
**Pedagogical coordination and continuous
professional development in the
qualification of ECEC services in Italy**

Tullia Musatti

Institute of cognitive sciences and technologies
National Research Council of Italy

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Summary

- The municipal ECEC provision in Italy and its good practices
- An example of ECEC provision
 - directed to all young children in a city district,
 - with strong links with the local community
 - oriented by a general pedagogical framework.
- Two main qualifying elements
 - The systematic and systemic support to continuous professional development of the ECEC personnel
 - The pedagogical coordination of the ECEC services
- The present challenges and perspectives

The ECEC provision in Italy

- Split-system for under 3s and 3 to 6 year olds
 - Different norms and organizational standards
 - Different level of governance
- In both sectors a mix of public and private provision with predominance of the public sector
- 94% of 3 to 6 year olds attend a *scuola dell'infanzia*
 - 60% in services provided by the State
 - 29% in private services
 - 11% in municipal services } % great variability
- 18% of under 3s attend a center-based service (great variability across areas)
 - 14% in municipal services
 - 4% in private services

Professionalism in ECEC

- Different professionals are employed in the two sectors of the split-system.
 - *Educatrici* (Educators) for under 3s: 5yrs upper secondary → 3yrs university
 - *Insegnanti* (Teachers) for 3 to 6 yr olds: 5 yrs university
- Almost all women.
- Differences even they are employed by the same municipality
- During the first development of ECEC provision no university degree was required for both types of professionals. Up today the majority of professionals at work have just secondary school diploma (ISCED 3C).
- A major investment in continuous professional development

The support to continuous professional development

Systematic

- Amount of paid “non-contact” hours per academic year
Originated from working condition in public employment

Professionals:
right/obligation



Municipal administration
engagement
requirement for public funding

Systemic

- Organized on a group basis and involving all professionals of the service
- Aimed at acquiring a reflective stance
- Based on the analysis of educational practices
- Involving observation and documentation procedures*

Situated

* Picchio, M., Giovannini, D., Mayer, S. & Musatti, T. (2012). *Early Years. An International Research Journal*, 32, 2, 159-170.

The pedagogical coordination of ECEC

- Valorizing educational responsibility of professionals in the single service
 - No directors in the single service
 - Entrustment to the team of teachers and
 - Collegiality
 - Parents' involvement
- The pedagogical coordination
 - A municipal function at city (or district) level
 - Supporting education practice in the ECEC service at team level (counseling and organizational devices)
 - Supporting personnel in family outreach
 - Providing in-service training initiatives
 - Interface ECEC personnel - administration

The pedagogical coordinators

- **Presence**
 - In almost all municipalities with ECEC services
 - Responsibility of a small number of services (2-3 to 6-10)
 - Required for receiving public funding
- **Collegial work within a municipal team**
- **Formation**
 - 5 (3) yrs university degree + professional course or experience
 - No national profile
 - Need for CPD
 - Peer interaction as a major source of support

New perspectives and challenges

- **New need for networking** between ECEC services*
 - CND initiatives shared by twinned services in the same city
 - Exchanging visits between services of distant cities
 - Documentation centers as professional resource for all service sited in a large area
 - Regional or district networks of pedagogical coordinators
- **Active professional network including all ECEC services in an area** (municipal, state or private)
 - Public and private providers and children's right to good quality ECEC
 - The role of pedagogical coordinators in the evaluation of quality of both municipal and private services

*Lazzari, A., Picchio, M. & Musatti, T. (2013). Sustaining ECEC quality through continuing professional development: systemic approaches to practitioners' professionalisation in the Italian context, *Early Years. An International Research Journal*, 33, 2, 133-145.

Thank you for your attention!
