

EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Italy 2014/2015 data background information



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How the official decision of special educational needs (SEN) used in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

An official decision leads to a pupil being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.

Pupils' legal entitlements under what legislation

Italy has two different pieces of legislation that guarantee specific rights to pupils with disabilities and specific learning disorders (SLDs): Law 104 of 1992 for disabilities and Law 170 of 2010 for SLDs (such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and dysorthography).

In the first case, the pupil has the right to a support teacher. In the second case, they have the right to compensatory tools and dispensatory measures.

According to Law 104/92 (article 3, paragraph 1), the concept of 'disability' refers to subjective, objective, social and cultural difficulties. A person with a disability is:

... one who presents a physical, mental or sensory impairment, stable or progressive, which causes difficulties in learning, relations or work integration, so that to cause social disadvantage and exclusion.

The process leading to a statement starts with parents, who request a collegial assessment by the local health authority (according to Law 104/1992, articles 12 and 13).

Assessment report (in case of disability and SLD)

The assessment report indicates the nature – stable or progressive – of the pathology ascertained, with reference to the World Health Organization's international classifications and the degree of severity.

The assessment is propaedeutic to the functional diagnosis, which is drafted by the multi-disciplinary unit. The unit comprises a clinician, who is a specialist in the pathology ascertained, a neuropsychiatrist, a rehabilitation therapist and social services operators.

Functional diagnosis (in case of disability and SLD)

The functional diagnosis, aimed at the recovery of the pupil with disabilities, takes special account of their potential in the following aspects:

- Cognitive: degree of development attained and capacity to integrate competences
- Affective-relational: self-esteem and relationships with others
- Linguistic: understanding, production and alternative languages
- Sensorial: type and degree of deficiency with particular reference to sight, hearing and touch
- Motor-praxis: gross and fine motor skills



- Neuropsychological: memory, attention and organisation in time and space
- Personal and social autonomy.

Parents submit the assessment report and the functional diagnosis to the school to request additional educational support to meet the pupil's learning needs.

How additional support is understood within the country context

National legislation

The Law of 3 March 2009 no. 18 ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2009, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) published the 'Guidelines for the integration of pupils with disability at school'. These aim to increase the quality of educational interventions for pupils with physical, intellectual and sensory impairment.

Law 170/2010 and related guidelines state that pupils with learning disorders do not need special teachers, but a new way of teaching, according to their way of learning. The aim is to shift the focus from a clinical to a pedagogic view, by empowering all subjects involved in the educational process.

As pupils with SLD are under the responsibility of the curricular teachers, schools should activate specific pedagogic and didactic measures to guarantee their achievements. They may also use personalised educational plans (PDP) and have the possibility of using compensatory tools and dispensatory measures.

According to Law 104/1992, pupils with disabilities have the right to attend mainstream classes with appropriate teaching support. They have the right to full participation in school life, such as summer camps, study visits (accompanied by special staff), etc. According to their disability, pupils may have assistants provided by local authorities. Pupils have the right to an individual education plan (IEP) drafted by family and schools, to a social project drafted by social assistants and experts from the local health authority, to a rehabilitation programme tailored to their individual needs, and to vocational guidance.

Additional support (pupils with disabilities)

According to Law 104, pupils have the right to a support teacher who acts as a tutor to guide them during school activities. This is for a particular number of teaching hours, according to the type and severity of the pupil's disability. Pupils may also be entitled to an assistant for autonomy and communicational needs, provided by local authorities.

According to the Decree of the President of the Republic (DPR) 89/2008, classes with pupils with disabilities usually contain a maximum of 20 pupils. This is provided that the inclusion process is supported by a project which defines strategies and methods adopted by class teachers together with support teachers and school staff.

Law 104/1992 provides for the removal of barriers (architectural or sensorial) and the introduction of appropriate aids and tools to support pupils with disabilities in education and training. For example, technical and didactic equipment should be adapted to pupils' needs, according to their functional or sensorial impairments.



The Stanca Law 9 January 2004 no. 4, containing the 'Provisions to support the access of disabled people to computing', has become operational through:

- the Implementing DPR, 1 March 2005, no. 75;
- the Ministerial Decree of 8 July 2005 'Technical requirements and different levels of accessibility to information technologies', laying down guidelines on the technical requirements and methods to verify the accessibility of internet sites, and evaluation programmes used for this purpose;
- the Ministerial Decree of 30 April 2008, 'Technical rules governing the access to educational tools and training for pupils with disabilities'.

Territorial Support Centres (CTSs)

CTSs are a network of 107 public mainstream schools across Italy. The CTS teachers compile and disseminate the best practices on information and communication technologies for inclusion (hardware and software) and support teachers who ask for help both in purchasing and efficiently using those technologies ('Guidelines for the integration of pupils with disability at school', 2009, Part II, par. 1).

In-service teacher training

All the school staff are responsible for pupils with SEN, not just the support teachers. Therefore, teachers and school managers at all school levels receive specific in-service training for pupils with SEN. Training activities focus on topics such as early risk identification, didactic measures to be adopted both with the pupil and with the class group, assessment procedures and guidance. The specific training plans are drafted by the MIUR and by schools, according to their autonomy. Training activities may involve also universities, research institutes, scientific entities, associations and local health authorities.

The criteria for an official decision are

There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team

At municipality level

Law 328/2000 defines the 'integrated system of interventions and social services', stating that families, with municipalities and social services, agree upon an individualised life project for their children, aiming for full integration 'within the family and social life'. Moreover, Law 328 and Law 104 state that local authorities, local health services, social services, schools and families make framework agreements for the integration of all services necessary for the full inclusion of pupils with disabilities, according to their potential and aimed at their educational, social and future work life.

At school level

According to the individualised life project, schools draw up, for each pupil with disabilities, an IEP prepared jointly by specialist clinicians, social services and teachers,



with the family's collaboration. This plan contains the life project, with actions ranging from school, to work and social rights.

The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the pupil's school

Each school has two Working Groups for inclusion at different levels.

Operational Working Group H

For each pupil with a disability, there is an inter-professional working group, called Working Group H. It comprises the head teacher or their delegate, a representative of the class council or one or more curricular teachers or support teachers, psycho-social and health operators involved in the case and the pupil's parents. Municipality assistants to personal autonomy and communication, school staff and any other professional involved in the pupil's inclusion may also participate in the meetings.

The group meets according to the agreed schedule and shall:

- prepare the PDF;
- prepare the IEP;
- assess the possibility of school retention for the pupil;
- assess the possibility of renouncing the support teaching time;
- support and encourage the transition process between school levels and orientation.

School Working Group H

A Working Group H operates at school level. It comprises the head teacher or their delegate, teachers' representatives from each disciplinary department, support teachers, parents' representatives, school staff, the municipality representative responsible for inclusion and a representative from the local health authority.

The School Working Group H has the following tasks:

- Define the school policy for inclusion
- Identify quality indicators for inclusive education at school to be included in the school's plan of the educational offer
- Give advice on the requested support teaching hours
- Determine criteria for allocating support teaching hours
- Propose actions to promote the inclusion process.

There is a legal document which describes the support the pupil is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning

Dynamic functional profile (PDF) for pupils with disabilities

The PDF indicates the pupil's physical, psychological and social and emotional characteristics. It emphasises both their learning difficulties and the possibilities of



recovery, as well as personal skills that must be supported, solicited and gradually strengthened and developed, in compliance with the individual's cultural choices.

The PDF is prepared after the functional diagnosis (see above). It indicates, after an initial period of school placement, the expected level of development that the pupil with SEN should reach in the short term (six months) and the medium term (two years).

The PDF must include:

- a functional description of the pupil in relation to the difficulties encountered in the various sectors of activity;
- an analysis of the pupil's potential development, in the short and medium term, derived from examining the following parameters:
 - Cognitive: potentialities in relation to the level of development, the problem-solving strategies used according to the age group, the cognitive style and the ability to use, in an integrated way, different skills
 - Affective-relational: potentialities in relation to the area of 'self', relationships with others, motives and attitudes towards learning
 - Communicational: potentialities in relation to different interaction modes, prevailing contents and privileged means
 - Language: potentialities in relation to understanding oral language, verbal production, communicative use of verbal language, use of verbal thought and use of alternative or additional languages
 - Sensorial: potentialities related to visual, auditory and tactile function
 - Motor-praxis: potentialities in relation to gross motor skills, fine motor skills, simple and complex praxis and internalised motor programming capabilities
 - Neuropsychological: potential mnesic capacity, intellectual capacity and the organisation of space and time
 - Autonomy: potentialities in relation to individual and social autonomy
 - Learning: potentialities in relation to age (reading, writing, mathematics and so on).

In both cases (disability and SLD), documents provided to the committee (teachers and psychologists) that works within the school are tools on which the personalised learning action is based.

The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process

The functional diagnosis is usually reviewed at least during the transition period between pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary school, and during upper-secondary school.

The PDF is updated at the end of pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary school, and during upper-secondary school.



Proxy indicator(s) for the 80% benchmark used for the country's data collection

Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more with non-disabled peers.

Details on what the country proxy is

The MIUR collects data on pupils with SEN through a census statistical survey on all the public and private Italian schools in the 20 Italian regions. Only the data for Bolzano's province (one of the two provinces in Trentino-Alto Adige) is missing. Therefore, for Bolzano's province, the data on pupils with SEN is integrated with data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (Istat). Istat collected data on pupils with SEN through a sample survey of primary and lower-secondary schools.

Overall, the data on pupils with SEN accounts for over 98% of pupils with SEN in the Italian school system.

Why this proxy was used

It is the best way to account for Italian pupils with SEN.

Difficulties in using any proxy

As specified above, the data accounts for over 98% of Italian pupils with SEN. In addition, when data is missing, it is estimated based on the previous data provided by the same schools.

Specific country issues in applying the proxy

No issues.

Detailed description of what is meant by 'out of formal education' within the country's data collection

The 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines Formal Education as follows:

[...] education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and, – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNESCO Institute for



Statistics, 2011, *International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*, p. 11).

Information on pupils considered out of education (i.e. those not in formal education as per the ISCED definition)

Data from the MIUR (as specified below) mainly relates to public schools and to private publicly-subsidised schools. Data provided by the MIUR refers to them and considers pupils attending school. Pupils out of education are not provided. Locally, at the municipal level, the school attendance of children aged 6–16 years registered with the Registry Office is monitored.

Country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education

Formal education

This takes place in institutions formally dedicated to education (mainstream education) and training. It ends with the acquisition of a diploma or a recognised qualification. This applies to the entire education system, from primary school to university, and includes a variety of programmes and specialised agencies for technical and vocational training.

Non-formal education

This means any organised educational activity outside the formal system and carried out, for example, in the workplace, in organisations or in civil society groups, associations and so on. It is intended for well-identified categories of users and sets specific objectives in the field of learning. However, it does not provide for the acquisition of qualifications.

Informal education

This is a process, not tied to specific times or places, through which every individual acquires – even unintentionally or unconsciously – attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in their environment. It may be from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market, the library, from the world of art and entertainment, the mass media, etc.

Therefore, all forms of education provided for pupils between 6 and 16 years are formal education, as it is compulsory (including home education, education in care institutes, in rehabilitation centres, in hospitals, in reformatories, etc.).

Sources of data from non-educational sectors – i.e. social, justice, health

Data from non-educational sectors has not been provided.

Provision of data on private sector education

The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the pupil population in the private sector.



Private sector education in the country

Private schools are founded only by private sectors, such as parents, associations, charities, etc. The school management selects and pays the school staff. All kinds of schools must follow the national guidelines on education and they are periodically visited by ministerial supervisors.

Pupil population counted for each relevant question

The data provided by the MIUR refers specifically to public schools and to private publicly-subsidised schools.

In Italy, there are three types of schools: public schools, private publicly-subsidised schools (*scuole paritarie*) and private schools.

In fact, Article 33 of the Italian Constitution lays down two basic principles:

- The State shall provide a State-school system accessible to all young people.
- Organisations and private individuals are entitled to set up schools and colleges with no additional costs to the State.

Furthermore, private publicly-subsidised schools (*scuole paritarie*) can issue certificates with the same legal value as qualifications from State schools of the same type and level. Such schools are free to choose their own cultural orientation and educational teaching approach. Non-profit-making schools benefit from special tax relief.

The national education system comprises public schools and private publicly-subsidised schools. Therefore, national data refer only to them.

Specific issues with providing data on private education and how these have been overcome in the data collection

There are two types of private education: education in private publicly-subsidised schools (*scuole private paritarie*) and education in private schools (*scuole private non paritarie*). Data for both has been collected, but the latter type are not obliged to send data to the MIUR. Therefore, data collection for them is not always complete.

Pupil age ranges

Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 1: 6 to 10

Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 2: 11 to 13