Comune di Perugia
Area Servizi alla Persona
Unità Operativa Servizi Educativi e Scolastici

FIRST DAYS
AT THE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN
AND AT THE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:
WELCOMING, ORGANIZATION AND ACCLIMATISATION

"Hospitality is an essential dimension of the service, which goes beyond the first setting.
The relationship is in fact a weaving that is done day by day using a variety of tools. "
National guidelines
for children's educational services

Among the educational services of the Municipality of Perugia there are also the collateral types **"Centre for children"** and **"Centre for children and families"**, services that nowadays have their own identity recognized nationally by Legislative Decree 65/2017. Their specificity lies in the fact that, unlike other services, they welcome girls and boys for a limited time and also children and parents together, offering socialization and playtime to children, dialogue and discussion for parents.
Also in these services, children are the first recipients of the welcoming: the environment and activities are designed for them and the proposal of new play and social experiences are the main declared objective. Complementary services are also complex socio-educational services in which multiple elements are intertwined that must be harmonized so that they can guarantee an environment that helps the child to grow, establishing close collaboration with parents. For this reason, in the educational project we can identify the structural, managerial, organizational elements, the pedagogical choices, the professionalism of the educators, the educational styles, connections and relationships, the answers to the needs belonging to that service and work group.
The Centre for children is open in the morning, from Monday to Friday, from 8.00 to 13.00 and welcomes children aged 18 to 36 months. This service does not include lunch, but a snack is distributed in the late morning (10.00 / 10.15 approx.), So that children can stay well until the time of departure. The same service takes the role of a ***Children and Families' Centre*** in the afternoon from 15.00 to 18.00 and more precisely on Mondays for children up to 12 months and on Wednesdays for children from 2 to 3 years old, who are not enrolled in the morning service. Each meetings has four parts in order to create harmony, well-being and sharing for the whole group, both adults and young:

- Hospitality;
- Snack;
- Themed activity / workshop based on the seasons and the educators' educational project;
- Reordering of materials.

The holiday period, Christmas and Easter, become an opportunity to experience shared meeting moments between the children attending the morning and the children attending the afternoon

with their families. In the Children and Families' Center, the same offer for children is proposed to parents as a stage where to discover the potential of their child and the possible ways to interact with them. All this stimulates parents to have a more serene look on their child and consequently on their parenting skills and at the same time constitutes an opportunity to develop a dialogue with the other adults present. The first interlocutors are the educators who, with different behaviors, attitudes and relational styles, welcome not only the physical presence of the parents, preparing the environment for their well-being, but also support them in times of difficulty with the child, guide their behavior in the service, encourage sociality.

With a view to accompanying parenting, the educational service has to take care of the families' needs, but it does not replace them; on the contrary, everything is built and realized in the relationship with parents. By welcoming the staff group, it creates a circular relationship between educators, children, families and contexts, around which the care of relationships in the educational path takes place and develops.

One of these first "acts of care" is represented by the **welcoming interview**. Knowledge always implies a first meeting, where there is listening, there is telling about oneself and telling who we are (educators-service / parents) and who is the child who will begin to explore and interact with curiosity with new environments and new faces. Making people feel welcomed, in fact, passes through listening, which means making the other feel understood, leaving room for doubts, emotions, difficulties that the parent experiences, without having judging attitudes.

This is a very important time for parents; entrusting one's child to others is often difficult: it is therefore necessary to begin to know the educators and to establish a relationship of trust and authentic collaboration with them.

Dialogue and free storytelling open the door to knowledge, but information will also be collected through the data that parents will provide by filling in forms at home for a good insertion of the child in the Centre.

In addition to a first individual meeting with the family, there will be a **first assembly meeting** with all the parents and all the educational staff, aimed at presenting the service, its functioning and who / how is part of it. On this occasion, the fundamental principles and rules that the working group has assumed as values and exercises in its professionalism to promote good organization and collaboration in the daily development of life at the Centre are summarized.

Hospitality, participation, listening, personalization, are the values within which the "care" and educational professionalism are carried out; it is on these values that the Pedagogical Coordinators, together with the educational staff, have elaborated the document **"Manifesto della Cura"** to support the construction of a common knowledge, because they belong to an educating community. A first concrete step in this direction is the "Pact of educational co-responsibility", a document in which the family builds, shares and finally signs the founding principles and rules with the educational service, respecting the reciprocal roles and the spirit of cooperation. .

Welcoming everyone means creating the conditions so that everyone can have the tools to feel integrated and an active part of the educational service of reference; for this, a collaboration was activated with the **linguistic mediation** agency managed by the C.I.D.I.S. to allow families residing in the area with different languages and cultural backgrounds to interact more easily with the Center, to understand its functioning while providing support to educators in communicating with parents. The mediation service can be activated by families by making a

request to the Centre. Thanks to this collaboration, families will also have information material relating to the Centre translated into their native language.

As part of the assembly meeting, the parents are (usually) elected, who together with (usually) the educators, will form the **"Management Committee"**, which will meet to deal with the organization of parties, trips, extraordinary requests and discussing needs and / or issues in which parents and service can be supported.
The sense of belonging and sharing of the group, throughout the year, is nurtured and extended in a network of relationships and opportunities that the educational service will organize based on the project (workshops, meetings with experts, parties, trips, etc. .). In addition to scheduled and routine meetings, obviously the educational staff, when there are requests or deem it necessary, organizes interviews with the parents, to discuss and support both the family and the child in his / her growth path.
The acclimatisation of the Centre for children can be defined as a real experience of co-education and co-construction of educational paths for families. Here, participatory acclimatization is practiced in three days and within this approach, the parent is not only a guest of the service but a protagonist. During the three days of total immersion in the service, the parent not only accompanies his child in the passage from home to the Center, but also has the opportunity to tell the educators about him / herself as a father or mother and with them define and agree the path to take, while the children will benefit from the reassuring accompaniment of their parents for a long and relaxed time, which will allow them to familiarize themselves with places, habits and people, supported by the secure base represented by mum and dad. Furthermore, the parents themselves will be able to fully enjoy the flavor of life at the nursery, learning in turn to know both the different proposals and routines, both the companions of their children, and the professionals who will take care of them.
In the following days, according to the times and schedules agreed with the educators, but always taking into account the times of the child, the parents will make a gradual separation from the child, entrusting him / her to the care of the educators, from the first moment of the entrance, until the moment of the exit at the end of the activities.
For some years now, the "small group" acclimatisation has been adopted. This allows both children and families to share the initial path and emotions, mutually supporting each other, favoring the construction of the relationship and alliance even between parents and educational staff. Of course, within an organization and a common path, the necessary flexibility is adopted to respect the needs of each child and to ensure their well-being.
Knowledge and active involvement in everyday life allow both to reassure oneself with respect to the quality of the experiences and relationships offered by the educational service, and to be able to better understand how the life of the Centre unfolds, thus favoring, in the days following the setting up, their greater serenity in detaching oneself from one's child. In this way educators and parents live the Service TOGETHER. It is in this being together that the foundations of the relationship of trust and alliance are immediately built.
It is important to remember that the more peaceful the parent is, the easier it is for boys and girls to live their experience joyfully.
In this phase of growth for the child, the knowledge of the world around him also takes place by establishing an empathic process with the parent (try to understand if he approves, if he is

dangerous, if he should be afraid, etc.), and at the same time he begins to be aware of his loss / distance. On the other hand, for the parent it is the moment in which he / she begins to trust his / her child, because he / she begins to see in him / her the ability to express his / her needs to others, the ability to "use" others to learn about the world around him / her.

For this reason it is important to reassure the family, to make them understand that they will receive answers to their needs, but above all that the child will be offered tools, contexts to stimulate exploration, communication, play, routine activities, where they can receive stimuli to organize the mind, words to express meanings and emotions, live meaningful experiences on an emotional, cognitive, social level, and above all it will be a place of care that represents the true qualifying aspect of the Centre.

The spaces will be organized and arranged so that children can move, choose and use the games and various materials, independently and safely; from birth, learning takes place through contact with things and people. In the experiences that children can have both inside and outside the structure, with various types of materials (natural, recycled, colors, water, sand, earth, etc.), they will be able to experience the possibility of getting dirty and wet.

This is one of the reasons why, educators ask families to bring a "backpack" with at least one complete change of the child, to be left at the Centre and checked every day, in order to always have clean clothes available.

Knowledge passes through the exploration of the surrounding world: in this process of discovery, the child is active and protagonist, he can share and elaborate experiences, both with other children of the surrounding educational realities with which paths / projects are established, and with the adult who performs facilitating functions.

In this way children have the opportunity to experience the pleasure of being together, of shared play, of exchanging ideas, of developing the awareness that collaboration, sharing, diversity, are sources of enrichment and that conflicts can be solved.

Within this pedagogical framework, the **WELCOMING** takes place on the first day and lasts all year round, and is an opportunity to be together that grows day by day.

"Educational services and preschools mark the child's entry into an educating community but also a new partnership with parents, based on trust and mutual respect. "
Pedagogical guidelines
for the zero-six integrated system

P.za Cecilia Coppoli c/o nuova Monteluce - Perugia Tel. Uff. 0039 75 5773834 - fax 0039 75 5773281 e-mail: i.filippetti@comune.perugia.it