

Municipal provision of nurseries and other socio-educational services for infants

School year 2008/2009

Istat has published the main results of a rapid survey of expenditure and users of socio-educational services for infants. The aim is to provide an updated and complete picture of the provision by Italian local authorities of nurseries and other socio-educational services aimed at the population in the zero to two age bracket (up to the age of 36 months).

In the school year 2008/2009, **176,262 children** aged zero to two years were enrolled at municipally owned or financed nurseries. Local expenditure in 2008 after deducting fees paid by families was about **1,118 million euro**.

Between 2004 and 2008 the number of nursery users increased by about 30,000 units, of which 11,000 between 2007 and 2008. In the five years under investigation, net current expenditure after user fees on nurseries registered an overall increase of 31.5%, whereas child enrolments rose 20.6%.

Nurseries: enrolled children and sustained expenditure in Italy. Years 2004-2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Enrolled children	146,152	150,110	159,909	165,214	176,262
Expenditure by municipalities	850,630,482	899,818,467	953,466,505	1,019,619,481	1,118,351,350
Total expenditure (local authorities and families)	1,034,909,577	1,110,937,063	1,166,712,448	1,256,211,771	1,367,336,647
Percentage of expenditure by families	17.5	18.6	18.0	18.5	17.9

The percentage of municipalities that provide nursery services, either through municipal facilities or public fund allowances to families who refer to private facilities, increased progressively from 33.7% in 2004 to 40.9% in 2008. Consequently, children aged zero to two years who live in a municipality that provides a nursery service rose from 67.4% to **73.4%** (**index of territorial coverage**).

Although efforts to increase services for infants have led to an overall expansion of provision by local authorities, the share of demand thus far met is still well below the potential user base.

The **index of acceptance into care**, calculated as the percentage ratio between users enrolled at nurseries and resident children aged zero to two years increased from 9.0% in 2004 to **10.4%** in 2008.

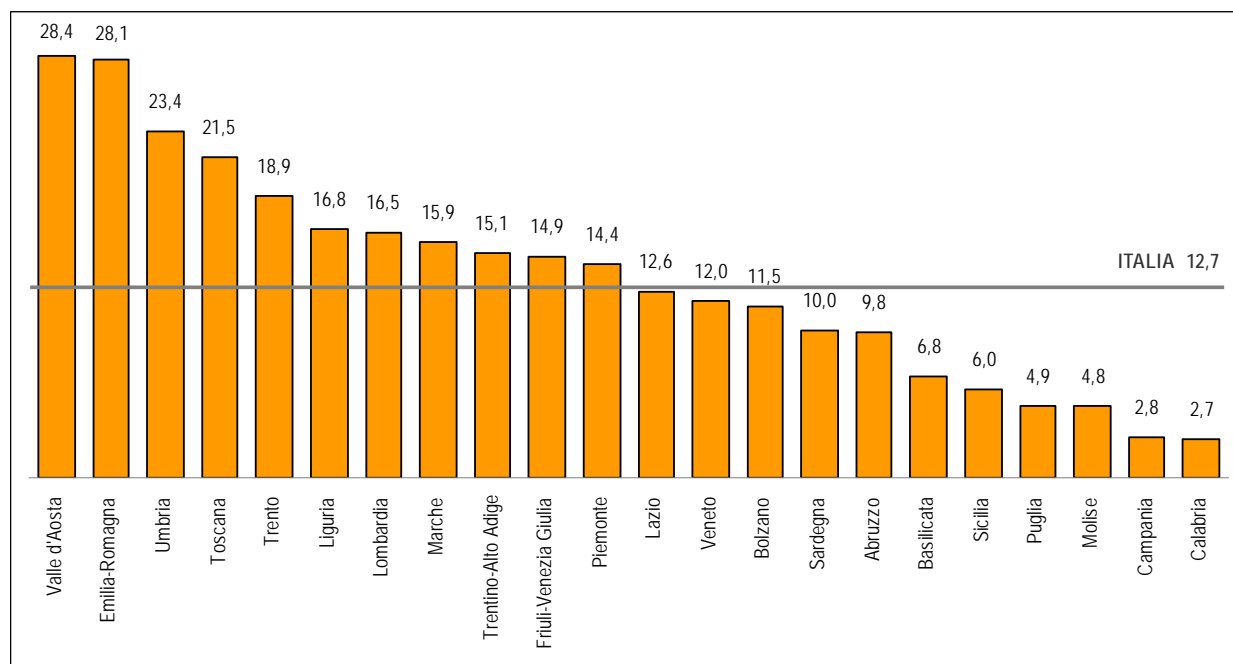
Alongside traditional nurseries, supplementary and innovative forms of services for infants are now being offered, such as micro-nurseries and family home-based nurseries which are part-financed by municipalities and supra-municipal bodies. In 2008/2009, **2.3%** of children aged zero to two years were entrusted to such services – a figure which has remained basically stable over the five-year period.

Overall, therefore, **12.7%** of children were taken into care by a public socio-educational service (nurseries and supplementary services) while territorial coverage in terms of children resident in a municipality providing such services amounted to **78.2%**.

Indicators of socio-educational services for infants. Years 2004-2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Nurseries					
Percentage of municipalities covered by the service	32,8	35,2	36,7	38,3	40,9
Index of territorial coverage of the service (per 100 residents aged 0-2)	67,0	69,5	70,6	72,3	73,4
Indicator of acceptance into care of users (per 100 residents aged 0-2)	9,0	9,1	9,6	9,9	10,4
Supplementary services					
Percentage of municipalities covered by the service	11,9	14,0	15,1	23,0	23,7
Index of territorial coverage of the service (per 100 residents aged 0-2)	25,9	31,2	32,8	39,4	40,8
Indicator of acceptance into care of users (per 100 residents aged 0-2)	2,4	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,3
Total services for infants					
Percentage of municipalities covered by the service	38,4	42,0	43,2	48,6	51,0
Index of territorial coverage of the service (per 100 residents aged 0-2)	70,1	71,9	73,1	77,7	78,2
Indicator of acceptance into care of users (per 100 residents aged 0-2)	11,4	11,2	11,7	12,0	12,7

index of acceptance into care of socio-educational services for infants, per region. Year 2008 (per 100 residents aged 0-2)



For more detailed information please refer to the Italian version

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