

## The integration of disabled students in public and private primary and lower secondary schools

2013-2014 school year

Istat releases the results of the survey on students with disabilities in primary and lower secondary schools (public and private) for the 2013-2014 school year.

The survey was conducted as part of a project financed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (Miur), and its goal was to examine the resources and tools that have been adopted by single school centers to facilitate the integration of students with disabilities. The survey response rate was 85%, 21,799 schools have filled the questionnaire.

During SY 2013-2014, about 150 thousand disabled students were enrolled in compulsory education: almost 85 thousand in primary school and about 65 thousand in lower secondary school.

About 4.2% of the disabled students in primary school had vision-related disabilities, about 4.5% had hearing difficulties and about 13.7% had mobility impairments. Regional differences were reported with respect to learning and attention-deficit problems, which affected 14.6% and 14.3% of disabled students in primary school and 20.1% and 11.4% of disabled students in lower secondary school. (Table 1).

The difficulties that characterized disabled students in lower secondary school were similar to those found in primary school. Visual and hearing impairments were experienced by 3.8% and 4.4%, respectively, of students with disability, while 9.1% of disabled students faced mobility impairments. Noteworthy geographical differences were found with respect to learning and attention-deficit difficulties, with higher values detected in the South and the Islands.

The scholastic environment remained fairly inaccessible and the number of schools equipped to overcome architectural barriers appeared too low, although this area showed some improvement. Lower secondary schools seemed to offer better access for disabled students in comparison to lower order schools. (Table 2).

In terms of learning ability, the key professional figures were the curricular teacher and the learning-support teacher, who provide mutual support in the development of communications, relations and socialization. Other professional figures include the cultural education assistant (CEA) or personal assistant<sup>1</sup>, the communications facilitator<sup>2</sup>, the communicator for the deaf<sup>3</sup> and the scholastic aide<sup>4</sup> with the specific task of assisting disabled students.

In SY 2013-2014, the MIUR data indicated a total of about 74 thousand learning-support teachers for both scholastic orders of public schools. More than 97% of students with disability were supported in the learning activity by the learning support teacher while a percentage of students were supported in the activity of daily living by the teacher in place of others professional figures such as the cultural education assistant (CEA) or the personal assistant (2.5% of student in primary and in lower secondary schools).

---

<sup>1</sup> Cultural education assistants are employees of the Municipality or Cooperative and collaborate actively to promote the integration of dependent minors, supporting their integration with the class and helping them eat and use the restrooms.

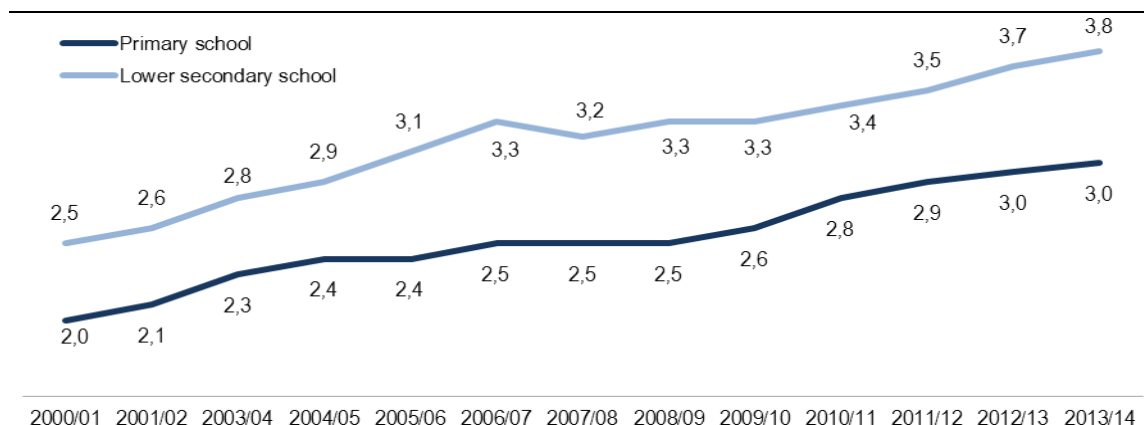
<sup>2</sup> The main activities of communications facilitators are targeted at students with cognitive disabilities or autism.

<sup>3</sup> Communicators for Italian sign language (LIS) or deaf-mutes are operators that act as communication facilitators between deaf students, the class and the teachers. The purpose is to reduce communication barriers, offer equal opportunities and make it possible for deaf students to express their full scholastic potential.

<sup>4</sup> Scholastic aides are qualified to provide disabled students with material and hygienic assistance, and they receive a stipendium supplement for this reason.

**FIGURE 1. DISABLED STUDENTS BY SCHOOL ORDER AND SCHOOL YEAR**

School year 2013/2014, values for 100 students



**TABLE 1. DISABLED STUDENTS CATEGORIZED BY PROBLEM TYPE, DIVISION AND SCHOLASTIC ORDER. 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR (percentage values)**

Problem type	North	Center	South and the Islands	Italy
<b>Primary school</b>				
Blindness	0.7	1.1	0.8	0.8
Partial blindness	3.6	3.6	3.0	3.4
Acute deafness	1.3	2.2	1.7	1.6
Partial deafness	2.6	3.5	2.9	2.9
Problems related to mobility	12.6	13.7	15.2	13.7
Learning-specific disorder	12.7	15.6	16.5	14.6
Language-specific disorder	20.9	24.8	21.5	21.9
Generalized developmental disturbance	17.2	15.9	17.4	17.0
Mental retardation	41.5	34.3	46.6	41.8
Attention deficit and behavioral disorders	13.0	17.9	13.8	14.3
Emotional-relational disturbances	15.8	13.3	16.0	15.3
Early psychiatric disorder	0.9	0.5	0.2	0.6
Other	17.3	19.8	16.1	17.4
<b>Lower secondary school</b>				
Blindness	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.6
Partial blindness	2.5	3.9	3.6	3.2
Acute deafness	1.9	2.0	1.2	1.7
Partial deafness	2.1	2.7	3.4	2.7
Problems related to mobility	8.2	9.6	9.9	9.1
Learning-specific disorder	16.7	27.5	20.6	20.1
Language-specific disorder	11.4	14.3	13.4	12.6
Generalized developmental disturbance	11.7	11.9	11.9	11.8
Mental retardation	45.5	41.7	55.9	48.3
Attention deficit and behavioral disorders	10.8	13.8	10.9	11.4
Emotional-relational disturbances	17.1	17.8	14.7	16.4
Early psychiatric disorder	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7
Other	17.9	16.7	14.5	16.5

Source: Istat

Note: The sum of each percentage column is greater than 100 because a single disabled student can have more than one type of problem.

TABLE 2. SCHOOLS WITH REGULATION ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES BY SCHOOL YEAR, ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE, SCHOLASTIC ORDER AND REGION. 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR (for 100 schools in the same region)

Regions	Accessible stairs	Accessible hygienic services	Tactile maps and tactile trails	Accessible external and internal access routes
<b>Primary school</b>				
Piemonte	74.8	70.5	26.9	22.5
Valle d'Aosta	74.1	70.6	21.2	37.6
Lombardia	74.4	76.0	26.0	22.7
Trentino Alto Adige	74.9	67.3	26.5	40.9
<i>P. A. Bolzano</i>	<i>86.0</i>	<i>73.9</i>	<i>24.9</i>	<i>54.4</i>
<i>P. A. Trento</i>	<i>59.6</i>	<i>58.3</i>	<i>28.8</i>	<i>22.5</i>
Veneto	72.9	75.0	25.3	24.8
Friuli Venezia Giulia	77.3	77.6	28.6	26.5
Liguria	68.9	61.8	38.6	17.3
Emilia Romagna	73.4	78.7	33.1	23.7
Toscana	63.8	68.7	26.9	21.9
Umbria	68.5	73.5	25.5	25.2
Marche	77.1	65.8	25.1	22.0
Lazio	66.5	66.8	21.8	13.5
Abruzzo	62.1	60.1	14.3	16.1
Molise	55.3	63.1	22.7	14.2
Campania	60.8	51.0	16.6	12.8
Puglia	77.5	68.7	21.7	20.5
Basilicata	76.7	62.1	19.9	10.7
Calabria	50.8	50.1	14.8	8.3
Sicilia	61.9	60.4	21.7	16.6
Sardegna	63.0	68.0	19.3	10.8
<b>Italy</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>66.9</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>19.6</b>
<b>Lower secondary school</b>				
Piemonte	78.3	75.3	24.1	21.1
Valle d'Aosta	76.2	66.7	28.6	33.3
Lombardia	79.2	78.2	28.6	26.0
Trentino Alto Adige	74.7	70.7	27.0	36.2
<i>P. A. Bolzano</i>	<i>80.7</i>	<i>76.1</i>	<i>27.3</i>	<i>50.0</i>
<i>P. A. Trento</i>	<i>68.6</i>	<i>65.1</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>22.1</i>
Veneto	80.1	76.6	29.8	25.9
Friuli Venezia Giulia	85.6	82.6	29.3	30.5
Liguria	77.1	67.3	33.2	16.1
Emilia Romagna	78.1	80.0	32.7	22.5
Toscana	75.5	70.7	25.9	20.7
Umbria	69.4	71.1	28.1	20.7
Marche	81.1	67.0	21.9	21.5
Lazio	74.8	70.0	23.1	15.0
Abruzzo	76.1	67.0	14.3	16.1
Molise	61.4	63.9	28.9	12.0
Campania	73.8	61.3	15.7	13.8
Puglia	81.6	74.8	22.5	18.0
Basilicata	84.7	61.1	22.2	14.6
Calabria	66.7	52.7	17.0	9.9
Sicilia	70.3	63.3	23.4	17.3
Sardegna	66.0	73.5	13.3	11.1
<b>Italy</b>	<b>75.9</b>	<b>70.6</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>19.7</b>

Source: Istat

**For more details please refer  
to the Italian version**

---

Contact persons:

**Alessandra Battisti** ([albattis@istat.it](mailto:albattis@istat.it)).

phone +39 06 4673.7582

Socio-demographic and environmental statistics directorate  
Istat – National Institute of Statistics