

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

School Year 2014-2015

Istat releases the results of the survey on students with disabilities in primary and lower secondary schools (public and private) for the 2014-2015 school year.

The survey has been carried out 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). 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 99%, 23,421 schools have filled the questionnaire.

Main results

During SY 2014-2015, more than 150 thousand disabled students were enrolled in compulsory education: more than 85 thousand in primary school and more than 65 thousand in lower secondary school.

About 4.8% of the disabled students in primary school had vision-related disabilities, about 5.2% had hearing difficulties and about 13.8% had problems related to mobility. The learning and attention-deficit problems affected 19.5% and 17.4% of disabled students in primary school and 22.1% and 16.4% of disabled students in lower secondary school. Regional differences were evident for these types of problems, the prevalence was always higher in the regions of the South and the Islands area (Table 1).

The difficulties that characterized disabled students in lower secondary school were similar to those found in primary school. Visual and hearing difficulties were experienced respectively by 4.7% and 5.3%, of students with disability, while 11.1% faced mobility problems. Noteworthy geographical differences were found with respect to learning and attention-deficit difficulties, with higher values detected in the Centre of Italy.

The scholastic environment remained fairly inaccessible and the number of schools equipped to overcome architectural barriers appeared to be too low, although this area had FIN QUI shown 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 are 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 assistant¹, the communications facilitator², the communicator for the deaf³ and the scholastic aide⁴ with the specific assignment of assisting disabled students.

In SY 2014-2015, the MIUR data indicate more than 79 thousand learning-support teachers for both scholastic orders of public schools combined. About 82% the learning support teachers provide didactic support, a percentage of 14% provide support in the treatment of behavioral problems, while there was a percentage of teacher that provide support in the activity of daily living in place of others professional figures such as the cultural education assistant (CEA) or the personal assistant (about 3% of student in primary and in lower secondary schools

¹ 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.

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

³ Communicators for Italian sign language (LIS) or deaf-mutes are operators that act as a communication bridge 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.

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

Table 1. Disabled students categorized by problem type, division and scholastic order. School Year 2014-2015 (percentage values)

| Problem type | North | Center | South | Italy |
|--|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Primary school | | | | |
| Blindness | 0.7 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Partial blindness | 3.3 | 3.6 | 4.1 | 3.7 |
| Acute deafness | 2.0 | 1.8 | 2.3 | 2.1 |
| Partial deafness | 3.1 | 2.5 | 3.6 | 3.1 |
| Problems related to mobility | 12.3 | 13.9 | 15.6 | 13.8 |
| Learning-specific disorder | 15.8 | 19.6 | 24.3 | 19.5 |
| Language-specific disorder | 19.0 | 23.7 | 23.2 | 21.4 |
| Generalized developmental disturbance | 24.5 | 27.1 | 27.3 | 26.0 |
| Mental retardation | 42.3 | 37.2 | 44.2 | 41.9 |
| Attention deficit and behavioral disorders | 14.2 | 19.4 | 20.4 | 17.4 |
| Emotional-relational disturbances | 15.4 | 16.3 | 17.7 | 16.4 |
| Other | 21.7 | 21.1 | 17.3 | 20.1 |
| Lower secondary school | | | | |
| Blindness | 0.7 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Partial blindness | 3.0 | 4.6 | 4.8 | 3.9 |
| Acute deafness | 2.0 | 2.7 | 1.2 | 1.8 |
| Partial deafness | 3.2 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.5 |
| Problems related to mobility | 10.1 | 10.5 | 12.9 | 11.1 |
| Learning-specific disorder | 19.8 | 25.1 | 23.7 | 22.1 |
| Language-specific disorder | 13.5 | 14.1 | 13.5 | 13.6 |
| Generalized developmental disturbance | 21.1 | 20.7 | 21.2 | 21.1 |
| Mental retardation | 52.0 | 44.6 | 49.8 | 49.8 |
| Attention deficit and behavioral disorders | 15.7 | 19.3 | 15.7 | 16.4 |
| Emotional-relational disturbances | 15.9 | 15.6 | 16.7 | 16.2 |
| Other | 16.7 | 19.5 | 15.7 | 16.9 |

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. School Year 2014-2015 (for 100 schools in the same region)

| Regions | Accessible stairs | Accessible hygienic services | Tactile maps and trails tactile | Accessible external and internal access routes |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Primary school | | | | |
| Piemonte | 88.1 | 82.2 | 32.3 | 46.1 |
| Valle d'Aosta | 95.5 | 95.5 | 40.9 | 53 |
| Lombardia | 87.3 | 90.3 | 33.4 | 47.5 |
| Trentino Alto Adige | 94.5 | 84.0 | 35.3 | 57.4 |
| <i>P. A. Bolzano</i> | 92.5 | 77.9 | 25.0 | 54.9 |
| <i>P. A. Trento</i> | 98.2 | 95.2 | 54.2 | 61.9 |
| Veneto | 84.6 | 88.5 | 32.7 | 49.0 |
| Friuli Venezia Giulia | 84.0 | 82.9 | 33.2 | 53.5 |
| Liguria | 84.7 | 72.3 | 38.8 | 37.9 |
| Emilia Romagna | 83.7 | 89.5 | 37.5 | 50.1 |
| Toscana | 79.4 | 85.1 | 30.5 | 45.7 |
| Umbria | 78.4 | 84.3 | 28.9 | 42.9 |
| Marche | 87.6 | 74.0 | 25.7 | 37.9 |
| Lazio | 83.7 | 82.1 | 29.9 | 37.1 |
| Abruzzo | 74.6 | 74.9 | 22.6 | 38.6 |
| Molise | 78.7 | 66.1 | 37.0 | 29.9 |
| Campania | 79.6 | 66.9 | 21.0 | 38.8 |
| Puglia | 87.8 | 79.2 | 24.7 | 41.2 |
| Basilicata | 87.8 | 70.1 | 24.4 | 34.5 |
| Calabria | 64.2 | 65.3 | 17.5 | 30.4 |
| Sicilia | 75.5 | 74.6 | 27.1 | 36.4 |
| Sardegna | 76.9 | 85.9 | 25.2 | 39.8 |
| Italy | 82.4 | 80.6 | 29.3 | 42.9 |
| Lower secondary school | | | | |
| Piemonte | 92.3 | 86.3 | 32.6 | 49.7 |
| Valle d'Aosta | 100.0 | 87.5 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Lombardia | 91.5 | 92.3 | 36.8 | 49.1 |
| Trentino Alto Adige | 97.2 | 92.3 | 41.5 | 57.0 |
| <i>P. A. Bolzano</i> | 96.2 | 91.0 | 41.0 | 59.0 |
| <i>P. A. Trento</i> | 98.4 | 93.8 | 42.2 | 54.7 |
| Veneto | 92.3 | 91.2 | 32.9 | 50.8 |
| Friuli Venezia Giulia | 88.1 | 89.4 | 37.5 | 61.3 |
| Liguria | 94.9 | 79.0 | 40.9 | 40.9 |
| Emilia Romagna | 89.4 | 92.8 | 36.7 | 52.2 |
| Toscana | 90.9 | 86.7 | 30.9 | 46.2 |
| Umbria | 89.7 | 89.7 | 35.3 | 41.4 |
| Marche | 93.3 | 78.1 | 25.2 | 34.3 |
| Lazio | 88.6 | 84.4 | 29.0 | 38.0 |
| Abruzzo | 88.0 | 81.0 | 21.3 | 38.4 |
| Molise | 89.2 | 60.8 | 35.1 | 29.7 |
| Campania | 87.5 | 74.0 | 21.2 | 40.5 |
| Puglia | 92.3 | 84.3 | 24.6 | 44.3 |
| Basilicata | 83.7 | 68.1 | 20.6 | 36.9 |
| Calabria | 80.3 | 70.2 | 17.9 | 33.0 |
| Sicilia | 88.0 | 80.8 | 31.5 | 37.1 |
| Sardegna | 81.9 | 84.1 | 22.5 | 41.6 |
| Italy | 89.5 | 84.3 | 30.1 | 44.1 |

For more details please refer to the Italian version

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