

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

School Year 2015-2016

Istat releases the results of the survey on students with disabilities in primary and lower secondary schools (public and private) for the 2015-2016 school year.

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), the goal of the survey 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 92%, 23,408 schools have filled the questionnaire.

During SY 2015-2016, more than 156 thousand disabled students were enrolled in compulsory education: 88,281 thousand in primary school and 67,690 thousand in lower secondary school.

About 3.8% of the disabled students in primary school had vision-related disabilities, about 3.6% had hearing difficulties and about 9.9% had problems related to mobility. The learning and attention-deficit problems affected 18.9% and 18.7% of disabled students in primary school and 22.1% and 15.6% of disabled students in lower secondary school. Regional differences were evident for these type of problems, the prevalence was always higher in the Southern regions (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 by 4.1% and 4.9%, respectively, of students with disability, while 11.4% were faced with 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 shown some improvement. (Table 2).

In terms of learning ability, the key professional figures were the curricular teacher and the learning-support teacher, who provided mutual support in the development of communications, relations and socialization. Other professional figures included 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 2015-2016, the MIUR data indicated more than 82 thousand learning-support teachers for both scholastic orders of public schools combined. More than 80% of the learning support teachers provided didactic support, about 14% provided support in the treatment of behavioral problems, while there was a percentage of teacher that provided 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 2015-2016 (percentage values)

Type of problem	Primary school				Lower secondary school			
	North	Centre	South and Islands	Italy	North	Centre	South and Islands	Italy
Blindness	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.7
Partial blindness	3.2	4.0	2.7	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.7	3.4
Acute deafness	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.9	1.3	2.3	2.2	1.8
Partial deafness	2.7	3.1	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.9	3.6	3.1
Problems related to mobility	12.0	12.5	13.9	12.8	9.9	11.6	13.3	11.4
Learning specific disorder	15.0	18.7	23.8	18.9	20.3	26.9	22.0	22.1
Language specific disorder	21.4	23.0	21.7	21.8	14.2	13.2	14.1	13.9
General development disturbance	23.8	25.7	25.9	24.9	20.7	19.9	23.1	21.4
Intellectual disability	44.4	38.1	42.5	42.5	51.5	46.4	50.7	50.3
Attention deficit and behavioural disorders	15.9	21.1	18.7	17.9	14.3	18.0	15.9	15.6
Emotional relational disturbances	16.3	14.7	17.4	16.4	16.8	16.7	17.7	17.1
Other type of problem	21.7	21.3	19.0	20.7	18.1	23.0	15.8	18.2

Table 2. Schools with regulation architectural features by school year, architectural feature, scholastic order and region. School Year 2015-2016 (for 100 schools in the same region)

REGIONS	Primary school				Lower secondary school			
	Accessible stairs	Accessible hygienic services	Tactile maps and tactile trails	Accessible external and internal access	Accessible stairs	Accessible hygienic services	Tactile maps and tactile trails	Accessible external and internal access
Piemonte	81.5	78.1	23.7	43.5	82.8	79.2	23.7	45.0
Valle d'Aosta-Vallée d'Aoste	85.7	82.1	20.2	60.7	90.5	85.7	28.6	57.1
Lombardia	82.9	85.4	26.6	50.1	86.3	87.7	28.7	51.8
Trentino-Alto Adige	89.6	81.4	27.2	58.4	90.8	86.7	29.5	52.6
P.A. Bolzano-Bözen	93.3	82.0	25.1	55.4	97.7	90.9	36.4	53.4
P. A. Trento	84.2	80.5	30.3	62.9	83.5	82.4	22.4	51.8
Veneto	77.8	81.9	25.6	48.3	85.9	83.4	26.4	48.7
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	78.6	79.6	27.9	57.4	85.7	82.1	26.8	63.7
Liguria	78.6	65.7	29.7	41.5	86.6	72.1	27.4	42.3
Emilia-Romagna	79.7	85.3	29.4	52.1	84.7	86.4	30.1	50.9
Toscana	73.7	78.6	20.3	48.3	84.1	81.2	20.4	47.2
Umbria	77.3	80.3	30.1	48.2	83.1	87.1	30.6	51.6
Marche	80.0	71.9	17.1	41.1	82.5	73.1	15.8	37.2
Lazio	72.4	70.6	15.1	34.0	78.4	74.5	16.8	35.0
Abruzzo	73.3	71.9	18.1	40.1	81.9	71.7	15.9	40.3
Molise	64.3	70.5	13.2	32.6	76.6	77.9	14.3	32.5
Campania	72.8	62.1	14.1	40.0	82.4	69.4	14.4	42.7
Puglia	85.2	77.7	18.9	44.1	88.3	81.4	16.6	47.1
Basilicata	87.6	71.8	16.3	38.1	90.8	75.2	14.2	40.4
Calabria	60.7	63.0	12.3	35.1	76.8	66.4	13.4	39.3
Sicilia	72.7	71.9	16.0	39.8	85.1	79.3	19.1	42.6
Sardegna	73.8	81.3	16.5	43.1	75.3	80.8	12.8	42.7
Italy	77,0	75,7	21.0	44.4	83.6	79.2	21.4	45.3

For more details please refer to the Italian version

Contact person:

Alessandra Battisti (albattis@istat.it)
ph. +39 06 4673.7582
Istat – Italian National Institute of Statistics
Viale Liegi, 14 – 00198 ROMA