

## SCHOOL INCLUSION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES | S.Y. 2018-2019

# Students with disabilities are still growing

→ The increase in the number of pupils with disabilities (+10 thousand) in the Italian schools (3.3% of the total) is confirmed.

Poor accessibility for students with motor disabilities; inclusion is insured by only 34% of schools. Aid for students with sensorial disability (2% of school) is quite critical. Only in 15% of school buildings broke down architectural barriers.

The ratio between students and special-need teacher is better than the legal provisions, but specialization is lacking: one teacher out of 3 is not selected from the list of special-need teachers but from the list of general teachers.

# -2

**Hours per week special-need teaching/assistance in the South**

In Northern schools, 12.1 hours of assistance

# 59%

**Pupils with disabilities who have not didactic continuity with the special-need teacher**

# 66%

**Pupils with disabilities who do not participate in overnight trips**

The percentage rises to 81% in Southern schools

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## Still too many architectural/physical barriers in the Italian schools

In Italy in the school year 2018/2019 there were 55,209 schools and over 284 thousand students with disabilities (3.3% of the total), with an increase by 50% in the last 10 years.

Characteristics and quality of school services play a key role for an effective inclusion process. The main aspects are for example: accessibility of all educational spaces, the usability of suitable technologies, and presence of trained and competent professional figures.

Unfortunately, in the school year 2018-2019 there were still too many physical barriers in the Italian schools: only one school out of three was accessible for pupils with physical disabilities. The situation seemed to be better in the North of the country where values were over the national average (38% of schools complying with the provision), while it got worse reaching the lowest levels in the South (29%). The lack of an elevator or the presence of a not suitable elevator for the transport of people with disabilities were the most common barriers (46%). Schools without ramps were also frequent (33%) as those without accessible toilets (29%).

## Difficulty of access for people with sensory disabilities was greater than for the other students with disabilities

The problem of accessibility was worst for student with sensory disabilities. In Italy, only 18% of schools have at least one sense-perceptive aid to facilitate the orientation and the recognition of places. Data showed also in this case, a sharp territorial dichotomy: the percentage of schools equipped with sensory-perceptive aids decreases progressively from 23% in the Northern regions to 14% in the Southern regions. The percentage of schools equipped with all the facilitators for student with sensory disabilities required by law decrease drastically reaching just 2%.

Even though data on accessibility showed a serious delay of the Italian schools, those that during the school year carried out works aimed at breaking down architectural barriers did not exceed 15%.

## SCHOOLS BY ACCESSIBILITY, TYPE OF ARCHITECTURAL BARRIER AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS. S.Y. 2018/2019. Values for 100 schools in the same region

	Physical Barriers			Barriers for people with sensory disabilities			
	Accessible schools	Inaccessible schools	Schools that do not respond	Schools with all facilitators for people with sensory disability	Schools with only one facilitator for people with sensory disabilities	Schools without any facilitators for people with sensory disabilities	Schools that do not respond
<b>NORTH</b>	38.5	42.9	18.7	1.7	21.0	60.0	17.3
<b>CENTRE</b>	35.3	46.8	17.9	2.2	14.7	65.3	17.9
<b>SOUTH</b>	29.4	52.1	18.5	2.1	11.6	67.8	18.4
<b>ITALY</b>	34.4	47.1	18.4	1.9	16.2	64.0	17.9

## Technology: a facilitator that is still underused

Technology can play an important "facilitator" role in the school inclusion process, supporting students in the learning process and increasing the comprehension levels.

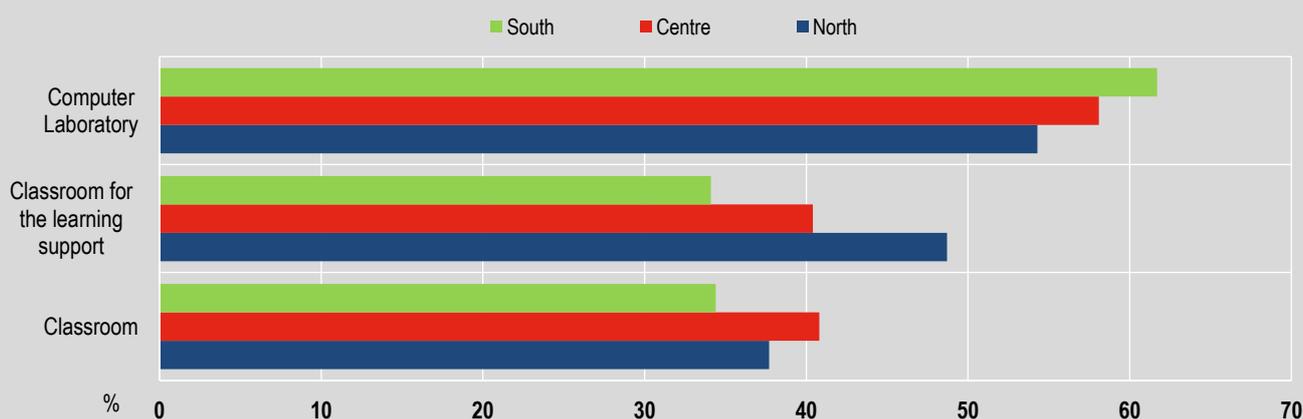
In Italy one school out of four have less computers adapted to students with disabilities than the need. There is not marked territorial differences (78% of schools of Center vs 75% of schools in the North and the South)

## Lack of computers in the classroom of student with disabilities

The computers are rarely located in the classroom (37% of schools): over 60% of schools have this IT support located in a specific classroom for the special-need teacher or in a computer laboratory. This represent an obstacle to using the tools as a daily facilitator for learning.

In 22% of schools the number of computers, even when correctly positioned in the classroom, are not adequate to students' needs. In kindergarten, the IT tools to support learning process are different from those used in other educational level, due to the age of pupils: those that use a specific technology to support the pupil with disability are 19.5%.

**FIGURE 1. SCHOOLS WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ADAPTED COMPUTERS STATIONS, BY PLACEMENT OF THE COMPUTERS AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS. S.Y. 2018/2019. Values for 100 schools in the same area**



## Often special-need teachers without specialization

In the Italian school system, the main professional figure supporting students with disability is the special-need teacher, who can play a key role not only in the student's educational path but also in the scholastic inclusion process, realizing individualized interventions strictly related to the specific needs of the single students.

In the 2018/2019 school year, there were almost 173 thousand special-need teachers in Italian schools (MIUR data). At national level the student-teacher ratio is better than that provided by Law 244/2007 (two students to one special-need teacher) with a value of 1.6.

The knowledge of educational technologies by teachers is fundamental for effective use of these tools. In 12% of Italian schools, no special-need teachers have attended a specific training on these matter, in 64% of schools only a few teachers attended courses, while in the remaining cases (24%) all teachers attended at least one course.

## The number of students with special-need teacher in the primary schools was constantly increasing

In the school year 2018/2019, students with disability who attended primary and lower secondary schools were just over 177 thousand i.e. 3.9% of the total.

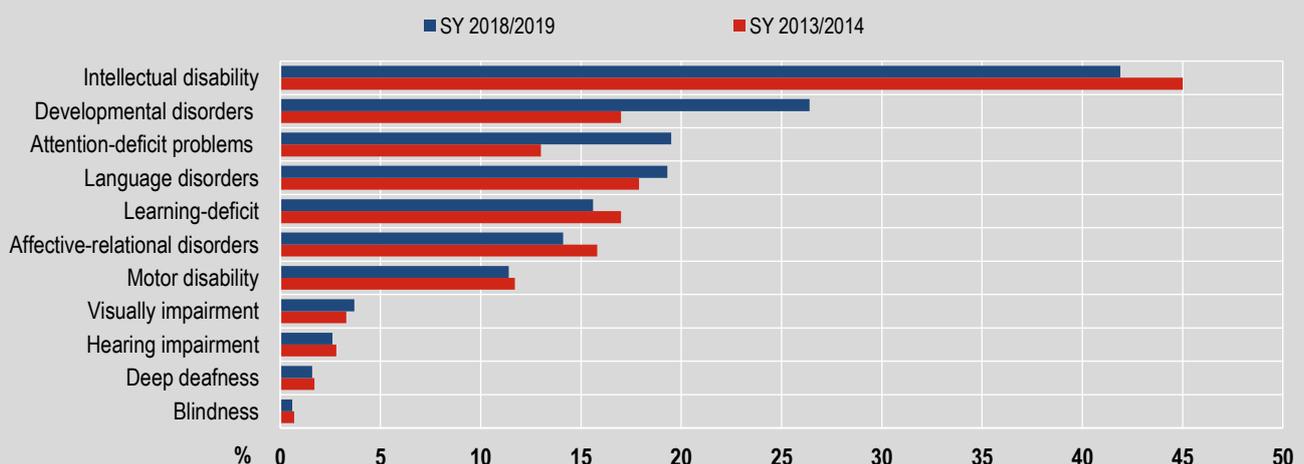
The average age was 8.4 years in primary schools and 12.4 years in lower secondary schools, these values were slightly higher than those of total students of the same educational level (7.9 and 12 respectively) (MIUR data). Students with disability were mainly male (68%), 212 per 100 females.

## The most frequent problem was intellectual disability

The more common problems were intellectual disability (42% of students with disability) and developmental disorders (26.4%) while sensorial problems were less common (8%).

40% of student with disability have more than one problems, this condition is more frequent among those with intellectual disabilities (51% of cases). Most of the students with disabilities have a certification based on the Law n.104 of 1992 (98.4%).

**FIGURE 2. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY IN FIRST CYCLE SCHOOLS BY TYPE OF PROBLEMS AND SCHOOL YEARS.** Values for 100 students with disabilities



## The hours for special-need teacher increase, but with discontinuity in the pupil-teacher relationship/ratio

The average weekly hours with the special-need teachers by student in the first and in the second ISCED educational level was of 14.1 hours. The comparison between the two educational levels showed a greater number of hours in primary school (15.4 hours) than in the lower secondary school (12.3). In the last five years, the amount of average weekly hours has increased by 18% (2.1 hours more per week for both educational level). Although there has been an increase in the number of hours with the special-need teacher, these seems to be not yet fully satisfying: almost 6% of families have appealed to the regional courthouse to increase the number of hours with the special-need teacher.

A further critical issue regards the discontinuity in the relationship between the special-need teacher and the student due to the high shifting of teachers, not only during a specific school year, but also from one school year to the next. These continuous changes prevent the special-need teachers from establishing a productive relationship with the student and from carrying out a wider educational project aimed to reach a full inclusion.

For the 2018/2019, 42.3% of students had a different special-need teacher from the previous school year and 10% of student changed the special-need teacher along the school year.

## Most critical participation in the South of country

A fully scholastic inclusion is also based on the relationship with the group of peers not only from the relational point of view but also from the learning process. For this reason, it would be useful that all the activity with the special-need teacher would take place in the classroom together with the peers.

Students with disability spend most of their time within the class (27.6 hours per week) and carry out teaching activities outside the classroom only for a residual number of hours (2.6 hours per week).

Participation in short educational trips (without overnight stay) organized by the school are quite frequent (92%). When educational trips include overnight stays, participation decreases: 66% of student with disability stay at home. The most frequent reason is the disability itself (22% of pupils), the reason remains the same also for trip without an overnight stay (38% of pupils). 43% of students with disabilities do not take part in the extra-didactic activities. Participation in physical activity is instead very widespread: 94% of student with disability attend.

**FIGURE 3. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE FIRST CYCLE SCHOOLS BY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.** S.Y. 2018-2019, values for 100 students with disabilities

