

Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Socio-pedagogical interventions to support children and families in vulnerable situations
Course Code	51117
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	GSPS-06/A
Language	Italian
Degree Course	Bachelor in Social Work
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	
Lecturers	dr. Diletta Mauri, Diletta.Mauri@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/home/research/competence-centre-social-work-social-pedagogy-social-policy/team-and-body/person/50967
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	Second semester
Course Year/s	3 (L-39 Social Work) 2 (L-19 Social Education)
CP	4
Teaching Hours	30
Lab Hours	0
Individual Study Hours	70
Planned Office Hours	12
Contents Summary	<p>The course provides an overview of educational and social interventions aimed at children and families. These are placed within the current cultures of parenting and childhood, with a focus on the living contexts of families.</p> <p>A central part is devoted to families in a vulnerable situation. The link between social inequalities and rights, the concepts of ill-treatment and 'well-treatment', the promotion of positive parenting and prevention strategies are explored.</p>

	<p>The course also provides basic knowledge on the Italian system of protection and promotion of the welfare of minors and families. The main legal references concerning children's rights are presented (with a specific focus on participation), highlighting the implications for the design of educational and social interventions.</p> <p>Finally, a number of specific interventions are analysed, including: support in the early years of life, home-based education, work in residential communities for minors and accompaniment in autonomy paths.</p>
Course Topics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Situating Educational and Social Interventions within Contemporary Cultures of Parenting and Childhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The "new" sociology of childhood - The family practices approach and the concept of doing family - Intensive parenting (mothering) and parental determinism 2. Educational and Social Interventions with Families in Situations of Vulnerability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The "social advantage loop" and its connection with rights - Family education as a tool to strengthen parenting competencies - The concepts of maltreatment and "well-treatment" - Types of maltreatment according to the World Health Organization (WHO) - Intergenerational cycles of maltreatment and strategies for their interruption 3. Legal and Policy Framework for Educational and Social Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the principles of participation and respect for the views of children and adolescents - Children's rights within the Italian system and implications for the design of educational and social interventions - Key guidelines for practitioners: "Intervention with children and families in situations of vulnerability. Promoting positive parenting", "Guidelines for foster care", "Guidelines for residential care services for minors" 4. The System of Services for Children and Families

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concepts of promotion, prevention, and protection - The bioecological approach to intervention levels: micro, meso, exo, macro - Stakeholders and institutional actors involved - Types of services and intervention tools <p>5. Focus on Selected Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support during the first 1,000 days of life - Home-based educational support - Educational and social work in residential communities for minors - Supporting care leavers in their transition to independence
Keywords	Parenting, childhood, vulnerability, educational interventions, social services
Recommended Prerequisites	Basic knowledge of the role of social educators and social workers in interventions with children and families.
Propaedeutic Courses	
Teaching Format	The course is held in person and includes: a) lectures; b) contributions from professionals and experts by experience; c) interactive activities with the class.
Mandatory Attendance	In accordance with the regulation
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>At the end of the course, students will have acquired theoretical tools to read parenting and childhood in a contextualised way, recognise the link between social inequalities and family vulnerability, and understand the concepts of ill-treatment, "well-treatment" and the promotion of parenting skills. They will know the main legal references and policies useful to orient themselves among the interventions provided by the Italian system of prevention, promotion and protection of the well-being of children and families. They will know how to situate the role of the social educator and social worker within the service system.</p> <p>Ability to apply knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Students will have acquired basic competences to analyse the needs of families and minors, in particular in vulnerable situations, and to identify tools and strategies in the planning of educational and social interventions, in coherence with the Italian system of policies and services.</p>

	<p>Autonomy of judgement The course promotes the development of critical thinking. Students will be able to analyse family dynamics and risk contexts, considering the intersections between individual, relational and social factors.</p> <p>Communication skills Students develop appropriate technical language and effective communication skills to operate in educational and social contexts.</p> <p>Learning skills Through case studies, discussions with experts and interactive classroom activities, students develop independent and reflective learning skills. They will be able to keep critically abreast of regulatory changes, guidelines, good practice and theoretical debates in the educational and social field.</p>
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	
Assessment	<p>Formative assessment: During the course, students will be asked to analyse and present to the class one article from among those identified by the lecturer. After each presentation, the lecturer will provide an individual commentary and invite students to carry out a self-assessment.</p> <p>Summative assessment: This will be carried out by means of a written test focusing on the articles analysed and presented to the class, as well as on the content covered during the course.</p>
Evaluation Criteria	Level of knowledge of the texts and materials presented in class, ability to argue clearly and coherently, capacity for critical reflection on the course content, and appropriate use of technical language.
Required Readings	<p>Milani, P. (2018). Educazione e famiglie. Ricerche e nuove pratiche per la genitorialità. Carocci. (Capitolo 2)</p> <p>Bertotti, T. (2013). Bambini e famiglie in difficoltà: teorie e metodi di intervento per assistenti sociali. Carocci. (Capitoli 4 e 6)</p>

	<p>Zucchermaglio, C., Saglietti, M., & Cerantola, L. (2021). La partecipazione dei bambini e delle bambine come diritto, processo, pratica e forma. Voci, riflessioni ed esperienze dal campo dell'alternative care. <i>Fundamental Rights</i>.</p> <p>Sità, C. (2017). La genitorialità intensiva e le sue implicazioni per la relazione tra genitori e professionisti. <i>Consultori familiari oggi</i>, 25(2), 45-55.</p>
Supplementary Readings	<p>Belotti, V., Mauri, D., & Zullo, F. (2021). Care leavers. Giovani, partecipazione e autonomia nel leaving care italiano.</p> <p>Fargion, S. (2023). Representations of parenting and the neo-liberal discourse: Parents' and professionals' views on child-rearing practices in Italy. <i>Journal of family studies</i>, 29(1), 188-204.</p> <p>Mauri, D. (2024). Constructing the 'zero family': Breaking the intergenerational transmission of maltreatment from the perspective of care-experienced parents. <i>Child Abuse & Neglect</i>, 153, 106855.</p> <p>Morrison, F. (2023). Theoretical grounding on children's participation in research on maltreatment. In M. Roth, R. Alfandari, G. Crous (Eds.) <i>Participatory research on child maltreatment with children and adult survivors: Concepts, ethics, and methods</i> (pp. 13-26). Emerald Publishing Limited.</p> <p>Pandolfi, L., Palomba, F. (2025) <i>Qualità educativa delle comunità per minori. Un percorso di valutazione sul campo</i>. Pensa MultiMedia.</p> <p>Petrella, A., & Milani, P. (2024). <i>L'educativa domiciliare. Metodo, pratiche, strumenti e attività</i>. Erickson.</p> <p>Serbati, S. (2017). "You won't take away my children!" families' participation in child protection. Lessons since a best practice. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i>, 82, 214-221.</p> <p>Sità, C., & Mortari, L. (2023). Rethinking "the family" in foster care in Italy: The perspective of children in care and of foster parents' children. <i>Global Studies of Childhood</i>, 13(4), 358-371.</p> <p>World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, World Bank Group (2018) <i>Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential</i>.</p>
Further Information	
Sustainable Development	No poverty, Peace, justice and strong institutions, Reduced

Goals (SDGs)	inequalities, Good health and well-being
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