



Gruppo di Lavoro
per la Convenzione
sui Diritti dell'Infanzia
e dell'Adolescenza

9. RIGHT TO PLAY AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

A certain resistance to recognise the right to play as the base - together with health and education - of each individual's growing path still exists in our country.

For parents and teachers, play and spare time are still tied up to the concepts of rewards and they are not perceived as a right.

In the world of school the concept of free play as children's natural necessity is still not really considered, children who need, more than indications about what to do, time and spaces and authorization to do. Recreation enters in the school, but always with a purpose, with an educational goal, as a side element, with a limit and with a meaning strongly marked by the adult's authorisation, and only in a contest and in a setting that the adult thinks safe. Too often play is used by teachers and educators as an exchange good, to manage ungovernable classes. A cultural upgrade is needed to lead to not consider the children playing activity as a meaningless action, annoying and potentially dangerous, but as an essential right, naturally connected to the duty of institutions and grown up world, as underlined by the General Note number 17 of the UNO committee, that, moreover, in Italy has not even been translated and distributed.

As already pointed out in the 8th CRC report, a strong contradiction exists between exercising the right to play and affirming rules related to the private, to the property and the "quiet living"; typical grown up rules, thought to handle the spontaneous playing activity and to preserve spaces and times from noise, chaos and mess.

As obstacles and constraints on playing in public places limit autonomy and the possibility to meet new friends, to experiment adventures and to activate growing up processes, during the years

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some Local Administrations - thanks as well to the Cities Friends of Children and to the action of networks, associations and organised groups advocacy - took action in changing rules of Municipality Police and flat complexes, that often forbid playing.

However, the general and local contest is still traditionally linked to the concept of fun as “exception”, frequently with old prohibitions. In relation to the absence of local and national framework regulations about support and promotion of the right to play, a network capable to transmit visions and common projects to share, and in need to repeat the most significant experiences, is still missing.

The world of electronic games, on- and offline, and more generally the virtual world linked to the use of Internet, has become for teenagers and children the true meeting place and relational experience, freed from the adult sight: a place where you can play together even remaining in your own room, and where the experiences take on undefined borders forgetting that, even being a virtual place, it has undeniable repercussions on the true and personal reality of the single.

In this picture some effects are evident, as: the “deprivation” of the public spaces’ play fruition; the “specialization” of playing in “guided” contests and the compression of free playing; the loss of legitimation of the playing activity as “indicator” of welfare and life quality; the constriction of children recreation in enclosed spaces or at home, prevalent place for 98% of minors. Consistently with this picture of carelessness, it is emphasized that the ISTAT warehouse does not consider the survey of habits connected to playing, whereas, instead, similar actions as sport and physical activities are present.

To the lack of a true culture about playing - it is a further example the absence of Practical Playing Techniques subject in the formation curriculum of educators, teachers and childhood operators - is matching the absence of an effective public economic coverage for the Third Sector’s projects that have in their actions’ focus the promotion and the playing practices, as connoted in the article 31 of the Convention of Rights for Childhood and Teenagers.

Thanks to the law 285/ 97, social educational and recreational services have been activated, especially addressed to the very early childhood and have filled the structural public lack of these services, even, if the direction that was meant to promote the perception of minors as real right subjects, through improvement of the ambient fruition, has remained clearly a side issue.

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Services as Toy library - place freely open to play - and Playbus - tool that transforms the urban contest in exchange and meeting opportunities - born with the financial help of the 285, today remain sporadic experiences, exclusively financed by privates. In spite of many public and Third Sector realities have signed the National Chart of Italian Toy libraries, that specify the characteristics and the quality indicators as “public service for playing”, as far as Toy libraries are concerned, a general abuse of the name to mask kindergarten or baby parking, still remains, as it is still missing a local and national transparent and continuous regulation, and university formative curriculum for the Toy librarian position.

The Playbus, instead, is still undervalued in its real potentials , it is more and more used for single animation interventions rather than structured and continuous projects; therefore it is not valorised in its own original meaning as an instrument to rescue, in a ludic key, playgrounds and public spaces and to monitor and support the social texture.

In the same way, either the institutional opportunities dedicated to play - World Play Day, on 28th of May, has been launched by ITLA in 1998 and approved by UNO, and the Childhood and Adolescence Rights Day on 20th of November (as reminded by CRC) - or those organized by the Third Sector, privates and schools, still remain marginal.

Therefore the Group CRC recommends: To the National Guarantor for Childhood and Adolescence, National Observatory for Childhood and Adolescence, National Centre for Documentation and Analysis for Childhood and Adolescence (CNDA) to start up monitoring on playing occasions (good administrative practices, toy libraries, schools, friendly cities ...), adding up playing to the ISTAT indicators (national warehouse) and to update multipurpose research data still at 2012; To the Ministry of Education, University and Research to promote Playing and Ludic Culture through their teaching in the formative curriculum of teachers, educators and animators;

To the Government to translate and release the General Note number 17 about the right to play and to consider that right between the Essential Level of Services, of the article number 117 of the Italian Constitution.

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