# Pedagogy of Early Childhood and Schooling

## Prof. Paola Amarelli

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to offer students the opportunity to reflect and understand the fundamental categories and trends prevailing in the contemporary pedagogical debate, useful for understanding school reality and the world of childhood; furthermore, it aims to highlight the points of contact between the main theories and the actual features of pedagogical research.

In particular, the course will focus on the models that can be used to get a better understanding of schools and child development, in order to allow students to carry out a critical analysis of the cultures, social representations, and the relationships that characterise their life contexts.

**More specifically, the course aims to:**

* identify the actual representations and conditions of childhood;
* recognise the key elements of human development and the educational needs that characterise childhood;
* examine children’s rights;
* analyse some key words of early childhood pedagogy: family and parental duties, educational care and relationship, space, time, and play;
* know the basic dimensions of school pedagogy: the curriculum, educational continuity, educational co-responsibility, the school-family relationship and the educating community;
* know the dimensions of professionalism: observe, plan, document, evaluate;
* to know the modalities of educational communication

**At the end of the course, students will be able to:**

* describe childhood conditions and needs;
* examine children’s rights;
* identify the main features of human development;
* define the key elements of the educational environments that characterise childhood
* develop their knowledge of the fundamental dimensions of early childhood and school pedagogy
* identify new areas of work and educational intervention

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will introduce the target, field of study, key concepts, and operational dimensions of early childhood and school pedagogy, also through the analysis of the theoretical elements presented in the textbooks and in the teaching material indicated in the reading list. Furthermore, the course will explore the different dimensions that characterise the knowledge of childhood (features of evolution, needs, and rights) and the educational environments of early childhood and primary school (goals, methods, and tools), also considering what students have learnt during their internship.

Finally, the course will analyse the pedagogical aspects and perspectives of the so-called *Indicazioni nazionali* (*National instructions*), also in the light of the latest reforms.

***READING LIST***

M. Amadini, A. Bobbio, A.Bondioli, E.Musi*, Itinerari di pedagogia dell’infanzia* Scholé, Brescia (2018)

L. Pati, *Livelli di crescita*, La Scuola, Brescia 2016 (chapters 8-9 excluded)

 Additional materials (articles, essay sections and others) will be indicated or provided in copy by the lecturer and made available on the Blackboard platform.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be based on an interactive teaching method that will include also group works guided by the lecturer, practical exercises, and, sometimes, lectures held by subject matter experts. Some parts of the textbooks indicated in the reading list will be explained in class, also thanks to the group works mentioned above. The active participation in this kind of activities will contribute to the definition of the final mark.

The teaching material used, presented, and produced during the course (also by students) will be made available on Blackboard, on the university website.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

During the final exam, students will be tested on their knowledge of the topics explained in class, and their reasoning and communication skills. In particular, the assessment criteria will include: accuracy of answers, knowledge of the subject, and ability to combine the new skills with pedagogical practice.

The final exam will consist in an oral test (duration: 20-30 minutes), composed of two different phases:

A *first phase*, based on two/three open-ended questions, aimed to test knowledge of the key concepts and theories explained during the course; a *second phase*, based on the analysis of a specific issue or case study, aimed to test the ability to put into practice the theoretical concepts learnt in class.

The answers to the questions of the first phase will be assessed following these criteria: presentation of coherent arguments, ability to express concepts in a clear way, and accuracy of answers. For the second phase, instead, assessment will adopt the following criteria: ability to carry out an accurate analysis of the problem, suggest possible solutions, apply the concepts learnt in class, and find links and connections between general issues and the specific topics presented in the reading list. Also the written assignments submitted to the lecturer during the course will contribute to the definition of the final mark.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course, which is structured taking into account the professional profile of educators and teachers; for this reason, it is constantly updated with the new possibilities introduced by the Legislative decree 65 /2017 that has set an integrated education system for all children from 0 to 6 years.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.