RULES: A CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOL-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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This presentation regards a crucial educational topic for family-school partnership: teaching children rules. Reflections and data have sprung from a qualitative research conducted with a group of Early Childhood Education and Care services directors and teachers, based in Milan, from 2007 to 2009 (supervisor Prof. Mantovani S., University of Milan-Bicocca).

As the psychological literature, scientific and popular, of the last decades has highlighted (Bettelheim 2007, Petter 2002, Schaffer 1993), parents feel a sense of confusion and fragility in defining responsibilities and roles in teaching children rules. As our research gave evidence, this fragmentation and uncertainty create difficulties in establishing an educational pact in the school-family collaboration: families culturally diverse, different habits and ethics, arise doubts and questions in the school context regarding the potential and the limits of the school's influence in educating children and in establishing a collaborative/supportive relationship with families.

Rules and roles, today more than in the past, are not givens, they are to be discussed and shared. This requires to return on basic questions, giving renewed answers: are rules and educational strategies discussed with parents? How? Is it possible? What school rules should parents be asked to respect? What rules should children respect? Which rules should be supported with collaboration from the families? 'Participation' and 'flexibility', typical tools of Italian ECEC services (Mantovani 2007), seem to have become difficult to manage and may need to be rethought in the search for new equilibrium between firmness, in defining spaces and roles, and the ability to negotiate, between participation and educational proposals. The research offers an analysis of teachers and directors representations on family-school partnership regarding rules and teaching children rules, highlighting points of major significance and methodological hints about teachers teaching and research in this field.

Keywords:
Rules; Socializing; Infant Pedagogy; Parenting; ECEC services; Method; Teachers teaching; Research
References:


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