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- *The relationship between parents and teachers.*
- *Learning and emotional development.*
- *Hyperactivity and attention deficit disorders.*
- *A multi-coloured classroom: foreign children at schools.*

Presentation

All children and young people go to school. Sometimes this happens very early: they go to the nursery at eighteen months. Often from the age of three they go to nursery school. Leaving and returning home is a condition that lasts from the age of three to eighteen. It also continues, with attendance at university, which in our country is not associated with students leaving home.

The act of leaving home and returning every day coincides with gaining experience in the world and with learning and acquiring the skills necessary to read and understand it, like those necessary 'to deal with the world' and 'knowing how to function together with others'.

All of this happens at school. Parents know this and ask themselves: "Which school does my son/daughter go to? How does it really function? Who do they spend their days with and how do they spend them?". Apart from the normal questions linked to separation (which has different meanings for different ages) parents manifest expectations and express, at the same time, anxiety, doubts and hopes. When they display evident unease, when parents see the growth of hyperactivity or difficulty in maintaining attention these questions become pressing. While also the school asks: what happens to pupils with their families, what messages do they receive at home?

This has always happened, but today the scenario has become more complex, it has been enriched by decisive new factors. In fact educational models (what does it mean to educate?) are no longer automatically shared by all adults, because models spread by the whole of society and by the media count more than in the past, because the values of parents are no longer formed within a culturally uniform community but rather in very differentiated ways and because Italian society is also experiencing a crisis in the protection of procedures, rules and limits, which are essential components of education.

Also school is no longer the only place where there is access to information and ways of learning. All the human disciplines, both theoretical and practical, are available on the internet and are accessible in a thousand forms, rapidly, at home, at school, everywhere. The games of the past are finishing but everyone says they are still important, while video games accompany those who are growing up, from their earliest years. Play and knowledge go together and information can be manipulated, varied, confused and compared with many means. Are there dangers? Are there opportunities?

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TEACHERS AND PARENTS



The same way of learning (the operation of the human brain) is called into question: organisation of memory, the simultaneous presence of many codes, the coexistence of analogical and logical procedures, the immediate relationship between knowledge produced and used etc. How does all this happen between home and school? And while the paradigm of complexity makes the traditional borders between 'subjects' relative, parents ask themselves: what is really important to know and at what age? And while they see their children's classes coloured by the children who come from all over the world they ask: is this an obstacle or a great opportunity?

In Italy more than elsewhere these questions and uncertainties, instead of being a reason for common adult reflection and of agreement between home and school, become the territories of conflict. Is it possible to avoid them in the name of adult responsibility and how?

This volume is intended to make a first contribution to the exploration of this complex educational landscape. The first chapter provides tools useful for reflection and understanding to favour a new alliance between parents and teachers, with the perspective of a balanced distinction of roles and functions. Then we deal with the relationship between family and school, the challenges of multicultural classes, the link between learning and creativity and the delicate question of so-called 'hyperactive' children.