

# ITALIA -ITALY

## Overview of residential child care

### Journal abstracts

The locked box in the attic: ghosts and memories.

Author: Gatti, Patrizia.

Publication info: *Journal of Child Psychotherapy* 37. 2 (Aug 2011): 147-162.

Abstract: The author discusses the technical difficulties encountered in clinical work with children who have suffered an early trauma, as is often the case for fostered and adopted children. An account of the first five years of psychotherapy with a nine-year-old boy, who was removed from his birth family at an early age, will be elaborated in some detail to explore these issues. Particular difficulties are discussed that relate to maintaining an analytic position while working with highly disturbed object relations. Questions are raised about how to facilitate a therapeutic space within which the trauma is worked but does not become the sole focus of treatment in a destructive way. It is argued that the acknowledgement, sharing and greater understanding of the trauma together with the patient helps to transform traumatic memories or 'ghosts'. When therapy can become a place of change and restitution, this lays the foundation for another kind of experience.

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Community Psychology in Italy: Introduction and Prospects.

Author: Santinello, Massimo; Martini, Elvio Raffaello; Perkins, Douglas D.

Publication info: *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community* 38. 1 (Jan 2010): 1-7.

Abstract: The history of community psychology in Italy is briefly reviewed. The field has developed extensively in universities and applied settings over the past 30 years. This issue presents 5 recent examples from different regions of Italy of preventive and other community psychological intervention studies. They include an evaluation of a program to increase the independent mobility of children walking to and from school, the ecological evaluation of child and adolescent residential care communities, participatory action-research with adolescents in schools and neighborhoods, evaluation of a participatory local health intervention planning process, and the description and evaluation of a collaborative, Internet-based community planning training program.

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Relational Climate and Effectiveness of Residential Care: Adolescent Perspectives.

Author: Palareti, Laura; Berti, Chiara.

Publication info: *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community* 38. 1 (Jan 2010): 26-40.

Abstract: In Italy, the evaluation of residential care is particularly important in view of: (1) the process of deinstitutionalization; (2) the power of the public authorities to devolve the running of services, including residential communities, to private partners. The literature has stressed the importance of involving multiple stakeholders in the design and implementation of evaluative research. This article summarizes a research plan for the evaluation of child and adolescent residential communities based on the theoretical framework of developmental psychopathology and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development. A study is presented on the perception that adolescents in care have of the community's relational climate - analyzed by way of everyday routines and communications with adults -- and of the effects of the intervention. The results corroborate the hypothesis that the relational climate in a community is a good predictor of the efficacy of residential care.

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Focus Groups as an Instrument to Define Evaluation Criteria. The Case of Foster Care.

Author: Moro, Giuseppe; Cassibba, Rosalinda; Costantini, Alessandro.

Publication info: *Evaluation* 13. 3 (Jul 2007): 340-357.

Abstract: This article reports the results of a research project that aimed to identify the criteria upon which a foster care intervention may be considered as having been successful. The aim was to confirm the existence of shared evaluation criteria among the different groups involved in foster care and, moreover, to investigate possible differences in the meaning given to the foster care experience by the different stakeholders. The data collected from six focus groups was analysed in two ways: first, the criteria necessary to evaluate foster care were derived; second, a textual analysis was undertaken to investigate the associations and the frequency of use of some significant terms.

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Foster Care between Reparation and Risk.

Author: Ongari, Barbara; Pompei, Maria Gemma.

Publication info: *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare* 6. 1-2 (Mar 2003): 43-51.

Abstract: In this article, family foster care was analyzed from a psychodynamic perspective. Its reparative value was

highlighted, in so far as the children can experience secure interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being, as well as the risks underlying this complex social situation. In addition to child and family characteristics, the functioning of the foster family and the role of social services, the justice system, and mental health were considered. A case of failure was presented. The importance of concomitant social and psychological support for the children and for their birth parents was stressed. It was concluded that only a close collaboration between the various agents prevented 'institutional maltreatment.'

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**Abandoned children and their transitions to adulthood in nineteenth-century Italy.**

Author: Sigle, Wendy; Kertzer, David I; White, Michael J.

Publication info: *Journal of family history* 25. 3 (Jul 2000): 326-340.

Abstract: Recent work on the large-scale abandonment of European infants has focused on abandonment itself, how the infants were treated, and how many survived infancy. Little is known about what happened to those who survived. The authors focus on what happened to the foundlings of Bologna, Italy, over the course of the nineteenth century, at the point in their lives when foster families were no longer paid to care for them. The evidence from Bologna does not support previous assumptions that their ties to their foster families were weak and that their fate was thus a bleak one.

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**Cultural Images of Children, Parents and Professionals: Italian Interpretations of Home-School Relationships.**

Author: New, Rebecca S.; Mallory, Bruce L.; Mantovani, Susanna.

Publication info: *Early Education and Development* 11. 5 (2000): 597-616.

Abstract: Examined home-school relations in five Italian cities, focusing on the continuity and sub-cultural variations associated with two national guidelines: participatory social management and the initial entry of young children into out-of-home care. Found diverse sociopolitical and theoretical interpretations of effective home-school relationships, leading to structural variations in how each guideline is operationalized and valued.

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**Childhood Mortality and Quality of Care among Abandoned Children in Nineteenth-Century Italy.**

Author: Kertzer, David I; Sigle, Wendy; White, Michael J.

Publication info: *Population Studies* 53. 3 (Nov 1999): 303-315.

Abstract: Extant research provides evidence of the large-scale abandonment of newborn babies in the European past, with staggering rates of infant mortality among the foundlings. For the most part, scholars have agreed with the foundling home officials of the past in assigning much of the blame for this excess mortality to the women who took in the foundlings as wet nurses and subsequently as foster mothers. Here, this view is challenged, based on an examination of the children abandoned at the foundling home of Bologna, Italy, in the 19th century. Four cohorts of foundlings are examined -- those abandoned 1809/20, 1829/30, 1849/50, and 1869/70 (total N = 3,615) -- using records of the home to trace the changing pattern of infant and early childhood mortality. Longitudinal methods are used in examining the life course of these foundlings and the determinants of their mortality.

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**Age Structuring and the Lives of Abandoned Children.**

Author: Kertzer, David I.

Publication info: *History of the Family* 4. 1 (1999): 5-15.

Abstract: Analyzes age structuring in foundling homes in Italian cities and shows how the authorities who founded and ran the homes applied age criteria differently in different places. The age of the child was an important criterion for determining how long authorities rendered payments to foster parents as well as when children were judged to have become economically independent. Variation was considerable. Payments to foster parents differed in size and timing throughout the areas examined. Boys were judged to have become independent earlier than girls. Those who never married often extended their foundling status into old age. The existence of such differing thresholds was linked to relative wealth of institutions and to their location - urban or rural, north or south - and had dramatic consequences for people involved.

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**Growing Up as an Abandoned Child in Nineteenth-Century Italy.**

Author: Kretzer, David I; Koball, Heather; White, Michael J.

Publication info: *History of the Family* 2. 3 (1997): 211-228.

Abstract: Historical evidence from the Bologna (Italy) Foundling Database indicates that huge numbers of newborns were consigned to foundling homes in the 19th century. Attempts to keep these children alive depended heavily on placing them with rural wet nurses and foster families. In general, scholars have portrayed these foster families as having little concern for the welfare of their charges. One consequence of this view is the presumed inability of foster home arrangements for foundlings. Archival records are used to investigate the relationships between foster families and foundlings.

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Creativity Comes Dressed in Everyday Clothes.

Author: Gandini, Lella.

Publication info: Child Care Information Exchange 85 (1992): 26-29.

Abstract: Describes the early childhood system in Reggio Emilia, Italy, in which educators (1) ensure that children live in "a community of well-being"; (2) create a supportive environment; (3) respect individual rhythms; (4) maintain work areas for the visual arts; (5) respond flexibly to children; and (6) foster peer support.

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