



# Inclusive teaching for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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**I**nnovative  
**A**cademic  
**C**ourse on  
**I**ntegrative  
**I**nterventions for  
**C**hildren with  
**A**utism  
**S**pectrum  
**D**isorders

# Erasmus+

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# Innovative Academic Course on Integrative Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

## STUDENT AND TEACHER'S MANUALS

- ▶ Module 1- ASD Assessment
- ▶ Module 2- ASD Specific interventions
- ▶ Module 3- ASD in family
- ▶ Module 4- ASD in school
- ▶ Module 5- ASD Advocacy



# Children with ASD in mainstream classrooms

- ▶ This Module is dedicated to the relationship between autism and the school environment and to the topic of autism measures in schools
- ▶ the family's choice to include the autistic student in a normal school class is not obvious in all countries
- ▶ In Italy, the process to integrate and include students with disabilities in schools has a long history
- ▶ The inclusion of children with disability in schools is an **international standards** and remains a fundamental goal





# CONVENTION on the RIGHTS of PERSONS with DISABILITIES



On 3 May 2008, the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force  
(approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 13, 2006, signed by Italy on March 30, 2007 and ratified by Law No. 18 of March 3, 2009)

It represents the highest expression of PROTECTION and PROMOTION of the rights of people with disabilities and marks the culmination of a process of INCLUSION that began in the second half of the twentieth century.

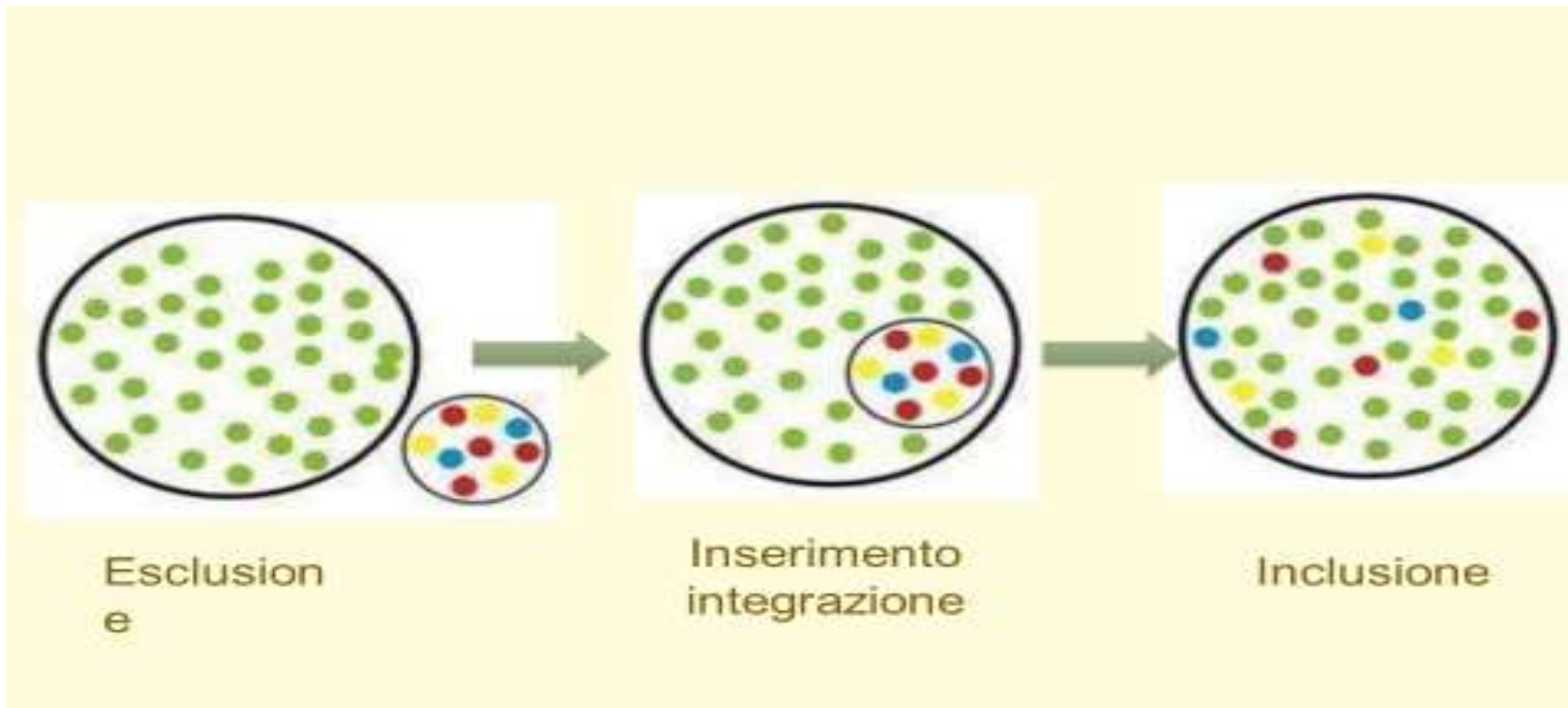


## ARTICLE 24. EDUCATION



- ▶ 2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:
  - ▶ (a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;
  - ▶ (b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others **in the communities in which they live;**
  - ▶ (c) **Reasonable accommodation** of the individual's requirements is provided;
  - ▶ (d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
  - ▶ (e) **Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion**





What does mean **INCLUSION**?

# Semantic change

## THE ICF MODEL

### Biopsychosocial meaning of disability



The disability does not coincide with the subject, but arises from the possibility or not of PARTICIPATION and INCLUSION of the subject in the reference environment.

While in the past a linear relationship was assumed between the state of illness and the conditions of disability, the WHO assumes that a causal relationship between these elements is not always sustainable, but that disability is the expression of a **COMPLEX INTERACTION THAT INCLUDES CONTEXTUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES.**

# Problems and critical issues for students with ASD

The autistic student encounters significant **obstacles** when introduced into a normal class of students:

- The social interaction deficit,
- The low mental functioning, typical of most students with autism,
- The maladaptive behaviors

work against their integration in the school environment.





## A biopsychosocial approach for school inclusion

- ▶ The social inclusion of the student with autism also presupposes an overcoming of the old concept of integration. In the old perspective it was above all **the student who had to adapt to the environment** of the school and not vice versa. The new perspective of social inclusion implies a new attention **to differences**, a differentiated interest of the school for each student, **for everyone and for each one**.
- ▶ In this sense, as Lucio Cottini (2017) has written, the autistic student is not **a guest** of the class, wandering the corridors of the school without being in the classroom with his classmates, and for whom the school can guarantee some intervention specialist. The autistic student becomes a student like all the others and even with them, and **who has the right to stay in class to learn like all his other companions**, albeit with his peculiarities and time to grow. Consequently, all of this also requires an **important adaptation of the curriculum tool**.

# Environment autism-friendly

- ▶ the autistic student needs an environment that is autism-friendly
- ▶ This means one that is able to adapt to the peculiar characteristics of the student with autism without renouncing its objectives of educating and **satisfying the needs of all its students**
- ▶ The inclusion of students with ASD in mainstream classrooms in contact with all teachers and classmates represents **an experience of inestimable value, the purpose of growth and maturation**, the development of **potential** as well as the process of **social inclusion**.
- ▶ School is always the **training ground** for life for each student, including the autistic student



# Inclusive educational contexts

- ▶ GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APY2akeZPLk>
- ▶ Activity predictable,
- ▶ visual teaching,
- ▶ prepare the transitions,
- ▶ environment with specific area with specific goal,
- ▶ natural setting,
- ▶ individualized plans.





## Adapting the curriculum: the **debate** inside or outside the classroom

- ▶ It is important for the autistic student to be in class with his classmates because he thus has the opportunity to learn a great deal about social rules, even when he seemingly has not learned anything about what is being said and discussed by teachers and classmates, as he is completely immersed in his autistic world. **For example, participating in class life has great value as a means of learning social rules and of feeling included in the social environment** of the class and the school for high-level autistic students, in particular those with Asperger's Syndrome.
- ▶ However, there are cases where it **is necessary for the autistic student to work alone in a one-to-one basis with the support teacher outside the classroom**. In other cases, the student can stay in the classroom for a limited time, as much as his ability to tolerate frustration can bear without acting out a problem behavior.
- ▶ In general, however, there is now agreement among clinicians and researchers that the situation in which the autistic student works most of the time alone with the support teacher **is not very encouraging**.



## 2 paths/1 classroom



- ▶ It becomes necessary from the beginning to think of sufficiently **flexible forms of a curriculum prepared for all students, and then make individual adjustments for each student.**
- ▶ On this basis, an open and functional curriculum for all individual students is necessary from the very beginning (Olley, Reeve, 2004). From the beginning, a curriculum that integrates **content and learning acquisition processes can be developed by using different codes - linguistic, visual, and iconic - in order to be generally usable by all students.**

# Cultural participation in a task

- ▶ In these more complex cases, the distinction between **learning a task** and **cultural participation in a task** becomes necessary (Cottini, 2017). In these situations, it is necessary to adapt the class's objectives to those of a low-functioning autistic student, to **think about activities specifically designed for him**, so as to engage him in a learning task, and involve him in the **culture of class knowledge**.
- ▶ With a little imagination and inventiveness, however, multiple ways can be found to **integrate and interconnect the curriculum** points for the students in a typically developing class and for the student with autism.

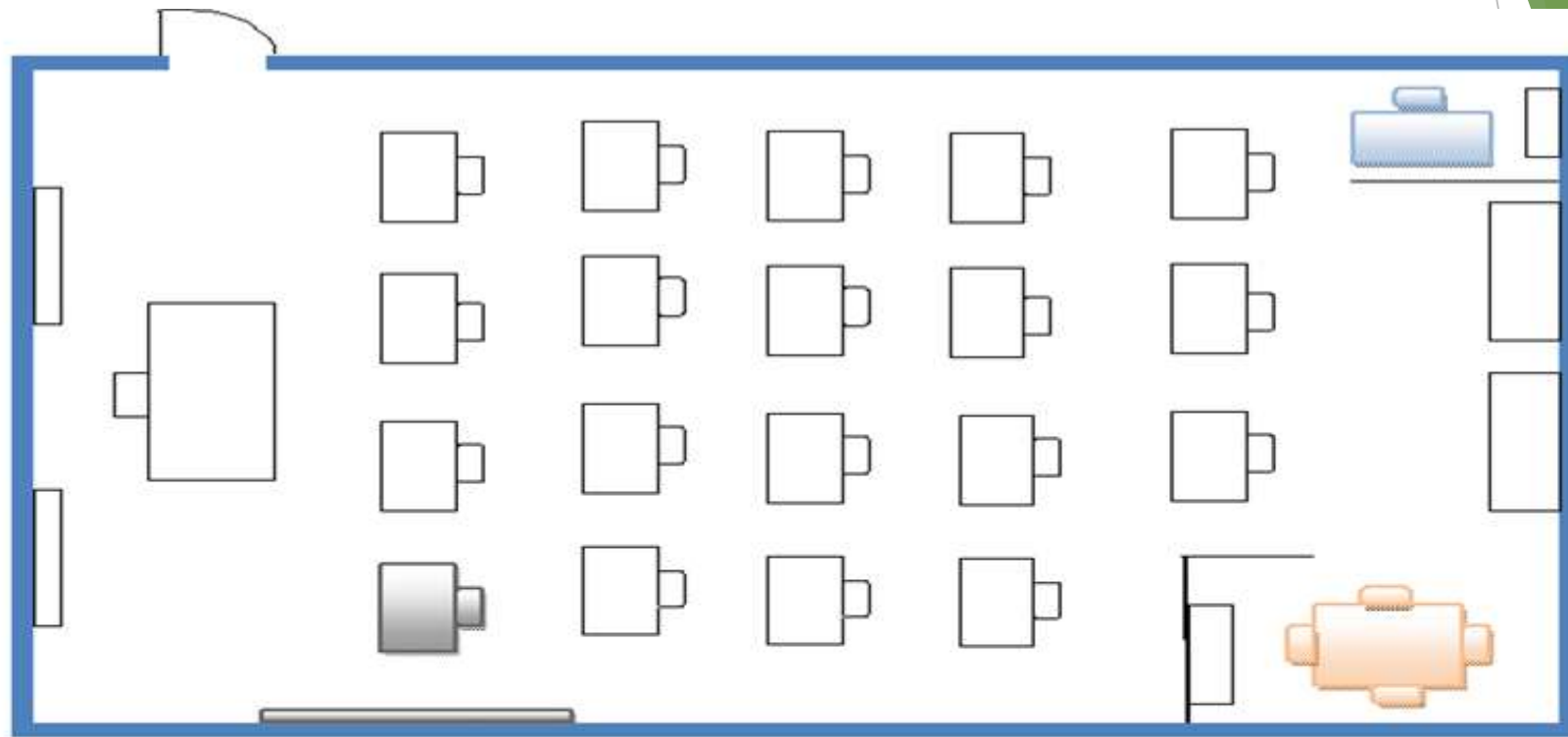


# Spatio-temporal organization at school

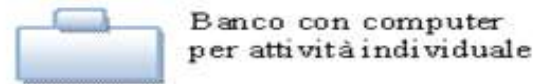


- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bsGrd1RCys>
- ▶ The positioning of the desks, the presence of many students, and the teacher during a lesson, as well as external spaces outside the classroom, the corridors, bathrooms, and gardens can actually cause serious emotional stress in the autistic student.
- ▶ For this reason, **the autism-oriented classroom should minimize distracting stimuli**
- ▶ It is first necessary that the classroom where the autistic student finds himself be a **fairly large classroom**. This is due to the fact that there is thus **an area where the autistic student can work individually**, a space where the student can work on a **"one-to-one" basis with a support teacher** (Cottini, 2011).
- ▶ The ideal condition in the classroom **environment is to have a desk large enough to accommodate the support teacher**; a table placed along wall, for example, with cupboards on either side to hold work material and to store objects.

# Organization of the physical environment (Cottini)



## Legenda



# Spatio-temporal organization at school

- ▶ Specific spaces: e.g. **THE SENSORY ROOM: HELPING STUDENTS WITH AUTISM FOCUS & LEARN**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9j6rQ4rtQY>

- ▶ The classroom may contain a board, hung on the wall above his work area, which indicates the activities that the autistic student performs during the course of the day and the week.
- ▶ It is important that the autistic student also learns to **familiarize** himself with the **rest of the school building**. He should be a **very clear idea of which route leads to the toilet, the school canteen's dining room, or the garden, by also taking advantage of the wall posted**



# Spatio-temporal organization at school

- ▶ the activities should preferably **be repeated daily and weekly** so that the autistic student can become used to them, thus reducing his **anxiety**.
- ▶ In some cases, it is typical to highlight to the autistic **subject how much time** he has available for each activity.



# Educational interventions models for the ASD

## 1 TEACCH IN THE CLASSROOM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkymZzmg4jw>

## 2 TEACCH PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF CLASSROOM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-ZYm4drzCY>

3 TEACCH IN THE CLASSROOM [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmRmj\\_78FAw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmRmj_78FAw)







## The cooperative learning: involvement of peers and **classroom climate**

- ▶ The involvement of peers, similarly, is a contextual strategy for the development of an inclusive class (Mitchell, 2008; Molteni & Guldberg, 2013; Vivanti et al., 2014). The opportunity of involvement in the learning experiences for all students **promotes increase the self-esteem in child with communicative disabilities** (Reichow, Steiner & Volkmar, 2013; Matson, 2014).
- ▶ Similarly, the *Classroom Climate* it allows the implementation of inclusive processes, because a motivating and positive climate, promotes the learning in all students (Mitchell, 2008). The positive classroom climate can to **promote processes of mutual help between the student with ASD and his peers**. The requests for information that can to be expressed during the experience of cooperative learning, can to be involved reciprocal requests for help between the student with ASD and his peers.

# The cooperative learning: the background

- ▶ 60 SECOND-STRATEGY: COOPERATIVE LEARNING ROLES FOR STUDENTS  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zR6rTKPkjgQ>
- ▶ The historical foundations of the educational opportunities promoted by facilitating interaction processes between peers can to be found in the concept of *Laboratory School* (Dewey, 1938), according to which the cooperative socialization among peers represented a key element for social participation and cooperation.
- ▶ The *theory of socio-cognitive conflict of Piaget* presents explicit reference cooperative learning processes, give that the possibility of comparisons between the knowledge of the peers and the possibility of discussion of different points of view represent relevant factors for the cognitive development.



# The cooperative learning in students with ASD

- ▶ in inclusive classes it allows to student with ASD to *make requests* using the symbolic codes, *replacing the maladaptive behaviors with others more adaptive*
- ▶ The sharing of a communicative code with peers in typically developed is a *great communicative opportunity* for the child on the ASD
- ▶ The cooperative learning experiences can indeed allows the *understanding of the social rules*, with positive influences on the development of more adaptive behaviors (Steiner et al., 2013; Cottini & Morganti, 2015).



# KEY ISSUES of Cooperative learning in students with ASD

- ▶ The cooperative learning processes are one of the most educational interventions for the treatment of ASD, and represent **an effective inclusive strategy** for the student.
- ▶ The social interaction promoted by cooperative learning processes can be considered as representative of all educational goals, give its **strong correlation with the decrease of maladaptive behavior**.
- ▶ The observation of behavioral model with typical neurodevelopment **can to increase the competences** of the student with ASD.
- ▶ The inclusion of student with ASD in the regular classes is crucial for the **learning of social interaction rules**, and both for the **development of acceptance** of the child with ASD in the peer's group.





# Multumesc mult!

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