

Estimation of the Effects of the Reggio-Approach Infant-Toddler Centers

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1 Introduction

In this document, we focus on estimating treatment effects of the Reggio-Approach infant-toddler centers. We first provide the background information on infant-toddler centers in Reggio, Parma, and Padova over time. We also discuss types of infant-toddler centers attended by respondents in our data.

2 Background

2.1 Evolution of Infant-Toddler Centers in Italy

The Italian child care system is divided in infant-toddler centers (Asilo) for children aged 0-3, and preschool (materna) for children aged 3-6. Infant-toddler centers are provided mainly by the municipalities and private institutions in more limited supply than preschools. While the number of preschools for ages 3-6 increased rapidly over the years, the number of infant-toddler centers remained very low.

Only under the 2002 Budget (Law N. 448 dated 2001/12/28) infant-toddler centers were defined as services able to improve the education and the socialization of children; in some regions, like Toscana, Emilia Romagna and Liguria, new legislation was proposed in

which infant-toddler centers were considered “educational” and not merely an instrument for reconciling family and work, or to support the disadvantaged. The 2002 Budget (and the subsequent 2003 and 2004 Budgets) foresaw the transfer of funds from the State to the regional authorities for the extension and the improvement of the existing infant-toddler centers throughout the country, above all in view of the Lisbon Objectives. The European Union began to declare the importance of supplying accessible child care for ages 0-3 as policy to encourage female employment in 1992 and in 2002, during the Barcelona summit, set the objective (to be reached by 2010) at 33% of all children under the age of three. It is important to emphasize that the European Commission not only introduced this quantitative target on the availability of infant-toddler centers, but also produced successive documents emphasizing the qualitative aspects: infant-toddler centers should contribute to the emotional, social, and cognitive development of the child.

2.2 Reggio Approach Infant-Toddler Centers

The Reggio Approach infant-toddler centers are the oldest childcare system in Italy. It started in 1971 with the opening of the first municipal infant-toddler center in Reggio Emilia. Municipal infant-toddler centers in Parma and Padova instead started after the 1971 National Law. **(YKK: The exact information on the history of the municipal infant-toddler centers needs to be found.)**

3 Data

Figure 1: Type of Infant-Toddler Center Attended, by City and Cohort

