

## **Editoriale / Editorial**

### **Sport & Inclusione**

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Over time, the changes in life and consumption styles of families, together with the access to sports practice of the weaker social groups such as old people, disabled, children, poor, etc., have given start to a real evolution of the meaning of sport that increasingly benefits the educational, inclusive and social value, downgrading the consideration of the competitive sports performance. In this perspective, starting with what a person is able to give or take, regardless of his physical or mental differences with others, sports encourages the consideration he has about himself and his existence, in full agreement with the assumption of inclusion.

The social and educational dimension of sports movement is now well-established and promoted internationally in support of integration and inclusion phenomena, and is matched with a reconsideration of the concept of health that leads to understand sport as a plurality of practices that help configuring it as an educational strategy in the way the subject should live his leisure time.

At the level of international organizations, there are many declarations and initiatives that recognize and disseminate the educational value of the so-called “sport for all”.

Among these, we consider it important to mention the European Year of Education through Sport of 2004, established by Decision 2003/291/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of February 6, 2003. The reasons for this initiative recall the educational potential that sport can play in relation to the growth and development of individuals and to the development of civil society, also by promoting the social inclusion of marginal groups.

“Sport for all” requires a concept of sports activity as an activity carried out by the subject and based on a high maturity level of the motor functioning. The motor skills functioning, like all the other types of functioning, can manifest itself in ways that show its development and improvement, from the forms developed in childhood up to those own of the specialist sports gesture, aiming at its highest possible development made possible by the individual conditions. In this respect, the education to sport represents a path that unfolds at different levels, from the initial motor activity to the initiation to sport and its specialist performance, on a continuum that allows everyone, without any kind of bias and distinction, to undertake it according to the maturity of his motor functioning.

If promoting a “sport for all” is rooted in a concept of sport overcoming that purely professional- competitive one, the sports practice for people with disabilities, or any other form of physical, psychic, social or economic “deficit” needs to be part of a paradigm that lays the foundations for the recognition of their identity and social inclusion.

Therefore, in line with the evolution of the international debate on this subject, it is about grasping the elements that re-orient this operation towards horizons of normalization in the necessary special normality perspective, which is at the basis of the educational and inclusion processes, throughout these subjects’ lives.

The human being acts according to a thought, an intention, and his action is expressed through intelligent behaviors of adaptation to daily life, work, sports and leisure time situations. More specifically, sport can satisfy some human needs in productive ways, which are related

to the game experience, to the movement, to the competitive spirit and to the group and team life. Physical activity is certainly a fundamental tool for improving the residual potentialities in all the degrees of disability and disadvantaged “situations”, or in situations characterized by a form of “diversity”.

Moreover, from the early years of age, those who perform regular physical activity, from group or individual sports up to simple physical-motor activities or outdoor games, in fact, show a greater confidence in their own abilities, develop greater self-esteem, establish social relationships easier, tolerate more stress, and are less inclined to disorders such as anxiety and depression, stimulating automatically inclusive processes. Other studies have shown that the constant practice of sports or motor activity has beneficial effects on several functions that have an impact on both the inclusive, and especially on the personal and relational sphere.

Not less important, especially for the current generation of young people, are the effects generated in the maintenance of mental health and in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, hypertensive crisis, already present in children and often related to overweight/obesity conditions affecting children.

The sport activity for the disabled person, or for who find himself in situations of physical, economic or social disadvantage, is the exaltation of his abilities (albeit residual) and of what he does, in a world that always reminds him of what he cannot be and what he has not available. Aiming at inclusiveness means allowing all those who approach sports and motor practice to achieve a basic level of technical skills, to feel pleasure in the commitment and efforts generated and to be not excluded for being “less adapted”. In this sense, the initiation to motor and/or sports practice for individuals with mental, economic, social, and other types of disabilities and/or problems, is intended to promote their social integration, inclusion, and self-esteem, prevent the risk of chronicdegenerative disease and improve their life quality.

What we have analyzed highlights the importance of promoting motor sports in the school context too, at any level, and of pursuing the inclusive goal for those who are characterized by the implied or expressed request for special educational needs (SEN).

The analysis and the study about the relationships between the sports and motor activity and the possibility to develop inclusive, educational and training processes represent the main research topics of this issue.