



The education system and the provision of services for children must take these processes on board and reconsider the way schooling is delivered and managed.

Milan City Council is currently exploring the many facets of education and training for child service providers via a study aiming to define guidelines to shape an educational offering that can accommodate today's social and economic trends.

The **Progetto Maggio 2013** (May 2013 Project) is in fact a special initiative designed to foster and encourage a shared cultural debate amongst professionals, teachers, families, experts and the local population as a whole, on matters relating to Child Educational Services in Milan.

The project ultimately hopes to create a new "Educational manifesto". This document will lay down new guidelines for the Council's educational services, based on its awareness of the changed living conditions of the local population.

The educational model that child services must relate to needs to be amended to accommodate the changed working conditions of parents, especially working mothers: the utmost flexibility is required to satisfactorily reconcile work and home life. The city also has an increasing population of children with parents from countries outside of Italy (20%).

The main focus of the educational offering can be summarised in the following points:



1. Children: a blessing and a responsibility for everyone



2. The public and private dimension of Child Services

3. Listening and engagement



4. Children and the city around them

5. Children with disabilities



6. The pace of children versus the pace of the city

7. Families in the forefront

8. Children, regardless

9. Education and training professionals

## The Children's House

How can a greater awareness of the physical environment help children to learn more effectively?

Cognitive processes are stimulated by multi-sensory experiences. An "Ecology of the senses" encourages observation based on numerous perceptive phenomena – not only sight, but also taste and smell. In other words, the whole body becomes a receptor of stimuli that the child automatically processes.

Enhanced sensitivity towards the concepts of landscape and environment is reshaping the foundations of the new design paradigm, and inevitably generating fallout on the quality of space and the materials that fill it.

Stating that a certain architecture "belongs" somewhere also means embedding certain values into the landscape: be they darkness and light, sounds and silence, scented breezes and essences, heat and cold, topography and geology, culture and history. The approach goes far beyond the actual constructions, but involves space in general, from intimate home interiors to large public places.

More specifically, educational space demands the greatest attention towards choosing and defining materials, from the properties of the ground below it to those of the light and sound it catches.

There comes a sharper focus on the many ways in which children experience and move through space. For example, the ground reacts to the heaviness or lightness of footsteps, whether running or walking, but always maintaining physical contact with movement. Light also sets the pace of daily activities, and is affected by the spatial and physical properties of space.