



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

DIPARTIMENTO PER LE POLITICHE DELLA FAMIGLIA

Contribution of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department for Family Policies – International Year of the Family

Many are the measures recently adopted by Italy to improve the wellbeing of all children and their family and support the birth policy in Italy. Among the main ones, adopted through the 2020 Budget Law, it is particularly worth mentioning the:

- **Fund for the Universal Allowance and Family Services**, provided for by the 2020 Budget Law (Law No. 160 of 27 December 2019), which is aimed at implementing the interventions in support of and for the enhancement of the family, and contributing to the reorganization of policies in support of families with children;
- **Bonus at Birth (the so-called *Mamma Domani*)**, which is a structural measure amounting to 800 euros, which is granted by INPS¹ as a single payment, following pregnancy, adoption or foster care;
- **Nativity Allowance (*Bonus Bebè*)**, which is a monthly family allowance for each child born, adopted or in pre-adoptive foster care as from 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020. The allowance amounts to respectively to 80, 120, and 160 euros (according to the family's ISEE²) and is provided for 12 months to the child's family, with a 20% increase for each child following the first;
- **Mandatory paternity leave**, which was extended from 5 to 7 days.

Furthermore, with a view to economically supporting families, in March 2020, **the new Family Card** was launched and can be accessed through the specific online platform (<https://www.cartafamiglia.gov.it/cartafamiglia/>). The Family Card allows access to both discounts for the purchase of goods or services and tariff reductions, granted by public or private entities participating in the initiative, for households with three children up to 26 years of age.

¹The National Social Welfare Institution

²Equivalent Economic Situation Indicator

The Department for Family Policies is also currently carrying out a project entitled "*La rete deicentri e deiserviziintegrati per le famiglie*"(Network of centers and integrated services for families) funded under the European Social Fund national Operational Program on Inclusion 2014-2020. The project intends to promote the dissemination and strengthening of Family Centers in Italy, through a harmonious and homogenous approach, with a view to ensuring the same high quality standards throughout the country. This will be further achieved through the experimentation of integrated initiatives for families, with particular reference to families with multiple problems. Among the beneficiaries of the project also families with children witnessing violence and (foster) families of children orphaned by domestic crimes are included. The project will last until 2023 and has a total allocation of about 15 million euros.

As far as the education of children is concerned, through the 2020 Budget Law a **new investment fund for the financing of actions for the securing, restoration, requalification or building of nursery schools** all over the national territory. The amount that will be allocated is equal to 300 million euros for the period 2021-2023.

Furthermore, with a view to supporting families in guaranteeing education starting from their children's early childhood, the abovementioned law established the provision of an annual contribution amounting respectively to 1.500, 2.500, and 3.000 euros (according to the family's ISEE) for the payment of nursery school fees. The bonus (so-called **Nursery Voucher**) is also granted to families for the introduction of forms of home support for children affected by serious chronic diseases.

Moreover, in December 2018, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department for Family Policies signed a **3-year Collaboration Agreement** with the Italian National Statistics Office (ISTAT) and the Ca' Foscari University in Venice aimed at producing, disseminating and analyzing statistical data relating to the early childhood education services existing in Italy, for a total amount of over 400,000 euros. In particular, the implementation of the Agreement is contributing to the collection of quantitative data, the definition of a system of indicators, the production of specific reports, the collection and analysis of the actions taken on the topic at the regional and provincial levels, the increased knowledge on the local governance of social and educational policies, and the identification of best practices.

Among the measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children and protect its victims, the Department for Family Policies' *114 EmergenzaInfanzia* service (**114 - Children Emergency Number**) is particularly worth mentioning. This is an emergency helpline which is active 24 hours a day and can be called free of charge from all over the country by anyone willing to report discomfort or dangerous situations involving children and adolescents.

From the **awareness-raising perspective**, the Department is currently developing a specific institutional communication campaign on cyberbullying.

As for a specific form of violence against children, namely child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, Law No. 172/2012 ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse introduced several amendments in the Italian Criminal Code expanding the notion of child pornography and including also virtual images.

The Italian Government's action to prevent and combat all forms of child abuse and exploitation is complemented by the **Observatory for the Fight against Paedophilia and Child Pornography**, a strategic body established within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Family Policies, with the aim of studying and monitoring the phenomenon. The Observatory, which is chaired by the Head of the Department for Family Policies, is also in charge of the elaboration of the National Plan for the Prevention and Fight against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. Among its institutional tasks, the Observatory also includes **a specific database** aimed at collecting information to monitor the phenomenon. In particular, the database provides updated information coming from different sources such as the National Statistics Institute, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice.

Furthermore, in November 2019, the Department published a **Public Call for Proposals for the funding of projects for the protection and support of children victims of abuse and sexual exploitation**. The total amount allocated for the Call is 5 million euros and its strategic objectives are to: 1) prevent peer violence, also perpetrated through the use of new technologies; 2) support parents and families of children who are victims of violence or sexual abuse; 3) prevent and combat child sexual exploitation; 4) prevent, protect and support victims of violence and abuse in world of sport.

The Department for Family Policies has also participated in the preparation of the draft **Regulation of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on the supporting measures for children orphaned by domestic crimes and gender-based crimes**, as well as for their foster families. The draft is currently being examined by the Parliament and includes measures to support their entry in the labour market; the provision of scholarships; the coverage of medical and assistance expenses; the provision of orientation and professional training; as well as their (free or partially free) attendance to educational institutions.

MEASURES FOR FAMILIES AND OLDER PEOPLE TAKEN BY ITALY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

Extraordinary leave for parents and babysitting bonus

As a consequence of the spread of the Covid-19 virus all over the country and considering the subsequent temporary suspension of the provision of child education services and teaching activities in all Italian schools, art. 23 of Decree Law No. 18 of 17 March 2020 (the so-called *Cura Italia* Decree) introduced an extraordinary leave and bonus for parents, with the aim of supporting them during the period of temporary closure of school activities. Indeed, starting from 5 March 2020, parents working in the private sector with children up to 12 years of age have access to a specific 15-day leave covering 50% of the salary. The leave can be enjoyed by both parents alternatively and only if no other income support measures apply for the family members.

Age limits do not apply to children with serious disability certified under Law No. 104/1992.

Furthermore, starting from 17 March 2020, as an alternative to the Extraordinary leave, private sector working parents can choose to receive a specific bonus for the purchase of babysitting services amounting to 600 euros. For parents working in the public and private accredited health sector, as well as for the police and the defense personnel employed with anti-Covid tasks, the babysitting voucher is increased to totally 1,000 euros.

The above mentioned measures can be requested for also by foster parents.

Extension of paid leaves for people assisting persons with disabilities

Among the numerous measures taken to support families during the Covid emergency, the abovementioned Decree Law has increased the already existing monthly paid leave for working people assisting a person or relative with disability (pursuant to Law No. 104/1992) from 3 to 15 days for March and April 2020.

Family Card

On 18 March 2020, the new Family Card was launched by the Department for Family Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The Card allows families with 3 children under 26 years of age to access discounts and price reductions on goods and services offered by the companies participating in the initiative and listed in the online portal specifically set up by the Department (<https://www.cartafamiglia.gov.it/cartafamiglia/>). With the entry into force of Decree Law No.9 of 2 March 2020, the Family Card has been extended to all families with one child living in the Italian territory, with a view to providing additional support to families during the current virus crisis.

Experts' groups on family/children and Covid

Within the framework of the activities carried out by the national Observatory for Childhood and Adolescence (established within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Family Policies), on 8 April 2020 the proposal was made to establish a specific Working Group of experts for the assessment of the current health emergency's impact on children and the identification of actions and strategies on the topic to be proposed to the Government.

Also within the framework of the National Observatory on Family, a special experts' Working Group is being established with a view to assessing the impact of Covid emergency on demography and family choices. The start of the Working Group's activities will be announced on 28 April 2020 during the presentation of a survey carried out by the Toniolo Institute on the effects of the pandemic on youth's change of habits and life projects.

Anti-Wastage donations

With the aim of contributing to overcome the loneliness experienced by hospitalized children and elderly people, as well as by children and their families staying home in compliance with the lockdown measures currently in force in Italy, and with a view to providing people with more educational and cultural opportunities while in the hospitals and at home, the Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family called upon the main IT and toy-selling companies operating in Italy to donate them electronic, IT, educational and play materials (toys, personal computers, tablets, e-readers, etc.) in line with the anti-wastage provisions extended by art. 31 of Decree Law No. 9 of 2 March 2020.

The “#CiStoDentro” (#IAmIn) initiative

The “#CiStoDentro” (#IAmIn) project is the new initiative launched by the Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family to provide all parents with a tool for experimenting new ways to play with their children at home during the current lockdown. The initiative is available on the website of the Department for Family Policies (<http://famiglia.governo.it/ci-sto-dentro/>) and includes several sections, such as 1) information on Coronavirus; 2) the possibility to send a letter to the Minister; 3) pieces of advice on new games to be played at home; 3) suggestions on books to read; and 4) a photo gallery.

Toll-free number for older people

Upon request of the Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family and in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department of Civil Protection, a specific toll-free number providing psychological support for the most vulnerable people (especially older people) in the Covid emergency situation is currently in the process of being activated.

“Educhiamo” (Let’s Educate) Call for Proposals

The Department for Family Policies is elaborating a public Call for proposals for the financing of non-formal and informal education projects for the empowerment of children and youth, with a view to allowing them to acquire knowledge and abilities that will contribute to the development of their potential as active and responsible citizens and promote their commitment towards their society, while respecting differences. The Call will be aimed at promoting such activities to accelerate the recovery of the society after the end of the coronavirus global emergency, in collaboration with civil society organizations and local bodies. The total amount that will be allocated should be 30 million euros and will fund projects on children’s and youth’s empowerment, intercultural exchange, intergenerational dialogue, non-discrimination and equality, inclusion of disadvantaged people and persons with disabilities, promotion of healthy lifestyles among children and youth, environmental protection and sustainable development, appreciation of local cultural heritage and respectful use of social media.

“Giochiamo” (Let’s play) Call for Proposals

This initiative will provide financings for projects envisaging play activities for children aimed at finding alternative and creative solutions for them to enjoy their rights to rest, free time, recreational, cultural and artistic activities during Stage 2 of the Covid emergency. The total amount allocated for the Call will be equal to 5 million euros. The abovementioned solutions could envisage, inter alia, the carrying out of outdoor play activities for children under adults’ supervision, as well as online and offline child-friendly cultural and artistic activities, all in line with the social distancing protocols. The funded actions will also be aimed at supporting children and their families whose vulnerable conditions have worsened after the Covid outbreak, such as families with disabled children and families living in economic and educational poverty or in social marginalization.

Joint letter to EU Commissioner Schmit

A joint letter signed by the Italian Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family, Prof. Elena Bonetti, the French Secretary of State for Child Protection, Mr. Adrien Taquet, and the German State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Ms. Juliane Seifert, will be sent to the European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit over the next days. The initiative is aimed at avoiding that the condition of children living in poverty and social exclusion in the EU is further worsened by the global health emergency the Union is facing and that will have heavy economic and social consequences especially on children and youth. The letter underlines the importance of a stronger, prompt, and coordinated response of the European Commission and the EU Member States for combating child poverty, with a view to ensuring the most vulnerable children the best possible growth, including through economic support measures such as the Child Guarantee for vulnerable children.