

Giuseppina Pizzigoni's 20th Century Pedagogy of the Kindergarten

Giuseppina Pizzigoni's 20th Century Pedagogy of the Kindergarten

By

Sandra Chistolini

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



Giuseppina Pizzigoni's 20th Century Pedagogy of the Kindergarten

By Sandra Chistolini

This book first published 2022

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2022 by Sandra Chistolini

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-8714-2

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-8714-4

Cover designed by: Elena Pellegrini

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	viii
A commitment, a promise, an appeal	
Introduction	1
Pedagogy of a school created by women	
1. A teacher and her school	1
2. Reasons for the study	2
3. Methodological aspects	3
4. Distinguishing features of the research	4
5. An immense patrimony	4
6. Documents from the present	5
My kindergarten by Giuseppina Pizzigoni	7
1. Fundamental guidelines	7
2. Programme	8
3. General working hours	12
4. Explanatory notes to the programme	14
Part one: The Pizzigoni Kindergarten, history of the school and pedagogical theory	
Chapter 1	22
Maria Montessori and Giuseppina Pizzigoni, pioneers in the scholastic renewal of a century	
1. University chairs of pedagogy	22
2. New pedagogy founded by women	23
3. The female side of science	26
4. From method to school	27
5. Critical issue at the basis of the new school	28
6. Comparative perspective in the renewal plan	30
7. Social resonance and historic-cultural continuity of pedagogy	31

Chapter 2	33
The spirit of the <i>Rinnovata</i> in the Europe of education	
1. Should the <i>Rinnovata</i> School be considered in the European pedagogical scenario?	33
2. An object from a museum or a constantly new school?	37
3. Is Pizzigoni's idea of elementary school similar to Pestalozzi's idea of elementary education?	38
4. A significant school	41

Part two: Initial conceptualisation of the school and critical notes of the Twentieth Century

Chapter 3	46
Pedagogical issues and the concept of respect for the child	
1. Pedagogical intuitions between continuity and transformation.....	46
2. Renewal as a permanent school method	48
3. The value of childhood	49
4. Overturn the method	52
5. Ethical basis of the concept of child development.....	53
Chapter 4	56
Observation and experimentation	
1. Educational demand of society	56
2. Pedagogy of the school	58
3. Children as their own teachers	60
4. Educate to the collaboration among children of various ages.....	62
Chapter 5	64
Education courses for the Pizzigoni method	
1. Education of the in-service teacher	64
2. A living memory.....	67
3. Subjects-objectives of the education process.....	70
4. Aptitude for teaching and tools of detection	74

Part three: Educate at the *Rinnovata*

Chapter 6	82
A school of human and social education	
1. Experience without conditioning	82
2. Aims and principles of the common pre-school.....	83
3. Presentation of the special school to parents.....	85

4. Common pre-school and special school.....	87
5. Meanings of good and bad	89
Chapter 7	90
Organisation of the teachers and empirical study of the child	
1. Work plan, final report and annual programming.....	90
2. Ways of recognising the progress in learning	92
3. A school without labels.....	111
4. Criticism of the experimental method, starting from the divine concept	113
5. Scientific nature that begins with the <i>Rinnovata</i>	114
 Part four: Testimonies on implementing the Pizzigoni method	
Chapter 8	118
Narrations and interpretations	
1. Discovery of Giuseppina Pizzigoni.....	118
2. My experience at the <i>Rinnovata</i>	121
3. <i>A una tosa cara e capriziosa</i> (A dear, capricious girl).....	132
4. Experimental method and training the teacher.....	137
5. Ups and downs of 'Opera Pizzigoni'	142
Chapter 9	150
Brief autobiographies	
1. Insight, imagination and creativity.....	150
2. The rebirth of artistic subjectivity in school.....	157
3. Intriguing simplicity.....	163
4. Belief in professional coherence	168
5. Cooperation of the parents and equipped spaces	176
Contents and representations of educational activities	184
Bibliography	211

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A COMMITMENT, A PROMISE, AN APPEAL

If we had just ten percent of the intellectual strength and tireless passion for the school of Giuseppina Pizzigoni, we could not, without a shadow of a doubt, allow the material about the kindergarten to be lost, the school that originated at the Rinnovata in Milan, and has been enriched over time through great dedication.

Driven by this thought, the study being presented here was conducted; it is evidence of an initial commitment of a critical recomposition of being in the school that goes beyond the model, with unique, unmistakable coordinates that never appear to be the same in their temporal realisation.

The call to research is a promise to continue in the undertaking and holds an appeal to duly consider this major, vast documentation, a source of theoretical development and introduction to scholastic practice.

The copyrights of this volume are earmarked for the cataloguing of the material gathered and preserved by Sara Bertuzzi, the spiritual heir of the Rinnovata Kindergarten. It is deemed opportune to raise the interest of Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Italy to which financings for the research in progress have been allocated for several years now, as well as the Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, Office for the Architectural Heritage and Landscape of Milan, the Region of Lombardy and the Province and Municipality of Milan, to support the initiative with concrete actions of acknowledgement and dissemination, as well as scientific, pedagogical, cultural, social and political enhancement of the Pizzigoni school. Profound thanks to the ‘Opera Pizzigoni’ and its President, Flavia Maddalena, for having made it possible to consult the archives of the Rinnovata, to the head teacher, Sara Bertuzzi, who allowed us to view so many documents and who clarified their origins, also by supplying an unpublished report by Pierina Boranga, and to the teachers Graziella Drudi, Enrica Gibillini, Chiara Oliani, Marina Salvadori, Paola Tansini, Graziella Vignati, for having recalled those meanings of educating that emerge as fundamental reasons for working in the school, read in continuity with general existential choices.

INTRODUCTION

PEDAGOGY OF A SCHOOL CREATED BY WOMEN

1. A teacher and her school

The purpose of this study on the kindergarten of Pizzigoni, starting from its conception in 1927 until the most recent achievements of headteachers and educators, is to show how a pedagogical idea can survive over time and be creatively developed, without being the imitation of a model, but, rather, propose a permanent renewal of education and teaching.

Many books, articles and reviews have been written about Pizzigoni; conferences and seminars have been carried out; teachers' education courses have been organised; her pedagogical method has been discussed, criticised, buried and retrieved. Ups and downs have made the teacher, headmistress and educator the object of praise and criticism. We do not wish so much to raise this discussion, although interesting, and taken up again here and there in the book, as much as to say that one woman knew how to oppose the general trend in school; remaining in the school, she renewed the idea and practice of teaching, laid the foundations for changes that characterised primary education in the 20th century, travelled round a Europe that was rising to the new era, read, studied and reformulated the same pedagogy that was desiccated and suffocated her and from which she had to free herself in order to free childhood.

The lifeless image of pedagogy risks resurfacing, when one moves away from the deeply rooted human need to offer better learning conditions, to everyone and for everyone. This is an ancient principle that Comenio, as every teacher, reminded us to pursue.

Pizzigoni was a woman who, together with other women, viscerally felt the need of children to grow in the world, create the world and enter into the cosmic project of regeneration of the spirit.

The child, who wants to know and proclaim their desire to be present in the drawing of a humanity on a never-ending journey, is heard very attentively and with a creative intuition that fosters and does not constrict.

2. Reasons for the study

To orient the study towards kindergarten, as Pizzigoni called it, replies to the retrieval of an educational process that had its roots in the thinking of the Lombardy teacher and that lasted over time, being enriched and expanded significantly for the scholar of pedagogy.

The kindergarten was started up to meet a social need of the city of Milan that was undergoing the disruptive processes of urbanisation, industrialisation, migration and emancipation that bore the inevitable consequences of redefining family structures, work, friendships, community and political structures. Southern Italy moved towards the North and the North watched Europe and America, as two goals of scientific and technological progress. The consequences on economic and social structures produced a previously unknown need for education and, more and more, the school could not be considered a place separated from society. The school was intended for society and, as such, its task was to remedy the deficiencies that were building up in it.

The impossibility of the mother to stay close to her child during its early years was, for Pizzigoni, a social factor that inspired the offer of a school, a kindergarten, precisely, that would educate children with that devotion and love that they were unable to receive at home. According to this consideration, the working woman was probably more a sign of necessity than a form of emancipation. The economic situation of the family and level of culture were deeply interrelated and exercised a reciprocal influence: a well-to-do family could have their children study without depriving of them of the daily care of their mother, since their father's salary was sufficient to support everyone; a middle-class family began to have economic problems and nurtured hopes of social mobility, to the point that the woman of the house going to work gave everyone the chance for social ascent; a family of the urban proletariat spent most of their day in a factory and in workplaces, or seeking employment; therefore, handing the child over to the kindergarten was certainly a way to avoid abandonment and the negligence of childhood.

Pizzigoni talked about these situations frequently and her human involvement is understood, together with her great concern about school.

It should be noted how, today, among the very young mothers, we see a return to the direct care of their children, perhaps by organising shifts with their father, when economic conditions allow for it; admission to the nursery school and kindergarten is willingly deferred. Let us not overlook the emergence of so-called *home-schooling*, for example, that is currently expanding, being organised and performed by the mother, even throughout

primary school.

3. Methodological aspects

We also intended to emphasise the tenacity of the Pizzigoni method in the renewal, thanks to teachers, who have been intrigued by it, hereby giving body and substance to the original intuition.

It is not rare for teachers to talk about school. What is rare is listening to and divulging what they say. One of the duties of pedagogy is to give voice to those teachers, who have worked long hours, even under duress, at school, struggling to apply the principles they believe in, and to feel an inner growth from the innovation. So we went searching for teachers, who taught according to the Pizzigoni method, and attempted to understand what stimulated them for so many years and to not lose their testimonies.

The result is an initial study, being proposed here, which, although inevitably limited, constitutes the attempt of academic pedagogy to proceed jointly with scholastic pedagogy, remaining aware of the fact that there cannot be a principle that does not find reasons for its universality in the practice of it.

As regards methodology, the choice made was to start from historic documents to place the reader face to face with the original text written in 1929 by the author, and then compare the data acquired from the past with the data narrated in the present, after a gap of eighty years (1929-2009), by leading figures of the pedagogy being studied. The result of this was a new document derived from the contemporary application of the Pizzigoni method in the city of Milan. The testimonies are a sign of the transposition, from past school experience to current memory, from narration to transcription, from the oral to the written version.

This methodology was already followed in previous studies, such as the new edition of the volume, entitled *La pedagogia secondo Rudolf Steiner. L'humanitas e il movimento delle Scuole Waldorf* (Rudolf Steiner Pedagogy. Humanitas and Waldorf School Movement) edited in 2008 by Franco Angeli, the same publishing house as this volume.

The past and present documents that open and close this book are completed through the central section of the book, which includes our critical comments. The latter was worked up, by having recourse to the texts of Pizzigoni and texts produced between 1956 and 1986 by followers of the method.

4. Distinguishing features of the research

The research being presented is absolutely new and original in the field of pedagogy, since it is the first systematic work about Pizzigoni's kindergarten, eighty years (1927-2007) after its foundation. The distinguishing features connoting the research are summarised below:

- *gender* feature, since it is meant to accentuate the female dimension of Pizzigoni's contribution during an era, i.e. the early 1900s, in which the renewal of the Italian school, inside the school, was essentially female (Rosa Agazzi and Carolina Agazzi, Maria Montessori, Alice Franchetti, Maria Boschetti Alberti, Rina Nigrisoli, Maria Maltoni);
- *historic* feature, given by the use of the original document from 1929, as a reference for interpreting present-day data;
- *experiential* feature, represented by the testimonies gathered, by contacting persons applying the Pizzigoni method in kindergarten;
- *structural* feature, because it opens a new chapter in the research on the pedagogy of Pizzigoni and does not overlap on previous studies and research, done mostly on the elementary school;
- *constructive* feature, aimed at considering this book a practical action towards starting the work of systematically organising Pizzigoni's material about the kindergarten.

5. An immense patrimony

The first historical document, coming to us from the past, is the foundation that supports subsequent thought and allows for better understanding the testimonies gathered in the field.

It is the *Asilo infantile* (Kindergarten), published in 1929, introduced here in the original version, courtesy of the 'Opera Pizzigoni'. This text gets to the heart of the concept of the kindergarten, lays out its purposes, follows its organisation and outlines its valuation criteria.

Following this are two reflections concerning the female aspect of Italian schools in the early 20th century and the European distribution of the Pizzigoni Rinnovata. Among other things, these two comments examine the impact of the pedagogical replies to the cultural expectations of a society in slow, but unstoppable progress. Our curiosity to know what it was about the Giuseppina Pizzigoni method that merited its staying alive so long, transitioning from nursery school to pre-school and then to kindergarten, was abundantly satisfied by reading the documents gathered

by Headmistress Sara Bertuzzi, who had the opportunity of working with Piera Parmigiani, who had been, in turn, one of Pizzigoni's students.

6. Documents from the present

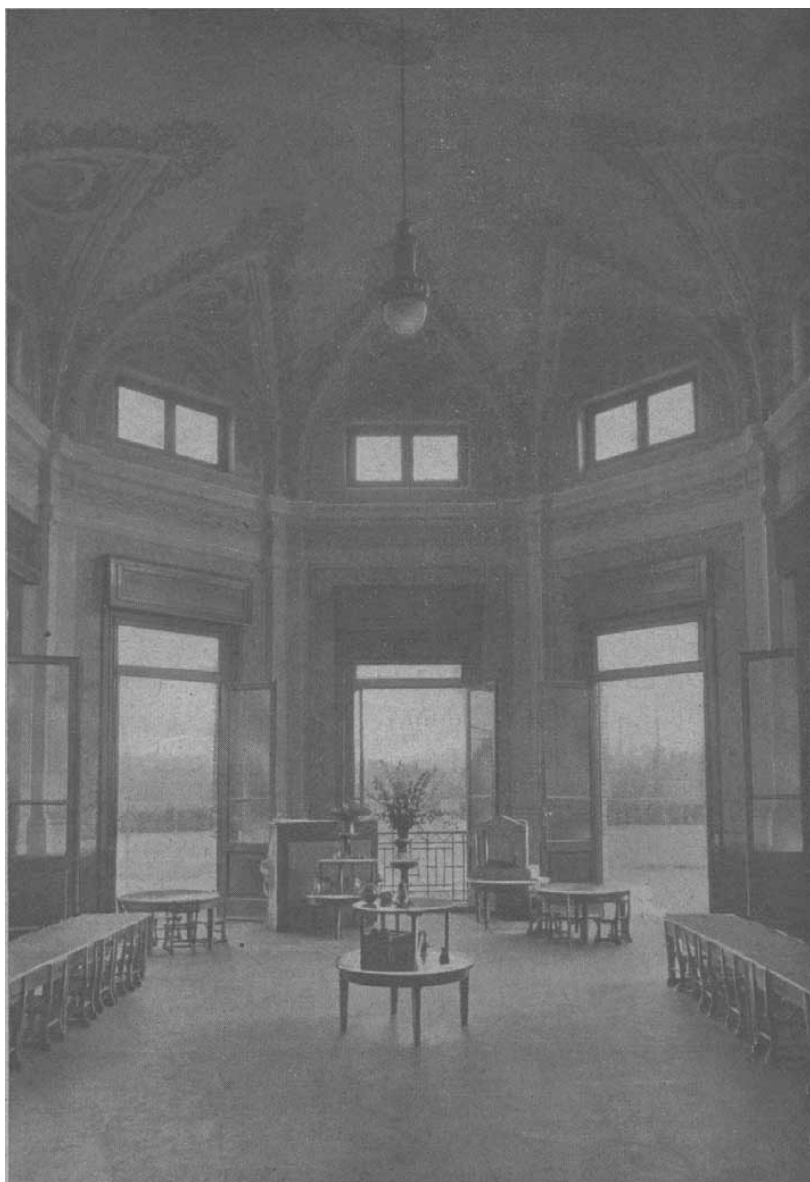
Part of the material, well cared-for and preserved by Sara Bertuzzi, was presented during the Conference at the Rinnovata in October 2007, almost eighty years after the founding of the school, and currently awaits being entrusted to expert hands, for a precise cataloguing and the initiation of studies and research in the sector, not last of which are dissertations and doctoral research.

Those teachers, who kindly replied to the request to write about their own teaching experience, preferred reconstructing a part of the history of the theories and methods of the Italian kindergarten, i.e. covering approximately the last fifty years. The living testimonies of the teachers, who planned their teaching based on the Pizzigoni method, represent short autobiographies that reveal how the teacher was inspired by this method, which gradually became a reliable guideline for teaching in the manner of the Rinnovata.

Every testimony was annotated, with reference to Pizzigoni's texts, then reviewed by each teacher in order to have a final concerted version.

Scientific interest may be a starting path and this study shows how a memory is necessary to bring the school alive, a memory that became a milestone for forming our own national and European identity. Young teachers cannot neglect learning about this pedagogy constituted by thought, practice and development.

Ours is a research that has just begun; we hope to be able to continue the study soon, under conditions made favourable by the required organisation of the abundant documentary material.



Refectory – Music and games room.

MY KINDERGARTEN¹

BY GIUSEPPINA PIZZIGONI

1. Fundamental guidelines

My kindergarten – as all kindergartens – arose to satisfy a social necessity and not for a particular philosophical and pedagogical concept (because I have always been of the opinion that the youngest ones should be kept at home, under the watchful, loving eye of the mother); it means to respect what the child holds most sacred: its freedom, its ingenuity and its development, according to immutable biological laws.

My kindergarten is the preparation of the young during the age of growth, according to the truth and nature, as it is for the other classes of the Rinnovata².

Therefore, far from wanting to demonstrate the excellence of a method, which finds expression through a plurality of means, often artificial, the school sees to it that the child grows healthy and strong, truly lives life, not as a child prodigy and not even as a common child, as the result of any ideological construction; it assures that the child grows healthy and good and becomes a person who observes the world and things, nature and life, workers, Italians, Christians. The concern lies not with teaching, but rather taking great care, so that the child forms habits of cleanliness, kindness, sociability and activities; diligent care, so that the child becomes familiar with water, the sun, animals; it becomes accustomed to considering other children, as limits to its freedom and as beings necessary in everyday life; diligent care so that the child learns to speak our language, without actual lessons, but through experiencing things and their intrinsic, relative value; diligent care so that the senses of the child are exercised on a daily basis, not with so-called scientific means, but by using the things themselves and through associations taken, here too, from personal experience.

The work of the child is a game, as everyone knows, and the child must be able to play freely. The programme and hours of my kindergarten

¹ G. Pizzigoni, *Il mio Asilo infantile. Linee fondamentali. Programma. Orario. Note illustrative*, Stab. Tipo-Litogr.-Cartotecnico Fed. Sacchetti e C., Milano, 1929.

² See Scuola Rinnovata G.B. Vico – Milan.

provide for a certain period of time during the day for the child to act freely, always, of course, under the watchful eye of an overseer. On the other hand, since the child has to accustom itself right away to discipline (it is a good idea to acquire certain habits from early childhood), the teacher is ready with an infinite number of activities that are playful, but, at the same time, the beginning of serious work. Such as working the earth, building with wood, plasticine and cardboard; doing cut-outs, some of which are done together with the teacher, and some done by the child alone, who composes, as it pleases, various scenes with components cut out and glued to a sheet of paper, acting as a background to the scene; drawing, which is always meant to be the expression of free thought and not as the child has been conditioned, and for which the little one will need colourful pastels; or the spontaneous colouring of geometric designs, prepared and scaled by comprehension difficulty, that form decorative elements.

The teacher should never “lecture”: she should interest the children, without the formality of desks and prefixed programmes, through games and conversations that are always proven through experience or observed together, for the purpose, as stated above, of developing the spirit of observation, exercising the senses and directing the children’s activities.

So, my programme is not nor can it be divided by months: it points out the *kind* of activities and the *manner* and *limitations*, in which these activities are to be carried out. It is to be interpreted without strictness, except in its fundamental concept: **respect the children and educate them, according to truth and nature**. If one enters the Kindergarten of the Rinnovata to teach, it is best to leave the baggage of the standard methods used to date in kindergartens behind, and live in it, like an intelligent mother knows how to live alongside her child.

2. Programme

Physical education

Life outdoors, whenever possible.

Resting outdoors on cots set up in the shade after lunch, whenever possible.

Daily deep-breathing exercises; then, also only through the nose. Free playtime: balls, dolls, various games.

Group games (the shepherd and the wolf, the hunter and the hare, and the like).

Partial dips and complete dips in the swimming pool. Sunbaths, as an offset to swimming in the pool.

Rhythmic gymnastics (see music).

Gardening (see work).

Short exercise walks (5, 10, 15 minutes).

Exercising the senses

a) **Sight:** Assessment of visual strength using an illiteracy table.

Exercising colour sense: basic colours.

Various exercises for the concept of distances; *longer* and *shorter*; *broader* and *narrower*; *higher* and *lower*; *heavier* and *lighter*. Various exercises for the concept of *equal* (making use of material offered by the garden).

Various exercises for the concept of circular, square and triangular figures.

b) **Hearing:** Sounds and noises – various and diverse sounds – various and diverse noises.

Music: Singing simple songs by ear.

Auditions: the same little songs will be played and listened to by the children from time to time. – Some religious songs. – Some patriotic songs (typical of that period).

Rhythmics: Footsteps: walking normally, slowing down, accelerating; stepping to the sound of music.

Various exercises: e.g. listen to an aphonic voice; understand where a sound or noise comes from; understand if the noise is produced by a rock, metal, wood.

c) **Smell:** Assessment of olfactory sensitivity. Smelly bodies and non-smelly bodies. Good smells. Bad smells.

d) **Taste:** Sweet, bitter, salty, sour.

e) **Touch:** Hot, cold, smooth, rough.

Habits of cleanliness: Brush one's shoes; wash one's hands after the brushing, as well as before eating and after going to the toilet. About when to be able to go bareheaded or to cover one's head under the sun, so as not to suffer sunstroke. About rinsing one's mouth after meals and the like.

Meal, a hot meal at school and a snack.

Children in the kitchen and in the refectory (see work).

Medical check-ups at the beginning of school, once a week and at the end of the year. Any winter and summer care.

Compilation of an individual biographic record by the physician and teacher.

For moral education

Example given by the teacher and fellow classmates.
 As a rule of civil and social living, deduced from the facts that actually happen at school.
 Fight against egotism; educate to sociability; get into the habit of mutual help.
 Model children (various sketches represented by puppets in the theatre).
 Habits of orderliness: Hang up one's clothing; put away any toys used; button one's coat, tie one's own shoes or with the help of a classmate.
 Be conscious of why certain things are done.
 Acquire the habit of economising: everything is useful, even crumbs that can be given to the birds.
 Develop the love of family and Country.
 Love for living things: visit them often, give them food and drink; do not upset them and do not harm them.
 Develop the sense of both responsibility and discipline. Develop the sense of accuracy.
 Knowledge of fables with the clearest meaning and tales regarding the origins of the homeland.

For education of the sense of aesthetics

Contemplation of the sky, clouds, flowers, insects, frost, snow and the like.
 Environmental ornamentation. Flowers in the flowerbeds, flowers in the meadows, flowers in vases.
 The harmony of colours (exercises using mosaics and various games).
 Colouring simple scenes, with outlines worked up by an artist³.
 Distribution of colours in known geometrical figures, resulting in an aesthetic effect⁴.

For religious feeling

From the admiration of the beauties of nature to the religious sense of the Divinity. A sacred song/hymn? Canto sacro, sacred chant, every morning.
 Morning, noon and evening prayers.

³ See Pizzigoni material, at G.B. Paravia – Milan.

⁴ Idem.

Every day, flowers are given in offering to Baby Jesus and the Virgin.

Narrative of some of the most essential biblical facts.

Examples: Adam and Eve in the Earthly Paradise – Expulsion from the Earthly Paradise – The birth of Jesus – The Magi – Jesus being dutiful to Joseph and Mary.

For intellectual education

Various exercises for training to be observant.

Various exercises for developing the criterion.

Inquiring into the causes of some facts, when the causes are clear.

Nomenclature of objects used in common: of the school, the kitchen, the table; plants, herbs, fruit, animals in the garden (fish, birds, chickens, geese, pigeons, dog, cat, cow, goat, rabbits, and the like).

Nomenclature of the external parts of the human body.

Concept of time: today, yesterday, tomorrow.

Names of the four seasons. Names of the days of the weeks and months of the year.

Various basics: one's own particulars: name, surname, age, parents, home address, citizenship, nationality.

Names of the teacher, classmates, head teacher.

Names of the King, Queen, Head of Government. (Common during the early periods of Italy)

The sun, light, shadows.

Various objects gathered for the group museum.

N.B. – The entire programme requires no real lessons, but rather the contents of spontaneous learning through the method of personal experience.

Mother tongue

Various conversations about the subjects of the programmes. Attempting tongue-twisters

Pronunciation exercises.

Repetition of fables and tales narrated by the teacher.

Narrative related to the little scenes composed by the children with the cut-outs⁵.

Use of the illustrated book library.

⁵ See Pizzigoni material, at G.B. Paravia – Milan.

Drawing

Spontaneous drawing, also using coloured pencils.

Some exercising of tracing schematic drawings and reproducing forms of known objects, Colouring in these tracings.

Work

Gardening: spontaneous work in special flowerbeds. Hoeing, weeding, gathering dry leaves, collecting flowers, and the like.

Daily brushing of one's shoes.

Putting on and buttoning up school smocks, aprons, overcoats, and the like. Laying and clearing the breakfast table.

Sweeping the dining hall, dusting.

Paper cut-outs: cutting out various figures and sticking the cut-outs, already foreseen with paste, onto coloured paper or colour the figures and past them onto white paper, so as to make squares of free individual composition⁶.

Copy some fruit with a simple shape in clay.

3. General working hours

9 – 10 – Entrance – Cleaning check– Possible additional cleaning – Shoe cleaning – Putting on the school smock – Trip to the toilet – Hand-washing.

10 – 11 – Activities with the teacher (exercising the senses – Singing – Gymnastics – Speech exercises – Free activities).

11 – 12 – The tables are set – The children go to the toilet – They wash their hands.

12 – 13 – Mealtime.

13 – 14 – The children take turns putting the classroom in order, also making a game of it, thus learning about tidiness

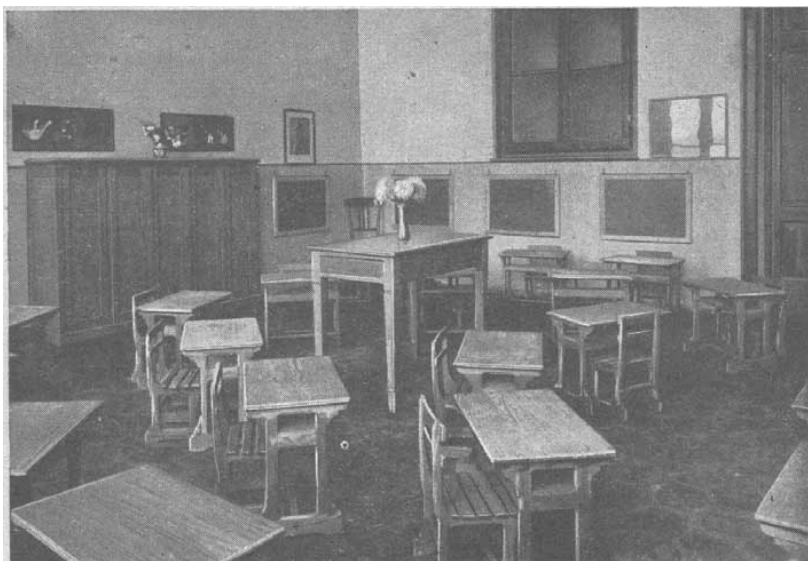
14 – 15 – Nap.

15 – 16 – Varied work.

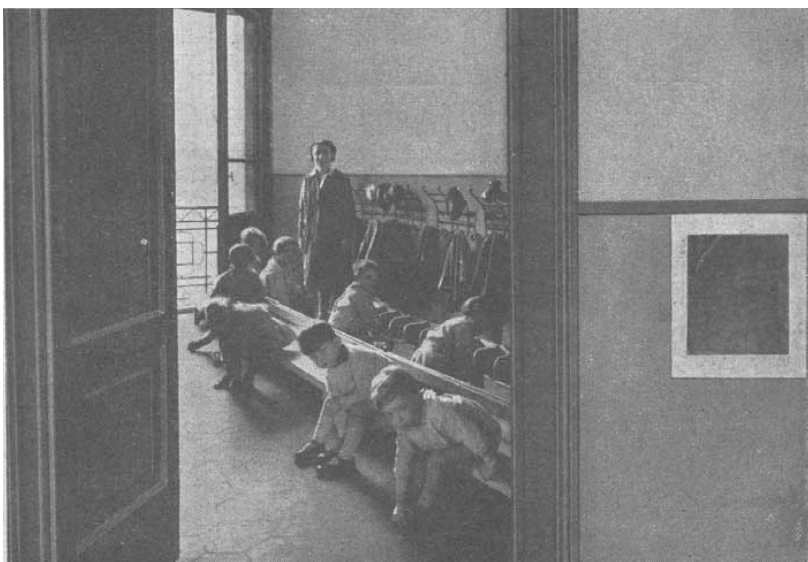
16 – 16.30 – Snack.

16.30 – 17 – Preparation to return home.

⁶ See Pizzigoni material, at G.B. Paravia – Milan.



Classroom furnishings.



Cloakroom.

4. Explanatory notes to the programme

For physical education (see page 8)

For eyesight: Exercises of colour sense (basic colours). The teacher makes up the exercise material, hereby preparing:

1. In a box of blue, red and yellow skeins of yarn, all in duplicate. (The child chooses a skein in one of the three colours and then matches it to the other of the same colour, still in the box; this will guide the teacher towards identifying any colour-blind children. The exercise is useful for recognising colours and learning their names).
2. In a box of skeins of yarn in duplicates of the three basic colours, as above, and in different shades. (The children practice arranging these skeins in shades, from the darkest to the lightest and vice versa; this way they train their eyes to the various tones of colour, as they learn the names of the various shades. Of course, between one shade and another, there has to be a notable difference in tone).

To gain knowledge about geometrical shapes: circle, square, triangular, it is useful to employ pastels to colour in geometric shapes prepared for the kindergarten, that is, the three basic perfect figures: circle, square, equilateral triangle. The colouring of these figures assures that their characteristics are made clear to the eyes of the little ones. The child learns the properties of these figures, while learning their names. (For such exercises, it is necessary to follow the steps of the exercises, as indicated and grouped together in notebooks proposed by me)⁷

1. shapes in their geometric outline, without superimpositions or combinations;
2. combinations of geometric figures without superimpositions;
3. composition of the same figures, superimposed;
4. combinations of two different figures, superimposed;
5. combinations of three different figures, superimposed;
6. various combinations.

For hearing: Music. As much for singing as for rhythmic, it is a good idea for the teacher not to oblige all the children to sing and move their bodies. From time to time, she plays music or sings: the more sensitive

⁷ See Pizzigoni material, at G.B. Paravia – Milan.

children will follow the music: the others will stay to one side, or maybe play. Perhaps further into the year an interest in music will awaken in them.

At a later time, the teacher will make it clear to the ones who are indifferent to music not to disturb those who are singing or who are doing rhythmic exercises, thus giving a practical lesson about social life, provided all or almost all the children are happily taking part in the musical exercises.

For moral education (see page 10)

Once again, for the purpose of educating to sociability, it is a good idea for the kindergarten to be provided with round tables, at which the children can sit and arrange at will. Of necessity, the children will find themselves having to watch what they do, and the teacher will be able to achieve that the children, by seeing each other, play together rather than be rude to each other: this is rather rare among the young ones in the kindergarten.

The puppet theatre is meant to be useful to the teacher as a means of teaching moral education. The *very short* shows she creates will have the purpose of presenting models of goodness to the children. No fearful scenes: no thieves, police, beatings: no lies, malice, pranks, and certainly no devilish apparitions or masked men.

For aesthetic education (see page 10)

The little sketches I propose, and that the child is meant to colour, are drawn by an artist, because only the artistic touch educates to a *sense of aesthetics*.

When the child freely colours the *geometrical combinations* I propose, the results are an alternation of shapes and colours with an aesthetic effect, which, in itself, leads children to feel what artistic rhythm is and motivates them to create various decorative patterns. (for knowledge of geometric figures, see page 21).

For intellectual education (see page 11)

In my kindergarten, I discarded *lessons*. The child, who spends the entire day with the teacher, learns everything indicated in my Programme. That is why, in demonstration of my statement, the kindergarten classroom does not look the same as standard school classrooms; the children's tables

should be neither in lines nor rows in front of the teacher's desk. No *school* system. In the classrooms occupied by the children for some hours of the day, the tables are arranged in such a way that each child has a well-lit station.

The teacher's desk stands either in the middle or corner of the room, whichever is best, that is, where it obstructs least. There are two open cabinets along the walls, from which the children can freely take the work material they need at one time or another, material arranged in order by the teacher; there is one closed cabinet, in which she keeps the works. Some small slate boards are within reach; there are coloured pictures that might be of interest: primarily among these are the painting of the Virgin with Baby Jesus, portraits of the King, the Queen and the Head of Government. On the teacher's desk and on top of the cabinets are vases, into which the children can put fresh flowers picked from the garden every day, this being always under the guidance of the teacher.

Work: cut-outs (Series A, Series B, Series C) Series A – *Various simple scenes*⁸.

Collected here are little figures that can and must be matched to form a scene. The children – who have to find figures that are the same and already grouped together in boxes – take them out and match them, using their own skill; they cut them out, apply paste on the back and place them on a sheet of white paper. By observing the scenes composed by the children and listening to their descriptions, the teacher has a way of judging the level of mental development of each child.

Series B – *Country life*.

Here all the figures belong to country life and are designed by the artist, each in proportion to the others. Through this series, the child enriches its linguistic vocabulary and can better indulge in composing as per its own skill: for example, the composition may result in a house in a pine forest; or a market of donkeys or oxen; a hen house; a farmhouse with people and animals, and so on; but the picture always has to be a spontaneous composition of the child, who, with such a wealth of elements, will produce a large variety of compositions.

Series C – *The road*.

The 22 figures of this series are also meant to aid children in expressing various scenes through the composition of figures they have chosen and pasted on white paper.

⁸ See Pizzigoni material, at G.B. Paravia – Milan.

One should take care that the child does not mix up the elements of the three series of designs mentioned above, otherwise the harmony and proportions of the various figures would be lost, as well as, and most importantly, the artistic success of the picture created by the child.

N.B. – If the child wishes to complete the scenes composed of coloured pastels to indicate, in particular, the sky, earth, grass, etc., let it do so. But the teacher should take care that aesthetic reasons dictate that this would not occur with *black and white*; it is deemed a sign of great artistic sensitivity, if the child wishes a cut out of a black strip to make a line of earth onto which the other figures are to be placed. This will occur rarely; nonetheless, the teacher keeps black paper strips available to the children, which she will be able to offer them at random, for their use.

I consider the learning tool described above of primary importance in the kindergarten, because it groups together many educational advantages. That is:

1. It keeps the children occupied in the work of cutting out, applying paste and arranging the cut-out figures, foreseen with paste, on a sheet of paper, thus providing them with the joy of *creating*;
2. It educates the aesthetic sense of the child;
3. It obliges the children to observe, interpret and understand the logic of coordinating the figures for the purpose of representing an action;
4. It keeps the children occupied at length in the same, although varied, pleasant activity;
5. It gives the children a way to learn many words;
6. It gives the children a way to exhibit the subject of their composition to the teacher and, through speaking, learn their mother tongue.

BIOGRAPHICAL REPORT

Year

.....
 born in
 on.....
 Father's name age profession.....
 Mother's name age profession.....
 Brothers: (number) ages.....
 Sisters: (number) ages.....
 Home address No. of rooms.....
 no. of inhabitants

Family medical history (Anamnesis)

Parents' illnesses.....
 Tuberculosis
 Syphilis
 Alcoholism.....

Individual medical history (Anamnesis)

Breast-feeding.....
 Physical development.....
 Intellectual development.....
 Do you drink wine at home?.....
 (Common during the period in question)
 Illnesses

Somatic screening

General development.....
 Nourishment status
 Skeleton
 Muscles.....
 Skin and mucosa
 Lymphatic system.....
 Eyes
 Ears, nose, throat
 Respiratory system.....
 Circulatory system.....
 Digestive system
 Nervous system.....

Speech, pronunciation
Urinary system.....
Enuresis – daytime / night-time
Vaccination.....
Booster.....
Date
Physician

(*) **Section** **School year**

	OCTOBER	JANUARY	APRIL	JUNE
<i>Weight</i>Kg.
<i>Height</i>cm.
<i>Chest circum.</i>
<i>Dynamometry rh</i>
» <i>lh</i>
<i>Visual acuity re</i>
» » <i>le</i>

Dental status

.....

Summary of the somatic screening

October

.....

June

.....

Observations

Booklet for the poor.....
Winter treatments.....
Free meal

(*) A total of 3 sheets.

Climate care

Writing material.....

Beach care

Specialist check-ups

Children's Hygiene Camp.....

Psychological screening

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Teacher's observations

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Total number of absences

Illnesses suffered during the school year.....

Moral conduct

Tidiness.....

Scholastic achievement.....

.....

Teacher's signature

.....

PART ONE

THE PIZZIGONI KINDERGARTEN, HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL AND PEDAGOGICAL THEORY

CHAPTER 1

MARIA MONTESSORI AND GIUSEPPINA PIZZIGONI, PIONEERS IN THE SCHOLASTIC RENEWAL OF A CENTURY

1. University chairs of pedagogy

In twentieth-century Italy, academic pedagogy was prevalently male and school education was primarily female. At the beginning of the new Millennium, there is a notable presence of women holding university chairs of pedagogy (see table 1), with the exception of studies of history, where males prevail.

Female educators, mothers, teachers and professors represented the model of the Italian culture until the most recent times (see S. Chistolini 2007b). Perhaps the most well-known inversion of this trend was that of Montessori; she was a new woman for the period in which she lived and made pedagogy the banner of female liberation, hereby justifying everything with science. On the other hand, a university career in pedagogy for women and, in particular, for teachers, was always difficult, because an educated woman was able to aspire, at most, to a tenured position in a school and certainly not a university career. This is why we can say that, even in 1970, women found pedagogy taught by men at university and established educational development in the family and at school, as an educator and teacher. The situation changed after 1970 through student movements, the “university for the masses”, the liberalisation of study plans and through the institution of new degree courses in Sociology and Psychology, which became competitive with respect to the degree course in Pedagogy, which was notoriously more philosophical and intended almost exclusively for those who wished to teach, i.e. conceived by men for women. In other words, theory was male and practice was female.

The early 1900s in Italy were years in a century dedicated to women, for education more than pedagogy. Rosa (1866-1951) and Carolina (1870-