

SCHOOL-FAMILY ALLIANCE IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR INCLUSION: AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF THE EMERGENCY CONTEXT

ALLEANZA SCUOLA-FAMIGLIA NEI PROGETTI EDUCATIVI PER L'INCLUSIONE: UN'INDAGINE ESPLORATIVA DEL CONTESTO EMERGENZIALE

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Abstract

The introductory part of this article will focus on defining the most recent socio-cultural framework of special needs and inclusive education in Italy. Recently, the number of individuals with special educational needs has been growing significantly, requiring governance to respond effectively to the urgencies of the most fragile section of the population by providing funds and expanding scientific research on education. At such a critical juncture in history, when we are recovering from a pandemic that has shaken the very foundations of institutions, the post-emergency economic resources from the Next Generation EU (NGEU) represent both a challenge and an opportunity for each of the state-members, concerning economic and social recovery: the educational domain plays a crucial role in fostering the resurgence of new generations in an uncertain present troubled by a multifactorial crisis. The objective of this literature review is to provide a critical overview of the most recent research and school interventions in the field of special education, with a specific focus on the participation of parents/guardians in the distance learning processes of pupils with special educational needs in the COVID-19-related emergency context. Concerning methodology, this scoping review adhered to the guidelines of the PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews. The studies selected by this review provide an international projection of the parent-support teacher relationship during the pandemic, with an emphasis on the limitations, difficulties, and outcomes of special education in the critical pandemic

context. The utility of the study lies in its uniqueness since no similar research has been found by the authors. In particular, the data collected and presented in this paper can provide a reference point for the development of best practices in educational design and policy setting, with a perspective of preparation, particularly for problematic situations.

La parte introduttiva di questo articolo è incentrata su un inquadramento generale della pedagogia speciale e dell'educazione inclusiva in Italia. Negli ultimi tempi, il numero di persone con Bisogni Educativi Speciali (BES) è cresciuto in modo significativo, il che significa che la governance nazionale deve rispondere in maniera efficace alle urgenze dei più fragili, mettendo a disposizione fondi e ampliando la ricerca scientifica in campo educativo. In un momento storico così critico, alle prese con una pandemia che ha scosso le istituzioni dalle fondamenta, le risorse economiche post-emergenziali della Next Generation EU (NGEU) rappresentano, allo stesso tempo, una sfida e un'opportunità per ciascuno degli Stati membri, in direzione di una ripresa economica e sociale: il settore dell'istruzione gioca un ruolo cruciale nel favorire il riscatto delle nuove generazioni, in un presente incerto e travagliato da una crisi multifattoriale. L'obiettivo di questa revisione della letteratura è fornire una panoramica critica sulle ricerche più recenti e gli interventi educativi nel campo della pedagogia speciale, con un focus specifico sulla partecipazione dei genitori/tutori nei processi di didattica a distanza degli alunni con BES nel contesto dell'emergenza legata al Covid-19. Per quanto riguarda la metodologia adottata, la presente scoping review segue le linee guida raccomandate dalla PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews. Gli studi selezionati in questa sede offrono uno spaccato internazionale sul rapporto genitori-insegnanti di sostegno durante l'emergenza socio-sanitaria, con un'enfasi sui limiti, le difficoltà e i risultati dell'educazione speciale nel contesto critico della pandemia. L'utilità dello studio risiede nella sua unicità, dal momento che gli autori non hanno reperito ricerche simili. In particolare, i dati raccolti e narrativamente esposti nel presente lavoro possono rappresentare un punto di riferimento per lo sviluppo di buone pratiche nella progettazione didattica e nella definizione delle politiche per l'istruzione, in un'ottica di preparazione alle situazioni particolarmente problematiche.

Key-words

Special education, Covid-19, special educational needs, online education, families
Pedagogia speciale, Covid-19, bisogni educativi speciali, didattica a distanza, famiglie

Introduction

The school of the present must contain, among its essential characteristics, the attribute of inclusiveness. This is achieved by being "an educational organization capable of flexibly articulating itself in relation to the needs of each one" (Cottini, 2019, p. 11). Educational and social needs, in Italy as in the rest of the world, concern large groups of people, towards whom the institutions certainly cannot remain indifferent. Relating to the ISTAT data released in January last year (ISTAT, 2021) for the school year 2020-2021, in our country, there was an increase in the percentage of students with disabilities certified by the ASL (+3.6 % of enrollments, equal to about 4,000 students). According to this last report, there are at least 300,000 pupils with disabilities in our country. However, the pool of subjects with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is much wider: this category includes students with

neurodevelopmental disorders, emotional and behavioral disorders, and surplus endowments (Santrock, 2021). Numerous conditions fall into the macro-category of neurodevelopmental disorders - Specific Learning Disorders (ASD), Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder-ADHD), intellectual disability, physical disabilities (motor or sensory), language disorders, and autism spectrum disorders - a wide range of cases that need support in a multifaceted field of intervention, for which competent professionalism is required and a compact synergy that keeps specialists and families united, in a perspective of educational co-planning as inclusive as possible. It is from these assumptions that Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is born, i.e., the conversion of products and spaces used for education - from textbooks to classrooms - to make them accessible to any user (Cottini, 2019). The idea of Universal Design, before being applied to the educational context, was developed over forty years ago by the American architect Ron Mace, who spoke of functional access to any structure, through a radical "removal of barriers" (Mace, 1985). Today, along the innovative trajectories of the 21st century, we cannot speak of accessibility without referring to digital environments and artifacts, especially if we refer to the younger generations and, therefore, also to educational contexts. Digital technologies and online learning are resources with wide applicability in the field of inclusive education (Pascoletti, 2019), including at least three functionalities:

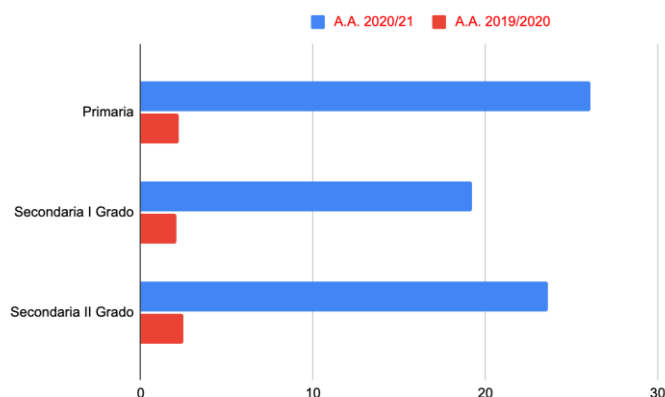
- assistive-compensatory functions, or mechanical aid for various kinds of disabilities, through Assistive Technologies (TA),
- dialogic-relational and sharing functions, i.e., communication support - considering that, for example, in a very large geographical area such as the United States, about 21% of students with BES have language difficulties (Kena et al., 2015),
- interactive-multimedia and manipulative functions, or the promotion of active learning, through methodologies that stimulate the production of autonomous and original content- think of Digital Storytelling, or DST (Di Fuccio et al., 2016).

Digital technologies, increasingly present in classrooms starting from kindergarten (Toto, 2019), have enormous potential for enriching the teaching experience of a pupil with disabilities; in a context of a socio-health emergency such as the worldwide spread of SARS-CoV-2, the value of teaching technologies is even higher.

To the socio-demographic factors that can already normally affect access to educational services for pupils with SEN (Sturm et al., 2021), the material impossibility of reaching the places of learning has suddenly been added; and this is where the Distance Learning (DAD) card came into play. In Italy, fair results were recorded concerning the participation of pupils with disabilities in DAD, considering the difficulties due to the lockdown, with online participation of 41% of pupils with disabilities (ISTAT, 2021).

Figure 1

Participation in DAD of Pupils with Disabilities in Italy: Values per 100 Students. (Source: ISTAT, 2021)



There is less reassuring data on teacher preparation compared to e-learning practices: from the SIRD 2020 report on DAD, it emerged that only 12% of the total Italian teachers (corresponding to: 7.5% nursery schoolteachers, 9.3% primary teachers, 13.9% lower secondary teachers, 17.4% upper secondary teachers) had participated in training sessions on e-learning practices (Girelli, 2020). Consequently, a first goal towards which the pace must be accelerated concerns the digital skills of teachers, especially those specializing in support, in which context the PNRR funds represent an important opportunity; from a sample of teachers in the process of specializing in support recently analyzed by Fiorucci (2021), a clear agreement emerged in the belief that a didactic project mediated by technologies is more motivating for a pupil with disabilities.

Another important element for inclusive teaching concerns school-family cooperation, which in some cases proved essential during the pandemic (Girelli, 2020). Educational research has repeatedly questioned the families of pupils with SEN to ascertain the satisfaction rates of the educational support services provided by the competent bodies, often recording good results, even if limited to localized samples (Zanobini et al., 2017; Garbe et al., 2020; Kohlmeyer & Edyburn, 2022). Emphasizing the role of families in the education of pupils with SEN is one of the aims of this survey.

Inclusive Education: The Current Italian Context

The legislation on inclusive education in Italy took off in the second half of the 1970s (Zanobini et al., 2017). Art. 2 of Law 517 of 4 August 1977 states:

To facilitate the implementation of the right to study and the promotion of the full formation of the personality of the pupils, the educational program may include supplementary school activities organized for groups of pupils of the same class or different classes also for carrying out individualized interventions concerning the needs of individual pupils. As part of these activities, the school implements forms of integration in favor of disabled pupils with the provision of specialized teachers (...).

An important legislative achievement in favor of people with disabilities was achieved thanks to Law 104 of 1992, with which the Italian Republic undertook to guarantee "full respect for human dignity and the rights of freedom and autonomy of the handicapped person "And" full integration into the family, school, work, and society" (Article 1). Law 104 regulated the educational intervention in support of people with disabilities, providing for the formulation of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), co-written by parents, teachers, and health workers. The latest guidelines for compiling the IEP are contained in the Interministerial Decree n.182 of 2020. The IEP is drafted by the Operational Working Group for Inclusion (GLO), comprising the teachers of the class, curricular and support council, and the parents/guardians of the pupil with BES, with the advice of any professional in the health or psycho-pedagogical field; the pupil's family can report an expert external to the school organization as a member of the GLO. The shared drafting of the IEP is a valid example of school-family alliance in the field of special teaching, with the aim, clearly stated in the DI n.182, of ensuring the "active participation of students with an ascertained disability condition in developmental age for the purposes of school inclusion in compliance with the principle of self-determination" (Art. 3).

The active participation of families in the educational project of a child with a disability is highly esteemed by scholars: the parent must be aware of his/her "educational commitment" from the early life cycle of the infant (Maggiolini, 2021, p. 40), from the moment the growth ecosystem of the individual inevitably and profoundly influences its development (Friso, 2021). In this sense, strengthening the bond between families and the school is a winning operation for the fulfillment of the inclusive mission, despite the teacher-parent/guardian collaboration being often hindered by some factors, such as the prejudice according to which the family must be a "resource immediately ready for use" or differing perceptions of the potential of a student with disabilities (Dainese & Ghedin, 2021).

The most recent legislative device in terms of training of support teachers is Law no. 79 of 29 June 2022, promulgated as a supplement to the previous Law 36. According to the new provisions (Art. 44), the system of general recruitment and initial teacher training will be divided into:

1. qualifying course of 60 CFU/CFA,
2. national public competition, and
3. trial period of one year with a final evaluation.

Concerning the specialized teachers on support, they will be able to compete for the places available on support by presenting the qualification as an admission requirement. In addition to the admission procedures and some scattered clarifications, nothing is mentioned concerning any specialized skill of the support teacher, innovative aspects in the initial training of the same, nor the financing of initiatives or projects that promote and systematize school-family collaboration, despite COVID-19 having shown us how perfectible this is (Girelli, 2020).

The main objective of this work is to highlight the role played by the families of students with SEN in the global emergency context, with a focus on the outcome and any limitations of the interventions analyzed, to constitute a point of reference for research and intervention in the field of special pedagogy.

Specifically, a scoping review was conducted to answer the following research question: *what role did families play in the special emergency teaching interventions conducted by the support teachers?*

Metod

To identify the studies that analyze the role families played in the emergency special teaching interventions conducted by the support teachers during the pandemic, a scoping was carried out. Scoping review can be defined as an initial exploration of the literature that allows a preliminary mapping of the scientific evidence relating to a certain area of study and interest to identify its purpose, nature, and scope (Tricco et al., 2018). Specifically, this scoping review follows the guidelines recommended by the PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA -ScR; Tricco et al., 2018).

Search Strategy

As per the research question and the main objective of this study, a literature search was conducted on Scopus, ERIC, and Psych Info. These databases were selected as they include studies from several relevant scientific disciplines (e.g., pedagogy and psychology). The following keywords have been used alone and in combination: support teacher * OR special need * teacher * OR "special education teacher *" OR "need special education") AND ("famil*" OR "parent*" OR "caregiver*"). Variants of the keywords in US and UK English have been used where necessary.

Inclusion Criteria

The following were the inclusion criteria: a) articles published from March 2020 (the advent of COVID-19) till today; b) studies that included support teachers from all levels of education and/or parents of pupils with SEN and disabilities in general and that investigated the role families played in the emergency special teaching interventions by support teachers during the pandemic and c) studies published in scientific journals in English.

Selection of Studies and Data Extraction

As can be seen from Figure 2, an initial search of the 3 selected databases revealed 1244 papers. After eliminating duplicates and screening the title and abstract of each study, 38 papers were selected for reading the full text. Finally, 16 articles met the inclusion criteria, were analyzed, and included in the final table (Table 1). For each study, the following were reported: authors, year of publication, the country in which the study was conducted, number and characteristics of the participants, the main objective of the study, and the characteristics of the intervention or survey (research design, nature of the survey quantitative or qualitative and description of the contents of the intervention, where available), main limitations. The extracted data were then summarized using a narrative approach in the *Results section*.

PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and Explanation

Records identified through searching
multiple databases: Scopus, PsychInfo e
ERIC ($n = 1244$)

Records after duplicates removed
($n = 544$)

Records excluded after title and
abstracts screened
($n = 506$)

Full-text to be assessed for
eligibility ($n = 38$)

Full-text articles excluded ($n = 22$)
Not written in English: 4
Not conducted during Covid-19 pandemic: 4
Families not included: 7
Included not only special needs teachers: 5
Didactic interventions not present: 2

Studies included in the synthesis ($n = 16$)

Records excluded ($n = 2572$)

Table 1

Selected Studies

AUTHORS, COUNTRY, YEAR	KEYWORDS	PARTICIPANTS	OBJECTIVE	RESULTS	FEATURES INTERVENTION/ INVESTIGATION	LIMITATIONS
Börnert-Ringleb et al., 2021 Germany	Digital learning; special teaching; car-effectiveness	N = 722	Detect the factors that hinder the use of online learning of special teaching during the lockdown, from the teacher's perspective	Parental support is key to self-effectiveness of the teacher in the use of online learning to support students with SEN; Lack of collaboration can hinder the effectiveness of the didactic intervention	Cross-sectional; Quantitative survey	Deepen the perception of teachers also qualitatively; The study analyzes only the teachers' perspective, and not those of students and parents
Canning & Robinson, 2021 United Kingdom	Special educational needs; disability; autism spectrum disorders; emotional well-being; home environment	N = 8 families of students with autism spectrum disorder	Explore the perspective of the families of BES pupils concerning the emergency teaching intervention	Parents felt more pressure from the school but accepted the role of "guardians" of the well-being of their children in the context of homeschooling. Time-management and routine setting are the most beneficial skills transferred by	Cross-sectional. Qualitative survey conducted through group chat on social networks, telephone interviews, and online questionnaire	The surveyed sample covers only a localized area of the UK; the analysis considers SEN only relating to students with autism; the study analyzes the perspective of families alone

				teachers in the emergency context		
That is- Peña, 2022 USA	Special bilingual teaching; bilingual education; family; educational technologies; Latin children and families American; qualitative research	N = 30 mothers of bilingual students with SEN	Measure the degree of accessibility to educational technologies for bilingual students with disabilities	Technological support provided by the school was not sufficient for the 21 applicants. Conversely, the use of apps favored parent-teacher communication, enabling circumventing of language barriers and supporting educational intervention	Cross-sectional Quantitative survey	The sample investigated is limited to a localized area of the United States; research can be extended to other multicultural contexts that include more diverse linguistic minorities; the survey does not consider the experiences of teachers
Colombo & Santagati, 2022 Italy	COVID-19; distance learning ; school inclusion; school relationship-family; students with disabilities;	N = 147 teachers	Detect positive and negative aspects of the family-teacher collaboration in support of special teaching	Parental mediation is an essential component of the success of online education. Web-based communication is useful to reinforce	Cross-sectional Quantitative survey: online questionnaire disseminated through social media	The data collected refer to a rather early phase of the social and health emergency from COVID-19; the study only analyzes

	support teachers.			the teacher intervention network-parent		the teachers' perspective
Diana et al., 2021 Indonesia	Life skills; special educational needs; early childhood	N = 12 students with SEN	Measure the level of implementation of the inclusive teaching model (I - Teach) for the transfer of students' life skills	Teacher-parent communication by telematic means and the sharing of photo-video material has offered new possibilities for school-family collaboration in the promotion of life skills of students with BES	Cross-sectional after surgery; Quantitative survey, monitoring, and promotion of the development of life skills through distance teacher-parents communication	Small sample
Hurwitz et al., 2021 USA	Autism spectrum disorders; pandemic from COVID-19; PEI; IDEA; special teaching; teachers	N = 106 SEN support teachers or specialists	Evaluate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the management of IEP and on the methods of providing teaching to support students with autism	<i>Homeschooling</i> encouraged greater parental participation in the monitoring and enforcement of the IEP. Online learning highlights the importance of collaboration with the family of people with SEN. The teachers experienced many difficulties due to the lack of	Cross -sectional Quantitative survey: administration of an online questionnaire concerning special teaching services for students with autism	The sample covers only a localized area (Indiana, USA); the study analyzes only the teachers' perspective.

				preparation for an event of this kind		
Johnson, 2020 USA	COVID-19; access to communication ; audiologist education; online education; parents; remote learning;	Audiologist teachers and educators	Explore the difficulties and emergency teaching experiences of teachers with deaf students/ hearing impaired with the support of e-learning platforms integrated with assistive technologies and with a focus on analysis of contexts and relationships between the actors of the educational intervention	Most parents agreed to support teachers (<i>role of the extended teacher</i>) in maintaining attention and communicability levels. Parents felt involved in the processes of educational inclusion of children thanks to parent training interventions and virtual meetings to share the IEP of their children with teachers	Cross-sectional Qualitative survey: online discussions, chats, and forums drawing a picture of online education to support students with hearing disabilities.	The reference sample for data collection is not described sufficiently to facilitate the replicability of the study

<p>Kim & Fienup, 2022 USA</p>	<p>Accessibility; COVID-19; online learning; special teaching; students with disabilities</p>	<p>N = 3 students with SEN and low levels of participation</p>	<p>Evaluate the degree of accessibility and involvement of students with SEN concerning teaching practices</p>	<p>After implementation of the intervention, the students showed an increase in the rate of participation in activities. Parental involvement is a fundamental element of the intervention tested</p>	<p>Design (baseline) Pre -Post- intervention. The students took part in an online learning program characterized by strategies to increase the level of engagement (parent email prompting, online rewarding, etc.)</p>	<p>The increase in student engagement levels can be influenced by a greater degree of parental involvement</p>
<p>Medwetz et al., 2021 USA</p>	<p>Distance learning; special teaching; project - special educational action; pandemic; resilience</p>	<p>198 support teachers</p>	<p>Determine the impact of COVID-19 on the management of special distance learning by the support teachers</p>	<p>Communication with parents and pupils took place mainly online, via web platforms (88%) or email (87%); thus highlighting the importance of a good web-Communication. The completion of the EIP took place mainly thanks to online platforms (93%). Observed an increase in communication with students with SEN and with families to fulfill educational</p>	<p>Cross -sectional Quantitative survey: administration of an online questionnaire concerning the perception of self-efficacy of the support teachers, the relationship with parents/guardians, the coping strategies adopted</p>	<p>The investigated sample covers only a localized area (Minnesota, USA); the study analyzes only the teachers' perspective</p>

				objectives (e.g., parental support is important to ensure the use of study materials)		
Mete Yesil et al., 2022 Turkey	SARS CoV-2, spectrum disorder, autism, hearing impairment, language delay, global developmental delay, challenges	117 parents of children with SEN	Assess the impact of COVID-19 on children with SEN and their families	18.6% of families report having received support from teachers in online teaching. About 17.2% of families interrupted the distance learning activity. Most of these children had global developmental delay and the mothers had a low level of education	Cross-sectional Quantitative survey	Results difficult to generalize (data from a single center, questionnaires not validated)

<p>Lambert & Schuck, 2021 USA</p>	<p>Emergency Remote Teaching; didactics of the Mathematica; COVID-19; students with disabilities</p>	<p>1 teacher of mathematics, 3 educators specializing in BES</p>	<p>Analyzing the negative experiences of teachers/educators in the context of Emergency Remote Teaching and the didactic strategies adopted to meet the new needs</p>	<p>Strong family presence (one parent attended all the student's online lessons); the sense of socio-emotional connection with the learner and the development of self-regulation are relevant in the practice of mathematics; awareness of the importance of the school-family relationship in the management of the IEP</p>	<p>Cross-sectional qualitative survey through semi-structured interviews administered to the same subject over 2 weeks; constitution of focus groups with educators</p>	<p>Small sample, non-generalizable results. No questionnaires and/or interviews previously validated in the literature were used. Only teachers' perceptions were considered; it is useful to include those of parents and students also.</p>
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<p>Sakarneh, 2021 Jordan</p>	<p>COVID 19, families, lockdowns, students with BES</p>	<p>10 parents of children with SEN</p>	<p>Explore the factors and perceptions of children and parents about online education</p>	<p>Parents with various difficulties in using technological strategies and devices to ensure their children continue home education.</p> <p>Parents report having experienced difficulties in managing their children's behaviors, due to physical and emotional fatigue, low motivation to study.</p> <p>Improvement thanks to the support of teachers.</p> <p>Training by teachers is suggested to increase the knowledge of strategies in parents and thus enable a better home-school collaboration</p>	<p>Qualitative survey</p>	<p>Small sample, non- generalizable results</p>
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<p>Schuck & Lambert, 2020 USA</p>	<p>Sign-remote chin in emergencies; COVID-19; special education; teachers; elementary School</p>	<p>2 support teachers</p>	<p>Analyzing the experiences of support teachers to understand their perceptions of the transition to distance learning</p>	<p>Importance of the family-school alliance rediscovered with distance learning during the COVID-19 emergency. According to the teachers, there is a need to educate parents to use specific educational strategies and techniques so that they can coordinate more with the teacher's work</p>	<p>Cross-sectional Qualitative survey</p>	<p>Small sample, non-generalizable results. No questionnaires and/or interviews previously validated in the literature were used. Only teachers' perceptions were considered; it is useful to include those of parents and students also.</p>
<p>Siller et al., 2022 USA</p>	<p>Spectrum Disorder autism, parent - training, nursery, school childhood</p>	<p>10 teachers and 8 families</p>	<p>Evaluate the feasibility of parenting - online teacher support training for parents of students with autism spectrum disorder to promote communication</p>	<p>Both teachers and parents reported that the experience was positive and beneficial for them and the students. Parents appreciated their involvement in this intervention, calling it family-centered</p>	<p>Cross-sectional Quantitative-qualitative survey Contents of the parent-training intervention: understand the methods of communication of one's children; understand and redefine the goals and expectations of parents concerning the abilities of their children; identification of</p>	<p>Small sample, difficult generalization of results. Important variables are not taken into consideration such as: how effectively parents implement the strategies learned with their children at home, the degree of</p>

			social action and play		strategies that enable adapting the environment to favor gaming activities as much as possible; development of a game routine; understand how to achieve collaborative play with your child, how to promote coordinated attention, how to talk to your child during play; how to gradually encourage the autonomy of your child in the game	engagement of the children, the quality of communication, and parental stress. Absence of a control group
Stambekova et al., 2022 Kazakh- stan	Education- inclusive action. Students with disabilities; support; BES students	10 support teachers	Investigate teachers' perceptions of the implementa tion of inclusive distance learning	Most teachers prefer to adopt classical teaching methods rather than at a distance. Teachers believe that students are unable to achieve their goals and satisfy their personal needs with distance learning. When teachers are asked to narrate their experience of relationships with	Cross -sectional Qualitative survey	Small sample- not representative

				families, they report high levels of parental anxiety, the lack of technological and communication devices, and the inadequacy of online education for families.		
Steed & Leech, 2021 USA	Early childhood education ; learn-remote chin; special teaching; Crown-virus	1107 teachers (160 support teachers)	Understand how teachers have adapted their teaching activities to foster distance learning of children and their families	Difficulty on the part of teachers to stay in touch with all families and for families to always remain engaged in the new teaching methods. Support teachers spend more than curricular teachers to promote an alliance with the family;	Cross-sectional Quantitative-qualitative survey	The teachers' experiences were investigated only concerning distance learning. Future studies should also explore their perceptions of using technology with students, hybrid learning modes, and teachers' concerns about back-to-school face-to-face.

Results

Regarding the methodological aspects of the studies included in this scoping review, we observe how the studies, published from March 2020 to today, include heterogeneous and small samples, except for Börnert-Ringleb and colleagues (2022), who conducted a qualitative survey on 722 support teachers, and Steed and Leech (2021) who too conducted a quantitative-qualitative survey with 1107 teachers.

Concerning the characteristics of the interventions and investigations conducted, these too turn out to be heterogeneous. Mostly, the studies present qualitative surveys to investigate the perceptions of teachers and families about distance learning, and the research design of the studies is in most cases cross-sectional. Further, none of the studies adopts a multi-informant approach that considers the perceptions of students, teachers, and families simultaneously.

Concerning the results of the interventions and surveys, however, important aspects emerge relating to the school-family alliance and the involvement of families and parents in distance learning activities for pupils with SEN. First and as per the literature, most families and teachers point out that students with SEN show greater difficulties in adapting to distance learning strategies than typically developing students (Steed & Leech, 2021). Further, in this adaptation process, the role of the parents is defined as that of the extended teacher who should support the learning process of their children by adopting, at home, strategies similar to those proposed by teachers at school: a job that involves an important workload for the parents, affecting their general well-being and quality caregiving strategies (Canning & Robinson, 2021; Johnson, 2020; Sakarneh, 2021). This workload is perceived as reduced when the school and teachers collaborate with parents, both in terms of training and support for knowledge and the choice and use of the most appropriate behavioral and didactic strategies, effective and individualized for use with the pupil (Diana et al., 2021; Hurwitz et al., 2021; Lambert & Schuck, 2021; Mete Yesil et al., 2022; Schuck & Lambert, 2020; Siller et al., 2022). Similarly, some studies indicate that teachers too perceive parental collaboration as an important aid that increases the perceptions of self-efficacy (Börnert-Ringleb et al., 2022; Colombo & Santagati, 2022; Kim & Fienup, 2022; Stambekova et al., 2022).

Another relevant aspect that emerges from this review relates to the use of technological devices to support teaching. While some families encountered difficulties in the use of technology and had little support from schools and teachers (Cioè- Peña, 2022), others considered that technologies had favored communication with the school itself (Colombo & Santagati, 2022; Medwetz et al., 2021), highlighting the need to train teachers so that, by enhancing their digital skills, they can play an important role in training and supporting families.

Discussion

Inclusive teaching implies flexible adaptation to any context, more so in situations of hardship or material obstacles to its fruition (Ducy & Stough, 2021; Hodges et al., 2022). The health emergency due to coronavirus infections has put global education systems to the test, posing an unprecedented challenge to special education professionals and parents of pupils with disabilities. In the present scoping review, some significant experiences of emergency teaching in support of the SEN are highlighted through an examination of the data collected by the international scientific community. From the studies collected, it is clear that the pandemic has focused attention on the need for collaboration between teachers and families of students with BES. From the development of life skills essential for the development of autonomy and independence to the realization of individualized training objectives, the alliance between support teachers and parents/guardians is described as a winning strategy in the emergency

context: the skills transferred by teachers are reinforced in the home environment, in a process co-monitored by the teacher and tutor by telematic means (Diana et al., 2021); thanks to greater school-family communication, stimulated by the impossibility of face-to-face meetings and the versatility of the digital media (Colombo & Santagati, 2022), parents feel more involved in the IEP than their children (Hurwitz et al., 2022). As shown by Lambert and Schuck (2021), the "wall" raised by the pandemic, or, perhaps, made visible by it, is bypassed by the teacher who, with resourcefulness and skill, talks remotely with the parents of the pupils with difficulties, illustrating to them the strategies implemented in the classroom to stimulate, for example, the self-regulatory skills of the learners, promoting their strengthening also during the DAD.

If it is true that we emerge wiser from crises, a lesson that must be drawn from this last, dramatic chapter in the history of education is that digital technologies can concretely benefit special teaching, if used wisely. The support teacher, in the pandemic phase, had to test his/her adaptive skills and creativity in making the techniques of the trade effective in an unexpected context (Lambert & Schuck, 2021): therefore, it seems necessary to include training in such soft skills in support specialization courses.

Another important focus concerns the digital skills of the support teacher: the drastic testing field of COVID-19 has put many teachers in difficulty (Hurwitz et al., 2021; Steed & Leech, 2021; Stambekova et al., 2022), underlining the importance of training education professionals in the use of innovative platforms, means of communication and tools capable of improving the didactic experience of those with special educational needs (Toto, 2019).

Limitations of the Review

The results of this review must be interpreted in light of the intrinsic limits to the type of work performed. First, we considered only literature written in English and, for this reason, significant studies published in other languages may have been excluded. Secondly, although the authors intended to conduct as diligent a research as possible, it is possible that some studies were omitted from the initial research and that, consequently, some relevant data were not considered. A third limitation is the potential omission, during the selection of the studies, of works equally useful for this research, despite the attempts to sift the material as accurately as possible.

Conclusions

The Italian education system has been navigating for some time now a fluid state of uncertainty and sudden changes, heavily impacting the serenity of students, teachers, and families. Besides the turbulence of the Coronavirus, with the forced transformation of environments, methods, and means of learning, mid-2022 has thrown up a government crisis that projects further instability in the scenario of teacher training and the structuring of the school macrocosm,

putting in place potential discussion even the most recent legislative updates. However, if well-being means above all the balance and solidity of services, in this oscillating and whirling panorama of events, the most fragile subjects are put at risk, including young people who need firm and decisive support in following their own paths of cultural development and growth. Reflecting on good practices, difficulties, and possible solutions in the challenging context of the pandemic can help us design more decisive responses to the needs of the needy, where a stormy climate threatens to stifle, with its overwhelming roar, the most subdued cry for help.

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