

## An Inclusion Project for Deaf Children into a Northern Italy Contest

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**Abstract :** 84 deaf students (from primary school to college) and their families participated in this inclusion project in cooperation with numerous institutions in northern Italy (Brescia-Lombardy). Participants were either congenitally deaf or their deafness was related to other pathologies. This research promoted the integration of deaf students as they pass from primary school to high school to college. Learning methods and processes were studied that focused on encouraging individual autonomy and socialization. The research team and its collaborators included school teachers, speech therapists, psychologists and home tutors, as well as teaching assistants, child neuropsychiatrists and other external authorities involved with deaf persons social inclusion programs. Deaf children and their families were supported, in terms of inclusion, and were made aware of the research team that focused on the Bisogni Educativi Speciali (BES or Special Educational Needs) (L.170/2010 - DM 5669/2011). This project included a diagnostic and evaluative phase as well as an operational one. Results demonstrated that deaf children were highly satisfied and confident; academic performance improved and collaboration in school increased. Deaf children felt that they had access to high school and college. Empowerment for the families of deaf children in terms of networking among local services that deal with the deaf also improved while family satisfaction also improved. We found that teachers and those who gave support to deaf children increased their professional skills. Achieving autonomy, instrumental, communicative and relational abilities were also found to be crucial. Project success was determined by temporal continuity, clear theoretical methodology, strong alliance for the project direction and a resilient team response.

**Keywords :** autonomy, inclusion, skills, well-being

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