

WORKING TOWARDS AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR PROMOTING INTERACTION AMONG EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FAMILIES

LUCA REFRIGERI

Luca Refrigeri

Dept. of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, University of Molise, Campobasso, Italy

E-mail: luca.refrigeri@unimol.it

Abstract: *This article addresses the growing need for coherent European education policies that explicitly recognise families as strategic partners in educational processes. Focusing on the Italian case as an illustrative example, the paper analyses the evolution of school–family relationships from formal participation towards substantive educational co-responsibility. Drawing on pedagogical and sociological theory, national and European normative frameworks, and comparative evidence from OECD reports, the study highlights the central role of relational practices, teacher professionalism, and school autonomy in promoting effective interaction between educational institutions and families. The analysis underscores how persistent educational inequalities across Europe are closely linked to family background, thereby reinforcing the urgency of policy approaches that support structured, dialogical, and inclusive school–family partnerships. The article concludes by proposing operational orientations aligned with European policy priorities, aimed at strengthening shared educational responsibility and fostering students’ autonomy, equity, and long-term educational success.*

Keywords: *school–family partnership; educational co-responsibility; teacher professionalism; European education policies*

1. Introduction

In the context of the twenty-first century, profoundly shaped by far-reaching social, cultural, and educational transformations, the relationship between school and family emerges as a crucial nexus, requiring a redefinition of its forms, boundaries, and purposes in response to the complex demands of contemporary societies. Within this framework, the role of the family—and, more specifically, its educational, cultural, and socio-instructional conditions—has become increasingly decisive in shaping young people’s educational choices and significantly influencing their trajectories of academic achievement and social success.

International research has consistently highlighted how family background, parental education levels, and cultural capital strongly affect students’ aspirations, expectations, and learning outcomes. Classic sociological contributions have shown that the transmission of cultural capital within families plays a pivotal role in reproducing or mitigating educational inequalities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1986). Similarly, Coleman’s theory of social capital

*WORKING TOWARDS AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR PROMOTING INTERACTION
AMONG EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FAMILIES*

underscores how family-based relationships, norms, and support networks function as critical resources that enhance students' educational engagement and performance (Coleman, 1988). These perspectives remain highly relevant in contemporary educational systems, where inequalities increasingly intersect with migration, socio-economic vulnerability, and differentiated access to cultural and educational resources.

At the same time, the diversification of family structures, the growing plurality of parenting models, and the intensification of intercultural dynamics challenge schools to rethink their institutional role and their modes of interaction with families. Recent pedagogical and sociological studies emphasize that parents today demonstrate heightened educational awareness and expectations, while also experiencing greater uncertainty in navigating complex and rapidly changing educational pathways (OECD, 2023; OECD, 2024). Large-scale international assessments further confirm that students' academic success is strongly correlated with family socio-economic and cultural indicators, reinforcing the need for schools to adopt compensatory and inclusive strategies capable of counterbalancing structural disadvantages (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2022). In this evolving scenario, characterized by high mobility and increasingly non-linear relational dynamics, a conception of school–family relations based solely on episodic meetings or instrumental communication appears inadequate. Contemporary scholarship advocates instead for a dialogical, participatory, and co-constructed approach to education, in which the partnership between school and family is not an ancillary component but a foundational dimension of pedagogical action (Epstein, 2011; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Such an alliance is essential not only to support students' learning processes but also to promote equity, shared responsibility, and sustained educational success.

From this perspective, strengthening school–family partnerships represent a strategic lever for addressing educational inequalities and fostering students' holistic development. Recognizing families as active educational agents—and acknowledging the decisive role of their cultural and educational resources—allows schools to move beyond deficit-oriented models and towards collaborative frameworks capable of enhancing young people's agency, resilience, and long-term success in increasingly complex social contexts.

Such an alliance, however, to be authentic and generative, cannot be reduced to a merely organizational agreement or a functional division of responsibilities. Rather, it requires a profound rethinking of reciprocal responsibilities, grounded in trust built through genuine listening and a form of shared responsibility enacted daily. In a society characterized by complexity, as highlighted by Morin (2001), education cannot be entrusted to a single actor but must instead be conceived as a collective enterprise, in which multiple agencies—schools, families, and territorial and institutional actors—contribute jointly to the construction of meaning. Within this perspective, an educational alliance entails mutual recognition not only of competencies but also of the limits, roles, and specific viewpoints that each actor brings, fostering cooperation based neither on delegation nor control, but on responsible sharing (Romeo, 2023).

The urgency of such an alliance becomes even more evident when considering the evolution of family educational styles and the growing fragility of community ties, which often

result in a form of educational solitude affecting both teachers and parents alike (Castaldi, 2023). In this context, education can no longer be conceived as an exclusive or isolated task, but rather as an integrated and multi-level process requiring coherence, continuity, and shared meaning across educational environments.

Communication plays a decisive role within this framework. There can be no genuine alliance without authentic dialogue, nor can shared responsibility exist in the absence of a real convergence of educational goals and intentions (Bruner, 1996). Education, as Bruner himself argued, is fundamentally a narrative process through which individuals construct meaning from experience. It is within the relational fabric and the shared narratives between school and family that an educational project capable of guiding and sustaining students' development can take shape. In the Italian context, despite significant normative efforts aimed at promoting more advanced forms of participation, school–family relationships continue to oscillate between meaningful openings and structural resistances, often remaining anchored to vertical, formal, and episodic communication practices (Ministry of Education and Merit, 2023).

It is within this framework that the present article is situated. Its aim is to analyse the evolution of school–family relationships in the Italian context, focusing on the transition from predominantly formal participation towards a deeper form of educational co-responsibility, as outlined in the 2023 national guidelines. Particular attention is devoted to the strategic role of school autonomy, understood as a key lever for fostering meaningful dialogue with families and for reshaping school organisation from a relational perspective. The article also reflects on how the construction of an authentic educational alliance necessarily entails the development of a professional culture capable of integrating communicative, relational, and pedagogical competencies alongside didactic expertise, within a genuinely generative perspective (Palma, 2024). The overall intention is to offer a theoretical and practice-oriented contribution to the ongoing debate on how schools can increasingly become open, welcoming, and dialogical environments, able to value the complexity of educational relationships and to build, together with families, a solid and shared pact for students' growth and success.

2. From formal participation to educational co-responsibility: the normative evolution of school–family relationships in Italy

The reflection on the relationship between school and family within the Italian educational system has its roots in the reformist era of the 1970s. With Presidential Decree No. 416/1974, part of the so-called *Decreti Delegati*, a process of school democratization was initiated through the introduction of collegial bodies such as the Class Council and the School Council, formally recognising families as actors in school governance. This regulatory innovation aimed to overcome a centralised and hierarchical model of schooling, instead promoting a participatory culture that acknowledged the plurality of subjects involved in the educational process. Nevertheless, despite its original intentions, parental participation has often progressively taken the form of a bureaucratic fulfilment rather than a genuine assumption of educational co-responsibility. Opportunities for dialogue have frequently remained limited and burdened by formalism, with

*WORKING TOWARDS AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR PROMOTING INTERACTION
AMONG EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FAMILIES*

little impact on the pedagogical dimension of school–family relationships (Bettinelli & Cardarello, 2022). A more significant conceptual shift occurred with the introduction of the *Educational Co-responsibility Pact* (*Patto educativo di corresponsabilità*) through Presidential Decree No. 235/2007. This instrument marked an important evolution in the way relationships between schools, families, and students were conceived, moving the focus from formal participation towards a substantive sharing of educational goals. Updated in 2019, the Pact functions not only as a regulatory tool defining shared rights and duties, but also as a symbolic and dialogical device capable of fostering a culture of respect and mutual commitment to students’ holistic development (Presidential Decree No. 235/2007; Ministry of Education and Merit, 2023). Its deeper significance lies less in the formal act of signing than in its potential to initiate a process of reciprocal recognition of educational roles, encouraging a conscious and continuous collaboration between schools and families (Chiusaroli, 2022).

This orientation is further reinforced by the recent *Guidelines on Parental Participation and Educational Co-responsibility* issued by the Ministry of Education and Merit (2023), which explicitly stress the need to move beyond episodic and formal forms of involvement in order to promote authentic and structured educational co-design. The Guidelines outline a relational model grounded in practices of active listening, ongoing dialogue, and strategic cooperation, recognising educational co-responsibility not as a theoretical aspiration but as a necessary condition for effectively supporting students throughout their educational trajectories. Within this framework, the school–family relationship is understood as dynamic, process-oriented, and participatory, nourished not only by periodic meetings or official communications but also by institutionalised spaces for dialogue, joint training pathways, and structured opportunities for shared educational reflection (Zollo & Galdieri, 2023).

A further strategic element in redefining school–family relationships is represented by school autonomy, introduced by Law No. 59/1997 and subsequently regulated by Presidential Decree No. 275/1999. These reforms granted schools greater responsibility in designing their educational provision—now formalised in the *Three-Year Educational Offer Plan* (*Piano Triennale dell’Offerta Formativa*, PTOF)—in relation to territorial needs, available resources, and the specific characteristics of local school communities (Law No. 59/1997; Presidential Decree No. 275/1999). When interpreted merely in organisational terms, school autonomy risks being reduced to a technical–administrative mechanism. However, when reframed within an ethical and pedagogical perspective, it can become a powerful lever for co-responsibility, promoting a school identity that is open to dialogue with families and the wider social context. In this sense, autonomy enables schools to actively involve parents in the design and evaluation of educational activities, while also strengthening relationships of trust and reciprocity among educational actors (Moria, Rossi, & Toci, 2022). Achieving this potential, however, requires overcoming technocratic interpretations of autonomy and reclaiming its deeper pedagogical meaning, grounded in co-responsibility constructed over time through authentic relational practices.

Overall, the normative evolution of the Italian educational system from 1974 to the present reveals a persistent tension between models of formal participation and perspectives oriented

towards substantive educational co-responsibility. The contemporary challenge, therefore, lies in translating this principle into concrete practice, ensuring that it does not remain confined to declarative statements but becomes embodied in everyday experiences of educational cooperation. Only through a structured and continuous dialogue between schools and families—supported by coherent regulatory frameworks and a shared pedagogical orientation—can a solid educational alliance be built, capable of responding effectively and sensitively to the complexity of current educational challenges (Turano, 2023).

3. The relational dimension of teacher professionalism in Italy

As highlighted in the previous sections, within a context marked by profound normative, organisational, and social transformations affecting all levels of the Italian school system, educational professionalism is currently facing unprecedented and complex challenges. The evolution of students' educational needs and the transformation of their life contexts require teachers to expand their professional scope well beyond instructional planning and the implementation of daily teaching practices. Teachers are increasingly called upon to act as relational mediators within complex educational ecosystems, engaging not only with students but also with families, colleagues, and territorial actors.

In this regard, the Prime Ministerial Decree of 4 August 2023 (published in the Official Gazette No. 224 of 25 September 2023) defines the new framework for the initial training of secondary school teachers through the introduction of structured university-based qualifying pathways grounded in professional standards consistent with the educational aims of the Italian school system. Annex A of the decree outlines the professional profile of the qualified teacher, identifying a structured set of competencies—cultural, disciplinary, methodological, didactic, psycho-pedagogical, organisational, assessment-related, and digital—aimed at shaping a dynamic, reflective, and continuously evolving teaching professionalism. However, a closer reading of the document reveals a clear underrepresentation of relational competencies, particularly those related to communication with families and cooperative work within the broader educational community.

Although the introductory section of the decree acknowledges the importance of building positive educational relationships and recognises the teacher's orienting function, these dimensions appear marginal within the systematic articulation of professional competencies, which remains predominantly focused on technical and instructional aspects of teaching. Relational competencies are mentioned only in a fragmented and generic manner—for instance, in reference to classroom group management or to relations with families—without an explicit and integrated recognition of their transversal and strategic value. The resulting image is that of a teacher still primarily centred on individual didactic action, rather than on a distributed and collaborative professionalism capable of influencing the overall relational quality of the school context.

Such an approach risks overlooking a fundamental pedagogical principle: teaching professionalism cannot be confined to the technical–operational management of the classroom but must be understood as unfolding across a plurality of relational contexts that involve the entire

*WORKING TOWARDS AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR PROMOTING INTERACTION
AMONG EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FAMILIES*

school ecosystem. Interaction with colleagues, collaboration with families, and dialogue with educational and institutional actors in the local community constitute structural dimensions of teachers' work, whose educational effectiveness is closely intertwined with the quality of the relationships established.

Educational and sociological research has long emphasised the centrality of communicative and relational competencies in defining teacher professionalism. Perrenoud (2002), for instance, includes them among the ten key competencies for teaching, highlighting the importance of cooperation among colleagues, family involvement, and attention to relational dynamics with students. Similarly, the OECD report *Teachers Matter* (2005) and European policy documents on key competences for lifelong learning (Council of the European Union, 2018) stress the need to strengthen teachers' interpersonal and communicative skills as an integral part of both initial and in-service teacher education. Teachers are increasingly required to manage complex relational situations that demand competencies not always included in their professional repertoire and for which specific training opportunities are often insufficient or lacking altogether (Simeone, 2023). The effectiveness of educational action is therefore closely linked to teachers' ability to build and manage complex relational networks. Encounters with families engage teachers' professionalism in ways that extend beyond rational, conscious, and formal dimensions, involving emotional and symbolic aspects that situate the school–family relationship within the realm of implicit pedagogies and latent educational processes (Gariboldi, 2007). This highlights the growing need for a professional and intentional use of relational competence, which can only develop through training pathways that enable teachers to become reflective practitioners of the interactions they enact.

Within this perspective, the conscious use of communication emerges as a cornerstone of the educational co-responsibility pact between school and family. Communication cannot be reduced to a mere exchange of information; rather, it must be understood as a dialogical, empathic, and bidirectional practice capable of generating shared meanings. Following Bruner's (1996) cultural approach, the construction of educational meaning is possible only through communicative processes that integrate cognitive, emotional, and relational dimensions, making visible also the latent aspects of interactions.

For educational communication to fully realise its potential, teachers must be able to employ multiple communicative forms and expressive codes. Verbal language represents only one among many; non-verbal communication—comprising posture, tone of voice, facial expressions, eye contact, proxemics, and gestures—plays a crucial role in conveying meaning. As early studies have shown (Mehrabian, 1971), in contexts involving emotions and attitudes, a significant proportion of perceived meaning is transmitted through non-verbal channels. In school–family interactions, non-verbal communication assumes a strategic function, as it conveys trust, openness, willingness to listen, and mutual respect.

Teachers who are aware of their bodily language can enhance the effectiveness of verbal messages, prevent misunderstandings, and create a relational climate conducive to dialogue and educational collaboration. However, such competence is rarely the object of systematic training

within initial or in-service teacher education. Yet research on interpersonal communication consistently demonstrates that congruence between verbal and non-verbal communication is decisive for perceived credibility and for the quality of relationships established (Argyle, 1988; Hall, 2006). Coherent gestures, an empathic tone of voice, attentive eye contact, and an open bodily stance can facilitate dialogue even in sensitive situations, transforming interaction into a genuine experience of educational alliance.

Investing in teachers' communicative training, therefore, does not merely entail the development of technical skills but fosters deeper relational awareness and a more refined capacity to interpret the emotional and cultural signals that emerge within school–family dialogue. Strengthening the relational dimension of teacher professionalism thus represents a crucial condition for making educational co-responsibility both effective and sustainable within increasingly complex and plural educational contexts.

4. Educational autonomy and independence: family influence and European perspectives

Within a mature vision of educational co-responsibility, one of the most delicate and strategically relevant issues concerns the promotion of students' autonomy. Autonomy should not be understood merely as the ability to make decisions or to orient oneself consciously within one's educational pathway, but also as the progressive development of trust in one's own personal resources and capacities. The profound social, cultural, and familial transformations experienced across Europe over recent decades have generated increasingly complex dynamics, making the family context a decisive—yet never neutral—factor in shaping students' educational trajectories.

Comparative European and OECD data consistently demonstrate the strong influence of family background on students' educational outcomes and life chances. Large-scale international assessments such as PISA and longitudinal analyses conducted by the OECD highlight that parental education levels remain among the most powerful predictors of educational attainment across European countries (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2022; OECD, 2023). In Italy, this pattern appears particularly pronounced: students whose parents have lower levels of educational attainment face a significantly higher risk of early school leaving, while the likelihood of completing upper secondary and tertiary education increases sharply when at least one parent holds a university degree. Although national statistics capture this phenomenon in specific terms, similar intergenerational gradients are observable across most European education systems, confirming the structural nature of educational inequality within the European context.

From a comparative perspective, OECD analyses show that, on average across Europe, young people whose parents have not completed upper secondary education are more than twice as likely to leave education early compared to their peers from highly educated families. Conversely, the probability of completing tertiary education increases dramatically when students grow up in households endowed with higher levels of cultural and educational capital (OECD, 2022). This evidence reinforces Bourdieu's (1986) theoretical insight regarding the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital as a powerful driver of educational and social mobility. Families constitute not only affective and relational environments but also primary

*WORKING TOWARDS AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR PROMOTING INTERACTION
AMONG EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FAMILIES*

symbolic and cultural spaces in which linguistic codes, cognitive styles, expectations, and dispositions towards learning are acquired and internalised.

Parental educational attainment thus represents a cumulative advantage, operating not only at the symbolic level but also through concrete forms of support, guidance, expectations, and access to supplementary educational resources. Across Europe, policies aimed at promoting educational equity increasingly recognise the need to counterbalance these structural asymmetries through school-based interventions, early support measures, and inclusive pedagogical practices. At the same time, this growing awareness has generated ambivalent dynamics within family–school relationships. On the one hand, there has been an increase in parental involvement in children’s educational pathways; on the other hand, some contexts have witnessed the diffusion of forms of overprotection or educational substitution, which may hinder students’ processes of emancipation and responsibility-building (Biscaldi & Zunino, 2023).

Educational research suggests that autonomy cannot be either imposed or left to chance but must be carefully scaffolded within a balanced relational context. Students need to feel supported without being replaced, encouraged without being deprived of responsibility. In this sense, schools play a crucial role in fostering students’ perceived self-efficacy through didactic and relational practices that value personal initiative, frame error as a learning opportunity, and promote reflexivity as a key dimension of growth (Bruner, 1996). These processes may be compromised when families—especially in the absence of an explicit and shared educational pact—adopt substitutive rather than complementary roles, thereby weakening students’ opportunities to develop autonomy.

For this reason, educational co-responsibility must also translate into a clear and shared definition of respective roles and spheres of action. While families are primarily responsible for providing stable emotional support, value frameworks, and a home environment conducive to learning, schools retain the responsibility for designing, guiding, and evaluating students’ educational pathways within a perspective of progressive and personalised development (Chiusaroli, 2023). Bruner’s cultural perspective remains particularly relevant in this regard, as it emphasises that meaningful learning can only occur within cultural contexts that value language, dialogue, and the negotiation of meaning. Consequently, the promotion of autonomy cannot be reduced to a purely cognitive or methodological issue but must be rooted in a culture of mutual trust between school and family, based on clarity of roles, coherence of interventions, and a shared commitment to building a genuine educational alliance.

Within a European framework increasingly oriented towards equity, inclusion, and lifelong learning, the tension between protection and autonomy, guidance and freedom, should not be addressed through dichotomous or delegatory logics. Rather, it should be interpreted through the principle of educational subsidiarity, according to which each actor intervenes in support of the learner’s integral development, without replacing or neutralising the agency of others. From this perspective, activating shared spaces of reflection between teachers and parents becomes essential in order to develop a common educational vision and to prevent both conflictual dynamics and reciprocal forms of de-responsibilisation (Turano, 2023).

5. Operational proposals and future developments: a European-oriented perspective

In light of the analytical path outlined in the previous sections, it becomes increasingly evident that the school–family relationship, although institutionally recognised across European education systems, requires a profound rethinking capable of fully activating the educational potential embedded in a genuinely co-constructed alliance. Conceiving parental involvement merely as formal adherence or functional presence is no longer sufficient. Rather, there is a need to design and implement spaces, times, and modes of collaboration with an explicitly educational and relational orientation, in which dialogue among adult educational actors can generate shared meaning, guidance, and mutual trust. This need is particularly relevant in contemporary European societies, where young people—despite national specificities—exhibit broadly comparable behavioural patterns, aspirations, and vulnerabilities shaped by globalised cultural, digital, and social dynamics.

From this perspective, a first operational proposal concerns the establishment of stable and structured opportunities for reciprocal listening and dialogue, within which teachers and parents can engage in meaningful discussion around educational needs, strategies, and shared pedagogical responsibilities. Such spaces should move beyond the predominantly informational logic that still characterises many school–family interactions across Europe—often limited to individual meetings or unidirectional communications—and evolve into genuine laboratories of educational co-design. In these settings, families can be recognised as active partners in the educational process, valued for the experiential knowledge and cultural resources they bring (Castaldi, 2023; Palma, 2024). Comparable practices have been promoted in several European policy frameworks that emphasise parental engagement as a lever for educational inclusion and student well-being.

Alongside this, it is essential to promote joint training pathways involving both school staff and parents, aimed at fostering shared reflection on communication, conflict management, inclusion, and educational co-responsibility. The goal of such initiatives should not be to “educate” families in a prescriptive sense, but rather to create spaces of reciprocal exchange grounded in the recognition of everyday challenges and a shared commitment to acting in the best interests of children and young people. European experiences in family–school partnership programmes demonstrate that when training initiatives are designed with sensitivity to families’ languages, time constraints, and cultural backgrounds, they can significantly contribute to building durable cultures of trust and cooperation, moving beyond episodic responses to isolated problems (Chiusaroli, 2022; Zollo & Galdieri, 2023). Another strategic direction concerns the reconfiguration of the Educational Co-responsibility Pact. Across many European contexts, similar instruments exist but are frequently reduced to formal documents signed at the beginning of the school year, with limited pedagogical impact. Reframing such pacts as outcomes of participatory processes—open to dialogue, periodically revisited, and collectively negotiated—could restore both their symbolic and functional value. Moreover, extending these frameworks to include territorial actors such as local associations, social services, and third-sector organisations aligns with European approaches to education as a shared and community-based responsibility, recognising the plurality of actors involved in young people’s development (Mulè, 2024; Romeo, 2023).

WORKING TOWARDS AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR PROMOTING INTERACTION AMONG EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FAMILIES

To further support dialogue and strengthen the bond between school and family, the integration of narrative, reflective, and documentary tools into everyday school practice represents a promising avenue. Instruments such as shared diaries, learning portfolios, or digital platforms for formative documentation can help make visible what often remains implicit: students' learning processes, emerging difficulties, adopted strategies, and achieved milestones. When appropriately valued, these tools foster a plural and dialogical narration of educational experience and contribute to the construction of a shared memory of meaning—an approach increasingly encouraged within European policy discourses on formative assessment and learner-centred education (Dusi, 2023; Biscaldi & Zunino, 2023). Finally, none of these proposals can be fully effective if they are not embedded within a genuinely participatory school governance framework. Revitalising collegial bodies—not merely as representative structures but as authentic spaces for shared reflection and decision-making—constitutes a crucial condition for strengthening educational alliances. In this process, school leadership plays a decisive role in facilitating dialogue, acknowledging conflict as a generative dimension, and sustaining participation. The strategic use of digital technologies, widely promoted in European education policies, can further enhance accessibility and inclusiveness, particularly for families facing logistical, linguistic, or socio-economic barriers to participation (Moria, Rossi, & Toci, 2022; Turano, 2023).

Taken together, these proposals do not constitute a rigid model to be uniformly applied across diverse national contexts. Rather, they offer a cultural and operational orientation that invites schools to conceive themselves as open, plural, and dialogical educational communities. Within such a vision, families are not merely users or recipients of educational services but co-responsible actors in the formative process. Strengthening school–family partnerships in this way represents a key lever for responding to shared European educational challenges and for supporting young people's development within increasingly complex and interconnected social landscapes.

6. Conclusions

This article has explored the evolution of school–family relationships within the Italian educational system, situating it within a broader European and international framework marked by increasing complexity, social fragmentation, and persistent educational inequalities. Through an integrated analysis of normative developments, theoretical perspectives, and empirical evidence, the study has highlighted how the transition from formal participation to substantive educational co-responsibility represents not merely a regulatory adjustment but a profound cultural and pedagogical shift.

The analysis has shown that, despite significant policy efforts at both national and European levels, school–family partnerships continue to oscillate between declarative intentions and uneven practices. Normative instruments such as collegial bodies, the Educational Co-responsibility Pact, and school autonomy frameworks have undoubtedly expanded opportunities for participation, yet their transformative potential largely depends on the quality of relational processes enacted within schools. Without sustained dialogue, mutual recognition, and shared

responsibility, these tools risk remaining confined to formal compliance rather than fostering genuine educational alliances.

Particular attention has been devoted to the relational dimension of teacher professionalism, emphasising how communicative and interpersonal competencies constitute a foundational—yet still under-recognised—component of effective educational action. Strengthening these competencies through initial and in-service teacher education emerges as a strategic priority for enhancing school–family relationships and for supporting students’ holistic development. In parallel, the discussion of educational autonomy has underscored the decisive influence of family background on students’ trajectories across Europe, highlighting the need for balanced approaches that support autonomy without fostering dependency, and that align family involvement with school-based pedagogical guidance.

From a European policy perspective, the findings reaffirm the importance of integrated and multi-level strategies that address educational inequality, promote inclusion, and valorise families as co-responsible partners in education. The operational proposals outlined—ranging from structured spaces for dialogue and joint training pathways to participatory governance and narrative tools—should be understood as adaptable orientations rather than prescriptive models, capable of being contextualised across diverse national and local settings.

Ultimately, fostering an authentic educational alliance between school and family requires a shared cultural commitment to trust, dialogue, and subsidiarity. It calls for schools to position themselves as open and reflective educational communities, for families to be recognised as active and competent partners, and for policy frameworks to support relational and participatory practices over purely procedural ones. In this sense, strengthening school–family co-responsibility represents not only a response to current educational challenges but also a necessary condition for promoting equity, agency, and sustainable educational success for young people across Europe.

REFERENCES

1. Argyle, M. (1988). *Bodily communication* (2nd ed.). Methuen.
2. Bettinelli, M., & Cardarello, R. (2022). *Partecipazione e corresponsabilità educativa*. FrancoAngeli.
3. Biscaldi, I., & Zunino, A. (2023). *Famiglie e scuola: Relazioni educative nell’epoca della complessità*. Carocci.
4. Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.
5. Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. Sage.
6. Bruner, J. S. (1996). *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press.
7. Castaldi, C. (2023). *Educazione e comunità: Nuove alleanze tra scuola e famiglia*. Il Mulino.
8. Chiusaroli, L. (2022). *Patto educativo di corresponsabilità: Tra norma e relazione educativa*. Armando Editore.
9. Chiusaroli, L. (2023). *L’alleanza educativa come processo generativo*. Erickson.
10. Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(Suppl.), S95–S120. <https://doi.org/10.1086/228943>

*WORKING TOWARDS AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR PROMOTING INTERACTION
AMONG EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FAMILIES*

11. Council of the European Union. (2018). *Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning*. Official Journal of the European Union.
12. D.P.R. 31 maggio 1974, n. 416. *Istituzione degli organi collegiali della scuola*.
13. D.P.R. 21 novembre 2007, n. 235. *Regolamento recante modifiche al D.P.R. 24 giugno 1998, n. 249*.
14. D.P.R. 8 marzo 1999, n. 275. *Regolamento recante norme in materia di autonomia delle istituzioni scolastiche*.
15. Dusi, P. (2023). *Scuola e famiglia: Comunicazione, alleanza, corresponsabilità*. Mondadori Education.
16. Epstein, J. L. (2011). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools* (2nd ed.). Westview Press.
17. Gariboldi, A. (2007). *Pedagogia implicita e relazione educativa*. Vita e Pensiero.
18. Goodall, J., & Montgomery, C. (2014). Parental involvement to parental engagement: A continuum. *Educational Review*, 66(4), 399–410.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2013.781576>
19. Hall, E. T. (2006). *The hidden dimension*. Anchor Books. (Original work published 1966)
20. ISTAT. (2022). *Livelli di istruzione e ritorni occupazionali*. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica.
21. Legge 15 marzo 1997, n. 59. *Delega al Governo per il conferimento di funzioni e compiti alle regioni ed enti locali*.
22. Mehrabian, A. (1971). *Silent messages*. Wadsworth.
23. Ministry of Education and Merit. (2023). *Guidelines on parental participation and educational co-responsibility*. Italian Government.
24. Morin, E. (2001). *Seven complex lessons in education for the future*. UNESCO.
25. Moria, M., Rossi, F., & Toci, A. (2022). *Autonomia scolastica e comunità educante: Per una governance partecipativa*. Tecnodid.
26. Mulè, C. (2024). *Educazione diffusa e nuovi scenari pedagogici*. FrancoAngeli.
27. OECD. (2005). *Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers*. OECD Publishing.
28. OECD. (2019). *PISA 2018 results (Volume II): Where all students can succeed*. OECD Publishing.
29. OECD. (2022). *Education at a glance 2022: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing.
30. OECD. (2023). *PISA 2022 results (Volume I): The state of learning and equity in education*. OECD Publishing.
31. OECD. (2024). *Education at a glance 2024: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing.
32. Palma, S. (2024). *Comunicare l'educazione: Nuove prospettive nella relazione scuola–famiglia*. Zanichelli.
33. Perrenoud, P. (2002). *Dieci nuove competenze per insegnare*. Anicia.
34. Romeo, L. (2023). *Educazione e corresponsabilità: Percorsi di alleanza tra scuola, famiglia e territorio*. Le Monnier.
35. Simeone, R. (2023). *Le competenze relazionali nella professionalità docente*. Guerini Scientifica.
36. Turano, M. (2023). *Scuola, famiglia e territorio: Per un nuovo patto educativo*. SEI.
37. Zollo, F., & Galdieri, M. (2023). *Educare insieme: Linee guida per una corresponsabilità educativa*. Carocci.