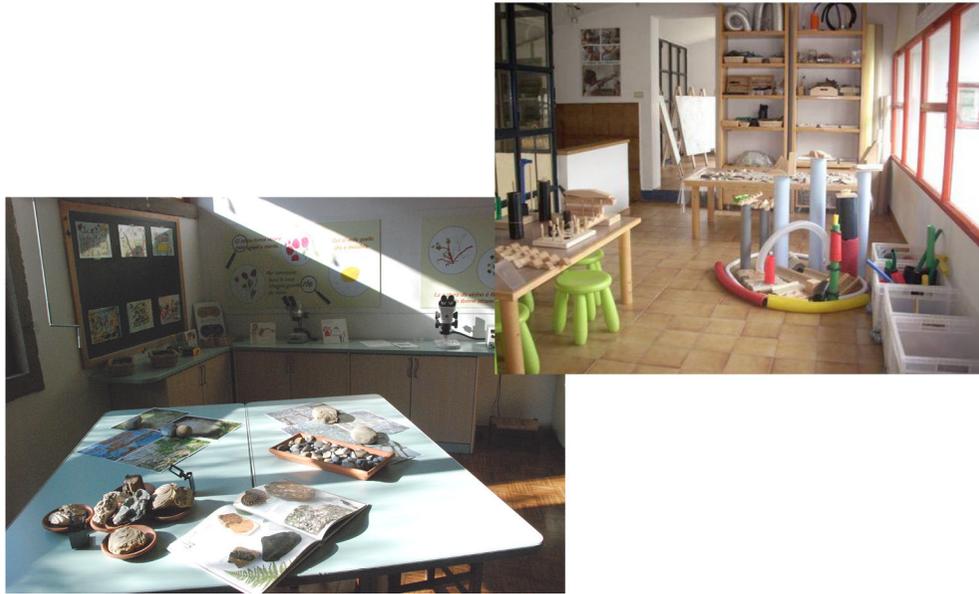


cific contexts. There is also now a working group consisting of the Coordination Group described above plus educators from the Areebambini, aiming to provide organisational and reflective support to the centres.



For over 20 years Pistoia's extensive network of early childhood centres has been the focus of attention from the international community.

The *Study in Pistoia* programme offers various different opportunities for study and training in the early childhood centres, and to know more about the experiences the city organises for children.

Every year the infant-toddler centres, preschools and Areebambini welcome many visitors, both from Italy and abroad, interested in studying and becoming familiar with Pistoia's experience.

The *Study in Pistoia* programme offers two types of experience:

1. Visiting the centres
2. Internships in the centres

A contact person working in the Education Department is concerned with planning, organising and overseeing internships and visiting delegations.

In over 50 years of educational history, Pistoia has created a common foundation for all the centres – infant-toddler centres, preschools, playspaces and *Areebambini* – built on sharing principles to bring to life a single educational, cultural and social programme that constitutes the identity of the city of Pistoia's early childhood centres.

Pistoia's early childhood education centres: inside the community and for the community



The infant-toddler centres, preschools and AreeBambini all grew from the same cultural and social origins, as the fruit of the education programme created and designed for children aged 0-6 years in the city of Pistoia

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CENTRES AND SCHOOLS

1964 the first preschool (3-6)

1972 the first infant-toddler centre (0-3)

1987 the first AreaBambini: AreaGialla (yellow) including workshops of children aged 4-8 years and the “Casa degli Orsi” playspace for children aged 18-36 months.

1996 the first Babies and Parents Centre: “Spazio Piccolissimi”.

In recent years, Pistoia has also experimented with different ways of running the centres, before settling on the current system which offers:

Centres for 0-3 years

- 5 infant-toddler centres / 1 playspaces / 1 babies and parents centre, all public and run directly by the city of Pistoia.
- 1 public infant-toddler centre and one public playspace, run by subcontract.
- 10 private infant-toddler centres accredited by the city of Pistoia.

In the school year 2025/2026, 51% of children in Pistoia attend the city-run infant-toddler centres.

Centres for 3-6 years:

- 7 city-run preschools
- 19 State-run preschools
- 8 private preschools

About 98% of Pistoia’s children aged between 3-6 years attend a preschool, which may be run by the State, the city or privately.

In the school year 2025/2026 about 18% of the children in this age group attend city-run preschools

We guarantee and protect privileged access to the centres for children with disabilities, in foster care or adopted families, in single-parent families, in families with socio-economical difficulties, and with working mothers.

AreaBambini

As well as the infant-toddler centres and preschools, Pistoia’s early childhood education system includes another type of centre: the AreaBambini (children’s areas).

The innovative and strategic decision to open the AreaBambini in Pistoia made it possible to meet and understand the families’ needs, linked to social and family changes, as well as offering children a place of their own in the city to satisfy their need to play, explore and discover, and be with other children – because playing together is better, and above all, more fun.



There are now four AreaBambini, each with its own identity, strongly characterised by the type of activity offered.

The workshops at the blue, green and yellow areas - AreaBlu, AreaVerde and AreaGialla – aim to promote what we consider to be important languages for children: artistic, scientific and symbolic languages. The red area - AreaRossa – is a space dedicated to families, where we aim to support parents through their experience in bringing up a young child.

Access to the AreaBambini takes place through a different system to that of the traditional centres. The AreaBlu, AreaVerde and AreaGialla workshops are open in the mornings to school class groups, whose teacher can book through the Pistoia Ragazzi website.

The AreaBlu, AreaVerde and AreaGialla workshops also play a specific role for the city’s preschools: the AreaBambini educators work together with the preschool educators to build specifically designed projects to support their teaching and the children’s experience within their daily activities.

Lastly, the workshops are also accessible in the afternoons: parents can subscribe and obtain a special card valid for 8 sessions. The *Incontraaree* programme enables children aged 5-8 years to spend one afternoon a week in the AreaBambini spaces, where they can meet new friends and explore different expressive languages.

The city’s pedagogical coordination team plays a strategic role, and has always focused on guaranteeing consistency and continuity in the activities and organisation of the developmental contexts available to the children, as well as supporting the educators in their ongoing process of learning from and reflecting on their practice, with a rich programme of training sessions to nourish a high level of educational philosophy.

The Education Department’s pedagogical coordinator is responsible for the educational and administrative coordination of each infant-toddler centre/ preschool / playspace /family space run by the city of Pistoia.

As of 2022 the pedagogical coordination structure has been redesigned, with a new Coordination Group consisting of: the executive officer for the city’s Education Department, the pedagogical coordinator, and educators, whose role is to support the work of the pedagogical coordinator in different spe-

