

# CONQUERING THE PASS FOR THE CITY OF THE SUN, A SMOKE-FREE CITY. Teaching the no wish to smoke.

## Introduction

Smoking is still nowadays the most frequent and dangerous risk factor for people health. It brings about more than 80.000 deaths every year in Italy and causes several cardiovascular, pneumologic and neoplastic pathologies with consequent increasing health and social costs. In Italy there has been a decrease in the age of smoking initiation. 65% of teens have already tried to smoke once by the age of thirteen. Although cigarettes' advertisement and smoking in public places are legally forbidden, smoking is still very common in environments where children are. Since children spend most of their time at home and at school, it is very important to involve parents and teachers in such a project. An early intervention is recommended because children have better abilities of learning correct concepts and healthy behaviours through games and fairy-tales.

## Instruments and methods

In order to better improve the project teachers are given a handbook and children a book to colour at home together with their parents. Students active participation is on the basis of the educational project. Children get to know two characters "Nicotine" and "No smoking, thanks" who can be performed by different people: teachers, parents, school assistants, etc. Through story telling and games children are taught to prevent smoking and learn a healthy way of life.

## Target

Children from 5 to 7 years old attending the last year of infant school and the first and second year of primary school represent the main target of this project. At a second stage, the target includes parents and teachers.

## Results

93 questionnaires were delivered to families and 47% of them were returned filled in by pupils' parents. According to the questionnaire replies 88% of parents having got children attending the infant school declare to know the project and all parents of children attending the primary school know about it. The educational project is approved by all those parents of children in the infant school and by 98% of parents having got children in the primary school. 35% of infant school pupils' parents and 62,9% of primary school pupils' parents think the activities performed within the project represent a reminder for family discussions about smoking. Moreover, some smoker parents - 16,5% of infant school and 14,3% of primary school children - state they were convinced to quit smoking. Teachers and students appreciate the good instruments and methods adopted for performing the project. Involvement of parents was good in primary school and low in infant school.

## Conclusions

Results obtained through the questionnaires show that the training experience was successful. Nonetheless it is now necessary, as in any educational programme, to continue to carry on the project. In school year 2009/2010 the project has been extended to all classes from year 1 to 5 of the same primary school involved last year in order to evaluate its effectiveness on a broader target of students.

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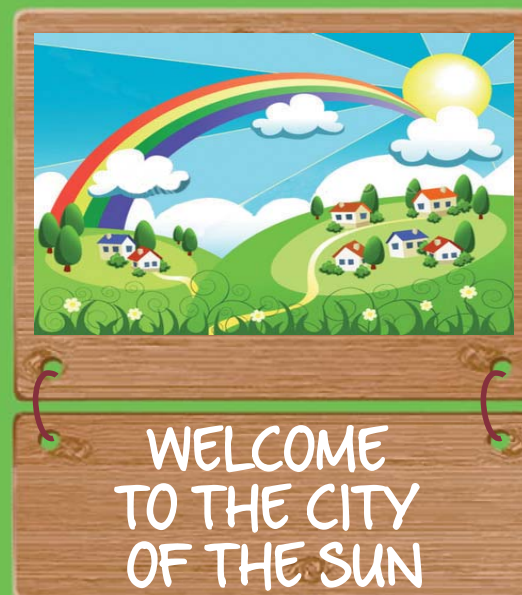
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