Social Indicators Research (2026) 181:33
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-025-03740-5

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Innovations and Challenges in Surveying Child Well-Being in Italy

Daniela Cocchi[1] · **Emilio Maria Colella**[2] · **Giulio Ecchia**[2] · **Enrico Elefante**[3] · **Francesco Giovinazzi**[1] · **Luciano Messori**[2] · **Francesca Tosi**[1,2] · **Massimo Ventrucci**[1] · **Matthew John Wakefield**[2]

Received: 30 October 2024 / Accepted: 7 November 2025

Abstract
This paper examines the state of child well-being survey data in Italy, highlighting the lack of longitudinal, child-centred studies, discussing the importance of such data for evidence-based policymaking and comparing Italy's situation with that of other European countries where cohort studies are more established. We emphasize the importance of high-quality, longitudinal data to inform social policy and capture the dynamic factors impacting well-being, such as economic, health, and educational conditions. Although international initiatives by organisations like UNICEF and the OECD, have advanced child well-being research, gaps remain in Italy, where data are fragmented and cross-sectional, limiting the understanding of long-term outcomes. We introduce GUIDE (Growing Up In Digital Europe), the proposed first pan-European birth cohort study, aimed at addressing this gap by providing harmonized, longitudinal data on child and youth well-being, collected by directly surveying children and their families. This would provide a novel perspective for social research in Italy, where data on children's viewpoints remain underdeveloped. As part of this initiative, Italy will conduct a pilot study for GUIDE in 2025, with a focus on adapting international survey tools to Italy's cultural context. We describe Italy's pilot study for GUIDE, including pre-test findings and sampling strategies, emphasizing the project's potential to inform social policy in Italy and across Europe. By enhancing Italy's child well-being data, GUIDE is positioned to inform policy and intervention strategies, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping child and youth well-being in Italy and Europe within a life-course framework.

Keywords Cohort study · Longitudinal data · Child Well-Being · Life-Course · Sampling strategies

✉ Francesca Tosi
francesca.tosi12@unibo.it

[1] Department of Statistical Sciences "Paolo Fortunati", University of Bologna, Via Belle Arti, 41, Bologna 40126, Italy

[2] Department of Economics, University of Bologna, Piazza Scaravilli, 2, Bologna 40126, Italy

[3] Direzione Generale – Ufficio ricerche, Agenzia Italiana per la Gioventù, Via Sabotino, 4, Rome 00195, Italy

Published online: 05 January 2026

1 Introduction

The concept of child well-being is broad and multidimensional, encompassing elements related to physical and psychological health, education, economic security, and the family environment (Rees et al., 2012). Major international organizations, such as UNICEF and the OECD, have developed definitions that emphasize a holistic approach, including economic, social, and educational variables to capture children's overall well-being (OECD, 2021). In recent years, the work of Rees and Pollock emphasized the importance for a child-centred approach to well-being, focusing on subjective measures that prioritize children's own perspectives and experiences (Pollock et al., 2021). Moreover, it has been acknowledged that childhood well-being influences various outcomes over the life course, such as adult health, academic achievement, quality of life, employment and socioeconomic status in adulthood, and the likelihood of passing on their life outcomes to their own children in the future (Goswami et al., 2016; Statham & Chase, 2010). This is why there is a recognized need for high-quality data on child and youth well-being; ideally, the data should include survey-based subjective measures and be collected in longitudinal form to capture the dynamics of childhood and youth development, as well as the impact of major life events.

Although there have been improvements in measuring and monitoring child well-being, significant gaps remain in both national and international child data. Therefore, national statistical offices, international organizations, and academic researchers have been involved in various initiatives to enhance data collection efforts. At the international level, tools such as the Children's Worlds survey, the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey, and the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have contributed to enhancing our knowledge and understanding of children's lives at different stages and in various aspects.

In Europe, the EU has adopted several policies to improve children's well-being in its Member States, including the European Child Guarantee (European Council, 2021), which aims to ensure access to essential services for children at risk of social exclusion. The EU's strategic framework emphasizes the need for multidimensional interventions that address not only material poverty but also access to education, healthcare, and social participation. To measure child well-being, various tools have been developed by Eurostat, such as the child-specific index of material and social deprivation based on the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey (Guio et al., 2012). In addition, as the headline indicator to monitor the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan poverty target, the at risk of poverty and social exclusion rate (AROPE), also based on EU-SILC data, measures the risk of being in a state of deprivation for individuals of any age.[1] Despite the efforts of the European Union to provide a harmonized and comparable framework to monitor children's living conditions, to create, execute, and evaluate effective child well-being policies, policymakers require data that more accurately reflect children's lives, focus on what matters to them, and identify emerging issues and vulnerabilities at an early stage.

On a national scale, many countries have seen an increase in country-specific surveys and datasets, which have significantly expanded the available evidence on child well-being. However, most OECD countries still lack sufficient data to inform their child well-being policies and do not have robust data systems for monitoring these policies. In Italy, child

[1] The AROPE is measured as the share of the population that is either at risk of poverty, and/or severely materially and socially deprived, and/or lives in a household with very low work intensity.

poverty and well-being are addressed within official statistics primarily through occasional surveys conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (Istat). These include the multipurpose survey *Family*, *Social Subjects*, *and Childhood Condition* – the first national survey on child well-being carried out in 1998 – the *Survey on the Integration of the second generation* (Istat, 2020), the *Survey on Living conditions of minors under 16 years old* (Istat, 2025), and the *Survey on Children and young people: behavior*, *attitudes*, *and future projects* (Istat, 2024). Scholarly initiatives are currently working to frame the existing knowledge on child well-being in Italy. A prominent example is the DORA (Data Integration for Acknowledging Risks and Protecting Children from Violence) project[2], which aims to identify and systematize all statistical sources related to violence against children by understanding the nature of the data already collected, the thematic areas covered, and other characteristics that will be useful for future data collection efforts.

However, like many other countries, Italy still lacks longitudinal, internationally comparable sources of subjective data on children's and adolescents' perceptions, evaluations, and aspirations, which are essential for assessing young people's *own* views on their well-being. Collecting data on children's lives using frameworks originally designed exclusively by adults or originated from the study of adult well-being has been deemed insufficient to provide a comprehensive view of the well-being of children and young people (Casas, 2011). Furthermore, adopting a longitudinal, life-course approach in studying child well-being is essential to capture how changes in young people's lives impact their overall well-being across different stages of development and life transitions (Pollock et al., 2021). Thus, developing concepts and frameworks that incorporate children's own perspectives – i.e., embracing a *child-centric* approach – is essential to guarantee their active participation and ensure that their voices are acknowledged in matters that impact them, especially in child well-being policies (Fernandes et al., 2013; Goswami et al., 2016).

This holistic approach to measuring children's well-being is embodied in the Growing Up in Digital Europe (GUIDE) project, which aims to be the first Europe-wide comparative birth cohort study. GUIDE seeks to provide longitudinal statistical evidence on the well-being of children and young people growing up in Europe to inform social policy across the continent. This will be achieved by developing harmonized survey tools and coordinating the administration of questionnaires to children and their caregivers across two cohorts, following them from infancy through early adulthood, with operations set to span from 2027 to the mid-2050s.

This paper will illustrate how the GUIDE project is developing across the pre-test and pilot phases within the Italian context, providing a comprehensive overview of the instruments utilized and the lessons learned throughout the process. The paper begins with a brief review of the current state of knowledge on child well-being in Italy (Sect. 2), drawing on both the most recent scientific literature and evidence produced by official statistics. Section 3 outlines the setup for the GUIDE project including international piloting of the survey, and Sect. 4 provides a detailed description of the pilot's implementation in Italy. In Sect. 5 the paper reflects on the potential impact of the GUIDE initiative on policy in the Italian context. Section 6 concludes.

[2] https://ares20.it/dora/.

2 Child Well-being in Italy: A Synthetic Review

Theoretical studies emphasize that children's well-being throughout the life course is influenced by both individual and contextual factors, including family resources, social policies, and the level of community cohesion (Reynolds et al., 2017). Access to essential services, such as healthcare and quality education, is crucial for ensuring harmonious development, promoting future health status, and providing protection against poverty and social exclusion (Hertzman & Wiens, 1996). Factors like parental income, educational attainment, and employment status are crucial in shaping children's developmental outcomes (Currie & Rossin-Slater, 2015; Joshi, 2020). Additionally, the degree of parental involvement, particularly in activities that stimulate cognitive development, has a profound effect on children's intellectual growth (Del Boca et al., 2017). Another critical element is nutrition, as a child's diet directly affects both their cognitive and physical development. Nutritional deficiencies, especially in early childhood, are associated with lower academic achievement and a heightened risk of long-term health problems (Tosi & Rettaroli, 2022). Disability is also a significant individual risk factor. Children with disabilities face numerous challenges that affect their access to healthcare, education, and social integration. These barriers often negatively impact overall quality of life and exacerbate inequalities in both health and educational outcomes (Balbo & Bolano, 2024). Furthermore, access to community resources – such as educational institutions, healthcare services, and social networks – significantly influences children's development and well-being. Quality childcare services are essential for promoting children's cognitive and social growth, particularly in disadvantaged settings. Research shows that early childhood education fosters academic achievements and also social inclusion, helping reduce long-term inequalities (Brilli et al., 2016).

Children from migrant backgrounds or second-generation youth face additional contextual challenges. These children often encounter barriers to social mobility and education, which exacerbate their vulnerability to social exclusion. Giovinazzi and Cocchi (2021) emphasize that second-generation children in Italy experience structural disadvantages, such as limited access to high-quality education, which further compounds their social risks. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted and intensified these disparities (Cusinato et al., 2020). The pandemic's disruptions to education, healthcare, and other essential services have had profound negative effects on well-being, particularly for children from vulnerable communities. Increased developmental delays, mental health challenges, and reduced access to educational opportunities during this period have disproportionately affected children with disabilities and those from low-income or migrant families.

According to Eurostat, in 2024 children aged less than 18 in the EU were at a risk of poverty or social exclusion that was 4 percentage points higher than the risk for adults (24.2% compared to 20.2%). Significant disparities between countries also exist. Children in Northern and Central Europe generally report higher levels of well-being compared to their peers in Southern and Eastern Europe. Countries like Bulgaria (35.1%), Spain (34.6%), Romania (33.8%), Greece (27.9%), and Italy (27.1%) report the highest levels of child deprivation, while Slovenia (11.8%), Cyprus (14.8%), Czechia (15.4%), the Netherlands (15.8%), and Denmark (15.9%) present better conditions for children.[3]

Children's well-being in Italy is marked by pronounced regional disparities and specific vulnerabilities. According to Istat's *Survey on Living conditions of minors under 16 years*

[3] Source: Eurostat, indicator ilc_peps01n (last accessed on 1 August 2025).

old (2025), 26.7% of children under 16 are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared to an average of 23.1% for the total population. The risk is higher in the South (43.6%), compared to the Centre (26.2%) and the North (14.3%). Migratory background and citizenship are key factors: foreign minors face a risk of poverty or social exclusion in 43.6% of cases, a rate 20 percentage points higher than that of their peers with Italian citizenship (23.5%). This difference reaches its peak in the South, where the risk of poverty or social exclusion is 78.2% for foreign children compared to 40.9% for Italian children. In the North, the figure for foreign minors is 10 percentage points lower than the national average (33.9%), while the value for Italian children is much lower (9.3%). Concerning household composition, children from single-parent families are the most affected by economic difficulties (38.3%), particularly when the household is led by a single mother (48.4%). Moreover, families with children are more likely than other family types to face financial burdens such as mortgage (22.7%, compared to a national average of 10.2%) or rental payments (23.6% vs. 18.4%) – and the gap is even more pronounced for single-parent families, especially where that parent is a mother.

In 2024, 11.7% of children and adolescents under 16 living in Italy experienced material deprivation (Guio et al., 2012). The proportion is in line with the European average[4], though the severity of deprivation is particularly significant. Common forms of deprivation include living in families unable to replace damaged furniture with items in good condition (88.6%), take one-week of vacation away from home each year (85.4%), and regularly engage in recreational activities outside the home (67.5%). In terms of food deprivation, 4.9% of minors under 16 (8.9% in the South) lived in households unable to purchase necessary food, and 2.3% did not consume at least one protein-rich meal a day because of economic difficulties faced by their families.

The *Children and young people: behaviour*, *attitudes*, *and future projects* (Istat, 2024) study surveyed 39,214 respondents aged 11 to 19 years, highlighting both the demographic decline and the growing multiculturalism among children in Italy. As of January 2024, the population of children and young adults aged 11 to 19 amounted to 5.14 million, representing 8.7% of the total population. Notably, 9.7% of this group has a migration or foreign background – with six out of ten among them (59.5%) being born in Italy and 11.8% arriving after the age of 11. The study focused on both investigating the digital habits of children and adolescents and exploring their future aspirations, revealing that young people aged 11 to 19 are highly integrated into the digital world[5], with 85% of them having a social media profile (97% among those aged 17 to 19). Gender differences show that girls have more frequent online interactions with friends, while boys engage more in face-to-face meetings, seeing their friends daily or several times a week. Educational aspirations vary by socioeconomic and migration background: 60.3% of students from affluent families plan to attend a university-preparatory high school (*liceo*), versus 34.8% of those from less secure backgrounds. Disadvantaged students are more likely to opt for vocational paths (15.6%) or remain undecided (34.5%). University aspirations are stronger among girls (67.4%) than boys (46.4%), and lower among foreign-born students (44.5%) than their Italian-born peers

[4] The countries with the least favourable material conditions for minors under 16 are Greece (33.6%), Romania (31.8%), and Bulgaria (30.4%). Conversely, the countries with the lowest levels of deprivation are Croatia (2,7%), Slovenia (3.8%), and Sweden (5.6%) (Istat, 2025).

[5] The report confirmed that children and adolescents are digital natives, with an interesting 79% of respondents using smartphones or tablets to complete the survey.

(57.8%). Finally, 32.3% of youth express anxiety about the future, especially girls (42% vs. 23.1% among boys).

Istat has conducted several studies exploring specific dimensions of child well-being, such as social integration, education, and health. One of the earliest and most comprehensive initiatives was the multipurpose survey *Family*, *Social Subjects*, *and Childhood Condition*, carried out in 1998. This survey used a dedicated questionnaire for children and adolescents aged 0–17, covering a broad range of topics including school life, leisure time, interpersonal relationships, play, participation in household chores, and support to family members. In the years that followed, Istat continued to enrich the evidence base on child well-being through focused studies that have addressed individual aspects in depth. While these studies have yielded important and detailed insights, they were generally not designed within a unified, child-centred, multidimensional framework. As a result, the integration of different domains of child well-being into a single, coherent picture remains an area with potential for further development. For example, Istat's study on the integration of second-generation children in Italy (2020) offered valuable information on the experiences of students with a migration background, particularly in the educational system. Based on data collected among secondary school students, the study highlighted specific barriers encountered by these children, such as delayed school enrolment and lower academic performance.

Alongside official sources, other institutions have produced valuable data on children in Italy. Research institutions including UNICEF Innocenti and the CHILD Centre at the University of Turin, and organizations like Save the Children Italia and Fondazione Con i Bambini, have contributed studies on child well-being, education, and poverty, including among marginalized groups.

Despite these efforts to produce complementary data to monitor children's and young people's well-being, Italy's survey landscape shows important gaps, particularly the lack of longitudinal studies. Existing surveys (e.g., Istat's EU-SILC and other surveys on living conditions) offer nationally representative data on child poverty, material and social deprivation, and access to educational services but are largely cross-sectional, providing snapshots at one point in time without following individuals over the long term. This absence of longitudinal data limits the ability to understand how life circumstances and experiences affect children's long-term development and well-being in Italy (Pollock et al., 2018). Other countries – including the UK, France, Norway, Germany, Denmark, and Ireland – conduct cohort studies that track individuals from birth to adulthood, enabling deeper analysis of growth trajectories, educational transitions, physical and mental health conditions, and social mobility for targeted interventions with evidence-based policies.

Italy also lacks continuous coverage across all age groups from early childhood to young adulthood. Current data often exclude critical life stages such as adolescence and the transition to adulthood, hindering a full understanding of how social inequalities emerge and evolve over time.

To close this gap, Italy needs a longitudinal monitoring system that follows children and young people throughout their development. Such a system would allow for comprehensive, nationally representative data collection across multiple domains (social, economic, health, educational), support evidence-based policy-making, and bring Italy in line with European best practice.

3 GUIDE: the European Backdrop

The GUIDE (Growing Up In Digital Europe) project aims to establish the first Europe-wide comparative birth cohort study to provide longitudinal statistical evidence on the well-being of children and young people to inform social policy across the continent. Italian involvement in this project could fill the evidence gap described above and would also facilitate international comparisons as data would be harmonised across European countries. In this section and the next, we describe the advancement of GUIDE in Italy.

The aim of the GUIDE is to establish a harmonized, Europe-wide, accelerated, longitudinal cohort study. As a longitudinal cohort study the GUIDE would aim to find a sample of children from a given year of birth, and to periodically collect survey evidence from these children and/or their parents/carers as the children grow. The accelerated nature of the study refers to the fact that the aim is to have overlapping samples from two cohorts, the first a "child cohort" of families with children aged 8-years when first interviewed, and the second an "infant cohort" of families with children that are approximately one-year old when their parents/carers are first interviewed.

A proposed timeline for the data collection could involve a first wave of data collection as soon as 2027 when both the child and a parent/carer of the "child cohort" sample families would be interviewed. Further interviews with this cohort would happen every third year, so when the children are 11, 14, and so on. First interviews with parents/carers of the infant cohort could happen in 2029 (and so be the second wave of GUIDE data collection), with a follow-up at age 3 and subsequently in every third year (so at ages 5, 8, 11, and so on). Thus, once the two cohorts are being followed at a three-yearly frequency the pattern of data collection would be a year with data collection from the "child cohort", a year with data collection from the "infant cohort", then a gap year before returning to the child cohort. If the samples are followed until the children become young adults (approximately 23 years old), then data collection would continue until the mid-2050s. The initial samples for each cohort in the GUIDE survey should, for each country, be representative of families with children in the respective age-ranges. Planned initial sample sizes are of 8,000 (families with) children in the child cohort and 10,000 children in the infant cohort, with sample sizes halved for countries with smaller populations. Strategies to select the initial samples – exploiting stratification and probabilistic sampling – are currently being drawn up by a scientific group within the European GUIDE consortium.

Ahead of the proposed first waves of data collection, GUIDE has already begun a program of pilot studies.[6] Pilot studies offer valuable insights into research design and execution and have already been completed in Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland and Slovenia. The pilot studies have been used to trial survey instruments for the proposed first two waves of data collection and so each pilot has included three respondent groups: caregivers of 8-year-olds, the 8-year-olds themselves, and caregivers of newborns (6–15 months old), each with a dedicated questionnaire. Participating countries implemented the pilot studies employing convenience samples assembled with strategies that depended on the options available to,

[6] Pilot studies in Croatia, Finland, France and Ireland were part of the COORDINATE (COhort cOmmunity Research and Development Infrastructure Network for Access Throughout Europe) project. COORDINATE is part of the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme with grant agreement No 101,008,589. The team of authors of this paper come from the Italian research group that is attached to this project.

Table 1 Contents from parents questionnaire

Parents Questionnaire – Child cohort		Parents Questionnaire – Infant cohort
Section 1	Household information	Household information
Section 2	Socio-demographics	Socio-demographics
Section 3	Employment and socioeconomics	Employment and socioeconomics
Section 4	Housing, neighbourhood and community	Housing, neighbourhood and community
Section 5	Pregnancy and birth	Pregnancy and birth
Section 6	Child's health and well-being	Baby's health and nutrition
Section 7	Child's education	Baby's development and habits
Section 8	Child's care, parental support and parenting	Child's care, parental support and parenting
Section 9	Child's activities	Child functioning and relationships
Section 10	Health and well-being	Health and well-being
Section 11	Self-completion	Self-completion

Table 2 Contents from children questionnaire

Children Questionnaire	
Section 1	Demographic information
Section 2	Initial questions
Section 3	Life, safety and relationships
Section 4	Self-perception and social relationships
Section 5	Health and physical well-being
Section 6	Emotional well-being
Section 7	Social well-being
Section 8	School
Section 9	Family and home
Section 10	Friendships
Section 11	Bullying
Section 12	Free time and activities
Section 13	Electronic devices and internet
Section 14	Family finances
Section 15	Neighbourhood and community

and choices of, national scientific committees.[7] The specific strategy adopted in Italy to construct a convenience sample is discussed in Sect. 4.2 of this paper.

Full questionnaires for each of these respondent groups were developed by the international research team of the GUIDE project. It is important to note that young people provided input into the design of these questionnaires through the establishment of youth advisory boards: the child-centric nature of GUIDE goes beyond the plan to interview children. Tables 1 and 2 summarise the contents of the questionnaires, organised in sections.

In terms of the evidence gap discussed above, it is important that the research design and the questionnaires put great emphasis on measuring well-being from both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives. Hedonic well-being is operationalized as pleasure and happiness, with an emphasis on the presence of positive emotions and the absence of negative ones. Eudaimonic well-being is instead assessed through self-realization, personal growth, and goal attainment. In addition to these measures, the questionnaires also include items related to health and to material conditions. This multi-dimensional approach provides a compre-

[7] Access to population registers is one option that was not always available for pilot studies.

hensive view of respondents' well-being[8], with outcomes that can be linked to the socioeconomic background of the individuals and their families. Consequently, GUIDE can address the need for survey-based evidence, particularly in countries like Italy that lack cohort studies to provide data on the well-being of younger populations.

The GUIDE pilot studies involve European nations of different sizes and encompass a range of cultural, linguistic and institutional differences. The harmonized nature of the project involves a common questionnaire that is translated to meet the linguistic and cultural contexts in which the survey is carried out. In line with best practice in cross-national survey design, the GUIDE project has employed the "TRAPD" protocol[9] to translate questionnaires; this procedure is described more fully in our discussion of the ongoing Italian pilot, below. The common questionnaire is important for the purposes of the pilot project, and so even though piloting has not been simultaneous in different countries, structural changes to the to questionnaires will only be considered once full results of pilots in different countries have been analysed and compared.

The GUIDE pilot studies have been primarily designed to test the cultural adaptability of the survey questionnaires and the effectiveness of questionnaire translation. Additionally, the pilots have also proved useful as precedents for testing other aspects of survey implementation. For example, across the different pilot studies that have been or are being conducted, different approaches have been taken to find and recruit the pilot-sample, and regarding the use of cash or "near-cash" incentives[10] to sample members to encourage participation. So far pilot survey interviews have been conducted face-to-face, usually using the CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviews) technique, although some interviews (notably in Finland) have been realised on a CAVI (Computer Assisted Video Interview) basis.

The GUIDE pilot studies have therefore been invaluable in terms of testing questionnaire content, but also for trialling these elements on recruitment methods, incentivization of survey samples, and modes of questionnaire administration. The feedback collected will be analysed by the supranational scientific committee. Composed of representatives of the countries participating in the GUIDE project, the committee will make decisions on potential structural changes to the questionnaires, methods of sample recruitment, and modes of survey administration, for Wave 1 of the full GUIDE survey.

The GUIDE pilot studies that have already been concluded have been deemed a success: samples were reached in a timely fashion and feedback from sample members and interviewers was generally positive. The ongoing Italian pilot study can make several contributions to the evidence already gathered. Some of these contributions, for example regarding questionnaire translation and adaptability, will be specific to the Italian context, but those regarding the design elements like recruitment methods and modes of survey administration, will have a wider applicability. Overall, the evidence gathered from the GUIDE pilots can provide a roadmap for future researchers, allowing for informed decision-making in navigating budgetary constraints and optimizing resource allocation when implementing a large-scale survey.

[8] For a discussion on the complementarity and divergence of hedonic and eudaimonic approaches, see, for instance, Ryan and Deci (2001).

[9] See Harkness, 2003, and Survey Research Center, 2016.

[10] "Near-cash" incentives would be things like vouchers that can be redeemed with certain retailers or for certain product.

4 GUIDE in Italy: the State of Play

As mentioned above, a pilot study for the GUIDE survey, involving a sample of families with 8-year-old children, and a sample of families with infants, is to go into the field in Italy in the central months of 2025 (Colella et al., 2025). The Italian GUIDE pilot is made possible by FOSSR (Fostering Open Science in Social Science Research). This is a project funded through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) – NextGenerationEU plan, and coordinated by the National Research Council (CNR). GUIDE is part of Work Package 4 (WP4) within this project.[11] Led by the CNR-IRPPS (Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies), WP4 focuses on enhancing the infrastructure for panel and longitudinal data in Italy and connecting FOSSR to major European social science research groups. Within WP4, the GUIDE survey works alongside SHARE and the Gender and Generation Survey (GGS), as well as the first Italian Online Probability Panel (IOPP).

As the Italian GUIDE pilot is entering the field, certain steps have already been taken, and decisions made. The survey questionnaires have been translated into Italian, and strategic decisions regarding sample size and recruitment have been made. We discuss these elements in the next subsections. In addition, the methods of survey administration have been chosen. For the child cohort with eight-year-old children, interviews will be conducted face to face using CAPI techniques. For the infant cohort, where only adults (parents/carers) are interviewed, the aim is to conduct half of the interviews using a CAPI technique, and half of the interviews as Computer Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI). CAWI interviews are self-completed by the interviewee via a web-interface: support from survey-agency staff is only needed to deal with queries or technical problems and may often be provided remotely. Italy will be the first country in the GUIDE consortium to administer the questionnaire using the CAWI mode. This innovation, based on rapid developments on the frontier of interview implementation technique, is a very important element of the Italian pilot study as it could pave the way for potential cost reductions via a "push to web" in the full-scale GUIDE survey.

4.1 Translation and Pretesting of GUIDE Questionnaires

As mentioned above, the translation of the GUIDE questionnaires into Italian followed the TRAPD approach, the acronym standing for Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pre-test and Documentation. This process was carried out by the Bologna research team, with technical support from Centerdata[12], prior to the beginning of the pilot process. TRAPD is considered a best practice in cross-cultural survey research, as it helps to minimize translation errors, ensure cultural sensitivity, and enhance the validity and reliability of data collected across different countries. Initially, two different translators independently translated the questionnaire from English to Italian (Translation). Following this phase, a designated reviewer synthesised and harmonised the two competing versions (Review and Adjudication). Then, an Italian pre-test was implemented (Pre-test). It consisted in interviewing a small convenience sample, to evaluate the translated questionnaires. Based on the outcomes of the pre-test, the Italian versions of the GUIDE questionnaires have been fine tuned for the pilot survey.

[11] See: https://www.fossr.eu/cosa-facciamo/miglioramento-dellinfrastruttura-dei-dati-panel-e-longitudinali-in-italia/.

[12] Particular thanks to Maurice Martens at Centerdata.

Table 3 Pre-test module: feedback questions

Pre-test Module
Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree):
[Q1] I had no difficulty understanding what was being asked of me in the questions included in this section of the questionnaire.
[Q2] The response options for the questions included in this section of the questionnaire were clear and comprehensive.
[Q3] I did not feel discomfort or embarrassment in responding to the questions included in this section of the questionnaire (e.g., overly personal questions).
[Q4] Please provide us with open-ended feedback regarding the content of the questionnaire or your interview experience so far (e.g., are there specific questions for which you encountered difficulties? If yes, which ones? Why?)

Table 4 Numerical results of Pre-test Module, Children Questionnaire

Children Questionnaire			
	Q1	Q2	Q3
Section 1	5.0	5.0	5.0
Section 2	4.8	4.8	4.8
Section 3	4.4	4.4	5.0
Section 4	4.2	4.4	4.8
Section 5	4.6	4.2	5.0
Section 6	3.8	4.6	4.6
Section 7	4.6	5.0	5.0
Section 8	4.6	5.0	4.6
Section 9	5.0	5.0	5.0
Section 10	5.0	4.6	5.0
Section 11	4.6	4.8	5.0
Section 12	4.8	4.8	4.8
Section 13	4.6	5.0	4.6
Section 14	4.4	5.0	4.6
Section 15	4.2	5.0	5.0

The pre-test involved a small number of in-person pen-and-paper interviews, conducted with 9-year-old children (as a proxy for 8-year-olds), and with parents of the GUIDE cohorts. To gain feedback from the interviews, a "Pre-test Module" was included at the end of each section of the questionnaire (sections as listed in Tables 1 and 2, above). It consisted of the following four additional questions, summarised by Table 3 below:

While the small number of pretest interviews means that feedback from the pretest was qualitative in nature, Questions 1 to 3 allowed us to compute numerical results to assess comprehension, clarity of response options, and respondent comfort. Tables 4 and 5 show numerical results of the three questions of the Module for each section of the questionnaires. The same results are reported in Figs. 1 and 2 in which sections with an average score equal to or below 4.5 are highlighted in a darker shade of grey.

The qualitative results of the Italian pre-test suggested some potential areas of improvement for questionnaires or for the translation and adaptation process. It showed how sections related to emotions, self-perception, social relationships, and family finances posed the

Table 5 Numerical results of Pre-test Module, Parents Questionnaire

Parents Questionnaire			
	Q1	Q2	Q3
Section 1	4.8	4.5	4.9
Section 2	5.0	5.0	5.0
Section 3	4.4	4.7	4.3
Section 4	4.4	4.5	5.0
Section 5	4.9	4.8	5.0
Section 6	3.9	4.4	4.9
Section 7	4.9	4.6	5.0
Section 8	4.4	4.8	5.0
Section 9	4.5	4.6	5.0
Section 10	4.9	5.0	5.0
Section 11	4.3	4.2	4.5

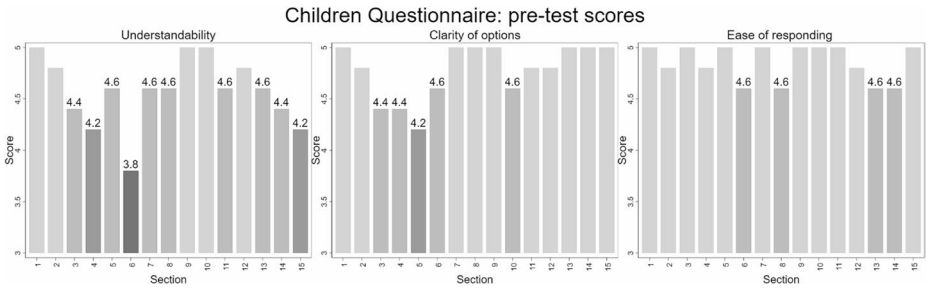

Fig. 1 Children Questionnaire Pre-test score
Note: Darker bars indicate scores that are equal to or below 4.5

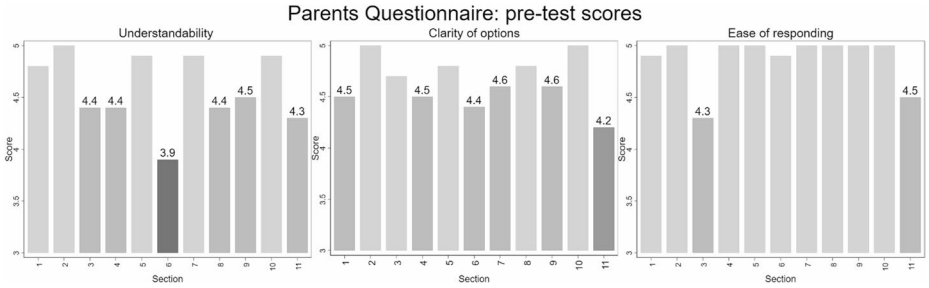

Fig. 2 Parents Questionnaire Pre-test score
Note: Darker bars indicate scores that are equal to or below 4.5

most comprehension challenges for children,[13] while for the small sample of parents, the sections on child health, work, education, housing conditions, and childcare, were the most challenging. Additionally, some questions were identified as potentially causing discomfort or embarrassment, especially those related to sensitive topics or personal experiences.

As emphasized in Sect. 3, a common questionnaire across pilot countries is an important element of the GUIDE pilot process. Results from the Italian pretest were used to inform some minor wording adjustments to the translated questionnaires, ahead of the Italian pilot. However, at this stage adjustments of content are not being made, rather, errors in wording or translation and adaptation have been fixed. For changes of content, it will be important to see if the issues raised in the pretest are confirmed, in a more statistically robust way, in the larger samples of the full GUIDE pilots. More substantial changes to questionnaires may happen ahead wave 1 of GUIDE, but these will follow the recommendations of the supranational scientific group that is analysing pilot results and reviewing the questionnaires that will again be harmonised across countries for Wave 1. The pretest also played another role, which was to inform training for the GUIDE pilot survey interviewers, by giving them guidance on how to behave during the interview with regard to potentially sensitive questions, especially when the interview is with a child respondent.

4.2 Sample Strategy and Implementation

Using the post-pretest questionnaire, the Italian pilot study for the GUIDE project is to be conducted in the central months of 2025. While the samples of the GUIDE survey should aim to be representative of the population groups that are sampled, in the pilot studies smaller convenience samples are selected in a way that is feasible but that will nonetheless provide some heterogeneity in the characteristics of the interviewed families. The Italian pilot will, for example, sample families in both the north and the south of the country as it will be conducted in four regions: Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna in the North, Campania and Puglia in the South.[14] The Italian pilot aims to conduct a total of 1,950 interviews, distributed as follows:

- 1,300 interviews in 650 families with children aged 8 years and older. Two face-to-face CAPI interviews will be conducted in each family (*child* cohort): one with the parent/guardian (approximately 60 min) and one with the child (approximately 30 min).
- 650 interviews in families with children aged between 0 and 1 year (infant cohort), of which:
  - 325 families with children aged between 0 and 1 year (infan*t* cohort). Face-to-face CAPI interviews with a parent/guardian (approximately 60 min).
  - 325 families with children aged between 0 and 1 year (infant cohort). Self-administered CAWI interviews with a parent/guardian (approximately 60 min).

[13] Sect. 6 of the child questionnaire on Emotional well-being received a particularly low score for "understandability", but a less low score for ease of responding, perhaps partly because the available response categories were understood.

[14] Following a competitive tender procedure, fieldwork implementation, including administering the questionnaires, is handled by a consortium comprising CSA Research and Intellera Consulting. This consortium is collaborating with researchers from the FOSSR WP4 team, and with scientific advisors from our group at the University of Bologna.

It is worth noting that the Italian GUIDE pilot study aims for a larger (convenience) sample size than the pilot studies already implemented in other European countries. Ideally, to reach samples, access to population registers would be an efficient solution, allowing for easy identification of 8-year-old children and newborns, and enabling the swift creation of a pool of target families for random sampling. However, lack of access to these registers for the pilot study, necessitates resorting to strategies with a more unpredictable response rate. Here we describe the strategy that is being adopted for the child cohort (families with 8-year-old children) in the Italian GUIDE pilot survey.[15]

For this cohort, the strategy to reach the sample of families to be interviewed focuses on the interaction with trusted centres to identify families eligible for the interview, and for the child cohort the trusted centres are primary schools. The first step in building the sample was sampling cities in which trusted centres would have been selected. The four municipal capitals were considered, and 10 municipalities with over 30,000 inhabitants were selected from the rest of the province. To reach a minimum number of municipalities, neighbouring provinces were also considered for Bologna and Bari. For these two provinces, all municipalities with over 30,000 inhabitants belonging to the provinces bordering the province of the municipal capital, were taken into account.

As mentioned, the trusted centres are primary schools. More accurately they are "comprehensive institutes"[16], which are organisations run by one principal (or head), but which may include more than one school. The strategy involves asking principals to agree to assist the GUIDE research group in reaching the families of pupils enrolled in the third year of primary school in the academic year 2024/25. In particular, schools act as an intermediary conveying to families the object of the research through institutional communication and providing families with the means to join the project. The strategy for the selection of the sample schools in the four GUIDE regions was to choose larger schools, in order to reach an adequate number of families with eight-year-old children. The procedure resulted in a list of slightly more than 160 comprehensive institutes, which account for almost 360 primary schools. The sampling strategy gave a sample of schools that is approximately evenly divided between municipal capitals and other neighbouring municipalities.

To realise the target number of interviews, it is necessary that some families in the target sample actually participate in the survey. For the Italian sample, financial incentives to encourage participation are not available. It is known that there is a positive correlation between financial incentives and survey response rates (Smith et al., 2019; Abdelazeem et al., 2022). The lack of such compensation might negatively affect the willingness to participate in future surveys, while its presence can increase initial participation and encourage continued engagement, particularly crucial for lengthy, self-administered online surveys and when motivating child respondents (List et al., 2023).

The Italian GUIDE pilot will add to evidence from pilot studies conducted in other nations, in terms of methods of sample recruitment and the role of incentives for participation. A principal aim of the pilot studies is also to inform the process of questionnaire design and translation and cultural adaptability. The Italian study will also provide impor-

[15] Given sampling in different regions, and the recruitment methods described here, one would expect that some families in the pilot samples will come from minority ethnic, and/or linguistic minority, groups. It will be interesting to see how these interviewees deal with the questionnaire, even if the scale of the pilot study has not allowed using versions of the questionnaire in languages other than Italian.

[16] Istituti comprensivi.

tant information on the feasibility of using CAWI to administer the GUIDE survey, at least for adult respondents; if this is successful, it potentially also has broader implications about the importance of a "push to web" as a means of making efficient use of budgets for survey-based research in social sciences. The eventual realisation of the target number of interviews in the Italian pilot will be a strong indication of the feasibility of rolling out the GUIDE survey in full in Italy. For Italy, and for other nations, GUIDE would provide important, longitudinal data on the well-being of children and young people, and these data would be harmonized with data from other European countries.

5 The Potential of GUIDE To Address Policy Issues in Italy

The GUIDE project will provide essential data for shaping Italian policies on child well-being and development. In short, key contributions of the project for Italian policy makers include:

- Construction and analysis of new datasets. This project will enable the construction of new Italian datasets, representative of the Italian population, on relevant themes such as child-parent relationships, educational aspirations, and social conditions of children and young adults.
- Insights into key transitions: given its longitudinal approach and its sampling structure (the two cohorts framework), GUIDE will offer a unique perspective on significant transitions in children's lives.
- International comparisons: the project allows for international comparisons of child and youth well-being, and for a better understanding of relevant European policies affecting children and youth.
- Policy evaluation: opportunities to evaluate policies over time and assess their impacts.
- Cost-Benefit analysis: evaluation of policy benefits against survey costs (a requirement for the future implementation of budgets of public institutions according to EU guidelines).

Looking ahead, GUIDE's data can also play a significant role in analysing intergenerational dynamics, particularly in the light of shifting family structures and demographic trends in Italy. The GUIDE project focuses on the development and well-being of new generations. In a context of evolving family arrangements, further research could examine the role of grandparents, and a survey of grandparents of the children in the Italian GUIDE pilot survey sample is being designed.[17] Intergenerational relationships, such as those involving grandparents, can significantly influence the wellbeing of family members and impact offspring's life-course decisions. Choices regarding where to live, whether and how much to work, for example, may be influenced by the (practical and emotional) support of an older generation. Understanding how older individuals integrate into family dynamics is crucial for investi-

[17] Designing this survey is part of the broader project "Differentials in WELL-being: the role of family dynamics, cohort trends and LIFE course events (WELL-LIFE)", which is a PRIN 2022 project (project code 2022BTNAC9), funded by the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research with principal investigator Ylenia Brilli at Ca' Foscari University, Venice, and a local unit in Bologna coordinated by Matthew Wakefield; the abstract of the project can be found here: https://www.unive.it/web/en/8046/prin-projects#c73997.

gating well-being, including the well-being of young people. These themes are especially important for countries like Italy that are experiencing rapid population ageing.

In the remainder of this section we will present some examples of the possible benefits of new data provided by GUIDE for these policy relevant topics, in the perspective of evidence-based policy-making (see O'Leary and Fox (2018)). Following this approach, we will also discuss the case study of "Con i Bambini" social enterprise and its possible collaboration with GUIDE.

A recent report by the Fondazione Zancan (2024), underscores the urgent need for effective policies to improve child health and well-being. The report highlights several areas for intervention, including addressing educational poverty, supporting emotional and cognitive development, tackling obesity, and improving healthcare access. In particular, it advocates a comprehensive, regionally tailored strategy involving collaboration between the government, local authorities, and healthcare providers to address these issues effectively.

With regards to educational poverty, the "Report on Educational poverty" by the "Con i Bambini" social enterprise reveals that educational disparities in Italy are still prevalent, particularly in southern Italy. The report indicates that approximately one million children in Italy are affected by educational poverty, which limits their learning opportunities and future achievements. This situation is exacerbated by socioeconomic inequalities that restrict access to educational resources and support (Con i Bambini, 2022).

The European Commission's report on child well-being, published in 2023, reinforces the need to address educational poverty and socio-economic inequalities to ensure a better future for children in Italy. The report highlights how economic conditions directly influence educational opportunities and child development, urging coordinated action from institutions to combat these issues (UNICEF, 2024).

Finally, with regards to child health, it should be noted that only around 5% of Italy's health research budget is allocated to child health and development (Istat, 2023). This underscores the need for increased investment in evidence-based, cost-effective interventions and policies. Guidelines provided by the OECD emphasize the importance of integrating longitudinal data to identify effective interventions and assess the long-term benefits of early childhood policies (OECD, 2021).

Overall, the GUIDE project could significantly impact policy-making by providing longitudinal data to identify the most effective intervention strategies and assess their cost-effectiveness. This approach would support a holistic policy-making process aimed at improving child health and development while contributing to the overall social and economic prosperity of Italy.

5.1 Addressing Educational Poverty Through Interventions: the Case of the "Con i Bambini" Social Enterprise

As previously discussed, educational poverty, defined as the lack of access to quality education and learning resources, has long-term implications on the cognitive, social, and economic outcomes of children. The "Con i Bambini" social enterprise, founded in 2016 as a non-profit organisation (social enterprise according to Italian law) in order to realise programs from the "Fund Against Educational Poverty in Children and Youth" has been

instrumental in implementing interventions to alleviate educational disparities and improve access to quality education for underprivileged children in Italy.[18]

5.1.1 Key Interventions and Outcomes

The activity of "Con i Bambini" focuses on comprehensive, community-based programs that engage schools, families, and local organizations. One of its notable projects, "A Scuola di Open Coesione" (ASOC), aims to enhance students' civic engagement and data literacy by involving them in monitoring public funding and community projects. This initiative has reached over 30,000 students across Italy, fostering a sense of responsibility and empowerment among young participants.

Another significant intervention is the "Play it again, Sam!" program, which provides after-school tutoring and mentoring for students at risk of dropping out. This program has demonstrated substantial success, with a 20% increase in school retention rates among participants and improved academic performance in subjects such as mathematics and Italian.

In addition to these educational programs, the foundation addresses socio-economic barriers through initiatives like "Punto Luce," which provides safe centres for children in impoverished neighbourhoods. These centres offer educational activities, recreational facilities, and support services for families, contributing to the overall well-being and development of children. As of 2023, there are 26 "Punto Luce" centres across Italy, serving over 10,000 children and their families.

5.1.2 Data-Driven Impact and Potential for Policy Enhancement

The data collected from these initiatives offer valuable insights into the factors contributing to educational poverty and the effectiveness of various interventions. For instance, longitudinal studies indicate that consistent participation in after-school programs like "Play it again, Sam!" significantly reduces dropout rates and enhances academic performance, particularly among students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The "Con i Bambini" approach highlights the importance of multi-faceted interventions that combine educational support with community engagement and family assistance, including support from older generations. Such comprehensive strategies not only improve educational outcomes but also contribute to the broader social and economic development of communities.

This case study shows the potential of integrating data from community-based interventions like those of the "Con i Bambini" social enterprise into national education and social policies. By leveraging detailed insights from these programs, it is possible to enhance the effectiveness of national and regional strategies to combat educational poverty, ensuring that all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to quality education and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

[18] "Con i Bambini" is a subsidiary of the CON IL SUD Foundation. The Fund was created in 2016 in collaboration with ACRI (an organization representing foundations of banking origin), the Italian Government, and The National Forum of Organizations in the Third Sector. The fund has a value of about 700 million euro over six years and represents the largest system action to combat the phenomenon of educational poverty in Italy (source: "Con i Bambini" website).

In this regard, using longitudinal data from these programs, policymakers can better understand the most relevant conditions which make children most vulnerable to educational deprivation. This understanding can guide the development of targeted policies that address the root causes of educational poverty, such as inadequate school resources, socioeconomic disparities, and family support systems. To further strengthen the effectiveness of its initiatives, the work of "Con i Bambini" could benefit from the implementation of GUIDE since this project would follow a representative sample of Italian children over time and collect data on children's well-being. GUIDE would thus provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics that influence young people's growth and learning, while detailed data on well-being of children in communities participating in specific projects would allow for adapting national strategies to better address individual and social challenges.

6 Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

This paper highlights the critical gap in longitudinal survey-based evidence on child and youth well-being in Italy and the resulting challenges in designing and assessing policies that could effectively address young people's needs. Unlike other European countries with well-established cohort studies, Italy has largely relied on fragmented, cross-sectional data to address its knowledge needs on this topic. This reliance limits insights into the long-term effects of social, educational, and economic conditions on young people. Given the multidimensional aspects of child well-being – spanning physical, emotional, economic, and social domains – a robust longitudinal framework is essential to capture these evolving dynamics accurately.

The GUIDE (Growing Up In Digital Europe) project represents a significant breakthrough by establishing a harmonized, continent-wide survey initiative that can help fill the data gap in Italy and that also allows for cross-national comparisons. By adopting a child-centric perspective, GUIDE's questionnaires investigate both objective (such as socio-economic conditions and health) and subjective indicators (including hedonic and eudaimonic well-being), directly capturing the voices and experiences of children and young people. This approach not only aligns with emerging policy paradigms that advocate for child-inclusive frameworks but also facilitates the tracking of life-course trajectories – something absent from existing Italian data sources.

For Italy, GUIDE's longitudinal design will be instrumental in assessing critical developmental stages, including the transition from early childhood to adolescence and beyond. By utilizing longitudinal data, GUIDE can uncover how various environmental, familial, and institutional factors interact over time to shape outcomes, providing policymakers with insights into the causal pathways behind observed trends in education, health, and socio-economic conditions. The potential for GUIDE to provide regular, high-quality data means that Italian policymakers will be better equipped to evaluate the effectiveness of targeted interventions, such as the European Child Guarantee, which aims to address social exclusion among vulnerable children.

In addition, GUIDE's alignment with similar studies across Europe opens new pathways for cross-country analysis, allowing Italy to benchmark its child well-being data against countries with established support frameworks. This comparative potential not only reveals Italy's relative position but also identifies best practice from other contexts that could be

adapted to address Italian needs. Moreover, GUIDE's focus on harmonizing survey tools across diverse cultural frameworks will enhance Italy's approach to data collection, providing validated metrics that are adaptable at both regional and national levels. The first pilot survey of GUIDE in Italy in 2025 will serve as a practical test for implementing these harmonized instruments in the Italian context. This pilot will explore the viability of questionnaire items, interview modes, and sampling strategies, contributing insights into the feasibility of a nationwide longitudinal survey through a large pilot-sample size and the integration of a Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) approach.

Thus, GUIDE can directly inform the development of evidence-based policies aimed, for example, at reducing inequality and improving the well-being of young people. By tracking children's lives over time, GUIDE will help to understand how their circumstances change, and which factors influence their well-being. This information will identify areas where interventions are most needed and which policies are effective, enabling more efficient allocation of resources in the future.

In conclusion, as Italy aims to align its child well-being policies with European standards and address significant regional disparities, GUIDE offers a crucial framework for ensuring that the voices of children and young people are systematically represented in policy discussions.

Acknowledgements Special thanks to Chiara Monfardini for her contribution to our research group, including her work on the pretest survey ahead of the Italian GUIDE pilot. We would also like to thank for their useful comments and observations Leni Avataneo, Toni Babarovic, Alan Barbieri, Francesca Bastagli, Francesco Billari, Ferruccio Biolcati Rinaldi, Salvatore Capasso, Rossella Ceccattini, Loredana Cerbara, Giovanni Cerulli, Alberto Credi, Enrico Elefante, Dario Germani, Marco Imperiale, Giulia Lambertini, Nicolò Marchesini, Letizia Mencarini, Maurice Mertens, Mario Paolucci, Claudia Pennacchiotti, Alessandra Petrucci, Marilena Pillati, Gary Pollock, Ilaria Primerano, Emanuela Reale, Marco Rossi Doria, Federica Santuccio, Seaneen Sloan, Mario Sprocati, Kate Sullivan, Jennifer Symonds, Luciana Taddei, Cristiano Vezzoni, Guglielmo Weber, Alessandro Zamboni, the participants at the workshop "Growing Up In Digital Europe: Italian Stakeholders Forum", Florence, October 2023, the participants to DSSR (Data Science and Social Research) Naples international conference, March 2024 at the participants at the workshop "FOSSR Days" workshop held in Rome, October 2024. All remaining errors and imprecisions are our own.

Funding Open access funding provided by Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna within the CRUI-CARE Agreement.

Declarations

We thank financial support from COORDINATE (COhort cOmmunity Research and Development Infrastructure Network for Access Throughout Europe) Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme grant agreement No 101008589, and GUIDEPREP Horizon Europe research and innovation programme, grant agreement No 101078945. The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

References

Abdelazeem, B., Abbas, K. S., Amin, M. A., El-Shahat, N. A., Malik, B., Kalantary, A., & Eltobgy, M. (2022). The effectiveness of incentives for research participation: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *PLoS One*, *17*(4), e0267534. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0267534

Balbo, N., & Bolano, D. (2024). Child disability as a family issue: A study on mothers' and fathers' health in Italy. *European Journal of Public Health, 34*(1), 79–84.

Brilli, Y., Del Boca, D., & Pronzato, C. D. (2016). Does child care availability play a role in maternal employment and children's development? Evidence from Italy. *Review of Economics of the Household*, *14*, 27–51.

Casas, F. (2011). Subjective social indicators and child and adolescent well-being. *Child Indicators Research*, *4*, 555–575.

Colella, E. M., Ecchia, G., Germani, D., Primerano, I., Santurro, M., Tosi, F., Ventrucci, M., & Wakefield, M. J. (2025). GUIDE: Innovations and challenges to survey child well-being in Italy. In Longitudinal Data Infrastructures in Europe: Tools for Open Science in Social Science Research (pp. 117-129). Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-07005-0_9

Con i Bambini (2022). *Report on Educational Poverty and Regional Disparities* [Report on Educational Poverty and Regional Disparities]. Retrieved from https://www.conibambini.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Pnrr_poverta_educativa_mappe_regionali_Ridotto.pdf (last accessed on July 26, 2024).

Currie, J., & Rossin-Slater, M. (2015). Early-life origins of life-cycle well-being: Research and policy implications. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *34*(1), 208–242.

Cusinato, M., Iannattone, S., Spoto, A., Poli, M., Moretti, C., Gatta, M., & Miscioscia, M. (2020). Stress, resilience, and well-being in Italian children and their parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(22), 8297.

Del Boca, D., Monfardini, C., & Nicoletti, C. (2017). Parental and child time investments and the cognitive development of adolescents. *Journal of Labor Economics, 35*(2), 565–608. https://doi.org/10.1086/689479

European Council (2021). Council Recommendation 2021/1004. Establishing a European Child Guarantee. European Union, Council of the European Union. Available online: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2021/1004/oj (accessed on 19 October 2024).

Fernandes, L., Mendes, A., & Teixeira, A. (2013). A weighted multidimensional index of child well-being which incorporates children's individual perceptions. *Social Indicators Research*, *114*, 803–829.

Fondazione Zancan (2024). *Recent Studies and Publications*. Retrieved from https://www.fondazionezancan.it/product-category/pubblicazioni/ (last accessed on July 26, 2024).

Giovinazzi, F., & Cocchi, D. (2021). Social integration of second generation students in the Italian school system. *Social Indicators Research, 160*, 287–307.

Goswami, H., Fox, C., & Pollock, G. (2016). The current evidence base and future needs in improving children's well-being across europe: Is there a case for a comparative longitudinal survey? *Child Indicators Research*, *9*, 371–388.

Guio, A. C., Gordon, D., & Marlier, E. (2012). Measuring material deprivation in the EU: Indicators for the whole population and child-specific indicators. Eurostat methodologies and working papers. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Harkness, J. A. (2003). Questionnaire translation. In J. A. Harkness, van de F. J. R. Vijver, & P. P. Mohler (Eds.), *Cross-cultural survey methods* (pp. 35–56). Wiley & Sons.

Hertzman, C., & Wiens, M. (1996). Child development and long-term outcomes: A population health perspective and summary of successful interventions. *Social Science & Medicine*, *43*(7), 1083–1095.

Istat (2020). *Identità e Percorsi Di integrazione Delle seconde generazioni in Italia*. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica.

Istat. (2023). Annuario Statistico Italiano 2023. Roma, Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. https://www.istat.it/produzione-editoriale/annuario-statistico-italiano-2023/

Istat (2024). *Indagine Bambini e ragazzi. Anno 2023. Nuove generazioni Sempre più digitali e multiculturali. Statistiche report*. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica.

Istat (2025). *Le condizioni Di vita dei minori Di 16 anni. Statistiche focus*. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica.

Joshi, H. (2020). Pathways towards well-being. *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, *11*, 153–155.

List, J. A., Petrie, R., & Samek, A. (2023). How experiments with children inform economics. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *61*(2), 504–564. https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.20211535

OECD. (2021). Measuring what matters for child well-being and policies, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/e82fded1-en

O'Leary, C., & Fox, C. (2018). *Understanding the potential policy impact of a European longitudinal survey for children and young people*. In: Measuring Youth Well-being How a Pan-European Longitudinal Survey Can Improve Policy. Springer.

Pollock, G., Ozan, J., Goswami, H., Rees, G., & Stasulane, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Measuring youth well-being: How a pan-European longitudinal survey can improve policy*. Springer.

Pollock, G., Goswami, H., & Szymczyk, A. (2021). Child Well-being Across the Life Course: What Do We Know, What Should We Know? *Sustainable Human Development Across the Life Course* (pp. 165–192). Bristol University Press.

Rees, G., Goswami, H., Pople, L., Bradshaw, J., Keung, A., & Main, G. (2012). *The good childhood report 2012: A review of our children's well-being*. Springer.

Reynolds, A. J., Mondi, C. F., Ou, S. R., & Hayakawa, M. (2017). Generative mechanisms of early childhood interventions to well-being. *Child Development, 88*(2), 378.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 141–166.

Smith, M. G., Witte, M., Rocha, S., & Basner, M. (2019). Effectiveness of incentives and follow-up on increasing survey response rates and participation in field studies. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *19*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0868-8

Statham, J., & Chase, E. (2010). *Childhood Wellbeing: A Brief Overview*. Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre.

Survey Research Center. (2016). Guidelines for Best Practice in Cross-Cultural Surveys. Ann Arbor, MI: Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. October, 18, 2024, from http://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/

Tosi, F., & Rettaroli, R. (2022). Intergenerational transmission of dietary habits among Italian children and adolescents. *Economics & Human Biology, 44*, 101073. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ehb.2021.101073

UNICEF. (2024). The State of Children in the European Union. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. https://www.unicef.org/eu/media/2521/file/The%20State%20of%20Children%20in%20the%20European%20Union%20.pdf