

The data discussed in this study show the differences between the quality of the relationship with children with specific difficulties and the relationship with children who have had a normal development as perceived by the teacher. In these cases, the presence of a teaching assistant may be a valuable resource as s/he can develop a more intimate relationship with the child and mediate between the child and the teacher, facilitating the pupil's integration with the rest of the class (McVittie, 2005; Howes, 2003; Hemmingsson et al., 2003; Longobardi et al., 2013). The social bonds with children with difficulties differ for at least one relational aspect from those with children from the Control Group, the sole exception being children with Down's syndrome. Our work is gradually reaching the objective of comparing the perception of the relationship with children with special education needs and the average data registered among the Italian population (Fraire et al., 2013). The three dimensions of the relationship do not register significant differences for children with Down's syndrome and their other classmates in the teacher's perception. The Closeness dimension is hampered only in the case of the bonds with children affected by an autism spectrum disorder.