

## Understanding the phenomena in order to meet the needs

The Istituto degli Innocenti contributes to the promotion of the rights of the younger generations through study and training and informational activities. It conducts research and monitoring, drawing up statistics, managing specialized data banks and carrying out an extensive activity of documentation and dissemination in support of policies and actions for children, adolescents and families.

The Institute cooperates with various bodies and institutions at the local, national and international level. Together with Italian and foreign **Universities and Research Centres** the Institute develops higher education studies and courses. For the **Italian Government** it manages the activities of the **National childhood and Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre** ([www.minori.it](http://www.minori.it)) and carries out monitoring and training for the **Commission on International Adoptions**.



It is moreover responsible for the secretariat of **ChildOnEurope**, the European Network of National Observatories on Childhood.

Together with **Unicef IRC - Innocenti Research Centre**, that by desire of the Italian Government has had its headquarters at the Institute since 1987, the Institute has founded and manages the **“Alfredo Carlo Moro” Innocenti Library**, specialized in children's rights.

For **Region of Tuscany** Istituto degli Innocenti monitors and supports children's policies through the management of the **Regional Children's Observatory** and other activities.

The Institute is also an **Educational Agency** accredited for vocational training and refresher courses on childhood, adolescence, families and maternity.

## Action and knowledge: experimentation in the public services

The continuous search for innovation and quality is the basis for all the activities performed by the Institute. **Taking in children in difficulty** remains the first and most important service provided by the Institute which adapts its long experience to the changes in social needs. In the 1970s, large facilities for abandoned children were replaced by homes run on a family scale. Here temporary accommodation is provided for children and mothers from the Florence area, sent by the local Social Services or by the Court: the **Casa Bambini (Children's House)**, for small children from 0 to 6 years, the **Casa Madri (Mothers' house)**, for women with children and pregnant women in difficult situations and the **Casa delle Rondini (Swallow's nest)** for mothers in the final period on their path towards autonomy.

The Istituto degli Innocenti invests its own resources also in the Tuscan territory in support of innovative services for children and their families, in cooperation with other public and private organisations. So the following centres have now been established: the **Villaggio La Brocchi** in Borgo S. Lorenzo, which receives foreign families with children seeking asylum, and the **Canapè**, centre for adolescents in Campi Bisenzio.

For smaller children, aged under three years, the Institute provides three crèches and the **Botteghina**, an afternoon Centre where children can play followed by operators.

The Innocenti provides children and their families with a wealth of other educational possibilities. **La Bottega dei Ragazzi (The Children's Workshop)**, an educational service provided by Mudi, the Innocenti Museum, provides children from three to eleven year of age with laboratories for play, creativity, “citizenship” and rights, where children learn to recognise and to love the historical, artistic and cultural heritage of their local territory.

By paying attention to young peoples' relations with the mass media the Institute has developed **media education** activities for children, teachers and parents.



**Ragazziestampa (Children and the press)** is the proposal for a reasoned understanding of information intended for adolescents. In order to educate the youngest children to make a responsible use of Web 2.0, together with the Region of Tuscany, the Institute has created a project named **Trool - Tutti i ragazzi ora on line (All kids now on line)** ([www.trool.it](http://www.trool.it)), that includes the portal Trool.it and laboratories in the schools with the participation of teachers, families, local authorities, associations and cultural institutions.



## A cultural centre in the old foundling hospital: MUDI, the Innocenti Museum

The activity of caring for children, the beauty of the building designed by Brunelleschi and its importance in the history of art have helped to make the Institute a cultural centre open to the city and to the world.

Today the **MUDI, Museo degli Innocenti**, a project that began in 2004, valorizes the Institute's cultural, artistic and historical-archival heritage. The monumental rooms are used for meetings and conferences, exhibitions, concerts and theatre performances, organized by the Institute or by other public and private organizations.

In the Institute's **Gallery** more than fifty works, dated between the 14th and the 18th century are currently on display. They are mostly paintings, created expressly to embellish the “children's place”. Among the principal masterpieces are *The Adoration of the Magi* by **Domenico del Ghirlandaio**, the *Madonna with Child* by **Sandro Botticelli**, the *Madonna with Child and Saints* by **Piero di Cosimo**, the *Madonna with Child* by **Luca della Robbia**.

Through the renovation of the spaces and restoration of the works of art, the enlargement of the museum area and the provision of new services, the MUDI will be better equipped to tell the history of the Institution and of childhood.

The Institute's documentary memory is the **Historical Archive** containing about 15,000 documents, collected incessantly from the 14th to the 20th century. They bear witness to the life in the old hospital and in many other ancient hosting institutions, families and individuals whose written memory, together with their assets, went to the Innocenti over the centuries. The inventory of the Historical Archive can now be consulted on line.

