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Ordine degli Psicologi
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SESSION 1

THE INTERVENTION CONTEXTS

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU A STORY?

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The goal of this action-research was to identify possible early dysfunctional dynamics in children exposed to violence, in order to offer adequate support and educational measures. The qualitative study involved 6 children, aged from 3 to 5. Three of them had been exposed to domestic violence. We set up the "Laboratory Tales", consisting of five weekly meetings within a month (October-November 2013). The duration of each meeting was 90 minutes. We recorded each of them.

We encouraged the children to play, then they listened to a story, previously recorded (Hansel and Gretel) and illustrated on a big picture book. Afterwards, each child draw a fairy tale. Finally, we offered to them a puppet, which represented a character from the book, and we asked them to tell his or her own version of the story. The task was to play and take inspiration from the materials to tell the tale in their personal way.

We tried to identify the differences between the exposed and not exposed children (control group) through:

- drawings
- elements of consistency in the task of reconstruction of the tale
- dramatization of the story with the help of figure-puppet

The exposed children showed a lower level of internal security. As a consequence, they were not able to tune serenely with the playful context and to respond adequately to adults' proposals. We found a tendency in this group to omit important details or enter new negative characters. This fact may be linked to internal conflicts, possibly connected to exposure to aggression and violence. Similarly, they paid less attention to the movie's narration, showing a defensive avoidance of ambiguous stimuli. Moreover,