

# SIMPEets Operating Manifesto – Pediatric action in adolescence

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## “360° PEDIATRICS – PEDIATRIA 360°”

Section by SIMPEets

(Italian Society of Pediatricians, Third Sector  
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## Abstract

**ENGLISH TEXT:** Adolescence is a complex and change-filled transition phase, in which young people face challenges related not only to personal growth, but also to an increasingly pressing and hyperconnected social context. Often criticized by adults, adolescents hide a rich and vulnerable inner world that needs to be listened to rather than judged. They

are no worse or better than previous generations, but they live in different times, which amplify their fragility and potential. In this scenario, pediatricians play a fundamental role in promoting physical and mental well-being, preventing distress, and supporting identity building. This awareness has led to the *SIMPEets Operational Manifesto – Pediatric action in adolescence*, promoted by SIMPEets (Italian Society of Pediatricians, Third Sector Organization, *Società Italiana Medici Pediatri, Ente del Terzo Settore*), which proposes 11 concrete actions to strengthen the role of pediatricians as active and present figures in the everyday lives of adolescents. Accompanying, rather than correcting, is the key to supporting adolescents toward a possible future.

**ITALIAN TEXT:** L'adolescenza è una fase di transizione complessa e ricca di cambiamenti, in cui i giovani affrontano sfide legate non solo alla crescita personale, ma anche a un contesto sociale sempre più pressante e iperconnesso. Spesso criticati dagli adulti, gli adolescenti celano un mondo interiore ricco e vulnerabile, che ha bisogno di ascolto più che di giudizio. Non sono peggiori o migliori delle generazioni passate, ma vivono tempi diversi, che amplificano fragilità e potenzialità. In questo scenario, il pediatra assume un ruolo fondamentale nel promuovere benessere fisico e mentale, prevenire il disagio e sostenere la costruzione dell'identità. Da questa consapevolezza nasce il manifesto operativo intitolato *SIMPEets Operational Manifesto – Pediatric action in adolescence*, promosso da SIMPEets (Società Italiana Medici Pediatri, Ente del Terzo Settore), che propone 11 azioni concrete per rafforzare il ruolo del pediatra come figura attiva e presente nei luoghi della quotidianità adolescenziale. Accompagnare, più che correggere, è la chiave per sostenere gli adolescenti verso un futuro possibile.

## Keywords

SIMPEets, Italian Society of Pediatricians, Operating Manifesto, Pediatrics, pediatricians, adolescence.

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## Introduction

Adolescence is often described as a middle ground, an uncertain bridge between childhood and adulthood. It is a tumultuous period, rich in physical, emotional, and cognitive transformations, but also full of great possibilities. Today, more than ever, adolescents live in a complex world: school and family pressures are compounded by those related to social media, climate change, global instability, and economic uncertainty.

Many adults view them critically, labeling them as “unmotivated”, “addicted to their phones”, “unable to face reality” [1]. But how fair is this view? Perhaps behind behaviors that may appear superficial lies a rich, anxious, curious, and often confused inner world that needs listening more than judgment. Today's teenagers are neither better nor worse than those of yesterday: they are simply different because the times they live in are different. Having everything at your fingertips does not mean being happier or freer [2]; on the contrary, hyperconnectivity exposes them to greater comparison, performance anxiety, and the judgment of others.

Yet they show extraordinary capacity for adaptation, reinvention, and activism, giving voice to crucial issues such as civil rights, environmental sustainability, and mental health. Being a teenager today is a constant challenge, but also an extraordinary opportunity to build one's identity and imagine who one wants to become. In this context, pediatricians play a crucial role in monitoring the overall development of adolescents, offering support and advice on fundamental aspects such as nutrition, physical activity, mental well-being, and prevention. It is therefore necessary to strengthen pediatricians' skills in listening [3], observation, and early guidance. This need has given rise to the *SIMPEets Operational Manifesto – Pediatric action in adolescence*, promoted by SIMPEets (Italian Society of Pediatricians, Third Sector Organization, *Società Italiana Medici Pediatri, Ente del Terzo Settore*), a concrete and sustainable tool to help pediatricians recognize distress, build educational alliances, promote and protect adolescent health in everyday environments.

In this context, SIMPEets reaffirms the full responsibility of pediatrics for the 0-18 age group, with an open, responsible, and collaborative approach. Taking pediatrics out of the clinic – into schools, communities, and relationships with families – means fully exercising its clinical and preventive function [4]. The result is a “real-life” operational program that recognizes the pediatrician as the first active point of contact to accompany adolescents before discomfort becomes a disorder, before fragility turns into absence.

The task of adults is not to shape or judge, but to accompany: to offer support, to ask questions rather than give answers, to be present without being intrusive. Adolescence is not a disease to be cured, but a phase to be lived through. And those who experience it, often with more courage than they appear to have, need above all trust, because every adolescent, behind their uncertainties, carries within them the seed of a possible future.

Based on these needs and requirements, SIMPEets has produced the *SIMPEets Operating Manifesto – Pediatric action in adolescence*, which includes the following 11 actions.

### 1. Health assessment 2.0 for adolescents

*Objective:* To identify psychosocial and mental health needs at an early stage through an assessment co-designed with adolescents.

*Tools:* Mobile apps (Selfsea, Heads Up), digital platforms integrated with pediatricians and services.

*SIMPEets' role:* To coordinate a national format for the Emotional Health Assessment.

### 2. “Sentinel” pediatricians in schools

*Objective:* To strengthen the presence of pediatricians in schools as trusted figures for listening, prevention, and health promotion.

*Tools:* Collaborations with Information and Counseling Centers (*Centri di Informazione e Consulenza – CIC*), psychological help desks, third sector organizations, and peer education.

*SIMPEets' role:* To promote regional protocols between local health authorities, schools, and pediatricians.

### 3. Psychopedagogical teleconsulting network

*Objective:* To support pediatricians in managing adolescent distress through multidisciplinary teleconsulting.

*Tools:* European network of Cybersecurity centres and competence Hub for innovation and Operations (ECHO network), Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA) models adapted to Italy.

*SIMPEets' role:* To activate pilot networks in the most fragile regions with child neuropsychiatrists and psychologists.

### 4. Digital mental health education

*Objective:* To communicate with adolescents about well-being and prevention using their digital languages.

*Tools:* Podcasts, memes, social challenges with health influencers.

*SIMPEets' role:* To co-create content with schools, startups, and foundations.

### 5. Informal prevention spaces

*Objective:* To offer listening and prevention outside the clinic, in informal and accessible settings.

*Tools:* Presence in youth centers, counseling centers, civic spaces, third sector organizations.

*SIMPEets' role:* To promote an Italian model similar to the Adolescent Resource Centers (ARC) with municipalities and local health authorities.

### 6. Evaluation and monitoring of interventions

*Objective:* To demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of actions with simple and shared tools.

*Tools:* Scales (Patient Health Questionnaire – 9 [PHQ-9], Generalized Anxiety Disorder – 7 [GAD-7], Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire [SDQ]), apps for anonymous data collection, dashboards.

*SIMPEets' role:* To set up a methodological framework for participatory evaluation.

### 7. Training of pediatricians

*Objective:* To strengthen the relational and psychosocial skills of pediatricians.

*Tools:* Continuing Medical Education (*Educazione Continua in Medicina – ECM*) courses, distance learning (*Formazione a Distanza – FAD*), clinical supervision, FRIENDS training.

*SIMPEets' role:* To offer specific training modules, especially for young pediatricians.

## 8. Transition from adolescence to adulthood

*Objective:* To ensure continuity between pediatricians and general practitioners during the transition to adulthood.

*Tools:* Joint training, shared transition protocols.

*SIMPEets' role:* To activate local collaboration networks between pediatricians and general practitioners.

## 9. National campaign “*Parlami*” (i.e., “talk to me”)

*Objective:* To promote listening and storytelling as a means of preventing distress.

*Tools:* Public events, posters, digital map of emotions.

*SIMPEets' role:* To coordinate the campaign with pediatrician ambassadors in the territories.

## 10. Diary of the invisible adolescent

*Objective:* To offer a safe space for expression to adolescents aged 10-14.

*Tools:* Collection of texts, drawings, and poems for the “*Libro Bianco*” (i.e., “white book”).

*SIMPEets' role:* To collect and edit content, promote the book as an advocacy tool.

## 11. SIMPEets help desk for parents and adults

*Objective:* To support parents and educators in their relationships with adolescents.

*Tools:* In-person/online meetings, practical materials, and guide sheets.

*SIMPEets' role:* To train pediatrician-facilitators and coordinate local or virtual help desks.

## Declaration of interest

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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