



# **PATHS AND LABYRINTHS**



**Comune  
di Modena**

**Modena Est Preschool**  
*5 years old class*

*Teacher*  
**Stefania Stefanini**



“A labyrinth is made of many roads  
that form a long long road  
and you need to find the correct one to get out  
and maybe, if there is a treasure  
and you want it, you could also take it”

*Davide*





# EXPERIENCING LABYRINTHS IN ORDER TO...

- ☐ Move around easily (walking, running, jumping...)
- ☐ Gain consciousness about your body, and about your position compared to some points of reference
- ☐ Coordinate movements and adapt them in different settings (class, hall, garden, with or without obstacles)
- ☐ Recognize the concepts of starting and ending points
- ☐ Recognize the concept of interdiction and observe it
- ☐ Be able to follow verbal instruction to walk through a path
- ☐ Be able to plan and propose different paths
- ☐ Share an idea and realize it by imagining different possible solutions
- ☐ Dialogue and collaborate in order to reach an objective together
- ☐ Share and respect the rules of the game

# WHY A LABYRINTH?



Children's interest and curiosity for labyrinths begun after having observed and read a book that a child brought to school.



VALENTINA: This is a labyrinth made with wood, there are many bridges built on rivers.



# GROUP CONVERSATION ABOUT LABYRINTHS

Starting questions:

- What are labyrinths?
- What are they for?
- How are they made?
- Where are they?
- Is it possible to build one? (how, which materials)

TOBIA: Labyrinths are things where there are ghosts.

ILARIA: It's where you get lost... where there are many doors and you don't know where to go.

DAVIDE: If you don't get lost, you find something.

LORENZO: It's a game... it's very long.

SIMONE: You can get lost, but then you find the right road, but you have to do it with your finger first, and then with the felt pen.

MATTIA A: For me the labyrinth is a big road full of walls.

THOMAS A: And also curves.

MATTIA M: It's a place where you can win and you can lose.

ENRICO: I go in the labyrinth to explore and I have fun.

MARTINA R: The labyrinth could be made of soil.

VALENTINA: Of roads made of soil to get where you need to go.



VIOLA: But you can get lost.

FEDERICO: It's a game where you need to find the correct road to get home.

ERICA: Or to find something beautiful.

FILIPPO: It's a place where there are many roads.

THOMAS T: It's a thing where you have to get in and get out and you should not get lost.

MARTINA A: They can be made of wall.

SAMUELE: Also with leaves and bushes.

CLARA: And hedges.

MATTEO: And of rocks.

LUCA: Labyrinths I can make them with roads that go on straight, backwards, forward, zig-zag.

ALICE: In order not to get lost you need to pay attention.

ALESSIO: The labyrinth needs to have an entrance and an exit.

SIMONE: In order not to get lost I look for footprints.

LORENZO: I take little rocks.

FEDERICO: If I make arrows with branches, I don't get lost.

**The idea that came up FROM THE CONVERSATION is that:**

Labyrinths are games with curvy roads where it is hard to orientate, and they are made of wall, soil, hedges or drawings. They have an entrance and an exit.



DIDAGALVI

CHIAVI INGI

TENNISSE

METRO

# L'NUOVO ZINGARELLI

VOCABOLARIO  
DELLA LINGUA ITALIANA  
di Nicola Zingarelli

ZINGARELLI

## WE SEARCH FOR THE DEFINITION OF LABYRINTH IN A DICTIONARY:

1. Name of some legendary architectural constructions of ancient times, with ingenious and complicated structures, with twisted rooms, corridors, tunnels, so that it was hard to orientate for people who got in. Crete labyrinth, according to the myth, was built from Dedalus for the Minotaur, Minos' horrendous son.
2. Generically, any tangle of roads or paths. In the gardens and in the parks belonging to Italian villas in '600 and '700. Tangle of boulevards and roads with large hedges or walls on the sides.
3. Patience game belonging to brain teasers game, it consists in finding, in a tangle of roads, the right path that, from one of the entrances, brings to the exit.
4. Complicated situation you don't know how to get out of.







# ARIADNE'S THREAD

Since it was named in the dictionary definition, we told the children the story of "Ariadne's thread".

Children were curious and fascinated about it, and they tried to tell the story with their words...

MATTIA M.: Once upon a time there was Theseus who had to go and overcome the Minotaur that was inside a labyrinth. Arianna had an idea, to create a red wool thread to get out of the labyrinth, then. He (Theseus) defeated the Minotaur and he succeeded in getting out of the labyrinth and everyone was happy".

Mattia A, talking about the wool thread, realized that, in the area of our classroom that is dedicated to handmade constructions, there was a ball of wool.

MATTIA A.: We could take this wool and make the labyrinth.



Starting from Mattia's idea, we go in the school garden and we start to unroll the thread building a MAZY PATH among trees and bushes.









During some moments of free play in the classroom, children spontaneously collaborate in order to build a **CHAIRS LABYRINTH**



Spontaneous construction of a **"LEGO" LABYRINTH**

FILIPPO: Do you see it? Here there's a secret way.



During a moment of free play in the classroom area which is dedicated to **HANDMADE CONSTRUCTIONS...**



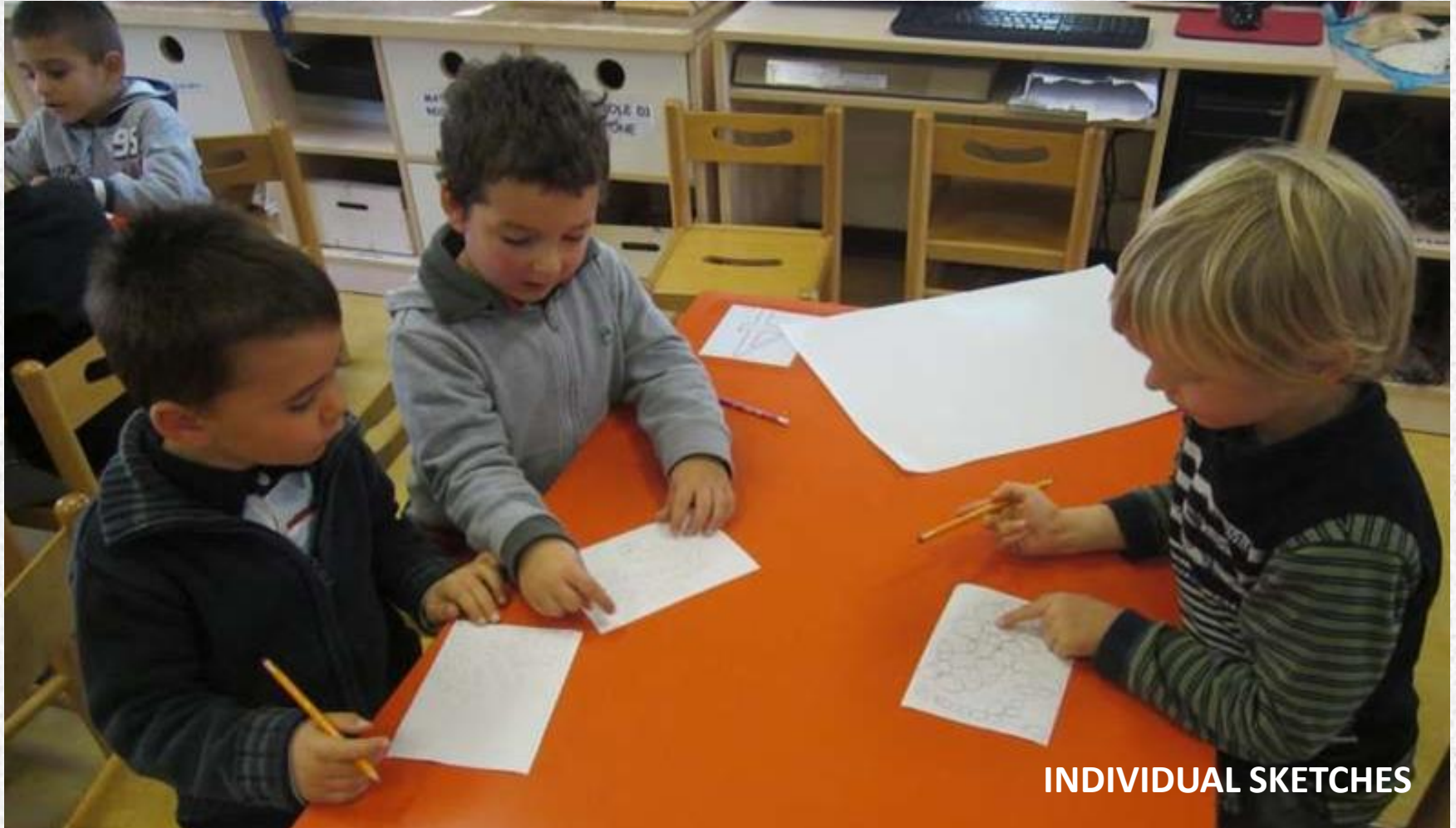


SIMONE e FEDERICO: We made this labyrinth together, Federico hammered the nails, I put the wool because this is a labyrinth with a lot of fog, the roads are not visible and it is very hard to get out.

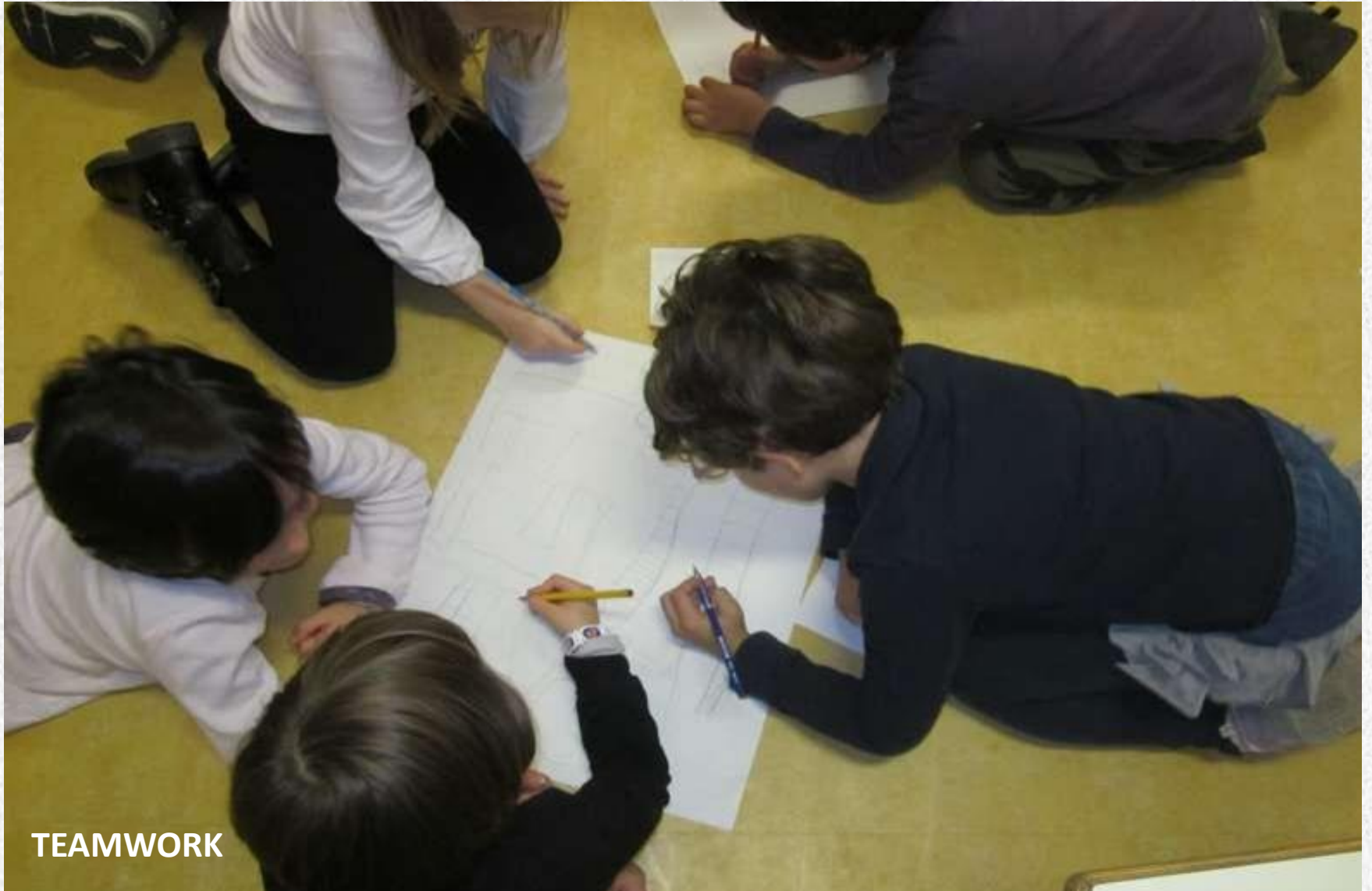


# REASONING, PLANNING, DISCUSSING IN ORDER TO REACH AN OBJECTIVE TOGETHER

In small groups (3/4 children) they drew a labyrinth.

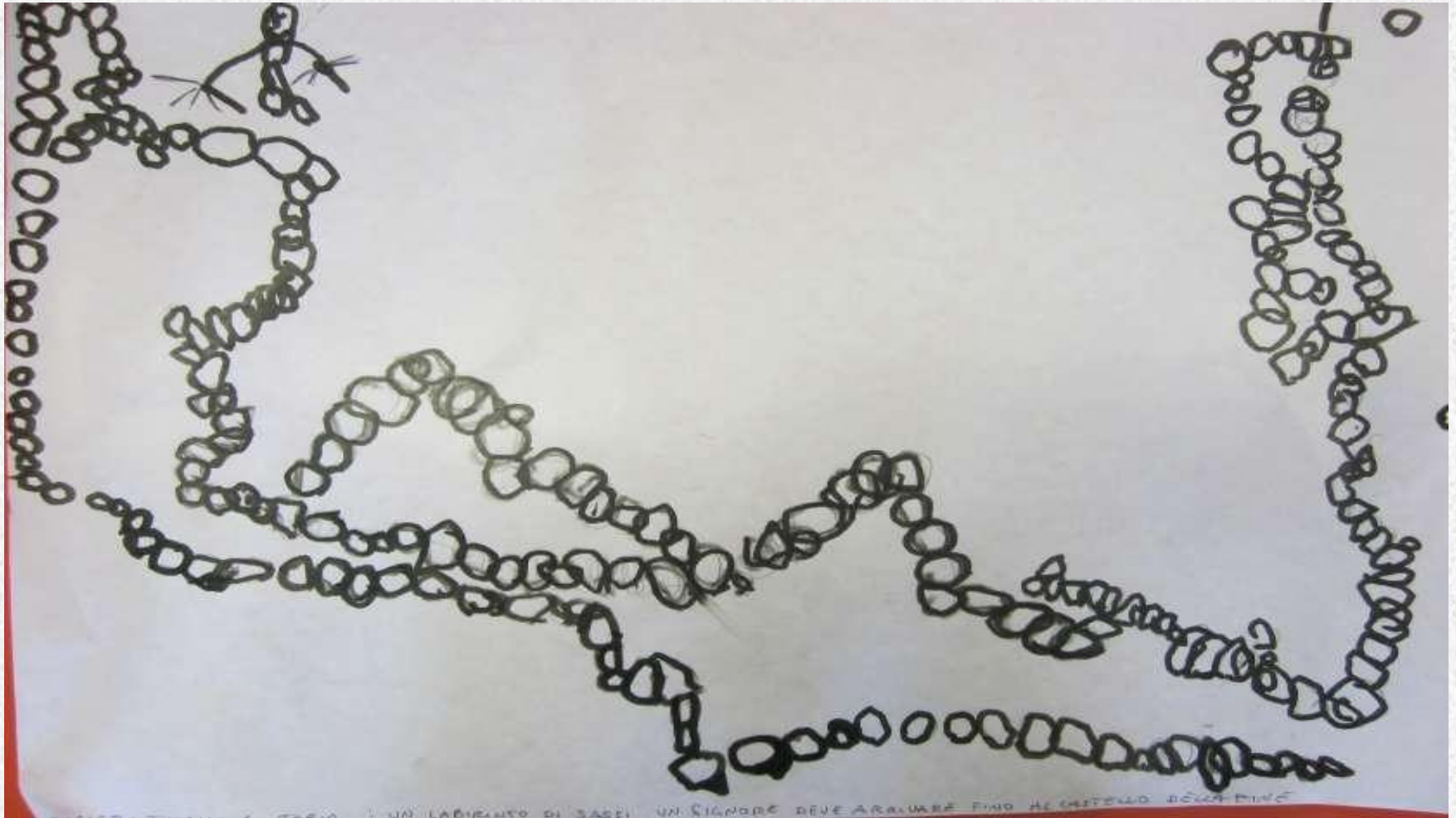




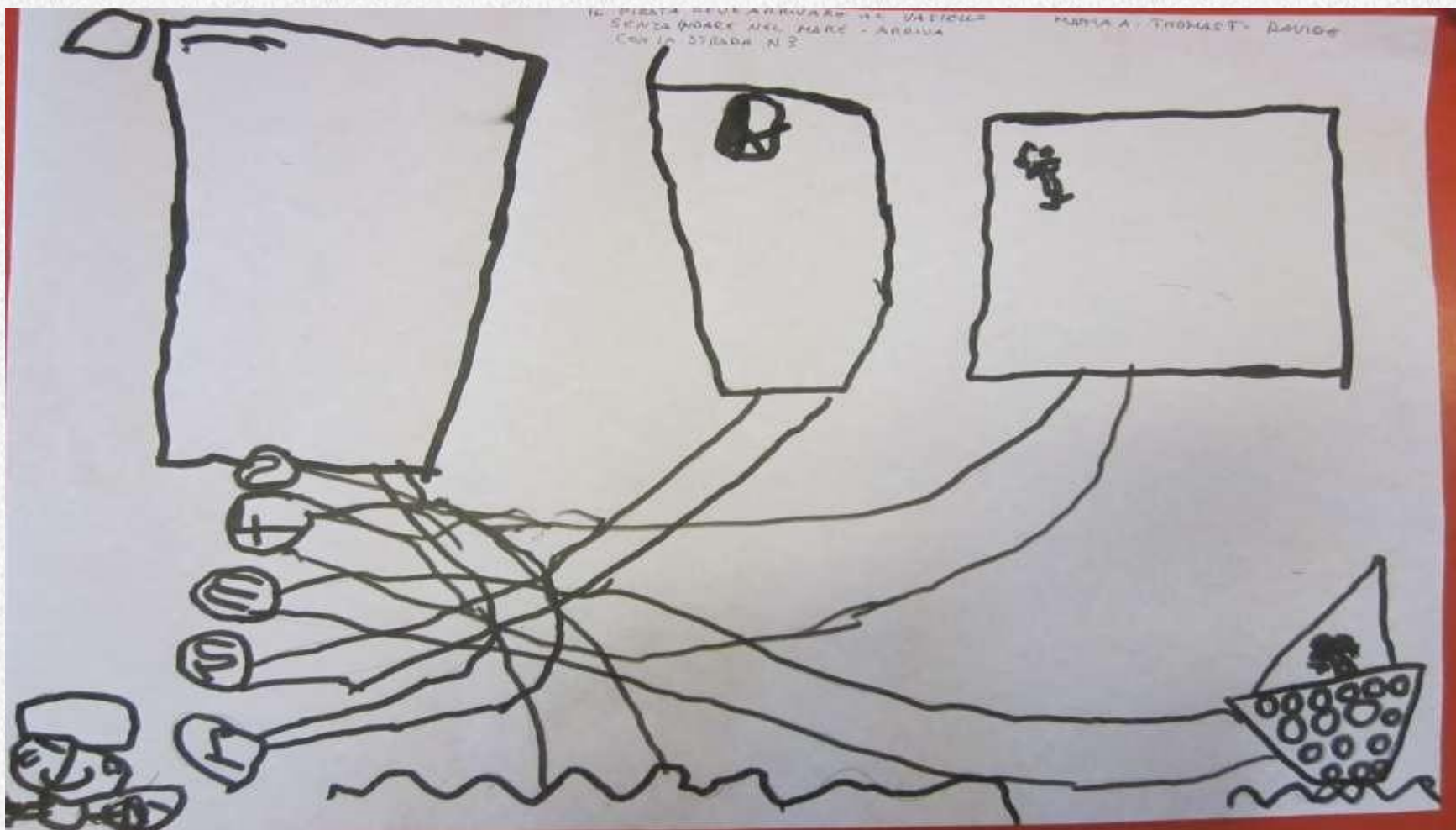


TEAMWORK

# SOME PROJECTS



ENRICO, THOMAS A, TOBIA: This is a labyrinth of rocks, a man has to arrive to the castle where there's a flag.



MATTIA A, THOMAS T, DAVIDE: The pirate has to reach the vessel without falling down in the sea. The correct road is number 3.





# THREE-DIMENSIONAL LABYRINTHS

We asked families for collaboration in order to build three-dimensional labyrinths with children.



TOBIA: Saturday and Sunday I built this labyrinth with my dad. I had the idea because at home I have the tools. I took cortices, little branches, rocks, leaves, pinecones, chili pepper, thread, nails, elastic...

I made a labyrinth, there are two roads, one on the rope, and the red one, where you have to go... I go over it with my finger or with the horse toys.



ILARIA: I made this labyrinth with my dad, before we thought it, then we attached the pieces and the bridges. I have to start with the finger from the beginning and arrive to the end following many roads.



MARTINA R: I made this labyrinth with my dad. My mum brought me the stickers with Trilly, the rocks, and I took the acorns at my grandma's, then I attached with the glue making the roads that I had thought before.

There is a dog and a cat that have to reach as soon as possible all the stickers and the drawings, in order to go and get the orange and blue diamond.





SIMONE: I made the labyrinth with my mum, I thought to make with pasta, then I put a little ball that begins in a small place and ends in a large space.



LORENZO: I made this labyrinth with my mum. First mum took a large piece of paper then we took some straws and we attached them randomly and many roads came out. With the bottle cap I had to look for the right road then pass under the tunnel and the tent and arrive at the final cap.





# “LASER” LABYRINTH

In the school garden, after having experienced the wool thread labyrinth, children proposed to the teacher to create a permanent labyrinth using a stronger thread.

During free play moments in the thread labyrinth, children suggested a new way of playing there: they transformed the threads in laser beams, that would "emit heat..." if touched, and eliminate the players who would touch them.



# FREE PLAY IN THE LASER LABYRINTH

LORENZO: If I touched the beams I would be burnt and I had to get out of the game, so I was tightening myself down like an ant in order not to get burnt.





LUCA: I was walking with my hands on the ground trying not to touch the thread.

ALESSIO: I was opening my leg and rising up my feet then I was laying down... I was struggling.





# **VISIT TO A REAL LABIRINTH: SIGURTÀ PARK**



We got in the labyrinth



Like Theseus we used a red  
wool thread not to get lost







We finally arrived to the center



We observed the form of the labyrinth from above and we tried to draw it.



# GOING THROUGH A REAL LABYRINTH: EMOTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS.

THOMAS A: When I got into the labyrinth it seemed to me like a forest with the trees... I imagined it this way. I could not understand where to go, fortunately we took the thread with us otherwise I would remain there for a hundred years and I was very very hungry.

MATTIA A.: I liked to go in it... there were high hedges and we could not see anything, but the teacher had brought the red thread and we could get out. If I were alone I would not have entered because it was too difficult.

MARTINA A.: When I saw the labyrinth I thought that inside the labyrinth there was a princess walking towards home. I didn't like the labyrinth because there was too much to walk.

CLARA: The labyrinth was easy because we were following the thread. I liked it because that place was very beautiful. I imagined it this way... but maybe with higher hedges.

SAMUELE: When I saw the labyrinth I thought it was very beautiful, I imagined it different, with small roads, while it had large roads. The roads had difficult blocks (hedges that were blocking the road). I overcame them by following the wool thread.

ENRICO: The labyrinth wasn't frightening me because we were all together. I imagined it larger and with walls. Even if there were high hedges I could go behind and see.

MATTEO: When I saw the labyrinth I thought that it was easy but when I saw it from above it was very difficult with many roads. Inside I followed the thread, that's why it was easy.

LUCA: I saw the pictures and my friends told me... it was wonderful.

ALICE: For me the labyrinth was beautiful and very long to walk. It was very big so you could get lost... I didn't get lost because I was behind and I was walking with my friends.

DANIELE: In the pictures I saw the labyrinth because I was not there, and it is very big and made of hedges... maybe I'll go with my mum.

VALENTINA: The labyrinth... I imagined it large, when we used the thread I didn't thought there were so many walls, I didn't thought it was made of hedges but of wall... it was very beautiful and I was not afraid with all my friends.

LORENZO: I thought the labyrinth was easy, but it was difficult because the hedges were very high, you could not see so you might get lost... we followed the thread and it was easy.

MATTIA M: The labyrinth was with high hedges and with many blocks (hedges blocking the way). It was hard... I was a bit afraid to get lost, with Ariadne's thread it was easy.

TOBIA: When I saw the labyrinth I thought it was hard because it seemed so huge. I followed the path with the thread and we didn't get lost. It was very big, I imagined it smaller.



FEDERICO: The labyrinth was a bit hard because it had blocks (hedges that were blocking the way). We had lost the correct road, fortunately we didn't get lost because we followed the thread.

VIOLA: The labyrinth was a bit hard because there were many roads and we were struggling. It was very big, the roads were large and the hedges were high. We had to stay close to each other because we could get lost. To get out we used Ariadne's thread.

FILIPPO: When I saw the labyrinth I thought it was easy because there weren't blocks, we used the thread and we didn't get lost. I was not afraid even if the hedges were high. When I saw it from above it seemed difficult, it was very big.

MARTINA R: When I saw the labyrinth I thought that it was very hard because there were very high hedges. We used the thread so we didn't get lost.

ERICA: The labyrinth was huge, it was green with high hedges... it wasn't frightening me because we used the thread and we got out. I imagined it exactly as it was.

ALESSIO: I expected it different, like with curvy roads, while it had straight roads with just a bit of curves. I was not afraid to get lost because it didn't seem big. When I saw it from above, there were many curves and it was very very big and it was frightening.

SIMONE: When I saw the labyrinth I thought that it was a bit difficult but then we took the thread and we got out and this way it was easy. The hedges were very high and I could not see anything, but we had the wire that we could see.

THOMAS T.: I saw the labyrinth and I thought that it was exactly as I imagined it, it had high hedges, I thought you could not see anything but actually you could see the curves of the labyrinth. I was not very frightened because, even if the hedges were high, they were so clear that you could see the other side.

ILARIA: When I saw the labyrinth I thought that it was a bit difficult and you could get lost with all those roads and high hedges. I was afraid to get lost and not to be able to find the exit. We used the thread and we got out... The thread was very long, it could go through all the roads.

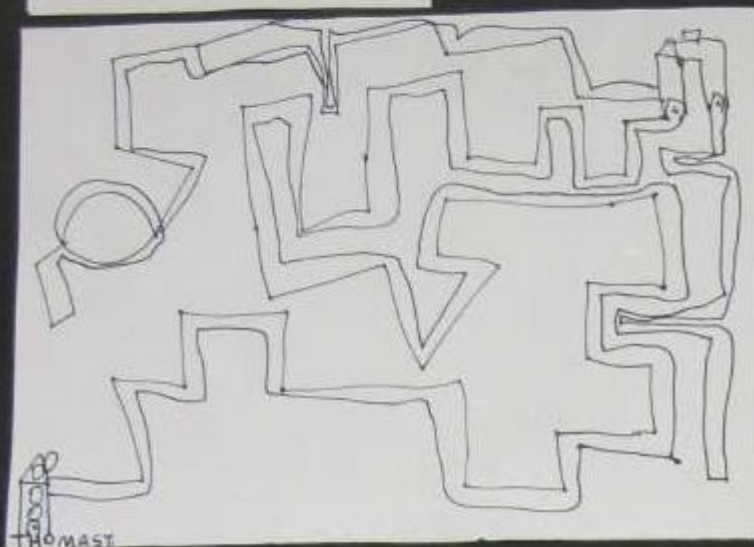
DAVIDE: The labyrinth was very hard because it was all zig-zag, straight with high hedges, and I couldn't see. We used the thread and we could arrive out of it, but to get to the center we had to use maps, we asked them to the people of the labyrinth with the phone.



# "IL CORPO IN MOVIMENTO"

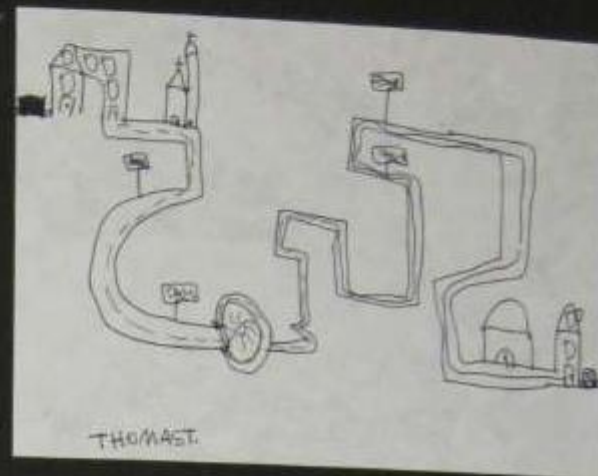
## Percorsi e labirinti

Rappresentazione grafica:  
labirinto scuola-casa

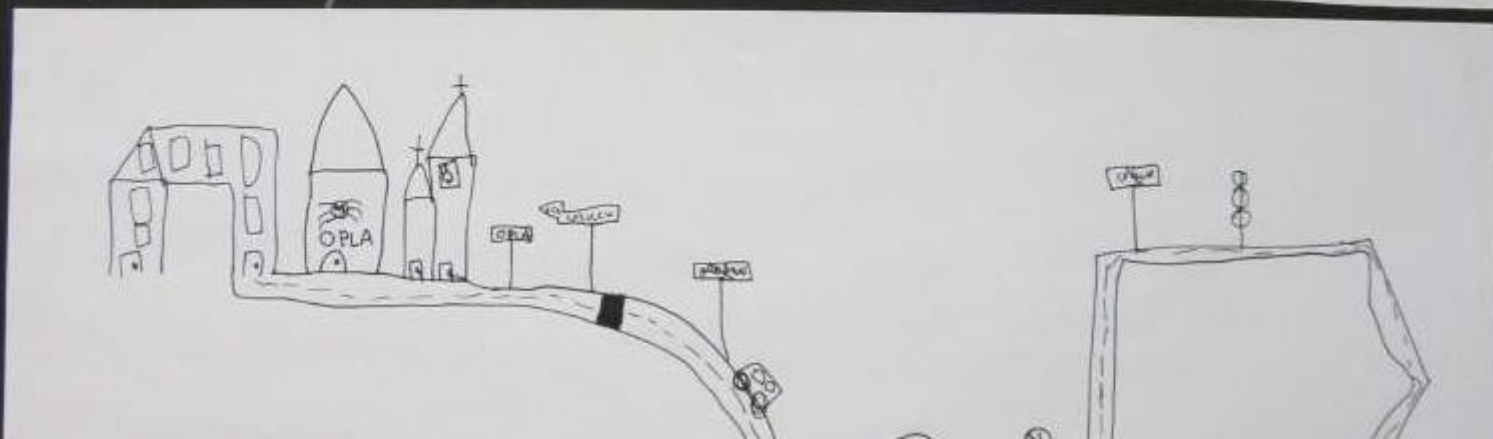


Sketches of the path  
from home to school

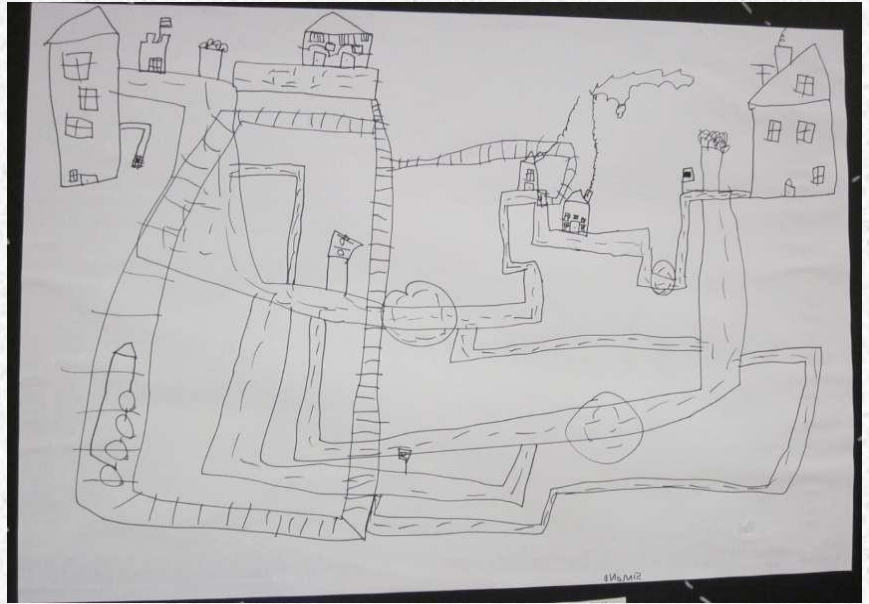
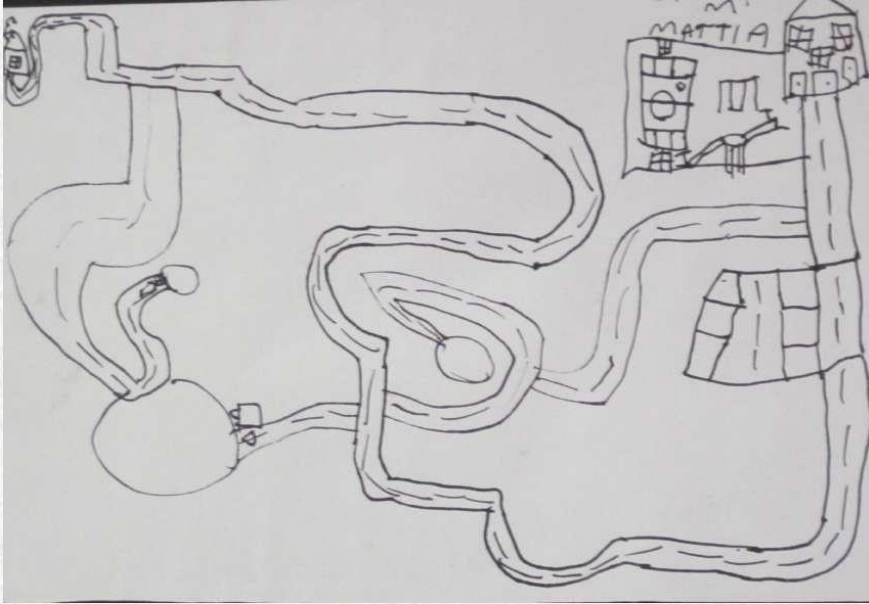
Schizzo percorso scuola-casa



Rappresentazione grafica mappatura individuata  
dai bambini percorso scuola-casa



# A POSSIBLE LABYRINTH



*GRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE LABYRINTH  
FROM HOME TO SCHOOL*



CONOSCO ED  
ESPLORO IL MIO  
QUARTIERE

RICONOSCO  
PUNTI DI  
RIFERIMENTO:

SCUOLA, OPLA', CHIESETTA,  
ROTONDA, EDICOLA

RAPPRESENTAZIONE  
GRAFICA DEL  
PERCORSO  
SCUOLA/CASA

TECNICA UTILIZZATA: TRATTO-PEN



# TELL ME WHERE YOU LIVE

FEDERICO: To go home I do the road of Modena... I do a street with some curves and a straight street... from the school I turn right, then straight on close to the park with the pulley, then I go under a bridge, then I go straight on for a while, then I have to curve, then I go straight on for some time, then I do another curve, then I go straight on and then I get home, it is number 4 and 4.

VIOLA: To go home I pass in front of the bar and then there is the sidewalk and I find the gate where there is my house.

CLARA: To go home I turn right and then I turn left, and I turn in front of the supermarket, then I turn at the traffic roundabout and at the park, then I turn in front of my grandparents' house, then there is the big supermarket and there is my house in Nicoli street.

SAMUELE: To go home I pass the traffic roundabout, then I turn left, then I go straight on, then there is a curve and a traffic light and I turn right, and I get home but the name of the street... I'll think about it... the street of my house.

MATTIA M: To go home I go straight on then I turn right in a big curve, then I pass near the hairdresser and the gas station and I get home in Brasile street.

ALESSIO: To go home I do the street straight on, I turn right, I pass near the church, then the market and the circus, and I turn left and I arrive, it is Carbonieri street number 7.



ILARIA: To go home I pass in front of Opla and of the church, then I pass close to the newsstand and to the icecream shop, then I turn where there is a new pizza restaurant that has some leaves on the window, then I get home in Porpora street, my house is orange and made with bricks and the roof is brown.

DAVIDE: To go home I pass where there is Opla and then close to the little church, and then I turn right, then I pass close to the newsstand and to the traffic roundabout, I pass on the overbridge and I go on the bypass and then on the other overbridge, then I'm home in Repubblica di Montefiorino street, I can't write the number because I don't know if it's 95 or something else.

MATTEO: To go home I pass close to the newsstand, then to the icecream shop, then I pass where there is a sign that tells me to turn right, then I go down under the bridge and close to the supermarket and I arrive home, that is in Fossa Monda street.

LUCA: To go home I see some signs with Monte Tintori street written on them, my mum told me, my number is 58, I see a sign where there is an arrow that shows me where Mattia lives and I live almost close to my mum's lab, the street I do is just a straight line.

LORENZO: To go home I pass in front of Opla and of the church, then I turn right and then I pass close to the newsstand, then I go straight on, then I pass under the tunnel, then I go straight on, I see three flags with a crane and I go straight on, and I see the trees, I do the traffic roundabout and I arrive home, in Righi Riva street number 29.

Nowadays the myth of the Labyrinth seems particularly actual,  
a myth about getting lost in order to find yourself again...  
It's a game that opens to the possibility to get in touch with nature  
in secrets gardens where walking is enjoyable  
along paths with extremely dense hedges that are endless.



