

Everyday life as an educational arena: Common sense, morality, and socialization in ordinary parent-child interactions

Vittoria Colla*

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna (Italy)

Submitted: September 7, 2025 – Accepted: July 4, 2026 – Published: September 15, 2026

La vita quotidiana come arena educativa: Senso comune e socializzazione morale nelle interazioni quotidiane tra genitori e figli

Everyday life is part of everyone's experience: it is the stable, reassuring background of our daily experiences, the realm of certainty, stability, obviousness and—at least apparently—irrelevance. Precisely due to its ordinary nature, everyday life typically remains unnoticed, rarely drawing our attention or the interests of scientific research. Adopting a phenomenological approach to educational events, this article challenges this conception by theoretically discussing and empirically illustrating the educational value inherent to ordinary life and the small talks that punctuate it. Focusing particularly on family conversations, the article demonstrates how apparently banal parent-child interactions encapsulate worldviews and moral meanings, tacitly ratifying them and passing them on to new generations. By enlightening the educational value of everyday family life and talks, the article makes relevant the need for a reflexive approach to ordinary experiences, fostering our awareness and “epistemic vigilance” toward the constitutive educational power of everyday life and social interactions.

La vita quotidiana fa parte dell'esperienza di ognuno di noi. Sfondo stabile e rassicurante delle nostre esperienze, è il regno della certezza, dell'ovvietà e – almeno apparentemente – dell'irrilevanza. Proprio a causa della sua natura ordinaria, la vita quotidiana passa inosservata, attirando raramente la nostra attenzione o l'interesse della ricerca scientifica. Adottando un approccio fenomenologico agli eventi educativi, questo articolo sfida tale concezione del quotidiano, mostrandone il valore educativo. Concentrandosi in particolare sulle conversazioni familiari, l'articolo argomenta teoricamente e dimostra empiricamente come interazioni apparentemente banali tra genitori e figli racchiudano visioni del mondo e significati morali, ratificandoli tacitamente e tramandandoli alle nuove generazioni. Mettendo in luce il valore educativo della vita quotidiana e delle conversazioni familiari di tutti i giorni, l'articolo sottolinea la necessità di un approccio riflessivo alle esperienze ordinarie, promuovendo consapevolezza e “vigilanza epistemica” rispetto al potere educativo del quotidiano e delle interazioni sociali.

Keywords: Phenomenological pedagogy; Parent-child interaction; Everyday life; Common sense; Socialization.

* ✉ vittoria.colla2@unibo.it

1. Introduction

Everyday life is part of everyone's experience. We all know intuitively what "everyday life" is: the stable, reassuring background of our daily experiences; the activities, places, people, and conversations that we encounter regularly; the "daily grind" that unfolds routinely with a good level of predictability. Everyday life is the realm of certainty, stability, continuity, obviousness and—at least apparently—irrelevance (Jedlowski, 2007a). Precisely because it is part of everyone's experience, the ordinary dimension of our life typically remains unnoticed, an invisible backdrop against which more relevant events and activities take place. With rare exceptions, everyday life does not draw our attention, nor does it attract the interests of scientific research (Di Cori & Pontecorvo, 2007; Jedlowski & Leccardi, 2003). And yet, as this article will show, it is precisely through ordinary life experiences, in the unfolding of apparently banal and irrelevant conversations, that our ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving as both individuals and cultural communities are constantly elaborated, reproduced, and sedimented. We owe particularly to Alfred Schutz and the phenomenological approach to social sciences a peculiar attention to everyday life, able to reveal its constitutive role in shaping individuals' beliefs, social identities, and, more broadly, the cultural and moral systems we live by. Crossing different fields such as sociology, pedagogy, and social psychology, the phenomenological approach encourages us to re-orient our gaze toward ordinary life, emphasizing that it is essentially through everyday practices and mundane social interactions that we express our intentionality (Husserl, 1900/1970), give meaning to our experiences, and (re)construct—or, potentially, transform—the social, cultural, and moral world we inhabit (Schutz, 1962; Garfinkel, 1967; Jedlowski, 2018). Consistently with its phenomenological roots, phenomenological pedagogy has been pioneer in acknowledging the educational relevance of ordinary life, reflecting on and exploring the idea of education as lived experience (Bertolini, 1958, 1988; Madrussan, 2022a; Caronia, 2011). In this perspective, education is viewed as an ordinary, essentially linguistic and interactive process (Bertolini, 1988; Caronia, 2011; Vaccari, 2018), situated in a culturally informed world.

Building on this phenomenological and pedagogical tradition, this article theoretically discusses and empirically illustrates the "implicit educational density" (Vassallo, 2016, p. 6) of everyday experiences, focusing particularly on family life and parent-child conversations. Indeed, as pedagogical research has long demonstrated, the family is key in shaping our ways of being in the world, constituting the center of our most significant relational experiences and the origin of our most important certainties—as well as insecurities (Formenti, 2000; Gigli, 2016; Iori, 1999, 2003; Milani, 2018). If the family is recognized as the primary context where we learn who we are, who we can be, and who we ought to be, nevertheless the ordinary and mainly conversational dynamics whereby our identities and beliefs are shaped day after day, in and through family mundane events and talks remain little investigated. It is therefore crucial to turn our pedagogical attention to family daily life and ordinary parent-child conversations, as they constitute the primary, crucial communicative space where we develop skills and abilities, learn about ourselves and the world around us. As this article will illustrate, ordinary family conversations are fundamental arenas where we are nurtured into culturally and morally competent subjects (Colla, 2024).

Adopting a phenomenological approach to educational events (Bertolini, 1988; Caronia, 2011, 2018), the article illuminates the educational value of ordinary family life and the small talks that punctuate it, which typically remains unseen in daily family practice and underinvestigated in scientific research. Building on some milestones of the phenomenological approach to social life (in particular, Schutz's notion of "common sense" and Garfinkel's "ethnomethods", see Section 2) and pedagogy (Bertolini's conception of education as a co-constructed linguistic event, see Section 3), and analyzing in detail some examples of mundane parent-child conversations, the article will demonstrate that and how apparently banal parent-child interactions encapsulate worldviews and moral meanings, tacitly ratifying them and passing them on to new generations. By enlightening the educational value of everyday family life, the article makes relevant the need for a reflexive approach to ordinary experiences. Furthermore, it advances some hypotheses of pedagogical interventions to foster our awareness and "epistemic vigilance" (Caronia, 2020, p. 60) toward the constitutive educational power of everyday life and social interactions.

2. Common sense and ethnomethods: A pedagogical perspective

The conception of everyday life as a ‘cultural and moral factory’ (Colla, 2023, p. 19), an arena where the social, cultural, and moral organization of a community is constantly reproduced is deeply rooted in the phenomenological perspective, particularly in Alfred Schutz’s notion of “common sense” (Schutz, 1962). In Schutz’s words, common sense constitutes “a form of ‘knowledge at hand’ [that] function[s] as a scheme of reference” (Schutz, 1962, p. 7), i.e., a basic, operational kind of knowledge, intersubjectively shared by a socio-cultural group, which we routinely rely on to understand and give meaning to everyday experiences. By simplifying and making familiar our ordinary experiences, common sense allows us to effectively cope with the practical problems of everyday life. Through a process of “taming of the world” (Jedlowski, 2007b, p. 11), it allows us to interpret new situations in the light of previous, similar experiences, giving us the means to manage new situations as if they were already known. A key feature of common sense is its taken-for-granted nature. That is, in everyday life experiences we typically assume its validity, leaving it unquestioned—at least until counterproof occurs. In Schutz’s words,

As long as the once established scheme of reference, the system of our and other people’s warranted experiences [i.e., common sense] works, as long as the actions and operations performed under its guidance yield the desired results, we trust these experiences (Schutz, 1962, p. 228).

In accomplishing our everyday life activities, we rely on common sense as some obvious and unquestionable knowledge, a set of indisputable certainties and rules whereby we categorize the material and ideational reality around us and act upon it.

Although it may appear as a merely cognitive and strictly individual issue, commonsense reasoning is in fact a socially and even pedagogically relevant matter. Indeed, far from being a private, hidden phenomenon occurring only inside our minds, the use of common sense in everyday life always has a visible side. According to Schutz and the scholars he inspired (see Berger & Luckman, 1966; Garfinkel, 1967), each time we interpret reality and deal with it, our words, actions, and behaviors bear traces of our commonsense interpretation. In other words, the behaviors we deploy in daily life constitute the visible side of commonsense reasoning, the demonstration of the ways in which we are interpreting the world and reacting to it. It is precisely such visibility of common sense that allows intersubjectivity (Duranti, 2014), ensuring mutual understanding, coordination, and, more in general, the concerted accomplishment of social activities. Importantly from a pedagogical standpoint, such a ‘visible side’ of common sense is also what makes everyday life pervasively *educational*. By adopting a phenomenological perspective, we can think of education—especially “informal education” (Tramma, 2009) or “socialization” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966)—as originating from the deployment of common sense in ordinary and visible courses of actions, which Garfinkel (1967) calls “ethnomethods”. Ethnomethods are the routinized, culture-specific and commonsense-based procedures whereby subjects accomplish everyday activities (Garfinkel, 1967; Fele, 2002). Through such routine procedures that we constantly use in our everyday life, not only do we build on commonsense beliefs and rules, but we also subtly *display* our commonsense reasoning; in other words, inscribed in our ways of acting are our ways of thinking. Since ethnomethods encode and display the commonsense categories they draw on, we can consider them as authentic *educational practices* that make common sense visible and learnable; ordinary, largely unnoticed practices that contribute to educating children to the taken-for-granted validity of common sense (Colla, 2023, 2024).

Being repetitively exposed to ethnomethods in the unfolding of their everyday life, children have the chance to acquire not only the ethnomethods themselves (i.e., the practical ways of accomplishing daily social activities), but also the commonsense categories, rules, and assumptions that are presupposed in and enacted through the ethnomethods. In this perspective, daily life constitutes an educational arena where cultural and moral worldviews are constantly assumed, displayed, and transmitted (Caronia, 2020). In the unfolding of everyday life experiences, common sense is not only pervasively used, and thus ratified and crystalized in its validity, but also intersubjectively shared and passed on to new generations.

3. Language, social interaction, education

Among the different ethnomethods we use in everyday life, language-mediated social interactions are particularly relevant as educational arenas. Indeed, as effectively summarized by Heritage (1984), commonsense categories, rules, and assumptions are “language carried” (p. 54), i.e., they are mainly expressed through language, which identifies, segments, and traces the borders of material and ideational objects. As Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain, language is the fundamental means that mediates between the individual and its cultural, social, material and ideational world, “mark[ing] the coordinates of [our] life in society and fill[ing] that life with meaningful objects” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pp. 35-36). Far from being a mere ‘instrument’ for transmitting information or referring to reality, language-in-interaction is a precious resource whereby ordinary life is organized, commonsense reasoning is intersubjectively shared, and mutual understanding is guaranteed. Studies within the phenomenological paradigm have long emphasized the “reality-generating potency of conversation” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 172), showing how language and social interactions contribute to shaping the social and cultural world we live by (Caronia, 2021).

And yet, social interaction is not limited to verbal language. Even though language is typically viewed as the “primary constitutive element of human agency” (Duranti, 2003, p. 45), the paraverbal (e.g., voice volume, intonation, sound stretches, silences) and nonverbal (e.g., gestures, gaze directions, bodily orientations, use of objects) dimensions of social interaction are also relevant in constituting the meaning of verbal utterances. As studies within the so-called “multimodal” or “embodied approach” to social interaction have extensively illustrated (see among others, Goodwin, 2000; Mondada, 2016), coordination, mutual understanding, and meaning making in social interaction are achieved through a range of resources that extend far beyond mere verbal language, including the bodily and the material. Not only what is said, but also how it is said, and even what is *not* said, the silences and the words that are not uttered in conversation have some creative power, as they presuppose and tacitly convey commonsense expectations concerning what is relevant or not, appropriate or inappropriate, utterable or taboo (Duranti, 2007). As Berger and Luckmann (1966) effectively put it, conversation—with its multimodal dimensions—is the most important vehicle of reality-maintenance (p. 172).

In line with these reflections, phenomenological pedagogy conceives of social interaction as the fundamental means whereby education is done. In other words, education is an essentially linguistic and interactive phenomenon (Bertolini, 1988; Caronia, 2011; Vaccari, 2018): any educational experience is made possible by and realized through social interaction, i.e., situations when subjects are not only co-present (Goffman, 1967) but also involved in a communicative exchange mediated by language and/or other multimodal aspects. It is in fact through social interactions and particularly through the “language of concrete things” (“linguaggio delle cose concrete”, Bertolini, 1965, p. 324, 1988) characterizing daily experiences, that we can communicate and co-construct a shared horizon of meaning. In this perspective, education is viewed as a situated and cooperative process of co-construction of meaning (“uno sforzo continuo, situazionato e consapevole di co-costruzione di significati da parte di chi educa e di chi viene educato”, Bertolini, 2006, p. 10), a joint achievement made possible by language-mediated social interaction, through which the subjects involved actively elaborate the meaning of their actions, (re)affirm (or even potentially challenge) taken-for-granted worldviews, and essentially pass on to new generations the self-evident and apparently ‘natural’ character of their culture-informed world.

Framing social interaction as an educational event—as phenomenological pedagogy invites us to do—, provides us with the means to theorize the pervasive educational relevance of ordinary life. It gives us the theoretical lenses to conceive of daily experiences and the small talks that uphold them as countless, ubiquitous, almost invisible yet extremely powerful educational events, each of which inevitably builds on commonsense beliefs, relentlessly (re)affirms, and pervasively conveys them, educating to their unquestionable validity.

4. Family talk, family socialization

If mundane conversations constitute inherently educational events, this is especially true for conversations within the family context. We all know first-hand to what extent daily family dialogues with our

parents, siblings, and caregivers have forged our ways of being, thinking, and behaving. Pedagogical research has extensively thematized the crucial role of childhood experiences within the family and the domestic space, showing how they contribute to shaping what we become (see among others, Formenti, 2000; Gigli, 2016; Iori, 1999, 2003; Milani, 2018; Pati, 2014; Catarsi, 2008; Perillo, 2018; Biffi & Carriera, 2021). Consistently, a huge number of publications have provided guidelines and instructions for parents on childcare activities (see among many others, Hogg & Blau, 2001; Mead, 2018; Siegel & Payne Bryson, 2018), contributing to raising consciousness on the pivotal role of family experiences in children's development.

Although from a different theoretical and methodological perspective, research analyzing naturally occurring parent-child conversations has empirically shown that they constitute “a uniquely fertile arena for moral thinking and moral development” (Wainryb & Recchia, 2014, p. 5; Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2007). Through the meticulous analysis of real parent-child daily talks, the numerous works in this stream of research have illustrated that family conversations, no matter how brief, mundane, and apparently irrelevant, are in fact ‘culturally saturated’ socializing events (see among others, Ochs, Pontecorvo, & Fasulo, 1996; Kremer-Sadlik, 2019; Sterponi, 2003; Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018; Fasulo, Lloyd, & Padiglione, 2007; Galatolo & Caronia, 2018; Caronia & Colla, 2024; Colla, 2022). By taking part in everyday conversations, children are exposed to commonsense beliefs and moral assumptions, and they are gradually socialized into culturally and morally competent subjects, able to interpret reality in inter-subjectively shared ways and oriented to aligning with culturally appropriate norms, expectations, and duties (Caronia, 2020; Colla, 2023, 2024).

Drawing on works within the phenomenological approach to social life and pedagogy, so far we have theoretically argued for the educational relevance of ordinary family life and conversations, offering some theoretical lenses to conceive of mundane family talks as morally dense educational events. In the next section, we provide some empirical evidence for this argument: by analyzing a series of real, naturally occurring parent-child conversations, we will illuminate the moral relevance and educational power of daily family dialogues.

5. Moral education in ordinary family conversations: “Do it properly” as a taken-for-granted imperative

To empirically illustrate the moral and educational density of everyday family conversations, in this section we present a series of naturally occurring parent-child interactions that were collected as part of a multi-year, video-ethnographic research on ordinary family activities (including dinners, homework, sports activities, and shared reading). Adopting a discourse analytic approach (see among others, Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), this research aims at investigating family experiences and illuminating the educational relevance of the mundane conversations that punctuate it (see Ochs et al., 1996; Galatolo & Caronia, 2018; Caronia, Colla, & Galatolo, 2021; Vassallo, 2016; Caronia & Colla, 2024, 2023; Colla, 2023, 2024). The excerpts presented below, which are taken from different moments of everyday family life, concur to show to what extent as well as how commonsense rules and expectations inform ordinary interactions, making them highly educational experiences. In particular, in these conversations we will see how parents take for granted and evoke the moral imperative of behaving “properly”, i.e., complying with a given standard of “appropriate” conduct. By relying on this assumption and urging their children to comply with it, parents not only ratify its validity, but they also convey it to children as an unquestionable rule for managing daily activities and behaving in everyday life. As we will see in the excerpts and analyses, the interrelated, commonsense ideas according to which there are “right”/“wrong”, “better”/“worse” ways of behaving and human behavior should comply with a standard of “appropriate” conduct are visibly presupposed, put into words, and passed on to new generations as absolute, incontestable, even obvious, facts of life.

The first example shows how the rule of “behaving properly” pervades an ordinary, apparently natural and even physiological activity like eating. The interaction occurs during a family dinner and involves a mother, a father, and their two-year-old child Tobia. While the child is chewing a piece of meat, the mother makes relevant the imperative of “eating properly”.

Ex. 1 – “Eat properly”

1.	Mother	vuoi assaggiarlo intanto così vedi se ti va? do you wanna try it so you see if you want it? ((offering a spoonful of meat to Tobia))
2.		((spoon-feeds Tobia))
3.	Tobia	((chews noisily with open mouth while looking at Mother and then Father))
4.	Father	buo:no? good?
5.	→ Mother	mangia bene senza far tutto quel rumore dai eat properly without making all that noise come on
6.	Tobia	((chews silently))

In lines 1 and 2, the mother offers Tobia a spoonful of meat, which the child starts chewing noisily (line 3). While the father appears oriented to the child's tasting activity by asking him if the food is “good” (line 4), the mother intervenes by problematizing his conduct (line 5). The directive she issues in line 5 may seem a mere, banal way of correcting the child's conduct, one we have probably witnessed many times as children or parents. However, by analyzing it more carefully, we can unveil its moral and educational relevance. Indeed, by urging Tobia to “eat properly without making all that noise”, the mother does a twofold moral work. First, she discursively constructs the child's behavior as too noisy and, therefore, as “wrong”. In so doing, she conveys the commonsense idea according to which there are right vs wrong ways of behaving (in this case, of chewing). Second, and relatedly, she makes relevant a standard of “appropriate conduct” for the child to comply with, which consists in chewing silently. In the following turn, the child complies with the mother's directive by starting to chew soundlessly (line 6). Beyond the child's immediate compliance, what is worth noting here is the—subtle, less visible—process of moral socialization that occurs through this brief exchange. By interacting with his mother and being exposed to her directive, Tobia is socialized into commonsense beliefs and expectations, including not only the rule of “chewing silently”, but also the more general moral principles that uphold and inform this specific rule, i.e., the interrelated ideas according to which there are right vs wrong behaviors, and he is expected to behave “appropriately”.

The same moral assumptions are evoked by the mother in the following extract, who intervenes to correct her child's sitting posture.

Ex. 2 – “Sit properly”

1.	Laura	((is sitting at the table keeping one of her legs bent))
2.	→ Mother	mettiti ↑COMpo:sta (con:-) sit properly (with)
3.	Laura	((brings the leg down))
4.	Father	eh:: eh ((sighing while staring at Laura))

Similarly to example 1, this excerpt shows a short directive sequence involving a mother and her child Laura (six years old). While eating at the table with her parents and younger brother, Laura adopts an unusual posture, sitting with one leg bent and the foot placed on the chair (line 1). Having noticed Laura's sitting posture, the mother intervenes urging her to sit “properly” (“*composta*”, line 2), which the child immediately does (line 3). Similarly to example 1, and beyond its apparent irrelevance, this excerpt builds on and implicitly conveys a “morally organized world”, a set of rules for individual conduct that the child is expected to comply with. In addition to requesting (and obtaining) the child's change of posture, the mother's directive presupposes and “talks into being” (Heritage, 1984, p. 290) a more general moral idea, which transcends the specific rule of “sitting properly”, i.e., the existence of a standard of conduct, which the child must align with in her everyday life activities.

The imperative of “doing things properly” pervades not only the moments when family members eat together, but also many other parent-child daily events. The next excerpt occurs during parent-assisted homework: while Benedetta (seven years old) is completing her math assignment, the mother checks it and problematizes the child’s handwriting.

Ex. 3 – “Do it properly”

1.	Mother	°scrivi° meglio:.. (.) ^guarda sti due numeri (.) write better look at these two numbers
2.		^((points to the numbers on the page))
3.		falli un po’ per bene. cos’è quel due? do them a bit properly what’s that two?
4.	Benedetta	((deletes))
5.	Mother	fallo per BEne do it properly

In lines 1-3, the mother problematizes Benedetta’s handwriting, particularly the way she has written the numbers in a math exercise. Through a series of directives, the mother urges the child to critically observe her work (“look at these two numbers”, line 1; she also points to the numbers, line 2) and write them more neatly (“write better”, line 1; “do them a bit properly”, line 3). With these directives, the mother evaluates the child’s writing as sloppy and conveys the need for the child to correct it. From a phenomenological and moral socialization perspective, the mother assesses the child’s work as “wrong”/“inappropriate” and sets a standard for the child to comply with, i.e., writing “better”/“properly”. Benedetta immediately complies with the directive (she deletes the numbers, line 4; then she writes them again, not transcribed), while the mother makes relevant once again the imperative of doing homework “properly”. This exchange clearly illustrates how, one interaction at a time, the child is gradually socialized into a “homework morality”, which includes the obligation to “write neatly” (Colla, 2022). Yet, the moral and educational value of this contingent exchange extends beyond this. By taking part in this conversation, Benedetta appropriates not only the particular obligation to write properly, but also the far more foundational beliefs that human conduct is assessable according to a standard of appropriateness and, relatedly, that one must behave “properly” (Caronia & Colla, 2023). Even though these general moral principles are not explicitly stated in this exchange, the mother’s turns build on and implicitly convey them as self-evident and unquestionable.

The next excerpt is taken from another activity that characterizes many family routines, i.e., child sports practice, and it further illustrates how children are exposed and, therefore, socialized to moral standards of behavior in the unfolding of ordinary parent-child talks. In this case, Federico (eight years old) and her mother are driving to a soccer match when the child expresses his fear of being unable to shoot on goal due to the high wind that has started blowing. In response, the mother evokes the need for the child to “do his best”.

Ex. 4 – “Always doing your best”

1.	Federico	>non possiamo tirare da- (.) se- se we can’t shoot from- if-if
2.		tiriamo da lontano,< non:::- non entrerà mai we shoot from afar it won’t-it will never enter
3.	→ Mother	no Federico. l’importante è far <u>sempre</u> del tuo MEglio no Federico what matters is always doing your best
4.		e non ti preoccupare. and don’t worry

In lines 1-2, Federico discloses his concern about the upcoming match, particularly about his team's ability to play well and score ("if we shoot from afar it will never enter"). In response, the mother makes relevant the need for him to "always do his best" (line 3), framing this as all that matters ("what matters", line 3) about his athletic performance. While the mother's turn is visibly oriented to reassuring Federico (see the final "don't worry", line 4), it also conveys the existence of a moral standard of conduct. By urging the child to "always do his best", this mother sets this as the main goal, implicitly evoking the concept of virtue (MacIntyre, 1984) and pushing the child to make an effort to comply with this standard.

The final excerpt below is taken from another homework session involving a mother and her six-year-old child Valeria. Similarly to the examples so far, it shows how the mother evokes the imperatives of "doing one's best" and "doing things properly". In addition to that, the excerpt is particularly interesting because it offers a visible demonstration of *the child's* orientation to these moral principles, which constitutes some evidence that she has in fact been socialized into the moral horizon evoked by the mother in interaction.

Ex. 5 – "You can color better"

1.	Mother	qui hai colorato abbastanza bene, qua; ^secondo me; here you have colored quite well, here (instead) in my opinion
2.		^((turns the page and points to an image))
3.	Valeria	ihiih[ihihih eheheh ((smiling))
4.	Mother	[puoi colorare un po' me:glia. mi sbaglio? you can color a bit better am I wrong?
5.	Valeria	((takes a crayon))
6.	Mother	fai a modo. do it properly
7.	14 seconds omitted: Valeria colors the image requested by the mother. In the meantime, the mother looks at her.	
8.	Valeria	((takes another crayon and starts coloring another image))
9.	Mother	quello va già bene that one is already okay
10.	Valeria	no no meglio no no better ((coloring))
11.	Mother	((smiles))

In lines 1-2 and 4, the mother problematizes the way in which her child Valeria has done her assignment, which consists in coloring some images on a schoolbook. By suggesting that the child "can color a bit better" (line 4), the mother takes for granted and implicitly refers to the principle according to which one should always do their best, prompting the child to improve her work as much as possible. Like the children in the previous excerpts, Valeria immediately aligns with the mother's suggestion: she takes a crayon (line 5) and then colors the image problematized by the mother (line 7). It is worth noting that, before the child starts coloring, the mother explicitly formulates the moral principle of "doing things properly" (line 6), which works a sort of "moral guidance" for Valeria in correcting her work.

After coloring the image indicated by the mother (line 7), Valeria takes another crayon and starts coloring another image (line 8). The mother, who has been looking at her, intervenes to communicate that this image is "already okay" (line 9), thus conveying that there is no need for the child to improve it. In response, Valeria expresses her disagreement, stating that the image can be improved ("no no better", line 10). This child's turn is particularly revealing: by further improving her work, Valeria provides a visible demonstration that she has acquired the idea of "standard" as well as the related principle of "doing one's best". Just like her mother, she now applies these moral principles to her everyday life activities, specifically to homework assignments.

6. The educational density of everyday life: Concluding remarks and hypotheses of pedagogical interventions

By combining theoretical reflections within the phenomenological approach to social life and educational events with detailed analyses of daily parent-child conversations, the article has argued for and empirically illustrated the educational richness and pedagogical relevance of everyday family life, showing how ideologies, ways of seeing the world, moral and cultural systems made of rules and expectations, concepts of “right and wrong”, “appropriate and inappropriate”, “good and bad” are nuzzled in daily practices, as tacit assumptions and implicit messages conveyed by words, actions, and gestures. Such socializing power inherent to ordinary experiences remains largely unnoticed in the unfolding of our everyday life. If we asked the parents what they were doing when talking with their children in the analyzed exchanges, they would be unlikely to respond that they were doing “moral work” or “educating their children to commonsense rules”. Indeed, everyday life experiences typically escape our consciousness and reflexivity; they are mainly accomplished in auto-mode, as routinary, taken-for-granted scripts (or, in Garfinkel’s words, as “ethnomethods”). And yet, the analyzed exchanges provide visible evidence of the pervasive educational work that parents and children carry out in the unfolding of their ordinary life. While involved in daily interactional activities like eating together or doing homework, parents and children assess and categorize the reality around them based on the commonsense, morally dense categories of “right vs wrong”, “better vs worse”, and evoke imperatives and rules for moral conduct like “do your best” and “do things properly”. Far from their apparent irrelevance, these micro-exchanges have high educational value, as they build on, actualize, put into words, and ratify culturally shared versions of reality. Day after day, one interaction at a time, these mundane conversations nurture children into “speakers of culture” (Ochs, 2002), i.e., individuals that “naturally” think, feel, and behave in culturally appropriate ways.

Acknowledging the “implicit educational density” (Vassallo, 2016, p. 6) of everyday life and conversations makes relevant a pedagogical re-evaluation of daily experiences, especially those occurring in highly educational contexts like the family. It makes relevant a new perspective on family life, one that views daily, routinary, and apparently irrelevant activities as “quality time” (Kremer-Sadlik & Paugh, 2007), i.e., culture- and family-making educational experiences. Such a renovated gaze on ordinary family life builds on the ability to recognize the power of words, silences, and gestures, grasp their interactive meanings and educational effects, and intentionally (re)orient ordinary actions and talks. This perspective makes relevant the activation of processes of self-reflexivity (Contini *et al.*, 2014; Mortari, 2003) and “epistemic vigilance” (Caronia, 2020, p. 60), guiding parents, caregivers, and educators toward an increased “educational intentionality” (Bruzzone, 2023), i.e., promoting their ability to recognize, reflect on, and consciously channel the educational potential inherent in daily experiences and mundane conversations.

Such a renovated gaze can be activated through specific pedagogical interventions, prompting parents—as well as caregivers and educators—to draw their attention to everyday life and small talks. The use of video recordings of daily family events constitutes a precious resource for this aim. During specifically devised encounters, parents can be invited to observe their own (or other families’) video-recorded conversations, in order to identify the taken-for-granted moral principles underpinning such ordinary experiences and the educational value of mundane gestures and words. They can be invited to reflect on their ordinary ways of interacting with other family members, primarily their children, critically assessing them and advancing alternative ways of talking and educating in everyday life. By enlightening the mundane dimensions of ordinary family life, these encounters could focus on specific sentences, voice volume and pitch, words, gestures, and physical stances used in everyday conversations, making them the object critical analyses and unveiling their educational power. These video-guided reflections can activate discussions allowing family members, caregivers, and educators more in general, to re-interpret their daily experiences, learn from them, become more conscious about the educational power of mundane events, and re-orient their daily conversations toward more intentional socialization objectives.

Through the re-evaluation of everyday life and its educational value, a new, deeper and more critical understanding of what appears obvious and irrelevant can be achieved, which allows us to become con-

scious interpreters of established routines and taken-for-granted practices, able to “give direction and meaning to [our] action[s]” (Madrussan, 2022b, p. 27) and drive them toward new, more intentional educational goals.

7. Transcript conventions

°word°	talk that is markedly quieter than the rest of the talk
WORD	talk that is markedly louder than the rest of the talk
[word]	overlapping talk
(.)	pause shorter than 0.2 seconds
(1.5)	pause measured in seconds and tenths of a second
-	prior word or sound is cut off
((word))	description of nonverbal events (e.g., gestures, gaze direction)
wo:rd	prolongation of the sound
,	slightly rising intonation
?	strongly rising intonation (typical of questions)
.	falling intonation
↑	higher pitch
↓	lower pitch
^	moment when nonverbal event begins with respect to uttered words

References

- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Doubleday and Co.
- Bertolini, P. (1958). *Fenomenologia e pedagogia*. Bologna: Malipiero.
- Bertolini, P. (1965). *Per una pedagogia del ragazzo difficile*. Bologna: Malipiero.
- Bertolini, P. (1988). *L'esistere pedagogico. Ragioni e limiti di una pedagogia come scienza fenomenologicamente fondata*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia.
- Bertolini, P. (Ed.). (2006). *Per un lessico di pedagogia fenomenologica*. Trento: Erikson.
- Biffi, E., & Carriera, L. (2021). La casa come spazio educante: riflessioni pedagogiche a partire da uno studio durante il lockdown. *MeTis. Mondi educativi. Temi, indagini, suggestioni*, 11(2), 240–251. <https://doi.org/10.30557/MT00176>

- Bruzzone, D. (2023). L'intenzionalità educativa. In M. Amadini, D. Bruzzone, M. Musai, P. Triani, & P. Zini (Eds.), *Pedagogia Generale. Temi fondamentali dell'educazione* (pp. 31–63). Milano: Vita e Pensiero.
- Caronia, L. (2011). *Fenomenologia dell'educazione. Intenzionalità, cultura e conoscenza in pedagogia*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Caronia, L. (2018). The phenomenological turn in education: The legacy of Piero Bertolini's theory. *Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica*, 13(2), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1970-2221/8600>
- Caronia, L. (2020). Pedagogia della vita quotidiana. Ovvero: come costruiamo i mondi a cui apparteniamo. In D. Bruzzone & E. Musi (Eds.), *Aver cura dell'esistenza. Studi in onore di Vanna Iori* (pp. 53–62). Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Caronia, L. (2021). Language, culture and social interaction: An introduction. In L. Caronia (Ed.), *Language and Social Interaction at Home and School* (pp. 1–36). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Caronia, L., & Colla, V. (2023). Beyond school-related learning: Parent-child homework talk as a morality building activity. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 43, Article 100778. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2023.100778>
- Caronia, L., & Colla, V. (2024). Shaping a moral body in family dinner talk: Children's socialization to good manners concerning bodily conduct. *Appetite*, 199, Article 107502. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2024.107502>
- Caronia, L., Colla, V., & Galatolo, R. (2021). Making unquestionable worlds. Morality building practices in family dinner dialogues. In L. Caronia (Ed.), *Language and Interaction at Home and School* (pp. 87–12). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Catarsi, E. (2008). *Pedagogia della famiglia*. Roma: Carocci.
- Colla, V. (2022). "Don't complain and do it properly": 'Pedagogicalized parents' and the morality of doing homework. *Rivista Italiana di Educazione Familiare*, 20, 211–228. <https://doi.org/10.36253/rief-10579>
- Colla, V. (2023). *Education in Everyday Family Life: Language, Culture, and Morality in Homework Interactions*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS.
- Colla, V. (2024). *La cultura nelle parole di tutti i giorni: per una pedagogia della vita quotidiana*. Como/Pavia: Ibis.
- Contini, M., Demozi, S., Fabbri, M., & Tolomelli, A. (2014). *Deontologia pedagogica. Riflessività e pratiche di resistenza*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Di Cori, P., & Pontecorvo, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Tra ordinario e straordinario: modernità e vita quotidiana*. Roma: Carocci.
- Duranti, A. (2003). Il parlare come pratica sociale. In G. Mantovani (Ed.), *Manuale di psicologia sociale* (pp. 45–61). Firenze: Giunti.
- Duranti, A. (2007). *Etnopragmatica. La forza nel parlare*. Roma: Carocci.
- Fasulo, A., Loyd, H., & Padiglione, V. (2007). Children's socialization into cleaning practices: A cross-cultural perspective. *Discourse and Society*, 18(1), 11–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926507069454>
- Fele, G. (2002). *Etnometodologia. Introduzione allo studio delle attività ordinarie*. Roma: Carocci.
- Formenti, L. (2000). *Pedagogia della famiglia*. Milano: Guerini.

- Galatolo, R., & Caronia, L. (2018). Morality at dinnertime: The sense of the Other as a practical accomplishment in family interaction. *Discourse and Society*, 29(1), 43–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926517726110>
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice Hall.
- Gigli, A. (2016). *Famiglie evolute. Capire e sostenere le funzioni educative delle famiglie plurali*. Parma: Edizioni Junior.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction Ritual. Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Goodwin, C. (2000). Action and embodiment within situated human interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32, 1489–1522. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(99\)00096-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00096-X)
- Goodwin, M. H., & Cekaite, A. (2018). *Embodied Family Choreography. Practices of Control, Care and Mundane Creativity*. London: Routledge.
- Heritage, J. (1984). *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Hogg, T., & Blau, M. (2001). *Secrets of the Baby Whisperer: How to Calm, Connect and Communicate with Your Baby*. London: Vermilion.
- Husserl, E. (1900/1970). *Logical Investigations*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Iori, V. (1999). Per una pedagogia fenomenologica della famiglia. *Encyclopaideia*, 6, 115–126.
- Iori, V. (2003). Spazio e tempo. Fulcri educativi della pedagogia familiare. In L. Pati (Ed.), *Ricerca pedagogica ed educazione familiare. Studi in onore di Norberto Galli* (pp. 271–297). Milano: Vita e pensiero.
- Jedlowski, P. (2007a). Il posto dei dettagli. Prospettive di una sociologia della vita quotidiana. In P. Di Cori, & C. Pontecorvo (Eds.), *Tra ordinario e straordinario: modernità e vita quotidiana* (pp. 87–98). Roma: Carocci.
- Jedlowski, P. (2007b). *Che cosa significa che la realtà sia una costruzione sociale? Un seminario di teoria sociale*. Working papers n. 9, Dipartimento di Sociologia e Scienza Politica, Università della Calabria.
- Jedlowski, P. (2018). Il mondo dato per scontato. Conversazioni quotidiane e costruzione sociale della realtà. In S. Besoli, & L. Caronia (Eds.), *Il senso della realtà. L'orizzonte della fenomenologia nello studio del mondo sociale* (pp. 119–129). Macerata: Quodlibet Studio.
- Jedlowski, P., & Leccardi, C. (2003). *Sociologia della vita quotidiana*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Kremer-Sadlik, T. (2019). Ordinary ethics and reflexivity in mundane family interactions. *Ethos*, 47(2), 190–210. <https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12234>
- Kremer-Sadlik, T., & Paugh, A. (2007). Everyday moments. Finding 'quality time' in American working families. *Time & Society*, 16(2/3), 287–308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X07080276>
- MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After virtue*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Madrussan, E. (2022a). L'educazione eloquente dell'esperienza sensibile. Sull'implicito nell'esperienza del quotidiano. *Paideutika*, 35, 93–106. <https://doi.org/10.57609/paideutika.vi35.2157>
- Madrussan, E. (2022b). Tre volte relazione. Intersoggettività, culture, riflessività per la formazione pedagogica dell'insegnante di scuola secondaria. *Pedagogia oggi*, 20(1), 26–32. <https://doi.org/10.7346/PO-012022-03>
- Mead, C. (2018). *7pm To 7am Sleeping Baby Routine: The No-Cry Plan to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night*. London: Vermilion.

- Milani, P. (2018). *Educazione e famiglie. Ricerche e nuove pratiche per la genitorialità*. Roma: Carocci.
- Mondada, L. (2016). Multimodal resources and the organization of social interaction. In A. Rocci, & L. de Saussure (Eds.), *Verbal Communication* (pp. 329–350). Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Mortari, L. (2003). *Apprendere dall'esperienza. Il pensare riflessivo nella formazione*. Roma: Carocci.
- Ochs, E. (2002). Becoming a speaker of culture. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language Acquisition and Language Socialization: Ecological Perspectives* (pp. 99–120). London: Continuum Press.
- Ochs, E., & Kremer-Sadlik, T. (2007). Introduction: Morality as a family practice. *Discourse and Society*, 18(1), 5–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926507069451>
- Ochs, E., Pontecorvo, C., & Fasulo, A. (1996). Socializing taste. *Ethnos*, 61, 7–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.1996.9981526>
- Pati, L. (Ed.). (2014). *Pedagogia della famiglia*. Brescia: La Scuola.
- Perillo, P. (2018). *Pedagogia per le famiglie. La consulenza educativa alla genitorialità in trasformazione*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E.A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, 50(4), 696–735.
- Schutz, A. (1962). *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Siegel, D. J., & Bryson, T. P. (2018). *Yes brain. Come valorizzare le risorse del bambino*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.
- Sterponi, L. (2003). Account episodes in family discourse: The making of morality in everyday interaction. *Discourse Studies*, 5(1), 79–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614456030050010401>
- Tramma, S. (2009). *Che cos'è l'educazione informale*. Roma: Carocci.
- Vaccari, M. (2018). Agency in language. Lessons from (and for) a phenomenological approach to education. *Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica*, 13(2), 49–73. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1970-2221/8594>
- Vassallo, E. (2016). *Culture familiari e pratiche di vita quotidiana. Modelli educativi e culturali nelle conversazioni a tavola tra genitori e figli*. (Tesi di dottorato non pubblicata). Università di Bologna, Bologna.
- Wainryb, C., & Recchia, H. E. (Eds.). (2014). *Talking About Right and Wrong: Parent-Child Conversations as Contexts for Moral Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vittoria Colla – Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna (Italy)

✉ vittoria.colla2@unibo.it

Vittoria Colla is a Researcher at the Department of Educational Studies of the University of Bologna. She conducts research in the field of pedagogy of everyday life, investigating the educational relevance of parent-child conversations during ordinary family activities. She also studies interactions in healthcare settings, particularly oncological and pediatric visits, including primary care visits with unaccompanied foreign minors. Among her recent publications are: *Education in everyday family life. Language, culture, and morality in homework interactions* (ETS, 2023); and *I compiti a casa. Linguaggio e apprendimento quando la scuola entra in famiglia* (with L. Caronia, Raffaello Cortina, 2024).