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## A Child Up to Three Years in a “Corset” of Social Perception of Education. Selected Problems of Specific Needs and Development Opportunities in Early Childhood

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*Dziecko do lat trzech w „gorsecie” społecznego postrzegania edukacji. Wybrane problemy specyficznych potrzeb i możliwości rozwojowych w okresie wczesnego dzieciństwa*

**Abstract.** The study aims to draw attention to the “tight corset” of education of a child, including a child up to the age of three, which is still perceived as weak and not very competent. The author raises the issue of natural education and non-directive education by constructing considerations in the context of social paradoxes, behavioral perception of education, and in the context of restrictions on the functioning of the child in accordance with his natural needs and capabilities in public space. The text also raised issues related to the excessive standardization of interactions with a child up to the age of three, which, in the author’s opinion, may lead to excessive “judging”, which makes “the child become a thing”.

**Keywords:** child up to the age of three; behavioral perception of education; early childhood; natural education

**Abstrakt.** Celem opracowania jest zwrócenie uwagi na „ugorsetowanie” edukacji dziecka, w tym dziecka do lat trzech, które nadal bywa postrzegane jako słabe i mało kompetentne. Autorka porusza kwestię edukacji naturalnej oraz edukacji niedyrektywnej, konstruując rozważania w kontekście paradoksów społecznych, behawioralnego postrzegania edukacji oraz w kontekście ograniczeń dla funkcjonowania dziecka zgodnie z jego naturalnymi potrzebami i możliwościami w przestrzeni publicznej. W tekście poruszono także zagadnienia związane z nadmierną standaryzacją oddziaływań wobec dziecka do lat trzech, co zdaniem autorki może prowadzić do nadmiernego „osądzania”, które sprawia, że „dziecko staje się rzeczą”.

**Słowa kluczowe:** dziecko do lat trzech; behawioralne postrzeganie edukacji; wczesne dzieciństwo; edukacja naturalna

## INTRODUCTION

On the basis of pedagogical literature, the needs and development opportunities of a child up to the age of three are now more and more often articulated, perceived and analyzed. Recognition of a child in the categories of a strong perpetrator of his own education and perception of the need for adults to create a pro-development offer by children are the subject of interest of many scientific studies, of which one of the leading ones are the studies of Telka (2009, 2016, 2017), Karwowska-Struczyk (2007a, 2007b, 2012) and other educators inspired by the reflection of the authors cited here. While psychologists and educators emphasize the value of early childhood experiences and studies on early childhood education focus on the child, the interest in developing education and care places for children up to three years observed among politicians is primarily the result of the needs of the labor market and economic reasons. Despite the fact that, as early as 2011, the need to implement a systemic, integrated approach of “early childhood education and care based on cooperation and involvement of all essential elements of the system” was emphasized (Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow, OJ EU C 175/8, 15.06.2011), the solutions proposed in Poland can still be considered disputable. Although the Polish authorities have implemented the assumptions of the Act of 4 February 2011 on the care of children up to the age of three (Journal of Laws 2011, no. 45, item 235), they also significantly revised it in 2017, granting parents more rights in the process of their cooperation with nurseries, it is still – in the perception of a significant part of the society – that children in early childhood are believed to need mainly “clean”, uneducated care, and the ministry responsible for supporting human development at the threshold of their life is the Ministry of Family and Labor and Social Policy, not the Ministry of National Education. The nursery schools are still perceived as a “necessary evil” and “storage room” in which a child can learn only self-service. If a crèche does not function in the current of rigid behaviorism with a pre-programmed educational process defined by goals, methods, standards, and other elaborate indicators, it is considered a place where the child simply spends time instead of “learning” or “educating”.

Polish society relatively often perceives education from the perspective of behaviorism. Formal classes with the participation of an instructor, who becomes an inspiration to imitate his specific instructions, such as language, dance, martial arts and other skills, are not appreciated. On the other hand, the assumptions of naturalism, the educational role of play and free exploration of the child do not always agree to children’s independence or – what Korczak (2017) highly valued – self-governance.

## “CORSET” OF EDUCATION OF A SMALL CHILD

As Klus-Stańska stresses emphatically, in contemporary Poland, regardless of the institution to which the children attend (whether it is a nursery, kindergarten or school), the formal education model dominates in practice with a strong emphasis on “leading” by a teacher, instructor or guardian classes, as well as writing work plans with predefined learning outcomes. In the education of a small child, also up to three years old, there is no shortage of attempts to construct result plans, ready-made scenarios or outlines of classes that are implemented in an inflexible way and usually skip the free activity of the child (unless the children are “polite” and as a reward they will be able to last five minutes to play). This model of education can be called a model derived from the behavioral theory of learning, in which learning is perceived as a measurable, controlled and strictly planned process (Klus-Stańska 2007).

In this way, a child “using selected textbooks uses elementary data pools, (...) walks on the tracks” (Remiszewska 2013, p. 45). One could even risk the statement that “based on the learned schemes of completing the headings and entering the anticipated answers in them” in the “*a priori* teaching process”, he does everything in response to the expectations of others (and not as it should be – his own), gradually giving up from identity and creativity to “fit” to the standard.

In Poland, free play, motor potential of a child is limited, and his natural need to commune with nature is inhibited. In contrast to e.g. the Netherlands or the Scandinavian countries, in our country we are dealing with constant – seemingly positive reasons – care for the physical safety of the child in the nursery, especially in the context of the physical space organized. This care often turns into overprotection. In addition, it seems that the issue of a child’s physical security definitely outweighs the concern for his emotional security. It can be admitted that the Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 10 July 2014 on housing and sanitary requirements to be met by the premises in which the nursery or children’s club is to be run (Journal of Laws 2018, items 603, 650, 1544, 1629; Journal of Laws 2019, item 60), adopted pursuant to Article 25 para. 3 of the Act of 4 February 2011 on the care of children up to the age of three (Journal of Laws 2011, no. 45, item 235), undoubtedly sets out much-needed standards in the field of material safety of the space of facilities for the youngest, however, guidelines adopted by individual territorial sanitary and epidemiological stations, e.g. in the following wording: “Room equipment should have attestations or certificates. Furniture should be adapted to the requirements of ergonomics, and toys should meet the requirements of safety and hygiene and have CE marking” often lead to room restrictions for the youngest natural materials, which are used successfully by children in other European countries such as the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and others. Despite the fact that children in these countries have been dealing with stones and woodworking since childhood, and children in their second year of life make their first fishing rods and travel by canoe among the fjords, swim

in a garden swimming pool dressed in a temperature of 10 degrees, feed chickens, sheep, collect sharp sticks, etc., which would give Polish parents the so-called dizziness. This – as noted by, among others, Brzezińska – are countries “in the top ten when it comes to children’s quality of life (e.g. Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Ireland)” (Brzezińska et al. 2012, p. 11). Of course, this also results from the fact that in most of these countries “integrated early care and education systems are used”, which are slowly beginning to be discussed in Poland as the most effective for the development of children in early and middle childhood.

Education in Poland is still “rigid” education, often consisting not so much of creating a development space as it is of “artificial development support” – with an unpredictable effect. Such “support” is always accompanied by a message about helplessness directed towards the child: “You cannot do it yourself”, “Without me you are weak”. These types of messages can be seen very often – children are led by force by the hand with a radiant smile of an adult expressing the belief: “You can almost walk”, “See, it almost walks!”. Such formulations convince the child that he is not the perpetrator of his own development, that without assistance he is “unable” and therefore incompetent. This information that what a child does is not good enough is “incomplete” or “half empty”. The child functions in a “corset” imposed by adults, in a tight “uniform” that tightens his figure, blocks the “work of the diaphragm”, deprives him of the feeling of his own actions, inhibits motor skills, manipulation, limits faith in his own abilities, and gradually deprives him of the joy of communication.

## CHILDHOOD PARADIGMS AND TRUST IN THE CHILD’S ABILITIES

Reaching into the literature on the subject, we clearly see two childhood paradigms. The first of them, rooted in the modernist perspective, is based on the belief in a weak, “poor” in competence child, which requires help and support from adults (Gawlicz 2011, pp. 270–271). The child appears to be a reproducer of knowledge, identity and culture, he must be “repaired,” “correctly shaped”, after all, he is weak. In this construction, childhood must be subjected to “service” by adults – allegedly more competent. Therefore, the child is “processed” from the raw material into a predetermined, expected product, which happens through a “series of specific, standardized processes” (Gawlicz 2011, p. 271). Man on the threshold of life appears in this concept as a “semi-finished product”, which should be influenced in expectation of “achieving specific normative results” defined by adults (Gawlicz 2011, p. 271). Adulthood is the only point of reference, the measure by which the “uniform” and “corset” of a child are “cut”.

In the second concept – reaching for non-directive education, the idea of accompanying the child in development – we are dealing with a causative child, a child co-creating knowledge, identity and culture. “Such a discursive child model appears as part

of the so-called new paradigm in childhood sociology, assuming, among others, that children have causative power and take an active part in the process of constructing their own life and the society in which they live” (Gawlicz 2011, p. 271). Children are not semi-finished products, but full-fledged people. People calling these people to live must constantly listen to their voices. Children in the discussed paradigm of childhood, as Gawlicz notes for James and Prout, are heard, they participate in the decision-making process (as it happens in philosophy, e.g. Reggio). Therefore, an adult has no power and no obligations towards the child. This model assumes that all children are intelligent, that they have been actively learning since they were born. The child, however, needs space and focus on the present. Children are full-fledged citizens of social and physical space, they have the right to initiate solutions and projects, they have the right to serious treatment.

However, there are people who also today say that a child cannot be an initiator, explorer, people who doubt whether an infant feels the “hunger” for knowledge. Paradoxically, older, but still childhood, siblings usually show the greatest confidence in the capabilities of young children. Siblings do not assess the skills of younger children, they do not expect successes from children, and by playing or talking to their younger brother or sister, they pass them the knowledge and shape their skills in an extremely natural and thus effective way. The child looks at the other child through the prism of his experiences, not through the prism of challenges of the best future, high earnings, and adult successes. An adult seems to constantly rush a child precisely because of his future chances on the labor market and for the sake of the child’s high social position in his life for a minimum of twenty years. How often we hear: “I think he will be president,” “He will become a scientist”, “He will be an outstanding artist” only for the fact that the child hit his hand on the piano keyboard, nudged the guitar string, picked up a scientific book, uttered a holophrase reminiscent of some “adult”, a very serious word, etc. Parents often expect that their children – unless they are outstanding – will at least be within the norms, in the set development standards (although in the spirit of the parent there is a thirst – “let it happen a little in advance”). Parents look at children in playgrounds and make constant judgments and comparisons: “Mine is here, and this is not yet” – in the subtext this means that “mine is better, the other worse”, “should already raise their heads” which in any translation it can mean “something is wrong with this child”, “not yet eating it alone” (which also suggests missing goods, and thus objectifying the child), “and my already peeing on the potty”, which we often hear when a child “applies” to kindergarten. It is worth mentioning at this point that the phrase “peeing” is not the most linguistically smart. In addition to many parents, it seems that the measure of child’s intelligence and readiness to cross the preschool threshold is mainly the ability to control bowel movements.

Such formulations are very harmful to children and indicate above all the deficiencies of their parents as sensitive carers and observers as well as development companions. As Dolto pointed out, “It should already say – there is no such thing” (Dolto 2002,

p. 81). The creator of Green Houses expressed the conviction: “I am always shocked by those mothers who do not take their eyes from the bodies of their children, from their ‘feats.’ (...) Is it normal that the clove appeared on such and such a day on top, and not downstairs? (...) Not a word about his faces, about what he smiles at, why he cries, or about his outlined character, about what he likes and what he doesn’t. He writes about his weight, not about facial features, about the color of his eyes or hair. (...) Not a word about his pleasure and their comedy when he gives him a bottle of milk, when he disguises him, bathes” (Dolto 2002, p. 262). Dolto believed that this type of child observation – devoid of tenderness, emotion, respect – resembles the observations made (as she pointed out – fortunately relatively not often) by experimental psychologists. According to the author, this type of developmental analysis of a child has no advantages for him, because the observation is carried out according to rigid tables and indicators, without the context of the child’s individuality. This is not a sensitive observation, which is encouraged by Dolto, and also mentioned at the beginning of the study by Telka, and observing “judging”, answering the question of whether the child falls into the standard, is the observation that makes “the child become a thing” (Dolto 2002, p. 263).

It is an observation not of what the child can do and what makes him happy, but the search for what it cannot yet, but it should already be able to. Describing accompaniment to development, Telka recalls the concept of supporting the autonomy of another human being in the concept of Contrepois convinced that in relation to the ward it is necessary to “support the manifestations of his initiative, allow the child to make decisions, make choices that enable gradual building of self-awareness” (Telka 2009, p. 124). Pikler and Gerber, who pay attention to the value of the independent activity, the value of a special, privileged, emotional relationship, and – in the case of the Pikler philosophy – the need to give it a form suitable for the institutional environment, also expressed a similar trend (see David, Appell 1973). The mentioned concepts – both Dolto, Pikler and Gerber, and the adaptation of these concepts by the Polish researcher Telka – emphasize the need to support the child’s awareness of his own “I” and the world, as well as care for physical and mental well-being a pupil constituting the foundation of his development. The child does not need a uniform, “supporter” or training, but trust in individual possibilities, which should result from adapting the environment to the needs and capabilities of the child, which are observed not through positivist research experiments, but sensitive developmental accompaniment. Thanks to the affirmation of accompanying people, the child will enjoy the improvement of their own competences. Adults should therefore give the child “credit” for autonomy, support the naturally occurring potential, “wait” in a situation where the child needs more time to achieve a specific competence, closely watch the “zone of nearest development”.

In Poland, there is still insufficient experience in the field of development assistance promoted in Lodz, as well as reliable translations of Pikler’s literary output, and a two-

-year-old child who is in the hospital in the pediatric neurology department is described as very contact and developing, only slightly slower than the other children, at their own pace, who, however, “still” cannot sit and walk, the hospital psychologist suggests to wear a corset and does not see the need to empower the parent in the process of supporting the child, despite the fact that in the interview the mother declares that the child spends a lot of time in the playpen with the toys provided there and that she often carries a child in her arms. When a child is one-year-old and does not walk on his own, and it is evident from the interview that he is a premature baby with perinatal complications, the physiotherapist “puts him” by force to show his parents how to do it, regardless of the necessity, as described by Twardowski (2016), of supporting parents in this process. This physiotherapist, despite the anxious, spasmodic, repetitive panic attack of a child ripped out of the hands of his parents, does not cease to “fight” with a “too soft” or “not stable enough” figure.

The same physiotherapist applies hydrotherapy to the infant in good faith (prophylactically) without understanding that the child reacts with panic when he doesn't see the person holding him from above and moves him like a puppet. Before the child's eyes (according to his perception scale) there are literally “muddy”, while the sound of bubble generating devices paralyzes even sitting nearby and making “good faces for bad play” parents. After all, anxiety vomiting into the water will certainly not be conducive to motor therapy and will not bring the expected results<sup>1</sup>.

## EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE “CORSET”

Man develops most intensively throughout his life when he is completely addicted to adults – in the prenatal period and up to the age of three. Since the competences of communication, locomotion and manipulation are crucial for development at this time, it seems common that the support of these competences by guardians is not education, and even that these competences “acquire themselves” during the growth of a small child. A child up to the age of three – in order to actually develop these competences – should be able to learn by exploration, free play, in the process of observing and imitating people from the immediate environment and in situations occurring in his life that have cognitive values for the child (Kram, Mielcarek 2014). Due to the relatively low knowledge about early childhood education, “The situation in Poland regarding early care and education, requires intensive and long-term changes in this area. Regarding the current state of knowledge in the world and the European Union's strong attitude regarding early development, two main problems can be noticed. The first and the basic one is associated with the social awareness of the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> The opinions expressed by the author described in this part are the result of personal maternal experience.

the first years of life for human functioning in later periods. This problem concerns both parents, specialists and politicians shaping the image of Polish education and childcare. Only a change in this area can guarantee the beginning of changes in the system and organization of services targeted at families and young children. The second problem, largely resulting from the first, concerns the functioning of the system, which, not based on a common vision for supporting development and education, does not work well enough, and often even faulty (...). The resulting lack of mutual supportive cooperation between various institutions and specialists, incompatibility in thinking and acting, basing your work mainly on personal resources and intuition are – paradoxically – also a negative effect of insufficient or inadequate support for development in the first years of life of people creating this system and implementing it” (Brzezińska et al. 2012, p. 16).

Polish society still too often perceives the child as weak and incompetent. The knowledge that – according to the assumptions of educational constructivism – the child does not require guidance, but sensitive observation and support in development through discrete support, which has been talked about for a long time, is still unpopular, was indicated by, among others, Montessori. It seems that in the practice of Polish education aids designed by Montessori are more popular, as well as the removal of possible toys from a Montessorian kindergarten profile, than the doctor’s concept itself, and above all the adaptation of this concept in reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and not of Muslin’s Italy. In a Polish “corset”, education often boils down to the institution’s material furnishings, while philosophy which, after all, cannot be seen directly, often remains a side thread. It seems that in such a programmed system a child is formed “good, obedient, good, comfortable”, but at the same time “internally bound and incapable of life” (Tschope-Scheffler 2011, p. 54).

For the topic of the social perception of education undertaken in the development of the subject, the issue of child’s education in natural conditions, including primarily in the process of occasional teaching, is also becoming relevant. While in Polish society everyone agrees that “During the first years of life, the child develops and satisfies all his needs, including cognitive ones, mainly in the family environment” (Kram, Mielcarek 2014, p. 7), it is aware of the fact that in infancy and childhood “Gradually, on the first experiences gained at home and around the house, it builds up new ones related to education in new environments – in public places, in various institutions, including care and educational institutions” (Kram, Mielcarek 2014, p. 7) is much smaller.

Therefore, a child’s educational space up to the age of three does not have to be a crèche, toddler club, school or “educational studio”. “The child’s admiration for the surrounding world and the desire to gain new experiences at every step show that it is during early childhood that cognitive curiosity flourishes” (Kram, Mielcarek 2014, p. 9). For a small child, educational values have “all the places where they go with their guardians, i.e. a store, park, playground, various public utilities, such as a hospital, clinic, bank, office, museum. Any situation in which a child gains new experiences, re-

ardless of the place, can be considered a potentially educational situation. From every place, as long as the spontaneous activity of the child is not limited, the child riches with information about the specificity of this space and possibilities" (Kram, Mielcarek 2014, p. 7). Meanwhile, "In principle, all the physical spaces in which children reside are designed, arranged and managed by adults", despite the fact that children have "full right, guaranteed in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, to express their opinions on all topics that they concern them" (Martyka 2017, p. 99).

Also early support, in a family-focused paradigm, which, according to Twardowski (2016, p. 201), is particularly valuable because it focuses on the whole family and on influencing the child through the family in natural situations, which in turn it also meets the assumptions of early education formulated by such specialists as Mielcarek, Czub, Kram, Appelt, and Brzezińska, presented by the authors in the series "Good Teachers' Necessary", is most beneficial for the child. Therefore, both early support and early education need not only a place in specialist offices. They also happen constantly in natural situations, in the physical and social space of the world around the child. As already mentioned Twardowski points out, "early development support brings the best results when carried out during daily activities, in the context of natural interaction between carers and the child" (Twardowski 2016, p. 204). The essence of early development support and early education is, therefore, not equipping the child with appropriate toys or educational aids, nor is it planting a child in front of an instructor or carrying him to specialized classes, but using potential educational situations, natural situations, as well as cooperation in close and friendly interaction with a child from a guardian close to him.

In Poland, at the same time, there is a prevailing belief in the need to invest in classes, in early learning to read, and parents of two-year-old children express doubts about whether a pre-school teacher or guardian in a nursery will be able to recognize the unique talents of their children and properly support them if not accompanied by a specialist from robotics, mathematics, dance, and also preventive therapy or speech therapy. Children in nurseries, for commercial reasons, are offered collective speech therapy, fairy tale therapy or corrective gymnastics!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Since 2014, the author participated in meetings with parents, which are held in care and educational institutions. On this basis, she observed the parents' lack of understanding of their role in the process of supporting their child's development, as well as underestimating the role of a teacher or guardian in the early childhood education process. Parents postulate extracurricular activities and question teachers' competences in recognizing, extracting and consolidating their child's resources. Teachers and guardians are often helpless against questions such as: "Are you able to recognize my child's mathematical talent?", "Can you teach a child global reading?", "Can you tell if your child is not musically talented?". Parents are convinced that nurseries and kindergartens are "storage rooms", so the family is also not a place where the child learns. According to many parents, the place of "real" education is specialized schools. Parents do not seem to be aware of the fact that for a child to acquire further competences, he or she must be with people with whom he or she will establish an emotional bond, which – in the child's opinion – are their closest, everyday guardians. Therefore, the child will develop most effectively among people who often accompany

## OCCASIONAL TEACHING AND THE “CORSET” OF SOCIAL SPACE

It is safe to repeat after Martyka that “Threats to the proper development of the child, which the spaces of modern cities carry, are largely the result of the objective treatment of children in the process of designing and managing cities. Adults responsible for urban development only take into account their own needs. Therefore, designing ‘for the good of the child’ is possible only if children are included in the processes of designing public spaces in cities, which means real, and not apparent, inclusion in the structure of civil society” (Martyka 2017, p. 106).

Meanwhile, the participation of a child up to the age of three in public space, and as a result, in the process of occasional teaching still seems quite problematic. While the physical space of offices, restaurants, medical clinics adapts to the child to some extent, designers usually have the vision of an independent and sitting child, walking, able to play in a “quiet” and “planned” way, i.e. not scratching the walls and “not rolling” on the floor, not running “without order and composition”, not crying, God’s weapon “hungry”, because a hungry child means a loud child, etc. The space for a child resembles a space in which they can stay, provided that they are limited their activity – preferably sleeping or dead.

In 2012, Professor Mikołajko’s essay and his allegations about prams were heard widely (see Krzemińska 2012; *Prof. Mikołajko odpowiada...* 2012). According to him, women, by the very fact of having a child, claim the right to special treatment and the seizure of public space. Meanwhile, not everyone wants to listen to the screams and crying of children, give in queues or participate as a spectator in public feeding or changing babies. A similar tone was maintained by Kublik (2014) in “Gazeta Wyborcza”, describing the experience of the author from a restaurant, where at the next table, and therefore in her presence, but without asking for permission, the baby was changed. The media storm that began after the publication of this text clearly shows how much Poles differ in opinions about the child’s presence in public space (Archanowicz 2015, p. 146). And although “Public space (...) is gradually changing and adapting to the needs of parents of young children, it is not yet friendly to them (...)” (Archanowicz 2015, p. 138).

Research conducted in 2015 by Archanowicz shows that “a woman who gave birth to a child and ‘tugs them with her’ often exposes to overt or covert discrimination – stinging and aggressive remarks, and at best indifference, unnoticed and lack of willingness to help” (Archanowicz 2015, p. 139). The fact is that “After the birth of a child, a woman is in a situation of a person who has suddenly become disabled and has difficulty moving on her own. Tame and safe city so far turns out to be a tangle of stairs without driveways, high curbs, sidewalks blocked by parking cars, tight elevators and dark and smelly underground passages” (Archanowicz 2015, p. 140) makes communing with

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him in his everyday life, but not in interaction with the instructor with whom he associates twice a week for 30 or 45 minutes.

public space for a small child is sometimes almost impossible. “When it is necessary to settle the matter in the office, mothers forced to take the child with them encounter a number of inconveniences. Many public places lack changing tables and places where you can feed your baby. Even in the presence of priority signs, guardians with a child do not get a reduced tariff while waiting in queues – they seem to be perceived as having unlimited free time, so by definition they can devote it to dealing with official matters” (Archanowicz 2015, p. 142). This, in turn, causes the parent’s reluctance to implement the child in the world of public space. The conviction expressed by the author of the study that “When a child begins to cry, there is often verbal aggression and comments about ‘easy-going’ taking the child to the area where adults are, created for them and adapted to them” (Archanowicz 2015, p. 142), is still valid. The author also writes that “The matter of shopping looks similar. It is difficult to do them both with a child in a stroller, as well as the one running between the shelves. In some of the larger stores, so-called priority cash registers serving pregnant women with small children and disabled people. In practice, however, they are often closed or a long queue is set up. As a result, women with children use them less often, feeling ‘less authorized’ or giving up due to comments from other store users” (Archanowicz 2015, pp. 142–143).

Although so-called cafes or clubs where the parent can stay with the child, they are mainly of a commercial nature. When a parent has to or simply wants to take a small child into public space, it turns out that “when a guardian sometimes has to take a child into an adult space, [he becomes] a person not fully functional and mobile – burdened with kilograms of luggage and with attention focused on a small man who is unable to take care of his safety and comfort, but loudly and regardless of social norms, he will shout and cry any dissatisfaction and discomfort” (Archanowicz 2015, p. 146). It is also worth mentioning the text from 2019 published in “Polityka”: “(...) there are online disputes that come back from time to time, causing a lot of emotions. These include the question of whether to come to the restaurant with children or whether children should stay at home. The Parma and Rukola restaurants from Poznań have unleashed the storm again. Its owners posted photos of a dirty table and chair on Facebook and announced that children under six would no longer be welcome at their premises. Are restaurateurs right and the child in the place the same nuisance?” (Czajka-Kominiarczyk 2019). Czajka-Kominiarczyk rightly notes that “The ban on admission alone seems to be an ineffective method for many reasons. If we assume that it is not possible to enter the restaurant with small children, it is vain to expect that after exceeding the age of six they will suddenly know how to behave in such a place. It is not only a matter of parents’ convenience but also of socialization” (Czajka-Kominiarczyk 2019). The author also raises another very important issue: “There is also the topic of exclusion from common spaces. The easiest way to eliminate children is because they can’t defend themselves” (Czajka-Kominiarczyk 2019).

If we also notice that only a person literally indicated by children can be a Knight of the Order of Smile, then again there is the problem of discrimination against children

in early childhood, who can in no way express their beliefs in this regard, which leads to the fact that postulant changes in the perception of a child's education, e.g. those striving for indirectiveness, as well as those defending the rights of the youngest in public space, will never become Knights.

## CONCLUSIONS

Children up to three years of age, due to the specificity of their needs and development opportunities, mainly due to the need for safe attachment with their closest guardians, due to the lack of self-service independence, limited verbal communication, a strong need for exploration, and the need for intense sensory experiences and the necessity of crossing one's own motor and communication barriers, often perceived as not very competent, and even as not very sensitive. Meanwhile, the child constantly explores, learns, experiences, tames the world with himself and himself with a great, bizarre, unknown, and sometimes even unpredictable world.

Education without a corset means abandoning the child's constant planning of time, overtaking developmental tasks, and offering him too many stimuli. Education is the wise "accompaniment in development" (Telka 2017) on the basis of careful observation, readiness to engage in adult interaction, in the adult's authentic sensitivity to children's needs, in mutual motivational closeness functioning according to the words: "I want to help a child achieve what I observe, see or feel I want to reach a child".

As Czub and Appelt argue, "Education is not only related to school-age or limited only to educational institutions. The first and longest and strongest teachers affecting a small person are his parents or closest guardians, and the basic school of life and various skills useful in it – home and immediate surroundings" (Czub, Appelt 2013, p. 120). Education begins with the beginning of life – "much earlier than a person starts formal education", in situations in which a person is "supported by many different experiences, seemingly unrelated to teaching" (Czub, Appelt 2013, p. 120).

It is also worth quoting Czub and Appelt who, writing about the challenges for the system, argue that "In view of the importance of the quality of early experience for the entire development process, the education system faces a number of priority challenges, the most important of which seem to be:

1. Raising awareness of the importance of early childhood for the entire further life of the individual, consisting on the one hand of increasing the awareness of parents and specialists, and on the other – convincing decision-makers that this is an area worth investing significant funds that will bring both short and long term positive and socially desirable effects.
2. Propagating knowledge about basic development needs in the context of acquiring knowledge and skills at every stage of life (Lifelong Learning) and proper functioning in society.

3. Developing theoretical and empirical knowledge, showing directions of the most effective support for the development of young children in both family and non-family environment. Previous searches in this area are usually conducted in the context of the 'care vs education' opposition. Researchers focusing on the effectiveness of early education often ignore the issue of quality care for babies and young children, without treating it as an experience closely related to learning. Similarly, researchers analyzing the impact of early experiences related to the quality of care (attachment, maternal/caring sensitivity) often overlook the element of early education" (Czub, Appelt 2013, pp. 120–121).

The analysis of the problem of early education made by these authors in 2013 is still valid. One can confidently express the opinion that currently "One of the challenges faced by researchers and creators of social policy is (...) a meta-analysis of existing research results, enabling the drawing of conclusions aimed at creating an integrated policy of care and education" (Czub, Appelt 2013, p. 121).

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