

## THE SOCIAL QUALIFICATION OF THE CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL IN THE OUT-OF-FAMILY CARE INSTITUTIONS

### Bērnu sociālā sagatavotība skolai ārpusģimenes aprūpes institūcijās

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**Abstract.** *The article „ The social qualification of the children for school in the out-of-family care institutions ” is based on research results. It analyses children who are being brought up in out-of-family institutional care and looks at their social readiness for comprehensive school.*

*Previous research results show that while being in out-of-family institutional care, a child's development is delayed due to insufficient external stimulation. Although it provides the child with physical security and satisfies their basic needs, it cannot provide the most important aspects of development for a child - a close relationship with at least one adult who could captivate and become a trustee for several years.*

*The article raises and analyses the conditions that affect the process of preparation for school.*

**Keywords:** *development of the child, environment, institutional care, out-of-family care, social attitudes, social qualification, the person of attraction*

### Introduction

It is necessary for any child to receive his parents' love, their warmheartedness, intimacy and care in order to develop harmoniously. Taking care of the child the parents are those ones who stimulate the development of the child's intellectual and motoric functions, promote the emotional development of the child as well as the development of his personality (Āre, 2003). If there exists an emotional contact among the parents and the child the feelings of love, tenderness and affection have been formed in the child as well.

Bowlby, the famous psychiatrist and scientist whose name is well-known throughout the world referring to Grinker (Grinker, 1962) and Offer (Offer, 1969) points out that healthy, happy and sure of themselves young people grow up in stable families where both of the parents have paid much of their time and attention to their children. Positive reactions the child is disposing noticed and evaluated by his parents is the main condition for the development of the child's self-assurance (Bowlby, 1998).

Bowlby has researched the theory of forming an attachment of the parents and their children and has come to the conclusion that close emotional relationship among the parents and the children have the primary meaning that makes an influence on the general development of the children, favour their mental as well as their social health. A very great influence on the child is left by the way the parents have grown him up, especially it concerns the role of the mother in the family. The scientist having made his work of research for decades has proved

that the child is retrograding in his development if he is losing the person who is recruited to him or if he is not possible to have such a person, for example – during the time that the child spends in the out- of- family care institution (Bowlby, 1998).

To our regret there are the situations there when the parents are not doing their duty properly, when their care and love are substituted by violence and the rights of the child are ignored so lacking the child his chance to develop himself normally. The main task of the social workers of the Orphans' court is to work with the parents of the child so that he would be able to return into his own family. During the process the child is insured by rehabilitation in the institution (if it is not possible in the family of his trustee or in his foster family) (The Rule of the Protection of Children's Rights, 1998). If it is impossible for the child to return in his biological family it is necessary to look for the family in which he would be able to live till his becoming adult. So it comes out that the orphanage is a short-term shelter for the child who has experienced the situation of a certain crisis. One must point it out with regret that such a kind of the out-of-family care system is not able to function in Latvia yet so the out –of–family care institution turns out to become a long-term shelter for the child. Very often the children are living in the out–of–family care institutions for a very long time but sometimes even from their birth to the very becoming adults.

### **The Concept of the Social Qualification for School**

With the child's „qualification for school” one usually understands the child's intellectual potential and his ability to accommodate himself to his training.

In order to adapt himself better to the school - life and to act successfully there he must come to the definite stage of the development of his psyche at the end of the period of preschool. There are numerous points of view there regarding the level of the knowledge of the child when beginning school. The pedagogical and psychological qualification for school – both are pointed out in the theoretical literature.

The psychological as well as the pedagogical qualification for school includes the child's physical, psychic and social development. Whether the child is physically, psychologically and socially matured for the school-life or not depends on some factors that can be divided into two groups: the biological factors (the state of the child's health, the psychical peculiarities and the trends of his character) and the social environment.

The social qualification includes the ability to realize and to accept oneself as a special personality, the ability to guide and to control one's own behaviour, the ability to communicate, to co-operate and to respect the neighbouring.

## **The Conditions that have an Influence on the Child's Social Development**

When analysing the process of the formation of a personality Garleja points out the social correlations analysed as the process in which the human being evaluates the attitude of the society towards him, the behaviour of other people and vice versa. She has come to the conclusion that while being in the process of a close correlation the human beings are realising their emotional potential, fill the social role, fulfill the social expectations of the concrete situation (Garleja, 2006).

The ability of the child to accept the norms of behaviour of the society will depend on success of the process of his socialization. Everything the child gets acquainted with in his family is of great importance for him: the mutual relations of his parents, their bad habits or dependances, the style of growing up the children, their attitude towards the work and the needs of the child. All the matters mentioned above have an influence upon forming the moral of the child, helps to form his attitude towards himself and the neighbouring. If the child lacks the ability to be in his own family (the biological one or in the family of trustees or in the foster family) he is to live in the out-of-family care institutions - then the staff of the institution representing the parents are playing a great role in the process of educating the child.

The formation of the social attitudes the author of this work is connecting closely with the position of the adults who set the example with their actions or on the contrary – their idleness – and are forming the system of the attitudes of the child. Always new and new qualities of the attitude towards himself, towards other people, things and phenomena are formed during the process of socialization. Analysing the pre-conditions of forming the attitudes Garleja points out that the fundament of the attitude is formed of one's knowledge, feelings, opinions, will, behaviour, the orientation on definite values (Garleja, 2006). The source of the formation of one's attitude is his experience. In the case when the needs of the child are not satisfied his negative experience and with this his negative attitude is formed. The negative attitude lowers one's motivation that occurs to be an impulsive force of great importance delaying one's development and lowering the resultativity of one's work.

One is sure to say that the adults who are able to influence the psychological environment so furthering the development of the child's personality play an important role in the social development (and in the development on the whole) of the child. The author of the research is sure that in the out-of-family care institutions where the children of the younger preschool age (under 5 years of age) find themselves to be in a comparatively boarding school environment having close contacts only with their group mates and the staff of the institution the adults have a very specific influence on the child. The adults make a positive

influence on the child with their personal attitude towards him leading the child to a purposeful action with the aim to formate and to develop the attitude of the child towards the outside world and towards himself.

Numerous works of research (Johnson, 2006; McCall, 1996; Williamson&Greenberg, 2010; Мудрик, 2002; Laugmeier&Matejcek, 1984; Bowlby, 2006; Прихожан, Толстых, 2005; Rutter, 1998; Ambrose, 1961; Provence&Lipton, 1962; Ainsworth, 1962; Pringle, 1965; u.c.) prove that the environment of the out-of-family care institutions – the physical as well as the psychological one - is not stimulating enough the development of the child.

The preschool age children are the focus of the social educators nevertheless those pedagogs have no any qualification of the preschool educators (The Rules Regarding the Classifier of Professions, the main tasks corresponding the definite profession and the basic demands of the qualification and the order of the usage and actualization of the Classifier of Professions, 2010). That has been taken into consideration that one must come to the conclusion that the staff of the out-of-family care institution is not able to provide the processes of the training and education of the children. The staff is in lack of time and abilities because there are the children of different ages and having different levels of development there in the same group of the out-of-family care institution of the local self-government therefore their needs differ on a very large level.

It has been proved that the experience gained during the period of one's childhood is forming the fundament of the further training and educating. This experience being positive there exists the probability there that the following education will be more or less effective, that one will follow to educate himself throughout his life. Living in the out-of-family care institution the child gains not wholesome experience when trying to get acquainted with the world of the adults that is disposed before him by the environment of the institution where he is watching the members of the staff and learning from them. Are is defining the environment of the orphan house to be "the shaper of one's development" because the human being adapts to most in a closed environment. The children have no motivation to use the abilities they have (Åre, 2003).

The out-of-family care institutions leave a disruptive influence on the development of the child. It is significantly destructive in connection with the development of the child even taking into considration the fact that it can insure the child's physical security and provides all his physical needs. It does not suit the child exactly even in the case it insures the physical security of the child and can provide his physical needs. The basic element of the many - sided development of the child is to be in close emotional connection with at least one of the adults who would be the person of trust and attraction for the child. Living in the out-of-family care institution the child is socially isolated. Sometimes such children who have never had the ability to be alone or to form the personal contacts with some of the caregivers are not able to feel themselves as definite

personalities - they feel themselves only as the members of the group. Such a closed environment around the child promotes the psychosocial deprivation of the child that arouses from the limited ability to fulfill the needs necessary for one's existence – in the definite case – the need for emotionally close relations with at least one of the adults being the person of trust and attraction for the child (Batņa, 2007).

As the result of living in the out-of-family care institution the child lacks his motivation and his self identity, he is emotionally poor, he experiences definite difficulties in forming close relations with other people, in accepting himself. One can notice some aggressiveness in his behaviour. Intellectually the child is lagging behind his peers (Ozola, 2001).

### **The Selection of the Research and the Logics of its Forming**

The aim of the research was to clear out the many - sided (social, psychic, physical) qualification of the child for school in the out-of-family care institutions.

The card (hereafter – The Card) of the Individual Evaluation was worked out based on the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers Nr.533 „The Regulations of the Guidelines of the State Preschool Education” (CM Nr. 533 The Regulations of the Guidelines of the State Preschool Education, 2012) that point out the planned results of the learning of content of the preschool education. These Cards within the borders of the research were completed by the social caregivers/educators of the out-of-family care institutions who were working with the children there and knew their skills, their levels of knowledge and their abilities. The fillers of the Cards were asked to evaluate the child's development offering them to use the characteristics of the skills of the children and asking all of them to chose the more characteristic statement: not causing difficulties, causing some difficulties, causing difficulties or is not possible to cope with (ranked from 1 till 4 years of age).

The children selected for the research were taken from the out-of-family care institutions of NGOs and the ones of the self – governments in different regions of Latvia. The Cards were filled for 46 children at the age of 6-8 who had good psychical health, who received the out-of-family care from the definite institutions and who had begun their first schoolyear in 2011./2012 (the first step of the research work) as well as those ones who had begun their schoolyear in 2012./2013. (the second step of the research work). The statistic data about the children at the age of 6-8 who had been enrolled in the first form of the comprehensive school as well as of those ones who had been sheltered in the out-of-family care institutions being not accessible (and one lacking the information regarding the institutions they have been sheltered in and taking into consideration the fact that all the out-of-family care institutions where there the

children of the school age had been located had been included in the research as well) it is possible to come to the conclusion that the selection formed represents the most part of the targeted groups and it is possible to make the conclusion regarding the situation of the child's qualification for the school that corresponds to the situation in our state on the whole.

All the children taking part in the research had been divided into two subgroups – the children sheltered in the out-of-family care institutions of the self-governments (n=27) and those ones who had been sheltered in the out-of-family care institutions of the NGOs (n=19). The results of both the subgroups had been compared.

### **The Interpretation and the Analysis of the Results of Research**

The processing and analysis of all the data gained as the result of the survey has been performed with the help of the data processing software *SPSS 19.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science)*.

First of all a total confidence indicator was estimated – the Cronbach' alpha. This indicator is 0,897 that means that the data of the research have a high level of credibility so they can be used for the further analysis.

Using the method of the Spearman's rho in order to calculate the correlation that is used for nonparametric data the rank correlative connection between the category of the institution (the institution of the definite self – government or NGOs) and the level of the many - sided development of the children was defined ( $p < 0,01$ ; two-sided level of significance). It comes out that the development of the child is found to be better in NGOs where they are comprehensively ready to begin their schoolyear if compared with the children being under the care of the institutions of the self – governments that points out the influence of the form on the results of the children's development.

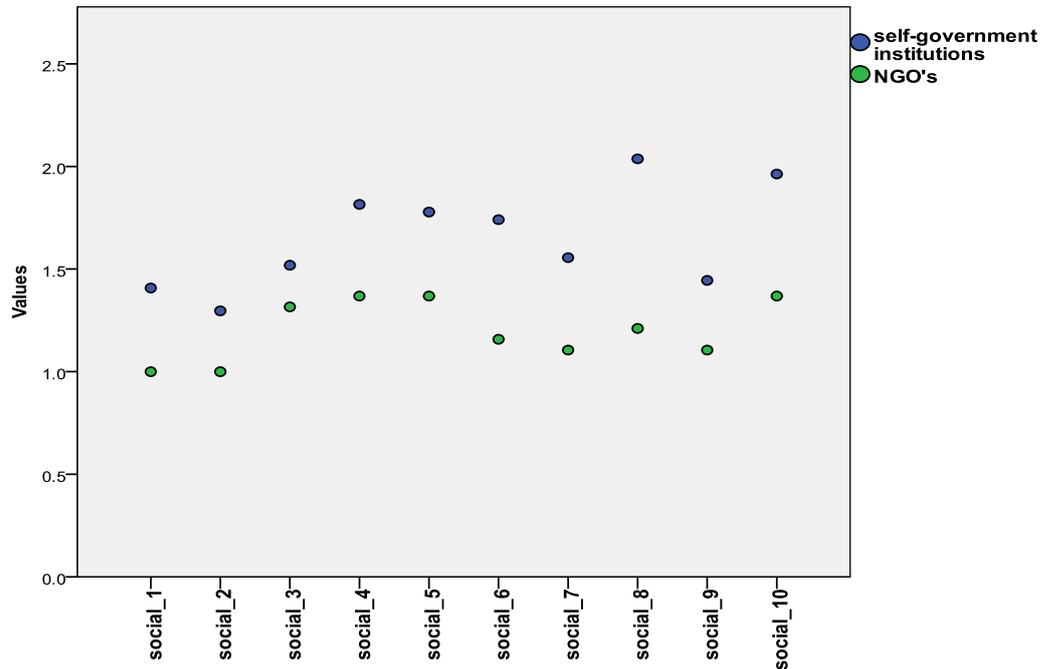
The central tendency indicators of the evaluation of the results of the social qualification were calculated being the part of the research. Those data have been analysed separately for the institutions of the self-governments and the ones of the NGOs in order to compare them.

The indicators of the central tendency of the changing values (*Mean*) point out the differencies in the social development of the children who are sheltered in the orphans' houses of the NGOs and those ones of the self-governments demonstrating that in all the scopes the indicators of the orphans' houses of the NGOs are better. It is demonstrated by the indicators of the standard deflection as well (see the table No 1). It is well demonstrated in the figure No 1.

Table No1

**The Indicators of the Central Tendency, the Standard Deflection and the Parameters of the Dissimmetry – the Social Qualification of the Children For School**  
*Centrālās tendences rādītāji, standartnovirze un asimetrijas rādītāji – Bērnu sociālā sagatavotība skolai*

The indicators of the social development	The institution					
	1 The self-governments			2 NGO		
	Std. Deviation	Mean	Skewness	Std. Deviation	Mean	Skewness
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Name their names, surnames, address, the state where they live in</i>	,572	1,41	1,055	,000	1,00	0
<i>Make a request, are able to thank, ask and answer the questions, tell the story of what they can do</i>	,542	1,30	1,703	,000	1,00	0
<i>Co-operate with their peers and the adults, accept or reject recommendations, justify their opinions</i>	,643	1,52	,865	,478	1,32	,862
<i>Evaluate the actions of others as well as of themselves, express their attitude towards them.</i>	,834	1,81	,374	,496	1,37	,593
<i>Pay tribute to other people as well as to their work and the work of themselves</i>	,801	1,78	,923	,496	1,37	,593
<i>Have a careful attitude to the environment on the whole</i>	,764	1,74	1,050	,375	1,16	2,041
<i>Perform simple self-service works taking into consideration the learned fire safety as well as electrical safety rules</i>	,577	1,56	,416	,315	1,11	2,798
<i>Know how to act in different situations if their personal safety is at risk at home, on the streets (rode) and in nature (of reservoirs, in touch with animals, unknown substances and plants)</i>	,808	2,04	,403	,419	1,21	1,545
<i>Use good personal hygiene</i>	,577	1,44	,879	,315	1,11	2,798
<i>Feel themselves responsible for the tasks given and for their personal goods</i>	,759	1,96	,634	,496	1,37	,593



*Fig.1 Mean – The Children’s Social Qualification for School  
1.att. Mean – Bērnu sociālā sagatavotība skolai*

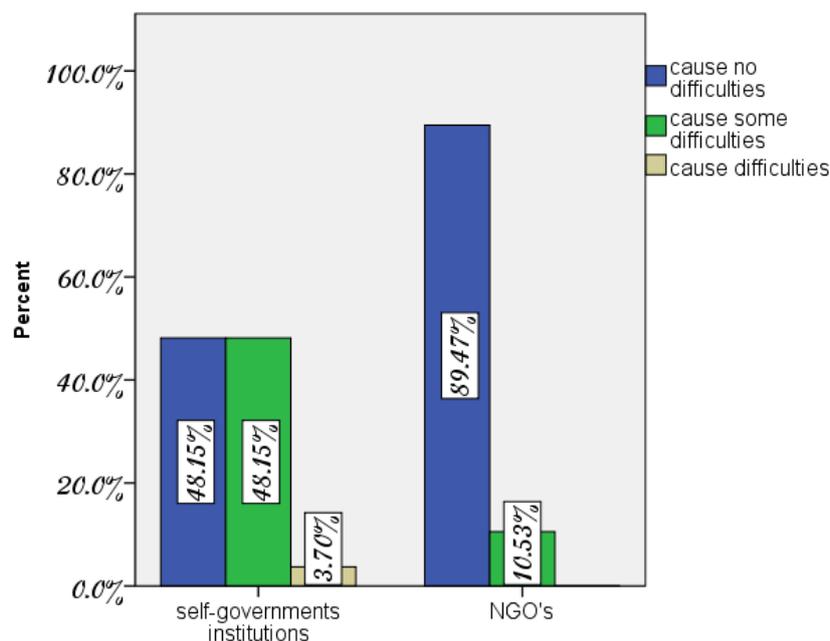
The data collected in the illustration No1 point out that the results of the NGOs are very close to 1 in all the positions that means that the statements „not causing difficulties” or „causing some difficulties” had been chosen mostly when the children’s evaluation had been made. The data of the self-governments are disposed a bit higher (marked in blue) so that means that they are placed away from the statement „causing no difficulties”. The average indicators of *Mean* persuade us that the children who are sheltered in the NGOs are socially better developed.

For the first criterion „Name their names, surnames, address, the state where they live in” (social\_1) - in the column *Mean* - the number 1,41 concerns to the self-government, 1 concerns to the NGOs that indicates to the fact that for all the children sheltered in the institutions of NGOs who participated in the research this skill was evaluated to be the skill of the highest level – „causing no difficulties” (encoded with 1). The standard deflection is 0 concerning the data of the NGOs and 0,572 concerning the data of the self-governments that indicates to the unequal rating of the children. The asymmetry index concerning the data of the self-governments is 1,055 (NGOs – 0) that shows that the data located around the meridian differ in large (see table No 1).

The analysis of the data regarding the next criterion of the social development „Make a request, are able to thank, ask and answer the questions, tell the story of

what they can do” (social\_2) shows that the data of the self-governments in the column *Mean* correspond to 1,30 but the data of the NGOs – to 1,00 (corresponds to the statement „causing no difficulties”). High indicators of the standard deflection and asymmetry (0,542 and respectively 1,703) concerning the data of the self-governments point out a very drastic difference among the evaluations that means that the children had been evaluated very differently taking into account the fact that on the one hand there had been such children there who had had no difficulties in demonstrating this skill but on the other hand there had been such children who had not been able to cope with the task given (see table No 1).

Very expressive is the difference among the institutions concerning the criterion „Perform simple self-service works taking into consideration the learned fire safety as well as electric safety rules” (social\_7) where the indicator of assymetry according the data of the self-governments is 0,416 but according the data of the NGOs - 2,798 with existing the *Mean* 1,11 that shows the evaluation that differs from that one „causing no difficulties” (encoded with 1) for the children of the NGOs being a very rare exception of the general high level of the development (see table No 1). These differences are shown in the illustration No 2. The demonstration of the skill cause minor difficulties only to 10% of the children sheltered in the NGOs.



**Illustration No2 The Evaluation of the Children – „Perform Simple Self-service Works Taking Into Consideration the Learned Fire Safety as well as Electrical Safety Rules”**  
2.att. **Bērnu izvērtēšana – „Veic vienkāršus pašapkalpošanās darbus, ievērojot apgūtos ugunsdrošības un elektrodrošības noteikumus”**

As regards the criterion connected with the skill to feel themselves responsible („Responsible for the tasks given and for the personal goods”, social\_10) one can notice significant differences between both the sectors (the self-governments and NGOs) as well. According to the data of the self-governments *Mean* is 1,96 (closer to 2 – „causing some difficulties”), according to the data of the NGOs - 1,37 (1 – „causing no difficulties”), the standard deflection according the data of the self-governments is 0,759 that is almost two times higher in comparison with the data of the NGOs (0,496) that shows that the children of the NGOs have the skill developed more evenly (see the table No 1).

Such the results concerning the both of the last criterion of the social qualification would be connected with the situation when being in the out-of-family care institution the child has all the necessary preconditions for his own security and his physical health ensured. It is not necessary for the child to take care of himself, the well-being of the other people do not depend on his activities or his idleness. As the result the child can be in a lack of useful life skills what as one knows is a very actual problem in our country. The young people who have been sheltered in the out-of-family institutions often are not able to take care of themselves after they have left the institution, they are not able to evaluate the things the other people have done for them. They become the permanent clients of the social services very often.

### **The Conclusions of the Empiric Research**

- The development of the children who have been sheltered in NGOs must be evaluated positively, the children are developed much better and in connection with this are socially better prepared for beginning the school in comparison with the children coming from the institutions of the self-governments.
- In the institutions of the self-governments the levels of the development of the children are very unequal because of the children who have fully acquired the skills on the one hand and such ones who are not able to cope with the tasks given on the other hand.
- One can achieve better results if the processes of the development are orientated on the definite targets.
- The skills of the self-service are less developed of the children in the institutions of the self-governments, it is more difficult for them to take responsibility and evaluate the work of others as well it being connected with the environment within which the children are ensured all the necessary for their physical well-being, they are not obliged to take care of themselves as well as of others.

- The institutional environment is not able to provide the conditions for the development of the children with the exception of the out-of-family care institutions of the NGOs the environment of which has been made as close as it is possible to that one of the family giving to the child the necessary care, love, an individual approach of the person who replaces the child's mother (or both the parents).
- One of the proposals for the improving the situation would be the environmental application of the out-of-family care institutions to that one of the family that would succeed a many - sided development of the children as one can get sure of taking into consideration the experience of the NGOs.

### Kopsavilkums

Jebkuram bērnam, lai viņa attīstība noritētu harmoniski, ir nepieciešamā mīlestība no vecāku puses, to sirsnība, tuvība, rūpes. Pastāvot emocionālām kontaktam starp vecākiem un bērnu, bērnā veidojas mīlestība, maigums, pieķeršanas jūtas. Ja šādas attiecības ar vismaz vienu pieaugušo bērnam ir liegtas (piemēram, ja bērns aug ārpusģimenes aprūpes iestādē), viņa attīstība tiek kavēta.

Lai bērns varētu veiksmīgi pielāgoties (adaptēties) dzīvei skolas vidē un sekmīgi tajā darboties, pirmsskolas perioda beigās viņam ir jāsasniedz noteiktā psiķes attīstības pakāpe. Izdala sociālo, fizisko un psihisko gatavību skolai.

Sociālā sagatavotība iekļauj sevī spēju apzināties un pieņemt sevi kā atsevišķu personību, spēju vadīt un kontrolēt savu uzvedību, spēju komunicēt, sadarboties un cienīt apkārtējos.

Empīriskā pētījuma rezultāti ir parādījuši, ka ārpusģimenes aprūpes vide negatīvi ietekmē bērna attīstību kopumā, tiek kavēts arī socializācijas process. Pētījuma rezultāti apstiprina arī to, ka atrodoties NVO aprūpē, kuru vide iespēju robežās ir tuvināta ģimeniskai un kas sniedz bērnam individuālo pieeju un mīlestību no personas, kas aizstāj māti (vai abus vecākus), bērna attīstība notiek daudz veiksmīgāk. Šos rezultātus lielā mērā ietekmē arī tas, ka atšķirībā no pašvaldību iestāžu aprūpē esošiem bērniem, bērni, kas saņem aprūpi NVO institūcijās apmeklē pirmsskolas izglītības iestādes jau sākot ar jaunāko pirmsskolas vecumu.

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