

# Summary

## Fostering the development of young children – the perception and experience of guardians

The first years of a child's life are a critical stage in their development, a time of new skills and experiences, and also when habits are formed that become a permanent feature of their later life. Giving the child the appropriate stimulation during this period, creating the right relations with their environment, or observing role models forms the basis of the correct child development. This is why the key issue is to focus attention both on how the individual develops and how to stimulate this process.

From the cognitive point of view, it is also interesting to note how this becomes a test of whether parents or guardians are aware how greatly they impact on the child's development and whether they take any steps to stimulate this development. The above-mentioned discussion unequivocally defines the fundamental objective of the research, which is to analyse parents' and guardians' opinions on how they help child development. This subject is rarely taken up in the literature, and as such constitutes something of a gap in the research conducted so far.

The main narrative axis in this monograph is the idea of helping the child to develop, which is understood as all forms of assistance (professional and non-professional) in the interaction between adults (professionals and non-professionals) and the child, actions whose aim is not only to strengthen and enhance the child's well-being by means of promoting and stimulating their development in each and every sphere, but also to shape the child's surroundings in such a way that enables them to enjoy various experiences that lead to greater autonomy.

The monograph comprises five chapters. The first two deal with theoretical considerations closely connected with the subject matter. With this in mind, the narrative axis of the first chapters deals with human development. This is the context within which attempts are made to describe the concept of *development* by taking the historical outline and immanent features of this term into consideration. It is possible to explain the concept of development by focusing on such issues as: the types of developmental changes listed by A. Brzezińska based on H. Bee's work; developmental factors suggested by S. Szuman; developmental tasks from the perspective of E. H. Ericson, B. M and Ph. R. Newman and R.J. Havighurst. This is followed by an attempt to systematize theories functioning in the literature that aim to explain the essence of individual development in terms of the fundamental concepts in psychology.

Issues based around the subject of assisting development are supplemented by a description of selected methods related to them, with a fundamental element here being the author's attempt to define development.

The theoretical considerations continue in Chapter 2, where they focus on an exhaustive analysis of particular spheres of early childhood development – the period from birth up to the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> year – which is in accordance with the principles adopted in this work. The following spheres of development are analysed in depth: physical, motor, cognitive, speech and also emotional and social. The chapter closes with issues related to indicating clear ways to provide assistance in these spheres.

Chapter 3 contains the methodological principles underpinning the author's research and sociodemographic description of their sample.

Basing on these theoretical assumptions, Chapters 4 and 5 deal with guardians' views and experiences regarding fostering child development, which refers not only to parents but to others caring directly for a child. The analysis of research findings focuses on issues such as the possibility and duty to foster a small child's development; methods for fostering particular spheres of development; the source of parents' opinions on helping children develop; actions undertaken to achieve this end; the difficulties experienced in fostering the child's development.

The conclusion to the monograph indicates the implications for pedagogical practice.

*Translated by Rob Pagett*