

# The Benefit of Professional Parenthood for the Child

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## Abstract:

The author points out the mission of professional families in childcare in substitute care. It approximates the benefits of professional families for children living outside their own families, especially in the area of filling their mental needs. It emphasizes the importance of a relationship that is important to the life of every person and especially to children in the process of their development. In the contribution, the author describes the legislative definition of professional parenthood in the Slovak Republic; approaches the roles of a professional parent in the care of a child, and emphasizes the importance of motivation for the performance of this profession; as well as the preparation for professional parenthood; the personality characteristic of professional parents.

The author also points to the merit of cooperation between professional parents and members of a multidisciplinary team in

addressing childcare issues. The contribution focuses on the benefits of professional parenting for the child, comparing this kind of childcare care provision in children's educational groups in children's homes.

## Role of professional families

A professional family is a specific institute for childcare which, for serious reasons, have been excluded from the family environment. It is a form of constitutional care in which childcare is not provided in children's home areas, but in the home environment of professional families. Act No 305/2005 Coll defines the conditions for the performance of professional parenting in relation to the scope of preparation for replacement parenting, the requirements of professional parent's personality as well as the organizational provision of professional parenting.

Preparing for professional parenting under the current legislative conditions runs for 60 hours for those who have completed a full secondary education completed by a school-leaving examination. For those who meet the special condition of higher education, 40 hours of training is sufficient. In the care of one physical person who becomes a professional parent, up to three children may be placed in care. In the case of a married couple, a maximum of 6 children may be placed.

According to the Concept of Enforcement of Court Decisions in Children's Homes for the Years 2012-2015 with a View to 2020 - The Transformation Plan and the Deinstitutionality of Replacement Care, from January 1, 2016, every child under 8 years of age is placed in a professional family and from 1 January 2021 in a professional family, all children up to the age of 10 are placed. Only children who require special care in a specialized group of children's homes for their health condition will be exempt.

Childcare in a professional family is a great professional challenge for the quality of ensuring a child-friendly environment in which the child will be saturated with his/her psychological and social needs in the degree and quality that will be as close as possible to the life of the child in the normal family (Hudecova, Belkova, 2008).

### 1.1 Meaning of relationship

A great challenge for professional parents is to build a relationship with a child. This is nec-

essary to fulfill all the intentions that professional parenting carries. Creating a relationship can be complicated for the initial mistrust of children towards professional parents as children can survive serious emotional injuries in the biological family and have no positive parental behavior.

Also, children can be severely traumatized by leaving a biological family and may have an inherent loss of separation from their parents. Unless a child in such a difficult situation is provided with professional assistance and isn't fit to enter a professional family, his/her placement can bring a lot of pain and mutual misunderstanding to the child with professional parents.

Therefore, it is especially important for professional parents to be well-prepared to manage the adaptation phase after the child's arrival in their family and to be able to understand the needs for childcare loss treatment. As stated by Hasto (2005, p.90), "A safe childhood" is a "safe bond" in which the child knows that in stressful and anxiety-inducing situations he can rely on parental emotional and active support." It is very important for children who have not had such a relationship many times with parents to have the opportunity to create someone (Noskova, 2011).

## 2 Cooperation of the expert team

However, professional parents in the care of children in their families do not remain alone. They use the help of professional staff who are made up of children's home staff - directors, social workers, psychologists, educators as well as external staff - staff of primary and secondary schools attended by children or healthcare facilities that provide healthcare for children. An important supportive environment for professional families may be their wider family, friends and acquaintances. In difficult situations, they can get help and support from them, and also give children a family cohesive experience. However, situations where the social environment of professional parents doesn't respond positively to their job role and don't understand the sense of professional care can occur. It is important, there-

fore, that in preparing the candidates for professional parenthood, it is also important for those interested to communicate openly about their intention to become a professional parent with their close surroundings and to prepare their close relatives for the arrival of the child.

An area where the help of a team can be needed is also a help for biological children when a new child arrives in the family. There may be situations where biological children will perceive in the incoming children of their opponents and will fight for their parenting and attention.

## 2.1 Cooperation with the biological family of the child

A specific area is also to help children adjust to their relationship to biological parents. A professional family should be a temporary form of care until the child can return to the biological family or until a suitable replacement family finds it.

Professional parents, like people who have not been more closely involved in this field, can feel a certain threat in contact with children with a biological family. They often do not trust biological families to be able to change themselves and are therefore not very open to contact with them. However, professional parents must be aware of the fact that the regulation of their relationship to their parents plays a key role in their lives. Miklosko & Zarnay (2008, p.54) are of the opinion that "the shorter the separation of the child from the family, the greater the willingness of the parents to work together and the greater the likelihood of the child returning to the family".

Due to the demanding nature of this profession, we would like to argue that there is a need to improve the preparation for professional parenting as well as the professional-advisory service provided to professional families. It is important to take into account past experience of professional parenting and to take on new changes that will make the provision of this specific care more effective. In particular, it should be a matter of assessing the real capacity of the professional parent to pursue that profession. It is also very important to accompany the child and professional parents in the adaptive phase of mutual co-existence which should be preceded by contact with the child before the placement in a professional family (Bohunsky, 2011).

Professional parents should feel the co-responsibility and interest of employees of the children's homes as well as their wider social environment. A professional family is a place where children's needs can be saturated even at a more intense level than in groups of children right in their children's home. This is mainly because the child grows up in a narrow circle of people who pay attention to the child. The child also has the opportunity to experience the role of family members which is very important for his current as well as future life.

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