

# The Importance of Mutual Cooperation of Various Actors for the Successful Educational Process of the Child

Lukáš Stárek\*

**Abstract:** Equal opportunity and fair access to quality education for children/pupils/students should be among the basic pillars of human rights. One of the major influences, and not only in pedagogical, social, economic and cultural terms, is the family. It influences the outcomes of pupils' school success, the educational process and, last but not least, the life and career track too. Another of the main pillars that undeniably influence the upbringing, education and whole development of an individual is the educational institution. Considerations of social change have to include changes within the family environment. One such critical change is the very relationships between parents and children when moments arise where a parent does not, for example, know how their child spends their free time, what are the child's interests and who her/his friends are. The pace of society stemming from a stressful environment that is hectic, and ethically and morally, in certain areas, socially unanchored, and felt not only by the parents themselves also increases the gap in family relationships. The family is more isolated from the world around them, and an increasing number of parents are unable to handle the child-raising process and attempt to shift certain areas of child-raising and responsibility to various institutions and specialists. The expert article reflects on the topic of the importance of the cooperation of various actors, who can contribute to the successful educational process of a child thanks to mutual cooperation, listening, reflection or engagement.

**Keywords:** cooperation, engagement, educational process, pupil, teacher

## INTRODUCTION

The term "family" cannot be unambiguously characterised and defined. The status of a family as an educational agent has changed in recent years, which is comparable to, in a historical context, changes in society. Any future perspective regarding the definition and view of

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\* Lukáš Stárek (✉)

Department of Special Education, Jan Amos Komensky University, Prague, Czech Republic

e-mail: starek.lukas@ujak.cz

the family is also highly variable. The family is generally defined in connection with its status within the social system. The focus of this paper primarily concerns the sociological conception of the family. For this reason, the most accurate definition is the one from *The Large Sociological Dictionary*, which states the family is the most important social group and institution, being the fundamental component in the social structure as well as the basic economic unit with the main function of reproducing the continuation of the human species and raising or, alternatively, socialising the next generation as well as the transmission of cultural role models and preserving the continuity of cultural development (Linhart et al. 1996).

For a child, the significance of the family is undeniable, whether it concerns aspects of the emotional foundation (which is today the most challenging to meet) security and safety, but also sufficient stimuli and transmission of experience that emerge from the role of parents and citizens of a given country in relation to cultural identity. The family has their specific function, which is changing with regard to the development of society. It is observed that fulfilling the role of the family can be very demanding for a single parent.

Families in today's society differ in their social status, which may have a positive or negative impact on the child. Social status is defined as "the social position that an individual or group has in the vertical social hierarchy. Between people of different social status, there is social inequality. Different social status is evident in the level of education, qualification, wealth, position of power, etc. Consequently, social strata, classes and economic groups form. Individual economic groups also have distinct social recognition or prestige. Social status is connected with various lifestyles" (Průcha, Walterová and Mareš 2013, 272).

One of the factors that influences the raising and education of a child is the level of education attained by the parents themselves. The family and its social status is defined in connection to the actual level of education achieved because, according to Lehman (2001), education contributes to a person's improved faculties for living as well as her/his future career and thus status in society.

The interconnection of child-raising and education with the economic, political and cultural development of society is evident in their close connection to the development of the social structure. In a traditional society, social status was predetermined by tradition and origin. Even when there was mobility here (wars, service of the nobility, money

lending, etc.), education was more of a privilege, a confirmation and symbol of the existing status, rather than a tool for social advancement (with the exception of a narrow group of civil servants and the clergy). In modern societies, it plays one of the most important roles of integration into the professional structure (Havlík and Kot'a 2011, 81).

*The influence of the family structure and the operation of the family on the education and raising of a child*

The internal structure of the family closely impacts on the process of a child's school success. Today's family setup, in terms of the number of children, is mainly one or two children. In terms of larger sibling connections, various child-raising processes/approaches are reflected in the individual siblings. The general claim can be made that higher requirements are placed on the older sibling, whom the parents were able to give a greater amount of attention. Therefore, parents did not pay as much attention to younger siblings in childhood. This general claim, in historical terms, is supported by Alfred Adler, whose claim was based on the idea that only-children and first-borns have the best educational results. Greater pressure and more attention are placed on them than other children in the family. The size of the family and the birth order has an impact on the educational process and its outcomes. Modern studies, for example, include Pavan (2012), whose research involved a sample of 4,152 mothers and their 8,192 children from birth to 14 years of age. The result of his research was that first-borns receive greater overall investment from their parents. Interest lessens with the second-born and still more with the third. The aforementioned overall investment means, for example, the number of books, the reading of mothers to their children and attending cultural events. Another interesting study that confirms the above was undertaken by Hotz and Pantano (2015). Their results showed, in terms of the actual effect on the pupil's success, 34% of first-borns were considered the best in the class. As the birth-order increases, the percentage drops.

Conflicts may play out in each family. Their source may be varied (infidelity, suspicion of infidelity, a lack of financial resources and inadequate behaviour of one of the partners, to name a few). These conflicts may adversely affect the child, especially in terms of psychological development or psychological needs, namely in connection to the social development of the child. The parents may not at all feel that their conflict affects or influences their child. However, these experiences are buried deep in the child's memory (Stárek 2021).

A single-parent family – where one of the parents is deceased, has abandoned the family or the child is born out of wedlock – may have a similar negative impact, and not only on the educational process. Matoušek (2010, 45) states that “unlike two-parent families, single-parent families are threatened with unemployment, insufficient access to adequate housing, social isolation, poverty and social exclusion.”

The effects and influences on education are observed, especially in terms of professional career, where the family becomes an actor that may determine the very direction in this area when it is not possible, for example, to act in accordance with the nature of her/his wishes or dreams, which have their own legitimate place here, given the age of the child. School, the educational institution itself, is then also connected to this influence. Based on the text, an influential factor in the broader cultural conception is the background of the family and its economic capital.

Another manifestation of risk factors threatening a child’s health is living in a criminogenic environment. “An increased instance of pathological phenomena, risk behaviour and criminal activity appears in these families. Furthermore, the family is not able to sufficiently satisfy a child’s basic needs, especially the psychological. The parents are not often effective and consistent in helping their child, which is related to school obligations” (Zíková et al. 2011, 13).

According to Jurovičová and Žáčková (2009), socially disadvantaged families have a lower level of education and higher risk of unemployment. A child coming from these families experiences unfavourable psychological development, especially in terms of cognition. A child does not have sufficient sensory stimuli that ultimately affect the perception and recognition of reality. Furthermore, fine motor skills, visual and aural perception, auditory and visual memory and lowered concentration are deteriorated. These factors lead to inadequate development of vocabulary and creation of abstract terms.

Research conducted thus far that has examined this issue, such as *Equal Access to Education in the Czech Republic: Situation and Recommendations* (2014), shows that the education of a child is directly dependent on the family as the starting point. A relatively high percentage of university students come from a family background where the parents are university educated and therefore of a higher socioeconomic status. “Stark differences in statistical terms are shown: the likelihood of a university education of a child from a family of

“professionals” compared to a child from a “static working-class background” is more than twenty times” (Matějů and Večerník 1998, 59).

Another factor that influences the raising and education of a child is the socioeconomic level of parents. The financial circumstances of the family, primarily the parents, may support, and in the opposite case, prevent the attainment of a level of education that the child wants to achieve. The largest group of children and pupils with a social disadvantage are found among those of low socioeconomic status. Families are often dependent on social support because of unemployment in the Czech Republic (Zíková et al. 2011). According to Němec et al. (2014), the families live in a poor economic situation where the income often does not cover the monthly expenses. The housing conditions are under the ordinary standard of living. It often happens that a child does not attend preschool because of unpaid school or meal fees. Problems in learning appear. The pupil often does not have adequate supplies and equipment. They may on occasion come to school untidy and/or unwashed, or they do not come at all.

According to Možný (2002), the socioeconomic situation of parents has an impact on several areas that directly affect a child’s educational process. One such area is the housing of the family itself, where the incomes are reflected in the locality where they live. There are different opportunities for children who have their own room and a higher possibility to concentrate on learning; for children who share a room with their siblings, their concentration may be disturbed by stimuli or attacks from the siblings. A favourably secure family may also be able to live in a “better neighbourhood” where a child may meet equally advantaged friends and attend an “elite” school Danielsbacka et al. (2017). The socioeconomic status is also intertwined with the degree of attention paid to a child. They promote the idea that parents with higher socioeconomic status give their children more attention. The parents’ attention itself is one of the sub-areas that affects a child’s school results.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE FAMILY AND THE SCHOOL

Communication, trust and respect are areas used to ensure effective cooperation between a family and the school. The parent and the school have a joint responsibility in the child’s educational process, and without mutual coordination it is not possible to ensure the

positive impact on the child itself. In the cooperation, there are various factors that may result in the function or disfunction of this mutual cooperative apparatus. They especially include the personality of the educator in terms of her/his approach to the parents, professionalism, age and experiences; the climate in a given class where there is the issue of overcrowding, relations in the class, bullying, work with a group – both in positive and negative terms; how the parent views school, whether she/he used to attend this school and has their roots here, or whether it is a school in the family's current locality and the parents have no connection to it, which may be, for example, related to the specialisation of the school.

A parent should be interested in the child's perception of school and whether she/he is thriving or not there. Coordination should bring the parents a feeling of cooperation and definite belonging. A space for a child's specific learning in terms of easier identification of her/his strengths and weaknesses that may be built upon through the guidance of free-time activities or professional preparation opens up. Favourable cooperative communication also affects the perception of the transfer of information that the child conveys from school. A parent may easily verify information, obtain reactions to the child's work at school and inquire about everything that concerns the educational process. The educational institution may affect/influence not only the children/pupils but also their parents (Stárek 2021).

To be able to ensure child's rights, which include the right to an education, it is therefore necessary that when other essential aspects for a child's life, specifically raising and education, are met, the crucial features of cooperation between a school and family are also met. We may view the family and school as two social institutions that are in nature very distinct but both being responsible for a given area of child-raising and education. Parents contribute through their own attitudes to education and learning to the incorporation of this value to the child's whole value system. The child's overall relationship to school and to education as such or to other social values is thus obviously influenced. The whole system of social perception and respecting values are formed by the coordination of a child-raising activities of both these institutions (Janiš et al. 2001).

Cooperation between parents and the school may be advantageous for all parties involved. Krejčová (2005) shows the significance of the cooperation from the perspective of the child, family and school. Parents' cooperation with the school affects the child by increasing

self-confidence at the moment when a family member actively engages with school events. A child internalises the feeling that the family approves and supports the world of the school where the child spends several hours a day. If a child is aware that their parents work together, they can better accept the authority of other adults. It can be assumed that the child's attitude to school is significantly more positive than in the case where a parent refuses to cooperate with the school. Cooperating with the school is beneficial even for single parents. Programmes involving families into their activities increases the self-esteem of parents, enables them to realise everything that is in their power and at what they are competent as parents. By watching their child at work, they better understand the issues focused on the development of their child, gain a more realistic view on the possibilities and limits of their child's education, better understand the environment of the school, class and demands of the teaching profession. From the perspective of the teacher and the school, informal communication between teachers and parents presents an additional source of information about the development of their child. On the basis of observations and information from the parents themselves, they can further modify the conditions at the school to suit the child's needs, create an individual progress plan, for the individual child. On the basis of information supplied by the parents, the teacher may evaluate the more effective specific situation at school and aim at meeting the goals completely in their job.

Čapek (2013) divided positive argument emphasising involvement of parents into the teaching of their child in several areas:

1. Right – the right of the family is the possibility to participate in various activities at school. Parents are bearers of the main responsibility for their child's development. They have the right to be informed about their child and select the school the child will attend. Parents alone have the right to decide whether they will strengthen the school's influence on the child or to weaken it. Various methods support the development of the child.
2. Equality – the parents are equal partners both for the school and for the teacher. Mutual relations are equal. Each of the participants brings differing but valuable experience.
3. Reciprocity – mutual cooperation has to be advantageous for all parties. Each one assumes responsibility for its decision.

4. Strengthening – the parents should feel that they and not only the child are successful from their involvement in education. It opens up for them possibilities to learn, become familiar with new issues, etc.

Cooperation with parents creates mutual trust, eliminates fear and prejudices, supports the pupils' tolerance and recognition of values, strengthens the willingness of the child to actively engage with the lesson and her/his joy from learning, improves the support of the child in overcoming problems (personal, family and school), helps eliminate the most varied social pathological phenomena and negative influences from the environment, supports school in the achieving its educational programme and is for the pupils the model respectful and constructive behaviour among people (Čapek 2013, 16).

From the educator's perspective, properly established cooperation is a significant assistant in determining the adequate degree of approach to a pupil. If a teacher correctly evaluates the causes of a child's behaviour and has the possibility to compare the own observations or finding with information from the parents, she/he may meet her/his own professional commitment to achieve the goals of the lesson while complying with the adequate approach to the specific student. The educator must be a realist and thus realise that not every parent will want to cooperate. The duty of the school is to inform parents about punishments and the methods of handling the child's problems and to guide them to institutions or organisations that may help the child, parent or family (Stárek 2021).

Institutions and educators themselves may have expectations in their relationship to a family/parents. According to Rabušicová and Pol (1996), they include:

- Parents will be willing to deal with the problem;
- Parents will create a positive home environment;
- Parents will show care for their child's work and check it;
- Parents will ensure that their child will bring the necessary supplies to school;
- Parents will oversee that the teacher's requirements are met;
- Parents will be interested in meeting the teacher.

*The educator as an actor in the educational process of children with social disadvantages in kindergarten*

A preschool teacher may also fill the role of a protector and provider of professional care, a mediator of knowledge and experience, a counsellor and initiator, a manager, diagnostician and clinician.

Through the role of protector and provider of professional care, the teacher creates a safe and loving environment for children and provides professional supervision. The role of the facilitator is to mediate knowledge and experience using appropriate methods and forms. In the role of counsellor and initiator, the teacher uses educational strategies respecting the specifics of preschool age and is a consultant and counsellor in educational situations in preschools, and designs and creates suitable conditions for the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and attitudes. The task of the managerial role is to participate in the creation of school and classroom educational programs, the use of appropriate evaluation tools, the creation of aids, the innovation of education and the creation of suitable conditions for preschool education. The aim of the diagnostician and clinician's role is to determine the interests and needs of children, identify their possible difficulties, evaluate the development of the child's personality, communicate with other pedagogical staff and parents (Šmelová 2006).

Mertin and Gillernová (2015, 26) add, "that in order to master the pedagogical profession in preschool, in addition to professional skills (art, physical, musical, dramatic, etc.), methodological knowledge (taking into account the age of the child), social, special-educational and diagnostic."

#### CURRENT COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Currently, there are noticeable tendencies to achieve meaningful and effective cooperation between the family and school. Haynes and Comer (1997) conducted research that examined the current trends in the school system. Among other topics, they discussed early schooling, when parents and teachers were often neighbours and it was easier to find opportunities to discuss the progress of the pupils. Consequently, pupils heard the identical requirements from parents as well as from their teachers. It was thus clear to them that the same standards were expected from them both at home and at school. As society became increasingly more complex, these relationships were gradually relegated to the side lines. Neither the parents nor the teachers had enough time to inform each other and build a working relationship. In many societies, parents are dissuaded from participation in the lesson, and teachers often seek personal contact with parents only when it is necessary to address a problem. The result in many cases is, unfortunately, a lack of understanding and respect, and when a child

falls behind, the parents blame the teacher, and the teacher the parents. A school must make it so that parents feel welcome. Families must commit time and energy to the support of their children at home as well as at school.

In the 1990s, Wikelund and Cotton led a study on the involvement of parents in teaching. It showed that the involvement of parents has positive results on the improvement of performance and the development of pupils. Among other things, they mentioned that the earlier the pupil's parents start to cooperate with the school, the greater the cooperation's effect on the pupil's results. A school that offers diverse types of involvement for parents in the school's life is evaluated as very successful and open to parents. They also discussed that this involvement positively influences the attitude and behaviour of the pupils, study results and the education of disadvantaged individuals (see Wikelund and Cotton 2017).

According to Bertlová (2015), interest in the given issue in the Czech Republic has increased. Organisations that are focused on this cooperation have been established, attempting to spark greater interest and offer different types of communication and cooperation both to schools, which should take the first step, and to parents. Bertlová further states that, for many teachers, communication with parents is an unpleasant affair; others dislike it. However, some are able to benefit from cooperation with parents, and it is desirable that the attitude of teachers and the public is more inclined to this cooperation. Observation is an utterly essential prerequisite for diagnosing a child. A good teacher identifies change in the child's behaviour and, despite the fact she/he strives to determine the cause of the change, it is not sometimes in her/his power to solve the situation. Educators may themselves best clarify whether a change is happening in the family, either positive or negative. If these two forces are joined, the teacher may take the cause into account when assessing the pupil, and both parties may together quickly and most effectively work on a solution to the child's problem. If the parents and teacher are unable to identify the cause of the change in the child's behaviour together, it indicates a problem outside school and even outside the family.

The organisation EDUin (2011) also runs an interesting study "The Relation between the Parents and their Child's School". This study examined: the current level and means of communication between schools and parents; the degree of participation and parents in a school's activities; a school's cooperation with parents; and teachers'

treatment of children. It emerged from the research that parents wish to be informed mainly about their child and less about the school as such. Parents prefer oral communication with the educators most of all. Email communication with teachers is used by 8% of parents, but 45% desire it. More than half of parents learn information directly from their children, but 87% of them did not prefer this method. A third of parents receive information on their child's performance once a month. At least once a month, 84% of parents get information. Almost a half of parents think that the frequency of communication with the school is acceptable, while there is room for improvement in terms of intensity rather than amount. Regarding the field of the school's activities and parents' participation in them, almost 88% of parents would like to participate in some of the activities. The highest per cent of respondents expressed an interest in those activities that did not require a parent's intensive involvement, such as a class visit. Parents are more often willing to participate in activities that are not too demanding for them. An example is the willingness to organise free-time activities, which only 19% of respondents promise. However, they are willing to participate in a given activity twice in a six-month period, which is more often than all activities. In 66% of cases, parents sometimes make suggestions for improvement to the school or educator. In about half of cases, the school then handles the comments. Complaints concerning free-time and organised activities are in first place, followed by those about the operation of the school and class. Parents agree that the school could try more to cooperate with parents. Parents generally did not know much about whether parents play an important role in their child's school. According to parents, the main instigator of cooperation should unambiguously be the school. At the same time, 89% of parents identified this cooperation as a necessary condition for quality education. According to parents, it is very important for the school to cooperate with parents so that their child may work in the same manner in both environments. Half of parents rate the degree of cooperation with the school as satisfactory. If they wanted to improve it, the school would have to prepare better conditions. A full fifth of parents are not inclined toward greater cooperation given their time commitments. Seven per cent of parents are dissatisfied with the school's approach. Only 33% of respondents mentioned that the educator discussed with them how to teach their child, and only half of parents consider the teacher as competent in considering the individuality of their child. Respondents regard knowledge in the field

and the ability to rouse interest as paramount in teachers. If anything can be improved, it is their approach as partners.

At present, the model of shared responsibility is coming to the fore. This shifts the above-mentioned participatory model to an even more significant share of cooperation between parents and the school, emphasises the joint responsibility of parents and teachers for the results of specific decisions. Therefore, the involvement of parents is essential in such activities that will benefit their children. At the same time, however, Rabušicová (2004) expresses concern that such shared responsibility will not change over time into divided responsibility.

If we want to professionally define modern cooperation, then there is no complete terminological uniformity. A partnership between a school and parents can be viewed as cooperation, involvement or participation. We will focus on participation and involvement. (Prins, Wienke and Van Rooijen 2013) Parental participation includes the active participation of parents in various school activities (Smit, Driessen, Sluijen and Brus 2007). These activities may focus on the school itself, such as organising parents' evenings, helping with school trips and helping with lessons, such as reading, as well as participating in the school council or the parents' council. The term that is used more frequently is parental involvement. It occurs when parents' behaviour shows that they feel a shared responsibility for their children's development (Vries 2010). According to Prins, Wienke and Van Rooijen (2013), it is rather an emotional involvement in the development of their child at school and in relation to the teacher. For example, parents show interest, create conditions for homework and, if necessary, can and want to direct their child. Though they also attend school events, they are in the passive role of a visitor and also show respect for the teacher. The primary goal of parental involvement is therefore to give the parents themselves a role in the education of their children, from which it is clear that it is a matter of cooperation and partnership.

## RISK OF COOPERATION BETWEEN A FAMILY AND SCHOOL

The relationship between parents, teachers and the school their children attend is often problematic. According to Čírová (2012), the problems may be grounded in a lack of understanding. Over the last 25 years, the Czech school system has undergone significant modernisation, which entails considerable changes in the educational process. Parents come into contact with the school with their own

memories from childhood, thus imagining an entirely different education system. Significant problems, namely misunderstanding in marginal cases through to rejection of what the school offers, may emerge because of this. Sufficiently informing and familiarising parents with new procedures markedly helps build good relationships between a family and school. Feřtek (2011) lists the basic aspects that hinder successful cooperation between parents and their child's school:

- Parents' conceptions of the modern form of education are not uniform. It is necessary for teachers to anticipate that making the parents aware is an incredibly protracted job and only possible to a certain extent.

- The fundamental agent here is the educator. Primarily it is up to her or him what form the communication with the parents will take because they are specialists in education and communication.

- Basically, the parents' conception about today's schooling stems from their own experience, thus most often from the circumstances in school from the period of so-called *normalisation* during the 1970s and 1980s. For this reason, many come with a feeling of fear, without realising it. They may view school as a repressive social institution that threatens their children's personality.

- Some parents are not too interested in their children's education. For others, it is, in contrast, a priority. An insight into the current situation where the topic of education is becoming a frequent topic in the media is positive.

- Many teachers are conservative, and it is incredibly demanding to change their own attitude to the parental community. A willingness to be further educated in the pedagogical disciplines, which is at the moment not an obvious matter, is crucial here.

- A large per cent of teachers are used to communicating primarily with children in a position of authority. For many of them, it is then very difficult and stressful to communicate with parents as equals.

- When interacting with parents, teachers may assume a defensive attitude so that parents do not learn too much about the school and cannot delve too much into matters.

- Almost all school principals are dissatisfied with the situation where parents have little interest in the school and are not active. At the same time, however, the vast majority of directors are taken aback if parents start to be intensively interested in school and organise each other.

Suquet (2013) mentions additional causes of inadequate cooperation between the family and school. One example is the low social prestige

of the teaching profession, lack of funds for working at school, unpreparedness of some groups of parents in raising children, a difficult social situation in the families with low income, the value system of the family directing priority to consumer values and a range of other tendencies with which it is necessary to anticipate in the future:

The task for the future thus remains the qualification of the preparation of future teachers in their cooperation with parents in real life and the development of communication, consultation and advisory skills of the teacher, who is an essential prerequisite of successful social interaction and cooperation (Suquet 2013, 8).

## ORDINARY FORMS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN A FAMILY AND SCHOOL

*Class meetings and individual consultation.* Feřtek (2011) views a discussion with parents about their satisfaction with the organisation of teaching, what parents value the most at school and what they would like to change as the most important at the class meeting. Therefore, educators should use this occasion precisely for the purpose above. Debate about marks should be in principle a private matter. Therefore, it should only take place with the participation of the parent, teacher and, in some cases, the pupil. Čapek (2013) states that class meetings have become such an inseparable part of Czech schools after many decades of having them that it is not possible to find a school in the current school environment in which class meetings would not take place. Unfortunately, a major disadvantage of many class meetings is that schools have made virtually no changes in the organisation of class meetings over the decades. The reason may be that teachers do not see a reason to make any changes, or they would like to make changes but have no idea what changes they want.

*Enrolment into 1st year of elementary school.* We can view enrolment into compulsory school attendance as a foundation for building of cooperation between a family and school. According to Feřtek (2011), enrolment is, though often considered a routine matter, a crucial moment when educators and the school as a social institution offer their services to parents with whom they will most likely be in contact for the following nine years. Feřtek rates the meaning of the event as incredibly clear – apart from the necessity to ensure the school readiness of the future pupils, it is an occasion to show the school in the best light. Therefore, the way the enrolment is organised is crucial.

Certain schools prefer an enrolment that is official in nature. Others organise an enrolment in the form of an obstacle course where children complete adventure tasks. However, it is also crucial for the family whether they feel welcome at the first collective meeting and not like the mere accompaniment of another future pupil. Unfortunately, the parents have to wait, along with their children, in the corridor, where they are unable to sit. Prepared seating, even a children's corner, can play a significant positive role. An improvised café with a play corner can be ideal.

*Information meeting for parents of pupils from 1st class.* This activity is for parents whose children will go to school for the first time, primarily the first meeting and the beginning of building a relationship between them and their child's school (Čapek 2013).

It is usually held in June in the presence of future class teachers, after-school carers, school management and representatives of the 'Friends of the School Club'. Information is provided on the organisation of the school, mental hygiene and also on cooperation and active involvement of parents in the life of the school (Kaiser 2000, 10).

These meetings can also be used for obtaining basic information on the child. Krejčová and Kargerová (2011) recommend that educators draw up in advance the prepared form that will become a part of the file on each child. The rules for cooperation, communication, determining the expectations of the parents and following them and setting the requirements and expectations of the educator are drawn up at the first meeting.

*Open Day.* It is a very widespread event. Schools use it primarily to present the school to parents of future first-years. The event allows many parents to form a real idea of the quality of the given school. A minority of schools also offer viewing of a teaching demonstration. The more learned schools let parents watch a demonstration lesson and provide a richer variety of these events (Čapek 2013).

*Concerts and performances for parents.* They are a frequent occurrence at schools. According to Čapek (2013), it is necessary to involve, for example, gifted children who attend an artistic school along with all children into these events. Feřtek (2011) emphasises that it is necessary to schedule these events for a time when the parents can really participate. For example, if the event is scheduled for the morning, the school does not show parents that it was interested in their participation. It is also suitable for these actions to have a distinct

character each year, so innovation and changes of scenery are welcome. The length of the given performance is important. It should not exceed two hours. The purpose of a similar performance is to show that the school participates in municipal events, a presentation of the school as a place where something happens. Among other things, it creates an opportunity for the parents and teachers to chat informally about topics not connected to school. It is therefore advisable to arrange a small buffet table with biscuits, coffee and tea for after the performance (Feřtek 2011).

*Art workshops.* They are very popular and accessible. Parents can attend art workshops together with their children or separately. The basic activities are creative projects, interesting handicrafts or art activities. Čapek (2013) states that workshops can be made special, for example, by the participation of one of the parents who is a representative of their profession here. Art workshops are becoming increasingly popular and schools are adding them to the school year's schedule in ever-increasing numbers.

*Groups and free-time activities led by a parent.* Čapek (2013) defines three fundamental forms of involvement by volunteers: 1. Cooperation with a volunteer centre. 2. Cooperation with the sending organisation 3. Tailor-made volunteer programme. A volunteer programme without state support is the most advantageous for a school as it avoids restrictions concerning age, insurance, contractual relations and other conditions. Despite this fact, this programme should have certain essential features such as a designated coordinator, specified activities for the volunteers, drawn-up agreements on cooperation and in the best cases a signed code of ethics protecting the interest of the pupils and the school. According to Feřtek (2011), a more suitable variant of occasional "teaching" is, for example, in handicraft workshops. Parents have fewer time demands. The school has the possibility to communicate and cooperate with a greater number of parents and trainers.

*Visits by parents to the classroom; parent assistance in the lesson.* This is a tempting possibility for parents. The school allows them to see directly into the running of the classroom. They have a chance to observe their child in a different environment than the home and spend more time with them. They may learn what their child's relationship to authority is, how they express themselves in the class collective or how they take care of their things. Furthermore, the parents get the feeling from the school's side that they are needed, can have purpose and be of

use (Čapek 2013). The education programme ‘Start Together’ cooperates with parents in the form, among others, of their assistance in the classroom. They may use the possibility to observe the classroom as guests, prepare a lesson, help in various activities in the activity centre (workstations) in the classroom and individually devote themselves to a child who needs it (Krejčová & Kargerová 2011).

*Parent as a specialist in her/his field.* “Parents assist in learning activities that are thematically related to their profession or interests, arrange excursions to their own workplaces, transport for school trips, help with the production of aids, decorations and classroom equipment” (Krejčová & Kargerová 2011, 165). Parents interested in this activity can explain to their children what they need for their education profession, whether they need to work in a team, speak a foreign language, deal with people, master excellent mathematical skills, etc. It is advisable for pupils to make simple notes and the next day they talk about the topic with the teacher. Among other things, it is beneficial to improve children’s communication skills, ask questions, and listen to others.

*Assistance of parents on trips and excursions.* According to Čapek (2013), this is a typical form of cooperation for the first grade of primary school. Parents later are involved more sporadically in this direction. Educators in general greatly welcome this form of cooperation.

*The parent in the association in the support of the school.* An association of parents and friends of the school exists, with possible variants of names, in most current schools. The main purpose of such associations is primarily the diverse support of the school, but also the pursuit of their interests and rights. They are usually organised by the school, have formal meetings and take place approximately twice a year. Another example is civic associations organised directly by parents. They have their own rules, finances and cash account, and as such can apply for grants that are not available to schools. This independent organisation at school suggests that the parents are very active here. They have a clear idea of the help and support of the school. A frequent form of assistance is obtaining financial support and assistance in organising various school events. Associations that convene class meetings are no exception. Unfortunately, the difficulties are rooted in the duration of these associations. Often, when a child goes to another school, parents naturally stop showing

interest in participating in such an association, and it can be difficult to find other active parents (Feřtek 2011).

#### LESS COMMON FORMS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN A FAMILY AND SCHOOL

Both sides find it desirable and successful for the parents to be involved in the events of school life more intensively than is normal. Organising an annual event is only a good start. However, it is necessary to also use other activities such as swap meets, fetes, singing on the school stairs, workshops, scientific conferences and others. The foundation is to pay attention to the preparation of the invitation for the parents and to its mailing. Using the pupils as a guide is suitable. They can take care of the parents and tell them information. It has a very positive effect both on the parents and the pupils themselves, who have the feeling that they are trusted enough that the educator offered them this task (Čapek 2013).

*Curricular afternoon.* It is more of an exception in our school, although its potential is significant. The point is for the school to explain and clarify the philosophy of their educational strategy, aims, selection of different methods and classroom resources. It is suitable to invite parents to school and show them, for example, reading workshops, explain the purpose of the classroom lessons with the participation of the school psychologist, why new methods are used in mathematics lessons, what are the reasons for using new script for first-years, etc. Often misunderstandings and conflicts arise between parents and educators stemming from the parents' lack of knowledge about pedagogy. Therefore, the school should provide parents with the necessary information. Certain schools use class meetings for the same purpose, especially if they are providing information on pupil's marks during a personal consultation. An alternative to the personal meeting may be an information brochure or a regular column on the school's website (Feřtek 2011).

*Garden party and bonfire.* A casual atmosphere is incredibly positive. Parents feel comfortable and unthreatened. A significant benefit for educators is that they may observe pupils in interactions with their parents. Feřtek (2011) states that it is, for example, suitable to invite a trained guitarist to create a pleasant atmosphere. The preparation of food will then ensure no one feel uncomfortable at the event. Initially, the participation of parents may be sporadic. Therefore, it is suitable to repeat this event so that it becomes a part of the

parents' general awareness. Apart from the school garden, a location outside the school grounds can be used so that the parents feel more at ease.

*Parent corner.* A room in the school intended for parents can be used by parents when they are waiting for their children. Talks with their child's educators may take place here on "neutral" ground. It may be furnished with chairs, a bookshelf and a noticeboard with information. The chance to make a hot drink while waiting is also a pleasant option (Čapek 2013). In the education programme 'Start Together', these spaces are set up in every school that has the suitable space possibilities. Krejčová and Kargerová (2011) state that it is not essential whether it is a complete and separate space or only a reserved corner. They consider suitable furnishings that motivate parents to make a short stop at school, chat with other parents and read information on the noticeboard as important. The authors also emphasise the need of repeatedly invite parents to these spaces and ensure their accessibility.

*Parent as "cook for the day."* The parents visit the class and gradually assume the position of "cook of the day", where they prepare a simple dish with the children (Čapek 2013).

*Book club.* This activity is a component of involving parents and their children into the project of a book club. It involves a book being selected from a list for a given month. The book is read by the parents, pupils and teacher. All the participants meet after the given month to discuss the fates of the heroes, the main plot of the book and its other aspects (Čapek 2013).

*"Three for Me."* According to the National Parent Teacher Association, 8,100 schools and 4,500,000 parents in the USA are involved in the original "Three for Me". This activity involves the creation of a list of volunteer jobs and activities scheduled at pre-determined times. This list is then presented at the class meetings to parents, who are requested to dedicate three hours of their time to the school. According to Čapek (2013), this form of cooperation brings more fathers to the school because they can choose the time and activity suitable to their free time and they can dedicate it to the school.

*Game afternoon.* It is a suitable way for parents, educators and children to spend time together while having casual fun. These afternoons may be in the spirit of various board games, where teams of parents and children compete.

*Fundraising.* Švrčinová (2017, 7) defines fundraising as a “systematic activity that aims to obtain funds for an organisation’s or individual’s activity.” Čapek (2013) presents fundraising as one of the possibilities how to obtain funds for the school through cooperation with parents. It is an activity involving parents assistance in the organisation of an event for the school, and the school profits from it. For example, it may involve the baking of biscuits and their subsequent sale, making and selling items in a workshop for parents, organising a fair, collecting recyclable materials and other things. An easily manageable fundraising event is, for example, the “school calendar,” with photos from school events, names of days of school events for parents. Parents may pay to have their child’s birthday marked in the calendar. Apart from the sale of the calendar, profits may come from sponsors or small firms that may place their logo or slogan in the calendar.

*Initial and ongoing talks.* Introductory talks are typical for schools that want to know whether their educational ideas and the ideas of future pupils’ parents are different. It specifically involves schools that have a clearly given education philosophy with a clear conception of child-raising in the family of their pupils. The primary aim is to minimise subsequent idea clashes between the parents and school. A typical example abroad are Waldorf schools that determines the ability and willingness of parents to cooperate with the school during these talks.

*School loans.* It may involve countless items, from books, encyclopaedias, to lesson programmes through to sport equipment.

*Educator visit to the family.* This form of cooperation is primarily done in certain schools involved in the education programme ‘Start Together’. Krejčová (2005) evaluates the visit of an educator in a family as very beneficial for both sides. The educator may come to know and observe the pupil in her/his family setting, which allows the educator to better understand the pupil’s individual development attitude, behaviour and reaction in the school environment. The main motive of these meetings is usually an effort to get to know the family in more depth and knowledge, to establish a closer, more personal character. It presents a highly effective opportunity to deepen communication between parents and the school, although it is unlikely to be one of the most widely used forms of cooperation in the near future.

*Forms of social and psychological assistance for the family.* The teacher may play the role of the professional or mediator of psychosocial care where the parents use her/him for consultation or, as the case may be, as a mediator of meetings with other specialists. This meeting may be organised both at school and in a neutral setting, and the teacher may participate in them as support. The educator may also take on the role of a coordinator of a support group in the school that the parents with similar problems use. Experts who help address the problematic situations visit. For example, single parents may meet each other, and the nature of meetings can lead to both getting type and ideas and mutual help in mental hygiene terms.

In the context of our topic, we should also mention the issue of children/pupils who are placed in institutional care and whose daily educational joys and worries are shared with the staff of the institutional facility. The problem is described by Daněk (2022) - it cannot be argued that children and young people are educationally and socially behind solely because of institutionalisation. According to our findings, children come to the children's home with pre-existing difficulties. The narrative analysis helped us to penetrate the period of development of children and young adults before their arrival at the Children's Home Klánovice. It was clearly shown that a significantly important period preceded the stay in the children's home when the child was exposed to pathological influences of dysfunctional family environments and the efforts for rehabilitation by the authorities of social and legal protection of children were not successful.

## CONCLUSION

Preparedness of future teachers in cooperation with pupils' parents is at the moment essential in the development of cooperation between a family and school. The crucial ability is, for example, to navigate through the influences of family factors on the child's personality, through the typology of parental attitudes, through styles of upbringing in a family, through the parents' child-rearing methods on the children, through shortcomings in the parents' effect on the children and their rectification, etc.; likewise, the teacher's definite skill set, i.e. the ability to gain the trust of parents and influence their attitudes to cooperate with the school, mastering the basics of general educational consultation, qualified communication with educators, etc. A consistent sign is the perception of parents as a significant partner who will be able to influence the child's educational process and may

support the positive interconnection of child–school–parent. A common sign of all measures support the cooperation of the family and school. Schools in their policies avoid in advance considering parents as ignorant or merely the child’s biased advocates; even that parent who does not come to the school may be a good parent and may cooperate well with the school, provided the school is able to motivate her/him to do it. The school may change the fact that parents feel incredibly burdened by their work and household responsibilities and thus do not want to dedicate their time to the school. A school may positively influence the prejudices of those parents who have their own negative experiences with education.

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