

**mgr Marta Pacholczyk-Sanfilippo**

*Early institutional care and education for children under the age of 3 – legal guidelines and the practice and functioning of crèches in Warsaw*

The aim of the activities described in this dissertation was to diagnose the functioning and the organization of work of crèches in Warsaw. The research was conducted in the capital city, as the number of children involved in this type of institution is particularly high.. The author considered the diagnosis important for several reasons. First of all, it can be a source of information for employees of institutions in a broader context (local government). Secondly, it can be valuable in the process of changing the social policy of Warsaw in this area. Third, this work is a continuum of legislative changes introduced in 2011. The diagnosis was based on the analysis of legal documents, departmental guidelines, available literature on the subject and the results of own research.

The dissertation presents various levels (country, city and institution) of the functioning and organization of work of nurseries (crèches), the professional preparation of caregivers, the cooperation of institutions with parents and the local community, and the supervision of nurseries. The study analyzes the documentation, space management and activities of children. Attention was also paid to the organization and manner of supervision carried out by local government representatives. The dissertation raises issues in the fields of humanistic and social pedagogy, developmental psychology, history of education, sociology and other social sciences.

The first part is devoted to key issues related to care and education for children under 3 years of age. The first chapter in this part contains an analysis of the literature on the subject, previous studies, as well as numerous reports and legal regulations in this area. Moreover, the chapter presents the theoretical outline of the organization of the child care system and describes the ways of functioning of facilities for the youngest children and their role in the social life of the state. Additionally, it presents the general situation related to the issues of young children in Poland. The second chapter concerns the ways of organizing work in nurseries. Nurseries in

San Miniato, Italy, have been described as an example of good practice. The third chapter presents Polish and foreign research on early childhood education and care

The second part describes the methodology and results of own research carried out in Warsaw nurseries in the years 2017–2019. The dissertation ends with a summary, conclusions and a set of recommendations and assumptions that can help in developing a new concept of organization of work in this kind of institution. The results obtained are used to diagnose the situation and activities undertaken by children, caregivers, directors / managers and decision-making activities related to the functioning of nurseries.

The analysis of the collected materials showed that in structural terms it can be concluded that all Warsaw nurseries in which the study was conducted, from a formal point of view, fulfill the tasks

specified in the Act introduced in 2011. On the other hand, the tasks related to care, upbringing and education are often misinterpreted, which does not allow for an adequate assessment of the quality of work of the examined institutions.

It is worth noting that the dissertation fills the gap in Polish social research into the tasks of early childhood education and care, but does not completely cover this issue. In social sciences, the subject of a small child was very often discussed, while nurseries are an area in which relatively few researchers have been interested. Publications on this topic usually present quantitative analyses, and none of them attempts to diagnose the current situation. This study may interest the students of pedagogy and psychology, persons working in nurseries or planning to establish such an institution, policy-makers and parents.