Universities for children (UFCs) represent special phenomena between educational innovations. Their current condition is originated in various social, historical and cultural factors. History of UFCs consists of a plethora of approaches to teaching which sometimes were in interest of educators for relatively short time.

In the first part of my thesis “Concepts – history – transformations” I discuss the significance of the term university and then I explore the meaning of UFC. I refer to select changes in tertiary education and recognize some threats that come from the neoliberal standpoint in pedagogy. Then I present a history of universities for children with special emphasis on the Maria Skłodowska-Curie’ idea of “Cooperative” and on explanation why the idea declined. Finally in this part of my dissertation I show the reasons for recovering of the idea of UFC and for eventual its success.

The second part oscillates around the idea of action research. Particularly, I discuss two projects that I participated in and which pertain to the idea of UFCs: “The Polish Academy for Children” at the University of Warsaw and “Academy for Arts of Thinking”.

The third part of the dissertation consists of my analyses and interpretations undertaken from the anthropological perspective. Among the concepts and metaphors I discuss readers can find fashion, fashion house, ‘Governed Child’, and performance.

I conclude with some special insights into the history and condition of universities for children. The UFCs support students in learning what the scientific culture means, what is cooperation and finally how to build the atmosphere of universitas. The UFCs inspire children to pose philosophical, that is, really reflective questions as well to interact with others and build together a community of inquiry.

Universities for children (UFCs); the Maria Skłodowska-Curie’ idea of “Cooperative”; “The Polish Academy for Children” at the University of Warsaw and “Academy for Arts of Thinking”; Among the concepts and metaphors I discuss readers can find fashion, fashion house, ‘Governed Child’, and performance; action research; history and condition of universities.