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# Current tendencies in choosing the form of education of students with hearing impairment in the current educational system in Poland

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The aim of this article is to present changes in the education of deaf and hard of hearing persons over the last 7 years. The trends in the education of children with hearing impairment clearly point to the departure from special forms of education in favour of public education and integration. These changes, however, are a challenge for both teachers, parents and students with hearing impairment.

**KEY WORDS:** hard of hearing student, deaf student, education of students with hearing impairment

## Introduction

The development of technology and the widespread use of hearing aids, cochlear implants and, above all, the prevalence of hearing screening have led to the use of functional classification in the edu-

cation of the deaf and hard of hearing, which distinguishes two groups of children with hearing impairment. These include deaf children and hard of hearing children. Deaf children are children with hearing impaired to such an extent that it does not allow them to receive speech sounds naturally: i.e. by hearing. The characteristic feature of this group of children is the inability to master verbal speech in the natural way (by imitation). The second group, hard of hearing children (hearing impaired), includes children with hearing impaired to a degree that limits the reception of speech by hearing; hard of hearing children can learn verbal speech by natural means: through hearing (Szczepankowski, 1998). K. Krakowiak (2016) also emphasizes that the new circumstance of the education of the deaf and hard of hearing area a result of, among other things: changes in medical knowledge, achievements in neuroscience and developmental psychology, the development of speech therapy and practice, the development of new methods of language education, the development of new philological knowledge of sign language. In the case of children with hearing impairment, the simultaneous initiation of screening programs and a network of early developmental support institutions is very important (Podgórska-Yachnik, 2016).

These changes imply completely new opportunities in the field of education, early support for the development of children with hearing impairment, as well as psychological and pedagogical help. Due to the above, it is important to remember that special educational needs of children with hearing impairment have changed over the past 20-30 years and require the use of other systemic solutions.

### **Decisions, qualification procedure for the form of education**

Students with hearing impairment have the possibility to study in public schools, in integration schools or schools with integration classes and in special schools. Pursuant to the *Regulation of the Min-*

*ister of National Education of 18 September 2008 on decisions and opinions issued by multidisciplinary teams operating in public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, as well as with the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 1 February 2013 on the detailed rules of operation of public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, including public specialist centres, along with the amending regulations,<sup>1</sup> decisions on the need for special education, for example, for hearing impaired children (hard of hearing or deaf), are issued by multidisciplinary teams organized in public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres<sup>2</sup>. The multidisciplinary team is appointed by the director of the counselling centre. It includes: the director of the centre or a person authorized by him/her, a psychologist, educator, doctor, speech therapist, who develop an appropriate diagnosis<sup>3</sup>.*

At the request of the applicants<sup>4</sup>, a decision on education is taken at the meeting of the multidisciplinary team, after the analysis of the medical documentation provided by the applicants and on the basis of specialized tests conducted at the counselling centre (psychological, pedagogical, speech therapy). The team decides on the need for special education or lack of such need. Decisions concerning the need for special education provided by a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre consist of a diagnostic part, of the resulting decision part, including the conditions for realization of educational needs, the form of stimulation, revalidation, therapy, improvement, development of the potentials and strengths of the child and other forms of psychological and pedagogical help. It is

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 25 August 2017 amending the regulation on detailed rules of operation of public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, including public specialized centres.

<sup>2</sup> According to the regulation, decisions on the need for special education and decisions on the need for individual teaching of blind and visually impaired children, deaf and hard of hearing children and children with autism and AS are issued by teams operating in the counselling centres indicated by the education superintendent, with the consent of the authority in charge.

<sup>3</sup> According to the regulation, the team may also include other specialists, if their participation in the team is necessary.

<sup>4</sup> Parents, legal guardians of the child.

worth noting that the decision includes the recommended form of special education for hearing impaired students: either in a public school or in an integration school (or an integration class) or in a special school (or a special class). However, the final decision concerning the school in which the child will learn is taken by the parent. On the basis of the decision submitted to the authority in charge, the child is referred to the recommended form of education (see Chrzanowska, 2015; Dziurda-Multan, 2007; Szumski, 2004, 2011). A decision is issued for a period of one school year, the educational stage, the education period in the school concerned.

M. Chróścicka, W. Kodura et al. (2005) on the basis of many years of experience in the diagnosis and monitoring of effects in school education of children with hearing impairment, developed a scheme for qualifying the child to an appropriate form of education. If the child with a hearing impairment achieves above-average results in the WISC-R<sup>5</sup> full scale (verbal and non-verbal), communicates with the environment through verbal communication, has acquired basic school techniques and the parents/carers work with the child, we can predict success in the realisation of the public school program. It is also important that the teacher, who is working with the student, understands the complexity of hearing impairment. If a child with a hearing impairment achieves an above-average result, but only on a verbal scale, communicates through verbal communication, but to a limited extent, has acquired basic school techniques and the parents/carers work with the child, the child may attend compulsory schooling in an integration class and an individual program tailored to the child's ability may be requested. However, if a child with a hearing impairment achieves only mediocre results in the tests, communicates through verbal communication, but only to a very limited extent, has acquired poor school techniques, and the parents/carers are constantly working with the child, then it is recommended that the child attends

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<sup>5</sup> WISC-R - (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children) - modified version. This is a psychological test used to measure general intelligence.

a school for children with a hearing impairment. In order for the form of education, proposed by a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, be optimal, the following factors should be taken into account: the time of diagnosis, hearing and speech rehabilitation, the benefits of hearing aids (also cochlear implants), parental involvement in therapy, level of language development, level of intellectual ability, mastery of school techniques, concentration, the ability to work independently, emotional and social functioning (Chróścicka, Kodura et al., 2005).

## Educational opportunities

According to the Law on Education<sup>6</sup>, as well as relevant ministerial regulations<sup>7</sup>, a student who is covered by special education (in all three forms – special, integrative, public) – must have a well-tailored pre-school education program and curriculum adapted to his or her individual developmental and educational needs, as well as psychophysical capabilities. The basis for adaptation is the Individual Education and Therapeutic Program (IETP), which includes recommendations for working with the child, as included in the decision on the need for special education. The program is devel-

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<sup>6</sup> Law of December 14, 2016 – Educational Law (Journal of Laws 2016, item 59).

<sup>7</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 July 2015 *on the conditions for the organization of teaching, education and care for children and youth with disabilities, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment* (Journal of Laws 2015, item 1113), Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 August 2017 amending the regulation *on the conditions for the organization of teaching, education and care for children and young people with disabilities, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment* (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1652) and the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 April 2013 *on the rules of granting and organizing psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and institutions* (Journal of Laws 2013, item 532), Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 August 2017 amending the regulation *on the rules of granting and organizing psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and institutions* (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1643).

oped by a team<sup>8</sup>, on the basis of a multidisciplinary assessment of the level of functioning of the child or student, taking into account the recommendations contained in the decision on the need for special education and, as appropriate, in cooperation with the psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, including a specialist centre. The program is developed for a period of time specified in the decision on the need for special education, but not longer than the educational stage. The aim of the Educational and Therapeutic Program is to take into account the scope and method of adapting the pre-school education program and educational requirements to individual developmental, educational and psychophysical capabilities of the child through the uses of appropriate methods and forms of work. The program also defines the forms and duration of providing psychological and pedagogical assistance to the child or student (including the time dimension), parent support measures, the scope of cooperation with other centres, institutions, the scope of cooperation between teachers and specialists with the child's parents, and revalidation activities<sup>9</sup>.

Taking into account contemporary educational trends, which are being observed in the reality of the inclusive system implemented in schools, as described by I. Chrzanowska (2007), it is expected that more and more children with special educational needs will attend classes in public schools. There is also a noticeable increase in the number of hearing impaired children in public and integrative education. This is caused by changes in educational regulations<sup>10</sup>, an increased awareness of the parents concerning the educational

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<sup>8</sup> Teachers, educators and specialists who teach children or students

<sup>9</sup> According to the regulation, in the case of deaf children, this may include, for example, sign language classes or other alternative methods of communication classes (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2017 on the conditions for the organization of teaching, education and care for children and youth with disabilities, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment).

<sup>10</sup> The Act on the Education System of the Ministry of National Education of September 7, 1991 and 1993, as further amended, the Act of 14 December 2016 - Educational Law (Journal of Laws, No. 2016, item 59).

possibilities of the children, but unfortunately also an increased pressure for the child to attend a public school. As J. Barańska (2003) observes, this trend is also the result of advances in medicine<sup>11</sup> and technology<sup>12</sup>, an increase in the number of children covered by early developmental support<sup>13</sup>, an increase in the number of institutions where audiological, surdo-pedagogical, surdo-psychological and surdo-logopedic diagnosis is performed, as well as an increase in the number of clinics and centres dealing with psychological and pedagogical help and support for the development of children with hearing impairment, dissemination of knowledge about developmental possibilities of students with hearing impairment.

M. Olempska's (2009) study on the educational pathways of students with hearing impairment conducted in the Łódź Province also shows the tendency of educating such children in public and integration schools. The study included 283 children and adolescents with hearing impairment, including 117 girls and 166 boys, who were subjected to specialized diagnoses (psychological, pedagogical, speech therapy, medical) for multidisciplinary teams in the

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<sup>11</sup> In Poland, since 2002, almost 5 000 000 children have been screened thanks to the Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening Program, all neonatal units were equipped with screening equipment, not only the screening system was developed (performed in 416 centres of I referral level), but also centres of II and III referral (75 and 24 centres, respectively) to which new-borns with suspected hearing impairment are directed. As a result of the Program, approximately 278,955 children with suspected hearing impairment have been referred for treatment (source: [http://www.wosp.org.pl/medycyna/nasze\\_programy/badania\\_sluchu](http://www.wosp.org.pl/medycyna/nasze_programy/badania_sluchu), access 25.06.2017).

<sup>12</sup> The intensive development of technology leads to the development of better hearing aids – hearing aids, cochlear implants or the FM system, and due to early diagnosis they can be used very early.

<sup>13</sup> According to the SIO (Educational Information System) data, the number of children covered by psychological and pedagogical help is increasing every year, as well as the number of issued opinions on the need for early development support. The figures indicate that in 2008 there were 14021 children included in WWR, in 2011 – 18320, 2013 – 25592 (source: [http://brpd.gov.pl/sites/default/files/wyst\\_2014\\_07\\_24\\_men\\_odp\\_01.pdf](http://brpd.gov.pl/sites/default/files/wyst_2014_07_24_men_odp_01.pdf); access 25.06.2017).

Łódź Province. Student documentation was analysed<sup>14</sup>, which allowed to determine in what form or forms of education the educational process took place. At the pre-school stage, we observe that the vast majority of children attend public facilities (135 children) or integration facilities (110 children), which may be dictated by the greater availability of these forms of education at this stage of education, the proximity to the place of residence and the choice of parents themselves. Children with a mild hearing impairment (18 children) and moderate hearing impairment (31 children) attend mostly public primary schools, and children with mild, moderate and significant hearing impairment attend special schools for children with hearing impairment. On the other hand, the vast majority of students with severe hearing impairment attend schools for deaf people. The analysis of the form of education on lower-secondary school level shows that the vast majority of students are educated in schools for hard of hearing and deaf children. According to the *Report on the situation of deaf people in Poland*<sup>15</sup>, it is worrying that there is a systematic decline in the number of children in schools for the deaf and hard of hearing as far as the intellectual standard is concerned. As the authors of the Report point out, more and more children with additional disabilities, such as autism, intellectual disability attend such schools. The result is that special schools use a curriculum that does not take into account the specificity of deaf people and public schools are not prepared to effectively educate children with such disabilities and such communication problems.

The analysis of nationwide data, from the Educational Information System (System Informacji Oświatowej – SIO), also shows some trends in the education of children and young people with

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<sup>14</sup> The collected data concern the years 2004/05 – 2008/09, decisions on the need for special education were analysed, as well as protocols from the multidisciplinary teams for hearing impairment in the Specialized Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre for Professional Consultancy for Children with Developmental Defects in Łódź.

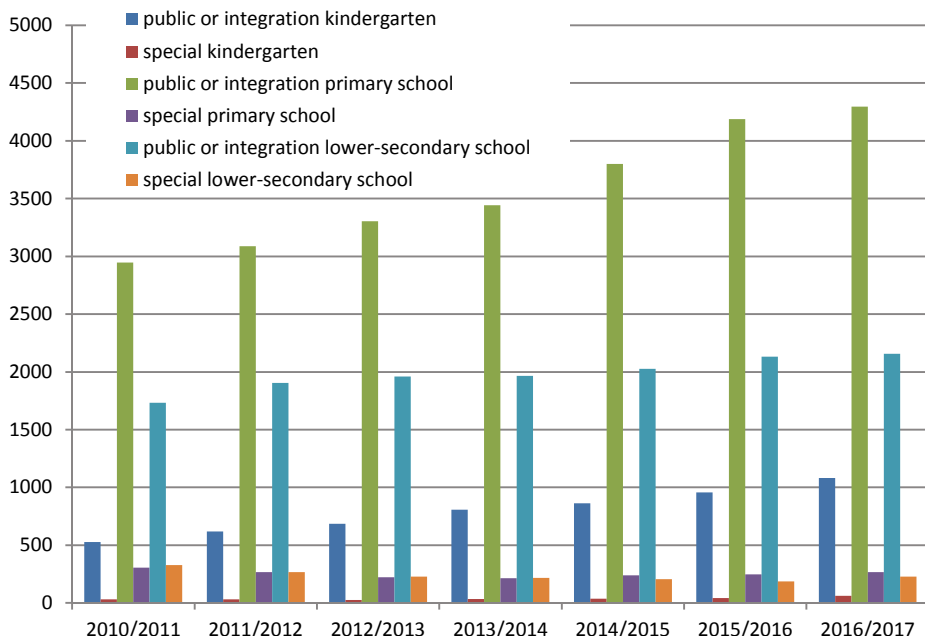
<sup>15</sup> *The Situation of Deaf People in Poland*. Report of the Panel for Deaf People at the Ombudsman, edited by Marek Świdziński, Warsaw 2014.



**Table 1.** Number of students with hearing impairment in the school years 2010/2011 – 2016/2017

School year	Number of students with hearing impairment in:						
	Public or integration kindergarten	Special kindergarten	Public or integration primary school	Special primary school	Public or integration lower-secondary school	Special lower-secondary school	
2010/2011	528	30	2947	306	1732	327	
2011/2012	618	30	3087	265	1904	266	
2012/2013	684	25	3304	221	1959	227	
2013/2014	808	34	3444	215	1964	217	
2014/2015	861	35	3801	238	2025	205	
2015/2016	957	43	4189	246	2131	187	
2016/2017	1082	60	4297	267	2157	227	

(Source: own elaboration based on information contained in the Educational Information System, <http://www.cie.men.gov.pl/index.php/dane-statystyczne/139.html>; access: 01.07.2017)



**Fig. 1.** The number of students with hearing impairment in the school years 2010/2011-2016/2017. (source: own elaboration on the basis of information contained in the Educational Information System, <http://www.cie.men.gov.pl/index.php/dane-statystyczne/139.html>; access: 01.07.2017)

hearing impairment. In the case of children with hearing impairment<sup>16</sup> there is an increase in the number of students in public and integration facilities – in kindergartens, primary schools and lower-secondary schools. In the last seven years, the number is quite high and accounts for, respectively: in the case of public and integration kindergartens – 554 children, in the case of primary schools – 1350 students and 425 in the case of lower-secondary school. The figures

<sup>16</sup> In accordance with the guidelines established by the International Office of Audio-phonology (BIAP), a hearing impaired student is a student with mild or moderate hearing impairment and a deaf student is a child with severe or profound hearing impairment.

also show the downward trend for special education – in the case of kindergartens – by 30 children, special primary schools – by 39, lower-secondary schools – by 100 students.

Graphic representation of figures showing trends in the education of students with mild to moderate hearing impairment is presented in Figure 1 below. In the case of deaf and hard of hearing children with severe and profound hearing impairment, growth tendencies are not as spectacular. There is an increase in the number of children attending public and integration kindergartens (by 92 children), but the growth tendencies are also visible in the case of special kindergartens (the growth in the number of children in the last 7 years is 32). At primary school level, there is a noticeable increase in the number of children educated in public and integration schools – by 246 students, to the disadvantage of special schools (a decline of 210 students in this form of education). It is worth noting that at the level of lower-secondary education, most of the deaf students attend special schools. These differences are clear and during the last seven years have not changed much<sup>17</sup>.

Graphic representation of figures showing trends in the education of students with severe and profound hearing impairment is presented in Figure 2 below.

As emphasized by M. Kupisiewicz (2006), until recently it was thought that the education of children with hearing impairment should be segregated and compensatory. Today, this belief is giving way to inclusive education. This tendency is mainly the result of the demands placed on special education. These include, among other things, the over-protective and protective atmosphere that prevailed in special education centres, restrictions in communication with peers with similar (usually low) level of linguistic development<sup>18</sup>, restrictions in stimulation towards normal development and social

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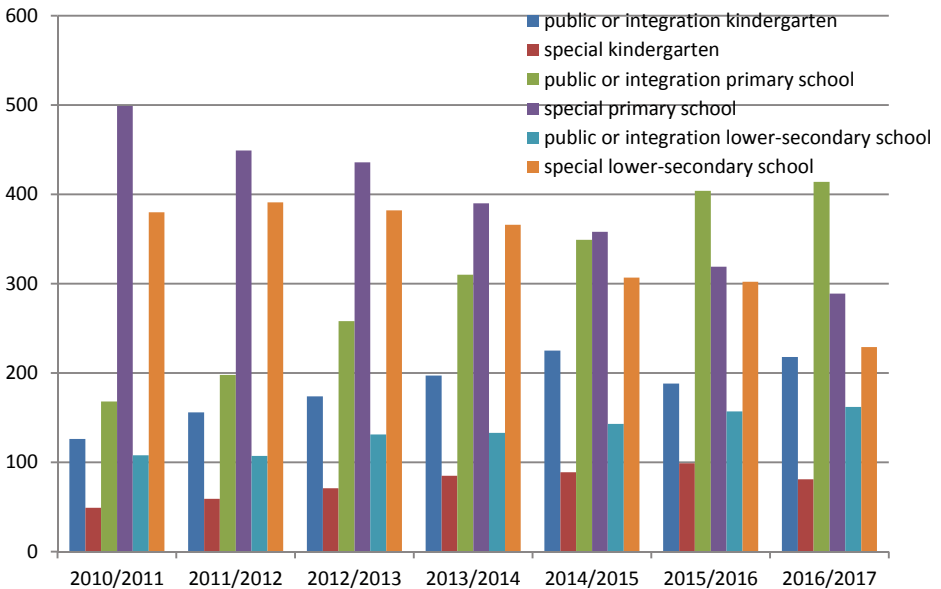
<sup>17</sup> Similar trends in the education of children with hearing impairment are apparent in England, Israel, Australia and the United States. (Powers, 1996; Rower, Hyde, 2002; Zanberg, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Taking into account the fact that about 90% of hearing-impaired children are born in hearing families, this problem is of great importance.

**Table 2.** Number of deaf students in the school years 2010/2011 – 2016/2017

School year	Number of deaf students in:					
	Public or integration kindergarten	Special kindergarten	Public or integration primary school	Special primary school	Public or integration lower-secondary school	Special lower-secondary school
2010/2011	126	49	168	499	108	380
2011/2012	156	59	198	449	107	391
2012/2013	174	71	258	436	131	382
2013/2014	197	85	310	390	133	366
2014/2015	225	89	349	358	143	307
2015/2016	188	99	404	319	157	302
2016/2017	218	81	414	289	162	229

(Source: own elaboration based on information contained in the Educational Information System, <http://www.ci.men.gov.pl/index.php/dane-statystyczne/139.html>; access: 01.07.2017)



**Fig. 2.** Number of deaf students in the school years 2010/2011 – 2016/2017. (source: own elaboration based on information provided in the Educational Information System, <http://www.cie.men.gov.pl/index.php/dane-statystyczne/139.html>; access: 01.07.2017)

adaptation, development of social isolation attitudes. Despite the many difficulties encountered by hearing impaired students attending public schools, it is recognized that this is a desirable form of education. As emphasized by G. Dryżałowska (2015), public district schools are obliged to accept every student in their area. In the case of a hearing impaired students, the obligation to support the education process, especially at the beginning of the popularisation of inclusive forms of education, rested on the family environment, mainly on mothers, who often took the role of a second teacher. According to research (Sakowicz-Boboryko, 2001,2016), parents of children with hearing impairment often encountered difficulties, such as: the lack of appropriate competences of teachers of public

schools<sup>19</sup> to work with deaf children. As the author observes, the success of a student with impaired hearing in public education is the result of the hard and tedious work of the child and parents. As indicated by research, the most important factors determining the success of school children with hearing impairment include: the level of parental education, parental interest in the child's revalidation situation, parents' knowledge of their child's disability, the material status of the family.

As early as the 1970s, Kirejczyk (1970), based on empirical studies, found that teaching children with hearing impairment in public schools gives them the opportunity for optimal development, together with their peers, includes them in a normal environment, shows them that they are not different from people who hear – apart from their hearing impairment. As the author observes, modern teaching and education of students with hearing impairment should be based on integration rather than isolation. The literature on the subject includes numerous reports of empirical research relating to the positive influence of integration on the process of education and training of students with hearing impairment. U. Eckert (2000) mentions significant benefits of educating children with hearing impairment, which include the following:

- preventing the separation of the child from the family home, the environment which is closest to him/her,
- preventing differences between children,

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<sup>19</sup> In 2009, a Leonardo da Vinci project was launched to examine the competence of teachers working with children with hearing impairment in Europe. Research has shown that although there were teachers and people working with deaf people in each of the partner countries, their level of qualifications, knowledge and roles were very different. In some countries, such as Denmark and England, it is mandatory to have specialist qualifications in order to be a teacher of deaf people. In other countries, there is no such requirement and there are no clearly defined criteria concerning the knowledge, skills or the understanding that teachers who specialize in working with children with hearing impairment should have appropriate qualifications. Studies have also shown that there are significant differences across the European Union in accessing the appropriate type of support that should be provided to the child and his/her family (<http://www.batod.org.uk/downloads/leonardo.pdf>, access: 12.2016).

- allowing for contact with peers,
- social development of a student with hearing impairment, development of his or her peer interaction skills,
- motivation to learn verbal speech – increase of the vocabulary and conceptual resources of speech, language development of the child,
- specialized educational care (education of deaf and hard of hearing children), speech therapy and psychological care, taking into account the skills and abilities of the child,
- mobilization and motivation of parents to work with the child.

Today, one of the most important challenges facing special and general pedagogy is the realization of a concept of common, inclusive education of children with hearing impairment with their hearing peers. The success of this form of education for deaf and hard of hearing students depends on many factors, including: those related to the child itself (level of disability), his/her abilities, the attitudes of teachers and peers, the conditions under which the didactic process takes place, the preparation of teachers of public schools to perform revalidation functions (Kupisiewicz, 2006). At present, public schools will face the challenge of adapting to the student, also to the one who has a lower language level than his or her peers. A child with hearing impairment who begins school is usually characterized by a delayed language development. This delay is influenced by many factors, including: the individual characteristics of the student, the time of beginning speech therapy rehabilitation, etc. The bigger the deviation from the developmental standards, the greater the risk of school failure. School success of a student with hearing impairment also depends on the school. It is important to create conditions in which less competent students have the chance to experience success. It is also important for the school to develop conditions to acquire skills, competencies, knowledge, and understanding of the problems which students with hearing impairment face every day (e.g. relations with peers, teachers). Support given to the student in solving these problems has a decisive influence on the attitude of the child to the school (Dryżałowska, 2007).

Inclusive education can create pose organizational, substantive and technical problems. In the case of hearing impaired students, this is usually a barrier to communication, but also problems related to the lack of specialist knowledge of the teachers related to the education of deaf and hard of hearing children. These problems are the main reason for the lack of willingness to accept deaf and hard-of-hearing students in public or integration schools. As a result, it often happens that a student with hearing impairment cannot cope with the requirements and conditions of education in an integrated or public school. Then, after a few months, and sometimes even after a few years, the recommended form of education is reclassified and the child is transferred to a special school (Szczepankowski, 1998). However, the primary benefit of educating children with hearing impairment in a public school is the stimulating environment of their peers, which affects social integration and supports speech and thinking of hearing impaired students. In a public school the student is surrounded by verbal language, he must pay attention to the words that are addressed to him, but he also communicates by means of speech. This allows him to master language more quickly and use the language to gain new knowledge and skills. The main disadvantages include: verbal methods of work, lack of specialist knowledge of teachers who do not know the specificity of the development and learning of students with hearing impairment, and classes with too many students. The latter constitutes an important obstacle to satisfying the student's didactic needs and may be the cause of school failures. Educating a child with hearing impairment requires a strong involvement of parents in school work. Parents cannot limit themselves to helping their child during homework. They often play the role of a second educator, help with catching up on the school curriculum, explain many difficult terms, language phrases to the child, help them in understanding the contents of textbooks (Dryżałowska, 2007). It should be emphasized that the choice of school for the child is a difficult and responsible decision of the parents. There are many factors involved, such as the type of school (public, integration, special), its



location, educational offer, education costs, the competency of teachers working with the child, educational and therapeutic support, and the possibility of contact with peers without disability, but also with other children with disabilities, or the opportunity to exchange experiences with other parents. In the case of children with hearing impairment, the presence of other deaf children is particularly important, as it gives them the possibility to communicate in sign language, although not all parents see this as a benefit, but rather as the „death of verbal speech” – which may cause unreasonable fear of contact with other deaf children and their natural way of communication (Podgórska-Jachnik, 2011).

In the context of educational choices, important socio-cultural aspects should also be taken into account. As the authors of the *Report on the Situation of Deaf People in Poland* underline, the condition for improving the situation of deaf people in Poland is the introduction of bilingual education. In the education of deaf people, this idea is a result of the recognition of the deaf as a linguistic minority. A deaf child must learn the first language – the sign language, and the second step is to teach him/her the language of the majority – the audio language. As the authors emphasize, sign language is the only way to enable a deaf child to meet his/her basic needs (i.e. early communication with parents, cognitive development, knowledge acquisition). The bilingual doctrine works when the environment recognizes sign language as a full-fledged language. In Poland, the Act of 19 August 2011 on sign language and other means of communication (Journal of Laws 2011, No. 209, item 1243) defines sign language (Polish Sign Language – PJM) as the natural visual-spatial language of communication of the persons entitled, without specifying its psycholinguistic status (whether it is the first or second language), although it protects the basic rights of people with hearing impairment to use the services of an interpreter (Podgórska-Jachnik, 2016). However, as indicated by the *Report*, schools for deaf people are not prepared for bilingual education. There are a number of reasons, including: the language competence of the teacher (teachers use the language-sign system, which is not a natural language, but

a type of sign language of the Polish language.) The lack of language competence in the scope of PJM blocks communication between teachers and children, children teaching methodology (no PJM curriculum, no textbooks for bilingual children), teacher qualifications<sup>20</sup> (lack of requirements for teachers, lack of relevant subjects in study curricula), early intervention (concentration only on the development of the audio language)

The significance of the development of the socio-cultural identity of the deaf should also be emphasised. It is extremely important for people with hearing impairment to feel that they are valuable, that they are a driving factor, that they have a reference group that guarantees their identification and security and is a good starting point for shaping an individual identity without neurotic fear. In the case of children and adolescents, it is especially important to have role models of mature deaf adults, who are particularly important in education and provide an example of a courageous creation of their own development paths (Podgórska-Jachnik, 2007).

## Summary

The hearing and language skills of deaf and hard of hearing children, which have changed in recent years, indicate a new era in education and therapeutic practice in this population. The benefits include: hearing screening, early development support programs, technology development, and educational assumptions that include

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<sup>20</sup> According to M. Czajkowska-Kisil and A. Klimczewska (2007), there are few teachers in schools for the deaf who are familiar with the natural sign language, therefore a teacher with knowledge of PJM enjoys great authority among children because of the possibility of natural communication. According to D. Podgórska-Jachnik (2011), a teacher with hearing impairment: understands the situation of a deaf student, may be an excellent model of natural sign language, may be a role model of raising the level of educational aspirations of deaf students, offers the opportunity to develop the understanding of able children of other people, who are different because of their disability; weakens the fear of otherness and deafness.

the vast majority of hearing impaired children and the possibility to provide education in public and integration schools. We should not forget about the socio-cultural and emancipatory aspects in the education of deaf people, and, first of all, about sign language as an alternative to teaching in audio language, as well as bilingual education, which the deaf people strongly support in Poland.

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