

Preface

This next volume of *Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Education* is a collection of articles addressing child issues in early care and education systems, child's distinctness arising from its disability, stress and parental crisis, as well as the issues of children with autism spectrum disorder and Asperger syndrome. This publication is a response to already initiated legal and organisational actions. Discussed issues can serve as an inspiration for planning and implementing activities supporting optimal development of a child and providing support for its family.

The paper opens with the article by Katarzyna Ćwirynkało and Urszula Bartnikowska on how adoptive and foster parents discover distinctness of the child caused by its disability. As the authors point out, the confrontation with the distinctness of the child can affect both biological parents, as well as adoptive and foster parents. Many common elements can be found between them, as it can be assumed that in their majority they share similar parental experiences. The empirical part of the text is an interesting analysis of the results of qualitative research conducted with parents from 20 adoptive and foster families who raise a child with a disability. The analysis of the interviews shows the ways of discovering the distinctness of the child, accepting this distinctness, and the meaning assigned to it.

There are many interesting solutions that can be found in the Polish care system for impaired children. However, due to the lack

of consistency in the management of individual types of childcare facilities for young children, some of these solutions cannot be fully implemented. This problem is related to the system of nurseries and early child development support, as noted by Anna Mikler-Chwaszek. The author emphasizes that in the case of any diagnosis or suspicion of any developmental disorder in the child, it is worthwhile to undertake, as soon as possible, multifaceted actions in order to support this child's development. This will not only improve the existing condition, but may also contribute to reduction or even elimination of problems that may have consequences in the future. Many disorders have a tendency to worsen with age, so the sooner the child is treated, the greater the chance is for it to avoid many difficulties.

The issue of the crisis affecting parents of children with disabilities in the perspective of new standardisation tools is addressed in the article by Joanna Doroszuk. The author points out that social and cultural changes determine the functioning of families of children with disabilities. Internet, support groups or associations are the new normalisation tools that parents can use. They can influence both the construction of their parenting and their capability to deal with difficult situations. The author analyses the social and emotional situation of parents of children with disabilities based on her research. She also indicates significant categories and areas relevant for further scientific exploration.

Another article by Barbara Winczura focuses on the very important issue of the development of social relations in children with autism spectrum disorder in contacts with their relatives. The author presents the development profile of social relations of young children with autism in contacts with their close ones and analyses the conditions of the attachment in the child-parent relationship in this group of disorders. As pointed out by B. Winczura, almost half of all people with autism participate in various forms of social life, although their profiles of social-emotional deficits remain highly varied. Impairment of the social sphere in this population includes limited capability and ability to recognise, understand and engage in contact with other people and in interpersonal communication.

Parents / guardians become the first observers of disturbing behaviours of the child, but also the first initiators of establishing close relationships with their offspring.

The article by Aneta Wojciechowska and Anna Gulczyńska presents the results of a pilot study on sexual behaviour of children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder in their mothers' opinions. In the first place, the authors presented the theoretical background, based on which the research methodology was designed. Then they described in detail the results, the discussion and the conclusions possible at this stage of the research. The respondents were 38 mothers who completed questionnaire surveys indicating both the type and frequency of sexual behaviours observed in their children or adolescents.

An extremely important issue concerning the stress of mothers of children with autism was presented in the article by Anna Banaśiak. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of parental stress experienced by mothers of children with autism. The study involved 39 mothers of children with autism, 40 mothers of children with Down syndrome and as many mothers of children developing properly. The results indicate higher level of parental stress in mothers of children with autism than in mothers with Down syndrome and mothers of well developing children. Potential sources of strength for coping with stress in mothers of autistic children are related, as emphasised by the author of the text, to relatively low stress resulting from family disharmony, personal burdens, child health and financial problems. The research presented in the article by Mieczysław Dudek, dealing with the stress of parents of autistic children, complements this issue. As the author points out, the appearance of a disabled child in the family is always a source of tremendous stress. This problem is particularly evident in case of a child with autism because of its unpredictable and non-typical development. The subject of this study was to investigate ways to cope with stress among 130 parents of children with autism.

The specifics of verbal and nonverbal communication of a child with Asperger syndrome in the context of his role as a student and

colleague was discussed by Ewa Gacka. The author emphasises that communication is one of the most important elements of human existence, since human as a social being strives to communicate with others. Communication skills affect, amongst others, the level of acceptance of the person by the rest of the community, they contribute to succeeding in various aspects of life and fulfilling social roles. The article focuses on the analysis of communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal, of a child with Asperger syndrome (AS) as well as on showing the specific ways of communication of a person with Asperger syndrome, that hinder finding themselves in school community.

In the next article, Małgorzata Moszyńska presented conclusions of the study on school environment in narratives of students with Asperger syndrome. This article deals with the social functioning of a student with diagnosed Asperger Syndrome in a mainstream school environment, in his subjective assessment. The article is embedded in the framework of qualitative research, and the purpose of the research was to reach the subjective meanings that students with Asperger's assign to this institution and to understand what school is for them.

Interesting analyses are presented in Rita Khoury's research on the mothers of children with Tourette syndrome. The purpose of the study was to collect data from mothers of children with Tourette syndrome (TS) to determine to what extent the existence of a TS child in a family influenced the quality of its mother's life. The study involved 50 mothers of TS children. The results show that the lack of reliable and comprehensive diagnosis and information can lead mothers to high levels of stress, discomfort and lack of balance.

The paper concludes with reports from conferences (19th National Scientific and Educational Conference 'Speech Therapy. Practices in Speech Disorders', 30 June – 2 July 2017, Lublin, Poland and 3rd International Scientific Conference 'Child and Teacher in the World of Media) and a review of a scientific publication.

Editor
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