

# Henryk Cudak

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## The importance of educational culture of parents in children's social adjustment

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Henryk Cudak  
Academy of Management in Lodz, Poland

## **The importance of educational culture of parents in children's social adjustment**

### **1. Introduction**

A family constitutes the social environment which may be characterized by the optimal conditions to provide values, norms of behaviour, general culture, social adaptation of human groups for their children. As Z. Tyszka (2003) rightly argues, a family in the opinion of Polish society occupies a leading position in the hierarchy of values. Despite such a high place, a modern family as a member community and an educational institution experiences various crisis situations that may interfere with development as well as emotional, social and axiological spheres of children and adolescents.

Behavioural problems, social dysfunctions of family and children lie in the microstructure of the family and the surrounding environment and they result mainly from low-pedagogical culture of their parents. The elements of family life that undermine parents' educational awareness level are: a lack of pedagogical knowledge of parents on upbringing and development of children, too poor ability to proper organization of family life, lack of educational - caring skills, limited responsibility of parents for upbringing and socialization of their children (Cudak, 2011).

The daily interactions of family life are usually spontaneous, involuntary, purposeless and unplanned - they come without teaching thought of their parents. Hence, they may interfere with normal behaviour, they may devalue the values of social and family life, and they may surpass the accepted positive role models of cooperation in social groups. Unconscious parental actions can cause dysfunctions in the family, which result in emotional, social and moral hazards. These negative social phenomena are accompanied with conflicts, verbal aggression, physical and psychological violence, stress as well as tense and nervous atmosphere of home life. This state of family dysfunction, which is often on the verge of social pathology, directly contributes to the educational, caring and socialization risks of children and adolescents.

## **2. Dysfunctional behaviour of children and adolescents and their family circumstances**

The phenomenon of social pathology and behavioural dysfunction in children and adolescents can be more clearly seen in the various peer groups, at school, local and family environment. Their negative behaviours evoke more or less social damages causing emotional, functional and axiological threats in structures of human life.

As a rule, these malfunctions in social behaviours are accompanied by active conflicts, pathologies, an aggression in interpersonal interactions, violence against vulnerable individuals and groups of youth, hatred and hostility towards others, a lack of internal control, self-awareness and understanding in the local, school and peers' community. Dysfunctions in behaviours of children and adolescents can be defined as negative attitudes towards the system of individuals, social groups, society, approval of values and patterns of behaviour, recognized in the community as illegal behaviour and designed to encourage anti-social conduct of individuals causing damage and harm to another person, a peer group or a family.

The severity of educational dysfunction or social pathology in children and adolescents may occur in the form of:

- a slight degree of disturbances in behaviour,
- a significant level of severity of pathology in social behaviour.

The first form – slight degree – of behavioural dysfunction is manifested in individual disturbed emotional and social behaviour towards other people that surpass the accepted principles of culture and norms in interpersonal interactions. These behaviours cause low social harm, not settled yet. Therefore, they can be corrected and eliminated both in the local, school and in family community.

In case of significant increase of social pathology, the youth manifests negative behaviours with a high frequency. These behaviours are already well established and they disrupt the functioning of social groups, prevent a social, psychological and moral intercourse with other people or groups, neglect knowingly norms and interpersonal values, thus causing conflicts with the environment, mental pain and suffering in the social circles (Pytka, 1995). This group of educational dysfunctions in children is more difficult to eliminate, as the emotional sphere and child's will as well as personality traits that enslave their social environment in which they live are often disrupted. The environment, to some extent, concedes the behaviours that are negative and inconsistent with social norms, because features of dysfunction or social pathology of children and adolescents have evolved and developed in this environment.

Among children from primary school educational dysfunctions are usually reversible; they have not taken the forms of social pathology in the form of persistent and frequent phenomena of theft, robbery, crime, alcoholism or drug

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addiction yet. Typically, these disturbances in behaviours take the form of light social dysfunctions; however, this does not mean that the family environment or the school may underestimate them. If children who are observed with the initial phase of dysfunction in the behaviour are not subjected to educational interactions, in a deliberate and conscious way in good time, their parents will not respond to moral and axiological offenses, accepted social norms. Then, the pathological risks will strengthen, deepen and spread, becoming more and more dangerous to the social environment. Eliminating these dysfunctional risks is becoming a problem for both the parents who often cannot manage the upbringing of their children, and for the school which does not provide rehabilitation with educationally beneficial effects.

Among the various determinants that may be the source of pathological behaviours in children (school, peer group, the local environment, family), the family is the most important environmental contributor to the formation and development of social dysfunction. S. Cudak (2009) rightly argues that the greatest influence on the formation of negative behaviours, attitudes towards social norms, human values are attributed to the family. A shortfall of family life and a conflict atmosphere of home functioning constitute main causes of educational dysfunction in children.

L. Pytka (1995) distinguished the following negative environmental elements from the determinants of family:

- a family breakdown which is a sign of an unfavorable married life of parents,
- no positive pedagogical effect in a family environment,
- a lack of interest and care for the child,
- the negative influence exerted by parents, fights, aggression, violence, alcoholism where a child is a witness,
- emotional rejection by parents.

On the basis of a family environment research, H. Cudak (2011) lists at least five factors that cause educational dysfunction and social pathology of children inherent in the family. These are:

- a negative mental attitude of parents towards their child. There is a strong correlation here between emotional rejection, mostly by mother, and dysfunction in behaviour in the family and beyond the family.
- An inconsistency in parental interactions in relation to different and often inappropriate child behaviours.
- The use of educational methods in the family in a form of extortion, beatings, violence, sharp and open conflicts and brutal treatment of the child.
- Conveyance of dysfunctional and pathological pattern of behaviour of parents in a family environment.

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- Indifference of one or both parents to the developmental, parental, unusual and educational problems of the child.

Despite these factors of family environment that are quite important in shaping the behaviour of parental dysfunction in a child, there are also other ones that have a disturbing impact on their proper emotional and social development. These are: the negative situations of family life in spheres: emotional, axiological and socialization in the form of disregard of social norms and behavioural patterns in interpersonal interaction by parents in the presence of children, loosening or lack of emotional ties in a family environment, addiction of parents or one of them to alcohol or drugs, adopting a system of values that are rejected by most of the families and the teleology of social functioning as well as traumatic, unfriendly and nervous atmosphere of home life.

Behaviours or actions undertaken by parents that are on the verge of social pathology are usually in the form of objective dysfunctional parental behaviours directed at the child in daily negative interactions without the subjective intentions of doing harm to their children. Parents with no educational and pedagogical reflection expressing dysfunctional behaviours think that they proceed duly. This functional system on the verge of social pathology is recognised by them as the system of interaction and socialization and caring and emotional activities towards children in a family environment.

While analyzing the behaviour of children and adolescents with educational dysfunction and social pathology, K. Pospiszyl (1995) in his classification identified three types: criminal behaviour, neurotic behaviour, psychopathic behaviour. Criminal behaviours are defined here based on proven deviation from accepted legal norms, while the neurotic and psychopathic behaviours are evaluated in terms of the deviation from the so-called mental standards. K. Pospiszyl omits an important category of negative behaviours of children with symptoms of social pathology which constitute a deviation from the social norms accepted by the general public. These pathological social behaviours include: routine lies in the social environment, conflicts with peers, at school and with family, escape from home, truancy, alcohol abuse, aggressive behaviour in interpersonal interactions, destruction of public property, denial of pro-social values.

The phenomenon of social pathology among children and adolescents is rising. Efforts undertaken by the school and other educational institutions concerning the elimination of educational problems in children, their behavioural pathology and social maladjustment are often ineffective. A lack of efficiency and effectiveness in the implemented social prevention among young people being on the verge of social pathology stems from the fact that children and adolescents with educational dysfunction stay in the family environment, which was the cause and the source of the formation and development of the disorder in behaviour and

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adaptation to social life. A family environment for those children affects, often negatively, without a pedagogical reflection, with low parental awareness, having no knowledge of educational methods, means and goals as well as developmental periods of children and adolescents. Patterns of parental actions are often radically far from caring and pedagogical principles acclaimed in normally functioning families. Negative patterns of parental behaviours are revealed mainly in the form of conflicts, parental aggression, traumatic atmosphere at home, lies, and inconsistencies in the actions of parents, the negative social and emotional relations between family members. Satisfying psychological and social needs of children by their parents manifests multiple deficiencies, shortcomings and defects. A responsibility for upbringing, health, culture of behaviour, education, parents shift onto schools and educational and cultural institutions. In this way they have no caring and educational obligations as well as parental responsibility for the fate and development of their children. In family environment children with educational dysfunction are more often punished than rewarded. The penalties applied by their father or mother are usually non-educational in the form of beatings, humiliation of their dignity, anger and insults to the child, constant name-calling and ridiculing them. Children with behaviours of social pathology are not supported by their parents in the educational, social and emotional areas and therefore they often feel the loneliness in their family. There is a lack of emotional relationships in social relations with their parents.

Described unsettled elements of the pedagogical culture of the family environment cause rise, development and strengthening of social pathology in children.

### **3. The need for improvement of the culture of education in the social adjustment of children**

In the process of upbringing a child a special role is attributed to the family environment, because the family is the first educational and most important environment for them, as it emotionally influences his or her personality. Any disorder of education, care, socialization and emotion taking place in the family, threatens the social adaptation of the child, causing dysfunctions in family and beyond family behaviours.

The process of social adjustment of adolescents is possible in a situation of change in the current family environment interactions. These changes must relate to the views, attitudes, methods, and emotional and social relations of parents with their child. Parents must consider their parental actions, their home atmosphere, how to reward and punish and also how to satisfy the psychological and social needs of the child. These considerations should be combined with the need to improve parents' knowledge on the child, sensitivity to his or her emotional needs,

increased responsibility for the fate of the child and creation of friendly educational atmosphere. Improving family environment will eliminate the intuitive and random parental actions, often threatened with contemporary problems of social and economic life. It will take the form of conscious and deliberate childcare actions.

Obtaining elements of pedagogical culture, which will be concealed in educational awareness of the parents, takes place through versatile acquiring of educational and psychological knowledge concerning educational role of the family, creation of emotional and social conditions for optimal development of the child and active cooperation with the school and his or her form – master. Increased educational awareness of parents and their responsibility for the family environment, especially the children functioning in this environment contribute to the change of attitudes, views, emotional relationships and methods of dealing with a child. A process of social adaptation of children and adolescents will occur if there is a change in parental awareness resulting from the improvement of pedagogical culture of their parents. The elements of this educational culture are in the form of characteristics of family environment, such as the atmosphere of family life, benevolent parental attitudes, sensitivity to the needs of children and skillful educational influences (Cudak, 2010).

The atmosphere of home life is determined by the personal characteristics of parents, the emotional relationships between its members and all the conditions of family life. Children's social adjustment can take place in a friendly, creative, warm, loving and understanding atmosphere and mutual cooperation in the family community. A nice and warm family atmosphere leads to a creation of optimal conditions in a family environment in which the process of social learning of values and norms of behaviour by children proceeds. Kind and full of feelings relationships between parents may affect the educational process in the family. They form the optimal relationships between parents and children. Adolescents with emotional and social dysfunctions, in an environment in which there is a beneficial and warm atmosphere, can share their joys and successes, eliminate difficulties and worries. These situations bring mental balance, stimulate social development also in children with educational difficulties and social risks.

An important element of the pedagogical culture are the views of parents on upbringing and child development as well as appropriate parental attitudes expressed in the family. They determine the behaviour of parents towards the child, his or her acceptance, love and appreciation. In families in which the expression of parental attitudes is appropriate, a process of social adaptation of children and adolescents occurs, because they feel safe and self-confident in the family environment. Then, a trust of a child to his parents changes; the child acts freely, is active and emotionally balanced in undertaken actions. Appropriate interactions

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between parents and children, expressed in a positive parental attitudes optimize the effectiveness of family upbringing and enhance the emotional ties between members of the family. A warm-hearted attitude of maternity towards their children and full acceptance in the attitudes of paternity decide about the creation of positive personality traits, even in adolescents with educational dysfunction.

Educational skills of parents constitute important elements of teaching. They include a particular actual impact of education used by parents, that is mainly applied educational methods (rewards and punishments), an interaction with schools and the conscious creation of educational situation for the child (Ruszkiewicz, 2006). A use by parents - with full reflection – of educational rewards, including emotional rewards, eliminating the environmental impacts of parental punishment that humiliate the dignity of the child may optimize his or her personal development, improve social and emotional relationships with parents and create close emotional bonds in a family environment (Świdarska, 2011). A deliberate creation of educational situations provides children with positive social experiences, communicates socially beneficial ideas and norms of behaviour that can overvalue existing pathological behaviour of adolescents.

Satisfaction of children needs, especially mental and social, are among the elements of pedagogical culture. Parents should first recognize the needs of their children and then with the full knowledge should satisfy them. Significant psychosocial needs of children include a need for love, acceptance, kindness, social contact, activity and safety. A rational satisfaction of their needs stimulates a child's development, eliminates their problems of education and even social pathologies as parental love and continuous warm physical and emotional contact in the family community consolidate emotional closeness to each other, kindness, emotional understanding of each other, establishing positive relationships in a family environment.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Parents and even professional teachers – in a form of masters in educational institutions are not aware of a distressing trend of the growth of emotional and educational dysfunction and social pathology among children and adolescents. Unnoticed in an appropriate time, educational problems in children cause intensification of symptoms of behavioural pathology, disregard for social norms, adopting their own - often negative - values of life. They become a threat to the family, local community and contribute to the disorder of adaptation in social groups and global society.

The notion that a family in the education of children satisfies the most important role constitutes an assumption of modern pedagogy as well as state ideology. It is responsible for the care, socialization and preparing young people

for life in society. Such a thesis – its rightness should be recognized – must lead ultimately to the preparation of adolescents as potential future parents and their current parents to the proper performance of duties and tasks of parenting, educational organizations and the creation of emotional ties in the family community. Only parents aware of upbringing a child, with a high pedagogical culture, on the one hand may create the system of desired and beneficial parental actions in order to optimize development, social adaptation, education and the fate of their children. On the other hand, parents adequately prepared to live in a family community, their knowledge of the childcare and necessity of creating friendly atmosphere of home life may be the factors of family environment which will eliminate educational problems and even social pathology of children. These family situations will certainly be beneficial to the process of social adaptation of adolescents.

### **Znaczenie kultury wychowawczej rodziców w przystosowaniu społecznym dzieci**

#### **Streszczenie**

Problemy wychowawcze, dysfunkcje społeczne rodziny i dzieci tkwią w mikrostrukturze rodzinnej i otaczającym środowisku i wynikają one najczęściej z niskiej kultury pedagogicznej rodziców. Elementami życia rodzinnego, które osłabiają poziom świadomości wychowawczej rodziców jest brak wiedzy pedagogicznej rodziców o wychowaniu i rozwoju dzieci, zbyt mała umiejętność właściwej organizacji życia rodzinnego, brak umiejętności wychowawczo-opiekuńczych, ograniczona odpowiedzialność rodziców za wychowanie i socjalizację dzieci.

Codziennie interakcje w życiu rodzinnym są z reguły spontaniczne, mimowolne, niecelowe, nieplanowane – przebiegają one bez refleksji pedagogicznych rodziców. Stąd też mogą one zaburzać normy zachowań, dewaluować wartości życia społecznego, rodzinnego, wykraczać poza przyjęte pozytywne wzory współdziałania w grupach społecznych. Nieświadome działania rodzicielskie mogą powodować dysfunkcje w rodzinie, których konsekwencją są zagrożenia emocjonalne, socjalizacyjne, moralne. Tym negatywnym zjawiskom społecznym towarzyszą konflikty, agresja werbalna, przemoc fizyczna i psychiczna, stresy, napięcia i nerwowa atmosfera życia domowego. Stan takiej dysfunkcyjności rodziny, która graniczy często z patologią społeczną w sposób bezpośredni przyczynia się do zagrożeń wychowawczych, opiekuńczych i socjalizacyjnych dzieci i młodzieży.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rodzina, kultura wychowawcza rodziców, przystosowanie społeczne dzieci.

**Keywords:** Family, educational culture of parents, children's social adjustment.

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