

Urszula Dudziak¹
Instytut Nauk Teologicznych
Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II

Developmental Needs of Small Children. Threats and Potential Consequences of Transferring Children to Nursery

[Potrzeby rozwojowe małych dzieci. Zagrożenia i potencjalne konsekwencje oddawania dzieci do żłobka]

Streszczenie: Nieodzowną dla prawidłowego rozwoju potrzebą dziecka jest miłość wyrażana poprzez bliskość rodzica, troskliwą opiekę i kontakt umożliwiający nawiązanie więzi. Potrzeby gospodarcze społeczeństwa, rozwój kariery zawodowej rodziców, starania o podwyższenie standardu finansowego rodziny, brak cierpliwości dla własnych dzieci i nieznamość zasad postępowania opiekuńczo-wychowawczego skłaniają wiele osób do oddawania dzieci do żłobka. Politycy prześcigają się we wskazywaniu rosnącej liczby takich placówek i funduszy łożonych na ich utrzymanie. Pojawia się jednak pytanie czy rozłąka idących do pracy rodziców i oddawanych do żłobka dzieci wpływa korzystnie na ich procesy rozwojowe? Czy praktyka ta jest wyrazem rodzicielskiej troski, czy też świadomą lub nieświadomą krzywdą młodego pokolenia? Na co zwracają uwagę osoby, którym zależy na rzeczywistym dobru dziecka i na stworzeniu mu jak najlepszych warunków rozwoju? Co w związku z tym należy robić, by pierwsze etapy życia dziecka były jak najwłaściwsze, stanowiąc fundament kształtowania prawidłowych postaw w przyszłości. Artykuł oparty jest na przeglądzie zarówno teoretycznych, jak i empirycznych publikacji uzasadniających przedstawione wnioski i postulaty.

Summary: A child's proper development requires love expressed through close parental care and contact that allows for the establishment of bonds. Many parents place their children in a day nursery due to the economic needs of society, their career development, the desire to increase the family's financial standard, impatience with their own children, ignorance of the rules of care and upbringing, and the belief that professional educators can perform educational tasks better. Politicians compete to highlight the growing number of such facilities and funds allocated for their

¹ Urszula Dudziak, Katedra Nauk o Rodzinie, Instytut Nauk Teologicznych, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, al. Raclawickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Polska, urszula.dudziak@kul.pl, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5144-7708>.

maintenance. However, it is questionable whether separating parents who go to work and children who are placed in a day nursery has a positive effect on the children's development process. Is this practice an expression of parental care, or does it cause conscious or unconscious harm to the younger generation? What do people who care about the child's best interest focus on, and how can they create the best conditions for their development? What steps can be taken to make the initial stages of a child's life as appropriate as possible, considering it is the foundation of shaping proper attitudes in the future? This article is based on a review of both theoretical and empirical publications, which supports the presented conclusions and postulates.

Słowa kluczowe: potrzeby dziecka, rola rodziców, wzrost liczby żłobków, skutki opieki żłobkowej.

Keywords: child's needs, role of parents, increase in the number of nurseries, the effects of nursery care.

Introduction

The increase in the number of day nurseries and the demand for more of them, the self-congratulatory statements by politicians about opening more childcare facilities, and the growing tendency to place children in day nurseries so that mothers can return to work more quickly, all call for an examination of children's welfare. To evaluate the situation effectively, it is crucial to consider not only the economic aspect or so-called political correctness, but most importantly, the developmental requirements of young children, the reasons why adults enrol their children in the day nursery, the possible effects of early separation of children from their parents, and the familial guidance that is useful to the family.

Dilemmas of „what to do with a young child” are faced by: single mothers, members of families experiencing addictions and domestic violence, women fearing job loss and difficulties in their further professional careers. Publications about the positive impact of nursery care, e.g., on cognitive, emotional, and social development, are also a factor complicating the decision to leave a child at home (Andersson B.E., 1992, pp. 20–36; Caughy O'Brien M., Dipietro J., Strobino D.M., 1994, pp. 457–471; Thompson R., 2021, pp. 9–36).

The motives for placing children in nurseries are usually: the possibility of returning to work; career continuation; earnings; single motherhood and lack of help from others in childcare; harmful conditions for child development in a dysfunctional family; suggestion from people claiming that professional care brings greater benefits to children than staying at home with the mother; the belief that a child in nursery better develops social skills, learns to cooperate with peers, and gains new experiences. It is worth analyzing

such arguments and understanding the drawbacks of an inappropriate decision.

The issues addressed in this article are intended to help answer the questions: Does placing children in nurseries help their development or harm them? Does it serve to meet developmental needs, or does it pose a threat to development? Is it genuine care for children, or is it causing them harm? The aim of this publication is to highlight the developmental needs of young children and the potential consequences of placing children in nurseries. It is important that entrusting childcare to institutions should not be a common automatism, nor an action justified by the projection that „others do it too”. Making such an important decision should be preceded by acquiring knowledge that allows for consideration of the adults’ assumed gains and potential losses. After all, the gain for adults (such as professional success, time for oneself) does not always become a benefit for children. The article provides information about the risks and possible consequences of placing children in nurseries. Having this knowledge may prove helpful in making a responsible decision on this matter.

The characterization of the issue known as „nursery-ization” presented here is based on publications by psychologists, theologians, pedagogues, and parents sharing their own life experiences. Based on theoretical considerations, pedagogical research and a psychological analysis of the development of the capacity to love, the paper presents valid conclusions which enable adults to make the right choices. Its core lies in parents’ genuine concern for their offspring, who represent the future of the nation. This concern should also include the prevention of anything that might pose a risk to children’s development. The familiological postulates formulated in the final part of the text can provide support for decisions made by parents.. They can also be a useful material in the educational process of future psychologists, educationalists, theologians, political scientists and parents.

Infant Developmental Needs

The vocation of marriage is not only to express, strengthen and deepen the mutual love that unites a man and a woman, but also to transmit life to the succeeding generation. *Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it* (Genesis 1: 28). By adopting the right attitude towards themselves, their future children and society as a whole, spouses fulfil their duty of *responsible parenthood* (Paul VI 1968, HV 10). The term refers to parenthood that is well-informed, competent, freely chosen, and ready.

Couples should choose the most suitable time to conceive a child. From the very beginning, they should provide the child with a sense of safety through their tender and selfless love. The encyclical *Humanae Vitae* states that the proper execution of the procreative task requires considering multiple partial aspects such as „biological, psychological, demographic and sociological ones”, as well as „the complete human being and their entire vocation, which encompasses not only the natural and temporal realm but also the supernatural and eternal dimensions” (Paul VI 1968, HV 7). The role of parents goes beyond the provision of basic necessities of life, such as food, drink, clothing, hygiene products and toys, and includes responsibility for the psychological, spiritual and social welfare of the child, which can be seen as a form of upbringing².

Sociologist Franciszek Adamski posits that the family expands itself and society through the birth of new members, rather than by accepting individuals from outside (Adamski F., 2004, 104–105). „Every human being comes into existence through the love of their parents, who invite them from their first home, the mother’s womb, into the wider family community and human society. The reception of love and care in the family home creates optimal conditions for the development of the child and at the same time provides the fundamental basis for their education and upbringing” (Dudziak U., 2007, p. 102). According to *The Charter on the Rights of the Family*, parents are recognized as „the primary educators of their children” and are responsible for ensuring that institutions do not take over their assigned tasks or replace them. The role of institutions is to support families, not supplant them. During the first months and years of life, a child is unable to establish deep relationships with many people simultaneously and requires attachment to those closest to them³. The child requires

² In the Catholic Church the issue of raising children is addressed both in the Rite of the Sacrament of Matrimony and in the Rite of the Sacrament of Baptism. As evidenced by the priest’s dialogue with the future spouses: „Do you wish to raise the children that God will bestow on you with love and in accordance with the Catholic tradition?” „We do”. *Obrzędy Sakramentu Małżeństwa dostosowane do zwyczajów diecezji polskich* [The Rites of the Sacrament of Matrimony Adapted to the Customs of the Polish Dioceses (p. 29)], (2007), Księgarnia Św. Jacka, Katowice. The responsibility to raise their children in faith is implied in the words of parents who seek Baptism for them: „By requesting Baptism for your children, you assume the duty of teaching them to love God and their neighbours by following God’s commandments, as instructed by Jesus Christ [...]. Ensure that they are raised in a way that shields their divine life from the contamination of sin and allows their development to continue”. *Obrzędy Chrztu dzieci dostosowane do zwyczajów diecezji polskich* [Rites of Baptism of Children adapted to the customs of Polish dioceses (pp. 49–50)], (2005), Księgarnia Św. Jacka, Katowice.

³ The child demonstrates a need for a bond with their mother, a desire for closeness, and the urge to be with the person they love. The child reaches out their arms, hugs, and expresses a desire to „always be with their mother”, in: M. Braun-Gałkowska (1994), W tę samą stronę. *Książka dla nauczycieli o wychowaniu i lekcjach wychowawczych* [Facing the Same Direction. A Book for

a constant and undivided attention from a caregiver who is by their side. Typically, the primary caregiver and source of constant attention for an infant is the available mother, who breastfeeds the baby for their first year of life.

Besides providing nutrients and biological immune bodies, natural breastfeeding is an opportunity to establish a particularly close relationship (Karpienia M., 2021, pp. 11–12). The new-born can hear the mother's heartbeat (a sound familiar from the prenatal period), can feel the warmth and the unique scent of her skin, can be touched, cuddled, and notices and exchanges glances. Such situations lead to the inception of verbal and non-verbal interactions, and further provide an opportunity to form a deeper bond. It is highly important that parents provide their children with the experience of closeness to a loving person to foster their development. The *Lactation Guide [Poradnik laktacyjny]* by specialists at Holy Family Hospital in Warsaw emphasizes that „breastfeeding is a unique way of communication” between mother and child and her milk is „the healthiest method to nourish a new-born” (Łodykowska E. and Bienkowska S., 2017). The authors enumerate the immediate and long-term benefits of breastfeeding for babies. The former include:

- „stimulation of the maturation and motor development of the gastrointestinal tract,
- adaptation of the composition and quantity of maternal food to the needs and capabilities of the new-born,
- immune protection reducing the risk of bacterial and viral infections,
- reduction in the incidence of diseases of the digestive system, reduced incidence of gastrointestinal diseases, respiratory diseases, urinary diseases, otitis media, meningitis, allergies,
- reduced risk of infections and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS),
- satisfaction of emotional needs, strengthening the baby's immune system against painful medical procedures, reduction of stress due to the mother's closeness”.

Long-term benefits include:

- „reduction of the risk of overweight, obesity, asthma, type I and II diabetes, malignant granuloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, hypercholesterolemia, hypertension,
- protection against speech and bite defects (exercising the facial and oral muscles while suckling at the breast),

Teachers on Upbringing and Form Periods (p. 106)]. Krupski i S-ka, Warsaw; M. Braun-Gałkowska (1994), W tę samą stronę. Antologia tekstów dla nauczycieli i uczniów do lekcji wychowawczych [Facing the Same Direction. A Collection of Texts for Teachers and Students for Form Periods (p. 53)], Krupski i S-ka, Warsaw.

- ensuring optimal psychomotor, intellectual and social development,
- better development of cognitive functions – higher scores in intelligence tests” (Łodykowska E., and Bieńkowska S., 2017).

The list of values presented for breastfeeding is so extensive that it alone is a compelling argument for a mother to stay at home with her child. Placing infants in day nurseries deprives them not only of their mother’s milk but also emotional proximity, which is essential during their early years. Mother’s presence provides children with a sense of safety, which serves as the foundation for their further development. This aspect is of specific significance in the formation of humanity, which is primarily characterised by its capacity for love. As stated by the familial author, Debbie Pearl, the provision of mere care, including food, clean water, space for exercise and treatment-known in animal husbandry is insufficient for children. „If you get up in a hurry in the morning and rush to take your little one to a stranger to wipe their tears, serve them lunch and read them a book, please don’t call yourself a mother. Such a child is ‘adopted’ every day with the added harm of being passed from one adoptive mother to another” (Pearl D., 2009, p. 236).

The fundamental need of a child, which should be met by their parents, is – as Ross Campbell wrote – expressing love through eye contact, physical contact, and focused attention. When parents pay focused attention, children feel loved, unique, and important to parents, interested, valued and cared for (Cambell R., 1990, p. 61). The child needs moments of undivided attention, where they feel like they are with only their mum or dad, and that they are *the most important person* in the parent’s world. According to Ross Campbell, the manner in which directed attention need is fulfilled „has an impact on how the child perceives themselves and how they are accepted in their surroundings. The absence of focused attention leads the child to believe that everything else is more important than they are which consequently results in a sense of low self-esteem. This leads to the child feeling insecure, and their emotional and mental development may become abnormal” (Cambell R., 1990, p. 66). Despite having a large family and busy schedules, it remains crucial for the father and mother to spend dedicated one-on-one time with each child. A shortage of parental attention can result in a child feeling neglected and unloved, despite the parents’ affection, provision, and material gifts such as sweets and toys. Ross Campbell argues that giving targeted attention to a child is „the most effective investment in their future development and keeping their emotional reservoir full” (Cambell R., 1990, 71).

The emotional development of a child, who receives love and a sense of safety from a parent, is an important factor that should not be ignored.

Rejecting this argument would be imprudent and harmful to the child's welfare. An open letter, dated November 15, 2018, addressed to the Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and the MPs and Senators of the Republic of Poland was signed by professors of pedagogy, psychology, paediatrics and child psychiatry. The letter addressed the subject of childcare for children under the age of 3 and emphasised the critical importance of „the early childhood period for the development of every individual. The quality of experience during this period has a direct impact on an individual's future functioning in life” (*List otwarty* [Open letter] e-kai 2023). The authors of the letter stressed that the proximity and a secure bond with a known and beloved person provide „the basis for the child's self-awareness and perception of the world. This foundation can foster an eagerness to explore the environment, acquire knowledge and eventually participate in social life. It can also shape their adult family relationships” (*List otwarty* [Open letter] e-kai 2023).

One of the most remarkable human abilities is the capacity to love, as evidenced by the need to both love and be loved. Developing and improving this capacity is important. It is associated with stages of development, from infancy to adulthood (Dudziak U., 2007, pp. 123–138). Nurturing relationships with caring and affectionate individuals can foster the capacity to love. To fully understand love, an individual must experience it through encounters with others⁴, life experiences, and by learning how to express and demonstrate it in various ways. The development of the capacity to love starts at birth and continues until the age of three. The next stage covers the pre-school and early school years up to the age of 10. During this earliest period, it is crucial to be in close proximity to a loved one, make eye and tactile contact, listen to each other, recognise voice and facial features, establish relationships, and experience care, help, warmth, and tenderness. This typically occurs in a nurturing family home, and the mother, who is breastfeeding, is usually the first person to provide the experience of close presence, as mentioned above. During the early stages of a child's life, an attachment to a loved one forms, which is the foundation for exclusivity and fidelity in future adult relationships⁵. To develop positive social attitudes

⁴ „Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it” (RH 10). John Paul II (1979a), Encyclical letter *Redemptor hominis*, AAS 71 (1979), pp. 257–324.

⁵ Psychologist Maria Braun-Gałkowska emphasised this in her lectures, teaching students and family counsellors, and preparing teachers for effective educational work with her publication, in: M. Braun-Gałkowska (1994), *W tę samą stronę. Książka dla nauczycieli o wychowaniu i lekcjach wychowawczych* [Facing the Same Direction. A Book for Teachers on Upbringing and Form Periods (pp. 102–108)], Krupski i S-ka, Warsaw and in: M. Braun-Gałkowska (1980), *Miłość aktywna. Psychiczne uwarunkowania powodzenia w małżeństwie* [Active Love. Psychological Determinants of Marital Success], IW PAX, Warsaw.

and healthy emotional expression, individuals require the experience of love, safety, and trust from someone. Throughout life, but particularly in childhood, individuals require love, care, emotional closeness, positive reinforcement, and support to establish healthy emotional bonds with others. These are the specific responsibilities of parents towards their children. It is challenging to conceive that individuals, such as institutional workers, caregivers, teachers, or educators, can substitute for parental affection and care. Mature love, expressed in closeness, exclusivity, empathy and acting for the good of another person, as Maria Braun-Gałkowska puts it (1994, pp. 102–108; 1980) as well as the love described by Fr Marek Dziewiecki, manifested in presence, diligence and tenderness (2000) is formed from childhood and requires the presence of a loving one who, through their closeness, tenderness and care, enables the child to become attached. The attachment forms the basis of exclusivity and fidelity in adulthood. The ability to attach to a loved one, formed in childhood, is particularly important for spouses as their bond should be both exclusive and indissoluble. Disrupting a child's attachment to a loved one can lead to an excess or shortage (lack) of adult attachment capacity. Excessive attachment can result in pathological jealousy, suspicion, and a constant fear of betrayal whereas a lack of attachment and the inability to form lasting bonds can result in infidelity and divorce. Enabling a child to form attachments with loved ones is crucial for their future life as an adult. This is important not only for the individual but also society as a whole, especially for the proper functioning of families and marital relations.

The team of educationalists who manage the *Natuli – dzieci są ważne* [Natuli – Children are Important] blog, magazine, publishing house, bookshop and fan page state that there can only be one primary figure of attachment. This person is the one who takes care of the child most frequently, who is emotionally invested, and who meets the child's needs. The child smiles, babbles, and cuddles with this person. During challenging times, the child needs this person and reacts to their disappearance with fear, crying, and anxiety (Musiał M., 2023) Anna Trawka, an educationalist and therapist who manages the parenting blog *Nebule.pl*, provides reasons against enrolling children in day nurseries. She emphasizes that young children require adult figures like parents for proper development, instead of peers who have similar needs and skills. Pedagogical observations indicate that children under the age of four typically play alone or 'alongside' their peers, rather than 'with them'. Since they are still incapable of identifying or regulating their emotions, children often argue over a favourite toy that one has taken from another. Moreover, it is easier for a child to be pushed, hurt, or scratched by another child (Trawka A., 2020).

The first three years of a child's life are crucial for their personality's foundation, which will develop in the future. Children acquire skills at their own pace and become self-sufficient in a family home environment. This applies to matters such as hygiene, self-feeding, morning routines of washing and dressing, which can be achieved without the stress and haste that arises when a parent opts to enrol the child in a day nursery or nursery school to get to work early in the morning. Prioritising the child's needs and offering undivided attention is more likely to yield success in a familial setting than in a larger group of children with an institutional carer. Demonstrating patience is also more effective when dealing with a single child than when dealing with many children of a similar age.

Parents must also ensure the child's health is taken care of. It is important not only to treat illnesses but also to prevent them from occurring. One disadvantage of day nurseries is the higher likelihood of infections. Infections spread more easily in large groups, and young children may struggle to prevent them due to unawareness of basic hygienic practices such as nose wiping, hand washing, and mouth covering when coughing. Taking care of eight children makes it difficult for the childminder to notice if any of them are feeling cold or if their clothes require changing or supplement. Although the children might have a full wardrobe at home, some clothes may not be available in the nursery. When a child is left by their mother for an extended period, it can create a sense of danger, lead to loss of safety, and induce stress. According to Ewa Budzyńska, „stress and separation can weaken the immune system's development, while warm early relationships, including cuddling and breastfeeding, can strengthen it” (2012, p. 120). An analysis of health records from outpatient visits and hospitalizations, conducted by Gerard Van den Berg and Bettina Siflinger among 520 children from nursery and home groups, showed a higher incidence of diseases in early childhood among children subjected to institutional daycare and a lower frequency of infections later in life (Van den Berg G., Siflinger B., 2020, pp. 1–47). An international team of specialists publishing in the journal *Allergy*, based on data from 10,851 parents and questionnaires regarding allergic symptoms, found that children attending nurseries have a higher risk of respiratory symptoms and allergies than children staying at home. The causes of such symptoms as wheezing, night cough, asthma, rhinitis, hay fever, eczema, allergic reactions to food, colds, and ear infections are environmental factors, especially allergens and viral infections. The increased risk is statistically significant and primarily affects the youngest children, up to four years of age (Hagerhed-Engman, Bornehag, Sundell, and Åberg, 2006, pp. 447–453).

When faced with the decision of whether to stay at home with their child or place them in a day nursery and go to work themselves, a parent should recognize that the early years of a child's life are 'unique and cannot be replicated' (Trawka A., 2020). Contemporary practitioner psychologists, who support John Bowlby's theory of attachment, highlight the significance of developing close emotional bonds for personal growth and well-being (Melka-Roszczyk M., 2021). Research conducted in the 1940s and 1950s in the USA and Europe demonstrated that „the absence of care from significant individuals, especially the mother (e.g. due to her death or a child's protracted stay in an institutional setting such as a hospital) has an adverse effect on a child's development not only in childhood, but also in later life. Therefore, the attachment style formed in early childhood has a profoundly significant impact on an individual's future” (Melka-Roszczyk M., 2021). Maria Przetacznik-Gierowska and Ziemowit Włodarski note that „monotropism is characteristic of attachment: the new-born's reactions are directed solely towards the mother figure, who is perceived as isolated from the environment, rather than towards any person in the environment” (1998, p. 157). The new-born establishes tactile contact with their mother during the breastfeeding process. The baby then tracks their mother with their eyes and pays attention to her voice. By the end of the third month, a clear bond, characterized by a revival reaction, is formed. This bond comprises various elements such as the motor element, which enables movement of the trunk and limbs, a smile to mimic their mother, and vocalization or cooing sounds. „As time goes by, the infant becomes more adept at distinguishing their mother from other individuals and reacts accordingly with either concern or orientation reflex” (Ibidem). Fear of unfamiliar individuals suggests a distinction made between known and unknown individuals. Among the known individuals, the child identifies the mother as the primary source of protection and safety „to whom they turn for refuge and escape in dangerous situations” (Ibidem).

Mariola and Piotr Wołochowicz point out another task of parents towards their children in their publications (2006, p. 20–21, 32). Parents have the responsibility to provide religious education to their children by setting an example of living a religious life. „They must create an educational environment that reflects God's values and use this environment as a foundation to perform the education process” (Wołochowicz P., 2021, p. 17). The upbringing of their own children should be based on Christians' commitment to unconditional love, respect for dignity, and formation according to the will of God. It is their responsibility to raise their children with discipline and admonish them according to the Lord's wills (Eph 6:4). Children are expected to obey their parents while fathers are instructed

against provoking their children (Col 3:21). The book of Psalms already mentions the transmission of the essential contents of Salvation History from generation to generation. It was ensured that the knowledge passed down by fathers to their sons would be preserved. Parents are responsible for teaching their children to trust God, remember His works, and obey His commands (Ps 78:3–7). These teachings should be instilled in children at all times and places, whether *they are at home, travelling, going to bed, or waking up* (Deuteronomy 6:5–9). Scriptural indications reveal that God desires to raise children in accordance with His plan. Passing on the witness of faith and authentic values to the younger generation is crucial to enable „a new generation to live with and for God” (Wołochowicz P., 2021, p. 21). What is essential is to draw children with them through the true, living faith of their parents, through a passion for Jesus „presented as a participation in something wonderful” (Ibidem, p. 23). Recalling John Paul II’s address to Catholic schoolchildren in New York in 1979, Piotr Wołochowicz emphasizes that „the essence of Catholic upbringing is not formal religious, not just moral behaviour; it also involves learning to live closely with Jesus” (John Paul II 1979/2009, p. 185). The answer to the question of whether it is acceptable for parents to delegate such a responsible task towards their own children to strangers with an unknown level of religious commitment seems obvious. The belief that „someone other than the parents is better suited for raising children”, commonly known as *social upbringing*, has negative repercussions. The consequences of impetuous decisions to entrust a child to strangers are revealed when „we realise they have adopted the values of their educators over our own”. In this regard, the belief that social upbringing surpasses parental involvement, as suggested by Kathi Mills, ultimately „proves to be a nightmare” (Mills K., 1994, p. 19).

Each individual’s needs may be considered in terms of somatic, mental (including emotional and intellectual) and spiritual categories related to religiosity and moral upbringing. Social contact needs of a young child are initially fulfilled in a dyad or triad of individuals, suited to the child’s needs. Over time, the child’s social circle is expanded to include extended family, peers, neighbours, and teachers. Given the aforementioned information, it is reasonable to inquire whether placing a young child in a day nursery aligns with meeting their needs, or if it is incompatible with this objective. Does separating the child from the mother stem from a genuine concern for the child’s welfare? What repercussions may arise from substituting family relationships with institutional ones and transferring parental responsibility to individuals tending to multiple children simultaneously?

The Proliferation of Day Nurseries and the Reasons and Possible Consequences of Separating Children from their Parents

In the speech on TVP INFO channel on January 15, 2021, Minister of Family and Social Policy Marlena Małaż admitted that since 2015, so-called day nursery enrolment in Poland had doubled. One in four children under the age of three, which is equivalent to 25%, received day nursery care. Maria Topolewska reported in *Gazeta Prawna* of December 2, 2020 that the rate of day nursery enrolment for children under three was 12.4% just five years before (Topolewska M. 2020). According to the January 15, 2021 edition of *Gazeta Prawna*, in the speech by Minister Małaż, it was reported that over PLN 2.1 billion was transferred between the years 2015 and 2020 to establish and maintain childcare facilities for children aged three years or younger (*Od 2015 roku żłobkowanie w Polsce wzrosło dwukrotnie*, 2023). The number of day nurseries, children's clubs, and childminders rose from 571 in 2011 to 5,982 in 2019. Similarly, the number of available day nursery places increased from 32,000 to 172,000 in 2019. During a televised address, Minister Małaż expressed „pleasure in the growing number of rural day nurseries and noted that day nursery enrolment was even higher there than in urban areas (up to 30%)”. Additionally, Minister Małaż announced that „For the creation of new day nurseries, we are allocating PLN 341 million (in 2021). In total we plan to create 25,000 new places in day nurseries. This represents a 13% increase since the previous year. This outcome is highly satisfactory to us. New day nurseries are being established in areas where there were none before. There will be 95 such boroughs” (*Od 2015 roku żłobkowanie w Polsce wzrosło dwukrotnie*, 2023). Multiplying the number of day nurseries and allocating a significant amount of funds for this purpose may create the impression of doing some good. However, a rhetorical question arises: can it be exciting or even ‘very exciting’ to uproot a child from its family prematurely and place it in the care of strangers? Can institutional custodians provide the same amount of tenderness for a group of children as a mother would for her breastfed baby? Will they instil the same values as the natural parents? Will the caregivers demonstrate a live faith? The Bologna Strategy, developed in 2002, predicted that day nursery coverage should reach 33% in 2017 that is one in three children. Poland, governed by the PO (Civil Platform) then, adopted the same, which was later included in the Strategy for Responsible Development of Poland in 2027 (The Strategy for Responsible Growth [in Polish], 2017). It can be noticed that political action does not always coincide with what is best for the child's proper upbringing, and causing emotional harm to an

immature human being is sometimes labelled as a strategy of responsible development.

Parents may choose to place their child in a day nursery for economic or work-related reasons. Women are frequently motivated to continue working in order to advance their career, maintain their position, generate income, and pursue their own professional development. Furthermore, their household duties may cause fatigue and lead to a desire for a change, which is addressed through professional work or engaging in other personal interests. Alternatively, they may make use of the opportunity to rest while their child is at a day nursery. The decision to place children in a day nursery is often based on a certain understanding of their well-being that puts emphasis on the professionalism and additional skills of the carers, such as the ability to play musical instruments. On occasion, the beneficial aspect of nursery room size is emphasised, which can improve children's motor skills through activities like running. Furthermore, interacting with other children and adapting faster to current social norms are also identified as advantageous.

Piotr Wołochowicz lists and tries to refute seven arguments used by parents to justify placing their children in day nurseries and nursery schools. One of these arguments is the common assertion that „everyone else does it”. This argument can be countered by pointing out that parents should do what is best for their child, and not follow the example of others (Wołochowicz P., 2021, p. 76), even if they are the majority (as in the case of nursery schools)⁶. The author of the book *Mamo zostań ze mną w domu. Pomóż w tym, tato* [Mummy stay home with me. Dad help out with that], points out that placing a child in a day care or nursery school makes that

- the child's attitudes are influenced by people other than those provided for in God's plan,
- the child's years of carefree childhood are taken away by being thrown into a rut of responsibilities, without being able to sleep as long as they want and without being able to organise their own playtime,
 - the time spent with a parent is reduced,
 - the child is exposed to more frequent illnesses due to infection from other children,
 - household costs increase due to day care and nursery school fees, no time to make preserves or shop for cheaper goods due to work, cost of work

⁶ W roku 2019/2020 do przedszkoli w Polsce zapisanych było około 75% dzieci [In Poland, in the academic year 2019/2020, approximately 75% of children were enrolled in nursery schools]. Retrieved June 7, 2023 from https://demagog.org.pl/analizy_i_raporty/szkolnictwo-w-polsce-sprawdzamy-najnowsze-dane-gus/.

clothes, public transport fares, cost of medication for more frequent illnesses of the children, and loss of income due to sick leave to care for a sick child,

- the mother is exposed to the stress of juggling work with domestic and parental duties which has a negative impact on the child, who experiences her haste, tiredness or nervousness (Wołochowicz P., 2021, pp. 76–77).

It should be noted that a child's developmental pace may be affected within a day nursery setting, as the curriculum has to cater to the entire group.

The assertion that a child wants to attend nursery school, likes it, and feels comfortable may be a defence mechanism employed by parents to justify their negative actions. Even if it pertains to the child's genuine satisfaction and will, such a motive is not appropriate anyway. It is not the parent's duty to fulfil the child's wishes but to decide what is in their best interest. The child's *wish* might arise from a need to satisfy the parents or reconcile with a situation where their previous protests (crying, clinging, or escaping from the hands of a childminder) were ineffective. Perhaps the child became accustomed to this due to lack of other options. If the child was indeed better off in an institutional setting compared to home, then it would be essential to identify and rectify the issues present within the family environment that gave rise to such problems. It could be conflicts within the family, boredom arising from the lack of organized and attractive activities, or the absence of relationships with other kids from amiable families or playgrounds. Piotr Wołochowicz suggests that „such problems should be resolved within the family rather than placing the child in an institution” (Wołochowicz P., 2021, p. 79).

Linking the necessity of going to work with the urge for earning more to support oneself till the next pay does not consider the new expenses for school fees, travel, additional clothing and shoes, toiletries, children's sickness, medicines, fewer days off, and increased household expenses. The subsidy schemes introduced in 2016 to fulfil the requirements of children, such as school supplies, additional activities, vacations, and family trips, are of notable assistance. According to Piotr Wołochowicz, it is socially advantageous that a number of women albeit quitting their jobs after the programmes' inception have opted to look after and nurture their children at home. Thanks to this, „some children have got their mothers back”, and the women no longer have the added responsibility of simultaneously taking care of their household and working outside (Wołochowicz P., 2021, p. 80). The option of remote, part-time, or casual work may be ruled out for fear of the spectre of starvation to which living on a single wage would lead.

Going back to work out of selfish motivation is unjustifiable and may signal incorrect decision-making or a flawed value system. Opting to prioritise one's career over the care of one's child may result from the prevalent undervaluation of full-time homemaker job. Motherhood, during which a woman cares for her child, is sometimes inaccurately described as 'not working' or 'sitting idle at home'. In fact, her dedication should be commended as an investment of her time in what is most valuable – the formation of a new human being (Wołochowicz P., 2021, p. 83). Prioritising a career at the expense of childcare may lead to adverse effects on a child's ability to cope in life. This often results in remorse for the mother and an incapability to resolve the disorders caused in many children.

For some, the reason for placing a child in institutional care is to entrust them to professionals who can teach them skills such as singing, drawing, and dancing. However, it is important to note that „knowledge without a well-formed character and a stable personality goes to waste anyway” (Wołochowicz P., 2021, p. 87). Moreover, some materials provided by irresponsible educators can be harmful and demoralising for the child. This includes, for instance, introducing sex education in nursery schools using so-called 'sex boxes' that include items such as a plush vagina and an erect penis (Jarmuż A., 2013). Such actions can be harmful and inappropriate for young children. Implementation of guidelines from „the Equality Nursery School” is inappropriate as it can cause sexual disorientation and disrupt gender identity formation, while promoting genderism and discrimination such as forcing boys to wear dresses (*Równościowe przedszkole*, 2023)⁷. The constant presence of the parent in the child's home provides a sense of safety and also gives the child the opportunity to bond with the parent, to be cared for and to receive individualised attention. On the other hand, for the parents, it provides the opportunity to fulfil their constitutional right to raise their children in accordance with their own views, religion, and morals (*Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997, Article 48*). According to Piotr Wołochowicz, the correct approach to child-rearing can be summarised as follows: „One should not entrust the upbringing of their child to anyone else as they are too valuable”. Furthermore, he notes that when animals are separated from their mothers, „they tend to lose their natural maternal instinct, which often results in them abandoning their offspring soon after birth, especially in captivity”. In Wołochowicz's opinion, „a similar phenomenon can now also be observed among humans. To

⁷ For information on the effects of the promoted gender ideology, please refer to the book: Abigail Shrier (2023), *Nieodwracalna krzywda. Tragiczne losy nastolatek, które zmieniły płć* [Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters] (M. Samborska, transl.). Wydawnictwo AA, Kraków.

a significant degree, the continuity between generations has been disrupted. This can be seen in the fact that individuals are now more preoccupied with providing their own children with the same upbringing they themselves received” (Wołochowicz P. 2021, p. 89). The child’s acquisition of skills, such as dancing, practised by the teacher conducting this type of course in a nursery school or, for two-year-olds, in a day nursery, does not compensate for the many hours of absence of the mother and, as a result, such disorders as the pathological search for acceptance by the child. It is worth emphasising that the teacher does not replace the mother and the father, and a small child does not need additional lessons at a level that the parents would not be able to provide. Numerous aids are available to support parents in nurturing their children’s talents at home. Additionally, community centres, clubs, and psycho-educational counselling centres provide various programs for children. Attending rhythmic lessons, doing manual exercises and so on for an hour a week is more beneficial than placing a young child in a day nursery or nursery school for several hours every day.

Yet another argument for justifying placing a child in foster care is socialization. However, the authors who refute this argument suggest that sending a young child to a foreign environment has detrimental consequences. They state that „A child who stays at home with their mother or father is more likely to build their confidence in their relationships with others. However, if a child is sent to an external setting too early e.g. a nursery school and is harmed, be it by another child or an adult, they may carry the hurt with them for the rest of their life. As a result, such a child may hurt others as they have not yet developed mature defence mechanisms” (Wołochowicz P., 2021, p. 93–94). Early socialization can lead to the development of antisocial tendencies. The children who „have been given sufficient time to mature naturally, are more likely to become altruistic social individuals who have managed to develop positive patterns of social behaviour” (Moore R., 2023). According to Raymond Moore and Dorothy Moore, the authors of books such as *Better Late Than Early* (Reader’s Digest-McGraw Hill, 1976) and *School Can Wait* (Brigham Young University Press, 1979), „the quality of a child’s social behaviour is more dependent on their emotional stability, self-esteem, and non-egoistic concern for others than the number of children they play with. It typically reflects the quality of parental role-modelling and the strength of attachment to caring, consistent parents” (Moore R., 2023). James Hymes states that young children thrive in reciprocal and personal relationships. Toddlers engage in cooperative play when placed in small groups of two to four individuals. On the other hand, ‘social beginner’ toddlers tend to experience tension and irritation when placed in large group settings (Hymes J.L., 1968).

The decision to place a child in a day care or nursery school may be motivated by the birth of a sibling and the mother's fear of not being able to handle two children, or convenience and a desire to make things easier. It is important to consider fairness from the child's perspective since a child who is with the mother is treated differently from one placed in an institution. The mother, on the other hand, requires assistance in addressing concerns about her ability to handle the situation, developing a new division of responsibilities, within the household, involving co-housemates (especially the child's father) in childcare and other household chores, relinquishing perfectionism, acknowledging activities benefiting the child's welfare, fulfilling the child's needs and fostering their development.

Ewa Janczak-Cwil, in her article of July 20, 2021, admits that the initial phase of settling a child into a day nursery and adjusting to a group setting before they are developmentally prepared, can pose „significant difficulties”. Furthermore, she provides a list of possible reactions that children may exhibit, even after a three-month-long adaptation period. These reactions may include: „violent protests upon returning to the day nursery, feelings of anxiety and apathy, appetite disorders, nightmares, aggressive outbursts when reminded of the day nursery, selective mutism (e.g. the child avoids talking about or speaking in the day nursery, even though they are talkative at home)” (Janczak-Cwil E., 2021).

Due to their limited emotional maturity, infants and young children may find it challenging or even impossible to share an adult's attention. As previously mentioned, due to their low 'emotional capacity', they may be unable to accommodate many people at the same time. In larger groups, they may struggle to function and may develop attachments to their caregivers. They may experience feelings of abandonment and being left behind forever by their mother. Not having the concept of time, they are unable to comprehend that their mother will return in a matter of hours. Abandonment by loved ones may be perceived by children as a message: „I do not want you”. When a parent does not respond to a child's crying and runs away, it conveys a message „I do not care how you feel”. Emotional harm to a child repeated daily causes them to initially protest and eventually become resigned. Adults still tend to view physical health issues as a greater concern than psychological trauma when deciding whether it is appropriate to leave a child in a day nursery. In her article Ewa Janczak-Cwil asserts that day nurseries are unsuitable for children with weakened immune systems, those who frequently fall ill and spend more time at home than at the nursery, and seriously ill children who require more specialized care than what a single carer can provide for a group of children (Ibidem).

The nurturing environment plays an important role in human development. Human development, as Andrzej Jurkowski advocates, takes place in relationships with others (1979, pp. 64–71). Contacts between adults and infants can trigger a strong emotional response in the child and also stimulate general activity. This includes exploring objects, imitating behaviour and gaining experience. Adult responses to children's activity can maintain it, increase its frequency, and create a mood of animation that stimulates activity. In this way, complex mental skills and processes are formed.

Maria Przetacznikowa conducted an interesting study on 150 infants in three groups of 50 children each (1960). They were infants from orphanages, day nurseries and families. The series of tests compared the following: development of movement, manipulation of objects, and recognition of objects, social contact and understanding of language. Developmental differences became apparent from 4 months of age and increased with age. Children from families were closest to developmental standards, followed by those from day nurseries and then those from orphanages. This third group of children was characterised by the lowest levels of development, passivity and a tendency towards negative emotional states. The fact that children from family environments are more active and children from non-family environments are passive is what Andrzej Jurkowski calls „an observation of great significance”. This is because „we attach great developmental importance to the child's own activity” (1979, p. 71).

A valuable addition to these findings is the research of Jacuńska-Iwińska M., (1963, pp. 71–72). She observed infants aged 5–7 months in family homes and day nurseries. During the 3-hour observations, she recorded the child's activity and the adult's reaction to that activity. This could include: approaching the baby, showing kindness, giving toys, rocking, talking to the baby. The number of times the adult made contact with the child alone showed significant differences between the two environments. In the families, 135 environmental responses were recorded during these 3 hours of observation, whereas in the day nurseries there were only 5. This may be due to the larger number of children in the care of the caregiver in the nursery, but may also be due to the attitude of the adults towards the children. The researcher also found qualitative differences in the observed adult-child interactions. There was a wider range of adult responses in families compared to nurseries. These responses had more emotional and social depth, which proved to be more beneficial for the cognitive development of children. Adequate child development necessitates positive reinforcement. This comprises various forms of communication, including positive verbal and non-verbal messages, such as: „I care deeply about you”

instead of saying: „I don't care what you do”, intentional and direct influence, but also the indirect influence of creating a general climate, which is also developmentally important.

Research on cortisol levels, the hormone linked with stress, also indicates that children should not be sent to day nurseries. Rainer Bohm, a paediatrician and adviser to the German parliament's family affairs committee, warns that children in day nurseries produce higher-than-average levels of cortisol, which can damage nerve cells. „According to the German expert, excessive stress in early childhood causes negative changes in the part of the brain responsible for social behaviour” (Łosiewicz D., 2014). The consequences of long-term stress include depressive or aggressive behaviour in children. Sue Palmer, a British educationalist and writer, expresses a similar view (Palmer S., 2021). Palmer is critical of replacing a child's individual attention and care with institutional care. According to Palmer, such care could lead to either withdrawal and sadness or aggression. Palmer confirms that UK government researchers discovered that children in day nurseries had cortisol levels that kept exceeding the normal range and even persisted after they returned home. This could potentially lead to a wide range of emotional and social problems in the future. This viewpoint is also shared by eminent researchers, John Bowlby (1907–1990) and Rene Spitz (1887–1974) as cited by Dorota Łosiewicz. John Bowlby, a British psychiatrist and psychologist, renowned for creating the theory of attachment that significantly influences child development, investigated how children respond to separation from their loved ones. Bowlby conducted research on children who stayed in a 24-hour day-care centre for several days while the mother was away in hospital giving birth to another child. Rene Spitz, an Austrian medical doctor and psychoanalyst, who lived in the USA since 1940, analysed the impact of a child's loss of contact with their mother⁸. Spitz investigated children who were placed in institutional care, due to their mothers being imprisoned. When separated from their mothers, children experience high

⁸ The books of John Bowlby include: *Attachment and loss*, Vol. I, *Attachment* (New York: Basic Book, 1969); *Attachment and loss*, Vol. II, *Separation: Anxiety and anger* (New York: Basic Books, 1973a); *Attachment and loss*, Vol. III, *Loss* (New York: Basic Books, 1980). *Attachment and Loss*, Vol. III (New York: Basic Books, 1980); *Separation: Anxiety and Anger* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1973b). Bowlby developed the attachment theory, which was elaborately discussed by Piotr Marchwicki in *Seminare* 2006, No. 23, pp. 365–383. Rene Spitz examined the effect of the child's relationship with their mother on their psychological development. He elaborated on how insufficient maternal care during early childhood could impact a child's emotional growth and ability to form bonds with others. Books authored by Spitz include: *No and Yes: On the Genesis of Human Communication* (New York: International Universities Press, 1945), *Anaclitic Depression: An Inquiry into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood* (New York: International Universities Press, 1956) and *The First Year of Life: A Psychoanalytic Study of Normal and Deviant Development of Object Relations* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965).

levels of stress. The failure to develop a bond with their mothers can result in various developmental disorders, such as hyperactivity, impulsivity, anxiety attacks, irritability, delayed cognitive development, signs of deep distress, emotional apathy, weight loss, slowed physical growth, and it can even double the mortality rate (Łosiewicz D., 2014).

Research by many authors suggests that elevated cortisol levels in children contribute to affective disorders (Ellenbogen M., et al, 2011), increased anxiety and depression (Vreeburg S.A., et al 2010), as well as reduced resistance to stress in later life (Roisman G. et al 2009) and stress-related illnesses in adulthood (Craft T., DeVries C., 2009). One factor that eliminates stress and reduces cortisol levels in children is focusing attention on the child and creating a close bond with the mother who is sensitive and responsive to the child's needs.

Ross Thomson also writes about the effects of stress experienced by mothers (Thompson R., 2021, pp. 9–36). This stress is caused by the pressure to meet both domestic and professional tasks. Its consequence is a sense of guilt and lowered self-esteem associated with difficulties in reconciling both roles. Stress resulting from undertaken professional work combined with challenges related to childcare affects the mental health of working mothers. Chronic stress causes anxiety, depression, sleep problems, professional burnout, aggression, and attention problems. It can also lead to problems in relationships with children. Transferring a mother's frustration to children can hinder their acquisition of cognitive competencies, emotion regulation, and establishing contacts with others. In the experienced situation, children may develop anxiety disorders and, in the future, references to work as a source of stress. Improvement in the mental health of working mothers can be caused by support provided to them and work flexibility. This is important because mothers' well-being is beneficial for children (Ibidem).

Developmental psychologist Ross Thomson, analyzing theory and literature with research descriptions, found that long hours spent by young children (from 9 to 36 months) in nurseries do not remain without influence on their emotional, cognitive, and social development. However, he also made this influence dependent on the quality of the facility. Better-off parents can provide their children with centers that create better care conditions and have a more positive impact on their children. The author emphasizes that low-quality care can contribute to developmental problems. This happens especially in the absence of emotional support and lack of staff cooperation with parents. The main cause of these problems is long separation from the mother, weakening the child's ability to attach to a loved one. The negative consequences of this experience are long-term (Ibidem).

Bengt-Erik Andersson attempted to prove the merits of staying in a nursery (Andersson B.E., 1992, pp. 20–36). He conducted research on eight- and thirteen-year-old children who received daycare in early childhood and compared them with children experiencing home care. In his opinion, children placed in nurseries have better cognitive results and socio-emotional competencies in later years. However, there may be objections and doubts about his study. Both groups of children he studied numbered only 59 and 69 individuals. Such a number is relatively small for longitudinal studies. Moreover, it should be remembered that different statistical tests are used when comparing the significance of differences in the case of equal and unequal groups. This can result in drawing false conclusions, especially when generalizing results to a larger population. The results of Andersson's research conducted even 10 years after the end of nursery care could depend not only on this care but also on other factors affecting the development of a 13-year-old child, for example:

- the influence of the family environment;
- socioeconomic status of families;
- parents' education;
- relationships between parents;
- educational atmosphere in the family;
- quality of school education (teacher engagement, availability of teaching aids);
- peer relationships;
- life variables and stressors such as moving, parental divorce, health problems, death in the family;
- as well as later experiences during adolescence;
- support from the environment;
- quality of healthcare.

It should be noted that developmental psychology requires considering not only individual variables but a broader context of life. Besides, cognitive skills and the ability to establish contact with others are not enough to create deep, lasting relationships when there is no developed exclusivity and ability to attach to a loved one. This, in turn, is required for successful building of bonds, especially marital and family ones in this and subsequent generations.

Psychologists and educationalists describe such a diagnostic category as RAD (*Reactive Attachment Disorders*) or Reactive Attachment Disorder in Children (Bartnikowska U., 2019). „According to the DSM-V classification, children with RAD have a severely disturbed and developmentally inappropriate pattern of forming relationships with other people, beginning before the age of five. The child also manifests dysfunction in the area of social skills” (Jarecka P. 2020).

According to John Bowlby, who based his conclusion on observations of 115 children, the separation of infants and children from their mothers and family home during early childhood causes psychological pain and distress. This is evident through behaviours such as open dissatisfaction, crying, anger, violent protests, and resentment towards caregivers. In the subsequent stage, the child loses hope of bonding with the mother, resulting in resignation, reduced physical activity, shutting down, and crying. In the third stage, the child strives to demonstrate an interest in the surroundings and accepts the food and toys provided by the carers. However, a visit from the mother does not inspire an enthusiastic response from the child. Instead, they act as if they are offended or hardly recognize her. The child attempts to form a bond with the carers, but the carers change, they go home after work and the child has another experience of disappointment (Bowlby J., 1999; Bowlby J., 1982). „As the child loses various maternal figures whom the child has given a little of his or her trust and affection each time, he or she will become less and less attached to the caregivers and will eventually stop attaching to anyone: the child will become more and more closed in on himself or herself and, instead of directing his or her desires and feelings towards people, will become more and more interested in material things such as sweets, toys or food” (Bowlby J., 1999, pp. 42–43).

Jay Belsky (b. 1950), an American child psychologist who specialises in developmental psychology, confirms that after a series of separations from their mother, young children tend to avoid or distance themselves from her (1986). Belsky also asserts that the longer children stay in a day nursery, „the more likely they are to display antisocial behaviours such as arguing, fighting, vandalism, lying, intimidating others, cruelty, disobedience, and crying” (Łosiewicz D., 2014). Furthermore, adolescents who attended day nurseries during their early childhood are more likely to turn to cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs, as well as resort to violence and stealing compared to those who were raised at home (Ibidem).

Institutions that take care of children include orphanages providing permanent care and week-care centres where parents collect children only on Sundays and holidays, as well as day nurseries. Maria Przetacznik-Gierowska and Ziemowit Włodarski assert that „from the point of view of attachment theory, each of the three places mentioned above is, in principle, unfavourable for the development of the child. This is because the proper process of socialisation requires the maintenance of an instinctive emotional bond between mother and child. Such a bond is manifested mainly through the ability to communicate with each other by giving and receiving specific signals. Thus, according to the same theory, any repeated daily separation from the mother, no matter how brief, should be viewed as

a disruption to the attachment relationship. Such disruptions may have negative consequences for the child's socialisation process" (Przetacznik-Gierowska M., Włodarski Z., 1998, p. 163). The young child „experiences every separation from the mother with great intensity, without knowing when or if he or she will be reunited with her" (Ibidem).

Eurydice and Eurostat data presented in the Ordo Iuris Institute report show that in the European Union in 2014, children under the age of three attending early childhood education and care facilities spent an average of 26.4 hours per week. Poland, in this regard, ranked second after Portugal, with an average separation of 39.1 hours from home and mother (Zych T., et al 2018, p. 46; Eurydice and Eurostat Report 2014, p. 66). Two years later, a study of the OECD Family Database, presented by Dorota Szelewa (2019), showed that the average number of hours per week that children spent away from home without their mother amounted to 32. This was still above the European average and was 32 hours too many for a child under the age of three to be taken from the family home and placed with unfamiliar carers and a group of children of a similar age. A Ministry of Family and Social Policy document on day nurseries, published on November 21, 2018 and amended on July 19, 2022, states that a child aged 20 weeks to 3 years can stay in a day nursery for up to 10 hours per day. „Each child in a day nursery will receive care for up to 10 hours a day. Under certain circumstances, such as when parents have to work late or attend medical appointments after work hours, the 10-hour period may be extended upon request by the child's parent, for an extra fee" (Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej [Ministry of Family and Social Policy], 2022). However, why would a parent pay for something that harms the child? The dedication of a gardener to their garden, a farmer to their herd, a sportsman to training or an artist to their painting, and even a caterer who prioritizes delivering hot dinners to their clients, raises the question: does a parent value their child less than plants, animals, artwork, physical fitness, or a hot meal? The accountant responsible for the final financial statements would refuse to delegate their work for 10 hours. However, the child is frequently transferred even when visibly distressed, tearful and protesting.

Irena Namysłowska, a national consultant in child and adolescent psychiatry, points out that „Without a good, secure attachment, neither the child's proper emotional and social development nor his or her mental development in terms of the interaction between attachment and brain formation is possible. Even the best day nursery, well-equipped and staffed by trained and committed professionals, cannot substitute the individual relationship between a parent and a child in a safe and stable home environment, over an institutional one. Research suggests that disruptions

in the parent-child relationship can be a sign of the onset of emotional and psychological disorders in childhood, adolescence and adulthood” (Namysłowska I., 2014). Improper attachment is a poor prognosis for marital and family bonding. It would be valuable to conduct further research from a scientific and practical perspective, to determine the percentage of people who had difficulty forming relationships due to being placed in a day nursery in their childhood and also had difficulty forming relationships through attachment to a loved one and ended up getting divorced.

Numerous studies were conducted in the latter half of the twentieth century on the effects of separating infants from their mothers and substituting maternal relationships with institutional care. The authors explicitly highlighted the limitations of institutional care. Presently, there appears to be a trend to evade such discussion and, moreover, to extol the establishment of new day nurseries, the enrolment of children in such institutions and the participation of mothers in the workforce. Opposing viewpoints are dismissed, and the open letter from experts in psychiatry, paediatrics, psychology, and education (*List otwarty w sprawie opieki nad dziećmi do lat 3* [An open letter on childcare for children under the age of 3, 2018]) has failed to sway politicians’ drive to expand the network of day nurseries and increase the population of children attending them. To avert the confusion of parents and dissuade them from rationalizing day nurseries provision as beneficial (when it is not), it is imperative to provide a realistic perspective and appropriate guidance.

Familiological Proposals

Adults have the responsibility to positively influence children’s upbringing, and they should prepare themselves for this task. Better understanding of the issue increases the chances of informed decision-making. This is also relevant for professionals who have an impact on society through their work. Legal professionals, journalists, politicians, teachers, and parents should take into account empirical research conducted by psychologists, educationalists, and medical professionals. Priority must be given to the welfare of the child, and the aforementioned research findings determine what is best for children at different developmental stages.

More frequent illnesses, stress experienced by children placed in nurseries, and possible disturbances in shaping attachment, and thus serious difficulties in developing the capacity for love, as well as demographic decline, justify opposition to building new facilities of this type and suggesting ways of their functioning. It is reasonable to support the family to keep the child

at home and enable them to experience closeness, as well as valuable time spent with parents, grandparents, and older siblings. This support can include teaching about the value of family and the effects of insufficient parent-child relationships. It is advisable to organize support groups and experience exchanges for people caring for young children at home. It is obvious that most parents do not have psychological or pedagogical preparation for raising a child. However, their skills can develop based on numerous guides and programs about how to organize time devoted to nurturing and upbringing, how to organize play, what toys and books to acquire. In the case of dysfunctional families, placing a child in a nursery does not solve the problem. It is necessary to undertake corrective actions with the involvement of social workers, health services, lawyers, psychologists, and others. It is also worth emphasizing that nursery professionals, despite their knowledge and skills, not being parents of the children entrusted to their care, do not have a natural bond with them, do not devote as much time to each child as a mother who is not professionally employed, are not able to focus their attention on one child throughout the day, and are not the persons in relation to whom the child's exclusivity and attachment should develop.

In the specialist journal „Psychiatria po Dyplomie” [Psychiatry after Graduation], Irena Namysłowska examines the impact of a child's emotional bond with their mother on brain development and functioning. „The quality and functioning of neuronal connections in the brain are significantly related to the type of attachment. The interaction between the mother and infant stimulates the development of connections between the frontal cortex and the limbic system” (Namysłowska I. 2014). A meaningful mother-child relationship that enables the child to bond with the mother promotes not only emotional and social development, but also cognitive one through brain development. The creation of the bond between the child and mother through maternal presence, love, tenderness, endearment, and kind care is backed by psychological, pedagogical, theological, social, and medical perspectives. The child requires more than just physical sustenance. Emotional satisfaction and a feeling of safety are equally necessary. The parent, who is the closest person to the child, plays a crucial role in providing the above. Raymond Moore advocates:

„If you want a well-rounded and sociable child, provide them with a warm, consistent and responsive home until they are 8 or 10 years old, [...]. Do not worry about fashionable methods of education and upbringing, but simply be present for your children and keep outside influences to a minimum” (Moore R. 2023).

Spending time with the mother, receiving her attention, care, engaging in dialogue and play, and later being involved in household chores help children acquire practical skills. Additionally, it enables them to develop qualities such as tidiness, responsibility, diligence, self-reliance, self-esteem, being helpful to others, and altruism. As per Raymond Moore, „Children who share household chores with their parents feel needed and wanted. They also feel someone relies on them” (Ibidem). These experiences lay the groundwork for fostering positive social attitudes.

It is recommended that a child should continue to be cared for by its mother until the age of three (Bialecka B. 2018; Ainsworth M.S. et al 1978). During this period, the mother is expected to act as the child’s primary caregiver, fostering bonding and providing a sense of safety and love. Her presence provides the opportunity for the development of healthy attachment. This is particularly crucial for subsequent emotional and social development. Facing challenges in attachment formation with loved ones can lead to numerous educational issues (Słaboń-Duda A., 2011).

Day nurseries can be a source of stress for young children, due to factors such as separation from the mother for extended periods, an unfamiliar environment outside the home, changes in caregivers, and negative interactions with their peers. Bogna Bialecka, a psychologist, underlines that a child up to the age of three is not developmentally ready for continuous interaction with peers (Bialecka B., 2018, p. 49). In general, „the readiness to form peer relationships typically develops at a later stage in childhood”. A *toddler* stage is typically characterised by a close bond with the mother. Enrolling a child in a day nursery can hinder the development of direct attachment and expose them to stressors. Maria Braun-Gałkowska’s lectures on family psychology indicate that this can lead to the child becoming „emotionally disabled”. It could be beneficial for parents who are unaware of this to be informed about it. If they are aware but still choose to act against the best interests of their child, they ought to reconsider their values, reflect deeply on their actions and decisions when entering into marriage, or consider what it means to be a responsible parent.

Some parents opt not to send their children to either a day nursery or a nursery school⁹. Additionally, some parents choose to educate their children at home through home-schooling. However, certain individuals succumb to modern societal pressures that can sometimes resemble tyrannical tendencies. As stated by Pino Pelegrino, a casting director and author of *The Art of Parenting*, it is crucial for a child to attend nursery school, „they should definitely be enrolled” (Pellegrino P., 2003, s. 124). The author

⁹ The arguments supporting this decision are presented in Piotr Wołochowicz, *Mamo zostań ze mną w domu. Pomóż w tym tato*.

convinces parents that a child as young as three „feels the need for nursery school” and „should be sent because the benefits can be invaluable”. At the same time, he warns that „Depriving a child of the opportunity to attend nursery school can be a mistake with incalculable consequences” (Ibidem). And he adds „In the worst case scenario, one could wait until the age of four, but any further delay should be avoided” (Ibidem, p. 134).

Advice based solely on personal beliefs without empirical research may alienate certain audiences. However, people who value and recognise celebrities as authorities, even when they speak outside their area of expertise, tend to follow their advice. The fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles suggests that *we must obey God rather than men* (Acts 5:29). Piotr Wołochowicz’s statement, „The family is God’s intended environment for instilling God’s values in the child”, is accurate. Therefore, „the child must remain with the family – the natural environment where God intended them to be!” (Wołochowicz 2021, p. 67).

The continued erosion of moral values among children due to sex education in Germany, and the subsequent legal actions taken against parents who object to such lessons (Frona.pl, 2013) have led some parents to opt for home-schooling instead. Successfully passing exams on specific material enables children to progress to the next stage of their education. Parents who engage in home-schooling show concern for the welfare of their child, focus on what is beneficial and potentially harmful to their child, provide effective educational support, protect their child from the devaluation of their values, customise their teaching methods, and defend their right to provide a comprehensive education rather than depraving sex education that rejects moral standards.

Parental sensitivity, vigilance, and responsible care hold great value. Acknowledging that the period before the child turns three is a crucial stage requiring special protection does not mean relinquishing additional attention and responsibility towards the child. During each stage, children may experience both positive and negative events. The role of parents is to promote positive behaviours and guard against negative ones, drawing on their own life experience and nurturing abilities. Furthermore, parents should employ their skills to enhance the welfare of their offspring.

In the conclusion of frequently cited book *Mamo zostań ze mną w domu. Pomóż w tym tato* [Mummy stay home with me. Dad help out with that], Piotr Wołochowicz recounts an extract of a speech by John Paul II, delivered in Zakopane on June 7, 1997. In his address to children receiving their first Holy Communion, the Pope also spoke about the responsibility and direction of the parents’ vocation to educate their children. Given that the content presented is always relevant and indispensable, it is of value to recall it.

„Parents have the right and duty to educate their children in accordance with their own beliefs. You should not relinquish this right to institutions which can provide the essential knowledge to children and young people but are incapable of giving them a testimony of faith, parental care and love. You should not be tempted to provide your children with the best possible material conditions at the expense of the time and attention they need to grow *in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man* (Luke 2:52). If you, as parents, want to protect your children from moral degradation, from the spiritual emptiness that the world offers them through various environments and even school programmes, embrace them with the warmth of your parental love and give them the example of a Christian life” (John Paul II, *Apostolic Journey* 1997).

This article (including its translation) were funded by grant Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Lublin. GD publications: *Postawy wobec moralności małżeńsko-rodzinnej. Studium porównawcze wybranych grup* (Attitudes towards marital and family morality. Comparative study of selected groups) number 1/6-20-24-01-0802-0002-1058.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamski Franciszek, 2004, *Rodzina* [Family], in: Krystyna Ostrowska (ed.), *Wychowanie do życia w rodzinie. Słownik pojęć* [Educating for Family Life. Glossary (pp. 104–105)], Rubikon, Kraków.
- Ainsworth Mary Salter, Blehar Mary, Waters Everett and Wall Sally, 1978, *Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation*, Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New York.
- Andersson Bengt-Eric, *Effects of day-care on cognitive and socioemotional competence of thirteen-year-old Swedish schoolchildren*, *Child development*, 1992, 63(1), pp. 20–36.
- Bartnikowska Urszula, 2013, *Zerwane więzi – Dziecko z syndromem RAD – Nowy obszar działań pedagogów specjalnych* [Broken Bonds – The Child with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) – A New Field of Action for Special Educators], *Człowiek, Niepełnosprawność, Społeczeństwo*, 1(19), 21–37.
- Belsky Jay, 1986, *Infant day care: A cause for concern?* in: *Infant day care: A cause for concern, Zero to Three*, 7(1), 1–7.
- Białecka Bogna, 2018, *Wpływ żłobków na rozwój dzieci* [The Influence of Nurseries on Children's Development (p.46–49)], in: Report: Tymoteusz Zych, Anna Świerzevska & Magdalena Olek (part 1), Janusz. Roszkiewicz (part 2), (ed.), *Opieka nad dziećmi do 3. roku życia w Polsce i na świecie. Aspekty prawne, ekonomiczne i społeczne* [Childcare for children up to the age of 3 in Poland and worldwide. Legal, economic and social aspects], Instytut na rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris, Warsaw.
- Bowby John, 1973a, *Attachment and loss*, Vol. II, *Separation: Anxiety and anger*, Basic Books, New York.
- Bowby John, 1973b, *Separation: Anxiety and Anger*, The Hogarth Press, London.
- Bowby John, 1980, *Attachment and loss*, Vol. III, *Loss*, Basic Books, New York.

- Bowlby John, 1982, *Costruzione e rottura dei legami affettivi*, Raffaello Cortina Editore. Milan.
- Bowlby John, 1969, *Attachment and loss*, Vol. I, *Attachment*, Basic Books, New York.
- Bowlby John, 1999, *Attaccamento e perdita, I.: L'attaccamento alla Madre*, Torino: Bolatti Boringhieri.
- Braun-Gałkowska Maria, 1980, *Miłość aktywna. Psychiczne uwarunkowania powodzenia w małżeństwie* [Active Love, Psychological Determinants of Marital Success], IW PAX, Warsaw.
- Braun-Gałkowska Maria, 1994, *W tę samą stronę. Książka dla nauczycieli o wychowaniu i lekcjach wychowawczych* [Facing the Same Direction, A Book for Teachers on Education and Form Periods], Krupski i S-ka, Warsaw.
- Braun-Gałkowska Maria, 1994a, *W tę samą stronę. Antologia tekstów dla nauczycieli i uczniów do lekcji wychowawczych* [Facing the Same Direction. A Collection of Texts for Teachers and Students for Form Periods], Krupski i S-ka, Warsaw.
- Budzyńska Ewa, 2012, *Małe dzieci mały kłopot? Więziotwórcze funkcje rodziny* [Small Children Little Trouble? The Bonding Function of the Family (p. 120)], in: Wojciech Świątkiewicz (ed.), *Więzi międzypokoleniowe w rodzinie i w kulturze* [Intergenerational Bonds in the Family and in Culture], Uniwersytet Śląski Studio NOA, Katowice.
- Cambell Ross, 1990, *Twoje dziecko potrzebuje Ciebie* [How to really love your child] R. Zabrzęski (transl.), Towarzystwo Krzewienia Etyki Chrześcijańskiej, Kraków.
- Caughy Margaret O'Brien, Dipietro Janet A., Strobino Donna M. (1994), *Day-care participation as a protective factor in the cognitive development of low-income children*, *Child Development*, 65(2), pp. 457–471.
- Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997, Article 48, The Principle of Protection of Parental Authority*, *Journal of Laws* 1997.78.483 of April 2, 1997.
- Craft Tara, DeVries Courtney, 2009, *Vulnerability to stroke: implications of perinatal programming of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis*, *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience*, 3(54), pp. 1–12.
- Dudziak Urszula, 2008, *Dom rodzinny: centrum wychowania i edukacji* [The Family Home: The Centre of Upbringing and Education], in: Teresa Mazan, Katarzyna Mazela and Małgorzata Walaszczyk (eds.), *Rodzina wiosną dla Europy i świata. Wybór tekstów z IV Światowego Kongresu Rodzin 11–13 May* (pp. 102–106), Łomianki, Fundacja „Pomoc Rodzinie”, Warsaw.
- Dudziak Urszula, 2007, *Jak kochają małżonkowie? Miłość małżeńska, jej cechy i znaki* [How Do Spouses Love? Marital Love, Its Characteristics and Signs], in: Wiesław Przygoda and Jerzy Karbownik (eds.), *Miłość na nowo odkryta. Wokół Benedykta XVI encykliki o Bogu Miłości* [Love Rediscovered. A Discussion of Benedict XVI's Encyclical on the God of Love, pp. 123–138], Skarżysko-Kamienna.
- Dziewiecki Marek, 2000, *Cieleśność, płciowość, seksualność* [Corporeality, Gender, Sexuality], Jedność, Kielce.
- Ellenbogen Mark A., Hodgins Sheilagh, Linnen Anne-Marie & Ostiguy Caroline S., 2011, *Elevated daytime cortisol levels: A biomarker of subsequent major affective disorder?*, *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 32(1–2), pp. 265–269.
- Eurydice and Eurostat Report, 2014, *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, 66. Brussels, Retrieved July 7, 2017 from http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/166PL.pdf.
- Fronda.pl., 2013, December 6, *Niemcy: matka trafiła do aresztu, bo syn nie był na edukacji seksualnej* [Germany: A Mother Taken Into Custody After Her Son Failed to

- Attend Sex Education Classes], Retrieved July 4, 2023 from <https://www.fronda.pl/a/niemcy-matka-trafila-do-aresztu-bo-syn-nie-byl-na-edukacji-seksualnej,32509.html>
- Hagerhed-Engman Linda, Bornehag Carl-Gustaf, Sundell Jan, and Åberg N. David, *Day-care attendance and increased risk for respiratory and allergic symptoms in preschool age*, *Allergy*, 2006, 61(4), pp. 447–453.
- Hymes James L., 1968, *A Child Centered Program*, in: James L. Hymes, *Teaching the Child Under Six (pp.25–50)*, Columbus, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Merrill Publishing Company, Ohio.
- Jacuńska-Iwińska Małgorzata, 1963, *Reakcje dorosłych na aktywność małego dziecka jako czynnik różnicujący środowisko domowe i zakładowe* [Distinguishing Home From Institutional Environments Based on Adult Responses to Young Children's Activities (pp. 71–72)], *Psychologia Wychowawcza* [Educational Psychology].
- Janczak-Cwil Ewa, 2021, June 20, *Kiedy dziecko nie nadaje się do żłobka: od jakiego wieku można je posłać do placówki?* [When Is a Child Not Ready for a Day Nursery: At What Age Can a Child Be Sent to a Day Nursery?], retrieved May 27, 2023 from <https://mamotoja.pl/male-dziecko/wychowanie/kiedy-dziecko-nie-nadaje-sie-do-zlobka-31972-r1/>.
- Jarecka Paulina, 2020, May 20, *Zrozumieć reaktywne zaburzenia przywiązania. RAD u dzieci*. [Understanding reactive attachment disorder. RAD in children]. Retrieved June 29, 2023 from <https://dzieciecapsychologia.pl/zrozumiec-reaktywne-zaburzenie-przywiazania-rad-u-dzieci/>.
- Jarmuż Anna, 2013, June 4, *Czy sex-boxy zawitają do polskich przedszkoli? Boją się tego niektórzy rodzice* [Will Sex Boxes Be Introduced in Polish Nursery Schools? Some Parents Express Concern], *Głos Wielkopolski*, retrieved June 24, 2023 from <https://gloswielkopolski.pl/czy-sexboxy-zawitaja-do-polskich-przedszkoli-boja-sie-tego-niektorzy-rodzice/ar/910781>.
- Jurkowski Andrzej, 1979, *Czynniki determinujące rozwój psychiczny człowieka. Środowisko* [Factors Determining the Psychological Development of Humans: The Surroundings (pp. 70–71)], in: Jan Strelau, Andrzej Jurkowski, Zygmunt Putkiewicz (eds.), *Podstawy psychologii dla nauczycieli* [Basic psychology for teachers], Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa.
- John Paul II, 1979a, Encyclical letter *Redemptor hominis*, Rome, March 4, AAS 71 (1979), 257–324, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html.
- John Paul II, 1979b, *Przemówienie do młodzieży ze szkół katolickich, Nowy Jork* [Address to the Youth of Catholic Schools, New York], in: *Służyć wzrastaniu w prawdzie i miłości. Wybór dokumentów Kościoła na temat szkoły katolickiej i wychowania* 2009 [Serving to Grow in Truth and Love. A Selection of the Church's Documents on Catholic Schooling and Education, ed. Janusz Poniewierski (p. 185)], Wydawnictwo AA, Kraków.
- John Paul II, 1997, *Apostolic Journey of His Holiness John Paul II to Poland (May 31–June 10, 1997)*, Address of John Paul II at the meeting with children who received first Holy Communion, Zakopane, Saturday 7 June 1997, retrieved July 4, 2023 from https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_07061997_children.html.
- Jurkowski Andrzej, 1979, *Czynniki determinujące rozwój psychiczny człowieka. Środowisko* [Factors Determining the Psychological Development of Humans: The Surroundings], in: Jan Strelau, Andrzej Jurkowski and Zygmunt Putkiewicz, *Podstawy psychologii dla nauczycieli* [Basic psychology for teachers (pp. 64–71)], Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa.

- Karpienia Magdalena, 2021, *Karmienie piersią* [Breastfeeding], Natuli, Szczecin.
- List otwarty w sprawie opieki nad dziećmi do lat 3, 2018 [An open letter on childcare for children under the age 3], retrieved May 23, 2023 from <https://www.ekai.pl/dokumenty/list-otwarty-w-sprawie-opieki-nad-dziecmi-do-lat-3/>.
- Łosiewicz Dorota, 2014, June 16, *Stres żłobkowy* [Stress in nursery settings], retrived June 28, 2023) from <https://www.sensity.pl/stres-zlobkowy-wsieci/>.
- Lodykowska Elżbieta and Bieńkowska Sylwia, 2017, *Poradnik laktacyjny* [Lactation Guide]. Szpital Specjalistyczny im. Świętej Rodziny SPZOZ, Warsaw, retrieved May 23, 2023 from https://szpitalmadalinskiego.pl/attachments/article/838/Poradnik_Laktacyjny_2017.pdf.
- Marchwicki Piotr, 2006, *Teoria Przywiązania J. Bowlby'ego* [J. Bowlby's attachment theory], *Seminare*, 23, 365–383.
- Melka-Roszczyk Marta, 2021, *Znaczenie stylu przywiązania w rozwoju i życiu człowieka* [The Significance of Attachment Styles in Human Development and Life], Retrieved May 30, 2023 from <https://psychologiapraktyce.pl/artykul/znaczenie-stylu-przywiazania-w-rozwoju-i-zyciu-czlowieka>.
- Mills Kathie, 1994, *Mamusiu, gdzie jesteś? Czyli o trudnych wyborach współczesnej kobiety* [Mommy, Where Are You? What Could Be More Important Than Investing in the Lives of Your Children?], Oficyna Wydawnicza Vocatio, Warsaw.
- Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej [Ministry of Family and Social Policy], 2022, July 19, *Żłobek* [Day Nursery], Warsaw, retrieved July 1, 2022 from <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/lobek>.
- Moore Raymond, 2023, *How to Socialize Young Children*, Hewitt Research Center, Washougal. Retrieved June 24, 2023 from <https://vftonline.org/Kevin4VFT/Moore-Kidz.htm>.
- Moore Raymond S. and Moore Dorothy N., 1975, *Better Late Than Early, A New Approach to Your Child's Education*, Reader's Digest Press, Michigan University.
- Moore Raymond S. and Moore Dorothy N., 1979, *School Can Wait*, Young University Press, Brigham.
- Musiał Małgorzata 2023, *Pierwsze rozstanie. Jak i z kim zostawić dziecko?* [First Separation. With Whom and How to Leave Your Child?], retrieved June 7, 2023 from <https://dziecisawazne.pl/pierwsze-rozstanie-jak-i-z-kim-zostawic-dziecko>.
- Namysłowska Irena, 2014, Zaburzenia przywiązania [Attachment disorders], „Psychiatria po dyplomie”, 4, 3, retrieved July 1, 2023 from <https://podyplomie.pl/psychiatria/16808,zaburzenia-przywiazania?page=3>.
- Obrzędy chrztu dzieci dostosowane do zwyczajów diecezji polskich* [Rites of Baptism of Children adapted to the customs of Polish dioceses], 2005, Księgarnia Św. Jacka, Katowice.
- Obrzędy Sakramentu Małżeństwa dostosowane do zwyczajów diecezji polskich* [The Rites of the Sacrament of Matrimony Adapted to the Customs of the Polish Dioceses], 2007, Księgarnia Św. Jacka, Katowice.
- Od 2015 roku użłobkowanie w Polsce wzrosło dwukrotnie* [Nursery enrollment in Poland has doubled since 2015], retrieved June 7, 2023 from <https://serwisy.gazeta-prawna.pl/emerytury-i-renty/artykuly/8069497,maluch-plus-malag-uzlobkowanie-w-polsce.html>.
- Palmer Sue, 2021, *21 st Century Boys*, Hogs Back Books Ltd, Guilford.
- Paul VI, 1968, *Humanae Vitae. On the Regulation of Birth*, AAS 60 (1968), 257–299. retrieved May 23, 2023 from https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.

- Pearl Debbie, 2009, *Kobieta, jakiej pragnie twój mąż* [Created To Be His Help Meet]. Vocatio, Warsaw.
- Pellegrino Pino, 2003, *Sztuka wychowania* [The art of parenting], Wydawnictwo Salezjańskie, Warsaw.
- Przetacznikowa Maria, 1960, *Rozwój psychiczny dzieci w pierwszym roku życia w przekroju trzech środowisk wychowawczych* [Psychological Development of Children During Their First Year of Life in Three Different Parenting Environments], Psychologia Wychowawcza 1 [Educational Psychology, Vol 1],
- Przetacznikowa-Gierowska Maria and Włodarski Ziemiowit, 1998, *Psychologia wychowawcza*, t. 2 [Educational psychology, Vol. 2], PWN, Warsaw.
- Roisman Glenn, Susman Elizabeth, Barnett-Walker Kortnee, Booth-LaForce Cathryn, Owen Margaret Tresch, Belsky Jay, Bradley Robert H. Houts Renate and Steinberg Laurence, 2009, *Early Family and Childcare Antecedents of Awakening Cortisol Levels in Adolescence*, Child Development, 80(3), pp. 907–920.
- Równościowe przedszkole. Indoktrynacja maluchów za unijne pieniądze* [The Equality Nursery School. Indoctrination of Toddlers With Funding From the European Union], 2013, September 13), PCh.24.pl. Polonia Christiana. Retrieved June 24, 2023 from <https://pch24.pl/rownosciowe-przedszkole-indoktrynacja-maluchow-za-unijne-pieniadzel>.
- Szelawa Dorota, 2019, *Polityka opieki nad małym dzieckiem: usługi edukacyjno-opiekuńcze, a instrumenty pieniężne* [Early childhood policy: comparing education and care services with financial instruments], Fundacja Stefana Batorego, Warsaw.
- Shrier Abigail 2023, *Nieodwracalna krzywda. Tragiczne losy nastolatek, które zmieniły płeć* [Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters], Małgorzata Samborska (transl.), Wydawnictwo AA, Kraków.
- Slaboń-Duda Agnieszka, 2011, *Wczesna relacja matka-dziecko i jej wpływ na dalszy emocjonalny rozwój dziecka* [The Early Mother-Child Relationship and Its Impact on the Child's Subsequent Emotional Development], „Psychoterapia”, 2 (157), pp. 11–18. Retrived July 4, 2023 from http://www.psychoterapiaptp.pl/uploads/PT_2_2011/11Slabon_PT%202%202011.pdf.
- Spitz Rene, 1945, *No and Yes: On the Genesis of Human Communication*, International Universities Press, New York.
- Spitz Rene, 1956, *Anaclitic Depression: An Inquiry into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood*, International Universities Press, New York.
- Spitz Rene, 1965, *The First Year of Life: A Psychoanalytic Study of Normal and Deviant Development of Object Relations*. International Universities Press, New York.
- Szelewa Dorota, 2019, *Polityka opieki nad małym dzieckiem: usługi edukacyjno-opiekuńcze, a instrumenty pieniężne* [Early childhood policy: comparing education and care services with financial instruments (pp. 1–18)], Fundacja Stefana Batorego, Warsaw.
- The Revised Standard Version of the Bible: Catholic Edition*, 2006, Ignatius Press, San Francisco.
- The Strategy for Responsible Growth* [in Polish], The Council of Ministers on 14 February 2017, retrieved June 7, 2023 from <https://www.gov.pl/documents/33377/436740/SOR.pdf>.
- Thompson Ross, Infant day care: Concerns, controversies, choices, in: *Employed mothers and their children*, (ed.) Jacqueline V. Lerner, Nancy L. Galambos, London and New York, Routledge 2021, pp. 9–36.

- Topolewska Michalina, 2020, December 2, *Pieniądze z Malucha + wracają do budżetu* [Funds from Toddler + return to the budget], *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, Retrieved June 7, 2023 from <https://praca.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/1497866,maluch-samorzady-nie-wykorzystuja-dotacji.html>.
- Trawka Anna, 2020, *Dlaczego nie zapisałam moich dzieci do żłobka* [Reasons for not enrolling my children in day nursery], Retrieved May 30, 2023 from <https://www.nebule.pl/dlaczego-nie-zapisałam-moich-dzieci-do-zlobka/>.
- Van den Berg Gerard J., and Siflinger Bettina M., 2020, *The effects of day care on health during childhood: evidence by age*, Uppsala: IFAU, pp. 1–47.
- Vreeburg Sophie A., Hartman Catharina A., Hoogendijk Witte J.G., van Dyck Richard, Zitman Frans G., Ormel Johan, Penninx Brenda W.J.H., 2010, *Parental history of depression or anxiety and the cortisol awakening response*, *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 197(3), pp.180–185.
- Wołochowicz Mariola and Wołochowicz Piotr, 2006, *Nie składajmy dzieci na ofiarę* [Let Us Not Sacrifice Children], *Cel* 1(4), pp. 20–21, 32.
- Wołochowicz Piotr, 2021, *Mamo zostań ze mną w domu. Pomóż w tym tato* [Mummy stay home with me. Dad help out with that], Edycja Świętego Pawła, Częstochowa.
- W roku 2019/2020 do przedszkoli w Polsce zapisanych było około 75% dzieci* [In Poland, in the academic year 2019/2020, approximately 75% of children were enrolled in nursery schools], retrieved June 7, 2023 from https://demagog.org.pl/analizy_i_raporty/szkolnictwo-w-polsce-sprawdzamy-najnowsze-dane-gus/.
- Zych Tymoteusz, Świerzevska Anna and Olek Magdalena (part 1), Janusz Roszkiewicz (part 2) (eds.), 2018, *Opieka nad dziećmi do 3. roku życia w Polsce i na świecie. Aspekty prawne, ekonomiczne i społeczne* [Childcare for children up to the age of 3 in Poland and worldwide. Legal, economic and social aspects], Instytut na rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris, Warsaw.

