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# Family and Educational Institutions (Kindergarten and School) as the Areas of Experiencing Values

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**Abstract.** At the time when a child is given birth to, its process of rooting in the social world begins and through the two specific phenomena, i.e. socialisation and upbringing, such child becomes a representative of a society. However, there are two institutions inseparable from this process, i.e. kindergarten and school. Nonetheless, a family is the first and natural upbringing environment for children, teaching them appropriate behaviour, providing with code of conduct and values. Intergenerational transmission of values is the mechanisms allowing generational continuity, as it focuses on passing on values crucial for the parents, manifested through a specific contact with their children. On the other hand, kindergarten and school as institutions reflect the period when a child becomes a part of a structured social group, where all pupils are subject to the same rules, by which members of such group build up their knowledge on society and culture, constructing their individual and unique image of own self and the world around. Last but not least, it is also the time of preparing them to undertake autonomous and efficient activities. Such institutions conduct their upbringing activities in intentional and organised manner, in accordance with the curricula, taking into consideration socially established, upbringing objectives involving assistance of pedagogical staff and appropriately adjusted equipment. Therefore, cooperation and engagement of these three institutions allows to establish a coherent image of own self and own position in a society.

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**Keywords:** *family, kindergarten, school, intergenerational transmission, values, upbringing, socialisation.*

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## Introduction

Taking root in social world begins as early as at the time of a child's birth and thanks to socialisation and upbringing, a child gradually becomes the representative of a society. Upbringing is in its broadest meaning, as A. Tchorzewski claims, is understood as "all kinds of social activities that are characterised <...> by constitutive features, i.e. accommodation, approximation and indoctrination (Tchorzewski, 1994) and "with predominance of the two first features, i.e. accommodation and approximation, as it takes place within social activities. Hence, it refers to socialisation, perceived as the process of preparing individuals to live in a society by participation in social groups and culture" (Tchorzewski, 1994). *Accommodation* involves change of the already existing or establishing new cognitive structures in order to adapt better to the environment, *approximation* involves approaching possibilities to the individuals with patterns of behaviour and contents resulting from recognised values and life objectives that function as an imperative stemming from the sense of belonging to a given society, whereas *indoctrination* embraces systematic and organised influences on beliefs and points of views, i.e. shaping the individual awareness or groups, which source refers to the ideas formulated by given doctrine represented by social institutions as a family, school, nation or a state.

Thanks to a combination of intentional and unintentional influences, emerging through a chain of interpersonal interactions in social and cultural context, internalisation of socially accepted values takes place, engaging transmission of norms and patterns of behaviour, as it manifests itself through the activities of social environment (family or colleagues), persons (e.g. a parent or a teacher) or institutions (e.g. a school).

The social world, predominantly family and then upbringing and caretaking institutions in which a young person grows, constitute an area where the code of conduct and values are verified within individual awareness. It is an extremely difficult process demanding from its members to be aware selection of choices and subsequent behaviour according to the principles. In contemporary, dynamically changing world, the problem of globalisation, particularly the cultural one, has crucial meaning in a society and individual functioning. Cultural diffusion, enabled by the development of mass media and other tools of communication such as the Internet, made the world a global village. According to Ł. Dawid and W. Kojs, a human "shall not only understand such changes, but also realise that they generate a qualitatively cognitive and existential situation that requires social and emotional skills in order to deal with appropriate co-creation of the reality in accordance to the fundamental educational motto, i.e. "understand the world – direct own self" (Kojs & Dawid, 2003).

Family, upbringing institutions and the caretaking ones should, at least theoretically, constitute places, where – adequately to their possibilities – children acquire knowledge, competences and skills in order to fulfil various social roles in such a diverse surrounding. It must be remembered that a social role is a set of expectations towards an individual

linked to a given social status. It also tackles a set of rights and obligations resulting from holding a given social position. Each human fulfils few social roles at the same time, hence in case of a small child, whose perceptive abilities are limited, it may cause conflict with own self and groups such child belongs to. The ability to resolve these conflicts seems to become crucial task for a family, kindergarten and school.

In such circumstances, according to D. Klus-Stańska, it is of paramount importance to “assign meaning resulting from specific social and cultural experiences that become a unique offer addressed to children by adults” (Klus-Stańska, 2004). Such offers are more or less consciously generated by the subjects, whereas the goals may contradict the gained outcomes as “despite the effort of given institutions, uncontrolled social factors thwarts the efforts leading to disturbing outcomes within the area of meanings” (Klus-Stańska, 2004). The subjects generating offers to a young person include the family, kindergarten and school as areas of manifesting norms and patterns of behaviour in terms of social conduct and values. Within these three institutions, a young man in various manner establishes, or should establish, own vision of the world and own place within. Hence, such institutions should provide children with relatively coherent opportunity to get to know, understand and interiorise values allowing them to exist as social creatures in a society.

## **Intergenerational transmission of values in a family**

Family as a primary group is an institution from the social point of view, but only one of the three recalled where “educational and upbringing plan” does not rely on pedagogical or psychological knowledge recognised by a diploma or degree, but on parents’, grandparents’ or other significant adults’ intuition.

Family, as R. Skrzypniak suggests, is a “stream of processes” (Skrzypniak, 2001), lasting incessantly throughout the life of its members, during which a set of values, principles and norms of a family is being established with reference to:

- own self, i.e. parents towards own parents, parents towards children, children towards parents, parents towards parents (mother’s and father’s grandparents), children towards own self and towards further relatives,
- social environment.

F. Adamski notices that a family constitutes a “spiritual unity of a small group of those gathered within common hearth and home by acts of mutual help and care, based on faith in real or hypothetical biological links, family and social tradition” (Adamski, 1982). On the other hand, A. Giddens points that a family, not necessarily a conventional one (a mother, a father and children), concerns predominantly a group of related persons, where adult members accept the responsibility and care taken for the children, and despite changes and modifications within contemporary structure of family, it still constitutes irreplaceable source of emotional satisfaction for all its members (Giddens, 2004).

From the moments of a child's birth until introducing institutions to its life (i.e. about 3rd year of life), family is a primary socialisation and upbringing environment influencing the child's development, enabling the young individuals to create their human dimension (Giddens, 2004).

Establishing individual system of recognisable and accepted values is predominantly related to the influences of the significant adults (parents, grandparents and closest relatives) that introduce the child to the surrounding world, shaping its attitude to the reality. It is possible thanks to given, specific for each family, intergenerational transmission of values that, as H. Elżanowska claims, "functions as a mechanism that presents generational continuity within the range of manifested values, i.e. indicates similarity between parents and children. Therefore, such process focuses on transmission of values significant for the parents through a unique contact with their children" (Elżanowska, 2012). Moreover, it must be remembered that values exist only in specific conditions "within an area of a complex system referred to as axiological situation, with a human as its centre and decisive factor of its creation, <...> possessing awareness and freedom, being able to self-reflection and creativity (Gołaszewska, 1990).

In a family relation, the axiological situation takes place ceaselessly as in each moment of the everyday life each member of a family is rooted in strong – by and large – mutually positive relations, within given position and simultaneous fulfilment of several roles.

Transmission of values in family takes place according to P. Brzozowski on the basis of two processes. First of them refers to the marriage relation and involves modification of values as a result of mutual influences (so called mechanism of equalising values, related to the interpersonal attractiveness), whereas the second one is related to the process of transmitting values to the generation of children within the process of social inheritance. It takes place within a double course, i.e.:

- directly – through intentional upbringing influences of parents such as modelling, identification, shaping the meaningfulness structure of notions addressed by the parents to children;
- directly – as channels of including values into the personality structure of children by the way of parental attitudes, fulfilling mental needs and emotional atmosphere (Brzozowski, 2000).

Parental system of beliefs plays crucial part in defining the undertaken upbringing activities, what in turn influences the dynamics of child's behaviour and its system of beliefs. Moreover, values preferred by the parents are decisive in terms of direction and method of upbringing influences to a large degree. Nonetheless, not all of the influences shaping child's personality are intentional.

S. Kawula distinguishes four possible types of parental influences towards children, namely:

- unintentional, neutral in terms of upbringing (distinguished theoretically, as even minor activities around the house provide opportunities of imitation),

- unintentional, significant in terms of upbringing;
- intentional, oriented at accomplishment of family's or a given group's goals (such as assigning duties);
- intentional, oriented at accomplishment of upbringing goals present with given society (Kawula et al., 1997).

The last option focuses on shaping life orientation among children, as “it concentrates, among others, on transmission of the heritage and traditions of a given society within culture, shaping desired attitudes, establishing appropriate conditions for school learning and instilling socially valuable aspirations” (Kawula et al., 1997).

The family atmosphere of a given home (so called emotional ambience) constitutes a crucial factor influencing the process accepting or distancing from the values transmitted within a family. The significance of this factor for the intergenerational transmission of values is reflected in its impact on the efficiency of all kinds of influences, as the contents experienced in a given atmosphere fall deeply into a child's mind.

As far as adult life choices are concerned, the experiences of early childhood and the adolescence decide on the hierarchy and importance of the selected values. The hierarchy and importance of the values allow individuals to assess human's behaviour, establish obligation, prohibitions, social and legal norms as well as undertake sanctions if disobeyed. The values recognised by the parents, as Barbara Bulla notices, exert influence on children's behaviour regardless of their age, due to the fact that family functions for children as a point of reference (Bulla, 1987).

The patterns of behaviour, choices made and values are all observed within parent's relations, hence becoming a kind of matrix – point of reference for children that are to establish given relations with their peers or adults. According to M. Ziółkowski, “parental matrixes” determine the cognitive perspective and hierarchy of values of a child (Ziółkowski, 1981). Parents pass on knowledge on the world and ready formulas of perceiving reality to children by intentional and unintentional influences, whereas children – applying processes of identification, imitation, modelling and internalisation – assimilate the values and their systems, subsequently establishing own axiological hierarchy (Elżanowska, 2012).

As a result, a child, remaining in relation with given values, norms, behaviours and declarations (presented by adults out of the family circle) perceives it from the categories of previously adapted values and norms (Elżanowska, 2012). Majority of values and rules of judgment in adult life refer to a pattern introduced by the family.

## **Kindergartens as upbringing institutions**

Kindergarten is the institution that enters the family life as first of such type, since the pre-school age brackets embrace children between 3 and 6 years of age. It is a period

of qualitative and quantitative rapid changes in the course of human's life, as this is the stage when, according to Jerome S. Bruner, "a child acquires skills of internal presentation of major excerpts from the surrounding world applying imitative constructs, with the process of getting to know the surrounding reality of more reflective activity" (Bruner, 1978). Therefore, one of the priorities of a pre-school upbringing is to support a child's growth that is constituted by "defining goals, pedagogical and organizational assumptions and premises of an institution upbringing children at this developmental stage" (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2010). Such care embraces, in compliance with contemporary knowledge, fulfilling developmental and individual needs of a small child, concurrently searching for various ways of its accomplishment. Therefore, noticing deficiencies and retardation of children in order to provide them with earliest possible assistance in their individual educational path is of paramount importance.

Kindergarten is referred to as a caretaking and upbringing institution, and according to the premises within curriculum essentials of kindergarten teaching for kindergartens and pre-school units at school, the function of such institution embraces caretaking, upbringing and teaching priorities. They are accomplished within the framework of common plays (games) and learning in safe, friendly circumstances adjusted to the developmental needs of each child until reaching the stage of readiness to undertake learning process at primary school.

The precise goals and objectives of such institutions according to the curriculum essentials include:

- supporting children in developing talents and shaping intellectual activities necessary in everyday life and further education,
- establishing set of values including such mode of upbringing that would make children aware and able to distinguish right from wrong,
- shaping emotional resistance necessary in new and difficult situations, including handling stress and managing failures,
- developing social skills indispensable in appropriate relations with adults and children,
- establishing condition favouring common and harmonious plays (games) and learning process of children differing in terms of physical and intellectual abilities,
- care for the health and psychical condition of children, their fitness, encouraging to participate in games and sport activities,
- building up knowledge on social, environmental and technical world, developing skills to present own thoughts in a way understood by others,
- introducing children to the world of aesthetics and developing skills to express own self through music, small theatrical forms and arts,
- instilling sense of social belonging (to a family, peer group, national community, etc) as well as patriotic attitude,

- providing children with better educational chances by encouraging their curiosity, activity and independence as well as shaping skills and providing knowledge important in school education.

Hence, such first institution for children is obliged to maintain coherent image of social world with all the rules of interpersonal relation it implies. Such aim is accomplished taking into account “respect towards each child’s individuality, originality and exceptionality, engaging contacts with the surrounding during which the process of learning the reality through activity takes place” (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2010).

Notwithstanding, counselling and supporting families in their upbringing activities is also another essential function of the kindergarten objectives. According to A. Klim-Klimaszewska such activities are reflected in assisting parents in recognising children’s developmental abilities and undertaking early expertise intervention, keeping parents updated on their child’s progress as well as establishing the direction and range of tasks accomplished in such institution together with the parents” (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2010). There are also some general principles of cooperation between parents, caretakers and other subjects involved in the process of upbringing at this stage. They tackle the principle of mutual exchange of information regarding the child, familiarising parents with the didactic and upbringing activity of a unit, raising the pedagogical culture of parents, influencing parental attitudes, as well as integrating children, parents and teachers (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2010). These rules do not embrace all issues that should be taken into consideration both by the caretakers and parents. Nonetheless, the process of upbringing is definitely the more efficient the deeper it is rooted in cooperation between all the crucial subjects involved.

Cooperation between institutions (in fact a given pre-school tutor) and given family in the kindergarten reality must rely on mutual respect, awareness of the role parents play with regards to own child, and a role assigned to a given teacher. Both parties must treat each other as partners, approaching each other with trust and friendliness. The awareness that it is the parent, who plays a crucial part and is of top importance for a child, is a ground for establishing appropriate relations and the caretakers “only” support such a parent. The tutor cannot treat the parent as an unwelcomed client that is nosy, constantly asking about own child and the things which appear obvious for the tutors. Nonetheless, such attitude results from, and reflects, a genuine care for own child. Unfortunately, there are also such parents that care very little about own child and the course of its growth in kindergarten, neglecting it and presenting emotional coldness. If a child is taken care of by the grandparents or growing sibling, then they are also to be treated as partners. On the other hand, if a child is from orphanage or comes from a foster family, relation with subjects directly involved in the process of such child’s upbringing should be also established. In all these recalled circumstances it is not only possible but also necessary to transmit values, on the basis of acknowledged premise that a child is considered by all the subjects as a superior value.

## School as a place of intentional and organised upbringing

School is another crucial institution in the educational system, significantly influencing the development of a young person, with its priority stage, i.e. early school education. Early education is a phase when a child becomes a part of organised social group within rules obliging all its members, thanks to which knowledge on society and culture is established, at the same time constructing own individual and unique image of own self and the world around, last but not least preparing to undertake independent and efficient activities.

Exceptional function of school lies in the fact that it carries out own educational activities intentionally and in organised manner with pedagogical staff and application of appropriate methods as well as suitable equipment and conditions. School class is within school environment the most direct and strongest influencing social group. The social bond existing within such group results from relations between colleagues and friends established both within formal (school class), and informal contacts (friendships etc).

Moreover, school also constitutes cultural environment embracing various aspects influencing given individuals, i.e. elements of social and historical human heritage, referred to as goods of material and spiritual culture. The creations of human activity are constituted by given civilisation, including the law, morality and customs, concurrently making up indispensable aspects of majority of the upbringing influences.

In the school reality, the values and moral attitudes should constitute the source of goals and tasks accomplished within the didactic and upbringing process. According to A. Tchorzewski, such goals and tasks function within framework of three categories of issues, namely:

- “(1) common search for the truth regarding the area of knowledge on the world, accessible to teachers and pupils, considering the reality they are part of and co-create,
- (2) common opening towards the surrounding reality and social life through simultaneous participation and anticipation,
- (3) ongoing motivation to co-create moral stands with objective, ethic values as its subject, emerging within the area of awareness of all those subjects involved in the process of upbringing” (Tchorzewski, 1994).

The author also claims that “the upbringing reality embraces particular role assigned to the third tasks, i.e. shaping moral stands both of the tutor–caretakers and the pupils” (Tchorzewski, 1994), underlining that “a meeting of the subjects of upbringing is the key to discover, experience and accomplish values thanks to which human ceases to be one-dimensional”. For the sake of moral values, both the teachers and their pupils set up own internal and external order basing on truth and tolerance sourcing from total acceptance of the other human. Such premise allows to acknowledge the fact that individual and social human life is not only subject to environmental, political, ideological



or economical laws, but also to values and rights, obligations, and moral duties derived from them” (Tchorzewski, 1994).

The process of their accommodation is a key factor regulating human’s behaviour providing life and existence with deeper meaning. Hence, upbringing and didactic activities draw great deal of attention to the process of shaping comprehension of moral notions, locating them within educational situations enabling children to identify with the socially accepted values.

M. Łobocki claims that “upbringing, abstracting from values including the value of a person as a human, is – beyond any doubt – insecure and superficial” (Łobocki, 1994). The process, thanks to which a child accepts and internalises rules and standards of behaviour from the surrounding is a long-lasting one, and requires adults’ assistance as entering the world of values and moral notions by a child is a complex phenomena.

Within the framework of so called pedagogy of values, the search for ways of introducing children to the world of values and moral notions by teachers (and pedagogues) both theoretically and practically constitutes one of the top priority objectives of the theory of education. The main goals of such pedagogy is to introduce a child to the world of values and basis of moral attitudes as according to K. Ferenz “a human whether accidentally or intentionally, entering given group and at the same time its culture, must get to know at least its general principles for the sake of appropriate functioning within. Such individuals can get to know it gradually through observation or experiencing a situation, or by individual discovery of unrevealed paradigms of the activities in various life situations. Such phenomena, referred to as *socialisation* becomes too slow and costly in contemporary circumstances, both for the individual as well as the group he / she belongs to <...>, hence aware introduction of the individuals to the world of culture, i.e. symbolic dimension of its social reality, namely upbringing, is highly desired” (Ferenz, 2004).

The above-described social environments do not exist in isolation, but are tightly linked to each other, as each of them constitutes a complex system, and crucial factor determining the individual development. Nonetheless, each generates values, attitudes and norms which are not always coherent, hence becoming a specific cultural borderland related to the process of establishing unique, individual and communal awareness. Phenomena and processes of mutual interspersion, overlapping or confronting the cultural identity, constitute in the long run a new type of human with its specific awareness.

In a situation of frequently emerging axiological differentiation between the home and upbringing institution (exemplified by the kindergarten and school with its first phase, i.e. the pre-school or early school education), with contradictory, recognised and accepted values by each of such institutions, it is necessary to fulfil the area of children’s everyday life with opportunities to assign personal meaning to individually adapted and socially accepted values. Moreover, when a child does not find support within post figurative cultures, i.e. closest relative adults (parents or grandparents), there is an axiological gap emerging, fulfilled with patterns of configurative culture, hence the process of experi-

encing values and social norms from the peer group begins (Mead, 2000). Unfortunately, such values often remain contradictory to the socially accepted virtues. Upbringing and educational institutions, embracing all children within the school duty and social mandate to carry out upbringing activities constitute the only areas where such phenomena might be counteracted. Teachers, aware of their role, equipped with specialist, didactic and psychological competences should take responsible approach towards shaping axiological identity of the children taken care of. Upbringing programmes accomplished within school system should contain opportunities enabling pupils to ponder over life, existential choices, and in-depth self-awareness, “brightening up” own set of values, as well as acquiring skills to lead life determined by consciously selected and accepted values.

## Conclusions

The process of rooting children in the social world begins as early as the baby is born and through the processes of socialisation and upbringing, such child becomes a representative of a society. However, there are two institutions inseparable from this process, i.e. kindergarten and school. Still, if it is the family that constitutes first and natural upbringing environment for children, teaching them appropriate behaviour, code of conduct and values. Intergenerational transmission of values is the mechanisms enabling generational continuity, focusing on passing on values crucial for the parents, manifested through a specific contact with their children. On the other hand, kindergarten and school reflect the period when a child becomes a part of structured social group where all pupils are subject to the same rules thanks to which members of such group build up their knowledge on society and culture, constructing their individual and unique image of own self and the world around. Last but not least, it is also the time of preparing pupils to undertake autonomous and efficient activities. Such institutions conduct their upbringing activities in intentional and organised manner, in compliance with curricula taking into consideration socially established upbringing objective, providing the opportunity to shape axiological attitudes appropriate from the social point of view. It is particularly important when a need to modify or reconstruct values of norms appears, especially in the situation of contradiction between values recognised and acknowledged among all the institutions involved. Therefore, only their cooperation and mutual engagement allows to establish coherent image of own self and owning self in the relation to the society.

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# Šeima ir ugdymo įstaigos (darželis ir mokykla) kaip vertybių suvokimo aplinka

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## Santrauka

Institucijos, kuriose vyksta augančio žmogaus socializacijos procesai, yra šeima, darželis ir mokykla. Visų jų bendradarbiavimas ir veiksmų derinimas leidžia vaikui susidaryti darnų savo paties tapatybės ir santykio su visuomene vaizdą. Labai svarbu akcentuoti tai, kad šeima yra pirmoji ir natūraliausia vaiko ugdymo aplinka, mokanti vaiką tinkamo kasdienio elgesio ir supažindinanti su visuomenėje priimtomis elgesio normomis bei vertybėmis. Vertybių perdavimo iš kartos į kartą mechanizmai užtikrina skirtingų kartų vertybių tęstinumą per procesus, kurių metu tėvai, tiesiogiai bendraudami su savo vaikais, įskiepia jiems svarbiausias savo vertybes. Kita vertus, darželis ir mokykla apima tą vaiko raidos periodą, kada vaikas tampa struktūruotos socialinės grupės nariu ir kur visiems privalu laikytis tų pačių taisyklių, nes tik taip visi tokios grupės nariai kaupia žinias apie visuomenę ir kultūrą, kuria individualų ir unikalų savo pačių ir juos supančio pasaulio supratimą. Šiuo laikotarpiu taip pat yra labai svarbu parengti vaikus autonomiškiems sprendimams ir produktyviai veiklai.

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**Esminiai žodžiai:** šeima, darželis, mokykla, kartų bendravimas, vertybės, ugdymas, socializacija.

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