

---

# Teacher-Parent Cooperation and Pupils' Achievements in the Perception of Adult Respondents (Based on the Example of Secondary Schools)

Ewa Musiał

University of Wrocław, Institute of Pedagogy, J. Dawida 1, 50-527 Wrocław, eko@pedagogika.uni.wroc.pl

---

**Annotation.** The school's main objective is to provide broad and comprehensive development of a pupil considering both educational (teaching) and protective aspects. Not only a pupil-teacher but also a parent-teacher vital cooperation is needed in order to achieve school's goals and objectives. The dialogue between pupils, teachers and parents is indeed extremely important and should be kept going systematically throughout pupil's education. Without the cooperation between teachers and parents, accordingly to the assumption: "We (teachers) teach-parents help, parents raise – we (teachers) help. Nothing about us, without us", the effective school improvement cannot be realized. Ultimately, the communication between school and home is necessary to determine child's best interests. The school-home cooperation and the increasing knowledge and awareness in this area is significantly important for the future analysis in carrying out educational researches.

---

**Keywords:** *secondary school, school achievements, pupils, parents, teachers, cooperation.*

---

## Educational achievements – definitional context and factors

Educational achievements of pupils are estimated in the school program, which includes a detailed description of educational effects on each stage of education and the characteristics of the ways leading to achieve them (Pomykało, p. 498) and the results of purposeful action taken by school. At various levels, the attainments should be obtained by the pupils within the cognitive, emotional and social development. In almost every

school there are pupils who are making progress in learning and achieve good results, which relate to the success of their own education, thus implementing the program assumptions. But there are also ones whose progress within the achieved learning outcomes is insufficient. Without achieving success, pupils are less likely to pass coming educational thresholds. For them, it's a losing battle, which is characterized by a subjective divergence between the educational – teaching requirements of the school and the progress achieved by the pupils as well as the results obtained in the learning process (Kupisiewicz, 2006, p. 158), also the divergence between the effort being put in learning (self-assessment) and the school success assessed by teachers (Czarnecki, 2005, p. 127), unlike the school success referred by W. Okoń as a process of complete harmony between the purpose of education and the school requirements as well as the educational achievement and the actual capabilities of the pupils (Okoń, 2001, p. 308). In classic terms, J. Konopnicki believes that the concept of “success” and “failure” at school should always be considered together when success ends, failure begins and vice versa (Konopnicki, 1966, p. 97–98). Therefore, it's once again worth setting a question what is the reason for widely conceived educational success and failures of pupils. Psycho-pedagogical literature on learning points mentions various factors which affect the learning outcomes of children and young people. In general, they can be categorized as follows:

- internal factors related to mental and physical development of a child's individual characteristics. J. Konopnicki defines this category by intellectual reasons (Konopnicki, 19966, p. 97–98), Z. Wiatrowski uses the name of biopsychological and personality causes (Wiatrowski, 1975, p. 211–212), H. Spionek writes about the psychological and biological reasons of school failure (Spionek, 1970, p. 68–77);
- external factors, which include the conditions of a child's life, the impact of proximal and further environment, especially child care and educational work provided by the two most important environments: family and school environment where child is living, developing and gaining experience.

## **The meaning of contacts between parents and teachers**

In addition to undeniable influence on pupils' educational attainment of internal factors, an important determinant affecting the chances of school pupils, mentioned by theoreticians and practitioners focused on this aspect is teaching and educational work, conscious and purposeful educational effort undertaken by teachers at school and by parents at home, also in the atmosphere of mutual cooperation between representatives of these communities. Conclusions of diversified researches presented in the literature and my own observation allow to propose a thesis that majority of teachers are convinced with the above statement, and unfortunately not too many parents. In order to find out people's opinion of the above mentioned, the representatives of the family and the school, which

affects the importance of their cooperation as a factor which determines the success of the school career of students (secondary school pupils), in 2013 I carried out a research based on a diagnostic survey, realized in two secondary schools in the Lower Silesia Province and two secondary schools in the Opole Province. In the diagnosis, I applied the same questionnaire for parents and teachers. Both questionnaires contained three questions: the importance of the cooperation of teachers and parents and school achievement of pupils in the respondent's opinion; the factors which destabilize the cooperation; the opportunities for the collaboration between teachers and parents. 250 parents took part in the survey of secondary school pupils in grades 1–3 (102 first grade pupils' parents, 74 second grade pupils' parents and 74 third grade pupils' parents) and 50 teachers.

## The importance of the cooperation between teachers and parents for the achievements of pupils

The effective teacher-parent cooperation and its organization is obviously very time consuming and requires the commitment and initiative from both teachers and parents. It is worth it though. In the end, the determination and patience will pay off. The teacher-parent cooperation allows teachers to look deeper inside pupil's situation and help to confirm their opinion about them. The parents, on the other hand, with teachers help, become more aware in their role of active careers. This helps pupils in their quest for knowledge, supports their mental efforts, helps overcoming failures and solves different kinds of problem they face each day. The analysis of researches indicates that teacher-parent cooperation which was 'intentional, systematic and made on a regular basis'. The participants notice a number of opportunities to support education in secondary schools. As for the question 'Is cooperation between teachers and parents important for the student's academic achievement?' more than half of the surveyed teachers and parents responded positive. The responses in graphics terms presents Chart 1.

*Chart 1. Responses of teachers and parents in the meaning of their cooperation for school achievements of pupils*

Answers given by the respondents	Teachers	Parents
Yes	80 %	68 %
No	6 %	19 %
No opinion	14 %	13 %

The teachers most commonly justified their answers in a following way: *“The contact with the parents allows to determine a plan which affects students with different levels”*,

*“Parents often do not even try to help children because they don’t have enough competence of the techniques of intellectual work, it can be sorted out by meetings and talking about it, the devil’s not so black as he is painted...”), “A parent should be told about the pupil’s problems and how they can be solved”, “The parents interest is vital for a pupil because she or he knows cheating makes no sense and the parents can always talk to teachers.”* Quite optimistic, at this point, is emerging picture of parental responses to the same question. Many mothers and fathers expressed their positive opinion about the cooperation with teachers which affects their children education. Studies show that those parents, who appreciate the cooperation with the teachers, seem to as well appreciate the contact with the school. In the questionnaire, they wrote: *“<...> a parent who is frequently informed about the child’s progress, can always react on time, and won’t be behind child’s work”, “<...> I believe in teachers’ good intentions, who is looking for the possibilities to get across to my child, and asks me about my perceptions which I could gain during the observation of my child at home, he is trying to help me”, “Secondary school is a tough age, young people reject the authority of the parent, a student who is surrounded by adults may not lose the motivation to learn”, “Only the information received from a teacher on a regular basis gives a complete picture of what is happening with the student at school”, “The kids are fast, sometimes the teacher will tell something what helps to keep up with them, and how to help them to learn”, “though my numerous objections are caused by the fact how teachers communicate with parents – improperly prepared school meetings – the sense of cooperation cannot be undermined, you have to be up to date in order to be able to react in time when things go wrong, when trouble starts.”* Almost 19 % of the respondents doubted in the cooperation, and some respondents (about 13 %) had no opinion about it. The Parents have written for example: *“I attend school meetings and at least I will know what my child’s marks are, and know if my child lies to me...”, “Teachers give advice, which are hard to understand”, “I encourage my son to learn, I help him but it all takes time and I don’t have time at all, the best way would be to do everything at school, maybe during some additional individual classes”, “Teaching in the secondary school is difficult, kids are actually not kids anymore but they are young people, they have to study on their own.”*

## **Sources of interference in teachers-parents cooperation**

In the pedagogical literature, we find a lot of studies describing the issue of the relationship between teachers and parents. Family is also an important factor of educational opportunities for children, it’s often the critical factor. It is a micro-system, used to provide the basic social values for the next generation, and thus it determines the educational achievement of children, as well as their future careers writes E. Marynowicz-Hetka (Marynowicz-Hetka, Piekarski, 1991, p. 130). For school to become friendly, modern and safe place and also a one that is helping students to develop themselves to effectively

carry out its tasks effectively, it must somehow “convince” parents who will co-create the atmosphere, climate of this place, cooperate together with the management, educators, teachers and they will follow the same way and always keep in mind what’s the best for the children. Achieving these goals is possible, if teachers and parents cooperate with each other like partners, with both rights and duties. A parent who is asked by the school to cooperate and knows what is his role will get deep into children’s world, he would want to know what is happening in there, ask questions, analyze, gather knowledge and teachers’ experience. Perhaps he gets more knowledge in the pedagogical field rather than avoid teachers. M. J. Lukšienė-Matjošaitytė mentioned many times in his universal statement that home and school make a young man see the world through values which he learned and which became his own. He starts to respect ultimate good- knowledge and skills. A man becomes open minded, which means not only absorption but also “being open to the world” and therefore being more visible, recognized and even “found” (Szerlag, Walasek, p. 215–226).

Meanwhile, the emerging picture of parent-teacher contact is not as optimistic as before. In the social perception (involved entities) contact teacher–parent means often meetings at school during which, a frustrated teacher is sitting behind a desk, finds his work as unappreciated, he is overworked, constantly criticized and in (tight) benches parents “huddle”, ashamed of their children and being driven into guilty feeling for their pedagogical incompetence. Both sides are afraid of one another, getting a defensive attitude anticipating an attack, they cannot listen to each other, cooperate, etc., looking for an opportunity to avoid contact with each other.

The answers given by teachers and parents provides a way for their disappointment, the process of cooperation. When they are asked what factors destabilizing the cooperation between teachers and parents of students, teachers’ answers include: *“Parents are worse than their children, first it is difficult to persuade them to cooperate, then it is difficult to get along, and once get a compromise it works only for a while, because they are inconsistent”*, *“Parents have no knowledge to help their child even at the stage of a secondary school”*, *“Parents expect a miracle, think that the school will take over their responsibilities in helping their child to learn...”*, *“Secondary school time is the stage when pupils should start being responsible for their education, the fact whether a parent is at school or not it is almost meaningless. At this age, the child would not surrender to the pressure of a parent, might be even against him, or try to fight against adults, the child will do just the opposite to what we want him to do. There is no blame on the parents, the pupils must be willing to work on their own...”* Teachers in secondary schools a “making an alarm”. Parents of teenagers do not seem to be interested in the educational future of their children. To the mandatory parents-teachers meetings at the school come only a handful of adults. *“Such low attendance has not been registered yet”* admit teachers. It happens that for the school meetings with teachers only a few parents arrive. Teachers say: *“Parents are not interested even when the child is expected to get unsatisfactory grade. They explain later,*

*they were at work, or had an important trip”, “It’s high time for parents to stop blaming teachers for the low grades, parents should start feeling responsible”, “Parents who ignore teachers allow children to do the same”, “Neglecting approach of a child often takes a source in parents attitude towards school. Lately a new trend is that everyone should feel good. But parents do not notice that their child behaves differently at home than in a group of peers. This is often the child’s behavior that parents do not accept – they want to have peace, and therefore prefer to avoid contact with the school...”*

The study once again shows a worrying statistic of described phenomenon. Parents in their opinion about the factors destabilizing their cooperation with teachers emphasized arrogant behavior, the lack of pedagogical approach, routine meetings etc. They mentioned among others: *“I do not want to hear again the criticisms of assessments and behavior of my child”, “Teacher still advises, blames, criticize...”, “I hate when a teacher talks about a one student in front of all parents”, “Teacher think that a parent should get along with everything, that he should help the child to learn, and I cannot do it, I do not know much about chemistry or physics <...> even at the secondary school level, probably others also do not know but nobody will admit”, “Why should I do something what doesn’t interest me”, “Teachers treat us like students, all the time they advise us what to do, as if they want us to teach us. But we have a lot of responsibilities, and a teacher at school should learn during the classes <...>, without waiting for the parents to do homework at home”.* It is not surprising that a few parents (even among those who, in the cooperation with the teachers they saw a number of benefits for the child’s educational career) declared regular contact with the school, mainly in the form of participation in group meetings organized by teachers, about half of them are interested seems to be in the form of individual meetings, and the rest, as emphasized that they contact school occasionally, the others contact school occasionally, some from this group of parents meet teachers only on the call made by the school (sometimes as a result of the next prompt-note).

## **Possibilities for cooperation between teachers and parents**

Analyzing the problem of cooperation between families and schools should be adopted following T. Kotarbiński that the interaction of multiple entities considering certain of their activities and because of their specific aims occurs only if each of them helps another entity of the same group or is assisted by any other entity of the same group. Such help is expressed in enabling or facilitating of certain tasks. The extent and nature of parents-teachers cooperation is regulated by the law. What is emphasized is among others the right and duty of parents to systematical and close cooperation with schools and school supervisors, an important goal should be to resolve common issues related to education and child care, and care for their comprehensive development (Kotarbiński, 1982, p. 86). Specific legislation of mutual obligations are mentioned in the Universal



Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Charter of Parents' Rights, the Constitution of Poland, the School Education Act, the Teachers' Charter.

The School Education Act emphasizes that the education system provides among others assisting by school educational role of family, and the primary responsibility of teachers is to do their best for the good of students, care about their health, moral and civic attitude with respect for the dignity of students. Already in the '80 of the last century, the legislature specifically listed the objectives of cooperation between representatives of both communities, emphasizing:

- consistent family and school impact on children and young people in the process of education and care, in accordance with their development and health needs,
- improving the organization of educational and care system at school, in the family and the environment,
- familiarize parents with the education, upbringing and care, organization of education and the ensuing tasks for schools and parents,
- promulgation of upbringing and care functions knowledge in the family,
- parents acquisition for the active participation in the implementation of the curriculum, education, and care and to provide assistance at school,
- creating a proper social climate and material conditions for the operation of the school (*Rozporządzenia MEN z dnia 9 listopada 1988 r. w sprawie form współdziałania rodziców i opiekunów prawnych ze szkołami i organami nadzoru pedagogicznego Dz. U. No 37, poz. 292/ 1988/*).

In 2007, thanks to the School Education Act parents received new important rights which increased their scope of co-decision on important matters concerning the organization and functioning of the school, attended by their children. The purpose of the Parents' Board, is broad integration of parental environments and to create a platform for discussion and exchange of views on all matters relating to the Polish school. In each school calling the parents' board is now mandatory. In practice, however, not all of the opportunities provided by the current legal system, are fully utilized. Parents often want to be more involved in the school life, but do not know how this involvement should look like. A similar, though considering other areas of cooperation is relatively small resourcefulness in establishing active and systematic bilateral relationship, which is characteristic for the teaching profession. The cooperation generated by each school should facilitate the involvement of entities on the level of parent-child-school. In case of preschools as well. The main objectives of such programs for both types of institutions usually means: to develop a completed, friendly, integrative and coherent system of cooperation between school and parents; based on increase of parental involvement in the educational tasks, in the care function of the school, developing a sense of shared responsibility of parents for the effects of preschool or school work, to agree mutual system of educational interactions, to develop friendly cooperation based on a partnership and real dialogue.

What are the opportunities for cooperation noticed by respondents? Teachers almost unanimously stressed: *“the need to take into account the ideas of parents in building the mission and vision of the institution, which educates a child”*, *“the need to inform parents about the lives of students.”* Also drew attention to: *“the possibility of building, to promote the teacher’s authority in the eyes of a child, which would allow more effective educational impact”* and *“increase the involvement of parents in school life.”* *“Parents while in their statements emphasized that teachers’ planning strategies to interact and work took into account that in this respect are the expectations of their parents”*, *“observe the rights to dignity, intimacy parent, family, baby”*, *“in a manner accessible expressed they (teachers) will be your advice”*, *“<...> tried for a good atmosphere at the meetings of the class.”*

## Conclusion

Statute of each school defines: the forms of cooperation, taking into account the right of parents to knowledge of didactic – educational tasks and goals of in the class and at school, knowledge of the rules of assessment, grading and promotion of pupils and conduct examinations at any time, to obtain reliable information about their child and his behavior, progress and causes of learning difficulties, to obtain information and advice on matters of education and further education of their children, express and transmit supervisor pedagogical views on school work, the frequency of organizing regular meetings with parents to share information and discuss the educational topics, etc.

In the context of research results, the cooperation of representatives of both communities is an important factor in the proper functioning of a student at the school, which include determines the harmonious development of students affects their progress. Teachers in their statements clearly emphasized that the student is important, interest in the fate of the school and the contact with the teacher, wrote, inter alia: *“When it is in contact with the parents, you can determine a plan of action...”*; *“The pupils knows that its parent is interested in him, that he cared for him, that does not make sense to cheat because the parent, and so he finds the teacher.”* Parents are trying to somehow enter sowing the context of statements like: *“A parent who is informed of their child’s progress can respond quickly, there will be then up”*, *“<...> the pupil surrounded by adults who are guarding him will not lose motivation to learn”*, *“only to inform a teacher on a regular basis gives a full picture of what is happening with the pupil at school.”*

Mutual support and respect of parents and teachers, and vice versa is a sine qua non for the education of children and youth. Parental knowledge about the functioning of the institution, teacher’s work, school assignments, problems that teachers solve every day – the bigger it is, the more it sustains the effect of education, an understanding of the child on every stage of education. Authentic, lasting interest in the progress of child’s education, behavior and school gives the child confidence, and awareness that he has his



family support in ongoing and planned educational activities. It gives parents a sense of accomplishment as partners who can actively participate achieving the educational outcomes of their children, as well as in the development of the educational institution attended by their offspring. Thus, not only the parents should work together with the school, but also a school should work together with the child's family. The starting point must be the awareness of the role of parents and the teacher, to whom they entrusted their children. In building cooperation, for sure it will be helpful, as evidenced by research: taking by teachers' ideas for parents in building the mission and vision of the institution, which educates a child, mutual respect for the law to dignity, intimacy parent, family, baby, and teacher improvement, in their mutual relations, interpersonal communication.

## References

- Barkauskaite, M., Tijuneliene, O. (2012). Meilutė Lukšienė – inicjatorka pookupacyjnej reformy oświatowej na Litwie i twórca tej koncepcji. In *Wychowanie w rodzinie. Obrazy rodziny w ujęciu pedagogicznym i historycznym (tom V)*. Wrocław.
- Czarencki, K. (2005). *Szkolna wiedza pojęciowa uczniów klas początkowych*. Katowice.
- Encyklopedia Pedagogiczna*. (1993). Warszawa.
- Konopnicki, J. (1966). *Powodzenia i niepowodzenia szkolne*. Warszawa.
- Kotarbiński, T. (1982). *Traktat o dobrej robocie*. Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk, Łódź.
- Kupisiewicz, Cz. (2006). *Podstawy dydaktyki ogólnej*. Warszawa.
- Marynowicz-Hetka, E., Piekarski, J. (1991). *Rodzina i instytucje socjalno-wychowawcze*. Łódź.
- Okoń, W. (2001). *Nowy słownik pedagogiczny*. Warszawa.
- Rozporządzenia MEN z dnia 9 listopada 1988 r. w sprawie form współdziałania rodziców i opiekunów prawnych ze szkołami i organami nadzoru pedagogicznego Dz. U.* (1988). No. 37, poz. 292.
- Spionek, H. (1970). *Zaburzenia rozwoju uczniów a niepowodzenia szkolne*. Warszawa.
- Wiatrowski, Z. (1975). *Powodzenia i niepowodzenia szkolne pracujących*. Warszawa.

---

# Suaugusiųjų požiūris į mokytojų ir tėvų bendradarbiavimą ir mokinių pasiekimus (vidurinių mokyklų atvejis)

Ewa Musiał

Wroclavo universitetas, Pedagogikos insitutas, J. Dawido g. 1, 50-527, Wroclavas, eko@pedagogika.uni.wroc.pl

---

## Santrauka

Vaikų ugdymo pasiekimai nurodomi mokyklos programoje, kurioje detalai aprašomi planuojami pasiekimai kiekviename ugdymo tarpsnyje bei būdai juos pasiekti. Viena svarbiausių siekiamybių – tai iš anksto apgalvotas, sistemingas ir reguliarus mokytojų ir mokinių bei tėvų ir mokytojų bendradarbiavimas. Šeima taip pat labai svarbus vaiko ugdymo galimybių veiksnys, dažnai – svarbiausias. Mokykla, sukurta kaip draugiška, šiuolaikinė ir saugi vieta visapusiškai mokinio raidai, tam tikru būdu turėtų „įtikinti“ tėvus kartu kurti tą aplinką, bendradarbiaujant su mokyklos vadovybe bei mokytojais, ir nuolatos vieningai dirbti vaikų labui. Šiuos tikslus galima pasiekti išvien dirbant mokytojams ir tėvams, turintiems tiek teisių, tiek pareigų.

---

**Esminiai žodžiai:** *vidurinė mokykla, mokyklos pasiekimai, mokiniai, mokytojai, bendradarbiavimas.*

---

Įteikta / Received 2014-01-15  
Priimta / Accepted 2014-06-20