

DOI: 10.21767/2572-5394.100047

## Factors Influencing Healthy Childhood in a Big City Family (Polish Studies)

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Received date: February 16, 2018; Accepted date: April 03, 2018; Published date: April 09, 2018

Citation: Matyjas B, Forma P (2018) Factors influencing healthy childhood in a big city family (Polish studies). J Child Obes Vol No 3 Iss No 2: 7.

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### Abstract

World Health Organization (WHO) recognized obesity as a disease with an epidemic potential. The data in Poland confirms the need to learn about factors influencing health in childhood. Demographic changes occurring in Poland are caused by constant progressing phenomenon of an aging population. The article attempts to describe family factors which determine healthy childhood. The empirical research focuses on the parents' concerns about the proper development of their children, their health and life (one of the most essential care and education tasks). The research was conducted in the City of Warsaw (Poland) which creates specific space of life, particularly for families who live there. Finally, the article attempts to provide typology of childhood in the examined families.

a completely new, legal and social reality acquiring numerous rights, such as the right to perform legal actions, the right to participate in political life or the right to take independent financial and other decisions.

Childhood should be considered in all the aspects of human life and its various, biographical, historical, social, cultural and political determinants.

A contemporary approach to the child and childhood is defined in Polish and Western European pedagogical, sociological and historical literature as "the civilization of child and childhood" [3]. This rediscovery of the child, childhood and research into childhood occurred in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the 1990s. In 2008 "An Introduction to Childhood Studies" by Kehily was published [4]. The author was inspired by scientific reflections on historical, socio-cultural and political approach towards childhood.

It is worth emphasizing that the knowledge of childhood in Poland and in the world was influenced by the holistic approach to the child and childhood. Therefore, anthropological and philosophical context of childhood is widely discussed by social sciences (including humanities) whereas historical, psychological, developmental, sociological and pedagogical contexts of childhood are discussed particularly by social pedagogy [5].

The above-mentioned aspects of childhood and studies of childhood indicate multiple contexts as well as numerous possibilities of analysis and interpretation. The contemporary discourse of childhood is characterized by an interdisciplinary approach to this issue. It shows that the image of childhood is influenced by a range of factors, conditions, phenomena and processes that occur locally and globally. Nowadays the space of the child changes and increases. The range and type of cognitive, social and cultural contacts change and various new sources appear. Childhood is socially and culturally constructed, firmly rooted in the reality of social life. This new paradigm of the research into childhood is reflected by a new research perspective where childhood seems to be socially and culturally constructed. In terms of pedagogy the child is viewed as a subject of personal development [6-8]. It is assumed that children (childhood) are the real part of the society and culture. Children create a social structure that is a part of the society. They do not prepare to become members of the society, but

**Keywords:** Childhood obesity; Obesity; Healthy lifestyle; Mental health; Psychology; Sociology; Pedagogy; Diet; Physically active

### Introduction

In demographics situation in Poland a majority of the respondents declared to be physically active during the week. In some demographic studies, for example in: Population projection 2014-2015, Children's Mental Health (2005) [1] or Ageing Report: Economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), European Commission, Statistical annex, we can read that the percentage of children spending their leisure-time watching TV, playing PC games is annoying. More attention is required from both their parents and the school thereby the relationship between information on healthy life-style and the true attitude/intentions of its creators could be made clear to the children.

In psychology, sociology or pedagogy childhood is defined as the first stage in human life before adolescence. It is described as a fundamental period for human life and development until the age of majority. Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is any human being below the age of eighteen [2]. "The magical moment" of becoming 18 years old dramatically changes the person's life. This is when a child enters

already contribute to the society [9]. Children are characterized by their own perspective of the world [10]. They actively construct their lives and become social actors'.

The subjective approach to the child and to the studies of childhood appears increasingly frequent in Polish analyses and research. However, those taking the child as an object of the study are still common. It should be emphasized that the objective approach also includes subjective perspective. The studies of childhood combine both paradigms, subjective and objective approach to the child (quantitative and qualitative research, so called triangulation of research theory and methods).

In Polish pedagogy, the child is valued not only by their parents but also by the entire society. Pedagogical studies based on humanistic approach are child-oriented. In 1989 the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted [11], where the child is defined as a unique human being, highly valued, in other words, an important subject of social structure. In terms of the necessity of subjective approach to the child, the Convention strengthened the legal, social and political position of the child [9].

Reevaluation of the approach towards childhood, and its subjective perspective has been discussed by James et al. [12], who identified the following characteristics of the new (under development) paradigm of research into childhood:

- childhood is not natural or universal; it is understood as a social construct, specific structural and cultural component;
- analyses of childhood influenced by social factors-this implies understanding of childhood through multiple aspects;
- children-oriented childhood, considered from children's point of view;
- children as active subjects constructing and describing their social life and lives of other people or communities;
- the use of ethnography, particularly useful in the studies of childhood, methodology that takes into consideration children's opinions expressed directly, participation in generating sociological data;
- transformative aspect of the research, which should be associated with involvement and participation in reconstruction of childhood and actions to improve the situation of children.

In Polish social sciences (social pedagogy) the studies of childhood are very extensive and multi-directional. Smolińska-Theiss identified seven components of the changes in the studies of childhood:

- **The first** is associated with changing subject of the research (oriented to children as a social group e.g. poor children, rich children, healthy children, ill children, studying children, rural children, urban children, talented children, foreign children, migrant children, soldiers, beggars, prostitutes etc. each group lives in different conditions, has different problems, different future plans or career prospects);
- **The second** shows that childhood loses its magic charm (children lose their privileges and protection, they enter a

social structure, build their biography, use the family sources, experience the consequences of their own decisions, learn how to be responsible for their actions, bear social changes, they become less children and more citizens);

- **The third** refers to changing space and time of the childhood (the child enters politics, religion, culture, different areas of public space);
- **The fourth** identifies special public space for children, separated from the world of adults e.g. school which moves contemporary childhood from family to an institution with rules, norms and regulations (an approach to childhood depends on the type of school);
- **The fifth** shows that time of child and childhood changes (in historical and real aspects), this is possible thanks to new media, visual transmissions may move time flow vectors, but each child belongs to a specific culture and time; that is why childhood cannot be considered without reference to these elements;
- **The sixth** refers to changing biography of the child, traditional childhood used to be defined in terms of psychology and with reference to the stages of child development; childhood finishes with adolescence when youth period starts; in pedagogical studies the category of so called social age (9-11 years) occurs, when a child enters social life;
- **The seventh** defines limits of childhood (e.g. in EU programmes, in the activities of the Council of Europe, UNESCO, UNICEF), the earliest childhood during the foetal life and first month after birth is mentioned, so it is late childhood at the beginning of adulthood; late childhood is understood as a social status of persons who are dependent on their families; late childhood reflects socializing efforts of the family, shows resources based on which a young person creates his/her biography and, as a result, contributes to social changes [13].

Polish studies of childhood are a part of European and Western European discourse on the contemporary research into the childhood, characterized by ontological approach [8,10,12] according to which various versions of childhood exist and childhood is diversified and determined by family, local and global factors. Different areas of childhood depend on social, cultural, political and economic factors connected to political transformation in Poland (since 1989), globalization processes, determinants of social micro-, egzo-, mezzo- and macro system (Bronfenbrenner's theory) [14]. Specific types of childhood largely depend on the environmental conditions the child is surrounded by. Barbara Smolińska-Theiss discusses different values, cultural and communication codes, social, religious and cultural networks, which acting as resources create everyday life of children [15]. Poor childhood (deficiencies, shortcomings suffered by poor children, children of unemployed or homeless parents, children of emigrants and refugees, street children) threatens existence of the child and family. It constraints individual and social development [15]. The second type of childhood, whereas, defined as cultural childhood-child resources, based on which the child as an active subject of self-development that creates their own biography with the use of

family and social environment resources, construct his/her own daily life [16].

“Good” childhood (good conditions for development and upbringing) is created by family (environmental, social) resources, based on resources, that is to say potential or capital which is used by the child to construct their world. These conditions and situations in daily life are dynamic and in progress (as opposite to static ones).

Other researches in childhood focus on the factors that influence “bad” childhood e.g. poor, requiring social support, passive, etc. These researches discuss deficit, shows basic shortcomings or deficiencies that threaten the existence of families and the development of children. As Smolińska-Theiss proves, the studies characterizing social changes of childhood do not only provide simple diagnosis, they reveal shortcomings of socio-political systems, show injustice of the modern world, harm and suffering of children [15]. Research into the childhood which requires social support have become an important part of the Polish pedagogical studies.

To sum up, the Polish research into childhood (sociological, pedagogical) involve different historical, social and cultural aspects that result from political transformations, the history of humankind, the transformations of families, the position of children in the family and globalization processes (the Internet, as a tool of globalization, is very important in creating childhood). Childhood perceived as social and cultural construct in the research is defined in an objective (influence of different factors on the child) and subjective context, where the child becomes a subject of development, a creator of his/her own space of life. The childhood, from this perspective, seems to be an image of child creation [17] that consists of child impressions, experiences associated with family, peer group, school or social institutions.

The research into childhood are both objective (childhood influenced by upbringing and environment) and subjective (independent childhood, developing and participatory) [18]. There are also researches combining both approaches [14,19]. They might be defined in epistemological and methodological perspectives which emphasize cognition and exploring the issue of childhood and define, based on ontological fundamentals, researcher’s preferences regarding methodology (holistic, interdisciplinary approach to the methodology of various disciplines).

## Childhood in a Big City Family and Its Specificity

The family regardless of the place of living (rural or urban area, a big city) creates space for socialization and upbringing of children. In specialist literature, also in spoken language, a rudimentary, primary function of the family in different areas of activities is emphasized. This is the family where so called primary socialization in different spheres of life (including health) occurs.

The family creates autonomic environment, closed to some extent. On the other hand, it is open to social, cultural, global

and local transformations in the world, including lifestyle transformations-health, physical activity, diet. The child, through participation in everyday situations and interactions with family members, acquires an essential knowledge of the world, the system of values, moral norms, learns how to meet their needs, develop capacities and interests [19].

A big city family has the same responsibilities as any other family. However, its specificity and uniqueness should be emphasized. The family participates in social, geographical and cultural structure of a big city.

Doniec identified characteristics that indicate the directions of modern family structure transformations. They contribute to the process of transition: “1) from a small to a big family, 2) from productive to non-productive family, 3) from patriarchal to egalitarian family, 4) from open to closed family, 5) from family institution to family partnership and friendship, 6) from stable family to busy family, 7) from strong to weak family, 8) from family “community” to family “association”, 9) from family with predominant formal bonds to family with personal and emotional bonds” [20].

Sociological and pedagogical literature identifies a general model of modern family in each country, most of all in big cities. It is typically a small, planned, two-generation family comprising parents and not many children (model 2+1 or 2+2), possessing their own property, economically independent, but having strong bonds with the family of origin. This might be explained by difficult economic situation of many young couples and support offered by their parents [20].

In big city families emotional bonds seem to be a consolidating factor which influences all the family members, including children. Relations with children are characterized by partnership and friendship. Child position in the family changes. The child is considered to have an autotelic value and educational activities seem to be planned and intentional. Parents consider the comprehensive and integral development of the child very important, where health is prioritized. Family is a microenvironment that meets the child’s needs and influence his/her development. The family may create “good” (including pro-health) conditions for life and development of the child or unfavorable conditions for bio-sociocultural development of children.

From pedagogical perspective which refers to overall development and upbringing of children there are two types of parental interactions: the first is unintentional, spontaneous and results from the fact of participation in the family (example of parents); the second involves intentional actions, connected to upbringing activities, including obeying rules and norms of nutrition, hygiene, concern for the child’s health condition.

In the group of family conditions influencing healthy childhood, in a broad sense resources should be mentioned in social pedagogy defined as “human resources” [21] and in modern literature as “social capital”. Possessing, keeping and managing resources is very important for human life. According to Nestmann, “our expectations, our everyday life, our well-being, health, successes and failures, problems and crises depend on resources” [22].

Family resources are all internal and external elements of family environment that facilitate human development. Family resources include potentials of each family member, the whole family and the family living environment. Family resources determine the development, health condition and education of children. Family resources include: parents' age and education background, family type and structure, economic situation, place of living and such family factors as: family bonds, educational atmosphere and pedagogical skills of parents [19].

From pedagogical perspective, economic situation of the family defines family status and status of children and childhood, as well. Many authors, including Smolińska-Theiss mention better educational chances of children and parents who belong to so called middle class and whose incomes guarantee good financial and economic situation of the family [15]. They invest in children, providing conditions for their comprehensive development, families increase their chances of success. A big city area through creating so called "system of opportunities", such as socio-cultural, artistic, sport, places of consumption (where friends and families meet and socialize) and shopping centers helps families to develop. On the one hand, such places contribute to uniformity of life patterns; on the other hand, a big city offers a range of chances, with its city center where local and global components are combined into so called universal environment [23].

The space of big city offers various and multi-functional components, arranged in a way that each social group and each person could find a suitable place to live their life and meet their needs including the need for healthy lifestyle (sports activities, recreational activities, physical activities). Families and children may choose a form of participation in a big city life.

## Determinants of Healthy Childhood in Empirical Research

The big city family (including its resources) who creates conditions for integral development of children was the research subject. The study focuses on factors influencing "healthy" childhood. The research aims includes:

- **Theoretical aim:** to learn and show family conditions (resources) that influence childhood in a big city family, including childhood defined as "healthy";
- **Practical aim:** to outline pedagogical recommendations and guidelines particularly for parents of big city families regarding optimizing conditions for development and upbringing of school aged children (primary school).

The main purpose of the research has been defined through the question: How do parents care for the proper development, health and life of their children?

The quantitative research based on diagnostic survey and author's questionnaires for children and their parents was conducted in Warsaw and in one of schools located in close vicinity to the city center (The research was conducted in the school year of 2016/2017 and involved 114 students of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year and their parents).

First of all, it should be emphasized that care for development, health and life of the child is one of primary tasks of the family. Activities taken by parents are very important because the child's health condition determines overall childhood. Properly developing child will have a chance to be active, curious of the world and of other people. This is illustrated by his/her everyday family and school life, peer relationships and by the proverb: "a sound mind in a sound body", as well.

Parents' activities undertaken in order to provide proper development of children, their lives and health include: care for good sleep of the child (the number of sleep hours, hygiene of sleep), eating habits (meals eaten during the day, the place of eating dinner), clothes condition (clothes relevant to the season of the year, protecting from cold weather e.g. in autumn and winter season), outdoor activities (time devoted to outdoor activities).

Actions connected to the above-mentioned parental tasks are discussed below [14]. They are intended for providing proper living conditions and good health. These are factors that influence "healthy" childhood of the respondents.

The considerations begin by the question which refers to the time children devote to sleep. It is a very important issue because sleep is strongly connected to relax, regenerative processes, mental and physical balance, increased resistance to stress. A good sleep is also connected to the sleep hygiene.

Young body system needs at least eight hours of sleep, which will strengthen body and equip the child with energy for the whole day, increased activity during the day, particularly at school. Sleep deficit will make the child tired, bored and reacting slowly. The child will not be able to develop his/her interest or perform other activities. With reference to the number of sleep hours, the students replied as follows:

- 8 hours-46 students (40.35%): 18 boys and 28 girls;
- more than 8 hours-48 students (42.11%): 29 boys and 19 girls;
- less than 8 hours-20 students (17.54%): 10 boys and 10 girls.
- In total: 114 (100%)

Based on the research findings, parents concerns for good relax and good sleep of their children, being aware of its importance for proper development of their children and their everyday life. In total, 82.46% of the students sleep 8 hours or more. This is a significant majority of the respondents, which allows researchers positive assessment of this situation. However, it is worrying that 17.54% of students do not have enough sleeping hours and relax, which indicates improper approach of parents to the good night's rest. It can be claimed that some parents neglect health and proper development of their children, which is proved by the failure to provide children with regular sleep hours by 20 parents.

The concern for proper development of children, their health and life is also illustrated by balanced and sensible nutrition and the number of meals during the day. Proper nutrition of children is necessary for good health, which is reflected by the child's activity in playing, studying and spending free time.

Students were asked about the meals they eat during the day and where (school/home) they eat dinner.

The results are shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1:** Daily meals eaten by the respondents.

Daily meals	Students' responses N=114	
	respondents	percentage
breakfast	109 (54 boys, 55 girls)	95.61
second breakfast	102 (50 boys, 52 girls)	89.47
dinner	114 (57 boys, 57 girls)	100
afternoon treat	36 (17 boys, 19 girls)	31.58
supper	112 (56 boys, 56 girls)	98.25

The research findings prove that parents care for sensible nutrition of their children. Over 95% of students eat meals at home e.g. breakfast before going to school (less than 5% of children do not eat breakfast before leaving for school).

This is a very important meal for the child, giving energy, strength and stimulating the child to take up school activities. Over 89% of students eat also second breakfast, earlier prepared by the parent and taken to school by the child (10.53% students do not eat second breakfast during the breaks at school).

All the students eat dinner, the main, hot meal during the day, which is very optimistic because dinner is a pro-health and pro-development component required by growing up schoolchildren. Parents satisfy the need for hot meal properly: 98 students (86.73%) eat dinner at home, 23 students (20.35%) eat dinner at their grandparents and 43 students (38.05%) eat dinner at a school canteen. Parents try to provide their children with the possibility of eating dinner at home or at close relatives (grandparents). If it is impossible, they let their children buy dinner at the school canteen. The child is not hungry as he/she may eat at school. Proper development always involves eating

several meals in the day. According to dietary specialists, children should eat five meals during the day depending on parts of the day: breakfast, second breakfast, dinner, afternoon treat and supper.

Approximately one third of the respondent (31.58%) is offered an afternoon treat. This problem has not been investigated, but it might be reasonably assumed that children replace a balanced afternoon treat with sweets and do not call this meal "afternoon treat". It seems that the concept of an afternoon treat is becoming obsolete. However, it is sometimes used with reference to small pre-school and early school children. With reference to older children "afternoon treat" is not used in everyday language. It is rather called a "snack" than an "afternoon treat".

Perhaps children understand and define an afternoon treat in a different way and this is the reason why the research findings about the afternoon treat are not clear enough.

Supper is also an important meal in the day. The research findings here appear to be satisfying: 112 students (98.25%) eat supper at home and only 1.75% of students (2 respondents) do not eat supper before they go to bed. The research findings which refer to eating meals by the respondents show that parents care for their children sensible nutrition which determines proper development and health. The research findings prove that children are not hungry; they eat regularly and follow a balanced diet.

Another concern of parents for their children is to equip them with suitable clothes and shoes, depending on the season of the year, which is very important especially in autumn and winter. This time of the year children might suffer from cold (which results in school absence) if they do not wear warm clothes.

In order to look into the matter of proper clothing that protects children from cold, the respondents were asked about clothes and shoes they wear depending on the season of the year. The responses are included in **Table 2**.

**Table 2:** Possession of clothes and shoes suitable for all seasons of the year.

Possession of clothes and shoes suitable for all seasons of the year	Students' responses*	
	respondents	percentage
attractive (e.g. brand clothes)	67 (34 boys, 33 girls)	59.29
good-fashionable	65 (25 boys, 40 girls)	57.52
average	15 (9 boys, 6 girls)	13.27
poor	0	0
very poor	0	0

\* possibility of multiple choice

The majority of students claim to wear attractive, good and fashionable clothes and shoes, whereas 13.27% of the respondents judge their outfit as average (but still protecting from weather conditions). There were no complaints about bad or very bad clothes or shoes. It might be assumed that thanks to

their parents, school children are well protected from weather conditions in different seasons of the year. Students feel well-dressed and highly appreciate the quality of their garments.

Caring for life and health of their children, parents undertake activities to provide pro-health conditions for development.

These actions may take various forms. The respondents were asked the question: What does your family do for healthcare? The responses are presented in **Table 3**.

**Table 3:** Parental concerns about the child's health (students' responses).

Forms of parental concern about the child's health	Students' responses*	
	respondents	percentage
regular doctor's appointments	51 (27 boys, 24 girls)	47.22
healthy diet	47 (27 boys, 20 girls)	43.52
shared physical activity	56 (31 boys, 25 girls)	51.85
medicines boosting the immune system	55 (25 boys, 30 girls)	50.93
others	14 (5 boys, 9 girls)	12.96
* possibility of multiple choice		

All the respondents claim that their families care for health.

There are different forms of pro-health activities undertaken by the families: doctor's appointments (including specialists) when the child feels unwell, a balanced diet (proper nutrition), shared physical activities (walking, cycling, rollerblading, swimming) and taking medicines to boost immune system (vitamins, diet supplements). In the category "others" the respondents provided various answers.

These are some of the replies (only 14 students used here their own description):

- If I feel unwell, I go to the doctor, then I take medicines prescribed by the doctor
- I do sports (karate)
- I wear clothes suitable for weather conditions
- I drink pro-health yoghurts
- I wear warm clothes
- Cupping therapy
- Regular hygienic practices

The respondents emphasized that if they feel unwell (cold or similar medical conditions); their parents take them to the doctor. In terms of health, parents look after their children not only day-to-day, but also when they feel sick or ill.

For regular and proper development, a child needs a substantial amount of fresh air, which is pointed out by doctors and specialists in pedagogy (pedagogy of health, social pedagogy) [24] because physical effort affects all the spheres of child development: physical, intellectual, psychological (emotional) and socio-cultural. Providing healthy life as an essential component of proper upbringing [25] is one of parental responsibilities.

The students were asked the question: How many hours a day do you spend on active leisure? The responses are included in **Table 4**. The data included in the table show that the

respondents spend active leisure outdoor (skateboarding, cycling, playing football, outdoor gym) every day.

**Table 4:** Outdoor leisure activities.

Time allocated to outdoor leisure activities (daily)	Students' responses*	
	respondents	percentage
several minutes	8 (5 boys, 3 girls)	7.14
half an hour	29 (11 boys, 18 girls)	25.89
1–2 hours	48 (22 boys, 26 girls)	42.86
2–3 hours	16 (11 boys, 5 girls)	14.29
more	11 (7 boys, 4 girls)	9.82
no response	2	-
Total	114	100
* number N=112 (lack of 2 answers) represents 100%		

Over one third of the respondents (33.03%) spend active leisure in the open air from several minutes to half an hour. A significant majority of the students (67.58%) spend from 1-2 hours to 3 and more hours outdoor. It might be claimed that parents encourage their children to spend active time in the open air after school. This way parents promote healthy and active lifestyle. 89 students (78.07%) claim to have sports equipment at home.

Developing pro-health attitude such as physical activities or sports will bring good results in the future. Physical activity, especially in the open air, allows children to regenerate body system, get rid of fear or stress and have positive attitude to other people and to the world. Thanks to physical activity children may study effectively, develop their interests and successfully function in different spheres of life. Based on the research, parents consider physical activity of their children very important for health and proper development.

The results of the research into parental concern for proper development, health and life of their children prove that parents look after their children very well.

The results are more than satisfying. Specialists in pedagogy might be happy because children seem to have healthy and physically fit childhood (with good nutrition, better quality and amount of hygienic meals, proper time and amount of sleep).

It may be assumed that the big city childhood is affected by different factors, such as family factors (majority of parents have high level of education, parents' professional career, good and very good financial situation, the type of family-complete and small) and those associated with specificity of living in a big city.

Parents have good professional career and social status. It might be expected that their level of education strongly influences the situation of their children. Parents' professional career and educational background affects the position of children in family, living conditions and healthcare. Good living conditions and financial situation contribute to "good" and

healthy childhood, which is proved by the responses of children and their parents.

## Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Looking at the problem from different perspectives in the study, the currently dominant trends in society changes the family life, preferred-consumer style-life, and the style of mass culture, the mass media and the Internet is the prime concern of introducing public education programs in the field of health, both educating and enriching the colloquial knowledge about its subject, including its protection. It is also important to promote positive health behavior patterns and to consistently consolidate a healthy lifestyle through cooperation of various environments, including scientific, socializing and bringing up young people and children, not excluding so many mass media that are currently significant in the social life. Only, it seems, an integrated and well-thought-out model of activities in this area can be effective.

The big city family creates a specific space of socialization and education rooted in a big city as place of living (its geographical and spatial location, educational institutions, cultural places and sport facilities) characterized by transformation processes (it is typically a small, nuclear family, democratic and egalitarian, where the child is highly valued) and transformations in educational awareness and social as well as professional status of parents. Parents living in cities place emphasis on comprehensive and integral development of children, including healthcare, which is proved by the research results.

Family and family resources are the main factors affecting healthy childhood. Majority of the families involved in the research were complete, with well-educated parents and characterized by good financial situation [26], most of them with 2 children (67 out of 114 families), 30 with one child and 17 with 3 children.

Based on the research findings, it might be claimed that parent look after life, health and general development of their children properly, which is manifested by their actions. They provide healthy childhood based on the family resources.

Empirical data show that childhood of the respondents may be defined by high status (high level of parents' education, parents' professional career, complete family, 2+2 model of family) and characterized by wealthy lifestyle (social status, living conditions), regular in everyday life: sleep hygiene, proper nutrition, clothes suitable for weather conditions, parental concern for health condition of their children, meeting the needs resulting from physical development (outdoor physical activities, doing sports).

Conclusions and recommendations reached from the research findings should be promoted not only among the respondents, but also among all parents who bring up school-aged children. The role of social education (different forms and institutions) should not be underestimated. Pro-health activities that contribute to healthy childhood and healthy adulthood in the future need to be promoted. Continuous health education of parents affects their pro-health activities towards their children.

The knowledge of human health generates healthy life style, which is very important in the modern world dominated by work and professional career.

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