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## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS TOWARDS SCHOOL IN THE CONTEXT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE UPBRINGING AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CHILD**

The school environment is the second after the family most important social group that satisfies the child's existential and developmental needs. There are complex socialization processes present in the family and school, which are shaping the cultural awareness and expression as well as the initiative and entrepreneurship of the young person. They are being equipped with social competencies that enable them to act independently in adult life.

The family provides them with the first patterns of behavior, experience, and social bonds. It is a source of emotional support and information on how to overcome difficulties. It is the basis for the development of interpersonal skills, which determine their further development. The effective upbringing of children is a task that overwhelms many parents. School activities are often the complement, and support for the efforts of the parents.

School's specific function consists of the transfer of values, skills and competences. Raising awareness and socialization of children at school takes place in an organized

and programmed way through specialized teaching – learning activities (Kozubowska, 1997; Kowolik, 2003).

The consistency based on partnership and cooperation of school and home environment is the key to ensure the effectiveness of their actions. Their mutual goal is the high quality of upbringing and education. The teacher, as a professional entrusted with the child, should show greater activity in mutual contacts with the parents of his students. Building these relationships should start with defining the expectations that each parent has towards the school in terms of responsibility for education and educational achievements of their child. In good school, those are the subject for reflection and a foundation for creating effective cooperation strategies.

## **FACTORS CONDITIONING THE CREATION OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE FAMILY AND THE SCHOOL**

Each educational institution has a set of organizational status. The generally accepted rules and requirements governing the functioning of the school are included in its statute. Teachers and specialists thanks to their training have high interpersonal skills and their everyday contacts and focus on the organization of life in the school strengthen the social ties that integrate the team.

Parents are not so well organized. They bring their kids to school and for half a day they are absorbed with work or other duties. In the age of electronic grading systems, they do not even have to look into their children's notebooks and workbooks to find out how the young ones are doing. In these circumstances, they are only guests and clients of the school, and for teachers, the school is like a second home.

So what should the teachers do to make parents feel like co-hosts of the school? Parents are interested in how the school stimulates the child's desire for knowledge. They can be helpful in improving the educational process when they are noticed. Not infrequently, the decisive influence on the quality of the parent-school relationship is the attitude adopted by the teacher. If the teacher is open to dialogue, it can encourage joint development of effective ways to strengthen the child's cognitive activity. The most desirable model of cooperation between teachers and parents is a system in which both sides have a sense of making the decisions on issues important for the student together with the teacher.

A teacher who inspires parents' trust is the one who:

- knows their attitudes, emotions, and fears;
- anticipates parents' fears and traumas, calms them down;
- is patient, open to opinions from outside but assertive – talking to parents, they take into account parents' views, but does not succumb to pressure, takes difficult problems in relations with them in a non-confrontational manner, knows how to explain the motives of their decisions;

- is sure of their competence;
- comes out with the initiative;
- has a strong professional intuition supported by knowledge and experience;
- has a didactic vision based on the diagnosis of children's abilities – knows how to lead them, how to use their potential, knows their fears, dreams, home situation makes note of their efforts.

“The teacher works in a dynamic reality – that is, open to variability [...]. They meet with students, parents, teachers [...]. These meetings require continuous dialogue between educational partners, as well as taking into account the common interpretation of the world and values” (Sikora, 2016, p. 57).

An extremely important variable is the way the teacher communicates information regarding the student's developmental efforts to their parents and the integration of the activities of all three entities. There are many proposals:

- individual:
  - individual consultations – arranged meetings to explain problems and discuss related methods of joint preventive actions, possible sources of support, etc.;
  - “open door” – systematic teacher's duty for parents feeling the need for individual conversation;
  - a notebook for correspondence – a notebook in which teachers and parents provide current information related to the child's life at school and at home (necessary utensils, upcoming class events, child's well-being on a given day, noticed difficulties, explanation of unintelligible messages sent by children);
  - electronic journal – mutual transfer of the aforementioned information by means of electronic mail;
  - telephone calls – in cases requiring immediate contact (child's unwellness, unexpected fortuitous event) and decisions related to the child's safety;
  - “Skarbczyk” (treasure book) – notebook, in which the student collects “treasures” (stickers, stamps) confirming any additional initiative of the child outside the school, e.g. obtaining the necessary information, preparing a presentation, doing additional homework, participating in competitions, winning successes, helping in organizing additional ventures;
- group:
  - general meetings – conducted by the teacher, but also by the willing parent (agreeing with the other participants on the topic of the meeting, conducting discussions and formulating conclusions);

- open classes – adaptation, demonstration (enabling observation of the child in relationships with peers), based on the joint action of adults and children (Mother’s Day, Grandmother and Grandfather Day, Christmas Eve, Family Day, class picnic, etc.)
- meetings aimed at educating parents – lectures, practical workshops, discussions, talks to help solve the problems found;
- notice board – current information on the organization of the class’ life (additional student achievement, planned activities, materials required, proposals for participation in competitions);
- permanent exhibition of interesting pupils’ work – artworks, interesting essays, constructions, results of experiments, effects of implemented projects;
- workshops conducted by pupils;
- preparing a fair with creations of children and their parents in order to raise funds for the needs of a class or a member of the school community in need;
- a parent as an expert – the use of his professional or hobby skills to organize activities with him, bringing students closer to the area in which he operates;
- a trip to the parent’s work establishment – the use of a parent’s professional contacts to conduct classes and experiences in the natural environment.

When the parents of students understand the legitimacy of their presence at the school, they willingly give their time and energy. When their commitment to the common goal is carefully considered and appreciated, they become part of the class team and decide to co-create the school. Integrated parents and teachers modify and improve their work. For the school, they are the basic social capital and support for the students’ efforts. Mutual respect, trust, and cooperation strengthen the activity of the pupils, which gives them a chance for success in learning.

The research team led by prof. Goddard from Ohio State University (OSU, USA) has analyzed the influence of various factors on the effectiveness of teaching. It was carried out in dozens of randomly selected American primary schools and showed that social capital proved to be a factor determining students’ educational achievements to a greater extent than the budget, property resources of the institution, ethnic problems or previous successes (Salloum et al., 2017).

Teachers and parents looking for ways to improve the school in an open dialogue create a climate that is conducive to changes aimed at creating a student-friendly place.

By undertaking joint actions they give an example of effective communication and creative solution of the problem. At the same time, they are preparing a new generation (students) for the challenges of the future, they are mobilizing to take the effort to “go further” and participate in lifelong education (Gajdzica, 2008).

“Trust in interpersonal relationships (relational trust) belongs to the social sources of school improvement, it facilitates the formation of beliefs, values, organizational procedures and individual behaviors that cause causal influence on student involvement and learning” (Węgrzyn-Jonek, 2015, s. 6).

## COOPERATION OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN TERMS OF EDUCATION

This part covers mainly notifying the parent about the child’s educational achievements. These are:

- student’s knowledge and skills;
- successes;
- capabilities;
- above-average skills;
- learning disabilities.

Parents’ opinions about their child and their interest in their effort to be in the world are very inspiring. The student finds their way much better in school duties when they feel that his parents want him to broaden his knowledge and acquire new skills. If the expectations of the school and the home coincide, then students do not manifest resistance to doing homework, preparing for tests, using the correct language or following to the instructions of the teacher. The indifference of parents to the education of a child makes it difficult for them to accept the requirements.

Too little commitment of the teacher to support parents in solving the child problems in learning leads to their helplessness and greater psychological distance to the school (Żłobicki, 1998).

How to get parents interested in the achievements of their children? In addition to providing reliable information on the child’s developmental progress, teachers are required to indicate ways of satisfying the observed needs and to establish joint activities supporting their efforts to broaden educational competencies.

The presence of a parent at school is difficult for all three entities of interaction (student – teacher – parent). The student is aware of the control of their activity and behavior by their parents. The teacher, apart from working with the student, must do additional (sometimes much more difficult) work with their parents and guardians. The parents, in turn, undertake a dialogue with the awareness of their own school experiences and with the fear that their previous educational efforts and ideas about the beloved child will be verified by a specialist and may not always be approved.

During meetings with the teacher, parents have the right to different behaviors, and teachers should recognize them and try to modify them for the common good (Michcińska, 2009).

## COOPERATION OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN TERMS OF UPBRINGING

In terms of upbringing, the teacher can interact with the child's parents in the following fields:

- supporting the development of their moral, intellectual, artistic and physical advantages;
- correcting what is maladaptive, undesirable or harmful to an individual or society;
- shaping the character of the student in accordance with pro-social patterns of conduct;
- preventing the risks that their children may encounter (preventive actions) (cf. Garstka, 2015).

Expectations of parents towards the school are focused primarily on care and education. However, the character, aspirations, and feelings of the child are the sphere of their personality, for which they want to be responsible (Gawlin, 2006).

No parent likes to be evaluated, especially when their educational mistakes are noticed. They are disappointed then. They are frustrated with their inefficiency and the lack of expected results of their efforts, but the causes of these failures are sought in external sources and they take a defensive stance. They satisfy the need for being a good educator of their child by over-caring or grievances and claims against a school and they begin to be seen as a "conflict parent." To avoid this, we need to appreciate their intentions and understand the reasons for frustration. Only in this way can a beneficial, effective and creative dialogue be established.

The lack of understanding between the family and school in the process of raising a child causes:

- slowing down the process of their socialization;
- providing the child with double norms and values from those who are significant to them – ones from the teacher and the other from their parents;
- inconsistency in the child's perception of social reality;
- searching for alternative rules and role models in informal groups, not always socially desirable.

Therefore, it is the field of the teacher's activities, in which they should show special sensitivity, patience, and tact. Non-invasive communication between the teacher and the parent is the basis for maintaining good relations with them. Building a parent's trust in the educator is a process that involves noticing the child's needs, skillfully handing them over to the parent and convincing them to create a common strategy to empower the young man in his social experience and maturation to independence. In the atmosphere of mutual trust, the parent will share with the

educator his own observations and already worked out methods of dealing with the child. A responsible and open educator can supplement them with his/her theoretical knowledge, experience and results of observing a child in a group, indicate ways to deal with unusual and difficult situations, as well as actions delaying their initiation in various risky behaviors.

The harmony of socializing activities of both environments gives them:

- a sense of security;
- high level of self-esteem;
- the ability to establish satisfying contacts with peers;
- courage to take on new social roles;
- a motivation for group activity and responsibility for its members;
- a sense of belonging.

Each teacher has to develop their own communication strategy with their parents and specify their rights and obligations so that they would like to invite the teacher to co-create conditions that would facilitate the child's development.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS TOWARDS SCHOOL IN THE LIGHT OF RESEARCH**

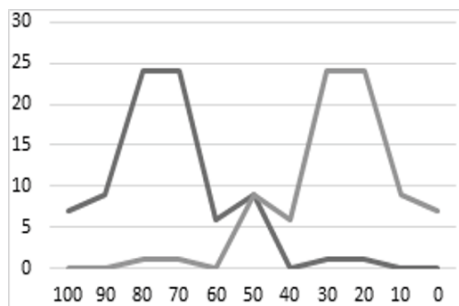
The research was carried out as part of the internal evaluation in the school year 2017/2018 among 149 parents of children attending elementary school and junior high school in the School Complex No. 19 in Bydgoszcz. Parents of children of grades I-III were excluded from research because they are obliged to take care of the child on their way to school and have many opportunities to maintain even spontaneous contact with the educator. This decision resulted also from the difference between these two groups of parents (different parents' involvement, independence of children, expectations of teachers), which was revealed during pilot studies.

The aim of the research was to determine how parents perceive their participation in the didactic and educational process of the child and what are their expectations in this regard towards educators and teachers, and what forms of support they expect in the emerging problems. The following specific problems were formulated:

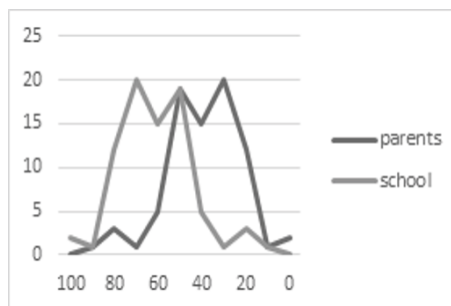
- In what proportions the school and home are responsible for raising and teaching the child?
- Which school functions do parents consider the most important?
- What forms of contact with the school do parents prefer?
- What forms of help do parents expect from a school in case of undesirable behavior of the child?

- The diagnostic survey was used as the basic research method in which a non-standardized questionnaire was used.

Studies have shown that parents assume the overwhelming responsibility for bringing up a child, and they perceive school to be responsible mainly for the child's knowledge.

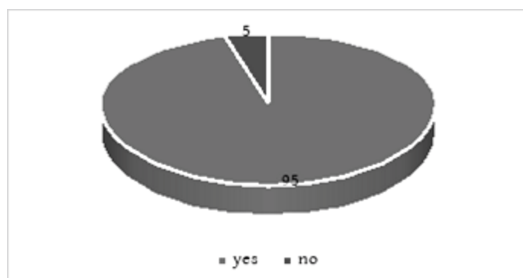


**Figure 1.** Responsibility for child upbringing  
**Source:** author's study.



**Figure 2.** Responsibility for child knowledge  
**Source:** author's study.

This is confirmed by their answers to the question whether a parent should engage in child's learning.

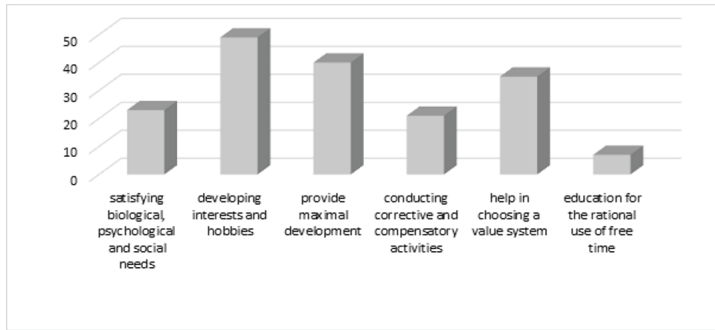


**Figure 3.** Involvement of parents in child's learning  
**Source:** author's study.

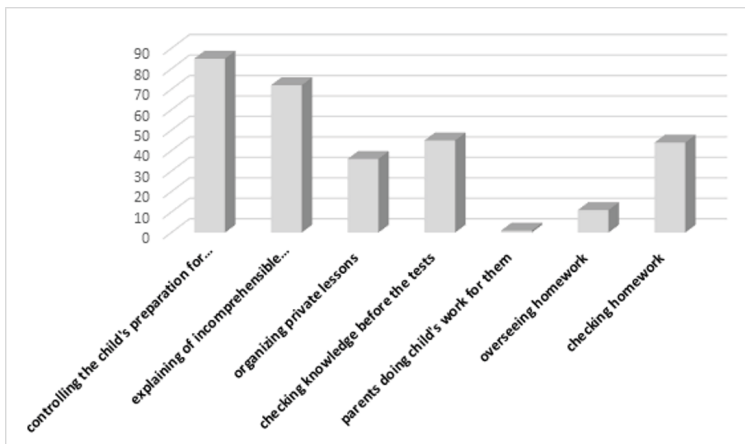
Expectations of parents towards the school focus on developing children's interests and passions, as well as on providing conditions enabling the child's maximum development. Help in choosing the value system is seen only in the third place.

Parents small participation in supporting the development of a child is usually understood as controlling a child's preparation for school and explaining incomprehensible material. Parents were also given an open question on what other ways could a parent work with their child, but it was left unanswered.

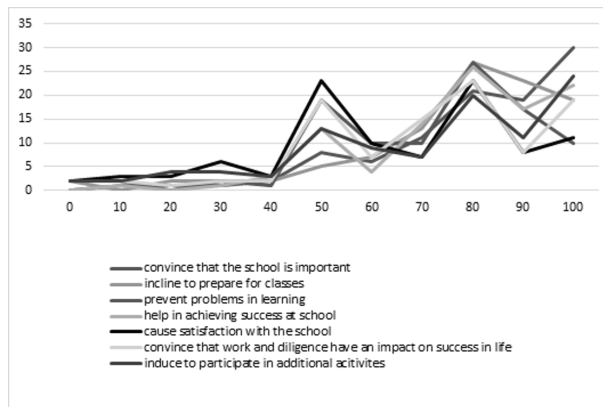




**Figure 4.** The most important functions of the school in the opinion of parents  
**Source:** author’s study.



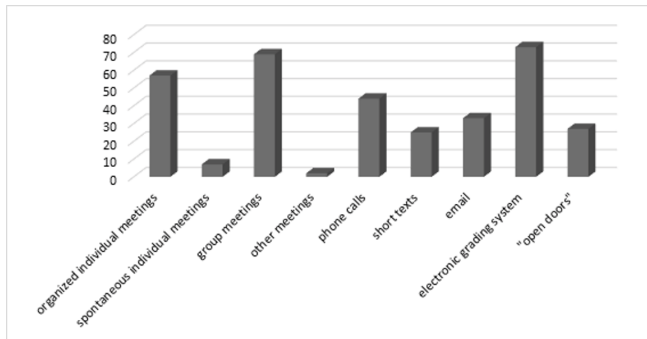
**Figure 5.** Ways to support the child’s cognitive activities by their parents  
**Source:** author’s study.



**Figure 6.** The feeling of parents’ influence on various situations related to the functioning of their child at school  
**Source:** author’s study.

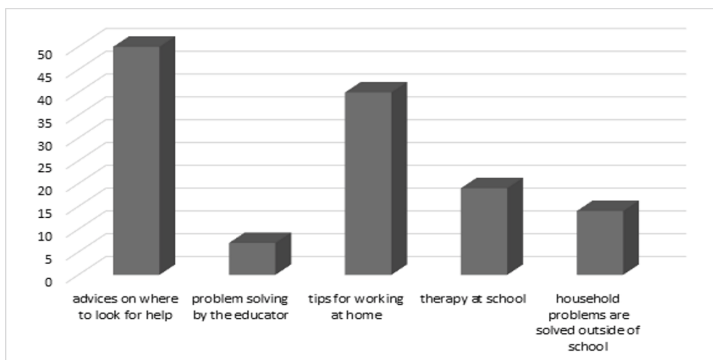
They believe that they are able to convince the child that the school is important and encourage them to take part in additional classes. Most of them are convinced that this is how they can strengthen a child's motivation to achieve more at school. Parents, however, do not see their significant participation in child's satisfaction with cognitive and social activity in the peer environment and they do not see how they as parents could prevent educational difficulties of their children.

They are most willing to stay in touch with the school through an electronic grading system and through group and individual meetings, but not through "open doors." They do not expect proposals for meetings related to their greater involvement in the organization of school life.



**Figure 7.** Parents' preferences regarding forms of contact with the school  
**Source:** author's study.

In terms of undesirable behaviors of the child, parents expect to indicate the place or person from whom they will receive help, as well as advice on how to work with the child outside the school. It is frightening that as many as 14 percent of the parents' opinions are focused on the statement that domestic problems are solved outside of school. It can be concluded that they will do a lot to conceal the educational situation at home.



**Figure 8.** Expectations of parents towards school in the event of undesirable behavior of the child  
**Source:** author's study.

The research results analyzed and described above illustrate the parents' opinions towards the issue of education and upbringing of their children. They show that the majority separates the functions of the school and home, and only a small group sees the success of their children in support activities in both environments complementing each other. Parents are not aware that the school is an important link in the process of upbringing. Therefore, it is important to have a real impact on a school's organization.

Parents' participation in school life will not be important if they do not decide for themselves, but instead, they need to be encouraged and helped to exist in the school structure. For this to be possible, they must see the connection between their involvement in creating the school's climate and the behavior of their child.

If the teachers help parents enter the school space, they will familiarize them with the program and moral requirements for their children, explain what and how they learn, what benefits everyone can get from correct and effective relationships, they can count on parents' activity not only at home but also outside of it.

Knowledge on how the child functions at school allows parents to get to know a child's real capabilities and thus formulate more adequate requirements and expectations towards them and help them more effectively when they have difficulties. It gives them a sense of influence on what is happening to their children, what and how they are taught, how they are treated (Babiuch, 2002).

There is no better way to acquire parents than to include them in the school activity and develop comprehensive forms of cooperation and giving them the opportunity to "dive in" the atmosphere of the school and experience the educational process in which their children participate (Piotrowska-Gromniak, 2018).

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## EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS TOWARDS SCHOOL IN THE CONTEXT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE UPBRINGING AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CHILD

**Keywords:** parents at school, teacher's cooperation with parents, parents' expectations towards school

**Abstract:** There are complex socialization processes present in the family and school, which are shaping the cultural awareness and expression as well as the initiative and entrepreneurship of the young person. Effective upbringing of children is a task that overwhelms many parents. School activities are often the complement and support for the efforts of the parents. Building these relationships should start with defining the expectations that each parent has towards the school in terms of responsibility for education and educational achievements of their child. In good school those are the subject for reflection and a foundation for creating effective cooperation strategies.

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## OCZEKIWANIA RODZICÓW WOBEC SZKOŁY W KONTEKŚCIE ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚCI ZA WYCHOWANIE I OSIĄGNIĘCIA EDUKACYJNE DZIECKA

**Słowa kluczowe:** rodzice w szkole, współpraca nauczyciela z rodzicami, oczekiwania rodziców wobec szkoły

**Streszczenie:** W rodzinie i szkole zachodzą złożone procesy socjalizacyjne kształtujące świadomość i ekspresję kulturalną oraz inicjatywę i przedsiębiorczość młodego człowieka. Efektywne wychowanie dzieci jest dla wielu rodziców zadaniem, które ich przerasta. Dopełnieniem, a często wsparciem ich starań są działania szkoły. Budowanie tych relacji należy zacząć od określenia oczekiwań, jakie ma każdy rodzic wobec szkoły w zakresie odpowiedzialności za wychowanie i osiągnięcia edukacyjne jego dziecka. W dobrej szkole są one przedmiotem stałej refleksji i warunkiem tworzenia skutecznych strategii współpracy.