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# School and family cooperation as a contemporary challenge to axionormative chaos in society

# Współdziałanie szkoły i rodziny, współczesnym wyzwaniem wobec chaosu aksjonormatywnego w społeczeństwie

**Abstract**

Various social environments consciously and deliberately, or unconsciously, undertake educational goals. A family is the first and extremely important educational environment for a child. The upbringing process in a family in modern times may be hindered by macro-social conditions that affect the risks of parental interactions.

School is also an important educational environment. It conducts educational tasks in a deliberate, conscious, and intentional manner. The analysis of the actual educational role of school is critical because it does not fulfil its assigned educational functions.

Both family and school have similar goals for raising children and students. Therefore, the issues of cooperation between these two entities should function in everyday interactions. Family and school cooperation, on the one hand, optimizes the process of raising children, on the other hand, is an important component of eliminating or reducing the educational threats that dysfunctional social centres can transmit causing axionormative chaos in children and adolescents.

**Keywords:** family, school, upbringing, social changes, cooperation, values

**Streszczenie**

Różne środowiska społeczne podejmują w sposób świadomy i celowy bądź nieuświadomiony cele wychowawcze. Rodzina jest pierwszym i niezmiernie ważnym środowiskiem wychowawczym dla dziecka. Proces wychowania w rodzinie we współczesnych czasach może być utrudniony uwarunkowaniami makrospołecznymi, które mają wpływ na zagrożenia oddziaływań rodzicielskich.

Ważnym również środowiskiem wychowawczym jest szkoła. Realizuje ona zadania wychowawcze w sposób celowy, świadomy i zamierzony. Analiza rzeczywistej wychowawczej roli szkoły jest krytyczna, ponieważ nie wypełnia ona swych przypisanych funkcji edukacyjnych.

Zarówno rodzina, jak i szkoła mają podobne cele wychowania dzieci i uczniów. Stąd też zagadnienie współpracy między dwoma podmiotami powinno funkcjonować w codziennych oddziaływaniach. Współdziałanie rodziny i szkoły z jednej strony optymalizuje proces wychowania dzieci, a z drugiej

strony jest ważnym komponentem eliminowania bądź ograniczenia zagrożeń wychowawczych, które mogą przekazywać dysfunkcyjne ośrodki społeczne, powodując chaos aksjonormatywny u dzieci i młodzieży.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rodzina, szkoła, wychowanie, przemiany społeczne, współdziałanie, wartości

## Introduction

Each human individual in their ontogenetic development, functions in different social environments. Social environments that are especially important for the upbringing of children and young people include family, school and parallel (non-school) upbringing centres such as social media, the Church, community centres, clubs, organisations, associations and local authorities. Educational tasks are to a greater or lesser extent, included in the functions of each of these social environments. Educational entities operating in the local environment (family, school and other institutions) are relatively autonomous institutions.

Each of these social environments undertakes its own system of educational, axiological and socializing interactions. To a small extent, these entities identify themselves in the need for cooperation of jointly adopted educational goals, transmission of values, culture of behaviours and model of social and moral functioning of the young generation. There are serious doubts and reservations in the area of mutual relations and socialization and educational goals undertaken by social institutions responsible, by their nature, for the multilateral development of children and youth. The barrier to the lack of educational cooperation of family, school and social institutions is incompleteness or lack of agreement; even a conflict of interest is manifested in some social situations. Axionormative chaos among contemporary youth is caused by educational interactions, uncoordinated by various social entities, and the transmission of values which are not always recognised in society, social norms and culture of behaviours.[1]

## Family as an important entity of educational interactions

In the educational process, a family is the primary social, emotional, cultural and caring environment, which from the moment the child is born, teaches them specific behaviours, recognized values, first words and views adopted by parents. The quality of parental interactions with the child depends, above all, on intra-family conditions, such as educational awareness, emotional and social bond between family members, home atmosphere, culture of family life and the level of satisfying

[1] A.M. de Tchorzewski, *Rodzina w czasach współczesnego chaosu aksjonormatywnego*, "Studia Pedagogica Ignatiana" 2019, No. 2.

the psychosocial needs of the child, as well as cooperation of parents with caring and educational facilities (kindergarten, school) in which the child functions.

Education in a family environment, as Stanisław Kawula states, "can be intentional, planned and conscious on the part of parents (reflective), just like in direct education institutions (e.g. school) and can take place in a random and spontaneous (non-reflective) manner."[2] Deliberate educational interactions in a family are more effective in the implementation of parental tasks; educationally beneficial situations are consciously created in the family community, shaping specific personality traits of children.

Family upbringing is defined in a broad sense by Wincenty Okoń. In his opinion, the educational process in a family consists of "caring and nurturing activities of parents towards children… educational activities in the field of physical-health, mental, moral-social, religious and aesthetic education… Activities such as parents' attitudes and behaviours, the emotional and cultural atmosphere of family life and children's participation in housework, as well as family cooperation with school play an important role in family upbringing."[3]

In the social environment of a family, in which parents have a high level of pedagogical culture, a certain system of educational influence is created in a more or less conscious manner. In the implemented caring and education system, parents adopt certain educational goals and rules of conduct in the family which are recognised in society and local environment towards themselves and their child, as well as pedagogical methods optimizing the child's upbringing.

The importance of family in the child's upbringing is significant, especially during the first years of their lives, because parents are the first and only, emotionally closest people who, through nurturing, caring and playful activities, teach them behaviour worthy of being a family member; they teach them sensitivity, thinking, and culture of family life. During infancy, post-infancy and pre-school life, close emotional ties between parents and a child are more important in the child's upbringing than the upbringing methods used. Emotional and social bonds in a family are expressed through parental love, kindness and accepting parental attitudes, meeting psychological and social needs, including frequent and direct physical contact and verbal dialogue with a child.

The compliance of parental activities undertaken in the family environment, with the recognized values and norms of behaviour in society, is a good example for the child to follow, both as regards behaviour of the family community and among the peer group.

Education in the family environment is indirectly correlated with the atmosphere of home life. A family atmosphere full of kindness, displays of mutual love, respect, dialogue, understanding, emotional and social support, is a liberating motivation for children to take over their parents' educational persuasion, values and social

[2] S. Kawula, J. Brągiel, A.W. Janke, *Pedagogika rodziny*, Toruń 2007, p. 95.

[3] W. Okoń, *Nowy słownik pedagogiczny*, Warszawa 2007, p. 94.

norms. Intergenerational transmission then provides continuity to the behaviours passed on by the family, but also determines the optimal direction of educational interactions by parents in relation to children.

Within the family environment, in addition to socio-emotional relationships between parents and the child, well-thought-out educational methods are undoubtedly an important element in the educational process. From the "youngest developmental periods of the child, through the phase of school life and adolescence, parents should employ educational methods with varying degrees of intensity appropriate to the age and individual mental characteristics of the child."[4]

The most beneficial pedagogical methods in the process of raising a child within a family environment are: rewarding and punishing, educational control, parents' example, creating educational situations, persuasion and dialogue with the child, as well as the cooperation of parents with educational institutions. Consciously used educational methods within the family environment optimize the development of children in various spheres (emotional, social, intellectual, moral, axiological), as well as shapes their personality traits.

In the upbringing of children within a family environment, in conscious and intentional, as well as unconscious interactions, both the mother and the father should fulfil their parental duties with great care. The mother should do this by showing unconditional love for the child in every family situation, by showing care, emotional support and full acceptance of the child, along with satisfying their psychological and social needs. The father, on the other hand, in the course of a friendly and educational dialogue with the child, at the same time creating socially and emotionally beneficial situations in everyday interactions. This provides the child with a sense of security and belonging to the family community, sets a model to follow and inculcates social values.

The quality of educational interactions within a family environment also depends upon the level of parents' pedagogical culture. The high level of this culture is manifested in daily educationally friendly interactions between parents and the child. It is also expressed in the caring and educational responsibility for the life, education and culture of children and skills in supporting their socially positive behaviours and correcting the unfavourable ones.[5]

The process of upbringing within a family, undoubtedly expands its scope and meaning if parents interact with the multilateral functions conducted by school. This applies to didactic, educational, caring, organisational as well as recreational and leisure functions. The cooperation of parents with the teacher – educator and school enhances the authority of parents and school educators on the one hand, and on the other hand, it activates and motivates children to undertake various educational and upbringing tasks, consolidates positive behaviours acquired in primary

[4] H. Cudak, S. Cudak, *Społeczne i emocjonalne funkcjonowanie współczesnej rodziny*, Warszawa 2020, p. 47.

[5] M. Winiarski, *W kręgu pedagogiki społecznej*, Łódź 2017.

family upbringing, and directs joint upbringing activities of the family and school in relation to children.

Many modern families show parental insufficiency. The consequence of this failure may be a dysfunction of the family in the social, emotional, caring, cultural and axiological spheres. The upbringing process in the family environment is threatened by elements of intra-family life such as:

a) increasing conflicts between parents and parents and children in various domestic situations, including caring, social and upbringing situations;
b) the consequence of intra-family conflicts is the creation of an unfavourable, often traumatic home atmosphere, in which there is nervousness, stress, aggression, as well as indifference to the caring and upbringing of children;
c) emotional, social and economic bonds between family members are weakened. Eliminating these bonds results in internal isolation of the child in the family environment and a sense of loneliness;
d) an increase in non-family responsibilities (social, professional, political) of the father and mother causes the formation of avoiding parental attitudes which poses a threat to, or even eliminates, the dialogue between parents and children;
e) low educational awareness of parents; the consequence of this condition is a threat in the sphere of responsibility for the child's life, a low threshold of sensitivity to the psychological and social needs of family members and lack of educational skills;
f) an asymmetry in the educational methods used in the parenting interactions. Parents more often punish, rather than reward the child, which has little pedagogical justification;
g) cooperation of parents with educational institutions, mainly school, is active when the child is in early stages of education (grades I–III). On the other hand, in the older classes of primary and secondary school, cooperation with teachers and class educators is reduced or completely eliminated, both in the area of teaching and raising the child.

## School as an entity of educational interaction

After the family, the second most important educational and upbringing environment for a child is the school. W. Okoń presented multilateral and important elements of the school's function as an educational institution. He defined it as an "educational institution dealing with the education and upbringing of children, youth and adults, applying the goals, tasks and educational concepts and curriculum adopted in a given society; These goals are achieved by appropriately trained teaching staff, educational supervision, premises and equipment, as well as budgetary support from the State Treasury, local governments or other sources."[6]

[6] W. Okoń, *Nowy słownik pedagogiczny*, p. 383.

The school as an educational environment, bears responsibility for the students and the level of their upbringing. At school, students expand their individual experience gaining knowledge and shaping norms and patterns of behaviour recognised in the global society. The educational institution educates in an intentional manner, targeted in accordance with specific goals, using the knowledge and pedagogical experience of teachers and school counsellors.

The school institution plays an important role in the development of children and youth in the didactic, caring, cultural and educational areas. First of all, it shows concern by preparing them for independent social participation, for proper performance of professional work and active participation in cultural life, both in the local and macro-social environment. The educational institution influences not only the intellectual sphere of students, but also takes care of shaping appropriate social and moral attitudes. The school teaches and educates in accordance with the applicable statute and curriculum in a planned manner, with the help of specially prepared teaching staff. At school, students establish much wider interpersonal contacts than it is possible in a family environment.

The educational role of school should be primarily focused on the following areas of its activity:

a) cooperation of teachers, educators with non-school institutions (city and municipal governments, social media, cultural centres, clubs, associations, the Church and others operating in the local and macro-social environment;
b) cooperation with parents as an important partner in the education, upbringing, caring and socialization of children and adolescents;
c) improving the educational and social environment of school for the multilateral personal development of students;
d) formulating specific axiological, social, cultural goals and their consistent implementation in the course of educational activities;
e) developing a sense of sensitivity to the need to support individuals and groups at risk in economic, social and health functions;
f) shaping the attitude of care and protection of the natural environment, which is degraded and destroyed by the development of civilisation;
g) developing the ability to recognize moral timeless values, as well as rational dialogue and tolerance towards other views;
h) eliminating in pedagogical activities the functioning axionormative chaos expressed in various social environments, including primarily social media.

The aforementioned functions of the school as an educational institution are quite extensive, but important for the development of global society, local environment, family and students as individuals functioning in society.

The analysis of the activities of modern school is critical in many areas of its functioning. Tadeusz Lewowicki draws attention to "the use of political and administrative supervision over schools that change the basic goals and tasks or

formulate them so vaguely that it allows for various manipulations, curriculum changes, objectionable requirements for students and teachers."[7]

The author also proves that in modern school, there is a growing educational chaos, resulting from ill-considered organisational and curriculum reforms of primary and secondary education.

In addition, attention should be paid to the asymmetry in the implementation of pedagogical activities at school between educational-caring and didactic functions. The tasks contained in the didactic curriculum far exceed the educational problems. There is a visible failure to solve difficult socialisation situations of students. In the process of learning and upbringing, teachers secondarily expose the hierarchy of the system of values, especially the universal ones, such as freedom, tolerance, democracy, justice, support for the weakest and security.

The school's cooperation with the students' parents is insufficient and is usually limited only to parental meetings. This weakens the emotional and social bonds between the school institution and the important educational entity – the family. There is also a serious shortage or lack of cooperation between the school and non-school institutions operating in the local environment. The parents' expectations of school in the field of parental and educational counselling are not fulfilled. Therefore, the pedagogical culture of parents is at a low level.

One of the important functions of the school is to cooperate with the students' family as an important educational environment. The unification of the upbringing process by teachers/educators and parents is an important challenge of modern times, in which axionormative chaos and increasing confusion of values are manifested in society.

## Cooperation between school and family as important educational entities

Social environments, educational institutions, including cultural and art centres, social media, school and family are autonomous entities. Each of them pursues its own goals, tasks, cultural, axiological, social, political and educational content, having some importance in the upbringing and socialization of children, adolescence and the adult part of society. However, the main responsibility for the course of life, the hierarchy of values and preparation for functioning in society, belongs to school and family. These two extremely important educational entities have similar goals for the multilateral shaping of the personality traits of a child in the family and a student at school; consequently, they must cooperate with each other. Dorota Smykowska rightly expresses the view that "the issue of school cooperation with students' parents

[7] T. Lewowicki, *Edukacja między utopią a nieutopinym światem. Garść refleksji w nawiązaniu do koncepcji trójjedni: rodzina – szkoła – instytucja społeczna*, "Studia Pedagogica Ignatiana" 2019, No. 2.

should be one of the elements of planning and organising school life. This means that parents and school should, on a partnership basis, be equally responsible for both the child's education and its bio-psycho-social-cultural development."[8]

Smykowska's definition of cooperation embraces an overly general understanding of this concept, but includes its basic significance, which includes partnership in organising and planning education and upbringing and responsibility for the multilateral development of children.

A concept closely related to cooperation is collaboration. It is understood by Henryk Czerniawski as "taking action for a common goal, based on identification with this goal, trust, loyalty and acting in the interest of all participants while maintaining the accepted rules of communication and conflict resolution."[9] The term given by Czerniewski contains content concerning social entities, including individuals or certain human groups. In relation to school and parents, cooperation should be defined as taking multiform actions by these two social institutions, in favour of common educational goals for children, in which there is identification with the adopted goals, expressed in mutual trust, loyalty, equivalence of rights and partnership in actions. The aim of cooperation is to optimize the process of upbringing, education and socialization of children and youth.

When analysing the definition of cooperation, collaboration and partnership, Barbara Lulek[10] treats these concepts in an ambiguous way. A feature of collaboration is the provision of assistance by entities, with one (school) fulfilling the leading role, while the other (parents) being involved in the process of achieving the undertaken goals. On the other hand, cooperation sets a further goal, divided into partial tasks, with mutual communication between the school and the family. Partnership should be understood as the equivalence of rights and obligations in decision-making.

The view should be adopted, despite the ambiguous understanding that between the entities of school and family there should be both cooperation, collaboration and partnership in educational interactions.

Teachers and family in open dialogue should look for ways of mutual relations, upbringing in the family and school environment. In the literature on the subject, three types of cooperation are most often given in the classification in order to optimize upbringing in the family and school environment. Distinguishing them is based on the number of people participating in meetings. These include collective, mixed and individual forms. According to Andrzej Ładyżyński,[11] teachers most often use collective forms of cooperation with parents, during which at least several parents participate at the same time. They can be referred to as a conference, a meeting or a meeting with an expert.

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[8] D. Smykowska, *Współpraca szkoły z rodziną w zaspokajaniu potrzeb rozwojowych dzieci z lekkim upośledzeniem umysłowym*, Kraków 2008, p. 11.

[9] H. Czerniawski, *Współdziałanie potrzebą czasu*, Lublin 2002, p. 12.

[10] B. Lulek, *Współpraca szkoły, rodziny i środowiska*, Rzeszów 2008.

[11] A. Ładyżyński, *Rodzina we współczesności*, Wrocław 2009.

Mixed forms of cooperation include, among others, the activities of parental representatives or parental councils. Individual forms include consultations, home visits or telephone calls. Most often, they complement and enrich collective forms.

In addition, collective forms, in the form of participation (cooperation) of parents with the school, not mentioned by Ładyżyński, also include joint organisation of school celebrations, participation of parents on school open days, school patron days and other school and state holidays.

An interesting form of cooperation is also pedagogical training for parents organised by the school management or class teachers.

The result of cooperation between the family and the educational institution should be the integration of both social environments, and the quality of educational goals depends upon the degree of their integration. When undertaking the difficult task of creating an optimal program of cooperation between school and parents, employees of the educational institution must bear in mind the positive attitude towards parents.

The process of optimizing socialization and upbringing of children is possible when various social institutions, including primarily school and family, have a wide area of mutual understanding, shared educational and caring activities, searching for beneficial ways for the multilateral development of the child's personality in the family environment and the student's personality at school.

However, in the actual educational activities undertaken by school and parents, mutual caution and even distrust in their social and often emotional relationships are observed. Parents fear the school's critical assessment of the upbringing they provide. Parents' assessment of the school's and teachers' educational work is also at risk. Both the negative opinion of the educational role of parents and the educational role of school, are suggested by social media. Critical assessment of the cooperation of educational institutions with the family environment results in the formation of parental attitudes towards the undertaken educational activities of school in the form of adaptation, inertia and opposition. Adaptation of parents is usually limited to following the instructions of the school and the teacher. Inertia manifests itself in the passivity and indifference of parents to the educational requirements of the school. The opposition is the parents' attitude of rejection or conflict in relation to the actions taken by teachers and educators towards students.

Nowadays, various social institutions, including social media, in their cultural, axiological, socialization and educational activities convey, in a more or less purposeful and conscious manner, their own opinions, goals, views, assessments of social, moral and ethical phenomena. These values, in accordance with the interests of autonomous socio-cultural and educational entities, are often implemented in a manipulated manner, appropriate in their content to the needs and recognized values and social norms of a specific institution.

The axionormative message of functioning social environments is often exposed by such behaviours as: striving to acquire a professional or political career,

increasing material goods in order to "have" as much as possible, rather than "be," promoting new traditions and cultural behaviours, consumerism, including the pleasure of consuming, intolerance towards other views and minority groups, conflictual and aggressive behaviour towards weaker human individuals. This causes children and young people to acquire secondary socialization and confusion of the value system hierarchy.

Therefore, in the face of contemporary axionormative chaos, it is necessary for the school and parents to cooperate in order to develop, on the one hand, the unification of upbringing trends, beneficial in the axiological, cultural and moral-ethical sphere; on the other hand, they must, a rational manner, indicate to children and adolescents the threats contained in the messages of social environments, including the mass media, in order to select knowledge and eliminate negative attitudes, social relations, behavioural norms and values conveyed by these centres.

It is in the interest of the family to raise their children in a way that they would identify in their lives the allocentric, social and cultural behaviours and values recognized by the general public, in order that they can function positively in the community in the future. School as an educational institution must also implement universal values in its curriculum: tolerance, freedom, democracy, justice, truth, help for the needy and the weak, care for the natural environment, culture of behaviour, respect for the law and social norms. Similar and even unanimous educational goals of school and family undoubtedly make it necessary to undertake joint cultural, axiological, ethical and social activities, in order to eliminate axionormative chaos in behaviour and consolidate positive personal traits and pro-social attitudes of children and adolescents.

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