
Education of Parents as a means of support to Family Care of Small Children

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OMEP International Conference, Tromso, Norsko, 7–11/ 8/ 2006

Basic idea

- **Family life education:** educational activities whose goal is to enhance the quality of family life
- can be seen from **micro-level:** this kind of education may increase the sense of wellbeing among its specific individual participants
- as well as **macro-level:** educating parents may help to prevent social deviation

Parenting education

- the most crucial segment of family life education
- aimed at changing or improving parenting knowledge and skills within the family system
- is based on the assumption that disintegration of traditional family bonds has brought about destruction of natural ways of passing-over family know-how in extended families

Research questions:

- *to which extent Czech parents of small children are involved in the process of parental education as well as to which extent Czech parents are motivated to participate in the future and/or what are the potential obstacles of their participation*
- *whether and how institutions of preschool education (crèches and maternity schools) as well as other family-supporting institutions can participate in educating parents of small children*

Methodology, recourses

- *Data from a representative survey of adult education in the Czech Republic performed in Spring 2005 (N = 1,413, population between 20 and 65 years of age)*
- *Data from two case studies of two maternity schools, a crèche and a Centre for Family*

Care of children from birth to 3 years of age

- care within the family
- crèches (from 6 months to 3 years of age)
- maternity schools (primarily designed for children from 3 to 6, but can accept a 2-year-olds if free capacity is available)
- private care options such as au pairs, micro-crèches, childminding etc.

Participation in family-life and parenting education

- only a very marginal part of Czech population participate in family life education: within last 12 months 2% of respondents, intention for next 12 months expressed 3% of respondents
- “self-perpetuating effect”: 55% of respondents who have participated in the past have intention to enter again

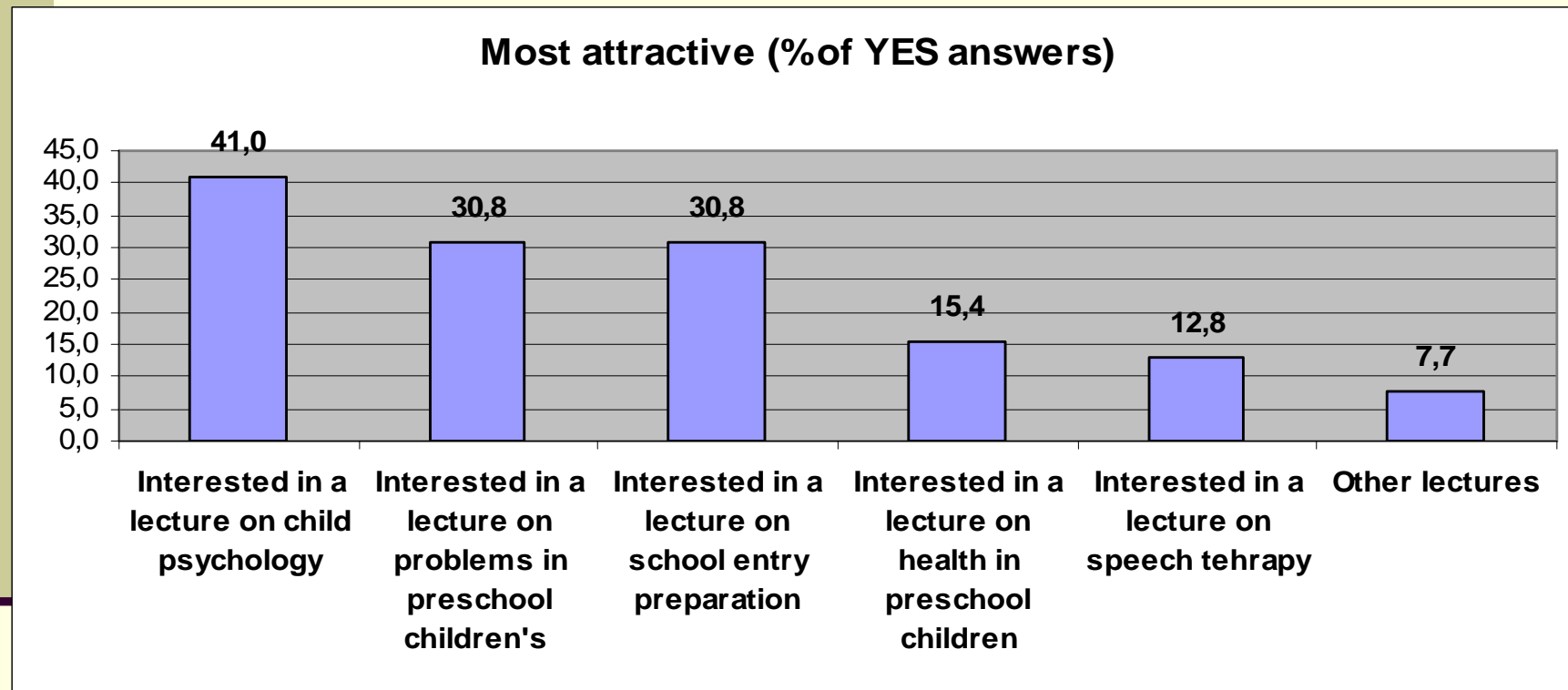
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- gender polarity: 80% of those who attended this education during last 12 months are women
 - level of formal education: university degree holders are overrepresented significantly
 - life-cycle: no correlation between family development stage and inclination to get involved in family life education

The offer of parenting education – an example of a crèche and maternity school

Table 1: Response of parents to an invitation to attend a lecture given by an invited expert

Response to an invitation to attend a lecture		
Positive, will attend	59 %	23
Cannot attend	28 %	11
Will attend, but reluctantly	8 %	3
Do not want to attend	5 %	2
Total	100 %	39

Graph 1: Topic preferences regarding lectures by experts



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- *“Many parents like our approach, but keep behaving authoritatively towards their children. Parents themselves need to be educated not to apply the same authoritative parenting approach they had experienced as children.”*
 - *“Parents often do not even know what they should.”*

Conclusions

Our findings suggest that the most active providers of family-life and parenting education are all kinds of NGO. Maternity schools and crèches can also have some potential for becoming a space for parenting education, but both sides have approached this opportunity with caution so far. Take-carers and teachers representing these institutions are anxious about a potential unwelcoming attitude on the part of parents, or strive to maintain the very existence of their institutions, while parents have not overcome their reservedness towards institutions embodying their not very good childhood experience. Overcoming such a barrier is rather hard and takes time.