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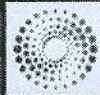





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# HealthMED

Journal of Society for development in new net environment in B&H



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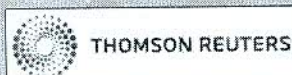
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# Quality of family interactions and mental development of preschool children

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## Abstract

The basic premise where this research starts is that the quality of interactions in a modern family is correlated with mental development of children, affecting the progress or delays in their mental development. The research sample is consisted of 148 mothers of children aged between two and six years from preschool institutions in Petrovac at the Mlava, Valjevo, Kruševac, Žagubica, Paraćin, Jagodina and Belgrade. To collect data on family interactions, modeled on the McMaster model, we used the shortened version of the Todosijević questionnaire that examines open communication, emotional warmth, joint solving of problems, hostility, disorder, and alienation in family interactions.

In collecting data on the status of mental development of children we used the questionnaires designed for this study and based on the norms of mental development of children by Ivić and collaborators, which examine dimensions of intellectual, emotional and social development. We assumed that all the dimensions of family interactions are associated with all mentioned dimensions of mental development of children. The results show a statistically significant correlation between the tested dimensions, confirming all of the initial assumptions. The results suggest that the family and family interactions strongly influence the overall mental development of preschool children and highlight the importance of education of parents in this sense in counsel bodies as well as in all other educational institutions.

**Key words:** Contemporary family, family interaction, cognitive, emotional and social development of children

## Introduction

According to the interactional view, which is in line with modern genetics, the influence of biological and social factors is needed for the full devel-

opment of a person (Popper, Eccles, 2002:112). In other words, the ways of a personality's development depend both on its organic preconditions and on the social environment in which he or she develops. The prerequisites for organic mental development are primarily morphological and functional maturation of the cerebral cortex (Shaw, Greenstein, Lerch, Clasen, Lenroot, Gogtay, 2006:678). Social impacts are directly intertwined with the processes of growth, development and of organic maturation, and are consisted of all elements of the social environment in which a child lives, and this is above all, his or her family. The family and family interactions are directly involved in the ways of mental development (Marley, 2004:182). Family atmosphere, the quality of family interactions between parents and children, the level of sensitivity and stimulation in care of the child are the most important predictors of children's mental development and, ultimately, of his or her mental health. Sensitive parents or parents who are emotionally involving in interactions with children and provide them a stimulating family environment, have undoubtedly raised children who are cognitively, emotionally, socially and mentally healthier and more prosperous (Bjorklund & Pellegrini, 2000; Pancsofar, 2008:1702).

Given the importance of family, it is worth noting in this context that the large and rapid social and cultural changes are reflected on all the characteristics of modern families. Economic insecurity, uncontrolled flow of information, increased divorce and family abandonment, with increasing employment of parents (while the unemployment rate gets higher), then, division of roles in raising, upbringing and education of children between families and preschool institutions and schools, alternative forms of family and marital life, the collapse of traditional morality and the creation of new values of consumer society – all these factors certainly foster modelling of entirely new forms

of family functioning and new forms of family interactions. In a complex assessment of the impact of modern families in the mental development of children, one should take into account several factors, but most notably: family composition, family relationships, family function, parental personality, the pace of development of family relationships, the way children are brought up, the system of values and behavior norms in a family, social relations and the culture in which families exist, and many other important facts about the family. Of course, it is impossible to include all these factors in a study. In this paper we make an attempt to investigate in what way the quality of family interactions affect the mental development of children.

The theoretical framework of this paper is the McMaster model of family functioning (Epstein, 1978:23), which posits six dimensions of family interactions important for a family functioning. These are: 1) *solving problems*, defined as the ability of families to solve problems at a level that maintains effective family functioning, 2) *communications* relating to information exchange in a family, i.e. whether the communication is open or covert, direct or indirect, 3) the *role* dimension is related to established forms of behavior by which individuals fulfill their family functions, focusing on whether the roles are distributed appropriately, explicitly, through free discussion, and whether these are performed in a responsible manner; 4) *affective response* is defined as the ability to respond to various stimuli with the appropriate quality and quantity of emotion; 5) *affective involvement* is defined as the degree to which the family shows interest and evaluation of activities and interests of family members, with several possible degrees of involvement, from complete lack to symbiotic involvement, with medium levels to be understood as the healthy ones, and 6) *control of behavior*, defined as practices adopted by families in order to regulate behavior in specific situations - physically dangerous situations, situations involving satisfying and expressing psychobiological needs and instincts, and situations involving socializing within and outside the family. Also, the starting point for this research is the theoretical grounds based on the Development map by Ivić and collaborators (Ivić i sar., 2004) which purports the correlation of qualities of family interactions and of all aspects of a child's mental de-

velopment. In other words, the interactions guided above all by parents (and by educators), implying cooperation, emotional involvement and warmth, have stimulating effect on mental development, while interactions involving exclusion, coercion, threat, emotionally distanced interactions, have destructive influence on development of all aspects of a child's personality. One should keep in mind in this context that the family interactions are one of the two most important factors (the other is the constitutional type of a child) leading to occurrence of psychopathological phenomena in the age of child's development (Kondić, 1998:23).

## Method

### 1. The subject and problem of research

The subject of the present research is to assess impact of interactions of family members on mental development of children. Given such a set of the subject, the problem of this research could also be posed as question whether family interactions, defined by harmony, hostility, disorder, and alienation in family interactions are associated with the degree of mental development of a child living at home, and attending a preschool institution within the appropriate age group, as defined by indicators of cognitive, emotional and social development.

### 2. The aim and objectives of research

In accordance with the subject matter and with the problem of this research, the following aim and objectives of research have been defined.

**The aim of this research** is to determine and explain whether there is a correlation between family interactions and the degree of mental development of a child living in the family.

To achieve such a specific goal of the research, it is mandatory to realize the following **research tasks**:

- To determine whether the open communication in family interactions is associated with cognitive, emotional and social development.
- To investigate whether the emotional warmth in family interactions is associated with cognitive, emotional and social development.
- To examine whether the joint solving of problems in family interactions is associated with cognitive, emotional and social development.

- To determine whether the hostility of family interactions is associated with cognitive, emotional and social development.
- To investigate whether the disorder in family interactions is associated with cognitive, emotional and social development.
- To examine whether the alienation of family interactions is associated with cognitive, emotional and social development.

### **3. Hypotheses of the research**

Starting from the goals and objectives, we have posed the following hypotheses:

#### **The general hypothesis**

It is expected that there is an association of family interactions and mental development of a child living in the family.

#### **Specific hypotheses**

It is assumed that there is a correlation between an open communication in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. Children living in families with open communication, display prominent cognitive, emotional and social aspects of their mental development.

It is expected that there is a correlation of emotional warmth in family interactions with the cognitive, emotional and social development. Children living in families with emotional warmth display prominent cognitive, emotional and social aspects of development.

It is considered that there is a correlation of common solving problems in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. Children living in families in which members jointly solve problems, display more prominent aspects of cognitive, emotional and social development.

It is assumed that there is a correlation between hostility in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. Children living in families in which there is hostility in family interactions, display less pronounced cognitive, emotional and social aspects of mental development or have difficulties in certain aspects of their development.

It is expected that there is a correlation between disorder in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. Children living in families where there is disorder in family interactions, display less pronounced cognitive, emotional

and social aspects of mental development and have difficulties in certain aspects of their development.

It is considered that there is a correlation of alienation in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social aspects of mental development. Children living in families where there is an alienation in family interactions, display less pronounced cognitive, emotional and social aspects of mental development and have difficulties in certain aspects of their development.

### **4. Research variables**

#### **Independent variable**

*Family interactions* are operationalized by the instrument of family interactions measuring six dimensions: open communication, emotional warmth, joint solving of problems, hostility, disorder, and alienation.

#### **Dependent variable**

*Degree of child's development* is operationalized through three dimensions: cognitive, emotional and social development.

#### **Control variables**

*Gender of child.* The sample is divided into mothers of girls and mothers of boys.

*Age of child* - the child's age is treated, so to speak, as a control variable only in the sense that the mothers filled those questionnaires designed for the age of their children. However, questionnaires have the same number of questions and the same dimensions, so the data are processed as if it were one questionnaire, and therefore this variable will not be used in data processing in terms of testing the correlations or the differences.

### **5. Population and research sample**

This research covers the population of mothers of children attending preschool institutions. In preschool institutions there are different groups divided by age of the children. These are mostly younger kindergarten, older kindergarten, medium and mixed or older age groups. The research was conducted in several preschool institutions in Petrovac at the Mlava, Valjevo, Kruševac, Žagubica, Paraćin, Jagodina and Belgrade.

The convenient research sample includes 148 mothers. The selected mothers are those with children under the age of 2, then of ages about 3 and 5, while questionnaires cover wider range of months

or years of children, because we took into account that some children may reach levels of development matching lower or perhaps even higher ages. In completing questionnaires on child development mothers had help from teachers and educators, because they like mothers spend lots of time with children.

The selected mothers are those whose families have more members and they were told that during answering questions take into account family interactions which their children are daily exposed to. The selected families are complete ones in order to avoid intervening effects of divorce and related traumatic experiences.

Table 1. The structure of the sample regarding gender of child

| Gender of child | Frequencies | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|
| Male            | 72          | 48%        |
| Female          | 76          | 52%        |
| Total           | 148         | 100%       |

Table 2. The structure of the sample regarding age of child

| Age of child                | Frequencies | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|
| 20-22 months                | 44          | 28%        |
| 72-76 months (ca 3 years)   | 47          | 31%        |
| 120-124 months (ca 5 years) | 57          | 41%        |
| Total                       | 148         | 100%       |

Therefore, the sample consists of 148 mothers, 72 mothers of male children and 76 mothers of female children. Also, the sample consists of 44 mothers the children of whom are at the age 20-22 months, 47 mothers with children with the age of 72 to 76 months, and 57 mothers whose children are at the age between 129 to 124 months.

#### 6. Methods, techniques and instruments of the research

The descriptive method is used in the paper, which is adequate for monitoring the biographical data in order to follow a child's development during early childhood, when parents constantly stand with the child and record all events and changes in a child's development. After the fifth-sixth year, the child's development is greatly expanded and rich, and the parents are no longer able to monitor and record everything needed despite their best intentions. The advantage of this method is in that the de-

velopment is followed by the one who is in constant contact with the child, while the lack is in that the observations of parents are not always systematic, and in that parents sometimes unconsciously modify their findings as a result of subjective attitude towards their own children. We tried to alleviate this deficiency by having involved teachers in responding to the questionnaire on child development.

The instruments used in the research are the questionnaires of the degree of the cognitive, emotional and social development: Questionnaire of the children development level under 2 years of age, Questionnaire of the children development from 2.5 to 4 years of age, and Questionnaire of the children development from 4.5 to 6 years of age; as well as the Questionnaire of family interactions.

There are three types of questionnaires on stage of development because distinct types were given to mothers with children of different ages (up to 2 years, from 2.5 to 4, and from 4.5 to 6 years). The questionnaires were designed for this research, based on the development standards by Ivić and collaborators (Ivić, 2004). Each of the questionnaire consists of three subscales:

- *Cognitive development* (related to level of speech development, perception and intellectual abilities),
- *Emotional development* (related to quality of attachment, emotional expression and emotional control), and
- *Social development* (related to quality of interaction and communication with adults and children, independence, behavior in the game).

Each subscale contains 7 statements which can be responded positively or negatively, and the total score is obtained simply by summing responses. Thus the scores can be obtained for each subscale, and for the scale as a whole.

The questionnaire of family interaction is constructed on the model of FAD questionnaire that was originally developed as an operationalization of the McMaster model of family functioning, and in relation to systemic family therapy (Todorović, 1996). The scale consists of 23 items (representing a shortened version of the original questionnaire). The scale is balanced, i.e. it contains items that express both positive and nega-

tive perceptions of the family. Both scales are of the Likert type with four possible degrees of dis/agreement (1-4), where a higher number indicates greater agreement with a given statement. Scores are obtained by summing the appropriate items (statements). In this paper six dimensions of family interactions are used:

- *Open communication* (items 19, 7, 18) - adequate sharing of information in the family, fostering tradition of honest discussion and communication about the usual, but also about taboos;
- *Emotional warmth* (items 17, 21, 9) - interest and evaluation of activities and interests of the family members;
- *Joint solving of problems* (items 1, 3, 8, 18, 23) - the ability of family to gather around solving family problems and problems of individual members;
- *Hostility* (items 2, 4, 5, 10, 22) - refers to negative emotional exchange between members, unfulfilling of the roles and responsibilities, criticism, etc.;
- *Disorder* (items 6, 14, 20) - relates to poor or non existing control of behavior in the family and the lack of commitment;
- *Alienation* (items 11, 12, 13, 15, 16) - refers to the lack of adequate interaction, manipulation, overall distance, coldness and indifference among the members.

**7. Statistical analysis of research results**

Having finished the research we performed data coding and made data as entries into raw matrix. For this a software package for statistical analysis of data (SPSS 17.0) was implemented. Since we were interested only whether there is an association of family interactions with the degree of mental development, i.e. dimensions of these variables, we used correlative techniques of research, that is, the partial correlation, since the gender was taken as a control variable. In doing so influence of gender

was reduced to minimum, discovering in what way family interactions of complete families affected the level of speech development of children. In order to show descriptive characteristics of the sample, frequencies and percentages were used.

**Results and discussion**

Research results will be presented according to the hypotheses (firstly according to the specific ones, and finally according to the general one) and the partial correlation will be used, indicating the degree and direction of the correlation among dimensions of independent and dependent variables, with the gender as a control variable.

**1. Correlation of open communication with dimensions of mental development**

The first of the specific hypotheses assumes that there is a correlation of open communication in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. It is expected that children living in families with open communication display more prominent aspects of mental development.

Table 3 shows that open family communication is associated with cognitive development ( $r=0,445$ ,  $p<0,01$ ), emotional development ( $r=0,435$ ,  $p<0,01$ ) as well as with social development ( $r=0,486$ ,  $p<0,01$ ). Since the correlation is positive one, it can be concluded that children from families with open communication display more prominent aspects of cognitive, emotional and social development. This conclusion partly proves the specific hypothesis of this research. Families where clear and direct messages are used, and where the messages are being accepted, i.e. where there is knowledge on content of notification and the ways thereof, which is one of the most effective methods of verbal communication, are those that can bring up children who understand well other people's speech and speak well, have good perception, can learn without difficulties and can express interest in the world around them.

*Table 3. Correlation of open communication in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development*

| Partial correlation<br>(control variable: gender) |                       | Cognitive<br>development | Emotional<br>development | Social<br>development |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Open<br>communication                             | Correlation           | ,446                     | ,435                     | ,486                  |
|   | Level of significance | ,000                     | ,000                     | ,000                  |

On the other hand, families where the messages are masked and/or indirect, and where the messages are being ignored or disqualified, i.e. the families with poor communication, are able to bring up children that can understand less, that make lesser use of verbal expressions, that are less interested in the world and can learn with difficulties.

### **2. Correlation between emotional warmth with dimensions of mental development**

According to second hypothesis, it is expected that there is a correlation of emotional warmth in family interactions with the cognitive, emotional and social development. It is expected that children living in families with emotional warmth would display more prominent aspects of cognitive, emotional and social development.

Table 4 shows that emotional warmth in family interactions is positively and in statistic sense significantly correlated with all the dimensions of mental development of preschool children. Namely, the more increased emotional warmth is, the better are all of the indicators of cognitive, emotional and social development. This entirely proves the second specific hypothesis. The emotional warmth is dimension related to the pronounced emotional involvement in which family members are interested in each other, but without intrusion. This involvement is based on the needs of others and on constant evaluation of the emotional state of other members. Families where there is such a family atmosphere and where such a participation in the lives of its members is fostered, are able to facilitate the youngest members with an adequate mental development. Families

where there are cold emotional relationships, where members relate to each others as strangers and therefore barely talk, can bring up children with poor social interaction, activity and attention, children that can understand others' speech less and can talk less, learn and solve problems with difficulties, children that are emotionally and socially not adapted.

### **3. Correlation of joint solving of problems with the dimensions of mental development**

The third hypothesis is the following: It is considered that there is a correlation of solving of common problems in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. Children living in families in which members jointly solve problems, have more prominent aspects of mental development.

Table 5 displays the joint solving of problems in family interactions is positively and significantly associated with cognitive, emotional and social development. Thus, the families that are able to jointly solve problems can develop with their youngest members exactly attention, interaction, as well as emotional and social competence. In this way the third specific hypothesis is proven. Joint solving of problems involves the relationship of unity in dealing with both the practical and emotional problems. The most effective family functioning is the one including all seven stages in relation to a problem: identification of a problem, communication on a problem, alternative plans to solve a problem, decision on action based on selection of alternative possibilities of actions to implement a plan, direction of actions towards the

*Table 4. Correlation between emotional warmth in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development*

| Partial correlation<br>(control variable: gender) |                       | Cognitive<br>development | Emotional<br>development | Social<br>development |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Emotional<br>warmth                               | Correlation           | ,337                     | ,450                     | ,579                  |
|   | Level of significance | ,001                     | ,000                     | ,000                  |

*Table 5. Correlation of joint solving of problems in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development*

| Partial correlation<br>(control variable: gender) |                       | Cognitive<br>development | Emotional<br>development | Social<br>development |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Joint solving of<br>problems                      | Correlation           | ,388                     | ,494                     | ,325                  |
|   | Level of significance | ,000                     | ,000                     | ,000                  |

final solution, and finally, assessment of success of the action. Families that in this way meet their problems do talk a lot and work together a lot, interacting with each other, and promote development of interaction, activities and child care, as well as emotional and social competence.

On the other hand, families the members of which successfully or unsuccessfully but independently solve their problems without seeking help from others, and the families with common problems the individual members of which attempt or not to solve, can only hinder cognitive, emotional and social development of children.

**4. Correlation of hostility with dimensions of mental development**

The fourth specific hypothesis suggests that there is a correlation between hostility in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. It is expected that children living in families with hostility in family interactions display less pronounced aspects of mental development.

Table 6 displays the hostility in family interactions is negatively and significantly associated with all the dimensions of mental development. This means that increased hostility in the family decreases level of cognitive, emotional and social development. Families with increased hostility in their relationships have children with less progress in all aspects of mental development. This proves the fourth specific hypothesis. Families where there is hostility, negative emotional exchange, rows, cold relationship, criticism, etc. show diminished interest and reduced the interaction between members, which also results in paying less attention on children and towards

providing appropriate incentives for their development. Moreover, the relationships with the prevailing enmity incite anxiety forming basis for development of neurotic symptoms.

**5. Correlation of disorder with the dimensions of mental development**

The fifth specific hypothesis is: It is expected that there is a correlation of disorder in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. Children living in families with disorder in family interactions display less pronounced aspects of mental development.

Table 7 shows that disorder in family interactions is negatively and in statistic sense significantly correlated with all the dimensions of mental development. It is to be concluded that families with disordered family interactions bring up children with lower level of mental development. Thus the fifth specific hypothesis of this research is confirmed. Disorder in the family interactions is related to chaotic control of behavior. Control of behavior can be rigid, where there is no agreement and the rules are inflexible and are usually the same for all ages. In setting the rules of conduct the new circumstances and a flexible control are taken into account. *Laissez faire* is a form of educational freedom, where anything is permitted. The chaotic control includes all forms of control alternately or simultaneously, and is very confusing especially for children. Families with consistently established flexible control, of course, work better and have positive impact on child's overall development.

Table 6. Correlation between hostility in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development

| Partial correlation<br>(control variable: gender) |                       | Cognitive development | Emotional development | Social development |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Hostility   | Correlation           | -,380                 | -,485                 | -,257              |
|   | Level of significance | ,000                  | ,000                  | ,010               |

Table 7. Correlation of disorder in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development

| Partial correlation<br>(control variable: gender) |                       | Cognitive development | Emotional development | Social development |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Disorder  | Correlation           | -,384                 | -,524                 | -,416              |
|   | Level of significance | ,000                  | ,000                  | ,000               |

### 6. Correlation of alienation with the dimensions of mental development

The sixth and final specific hypothesis is: It is considered that there is a correlation of alienation in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development. It is assumed that children living in families with alienation in family interactions display less pronounced aspects of mental development.

On the basis of Table 8 it can be concluded that the alienation between family members is in a negative and statistically significant correlated to the dimensions of mental development: with cognitive, emotional and social development. Specifically, these dimensions are less pronounced in children from families with an increased alienation in family interactions. This *confirms the sixth specific hypothesis*.

Families where their members are alienated from each other, who know little about each other and do not attach themselves with the problems or the joyful moments of other family members, in a word families with estranged members, the ones who do not communicate, have children with lower levels of mental development in all tested dimensions. Such children poorly understand and express their own voice and poorly respond to orders, do not show need for interaction, have poor attention to all kinds of stimuli, have no interests, poorly learn, and are emotionally uncontrolled and socially excluded. In contrast, the families that make appropriate contacts, take part in the lives of each other, manage to positively influence the development of children.

### 7. Correlation of family interactions with mental development

The general hypothesis states that there is a correlation of family interactions with mental development. On the basis of specific hypotheses that are proven, we can conclude that the variables are interrelated, and this to be concluded from Table 9 which displays positive and statistically significant correlation of family interactions with mental development. The variable of family interactions occurred by recoding items of hostility, disorder and alienation, so that higher scores on this variable indicates the higher quality of family relationships.

Families where there is high quality in the family atmosphere and where an adequate communication is achieved, can foster warm emotional relationships and can have flexible control of behavior. In that way they can jointly solve their problems, in the family circle coping with losses and difficulties. Where family members are not in conflict, the conditions encouraging full development of child are created.

### Conclusions

The basic premise on which this research started was that the family interactions may be correlated with mental development, i.e. that they affect progress or delay in a mental development. To investigate this hypothesis, we examined mothers and educators of preschool children in whose development we have been interested in. The selected mothers were ones of those children living in complete families and with no organic deficiencies that may have caused problems in mental development. We have controlled the variables of gender and age of children, in order to avoid

Table 8. Correlation of alienation in family interactions with cognitive, emotional and social development

| Partial correlation<br>(control variable: gender) |                       | Cognitive<br>development | Emotional<br>development | Social<br>development |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alienation  | Correlation           | -,319                    | -,426                    | -,341                 |
|   | Level of significance | ,001                     | ,000                     | ,000                  |

Table 9. Correlation of family interactions with mental development

| Partial correlation<br>(control variable: gender) |                       | Mental development |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Family interactions                               | Correlation           | ,276               |
|   | Level of significance | ,006               |

occurrence of differences in development due to gender and age distinctions.

The area of family interaction being very wide one, we tried not to expand it much further and have encompassed with this term (according to the McMaster model and the shortened version of the Todosijević questionnaire) open communication, emotional warmth, joint solving of problems, hostility, disorder, and alienation. We assumed that all these dimensions of family interactions significantly correlated in a statistic sense with the dimensions of mental development, as are cognitive, emotional and social aspects of development. These assumptions were confirmed. Described in such a way, we have investigated and found out that family interactions are correlated with the degree of mental development. Therefore, on the basis of these results we can conclude the following:

Families where there is open, clear and direct communication manage to influence preschool children to develop cognitively adequate (developing the ability to understand speech, abilities of expressive language, perceptual abilities, as well as skills of learning and thinking).

Families whose members are emotionally connected, participating in problems and joys of other family members, who can and want to share their affective states with other members, are families where children have harmonious mental development.

Those families where members jointly deal with the problems and try to solve of them with the effort of all the members, represent suitable framework of cognitive, emotional and social development.

On the other hand, families where emotions are not expressed and are not shared among family members, where quarrels are frequent, where for a long time there is no conversation between the members, are the families bringing up children with difficulties in cognitive, emotional and social development. Families with no order and rules, where there is no control of behavior, and where members are independent from each other and where there is no agreement nor exchange, have children with poorer ability of interaction, children who gesture less and have lesser motoric response to verbal orders, as well as children who speak less in general, that are insecure, distant,

frightened, dependent, indifferent to environment, uncooperative, with poor ability to delay satisfaction with neurotic manifestations, such are thumb sucking, hair picking, nail biting, rubbing of body parts, enuresis and the like. Such children are brought up in families the members of which are alienated, where there no discussions, interactions and communication.

Thus, we conclude that the family and behavior of the family members strongly influence the overall mental development of child. It is therefore important to encourage a constructive family interaction and communication in counseling bodies, as well as in all other educational institutions.

We are aware that we made a modest contribution to explaining the above issues and problems, and we expect that this research may be an incentive to other authors for more complete discussion of these contents.

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