

Summary

The second issue of the *Journal of Preschool and Elementary Education* that we are presenting is devoted to problems concerning the education of children at the preschool and elementary school ages. They are significant educational issues.

These topics have acquired particular significance due to the necessity of adjusting the Polish system of education to the current needs of the domestic market and economy, as well as to EU requirements.

The concept of problems in education has a complex character. Some pedagogues claim that such problems encompass situations which are characterized by a lack of balance between school or preschool requirements, and how a child is developing.

It is often considered to be a failure when divergences in the process emerge and become established between the educational aims and children's achievements, as well as the shaping of their negative attitude towards preschool or school requirements is called failures (cf. W. Okoń, *Nowy słownik pedagogiczny*, Wyd. Żak, Warsaw 1998, p. 262–263).

The concept of failures has a normative character, since every educational institution defines its own criteria of requirements. They may refer to various issues, e.g. children conduct, their emotional attitude towards particular situations and things, or their school results. Failures are an inability to achieve these norms.

The notion of failures embraces both educational and teaching failures. Educational failures consist of the incompatibility between children's behaviour and the requirements imposed upon them. However, in the case of incompatibilities between knowledge, skills and habits acquired by children, and the material they should master according to the curriculum, we are dealing with teaching failures.

The causes of failures are generally multiple and complex. They can be perceived as a teachers' pedagogical failure and the ineffectiveness of their endeavours, as well as children's learning difficulties and the fulfilling of school or preschool duties. Therefore, they are factors independent of children and also relatively dependent on them. From among the various determinants of failures, the major ones include: the socio-economic, bio-psychological and teaching causes.

From the point of view of an individual, failure is connected with an unpleasant personal experience, which results from the fact that one cannot meet the requirements. Such an experience influences personality, and the ability to adapt to the social requirements. Thus, failure is a relative concept, resulting from an incompatibility that occurs between two factors: social norms and an individual's ability to meet certain conditions. For this reason, educational failures are regarded as a harmful phenomenon from both the pedagogic and psychological, as well as the economic and social points of view. Therefore, we have to give some thought as to what triggers the phenomenon of educational failures, and how they can be prevented.

The authors of the articles contained in the following issue attempt to find the answers to these questions.

Anna Klim-Klimaszewska, Ewa Jagiełło

