

Functioning of a Temporarily Single Parent Family System Due to Migration from the Perspective of Adolescents with Cerebral Palsy

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Abstract : There is a definite lack - in Poland, as well as around the world - of empirical studies of families raising handicapped child, in which one parent migrates. In diagnostics of the functioning of such families emphasis should be placed not only on the difficulties, but most of all it should be indicated what possibilities are there for the family and how it overcomes the difficulties. Migration of a parent on the one hand is a chance to improve the family's material situation. In certain circumstances this may only be an "escape" into work from the issues associated with the upbringing and rehabilitation of a handicapped child. The aim of the study was to learn the functioning of a temporarily single parent family system as a result of migration of a parent from the perspective of adolescents with cerebral palsy. The study was conducted in the year 2013 in the area of Eastern Poland. It involved an analysis of 70 persons (with cerebral palsy in an intellectual capacity) from families in which at least one of the parents migrates. The study incorporated the diagnostic survey method. These tools were used: Family Evaluation Scales (SOR) adapted for Poland by Andrzej Margasiński. The explorations in this study indicate, that 47% of studied temporarily single parent families are balanced models. This is evidence of the resources at the disposal of the family which, despite the disability of the child and temporary separation, is able to function properly. The conducted studies show, that 37% of temporarily single parent families are imbalanced models in the perception of adolescents with cerebral palsy. These families experience functional difficulties and require psychological and pedagogical support. There is a need for building skills related to effective coping with family stress. Especially considering, that families of an imbalanced type do not use the internal and external resources of the family system. Such a situation may deepen the disarrangement of family life. In intermediate families (16%) there are also temporary difficulties in functioning. Separation anxiety experienced by mothers may disrupt relations and introduce additional stress factors. For that reason it is important to provide support for women with difficulties coping with the emotions associated with raising handicapped adolescents and migratory separation.

Keywords : child with cerebral palsy, family, migration, parents

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