



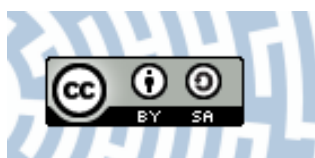
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PRESCHOOLERS' APTITUDES IN THEIR PARENTS' VIEW


UZDOLNIENIA DZIECI W WIEKU PRZEDSZKOLNYM W OPINII RODZICÓW

Keywords:
talents, abilities,
success, parents,
kindergarten

Słowa kluczowe:
uzdolnienia,
zdolności, sukces,
rodzice, przedszkole

Summary: The article addresses the issue of the giftedness of preschool children. Based on research and literature analysis, issues related to the development of preschoolers' talents were discussed. The most frequently observed aptitudes, their diagnosis and ways of supporting a gifted child are presented. The necessity of cooperation between parents and the kindergarten was emphasized. Attention was paid to the difficulties faced by parents of gifted children. The conclusions, practical advice and tips resulting from the research and analysis of the literature on the subject can be used in pedagogical practice to stimulate the development of children's talents.

Streszczenie: Artykuł podejmuje problematykę uzdolnień dzieci w wieku przedszkolnych. Na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań i analizy literatury przedmiotu omówiono zagadnienia związane z rozwojem uzdolnień przedszkolaków. Przedstawiono najczęściej obserwowane uzdolnienia, ich diagnozę oraz sposoby wsparcia dziecka uzdolnionego. Podkreślono konieczność współpracy rodziców i placówki przedszkolnej. Zwrócono



uwagę na trudności, z jakimi borykają się rodzice dzieci uzdolnionych. Wnioski oraz praktyczne rady i wskazówki wynikające z badań i analizy literatury przedmiotu mogą być wykorzystane w praktyce pedagogicznej, aby stymulować rozwój dziecięcych uzdolnień.

Introduction

One of the manifestations of modern childhood is what is referred to as the so-called “high-quality childhood” (Dobrodzicka, 1999, p. 154; Giza-Poleszczuk, 2000, pp. 143, 146). Many new, previously unknown cultural and civilizational phenomena have appeared in the child’s world, both supporting and threatening the development of their multilateral personality. The power of information has increased as well as the range of stimuli affecting the mind and interactions promoting various value systems (Kojs, 2012, p. 111).

In today’s reality, active and creative people who exceed the limits of mediocrity and the limits of present-day knowledge are needed more than ever (Pufal-Struzik, 2008, p. 9). For this reason, according to Edward De Bono (1995), education faces new, particularly important tasks, such as educating children about creative attitudes towards the environment (readiness to make creative changes in the environment) and towards themselves (development of the “I” – readiness to make creative changes in one’s self, self-creation, and creative self-realization).

Currently, creative activity in various fields has become an important social issue resulting from the law of change and variability. This requires, *inter alia*, educating the young generation to actively participate in the process of the constant changes taking place in the world. Active participation in these changes is impossible without the personal and creative commitment of individuals. It is the responsibility of every educational institution to support the elementary creative abilities of students. These abilities constitute the basis of creative activities (Puślecki, 1998, p. 11).

Gifted and talented children, according to Edyta Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska (2012, p. 24), are those who “have a predisposition – inborn potential – to achieve outstanding achievements in a selected field of activity. Provided with

the right conditions, they will develop their talents and be remarkably successful." An ongoing discussion on the abilities and support of gifted students has shown that many publications often contain only general guidelines or solely concern older students. There is very little research on the aptitudes of younger children. According to Maria Tyszkowa (1995, p. 5), such research "would prevent the sieves of our education system from losing diamonds." The sooner a given type of aptitude is recognized, the more likely the child is to develop it successfully. Considerations about preschool children are dominated by reflections on their creative activity, which is a condition for proper development. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the characteristics of gifted children found in scientific literature concern older children (Giza, 2008a, p. 26).

Therefore, the aim of this article is to present parents' opinions on the aptitudes of their preschool children. On the basis of the research and an analysis of the literature on the subject, problems related to the aptitudes of preschool children are discussed. The terms "ability" and "aptitude" are defined. Due to the fact that the talents displayed by the child may be noticed by parents, teachers or other people from the child's immediate environment, the types of children's aptitude and their first successes are presented. A gifted child should receive individualized treatment, and the proper conditions for the development of their passions and talents should be created. In this context, the need for cooperation between parents and the kindergarten is emphasized. The difficulties faced by parents of gifted children are emphasized. The conclusions include practical advice and tips resulting from the research and analysis of the literature on the subject that can be used in pedagogical practice to stimulate the development of children in accordance with their abilities and interests.

In various publications, one can find numerous definitions of abilities and aptitudes, the characteristics of which depend on the adopted cognitive or practical goal and theoretical perspective. The terms "ability" and "aptitude" are used in psychology and pedagogy in a variety of ways (Fecher-Sędzicka, Ochmańska & Odrobina, 2012, pp. 11–12). Sometimes they are used interchangeably.

According to Bolesław Hornowski (1978), aptitude is an individual property of a person's personality which cannot be reduced to developed habits but thanks to which it is possible to shape various types of habits and skills.

Aptitude can be understood as more efficient performance of certain activities in relation to others' performance, inborn predispositions to perform specific activities or as internal conditioning and mostly inborn capabilities to

act efficiently in terms of specific predispositions and attitudes (Czelakowska, 2007, pp. 41–42). According to Wiesława Limont (2010), aptitudes are revealed in cognitive processes, in a specific area and a specific field of activity. On the other hand, Czesław Nosal (1999, pp. 22–29) claims that aptitude “is a global disposition relating to the mind as a whole as well as a local one specialized in the processing of stimuli of a certain type. This is matched by general (e.g., intelligence, reasoning) and special (e.g., mathematical, poetic and literary) aptitude.”

Aptitudes are divided into general (intelligence, perception, memory, imagination, motor skills, emotional sensitivity) and special ones (related to a specific field or areas: musical, artistic, technical, linguistic, literary, mathematical, natural, creative) (Szewczuk, 1990).

When talking about special aptitudes, the term “ability” is often used to emphasize that many special aptitudes are a specific configuration of more specific abilities. Therefore, abilities are directional, related to a specific field such as art, music, sports, motor skills. Ability allows us to achieve very good results in a specific field such as mathematics, art, and sports (Strelau, 1997, p. 223).

According to Danuta Czelakowska (2007, p. 42), the activity of an individual influenced by the environment is called an ability. The concept is understood as a set of acquired skills and knowledge conditioning the level of performance of a given activity and sometimes also treated as special (directional) abilities as opposed to general ones. On the other hand, Jan Strelau (1997, p. 223) writes that abilities are relatively constant internal conditions of a human being that determine the effectiveness of performing activities in a specific sphere of their activity. For the purpose of this study, the definition of ability by Czelakowska was adopted.

Developing abilities as a result of an individual’s activity may transform into real opportunities that ensure a high level of learning or action (Czelakowska, 2007, p. 43).

Method

In preschool age, those features of a child’s mind are formed which play a supporting role and constitute the necessary background for achieving above-average learning results and successes in developing one’s passions. The most important of them are the following: curiosity about the world and persistence in exploring what is not yet clear; a sense of purpose conditioning cognitive

inquisitiveness; ability to make intellectual effort and focus on the time needed to complete a given task; precise reasoning allowing for meaningful ordering, establishing cause-effect relationships and predicting consequences; and deriving joy from the achieved goal, which is the basis for a creative attitude to any activity (Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, 2012, p. 70).

Gifted children have specific educational needs. These children have different personality, intelligence and even behavioral characteristics. They have the ability to obtain a higher level than less capable and average children and develop multilateral, specialized, unique interests; they have well-developed abilities to conceptualize the surrounding reality, deepened motivation in fulfilling their own needs, a high level of concentration within their interests, a creative approach to problem solving; they also enjoy learning and have a high level of self-awareness and sensitivity (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2010, p. 265).

The conducted research was aimed at determining what aptitudes preschool children have and what activities their parents employ to support the development of their children's abilities and passions. The research problems were drawn up in the form of the following questions:

1. What kind of aptitudes do preschool children have in their parents' opinion?
2. In the opinion of parents, what factors determine the development of children's capabilities?
3. In the opinion of parents, who supports a gifted child and to what extent?
4. What difficulties do parents of gifted children encounter?

The research was conducted in 2020 using the diagnostic survey method. The research covered parents of children attending kindergarten. In total, 63 parents (95% mothers and 5% fathers) were examined. The age of the respondents was between 29 and 46 years old. People with higher (59%), secondary (21%), undergraduate (17%) and vocational (3%) education participated in the study. According to statistical analyses, the most numerous groups of respondents were parents aged 30–34 (36.51%) and 35–39 (also 36.51%). The smallest group of respondents were in the age group of 46 and older (4.76%). The remaining respondents were parents aged 26–29 (6.35%) and 40–45 (15.87%).

Most of the respondents – 54% – have two children; 35% of them had one child. Only 6% of the respondents had three children, and 5% four. The largest group of respondents were the parents of children aged six (44%) and five (30%). Parents of seven-year-olds (13%), four-year-olds (10%) and

three-year-olds (3%) also participated in the study. Most of the respondents were parents of girls (62%), with 38% being parents of boys.

Children's aptitudes

Cognitive, musical and artistic aptitudes are revealed the earliest in the development of gifted children, although leadership and creative abilities are also noticeable very early. Young children with outstanding abilities may be gifted in one or more areas of activity. From an early age, cognitively gifted children try to write on their own using printed letters and reveal linguistic and mathematical skills. Sometimes, a fifteen-month-old child can count to 10, and a four-year-old child can add and subtract. They intuitively understand the concepts of numbers and mathematical procedures and compete with older colleagues and adults in board or card games. Their own ideas for manipulating numbers differ from the methods taught in kindergarten (Lewis & Luis, 1990).

Children's aptitudes are revealed in their basic form of activity, namely, in play. During childhood, in a kindergarten group, the first individual differences are often revealed in terms of the achievements and skills of all children. Some children "draw nicely, others recite poems, some are more inventive in playing, and others run the fastest." At the preschool stage, it is possible to identify children's aptitudes in the field of dance and music. We also encounter symptoms of mathematical, linguistic, literary or artistic aptitudes (Giza, 2008a, p. 25; Giza, 2008b, pp. 13–15).

The conducted research asked parents the question of what they considered the aptitudes of their preschool children to be.

Figure 1 presents an analysis of the results of the research on the types of aptitudes of preschool children. The largest group of respondents stated that their child shows artistic aptitude (17%). Slightly fewer respondents (14%) indicated musical and dance aptitudes. Parents also mentioned cognitive (10%), sports (10%), linguistic (9%), mathematical (6%) and acting (5%) aptitudes. Only 1% of the respondents stated that their child had an aptitude for natural sciences. Other aptitudes of children – according to the respondents – are playing a musical instrument (4%) and an aptitude for construction (3%).

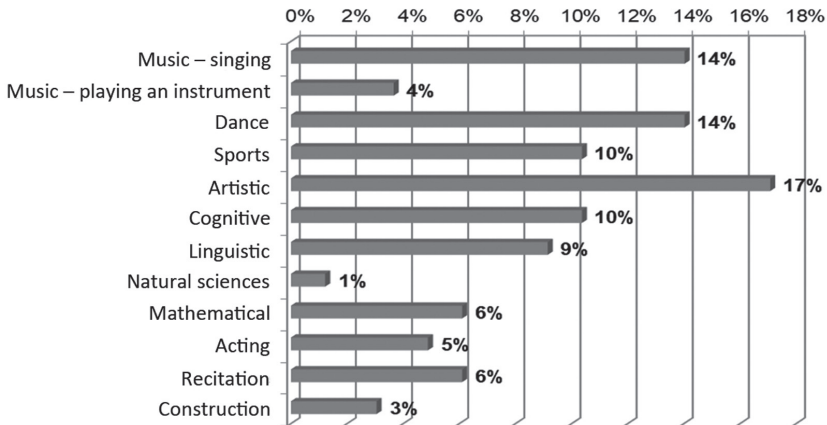


Figure 1.

Types of children's aptitudes in the opinion of their parents.

* The results do not add up to 100% because the respondents could choose more than one answer.

Source: own research.

Parents were also asked if their child had an idol with similar or the same aptitudes whom they were imitating.



Figure 2.

Was there an idol motivating children to develop abilities?

Source: own research.

Based on the analysis of Figure 2, it can be concluded that only 21% of the respondents confirmed that the child had an idol who motivated them to act; 79% of the respondents were of the opposite opinion. Some respondents indicated their children's idols. According to the parents, the idols for their

child are often the grandfather, peers, older siblings, athletes and dancers. Characters from fairy tales were also indicated (Elsa from *Frozen*, Wispser, Captain America).

The beginnings of children's aptitudes

Some children tell their parents or teachers very early on what they are interested in by means of various messages. This is confirmed by Maria Przetacznik-Gierowska (2009, p. 179), who writes: "There are no sharp boundaries between the child's play, their artistic creativity, and the way they perceive art. The child draws, paints, molds play-doh, arranges rhymes and poems, sings songs invented by themselves, and performs dance movements to music spontaneously for the pleasure it gives them, behaving in the same way as during other games."

The symptoms of these aptitudes can be observed during typical activities in kindergarten. The most valuable cognitive tool is the participatory observation of the kindergarten teacher. It is difficult to overestimate their role, as they are often the first person from outside the family who has the opportunity to observe the child in their peer group. The teacher's knowledge and experience allow for observation aimed at indicating children who stand out in the group. Children's aptitudes can be identified in games, during free time, in their statements, interpersonal contacts, their way of performing tasks, recitations, dances and art works (Giza, 2008b, p. 14).

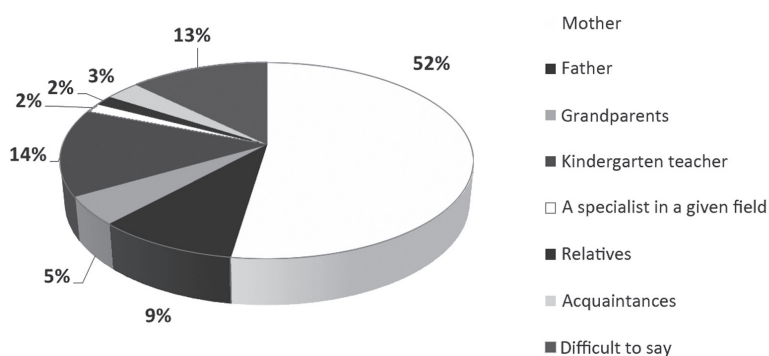


Figure 3.

The person who first noticed the child's aptitudes.

Source: own research.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of answers to the question of who first noticed the child's talent in a given field. The data show that the surveyed parents most often indicated the child's mother (52%) and their kindergarten teacher (14%). The respondents also listed the child's father (9%), grandparents (5%), a specialist in a given field (2%), acquaintances (3%), and relatives (2%). The remaining 13% of respondents could not answer this question.

Identifying gifted children is a difficult and lengthy process. It should be started at the earliest possible age of the child (Lewis, 1998, p. 18).

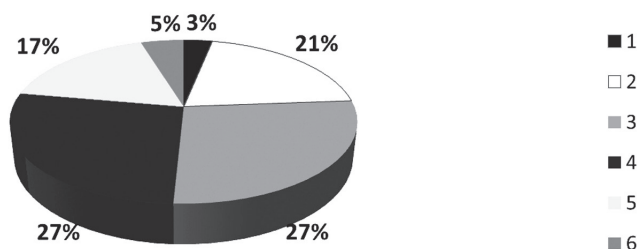


Figure 4.

The age at which an aptitude was first observed.

Source: own research.

The development of aptitudes is closely related to the stages of the child's development. The surveyed parents were asked to indicate in which year of their child's life the signs of specific aptitudes were observed. The detailed research results are presented in Figure 4.

The analysis of the data shows that the majority of respondents observed their children's aptitudes in the third and fourth year of their child's life (27% each). Others reported that the child began to manifest certain abilities at the age of two (21%) and five (17%). Among the respondents there were also those who stated that their child showed specific aptitudes already in the first year of life (3%).

Figure 5 presents the results of the respondents' responses to the news about their child's aptitude. The largest group of respondents (60%) was pleased with this news. Other parents experienced an eagerness to act (36%), pride (2%) and anxiety (2%).

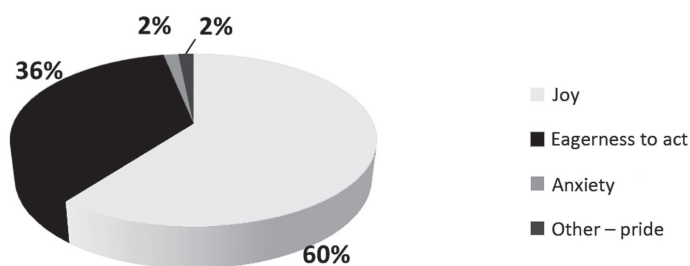


Figure 5.

Parents' reaction to the news about their child's talents.

Source: own research.

Children who achieve a lot pursue a goal and success. They are positive, self-confident, flexible, resilient, disciplined, inquisitive, enterprising and proud of themselves and their already achieved successes and abilities (Lewis, 1998). As sociologists emphasize (Grzeszczyk, 2003, p. 291; Palska, 2000, pp. 357–359), we live in the cult of success. Today's high-quality child is undoubtedly brought up to be successful. At the preschool level, where the assessment of children is individualized and takes descriptive forms, the aptitudes that are noticed in children do not significantly affect the way peers perceive them and their position in the group. Children judge others according to the criteria of aptitude only at school. At the preschool level, abilities are a more egalitarian trait. They are not treated as particularly desirable by children. However, they begin to play a significant role when learning becomes the basic form of children's activity (Giza, 2008a, pp. 25–26).

The conducted research has confirmed that even preschool children achieve successes. This is what 91% of respondents think. The opposite opinion is held by 9% of the respondents. The most frequently enumerated successes are achieving high places in various competitions, contests, and tournaments (art, vocal, music, recitation, sports, chess, dance, and Judo competitions, karate tournaments). Other children's successes that their parents boasted about are "winning a newspaper competition" and participating in an advertisement of the social campaign "Read to Children."

According to the surveyed parents, their child's successes are also reflected in "praise from teachers and other parents," "joy when a child can participate in some kindergarten performance or classes at the community center," "performances in front of parents, and grandparents in kindergarten," and

“performances without stress.” Other statements of the respondents are also interesting. One of the mothers noted that her child’s success was their ability to add and subtract within 100. She was happy about the child’s noticeable progress. Other statements read: “my child asks me to give them various mathematical tasks – for me it is a success”; “My daughter’s joy of participating in the classes is a success. Her performances and awards are of secondary importance”; “According to my child, changing position on the pitch from defense to midfield is joy and success.”

Support

Janet Bates and Sarah Munday (2005, p. 59) emphasize that “it is extremely important to gain the support of both parents of the child and the school authorities when working with gifted students. Regular contacts between all parties can result in an enrichment of the educational process.”

Intensive assisted development of children must be adapted to the actual cognitive and executive abilities of a particular child. The adult’s job is to provide comprehensive help. A way of supporting a child in their development is organizing the learning process and supervising its course. This involves organizing learning situations – games, assignments and exercises – during which the child can accumulate valuable experience. The learning process produces great results when it is favorably adapted to the child’s abilities. Additionally, it is to shape what is most important in development, because the child is to be smarter, independent, and curious about the world and the people in it (Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska & Zielińska, 2004, p. 11).

The surveyed parents were asked to indicate what kind of support they provide to their child in developing their passion.

The analysis of the data presented in Figure 6 shows that the largest group of respondents prefer such forms of support as praising the child (86%), attending performances and competitions (71%) and assisting in preparing for competitions (57%). Other forms of support include referring to family traditions regarding aptitude (2%), financial rewards for the child (3%) and cooperation with specialists. It is noteworthy that 67% of parents said that they comforted their child when they failed, and 35% talked to them about successes or failures.

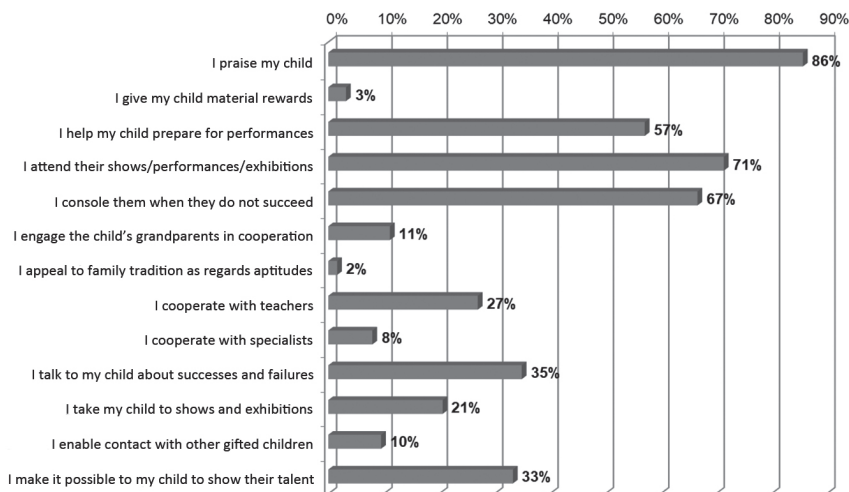


Figure 6.

Types of parental support for a child.

* The results do not add up to 100% because the respondents could choose more than one answer.

Source: own research.

The role of parental education, which may develop in the future, is increasingly recognized. In contrast, too little attention is paid to developing the child's talents and interests in the home where emotional ties are the strongest. There is a need to stimulate the development of the child's innate abilities and to select such means that will enable the development of the child's creativity (Zyzik & Grelowska, 2008, p. 27).

The surveyed parents were also asked to indicate how much time they spend on developing their child's aptitude.

According to the data presented in Figure 7, approximately one-third of the respondents (33%) spend two to three hours a week on developing their children's abilities. Slightly more parents (37%) spend more than three hours a week for this purpose, while 11% of parents spend a maximum of one hour a week. On the other hand, 17% are unable to accurately determine the time period. Only 2% do not spend any time at all on developing their children's passions.

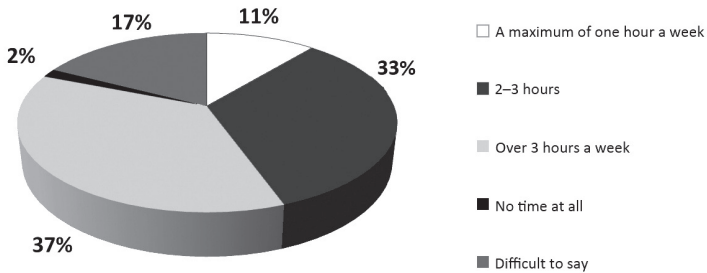


Figure 7.

Time spent by parents on developing their child's aptitude.

Source: own research.

Parents, adapting to market requirements, accelerate the process of teaching and developing their children's abilities, *inter alia*, by providing them with a wide range of activities, starting from kindergarten (Nrezent-Drag, 2005, p. 149). In modern societies, not only is the period of childhood at school extended, but the scope of out-of-school, professional and institutional child-care also grows (Kopp & Lippitz, 2003; after: Nrezent-Drag, 2005, p. 149). Therefore, the surveyed parents were asked to indicate the forms by which they develop their children's interests.

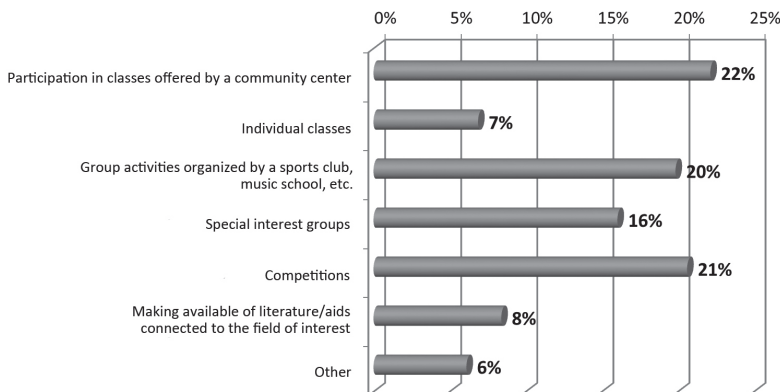


Figure 8.

Forms of improving the child's aptitude.

* The results do not add up to 100% because the respondents could choose more than one answer.

Source: own research.

According to the survey, 22% of parents stated that their child develops his or her talents by participating in activities at a community center. Quite a large group of respondents also stated that the child improves their capabilities by taking part in competitions (21%) and in additional group activities such as sports (20%). The respondents also mentioned such forms as their child's participation in interest groups (16%), providing literature or other help related to the field of interest (8%) and individual classes (7%). A small group of respondents (6%) indicated other forms of developing their children's aptitudes. The most frequently mentioned are "participation in national competitions," and "participation in castings." A detailed analysis of empirical data is presented in Figure 8.

According to Barbara Lipnicka (2000, p. 63),

The family plays a pivotal role in developing the child's abilities and talents. It is the family that has the primary responsibility to their gifted child and, consequently, to society. Parents play a vital role in developing their children's motivation. Parents who have high expectations of the child and their ability to achieve success, and who support their aspirations with their own approval, contribute to the development of achievement motivation. Children's expectation of success is the determining factor for their success.

It happens that parents have to overcome many difficulties in order to help their child develop their passion.

Figure 9 presents statistical data on the difficulties encountered by parents of gifted children. The largest group of respondents indicated problems related to the organization of time for additional activities for the child (53%). For others, the difficulty, or rather a source of anxiety, is the lack of time for the child to play freely (19% of respondents). The respondents also struggle with such difficulties as family pressure (2%), housing conditions (5%), jealousy of siblings (8%), jealousy of friends (8%) and lack of support from a spouse (8%). Figure 9 presents a detailed analysis of the data.

In overcoming difficulties, parents look for allies. A great responsibility lies with the parents of gifted children. They should not only spot all the child's abilities and talents, but also shape, develop, expand and enrich them, adequately stimulating the child and encouraging them to act. Such parents should work closely with the kindergarten to meet the child's needs together with teachers (Lewis, 1998).

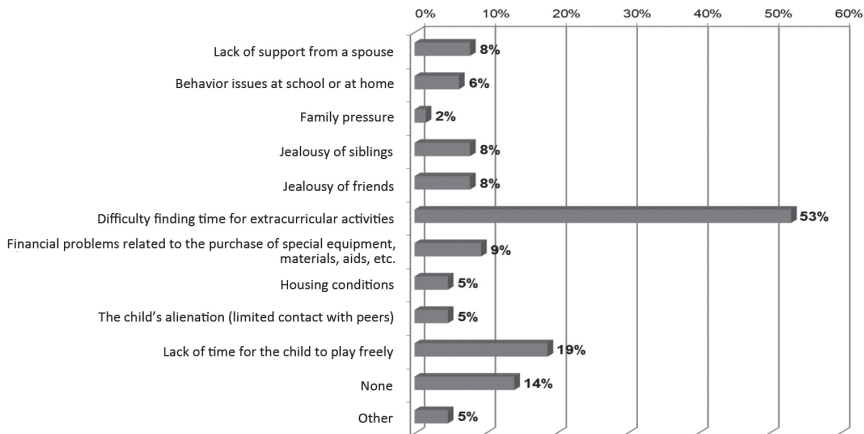


Figure 9.

Types of difficulties noticed by the parents of gifted children.

* The results do not add up to 100% because the respondents could choose more than one answer.

Source: own research.

The surveyed parents were also asked about the role of kindergarten in developing their children's talents. Only 45% stated that the kindergarten creates appropriate conditions for this, while 17% were of the opposite opinion. It was difficult for the rest of the respondents to answer this question.

The parents who were satisfied with the cooperation in this area had the opportunity to justify their position. Here are some examples of their statements:

Teachers in our kindergarten are great at preparing children for competitions. They can identify skills in a child and develop them, and at the same time indicate those things that the child should work on.

The kindergarten creates such conditions, to a large extent, by motivating children to participate in various performances and competitions, as well as by observing the child, informing parents what the child is good at and advising them on how to improve the child's aptitude.

The teachers pay attention to the child's strengths or indicate which activities the child should participate in in order to develop their talents. Our kindergarten offers great opportunities. The commitment of the staff is enormous. They encourage children to learn and work through play; they propose a number of activities that take time. They are great.

Other parents noted:

The teacher praises the child's achievements; motivates them to participate in competitions; teachers also involve parents to participate in competitions and projects.

According to some of the respondents, the kindergarten does the following: organizes additional classes, interest clubs, additional language classes; cares about the individual development of the child; teachers provide parents with information about national competitions and encourage their children to take part in them.

However, there were also opposing voices:

In my opinion, the kindergarten does not create conditions for artistic gymnastics. In kindergarten, my son cannot do a cartwheel or a handstand, but I understand that.

Unfortunately, the place my child attends does not create conditions for the development of dancing and musical skills.

Practical advice and tips

The surveyed parents provided practical advice and guidance on supporting the child in the process of developing their passion.

According to the respondents, the most important thing is observation. They believe that "one should carefully observe the child to see if and to what extent they are gifted"; "we should enjoy their child's capabilities and successes, even though they are not always in line with our dreams"; "we should not pressure the child"; "we should encourage the child and let them be independent, rather than impose on them our own vision." According to the parents, it is sometimes worthwhile to "wait until the child wants to learn more skills."

The surveyed parents claim that the most important thing is to support the child, especially in the event of failure. Their advice and tips in this regard were as follows: "development in a specific direction should be supported, because it may turn out that the child gets bored with it, and the only thing left is the parents' unrealized ambitions. It is also important to support and be proud of the child at every moment: it should be about a joyful time for our children, not unfulfilled dreams of parents." Others said that "the child should be praised, not pressured," and "interests should be developed through play."

The next advice from parents concerns the ability to listen to what the child says: "Listen to what the child says, so that their talents do not become the way to realize your own unfulfilled dreams, your own ambitions." The parent should "listen and observe your child, because every child is a gifted one; give your child different opportunities. Do not inhibit or limit those activities in which they show interest." Another important piece of advice is: "Let us love our children and let us respect them so that we do not miss the point when the child, instead of enjoying what he is doing, begins to be coerced. I wish this for myself and for all parents."

Parents should also adjust the activities, their intensity and the development of aptitudes to the abilities and needs of the child, and listen to what the child asks for. It is worth remembering to "do nothing by force, and that failure is nothing wrong." One should not "force a million activities; let the child look for what they enjoy and help them to achieve it." Other parents' advice is: "Do not put pressure on the child, do not put pressure on them, let them choose extracurricular activities and groups of interest, let them play with passion."

The parents' advice on creating appropriate conditions for developing aptitudes is as follows: "create conditions for the child to learn about their talents, to take part in their development and enjoy it together with the child, if it pleases them"; "explain to the child that it is to give them joy first of all, not that they have to do it"; "show new possibilities in areas that interest the child"; "try to provide conditions for deepening the child's interests"; "be present, talk to your child"; "allow their interests to change"; "praise, appreciate, motivate, and encourage your child to deepen their aptitude"; "show great support and understanding in the case of failure"; "support the child, look for allies in solving difficulties."

Parents also advise others to "try different activities until the child likes something"; "show the child as much as possible to capture interests and talents, but don't force them to do anything"; "enroll the child in extracurricular activities according to their interests"; and "let your child enjoy what they do for as long as possible." Another parent suggests: "our ambition is not the most important thing – the child has to have fun from the classes – only then do the next training and exercises make sense."

In the statements of the respondents, the following threads appear the most often: "let's support our children by giving them development opportunities in those areas that give them the greatest joy"; "let's not compare ourselves to others, let's not criticize, let's not force, let's learn from failures"; "let's help them

believe that they can be masters in a given field and let's help them become them." As the respondents note: "we, the parents, sometimes have to help and guide our children. You have to give them faith and support"; "let's not limit our children. Let them get dirty. Children are very creative."

According to the respondents, the time that parents spend on helping their children develop their passions is also important. Therefore, they believe that it is important to "allow the child to devote time to activities that they enjoy." Other respondents advise, "nurture childhood; the most important thing is to recognize the child's interests and abilities and find time to develop them – home is the most important place where a child can grow." Parents also emphasize that one should "not make talent an unpleasant duty." "Let the children enjoy the classes. Be patient and persistent," noted another parent.

Conclusions

In the broadly understood social interest and for the public good, the development of a child's aptitudes should be supported, despite the fact that many activities in this area have now been commercialized and are carried out privately for an additional fee from parents (Stańczak, 2008, p. 5). Although scientific knowledge about the presence of aptitude in the youngest children, supported by empirical research, is systematically enriched, it depends on the knowledge and creativity of teachers and parents whether the skills will be noticed in the behavior of preschool children. Once noticed, they must be enriched and developed in order to meet the educational challenges and needs of contemporary didactic and educational practice.

The development of abilities is closely related to the stages of the child's development. In the preschool and early school period, the differences between average and gifted children intensify, therefore, it becomes important to have an appropriate educational impact to stimulate the development of students in accordance with their abilities (Fecher-Sędzicka, Ochmańska & Odrobina, 2012, p. 16).

Conclusions resulting from the analysis of empirical data are an attempt to answer research questions. The research shows that preschool children most often display artistic, musical, dance, sports and cognitive abilities. The presence of an idol is also important in the implementation of their passion. Most often, it is a fictional character. In the process of upbringing, it is worth remembering that, in addition to the characters from fairy tales, idols are

important, and the child observes and imitates them in reality. An idol can be someone from the family, a famous athlete, dancer, singer, etc.

For children, kindergarten becomes their first institution and outside environment. Thanks to intentionally organized classes, they learn new areas of knowledge and activities (Giza, 2008a, p. 25). In kindergarten, the child is under the care of the teacher. The child's remaining active time is provided in various ways by parents. Therefore, without cooperation with the child's parents, it is difficult for the teacher to effectively manage the process of the child's mental development and shape their skills and abilities (Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, 2009, p. 16).

The research also shows that parents' reaction to information about the perceived abilities of their child is usually positive. Parents are motivated to take actions to develop their children's passion. According to Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska (2009), parents should be told and shown how to support a child. Parents want to know what exactly to do with their child so that they can do more.

The educational needs of gifted children may be difficult to meet in the average preschool group. Boredom and a lack of challenges sometimes lead to frustration of such children manifested in inappropriate behavior (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2010, p. 265). Therefore, children should be stimulated to develop their talents, encouraged to use many methods of problem solving and searching for various sources of knowledge and information, and allowed to implement creative ideas. Conditions for achieving success should also be created.

Research has confirmed that a gifted child strives for success. For a child at this age, the greatest success is enjoyed in participation in competitions, performances in front of parents and grandparents, praise from teachers and parents, as well as undertaking various activities that help them to develop their passion (e.g., additional tasks to be performed in the field of activity that the child is interested in).

It is the responsibility of the parents of talented children to shape and stimulate their children's aptitudes. Such parents should closely cooperate with the kindergarten in order to meet the child's needs together with teachers (Lewis, 1998, p. 10) and, thus, support them in various situations.

Based on the research, it can be concluded that parents are willing to cooperate with the kindergarten. They appreciate the contribution of kindergarten teachers to the individual development of the child and the development of the child's competences and skills. Therefore, according to Klim-Klimaszewska (2010, p. 264), preschool education must adapt to the changes that have

occurred without neglecting the comprehensive upbringing of children and ensure the high quality of the educational and didactic process and educational effectiveness, so that the creative potential of the child is stimulated as soon as possible.

Apart from working with the kindergarten, parents undertake many activities aimed at supporting their child. Research shows that the most frequently mentioned methods of such support are praising the child, being present at performances and helping them prepare for shows and competitions. It is important to console a child when they fail. Parents also support their child by organizing the rhythm of the day in such a way as to devote as much time as possible to developing their abilities. The time devoted to the child depends on the functioning of the whole family and the child's type of abilities. Most often, it is two or three hours a week, but some parents spend more time than that.

Nowadays, the offer of additional activities for children is expanding in the educational space according to their interests. This research has confirmed that most children develop their passions by participating in competitions and activities that take place in community centers. Children also attend classes that develop a given type of talent (e.g., sports clubs) and special interest clubs. Helping a child to prepare for a competition is also a form of developing their talents. The data analysis shows that parents prefer group classes to individual lessons, so that the child develops their abilities among peers.

Parents have to overcome many difficulties to help their child develop their passions. Research shows that the greatest difficulty is organizing time for additional classes. Parents are also concerned about the fact that the child has little time to play freely. For others, the difficulty is the lack of their spouse's support, the jealousy of siblings or friends, financial problems related to the purchase of specialized equipment and the assistance needed to develop the skills.

The significant achievements of childhood do not always foreshadow success in the future. It is worth observing them closely, but more in the context of the child's development than in formulating high expectations (Giza, 2008b, p. 14). According to Stańczak (2008, p. 6), the individual abilities of a child change over time. The environment of the child's life and learning liberates and allows for certain types of activities in which the above-average abilities of some individuals are revealed.

The research was also an opportunity to provide parents with practical advice and guidance on accompanying their child in the process of discovering and developing their passions. According to the surveyed parents, the child

should be observed, listened to and supported in every situation, especially in the event of failure, and parents should be happy about their successes even if they are not always in line with the parents' dreams. It is worth remembering that the child's abilities cannot serve to fulfill parents' unfulfilled dreams and ambitions. Parents should be patient and understanding.

The research confirmed that parents observe their child's development and create appropriate conditions for the development of their talents. They are willing to cooperate in stimulating the development of their children's talents and they are aware of the difficulties that they must overcome together with the child. Conclusions resulting from quantitative and qualitative analyses may be the basis for further, detailed research in the field of the diagnosis and development of children's talents. In the broadly understood educational and social space, diagnosing and developing children's aptitudes and then promoting them are still important and current tasks for parents, teachers of preschool education and the mass media.

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