

Practices and methods of early care in the Czech Republic: a guide to the social model

Hradilková, T. *Praxe a metody rané péče v ČR: Průvodce sociálním modelem*. Praha: Portál, 2018

Reviewed by Zuzana Haiclová

Terezie Hradílková, who is the main author of the book, is the founder of the first early care center in the Czech Republic. She has been working with families in which a child with a disability was born for more than 25 years.

The book “Practices and Methods of Early Care in the Czech Republic: A Guide to the Social Model” by the author Terezie Hradílková and the team was published in 2018 in the publishing house Portál. The authors try to bring the reader closer to how early care works in practice in the Czech Republic and what work with families with a child with a disability entails. The publication provides an overview of the field of early care and all the components that belong to it.

The book is divided into ten chapters. The first chapter is entitled “Introduction, why and for whom the publication was created”. The author introduces the publication and acquaints the reader with the main reason for writing this book. She describes the importance and significance of early care. “Once upon a time” is the title of the second chapter. Readers can learn a brief history of early care. How this service came into being and how it has changed over time to its current form. By reading all the contexts that were linked to the development of early care, it is easier to understand why early care has a place in social services today. “The parents’ journey with early care” is the title of the third chapter. This is a very practical part of the book, which describes the course and forms of the service and introduces the reader to how the cooperation between the family and the early care counselor takes place. With the help of the chapter, the reader can go through the whole process and imagine the service better. The fourth chapter “What is the” social model “of early care in the Czech Republic?” explains what is the main goal of early care, approaches concepts such as social service, field service, etc. The fifth chapter entitled “What does quality early care mean” describes which specific areas of early care should not be underestimated.

Quality should be reflected in the methodology, early care management, but also, for example, in careful preparation for each consultation in the family. The sixth chapter provides a specific description of how early care is provided. It describes to whom the early care counselor pays attention and where this attention is directed. The beginning of the chapter outlines the situation in a family with a child with a disability. The circumstances and factors that the family experiences and that they have to deal with are described. The author also describes how the counselor works with the family. It brings the reader closer that outside the child with a disability and the parents, attention is also paid to the child's siblings and the whole community. "Specifics of early care by the type of disability" is the topic and title of the seventh chapter. It is gradually described here how to work with children with mental, combined, physical, visual impairment, with children with autism spectrum disorder, with children with hearing and rare neuromuscular diseases. Each of these groups of disabilities needs to be approached differently and the specifics of each type of disability need to be taken into account. In the eighth chapter entitled "Early care counselor and the provider's team" we can get acquainted with the prerequisites for performing the work of an early care counselor, what qualities, skills and experience she should have in order to perform the work well. The last, ie the ninth chapter acquaints the reader with the current situation of early care in the Czech Republic, is entitled "The current situation of early care in the Czech Republic in numbers". The content of the chapter points out that despite the fact that early care is expanding its capacity and the whole system is improving, this service is still not provided to all families who need it and the capacity of this service is insufficient. It also deals with the financing of early care, availability and awareness of early care.

The book continuously contains tips, advice, but also the lived experiences of client families, which pleasantly enrich the reading. The publication also contains several photographs that capture, for example, direct work with a child, a photo from joint events, or, for example, specific aids that are used in direct work with a child. The book is nicely and clearly structured, so the reader is better acquainted with the chapters and has the opportunity to find specific information that interests them more quickly.

After reading the book, the reader will be able to imagine what all early care work entails and involves. The publication legibly, clearly and sometimes even humorously describes the practice of early care. It provides a lot of answers to questions that can be asked by the parents of a child with a disability which might not occur to an expert. The book could be appreciated by people who are considering becoming early care clients, but also by social workers who are thinking about working in early care.

Mgr. Zuzana Haiclová
Department of Special Education Studies
Faculty of Education
Palacky University in Olomouc
Žižkovo nám. 5
771 40 Olomouc
Czech Republic
e-mail: zuzana.haiclova01@upol.cz