

porównawczej oceniają także szczęśliwość swojego związku. Prawdopodobnie jest to skutek nieprawidłowej lub zerwanej więzi z rodzicami, która prowadzi do zachwiania poczucia bezpieczeństwa i niezaspokojenia potrzeb emocjonalnych, niezbędnych dla budowania satysfakcjonujących relacji. Rodzice wychowanków, jako osoby znaczące, zawiedli zaufanie swoich dzieci, co skutkuje trudnością w obdarzeniu zaufaniem osób ważnych dla wychowanków, w tym ich małżonków.

Na koniec warto jednak podkreślić, że mimo doświadczenia pobytu w domu dziecka prawie co czwarty wychowanek żyje w małżeństwie o wysokiej jakości. Zbliżony rezultat uzyskały osoby bez bagażu w postaci dzieciństwa w placówce pieczy zastępczej. Zaprezentowane w artykule wyniki są częścią większego projektu badawczego autorki [8], którego celem było opisanie czynników różnicujących jakość związków małżeńskich wychowanków domów dziecka.

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RESEARCH ON CHILDREN QUALITATIVE WAY TO RECOGNISE CHILDREN'S PRE-CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL WORLD

The aim of the article is to introduce research results from research of today's children. Research was done in years 2016-2017. The aim of the research is to examine the concepts and preconceptions of 5-7 years old children within their social space and to compare them with adults' views on current children and their concepts. The research sample is 284 respondents – children, preschool teachers, primary school teachers and parents. In research is used combined (qualitative-quantitative) research strategy. The methods used are semi-structured interviews with children and questionnaire for adults. The most important

research finding is that in many areas the views of adults on children and their world have not been identified with children's answers. Our research question was: How current children perceive and experience their social space in comparison to adults' opinions about them.

Key words: social space, young learners, parent, grandparent, teacher, opinion, concept, preconception, toy, leisure time.

Introduction. The theoretical basis of the qualitative part is hermeneutics, we approach to the phenomenon in order to understand it, we are looking for the meaning of the phenomenon to reflect the reality and we perform a phenomenological analysis. In research we investigate children's point of view on world.

The quantitative part of the research is based on constructivism, a method of dealing with the ways in which people interpret the world. Constructivism as philosophies emerging in the 20th century deal with so called „true knowledge“ the essence of which is active knowledge based on own experience. The most famous and the most important representatives of constructivism are J. Piaget [1], L.S. Vygotskij [2] and J.S. Bruner [3].

An important for research is discovery in J. Piaget [1] theory – the influence of the environment in formation of knowledge in interaction with the subject. In the process of knowledge an adult or child are discoverers and designers, who designs, or reconstructs knowledge passing from the ideas to the constructing of the knowledge.

The basis for research is theory of Vygotskij, [2] which emphasizing the functioning of the human mind can be explained only by social interaction, because the mind is shaped in social contact with others. Human development and knowledge is directly affected by the social environment, society and culture. An important benefit of Vygotsky's theory is the problem of thinking and speech. According to Vygotsky, speech is a tool of thinking. The meaning of word relates to process of thinking.

For the purposes of our research we are also using the theory of J.S. Bruner's [3]. theory of cognitive development of children empowering the world through representations. For representation, Bruner considers cognitive man's relationship to the world. Each area of knowledge can be represented by a set of activities, set of images or a set of logical statements and expressions. Human go through three levels of knowledge / three levels of representation: enactive mode (active), iconic mode, symbolic mode.

Our research of the social space of current children, is based on the Bronfenbrenner [4] theory of ecological systems (1979). We are mostly interested in the *closest social space* of current 5–7 year old children, according to the Bronfenbrenner [4] theory it is a *microsystem*, where: *family* – in our research represented under the category *home*, under the category “home” we are specifically examining grandparents from the perspective of children, *neighborhood* – which is in our research understood as the game and the toy, *institution* – in our research understood as *leisure time*. (see Fig. 1)

Nowadays, we can feel that the influence of the media has intensified considerably in recent years and it is gradually getting closer to the closest space of man. In our research, we want to investigate the transfer of the influence of media from the interface of the exosystem and mesosystem in Bronfenbrenner theory from 1979 to the microsystem layer, the closest, most personal area of the current children.

Another area in which the status has changed comparing to 1979 in the Bronfenbrenner [4] are the grandparents. We want to investigate if due to various factors influencing the changing nature of the current family, family crisis, «opening» of borders, and so on. nowadays, grandparents have moved from the closest social space of the child (microsystem) little further (mesosystem).

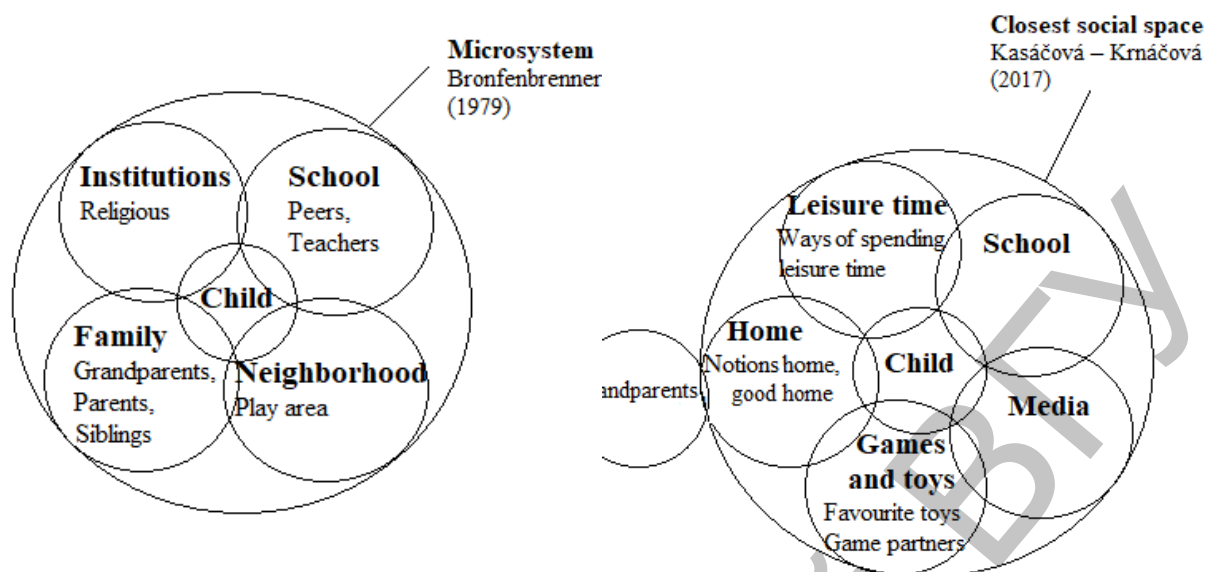


Fig. 1. – Comparison of Microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and Closest social space (Kasáčová – Krnáčová, 2017[5])

Methodology and methods. The research of current children was done in years 2016-2017. The aim of the research was to examine the concepts and preconceptions of 5-7 years old children on selected notions of social space – home, leisure time, games and toys, the relationship of the children to the given social attributes, their desires and pleasures, fears and worries. Children concepts and preconceptions were compared with opinions of adult about statements of current children. Research of the current children is related to the project VEGA 1/0598/15 „*Children at the threshold of education and their world*“, which is supervised [6]. We used the combined (qualitative-quantitative) research strategy: qualitative research of children's answers, their analysis, coding and categorization, which has become a structure for quantitative research of adult's concepts about children preconceptions. Qualitative methods have been used for purpose of comparisons. Research methods were flexible semi-structured interview with children and a questionnaire for adults. Research tools have been designed for purpose of this research. The clarity of questions was verified on sample of respondents – children during the pre-survey. Based on the children's responses and other possible responses, we have created response categories as options for responding for the adult questionnaire. Items in the questionnaire were created analogously with questions given to children. We created responses based on the categories created by analysing and encoding child responses.

Research of the social space of current children took place in several phases: part *Children and their concepts about word*, part: *Adults on children and children concepts*, part: *Comparison of both research parts*, using individual research methods and research probe: *Children about grandparents*.

RESEARCH PART: CHILDREN AND THEIR CONCEPTS ABOUT WORLD

The research sample: The research sample consisted of 96 children (61 girls and 35 boys) in age 5-7 years, attending last year at kindergarten, respectively the 1st degree of primary school in Slovakia (see Table 1).

Table 1. – Summary of respondents. Part: *Children and their concepts about world*

Respondents	Total	Girls	Boys	Age (Number of children)
Children	96	61	35	5,5-6 (52) 6-7 (44)

The research method and the research tool: Research method was flexible semi-structured interview. The applied research method was flexible micro-interview described in ICERI conference in Seville [5]. Research tool has been validated in the pre-research as research tool – *Interview to survey on children's preconceptions about notions related to social space*.

Main target: To examine the concepts and preconceptions of 5-7 years old children within their social space.

Partial targets: Find out what the favourite toy of current 5-7 years old children are. Find out what the ways of spending leisure time of current 5-7 years old children are. Find out influence of media on current 5-7 years old children.

RESEARCH PART: ADULTS ABOUT CHILDREN AND CHILDREN CONCEPTS

The research sample: The research sample consisted of 188 adults – 72 pre-school teachers, 51 primary school teachers and 65 parents in Slovakia.

Table 2. – Summary of respondents. Part: *Adults about children and children concepts*

Respondents	Number
Parents	65
Preschool teachers	72
Primary school teachers	51
Total	188

The research method and the research tool: Research method was a questionnaire. Research tool was the questionnaire – *Adult view at current children* in electronic form and printed form for parents, preschool teachers and primary school teachers.

Main target: To explore the opinion of the preschool and primary school teachers and parents about the current children and children concepts.

Partial targets: To identify knowledge and concepts of preschool and primary school teachers and the parents of selected areas: about children's favourite toy, children's leisure time.

RESEARCH PART: COMPARISON OF BOTH RESEARCH PARTS

Main target: Compare the opinions of preschool and primary school teachers and the parents about children with children's answers within the areas of social space of current children.

Partial targets: Compare the opinions of preschool and primary school teachers and the parents about children with children's answers about children's favourite toy, children's leisure time.

The research method of data analysis: Quantitative statistical data analysis – comparison of the research files was realised through the statistical program SPSS Statistics, using Pearson Chi-Square test.

RESEARCH PROBE: CHILDREN ABOUT GRANDPARENTS

The research sample:

Table 3. – Summary of respondents. Part: *Children about grandparents*

Respondents	Total	Girls	Boys	Age (Number of children)
Children	63	28	35	6-7 (63)

The research method and the research tool: Research method was flexible semi-structured interview with children. Research tool has been validated in the pre-research as research tool interview – *Children point of view on grandparents*.

Main target: To study the concepts and preconceptions, of children about grandparents, their importance for children and ways of spending of children free time with grandparents.

Partial targets: Find out the importance of grandparents to children (according to children). Find out what children love (and what children don't love) and what children want to do with their grandparents in their leisure time.

Findings and their discussion. In research result we offer selected findings with-in areas closest social space of current children [5]: leisure time, games and toys, to find out position of media in closest social space of current children. Subsequently, we researched the area of grandparents, whether they are in a microsystem of current children, or if the position of grandparents is currently moving into the mesosystem.

FAVOURITE TOY OF CURRENT CHILDREN. What responses did children give us? More than 80% of children's answers to the question: *What is your favourite toy?* contained concepts classified as classic **toys** such as dolls, cars, plush toy: *"My plush toy."* *"My teddy bear – plush toy."* *"Blacky, the dog I got for my sixth birthday (a plush toy)."* *"My doll Zuzka, which is my favourite doll."* *"Monster (a doll). With teeth like a ghost."* *"Doll."* *"Robots."* *"Cars."* Only 12% of children's have identified their favourite toy as different types of **media** (computer, tablet, mobile phone): *"Um, on my computer, that's where I have all the games."* *"Tablet and telly."* *"Mobile phone, tablet and monopoly (board game)."* *"Well, I'm playing the most on the tablet."* The other toys mentioned by children were **Lego or building kits**. However, as the most popular toy it was mentioned only by 8% of children: *"Small Lego."* *"Lego is my favourite toy."* According to this we have created special category – Lego. The options of **natural material** and **pets** were not mentioned in the statements of children at all.

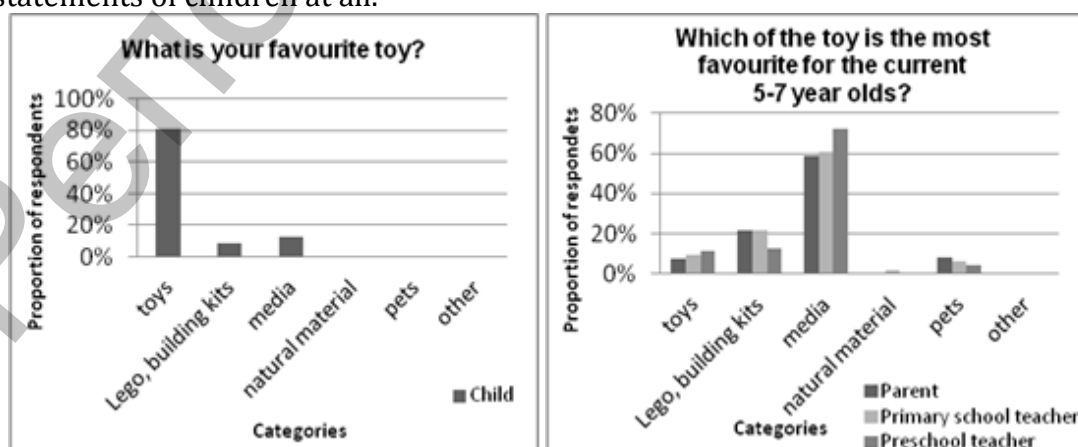


Chart 1. – Representation of children's answers about the most preferred toy.

Chart 2. – Representation of adult's ideas about children's preferred toy.

The issue of knowledge/vision of parents and teachers about preferences of toys in current children is dealt with in a questionnaire with only one option: *Which of the toy is the most favourite for the current 5-7 years old children?* In this area, parents and teachers do not match at all with children's answers. Adults are succumbing to trends that are critically and warningly expressing about "high-technology" and "virtual" period of time. But the answers of children's respondents show that children in the age of study are «more traditional» than adults think. Only 12% of children have identified tablets, computers and mobile phones as toys. 72% of preschool teachers assumed that children will be considering tablets, computers and mobile phones for toys.

As the most popular toy of the current 5-7 years old children, in a significant advance compared to other options, preschool teachers (72%), primary school teachers (60%) and parents (58%) consider different types of **media**. After media, 21 % of parents, 21% of primary school teachers and 12% of preschool teachers chosen **Lego and building kits**. 12% of parents had chosen **pets** and 7% of parents had chosen classic **toys** (cars, dolls, etc.). 12% of teachers in both categories chosen option classic **toys** (cars, dolls, etc.) as the most popular toy of children, 10% chosen option **pets**. 2% of primary school teachers mentioned option **natural material**.

By comparison of the responses of children and adults to the given question, there was a statistically significant difference between groups within the categories: **toys** ($p = 0,000$), **media** ($p = 0,000$) and **pets** ($p = 0,005$).

LEISURE TIME OF CURRENT CHILDREN. 59% of children answers to the question: *How / where do you spend your leisure time, when you are alone, without parents?* fell under the category of children leisure time spending without their parents **at home, playing** (with classic toys): «*I'm alone at home, playing with toys.*» «*I play chess with Jan-ka.*» «*I'm playing with my sister.*» «*I'm home and I draw.*» 47% of children's answers describe their leisure time as time spent **in nature, doing sports activities**: «*We play ... outside ... we play hockey behind the house.*» «*On the playground.*» «*I'm going out.*» «*On the playground.*» 35% of children's answers fall under the category of spending leisure time alone with activities using different types of **media** (computer, tablet, mobile phone, TV): „*(With my sister) we watch (TV).*“ «*I like to watch « a telly. « and sometimes I turn it off, and sometimes watch DVD (with fairy tales).*» «*Sometimes I play on a tablet.*» „*I play with a tablet.*“ **Out-of-school activities** were mentioned by 8% of children and time in the **leisure centre** was mentioned by 1 % of children. «*In the playground «Sales»(Salesians of Don Bosco), we play, we climb on the trees and we are swaying on swings.*» «*With the Salesians, I ride on a scooter.*» Unused leisure time – **being bored** was recorded in only 4% of children's answers. Children didn't mention spending time in **city** in connection with their leisure time.

Answers of parents, teachers of pre-school education and teachers of primary education to the question: *How / where the current 5-7 years old children spend their free time alone, without parents?*, of which the respondents could choose a maximum of two, were the following.

Opinions of adult about children do not identify with the answers of children. The most frequent possibility of free-time spending of current children without parents are according to primary school teachers (67%), preschool teachers (74%) and parents (51%) **different types of media**. The possibility of spending time **at home, playing** (with classic toys) was the second most common option for teachers of pre-school education (36%) and parents (46%) and the third most frequent option for teachers of primary education (31%). Primary school teachers (51%) preferred leisure time of children spent by **out-of-school activities**, before spending time at home playing games. The

categories **nature, sport, city, centres**, as ways of leisure time spending of current children without parents, are significantly less represented in the answers of adults.

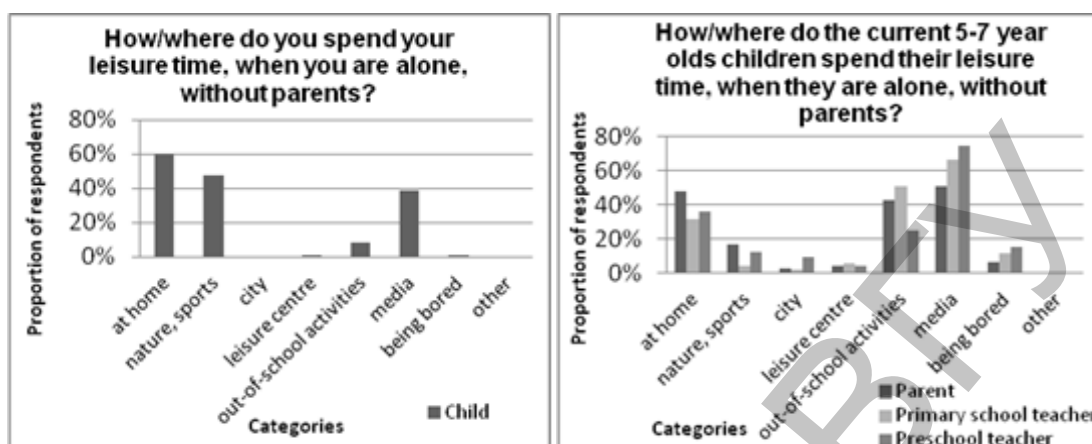


Chart 3. – Representation of children's answers about how they spend their leisure time without parents

Chart 4. – Representation of adults' answers on how children spend their free time when they are alone

Comparing the answers of children and adults within the given question, we identified a statistically significant difference between the groups within the categories: **home, playing** (with classic toys) ($p=0,003$), in **nature, sport** ($p=0,000$), in **town** ($p=0,007$), **leisure activities, out-of-school activities** ($p=0,000$) and **media** ($p=0,000$).

GRANDPARENTS THROUGH THE EYES OF CURRENT CHILDREN. Another question in the interview: *What are the meanings of grandparents to the children?* examines the importance of grandparents for children from the children point of view.

The most common category in children's testimonies (68%) of the importance of grandparents for children aged 6-7 years was **help and care** during the absence of parents, children's illnesses or at leisure time, holidays: «For example, when parents are somewhere off, they can look after us.» «For example, if my mother went to work, for example to Germany, I would have to sleep with my grandma sometimes.» «When parents are at work and the children is sick to be able to look after him.» In 5% of these answers, children perceived help and care mutually although when question was *What is the sense of grandparents?* Children answers were: «In my point of view, not to be alone (old parents).» «Helping grandparents.» The 1% representation of these answers had an answer combining the importance of the care of grandparents in relation to the death of parents. 13% of children **were unable to answer the question**. Another children answers (10%) on the importance of grandparents for children were directed towards shared **leisure activities** of children and grandparents like game and entertainment: «To play with them.» «For example, they can learn children how to knit.» «For example, when we bake cakes.» 6% of children's answers fell into the category **others** in connection with **visits**: „To visit them.» A higher level of abstraction was evident in 3% of children's answers, where the meaning of grandparents was considered as the **emotion** for example joy from the common moments: „To make us happy.“ «To make children happy.»

Next, we asked children about their concepts: *What would it be like to have no grandparents?* and *Why?* Children mostly replied that it would be **bad**, or terrible, uncomfortable, difficult, boring and sad. That is why we have devoted more detail to the

child's justification for their answers. So, we asked the question: *Why would it be bad not to have grandparents?*

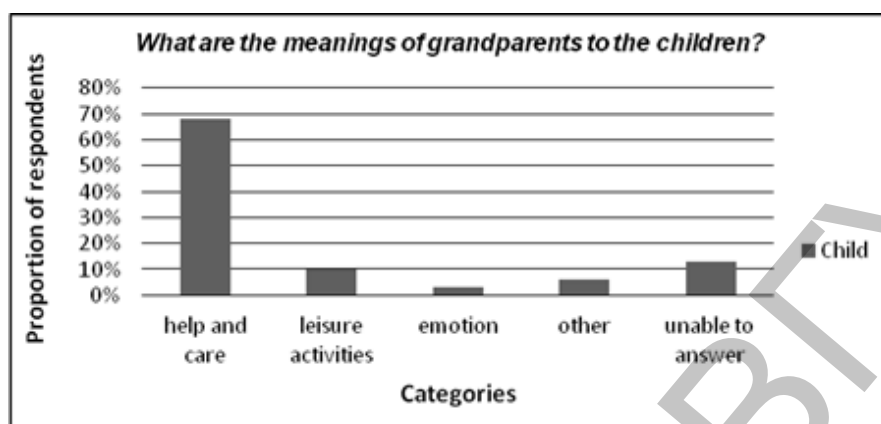


Chart 5.—Representation of children's answers about the meanings of grandparents to the children

27% of the children's answers were **without justification**. 11% of children **didn't know** why it would be bad not to have grandparents. 6-7 years old children combined the idea of not having grandparents with negative emotions justified to the greatest extent (32%), that there would be **no one to take care of them** if for example parents did not have time: «*Bad. Because when mommy and daddy are at work, I must stay alone at home.*» «*Bad. Because if we were sick, they would not be able to take care of us.*» «*Terrible. The children would have to guard themselves.*» «*Parents would have to take a time off from work when we are sick and then they would not have enough money.*» Consequently, children (13%) would miss game and entertainment within the category of **leisure activities**, in connection with the concept that they would not have grandparents: «*Horrible. For example, I could not play them and go to visit them.*» «*Unpleasant. Because I would not have anyone to play with.*» «*Bad. Because I would not have fun with them.*» «*Bad. Because I could not go with them on trips.*» In 6% of 6-7 years old children, **emotion** were the reason why it would be unpleasant to have no grandparents: «*Sad. Well, I think the kid would not be happy.*» «*Sad. Because I would miss them.*» «*Sad. Because my mom and dad would not have their parents.*» 6% of the children answers were categorized as **other** for example in connection with grandparents pets: «*Terrible, because I wouldn't be able to meet with their dog.*» «*Bad. The dog would have to be given somewhere else.*» 5% of children would miss the **media** in connection with the concept that they would not have grandparents: «*Terrible, because I wouldn't have anyone to lend me a tablet.*» «*Bad. No one would let me watch the TV for a long time.*»

In addition, we have done a research probe on how children spend time with their grandparents, what do they like to do, what they don't like to do and what they want to do. Firstly, we have been founding out what kids do with their grandparents. Children mostly associated time with grandparents with the game, whether it was table game, staying outdoors or doing house works. Then we asked the children more specifically: *What do you like to do with grandparents?*

From all of the mentioned above 6-7 years children spend most of their time with grandparents through the **game** (56%): «*I prefer to play with them.*» «*I like to play with grandparents.*» of which the most popular games are table games or card games: «*I play with them (old parents) games like Ludo (Man, don't get upset).*» „*I play cards with grandfather.*“ „*I play Pexeso with grandmother.*“ and outdoor games, sports: «*We prefer playing*

outside.» «We go out with the doggy.» «I prefer to ride a bike with grandfather in the rain.» After the game 32% of children's answers were represented by **housework** in the kitchen, garden, or in the grandparents animal stall: «I help cook in the kitchen.» «We do work in the garden.» „I like to cut wood with grandfather.“ «We're baking a cake with grandmother.» „I like to collect fruits with grandfather.“ 6% of children said they **did not** actively spend time with grandparents. The **media** were represented in 3% of children's answers: «We are watching» the „telly».» Within the category **others**, 3% of children mentioned talking to grandparents: «We are talking.»

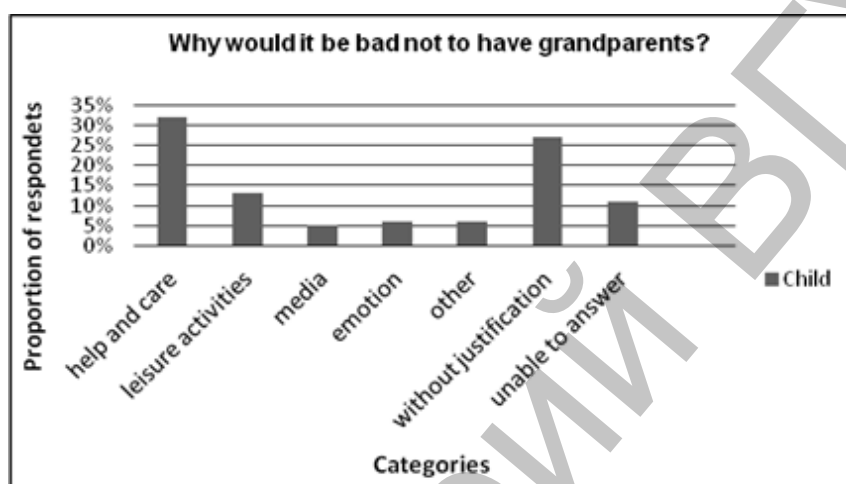


Chart 6. – Representation of children's answers about reasons why it would be bad not to have grandparents

To the question: *Is there something you do not like with to do with grandparents?* 6-7 years old children mostly (68%) answered that there is nothing like that. 32% of the children mentioned that there is something they did not like to do with grandparents. Mostly children mentioned **arguments**: «When my older and younger sister comes, I don't like when they are fighting at grandmother house.» «I do not want to argue with them (grandparents).» and more difficult **house works**: „I don't like raking hay.“ „I don't like digging into the soil.“ Then children mentioned the **preparation for the school**: «I don't like doing homework with them.» „I don't like counting.“, also **sleeping** at grandparents house: „I was afraid to sleep at my grandparents house.»

Answers of 6-7 years old children related to the question: *What would you like to do with your grandparents?* were mostly (48%) associated with the **game**: «Play.» «I wish my grandparents have time to play with me.» «I'd like to go with them to the playroom.» «To play with the Lego.» «Just to play cards with them.» «Play with kitties.» «To draw.», outdoor game, sports, walks: «That we could go for walks.» «Cycling.» «Going for a walk with our dog.» After the game, children would like to help old parents with **house works** (13%) in connection with helping in kitchen, garden, in a variety of manual work or with pet care: «Well, I'd like to cook with them and collect the eggs, because my grandparents have chickens.» «Help them.» «To help them cooking.» 22% of children **didn't know** how to answer. **Other** children's answers (9%) were related to trips, time in the city, or simply enjoying time with grandparents. 8% of children's answers about what they would like to do with their grandparents headed to the category **media**: «Just watch «the telly».» «Watch movies.» «Watch cartoons.»

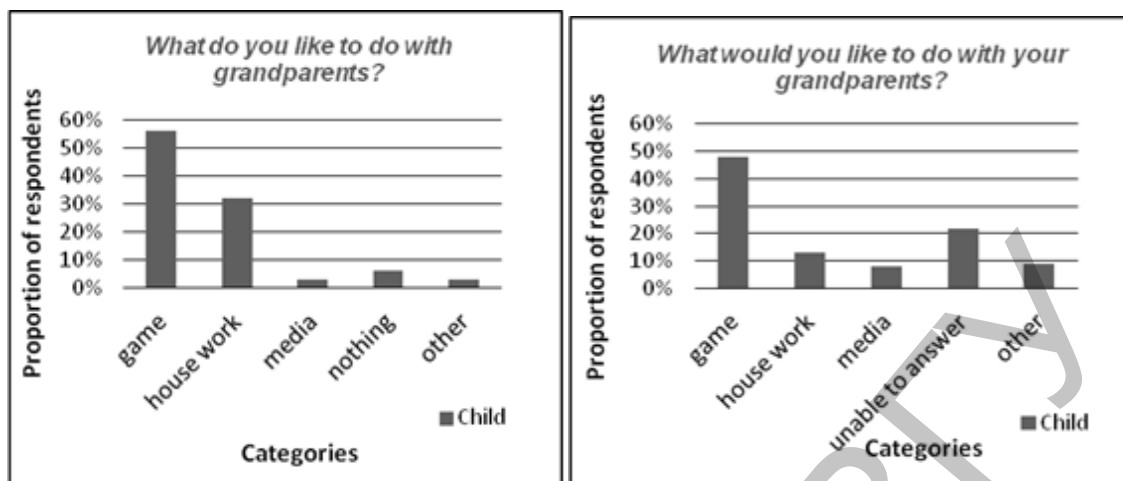


Chart 7. – Representation of children's answers about what children like to do with grandparents

Chart 8. – Representation of children's answers about what would children like to do with grandparents

Since children aged 6-7 years still can't properly express the time context, we didn't ask them for the frequency of encounters with grandparents. We were curious whether children are happy with how often they meet their grandparent, or whether they want to be with them more often: *Would you like to be with your grandparents more often?*

Regardless of how often children meet their grandparents, 57% of the children said that they would like to meet their grandparents **more often**: «I'd like to be with them more.» «More often.» «I'd like to be with them more often.» «Even more.» «I want my grandparents to have more time for me.» 40% of children in their answers mentioned that they are **satisfied** with how often they meet their grandparents: «It's enough for me.» «Enough.» «Pretty enough.» «I am satisfied.» In 3% of children testimonies children **couldn't answer**.

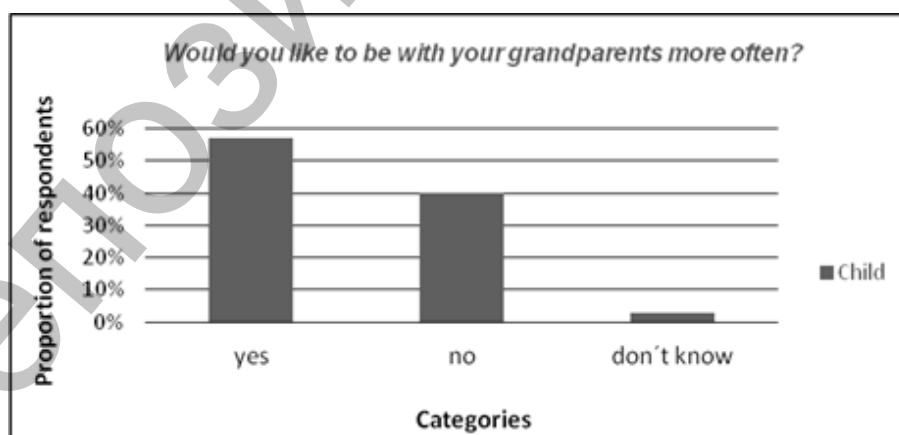


Chart 9. – Representation of children's answers if children like to be with grandparents more often

CONCLUSION. The most interesting and surprising findings are the following: We managed to find out that the young learners prefer classic toys. Toys have not been replaced by information and communication technologies, which is in direct contradiction to the claims made by authors (Eriksen 2001; Bauerlein, 2008; Spitzer, 2014 at al.). Today's children spend their leisure time in nature and through a variety of sports at a significantly higher rate than playing computer games, as adults expect.

We also pick up other research findings from all our research (more in Kasáčová – Krnáčová, 2017). Children's answers have shown that children prefer to play with their siblings or peers than alone. Another finding was that 5-7 years old children can think about abstract events such as war or death in connection with their worries. Children of this age are afraid of themselves and their loved ones. Adults underestimated the children, because they expected that biggest fear of children will be losing in the game or competition.

Children aged 6-7 years can mostly explain the notion “grandparents”. Children combined the importance of grandparents for children pragmatically with help and care during the time when parents are busy. Here we can see a realistic sign of pragmatic consideration of children about the work life, which is also part of the world of children. However, 6-7 years old children were able to express responses emotionally more focused of meaning of grandparents for them, like game, fun, shared time, love, and the least extent – media. The answers of 6-7 years old children on how they want to spend time with their grandparents reveal the desires of children about their old parents. An important finding from the research probe is that there is no significant difference between what children are doing with their grandparents at leisure time and what children want to do. It means that the behaviour of grandparents is based on the needs, desires and wishes of the children, and that grandparents know children very well. Children aged 6-7 years want to spend time with their grandparents. 6-7 years old children in the majority mentioned that they would like to be with grandparents more often than they are. However, the positive finding is that almost half of the children are happy with how often they are with their grandparents. It is clear from the children's answers that, despite the changes in the family, the grandparents are still close to children today and hold their place in the microsystem or the closest social space of children.

Children discover the world through relationships. The way they perceive it needs to be uncovered by a sensitive approach in open communication. It is important to recognize the individual dimensions of the social space of current children. Concepts of parents about the social space of current children may not be the same as perceived by children themselves. Many findings indicate that adults are often mistaken in their assumptions about child reflections. It is important not only to talk to children, but also to know how to ask questions correctly, so that we can learn from them more and we ourselves can learn how to help children. Understanding of children will influence the behaviour of adults towards children, their expectations from children and their mutual relationship.

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