
Kindergarten/ Social Pedagogy Homepage of Ingeborg Becker- Textor and Dr. Martin R. Textor

Upbringing- Partnerships of teachers and parents

Martin R. Textor

In many studies it's documented that children are– family- related– put to school with different initial conditions. Although then children go through the same school, at least in the first four years, teachers don't reach to balance such differences. The Salzburg professor *Krumm* (1995) commentated on these research results as follows: “The differences in cognitive or affective initial learning conditions don't decrease over the course of school time, they increase. Of course, this doesn't mean that in school there is not learned a lot of. This simply means that pupils who are advanced before and during school time are able to use chances to learn better...” (p. 8) School achievement of children can be better explained by conditions in the family than conditions at school. (up to two thirds of relevance)

Also the still intensively discussed PISA- study revealed that success in school depends particularly on family factors. This is especially true for Germany: There is no other industrial country where the social background is as important for scholar success. Children from academic families have a four times larger chance for Abitur than children from skilled labour families. Even lower class children with best achievements don't go on higher schools but stay at secondary modern school (Hauptschule). Therefore parents decide about the school career of their child by their expectations of achievement, by their dimension of advancement of childish development and by control, especially of homework.

All these researches point out the great relevance of family for children. It's obvious that there is learned a lot in family, most of all competences and attitudes which are important for the whole further life. To this belong abilities of language, gross- and fine- motor- skills, motivation to learn, curiosity, commitment, interests, values, self- control, self- confidence, social competences etc. How much these competences are trained in family decides about the future success in school and life of the child.

That means for school: Parents' achievement mustn't be underestimated. They taught their children successfully to walk, to run, to speak and to treat others. They spend much more time with their child than teachers are able to give them in classes. Furthermore they are more important "objects of love" than teachers, whereby the feelings related to that advance imitation and learning by patterns. Finally parents are "specialists" for their child. They know their child much longer and in different situations than the teacher, and children behave at other places very different.

My last statements make plain how important the exchange between school and parents home about the child, his living situation and his education. Teachers and parents have knowledge gaps- first ones about the family situation and child's behaviour and experience outside school, the others about daily routine of education and development of the child at school. The two sides only can get to know by dialogue, in which partners are equal and accepted, about child's behaviour in each other living world.

Such a dialogic relation between teachers and parents could be called "up- bringing- partnership" (comp. Textor 2000) This term stresses that at the one side teachers and parents effect on child's development and on the other side the common responsibility for child's education takes the centre stage between both sides. Furthermore the term "partnership" includes that family and school are having equal rights, have "contracted an alliance", have the same agenda and work together.

Up- bringing- partnership is realised by a dynamic process of communication by open up of family and school for each other. This requires trust and respect from respect to each other- attitudes that also effort to the child: If he/ she notices that teachers esteem the family, he/ she will develop more self- respect. If he/ she notices that the parents respect the teacher, this will support the pedagogic reference and motivation to learn.

To open up on family's side means that parents talk about the child's behaviour in the family, special experiences, their aims in- and methods of education. On school's side to open up is about make the daily school routine transparent for parents. For example, parents want to know, which aims, conception, practices of education teachers have, what they teach and how they behave in difficult situations- for example towards an aggressive defying child. They also want to profit by the developmental- psychologically and pedagogic professional

knowledge and the experiences of the teachers. At the most they wish to get information about how their child behaves in the class, how it develops, which advances it does by learning, if it has any problems.

Due to the impression of the PISA- study I extended the term “up bringing partnership”: In my opinion there also should be a “educational partnership” between parents and school. What I mean is that parents and school should cooperate also at children’s education. From my point of view this implies the corporation of parents at school. So you meet for example at American schools parents who lead small groups of children by working with pc’s, by speaking with them in a foreign language or supervise them at other activities. Children’s development profits because they have other partners to talk or play or as role models besides the teachers. They experience more stimulation, instruction and support. By the more intensive interaction with adults their linguistic and cognitive development is accelerated. Further they acquire social skills by having intercourse with adults that often have been unknown before.

These possibilities could also be opened at German schools. Especially project work facilitates an intensive inclusion of parents in educational activities (comp. Textor 2002). Parents should be a part of the project planning, whereby they can contribute own ideas and take on jobs– for example get books, materials resp. tools or make appointments with crafts companies or cultural institutions. In the course of one project they can be active, i.e. instruct small groups in certain activities, be interview partners or contribute special professions. They also could be visited in projects like “Working” or “Living” at work or at home. Parents could be demanded to deepen project subjects at home. And eventually they could be included in the evaluation of projects.

Further the cooperation between parents and school should lead to an improvement of bringing up and education in the family. In relation to this shall be remembered the following result of PISA: Students were asked how far their parents advance their scholar development. Only a bit more than 40% of German students gave the statement that their parents talk regularly with them about their scholar achievements– the OECD- average was 51,2 %, the account of Italian parents was even about 60 %. Further report only 41 % of German 15-year-olds that their parents have regularly personal talks with them and just about 16 % said that

their parents talk with them about films, books or TV several times a week. In other countries parents showed eminently more interest.

The following becomes clear here: Parents must take on more responsibility for bringing up, education a personal development of older children and adolescents. This just can happen if also teachers have influence in upbringing by family and so get active by parents' education. For example, this can happen by individual conversations but also by parents' evenings and circles. Further teachers can tell parents how they can take up, add and deepen subjects of projects. This way parents can lend books appropriate to the present subject from town library and have a look at them together with their child. They can speak about new terms or execute certain by teacher suggested experiments or perform with the child handicraft works or have an interview. By this way the learn experience is intensified and extended—education in family is intensified.

So I plead for an upbringing- and educational partnership of parents and school: If parents can contribute their knowledge, competences, hobbies etc in school, the educational offer extends. If parents discuss with children, especially in small groups or individual talks, linguistic-, social-, and cognitive development are supported. If teachers impinge on family upbringing, children's conditions for socialisation improve. If they require parents to take up lessons' contents and deepen them, this will have positive efforts for the cognitive development of the child. Upbringing and education become a common task of school and family this way.

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