

ONE DAY CONVENTION "ENCEPHALOS" ON: «Child - Family - School»

SUMMARIES OF SPEAKER PRESENTATION

Outlets - Obligations - Limits - Participation

Aikaterini Divoli

The child is born free of any kind of obligations but very soon is forced to follow various restrictions.

Outlets for the child should be any kind of motion, the creative games, fairytales, puppetry, art is general as music – dance – painting. These help the child to express freely its inner self while developing towards adulthood.

Obligations are applied through the various routine nourishing, cleaning etc. later then studying and fulfilling personal – family - work needs. Time has an essential role in human life generally.

Limits are necessary from early childhood throughout life. These are not only restrictive but also protective and they are applied later by the laws.

Participation in family life is necessary from the very early childhood. It helps the child to develop a sense of belonging, to interact with others, to offer and receive, to love, to grow into a creative sensitive personality.

School: a place of challenge for students' adaptive functioning

Ioanna Giannopoulou

The last international PISA Assessment (2015), which takes place every three years under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has placed our country. Similar results were observed in a more concise assessment in mathematics, reading comprehension and collaborative problem solving. At the same time, Greek students occupy low ranking position with regard to their level of joy/happiness experienced in school. The Nationwide Survey of EPIPSI (2014) concerning health behavior in adolescent students, aged 11, 13 and 15 years old (that takes place every four years under the auspices of the

World Health Organization), with regards to their school experiences and perceptions, revealed that one in every 3 students (32.0%) feel pressured by school work, with higher proportion of girls than boys (36,1% and 27,8%, respectively). The percentage indicating satisfaction with school attendance decreases significantly with students' age: from 83.9% (among 11-years-old) to 57.1% (13-year-old) and to 48.9% (15-year-old), which is likely to reflect differences in the perceptions held by teaching staff within various levels (primary/secondary) and types of education (public/private), not only regarding the school's organization and operation, but also about its role, the value system and the hierarchy of learning objectives.

The school is the environment in which the children/teenagers spend most of their time, outside the family. As a micro-society it plays an important role in children's and adolescents' socio-emotional development, in promoting their psychological resilience and social adaptation/inclusion in future communities of work, and hence by definition it is a social space for creative co-work, collegiality and sociability. Therefore, a positive school environment, as in "caring school community", can be a protective factor for children's and adolescents' mental health, whereas a troubled school environment can result in the child's/adolescent's low motivation for learning and low self-esteem, in the display of psychosomatic symptoms, aggression and risk-taking behaviours, such as alcohol and/or drug use. In recent years, there has been an increase in the proportion of children/adolescents in Greece experiencing a wide range of difficulties with negative impact on their functioning in the areas of physical and mental health, learning and school adjustment. A variety of individual, family, social and cultural factors are associated with psychosocial adaptation and school performance and, thereof with the likelihood of developing psychosocial and learning problems. Through the prism of exogenously imposed extreme restrictive social budget "fiscal" measures, which have a serious impact on the Greek communities and the schools, but also considering the idiosyncratic weaknesses in the Greek educational system (para-paideia-parallel private cramming system), we will at-

tempt to shed some light on the results of the above mentioned surveys.

The role of volunteer actions to combat socially excluded children: the case of the "Ark of the World" in Athens

Tsobanoglou Georgios

A given social fact must be explained by social causes in order to lead to reform of social policies. The recent publication of "The Social Portrait of Greece" 2016-2017 by the National Centre for Social Research (2018) highlighted the failure of modernization of Greek society in the context of a Social Europe. The thorough analysis of relevant EU indicators provides evidence that Greece goes through an unprecedented social rather than economic crisis, as it has been officially reported and treated. Social and political fragmentation in the institutions and practices has produced the opposite effect, as it has failed to 'modernize' social policies that continue to be characterized by a medley of settings with conflicting responsibilities between different actors, while such crises as child poverty remains the biggest in the Eurozone. For example, the function of a system which ensures a guaranteed minimum income for protecting socially weak populations, such as mothers and children, remains to be in place comprehensively. Data from the study of IOBE (2017) for the food crisis show that private initiatives (volunteering) such as the Food Bank (Vassilopoulos) is a visible intervention in a sector crucial for combating poverty. Food donations are still not exempt of VAT while there is legislation to that effect (N4238/2014). Similarly, while law 4430/2016 is in effect regarding the operation of the Third Sector (nonprofit), in practice there is no evidence that the not-for-profit enterprises can use that institution. Here we see a conflict between the economy and society.

The "Ark of the world" was formed by a member of the Greek Orthodox Church and is an example of a response to the needs of protection and care of outcast children. This organization works without any public support, only by contributions from the people and private donors, such as the Food Bank Foundation. The above example, in conjunction with national data concerning the policy on the management of the humanitarian crisis, allow us to interpret key aspects of the handling of the social crisis in Greece. While the phenomenon lasts for a decade it does not seem to have brought about the necessary systemic changes, within the social administration, in terms of an effective social response to the food-crisis and child poverty issues. As a result the charity/volunteering sector, while it appears to be an impor-

tant method for tackling child poverty, there is still a missing accommodation of the sector in an socially effective manner. The current regime is ineffective, as it is characterized by fragmentary actions (often without transparency) and lacking cooperation with social partners, in the drawing of the relevant Community funds to address this grave social problem.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Sotiris Kotsopoulos

ADHD is a disorder of early childhood which becomes an important problem during school years. It is more common among boys than girls (3 to 1). During adolescence hyperactivity may subside but for many individuals may be a lifelong problem. There is evidence that the pathology of the disorder consists of dysfunction of certain networks of the brain which involve the neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine. These neurotransmitters underline 'executive functions' which impact upon inhibition and delay of any improper response. The etiology is genetic and environmental toxic effect of substances during pregnancy (smoking, alcohol, acetaminophene, lead). Colorings and preservatives in the food of the child have also been suspected. Effective control of the symptoms of ADHD may be achieved with medication (methylphenidate-Ritalin which increases the concentration of dopamine in the synapses and atomoxetine-Strattera which increases the concentration of noradrenaline. Psychological interventions may have important but supplementary effect.

Human sexual differentiation and aberration spectrum

Christos N. Tasopoulos

Human Sexual Differentiation process starts with the fusion of an ovum, carrying a maternal X chromosome with a spermatozoon, carrying a paternal either X or Y chromosome. It evolves up to a certain stage during pregnancy and gets completed by the sex hormones in puberty, when female and male human beings become mature for reproduction.

The primordial genital structures of the embryo, in the absence of a Y chromosome, develop into female internal and external genital organs and the brain develops without differentiation. In presence of an intact and functional Y chromosome, the embryonic primordia develop into male internal and external genital organs during the 1st trimester and the dimorphic brain gets masculinised during the 2nd half of pregnancy.

The differentiation mechanism is extremely complicated and sensitive to any alteration or mutation of parental genital cells, chromosomes and genes, as well as of embryonal hormones, enzymes, receptors and neurotransmitters, not neglecting the detrimental effect of the environmental endocrine disruptors. Thus, the final target of development of a perfect female or male, may not be totally successful in every descendant.

Due to these eventual influences on the embryo, there are newborns with errors in the formation of the internal or external genital organs and hormones. Exactly in the same way, there may be newborns with normal internal and external genital organs, but with aberrations in the cellular structure and function of specific brain areas, which determine Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation.

Regarding the anatomical and hormonal disorders, we are able, with special surgical interventions and hormonal manipulations, to offer these people, to a great extent, the sexual characteristics, organs and functions, which best correspond to the Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, they identify with. In contrast, regarding inborn Gender Identity (the conviction that a person belongs to the male or female gender) and Sexual Orientation (heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality) which have been programmed in the dimorphic brain during the endometrial life, there is no proof that any postnatal medical manipulation or influence of the social environment, can have any crucial effect.

Diagnosing orthopedic conditions of the newborn in time, by early on clinical examination

Emmanouil-Alexios Verikokakis

It is my duty to inform parents about this very important examination that their newborn should undergo. Unfortunately the Greek state hasn't establish this check up as mandatory, the way other medically advanced countries have done. In our country it is up to the parents to seek for orthopedic exam for their newborn.

The physician during the orthopaedic exam checks the integrity of the baby's musculoskeletal system. Every one of his bones and joints is thoroughly examined. This way we are able to diagnose a variety of malformations that would otherwise go unnoticed by both parents and pediatricians. Conditions like Clubfoot, Scoliosis, Kyphosis and Hip Dysplasia can be diagnosed immediately after birth. Thus we are buying time, because we can intervene while the baby's skeleton is still soft and all the malformations are treated with simple means.