

Foster Parents' Readiness for the Implementation of Foster Family Pedagogy

Maritana Gorina

Daugavpils University, Daugavpils, Latvia

Oksana Ivanova

Riga Technical University, Riga, Latvia

Marite Kravale-Paulina

Daugavpils University, Daugavpils, Latvia

Abstract

It can be observed that changing attitude towards the environment and fellow human beings manifests itself as a socially unsustainable relationship, which in different ways and at different levels manifests itself in social exclusion. Social exclusion is increasingly emerging as a phenomenon that is complex in nature and its solutions must be sought in the wicked problem approach, which is characteristic of complex problems and has significant ontological roots. At present, ontology should consider the much more complicated problem of what types of being are formed by both the natural and the cultural evolutionary processes. It can be argued that evolutionary ontology attempts to create a new image of the world and of humans – a new non-anthropocentric cosmology, i.e., a consistently philosophical culturological cosmology that takes into account reality in its real structure as a conflict between the spontaneous activity of nature and the socio-cultural activity of humans (Šmajš, 2008, p. 96). The reasons for social exclusion can be different, and its specific manifestations are various, and the same can be said about the phenomenon of social inclusion, which is the expression of the quality of other relationships and attitudes. Externally observable signs of social exclusion are more closely related to the concept of families at risk. A social risk family can be defined as a family that experiences difficult problems and has limited opportunities to provide favorable living conditions for the comprehensive development of all family members. More and more often it is associated with unsustainable cultural or non-cultural contexts, mainly related to non-ecological culture prosperity in the consumer society. It can be noted that this context in its current form (which includes manufacturing, consumption, material culture, and technology, and both the social, intellectual, and material life of humans) is quite anti-natural oriented in its principle. Unfortunately, the aggressive anti-natural sociocultural strategy permeated also the field of human upbringing and education (Šmajš, 2008, p. 194). At the beginning of the 21st century, it has emerged as the Anthropocene era in a broader sense, in which the geological characterization of the era is

complemented by the characterization of the sustainability of public relations in a broader holistic perspective.

The aim of the article is to consider a number of real cases in a broader perspective from the point of view of foster family pedagogy, identify the choice of foster care approaches and evaluate the results obtained.

From the perspective of foster family pedagogy, foster parents and foster children are participants in the lifelong learning process, where the mutual influence and interaction of foster parents and foster children are studied. The authors evaluated real situations from the perspective of foster family pedagogy and children's involvement in the family structure. The article also examines the influence of the foster family and its readiness to overcome the effects of Anthropocene unsustainability.

Key words: foster family pedagogy, foster parents' readiness to implement the foster family's mission, foster child, life experience, families at risk

Introduction

In the changing world, socio-cultural enrichment, pedagogical research, appearance of new pedagogical realities and the interpretation of pedagogical facts require searching for new methods of studying modern pedagogical phenomena, determining the degree of pedagogical contribution to the researched phenomena and distinguishing the pedagogical component of human social life. The interaction of the family with society is undeniable. The family is important because it creates an individual's personality. Each individual and family interact in natural/cultural and social contexts. The idea of evolution is the development of the relationship between the world of children and the world of adults. A developmental habitat is introduced into the child's internal environment, from which the child draws information and the life experience, and for the most part it is unpredictable. The family environment is considered to be a natural, material and social environment for foster parents and children, who by interacting learn new activities, acquire new roles and assign new values. It is an event that is considered to bring the life experience to life between foster parents and children left without parental care.

At the first World Congress of Families in Prague (1997), Tarah Fleming said that the human species could be called not only *Homo Sapiens* – a sensible, intelligent being – but also *Homo Familiaris* – family being (Fleming, 1997). It means taking care of one's children and the individual's need to belong to the family. The study of the structure and content of *Homo sapiens* species should look for features that will allow recognizing the relationship between human and nature, and preserving the deepest identity of the prototype values required for self-production processes (Salite et al., 2020).

The child grows and changes; in this regard it cannot be considered that the child will remain intact. Time, events and life experience have an impact on children's feelings, experiences, needs, thus creating a unique character and personality (Gorina & Šukste, 2019).

The suppression and distortion of a child's needs lead to the appearance of negative traits and make the child unhappy. Negative experiences that a child has acquired in childhood hinder developmental abilities. Through the prism of the experience gained, children begin to perceive the information coming to them from the distorted outside world, which prevents them from seeing that the environment has changed when they enter a favorable environment. This indicates the unsustainability of the child's development.

D. Elkonin admits, “The natural course of life of children and adults in society is a continuous series of situations, which are characterized by varying degrees of difficulty. In difficult situations, a creative effort arises in an attempt to solve new problems and behaviors as a choice of necessary responses. The moment of overcoming natural forms of behavior...” (Эльконин, 2005, 8–10). For children left without parental care, a foster family is one of the greatest values that will form the center of the child’s personality, character, will, love and friendship, as well as the adult support will promote the development of self-confidence in a sustainable manner.

Children become accustomed to the environment in which they grew up. Being beaten and left without food become the norm for a child. The norm does not mean that the child likes it; the norm is the usual environment in which the child lives, which is familiar to the child, and something new scares the child. Therefore, many children, in the most favorable environment for them, do not know how to behave and exist in these conditions. By provoking aggression, they try to return to the environment that is normal for them.

In the context of the Anthropocene era, thinking and action have changed and a lack of succession and interrelationships can be identified there (Fedosejeva et al., 2018). A child left without parental care develops a hostile view of the world, child’s interest in exploring the world is negligible, and it is an obstacle to the child’s active cognitive activity; as a result, the child does not develop a relationship of trust.

The child is significantly more concerned about environmental safety and predictability, so any change in the normal course of events is frightening. Foster parents must be a great “resource” from which a foster child can gain confidence in his or her strength, ability to love and be loved.

Anthropological research by Christiansen et al. (2006) shows that, for example, children and young people in Africa today are often portrayed as innocent and passive victims of poverty and conflict, but many young people still cope with the acquisition of new skills they can later use creatively in other contexts (Christiansen et al., 2006).

Philosophy is based on the belief that in a family environment, regardless of how the concept of family is defined, there is an indisputable need for any child. Consequently, only knowledgeable and skilled foster parents can provide quality care to a child left without parental care.

The authors accept the theory by Rozov (Розов, 1995) that states that the good must be attractive and modern. The task of foster parents is to educate children who will be able to create their own life trajectory by influencing living conditions through methodological efforts. More specifically, they should help children manifest themselves in shaping their lives. Insufficient development of the above abilities often prevents foster children from succeeding in life.

Foster parents cannot directly influence the development of the child’s personality, but in their power to influence the environment, where the child will be able to freely gain new experiences, to make the environment more dynamic, saturated with possible challenges that will require the comprehensive development of the child. The authors of the study agree with the statement that “a conscious choice about the existence or absence of the Self and We is appropriate to the given situation, thus achieving the highest possible potential for development. By actively participating in the processes of developing the well-being of society and maintaining environmental sustainability, people

adjust/tune their feelings, the basic values of the education and health care process” (Bogdanova et al., 2017). Thus, foster parents will help gain new experience, teach to analyze the events, feelings and experiences that take place in the child’s life.

Foster parents have to put a lot of effort and wisdom into creating favorable contact with foster children adopted in their family, which means creating living conditions, emphasizing spirituality and human spirituality, which will be revealed in living conditions and realized during life (Salite, 1998). It is a transition to different notions of sustainability. For any transition to sustainability to be successful, knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) in relation to sustainability should be understood (Salas-Zapata et al., 2018).

Foster families are one of the forms of out-of-home children, with the help and support of which it is possible to bring the family care model closer and enable the foster child to acquire the necessary skills while living in a family environment. The child receives personal experience from foster parents in shaping his/her life and character. Behavioral experience will be necessary when entering an independent life.

A child who comes from a socially disadvantaged background is different from a child who grew up in a wealthy family. Sustainable development or sustainability is not just an environmental issue. It is a multifaceted interdisciplinary concept that affects our future, encompassing cultural, social, economic, political and environmental aspects. These different aspects of sustainable development are interrelated and cannot contribute to the principles of sustainable development (Hofman-Bergholm, 2018). Raising a foster child should be based on foster parents’ understanding of child psychology, as the child has suffered a psychological trauma by losing his or her biological parents. This behavior of the child is only outwardly similar to the child’s usual reactions. Interdisciplinary action research should use relations with the environment, perception, undifferentiated identity, sustainable and self-generating prototyping in ecological sustainability in relation to personality and nature (Salite et al., 2020). A child brought up in safe conditions is interested in exploring the world, gaining new opportunities, striving for new experiences and searching for communication.

The aim of the research is to find out the experience and opinion of the research participants about the mutual influence and interaction in the implementation of a sustainable life experience for children left without parental care, offering a new approach to identifying the functioning of foster family pedagogy.

Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to perform the study. Within the framework of the research, the authors will provide a vision of life experience on the problems related to the foster parents’ readiness to support, participate in the improvement of a particular surrounding world (material and relationship world), which will be necessary for foster children when entering the independent life.

The qualitative research methodology was based on a three-part “phenomenological” interview (Seidman, 1998), which provided the context of the experience of the study participants (children left without parental care) to reconstruct the details of their experience in the context, in which this experience was gained. It is therefore important to assess one’s knowledge, skills and experience, which translate into self-experience

and ultimately allow individuals to set more sustainable goals for their education (Kravale-Paulina et al., 2013).

The quantitative research methodology (questionnaire) helped find out the opinion of the research participants (foster families) about the mutual influence and interaction with foster children. Mathematical and statistical data processing methods were used to summarize the results of the research. For clarity reasons, the data were interpreted in graphical form. The research methodology used a targeted sample of research participants, in which there was an interaction among the research, the activity, and the evaluation and comparison of the obtained results (Mārtinsone & Pipere, 2011). The study was initiated in March 2020 and involved 34 foster families and 4 foster children.

The Latvian Foster Family Training Programs on the Basis of Foreign Experience

The Netherlands and some other European countries have a foster care program developed by the Child Welfare League of America in the early 1990s. The development of the program lasted for several years and involved 14 U.S. state children's rights organizations, several foster care associations, national resource centers, as well as several universities and colleges. In the international environment, the program is known as PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education).

The PRIDE program is based on the specific competencies (knowledge and skills) required for foster parents to be able to successfully care for and raise children. Five categories of knowledge and skills required for foster parents have been formulated within the program. One of the developers of this program said that the initial list of skills compiled by the experts consisted of 28,000 units. To enable foster parents successfully raise and care for children left without parental care according to their special needs, five competence categories have been distinguished (SOS bērnu ciemati Latvijā, 2018):

1. child care and protection;
2. meeting the developmental needs of children and preventing developmental delays;
3. building relationships among children and supporting their families;
4. building a safe and supportive lifelong relationship with the child;
5. cooperation or work in a professional team.

The Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP), developed by Linda Bailey and Heter L. Craig-Oldsen (Institute for Child Welfare, USA), is widely used in the United States.

The "Competent Caregiver of Emotionally Traumatized Children" (KETBA) has been known in Latvia since 2016. This program has been a way for caregivers to understand the effects of trauma, to care for and establish contact with children who have experienced trauma, and to help them find a way to heal. In Latvia, KETBA training is officially approved as training for foster families and adoptive parents in order to obtain foster family and adoptive parent status. The authors of the program are Jayne and David Schooler, who represent Back2Back Ministries. In Latvia, the first training of coaches took place in May 2017. It was organized by New Hope Latvia in cooperation with the Latvian Christian Alliance for Orphans. After completing the program, there is an opportunity to acquire the TBRI® program, which is based on the same basic principles. In cooperation with the Karyn Purvis Institute, at the beginning of 2019, this training program was translated into Latvian. The authors of the TBRI® training program are Dr. Karyn B.

Purvis and Dr. David R. Cross (Latvijas kristīgā alianse bāreņiem, 2020). *It is important to note that in our country it is still not possible to use foreign experience without adapting it to the reality of Latvia, because the standard of living and way of life, values, habits, etc. differ too much.*

Results

The statistics give an idea of the care system in just one day of the year. Approximately 30,000 more children are in care in 12 months, and a similar number leave the care system to return home, move to another family member, live with new adoptive families, be subject to special guardianship or residence arrangements, or move into adulthood (The Fostering Network, 2019). Statistics for 2019 provide an overview of the foster care system (see Figure 1).

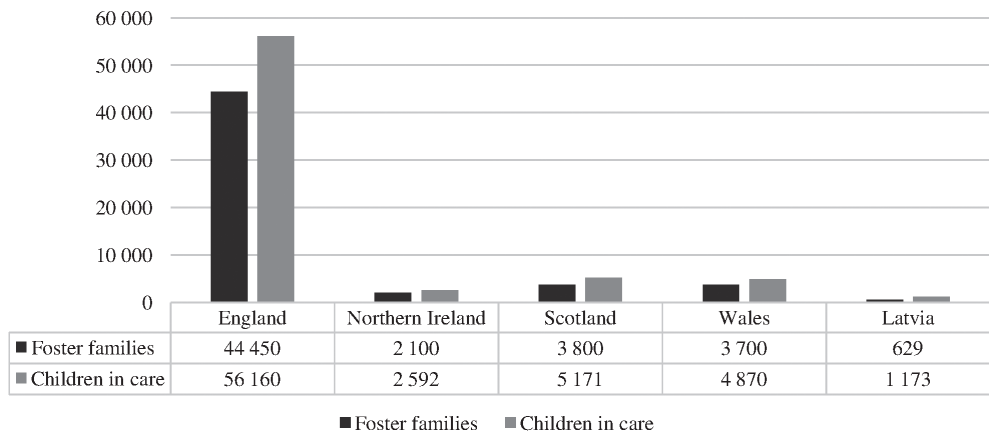


Figure 1. The Fostering Network, 2019

The authors of the study were interested in the period (in years) the research participants (foster families) had been performing their duties. This information will give a clear vision of the duration of the experience. The results showed that 3 foster families had been fulfilling their duties for 10 years, 4 foster families – 6 years, 2 foster families – 5 years, 8 foster families – 4 years, and 12 foster families – 3 years. The data are shown in Figure 2.

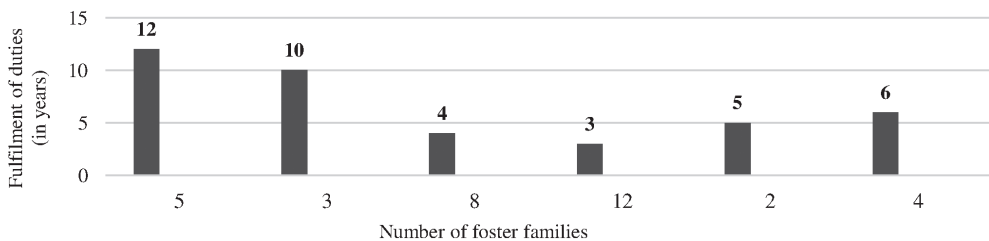


Figure 2. Duration of duties performed by foster families

In the context of the study, it was important to find out the readiness of foster family to deal with a number of related consequences when admitting a foster child to their

family. Since Latvia does not have its own training program for obtaining the status of foster family, but the programs are adopted from the USA, it was important for the authors to find out which training program had granted the status of foster family.

The obtained data show that 9 study participants (26 % of the respondents) completed the KETBA training program in order to obtain the status of foster family, and 25 study participants (or 74 %) participated in the PRIDE training program.

Due to the fact that the foster family is considered to be the most complex socio-pedagogical phenomenon, the society shows great activity in providing help and support to foster children. It should be noted that foster parents do meaningful work, which can also be challenging, as foster parents have a difficult role to play, i.e., they have to continuously learn and develop, establish communication with people that work with children, such as social workers, education specialists and health professionals.

Within the framework of the research, the authors found out the experience and opinion of the research participants about the mutual influence and interaction with foster children in bringing sustainable living experiences to life, offering a new approach to identifying the functioning of foster family pedagogy. Life experience is a special type of activity, the aim of which is to create an individual way of life and which is regulated by a system of dynamic meaning of life.

Based on the context of foster family experience, the opinions and experience of foster parents were explored by asking special questions. The results are shown in Figure 3.

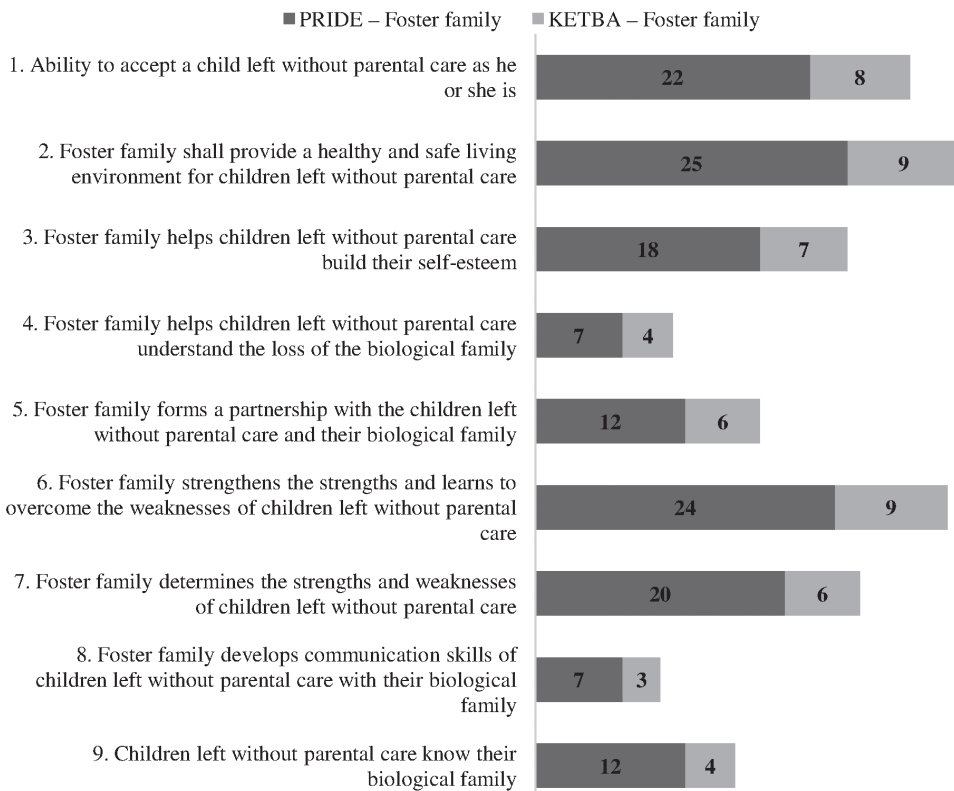


Figure 3. Foster family experience

Based on the collected data (see Figure 3), foster parents experience great *difficulties in communicating with their children's biological families and in forming partnerships with children's biological families, as well as in providing help related to the understanding of the loss of the biological family*. It is difficult to require that foster parents establish and maintain contact with the children's biological relatives. It should be acknowledged that the need for such contact is important for every foster child, as it will allow preserving the past. As the reality shows, there is still a lot of work to be done with public awareness.

The good practice of the world and also of Latvia proves that one of the main tasks of the foster family is not only to provide good care, but to ensure a safe and supportive environment for the foster child. One of the criteria for such an "environment" is that the foster child, while in the foster family, still maintains contact with important people from the past (present), such as biological parents, godparents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, neighbors, other foster families, teachers, classmates, etc., thus providing the child with the opportunity to develop both a sense of belonging and identity (Irish Foster Care Association, 2013).

The authors would like to emphasize that the aim should not be to separate children from biological parents as much as possible, but to help parents and children deal with their fears, anxieties and concerns as much as possible, to help overcome "difficult" areas in parent-child relationships. The stakeholders should work together by observing life experiences in order to achieve positive outcomes and success. Reinstatement of parental rights, return of the child to the biological family, family reunification are rather long, laborious and emotional processes for all the participants (children, parents, foster families and specialists).

Foster Children Experience from the Perspective of Foster Family Pedagogy

M. Gorina's 12 years of experience show that a foster family means caring for, nurturing, promoting the growth and development of a child left without parental care. Examples from life help connect the acquired knowledge with real life. Foster children may not live with foster parents for a long time, but a foster family may be the only positive example they have ever had. The child's psychological trauma encourages him or her to distrust the social environment and foster parents are often seen as a source of danger. Being aware of the foster child's past experience, becoming a role model for someone is a real achievement. The child's intellect, emotions, soul are saturated with real life, the personality grows in accordance with its inner program, receiving strength and gaining experience, self-confidence and trust in the surrounding world. Foster parents face key questions: "How to teach them to be happy entering the adult life?", "How to help them find their way to the future?" Obstacles strengthen resilience and increase willpower. In the beginning, the world in which the child develops must be real, lasting, internally consistent, thus facilitating the child's path to knowledge and love. The development environment is multidimensional and comprehensive. Outside the social environment, it is partly necessary to model the material world.

The study focuses on four foster children who have reached the age of 18 and started independent life. The life experience of foster children has developed in different circumstances and worldviews until they started to live with foster parents. For reasons of confidentiality, the real names of the study participants are not used; instead, they are replaced with fictional names.

Aina – A 14-year-old girl came to the foster family from the orphanage. She was taken away from the biological family when the girl was 6 years old. She was taken by her mother's sister. Aina had a younger brother, but children were separated. The girl did not stay long, because her mother's sister could not tolerate Aina's actions – the girl used to wander and steal. Her mother's sister gave up Aina and then the girl began changing families. In the first foster family, the girl stayed for six months, then she expressed a wish to return to the orphanage. After living in the orphanage for a year, the girl expressed a wish to live in a foster family. The authorities gave the girl the opportunity to live in a foster family. And such a scenario continued five times until the girl's adulthood. With this lifestyle, the girl often had to change educational institutions.

During the interview with the girl, the authors intended to find out the reasons of her actions and fluctuations when changing places of residence, expressing a wish to live with foster parents, then in the orphanage. The girl explained that every time she entered a new environment, attention was paid only to her, she was in the center of attention. As soon as less attention was paid to her, she required a new environment. Of course, any child wants to be in the center of attention and is looking for ways to get it, but ways to get it for children left without parental care may not be adequate for the situation.

Richard lived in a biological family – a social risk family – for up to 14 years. The boy did not get the best experience from his parents: he stole to meet his needs (smoking, alcohol), and his lifestyle was to wander. The parents did not take care of the child and showed no interest. He came to the attention of the social service and the police after a theft made with his adult friends. The boy was removed from the biological family and he came to a crisis center, where he stayed for three months. The staff of the center found the foster family that took Richard. While living with the foster parents, Richard was allowed to spend time with his biological parents on weekends. While staying with the foster parents, everything was fine, the boy studied well, helped to do the housework, as well as good communication skills with other children and adults were developed. The mistake of the responsible institutions was that they allowed him to stay with the biological family, where the boy had a bad life experience from an early age. While staying with the biological family, the boy came to the attention of the police about serious thefts and his life experience at the age of 16 continued in a juvenile colony.

The authors found out the reasons behind Richard's actions. The boy explained that he deliberately committed crimes to be arrested, because his life experience showed that the man was strong in prison. He gained this life experience from his adult friends, who taught him to survive. It was a strange experience that the boy had not experienced himself.

At the age of 2, the biological mother left Emil at the door of the orphanage. The boy spent his first years in the orphanage. The boy remembers from childhood how much he expected his mother to come every day, but it didn't happen.

At the age of 4, the child was taken by the first foster family, where he lived for 6 years. Due to the fact that the foster mother's health deteriorated significantly and she died, the foster father alone did not take responsibility for the boy and had to give up on the boy. Thus, at the age of 10 the boy was taken by the second foster family, where he also lived for 6 years. It was a difficult period both for the boy himself and for his foster parents. Emil's academic achievement was poor, he experienced difficulties in building new relationships of trust with his foster parents, he did not understand the picture of the world and did not want to develop in it. But the years went by and the struggle with the "windmills" continued until a great conflict took place between Emil and the foster parents, where a decision was made by the foster parents to give up the boy. Thus, Emil was taken by the third foster family at the age of 16. The teenager, listening to the advice of the foster parents, enjoyed spending time together, and improved his academic achievements. The foster parents rejoiced in the boy's determination. Already at the age of 16, he had a goal what to achieve in life and how to live beyond adulthood.

The boy shared his previous life experience. In the second foster family, the boy's opinion was not heard, his interests were not respected, and, therefore, he started a fight against his foster parents. One could feel that the boy wanted a heartfelt conversation.

Mark was removed from the biological family at the age of 4 and he came to the orphanage. Unfortunately, the boy had to experience a bitter life experience that remained in the boy's memory for a lifetime. In front of his eyes, his mother killed his little brother. The boy did not succeed in life, he had to gain life experience in one orphanage, then in the second, and then in the third. Shortly before reaching the age of 18, the orphanage where the boy lived was closed and he had to live with a foster family, but it was only for 45 days.

The observation shows that the boy is not ready to live in a family, he has problems communicating with other children in the family, does not understand basic things, and is not prepared for independent living. He is used to live for himself and be provided with board and lodging. There are situations that are so complex that they have robbed an individual of his or her natural ability to act, and he or she must now take into account the views of other peers. The boy is surrounded by a family environment, in which he has never been and has not gained experience. There is a popular perception in society that children raised in orphanages are potential criminals and simply antisocial citizens; this manifests itself as an antisocial lifestyle. They do not develop into a viable citizen. And statistics often confirm this, which is why children today violate laws, moral norms and rules. Behind every child left without parental care there is an individual case and a person.

The study has provided a theoretical analysis, experience and debate on how to help foster children not only obtain education, but also continue their development throughout their lives without losing their family environment, which is considered natural. This is the issue that foster family pedagogy needs to address.

Finding out the experience and opinion of the research participants about the mutual influence and interaction in the implementation of sustainable living experience, the authors of the study offer to get acquainted with the developed model, which reflects the problem, by identifying a number of tasks that can be performed in real life. The model indicates the importance of arranging problems according to the increasing level of complexity. The model uses five principles of effective pedagogical planning, the observance of which will allow achieving the highest results (see Figure 4).

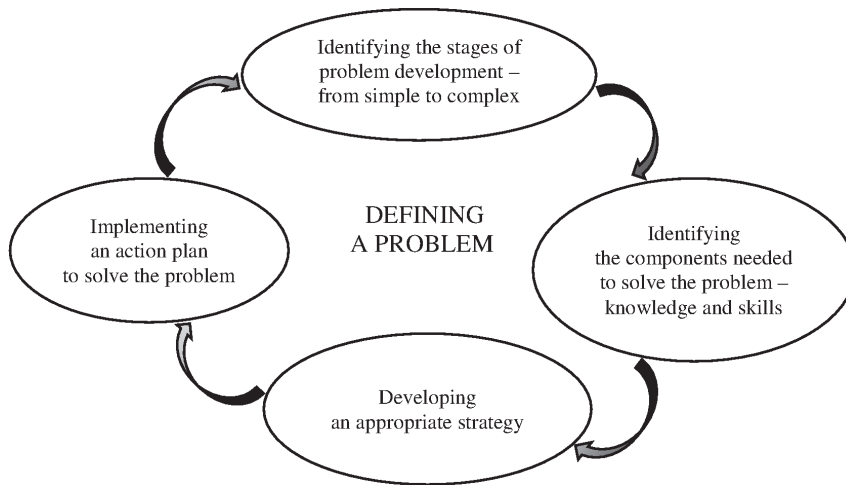


Figure 4. Five principles of effective pedagogical planning

In the structure of modern scientific knowledge, methodological problems are increasingly growing, gaining the importance of understanding the global changes in the life of children and society. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the methodological search for social pedagogy coincides with the change in the general methodological paradigm of modern science. Currently, in education and science the essence of pedagogy mission is understood narrowly or even almost lost. Mission-oriented pedagogy science has always, since the emergence of the science, been tended towards a broader understanding of the world (Salite, 2015, p. 27). The essence of the new methodology is that it is believed that the world has lost the usual order – probability with an unpredictable future.

As a result, the child's relationship with the world becomes irregular. The child develops under pressure, and under unclear circumstances he or she needs to respond to change and instability. In today's social and educational field, science needs a system of methodological principles that would preserve the pedagogical essence of the social phenomenon in the center of attention.

The theory of foster family pedagogy should include: social education, educational space, environmental pedagogy, personality-oriented education, which would allow specifying the general model of foster family activity. A foster family has a huge advantage if it is set up for short-term help, for a specific situation, under certain conditions, for solving problems, and if it does not destroy the child's relationship with the biological family.

Discussion and Conclusions

The idea of evolution is mutual developmental relationship: the world of children and the world of adults. Children are indicators of shared values. As Laszlo emphasizes, people need to change their views and vision about their role in the environment and about the role of the environment in their lives (Laszlo, 2008). Like mirrors, children reflect the culture of adults. A foster parent is one who can expand this influence with the help of his or her family, personality, find new approaches and a role for the foster child in society. The mission of foster family pedagogy is crucial for education and education for sustainable development, based on values that will form the basis of moral education and help get to know oneself and others better. It follows that if a child left without parental care is included in the family environment at an early age, then the child has the opportunity to learn wisdom from the life experience of foster parents.

As the foster family is considered to be the most complex socio-pedagogical phenomenon, the main goal of the study has been to understand the experience of foster parents and find out their opinions about the mutual influence and interaction for bringing to life a sustainable life experience. According to the results of the research, nine foster families participating in the study completed the KETBA training program and 25 foster families participated in the PRIDE training program in order to obtain the foster family status. It can be concluded that the PRIDE training program for foster families is being successfully implemented in Latvia.

It follows that the training programs for foster families that are being implemented in Latvia have been developed by social agencies, which provide services in raising the consumer generation; therefore, a problem can be seen in connection with the fact that foster family training programs are not related to pedagogy. At present, the process of globalization and the changeability of environment require the society to ensure sustainability for itself and its lifewide environment (Katane et al., 2015, p. 50). The sustainable development of society depends on the core principles of re-examination that underpin current social and cultural systems, including the principles of a holistic approach, as well as on questioning such principles in relation to individuality (Badjanova & Iliško, 2015, p. 133). The authors of the present study emphasize that the Latvian society should look for its own new perspectives, methods and directions for the implementation of foster family pedagogy in the society.

Another important factor to address the issue of foster family pedagogy is the readiness of foster parents to carry out the mission of foster care activities. Foster parents need to understand the diversity of different situations. The research has demonstrated that foster parents experience difficulties in communicating with their children's biological families and in forming partnerships with children's biological families, as well as in providing help related to the understanding of the loss of the biological family. Social exclusion is another salient example of such alienated frame of reference which effectively dominates and shapes public thinking, and exacerbates unsustainable tendencies in modern society (Gedžūne, 2015, p. 95).

The interaction of foster parents and foster children in bringing life experience to life indicates that everything depends on the child's previous life experience. It sounds strange, but the child's future is determined by his or her past. In his/her mind, unconsciously rationalized memories of the past make it impossible to form a future life perspective.

The intellectual and cognitive activity of once rejected children, who are in an emotionally unfavorable situation, decreases. There is little left in their lives that they can change or influence themselves.

The phenomenological approach provides an opportunity to understand the inner world of the foster child and foster parents, by touching on their experience, trusting their independent conclusions and explanations, revealing the deep meanings and values of choice.

The foster family as an innovative and constantly changing social and pedagogical phenomenon is an interesting object of pedagogical research and is awaiting for new scientific conclusions on the improvement of its practical activities. The foster family phenomenon should be understood scientifically and the laws and models of existence should be transferred to the category of the phenomenon.

References

- Badjanova, J., & Iliško, D. (2015). Holistic approach as viewed by the basic school teachers in Latvia. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 6, 132–140.
- Bogdanova, R., Šiliņa, M., & Renigere, R. (2017). Ecology approach in education and health care. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 8(1), 64–80.
- Christiansen, C., Utas, M., & Vigh, H. E. (Eds.). (2006). Navigating youth, generating adulthood: Social becoming in an African context. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika-institutet.
- Fedosejeva, J., Boče, A., Romanova, M., Iliško, D., & Ivanova, O. (2018). Education for sustainable development: The choice of pedagogical approaches and methods for the implementation of pedagogical tasks in the anthropocene age. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 20(1), 157–179.
- Fleming, T. (1997). The natural family. The World Congress of families (speech). Prague, Czech Republic.
- Gedžūne, G. (2015). Awakening pre-service teachers to children's social exclusion in the classroom. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 6(1), 95–109.
- Gorina, M., & Šukste, N. (2019). Trust in the acquisition of life experience of children left without parental care. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 21(1), 76–87.
- Hofman-Bergholm, M. (2018). Changes in thoughts and actions as requirements for a sustainable future: A review of recent research on the Finnish educational system and sustainable development. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 20(2), 19–30.
- Irish Foster Care Association. (2013). *Foster care, an information booklet on Foster care in Ireland*, IFCA, April, 22–23.p. Dublin.
- Katane, I., Kristovska, I., Vjatere, G., & Katans, E. (2015). Evaluation, support and promotion of specialists' competitiveness development in modern enterprise as learning organization. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 6, 50–71.

- Kravale-Paulina, M., Iliško, D., & Olehnovica, E. (2013). Values orientation approach to the educational process: The temporal dimension. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 106, 3285–3290.
- Laszlo, E. (2008). *Quantum Shift in a Global Brain. How the new-scientific reality can change as and our world*. Rochester Vermont: Inner Traditions.
- Latvijas kristīgā alianse bērņiem [Latvian Christian Alliance for Children]. (2020). Traumas izpratnē un attiecībās balstīta intervence [Understanding of trauma and intervention based in relationships]. Retrieved from <http://palidzibareniem.lv/atbalstacentrs-tilts/apmacibas/>
- Mārtinsons, K., & Pipere, A. (Eds.) (2011). Ievads pētniecībā. Stratēģijas, dizaini, metodes [Introduction into research. Strategies, designs, methods]. Rīga: Raka.
- Salas-Zapata, W., Rios-Osorio, L., & Cardona-Arias, J. (2018). Knowledge, attitudes and practices of sustainability: Systematic review 1990–2016. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 20(1), 46–63.
- Salīte, I. (2015). Searching for sustainability in teacher education and educational research: Experiences from the Baltic and Black Sea Circle Consortium for educational research. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 6, 21–29.
- Salīte, I. (1998). An ecocentric paradigm: An important tool for teachers of environmental education. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 14, 81–85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Salīte, I., Fjodorova, I., Iliško, D., Ivanova, O., & Meihami, H. (2020). JTES for sustainable development: An action research environment for the development and sustainable future of the journal identity. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 22(1), 1–5.
- Seidman, I. E. (1998). Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- SOS bērnu ciemati Latvijā [SOS children's villages in Latvia]. (2018). Apmācības audžuvecākiem, adoptētājiem, aizbildņiem, viesģimenēm [Training for foster parents, adopters, guardians, guests]. Retrieved from <https://www.sosbernuciemati.lv/lv/apmacibas/apmacibas-audzuvecakiem>
- Šmajš, J. (2008). Evolutionary ontology. Reclaiming the value of nature by transforming culture. Amsterdam/NY: Rodopi.
- The Fostering Network. (2016). Fostering statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.the-fosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/all-about-fostering/fostering-statistics>
- Розов, М. А. (1995). *Классификация и теория как системы знания. На пути к теории классификации* [Classification and theory as a system of knowledge. Towards a classification theory]. Новосибирск: Изд.-во НГУ.
- Эльконин, Б. Д. (2005). *Психология развития* [Developmental psychology]. Москва: Academia.

Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Maritana Gorina, PhD candidate, Daugavpils University, Parades 1, Daugavpils, LV-5401, Latvia. Email: gorina@inbox.lv