



## SCHOOL SUPPORT TOWARD PUPILS WITH BEHAVIOUR AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES FROM PARENT'S AND CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE\*

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Educational systems and societal changes: Challenges and opportunities

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## BACKGROUND of the study

- School has great influence on child's life (one of the most important protective or risk factors for healthy development/behaviour problems)
- Croatia:
  - 18% of population are children under 18 years ([www.dzs.hr](http://www.dzs.hr))
  - N=18 862 pupils with developmental difficulties in Croatian school system in 2017/2018 ([www.mzo.hr](http://www.mzo.hr))

Legal framework: defines help, support and interventions for children with behavior and learning difficulties.

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## RESEARCH QUESTIONS (from parental and child's perspective)

1	How children with behavior and learning difficulties and their parents perceive school support regarding their difficulties?
2	How do they value school/schooling?
3	What is the role of the school in everyday family life?
4	What are the specific/concrete interventions for children (and parents) at school and in the community?
5	How do parents and children cope with child's behaviour and learning difficulties?
6	Does specific time line exists regarding the development of the child's difficulties and received interventions?
7	What interventions do they actually need?

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## METHODS

- **SEMI-STRUCTURED FAMILY GROUP INTERVIEWS** conducted from 2017 to 2019
- **PARTICIPANTS:**
  - 10 families at risk from the City of Zagreb and the Zagreb County area included in intervention delivered by CSW, NGO Ambidekster, Psychiatric hospital for children and youth, Institutional risks/needs/strengths assessment **DUE TO THEIR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS**
- **DATA ANALYSIS:** thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

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## RESULTS (1): IDENTIFIED THEMES

- Long lasting problems (in schooling, learning, behavior) and inadequate school interventions
- Absence of help from school and lack of cooperation with parents in school
- Child's difficulties influence the whole family and everyday family life
- Education (of the child) is the most important priority in the parental value system
- Strong protective factor for the child are genuinely interested parents (mothers)
- Parents are left on their own in dealing with child's difficulties
- School fails when it comes to children with behavior and/or learning difficulties
- School doesn't do anything even in cases of their undoubtable obligation and responsibility
- (Rare) useful school interventions are continuous and intensive (e.g. school assistant, day treatment program)
- Useful community services and interventions- rare and fragmented (psychiatric treatment, help with learning, institutional assessment...)
- Out-of-school interventions are more effective than school interventions
- Non-existing expected cooperation of school and community institutions

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## RESULTS (2)

**SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS INSUFFICIENT, INADEQUATE AND UNMATCHED** according to the following criteria:

**AGE:** no adequate assessment and interventions in the first grades; in upper classes no DTP possibility...

**AVAILABILITY (LOCATION):** few schools have class assistants; few neighbourhoods have NGOs who offer interventions for child/parent/family; no adequate/needed interventions near by/in local community...

**NEEDS:** complex needs due to high and complex risks; segmented interventions (e.g. only help in learning, but no help for behavior problems)

**INTENSITY AND FREQUENCY:** low intensity/frequency not matched with the needs of the family (child/parent)

**WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH:** does not exist

**COMPLEXITY:** no complex family interventions

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How do participants value school/schooling?	School- priority in family value system; parents care about the child's future; parental readiness for school interventions; parents search for help continuously (and for many years)
What is the role of the school in everyday family life?	School highly influences family life; school as the main leitmotif of the everyday family life; family overwhelmed by school problems; school as a source of new/additional family problems; heavy parental emotions (guilt, shame) due to the child's low school achievement
What are the specific/concrete interventions for children (and parents) at school and in the community?	DTP & class assistant as good examples; (some) teachers efforts and sensibility appreciated; but: needs unmatched to interventions, formal conduct of interventions, uneducated or uninterested teachers; low number of professionals in schools
How do parents and children cope with child's behaviour and learning difficulties?	Coping on their own; seeking for professional help; no cooperation school-community interventions; fragmented available interventions...

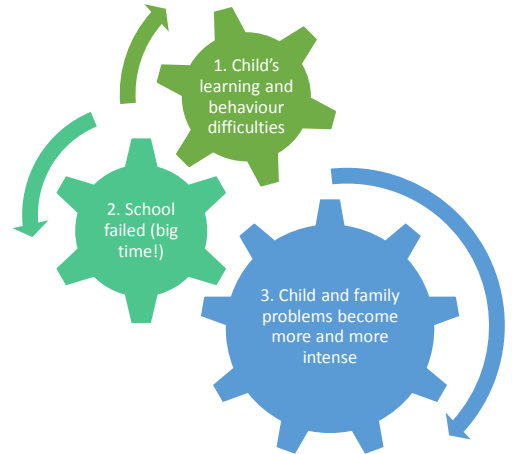
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Does specific time line exists regarding the development of the child's difficulties and received interventions?	Mild behaviour and school problems > moderate/severe problems in school/outside of the school > family problems > seeking interventions outside of the school
What interventions do they actually need?	In general: intensive, frequent, continuous, longlasting, easily available interventions  School: more understanding and interest from teachers for the needs of the pupils; more responsibility; more professionals to detect/assess problems on time; adequate interventions matched to the needs; more cooperation with parents; more zero tolerance of school violence/bullying

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## CONCLUSIONS

- School system: **slow, non-reactive or reacts too late**
- If the school reacts, **school interventions inadequate, unmatched to the needs of children/parents/families**
- **Parents not respected** by school professionals
- **No cooperation** between school and community institutions
- Great parental effort for minor results
- Not enough adequate interventions in schools and local communities
- **No complex interventions** available for families



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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING! 😊



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More about the FamResPlan  
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