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## Diagnostic aspects of the analysis of drawings depicting a child's family

### Diagnostyczne aspekty analizy rysunków rodziny dziecka

#### Abstract

**Introduction.** The article describes the methods of characterization and possible ways of interpreting children's artworks that present the images of their families. The author pointed to various types of children's imagery depending on personal experiences and acquaintances. The stages of development of aesthetic expression and ways of analyzing children's drawings, which begins with defining the space of the compositional arrangement, are described. The author treats a child's drawing as a means of expressing their experiences and as a form of coding a symbolic transformation of experience.

**Aim.** The aim of the article is to discuss a drawing presenting a child's family as one of the basic tools for studying the development of a child and their family as an educational environment. The author shows a family drawing as children's reflections of their observations, thoughts, and feelings about themselves and their relationship with individual family members, and as a tool for analyzing the visual signs created by children and their meaning.

**Materials and method.** The article is based on the literature on the subject and the author's own pedagogical and artistic experience. It was supplemented with examples of analysis of children's drawings depicting families, which were taken from the author's collection, acquired as part of his research. The author analyzes the elements of drawings qualitatively to illustrate a child's way of perceiving the family environment.

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**Conclusion.** The text may be a source of inspiration for a multifaceted analysis of a child's drawings as a material for diagnosing not only how they perceive and feel about family relationships, but also their levels of artistic development and potential talents in this area.

**Keywords:** family, child, drawing, diagnosis, art education.

### **Abstrakt**

**Wprowadzenie.** W artykule opisano metody charakterystyki i możliwe sposoby interpretacji dziecięcych prac plastycznych, które przedstawiają rodzinę. Autor pokazał różnorodne typy dziecięcych obrazowań, uzależnione od osobistych przeżyć i doświadczeń. Opisano etapy rozwoju ekspresji estetycznej oraz sposoby analizy rysunków dziecięcych, którą rozpoczyna się od określenia układu kompozycyjnego. Autor traktuje rysunek dziecka jako środek ekspresji jego przeżyć, a także jako formę kodowania symbolicznej transformacji doświadczenia.

**Cel.** Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie rysunku rodziny jako jednego z podstawowych narzędzi badania rozwoju dziecka oraz jego rodziny jako środowiska wychowawczego. Według autora rysunek rodziny odzwierciedla spostrzeżenia, przemyślenia i odczucia dziecka na temat samego siebie i relacji z poszczególnymi członkami rodziny oraz jest narzędziem analizy znaczenia znaków plastycznych tworzonych przez dzieci.

**Materialy i metoda.** Artykuł opiera się na literaturze przedmiotu i własnych doświadczeniach pedagogiczno-artystycznych autora. Uzupełniony został przykładami analizy dziecięcych rysunków przedstawiających rodziny. Prace te pochodzą ze zbiorów autora, zebranych w ramach prowadzonych przez siebie badań. Artykuł poddaje analizie jakościowej elementy rysunków w celu zobrazowania dziecięcego sposobu postrzegania środowiska rodzinnego.

**Wnioski.** Tekst może być źródłem inspiracji do wielopłaszczyznowej analizy rysunków dziecka jako materiału do diagnozy nie tylko sposobu postrzegania i odczuwania przez nie relacji w rodzinie, lecz także poziomu rozwoju plastycznego i potencjalnych uzdolnień w tym obszarze.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rodzina, dziecko, rysunek, diagnoza, edukacja plastyczna.

## **Introduction**

The contemporary socio-cultural reality, threatened by the danger of relativisation of the value world, is deprived of fixed norms determining the proper functioning of a person in the world (Igoriewicz, 2020). A peculiar decadence results from a variety of factors, but it is most often the case that ethical and moral principles, considered unchangeable so far, are no longer valid. The relativity of concepts allows for the interchange of their meanings, which is closely related to the flexibility of thinking (Krauze-Sikorska, 2022). The good can be perceived as evil and vice versa. In the field of aesthetics, ugliness often rises to the status of beauty. Educational environments and institutions hitherto upholding traditional values are themselves vacillating in this area. A young person, especially a child in need of support and

direction, may encounter problems, as is the case in many situations. An important task of education is therefore to recognise how the family functions in today's reality as the first and most important educational environment that influences all spheres of child development, i.e. cognitive, emotional, social-moral and physical. The upbringing, emotional and social tasks of the family are currently difficult to fulfil, as the family as a socio-educational institution is subject to change, and continuous evolution and does not always keep up with socio-economic changes (Cudak, 2012). The institutional responsibility for the process of upbringing and education also rests with the kindergarten and school, and in a special way with the educator and his/her competencies (Szczotka, Szewczuk, 2018). A fundamental role is attributed to the sensitivity and vigilance of teachers/educators to all kinds of problems occurring in the life environment of the student/educator. Crucial to the teacher's effective teaching and upbringing/care activities are his/her diagnostic competencies, which "are determined by specific abilities and skills to use methods of cognition that are appropriate (in a given situation), the purpose of which is to identify and assess the characteristics of a person and the properties of his/her living environment" (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2016, p. 29). In pedagogical work, diagnosis of the family as an educational environment is undertaken especially in those situations in which the behaviour of the child raises concern for the pedagogue and may constitute a threat to its proper development. Signals for the diagnosis may also be such situations as material insufficiency of the family, difficult housing conditions, pathologies in the family, low social and emotional maturity of parents, single parenthood, disturbed contacts (or lack of them) with the family of origin, neighbours or lack of help and support from the family, the local environment, social and educational institutions in the situation of the emergence of a crisis (Dybowska, 2010). The diagnosis of a concrete family may include, according to the holistic strategy, the entirety of its functioning or, according to the selective strategy, selected areas, such as, for example, the type and strength of interaction patterns with other people by adult family members, the type of behavioural patterns presented in difficult situations, the type and nature of emotional bonds between all family members, the type of patterns of satisfaction of basic psychological and social needs and others (Dybowska, 2010). The contemporary approach to the family is characterised not only by analysing the mutual interactions of its individual members but also by considering the individual as a participant in the family group, with the family being treated as a structure or system of mutual interactions (Radochoński, 1984). In the pedagogical analysis of the family, the arrangement of intra-family emotional bonds, the immediacy of contact and the intimacy of relationships (Opozda, 2016). As Beata Krzesińska-Żach (2007, p. 17) emphasises, "relations between individual family members conduct, as a rule, a permanent and rather unprecedented in other

groups social bond, uniting the group into a compact whole". Family bonds manifest in the various relationships, connections, dependencies, interactions and attitudes of family members, which are the basis for the existence and development of the family and its quality. Family ties are not the same in all families and are different in the various phases of the life cycle as well as the life circumstances of the same family. They are a dynamic phenomenon, undergoing constant transformation (Dyczewski, 2005). The characteristics of the persons belonging to the family group and the system of interactions between them mean that the systemic approach to the family has been used within the framework of numerous studies on the family, including the occurrence of specific dysfunctions or pathologies (Radochoński, 1987; Margasiński, 1996; Ochojska, 2000; Gałkowska, 1999).

This paper aims to present the drawing of the family as one of the important tools for studying child development and the family as an educational environment. The author considers the child's drawing as a means of expression of the child's experiences and also as a form of encoding the symbolic transformation of experience. The research paper is based on the subject literature and is supplemented by examples of analysis of drawings from the author's collection gathered as part of his research.

### **Family drawing as a diagnostic tool in pedagogy**

In the pedagogical-psychological diagnosis of the family, apart from i.a., observation, interview, questionnaire, tests, and scales, projective techniques play an important role. These include the family drawing test designed by Maria Braun-Gałkowska (1985) or Anna Frydrychowicz (1996), as well as various types of stories and tales or tests of unfinished sentences (Jarosz, Wysocka, 2006). Children's projection usually has the character of free expression, otherwise known as natural expression (Sęk, 1984), and consists of the spontaneous, unconscious and unintentional externalisation and expression of mental content in symbolic forms or through physical objects (movement, mimicry, vocalisation, verbalisation, writing, drawing, painting, and constructing) (Popek, 1993). Especially in the case of the child, projection is often situational, based on momentary and short-lived, but strong emotional experiences (Popek, 1999).

The child's plastic creative activity is "an authentic expression of individual experience. The elements of novelty and the aesthetic structure of the productions are a document of the creative process. The creative process contributes to the general development of the child, multi-layered cognition of reality, self-creation of personality, development of abilities and individuality" (Głowacka, 2006, p. 23). The variety

of expressive means and accompanying characters used by children is a testimony not only to the knowledge they possess about a particular subject but also to their externalised feelings, emotions and even expectations. As Ewa Piwowarska (2020, p. 108) writes, “graphic records encode through artistic means of expression emotions and relationships existing between children and others. Therefore, alongside verbal reactions and within the framework of non-verbal behaviour, they create drawings that are expressions of the management of feelings, information, and knowledge depicting their relationships, e.g. with their family”. In the method of drawing one’s own family, in a drawing with this theme, the child shows the interdependencies between family members and one’s attitude towards them (Frydrychowicz, 1996).

Projective drawing in working with the child is mainly treated as a research method to gain knowledge concerning the child’s psycho-development (Braun-Gałkowska, 2016). It can provide a picture of those areas of reality that are not expressed verbally by the child. It allows an insight into the world of his/her thoughts and emotions and can be a tool to identify developmental dysfunctions, simultaneously related to the way the child perceives himself/herself and others with whom he/she interacts, as well as the reality of the family in which the child grows up. Children spontaneously and honestly depict pictorially everything important to them, that they accept: the people with whom they are emotionally connected, their interests, their knowledge of the world they are exploring, as well as their moods, experiences and emotions, such as joy, sadness or fear. Projective drawing is a subjective method in the sense that it expresses the subjective, personal perception of the world by the subject, but its interpretation does not depend on the subjective judgements of the researcher but on objective indicators, such as the displacement of the drawing, the use of only one crayon, the omission of the father and others. Although these indicators are not quantitative, they are clearly defined. The method discussed is often criticised. Indeed, using it is difficult, as it is based not only on knowledge but also on intuition and therefore its use requires good preparation (Braun-Gałkowska, 2016). In the analysis and interpretation of drawings depicting the family, the observation of the drawing child, his or her expressions, comments, facial expressions, and the course of the drawing’s creation become particularly important. Only in such a context can the meanings encoded in a particular child’s drawing be more fully understood and more accurately interpreted. This also requires an in-depth knowledge of the development of graphic activities in the context of overall psychological development (Tyszkowa, 1993, pp. 8–9). As Urszula Szuścik emphasises, “drawing should be analysed not only as an independent object but also in the context of the process and functions that made it possible” (Szuścik, 2018, p. 35). Thus, the use of several complementary research techniques in the process of the child’s drawing of the family enables a correct and insightful interpretation of the drawing.

### **Children's drawing as a means of expression of experiences and a form of encoding the symbolic transformation of experience – examples of interpretations of family drawings**

According to U. Szuścik (2018, p. 33), “the need to draw is a child’s natural need for expression determined by his/her psychophysical development”, and a child’s drawing can be treated as “a form of expression of the child’s experiences, as well as an activity in creating signs and their meanings based on one’s own experiences and their transformation based on signs from the real world” (Szuścik, 2021, p. 23). The subject matter of children’s artwork can be diverse and is connected to factors such as the most important person or people, the family, the immediate environment, as well as emotional and psychological development and experiences, events or phenomena. The child - from the initially shapeless scribbles – consciously conceives a human figure. This is most often the mother, then the father and other family members. In the next stage, the child encodes everything he or she remembers from the world around him or her and what has aroused the child’s interest (Suświłło, 2019).

Children’s imagery is a form of graphic recording of remembered visual perceptions and refers to real reality. The schema, which is a synthesis of abstract contours, originally clearly anthropomorphic, is the determinant for analysis. The intriguing fact of the transposition of three-dimensional physicality into a purely graphic form, initially operating mainly with contour lines defining shapes, becomes the object of inquiry as to how to interpret their meaning. The memorising function results from the multiple recordings in the consciousness of the emotionally closest images. The child in the first stage of the development of aesthetic expression draws, without awareness of meaning and form, so-called “scribbles” (Szuścik, 2019). These are uncontrolled records of emotions, left on the plane as chaotically applied lines and intersecting curved and oblique ones. These lines reflect, in an abstract structure, the childlike joy resulting from their creation. The drawing of a pre-school child is above all an ideoplastic record of his thoughts in graphic form. It is a pictorial statement about the reality closest to the child, the one with which he or she is in direct contact and which he or she most often fixes in visual and emotional memory. The child’s primary creative activity mainly concerns the reality of his/her family, where he/she is allowed to grow up. The subconscious desire to express his thoughts and experiences manifests itself in the transposition of physical reality into pictorial reality, which is de facto an abstract synthesis of contoured shapes that resemble something real by association. The child does not know the rules of drawing and therefore uses the contour line, which transforms the three-dimensionality of the real into a flat, graphic form, which is a kind of pictorial ideogram, a visual message, only in distant associations possible to be “read” by people other than the author. The child’s knowledge, resulting from

sensory cognition, is transformed in his or her mind into images. In the next stage, it is written down in the form of individual illustrative statements, successively enriched with additional elements, along with the psychophysical development, which is a reference to the real world, with which the child has direct contact. The child uses a self-invented pictorial code, often abstract due to a lack of manual dexterity. With the help of simple drawing structures, he or she tells about the world as knows in an absolutely sincere way. The child's perception of the world and imagination is driven by emotions. Everything close to the child, that evokes positive feelings, remembers first and rejects everything bad, unpleasant or strange to her or him. The fixation of a real image in the mind by the memory function is due to the natural ability to focus attention on someone or something important to him or her, loved, and accepted. Repeated seeing, and repetition cause emotional approximation and result in the possibility of image transpositions. Abstract-allusive figuration has a clear reference to actual reality. It appears in children's drawings around the age of three and represents a so-called "attempt to close the circle". This means that the child remembers the mother's face, which has been seen many times, and at first, simplifies it graphically into a circular form, then gradually adds other structural elements to it, from which references are made to the shape of legs (the so-called "cephalopod"), and then, by combining deformed geometrised elements in the form of rectangles, triangles or oval forms, an image of the so-called "cephalothorax" is created. The human figure – a person, most often a mother – is the first and fundamental motif of imagery, which develops from simplified schemes towards more detailed ones, constantly enriched with accoutrements or details. The image of the human figure is a simultaneous synthesis of remembered perceptions, a graphic record of combined *en face* and profile vision. Semi-profile shots in early children's art are absent.

Drawing works give an insight into the character and temperament of the creator and the world of his or her imagination. It is important to note that, in general, by the age of six, the child creates ideograms related to the child and the people he or she is with every day, whom he or she loves, accepts or disapproves of. Projective drawings are a means of communication (Glinkowska, 2022), often in a non-literal way, using recognisable symbols. Research and interpretation can be subjected to a drawing work, the analysis of which roughly gives an idea of his perception of the world. A discerning observer can determine, just by looking at a drawing, the gender of the child and how his or her development is progressing (Piwowarska, 2022). Valuable information necessary for a more complete interpretation of drawing expression is provided by observing the child's behaviour during the drawing process. It is also important to have an individual conversation that conditions the establishment of a relationship, from which it is possible to find out who is depicted in the drawing and who they are to the child, what age they are, what they do, what feelings they have,



and so on. In observation, when the work is done in the course of the lesson, it is furthermore important to pay attention to the child's emotions, any comments, the time spent drawing individual figures, the order in which they are drawn and the neatness of their execution. The people drawn first are usually depicted more carefully. They are those with whom the child feels particularly emotionally connected, as implied by attachment theory (Bowlby, 2007).

Drawing of the family is constantly one of the basic tools for studying child development. It helps to determine the child's ability to function freely and safely at home and in his or her immediate environment, to get to know people, objects and events, and to support his or her parents in everyday activities. It also gives expression to difficult life situations and predictable behaviour of the child related to social relationships. Projective drawings are consistent with the child's functioning in the family and are primarily concerned with the human figure, presented as a dominant-silhouette form in its entirety or framed as a portrait. As indicated earlier, the full-figure arrangement is most often an image of the mother. It is an ideoplastic form, synthetically incorporating the most typical features of the figure of the person depicted. In this case, the classic cephalothorax has a triangular or trapezoidal shape and is topped with a circle, surmounted by a hairstyle alluding to the real one. In addition, the human figure's psycho-image acquires various symbolic meanings in its structural elements. An exaggeratedly large head can signify intellectual prowess and a developed imagination, a face with exaggerated lips erotic aspects, while a small figure size can mean complexes and mental underdevelopment. Hands raised in the air are a sign of joy, but also of the need to give up. Hidden behind the torso or folded over the chest, they symbolise reluctance, hostility, suspicion, and aggression. However, in interpreting the individual elements of the drawing, it is necessary to take into account the verbal comments accompanying the drawing activity and the data from observing the process.

Interpretive analysis of the family drawing begins with determining the compositional arrangement. Attention should be paid to whether the depiction occupies the whole space of the sheet or only part of it and whether the depicted elements are, as a system, coherent or chaotically dispersed. The most typical way of depicting space in this type of work is the arrangement of compositional-anthropomorphic forms between two horizontal areas. At the bottom border of the card is the ground plane, symbolising real reality and, at the same time, the emotional stability of the child. In the upper part of the card, a reference to emotions, feelings and dreams, the child locates all kinds of symbolic motifs, such as the sun, hearts or rainbows.

The figures in family drawings are usually placed rhythmically in a row, holding hands. The child starts drawing from the left side, which is sometimes associated with feelings addressed to the mother, which is justified by the fact that the right-handed child starts drawing the elements most important to him or her from the left side.



However, the figure that is most important to the child is placed in the centre of the drawing plane, and the author of the work is sometimes depicted next to it. The central figure may be relatively larger than the others, made more precisely, which may indicate the child's admiration for it, or sometimes fear. It should be noted that the child very often presents a biased picture of his or her family. If the mother is an authority for him/her, he/she takes the main place in the drawing, and if the father, does. The hierarchical representation of figures is also linked to the order in which they are drawn. People the child dislikes and does not accept are usually drawn at the very end, in the corner of the page or away from the other figures, in an unattended manner. Disapproval of a person may also be manifested by depriving them of their face, hands, or feet in the drawing.

Below, selected elements of the artworks collected as part of our own research, using the projection technique, entitled "Draw the family", as elaborated by A. Frydrychowicz (1996). The study involved 34 randomly selected children aged 5 to 7 from a kindergarten and primary school in Kaniów. The task of all respondents was to draw a picture of a family. Each child was examined individually. They had a sheet of paper and coloured pencils at their disposal. During the study, observation was conducted using a verbal and non-verbal behaviour observance sheet and an interview questionnaire, according to the research tools developed by A. Frydrychowicz (1996). For the children, drawing appeared to be a natural activity, they eagerly embarked on the task, and drawing was a way of establishing contact with the researcher. For the needs of this paper, the analysis and interpretation of the drawings were restricted to selected characteristic elements related to composition, drawing space, graphic elements, colour meaning and content.

As a result of the qualitative analysis of the artworks, it was found that the vast majority of them were maintained in the aesthetic canon of this type of creation, which is figurative array, and rhythmic imagery. The compositions were usually coherent, filling mainly the lower part of the sheet. Most of the works were ideoplastic simplified schemes. The children created schemes that were enriched both in terms of differentiation of forms and compositional arrangements. The boys' drawings were definitely more synthetic and geometric. Most of the works followed a homogeneous compositional formula, where the lower part of the drawing plane defines the zone of earth and matter as such, and is also associated with the child's emotional stability, while the upper part refers to the depth and space of the sky, with symbolic motifs such as clouds, birds, hearts, rainbows, and suns levitating in it, often personalised and framed in the upper right or left corner of the page. However, the essential meaning of the drawing is perceived intuitively by the skilled observer. It is most often positive in its conveyance of children's emotions, which is revealed by the manner of drawing. The child's happiness, apart from purely artistic means, is recognised by the sche-

matic accoutrements, i.e., the smiles on the faces of the people depicted. The creation of most of the artworks was based on the child's definition of basic shapes, using an isolated and often expressive contour line. Their closed surfaces were filled in with more or less expressive means of graphic expression, i.e., flat stencilling with colours, without taking into account chiaroscuro modelling at this stage of artistic development. The expressiveness of these drawings could be deciphered from the shapes of the compositional elements, their deformation with a clear tendency towards the individualisation of representations, and the characterisation of people (deformed silhouette shapes, clothes, hairstyles, and details).

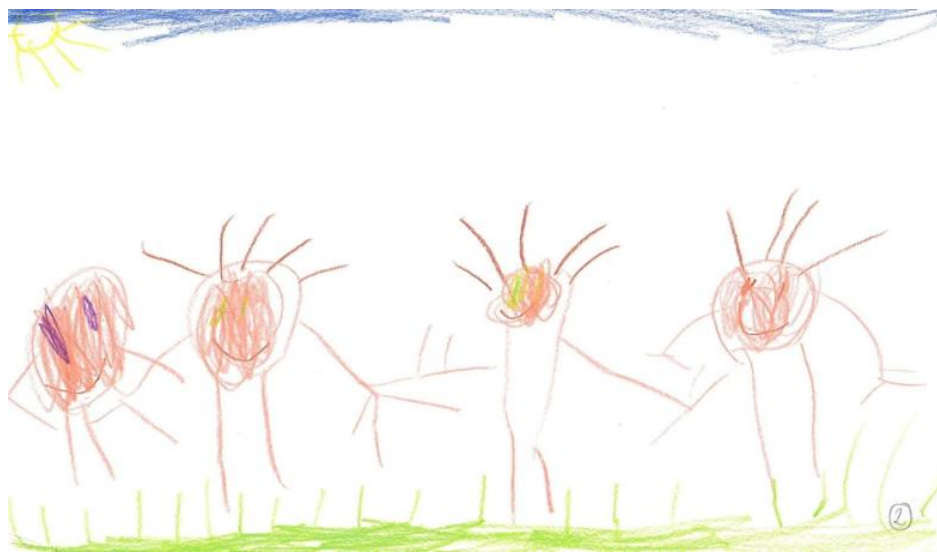
The drawing of the family also indicates the child's type of emotionality, described as sensory or rational. Sensory drawing is characterised by vitality and spontaneity, which is reflected in the drawing of lines that are rounded and in the presentation of the family in a dynamic way while performing certain activities. On the other hand, rational drawing contains straight lines, the figures are angular and geometric, and there is a strong attention to detail and order in the drawing (Braun-Gałkowska, 1985).



Picture 1. Artwork by a child (girl), aged 6. Source: Author's own study.

In Figure 1, the dominant features mentioned above can be found. The drawing was made with a clear reference to the canon valid in this type of imagery. The composition is coherent, arranged between two horizontal systems defining the space of earth and sky. The figures are rhythmically and serially arranged. It is a juxtaposition of horizontal and vertical arrangements. The drawn figures are connected to the ground, which gives information about the author's emotional stability. In the so-

called “mother’s zone”, on the left side of the work, a mother is depicted together with a little boy. The central place is taken by the author herself, and the freedom and joy are further expressed by the smile on her face. On the right side of the drawing, in the so-called “father zone”, her younger brother and father are visible. The individualisation of the people in the work is clear. The child has used six colours in contrasting combinations.



Picture 2. Artwork by a child (girl), aged 6. Source: Author’s own study.

Figure 2, analogous to the previous artwork, was composed according to a similar scheme, but the anthropomorphic forms have clear features of typical cephalopods, which is present in the works of younger children, usually 3–4 years old. The drawing does not specify who is depicted in it. It has a much poorer colour scheme than the earlier work. Note that the anthropomorphic forms drawn are smiling. The child’s drawing, supplemented by a conversation with the child and observation, can therefore also be a tool for diagnosing the level of development of manual skills and artistic growth.

Figure 3 shows anthropomorphic forms with distinct deformations. They are situated on the right side of the sheet, while the left side is blank. The colour scheme is restricted. Nevertheless, the figures presented are smiling. The way of drawing, i.e., combining many shorter lines, may indicate the presence of inhibitions in the child or signal tension. Conversely, weaker crayon pressure and less visible lines may be associated with anxiety and withdrawal (Szabelska, 2011). Suppression or repression of problems may also be indicated by the presence of a relatively large white space on the other side of the page (Braun-Galkowska, 1985).



Picture 3. Artwork by a child (boy), aged 4. *Source:* Author's own study.

Figure 4 was made by a boy and shows features typical of drawings made by boys, i.e., a high geometrisation of shapes and their reproduction. There is a lack of circular and oval forms. The emphasis on the mother is pronounced. She is drawn first and located in the central part of the page. This indicates a valorisation of this person (this was confirmed by the child's statements, which indicated that she was the person most loved and admired by the boy in the family).



Picture 4. Artwork by a child (boy), aged 7. *Source:* Author's own study.

The drawing is coherent in composition and cheerful in expression due to the colour scheme and the smiles visible on the faces of all the people portrayed. The angular shapes of the individual figures may indicate the child's rational type of emotionality.

Portrait shots are usually framed busts, showing a U-shaped face with a symbolic smile on the face. A broad overview of this type of artwork can be admired at the exhibition of the annual nationwide art competition addressed to children with disabilities, entitled: "Mama, mamusia, mamunia (Mum, mommy, and mammy)", which has been organised for seven years by the Trampoline Association working in Bielsko-Biała and the Konstancy Ildefons Gałczyński Special School Complex in Bielsko-Biała. Despite the schematic and iconic shapes of the figures, often presented with various attributes typical of women, a cheerful expression emanates from the artworks. A review of the tendencies of depicting the human figure by a child can also be found in the drawings made for the International Plastic Competition "Bohun's palette", addressed to children and young people. It is important to note the particularly high level of works of this type produced by young Slovak artists. Perhaps this is the result of better education in this area.

## **Conclusion**

Because a child's artistic creativity is one of his/her first and primary forms of non-verbal communication with the environment (Szuścik, 2018), drawing allows us to gather a lot of information about the child and his/her relationship with the family. Because of the child's spontaneity and sensitivity, the diagnostic value of his drawing is very high. At the same time, it is important to remember that to read the content contained in a child's drawing, it is necessary to be able to decipher the entire alphabet that makes up the child's artistic expression. Colour, form, and composition are independent and self-generated expressions, which make it possible to state that temperament, imagination, thinking, and visual memory condition the artistic work to be conducted as an "externalization" of the child's internal mental structure (Popek, 1999). The child's drawing of the family can be a valuable source of information for a teacher about the situation in the family and the child's perception of family relationships, provided, however, that it is complemented by other diagnostic methods and tools. As Grażyna Szabelska writes, "the conclusions from the analysis of drawing can only have the status of specific hypotheses, to be further verified with more certain research tools" (Szabelska, 2011, p. 128). The analysis of children's artworks has shown that the child's visual creativity can be considered as a process that results in the child shaping a visual sign and giving it a proper meaning. In the course of the development of the child's experience, the sign structure in the child's artwork changes (Szuścik, 2018). It should be added that for a family's drawing to be of full diagnostic value, a larger amount of work needs to be analysed, and the drawing itself should be enriched by an interview with the



child. Moreover, it is necessary to take into account the dynamics and development of the child's cognitive processes and the child's spontaneity in creating artwork when analysing and interpreting family drawings. The knowledge of analysing the family drawing as a method of learning about the child's perception of family relationships is an important component of the diagnostic competence of teachers and pedagogical students.

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