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School-parent cooperation as an area of (non)pedagogical effectiveness – perceptions of students preparing for their professional role as pre-school and early childhood education teachers and early childhood education.
Initial research report

Współpraca szkoły z rodzicami jako obszar (nie)skuteczności pedagogicznej – wyobrażenia studentów przygotowujących się do roli zawodowej nauczycieli edukacji przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej.
Raport z badań wstępnych

Abstract

Aim. Cooperation with parents at school is crucial. Therefore, it is important that students already at the stage of academic preparation gain awareness and skills in building relationships with parents.

Methods and materials. Questionnaire interview with open-ended questions conducted in April 2024 with second-year students of Pre-school and Early Childhood Pedagogy

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Results and conclusion. For students, already understanding this value at the stage of study is important for building positive relationships with parents of future students and dealing with the challenges of cooperation. Preparing students for this cooperation is important for the Polish educational system, inspired by global achievements. Practices from other countries can inspire innovation and adaptation to changing educational needs. Knowledge of different models of cooperation and communication and conflict resolution skills are key to building a positive educational environment.

Keywords: school, teacher, parent, student, cooperation, preparing for the teaching profession.

Abstrakt

Cel. Współpraca z rodzicami w szkole jest kluczowa. Dlatego istotne jest, aby studenci już na etapie akademickiego przygotowania zdobywali świadomość i umiejętności w budowaniu relacji z rodzicami.

Metody i materiały. Wywiad kwestionariuszowy z pytaniami otwartymi przeprowadzony został w kwietniu 2024 r. ze studentami drugiego roku kierunku pedagogika przedszkolna i wczesnoszkolna w Instytucie Pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Wyniki i wnioski. Zrozumienie przez studentów pedagogiki wartości współpracy z rodzicami w szkole już na etapie studiów jest istotne dla budowania pozytywnych relacji z rodzicami przyszłych uczniów oraz radzenia sobie z wyzwaniami takiej współpracy. Ich przygotowanie do niej ma duże znaczenie dla polskiego systemu oświaty, inspirowanego globalnymi osiągnięciami. Praktyki z innych krajów mogą stanowić bodziec do opracowywania i wdrażania innowacji dostosowanych do zmieniających się potrzeb edukacyjnych. Znajomość różnych modeli współpracy oraz umiejętności komunikacji i rozwiązywania konfliktów są kluczowe w budowaniu pozytywnego środowiska edukacyjnego.

Słowa kluczowe: szkoła, nauczyciel, rodzic, uczeń, współpraca, przygotowanie do zawodu nauczyciela.

Introduction

Parents are the first to introduce children to language, culture, values and social behaviour. It is in the family that the process of developing key competences necessary for self-fulfilment, personal development, active citizenship, social integration and employment, such as communication in the mother tongue and a foreign language, begins (*Recommendation of the European Parliament...*, 2006). When

a child reaches school age, their education becomes the responsibility of the pre-school and school. At school, children acquire knowledge, develop skills, learn cooperation, self-discipline and independent thinking. School allows them to broaden their horizons, discover their interests and develop their talents. Parents should be supported by teachers who, in addition to teaching, support the social, emotional and moral development of pupils.

Education and upbringing become a joint affair between parents and teachers, and their influences intermingle (Olejnik-Krupa, 2022). Monika Miňová emphasises that parents are aware of the important influence school has on their child's development. It is a place where they not only acquire knowledge, but also develop social skills, creativity and independence. The school, in turn, increasingly recognises the importance of the family environment in the overall development of the student. It is in the family that the foundations of a child's personality, values and social behaviour are formed. The integration of these two environments – school and family – is becoming a key element in ensuring comprehensive support and optimal development of children (Miňová, 2017). Gregory Flynn notes that cooperation between school and parents not only identifies a child's special needs but also significantly facilitates his or her full integration into school life (Flynn, 2007).

Cooperation between parents and teachers – definitional contexts

The presence of parents and their involvement are key determinants of the quality of a child's education in kindergarten and school (Musial, 2019). When representatives from both settings work as a team, they can better understand the child's individual needs and abilities, which enables them to tailor teaching strategies to meet the child's needs. This shared commitment helps to build a strong educational foundation that will serve the child throughout life. It is widely rightly emphasised that neither the school nor the family alone, acting in isolation, can take total responsibility for children's education. Also, society expects teachers to be open to relationships with representatives of their students' family environment, while actively increasing parental involvement in school life (Cankar, Lubej, & Rutar, 2012).

The literature on the relationship between parents and teachers often uses terms such as *collaboration*, *cooperation* and *partnership* as synonyms, although they may have slightly different shades of meaning. Among others, Barbara Lulek (2008) points that out. "Interaction – means the participation of actors in a task situation, without exemplifying the nature of the mutual relations occurring between the participants in the situation" (Maszke, 2005, p. 42).

Teacher-parent interaction is defined as a process in which both parties (teachers and parents) actively collaborate, exchanging information, sharing experiences and taking joint action to support the child's development and education. It is generally understood as

[...] the exercise of joint actions by them for the good and well-being of individual pupils and the class as a whole. This also does not exclude cooperation on the level of unidirectional services, externalised, for example, in the provision of assistance from the parents for the benefit of the class or in their support by the class teacher. Of particular educational importance, however, is the carrying out of joint tasks in accordance with a prior decision on the matter (Święcicka, 2024).

Ewa Kozak further adds that “[...] is the mutual support and cooperation of the actors in achieving a common goal. It is based on mutual trust, loyalty, and submission to a goal that must be duly realised by both parents and teachers” (Kozak, 2010, p. 53).

Mieczysław Łobocki uses the terms *cooperation* and *collaboration* interchangeably, “defining them as actions taken jointly by pupils and teachers to achieve the good of individual pupils, the class, the whole school community in the process of teaching and upbringing. These actions are taken to achieve jointly set goals” (Łobocki, 1985, p. 167). In explaining these concepts, however, it is also worth taking into account the position of Anna Gulczyńska, Anna Rybinska, and Waldemar Segiet (2020, p. 350), who propose that “[...] consider ‘cooperation’ as a concept superior to ‘collaboration.’” Collaboration refers to acting together, for a common purpose. It therefore implies a constructive interaction in which both parties make joint efforts to support the child in his or her development and education. It is an activity in which teachers and parents engage in mutual support, information exchange and joint decision-making. In the classic definition, Wincenty Okoń assumes that cooperation is

[...] the interaction with each other of individuals or groups of people carrying out their partial tasks in order to achieve some common goal; cooperation is based on mutual trust and loyalty and on subordination to the goal, duly realised by all individuals or groups (Okon, 1987, p. 346).

A similar position is adopted by Albert Wojciech Maszke, who sees cooperation as a type of joint action between two or more actors, the aim of which is to contribute to the realisation of tasks resulting from the division of labour and understood as a joint task, which is accurate and in line with the generally accepted understanding of the term. Collaboration between different actors, including parents and teachers,

consists of joint efforts to achieve common goals or specific tasks (Maszke, 2005). Parent-school collaboration is a dynamic process that can be shaped by various factors, both on the part of teachers and parents. According to Elżbieta Zyzik, its extent depends primarily on the degree of teachers' commitment and ingenuity, as they are often the ones who initiate and organise cooperation activities between school and parents. Teachers' openness to children's problems and needs can influence the extent of cooperation, as this enables more effective joint action to solve these problems. Teachers' attitudes towards parents, such as taking an interest in their opinions and views and treating them as co-partners, are key to building positive relationships and effective cooperation. Parents' involvement in the upbringing and teaching process is also important – the greater the involvement, the greater the extent of parents' cooperation with the school can be (Zyzik, 2009). Mikołaj Winiarski, on the other hand, lists factors that have a negative impact on the effectiveness of cooperation between parents and teachers. In this respect, the researcher draws attention to the lack of full awareness of the socio-educational value of cooperation and the failure to respect the principle of partnership.

There are a number of legal acts at global and national level that regulate the relationship between school and family, providing protection and support for parents and respecting their role in family and social life. As a member of the European Union and the United Nations, Poland has accepted documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights (1950), the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the European Parliament Resolution on Freedom of Education (1984). In Poland, the rights of parents are regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 and the Education Law of 14 February 2019, as well as the provisions of a number of regulations. Anna Gulczynska, Anna Rybinska and Waldemar Segiet add:

[...] many establishments also outline the specific principles under which the teacher's cooperation with the pupil's legal guardians should take place. Usually, this information can be found in the school's statutes and regulates the rights and responsibilities of parents (guardians) and children (pupils) [...]. In the case of some schools, the rules of cooperation: "parents-teachers" are regulated in the Educational-Prophylactic Programme, these issues may also be included in preventive or educational programmes (Gulczyńska, Rybinska, & Segiet, 2020, pp. 349–350).

However, as Inetta Nowosad rightly points out

[...] [in] initiating community action by teachers and with parents, however, documents alone are not enough, for both the taking of the action itself and the results are

dependent on teachers – on awareness of the goal of planning the most beneficial and appropriate activities, getting parents on board, implementing the adopted plan and monitoring the achieved intentions (Nowosad, 2014, p. 50).

For this reason, it is interesting to find out the students' perspectives on working with parents, and in fact their interpretations of this issue, to which the next section of the paper is devoted.

Key role of the teacher

An analysis of the legislation shows that parents have an important influence on the quality of education for children and young people, being full members of the school community. Existing legislation enables parents and teachers to work together to increase the effectiveness of school work and to meet the expectations of society. Nevertheless, as Bogusław Śliwerski notes, there is a discrepancy between law and practice – the law favours parents, but the practice often lies with educational and school authorities. Therefore, it is important to strive to change this situation by promoting public awareness of the role of parents in education, building partnerships between school and parents and introducing appropriate mechanisms and practices of cooperation that will enable the potential for joint action to be used for the development of education and upbringing of children and young people (Śliwerski, 2004). Krzysztof Polak attributes to the teacher the role of a natural leader in the context of cooperation between school and parents. In his view, the teacher, in fulfilling his professional duties, must not only support the development of the student, but also take care of the proper shape of relations with parents (Polak, 2011). The position presented by Przemysław Bąbel and Sławomir Trusz also assumes that the teacher is the key person responsible for parents' co-participation in the educational process of children and young people. The teacher, as the person with the educational function in the school, should initiate the process of cooperation and create favourable conditions for its implementation. The researchers argue that a teacher who assumes co-responsibility for the upbringing of a child previously influenced by the family environment should be interested in obtaining help from the parents. Furthermore, because of his or her training, the teacher should be prepared to initiate joint contacts with parents. However, the authors note that it is the teacher who is often perceived by parents as the authority, which may make parents hesitant to propose joint activities. Consequently, the initiative in establishing cooperation usually rests with the teacher (Bąbel, Trusz, 2004). Nedeljko Milošević (2022) points out that during their studies, future teachers should acquire skills and knowledge about the relevance of family-school cooperation. Then, in the course

of their professional work, they should improve these skills, nurture cooperation with parents and initiate actions in favour of it. This is because building partnerships is often hampered by a lack of adequate preparation of teachers for cooperation with pupils' parents.

The school's collaboration with parents is accompanied by both strengths and weaknesses. Strengths include parental involvement, which supports the child's learning and development, and a close working relationship that enables a better understanding of the pupil's needs and a tailored educational approach. Regular communication promotes information sharing and joint problem solving. Weaknesses include the limited resources of some parents, lack of time to engage, differences in expectations between parents and teachers, and potential conflicts that can hinder effective action (Buk-Cegiełka, 2019). According to Harlene Anderson, author of the systemic theory of collaborative dialogue, the key in communication between representatives of the two communities is to create a space where parents and teachers can construct meanings and solve problems together by listening, speaking and understanding each other. This dialogue is based on openness, mutual respect and joint search for solutions, which fosters trust and effective cooperation. In the context of education, the implementation of this theory can significantly improve communication between the school and the child's family home, supporting the integral development of the student through a holistic approach to their needs and challenges (Anderson, 2018).

Cooperation between parents and teachers should be based on partnership. Subjective treatment of parents by teachers, ignoring their needs and parents treating teachers as executors of orders can lead to conflicts. The use of outdated models of cooperation, which do not take into account new trends and needs, limits the effectiveness of this cooperation (classic "interview meetings" instead of RUN meetings, i.e. parent-student-teacher, see *Interview*, 4.09.2024), putting the problems of the school above the good of the individual student's development, etc. (Winiarski, 1999). Partnership refers to equality and mutual respect between partners. In the context of the parent-teacher relationship, it means treating each other as equal partners who work together to achieve the child's educational goals. In partnership, parents and teachers engage in dialogue, mutual assistance and decision-making on an equal basis. According to Jan Szczepański, a partnership is "a relationship between two individuals or groups or between an individual and an institution having a form regulated by custom or custom, but most often formalised, entered into for the purpose of working towards a specific goal" (Szczepański, 1978, p. 3). Maria Mendel considers the concept of partnership in an educational context as relationships of actors based on purposeful and jointly recognised action, of which education is a joint part. She sees it as a type of cooperation in which partners jointly pursue specific goals related to the educational process. Before the cooperation starts, the partners agree on common goals and prin-

principles of action. In this context, teacher-parent partnership is a relationship in which both parties interact to shape the educational process, sharing knowledge, experience and perspectives (Mendel, 2000). Anita Nogal rightly points out that “the school-family partnership aims to provide optimal conditions for children’s development and learning and to support them in achieving success in school and in life” (Nogal, 2024, p. 9).

Test procedure

Reflecting on the focussed issues of teacher-parent cooperation as an area of pedagogical (in)effectiveness in the perspective of students preparing for their professional role as preschool and early childhood education teachers led to the formulation of the following research questions, giving directions for empirical exploration:

1. What is the students’ knowledge of the nature and forms of teachers’ cooperation with parents in the context of their professional role as future preschool and early childhood education teachers?
2. What factors promote effective collaboration between teachers and parents of pre-school and early childhood children according to prospective teachers?
3. What factors hinder cooperation between teachers and parents of pre-school and early childhood children according to the respondents?
4. What steps or actions do students consider crucial at the beginning of the collaboration with parents to make it satisfactory for all parties involved?
5. What is the students’ vision and assessment of their strengths and weaknesses in terms of future collaboration with parents?

A questionnaire interview (Sztumski, 1995) with second-year students of preschool and early childhood pedagogy at the Institute of Pedagogy at the University of Wrocław was conducted in April 2024. The research involved students who agreed to take part in an individual interview conducted during the first conversation classes in the subject of the teacher’s cooperation with parents and the educational environment. The interview was categorised and based on a carefully designed author’s questionnaire. The chosen research procedure allowed for the collection of comparable information, as the questions in the questionnaire were identical for each participant. The research was conducted with a small group of 56 students. They were of a causal nature and their continuation in the future on a randomly selected, representative sample will allow for the generalisation of the results, which will be a valuable source of information for the development of research concepts within pre-school and early childhood pedagogy. It should be emphasised that the aim of the research was not to generate conclusions about teachers’ cooperation with parents, but to identify how this prob-

lem is perceived by students. It is also worth mentioning that conducting the research at the beginning of the subject course was aimed not only at acquiring empirical material, but also at stimulating the participants' reflection on the relevance of the issue, increasing their awareness of educational goals in the diagnosed area and motivating them to participate more actively in the teaching and learning process. The research sample, consisting of future teachers who will have to work with parents of students in their careers, was selected on the basis of these assumptions.

Data on the issues in question were collected using an original interview questionnaire consisting of ten questions, including eight open-ended and two closed-ended with a disjunctive cafeteria. The questions focused on the students' perceptions of the essence of teacher-parent collaboration in the context of pre-school and early childhood education, the forms of such collaboration, their effectiveness, as well as the factors determining the quality of teachers' relationships with parents, the students' ideas on how to satisfactorily start the interaction of both parties, and their own strengths and weaknesses that could potentially affect the quality of their contact with students' parents in the future. Due to the preliminary nature of the research and the associated small number of respondents, data are presented in descriptive form.

Findings

The essence of cooperation between teachers and parents lies in the recognition of parents as equal partners in the process of education and upbringing of the young generation. The respondents confirmed with their answers to the questions: *What do you think the essence of cooperation between teachers and parents consists of?* and: *Is cooperation between representatives of both environments necessary?* that this is exactly how they understand its meaning. Some of the answers are quoted below*. According to the students, cooperation

It is a fruitful communication and responds to the needs of both parties, it is a desire to help parents to make their children function better in the area of learning as well as in society.

It is a joint action for the benefit of the child, such cooperation is aimed at supporting and understanding the child. Teacher-parent cooperation is a dialogue between them, a two-way interest in the life of the school, the classroom, the student. It is a willingness to work together for the benefit of both the student teacher and the parent.

* The original spelling has been retained in the empirical material presented.

It is a situation in which the teacher and parent talk together about the child and consider how to proceed so that the pupil has the best possible space to develop.

It is the active participation of the parent in the life of the school and the child.

It is a relationship based on partnership. Its aim is to provide children with the best possible conditions for their development at school.

It is the willingness and ability to communicate information about the child to each other between the teacher and the parents. A joint conversation aimed at jointly solving a possible problem a discussion on various topics related to the child.

It is a conversation, a contact between the teacher and the parent looking for common solutions to create a pleasant and conducive atmosphere for the child's development. It is a relationship in which the main initiator is the child and his/her action at school.

In the perception of the respondents, an important aspect of collaboration is the building of interpersonal relationships based on mutual trust and understanding between teacher and parent. They see this process as active communication and collaboration that responds to the needs of both the child and the parent, in the areas of learning and society. For the respondents, cooperation means working for the development of the child, where both parties try to provide the best possible conditions for the child's development at school. They emphasise the importance of dialogue based on partnership and mutual interest in the life of the school, the classroom and the student. The students' statements also indicate a wide range of activities involving the active participation of parents in the life of the school and the child and the search for joint solutions to problems. They attach importance to creating a pleasant and supportive atmosphere through conversation, contact and the search for joint solutions. They note that a lack of cooperation can make it difficult to respond appropriately to various situations related to the child's development and learning. According to the students, cooperation between teachers and parents is essential for the proper support of the child's development and enables the child to know his or her potential and to communicate in difficulties, which promotes proper development. It creates a safe space for the child's development in which the child can develop his or her skills and potential. Respondents also emphasise the benefits for parents who, through collaboration, feel involved in the life of the school and the community, which promotes better functioning of the educational system. Overall, students' responses suggest that teacher-parent collaboration is crucial for children's optimal development in school and life. It is seen as an indispensable

element for discovering and developing children's potential, responding to difficulties and creating a safe learning environment. It is only through the cooperation of teachers and parents that it is possible to provide children with the best chances for success both at school and in life.

Despite a clear appreciation of the sense of cooperation between teachers and parents, which was declared by all respondents (N = 56), the majority (39 persons, 69.6%) showed relatively little awareness of the possibilities of forms of organising such cooperation. The students most frequently mentioned parent meetings, the so called "parent-teacher meetings." The most frequently mentioned forms of cooperation were: parent-teacher meetings (48 persons, 85.7%), where teachers present information about the curriculum, timetable, grades and other important issues concerning the teaching and learning situation of the class; individual meetings (consultations) (43 persons, 76.6%), where teachers and parents can meet individually to discuss the student's progress and needs and discuss strategies to support his/her development; or written correspondence (38 persons, 67.8%) as an exchange of information between teachers and parents in the form of e-mail messages or messages sent via Librus. The data analysis provides a broader insight into students' perceptions of teacher-parent collaboration. Despite a general recognition of the sense of this collaboration, respondents show little awareness of the various possibilities for organising it. This suggests a need for more education on this topic within the curricula. The forms of collaboration mentioned by students, such as parent-teacher meetings, one-to-one meetings and written correspondence, reflect the prevailing traditional approach to communication between teachers and parents. The lack of a clear presence of innovative/modern forms of contact provided by, for example, e-learning platforms or mobile applications, may indicate a limited awareness of technological possibilities in the context of school-family collaboration. Potential reasons for this low awareness should be noted. Limited experience or lack of sufficient training may reduce awareness of the various forms of collaboration. It is therefore important that educational programmes for future teachers include the development of skills for effective communication with parents. These findings suggest the need for more varied collaborative strategies that can be tailored to the diverse needs and preferences of parents and technological capabilities. Developing awareness and skills in innovative communication methods can increase the effectiveness of teachers' collaboration with parents, which in turn will contribute to better support for students' development.

In the context of research on the relationship between teachers and parents, the various forms and nature of cooperation and the expectations of both parties regarding the education of the child are therefore an important issue. Research by both Polish and foreign researchers highlights the wealth of possibilities for organising contacts. The main forms of cooperation between parents and the school include the organisa-

tion of class trips, events and school celebrations, the exchange of information on educational achievements, involvement and support in situations of educational and didactic difficulties in children, familiarisation with school rules, the creation of individual educational and therapeutic programmes and the school and class work plan, the resolution of problem situations, mutual contact in emergency situations, the election of a class trio and the provision of work and services for the benefit of the class and the school (Kordziński, 2017; Mendel, 2006). Eleonora Mendelová and Libuša Gužíková (2024) point out that contemporary educational practice incorporates both traditional methods, such as face-to-face meetings and written communication, and modern digital technologies, including communication via the Internet and mobile applications. In addition, cultural and sporting events and various forms of meetings and activities that support cooperation between school and parents are of increasing importance. In her research, Jana Kropáčková (2017) points to parents' preference for informal forms of cooperation with the school, involving a variety of interactions that foster closer relationships and mutual understanding between parents and the school. Parents often choose to have regular conversations with teachers to discuss their child's progress, understand their child's needs and set educational goals. Attending school events and meeting other parents are also important ways of building the school community and supporting school initiatives and activities. These informal forms of cooperation not only increase parents' involvement in school life, but also support children's fuller educational and social development. The literature often emphasises that both direct and indirect forms of interaction between parents and teachers contribute to building and shaping effective cooperation. In the survey conducted, only a few participants (8 people, representing 14.2% of the sample) highlighted the organisation of open days and other school events, such as festivals, charity events or school parties. These initiatives not only allow parents to visit the school and learn about their child's work and school activities, but also serve to build links between the school community and its surroundings.

Of the participants in the survey ($N = 56$), as many as 20 (35.7%) chose the option "I have no opinion" in response to the question concerning knowledge of forms of cooperation between teachers and parents. The students gave different reasons for their choice. Some were simply not sufficiently familiar with the various forms of cooperation between teachers and parents, resulting in their uncertainty in choosing a different answer, while others were undecided or did not have a clear understanding of which forms of cooperation were most effective and worth mentioning. A lack of experience in professional practice or a lack of concrete examples clearly led to difficulties in choosing the right answer. There was also the possibility that some respondents did not want or feel the need to express their opinion on teacher-parent collaboration. This could have been due to the belief that their opinion did not matter much or that the topic was not relevant to them in the context of their future professional work. It is also worth

mentioning that these individuals also did not answer two related questions to the previous one: Which form of collaboration do you think is the most effective? and Which form of cooperation do you think is the least effective? The high proportion of those taking the survey and selecting the "I have no opinion" option indicates the need for further research or action to understand the reasons for this and to investigate what factors may have been decisive in respondents' non-response. This indicates a limited interest or knowledge of the subject by respondents and the need to include appropriate educational activities. In contrast, the analysis of the responses to the above questions shows that the students considered regular meetings between teachers and parents and individual consultation meetings, which allow for open communication between parents and teachers to discuss the child's pre-school/school situation, to be the most effective forms of cooperation between teachers and parents. The respondents also appreciated the possibilities offered by electronic communication through e-mails, text messages or educational platforms, such as Librus, in this age of developed information technology. Workshops organised by the school for parents to understand their children's needs and challenges and how they can support their children's educational and social development were also considered very useful. Students considered the least effective forms of cooperation between teachers and parents to be short conversations in the corridor on the run and phone calls perceived as insufficient, as they do not allow for a full discussion of the child's problems due to limited time and attention, which can lead to misunderstanding or miscommunication. The popular collective meetings ("teacher-parent meetings") in educational establishments, where issues are raised in general and the individual needs and situation of the pupil and his/her family are not taken into account, were not recognised by the respondents. If teachers do not tailor their approach to specific problems and needs, they may be perceived as unhelpful or uninteresting.

In response to the question: What do you think positively influences the cooperation between teachers and parents? the respondents mentioned trust-building, open communication, listening to the needs of the family and common goals regarding the education of the student as key factors for a satisfying, effective and efficient relationship. They also emphasised that successful teacher-parent collaboration is based on active listening, the ability to communicate without violence, on empathy, dialogue and a willingness to work as a team. Building trust between teachers and parents contributes to an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. When both parties trust each other, it is easier to cooperate and make joint decisions, which translates into better support for student development. Open communication allows for a free exchange of information, ideas and concerns between teachers and parents. This allows one party to better understand the needs and expectations of the other, which fosters partnerships and more effective collaboration in the child's education. In addition,

listening to the needs of the family allows teachers to better understand the student's life context and their individual needs and abilities. This enables them to adapt their teaching approach, which promotes a better tailoring of the educational process to the student's individual needs. Shared goals for a pupil's education enable teachers and parents to set common priorities and actions that benefit the child's development. By acting together in pursuit of these goals, both parties can better understand and support the student's needs, resulting in better educational and social development. Soliciting these factors fosters a positive relationship between teachers and parents and supports the student's development. The absence of any of these elements can lead to negative consequences. For example, a lack of respect can lead to feelings of being unappreciated or undervalued, which can undermine trust between the parties and make collaboration difficult. A lack of open communication can result in misunderstood information or omissions, which in turn can cause conflict and ineffective collaboration. A lack of empathy can result in parties being unable to understand each other's needs and perspectives, leading to increased tension and conflict. A lack of willingness to cooperate can limit the ability to achieve common goals and take effective action, which can lead to frustration and a lack of progress in the collaboration.

In their statements, respondents also pointed to a number of factors that can adversely affect teacher-parent collaboration. These factors included a sense of superiority and lack of openness, expressed in the belief that only one side is right, and leading to a lack of openness to the needs and perspectives of the other side, making it difficult to build effective cooperation, as well as boredom or ignorance on the part of parents. Children's school problems and the desire to dominate one side can also negatively affect the relationship between teachers and parents; while a lack of interest in what the other side has to say, parents' lack of time and media-only communication can lead to disagreement and frustration. Respondents also mentioned: blaming each other, lack of contact, being constantly called to school, wanting to dominate the other party. These factors, according to the students, can lead to the disappearance of trust, conflict and a reduction in the effectiveness of cooperation between teachers and parents. A sense of superiority and lack of openness can lead to a lack of understanding and empathy for the other party's perspective. This, in turn, can hinder the building of effective collaboration, as a lack of openness to the needs and perspectives of the other party can result in conflict and tension. Boredom, ignorance on the part of the parents and the children's school problems can in turn influence less commitment to the collaborative process. When one party is not interested or does not understand the nature of collaboration, this can lead to a lack of communication and frustration about the lack of progress. The desire to dominate one party can lead to imbalance and feelings of being undervalued, which negatively affects the atmosphere of cooperation. Blaming each other, lack of contact and constant name-calling can lead to increased tension and reduce

the effectiveness of cooperation. When one party blames the other for problems or does not make an effort to build a relationship, this can lead to a tightening atmosphere of conflict and mistrust.

Nurturing the quality of the relationship between teachers and parents from the outset is therefore very important for the smooth running of the school and for providing the greatest possible support for pupils. A well-established relationship between teachers enables more effective collaboration and the exchange of ideas and best practice. Working together to solve problems and share knowledge contributes to better teaching and supporting pupils' development. It is noteworthy that good relationships between teachers facilitate the coordination of activities and the planning of school work. Working together on curricula, organising lessons or monitoring students' progress becomes more effective and coherent. Students' responses to the question: Where would you start in order to make cooperation with parents satisfactory (effective, efficient)? shows that the key steps or actions at the beginning of cooperation with parents in order for it to be satisfactory for all include defining common goals and expectations that each party wants to achieve through cooperation. Last but not least, it is important to start the collaboration with open yet frank communication in which both parties can express their needs, concerns and suggestions. A willingness to understand the other party's perspective and being ready to listen empathetically and take their point of view into account can also be helpful. Together with the parents, it is useful to develop an action plan that includes specific steps to be taken to achieve the agreed goals. It is also necessary to maintain regular communication between the teacher and parents to monitor progress, share information and resolve any problems. It is crucial to build trust between the teacher and parents by consistently acting on agreed goals and shared values, as well as a positive and open approach, even when there are difficulties or differences of opinion. The teacher's task is to build a relationship between the two most important environments for a child's development, i.e. the school and the home, as he or she acts as an educational conduit for pupils and their parents in the educational establishment environment. There are a number of characteristics that can help the teacher to build positive, supportive and fruitful relationships with parents, which in turn contribute to the educational success of the students.

In the context of their future role as teachers, students found particularly important: the ability to listen empathetically and understand parents' perspectives, which can build trust and foster positive relationships, which is crucial for effective collaboration; the ability to communicate, which allows the teacher to convey information clearly, explain educational issues and respond to parents' concerns and questions; openness to collaboration, as the teacher should be open to working with parents, listening to their opinions and comments, co-designing educational plans and involving them in the child's learning process; tolerance, equated with an understanding of the diversity

of family situations and needs, which allows the teacher to better adapt his or her approach to each student and to work with different parents. In addition, a commitment to pupil development, a willingness to provide individual support, a deductive approach to solving educational problems, and empathy to help support parents in making decisions about their child's development are crucial for effective collaboration with parents.

Conclusion

Cooperation between teachers and parents enables the child's potential to be discovered and developed, allowing them to better understand their skills and abilities. Furthermore, it allows both teachers and parents to work together to find solutions to problems that arise during the child's institutional education. It is therefore essential for creating optimal educational conditions and giving the child the best chances for success in school and in life. Already during their studies, students should become aware of the role that school-parent cooperation plays in the teaching and upbringing of pre-school and early childhood children. Understanding this importance will enable them to better appreciate the importance of building positive relationships with the parents of their future students, taking into account the complexity and variability of the situations and conditions in which these relationships will be established and implemented. In building the concept of establishing a collaborative relationship with parents and successively developing it for future teachers, it is also important to be aware of the various challenges and barriers that may impede effective school-parent collaboration. Considering these challenges will enable students to be better prepared to deal with them in their future teaching work. Also important are teaching situations in which students can explore different models and strategies of school-parent collaboration, evaluating their effectiveness in promoting student success and supporting the development of pre-school and early childhood children. This process can include an analysis of different methods of communication, the organisation of parent-teacher meetings or programmes that support parents in actively participating in their children's education.

As Małgorzata Prokosz rightly notes, when writing about the education of school educators, "we mean the process of acquiring substantive competencies necessary for work, but also improvement understood as the development of extending hitherto acquired knowledge" (Prokosz, 2012, p. 32). The analysis of the statements of the students surveyed revealed significant challenges that future teachers may face in the context of building effective cooperation with children's parents. An important aspect that came to the fore was lack of experience. It can create feelings

of insecurity and lack of confidence, which in turn will negatively affect the ability to communicate effectively and deal with difficult situations. Additionally, a lack of authority and the stress of a new teaching role were also identified as significant factors affecting relationships with parents. However, despite these challenges, there is the prospect of professional development. Beginnings are always difficult, but by successfully pursuing professionalism, future teachers can overcome these difficulties. It is important to be aware of one's own weaknesses and to actively work on improving them through training, internships or mentorship. Professionalism is a key element in allowing teachers to develop and improve the skills needed to work effectively with parents. In this way, despite initial difficulties, they can succeed in building positive and supportive relationships with parents, which will contribute to the better development of students.

Research indicates that preschool and early childhood education students should have the opportunity to develop communication skills through practical experience. It is important that they gain experience in conducting open, honest and empathetic communication with both children and their parents. In addition, students should explore strategies for building trust and cooperation with parents, such as regular updates on student progress, open communication and joint planning of educational activities. These findings can be the basis for the introduction of appropriate content into the curriculum of a subject dedicated to the issue of cooperation between the kindergarten/school and the educational environment (parents). Through conscious and reflective theoretical analysis and practical experience, students can shape their own approach to pedagogical work, integrating theoretical knowledge with professional practice in the field of school-parent cooperation. Investigating and exploring new pedagogical spaces will enable them to better understand the diversity of educational situations and to adapt to the changing needs and demands of the teaching profession, which is aware that effective work with children is determined (also) by contact with their parents. Regular reflection on one's own experiences, current challenges and opportunities for development, as well as striving for continuous improvement, can contribute to the professional emergence of future teachers in an effective relationship with children's parents. After all, teachers should be both "practical" and in need of sound theoretical knowledge, so equipping them with the broadest possible interdisciplinary knowledge in the humanities and relating it to the practical dimensions of future professional tasks must play an important role in their education (Cyrńska, 2012). One of these is cooperation with parents. I completely agree with the opinion of I. Nowosad, who writes "[...] teachers excluded from the expertise with which they should have been equipped during their studies, out of necessity of professional tasks undertake contacts with parents. They are doomed to failure in this process, basically 'on entry'" (Nowosad, 2014, p. 53).

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