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Parent-Child Contact in a Youth Educational Centre – Selected Legal and Pedagogical Aspects

**Kontakt rodzica z dzieckiem umieszczonym w młodzieżowym ośrodku
wychowawczym – wybrane aspekty prawne i pedagogiczne**

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Abstract

Introduction. Placing a minor in a youth educational centre is an educational measure used in cases of demoralisation or criminal offences, aimed at their resocialization and social readaptation. One of the key factors influencing these processes is the child’s contact with their family and the possibility of receiving support from them in the transition process.

Aim. The aim of this study is to show the possibilities of implementing contact between youth educational centre (YEC) pupils and their parents, its importance for readaptation within the legal framework, and to discuss the barriers to its implementation on the part of the student, parents, and the YEC.

Methods and materials. Scientific publications and legal acts concerning the issue of parent-child contact were analysed, with particular emphasis on children placed in YECs, the importance of contact for the student’s social readaptation, the legal basis and principles for its implementation, and its limitations.

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Results. The analysis covering publications, legal acts, and previous experience, indicates the importance of supportive contact between YEC students and their parents for social readaptation. At the same time, they demonstrate that the implementation of contact depends on many interrelated factors affecting both the parents (scope of parental authority), the child, and the YEC, which must be considered individually.

Keywords: juvenile rehabilitation, youth educational centres, social readaptation of juveniles, parent-child contact

Abstrakt

Wprowadzenie. Umieszczenie nieletniego w młodzieżowym ośrodku wychowawczym jest środkiem wychowawczym stosowanym w przypadku demoralizacji nieletniego lub dopuszczenia się czynu karalnego i ma na celu jego resocjalizację i readaptację społeczną. Jednym z istotnych czynników wpływających na przebieg tych procesów jest kontakt wychowanka z rodziną i możliwość uzyskania od niej wsparcia w procesie zmiany.

Cel. Celem pracy jest ukazanie możliwości realizowania kontaktu wychowanka MOW z rodzicami, jego znaczenia readaptacyjnego na gruncie przepisów prawa, a także omówienie barier w jego realizacji występujących po stronie wychowanka, rodziców oraz instytucji MOW.

Metody i materiały. Analizie poddano publikacje naukowe oraz akty prawne dotyczące problematyki kontaktu rodziców z dzieckiem, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem dziecka umieszczonego w młodzieżowym ośrodku wychowawczym, znaczenia kontaktu dla readaptacji społecznej wychowanka, podstawy prawnych i zasad jego realizacji oraz ograniczenia.

Wyniki. Analiza literatury, aktów prawnych oraz dotychczasowe doświadczenia wskazują na znaczenie wspierające kontaktów wychowanka MOW z rodzicami dla readaptacji społecznej. Jednocześnie ukazują, iż realizacja kontaktu uzależniona jest od wielu współwystępujących czynników leżących zarówno po stronie rodziców (zakres władzy rodzicielskiej), wychowanka jak i placówki, które muszą zostać indywidualnie rozważone.

Słowa kluczowe: resocjalizacja nieletnich, młodzieżowe ośrodki wychowawcze, readaptacja społeczna nieletnich, kontakt rodzica z dzieckiem

Introduction

The behaviour of a minor that is inconsistent with social norms (including legal norms), indicating their social maladjustment, constitutes grounds for the application of measures provided by law in order to halt the undesirable process of demoralisation, and to provide assistance to the minor. Amongst such measures, the law formally

regulates the use of various interventions differing in the degree of interference (e.g., youth educational centres).

The application of educational and rehabilitative measures with respect to minors is regulated by the Act of June 9, 2022, on supporting and rehabilitating minors (consolidated text: Journal of Laws 2024, item 978, as amended). They are intended to lead to the social readaptation of the minor, understood as the acquisition, or reacquisition, of the ability to live independently and to perform social roles in a manner consistent with social requirements. It should be remembered that social readaptation constitutes the final stage of the resocialisation process, which only concludes within a specific local community (Ambrozik, 2007), and its course is influenced by numerous factors. Foremost among them is the influence of the family, contacts with it during the implementation of educational measures, and its significance for the process of change and re-adaptation to life after leaving the total institution.

This article addresses the legal and pedagogical aspects of parent-child contact when the child has been placed in an educational facility, namely a youth educational centre. It highlights the role played by parents and contact with them in the course of the child's socialisation, as well as in their resocialisation and social readaptation.

The aim of the study was to analyse the impact of selected legal regulations on the possibility of exercising the right to contact a child when an educational measure in the form of placement in a youth educational centre has been applied, and to show the opportunities and barriers that arise in a given factual situation shaped by the justified application of a legal norm allowing for interference with the exercise of contact with the child.

The Socialising and Educational Role of the Family, and the Consequences of its Dysfunction

The family, as an educational environment, exerts a significant influence on the shaping of the human being, their personality and identity, constituting the child's primary educational setting. It plays an important role in the construction of social attitudes, mechanisms of reaction, and the course of the socially vital process of primary socialisation (Szacka, 2003). Experiencing reliable and caring contact with parents, as research shows, increases the likelihood that the child will develop self-confidence, resilience, and adaptive learning strategies (Brooks, 2023). In the socialisation process, parents (significant others) not only transmit patterns of social roles to the child but also equip them with social competences necessary for fulfilling the duties associated with a given role, and for coordinating the demands arising in various spheres of life (Hurrelmann, 1994). A sense of mismatch between one's competences and situational demands (e.g.,

organisational or institutional) leads to inappropriate behaviours inconsistent with social norms (including legal ones).

Unfortunately, situations in which parents fail to properly fulfil their parental responsibilities are not uncommon. Family dysfunction often originates in parents lacking proper role models of mother and father, parenting competencies, and the skills to work educationally with a child who is maturing and changing across multiple domains. Today, families struggle with various types of addictions (chemical and behavioural) and mental disorders of different origins, which generate difficulties in social functioning and hinder proper educational communication, thus disrupting contact with the child. Children experiencing inconsistent or disrupted parent-child contact may develop insecure or disorganised attachment patterns, which may affect their ability to concentrate, interact with peers, and cope with life's demands (Sun *et al.*, 2025; Vassallo, 2023). According to Parke, many of these planned or unplanned life changes resulting from adult family members' problems inevitably influence the beliefs, actions, and socialisation conditions offered to children (Parke *et al.*, 2008).

The multitude of causes of improper functioning in the contemporary family results in the social maladjustment of children raised within it, creating the need for multifaceted and interdisciplinary support in fulfilling its functions. The following section presents the grounds for the state's application of particular actions in regulating contact between child and parents, depending on the reasons justifying their use and the factors shaping the factual and legal situation of the child, which determine whether their living environment is deemed safe and properly functioning or in need of support and correction.

The Grounds for Interference in the Exercise of the Family's Educational Functions

Actions or omissions by parents that endanger the welfare of the child or infringe upon their rights and interests constitute the grounds for interference in the exercise of custody over a minor. The Family and Guardianship Code provides for three forms of interference in the exercise of parental authority over a child: suspension of parental authority, deprivation of parental authority, and restriction of parental authority (The Family and Guardianship Code of February 25, 1964). The decision regarding restrictions on the exercise of custody of a child depends on the origin, scope, and consequences of the diagnosed irregularities (Rajewska de Mezer, 2017). Suspension of parental authority is caused by a temporary obstacle to its exercise, which is of a transient nature. Deprivation of parental authority, on the other hand, results

from a permanent obstacle preventing the exercise of custody in all its aspects, an abuse of that authority (through the use of physical or psychological violence), or gross neglect of parental duties towards the child (Article 111 of the Family and Guardianship Code).

Restriction of parental authority, which is intended to correct the family situation that poses risks to the child, consists in reducing or diminishing the scope of custody exercised over the child, by depriving parents of certain competences in relation to the child (physical custody, management of the child's property, or representation).

Parental Authority and Contact With the Child

Given the subject under consideration, it is necessary to address the relationship between parental authority and its exercise, and the parent's right to contact with the child. In situations where restrictions on parental authority have been imposed, the issue arises of whether the parent may continue to maintain contact with the child, and whether such contact may be limited or withdrawn.

According to Article 113 of the Family and Guardianship Code: "Irrespective of parental authority, parents and their child have the right and obligation to maintain contact with one another" (Article 113, The Family and Guardianship Code).

The prevailing view in case law is that the concept of personal contact with the child does not fall within the scope of parental authority (Supreme Court ruling of October 21, 2005, case no. III CZP 75/05). It is also indicated that this is a right arising from the closest kinship, linked to parental authority, and intended to serve the welfare of the child (Kotas-Turoboyska, 2022). Even the restriction or deprivation of parental authority over the child does not automatically lead to a limitation of contact with the child, which, as emphasised above, represents the exercise of the right to maintain relations with close relatives. The basis for such restrictive interference may only be a situation where the child's welfare is endangered by contact with the parent. Where maintaining parent-child contact constitutes a serious threat to the child's welfare or infringes upon it, the court is obliged to impose a prohibition on the exercise of contact.

Grounds justifying interference with the exercise of both parental authority and the restriction of contact with the child may include the appearance of symptoms of social maladjustment (demoralisation) of the minor, arising from parental neglect, abuse, or proven educational incapacity, which require an appropriate response from the bodies formally obliged to act.

Placement of a Minor in a Youth Educational Centre¹ – Selected Legal and Pedagogical Issues

The occurrence of symptoms indicating demoralisation or the commission of a punishable act by a minor, provided that statutory conditions are met, constitutes grounds for initiating proceedings under the provisions of the Act on Supporting and Resocialising Minors.

Among the educational measures aimed at shaping socially desirable attitudes, supporting the child's psychological and social development, and counteracting the progress of demoralisation, the legislator has provided for measures implemented in the child's existing environment (*e.g.*, a warning, an obligation to adopt specific behaviour, or supervision by a social organisation or by a court probation officer) and those involving placement of the minor outside the family. Among the latter are placement in a professional specialised foster family, a youth educational centre, a district educational centre, or, in the form of a corrective measure, a juvenile detention centre.

Placement in a youth educational centre or a district educational centre constitutes an educational measure, the application of which is ordered by the district court, family and juvenile division, after analysing the evidence and opinions collected in the case, guided by the welfare of the minor and the need to subject them to resocialising and supportive interventions. The regulations provide for two types of youth educational centres: resocialising-educational centres, and resocialising-revalidation centres².

According to § 11 of the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of March 30, 2023, on certain public institutions of the education system (Journal of Laws 2023, item 651), the tasks of a youth educational centre include the elimination of manifestations of social maladjustment of the minor and activities aimed at their social readaptation, expressed in preparation for independent, responsible life in accordance with the binding social and legal norms after leaving the institution.

As Wiesław Ambrozik notes, resocialising interventions undertaken in resocialisation institutions of various types are always accompanied by some form of social isolation, which creates a structural barrier to the ongoing resocialisation process

¹ Youth educational centre, hereinafter also referred to as YEC.

² The first type is intended for socially maladjusted children and young people who require a special organisation of learning, appropriate working methods, educational interventions, as well as psychological and pedagogical support and resocialisation. The second type accommodate socially maladjusted minors with mild or moderate intellectual disabilities who, for this reason, require a special organisation of learning, work, educational and resocialisation methods adapted to their needs and, which in this case is particularly important, psychological and pedagogical support – § 10(2) of the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of March 30, 2023, on certain public institutions of the education system (Journal of Laws 2023, item 651).

(Ambrozik, 2013). This manifests itself in the emergence of conditions of social isolation of the subject and object of the intervention, in their stigmatisation, and in the social exclusion accompanying the enforcement of the resocialisation measure (Ambrozik, 2013). It is therefore important for a stimulus to exist, a kind of bridge between the institutional environment and the outside world, which may precisely be the family/parents of the ward and contact with them, allowing the maintenance of bonds and the sense that the separation characteristic of the resocialising institution is temporary and directed towards change. In carrying out tasks related to the education and resocialisation of the minor, aimed at their social readaptation, youth educational centres also attempt to cooperate with the family and relatives of the wards, relying on the motivating influence of the minor's relations with their close ones, where this is possible not only formally, but also in practice.

Article 88(4) of the Act on Supporting and Resocialising Minors indicates that the enforcement of educational measures should lead also to the proper fulfilment by parents or guardians of their duties towards the minor (Act on Supporting and Resocialising Minors). As follows from the above, the application of this measure also has an educational significance, supporting the ward's parents in exercising their parental functions in such a way as to ensure the child's/minor's physical safety and to create conditions for their proper development as a social being. Being aware of the temporary nature of the minor's stay in the institution and the necessity of functioning in the open environment after leaving the centre, cooperation with parents makes it possible to jointly create conditions for the minor's return to family life. However, it should be remembered that despite the institution's efforts in working with the family, building bonds, and providing assistance in the process of change, there is not always the willingness or ability on the part of the parents to constitute a so-called support network for the child. Objective reasons may arise which affect the effectiveness of the support provided by the institution, such as mental health disorders of various origins, a demoralising influence on the child, or lack of willingness to meet and maintain contact.

The possibility of drawing on the motivating support of the family in the resocialisation process is an important factor facilitating social readaptation. Contact with relatives and the open environment allows the maintenance of bonds and provides hope for a return to normal, non-institutional life. It is therefore important to become acquainted with the family situation of the minor and analyse it in legal and pedagogical terms, in order to exclude, on the one hand, situations of disruptive parental influence where measures interfering with the exercise of custody or the right to contact have been applied, and, on the other, to make use of the family's potential in providing assistance based on the principle of subsidiarity.

Placement in a youth educational centre is a difficult situation for the minor, as it involves separation from their existing environment (home, familiar places and people), and deprivation of the possibility to satisfy emotional needs (the presence of a familiar person, contact with them. It creates the necessity of adapting to new conditions (the educational institution, school) and of forming/entering into relationships with previously unfamiliar individuals from various educational backgrounds with differently shaped personality traits, habits, or behaviours. Problems and difficulties experienced, perceived as insurmountable, may give rise to crisis situations, which, if specific factors are present, may develop into a crisis with somatic, psychological, behavioural, and cognitive symptoms (James & Gilliland, 2004). Lack of appropriate support may lead to a chronic crisis and significantly disrupt the resocialisation and social readaptation process of the minor.

Given the possibility of positioning parents as individuals building a support network for the minor undergoing change, it is essential for the institution to obtain full information on the legal situation between the ward and the parents: the scope of parental authority over the minor, if they are underage and lack full legal capacity, and whether it has been restricted or withdrawn. Another important issue to determine is that of parental contact with the child, since its restriction or prohibition will also affect the possibility of involving parents in the resocialisation process of the minor staying in the youth educational centre.

Parent-Child Contact in a Youth Educational Centre – Legal and Pedagogical Aspects

When considering the subject, it should be noted that the manner and scope of a parent's contact with a child placed in a youth educational centre (YEC) are influenced not only by certain restrictions provided for in family and guardianship law, but also by the provisions of the Act on Supporting and Resocialising Minors, secondary legislation issued under it, and the internal regulations of the resocialisation facility governing a ward's contact with their parents.

The provisions of the Act on Supporting and Resocialising Minors guarantee a minor placed in a YEC the right to the protection of family ties and contact with family members and other persons. This right, exercised through visits, temporary leave, holidays, correspondence, and the use of other means of remote communication, is specified in the statutes and regulations of individual institutions, consistent with generally binding law.

If contact may adversely affect the pending proceedings, the minor's resocialisation process, or their treatment, the director of the institution may decide to restrict

it. The director is obliged to immediately notify the minor of such a restriction or prohibition and, at the minor's request, the family court, giving the reasons for the decision (Article 115[1] and [4] of the Act on Supporting and Resocialising Minors). If the restriction or prohibition of contact concerns the minor's parents or legal guardians, the competent court must be notified without exception. A ward's contact with parents takes place through direct interaction in the form of visits, the use of temporary leave, and holidays, as well as through correspondence and other means of remote communication, such as electronic communication (Article 107[1][11] of the Act).

Visits are a direct form of contact between the ward and their relatives, providing an opportunity to meet significant persons in the minor's life, especially at the initial stage when the right to temporary leave or holidays is not yet granted³. They make it possible to satisfy the need for contact with close relatives, reinforce the sense of being important to one's loved ones despite physical absence from the home environment, and may constitute a form of support in the difficult situation of placement in a YEC, which bears the characteristics of a total institution. A youth educational centre is obliged to provide appropriate conditions enabling wards to maintain contact with persons from outside the centre and to cooperate with the ward's parents.

Given the functions performed by a YEC, visits are subject to certain rules, of which both wards and their relatives are informed upon admission. As a rule, visits take place on holidays and school-free days, upon prior arrangement with the director of the centre. In particularly justified cases, the director may grant permission for visits on school days.

A ward's visits take place on the premises of the centre in accordance with the established rules. The possibility of temporarily leaving the institution and spending time with relatives while an educational measure is being enforced is provided through forms of contact such as holidays and temporary leave. Pursuant to Article 180, a minor may temporarily leave the institution if granted leave (with the consent of the family court judge and the director of the centre) or temporary permission⁴. Other statutory grounds for authorising the minor to leave the institution include attending a school located outside the centre (with the court's consent) and practical vocational training (linked to the fulfilment of compulsory schooling).

Both leave and temporary permission are granted to wards at the request of parents or legal guardians submitted to the centre's director. The director's decision de-

³ Pursuant to § 15(2) of the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of March 30, 2023, on certain public institutions of the education system (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 651), the first leave permit may be granted to a resident after a 30-day stay in the centre.

⁴ As a rule, the family court grants permission for leave to a minor subject to an educational measure; however, in justified cases, the court may stipulate that the granting of temporary permission shall also require its approval.

depends on the formal prerequisite of the court's consent, as the minor remains under its jurisdiction. The decision is also influenced by the ward's behaviour in the centre (assessment includes, among other things, fulfilling school duties, conduct consistent with the interests of the school community, and care for their own and others' safety and health).

Parents of a ward granted temporary permission or leave submit a written application for consent for the child to return home, undertaking to assume responsibility and provide care during their stay at home. In some centres, these applications cover the entire school year, while in others they concern a specific period (*e.g.*, holidays, Christmas, weekends).

Leave may be granted to a ward on days when no educational activities are held in the school they attend. The educator, in agreement with the ward, and after obtaining the family court judge's consent for leave, provides the director of the youth educational centre with information on the ward's travel arrangements, place of stay during the leave, and how the leave will be spent (§ 14[1,3] of the cited Regulation).

Temporary permission is generally granted for a period not exceeding five days, although in justified random cases it may last longer. According to the formal rules of youth educational centres, temporary permission is granted at the ward's request, with the educator's opinion, and information about the permission is recorded in the ward's individual file (§ 15[1–5] of the cited Regulation).

Staying in an open environment during temporary permission or leave can have significant readaptive value for a minor placed in a resocialisation institution for a longer period. It allows a temporary return to the family, a *kind of reminder of one's existence*, affirming membership of the family. It strengthens bonds weakened by the minor's absence, provides an opportunity to work on often difficult family relationships, and to rebuild them with the support of professional psychological and pedagogical assistance from family support services referred to in the Act on Supporting the Family and Foster Care. For this reason, it is important that families receive support from statutory institutions obliged to provide assistance, such as probation officers, social workers, or family assistants.

Sonia Dzierżyńska-Breś, in her research on the family's role in the social re-adaptation of prisoners, noted that depending on the family's character, internal organisation, and functioning—both as a whole and of its members—it adapts in interaction to changes caused by a temporary alteration in its actual composition, acting or remaining a passive recipient (Dzierżyńska-Breś, 2017). A similar situation arises in the case of a minor's placement in a youth educational centre, requiring the family to adapt to new circumstances. The minor ceases to function physically within the family, where they had previously held defined roles. The family system thus experiences a form of loss, even when the objective assessment of the minor's behaviour justified

the imposition of an educational measure. This loss may be perceived by relatives as harm, which may reduce their willingness to cooperate with support institutions (e.g., social services, probation), seen as responsible for the loss. Hence, the possibility of home visits during temporary leave or holidays meets the need for closeness and presence, reaffirming the minor's place in family life. However, the home stay should support change and the resocialisation process.

The implementing provisions of the Education Law require youth educational centres to cooperate with social welfare centres and social service centres in matters of preparing minors for independent living (§ 31[3] of the cited Regulation). This provision constitutes both the legal and practical basis for cooperation with parents and families in resocialisation and post-institutional activities.

After leaving the centre, both the ward and the family may receive support from the institution. According to § 33[1][2] of the cited Regulation, at the request of the parents or of the ward themselves (if of age), the scope of cooperation between the centre and the family after the ward leaves is determined. This provides professional support for social readaptation from specialists such as educators, psychologists, and pedagogues familiar with the minor, their problems, the effectiveness of certain methods, and the family's potential and difficulties influencing adaptation.

Statutes and other internal acts provide for various forms of cooperation with the ward's family, covering resocialisation, educational, and preventive tasks. Support for relatives includes raising parental educational awareness, providing information on educational methods, and specialist assistance through individual consultations with an educator, psychologist, pedagogue, or the director.

Cooperation with the minor's parents benefits both sides of the educational relationship: staff gain information from parents on the child's functioning and their experience with educational methods, which is used in developing individual educational and therapeutic programmes. Internal acts assign educators the task of fostering positive teacher-student and school relationships, while boarding educators must update information on the family and educational environment, measures taken with the family and ward, and preparations for leaving the centre and functioning in the open environment. Importantly, the educator's interest in the ward does not end with the completion of the educational measure but continues through ongoing contact and assistance if needed. Psychologists and pedagogues support wards in resolving relational problems with family members, repairing communication, using mediation methods, and providing crisis intervention.

For some wards, returning to the centre after leave evokes ambivalent feelings – on the one hand longing for relatives and life outside, but on the other a sense of security, predictability, stability of people and events, and clearly defined boundaries, which are essential in the upbringing process.

An important form of contact with a minor in the centre is telephone calls, communication via messaging applications, and correspondence. Remote contact enables communication between parents and the minor despite the lack of physical presence (visits, leave). The inability to visit may be due to the distance from the parents' residence, travel costs, work schedules, health problems, *etc.* Telephone or video calls allow, at least partially, the satisfaction of the need for connection and closeness, showing that relatives remember the family member, care about their fate, school progress, and the resocialisation process. In line with crisis intervention theory, parents often constitute the minor's support network, enabling them to overcome difficulties.

The rules for telephone or online communication are defined in the internal rules of the centres. Another form of indirect contact is correspondence, though increasingly replaced by phone and online communication. A ward's correspondence is subject to supervision, and if it contains content infringing on legal order, safety, or potentially influencing resocialisation or treatment, it may be censored (Article 116 of the Act on Supporting and Resocialising Minors). This measure also constitutes a restriction of contact if a decision is made to not deliver a letter to the ward (intercepting correspondence) due to its negative, socially antagonistic content.

Thus, even when parents retain full parental rights and have not had their right to contact restricted under family and guardianship law, the specific nature of this educational measure and its accompanying safety rules significantly limit the freedom to choose the time and form of contact. These rules are justified by the organisation and aims of the institution, yet they objectively restrict parental contact in terms of timing, which may in turn affect the minor's process of readaptation to life outside the institution.

Conclusion

As shown above, contact between a minor placed in a youth educational centre (YEC) and their closest relatives—parents and family—can be an important factor supporting the process of resocialisation and readaptation, due to its role in maintaining bonds, counteracting loneliness, and motivating the minor to change.

The law sets out the formal framework for the exercise of parent-child contact by defining the scope of parental authority, distinguishing between custody and contact, and identifying the grounds for interference in the exercise of parental authority and contact. The law also regulates the principles and forms of contact with a child placed in resocialisation institutions, including a YEC, and the grounds for restriction in situations requiring an appropriate response to protect the child's welfare. Restrictions imposed by family court decisions on parental authority and contact may overlap with, and often do overlap with,

restrictions resulting from the rules governing the functioning of resocialisation facilities, as defined by binding legislation and the institutions' internal acts.

The exercise of contact nevertheless requires support from professionally functioning bodies – staff of the YEC (educators, pedagogical and psychological teams), the guardianship court and probation officers acting under its authority, as well as social service centres, social welfare centres, municipal family support centres, and within them social workers and family assistants. At times, for contact between the minor and family to have significance for the process of change, it must be developed through long-term pedagogical work, therapy, counselling (family, psychological, and legal), and—crucially—the willingness of both parties to cooperate to achieve the desired educational change.

If parents of a minor placed in a YEC have not been prohibited from contact with the child despite restrictions or deprivation of parental authority, they should be considered as potential *supporting partners* or *specialists in their own child*, rather than being viewed solely through the lens of past ineffectiveness in counteracting the child's demoralisation. Involving parents as co-responsible participants within the professional interventions of the YEC's educators can make them *allies of the centre's readaptive efforts*, thereby reinforcing the message directed to the minor. It also allows them to remain in the parental role despite the child's physical absence from the home, enabling them to provide support to the minor, while at the same time giving parents the crucial sense of agency and responsibility.

The focus must be on the potential of the minor, their relatives, and the relationship between them, which can serve as the foundation for resocialisation and readaptation measures, rather than on perceiving the parent only in terms of past deficits. With awareness of the objective, formal, and educational conditions in which work with the minor takes place, and analysing them through the lens of professional knowledge and experience, efforts should be made to support the maintenance of the relationship, to teach and raise awareness in both parent and minor, so as to facilitate—and sometimes enable—the process of returning to family life after leaving the institution. At the same time, it is essential to react when contact between parent and child produces negative effects, undermines resocialisation progress, or threatens the child's welfare. Threats to the minor's welfare arising from contact constitute grounds for judicial interference through restriction or prohibition.

Contact between a minor and a parent during a stay in a YEC (if it is formally possible)—and its quality—helps preserve bonds with the outside world and family, which is crucial for later relationships, support, and thus the effectiveness of readaptation. Such contact and work with the minor and parent (or through the parent's authority), may positively influence not only the desired change in the minor's functioning but also raise awareness and modify the family's fulfilment of its functions. Involving parents

in the resocialisation process through their contact with the minor and cooperation with them prevents passivity (learned helplessness), provides new competences, and enables them to take responsibility for the upbringing of the minor. The course of contact depends greatly on the knowledge and professionalism of YEC educators, pedagogues, and psychologists, their cooperation with other institutions (courts, probation, social services, schools), their ability to build educational relationships with the ward, and their skill in using the potential inherent in family contact. The minor's stay in the centre can be used not only for work with the child but also with the family, as part of the legally mandated cooperation with parents. This provides an opportunity to influence them, to shape how they conduct contact with the minor, by highlighting the importance of this contact for the next stages of the minor's and the family's life in the open environment, with full responsibility for their actions and omissions.

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