

**Dr Malgorzata Biedron
University of Wroclaw
Pedagogy Institute**

Parents' participation in leisure time activities of their preadolescent child.

Model approach.

A young person at the pre-adolescence stage of development is in many respects an independent and autonomous individual, however, the specificity of this developmental phase and yet not full emotional maturity makes parents take care of their daughter's or son's free time in a manner which is reasonable and adapted to concrete situations. Assuming that a person is a holistic bio-psychic unity one should make efforts that in the leisure time preadolescent could engage in activities which promote development of all spheres of his/her personality i.e. the biological, social and cultural. It seems obvious that fundamental parents' duty is ensure appropriate amount of free time and provide material means for leisure (equipment, financing participation in educational or recreational, sporting, cultural and artistic events). Despite undoubted benefits of spending free time together, parents should remember that adolescent is craving to fulfill need of emancipation from the direct supervision, therefore parents should create circumstances to undertake activities also together with peers. The freedom of choice in undertaken activities is a constructive feature of leisure time. Therefore, parents should allow a young person to come up with invention, ingeniousness, resourcefulness and independence in managing free time.

Parents have to limit their suggestions or interventions to situations which are essential from educational point of view. I believe that the most difficult task in this development level is to make a teenage see parents (both or separately) as still attractive partners for spending free time and

And make them want to spend part of the free time together with them. It is worth to highlight the fact that observed approaches on both sides demonstrate the general atmosphere of family life, condition and quality of intergenerational relations and result of all hitherto care and education activities. Finding the right balance between accompanying an adolescent child in free time act and justified separation becomes an important task for carers.

The survey carried out at the beginning of 2011, which covered 156 families, confirmed the regularity¹ which was determined in analogous surveys – key impact on the role of parents in organization of teenager's leisure have: education level of parents, workload and material standing of the family.² These factors create a syndromatic variable the components of which affect each other. Longitudinal studies prove that these factors show quite strong historical constancy. The pedagogic awareness and ability to support the development of an adolescent son or daughter is dependent on the education level of parents. The possessed cultural capital is handed over and multiplied in the intergenerational transfer. Knowledge and an appropriate system of values allow for overcoming difficulties in child care which arise from a heavier workload (efficient time management) and/or limited financial resources (efficient home budget management). Being charged with different duties (professional, family, social) determine the possibilities of finding time for individual leisure and for leisure spent together with a spouse. The material standing of the family affects the family life standard, i.e. satisfying basic livelihood needs (food, home, clothes etc.) and developmental aspirations the integral part of which is free time activity. However, it should be stressed that the latter to a similar degree depends on financial resources and system of values and accepted priorities which are clearly correlated with the education level. Some parents, will be feeling dissatisfied, and will concentrate on collecting material goods at the expense of free time and quality of family relations. Others, despite obstacles, will organize means which allow for organizing attractive free time activities which supports family, as a whole (system) and development of particular family members. High education level, moderate workload and good material standing, factors which create choice possibilities for free time activities but still not sufficient if present incidentally and when are not supported by the conviction on importance of reasonably planned leisure. Analysis of collected research material including the differentiating impact of the syndromatic variable allowed for determining three models of parents' participation and using free time: model of support and bilateral cooperation, model of paternalistic control and a separative model.

¹ M Biedroń, *Caring function of a metropolita family*, Published by Impuls, Kraków 2006

² For characteristics of formal education levels and categories of duty loads and material standing see the monograph by M. Biedroń, op. cit., s.

[M Biedroń, *Funkcja opiekuńcza rodziny wielkomejskiej*, Wyd. Impuls, Kraków 2006

² Charakterystyka poziomów wykształcenia formalnego oraz kategorie obciążenia obowiązkami i sytuacji materialno-bytowej znajduje się w monografii M. Biedroń, op. cit., s.]

Support and bilateral cooperation model.

In this model, fathers and mothers who boast high level of education, who with lesser workload, of diversified material standing and parents with secondary education assessing their financial standing as good and loaded with duties within acceptable levels were more numerous. Both spouses become equally involved in organization of a teenager's free time - depending on circumstances – complementing each other/exchanging activities (e.g. ensuring transport, care when presence of an adult is required, participation in visits in cultural centers, recreational and sporting activity etc.), or share the task. Intensification of sexual maturity processes, sexual awareness and typical ambivalence of attitudes towards opposite sex may cause more or less distancing or even rejection of one of the parents (in the case of boys – mother, in the case of girls – father), as an inappropriate companion for leisure activities. In the discussed group there were no incidents where a son or daughter distanced from a parent of the opposite sex in an open and radical manner. If there were any preferences concerning the company of one of them, the choice was driven by skills or predispositions, not sex. It seems obvious that an adolescent, a growing stronger and fitter boy will perceive his father as a good partner for sporting endeavours and a girl will choose her mother as a good companion for shopping for clothes, but still it is not a rule without exceptions. Analysis of research results concerning the free time which teenagers from the discussed group have at their disposal raise significant reservations. Almost 10% of girls and boys have, in accordance with hygienic standards, a 5-hour free time on school days at their disposal. Substantial majority declared that approximately 3.5 hours are at their disposal. The shortages were compensated for on days off school. Both parents and children put it down to school duties and additional classes (foreign languages education, additional classes on different subjects) in particular a vast amount of homework assigned by teachers. Almost all parents perceived the situation as inappropriate but at the same time concluded that they were helpless in this respect and they could not change the situation. Participation of parents in organization of free time of a teenager in this group was mainly performed by suggesting (proposing, convincing) activities which are beneficial for the development (in the case of less affluent families – finding activities which are not so costly), ensuring appropriate equipment, transport and care (in the case of families with a heavy workload the last element was the most challenging) and also a balanced personal participation in particular forms of activity. As regards children, the leisure activities mainly include out-of-doors activities. Parents stressed the fact that for children after being stuck in schools for many hours, movement and

activity are of utmost importance for „*body and psyche*”. Significant number of teenagers take part in different recreational and sporting events organized by educational institutions under the supervision of a professional instructor/carer. In parents’ opinion this form of activity combines three elements which in their opinion are significant, namely, possibility to let off physical energy and defuse stress, enhance specific abilities and ensure child care. For parents who are overloaded with professional duties such type of care gives them the feeling that the child is safe. Other popular forms of creative and expression activities comprise: dancing, acting, art, handicraft, literary writing. In parents’ opinion it is important that children develop their artistic sensitivity which helps them understand the world of material and non-material culture. Pre-adolescent children are characteristic for intense experiencing of different events of everyday life. Oftentimes social regime does not allow for instant letting off tensions therefore in parents’ opinion participation in this type of activities is quite often a “safety valve”. Apart from the activities undertaken in various institutions, parents appreciated the value of free time activities organized by informal peer groups in the neighbourhood. Thereby providing a discreet care over a teenager they refrained from exaggerated interference in activities and peer relations and even noticed benefits of contacts with individuals whose actions were contradictory to certain social and cultural standards. Parents’ statements prove that free activity within a peer group is a natural way for a young person to socialize, acquire social competences and a necessary element of social, cultural, psychical and emotional maturing. From educational point of view it is important that parents from the group were favourably inclined to have their son’s or daughter’s friend staying at their house. Even at the cost of commotion or mess, in their opinion it was worth getting to know their own child’s play mates “*in a natural way*”. Consent to such visit and involvement in preparations is a perfect way to show their children that their needs are treated seriously and that he/she is a full member of the family thus becoming an invaluable occasion to strengthen relations with their children.

In the coordinated cooperation model the aspect of joint leisure time of family members is interesting. Admittedly, statistically the model does not differ from the indicator of family leisure activities in the paternalistic model however; from the quality perspective the differences are enormous. Firstly, a wide variety of activities is in place, from joint excursions and everyday recreational and sporting activity, hobbies, participation in cultural events, watching films, TV programmes and social meetings. Secondly, a specific feature of joint leisure is that all members of the family without exception are involved in planning,

organization and realization. Thirdly, there were situations of „role-switching” when an adolescent boy or a girl acquired a role of a carer/expert/guide taking care of other members of the family. The intention of parents who become involved in this sort of situations is to create an atmosphere of closeness and unity while supporting development of independence of an individual, sense of authorship, active involvement in tackling various problems and definitely boost their self-esteem. Fathers and mothers signaled that their joint leisure time becomes a really difficult undertaking, carrying increased expenses but mainly due to rapidly changing needs and expectations of a young person which requires great ingenuity and logistic planning from parents. Activities which are undertaken among peers could be evaluated as extremely attractive while the same activities organized by parent could be perceived as dead boring. This is why parents’ statements often included phrases such as: *“we do not impose ourselves with our company”*, *“if he/she does not want we do not force it”*. Considering natural features for this developmental phase such as: irritability, imbalance between psychical mechanism of excitement and relaxation, increased criticism, negativism, ambivalent approach to adults, need of temporary isolation and loneliness, so it seems that acquiring the attitude of parents is the most efficient strategy all the more so because the need of separation in discussed cases does not become so serious that it arouses anxiety.

In my opinion the sphere of parental activities which rely on modern media in organizing leisure time activities is worth discussing. The survey confirms that it is an extremely popular method of spending free time for which it is hard to find equally attractive alternative and at the same time the weakest link of parental care. Surveyed parents indicated that it is very difficult for them to apply basic control over what their son or daughter is playing in or watching. Even though certain limitations concerning time or content are applied at home there is no certainty that the child will not violate the prohibition when he/she stays at home alone or is paying a visit to a friend whose parents are more liberal in this respect. Therefore parents’ ability to monitor this sphere of leisure time is greatly limited. Carers who took part in the interview admitted that they have a problem with the pressure of the environment, which they can not handle. Many parents who face this uncomfortable necessity assume a strategy of encouraging children to watch certain films, programmes or play certain computer games by showing them their senselessness and deprecating their intellectual, ethical level and explaining what is unreal in the presented „reality” by showing real consequences of characters’ actions. Other parents (usually the ones with less workload and/or more affluent) propose a range of alternative actions, to be selected by a teenager, incur additional costs

relating to for example purchase of new sport or hobby gear etc. Only in two homes parents did their best to create a special atmosphere and conditions for example by preparing TV snacks, comfortable seats and special fans' gear when the family were to watch a match or another sporting event. All the efforts are to make the time in front of TV special and the match or another event a topic of very often heated discussions. The inclination to computer games among teenagers (most frequently boys than girls) arouses the most concern among parents. Quite numerous negative opinions concerning the content and influence on the psycho-physical condition of an adolescent individual cause that carers, not always rightly, have skeptical approach to computer games. Merely a few fathers admitted that they love this sort of leisure activity and take part in it together with their teenage sons. However there were no instances that the time spent on surfing in the Internet and playing computer games exceeded 15 hours per week. On the other hand social portals attracted great interest and popularity of girls who eagerly would spend more time and attention unless parents' prohibitions (the average for this group amounted to approximately 10 hours per week). Statements of fathers and mothers who represent the bilateral cooperation model prove that in their opinion the best method of transferring attention and interest of a son or daughter to other activities than mindless, passive consumption of media or spending too many hours surfing in the Internet or chatting on social portals or playing computer games is to provide ideas and (what they increasingly stress) providing a good example. Correctness of this type of reasoning confirms that the theory of inheriting life style along with a number of surveys which indicate that the pattern-setting aspect of the family environment in shaping attitudes, convictions and preferences is of great influence.

Paternalistic control model.

The most dominant group in this model is represented by families with average education and financial standing, as well as with higher education, who share a level of workload within norm. A characteristic feature of the model is a relatively high number of unemployed mothers, in relation to mothers from other models. The majority of professionally active women devoted considerably less time to their professional responsibilities than their husbands did. For some women the high social status of motherhood and traditional understanding of family roles was a significant factor in resigning from their careers, and in consequence emphasis on upbringing of children and housekeeping. For others, focus on family matters becomes a compensation mechanism for satisfying one's need for self-realization. Typically in this model, teenagers were treated as very immature individuals,

unable to make autonomous decisions, as objects rather than subjects of care; whereas parents restrained their self-realization in order to provide better opportunities for their offspring. Despite the fact that parents were guided by noble motives, wanted to raise an "exemplary" boy or girl, and to protect them from the evil and danger of the metropolitan environment, it is hard to name such conduct differently than successive strengthening of teenagers' dependency on parents, creating attitudes of learnt helplessness, undermining self-confidence, and even depriving a young individual of his/her subjectivity. Similarly, as in the previously discussed model, both parents affirm their will to organize and participate in their child's leisure; however mothers are more active in this sphere. Poor involvement of fathers in children's leisure can be treated as a result of their intense preoccupation with professional duties. Significant element of parental care is ensuring that a young individual has sufficient time which can be spent in accordance with his or her interests. The considered group featured the biggest number of unsatisfied needs in this respect. Almost 80% of girls and boys admitted that during a week they do not have more than 3 spare hours at their disposal. On holidays and at weekends, although still smaller in comparison to other groups, this number increases significantly. A few reasons for this situation are revealed in statements of young respondents. According to the definition, activities taken during spare time should be of voluntary character. However, in case of this group it is not so. Parents play a dominant role in the development of this aspect of teenagers' lives. Guided by a conviction of superior value of intellectual development, they suggest or impose activities which have primarily educational purposes, concerning: acquisition of foreign languages, school subjects, music lessons, ballet, and less frequently sports. Combined with high amount of school duties, they create in a teenager a sense of a very limited amount of time for leisure and recreation. The doctrine of superiority of activities carried out in educational institutions, and foremost a sense of security of an immature son or daughter, makes parents intensify organizational efforts in such a way that most of the free time is spent in various facilities, under the guidance of teachers, instructors and tutors (one of the most preoccupied children participated in 5 additional classes which amounted to about 10 hours per week). Constant adult supervision, tasks conducted according to imposed scenarios, and limited children's choice, strengthens a sense of fatigue and insufficient spare time. Many girls and boys pointed out that they would like to remove such educational activities from their schedule, which suggests that those tasks should be excluded from the category of leisure and be rather qualified as additional duties. Parents' involvement, apart from the selection of additional activities, included financing, providing appropriate gear and equipment, but also support (preferably

personal) in a form of devoting time to waiting for a child to complete the activities. In the described model, parents do their best so that a child has an opportunity to take part in numerous cultural events. However, rarely can a teenager partake in any such event without adult supervision. This is understandable if a particular event, film screening, or performance is far from home, but if it takes place almost "across the street", direct supervision seems to be quite an exaggeration. Varied educational status of parents is reflected in the selection of activities. In intellectual circles, participating in specified forms of cultural transmission required rather high level of competencies and appealed more to expectations of parents than children. This could of course stimulate personal development of a young individual, but in a 11-year old child it could produce a sense of fatigue or even irritation. In families with average level of education the selection of content was sometimes even below the normative limits specified for this stage of development. Perhaps these were attractive and satisfactory forms for girls or boys, but they stimulated their biological, cultural and social development only in a limited way. Some of the children of the parents with average education status did not at all participate in any additional classes, and seldom visited cultural facilities stating that parents have no time for them, or that "nothing interesting is going on in the city". Possibly, parents did not have enough time or will to make proper selections, and their "helpless" child, for whom parents always made decisions, is unable to show initiative and passively awaits ideas from others. Differentiating influence of parents' education was also noticeable in terms of use of media in the organization of leisure. There is a clear polarization of attitudes of parents and teenagers in this respect. Children of intellectuals from the addressed model represented a group in which time spent on watching TV and using computer was the lowest in the whole population (7-8 hours per week). As indicated by the analysis of source materials, teenagers who were absorbed in other activities simply had no time for this.

Parents, who approached such free time organization with reluctance, not only used personal example but also produced alternative activities for teenagers, and laid down rather rigorous conditions for the use of media. It is contrary for reading of books and magazines. Most of girls and boys from this group declared books reading as one of their favourite forms of leisure (perhaps because of a lack of other forms) and named many titles, that were not on the school reading lists, as ones they have read recently. Even less wealthy parents willingly financed new books and spoke about their children's passion for reading with great satisfaction. The same holds true for certain types of magazines, or so called collector's magazines (e.g. on natural world, different historical periods, or with scale models etc.). A

few of them also declared interest in certain social and political articles, which they found in press read by their parents. Different image is presented by families with average level of education. As far as the use of media in the organization of free time is concerned, knowledge about time that teenagers devote to the media and what interests them is scarce. Apparently, parents who compulsively protect their children, see no harm or danger resulting from media transmissions. Children, without relevant limitations, can watch TV programmes even at night hours, as many of them have their own TV sets in their rooms and may use it even if the rest of the family members are asleep. It was a quite frequent habit for families to watch together different kinds of TV shows, series, fictional films and cartoons, analyze them, comment upon and quote them. Monitoring of computer games and time spent surfing in the Internet are some of the weakest points of parental care. Only a few parents stated they have installed filters preventing access to undesired websites, and even protected the computer with a password. Similarly, few admitted that they play computer games together with children, get excited about results, failures and successes. In their statements carers express a sense of guilt, but immediately they justify themselves by the fact that they devote so much time to children that they deserve some rest; they play down harmful influence of morally dubious content, or explain that "my son/daughter also deserves some kind of entertainment", and apart from that "everybody does that". Unfortunately, informal contacts with peers look equally bad.

Parents without hesitation allow their children to invite friends over, and even get involved in such visits. Children however have no possibility to invite whoever they want, as parents make selections and divide their friends into "appropriate" and "inappropriate" categories. During the visits, not even trying to be discrete they check on children, suggest activities, make comments and correct behaviours. As comments of young respondents indicate, such behaviour effectively discourages re-visits. It should be remembered that an individual in the period of pre-adolescence is highly sensitive to condescending and corrective actions of adults. Far more can be achieved by unconventional behaviour and jokes than by moralizing and instructing. The imperative of continuous monitoring of behaviour and treating teenagers as immature individuals, virtually without the ability to self-control, makes parents treat spontaneous leisure in the company of peers with reluctance. Sources of this reluctance listed by parents are both numerous and absurd. Statements suggested irrational concern about a son or a daughter, which effected in e.g. need for continuous "checks" by mobile phone, specific update on information on what one is doing and with whom, rigorous prohibition to go to certain places etc., suspecting without grounds that without monitoring, young people surely

take dangerous and/or immoral actions, groundless conviction about demoralizing influence of peers, and that time spent in the backyard is wasted time. Parents obviously do not realize or remember that restrictions on spontaneous free time activities, not only deprive a young individual of many priceless and essential experiences necessary for development, but also make leisure less pleasant and negate the concepts of free will and freedom of choice that are related to this aspect of life. Occasional trips outside of the city are used as a kind of compensation for activities on fresh air. In the discussed type, they constitute quite a popular form of family recreation. In fact, parents try to fill teenagers' free time with tasks that are at the same time pleasant and useful; however involvement of teenagers in planning and preparation is very minor or non-existent. Responses of parents concerning their image of free time spent with children led to interesting conclusions. They ascribe high value to it and see it as an opportunity to acquire knowledge about the world, getting to know oneself and each other, taking care of family bonds, but at the same time they treat it as their parental duty. Phenomenological analysis of statements suggests that the primary connotation that adult respondents ascribe to this activity is a duty, resulting from the fact of being a parent, a spouse, and only later as a way of recreation. It turns out that strong emphasis on teenagers spending their free time refining certain abilities, wisely organized, not affected by reckless activities which give no measurable outcome, suddenly caused the effect of a phenomenon that McCannell ironically called "utilization of free time", where spare time is carried out according to the rules of efficiency and effectiveness.³ Free time loses its hedonistic dimension and becomes a task.

Separative model.

The most numerous group in this model consists of parents with low and average education levels, declaring less favourable material situation or/and excessive workload. Work overload and poor material standing trigger subjective sense of injustice and social handicap in fathers and mothers. This condition makes them concentrate on their own generally understood need for rest, and keeping distance to the needs of children who generate additional stress and fatigue. In the researched type, we deal with traditional division of roles between a wife and a husband, thus almost the entire burden of taking care of children and housekeeping falls on the shoulders of a woman, who additionally performs professional duties. Limited personal

³ MacCannell, *The tourist. New Theory of the Leisure Class*, Warsaw 2005, p.15
[MacCannell, *Turysta. Nowa teoria klasy prężniaczej*]

responsibility for care and educational tasks consequently results in parents willingly letting grandparents, older siblings, far relatives, friends or educational facilities, carry out tasks related to organization of free time, or allowing their children to be entirely independent in that matter. As a part of organization of leisure, children manifest high level of self-reliance resulting from the fact that they could rarely depend on help and support of parents. In comparison with other models, relatively high amount of free time that boys and girls have (above 60% of children has 5 spare hours during school days) is not the result of intentional parental proceedings but rather lack of discipline in carrying out of school duties. Little involvement of carers in the recognition of locally offered ways of spending free time makes children's participation in organized forms of leisure relatively small. Financial difficulties pose additional problem which parents often do not recognize or which they do not see as something which needs to be overcome. Some children stated that they were forbidden to take part in activities as a form of punishment for poor grades at school. Empirical evidence revealed that this is rather a mere excuse, as said prohibition did not induce efforts to improve grades of a 5th year old pupil, neither mobilized carers to help the child. Almost 15% of the children participating in sports, dance, and musical or art classes uses charge-free forms proposed by a school, local cultural-educational facilities, parish, or owes that fact to the suggestions and funds of grandparents, older siblings or godfathers. In a few cases fathers and mothers did not even realize that a child participates in any classes at all. It is up to the invention of teenagers to decide how they fill their free time, and even their daily schedule, since it happened that without knowledge of carers they skipped school. Limited financial resources, no persons to provide suggestions or inspiration made recreation of boys and girls in the discussed type mainly focused on home and the closest environment. Many times I have highlighted values of a free play time spent with peers in a backyard area, but statements of young respondents expressively suggested that in their case, this freedom exceeded any reasonable limits, development norms, and even safety rules. It turns out that the awareness of almost complete lack of supervision negatively influenced by the social control atrophy, lead children not only to actions futile in a sense of development, but even pathological such as: aimless wandering around the city (at a considerable distance from home), sitting around in backyard gates or secret parts of backyards, stealing fruits from allotment gardens, risky and dangerous sports such as downhill biking from a steep hill, construction sites parkour, swimming in a pond in park etc., trying drugs, cigarettes and soliciting money. Such behaviour is really hard to consider as proper characteristics of autonomy and creativity of a teenager and definitely should provoke carers to take appropriate actions. However, parents

excused their evident pedagogical negligence stating that at the moment when a child goes out there are no other family members at home, or that it is pointless to ask what they are doing because child can always tell a lie. This absurd assumption reflects irregularities in relationships between parents and their children. If adults in advance assume a child will lie, they either lack confidence or by their own parental incompetence prove to a teenager that cheating is nothing wrong, but contrary, it can be used to satisfy parental curiosity. With all due respect towards individual subjectivity of a young individual, we can not give too much credit to his/her ability for self-control, risk evaluation, or anticipation of consequences, which even in reasonable girls and boys who act as a group may be replaced by recklessness and desire to impress others. Setting restrictions on activities and monitoring of their content does not undermine the said subjectivity⁴. Attitude of parents towards visits of friends is here different than in other types. Tolerance concerns mainly such situations when teenagers lock themselves in a room and do not disturb other family members. Satisfied parents did not inquire what their son or daughter was doing with friends. The sole fact that a child is at home and "does not wander around" was for them a proof of their parental competences, and the fact that "we is busy and do not disturb us" is satisfactory enough so that they wanted to sustain this state as long as possible. Carers, obviously feeling that such excuses are far from perfect again produced arguments of work overload, high level of stress and absolute necessity to relieve it and relax in peace and quiet, without children. They also highlighted that a daughter or a son can not invite friends over when no adults are at home, although responses of teenagers proved that this rule was regularly broken.

In the separative model, family recreation is often neglected. It is difficult to consider staying at the same place as a common activity. From time to time, family leisure was organized in such a way to please all family members. Usually one side found that time as wasted. It should be noted that rare activities of a family as a whole resulted not only from a tendency for separation of parents and children, but also separation in terms of sex. Deeply rooted stereotype which divided tasks and entertainments on male and female often made it hard to find satisfactory compromise between needs of individual family members.

Children from this group rarely visited culture promotion facilities. No inspiration from parents aided with limited financial resources caused that virtually one and only place where teenagers went apart from mandatory school outings was a cinema. The choice of genres was rather narrow and disorderly, most often suggested by peers and at best limited by official age

⁴ J.C. Dobson, *Rules Are Not for Cowards*, Warsaw 1993
[J.C. Dobson, *Zasady nie są dla tchórzy,*]

restrictions. Participation of boys and girls in cultural activities is basically a mirror image of patterns provided by parents. Key factors are unlimited and uncontrolled TV shows and spending many hours in front of a computer screen viewing favourite sites, chatting and playing games. This is also the most popular way of spending "common" free time in this group. It happened that children and parents fought over a choice of TV channel or access to a computer. This could lead to conflicts or even family fights. Both carers and children find it satisfactory when one of the family members has his own TV set or a computer, as then "nobody disturbs anyone, and everyone can do as they please". Apart from the fact that parental control in such conditions becomes a fiction, it is an evidence of deep atrophy of family bonds and dangerous isolation of individual members of this micro community.

Pattern-setting family influence is reflected also in a taste for reading books. Almost 2/3 of teenagers from the studied model did not read anything from outside of school reading list; the rest read at most one additional book during the last two months. Parents in their declarations argue that they value this form of cultural activity and acquiring knowledge about the world. In fact, they even provide their sons and daughters with various publications, but without own-example they are unable to awake a passion for reading in them. In some families, beautifully published albums, guides, atlases, and works of literature are treated as mere decoration and a way of raising prestige, however their usage is minimal. Children aim primarily at easy to read adventure and travel stories and novels of matters describing events and moral problems typical for adolescence; comic books and youth magazines are equally popular but their content is of dubious intellectual value.