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Role of the family in the socialisation of children: Relevant sociological research in Hungary[**]

ABSTRACT: The number of children in Hungary has been steadily decreasing in the recent decades, which poses serious demographic challenges for the country. According to the latest statistics, the decrease in the number of children is not only a consequence of the relatively low number of births, but is also related to the aging of the population and the changing values among young people.

The socialization and rights of children are closely related to the family environment, educational institutions and social interactions. The socialization of children begins in the family, where the parent-child relationship plays a fundamental role in the development of the personality. Family parenting styles, such as supportive or authoritarian approaches, have a significant impact on children's socialization processes and their later quality of life.

The protection of children's rights is also crucial during socialization processes. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes the rights of children, including the right to freedom of expression, the right to family life and the provision of an appropriate educational environment.

During the process of family socialization, children learn social behaviors not only from the close family environment, but also from broader family relationships, which are particularly emphasized in large families. In large families, children can see more examples, which enriches their socialization experiences and helps them develop social skills.

Family customs, patterns and norms, from religiosity to financial decision-making, also have a significant impact on children's future lives. In addition, family socialization affects not only children's development, but also interactions between families and social structures. During family life education, children learn how social relationships work and how to navigate

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different social situations. In large families, shared experiences and family traditions further strengthen family identity, which plays a decisive role in their later (adult) lives.

KEYWORDS: family, socialisation, children, Roma, social situation.

1. Introduction: Family as a starting point

The transformation of family life in Europe can be linked to a decline in the propensity to have children. Following the baby boom of the 1950s, fertility rates fell dramatically in the 1960s. This led to a shift in European societies from large and multigenerational families to families with two or fewer children and one generation. Thus, the number of children also decreased, and the socialisation processes within the family went in new directions. Through research on sibling relationships, we can observe different shifts in emphasis on the number of children and family dynamics.

Family is the most basic, intimate, and dynamic unit of social organisation. It is within the family - the primary socialising environment - wherein parents pass on, intentionally and unintentionally, what they believe in and what their parents believed in. The family structure, family roles, and family life have undergone significant changes in different parts of the world over the past decades and are expected to continue to evolve (global family change). Childbearing trends increasingly show that childbearing intentions are approaching the rate needed to maintain the population (2.1) at the global level; however, targeted government family policies can both encourage and discourage these intentions. In Hungary, there has been no decline in childbearing plans in recent decades, as young people continue to plan to have at least two children, which is key to the survival of the society. Most young families are planning to have two children; that is, they plan to ensure their child has at least one sibling. This is encouraging and can be observed from the surveys on the total number of planned children. In fact, in addition to the children they already have, Hungarian families are planning to have 2.1 to 2.4 more children.[1] Further research confirms that

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[1] Fűrész–Székely, 2019; Kapdebo, Papházi and Tárkányi, 2022; A tervezett gyermekek számának alakulása a 2010-es években, 2019. február, [Online]. Available at: https://www.koppmariaintezet.hu/docs/KINCS_tervezett_gyermekek_ szamanak_alakulasa_20190211_v2.pdf (Accessed: 18 September 2024); OECD Family Database (2016) SF2.2: Ideal and actual number of children [Online]. Available at:

people desire harmonious relationships and families, but individual life situations can create different family formations, so the evolution of family life has become complicated and diversified. In many cases, not only free choice but also circumstances and societal expectations play a major role. Nevertheless, family life, in a heterosexual marriage, is still the most recognised and desired form of coexistence and the most important for the physical and spiritual growth of children.[2]

2. Research on children in social and family studies

Socialisation of children within the family context is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors, including parenting styles, family cohesion, cultural identity, and socioeconomic status. Research has consistently shown that positive family dynamics play a crucial role in shaping children's social competencies and emotional well-being. A significant aspect of family socialisation is the impact of positive parenting and family cohesion.

Research has highlighted that supportive family environments foster social self-efficacy in children, which is linked to better social competence and reduced problem behaviours, such as aggression and violence, during childhood and adolescence.[3] This assertion is echoed by Khan, who emphasised the critical role families play in socialising children with autism spectrum disorder, noting that family dynamics can significantly influence the development of social skills in these children.[4] Furthermore, the emotional atmosphere within the family has been shown to correlate positively with the development of social skills, indicating that nurturing environments are essential for healthy socialisation.[5] Cultural socialisation has also emerged as a vital component in the family context, particularly among minority groups.

Williams discussed how mothers' cultural socialisation practices serve as protective factors against sociocultural risks, thereby influencing their children's internalising behaviours.[6] This aligns with the findings of

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https://www.oecd.org/els/family/SF_2_2-Ideal-actual-number-children.pdf (Accessed: 18 September 2024).

[2] Engler, Markos and Major, 2024.

[3] Leidy et al., 2012, pp. 3–13.

[4] Khan, 2015.

[5] Bagherabadi, Nikpeyma and Pashaeypoor, 2020.

[6] Williams, 2023.

Arakelyan and Ager,[7] who asserted that strong family ties and positive parent-child relationships provide essential support for children's psychosocial well-being, particularly in refugee contexts. Such cultural and emotional support systems are crucial for children to navigate their social environments effectively. Moreover, socioeconomic factors significantly affect family socialisation processes. Li et al. indicated that positive family social capital mediates the effects of poverty on children's mental health, suggesting that supportive family interactions can mitigate anxiety and depression.[8] This is particularly relevant in the context of families facing social risks, as highlighted by Gudzinskiene and Augutavičius, who noted that children from families affected by substance abuse often experience significant social and emotional challenges.[9] The interplay between socioeconomic status and family structure further complicates the socialisation process, as evidenced by studies showing that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may have less access to enriching social experiences.[10]

Family life cycles[11] play a significant role in the balanced functioning of a family, with family dynamics and composition changing over time. These changes can be understood in a structured manner in the so-called family life cycles. As the life cycle progresses, family status changes, previous roles are lost, and new roles are created. In many cases, the loss of a role, learning, and taking up of a new role are seen as crises in a family's life.[12]

A family is a dynamic unit that changes and evolves over time. Besides traditional causal relationships, professionals can help understand many phenomena by observing the interaction of individual behaviours and phenomena, characteristics of the relationships between family members, and communication that maintains the dysfunction. The family system is a unit with clearly recognisable and specific characteristics, a defined way of functioning, and rules. The patterns that emerge during long-term coexistence affect the autonomy and emotional relationships of family members, determine their possibilities for action and adaptability, and shape

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[7] Arakelyan and Ager, 2020.
[8] Li et al., 2018.
[9] Gudzinskiene and Augutavičius, 2018.
[10] Hjern et al., 2000.
[11] Duvall, 1957; Rodgers, 1962.
[12] Aldous, 1990.

their perceptions of themselves and their personal relationships. Therefore, they naturally affect children's development. The concept of the family life cycle is a framework for thinking about how a family functions in terms of cultural and social norms. For example, acceptable or unacceptable behaviour in a given family is undoubtedly determined by cultural expectations at all stages of the family's life. Biological development can also provide clues to help us understand how parenting and children are related.

Based on the results of Cunningham,[13] it can be stated that the parent of the same gender as the child has a greater influence on the formation of the child's opinion. Therefore, does the attitude towards the division of labour according to gender—based on data from the British Household Panel for 1994–2010 on British children aged 11–15 years—his attitude towards the division of labour according to gender.

In recent decades, the increase in relationship fragility and the need to form new relationships has brought about changes in both children's family life trajectories and family relationships. In Hungary, most children (66%) in the new millennium continue to live with two blood parents for the first 14 years of their lives, but this proportion is decreasing. Compared to 1990–2002, the proportion of children raised by their mother alone for a shorter or longer period increased from 28% to 34% during 2003–2015, and the proportion of children raised by a foster father until the age of 15 years increased from 15% to 18%.[14]

Parental relationships are more likely to break up if the partners were cohabiting at the time of the child's birth rather than if they were married. Parents who marry after cohabitation are more likely to divorce than those who marry without cohabitation (an increasingly smaller group). The analysis by Murinkó and Spéder also shows that, since 1990, 5–6% of children in Hungary were born to a mother who did not cohabit with her partner in a single-parent family.[15] The same study mentioned that the family structure between conception and birth showed more changes than expected: 64% and 53% of unpartnered mothers moved in with their partner at conception during 1990–2002 and 2003–2015, respectively. Among expectant mothers who were unmarried, 45% and 21% were married at the time of pregnancy during 1990–2002 and 2003–2015, respectively.

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[13] Cunningham, 2001.
[14] Murinkó and Spéder, 2021.
[15] Ibid.

Changes in children's marital status are associated with mothers' educational attainment; children of more educated mothers experience both single-parent and tandem family situations at lower rates and for shorter periods of time than do children of less educated mothers. The main results of recent research on family sociology and children are presented, with a focus on COVID-19.[16]

3. Family types and the dynamics of family definition

The share of marriage-based families in all family types was still close to three-quarters in 2001, but after another 10 years, it fell by 10 percentage points to 65% and has hardly changed since then. At the time of the 2016 micro-census, married couples with children accounted for 35% of all families, compared to 38% of families in 2011 and 45% in 2001. In 2016, 29% of the families were headed by couples without children, which was the second-most common family type. No children does not necessarily mean childlessness; it simply excludes children who have already left the family nest.[17] The traditional family structure in Hungary is illustrated by the fact that, in the first decade of the new millennium, the share of families based on marriage decreased significantly, while the share of families with household types other than marriage, such as cohabiting relationships or single-parent families, and the share of single-parent families increased significantly.[18]

The pluralisation of family definitions has been observed in European societies in recent decades. In Hungary, a 2021 survey continued to investigate the presence of the traditional (conservative) family concept, although different views on certain family types were found, especially by age group, household type, region, and religiosity.[19] It can be said that the society prefers a family to a couple relationship, regardless of its type, and one that includes children, as opposed to a childless family.

For example, international research on the sociology of education and the family is scarce, especially in the field of twins. On the other hand, we can conclude that the situation in twin families is unique since the

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[16] Chambers and Garcia, 2021; Feinberg et al., 2022; Fong and Iarocci, 2020.
[17] Engler and Pári, 2022.
[18] Vörös and Kovács, 2013.
[19] Gyorgyovich and Pári, 2023.

socialisation of children born together is different from that of single-born children.[20]

The size of the family and learning opportunities of twins[21] are reflected differently in each family type, and twins use their special situation as capital in the Bourdieuian sense.[22] A Dutch comparative study also examined Hungary. According to the Dutch researchers, in Hungary, a larger family is associated with fewer opportunities for children to learn, as parents' attention to children decreases and the average level of education increases for siblings who are close in age.[23] A study in Sub-Saharan Africa[24] found a negative and significant relationship between the number of siblings and educational attainment of families with four to five children. In families with fewer or more children, the effect is negative but not significant. Parental background of twins is a determinant of socioeconomic factors among siblings, especially for high educational attainment.[25]

4. Day care and assessment of young children

According to official Hungarian statistics, the proportion of children enrolled in nurseries as a proportion of the population aged under three years has been gradually increasing since 2017, with 18.1% of the population aged under three years attending nurseries by 2022. In Hungary, there are four types of crèches, and in 2022, 50,720 children were enrolled in one of the four crèche types, 3,603 more than in the previous year.[26] In total, 928 traditional crèches, 334 mini-craderies, 1,086 family crèches, and 12 workplace crèches provided day care for young children. Of the total number of children in crèches, 1,008 had special educational needs. As in previous years, the number of day-care places increased in 2022, helping women re-enter the labour market. In 2021 there were 52,822 day-care places available as nurseries, and in 2022, there were 55,370, an increase of 19% over five years.

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[20] Métneki and Pári, 2020.
[21] Downey, 1995.
[22] Hegedűs et al., 2014.
[23] Eijck and De Graaf, 1995.
[24] Kuepie and Tenikue, 2012.
[25] Grätz, Lang, and Diewald, 2022., Pári and Engler, 2024.
[26] Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) (2022) Kisgyermekek napközbeni ellátása, [Online]. Available at: https://www.ksh.hu/s/helyzetkep-2022/#/kiadvany/kisgyermekek-napkozbeni-ellatasa (Accessed: 10 February 2024).

In May 2023, the Maria Kopp Institute for Demography and Families (KINCS) conducted a survey on the responsibilities and roles of parents and teachers in the upbringing, education, and protection of children.[27] According to the Hungarian adult population, the responsibility for ensuring a balanced living environment for children lies primarily with the closest family members. The roles of mothers (94%) and fathers (88%) were overwhelmingly considered paramount. The importance of the grandmothers' and grandfathers' roles was agreed upon by 65% and 58% of the respondents, respectively. The importance of primary and nursery schoolteachers in ensuring children's living conditions was considered high by 50% of the respondents for each. Approximately 45% of the respondents believed that secondary and upper secondary teachers were also responsible for ensuring children's balance. Professionals responsible for extra-curricular activities (40%) and distant relatives (36%) were in last place. The younger the respondent, the less important the role of teachers in ensuring children's well-being.

Most Hungarian adults believe that mothers (95%) and fathers (89%) play the greatest role in protecting their children, followed by older siblings (77%). According to respondents, grandparents (grandmothers: 75%; grandfathers: 68%) also play a significant role in protecting children. According to most respondents, nursery schoolteachers (68%), lower secondary schoolteachers (68%), upper secondary schoolteachers (63%), and secondary schoolteachers (61%) all play a role in protecting children. The younger the age group, the higher the proportion of respondents who considered the role of teachers working with children of that age to be important.

5. Public opinion on child protection

In a recent Eurobarometer survey, 73% consider online child sexual abuse to be a widespread or very widespread problem, and 92% agree that children are increasingly at risk online. The circulation of online child sexual abuse materials and cases of "grooming" (manipulating children into sexual abuse) have both been rising at an alarming rate. On average, most respondents from the European Union (EU; 82%) agreed that tools such as parental

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[27] A szülők és pedagógusok felelőssége a gyermekek nevelésében, [Online]. Available at: https://www.koppmariaintezet.hu/images/docs/A_szulok_es_pedagogusok_felelossege_a_g yermekek_neveleseben.pdf (Accessed: 28 November 2024).

control were not sufficient to keep children safe online. Moreover, 78% of the Europeans interviewed tended to support or strongly support the European Commission's proposal to fight child sexual abuse.[28]

A previous public opinion study[29] focused on the rights of the child and showed that 79% of the respondents (aged 15–18 years) believed that when children need help to defend their rights, they encounter problems as they do not know how to go about it and whom to contact, and 76% believed that children are not aware of their rights. More than 85% of the respondents thought that providing more information to children about their rights and providing more support to organisations working in the field of protecting children's rights should be priorities in Europe. Further, 83% of respondents were also very supportive of actions to promote children's rights in countries outside Europe. Making a missing child alert system operational throughout the EU and involving children more in defining policies that concern them were considered actions that should be prioritised by 80% and 73% of respondents, respectively. The survey revealed that the main concerns of young European citizens were violence against children and sexual exploitation.[30]

6. Results of research on children's rights

The rights of the child are not abstract concepts but a set of conditions necessary for the development, fulfilment, and protection of children in the society, in not only theory but also practice. These foundations were laid in the 1989 United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, which became effective in Hungary under Act LXIV of 1991. According to the UN Convention, the family is the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members, especially children, who should receive the necessary protection and assistance to enable them to fully carry out their future responsibilities within the community and grow up in a happy, loving, and understanding family environment, which is necessary for the full and harmonious development of their personalities. Therefore, children have the

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[28] European Commission - Eurobarometer (2023) Protection of children against online sexual abuse, [Online]. Available at: https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2656 (Accessed: 02 February 2024).

[29] European Commission - Eurobarometer (2008) The rights of the child, [Online]. Available at: https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/698 (Accessed: 02 February 2024).

[30] Ibid.

right to be cared for by their parents, and protecting and supporting the families to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities should be a priority for all countries.[31] Nevertheless, we can see challenges in, for example, Spain and Italy regarding children's rights and policies.[32]

The Bill of Fundamental Rights of the Child recognises the innate dignity of the human person and considers the fundamental human rights, which are enshrined in the context of the right of all to exercise them without discrimination or distinction. It also recognises and affirms that the harmonious development of a child's personality requires that he or she grow up in a happy, loving, and understanding family environment. It also points out that there are children in particularly difficult circumstances in all countries of the world and that it is necessary to pay special attention to them.

The Hungarian law defines the term "family." In addition to the Fundamental Law, the Act on the Protection of Families stipulates that raising children in a family is safer than any other option.[33] In Hungary, Act LXXXIV of 1998 on Family Support was promulgated on 24 December 1998 and entered into force on 1 January 1999.

> Its significance is shown by the fact that it replaced the previous legislation introduced in the Bokros package, which made family allowances dependent on the income of family members... The Act stated the principle that all children are of equal value to society, i.e. all children who are supported by their parents in their own household are entitled to benefits under the same conditions, regardless of their income and wealth.[34]

Several other jurisprudential approaches to Hungarian children's rights have been published.[35] There is also a specific approach that traces the legal situation of children with special educational needs and concludes that the

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[31] Gellérné, 2021a; Llorente and Gas-Aixendri, 2022.
[32] Fernández-Arrojo et al., 2020.
[33] Barzó, 2021, p. 295.
[34] Dani and Kottáné, 2018, p. 23.
[35] Benyusz, 2021a; Gellérné, 2021b; Lux, 2018; Lux, 2022.

fundamental rights of these children are implemented "on paper," but the material and personal conditions of their care leave much to be desired.[36]

Three EU strategy documents on children's rights address child protection[37] include the European strategy for a child-friendly internet,[38] the Commission recommendation on investing in children,[39] and the Commission communication on the protection of migrant children.[40] The cornerstone of the EU child rights rules is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was 30 years old in 2019.[41] The anniversary was a wake-up call regarding the extent to which the developing and developed world is lagging behind in the realisation of children's rights, in terms of both basic survival needs and gaps in children's rights.

Children should certainly not be a buffer, in either family relationships, which are the primary source of protection, or in legal or political disputes between the EU and Member States or between Member States themselves.[42] The European Commission has committed to children's rights at the level of strategy, but the power to implement most of the measures with the potential to make a real difference lies with the Member States, and the strategy therefore risks being ineffective in the absence of a real commitment from Member States.

7. Changes in children's rights during the pandemic (Children's Rights Report for 2020 to 2022)

In the area of children's rights, the major themes in 2020 were the issues of the pandemic, exclusion, sexual abuse, and exploitation. The pandemic highlighted that some children's rights can easily conflict with each other in crisis situations.[43]

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[36] Lux, 2020.
[37] Benyusz, 2021b.
[38] EUR-Lex, 2012.
[39] EUR-Lex, 2013.
[40] EUR-Lex, 2017.
[41] UNICEF, 1990.
[42] Benyusz, 2021b.
[43] Fodor, 2021.

Several discriminatory provisions have been adopted,[44] and important progress has been made in the areas of sexual exploitation of children and protection of victims of violence.

Legislative measures mainly concerned education, primarily because of the shift to digital education. However, little of the legislation concerned the family environment and it did not respond to the call from the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights to protect children from violence in relation to this risk situation. In the spring of 2020, students, their parents, and teachers had a total of one weekend to switch to digital technology outside the classroom—without any meaningful technical, methodological, or data protection support.

An important step was the July 2020 amendment to the Public Education Act, which extended the right to free primary and secondary education to all pupils up to the age of 18 years. Additional guarantees, including free access for children with multiple disadvantages and special educational needs, were added. The amendment also introduced the institution of a school guard, which had been the subject of protests.

Important and long-awaited changes were made to domestic legislation on child sexual abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. The 2020–2023 National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings pays special attention to victims aged under 18 years, and the amendment package promulgated by Act V of 2020 considers persons aged under 18 years who are involved in prostitution activities as victims rather than perpetrators. Thrice as many children were involved in relationship violence in 2020 than the previous year (27 in 2019 and 81 in 2020). The number of crimes against children also increased significantly, with nearly 500 more cases (6,310) being prosecuted. The third most common crime against children aged 0–13 years was sexual violence.

The government placed particular emphasis on family protection. In the context of the fight against COVID-19, the family action plan was extended to include more support. Moreover, there have been extensions to the emergency eligibility, Családi Otthonteremtési Kedvezmény (CSOK)[45] for house purchases, baby loans that are free use loans, interest-free loans, car purchase subsidies, and grandparent allowances. The new minister

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[44] Such as 9th Amendment to the Hungarian Constitution, ratification of the Istanbul Convention, and difficulties in adoption.

[45] CSOK is translated as the Family Housing Subsidy and is based on the Government decree No. 16 of 2016 and Government decree No. 17 of 2016.

appointed by the prime minister in September, who does not have a portfolio for families, also promised a second family action plan.

By 2021, 365,000 children received the COVID 19 vaccine. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of child psychiatric cases increased by autumn 2021, with an increase in self-harm and suicide attempts.[46] Teenage pregnancies, although decreasing year on year, remained a major problem. In 2020, 1,800 new-borns had a mother aged 14–17 years at birth.

The pandemic also pushed many personal activities online, resulting in children spending even more time in front of screens than before. While the number of sports halls increased from 1,279 in 2011 to 1,357 in 2020), the number of pupils participating in school sports clubs fell by a quarter, and the number of pupils participating in school sports clubs fell by almost half compared with 2010.

Many studies have already been conducted on the situation of Roma children, and the main conclusion is that they are not discriminated against only in education.[47] A disproportionate number of Roma children come to the attention of child welfare centres and guardianship authorities, and they are the most likely to be removed from their families, while reintegration is difficult, lengthy, and often no longer a priority for public actors.[48]

In recent years, progress has been made in improving the provision of crèche services; however, these services are still lacking in small villages. This report also draws attention to the selective nature of the institutional system. It highlights that there are few facilities for disadvantaged children, and there is lack of provision for children with special needs. Many institutions are unable to provide care to children with long-term illnesses or disabilities because of a shortage of qualified professionals.

In the 2023/2024 school year, the number of pupils with special educational needs increased more than ever, by 5,277 pupils. According to data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) or Központi

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[46] Children's Rights Report (2021) [Online]. Available at: https://www.canva.com/design/DAFAmRxVAMI/wUhgVaqwqTBVowOOChPYAA/view?website#2:vezet-i-sszefoglal (Accessed: 02 February 2024).

[47] Elekes, 2022; Farkas, 2007; Kozma, Pusztai and Torkos, 2003, Kende and Neményi, 2006; Óhidy, Sheila and Alina, 2022.

[48] ERRC, 2007.

Statisztikai Hivatal (KSH),[49] while the 2022/2023 school year had 99,588 pupils, the 2023/2024 school year comprised 104,865 pupils.

According to the Children's Rights Report, the interrogation of child victims of crime is becoming more child friendly, which was an improvement compared to previous years.[50] Instead of the police, children can be interviewed by a forensic psychologist or counsellor. Moreover, hearing and therapy centres have been established in several cities. There is also greater emphasis on helping children who have been trafficked. No offence of prostitution can be prosecuted against trafficked children, and the offence of child pornography has been amended.

The Constitutional Court ruled that the determination of school readiness is primarily based on parental rights. In 2021, the concept of a child or pupil in long-term care was included in the Public Education Act under the category of pupils requiring special attention. A Disability Advisory Network was also established.

One of the most important new norms affecting children's rights, which came into force in 2022, concerned children's right to participate and express their views in a very important area: the settlement of parental custody and the placement of children with third parties.[51] In response to the current situation, several laws were adopted in 2022. On the one hand, they focus on the residence in Hungary, institutional boarding, education, participation in school-leaving examinations, and coordination of care for children seeking asylum because of the war with Ukraine. On the other hand, as this is the public education sector, in February, the powers of school guards were extended, their training systems and qualification conditions were modified, and the temperature of institutions was capped during the winter season.

In 2022, important legislative changes were also made regarding certain issues related to adoption, such as paternity leave, and 10 days' leave could also be applied to situations other than adoption; they also included mandatory adoption counselling and participation in a voluntary adoption course. In January 2022, the government decreed the allocation of advance

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[49] Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) (2024) 23.1.1.6. Sajátos nevelési igényű gyermekek, tanulók száma fogyatékosság-típus szerin [Online]. Available at: https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/okt/hu/okt0006.html (Accessed: 19 November 2024).

[50] Children's Rights Report (2021) [Online]. Available at: https://www.canva.com/design/DAFAmRxVAMI/wUhgVaqwqTBVowOOChPYAA/view?website#2:vezet-i-sszefoglal (Accessed: 02 February 2024).

[51] Ibid.

tax refunds for private individuals raising children. At the end of the year, the 424/2022. (X. 28.) Government decree reduced the personal income tax base for mothers aged under 30 years, thus further expanding the range of benefits related to childbearing.

According to the 2022 Children's Rights Report, by 31 December 2021, 110,750 children were registered as at risk, and 27,229 children were taken into protection. Most children registered as at risk lived in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, which is eight times as many as those in in Vas county, where the fewest at-risk children were registered. In 2022, the number of registered crimes committed by children (aged 0–13 years) increased somewhat.

The 2022 report also touched on the fact that the number of underage children raised in child protection care continued to rise; on 31 December 2022 14,035 of the 21,172 children were living with foster parents. In 2022, more than 1,500 children aged under 12 years lived in children's or residential homes, which also included children aged under 3 years living in specialised care; 332 lived in children's homes, of which 151 were infants aged 0–12 months.

Foster parents are raising more and more children. Starting from the number of 2.00 children in 2001 (i.e. two children on average per foster care family), it rose to 2.70 by 2021. The average age of foster parents was 52 years, and more than one-third of them belonged to the 51–60-year age group.

The number of children with special educational needs is increasing; however, there are not enough specialists. An extraordinary increase was observed in the 2021/2022 school year, which did not stop in the 2022/2023 school year. According to the KSH data, these children's number exceeded 100,000 last year. There were approximately 1,000 more children with special educational needs in kindergartens and primary schools than in the previous year (11,578 in kindergartens and 59,698 in primary schools).

The 2022 report highlighted that roughly 2 million people fleeing Ukraine crossed the Hungarian border in 2022, but only 33,273 applications for recognition as asylum seekers were submitted, of which 28,908 were granted by the General Directorate of Immigration. Nearly half of the applicants (15,096) were children. At the end of the 2021/2022 academic year, the Office of Education registered 2,270 Ukrainian citizens in its public education system.

8. Some examples of the role of education

Helping children in their studies and paying special attention to them—through, for example, individual attention by teachers and parents—also determines their personality development.[52]

A Mexican survey[53] further reinforced the research finding that parents largely determine their children's academic results, and research has proven that provision of learning support at home has a much greater impact than parental involvement at school. Among the Latino community, parents most commonly try to help their have a better vision for the future. Of course, parental involvement depends on several children do well in school and thus fit into society better, as well as factors, as there are parents who do not consider it important for students to participate in their school performance. The level of parental involvement also depends on parents' education: parents with higher education consider it more important to support their children at home or school than those with lower qualifications.

Based on this research, it can be said that, to a certain extent, expectations have a positive effect on both socialisation and performance, but if they are implemented in an exaggerated manner, they will have the same effect on students as in the case of shame and pressure from parents. The research also stated regarding these issues that it is worth considering students' individual characteristics, such as personality, temperament, age, and gender. Moreover, the cultural background should be considered along with family roles (e.g. "Because of my parents' self-sacrifice, I have to do my best in school.").

The study[54] also mentions the role of teachers: a less supportive teacher can reduce students' performance; teachers' negative attitudes towards Latin American students can be overcome by implementing teacher-parent dialogue and culturally sensitive education, while considering parents' culture, mother tongue, and ethnic-racial experiences; and organising workshops can strengthen the relationship between family and school.

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[52] Engler, Kozek and Németh, 2020; Pusztai et al., 2024.
[53] Cross et al., 2019.
[54] Ibid.

9. Results of Roma-focused research on the disadvantaged situation

Parents and children reading together has a positive effect on children's development. A Portuguese study[55] administered questionnaires on reading at home to Roma and low-income non-Roma preschool parents. The regression analysis showed that the mother's education, her child's educational aspirations, and nonformal involvement in preschool events had a positive effect on the frequency of reading at home. From this point of view, ethnicity was not important; therefore, similar results were obtained between Roma and non-Roma but low-status families. Thus, it can be concluded that members of both groups face similar challenges regarding reading at home, which is why introduction of good practices in the future can have a beneficial effect on them. The authors concluded that the involvement of parents in preschool activities has a positive effect on children's cognitive development, especially for small children.

Hungarian education data show that the Hungary's population has at most a basic education. Low education levels result in an unfavourable labour market status and are often associated with other social and economic disadvantages. From the student's point of view, leaving school early is called a dropout. Signs of the risk of dropping out appear earlier, mostly because of the deterioration of academic results. The dropout rate in vocational secondary schools is higher than other secondary educational institutions, but it also appears at the elementary school level.[56] According to research, in Hungary, the proportion of those at risk of dropping out is the highest at 25% among seventh graders, 20% among eighth graders, and 18% among fifth and sixth graders; overall 18% of the grades could be characterised as such. The proportion of boys at risk of dropping out was higher than that of girls in all grades in 80% of the institutions. Since students studying in catch-up settlements are at high risk of dropping out, it is important to create programmes to help them, especially male students, stay in school.[57] Another study[58] found that it has little influence on actual decisions about which schools children go to. In general, Roma children performed significantly worse on the tests than non-Roma children in all examined areas.

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[55] Ferreira et al., 2021.
[56] Trásy, 2023, p. 136.
[57] Ibid. p. 138.
[58] Kende and Neményi, 2006.

A study[59] looked for the answer to how home learning and family relationships developed in the online framework re-imposed by the quarantine in 2020, focussing on disadvantaged students and their families. Fourth grade students from disadvantaged family backgrounds typically live in smaller settlements and worse financial conditions, and their parents have a lower level of education.

Berényi[60] examined the intricate dynamics of educational selection processes and their implications for social inequality in the Hungarian educational system. The study focussed on the entrance examination preparation period, which spans nearly a year, and emphasised how this prolonged process exacerbates existing disparities among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The study argued that the structure of the entrance examination system is inherently biased, favouring students who have access to resources that facilitate better preparation. These include private tutoring, educational materials, and parental support, which are often more readily available to families from the higher socioeconomic strata. Consequently, students from disadvantaged backgrounds face significant hurdles in competing for places in prestigious grammar schools, leading to a cycle of educational inequality that is difficult to break. The analysis[61] extends to the broader implications of social selection in education, suggesting that the current system perpetuates a stratified society in which educational attainment is closely linked to socioeconomic status. The findings underscore the need for policy reforms aimed at creating a more equitable educational landscape in which access to quality education is not determined by socioeconomic background. In conclusion, a critical examination of Hungary's early selective grammar school system reveals how the mechanisms of social selection contribute to entrenched educational inequalities.

According to data collected during attendance education, disadvantaged children spend slightly less of their free time on reading, free play, and activities that develop fine motor skills; rather, they use their mobile phones and tablets more and spend more time in front of the computer. In addition, according to their parents, they spend more time studying than their peers and receive slightly more help from their parents,

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[59] Engler et al., 2022.
[60] Berényi, 2022.
[61] Ibid.

yet their school results lag behind those of their peers. Therefore, parental attention and effort do not compensate for students lagging behind.

Parents make a significant effort to ensure that their children keep up with their peers, both during attendance and distance education. Joint family activities and conversations have proven to be authoritative, and family relationships and the atmosphere can be said to be harmonious, even in times of isolation, in most families with disadvantaged children.

10. Summary

The family is the most natural environment for socialisation, and the primary place where children encounter primary socialisation patterns. Socialisation refers to the process involving interactions during an individual's whole life, the first crucial stage of which is childhood, when parents, grandparents, and siblings are a person's main community. The family life cycle model examines the process of socialisation and has been at the centre of social research since the 1950s.

In summary, the family as a unit serves as a foundational context for children's socialisation, where positive parenting, cultural identity, and socioeconomic factors converge to shape children's social competencies and emotional health. This underscores the importance of fostering supportive family environments to promote healthy social development among children.

Parents are at the core of all family studies. Typically, families play an important role in the learning progress of children. During the pandemic, the role of the family in Hungary became more valued, for not only children but also the older generation.

Demography plays an important role in family science research, and we cannot understand the evolution of family formations by ignoring changes in demographic factors. For example, the number of marriages in Hungary was the highest in the EU in 2021, and the desire to have children increased most significantly in Hungary by 2021 compared to 2010. All of this presents an extremely positive picture of family formation and the willingness of couples to found a family, in addition to the fact that seven out of 10 children in recent years were born in marriage. In this way, family formation has a significant effect on children's socialisation, the "fruits" of which will ripen in the following decades. The fact that young people who are about to start a family are thinking about a two-child family model in

their plans to have children - that is, most of them plan to have at least one more child after their first child - is also a reason for their confidence. However, this trend of having at least two children seems to be broken since 2022; hopefully, this is temporary, and the trend observed in the past decade - which has a positive effect on children's socialisation - will continue.

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