

Education of Unassertive and Withdrawn Children

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All of us remember important situations from our childhood when our parents raised us or situations from school when we encountered our role models or negative experiences. It is important for the child to get out of his/her comfort zone, but it depends on whether this leaving one's comfort zone takes place in a safe environment ensured by the parent, teacher, tutor or coach (otherwise we may be afraid to speak up, speak in front of the class, etc.). This publication presents specific techniques and activities that help address children's unassertiveness. How to help children develop healthy self-assertion, use their skills or talents, develop communication, (self)reflection, increase children's resilience as well as gain awareness of their own effectiveness. Of course, this applies to those children who are not connected to the situation. The author of the book is doc. PhDr. Markéta Švamberk Šauerová, Ph.D., who works at the Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic.

The book is divided into six chapters and includes a summary, annex, references, subject and name index. The first chapter deals with unassertive children who show passivity, fear of failure, do not express themselves regardless of their talents and are not willing to get out of their comfort zone. The author emphasises that although a child may have traits of unassertiveness, it does not mean that nothing can be done about

it. Children are born with about 50% of character traits but the other 50% is shaped by the child's upbringing and the people they meet in the course of their development. There is no limitation in the form of a verbal simile *"The child is just like our mum"* but it is necessary to create opportunities for the child's development. I appreciate the author's statement in the chapter that we do not want to change the child but only help the child achieve satisfaction. The end of the chapter is finished with a section from practice where experts (therapists, university teachers, school directors, etc.) present their ideas and thoughts about unassertive children.

The next chapter focuses on educational approaches and their effects on the development of personality characteristics. Various approaches are discussed with practical examples, including the following approaches: mutually authoritative, permissive, authoritarian and neglectful. The author also mentions the importance of appropriate motivation in education and psychological concepts including the Pygmalion and Golem effect. We should also respond to the child's mistakes to facilitate the child's development. The book presents the essence of agreement, both between parents and agreement with the style of education and philosophy of the school. The development of a child with a healthy and adequate self-esteem can also be influenced by various activities, games, outings, reading or talking.

The third chapter focuses on the development of the key competences for healthy assertiveness in the school and home environment. This is achieved through effective and healthy communication that does not involve evaluation, shouting, negative scenarios, blaming, etc. Specific examples are again provided. The author also mentions specific techniques that both the teacher and parent can try out, whether in the form of active listening, mind mapping, assertive or selective ignoring, etc. The chapter also addresses the frequent issue of "today's" education in the context of discomfort, building resilience and promotion of self-efficacy.

The fourth chapter deals with the appropriate educational approaches of the teacher to the personality development of unassertive children in a group or individuals and the application of authentic and formative assessment in practice. The part that I consider crucial is the introduction of the techniques to increase awareness of one's own self-efficacy, activities to deliberately overcome obstacles, appropriate activation of students as well as forms of (self)reflection or relaxation techniques.

The penultimate fifth chapter describes various programmes with experts. The KUPUB programme is intended for children with difficulties in social interactions, while the KOMPAS programme focuses on children who have difficulty integrating with others.

The icing on the cake is the Ideator – the last chapter which offers games and techniques for targeted development of children's self-confidence through perception and identification of emotions. The chapter also focuses on the development of self-control through the "leadership" game, in which the child experiences deliberate adoption of responsibility for others in cooperation with an adult with whom the child alternates.

The publication includes practical examples that prove that these techniques are applicable. At the same time, the theoretical background is supported by research. The book is well-structured into short chapters with comprehensible, clear and readable text. Both for parents and teachers, there are many ideas for the development of self-confidence, self-control, assertiveness and a healthy and adequate self-awareness.

I see this book as very beneficial for those who work with children and want to develop themselves and their children. For me personally, this book will have a place in my library and I will continue to recommend it to the general public. I appreciate the author's authentic afterword, in which she mentions her ways to knowledge and understanding through her experiences.

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