

THE LIFE QUALITY OF A CHILD FROM A FOSTER FAMILY IN ROMANIA

Ana Maria Dumitrescu

Asst. Prof. Dr., Pitesti State University, Romania, amdumitrescu81@yahoo.com

Abstract

As an alternative form of childcare, in Romania foster care is a welfare system that comes to meet the needs of the children who are medically fragile, who have been mistreated or who need specialized services. Most children who benefit from this protection have been traumatized and need medical, psychiatric, educational and special social care, and others come here because their biological families are unable or unequipped to manage care for a child with serious emotional issues or behavioral problems. The placement treatment is based on the premise that foster parents can serve as an important provider of therapy in the daily interactions with the child, that therapy should not be practiced only by a clinician and that the psychological needs of children can be best achieved in a family environment. Therefore, success of the placement to a specialist carer depends on the attachment that is created between the family of the carer and the child taken into care but also on the support received by the family from the community.

The aim of this study is to find out the quality of life of children placed in a foster family. The standard of living is further understood as satisfaction of the basic needs (both spiritual and existential) of a child. The analysis of the problem was based on a qualitative research firstly using observation as a method precursory of all the other tools and direct investigation of the face-to-face type. The sample consisted of two groups of respondents - children and foster parents. It should be stressed that the investigation into family life is very difficult because it may interfere with intimacy. In the case of the questionnaire prepared for children, it was necessary for it to be made as simple as possible without going too deep into their privacy. The relatively simple and comprehensive questionnaire makes it easy to assess the quality of life of children placed in foster families and the fact that the issue is studied from two perspectives, using two different questionnaires provides the possibility to collect more varied information, at least some of which can be compared. The results of this study demonstrate that the placement of children in professional foster care increases their quality of life, bringing major contributions to their recovery and social integration.

Keywords: social protection, foster family, quality of life, research method