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**GIVE YOUR CHILD
A HAPPY LIFE**



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All responsible parents are aware of how much commitment and knowledge is required to look after their children. Some are able to be more independent, while others are tied to their mother's apron strings out of fear of making their own decisions. The initial stages in children's development play a crucial role for their future, especially in those with observed abnormalities. To ensure that their children are off to a good start, many parents opt for early childhood development support classes. What are they and which children need help in the early stages of life?

Some children may struggle with serious health problems right from the very beginning. In such cases, they will be looked after by specialists and offered assistance in coping with their illnesses. Some of them are temporary and completely curable. How can you spot abnormalities in your child and how should you go about seeking help? Sylwia Wrona, PhD, from the Faculty of Arts and Educational Science of the University of Silesia, Head of the Postgraduate Qualifying Studies in Early Childhood Development and Family Support, says that developmental abnormalities aren't always noticed right away. Sometimes it takes a while for them to become apparent. If a child is born with a genetic defect or visible dysmorphic features, doctors usually notice it very quickly and take appropriate steps to further the diagnosis and, most importantly, to recommend rehabilitation measures. However, sometimes a child needs to start crawling, moving around, and babbling to show that they are suffering from an abnormality.

'This is when parents should seek medical advice', suggests the specialist. 'If the concerns are confirmed by the doctor, the next step is to go to the psychological and pedagogical counselling centre with a medical certificate of the diagnosed abnormalities'. Then, a team of specialists can issue a decision on the need for early development support. At this point, the child can start therapy in the indicated centres. Bear

in mind that this is just one of the pathways that parents can take. Other facilities that provide support include rehabilitation and education centres and leading coordination, rehabilitation and care centres offering early intervention classes. Unfortunately, the latter are few in number.

Under Polish law, early childhood development support is available from birth until the child starts primary school. Among the most common reasons for early development support are problems with eyesight, hearing, and delays in psychomotor development. Premature babies are a group with the highest risk of developing various abnormalities.

'Therapy brings the best results when specialists work together with parents', says the researcher. 'Although people often assume that parents are helpless without the involvement of a specialist, they in fact have the greatest influence on their child's development, even when abnormalities are identified. Research confirms that the better the quality of cooperation, the faster the results start to appear'.

A young child develops best during prolonged and structured exercises. These include the more specialised ones as well as the ordinary everyday activities. Forcing the child to do a lot of boring exercises tires not only them but also the parents.

'Activity should be sought everywhere. Everything is important in a child's development: how they sit at the table,

the way they walk, whether and how much they hunch over, and how long and how close they sit in front of a computer screen. Correct body posture in all of these situations and the correct distance from electronic displays can correct many defects, and when combined with therapeutic activities under the guidance of professionals, the probability of achieving the desired results increases greatly', explains the researcher.

When a child enters the next stage of their life and starts school, they come under the care of school counselors and teachers. At this and other stages of life, it is the parents or legal guardians who take care of the child. The child is never deprived of care.

There is a therapeutic kindergarten called Słoneczna Kraina (Sunny Land) at the Cieszyn Campus of the University of Silesia, near the Faculty of Arts and Educational Science, run under the auspices of the university. The pupils are cared for by scientists from the University of Silesia, as well as by a qualified teaching staff. The researchers focus on introducing new methods into the curriculum and monitoring their effectiveness. In comparison to other such institutions in Poland, this kindergarten is a pioneer in introducing model solutions. Although many people with different specialisations are involved, they are guided by one common goal: to ensure that the child receives proper care and leads a healthy and happy life.