

Volunteering in Infants' homes is quite a new area of volunteering in the Czech Republic and is slowly developing. The aim of the present study was to introduce and evaluate one concrete example of a volunteer program in the Infants' and Childrens' home for children up to three years in Prague - Krč. This program was started four years ago and its main idea is to find one volunteer for each child in the home who would visit the child regularly at least once a week and who would pay him individual attention. So every child can have at least for a while one adult person only for himself and doesn't have to share that person's attention with other children.

We were interested in the opinions of volunteers and nurses about this new program. These two independent groups are the main participants and also observers of this kind of volunteering, so their opinions are important for evaluating the program and also for creating a functional methodology. This methodology is the outcome of this diploma thesis, and could be an inspiration for other similar institutions.

Nurses and volunteers agree, that the relationship between child and volunteer develops with regular visits. This can be observed mainly in the behaviour of toddlers older than one year. The children usually look forward to their volunteer's visit, greet him when he arrives, and run to him with joy. They are happy that they can spend some time with him. In the presence of other children, they are often jealous and they guard their volunteer only for themselves. The regular visits of volunteers are the main condition for creating a relationship with children and subsequent children's joy.

Another aspect which is necessary for the success of this program is good communication between volunteers and nurses. Both sides should respect certain rules in their communication.

Volunteers should respect nurses as professionals and they should adhere to the rules of the ward.