

Abstract

Children growing up in residential institutions lost chance to live in natural family environment. No wonder they struggle with emotional deprivation, which has a very negative influence on their future lives. Česká školní inspekce (Czech School Inspectorate) is regularly highlighting this issue, and at the same time criticizing lack of educated personell in the institutions, which could provide systematic and long-term care. Even in the Czech secular society, there is growing concern among teachers, psychologists, philosophers, and theologians about lack of transcendence, which is necessary for healthy children's personality. However, missing transcendent element might be developed by education.

There is a chance for the church to step-in, because spiritual care in secular institutions is slowly becoming well-known in the community, due to its benefits. Therefore the subject matter of this thesis is to define the role of chaplaincy in children's homes.

Since this subject matter is rather unexplored, it is, in the first chapter, necessary to introduce the reader to concepts of pastoral care. The second chapter is devoted to the rights and needs of children, while the third describes the institution of children's homes. The fourth chapter introduces us to the concept of chaplaincy and its three types, which are working in the Czech Republic. The last chapter deals in the work of a chaplain in children's home, and offers possible suggestions, where he or she could help. In the conclusion, there are several arguments supporting establishment of spiritual care in children's residential institutions based on children's rights, valid legislation, and the current situation. The thesis is concluded with suggestion of future course of action.