

This thesis analyzes the instrument of professional parenting, with an emphasis on its possible application within the Czech system of at-risk youth care. Currently, the system of institutional and protective care and follow-up care for at-risk youth faces criticism from children's rights advocates. In some European countries and other parts of the world, professional parenting has found its permanent use as an instrument for the care of at-risk children and youth. In the Czech Republic, temporary foster care has been codified as an alternative to professional parenting; however, this concept does not have any broad application so far. In the first two chapters, the thesis defines basic terms and describes risk behaviour patterns in children and youth. The third and major chapter lists the main pillars of professional foster care, describes its forms as well as possibilities for foster recruitment, education and other characteristics. The final chapter reflects on current trends in the Czech system of care involving at-risk and vulnerable children.