

The dissertation thesis presents results of a several-year research project which focused on potential development of adolescents' social skills at secondary schools. The first chapters summarize various concepts, knowledge and theories connected with our topic. The emphasis is put on socialization in adolescence which is an ontogenetic aspect of maturation which points to the dissertation's main theme. The thesis also introduces social skills and emphasizes their necessary development at secondary schools in terms of complex sociocognitive development. Social skills are also tightly connected with academic success and their development also prevents risk behaviour. Social skills development is further considered in connection with teachers who belong among crucial sources of social support and development in adolescence. Another important social group at school environment involves peers who form school classes and affect each other in the course of the whole educational process. Finally, the social skills are introduced in connection with academic success, i.e. motivation toward school work, and academic efficacy. Both these characteristics of the educational process depend on social skills and simultaneously affect academic results. Last chapters of the theoretical part draw attention to different forms of risk behaviour, which typically appear in adolescence, and their prevention at secondary schools. Prevention and intervention programmes are frequently based on similar principles as social skills development programmes. Apart from the programmes, the text involves information on class assessment methods.

The empirical part of the thesis has rather application character and combines quantitative and qualitative methodology. The complete project was carried out at three secondary schools. The aim of the first part of the research was to screen school milieu where the second part of the project was conducted.