

Abstrakt v anglickém jazyce

Family policy in the Czech Republic and services of childcare for children of pre-school age

This master's degree thesis deals with family policy, in particular with the institutional provisions of childcare services for children of pre-school age, their legislative framework and potential future development. The goal is to find out whether the current legislation of childcare services sufficiently reflects the needs of parents, given demographic developments and the existing socio-cultural and economic context.

The first chapter characterizes the current context of family policy in the Czech Republic: We are experiencing rising fertility rates, while people realize parenthood at later stages of their lives. In addition, opinion polls show that 50% of families desire an egalitarian family model with an equal distribution of childcare responsibilities between both parents, thus allowing for the professional development of each. In reality, however, women usually lower their professional ambitions and stay at home taking care of the children.

The second chapter suggests that the discrepancy between the desired and the actually practiced family model is a result of existing family policies in the Czech Republic, which prefer the model of the father as the breadwinner and the mother as the housewife. Thus, in order to meet families' demands for an egalitarian model, I suggest that family policies should be de-familized, so that the constrictions put upon the simultaneous utilization of collective childcare services and the drawing of parental contributions are reduced or abolished.

In connection with the suggested steps for a defamilization of childcare and increasing fertility rates, the third chapter comes to the conclusion that it is important to secure the missing net of childcare services for children up to the age of three years and simultaneously focus attention on the expansion of kindergartens, whose capacities are insufficient. As a solution to the problem I suggest revisions in the legal regulation of private childcare services. I am convinced that the sum of the suggested legal revisions will contribute to a more family friendly environment – one of the primary goals of Czech family policy.