

**Abstract:** The aim of the thesis is to reflect the concept of the child in a historical perspective with an emphasis on recognizing the changing conditions of contemporary childhood with the goal of attaining a deeper understanding of today's pre-school child.

In the theoretical section we primarily examined the changes in the way children and childhood have been valued in various historical periods (from the beginning of human history to the present), the contribution of children to the family with respect to their function and impact of children on the lives of individual family members.

The practical section consisted of qualitative research (written reflections on childhood, interviews with families, children's drawings and creative workshops), representing a current survey of the world of pre-school children from the perspective of parents, grandparents and children themselves.

The written reflections, interviews and joyful atmosphere of the creative workshops in pre-schools indicate that contemporary parents and grandparents value their children highly as an extremely important part of their lives: children give meaning to their lives, provide emotional satisfaction and security, stimulate and promote creativity and development, act as a reflection of their own lives, are both a source of joy and concern, and foster continuity in their lives with respect to the future and past.

According to the majority of parents and grandparents, childhood has changed significantly over the past few decades. In certain respects, today's children are richer than preceding generations, in others more impoverished. They are heavily influenced by the fast-paced modern age, media, technology and information. Most parents and grandparents feel that media and technology primarily has a negative effect on children. Fewer admit the positive aspects of modern communication and information technology.

Parents and grandparents realize that today's society offers children innumerable activity clubs and programs from the earliest age. The wide range of leisure activities for children is perceived positively by some mothers. Many parents and grandparents, however, point out the risk of overwhelming and overloading the young body. Some mothers more acutely perceive the risks of the current age and have a greater tendency to be protective of their children.

In comparison with historical periods, the stance of the family and society towards children has improved in many respects, nonetheless, today's children may want and suffer, are neglected, emotionally deprived, abused, tormented, or overloaded.

Everyone should contribute to the best of their abilities to improve the situation of children, because a happy childhood becomes the solid foundation for a satisfied and fulfilling life as an adult.