

The paper looks at parents' experiences related to their children's preparations for attending an eight-year *gymnázium* (academic secondary school), with the goal of identifying and understanding how families experience this preparatory period and what preparatory strategies they choose; or rather, how they approach the preparatory exams, what preparations the family undergoes, what emotions they experience, and how they assess this experience. The theoretical part of this theoretical and empirical paper briefly defines some of the basic terminology necessary for understanding the paper's theoretical foundations and presents the legislative background of the state admissions exams. The third chapter of the theoretical part looks at several realized studies that have focused on the subject of multi-year gymnázia and parents' views on this phenomenon.

The various chapters of the paper's empirical section present the author's qualitative methodology, describe the study's approach, and show the results of a qualitative study of parents and children who underwent this experience in the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years. Their experiences with and perception of this process were determined via semi-structured interviews with both parents and children. The study also made use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This part also presents the findings of the analysis and a case study of one selected family.

An analysis of the interviews yielded numerous findings that I consider fundamental. Families experience this period as a stressful situation that was organizationally as well as emotionally demanding. Parents were fundamentally important to and had a fundamental influence on how this entire period was experienced. They organized their children's preparations, decided on the frequency of preparatory work, and were there to motivate and support their children. At the same time, they felt a strong sense of responsibility for the preparations' effectiveness and the child's success, even at the cost of potential mental harm caused by failure during the admissions exams. The children were more likely to experience the preparations as excessively stressful and tiring, despite the fact that they themselves had decided to take the admissions exams. The found data are interpreted and compared with the paper's theoretical starting points, in particular the research findings of contemporary studies. The study's results are placed within the context of contemporary research findings.

Keywords: Admissions exam, multi-year gymnázium (academic secondary school), eight-year gymnázium (academic secondary school), personal experience, preparations, parents' view, children's view, parents' role