

The choice of the type of childcare is a complex process influenced by many factors, such as parents' attitudes and beliefs, resource availability, family structure, parents' employment situation, as well as social policies and support offered by the state.

The aim of the presented project was to analyze the functioning of triads representing

family systems that have chosen different forms of childcare.

In the first two studies, 386 mothers ( $M_{age} = 32.35$  years;  $SD_{age} = 4.69$ ) and 30 fathers ( $M_{age} = 32.52$  years;  $SD_{age} = 4.65$ ) had participated. In the third study, 100 children

aged 24 to 48 months ( $M_{age} = 32.95$ ;  $SD_{age} = 3.45$ ) along with their mothers ( $n = 100$ ) and

fathers ( $n = 97$ ) had participated.

The first two studies focused on developing a tool to measure parents' satisfaction

with institutional care. The third study was used to verify the hypotheses. In the first two

studies, parents completed questionnaires assessing the quality of care provided for their

children. In the third study, the children's IQ levels and their socio-emotional functioning

were evaluated. Parents assessed their own parenting attitudes and empathy

The results of the analyses indicated that children attending day care facilities scored higher on scales measuring social skills. Mothers who did not choose institutional

care scored higher on scales measuring protective and inconsistent attitudes, and lower

on the autonomy attitude scale. Mothers whose children did not attend facilities scored

higher on the empathy dimension of personal distress. Fathers in this group, however,

scored higher on the perspective-taking dimension.

*Keywords:* childcare, parenting, parental attitudes, empathy, cognitive skills, socialemotional skills, triad