

GRUNDTVIG PARTNERSHIP 2013-2015

“ENGAGING DISADVANTAGED PARENTS TO ACQUIRE PARENTING SKILLS ”

EDPAPS

“ We are parents! Rights and responsibilities”

Project financially supported by the European Commission under Lifelong Learning Programme, GRUNDTVIG Sectorial Programme, Grundtvig Learning Partnership Action. The contents of this information is the sole responsibility of the authors. The National Agency for EU Programmes in Education and Training and the European Commission are not responsible for how the contents of the information will be used

“We are parents. Rights and Responsibilities”

1st part : Presentation of the lawyer Lois Anastasios concerning the legal frame of parents` rights and responsibilities.

The parents' role is not limited only in giving birth to the child and taking care of it during infancy, but it also expands in equipping it with all the necessary skills and equipment for dealing with the problems of life, successfully.

For this reason, it is absolutely necessary that the parents, among others, should cultivate to their child some essential preferences and dislikes, good internal dispositions towards people, things and circumstances, ways of behavior, as well as the right way of seeing life. In order to achieve this purpose, a man's life, from the moment he becomes a parent, is a continuous duty, an obligation, which at the same time is also a right. A family is a dynamic unity of co-dependent members. There is a dynamic co-dependence between the members of a family. Each family member accepts the effects of the other family members and simultaneously effects on them. The child, with his/her behavior influences his/her parents' behavior and shapes it to a certain extend. **As a result, between the parents' rights and responsibilities which aim at the ultimate purpose of bringing up a complete child, there is a relationship of interaction.** Every parent's right is an obligation to the child at the same time, and vice versa. The basic rule which frames the parents' rights – responsibilities is the child's benefit. Everything happens based upon this basic rule, the child's benefit.

The parents' attitude is of primary importance for the child's life. Parents teach better with their personalities and their paradigm than their advice and preaches. They are the child's background and live tradition; they are the child's first teachers and his/her best and beloved companions. They should create the appropriate atmosphere for the child's moral and religious prudence, the right conditions for his/her normal physical development and also care for the maintenance and promotion of the child's mental and physical health. It is their right and responsibility to care for the mental, national, social, political, professional, humanistic, and artistic education. They have the right and the responsibility to give the child the base so as to develop a correct viewpoint of life, which will include a total of values which will bring rules of thoughts and actions that could be applied in all the areas of human life and especially in those which are connected to the moral, national and social life.

Good parents have the right and responsibility to care for the following, consciously and systematically.

- They take care of the **child's needs**
- They create a **pleasant family atmosphere** and attend to ensure a happy childhood for their children.
- They inspire **respect** to the child, not fear.
- They cultivate the child's **trust** towards them, so as the child can confess to them their problems and feelings.
- They show **interest** in the children's school progress and achievements and they feel contended for the children's development and progress.

- When the children grow up, they show interest in their future plans and ambitions, their achievements in their studies, their special hobbies and interests, by encouraging their success appropriately.
- They treat their children as **responsible** or as partly responsible persons.
- They allow their children to feel **independent** and they cultivate to them though and action independence
- They promote the children's **enthusiasm** and they trigger their willingness for significant actions.
- They keep **encouraging** their children to never give up trying to achieve their aims.
- They always cultivate broad **social horizons**
- They **respect the child's personality** and their demands are equivalent to the child's degree of maturity and mental and physical skills.
- They are kind and behave with love towards the child's friends
- They **praise and encourage** the child in every effort, avoiding irony, taunting, cursing and slander.
- They try **to understand the child's point of view**
- They **trust** the child
- They care for the **child's play** and they also provide the child with other ways of entertainment, as well.

The above framework of obligations and rights will remain a wishful thinking practice unless the state introduces a **legal framework** which will both guarantee the parents' rights and responsibilities.

Consequently, every lawful state has established a framework of laws which define the parents' rights and responsibilities, on the one hand, in a general and abstract way which allows parents to select freely their way of bringing up their children according to their viewpoint of life and on the other hand, according to the dominant socio – political aspects. We should not forget that the Law is an essential tool of the state which defines behaviours in order to maintain the social coherence and the existent socio – political system.

In the Greek Law there are the corresponding legal providences which set the rights and responsibilities of the parents. The basic source of rights and responsibilities in the Greek Law is the 11th Chapter of the 5th Book of the Civil Code, entitled: **“Parent – Children relationships”**. As it is impossible to analyze all the restrictions that define the parents' rights and responsibilities towards their children, we will focus on four of them – maybe the most important ones.

1507 AK “Parents and children are obliged to pay mutual help, affection and respect.”

With this legal provision the moral obligation of parents for respect, affection and help obtains a legal dimension and specializes into the more specific cases of psychological and material support both in the daily problems and in the cases that a member of the family faces a certain issue. It also includes the mutual respect of the ideas and the religious and political views of the members of the family, as well as the protection from actions that could hurt the family members.

1510 AK “The care for the underage child is a duty and a right of the parents (parental care) which the parents have in common. The parental care includes the child's custody, the management of the child's

fortune and the representation of the child in every case or trial that concern the child's belongings or the child itself".

1511 AK "Every decision of the parents in relevance with the practice of parental care must aim at the child's benefit.

According to the child's maturity his/her opinion should be asked and taken into account before every decision concerns the child's benefits".

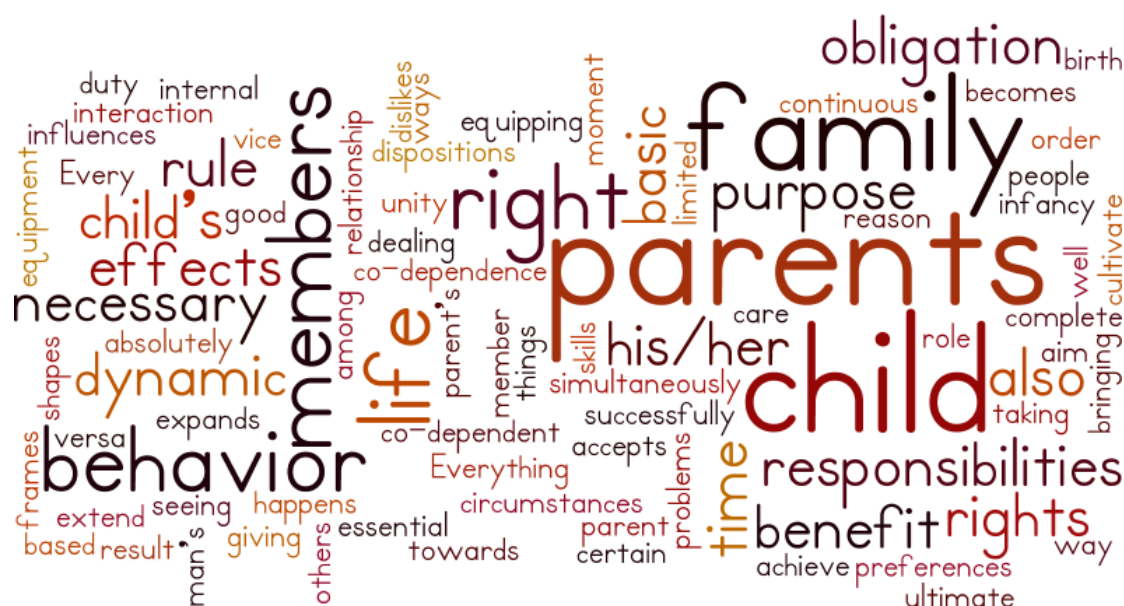
As a consequence, it is understood that the child's care is a right and obligation of the parents. The parents have to realize all the actions referring to the child's care. Nowadays, this law is even more important because of the legal provision 1511 for the protection of the child's benefit through the search for the child's opinion. The **1511 AK** defines the general law for protecting the child's benefit but also stresses the child-centered stance of the contemporary society that the lawmaker also adopts. With the term "benefit" it is meant the physical, mental, psychological, moral or any other kind of benefit which is under question in each case. The concept of the word "benefit" in the particular phrasing is abstract and at the same time evaluating, so as to include all that are necessary for each child, separately. But the most important criterion in order to specialize the child's benefit is his/her own personal opinion, which must be sought by the parents, and the only limitation is the child's maturity.

As far as the rest responsibilities – rights which are mentioned in the certain law (custody, property, management, representation) are concerned, the custody is without doubt the most important function which aims at the child's development as a personality to the best degree both to his/her benefit but also for the society's benefit in which he/she will be a member.

1518 AK "The custody of the child especially includes the upbringing, the supervision, the education and training, as well as the definition of the child's place of living. During the upbringing of the child his/her parents encourage them without gender discrimination to develop their personality with responsibility and with social consciousness. Disciplinary measures are allowed to be imposed on the child as long as they are pedagogically necessary and do not affect the child's dignity. The parents take into account their children's skills and personal penchants for their education and professional training".

That is, a child's custody includes the upbringing, the supervision, the education, the training and the specification of the place of living. As a matter of fact, the concepts that have been mentioned so far cover each other to the extent that the education (school) is part of the learning (which also includes general – out of school education) as learning itself is part of the broader concept of upbringing (moral cultivation and the social appearance of the child, in general). So, it could be said that the general concept of custody includes every case or measure relevant to the mental, spiritual and physical development of the child. There is also included care for clothing, food, health, name giving, religious and moral education, the taking of disciplinary measures and definition of the child's home.

Moreover, apart from the laws about the general child's benefit, the criteria which are useful for the shaping of the content of the acts of custody are defined, since it is explicitly mentioned that the main factor that must be taken into account in the parents' decisions and actions is the development of the child's personality, according to the child's skills and personal penchants.



Coming to a conclusion, we could say that giving birth to a child does not make you a parent. Being a parent means giving, promoting, and supporting the physical, emotional, social and spiritual development of a child from infancy to adulthood, through the rights and obligations of the parent.

2nd part: The guide of the parent that is responsible of the child's rights:

Based on activities which were held by the Romanian organization “ Save the children” , we shaped a guide with basic parents` responsibilities and children`s rights.

The right to education is one of the most important and defining rights that children have and is extremely important for his development as an adult. The participant children considered that parents are the most important pillars in terms of respecting this right together with the teachers and the school master. The parents responsibilities as children identified them are as follows: involving both the mother and the father in the daily process of homeworks, maintaining a constant relationship with the school teacher/ form master, receiving all the necessary materials (writing materials) for school, children's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in order to arise their interest for school.

1. **The right to have a family:** where we can easily observe the importance of parents in practicing and respecting this right. The main responsibility that each child mentioned was that each child, no matter the age, financial status or nationality needs a mother and a father. If the family is

not united, children say, than surely the child will not be totally happy. Each parent brings in the relationship care, support, help, involvement and a certain special way of being that the other parent can not replace. The parents responsibility regarding this right is to respect the idea of a family and always be there next to his/her child.

2. **The right to be informed:** each child needs a lot of information in order to discover the world around him/her, to adjust to it, to know the difference between good and bad. In this context, the participant children considered that the parents are actually the main responsables in helping their children to know the reality and of course to learn how to choose best.

3. **The right to food:** again the main responsables to respect and satisfy this right of the child are the parents. When giving birth the mother is the one that knows when to feed her baby and does it directly. Then, as the child grows older the food he eats is also prepared by the parents. Here, the participants also mentioned the importance and responsibility of their parents to work in order to buy the necessary food for the child.

4. **The right to medical assistance:** the parent is responsible of his/her child, of protecting him/her in order not to get ill, of dressing him/her according to the weather outside and of course to supervise the child in any situation. These are the responsibilities identified by the participants, here also mentioning accompanying the child to the doctor when needed.

5. **The right to leisure time:** children need leisure time in order to relax, and again, parents have a big responsibility in terms of allowing the child to enjoy it. In the same time, in order for the leisure time to be satisfying the parents need to ensure different materials (toys) for their children. Another responsibility that was identified in the working groups was the need of some activities in the leisure time that involve both the parents and the child and that will bring a lot of appreciation from the children.

6. **The right to participation:** parents should always remember the fact that their children are also part of the family and their opinions matter and are important. So, it is important that parents listen to their children in the situations that are important for them or that can be easily understood by them. In this way the parents help the child to become an adult and teach the child how to be responsible.

7. **The right to have a name and a nationality:** again parents were considered the main responsables in terms of this right. The participant children emphasized that the parents are the ones that chose a name for their child and also, are the ones that should take care that the child has a birth certificate, belonging to a country and having a nationality.

8. **The right to protection:** being protected is an important and elementary need as to raise a child in a safe and healthy way. Since the child is born, the parents are the ones that take care and protection to their child, helping the child to feel comfortable.

The present guide, other than the fact that manages to integrate the diverse responsibilities that parents have towards their children (mentioned by the participant children) also emphasises the importance parents have in raising, educating and preparing the child for the society.



3rd part: Parents` responsibilities in students` opinion

During the activities developed in our organization, PROSCOALAVARIAS, tried with their members, teachers to be more precise, to find out the most important responsibilities which children, school pupils, consider to be fulfilled by their parents. Therefore it took place during the counseling and orientation hours, which are included in the school program, talks about parent responsibilities towards their children. Beside the responsibility of giving life, baptize him, offering a shelter, food and school until the adult age, there are other responsibilities which a parent has in order for a good and healthy education.



Pupils and parents at School Gelu in the context of activities about parent rights and

responsibilities.

Therefore from the discussions that took place during MAY month 2015, with the pupils from both schools – School Gelu and School Varias – resulted the most important parent responsibilities in students opinion.

1. The responsibility to help to accept, themselves, the family, and the country where were born

The internal conflicts are born since childhood and can slowly burn and destroy the human being slowly. There are connected mostly to the lack of answers from childhood, like “Why I was born?” or “How must be to be good, accepted, loved?”. To understand better what’s up with him, you as a parent must tell him since he is little a story, the human story. You must talk with him about how and why he came to Earth, to tell him his purpose on Earth. It is important to answer to all the questions that your child has, even if they seem dull and stupid, and to tell him the truth. For him your answers are very important, are the elements which he creates his soul “house”, his mind “house”.

2. The responsibility to talk to him about GOD and to teach him the principles of a moral life

To not give the impression that you are not untouchable, talk with him about THE untouchable. You have this responsibility, to make him aware about the one who created him and

to prompt him the idea of an christian life. In the family institution will be clarified the adult morality later in. Show him that even you as a parent, you can make things wrong, that all people can make things wrong but it is important to admit and be responsible for them. It’s very important not only to talk about this thing, but you also must show him. The child will be very confused if you tell him a thing, but you deny it with your behaviour.

3. The responsibility to know him

There are not so many parents which are very aware of this responsibility, although is one of the most important. Parents are, usually, more oriented to correct, to argue, to change with the purpose „offering education”, but not keen to discover to know the children. How can someone change something if they don’t know the human? Therefore, dear parents, a very hard task but with great satisfaction is to know the qualities, skills, weak points of your children. Its a must to show that your only purpose is to know him, therefore you will gain his trust, showing him that he can have a trustwrothy friend in you. The best way to know your children is to **listen to him**. Listening is like a therapy for your child, a child that he doesn’t know who is, what he wants, what he feels. At the same time, a great connection is created between you and him. Another way is to **observe him**, without the child notice. Observe how he behaves when he wants to obtain a thing, how he behave with his relatives, with the kindergarden kids, school kids etc. The third way to know him is through **games**. Enter in his world, play with him, on every occasion.

4. The responsibility to help to find himself and to develop himself

The majority of conversations that you have with your child must be directed to the purpose of knowing him and developing him emotionally and physically. Everytime you see him drawing something

nice, mark this moment with kind remarks and even nice gestures. Praise him every time when he completes even a small chore, when he finishes something that he proposed himself, when he helps someone. Make him aware and play a dull face when he makes a mistake with less bad consequences. The child needs to know his feeling and his emotions, positive or negative ones. Only this what he can accept, assume and live in inner peace. Encourage good behaviours and show disagreement to the bad ones.

5. The responsibility to teach him what is authority

One responsibility that is not so easy is to become the figure of a true authority for your child. Every parent represents the **feminine authority**, also the **masculine authority**, and both parents must know their attributes. The child must understand from the feminine authority, delicacy, sensibility but also firmness and judgement. The father must harmonise skills like cheerfulness, flexibility, self-control and justice. The way you relate with him, that will be the way the he will relate with any other authority that he will meet.