

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIONAL SITUATION (PES)

#### 2.1 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A PES

In order to recognize a PES, we need to know its characteristics. What actualities or essential characteristics make a PES possible? These characteristics necessarily have to be present before there can be a PES. Some of these characteristics are:

- o Educational distress
- o Educational neglect
- o Educational obstruction
- o Disturbed communication
- o Disturbed psychic life
- o Disturbed expressive life
- o Being-different and experiencing oneself as being different (inferior)
- o Lack of perspective
- o Circular dynamics
- o Child problems

For the sake of a systematic description, each of these characteristics is differentiated from each other and is treated separately, but in a PES they are inseparable interdependent actualities that are closely interwoven. In the following descriptions, the connections among them are emphasized.

##### 2.1.1 Educational distress

A PES is a situation of pedagogical distress. A child is in a distressful **relationship** with his educator. The concept **child-in-educational-distress** holds here. When a PES also is a family situation (besides the possibilities of an educational institution or school situation), there is a **family-in-educational-distress**.

##### 2.1.1.1 A child-in-educational-distress

In this connection we borrow three concepts from Van der Zeyde's book<sup>(1)</sup> that already has become a classic in pedagogics:

(a) **The good child life:** a child lives in community with his educators and is directed to adulthood--he is **secure**, **receives** what he needs and experiences the world as **enticing**. Fundamental peace of mind is a characteristic feature of a good child life.

(b) **Educational deficiency:** all education is deficient; no one develops all of his potentialities. There are impediments to the complete development of adulthood. An educational deficiency **can** become educationally distressing; education is affected when the deficiency has the character of **distress**.

(c) **Educational distress:** this is measured by a child's own distress--only if he notices the educational defect is there mention of educational distress. One of the facets of a good child life is missing. This lack means that a child's entire existence is affected. A child in educational distress has difficulties in an educational **relationship**; a child who is not closely connected with his parents is not directed to the future or to life. With educational distress, a child especially feels **insecure** and he responds to this with **anxiety**. He is not sure his parents will meet his needs.

Regarding the concept of a **good child life**, the question arises regarding what a child needs--what does he need to feel prepared to move out of a sphere of security and tranquility in order to explore an enticing world and thus actualize his growing up? In answer to this question, some of the **primary psychic needs of a child** are mentioned:

- o **Physical needs:** the fulfillment of which are, via his bodiliness, primarily experienced emotionally; he then is psychically content.
- o **Need for security:** a child feels secure only in experiencing demonstrated love (Langeveld).
- o **Need for acceptance and a feeling of belonging.**
- o **Need of respect for his human dignity as a child.**
- o **Need to know and understand--a child wants to know.**
- o **Need for self-actualization.**

In order to satisfy these needs, an educator has to actualize the following facets in dealing with a child:

**caring** for a child, as is appropriate to his life, and falling within an educator's responsibility;  
**accepting**, as a deepening of this caring relationship; **giving** as a way of actualizing it;  
**protecting and challenging** as an aim.

These facets should characterize each educational act.<sup>(2)</sup>

The concept of educational distress holds for a handicapped as well as a non-handicapped child. A handicapped child, e.g., experiences educational distress if he does not receive the particular and special help and support needed.

A description of how a child's life becomes disturbed when he finds himself in educational distress, and of how he experiences this distress (conscious discernment, giving meaning, follow later.

#### 2.1.1.2 The family-in-educational-distress<sup>(3)</sup>

Within a family a distinction can be made between pedagogic and non-pedagogic relationships. Examples of the latter are the relationships between the parents, among the related children and among the parents and their already adult offspring. When educational problems arise in the family and when these also are related to disturbed pedagogic relationships, the non-pedagogic relationships also are a negative influence and the entire family life becomes disturbed. Because family life is such an intimate, interactive event, all family relationships now become disturbed. The becoming of all family members is restrained. There is family dysfunction. A family is dysfunctional as a **social system** as well as an **educational system**, i.e., a family situation is a problematic communal situation as well as a PES.

**Conflict** arises on an individual as well as a group level. The latter implies a **vicious circle** of alienation and **disturbed communication** of the family members. In this human interaction, child and educator **experience** themselves as insecure, defenseless and delivered to the disturbed situation, and the PES is experienced as being **without perspective**, as meaningless, threatening and unpleasant.

The family-in-educational-distress is especially characterized by inadequate educational influencing, disturbed communication, disturbed execution of tasks, unsuccessful socialization.

### **(a) Inadequate educational influencing**

With educational distress, influencing a child is

- o **discontinuuous:** the parents do not grasp the progressive nature of their child's becoming, but sometimes they approach him as a much older child, and sometimes no longer as a child but as an adversary. The parents withdraw themselves as educators and their child stands alone.
- o **incomplete:** the parents are not directed to the ordinary in their association with their child--they are preoccupied with his problem and direct their available energy to them. The parents intervene only with attempts to get their child to unlearn the undesired behaviors.
- o **inconsistent:** the parents are weary, pessimistic and no longer future directed. They let their ambivalent feelings toward their child appear and inconsistency and impulsivity are what characterize their educative attempts.

### **(b) Disturbed communication**

The parent-child as well as family interaction is disturbed, especially regarding the following aspects of interaction (following Mishler and Waxler's differentiation of the concept of communication):

- o moments of emotion (expressing positive & negative feelings)
- o moments of control
- o moments of flexibility
- o moments of acknowledging the other.

### **(c) Disturbed execution of tasks**

The family cannot actualize the following family tasks:

- o educator attachment (a precondition for educating)
- o the caring task
- o the enculturation of the educand
- o the emancipation of the educand

- o dealing with family crises.

The consequence of this is the individual pathology (deviance) of one or more family members, deviant educator attachment, unsuccessful/problematic caring, enculturation and emancipation.

#### (d) Unsuccessful socialization

Forms of this **disturbed living together** are:

- o absence of socialization--the adult does not present himself as educator.
- o insufficient socialization--for example, the hardened child.
- o unnecessary socialization--for example, over-protection.
- o inadequate socialization--for example, the parents try to reach their child but fail (e.g., the autistic child).
- o terrorizing socialization--for example, rejection and mistreatment.<sup>(4)</sup>

Neither a parent nor a child is in a position to bring about change in the alienating event. Educational distress can/must be eliminated with the help of a third person outside of the educational interaction between child and educator, namely the orthopedagogue. It is professional assistance and pedagogically founded help (orthopedagogic action) that is needed.

#### 2.1.2 Educational neglect

This concept (essence of the PES) points to educating that falls short of the mark. The educator does too little in his educating, guiding, exercising authority and discipline, he presents too few demands of self-restraint, values and norms, the child is too free to direct himself to what is immediately gratifying. There are material, affective and normative forms of educational neglect. This means that the child does not receive what he needs for his normal becoming adult and that he is not given help and support to actualize potentialities.

The child's education is neglected in the sense that there is **inadequate educative intervention**. This means that the essentials (fundamental structures) of the pedagogic situation are actualized in inadequate ways. Thus, the three concepts are synonymous:

**educational neglect;  
inadequate educational intervention;  
inadequate actualization of fundamental pedagogic  
structures.\***

The essentials of the pedagogic situation that are actualized inadequately in the PES are presented briefly in terms of Landman's<sup>(5)</sup> phenomenological analysis of a pedagogic situation:

### **2.1.2.1 The pedagogic relationship structures**

**(a) The pedagogic relationship of trust:** Two preconditions for a child's trust in an adult are that the adult **accept** him and show respect for his **human dignity as a child**. The actualization of this relationship of trust prepares a child to **venture** with the adult (guidance, accompaniment) as well as move away from him (emancipation). A conflict in trust will leave a child feeling so insecure and uncertain that he will not venture. Important aspects here are showing love, loving care, interest, protection, sympathy (feel with), sociality (we-ness), stable emotional bonding, tranquility, understanding, mutual trust; a child must feel that he is welcome by his educators and that he ought to be there. A child is traumatized (psychically wounded) by the inadequate actualization of this relationship because of defective love and care. With defective trust, a child cannot share his anxiety with his parents and then he becomes a task for the orthopedagogue.

**(b) The pedagogic relationship of understanding:** The educator must **know** and **understand** a child and show him **understanding**. Often parents have their own conception of a **child** to which their demands and expectations are tuned. Their view is that of an idealized, normal child that their own difficult-to-educate child hardly fits at all. This gives rise to pedagogic and affective uncertainty in the parents regarding their child. In his turn, the child experiences uncertainty as well as that he is not understood.

A lack of genuine knowledge leads to making unreasonable demands of a child. This disheartens, frustrates and confuses him and gives

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\* Although these three concepts indicate that the intervention of the **educator** is inadequate, it must be strongly stressed that a child **himself** has a role in his educating and growing up and that he is co-responsible for actualizing the fundamental pedagogic structures.

rise to feelings of guilt, conflict and derailment. A child asks for understanding from an adult educator during his encountering the adult world and during the long, difficult transition from a child attunement (free, carefree, blindly-trusting, playful) to the world of the adult with its demands for order, soberness, efficiency, matter-of-factness, being time-bound, etc.

Muller-Eckhard<sup>(6)</sup> comments on a child not understood as follows: the little being suffers harm that appears--because it occurs at such a decisive time--will continue for a lifetime. The child becomes disturbed in his entire psychic development. And why? Because in one sphere he experiences that his spirit is not supported.

**(c) The relationship of pedagogic authority:** A child has a need for consistent, sympathetic authoritative guidance. This authoritative guidance must be stable and not labile or impulsive. Such authoritative guidance especially gives a child normative confidence, firmness and security. This relationship implies additional aspects such as setting limits, demands, prohibitions, norms, values as well as discipline, routines, rules and firm guidance.

#### 2.1.2.2 The pedagogic sequence structure

**(a) Pedagogic association:** Here educator and child are **by** each other. Through the one-ness and we-ness that arises, a child feels safe (from loneliness and insecurity).

**(b) Pedagogic encounter:** Here educator and child are **with** each other; they enter each other's world. We-ness means that there is a common (shared) world between them. It is only through this encounter that pedagogic influencing is possible.

**(c) Pedagogic engagement:** This points to the responsibility-for-relationships of both the educator and the educand. [Here they are **for** each other.]

**(d) Pedagogic intervention:** This can take the form of **pedagogic corrective** action (disapprove, punish, prohibit) as well as **pedagogic approval** (allow, praise, prize, accept).

**(e) Return to pedagogic association:** Here a child can again be someone himself, he can peacefully assimilate the educator's intervention with him so that by giving meaning he can grasp what was presented to him.

**(f) Periodic breaking away:** Here a breaking away from the pedagogic association and encounter occur, i.e., child and educator

temporarily withdraw themselves from each other's presence. Thus, the pedagogic sequence includes moments of encounter, breaking away and encounter again. This periodic breaking away implies that the educator gradually makes himself superfluous to the child-- this is practiced so that complete (pedagogic) separation one day will be possible.

### **2.1.2.3 The pedagogic activities**

This has to do with the essentials of the educator's helping activities. The actualization of the pedagogic activities includes helping a child exercise the following:

- o Giving meaning
- o Exerting (making effort)
- o Following norms
- o Venturing
- o Being thankful
- o Assuming responsibility
- o Hoping
- o Designing
- o Fulfilling
- o Respecting
- o Self-understanding
- o Freedom

### **2.1.2.4 The pedagogic aim structure**

The educator is directed to a child's future and destination (adulthood) and he will lead him to the following:

- o Meaningful existence
- o Self-judgment and self-understanding
- o Respect for human dignity
- o Morally independent choosing and acting
- o Responsibility
- o Norm identification
- o Outlook on life (philosophy of life)

The question, to be answered in another section, is how does a child's psychic life become disturbed when the above-mentioned pedagogic essentials are actualized in inadequate ways?



The following fact must be emphasized: With educational neglect a child is not adequately helped and supported in actualizing his potentialities and **his becoming toward adulthood is restrained**. He is in **distress** with respect to his **educative relationships** and regarding the **educative activities** that need to occur for his own sake.

With respect to inadequate educative intervention with a child, Van der Geld\* says the following: To form an educand into a self-responsible, self-determining person, into someone who really is free and mentally healthy is difficult in an educative situation that contains one or more of the following aspects: a patriarchic or *laissez-faire* attitude, too extreme educational activities that allow the child to be "unfree", and thus do not "make him free"; materialism as compensation for the lack of a real loving educational relationship (compare the so-called "fat boys" in the U. S. A.); too much domineering; too much bonding; negativism regarding the child's potentialities expressed in such phrases as "you can't do this; you don't understand it", as opposed to encouragement and stimulation; too little influencing within the totality of educating in the form of help with his development of independence by which the impetus to independence too easily can fall into a (fatal) rebelliousness.

### 2.1.3 Educational obstructions

Each educative situation is characterized by **education-promoting** and **education-obstructing** factors. In the PES, the education-obstructing factors dominate. Indeed, an educative situation is problematic when the education-obstructing factors outweigh the education-promoting ones. As a dynamic event and as a precondition for a child growing up, education then is impaired, blocked and obstructed. The educational event comes to a relative **standstill** and eliminating the PES should mean that a **progression and a new beginning** in educating are brought about. In this connection it is said of a child that he is **restrained** in his being educated and growing up.

**Educational obstruction** implies that, in terms of a child's **personal potentialities and educability**, there is a disparity

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\* Van der Geld, A. M. C.: **Begeleiding van Opvoeders en Kinderen** (Guiding educators and children), Samson, Alphen, 1973, p. 287.

between the **pedagogically achieved** and the **pedagogically achievable**.

**Educational distress, educational neglect and educational obstruction** are closely related to a PES. Nevertheless, they stress three distinguishable facets of the PES: **educational distress** refers to the distress experienced by a **child**; **educational neglect** refers to the inadequate intervention from the side of the **educator**; **educational obstruction** refers to the impairment and blocking of the actual **educative event** itself.

#### 2.1.4 Disturbed communication

The pedagogic situation is an interpsychic (between persons) field of tension where educator and child must be attuned to each other and take each other into account. The expression "parents bring up children" allows this event to seem too much like a one-way event--the **communicative aspect** of the pedagogic situation is not obvious. There is an interaction between a child who wants to become someone himself and an educator who makes his own demands and sets his own expectations. A characteristic of the PES is that this communication (encounter, dialogue) between educator and child is disturbed.

Without education (as a dynamic, human encounter) a child cannot actualize his becoming-a-person (Langeveld); in its turn, education only can thrive where educator and child live together in a **genuine communicative relationship**. Other concepts that point to this necessary **pedagogic communication** are complete child-parent love (Langeveld), a love-tie rooted in a natural kinship (Waterink), a personal courtship (Carp), an affective **I-you** bonding (Hanselmann), a loving being connected (Wijngaarden).

Thus, educator and child each enter the world of the other; a common (shared) world arises. There is real interpersonal contact where there is a relationship between persons who want to know and encounter each other in depth **as persons**, where the personal reality (he as he is) and identity (uniqueness) of the other is acknowledged. The one has a love for and interest in the other for the sake of the other. He is captivated by the other person with his positive qualities as well as shortcomings.

Communicating means **encountering**: [here there is a clever play on words that I don't know how to translate into English; in Afrikaans, encounter = ontmoet. The claim here is that in an encounter the other is "relieved" (ont) of all "obligations" (moet)]. In an encounter, a child [and educator] is free to be himself; an intimate, warm, interpersonal space is created where a child can be completely himself.

In contrast to the **loving connection of communication** is the **anxious isolation** of a disturbed communication. **Anxiety** arises in a child when he becomes isolated from his educator. Being closely connected gets lost and a child stands **alone** against what for him is strange and menacing. By virtue of his nature, a child cannot stand alone. His possible existence is endangered. Essentially, anxiety is the experience of loneliness that has arisen with the severance of being lovingly connected. **Everything lacking in a loving connection, that the dependent child experiences, endures unconsciously as life menacing, as an assimilated anxiety** (Wijngaarden).

Wijngaarden<sup>(7)</sup> elucidates the following regarding a child who finds himself in a situation of disturbed contact:

A child cannot yet assimilate such a situation, and the degree to which the circumstances in this respect are serious or the degree to which a child is sensitive, the greater the "disposition for anxiety". He still lacks the power and maturity to again bring about a genuine contact; on the contrary, painfully wounded, he **pulls back into himself and cuts himself off**, or he directs himself only to the outer world to defend himself as well as possible, or he keeps outside afraid to fail. This outward attitude thus can be diffident and fearful (escape attitude) or indifferent, rude, impulsive as well as negative (defensive attitude).

From the experience of a lack of love (on the basis of educational defects or over sensitivity by a child), a fear of contact arises-- because it can injure anew--and in doing so, the contact is avoided or broken. A vicious circle is closed; the fear of contact breaks the possibility for contact that is an objective danger for being fundamentally connected. A child only can be helped out of this situation if **contact** with another is **re-established**; the adult himself must bring about this re-establishment. If this re-

establishment is not brought about, then a disturbance in development appears.

In the PES, a child deals with distress and his life is disturbed. In this connection, Langeveld<sup>(8)</sup> elaborates as follows: With disturbed children there is a failure in communication. This not only means that a child expresses too little about himself or rather conceals than manifests his interiority; it also means that his behavior and expressive life are "unreadable" to his daily educators.

Disturbed communication also can be described in terms of **interpsychic conflict** (conflict between persons). A gap has arisen between an educator and child by which all obviousness, flexibility and mutual attraction are lacking. The educator and the child are involved in this situation with disenchantment, despondency, guilt, loneliness, insecurity, anxiety and desperation.

The communication between educator and child primarily is an affective (emotional) connection. Disturbed communication is **emotion-poor**. By this, the emotional life of a child is damaged precisely because he has such a primary need for love, warmth, sociability, friendliness, pampering, coddling, interest, tenderness, and acceptance. Thus, the danger of disturbed communication is **affective neglect** which gives rise to **affective hunger** and **distress** in a child.

Hence, a disharmonious educator-child interaction means for a child affective distress, loneliness and is "growth-stopping". It is possible that disturbed communication (inability to communicate adequately) can be the origin of the PES, i.e., that a child, on account of a particular handicap, cannot communicate and that this serves as the education-obstructing factor; e.g., an autistic child.

In the following, brief reference is made to the connection between **disturbed communication** and the three other factors of the PES already considered, namely **educational distress**, **educational neglect** and **educational obstructions**. The connection between disturbed communication and educational distress is the following: a child's distress is primarily on a communication level (relationship level). Educational distress can be interpreted in terms of disturbed communication: the inability of the parents to help their child and the inability of the child to ask his parents for help is situated in the defective connection between them.

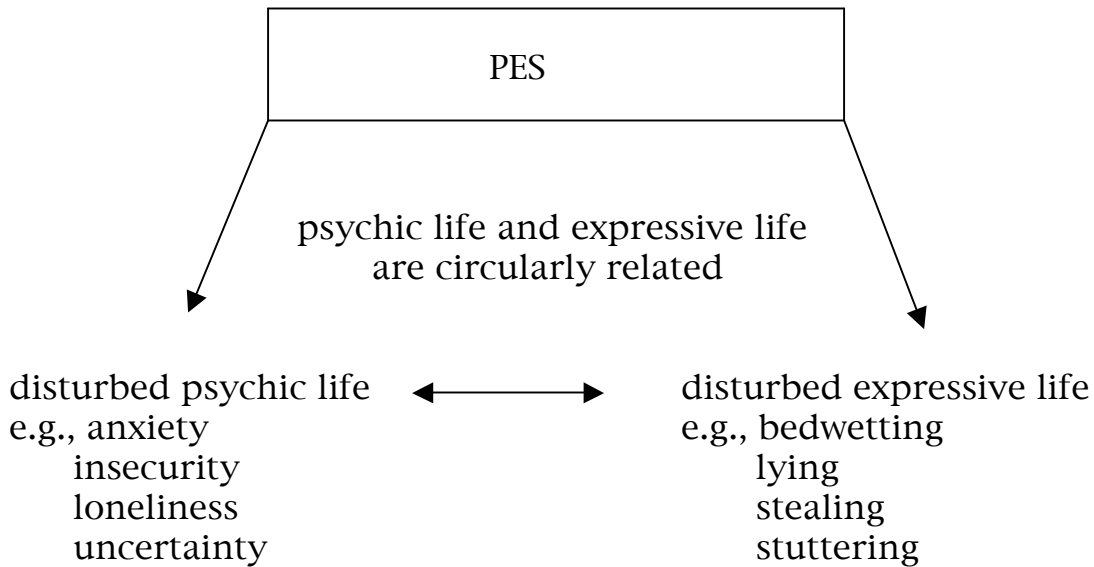
In addition, educating can be viewed as an **unfolding communication** between educator and child. Because pedagogic influencing only can be actualized via pedagogic association and encounter, **communication neglect** (defective association and encounter) also means educational neglect; similarly, disturbed communication prevents an educator from truly being able to adequately intervene with the educand. And because educating is an unfolding communication, the following statement is made: communication-obstructing factors in the pedagogic situation also are education-obstructing factors.

### 2.1.5 Disturbed psychic life

For the orthopedagogue, this clearly has to do with the question of what a child experiences (intrapsychically) when he finds himself in a PES. The question of the mutual connection between the child's lived experiences and behaviors and them with the PES is central for the orthopedagogue.

Where disturbed communication is regarded as a factor in the PES, the emphasis is placed on the interpsychic conflict between educator and child, and here the emphasis is on **intrapsychic conflict**, i.e., the conflict and disturbance regarding the PES that exists within the individual persons concerned. Namely, in the PES we are involved with living and lived-experiencing persons. The psychic life of a child and educator become disturbed because both attribute negative and disturbed meanings to the PES. Educator and child experience themselves as insecure, abandoned to and unprotected from the PES. The PES itself is experienced as being without perspective, as meaningless and as menacing. Educators and children experience dejection, disillusionment, feelings of guilt, pessimism, confusion, desperation, etc. Thus, a child's distress is an **affective distress**. The words **insecurity** and **anxiety** can be written over the entire PES.

Regarding their connections, the present matter can be schematized as follows:



Now the question is what specific distress does a child experience when the educative intervention with him is inadequate?

When the **pedagogic relationship of trust** is inadequately actualized, a child feels that his individual security is threatened. A conflict in trust always is paired with feelings of insecurity in a child. This leaves him defenseless, feeling completely powerless and this is paralyzing to him. A young child's trust is "blind" (unreasoned, unlimited, uncritical, unconditional). With broken trust this blind trust changes into distrust. A child feels abandoned, forsaken and betrayed with the correlated feelings of hate, anxiety and uncertainty. It is difficult for a child who is uncertain to trust in life again. A child who is affectively neglected feels unaccepted and unworthy. Feeling insecure and anxious almost is a rule with neglected children (Van der Zeyde). When a child does not receive enough support and help via the relationship of trust, his helplessness leads to anxiety. In love one-ness and security are present, in anxiety insecurity and loneliness (Carp). Trust gives rise to favorableness, willingness, calm and tranquility; in distrust there is fear, animosity, threat, unrest (Lersch). Emotional insecurity and distrust between parent and child mean stress for a child.

It has already been indicated that, in connection with the inadequate actualization of the **pedagogic relationship of understanding**, a child becomes discouraged, frustrated and confused. A defective understanding of a child leads to making unreasonable demands of him. It is discouraging and paralyzing and crushes his self-confidence every time that there are demands

and expectations of him that he knows he cannot meet and this thrusts conflict and derailment on him.

When **pedagogic authority** is inadequate, a child does not learn to know and obey norms and values; he remains uncertain about them. He becomes egocentric, obstinate and unrestrained. He has difficulty acquiring his freedom and responsibility. Also his socialization suffers because he does not learn to take fellow persons into account.

In connection with the non-actualization of pedagogic association, encounter and intervention, the following are noted: pedagogic influencing and pedagogic activity are possible only through pedagogic association and encounter. When they don't occur, a child's practicing-to-adulthood regarding the following facets is neglected (compare the pedagogic activities in section 2.1.2.3): He doesn't learn from the adult's example to give **meaning** to reality (persons, things, situations, events) continually on a higher level. His meanings remain childish (infantile) and this restrains his becoming. He will signify a situation (e.g., a vicious dog, poor learning achievement) with anxiety and insecurity instead of modifying it according to the educator's example. He does not cultivate a readiness to make an **effort** to contribute to his own becoming adult. He does not learn to live in accordance with particular **norms** so he is unable to reach **proper** adulthood.

Defective exemplification (by the educator) and emulation (by the child) of norms, values, principles and rules lead to the normative flavor of a child's psychic life (and expressive life) suffering damage. Without trust a child will not **venture** with or follow an educator's way (see below). An insecure child also cannot be **thankful** for the security the adult must assure for him. Also, he doesn't show the desired child **responsibility** (accountability) for his deeds and for his share in educative relationships. In addition, he doesn't experience much **hope** in and perspective (see below) on his future. His realization of his destiny (adulthood) is restrained. **Respect** for his own being a person and for other persons is lacking, as is respect for what a person ought to do or not do. He doesn't learn to **understand** and judge himself, and he over-estimates or under-estimates himself. He does not acquire **freedom** to responsibility.

Rienstra<sup>(9)</sup> nicely describes how a PES injures a child in the form of his disturbed psychic life. Some disturbed lived-experiences of a

child that he mentions in this connection are the following: affective hunger; fawning attitude; defensive attitude; lack of interest; egocentricity; feelings of rejection; affective instability; restlessness; hostile attitude; apathy; indifference; insecurity; anxiety; jealousy; neglect; feelings of guilt; trauma; frustration; loneliness; uncertainty; inferiority; lack of initiative; resentment; discouragement; spite; resistance; animosity; aggressive feelings; etc.

Lubbers<sup>(10)</sup> explains in his "anthropology (person image) of the life of a disturbed child": if a child is not accepted in love, he is continually confronted in his growing up with situations that he is unable to deal with. **Uncertainty** leads to **insecurity** and his life is without prospect. In his **helplessness**, he is abandoned to danger. He cannot free himself from his **anxiety**, and on the basis of a **conflict in trust** he cannot share his anxiety with his parents. Disturbing a child's life also means **disturbing communication**.

Clearly, the PES is a situation of conflict. Intrapsychic conflict, tension and disturbance arise when a child's needs, yearnings and initiative are frustrated by serious educative deficiencies. Some examples:

<b>The need of a child</b>	/	<b>The conflict situation</b>
The child has physical needs	/	they remain unfilled.
The child has a need for security	/	he feels insecure.
The child has a need for self-actualization	/	it is restrained.
The child wants to be someone himself (adult)	/	he is kept small.
The child wants to be accepted	/	he feels rejected.
The child wants to feel of worth	/	he feels inferior.
The child wants to be understood	/	he feels misunderstood.
The child seeks support to fulfill his potentialities	/	he is constrained.
The child wants to know where he stands	/	he is disoriented.
The child wants to be able to deal with new situations	/	he is frightened of them.
The child has a need for authority	/	he experiences it as lacking.

In light of the above, the following are presented as **essentials of a child's disturbed psychic life**:



- o **being different** (the child feels different in the sense of conspicuous);
- o **being inferior** (the difference makes him feel less worthy and even unworthy);
- o **loneliness** (he deals in an affective no-man's-land; severs contact);
- o **helplessness** (clumsy, dependent, powerless);
- o **uncertainty** (confusion, despair, bewilderment: a general basic uncertainty--lack of confidence--about life);
- o **anxiety** (lack of a close loving being connected; separated).

Anxiety is the **fundamental attunement** of human existence and it accompanies all of the above-mentioned disturbed emotional lived experiences.

A child's experiences in relation to his pedagogic situation do not leave him untouched; they are either favorable or unfavorable for his growing up. A child's disturbed experiences in relation to his PES mentioned above obstruct his psychic-spiritual development. Here there is mention of a **restrained becoming and learning**.

**Restrained becoming** means that the principles or moments in terms of which a child's becoming must prosper are not actualized (principles of helplessness, security, exploration and emancipation). This amounts to the fact that the child cannot conquer his **helplessness** on the basis of his **feeling of security** and be prepared to **venture** in the sense that he **explore** the, for him, unknown world and in doing so realize his **emancipation** to adulthood. Thus, there is mention of

- o defective or **destructive exploration** instead of **constructive exploration**: A child indeed explores his world but the nature of the exploration is defective or it points to a destruction of himself and others; e.g., he explores too early with sexuality, drug use; he engages in delinquent or meaningless, fatalistic and rebellious conduct;
- o **failed emancipation**: A child attains incomplete or improper adulthood or even a seeming-adulthood.

The PES can be a serious threat to the personality-in-becoming. It can push a child's personal development to defective emancipation, improper adulthood, psychic "distorted growth" and "mis-growth", personal disintegration, a break in psychic-spiritual health. Serious educative defects or inadequate educative situations are important factors in the event of impoverishing the psychic structure. This is expressed in childhood and later in adulthood in an inability to establish affective relationships and in inhibitions regarding participation in society. For example, Ringel\* describes five frequently occurring adult-types that someone with an unfavorable personal development can experience:

- o the "**broken person**" no longer is in a position to develop his own will or at least doesn't have the courage to show this outwardly. He will not take responsibility for himself; more strongly, he avoids this responsibility in anxious ways.
- o the "**hypocritical person**" is not in a position to bring the outer and his inner worlds into correspondence with each other. Outwardly he shows himself as diligent and adjusted; inwardly he is full of aggression and at odds with the situations around him.
- o the "**restrained person**" is characterized by the fact that he behaves in unnatural ways in his association with persons. For him everywhere there are obstacles in human contact and he doesn't have the courage to face and overcome them.
- o the "**distorted person**" no longer has the power to spontaneously live his total personality; he has, as it were, lost his natural basis and is at the mercy of "deviant mechanisms".
- o the "**childish person**" is characterized by his infantile relationships to the world around him. Everything is primitive and is seen superficially; things are taken lightly and a childish excessive optimism is displayed.

In childhood, the inhibition of becoming means that his life as a child is characterized by **infantilism**: life habits are left over from an earlier stage of development in his life, e.g., thumb-sucking at 12 years, bedwetting as a psychic response to tension, temper tantrums (even as adults) by which the child tyrannizes his educators and environment.

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\* Ringel, E., as cited by Van der Geld, A. M. C. : **Begeleiding van Opvoeders en Kinderen**, Samson, Alphen, 1973, pp. 285 and 286.

**Inhibition of learning** means that a child is blocked in his learning activities and achievements. Feelings and thoughts are two fundamental psychic phenomena and they are a precondition for him actualizing his cognitive potentialities (intelligence, thinking, remembering, etc.) hence his emotional life must be undisturbed. Consequently, an emotional disturbance also means a disturbance in his intellectual life. Then he becomes an underachiever at school because he becomes emotionally blocked regarding his intention (motivation) to learn.

Finally, the following three-fold distinction is made:

- o **correctable disturbed psychic life:** when the disturbance is a result of the PES, e.g., emotional disturbance or under achievement in the learning event, this can be eliminated by correcting the PES.

- o **uncorrectable disturbed psychic life:** here a child's disturbed psychic life is the origin of the PES, e.g., a child with psychoneurological dysfunctions (brain damage), by which a neurological defect shows itself in psychic dysfunction (fluctuations in attending, emotional instability, perceptual disturbances, etc.). Consequently, the disturbed psychic life of the child is an uncorrectable factor of educative obstruction that gives rise to the PES. In such a case, the disturbed psychic life of the child, nevertheless, is an essential of the PES. The same holds for the epileptic, intellectually retarded and autistic child.

- o **the possibility exists that a handicapped child's psychic life can become disturbed because he cannot assimilate and accept his handicap.** Although the handicap might be uncorrectable, the related psychic disturbance might well be correctable in the sense that he can learn to accept and live in peace with his being handicapped and different.

### 2.1.6 Disturbed expressive life

A child expresses his disturbed psychic life in one or another form of disturbed, undesirable or problematic behavior (externally perceivable action). Ordinarily we say a child has behavior problems or deviant behaviors. The orthopedagogue does not direct himself primarily to these behavior problems since he views them merely as the **symptom, sign** or **expression** of a child's

disturbed psychic life. Indeed, it is in terms of his disturbed expressive life that an educator notices that his psychic life is disturbed. However, often a child is "unreadable" to an educator and the question is whether the educator is always able to adequately interpret his disturbed behaviors in terms of disturbed experiences.

Freud has stated that thwarted needs become expressed in a child's behavior. Disturbed behaviors indeed are life expressions of a distressed child psyche to which the tensions of the PES give rise. Examples of conspicuous behavior (or worse) that are expressions of an unsolved disturbance are the following: enuresis (wetting the bed or pants), encopresis (soiling pants), sexual deviations, theft, unstable behavior, withdrawal, irritability, eating disorders, aggressive behavior, hyperactivity and restlessness, fatigue (tensions and conflicts often demand lots of energy); a child is unable to relax, rest or sleep, he feels too threatened, intellectual underachievement, thumb sucking, nail biting, fighting, lying, stuttering, disturbed sleep, headache, fear of the dark, obstinate behavior, motor unrest, etc.

Often the PES offers little perspective for a child's psyche. He consciously and unconsciously looks for ways out of his psychic misery. The PES limits his freedom to be himself and gives rise to restraints and disturbances in him. He responds to the distress and anxiety of the PES through an inner defensive attitude and associated external deviant behavior. In this way he tries to protect himself. We differentiate three directions of fleeing (as a fleeing and escaping from an inner state of distress):

- o **a fleeing forward (aggression):** he comes into open, intentional assault on and opposition to his educator, paired with the fear of reprisal by the adversary, because his educators have indeed become adversaries. Examples of this fleeing forward are lying, deceit, stealing, running away, rebelliousness.

- o **a fleeing into oneself (isolation):** he withdraws into himself, withdrawing himself from the influences that hinder and restrain his development. He finds himself on an island of loneliness (and **anxiety**). He is no longer "readable" to his educators; he is no longer reachable either through strictness or love. He maintains an isolating, contact avoiding or contact-breaking attitude toward life. This disturbed

communication leads to inner loneliness, isolation and a consuming feeling of abandonment.

**o a fleeing back (regression):** he falls back and holds onto an earlier stage of becoming with the unconscious aim to return again to a lost child paradise (an atmosphere of adequate security). He flees into the forms of existence of a younger child. Bedwetting is a typical symptom of regression. Other forms of regression are stuttering, thumb sucking, nail biting, etc. The psychic dynamic underlying this fleeing back can be explained as follows: "Don't you see how little, helpless and dependent I still am? Thus, I still wet my bed. Don't you hear how I talk? I suck my thumb (bite my nails) because something is missing--genuine loving interest!"<sup>(11)</sup>

The disturbed expressive life of particular types of handicapped children can be briefly mentioned. Once again, the disturbed expressive life or problematic behaviors of these children are the **origin** and not the result of the PES. Examples of this are hyperactivity, rhythmic defects, antisocial behavior and the poor reading and spelling of a brain-damaged child, the seizures of an epileptic child, and the absence of eye contact with an autistic child.

In this regard, Hart de Ruyter, et. al.<sup>(12)</sup> differentiate among the following forms of disturbed behavior that can give rise to clashes with the environment and serious deformations of character:

- o retarded behavior:** a mentally deficient child's behavior often is seriously disturbed and also socially disturbing, especially when care is inadequate; e.g., straying, moral misdeeds, organic deviations paired with mental deficiency;
- o psychotic behavior:** on the basis of deviations in person-structure, the person cannot link up with the community. His emotional life, temperament and character are disturbed. Psychotic behavior seldom appears in children and youths;
- o cerebrally disturbed behavior:** this is the result of psychic and neurological disturbances in brain-damaged children and also in epileptic children who are not amenable to medical therapy;
- o disturbed behavior in the poorly (intellectually) endowed:** poor or seemingly poor endowment often are related to problematic behavior;

- o **disturbed behavior connected with a phase of development:** examples here are abnormal obstinacy in toddlers and serious rebelliousness in children in puberty;
- o **situationally disturbed behavior:** behavior that is disturbed because of the situation within which a child lives, e.g., a PES. These disturbed behaviors essentially are alarm-signals that a child's psychic life is disturbed;
- o **reactively disturbed behavior:** this is a child's intrapsychic response (reaction) to particular circumstances, e.g., the death of a next-of-kin, uprooting, divorce and serious psycho-traumas (shocks). This can be temporary (he assimilates the psychic conflict) or he can become neurotic. An example of such behavior is a psychosomatic illness such as asthma;
- o **neurotically disturbed behavior:** an anxious child can exhibit particular compulsive behaviors, defensive behavior and hysteria that are expressions of his insecurity and anxiety.

The above specific forms of disturbance with the related behavioral disturbances are dealt with briefly in chapter three.

### 2.1.7 Being different and experiencing oneself as being different (inferior)

The PES is characterized by a being different in the sense that, as a pedagogic situation, it has become conspicuous. Also, a child who finds himself in a PES is referred to as being-different or as a child conspicuous in his becoming. It is precisely this being-different, e.g., of a handicapped child that gives rise to a PES. A child is different; this changes the educative situation. A child experiences (attributes meaning to) things and events differently (his world is different). His educators often find it difficult to be attuned to his being different and this leads to a lack of understanding and disturbed communication.

When a PES originates from obstructive factors that are correctable (e.g., deficiencies in educating), then the disturbed behaviors of an educator as well as a child are the different or conspicuous factors of the PES.

Being different because of deafness is of another nature than because of blindness. Consequently, each child is **uniquely** different in his needs.

A child in a PES is different but he also experiences himself as being different, i.e., he is explicitly aware that he is different and conspicuous. He experiences his defect (e.g., learning problem, deviant behavior, physical handicap) in the eye of the other--under the look of the other. He is aware that others notice his deficiency and this makes him self-conscious.

The essence of this experience of being different is a **self-devaluation**, a subjective experience of the defect as something that makes him feel inferior to those around him. Thus he experiences himself as different in the sense of inferior (of less value). The clever pupil, the champion athlete and the beautiful high school girl also experience themselves as different and conspicuous on the basis of a particular status but not in the sense of self-devaluation and a feeling of less worth. The former conspicuous child experiences himself as "a bit of bad luck"--"I have a defective body", "I have a learning problem", "I have parents who don't understand me". He feels of less value in the eyes of the other. He is aware of their "hidden, masked negative feelings that he experiences as depreciating" (Rupp). Others devalue him because of his deficiency. He accepts the other's judgment that he is of less worth and he devalues himself.

This experience of self as different and inferior means for a child a disturbance in his psychic life. It also means a disturbance in his expressive life because he will continually behave as someone who is of less value.

### 2.1.8 Lack of perspective

An educational situation always either **provides a perspective** or is **without one**. In two respects the PES is a situation without a perspective. On the one hand it is characterized by an **obscure future perspective** and on the other hand by an **educational perspective that is lacking**.

As to an **obscure future perspective**, a person is historicity (past, present and future). Only the present is livable as there is a past out of which and a future to which it can be lived. The PES in which those involved find themselves colors the manner in which the future is seen. Child and educator experience the PES as not having a future perspective, as meaningless and as menacing. From

the disturbed here-and-now of the PES, an ordered future does not seem possible. Educational distress (the good child life is disturbed) means that a child is no longer directed to the future or to adulthood. Being without perspective means that neither educator nor child look to the future from the disorientation of the present PES. Then an educator asks, "What will this child become one day?" A child might ask himself "How am I going to attain proper adulthood one day if I have already run aground?"

Hope-in-the-future thus is lacking. It is this hope-in-the-future that makes a child's growing up meaningful and awakens in him agreeable expectations for the future (Landman).

As far as **lacking an educational perspective** is concerned, the PES is a situation of confusion and impotence. A child is in educational distress but the educator is **confused about action**. He does not know how he should act further pedagogically with the child entrusted to him. He does not know how to correct the educational deficiency that has given rise to the PES. Or he does not know what particular, different kinds of special educative actions to apply to his handicapped child. He needs advise, support and guidance from an expert orthopedagogue. Because of his educationally difficult child, he is dealing with pedagogic and affective uncertainty. He does not always understand the experiences and behaviors of his child-in-distress so his pedagogic intervention is characterized by uncertainty and misunderstanding.

Ter Horst<sup>(13)</sup> links the lack of perspective of the PES to the disturbed psychic and expressive lives of a child and educator as follows: The lack of perspective shows itself in a child, e.g., as loudness, depression, anxiety, aggression, destructiveness, isolation, task refusal, lack in a sense of reality, stereotypic thinking, psychosomatic symptoms, rambling, psychoses. In an educator it presents itself as depression, over-protection, strictness, fickleness, rage, isolation, neglect, rejection, abandonment, psychosomatic symptoms, a "let-it-be" attitude.

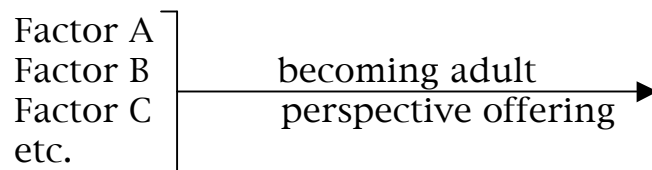
The findings of Van der Geld<sup>(14)</sup> serve as a meaningful illustration of both an **obscure future perspective** and an **educational perspective that is lacking** as essentials of the PES. According to him, the following are experienced by parents who are involved in a PES:



- o uneasiness about the child's future
- o uncertainty about his future
- o a feeling of impotence
- o a feeling that they fall short of the mark
- o a feeling of educational uncertainty
- o a feeling that they have failed educationally
- o alarm about the child's actual behavior
- o uncertainty about educational decisions
- o the question and uncertainty: what must we do further with this child?
- o concern about the child's improper development

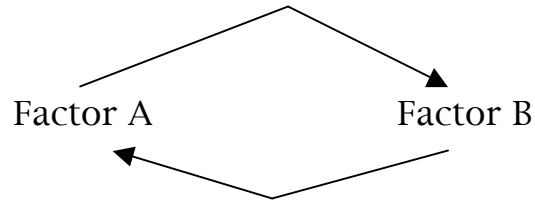
### 2.1.9 Circular dynamic

A non-problematic educational situation is a **dynamic field of tension** within which the perspective-offering factors (e.g., educator, child) are attuned to each other such that they continually can move forward with each other. **Dynamic** means that there is **action** and **movement**; something **happens** there. In the non-problematic educational situation, the dynamic is **linear**, i.e., the interdependent forces of the situation promote a child's becoming toward adulthood. This is represented schematically as follows:

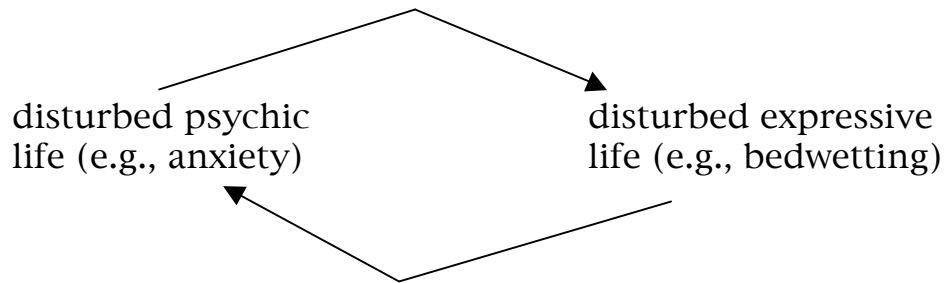


Although educating and becoming have come to a relative standstill in it, even so a PES is also characterized by a dynamism. However, the factors of the PES are attuned to each other and act upon each other without perspective and impede each other. (For example, the factor **educator** acts as an educational impediment on the factor **child**). Thus, in the PES the dynamic has degenerated from a **linear** to a **circular** one. A child's education and becoming are obstructed because a **vicious circle** has arisen which is relatively impervious to influences by other factors and that is not broken out of to a new forward movement of educator and child. A vicious circle implies that two interdependent factors of the PES mutually influence each other negatively by disturbing and obstructing each other so that the disturbance and obstruction increasingly become

worse. This circular dynamic or vicious circle is one that is closed.

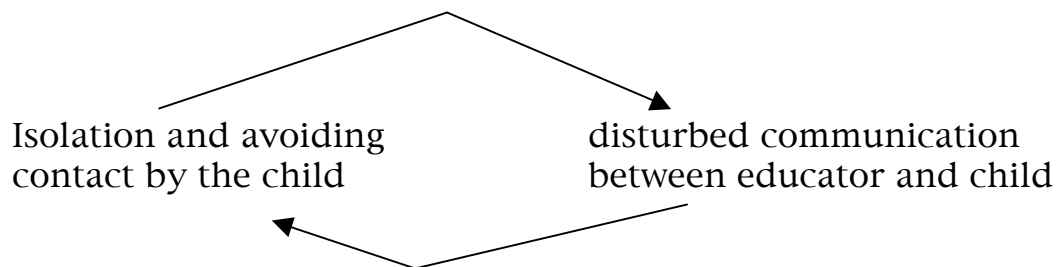


An intrapsychic as well as an interpsychic circular dynamic is possible. An example of an **intrapsychic circular dynamic** is the following: The psychic and expressive lives are connected as a circular event. A disturbed psychic and expressive life are connected as a vicious circle. For example:



Similarly, a vicious circle is possible between an emotional disturbance and a learning problem.

The following is an example of an **interpsychic circular dynamic**:



Further examples of this are that between the pedagogic and non-pedagogic relationships in the family, that between educational distress of a handicapped child and the pedagogic uncertainty of his

parents. Such a dynamic is actualized as follows: a child is handicapped and requires special, different educative intervention. His parents are uncertain about how to act in this special case and their educative attempts do not fulfill the particular needs and wants of their child. The child becomes educationally distressed with a related disturbed psychic life (anxiety) and disturbed expressive life (breaking contact). In light of the child's disturbed expressions (behaviors), the parents become even more unsure about how to educate their handicapped child because now he is a restrained as well as a handicapped child.

### 2.1.10 Child problems

Educating is helping a child become an adult. A PES implies that there is a problem regarding a child's becoming adult. Thus, an essence of the PES is that the educator experiences problems about his child. The concept **child problems** is chosen over the concept **problem children** because a child with his conditions and capacities is not always the obstructing factor (leading to the PES) and because the origin of the problem is not always the child. Often there are **problem parents** rather than **problem children** namely when the parent fails in his educative attempts and thus becomes the obstructing factor.

The concept **child problems** always refers to a **child life-with-deficiencies** whether the deficiencies are correctable restraints or uncorrectable handicaps. The important distinction in this connection was made earlier, i.e., whether a child **has** a problem or **is** a problem. Examples of these two types of problems have already been indicated (in Chapter 1).

## 2.2 THE ETIOLOGY OF THE PES

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Etiology has to do with the question of what factors lead to a PES. The fact that a PES has **multiple "causes"** must be emphasized. Usually more than one factor or even a multiple combination of factors act as obstructions in a particular PES; e.g., a child can be sickly but because of this his parents make the educational mistake of over-protecting or over-indulging him.

Also, once again it should be emphasized that the different obstructions are **interdependently** woven together and influence each other dynamically such that they only can be **distinguished** and should not be depicted as separate from each other. The elimination of these obstructing factors also means eliminating the PES. These factors often are correctable, e.g., a temporary illness, educational errors, poverty, marital quarrels. However, some of them are not correctable (e.g., the death of a parent, brain-damage, intellectual retardation) so that other doors to eliminating the PES must be found.

### 2.2.1.1 Education-obstructing factors

The following six groups of **education-obstructing factors** are distinguished:

#### (a) Physical (bodily) factors

The congenital or acquired physical deviations and sensory deficiencies of a child create problems for his parents with respect to educating and handling him. His different physical status--and also his **experience** of his physical handicap--requires a modified, special educative situation and presents the parents with a difficult, problematic educational task to which they are not always able to respond. Examples of obstructing physical and sensory conditions of a child are the following: blindness, deafness, poor sightedness, being hard of hearing, loss of sense of touch (e.g., being burned), epilepsy, brain damage and minimal brain dysfunction, chronic illness such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney defects, leukemia, polio; in addition, muscular dystrophy, asthma, hemophilia, loss of a limb, birth defects, speech defects, tuberculosis, spina bifida and mental retardation.

Concerning these physical and sensory handicaps as factors of the PES, the task of a physician, medical and paramedical specialist, children's specialist, internist, optometrist, neurologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech therapist, etc. is to entirely or partially eliminate the PES. Thus, education obstructing factors such as epilepsy can be treated with medicine or weak sightedness can be eliminated through ophthalmic correction.

#### (b) Psychic-spiritual factors

A child's psychic-spiritual being restrained and handicapped with the paired intellectual deficiency and/or emotional disturbance act as an educational obstruction especially because there is a defective possibility of communication. Examples of this are the defective contact of an autistic child, psychic dysfunction of a brain damaged and epileptic child, the intellectual impotence of a mentally retarded child and the disintegrated personal structure of a youthful psychopath.

Besides these possibilities of uncorrectable handicaps (defects, dysfunctions), correctable restraints can act as educational obstructions, e.g., disturbance in the psychic life of a child who cannot assimilate one or another situation in his life (educational distress, death of a close relative, a physical defect, failure at school, etc.). For example, poor school achievement can be the origin as well as the outcome of a PES.

Eliminating the PES with respect to the above mentioned restraints and handicaps is the task of the **orthopedagogue**. He has the task of designing and implementing special forms of activity (forms of pedotherapy) with these children. However, when a child's personal structure is disturbed and he displays a psychiatric image, he finds himself outside of the purview of the orthopedagogue and he becomes a special task for a psychiatrist.

### **(c) Factors arising from relating to reality**

Here the educational obstructions are situated in the human and non-human **reality** to which a child is in **relation**, namely persons, animals, plants, things. This primarily has to do with the **human relationships** a child finds himself in and where there is a distinction between **pedagogic relationships** (parents, teachers) and **non-pedagogic relationships** (brothers, sisters, friends, classmates, age cohorts). Of these the former far and away are the most meaningful for a child.

In this connection, the matters of **disturbed educational relationships** and **educational errors** as educationally obstructing factors are central for the orthopedagogue and clearly his task is to eliminate them. In this light, the facet of the PES called **factors arising from relating to reality** and their **elimination** will receive particular and detailed attention later in this work.

**(d) Family factors** (not belonging to group c)

This involves the non-pedagogic relationships and conditions in the family that can act as educationally obstructing factors. Here one thinks of an incomplete family (death of one or both parents, divorce), individual mental disturbances of one or both parents (neurosis, mental retardation), marital tensions, conflict between parents and their adult children, family crises such as poverty, illness, homelessness, unemployment, separation (e.g., because of war).

The modern family is characterized by a certain tragedy. The family situation that struggles for permanence in the midst of impermanent social relationships is tragic. Family members diverge from each other by which, in our society, the family clearly is a field of social tension. Many family and educational difficulties can be related directly to the contemporary structure of society. The educative function of the family no longer is consistent because educating (to participate in society) continually is influenced by changes in the social structure. This is an unavoidable dynamic in the educative function of a modern family. Appropriate participation in new social situations must continually be brought about (Van der Geld).

The elimination of the PES with respect to family factors is the task of a family sociologist, social worker, clergyman, psychiatrist, family counselor, marriage counselor, etc.

**(e) Subcultural factors** (not belonging to groups c and d)

Disturbances in an unfavorable life community or social situation within which a child and family find themselves can function as educationally obstructing factors. Possibly the family finds itself in a crime-infested or socio-economically under-privileged environment. The system of values, attitudes, customs and lifestyle of the subculture retard or disturb a child's personal becoming. A good example of this is the terrorized communities in Ireland. Conflict and violence between religious and socio-economic clashing groups give rise to children growing up with hate, aggression and anxiety.

The elimination of such factors is the task of politicians, economists, sociologists, community leaders, social workers, etc.

**(f) Societal structural factors** (not included in groups c, d and e)

The broad structure of society thoroughly influences (promotes or hinders) the family life and the education of a child, and can be educationally obstructing. This includes social and economic factors such as power, status, assets, consumption, etc. in society. Socially determined structural factors such as national poverty, famine, epidemics and housing problems directly affect the family and thus are education obstructing factors. There can be deficient financial means for adequate teaching and schooling or for child medical services; city planning and house building can occur without taking the child into account.

In addition, the following social structural factors are examples of what can be disturbing to family stability and obstructing to the education of a child: the increased pace of life in society, neuroticizing factors (psychic pressure on family members), psychically dissatisfying work, economic tightness and uncertainty, the ambiguity of our time, uncertainty and decline of social status, population explosion, urbanization, the multiformity and complexity of cultural influences.

The great societal elevating task is the work of the politician (state), sociologist, economist, city planning expert, ecologist, etc. They must work together to bring about change to create a better, more humane society. Not only must a child become equipped for life but society must be made livable for a child (Ter Horst).

From the above classification, it seems that factor groups b and c are the task of the orthopedagogue for eliminating the PES. Next the education obstructing factors belonging to these groups will be treated more in particular under the following themes:

- o mistakes in educating as factors of the PES;
- o disturbed relationships as factors of the PES;
- o particular family situations as factors of the PES.

### **2.2.2 Mistakes in educating as factors of the PES**

It is difficult to educate a child correctly. Since no one is perfect, it also is natural that an educator makes mistakes (compare the

concept **educational deficiency**). Mistakes are made either on the basis of indifference or ignorance. A child's natural equipment puts him in a position to overcome the damage from the educative mistakes of his educators. However, an educator can focus on his mistakes. Therefore, he should continually strive to get to know his child and his educating better and improve himself as an educator. Preventing is always better than curing. The natural equipment of an educator puts him in a position to be successful at educating his child without particular knowledge of pedagogics because of his **intuitive attunement to what for his child is right or wrong, good or bad** and because of his **love for his child**.

The matter of educative mistakes centers on the fact that an educator inadequately takes into account

- o the primary psychic-spiritual needs of the child (hence, neglect); and
- o the natural psychic-spiritual stage of becoming (level) of the child (hence, spoiling and interrogating, hardening and other excesses).

The following particular inappropriate educational attitudes and actions of the parents are distinguished:

### 2.2.2.1 Neglect

For his growing up, a child receives insufficient material care as well as too little help and support in the forms of guiding, disciplining, establishing routines, etc. Often there is good material care but the parents are so busy with their occupational or social life that they have no time to give attention to their child. The association and encounter with the child, within which the opportunity for educating lies, are not actualized enough. The occasion is lacking where demands, norms, commands and prohibitions can be presented to the child. He is allowed to do whatever he desires. This leaves him insecure because he now is groping with uncertainty about how he should act in a strange, menacing reality. Then, his exploration of his world often is destructive and his deeds occur at the cost of others. The child's conduct and behaviors are unrestrained and uncontrolled. He does not take into consideration others and accepted norms and this defect can degenerate into criminality.



Although there often is mention of average or good intellectual potentialities, at school he is not disciplined enough to concentrate or he doesn't exert himself enough to satisfactorily achieve cognitively. In class he is restless, obstinate and unrestrained, and he directs himself only to what is pleasant. He is bored and his attention fluctuates. His weak focus on work leads him to "rattling off" a task merely to get rid of it. Also he exerts no effort or discipline with respect to any thinking activity.

#### 2.2.2.2 Over-indulgence (spoiling)

This means that the parents unreasonably "spoil" their child by an over-indulgent attitude. This is certainly the most difficult educative mistake to avoid. If the educators cannot distance themselves from their child or if they don't possess the mental strength to say "no" to him, they are too slack and irresolute. They give in to everything their **child** wants and not to what **ought** to be. This everything-may and everything-can educative climate brings chaos to a child. The parents try to avoid conflict and unpleasantness with him by giving in to his whims. They try to buy kindness and favor from him, or they spare themselves from the immediate frustration. However, this educative attitude is short sighted--the child avenges himself by demanding even more from his educators.

Often the reason for this over-indulgent attitude is that a child is ill or handicapped. A child is a physical invalid but the parents also make him a mental invalid. Some parents want to educate their child in a "modern" way or "psychologically" and he must be allowed to be "free" to do what he wants. Prohibitions and punishment will lead to "complexes" arising in a child. Often because of loose family ties, a child is "free" to go his own way. Sometimes the parent compensates for his deficiency in giving love, real **personal** interest and discipline by flooding his child with material goods. He buys off his own conscience by over-indulging his child. The grandparents are the natural over-indulgers of the child. They control their child with difficulty. They do not demand and only give because they do not carry the primary responsibility for educating him.

A child who is spoiled and treated indulgently is a stranger to life in a harsh reality. He remains on a **gratification level** while achievement on a **reality level** is what is desired. He doesn't learn

to endure aversions, difficulties, disappointments and frustrations. He doesn't learn to exert himself to meet the demands of reality. Especially in school, he has difficulty accepting punishment and strictness from a teacher. Here he underachieves because he is used to standing outside of and above demands, obligations and also prohibitions. A child who is materially indulged doesn't learn the value of money and goods and he never learns the joy of receiving because he is too used to receiving excesses.

A spoiled child becomes egocentric. The world is made only for him. He tyrannizes his environment with his being obstinate and over-reacts when he doesn't get his way. He is without norms and respects nothing and no one. His self-interests reign on a hasty level and he directs himself to his own gratification. His behavior degenerates and becomes blatant, offensive, trite and vulgar. Often, when he reaches puberty he escapes by changing into a delightful teenager.

An over-indulgent educator also is inclined to permit a child and youth to do things for which he is not yet ready and which are not appropriate for his age; e.g., a girl who is allowed to date boys or to wear make up at too early an age.

### **2.2.2.3 Hardening**

Hardening is really the opposite of over-indulgence. Many educators exaggerate the view that a child should be made hard through education so that he can maintain himself in a hard-handed world and against the difficulties and problems of life. Especially a father might detest a spiritless child and want to make his son a "man". Then the boy is not allowed to cry and run to his parents after each difficulty. A child's becoming independent is absolutized. Sometimes the parent's attitude is one of lovelessness and a sadistic mentality and he then deliberately creates situations where his child is uncomfortable (cold bath water), anxiety and disappointment must be endured and he must learn to suffer. Sometimes a child is treated ruthlessly--beaten and punished. Or he is rejected when he wants to reconcile himself with his father. Such parents stress games and sports that make him rough and hard.

Overlooked is the fact that punishment is a symbolic activity with the sole aim of improving a child morally. The parents know nothing of prudence and gentle firmness and also of forgiving and

reconciling. Their manner of punishment works to harden their child and often is more of a personal emotional discharge on him rather than the use of punishment as a responsible means of educating. Irrespective of the anxiety and disposition to anxiety that is central in the world of an educationally hardened child, he becomes blunted, devoid of feeling, degenerate, devalued and indeed hard. Educational hardening means for the child a psychically distorted growth.

#### **2.2.2.4 Over-protecting**

The over-concerned and over-protecting attitude essentially means a child in his growing up is under-estimated and therefore also under-challenged. Excessive physical pampering usually is paired with this. A child is treated as if he were much younger and only those demands are made of him that would be made of a younger child. Colloquially, it is said that such a child is "pampered up" rather than "brought up". This educative mistake springs from a parent's excessive fear that something will happen to his child. The parent sees danger in everything and tries to protect his child against the danger. Then, he may not be allowed to move in and near the street or play with any friends. At every opportunity, the parents keep him too little for his age (infantilize him). Often it is the parents' aim to keep him little so they can "possess" him longer. A child's wanting-to-be-someone-himself and his increasing independence are not taken into account enough. He is not recognized and acknowledged in his developing uniqueness. Especially mothers are disposed to over-protect and it is said that a child becomes too "mothered".

This attitude shows itself in a child being excessively bonded to his mother and excessively seeks his mother's attention. Many parents allow their child to sleep in the same room with them until a late age. Ordinarily, he is helped too much with everything--with homework, going to school, eating, bathing and dressing. These parents forget the important educational principle that if one wants to help him become independent, one must gradually withdraw one's help. Often a mother interferes when the child disagrees with the father, a teacher or a playmate. He is sheltered from associating and competing with peers.

Levy<sup>(15)</sup> differentiates between two forms of motherly over-protection: the domineering and the submissive mother. The first-

mentioned demands of her child strict obedience and submissiveness. All aggressive inclinations are smothered. The child is really a love object that is possessed by his mother's complete will. He does everything that his mother wants and passively submits to her will. The submissive mother gives herself completely to her child who happily demands her attention and complete services. Yet this mother is aggressive towards persons who dare to lift a finger to her child and to her child himself if he acts submissively and exploits this submissiveness. He is too free and behaves rudely toward his mother. The more arrogant he becomes, the more his mother's discipline fails. Then she has to increasingly endure the situation and apologize to her child. The child tyrannizes his mother and makes her life intolerable.

Such over-protected children are seriously restrained in their psychic development. With this child there is no mention of obedience but of docility--a child must be in a position to be disobedient before there can be mention of obedience. However, the child cannot be disobedient; he is too afraid that a distance will come between him and his parents. He is merely docile, "sweet", submissive, tractable, too polite, obliging and reserved. He will never take the lead within a group of peers. He maintains a waiting attitude. He doesn't take the initiative, is dependent, passive, irresolute--his life is led for him. He chooses younger playmates so he can maintain himself against them. He remains helpless and finds himself hand-in-hand with his mother rather than among his playing age-mates. He drifts between the tenderness at home and the hardness at school and with playmates. For this he endures the ridicule and teasing of others.

Following the example of his parents' excessive fear, the child learns that everything he comes into contact with means something extremely dangerous. Indeed, he remains "little" because he is restrained and disrupted in his growing up. He refuses to become big because then he must fulfill obligations and responsibilities appropriate for his age.

A child with a passive, over-protective mother continually treads on her love and willingness. He abuses his mother's weakness and is demanding, insubordinate and aggressive. At school he cannot assimilate a teacher's demands and firmness and he is restless, pig-headed, troublesome, he violates the rules of the school and shows minimal interest in the learning material.

### 2.2.2.5 Being too strict

An over-strict, unbending and unaccommodating treatment of a child indicates that his level of becoming is over-estimated. A child is educated as too grown up and judged as too adult. Demands are made of him that usually are made of adults and this amounts to an excessive educational attitude. He has to be thorough, honest, orderly, level headed, efficient, business-like and always be on time. These demands are too high because the educator makes them from his adult world and not with an understanding of the child's world.

This mistake arises from a parent's over-ambitious and perfectionist attitude. The child must contribute to this in order to prove his status by showing himself to be a model of high achievement. The child is forced into this model because often he merely is the object of his parents' educational plans.

This attitude leads to excessive control and over-intervention on the part of the parent (meddling instead of intervening). Their educative activities exist only in interfering and disapproving and never in agreeing and approving. They are almost always dissatisfied with his child's achievements and behavior. A parent's disapproving and over-critical attitude makes his child anxious and frustrated. He fears the punishment, reproof and non-acceptance that he has to suffer if he does not meet certain demands. Rancor, resentment and aggression are awakened in him. This is extremely discouraging, also for an adult, when someone tries his utmost best but continually is unable to meet the demands and expectations made. Later the child cannot assimilate disappointments and failures--because the parents are unable to assimilate them.

The child is so overwhelmed by the excessively high demands and he becomes so emotionally strained that in carrying out an achievement task he becomes paralyzed and blocked. This prevents optimal achievement. Then others are blamed for the under achievement, e.g., the "unfair teacher". He feels that he must first achieve before his parents will accept him. He suffers psychic damage under the severe and continuous strain of his parents' future expectations that he is unable to fulfill. He becomes sensitive, reserved, extremely sensitive to criticism; defective self-confidence and feelings of inferiority are awakened in him because he never is able to meet the expected demands.

Over-strict parents are guilty of a **wishful educating**. They educate in terms of their **wishes** for their child and not in terms of his **actual potentialities**. This attitude is vane, short sighted and ignorant. These parents usually turn a blind eye and are not too satisfied. The child must be an "improved version" of his parents. He must attain what his parents can't or he must at least equal their high achievement. The child is so pushed and shoved that his inner peace and carefree childhood are taken away.

A detrimental form of excess is the use by parents of unfavorably comparing the child with a parent or younger brother or sister. If an older child is presented as an ideal image, then each time this is a discouraging experience for the younger child since he is unable to fulfill the achievement-demands. The oldest child feels inferior when his achievements and behavior are unfavorably compared with a younger brother or sister. The parents forget that children clearly differ from each other with respect to the tempo as well as the direction of their growing up. By making unfavorable comparisons, as a form of excess, he is not given the opportunity to develop in his own way and as appropriately as possible.

#### 2.2.2.6 Inconsistency\*

Often parents are neurotic (personally unstable), impulsive or pedagogically uncertain and then their handling of their child and exercise of authority are not consistent. These "hedging parents" are on one day this and on another day that. The behavior of their child that is permitted on one day is punished on the following day. Then the child becomes uncertain because he doesn't know where he stands. He doesn't know whether his behavior in a particular situation will be approved or disapproved. There are no firm, consistent sets of rules and norms according to which he should make his choices.

A related confusing state of affairs is when the educational attitudes of the father and mother do not agree. The father usually is inclined to be strict and exacting and the mother indulgently concerned. Consequently, there are ambiguous expectations. Then he feels wronged by the strict parent, with related fear, aggression

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\* The author has labeled this section as "instability" but the content clearly refers to inconsistency, irrespective of the educators instability--(G. Y.).

and avoidance, or he exploits the indulgent parent. This conflicting educational influence leads to unstable behavior in the child because firm lines of action require normative and affective confidence. In addition, his behavior is characterized by anxiety, insecurity and hesitation in any new situation. On this basis there is no mention of an adequate exploration of the world by the child.

### **2.2.2.7 Overly-correcting**

This educational mistake is closely connected with education that is too strict. Blind obedience, punctuality and propriety are demanded of the child. Every moment of the day, he is trained until he fits the parents' ideal image. Educating indeed means that the child must continually be corrected (approval, disapproval, punishment, censure, chastise). A child's mistakes must be pointed out and he should be given the chance to correct them; otherwise he becomes unrestrained. But the parents' perfectionist aim can degenerate into an education that exists in a chain reaction of corrections where association with the child merely exists through intervening and pointing out mistakes. This smothers the child's initiative; rather, he does nothing because then he can't make a mistake. His behavior then is "sweet", without initiative and alien to life: the overly-corrected child is forced into a style of behavior that is alien to the life of a child; he is not given the right to be a child or to make mistakes and this coercion overwhelms him.

### **2.2.2.8 "Neuroticizing"**

Our modern society is demanding and encompassing and this gives rise to a number of neuroticizing factors affecting the adult educator. The adult is neuroticized often with a correlated inability to communicate, emotional instability (anxiety) and aggressiveness. The adult who has become neurotic or disposed to neuroticism does not have at his disposal the inner control, stability and mental strength to answer positively the challenges, problems and tensions that he comes up against. He finds educational tensions burdensome along with other tensions of adult life such as financial, occupational, social and marital tensions. His neurosis and tension then is transferred to his child. Or his child serves as a lightning rod and the parent delivers his personal disintegration to his child. The child becomes the victim of a neuroticizing education and his psychic life becomes unstable and disturbed. There is a vicious

circle possible between the parent's neurotic outbursts and the alienation that arises between parent and child on this basis.

### 2.2.3 Disturbed relationships as factors of the PES

Several possible disturbances in pedagogic as well as non-pedagogic relationships in the family situation can be educatively obstructive. All relationships in the family are reciprocally related and influence each other. The relationship between the parents is a co-determinant of each parent's relationship with their children and also the mutual relationships among the children; the relationship between parents and children mutually influences the relationship of understanding between the parents. Thus, there are multiple, interacting complexes of relationships that, when difficulties arise, easily can degenerate into confused, disturbed relationships.

#### 2.2.3.1 Neglected affective relationship

A child's experience of security is only bestowed in **demonstrated** love (Langeveld). However, often the parents are too busy to show this love in spontaneous association with their child or, as cold, unloving individuals, they are not in a position to give him love and personal warmth. In such a situation, a cozy family atmosphere is missing and the fact that a child has a right to a sunny youth is ignored.

A child is affectively neglected in the sense of either a **deficient** or an **excessive** amount of love. Then, as a consequence, he is either unsatisfied or satiated. Regarding a deficient amount of love, Ter Horst<sup>(16)</sup> says the following: Love is a core category of educating. It makes a child's personal becoming and educating possible and secures his humanness. Withholding love is a contradiction. One who is loving doesn't withhold it, not even during a conflict or a scolding. **A young child has nothing more difficult to overcome than a deficiency in love.** If the parents are (emotionally) absent, unloving, preoccupied, contact-disturbing, a child's personal becoming is seriously endangered because being unloved makes the world gray and without perspective.

Being unloved usually shows itself in rejection and poor emotional contact. A child who lives in a defective loving attachment with his parents suffers affective hunger and remains affectively needy.



Often he responds with an adulation-seeking attitude--seeking love, warmth, attention, acceptance.

A child who receives too much love becomes egocentric. He does not cultivate a healthy, realistic sense of his place in the world. His world revolves around himself and in later adult life he is disillusioned by the push and pull of a cold, businesslike world.

### **2.2.3.2 Rejecting relationship**

Regarding a child's experience of this relationship, it is more serious than affective neglect. For one or another reasons, a parent does not accept his child: he was an unwanted baby; the child is the opposite gender from what was desired; the child is not as ideal a child as the parent would want to have; or he is handicapped, of low intelligence, ill or troublesome. An unaccepted child then has to suffer constantly the criticism, aggression, rejection and irritation of his parent. He never experiences a good-natured wink, a pat on the shoulder, a listening ear, a sympathetic look or an encouraging voice. He feels outcast, threatened and inferior, his whole child existence is assailed. He consciously or unconsciously reasons as follows: if they, the anchors in my life who were responsible for my birth, do not accept me, who in the world will?

A child becomes emotionally unstable and his burdensome problem of acceptance makes him restless and overactive. He is hostile, unfeeling and indifferent toward his rejecters. As far as his own life is concerned, if he is not accepted, he sees no sense in his existence and his achievements. Difficulties of contact arise because in each human encounter he wonders if and doubts that he will be accepted. On cognitive exercises, his concentration is faulty because he is consumed by the question of whether his parents accept him and of whether he can rely on them. His behavior deteriorates into attention seeking in an effort to be noticed and accepted by others. However, his annoying behavior has the opposite effect because he repels others. Thus, a vicious circle arises among attention seeking, repelling and being an outcast.

### **2.2.3.3 Excessive emotional relationship between parent and child**

The possibility exists of an excessive emotional bond between parent and child. Usually this is between a parent and the child of the

opposite gender. (Freud would view this relationship as evidence for his Oedipus theory). A boy who is excessively bonded to his mother manifests languor, passivity and under achievement. There is a faulty identification with his father. Effeminateness, mother-bondedness and non-masculinity characterize his later attitudes and behaviors. His effeminate looks and behavior suggest that his striving as a child can be: "Someday I gladly want to be like my mom". The son is not close enough to his father so that he can gradually usher him, in his growing up, into the world of boys and men. In too strong a father-daughter bonding, the father worships his daughter for her beauty, while he excessively enjoys the particular youthful-feminine attention he gets from her. The father makes such a fuss about his daughter that she views her beauty and being a daughter as sufficient achievement and does not feel obliged to achieve elsewhere, e.g., at school or in behaving properly. Also a father and a demanding mother are played off against each other and the daughter often ignores her mother's demands, i.e., for school achievement and acceptable behavior.

#### **2.2.3.4 Ambivalent emotional relationship between parent and child**

The impulsive parent, in relating to his child, will allow feelings of love and hate to alternate and in doing so he will, in turn, accept and reject his child, depending on how the particular situation influences him. The child is burdened with **uncertainty** about whether his parent(s) love him or not. The parent often tries to compensate for his negative feelings about his child, or he tries to hide them by excessive concern and protection. Then, the child remains hesitant, waiting and impulsive in his own emotional life. He is uncertain and anxious about what he can expect next from his parents in this unstable emotional relationship

#### **2.2.3.5 Rivalry between brothers and sisters**

Conflict and disturbance can characterize the relationships between the children of a family. This can occur among the children, between adult offspring of a family, or between the children being educated and the adult offspring. These conflicts disturb the entire family life and in doing so work to impede the educational event in the family.

It is natural that a parent more easily makes contact with one of his children than another. However, the child's anxiety for the "favor" of the other is clearly understood.

Often brothers and sisters compete for the attention and favor of their parents. If their parents choose sides, then the favored child becomes spoiled and egocentric and the not favored one feels powerless, little, spiteful. For example, an older brother experiences a lack of power, resentment and frustration if his smaller little brother is "favored" and, under the threat of severe punishment, he dares not look askance at his little brother. The younger brother then can dare to taunt him and is free to get away with it. Whenever one child is "favored", the other feels outcast and inferior. He responds to this with jealousy, quarreling and bullying. On the one hand, the socialization of the children fails when competition, rivalry and favoritism are too strong--each child learns to fight for his rights; he learns only to take and not to give. On the other hand, a child's psychic development as well as his educating are damaged in the midst of a strained relationship of competition.

#### **2.2.3.6 Disharmonious marital relationship**

Where the parents live together in love and harmony, an atmosphere is created within which a child can prosper according to his potentialities. The tension, hate, mistrust and spats of a marital quarrel create a disturbed domestic atmosphere and this makes the child anxious, insecure and confused. Parents cannot hide disharmony in their marriage from a child because he is finely attuned to their relationship with each other. Often a child is forced to choose sides in the parents' marital conflict and he experiences guilt, fear, anxiety and a strained conscience toward the parent he chooses against. Thus, it is a great injustice to make him a participant in the conflict. Sometimes the marital quarrel is about the child so that he finds himself to be a bone of contention in the middle of a disharmonious marital relationship.

A parent can try to fill a gap in his marital relationship by directing himself completely to his child. Then the child receives too much love or the parent demands too much love from him. This can worsen the estrangement between the parents because feelings of guilt follow about the mistakes in educating that are made. Besides the existing conflict, an additional conflict arises concerning the

child. In this way, the tension of the marriage worsens the parents' relationship to their child.

## **2.2.4 Particular family situations as factors of the PES**

### **2.2.4.1 Incompleteness of the family**

Divorce, family abandonment by a parent, a second marriage, or the death or illness of any member of the family means a disturbance of the family situation. Any such unnatural, incomplete situation functions as a precondition for impeding education.

Each family knows conflicts, problems and disappointments. However, a psychically healthy family is in a better position to deal with and work out family crises. Through quarrels and tensions the child also acquires a healthy ability to defend himself that can serve him well outside of his family life and in his later adult life. Educationally, this means not the avoidance of conflicts but to teach a child to work them through adequately. The above-mentioned conflicts in the family can mean for the parent and child an overwhelming amount of stress, and they work to impede education in the family situation.

Long-lasting, serious illnesses of a child and parent needing home nurse care or even hospitalization means, on the one hand, a separation of the family members but, on the other hand, also a disorganization of the entire family life. Especially the death or illness of the mother can cause a serious disruption in family life.

The sick child becomes bored and frustrated when he cannot or may not participate in physical activities or may not associate with other children. The danger is that the ill child is spoiled or receives excessive attention or that the parents are not in a position to help him assimilate his sickness through an appropriate, reassuring focus on the illness. Often the child is hospitalized without preparation. He is separated from the warm, personal, secure domestic atmosphere and placed in the often cold, impersonal, unfamiliar atmosphere of the hospital. This separation often is paired with painful medical treatment as well as impatience from the hospital personnel.

With sickness and death come grief and anxiety of separation and a lack. It severs the structure of the family. When the parent cannot

work through this event he cannot provide consolation and assurance to the child who usually does not understand and is anxious about this crisis. Often a child has to carry a burden of the death of a family member on the basis that his being angry at and having a death wish for this family member which now has become reality.

A child sees his parents as an indivisible unity. With divorce comes duality--discord and dispute. During and after the divorce the child oscillates between the clashing parties. For him this means serious disruption, intolerable uncertainty and psychic uprooting. This is brought to a head because both parents (usually by spoiling) try to win him over and because he is forced to make a choice between them. Often he is used by one parent as a means to hurt the other.

Illness, death and divorce have one thing in common: the child misses the daily contact and love of at least one parent in his growing up and he misses a relationship that can be of formative value for him.

In the stepchild situation, the problem of mutual acceptance prevails. All family relationships now have become more complicated: it is now at least a second marital undertaking for the parent, a stepparent for the child and a stepchild for the parent with the possibility of tension, disappointment, affective neglect and a deficiency in security with all family members.

Other problems that arise in the case of family incompleteness are the fact that the mother, after the death of the father, must educate alone and might be over-concerned or too lenient or she cannot handle her growing up son. The father as an authority-figure and identification-person has now fallen away and the son no longer has a direction-giving ideal.

#### **2.2.4.2 Working mothers**

Essentially, here there also is mention of family incompleteness. When a mother earns money, the family can better care for the child materially. However, the question is if the affective and pedagogic care is interfered with. A mother's first calling is to care for and educate her children but after her day's work away from home often she doesn't have the desire and time to also still give adequate attention to her children. The possible result is

insufficient attention. For example, here one thinks of the serious lack of the child who after his day at school readily wants to share his experiences and achievements as well as his failures and disappointments with his mother. The expected interest and care that give a deeper sense and meaning to his life at home must be done without. The concept **latchkey child** indicates that the child brings the key to the house to school because in the afternoon when school is out, he has to unlock the front door alone and enter the cold, lonely atmosphere of the house. The child is not done justice as far as love and care are concerned and feels insecure, lonely and discontented. A mother who indeed is at home but who on account of a home-based occupation or a busy social life is present for the child but not available also has an annoying effect on the child that leads to frustration. Circumstantial obligations make the mother flustered, too meddling, over-burdened, irritable and impatient. In light of his need, the child experiences this negative attitude as indifference, insensitiveness and non-acceptance. Or the mother tries to compensate for the lack of genuine pedagogic care by spoiling, indulging and materially showering her child, or she applies unpedagogic means to the child in order to reduce the inadequate particulars of the case, namely by commanding, making angry, calling names, giving unreasonable punishment.

#### **2.2.4.3 The child's position in the family**

Some passing phenomena are noted with reference to the place a child occupies in the family:

Anxiety about personal development often characterizes an **only child**. The parents direct all of their wishes and ideals on the only child by which he is excessively burdened, and he runs the risk of having to be a model child. He also misses the contact with brothers and sisters and receives little chance to himself practice living together with others. Also there is a danger that the only child receives too much help and attention or even is over-protected, spoiled and over-indulged and in doing so is bound to be dependent. Then he feels inferior when he has to hold his own against a child who has more "life practice" than he does. Then he loses heart too easily and seeks help too quickly. He is somewhat without initiative and easily stands apart, timid and lonesome in the group of age mates. His excessive contact with adult conversation can lead to "precocious understanding". The other extreme is that he, as a spoiled only child, is bossy and stubborn when in the group

and his desires cannot be controlled. Anxiety can block his will to self-development. His failing drives him precisely back to the easy security with the parents that he doesn't need to share with anyone.

The **oldest child** had for a time exercised absolute power and received undivided love. Much attention is given to his progress. The parents also are more attentive to the first child than to the following children. His caring and growth are new to them and therefore often is accompanied with anxiety. When a following child arrives, the oldest is dethroned, as it were, which can be a painful and disappointing experience, especially if the oldest child is not prepared for the arrival of the newcomer or if he now suddenly receives noticeably less attention. Often the parents have threatened to "buy" another child if he doesn't behave himself and now with the new baby, he experiences the actualization of this threat. With this, usually higher demands are made of the oldest. He has to endure the pressure of additional tasks and responsibility (also for the younger ones).

The **youngest child** has too many family members who help and shelter him and he gravitates toward dependence, faulty becoming independent and lack of responsibility. His easy life leads to laziness, lack of willfulness and deficient initiative. He continually is treated as younger than his age in comparison with other children. For example, at ten years of age, the oldest child is "our big child"; the youngest child at ten years still is "our baby". The parents' desire to keep the child little and to possess him longer also holds here.

The **boy in a family of sisters** (only son among several sisters) often is burdened with high ideals and expectations. He is the "progenitor", and the parents and grandfather make a big fuss over him. He carries the family name and apparently will inherit the most. He either is highly regarded on the basis of his family position and not by anything achieved elsewhere or a high achievement-expectation is fostered in him as the only son. He has no other choice than to achieve better than his sisters and failure in this regard is difficult to assimilate. In each case, his chances are good that there will be unfavorable comparisons with his sisters because girls develop faster physically and psychically than boys. Often his extremely questionable position means for him feelings of guilt and anxiety.

### 2.3 The multi-disciplinary point of view regarding the PES

From the foregoing etiology of the PES it seems that a manifold totality of complex factors that vary from the physical handicap of a child to societal-structural conditions can give rise to a PES. In treatment of each of the six groups of educationally obstructing factors it also was indicated which disciplines (experts) by means of providing professional help are involved in eliminating each of the group factors.

Thus, there is mention of multiple-"causality" and multiple-"treatability" of the PES. The multi-disciplinary point of view regarding the PES does not make orthopedagogics a multi-disciplinary science, e.g., as Ter Horst contends. The complexity of the PES implies that a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive approach is required to eliminate the education obstructing factors in the PES. Complex problems surrounding the distress and confusion of persons are not solvable from one single perspective.

The orthopedagogue acknowledges this multi-disciplinary view and will not on his own subordinate other sciences when he views their task and discipline as central and himself as responsible for designing a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary plan of treatment/action. Because other experts (physician, social worker, sociologist, etc.) might only be involved in **one aspect** of the PES, the orthopedagogue is the only expert who always has a task in **every** PES. For the physician this involves the perspective of ill/healthy; he wants to bring about a **cure**. For the social worker the criteria of social orientation/disorientation hold; he wants to bring about **creative sociality**. For the psychiatrist the focus is on personal integration/disintegration; he wants to bring about **mental health**. Similarly, the sociologist, economist and theologian, e.g., respectively are directed to a person's (child's) social, material and spiritual wellbeing.

However, the orthopedagogue has the entire child as a physical-psycho-social-spiritual entity as well as his total life and educational situation as his focus. Viewed from a pedagogic perspective, it is the child's education that is restrained and the orthopedagogue wants to bring about **education**. More or less, there are no child problems, of whatever nature at all, that do not restrain the child in reaching proper adulthood and therefore the orthopedagogue is always involved when the child's educative situation becomes



problematic. He is directed to help the educator and educand who find themselves in a difficult situation.

Thus, the orthopedagogue must identify the **changeable**, **influencable** and **controllable** factors of each child problem and PES and in that light to design a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary plan of action/treatment with the aim of **compensating** for, **modifying**, or **neutralizing** these factors. This plan amounts to the pedagogues (orthopedagogue, orthodidactician, pedotherapist) and non-pedagogues (physician, social worker, sociologist, etc.) working together to eliminate the education obstructing factors and thus also the PES of the child through correcting his physical and psychic mis-attunements and through directing the human and non-human situation of the child so that optimal opportunity is created for his unobstructed passage to full-fledged adulthood.

The great variety of non-pedagogic experts already mentioned each has a place in the comprehensive plan of action/treatment. For example, where the diagnosis and handling of a child lies outside of his field of work regarding his physical or psychic attunement, the orthopedagogue does not hesitate to refer this child to one or another specialist for general or specific medical, psychiatric or neurological study and treatment.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the dependency of the PES on a multi-disciplinary structure of treatment/handling makes it necessary that multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary communication take place among the experts.

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