

## Parent-oriented professionals...

### **Introduction**

*On April 26th 2014, during the Parenting Knowledge congress, I spoke about “Parenting out of a scratch of the existence!” The first point I began to discuss was the vulnerable parenting of our mentally challenged and autistic son Michel. Based on own experiences as a parent, together with professionals I made connections by gathering experiences in the field of ‘good and bad’ practices, which I then translated into ideas, in order to develop parent-oriented professionals and organizations. On the last subject I even organized the workshop – ‘Parent orientation on all levels’ – together with the manager, team leader and personal senior client counsellor of foundation Pergamijn, where my son now lives. At the end of the congress, the audience and editorial office of this magazine requested me to publish this lecture. Especially because of the ways of understanding of our autistic and mentally challenged son who has serious behavior disorders. It has colored but also influenced my parenting skills. This however turned out to be more emotional work than I had originally thought of. It can be compared with a disco ball: there was always another new aspect that lit up and formed a meaning to what I liked to call: disorganized parenting.*

*In the lecture I approached my parenting from two disorganized circumstances that lead to a surplus of vulnerability: a son with multiple challenges and a complicated web of professional healthcare structures, procedures and various professional insights.*

*In this article I limit myself to the second circumstance: the relationship between parents and professionals who in diverse contexts are their own direct contact partners. A second concern of the circumstance are formed by the organizations parents have to deal with. The assignment towards parent orientation does reach further than the reach of professionals. This second concern will for that matter be the focus of a different article in a follow up edition of ‘Ouderschapskennis’.*

**Key words:** professional, relationship with parents, professional distance and closeness.

Wim Goossens is lecturer at Zuyd University of Applied Sciences in Sittard

## The parent-oriented professional...

Parents and professionals meet each other in many contexts. The contact between one and another varies in terms of intensity and takes place within several domains: education, well-being, youth welfare, youth care, healthcare, mental healthcare, justice, etc. The contact is not established beforehand by parent orientation. In this article I will first go into the vulnerability of this contact, for both parties. Subsequently I will pay attention to the attitude and development of the parent-oriented professional.

### Parent and professional: a double-vulnerable relationship?

Parents will always register themselves via their child. While the conversation is about the child, at the same time there will be an adjustment process in which both the parent and the professional exert a gentle scanning process to see if a cooperative relationship can exist. As a parent and lecturer I have many times been in the situation where professionals presumed that the conversation about the child had been conducted adequately, without addressing the meaning of a cooperative relationship for the parents.

*One teacher kept discussing the topic of being unable to teach my son to learn, read and write, while I was especially precarious about the question if my son even felt safe enough with the teacher. So we both had a different meaning of the relationship.*

In my perspective a form of adjustment is desperately needed because several expectations between parents and professionals exists, which do not have anything to do with the child. Openness about the dialogue between parent and professional can be beneficial. Attention to this subject is therefore really important because the contact between parent and professional is distinguished by mutual vulnerability.

#### *What happens to the parent in relation to the professional?*

In my conversations with parents in comparable situations (a child with a handicap/challenge), it appears once again that a variety of feelings and emotions are at issue when it comes to having contact with professionals: relief, dependence, shame, insecurity, resistance, scanning. Above all, it seems that parents scan the professional (just as the professional diagnoses the parents), which gradually increases the more often parents come into contact with professionals. This scanning happens on the basis of meaning: Can the professional mean something to me? Integrity and trust are also addressed: Is this professional sincere or does she/he have a feigned i.e. mechanical commitment? Does the professional follow its promises? Does he say what he does and does he do what he says? Comparing professionals is always at the heart of an issue. Therefore professionals do sometimes find themselves in a difficult position with parents: if the parents had negative experiences with professionals before, he/she will automatically be comparing to this example. Did they have positive experiences before, then his professionalism will be subjected to that. On top of that the comparing of professionals plays a bigger part if the parents have had more experience on the matter.

Parents scan the professional also subtly when it comes to the use of language: how does he talk about the child? How does he talk about his profession? How about his colleagues, or other organizations?

*In a very vulnerable period of my son's life a professional told me that he 'enjoyed working with this case'. I was immediately emotionally repealed from him: my son is not a case: he is my flesh and blood who finds himself in the most urgent distress!*

### *What happens to the professional in relation to parents?*

Not only the parents find themselves in a vulnerable relationship; the same goes for the professional. Vulnerable? Yes of course! In the last paragraph I asked for attention to be paid to adjustment, comparison and scanning from the view of the parent to professional and how the professional needs to keep adjusting him or herself to that one parent (or parents). The parent has probably talked to an entire group of professionals before (as probably is in the case of parents with a child who has a mental challenge). The best professional intentions can be misunderstood by previous experiences with professionals. This makes the target group of professionals very vulnerable.

A Mother told something for which she was ashamed of very much. A new group leader sincerely tried to get acquainted with her, but the mother only stared at the floor: this was the 65<sup>th</sup> group leader who introduced herself to her. Not again the same old story, not again picking up where I left, not again reopening the old wounds: “It did not have to do anything with here. It was an upright and very nice girl. She did not deserve to be treated like that, but I could not do it, I just could not... What must she have thought of me?”

Although it are not only the direct experiences with parents who can make the professional vulnerable. I will further explain two aspects below.

First of all, professionals come into contact with a socially charged matter: parenting. It is socially charged because so many ideas about parents are scattered in the general society: there are so many perspectives, so many norms, media hypes about failing or degenerated parents. In addition, there are protocols and jurisdiction which serve the purpose of security for the organization and the professional. Because, when it goes wrong with parents – or in the education – and professionals are involved, ‘with the velocity of a high speed train’ the guilt question rush to the professionals. The community, the media, in short the entire society watches when a professional enters into contact with parents. If that does not make you vulnerable, I don’t know what will!

Second of all, every professional becomes *as a person* vulnerable just as the parents. Contacts with parents confront him with his own socialization: how he is ‘mothered’ himself, alongside his/her own social perspectives, emotions and personal opinions towards parents and parenting. The environment and the culture of the professional can also be very different from the environment and/or culture of the parents he works with.

Finally the own parenting can come in between the professional and the parent. This appears in relation to parents as permanently addressed and being continuously asked to be reflected: ‘before, during and after action’. ‘Is my personal-professional attitude in relation to these parents in balance?’

Thus because the own ‘mothering’ and own parenting are brought to the issue, transference and counter-transference are constantly lurking around the corner. In other words: contacts with parents directly touch the own vulnerabilities of the professional.

### **Parents and professionals, a big difference?**

Next to the mutually vulnerable relationship, almost existential and surely positional differences also play a part in the contact between parent and professional. But first I give a small nuance and once more the residential settings for people who are mentally challenged, which comes from the context of meeting

parents frequently. However I suspect that the below mentioned subjects are applicable in many more domains. This schematic table summarizes them.

Parent	Professional
From the start and 'forever'	Somewhere in the ride and always passant
timeless	temporarily
It happens to you	Free choice
Emotionally intertwined	Emotionally concerned – affectively and appropriately neutral
Acquired and own parenting expertise	Generalist or specific child expertise
The overall child	Specific problem
Care as first care	Development as target
Living environment	Part of the system
Family relationship	Collegial relationship
24/7-shift	Limited amount of service hours

An important difference between parent and professional is that parents are connected to their child from the start of the first second, which Alice van der Pas<sup>1</sup> describes as the *awareness of being-responsible*. They hear the first sounds, receive the first smell of their child and develop their parenting unplanned, gradually and depending on the development of their child. Parents 'have lifelong' (and this is in contrast strong with the professional who meet the parents 'somewhere in the ride') one often asked question, problematic or point of development for the child. The contact between professionals and a child is per definition temporary and limited, and is often guided by a specific question for which the professional will be approached. The parent-oriented professional has knowledge of its role as a passant and appoints this for example by asking about previous experiences with professionals.

There is another difference between parent and professional which receives added weight to children with a limitation, handicap or disease, namely the fact that the child with a limitation, handicap or (chronic, serious or incurable) disease passes the parent. Professionals on the other hand choose from a specific point of interest, expertise or ambition to focus on certain target groups, limitations, challenges, diseases, etc. Their expertise though does not guarantee that also the meaning of the child's problem will fall in the spotlight of the parents.

'We were constantly discussing the painful treatments of our child with our professionals, for which we had to give permission. From within, the question on what kind of parents we were being to allow this to happen to our child, kept us busy at all times. There was no bigger, moral justifier for us than ourselves. We had such a need for a worker who could show us to look at ourselves with more lenience, but the conversation kept going on about the procedure of our child.'

This example shows that there are a certain number of dangers lurking around the corner. One of the most important dangers is that the expertise aimed at the child – on limitation, handicap, disease or the target group – has no guarantee that there is also attention for parenting questions. Parents have to deal with existential, moral, rational and emotional questions and the parent-oriented professional needs to be able to listen with a 'third ear': to the child's story, to his professional insights and to the (often not

<sup>1</sup> (2005). *Eert uw Vaders en uw Moeders. Handboek Methodische Ouderbegeleiding 6*. Amsterdam: SWP.

mentioned) parent's story. However from his expertise and perseverance in relation to the children's subject matter, the adjustment to the parent's story will lightly get lost. The professional is – with all his integrity – busy with his profession; the parent is busy with being a parent. A confronting experience about it is the book "Mijn zondagse kind" from Lenie Jansen (My Sunday child). In her book is an intrusive description, she shows the meaning of the syndrome of Landau-Kleffner to her son and his parents. The increasing handicap is central, but also passes a multiplicity of contacts with professionals in review. One of the most impressive passages to me, was her answer to the constantly asked question of if she had learned to accept the handicap from her son. Her interpretation is that she needed to learn and bear it, because who do you want to have this happened to? The question and her answer stand symbolically together in the distance I mentioned earlier: the professional who in a professional sense is interested in the child's condition and the parent who suffers from it in the fullest. Parents sometimes say: the group leadership cannot feel what we as parents experience with our kid, and I always say that this is right. Parents are emotionally intertwined with their child: from the start they have learned which sounds means rest and anxiety to the child; they have learned to deal with the specific behavior and temperament of this child and they have – in the words of Van der Pas<sup>2</sup> – also learned to deal with their emotions regarding the child and his/her limitation, disease or problem. They have a very own, specific expertise: what does and does not belong with this child of ours. The professional in this sense places his child expertise against it. However, it is more based on behavioral research, development-psychological and sometimes very normative theories and thinking models.

And while parents will always look at their child as a whole child and they are grown familiar with its temperament, emotions, cognitive capacity and all relating forms of expression, professionals look at the same child from a specific subject area with own structuring principles, categorized features and action protocols. This all belongs to careful and professional action, while at the same time I hear parents regularly talk about what I call the 'apparent incompleteness of the picture' professionals present when discussing their child. Maybe it is inescapable, but it does explain why so often parents want to add something to it or cannot recognize something. It is never their entire child and never their own child!

'My child is more than a combination of IQ and EQ scores, SRZ-P scales, phase formats and behavioral categories!'

Parent and professional can only adjust themselves when the professional has an eye for the difference between perspectives of how to look at the child. Already in "*Samen balanceren op een evenwichtsbalk*" (*Balancing together on a balancing beam*) (2004) I outlined the difference between the concept of care from the parent and the development concept of the professional.

They are directly to be found back in the 24/7 availability of the parent, while the professional is limited to functioning at the grace of service and employment hours.

A father: 'My son was in deep distress and I asked for a conversation. Then we had to compare the shifts of all professionals and could finally only find an appointment for two weeks later. Even if they had appointed me to meet me at two o'clock in the night, then still I would have come!'

I will also add several notifications on the different contexts of misconceptions between parents and professionals. The parent is part of the living environment. This is an organically formed system, which

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<sup>2</sup> Pas, A. van der (2007). *Theorie en praktijk ter discussie. Handboek Methodische Ouderbegeleiding 7*. Amsterdam: SWP..

progressively develops in an iterative way. To factors which influence the social world, I take in account the family relations and in broader view to the social network, the neighborhood circumstances, the financial circumstances, etc. How else can it be for professionals: they talk about the same child in a world of (professional) collegial relationships. In addition, are professionals part of the systematic world which didn't form itself organically, but has been established by a target aimed control?

Is there even any hope with all these differences between parent and professional? I think there is. Provided that we become aware of the matters I described until this point. They are already being picked up by the so called parent-oriented professionals. Is that a special kind of professional? Do they work differently? And what characterizes this parent-oriented professional and his way of work?

### **On the road to parent-oriented professionals...**

According to Van der Pas (1996, 2006) the following elements belong to the base luggage of the true parent guidance counsellor:

- General social-agogical knowledge and skills
- Specialized knowledge on children and acquaintance with the help of the instrumentation and the knowledge of children specialists.
- Specialist knowledge on parenting, parenting problematic, and buffer thinking
- Feelings of transfer and counter transfer of recognition and managing
- Being familiar with (own) traps in parental guidance; to be able to have a permanent discussion with children specialists.

Together with a fitting supervision trajectory this guarantees the concerned professional to be able to take in the parents' perspective – and also when the child is 'threatened'.

For a proper understanding of this: Van der Pas<sup>3</sup> targets the professional who makes it his expertise and course to guide the parents. In my perspective, however, the parent-oriented approach can reach a considerably larger audience of professionals. Within the study of Social Work (Zuyd University, department of Social Studies) I gladly draw the next comparison: not every student needs to become a systematic therapist, but all students need to be familiar with the essence of systematic working. The parallel will be clear: not every professional working with parents needs to become a specialist parent guidance counsellor, but every professional who works with parents, does need to be familiar with the following principles of parent-oriented practices:

- a parent-oriented attitude;
- have a view on own images of parenting;
- have a view on own mental models in regards to parents;
- a parent-oriented theoretical reference framework;
- perspectives for reflection;
- forms of acknowledgement from and for parents;
- Important additional remarks.

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<sup>3</sup> Pas, A. van der (2007). *Theorie en praktijk ter discussie. Handboek Methodische Ouderbegeleiding 7*. Amsterdam: SWP.

### *1 A parent-oriented attitude: several distinctive terms*

In cooperation with Pieter Remmerswaal<sup>4</sup> I formulated terms that are characteristic for a certain degree of 'parent orientation'. They all lay a different accent and together they clarify the difference between parent-oriented working in broad view and parental guidance as the specialist working field.

#### *Parent friendly*

Knowing that parenting will never reach a perfect status. Proper, critical, but not condemning thinking, talking and writing about parents.

#### *Parent-oriented*

All together to be able to think, empathize and sympathize with parents from the children's and parents' perspective – knowing that you are working with the most valuable of the parents: their child.

#### *Parent sensitive*

Sensitivity of signals from the parent perspective. To have an eye for what moves the parents, what accelerates them, what keeps them busy. The awareness of the *being position* and thus the vulnerability of parenting. To be able to stand where parents stand, but not to coincide with it.

#### *Parent involved*

To approach parents with a good intention (even if they fail in the nurturing) and to treat them as consulting seekers and clients to whom responsibility shall be accounted to.

#### *Parent guiding*

To work from a specialist point of view as parent counsellor:

- From a parent perspective;
- Supported by a parenting theory and the methodology of parental guidance;
- And (constantly) prepared to take in the parental guidance position (Van der Pas, 1994, 2006)

### *2 Perspective on own images about parenting*

A parent-oriented attitude goes together with the reflection of own images about parenting. In our choice modules and in the minor Parenting Guidance & Family Coaching of the study program Social Work this applies fundamentally to the development of a parent-oriented attitude. It will be picked up in a reflective learning track and supported by coaching.

As I noticed already, the professional (in contact with the parents) will be confronted with his own socialization and the own 'being mothered' (or in better wording: 'be mothered'<sup>5</sup> and 'be fathered'<sup>6</sup>).

An own professional experience: from the images of my affectionate, empathic, empathetic and involved mother I described in the start of my career the structured, guiding, directed, underlined mothers – I am to this day still ashamed for this – as dominant, chilly and distant. Fortunately I then met a critical supervisor who washed up my ears as he said: "Wim, I don't know if these paragraphs in your report are about mothers or of you. Could you please explain that to me?"  
I am forever thankful for her awakening!

<sup>4</sup> family therapist and trainer/supervisor and worked as a counselor in child and adolescent psychiatry. Coordinator of the team of expertise at Centre for Youth Mental Health Care in The Hague. Co-founder and long-term editorial secretary of the magazine *Ouderschapskennis*.

<sup>5</sup> *To give someone the feeling that his/hers emotions and body matter, the actual 'caring'. (Can sometimes deflect to the extreme).*

<sup>6</sup> *Specifying boundaries. (Can sometimes deflect to the extreme).*

It is my firm belief that professionals, just like me and every other, are influenced through childhood experiences. Additional to that is also the influence of the own parenting. An expert on the surface of parental guidance once said: "Being parent counsellor became difficult, the moment I had children. Suddenly they stood in between me and the parents I worked with."

Idealized images on the own parenting can lead to high demands to parents with whom we have to part professionally.

In short, what kind of parenthood is discussed when a professional conversation with parents needs to take place: the one from nurturing books? That of the parents? Or that from the professional-as-parent? Do not however cover up these voices: they serve as engaging conversation material with parents.

### *3 View on mental models in regard to parents*

In 2013 I met professor Carmel Borg (Department of Education Studies at the University of Malta) who was doing research in 'Parental Involvement in Education'. This is something else than participating in what professionals have devised. Borg describes the following four mental models used by professionals when in contact with parents and they all have a different relationship message.

#### *Expert model*

The message is: 'We are the people with expertise and you must focus on our expertise.'

#### *Transmission model*

Conveying something: 'We would love to have a conversation with you to give you the best of ourselves. With it you will function better as parent.'

#### *Consumer model*

The customer's king. 'We aim ourselves to your questions and wishes and we answer them as good as possible.'

#### *Partnership model*

We stand together, but all of us with our own input. We will try to match these with each other to reach the optimal results.

These thinking models help us in getting a grasp on the relationship between professional and parent and to find the alternatives for when you 'get stuck' as a professional. Think about: 'With which mental model am I working? What kind of effects does this have and what would I tell parents if I worked from the perspective of another model? What other sentences would I use then?' I sometimes ask organizations: 'What model is now dominant in your contacts with parents?' This sometimes gives new and surprising insights.

### *4 A parent-oriented theoretical reference framework*

Being aware of the thinking models is not sufficient. The professional needs to have a wider *parent-oriented reference framework* at his disposal.

Be aware: a lot of disciplines entail working with parents, but by far not always from a parent-oriented reference framework. Psychologists, (ortho)pedagogues, Medici, didactics and jurists have professional contacts with parents but are driven and inspired through development psychology, educational, ortho pedagogical, medical, didactic and/or jurisdictional approaches with corresponding methods. This leads inter alia to more advices and support for the purpose of the development and the right approach to the



child and everything can help. But also pedagogical advising can certainly be targeted to parents. (Sonja Ehlers e.a.2009) With a parent-oriented theoretical reference framework I mean parenting psychology. The parent-oriented professional is familiar with this, and thus also with the parental guided position, base aspects of the parental guidance methodology and the thinking schematic of Van der Pas – who finally aimed the attention to these subjects. It are as many postulates as for the parent-oriented professional. Without elaborating them I will enlist them another time:

- Parenting brings a sense of responsibility with itself
- Parenting makes vulnerable
- Parents are clients to the children professional
- There are crucial differences between partnership, parenting and parenthood

This includes the thinking schematic about parenting where it seems to be easier for the parent-oriented professional to with have a conversation with colleagues – or with parents in a parent friendly way – about problems in the parental workplace as well as the so called ‘buffers’ which should keep business on the right track.

### Overview Thinking Schematic about Parenting

Parental Workplace	Buffer Processes	Circumstances
Basic Behaviors (disc of 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Security</li> <li>- Care</li> <li>- Supervision</li> <li>- Expectations</li> <li>- Boundaries</li> </ul>	Solidary community  Task division  Metaposition	Child Mother Father Brothers and sisters Grandparents, other family Social network Housing, employment, income City, countryside, neighbor Cultural difference, religion, school system
Timing & Dose	‘Good parent’ - experiences	Violence on TV and videogames Migration and fleeing, Mobile phones, texting, internet Commercial for alcoholics Pedagogues Etc.
Emotion regulation		

### 5 Approaches for reflection

The parent-oriented professional can address parents out of four approaches and each one triggers different effects – including options for reflection. With every approach I name possible reflection questions and every question raises considerations such as: how does this question influence my thinking, my emotions and my behavior towards these parents?

#### *The personal approach*

What personal views on parenting, and what ideal images and experiences play a role when in contact with these parents?

*The professional approach*

What theories or methods put me as a professional in contact with these parents? On what do I actually rely on and based on what analyze model am I driven? From which angle do I speak to them?

*The organizational approach*

What kind of effect does my organization have on the contact with the parents? Think hereby in terms of delineation, policy and vision of the organization and of procedures and protocols. Does the culture and structure of the organization influence my view on the parents? Does my function- and task description and my legal status play a role somewhere in the contact with the parents?

*The social approach*

This concerns the entire social discourse up until the government policy and legislation. What roles play the present norms for 'good parenting and how do the media and actual incidents influence my thoughts and actions?

*6 Forms of acknowledgement of and for parents*

Remmerswaal, (1999/2013) and Goossens (2004) refer in their publications about group dynamic to the work of Schutz and his three forms of acknowledgement where group members have always been looking for (and you can also recognize this in the contact with parents): inclusion, control and affection. Remmerswaal and signatory have included a fourth: drawbacks. The parent-oriented professional has attention for it and addresses them:

1. Inclusion also known as fitting in: parents want this if it is about their child.
2. Control, in other words, being able to exert influence. Parents want this as well and want to be seen as competent.
3. Affection or appreciation. Parents want to be seen as human, and appreciated for who they are and not just for what they can and do.
4. Drawbacks or room for pain and sadness. Parents will want to speak about their feelings of guilt, about matters of which they are not proud of and of the dark feelings of their parenting.

Inclusion	A concept folder of a nursery/child care center: "Parents are permitted to be present at the discussion of their child." Parents are present!
Control	A mother who suffers a light mental challenge: "My children are in that foster home, but I am still allowed to say what I think is needed for them?!"
Affection	A mother: "I am no group leader who carries out a development program. I am her mother with all my care and love. Think of that when you talk to me!"
Drawbacks	The Father of a child with an intellectual disability and ADHD states in a support group: "Tonight I stood with him at the guardrail and I just wanted to throw him down." During the support group he came through: "But he is my dearest possession in life!"

*7 Important additional considerations*

*From Professional distance to professional nearness*

A lot of methodical guidelines and study courses name it the importance of functional distance or professional distance. This distance introduces a way of thinking which subsequently comes to expression

in the language of the professionals: keep distance, let the contact remain functional, don't let yourself get dragged into it.

As a counterpart I introduce the concept of professional nearness. How can I professionally stand close to this parent? Parents need this considerably more than distance. Get in touch with them on a base of professional proximity as a guide, and you will start saying other words right away, you use other sentences and create a different reality. You should then also read *Aandacht – etudes in presentie* (2005) from Andries Baart (*Attention – attitudes in presence*). His description of attention comes really close to the essence of the hereof mentioned professional nearness.

#### *The value of selective authenticity*

Under selective authenticity I understand that the professional chooses to deliver something into the social world, but without losing his professionalism. It is a higher degree of professionalism.

Our son has not been home for Christmas since several years. A group leader who was in the middle of a divorce and who was alone during Christmas came to stand next to us and said with tears in his eyes: 'Now I know what parents go through when their child is with our group over Christmas.' As a professional he did not sink to the level of our esteem; on the contrary. Yet, professionals still doubt sometimes to share experiences such as these with parents.

#### *From equality to dignity*

The term equality sometimes raises confusion between parent and professional. It suggests a similarity which is not in order, partly due to the input of parents and professionals not being of equal nature. On the contrary: precisely complementarity establishes the contact of parent and professional in a rewarding way. This however means that they are dignified within this complementarity.

#### *Revaluation of 'low-grade' meetings*

Often we look for the meaning and the relevance of professional work in special organized conversations, consultation sessions, and the discussion of plan of actions – in short official meetings. In my opinion however these are mostly the small, seemingly low-grade meetings with parents which have a significant meaning: the greeting and the coffee at arrival, the attention to how the child is clothed, the informal chatting about the child, the group leaders emitting fun, the listening ear for a story coming from the parent, etc.

A mother: 'The group leader proudly said "Take a look at our punker", when she came in with our son. I saw how much effort she took with a tube of gel to make his hair stick out to all sides. He looked so beautiful. I could have hugged her. This was more valuable than any other therapeutic conversation.'

#### *And finally: about subtle sensitivity for parents*

Subtle sensitivity passes the acquired forms of 'empathy'. Subtle-sensitive professionals are however not always aware of her value: from the appearance whence shows that the professional has an eye for what the parent experiences.

A mother: 'For a time our child could not be in my nearness and I had to look through the keyhole of his room to see him. And then there was a group leader who asked if I wanted to fill in the menu lists with her for my child. I have never had the chance to tell her how beneficial that was for my maternity feelings.'

## Lastly

This article focuses on the parent-oriented professional. It deals with the mutual, fragile relationship of the parent and professional, and several fundamental differences between parent and professional which produces a great confusion if no one is aware of it. Several mental models of professionals in their contact with parents pass the review: the expert model, the transmission model, the consumer model and the partnership model. Afterwards useful reflection remarks follow for the professional in his contact with parents: the personal, professional, organizational and social perspective. With regard to the relationship between parents and professionals the focus is put on forms of acknowledgement of parents: inclusion, control, affection and drawbacks.

In conclusion several additional attention remarks: professional nearness, selective authenticity, dignity, revaluation of the seemingly 'low-grade meetings' and subtle sensitivity.

With this article I hope to have delivered a more parent-oriented thinking and acting of professionals in respect to parents.

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