**Summary**

**Care and educational environment of foster families. Sociological study based on the example of the city of Białystok.**

 The work consists of an introduction, seven chapters and a conclusion. It also contains a bibliography and appendices.

 The research intention of the presented dissertation was to analyze various aspects of the functioning of foster families as a special type of care and educational environment. The city of Białystok was chosen to conduct such focused sociological research. The introduction presents the motives for undertaking the research task. By presenting the conditions for posing the research problem, the main goal of the dissertation was defined, pointing to the need to diagnose and evaluate the elements that determine the quality of the caring and educational environment in foster families. The work indicates what was its inspiration. Attention has been drawn to the dynamic increase in various dysfunctional phenomena involving the family observed in recent years, which is becoming a burning social problem. In order to examine the observed changes, the researcher’s approach lead to worthysearch for the determinants and conditions of these unfavorable phenomena, which lead to the formulation of postulates regarding the appropriate selection of measures to improve this situation. In addition to these objective reasons, a subjective reason was also given, as one's own experience, by accepting a child into one's own, traditional in values and form, family. The "Introduction" presents the current state of research on foster families, starting from the literature created at the beginning of the 20th century. The situation of foster families was presented in the light of the results of research carried out in the social, cultural and religious context, including the prevention of manifestations of pathology in families that result in children being placed in foster families. Chapter I of the dissertation entitled: "Family and the caring and educational environment - definitions, functions, theoretical inspirations" includes six subchapters in which issues related to the family and the care and educational environment are explained. By characterizing the institution of the family and foster family and the functions they perform, the importance of the quality of the family environment in which the basic socialization processes take place was indicated. The last part of the chapter presents theoretical inspirations.

 The second chapter presents the concept of the foster family in the social and legal system, which served as a necessary foundation for further research and analyses.

Issues related to the functioning of foster families in Poland have been described from a historical perspective, starting from the first multi-functional school institutions documented in the 12th century, funded by clergy, and ending with the 2012 Act on family support and the foster care system. Thus, the legal basis for the functioning of families was discussed and included: their rights and obligations, as well as the typology of foster families resulting from legal provisions.

The third chapter titled: "Methodology of own research" is an important element of the dissertation, defining the purpose and methodology of the author's empirical research. It presents further elements necessary in the conceptualization of empirical research, such as: defined subject matter, purpose, research problems and hypotheses, methods, techniques and research tools, sample selection, organization and course of author's research, as well as characteristics of the respondents.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation titled: "The care and educational environment of foster families in the material and living sphere."It indicates three areas of assessment of the material and living sphere performed by foster parents: the importance of the nature of economic and housing conditions and the scope of social assistance in the functioning of foster families.

Chapter five is titled: "The care and educational environment of foster families in the upbringing and educational dimension."It contains analyzes of research results carried out as part of in-depth interviews with foster families and experts, regarding the upbringing and educational dimension of children from the studied families. The analyzed care and educational potential, educational strategies and methods, as well as care and educational difficulties at home and at school were aligned to the theory of family life practices, the theory of labeling (marking) and the family formation and practice theories .

 In the sixth chapter entitled "Cooperation of foster families with supporting agencies", the following agencies cooperating with foster families in terms of their support were presented in two-fold stages: first- Team for Foster Care and Child Care at the Municipal Family Support Center, nurseries, kindergartens, schools, organizations social institutions such as the Nasz Dom Society, the Ernst & Young’s *Wings of Independence* foundation, the Consultation and Training Center and the Foster Care Club run by the Dialog foundation, the Children's Help Center of the KLANZA Association; second- the opinions of foster parents were presented on the difficulties of obtaining the necessary diagnoses for children in various medical facilities, clinics and institutions.

Separate subchapters analyze the opinions of foster parents on cooperation with schools and psychological and pedagogical counseling centers and the issues of psychological support, as well as the accessibilities of obtaining alternative help and support from other institutions supporting the foster care system, at large.

Chapter seven entitled: "The fate of the foster cared children raised in the foster care system" is the last chapter of the dissertation. It was devoted to analyzing the opinions of foster parents and experts on the three basic trajectories of the children under their care: in the studied environment, it was most often a return to the biological family; adoption, in the case of small children whose biological families were not involved in improving their situation, and in the case of older children who did not have the opportunity to return to their biological families, the most common solution was to stay in a foster family until they became independent.

The work ends with the Conclusion chapter, which summarizes findings of the previously stated research hypotheses. Chapter also contains the formulation of assessments, conclusions, proposals and recommendations relevant to the discussed topic for institutions and organizations whose primary task is to change the systemic regulations of social policy in relation to the examined issues. Alas, specific recommendations for entities responsible for processes taking place in foster families and for entities cooperating in the upbringing and educational process of children from foster families is the practical dimension of the presented dissertation.