

ABSTRACT

The dissertation focuses on the topic of designing for children. The core assumption of the dissertation states that there is a niche to be filled within this area. Namely, there is a general lack of didactic materials that would support both children without developmental disorders and children with special educational needs (SEN).

Starting from research on the visual perception of newborns and infants, the author suggests that, during the designing process, it is necessary to answer to the visual preferences of children, which is the subconscious pursuit of balance, symmetry, and simplicity. Following this idea can lead to creating graphic material that has a soothing effect on children and evokes positive responses, rather than causing excessive excitement and anxiety. Consequently, there is no risk of overstimulation, which is crucial in the case of highly sensitive children, children with attention disorders, and children with the autism spectrum.

The next chapter presents a detailed description of the stages of emotional and cognitive development of a child, from birth to school age, with particular attention to children with disorders. Various pedagogical methods and strategies are described, such as Piaget's theory, Vygotsky's concept, and Maria Montessori's method.

The importance of social competencies for the full use of intellectual potential is stressed. Conversely, school difficulties and failures lead to emotional problems. Since these spheres are intertwined, it is vital to support and develop both of them for the proper functioning of a person in society. It applies to people with and without disabilities alike.

The dissertation analyses the currently available tools and methods of supporting children's development, such as books, worksheets, and other teaching materials. The analysis identifies several main problems, such as a narrow group of recipients of the existing tools and the limited number of possible usage scenarios. Moreover, the aesthetics of the available tools are not adequately playful for children.

The second part of the dissertation describes the practical part of the project. The author presents and discusses a new series of teaching materials, i.e. books and sets of cards that support children's emotional and cognitive development. This chapter ends with an analysis of surveys conducted in several psychological and pedagogical centers and families.

The last part of the dissertation provides the conclusion and summary of considerations as well as several reflections on the possible implementation of the new concept.

Monika Chrabąszcz-Tarkowska