A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO CARE
OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to describe and stress the importance of the systems approach in therapeutic guidance of children with specific needs and its consequences for any form of intervention.

The approach that we are describing is not a systemic approach in the sense used by radical constructivism, but is concerned with the relationships between systems, as discussed in the work of Niklas Luhmann. We shall therefore use the term systems approach rather than systemic approach. It is on relationships between systems that we shall base ourselves at the end of the article when demonstrating the practical results of systems thinking. First of all we need to define the terms system and relationships between systems, and analyse the origin of systems and their functionality. A central issue will be the position of therapists in the system that they enter into through their intervention and which they become an integral part of. We shall also look at the consequences of this connection. Finally we shall consider the relationship between causal thinking and systems thinking in terms of therapeutic standpoints.

Keywords: System, systems approach, causal approach, responsibility of the therapist, responsibility of the teacher

Defining the concept "system"

In contemporary specialist literature we may come across the term system in various connotations, so first of all it is necessary to define what is meant by this concept. Defining it means highlighting the qualities of the concept system that we shall use further on in our exposition.

1. System in its classical sociological conception and in the natural sciences

The oldest and most widespread use of the concept of system was its classical conception in sociology. Here it was seen as a social structure. Thus we speak about the family system, the nuclear family or extended family system, and the school system, and also the transport system and the administrative system. The natural sciences also work with systems when they speak of the...