

EDUCATING CHILDREN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARENTS' RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

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Religious identity has an important role in establishing a parent-child relationship and vice versa. In relation to that fact, it is necessary to state that a parent-child relationship commonly depends on tradition and culture of certain region. With regards to an established idea that a child inherits its parents' religion, it is the government's obligation to provide education for children in accordance with their parents' religious beliefs, above all, with the aim to protect the children against possible ideological indoctrination which might be imposed by the government.

Secular model of educating a child is a reality, ground and base for all future experiences. However, secular model of education does not diminish the importance of religion, which, as a form of social consciousness, in many countries, has a key role in building the systems of values with students in their process of education. In other words, secularity, no matter how it is understood, does not exclude teaching religion and religious beliefs, but rather annuls imposing any one special form of religious group. Each state regulates the existence of religious education in accordance with its government, social and political beliefs regarding its tradition, culture and the particulars of its system of education.

The relationship between education of a child and the parents' beliefs is a term which encompasses different forms of religious education in schools (the available comparative data show that the subject of religious education is either compulsory or optional in almost all European countries).

Starting from the right of every human being to live in accordance with their religious beliefs, restriction of the religious beliefs of the parents is defined by the interests of the child in the first place. This means that the respect of the beliefs of the parents is subordinated to the basic right of the child to get education. The question of respect for the beliefs of the parents is placed in the context of curriculum and its realization. However, it is the interest of the state to provide access to information (including information on religious and philosophical nature) which is a part of school curriculum can have priority over parent's beliefs. Conflict of interest between the rights of the parents to provide their children with education in accordance with their beliefs and the state that has a great role in the field of education is a complex issue, which cannot be solved in a uniformed way, due to the influence of various objective and subjective circumstances surrounding each case.

The character of the religious education in Serbian system of education is reflected in the idea of inclusion and respect for the contents of other global religions, which was enticed by the religiously pluralistic community we live in. The Bylaw on organizing and executing religious education and an alternative subject education, regulates organization and execution of religious education for traditional churches and religious communities. Religious education and alternative subject education were introduced into the first class of primary and the first class of the secondary school as of the school year 2001/2002. The basic goal of religious education as a subject of choice is to represent the content of the faith and spiritual experience of the traditional Churches and religious communities that live and practice in our community, to enable the students to acquire spiritual and life values of the Church or the community they historically belong to, and to nurture their own religious and cultural identity, whereas the goals of civics are stated as helping students to increase their interest in human rights, demilitarization, appearance of tensions such as civil wars, racism and high unemployment rate. Although the primary goal of religious education is to recognize the contents of the faith and spiritual experience of the traditional Churches and religious communities of the groups who live and work in our area, and nourishing one's religious and cultural identity, in Serbia, the percentage of students who attend civics is distinctively larger.