

THE SPECIFICITY OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS EXPERT EVALUATION

Kocijan Hercigonja D., Buljan Flander G., Hercigonja Novković V.

Expert evaluation of children and adolescents commonly refers to giving expert opinion about their ability of giving a reliable statements and the contextual influence and other factors affecting the youth. There is a growing demand for parental evaluation as well as for the evaluation of the parents – children relationship in child custody cases, i.e. whether there are reasons to restrict parents' right to have the custody of the child.

In case of an adolescent who has committed a criminal deed, evaluation involves young person's ability to grasp, understand and make decisions during a criminal deed. Since children and adolescents are very different in their psychological, biological and social development, each evaluation should be viewed considering the phase of development, and the relationship and influence of the environment which, in various phases of development, can have different impacts on the child and the adolescent. Such interactions can in-

trinsically influence the experience of some situation and what attitudes are built towards the situation or the event.

Experts should be additionally educated in developmental psychology and psychopathology, as a basic prerequisite in conducting the evaluation of children and adolescents. Adequate place for the evaluation should also be provided.

Taking the complexity of children and adolescents evaluation, an expert team should include a psychiatrist, preferably specialised in child and adolescent psychiatry, a psychologist and, where necessary, a special educator/defectologist. These experts should estimate the consequences of the deed and characteristics of the child or the adolescent and her/his ability to give a reliable statement.

Finally, it is important to emphasise the importance of Juvenile Courts and permanent cooperation between all professionals who work with the youth.