

ABSTRACT:

This thesis examines the changes in perception of the child and the childhood from the Early Modern Age until today. Primarily, the thesis investigates the quality of life of infants and education advice concerning the first year of age. The historic part of the thesis addresses the changes in infant treatment depending on the social status of the mother. Further, the thesis discusses the possible origin of these changes in folk traditions and examines the role of authorities by reference to historical education guide books. Moreover, the thesis points out the influence of science and rationality on the infant treatment. Given the fact that there is no summarizing research available about the infant treatment in the 20th century, the thesis analyses different infant approaches using education guide books from this time period. Using data from a survey among contemporary mothers, which investigates their beliefs about infant education including the origin of these beliefs, the thesis aims to analyse the most popular guide books among the mothers. The findings from the research are used to outline problematic aspects of the present-day motherhood. Based on the comprehension of the historical connections, the thesis discusses the profound context of different contemporary education approaches. Nowadays, there is a disruption of generation continuity which is expressed by various and often antagonistic educational approaches and the consequent uncertainty in the relationship towards infants. That is why contemporary parents often feel the need to seek advice in educational guide books, whereby they both inspire themselves by such an advice, as well as analyse it critically. Needless to say, they primarily put the emphasis on their own empathy towards the child, and its constant development.