

See.
Blind children





An Association of Parents and Friends of Blind and Visually Impaired Children
year of establishment: 1990

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Public benefit organization

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13/15 Nowolipie St.,
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Non Public Revalidation and Education Centre for Blind and Visually Impaired Children and Adolescent with Coupled Disability

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A Daily Centre for Support and Adult Education for Blind and Visually Impaired Adults with Coupled Disability

„SOKRATES”

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Private Kindergarten Special Rainbow

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Mission and history

An association of parents and friends of blind and visually impaired children „Rainbow” was founded in 1990 in Warsaw with the initiative of parents who wanted to take care of rehabilitation, therapy, education of their children.

In 1992, two day rehabilitation and educational centres were established – a centre for blind and visually impaired children with conjugated disabilities at 6/10 Kopieńska St. – a centre of support for adults with disability at 12 Leonarda St.

A little later was established Out - Patient Clinic for Early Intervention at 13/15 Nowolipie St. for toddlers who have vision problems.

We took special care of **people with coupled disability** that were previously outside the support system. Two daytime outlets together with a counselling centre for small children create together a unique, on a national scale, complex system of comprehensive, specialist and permanent assistance and additional complex developmental problems : from the youngest children at risk of disability, through pre-school and school children until adulthood. Often our support include all human life.

We believe that over the years of our activity we have to prove that comprehensive assistance, specifically adopted to the needs of the blind and visually impaired in every age, significantly affects the change and improvement of the quality of live of both these people and their families.

Early help, directed to youngest children, who have a visual problems, prevents indefinable permanent disability and improves the chances of independent, independent living.

For adults, who are dependent on coupled disability, who have completed the stage of school education, the Socrates centre is the only place of social support and a dignified life.

The word rainbow is associated with colourfulness, diversity. We have created a rainbow of different possibilities for each child depending on his individual needs, possibilities, passions.





tests created by Finnish ophthalmologist dr. Lea Hyxarinen. This allows you to determine how much the child sees and whether there is cause for concern.

A more accurate diagnosis and in the next order a program supporting the development of vision we get a vision therapist (tyflopädagog with the specialization „eye rehabilitation“ such diagnosis should be carried out against the whole child development (psychological diagnosis) based on medical diagnosis and tests, it requires a long time.

It's important to have a calm atmosphere, keeping your child safety. During functional viewing assessment the therapist checks the range of vision, fixation, eye motility, possibilities of visual-meter coordination and manipulation of complex objects with visual control, field of vision functional visual acuity i.e. the smallest child can see and from what distance, sensitivity to contrast.

Vision therapy is most effective when it is started as early as possible, preferably in the first months or even the first weeks of a child's life.

The concentration of early treatment is early ophthalmologist diagnosis and the possibility of performing a functional vision assessment. Even in a child who has even very small visual abilities (eg. feeling of light in close proximity to the eyes), the function of visual detection of the object's presence can be distinguished in close proximity to the eyes, visual functions can be developed.

The key issue is the time to start the visual stimulation. The earlier the visual stimuli stimulate the child's nervous system, the more likely they are to reach successive stages of visual development.



The earlier the visual stimuli stimulate the child's nervous system, the changes of achieving subsequent stages of development of vision are greater.

Examining the sight of a small children, a child with a complex disability or one using speech, is a quite different task. The rainbow is one of the few places where an ophthalmologist and then a vision therapist, will assess how a child with different additional problems can cope with seeing.

For many years has been working with the rainbow eye specialist doctor Alicja Krawczyk.

In the ophthalmology office, infants and young children are examined whose parents are concerned about how the child sees them, children with various disabilities,

such as children who do not communicate verbally, children with mobility disabilities, with the Downe syndrome and the autism spectrum.

The ophthalmologist office near Kopinska is equipped with the necessary diagnostic equipment to test visual acuity, fundus and detailed visual functions, as well as as various diagnostic tests.

An ophthalmologist may use elements of the so-called functional assessment of vision (examination of visual acuity without interference in the eye) using preoperative



Assistance starts as soon as possible. Parents receive professional information and professional psychologist support, so needed in the first period after childbirth.

The first link in the versatile help system created by Rainbow is the activity addressed to the youngest children and their families, carried out in the Comprehensive Diagnosis, Early Education, Therapy and Rehabilitation Counselling for Blind and Visually Impaired Children at 13/15 Nowolipie St. in Warsaw.

The basis for admitting a child to the counselling centre is the opinion on the need for early development support provided by the psychological and pedagogical counselling centre.

Small children, from 0 to 7 years old come to the clinic with various visual problems, also with other complex dis-

abilities, which are accompanied by difficulties in seeing, help starts as soon as possible. Parents receive professional information and professional psychological support, so needed in the first period after the birth of the child.

An early set of information, divided both to the child and his new family, creates the chance that the small blind and visually impaired child will be enchanted as much as possible – independent, independent adult.

Team of specialists

Therapists with many years of experience and broad professional competences - psychologists, vision therapists, speech therapist, physiotherapist, sensory integra-

tion therapist, spatial orientation teacher. They support the child's development in every sphere, provide parents with the necessary knowledge and skills as well as systematic support.

The clinic includes the help of children from the Warsaw area, the Masovia Province, as well as from other parts of the country, the program of early support of child development is constructed by a team of specialists and adapted individually to the child's needs and developmental opportunities.

Except consultations and therapeutic activities in the clinic, regular visits are carried out at home, in an environment where the whole family feels good, safe and at ease.

They are the most effective of helping a toddler who has been diagnosed with or suspected poor vision.

Scope of the proposed assistance:

- *functional visual assessment and visual therapy*
- *psychological diagnosis and comprehensive child guidance*
- *psychological support for a child*
- *spatial orientation*
- *psycho-pedagogic therapy*
- *diagnosis and sensory integration activities*
- *movement therapy*
- *speech therapy with elements of alternative communication*
- *music, movement, communication classes, in a small group*
- *psychoeducation, training workshops for families*
- *preparing the child for further education*
- *cooperation with specialists from institutions with a similar profile.*



Rainbow kindergarten



The kindergarten is fully adapted to the needs of children with visual disabilities and coupled disabilities, equipped with appropriate equipment and aids.

To the non-universal nursery school of special rainbow at 6/10 Kopinska St. children with sight disability and coupled disability are accepted from the age of 2.5 until they start school. The basis for admission to the kindergarten is the opinion on the need for special education for the pre-school stage issue by psychological-pedagogical counselling and qualification by a team of doctors and therapists.

Program offer

Program work is organized in small groups of 4, where children gain their first social experience, they can develop their competence and skills, play and learn independently.

We pay special attention to the development of communication skills using alternative methods of communication.

The kindergarten program includes many individual and group forms and methods that develop the potential of the child: vision therapist, speech therapy, psychological therapy, SI classes, spatial orientation, music therapy. In kindergarten, hipotherapy and dog therapy are also organised. The program is tailored to the individual needs and abilities of the child.

In addition to a wide range of educational activities, each child is covered by a physical rehabilitation program and medicine care - an ophthalmologist, rehabilitation phy-

sician, neurologist, paediatrician, nursing staff, training, integration and recreation meetings are organised for parents, we also offer psychotherapy for families.

Staff

A team of specialist are teachers with pre-school education, special pedagogues, specialists in various fields (psychologist, speech therapist, typhlo-pedagogue, vision therapist, physiotherapists, music therapist, SI therapist, specialist AAC and doctors and nurses.

The team constantly raises their professional competences and co-operates with each other creating a coherent system of therapeutic interactions addressed to the child.

Surroundings

The garden is an integral part of the facility, classes, outdoor meetings, occasional and recreational events which take place there. It is a playground equipped with devices for children with physical disabilities and a separate place for hippotherapy.

The kindergarten is fully adapted to the needs of children with visual disabilities and coupled disabilities, equipped with appropriate equipment and aids.

The building has no architectural barriers, there are offices for individual work with children (psychological, speech therapy, vision therapy, SI room and rehabilitation room.





The program includes:

- *diagnosis of vision*
- *pediatric, orthopedic, neurological and rehabilitation care*
- *revalidation and upbringing classes in small groups*
- *psychological diagnosis, diagnosis of development*
- *vision therapy and spatial orientation*
- *psycho-pedagogic therapy*
- *physiography*
- *speech therapy, introduction of alternative communication methods*
- *music therapy*
- *occupational therapy*
- *hippotherapy and dogotherapy*

Surroundings and equipment

The garden is an integral part of the institution, classes, outdoor meetings, occasional and recreational events. There is a playground equipped with facilities for children with physical disabilities and a separate place for hippotherapy.

The centre is fully adapted to the needs of children with visual disabilities and coupled disability, equipped with appropriate equipment and aids.

The building has no architectural barriers, there are offices for individual work with children (psychological, speech therapy, vision therapy) a room to do SI and a rehabilitation room. Each of the children's rooms is equipped with Sensory Integration equipment.

Medical care (diagnostics, treatment, rehabilitation) is provided by a Non- public Health Care Unit Rainbow, training centres and psychotherapy for families, special integration and holiday meetings, excursions are organized in the centre.

All children, including those suffering from epilepsy or children with feeding problems (internally fed) are surrounded by caring, cordial therapeutic and medical care. The rooms and rehabilitation equipment are adapted to their needs for health and recreation. The centre provides daily nurse care, doctors- ophthalmologist, rehabilitation physician, neurologist and paediatrician.

Personnel

The team of therapists are teachers - special pedagogues and specialists in various fields (psychologist, speech therapist, typherapist ((tyflopedagog)/ vision therapist, SI therapist, AAC specialist and doctors and nurses constantly improve their professional competences and cooperate closely to create a coherent system of interactions therapeutic targets for the child.



An Individual Therapeutic Program is adapted to the child's specific needs and abilities.

After completing the education stage at the pre-school, the child can learn further in the Non-Public Private Rehabilitation and Education Centre for Blind and Visually Impaired Children and Visual Impaired children.

The centre is located in the same place as the kindergarten – at 6/10 Kopiańska St. The branch of the centre - for the oldest students is located at 12 Leonarda St.

To a Non-public Revalidation and Education Centre Children with disability at the age of 3-25 are admitted on the basis of a decision about the need for revalidation and education classes issued by a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, the qualification

by a team of doctors and therapist is also necessary. The centre's work is organized in small revalidation groups, where children and young children consolidate and develop their skills and acquire new competences in the field of cognitive, emotional, self-service and social contacts.

Thanks to the use of new experiences, they gain opportunity to explore the outside world with all available senses. They develop in the field of communication with the environment and peers.

Individual therapeutic program is adapted to the specific needs and possibilities of the child.



- *diagnosis and psychological therapy*
- *occupational therapy*
- *spatial orientation*
- *classes in the therapeutic kitchen*
- *horticultural therapy*
- *Braille learning*
- *physiotherapy, physical therapy, massage*
- *arttherapy (ceramic activities)*

Moreover the resort organizes: traditional Christmas meetings and integration games, as well as tours and occasional theatre performances with the help of the family's pupils can use the support and assistance of a social worker, psychological support, and other specialist depending on the needs, for example, a lawyer.

For this group and their families as part as European Union

projects, assistance services, environmental support, and respite care are organised, Sokrates is a special place because there are not enough places like this. People over 25 are often doomed to isolation, exclusion, closing in four walls, social development, contacts with other people, an environmental conducive to development is indispensable for every person in maintaining a dignified life.

Parents of older children often ask themselves what will happen to their child when they have completed the school education stage.

25 years and what next?

It's is a very current problem for many families of people with disabilities. In a Rainbow Association, we are looking for solutions for the daily support of this group of people and for building a safe future for them and their families.



SOKRATES is a special place because such places in Warsaw is not enough. People over 25 are often doomed to isolation, exclusion and closing in four walls.

For people over 25, a certain period of life ends, the time of school education. For those of them who, due to their complex disability, dependability, dependence on the support of others, will not be able to work and maintain themselves, we have created in Rainbow a **Daily Centre for Support and Special Education SOKRATES.**

We provide comprehensive specialist assistance, rehabilitation, support and therapy for a group of nearly 50 adults with deep, multiple disabilities - visual, intellectual and physical. All the people in the centre are completely dependent on the help of others, non-dependent people, requiring constant care, which is provided by a quali-

fied, experienced and devoted staff - therapists, specialists, doctors.

The centre's program includes depending on the individual needs and possibilities of the mentee's:

- *functional assessment and vision therapy*
- *supporting independence*
- *learning everyday activities*
- *supporting communication functions*
- *care of rehabilitation physician, neurologist, ophthalmologist*

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Our Ceramics




Each of the pupils impresses a part of their heart, passion and preferences in the clay, it often costs a lot of effort and hardship.

In adult centre at 12 Leonarda St. is an amazingly magical place, a ceramic workshop in which - under the supervision of a qualified team of specialists - unique works are created. These beautiful objects were often exhibited in various types of exhibitions, fairs, auctions, participated and were awarded in competition for disabled people.

In the ceramic classes, pupils with different mobility and different possibilities participate, and what is different, are the forms of excersises and activities.

Least efficient persons perform simple excersises - peeling of clay pieces, forming balls, rolling pins, pressing stamps, textures with the help of therapists, the mentions

places pieces of clay in gypsum molds and these vessels are shaped into bowls, plates, pots.

The purpose of these excersises is to improve the work of hands, improve visual - mate coordination, spatial orientation taming with textures.

The more efficient guards themselves glue the forms with clay, they decide on the way of finishing denorating works. Sometimes they perform simple objects without the use of plaster molds, independently shaping the clay. The most efficient ones perform all tasks on their own, from the preparation of materials and the workplace. Each of the pupils impresses in the clay the piece of their heart,

passion and preferences, often it costs a lot of effort, hardship and dedication.

Instructors take care of the burning and glazing. The topics of the classes are tailored to the interests of their pupils, the changing seasons and important events in the life of the centre.

The performances of the work during the classes is the decoration and equipment of the rooms in the centre are sometimes gifts for the close to them, sometimes souvenir gifts for the guests of the centre. Other people for whom we organise educational ceramics workshops are also invited to join us. Ceramic products can be seen and ordered on website www.ceramika.tecza.org.

There are also information about organized ceramic markets.



