

**Academic guidance**

Counselling in education from early childhood, usually from 3 years, up to the higher education institution level includes a wide range of services to support and broaden the effectiveness of pupils’ (and children’s and students’) education. Counselling in education is provided in close cooperation with schools, teachers, parents and adult pupils. Counselling includes *psychological, special educational and career services*. These activities include diagnostics – psychological diagnostics, special educational diagnostics, diagnostics concerning supporting measures for pupils with special educational needs, specification of recommendations of relevant supporting measures, assistance in their implementation in practice and continuous monitoring of their effectiveness. They also cover consultation, interventions, coordination and career counselling.

Counselling is provided on the basis of an *informed consent of the applicant* (parent or guardian of the pupil / adult pupil) in accordance with ethical principles.

Counselling in Czech education is a *complex system*. The institutions are only partly specialised; most of them work in all three areas – educational (study), psychological, and career. Professional competence in the area is required. Institutions focused on the needs of pupils with health disabilities and some institutions that deal only with career counselling stand somewhat apart.

School counselling is targeted at *boosting* the knowledge and skills of pupils, including social skills, all-round personality development, career decision making, and lifelong learning.

Consulting services also concern the *prevention* of school failure, dropping out from studies, risky behaviour, the relationship and personal issues, and targeted interventions to solve these problems.

The consulting services are also focused on providing *direct psychological and special pedagogical interventions* for pupils with special educational needs, assistance in solving their risky situations, and methodological support to parents, teachers and school facilities.

School counselling services also include *social consulting services* providing social and legal counselling, social interventions, and collaboration with the public authorities (bodies for the social
and legal protection of children) to promote the interests of the pupil.

Very important tasks of the school counselling include finding out suitable support measures for pupils with special educational needs, gifted pupils, and pupils from different cultural backgrounds, finding particular support measures according to the needs of the pupils and taking part in their implementation in the process of the pupils’ education to increase its success. Another integral part is the monitoring of the effectiveness of the support measures and their functioning in practice. (For more on the support system via the support measures, see Education of Pupils with Special Education Needs [1].)

The task of counselling is to recognise in good time a risky pupil in terms of their development and education, identify their educational needs and, in collaboration with all the relevant workers and behavioural analysis, to specify targeted support measures to improve their learning results and support their personal development and career orientation.

Support measures include a broad spectrum of special educational, psychological, pedagogical and organisational, and personal measures and techniques, which are provided to pupils free of charge from the state budget.

Counselling is provided for pupils, their legal representatives, schools and school facilities, and in close cooperation with them.

Consulting services are provided by:

- **schools** by means of education staff (school counsellor, prevention specialist in counselling centre, school psychologist, special educational needs specialist) and non-education staff (social worker)

- **school guidance and counselling facilities**, i.e. pedagogical and psychological counselling centre and special educational centre

For more information on the activities of staff responsible for guidance, see Education Staff Responsible for Guidance in Early Childhood and School Education [2] in Chapter 10.

Consulting services may also be provided by other natural or legal persons within the specified range and conditions.

The methodological and theoretical background is provided by the National Institute for Education [3] which has a coordinating role and role in the further training of guidance counselling staff, and departments of psychology and special education at higher education institutions. The National Institute for Education provides both information and methodological background and direct services in the field of pedagogical, psychological, and career counselling, and cooperates in the latter area with the Labour Office [4] and its regional branches, under the control of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs [5]. (For more details, see Career Guidance.)

The methodological and professional platform is represented by associations that deal with
various areas of education and higher education institutions (departments of psychology and department of special education). (See also Career Guidance [6].)

The National Institute for Education is authorized to review the recommendations of school counselling facilities concerning the requirements of pupils with special educational needs, proposals for their successful education, and the specification of support measures to enhance the educational effectiveness of pupils with special educational needs. Adult pupils, legal guardians of under-age pupils, a public authority, the school or school facility, or the Czech School Inspectorate [7] may ask for a revision of a recommendation issued by a school counselling facility if there are doubts about its accuracy. (See Special Support Measures [8].)

Families with disabled children up to 7 years of age can take advantage of early care services provided under the Social Services Act. This is a field service, possibly supplemented by an outpatient form, provided to the child and the parents of a child who is disabled or whose development is at risk due to unfavourable health conditions. The service is aimed at supporting the family and the child’s development with regard to his/her specific needs. There is a list about 50 providers in the register of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs [9]. Some of them, for example, organise various seminars or lend appropriate aids and toys for children. Consultations take the form of field work. They can be supported from public sources.

**Legislation and Bibliography:**

*Decree on Providing Guidance in Schools and School Guidance Facilities* [10]

*Education Act* [11]

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**Counselling services at schools**

Schools provide counselling services for their pupils and their parents (guardians). A substantial part of them consist of giving support to the pupil’s personality, their educational results, setting suitable conditions for education, the prevention of risky behaviour, and assistance in the pupil’s decision-making process on their careers, specification and implementation of the plans of pedagogical support.

The schools provide the consulting services through a school guidance and counselling workplace (školní poradenské pracoviště), which usually includes:

- a **school counsellor** (výchovný poradce) who provides consulting services in selecting an education pathway or jobs, i.e. career counselling, participates in the solving educational or relationship difficulties of the pupil, or mediates contact with specialists

- a **school prevention specialist** (školní metodik prevence) who coordinates the specification
and implementation of the school preventive programme which primarily concerns the prevention of risky behaviour (skipping school, self-harm, drug use, sexual abuse, racism and xenophobia), support for multicultural values, and contact with specialists

Providing consulting services can also be ensured by:

- a **school psychologist** (školní psycholog) who is particularly involved in the creation of an inclusive climate at school, participates in the formation of the plans of pedagogical support on an individual educational plans, consults issues of education with parents and guardians, assists in matters of education, helps pupils solve their problems, participates in the support of the education of the pupils, including gifted ones, identifies the pupil’s risky developmental factors in time, performs indicative psychological diagnostics, and gives direct help to pupils with special educational needs in accordance with the content of the support measures

- a **special educational needs specialist** (speciální pedagog) who is particularly engaged in creating an inclusive climate at the school, supporting the education of pupils with special educational needs, especially pupils with health disadvantages, the timely identification of risk factors in the pupils’ development, performing pedagogical interventions in accordance with the recommendations for pupils’ support, participating in the elaboration and fulfilment of the plans of pedagogical support, participating in the creation and fulfilment of individual educational plans, providing methodological help to school staff during the education of pupils with special educational needs, and giving methodological assistance and support to pupils’ legal representatives in matters of education

The decision on staffing of the school guidance and counselling workplace falls within the competence of the school head.

**School counselling includes, in particular:**

- support in establishing an inclusive school climate

- assistance in solving relationship problems in class

- support for success in learning and the prevention of failure

- primary prevention of pupils’ risky behaviour, creation and implementation of school preventive programmes, and education for a healthy lifestyle

- starting during basic education, career counselling is employed, integrating educational, information and consulting support in selecting the educational pathway and career opportunities
• professional support for the education of pupils with special educational needs (including gifted pupils, foreigners, and national minorities)

• screening of pupils to find the effectiveness of learning and strong and weak points, making recommendations to solve their problems

• developing the plan of pedagogical support comprising support measures of the 1st level and their fulfilment to help pupils facing failure at school, dropping out, or risky behaviour

• on-going and lasting support for the education of gifted and exceptionally gifted pupils

• methodological support for teachers in applying psychological and special pedagogical know-how in education

• implementation of support measures of 2nd and 5th levels in cooperation with school counselling facilities (pedagogical and psychological counselling centre, special education centre), provision of interventions for pupils with special educational needs

• coordination in providing supporting services at school, participation in work on individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs

• providing information and opportunities to make use of services related to the educational support of pupils

• providing basic information on available social and other professional services

• methodological assistance to teachers in applying support measures to school educational activities

Counselling at basic and upper secondary schools

In providing consulting services, the school counselling staff of the school guidance and counselling workplace (school counsellor, school prevention specialist, school psychologist and special educational needs specialist) cooperate with the education staff, particularly with class teachers and the school counselling facility in the matter of pupils’ education and the adjustment of suitable educational conditions.

The basic school (základní škola) and upper secondary school (střední škola) collaborate with a pedagogical and psychological counselling centre (pedagogicko-psychologická poradna), a special educational centre (speciálně pedagogické centrum), or other institutions which participate in the educational support of the pupil and protection of their interest, or with the authorities for the social and legal protection of children and non-governmental organisations working in the field of
social inclusion. The school also collaborates with the Labour Office under the control of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

A basic document concerning the school success in relation to counselling services is a plan of pedagogical support which defines the support measures of the first level. The plan of pedagogical support is drawn up by the school to support the pupil’s achievements in some subjects through pedagogical means. The plan of pedagogical support describes the pupil’s difficulties towards which the support should be directed, the pupil’s strengths, ways to achieve the targets required, and assessment of effectiveness.

On the basis of recommendations by the school counselling facility, schools draw up an individual educational plan for the pupil to support the education of pupils with more special educational needs and pupils needing support measures of the 2nd to 5th levels. The individual educational plan includes pedagogical, organisational, content, personal and technological modifications to the education process and examinations. At the upper education level, the school head may also allow education according to the individual educational plan for other reasons than the existence of special educational needs or the talent of the pupils.

See also Special Support Measures.

Counselling at nursery schools

Nursery schools (mateřské školy), which are intended mainly for children from 3 years of age (no sooner than 2 years of age), provide counselling services to parents in the field of pedagogical support concerning the development of their children and give the parents information on professional consulting and other available services that focus on supporting the children’s interests, development, and preparation for compulsory education.

To provide consulting services, the nursery school can set up a school guidance and counselling workplace.

The nursery school collaborates with a pedagogical and psychological counselling centre, special educational centre, or other institutions which take part in the education of the child and protection of his/her interests. If the child’s interests are at risk, it collaborates with an authority for the social and legal protection of children. Nursery schools collaborate with basic schools to prepare a child’s smooth transition from preschool to compulsory education and cooperate with organisations ensuring early childhood care under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to ensure the child’s smooth transition from preschool to compulsory education.

Nursery schools provide specific support to children with special educational needs through support measures. The support measures are implemented by professionally trained education staff (educators, special educational needs specialists, school speech therapist, and others) in accordance with the children’s educational needs and recommendations by the school guidance and counselling centre.

The key document which is drawn up by the nursery school to use its consulting service, is a plan of pedagogical support. The plan is intended for children who need support measures in the first stage of their education.

On the basis of recommendations by the school counselling facility, nursery schools draw up an individual educational plan, to support the education of pupils with more special educational
needs and pupils needing support measures of the 2nd to 5th level. The individual educational plan includes pedagogical, organisational, content, personal, and technological modifications to the preschool education process at nursery schools.

See also Special Support Measures [8].

**Legislation and Bibliography:**

Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children [12]


Education Act [11]

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**Counselling services at school counselling facilities**

**Special education centres** (*speciálně vzdělávací centra*) are primarily focused on supporting pupils with hearing, visual, and physical impairments, speech impediments, multiple disabilities, autism or mental disabilities.

**Pedagogical and psychological counselling centres** (*pedagogicko-psychologická centra*) as codified in the Education Act specialise rather in providing counselling for pupils with developmental disorders of behaviour and learning. Another target group consists of pupils with personality or relationship problems, pupils who are foreigners, and pupils who are disadvantaged because of their cultural background or other bad situations in life.

For more information, see Psychological Counselling.

**Legislation and Bibliography:**


Education Act [11]

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**Psychological counselling**

Pedagogical and psychological counselling provided for pupils (and children and students) including those with special educational needs is an integral part of their education and harmonious
development.

Pedagogical and psychological counselling and special educational support for pupils (and children and students) are provided by school guidance and counselling facilities, i.e. pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (pedagogicko-psychologická poradna) and special educational centres (speciálně pedagogické centrum).

Diagnostic institutes (diagnostické ústavy) and centres for educational care (střediska výchovné péče) provide consulting services within institutional or protection education and preventive educational care.

On the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, there is a map of pedagogical and psychological counselling centres in the Czech Republic [13].

Legislation and Bibliography:

Education Act [11]

Pedagogical and psychological counselling centre

The pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (pedagogicko-psychologické poradny) are school counselling facilities (školská poradenská zařízení) established by regions, or other legal entities or natural persons (both religious and private guidance and counselling centres). There must be at least one centre in every district.

The services of guidance and counselling centres are provided by psychologists (psychologové), special educational needs specialists (speciální pedagogové) and social workers.

The individual or group work of the experts with pupils and their parents and guardians and teachers includes diagnostic, interventional, methodological and information activities. These are provided by appointment on the premises of the centre and through visits of expert counsellors to schools and school facilities.

The common activities of the pedagogical and psychological counselling centre mainly involve:

- determining whether pupils are ready for compulsory school attendance and submitting report and recommendations;

- determining the special educational needs of pupils using methods of psychological and special education diagnostics;

- drawing up recommendations and proposals for support measures for pupils with special
educational needs and gifted pupils;

- providing pupils with direct psychological and special education support and interventions;

- giving support to pupils facing increased risk of school failure or having problems in their personal and social development;

- giving consulting services to pupils from different cultural background and pupils with different environmental conditions;

- providing pupils with career consulting;

- providing pupils’ parents and guardians with information, methodological and consulting support;

- through the prevention specialist, ensuring the prevention of risky behaviour, implementation of preventive measures, and coordination of the work of school prevention specialists;

- providing methodological support for teachers and school facilities in offering consulting services of schools and school facilities for applying support measures;

- making adjustments regarding the taking of examinations at the end of the education in upper secondary schools (střední školy) and tertiary professional schools (vyšší odborné školy);

- providing assistance and counselling for schools in the field of identifying (exceptionally) gifted pupils and providing them with professional pedagogical, educational, and psychological services;

- regularly evaluating the implementation of support measures.


**Legislation and Bibliography:**


**Special education centre**

Special education centres (*speciálně pedagogická centra*) mostly work in schools set up for groups of pupils (and children, and students) with physical, mental, hearing, visual disabilities/impairments, speech impediments, autism, multiple disabilities, and rarely also for pupils with developmental learning disorders or behavioural disorders. They specialise in providing consulting services for the category of pupils for which the school has been set up. The current trend is to provide the specialised consulting services on an integral basis for more categories of disabled pupils.

Psychologists (*psychologové*), special educational needs specialists (*speciální pedagogové*) and social workers work in the centres. These teams may take on other professional workers because of the clients’ disabilities. The centres work on an outpatient basis on the premises of the centre and through visits of the centres’ workers to schools and school facilities, or families and facilities taking care of pupils with disabilities.

The main focus of the activity is to support preschool children in the care of their parents or guardians, to support pupils integrated into schools and school facilities, to support children, usually between 3 and 19, with severe and multiple disabilities who cannot attend school. Schools for pupils with a specific type of disability are provided with counselling services only within the diagnostic care.

**The common activities** of the special educational centre mainly involve:

- determining to what extent disabled pupils are prepared for compulsory school attendance;
- determining the special educational needs of pupils with health disabilities and their requirements for support measures;
- working out expert background documents to specify the conditions for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
- suggesting recommendations on suitable modifications to the final exams of pupils with disabilities;
- providing career counselling in the field of follow-up education and work placement;
- ensuring special educational care and support measures to pupils in the inclusive form of education if the professional support cannot be guaranteed by the school and its staff;
- performing special pedagogical and psychological diagnostics and providing counselling and
assistance in solving problems in the education and social development of pupils with disabilities;

- providing counselling in the field of the education of pupils with disabilities as well as for education staff and parents or guardians of pupils;

- giving methodological, information and consulting support to schools which educate disabled pupils and to their legal representatives;

- regularly evaluating the needs and effectiveness of support measures.

**Legislation and Bibliography:**


Education Act [11]

**Centre of educational care**

Centres of educational care are school facilities which provide diagnostic and preventive care and consulting services for minors in difficult life conditions, people with behavioural disorders, people at risk of behavioural disorders, or people with developed behavioural disorders, and persons with negative phenomena in their social development, who have not been put under protective care or placed in institutional care. The centres are also intended for people who have reached 18 years of age until they have completed upper secondary education (henceforth referred to as ‘clients’).

The diagnostic activity is focused on recognising the essential features of the clients’ personality and finding out their needs and problems. It is a starting point for drawing up an individual plan to be followed in applying pedagogical, psychological and therapeutic procedures.

The therapeutic activity is directed towards the changes in the clients’ behaviour and attitudes.

The centre of educational care provides psychotherapeutic assistance for children, young people and parents, for instance concerning problems of mutual relations, behavioural disorders, bullying, antisocial phenomena in children and young people (aggression, drug abuse, initial delinquency), or mental difficulties and personality problems in children.

The care is ensured by teams with expertise in psychology, special education and social work.

The basic methods of work are individual psychotherapy, family therapy, and group psychotherapy.

The centres also offer the coordination of a voluntary therapeutic stay in educational care centres.
for children and young people with a stay in a residential department.

Some centres prepare **preventive programmes for schools**, e.g. programmes on bullying, racism, drug abuse, or safe internet. They also offer diagnostics and interventions if there are pathological phenomena in the class.

If necessary, the centre of educational care can also **collaborate** with the school, pedagogical and psychological counselling facilities, the authority for the social and legal protection of children, medical facilities, and other bodies which are engaged in the prevention and solution of the client’s risky behaviour.

**Legislation and Bibliography:**


**The diagnostic institute**

The diagnostic institute is a school facility which carries out special pedagogical and psychological testing on a residential basis of **children** who have been **ordered to receive institutional education** or had **protective care imposed** on them by a court, or of children who have been placed in the facility by their parents / persons responsible for their education (on the basis of an agreement between the institute and the parents or a guardian of the child or people who have reached 18 years of age) because of behavioural difficulties. It can provide children with non-residential special educational care, i.e. provide special education or psychological services to children with behavioural disorders and to their families or schools.

**Legislation and Bibliography:**


**Career guidance**

**Transmitting information about the world of work** is part of the curriculum in both compulsory and in post-compulsory education.
Another form of preparing for life in the world of work is **practical training**, which particularly takes place in upper secondary education, especially at vocational schools, which are attended by about 75% of the population.

Apart from the **school counsellors** (školní poradci, see [Counselling services at schools](#)), career counselling is also provided by institutions specialised therein.

### Legislation and Bibliography:

- **Decree on Providing Guidance in Schools and School Guidance Facilities** [10]
- **Yearbook of Trends. Education in the Czech Republic 2006/07–2016/17** [14]

### Career issues in the curriculum

Within the **compulsory education**, one of the educational areas included in the [Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education] [15] is the area of **The People and the World of Work**.

The **first stage** involves four thematic fields:

- Working with Fine Materials
- Construction Activities
- Plant Cultivation
- Food Preparation

All fields are mandatory.

The **second stage** involves eight thematic fields:

- Working with Technology
- Design and Construction
- Plant and Animal Husbandry
- Household Management
- Food Preparation
- Working with Laboratory Equipment
- Use of Digital Technology
- The World of Work

The thematic field The World of Work is compulsory and schools choose from the other fields at least one another according to their needs and educational objectives. Considering its focus on future occupational choice, it is recommended to include it in the highest school years.
Preparation for professional and economic civil life is carried out at upper secondary level within the educational area (for general upper secondary schools) and cross-curricular theme People and the World of Work (for vocational courses). The framework educational programmes [16] also require general upper secondary school leavers to have entrepreneurship competences and leavers of vocational courses to have the competences needed to enter the labour market and carry out business activities.

Including practical training and work experience in companies into the curricula of vocational upper secondary schools facilitates contact between pupils and employers which may influence the pupils’ decision on their future choice of employment. Moreover, after completing their studies, some of the pupils start working at the company where they had their practice. Contact with the world of work is provided through practical training in companies during vocational education (see the section Teaching and Learning in Upper Secondary Education [17]).

Legislation and bibliography:

Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education [18]
Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education [19]
Framework Educational Programmes for Vocational Upper Secondary Education [20]

Institutions providing career guidance

Career guidance and counselling is provided by:

- school counsellor (výchovní poradci) directly at schools (see Counselling Services at Schools)
- pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (pedagogicko-psychologické poradny)
- special education centres (speciálně pedagogická centra) (pupils with special educational needs)
- the Career Guidance Centre [21]
- information and guidance centres for choice of careers of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic [22] (IPS)

Information and guidance centres for choice of careers of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic (IPS)
The labour offices have undergone a legislative change, by which a Labour Office of the Czech Republic has been established. The Office has regional offices, which include contact centres set up in compliance with the need for accessibility. Information and guidance centres for choice of careers within regional offices provide current information on:

- the network of upper secondary schools, study and vocational courses in the whole country
- admission procedures requirements
- demands and requirements for each occupation
- employment opportunities of graduates
- the situation on the labour market in regions and the whole Czech Republic
- retraining opportunities (for more information, see Unemployed and other defined groups)

Information and guidance centres for choice of careers of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic provide detailed descriptions of jobs, the possibility of self-testing of professional interests in relation to an occupation and the relevant education, and electronic searching of study fields or vocational courses in the whole country and other services, all of them free of charge.

The standard activities of the school counsellor include (in addition to those mentioned in the section Counselling services at schools) accompanying the final-year classes on visits to the information and counselling centre of the Labour Office, where pupils become acquainted with the situation on the regional labour market and with the options of follow-up education. Pupils are informed that they can make an appointment for an individual consultation regarding the choice of their career or transition into the labour market.

National Institute for Education

The Career Guidance Centre is a part of the National Institute for Education; this Centre publishes a number of publications analysing the success of graduates on the labour market.

The National Institute for Education is the administrator of the Internet portal www.infoabsolvent.cz – the Information System on School Leavers' Success in the Labour Market (ISA), which was created within VIP Kariéra systemic project (2005–2008) of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports with the support of the European Social Fund. On the website, those who are interested can find a short description of every course at upper secondary schools, conservatoires and tertiary professional schools, a short description of the field, job opportunities, information on unemployment, basic documents, schools offering particular courses, and basic information on the entrance procedures to these schools. The site can be searched by profession and gives the characteristics of every position, activities performed, a list of courses in which it is possible to attain the necessary qualifications, average monthly income, and other information. The courses can also be chosen taking into account the kind of disabilities/impairment of the pupil. The web pages also contain advice on
career choices and in the case of difficulties with studies, they give contact details for specialists in pedagogical and psychological counselling centres, the Career Guidance Centres, Labour Offices and the Information Youth Centre.

The establishment of **school guidance and counselling workplaces** (školní poradenská pracoviště) at more than 100 schools was an important part of the VIP Kariéra project. The guidance and counselling centres are staffed by a school psychologist, and/or school special educational needs specialist, a school counsellor and a school prevention methodologist. Currently, there is a trend of expanding the number of school guidance and counselling centres and thus to give more schools the competence to provide guidance services to pupils directly.

**Vocational training of pupils with special educational needs**

The vocational training of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of the mainstream population, including the offer of fields of study, their structure, while maintaining the support that is appropriate to the pupils’ special educational needs. The career guidance provided to these pupils is similar to that given to other pupils; in the case of disabled pupils, the special education centres also participate in the guidance. The transition of young people with **severe or multiple disabilities** from vocational training to the labour market seem to be the most difficult area of caring for the disabled. The situation is particularly complicated in employing intellectually impaired persons. These juveniles are usually registered as long-term unemployed, or receive a disability pension and very often remain in the care of the social network.

**Legislation and Bibliography:**
