
CONFERENCE

Date: 14th and 15th of September 2023

Place: Hybernská 4, 11000, Prague 1, Czech republic

A critique of the adult-centred theory and research methods traditionally used in the exploration of children and adolescent's development and lives entered the discourse of social sciences in the 1990s with the theory of New Sociology of Childhood (James and Prout, 1997), arguing that children and young people are in traditional discourses considered by adults as incompetent in their skills before developing into fully respectable adults. In terms of research, children and youth are traditionally treated as research subjects who provide the data in adult-centred categories on children's themes, resulting in information about children that is directed, analysed, and produced by adults in adult-centred views. In addition, the discussion of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has ignited the discussion on the implementation of children's rights in children's daily encounters with social institutions, such as family, education and schools, social services, health services, law institutes etc. The child-centred perspective aims to acknowledge, address and empower children's voice and active agency considering children as active social agents with their experiences and perspectives that are relevant to society. Yet, traditional discourses and related social policies on children and childhood still present barriers to child-centred perspective, inclusion, and active participation of children in democratic institutions and societies. This recent development in social sciences is embedded in the new discipline of Childhood (Children's) studies with an interdisciplinary approach to the child, children, and childhood. With a child-centred focus, new research methods are friendly to children's mode of communication, allowing active participation in research and thus more authentic exploration of children's experiences and perspectives of the lived social phenomena in question.