

## **Somatic program for families with children with special needs**

### **Children and their families**

After many years working with children and their families we observed often very complicated situation families find themselves in. Their children begun to have troubles of different kinds, they were diagnosed or not, the medical attitude is often very unclear and pessimistic. The picture of their grown child, they dreamed about during pregnancy is gone, and there is nothing to replace it. They are send to different types of therapies and ambulances, often with very vague sense of direction.

### **BMC potential**

Being with them in these situations, we realized that working with BMC is very supportive for integration, acceptance, understanding and offer very concrete tools to children as well as to parents. This movement approach works with individual child and its family rather than following concrete diagnosis, which opens the space to see the whole personality and strong sites of the child and explores the ways to support him, where he needs. One of the main principles of BMC is the exploration of developmental movement and relations of functioning of human body. We work a lot experientially on our own body and than coming from this personal experience we support the understanding of parents which is very important for supporting the development of the child as well as for well being of the whole family.

### **SPARKS influence**

The SPARKS project offered us unique opportunity to experience and see our colleagues working with BMC in various settings – individual sessions with clients, working in the frame of institutions, group sessions for children and their families, artistic work, meetings of professionals etc. We had an interesting discussion about the place of BMC within other therapies in concrete situation working with individual child. We named two basic examples – BMC being the main therapeutic tool to work on improvement and development or having more integrative role among other therapeutic approaches the family is using.

Based on SPARKS experience we have developed

### **Supportive program**

Through reflecting our experiences and discussions in different professional circles we created supportive program for the families with children with special needs which includes:

- **regular individual work** with the child – through touch and play we support his movement development allowing as much independence as possible, after stimulation we create conditions to integrate new patters and relationships in the body
- **group work** with child – regular meetings for families with children with special needs, which offers a lot of opportunities to play together, sing and dance in a joyful atmosphere without expectation of necessity of improvement, it offers experiential part for parents, where they experience their movement
- **experiential learning for parents** in the frame of individual as well as group work – offering the parents opportunities and motivations to move and explore the relations of their own body to support deeper understanding of their child's functioning and perception
- **further education of parents** – participation on educational program BabySoma developed by Babyfit (supported financially and organizationally) focused on exploration of movement development in the first year of life as a base for later learning and perception

- cooperation with our foreign partners of SPARKS project – participation of families on international activities of the projects including direct cooperation of foreign educator with the child, as well as **support and opportunity to dialogue with international community**
- in case of interest – **reports and communication with other professionals** working with the child

We used this framework (or its parts) with following children: Zinka Bednáriková with family, Juraj Frič with family, Viktor Vicen with family, Svetlana Krajčovičová with family, Eliška Balážová with family, Tomáš Kubaščík with family, Lilly Uhlířová with family, Marcel ..... with family.

Their positive reactions and pointing the improvements of their children on different levels showed us the capacity and potential of this program and necessity of looking at situations of these families not only from narrow view on child's development but wider perspective including the support and understanding of other family members. This creates great base for child to develop in more aspects of his life and well being of the whole family.