**Title of Doctoral Thesis:** Early intervention and adoption: Mental health professionals’ and adoptive parents’ experiences and attitudes

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ABSTRACT

In view of the new law regarding adoption and foster care, as well as of the priority given, globally, in the implementation of preventive interventions that promote mental health, this dissertation aims to illustrate the experiences and perceptions of mental health professionals on adoptive parents’ preparation process and on the importance of early intervention programs in the empowerment of adoptive parents regarding the effective handling of the psychosocial dimensions of adoption and, simultaneously, to investigate the social representations, feelings, personal experiences and expectations of adoptive parents themselves on the aforementioned issues. The theoretical part includes a brief overview of the legitimate definition of adoption, the different alternatives of adoption, the major law changes and the respective psychosocial aspects. In addition, it refers to the main challenges of parental role and to the distinctive demands that adoptive parents have to cope with. Finally, the meaning of early intervention and the positive effects of such programs in risk factors deduction, in parental empowerment and, correspondingly, in the smooth social and emotional child development, are highlighted. In the research part, we describe the subject and the purpose of the study, the individual goals and the main research questions. The method chosen is the qualitative social research method. The collection of data will be based on semi-structured interviews and the analysis will be based upon thematic analysis strategy. The research sample will be constituted by 25 professional and 45 adoptive parents and will be retrieved from relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations, covering five out of the thirteen geographical regions of the country.

Key Words: adoption, early intervention, adoptive parents, attitudes, mental health professionals