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Physical Health and Pronatalism in Jędrzej Śniadecki's *On the Physical Education of Children*

Jędrzej Śniadecki (1768–1838) was one of the first Polish-Lithuanian anthropologists. Śniadecki was a professor of chemistry and medicine at the University of Vilnius and the Vilnius Medical-Surgical Academy. Śniadecki was a scientist with many talents. In 1800, he published the first textbook of chemistry in the Polish language in Vilnius. One of his most famous works was the three-volume *Theory of Organic Beings* (Vilnius, 1838), which is considered one of the earliest works on physiological chemistry.

One of Śniadecki's fields of scientific interest was the hygiene and physical education of children. In 1840, thanks to M. Baliński, his *On the Physical Education of Children* was published posthumously in Warsaw. This nearly 90-page monograph presented Śniadecki's concept of physical education. It included many aspects that contributed to the overall education of a child. He believed that the main purpose of education was to create a healthy and happy individual. In order to reach that goal, education should be organized and based on both the correct interpretation of human physiology and moral needs, and not just on morals. In this way, a population of healthy people would create healthy families and a healthy, strong nation.