STUDY AND CHARACTERIZATION OF THE HEARING FAMILY WITH DEAF CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

An explanation is given on the functioning of one-deaf child or adolescent families, making emphasis on the education given to these children. A methodological approach is shown, followed by the assessment of those households, the spotted shortcomings, as well as the integration of the information contributed by the case-studies, which allowed determining the typical families. The theoretical conception on which it is based is the Historic-Cultural, which has been presented by the author through other research and publication results.

Key Words:

INTRODUCTION

The family constitutes the first space for interaction with society, of human, communicative and formative contact in socialization. Therefore, the family has the mission of providing its members with opportunities to develop and enrich their personality. The culture asks parents and other significant adults to fulfill their responsibility in the upbringing and training of children and adolescents, preparing them for life, together with educational institutions.

The problem studied is common to other families with children who have disabilities, but it has its peculiarity, given by the social as well as by the characteristics of the deaf person. It is assumed that these families should be studied from the same conceptions and with the methodological resources developed by contemporary social sciences, especially Psychology and Pedagogy.

Families with deaf children or adolescents present a variety of problems in their functioning that alter the emotional climate of the household and communication between relatives, which often hinders the school's efforts in their education. Studies carried out by the author in the Cuban context, revealed that there is still no scientifically based approach for its characterization and evaluation. Specialists require a framework of pedagogical understanding to study these household and pave the way for their educational care.

It was then decided to develop the methodological resources that support and facilitate the evaluation of families. It constitutes a demand for the specialty, included in the priorities of the National Education System in Cuba regarding the implementation of the bilingual educational model for deaf people. Intra-family educational functioning is taken as the center, in response to a current problem of education for deaf children.

The experience takes place in the “Fructuoso Rodríguez Pérez” Special School, a provincial center that serves these schoolchildren in Villa Clara, where the educational community implemented a strategy for family education.
FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S DISABILITY

Today's society recognizes diversity, however, certain canons of beauty are maintained in which the harmony of the body structure and external physical features are weighed. The couple expects strong, well-formed, healthy and intelligent children, they aspire to have children who prolong and materialize the fulfillment needs not achieved by them. They want it from the social model built, so it is very difficult to prepare to expect a different offspring.

When the expected child does not meet these expectations, the family feels attacked, attacked, involved in a plot that can be attributed to destiny, nature, or divine punishment. They often experience this situation as a painful loss; it constitutes an injury to the concept they have about themselves as parents and human beings. Authors such as Kirk (1975) and Rolland (2000) recognized early that families go through a period of internalization of this new reality. This elaboration of the mourning for the losses suffered depends on the previous functioning of the household, led in most cases by the couple of parents. The personality characteristics of each parent must also be taken into account. The family experiences a deep state of stress, becomes unstable; it is not ready to accept the child who disagrees so much with the social model. Symptoms of family dysfunction may then appear.

The appearance of barriers in communication that previously flowed in a functional way in the founding couple of the household is also reported; Many times it has its origin in that the feelings of guilt that parents develop are not shared, the problem is attributed to the other (Castro, 2007: p.36).

A common stage is when parents feel sorry for themselves for what fate has brought them. Feelings of grief, despair, or guilt that parents may experience are reasonable to expect, they could be considered appropriate. But these affective reactions of anxiety, ambivalence, irritability, fear, insecurity, bewilderment, begin to permeate the affective and educational function of the family.

When the disability of a young child appears, the family gradually reorganizes the distribution of its tasks and roles. The mother almost always carries the greatest weight. The households with these children could carry dysfunctions from before the appearance of the child's problem; then the difficulties tend to worsen, as if the family and micro-social situations in which these households exist were generators and sustainers of conflicts. In some families, the parents' reactions to the child's difficulty consist of maintaining excessive protection; parents are affected by perceiving social prejudices, which affect the parents' attitude towards the child.

Authors such as Martha Schorn point out that this is accompanied by the poor preparation of the parents for the cognitive, affective stimulation and necessary socialization of the child; This causes desperate reactions, ranging from depressive to aggressive, although those with greater protective resources seek to find alternatives to act (Schorn, 1997: p.213).

It is possible to explain how families are and function as society needs and expects, forms of family life and home values very different from the dominant moral would not be accepted. Society expresses prejudice towards disability, especially when it manifests itself externally as a difference from “the norm”.

THE DEAF CHILD AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Deafness is defined as “a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through the ear, with or without amplification”, therefore, it can be viewed as a condition that prevents an individual from receiving sound in all or almost all of its forms. In contrast, a child with hearing loss can generally respond to auditory stimuli, including language. Deaf people are considered to be those who have a bilateral hearing loss, generally severe or profound, and whose appearance occurred from birth or in the first years of the child's life.

It constitutes a sensory limitation that has its cause in the organic damage of the auditory analyzer. As a consequence, hearing losses of different magnitudes occur, which in turn cause difficulties for the formation and development of oral language for communication and the development of psychic processes.
Currently there are few bibliographic sources that address the psychological aspects of the development of the deaf child. The specialized literature offers data from isolated research of authors who explain the psychological aspects of the development of deaf people from isolated positions, for example, Marchesi, A., was dedicated to the cognitive and linguistic study of deaf children: Soloviev I.M. and Shif J. I. studied the regularities of cognitive activity; Skliar, C., investigated the concept of identity in deaf people (see Rodríguez, 2008 and 2011). For her part, Schorn (1997) made interesting psychoanalytic reflections on the development of the personality of the deaf child and adolescent.

In our environment, doctors Xiomara Rodríguez, leader of current approaches in the education of deaf children, and Rosa Maria Castellanos, theorist and leading specialist, stand out, who maintains that the development of the personality of these children occurs under the same general laws that rule the development of the rest of the children (Castellanos & Rodríguez, 2003: p.189)

Regarding families with deaf children, several works aimed at understanding it have been released in recent years, they have their roots in studies carried out with parents of children "without disabilities". In Cuba, the work of researchers such as Castro, P. L., (1996, 2005), Núñez, E., (1995, 2005); Blanco A., (2000), Castillo, S. (1998, 2005); Martínez, C., (2003), García, A. (2001), Padrón, A. R. (2008), among others, in them, the active participation of parents in the process of their own evaluation and diagnosis was focused; contributing their criteria and their own reflections on the causes that may be affecting family dynamics. Studies and publications carried out by the author are a source and confirmation of the conceptions of current scientific literature referred to above.

When studying families with deaf children, it is considered that the greatest difficulty lies in the communicative function of the family members with the minor, and of this with society (García & Castro, 2006: p.95). In this sense, Vigotsky referred to the fact that the action of the defect is secondary, indirect. The essential thing is to understand its social consequences, determine the child's social position, relationships and communication (Colectivo de Autores, 2003: p.78)

Studies on hearing families with deaf children show that there are communication barriers that make it difficult for the family system to function, due to misunderstandings regarding the linguistic codes used based on the particular bilingual situation of deaf people. The vast majority of deaf children are born in homes that live in the hearing world and parents do not imagine the child's difficulties in understanding language. Perhaps more than in other types of children with disabilities, these parents need to be helped to understand this type of life and communication.

Parents with deaf children find it more difficult to change as the child grows, there are rigidities and fears of change due to the strong emotional anchors that exist. Faced with each new demand, both the parents and the child have difficulty reorganizing their daily tasks and relationships at home. They experience a series of subjective reactions in each period of the deaf child's life.

The deaf's communication difficulties reduce opportunities for social contact and are a source of frustration for him and his family. These difficulties prevent understanding the verbal explanations of the emotions and feelings of the hearing people around him, even the facial expressions of these people are not always understood by the deaf.

Given the ignorance and uncertainty that parents have about the characteristics of their child, questions arise that, far from favoring stimulation and promoting development, hinder and torment. Therefore, one of the issues that must be taken into account is the disposition in which the parents are to face the difficulties of their child. The loss of harmony in the family environment is frequently appreciated, which is defined by the balance between the functions, forming a system where they condition each other and in turn remain in harmony between the components that mark the family functioning. When this is affected, premises are lacking that favor healthy development and balanced personal growth of family members, especially the deaf child. Sometimes the normal development of the autonomy and independence of the minor is hampered.

Some parents are too demanding, in their insistence on the development of the child they ask for efforts beyond their possibilities. This causes stress for minors and can lead to a frustrated and insecure personality. Sometimes
these parents are also demanding to professionals; demanding unrealistic miracles in the face of their child's shortcomings. These parents do not make an adequate assessment of the real levels of development reached by their child, hence they handle them from their deficiencies and limitations.

Generally, the psychological boundaries that make it possible to respect everyone's space in the household, and in particular, the territory of the child with "deficiencies" are not adequately established. The non-establishment of the rules in the system (whether implicit or explicit) threatens the balance of the rest of the components. On the one hand, parents do not feel the need to tell the child what is right and what should not be done, or at what times, which behaviors are acceptable and which are not. Then they establish norms that later they do not demand, reason why they do not get to be established as definite and constant rules.

In these families, social prejudices penetrate the parents and limit the child in their stimulation and socializing contacts. This is manifested when the child is left in her crib without the necessary stimulation; they hardly smile or coo at him, do not encourage him with loving words, or do not play with the little one. Often they limit contact with potential playmates.

Vigotsky pointed out that deafness not only changes man's attitude towards the world, but also influences, first of all, in the relationships with those around him[…] for the person who approaches this child there is not so much deafness as a fact directly biological, like the social consequences of this fact. (Selected Works, Volume 5, pp. 43-53) He also considered that deafness is a normal and non-morbid state for the child. He feels that defect only indirectly, secondarily, as a result of his social experience reflected in himself. (Ibid, pp. 89-90)

It is recognized in the literature that there is a dominant listening culture and that the culture generated by the deaf themselves has been relegated, this culture contains not only their sign language, but also includes their experiences and their peculiar way of understanding the world.

Some Cuban authors (Rodríguez & Castellanos, 2003: p.68; García & Castro, 2006: p.55) admit that having a different language fosters identity with the sign-speaking group. Presumably, the Cuban deaf community is currently going through a constitution process, where its members gain their own social space and recognize themselves, both by the difference with others, and by the community with their peers.

The hearing family can favor the deaf child's identity, but can also hinder it, from the representation that parents have about this minority community. There may be a conflict between the affective identification that this child feels for his parents, the security that this gives him and the new identification that he develops towards the sign-speaking group.

It is recognized that deaf people suffer from stigmatization processes; some people with severe disabilities carry a stigma when their physical or sensory differences are recognized by others as inconsistent with "normality." In our environment, Dr. Castro has called them people with a visible stigma, revealing the dynamic of prejudice that triggers their situation in the family, the community, and the institutions that serve them.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This work reports both what was obtained through the study of cases with a clinical approach and a generalization of the family characteristics through the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. It is deepened through the analysis of various aspects previously revealed in the characterization studies; This new integration provides knowledge of great value for the care of these children and their families. The case study was decided because it allows us to delve into the intrafamily processes related to the formation of the personality of their children in their sociocultural environment. The set of families that could be included, given the requirements of this methodology, does not seek to represent the population, but rather to appreciate the diversity of families that attend a special school, and to deepen their educational functioning.

The case study is included in the qualitative research methodology. It has great importance in the development of the social sciences and is used frequently by Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology. Its greatest value lies in providing an approach between theory and practice. This approach integrates methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, the registry of testimonies from key informants, and others, which make it possible to penetrate the characteristics of the family processes that are studied. Cuban authors such as Alonso and Castro recognize the importance of case studies to deepen the characterization of the subjects and the evolution they experience during their psychological care.
This approach allows for close interrelation between the researcher and the subjects under study. With the selected relatives, their life history is reconstructed and the current family functioning is deepened, with an emphasis on the education of the deaf child. The information obtained when evaluating the children is also used and is complemented with records in the researcher's field diary, which systematizes observations and relevant interpretations in the process of characterization and education of these families.

The analysis of each case allows the strategy to be directed towards those most significant aspects that lead to improving the educational function from a compensatory position. It is not enough to present the cases and attempt a conclusion of regularities about the group studied. Through a careful inductive process, typical cases are identified and characterized, which express the constellation of factors or indicators studied and the essentials of family functioning are revealed. The type of cases found reveals the general, through its particular expression, in a concrete case that is the singular expression.

**ELABORATED INDICATORS**

The recognized theory about the family and its functions supports the methodology that allows interpreting the cases.

The categories and concepts developed in the last two decades in the study of Cuban families are taken as reference. When necessary, certain aspects were specified that qualify family functioning when hearing impairment is present in children. The research process made it possible to specify their definitions, deepen and determine their validity.

The indicators for characterization establish qualitative essences of objects, processes and results related to family life and functioning. In this study they were:

1. Representations of family members regarding the living conditions of the household.
2. The composition of the family and the relationships established by its members.
3. The ideals of the parents around the family and the child.
4. Communication among family members.
5. Perception of social prejudices and their impact on the socialization process.
6. Attitude of parents towards the deaf community.
7. Performance of the family educational function

It is particularized in the family educational function, here the preparation of the adults of the family in their spiritual cultural function, the attention to the school life of the children and the educational control procedures are taken into account.

A system of instruments was created, which included participant observation of the families' homes; the group interview with parents to investigate the processes that occur in the family environment; parent questionnaire that is preferably applied as an interview to both parents; drawing of the family to obtain information about conflicts in family affective relationships through the child; and the technique of the three wishes, fears and scams. Teachers and specialists who were taken as key informants were also interviewed; they contributed about the families studied, as well as the context where they develop.

The information obtained is integrated to achieve an evolutionary interpretation of the studied family, from before the discovery of deafness in the child, in particular during the stage of facing its diagnosis and the performance of family functions is emphasized in the face of the demands of the compensation of the defect.

The researcher proposed to share the work of the professionals of the school for the deaf for a long time and to understand each one of the cases, both parents and children. In addition, the modalities of education for families were developed, which allowed obtaining the necessary information for the case study.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS**

The triangulation of the information collected through the applied instruments clarifies the characteristics of the household with deaf children, which allow directing their educational attention.
Their households are made up of several members, ranging from 3 to 7 relatives of up to three generations (grandparents, parents, children); some also have uncles and cousins. Homes where parents have separated predominate. More often, it is the father who works, only 6 mothers do, those who express that the maintenance of the child is in their hands, since the father does not live with them and does not contribute financially. Only in three cases are both parents who are responsible for meeting the material needs of their children. The number that refers to other family members, such as uncles, contributing to the satisfaction of these needs is significant. Neither parent has a college level, 9th and 12th grades predominate, or middle-tech graduates; In the case of grandparents who live together, they have only 6th grade, an aspect that affects their possibilities for the education of the child, considering the complexities present in these cases.

The houses generally have rooms and basic resources to satisfy the needs of their members, only two cases do not have a television or refrigerator. The deteriorated living conditions are usually a source of emotional difficulties for family a member, who occurs in four households, whose adults expressed dissatisfaction due to construction difficulties in their homes, and in one they have coexistence problems that affect the adequate emotional development of the minor.

In these households, domestic tasks overload mothers, only in 3 cases is their distribution among the different members appreciated, but with little participation of the children investigated. Most parents argue that they are small, have disabilities, and must engage in other activities at home. In general, it is the male father who considers that the deaf child should not do household chores, but it is admitted that the deaf girl should participate in them.

Communication with the deaf child in the family occurs through oral communication, only some indicate the use of sign language. This reveals the insufficient control of it by parents, but also the desires and aspirations of these families with respect to their children communicating like other people. The communicative preference of these children is 90% with the mother, only in 10% they referred to siblings, other relatives, or the father.

However, the parents expressed that they are satisfied with the communication established at home with the deaf child; although they do not understand the language; instead they are pleased that they exchange affections when they share household activities, rest, play, or go for a walk with their child. Only 2 families express dissatisfaction and argue that many times they do not understand the concerns that the child brings from school. For example, they believe that communication difficulties limit their ability to help their child with the tasks that the school indicates. In several cases the parents reported that when they could not understand the child, the child became irritated.

The observations made allowed us to verify that in most homes the family climate is pleasant. The presence of the deaf child is accepted, although communication between the family members present around the child is very limited; they barely involve him in conversations. In most homes the presence of rules of coexistence and respect among the members of the family nucleus is observed; But in two homes there were discussions that affect coexistence.

In response to indiscipline or mistakes that children make at home, parents report that they use scolding as the most frequent educational method, those investigated report that their children react to these methods with pain and understanding; to a lesser extent, they report that they react with crying, pain, fear or resentment.

School activity causes new demands for these families, which place in the foreground the obligation to understand each other, through Spanish, sign language or other possible alternatives, in order to participate together with their children in solving school tasks. In the studied families, it was revealed that the most knowledgeable of sign language preferably rely on it to exchange with the child; but others use written Spanish, using the notebook, or a child's school text.

With regard to the future of their children, almost all these parents consider that they can achieve high educational levels; they also recognize the great effort they will have to make to achieve this. They propose, in all cases, that they will finish basic secondary school, only some consider that they will be able to go to university. Some point out that the important thing is that they are useful to society. However, the aspirations of more than half of these
parents do not materialize in objective plans, they seem more like wishes, perhaps they wait for time to materialize them, but they do not make a concrete plan to achieve it.

These families have experienced the child's situation with pain, they have felt the rejection and little understanding of other people towards their children, because sometimes they question or censure the parents, as if they were to blame for “the problem” of the child. They express the need for more knowledge to advance in education and especially tools to communicate better. They have high expectations about what the school should bring to them, but they express great concern for the future of the deaf child.

According to the criteria of the various informants interviewed, at present, families with deaf children encounter certain difficulties that hinder their proper functioning and influence the child's stimulation. Health specialists point out that any family with deaf children will experience feelings of doubt, pain, so they suggest they approach the specialists and seek explanations. For his part, the methodologist in charge of the specialty, considers that in general hearing parents with deaf children feel frustrated, they progress slowly in the knowledge of the child and in mastering their mode of communication. He points out that many parents have aspirations beyond the possibilities of the child.

At an early age, what is related to communication with the minor is affected, the stimulation of different areas of development, not all of them are equally privileged; their physical development is often cared for more than their emotional and relationship needs. Faced with the misunderstanding or non-acceptance of their deafness, they dedicate themselves to finding solutions to this problem of the child instead of seeking to find resources to compensate it. In addition, they point out that some families reject sign language, expressing that they prefer the use of oral language. The interviewees interpret it as an expression of non-acceptance of deafness.

The schoolchildren of the investigated families are cared for by the educational system from 3 or 4 years old. Most attended the Santa Clara city nursery school. Those who come from distant municipalities did not do so in a systematic way.

The informants point out that when these children arrive at the special school, the families have difficulties in supporting school learning because they do not have the necessary knowledge to cooperate in carrying out the tasks. In some cases, they fail to understand the essence of the tasks that teachers give their children.

An important barrier is the lack of sign language, in particular to explain school subject.

The interviewees pointed out that many parents are dissatisfied with the progress of their child in the special school, they expect more than the school sometimes achieves. In adolescence, other problems appear, the first of them lies in the transition to lower secondary school and the real conditions of the children to face the challenges of inclusion in a new school environment, of listeners. In addition, concerns typical of this age appear in families, such as those related to the children's search for independence, their first affective-sexual experiences, among others.

The main problems faced by parents in the education of their deaf children, according to the criteria of these informants, lie in communication difficulties (little command of sign language), which limits relationships at home and language development. It is striking that they do not highlight the emotional and family functioning difficulties that are felt by mothers and fathers.

Some interviewees report that these parents manifest ignorance of educational methods that respond to the characteristics of their children, so that sometimes they are required beyond the possibilities. They insist that families must know the deaf community and its peculiarities, as well as what is related to the social integration of deaf people and the role that the family plays in their preparation.

To confirm these educational needs of parents with deaf children, 10 teachers and specialists who serve these families were interviewed. Their experience is, on average, between 5 and 20 years. They suggest that the main problems faced by families in the education of deaf children are related, in order of importance, with:

– Communication with the child.

– Knowledge of their psychopedagogical characteristics, without recognizing potentialities.

– Facing the school learning process.
Lack of knowledge of resources to face everyday situations.

Audiological treatment.

On the other hand, they refer that the parents of deaf children experience discomforts closely related to communication and socialization, which limit the fulfillment of their educational function in general, and is evidenced in the little compensatory stimulation offered to the child. The main problems that occur are:

- They do not understand the child.
- They incorrectly interpret the information offered by the minor.
- They express feelings of inability to solve their child's problems, both those related to school life and to situations in everyday life.
- Because of the existing barriers to socialization.

Specialists from the Centro Nacional de Superación y Desarrollo del Sordo (CENDSOR) pointed out that hearing families with deaf children have little identification with the cultural features of this community; They do not understand their modes of communication, their characteristics to relate to the world, the use of peculiar forms to name, greet, clap, etc. They refer that this situation leads to mismanagement of the child during the educational process, considering that marked deficiencies in communication are manifested. Related to the above, in these families there is little evidence of acceptance of the reality of their child with a disability; this leads them to search for solutions in all possible directions, focused on the idea that the child can regain hearing.

On the other hand, these parents guide the child towards various activities, both study and practical, which are difficult for them because they do not consider their hearing loss, causing difficulties in complying with them and therefore feelings of insecurity and inferiority in many of them, conditioning an inadequate education of self-esteem. In some cases, families see the deaf child as a brake on the development of their own expectations.

The families, who belong to the special school and maintain constant exchanges with each other, were interviewed as a group. They point out that they have had little space to reflect on their problems with the education of the deaf child. One of them says: "we are not used to discussing these problems collectively." Parents' meetings are only informative; they do not provide spaces for parents to raise their feelings, needs, frustrations.

Some parents consider it very difficult to face this process without knowledge, especially around communication. A mother expresses: "She does not understand me ... and I do not understand her." The interviewees agreed that having a deaf child is sad, difficult to understand, very painful, something for which one is not prepared. They expressed: “it feels like everything is over”, “hope is lost”, “I wanted to die”, “everyone in the house cried a lot”. Some still feel hurt today and express it; others claim to have gotten used to it.

They reflect on the signs of rejection towards their children that they have appreciated; for example, some parents of hearing listeners did not allow their children to visit others, so the other minors would walk away and leave the deaf child playing alone. Another example, everyone in the community referred to the minor as "the deaf." These are experiences lived by the majority of those present. They relate what they have had to do so that their children are accepted in the social environment in which they develop. Several of the interviewees admit that they now feel more compensated with their efforts, as they see positive results in terms of social acceptance.

Other concerns of parents relate to the possibilities that their children have to prepare for the career options that are offered to them. They express “I am not sure that everything possible is being done in terms of their preparation for the future”, “I think it is very difficult for them to be at the level of others, you have to look for options according to their possibilities.

CASE STUDY OF FAMILIES WITH DEAF CHILDREN

A group of studies of 20 families was obtained; They constitute the homes of students from the “Fructuoso Rodríguez Pérez” Special School to which we had access in this research. Once the in-depth study of each family had been carried out, the cases were classified according to what was proposed by authors who use this qualitative methodology. This procedure provides new knowledge about families with deaf children, because it allows systematizing the interpretation made of each one, with the help of the established system of indicators.
The cases are interpreted from the known and assumed theory about the family and its functions. The logic followed in the analysis of each case is based on the established indicators. They cover essential aspects of the family educational function, the representations that parents have about this functioning. It is analyzed in each case how the barriers imposed by social prejudices towards people with disabilities and their families operate in parents, to what extent they affect the adequate performance of this function; how also to recognize and respect the particularities of deaf people as members of a different sociolinguistic community. It was not intended to arrive at a diagnosis of family dysfunctions; the potentialities of the household studied were valued in each family.

The methodology developed for the study of these families is shared by the researchers with the specialists and pedagogues of the school. In the process of education and orientation of these families, the initial characterization is confirmed and deepened in a peculiar way: families and educators become aware of their sociocultural conditioning factors, question prejudices, decide what they should change, and how they will do it. The three qualitatively different types of families that were identified are presented below.

**TYPE I Adjusted family, which fulfills its educational function:** Family that promotes the formation of the personality of the minor when carrying out its educational function. They accept the characteristics of the child early and family ties are maintained around the care of the deaf child. They accept the deaf community; they care about the learning of the sign language at the same time as the Spanish language. They maintain close relationships with the school and educators; support the child in the schoolwork. The child is satisfied with her school, progresses in learning, maintains good relationships with her peers and educators. In the study group, only one case is classifiable in this type.

**TYPE II Maladjusted family, where social prejudices hinder their educational function:** Family crossed by social prejudices, and related to it presents various emotional problems, one of the parents, or both, is psychologically vulnerable. They reject the child's condition or are ambivalent in the face of this reality; they have not overcome the stage of mourning, they manifest estrangement or rejection towards the deaf community. They do not achieve adequate communication with the minor, nor are they interested in mastering sign language. Relations with educators and the special school are unsatisfactory. The minor shows behavioral and learning difficulties. Five families were assessed as classifiable in this type.

**TYPE III Family that recognizes prejudices, assumes the reality of the deaf child in its educational functioning, but maintains imbalances:** Family that maintains some interpersonal difficulties among its members; unequally accept the reality of the child. Some family members accept the minor's condition early and promote the educational functioning of the home, some of the adults pay attention to the minor's communication through sign language, and they accept the deaf community. Relations with educators and the special school are not constant. The child's behavior is appropriate, the relationships satisfactory, and can manifest fluctuations in learning. Fourteen families with these characteristics were identified in the group studied which is described in figure 1.

![Figure 1: Family functioning.](image)

Below, a synthesis of the interpretation given to a case, which corresponds to type II (maladjusted family, crossed by social prejudices).
This family is made up of three members, mother, grandmother and the youngest, fatherless since he was two years old. The household lives in a country town, the material conditions of the home are adequate, they have the basic electrical appliances, spaces for each one; the mother is an average technician and the grandmother is a housewife with a 6th grade of schooling.

The adults who live at home are hearing people, only the minor has severe bilateral hearing loss. The research carried out allows us to appreciate how this family suffered for a long period of time the discovery and the diagnostic investigation of the disability. Even at present, they have unresolved griefs, they have not been able to accept the situation so they do not project themselves correctly in the child's education with a view to preparing them for future life. They consider that they will not be able to reach high educational levels, which they will always depend a lot on others and they fear what will happen if they, who are the mothers, one day are not present. They would like the deaf child to achieve independence, to interact more with others, but they do not promote family or social activities that contribute to this goal.

The minor does not share household chores, generally isolates himself, remains alone for long periods of time. In his daily behavior, there are misalignments, extreme reactions to different situations, he is silent, little related, and he has difficulties expressing his feelings. Generally does not play with other children her age, the mother does not encourage to entry into the home of other children limiting the socialization of the child.

The mother considers that she will not be accepted or understood due to her characteristics, therefore she may be the object of ridicule and suggests that it is better to avoid it; there are family prejudices around the minor's problems.

The relationships between the members of this family are not good, there is emotional abandonment, the adults do not assume the compensatory stimulation of the child, nor do they promote the tasks of the age.

In this case, the mother and grandmother have little support for the performance of school tasks, they do not dominate Cuban sign language, so they have little understanding of the child's needs, it is difficult for them to comply with the task guidelines indicated by the teacher, they almost never manage to help, so the child feels bad. She shows her disgust with protests, gestures of annoyance that are then repressed by the mother with strong scolding; These educational control procedures are not adjusted to the characteristics of the minor. The mother attends school meetings, but does not intervene little, remains silent, does not like to express her ideas and feelings in public; when you are alone with the teacher if you do.

Both relatives admit that the son's relationships with the deaf community are necessary, since they constitute a way for the child to not be so isolated and alone, that he can share with other people who have a difficulty like his. However, in their daily performance there is no real intention for this to happen, since they limit the child's relationships with those around her and also with members of the deaf community in her area of residence. Only at school can she relate and share with her fellow group members.

The study allowed concluding that this family has difficulties in fulfilling its educational function; it is unable to meet the demands of all its members, particularly the deaf child, in the organization of the daily life of the household. They do not carry out activities that strengthen the emotional and communication bonds that are essential for the proper development of the personality and for the appropriation of the family and social culture.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the antecedents and the current theoretical production on the family with children who have disabilities revealed the essence of the family functioning of households with deaf children. The most vulnerable parents manifest dysfunction, many fail to conduct education and care for the emotional needs of their children, who tend to have limited socialization and communication difficulties.

Family functioning in these homes is often distorted due to the demands of care for the deaf child and the imbalances that arise in this process. Many of these parents suffer after years of having recognized that their child is different, they have not overcome the stage of grief in an optimistic way, which makes it difficult for them at present to adopt a position that contributes to the development of the family.
Parents have different reactions to knowing the child's condition; many report that it was very painful and show that it still affects them. Manifestations of fear of being different were identified, they were not expecting a child with these characteristics. They are puzzled by communication difficulties, which interfere with daily life and intra-family relationships. Parents tend to believe in the transitory nature of the child's involvement; they consider that some solution will be found and that they will become like the others.

In most of the cases studied, family functioning is altered; The resources they possess are not used to compensate for the hearing deficit and lead the formation of the children. Family strategies to face the difficulties of the child tend to burden the mother, which shows an asymmetry in the couple that constituted the home. They are not only in charge of the early care and health of the minors, they also take care of the link with the school and the tasks of the child's education. It is mainly mothers who undertake the study of sign language. The children report that in their homes they communicate best with their mother.

The families studied establish few links with the ANSOC; they generally do not attend the activities carried out at the headquarters. They resort to specific needs of a material order, they evade the reality of the existence of a deaf community, with its forms of communication and its identity.

The cases contributed to an interpretation of the multiple conditioning of these parents and the fulfillment of their family functions; they also clarified their current educational and counseling needs. The main regularities of families with deaf children that were studied corroborate and deepen the historical-cultural theoretical support of the research.

The study carried out contributes to the lines of development of the specialty regarding work with the family. These data obtained and interpretations made will allow the educational community to be mobilized to promote better preparation of parents in the performance of their educational function.

REFERENCES