

THE INTEGRATION OF THE CHILDREN WITH HEARING DEFICIENCY IN THE MASS EDUCATION

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Abstract: The great majority of the children with hearing deficiency are born and live in hearing families in which any of the family members do not know the gestural language and do not have the experience of the work with the deaf persons. For the children with hearing deficiencies „the linguistic isolation” lead to social isolation and further we can meet troubles in the intellectual and affective sphere. The building of the social relations are based, in great measure, on the verbal communication. Is our society prepared to accept the diversity? Are the children with hearing deficiency wishing to learn near their hearing colleagues?

Key words: deaf children, hearing loss, communication, normal education

The hearing children benefit from a normal evolution, without educational stumbles, and their families are acquitted from supplementary efforts in the integration of their own children in an adequate educational system.

The communication manner of the deaf child, born in a hearing family, will be similar with the manner in which a hearing child learn to communicate, with the difference that the deaf child will communicate by means of signs.

Latter, the deaf child will begin to associate the signs and to utilise them when he will have different needs or when he will want to play.

The deaf child in a hearing family, points to the wished object, and the family members will give him that object and will name it but will not be persistent enough about how to make the child understand how to look so that they can understand, in the first instance, and then be able to use the sounds, words to point to certain objects phenomena, people.

Eventually it will be created some opportunities for communication by signs between the hearing parents and the deaf child. This communication is limited, however, very poor, with negative consequences for the development of thinking ability in general sessions on the functioning mental capacity and the development of personality.

The studies of Bishop and Gregory (1979 apud. Lepot-Froment, 1999) show a pronounced retardation of expressive vocabulary of children with hearing impairment, whether they come from hearing families and they are stimulated in terms of oral communication. With the integration in school, the vocabulary increases, but very slow and purchases expressive language are used only partially at home.

In the organization and semantic processing, the skills of deaf and hearer are similar, which means that to understand it is necessary to read, emphasizing the significance (Anca, 2001, p.159).

In recent decades it is observed the trend of encouraging integration and combating exclusion from main stream education of children with hearing impairment.

Integrated education refers to integration into mainstream education for children with special educational needs, a category that includes people with hearing deficiency (Gherguț, 2001, p.12).

Educația integrată se referă la integrarea în structurile învățământului de masă a copiilor cu cerințe speciale în educație, categorie în care sunt incluse și persoanele cu deficiențe auditive (Gherguț, 2001, p.12). The

principle of normalization has occurred as a result of Scandinavian research conducted in the 70s and is moving towards a manipulation of environmental conditions in order to achieve educational goals. Here we talk about active school (learning by doing it myself), primarily for the acquisition of social competence in children with special needs (Clark, Clark, 1974 cited Gherguț, 2001).

To highlight the need to integrate hearing impaired children in mainstream education, we conducted a study on ascertaining the impact this phenomenon has on other children, educators and parents alike.

Methodology

Objectives

The main objective behind the present study is to obtain information on how they are perceived children with hearing impairment.

Sample

The entire material is based on conclusions drawn from the application of questionnaires and discussions with teachers, educators, parents and children with hearing disabilities integrated into mainstream education. The volume of samples was 50 subjects.

The sample of 50 subjects comprising 10 teachers / educators, 20 deaf children and 20 parents (their parents). The 20 children have attended three kindergartens, two of the city of Arad, and a kindergarten in Timișăara currently being integrated into the first class in mainstream education.

Method presentation

The questionnaires were applied in schools where were integrated the children with hearing deficiency. Were held 3 focus-groups: one with

teachers, one with children and one with parents, where they were completed answers to questions.

Being a constative study the step test was conducted during a single day, the three focus-groups scrolling down a row, each lasting an hour.

As methods for the data presentation we used graphics (charts) as they allow an intuitive examination of the results.

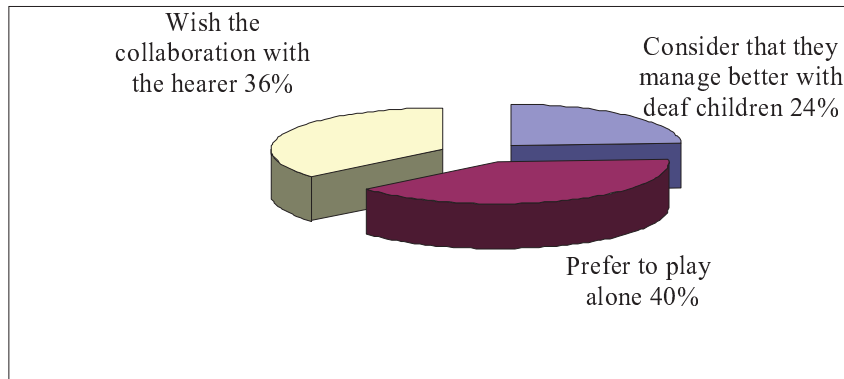
The results can not be considered only a product of the given history and social moment; they will support of course changes and shifts over time, making them available only for the temporal and spatial sequence that lies within.

These points of view will be presented successively and we consider them as defining the reflecting trends and attitudes towards education for deaf organization. In our presentation we start from the students to the parents and we leave to the final the opinion of the most competent teachers for deaf school.

The study results

The opinion of deaf students

Of all students surveyed on *how they would like to engage in play*, 24% believe that they would do better with hearing deficiency students because it means better, have common concerns and not each other laugh. 40% prefer to play alone, arguing that they do not like strained relations or rules imposed by that play on the computer, they want to draw or that generally they do not understand the rules when there are more players, nor help them understand and can not ever be leaders and 36% want collaboration game with hearing people because they have to learn new and exciting things even if they are not always accepted as equal partners.



Graphic 1. How children would like to engage in play

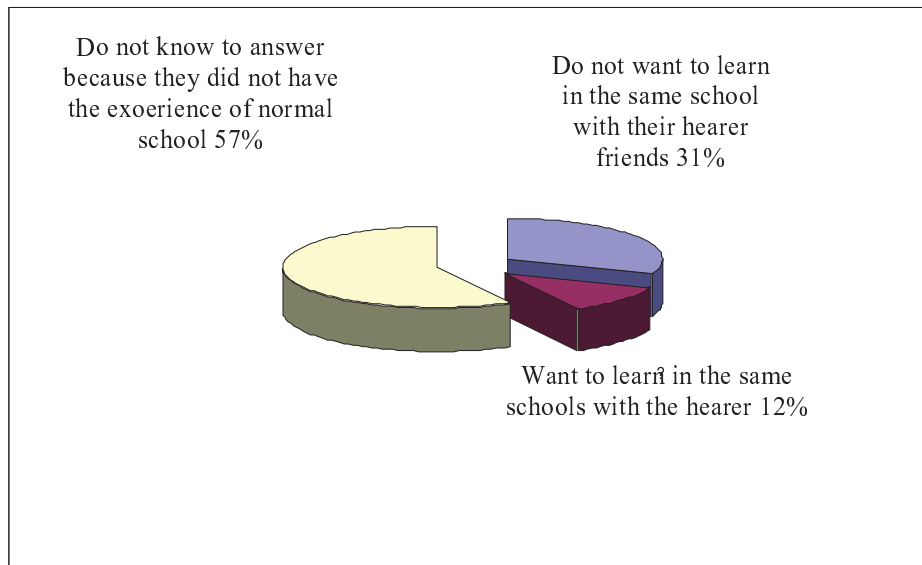
Although they want to work more than normal children, from the deaf students, 82% do not want to learn in school with their friends who hear better than them. This idea is supported especially by those who have attended a "normal" school for a period of time and motivate their choice by the fact that the other colleagues nicknamed them, say to them "deaf" or "mute", sometimes beat them because they didnt understand to comply with certain rules and reject them from most activities.

This attitude is generated also by the way in which the teachers are behaving towards them, placing them either in front or too much behind the class and keeping their exposure to a high level, without giving attention to the intelligibility or to the labial image visibility. Kids say that the "lady" talks too fast and they do not understand everything she says; when they are asked they did not have the necessary time to decode the message, and no opportunity to be supported with additional explanations. Because they do not understand, others angry with them, they admonishe them, get bad grades and are considered weak students.

Sometimes their verbal emissions produce hilarity which makes them be ashamed and do not want anymore to communicate and to have

relationships with others. The feeling of shame is intensified by the fact that they do not learn in the same way (either quantitatively or qualitatively) with the others and find it very hard and very much to learn, exceeding the capabilities they have. Often they have the need to copy explanations (notes) from their colleagues because it is a lot of writing and they fail to note while the teacher explains the lesson, knowing that they present difficulties to hear and write in the same time the given message.

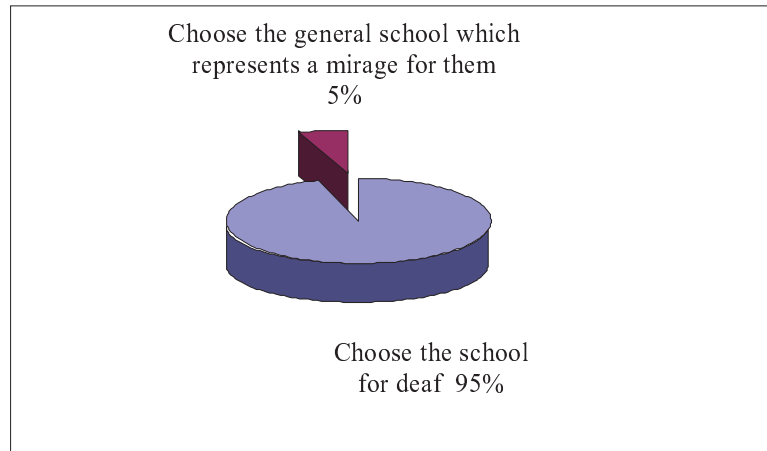
Those who attended a regular kindergarten classmates say that they were considered friends by the other colleagues, but sometimes they do not understand very well and were not accepted in certain activities just because they do not understand; however, at school things have not been the same; the competition has excluded them from the group of "friends," and isolated them. They believe they understand much better each other with the hearing deficiency children who are like them, they can help each other and have equal forces and they can compete in any discipline with a chance of succeeding without fear that others will laugh at them, they will not exclude each other. 3% will learn in school with hearing people, the reason being that the schools are larger and there are more children and 15 % do not know how to respond because they had not the normal school experience and would not like to have unhappy experiences. In the figure 2, it can be viewed the data obtained as a result of the statement preferences of deaf children in relation to school where they would like to attend (special school versus normal school).



Graphic 2. Distribution of preferences for special schools - mainstream schools

In proportion of 95%, the hearing deficiency children choose to carry on the educational activities the school for deaf because here they receive what they teach, the teachers have patience with them and help them understand the lesson, even if the knowledge are numerous, they are structured so that they have greater degree of accessibility. Classes in these schools are smaller, with far fewer students and the teacher can handle each one and can help each one to overcome the difficulties.

The students appreciate that they like the school for deaf children because here all the children understand each other, can explain themselves certain rules or knowledge, collaborate well with each other and are supported by educators in their homework. They also prefer the school for deaf children because here it is best for them in terms of individual security and access to artistic activities, cultural and sporting. 5% of respondents choosing middle school which is a kind of mirage for them.



Graphic 3. The students options for mainstream school - school for deaf

Here's how opinions are centered around the idea of keeping a school for deaf even if the most important desire of the students is to relate more with normals and to be part of their community.

Parents' deaf students opinion

From the historical point of view, the pressure of parents groups was that that generated the change; they are a force even if latent, in some moments. For the Romanian society we can say that we are still in the early growth of parental power. They usually show some preferences for certain types of schools and we have every reason to believe them insistent, persistent and unflinching in their decisions regarding "integration" and "segregation" of their own children.

Teachers can not and must not ignore the "force" that are the parents. Parental choice and the pressure that they achieve is so great that it is one that can generate or stop the change. There are two major categories

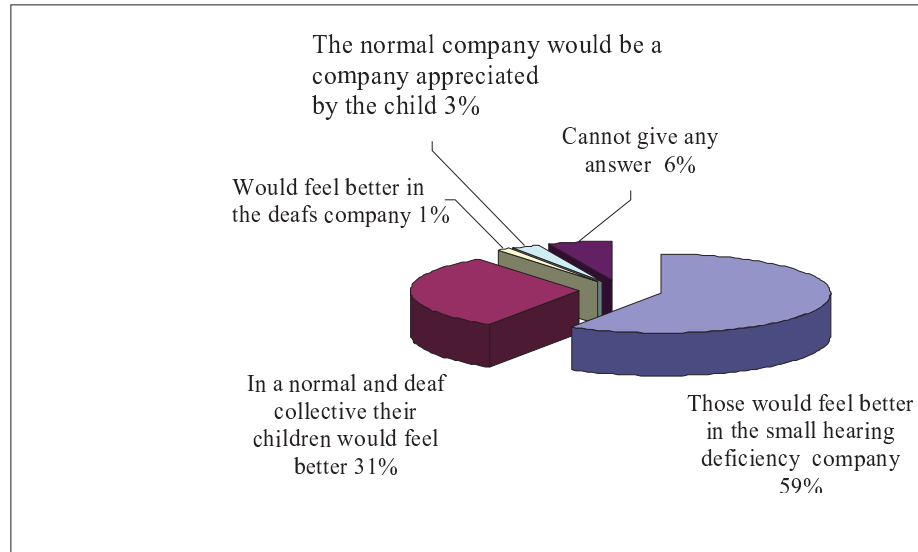
of parents: those informed who understand the significance of the change, of the progress not only for progress but for the benefit of the children and those uninformed or ill-informed who are satisfied with what exists and want to stay in this range at least partially circumventing problems that hearing loss generated in the family. Regardless of the category to which they belong, the parents can exercise individual or group pressure on all levels of decision-making even if their requirement refers only to their own child.

Starting from these considerations we tried to find out what is the opinion of deaf students' parents to the two biggest trends displayed vis-a-vis of the deaf students, this also for that, ultimately, the parents are the ones who need to take the responsibility and they considers that the current legislation provides them that chance.

Most of the parents with normal hearing would prefer that their children evolve in the speaker society and cultural environment, to have a comfortable existence in the world hearer, to become proficient in the use of the oral language. But their desires can only be correlated with those of the little deaf child, so, knowing their children, they responded to 59% that those would feel better in the company deaf. 31% felt that in the collective deaf and normal as the environment in which their sons would feel at ease.

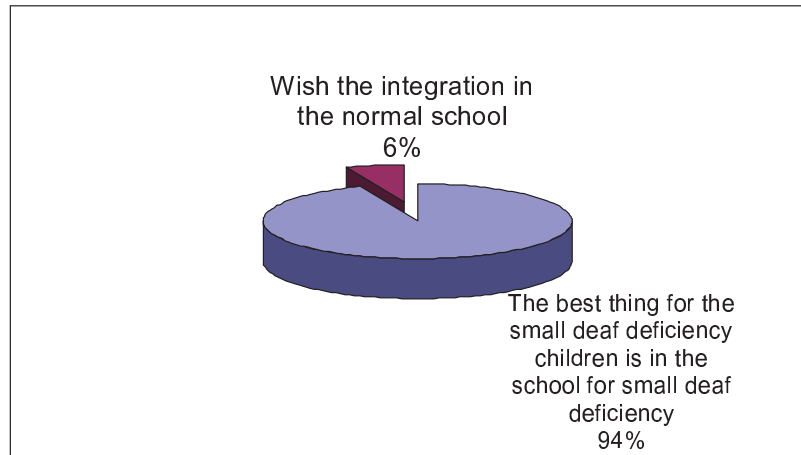
What is significant for parents' attitude towards the severe handicap is that only 1% believed that their child would feel better in the company of deaf, demonstrating in this way the natural tendency to approach normality. 3% think it would be a company valued by the child that of normals, and 6% can not give any answer to this question, arguing that the family from which the child comes is one of the deaf and this has not had much contact with normals so that parents can make an assessment of the behavior or the

desire towards this alternative, missing this term they think that is not right to make a statement or another.



Graphic 4. Preferences of parents for their children's schools

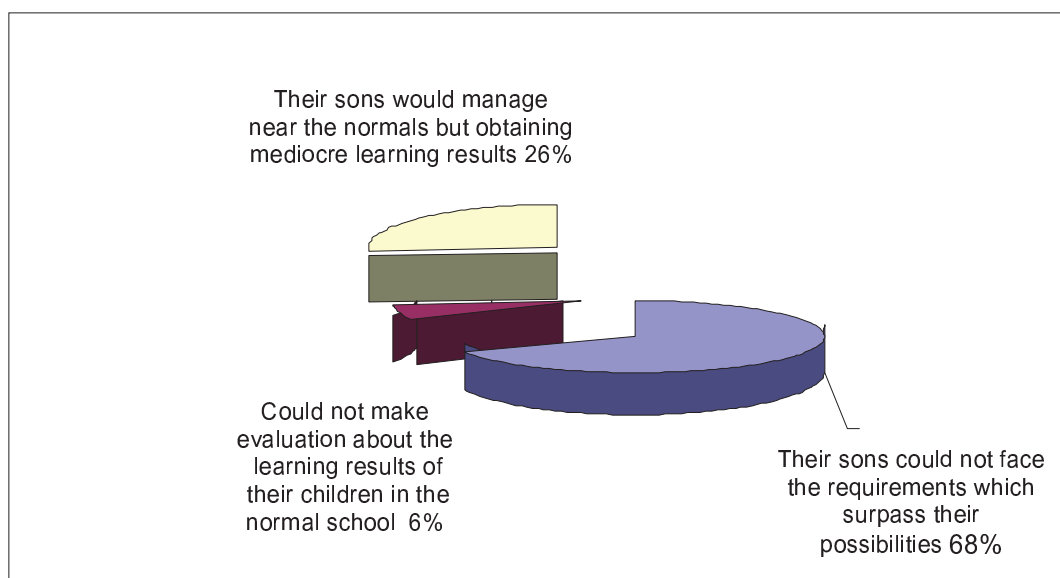
Responding to the questionnaire, parents stated in 94% that the best for deaf is in the school for the small deaf deficiency; only 6% want integration into normal school and no parent has not expressed the desire that his son learns in a school for the deaf considering that in this company their child would lose the oral language in the favor of sign language and gesturing as specific language ant that is what they do not want to happen. Some parents prefer very early placement in a residential form of education arguing that they do not know, do not have time and it is better for the child to receive a proper education but hide behind this claim the desire to make others responsible for the fate of the children, to release them from an extra care, to get rid of the image which hardly answers to the tasks and wishes to participate fully in family life.



Graphic 5. The integration of small deaf deficiency children in mainstream school - parents' opinion

Putting the hypothetical question of the integration into normal school of the small deaf deficiency children, we tried to obtain the parents' opinion on the developments in learning of their children. Regarding the results that may be obtained by integrated deaf students in mainstream education, 68 % of the parents believe that their sons could not meet the requirements which sometimes even exceed their own intellectual possibilities. In this group a significant part is made up of parents who have had experience with their children in normal school. They showed that the learning results were very poor. Their children did not meet the requirements because of their disability, which not allowed them to receive the teacher's messages in the rhythm of others on the one hand, and secondly because often they did not understand the content of the communication and a proof of this is that they could not tell what they had heard or could not summarize the lessons because there were entire pieces that needed further explanations that they could not get to school.

The large number of students in the class (25 -30) did not give to the teacher the opportunity to deal more often with the small deaf deficiency children and often this was sitting somewhere behind the other, so that the possibility of receiving was more reduced. A significant number of small deaf deficiency students in mainstream schools remained repeaters due to all this troubles, say the parents who can not bring accusations to the teacher who had no experience or necessary knowledge for working with the small deafdeficiency children. What the parents kept particularly to emphasize is that all these problems were solved by transferring the child to the school for the deaf where there is actual support conditions and where the teachers are qualified and very eager to help the children to overcome the obstacles.



Graphic 6. The evolution of educational outcomes – according to parents

6% of the parents can not make judgments on the results that they would get their children into regular school because they do not know the problem, they themselves being with small deaf deficiency. 26% answered

that their sons would manage near the normal people but obtaining learning results at best mediocre, currently weak and very weak.

The attitude of the parents towards the integration is motivated on the one hand by the truth that they are not ready and there are no services to prepare for receiving support from a very early age and on the other hand the need to reproach to someone the child failures or this someone can not be better chosed than the school. Their impression is that the society is obliged to support them at all levels, transferring their responsibility as parents to the broader shoulders of the society.

Without express explications, each parent was concerned towards the integration, inquiring about the benefits that would have the child but "structuring" also questions about the possibility of losing some benefits that they enjoy in the present moment.

Their attitude can not be neglected and it must be based on all decisions. Perhaps more than ever we need a "school for parents" where they are oriented but can also be induced to assume responsibility for their children, not to accuse civil society that is not ready to receive them.

The opinion of the teachers from the hearing loss children school

The teachers from hearing loss children school, those whom from years work with small deaf deficiency students, know them very well not only because they have the experience of the years spent together or because they have been trained in universities or have attended training courses, but also because they are affective related to them.

The arguments they bring to support the idea widely accepted that the existence of the school for small deaf deficienecy is not a segregation refers primarily to the fact that the school is open, it allows entry and exit of

students at all the levels depending on their school development, the degree of recovery and the personal choice, they benefit from special equipment, facilities, specialists, recovery programs at all levels (sensory, physical, cognitive, social), they benefit from programs adapted to the students specific and are not compromising the aims of mainstream education or fundamental objectives pursued by it.

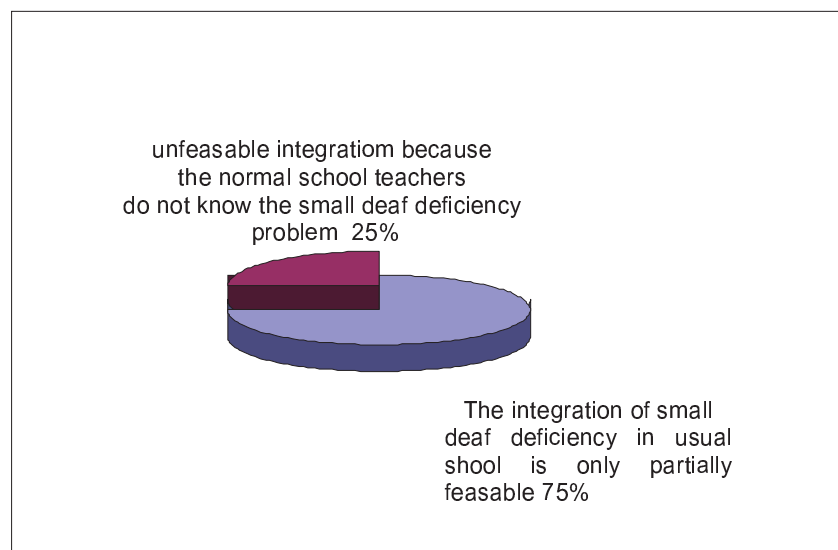
The objectives it proposes itself, are no other than the school's "normal" but with the addition of the specific notes moreover that the students as they arrive in the first class have a limited vocabulary and low communication possibilities which require to be developed as they evolve naturally to a normal child. The development of the small deaf deficiency child, regarded as a lagging behind the average child requires to be overcome, specialized assistance that are fully in school for small deaf deficiency children which does not work as a parallel body, but as a possible option at a time for the recovery of the retardation due to hearing disability.

The teachers from the schools for small deaf deficiency believe that the society is not yet ready to receive and understand the immediate needs of the small deaf deficiency persons. It can not receive them suddenly and without discrimination in its normal teams; therefore, 75% of the teachers believe that the integration of the small deaf deficiency children in the mainstream schools is only partially achieved. They support this idea by the fact that integration depends on a number of parameters that must be defined and appreciated. It recalls the degree of hearing loss, the age of its installation, the age at which the child received the prosthesis and which was the profit realised from it, the IQ which must be correlated with all other measures of individual psychological development, the family contribution, material but especially spiritual, the view of normal school

teachers and availability of acceptance and cooperation of the other students.

The integration can be done at the level of mild or at most moderate hearing loss, with normal intellect but in these conditions it needs help from the family and the professionals. It should be pursued if there is no other prior or subsequent to hearing loss handicaps that can hinder the recovery process in the normal collective. The number of small deaf deficiency is relatively small in relation to the geographical area and is relatively difficult to organize groups or classes with special programs which require the development of more flexible programs in order to accommodate to the special needs, which is quite difficult to achieve very fast and without an experimental base. The integration is ultimately a matter of individuality because it depends on the child's personality structure, but also an issue of human community where should be operated changes in the mentality of teachers and students whom should not see the presence of a small deaf deficiency child in a classroom as an "event" but as everyday normality. The integration of a small deaf deficiency child in the normal school is partial realisable also because there are fields on which they can assimilate easily even under the current conditions while others fields require adaptation and simplification to the basics and fundamentals concepts. Lastly must be considered also all the material conditions necessary with all the investments that are involved to provide a favorable environment to the receiving of the small deaf deficiency children beside the normal children. 25% of the teachers consider the integration as unfeasible because the normal school teachers do not know the issue of hearing loss, there are no specialists in these schools of hearing and the small deaf deficiency child needs special and personal help, he requires specific recovery activities that are not contained in the plan and schedule developed for the regular

students. Programs are too broad and in their current form, the deficient child will not be able to cope, especially in some fields. Teachers do not know the methodology of working with deaf so they do not know how to address to him. Children should be marginalized because of hearing problems and what would happen has already happened, and not just once, the small deaf deficiency child with considerable capacities and potentialities gone from the Special school to the "normal" school, and is obliged to return from where he left with backlogs in knowledge and language. These groups of teachers believe that it is essential the structuring and restructuring of the programs, of the books and also to make a flexible system as a whole. They appreciate that without strong arguments placement student can increase the stress, which is found in a large, and sometimes hostile community, with unfavorable acoustic conditions without adequate support.



Graphic 7. The teachers opinion about integrating children with hearing loss in mainstream education

Integration to be successful, needs to meet certain conditions among which are mentioned: the use of residual hearing skills, proper use of the individual prosthetic optimal level, good reading on the lips or even very good, the lack of associated disability insurance, the parents availability of an adequate support, the teachers disponibility to demonstrate understanding and endeavor to help and of course the existence of funds (rather large) granted by the society to arrange a friendly atmosphere in the classroom.

Questioned about the team that performed well in training and educating the small deaf deficiency children, special school teachers 100 % responded without hesitation that a group of small deaf deficiency children would be the best because being with those similar to him the student will not considered himself as unique, will not be complexed by his disability, will not feel alone, isolated, marginalized or offended, will be in his environment and understand there are many like him, so the atmosphere will stimulate him. The the small deaf deficiency children collective, from the psycho-pedagogic point of view, the concepts rescheduling, their resumption and their integration into the language system are governed by the principles of progressive pedagogical material presiding ordering. Here there is opportunity to address language skills, deliberately directing the learning process in the sense that comes naturally child language acquisition. It can be done going through stages in learning the language, stages of observation, practice, discovery of the mechanism of language and application of knowledge in oral and written expressio, according to the psycho-individual particularities of the small deaf deficiency children. Working methodology used is that specific and consistent with the individual rythm, with the progress and personal purchases made. In the small deaf deficiency collective each is valued according to his potentials,

the programs are adequate, the textbooks are appropriate, the material conditions ensure a favorable framework for the development and they can benefit from the help of highly qualified staff. Macro and specific microclimate stimulate the development.

100% of teachers agreed with the statement saying that classes in schools for small deaf deficiency children from the deaf schools do not provide a good framework for development, because in the presence of the deafs, the small deaf deficiency child will drop very easily to verbal language that requires effort and will take sign gestures language as a relatively easy means of communication, and by this he will influence his. They will lose interest in verbal communication which will alter the setbacks, they will lose the acquisitions obtained and they will not exercise the residual hearing, will cap the aspirational level because they are not in the necessary environment favourable to develop. The availability of verbalization of the deaf and small deaf deficiency children are different and the environments in which they are developing themselves are also different in terms of access to culture, verbal communication and social networking.

The opinions converge towards the finding of an optimal forms of integration which, however, should not be done abruptly and frustrating for the protagonists, but as 95 % of the teachers appreciate, gradually by actions that can begin at a very early age, so that children know, accept and help each other. The steps for achieving integration can begin with early detection of the deficiency, early prosthetic so that it can be used leftover hearing as early as possible, and the verbal communication on all occasions and also the expert assistance given to the family has the duty to inform about the potencies and about the type of their activation and development. The specialists will be permanent consulted and will provide services to all

who require them. Parallel to this, it is necessary to have common activities with the normals under the form of excursions, competitions, shows, leisure activities, games and sports competition. As social beings, the small deaf deficiency children will develop in their natural environment, in the origin families but also in institutional residences boarding schools.

The teachers believe that "language is learned with the mother in her arms, with her caresses and encouragements, and the house is the best environment for the emergence of language skills" (Tucker and Powell, 1993), however, we must not forget that even the most "noble "families send their children to boarding schools for a better development.

Every child develops his language in communicative context, he feels as a discussion partner. Child's contribution to the dialogue, be it verbal or less verbal lead to purchases made spontaneously and liberal, will constitute the basic vocabulary of the child. The deaf as the normal, feels the need to participate in the dialogue, in the discussion, in which they do not answer to questions but realize comments and judgments. Here goes the need for open dialogue allowing active and creative- direct of the child.

The integration of small deaf deficiency children, people who have hearing troubles and consecutive language troubles, should be well thought out so that it does not reach what said the teacher Stanciu Stoian: "A large part of the deficient, those with mild disabilities are not treated as such, but leave to live and work with normal children. Far from being a solution, this way of solving the problem is as not be more contraindicated. It is not useful for the deficient and disturb the educational process for the others. "(Stanciu, 1967).

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