

Adoption of a person with a disability from the perspective of adoptive parents**Adoção de pessoa com deficiência sob a ótica de pais adotivos****Adopción de una persona con discapacidad desde la perspectiva de padres adoptivos****Alinne Ferreira da Silva¹, Paula Orchiucci Miura²****Received: 19/09/2022 Accepted: 22/02/2023 Published: 27/03/2023**

Objective: to understand the process of adopting a child with a disability from the perspective of adoptive parents. **Methods:** qualitative, descriptive and exploratory field research, carried out in September 2019, which used the case study method. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the adoptive father and mother. Data interpretation was performed by content analysis. **Results:** the following categories were constructed: analytical: "*Experiences of adoptive parents*", and empirical/thematic: "*Adoption process*", "*Emanuel's previous history and arrival in the new environment*", and "*The experience of being a parent of a child with a disability*". The child's story showed particular issues, through the experience of domestic violence, prior to arriving at the substitute home. The participants were emotionally available to the adoption process, managing to adapt to the child's needs. **Conclusion:** reflecting on family dynamics and helping parents in the act of caring is extremely important considering that a creative environment in affection and care is a powerful space for parent-child constitution.

Descriptors: Family; Care network for disable people; Adoption.

Objetivo: compreender o processo de adoção de uma criança com deficiência sob a perspectiva dos pais adotivos. **Método:** pesquisa de campo, qualitativa, descritiva e exploratória, realizada em setembro de 2019, que utilizou como método o estudo de caso. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas com pai e mãe adotivos. A interpretação dos dados se deu por análise de conteúdo. **Resultados:** construí-se as seguintes categorias: analítica: a "*experiências de pais adotivos*", e as empíricas/temáticas: "*Processo de adoção*", "*A história pregressa de Emanuel e a chegada no novo ambiente*", e "*A experiência de ser pai/mãe de uma criança com deficiência*". A história da criança se mostrou com questões particulares, mediante a experiência de violência, em âmbito doméstico, anterior a chegada ao lar substituto. Os participantes mostraram-se disponíveis emocionalmente ao processo de adoção, conseguindo se adaptar as necessidades do filho. **Conclusão:** refletir sobre a dinâmica familiar e auxílio aos pais, no ato de cuidar é de extrema relevância considerando que um ambiente criativo em afeto e cuidado é um potente espaço para a constituição parento-filial.

Descritores: Família; Rede de cuidados à pessoa com deficiência; Adoção.

Objetivo: comprender el proceso de adopción de un niño con discapacidad desde la perspectiva de los padres adoptivos. **Método:** investigación de campo, cualitativa, descriptiva y exploratoria, realizada en septiembre de 2019, que utilizó el método de estudio de caso. Se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas con el padre y la madre adoptivos. La interpretación de los datos se realizó mediante análisis de contenido. **Resultados:** se construyeron las siguientes categorías: analítica: las "*experiencias de los padres adoptivos*", y las empíricas/temáticas: "*Proceso de adopción*", "*Historia pasada de Emanuel y la llegada al nuevo entorno*", y "*La experiencia de ser padre de un niño con discapacidad*". La historia del niño mostró problemas particulares, a través de la experiencia de violencia, en el ambiente doméstico, antes de la llegada al hogar sustituto. Los participantes se mostraron emocionalmente disponibles al proceso de adopción, siendo capaces de adaptarse a las necesidades del niño. **Conclusión:** Reflexionar sobre la dinámica familiar y ayudar a los padres en el acto de cuidar es extremadamente relevante, considerando que un ambiente creativo en el afecto y el cuidado es un espacio poderoso para la constitución del binomio padres-hijos.

Descriptores: Família; Red de cuidados de la persona con discapacidad; Adopción.

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INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, adoption is a process of legal institutionalization, through the security of social rights, which instrumentalizes it and aims to distance it from religious welfare ways found in its historical development. The practice took an extensive journey and has been present since colonial times. It was related to charity, according to what the Church preached, in which wealthy homes provided assistance to those considered “most in need”. It was also carried out in a legally non-formal way, as means for wealthy individuals acquiring free labor¹.

Cultural heritage contributes significantly to the fact that, even nowadays, this form of filiation is fraught with myths and prejudices, such as: *Brazilian adoption* - the illegal practice of registering a child born to another as one's own child, with no respect for legal procedures - a practice that constituted about 90% of adoptions in the country as recently as in the 1980s (20th century). By this means, one seeks to, among other reasons, hide the adoption as if it was reason for shame and/or humiliation².

Through Law 8069 of 1990, in Brazil, a child is understood as a subject of rights and has the principle of full protection, under the responsibility of society and the State as a pillar for their development. In this perspective, adoption is recognized as an exceptional measure for situations in which the child cannot remain in contact with their family of origin, starting to live in a substitute family. The right to adoption and to a home that allows full development of children is a less harmful measure when compared to shelters and/or temporary homes, considering that shelter institutions, in addition to having collective institutional dynamics for groups of children and/or adolescents, normally have a reduced number of caregivers when compared to the number of institutionalized children, thus hindering the unique care that education and child development require³.

The obstacles that involve the child/adolescent in a situation of separation from their natural home are multifactorial. Therefore, thinking about adoption is understanding that the arriving child has historical, social and cultural aspects, especially when the particularities of a physical disability are present. The reasons behind the abandonment of children with disabilities does not differ from other abandoned children, and scenarios of deprivation and poverty are a common factor. However, in cases involving disability, the lack of knowledge about the condition that affects the children and socially reproduced prejudices motivate abandonment and/or neglect, as well as the availability of applicants for adoption, given the prejudice imply fear of how to care, how to handle and/or how to face the society that judges⁴.

Prejudice and difficulties socially imposed on people with disabilities do not only

impact the natural family and the child/adolescent, but also future adoption applicants. Verbal acceptance by applicants for children with physical disabilities is greater; however, the number of children with disabilities waiting to be adopted is greater, which may mean that they spend more time on the waiting list and experience greater difficulty in being inserted into adoptive families⁴.

The social journey faced by people with disabilities (PD) also permeates constructions and deconstructions throughout sociocultural development. It was only in 2015 that a law was created in Brazil that guarantees rights to this group. However, inclusion and accessibility are still far from the ideal proposed by the regulations, since, although Brazilian history is marked by social, economic and cultural inequalities, prejudice and intolerance towards difference is the main barrier to be deconstructed to application of what the laws propose⁵.

“Being disabled” is intrinsic to the experience of everyone involved in the adoption process, from the intent to family life. However, it is through experience that it becomes possible to have access to the care that is necessary for the adopted child. In this sense, physical condition does not imply a difference in care between children with or without disabilities. Reflection that makes it possible to rethink the care of the person with a disability and the naturalization of biological aspects as barriers, since the disability has affective contacts (looks, touches, caresses, smiles and other experiences) marked by reciprocity, as in any human relationship between those who offers care and who receives it⁶.

Added to the social and historical circumstances, the relevance of academic productions that study experiences of adoption of people with disabilities is demonstrated, with a view to instrumentalizing the practice of those involved in the adoption process, as well as problematize the cultural and historical reality in which the theme is immersed. In this sense, this work aimed to understand the process of adopting a child with a disability from the perspective of the adoptive parents.

METHODS

It was a qualitative research that, in itself, helps in the production of scientific knowledge with the participants (involved in their social, cultural and historical context) in order to demand from the researcher the use of methods that approach the reality of each subject⁷. With a descriptive and exploratory nature, the aim was to describe the cases based on the speech of the interviewees according to the life experiences of each participant.

The case study was used as a method to facilitate the understanding of the complex data involved in a singular reality⁸. This method was chosen because it has the particularity of

enabling the analysis of specific elements of what is being studied, through a broader understanding of the phenomenon and the criticality of the widely disseminated generalizations about the subject studied⁷.

Access to the participants was given through indication of the multidisciplinary team of the Brazilian Childhood and Youth Court (*Vara da Infância e Juventude do Tribunal de Justiça do Estado*) of the state where they resided and permeated the respective judicial process. The participants were contacted in advance for explanation of the research project and acceptance (or not) of participation in the study, safeguarding ethical procedures of research with human beings.

A semi-structured individual interview was carried out with the participants, through the interview script with the following triggering themes: adoption process; first experiences with the new family member; child development; formation of the new family. The interviews were conducted in a clinical care room in Psychology and were recorded for later analysis of the material in order to protect the secrecy of the information produced. The participants considered were a couple who were adoptive parents of a child with a disability. The production of the research took place in September 2019.

This work is linked to the research project entitled: "*Adoção sob a perspectiva de pais adotivos*" (Adoption from the perspective of adoptive parents), approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Universidade Federal de Alagoas, under Approval No 3.517.257/2019 and CAAE: 16666219.2.0000.5013. Compliance with the ethical precepts listed for research with human beings was ensured, respecting the conditionalities set by the referred committee, the Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF) and confidentiality of information, including the use of fictitious names.

The information used throughout the research was preserved in anonymity. Research participants, if they needed medical or psychotherapeutic support during or after carrying out this work, could count on the support of the Integrated Health Reference Center in the city where the work was carried out. The signing of the Free and Informed Consent Term was assured, after its explanation.

To systematize the data, Content Analysis⁷ was used with analytical and empirical/thematic categories.

RESULTS

The case under analysis portrays the family history of (Person 1 - P1) Bianca (23 years old) and (Person 2 - P2) João (25 years old) parents of Emanuel (Person with Disabilities, 6

years old). The couple's choice for adoption was linked to Bianca's health problems, who had blood pressure issues, a condition that could put her life at risk when bearing children. It was through the partnership with João that she found firmness and availability in the option of forming a family through adoption. In addition to the stimulus of having, in their extended families, the presence of other adoptive family members. Emanuel was adopted at the age of 4 years and 6 months and was institutionalized before, in a different municipality from the adoptive parents' domicile.

In the categorization, the following categories were built: analytical: the "experiences of adoptive parents" and empirical/thematic: "*Adoption process*", "*Emanuel's previous history and arrival in the new environment*", and "*The experience of being a parent of a child with a disability*".

Bianca reported always thinking about having a child, regardless of how the child arrived, whether through adoption or pregnancy. João expressed that the desire for adoption came to the couple, not only because of Bianca's health condition, but because he had helped in the education of an adoptive cousin/sister who meant a lot in his life and made him understand adoption as an act of love. The adoption of Emanuel took place between 2017 and 2018, through a final court case.

During the course of the process, Emanuel's family explained that, initially, they had indicated in the interview for enrollment in the Brazilian National Adoption System (*Sistema Nacional de Adoção - SNA*) - former Brazilian National Adoption Registry (*Cadastro Nacional de Adoção - CNA*) - that they wanted a child with a disability. However, when reflecting on possible difficulties that the decision could entail, they decided to request the removal of the disabled person topic from the registration. However, when Bianca joined a virtual group made of applicants for adoption and a technical team from the judiciary, she received photos of Emanuel, even when institutionalized, and knowing of his existence, she again pointed out, in the SNA, the acceptance of a child with a disability and asked the technical team that, if it was their turn in the ranking order of prospective parents, they would like to adopt him. According to the interviewees, the change occurred with increasing age; reintegration of people with disabilities and coverage of other cities, to enable the adoption of Emanuel. Bianca expresses:

[...] *my desire to be a mother was so strong that I couldn't settle for waiting, not knowing how the process was going, I was always looking for it. So much so that I scoured the internet and found the number of a person who was the coordinator of a shelter in Maceió, he understood my desire and said 'Bianca, I'm going to put you in a group of judges, psychologists and other parents who are there looking for their children... I'll put you in this group!' When he*

put me in, I wasn't even expect it! About three months went by and I was always seeing children in these groups... (P1)

With regard to waiting time, she also states that:

[...] It is complicated! There is a necessary bureaucracy, but a good part of it could be shortened. That what I felt in my case, right? Yeah... we did the whole process, it took us 7 months to join. I think it all lasted a year and some. We thought that because it was a disabled person's adoption, it would be faster, and at least in the countryside, we felt more welcomed than in our local area. I think that by taking less cases there, you can give more support, right? Than here, here we didn't feel comfortable. I think that, because I don't reduce myself to the difficulties here, I decided to expand! (P1)

For João, the experience also included the difficulty of providing care at the Childhood and Youth Court:

It was hard, it wasn't easy. We would usually ask for information, we would try to find out how our process was going and everything and if it weren't for the staff at the registry office. Because, if it were him... [...] there in the other city, we were well received, really well received; totally different from here, I thought it would be the opposite, because I'm from another region. That was what made us most happy, to continue, because the staff really welcomed us. (P2)

In the context of the pre-adoption history, the interviewees reported that Emanuel was the victim of much violence (by the natural family) that generated physical and cognitive impairment. Account Bianca (Emanuel's mother):

[...] when Emanuel was 9 months old, he was the victim aggressions, his mother does not claim that they were aggressions, but there are reports from the IML [Brazilian Medico-Legal Institute], because he was found - as far as I know - by a health agent, she found him bleeding and took him without anybody's authorization and took him to the hospital, that's when he was hospitalized because the exams showed that he had a cracked rib, another already calcified, so they saw that the injuries from the aggression were different. He had shaken baby syndrome, he already had head trauma, paralysis, he no longer had the strength to feed himself through the mouth, so they had to put a tube on him; he was very malnourished, broken cartilage in his ears, torn mouth, nose too. So, all that he went through... a lot of health problems, with absence crises, due to the aggressions. (P1)

A story marked by physical and emotional aggression. In this context, Emanuel's parents showed anger and dissatisfaction with their son's biological relatives. The intrafamily violence suffered by the child had serious consequences, one of which was more visible: physical disability. Bianca showed discomfort with this content, because - until the moment of the interview - they were occasionally judged as the perpetrators of these violences. It is observed, in Bianca's report, that despite the negative feelings towards the aggressors, the importance of knowing about Emanuel's life story gave her the opportunity to understand

what handling was necessary to deal with her son. Furthermore, Bianca added that:

[...] the one who takes care of Emanuel the most is his father, because he is more attached to his father. And I already knew that, because the psychologists had already told me. 'Bianca, he will be more attached to his father, because the father had more affection for him. And, for him to get attached to you, it will be more difficult' [...] but I'm happy, because I knew that everything he suffered was because of his mother, right? So, for him to get attached to me... he initially called me aunt! Not his father! He called his father "Dad" from day one. And, for me, the first three months were three very painful months, because what I wanted most was to see him call me "Mom", right? Because we went out to places and I was embarrassed, because it looked like I was a stepmother, and I didn't want that! He would say to his father: 'Da... dad!' and to me: 'Oh, auntie!' Then it was a stab in my heart, but not today, he says, 'Mom', but even so, his attachment is still stronger with dad. He feels safer, even when he's sick! These days he spent the night in the hospital, vomiting a lot, but even so... he ran and wanted to stay with his father... gave his father a hand. My heart hurts, I immediately get distressed when I see him sick, then he feels more confidence in his father. And, his father takes very good care of him! Bathing him, giving him water, taking him to physical therapy, it's always the two of them, they are very attached.(P1)

About the historical moment in Emanuel's life, from the moment he arrived in Bianca and João's family, the couple reported that, as a result of the violence suffered, their son had a regular routine of medical appointments, use of medication and participation in a health care rehabilitation center for people with disabilities. However, she states that, at that moment, through the formation of bond and love, the child has demonstrated progress. Bianca says:

[...] a lot of doctors, physical therapy, right? The medications he had to take every day and a series of tests and everything! Other than that, it was only at home... Emanuel didn't go out, he didn't want much contact with anyone. He keeps very much to himself! But now, Emanuel no longer takes medicine, Emanuel sleeps every night at 2 or 3 am, he has so much energy! [laugh] He jumps! He plays! He study! He runs! When we met him, he had only been walking for 3 months, because he didn't walk... he learned to walk when he was about 5 years old, which was the age when we met him. He's totally different now, it's a lot of energy for a single child! Although he still has his phases, having his crises of not wanting to go to crowded places, he has completely changed! (P1)

Bianca reports that Emanuel's adaptation process in the new family, after the institutionalization period, generated anguish:

[...] he used to sleep at 6 pm. So, if we needed to go to a party or anything else, we couldn't go, because he wouldn't stay, he would cry and act like an autistic child... he wouldn't say what he wanted, he would point. Then he would point to the bed and we would take him to the bed. The first night of sleep hurt me a lot, because in my head when I had my child, I was going to put him to bed, lull him to sleep, but Emanuel didn't like physical contact... I had to lay him down, turn off the light and he rocked himself to sleep, because it's his routine there, right? There were not that many arms, that many "aunties" that could take care of so many children. Then, I put him in the crib, turned off the light and he rocked himself to sleep and until this day he lulls himself to sleep, puts his finger in his mouth and rocks from side to side. I got scared... Because suddenly a child who doesn't like to be soothed, lights off and goes from side

to side 'an, an, an'... I was kind of like this... But then time passed and we adapted. (P1)

João, Emanuel's father, gives meaning to this process by stating:

We had the opportunity to have a normal child, so when I say normal, I mean without any difficulties. And I had difficulty with that, not on her part, but on my part. I need to be realistic, right? But when he saw me, he immediately called me dad and everything. (P2)

And about the social challenges, they explain that:

[...] Emanuel uses orthoses, one on his hand and two on his feet, when I walk with him people say 'Oh! See? There are mothers who are not careful and their children break their arm, but it's not that he broke his arm, he uses it! [...] When people judge, it gives that feeling like... of anger with sadness when hearing certain things, but it pays off when we look at him,, and we know what our real life is like, right? (P1)

The parents believed that because Emanuel arrived at their home when he was four years old, there was already a notion of the family constitution, as they observed in his speech, as well as reported that they reinforced, in building affection with the child, the understanding that they are his "parents of the heart" [sic]. For João, the revelation will take place:

[...] as he grows up. The interaction we have with him is like a normal child, as if I had with my father. When he grows up, let's say, if that's the case, we'll sit down, show that he has a sister. If he wants to meet her, we will get in touch with the people there and let them know that he is interested in meeting her. Even because he can't be taken away from us, because he's ours, right? When he grows up, we will prepare him. (P2)

DISCUSSION

Adoption process

Observing the reasons for Emanuel's arrival in Bianca and João's family, practices such as sending photos and videos, called "uberization" and "active search", are carried out with children in foster care who cannot be inserted into foster families, because of age, being a part of groups of siblings, ethnicity, or health issues. These practices are subject to a series of criticisms, as they call into question the preservation of the image and privacy written in the Brazilian Child and Adolescent Statute (*Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente - ECA*)⁹. And, therefore, the importance of care when dealing with adoption, so that it does not fall into the prism of exclusively valuing the choice on the part of the prospective adult and their desire to be a parent, without viewing the child as a subject of rights.

However, it should be noted that, even though the resource is the subject of criticism⁹, in this research, this digital device proved to be important for the adoption of Emanuel to

happen. Since, in Bianca's interview, she points out that it was through the video of her son that she sought ways to adopt him.

In the case studied, difficulty on the part of some public servants was mentioned. It is reflected on another survey carried out with servants of the Court of Justice of Rio de Janeiro¹⁰ that demonstrated that professionals who deal with this subject must be trained so that they can understand beyond bureaucracy the existence of expectations and singularities involved.

The waiting period is generally an anxious one for applicants, since there is judicial rigor¹¹. And even if applicants are aware of the existence of the official waiting list, the feeling of many candidates is that they may be forgotten, which - usually - makes them seek information several times in the judicial institution. Therefore, an instrument that can minimize this experience are group activities that allow reception during the entire waiting time¹¹.

Emanoel's backstory and arrival in the new environment

Of the various types of violence involved in the development of Emanoel, knowing the initial dynamics of the child's life is important for the adoptive parents, since it will make them understand what types of care they should have for the child, as some will have needs common to all children and others may need longer health treatments¹².

According to the couple, the aggressions were carried out by the mother and Emanoel was afraid of female figures and immediately bonded with male figures, observed in situation with his father (João), who reported the child's delay in calling Bianca mother. It is understood that this reaction by Emanoel occurred as a remnant of the violence suffered. This is important information for the couple, so that they could deal with the demands that Emanoel presented and respect his space and time in the process of establishing a bond with his mother.

In Bianca's context, *support*, *help*, and *dedication* were the power to create a bond in adoption¹³. For this, it is recommended that the first step to be taken is to think of the original history of the adopted child as essential, so that it is respected for not neglecting this content¹⁴, since, the child having their life history respected, builds in themselves a feeling of belonging in the new family context¹⁵. From this perspective, adopters need to practice self-denial in order to care for the child in an affectionate way¹⁶.

It is understood in Bianca's speech her availability to help Emanoel, through care and attention to his needs. Named as "primary maternal concern"¹⁷, this process reflects the circumstance in which the mother begins to find ways to manage her contact with the baby

and actively adapt to supplying the baby's needs, so that this experience can help them in the development of their ego and in mastery over their own impulses, since the mother, when developing this concern, from a symbiotic way, identifies with her child and, in addition to the physical needs, also helps affective needs and bonding with that child.

In this sense, it is observed that Bianca, when reporting the care given to Emanuel, seemed to experience the emotional state described by Winnicott¹⁷, when understanding her needs, supplying them and dealing with her baby's difficulties, as a good enough mother. However, for the mother to be able to play her role, she needs an environment that supports her¹⁷. Thus, covering the important participation of other family members as assistants in the care of the child.

In the adaptation process there are particularities regarding the institutional reception, which in the case of Emanuel, there were specific demands of his life history and psychological and physical impacts resulting from the violence suffered. It is understood that shelter institutions differ considerably from the family environment, since in these spaces professionals need to have collective attention to the group of children sheltered, making it necessary to use routine and institutionalized practices¹⁸.

In Bianca's speech, from the beginning, her availability to develop the primary maternal concern, through adaptations to the needs that her son presented, an affective bond was built that provided security and acceptance to what emerges in the relationship with her child who experienced, in their past history, situations of violence¹⁹.

The experience of being a parent of a child with a disability

Adoptive affiliation occurs during everyday life, in forms of expression and interaction with the adopted person. With the help of adopters in renouncing themselves, it is necessary to be open to care for the child that arrives, listening to them and understanding their anguish¹⁶. This happened with João (Emanuel's father) who, initially, did not feel prepared to take care of his son because he was a person with a disability. He believed that it would require care, which he would not be prepared to give. However, after the first contact with Emanuel and hearing him call him dad, he explains that he has resignified and opened himself up to the experience.

It is analyzed that adoption helped João to understand his difficulty, but his openness to living with Emanuel was fundamental so that only through daily experience was it possible for him to understand what, in fact, it is to deal with a person with a disability. It should be noted that adoption is a process that helps not only the child, but the parents in their process

of identifying and clarifying their own history. A condition that enabled the creation of a space for care, transformation and promotion of development not only for those who are adopted, but for all members involved in the process, through the construction of affective bonds¹⁹.

Despite João's openness, it can be seen that he reaffirms his fear of the possible challenges that Emanuel could make him experience. In this sense, it is understood that being disabled is intrinsic to the experience of everyone involved in the adoption process, from the judicial process to family life. However, it is only from living together that it is possible to have access to the care that will be necessary for the adopted child⁶.

Therefore, it is necessary for adopters to develop parental care skills and knowledge about the disability that the adoptee presents, seeking to understand the demands that are presented and to supply them²⁰.

The development of children who have suffered violence needs emotionally involved parents to provide a safe and stable environment that supports the physical, emotional and psychological needs that emerge²¹. João's emotional and affective availability is also seen in Bianca's reports, as well as the care she has for Emanuel, which represents a form of care oriented to understanding the needs of the child, as a good enough mother, aiming to answer to them and perform reception in the face of the difficulties that emerge¹⁷. However, it is reaffirmed that for the environment-mother to be able to understand her child and identify their needs, welcoming and carefully handling the demands that they present, she needs an environment that gives her support¹⁷.

The family offers an environment in which the child can have their needs met and obtain a foundation for their physical and emotional maturation. The environment is fundamental in the process of constitution of the subject, since in the beginning of life, babies absolutely depend on others to satisfy their physical, psychic and emotional needs¹⁷.

And, in the course of maturation, the family exercises continuity and support for these needs. Therefore, the family is relevant to the care of the mother-environment and the child who, at first, has initial contact with the parents, but gradually starts to involve the other family members¹⁷. It should be noted that family, in Winnicott, are all people who acquire kinship by making themselves available to provide special assistance to the child's needs, helping them to develop independence and tolerating rebellions that may arise¹⁷.

Still in the care proposal by Winnicott¹⁷, it is necessary to reflect on the social impacts involved in this dynamic, which demand even more efforts from the members in the care for Emanuel, as he is a person with a disability, in a unique way, the stigmatization and prejudice appear. In the context of adoption, children and adolescents with disabilities are victims of

new violence as they are rarely mentioned in the registers of applicants for adoption²².

A study points out from the parents' reports that it is understood that there is no difference between the necessary care and the responsibility that adults need to have with all children, as well as the importance of caring with affection, kindness, smiles and moments marked by reciprocity between parents and children⁶.

Regarding revealing the adoption, it was seen that, although there is concern about revealing the adoption story to Emanuel, the parents were afraid that he would be withdrawn from them when they touched on this topic, as well as believing that Emanuel already knows, somehow about his adoption. In this sense, it is understood that parents dealing with adoption with their children can be one of the most disturbing topics, as this content is linked to a weakening of the solidity of the bonds. Thus, this content needs to be prepared together with professionals who help in the re-signification of what bothers the parents, so that the child's story is not understood as a persecutory ghost¹¹.

CONCLUSION

The impossibility of having biological children, as well as the stories of adoption in the extended family, motivated the couple, Bianca and João, to adopt. The option of adopting a person with a disability, from the beginning, was declared by the applicants in the Brazilian National Adoption System even in the face of fears and apprehensions. The Active Search procedure (practices such as sending photos and videos to adoption groups) was the way to enhance the couple's desire to adopt Emanuel, demonstrating, in this case, that the referred procedure can be effective.

Emanuel's disability reveals part of his past history. Although Brazilian regulations make clear the criminalization of acts of violence against children and adolescents, intrafamily violence is still part of social contexts, leading to reflection on how to deal with the consequences that these acts result in children and/or adolescents who suffer it. Adoption enters this context as the possibility of rebuilding affective bonds by the infant.

The development of physical disability came as a result of the practices of violence to which Emanuel was exposed as a baby. The research participants, even though they verbalized insecurities in the face of the new and, initially, unknown, were emotionally available to the adoption process, adapting to their child's needs and offering a coexistence full of care, affection and affection.

The adoption process, according to the reports, could be configured in a powerful new family environment for all members. However, it is important to problematize the social

circumstances that impacted the couple's possibility of reframing Emanuel's peculiar condition of development, and Bianca informed in her reports that the temporary availability for her son was only possible because her autonomous activity enabled her to work at home, as well as relying on help from family members and her husband at times when she felt distressed and/or tired, from the dynamics of caring for her child. Do all social and cultural contexts have this possibility? Reflection on family dynamics and assistance in caring for the arriving infant is relevant for thinking about a powerful child and family development.

Another problem proved to be relevant for reflection, the prejudices pointed out by the parents (Bianca and João), with regard to being sometimes seen as “saviors” of Emanuel, because he is a person with a disability or being pointed out as possible aggressors of the physical disability that he presented. When listening to the couple, one feels their anguish in justifying themselves as non-aggressors and/or heroes in Emanuel's story and their quest to be seen as parents of a child without reservations, by third parties.

Emanuel's previous history carries with it violence that impacted on his development, but having had the support of Bianca and João led to a series of advances seen by the parents in their day-to-day with the child. Parents expressed that before Emanuel's arrival, they felt anxious about the changes they would have to dispense with, in favor of the child's specificities.

However, after living with the child and observing the cognitive and emotional advances, they felt gratified for everything that needed to be changed in favor of the infant's health. In addition to feeling grateful for the welcome that Emanuel showed when he meant them as parents. For the couple, perceiving the development of Emanuel's autonomy made them feel secure in relation to the child's future.

This work had the following limitations: being carried out only with a heterosexual couple; non-participation of the adopted child. On the other hand, the data presented here can encourage the importance of new research that deals with the subject so that interventions and techniques can be developed that help in the demands that permeate the adoption of the person with disability according to their peculiarities so that spaces of care, ethics, affection and support are made available as aids to all who experience the process.

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