

# The socialization of homeschooling children

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## **Abstract:**

This research is an approach to the homeschooling practise from a perspective based on the educational concept "Personalized Education". This research analyzes whether homeschooling is an educational option that promotes the socialization of children as well as the importance in the development of the person in all its dimensional notes and foundational aspects. It also studies what kind of socialization homeschooled children receive from not attending school. An interesting point of reflection is considered, as most of the criticisms of this educational option allegedly lack the opportunity for children to socialize, as a basis for homeschoolers delegitimizes this educational model. In our analysis we have conducted a review of the main research carried out in Spain and abroad on the socialization of homeschooled children. In the review we carried out a quantitative study in our country through a questionnaire developed by TEA Ediciones, SAU, a recognized body for evaluation. We also provide the conclusions with other qualitative techniques: group interviews or a focus group. Homeschooled children have a level of socialization equal and even superior to school children. With all this we aim to contribute to social recognition and the regulation of homeschooling, making it possible to improve the current educational offerings and expand education and awareness of parents to gain their children's educational rights.

## **Key words:**

Homeschooling, Home Education, Escolarización en casa, Educación en familia, Libre Educación.

## **Introduction**

Socialization is an important issue in the education of children. Homeschooling is an education focused on the development of the whole person, where parents take charge of the education of their children, it is a most personal education because it is the parents who know their children and love them more. The family environment allows a direct and constant contact with the children.

Family is the first and most important social community formation and construction for the person. The family, for its everyday immediacy, intensely fosters a vital coexistence that promotes a deep and comprehensive relationship (Rogelio Medina, 1990, p. 21). The education of children is so important that it cannot be delegated, in any case you can ask for help (Calderero, 2014, p. 14). It is within the family where an authentic integral education of the person occurs.

In most developed countries and the US and in virtually all countries of the European community, parents can choose the kind of education their children will receive from a wide range of possibilities, private, subsidized schools, alternative pedagogy centers, differentiated, multi-lingual and the option to homeschool, better known as homeschooling. However, in Spain this educational option is not socially recognized nor regulated by the Education Act. Families who opt for it, in some cases, face numerous problems that often lead to lawsuits.

There are many questions that society poses to the practice of homeschooling, Can parents without qualifications teach their children? How are they going to socialize the children if they are confined or kept at home? Will they be prepared to ensure their children can access college when they reach adolescence and the working world?

This work aims generally to provide data and information that can help people to understand why some parents take responsibility for educating their children, full-time, in particular to analyze about the topic of the presumed lack of socialization with homeschooled children, which does not correspond with the results of research conducted over the last 30 years in the US and UK, which shows that the socialization of homeschooled children is equal and even higher than schoolchildren (McDowell, 2004, p . 39).

We see the family as the first and primary school socialization of children, as it is in the family where we learn to give ourselves to others, to grow in peace and freedom. Family life is an ideal society and relations between nations (Bergoglio, 2015)

## **Literature review about socialization**

The first question that comes to mind when speaking of Homeschooling is how children who do not attend school are well socialized? It is also one of the biggest concerns that parents face when they first think of homeschooling as an option for their children. Socialization is the main argument of opponents of homeschooling, but they do not know homeschooling at all. Many parents are convinced that school attendance ensures socialization, but there are many children who are alone at school, where bullying can occur making their life unbearable. Such attacks are natural, as part of learning in a hostile world, but in reality these children become desensitized at an earlier age. (Ferrer, 2012)

Some authors believe that homeschooled children are shy, solitary, as are sections of socialization that occurs in schools (Desforges, 2015), other authors claim that homeschooling does not guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms of children (Valero, 2015). However, on the other hand we have the statistical results of the investigations carried out on socialization. Homeschoolers show that children often develop normal social skills and even above average results (Meighan, 2005, p. 10) (Cogan, 2010) (Riley, 2012, page 45) (Rudner, 1998).; in this regard we believe that our study is a contribution to these lines of work. The opinions among experts vary, but there is broad consensus that the family is the basic cell of human socialization (Goiria, 2012), so important is the family that is collected and protected in the Spanish Constitution in Article 19.1 " the public authorities ensure social, economic and legal protection of the family. " From home you learn naturally to relate to people of all ages; it is strange to assume that the natural way of teaching children is locked in a school where children are directed, controlled and most of the time constrained, it is believed that this is the ideal environment where you can socialize normally (Caballero, 2012). Placing twenty people born the same year, in a class and teaching them a different subject every hour is based on a model of the Prussian school of the nineteenth century, but in some schools we are still teaching this way (Ferrer, 2012).The answer from his wife Mandred B.Zysk, when asked about socialization was , "Go to your local school , walk the corridors and tell me which behavior you see that you think my child should emulate" ( Zysk, 2015) If there were no schools for everyone in the past. How did people learn social skills? The current trend in our society which limits the family to one or two children and forced to work

away from home, long working hours in order to survive, prevents a natural socialization and promotion of large families, contact with the extended family, cousins, grandparents, the immediate environment of the neighborhood, market, plaza, park, etc. It is increasingly difficult to find children playing in parks, children are locked up in schools, or doing extracurricular, homework, watching television or surfing the internet.

The homeschooling socialization allows this natural contact with the surroundings, with the family, the community and the neighborhood. You learn naturally to relate to people of all ages, recreational activities take place at any time of the day, you have time in the mornings, evenings, in the daylight walk with the children, to the city (Caballero, 2012 ). Professor Silvia Cachia and homeschool mother tells how she herself before knowing about Homeschooling, suspected a lack of socialization of children not attending school. What made her change her opinion? Experience, she saw with her own eyes that children who do not attend school are generally sociable than friends who do attend school. Schools are an alternative, not the only source of socialization. Homeschooling is not synonymous with isolation. Families who homeschool have constant, cultural, entertainment outlets, there become so many possibilities you can choose from. Normally the most important socialization occurs outside schools, at exits, excursions, parties, events, holidays, how could we not socialize if we are part of society from birth? (Cachia, 2014)

Larry Edward Shyers University of Florida conducted, in 1992, a comparative study between the social behavior of homeschooled children and schoolchildren and found no difference in the test that assessed the levels of self-esteem and assertiveness. However through direct observation and checklists, he found that homeschooled children had significantly fewer behavioral problems than their school mates exhibiting behavioral problems above average and also showed more anxiety than their homeschooled peers (Bunday , 2015) the Doctor in 1998 expanded Shyers information to their research, homeschooled children were able to control their emotions and to act in a socially acceptable manner, while school children had a tendency to act on their feelings, not their reasons (Rothermel, 2001).

Laura Bujalance collaborating on the book coordinated by Irene Briones, in Family Education, gives a good analysis of the Homeschooling accidental aspects such as the lack of control by management, the ability of parents to educate their children and socialization, a common and widespread argument based on accidental aspects that can be remedied and do not affect the option of homeschooling education per se (Bujalance, 2014). The most important thing is to clarify what is referred to as socialization. Richard

Medlin (Homeschooling and the Question of Socialization, 2015) refers to three aspects of social activity, play with other children, social influence or learning social norms and social exposure or the possibility to meet other different social values of the family itself. This process occurs naturally when children take part in their daily routines, steeped in the values of the community, including family members, neighbours, friends, colleagues, movies, books, extracurricular teachers, etc. The hypothesis that homeschool socializes children implies that children have no contact with others, and learning any social norm, not aware of any different values than those of their own family value, and that they would also be isolated from media communication, computers, books, etc. Even so there could be a case of children being socially isolated and this should be avoided as it is the negative end of any educational practice (Bujalance, 2014)

Parents who homeschool their children are very concerned with aspects of socialization, much more than parents who send their children to school (Medlin, 2015). The vast majority of homeschooled children participate in extracurricular activities and participate in many other leisure activities, cultural excursions, sports activities, than their peers in school. Perhaps one of the reasons for the high involvement and participation is that children tend to be watching some TV and have a lot of free time (Medlin, 2015)

An interesting study is offered by Clatham Carpenter in 1994, which asked a sample of school children and a sample of homeschooled children to write down a monthly record of all their interactions with others. Homeschooled children had contact with 49 people unlike school children who had registered up to 56 people. A significant difference. But the homeschool children had not only listed their peers, friends and colleagues of the same age, the homeschooled children had listed children of other ages, adults, experts, playmates, people from all types of age, sex and social origin (Carpenter-Clatham, 2015).

British researcher Paula Rothermel performed, in 2002, a quantitative study comparing a sample of more than 400 homeschoolers to evaluate the psychosocial and academic development of children in families, 80.4% of homeschoolers children were placed in the top 16%, confirming that there was no evidence or insufficient evidence to consider that children were isolated, lonely, anxious or prisoners of some sort of phobia or that they are socially incompetent. Most of the children were socially capable and adequately proactive. The requirement that children need to socialize the same way as is done in the school system does not hold (Rothermel, 2001, p. 364).

André Stern, musician, composer, instrument maker, author and journalist, never went to school. In his first book 'I never went to school' (2009), he explained that he grew up playing, experimenting, spending hours with everything that interested him naturally. His book opened a large international debate on education. When asked about socializing and if he had have missed having friends his own age, he usually responded to what is really essential is the contact with other people, not necessarily of the same chronological age. This ensured a great enrichment occurring through the diversity of cosmopolitanism in social relations, interacting with people of all kinds, of all ages, and if for some reason these friendships are broken, there is no Cold War to having to spend each day as it happens in a school (Stern, 2009)

The conclusion of most researcher's focus on the socialization of children are that homeschooled children are immersed in society, in the community, and are working and participating in all kinds of activities in contact with different types of people and also the fact that they have flexibility of a schedule that favors a rich and abundant socialization above the average of the children attending school full-time (Medlin, 2015)

## **Definition socialization**

According to the Royal Spanish Academy dictionary RAE, socializing is "Promoting social conditions, irrespective of relations with the state in humans promote the integral development of the person" (DRAE, 2015)

Sociology is defined as contact socialization and learning a set of norms, values and ways of perceiving reality that prevail in the society to which they belong (AAVV, 2015)

Popular opinion defines socialization from different perspectives. Some refer to the socialization and social activity, social contact with children through various games, participation in extracurricular activities, parties, etc. Still others refer to socialization as learning social norms and others think that socialization is to introduce children in different cultures and values of humanity (Medlin, 2015)

Personalized education speaks of solidarity as one of the main motivations of human existence. Solidarity as a necessity, love, selflessness and looking to others as the inspiration that gives meaning to our lives. It is the cordial and cheerful coexistence with others, based on the principle of openness, which can be summarized in giving himself to others and that is the meaning of our life (Bernardo, 2011, pp. 33-34).

We can say that the process of socialization is not just the acquisition of norms, values, culture and traditions of the society to which they belong, but also the education of the inner person, the education of transcendent values that strengthen personal identity.

Beyond the materialist view of socialization of the state, most interested in socializing citizens to maintain social order and to exercise a social control with control mechanisms to avoid social deviations, thereby eliminating the undesirable (Berger 1967, p. 90) and tries to replace the family with other structures of coexistence. Comprehensive socialization occurs in the family. Family community plays a key role in the process of acquiring the identity and differentiation of the individual and their integration into life in society (Rogelio Medina, 1990, p. 23)

In this paper we will focus on five scales that define socialization Moreno Silva and Martorell Pallás (Evaluation of socialization and relations with intelligence and personality dimensions in older children and adolescents, 1985) and encompassing these three definitions, socialization personal fulfillment, socializing and learning the norms, values and traditions of the various cultures of humanity and socialization as social contact with peers and with different people that promote mutual enrichment.

These five scales are considered with others that detect social sensitivity or concern for others, self-control in social relations, a dimension that represents a compliance with rules and social norms that facilitate coexistence and mutual respect , social withdrawal that determines whether the child is isolated or not, social anxiety or shyness that detects anxiety or shyness in social relations and leadership that detects popularity, initiative and self-confidence.

## **Methodology**

We used a mixed methodology to better understand the complexity of socialization and try to unite the many different opinions of the authors. On the one hand we used quantitative research through questionnaires to a sample of 54 homeschooled children and a sample of 31 schoolchildren, to compare the results between them. On the other-hand we used the qualitative technique through the focus group technique with homeschool families to better understand their vision of the socialization of their children.

The questionnaire is the BAS 3 battery socialization of TEA Ediciones S.A.U prepared by Moreno Silva and Martorell Pallás (1983). The psychometric information on the BAS-3 was presented at the First Congress of Psychological Assessment in Madrid (1984) and has also been published by (Silva, F, Martorell, M and Clemente, A, 1985)

The use of this questionnaire can be useful for teachers, psychologists and parents themselves, if they are properly advised.

The format is a questionnaire with two categories Si-No. Thus the answer to the younger population is simplified.

The questionnaire consists of 75 items that evaluate the different dimensions.

Co: Consideration for others: 14 items, detects social sensitivity or concern for others, particularly those who have problems and are rejected.

Ac: Self in social relationships: with 14 items, includes a bipolar dimension represents the positive pole compliance with rules and social norms that facilitate coexistence and the negative, aggressive behavior, stubbornness and a lack of discipline.

Re: Social withdrawal: with 14 items, detects both passive and active of the other apartment, until arriving at the end to clear isolation

At: Social Anxiety / Timidity: 12 items, various manifestations of anxiety, fear, nervousness, timidity, shame, social relationships are detected

Li: Leadership 12 items, popularity, initiative, self-confidence and spirit of service is detected.

In addition to the questionnaire it was found necessary to group interviews with collective homeschooler families and other families that send their children to a school. The technique of focus groups or discussion group offered insight with this interactivity. There were different opinions and views of families, who opt for homeschooling or enroll their children into a school, on the socialization of their children. We selected three families of each of the two types

The questions of the focus group are focused on clarifying aspects of socialization of their children.

## Research results

The questionnaire consists of 75 questions, divided by five dimensions these are: consideration for others (Co), self in social relations (Ac), social withdrawal (Re), social anxiety/shyness (At) and Leadership(Li).

First we analyzed the consideration for others, henceforth Co. Detects social sensitivity and concern for others, especially for those who have problems and are rejected or postponed. The average of the results are:

Media on the item "Consideration for others"

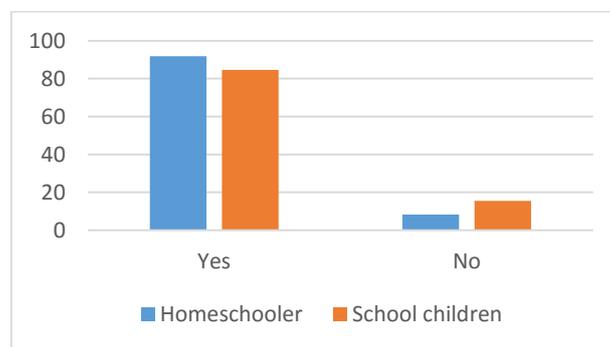


Figure 15. Do children have consideration for others?

The second dimension is self in social relations, from now on known as Ac. This collected evidence of a clearly bipolar dimension that represents, in its positive pole, compliance with rules and social norms that facilitate coexistence and mutual respect and in the negative, aggressive behavior, stubbornness and a lack of self- discipline.

Media among children and school children homeschoolers Item Self in social relations.

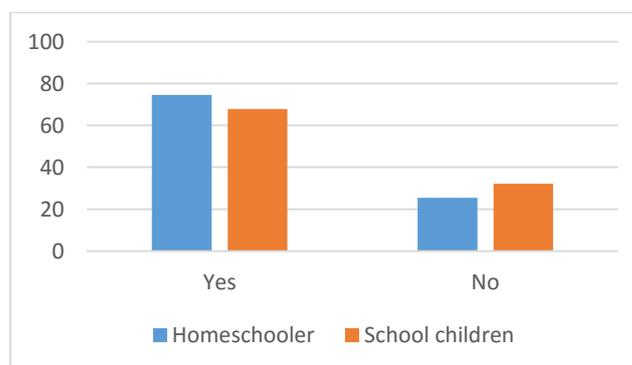


Figure 30. The children have self-control in social relations?

The third dimension is social withdrawal (Re), which detects both passive and active withdrawal of others, which shows if there is a clear separation of children from their social group/environment.

Media among homeschoolers children and schoolchildren in item Social withdrawal.

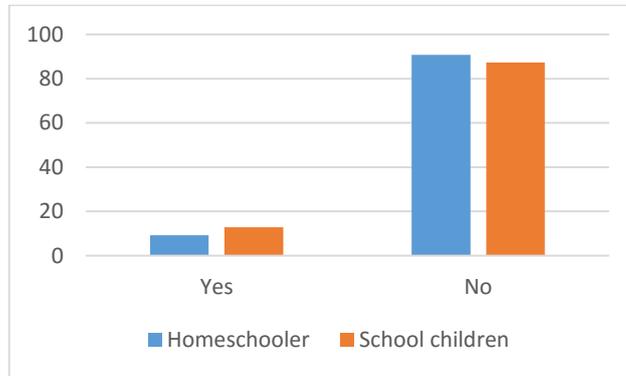


Figure 45. Are children socially withdrawn?

The next dimension is studying social anxiety or shyness (At), which detects different manifestations of anxiety (fear, nervousness) reactions linked to shyness (fearfulness, embarrassment) in social relations.

Average results Item Shyness or Social Anxiety among homeschoolers children and schoolchildren.

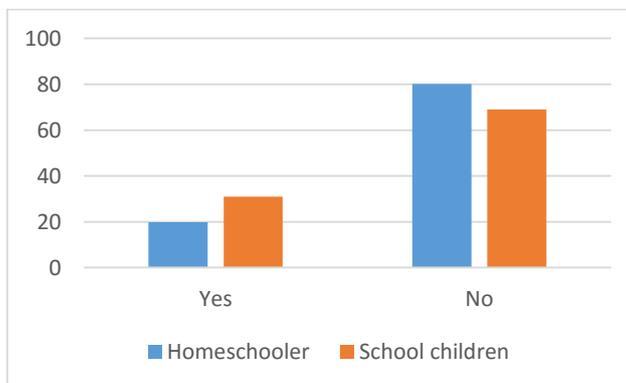


Figure 58. They present social anxiety or shyness children?

The last dimension that presents the questionnaire BAS 3 is Leadership (Li), where compassion, popularity, initiative, self-confidence and consideration or helpfulness is present.

Item Media Leadership among homeschoolers children and schoolchildren.

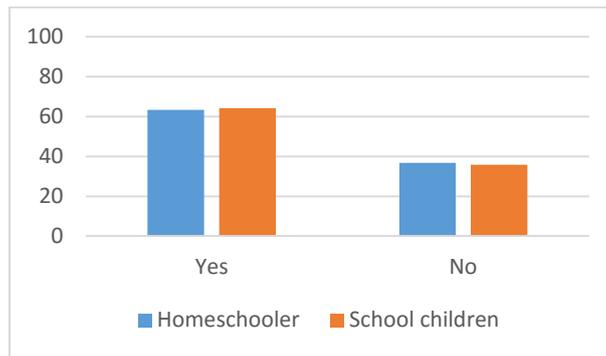


Figure 71. Children are the leaders?

With those five dimensions there can be added a final one known as sincerity. This dimension is interesting to observe the level of sincerity with which children answered the questionnaire.

Average among homeschooled children and schoolchildren of Sincerity dimension.

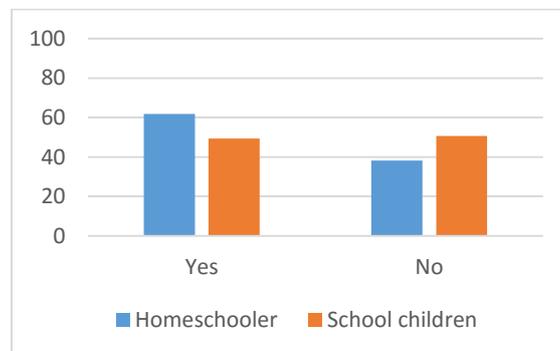


Figure 82. Are children sincere?

### **Analysis of the questionnaire data:**

The result of our analysis: the average of the dimension of "consideration for others" homeschooled children get 91.76% from schoolchildren who get 84.51%. Include the following items:

- They are considerate to other children, and help them when they have problems
- They are thoughtful when someone has problems and encourage and assist others to solve their problems.
- They are friendly and will be welcoming.
- They talk on behalf of others when they see they have problems.

- They make sure that no one is left out.
- They defend others when they are attacked or criticized.
- They are kind to others when they see that they have problems.
- They are considerate of others
- They care about what happens to others.

The average of the dimension of self-control in social relations, homeschooled children get 76.62% compared to school children who obtained 67.89%.

They emphasize that children:

- They don't tend to insult people
- They don't usually displayed stubborn
- They let the others work or entertain without disturbing
- They are not violent or hit others
- When they correct someone they make delicately
- They wait turn without jitters
- They talk and discuss calmly, evenly
- They don't usually challenge the oldest when they draw attention
- they are not impulse is to wait.

The average of the dimension of social withdrawal there is not a big difference but even so 9.18% of homeschooled children are socially withdrawn compared to 12.78% of schoolchildren who are socially withdrawn.

Include the following items:

- They don't tend to avoid others
- They are happy
- They dont feel lethargic, or have a lack of energy
- They interact when they are doing group activities

- No attempt to be in remote places, inconspicuous or busy
- They don't remain seated without knowing anything for a long time
- They do not stray when there are many people together.

The average of the dimension of social anxiety or shyness again we can see a big difference. The 30.96% of school children are shy compared to 19.88% of homeschoolers children who are shy.

Highlighted in the items:

- They don't show fear or turn away from things that are scary to others
- They don't find it hard to speak or respond
- They don't cry easily
- Most of them don't feel embarrassed
- They don't have a fear of new things or situations
- The vast majority are not shy
- The children respect gender and equality
- They do not startle easily when they cannot do something or they draw attention to themselves when they do not know what to do.
- They do not fear tasks.
- Do not get nervous when they have to say something in front of people

In the last dimension, the dimension of leadership is almost a tie, the school children is 64.2% leaders, compared with 63, 3% of children homeschoolers. Even so they stand out in the following items:

- They like to organize new activities
- The other children imitate them in many ways
- When there are problems the children meditate the situation
- They take the initiative in attempting something new
- they have been chosen as leader in group activities

-they find it easy to suggest new ideas.

To test the sincerity of children the most interspersed in the questionnaire items are added. The mean result of homeschooled children and school children showed a surprising difference. The 61.87% of homeschool children are more sincere versus 49.33% of schoolchildren.

The results of the questionnaires show that homeschooled children outperform school enrolled children in virtually all dimensions.

Following the results of the test, one can say that homeschooling does not impair the socialization of children, it shows improvement.

## **Data Analysis Focus Group**

The interview that was carried out sought a friendly atmosphere, outdoors, where children can play calmly and parents could concentrate on the interview. The interview was scheduled to last an hour and a half, but ultimately lasted two hours. We met three families homeschooling and three families that enrolled in school.

All gave a lot of importance to the roles of the father and mother as educators, to be primarily responsible for their children.

They also highly value a good teacher as well as the qualities of the teaching and education of the person, the values and virtues taught, family communication and interaction with school and the quality of human relationships.

For them the education of their children is very important.

No one put into question the socialization of homeschooled children, including some families that enrolled, they admired the quality of the socialization of Homeschooling, when parents authenticate educators of their children, to spend time with them, they have multiple opportunities to be educated, not only in knowledge but on values, respect for others, self-awareness, self-control, which are the foundations of a good socialization.

Finally, families highlighted the strong links that exist between parents and children and siblings and strengthen this personal growth and create a solid foundation for intellectual and emotional development. It is thus, nurturing, not only in physical

appearance, but also spiritual, children are nourished by their family's love and children are more likely to be themselves and act according to his personality, his convictions and beliefs achieving high self-esteem and favorable social relations of all types, classes, ages and social backgrounds.

## **Conclusions**

After the study, reflection and analysis of the literature, the responses to the questionnaire and discussions generated in the focus group conclude that:

The word socialization implies different meanings that we must consider. The acquisition of values, norms, knowledge of the culture of the country where you live and interaction with others, ultimately socialization involves the integral development of the person (DRAE, 2015).

-The Collective homeschooler cannot find that the socialization of their children is a problem. Analysing the literature, research and studies on socialization in the US and Europe indicate that the socialization of homeschoolers children is equal or better than the socialization of schoolchildren and although the state and the majority of society may think that socialization homeschoolers may be impaired children provide no foundation, research or study that supports your thoughts (McDowell, 2004, p. 106).

-There Are two types of socialization, positive and negative, a positive socialization implies responsibility, cooperation, kindness, loyalty, love and truth. This makes for a good self-esteem and a need to serve others. A negative socialization is the result of a coercive segregation, selfishness, competitiveness, negative dependence on each other, ridicule and harassment, poor self-esteem is built aggressively responding to pressure from others (Ballman, 1995, p. 185) .

-The Parents who choose homeschooling are looking for a good socialization based on the family unit, the interaction with the collective homeschooler, friends, extracurricular, camps and sports and leisure organizations.

The present study indicates both quantitatively and qualitatively that homeschool children get equal and even superior results in the dimensions that have been analyzed, the children have social awareness and care for others, they abide by the norms and social rules that facilitate coexistence and mutual respect. They are not shown to be isolated

segregated, anxious, nervous or shy in social relations. Most show popularity, initiative, self-confidence and helpfulness.

Parents are responsible for the education of the children and provide a quality education that covers all dimensions of the person.

So:

Where the socialization of children is concerned, homeschooling is a viable educational method, which like all methods and systems has its advantages and disadvantages but it works and works well.

The socialization of homeschool children is different to the socialization of children in school but not inferior in any case.

The responsibility for raising children lies with the parents and family. It is ideal for raising children, with the help of others and community as living environment.

We can consider that the hypothesis was confirmed:

The proposition that children need socialization on the scale offered by schooling, was not substantiated. Children can actually benefit from living without mass peer socialization such as that experienced in school. (P. Rothermel, 2002, p. 364)

## **Study limitations**

This research was conducted with the cooperation of the two of the most popular homeschooling associations known in Spain, ALE *Asociación para la libre educación* and CCRRH, *La coordinadora Catalana pel Reconeixement i la Regulació del Homeschooling*. Some children voluntarily participated in the preparation of the questionnaire and a small representation of parents have participated in the group interview.

The first limitation is there is not a complete record of the Spanish families who are integrally educating their children, which would have facilitated the participation of many more children in the questionnaires.

The second limitation arises from the lack of legal and social recognition that suffers from this educational option. Many parents acknowledge that they are interested in homeschooling, but have not considered a viable option as there is no law to regulate it, which significantly reduces the number of families who opt for Homeschooling and reduces the diversity of the movement.

Because of these limitations this study cannot be extrapolated to other realities, although the results are in line with and corroborative international research that has been carried out on socialization in other countries.

## **Prospective**

The Homeschooling is a recent and growing movement in our society. Mass education, the crisis of values, aggressiveness and lack of motivation in the classroom, make homeschooling a possible educational alternative to cover the most demanding parents with the quality of education for their children. In the US and in the rest of Europe the homeschooling movement has been growing over recent years, everything suggests that Spain may be doing the same. The law does hinder this growth, to be normal and functioning. We believe that the state cannot delay further regulation of this educational system to meet the social demand of families. It is not very unreasonable to think that in a few years homeschooling will have its own regulation in Spain and there is growth in the number of children opting for homeschooling throughout their education, or at some point in their school life, either partially or for a full time period.

It would be of great interest to future studies on the importance of the family as a socializing agent and educator of children. In short it is with the family where you can give a personalized quality education. Parents are the first and authentic educators of their children, considering all its dimensions, of which the social dimension is one of the most important because of its relationship with solidarity and importance, with the meaning of life and the life of each human being.

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