Beyond the Normal Curve: 
The Experience of Parents with Gifted Children

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In Venezuela, giftedness has been vaguely studied and attended. This lack of knowledge determines the hampered experience of the parents with gifted children. According to Pérez & Valadez (2010), parents of gifted children are often afraid of not knowing what is best for them or how can they help develop their skills. This can lead to certain difficulties in terms of differentiation of the paternal role with the role of the child as parents tend to treat children as adults. Therefore, Keirouz (1990), states that having a gifted child could affect parents’ self-concept as they may feel threatened, resentful or competitive with their children. Additionally, Colangelo & Dettmann (1983), state that giftedness engages a challenge and facing certain unique social and emotional needs. For this reason, Freeman (1994), came to the conclusion that these children need greater emotional protection, evidenced in the support and guidance of parents and teachers. The present paper reflects some aspects of a major project degree titled “The Experience of Parents with Gifted Children” (Vera & Yanes, 2017), which had as principal objective to understand the experience of parents with gifted children. Moreover, the investigation was carried out in the only Venezuelan institution dedicated to attend families with a gifted member, called “Proyecto Órbita – C.I. 130”. The project is distinguished for being a platform for identification, diagnosis and comprehensive assistance to people with high intellectual capacities, and its main objective is to promote the necessary conditions to develop the skills of these children and adolescents with an IQ equal or higher than 130 (Fundación Motores por la Paz, 2017). The conclusions were achieved through twelve in-depth interviews, using grounded theory design in a qualitative methodology. This enables a construction of knowledge that occurs on the basis of concepts (Krause, 1995), allowing us to approach the subject from a more flexible perspective, as well as a clear and holistic vision of the reality and experience of the participants themselves. This paradigm can then serve as support and learning source for other parents who face the same challenge. It should be noted that this is the first research in Venezuela that is developed within the framework of giftedness with a qualitative methodology, since all previous research has been based on a quantitative methodology. Therefore, this research supports both parents and teachers in the education of gifted children. In this respect, we found some theoretical aspects that approach to the construction of a theory emerging from the participants’ speeches. Among these results highlights the problems in the motor development of the gifted children, the expectations that parents have for the future of their child, the importance of educating in the value of humility and that parents do not get properly informed in the subject of giftedness.

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References


