

Experiences of Early Childhood Caregivers in Times of Covid-19 Pandemic Confinement

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Abstract

The objective of the study was to analyze the creative experiences of caregivers of children in early childhood in a children's home in times of confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. The in-depth study was carried out with six families, three nuclear and three extended, selected under the theoretical or conceptual sample; a semi-structured interview was applied as an instrument for the collection of information. From the experience of the participants, the results allowed us to establish domestic work, protection, adaptability and emotional support as the main activities assumed by the caregivers in the midst of confinement. Likewise, diversity in caregiving was visualized in the insertion of multiple caregiving functions that generated caregiver overload. Finally, the permanence of caregiving, the strengthening of emotional bonds and the woman as the main protagonist were reflected as particular elements in the caregiving experiences of the participants.

Keywords: *Caregiving, Early Childhood, Pandemic, Caregivers, Creativity.*

Introduction

The successful development of a child during infancy depends fundamentally on the stimuli, care and attention they receive, highlighting the importance of the optimal conditions in which the corresponding actions are carried out in order to establish bases that favor the cognitive, emotional and social development of the human being; This is why comprehensive care is essential between zero and five years of age, giving priority to health, nutrition, protection and early education components, attended from family, community and institutional contexts, so that children are provided with support for their survival, growth, development and learning (Ministry of Education, 2022).

In Colombia, as in other Latin American countries, early childhood care, initial education and comprehensive care outside the family have been configured on the basis of various institutional arrangements and public policies of both the education and social protection sectors. In this sense, in Colombia there are two institutional scenarios in correspondence with care spaces; in the first instance, from public policies and State protection, there are the Child Development Centers (CDI) and the Community Children's Homes Program of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), where the caregivers are the community mothers. In second instance, from the market and the private sector, the child care centers, called kindergartens, with little surveillance and monitoring, attended by child care professionals (Pineda and Munévar, 2020; Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, 2021; Ministerio de Educación, 2022).

However, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the population was forced to confine themselves to their homes to avoid the spread of infection (Wang et al., 2020); therefore, universities, educational institutions, CDIs, Community Children's Homes (CCHs) and other care service centers suspended their care at least on a face-to-face basis; generating new spheres in the educational sector and in the care of children under five years of age, since school accompaniment and the task of care was transferred almost 100% to the family, increasing domestic burdens and new tasks in households, added to

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paid work activities (Herrera, Hernández, Gélvez, 2020; Hernández, 2022) and "without the impossibility of accessing family assistance, generating an excessive overload within households, particularly in single-parent households" (Araujo and Hirata 2020, p. 23); this overload affected mainly women and especially those who were active in the labor market, and who were also the main actors in family care (Rodríguez, Alonso and Marzoneto, 2020; Serantes et al, 2021; Boada, 2021).

According to Herrera, Hernández and Gélvez (2020), the hours per week that women in Colombia, with productive work, dedicate to domestic and care activities increased more than those of men in August 2020, compared to August 2019, despite the fact that men's dedication was limited in relation to the hours of paid work; this demonstrated an increase in the care crisis and the gender gap (Ramacciotti 2020). Similarly, Romero, Fonseca, Doria, Herazo and Pérez (2022), argue that caregivers in the midst of the health emergency presented depressive symptoms and the more the quarantine progressed, the more the symptoms increased; however, the perception of the family became more positive, given that at the beginning it was perceived negatively. Similarly, in the study conducted by Herazo, Pérez, Bolaños, Fonseca and Romero (2023), it is stated that early childhood caregivers before and during the health emergency presented depressive symptoms, but that after the quarantine (2021) these symptoms decreased. However, anxious symptoms were higher after the quarantine and when returning to pre-pandemic routines.

On the other hand, Arguello, Herazo, Venegas, Mendevil and Arrieta (2023), in their study of care and parenting practices observed that early childhood caregivers during the health emergency complied at a medium level with care and health practices, as well as those of psycho-pedagogical accompaniment (25%). These practices were established by the ICBF to guarantee the accompaniment and continuity of services in the institutional and family modality.

It is evident that the quarantine brought about a new dynamic for caregivers, as children were absent from schools, parks and places of social integration, turning homes into the only educational, care and socialization scenarios; Hence the interest in deepening the analysis of the care of children in the midst of confinement, approaching it from the experiences of caregivers of children in early childhood, specifically those linked to the Children's Home under study, describing the adaptations and dynamics that generated functions and creative activities assumed in the families and the implications of confinement in care.

Now, considering that the Children's Home offers a service of attention of the institutional modality of the ICBF, which seeks to strengthen early childhood development; and that, like other educational institutions, given the sanitary emergency, it was forced to modify its methodology of attention and provide a service in the virtual environment; This work analyzes the creative experiences of the families linked to this modality during the time of confinement, given that they received guidance in the education and care of the children by the educational agents of the Hogar Infantil, assumed the roles of educators, and simultaneously developed other actions of child care, domestic work and teleworking.

Methodology

Given that the interest of this in-depth study was to analyze the experiences of the caregivers of children in early childhood in times of confinement due to COVID-19 pandemic, describing their assumed roles and understanding the particularities of care and identifying the implications of confinement in this practice, it was decided to carry it out from an interpretative view of reality, through a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design; it was decided to carry it out from an interpretative view of reality, through a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design; understanding that, qualitative research allows understanding phenomena in light of the perspectives and experiences of the subjects in their natural context (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2014). In this sense, this approach allowed analyzing the way in which caregivers perceived and experienced the care of their children in the midst of confinement, delving into their point of view, interpretations and meanings.

Likewise, taking into account that the objectives of this work were related to subjective aspects of the participating subjects, and the experiences of caregivers and caregivers were taken as an element of analysis, this study was inclined towards the phenomenological design, which proposes to study the

phenomena in their pure form, through a reflexive analysis of the individual's experiences of the phenomenon under study (Vladimir, 1967); and in the same sense, it aims to analyze, describe and understand care from the point of view of each participant from their experiences, analyzing their discourses and meanings; but also discovering the common elements of the experiences of care (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2014). Based on these approaches, this work also sought to frame the experiences of caring for children.

For the development of this study, families benefiting from the Hogar were selected, given its service modality focused on the education and comprehensive development of early childhood. Taking into account the phenomenological perspective of this study, the units of analysis were selected, in this case the families, under the theoretical or conceptual sample; and the size was determined according to the need for precision and refinement of the information collected (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2014), that is, six families were chosen (three nuclear and three extended) linked to the service of the Hogar Infantil, at the time of confinement due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which led them to live new experiences of caring for children; This made it possible to collect precise information to describe the functions and/or activities of the caregivers, to identify the implications of the confinement in the care and to determine its particularities.

For the analysis of the information collected, it was necessary to transcribe the interviews conducted with the participating families; this information underwent a coding process that allowed the creation of categories and subcategories around the dimensions of analysis: "Functions assumed by caregivers", "Implications of confinement in care" and "Particularities of care in confinement". In this sense, the data were analyzed through the conformation of units of meaning or categories, which made it possible to describe the caregivers' experiences.

Table 1. Analysis Category

Subcategory	Category	Dimension	Dimension conceptualization
Feeding of children Body hygiene of children Cleanliness of the home Adaptation to the home as a unique environment of socialization	housework	Roles assumed by caregivers	Activities performed by caregivers and caretakers in confinement
Adaptation of the home to		Implications of confinement on	Affections or

<p>the educational environment educational environment Expression of affection Identification of emotions Orientation to assertive behavior Transformations in emotional affective bonds Conflictual family coexistence Shared roles Support networks Role learning, caregiving support school accompaniment, teleworking Work and home burdens Positive family relationships</p>	<p>Protection and adaptability Socioemotional support Changes in family dynamics Diversity in Care New roles overload caregiver Links strengthened</p>	<p>care Particularities of pandemic care</p>	<p>situations generated in care caused by the experience of confinement. Characteristics or features of care that stood out in the midst of confinement</p>
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Results

Roles Assumed by Caregivers During COVID 19 Pandemic Confinement:

The accounts expressed by the participants show that the functions and activities assumed by caregivers in confinement are framed in three areas: domestic work, protection and adaptability, and socioemotional support. These subcategories are related to the material, emotional and ethical dimensions that make up the action of caring proposed by Palomo (2011, as cited in Puyana et al, 2020), where domestic work is highlighted, reflected through actions such as food preparation; cleaning, arrangement, maintenance and hygiene of the home and clothing; as well as body hygiene. On the other hand, the importance of school accompaniment, socialization spaces, and leisure time recreation is highlighted. And finally, the positive valuation of the influence of the caregiver on the emotional development of the person being cared for.

Domestic Work

In the narratives of the participants, it is evident that domestic work was characterized by tasks such as: feeding the children; some expressions such as "I have to prepare breakfast, lunch, everything" ... "I prepare dinner so that when my husband arrives I find his food ready and my children have dinner early", (F2NMother) show that the action of feeding was summarized in the preparation of food, but it also focused on the monitoring of daily meals: "since I was out of work, I took it upon myself to prepare good

meals for my children and be aware that they ate" (F5NMother) "we were able to do more follow up that the children ate all the food"(F1NMother).

For the caregivers, being at home all the time implied very frequent cleaning and cleaning tasks, both physically and in the home; expressions such as "we had to do this in the pandemic to keep the house clean for the children" (F1NMother) "for a clean environment and that meant washing the house and the clothes and that every now and then" (F1NMother) "bathing the child, this, that, the other, dressing him/her, we have always been there" (F1NPother) shows that these were actions that required significant dedication; bathing and dressing the children became complex, as there was resistance to this activity, the caregivers expressed "as we were at home, we also had to be attentive and run the children around to bathe and dress them" (F2NMother). "Although it was more time for bathing, tidying up and keeping them clean" (F3Mother).

These findings show that in the period of confinement caregivers experienced changes such as the overload of domestic duties, mainly in women responsible for the care of children, who began to demand more time and dedication to care.

Protection and Adaptability

The family as the main agent of socialization provides children with elements for the development of skills and attitudes necessary for adaptation to the various social and educational contexts where the infant is introduced to the first experiences of social interaction (Pichardo, Justicia & Fernández, 2009; Gallego, 2012). In the confinement the functions of the participating caregivers emerged through the practices of protection and adaptability, which were not common before and in a non-habitual scenario, due to the fact that it became necessary to adapt the home as a unique environment for socialization, for which, activities that were not frequent in the family dynamics were developed; actions such as games at home, leisure activities, spirituality, and strengthening of faith; evidenced in the following accounts.

"We were his friends from the neighborhood, from the home, from the park, the house became social" (F2NMother).

"at night we played ludo, we played carts, with the girl we played occupations, she was the doctor and I was the sick person and so on"... "we sat down to watch dolls, to share with them watching cartoons and laughing with them, to share more time in front of the TV, watching programs, Netflix" (F1NPadre).

"the children could not go out, the school issue, they played with each other and with their cousins who live on the second floor; then the house became the street, the school, the park, they socialized at home" (F6EAgrandmother).

"We strengthened the theme of spirituality, of prayer, we got up, bathed the children, prepared breakfast and until we were all together we did not eat, we prayed as a family. (F5NMother).

God was key, everything was very difficult and we would tell the children to cling to God, to ask him to take care of them every night. (F2NMother).

These testimonies show that they were practices that favored integration and socialization at home, and are intended to ensure the survival, protection and adaptation of children in a vital context (Gonzales and Estupiñán, 2010; Rodríguez, Alonso, Marzoneto, 2020).

In the same sense, expressions such as "I felt good at that time, we adapted, the older children also adapted quickly to virtuality, they knew how to handle that part and obviously yes, the task was hard, at least with the second one, I had to help with homework, exhibitions, he had to do this" (F5NMother) show that despite being a new experience, the process of adaptation from traditional teaching to virtual teaching, mediated by support and guidance from caregivers, was achieved.

Socioemotional Support

Considering that the action of caring should guarantee emotional well-being (Micolta, 2020; Herrera, Hernández, & Gélvez, 2020), some research establishes that caregiving should be developed in environments that involve the emotional component, where trust, love, happiness, dedication, affection, expression of emotions, protection, company, attention, and caregiver awareness prevail (Messina, 2013; Pautassi & Zibecchi, 2013; Herrera, 2015; Boada, 2021). In this sense, the results of this study are aligned with these approaches, given that socioemotional support mediated by the expression of affection, the identification of emotions and orientation to assertive behavior, stood out as a role that was not visible or frequent in the families interviewed. Stories such as "It was nice to know his manifestations of love, his joys, anger, sadness" (F5NMother), "I have been motivated to be aware of my child's day to day life, to see him grow more in his progress in the children's home and his development as a person, to know his emotions" (F3Mother), "I feel that the pandemic in my family was favorable, it gave me more time to know, share, play and experience many things with my children, to know what they feel and think" (F1NPadre), "the pandemic allowed us to dialogue with our children, in their own way, but they understood us, and we reached agreements" (F3EPadre).

"We learned and taught them to put ourselves in the other's place" (F6Grandmother), allowed us to recognize and highlight the manifestations of love, the identification of thoughts and feelings, the recognition of emotions, the search for dialogue, the dedication of time for recreation and games, as fundamental elements of the caregiver's role.

Implications of the Confinement as a Result of Covid-19, in the Care of Children.

The analysis of the stories given by the families of the Hogar Infantil El Portalito allowed the identification of four categories that reflect the implications of confinement in the practice of caring for children.

Changes in Family Dynamics

From the experience of the caregivers interviewed, alterations in the family dynamics were evident, since they had harmonious relationships within normality, however, as a result of the confinement these suffered variations, which are evidenced in the following narrations:

"being at home locked up made the children annoyed, they disobeyed and that made me angry" (F4NMother).

"they got bored and became aggressive and fought over toys" (F5NMother), "I scolded my daughter and my husband got angry and argued with me" (F1NMother), "we had some difficulties with my son, he began to misbehave and the father did not give him authority" (F4Mother).

These expressions indicate that family coexistence became conflictive, due to disobedience to authority, defiant behaviors in children resulting from anxiety, stress or desperation due to confinement, causing difficulties in intrapersonal relationships and negative transformations in emotional bonds.

Likewise, other narratives show that, for some caregivers, guiding the child to desired behaviors, modifying their defiant behaviors, providing spaces and activities that allowed them to be distracted, responding to academic activities, and also attending to household chores, generated negative emotions with conflictive manifestations towards the other members of the family nucleus.

"Being attentive to the house, to work and to the child's care made me desperate and made me angry, and sometimes I took it out on my children" (F1NMother).

"I despaired that the child did not pay attention when I told him to do his homework, it was stressful to attract his attention, and sometimes I had to hit him" (F3Mother). "I felt burdened, with little time and a lot

to do, it made me desperate and angry, my husband was not very helpful and we argued and it was not just one, there were 4 kids in my charge, and I had to be aware of everything about them" (F5NMother).

The results also show the family's interest in consolidating affective bonds to strengthen interpersonal relationships, mediated by teamwork and family union. "it brought us, that union, which we didn't do so often before, now we look for a movie that pleases us all and we share that moment." I feel that the pandemic in my family was favorable, it gave me more time to know, share and experience many things with my children" (F1NPadre).

"In my house, family relationships were strengthened and there was greater union with my husband and children, we shared more, we watched television together" (F2NMother).

Multiple Roles and Creative Activities

From the caregivers' accounts, it became evident that confinement promoted the reconfiguration of child care, generating multiple activities and functions reflected in actions that required academic supervision, socialization processes, control of inappropriate behaviors, monitoring the correct use of free time and electronic devices, as well as actions that favored positive relationships between siblings and emotional balance. In addition to this, the adaptation of the members to housework and teleworking is highlighted.

"Since there was a lot of time at home, we managed to keep the children together, without fights, showing love for each other" (F5NMother).

"It was always difficult to be attentive to the tasks, the chores and to make sure that they were not glued to their cell phones; these were things that did not require so much attention before" (F6Mother).

The results reflect the change in the functionality of the home to an educational environment, the learning of new roles and the adaptation of men to household chores, support for childcare and school accompaniment, even when they were not frequent;

"The pandemic made my husband learn a little about housework and child care" (F3EMother).

For my husband, having to bathe my youngest son and feed him was something new" ... "my husband had to take care of the children" ... "and also the accompaniment to the homework of all those guides and booklets that were left for the children" (F2MMother).

Likewise, the conversion of the home into a space for socialization where the caregivers were the mediators of this process is evident:

"doing something different right there in the house, we played cities, hide-and-seek, that is, we always tried to keep them in activities with the children" (F1NPadre).

"We shared more, we watched television together, I took the initiative, I felt it was my duty" (F2NMother).

Diversity in Caregiving

Statements such as "realizing that being a parent is not only bringing money or food to the home but also sharing with the child, helping him with homework or even making him lunch, because sometimes when my wife was busy I had to make breakfast for my son" (F3Father), "For me and my family this pandemic helped us so much in that we all had to support each other in the care of the child" (F3Mother) "to organize a schedule of activities, where we had a schedule to do household chores and that my husband supported me, the functions at home were distributed" (F2NMother), "at home, with the help of my sister we rotated the household chores and the children's chores" (F4Mother). (F4Mother), "my mother-in-law helped me take care of the children" (F3Mother), show a group of people in charge of care, who issued practices

according to their knowledge, beliefs and experience; consequently, the diversity of care is reflected, since shared activities and family support networks are observed.

In this sense, confinement permeated the creation of support networks made up of a set of actors who took responsibility for the care of the child, school follow-up and the strengthening of their relationships and emotional ties; this, theoretically Moreno and Granada (2013) call "constellations", which are characterized by the creation of the care bond with the father, uncles, and grandparents; and in some cases, community or educational care scenarios.

The support networks brought a benefit to the mothers or primary caregivers, some relieving burdens and lowering their stress levels.

"The help that one can receive, even with the children's chores, unloads a little bit" "so much load generates stress, but having my mother's help sometimes, it relaxed me a little bit".

Related to this, authors highlight the importance of establishing support networks for the success of the caregiving task and the well-being of the caregiver, as this work is considered a complex task (Martínez, Catalá, & Peñaranda, 2016; García, Castellanos, Álvarez, & Pérez, 2020).

Caregiver Overload.

In accordance with this, some narratives emphasized that during the period of confinement the combination of the workload, with the care, the accompaniment of the children's learning, and the domestic duties, generated an overload in the caregivers, despite the support they were able to receive. In this regard, women caregivers narrate the multiplication of tasks they experienced: "this pandemic was driving me crazy, I had to split myself in three, to do my work, the housework and the care of the child" (F3EMother).

"The beginning of this pandemic was a little difficult because I had many obligations at home and on top of that I had to do my work" (F2NMother).

"It was quite complicated, for me it was, because I had to be aware of the kitchen, the children, where they were, what they were doing, what they were doing, and the work, because I also had to comply with a work schedule" (F1NMother).

"I feel that as a woman and a mother everything was overloaded on me, there came a time when this was ending, I felt super exhausted and I wanted to go to work, I wanted to be in the workplace" (F1NMother).

These expressions show that it was the woman who was mainly responsible for the care of children (Conejo et al., 2020 Centioni, 2020; Rodríguez, Alonso, Marzoneto, 2020), who demanded more time and dedication.

Particularities of Child Care in Confinement Time

Strengthening of Emotional Bonds

Confinement allowed that within the reconfiguration of care experienced by the families interviewed, elements that characterized the strengthening of emotional bonds were highlighted. Testimonies such as "in these moments my family is more united, time for our son is sacred" (F3Mother) "sharing as a family was very positive since we were able to have that interaction with the children that we did not have before" (F5NMother) "in my house family relationships were strengthened and there was greater union with my husband and my children", (F2NMother) "it brought us, that union, which we did not do so often before, now we look for a movie that pleases us all and we share that moment. "(F1NPadre) showed that despite some difficulties in family coexistence, the practice of caregiving was based on the expression of affection, sharing, interaction between children and caregivers, and family unity.

Women As Protagonists of Caregiving

Some expressions made by the participants allowed us to conceive of the mother as the protagonist or main caregiver of the children, who, in spite of the support she received, was directly responsible for the housework, supervision, attention and school accompaniment of the children, but above all for accompanying and guiding the behavior and emotions of the minors, since the man was characterized as the provider of economic resources, that is, the one responsible for the household's finances. In this sense, these tasks demanded by the dynamics of the confinement, caused an excessive overload in women, especially in those who were active in the labor market. Before this, it is established that the confinement generated an overload in the care of children (Conejo et al., 2020), causing a differential impact according to gender (Massó, 2021).

The father's responsibility has been mostly economic, he helped me in the kitchen or with the cleaning, very little he does or did, he usually did not spend time at home, (F1NMother).

"My husband never picked up a dish to wash, in this pandemic he had more of an economic function than a family support function." ... "my husband would go to the street to look for food, but I think that he spent very little time with the child" (F4Mother).

"I had all the responsibility of taking care of, attending and answering for everything, food, cleaning, and more" (F5Mother).

"I think that we women were super powerful, taking care of the house, the children and working". "besides handling the children's anger and desperation for not being able to leave the house" (F5Mother).

"I had so many professions, I was a psychologist, a teacher, a housewife and even a recreationalist" (F1NMother).

Permanence in Caregiving

With regard to what was presented in this study, permanence in caregiving is one of the most relevant elements in the caregiving experience of the participating caregivers, allowing the deployment of protective, subsistence and socialization environments.

In relation to protective environments, caregivers deployed actions of care, adaptation and prevention of contagion; some expressed that "we did not let the children go out, not even us, to avoid contagion" (F2NMother) "we had to invent many games at home so that it would be easy for the children to adapt to being at home for so long" (F5NMother) "we arranged the house so that the children would be very comfortable, so that they would not go out and avoid contagion" "I have always been very attentive to the children and since my mother was sent to work at home, even more so during the pandemic period, so that they would not go out, that was my greatest concern not to let them go out" (F6EAggrandmother).

On the other hand, in the livelihood environments, school accompaniment, the promotion of well-being, the expression of emotion and affection were highlighted; the participants expressed: "in the pandemic I learned to dedicate time to my son, to teach him to love and take care of himself" (F3Father) "being at home helped us to show our children that we love them" (F5NMother) "the pandemic made us be more united, to be able to support each other and so it was easier to be at home" (F1NMother) "accompanying my son in his education, helped to show him more love, especially to make it easier to get used to being at home" (F2Mother).

In the socialization environment, the orientation towards tolerance, empathy and communication skills were stimulated through fun daily activities; the caregivers reported: "living together was not easy, especially when there are two children who fight, we had to teach values in a simple and didactic way" (F5NNMother).

"We tried to teach them to put themselves in the other's place, they in my place, to understand that I had a lot of work to do" (F1NMother).

"both my children and my wife, we used to play to burn off energy" (F1NPother).

"with my husband and my children, we shared more, we watched television together" (F2NMother).

Permanence is seen by García and Urbina (2021), as a characteristic of ideal care, which requires continuity, diversity and quality of care issued by the set of actors involved in this work, to positively impact the physical, emotional, cognitive and social sphere of the infant (Moreno and granada, 2013); therefore, the availability to meet the needs of the child and the intentional actions performed in parenting, are determinants in the establishment of affective bonds in the family nucleus (García, Rodríguez, Duarte, and Bermúdez, 2017)

Discussion

The pandemic produced by Covid-19, conceived as an unexpected event, generated physical, psychological, social and economic affectations; likewise, it demanded a confinement that notably impacted the families, forging changes in their dynamics and a reconfiguration of the care of children in those with members in the early childhood stage, which led to the generation of adaptation processes at the educational, family, social and emotional levels.

From the experiences of the caregivers and caretakers of children in early childhood in the children's home, it is established that confinement brought with it the performance of multiple functions and activities such as virtual school accompaniment, teaching, supervision, care, recreation and integration, emotional support and spirituality, which demanded the adaptation of the home to educational and socialization environments. In this sense, the results of this study allow ratifying that the family is the main entity where the care, socialization and teaching of infants takes place. Studies with similar findings (Serantes et al., 2021; Boada, 2021) demonstrate that the family became the new and only social ties for children, from the new social, care and school space, called home, where the use of technological elements such as television, cell phones and video games increased. This shows that in the family new roles of school accompaniment were forged that focused on the practice of care in teaching adapted to virtuality; caregivers and caretakers became the new teachers of sons and daughters, evidencing modifications in the family dynamics (Lepin, 2020; Centioni, 2020).

The confinement caused high levels of anxiety, irritability, fears, anguish, for the whole family, especially for those who were responsible for the care of children, generating impulsive or violent responses, which compromised their ability to provide a safe and stable environment (García et al., 2020; Sanchez, 2021), 2020; Sánchez, 2021); this is why, it is stated that the pandemic was associated with negative changes or deficits in intrafamily relationships, coexistence, assertive communication and in affective bonds, which acted as predictors of intrafamily violence (De la Cruz, 2020; Montero, et al., 2020; Lepin, 2020; Serantes et al., 2021; Méndez Moreno and Robles, 2021; Rojas and Alván, 2022; Hernández, 2022). Therefore, considering the importance of the socioemotional component for the development of self-esteem, self-concept, social skills and positive interpersonal relationships of the infant, in this study socioemotional support was identified as a relevant element in caregiving, given that the spaces for dialogue and interaction that allowed the identification of emotions and expression of affection favored affective bonds and the emotional well-being of the infants. The consolidation of affective bonds in the family environment is considered an important element as protective factors in the mental health of children, considering all the psychological effects of the pandemic (Serantes et al., 2021).

In families, emotional bonds reflect the union between parents and children; in this sense, they are woven when a relationship of trust, communication, respect, affection and understanding is lived; favoring the emotional stability of children (Pérez and Arrázola, 2013) and the strengthening of positive patterns in the structuring of the child's personality (Sánchez, 2021). In view of this, Palomo (2008) and Martínez et al., (2016) consider that the emotional dimension is an important element in the action of caring, since caring

encompasses a direct relationship between the caregiver and the cared for; and therefore, it should be developed in environments of love, affection, happiness, good treatment, where dedication, affection, protection, company, attention and acceptance prevail (Herrera, 2015; Checa, Orben and Zoller, 2019).

On the other hand, it is important to highlight that caring in confinement also involved in the families domestic work actions that were not previously assumed directly by the caregivers, such as food preparation, body hygiene and cleaning of the house, jobs that together with the workload or teleworking, led to an overload of occupations for the caregivers; However, despite the possible shared roles and support networks that were identified in some families, the trend shows women as the main protagonists in charge of the tasks required for caregiving, implying in them an occupational saturation that revealed traits of gender inequality, since men, despite being support in some household tasks, their fundamental role was mainly visualized in the economic provision. These results are similar to those identified by García et al., 2020; Boada, 2021 and Serantes et al., 2021, who state that confinement entails new configurations in the task of caring, implying the establishment of new rules, work schedules, studies and new roles for all members of the household, highlighting school accompaniment, food monitoring and supervision of behaviors, especially in the use of cell phones, video games, computer and television.

The implications brought about by the pandemic and the confinement as a measure to prevent contagion, established multiple occupations or tasks for people, especially for those with children in the early childhood stage, considering that supervision, accompaniment and surveillance related to the task of caring were required; actions that before the pandemic were mostly performed in schools, children's homes or educational centers. Aligned to this, the demands of domestic work and teleworking were strongly manifested (Serante et al., 2021, Rojas and Alvan, 2022). In the households these actions mainly involve one member as the main protagonist, however, in some families participating in this study, the support networks that were linked to execute the practice of care, was a key element; this result is aligned with the approaches of Moreno and Granada (2014) who state that "in the household there is not a single caregiver subject, but there is a constellation of caregivers who in one way or another are responsible for the care of the child;" (p.122).

If care is approached as an unpaid family practice that refers to daily tasks that favor the physical, social, emotional and cognitive well-being of the child (Micolta et al., 2015) and also involves the maintenance of household goods, feeding, personal hygiene and upbringing for the preservation and maintenance of the life of the other (Molinier, 2011; Micolta, 2011), a complex task is evident; However, if to these actions is added the educational component mediated by virtuality, the adaptation of the home as a socialization environment, the 24/7 supervision of the infant and teleworking, an overload is generated in the caregiver (Brenes, 2020; Araujo and Hirata, 2020; Boada, 2021). The results of this research show that women were the main caregivers of children (Conejo et al., 2020 Centioni, 2020; Rodríguez, Alonso, Marzoneto, 2020), who demanded more time and dedication.

These results are supported by the findings of some researchers (Araujo and Hirata, 2020; Brenes, 2020; Rodríguez et al., 2020; Serantes et al, 2021; Boada, 2021; Moguillansky and Duek, 2021; Hernández, 2022), who also determined that care, school accompaniment, house cleaning, food preparation and other domestic tasks in confinement, were characterized by gender inequality led by women, conceiving within the group of women the mother, sisters, aunts or grandmothers. The experiences mediated by confinement confirm the statements of Triana, Ávila and Malagón (2010), who state that women are responsible for upbringing, socialization, and directing the path towards healthy lifestyles, such as hygiene and nutrition habits; they are also responsible for providing spaces for the children to establish communication and assertive personal relationships.

This study allows us to conclude that confinement brought with it both positive and negative experiences within the homes, given the modifications in the family dynamics, focused on the interactions of the members of each family; for some it favored the affective bonds, however, in others the coexistence became conflictive, as a result of the non-compliance with the rules established in the home, manifested in defiant behaviors on the part of the children. Likewise, adaptation to new responsibilities, desperation, stress, anguish and anxiety due to confinement generated tensions in intrafamily relationships.

Another important element to highlight in this work is the new styles of interaction of the family members with the areas in which they performed their usual study and work activities; the confinement required the caregivers to develop actions of academic supervision of the children, while at the same time they performed telework or other domestic tasks. Finally, this study manages to rescue the fundamental role played by the family as a protective environment, given the permanence and continuity in the actions of protection, subsistence and socialization as elements that guaranteed the quality of care for the children, especially in highly complex social environments such as the experience of a pandemic.

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