

## PSYCHOMOTOR ABILITIES OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, AS PREDICTORS OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING

### PSIHOMOTORNE SPOSOBNOSTI DJECE SA RAZVOJNIM TEŠKOĆAMA KAO PREDIKTORI PORODIČNOG FUNKCIONISANJA

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#### ABSTRACT

The family environment plays an important role in the development of children with no developmental disabilities and children with developmental disabilities. Most previous studies observe the family environment in terms of its impact on children's outcomes. The aim of this paper is to examine the influence of psychomotor abilities of children with developmental disabilities on family adaptability and cohesion. This research observes and examines the developmental abilities of children with disabilities, as predictors of family functioning. The sample of respondents included a total of 339 respondents, of which 139 children (69 children with developmental disabilities and 70 children without developmental disabilities) as well as 200 parents of children included in the study. The results of the research showed that there are differences in family adaptability of cohesion between families of children with developmental disabilities and families of children without developmental disabilities. Psychomotor abilities of children with developmental disabilities, i.e. their communication abilities, represent significant predictors of family adaptability, while they have not been determined as significant predictors of family cohesion.

**Key words:** children with developmental disabilities, family functioning, psychomotor

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## SAŽETAK

Porodično okruženje igra važnu ulogu u razvoju djeteta kako tipičnog razvoja tako i djece sa razvojnim teškoćama. Većina prethodnih studija posmatra porodično okruženje sa aspekta njegovog uticaja na ishode djece. Cilj rada je ispitati uticaj psihomotornih sposobnosti djece sa razvojni teškoćama na porodičnu adaptabilnost i koheziju. Ovo istraživanje posmatra i ispituje razvojne sposobnosti djece sa teškoćama kao prediktore porodičnog funkcionisanja. Uzorak ispitanika je obuhvatio ukupno 339 ispitanika, od toga 139 djece (69 djece sa razvojnim teškoćama i 70 djece bez razvojnih teškoća) kao i 200 roditelja djece uključenih u istraživanje. Rezultati istraživanja su pokazali da postoje razlike u porodičnoj adaptabilnosti kohezije između porodica djece sa i bez razvojnih teškoća. Psihomotorne sposobnosti djece sa razvojnim teškoćama, odnosno njihove komunikacijske sposobnosti, predstavljaju značajne prediktore porodične adaptabilnosti, dok iste nisu utvrđene kao značajni prediktori porodične kohezije.

**Ključne riječi:** djeca sa razvojnim teškoćama, porodično funkcionisanje, psihomotorne

## INTRODUCTION

Children with developmental and intellectual disabilities, in the same manner as other children, come to an environment filled with hope and expectations. Unfortunately, the truth that a child's development is not orderly represents for parents an unpleasant surprise and even great disappointment, sometimes shock, and financial insecurity, as well as an adverse impact on the psycho-physical health and family environment (Vitoň, 2015). Parents of children with developmental disabilities need more inner/mental strength than parents of children with no developmental disabilities, not only to accept and overcome the difficulties of children, but also to face everyday challenges. Those parents who have developed a supportive environment and who possess the necessary skills to face challenges in a flexible way are more able to build a sense of security and protection that affects their family's development (Di Giulio, Philipov and Jaschinski, 2014).

Developmental disabilities and difficulties are heterogeneous and lifelong difficulties or obstacles that are often characterized by problems related to the functioning of the brain or senses and include genetic disorders that affect cognition, behaviour, and other body systems (Zablotsky, Anderson and Law, 2015). Developmental disabilities are a group of chronic conditions that often require lifelong coordinated, interdisciplinary and support services (Crocker, 1989; Yeargin-Allsopp, 1992 according to Braun et al., 2015). Available information indicates that children with developmental disabilities during early childhood show a low level of usage of services in early interventions, and only 17% of children with developmental delay up to 5 years actually receive early intervention services (Rosenberg, Zhang and Robinson, 2008).

The influence of social changes is obvious in many fields of daily functioning of individuals, under whose influence the family is inevitably affected, which represents a mediator between the needs of the individual and society (Zotović et al., 2008).

Modern trends in society and the consumer way of life have imposed changes in the structure of the traditional family, which included that the mother of children is mostly not employed, dedicated to caring for children and raising children, organizing family meals and family leisure. In relation to this, roles within the family have changed with increasing participation of women in higher education, decreasing wages of men and increasing the number of families with both parents employed (Newland, Coyl, & Freeman, 2008). Such a modern family implies the necessary reorganization of free time and the way of distributing parental roles within the family, which relate to the way of caring for children and establishing the discipline of children. All this reflects on family interaction and functioning, the level of quality of life of family members and, ultimately, on their psycho-physical health. To keep pace with these changes, it is important that researchers reconsider parental contribution to children's outcomes, such as security and attachment, and in the context of the modern family using co-decision strategies and social support. The parent plays a major role in the child's psychological, social, and academic development (Dardas and Ahmad, 2015). Adverse family experiences, including family dysfunction and harsh parenting strategies, are associated with an increased risk of psychopathology in children, which in turn negatively affects the process of stimulating growth and development. Negative family functioning is associated with depression and anxiety in children (Jongerden et al., 2014; Ferro and Boyle, 2015), lower developmental achievement (Firk et al., 2015), and behavioural disorders in later life such as eating disorders (Berge et al., 2014), obesity (Halliday et al., 2014) or Internet addiction (Yan, Li, & Sui, 2014).

In recent years, the well-being of parents / guardians and family functioning have been gaining increasing attention from researchers. Research shows that a comprehensive observation of the family in relation to the exclusive focus on the child, leads to an improvement in the outcome of the family as a whole (Smith et al., 2010). It is important that parents are provided with support after diagnosing the child's developmental disabilities, in order to develop effective parenting strategies as a mechanism for coping and adapting to the new situation. It was found that knowledge of effective parenting strategies is more important than theoretical knowledge about the child's development. It often happens that parents, at key moments in a child's development, focus all their resources solely on encouraging development without the use of adequate parenting strategies. These negative parental reactions occur more frequently among parents of children with developmental disabilities and behavioural disorders (Williamson and Johnston, 2016).

This paper presents the results of examining the psychomotor abilities of children with developmental difficulties and their influence on the dimensions of the Circumplex model of family functioning with the dimensions of family cohesion and family adaptability. The circumplex model considers that extremely high or extremely low values of cohesion can be a problem for a person and his/her relationships within the family. On the other hand, individuals who achieve moderate cohesion values are able to balance their relationships in a functional way (Olson, 1999).

Cohesion is defined as closeness between family members, while flexibility is defined as the ability of a family to change its structure, roles, and rules within a relationship in response to situational or developmental needs (Place et al., 2005). Specific concepts or variables that can measure the dimension of family cohesion include: emotional closeness, coalition, time, place, friends, decision-making, and interests. Family cohesion is an important dimension of understanding interactions between family members and represents a significant resource of support to families of children with intellectual disabilities (Hosseinkhanzadeh et al., 2013). Adaptability is considered to be the quality of family organization and leadership, the role and rules of relationships, and the way the family manages its stability and changes within the family (Olson, 2011). Family flexibility is the result of changes in its leadership, role relationships, and relationship rules. Specific concepts include leadership (control, discipline), negotiation styles, roles, and relationship rules (Olson and Gorall, 2003).

The aim of the research is to examine the psychomotor abilities of children with developmental disabilities and to determine the influence of the levels of these abilities on family adaptability and family cohesion. This includes examining children with developmental disabilities and their parents, as well as applying research methods to determine the impact between these two criteria.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Sample of respondents**

The total sample included 339 respondents: 139 children and 200 parents. The sample of children included 70 children with developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities and 69 children of typical development, both genders, aged 0-6 years, who were a control sample, from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska). The sample of parents included 200 respondents, of which 100 parents of children of typical development, as a control group, both genders, from Bosnia and Herzegovina and whose children were included in the research, and 100 parents of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities, both genders, from Bosnia and Herzegovina whose children were included in the research.

### **Design and Procedures**

Nonprobability sampling of respondents was applied in the research. Of the total number of children with developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities, in the educational and health institutions in which the research was conducted, every third child was included in the sample. Out of the total number of children of typical development, in the educational institutions in which the research was conducted, every fifth child was taken for the sample.

### **Measures**

To examine and determine the coefficient of psychomotor development, the Developmental Observation Checklist System - DOCS (Hresko et al., 1994) was applied, with the application of the development checklist and the obtained general coefficient of psychomotor functioning.

The Developmental Observation Checklist System DOCS is a standardized measurement instrument designed to measure areas of normal development, parental needs, and assess interpersonal and contextual impacts. DOCS instrument includes a Development Checklist, a Behaviour Assessment Checklist, and a Parent Stress and Support Assessment Checklist. During the research for the assessment of psychomotor abilities of children, the Development Checklist was applied, which assesses 4 areas of development: motor skills, cognitive development, communication, and social development. Assessment using this checklist provides insight into the level of developmental abilities of the child in relation to all areas of assessment, and the general coefficient of psychomotor functioning. The Development Checklist contains a total of 475 assessment variables for 4 sub-areas of development. Based on the achieved number of points, the coefficient of psychomotor development is determined in relation to the tabulated standardized results.

The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (Olson, 1991) was constructed in relation to the Circumplex model (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989) with the three most important dimensions: cohesion, flexibility, and communication. The scale is designed to measure family cohesion (level of connection or distance of family members), family adaptability / flexibility (how flexible the family system is and how it changes), and family type and functioning (extreme, moderate, and balanced families). The scale contains a total of 20 variables that can be used to assess all family members older than 12 years. Based on the number of points, the standard results of the two sub-scales of measurement and the type of family are determined.

### **Method of conducting research and data processing**

Research data were processed by the method of parametric and nonparametric statistics. The basic statistical parameters of frequency and percentages are calculated, and the obtained results are presented in tables and graphs. Multivariate regression analysis and optimal scaling were used to test the set research hypotheses. The research data were processed using the statistical package SPSS 20. for Windows.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Descriptive statistics of results in relation to the assessment of family functioning show the responses of parents of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and parents of children without developmental and intellectual disabilities, in the field of family adaptability and family cohesion.

Table 1 presents the results of the assessment of family adaptability of children with developmental disabilities and children without developmental disabilities. In relation to the presented results, the largest differences in the parents of children with developmental disabilities were observed in the variables "Parents and children discuss punishments" and "Children make decisions in our family". On the variable "Parents and children discuss punishments", the percentage of responses of "almost always" was 26% in parents of children with developmental disabilities, compared to 42.9% in parents of children without developmental disabilities.

In the sample of parents of children without developmental disabilities, only 1% of them "never" discussed punishments, compared to a percentage of 13% in parents of children with developmental disabilities. On the variable "Children make decisions in our family", 58% of parents of children with developmental disabilities answered "almost never", compared to a percentage of the same answer of 31.6% in parents of children with developmental disabilities. On the same variable, the response rate "almost always" was in 3% of parents of children with developmental disabilities, and the response rate of the same answer was in 2% of parents of children without developmental disabilities.

On the variable "In solving problems, children's suggestions are accepted" the results show that only 14% of parents of children with developmental disabilities and 10.2% of parents of children without developmental disabilities agree that they almost always accept children's suggestions, while 2% of parents of children without developmental disabilities and 12% of parents of children with developmental disabilities almost never do this. In relation to these results, we can see that parents of children with and without developmental difficulties do not accept children's suggestions in solving problems. Similar results were achieved by parents of children with and without developmental disabilities on the variable "We transfer family responsibilities from person to person", where the results showed that 31% of parents of children with developmental disabilities and 34.7% of parents of children without developmental disabilities almost never transfer family responsibilities from person to person, while 8% of parents of children with developmental disabilities and 3.1% of parents of children without developmental disabilities almost always do so.

Difficulties in determining the responsibility of each individual within the family were observed on the variable "It is difficult to determine the leader / s in our family", where the results show that 11.2% of parents of children without developmental disabilities almost always have this problem, and 17.3% of them often have this problem within the family. When it comes to parents of children with developmental disabilities, the percentages are lower and amount to 5% for answers "almost always" and 15% for "often". Similar results of parents of children with and without developmental disabilities related to the responsibilities of individuals within the family are visible on the variable "It is difficult to determine who does what type of work at home" where the results show that only 2% of parents of children with developmental disabilities, and 10.2% of parents of children without developmental disabilities almost always have this problem. On the other hand, 46% of parents of children with developmental disabilities and 36.7% of parents of children without developmental disabilities almost never have problems determining household chores/work for family members. These results show that parents of children with developmental disabilities better define individual roles and tasks for family members, compared to parents of children without developmental disabilities.

When it comes to the attitude towards changes within the family, on the variable "In our family the rules change" a high percentage of 23.5% was achieved by parents of children without developmental disabilities, and 23% was achieved by parents of children with developmental disabilities - both groups answered that the rules change often in their families.

In relation to that, as many as 6.1% of parents of children without developmental disabilities answered that this almost always happens, which is higher than the percentage of parents of children with developmental disabilities of 3% - on the same answer.

Table 1. Family functioning: adaptation

		Almost never	Once	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
In solving problems, children's suggestions are accepted	parents of children without developmental difficulties	2 2.0%	2 2.0%	47 48.0%	37 37.8%	10 10.2%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	12 12.0%	17 17.0%	33 33.0%	24 24.0%	14 14.0%
Children have the right to vote in their discipline	parents of children without developmental difficulties	5 5.1%	2 2.0%	37 37.8%	30 30.6%	24 24.5%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	15 15.0%	11 11.0%	26 26.0%	22 22.0%	26 26.0%
Different people act as leaders of our family	parents of children without developmental difficulties	46 46.9%	5 5.1%	28 28.6%	12 12.2%	7 7.1%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	42 42.0%	7 7.0%	25 25.0%	25 25.0%	1 1.0%
Our family changes change the way we perform tasks	parents of children without developmental difficulties	13 13.3%	4 4.1%	54 55.1%	21 21.4%	6 6.1%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	15 15.0%	12 12.0%	44 44.0%	28 28.0%	1 1.0%
Parents and children discuss punishments	parents of children without developmental difficulties	1 1.0%	2 2.0%	18 18.4%	35 35.7%	42 42.9%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	13 13.0%	11 11.0%	32 32.0%	18 18.0%	26 26.0%

Children make decisions in our family	parents of children without developmental difficulties	31	31.6%	13	13.3%	45	45.9%	7	7.1%	2	2.0%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	58	58.0%	7	7.0%	25	25.0%	7	7.0%	3	3.0%
In our family the rules change	parents of children without developmental difficulties	7	7.1%	0	0.0%	62	63.3%	23	23.5%	6	6.1%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	9	9.0%	10	10.0%	55	55.0%	23	23.0%	3	3.0%
We transfer family responsibilities from person to person	parents of children without developmental difficulties	34	34.7%	11	11.2%	42	42.9%	8	8.2%	3	3.1%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	31	31.0%	14	14.0%	36	36.0%	11	11.0%	8	8.0%
It is difficult to determine the leader / s in our family	parents of children without developmental difficulties	34	34.7%	11	11.2%	25	25.5%	17	17.3%	11	11.2%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	41	41.0%	6	6.0%	33	33.0%	15	15.0%	5	5.0%
It is difficult to determine who does what type of work at home	parents of children without developmental difficulties	36	36.7%	10	10.2%	31	31.6%	11	11.2%	10	10.2%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	46	46.0%	14	14.0%	21	21.0%	17	17.0%	2	2.0%

Table 2 presents the results of the assessment of family adaptation of children with and without developmental difficulties. In relation to the presented results, the parents of children with developmental difficulties/disabilities had the largest differences on the variables „Family members feel closer to other family members than to other people“, „My family members feel very close and attached to each other“ and „Family closeness is very important in our family“, relating to family closeness.



On the variable „Family members feel closer to other family members than to other people“ the response rate of the answer "almost always" in parents of children with developmental difficulties/disabilities was 22%, compared to a response rate of 45.9% on the same answer in parents of children without developmental difficulties/disabilities. Of the total number of parents of children without developmental difficulties/disabilities, 15% of them almost never felt closer to people outside the family than its members, while this percentage is lower in the sample of parents of children with developmental difficulties/disabilities and amounts to 10.2%. On the variable „My family members feel very close and attached to each other“ 51% of parents of children with developmental difficulties/disabilities answered "almost always", compared to 75.5% of parents of children without developmental difficulties/disabilities, on the same answer. On the same variable, the response rate of the answer "almost never" was 7% for parents of children with developmental difficulties/disabilities and 1% for parents of children without developmental difficulties/disabilities. On the variable „Family closeness is very important in our family“, 56% of parents of children with developmental difficulties/disabilities answered with "almost always", compared to as many as 82.7% of parents of children without developmental difficulties/disabilities, on the same answer. On the same variable, the percentage of responses with "almost never" was 9% in parents of children with developmental difficulties/disabilities, while no parent of children without developmental difficulties/disabilities on this variable chose this answer.

Based on these results, it is evident that the families of children without developmental difficulties/disabilities feel more closeness to family members and perceive family closeness present in their family, contrary to the families of children with developmental difficulties/disabilities.

Table 2. Family functioning: cohesion

		Almost never	Once	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
My family members are asking for help from each other	parents of children without developmental difficulties	1 1.0%	0 0.0%	25 25.5%	28 28.6%	44 44.9%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	7 7.0%	3 3.0%	32 32.0%	30 30.0%	28 28.0%
We approve of each other's friends	parents of children without developmental difficulties	11 11.2%	2 2.0%	9 9.2%	23 23.5%	53 54.1%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	10 10.0%	3 3.0%	7 7.0%	29 29.0%	51 51.0%

We love doing things in our immediate family	parents of children without developmental difficulties	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	8	8.2%	27	27.6%	62	63.3%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	3	3.0%	3	3.0%	13	13.0%	40	40.0%	41	41.0%
Family members feel closer to other family members than to other people	parents of children without developmental difficulties	10	10.2%	4	4.1%	15	15.3%	24	24.5%	45	45.9%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	15	15.0%	4	4.0%	28	28.0%	31	31.0%	22	22.0%
My family members like to spend their free time with each other	parents of children without developmental difficulties	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	9	9.2%	28	28.6%	60	61.2%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	9	9.0%	2	2.0%	17	17.0%	34	34.0%	38	38.0%
My family members feel very close and attached to each other	parents of children without developmental difficulties	1	1.0%	1	1.0%	5	5.1%	17	17.3%	74	75.5%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	7	7.0%	2	2.0%	7	7.0%	33	33.0%	51	51.0%
When our family does common things, everyone is present	parents of children without developmental difficulties	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	27	27.6%	33	33.7%	37	37.8%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	6	6.0%	7	7.0%	34	34.0%	33	33.0%	20	20.0%
We can easily think about the things we do together as a family	parents of children without developmental difficulties	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	13	13.3%	47	48.0%	37	37.8%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	3	3.0%	6	6.0%	40	40.0%	33	33.0%	18	18.0%

My family members advise other members about their decisions	parents of children without developmental difficulties	12	12.2%	3	3.1%	33	33.7%	33	33.7%	17	17.3%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	7	7.0%	10	10.0%	42	42.0%	28	28.0%	13	13.0%
Family closeness is very important in our family	parents of children without developmental difficulties	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	4	4.1%	12	12.2%	81	82.7%
	parents of children with developmental difficulties	9	9.0%	5	5.0%	6	6.0%	24	24.0%	56	56.0%

In order to assess the impact of psychomotor development of children with developmental and intellectual difficulties/disabilities on family interaction and family functioning, a multivariate method of regression analysis was applied. In this research, the system of predictors consists of variables of psychomotor development, which relate to communication, social development, motor skills and cognitive development, while the criteria is the variable family cohesion and adaptability.

Table 3 shows the results of regression analysis, i.e. the influence of psychomotor development variables on family adaptability. It can be seen from the table that the multiple correlation coefficient is 0.37, i.e. it shows that there is a relation between the variables of psychomotor development and family adaptability. The square of multiple correlation is 0.13, i.e. it shows that 13% of the variability of family adaptability can be explained under the influence of psychomotor development. The results of Fisher's test showed that at the level of statistical significance of 0.05, psychomotor development of children affects family adaptability.

Table 3. Results of regression analysis

Model	SC	df	PSC	F	p
1 Regression	3399,76	4	849,94	2,61	,043
Residual	21166,07	65	325,63		
Total	24565,84	69			

$r = 0,37$ ;  $r^2 = 0,13$ ; corrected  $r^2 = 0,08$

Table 4 shows the results of the beta coefficient, which represents the standardized partial regression coefficient. The logical and computational beta coefficient is very close to the partial correlation because it shows the partial (separate) share of an individual predictor in explaining the common variance of a set of predictors and criteria. From Table 2 it can be seen that based on the results of the beta coefficient, the greatest impact on family

adaptability was achieved by the variable of communication skills of children with developmental disabilities.

Table 4. Beta coefficient results

	Model	Non-standard coefficient.		Standard coefficient.	t	p
		B	SE	Beta		
1	Constant	66,68	18,17		3,66	,000
	motor skills	,38	,43	,20	,87	,385
	communication	1,30	,52	,62	2,47	,016
	social development	-,64	,52	-,29	-1,22	,224
	cognitive development	-,68	,47	-,32	-1,42	,160

Choi and Yoo (2015) state that a child's level of developmental abilities, parental depression, and stress are negatively associated with family adaptability. A study with a sample of 126 parents of children with Down syndrome found that parental depression, family cohesion, and communication were significant predictors associated with family adaptability. These results suggest the need to prevent depression in parents of children with developmental difficulties and intellectual disabilities, and interventions should focus on improving family cohesion and communication within the family as the development of protective factors. It can be considered that a child who shows a higher level of acquired communication skills has a positive effect on family interaction and communication as a whole.

Table 5 shows the results of regression analysis in relation to the criterion of family cohesion, while the predictors are variables of psychomotor development. It can be seen from the table that the multiple correlation coefficient is 0.24, i.e. it shows that there is a relation between the variables of psychomotor development and family cohesion. The square of multiple correlation is 0.05, i.e. it shows that almost insignificantly 0.5% of the variability of family cohesion can be explained under the influence of psychomotor development. The results of Fisher's test showed no influence of psychomotor development on family cohesion.

Table 5. Results of regression analysis

Model	SC	df	PSC	F	p
1 Regression	163,92	4	40,98	1,00	,411
Residual	2646,42	65	40,71		
Total	2810,34	69			

$r = 0,24$   $r^2 = 0,05$ ; corrected  $r^2 = 0,00$

Psychomotor abilities of children have not been identified as a significant predictor of family cohesion, which is contrary to previous results of research by Van Schoors et al. (2016), who consider child functionality and its characteristics to be related to cohesion within the family. Javadian (2011) indicates that families of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities show better family cohesion compared to families of children without

developmental disabilities, which is consistent with the obtained and described descriptive research results.

## CONCLUSION

The research examined the influence of the levels of psychomotor abilities of children with developmental disabilities on the dimensions of family functioning, as well as the individual influence of certain abilities of children with developmental difficulties. The assessment of family adaptation determined that the communication abilities of children with developmental difficulties and intellectual disabilities are a significant predictor of family adaptability. Family adaptability depends on a number of factors and there are several predictors of family adaptability. Lamb et al. (2016) found that a higher percentage of problem-focused coping, and a lower percentage of emotionally-focused coping are associated with more effective family functioning. In addition, these key variables are significantly associated with greater adaptability, as a dimension of family functioning.

The research found that psychomotor abilities of children with developmental difficulties do not represent a significant predictor of family cohesion, but descriptive descriptions indicate the existence of differences between families of children with and without developmental difficulties in this dimension of family functioning assessment, especially when it comes to family closeness.

Family functioning of families without developmental difficulties, as well as families of children with developmental difficulties, is a dynamic transactional process that cannot be effectively researched if it focuses exclusively on the assessment of individual family members and the cross-section of the situation within one time point (Pedersen et al., 2015). For a more detailed study of family well-being, it is necessary to conduct a series of longitudinal research studies that would examine changes within family processes and well-being.

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