

PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PARAGOMINAS/PA

PRÁCTICA PEDAGÓGICA DE PROFESORES DE PRIMERA INFANCIA EN EL MUNICIPIO DE PARAGOMINAS/PA

PRÁTICA PEDAGÓGICA DAS PROFESSORAS DA EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL NO MUNICÍPIO DE PARAGOMINAS/PA

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Abstract

This article aims to reflect on the pedagogical practice of Early Childhood Education teachers, regarding their attitudes and commitment to the work carried out within the educational space of this stage of Basic Education, seeking to understand the perceptions of teachers from the municipal public schools of Paragominas/PA, and relating theory to their practice. It is qualitative research, conducted in 4 (four) Early Childhood Education schools. For this research, a bibliographical survey, documentary analysis, and field research (interviews) were conducted, which contributed to understanding the perceptions, attitudes, and subjective aspects of the research participants. We conducted bibliographical research based on authors discussing the theme in question, and documentary research based on the analysis of documents from the Municipal Education Department. As a methodological procedure, interviews were conducted with Early Childhood Education teachers to investigate the proposed situation. The analysis of the corpus revealed pedagogical practice as a complex task, considering various factors that influence this activity, such as school planning organization, methodology, evaluation, among other elements that are part of the educational process. The results showed that Early Childhood Education teachers understand that pedagogical practice needs to be grounded in theoretical-practical knowledge and based on play and children's experiences, also supported by an "apparent" understanding of the standardization documents regarding Early Childhood Education.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education; Early Childhood Education Teacher; Pedagogical Practice.

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre la práctica pedagógica de los docentes de Educación Infantil, respecto de sus actitudes y compromiso con el trabajo realizado dentro del espacio educativo de esta etapa de Educación Básica, buscando comprender las percepciones de los docentes de las escuelas públicas municipales de Paragominas/PA, y

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relacionando la teoría con su práctica. Es una investigación cualitativa, realizada en 4 (cuatro) escuelas de Educación Infantil. Para esta investigación se realizó una encuesta bibliográfica, análisis documental e investigación de campo (entrevistas), que contribuyeron a comprender las percepciones, actitudes y aspectos subjetivos de los participantes de la investigación. Se realizó una investigación bibliográfica a partir de autores que discutieron el tema en cuestión, y una investigación documental a partir del análisis de documentos de la Secretaría de Educación Municipal. Como procedimiento metodológico se realizaron entrevistas a docentes de Educación Infantil para investigar la situación propuesta. El análisis del corpus reveló que la práctica pedagógica es una tarea compleja, considerando diversos factores que influyen en esta actividad, como la planificación escolar, la organización, la metodología, la evaluación, entre otros elementos que forman parte del proceso educativo. Los resultados mostraron que los docentes de Educación Infantil comprenden que la práctica pedagógica debe fundamentarse en conocimientos teórico-prácticos y fundamentados en el juego y en las experiencias de los niños, apoyados también en una comprensión "aparente" de los documentos de normalización relacionados con la Educación Infantil.

Palabras clave: Educación Infantil; Maestra de Educación Infantil; Práctica pedagógica.

Resumo

O artigo tem como objetivo refletir sobre a prática pedagógica de professores da Educação Infantil, em relação as suas atitudes e compromisso acerca do trabalho realizado no âmbito do espaço educativo desta etapa escolar da Educação Básica, buscando compreender as percepções das professoras da rede pública municipal de Paragominas/PA, relacionando a teoria com a sua prática. É uma pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa, tendo como *lócus* 4 (quatro) escolas de Educação Infantil. Para a realização dessa pesquisa foi feito levantamento bibliográfico, documental e pesquisa de campo (entrevistas), as quais contribuíram para conhecer as percepções, atitudes e aspectos subjetivos dos participantes da pesquisa. Realizamos pesquisa bibliográfica a partir de autores que discutem a temática em referência e documental partindo da análise dos documentos da Secretaria Municipal de Educação e como procedimento metodológico foram realizadas entrevistas com as professoras da Educação Infantil, com o intuito de investigar a situação proposta. A análise do *corpus* evidenciou a prática pedagógica como uma tarefa complexa, ao considerar os diversos fatores que perpassam essa atividade, quais sejam: organização do planejamento escolar, metodologia, avaliação dentre outros elementos que fazem parte do processo educacional. Os resultados evidenciaram que as professoras da Educação Infantil têm compreensão que a prática pedagógica precisa ser fundamentada em conhecimentos teórico-prático e pautada em brincadeiras e nas vivências das crianças, consubstanciada também por um "aparente" conhecimento acerca dos documentos de normatização acerca da Educação Infantil.

Palavras-chave: Educação Infantil; Professora de Educação Infantil; Prática Pedagógica.

Introduction

In recent times, pedagogical practice has garnered significant interest among researchers in the field of education, given the lack of understanding regarding the difference between educational practice and pedagogical practice, which are often used interchangeably.

Pedagogical practices are intentionally organized to meet specific educational expectations required by a given social community. Certeau (1994) wisely asserts that practices are never mere reflections of impositions - they react, respond, speak, and transgress. In this sense, they face an essential dilemma in their construction: their representativeness and value stem from social agreements, negotiations, and deliberations within a collective. They organize and develop through adherence, negotiation, or even imposition, and it is important to highlight that each professional involved possesses personal characteristics that influence the construction of their pedagogical actions.

Thus, practices are composed of singularities and constructed within a framework of experiential, professional, social, and political situations. However, they are executed within specific social institutions that are part of an educational system and are consequently regulated by norms. This context facilitates studies that enable access to and verification of the development of these practices within the educational sphere and the theoretical frameworks that support them.

According to Libâneo (1994), it is educational practices that truly determine the actions of schools and their social commitment to transformation. He further argues that pedagogy investigates these educational purposes within society and their integration into it.

Based on this premise, the main objective of this article is to elucidate the pedagogical practices developed by Early Childhood Education teachers within the public municipal schools of Paragominas/PA. This investigation is guided by the following question: How do the knowledge and attitudes of teachers in the educational environment contribute to the learning development of children in Early Childhood Education? We believe that the child's learning development is closely related to the organization of the teacher's pedagogical work, which should be guided by didactic principles, including the organization of the teacher's instructional time, planning, methodology, assessment, and other elements integral to the educational process.

To address the research question and achieve the stated objectives, a bibliographical and documentary study was conducted, along with interviews with teachers from four public municipal schools. This type of research constitutes a scientific investigation that aims, through planned study of primary sources, written productions on the same theme, and data collection, to provide answers to questions deemed important within a particular field of knowledge.

Bibliographical research effectively contributes to the expansion of knowledge, whether theoretical or practical, by systematizing insights that other researchers have analyzed, organized, and made accessible for use by other interested parties. The bibliographical research conducted drew upon studies by authors such as Freire (1979), Rousseau (1995), Ariès (1981), Sacristán (1999), Franco (2015), Charlot (2005), Oliveira (2010), Freitas (2004), with André (2005) and Yin (2005) contributing to the methodological framework of the study.

Theoretical framework - the context of early childhood education

In Brazil, the context of childhood has historically been marked by extreme poverty and abandonment, with adults' perspective towards children characterized by indifference and insensitivity. Thus, from ancient times to the present day, extensive discussions have revolved around the conception of childhood, clearly reflecting in the type of care provided to children in public institutions. Documents written by theorists of human history such as Plato (1996), Comenius (2006), Rousseau (1995), and Ariès (1981) illustrate how children have been treated and perceived throughout society since ancient times, based on different established conceptions of childhood experienced in different eras.

From this perspective, examining historical and social accounts enables the development of a holistic view of childhood, considering that children were long excluded from rights and lived on the margins without access to material and cultural goods.

Highlighting the National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (Brasil, 2010), which establish ethical, political, and aesthetic principles guiding pedagogical work with children in early childhood education, is also noteworthy. Educators should be familiar with these principles to better plan and justify their pedagogical practices.

The theoretical foundation of the National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education - DCNEI (Brasil, 2010) considers the child as a social, historical, and cultural subject—thus a rights holder who interacts with the world in daily practices, experiences, and constructs their personal and collective identity. This assertion is supported by the DCNEI's premise that the child:

Is a historical and rights-bearing subject who, through interactions, relationships, and daily practices, constructs their personal and collective identity, plays, imagines, fantasizes, desires, learns, observes, experiments, narrates, questions, and constructs meanings about nature and society, thereby producing culture.

Aligned with the guidelines, childhood is understood as a period where children play, imagine, fantasize, desire, learn, observe, experiment, narrate, question, and construct meanings about nature and society, thus producing culture and expressing opinions about the world.

According to the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education – LDBEN (Brasil, 1996), Early Childhood Education is recognized as the first stage of basic education, aiming to ensure the integral development of the child and complementing the actions of family and community. This stage is divided into daycare (0-3 years) and preschool (4-5 years), with play, care, and education as its foundational pillars. Play is the most significant form of expression for children, and education and care work together inseparably. As emphasized by the DCNEI (Brasil, 2010), "education and care must go hand in hand, democratically considering individual differences and, simultaneously, the complex nature of the child".

Therefore, it is essential to recognize that educating, caring, and playing in Early Childhood Education are inseparable and must be well-coordinated to promote

the child's development and assimilation of knowledge about themselves, others, and the world. Urgent transformations are needed in educational policies focused on Early Childhood Education, particularly in teacher training, to enhance pedagogical practices with a differentiated focus on children as rights holders and producers of culture in diverse times and spaces. Childhood is a historical construction that has faced (and continues to face) significant challenges in being recognized as such, necessitating pedagogical practices rooted in children's experiences—through play, games, and playful activities—that facilitate meaningful learning. This requires educators to adopt a committed and politically aware approach in their pedagogical practice.

Pedagogical practice of early childhood education teachers in Paragominas/PA

The classroom practice is related to the pedagogical activities developed by teachers within the school context, utilizing didactics to create necessary conditions for educational processes. In this regard, pedagogical practices are organized to meet expectations focused on children's learning.

Currently, various conceptions about pedagogical practice are employed in educational contexts. In this sense, the National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEIs) point to conceptions relevant to Early Childhood Education that facilitate mediation by teachers, ensuring significant experiences beyond the school environment. These include:

- ✓ Promoting self-knowledge and understanding of the world through expanded sensory, expressive, and bodily experiences that allow for broad movement, expression of individuality, and respect for children's rhythms and desires.
- ✓ Immersing children in different languages and progressively mastering various genres and forms of expression: gestural, verbal, visual, dramatic, and musical.
- ✓ Providing children with narrative experiences, appreciation, and

interaction with oral and written language, as well as exposure to different oral and written textual supports and genres.

- ✓ Recreating, in meaningful contexts for children, quantitative relationships, measurements, shapes, and spatial-temporal orientations.
- ✓ Building children's confidence and participation in individual and collective activities.
- ✓ Creating learning situations that promote children's autonomy in personal care, self-organization, health, and well-being.
- ✓ Encouraging ethical and aesthetic experiences with other children and cultural groups, broadening their frames of reference and identities through dialogue and knowledge of diversity.
- ✓ Stimulating children's curiosity, exploration, enchantment, questioning, inquiry, and understanding of the physical and social world, time, and nature.
- ✓ Fostering children's interaction with diverse forms of music, visual arts, graphic arts, cinema, photography, dance, theater, poetry, and literature.
- ✓ Promoting interaction, care, preservation, and knowledge of biodiversity and the sustainability of life on Earth, as well as the conservation of natural resources.

Teaching work is mediated by pedagogical practices that are continuously refined through interactions, the introduction of new knowledge, experiences, and other forms of expertise. This approach aims to start from the child's social context, promoting autonomy, creativity, and creativity. According to Brito (2006, p. 51), "[...] the teacher's thinking is constructed based on their individual experiences and exchanges with peers." Thus, pedagogical knowledge integrates into teaching practice, providing teachers with clarity and confidence to enhance not only teaching but also their professional development trajectories, ensuring the consolidation of the teaching and learning process.

An analysis of the pedagogical practices of early childhood education teachers

in the municipality of Paragominas, located northeast of the state of Pará, 310 km from the capital Belém, highlights the importance of theoretical foundations in developing conscious pedagogical practices. Violeta emphasizes this by stating, "[...] we need to study theorists; they provide the knowledge that we put into practice. It's necessary to study to learn more and bring that to the classroom to deliver a good lesson."

In this context, Violeta's thinking aligns with one of Freire's categories, commitment, as she emphasizes, "[...] commitment would be an empty word, an abstraction, if it did not involve the lucid and deep decision of those who undertake it. If it did not occur in the realm of the concrete" (Freire, 1983, p. 15). Thus, Violeta's statement reflects her commitment and respect in teaching, demonstrating her dedication to enhancing pedagogical practices in the school environment through a commitment to ongoing education.

Therefore, commitment is a Freirean category that resonates with Violeta's thoughts and actions, as Freire (1983) asserts that the ability to act and reflect is crucial for undertaking committed actions. "It is precisely this ability to act, to operate, to transform reality according to the purposes proposed by humans, which is associated with their ability to reflect, that makes them beings of praxis" (Freire, 1983, p. 17).

To better understand the importance of practice in the learning process, it is essential to differentiate between pedagogical, educational, and teaching practices. This differentiation clarifies their distinct roles, often confused and mislabeled.

Franco (2015) emphasizes that in the exercise of teaching practice, educators may or may not engage pedagogically. According to Franco, pedagogical practice only occurs when teachers engage in critical reflection on their practice and are aware of the intentions guiding their actions.

Therefore, developing pedagogical practices that are meaningful and intentional is crucial to achieving educational goals and objectives. Politicization is a

Freirean category present in teaching practices, enabling students to understand that education is a political action that can transform dreams, ideals, utopias, and objectives into achievable realities. Regarding politicization, Freire (1997, p.110) notes:

[...] education's politicization lies in its directive nature, its specifically human action of addressing dreams, ideals, utopias, and objectives" (Freire, 1997, p. 110).

According to Sacristán (1999, p. 74), pedagogical practice should be understood as "[...] all the consolidated cultural baggage about educational activity, which we properly call practice or culture about practice." This implies that teaching occurs within the school environment, where educators teach and learn how to be teachers through interactions and actions, acquiring professional knowledge through experiences gained in the teaching and learning process. This is what Sacristán (1999) defines as educational practice.

Orquídea¹ underscores the importance of pedagogical practice tailored to the child's needs, noting,

[...] our pedagogical practice needs to meet children's needs, because often, they encourage us to seek more and more. They stay isolated during activities, and we have to observe each child, how they develop and acquire knowledge in the classroom. (Orquídea 1)

This insight highlights how observation-based pedagogical practice allows educators to assess children comprehensively, valuing their learning from simple to complex knowledge acquisition. Through observation, teachers can reflect on their practice and develop or redefine their professional approach. Violeta¹ supports this perspective, stating, "[...] we need to study theorists; they provide the knowledge that we put into practice. It's necessary to study to learn more and bring that to the classroom to deliver a good lesson." This emphasizes the importance of validating pedagogical actions through theoretical knowledge, reflecting authors' insights into early childhood learning processes.

According to Charlot (2005), professional practice knowledge is often tacitly possessed by teachers, who demonstrate it through actions rather than words. Therefore, this knowledge only becomes evident in practice, as pedagogical relationships involve substantial knowledge and personal experience.

In conclusion, pedagogical practice can only be transformed through interaction, sharing, analysis, discussion, and reflection. It must be supported by investments in teacher training and other educational professionals to propose problem-based situations, drawing on their experience and confronting daily challenges with scholarly knowledge, thereby contributing to children's growth.

Regarding the integration of pedagogical practices based on children's experiences and realities, Violeta 8 emphasizes, "[...] we always have to involve children in activities based on their experiences, with games and play, young children learn more because it's part of their universe." This statement underscores the importance of play and games as effective strategies for children's learning, making learning enjoyable and engaging without exhaustion.

Participants in the study emphasize that integrating diverse practices into the classroom is essential for children's learning. They affirm that they use play, games, and other playful activities as strategies to develop pedagogical work with children, ensuring that they appropriate the knowledge proposed in Early Childhood Education, thereby guaranteeing their right to education, as outlined in the National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education.

Early childhood education in paragominas: continuing education

The National Policy for Teacher Training focused on Early Childhood Education (EI) significantly impacted the entire country, and Paragominas was no exception. However, this policy was implemented belatedly, as the LDBEN (Brazilian Guidelines

and Bases Law for Education) was approved in 1996, but it wasn't until 2008 that the municipality began the process of training EI professionals. Recognizing this as a necessary public policy essential to the development of pedagogical practices for EI teachers, coordinators, and managers only occurred after investing some time in Elementary Education and realizing that improving educational outcomes required investing in these professionals' training.

In Paragominas, the process of training Elementary Education professionals began much earlier than 2008 due to the establishment of the mining company Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD), later renamed Hydro Paragominas. In an effort to mitigate the social and environmental damages caused by the unregulated mining of bauxite, CVRD signed an exploitation contract with the municipal government, proposing investments including in education. This was a way to address societal concerns and mitigate the impacts of mining without having to provide extensive explanations, as the company was seen as "doing its part" by contributing socially.

Considering the historical trajectory of EI in Brazil, it's known that this stage was never a priority within basic education. In Paragominas, this became evident with the implementation of CVRD's mining project, where the focus was primarily on Elementary Education. Due to insufficient resources to cover all educational segments in the municipality, choices had to be made regarding which groups would participate in continuing education. Thus, SEMEC (Municipal Department of Education), based on agreements reached, decided to allocate resources exclusively to the training of Elementary Education teachers. This decision aimed to reduce high rates of student failure in the mandatory eight-grade education system at the time.

This approach underscored a lack of understanding regarding the need for qualification among EI professionals, who were marginalized in this process. It raises questions about how agreements between partnering institutions were made and whether there was genuine interest in addressing society's real needs. These questions are further explored throughout the study.

After years of implementing corrective measures and gaining a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning process, the Municipal Department of Education (SEMEC) in Paragominas decided to adjust its strategies. While continuing to invest in the training of Elementary Education teachers, SEMEC expanded this policy to include EI teachers, as well as other professional's integral to the process such as school managers and pedagogical coordinators in municipal public schools.

In Paragominas, historically and culturally, children aged 4, 5, and 6 years old were initially cared for in preschools coordinated by SEMEC (Municipal Department of Education), with financial and welfare support from the Municipal Department of Social Assistance (SEMAS), focusing primarily on caregiving. Around 2004, SEMEC began to comprehend the right to education for all children in the public school system, emphasizing the holistic development of the child and the inseparability of their affective, cognitive, linguistic, ethical, aesthetic, and sociocultural dimensions, as outlined in the DCNEI (National Guidelines for Early Childhood Education). This approach recognized children as social actors, where play and interactions are primary ways of relating to the world.

This understanding particularly evolved with the implementation of policies focusing on the training of Early Childhood Coordinators, aiming to enhance their qualifications and understanding of their role in overseeing, systematizing, and planning educational activities within the network. This led to the necessity of increased investments in the training of these professionals.

In 2008, the educational company Communicate Educative (CEDAC), which was already involved in continuous training for Elementary Education professionals, won a bidding process with the municipality and took over the training of Early Childhood Education professionals in Paragominas. Despite being based in São Paulo, CEDAC established operations in Paragominas to map out educational issues and understand the socio-political and cultural contexts in which children are immersed, aiming to develop a tailored training plan to meet their needs.

Training activities continued uninterrupted for about a year. However, in 2009, CVRD suspended funding, and it wasn't until 2011 that SEMEC resumed these

actions using its own resources, prioritizing content related to play, which had been widely discussed and identified as crucial for child development.

As Oliveira (2010, p.6) highlights:

[...] children need to engage with different languages and value play, childhood cultures. It is not about transmitting a ready-made culture to children, but offering conditions for them to appropriate certain learning experiences that promote the development of ways of acting, feeling, and thinking that are significant at a given historical moment.

Therefore, play is an indispensable learning right for child development. However, in Paragominas, this aspect was not initially prioritized in the pedagogical practices of teachers, which prompted attention during the process of continuous training, as the initial training did not adequately ensure this right.

In 2010, convinced that investing in the foundation of Early Childhood Education was the right path, SEMEC expanded its services to include children aged 2 to 3 years in the educational system, albeit slowly, starting initially in just one public school and gradually expanding in recent years. With this expansion, there arose a greater need to invest in the continuous education of professionals, as initial training for Early Childhood Education teachers often failed to adequately address the specific learning needs of young children. Freitas (2004, p. 98) emphasizes that "teachers in the early grades and early childhood education have undertaken a true marathon for their degrees in recent years, to meet such requirements, in courses that are rapid, accelerated, of questionable quality, and largely paid for by themselves." This highlights that many courses were created merely to comply with legislation that paid little attention to the education of professionals.

Therefore, in 2016, through pedagogical monitoring in Early Childhood Education schools, SEMEC recognized the deficiencies in the initial training of teachers in the public network, particularly those working with 3-year-old children. In response, they decided to promote continuous education for all professionals, supported by resources from the Brasil Carinhoso Program, aimed at municipalities to improve daycare and preschool services.

Thus, the training was systematized to address two main aspects: discussing and reflecting on the learning rights of children aged 3 to 5 years, focusing on fields of experience and different types of languages, as emphasized by the guiding documents of the educational policy for Early Childhood Education. This effort also aimed to develop the Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education in Paragominas, known as the Curricular Proposal.

The DCNEI (National Guidelines for Early Childhood Education) recommend that municipalities throughout the country construct their curricular proposals as a mechanism to ensure access to and appropriation of knowledge and learning in various languages relevant to children. In line with this recommendation, Paragominas developed its curriculum but chose to name it Curriculum Guidelines, understanding it as an evolving document open to reflections and changes whenever necessary, based on the understanding that the child is at the center of the educational process, and education is a historical process arising from human interactions with the environment.

According to Freire, education does not occur outside the context of society, which constitutes an essential condition for human existence. He adds, "There is no education outside human societies and there are no isolated men" (FREIRE, 1983a, p. 61). Through this perspective, he situates humans as fundamentally social beings, historically and temporally situated, who, in their ontological condition as beings, recognize themselves as subjects and develop through relationships established with the world.

Freire's reflections lead to the understanding that it is through society that we become human, highlighting that human existence results from social and cultural relations produced within the environment. It is the capacity of humans to transform society according to their needs.

In Paragominas, Early Childhood Education has taken new directions, being recognized as one of the rights of the child and becoming more prominent and explicit within the context of Public Educational Policies as the first stage of Basic Education, which is "a duty of the State and family, promoted and encouraged with

the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the individual, their preparation for citizenship, and their qualification for work," as expressed in Article 205 of the Federal Constitution of 1988.

Recognizing the child as a subject of rights, as a citizen, means acknowledging them with absolute priority, ensuring their rights to life, health, food, education, play, professional training, culture, dignity, respect, freedom, and family and community life. These rights are guaranteed to every citizen through the Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988), the Child and Adolescent Statute (Brasil, 1990), and subsequently the LDBEN (Brazilian Guidelines and Bases Law for Education) of 1996.

Thus, Early Childhood Education must place the child at the center of the educational process, respecting their development, how they learn, their experiences, individual rhythms, personal experiences, and collective interactions with other children and adults.

In accordance with the Federal Constitution of 1988, the child has the right to be educated and cared for in a nurturing environment that fosters the construction of their identity through interactions with their social environment. Therefore, the Early Childhood Education setting is a distinct social universe from the family, facilitating new interactions to expand knowledge about oneself, others, the environment, and the knowledge historically constructed by humanity.

Moreover, the school, as a rich environment for social interaction, should embrace each individual's particularities and promote recognition of diversities, accepting and respecting them to enable the comprehensive development of the child to live in society. Thus, a curriculum that embraces the diversity of knowledge and culture present in the school is fundamental to the individual's civic education.

According to the National Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI), municipalities face the challenge of granting autonomy to schools to create their curricula based on the needs and realities experienced in the school context. This approach ensures that Early Childhood Education in Paragominas aligns with constitutional principles and educational laws, fostering an inclusive and nurturing environment where every child can thrive.

Methodology

This study is based on a bibliographic and documentary analysis, centered on a qualitative approach, following André's reflections (2005, p.66), which contribute "to broad data collection and allow for the apprehension of the complex and multidimensional nature of phenomena in their natural manifestation". This type of investigation facilitates understanding phenomena under study from within, aiming to grasp their particularities.

The approach employed a case study method due to "[...] its capacity to deal with a wide variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations—beyond what may be available in conventional historical studies" (Yin, 2005, p. 26). Thus, the research involved interaction and immersion in the investigated reality, as well as dialogue with subjects from the 4 participating schools: teachers, administrators, and pedagogical coordinators, seeking a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

For the bibliographic research, Dissertations, Theses, and articles related to Continuous Education were used, considering the context of public policies, with a central focus on productions aimed at Early Childhood Education. Additionally, a review of theoretical references already analyzed and published through writings and electronic sources was conducted to gather more precise information and prior knowledge about the issue. An analysis of documents provided by the Municipal Department of Education of Paragominas/PA was also carried out, including the Early Childhood Education Curricular Proposal, portfolios containing various documents, among others. Furthermore, interviews conducted with teachers from 4 public preschools that were part of this study were analyzed, alongside theoretical contributions from authors discussing the issue under study, forming the basis of this research.

Discussions and results

The statements from participants in the 4 schools involved in the investigation regarding the pedagogical practices of Early Childhood Education teachers in Paragominas/PA, collected through interviews, reveal that the implementation of varied practices in the classroom context, including games, play, and playful activities, promotes significant learning for children in this stage of basic education. They also assert that these practices should be based on daily observation of the child, grounded in the knowledge of theorists who discuss the topic, in order to substantiate their classroom practice.

In this regard, the teachers' views align with current educational legislation, such as the LDB 9394/96 (Brazilian Guidelines and Bases Law for Education), and clearly resonate with the Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education. These guidelines emphasize that pedagogical activities developed with children in this educational stage should be based on two main axes: play and interactions, aiming at meaningful learning development while considering the social reality and experiences of Early Childhood Education children.

The study also demonstrated that the quality of pedagogical practice requires more investment in public policies, focusing on teacher training to support work within educational spaces and ensure the smooth progress of the educational process. On the other hand, it highlights teachers' concerns regarding the implementation of qualified practices to enhance the learning of children in Early Childhood Education schools in Paragominas/PA.

Final considerations

This study focused on the pedagogical practices of Early Childhood Education teachers in Paragominas/PA, aiming to reflect on their pedagogical practices, attitudes, and commitment within the educational space at this stage of schooling. The objective was to understand teachers' perceptions and relate theory to practice.

The analysis of teachers' statements regarding their work in Early Childhood Education showed that they are aware of the complexity of pedagogical work required with children at this stage of schooling. They demonstrated a clear concern for integrating activities based on play, games, and playful activities, aligning with the two main axes of the Curricular Guidelines that guide teachers' pedagogical work: interactions and play, aiming to achieve children's learning outcomes.

Participants in the research also emphasized that pedagogical practice should be grounded in theoretical knowledge, daily observation, and children's experiences to ensure meaningful educational processes that are relevant to their social reality.

In this perspective, it is understood that teachers' pedagogical practice is not neutral; it requires public policies and adequate investment in continuous professional development to effectively qualify the educational process, especially in Early Childhood Education, due to its unique characteristics that demand a distinct approach.

The study is relevant and contributes to expanding knowledge in the field, raising pertinent questions that impact teachers' pedagogical practices, such as ensuring planning for the development of meaningful pedagogical activities and providing appropriate continuous professional development tailored to this stage of schooling. These aspects are essential conditions for enhancing the quality of children's learning processes in Early Childhood Education.

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