

PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: TEACHING CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES

Grace Sherley Denny¹

Ivanise Nazaré Mendes²

SUMMARY

This article is the result of a section of the Master's Dissertation and aimed to analyze the ways in which the knowledge of playfulness of children in early childhood education is contextualized in teaching practices based on the reality of a municipal Early Childhood Education school. The justification is to seek to reexamine the pedagogical work, seeking to understand what educators do when seeking to develop a playful proposal with children in early childhood education. However, their practice is much more expressive and enjoyable for the school experience of these children, because an environment where playfulness, creativity, and spontaneity prevail will become much more conducive to learning. The methodological design was non-experimental, descriptive, cross-sectional, and mixed-approach. It was a non-experimental investigation, because there was no manipulation of variables or comparison groups. The researcher observes what occurs naturally without interfering in any way. It is a descriptive investigation, because it aims to describe the characteristics of a certain population or phenomenon or the establishment of relationships between variables. Still regarding the results, we emphasize that although there is a comparison regarding the teachers' time of service, this did not influence, as what was evidenced is that both work with the same purpose: Motivating students' learning processes, through playful tools.

Keywords: Playful. Child. Early Childhood Education. Learning. Child Development. Teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

This article is the result of a master's dissertation research that has as its theme Playfulness in Early Childhood Education: "Conceptions and Teaching Practices," carried out in a school of the Municipal Early Childhood Education network that brings the importance of conceiving the didactic and cognitive importance of playing, creating and imagining, making learning become a

1

¹Master in Educational Sciences from Universidad Del Sol – UNADES – PY, Specialist in School Supervision, Postgraduate in Higher Education Didactics, Psychopedagogue. gracedennyfonseca@gmail.com

²PhD in Environmental Sciences, Master in Educational Sciences from the Intercontinental University of Paraguay – UTIC, Specialist in School Management, Bachelor of Portuguese Language and Bachelor of Law. Ivanisemendes@hotmail.com

nice and happy construction.

Recreation, in its early days, was not related to education, but to parties and celebrations of worship of the gods. "Games symbolize the overcoming of obstacles faced by these groups (primitive tribes), passing from generation to generation to children in the form of games" (GUERRA, 1988 apud GARCIA; GIROTO, 2008).

Play is a way of living everyday life, that is, feeling pleasure and value what happens, perceiving it as an act of physical, spiritual or mental satisfaction. Playful activity promotes the development of skills, relationships and a sense of humor in people and predisposes the child's attention to motivate them to learn.

Playful activities brought into the classroom become a strategic tool that introduces children to the scope of meaningful learning in pleasant environments, in an attractive and natural way, developing skills. Therefore, happy children are generated, resulting in strengthened skills, affectionate children, willing to work in the classroom, curious, creative in environments that promote and expand their vocabulary and coexistence, captivating their family environment and with it the interest of parents in school events.

The work developed with children in childhood today challenges us to think about the teacher's commitment to focusing on children's interests, valuing the cultural background of each child, prioritizing pedagogical practices that are developed based on study and research work connected to a pleasurable childhood that appreciates the particularities of each one.

Playing is an activity that facilitates physical, cognitive and psychological development, stimulates intellectual development and enables learning. However, conceptualizing the term is not an easy task. Kishimoto emphasizes that it is very complex to define games, toys and play. The same behavior may be considered a game or not a game in different cultures, depending on the meaning attributed to it (KISHIMOTO 2003, p.15).

Lima (2013) points out that what is learned in certain phases of early childhood education can leave marks for the rest of one's life. Early childhood education is the time when children interact with the world and especially with themselves.

same.

According to studies by Souza (1996), early childhood education is configured as an important phase in the development of the individual, as it is at this stage that the foundations of the human being are being laid, stimulating and initiating the processes of formation and integration of various areas of their development.

Early childhood education requires new approaches to be truly effective, educating citizens and changing lives. Games and toys are very important in the early years, since children carry the instruments they use every day. Playful moments are an "imitation" of the reality already experienced by adults. "Through play, children can express their feelings about the social world and transform their reality, which is often tortuous due to the problems it brings" (ARRUDA; MOURA, 2007).

It is known that playing is an instinct that we are all born with - and for good reason. Just like eating and sleeping, playing is a survival instinct. In this sense, this study will seek to analyze the ways in which the knowledge of playfulness of children in early childhood education is contextualized in teaching pedagogical practices based on the reality of a municipal early childhood education school.

Since Froebel's introduction of kindergarten in 1836, play-based learning strategies have underpinned early childhood education structures around the world. Even today, play is valued conceptually and pedagogically.

2. HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

According to Oliveira (2005), historically the first early childhood education institutions were created in 1908 in Belo Horizonte, and in 1909 in Rio de Janeiro, but in the 1920s and 1930s new Early Childhood Education schools emerged, whose purpose was to care for young children so that their mothers could work, as until then education was the total responsibility of the family, revolving mainly around the maternal figure.

Brazilian early childhood education institutions with the expansion of elementary education took the form of daycare centers, with a focus on the care and feeding of poor children, marked by an initiative from the private sector that

Its objectives were to prevent crime, reduce infant mortality and reassure the elites through education for the subaltern (CRUZ, 1998).

Early Childhood Education has undergone significant changes since the enactment of the current Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education, Law No. 9394/96. Its inclusion in the basic education panorama represents an important advance in public responsibilities regarding this stage of education, since Law No. 5.692/71 was silent regarding the schooling of children aged 0 to 6 years (BRASIL, 1996).

Early Childhood Education is defined in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) as part of basic education, but not of compulsory education. The law also defines, in its transitional provisions, the transition of daycare centers to the educational system. The Ministry of Education (MEC) determined that, as of January 1999, all daycare centers in the country should be accredited in the educational systems (BRASIL, 1998).

As the first stage of basic education, Early Childhood Education aims to fully develop children up to six years of age, in their physical, psychological, intellectual and social aspects, complementing the actions of the family and community.

Article 205 of the Federal Constitution determines that education is a right of all and a duty of the State and the family. In article 208, section IV of the Federal Constitution, it is highlighted that early childhood education is a right of children and families, and that the government has the duty to guarantee care in daycare centers and preschools, when the family chooses to share with the State the duty of educating their children (ARAÚJO, 2010).

In 1988, Early Childhood Education began to be formally recognized in the Constitution, when it determined in its article 208, section IV that “the State's duty towards education will be fulfilled by guaranteeing [...] care in Daycare and Preschool for children aged 0 to 6 years old” (BRASIL, 2004, p.122).

2.1 OVERVIEW OF GAMES IN EDUCATION

Many different types of educational games are being applied and used in educational institutions, schools and homes. The use of games in education is

It mainly focuses on improving critical thinking skills when teaching a particular subject, allowing students to think outside the box while following the rules.

There are other games that can be used that are limited to improving knowledge in a given subject and the most popular are math games (YUE, & ZIN, 2009) argued that games such as chess cannot be seen as educational games because they improve logic, skill, reasoning and other characteristics valued in education, but they are not considered educational because they do not provide content or relay curriculum material. Games that incorporate curriculum content or other educational material are called educational games.

2.2 PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Games and toys are present in all stages of human life, making their experience essential. Play is essential for relationships between people. It is known that games and/or play are recognized as a means of providing children with a pleasant, motivating, planned and enriched environment, enabling them to learn various skills and improve their performance.

According to Luckesi (2005), playfulness is an important tool for the development of students. It is through play that children relate to the environment in which they live and to others, which allows them to give meaning to everything around them. According to this author, the main characteristic of playfulness is the fullness of the experience, that is, the playful experience of an activity requires total dedication from the human being.

According to Modesto and Rubio (2014), it can be said that learning occurs naturally through playful activities, a means that motivates and stimulates creativity in a process of learning and acquiring knowledge through pleasure.

Games have recently been gaining ground in our schools in an attempt to bring playfulness into the classroom. The intention of most teachers with their use is to make classes more enjoyable in order to

to make learning something fascinating. Furthermore, playful activities can be considered as a strategy that stimulates reasoning, leading the student to face conflicting situations related to their daily lives.

The meaning of playful, according to Kishimoto (2002, p.111), is “[...] playing is prior to playing, a social conduct that presupposes rules. Playing is a freer and more individual form, [...] The term playful encompasses both: individual and free activity and collective and regulated activity”. In the context of playing, there are several possibilities besides games, circle activities, singing, make-believe and many other forms of "fun".

This playing, having fun alone or with other children and/or adults, provokes discoveries, makes the child invent and obey rules, understand their space, get used to living between moments of joy, of achievements and others of learning to lose, lend and teach a new participant.

The recognition of education in daycare centers and preschools as a right of the child and a duty of the state to be fulfilled in the education systems from the 1988 Constitution and, later, with the inclusion of the new Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education - LDB, approved in 1996 (Law 9394/96), which advocates, in art. 29, the integral development of the child up to six years of age, in their physical, psychological, intellectual and social aspects, makes early childhood education in Brazil begin to conquer its space and give visibility to play in the school routine: “Giving visibility to playfulness in school is to perceive the child as a being that has its own language of expression, it is to allow him/her to experience a deeper involvement with what is being proposed” (BONFIM, 2010, p. 21).

In other words, in the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution, the term playful does not appear clearly when referring to children's rights, however it is up to interpretation, when in Art. 227 it lists fundamental rights as “the right to dignity, education, health, leisure, food, professionalization, culture, respect, life, freedom and family and community life” (BRAZIL, 1988).

The Statute of Children and Adolescents (ECA) in its Art. 16 establishes that the right to freedom of children and adolescents includes the following aspects: playing, practicing sports and having fun.

2.3 PLAYFUL ACTIVITIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early childhood education is a phase of great learning for children. During this stage, fundamental skills are developed that will be taken into adulthood. Through playful activities, children learn while playing, which provides better understanding and performance. The development of motor skills in early childhood education starts with a series of movements performed through educational and playful practices carried out in classes. Through playful activities, without the exact determination of exercises, children develop fundamental motor skills for their development (JIMÉNEZ, 2002).

Thus, playing should be taken into consideration mainly in school spaces, as it is rich in environments that facilitate experiences that through games, it is necessary to explain the most positive experiences and the realities that children know, the arguments of their activities will be much broader and more varied; in relation to play, it is a dimension of human development that promotes psychosocial development; the acquisition of knowledge, the formation of personality, that is, it encompasses a range of activities in which pleasure, creative activity and knowledge intersect to have more clarity before play (JIMÉNEZ, 2002).

Jiménez (2002) comments on the importance of play and its proactive role in the classroom. Jiménez (2002, p.42) considers that:

Play is, first and foremost, a condition, a predisposition for being in the face of everyday life. It is a way of being in life and of relating to it in everyday spaces in which pleasure occurs, accompanied by the relaxation that symbolic and imaginary activities produce through play. The sense of humor, art and other series of activities that occur when we interact with others, with no other reward than the gratitude that these events produce.

This is where the teacher presents the playful proposal as a way of teaching the content, it is the child who plays, appropriating the school content through a learning process; This learning is not simply spontaneous, it is the product of systematic and intentional teaching, and is called school learning.

The playful process or activity promotes self-confidence, autonomy and personality formation in childhood, becoming one of the main recreational and educational activities. Playing is an activity used for fun and pleasure of the participants, in many occasions even as an educational tool.

All stages of human life require a playful context, which has a wide range of values, depending on age. For children and adolescents, the purpose of games and play is intended for teachers, as a way of providing satisfaction for studying and learning (MAURICIO, 2008).

According to Schreiber (2010), playfulness contributes to learning because the child faces his/her internal conflicts and fully develops the emotional and cognitive aspects. Playing gives the child the opportunity to make mistakes and do things right, learn for himself/herself and build his/her own knowledge base.

All stages of human life require a playful context, which has a wide range of values, depending on age. For children and adolescents, the purpose of games and play is intended for teachers, as a way of providing satisfaction for studying and learning (MAURICIO, 2008).

According to Schreiber (2010), playfulness contributes to learning because the child faces his/her internal conflicts and fully develops the emotional and cognitive aspects. Playing gives the child the opportunity to make mistakes and do things right, learn for himself/herself and build his/her own knowledge base.

According to Campos (2006) in teaching and learning, games and playing help in psychomotor development, in the development of fine and gross motor skills, as well as in the development of thinking skills, such as imagination, interpretation, decision-making, creativity, opportunity to create, obtain and organize data and the application of facts and principles to new situations that, when we play, when we obey the rules, when we experience conflict of competence.

According to Freire (1989), the skills developed in a game context, toys, in the universe of children's culture, according to the knowledge that the child already has

has are important and should be incorporated into school practices, games such as hopscotch, catcher, nursery rhymes, hide-and-seek, circus games, have played an important role in children's development throughout history.

3 THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAYING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

An early childhood education environment should be a place where children discover a love of learning through a variety of playful experiences. Current research shows how play has changed and even been eliminated in many early childhood settings. The benefits of play are crucial to enabling a child to develop appropriately.

Children's early years should be about fostering and developing their curiosity through a wide variety of playful experiences. Understanding why play is important in early childhood development allows an individual to understand the true meaning of play. The history of play has changed and diminished over the decades. This decrease in free play has caused children to struggle academically.

Through everyday play, children are able to gain valuable life experiences through a variety of roles that will support growth and ultimately translate into the skills needed for adulthood.

According to research, play is an essential aspect of development; key skills, including social, behavioral, language, and cognitive, are all experienced through play opportunities. These skills are further developed through play as young learners grow into adults.

Families, educators, and administrators need to become advocates for the importance of play for early learners.

3.1 THE ROLE OF SCHOOL, TEACHER AND FAMILY IN THE ART OF TEACHING THROUGH RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The family, as one of the main references in the role of education, has been suffering the consequences of this globalization, losing important values, among them, moments that involve play due to parents' lack of time and knowledge of the benefits that play brings to the child's development.

According to Kishimoto (2006), through play, children develop important and fundamental skills for the development of autonomy and identity, in addition to maturing some abilities, such as memorization, imagination, attention and socialization. Thus, the family has an important role in play, promoting the practice of recreational and leisure activities that provide movement for children during play; ultimately, favoring elements that serve as an incentive for this practice.

The teacher, as the main person responsible for organizing learning situations, must create possibilities for imbalances, which show the student the new and the unknown, because when faced with a challenge, the child tends to assimilate knowledge, using mental and motor resources.

Therefore, according to RCNEI (1998, p. 29), the educator does not need to teach the child to play, as it is an act that occurs spontaneously, but rather to plan and organize situations so that games are presented in various ways, allowing children to choose the themes, objects and companions with which they want to play. And the teacher must make use of new methodologies, which seek to include the practice of games, because the objective is to train active, reflective, practical, critical, dynamic learning capable of facing challenges.

The school must create spaces and environments that promote play, allowing for the ongoing training of professionals who work directly with children, including physical education professionals. It is also the school's turn to offer toys and elements that enrich moments of joy within the school space, allowing for rich contextualized learning.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

After the studies, it was possible to realize that toys, games and recreational organizations are important for the development of children, in addition to the relaxation of rules, space, time, increased movement and skills, and recreational activities. They also promote broad participation and coexistence among children, promoting the integral development of the human being, development of physical, cognitive, affective and social elements, essential for the development and learning of children through toys, games and children's games that share joys, sadness, enthusiasm, passivity and aggression. Therefore, playful and recreational practices should be part of the school's pedagogical proposal. After all, education is preparing for life!

Although educators are aware of the importance of play resources for children's overall development, some of them have difficulty working with these tools. This is understandable, since stimulating students through games and play must be carefully planned. The teacher's role in relation to play is not just to give children objects and toys for the sole purpose of entertaining them and passing the time.

One conclusion that can be drawn is that all teachers consider that the practice of playing is very important for the integral development of the child, as well as an indispensable ally for the construction of new knowledge in everyday life, being seen as a pedagogical practice. The results show that transporting games, play and toys in the playful and educational aspects to preschool education means favoring learning, personal, social and cultural development in order to promote interaction, expression, communication and the construction of knowledge in the child.

Educators consider the act of playing as a promoter of the child's learning development in different areas of knowledge, an idea defended by Kishimoto (2002) when he states that play is the action that the child performs when immersing himself in the magical world of play, contributing to the construction of children's knowledge. From this perspective, the playful activity that is playing is very positive for the child's integral development, since it leads the child to become

If you are more flexible and seek alternatives for action, this process brings positive effects to the following aspects: physical, moral and social.

It was found that studying and investigating this topic is important to show that playful activities are methodological alternatives that contribute to students' learning, because as highlighted in the theoretical discussion and in the results, through play, children invent, learn and discover easily without losing their culture. Still regarding the results, we emphasize that although there is a comparison regarding the teachers' time of service, this did not influence, because what was evidenced is that both work with the same purpose: to motivate students' learning processes, through playful tools.

With this research, we found that currently, legal documents defend Early Childhood Education as a right for all children, emphasizing that educational actions must provide playful situations in everyday life, according to the National Curricular Reference for Early Childhood Education.

We can say that playing is a necessary practice in the childhood phase of every child's life, because it is fundamental for human development in this period, as this activity, contrary to the conception of some adults, is highly serious and of profound significance for the child, since they are beings who think and feel the world in their own way.

It is necessary to invest significantly in studies and discussions about the importance of play in Early Childhood Education, because if this practice is removed we will have a preschool where children will lose great opportunities to develop more fully, because through play they can create, imagine, run, move, listen to stories and build new knowledge. Managers and educators need to be prepared to make playful situations viable in the daily routine of preschool.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

ALMEIDA, Paulo Nunes de. Playful Education - **Educational Techniques and Games**. 6th Ed. _ Rio de Janeiro: Loyola, 2003.

ARAÚJO, VC **Reflections on children's play**.s/d. 2010.

ARAÚJO, Gabriela Barros Magalhães entitled "**FAMILY AND SCHOOL- A NECESSARY PARTNERSHIP IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**", presented as a partial requirement for obtaining the degree of Specialist in Early Childhood Education from the Catholic University of Brasília, on 12/9/2010

BROWN, Patricia. **The six-year-old child in elementary school: unidunitê...corporeality and playfulness — more than a rhyme, a reason**. 2010. 153 p. Dissertation (Master's in Education). Postgraduate Program in Socio-Educational Processes and School Practices. Department of Sciences.

BRAZIL, Ministry of Education and Sports, Secretariat of Elementary Education. **National curriculum parameters**. Brasilia: MEC/SEF, 1998

BRAZIL. Ministry of Education. Secretariat of Basic Education. **National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age**. Organization of Pedagogical Work. Notebook 01. Brasília: MEC/SEB, 2014.

BRAZIL. Ministry of Education. Secretariat of Basic Education. **National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education**. Brasilia: MEC/SEB, 2010.

CAMPOS, MM; FÜLLGRAF, J; WIGGER, V. **The quality of Brazilian Early Childhood Education: some research results**. Research Notebooks, v. 36, n.127. P. 87- 128, 2006.

CROSS, Silvia Helena Vieira. **Childhood and early childhood education: rescuing a bit of this history**. Fortaleza, 1998. Mimeographed.

ELKIND, D. (2003). **Thanks for the memory: The lasting value of true play**. YC Young

FREIRE, Paul. **The importance of the act of reading: in three complementary articles**. 23rd ed. São Paulo. Associated authors: Cortez, 1989.

JIMENEZ, B. (2002) **Playful and recreational**. Colombia: Magisterio.

KISHIMOTO, T. M. (Org.) **Game, toy, play and education**. 7th ed. Paul. Cortez, 2003.

KISHIMOTO, Tizuko Morchida. **Playing and its theories**. Sao Paulo: Pioneer, 2002..

KISHIMOTO, TM (1999) **Play and early childhood education**. In: .(Org.). Games, toys, play and education. São Paulo: Cortez, p.13-43

KISHIMOTO, Tizuko M. **Game, game, game and education**. Sao Paulo: 122

LARA, Cristina Machado. **Playing with Mathematics in Early Childhood Education and the Initial Series.** –1st Ed.–Catanduva,SP: Rêspel Publishing; São Paulo: Faith Press Religious Association, 2011, p. 15-34

LIMA, Bruna Alessandra Silva. **Playing in Early Childhood Education: Play as an educational strategy.** 2013. 76 p. Monograph (Specialization) – Pedagogy Course, Faculty of Education, University of Brasília, Brasília, 2013.

LUCKESI, Cyprian Carlos. **Playfulness and playful activities - an approach based on internal experience.** Nov. 2005.

MALUF, Angela Cristina Munhoz. **Playful activities for Early Childhood Education: concepts, guidelines, practices.** - Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2008.

MAURICE, Juliana Tavares. **Learning through play: playfulness in learning.** Psychopedagogy, 2008.

MODESTO, Monica Cristina;. **The importance of playfulness in the construction of knowledge.** Electronic magazine of knowledge teaching, 2014.

OLIVEIRA, Zilma Moraes R. **Nurseries: children, make-believe & co.** Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 1992.

OLIVEIRA, ZR of . **Early childhood education: fundamentals and methods.** 2nd ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2005. (Teaching in Training Collection) Integrating educational technology into teaching (6th ed.).

RUFINO, Theresa Clementino da Silva. **Playfulness in the classroom: in the initial grades of elementary school.** 39f. Monograph. State University of Paraíba, Center for Humanities. Guarabira, 2014. 125

SOUZA, Edison Roberto. **Play as a possibility for inclusion in Elementary Education.** Motrivivência Magazine. v.8, n. 9, 1996.

YVOSTSKY, L.S. **Learning, Development and Language.** 2nd ed. New York: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

YVOSTSKY, L.S. **The Social Formation of the Mind.** 6th ed. Sao Paulo, SP. Martins Fontes Publisher LTDA, 1998.

YVOSTKY, Lev S. **Selected Works III: problems of developing the psyche.** 2nd ed. Madrid: Visor Dis, 2000.

YUE, W. S. AND ZIN, N. A. M. (2009). **Usability Evaluation for Educational Games of History.** Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Science, Information Technology, Culture and Human Interaction-ICIS '09, 1009-1025. 2009.