



The importance of playfulness in early childhood education: contributions to the teaching and learning

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SUMMARY

This research addresses the theme “The importance of playfulness in early childhood education: contributions to teaching and learning”, emphasizing that games play a fundamental role in children’s lives. The general objective of this research is to reflect on how playfulness, as a pedagogical tool, can contribute to the teaching and learning process in early childhood education. In methodological terms, a literature review was carried out, using books, magazines and specialized websites to obtain the necessary theoretical basis. It was concluded that playfulness acts on the learning and development of children during early childhood education, and it is essential that the school and the educator understand the student in their entirety, considering both their affective and cognitive dimensions.

Keywords: Playfulness. Early Childhood Education. Teaching and learning.

ABSTRACT

The present research addresses the theme "The importance of playfulness in early childhood education: contributions to teaching and learning", emphasizing that play plays a fundamental



role in children's lives. The general objective of this research is to reflect on how playfulness, as a pedagogical tool, can contribute to the teaching and learning process in early childhood education. In methodological terms, a literature review was carried out, using books, magazines and specialized websites to obtain the necessary theoretical basis. It was concluded that play acts on the learning and development of the child during early childhood education, and it is essential that the school and the educator understand the student in his totality, considering both his affective and cognitive dimensions.

Keywords: *Playfulness. Early Childhood Education. Teaching and learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This research addresses the theme “The importance of playfulness in early childhood education: contributions to teaching and learning”, emphasizing that games play an important role a fundamental role in children's lives. Through the act of playing, children develop creative skills, acquire ease in interpersonal relationships and build themselves as individuals in an integrated manner.

By providing stimulating tasks and activities, the teacher encourages greater students' willingness and interest in learning. Therefore, the choice of activities that involve students is essential, thus motivating the realization of this study. In this way, the The research problem formulated is: What is the importance of playfulness in early childhood education and What are your contributions to teaching and learning?

The general objective of this research is to reflect on how playfulness, as a tool pedagogical, can contribute to the teaching and learning process in early childhood education. To achieve this purpose, the following specific objectives were established: to describe the concept and history of play; reflect on the role of the teacher in relation to playfulness in educational process; and identify playful methodologies that can benefit learning of the students.

From the point of view of theoretical foundations, the relevance of carrying out this study stands out. research, as it provides reflections on the application of play in the context of teaching and children's learning. For the academic community, this study is important because present theoretical information about playfulness and its contribution to improving educational processes, elucidating the role of the teacher in this scenario and demonstrating how Playfulness can be an ally in the development of children in the classroom.

For society, research offers an opportunity to reflect on the use of games, play and toys in the educational environment, with a view to promoting comprehensive development of students. In methodological terms, a review of



literature, using books, magazines and specialized websites to obtain the theoretical basis necessary.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCE

2.1 Conceptualizing Early Childhood Education

Preschool education, which represents the first stage of basic education, plays an important role in complementing the family educational process and promote the integral development of the child, preparing him/her for his/her integration into society as a free and autonomous individual. The family exerts a decisive influence on this context, providing guidance, emotional support and contributing to social adaptation and cultural of the child.

Early childhood education offers rich experiences that foster the development of children, taking into account their intellectual capacities and their social interactions. Historically, the value placed on education for children in this age group has been shaped by economic and political transformations that impacted the social structure. In Brazil, education for children aged 0 to 6 years began in the 18th century, with a welfare focus, which evolved into a pedagogical model centered on integral development and acquisition of new knowledge (Silva, 2021).

In Brazil, preschool education serves children under 7 years old, a critical period in which they are in the process of forming their identity and constructing their social self. In this stage, play takes on a central role, allowing children to explore the world around them and develop physical, intellectual, social and emotional skills (Santos; Ferreira, 2024).

The pedagogical work in preschool aims to provide an environment stimulating, where children can learn to live and relate to others, cultivating attitudes of acceptance, respect and trust. The work axes include construction of identity and autonomy, as well as the exploration of knowledge about the world, encompassing areas such as movement, visual arts, music, oral and written language, nature and society, and mathematics (Cunha, 2021).

In the axis related to the Construction of Identity and Autonomy, we seek to promote the children's self-knowledge, the development of their self-image and the ability to use personal resources. In turn, in the Movement axis, psychomotricity is addressed



in a playful way, promoting the development of gross and fine motor coordination by through games and play (Caputo, 2023).

In Early Childhood Education, children have the opportunity to explore rhythms, gestures and games motors through activities such as dances and songs, promoting the development of musical memory and the ability of creative expression. This integrated and dynamic approach is fundamental for the formation of prepared individuals who are aware of their role in society.

2.2 The learning process

Learning is a fundamental process for life, and it is through it that individual develops behaviors essential to his/her existence. At different levels — whether at a community, social or individual level — the impacts of learning are notable. Each generation takes advantage of the experiences accumulated by previous generations, contributing to the continuous growth of knowledge and skills over time (Silva, 2021).

According to Vygotsky (1997), development and learning are intertwined from the moment a child is born. Early in life, a child learns through interaction with their physical and social environment, which involves observing, experimenting, imitating and receive guidance from individuals more experienced in their culture. These interactions provide a variety of experiences that shape your understanding of the world.

Vygotsky understood cognitive development as a phenomenon guided by social interaction, highlighting the relevance of social relationships and structures in development of mental functions. For him, learning can occur in different ways, including play, games, formal instruction and collaboration among learners of varying levels of experience. The core of this process is mediation, which establishes connections between structures social and personal through instruments or signs.

The social context exerts a significant influence on the learning process. Children from subcultures may face challenges when confronted with norms, languages and lifestyles that differ from their own, which can generate conflicts and ambivalences (Santos; Ferreira, 2024). Thus, it is essential that educators are prepared to deal with this diversity, avoiding discrimination and valuing positive contributions from each student.

The family contributes to the child's emotional and ethical development, influencing the formation of their personality (Cunha, 2021). Children who grow up in unstable homes, who



do not provide a safe and welcoming environment, they may face additional difficulties in your learning journey.

The high repetition rate is a central issue to be addressed by the system Brazilian educational system. This repetition often manifests itself through failures "white", in which students are promoted from one grade to another without acquiring the necessary knowledge. Such practice hides the reality of school failure and makes it difficult to implementation of effective policies to solve the problem (Gil, 2021).

Another relevant aspect refers to the educators' perception of the causes of school failure. Often, responsibility is placed on the student and his/her environment family, disregarding other structural factors that also impact the process educational (Silva, 2021).

In this scenario, the solid training of teachers, especially those who work in early childhood education, it is essential to provide children with opportunities for interaction with language and construction of knowledge about reading and writing. This training must be based on consistent theoretical foundations, enabling educators to promote practices effective pedagogical practices in the classroom (Oliveira, 2018).

2.3 Historical contextualization on playfulness

Playfulness is an essential characteristic of human nature, as it is through play that individuals become able to live in society. Playfulness plays a role important in the intellectual, emotional and physical development of children (Souza, 2022). The Early childhood education is considered a means of preparing children for the future, and this involves construction of fundamental moral values, such as discipline, autonomy and interest.

Understanding the child only by his "childish" nature, isolating him from social relationships and historical contexts that surround it, is a limited approach. Childhood is defined by a type specific relationship with the world, governed more by the laws of desire than by the norms of reality (Denny; Mendes, 2024).

Historically, playing has been an intrinsic necessity in early childhood education since its inception. origins, and daycare centers and preschools were designed with spaces that encourage this practice. The play is considered a vital component of the curriculum in the early years, acting as a learning and development tool.

A learning environment that encourages play offers countless opportunities so that children acquire knowledge and understand the world around them. Through



of the game, they can relive experiences through movement, express emotions through dramatization and establish connections with the environment (Vales, 2023).

It is through play that the educator can plan activities that are fun and that teach ethical and moral values, forming citizens aware of their duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, these approaches provide more meaningful interactions between teachers and students, transforming the school environment into a creative, dynamic space far from routine habitual.

Through playfulness, it is possible to rescue ways and customs of different civilizations, offering the child infinite possibilities. Playing reveals the contradictions between the visions adults and children about toys, allows contact with challenges and satisfies curiosity, in addition to representing social practices and releasing the riches of children's imagination. This dynamic helps children overcome barriers, using creation, imagination and fantasy to promote their affective and cognitive development (Souza, 2022).

Thus, by proposing fun classes, educators stimulate the student's creativity, prioritizing their integral development rather than mere productivity. In this context, the student becomes the protagonist of the pedagogical process, awakening the desire to learn, desire to participate and joy in achievements.

A playful method that stands out is the use of digital technologies, such as information technology and the internet, which reconfigure the function of the computer as a tool educational and question the traditional role of the school and the teacher. Playfulness can serve as a bridge that facilitates learning when educators reflect on their methodologies and incorporate playful practices as motivators in their classes. In this way, Teachers who use playful strategies involve students in essential aspects of content, promoting enjoyable learning.

It is understood that playfulness is important in all stages of life; it does not matter if the student is small, teenager or adult. Games help students respect rules, understand predictability and integrate better into the school environment, promoting interactions more effective among colleagues, teachers and other participants (Denny; Mendes, 2024).

Playful activities mobilize mental schemes and activate neurological and psychological, stimulating critical thinking and cognitive understanding. When students engage in playful activities, understanding the content becomes more effective, as they experience a practical approach to theory. The educator can then present content in a diversified manner, where theory addresses more superficial issues, while practice enables a contextualized understanding (Souza, 2022).



Therefore, playfulness is fundamental to learning. By uniting theory and practice through play, educators offer unique experiences that contribute to a comprehensive and meaningful development of children.

2.4 The Importance of Play in the Educational Process

Playing and fantasizing are essential elements in a child's life. The author highlights that during play, the child develops new skills, exercises imagination, sociability and creativity, influencing their psychic, emotional development, cognitive and social.

Play is a voluntary activity, carried out within the limits of time and space, governed by consensual and mandatory rules, with an intrinsic purpose. This concept highlights the importance of games in defining limits for the child, since they participate without pressure, following the rules established by the games. In the psychoanalytic context, the act of playing reflects the construction of the human subject. The child establishes his/her relationship with objects through the maternal figure, which plays a fundamental role in the child's entry into social world (Vales, 2023).

From the maternal desires expressed in the look and in the games, the child psychically. Play is universal and essential for a child's growth and health. It is a form of communication with oneself and with others, creating a space potential between the self and the non-self, between the inner and the outer world. This space develops as the game evolves (Souza, 2022).

Each culture has its own games, with particular structures that shape the moral development of the child in relation to society. Through play, the child both distances himself from and approaches reality, becoming the author of his own world and expressing their feelings spontaneously.

From the first months of life, babies show great curiosity about environment around them, and play plays a key role in exploration of this environment and in learning (Cunha, 2021).

During the first year of life, the baby goes through rapid and constant changes, exploring their own body and the objects around them. The oral stage, where the child explores the environment with the mouth, is important in this discovery process (Santos; Ferreira, 2024).

From four to six months, the child improves his/her social interaction, demonstrating greater vocalization and facial and body expressions (Caputo, 2023). During this period, she develops



motor skills, such as lifting the head, sitting with support and holding the lower limbs when standing. It is common at this stage for the baby to cling to some object, such as sheets or cloths (Abreu et al., 2023).

In the first months of life, the baby shows progress in its interaction with the environment and people. At four months, he is already able to look at those who observe him, follow with your eyes and respond with babble during games (Cunha, 2021). Among in the fifth and sixth months, the baby begins to develop more complex motor skills, such as rolling over, sitting with support and putting his feet in his mouth. He demonstrates greater autonomy when seeking a voice when hearing it and may present the first teeth (Oliveira, 2018). In the seven to nine months, the child begins to show strangeness towards unknown people. He acquires greater control over his body, being able to sit without support and stand with assistance.

The first year of life is fundamental for the physical and psychological development of the child. child, during which he learns and acquires new skills by exploring the environment and interacting with objects and people (Silva, 2021). Between two and three years old, the child goes through a phase of intense cognitive and emotional development. During this period, it is common for her to show high energy and difficulty staying focused on one activity. The mother or caregiver should balance the encouragement of autonomy with the establishment of appropriate limits (Oliveira, 2018).

At this stage, the child demonstrates hyperactive behavior and imitates routine activities. family, such as answering the phone or taking care of dolls. She often responds with a "no" and begins the development of fantasy and make-believe, playing roles of adults or movie characters. Children also transform objects into toys and become interested in organizing and exploring sounds, and musical and colorful toys are suitable for stimulate this phase (Santos; Ferreira, 2024).

According to Piaget (2010), the period between birth and two years of age is the sensorimotor stage. motor, marked by the child's direct interaction with the environment. During this stage, the child experiences the world through the senses, and their experiences are experienced in a immediate. Visual search is essential for cognitive development, as the vision develops, understanding of the world around us also evolves.

The sensorimotor period is characterized by practical activity and learning based on immediate sensory experiences. Piaget (2010) notes that, at this stage, the child learns through the senses and is influenced by the immediate environment. He also begins to demonstrate representative thinking, setting the stage for the next stage of development.



During the pre-operative period, symbolic play prevails, allowing the child to explore and organize the world around you. Drawings become more meaningful, and language becomes more egocentric, centered on the child himself. He still cannot distinguish your point of view from the point of view of others, which can lead to some confusion between the personal and the social, the subjective and the objective (Santos; Ferreira, 2024).

Thus, the period between two and three years is marked by intense development. cognitive and emotional, in which the child begins to explore the world in a more imaginative way and symbolic, preparing for the next stages of development. During the pre-school, playing plays a fundamental role in cognitive development, emotional, social and moral development of the child. Through the act of playing, the child explores the world around them, assigning meanings to their immediate reality and building their knowledge of playful way (Oliveira, 2018).

The key concepts that shape the child's thinking at this stage are animism, realism, finalism and artificialism. Animism is the attribution of human characteristics to inanimate objects, while realism consists in the materialization of fantasies. Finalism reflects the egocentrism of the child, who interprets the world in relation to himself, and the artificialism involves the explanation of natural phenomena as if they were produced by human beings (Cunha, 2021).

2.5 Building Affective Relationships in the Classroom through Play

In the classroom dynamics, the interaction between teacher and student is fundamental, permeated by exchanges of experiences, emotional bonds and mutual construction of knowledge (Abreu et al., 2023). The teacher can observe his students during classes, understanding their needs, abilities and difficulties, which contributes to their integral development of each one (Cunha, 2021).

This relationship contributes to the formation of personality and the learning process. It is essential that it is based on mutual respect and trust, creating an environment cooperative and stimulating for academic and personal growth (Caputo, 2023).

According to Santos et al (2024), the teacher acts as a mediator in the trajectory of student development, being fundamental for the construction of their self. The links between Teacher and student strengthen and build each other in which the other becomes a complement and support.

During the learning process, it is important to recognize that the desire to learn of the student is an essential element for his/her development. The subject operates on the vertices



of desire and intelligence, and both must be considered in relation to learning as a whole (Fermim, 2024).

Play in education contributes to the development of autonomous subjects and critical. Through play, children establish concrete relationships that facilitate learning in Early Childhood Education, where traditional teaching can be complemented by more playful approaches.

Therefore, it is essential that pedagogical action is guided by the affective relationship between teacher and student, taking into account individual and behavioral differences each student. By promoting an environment of respect, understanding and autonomy, the teacher contributes to academic development and the integral formation of the student as a citizen (Caputo, 2023).

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the objectives of this study, a literature review was carried out, using specialized books, magazines and websites to obtain the necessary theoretical basis. The research bibliographical, as explained by Markoni and Lakatos (2006), consists of using material already developed, such as books and scientific articles. Its objective is to allow the researcher to familiarize yourself with all existing information on a given topic.

As a formal procedure that implies reflective thinking, research requires technical or scientific treatment. In the initial phase of an investigation, carrying out a bibliographic research is necessary to understand the topic to be analyzed, verify the existence of published works on the subject and choose the best research method.

The literature review marks the beginning of the development of the research plan, involving the examination of scientific literature to survey and analyze what has already been produced on a given topic. In this article, we conduct a literature review to seek information about playfulness in Early Childhood Education.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The articles selected for study addressed several aspects related to contribution of playfulness in teaching and learning in early childhood education. Abreu et al. (2023) investigated the baby's development, considering the implications of agency



everyday life and social representations in daycare. Caputo (2023) addressed the pedagogy of affection in the construction of teaching practice.

Silva (2021) discussed whether stimulation through educational and digital games can improve the cognitive development of students with learning difficulties, based on in the contributions of Piaget, Vygotsky and Wallon. Costa (2020) examined how literature Children can contribute to environmental awareness in early childhood education. Cunha (2021) investigated the role of play in the learning of children with educational needs special in inclusion in early childhood education.

Oliveira (2018) addressed the challenges faced by families and educators during the process of adaptation of children in early childhood education. Santos et al. (2024) analyzed the contributions to teacher training in the field of education and Human Rights. Saints and Ferreira (2024) discussed the importance of playing in early childhood education, considering the impacts of technology. These articles are considered to meet the proposed objectives for this study, providing a range of relevant contributions to the understanding of playfulness in early childhood education. The following table presents data from the selected articles for this study.

Table 1: Selected articles

Author(s)	Title	Type of Document	Institution	Again
ABREU, Barbara Cecilia Marques et al.	Baby development: implications of everyday agency and social representations in daycare	Dissertation	Pontifical University Catholic of Rio Great South	2023
CAPUTO, Mariana Lopes	Pedagogy of affection: the affective dimension in the construction of teaching practice	Work of Conclusion of Course (Degree in Pedagogy)	Faculty of Education, Federal University from Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro	2023
SILVA, Gizelle Cristina da.	Traditional and digital educational games: tools for stimulating development cognitive of students with difficulty learning.	Scientific Article	RCMOS-Magazine Scientific Multidisciplinary To know	2021
COSTA, Maria do Carmo da Cunha	Children's literature in the construction of environmental awareness in	Thesis of PhD	.	2020



Author(s)	Title	Type of Document	Institution	Again
	kindergarten: the collaboration of the school library			
CUNHA, Maria Rita of Cassia	The affective aspect and its importance in the learning of children with special needs special educational measures in the inclusion of early childhood education	Thesis of PhD		2021
DENNY, Grace Sherley; MENDES, Ivanise Nazaré.	Play in early childhood education: conceptions and teaching practices.	Scientific Article	RCMOS-Magazine Scientific Multidisciplinary To know	2024.
OLIVEIRA, Suélen Cristiane Marcos	The process of children's adaptation in early childhood education: the challenges for families and educators from childhood	Thesis	University State of São Paulo (Unesp).	2018
SANTOS, Danilo Miguel de Sales et al.	Education and Rights Humans: Contributions to Teacher Training	Book	EBPCA-Publisher Aluz	2024
SANTOS, Laura Torquetti Dias; FERREIRA, Stephane Cristini	The importance of play in early childhood education: impacts of technology	Monograph (Degree in Pedagogy)	Institute of Sciences Humanities and Social Sciences, Federal University from Ouro Preto	2024
SOUZA, Fabiana de Freitas Marques.	The contribution of play in the literacy and literacy process	Scientific Article	REEDUC-Journal of Studies in Education	2022

Source: Research data

The theorists presented in this study offer different perspectives on the importance of play in early childhood education and its value as part of the educational process. Caputo (2023) highlights the affective dimension of games in the formation of teaching practice, emphasizing its relevance in the cognitive and emotional development of children. The author highlights how a playful and affectionate environment can influence the learning process, creating a safe space for children to play and express themselves.

On the other hand, Souza (2022) explores the possibilities of using play in the process literacy and literacy in the initial grades. Silva (2021) focuses on the contributions theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and Wallon to understand the importance of educational games



traditional and digital in the cognitive development of students. By contextualizing their analyses based on these theories, these authors provide a theoretical framework for understanding the importance of playfulness in the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, Cunha (2021) and Santos et al. (2024) discuss the importance of building of affective relationships in the classroom as an integral part of the educational process. They highlight the role of the teacher as a mediator in the integral development of the student, highlighting the relevance of the relationship of trust and respect between teacher and student, creating an environment conducive to learning through play.

By integrating the perspectives of all these authors, a consensus can be observed on the importance of play and the construction of affective relationships in early childhood education. Each author contributes with complementary data, enriching the understanding of this topic and highlighting the need for pedagogical approaches that value integral development in childhood.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research aimed to investigate the contribution of play in teaching and learning of early childhood education through a literature review. Throughout the study, it was found that learning has the power to transform the way children interact with the world, not limited to disciplinary content, but encompassing also behavioral and life aspects.

From this study, it was found that playfulness plays a role in learning and child development during early childhood education. It was also observed that it is essential that the school and the educator understand the student in his/her entirety, considering both its affective and cognitive dimensions.

One of the most widely used practices in the early childhood sector is learning through of play. Play-based learning is described as a context of learning through which children organize themselves and make sense of their social worlds, when engaging with people, objects and representations.

As a suggestion for future research, it is proposed to apply questionnaires with educators to understand their views on the importance of play in the context school in early childhood education. Finally, this study was able to answer the proposed problem and to achieve the established objectives, highlighting the contribution of playfulness in the process of teaching-learning.



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