

Caregiver-child interactions in daycare centers: a study on the conceptions of early childhood educators

Jéssica Andrade de Albuquerque *
Fabiola de Sousa Braz Aquino 

Universidade Federal da Paraíba, João Pessoa, PB, Brazil

Abstract: Based on the understanding that conceptions guide professional practices and considering such understanding essential for the formulation of intervention strategies that enhance professional actions, this article addresses the conceptions of childhood educators regarding their work with infants in daycare centers and the development of infants in these contexts. This study was conducted with data collected by interviews conducted with five teachers working in public daycare centers. The audio was recorded and transcribed, and responses were analyzed using Bardin's content analysis procedures. Our results indicate a dissonance between what is said by educators and what is postulated by both development theorists and official documents guiding Brazilian Early Childhood Education. These findings assert the relevance of continued training, including child development and environments of caregiver-child interactions to enhance these aspects and favor interactive processes.

Keywords: conceptions, educators, nurseries, infants, child development.

Introduction

This study is based on the understanding that interactions between educators and babies in the context of daycare centers may favor collaborative ways of learning, better cultural understanding of babies, promote the understanding of others as intentional beings, facilitate the linguistic and socio-communicative development of babies, and contribute to the development of the children's social skills (Cain, Rudd, & Saxon, 2007; Degotardi, 2017; Ogando, 2020; Rodrigues, 2019; Shin 2012). Although studies demonstrate that the entry of babies into Early Childhood Education contexts and the interactions established with their educators promote maturation gains for those babies, especially those from a context of extreme need (Lordelo, Chalhub, Guirra, & Carvalho, 2007; Ogando, 2020), the quality of care provided has an impact on child development.

In general, research has shown that there is a direct relationship between the quality of educational environments, the level of learning, and child development (Casalinho, 2019), so that the high quality of daycare centers is associated with development in the baby's cognitive field, as well as social and linguistic effects (Fuertes, 2016; Ruzek, Burchinal, Farkas, & Duncan, 2014), and that its beneficial effects are greater in children from family environments with low levels of income and education (Geoffroy et al., 2007).

Regarding the criteria to determine the quality of daycare centers in Brazil, we mention the document entitled *Indicadores de qualidade na educação infantil* (Brazil, 2009), which lists seven domains, namely: institutional planning; multiplicity of experiences and languages; interactions; health promotion; spaces, materials and furniture; training and working conditions for both teachers and other professionals; cooperation and exchange with families; and participation in the social protection network. The set of these indicators delineates the elements necessary for a quality Early Childhood Education.

This study emphasizes the dimension of social interactions, essential to human development as it constitutes the basis of higher psychological functions and personality (Valsiner, 2007). In it, the notion of interaction is understood from the very etymological root of the word: inter-action, "action between," which implies bidirectionality, as stated by Piccinini et al. (2001). According with the Aurélio dictionary (Ferreira, 1994): "Interaction [inter+action] 1. Action that takes place between two or more things, or two or more people; reciprocal action". (p. 956). More specifically, it shares the concept of social interaction presented by Moura and Ribas (2007), who defined social interaction based on temporal and behavioral criteria, characterizing it by a partner's social behavior directed to another and answered by this other within five seconds.

Research carried out by Alexandrino and Braz Aquino (2018) and Oliveira, Braz Aquino, and Salomão (2016) point to how important it is for Early Childhood Educators to understand the value

* Corresponding address: jessica.a.psi@gmail.com



of educator-child interactions for the development of children's social cognition and pedagogical work to promote global development. Besides that, it is understood that educators who work in Early Childhood Education contexts have a fundamental role in the development of children who attend daycare centers and should position themselves as mediators between child and knowledge (Bolsanello, 2009).

The relevance of structured learning spaces for the development, as well as the quality of interactions in those contexts, had been affirmed by Vygotsky (2004) since the late 1920s, when the author considered that educational institutions should be environments in which children could benefit from social interactions for cultural appropriation and knowledge socio-historically constructed by culture, pointing to the importance of the mediated social interactions that should take place in such spaces for the promotion of the development of babies in daycare contexts.

Official documents governing Early Childhood Education in Brazil also emphasize the importance of interactions in educational processes. The *Referencial curricular nacional para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education; Brazil, 1998) highlights interaction as one of the most important teacher strategies to promote early childhood learning. The *Diretrizes curriculares nacionais para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education; Brazil, 2010) emphasize adult-child and child-child interactions as the axis of the curricular proposal for Early Childhood Education, including them as a fundamental element for the development of the individual's personal and collective identity. In the same direction, the *Base nacional comum curricular* (Common National Curriculum Base; Brazil, 2018), refers to social interactions as essential for child learning and development.

In this sense is highlighted the value of social interactions with others, such as educators and peers, which can contribute to qualitative changes and transformations at each new stage. Through the interactions established, different abilities can be built within the child's psyche, such as the imitative ability and the development of speech, thought, voluntary attention, as well as other typically human psychological functions (Vygotsky, 2004). As we understand the relevance of the Early Childhood Educators' role and the repercussions of their practices on baby development and recognize that such practices are built from their conceptions (Santos, Ramos, & Salomão, 2015), we highlight the importance of knowing how Early Childhood Educators conceive their role in baby development.

This argument was defended by Ramos and Salomão (2013), for whom knowing the conceptions of educators about child development is a fundamental aspect for the quality of said children's experiences in institutions, especially regarding the structuring of social

policies and their applicability in the daycare's daily life. Understanding these conceptions may cooperate in the formulation of intervention strategies aimed at professional practices that intentionally explore the value of social interactions and, more specifically, joint activities between educators and infants.

Given the above, and considering that conceptions are guiding practices, this study aims to understand the conceptions of Early Childhood Educators on their interactions with babies in daycare contexts, as well as the development of the babies they work with, to understand the fundamental epistemic aspects of their practices and enable processes of reinterpretation that dialectically permeate their actions aimed at the babies.

Method

This research has a qualitative-descriptive design. Such a method was chosen because it values, translates, and expresses the subjects' intersubjectivities regarding their experiences.

Participants

Five educators of daycare classes working specifically with 6–12-month-old babies participated in this research. The educator's age group averaged 41.4 years old, with family income ranging at around two minimum wages. All educators have a college degree in Education.

Instruments

We applied an interview comprised of sentences in which the participants were asked to complete four statements. The statements explored the educators' conceptions on what it means to be a child, their work with babies in the daycare center, the role of the daycare center, and child development. A sociodemographic questionnaire containing questions concerning the educators' professional training, their age, and work experience in Early Childhood Education was also used.

Procedures for data collection

This study was appreciated by the Comitê de Ética e Pesquisa com Seres Humanos (Human Research Ethics Committee), receiving a favorable ruling for its realization under CAAE number: 97767018.2.0000.5188. The educators agreed to participate in the study, expressing their consent after signing an Informed Consent.

The interviews were carried out in five public Child Education Reference Centers (Crei) in the city of João Pessoa (Paraíba, Brazil) and took place in private areas of the institutions, with the audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

It is important to emphasize that the institutions were located in neighborhoods characterized by the low socioeconomic status of the population.

Procedures for data analysis

The analysis of the interview responses was performed through Content Analysis inspired by Bardin (2009), including the literal transcription of the interviews followed by skimming, surveying, and categorizations of the answers. The statements completed by the educators were organized into four axes, namely: (1) Early Childhood Educators' conceptions on what it means to be a child; (2) Early Childhood Educators' conceptions on their work with babies in daycare; (3) Early Childhood Educators' conceptions on daycare; and (4) Early Childhood Educators' conceptions on the development of the children in daycare. The analysis considered the objectives of the questions and the structure of the instrument used.

Results and argument

The results of this study are presented and argued below based on official governing documents regarding Early Childhood Education in Brazil, literature on Child Development Psychology, and historical-cultural theory. The survey of these conceptions is understood here as a resource to support interventions seeking to promote child development.

Axis 1: Conceptions of Early Childhood Educators on what it means to be a child

When asked to describe "what it means to be a child," the educators' statements were organized into three categories, namely: (1) the understanding of the child as a being connected to the divine; (2) the understanding of the child as a source of learning for adults; and (3) the child as a being who needs preparation, protection, and education from adults. These categories were extracted from the speeches of the participants.

The first category, entitled "The child as a divine being," encompassed speeches such as: "*God's gift to me*" (Educ. 1), "*they are angels, alright, first in the eyes of God*" (Educ. 2), "*when I'm with children, I feel embraced by God*" (Educ. 3); "*God's gift in the lives of all the people who live with them*" (Educ. 3).

The second category, named "The child as a source of learning for adults," encompassed the statement: "*a child is a very important being in our lives, from whom we learn to live with love, affection, and dedication*" (Educ. 4). The third category, called "The child as a being who needs preparation, protection, and education by adults," included the speech: "*the child is a being that needs to be prepared for the future, who we need to protect and teach*" (Educ. 5).

The educators' mentions illustrate conceptions strongly separated from an explanation anchored in postulates of human development theories or information present in governing documents for Early Childhood Education in Brazil. Similar results were found by Maia (2012) regarding the absence of mentions based on theoretical foundations or covering educational policies.

The speeches of the participating educators also referred to ideas typical from the 16th and 19th centuries, respectively, in which the child was perceived as an angelic being and someone who needs care and preparation to be able to act in the future, distancing themselves from the perception of the child as a being in constitution, an active part in their own history (Kramer & Leite, 1996). In his study with Early Childhood Educators, Ferreira (2019) also verified reports that approached a conception of the child someone who is still becoming, with a concern towards the stage following their childhood.

Regarding the official documents governing the Brazilian Early Childhood Education, more specifically, the *Diretrizes curriculares nacionais para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education; Brazil, 2010), present a conception of the child as a social and particular being under the Law, an active citizen, participating in their own development, and able to build knowledge in the interaction with their environment and other social beings. This conception is supported by assumptions of child development theories defending the importance of the environment and interactions to the human constitution (Vygotsky, 1996). The defense of the relevance of undertaking dialogues with educators to promote discussions inspired by documents on topics related to Early Childhood Education and its implications for professional practices derives from this argument.

Authors such as Delors (2003) propose that the quality of teaching is determined as much, or even more, by the continuing education of educators than by their initial training. We agree with the researchers in the field of Early Childhood Education (Fernandes & Silva, 2019; Maiolino, 2020; Trindade, 2020), who defended the relevance of continuing education for the quality of educators' interventions with the children and reinforce the importance of professional training in roles related to Early Childhood Education, such as the conceptions built throughout human cultural history, and which actively affect their actions.

Axis 2: Conceptions of Early Childhood Educators on their work with babies in daycare

The interviewed educators, upon completing the statement: "*As a kindergarten teacher, I believe my job is...*". Their mentions were organized into two general categories. The first is called "Working with babies at the daycare generates personal fulfillment," included

lines such as: “*I feel fulfilled in the classroom with them*” (Educ. 1); “*It’s delightful, really great. I have great pleasure in working with children*” (Educ. 2); “*It’s very rewarding. I really like what I do, being with the children and seeing how much they develop*” (Educ. 3). Research carried out by Vasconcelos, Santana, and Borges (2015) identified educators who declared to perceive their work as pleasurable.

Across educator 4’s report, it is possible to notice the duality in the understanding of their work process, indicating, on the one hand, the suffering of “*hard work*” and, on the other, the fulfillment it brings: “*on the other hand, it’s a job that I’m working on*”. In the study carried out by Neves and Seligman (2006), child educators described their work with a double meaning, sometimes as a source of pleasure due to their relationship with the students, sometimes as a burden when it came to their long and exhausting workday, among other elements of daily dynamics. In the same direction, in his report on Basic Education teachers, Reis (2017) identified the coexistence of pleasure and suffering in their work process and pointed out that, many times, suffering seemed to overlap pleasure.

The second category, “A job that prepares for pedagogical issues, socialization, and education for the future” comprised the speech: “*It is preparing them for the future, guiding, and, in addition to teaching them numbers and letters, it is also instructing them not only about subjects, but helping them to live with other children, adults, and society in general*” (Educ. 5). This verbalization is in line with the *Referencial curricular nacional para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education, Brazil, 1998) about the work of educators in daycare centers, as the aforementioned document points out the educator’s intervention as a means to expand the children’s ability to approach concepts and social codes and points out the educator’s function as to provide an environment of diverse educational and social experiences. As goals for the pedagogical proposal of daycare centers, the *Diretrizes curriculares nacionais para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education, Brazil, 2010) also defend the insurance of the child’s access to processes of knowledge appropriation, renewal, and articulation and learning in different languages, as well as the coexistence and interaction with other children.

Generally, across the documents that govern Brazilian Early Childhood Education, one can see arguments linked to postulations of theories of human development when addressing the role of educators. On this issue, scholars (Chaiklin, 2019; Fleer, 2013; Pino, 2010; Vygotsky, 1996) affirm the relevance of the social other in the mediation of concepts, social conventions, and the appropriation of culture for children, which places child educators as mediators of knowledge and the children’s relationship with the world.

Axis 3: Conceptions of Early Childhood Educators on daycare

Regarding the allocution “In my opinion, the daycare center is a place where...”, the educators exposed concepts that were grouped into four categories: (1) as a place of welcoming; (2) as a family; (3) as a space bound to the affective dimension; and (4) as a place whose function is to insert children into society.

The first category, called “*The daycare as a place of reception*” included the following speeches: “*The child must be welcomed with peace, love, and a lot of affection*” (Educ. 2); “*Where the child is welcomed, it is his second family. A place where you find a lot of love and affection*” (Educ. 4); “*A place of welcoming, of love, of everything, so here is their other home, their second home, so they associate this place with their second home*” (Educ. 3).

The allusion to the act of welcoming babies leads us to reflect on two qualitatively different perspectives. The first, perceives daycare centers as places of welcoming, care, and protection, favoring the insertion of women in the labor market (Spada, 2005), based on welfare and hygienist actions that did not explore this space in its pedagogical function, capable of promoting the children’s development.

The second perspective includes welcoming as one of the dimensions that should be privileged in the context of daycare centers, essential for building the relationships established between the educator and the baby. From this approach, the *Referencial curricular nacional para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education; Brazil, 1998) presents a conception of welcoming families and children that reduces the insecurities of babies and favors relationships of trust with families. The *Base nacional comum curricular* (Common National Curriculum Base; Brazil, 2018), on the other hand, includes welcoming as one of the general competencies of basic education, pointing out the need to establish strategies for welcoming children, while valuing their diversity and culture. Here, welcoming is one of the elements that must be considered in the context of daycare centers, but it must be understood as part of the process. Thus, welcoming must be linked to the pedagogical proposal, aiming to expand babies’ abilities, experiences, and learning, and daycare centers must favor child development and act as a complement to family education.

Back to the educators’ statements about understanding the daycare center as a place of welcoming, it is mentioned that, in their reports, there are no indications of welcoming within a pedagogical dimension. Given these results, the importance of teacher education is reaffirmed in order to understand welcoming as a means of building relationships and bonds to promote child development.

The second category of this axis of analysis, entitled “The daycare as a family,” was built from mentions such as the following:

It is a family that us, in here, from the children to our co-workers, we are a family, even more, if you consider the fact we spend Monday through Friday with them. This is what we become. We have more contact with them here than with our own families at home, and the child itself, you know, because we, like them, only come home to sleep, then have the same routine again the next day. (Educ. 4)

Regarding the speech extract presented, it is essential to explore the distinct and interconnected roles between daycare centers and families. According to Silva (2011), daycare and family have distinct but complementary functions. The family’s role is acting in the processes of socialization, protection, and development of its members within the social, affective, and cognitive dimensions.

The *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (Common National Curriculum Base; Brazil, 2018) infers that the goal of daycare centers is to expand children’s experiences, knowledge, and skills to consolidate new learning, acting in a way that complements family education. The *Referencial curricular nacional para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education; Brazil, 1998) indicates that the sharing of responsibilities between Early Childhood Education and the family is essential. Still on this issue, Oliveira (2011) states that the role of the daycare is complementary to that of the family, which requires mutual knowledge of the educational functions of both parts in the process of teaching and caring for the children. Explaining the distinct and complementary roles of the daycare center and the family is significant to enable the development of intervention proposals in Early Childhood Education.

The third category of analysis, “The daycare center as a space bound to the affective dimension,” was formulated from the following speech: “*A place where we have a lot of love to give. A lot. A lot. A lot. We fill that space they don’t have at home with our love*” (Educ. 1). This category refers to the understanding of the daycare center as a space in which expressions, manifestations, or exchanges of affection take place, which was also observed in other statements by the educators, with love being significantly mentioned in most of the statements. Once again, we resort to Vygotsky’s (2000) argument:

The individual’s emotional aspect is no less important than the other aspects and is an object of concern for education in the same proportions as intelligence and will. Love can turn out to be a talent as much as genius, as the discovery of differential calculus. (p. 146)

Still in this emphasis on the affective aspect, the author indicates that emotions play a fundamental role in interpersonal relationships, and they enable the baby to elicit the other’s help to guarantee their survival. In this sense, it is understood that emotions connect babies to their social world. Thus, we understand that the affective dimension, an inseparable part of interactions, is one of the favoring components of the individual’s overall formation.

In the *Referencial nacional curricular para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education; Brazil, 1998), affection is mentioned as a base element for child development. It also indicates that educators should provide affective elements so that children learn to live together and that affective capacities are associated with the development of self-esteem, attitudes in social life, and understanding of oneself and others.

In this sense, we emphasize the relevance of affectivity for the development and warn that it must be understood within a global development process, and not a unilateral dimension. This argument is supported by the *Base nacional comum curricular* (Common National Curriculum Base; Brazil, 2018), which recognizes the need for aiming Basic Education at training and global human development, as well as the implying an understanding of the complexity and heterogeneity of the development.

Besides those statements, the speech that represented the construction of this category of analysis, which introduced the conception that the daycare would fill something absent within the family, still calls for discussion. In this regard, the *Referencial nacional curricular para a educação infantil* (National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education; Brazil, 1998) indicates, since the 1990s, that many professionals working at Early Childhood Education institutions have misconceptions about families and home contexts, especially those with lower incomes. The document points out to prejudice in this area, which may open doors for prejudiced actions and, therefore, affirms the need to knowing families better, as a cultural and historical structure that constitute themselves in many different ways.

Thus, we reiterate the importance of reflecting on discourses that may originate from stereotyped views of families and the need to know the reality of the public hosted by the daycare centers, so that intervention strategies to enhance child development can be thought and implemented based on facts.

Completing the categories of this axis of analysis, the fourth group of conceptions is called “The daycare as a place whose function is to insert children into society” and includes the mention: “*A place that is a second home and, besides being their home, has the function of inserting them into society*” (Educ. 5).

According to this understanding, we are brought back to the importance of understanding the wide role of the daycare center and highlight social inclusion as one of the elements that make up the complementary role of the daycare center to that of the family. However, we emphasize

that the role of the daycare includes the responsibility to promote global child development, setting up a pleasant environment in which the children are allowed to play, socialize, and develop together, as well as with their peers (Brazil, 2018). Therefore, we affirm that it is fundamental to perceive the daycare center as a context in which complex processes of child development are engendered.

Axis 4: Conceptions of Early Childhood Educators on the development of children in daycare

Regarding the statement “I observe that the development of the babies I work with at the daycare...”, the educators presented a set of answers that were organized into three categories, namely: (1) development facilitated by the educator’s knowledge; (2) rapid development; and (3) development favored by daycare centers.

The first category, “Development facilitated by the educator’s knowledge”, included lines such as the following:

There has been development since I arrived here, through my pedagogical knowledge, as well as my family knowledge. (Educ. 1)

I see very significant development during their interactions with me. We realize that they arrive one way and, in a week, they are different. 15 days later, they have changed again. When they arrive, they are usually crying, but as time goes by and we interact with them, then we realize that things have evolved. (Educ. 4) Babies become more independent, and our work helps them, for example, in motor coordination, organizing their routine. (Educ. 5)

On these conceptions, the educator is a mediator of knowledge, whose function is to help the child with methodologies and resources so that they can reach a level of knowledge that would not be attainable without mediation (Vygotsky, 2000). Contemporary researchers in the field of Child Developmental Psychology (Aquino, 2015; Vasconcelos et al., 2015) reiterate that Early Childhood Educators are, par excellence, mediators of significant and essential social relationships for children.

The official documents on Early Childhood Education (Brazil, 1998, 2010, 2018) also defend mediation and monitoring of practices and interactions as part of the educator’s work, in order to guarantee the plurality of situations to promote the full development of children. Thus, it is understood that, when verbalizing that the development of babies in the daycare center occurs “*through my pedagogical knowledge*” and “*through their [babies] interaction with me,*” the educators demonstrate recognition of their relevance in the process of new childhood acquisitions.

Nevertheless, it is essential to discuss other elements present in the verbalizations comprised in this

category. We are taken back to educator 4’s speech, which seems to condense two underlying and contradictory perspectives of development: the educator sometimes perceives development from the passage of time, which would refer to a maturationist conception, and, some other times, the development is perceived through their interaction with the baby, something more in line with an interactionist conception. Also in the same direction, educator 5’s speech expresses the same type of reasoning when she points out that “*The babies get increasingly independent,*” without referring to their interference in this process.

From the exposed, the types of development conceptions supporting the educators’ statements are problematized, if guided by a maturationist approach, which provides that the development is determined by genetic and neurological factors, or anchored in the historical-cultural theory, which conceives development as a product of reciprocal exchanges between social partners, or even if the two concepts coexist in the understanding of the educators.

The second category, entitled “Rapid development”, involved the understanding that the development of babies occurs very quickly and encompassed lines such as the following: “[Their] *Development is skyrocketing, it’s triggering an explosion, because they are learning in evolution; the evolution of light. With each passing day, the child presents more development in speaking, even in their attitude*” (Educ. 2).

It is important to mention that this kind of response is based on the educators’ daily observation of the behaviors and skills presented by the babies in daycare centers. Regarding the babies’ fast-paced development, we should also indicate Vygotsky’s (1996) postulates when addressing the first year of life crisis, which points out the rapid changes in development at this stage and affirms the need for the development of a well-structured pedagogy, able to keep up with these critical periods of development. Still on the how fast the children develop in their first year of life, we mention Wen et al.’s (2019) study, which revealed the accelerated brain development of infants and discussed its implications for later behavioral and cognitive performance by providing the first comprehensive report of the development of brain networks at a three-month interval during the first year of postnatal life.

In this topic, together with the emphasis on the rapid child development observed by educators in daycare centers, we also discuss whether these professionals perceive themselves as part of this process. In this sense, we mention an excerpt from educator 2’s speech, which states: “*with each passing day, the child presents more development in speaking, even in their attitude*”. How the educator exposes her perception on the evolution process of the children’s abilities allows for an interpretation that this development *comes with* the child, giving away an underlying idea that reflects,

once again, a maturationist perspective of the development. Thus, it is important to emphasize the social and mediated character that child development presupposes and affirm the relevance of the Early Childhood Educators' role as co-participants in the constitution of the babies' social, cognitive, communicative, and affective skills (Alexandrino & Braz Aquino, 2018; Silva, 2018).

The third category, called "Development evolution favored by daycare centers," comprised the following statements:

When babies are used to attending daycare, they arrive in their groups already aware of more things than babies who have no experience in daycare and are also more autonomous. (Educ. 4)

I believe coexistence in the daycare makes them develop even further. (Educ. 3)

These ideas suggest a conception that babies who attend daycare centers are more autonomous compared to those who do not. On this issue, observational research carried out by Amaro et al. (2015) revealed that there is no difference between groups of babies who attended daycare centers and babies who did not. The authors warned, however, that the daycare environments studied were of "subpar" quality, a factor that may have influenced the results, since the literature refers to the importance of the quality of the daycare centers to enhance child development.

Extensive research carried out on the impact of daycare centers on child development in national and international settings (Engle & Black, 2008; Lordelo et al. 2007) revealed that, for the children's development to be actually favored, there must be a high-quality environment.

Final thoughts

This study allowed us to assess the Early Childhood Educators' conceptions on what it means to be a child,

their work with babies in daycare centers, their conception of daycare, and regarding the development of babies in the context of Early Childhood Education.

Investigating these conceptions is relevant to improve the understanding about which references have been supported by those educators in their activities within the daycare centers and what practical implications these conceptions may trigger. These conceptions also allow for the formulation of interventions aimed at favoring actions to enhance child development.

The findings allowed for the identification of a dissonance between the educators' verbalizations, what development theorists postulate, and the official guidelines for Early Childhood Education in Brazil. In this sense, we affirm the relevance of carrying out in-service continuing education aimed at Early Childhood Educators to promote practices supported by scientific theoretical-methodological assumptions, which can help broaden these professionals' conceptions, while exploring fundamental aspects for the establishment of an intentional and pedagogical performance to promote development.

According to Psychology, we suggest that such training is addressed towards issues related to child development and educator-child-environment interactions to enhance these aspects and favor interactive processes.

Based on the research in the field of Child Developmental Psychology comprised by this study, we advocate for the relevance of educator-child interactions and professional interventions that favor these exchanges in the context of Early Childhood Education and hope to contribute to the reflection on the actions of teachers who work with babies in daycare centers so that they can recognize the relevance of their interference in child development and operationalize their practices with pedagogical intentionality, with a consistent theoretical-methodological basis.

In future research, we suggest that the educators are asked to present further details, examples, and descriptions of their actions regarding babies in daycare centers during the interview process, a procedure that could raise more approximate indicators on the established interactions.

Interações educadora-bebê em creches: um estudo sobre concepções de educadoras infantis

Resumo: Este artigo aborda as concepções de educadoras infantis sobre suas atuações com bebês em creches e sobre o desenvolvimento dos bebês nesses contextos. Parte-se da compreensão de que as concepções orientam as práticas profissionais, sendo fundamental compreendê-las para formular estratégias interventivas que potencializem as ações profissionais em creches. Participaram do estudo cinco professoras de educação infantil de creches públicas, as quais responderam a uma entrevista cujo áudio foi gravado e posteriormente transcrito. As respostas das entrevistas foram avaliadas por meio da análise de conteúdo de Bardin. Os resultados revelaram uma dissonância entre as verbalizações das educadoras e o que postulam teóricos do desenvolvimento e os documentos oficiais que norteiam a Educação Infantil brasileira. Diante do exposto, afirmamos a relevância das formações continuadas e sugerimos que elas englobem o desenvolvimento infantil e as interações educador-criança-ambiente, na direção de potencializar esses aspectos e favorecer os processos interativos.

Palavras-chave: concepções, educadoras, creches, bebês, desenvolvimento infantil.

Interactions enseignante-bébé dans les crèches : une étude sur les conceptions d'enseignantes de maternelle

Résumé : Cet article traite des conceptions des enseignantes de maternelle sur leur travail avec les bébés dans les crèches et sur le développement des bébés dans ces contextes. Nous basons sur la compréhension que les conceptions guident les pratiques professionnelles, étant essentiel de les comprendre pour formuler des stratégies d'intervention qui valorisent les actions professionnelles dans les crèches. Cinq enseignantes de maternelle de crèches publiques ont participé à l'étude. Elles ont répondu à une interview dont l'audio a été enregistré puis transcrit. Les réponses aux questions ont été évaluées à l'aide de l'analyse de contenu de Bardin. Les résultats ont révélé une dissonance entre les verbalisations des enseignantes et ce que postulent les théoriciens du développement et les documents officiels qui guident l'éducation maternelle au Brésil. Face à ce qui précède, on soutient la pertinence de la formation continue et suggère qu'elle comprenne le développement de l'enfant et les interactions enseignantes-enfant-environnement, afin de valoriser ces aspects et de favoriser les processus interactifs.

Mots-clés : conceptions, enseignantes, crèches, bébés, développement de l'enfant.

Interacciones entre educadora-bebé en guarderías: un estudio sobre las concepciones de educadoras de la primera infancia

Resumen: Este artículo aborda las concepciones de educadoras de la primera infancia sobre su trabajo con bebés en las guarderías y sobre el desarrollo de los bebés en estos contextos. Se parte de la comprensión de que las concepciones orientan las prácticas profesionales, y es fundamental comprenderlas para formular estrategias de intervención que potencien la actuación profesional en las guarderías. En el estudio participaron cinco profesoras de educación infantil en guarderías públicas, quienes respondieron a una entrevista cuyo audio fue grabado y luego transcrito. El análisis de las entrevistas se realizó mediante el análisis de contenido de Bardin. Los resultados apuntan a disonancia entre las verbalizaciones de las educadoras y lo que plantean los teóricos del desarrollo y los documentos oficiales que orientan la educación infantil en Brasil. De lo anterior, se afirma la relevancia de la formación continua y se sugiere que esta incluya el desarrollo infantil y las interacciones educador-niño-entorno, en el sentido de potenciar estos aspectos y favorecer los procesos interactivos.

Palabras clave: concepciones, educadoras, guarderías, bebés, desarrollo infantil.

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