

ARTICLE

**EARLY CHILDHOOD, DAILY LIFE AND CURRICULUM: REFLECTIONS BASED ON AN
ETHICAL CHOICE SUPPORTED BY AESTHETICS¹**

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to reflect on the theme of everyday life as the place of the curriculum in daycare centers and kindergartens, based on the conception of early childhood education proposed by Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994, Italy), creator of what we know as the "Reggio Emilia Approach," in dialogue with some Freirean concepts. In response to the question of what can be (re)thought about a curriculum for early childhood education in Brazil, bibliographical research was conducted highlighting the concepts of everyday life, planning, pedagogical documentation, and the workshop, in conjunction with Freirean concepts of freedom and beauty, as ethics and aesthetics of an education that fosters learning where concepts are forged by childhood and not by the educator. The results present us with a vision of education as formation and process, for and with children, contrasting with the model of curriculum constructed around a product.

Keywords: Reggio Emilia approach, atelier, design, pedagogical documentation, emerging curriculum.

**PRIMEIRA INFÂNCIA, COTIDIANO E CURRÍCULO: REFLEXÕES A PARTIR DE UMA ÉTICA APOIADA
PELA ESTÉTICA**

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RESUMO: Dialogando com alguns conceitos freirianos, este artigo tem como objetivo refletir sobre o tema da cotidianidade como o lugar do currículo na creche e nas escolas de infância a partir da concepção de Educação Infantil proposta por Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994, Itália), criador do que conhecemos como “abordagem de Reggio Emilia”. Sob a indagação do que pode ser (re)pensado a respeito de um currículo para a Educação Infantil no Brasil, foi realizada uma pesquisa bibliográfica em que se destacaram os conceitos de cotidianidade, projeção, documentação pedagógica e ateliê, em comunhão com os conceitos freirianos de liberdade e beleza, como ética e estética de uma educação que favorece uma aprendizagem em que os conceitos são forjados pela infância e não por quem educa. Os resultados apresentam uma visão de educação como formação e processo, para e com as crianças, contrapondo-se ao modelo de currículo construído em função de um produto.

Palavras-chave: abordagem de Reggio Emilia, ateliê, projeção, documentação pedagógica, currículo emergente.

PRIMERA INFANCIA, VIDA COTIDIANA Y CURRÍCULO: REFLEXIONES DESDE UNA OPCIÓN ÉTICA SUSTENTADA EN LA ESTÉTICA

RESUMEN: Este artículo busca reflexionar sobre la vida cotidiana como el lugar del currículo en guarderías y jardines de infancia, a partir de la concepción de la educación infantil propuesta por Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994, Italia), creador del "Enfoque Reggio Emilia", en diálogo con algunos conceptos freireanos. Ante la pregunta de qué se puede (re)pensar en un currículo para la educación infantil en Brasil, se realizó una investigación bibliográfica que destaca los conceptos de vida cotidiana, planificación, documentación pedagógica y taller, en conjunción con los conceptos freireanos de libertad y belleza, como ética y estética de una educación que fomenta el aprendizaje donde los conceptos son forjados por la infancia y no por el educador. Los resultados nos presentan una visión de la educación como formación y proceso, para y con los niños, en contraste con el modelo curricular construido en torno a un producto.

Palabras clave: enfoque Reggio Emilia, taller, diseño, documentación pedagógica, currículo emergente.

INTRODUCTION

The Reggio Emilia approach is not just another pedagogical model. It is an ethical choice. It is founded on the key principles that assert children's education is a right, a public good, a responsibility of the community. This approach emphasizes the school's role in ensuring access to a rich culture of childhood. Recognizing that education is not neutral, because it both reproduces and transforms reality, “the approach combines the concepts of social services and education” (Edwards; Gandini; Forman, 2016, p. 22). In this sense, educational practice in this approach “is a practice that opens a public space, a forum in civil society, where dominant discourses can be visualized and negotiated” (Dahlberg; Moss; Pence, 2019, p. 229). Supporting the principles of this approach, one of the central themes in Freire's work (1999) is that education is a political act. Educating involves the construction of knowledge and the transmission of values and power relations in society. This education aims to be both problematizing and liberating. Therefore, the political act that allows the freedom of choice, the freedom to question, and the freedom to be a subject is inherent to the act of educating. Regarding the ethical question,

Reggio, as we have already mentioned, reaffirms the school as, first and most important, a place of political and ethical practice. We consider political practice, but where do ethics begin? Partially through the high priority given to values. Schools in Reggio are seen as places for building values, such as friendship, solidarity, respect for differences, dialogue, feelings, affection (Dahlberg; Moss; Pense, 2019, p. 12).

For the Reggio Emilia approach, the school is not a bubble; it is a social place of deep exchanges between the social and political dimension, community issues, and relationships with families. Each of these dimensions is fundamentally important for characterizing and constructing such an approach. This approach considers relationships and the ethics of encounter as one of the pillars of everyday life, where the curriculum takes place.

The Reggio Emilia approach highlights not only the ethical considerations that place education as a public good, but also points to the aesthetic dimension of education. Aesthetics is seen as care, as aspiration and right of the human species. Vecchi (2017, p. 28), a Reggio Emilia *atelierista* who worked directly with Malaguzzi, states that

It is undoubtedly difficult to define with simplicity and clarity what is meant by the aesthetic dimension; perhaps it is, above all, a process of empathy that connects the subject with things, and things with one another. Like a fine thread, an aspiration toward quality that leads one to choose one word over another, or a specific color, a shade, a piece of music, a mathematical formula, an image, or the taste of food [...], it is an attitude of care and attention toward what one is doing; it is a desire for meaning, a sense of wonder, and curiosity. It is the opposite of indifference and negligence, of conformity, and of a lack of engagement and emotion.

We can find this attention to the aesthetic dimension of education in the concept of *boniteza* (beauty) taught by Freire (2021, p. 17), who states “[...] that *boniteza*, much like denunciation, proclamation, being wet or drenched, denotes a stance of creativity, a spirit of innovation, invention, and epistemological curiosity [...]”.

Alongside the aesthetic dimension of education, we can consider the aesthetic sense, because it is likely innate to the species (Vecchi, 2017, p. 36), as an element that transcends boundaries and connects fields of knowledge. “It is not linked only to art but becomes a mode of inquiry, a key to interpretation, and a site of experience” (p. 36).

In the context of early childhood education in Brazil, as outlined in the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-*Base Nacional Comum Curricular*) (Brazil, 2018), the education of children aged zero to six was, until 1980, called “preschool”. This means a stage before the formal school process, independent of it yet preparatory for it, and situated outside the formal education system. From 1988 onwards, the Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988) established the provision of daycare centers and preschools as a state duty. Subsequently, with the 1996 enactment of Law 9.394 (Brazil, 1996), the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB-*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases*), early childhood education became a stage of basic education and a right for all children. Its inclusion in the BNCC establishes early childhood education as the first stage of basic education, the foundation and starting point, which is no less important than any of the subsequent stages.

Caring and educating must be interconnected, serving as a force in realizing children's rights and focusing on their holistic development, which extends to the quality of education offered during early childhood. However, within the Brazilian education system, “school spaces are directly implicated

in the realization of the two challenges currently facing Early Childhood Education in Brazil: expanding service coverage and improving quality” (Toledo, 2019, p. 22).

In the context of this discussion, care regarding the word “quality”, which is not a neutral term, is fundamental. The discourse of quality presupposes control over reality, a reduction of complexity and diversity, and the notion that education is a product rather than a process. “At the heart of this discourse lies an effort towards universality and stability, normalization and standardization” (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2019, p. 127).

In contrast to the discourse of quality, within the field of education, and early childhood education in particular, we can consider the discourse of meaning-making, which takes into account context and everyday life, and accommodates diversity, subjectivity, and multiple perspectives, thereby bringing a democratic and public responsibility to the reality of daycares and early childhood schools:

In the field of early childhood, the discourse of meaning-making refers, above all, to the construction and deepening of an understanding of the early childhood institution and its projects, particularly the pedagogical work, in order to construct meaning from what is happening (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2019, p. 143).

From this entanglement of ethical choice, aesthetic attitude, and meaning-making discourse, we introduce inquiries into a curriculum for early childhood and its unfolding in everyday life.

FROM CONTEXT TO MEANING-MAKING: THE SCHOOL IS A PLACE OF CULTURE

When we take a close look at a day in a daycare center or preschool, we can perceive the close relationship between context, daily life, and the attitude of care, a close relationship termed everydayness.

A day at the daycare center is made up of various situations, such as waiting for a favorite toy, eating a piece of fruit, brushing one's teeth, or playing. All these everyday situations happen through communicative exchanges with the adults caring for the children, and through the individuals' interactions with the context. These relationships among the individuals, children and adults alike, with one another and with the environment contribute significantly to their relationships with the world outside the school. A day at the daycare center is, in microcosm, a day in society. There is an organizing routine, even though no two days are exactly alike. Days at the daycare center are unique, and any of the children's actions can become learning opportunities. Observing a day at the daycare center allows us to perceive what is normally invisible, yet present among the children within that context.

Maybe the intention, in this context, also means living the air, giving visibility to what is normally invisible: joy, curiosity, interest, affection, autonomy, possibility, responsibility, desire, anticipation, tranquility, satisfaction, intimacy, individuality, belonging [...] all these aspects that become visible not because we list them, but because we appreciate and practice them in everyday life (Strozzi, 2014, p. 60).

A question that can help us understand the nature of daily life in this setting is: what is a daycare center? We can reflect on the significance of this place, which embodies an educational environment shaped by relationships. The key figures in this environment are primarily the children, but it also includes their parents, educators, and all members of the school community. We might also ask:

What kinds of projects are possible within this environment of human interaction, and how many can be implemented?

As we continue to reflect on the meaning of the daycare centers, we also may ask: What is the purpose of early childhood education? Regulatory frameworks provide clear answers that emphasize the harmonious and holistic development of children, taking into account their age and psycho-evolutionary characteristics. A daycare center should provide both care and education as part of its daily routine. It should be a place where educational processes occur naturally, while also honoring the dignity and identity of each child through its curriculum.

The risk is that the daycare's daily routine, which is organized around activities and learning experiences that promote emotional, personal, social, and physical development, as well as language and communication skills, “reading the world,” artistic abilities, and cooperation, may become an uncritical repetition of the curriculum. These learning experiences unfold daily through activities such as arriving, eating, playing, napping, and eating again. However, they can easily become a matter of uncritical repetition, characterized by mechanical caregiving or activities disconnected from the daily context, by learning things unrelated to the children's everyday lives, or by encountering concepts far removed from the daycare's daily environment.

School organization [...] (environments, human resource management, educational programs) is very often the result of uncritical repetition, a lack of awareness, and a great deal of happenstance marketed as “creativity” or pedagogical freedom. The fact that children are keenly interested in being with other children causes adults to overlook the need to ask themselves how children “experience” this togetherness, what their interests are, and how those interests can be communicated and negotiated (Strozzi, 2014, p. 61).

Existing within the everyday without uncritical repetition is a demanding exercise that transforms practice into praxis. Praxis considers the context, the history of the children, the families, and the daycare center or early childhood school, adopting an attitude of deep listening as an intentional, empathetic act that extends to every aspect of the child's environment: In which city is the daycare located? In which neighborhood? How do the people who attend the center live? However, decontextualized education fails to listen to the reality of the children or their teachers. Decontextualized education disregards...

A school institution [...] is perceived as a “living organism” that pulses, changes, transforms, grows, and ages. [...] Similarly, an early childhood center and a daycare center can never remain exactly the same over time. They must ensure identity amidst change, as well as preserve a memory of the past and a memory of the future. Daycare centers and early childhood schools, as they appear in the morning, differ from how they are found in the evening—precisely because changes occur during the day that leave traces and memories within the spaces (Rinaldi, 2024, pp. 88–89).

Thus, we emphasize that the daycare center is a place for constructing learning and growing within a specific context. After all, learning means placing oneself before an experience, one arising from habits and impulses acquired through the individual's relationship with the natural and sociocultural environment, that is, the context.

We also reflect on the nature of the child: how do they learn? What perspective on the child informs the space we provide in the daycare center? When we discuss a daily routine that designs and

offers activities based on this perspective, we envision a child who is competent in their individuality, eager to grow and learn. We see a child whose learning process is defined as discovery and construction, shaped by the environment while also shaping it. This approach stands in stark contrast to learning defined by the reproduction of predetermined programs.

The image of the child is, therefore, a determining factor in defining the subject's social and ethical identity, their rights, and the educational contexts prepared for them. One of the key tenets of the Reggio approach, as Loris Malaguzzi wrote, is the image of a child who, from the moment of birth, is so deeply engaged in feeling part of the world and living in the world that they develop a complex system of skills, learning strategies, and ways of organizing relationships (Rinaldi, 2024, p. 86).

We bring to this dialogue the work *Education as the Practice of Freedom (Educação como prática de liberdade)*, in which Freire (1999, p. 49) discusses the need for human beings to recognize themselves as historical beings in the world through an understanding of their “word”, that is, their historical, social, and cultural context: “Man exists, *existere*, in time. Because he is not trapped in a time reduced to a crushing, permanent 'today,' he emerges from it. He immerses himself in it; he temporalizes himself.” In this continuous act of temporalizing oneself, learning in context means learning from one’s own culture, from each culture, and thus, there is no such thing as a right culture or a wrong culture. There are cultures, peoples, childhoods, and subjects. And there is listening.

This means that the school, even one for infants and young children, is a place of formation. It is a site for the transmission and acquisition of knowledge and values, and a place deeply connected to the social and political context, influencing it and being influenced by it. The role of the school, especially that of daycares and early childhood schools, is one of formation, because “substantially, the individual is formed to subsequently find their bearings and choose the values that will underpin their relationships and their connections with the community” (Rinaldi, 2014, p. 42).

Context-based professional development refers to knowledge constructed within the daily life of the daycare center, right on the classroom floor, with teachers and children engaged in a spirit of discovery and cooperation. But what does this mean? Within a project planning, contextual, and intersubjective dynamic, teachers listen to the children’s deepest questions, immersed in a pedagogy fueled by experiences, open-ended paths, and the unexpected; a pedagogy that embraces doubt, uncertainty, and error as valuable resources for a praxis centered on relationships and joy. In this sense, “school should be a joyful place. Children and teachers should enjoy school. [...] This pedagogy entails an act of authorship, without separating manual from intellectual work, in which everyone both designs and executes” (Faria, 2007, p. 283).

Learning from subjective processes and designing learning experiences do not simply involve mastering a technique; instead, they require a desire to listen to children and understand their evolving theories. Listening is an active process that demands teachers dare to explore the unknown. Children naturally embody this courage as they approach the unknown with a sense of inquiry, which we refer to as epistemological curiosity. It is this curiosity, shared by teachers, that becomes the structuring element of what we call an emergent curriculum, as “joy does not come merely from the moment of discovery, but is part of the process of seeking. Teaching and learning cannot take place outside of the search, outside of beauty and joy” (Freire, 1996, p. 53).

CONCEPTS ARE NOT TAUGHT. WE MAKE THEM EMERGE!

In May 2025, at a conference held at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre in Reggio Emilia, Italy, we were introduced to excerpts from the national guidance document for early childhood education services, created on December 6, 2021. The document states that “during the first thousand days of life, children acquire a sense of their identity and learn to communicate with others by sharing meanings; it is during these thousand days that they learn how to learn”² (Italy, 2021, our translation).

Guided by this principle, the Reggio Emilia approach focuses on a pedagogy of listening and relationships, seeking to understand how children and adults co-construct the process of learning how to learn, treating what we call project planning thinking as a mindset. It is a strategy of thought and action, an epistemological stance that respects and supports the learning processes of both children and adults. What truly matters is not what children learn, but how they learn. Malaguzzi (2016, p. 91) says that “learning to relearn with children is our line of work. We move forward in such a way that children are not shaped by experience, but rather give shape to experience.”

The understanding that children do not merely adapt to their experiences but actually shape them leads us to rethink how we plan the daily routines in daycares and early childhood schools. When we say that children shape their experiences, we mean that the objectives of educational activities should emerge from the activities themselves rather than from an external source. When educational objectives are imposed from the outside, it creates an imbalance in social relationships, subordinating the learning process to pre-defined directives and creating a disconnect between the child and the curriculum.

A child's life is unique. Children become fully engaged with whatever sparks their curiosity. They do not break their attention into fragments, nor do they separate themselves from their inquisitive actions. However, the curriculum is often fragmented to match a disjointed school environment. Currently, Early Childhood Education, as based on the BNCC's curricular foundations, emphasizes the educational outcome and prioritizes it, which is quite different from the way young children learn, as they are deeply involved in the process of exploring the world.

We need to envision an education that is not disconnected from its purpose. Daycares and early childhood schools should be places where children experience life fully, engaging through actions taken by adults who value children's time and curiosity. It is essential to foster a spirit of listening and connection with children. This approach requires a shift in how we view the act of planning:

In our work, we speak of planning, understood as the preparation and organization of space, materials, thoughts, situations, and occasions for learning. This enables exchange and communication among the school's three protagonists and interactive partners: children, educators, and families. [...] Given the complexity of this system, we can understand why children's potential is stifled when the endpoint of their learning is formulated in advance. Instead, at the start of a project, teachers should meet and discuss, in every possible way, how the project might evolve, taking into account the likely ideas, hypotheses, and choices made by the children. By doing so, they prepare themselves for all subsequent stages of the project, even if the unexpected occurs (Rinaldi, 2016, p. 109).

² “È nei primi mille giorni di vita che i bambini acquisiscono il senso della propria identità, imparano a comunicare con gli altri condividendo significati; è in questi mille giorni che apprendono ad apprendere”.

The project planning dimension of the everyday context integrates children's actions, stemming from intentionally designed provocations, with ongoing, constant observation and listening. Concepts emerge through the children's words and the traces they leave in their environment. Children “offer” concepts for adults to interpret; therefore, the adult’s worldview and the scope of their interpretation of reality make all the difference in the process of documenting and making visible the children's emerging thinking. We are speaking of an emergent curriculum that unfolds in the interplay between the children's actions and the perspective of the adults accompanying them.

Malaguzzi (2016, pp. 91–92) speaks of an attitude of inquiry by the adults, given that knowledge arises from research:

There are two ways to view children's learning processes and discover clues for supporting them: one is by observing how children engage in an activity and develop strategies for thinking and acting; the other is by looking at how the objects involved are transformed. Adults and children learn in very different ways: they employ different procedures, adhere to different principles, make different conjectures, and follow different leads. Our teachers actively conduct research, both independently and with colleagues, to develop strategies that foster the children's work or can be used by them. They move from research to action (and vice versa).

Discussing a project planning approach within a specific context does not mean leaving daily life to chance or to meaningless experimentation. Through constructing meaning around “learning to learn”, we speak of project planning and emergent curricula. The issue of objectives is a delicate one, and we consider this as well. It is a contradiction to speak of a learning objective when the teacher determines the objective, or are we actually speaking of a teaching objective? For Malaguzzi (2016, p. 94), “teachers follow the children; they do not follow plans. Objectives are important and will not be lost from sight, but the why and the how of reaching them are more important.”

In this sense, we consider the path of research within the school, identifying points that can guide us to build this understanding. First, what is the purpose of quality early childhood education? What is our conception of the child? Second, since the school arises from life, what are we providing for the children?

Consider the concept of “everyday life”; the profound relationship between the daily routine and project planning action- does a curriculum not emerge from this relationship? Malaguzzi (2016, p. 94) clarifies:

Our schools have not had, nor do they have, a curriculum planned out in units and subunits (lesson plans) of the sort behaviorists would like. That would lead our schools toward teaching without learning; we would demean both schools and children by entrusting them to the templates, catchphrases, and manuals that publishers so generously distribute. Instead, each year, every school outlines a series of related projects, some short-term, others long-term. These themes serve as the primary structural supports, but it is then up to the children, the unfolding of events, and the teachers to determine whether the resulting structure will be a cabin, an apartment building, or something else entirely.

Order and the construction of meaning arise precisely through the completion of processes. Everything has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Purpose provides direction and emerges from the project in light of an anticipated conclusion. However, we can rethink the concept of a timeframe for that ending. Children may change their minds, and new directions may emerge. What matters is validating the children's decisions rather than interrupting or overriding them.

In this context, we consider how this curriculum, which emerges from everyday life, can be documented, viewed, and recognized.

DOCUMENTING THE EXTRAORDINARY EVERYDAY: THE METASTRUCTURE OFFERED BY AESTHETICS

Thinking about a curriculum that emerges from everyday life does not mean leaving education to creative chance. There is a word that permeates everything that takes place during the daily routine of daycares and early childhood schools: intentionality. Intentionality is deeply intertwined with what we call project planning.

Project planning is a term used when working with the Reggio Emilia approach. It refers to a form of forward-looking planning (Rinaldi, 2014), rich in intentionality, that stands in contrast to rigidly programmed practices. As an epistemological framework, project planning fosters relationships among individuals and encourages the act of asking “why?”, raising hypotheses, problematizing issues, and creating situations of discovery, enjoyment, inquiry, and reciprocity, generating data, reflections, and knowledge.

When discussing project planning, it's essential to address provocation, the creation of investigative contexts for both children and adults, and documentation. These three elements, provocation, context establishment, and documentation, intertwine and recur as needed to support children's research. Instead of following a rigid set of rules and steps, effective documentation comprises a collection of notes, images, videos, and audio recordings. This collection serves as a guide and reference, supporting the emergent curriculum and making both individual and group learning visible.

Working by setting up investigative contexts, or provocations, means moving away from a planning approach that establishes general and specific objectives in advance. Instead, it means listening to the objectives that emerge from the formulation of hypotheses based on the teachers' knowledge of the children, the materials being used, and their prior experiences. Investigative contexts acknowledge that both children and teachers bring lived experiences that introduce numerous variables to the hypotheses being formulated. Thus, “alongside these hypotheses, flexible objectives are formulated, adapted to the children's needs and interests, which include those expressed by the children at any point during the project” (Rinaldi, 2016, p. 107).

Investigative contexts are learning situations. The act of planning enables action within the projects. These contexts involve preparing the space and materials to support children's learning by fostering relationships among the children, the adults, and the materials of inquiry. Thus, we understand the act of planning to be profoundly aesthetic.

Malaguzzi (2016, p. 80) referred to these investigative contexts as *ateliers*: “The *atelier*, a space rich in materials, tools, and professionally skilled people, contributed significantly to our work on documentation.” An *atelier* is a place of listening, a place where we can listen to the poetic languages of childhood; it is neither a space separated from the school organism nor a privileged one: “Let me emphasize, however, that the *atelier* never intended to be a separate or privileged space” (p. 80). We work with the concept of a diffuse *atelier*. The entire school organism can become an *atelier*, because what matters is an attitude of listening and aesthetic sensitivity, alongside prior knowledge of the selected materials, in support of a process of documenting children's learning.

In this sense, we enter the aesthetic dimension of education. Aesthetics as a form of care that engages all the senses; and aesthetics as provocation, an encounter with the other. Aesthetics as a kind of beauty that is integral to a conception of life, alongside joy, utopia, solidarity, love, and hope. Freire (1996) wrote that the act of teaching demands both ethics and aesthetics, arguing that the educational experience cannot be merely technical; rather, it must unfold through its formative nature, observing and respecting the learner's nature. Malaguzzi (2016) states that daycares and early childhood schools should be places of “aesthetic vibration”, that is, spaces that spark a holistic sensory perception, an allure, and an invitation to discovery. This aesthetic care is a prerequisite for the *atelier* culture to fulfill its role, and “it would be truly naive to think that the mere presence of an *atelierista* could bring about a major shift in learning” (Vecchi, 2017, p. 27).

The aesthetic dimension of education can be seen as a structure that connects and supports a comprehensive way of thinking. Unlike the traditional curricular organization, which rigidly separates the qualities and processes of thought, often leading to the exclusion of important aspects from various disciplines or languages (Vecchi, 2017, p. 29), the aesthetic dimension connects rationality, imagination, and emotions. This integration opens a window onto reality, allowing for a more holistic understanding. The aesthetic dimension works to prevent the fragmentation and exclusion of certain processes imposed by rationality, for “rationality without emotion or empathy, just like imagination without cognition or rationality, constructs a partial, incomplete form of human knowledge” (p. 29).

Thus, through rich investigative contexts, a continuous dialogue among children and a pedagogy sensitive to the languages of childhood can be established. Adults can witness the richness of the processes of learning to learn through pedagogical documentation.

To document means to interpret, to open up, and to make individual and group learning visible, readable, and accessible. Documentation takes place during the experiences children are undergoing, allowing them, both during and after the process, to view themselves from an external perspective. The records comprising rich documentation, such as photos, videos, and written notes, make the processes of constructing knowledge accessible and open to interpretation, fostering a democratic practice of sharing.

The documentary excerpts, choices made by the adults acting as educators for the children, speak to the subjective processes of both adults and children precisely because they are choices. To document is to listen to what must be heard; it is the creation of meaning; it is an act of authorship. Documenting makes visible the research work taking place in daycares and early childhood schools, research conducted by children together with the adults who care for them. Documentation and emergent curriculum are practices of resistance and democratic engagement, as documentation centers on desires: the children's desire to learn and the adults' desire to listen to them. Thus, “instead of relying on a standardized measure of quality, pedagogical documentation allows us to take responsibility for our actions and for our way of creating meaning” (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2019, p. 230), making education a political act.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the reflections presented, we return to the initial question: how can we (re)think a curriculum for early childhood education?

Education is a political act. As such, we need a daily practice, if not urgent, that affirms education as a liberating force. This approach aims to learn the freedom to make choices and the courage to ask questions.

Daycare centers and early childhood schools represent a complex system of relationships. Within this complex structure, it is essential to develop a combination of programs and strategies that support the natural qualities required for childhood development while also honoring the dignity and identity that a well-designed curriculum can provide.

An attitude of listening to the context goes hand in hand with strategy, a strategy that is built and deconstructed by drawing upon adversity, chance, and error. A predetermined program demands control and surveillance, disregarding the contextual vicissitudes present in children's lives.

“Teaching is not about transmitting knowledge, but creating possibilities for its production or construction” (Freire, 1996, p. 21); thus, the school is a place for constructing knowledge and relationships, what Rinaldi (2016) would term “social constructivism.” We understand daycares and early childhood schools as spaces for making choices, at educational, organizational, didactic, and political levels, that support what is fundamental to children's development as active subjects: the specificities of childhood and their contexts, to listen in a respectful and welcoming manner.

This brief study makes us reflect on the importance of a curriculum (re)imagined as a process of continuous, contextual learning, a construction based on children's epistemological curiosity and the historical and sociocultural contexts in which they live. It is a flexible, responsive, open, and emergent curriculum that honors the potential of childhood and the potential of educators, valuing their subjectivities and capabilities. Why not (re)imagine a humanized and humanizing curriculum that focuses on education as a process rather than merely a product? Such a curriculum would empower children to take ownership of their learning, while enabling educators to exercise agency and autonomy in interpreting the world.

We are speaking of an open, original curriculum, created for children and with children.

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The data of the research findings are documented in the manuscript.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1 – Principal researcher; data collection, data analysis, and manuscript writing.

Author 2 – Research advisor; supervision, oversight of data analysis, and review of the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding this article.