



## THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN AN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

### *A PARTICIPAÇÃO DAS CRIANÇAS EM CONTEXTO EDUCATIVO*

### *LA PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS NIÑOS EN UN CONTEXTO EDUCATIVO*

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**ABSTRACT:** Currently, we often hear about children's participation in educational contexts, however, it is not always easy to find the implementation of this principle, so it is essential to reaffirm the understanding of children as subjects who belong to a social group, capable of to share their opinions, to debate the opinions of others and to make decisions in aspects of their life. This paper is based on a study on this theme, carried out in the training of a master's degree, based on participant and reflective observation of a heterogeneous group of children of preschool age, which allowed us to analyze situations in which they could, for on the one hand, identifying barriers to the participation of children and, on the other, promoting new opportunities for its realization. Child participation implies attentive listening to children, recognizing and making sense of what they say. The adult acceptance that the child is a subject capable of making decisions, choosing and giving opinions, makes them adapt their educational practices, promoting real and more significant learning situations. In the development of the study, a scale of analysis of the context' quality regarding the involvement of the child was used (PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2010, p. 24), as this helps the educator to question the relevance of the activities, helping him to putting oneself in the children's shoes, considering indicators of involvement, such as concentration on activities, energy, persistence, among others. The text will present the conditions for the internship, as well as the theoretical foundation of the study, and the description and analysis of the project resulting from the research process that accompanied the entire pedagogical intervention. In addition, central contributions of this experience to the construction of professional identity will be addressed.

**KEYWORDS:** Involvement. Participation. Preschool education.

**RESUMO:** Atualmente é frequente ouvirmos falar da participação das crianças nos contextos educativos, contudo, verifica-se que nem sempre é fácil encontrar a concretização deste princípio, pelo que se torna fundamental reafirmar a compreensão das crianças como sujeitos que pertencem a um grupo social, capazes de partilharem as suas opiniões, de debaterem as opiniões dos outros e de tomarem decisões em aspetos da

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sua vida. O presente texto sustenta-se num estudo acerca desta temática, realizado no estágio final de um mestrado, baseado em observação participante e reflexiva de um grupo heterogêneo de crianças em idade pré-escolar, o qual nos permitiu analisar situações em que se puderam, por um lado, identificar entraves à participação das crianças e, por outro, potenciar novas oportunidades para a sua efetivação. A participação infantil implica a escuta atenta das crianças, reconhecendo e dando sentido ao que as mesmas dizem. A aceitação pelo adulto de que a criança é um sujeito capaz de tomar decisões, escolher e dar opiniões, faz com que este adapte as suas práticas educativas promovendo situações de aprendizagem reais e mais significativas. No desenvolvimento do estudo foi utilizada uma escala de análise da qualidade do contexto referente à implicação da criança (PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2010, p. 24), uma vez que esta ajuda o educador a questionar-se acerca da pertinência das atividades, ajudando-o a colocar-se no lugar das crianças, tendo que ter em conta os indicadores de envolvimento, como a concentração nas atividades, a energia, a persistência, entre outros. O texto apresentará as condições de realização do estágio, bem como a fundamentação teórica do estudo, e a descrição e análise do projeto decorrente do processo de investigação que acompanhou toda a intervenção pedagógica. Para além disto, serão abordados contributos centrais desta experiência para a construção da identidade profissional.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Implicação. Participação. Educação pré-escolar.*

**RESUMEN:** *En la actualidad, con frecuencia escuchamos hablar de la participación de los niños en contextos educativos, sin embargo, no siempre es fácil encontrar la concreción de este principio, por lo que es fundamental reafirmar la comprensión de los niños como sujetos que pertenecen a un grupo social, capaces de compartir sus opiniones, debatir las opiniones de los demás y tomar decisiones sobre aspectos de su vida. El presente texto parte de un estudio sobre este tema, realizado en la etapa final de una maestría, a partir de la observación participante y reflexiva de un grupo heterogéneo de niños en edad preescolar, lo que permitió analizar situaciones en las que era posible, para por un lado, identificar obstáculos a la participación infantil y, por otro, promover nuevas oportunidades para su implementación. La participación infantil implica escuchar atentamente a los niños, reconocer y dar sentido a lo que dicen. La aceptación por parte del adulto de que el niño es un sujeto capaz de tomar decisiones, elegir y opinar, hace que adapte sus prácticas educativas, propiciando situaciones de aprendizaje reales y más significativas. En el desarrollo del estudio se utilizó una escala de análisis de la calidad del contexto referente a la implicación del niño (PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2010, p. 24), ya que ayuda al educador a cuestionarse sobre la pertinencia de las actividades, ayudándole a ponerse en el lugar de los niños, teniendo en cuenta los indicadores de implicación, como la concentración en las actividades, la energía, la persistencia, entre otros. El texto presentará las condiciones para la realización de la pasantía, así como la fundamentación teórica del estudio, y la descripción y análisis del proyecto resultante del proceso de investigación que acompañó toda la intervención pedagógica. Además, se discutirán aportes centrales de esta experiencia a la construcción de la identidad profesional.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Implicación. Participación. Educación preescolar.*





## Introduction

This text addresses the participation of children in the development of educational action, based on the analysis of the experience of an internship in kindergarten, as part of the Master's course in Preschool Education and Primary School Teaching, with a group of boys and girls aged 3 to 6 years old.

Participation depends on several factors, based on educational conceptions and principles that are congruent with them, as well as variables such as contexts, family and social group, in the interactions that are established among children and between them and adults. It is up to the adult to understand the importance of the contributions of different children to their learning, in order to adapt their attitudes and educational practices to their interests, making them more significant.

One of the tools used to deepen the study was the use of the implication scale, by Portugal and Laevers (2011), which can be an ally for educators, as it helps them to evaluate the educational environment and, subsequently, to reflect on the changes that should be made so that children become more involved in the activities proposed to them.

## Child and Childhood

Children and childhood can be seen in different ways, one of these being John Locke's perspective "in which the child is metaphorically presented as a clean slate on which everything he/she needs must be entered" (SARMENTO; OLIVEIRA, 2020, p. 1125, our translation), that is, this philosopher considered that the child is born without knowledge and that he learns things through experience. On the other hand, there are perspectives that argue that the child is an active subject that seeks knowledge, being in constant evolution.

Children can be defined as "individual and singular subjects, members of the generational category childhood" (SARMENTO; OLIVEIRA, 2020, p. 1125, our translation), so this concept is always linked to the concept of childhood. Professor Kramer recognizes "a vision of the child as citizen, creative subject, social individual, producer of culture and history, while being produced in the history and culture that are contemporary to it" (2002, p. 43, our translation). From the moment the adult realizes that the child is a subject capable of making decisions, choosing and giving opinions, the adult





begins to create real and meaningful learning situations, considering the context and opinions.

The concept of childhood, on the other hand, can be defined as a universal generational category that results from interaction with the social context and is therefore not homogeneous, and may differ from context to context.

The concepts of subject and agency have underlain the idea that the child should be listened to, making educators and teachers need to transform their educational practices, challenging themselves to overcome from the side what gives them more security, to build new ways of working together with children. Thus, Malavasi and Zoccatelli (2013, p. 143, our translation) argue that

[...] the educational action is not that of transmitting, but of listening; an active and participating listening that places the adult in a situation of continuous learning and that, at the same time, turns him into an attentive and punctual observer, in conditions to welcome the children's requests and cognitive needs.

Educators and teachers must listen to what the children tell them so that they can evolve professionally and be prepared to meet the challenges posed by the group they work with.

## Participation

The term participation has been undergoing changes over time, depending on the meaning in which this term is used, the intentions of those who refer to it, and the social practices in which it is developed.

Participation is "a spontaneous activity" and, furthermore, it is "a multidimensional concept that makes such action depend on variables such as the context where it is developed, the circumstances that affect it, the skills of those who exercise it, or even the power relations that influence it" (FERNANDES, 2009, p. 95, our translation).

It is from birth that human beings begin to participate in various social groups, such as family, school, and friends, hence there are different ways of participating.

Children, regardless of age, must be the focus of pedagogical work at all levels of education, since children's participation

[implies that they can freely express opinions, thoughts, feelings and needs, and that the views they express should be considered and



influence decisions. This means that children need to be involved democratically in their living spaces - families, schools, media, associations, governments, etc. - and that their opinions exert an influential action (AGOSTINHO, 2009, p. 7, our translation).

For children to realize that they belong to a community and that their opinion is crucial, it is essential to develop democratic practices, because

Democratic participation is an important principle of civic sense, it is a means by which children and adults can participate with others in decision making [...] and in another, a means to oppose power and it will control, as well as forms of oppressions and injustice that necessarily derive from an unlimited exercise of power. Finally, democracy creates opportunity for difference to flourish; in this way we have an environment more conducive to the production of new thinking and new practice (MOSS, 2008, p. 11, our translation).

It is these democratic practices that enhance the interest of diversity among individuals, the struggle to combat oppression, and environments conducive to personal development.

Only recently, the social sciences have realized that listening to children has helped us to understand how children live and are organized, which implies the recognition of children as competent social actors.

Corsaro (2011 p. 15, our translation) argues that "children are social agents, active and creative, who produce their own unique childhood cultures, while simultaneously contributing to the production of adult societies". That is, children are observant subjects with formulated opinions, so they can bring suggestions for activities to the educational context, making this context more democratic. In addition, children should be included in situations in their community, making them feel that they are part of a group and can interact with adults.

As we have seen, children's interactions with adults are important, but interactions among peers are no less so, for in a group there can be diverse cultures. Corsaro (2011, p. 94-95, our translation) argues that

children do not simply develop as individuals; they collectively produce peer cultures and contribute to the reproduction of a larger society or culture [...] children contribute two cultures (that of children and that of adults) simultaneously.



When children play together, they are sharing knowledge and feelings that end up being the fruit of their social and family culture. Thus, the exchanges of information, opinions, and suggestions are the fruit of several cultures simultaneously, which are interconnected.

Bringing about the active participation of all elements of society is quite difficult, but it is essential to respect some basic principles of human rights. Therefore, it is necessary to promote values such as freedom, solidarity and equality among the various subjects of society, and it is crucial to start this promotion in children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) associated child citizenship with rights such as protection, provision, and child participation. Protection rights "safeguard against discrimination, physical and sexual abuse, exploitation, injustice, and conflict," provision rights "provide the conditions necessary to ensure health, education, social security, physical care, family life, leisure, and culture," and participation rights "give children the right to be heard and consulted, to express themselves and their opinions freely, to access information, and to decide for their own benefit" (VEIGA; FERREIRA, 2017, p. 8, our translation). Children's participation rights are those that are most overlooked by society (SARMENTO; SOARES; TOMÁS, 2007), since children are still seen by adults as less than competent beings who need help. That being said, it is up to the adult to create times and spaces conducive to child participation, making children recognize themselves as subjects belonging to a community,

This means that to defend children's participation is not to be against adults, nor to disregard and annul their roles and functions as such, in the care and education of children, horizontalizing intergenerational relations. On the contrary, it is to understand the adult as a crucial mediator in the promotion and guarantee of children's rights, it is to plead for more ethical relationships between adults and children - caring, respectful and cooperative -, capable of making adults also aware of their vulnerabilities and to recognize how much they can learn about themselves by learning about and with children (ROCHA; FERREIRA, 2008, p. 27, our translation).

Adults, as mediators, have the duty to design situations in which responsibilities are assigned to children, so that in this way they develop and become aware of their role in society.





## Barriers to child participation

The construction of education should be based on values of justice, democracy and participation of all elements involved in the educational process, and it is important to strengthen the participation of children. Young (1997) emphasizes that not everyone is in the same communication position, they can communicate in different ways and in their own ways, and that children's experiences can play a key role in what they say. Therefore, the realization that children's participation is a way of confronting differences between children is vital.

Educational contexts should be fair spaces in which children can participate, so participation "has to be seen not only as a right, but also as a necessity for the development of the principles of democracy" (AGOSTINHO, 2013, p. 232, our translation).

One of the main problems associated with child participation is related to power sharing, because sometimes adults believe that by participating children are diminishing their power and are no longer dependent on them. There are other scenarios of "active resistance" in which the adult becomes resistant to children's participation: one is when they believe that children should not be burdened, another is because they think that children cannot make decisions because they do not have enough knowledge, and there is also the idea that children are easily influenced. In addition to "active resistance", there is another "child-adult bonding scenario" called "hindrance", which is characterized by the adult not letting children participate or else letting them participate but their reactions to children's opinions discourage children's participation (REDDY; RATNA, 2002 apud SAVE THE CHILDREN, s/d, p. 1-2, our translation). Therefore, the child's participation depends on factors such as the context, the social group or the family, and can occur without help from the adult or with the adult's help.

There are two authors, Elias (1994) and Foucault (1984), who believe that power varies, and that it is fundamental to analyze situations that happen on a daily basis. The former states that there is a relationship of dependence between the adult and the child and that the influence of power

It has to do with the fact that there are individuals or groups of individuals who can retain or monopolize what others need (...) the greater the needs, the greater the proportion of powers that the former assume. On the other hand, individuals who are denied rights the means to satisfy their needs usually possess something they lack and which, in turn, those who monopolize them need (ELIAS, 1994, p. 53, our translation).



Foucault mentions that

Power is conceived as a set of actions on possible actions: it operates on the field of possibilities where the behavior of the acting subjects is inscribed: it incites, induces, circumvents, facilitates or makes more difficult, expands or limits, makes more or less probable; in the limit, it constrains or completely impedes; but it is always a way of acting on one or several acting subjects, insofar as they act or are susceptible to act. An action on actions" (FOUCAULT, 1995, p. 243, our translation).

According to Casas (2002 apud TOMÁS; SOARES, 2004, p. 350, our translation), children are considered "still-nots" because they see the world differently from the standards established by society. It was only later that children started to be seen as something socially constructed, since they had their own identity and ways of living different from adults. Although these particularities were considered, it was still the adult who was responsible for creating spaces, without taking into account the children's ideas.

Mayall (2002, p. 21, our translation) argued that childhood was still seen as a time when children were shown to be immature, in need of protection, and with no way to be economically independent. Thus, three paradigms predominate: "Ownership Paradigm", "Protection and Control Paradigm", and "Danger Paradigm". The "Ownership Paradigm" is characterized by the fact that adults consider children to be their property, and there is no way for children to participate and have their basic rights ensured. The "Protection and Control Paradigm" has to do with the fact that the adult believes that the child is dependent on him or her for protection and children are seen as incapable beings. Finally, the "Paradigm of Danger" refers to the fact that society is concerned about bad behaviors of children and young people and not always all their rights are ensured (TOMÁS; SOARES, 2004).

It is undeniable the idea that the adult is the one with the most power, however, the way children react to adult attitudes also makes them change their practices or ways of being.





## Implication

Taking into account the experiential approach, which aims to provide quality education for all children, there are two key dimensions to assess the quality of an educational context: emotional well-being and involvement (PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2010, p. 18). We chose to study the children's involvement in this project, since it would be difficult to study both dimensions simultaneously.

Ferre Laevers (1994) defined the concept of involvement, which later came to be called implication<sup>1</sup>, as being "a quality of human activity that can be recognized by concentration and persistence, characterized by motivation, interest and fascination, openness to stimuli, satisfaction and an intense flow of energy", being fundamental to understand that this is an indicator of quality of context that helps the educator to question himself about the relevance of the activities (LAEVERS, 1994 apud PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2010, p. 24, our translation).

In 1993, Ferre Laevers defined the scales of child involvement and the scales of teacher engagement within the experiential education project, and although we are talking about involvement which is the terminology used by Gabriela Portugal and Ferre Laevers (2010), involvement and engagement are synonymous terms.

Involvement can be assessed using a scale that has five levels, and while this is quite useful, it is necessary for the educator to always be mindful of the context and circumstances in which his or her assessment is made to avoid errors.

The level of involvement has to do with the effects of the environment on children and is not related to the child's predisposition for learning; therefore, this level is "a signal for the educator, giving indications about what the educational offerings or environmental conditions provoke in children, and is therefore an indicator of quality of educational context (not of the child!)" (PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2010, p. 25, our translation). That said, involvement has to do with the contexts that can in turn influence the way educators work, so it is essential to realize that low levels of involvement may have nothing to do with the ability of the educator to act.

The process of assessing the children's involvement is quite demanding for the evaluator, since he/she has to follow his/her perceptions and, at the same time, try to put him/herself in the place of the children being evaluated, having to take into account the indicators of involvement: (i) concentration; (ii) energy; (iii) complexity and creativity; (iv) facial expression and posture; (v) persistence; (vi) accuracy; (vii) reaction time; (viii)





verbal expression and (ix) satisfaction. Point (i) has to do with the child's ability to pay attention to an activity and can only be distracted by very strong stimuli; point (ii) has to do with the effort made by the child that can be demonstrated by the increase in the sound of his voice or other attitudes that can be observed by the child's facial expressions; point (iii) concerns the child's ability to perform complicated tasks and introduce new elements, with a personal touch in the activities or productions. Regarding (iv), the child's facial expressions and posture provide important information about their involvement, as they convey feelings that must be interpreted by the educator; (v) has to do with the fact that the child does not stop their activity, showing concentration on what is being done and not letting other stimuli distract them from their goals; (vi) relates to the care, quality and attention to detail of the activity performed. Already the (vii) refers to the speed of children in responding to stimuli that may be pleasurable and motivation in carrying out the activity; the (viii) is marked by what children say that leads the educator to draw conclusions about the satisfaction of children and, finally, the (ix) is the pleasure shown by the child when he or she is doing something or at the end of doing certain activity (PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2010, p. 26-28, our translation).

The implication that a child shows when doing a certain activity is not strictly about the degree of difficulty, but about the fact that the child is using the limit of his abilities, that is, reaching the zone of proximal development (VYGOTSKY, 1978).

### **Research project and pedagogical action**

The research in question was based on the action research methodology, so it was essential to use strategies and instruments for information collection and pedagogical intervention to support the project. Therefore, the information collection instruments were chosen according to the needs, objectives and questions raised by this research.

Qualitative research, in this case action research, indicates that researchers must collect information in many ways so that, throughout the cyclical process of observation and action, they can draw the necessary conclusions that feed the next cycle. This research has 5 characteristics, not all studies have all of them. First, information must be collected in the contexts, and this requires the researcher to spend a lot of time with the whole community, collecting information in a variety of ways. Second, the data collected should be very descriptive and without neglecting things that seem trivial because these allow one to reach various conclusions, and third, researchers should show more concern with





the process of reaching a certain result rather than the result itself. The fourth characteristic has to do with the fact that researchers draw conclusions based on the records made and, finally, researchers are concerned with what the students learned and how they did it (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 2013, p. 47-51, our translation). Therefore, in the present study, data were collected through participant observation and the instruments for collecting information were field notes, critical incident records (CSR), rating scales, audio records, photographs and videos and, finally, the records and works produced by the children. It is important to note that the various records were previously authorized by the parents and the children involved in the study. For reasons of identity reservation, the names given here comply with the rules of anonymity, i.e., they are substitutes for the real ones.

The project in question aimed to promote the participation of children in the educational context, hence the presentation of the strategies used during the children's observation is so essential.

Over time, several strategies were used to stimulate children's participation, to involve them in the activities and to keep their attention, such as creating activities based on the interests expressed by the children in Friday assemblies, in which proposals of activities they would like to do the following week are presented. Regarding the interest shown by the observed group in reading stories, some strategies used were choosing quality works, appropriate to what had been done in the classroom or to the children's taste; using various strategies of rhythm, timbre and movement, such as pretending to smell something, pretending to knock on wooden furniture, making movements that help in the storytelling, among other things.

The use of positive reinforcement was another strategy with great results as it helps children solve self-esteem problems, which can help improve their behavior.

Distributing tasks, pretending to tell a secret, and using categories to get children to go to the bathroom or find out which classmates are missing are other examples of strategies that promote child intervention.

Some strategies adopted to encourage children's involvement in the activities were to observe all the members of the group of children to see if they were really interested in what was being done. If, after several attempts, the children were not motivated, other activities were proposed in order to motivate their involvement. Based on our knowledge of that specific group of children, there were moments when it was essential to end the





activities earlier than planned, so as not to create disinterest. On the other hand, it is important to encourage the continuation of an activity that, when finished by the child, can trigger feelings such as joy, pride, and satisfaction. At some point, complying with the necessary ethical requirements, an *action cam* was used, placed on top of a cupboard or elsewhere, with the children's consent, so that they would not feel pressured by someone recording and constantly observing them, in order not to influence their behavior and not to bias the conclusions to be drawn in this study.

## Conclusion

This study on children's participation occurred in a preschool setting, and there was a concern to see if the children understood the importance of everyone's participation in the educational context, so over the weeks it was possible to see that the children understood the importance of their peers' contributions to enrich their learning. The following record shows that the children helped each other, shared ideas and understood that the contributions made by their peers were important.

*When defining his action plan, Antônio said, "I'm going to the experiments and I'm going to make plants like Sofia," and the Educator encouraged, "Good, you're going to make a plantation," and Antônio replied, "I'm going to make soil, water, corn, corn roots. And I already asked Sofia and she will tell me how I have to do it" (Continuous Record, November 5, 2019).*

Regarding the obstacles underlying the participation of all elements of the group, it was possible to verify that there were situations in which the older elements of the group or the children who normally participated the most, did not allow other elements to intervene as they wished.

After observing these situations, strategies were defined to promote the participation of all the members of the group, which can be defined as: giving a voice to the children; showing the whole group that their opinions are fundamental in the daily educational routine; creating activities which arose from the children's suggestions or which could be connected with something which had been discussed; bringing together more participatory children with less participatory children, among other strategies. The use of these strategies made it possible to analyze the involvement of children in the performance of activities, so it should be classified considering the "indicators of participation": "concentration", "energy", "complexity and creativity", "facial expression



and posture", "persistence", "accuracy", "reaction time", "satisfaction" and also "verbal expression" (PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2010, p. 27-28, our translation).

It is important to note that engagement has to do with contexts, which in turn can influence the way educators work, so it is critical to realize that low levels of engagement can be due to activities that are not appealing to children.

To analyze the children's levels of involvement I focused on videos made of some of their activities and their analysis. An example of a record made that allowed us to draw conclusions occurred when Jorge was playing in the play area:

*Jorge is in the play area putting a puzzle together, yet he is watching everything going on around him, such as watching me pull Paula's sleeves up instead of concentrating on the activity or just standing there staring into the void. When I noticed that the child was becoming unmotivated, I asked him if he wouldn't finish the puzzle and he replied, "I can't." Hearing this, I decided to motivate him by telling him that he could do it and to try again. In the end, Jorge was able to finish the puzzle (Continuous Record, November 13, 2019).*

Based on this record and on what I saw during the time that the child was performing the activity, I classified him/her as being at level 3 of the engagement scale, since he/she showed involvement in the activity although he/she lacked some indicators of involvement, such as concentration, pleasure and motivation (PORTUGAL; LAEVERS, 2011, p. 28-30, our translation). With the above example, it is possible to verify that the child in question was not concentrating because he looked at other things instead of focusing completely; he lacked motivation, so the strategy was changed, however, Jorge still did not show pleasure in doing it.

Finally, it was necessary to understand how the proposed activities promoted the participation of all children, and this was verified through the change in behavior of the group members.

Over time, it was found that there was great dependence between the siblings in the group, which was a very disturbing factor, since it inhibited them from separating, and sometimes the older sibling tended to 'smother' the younger one, leading him to not interact openly with the whole group and to focus on other projects, which is contrary to the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-school Education (2016), according to which

Asking older children or children who have attended kindergarten in the previous year to collaborate - planning together how to welcome the incoming ones constitutes a social learning situation from which the 'new' and the 'old' can benefit" (SILVA *et al.*, 2016, p. 99).



We found that the children gradually understood the pedagogical routine, and, with this evolution, new records characteristic of the Modern School Movement (MEM) were introduced, such as the attendance chart, the group diary and the weekly plan.

Regarding the most participatory children, who ended up influencing the other classmates, three elements stood out. In one of the cases, the child was too participatory, not giving others room to speak, so we had to use strategies such as shortening his speaking time or assigning him some more mundane tasks so he/she wouldn't cut his classmates' words short. Another child knew how to do things in a balanced way, knew the routines and showed concern in helping her classmates overcome their difficulties. On the other hand, the third child was quite talkative, but in a way to draw attention to himself, and progressively he/she became more open to others, showing himself to be more friendly, more understanding and more respectful.

As for the elements identified as not being very participative, because they didn't play a big role in the educational routine, it is possible to say that there were changes. One of the elements became more attentive to the activities around him, and at first seemed a little lost in space. Another stopped being the shy child who knew the answers to everything, but only said them quietly, and became much more involved in the activities. The case of the child in which there was a greater change was due to the removal of his brother; he/she became very involved in what he/she was doing, participated more and was able to claim his turn to speak, something that was feared would never happen. Finally, in reaction to a girl who was very little involved in the activities, the strategy used was to try to captivate her attention, always thinking of what she would like to do.

These conclusions are fundamental because they show that children are not all the same, so it is necessary to adapt activities to their needs and interests, not forgetting the educational intentionality behind the activities.

Children must be listened to and integrated into the whole educational process, because only then will they become aware of their role in society, becoming beings endowed with important values to live in a fair society.





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