

**Child(ren) and childhood(s) in the processes of production of curriculum policies for early childhood education: an analysis from the three capitals of the southern region of Brazil**

**Bambinø e infanzia(e) nei processi di produzione di politiche curriculari per l'educazione della prima infanzia: un'analisi di tre capitali della regione Sud del Brasile**

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**Abstract**

This article's theme is the meanings produced about child(ren) and childhood(s) in the processes of formulating curricular policies for the education of children aged 0 to 5 in Brazil. These processes are marked by colonizing perspectives based on the ideal of a global child and childhood and problematizing the norm by recognizing factors of heterogeneity that mark childhoods and children's education. It starts with an empirical study that compares two mandatory national curricular policies in force, the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (2009) and the *National Common Curricular Base* (2017), and their impact on subnational policies in three cities in the South of Brazil, namely: Curitiba, Florianópolis and Porto Alegre. The analyses reverberate different local movements that confirm the idea of global children and childhood and oppose this perspective, revealing resistances and alignments, not without tensions, in formulating and implementing curricular policies for early childhood education. A common point is the absence of a decolonial perspective underpinning the educational projects in curricular documents.

**Keywords:** child(ren), childhood(s), curriculum policies, early childhood education.

**Sommario**

Il tema di questo articolo è il significato prodotto su bambinø e infanzia(e) nei processi di formulazione di politiche curriculari per l'educazione dei bambinø di età compresa tra 0 a 5 in Brasile. Questi processi sono caratterizzati da prospettive colonizzatrici basate sull'ideale di un bambino e dell'infanzia globale e problematizzano la norma riconoscendo fattori di eterogeneità che segnano l'infanzia e l'educazione dei bambinø. Si inizia con uno studio empirico che mette a confronto due politiche curriculari nazionali obbligatorie in vigore, le *Linee Guida Nazionali per l'educazione della Prima Infanzia* (2009) e la *Base Nazionale Comune Curriculare* (2017) e il loro impatto sulle politiche subnazionali in tre città del sud del Brasile: Curitiba, Florianópolis e Porto Alegre. Le analisi riverberano diversi movimenti locali che confermano l'idea di bambino e infanzia globali e si oppongono a questa prospettiva, rivelando resistenze e allineamenti, non senza tensioni, nella formulazione e attuazione di politiche curriculari per l'educazione della prima infanzia. Un punto comune è l'assenza di una prospettiva decoloniale alla base dei progetti educativi nei documenti curriculari.

**Parole chiave:** bambinø, infanzia(e), politiche curriculari, educazione della prima infanzia.

## Introduction

This article's theme is the discourses about child(ren) and childhood(s) in the processes of formulating curricular policies for the education of children aged 0 to 5 in Brazil. These processes are marked both by colonizing perspectives, based on the ideal of a global child and childhood, structured in hegemonic norms – bourgeois, white, cisheteronormative – and problematizing the norm by recognizing the diversity and inequalities of class, ethnic-racial belonging, gender, age, and culture, which mark children's childhoods and education. It starts with an empirical study that compares two mandatory national curricular policies in force, the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (2009) and the *National Common Curricular Base* (2017), and their impact on subnational policies in three cities in the South of Brazil, namely: Curitiba, Florianópolis, and Porto Alegre. The aim is to analyze, based on the conditions of production of the texts of the policies mentioned above, the movements and meanings produced regarding the processes of appropriation, resistance, and counter-conduct in the face of the perspectives identified in the policies and how these discourses materialize in local curricular guidelines. In this sense, the article is organized into five sections, including this introduction. In Section 2, we present the methodological path, followed by Section 3, in which the debate and trajectory on curricular policies for early childhood education in Brazil are located. In Section 4, the curricular documents of the studied municipalities are analyzed, and in Section 5, we present some final considerations based on comparing local documents with national ones.

### 1. Methodological path

The empirical study that originates this article confronts two current mandatory national curricular policies, the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (DCNEI, 2009) and the *National Common Curricular Base* (BNCC, 2017), and their impact on subnational policies in three cities in Southern Brazil, namely, Curitiba in Paraná (PR), Florianópolis in Santa Catarina (SC), and Porto Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul (RS). The three cities have been chosen since they are the capitals of their respective states. In this sense, the curricular documents from Curitiba (PR), Florianópolis (SC), and Porto Alegre (RS) are our corpus of analysis. Based on the discourses present in the national and subnational curricula policies, we investigated the meanings produced about child(ren) and childhood(s) from the production conditions of each of the documents. When we move the word discourse, according to Maingueneau (2015, p. 25, author emphasis), it activates «diffusely, an open set of *leitmotiven*, of idea-forces» i.e., the discourse is: an organization *beyond the phrase, a form of action, interactive, contextualized, assumed by a subject, governed by standards*, assumed within an *interdiscourse* and more, the discourse socially *constructs* meaning. We will appropriate the following among these idea-forces, without excluding the others: «Discourse socially *constructs* meaning» (Maingueneau, 2015, p. 28, author emphasis).

The meaning we are dealing with here is not a directly accessible, stable meaning immanent to a statement or a group of statements that would be waiting to be deciphered; it is continually constructed and reconstructed within determined social practices. This construction of meaning is undoubtedly the work of individuals, but of individuals inserted in social configurations at different levels (Maingueneau, 2015, p. 29).

Based on these theoretical-methodological premises, we proceeded to analyze the curricular documents.

## **2. Curricular policies and childhood(s): for what and for whom?**

Why a curriculum for early childhood education? What belongs to this curriculum? These are questions that accompany early childhood education and, in the case of Brazil, take on new contours from the moment that early childhood education becomes a right for all children aged 0 to 6, with the approval of the 1988 Constitution and the first stage of *Basic Education with the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN)* in 1996. In 2009, we saw the publication of the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI)*<sup>1</sup>, a document prepared with broad participation that aims to guide public policies in the area and the elaboration, planning, execution, and evaluation of pedagogical and curricular proposals. In Brazil, early childhood education is the responsibility of municipalities, and it is up to other entities, federal and state, to cooperate with the offer and the federal entity to coordinate policies. The year 2009 is the reference for the analysis proposed here. We will take as a basis the review of the DCNEI, which presents a perspective of children and childhood that recognizes diversity and differences and defines that educational contexts must commit to combating and overcoming processes of racial, gender, religious, and class discrimination and exclusion, among others.

From 2017 onwards, the DCNEI began to compete with the *National Common Curricular Base (BNCC)*, a document whose formulation process began in 2015, with the establishment, by the Ministry of Education (MEC), of a committee of consultants for this purpose. At the end of 2015, the first version was presented and discussed within civil society, with public hearings, and by sending suggestions and opinions. In April 2016, the MEC released the second version, also open to criticism and suggestions. However, President Dilma Rousseff was impeached during the BNCC production process that year. It will only be possible within the scope of this text to present some of the changes that occurred from the first versions to the version that was approved in 2017. We will only highlight those that are relevant to the analysis proposed here. Concerning the meanings attributed to childhood(s) and child(ren) in the final text of the BNCC, in the section entitled *Early Childhood Education in the Context of Basic Education*, the document reaffirms the conception of children already presented in the DCNEI. Even though this part of the text presents the child as a historical subject of rights who builds their personal and collective identity (Brazil, 2009, 2017), in continuity with the propositions presented in the early childhood education chapter of the document, we realize that there is a shift in the conception initially presented and other meanings end up prevailing.

We can see this shift in the meaning attributed to the child(ren) and childhood(s) when we look at the section that addresses the transition from early childhood education to the next stage, the initial years of Elementary School. We see that tables were included that present a synthesis of learning for each field of experience that «must be understood as a guiding element and indicative of objectives to be explored throughout the segment of Early Childhood Education, and which will be expanded and deepened in Elementary School» (Brazil, 2017, p. 51). As highlighted by Souza, Moro, and Coutinho (2019), it is evident that the concept of children presented at BNCC is aligned with the guidelines of international organizations, foundations, and private institutes, which see children as human capital, which through an intervention based on skills and abilities, invests in the worker of the future.

### **3. The meanings produced about child(ren) and childhood(s) in local curricular documents**

In this section, we present the analyses of the meanings produced around the child(ren) and childhood(s) in the discourses of local curricular documents.

#### *Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Dialogues with BNCC*

We began the analysis of the municipalities' curricular documents with the early childhood education curricular document for the municipality of Curitiba, capital of Paraná, BR, called *Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Dialogues with BNCC* from 2019 (CEI). We emphasize that our corpus of analysis will be the CEI itself, and we will not compare it with other research that may have been carried out regarding its formulation and implementation (Arretche, 2001; Deubel, 2006). In the presentation of the CEI, authored by professor Maria Sílvia Bacila (Municipal Secretary of Education of Curitiba), Bacila (2019, p. 5) states that the document is a guide, but does not represent the ultimate truth, i.e., «Exactly as a guide, as an instrument, it will always be open to dialogue, alive, pulsating, talking to the educational reality». If we think about a travel guide, often used when traveling to an unknown place, we trust it and do not let it go under any circumstances because we simply run the risk of not being able to return to our place of accommodation, which may be located on a very close street. However, as our knowledge of the region is restricted, we cannot understand this; thus, we become anxious, nervous, and insecure... No, a curricular document could not be a guide with this meaning, but rather a document constructed by a significant portion of professionals who work in Municipal Early Childhood Education Centers (CMEI).

According to professor Maria Carmen Silveira Barbosa (who worked in the CEI consultancy), the construction of the CEI curricular document was democratic and participatory, representing «changes in conceptions, breaking with a prescriptive curriculum and proposing to rethink pedagogical proposals» (Barbosa, 2019, p. 68). In this regard, as the CEI does not historicize its formulation process, we are unable to assess whether the construction was democratic or not. Despite the absence of historical background, when we searched the web for the names of people who worked on the CEI Writing Committee, we realized that the team has experience in teaching, pedagogical coordination, and training of education professionals, some with master's degrees and others with doctorates. Still on the team responsible for building the CEI in 2019, which at the time had Professor Maria Sílvia Bacila as Municipal Secretary of Education in Curitiba, Professor Maria Carmen Silveira Barbosa from the School of Education of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) provided consultancy and the CEI Writing Committee was made up of twenty-nine people who were teachers and pedagogues from the SME of Curitiba. We emphasize that the CEI was built in 2019 under the management of Mayor Rafael Greca de Macedo of the Social Democratic Party (PSD). In terms of organization, the CEI is structured in three parts, as shown in Chart 1.

BEING AND LIVING CHILDHOOD IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN CURITIBA		
<b>Being and living childhood in Curitiba</b> What does it mean to be an educational city? What do we understand by child and childhood? How do children live their childhoods in Curitiba? Early Childhood Education in Curitiba Children's rights in Early Childhood Education institutions	<b>Being and living in an educational community</b> A look at subjects and relationships The construction of socio-environmental citizenship in the educational community Democratic management and the construction of educational communities	
CURRICULUM PROPOSED AND EXPERIENCED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION		
<b>Curricular dialogues in Early Childhood Education in Curitiba</b> Learning and development rights A curriculum committed to the care and education of babies and children Babies and children's play The languages of babies and children The experience of learning and the fields of experiences	<b>The fields of experiences</b> Field of experiences "The self, the other, and us" Field of experiences "Body, gestures, and movements" Field of experiments "Traces, sounds, colors, and shapes" Field of experiences: "Listening, speaking, thinking, and imagination" Field of experiences "Spaces, times, quantities, relationships, and transformations"	A network of connections <b>The curriculum, babies, and children in Early Childhood Education in the Municipal Teaching Network of Curitiba</b> Pedagogy of participation Pedagogical documentation
BEING AND EXPERIENCING TEACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION		
<b>The curriculum felt and lived in daily life</b> Actions that mark daily life Recurring proposals Projects <b>Pedagogical Documentation</b> Observe Listen Record Analyze and interpret Communicate Plan	The construction of narratives An attentive look and commitment to learning The transition processes <b>Become a teacher in Early Childhood Education in Curitiba</b> Professional development	

Chart 1: Organization of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum in the Municipality of Curitiba (Authors' elaboration based on the document).

Due to the limited number of pages in this article, we will analyze, in more detail, the part related to the question *What do we understand by child and childhood?*, located in *Being and living childhood in Curitiba, in the part Being and Living Childhood in Early Childhood Education in Curitiba*. The CEI, based on studies in the Sociology of Childhood, considers childhood «as a generational social category, i.e., a time in the individual's life» (Secretaria Municipal da Educação de Curitiba, 2019, p. 13) and supported by Sarmiento (2005) considers «that childhood is independent of children and from this perspective it will always exist, as it is constantly *filled* and *emptied* of its social actors who, at each time, form part of a generational category» (p. 13). Still based on Sarmiento (2005), childhood is a social construction situated historically and geographically and crossed by the social categories of class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion «and other variables that can intervene in the way of perceiving childhood at a given time, and place. In this sense, we recognize that childhood is plural – *childhoods*, as there were and coexist different ways of being and living childhoods» (p. 13, authors' emphasis). Therefore, despite the CEI presenting reservations about the idea of universal childhood, based on Barbosa (2000), it states the need for a certain universalization so that it is possible to think about «collective policies and proposals for the childhoods that surround us» (p. 13). Given this conjecture, in institutions that serve early childhood education, the CEI is committed to ensuring with care and attention the singularities of

babies and children, structuring collective projects with distinct possibilities that accommodate individualities, providing opportunities for «encounters, relationships, and interactions» (p. 13).

Concerning the concept of a child, the CEI (2019) states that they are «*a subject of history and rights*, who at this moment in life integrates the generational category of childhood and, in addition to age belonging, is a *social actor* who belongs to a class, a gender, a race/ethnicity, and a geographic location» (p. 14, authors' emphasis). Based on Corsaro (2005), in the CEI, the child is not a spectator of their life, of their learning process, but rather an interpretative reproducer because «children not only appropriate culture, but also participate in cultural changes (...), they create and participate in '*peer culture*'» (p. 14, authors' emphasis), a culture that represents «a stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values, and interests that they produce and share in interaction with their peers» (Secretaria Municipal da Educação de Curitiba, 2019, p. 14)

Unlike childhoods, the concept of the child is not presented as plural. However, as it is a generational category of these childhoods, would the child not also be plural? Why childhoods and not children? Manuel Pinto and Manuel Sarmiento (1997), references from the Sociology of Childhood, an area mobilized in the curricular document, argue that «the variation in the social conditions in which children live is the main factor of heterogeneity» (p. 22) and social markers such as class, ethnicity, gender, and culture act in characterizing the social place that each child occupies. Therefore, the child is a category that is simultaneously singular and plural. We noticed in the CEI, although unspoken and written, an *intersectional* look at children as historical subjects with rights, social actors belonging to different social categories, especially when they are concerned with proposing «a transversal and intentional work (...) that includes combating prejudice, discrimination, and inequalities through prevention, protection, promotion, defense, and reparation of human rights» (Secretaria Municipal da Educação de Curitiba, 2019, p. 41).

Therefore, we consider the following principles to guide our actions: human dignity; equal rights; recognition and appreciation of differences and diversities; secularity of the State; democracy in education; transversality, experience, and globality; equity; socio-environmental sustainability, and interculturality (*ivi*, p. 42).

Unfortunately, the speeches in the CEI do not materialize since if even one child escapes what is proposed and recommended, then some gaps need to be seriously addressed. Quite frequently, we find women and men on the streets of Curitiba pulling their carts to collect recycled waste, and it is not uncommon for small children and even toddlers to accompany them. How can we believe these children's rights are guaranteed if their legal guardians' rights are not? How often are we leaving the supermarket and coming across people asking for a pack of diapers for their young children? How many times, near the bus station, under an overpass, do we find indigenous families with their young children selling handicrafts?

Furthermore, here we are only dealing with what our eyes see, which is wide open, but if we enter into more peripheral spaces, what we experience would be much more significant. Elizabeth Macedo, in one of her texts written in 2019, stated what was being called Base, BNCC was «the intention of defining the horizon right there where the eyes of control can reach, (...) however, we insist on saying that the horizon it is not one, not even right there» (Macedo, 2019, p. 54), and more, that the Base that national research has been presenting is

a university that trains teachers in a research and cultural environment. The base is the teacher's exclusive dedication to a school, a salary that allows that teacher a dignified life (in which we do not just want food, but fun and art). The base is students who can eat and receive action from the State in meeting their essential health, sanitation, and cultural needs. The base is schools with good material and infrastructure conditions (Macedo, 2019, p. 54).

We agree with Macedo and direct our focus to the early childhood education Curriculum: Dialogues with BNCC to the governors of the municipality of Curitiba because the educating city does not respect female teachers.



Image 1: Demonstration on August 8, 2023 (Sgarbe, 2023).

#### *Reissue of the Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education in the Municipal Network of Florianópolis*

The document *Reissue of the Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education in the Municipal Teaching Network of Florianópolis*, in the capital of the state of Santa Catarina, dates from 2022 and updates the «[...] theoretical and methodological foundations, which translate and guide the composition of educational-pedagogical relationships» (Prefeitura Municipal de Florianópolis, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, Diretoria de Educação Infantil, 2022, p. 11) present in the *Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education of the Municipal Teaching Network of Florianópolis* of 2012. The 2022 Florianópolis curricular document is part of a documentary triad, together with the *Educational Pedagogical Guidelines for Early Childhood Education*, published in 2010, and the *Early Childhood Education Curriculum of the Municipal Teaching Network of Florianópolis*, published in 2015. All documents were prepared with the direct participation of professionals from the Teaching Network. Specifically, for the reissue of the guidelines, according to the document, training took place during 2019:

[...] in groups with Early Childhood Education professionals, teachers, classroom assistants, supervisors, and directors, for study and debate about each part of the original document, intending to deepen and update concepts concerning their trajectories and practices in the Network's Early Childhood Education in recent years (Prefeitura Municipal de Florianópolis, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, Diretoria de Educação Infantil, 2022, p. 12).

In addition to the direct participation of professionals, the preparation of the document included the contribution of consultants. There were 21 professionals linked to universities or the Florianópolis teaching network and an organizing committee comprising 11 people linked to the Directorate of Early Childhood Education of the Municipal Department of Education or who worked in teaching units and the Training Center. Furthermore, in the introduction of the document, it is possible to identify the information that its formulation considered the dialogue between the National Common Curricular Base (Brazil, 2017) and the municipal curricular documents of early childhood education in Florianópolis and occurred through training, studies, and collective debates. In this sense, it is interesting to note that even though CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2 of 2017, which establishes and guides the implementation of the BNCC, has determined that:

Art. 7 School curricula relating to all stages and modalities of Basic Education must have the BNCC as a mandatory reference and include a diversified part defined by institutions or school networks per the LDB, national curricular guidelines, and compliance with the regional and local characteristics, according to complementary standards established by the regulatory bodies of the respective Teaching Systems.

The municipal teaching network of Florianópolis chose to reissue its curricular guidelines and maintain the concepts, curricular structure, and form of organization as they were drawn up based on long and intense study and debate work from the previous decade. Within the scope of curricular organization, it is essential to highlight the choice to maintain the Pedagogical Action Centers, which precede the BNCC, as they were presented as a form of curricular organization in 2010 and have a similar meaning to that of the Experience Fields. Concerning the structure of the *Reissue of the Curricular Guidelines of Florianópolis* (2022), it is an extensive document with 363 pages, composed of written and visual texts, such as photographs provided by professionals, which mainly focus on children and children's productions. Its organization is detailed in Chart 2.

Still adhering to the structure of the document, attention is drawn to the fact that the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (Brazil, 2009) were included in full in the reissue of the curricular guidelines, marking, in our reading, an alignment with this national document, a very different movement when it comes to the presence, or rather absence, of the *National Common Curricular Base* (Brazil, 2017) in the body of the text. When advancing to the central analysis proposed in this article, the meanings surrounding childhood(s) and child(ren) in curricular documents, we identify explicitly, right in the first pages through the text *Educational-pedagogical Guidelines for Early Childhood Education in the Municipal Teaching Network of Florianópolis*, authored by Eloisa Acires Candal Rocha, which makes up part 1 of the document. These meanings refer to child(ren) and childhood(s) as categories marked by heterogeneity. In the author's words, the proposal for Pedagogical Action Centers points to a Pedagogy

[...] that recognizes children as concrete and real human beings, belonging to social and cultural contexts that constitute them. As a social construction, childhood must be recognized in its heterogeneity, considering factors such as social class, ethnicity, gender, and religion as determinants of the constitution of different childhoods and their cultures (Prefeitura Municipal de Florianópolis, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, Diretoria de Educação Infantil, 2022, p. 21).



<b>Part 1: The Pedagogical Educational Guidelines for Early Childhood Education</b>	
Educational-pedagogical guidelines for early childhood education in the municipal teaching network of Florianópolis.	National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education. CNE/CEB Resolution No. 5 of December 17, 2009.
<b>Part 2: The Play</b>	
- Play in Early Childhood Education; - Babies' play; - Very young children's play;	- Young children's play; - Play: paths to educational action; - A little more about the professionals' actions concerning the play.
<b>Part 3: Centers of Pedagogical Action</b>	
<b>Pedagogical Action Center: Social and Cultural Relationships</b> - Diversity in the encounter with difference: a principle of educational relationships; - Relationships with families in the educational-pedagogical actions of Early Childhood Education; - Educating-caring relationships in Early Childhood Education; - The relationships and interactions between babies, children, and adults; - Amid so many relationships, a path to build... possible actions by teaching professionals; - Space as "another" in relationships with and between children.	<b>Pedagogical Action Center: Languages</b> - <u>Oral and written languages: gestures, words, narratives, and literature:</u> Dialogues between and with children: between sounds, looks, gestures, laughter, and crying...; Playing with gestures, words, stories, and poems; The literary word: your, my, and our repertoire of poems and oral and written narratives; Dialoguing, narrating, writing, and telling stories: the role of teaching professionals; Paths of dialogue: perspectives on the performance of teaching professionals; - <u>Visual Languages: gestures, lines, constructions, colors, and images:</u> Visual Languages: playing, experiencing, creating...; Witches there, witches here, a spell I will break! Problematizing visual cultures; Come draw with me?; "Your sight improves, improves mine": the role of teaching professionals; Spaces, times, and materialities to play, experiment, discover, and imagine; - <u>Body and Sound Languages: body, gestures, movements, sounds, music, narratives, and theater:</u> And speaking of body...; Children, movement, action!; The sounds, the music, and the children; Shall we bang, whistle, and sing?; "Whoever plays, sings, and dances scares away their evils!"; "Owls and fireflies dance / among the <i>sacis</i> and fairies; Now I was a hero! And I'm the cowboy girl!; Meetings on the move: the role of teaching professionals.
<b>Pedagogical Action Center: Nature</b>	
- Beyond the walls: children in the city; - Places, times, and things: "My backyard is bigger than the world"; - Look, listen, pick up, touch, put in your mouth, shake, throw, squeeze... Observing and discovering the World with babies;	- Paths to Early Childhood Education "bigger than the world"; - Nature, society, and culture: children's relationships with expressions of mathematical knowledge; Look, Look, Nooks and crannies of the Island.
<b>Part 4: Pedagogical Action Strategies</b>	
- The bases of action in Early Childhood Education: pedagogical documentation, shared teaching, and the specificity of teaching with babies and very young children; - The observation; - The register; - Planning educational action; - The evaluation in early childhood education; - Child evaluation and context assessment: formative perspectives for Early Childhood Education;	- Evaluation as Pedagogical Documentation; - Evaluation and its instruments; - Experience report; - Portfolio; - Stories of relationships; - Dimensions of Pedagogical Action for Strategies (observation, recording, planning, and evaluation): some indications.

Chart 2: Organization of the *Reissue of the Curricular Guidelines of Florianópolis* (Authors' elaboration based on the document).

The document highlights an understanding of child(ren) and childhood(s) that comes, most frequently, from the field of Childhood Social Studies, especially Childhood Sociology, but also in dialogue with areas such as Childhood Pedagogy and historical-cultural psychology. In the section *Diversity in the encounter with the difference: a principle of educational relations*, there is the following statement.

The need to use the plural when referring to childhood and child reflects a significant scientific development on the topic, mainly around the social studies of childhood in permanent dialogue with the area of Early Childhood Education. We no longer allow ourselves to observe and define childhood as something universal, which equates to a period in the lives of all children. Even though they are present in all cultures, with some characteristics in common, the concrete constitutive conditions of their lives and the relational modes that surround them are not homogeneous and universal. There is a heterogeneity revealed not only by the individual differences of each child but also by their insertion in the social structure that characterizes and challenges them as belonging to social groups (Prefeitura Municipal de Florianópolis, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, Diretoria de Educação Infantil, 2022, p. 69).

The idea of heterogeneity is abundant in the text, sometimes explicitly, as in the quotes presented, sometimes implicitly through images of children and guidelines for pedagogical practice, for example. An element that differs from the curricular document of the municipality of Curitiba is the perception that the category *child* can (and should) also be understood in the plural, which recognizes that children are concrete subjects who experience concrete life situations which reveal multiple processes of subalternation when analyzed in an intersectional way. However, when reading the document, it is impossible to identify an explicit position that questions the coloniality in relationships with children, considering markers such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, and disabilities, although these categories appear in the text. We take as a reference Aníbal Quijano's (1991) idea of *coloniality of power* as a system of capitalist power in the world and modernity. The historical perspective adopted by Quijano allows us to understand the inseparability between racialization and capitalist exploitation (Quijano, 1991), a central perspective for educational projects committed to combating all forms of discrimination and exclusion (Brazil, 2009).

This absence allows us to rehearse some hypotheses, among them the limited visibility to other epistemologies, or borderline thoughts, as Mignolo (2017) calls it, within the scope of the discourses that underlie our educational practices, which intensifies even more when it comes to documents aimed at the process of education and care for children aged 0 to 5, who, although announced as competent social actors with childhoods affected by different social conditions, still appear as a marginal category.

*The pedagogical proposal Cenário Tempos of the municipal network of Porto Alegre*

The document *Cenário Tempos* (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021), from the municipal network of Porto Alegre, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul – BR dates from 2021 and presents the scenario of the curricular organization of the times for schools that have Early Childhood Education classes linked to the Municipal Department of Education (SMED) of Porto Alegre, which includes the network's own and community/partner ones, both part-time and full-time. The document, which has 41 pages, proposes «a structure of the journey/routine that foresees the times to Arrive, Feed, Take Care of, Rest, Say Goodbye, Talk/Meet, Narrate,

Propose/Opportunize, and Inhabit/Set Free» (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 06). As described in the document, the proposal was prepared throughout the second half of 2021, and the trigger for the document production process was the presentation of the proposal regarding the organization of time in Early Childhood Education carried out by SMED. This presentation took place at a general meeting with the participation of municipal Early Childhood Education and Jardins de Praça schools coordinators, supervisors of Early Childhood Education classes at municipal Elementary Schools, and members of SMED. Since then, four regional meetings have been held, organized by region (South, East, North, and West), and an SMED Early Childhood Education working group. In addition, the systematization working group was formed. With this direction, according to the document, the regional meetings, which took place between August and September, included the participation of pedagogical coordinators, supervisors, and professionals from SMED to discuss the scenario presented. The first meeting occurred in the SMED Auditorium, the second in the EMEB Emílio Meyer Auditorium, and the other two in schools in each region.

The first meeting was intended to discuss the scenario presented by SMED. The group concluded that the scenario presented «did not encompass the entire reality of the diversity of schools, the perceptions, studies, and practices of the Municipal Network» (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 05). Given this, producing a new scenario began «based on the practices and principles sought by the different schools belonging to the Municipal Network» (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 05). Furthermore, as stated in the document, some group members requested that another document be shared to integrate it into the discussions. This document was prepared by a working group of pedagogical coordinators and supervisors who created a curricular proposal between 2018 and 2019 (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021). Subsequently, other meetings were held for discussions and reflections on the conceptions of the different times that inhabit early childhood education, with the second meeting, called *D-Day*, being «intended for discussions in the schools of the Municipal Network with the collective of professionals from each institution on the pedagogical proposal, without the care of children» (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 06). Furthermore, as described in the document, after holding the four meetings on 09/30/2021, representatives from each region presented the systematization of discussions for consideration and evaluation by coordinators and supervisors. Considering that the documents had common concepts and practices, the group opted to unify the texts and create a single document that would guide the pedagogical work of the Municipal Network for Childhoods (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021). The presentation of the *Cenário Tempos* proposal took place on 10/01/2021 (Chart 3).

When we look at the document based on what the text presents to us, we realize that, in some moments, there are points of connection with the DCNEI (Brazil, 2009) and with the BNCC (Brazil, 2017). There is no specific space or topic in the pedagogical proposal to address the DCNEI or the BNCC, but the points of connection with these legal documents are explained in some topics. Concerning the DCNEI, the connection points seem more evident and developed in the approach to interactions and plays. In the topic *Structure of Curricular Organization: Times*, the centrality of interactions and games in the pedagogical proposal is explained.

The curricular organization times proposed in the scenario present a structure based on the relationship of interdependence of times, with fluidity and flexibility in a

movement of circularity, in which all moments are essential and complement each other in the school's daily life. Such times consider interactions and games (DCNEI/2009) as guiding principles of the curriculum from an embracing perspective (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 07).

Pedagogical Proposal Tempos Scenario - Early Childhood Education			
Contextualization of the Scenario			
<b>Structure of the curricular organization Times</b>	<b>Times of</b>	<b>Meeting with specialists</b>	The topics are formed by written texts and images, such as photographs provided by network schools. The photographs focus on children of different ages who participate in Early Childhood Education in different contexts and moments of everyday life.
Interactions and Plays Embracing Caring and Educating Active Listening/Looking/Active Subjects of educational action Time and temporality Spaces that embrace	To arrive Feed Take care of Rest Say goodbye Talk/Meet Narrate Propose/Opportunize Inhabit/Set free are presented	Physical education Music Visual arts	
<b>Journey</b>			
<b>May there still be time for</b>			

Chart 3: Organization of the Pedagogical Proposal Cenário Tempos (Authors' elaboration based on the document).

In the topic *Interactions and Plays*, its centrality is stated in the text when it assumes these as axes of the curriculum, as proposed by the DCNEI (Brazil, 2009).

As guiding axes of the curriculum in the Early Childhood Education stage, interactions and plays must be present throughout the children's journey from school to childhoods, which means the articulation of children's knowledge with that produced by humanity in relational situations [...] (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 08).

We can see, then, that the pedagogical proposal of the municipal network of Porto Alegre assumes that the times of curricular organization are articulated with interactions and plays throughout the children's journey at school.

Concerning the BNCC, the connection point is the proposition of working with fields of experience. The topic Interactions and Plays presents that «everyday life is the focus of pedagogical investment, in which fields of experience are woven» (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 08). Further on, after the topic *Spaces that Embrace*, a table is presented that mentions the rights of learning and development, the five fields of experience that are highlighted in the BNCC, the age groups corresponding to daycare and preschool. In this sense, there is a connection point with the BNCC, but not through a simple transposition of this document into the pedagogical proposal of the Porto Alegre municipal network. There is no reference to learning objectives in the document nor a list for each field of experience. Only the fields of experience are explained. This brings us to the leading role in the document production process. Furthermore, not discriminating learning objectives corresponding to each field of experience opens up space to preserve the specificities of each school. At the same

time, it opens space for children's experiences to be the driving force behind the times prioritized in the proposal. This aspect leads us back to the document's meanings attributed to children and childhood. There is a part of the document that explains how the pedagogical proposal understands children.

Early Childhood Education in Porto Alegre is characterized by serving children between zero and five years and eleven months from different regions in multiple cultural contexts, covering children of different genders, black, non-black, indigenous, with disabilities, and respected in their singularities. The child as a powerful subject, the center of curricular planning, and the focus of attention of all adults who work at school, regardless of the role/position they hold (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 12).

From this first look at the meanings attributed to child(ren) and childhood(s), it is clear that, just as in the document from the municipal network of Florianópolis, the pedagogical proposal of Porto Alegre also explains an understanding of child(ren) and childhood(s) that dialogues with the field of Childhood Social Studies, especially Childhood Sociology, and also with Childhood Pedagogy. In addition to this specific point, it is clear that heterogeneity seems to be recurrent when the text refers to children. We notice this in the photographs of children provided by schools, where heterogeneity appears through skin color, ways of dressing, plays, spaces occupied, gestures, and ages.

An aspect to be highlighted is that the document from the municipality of Porto Alegre provokes the perspectives of colonizing proposals that understand children and childhood based on global models. Such provocation is perceived in parts of the writing that refer to children and childhoods in the plural. The following excerpt, exemplifies this provocation.

In this sense, in the daily life of Early Childhood Education, all teachers must have a sensitive look and listen to the uniqueness of each child (babies, very young, and young children), from the welcome to the farewell, to constantly promote experiences and living for Ethnic-Racial Education, Gender Relations, and inclusion of children with disabilities/developmental disorders, seeking the positive growth and representation of black, non-black, and indigenous children (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 11).

It is also important to highlight that when we look at the last topic of the document it is clear that this pedagogical proposal is under construction, considering that the written text proposes «Continue discussions in working groups and schools to ensure continuity of the effective and dialogued construction of the Pedagogical Proposal of the Municipal Network of Porto Alegre, the Early Childhood Education stage, and its appropriation by all professionals in these spaces» (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021, p. 40). Next, some topics are listed to continue the discussion. Among them is education for Human Rights (gender and sexuality), education for Ethnic-Racial relations (ERER), and inclusive education and inclusion support services in Early Childhood Education (Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021). This seems to be an important direction, representing a starting point for producing decolonial pedagogical proposals and practices.

**Conclusions: even if initial**

When comparing the analyses of the three curricular documents of the capitals of Southern Brazil, movements of approximation and differentiation of the meanings produced around the child(ren) and childhood(s) are identified.

As ideas-force (Maingueneau, 2015), we identify discourses that recognize children as social actors and childhoods as social constructions, categories marked by heterogeneity. Concerning the national documents, *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (DCNEI) (2009) and the *National Common Curricular Base* (BNCC) (2017), we observed common movements, such as all documents cite the DCNEI as a reference document and its perspective of children, early childhood education and curriculum as fundamental, which are detailed in Chart 4:

Child	Early Childhood Education	Curriculum
Center of curriculum planning, they are a historical subject with rights who, in the interactions, relationships, and daily practices they experience, build their personal and collective identity, play, imagine, fantasize, desire, learn, observe, experiment, narrate, question, and construct meanings about nature and society, producing culture.	The first stage of Basic Education, it is offered in daycare centers and preschools and characterized as non-domestic institutional spaces that constitute public or private educational establishments that educate and care for children from 0 to 5 years of age during the day, on a full-time or partial basis, regulated and supervised by a competent body of the education system and subject to social control.	It is conceived as a set of practices that seek to articulate children's experiences and knowledge with the knowledge that is part of the cultural, artistic, environmental, scientific, and technological heritage to promote the integral development of children aged 0 to 5 years.

Chart 4: DCNEI basic concepts present in curricular documents (Authors' elaboration based on DCNEI, Brazil, 2009).

The points of differentiation are located, especially concerning the dialogue with the BNCC, considering that this document has the terms *competence and skills* as the mobilizing elements of the discourses about learning. This perspective recovers a discourse that was quite common in the 1990s, during the reform of Brazilian Education, which involved the decentralization of management, the institution of external quality assessment processes – which act increasingly more incidentally in the induction of curricula – in the flexibility of teacher training processes, and the bases for the advancement of neoliberalism. In this scenario, the vision of children as the *human capital* of the future, i.e., the child as someone who must become a fully productive adult (Penn, 2002), advances so that we have the proposal for a standardized model of curriculum, as we observed with the RCNEI (1999), of pedagogical practice and assessment in Early Childhood Education. Concerning the dialogue between the capitals' curricular documents and the BNCC (2017), we have the scenario detailed in Chart 5. In the analysis of the three documents as a whole, we did not precisely identify movements of counter-conduct and counter-discourse to the national curricular policy, namely the BNCC, but of appropriation and resignification, in the case of Curitiba, and of resistance and authorship, in the cases of Florianópolis and Porto Alegre.

These indicators allow us to advance in understanding that policy implementation processes are complex and depend on the context and the people who locally think, live, and implement the policy (Arretche, 2001). Furthermore, a counter-conduct perspective requires, in our opinion, more radical changes in the knowledge that inhabits and circulates in educational contexts, as the epistemological turn, called by Maldonado-

Torres as the *decolonial turn* (2011) proposed in the field of Social Sciences, there is still little space for debate in the training processes and formulation of curricular policies.

Curitiba	Florianópolis	Porto Alegre
<p>- The title of the document already reveals the link with the national document: Curitiba Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Dialogues with BNCC;</p> <p>- It changes the organization of the previous curriculum that the education network had formulated for Early Childhood Education and follows the nomenclatures and structure of the BNCC with fields of experience, rights and development, and learning objectives.</p>	<p>The teaching network updates its curriculum document in compliance with national legislation but does not change the nomenclature and structure of the curriculum. Instead of Fields of Experience, it maintains the nomenclature of dimensions of the curriculum of Pedagogical Action Centers, which are linked to the play and pedagogical action strategies. It does not present rights and development and learning objectives but addresses children's rights throughout the document and general indications around pedagogical work.</p>	<p>The document is organized into fields of experience and development and learning rights. It does not present development and learning objectives. The age organization follows the daycare and preschool division.</p>

Chart 5: BNCC in local curricular documents (Authors' elaboration based on Brazil, 2017; Secretaria Municipal da Educação de Curitiba, 2009; Prefeitura Municipal de Florianópolis, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, Diretoria de Educação Infantil, 2022 and Prefeitura de Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal de Educação, 2021).

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This is a version that updates the guidelines published in 1999.

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