

## Being a boy and being a girl in a class of multi-age children in the context of Early Childhood Education: Dialogues about gender identities



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### Abstract

This paper is a part of a 2023 master's dissertation aiming to understand children's constructed meanings about the ways to be a boy or a girl among personages in children's literature under counter-hegemonic perspective for gender. The methodology used ethnographic research with children and social constructionism. For the theoretical basis we have drawn to authors like Candido (2011); Corsaro (2005); Fernandes (2016); Machado (2018, 2021, 2023); Vianna and Finco (2009). Through this study we have found that gender identities are still present in our society as a way of differing and governing boys' and girls' bodies early childhood education schools.

### Keywords

Childhood Education; gender; children's literature.

### Ser menino e ser menina em uma turma de crianças de multi-idade no contexto da Educação Infantil: diálogos sobre identidade de gênero

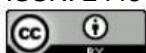
### Resumo

Este artigo é um recorte da dissertação de mestrado defendida em 2023 que teve o objetivo de compreender as significações construídas pelas crianças acerca dos modos de ser menino e ser menina existentes entre personagens em algumas histórias de literatura infantil que adotam uma perspectiva contra-hegemônica acerca de gênero. O estudo teve como metodologia a pesquisa qualitativo-etnográfica com crianças e construcionista social. Para a fundamentação teórica, foram utilizados autores como Candido (2011); Corsaro (2005); Fernandes (2016); Machado (2018, 2021, 2023); Vianna e Finco (2009). Foi possível identificar através deste estudo que as identidades de gênero ainda estão presentes em nossa sociedade como forma de diferenciar e controlar os corpos de meninos e meninas nas escolas de Educação Infantil.

### Palavras-chave

Educação Infantil; gênero; literatura infantil.

<sup>1</sup> This article is sometimes written in the first person singular as a result of questions asked by the first author. Sometimes it is written in the first person plural as a result of reflections made with the second author.



## Ser niño y ser niña en una clase de niños multiedad en el contexto de Educación Infantil: diálogos sobre identidades de género

### Resumen

Este artículo es parte de una disertación de maestría defendida en 2023 con el objetivo de comprender las significaciones construidas por los niños hasta las formas de ser niño y ser niña existentes entre personajes en historias de literatura infantil que usan una perspectiva contrahegemónica sobre género. El estudio usó como metodología la investigación etnográfica con niños y el construccionismo social. Para la fundamentación teórica, se recurrió a Candido (2011); Corsaro (2005); Fernandes (2016); Machado (2018, 2021, 2023); Vianna y Finco (2009). A través de esta investigación, se identificó que las identidades de género aún están presentes en la sociedad como manera de diferenciar y controlar los cuerpos de los niños en las escuelas de Educación Infantil.

### Palabras clave

Educación Infantil; género; literatura infantil.

## 1 Introduction

This article is an excerpt from a master's thesis (Machado, 2023) whose theme is gender issues in Early Childhood Education. The topic has been discussed by the researcher (Machado, 2023) amid tensions in Brazil when the subject is gender, in the face of constant vigilance of conservative sectors of our society, which associates the topic with a supposed incentive to change sexual orientations, “distorting” children, using gender ideology. For Reis and Eggert (2017, p. 17), “[...] gender ideology was used by those who defend traditional, reactionary and even fundamentalist positions concerning the gender roles of men and women”.

Thus, since the final paper of the Pedagogy Course, I have been researching and studying themes related to gender, Early Childhood Education, and Children's Literature, present in the work *Conceptions of Gender in Children's Literature: a Study of the Collection in a Preschool class* (Machado, 2018) and in the specialization in Educational Management, the theme of Children's Literature and the Programa Nacional do Livro e do Material Didático (PNLD) in Early Childhood Education: *when a setback tries to be disguised* (Machado, 2021), involving tense questions about discussions about gender, Early Childhood Education, and Children's Literature until reaching my master's research. We argue that, in addition to research in Early Childhood Education institutions, it is necessary to create an inclusive and safe environment for children to express and identify themselves as they wish, whether through play, choosing clothes, or the possibility of having books that deconstruct standards imposed by society, encouraging empathy and

respect among peers, so that children learn to deal with diversity in a healthy and positive way. With this objective, we hope to provide an environment for open dialogue on the topic between adults and children so that they can recognize and value gender differences.

In this article, we discuss the meanings constructed by children about the ways of being a girl and a boy in the context of Early Childhood Education, based on reading and storytelling and interactions between peers, adults, and children, highlighting the most relevant aspects during the study about the different ways of being a boy and being a girl that are portrayed among the characters in some Children's Literature stories. To achieve this goal, we must address the gender stereotypes that exist in society, deconstructing the idea that there are ways to be a boy or a girl.

The research used a qualitative, ethnographic and social constructionist approach as a methodology as a way of guiding research with children aged between 2 and 5 years and 11 months from a Federal Public School in Santa Maria.

In the next topic, we will present the methodology used in the research and impasses that occurred from planning the research to its completion; in topic three, we will discuss the concept of genre and Children's Literature; in topic four, we will present some meanings constructed by children about the topic; and finally, we will bring final considerations.

## **2 Research with children and materialities used to produce data: standstills, challenges, and methods**

As this is research with children as subjects, we understand that the best methodology is qualitative, ethnographic with children and social constructionist, in which, during data production, we observe interactions between child/child, child/researcher, and child /Children's Literature books.

Beltrame (2021, p. 32) emphasizes that:

Qualitative research is the most suitable way to carry out investigative work, as it is a more human, social, and contextualizing research. As it allows you to observe reality, interact with it, and even offer support for reflection on its change. They aim to discover new concepts, relationships, and ways of understanding reality. The description of a system of cultural meanings of a given group.

Qualitative research highlights investigative work, the more human, social, and contextualized nature; ethnography with children “[...] requires that the researcher enter,

be accepted and participate in the lives of those they study [...] imply, so to speak, 'going native'" (Corsaro, 2005, p. 446).

The perspective of Social Constructionism, according to Cadoná and Scarparo (2015, p. 2722), "[...] analyzes the production of meanings in everyday life, making research a possibility of mixing with collectives and understanding each context in its particular way". Machado (2023, p. 18) highlights that in this aspect the social constructionist perspective "[...] moves away from the bias of psychology and biology, to understand gender relations as social constructions" [...] and so carry out "[...] interpretative analysis, with social constructionism as a way of looking at and perceiving children's relationships and interactions in the research movement".

Oliveira-Formosinho (2008, p. 72) highlights the importance of listening to children's voices and points out the theoretical-methodological responsibilities of dealing with this public:

The fact that the research is done with children and not about children represents several responsibilities and concerns for the researcher, some analogous to those that characterize research that uses proxy methods and some that represent a novelty and are very specific to research based on children's perspectives. [...] In fact, the novelty and complexity of this recent approach should not represent a barrier, but rather a driver of investment so that children's participation is fully recognized, which, in our view, should only be achieved through the creation of opportunities real and effective.

In this research, we used Children's Literature books, understood as cultural artifacts, and not as mere research instruments. The chosen books are characterized by those that break hegemonic patterns of identity, gender, motherhood, and fatherhood, as well as social patterns, that is to say, we consider counter-hegemonic literature. Among the books are *Coisas de meninas e Coisas de meninos*, by Pri Ferrari; *Faca sem ponta galinha sem pé*, by Ruth Rocha; *Olívia tem dois papais*, by Marcia Leita; *Pode pegar*, by Janaina Tokitaka; *O pequeno príncipe preto*, by Rodrigo França; *Princesas negras*, by Ariane Celestino Meireles; *Princesas em greve*, by Thais Linhares; and *Monstro rosa*, by Olga Díos.

The books used are precisely those that do not reflect adult reality nor the norms imposed by society. So, we emphasize the importance of children having access to books that address such issues from early childhood at school, a place where children interact with differences, be it color, race, or family structure.

Candido (2011, p. 188) highlights that literature is “[...] a human right, fundamental, inalienable because, by giving shape to feelings and worldview, it organizes us, frees us from chaos and, finally, humanizes us”.

Teachers act as mediators, they can introduce and structure welcoming environments, allowing children time to explore books and their multiple possibilities, encouraging dialogue, interaction with images and text, being readers, storytellers and also enabling children to use their imagination through the world of stories and characters. We believe in the relevance of children's literature as a cultural artifact, as art, that allows questions, that unsettles thinking, that awakens curiosities and questions.

Literature makes it possible to enter into a process of transformation, replicate, create, and unravel scenarios and concepts, based on thought, which can help build different perspectives on coexistence in society. In this sense, we are aware that we are influenced by society and the historical period we experience. We, therefore, believe in the importance of making books available in schools that break the dominant models, standards, and roles previously established for men, women, girls, and boys.

For Ferreira (2013, p. 36):

Stories allow children entry into the fictional world, but also an understanding of the surrounding world, as they are confronted with situations experienced by the characters, as well as with their different modes of action and how these are reflected, both in the characters themselves and in those around them. By projecting themselves onto these characters, who sometimes experience personal dramas or face situations of doubt or conflict, the child learns on their own, or through adult mediation, that life is not always linear and that the problems that the characters (and perhaps themselves) face can be resolved, which alleviates fears and insecurities typical of the stage of development in which preschool children find themselves.

Thus, we observe the importance of children's literature, not to teach how to be, but to question oneself, to offer other possibilities of being, of living, of coexisting in movement, to understand how to be in the world, to understand oneself in this constant and different movement of the flow of life, to identify or find oneself strange through the characters, to be challenged to understand that there are differences and that differences are part of the world.

Argüello (2005, p. 79) highlights that “Literature is a vehicle of language, where exercises of power are carried out by attributing sense and meaning, with this it contributes to the fabrication of identities, positioning subjects in different and unequal social places”.

Based on the understanding of Children's Literature, and the importance of offering stories that problematize ways of being in society, we consider it important to offer them to children to understand their perspectives. To present the stories, we planned and organized the room and how the books were presented. The books were presented two by two. Each week, new books were included that remained in the collection from those offered and presented the previous week. As the days went by, we observed that there was little interest on the part of the children in handling, leafing through and even asking to read the books. It was at this moment that some questions began to arise regarding the research, which required thinking about a new organization. It was necessary to rethink how to present the books. We went back to the initial notes from the first moments with the class, as well as talking to the class's head teacher in the search for solutions.

As a collectively thought-out strategy, we chose, in addition to bringing books, to organize more cozy spaces, so children, hopefully, would be curious to take a closer look. In addition to the spaces, other elements began to be used such as puppets. From this strategy, we observed that at times the children listened to the story. The puppets were also attractive to children, as at times the children themselves retold the story based on the characters represented by the puppets.

After rethinking, we realized that more interventions and dialogues were emerging between the children and adults present in the room. Day after day, the research brought the meanings of the children that were recorded in a field diary, as well as photographic records were made. In this case, listening and observation were essential, because in some moments when the children realized that they were being photographed, they stopped role-playing, so it was important to be very attentive to not repeat this situation, opting for a written record of the moment, to intervene in the child's process.

It was possible to realize how much attention, listening, and sensitivity need to be at the service of the research subjects, preventing them from being exposed to artificial and/or embarrassing conditions. We know that the presence of the researcher interferes with the research situation: this is an element that we need to assume. Some situations, however, can be avoided so that the unexpected presents itself, considering that the unusual, the surprising does not occur as a result of the adult's intervention, but by the volition of the child.



Fernandes (2016, p. 776) says that:

The path of research with children will always be marked by the unexpected that comes from the alterity that characterizes the generational category of childhood. But it will be in the respect it ensures and in the relationship it establishes with this unexpected that lies the greatest contribution that the researcher can make to the construction of ethically supported knowledge in childhood.

Rinaldi (2012, p. 124) therefore highlights listening as a metaphor for the openness and sensitivity of hearing and being heard, listening not only with our ears but with all our senses (sight, touch, smell, taste, hearing, and also the sense of direction). When listening, we also use our senses, our anxieties and concerns, and perceptions, and we make plans and establish goals; when it comes to putting it into practice, it doesn't always happen the way we expected and that's okay; conducting research with children is full of the unexpected.

According to Beltrame (2021, p. 24)

Respecting childhood culture means focusing on children, and not on adult culture (adult-centric vision). We need to learn to interpret children, as they express themselves through their eyes, their touch, their speech, and their body. We need to find ways of looking, listening, feeling, and analyzing children. The challenge is to think about childhood from within itself, and not from adult culture.

Respecting childhood culture means respecting the child's time, organizing more than one plan, taking children into account, and not having adult-centric expectations.

The organization of the space was an important element and we thought about it with the children and other adults to find the best way to introduce children to books and other materials, such as paper, colored pencils, and markers, as there was an expectation that they could draw characters from the stories or draw something related to the stories that could be elements for analysis.

Gobbi (1997, p. 144) highlights that drawing “[...] is a way to learn more from children, who, being cultural subjects that they are, have in their drawings cultural artifacts and a fruitful language who demands to be seen”. The act of drawing offers children the opportunity to express their concerns, questions, and aspirations. Drawing and the way children organize and meditate on it require focus and creativity, which don't emerge instantly.

Pereira and Santiago (2020, p. 5) argue that: “That way, we conceptualize children's drawings as unique expressions of children's protagonism, cultural artifacts, and historical documents that materialize the life experience through which children

demonstrate their questions about the world". The drawings are not simple representations, but rather the expression of children through their creation and development, which means they can be considered as research records.

On several occasions, children explored pencils, markers, scissors, and paper. However, they never drew anything related to the books or the characters in their explorations. It is important to highlight that the school aims to give children autonomy in their constructions, not encouraging registration after storytelling or any other activity. The child is free to make their own records and constructions, and they are not offered ready-made drawings.

### 3 Concept of genre and Children's Literature used in the research

Gender identities are ways of distinguishing boys and girls, men and women within society. Daycare centers and schools, being integral parts of society, play an important role in this construction. Vianna and Finco (2009, p. 268) highlight how the sociocultural perspective allows us to perceive the subtle forms of control of the child's body.

The sociocultural perspective allows us to focus our attention on the forms of control of the child's body, a socially and culturally determined process, permeated by subtle forms, often not noticed. We could, then, say that the characteristics considered by tradition as naturally masculine or feminine result from different efforts to distinguish the bodies, behaviors, and abilities of girls and boys.

Every day, boys and girls have their freedom controlled, and sometimes these actions go unnoticed because they have become common and are passed down from generation to generation. These actions direct behavior without taking into consideration other ways of being that do not fit the heterosexual norm and prevailing behaviors.

In this work, we assume a dichotomous view of gender, as this is not about discussing multiple gender identities but rather about children's significance of being a boy and a girl, crossed by social and cultural issues that affect the construction of children's identities. We understand that there are many ways of identifying as man and woman, boy and girl, even considering only this duality, there are still countless stigmas that subjects face in society and the inequalities still present in the sexual division of



labor, in the professional valorization of women, in domestic work, in remuneration, in the construction of masculinities and femininities.

Overcoming gender inequality thus presupposes understanding the social character of its production, how our society opposes, hierarchizes, and naturalizes differences between the sexes, reducing them to physical characteristics considered natural and, consequently, immutable. It implies realizing that this unique and widespread way of understanding is reinforced by explanations arising from biological sciences and also by social institutions, such as family and school, which omit the process of constructing these preferences, which are always subject to transformation (Vianna; Finco, 2009).

Gender inequalities and separations occur from birth, in which, according to Paechter (2009) “[...] the child is inserted into a community of practice of femininity or masculinity”, in which expectations and prejudices are expected for each sex. Even though it is an expectation that does not belong to children, coexistence with adults makes them learn and adopt behaviors and expectations imposed by society.

According to Ramos (2008, p. 14):

Societies develop means of controlling language as a way of dominating discursive production. This surveillance over what is said and who says it reveals the standardizing face of our disciplinary society, in which the proliferation of literary works is not exempt from institutional control [...] texts and images of selected children's works the knowledge and powers that constitute relationships of gender and family conception, knowing that there is no neutrality even in those prints other than an 'innocent color' in children's books.

One way to control attitudes and language towards gender is through literature and children's books used/available in schools. Children must have access to works that present different forms of families and that do not reproduce stereotypes that reinforce gender inequality.

We understand and support the importance of contact with these materials at school due to the high cost of purchasing a quality book, which allows children to travel, not just in a world of enchanted kingdoms that don't reflect their reality.

In the dissertation (Machado, 2023), we used counter-hegemonic literature, with books that address gender themes and family constructions. The books presented to the children were never intended to raise questions and/or make judgments but rather to comprehend the children's understandings and positions about the themes studied in this

work. We believe that quality books are essential in Early Childhood Education. However, it is important to highlight that simply making these materials available in schools is not enough to guarantee children's access to them. To achieve this, group work between teachers and schools is necessary, with training on how books can be organized and how important it is for children to have access from early childhood.

Children's Literature is seen by many teachers as a pedagogical instrument, used to transmit knowledge and values to children. However, it is important to consider Children's Literature as a cultural artifact in which the child has the freedom to choose and browse all the books that interest them, without subsequent activities directed from the book, such as drawings.

Children's Literature is a cultural artifact that has the possibility of making children travel into a world of possibilities, stimulating their imagination and creativity. Fairy tales, for example, have been passed down from generation to generation with a series of imposed values and norms, such as that the princess needs to get married to be happy forever; the princesses are, for the most part, blondes, with long hair, with a series of stereotypes. Men are represented as strong, warriors, who save princesses in danger.

Furthermore, quality Children's Literature contributes to the formation of children's cultural identity. By reading stories that portray different cultures and realities, children have the opportunity to broaden their horizons and develop empathy for other people's experiences. Therefore, it is essential to recognize and value Children's Literature as a cultural artifact, capable of offering children the pleasure of engaging with enchanting stories that awaken emotions and feed the imagination. By understanding the importance of Children's Literature as an art, we can value it as a cultural heritage.

Next, I present some meanings constructed by children during research at a Federal Public School in Santa Maria.

#### **4 Books and the meanings constructed by children**

As previously mentioned, the presentation of the books was designed to draw children's attention to the number of pages and quantities of images and words.

#### 4.1 Books “Coisa de menino” and “Coisa de menina”

That day, it was a beautiful sunny afternoon. When I arrived in the classroom, I noticed the children eager to play in the courtyard. I arranged with the teacher that I would organize the space so that, when they returned to the room, they could explore and rest.

I organized a space in which books were available to children in a wooden structure attached to the ceiling, with fabric and lights, as well as providing cushions and some nursery beds on which the children liked to relax. When they returned, many lay down on the mat; others within the beds organized in the space. Geovana and Vitor were the first to read the books. After a while, I approached and asked if they needed help. They told me yes, that they would like to hear the story: “Coisas de menina”, written by Pri Ferrari, and, right when the title was read, I was interrupted by Geovana, who said: “And about boys, right, teacher!”.

The school where we carried out the research was/is a privileged place, which respects children's rights. Maybe that's why Geovana interrupted me, because for her, in the school context in which she experiences, there is no separation of games or queues for boys and girls. They have the freedom and autonomy to play with all the toys available in the room, whether they are cars, animals, or dinosaurs.

As I was reading the book, I was interrupted by Geovana with some report that her colleague Vitor also performed those actions, such as crying and dancing, which in the book were related to the girls' actions. Geovana disagreed with the book about what was for a boy and what was for a girl, just as Vitor, attentive to the conversation, shook his head in agreement with his colleague. They seemed to disagree with some different behaviors attributed to boys and girls in the book, which, although it highlighted differences, also showed similarities between boys and girls.

According to Vianna and Finco (2009, p. 269), “[...] preferences are not mere characteristics originating from the biological body, they are social and historical constructions”. When questioning the children about what girls' things were, they highlighted:

Bernardo: — Everything!

Leonel: — Dolls and doing makeup.

Geovana: — Polly pocket, with ponies, playing with cars.

Ester: — Dolls.

When I noticed the children's interest in continuing the subject, I kept asking them:

— Here in the classroom, the boys don't play with dolls with you?

Ester, Marta, and Rose, together, respond that they didn't.

— Are you sure? And don't you play with the boys' cars?

I asked the question considering that the school's perspective is not one of separation between boys and girls in games and toys available; on one of the days the research was carried out, I witnessed the girls the machinery toys, excavator, and other cars that were in the room.

Marta takes a position contradicting Ester and Rose, stating that, yes, they play.

I asked — Are there boy things and girl things in the room?

Rose: — No! Explaining that everyone could play with the toys that the teacher organized in the space.

I highlight once more the privileged context of the school and these children who have the autonomy, the possibility of interactions, the toys, and the games that respect the children's rights.

#### **4.2 Puppets – Diana, the talking flower and the story of the princesses on strike**

This story was one of the longest. So, how to introduce and keep children's attention while telling a story? Puppets, chairs, and a felt cabin were the materials used. That day, Diana was presented to the children in the class. Diana is a talking flower who came to the classroom to tell a very thought-provoking story.

We continued to talk about being a princess, a woman, and a mother. When asked about being a princess, Marta and Rose said they had seen a princess.

At one point, I asked: — Are your mothers princesses?

The response was unanimous.

All: — Yes.

Marta: — Yes. My father doesn't help my mother. He only makes the food.

Rose: — She's a princess because she's grown.

Bernardo: — She's a princess because she makes the food and lets us play.

Vitor: — She's a princess because she makes the food, feeds my sister and sleeps with my sister. She doesn't like fighting or dinosaurs.

Jorge: — É princesa. Ela faz comida e o pai ajuda brincando comigo depois. E quando ele escuta futebol, ele não escuta minha mãe.

Geovana: — She's a princess because she's going to travel and then goes to work.

Ester: — She's a princess because she cooks and plays with dolls with me.

According to Picanço, Araújo, and Sussai (2021, p. 7), “[...] this panorama allows us to identify that the sexual division of domestic work is unequal and unfavorable to women since the responsibilities for family reproduction tasks falls mostly on them”.

Women who are mothers have secured their right to work outside their homes. However, the demands of the home and the children still fall on them, increasing their tasks and responsibilities even further. These women work outside and at home, often without any help from their husbands with household chores, as shown in the report brought by the students in a moment of conversation after reading one of the stories in which the children report aspects experienced in their families.

### **4.3 *Olívia tem dois papais***

Another long story, this time finger puppets were used. Next, I show you what that moment was like with the children.

On the tatami, with a pipe structure, white fabric, and lights, finger puppets were placed, which were initially on the floor, but during the morning and afterward, some puppets were hung with the fabric.

As soon as she arrived and put away her bottle of water, Geovana came across that space, with a curious look at what that could be. Then Vitor arrived, who, as he passed the space, asked me if the pipe was an obstacle to go through. I answered with another question:

— What do you think?

He looked at me, shrugged, and left. A third child approached and started looking at the images, it was Jorge. Seeing that I was watching him, he said:

— A family, a girl, her father [silence].

I asked myself: was he wondering about the other man in the image? Without knowing who the other person in the image was, he left the space. At that moment, Geovana returned to the mat where I was still sitting, came over, and asked me to tell the story, as she saw my interaction with Jorge. When Geovana approached, I organized the protagonist characters of the story.

At no point did Geovana ask what the name of the story was. I asked her what that story would be, and who was taking part, and so we built it, using the book as a guide, which helped us place the images in sequence according to the story. Initially, we only used images, then we told the story with words and sentences. At the end of the story, Geovana said:

— And they lived happily ever after: the girl, her father, and her uncle!

From the children's speech, it is possible to see that the family structure experienced by the vast majority of children at school is that of a man and a woman and that any other organization is not considered a family. That's what happened when reading the story to a group of children who never considered that it could actually be a family and that Olivia had two fathers. Mesquita Filho, Eufrásio, and Batista (2011, p. 555) define: “[...] stereotype as a process of impression formation, which constitutes a set of affective, moral and instrumental evaluations, elaborated about a person”.

#### **4.4 *Monstro rosa***

Vitor: — The hands are bigger.

Marta: — The color, the other characters are smaller; he is very big; he is different because he is pink;

Rose: — It is the eye; the size and color of the pink monster's house.

It was the most leafed through and most sought after book in the research. With each reading, a new question arises about the monster that was pink. Costa and Santos (2016, p. 264) emphasize aspects about it:

[...] gender differences represented on literary platforms help to naturalize divisions and inequalities, which is why understanding the concept of gender as a social condition and not as a biological dichotomy is so interesting and thought-provoking from the point of view of scientific research.



## 5 Final considerations

The research, even if it does not intend to intervene in the context, considering that it is not an intervention research, at the same time made it possible to realize that literature can provide a space for children to reflect on the expectations and social pressures imposed on boys and girls. When faced with characters that break gender expectations, children may feel encouraged to question gender norms, and adults who interact with children can, in the same way, address the topic and raise issues that may affect them in everyday situations regarding gender issues. During the study, the importance of offering teachers continuous training on Children's Literature as a cultural element became evident, as well as the need for government programs to distribute books to schools.

In this sense, literature plays a fundamental role in offering diverse and inclusive narratives, which allow children of all gender identities to recognize themselves and feel represented. Through reading, children can expand their worldviews, develop empathy and respect for differences, and build their own meanings of being a boy or a girl.

This study also emphasizes how important continued education is for teacher training as a form of argument to defend and fight for children's rights and quality education. The importance of having government programs that help teachers in their daily struggles/demands regarding education is also highlighted.

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