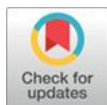


Games and Play: An Analysis of Documents and Pedagogical Praxis



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Abstract

Introduction. Play is central to child development and, in school Physical Education, its appreciation has been increasingly discussed. This study investigates games and play in public schools in Palmas, Tocantins. **Methodology.** Documentary analysis was conducted (Law of Guidelines and Bases, National Curriculum Parameters, National Common Curriculum Base, Tocantins Curriculum Document, Political-Pedagogical Project) and semi-structured interviews were carried out with two Physical Education teachers from Elementary School II. **Results.** The study highlighted the relevance of games and play for teaching-learning processes and holistic development. However, although present in curricular guidelines, their approach is often superficial and poorly articulated pedagogically. School Physical Education remains marked by a sport-centered perspective, relegating these practices to a secondary role. Teachers recognize their importance but show conceptual weaknesses and difficulties in articulating these practices with official documents. **Discussion.** There is an urgent need to expand academic debate and invest in continuing education to qualify teaching practices with games and play, strengthening playfulness in school Physical Education and valuing children's bodily culture.

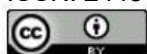
Keywords

games and play; school physical education; curricular documents; school.

Jogos e brincadeiras: uma análise entre documentos e a práxis pedagógica

Resumo

Introdução. O brincar é central ao desenvolvimento infantil e, na Educação Física Escolar, discute-se sua valorização. Este estudo investiga os jogos e brincadeiras em escolas públicas de Palmas/Tocantins. **Metodologia.** Realizaram-se análise documental (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases, Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais, Base Nacional Comum Curricular, Documento Curricular de Tocantins, Projeto Político-Pedagógico) e entrevistas semiestruturadas com dois professores de Educação Física do Ensino Fundamental II. **Resultados.** O estudo evidenciou a relevância dos jogos e brincadeiras para o ensino-aprendizagem e o desenvolvimento integral, contudo, embora presentes em diretrizes curriculares, sua abordagem é frequentemente superficial e pouco articulada



pedagogicamente. A Educação Física Escolar permanece marcada pela *esportivização*, relegando essas práticas a papel secundário. Professores reconhecem sua importância, mas apresentam fragilidades conceituais e dificuldades de articulação com os documentos oficiais. **Discussão.** Conclui-se ser urgente ampliar o debate acadêmico e investir em formação continuada para qualificar a prática docente com jogos e brincadeiras, fortalecendo a ludicidade na Educação Física Escolar e valorizando a cultura corporal das crianças.

Palavras-chave

jogos e brincadeiras; Educação Física Escolar; documentos curriculares; escola.

Juegos y actividades lúdicas: un análisis entre documentos y la praxis pedagógica

Resumen

Introducción. El juego es central para el desarrollo infantil y, en la Educación Física Escolar, su valorización ha sido objeto de debate. Este estudio investiga los juegos y las actividades lúdicas en escuelas públicas de Palmas, Tocantins. **Metodología.** Se realizó un análisis documental (Ley de Directrices y Bases, Parámetros del Currículo Nacional, Base del Currículo Nacional Común, Documento Curricular de Tocantins, Proyecto Político-Pedagógico) y se llevaron a cabo entrevistas semiestructuradas con dos profesores de Educación Física de la Escuela Primaria II. **Resultados.** El estudio evidenció la relevancia de los juegos y las actividades lúdicas para el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje y el desarrollo integral, sin embargo, aunque presentes en directrices curriculares, su abordaje suele ser superficial y poco articulado pedagógicamente. La Educación Física Escolar sigue marcada por una perspectiva *deportivizada*, relegando estas prácticas a un papel secundario. Los docentes reconocen su importancia, pero presentan fragilidades conceptuales y dificultades para articular estas prácticas con los documentos oficiales. **Discusión.** Se concluye que es urgente ampliar el debate académico e invertir en formación continua para cualificar la práctica docente con juegos y actividades lúdicas, fortaleciendo la ludicidad en la Educación Física Escolar y valorizando la cultura corporal de los niños.

Palabras clave

juegos y actividades lúdicas; Educación Física Escolar; documentos curriculares; escuela.

1 Introduction

One of the central elements in children's development is closely associated with the phenomenon of play. According to Kishimoto (2010), play is a free activity in which the child is responsible for initiating and directing actions, following or creating rules and developing skills. However, regarding the zones of development discussed by Vygotsky (2007), these are considered functions still in the process of maturation, requiring the

involvement of adults to be effectively developed. Considering play, children's development, adult-mediated learning, and the right to education, the school emerges as an environment where these elements intersect. In this study, the term “games and play activities” will be used due to the difficulty of establishing a precise conceptual distinction between these terms, as well as the fact that they are often understood as synonymous in common usage and within the Brazilian school context (Soares *et al.*, 1992).

Schools often seek pedagogical interventions to support the teaching process while remaining influenced by the characteristics of traditional schooling, marked by a predominance of hierarchy, clear and explicit rules, and the presence of controlling teachers who provide limited opportunities for students' recognition and agency (Nicolaci-da-Costa, 1987). With regard to School Physical Education (SPE), Kunz (2013) argues that a transformation of pedagogical practice is necessary, proposing changes that range from teachers' preparation and instructional practices to the very way in which school Physical Education is currently organized and implemented. It is essential to understand that School Physical Education cannot be reduced to a perspective centered solely on sportization. Approaching bodily practices exclusively through the lens of institutionalized sport means denying their playful dimension and overlooking the importance of play.

Recognizing that the landscape of games and play activities in SPE is shaped by the particularities of each locality and culture, the present study focuses on the context of Palmas, the capital city of the state of Tocantins, located in the Northern Region of Brazil. According to data from the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE, 2021), Tocantins has 776 Early Childhood Education schools, 1,247 Elementary Education schools, and 347 Secondary Education schools. Palmas, in turn, has 67 Early Childhood Education schools, 99 Elementary Education schools, and 37 Secondary Education schools (IBGE, 2021).

Based on the context presented, this study aims to understand how games and play activities are addressed in public schools in the city of Palmas. The investigation is conducted through an analysis of the guiding documents that inform teaching practice, as well as through the perspectives of Physical Education teachers working in the final years of Elementary Education (Grades 6–9) in two schools located in the southern region of the

municipality, one administered by the state government and the other by the municipal government.

2 Methodology

This study is characterized as empirical research and was approved by the Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa da (Institution and CAAE omitted to preserve the anonymity of the authors). A qualitative approach was adopted, as it is oriented toward the analysis of concrete cases in their temporal and local particularities, based on individuals' expressions and activities within their local contexts (Flick, 2004). Qualitative research is understood as a tool for achieving an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation, as it "[...] works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes" (Minayo, 2009, p. 21).

With regard to its classification, the study is characterized as descriptive-exploratory research. According to Gil (2002), descriptive research primarily aims to describe the characteristics of a given population or phenomenon, whereas exploratory research seeks to provide greater familiarity with the problem, making it more comprehensible, as well as contributing to the refinement of ideas and the generation of insights.

The study was conducted in two educational institutions, one municipal school and one state school. The sample consisted of documents guiding School Physical Education (SPE) and Physical Education teachers working in the final years of Elementary Education (Grades 6–9) at the aforementioned schools. Two teachers were selected as participants through convenience sampling.

The documents analyzed included: Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação (LDB), Parâmetros Curriculares nacionais (PCNs), Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), Documento Curricular do Tocantins (DCT), and the schools' Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP). The study focused specifically on the final years of Elementary Education because this educational level is present in both municipal and state schools.

Data collection involved document analysis and semi-structured interviews with Physical Education teachers. Regarding document analysis, a preliminary assessment of

each document was conducted, thereby supporting the subsequent analyses and interpretations obtained (Cechinel *et al.*, 2016). This analytical process was grounded in coherent interpretation, emphasizing the perspective adopted toward the proposed theme and facilitating a more effective examination of the research question (Sá-Silva, Almeida e Guindani, 2009).

Regarding the semi-structured interviews, Lakatos and Marconi (2016) note that this method is characterized by flexibility in the investigation process, allowing interviewers to explore particular issues in greater depth whenever necessary. Data were collected through audio recordings conducted at locations mutually agreed upon by the interviewer and the teachers from the participating schools. The interviews were carried out between November 22 and December 4, 2023. The recordings were transcribed verbatim for subsequent analysis of the relationship between the participants' pedagogical practices and the theme of games and play activities, as well as their knowledge of the topic and of the guiding documents that inform their pedagogical practice and planning.

Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, which involves an initial pre-analysis following data collection, followed by the coding and categorization of the material. Finally, the results are processed and interpreted (Bardin, 2016).

With regard to the categories identified, the following themes emerged from the interview data: (1) foundations for teaching games and play activities; (2) concepts of games and play activities; (3) games and play activities in the school context; (4) electronic games; and (5) the systematization of teaching games and play activities.

3 Results

The presentation of the results begins with the document analysis, highlighting references to games and play activities in terms of the number of occurrences, the corresponding grade level, and the meanings attributed to the use of these terms. No references to games and play activities were identified in the LDB. Regarding the analysis of the PCNs, only one occurrence was found, appearing in the "Objectives" section of the introductory chapter. Table 1 presents the PPPs of the two educational institutions included in the study.

Table 1 – Mentions in the Schools’ Political-Pedagogical Projects

PPP	Grade level	Mentions	Attributed meanings
State School	Grades 6-9	1	Teaching games through playfulness.
Municipal School	Grades 1–5	2	Inclusion and socialization, recreational games, and the preservation of traditional games and play activities.
	Grades 6-9	2	School sports featured in school-based competitions

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

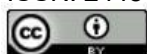
It was found that games and play activities appear only sparsely in the analyzed documents, with a total of five mentions identified. The highest number of mentions was found in the Political-Pedagogical Project of the municipal school, which contained four references. Table 2 presents the findings related to the BNCC.

Table 2 – Mentions in the BNCC

Grade level (Early Childhood Education)	Mentions	Attributed meanings
Ages 0–18 months (Early Childhood Education)	4	Awareness of the body's capabilities and limitations through play and interactions characteristic of this age group.
Ages 19 months to 3 years and 11 months (Early Childhood Education)	5	Development of movements, gestures, gazes, facial expressions, and bodily sounds through play, games, dance, theatre, and music. Appropriate use of the body during storytelling and artistic activities..
Ages 4–5 years and 11 months (Early Childhood Education)	5	Understanding the importance of rules for social interaction.
Grades 1- 2	10	Pedagogical practices centered on regional and community cultural traditions and aimed at supporting literacy development.
Grades 3 - 5	8	Highlights traditional and popular games and play activities from both local and global contexts, including games rooted in African and Indigenous cultural traditions, as well as other bodily practices present in the school environment and in the regional context of Tocantins.
Grades 6 - 7	3	Electronic games.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

In the analysis of the BNCC, a greater number of occurrences was identified across both Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. The curriculum components, thematic units, and knowledge objects are presented, with particular emphasis on the skills that explicitly provide guidance for the specific implementation of games and play activities. Regarding the second phase of Elementary Education, the knowledge object *electronic*



games appears exclusively in the 6th and 7th grades. Concerning Early Childhood Education, noteworthy discussions are found within the field of experiences, addressing aspects related to children's learning and development across the aforementioned age groups.

Table 3 – Mentions in the DCT

Ano escolar	Menções	Sentidos atribuídos
Grade 1	20	They provide guidelines for the teaching of games and play activities associated with the state of Tocantins.
Grade 2	25	Community and regional contexts of Tocantins and Brazil's Northern Region are incorporated as educational settings that support and enrich the literacy development process.
Grade 3	16	Encouragement of respect for diversity through traditional games rooted in Indigenous and African cultural traditions, highlighting their reinterpretation, appreciation, and relevance as valuable forms of historical and cultural heritage.
Grade 4	17	Traditional Brazilian games, alongside those originating from Indigenous and African cultural traditions, are approached through multiple forms of expression and adaptations to the available learning environments. Emphasis is placed on strategies that promote safe participation in play activities and games structured by specific rules.
Grade 5	19	Traditional games and play activities from diverse cultural contexts around the world, with particular emphasis on the appreciation, preservation, and promotion of the traditional games of the state of Tocantins.
Early years of Elementary Education	5	Respect for the regional characteristics of Tocantins; games rooted in Indigenous and African cultural traditions; fundamental concepts of games and play activities; and rule-based games.
Grade 6	1	Electronic games.
Grade 7	1	Electronic games.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

The discussions presented in the DCT document provide pedagogical guidelines for Physical Education teaching practices, with a stronger emphasis on the early years of Elementary Education. The curriculum framework prioritizes initiatives aimed at preserving and revitalizing games and play activities, including traditional games from the state of Tocantins and those rooted in Indigenous and African cultural traditions. With respect to the early years, these considerations are articulated both in the introductory section of the document and in the curriculum organizers designed for the early years of Elementary Education.

With regard to the framework addressing games and play activities, this theme was presented in the documents under analysis as a knowledge object. The occurrence of this

theme was identified in both the BNCC and DCT documents during the later years of Elementary Education, particularly in the 6th and 7th grades, where it is addressed in relation to the influences arising from technological advancements, as highlighted by the documents.

The interviews conducted with teachers aimed to achieve a deeper qualitative understanding of how games and play activities are conceptualized and how they are connected to everyday pedagogical practices. Thematic analysis led to the identification of five overarching themes that contextualize this educational landscape: (1) theoretical and pedagogical foundations for teaching games and play activities; (2) concepts of games and play activities; (3) games and play activities within the school setting; (4) electronic games; and (5) the pedagogical systematization of games and play activities.

3.1 Foundations for Teaching Games and Play Activities

When asked about the foundations underpinning their pedagogical practices regarding games and play activities, the interviewees referred to curricular and policy-guiding documents; however, they did not elaborate on the ideas or concepts contained within these documents. A similar pattern emerged concerning the academic literature used as a basis for their teaching practices. Although the participants indicated that they relied on books as reference materials, they were unable to identify specific titles or authors. In this context, it can be observed that the teachers reported drawing upon theoretical references, yet they did not provide a more detailed discussion of these sources or of the specific content to which they referred. The following excerpt from participant P1 illustrates this scenario: “There are specific books on games and play activities, but I can’t remember any of their names.”

3.2 Conceptualizations of Games and Play Activities

In describing their understanding of the concepts of games and play activities, participants most frequently associated them with the notions of “playfulness” and “fun.” Moreover, there was a prevailing tendency to treat the two concepts as synonymous. These

findings further suggest a lack of a well-developed theoretical understanding of the themes under investigation. This perspective is illustrated in the statement of participant P2: “They are two elements that contribute to the teaching–learning process in a more playful, natural, and instinctive way.”

The statement indicates that the participants perceived the terms as synonymous or, at least, conceptually overlapping. Similarly, the interviewees encountered difficulties in identifying the theoretical sources or scholarly references that informed their conceptualizations.

3.3 Games and Play Activities in the School Context

The participants emphasized the importance of games and play activities for students’ holistic development, particularly with regard to motor skills and socialization. Participant P2 further underscored the relevance of addressing this theme through its historical and cultural dimensions, stressing the need to preserve practices that are gradually losing prominence: “So, I think it is really important to work with this culture, which is increasingly being left behind.”

The participant highlighted the preservation and revitalization of traditional games and play activities as an important component of students’ learning processes. Additionally, he suggested that electronic games may represent a challenge to the maintenance and transmission of these practices.

3.4 Electronic games

The interviewees’ statements also revealed a limited understanding of certain knowledge objects addressed in the BNCC curriculum framework, particularly electronic games, which constitute a central focus of the present study. This can be observed in the statement of participant P1: “I work with electronic games mainly from a guidance perspective. Guidance. Okay? Regarding the negative consequences they have been causing, both in the present and in the future.”

The interviewees perceived electronic games as a contemporary phenomenon and expressed concerns about the risks they may entail. However, no ideas or strategies were mentioned for addressing them as pedagogical content.

3.5 Systematization of the Teaching of Games and Play Activities

It was not possible to identify any indications regarding the methodological approaches employed by the teachers in the teaching of games and play activities. Likewise, the participants were unable to clearly explain how games and play activities were incorporated into their lesson planning or to specify the educational purposes intended through their implementation. The following statements were provided in response to questions concerning the inclusion of games and play activities in teachers' planning practices: "No. I do not recall" (P1); "No. I do not explicitly mention them".

4 Discussion

Among the curriculum-guiding documents analyzed in relation to games and play activities, particular attention was given to the BNCC and the DCT. In these documents, games and play activities are characterized as thematic units within the broader category of bodily practices and are addressed throughout Elementary Education. Notably, the DCT emphasizes the importance of respecting the regional characteristics of the state with regard to knowledge progression criteria and bodily practices, including games and play activities, stating that it seeks to "[...] respect the regional characteristics of the state concerning the criteria for knowledge progression and bodily practices: Games and Play Activities [...]" (Tocantins, 2019, pp. 344–345).

With regard to games and play activities within the teaching–learning process of formal knowledge, they are presented in the BNCC as thematic units and knowledge objects. According to the document, this organization seeks to respect "[...] the many possibilities for organizing school knowledge, with thematic units defining an arrangement of knowledge objects throughout Elementary Education that is appropriate to the specificities of the different curriculum components" (Brasil, 2018, p. 27).

As a document that establishes the competencies and skills to be developed throughout formal schooling (Dillio & Francisco, 2026), the BNCC implicitly suggests, with regard to the criteria for organizing skills, the existence of a “possible arrangement.” In this sense, it proposes that “[...] the groupings proposed should not be regarded as a mandatory model for curriculum design” (Brazil, 2018, p. 29). Rather, the organizational structure presented in the document “[...] aims to ensure clarity, precision, and explicitness regarding what all students are expected to learn in Basic Education, while providing guidance for curriculum development throughout the country, adapted to different contexts” (Brasil, 2018, p. 29).

Regarding the DCT, particular attention should be given to Resolução No. 24, issued on March 14, 2019, and published in the Diário Oficial do Estado do Tocantins No. 5,347 on April 29, 2019. This resolution “approves the Documento Curricular da Educação Infantil e do Ensino Fundamental for the Territory of Tocantins, based on Resolução CNE/CP No. 2 of December 22, 2017, which establishes and provides guidance regarding the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC)” (Tocantins, 2019, p. 1).

Following the approval of Resolução No. 24 of March 14, 2019, the *Matriz de Recomposição* adopted the DCT as its primary reference, thereby establishing it as the foundational document guiding pedagogical actions in the state of Tocantins. This highlights the importance of educators’ familiarity with the documents that underpin the teaching–learning process and support “[...] the development of Political-Pedagogical Projects and innovative educational curricula based on this framework, as well as the commitment necessary to serve all children without distinction” (Tocantins, 2019, p. 2). However, at least with regard to games and play activities, neither the BNCC nor the DCT appears to be reflected in the schools’ Political-Pedagogical Projects (PPPs), where the theme is addressed only minimally and superficially. In addition to the limited treatment of games and play activities in the PPPs, the analysis revealed no references to the theme in the LDB and only a single reference in the PCNs.

The statements indicated that some curriculum-guiding documents are used to organize the teaching of games and play activities; however, these assumptions are not found in the documents themselves. According to Rufino and Souza Neto (2016), Early Childhood Education teachers experience difficulties in using the BNCC, and the way this

document is structured does not take into account the dimension of teachers' knowledge. Further addressing this issue, Santos and Niquini (2021) indicate that teachers possess only a superficial understanding of the PCNs and the BNCC, do not strictly follow the school's Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP), and rely primarily on the guidelines established by their respective state.

Another element observed concerns the difficulty experienced by the interviewees in identifying specific theoretical foundations related to the topic. Taffarel, Hack, and Morschbacher (2021) criticize the quality of the theoretical foundations of SPE, pointing to the need for a clearer and more consistent framework. According to Ferraz and Correia (2012), SPE cannot be limited solely to empirical and practical activities; rather, the mastery of robust theoretical foundations is essential for the qualification of the discipline. Thus, it can be observed that, at least with regard to games and play activities, both the elements present in the guiding documents and the foundations developed by the teachers may not be sufficient to address games and play activities with the necessary quality.

As an illustration of the foregoing, one PPP clearly directs the teaching of games and play activities toward sports events, recreational competitions, Student's Day celebrations, and recreational and interdisciplinary activities. It is understood that this document should include actions and goals capable of effectively reaching Physical Education classes and addressing games and play activities as pedagogical practices that strengthen students' physical, cognitive, affective, social, and moral development. This situation is consistent with the importance that games and play activities should hold within Physical Education. According to Kishimoto (2005), it is essential that, when planning and conducting classes, social and cultural dimensions be taken into consideration, with variations of games and play activities that support the learning process.

The interviewed teachers recognize games and play activities as essential components of Physical Education classes, considering that they promote students' overall development, particularly with regard to motor skills and socialization. Through playful activities, children explore their bodies, experience different movements, and develop competencies such as motor coordination, balance, strength, agility, and rhythm (Nascimento *et al.*, 2023). According to the same authors, these experiences contribute to

the development of a broad motor repertoire, which serves as a foundation for learning sports and other bodily practices throughout life.

In addition to physical development, games and play activities enable meaningful learning because they are embedded in children's cultural universe (Maldonado et al., 2017). By proposing activities that are part of children's everyday experiences, teachers create a more attractive and engaging learning environment in which students learn in a spontaneous and enjoyable manner. As indicated in some of the aforementioned documents, and as also reflected in the specialized literature, games and play activities play an important role in valuing cultural and local aspects, as they embody traditions, popular knowledge, and forms of bodily expression that reflect the identity of communities (Huizinga, 2018; Sosa, 2017). By incorporating these practices into the school routine, teachers promote meaningful and contextualized learning, strengthening students' connections with their own culture and with the diversity that surrounds them. Furthermore, the preservation of traditional and regional games and play activities contributes to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, expanding students' play repertoires and fostering respect for the diverse cultural expressions that exist throughout the country.

The promotion of socialization was another aspect highlighted. During games and play activities, students are encouraged to interact in groups, deal with rules, make collective decisions, and resolve conflicts. These situations foster the development of socioemotional skills such as empathy, cooperation, respect for differences, and teamwork (Silva *et al.*, 2012). Such competencies are essential not only within the school context but also for the formation of more conscious and participatory citizens.

Finally, games and play activities contribute to the construction of a more inclusive and welcoming school environment. This relationship can be found in the BNCC insofar as the thematic unit explores voluntary activities that, when carried out, are characterized by the creation and modification of rules. Participants, by understanding these rules as necessary and complying with them collectively, demonstrate the essence of play (Brasil, 2018).

When considering the relationship between motor development, elements of local culture, and socialization, another concept generates debate regarding games and play activities in SPE: electronic games. Resolução No. 24 introduces an innovation by

incorporating electronic games. Although considering the recent inclusion of this knowledge object, an initial lack of greater familiarity with this theme was observed during the interviews. The teachers experienced difficulty in positioning electronic games as content within SPE and expressed particular concern regarding their negative aspects. Neira (2018) presents criticisms of the way electronic games are addressed in the BNCC. According to the author, despite the wide diversity of existing bodily practices, the thematic unit “games and play activities” includes only electronic games as a knowledge object in the 6th- and 7th-grade levels. This limitation is viewed as problematic because it establishes “boundaries” regarding the themes to be addressed. The author emphasizes that “[...] a document that intends to be comprehensive and integrative should not establish boundaries in defining the themes to be studied” (Neira, 2018, p. 219).

Considering electronic games as a contemporary reality, Feres Neto (2005) argues for the importance of incorporating elements from students’ contexts and everyday experiences into Physical Education classes, allowing electronic games to be experienced in a pedagogical manner. According to the author, different aspects of electronic games, including their history, modalities, and even their relationships with the electronics industry, can enrich the teaching–learning process when explored in a thorough and contextualized way within the school environment.

The difficulties in discussing electronic games, as well as games and play activities in general, highlight the importance of theoretical deepening and continuing teacher education in order to strengthen scientific knowledge in the school context (Rosa, Silva e Azevedo, 2025). Although this aspect is present in some teacher education programs, it is not always prioritized. However, when such programs are accompanied by research, they can serve as a reference for other initiatives. It is essential that these educational programs do not limit themselves to reproducing a training model but instead seek to overcome this conception by promoting theoretical deepening that enhances pedagogical practice (Goi; Santos, 2019).

5 Final considerations

This study highlighted the relevance of games and play activities as fundamental elements for the teaching–learning process and for the holistic development of students. Through the analysis of official documents and pedagogical practices in public schools in Palmas, Tocantins, it was found that although games and play activities are present in some curricular guidelines, their approach remains superficial and is often dissociated from a structured pedagogical proposal.

The results indicate that SPE, in various contexts, remains strongly marked by a sport-centered perspective. Within this scenario, playfulness—expressed through games and play activities—still occupies a secondary position, although it should play a central role in pedagogical planning given its educational potential across motor, cognitive, affective, social, and cultural dimensions.

The central objective of this study was to understand how games and play activities are addressed in public schools in Palmas, based on an analysis of the documents that guide pedagogical practice and interviews with Physical Education teachers. It was identified that, although these documents have a normative character, their implementation requires flexibility in order to accommodate the specific characteristics of students and school contexts.

It is also noteworthy that teachers recognize the importance of games and play activities for the educational process; however, they demonstrate conceptual weaknesses and difficulties in articulating these practices with official documents. Terms such as recreational games, popular games, games of African and Indigenous origin, as well as electronic games, appear in the documents but still require greater appropriation by teachers, particularly with regard to the understanding and pedagogical exploration of these contents.

In particular, electronic games require specific attention: their pedagogical use remains underexplored, despite being part of students' everyday experiences. Understanding them as knowledge objects requires more in-depth theoretical and methodological training so that they may be incorporated into Physical Education classes in a critical and meaningful manner.

It is concluded that there is an urgent need to expand the academic debate on games and play activities, as well as to promote continuing education initiatives that foster

theoretical deepening and enhance teaching practice. It is hoped that this study may contribute to this discussion and encourage further research and actions that strengthen the role of playfulness in schools, particularly in SPE, recognizing it as a space for the construction of multiple forms of knowledge and for the appreciation of children's bodily culture.

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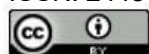
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