


## Playful memories of educators in early childhood education


### ARTICLE

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### Abstract

This study explores the playful memories of educators working in Early Childhood Education. The primary objective was to analyze the significance of these memories and the importance of integrating them into the educational setting. The research employed a qualitative, bibliographic, and documentary approach. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with two teachers from the municipal education network in Pau dos Ferros/RN. The gathered information was subsequently analyzed using Bardin's content analysis technique. The findings indicate that playfulness plays a crucial role in child development. By incorporating traditional games into their pedagogical practices, teachers provide opportunities for these games to be revisited and reconstructed within students' memories, while also fostering the development of personal, cultural, and social identities. Based on these results, the study emphasizes the value of teachers rediscovering and sharing games from their own childhoods, enabling children to experience them within the school context.

**Keywords:** Playful Memories. Traditional Games. Early Childhood Education. Educators.

### Memórias lúdicas de professoras da educação infantil

#### Resumo

O estudo disserta sobre as memórias lúdicas de professoras que atuam na Educação Infantil. O objetivo foi analisar as memórias lúdicas das professoras que atuam na Educação Infantil e a relevância de trabalhá-las no ambiente educativo. A pesquisa caracteriza-se como qualitativa, pesquisa bibliográfica e documental. O instrumento de coleta de dados foi a entrevista semiestruturada com duas professoras da rede municipal de ensino no município de Pau dos Ferros/RN. Desse modo, as informações obtidas foram analisadas com base na técnica da análise de conteúdo de Bardin. Os resultados revelaram que o lúdico contribui para o desenvolvimento infantil, pois o professor, ao inserir na prática pedagógica brincadeiras antigas, oportuniza que estas sejam reconstruídas na memória e impulsiona a formação da identidade pessoal, cultural e social dos indivíduos. Portanto, consideramos relevante que os professores resgatem brincadeiras do

seu período da infância e possibilitem que estas sejam experienciadas pelas crianças no contexto escolar.

**Palavras-chave:** Memórias Lúdicas. Brincadeiras Antigas. Educação Infantil. Professor.

## 1 Introduction

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Early Childhood Education, the first stage of Basic Education, is promoted with the purpose of providing the integral development of children, involving cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects, as well as enabling the acquisition of competencies and skills necessary for each age group in this stage of Basic Education (Angotti, 2010). The triad of caring, educating and playing, according to Angotti (2010), is a pertinent mechanism which, when worked on in an articulated manner in Early Childhood Education, contributes immensely to the development of teaching and learning processes.

Playfulness worked on in the educational environment (intensification of play), with the various possibilities of play, is an indispensable tool both for boosting children's development and for multiple learning, experiences, interaction, socialization and the construction of knowledge in a fun and pleasurable way (Maluf, 2009; Kishimoto, 2017). In addition to the relevance of play in the educational sphere, by bringing back old or traditional games that were present in other cultural and historical contexts, the teacher can enable the preservation of a people's culture, which has been passed down from one generation to the next (Leonardeli; Conti; Barbosa, 2021). Thus, the aim of this study was to analyze the playful memories of teachers who work in Early Childhood Education and the relevance of working with them in the educational environment.

The methodology of the study was a qualitative approach, bibliographical research on the themes of memory, Early Childhood Education and playfulness, and documentary research in the field of Basic Education. To this end, the instrument used to collect the data was a semi-structured interview with two teachers who work in Early Childhood Education in the municipal education network in the municipality of Pau dos Ferros/RN, in order to find out a little about their playful memories and the day-to-day pedagogical practice

developed in the educational environment; in addition, the analysis of this data was carried out based on the content analysis technique (Bardin, 2016).

The paper is organized into four sections: the first deals with the methodological path, explaining the methodology used to develop the study. The second section deals with the theoretical framework, with a brief discussion on the theme of *memories* and playfulness in Early Childhood Education, presenting the relevance of working with playful memories in the educational context. The last section of this study deals with the results and the discussion on the theme of "being a teacher in Early Childhood Education and their playful memories", in which the statements of the teachers interviewed are presented in dialogue with the theoretical contributions and, finally, we present our final considerations, explaining the relevance of the study in the field of Early Childhood Education.

## 2 Methodology

The study is based on a qualitative research approach which, according to Prodanov and Freitas (2013), is a type of research that interprets phenomena in an inductive way, prioritizing the subjectivity of the individuals involved in which the information obtained is not translated into numbers. Therefore, the data obtained in qualitative research "[...] is descriptive, portraying as many elements as possible in the reality studied. It is much more concerned with the process than with the product" (Prodanov; Freitas, 2013, p. 70).

In order to enrich the study, we used bibliographical research as a theoretical foundation, drawing on theorists who address the subject under investigation. We also carried out documentary research into legislation on basic education. In terms of methodological procedures, we used Prodanov and Freitas (2013).

The technique used to obtain information about the playful memories of early childhood education teachers was a semi-structured interview with two teachers who work in the municipal education system, both of whom work in a Municipal Early Childhood Education Center in the city of Pau dos Ferros/RN. According to Prodanov and Freitas (2013), the interview is a vehicle for obtaining information about a particular problem or

subject from an interviewee. The criteria for choosing the teachers were as follows: working in Early Childhood Education or having already had experience in this stage of Basic Education; links with the municipal education network; holding a permanent or contracted position; academic background in Pedagogy.

The teachers were invited to collaborate in the research by taking part in a semi-structured interview and, on accepting the invitation, they signed the Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF), which clarifies the purpose of the study and guarantees the confidentiality of the participants' identities; to this end, fictitious names were used, Flor Tulipa and Flor Violeta. Once the teachers were aware of the research, they authorized the recording of the interview and signed the image and audio authorization forms. The interviews took place remotely via the Google Meet platform, due to the availability of the teachers' time as they were in the final stretch of the school year and with an overload of work to complete the class diary. It's important to note that the interviews took place individually and on different days, with the interview with Professor Flor Tulipa taking place on 15/11/2022; the interview with Professor Flor Violeta, on 23/11/2022, but following the interview script to guide the conversation.

Teacher Flor Tulipa has a degree in Pedagogy from the Faculdade Integrada do Brasil (FAIBRA) and a specialization in Institutional and Clinical Psychopedagogy from the same institution she graduated from (FAIBRA). She has 6 years' professional experience and is a permanent teacher in the municipal school system in the municipality of Pau dos Ferros/RN. She works in the nursery class, which includes children aged 2 years old.

Teacher Flor Violeta has a degree in Pedagogy from the State University of Rio Grande do Norte (UERN), with a specialization in Clinical and Institutional Psychopedagogy from the Venda Nova do Imigrante College (FAVENI). She is a contracted teacher in the municipal school system of the municipality of Pau dos Ferros/RN, and has five years' teaching experience; she works in the pre-school class, which corresponds to children in the 4-year-old age group.

Therefore, in order to analyze the verbal data from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the teachers, we used the content analysis technique (Bardin, 2016),

proposing *a priori* and *a posteriori* analysis categories, in which we will have theoretical contributions, previously mentioned in the bibliographic research, which will guide the analysis of this verbal data. In short, this data analysis technique is a group of techniques that analyzes communications by means of "[...] systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of messages - indicators (quantitative or not) that allow the inference of knowledge regarding the conditions of production/reception (inferred variables) of these messages" (Bardin, 2016, p. 48).

### 3 Theoretical background

#### 3.1 What can we say about memories?

For us human beings, cultural and historical subjects, to talk about memories is to recall moments in our lives that were significant, experiences that left their mark in the past and are interconnected in the present. It is through memories that we build our history, our identity as individuals active in society.

For Caldas (2021), memory is a synthesis of what has been lived, as it manifests the experiences of individuals in their social environment. By telling their own story, these experiences can be revisited and given new meaning. In this way, the subject can decide about their existence and what they can become in society.

In this respect, memory is present throughout our life history and is thus interconnected with subjective and social factors; thus, according to Bosi (2015):

[...] memory allows the present body to relate to the past and, at the same time, interferes in the 'current' process of representations. Through memory, the past not only comes to the surface, but also pushes, 'displaces' the latter, occupying the entire space of consciousness. Memory appears as a subjective force that is both deep and active, latent and penetrating, hidden and invasive (Bosi, 2015, p. 46-47).

In light of what Bosi (2015) has said, we can see the importance of the relationship between memory and the past and present, and how relevant it is to recognize our

singularity as unique historical subjects, because even with our social relations with the community and with the apprehension of many experiences, we have our own particularities that we construct in our subjectivity.

Bergson (2010) argues that memory is related to the preservation of the past, in which memories are the primary sources for bringing this past into the present. Thus, memory "[...] prolongs the past in the present, because our action will dispose of the future to the exact extent that our perception, augmented by memory, has condensed the past" (Bergson, 2010, p. 247).

So, memories are the records of events or facts lived in the past that are in our memories, which are charged with feelings and emotions, in which we can bring up memories of happy and sad moments that we have experienced throughout our lives (Bergson, 2010).

Bergson (2010) also discusses the concept of two interrelated types of memory: habit memory and pure memory. Habit memory, which has a material and mechanical essence, is related to the memories we can acquire by repeating habits we do with our bodies, such as walking, running and talking. Pure memory, on the other hand, has a spiritual and emotional essence and is related to memories that have been significant in our lives and, for this reason, we keep them to relive.

In this context, Halbwachs (2024) talks about the individual memory of each human being in society, which is built on the principle of collective memory, which involves the influence of others, since:

[...] our memories remain collective, and are remembered by others, even when it comes to events in which only we participated. This is because, in reality, we are never alone. It's not necessary for other men to be present, materially distinct from us, because we always carry with us and within us a number of people who don't get confused (Halbwachs, 2024, p. 5-6).

In light of Halbwachs' (2024) assertion, it is pertinent to mention that our individual memories are built through social interaction and relationships with others in different environments, such as family, friends, church and school. So, in this coexistence between



individuals, it is possible to share and internalize memories of the past that will be reconstructed collectively. Thus, "much of what we remember is linked to other people's memories, so man is part of a collective fabric, in which he is never alone" (Caldas, 2021, p. 102).

In this context, the subject is a social actor and has a history; therefore, they need to build their identity as a being active in society; therefore, memory is interrelated to the constitution of identity. Thus, according to Caldas (2021, p. 105), "memory and identity are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, there is no search for identity without memory, and conversely, the search for memory is always accompanied by a sense of identity". In this way, we, as social individuals, seek to constitute our social, historical and cultural identity based on experiences from the past.

Therefore, we understand that when we talk about memories, we seek to recall and remember remarkable events that we have experienced since our childhood in which "remembrance is the survival of the past. The past, preserved in the spirit of every human being, comes to consciousness in the form of memory-images" (Bosi, 2015, p. 53). Therefore, when we remember the experiences of the past, we seek meanings for our lives in both the personal and social spheres.

## 3.2 Playfulness in Early Childhood Education

Childhood is the first phase of a human being's life, marked by imagination, pleasure, creativity and fantasy, which is directly linked to play, since games are present in children's daily lives. It is through play that children can express their feelings, emotions, desires and wishes. Thus, according to Angotti (2010, p. 19), "childhood is a unique stage in the life of the human being, a magical, unique moment of development, and for this it must be planned and structured".

Play is a spontaneous, voluntary, exploratory and pleasurable activity that is part of our lives and is accessible to every human being, regardless of social or economic status or age group. Playing is also communication and expression, in which it associates thought

and action, helping children to develop mentally, emotionally, socially and physically, so it is a vehicle for learning to live, but it is not a pastime (Maluf, 2009).

As cultural and historical subjects, children incorporate experiences from their social context through interaction and socialization, which mark their life history and contribute to their all-round development. Consequently, children are also subjects of rights, i.e. citizens who must have their social rights guaranteed and ensured by the legal apparatus.

In this sense, over the course of history, it has been noticeable that many achievements relating to childhood have been made, thus making it possible for children to be recognized, with guarantees of better conditions in terms of education, health, leisure and safety. Against this backdrop, the 1988 Federal Constitution was a pioneer in guaranteeing essential rights for citizens, such as health, safety, work and recognizing education as a right for all, adults, young people and children. This recognition of education as a right for all is set out in Article 205, which states that:

Article 205: [...] Education, a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, shall be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the individual, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and their qualification for work. (Brasil, 1988).

Based on the premise that education is a right for all, Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996 — the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB, Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação) — was enacted. This law guarantees access to education from Early Childhood Education to Higher Education, ensuring that everyone can access and remain in a quality education system. It contributes to the holistic development of individuals and their qualification for the labor market (Brazil, 1996).

Another important legal framework in favor of childhood is the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA, Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente), Law No. 8,069, of July 13, 1990. It provides protective measures aimed at children and adolescents in society, safeguarding fundamental rights such as health, freedom, education, culture, leisure, family and community life, among others (Brasil, 1990).



In light of this, it is evident that children have guaranteed rights, which have been achieved through struggles for the recognition of childhood—a vital stage in human life that must be valued. Among the social rights attained, such as education, health, and security, the right to play also stands out as particularly relevant in the context of childhood. This right is ensured by the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA), enacted in 1990, which affirms the child's right to “play, engage in sports, and have fun” (Brasil, 1990, Art. 16, section IV).

From this perspective, Early Childhood Education, as part of Basic Education, is grounded in three pillars: care, education, and play. The latter, which is the focus of this study, will be examined in greater depth throughout the present work. It is essential that the educational context provide playful moments with games and recreational activities that foster children's holistic development and learning, while also promoting joy and discovery—elements that are fundamental to play. Angotti (2010) presents a relevant statement on the playful nature of learning, asserting that:

It is important that the understanding of playfulness is not limited merely to situations involving games and recreational activities. Rather, it must also be recognized in its principles of pleasure and freedom—especially the freedom to possess one's own interpretative lens and to express thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and representations. In other words, the child must be allowed to position themselves as a persistent explorer of the world—eager to devour it, to understand it, and to become an intensely participatory and meaningful part of it. (Angotti, 2010, p. 21).

In light of Angotti's (2010) assertion, it becomes evident how important it is for teachers to intentionally incorporate play and games into the classroom in a structured and purposeful way. Beyond contributing to the learning process, such activities serve as mechanisms that foster pleasure, imagination, and fantasy, allowing children to express their emotions and explore their surroundings.

In Early Childhood Education, the first stage of Basic Education, the interactions made possible through play are a fundamental part of the school environment. They are essential for children to experience meaningful relationships with others in the same space, enhancing their social, intellectual, emotional, and motor development—and, above all,

enabling the production of knowledge. The Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC, National Common Curricular Base) states:

Interaction during play characterizes everyday childhood life, bringing with it many learning experiences and potentials for children's holistic development. By observing interactions and play among children and between children and adults, it is possible to identify, for example, the expression of affection, the mediation of frustrations, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation (Brasil, 2018, p. 37).

Given this, when teachers use playfulness in their pedagogical practice as a driving tool for learning, and propose such development in a motivating and enjoyable way, they enable children to learn through play. Thus, games and playful activities within educational contexts are “[...] conditions for maximizing the construction of knowledge, introducing the qualities of playfulness, pleasure, initiative, and active and motivating engagement” (Kishimoto, 2017, p. 39).

In this regard, educators can employ a wide variety of games and playful activities to stimulate children's learning processes. Among these are rule-based games, pretend play, cooperative games, and traditional or ancestral games. According to Maluf (2009), rule-based games involve the definition and adherence to specific rules during play; in pretend play, children sharpen their imagination by engaging with symbolic elements. The author also explains that cooperative games require collaboration, helping children understand the value of belonging to a group.

Traditional or ancestral games—such as hopscotch, “pass the ring,” circle singing games, hide-and-seek, spinning tops, among others—are passed down orally from generation to generation. These games allow children to gain experiences rooted in their social context through the culture and history of their community. As Kishimoto (2017, p. 42) notes, “[...] traditional play has the function of preserving children's culture, developing social interaction, and enabling the joy of playing.”

Thus, this variety of traditional games plays an important role in children's holistic development across social, cognitive, motor, and emotional domains. Moreover, they promote the cultural heritage of a given people (Leonardeli; Conti; Barbosa, 2021). Based

on this premise, it is important to emphasize that traditional games can be integrated into the school setting as pedagogical tools and as a means of cultural preservation.

Therefore, early childhood educators must consistently incorporate playfulness into their teaching practices, using games and playful activities as powerful tools to foster holistic development and enhance the teaching-learning process. As Maluf (2009, p. 20) states, “[...] through play, the child prepares to learn. While playing, the child learns new concepts, acquires information, and experiences healthy development.” It is therefore of utmost importance that children live their childhood fully, with play as a constant presence, so they may be happy and engage in harmonious coexistence with others.

## 4 Results and discussion

### 4.1 Being a preschool teacher and their playful memories

In this section, we will explore the playful memories of preschool teachers. For this purpose, we have systematized the categories of analysis (Bardin, 2016) both *a priori* and *a posteriori*. The *a priori* categories (playful memories/pedagogical practice) stemmed from the research objective, while the *a posteriori* categories (childhood traditional games/development of traditional games in the educational environment) emerged from the teachers’ verbal accounts. It is important to highlight that the following topics present the theoretical analysis and discussion of the *a posteriori* categories.

#### 4.1.1 Traditional childhood games

Playfulness is an essential part of every individual's childhood, and today's adults clearly had various playful experiences during their own childhoods, often with games typical of their time—commonly referred to as traditional or old-fashioned games. In this sense, when teacher *Flor Tulipa* was asked about the games she used to play during her childhood, she answered:

*In my childhood, I remember a lot the singing circle rhymes [...] rhymes [...] that are still used today, Teresinha de Jesus, and others [...]; I also remember that one passing the ring, it's not really a rhyme, it's more of a game. Passing the ring, hopscotch, hot potato, tic-tac-toe, stone throwing, falls into the well. I remember a lot of those (Flor Tulipa, 2022).*

Based on what teacher Tulipa shared, we can observe that during her childhood, she experienced playful singing games available at that time, which enabled a variety of learning moments. She especially recalls singing circle rhymes, but also mentions passing the ring, hot potato, hopscotch, and tic-tac-toe—all of which were part of her playful repertoire. Her words align with Maluf's (2009, p. 12) view that “we need to analyze our playful experiences and create descriptive memorials about them, allowing our emotions and representations to emerge [...]”

We also note that teacher Tulipa clearly distinguishes between singing games (rhymes) and games in general. Another relevant aspect of her account is the affective bonds that these games fostered, whether or not they involved rhymes. It becomes evident from her narrative that play contributes to teaching and learning processes, as her memories highlight the emotional connections tied to these moments.

Through teacher Flor Tulipa's statement and Maluf's (2009) argument, we recognize the importance of shaping a play culture, which, according to Gilles Brougère (2011), is driven by the social and cultural contexts of each society—contexts that hold sets of rules that are “available to participants in a given society and make up the play culture of that society, while the rules an individual knows make up their own play culture” (Brougère, 2011, p. 24).

In this context of discussion, teacher *Flor Violeta* also mentioned several games, especially street games that marked her childhood—such as tag, capture the flag, hide-and-seek, and volleyball—which she played with neighborhood friends, fostering interaction and fun:

*[...] I was a very active child, and on the street there were the neighborhood kids who gathered every afternoon to play. The games we used to play the most, especially these street games, were games like capture the flag, tag, hide-and-*

*seek, volleyball. Games that didn't require many resources, but still allowed for group fun, sharing relationships, experiencing the neighborhood, where children would always gather to play these games together [...] that entertained us so much even though they were so simple. (Flor Violeta, 2022).*

Indeed, from teacher Flor Violeta's words, it's possible to see that her childhood games were part of a specific historical and cultural context, preserving the customs of a given era and providing joy and enjoyment. In this regard, Kishimoto (2017) affirms that games available in different historical-cultural periods are "transmitted from generation to generation through empirical knowledge and remain in childhood memory" (Kishimoto, 2017, p. 42).

Echoing Kishimoto's ideas, João Batista Freire (2017) states that the act of playing reveals the game itself, noting that "we know it exists by its manifestations, because we can see it, touch it, hear it, or even sense it" (Freire, 2017, p. 65). Based on his position, we reaffirm that playing allows imagination—fueled by playfulness—to be externalized and to generate pleasure and enjoyment. In teacher Violeta's account, we clearly see how playing in the street with friends brought joy and activated the imaginative flow that games inspire (Freire, 2017).

Moreover, the teacher's testimony highlights the simplicity of play, emphasizing how and with whom one plays. Implicitly, teacher Violeta makes clear her appreciation for natural play, where everything flows continuously, effortlessly, and inclusively.

In summary, with the verbal data from the teachers regarding the traditional childhood games, it was possible to conclude that games belonging to a certain era or historical context can constitute a playful culture (Brougère, 2011), which reverberates through generations, fostering learning and eternalizing memories.

#### 4.1.2 Development of traditional games in the educational setting

When asked about the relevance of incorporating traditional childhood games into the current pedagogical routine, the teachers highlighted the importance of bringing the past into the present in a playful and enjoyable way.

Teacher Flor Tulipa stated: *"Yes, yes, definitely, because besides bringing back these games from the past, which are very fun and pleasurable; it's also a way to create a bond, in the classroom, a fun way of working"*. Considering the statement from this teacher, it is evident that rescuing games from a historical context, besides reminiscing about the culture of play, enables moments of enjoyment and pleasure. This fact aligns with Maluf's (2009, p. 33) assertion that "it is necessary for the teacher to establish a connection between pleasure, play, and learning. This will stimulate the child's imagination and fantasy, going far beyond an educational intention."

Another point we highlight from Teacher Tulipa's comment is the bond that games can foster in the school environment between children and teachers. In this regard, the relevance of play, according to Santana (2023), is linked to childhood cultures, which constitute networks of meanings, allowing children to interact with the world.

In this sense, based on Maluf's (2009) thoughts and Teacher Flor Tulipa's words, we consider how pertinent it is for the teacher, by incorporating playfulness into the educational setting through the revival of traditional games, to constantly promote the connection between pleasure, imagination, enjoyment, and learning—elements that these games are capable of boosting in the teaching-learning process.

In this context, Teacher Flor Violeta offers a significant contribution with her words about the importance of working with traditional games in the classroom:

*[...] when we bring these traditional games into the classroom, we are reviving them, also allowing our children to experience what many of us lived some time ago. So, besides enabling the development of many skills and competencies necessary at this stage of education, traditional childhood games also foster this interaction, this playfulness that is so important within Early Childhood Education in the initial formation of our children. (Flor Violeta, 2022).*

From this perspective, Professor Flor Violeta states that when a teacher introduces traditional games into the educational context, they are enabling children to not only develop the skills and competencies these games provide but also to engage with the culture historically constructed. Thus, it is in this cultural and historical aspect experienced by children in the realm of play that the constitution of a playful culture is fostered



(Brougère, 2011). In this sense, the professor's thought resonates with Bosi (2015, p. 55) when he argues that "[...] remembering is not reliving, but remaking, reconstructing, rethinking, with images and ideas of today, the experiences of the past." Therefore, we understand that when games from different historical contexts are revived and worked within the school environment, they stimulate their endurance across generations, preventing them from being forgotten.

Thus, it is important for the teacher to provide playful moments in the classroom so that children can learn in an enjoyable way, establish favorable interactions with both the educator and other children, and, by having contact with popular culture, understand the relevance of recalling and experiencing the games that their grandparents, parents, or uncles played in another historical context. In light of these considerations, Brougère (2011) asserts that children build the playful culture through play, by participating in games with peers and observing other children in the act of playing.

In the pedagogical routine, the teacher, by promoting a repertoire of games, enables children to enhance their overall development in cognitive, emotional, social, motor, and intellectual aspects, leading them to progress favorably in their learning process, which will be engaging and satisfying. Considering the constant importance of playfulness in the educational environment, we asked the teachers about the games they typically develop in their daily school routine, and we received positive and satisfactory responses. Professor Flor Tulipa mentions:

*[...] I usually work a lot with nursery rhymes, songs that involve body movement [...] I also worked with the shuttlecock. I generally don't work with hopscotch, because, since I work with two-year-old groups, they still have difficulty mastering the rules of jumping and understanding the game itself. [...]* (Flor Tulipa, 2022).

Given the account provided by Professor Flor Tulipa, it is clear that the teacher, in her pedagogical routine, often works with playfulness through nursery rhymes, a way of involving body movements. In this regard, the field of experience within Early Childhood Education – Body, Gestures, and Movements – in the National Common Curricular Base

(BNCC) presents that when children are exposed to “[...] different languages, such as music, dance, theater, and make-believe games, they communicate and express themselves through the interweaving of body, emotion, and language” (Brazil, 2018, p. 41).

In this context, we also recognize the importance of rescuing the repertoire of songs that were part of and continue to be part of popular children's culture. Therefore, working with music in Early Childhood Education “[...] means much more than the traditional transmission of songs. In fact, musicalization in Early Childhood Education involves sound experiences, exploring the world of sounds, and musical aesthetic experience” (Guilherme, 2010, p. 157). In agreement with this idea, Brito (2010) points out that music is significant in education because it is closely related to living, being one of the ways we establish a relationship with our environment, with others, and with ourselves.

However, in terms of playfulness, Professor Flor Tulipa shares the difficulty she faces in developing the traditional game of hopscotch, since, according to her, the group of children she works with is made up of two-year-olds, who have difficulty understanding the rules, although she has been able to develop the game of shuttlecock. The aforementioned teacher also mentions another game she works on with the children: “[...] *that ring-passing game, although they still have more difficulty understanding the objective of the game*” (Flor Tulipa, 2022).

Given the teacher's account, we can raise the following question: should it be expected that two-year-old children understand the rules of these games, or would the importance lie in the playfulness of the moment itself? We agree that the games, hopscotch and ring-passing, have established rules, but if the child can engage with the playfulness, it could allow for pleasure and joy to emerge. As João Batista Freire (2017) points out, when we engage with the Lord of the Game, we allow pleasure to be sharply heightened, and, consequently, fun, imagination, and creativity are enabled.

We also observe in the teacher's statement that she prioritizes nursery rhymes to work in the educational environment. These are relevant for preserving culture and providing children with musical experiences. In this regard, Guilherme (2010, p. 158) states that encouraging the child to “[...] get to know nursery rhymes and also the classics,

sometimes to relax, sometimes to cheer up, can lead them to a passion for music [...]”. The statement of the aforementioned author aligns with the thinking of Brito (2010) when he points out that music integrates body and mind, action and reflection, emotion and reason, sensitivity and intellect. In other words, making music allows us to enhance our human essence in relation to others, the world, and ourselves.

Professor Flor Violeta argues that she often works with a variety of games in the educational context with her class:

*[...] I really enjoy bringing games that use hula hoops, which also involve musicalization, games with balls, cones, jumping, dancing, that allow them to develop their motor skills and laterality. Understanding how movement and awakening the body are so important, and I realize that they are very attracted to games that are musicalized and also involve all the playful aspects that music can bring. So, I tend to explore these games that really enable action and involve several different strategies (Flor Violeta, 2022).*

It is evident from Professor Flor Violeta's statement that in her lessons, she consistently seeks to develop games that involve the body to promote the development of laterality and motor skills. She also uses a very significant pedagogical resource aimed at early childhood, which is musicalization. In this sense, the teacher, by providing body movement through playfulness and musicalization, allows children to “[...] explore and experience a wide range of movements, gestures, looks, sounds, and mimics with the body, to discover various ways of occupying and using space with the body [...]” (Brazil, 2018, p. 41).

In summary, the main goal of this study was to analyze the playful memories of teachers working in Early Childhood Education and the relevance of incorporating them into the educational environment. When we rescue the games that have incorporated a cultural and historical setting, we enable children, in their current context, to perceive and value popular culture and the teachings passed down from one generation to another. To this end, when we asked the teachers if they usually rescue any old games and develop them in the educational space, the responses were divergent, with Flor Violeta frequently working with them, while Flor Tulipa rarely incorporates them into her lessons but recognizes their relevance:

*[...] Rarely, I really enjoy working with games that were played in the past during my childhood, but, in reality, it's rare that we manage to do this kind of rescue. It could be invested in more. And then, what comes into play? It's games like "pass the ring," hopscotch, and circle songs. Recently, we participated in a course at the playroom of UERN<sup>1</sup>, where a very interesting song was worked on, a song by Seu Zé, and we started working with it in the classroom as well. That would be a game being rescued, right? (Flor Tulipa, 2022).*

On the other hand, in Professor Flor Violeta's statement, we notice that in her pedagogical practice, she always seeks to rescue old games and work with them in a reinvented way, giving them new meaning:

*[...] We carry out a circuit of games, where we bring various traditional games in a sequence, and also a bit reinvented. For example, we start with hopscotch, but instead of just using the feet as in the traditional hopscotch, we create a version that involves using both the feet and the hands, mixing that with a sequence of colors and movements. Then we move on to the hula hoop game, where instead of using the hula hoop traditionally around the waist, we use it as a resource that allows the children to jump in accordance with the rhythm of the music (Flor Violeta, 2022).*

It is evident that the teacher, Flor Violeta, when reporting that she uses traditional games, bringing this popular culture into the present day, seeks to work in an innovative way, reinventing a way to stimulate the children's interest in such games so that they are not forgotten but rather reconstructed and remembered. According to Bosi (2015, p. 89), "today, the function of memory is the knowledge of the past that is organized, orders time, and locates it chronologically." Thus, it is important that the games from the past are not forgotten but are always present in individuals' daily lives in society, especially in the educational environment as pedagogical tools in the teaching process.

The proposal to reinvent games, as discussed by Professor Flor Violeta, is of utmost importance, as it is necessary to contextualize these games, considering each child's daily life, as well as their social, cultural, and economic context. In this sense, the traditional and the modern can and should dialogue, seeking a single objective, which is to contribute to the teaching and learning processes of children.

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When asked about the children's interest in the moment when old games are worked on in the classroom, the teachers unanimously responded, presenting the pleasure and excitement of the children. Professor Flor Tulipa mentions:

*[...] We can see the child's smile. These are very enjoyable games. So, we see the smile on the child's face, it's pleasurable for the teacher to mediate these games, especially because they are part of our experience when we were children, and rescuing these games is very enjoyable [...]* (Flor Tulipa, 2022).

From Professor Flor Tulipa's statement, we consider that in the educational environment, when the teacher provides children with contact with old games, they allow them to become involved and enjoy these games. This, therefore, is a way of bringing the popular culture of the past into the present, thereby encouraging enriching experiences for the children's overall development. In this sense, the teacher's statement coincides with the idea of Leonardeli, Conti, and Barbosa (2021, p. 49) who state that old games can have “[...] significant importance for the evolution and development of children, allowing them to create autonomy, develop creativity, and develop the ability to resolve conflicts [...]”.

In this context, Professor Flor Violeta points out that when developing old games in the school context, she perceives the pleasure and enthusiasm of the children:

*[...] They really like it; it's as if that game, which many times our parents played, now comes with a new perspective [...] is something very different, very innovative for those children. So, when we bring the game, they get excited, get involved, want to participate, sometimes they want to play it more than once [...]* (Flor Violeta, 2022).

Thus, we can affirm from Professor Flor Violeta's statement that when children are exposed to games from past social contexts, they express pleasure, enjoyment, and excitement. This pleasure and excitement can stimulate the development of learning, the pursuit of new experiences, since, according to Maluf (2009, p. 32), “the more the child participates in playful activities, the more new searches for knowledge will manifest, and their learning will be more enjoyable.”

In view of this, it is pertinent to highlight that playing with our students is undoubtedly a crucial step for their cognitive and emotional development. However,

respecting the cultural and social space of these individuals in formation must be taken into account, as part of their memories is also constituted by aspects present in their current experiences, which thus become relevant within their realities, becoming part of their world, whether musical, poetic, or of another nature.

Therefore, the teacher, at the early stages of a child's schooling, has the essential role of being the mediator who will guide them towards playfulness, contributing to child development and to the rescue of games that were part of the playful heritage of the past; it is a way of preserving history and the culture of a people. Furthermore, the teacher, in their continuous professional development, needs to understand that, more than acquiring knowledge about playfulness and the act of playing in child development — as well as mastering didactic procedures, directions, and the evaluation of pedagogical proposals — it is necessary for them to be able to connect different childhoods through playful actions (Santana, 2023).

However, this teacher must first have pleasure and a taste for playing so that they can pass on these feelings to the children, because, as Maluf (2009, p. 32) states, “a teacher who doesn't like to play will never observe their students engaging in playful practices and will also not recognize the value of games in the life of the child.”

## 5 Final considerations

The research conducted with the two teachers who work in Early Childhood Education in the municipal school system of the city of Pau dos Ferros/RN allowed us to investigate their playful memories, understanding the repertoire of games that were part of their childhoods and how they seek, on a daily basis, in their pedagogical practice, to work with the children. The aim was for these games, which existed in other historical-cultural contexts, to be integrated into the collection of current games.

Thus, the play provided in the school environment brings abundant experiences, knowledge exchange, and new learning, since childhood is the stage of human life most suited for moments of playfulness, games, and fun. When teachers work with old games,



they significantly contribute to ensuring they are not forgotten, allowing them to remain present in the daily lives of children, integrating into their memories.

Therefore, when we reminisce about past experiences, we bring to the present the memories that stayed in our minds. Recalling old games is about ensuring they are never forgotten, but that they are passed down from one generation to another, allowing the construction of the cultural, personal, and social identity of individuals.

Thus, this study can be a valuable source for future research involving the playful memories of teachers working in Early Childhood Education, discussing the relevance of teachers recalling the games from their childhoods and using them in their pedagogical practice as a facilitating tool for the teaching-learning process. Moreover, it serves as a way to preserve the cultural, historical, and social repertoire of a particular society.

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