

## Assessment tools and practices in early childhood education: reflections on the role of children's participation

### ARTICLE

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### Abstract

The evaluation of learning is conceived as a guiding dimension of the learning process and serves as a support for pedagogical (re)planning. In this article, we reflect upon assessment tools and children's participation based on a supervised internship experience carried out at a Municipal Child Education Center (CMEI) in Manaus. This qualitative research is a descriptive and reflective study. We combined the analysis of field notes with a literature review on learning assessment in early childhood education, drawing on contributions from the Sociology of Childhood and the Pedagogy of Childhood. From this study, we understand that children's participation in assessment contexts within schools remains a challenge for teachers, as it requires that assessment experiences reflect participatory choices and strategies that position children as co-participants.

**Keywords:** Evaluation Instruments. Child Participation. Early Childhood Education. Sociology of Childhood.

### Instrumentos e práticas avaliativas na Educação Infantil: reflexões sobre o lugar da participação das crianças

### Resumo

A avaliação das aprendizagens é concebida como uma dimensão orientadora das aprendizagens e atua como subsídio para o (re)planejamento pedagógico. No presente artigo, realizamos uma reflexão sobre os instrumentos avaliativos e a participação das crianças com base em uma experiência de estágio supervisionado realizado em um Centro Municipal de Educação Infantil (CMEI) em Manaus. A pesquisa, de abordagem qualitativa, é um estudo descritivo e reflexivo. Aliamos a análise dos registros a uma revisão bibliográfica acerca da avaliação das aprendizagens na Educação Infantil, apoiando-nos nas contribuições da Sociologia da Infância e da Pedagogia da Infância. A partir do estudo, compreendemos que a participação das crianças nos contextos de avaliação na escola ainda é um desafio para as professoras, visto ser necessário que as experiências de avaliação reverberem opções e estratégias participativas tendo as crianças como coparticipantes.

**Palavras-chave:** Instrumentos de Avaliação. Participação Infantil. Educação Infantil. Sociologia da Infância.

## 1 Introduction

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The assessment of learning is an integral part of the educational process and is therefore very important in mediating pedagogical activities in early childhood education, as it is a dimension directly involved in school planning. In this context, assessment takes on a role that generates some tension, particularly when it responds to a trend that is very present in school contexts: the assessment of performance related to measurable results.

There is no single way to assess children, just as there are various assessment tools and models that can be incorporated into educational practice. In fact, we consider it significant to investigate assessment in early childhood education and, in particular, the assessment tools used by teachers in the preschool context. Taking into account that early childhood education is a *locus* for children to fully exercise their childhood, through play, interaction, and the production and affirmation of peer culture (Moruzzi; Tebet, 2017), we privilege discussion based on references that announce and defend them as participants and subjects of rights in early childhood education institutions and in society.

This article emerges in the midst of discussions around the construction of participatory alternatives for the education of young children and here associated with assessment processes. It is thus in dialogue with theoretical assumptions from the Sociology of Childhood (Qvortrup, 2010; Corsaro, 2011; Faria and Finco, 2011) and Childhood Pedagogy (Rocha, 2001; Oliveira-Formosinho; Kishimoto; Pinazza, 2007; Romão and Loures, 2024).

Understanding the limitations of the article, we intend to engage in a dialogue based on the report of an experience lived during a curricular internship at a Municipal Child Education Center (CMEI) in the municipal public school system of Manaus, focusing on the identification of the assessment tools used by teachers. Our objective is to analyze the place occupied by children as co-participants in the development/construction of assessment tools, guided by the following questions: How do teachers develop and use assessment tools? What are these tools? Do children participate in this process? And how does this occur?

The text is divided into two main sections: first, we list the legal and regulatory provisions that guide pedagogical practices in early childhood education and the contributions of the sociology of childhood and childhood pedagogy to a *different relationship* between children and adults in the spaces of reference. In the following section, we delve into the results and discussions, based on the analysis of records made during the mandatory curricular internship in early childhood education, the preschool phase. Thus, we divide this second moment into two thematic blocks: the assessment tools used by teachers, a block in which we present the assessment tools gathered in our experience; and the co-participation of children in the assessment processes, a moment in which we make some considerations about the participation of children with the tools and in the assessment practices.

## 2 Theoretical framework

In this section, we seek to discuss the normative-legal devices that deal with assessment in early childhood education (preschool stage) and the contributions of childhood pedagogy and childhood sociology to a different relationship between children and adults, its implications and confluences with legal documents, and the democratization of teacher assessment processes in early childhood education.

Assessment in early childhood education presupposes a formative rather than a classificatory approach, based on listening and observation, in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDBN), Art. 31, Item I: “assessment through monitoring and recording of children’s development, without the objective of promotion, even for access to elementary school” (Brasil, 1996). Recording is reiterated several times, precisely because it supports pedagogical planning, since, based on it, learning paths are made visible in one way or another, and because it represents a source of narrative authorship and reflection for the teacher.

With regard to assessment, the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI) recommend that “early childhood education institutions should create

procedures for monitoring pedagogical work and assessing children's development, without the aim of selection, promotion, or classification" (Brasil, 2010, p. 29). In this sense, the assessment tools developed and used by teachers in the preschool context should safeguard the recording and monitoring of children's learning and development.

The DCNEI also affirms the "use of multiple records made by adults and children (reports, photographs, drawings, albums, etc.)" (Brasil, 2010, p. 29), that is, both adults and children are active participants in the assessment processes. In line with this idea, the National Common Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (BNCC-EI) provides, in accordance with the DCNEI, that there should be monitoring based on various records made by adults and children in order to guarantee the rights to learning and development, and explicitly states that assessment at this stage should occur "without the intention of selecting, promoting, or classifying children as 'suitable' or 'unsuitable,' 'ready' or 'unready,' 'mature' or 'immature' (Brasil, 2017, p. 39).

In the composition of the aforementioned documents, we observe conceptions of children and childhood that converge with the sociology of childhood, while also proposing a participatory perspective that dialogues with the pedagogy of childhood. The DCNEI, in particular, carries with it a conception of children as authors, operators of their childhood, and producers of culture:

**2.2 Child:** A historical subject with rights who, in the interactions, relationships, and daily practices they experience, builds their personal and collective identity, plays, imagines, fantasizes, desires, learns, observes, experiments, narrates, questions, and constructs meanings about nature and society, producing culture (Brasil, 2010, p. 12).

Children as producers of culture is a concept dear to the Sociology of Childhood, which has argued that children, based on their relationships with their peers — other children — "creatively apprehend information from the adult world to produce their own unique cultures" (Corsaro, 2009, p. 31). This represents viewing children as protagonists and competent individuals, a fundamental prerogative of reflection on teaching. From this perspective, children are seen as "[...] active and creative social agents who produce their

own unique childhood cultures” (Corsaro, 2011, p. 15). They are subjects of rights who therefore participate innovatively in society, in its various and distinct spaces, whether institutional or not. Participation is a right that is guaranteed to them. In this line of thinking, this discussion is aligned with the fundamentals of the sociology of childhood and the pedagogy of childhood, presented here succinctly to highlight evaluative practices in early childhood education.

The sociology of childhood is a field in full force in sociology, in which the main intent is to shed light on a sociological view of childhood, affirming it as a social phenomenon to be studied on its own terms, that is, from the subjects that compose it, children (Sarmiento, 2008). In Brazil, it is acknowledged that one of the first authors to think about children from a sociological perspective was the Brazilian Florestan Fernandes, in his work dated in the 1940s and entitled *As trocinhas do Bom Retiro*. Another important work from the same decade was written by the Frenchman Marcel Mauss, entitled “Three Observations on the Sociology of Childhood.” It is considered a seminal text in French sociology of childhood. Since then, highly relevant works in the field began to emerge in the 1980s, originating from Anglo-Saxon and French researchers (Moruzzi; Tebet, 2017; Nascimento, 2011). It is worth emphasizing that the sociology of childhood is not a pedagogical proposal and should not be confused with the pedagogy of childhood.

Several studies in the field of education have resorted to the sociology of childhood as a theoretical and methodological reference, used to analyze the relationships, policies, and practices involving children, above all, due to the possibilities of shifts in the way of understanding them, specifically in the educational context. Authors in this theoretical field (Qvortrup, 2010; Corsaro, 2011; Sarmiento, 2005) have defended childhood as a social and historical construct and a structural category, that is, permanent in societies, even though its agents change and differ according to the passage of time, culture, political and symbolic contexts, etc. According to Qvortrup (2010), it is precisely these changes and pluralities that (re)affirm childhood as a structural category in societies, as it is not transitory, even though its operators are.

Raminho and Gonçalves (2023) point out that, by considering childhood as a structural category, the sociology of childhood has been particularly concerned with the development of childhoods. This means understanding children based on their own agency and modes of action, in order to overcome the way in which society, based on maturational views of childhood, has treated children: as beings in the process of becoming; as someone subject to adult reason and power who must meet the expectations of the adult(centric) world.

The sociology of childhood, therefore, has opposed biological and psychological views on children and childhood. These perspectives, rooted mainly in hegemonic currents of developmental psychology, have relegated childhood to a maturation phase and understood children as individuals who will develop and go through stages of development regardless of their social and historical condition (Sarmiento, 2008, 2005).

Childhood pedagogy, in turn, consists of a set of pedagogical actions and approaches that take children and childhood(s) as their reference point and, according to Barbosa (2010), results from advances in scientific production in education, which problematizes the reproduction of conservative and simplified models of teaching, knowledge construction, school relationships, and conceptions about children and students. Rocha (2001, p. 31) understands that “daycare and preschool have as their object the educational relationships established in a space of collective coexistence that has as its subject children from 0 to 6 years of age,” and, in this way, differs from the early years of elementary school, whose objective is teaching based on subjects from different areas of knowledge.

This pedagogy of childhood or early childhood education should aim to consider the different ways in which children are shaped as human beings, based on their cultural, social, and emotional contexts and their motor, gestural, creative, and aesthetic abilities, among other aspects. This perspective is based on the active participation of the subjects — teachers and children — in sensitive listening, attentive observation, welcoming, and the intentional organization of educational spaces and times.



Early childhood education and sociology of childhood are two fields that dialogue with each other and productively enrich educational practices, since, as already mentioned, it is possible to use concepts from sociology of childhood to consider other approaches to dialogue, listening, and coexistence with children, recognizing them as co-participants in all processes developed in the preschool setting. In this line of thinking, Demartini (2002) contributes:

For educators and researchers concerned with the construction of childhood pedagogy and early childhood education pedagogy, the discussion on the sociology of childhood becomes extremely relevant as it brings the concrete and real child, that is, it contributes to knowing more about the different ways of life of children, different childhoods, childhood cultures, about how childhood is being institutionalized, as well as how it is not being institutionalized (Demartini, 2002, p. 8).

We chose to explore this topic in this article because we believe it is necessary to develop a pedagogy of early childhood education centered on the specificities of children and childhood, arguing that studies based on the sociology of childhood and the pedagogy of childhood are powerful allies in this endeavor.

Given this theoretical framework, we understand that assessment in early childhood education should occur based on the axiom that children are historical subjects, producers of culture, who play, move, imagine, and produce a meaning of the world that is different from that of adults, and, therefore, should not be evaluated in a way that is comparative to other children, nor should they be framed within developmental ideals that do not dialogue with their social and cultural context.

Assessment in early childhood education, therefore, analyzed on the basis of the normative documents and theoretical foundations outlined above, is understood as a reflective movement that is ethically and politically committed to the child's education and inherently presupposes the recording of pedagogical experiences, which are articulated with the principle of reciprocal participation, in which the child is projected as a co-protagonist, alongside the teacher, whose speech, authorship, and participation must take place.

## 3 Methodology

This study is characterized as an experience report. Thus, it is a qualitative study of a descriptive and reflective nature. We reflected on the experience at a Municipal Child Education Center (CMEI) in the municipal public school system of Manaus, where the mandatory internship for the pedagogy course at the Federal University of Amazonas took place. The CMEI is located in the western part of the city of Manaus. It is a small institution with 10 classrooms and serves children in the first (3-4 years) and second (4-5 years) periods.

Due to the reduced university calendar (adjusted after the COVID-19 pandemic), the internship lasted only three months, from September to November 2024. During those three months, the intern was responsible, among other things, for monitoring and supporting the classroom teacher in her activities, producing and carrying out some literary activities with/for the children, recording daily activities, and immersing themselves in that context in order to, at the end of the internship, develop a teaching plan and an internship report as a requirement for passing the course. The records were made through notes in a field diary and were intended to constitute relevant data for the curricular internship.

We combined the analysis of the records with a bibliographic review based on specialized literature. Thus, we searched three journal indexes: Google Scholar, CAPES Journal Portal, and SciELO. We used the keywords: “Early Childhood Education,” “Assessment Tools,” “Evaluation Tools,” “Participation,” accompanied by the Boolean descriptors AND and OR. The time frame for articles covered a period of five years (2019-2024). Initially, we gathered 41 articles, and after reading the abstracts, 16 remained.



Subsequently, excluding articles from books and e-books, we worked with a total of 10 articles. This literature review provided support for our discussions.

## 4 Results and discussion

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### 4.1 Assessment tools used by teachers

In this section, we list and discuss the assessment tools identified in our experience during the internship. We present the assessment tools, their descriptions, the purposes for which they were used, and offer some reflections.

One of the instruments is the **children's notebook**. This consists of all the printed activities that the children did, which were later collected and pasted one by one into the notebook. The Law of Guidelines and Bases for Education (LDBN No. 9,394/1996) establishes that early childhood education institutions must "issue documentation that attests to the child's development and learning processes." Therefore, the notebook grouped together the children's first writings, drawings, and learning experiences and was shared with their families, being the closest thing to what we understand as a portfolio or dossier.

However, it was observed that there were no clear and explicit criteria for selecting which activities would or would not be included in the notebook, and its purpose was to be a repository of everything the children had done in terms of activities. Thus, its function was less to compose pedagogical documentation, precisely because of its unilateral nature. Nunes and Neira (2021) argue that the portfolio should be more than a folder to gather all the children's productions. In this regard, our criticism is related to the way in which this assessment tool composes pedagogical documentation in the reported context, when we recall that:

Pedagogical documentation includes records, but is not restricted to them. It consists of a path of reflection and communication about the children's educational experience, not as a unilateral path, as it proposes the involvement of children,

teachers, families, and schools. It is a process of feeling, thinking, and narrating, of creating memories, of sharing and dialogue, of constructing meanings, of active and sensitive listening (Maltez; Reis, 2023, p. 624).

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The **good behavior mural** consisted of a banner next to the whiteboard in the classroom with the names of the children in the class. This was a tool used by the teacher starting in October, and on it, the children were evaluated daily according to their behavior. This tool was used to help the teacher curb behaviors considered inappropriate, such as crying, shouting, talking out of turn, fighting with other children, running in the classroom, disobeying commands, among others.

**Self-assessment** took place daily at the beginning of class and covered the events of the previous day. The results of the assessment ranged from “good,” “under observation,” and “bad.” Those who “behaved well” received a smiley face next to their name on the banner, and those who “did not behave well” received a sad face next to their name, or a neutral face, depending on the severity of the “offense” committed the previous day. Thus, we realize that, in early childhood education, “the adult-centric mentality that has spread and become established in conservative spaces among practitioners of education is still privileged, which, conversely, praises children who are ‘well-behaved,’ quiet, silenced, frightened, and insecure” (Romão; Loures, 2024, p. 310).

The **evaluation form**, another of the evaluation instruments identified in our experience at CMEI, is a document composed of several questions about the children. These forms are established according to the BNCC fields of experience and include questions about behavior, emotional, motor, and interpersonal aspects. It was filled out by the teacher every six months. There are two options that the teacher can mark (A and B). Option A means that “The child has the autonomy to carry out their experiences” and B means “The child needs the mediation of other peers, adults, and children to carry out their experiences.”

We conclude that this instrument is subject to some criticism, as it includes pre-established elements as evaluation criteria and is a mandatory document prepared by specialists from the Municipal Department of Education. We understand, corroborated by

normative documents (Brasil, 1996, 2010, 2017), that assessment in early childhood education should not be a way to classify children, nor to fit them into pre-established standards of development.

The aforementioned form also presents other important challenges to be overcome in early childhood education practices: duality, Manichaeism, and lack of authorship. By recognizing only two criteria, there is no room for children's interpretations and subjectivities, nor is it compatible with the teacher's authorship in the formulation of learning hypotheses and assessment instruments, since the form is not formulated by the teacher herself.

The **descriptive opinion**, or report, is another of the assessment tools identified. This tool brings together the teacher's writings and narratives about the semester. The content of these opinions covers motor, emotional, learning, and behavioral aspects. These opinions are usually written by the teacher during the time set aside for planning and assessment, which is not "regular class time."

The main objective of this assessment tool is to compile a narrative about the child, their behavior, and their development. The teacher wrote the descriptive reports every semester, referring to events and activities that took place during the period. The descriptive report is a document for the teacher's exclusive use, meaning it is not shared with the family, and we did not have access to its content. Therefore, we were unable to learn about and delve deeper into how the teacher constructed the narratives in this document.

However, we agree with Nunes and Neira (2021, p. 872) when they state that this tool can be a way to build "[...] a reference for recording children's individual and collective learning processes, as well as for recording and evaluating teachers' work." From our point of view, the formulation of descriptive opinions or reports should be taken as a means for reflecting on the processes experienced, based on listening to and carefully observing children, their knowledge processes, questions, learning, thoughts, and interests.

In turn, the **textbook** consisted of numeracy and literacy activities. It was used at school by the teacher and the children, and the teacher assigned homework tasks for the

weekends. It had become such a routine that every Friday, when parents arrived to pick up their children at the end of class, they would ask the teacher if there would be an activity for home that week. Consequently, at the beginning of the following week, she would check whether the activities had been completed.

The use of textbooks in early childhood education is a topic that generates some tension, especially with regard to their content and practices that limit early childhood education to merely a preparatory stage for elementary school (Maletta; Moura, 2024). The focus of this article is not to problematize textbooks in early childhood education, but, as an assessment tool identified in our observation, we understand that the use of this tool as an assessment instrument distances what is pointed out by the normative guiding documents and their conception of childhood, children, and early childhood education from what is experienced by children and teachers in the daily routine of classrooms and educational spaces.

In general, based on normative documents and contributions from the sociology of childhood and pedagogy of childhood, we assert that the use and development of assessment tools in early childhood education cannot disregard listening, observation, and qualified records of daily pedagogical activities. Therefore, the use of a tool for reproducing ready-made activities does not seem to us to meet this demand.

#### 4.2 Children's participation in assessment processes

Based on our experience, we emphasize that children's participation is still a challenge in early childhood education, particularly with regard to assessment, as it is a topic with different concepts and specificities. The notebook that served as a portfolio, for example, which could be an ethical and affective path for dialogue or greater interaction between adults and children, in addition to offering children possibilities for choice and decision-making about which activities could be incorporated or not, became, in our view, an exclusive repository of children's productions. According to Moruzzi and Tebet (2017), child protagonism, a topic dear to the sociology of childhood, is still uncommon in early

childhood education, even though the DCNEI clearly establishes the participation of children, including in moments of evaluation, as we mentioned earlier.

On the other hand, we observed relevant participation by children only during the evaluation carried out using the good behavior mural, since the children were consulted. In this dynamic, the teacher asked the children how they evaluated their peers and, in most cases, the children evaluated their peers positively, since the idea that that behavior should be corrected is imbued in the teacher and not in the children. The teacher, dissatisfied with the evaluation results, imposed her voice as decisive.

Authors such as Uecker and Possa (2021) and Sobrinho (2009), based on Foucaultian thinking, analyze in a very elucidative way how early childhood education institutions standardize a homogeneous childhood and monitor children based on this, in order to create docile bodies that are useful to society. The teacher's words and actions, latent in the pedagogical relationship — in reference to the children's behavior — legitimize this universal standardization of children.

The search for an ideal childhood and child justifies adult-centered actions in early childhood education institutions, thus rendering children invisible in these spaces from an early age (Santiago; Faria, 2015). In the use of the good behavior mural, we were able to ascertain how children were consulted, but their voice had less weight in decisions about how to evaluate their peers. This is an unequal relationship and reverberates intensely in the evaluation processes, as we were able to infer from the observation of the formative objectives of this and other instruments identified in our experience at the CMEI.

Assessment processes based on an adult-centered perspective do not recognize children as co-participants, since the role assigned to teachers is one of control, in which children are instilled with the norms of socialization established and, in particular, a behavioral norm. In this context, in our view, it becomes difficult for teachers to mobilize efforts and reflections to build more democratic and participatory assessment processes with/for children.

From an adult-centric perspective, childhood is merely a period of transition and acquisition of the symbolic elements present in society, with children thus having the status of being minor, inferior, a place given to them by the corresponding dominant group: adults (Santiago; Faria, 2015, p. 73).

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The concern in this regard is what the child will become and the social position they will occupy as an adult. Corsaro (2011, p. 18) warns that it is common for adults to view children from a prospective perspective, which is why it is quite rare for them to be “[...] seen in a way that contemplates what they are — children with lives in progress, needs, and desires.” Pedagogical work, then, is governed by the logic of preparing children for later stages of schooling and for entry into society (as if children were separate from it).

We observed, in the practices and in dialogues with the teacher in the moments before the children arrived at the CMEI, her clear concern with preparing children for elementary school. In this sense, the role of early childhood education still seems to be somewhat diffuse among teachers, since we observed the textbook as a privileged assessment tool, whose activities were focused on learning letters and numbers, leading to the measurement of quantitative criteria for the assessment of children.

This early schooling, as Santiago and Faria (2015, p. 75) point out, is “anchored in concepts derived from developmental and behavioral psychology, reinforced by information and systems sciences, which are based on the economic idea of education as a social investment for the future.” According to Yaznadi *et al.* (2024), this economic logic of education is widespread in the decisions of government agencies and representatives and is linked to the neoliberal paradigm. Thus, there is a gap between what is on paper and what is actually implemented in practice.

Authors such as Moro (2021) and Silva *et al.* (2025) problematize the reproduction of this neoliberal logic accompanied by the expansion of large-scale assessment globally, including in early childhood education, arguing that this logic is contrary to the broad education of children and silences the debate about assessment in early childhood education institutions. Silva *et al.* (2025), in particular, clarify the issue and support us in this reflection by discussing the challenges posed in the Manaus context for the construction of a municipal policy for the assessment of early childhood education:



The reality faced in the city of Manaus is one in which early childhood education is seen as a means of “preparation” for elementary school, with projects that involve the development of oral and written language and financial education, in projects such as: “Traveling in Reading in Early Childhood Education” and “Financial Education Project (DSOP)” [...], used as a bridge to prepare for future large-scale assessments in later grades (Silva *et al.*, 2025, p. 7).

In dialogue with the studies by Malleta and Moura (2024), Silva *et al.* (2025), and Oliveira-Formosinho (2007), we understand that it is necessary to overcome these practices, which correspond to the early years of elementary school and are reproduced by teachers in early childhood education. In the context of learning assessment, these practices are at odds with the formative intentions set out in normative documents, since their principles based on productivity and preparation for later stages lead to the formulation of instruments that are less attentive to children in their different languages.

Given this situation, we can affirm that a paradigm shift in the assessment of learning in early childhood education is imperative, as is the construction of a participatory praxis, both inside and outside the classroom, that is, in teachers’ relationships with children, but also and especially with their peers, other teachers. In the previous section, we highlighted the absence of teacher authorship in the formulation of assessment tools. However, we infer from the research by Fochi (2021) and Reis and Maltez (2023) that the formulation and application of tools should take place in a context of collective reflection and listening to children, but also in the appreciation of teacher creativity. This requires teachers to regularly discuss, reflect, develop, and plan their pedagogical practice, and for this, they need space, time, and support.

From this perspective, it is necessary to deepen the debate about the political, ethical, and pedagogical meaning of learning assessment, as it is established based on the concepts and cultural repertoires that teachers carry with them. According to Oliveira-Formosinho (2007, p. 14), “pedagogy is organized around the knowledge that is constructed in action in conjunction with theoretical concepts and beliefs and values.” Pedagogy is built not only on a dialogue between theory and practice, but on a triangulation that encompasses theory, practice, and values, which

tells us that conceptions of the world, society, children, childhood, and early childhood education directly affect the theory-practice relationship.

It seems to us that this debate, whether intentional or not, slips into the training of early childhood education teachers. In view of this, we emphasize that the initial and continuing training of these professionals should provide the theoretical and methodological provisions for the integration of formative assessment into the educational process with the purpose of supporting the integral development of the child, in which the qualitative use of records allows for the articulation of determining aspects such as experiences, participation, advances, discoveries, doubts, and other specificities of children in their way of being, existing, and thinking about the world. In other words, improving perspectives and conceptions about children and childhood, rather than viewing children as students or schoolchildren.

This appropriation gains prominence in the formulation of a coherent institutional pedagogical proposal that considers the multiple material, cognitive, and social dimensions that can affect children inside and outside early childhood education institutions. This construction, as Santiago and Faria (2015, p. 79) emphasize, must undoubtedly involve “disinhibition our ears to listen to different children’s languages. It is necessary to listen to the noises of the walls, the furniture, the words spoken by little children; it is essential that teachers listen to them.”

This view of children allows us to understand the social relationships formed between them, their singularities, transgressions, and (re)inventions and, consequently, to build better tools to assess more qualified considerations about the learning that has taken place. Based on these notions, we can hope for the construction of a pedagogy of childhood consolidated by a different view of children, childhood, and participatory praxis and, consequently, a more democratic assessment that underpins children’s learning.

## 5 Conclusions

The internship experience at the Municipal Child Education Center, reflected in conjunction with the literature, allowed us to learn about, analyze, and infer that children's participation in early childhood education presents us with challenges. Having children as co-participants and with the right to exercise and have their voices heard, both in assessment and pedagogical planning, requires greater effort on the part of education departments, schools, and teachers, who need to reflect and learn to create strategies for the effective participation of children. This situation is compounded by the lack of teacher involvement in the development of assessment tools, with very vague concepts of children, childhood, and early childhood education that are revealed in educational practice.

Pedagogical work, limited to the preparatory model of transition between stages, positions children as individuals who must be monitored and framed within a specific type of behavior. Thus, assessment in early childhood education, an area with such potential to support children's learning, largely becomes a mere bureaucratic apparatus that must be filled out by the teacher, as it is part of their job. This situation is contrary to the guidelines and normative documents, which emphasize qualitative records produced by adults and children in co-protagonistic processes.

Children, based on these regulatory instruments of early childhood education and from the perspective of the sociology of childhood and pedagogy of childhood, are active participants in educational practice, including with regard to pedagogical assessment. In this sense, evaluation is linked to children's curiosities, thoughts, memories, cultures, interests, movements, and hypotheses. Such a practice can only be established and strengthened through the institution of a pedagogy that listens more to children and, in this way, different evaluation instruments that meet these demands can be developed and employed in everyday pedagogical practices.

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