TRANSITION STRATEGIES FOR BABIES ENTERING IN A DAYCARE: WHAT OFFICIAL BRAZILIAN EDUCATION DOCUMENTS SAY

ESTRATÉGIAS DE TRANSIÇÃO COM INGRESSO DE BEBÊS NA CRECHE: O QUE DIZEM OS DOCUMENTOS OFICIAIS DA EDUCAÇÃO BRASILEIRA

ESTRATEGIAS DE TRANSICIÓN PARA LOS BEBÉS QUE ENTRAN EN LA GUARDERÍA: LO QUE DICEN LOS DOCUMENTOS OFICIALES BRASILEÑOS SOBRE EDUCACIÓN

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ABSTRACT: In view of historical and cultural changes, the perception of childhood and concern for the overall development of babies, especially in view of their insertion into collective contexts, has been improving. Although the issue of caring for babies in early childhood education institutions has become the target of much research, few studies focus on actions and strategies for the initial insertion/transition of babies from home to daycare. Therefore, in view of this context, using Bardin's exploratory documentary study and content analysis, this work aims to analyze and discuss the transition actions and strategies mentioned in the main Brazilian educational guidance documents. Therefore, it is concluded that such documents mention few initial transition strategies, and when they do, they are generally superficial and non-directive.

KEYWORDS: Adaptation of babies in daycare. Welcoming babies in daycare. Early childhood education institution. Transition strategy. National guiding documents.

RESUMO: Diante das mudanças históricas e culturais, a percepção da infância e preocupação com o desenvolvimento global de bebês, sobretudo, diante da inserção em contextos coletivos, foi se aprimorando. Ainda que a questão do atendimento de bebês em instituições de educação infantil tenha se tornado alvo de muitas pesquisas, existem poucos trabalhos que se debruçam sobre ações e estratégias de inserção/transição inicial de bebês de casa para a creche. Portanto, diante desse contexto, utilizando o estudo documental exploratório e análise de conteúdo de Bardin, este trabalho tem como objetivo, analisar e discutir as ações e estratégias de transição mencionadas nos principais documentos norteadores educacionais brasileiros. Mediante isso, conclui-se que, tais documentos mencionam poucas estratégias de transição inicial e, quando o fazem, geralmente são superficiais e não diretivos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Adaptação de bebês na creche. Acolhimento de bebês na creche Instituição de Educação Infantil. Estratégia de transição. Documentos norteadores nacionais.

RESUMEN: Frente a los cambios históricos y culturales, ha mejorado la percepción de la infancia y la preocupación por el desarrollo global de los bebés, especialmente de cara a su inserción en contextos colectivos. Aunque el tema del cuidado de los bebés en instituciones de educación infantil se ha convertido en objeto de muchas investigaciones, son pocos los estudios que se centran en acciones y estrategias para la inserción/transición inicial de los bebés del hogar a la guardería. Por lo tanto, en este contexto, utilizando el estudio documental exploratorio y el análisis de contenido de Bardin, este trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar y discutir las acciones y estrategias de transición mencionadas en los principales documentos rectores de la educación brasileña. Por lo tanto, se concluye que dichos documentos mencionan pocas estrategias iniciales de transición y, cuando lo hacen, son generalmente superficiales y no directivas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Adaptación de los bebés a la guardería. Cuidando niños en la guardería. Institución de Educación Infantil. Estrategia de transición. Documentos rectores nacionales.

Introduction

The history of the institutionalization of childhood in Brazil is relatively long and goes back historically to the beginning of colonization, with the catechization of the indigenous people (Amoroso, 1998; Almeida, 2015). Subsequently, this process of institutionalization focused on poor and disadvantaged children, with the aim of further "social hygiene", removing elements considered to be at risk of "order" and "good customs", hiding them in supposedly rehabilitative institutions (Fonseca, 2007; Marcílio, 1997). This path continued with the Houses of Mercy and Wheels of the Exposed, passing through philanthropic assistance, reformatories and, later, the FEBENS, until the emergence of the first nurseries in Brazil (Ewbank, 1990; Marcílio, 1998; Matta, 1999; Rizzini; Rizzini, 2004; Kuhlmann Jr., 2007; Carvalho, 2009; Marcílio, 2009; Fonseca; Castro, 2013; Schach, 2015).

In Brazil, crèches began to appear at the end of the 19th century to care for the children of female slaves, due to the Free Womb Law, and also for the first segment of women who started working outside the home, who were domestic workers. Later, with the end of slavery, there was also an intensification of the incorporation of immigrant labor, which began to work on the farms but also organized itself in the cities and around the industries (Kuhlmann Jr., 2007). With the arrival of these immigrants, who had previous experience in labor relations and the workers' movement, demands for better working conditions accelerated, which presupposed as a right the provision of crèches for the children of mothers who, due to a demand for labor, especially cheap labor, had been incorporated by factories and industries (Oliveira; Rosseti-Ferreira, 1986).

In order to meet the needs of low-income families and the demands of factory and industrial workers, the issue of childcare centers began to be discussed at congresses. It was recommended that crèches be set up in industries, as a measure to regulate women's labor relations (Kuhlmann Jr., 2007).

Faced with this new social context, especially in relation to the intensive incorporation of female labor, and the consequent daily separations of mothers and children, both in Brazil and abroad, concern about childhood intensified, becoming the focus of research by scholars from various fields of knowledge, such as education, psychology, philosophy, sociology, medicine, psychiatry, biology and administration.

Theories emerged, mainly from the fields of psychology and psychiatry, which sought to take a closer look at the effects of separating babies and young children from their mothers in the process of entering nurseries. It was observed that, given certain circumstances, in some

cases, babies could develop different forms of attachment (Bowlby, 2002). It has been noted that in cases of absence of the mother, which could be a physical or psychological absence, babies can develop insecure attachments and even damage their mental health (Bowlby, 2002; 2004).

As a result of these movements and discussions, early childhood education began to receive special attention under the 1988 Federal Constitution and is now considered a child's right, a family option, and a duty of the State. In the process, poor children were no longer defined in pejorative terms as "minors", but as subjects of rights, guaranteed by the 1988 Constitution (Fonseca, 2007; Marcílio, 1998; Carvalho, 2009; Marcílio, 2009; Fonseca; Castro, 2013).

In this context, we highlight the creation of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA), promulgated in 1990, based on Law No. 8,069, which institutionally recognizes children and adolescents as citizens with rights, achieving new conquests in their historical construction processes. Early Childhood Education was incorporated into Basic Education through the Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB) 9394/96, establishing the principles of education and the duties of the State in relation to public education, reaffirming rights. According to the LDB, Early Childhood Education was defined as the initial stage of basic education, representing a historic achievement that took poor young children out of their confinement in institutions linked to social welfare agencies (Oliveira, 2011). In addition, early childhood education was organized in two stages: children aged 0 to 3 would be cared for in crèches; and children aged 4 and 5 would be cared for in preschools, free of charge and under the responsibility of the municipalities.

Since then, there have been countless official publications from Brazil's Ministry of Education (MEC), establishing regulatory frameworks that seek to guide pedagogical practices and the work of teachers in early childhood education institutions. It is possible to list, chronologically, some moments and legal documents that regulate how early childhood education should be oriented (Marquezan; Martins, 2017), such as the National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education (RCNEI), from 1998; the National Education Plan (PNE), from 2001; the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI), from 2009; and, the BNCC from 2017, among others that establish guiding principles for the first stage of basic education.

Thus, the changes and progress made in relation to early childhood education since the 1988 Federal Constitution were solidified with the approval by the National Education

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Council in 2009 of CNE/CEB Resolution No. 05/09, which established the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI). Guidelines that bring together principles, foundations, and procedures to guide public policies, the elaboration, planning, execution, and evaluation of pedagogical and curricular proposals for early childhood education. In this way, the guidelines have sought to guide the teacher's work with children and their school community, by proposing quality educational actions, articulated with social and cultural diversities with regard to childhood and children in the country (Marquezan; Martins, 2017).

The National Education Plan (PNE), on the other hand, is configured as a set of political-pedagogical goals, emphasizing early childhood education in kindergartens and preschools in a common way and constitutes an advance in the learning process, starting to have new visions on pedagogical proposals (Nascimento; Gurgel; Almeida, 2017). Among the regulatory frameworks, we highlight the preparation of the political-pedagogical project (PPP), which is the responsibility of educational institutions, provided for in art. 121 of the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN) - Law No. 9.394/96.

On December 22, 2017, CNE/CP Resolution No. 2 was published, establishing and guiding the implementation of the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC). A normative document that defines the organic and progressive set of essential learning that all students must develop throughout the stages and modalities of Basic Education, so that their learning and development rights are guaranteed, in accordance with the National Education Plan (Dias, 2019).

This document regulates and guides all the stages and modalities of basic education, as well as presenting a series of activities by age, listed in a compartmentalized way. It also emphasizes the split between daycare and preschool in early childhood education, a categorization that has been maintained since the LDB, (Barbosa *et al.,* 2019). The BNCC established learning rights for the Early Childhood Education phase, which are intended to guarantee the necessary conditions for children to play an active role in their learning environments, theoretically solving the challenges they experience and constructing meanings about themselves and the world (Brasil, 2017).

Based on the BNCC, a national guiding document, some Brazilian states have published their curricula, taking into account regional specificities and demands. In the state of São Paulo, we have the São Paulo Curriculum, published in August 2019, which defines and makes explicit to all education professionals working in the state, the competencies and

skills essential for the cognitive, social, and emotional development of São Paulo students and always considers their integral formation from the perspective of human development (Seduc/SP, 2019). According to the document itself, the BNCC is a mandatory reference, but it is not a curriculum. The Base establishes the objectives that are expected to be achieved, and the São Paulo Curriculum defines how to achieve the objectives.

Under the influence of these studies, a large part of the work on the initial entry/transition of babies into the collective environment was published from a Bowlbyian psychoanalytic perspective, and, therefore, inferred that the entry of babies into early childhood education institutions could be potentially harmful, since the baby would be far from their primary attachment figure (Bowlby, 2002; 2004). Some studies follow this perspective (Rapoport; Bossi; Piccinini, 2018), and others oppose it (Roecker *et al*., 2012; Izidoro; Pereira; Rodrigues, 2020), so it cannot be proven that the collective educational environment can actually be harmful.

The most important fact is "how" the initial transition process of these babies to the early childhood education institution takes place, in other words, how the institutions organize themselves to welcome the newcomers, and what transition strategies are employed by the institutions to welcome the newcomers. According to Peixoto *et al.* (2017), the number of transition practices is associated with babies' emotional well-being during the first month of attending daycare. Therefore, the child's first contact with school is a unique and memorable moment for the family and the school (Dias, 2019).

Based on this assumption, the teacher must welcome the children with as much affection as possible, showing sympathy and, above all, reassuring the little ones who are just starting school. In this way, planning the activities to be introduced is considered the main moment to foster the child's acceptance, participation and evolution in this new environment (Dias, 2019).

According to the work of Dentz *et al.,* (2022), who carried out a systematic integrative bibliographic review on the subject of the initial transition of babies in early childhood education institutions, a growing trend of studies on the subject was observed, however, according to the articles retrieved, there are still few studies that present transition strategies in a systematized way. The construction of policies that highlight this issue and point out practices to be considered in the initial transition process is therefore crucial. The aim of this article was thus defined.

Objective

The aim of this study was to analyze official early childhood education documents in search of guidelines for teachers on how to proceed with the initial transition process of babies in early childhood education institutions, as well as to look for mentions in these documents of strategies for transitioning babies from home to daycare.

Methodology

The documents analyzed were the three volumes of the RCNEI (1998), the two volumes of the National Quality Parameters for Early Childhood Education (2006), the DCNEI (2010), the BNCC (2017), and the São Paulo Curriculum (2019). As discussed in the introduction, these documents were selected because they are of great historical and political importance, because they deal not only with basic education in general, but also because they discuss early childhood education and present elements of a normative nature and/or specific suggestions related to this subject, as well as being the documents that are most cited in other works on the subject. The methodological resources used to analyze these documents were Bardin's exploratory documentary study and content analysis (2011). According to Gil (2002), exploratory research:

> [...] its objective is to provide greater familiarity with the problem, with a view to making it more explicit or constructing hypotheses. It can be said that the main aim of this research is to improve ideas or discover institutions (Gil, 2002, p. 41, our translation).

For the analysis, the parts that referred to early childhood education were read in their entirety, looking specifically for topics that dealt with the initial transition process from home to nursery school. The excerpts were presented in full and discussed individually and comparatively, analyzing whether or not transition strategies and/or guidelines for this process are presented. Content analysis has become one of educational studies' most widely used methods (Dalla Valle; Lima Ferreira, 2024). For this reason, Bardin's (2011) content analysis was used to analyze Brazilian official documents.

According to Santos (2012), content analysis involves a set of methodological tools that can be applied to diverse discourses from different data sources, such as newspapers, speeches, letters, advertising, novels, and official reports. In this paper, content analysis will

be applied to the documents mentioned above in order to organize and categorize the initial transition strategies mentioned in the papers.

In the pre-analysis of the documents, we systematically read the excerpts referring to early childhood education, looking for the theme of the initial insertion/transition of babies from home to nursery school. According to Bardin (2011), the initial contact with the documents, the so-called "floating reading", is the phase in which the hypotheses and objectives of the research are developed.

It was hypothesized that the documents would mention "transition strategies" in some way. It was hoped to find strategies for the transition process more objectively, clearly, and systematized, as these are guiding documents for early childhood education. However, after searching and analyzing, it became clear that these documents present transition strategies in a scattered and superficial way, with few examples of pedagogical/institutional/political procedures.

The coding process is the cut that will be made in the research, reducing it to a registration unit, which is a unit to be coded, which can be a theme, a word, or a phrase (Santos, 2012). Therefore, the recording unit of this work is the "Transition Strategy" (Bardin, 2011). Transition strategies were categorized into direct transition strategies (DTS) and indirect transition strategies (ITS). Therefore, the rules of completeness, representativeness, homogeneity, relevance, and exclusivity, according to Bardin (2011), were respected.

Results and discussion

The following are the main official guiding documents for Brazilian education that were analyzed from the perspective of how the initial transition of babies is approached in each of them.

National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education

The National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education (RCNEI), the first document analyzed, aims to:

> (...) to set quality goals that contribute to children's full development of their identities, capable of growing up as citizens whose rights to childhood are recognized. It also aims to help institutions achieve the socializing objective of this educational stage, in environments that allow children to access and expand their knowledge of social and cultural reality (Brasil, 1998, our translation).

The RCNEI was created to serve as a guide for reflection on the objectives, contents, and teaching guidelines for early childhood education professionals (whether nursery or preschool), respecting their individualities, helping them in their educational work, and clarifying what should be taught with an open and non-mandatory proposal. This document is organized into three volumes, the first of which is the *Introduction*, which briefly explains what the document is about; the second deals with the first area of experience, which is *Personal Formation* and *Social* which encourages the construction of *Identity* and *Autonomy* of the child; and, the third deals with the second area of experience, which is *Knowledge of the World*, referring to the axes of work which are: *Movement, Music, Visual Arts, Oral and Written Language, Nature and Society and Mathematics* (Silva, 2019).

The RCNEI has a specific topic, in its first volume, which deals with entering the institution and welcoming families and children, remembering that this topic in the book covers children from zero to six years old. Some transition strategies are presented, such as the orientation to carry out interviews, to get to know the family's reality and the children's habits better. As indicated there,

> The enrollment interview can be used to provide information about the care offered, the objectives of the work, and the concept of education adopted. This is also a good opportunity to get to know some of the children's habits and for the teacher to establish a first contact with the families (Brasil, 1998, p.80, our translation).

In addition, the teacher is instructed to give the child their full attention on their first day at the institution, when they are advised to use transitional objects.

> On the child's first day at the institution, the teacher's attention should be focused on them in a special way. This day should be very well planned so

that the child can be welcomed. It is advisable to receive a few children at a time so that you can attend to them individually. With very young babies, the main thing is to prepare their place in the room and their crib, identify them by their name, provide the food they will receive, and, above all, reassure their parents. Keeping some transitional objects in the institution, such as a pacifier, the diaper he uses to sniff, a teether, or even the bottle nipple he is used to, will help in this process. You can even ask the mother or person responsible for the child to come in a few days earlier to help prepare their baby's crib (Brasil, 1998, p. 80, our translation).

For comprehensive care, it is recommended that the process of adapting to the institution be gradual, with the child's length of stay gradually increasing, allowing them to gradually become familiar with what's new. It is also suggested that during the first few days, the presence of the father, mother or other close family member should be guaranteed, providing the child with emotional support as they face the new environment, guaranteeing them a sense of security.

When full-time care is provided, it is recommended that a gradual process of integration is established, extending the time the child is there so that they gradually become familiar with the teacher, the space, the routine, and the other children they will be living with. It's essential to request the presence of the child's mother or father or someone they know for the first few days, and even when necessary, so that they can face the strange environment with someone they feel safe with. Once they have established an emotional bond with the teacher and the other children, they will be able to cope well with the separation, being able to say goodbye to their loved one safely and detached (Brasil, 1998, p.82, our translation).

According to the document, this period demands a lot from the teacher, who needs support from the institution and colleagues.

This period requires a lot of skill, so the teacher needs support and accompaniment, especially from the principal and members of the technical team, as they are also undergoing a process of adaptation. Teachers need to be clear about the role of the mother (or whoever is accompanying the child) in their first days at the institution (Brasil, 1998, p.82, our translation).

The document also deals with the issue of crying, perhaps one of the most traumatic moments for families and the most challenging for teachers.

The child's crying during the insertion process seems to be the most anxiety-provoking factor for both parents and teachers. But there also seems to be a belief that crying is inevitable and that the child will eventually get used to it, overcome by physical or emotional exhaustion, and stop crying. Some

> believe that if you give them too much attention and hold them in your arms, they will become sly and cry. This experience should be avoided. Special attention should be paid to children in these moments of crying by holding them or suggesting enjoyable activities (Brasil, 1998, p.82, our translation).

It is also suggested that the teacher plan activities for the first few days in order to attract the children's attention, as well as organize the spaces for the activities according to the children's tastes.

> The teacher can plan the best way to organize the environment during these first few days, taking into account the children's tastes and preferences, rethinking the routine according to their arrival, and offering them attractive activities. Organized environments with painting, drawing, and modeling materials, house toys, buckets, shovels, sand, water, etc., are good strategies (Brasil, 1998, p.82, our translation).

In general, it can be said that the first document analyzed here mentions daycare and presents general transition strategies, with suggestions for the institution, the family, and the teacher. The document mentions children generically most of the time, but also defines a specific age group when it mentions "very young babies", suggesting direct transition strategies particular to this age group, such as a transition object, planned and staggered entry, more individualized care, special preparation of the space where the baby will stay, the presence of the mother a few days before to organize the baby's crib, etc.

National Quality Parameters for Early Childhood Education

The National Quality Parameters for Early Childhood Education, published in 2006, is a guiding document for implementing and evaluating public educational policies aimed at children from zero to five years old. The formulation of these parameters took into account the rights guaranteed to children by current legislation, which recognizes that, from birth, children are citizens with rights, unique and singular individuals, social and historical beings, as well as being competent, producers of culture and members of the whole of animal, vegetable and mineral nature (Brasil, 2006). The document:

> (...) contains quality references for Early Childhood Education to be used by educational systems, nurseries, pre-schools, and Early Childhood Education centers, which promote equal educational opportunities and take into account the differences, diversities, and inequalities of our immense territory and the many cultures present in it (Brasil, 2006, p.3, our translation).

As its name implies, the document, in its two volumes, addresses the quality of early childhood education, pointing out the foundations, parameters, and indicators of quality, as well as discussing the concept of the child and the pedagogy of early childhood education, as well as the competencies of education systems.

Little information is presented on the subject of transition. The document only emphasizes the importance of the moment of entry, which requires special attention from teachers and administrators, and advocates the presence of a relative or acquaintance of the child during the transition period. It's worth noting that the terminology of transition doesn't appear in the document, but is instead referred to as reception or adaptation.

> The period of initial reception ("adaptation") requires teachers, managers, and administrators to pay special attention to the families and/or guardians of the children, even making it possible for a representative of these families to be present on the premises of the institution (Brasil, 2006, p. 32, our translation).

The Parameters also highlight the importance of conducting interviews with families, as well as planning and organizing spaces to receive children and welcome families.

> (...) spaces are provided for welcoming families and/or guardians, such as a place for breastfeeding, for more private interviews and conversations, and for collective meetings in the Early Childhood Education institution (...) differentiated spaces are provided for children's activities, for professionals, for support services and welcoming families and/or guardians (Brasil, 2006, p.44, our translation).

National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education

The National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI), whose resolution was published in December 2009, are linked to the National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education. These documents bring together principles, foundations, and procedures defined by the Basic Education Chamber of the National Education Council to guide public policies and the preparation, planning, implementation, and evaluation of pedagogical and curricular proposals for Early Childhood Education (Brasil, 2010).

The DCNEI states that early childhood education institutions have a duty to promote children's development, offering them meaningful learning without anticipating the content

expected for elementary school (Brasil, 2010). Pedagogical proposals must respect ethical, political, and aesthetic principles, guaranteeing their socio-political and pedagogical function:

> (...) access to processes of appropriation, renewal, and articulation of knowledge and learning of different languages, as well as the right to protection, health, freedom, trust, respect, dignity, play, coexistence, and interaction with other children (Brazil, 2010, p.18, our translation).

The DCNEI addresses the issue of transition very superficially and in a punctual manner, mentioning the importance of appropriate strategies for the different moments of transition, but without mentioning what these strategies might be.

> The continuity of learning processes through the creation of appropriate strategies for the different moments of transition experienced by the child: transition from home to the Early Childhood Education institution, transitions within the institution, transition from nursery to preschool, and transition from preschool to elementary school (Brasil, 2010, p. 29, our translation).

Common National Curriculum Base

The Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC), the first version of which was published in December 2017, is a normative document and a mandatory reference for the preparation of school curricula and teaching proposals for all levels of basic education, with interaction and play as the structuring axes in early childhood education.

The Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC) presents a systematization and a clear differentiation between the stages of early childhood education, nursery and preschool, and the respective age groups. Nurseries cater for babies (0 to 1 year and 6 months) and very young children (1 year and 7 months to 3 years and 11 months), while preschools are aimed at young children (4 years to 5 years and 11 months). For each age group, specific learning objectives and fields of experience are defined.

At no point in the text is the issue of the transition from home to nursery or from home to preschool addressed. However, the document devotes significant attention to the transition from early childhood education to primary education, including a specific topic on this subject.

> For children to successfully overcome the challenges of transition, it is essential to strike a balance between the changes introduced, the continuity of learning, and an affectionate welcome, so that the new stage is built on

what the students know and are able to do, avoiding fragmentation and discontinuity in pedagogical work (Brasil, 2017, p.53, our translation).

Therefore, from an analysis of the document, it can be concluded that no initial transition strategy is presented. In fact, as mentioned above, this subject is not even addressed in the BNCC.

Curriculum Paulista

The last document analyzed is the São Paulo Curriculum, approved in August 2019, which aims to improve the quality of basic education in the state of São Paulo. It provides guidelines for student learning through the development of Student and Teacher Workbooks, which follow the general competencies established by the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC), as well as the curricula and curricular guidelines of public and private education networks.

The São Paulo Curriculum is the result of the efforts of education professionals representing the municipal and state education networks who, working collaboratively, have combined knowledge, procedures, reflections, and experiences in the construction of a reference document, which guides teaching practice in the different curricular components, being a guiding document for teacher training and other public educational policies (SEduc/SP, 2019).

The document presents a brief history of early childhood education, discusses the concept of childhood and children, and addresses the social function of early childhood education institutions and the role of professionals working in this area. On the subject of transition, the *Currículo Paulista* dedicates a specific topic to the subject, defining the concept of transition and highlighting the importance of family participation in this process.

> The first transition in Early Childhood Education takes place when the child leaves their family and enters the institution. For this transition to take place smoothly, the school's professionals must provide a warm welcome at the time of enrollment and make it possible for the family and the school to share their specificities, expectations, and needs. Thus, an institution that is safe in relation to the child favors the process of welcoming the family, just as a safe family provides security for the child (SEduc/SP, 2019, p. 42, our translation).

Once again, the importance of getting to know the child and their family is emphasized through interviews or meetings with parents and/or guardians.

> (...) families and schools need to get to know each other. This can be done through specific meetings with new parents/guardians and/or individual interviews. Knowing the typical tastes and behaviors of each child can effectively ease the insecurities, anxieties, and anxieties of both institutions in order to guarantee the child's well-being (SEduc/SP, 2019, p. 43, our translation).

The document points out that there are several transitions that the child faces continuously and stresses the importance of the presence of a known adult to facilitate the process.

> The child is continually going through transition processes, ranging from changes in physical spaces, changes or replacements of teachers, or even classmates joining or leaving the group. It is up to the institution to minimize the impact of these changes by making proposals that increase the child's interaction with different spaces and people (SEduc/SP, 2019 p. 43, our translation).

In general, it can be said that although the São Paulo Curriculum addresses the issue of transition and highlights relevant points to be considered by teachers and the institution, it presents few practical strategies for its implementation. From a positive perspective, this gap could provide greater autonomy for each institution to plan the transition process, taking into account its specificities. However, it is essential to note the absence of a normative document or directive instrument that offers more precise guidelines on the subject, including examples of strategies and suggestions for implementation.

General discussion on the transition strategies mentioned in the guiding documents analyzed

By highlighting and comparing the theme of transition and the transition strategies presented in each of the guiding documents analyzed, it can be concluded that the RCNEI, the oldest document, is the one that describes the transition process and strategies in the most detail for teachers, institutions, and families, although it does not use the term transition, calling the process welcoming.

Emphasis is placed on the importance of "interviewing the family" as a strategy to "reassure the family", to get to know the child and the reality in which he or she is inserted

well, and to "provide information about the institution, its functioning, and philosophy" (Brasil, 1998). Studies such as those by Costa, Dentz, and Amorim (2023) corroborate the relevance of this practice, highlighting the importance of meetings, interviews, and anamneses to get to know newcomers better. In addition to the interview with the family, some authors point out that certain institutions adopt the "visit before admission" strategy (Martins *et al.*, 2014; White *et al.*, 2020), a practice that can involve either the family visiting the institution or the other way around.

The RCNEI also points out that this is a good time to encourage family members or guardians to take part in the process, as seen in the strategies mentioned in the document: "Caregiver comes to organize the baby's crib before admission" and "Presence of a caregiver in the first few days" (Brasil, 1998). After all, when you share the care of a baby, who was once centered on the family, with a collective care institution, you have to do it gradually, showing the new space and giving the baby support to interact with objects and people. If there is the presence of a "reference person in the early days" (Rapoport; Piccinini, 2001; Klein; Kraft; Shohet, 2010; Bossi *et al.*, 2014; Martins *et al.*, 2014; Tebet *et al.*, 2020; Uellner; Frizzo, 2022, our translation), the baby will feel more confident and authorized to explore the new context, in their own time, based on the security of the presence of a family member of reference.

The document also mentions the importance of the "transitional object" (Brasil, 1998), which can be a pacifier, a washcloth, or even a child's attachment toy (Guédeney; Grasso; Starakis, 2004; Peixoto *et al.*, 2017; White *et al.*, 2020). It is considered that this object of attachment can bring some comfort to the baby, since it is a little piece of home that is brought into this new institutional environment.

It also highlights attitudes towards giving "more individualized attention", which can be organized by "staggering", or through "specific forms of organization", also relying on the "sensitivity and responsiveness of the teacher" in noticing signs of distress, "calming the baby" by "holding them" or "distracting them" with "attractive activities" (Brasil, 1998). In order to guarantee "more individualized care", other strategies need to be promoted, such as "Gradual Insertion" (Martins *et al.*, 2014; Grande *et al.*, 2017; Tebet *et al.*, 2020; Peixoto *et al.*, 2017; Uellner; Frizzo, 2022; Costa; Dentz; Amorim, 2023), which allows for a gradual insertion, i.e. babies start attending the institution for a few hours on the first day, with an increase in hours over the course of the week. This strategy is closely linked to the "staggered entry" (Costa; Dentz; Amorim, 2023) of babies.

According to (Rossetti-Ferreira *et al.*, 1994; Rapoport; Piccinini, 2001; Esteves *et al.*, 2012; Tebet *et al.*, 2020), the "specific forms of organization" refer to the organization of the space at the moments of reception, play, feeding, hygiene, and farewell; and, in a special way, for the reception of newcomers, pedagogically considering all the factors that involve the specificity of this moment.

When the document talks about specific forms of organization, it cites examples of what can be done to enrich the environment with attractive possibilities that facilitate the process, for example: "Organized environments with painting, drawing and modeling materials, house toys, buckets, shovels, sand, and water, etc. are good strategies" (Brasil, 1998, p.82, our translation). In addition to organizing the space considering the specificities of the class and its babies/children, "taking into account tastes and preferences" (Brasil, 1998). This exemplification of strategies is not common in any other document.

However, in order for the teacher to know this data, the attitudes mentioned above (meetings, interviews, and questionnaires) are necessary for the teacher to get to know the baby, their mood, and temperament beforehand, trying to predict behavior and needs. Generally, for teachers to be able to take part in meetings and interviews, the institution needs to be able to organize itself to guarantee their participation.

In addition, for teachers to have a better chance of success in the transition process, they need "support from the management team" (Brasil, 1998), as they are also immersed in this process and, therefore, also in transition. In addition to the support of the team, it is necessary for the institution to function as a cog in the wheel, where each professional performs their task well, ensuring a balance of functions without overloading anyone.

In the same vein, White *et al.* (2020) consider the importance of "psychological support for families and teachers", which concerns the management of the organizational type and human resources for the transition process of those involved (family members, teachers, and, above all, babies), which is in line with what is mentioned in the National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education (RCNEI), as shown below (Chart 1).

An analysis of the following documents shows that they deal with the issue of initial transition in a more superficial way and do not emphasize the entry of babies. The National Quality Parameters for Early Childhood Education mention four transition strategies (Chart 2). It takes up the strategy of "the presence of a reference person in the first few days" and the "specific forms of organization" (Brasil, 2006), already present in the RCNEI, and adds two other strategies: "a place for breastfeeding" and "special attention for families" (Brasil, 2006).

Chart 1 - Transition strategies mentioned in the RCNEI

National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education (RCNEI)
Conducting interviews.
Information about babies and families.
Providing information about the institution, its workings and philosophy.
Transitional objects.
Reassure the family.
Individualized attention.
Scaling.
A reference person will come and organize the baby's crib before the entrance.
Presence of a caregiver in the first few days.
Support for teachers from the management team.
Special attention for the baby - individualized.
Calming the baby.
Holding the baby.
Distract the baby.
Sensitivity and responsiveness.
Specific forms of organization (with examples).
Take children's tastes and preferences into account.
Attractive activities.

Source: Prepared by the author.

Another critical strategy mentioned in the document refers to the structural and organizational order, which depends on an adequate and planned space for breastfeeding. The management team, teachers, and other staff must take this into account when designing the environment. This is a space guaranteed by law, with the aim of encouraging continued breastfeeding. This strategy is relevant in relation to the transition process because it ensures the continuity of breastfeeding, giving the mother peace of mind about the baby's nutrition and well-being. However, this strategy is not exclusive to the transition process, since breastfeeding should be encouraged throughout the year (or longer if the baby is small).

"Special attention to families" (Brasil, 2006), in terms of meaning, seems similar to "welcoming the family" (Brasil, 2019), present in the São Paulo Curriculum. However, it will be seen below that this is not the case. The terminology changes a little, but it could be said that it basically means the same thing, except that welcoming the family takes place exclusively in the transition process, while "special attention for the family" leaves room for other interpretations, and can be considered or confused with a general pedagogical strategy. This is a good example of the need to differentiate between *Direct Transition Strategies* (ETD) and *Indirect Transition Strategies* (ETIND), in order to better explain the transition

processes, whether they are exclusive to the moment of starting nursery school, or whether they are more general to the pedagogical process as a whole.

Chart 2 - Transition strategies mentioned in the National Quality Parameters for Early Childhood Education

National Quality Parameters for Early Childhood Education
Special attention to families.
Presence of a caregiver in the first few days.
Specific forms of organization.
Breastfeeding area.

Source: Prepared by the author.

The document "*Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação Infantil (DCNEI)*" only mentioned one transition strategy, which was "specific forms of organization" (Brasil, 2010), already mentioned by the *Referencial Curricular Nacional para a Educação Infantil* (RCNEI) and *Parâmetros Nacionais de Qualidade para a Educação Infantil*. Another fact worth highlighting is that the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC) does not mention the initial transition process.

Among the other documents published after the RCNEI, the one that most recalls the subject and makes suggestions for the moment of transition is the São Paulo Curriculum. This document is innovative in terms of the use of the terminology "transition". He also explains that there are other transition processes besides the initial one, such as the transition from nursery school to preschool and from preschool to elementary school. In addition to those most cited in the literature, there are also processes related to changing rooms in the same institution, changing programs, changing teachers, or even transitions that occur on the same day, which are called "microtransitions" (Dentz *et al*., 2022).

The São Paulo Curriculum mentions as transition strategies (Chart 3) the "welcoming of the family at the time of enrollment", at which time there is usually also an "interview about the baby", and the "sharing of expectations, specificities and needs between family and institution". It also mentions "welcoming the family" in a more general context (SEduc/SP, 2019).

Chart 3 - Transition strategies mentioned by the São Paulo Curriculum

Curriculum Paulista
Welcome upon enrollment.
Welcoming the family.
Family interview about the baby.
Sharing expectations and specificities between family and institution.

Source: Prepared by the author.

Direct and Indirect Transition Strategies

This classification emerged as a pressing need to distinguish between teaching strategies specific to the transition period and teaching strategies that are important for the transition but go beyond the transition, i.e., those that concern the quality of early childhood education as a whole. The quality of early childhood education is directly related to a good transition, which is the best strategy because it encompasses the entire educational context and its conditioning factors, positively interfering in direct transition strategies.

The Indirect Transition Strategy is a type of approach that, in practice, is related to general pedagogical, structural, institutional, and political aspects, material and human resources, external factors, and the particular qualities of the teacher. This strategy can be applied both to the specific phenomenon of the transition of babies to nursery school and the pedagogical process in general. After all, families and babies are expected to receive special attention yearly and yearly.

Despite being guiding documents, many of the strategies mentioned are indirect in nature. Although some strategies may be similar, it is possible to see that a small difference in terminology can characterize a strategy as general (indirect) or exclusive to the initial transition process. From the analysis of the guiding documents mentioned above, it was possible to compile all the transition strategies, which were classified as direct or indirect (Chart 4), as discussed throughout this paper.

Chart 4 - List of all the initial transition strategies mentioned in the guiding documents analyzed, classified as direct or indirect

Direct transition strategies	Indirect transition strategies
Conducting interviews.	Support for teachers from the management team.
Information about babies and families.	Calming the baby.
Offer information about the institution.	Holding the baby.
Transitional objects	Sensitivity and responsiveness.
Reassure the family.	Consider children's tastes and preferences.
More individualized attention.	Attractive activities.
Scaling.	Breastfeeding area.
Reference person (RP) in the first few days.	Special attention to families.
PR organized the baby's crib before the entrance.	
Specific forms of organization.	
Sharing expectations and specificities between family and institution.	
Welcoming the family.	
Welcome upon enrollment.	

Source: Prepared by the author.

Final considerations

It can be concluded that the growth and investment in research in the area of childhood is remarkable, especially with regard to the initial process of bringing babies and young children into early childhood education institutions. This literature has a good body of knowledge about this process. These studies point to new possibilities and contributions to the field, suggesting political, social, institutional, pedagogical, and personal strategies for improving the educational context in which so many processes take place. However, just like the official national guiding documents, these concepts (transition strategies) have not yet been clearly and systematized as a tool to be followed by institutions and professionals in the field.

It's remarkable how the way something is written can define it in different ways, giving it different weight or importance and even completely altering its meaning. For this reason, this paper suggests greater terminological precision in order to restrict specific pedagogical actions to the process of transitioning babies to the early childhood education

institution. The act of defining and delimiting particular actions for this process gives it greater importance, making it a facilitator in its implementation.

It is, therefore, necessary to draw up new, more directive documents for the transition process, which list exclusive political, social, economic, structural, and pedagogical strategies for the initial transition of babies from the family environment to nursery school, highlighting the importance of this process. In addition, Brazilian Early Childhood Education lacks technical documents and manuals that act as guides for institutions and professionals in the field, allowing them to implement them with greater assertiveness.

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