

FORMATIVE PROCESSES OF TEACHERS WORKING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: NEEDS AND DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED IN THE COURSE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROCESSOS FORMATIVOS DE DOCENTES EM ATUAÇÃO NA EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL: NECESSIDADES E DIFICULDADES VIVENCIADAS NO PERCURSO DE DESENVOLVIMENTO PROFISSIONAL

PROCESOS FORMATIVOS DE DOCENTES EN EJERCICIO EN EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL: NECESIDADES Y DIFICULTADES EXPERIMENTADAS EN EL CAMINO DEL DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL



Julianna Britto OLIVEIRA SANTOS¹
e-mail: juliannabritto1980@gmail.com
Luiz Anselmo MENEZES SANTOS²
e-mail: luizanselmomenezes@gmail.com
Tacyana Karla GOMES RAMOS³
e-mail: tacyanaramos@gmail.com

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¹ Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), São Cristóvão – SE – Brazil. PhD student in Education at the Federal University of Sergipe. Master in Education from the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS). Member of the Teaching Training and Performance Research Group - INTERAÇÃO (UFS).

² Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), São Cristóvão – SE. Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Education at UFS. Coordinator of the research group Teaching Training and Performance-INTERAÇÃO/UFS. PhD in Education (UFS).

³ Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), São Cristóvão – SE – Brazil. PhD in Education from the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE).

ABSTRACT: This article is a partial of a dissertation, involving teachers who work in early childhood education and focuses on continuing education as a qualification for this educational stage. It discusses the specificities of the early childhood education, in order to understand the needs and difficulties of continuing education as a mechanism for professional development of teachers in this educational stage. Developed in the qualitative and descriptive approach, it was used theoretical studies based on Garcia (1999), Gatti (2008, 2011), Campos (2013, 2018), Abuchaim (2018a, 2018b), as well as in the descriptions, categorizations and analysis of the collective interviews conducted in 02 schools of early childhood education, in Aracaju-SE. The produced data were treated referentially in the content analysis of Bardin (2016). It became evident that listening to the teachers is a tool to approach the needs and difficulties of the teachers in the context of experiences in the continuing education processes. The continuing education constitutes in qualification element for the professional development of teachers and, consequently, in early childhood education.

KEYWORDS: Early Childhood Education. Continuing education. Teacher professional development.

RESUMO: Este artigo é parte de dissertação de mestrado envolvendo professoras atuantes na educação infantil brasileira, e versa sobre a formação continuada como qualificação e desenvolvimento profissional docente. Discute as especificidades da educação infantil, com objetivo de compreender as necessidades e dificuldades de formação continuada como mecanismo de desenvolvimento profissional dos docentes nesta etapa educacional. Desenvolvida na abordagem qualitativa e descritiva, empreenderam-se estudos teóricos pautados em Garcia (1999), Gatti (2008, 2011), Campos (2013, 2018), Abuchaim (2018a, 2018b), bem como nas descrições, categorizações e análises das entrevistas coletivas realizadas em duas escolas de educação infantil situadas em Aracaju-SE/Brasil. Os dados produzidos foram tratados referencialmente na análise de conteúdo de Bardin (2016). Evidenciou-se que a escuta docente constitui ferramenta de aproximação das necessidades e dificuldades dos docentes, no âmbito das vivências e nos processos de formação continuada. Considera-se que a formação continuada constitui elemento de qualificação para o desenvolvimento profissional dos docentes e, conseqüentemente, na educação da primeira infância.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Infantil. Formação continuada. Desenvolvimento profissional docente.

RESUMEN: Este artículo es parte de una disertación de maestría que involucra a maestras que trabajan en la educación infantil en Brasil, y trata sobre la formación continua como calificación y desarrollo profesional docente. Se discuten las especificidades de la educación infantil, con el objetivo de comprender las necesidades y dificultades de la formación continua como mecanismo de desarrollo profesional de los docentes en esta etapa educativa. El estudio se desarrolló desde un enfoque cualitativo y descriptivo, se realizaron estudios teóricos basados en los trabajos de Garcia (1999), Gatti (2008, 2011), Campos (2013, 2018), Abuchaim (2018a, 2018b), así como en las descripciones, categorizaciones y análisis de las entrevistas grupales realizadas en dos escuelas de educación infantil ubicadas en Aracaju-SE/Brasil. Los datos producidos se analizaron utilizando el análisis de contenido de Bardin (2016). Se evidenció que la escucha de los docentes constituye una herramienta para acercarse a las necesidades y dificultades de los docentes en el ámbito de las experiencias y los procesos de formación continua. Se considera que la formación continua es un elemento de calificación para el desarrollo profesional de los docentes y, en consecuencia, para la educación de la primera infancia.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación Infantil. Formación continuada. Desarrollo profesional docente.

Introduction

The school requires from its teachers, at all times, more organization and effectiveness, actions that organize clear and precise goals and results according to the needs demanded by educational contexts and valued by society as a whole. Teacher education today requires complex and dynamic actions from educational systems in their entirety, as well as initiatives and actions by teachers in their singularities, motivated by the recognition of their contexts and new meanings of their pedagogical practices.

In Brazil, discussions about the initial education of teachers in Pedagogy are recurrent, with it as a generalist to cover different stages and educational modalities, according to studies such as those by Campos (2018), Abuchaim (2018a, 2018b), Gatti (2008), among others, which state about the particularities of early childhood education (ECE). This presents weaknesses in the field of education for Brazilian teachers. It is, therefore, in the continued education process that the teacher has expanded the possibility of deepening, reflecting and acting on the specificities of early childhood education, and builds mechanisms for recognizing these in the contexts in which they work.

To address the guiding discussions of this research, substantiating relevant conceptual, historical and situational questions, we bring Gatti (2008); Gatti, Barreto and André (2011); Garcia (1999, 2009), among other scholars, to address the importance of continuing education as qualification and development of the teaching profession. Furthermore, we highlight in Kramer (2005), Campos (2013, 2018), Barbosa (2016), Abuchaim (2018a, 2018b), who, in dialogue with other authors, bring the daily life of early childhood education and its condition as a progressive educational stage expansion and restructuring, as well as the reconstruction of teaching professionals working with young children. In this context, the contributions of researchers such as Galindo (2011), Davis, Nunes and Almeida (2012), Aveledo (2018), Fernandes and Corrêa (2019) are recorded, who highlight them with discussions about the needs and difficulties of teachers to carry out their continuing education processes proficiently.

In this sense, continuous education processes aim to develop skills with teachers to know and re-signify concepts, attitudes and practices through studies, planning and implementation of daily educational actions. Therefore, its formative feedback is an inherent factor in teaching performance amidst the referential and contextual factors of development and qualification of educational action.

This article presents results of a master's degree research in the area of education, which aimed to understand the education processes experienced by teachers working in early

childhood education in the city of Aracaju – SE/Brazil, and reflect their needs, difficulties and education perspectives as a mechanism for recognizing, analyze, reframe and enhance ways of recreating the continuing education of the teachers involved, in an attempt to promote their qualitative professional development, as well as the education offered to children.

This study was carried out in the search for listening to teachers in their professional contexts, through questionnaires, individual and collective semi-structured interviews, the latter being a videotaped, structured, coded and analyzed investigative source, composing the theoretical body and the results presented in this article.

We understand that the continued education of teachers is effective in reflective and qualitative opportunities when it enables the recognition of the contexts of early childhood education, as well as the needs and difficulties that bring teachers closer and/or further away from planning and full participation in continuous education processes that promote their professional development.

Education or forging this teacher is the crucial point of this educational mechanism. Education, here, is understood as the processes of appropriation of the knowledge necessary for the proficient performance of the school teaching professional.

Corroborating with Santos, Fialho and Medeiros (2021, p. 1379, our translation),

[...] to practice teaching, specific education is required for such action. Teaching cannot be seen as improvisation. By defending education as a requirement for teaching, we believe that we will help it to develop consciously. Through education, we are able to think about school practice, classroom routine, the broader educational reality, among other aspects.

International studies and reports, such as those produced by the International Student Assessment Program (PISA -2015, 2018) ⁴, state that countries that invested in teacher education have guaranteed greater expansion and qualification in their education systems, with a direct relationship in the education of their students.

What follows from the reality in Brazilian teacher education, as Gatti, Barreto and André (2011) tell us, is that teacher education has a generalist structure. This makes it difficult for teachers to intervene qualitatively when they actually come into contact with daily pedagogical activities. There is a need for harmony between initial education and continuing education for teaching professional development.

⁴Assessment program carried out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to assess the proficiency level of young people at age 15. In 2022, 80 countries will participate.

From the perspective of the teaching professional's career, there is an urgent need to promote spaces for continued teacher education. It needs, once started, to constitute continuous points of reflection, planning, development and qualification of professional action. However, the quality of education, when based on thoughtlessness, becomes precarious and meaningless, according to Kishimoto (2002, p. 107, our translation).

Since the past, problems in education have been accumulating, due to the lack of clarity regarding the desired professional profile in the proposed education courses. Contradictions appear in amorphous courses, which do not respect the specificity of early childhood education.

Such situations are evident in the many courses and programs offered by teachers that are called “continuing education”. Specializations as a financial factor in the profession, courses and lectures offered with a lack of continuity and relationship with daily pedagogical routines, education in handbook programs, often transitory, and/or practices proclaimed without in-depth theoretical definition. This set of actions has superficially given the teacher an idea of education.

However, we ask: how are these trainings experienced by teachers who work in early childhood education? What needs and difficulties are present in the world of teacher education and how are these recognized and worked on to boost the knowledge necessary for the development of teaching and proficiency in the teaching and learning process? These were the questions that motivated our data production.

Knowing the education needs experienced by teachers is a premise for understanding their demands, arising from the continuous need for education to fully carry out the educational work.

Education needs here are recognized as necessary requests to reflect, act, evaluate, construct and carry out attitudes and actions related to professional commitment, in order to implement and qualify them with their capabilities and abilities to master and resolve situations in the effective exercise of their work (KRAMER, 2005).

Such needs are multifaceted and take shape in the full exercise of the teaching role in each context. This requires the construction of coping skills present in teaching and learning situations. Teachers' knowledge is forged in the constant interrelationships of theory and practice, in reflection, planning and continuity of their pedagogical work.

Using the term “education needs”, it is also necessary to discuss “training difficulties”, which are reflected in the relationships between teachers and the prospects of finding training,

pointing out, to a greater or lesser extent, the weaknesses in the establishment of courses/programs of continuing education.

“Training difficulties” are understood as situations, actions, understandings, impediments and setbacks that absent or distance the teacher from recognizing needs, as well as theoretical-practical discussions in motion in continuous education, defended as the primary character of teacher educational action.

In teacher education, these aspects constitute a double path, between needs and difficulties which, although apparent distinctions, are factors that need to be harmonized from the perspective of teacher professional development.

Just like needs, education difficulties need to be recognized, analyzed and mediated in order to dissolve or overcome them, with a view to urgently promoting actions in favor of qualifying the educational offer. Resolving difficulties also constitutes a need for planning and coherence in promoting continuing teacher education in the exercise of their professional role.

From this perspective, there is a call to reflect (KRAMER, 2005; ANDRÉ, 2016) and resize teaching actions, as well as their continued education. Continuous education consists of spaces that expand concepts and training actions, and must overcome stagnant and formless initiatives, being promoters of multiple training experiences, consolidated in the agglutination of theory and practice as inseparable. Therefore, this stage of teacher education must arise from an understanding of educational relationships and promote humanization and integrality of teachers and students in the educational process.

In our view, this necessary training dispels and elucidates obscured issues, discussing the overcoming of stagnant continued education, obsolete educational models that are unworthy of teachers' reflective capacity. The appreciation of the needs and specificities of the educational act is evident as a stance of recognition of the objectives of their profession and its correlation with the mechanisms that promote reflection and action, creativity, emancipation and coherent pedagogical autonomy.

At all levels and modalities, early childhood education presents its needs for continued training. This, in its specificities, highlights the multiple training needs, based on contributions to re-signify the practice demanded by the urgency that everyday life requires. Continuing training in early childhood education will be proficient through:

Continuing education programs for teachers and other professionals are also part of the list of basic requirements for quality Early Childhood Education. Such programs are a right for teachers, in order to improve their practice and develop themselves and their professional identity, in the exercise of their

work. They must give them the conditions to reflect on their daily teaching practice in pedagogical, ethical and political terms, and make decisions about the best ways to mediate learning and child development, considering the collective of children, as well as their singularities (BRASIL, 2009a, p. 13, our translation).

There is a point to bring closer the teaching education needs, as well as the recognition of their consolidation, and alerts us to the importance of always keeping them aligned, with the qualification and development of teaching work.

In dialogue with teachers working in EI, bridges of training and qualification possibilities must be built with crucial points of teaching action to enhance the integral development of children, as presented below.

Early childhood education as a space for continued education and teacher development: what do the teachers participating in the study tell us?

Initially, it is worth highlighting that teaching in Brazilian early childhood education, due to its historical constitution, its state of recurring conceptual changes, as well as contextual issues regarding the age group, financing and structuring, presents challenges to teachers that need to be treated as needs of definitions, research and studies to reach, as a training policy, teachers who work in this educational stage.

However, continued education can be seen beyond the scope of individuality. As a profession, needs and difficulties come together in the collective as singular and plural problems: such evidence imprints the collective meaning of education as a project and, of the school, as a learning community.

Therefore, talking about teacher education processes is considering both individual teachers and their collectives portraying their work contexts. Entering the spaces of Municipal Early Childhood Education Schools – EMEIs and observing their daily lives, their specificities, is to understand the dynamics that drive the knowledge and pedagogical practices that are constructed, in relation to these contexts of teachers and their needs and difficulties in pedagogical practice daily life, and its relationship with the education processes that constitute effective teaching.

In the methodological path, in approximation of the pedagogical context investigated, seeking a relationship with teachers in their school groups, the collective semi-structured interview was carried out in two EMEIs and, to process the information, the schools were numbered (called EMEI 01 and EMEI 02), as well as the teachers, who were numbered in

increasing numbers. Large EMEIs were included in the sample because they have a teaching staff equal to or greater than 10 teachers and responded positively to this research instrument. There were 21 teachers interviewed, making a timed total of 3 hours and 17 minutes of video-recorded interviews (on average 1 hour and a half in each school), according to an agreement signed with the participants, taking place in the morning shift, between the months of September and October 2019.

In this universe, the inclusion criteria for the sample of this research were teachers in full practice at the pre-school of the Municipal Network of Aracaju (classes of children aged 4 to 5 years and eleven months), to whom this research, the instruments and mechanisms of data production were presented, with the participation criterion being the acceptance of these teachers in view of the analysis of the objectives, methodology, purpose and structure of this research, followed by the signing of the Free Information Consent Form (TCLE). Through ethical considerations, we sought to build a friendly climate of mutual respect and collaboration, as well as attention to the criteria and guidelines expressed in the analysis and approval of the present study by the ethics committee in research with human beings, under opinion number 3,761,082.

In this methodological path, the interpretation of data was referenced in the content analysis of Bardin (2016), enabling the construction of categories and subcategories, *a priori* and emerging, and bringing together data produced in teachers' reports regarding the topic, in a meeting of individualities and teaching communities, given the objective of this research. The meetings were established according to a pre-approved schedule (between the months of September and October 2019) by the schools and teachers, as well as the regulatory rules for the meetings, which emerged from the data production instruments previously used (questionnaire and individual interview). The collective interview aimed at triangulating the speeches, testimonies, observations and conceptualizations about the education processes as a qualification of the professional development of teachers working with children enrolled in the stage called Early Childhood Education (Pre-School age group), in this study referred to as EI/pre-school.

As categories, we show that the first to be presented describes the feeling of teachers as professionals working in ECE; the second, on professional training that effectively helps in practice, has as indicators that the training is effective for teaching practice; the third category, training needs, is intended to qualify ECE/preschool services; the fourth, about the difficulties in continued education, presented to qualify EI/preschool service.

Some categories were established *a priori*, with the category “feeling of being a teacher at EI” emerging from the statements as something characteristic of the groups researched.

The collective interviews were transcribed and their results are presented in the tables below, with their relevant categories and indicators. The subjects participating in the research are identified by Professors, followed by numbers, protecting their real identities.

Table 01 – Distribution of reports about the meaning and/or meaning of being a teaching professional in EI for teachers working in the municipal network of Aracaju/SE/Brazil

Feeling of being a teaching professional in Early Childhood Education	No.	%
Feelings of satisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously, calligraphy, grammar, primers were charged; Today, we can look more sensitively at the specificities of children. Teach them with joy...; • School is a refuge for many children. These are blatant situations of violence that we see every day. I feel happy to be able to show <i>them</i> a new path, an opportunity for development. <i>For</i> me, this is the best thing. 	08	38.1
Feelings of dissatisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many responsibilities from top to bottom: planning, assessment, being the only adult in the room, taking people to the bathroom... We don't even have time to observe the children. Working at EI is a mix of positive and negative experiences; • We can't just be a teacher [...] it's a mother, a father and a grandmother [...] it's very complex. You have to work on socialization principles, affective principles, societal norms, in addition to didactic knowledge. 	03	14.2
Feeling of uncertainty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who work in elementary education have a vision for literacy, which is why they think that preschool needs to do some things to help the child and the elementary school teacher; • For me, everything is very new at EI. What do we have to teach? For me, everything is very loose, you have to teach through play, but how? 	10	47.7

Source: Table prepared through collective interviews carried out by researchers

Among the teachers interviewed, a significant majority report that they see teaching in Early Childhood Education with a feeling of uncertainty and indefiniteness given its specificities and the contextual issues that intertwine the daily activities of the school.

Among teachers, feelings of commitment to teaching duties and the aforementioned commitment to achieving them can be observed. This positivity demonstrates a teacher's quest to serve children with quality and the configuration of teaching roles in Early Childhood Education, followed by those who feel uncertainty, as they do not consider the duties and role expected of them as a preschool teacher to be defined. “ *In fact, I feel like an emergency professional, whatever is urgent at that time is what I have to do.* ” (Video-recorded verbal information)⁵.

⁵Statement given by Teacher 5, EMEI 2.

Initially, it was observed that the teachers' statements were guided by feelings and meanings of how they understood (or claimed to understand) teaching at EI. The majority described that, as teachers, they did not plan to act at this stage, and that these choices resulted in a need for work, guidance from the sponsor, proximity to their residence, among other justifications.

It is observed that, regarding the feelings of being a professional working in EI, the answers brought, as indicators, intense feelings of relationship, satisfaction and also dissatisfaction, given the perspectives that brought them to this field of work, as well as about the realities they had encountered, until then, in their professional practice.

Very characteristic of the feelings of satisfaction was the teachers' understanding of how much ECE, today, plays a role in the reconstruction of this educational stage and, mainly, its importance for the development of young children they serve. It is worth highlighting here that this emphasis comes from the fact that the municipal public network is responsible for serving children living in peripheral neighborhoods who, faced with weakened basic needs, find at school a space where their rights are preserved, where their needs are observed, their days are planned into meaningful experiences respecting their condition as a “developing subject” (BRASIL, 1996, 2009b).

The working conditions of teachers generate dissatisfaction, indignation, feelings of fragility and stress when exercising their profession because, in most cases, there is no way to resolve or resolve social problems. This also implies the fact that the teacher claims to have difficulty carrying out his pedagogical work, for various and urgent reasons, or having to carry it out superficially, mischaracterizing his identity.

We consider that we need, therefore, to think about these issues, which revolve around continued education, to develop, in teaching action, mechanisms capable of reflecting and acting in the face of the realities of the context, as well as forms that must be promoted by the supporting institutions, such as effective support for teaching work, through multidisciplinary teams or support networks for children and teachers, whenever necessary. It is evident that the feeling of being solely responsible for the child and their development fuels such dissatisfaction.

Very striking, in the statements of this category, as shown in Table 01, was the feeling of uncertainty regarding the profession. Many teachers who work in Early Childhood Education revealed that they were not clear about the functions and purposes of Early Childhood Education, as a stage of basic education. These professionals declared difficulties in their principles and methodologies, in the use of their materials, in planning their actions and in

facing daily challenges. At this point, where specific education leaves a gap, continuous education needs to promote qualified studies, discussion, actions and monitoring in the construction and development of the identity of teachers who work in EI.

Table 02 – Distribution of responses about which ongoing training effectively assists in teaching practice in Early Childhood Education/preschool

Training that assists in the teaching practice of Early Childhood Education	No.	%
<p>When dialoging with daily pedagogical life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We go through situations where we often don't know what to do to help children. The teacher also needs help (laughs). When education has to do with what we are going through, it helps a lot; • Continuing education should be focused on practice in the classroom. What should early childhood education be like ? It is necessary to reflect and put it into practice. 	12	57.3
<p>Collaborative learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We learn more at school, on a daily basis, than at college or in these training courses. When a difficulty arises, we knock on our colleague's door; • We learn a lot by observing a colleague with more experience. We cannot be ashamed; If you feel in doubt, ask, exchange experiences with the people who are actually in our daily lives. 	03	14.2
<p>Organized and meaningful training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to bring in experts capable of combining theory and practice, who could listen to our doubts, make concrete suggestions, monitor the results... it's like a cycle. Superficial training is make-believe, for those who teach and those who learn; • Since when they started thinking about training, they should put the teacher at the center. When thinking about schedules, spaces, themes; • When training is organized, even though we are tired, we go and don't return with the feeling of wasted time. 	06	28.5

Source: Table prepared through collective interviews carried out by researchers

When asked about how they see the processes, courses and continuing education programs, or when they really help EI teaching practice, facts were reported which are organized in Table 02.

A percentage of 57.1% of the teachers interviewed reported that training, in order to be attractive and meaningful for those who work in EI and assist in daily practice, needs to relate theoretical and practical aspects to knowing and doing daily: education that dialogues with the specificities of EI and the challenges arising from the contexts in which they occur.

Another indicator highlighted deals with the quality with which these courses/programs are organized, what points are debated, in what ways they are based, as they reached 14% of the responses. It was reported, by 28.5% of those interviewed, that teacher education that takes place at school, among peers and, in a collaborative way, from the perspective of those who experience the same context and approximate situations, achieves a certain degree of appreciation in the search for assistance in difficulties and challenges arising from everyday life.

Issues such as time, place and themes are always highlighted as synonymous with organization and attention to the teacher and their specificities. Organization points are linked to significant education reported by teachers.

There is a demand for education arising from the challenges of daily pedagogical life, which promote ways of overcoming weaknesses, often evidenced by the lack of specific education in EI, as a working condition, and are marked by the refusal of training that is orchestrated by superficial and/or pro forma form of the knowledge demanded. It can be seen, in the statements, that current discussions about the dynamics of EI and its specificities would allow the expansion and consolidation of teaching functions, in a movement to qualify the relationship between children and adults in the school environment.

A continuous education model considers collaborative learning as a factor in the professional development of teachers, considering the school as a learning community and, in the midst of everyday challenges, in everyday experiences with other teachers, there is the construction of specific skills to work with children. This point was presented by the teachers as a factor that helps their pedagogical practice, as seen in the statement:

It is on a daily basis that we learn. I don't have specific training, I've never worked in early childhood education, but I learn a lot by observing and talking to my colleagues. They are the ones who are truly close to me. I see their dedication and I try to mirror myself. This is how I discovered myself as a teacher in early childhood education (Video-recorded verbal information).⁶

It is essential for teachers that continued education helps in pedagogical work, that training is organized and meaningful, taking into account teaching realities regarding: schedules, materials and locations, and that themes are addressed in the theoretical-practical construct and consistent with everyday challenges.

⁶Statement given by Teacher 5, EMEI 2.

Table 03 - Distribution of continuing education needs that the school unit presents to qualify Early Childhood Education/preschool services

Continuing education needs in Early Childhood Education	No.	%
Those that arise from everyday challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs arise every day, doubts, changes in law. Books, projects, materials change. Right now the BNCC. These are challenges, these trainings are what we need; In education, they should also think about topics to support the teacher, which would help to build an identity. We have this need to know who we are, who the children are and how this relationship should happen. 	11	52.5
Respects the specificities of the school unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They should take into account the reality of the school and the children. Sometimes, they are based on a reality so far from ours that we have no way of putting it into practice; Each school has its own reality. This must be taken into account by real people, real situations, real conditions... Videos of schools in Rio Grande do Sul are often shown! My people, it's different! Everyone has their own reality. 	7	33.5
Consider training difficulties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would like to study more. I know this could improve me, but I don't have time and I don't see many opportunities that are consistent with my real life; When I arrived at the practice, I saw that I knew almost nothing (laughs), initial education should be more specific and it isn't [...] they put us in early childhood education, but do they know our weaknesses, our questions? 	3	14

Source: Table prepared through collective interviews carried out by the researcher

Among teachers, 52.5% stated that continuing education needs represent the demands of daily teaching, study needs, knowledge of the universe of ECE and their relationship with learning.

Approximately 33.5% of responses point to the need for education programs to go to schools and learn about their needs, listen to teachers and make efforts to formulate questions and ongoing training actions. Among the responses, 14% reported feeling a lack of greater discussion in the field of training about the difficulties that teachers face in completing and taking advantage of ongoing training on a permanent basis.

Among the needs for continued education, highlighted by teachers, according to Table 03, the questions of the direct relationship between the daily pedagogical routine and the challenges that arise from it are revisited; between what educational theories, laws and regulations denote and what happens in EI schools. These recurring questions demonstrate what the focus of continuous education needs to be, as a space for qualifying the educational offer, and under what conditions, and under what problems, ECE has been built concretely in its contexts.

In the teaching statements, the needs for recognizing the specificities, not only of ECE, but also of the contextual challenges that each school unit presents in terms of structures, spaces, localities, families served, among others, are highlighted. *“Why not go out to schools asking*

questions, listening to teachers? We are at school, and we know the needs of our daily lives.” (Video-recorded verbal information),⁷and also, “To listen and accept (laughs)” (Video-recorded verbal information)⁸.

The specificities of EMEI have been highlighted at various times in the teaching statements in this research. In reports about education, teachers state that if the realities are different, so are the training needs. It is imperative to delve deeper into the role of the ECE school and that guidelines on structures, materials and forms of organization, in a fruitful reflection and significant change, must start from realities: because it is a great challenge to overcome the historicity of adaptations and patches with which EI was treated and move in search of concrete and qualified changes.

If such issues are not discussed in continuing education spaces, we will continue to talk about promoting different play spaces in unhealthy environments; diversity of experiences without necessary materials, observing and listening to children in overcrowded rooms with a single adult (sometimes without training); in discussing learning and planning rights among teachers who are unaware of the specificities of Early Childhood Education. The need for recognition of schools and teaching working conditions to carry out continuous and proficient training is evident.

Table 04 - Distribution of responses about the difficulties in continuing education that this school unit presents in qualifying Early Childhood Education/preschool services

Difficulties in participating in continuing education processes	No.	%
Working day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I arrive at training so stressed, from working all day and the way we are charged... that's why I don't want to know anything, it doesn't concern me, because of personal and professional issues that are involved; Stress situations arise because we want to do our best and we can't, sometimes because we don't know, sometimes because conditions don't allow it. We have to do our best and even then, it doesn't seem enough. This creates a lot of stress. 	12	57.2
Relationship between teachers and the supporting/training institution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In relation to SEMED, the organization should improve. Private training requires time and money; You should look <i>at the</i> teacher as a human being, without many questions and demands; seeing us as we are, with a lot of good will (laughs), could help us. 	04	19
Feeling of devaluation in teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I know that continuing education involves many issues, it is knowledge, but we don't gain anything more for it. I feel valued, stimulated, I need to have motivation to participate in these courses; Change has to come from above; Mechanisms must be analyzed and revised for us to be valued, how we should be worked, how resources should be passed on to us, how training should be addressed. Instead, we only see blah, blah, blah. 	05	23.8

Source: Table prepared through collective interviews carried out by the researcher

⁷Statement given by Teacher 7, EMEI 1.

⁸Testimony given by Professor 1, EMEI 1.

Among the difficulties in participating in the courses, there are problems related to the intense working day and, to this, there is physical fatigue, due to the specificities of pedagogical work, and the logistics regarding locations, themes and training offering times.

Feelings of teacher devaluation were highlighted as a factor in demotivating participation and taking advantage of continuing education. Other factors that revealed themselves as difficulties were: the lack of dialogue, lack of definition of objectives, absence of daily life and insufficient rapprochement between trainers and trainees.

Continuing education courses/programs need to consider, in their structures, organizations and implementation, the difficulties teachers face in accessing education as a right to study and consolidate their development and identity, as teaching professionals in Early Childhood Education. Research reveals the difficulties, seeking to recognize and problematize them, facing them, as a perspective of reconfiguring dignified and respectful continuing education processes, in which it is realized that “[...] everyone *wants Always learning something, it's natural, but (laughs) you have to consider several things.*” (Video-recorded verbal information).⁹It is also worth considering that:

We are often afraid, a certain fear of talking about our problems, our difficulties, both in the classroom and when participating in training. We are afraid of being questioned, silenced in some way; our difficulties become reasons for ridicule, for an ungrateful response, for being singled out as 'sloppy', complacent, incapable [...] We often say that everything is fine. So we are not asked or questioned. (Video-recorded verbal information).¹⁰

Resolving inconsistencies in training and expanding the participation of teachers are the fundamental points in the difficulties encountered in continuing education. It is a fact that, even with the knowledge of the relevance of education as a driving force for the quality of Early Childhood Education for teachers, children and their relationships with the process of developing correlated learning experiences, there is insufficient adherence, participation and use by teachers in courses / continuous education programs relating to the specificities of Early Childhood Education.

The collective interview constituted a moment of reflection and meeting of teachers, where they were able to talk about the topic of continuing education and express feelings,

⁹Testimony given by Teacher 4, EMEI 2.

¹⁰Testimony given by Teacher 8, EMEI 1.

compare opinions, reveal desires, point out conflicts and present their needs and difficulties regarding working conditions, professionalization and performance at EI.

During the collective interview with 21 teachers, some questions were semi-structured (according to categories already described), others emerged from the reports themselves as ideas of complementarity or exemplification of the reported answers. It was observed that the statements complemented each other in some cases and, when there were divergences, the positions were accepted mutually as a sign of support and care in dealing with some issues that strongly affected the teachers in greater or lesser depth.

Even with semi-structured guiding questions, the answers or statements, heard in full, were transcribed, and, after vertical reading, they were structured within a frame of references, constructing categories of analysis presented.

As a profile constructed in the interactions, it was found that, among the 21 teachers who made up the collective interview groups in the two EMEI that accepted this instrument, only one teacher had an ongoing specialization in Early Childhood Education, in the Distance Education (EAD) modality; 10 teachers stated that they currently only participate in those offered by the Aracaju Municipal Department of Education (SEMED); 6 described participating in private initiative courses (preferably *online courses*); and 4 teachers declared that they had never participated in courses focused on the specificities of Early Childhood Education.

Added to this, disbelief in current training models and factors such as physical and mental fatigue of teachers significantly distance them from training in its continuous nature. It turns out that the majority of teachers claim to participate sporadically in training, often because they feel “obligated”. They generally participate at the beginning of their professional career, often out of curiosity and/or need for professional contact, with a decrease in frequency over the years of their career.

In relation to teacher appreciation, we are highly demanded. Many people think that being “playful” means entering the room and handing out toys, and it’s not. I need to plan, research, produce material, look after the children and even take activities to do at home. (Video-recorded verbal information).¹¹

In this research, focusing on continuing education, in its variations and modalities based on the specificities of Early Childhood Education, it is clear that it is common for teachers, in their statements, to raise many questions, regarding the organization, quality and related objectives to training, which demonstrates a relational fragility between the

¹¹Testimony given by Teacher 3, EMEI 1.

maintaining/training entity and the in-service teachers, as well as with the contextual acceptance of their needs.

This fragility could be translated as a lack of dialogue and divergence of understandings about training, its format and organization, choice of theme, modality, availability of vacancies and schedules that distance trainers and trainees within the space that should be aggregating. “*I feel like SEMED wants to do it. They try hard, but the training offered still leaves something to be desired.*” (Video-recorded verbal information).¹² “*If the formations continue as they are, I would like to sign and leave.*” (Video-recorded verbal information).¹³

Another situation presented is the vision of specialist and/or specific training always relating issues of appreciation, performance, qualification and professional development. It can be seen that valorization moves along several aspects, from the criteria of employability, working conditions, the construction of a respectful professional identity, established rights, social and personal visibility and, also, in relation to salaries, advantages, purchasing power and maintaining a dignified life with income from work activities.

At the moment, the teaching profession, in activities such as studying and working in basic education, has been detaching itself from issues of valorization. This has led teachers to classify it as a difficulty, impediment, demotivation and mischaracterization of actions in favor of permanent education. Within the job and salary plan, it is observed that the percentages paid to teachers between initial education and *lato sensu* and *stricto sensu specialization* are low and do not motivate teachers, and what is more, they are relatively below the costs that teachers invest in these Law Suit.

Added to this reality, as previously mentioned, teacher salaries are devalued compared to those of other professionals, compared to those they should receive based on Law No. 11,738/2008 (BRASIL, 2008) and, even within the educational field, where a teacher working in higher education receives approximately 3 or 4 times more than teachers working in ECE (in all basic education), even when they manage to attend training in *stricto sensu areas* (master's and doctorate).

The studies carried out by Abuchaim (2018b), among others, are reiterated, stating that, in many countries, in their valorization policies, the teaching profession, which, under the *master nomenclature*, is a condition for teaching at all educational stages, including in Early Childhood Education, requires minimum education required at master's level (academic or

¹²Statement given by Professor 1, EMEI 1.

¹³Testimony given by Teacher 3, EMEI 1.

professional), and that there is remuneration commensurate with the level of studies/teaching education. This situation confirms the importance of education issues in valuing teaching professionals.

In understanding the words of Gatti, Barreto and André (2011), teacher education is only established with the configuration of meaning between what is reflected and what is applied, that is, it only constitutes an attractive and transformative source for teachers if to manifest, in short, the points that overcome the difficulties in pedagogical practice. If this does not happen, it only represents another obsolete and outdated formatting action for teaching.

So, at times within the teaching profession, improvement, financial and personal investments in education do not translate into expertise, appreciation, or adequate remuneration. This point must be brought to the table when the subject is continuing education, even understanding that this does not constitute the only purpose, nor should it be the only reason for this agenda, however, it is evident that many teachers who expand their training seek mechanisms to distance themselves from basic education and/or EI.

Between the needs and difficulties of establishing continuing education processes, there is an urgent need for an equal balance regarding how the rights and duties of teachers, in the face of continuing education, and how the rights and duties of supporting institutions, as trainers, must be revealed and considered in search of improving educational provision in early childhood.

Final remarks

As we analyzed the data produced, there are many factors that reveal the distance or absence in the search for and effectiveness of continuing education, weakening its perennial character in the teacher's professional life. Such limiting facts are consequent inhibitors of qualification, as an aspect of teachers' personal and professional development, sustaining both the decline of this profession and the crisis in the identity and teaching profile, as a profession of relationship with knowledge and its most dignified forms.

The needs for teacher education are intertwined with the appreciation of Early Childhood Education as the first stage of Brazilian basic education and which contributes to the right to children's education. In most situations, the needs presented raise a request for attention, a chorus of supplication, for these professionals to build their identity and for proficient teaching work conditions to be guaranteed.

According to the perspective of the teachers participating in this study, education difficulties are amplified by the lack of attention to teaching as a socially recognized profession, by the lack of investment in remuneration and the extensive workload and responsibilities assumed by teachers, by the execution of education programs that are discrepant to the needs of teachers and due to the unfavorable logistics of planning continuing education, the personal and professional life situations of teachers, the psychological and physical exhaustion of daily school life and its demands, among others.

The triangulation of data carried out from Content Analysis (BARDIN, 2016), enabled the reflection and construction of needs, difficulties and perspectives for planning, executing and evaluating education programs with teachers who work in Early Childhood Education as mechanisms for promote actions to promote the professional development of teachers, as well as early childhood rights.

In this methodological path, teachers reveal that they believe in education as a path to personal and professional development in teaching. However, they state that the majority of continuing education organizations have reproduced academic models that are distant from the demands and reflections arising from the contexts and conditions of professionals who work in Early Childhood Education. This aspect, among other factors, has distanced teachers from the search for and credibility of continuing education actions as a mechanism for reflection and qualification of educational practice.

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