

CONTINUOUS TEACHER EDUCATION AND COMMITMENT TO CHILDHOOD: BETWEEN PUBLIC POLICIES AND TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICES <https://doi.org/10.63330/aurumpub.013-001>**Roberly de Oliveira Alves Machado¹, Quesia Vieira da Silva Souto², Nilza Araujo Rodrigues³ and Jean Carlos Batista Pereira da Silva⁴****ABSTRACT**

This article discusses continuous teacher education in Early Childhood Education, understanding it as a political-pedagogical practice fundamental to the construction of a democratic, inclusive, and equitable education. Drawing on critical references such as Nóvoa, Imbernón, Tardif, Oliveira-Formosinho, and Freire, the text highlights the need to conceive teacher education not as mere technical training, but as a collective, reflective, and situated process that values listening, experience, and the ethical dimension of teaching work. It emphasizes the importance of the teacher as a historical subject, capable of re-signifying their practice in response to the demands of childhood, the contradictions of educational policies, and the contemporary challenges of public schooling. The article argues that continuous teacher education should be understood as a space of resistance, dialogue, and care, promoting the articulation between theory and practice, pedagogical innovation, and professional appreciation. Thus, it reaffirms the centrality of teacher education as a structuring axis of educational quality and as a condition for Early Childhood Education to fulfill its social, inclusive, and transformative role.

Keywords: Teacher education; Early Childhood Education; Inclusion; Educational policies; Pedagogical practice.

¹ Licentiate in Pedagogy from the State University of Goiás
Specialist in: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Psychopedagogy, Dyslexia,
Educational Management, and Pedagogical Guidance

E-mail: roberlyolive@gmail.com

² Licentiate in Pedagogy from Universidade Paulista

Specialist in Neuropsychopedagogy

E-mail: prof.quesia35@gmail.com

³ Licentiate in Pedagogy - Faculdade de Ciências e tecnologia.

Specialization in Educational Management.

Educational Guidance.

Mathematics Teaching.

E-mail nilza34@yahoo.com.br

⁴ Licentiate in Pedagogy from Universidade Planalto

Specialist in: Educational Management and Guidance.

Specialized Educational Support.

Literacy and Reading, and Psychopedagogical Support.

E-mail: Jeanpedagogia@gmail.com



INTRODUCTION

Continuous teacher education in Early Childhood Education has become one of the fundamental pillars for ensuring educational quality and recognizing teaching as an ethical, political, and social practice. In light of constant transformations in the educational field and the multiple demands placed on childhood educators, it becomes urgent to rethink formative pathways, especially in view of the structural weaknesses of Brazilian public policies. In this context, continuing education should be understood not as a bureaucratic requirement, but as a professional right and an essential condition for qualified pedagogical practice committed to children's rights.

This article proposes a critical reflection on continuous education as a structuring element of transformative pedagogical practices, articulating public policies, teaching knowledge, and experiences situated in the school daily life. The objective is to highlight how collective, permanent, and contextualized formative processes contribute to strengthening educators' professional identity and to building a more inclusive, ethical, and sensitive education to the singularities of childhood. It starts from the assumption that there is no transformation of the school without effective appreciation of teachers — and that to be formed is also a gesture of listening, resistance, and belonging.

The analysis is anchored in a consistent theoretical base, including authors such as Nóvoa (1992; 2009), who advocates for relational and situated education; Imbernón (2000; 2010), who emphasizes the need for formative trajectories built with teachers from their real contexts; Tardif (2002; 2014), who understands teaching knowledge as social and plural constructions anchored in experience and practice; Oliveira-Formosinho (2009), who emphasizes sensitive listening and education linked to school daily life; and Freire (1996), whose critical pedagogy views education as a liberating and transformative practice.

Considering these contributions, this study examines the interface between public policies aimed at Early Childhood Education and the persistent challenges of teacher education, such as structural precariousness, discontinuity of formative programs, and low professional appreciation. At the same time, it highlights the potential present in school daily life, where collaborative formative practices that value experiential knowledge (Tardif, 2014), listening to childhoods (Sarmiento, 2003), and integration between theory and practice (Zeichner, 2008; Schön, 2000) can foster new ways of being and acting in teaching.

Thus, the article seeks to contribute to the debate on the role of continuous teacher education in promoting a school that cares for those who educate, recognizing the teacher as a historical, ethical, and affective subject, indispensable in weaving a democratic, plural, and socially committed education.

Continuous teacher education, in this sense, cannot be conceived in a fragmented way or disconnected from the concrete conditions of work. It is essential to recognize that educational spaces only gain meaning when they engage in dialogue with everyday practices, with the challenges faced in the classroom, and with the sociocultural contexts of the children. This means affirming that truly



transformative education goes beyond the mere transmission of content and methodologies; it involves creating conditions for teachers to reflect on their own practice, share experiences, collectively build pedagogical alternatives, and strengthen their identity as political subjects within the school environment.

Another fundamental aspect is the understanding that continuing education should be seen as a permanent process of human development, not merely professional development. The Early Childhood Education teacher deals with sensitive dimensions of life, such as care, affection, and attentive listening to childhoods. Therefore, investing in their education also means investing in their emotional well-being, in their ability to engage with diversity, and in their creative potential to re-signify pedagogical routines. At this point, it becomes urgent to break away from vertical and technicist models that barely consider teachers' voices, and to embrace dialogical practices that respect the rhythms, knowledge, and singularities of each educator.

Finally, conceiving continuous teacher education as a right also implies recognizing its political dimension. The strengthening of public policies that guarantee time, space, and dignified conditions for education is an essential element so that formative processes are not episodic or limited to short-term projects. On the contrary, they must be established as state policy, aimed at valuing teaching and consolidating a democratic and inclusive early childhood education. From this perspective, continuous education is also an act of resistance against the logic of teacher devaluation, constituting an ethical commitment to childhood and to the future of education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Teaching in Early Childhood Education constitutes a territory of high complexity and constant reinvention, in which the act of teaching goes beyond mere content transmission and assumes a relational, ethical, and political dimension. In this field, the educator is called upon to develop attentive listening, pedagogical sensitivity, and a commitment to inclusive practices that respect children's singularities and promote their holistic development. Teaching in early childhood requires intentionality and affection, but also solid and continuous education.

For Nóvoa (1995), teacher education should be understood as a relational and permanent process, in which professional identity is built through encounters with others, reflection on practice, and collective dialogue. From this perspective, continuing education cannot be reduced to an institutional or technical requirement; it is, above all, a right of the educator and an essential condition for teaching quality, the appreciation of childhood, and the construction of a democratic school.

Authors such as Imbernón (2010) reinforce the need for situated education, that is, rooted in the daily life of the school, in the concrete experiences of teachers, and in the real demands that emerge from pedagogical practice. Education that articulates theory and practice, listening and action, contributes to



the teacher perceiving themselves as a reflective subject, capable of transforming their pedagogical approach and responding ethically and critically to educational challenges.

In the same vein, Tardif (2002) argues that teaching knowledge is socially constructed, resulting from the interaction between academic education, professional experience, and the historical and cultural contexts in which teachers operate. Teaching, therefore, is not limited to mastering techniques or content, but is rooted in experience, school culture, and the formative trajectories of each educator. Investing in continuing education, therefore, means recognizing the teacher as a producer of knowledge, as an active subject in building a fairer, more inclusive, and childhood-sensitive education.

This reflection, supported by a consolidated theoretical base, leads the reader to understand that continuous teacher education is not only a structuring axis of educational quality but also an ethical commitment to childhood and to children's right to meaningful education. By problematizing the limits of public policies and valuing pedagogical practices rooted in daily life, this article proposes a critical and proactive analysis. In this way, it encourages the reader to follow the subsequent sections, in which the contradictions, possibilities, and formative pathways that nourish the construction of transformative educational practices in the context of Early Childhood Education will be explored in greater depth.

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION: FAR BEYOND OCCASIONAL TRAINING

Teacher education, especially in the context of Early Childhood Education, has often been conceived in a fragmented and episodic manner, limited to sporadic events that are poorly connected to the everyday reality of schools and the concrete demands of those involved in the educational process. This reductionist approach, grounded in a technicist and instrumental perspective, is the subject of strong criticism in the specialized literature.

According to Imbernón (2000), this pragmatic and superficial model of teacher education reveals a limited conception that must be overcome in favor of a broader and more integrative vision. He argues that education should not be understood as a “patch” applied to specific gaps, but rather as a permanent, dynamic, collective, and situated process — a continuous path of professional development built through interaction with context and peers.

In this direction, Nóvoa (1995) emphasizes that teacher education is essentially relational: “no one educates themselves alone, no one educates themselves for themselves.” Professional learning emerges in encounters with others, in attentive listening, in shared reflection, and in critical dialogue about pedagogical practices. This collective nature of education strengthens the construction of teaching knowledge that goes beyond the mere reproduction of techniques and bureaucratic assumptions, opening space for an ethical, reflective, and socially committed practice.



Furthermore, authors such as Tardif (2014) highlight the importance of teaching knowledge structured through lived experience, permeated by specific cultural, historical, and institutional contexts, emphasizing the need for public policies that recognize the complexity of teaching and ensure real conditions for continuing education. This implies guaranteeing teachers adequate time, conducive environments, pedagogical resources, and institutional spaces for study, reflection, and reconstruction of professional knowledge, thus promoting the social quality of education — a concept that emphasizes equity, justice, and the recognition of diversity within the school environment (Saviani, 2008).

Therefore, investing in continuous and qualified teacher education in Early Childhood Education is not a luxury or mere bureaucratic formality, but an essential condition for building an educational project that recognizes children's singularities, values pedagogical work, and strengthens the school's social function as a space for emancipation and transformation.

As Nóvoa (1992) points out, teacher professionalization requires formative pathways that promote educators' intellectual and ethical autonomy, valuing their practice as a legitimate source of knowledge. Additionally, Imbernón (2010) argues that continuing education should be conceived as part of a permanent, collective, and situated process, capable of articulating experiential knowledge with scientific knowledge, contributing to more critical, inclusive, and humanizing pedagogical practices.

TEACHING KNOWLEDGE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

According to Tardif (2002), teaching knowledge is a plural and multifaceted phenomenon, constituted by the dynamic articulation of different sources of knowledge: the knowledge acquired during academic training, the experiences accumulated in professional practice, and the personal experiences that permeate the teacher's trajectory. These forms of knowledge, far from being neutral or static, are in constant negotiation and transformation, as the teacher continuously dialogues with what was learned during initial training, with the demands and challenges of school daily life, and with the processes of reflection and re-elaboration that emerge from everyday pedagogical practice. Tardif (2002) defines teaching knowledge as social constructions, arising from practice, experience, and education.

This complexity of teaching knowledge becomes even more significant in the realm of Early Childhood Education, where professional practice requires a sensitive and multidimensional perspective. Here, the teacher must develop refined listening skills, attentive to the singularities of children, and deeply understand their cognitive, emotional, and social development processes. Sarmento (2003) advocates for listening to childhood and recognizing its singularities.

Moreover, it is necessary to master multiple languages — verbal, bodily, artistic, and playful — that constitute the child's universe, as well as to build affective bonds that sustain trust and welcoming, which are fundamental elements for learning and the child's well-being.



Wallon (2007) points to the interdependence between affection and cognition. Gatti (2009) highlights the importance of valuing the experiential knowledge acquired by teachers in their context. Continuing education, therefore, assumes a central and strategic role in valuing and legitimizing this knowledge built in situ by teachers. It must recognize the richness of situated knowledge, produced in daily interactions with children, families, and the school community, and promote spaces for collective reflection that strengthen educators' professional identity.

According to Zeichner (1999), teacher education that values the real work context contributes to the development of pedagogical autonomy, allowing the teacher to become an active subject in their own learning process and a transformative agent of their practice. This process of constructing professional identity implies a continuous movement between the personal and the professional, the theoretical and the practical, the individual and the collective. As Haddad (2003) emphasizes, a teacher's identity is not defined solely by technical knowledge, but by the ability to integrate knowledge, values, and affections into an educational practice that respects diversity and promotes inclusion.

In Early Childhood Education, this identity is particularly delicate and fundamental, as teachers are responsible for establishing the foundations for children's holistic development, contributing to the formation of critical, creative, and socially engaged individuals. In summary, understanding teaching knowledge as a plural set, built and rebuilt across multiple dimensions of professional and personal experience, reinforces the need for continuing education that goes beyond technical updates, promoting the strengthening of identity and pedagogical autonomy among Early Childhood Education teachers.

According to Tardif (2002), teaching knowledge is heterogeneous and results from the interaction between initial training, practical experiences, and professional socialization processes. In this sense, continuing education must consider the teacher as a subject of knowledge, promoting critical reflection processes on their practice, as emphasized by Imbernón (2010) and Nóvoa (1992). This is fundamental for educators to respond competently, sensitively, and ethically to the daily challenges of educational practice and to contribute to the social quality of education, especially in the context of childhood, which requires pedagogical action committed to children's rights and attentive to their singularities (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2009).

SITUATED AND COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION: BETWEEN THEORY AND THE SCHOOL GROUND

The proposal of situated education emerges as a fundamental paradigm for the qualification of teaching, especially in the context of Early Childhood Education, where the complexity of demands requires contextualized and sensitive responses. Oliveira-Formosinho (2009) highlights the school's daily life — the so-called “school ground” — as a unique space for learning and knowledge production.



Although permeated by tensions, challenges, and contradictions, the school's daily life constitutes a powerful space for meaningful learning, where teachers, when dealing with concrete situations, develop pedagogical strategies, face real obstacles, and construct knowledge that emerges from practice and interaction with children. This knowledge, according to Tardif (2002), is constituted through experience and must be recognized as legitimate and fundamental for professional development. In this context, teacher education must overcome traditional models that separate theory from practice, proposing an integrated and dialogical perspective, as advocated by Zeichner (2008) and Imbernón (2010), in which academic knowledge and experiential knowledge mutually nourish each other in the reflective exercise of teaching.

Contrary to education disconnected from school reality, situated education proposes a dialogical and inseparable articulation between theory and practice, recognizing that theoretical knowledge gains life and meaning when connected to the “school ground,” to concrete interactions, human relationships, and the everyday processes of teaching and learning. Schön (2000) proposes the notion of the “reflective practitioner” to describe this teacher who thinks about their practice, reworks strategies, and transforms the context through the action–reflection–action cycle. From this perspective, the teacher becomes a researcher of their own actions, as also defended by Alarcão (2010), who sees reflection as an essential component of critical and transformative educational practice.

For this education to effectively contribute to improving pedagogical practice, the school must be conceived and experienced as a true learning community. This concept expands the understanding of the school institution beyond an administrative space, positioning it as a collective, dialogical, and collaborative environment in which all actors — teachers, children, administrators, families, and other community members — actively participate in the construction of knowledge and shared professional development. This perspective aligns with the studies of Vygotsky (1998), who emphasize the social and interactive role in the learning process, reinforcing that human and professional development occurs through mediation between individuals and their sociocultural environment.

Furthermore, collaborative education enhances the development of collective competencies, promoting the exchange of knowledge and the co-construction of solutions to the everyday challenges of the school. As Imbernón (2000) points out, education cannot be conceived as a one-time event, but as a continuous, participatory, and contextualized process that values the experiences and knowledge of all involved. In this way, an institutional culture of critical reflection, innovation, and social commitment is fostered — indispensable for Early Childhood Education to fulfill its formative, inclusive, and emancipatory role.

In summary, situated and collaborative education represents an essential path for qualifying teaching in Early Childhood Education, promoting a fruitful encounter between theory and practice,



individual and collective, school and community. This approach strengthens teachers' autonomy and professional identity, while also contributing to the construction of a quality education that is sensitive to children's specificities and to the social challenges of the context in which the school is embedded.

PUBLIC POLICIES AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

In recent years, significant advances have been observed in the regulation of Early Childhood Education, expressed in official documents such as the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI) and the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC). These policies indicate a formal commitment to the qualification of teaching work and the appreciation of early childhood as a fundamental stage of human development.

However, the implementation of these advances faces structural challenges that continue to compromise the quality and continuity of teacher education in this segment. Among the main obstacles is the systematic absence of guaranteed time for professionals to dedicate themselves to study, reflection, and the development of their pedagogical practices. As Gatti (2009) warns, continuing education cannot be limited to isolated actions disconnected from school reality; it is essential that the educational system ensures objective conditions — such as time, space, and institutional support — so that teachers can engage in meaningful formative processes.

This limitation compromises not only professional growth but also the possibility of education that addresses the specificities of working with young children, whose complexity demands specialized knowledge, sensitivity, and an ethical stance that respects the child's holistic development in its multiple dimensions. According to Oliveira-Formosinho (2002), work in Early Childhood Education requires education that integrates theory and practice, affection and knowledge, recognizing the teacher as a childhood professional, capable of acting with pedagogical intentionality and sensitive listening.

Another critical point concerns the fragmentation of continuing education policies, which often appear disjointed from each other and disconnected from local realities and the concrete needs of teachers and children. According to Ponte (2014), the lack of dialogue between decision-making bodies and those who work directly in schools generates formative programs that are disconnected from school daily life, compromising their relevance and effectiveness.

Moreover, public policies that do not incorporate the active participation of educators in their design and implementation tend to reproduce homogeneous and rigid models, insensitive to the cultural, social, and territorial diversity that permeates Early Childhood Education in Brazil. As Silva (2016) emphasizes, recognizing and valuing teachers' narratives — their experiences, knowledge, and challenges — is essential for education to be contextualized, ethical, and politically committed.



This means promoting formative processes that transcend mere content transmission, incorporating ethical, political, and cultural dimensions of pedagogical practice and fostering inclusive and meaningful practices for each school reality. For Oliveira-Formosinho (2009), teacher education must value the complexity of professional teaching, recognizing the educator as an ethical, cultural, and political subject. This perspective breaks with technicist models, advocating for formative practices that are in tune with the social context and contribute to a democratic and equitable education. Freire (1996), in turn, emphasizes that teaching requires awareness of the world and commitment to social transformation, highlighting that educational practice must be liberating and dialogical.

In this scenario, it becomes urgent to rethink public policies for teacher education, ensuring not only resources and time but also spaces for listening and effective participation of educators. It is necessary for these formative processes to be built collectively, respecting the singularities of local contexts and promoting teachers' pedagogical autonomy as agents of social transformation. Imbernón (2010) argues that continuing education must be articulated with practice and school daily life, built with teachers, and not merely for them, in order to promote real and lasting changes in education.

Furthermore, Nóvoa (1992) reinforces that it is necessary to break with hierarchical and prescriptive models, investing in a formative culture based on collaboration, listening, and the appreciation of teaching experiences. Therefore, the contradictions present in public policies for education in Early Childhood reflect a tension between normative advances and the concrete working conditions of teachers. Overcoming these contradictions requires a political and institutional commitment that values teaching as a complex profession, recognizes the central role of continuous education, and strengthens the dialogue between policies and school practices, ensuring a quality, inclusive, and democratic education for all children.

EDUCATION AS A POLITICAL GESTURE OF RESISTANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

Continuous teacher education, when conceived as a collective, critical, and situated project, goes beyond the boundaries of technical training and asserts itself as a political gesture of resistance and ethical commitment to education. From this perspective, to educate oneself is to take a stand against neoliberal logics that instrumentalize educational work, reducing it to performance indicators and standardized goals. According to Freire (1996), teaching is a profoundly political act, which involves choices, values, and a critical stance toward reality. Education, in this view, becomes a space of insurgency against the emptying of pedagogical meaning, against the dehumanization of school practices, and against the fragmentation of teaching knowledge.

Rather than being limited to the accumulation of content-based knowledge, continuing education should promote the educator's reconnection with the deeper meaning of their practice, awakening their



pedagogical intentionality and ethical sensitivity. Tardif (2002) argues that teaching knowledge is constructed in practice and through reflection on it, requiring formative processes that value lived experience and the affective, cultural, and social dimensions of teaching. Thus, education becomes a real possibility for revitalizing the teaching profession, allowing the teacher to reaffirm their freedom to create, to experiment, and to transform the school routine into a space of listening, affection, and invention.

This political dimension of education transforms the very subject who teaches, re-signifying their practices and their ways of being in the world. Nóvoa (2009) argues that teacher education must be anchored in the recognition of the teacher as the author of their professional trajectory, emphasizing that “there is no change in education without valuing teachers.” The formative process, in this sense, becomes a path of personal and collective reinvention, in which the teacher becomes an agent of change, capable of breaking with oppressive structures, promoting inclusive practices, and building a more democratic, welcoming, and plural school.

To educate oneself, therefore, is also a gesture of courage. It is to resist the invisibilization of childhood, exclusionary practices, and the uncritical reproduction of pedagogical models. As Oliveira-Formosinho (2009) highlights, teacher education must promote participatory, ethical, and transformative professionalism, connected to local realities and to the knowledge produced in and by the school. By assuming this critical stance, the educator commits not only to their own professional development but also to the construction of an emancipatory educational project, in which children are recognized as subjects of rights and teachers as protagonists of the formative process.

In this context, it becomes essential that education be integrated into the school’s daily life and respect the uniqueness of educational territories. Situated education, as proposed by Imbernón (2011), values collaborative processes, peer dialogue, and the articulation between theory and practice, recognizing that the school must be understood as a space for knowledge production and permanent professional development. This approach breaks with the vertical and decontextualized logic of traditional education, betting on practices that strengthen teacher autonomy and pedagogical co-authorship.

Therefore, it is urgent to understand that education is not an end in itself, but a constant movement of reflection, belonging, and transformation. It is an ethical-political process that occurs through mutual listening, the sharing of experiences, and the collective construction of meaning. As Rinaldi (2005) affirms, inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, education is a form of “collective and permanent research,” which brings different forms of knowledge into dialogue, recognizing the complexity and beauty of the act of educating. In this horizon, the teacher ceases to be merely an executor of policies and becomes a historical subject, a producer of knowledge, and a defender of a more humane, inclusive, and just school.



THOSE WHO CARE FOR CHILDHOOD MUST ALSO BE CARED FOR

Planning with affection, as discussed in this reflection, requires the presence of a sensitive, reflective, and intentional educator — a professional who not only performs tasks but is genuinely engaged with the complexity and beauty of childhood. However, for such an educator to exist in their fullness, it is essential that they also be cared for: cared for in their education, cared for in their listening, cared for in the time reserved for growth, reflection, and renewal. Perrenoud (2000) emphasizes that teaching requires ethical and reflective commitment, and that the educator must be cared for in order to act fully.

Continuous education, therefore, must constitute a welcoming space, capable of strengthening the teacher's identity, broadening their horizons, and allowing the construction of new meanings for teaching. To educate oneself is not simply to incorporate new methods or techniques, but a profound process of self-knowledge and reconnection with the essence of educating — an ethical and poetic act that reaffirms the commitment to childhood as a sacred time of rights, potential, and humanity. Nóvoa (1995) highlights that teacher education must be a continuous and relational process, which strengthens professional identity and enables an ethical, sensitive, and committed pedagogical practice with the dignity of both child and teacher.

This commitment only becomes possible through public policies that ensure resources, conditions, and recognition; through schools that promote a solid, collaborative, and sensitive formative culture; and through teachers who persist in the constant pursuit of learning, including — and especially — from their own practices. According to Tardif (2014), effective educational policies must guarantee structural conditions and institutional support so that continuing education is meaningful and contextualized, enabling professional development aligned with the real demands of the school and the community.

Thus, it is reaffirmed with conviction that there is no quality early childhood education without qualified teacher education. And there is no quality education without attentive listening, dedicated time, and, above all, genuine affection. It is essential that the educational community remain committed to promoting education that is as human, delicate, and powerful as the childhood it seeks to protect, respect, and promote. As Vygotsky (1998) states, human development occurs through social interaction and cultural mediation, which reinforces the need for educational environments grounded in affection, listening, and time respected for the learning and holistic development of both child and educator.

It is necessary to recognize that the educator also feels, dreams, tires, and reinvents themselves. They are not an instrument of the system, but a subject of affections, history, and culture. Caring for the educator is, therefore, caring for education itself. It is ensuring listening spaces where they can share their concerns and strengths, their doubts and discoveries. Teacher appreciation begins with the recognition of their humanity, the legitimization of their voice, and trust in their ability to create possible worlds



alongside children. Freire (1996) emphasizes that the educator is a historical and cultural subject, whose practice is immersed in human and social relationships, and that their appreciation involves recognizing their affective, cultural, and political dimension, fundamental for a liberating education.

On this path, education should not be imposed as a bureaucratic or procedural requirement, but cultivated as fertile ground where the teacher can nourish themselves with knowledge, encounters, and meaningful experiences. To educate oneself, in this sense, is a gesture of belonging: to the profession, to the collective, and to hope. As Nóvoa (2009) reminds us, to educate oneself is “to exist as a teacher.” It is to find oneself in the other, in the group, in the collective history that precedes us and projects us beyond routine practices.

Moreover, caring for those who educate inevitably involves school management and the institutional networks that support pedagogical work. These are the entities that can — and must — create real working conditions, respect teachers’ time, and invest in moments of study, collective listening, and reflection. When the school is organized as a continuous learning community, it enhances the development of its professionals and directly reflects this in the quality of children’s educational experience.

Thus, school management plays an important role in creating an environment conducive to teacher development, being essential to improving the quality of education. According to Hopkins (2001), effective school leadership promotes a culture of continuous learning, respecting teachers’ time and valuing collective moments of study and reflection to strengthen commitment to teaching. Silva and Rodrigues (2019) highlight that institutional networks offer support among schools, expanding education opportunities and encouraging knowledge exchange.

Therefore, when the school is organized as a learning community, it supports the growth of professionals and improves the quality of education for children, as emphasized by Fullan (2007), who highlights the importance of collaboration for educational transformation. Finally, planning with affection is not a solitary gesture, but an exercise in communion. It is necessary for the school, as a living institution, to also commit to this affective and formative pact. The educator can only offer listening, time, and genuine presence if they are also listened to, if they have time, if they can be whole. Caring for those who care is, then, more than an ethical imperative: it is an act of justice, resistance, and hope in a present that is built, every day, with tenderness and struggle.

In this sense, Nóvoa (2009) argues that teachers must be considered subjects of rights and desires, recognizing that their professional development is deeply linked to the institutional and human conditions that surround them. Thus, the idea is reinforced that there is no quality early childhood education without quality teacher education. And there is no quality education without attentive listening, dedicated time,



and, above all, genuine affection. May we, as an educational community, continue fighting for education that is as human, delicate, and powerful as the childhood we wish to protect, respect, and promote.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

NORMATIVE ADVANCES AND STRUCTURAL LIMITS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

The results of the analysis indicate that continuous teacher education in Early Childhood Education has been reaffirmed in normative documents such as the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (BRASIL, 2010) and the Common National Curriculum Base (BRASIL, 2017), which highlight the importance of the teacher as a mediator of meaningful learning. However, while these documents represent progress by recognizing the specificity of teaching in early childhood, structural gaps are evident that hinder the materialization of a solid and permanent educational policy.

Among the main challenges is the absence of institutionalized time for study and collective reflection, a factor repeatedly criticized by Gatti (2009), who denounces the fragmentation of educational policies into episodic actions disconnected from school reality. This discontinuity weakens professional development processes and compromises the consolidation of a formative culture within institutions. Tardif (2014) supports this critique by emphasizing that teaching knowledge cannot be reduced to techniques or external prescriptions, as it is constructed through practice, interaction, and experience. Therefore, when education does not engage with these elements, it tends to lose relevance for teachers.

Another relevant finding is the observation that formative experiences situated in the school's daily life and built collaboratively have a greater impact on teacher identity and the quality of pedagogical practices. Oliveira-Formosinho (2009) highlights that the "school ground" is the prime space for knowledge production and professional development, as it is where the real tensions of pedagogical work emerge. It is in this space that the teacher mobilizes listening to children, confronts contradictions, and develops creative responses, which requires formative processes that are not external but integrated into the school's daily life.

The perspective of the reflective teacher, advocated by Schön (2000), reinforces this understanding by considering that teaching practice must be constantly reworked through the logic of action–reflection–action. Zeichner (2008) complements this by arguing that teacher education must overcome the gap between theory and practice, articulating academic knowledge and experiential knowledge. When this movement occurs in collective spaces, education takes on the character of shared research, strengthening not only individuals but also the school institution as a learning community (Vygotsky, 1998).

In this sense, experiences involving study groups, pedagogical workshops, interdisciplinary projects, and peer exchanges prove more effective than isolated courses. Imbernón (2010) emphasizes



that education built “with teachers and not just for teachers” enhances teacher autonomy, promotes the appreciation of experiential knowledge, and reinforces professional identity. Thus, the findings indicate that the quality of continuing education lies not only in the availability of courses, but in their ability to engage with contexts, individuals, and the concrete challenges of everyday life.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AS A POLITICAL AND ETHICAL GESTURE

The findings also reveal that education should not be understood as a bureaucratic requirement, but as a political and ethical gesture of resistance and transformation. By investing in their own development, the teacher reaffirms their position as a historical subject and producer of knowledge, countering the logic of standardization and instrumentalization of educational work. Freire (1996) had already warned that teaching is a political act and that educational practice only makes sense when linked to a project of humanization and emancipation.

From this perspective, continuing education enables the teacher to reconnect with the intentionality of their practice, recovering their autonomy and critical capacity. Nóvoa (2009) reinforces that there is no educational change without teacher appreciation, with education being a space for identity affirmation and professional authorship. At the same time, Tardif (2002) argues that teaching knowledge is only consolidated when legitimized through practice and shared reflection, which gives education a role in revitalizing the teaching profession.

At this point, the contribution of Rinaldi (2005), inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, stands out in understanding education as “collective and permanent research,” in which dialogue between subjects and knowledge produces not only understanding but also belonging and meaning. This political dimension of education transforms the very subject who teaches and expands the school’s potential as a democratic and plural space.

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF EDUCATION IN ADDRESSING THE SPECIFICITIES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

One of the recurring challenges pointed out by Early Childhood Education teachers refers to the scarce support in continuing education aimed at practice with children who are the target audience of Special Education. This lack of specific preparation generates insecurity among teachers and often directly impacts the school’s daily life, especially in situations where children exhibit challenging behaviors, such as nervous breakdowns, aggression, or difficulties in socialization — episodes that may involve hitting classmates, biting, or causing general agitation in the classroom.

According to Mantoan (2003), school inclusion only becomes effective when accompanied by concrete conditions for the teacher, including pedagogical support, appropriate resources, and permanent



education that prepares them to deal with diversity. However, what is observed, as highlighted by Glat and Pletsch (2010), is that the education offered is still insufficient, fragmented, and often distant from the real demands that emerge in working with children with disabilities or developmental disorders.

This scenario reinforces the need to understand continuing education as a right and as a space for the collective construction of knowledge, where teachers can share experiences, reflect on practices, and develop joint strategies to deal with crisis situations or disruptions in the school environment. For Nóvoa (1992), no one educates themselves alone: teacher professionalism is built in encounters with others and in reflection on practice. Thus, investing in situated and collaborative education is essential for educators to act with greater confidence and sensitivity in the face of each child's specificities.

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider that episodes of agitation and aggression should not be seen as "isolated problems," but as manifestations of communication and expression by the child, which require the teacher's attentive gaze and inclusive pedagogical strategies. Oliveira-Formosinho (2009) emphasizes that sensitive listening to childhood is a powerful path to understanding these manifestations, while Vygotsky (1998) reinforces that human development occurs through social interaction and cultural mediation. Therefore, education that integrates theory and practice, and that equips the teacher to understand the context of these behaviors, is essential for building more welcoming, democratic, and inclusive educational environments.

THOSE WHO CARE FOR CHILDHOOD MUST ALSO BE CARED FOR

A transversal aspect that emerged from the analysis is the need to care for those who educate. Planning with affection, as discussed by Perrenoud (2000), requires that the teacher also have spaces for listening, welcoming, and renewal. Education, in this sense, is not limited to the technical field, but involves emotional, cultural, and human dimensions, recognizing the educator as a subject of affection and history. Nóvoa (1995) had already emphasized that educating oneself is also a process of identity strengthening, in which the teacher finds themselves in dialogue with others and with the collective.

The literature shows that when educators lack time, resources, and institutional support, education risks becoming a mere bureaucratic ritual. On the other hand, when the school is organized as a learning community (FULLAN, 2007), supported by institutional networks that offer support and promote exchanges (SILVA; RODRIGUES, 2019), the formative process gains depth and results in more inclusive and creative pedagogical practices. Caring for the educator, therefore, is caring for childhood itself, since the quality of early childhood education is directly linked to the well-being and professional development of its teachers.

A transversal aspect that emerged from the analysis is the need to care for those who educate. Planning with affection, as discussed by Perrenoud (2000), requires that the teacher have not only



technical competencies, but also spaces for listening, welcoming, and renewal, where they can reflect on their practice, share experiences, and re-signify the meaning of their profession. Education, in this view, is not limited to courses and methodologies, but involves emotional, cultural, and human dimensions, recognizing the educator as a subject of affection, history, and identity. In this sense, Nóvoa (1995) emphasizes that teacher education is also a process of identity strengthening, in which the teacher finds themselves in dialogue with others, affirming themselves as a political and collective subject.

The literature shows that when educators lack time, resources, and institutional support, education risks being reduced to a bureaucratic ritual, emptied of meaning and disconnected from everyday reality. Conversely, when the school is organized as a learning community (Fullan, 2007), supported by institutional networks that encourage collaborative work and knowledge exchange (Silva; Rodrigues, 2019), the formative process gains depth and produces real impacts on pedagogical practice. This dialogical conception of education also aligns with Freire (1996), who understands education as a liberating practice and defends the need for the educator to be permanently cared for and recognized so that they can care for others.

Caring for the educator, therefore, is also caring for childhood itself, since the quality of Early Childhood Education is intrinsically linked to the well-being, appreciation, and professional development of its teachers. Oliveira-Formosinho (2009) adds that sensitive listening is not only intended for children, but equally for educators, because only in environments of mutual trust and recognition is it possible to sustain innovative and inclusive pedagogical practices.

Thus, investing in policies and institutional practices that prioritize care for those who teach is an ethical, social, and political imperative, capable of strengthening the teaching profession and, consequently, ensuring a childhood respected in its dignity and potential.

CRITICAL SYNTHESIS

In summary, the results and discussions show that continuous teacher education in Early Childhood Education:

1. **Has advanced normatively**, but still faces structural limitations, such as lack of time and discontinuity of policies (GATTI, 2009; TARDIF, 2014).
2. **Shows greater potential when situated and collaborative**, rooted in school daily life and built collectively (IMBERNÓN, 2010; OLIVEIRA-FORMOSINHO, 2009; ZEICHNER, 2008).
3. **Constitutes a political gesture**, reaffirming teaching as an ethical and emancipatory practice (FREIRE, 1996; NÓVOA, 2009; RINALDI, 2005).

4. **Depends on care for the educator**, recognizing that there is no well-cared-for childhood without valued teachers (PERRENOUD, 2000; FULLAN, 2007).

Therefore, continuous teacher education in Early Childhood Education will only reach its full potential when it is recognized as a professional right, cultivated as collective research, and supported by public policies that value teaching as a social and cultural practice. To educate oneself, in this horizon, is a gesture of resistance, belonging, and hope — an essential movement for building a democratic, sensitive, and childhood-committed school.

CONCLUSION

The reflection developed throughout this article demonstrates that continuous teacher education in Early Childhood Education cannot be understood as a mere bureaucratic requirement or episodic action, but rather as a professional right, an ethical condition, and a political necessity for the consolidation of a democratic and quality education. Recognizing the teacher as a historical, affective subject and a producer of knowledge means acknowledging that there is no transformation of the school without the effective appreciation of teaching. Education, in this horizon, goes beyond the technical field and assumes an emancipatory character, promoting the strengthening of professional identity, the collective construction of knowledge, and the sensitive listening to the singularities of childhood.

The analysis showed that, although there are significant normative advances — such as those provided in the DCNEI and BNCC — structural weaknesses persist that compromise the effectiveness of continuing education, such as the discontinuity of public policies, insufficient institutional support, and the lack of time dedicated to study and collective reflection. These gaps reveal a contradiction between the discourse of teacher appreciation and the real conditions of professional practice, resulting in fragmented formative practices with low impact on the quality of early childhood education.

On the other hand, the results indicate that situated, collaborative, and dialogical formative experiences have greater transformative potential, as they articulate theory and practice, value teaching knowledge, and respond to the real demands of school daily life. Education, when conceived as “collective and permanent research” (Rinaldi, 2005), contributes to the construction of learning communities, to overcoming professional isolation, and to strengthening bonds of belonging among educators. This perspective is anchored in authors such as Nóvoa (2009), Imbernón (2010), Tardif (2014), and Oliveira-Formosinho (2009), who advocate for education rooted in dialogue, experience, and listening to childhoods.

In light of this, it is concluded that educating oneself is also a political and resistance gesture. In the context of the precarization and devaluation of teaching, investing in permanent formative processes means reaffirming the centrality of the teacher in the weaving of an inclusive, plural, and socially



committed school. As Freire (1996) points out, educational practice is only liberating when it promotes critical awareness and transforms realities; in this sense, continuing education is an inseparable part of an emancipatory education project.

Thus, this study advocates for the urgency of public policies that guarantee time, material conditions, and institutional support so that continuous teacher education can be carried out in a consistent and transformative way. More than preparing for teaching techniques, it is about offering spaces for listening, dialogue, and collective knowledge production, in which teachers can recognize themselves, strengthen themselves, and reinvent themselves. After all, caring for those who educate is caring for childhood itself, and only valued, reflective, and supported educators will be able to build pedagogical practices that are sensitive to children's singularities and capable of sustaining early childhood education that is, at once, ethical, affective, and socially just.



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