



ANSWERS AND
INNOVATIONS
IN PRE-SCHOOL
EDUCATION IN



PORTUGAL
AND
SLOVENIA



Edited by
Luís Castanheira and Tatjana Devjak

ANSWERS AND INNOVATIONS IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL AND SLOVENIA

Edited by

Luís Castanheira and Tatjana Devjak

**Answers and Innovations in Pre-School Education
in Portugal and Slovenia**

Edited by Luís Castanheira, Research Center in Basic
Education, Instituto Politécnico de Bragança,
Portugal
Tatjana Devjak, Faculty of Education, University of
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Reviewed by Deolinda Ribeiro, Instituto Politécnico do Porto,
Portugal and
Jurka Lepičnik Vodopivec, Faculty of Education
Koper, University of Primorska, Slovenia

Language Proofreading Aleksandra Hribar Košir

Publisher Instituto Politécnico de Bragança

Cover designed by Jurij Selan, Faculty of Education, University of
Ljubljana, Slovenia

DTP by Igor Cerar

Available online at <http://hdl.handle.net/10198/16975>

ISBN 978-972-745-239-2; [Título: Answers and innovations in pre-school education In Portugal
and Slovenia]; [Editor: Luís Castanheira]; [Co-editor(es): Tatjana Devjak]; [Suporte: Eletrónico];
[Formato: n.d.]

Contents

<i>Tatjana Devjak, Luís Castanheira and Sanja Berčnik</i> Introduction	5
<i>Tatjana Devjak</i> The Concept of Pre-School Education in Slovenia Through Theoretical Framework	9
<i>Luís Castanheira</i> The Concept of Pre-School Education in Portugal through Theoretical Framework	29
<i>Tatjana Devjak, Luís Castanheira and Sanja Berčnik</i> Slovene and Portuguese Pre-School Teachers about Collaboration with Parents	45
<i>Sanja Berčnik</i> Collaboration with Parents as Part of Kindergarten's Educational Concept	75
<i>Angelina Sanches</i> Pedagogical Supervision as a Collaborative Process of Vocational Training	97
<i>Rosa Novo</i> Modern School Movement (MSM)	113

The Concept of Pre-school Education in Portugal Through Theoretical Framework

Luís Castanheira

luiscastanheira@ipb.pt

Research Center in Basic Education

Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, Portugal

Abstract

In Portugal, Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a leading role in the development of children in all areas and domains. Fortunately and eventually, in the first years of the 21st century a consensual thesis has been reached. ECE attendance is no longer considered a luxury and has become itself a right for everyone, a precondition for enriched development, which enhances the democratic principle of equality of opportunity, both in access and in educational success throughout life. In Portugal ECE is intended for children from three years until their entry into compulsory schooling, in other words, in the 1st year of the 1st Cycle of Basic Education (Law No 5/97, of 10th February). This is the first stage of basic education in the process of lifelong education. It became universal for 4-year-old children from the school year 2016/2017 (Law No. 65/2015), which changed another Law that established the compulsory schooling regime and which contemplated the universality of early childhood education from the year children reach five years. Nowadays ECE is for all children from the year they reach four years old. The universality implies an obligation for the State to ensure the existence of an early childhood education network that allows the enrolment of all the children covered by it and also that this attendance is free of charge for the educational component.

This is stated in the original legislation (Law no. 85/2009). There is no compulsory national program for early childhood education, but there are Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (CGPSE), which are based on the overall pedagogical objectives defined by the aforementioned Outlining Law (Law 5/97, of 10th February). These are intended to support the construction and management of the curriculum in the early childhood centres under the responsibility of each educator, in collaboration with the educational team of the local educational establishment/grouping of schools. The first CGPSE were published in 1997 and are still defined as a set of general and organized principles that the educator should use to make decisions about their practice, in other words, to plan and evaluate the educational process to be developed with children. In Portugal the ECE works in public and private institutions, pedagogically supervised by the State.

Keywords: *early childhood education, Early childhood centres, Curriculum Guidelines*

Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Portugal is a creation of the republican system that transformed a social concern into a legal and educational project for children from 3 to 6 years old, the period just before entering the compulsory elementary school. The decision of broadening the responsibilities of the State must be viewed in the light of the implementation of the concept of the earlier ages as an autonomous object of social intervention and scientific reflection. Its purpose was to create and train a new generation of new, more educated and supportive people in society, but for this, educational success was essential, and this could only be achieved through formal schooling beginning as soon as possible. It was essential not to miss the early years of the child's life, considered fundamental to the creation of healthy habits in specific educational environments and with properly trained professionals.

Early Childhood Education is not just a social and educational asset. It is also a cultural asset, for culture presupposes lifelong learning, requires intellectual curiosity, the ability to solve problems and also requires an ethical stance. Culture also wants to state and acknowledge the existence of multicultural societies, where difference is affirmed but equality of opportunity is guaranteed. This is the reality of the Portuguese society, its potentiality. Hence, we must consider that the quality of Early Childhood Education in a country can be the path for a more human and fair society.

The Portuguese Early Childhood Education System

Early Childhood Education: A brief history

Early Childhood Education in Portugal is considered the first stage of basic education in Portugal and begins at the age of three. Over the years there have been different designations for Education aimed at children before entering elementary school, seen not only in the history of education, but also in legislation, either in Portugal or other countries, for instance *Educação Infantil*, *Educação Pré-Escolar*, *Asilos Infantis*, *Creches*, *Escolas Maternais*, *Escolas Infantis*, *Jardins de Infância*, *Infantários*. According to Cardona (1997, p. 21), “ao longo da sua evolução, podemos observar diversas oscilações em relação ao papel e à especificidade atribuída a este nível de ensino, podendo constatar-se a existência de diferentes concepções subjacentes à expressão *Educação de Infância*” [throughout its evolution, we can observe several fluctuations in relation to the role and the specificity attributed to this level of education, and it is possible to verify the existence of different conceptions underlying the expression *Educação de Infância* (Early Childhood Education)]. To begin with there were assistance concerns throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and, more recently, educational and social. Teresa Vasconcelos (2003, p. 20) states that “a escolha da terminologia – *Educação e cuidados para a infância* – pressupõem uma perspetiva integrada e coerente, implicando políticas articuladas comuns à faixa etária dos 0 aos 5/6 anos por parte do ministério que tutela a educação e não a partir dos 3 anos, tal como a legislação portuguesa prevê” [the choice of terminology – early childhood education and care – presupposes an integrated and coherent perspective, implying articulated policies common to the age group from 0 to 5/6 years old by the ministry that supervises education, and not from the age of 3, as provided for the Portuguese legislation.] Indeed, the OECD (2011, p. 14) also considers that “a educação e cuidados para a infância incluem todos os contextos que proporcionam cuidados e educação para as crianças antes do ingresso na escola obrigatória, independentemente do tipo de estabelecimento, horário de atendimento, financiamento, ou conteúdos programáticos. O período da pequena infância é, em geral, definido como abrangendo a faixa etária que vai dos 0 aos 8 anos de idade” [early childhood education and care include all the contexts that provide care and education for children before entering compulsory school, regardless of the type of institution, working hours, funding, or curriculum content. The period of early childhood is generally defined as covering the age range from 0 to 8 years old].

The option for this research places it as the formal Education aimed at children from three to six years old, before entering Primary School, now called School

of the 1st Cycle of Basic Education in Portugal. The terminology used in the classification of the period of the child from three to six years of age, as well as the institutions that have this educational response and their professionals, have thus undergone several changes. The institutions range from *Escola Infantil*, *Jardim-escola*, *Escola pré-Primária*, *Jardim-infantil* to *Jardim-de-infância*. The educational response in itself has been called *Ensino Infantil*, *Ensino pré-Primário*, *Educação Pré-escolar* and *Educação de Infância*. The professionals are *Professora Infantil*, *Educadora Infantil* and *Educadora de Infância*. The correct and official discourse nowadays in Portugal name all of these as *Educação Pré-escolar* [Early Childhood Education (ECE)] and *Jardim-de-infância* [Early Childhood Education Centre or School] for the institutions attended by children from three to six years old. The teacher specialized in this area is officially called *Educador de Infância* [Early Childhood Educator or teacher].

ECE has slowly emerged during the 19th century, grew and developed during the 20th century and it reached stabilization in the 21st century. Things have changed from the children's assistance need to an educational and pedagogical need. Several factors have contributed to this path and to the development of education at all levels. The main and decisive point is the need to form a new society with good citizens in all the emerging regimes and states and in every place of these states and regimes. With a focus on improving the living conditions of the children, there has been a decline in infant mortality rates, which has made the investment in children worthwhile. Industrialization led to a need for a new reorganization of society with a higher concentration of population in urban centres: “Entre os restantes fatores destacam-se uma industrialização e urbanização crescentes, que provocaram profundas mudanças na organização da sociedade ocidental relativamente à produção de bens de consumo, bem como mudanças na organização e na estrutura familiar” [Other factors include a growing industrialization and urbanization, which has caused profound changes in the organization of Western society in relation to the production of consumer goods, as well as changes in the family organization and structure] (Spodek, 2002, p. 193).

When institutions aimed at Early Childhood Education appeared, the primary concern was merely to enrol children with their older siblings. It was the first approach to children's education. At first time they were more focused on assistance, and later they became more focused on preparing the child for the entrance in the Elementary school. However, there was a conviction that experiences lived by children in early childhood would influence the emerging adult. Diachronically, Early Childhood Education has undergone major changes in Portugal. According to Gomes (1977, p. 20), “percorreu as mesmas etapas que noutros Países da Europa, embora com significativo atraso no que concerne ao calendário e ao

número de 58 estabelecimentos” [It has undergone the same stages as in other European countries, although with a significant delay in the calendar and in the number of 58 establishments]. Above all, such a delay was due, in the opinion of Cardona (2006, p. 132), to the fact that the process of industrialization and the development of social policies for early childhood were slow. The earliest institutions had mainly welfare and social purposes.

In Portugal, children protection services emerged in the 15th and 16th centuries with the creation of the *Misericórdias* by Queen Leonor (1458–1525), a fact that has been referred to by several authors (Gomes, 1977; Ramirez, Penha and Loff, 1988; Bairrão/Vasconcelos/Cardona, 1997). “Its establishment marked the beginning of the creation of structures dedicated to the practice of charitable works for the poor, sick people and children without family” states Cardona (1997, p. 26). Many were the designations given to these institutions, such as “*rodas*”, “*refúgios*”, “*hospícios*”, and “*asilos*”. It can thus be inferred that social assistance was their predominant goal.

Though these institutions remain, from the 18th century onwards, more precisely during the Industrial Revolution, a distinction was made between institutions that proposed social or welfare objectives, and institutions that proposed predominantly pedagogical or educational objectives. There were times when institutions emerged that combined these two goals – welfare and education. According to Magalhães (1997, p. 122), this growing concern with the child and its educational success led to the need to create “structured and consequent educational plans” giving rise to a “meta-schooling of Early Childhood Education that tended to reduce the educational action to a school propaedeutics”.

From the 1870s onwards there was a growing need to create more Early Childhood Education institutions, with the gradual replacement of the spirit of care for a new educational concept (Castanheira, 2006).

In the last years of the monarchy, which ended in 1910, there was an intense pedagogical activity, although the creation of Early Childhood Education institutions is much reduced. According to Gomes (1977), an Early Childhood Education setting was created in Oporto in 1906, through the adoption of the Fröbel method. In 1910, Adolfo Coelho states that in Portugal there is only one early childhood center that which had been created in Lisbon in 1882. He was referring to the *Associação das Escolas Móveis pelo Método de João de Deus*, indeed created in 1882 which “precedeu, em 1907, à Reforma dos estatutos, passando, a incluir nos seus objectivos a criação das escolas maternas” [anticipated the Reform of the statutes in 1907, and included in its objectives the creation of “*escolas maternas*” (nursery schools)] (Sampaio, 1968, p. 90; Gomes, 1977, p. 51). In 1908 it was renamed to “*Associação de Escolas Móveis pelo Método de João de Deus, Bibliotecas Ambulantes e*

Jardins-escola” (Gomes, 1977:51).

During the period of the First Republic in Portugal, between 1910 and 1926, although the different governments of the Republic emphasized the role played by education in the country’s progress, by combating illiteracy and the generalization of the Elementary School, Early Childhood Education was indeed a priority of this political regime (Cardona, 1997, p. 35). It was considered, by the same author (2006: 135), “como sua missão primordial a preparação para a escola, paralelamente foi predominada a tendência para valorizar a especificidade deste ensino, tendo em conta as características das crianças” [as its primary mission the preparation for school and in parallel there was a tendency to value the specificity of this type of teaching, taking into account the characteristics of the children]. Until the mid-1930s, legislation sought to provide specificity and coherence to Early Childhood Education and, above all, to the training of early childhood educators with the integration of scientific subjects, such as Psychology, Child Psychology and Pedagogy, Pedagogy of Children, General and School Hygiene or Childcare.

In 1936, during the *Estado Novo* (the dictatorial political regime that ruled Portugal between 1933 and 1974), a new course for early childhood education emerges, which would lead, in practice, to the extinction of official Early Childhood Education in Portugal. The *Estado Novo* concentrates its investments in a compulsory education of 3 years, building a maternalist ideology that values the role of mothers and families (Nóvoa, 2005, p. 109). This reinforces the private initiative through a network of private early childhood centers directed primarily at the favored social groups, even though a significant proportion of children (about one third in 1950) are covered by unprotected child support systems. In 1960 there were just over 6,000 students in early childhood education in Portugal (*Ibid.*). Alongside with this formal network, in which the establishments depend from the Ministry of Social Security, an important market of nannies and day care centers that take care of the children during the working hours of their mothers develops. There is also a very significant reinforcement of the assistance perspective with the creation of organizations and institutions for poor children.

The socio-educational and psycho-pedagogical currents that emerge in the 1960s tend to value an educational logic (private early childhood education establishments) instead of an assistance logic (public or private institutions with childhood protection roles). The preparatory work for the *Estatuto da Educação Nacional* (National Education Statute) places the problem in a dual perspective, both pedagogical and social, referring in particular to the new situation of women in the labour market. Clear proposals were then defined to generalize and formalize public early childhood education, ensuring an education for all, as soon as possible. This policy was pursued and legislated by the Minister of Education in

1973, seeking to practice the principle that the expansion of the education system translates and supports, basically, the institutionalization of early childhood education, although optional (Castanheira, 2013).

With the end of the dictatorial regime in 1974 a democratic period began that still continues today. After 1974, several nurseries and early childhood centers of popular initiative were set up in rural and urban areas, initiated by political parties, factories, residents' committees and several associations, thus constituting an important real human network. The Childhood Education services had been scattered by several ministries and the need for greater coordination began to be felt. Efforts were made to respond to the social needs felt by workers with respect to the education of their children. There was an urgent need to organize society, both in the field of Early Childhood Education and in many other sectors of the society, where there was a lot of disorganization. The official network of Early Childhood Education appears in 1977 and in 1979 the Early Childhood Education Settings Statutes were created by the Ministry of Education, a subject we will return to later in the text. Although not sufficient, these two measures proved to be fundamental. Until then there had been no formal education policy regarding Early Childhood Education. However, there were (and still are) many public Early Childhood Education institutions, which depend from other government departments, namely the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity. For many years, the statutes proved to be a reference document in the panorama of Early Childhood Education in Portugal, at least until the publication of the Early Childhood Education curriculum guidelines in 1996. Despite being regulated for the public network, these guidelines were also followed by private institutions. In this sense, the Ministry of Social Affairs also publishes the Statutes of Private Social Solidarity Institutions in the same year. They also refer to non-profit Early Childhood Education institutions. The supervision of the existing early childhood centers is carried out by two different entities: inspection services from the Ministry of Education, such as the public early childhood centers, and those dependent on the Social Security, which supervise their Regional Centers and private institutions in their dependency.

The context changed slightly, as far as Early Childhood Education is concerned, in the beginning of the 1980s. According to Cardona's study (1997), 1,801 public Early Childhood centers were created in Portugal up to 1982. The number of educators exceeded a thousand, which justified, as it happened in the same year, the definition of a new placement system, specific to these professionals. So far, placements were carried out according to existing norms for Elementary School Teachers, which did not facilitate the process, given the diversity of characteristics of the two institutional networks. As regards the creation of more classrooms there was a slight stagnation.

In 1983 and 1984, no Ordinances for the creation of Early Childhood Education settings were published by the Ministry of Education, but new institutions were still being created by initiatives of local authorities. In turn, Social Security had only maintained the existing initiatives. This situation is due to the financial difficulties felt in the country. Only in 1985 did the Ministry of Education decide to publish Ordinances related to the creation of Early Childhood Centers. In 1986, the institutional coverage rate for Early Childhood Education children was 35.6% (Cardona, 1997, p. 94). Despite all the constraints, the sector, although slowly, grew consistently. In the school year 1985/86 it included 128,089 children (Gabinete de Estatística e Planeamento da Educação (GEPE), 2009, p. 102). This growth is due to the creation of the public network in 1977 and to the publication of the Statutes of Early Childhood Centres in 1979, which led to the opening of many Early Childhood Centres throughout the country. It should be noted that there is a decrease of 6-year-old children attending this level of education, probably because they have moved to Elementary School.

With the public network having been established in 1977, and with the publication of the Statutes of Early Childhood Centres in 1979 and the Basic Education Act of the Portuguese Educational System in 1986, the Early Childhood Education System was finally organized, although there was yet no national plan for Early Childhood Education. The training of Early Childhood Educators was done through a three years Bachelor's degree.

Since 1995, the policies for the development and expansion of early childhood education in Portugal have received priority attention from the constitutional government and civil society.

From the perspective of lifelong education and training and the reduction of social inequalities, the enlargement and expansion of Early Childhood Education was part of the government's program, with education in general and primary education being specifically stated as a national priority (Ministério da Educação, 1996; 1998). The Outlining Law 5/97 of February 10th, the so-called Outlining Law for Early Childhood Education was approved. Subsequently this Law is regulated through a coherent, integrated and comprehensive set of legislation, so that Early Childhood Education can have both educational and social functions. In 1997, the Ministry of Education published the document "Guidance for Early Childhood Education", which mirrors the principle of single tutelage for Early Childhood Education in Portugal (3 to 6 years old). As of this year the training of Childhood Educators also changed and a bachelor's degree with the duration of 4 years became mandatory for the profession. This system of training of Early Childhood Educators was kept until 2010, when, in the aftermath of the Bologna Process a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education became compulsory.

Organization of Pre-School Education

Model and organization of Pre-school education

There is no mandatory national program for pre-school education, but there are Curriculum Guidelines (CGPSE) which are based on the overall pedagogical objectives defined by the abovementioned Outlining Law (Law No 5/97, of 10 February) which “destinam a apoiar a construção e gestão do currículo no Jardim-de-infância, da responsabilidade de cada educador/a de infância em colaboração com a equipa educativa do estabelecimento educativo/agrupamento de escolas” [are intended to support the construction and management of the curriculum in Early Childhood Centres, which is the responsibility of every early childhood educator in collaboration with the educational team of the educational establishment/grouping of schools] (Silva, I., Marques, L., Mata, L., & Rosa, M. 2016, p. 5). The first CGPSE was published in 1997 and still continues to be defined as a set of general and organized principles to be used by the educator in order to make decisions about their practice, in other words, to plan and evaluate the educational process to be developed with children.

The main objectives of Early Childhood Education in Portugal are: to promote the personal and social development of the child based on democratic life experiences in a perspective of education towards citizenship; to encourage the inclusion of the child in diverse social groups, with respect for the plurality of cultures, favouring a progressive awareness of their role as a member of society; to contribute to equal opportunities in school access and learning success; to stimulate the overall development of each child, respecting their individual characteristics, including behaviours that favour significant and diversified learning; to develop expression and communication through the use of multiple languages as means of relation, information, aesthetic awareness and understanding of the world; to stimulate curiosity and critical thinking; to provide each child with conditions of well-being and safety, particularly in the area of individual and collective health; to proceed to the screening of maladjustments, deficiencies and precociousness, promoting the best guidance and directioning of the child; to encourage the participation of families in the educational process and to establish effective collaboration relationships with the community.

The Early Childhood Educator has complete freedom to choose the educational model he intends to work with in his group of children.

According to Silva et al. (2016, p. 5), the professional action of the Early Childhood Educator is characterized by an educational intentionality, which implies a reflection on the purposes and meanings of its pedagogical practices and the ways in which he organizes his action. This reflection is based on an interactive cycle

– to observe, to plan, to act, to evaluate – supporting different forms of register and documentation, which allow the Early Childhood Educator to make decisions about the practice, and adapt it to the features of each child, group and social context in which he works. The development of this process, with the participation of different agents (children, other professionals, parents/families), includes forms of communication and strategies that promote the involvement and facilitate the articulation among the different contexts of each child.

In Portugal, each Early Childhood Educator has autonomy for their pedagogical activity, adopting their own and diversified methodologies, in accordance with its pedagogical model. Among the most followed models I refer to the Portuguese Modern School Movement by Sérgio Niza, the American HighScope Model by David Weikart and the Italian model Reggio Emilia by Malaguzzi. All of them are social constructivist models, where children are involved in creating their own knowledge through their action. There is also pedagogy-in-participation, which has been growing considerably in the last years in Portugal.

Since the 1980s, the Portuguese Modern School Movement (MSM) has reoriented its cooperative training and its pedagogical model of school intervention for a cultural and communicative perspective, derived from the works of Vygotski and Bruner, among others. In the wake of Freinet, the MSM practises pedagogy of educational cooperation, in which children and educators negotiate activities and projects to develop around the programme contents, based on the interests and knowledge of the children and on the cultural context of the communities. This cooperative organization promotes moral and civic development, the power of initiative, the co-responsibility of students for their learning and the learning of democracy. Each child defines an autonomous work plan and the educator must monitor its execution and avoid the accumulation of difficulties. It is therefore sought to respect the rhythm and the characteristics of each child and to guarantee everyone's success. All children are involved in their own success, through the support given by those who have more facility to those with more difficulties. It is based on the works of Freinet and Vygotsky and relies on a class cooperative organization. Children are organized according to their interests, working individually or in groups. The educator promotes individual free expression, in a spirit of mutual aid and cooperation.

The High Scope model, following the path of the HighScope Educational and Research Foundation was created in 1970 by David P. Weikart with the objective of continuing research and activities he had begun as administrator of the Ypsilanti Public Schools in Michigan, USA. Five aspects stand out in this model that makes the difference, also the plan-do-review process. Practice is grounded and carried out based on a solid theory. It is not a mixture of models, it is something with

beginning, middle and end; Active learning for children and adults; Assessment – to assess is a process containing several tasks – to observe; to interact and to plan. The daily records are followed by the intentional practice, the Key Developmental Indicators (KDI) are an integral part of this work. There are assessment tools, such as the COR (Child Observation Record) and quality evaluation through the Program Quality Assessment (PQA). To assess means working together to support and develop the interests and potential of the child, guided by the Curriculum.

In this process the child chooses with intention, performs with concentration and reflects on what was learned. With a child's step, a giant step is taken towards the internalization of a fundamental methodology in active learning!

The Reggio Emilia model began in 1945, just after the end of World War II, when a group of citizens, including Professor Loris Malaguzzi, voluntarily decided to build the town and the school of Villa Cella in Reggio Emilia, where the funding was achieved through the sale of abandoned war material: “ver um tanque de guerra, seis cavalos e três camiões gerando uma escola para crianças pequenas é algo extraordinário. O facto de a escola ainda existir e continuar a funcionar bem é o mínimo que se poderia esperar desse início” [“seeing a war tank, six horses and three trucks generating a school for young children is something extraordinary. The fact that the school still exists and continues operating well is the least that could be expected from this beginning] (Malaguzzi, 1999, p. 67).

We can see that one of the pillars of the Reggio Emilia model is living consciously in a community where the different educational actors (teachers, educators, parents and others) constitute a work team that, together with the children, in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, are able to build a better quality educational response where everyone involved learns from one another (Lino, 2007).

The Pedagogy-in-Participation created by the *Associação Criança*, where Júlia and João Formosinho stand out, has been growing in recent years in Portugal and is based on new forms of space and time, activities and projects organization, as well as on new pedagogical materials for Early Childhood Education.

We also find a minority of early childhood educators who follow other models, such as:

- Project Pedagogy: this model starts from specific motivations, associated to social reality and which assumes an action plan built by the children and the educator, who coordinates it. It is based on a flexible and open plan, whose fundamental objectives are the development of sensitivity, creative imagination, autonomy and the socialization of the child.
- *João de Deus* Method: this model favours learning in the areas of reading, writing and arithmetics, according to an established plan, with the aim of preparing the child for school. The educator is in line with a directive pedagogy, in

view of the child's performance and school success.

- Cognitive Orientation Curriculum: it is based on Piaget's development theories and is part of an active pedagogy. The child learns by doing. The activities take place in an environment organized by areas, where children can make their choice. The educator has the role of encouraging and promoting action.
- Situational Pedagogy: it is inspired by non-directive pedagogies. The early childhood educator may also follow undifferentiated practices, not identified with a specific method. Educators must start from what the child already knows and value their knowledge as the foundation of new learning, as well as to stimulate the participation of all children.

Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education

In Portugal, there is no compulsory national curriculum to be followed in Early Childhood Education. There is a set of Curricular Guidelines created in a first phase in 1997 and renewed with some changes in 2016. Both are based on the Outlining Law on Early Childhood Education, Law no. 5/97, of 10th February. Early Childhood education became part of the Portuguese education system as the first stage of primary education in the process of lifelong education, complementing the educational action of the family, with which it should establish close cooperation, favoring the training and the balanced development of the child, with a view to its full insertion in society as an autonomous, free and supportive human being. The CGPSE review those guidelines in force since 1997, highlighting that early childhood education settings do not serve to classify children because the rhythm of child development differs and what matters is their progress. Assessing the progress of children is to compare each one to itself in order to situate the evolution of their learning over time; the assessment must be “formative”; the child should be involved, describing what he did, how and with whom, how he could continue, improve or do otherwise. The definition of desirable or expected objectives will eventually be used as a reference to situate and describe what the child has learned and the evolution of that learning, or also to alert the early childhood educator of the need to reformulate his intervention, thus encouraging the progress of every child. A summative assessment that quantifies or establishes levels of learning does not fit into this formative assessment approach. The new CGPSE define which skills must be acquired by children between the age of 3 and the entry into compulsory schooling – since early childhood education is considered as “the first stage of basic education in the process of lifelong education.”

There are some differences between the CGPSE created in 1997 and the guidelines published in 2016. For example, a new field of Physical Education is created,

when in the 1997 document only motor expression was mentioned. Other new terms appear, such as “Artistic Education” (Visual Arts, Drama Roleplay / Theater, Music and Dance), when formerly the reference was to dramatic, plastic and musical expression. The three major “content areas” are maintained – Personal and Social Training Area, Area of Expression and Communication (it ranges from “the construction of mathematical concepts and the relations between them” to oral language and approach to writing, and the World Knowledge Area (where “awareness of the various sciences” happens). However, there is a greater exploitation and reinforcement of the integrative perspective of all areas. These guidelines are to be adapted according to the characteristics of the groups of children that the educator has in front of him and of their diversity.

The pedagogical component of early childhood education is free in both public and private institutions. The family is given the first role in the education of the children, but its universality for children who are 4 years old is recognized. Early childhood education settings are understood as institutions that provide services aimed at the development of the child, providing educational activities and family support activities. The main aims of the early childhood education are: (i) to promote the personal and social development of the child based on experiences of democratic life, from a perspective of education for citizenship; (ii) to encourage the integration of the child in diverse social groups, respecting the plurality of cultures, favoring a progressive awareness of their role as a member of society; (iii) to contribute to equal opportunities in access to school and learning success; (iv) to stimulate the overall development of each child, respecting their individual characteristics, incorporating behaviors that favour significant and diversified learning; (v) to develop expression and communication through the use of multiple languages as means of relation, information, aesthetic awareness and understanding of the world; (vi) to awaken curiosity and critical thinking; (vii) to provide each child with conditions of well-being and safety, particularly in the area of individual and collective health; (viii) to proceed to the screening of maladjustments, deficiencies and precociousness, promoting the best orientation and referral of the child; (ix) to encourage the participation of families in the educational process; and (x) to establish relationships of effective collaboration with the community (Adapted from Law no. 5/97, of 10th February (Outlining Law on Early Childhood Education).

The new CGPSE devote special attention to continuity and educational transitions, since at before initiating their early childhood education children have already had a developmental and learning path in a family or institutional context that is fundamental to be continued. Silva points out that “o desenvolvimento das potencialidades de cada criança no Jardim-de-infância criará condições para que

tenha sucesso na transição para o 1º ciclo do ensino básico, numa perspetiva de continuidade das aprendizagens que já realizou” [the development of the potential of each child in the Early Childhood Centre will create the conditions for her to succeed in the transition to the first cycle of basic education, in a perspective of the continuity of the learning that she has already done] (Silva, 2016, p. 6). The foundations and educational principles they present, together with the development of learning as inseparable aspects, always have the child as the subject of the educational process, responding to their needs in an articulated construction of knowledge. The educational intentionality of the early childhood educator, through observation, registration, documentation, planning and continuous evaluation is essential, in a continuous process of articulation and communication. A good organization of the educational environment of the educational establishment and the children’s room, as well as the relations and interactions, are very evident in the CGPSE.

Conclusion

Early Childhood Education has already come a long way in Portugal, with advances and regression, however, there is still much to grow and evolve. To this end, it is essential to continue the research that has been done in this area in order to favour its development. The training of Early Childhood Educators has to provide new teachers prepared to work with the new children of the 21st century. Educators of the 21st century must be prevented from using 19th century pedagogies for children of the 21st century (Nóvoa, 2005). The new educator of the 21st century must be more complete, more global, a true citizen of the world, more multifaceted and must know well the new pedagogies that best adapt to the children he faces year after year. An educator who works together with society, with the family, with children and with new learnings that should be promoted holistically (Silva, 2016).

The child development takes place as a whole, in which the cognitive, social, cultural, physical and emotional dimensions intertwine and act together. Besides, their learning is carried out in a proper way, assuming a holistic configuration, both in the attribution of meanings in relation to the world, and in the understanding of the relationships established with others in the construction of their identity.

The origins of the Early Childhood Education in Portugal can be identified through characteristics that are specific to it: the historical independence of the other sectors of the school system; the intervention of several competing or complementary services; the integration into communities; the strong link with

parents and, for a long time, a specific continuous training for Early Childhood Educators (Castanheira, 2013). The historical evolution of Childhood Education always happened between the need for a social response to the children that must be freed from the mothers, so that they can be used, in complete freedom, in an immediate productive work, and the reception in private structures with pedagogical concerns for children of privileged strata who have been able to construct for their use the appropriate structures for the treatment they want for their children in order to maximize their potential. This level of education has been widespread both in the name of the liberation of parents and in the name of effective training, since to democratize it is necessary to gather and care for individuals from an early age.

References

- Cardona, M. J. (1997). *Para a História da Educação de Infância em Portugal: O discurso oficial 1834.1990*. Porto: Porto Editora.
- Cardona, M. J. (2006). *Educação de Infância. Formação e Desenvolvimento Profissional*. Chamusca: Edições Cosmos.
- Castanheira, L., (2006). *A Escola Infantil de Bragança: 1915–1934 Modernidade pedagógica e as 1as. Práticas de Educação de Infância no interior*. Dissertação de Mestrado. Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Lisboa.
- Castanheira, L., (2013). *Para a História da Educação de Infância em Portugal: O caso de Bragança (1934–1986)*. Tese de Doutoramento em Ciências da Educação. Lisboa: Instituto da Educação da Universidade de Lisboa.
- Gomes, J. F. (1986). *A Educação Infantil em Portugal (2ª Edição)*. Coimbra: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica. Imprensa de Coimbra.
- Gomes, J. F. (1986). *A Educação Infantil em Portugal: Acheegas para a sua história*. Coimbra: Livraria Almedina.
- Gomes, J. F. (1995). *Para a História da Educação em Portugal*. Porto: Porto Editora.
- Lino, D. (2007). O modelo pedagógico reggio emília. In J. Oliveira-Formosinho, (org.) Lino, D., & Niza, S. (Ed.), *Modelos curriculares para a educação de infância (3ª edição actualizada ed., (pp. 93–121)*. Porto: Porto Editora.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1999). História, ideias e filosofia básica. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman, *As Cem Linguagens da Criança: A Abordagem de Reggio Emilia na Educação da Primeira Infância* (pp. 59–104). Porto Alegre: Artmed.
- Nóvoa, A. (2005). *Evidentemente. Histórias da Educação*. Lisboa: Edições Asa.
- Sampaio, J. S. (1968). *O Ensino Infantil em Portugal*. Boletim Bibliográfico e Informativo

Nº. 8. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Centro de Investigação Pedagógica.

Silva, I., Marques, L., Mata, I., & Rosa, M. (2016). *Orientações Curriculares para a Educação Pré-escolar*. Lisboa: Ministério da Educação/ Direção – Geral de Educação (DGE).

Silva, I., (1997). *Orientações Curriculares para a Educação Pré-escolar*. Lisboa: Ministério da Educação/ Direção – Geral de Educação (DGE).

Vasconcelos, T. (2003). *Educação de Infância em Portugal: Situação e Contextos numa Perspectiva de Promoção de Equidade e Combate à Exclusão*. Porto: Edições Asa.