


## ARTICLE

# Educational relationship at the daycare as a form of positive parenting: contributions from an ethnography in daycare centers in Portugal

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### ABSTRACT

The article is based on an exploratory ethnographic observation in four daycare centers serving children from 3 months to 3 years old in Porto, Portugal. The roadmap for ethnographic observation were the principles of *positive parenting*. As psychiatrists, concerned with the intergenerational transmission of disorders that affect mental health from childhood onwards, we focus on the interactions of kindergarten teachers and education assistants with children. The aim was to broaden the scope of positive parenting and highlight the importance of its principles in the relationship between education professionals and young children in daycare. The main results highlight that the principles of positive parenting — *knowing*, *protecting* and *dialoguing* with the child — are, in general, present in the daycare centers, although not explicitly stated, and vary according to the educational environment of each daycare center, which is permeable to the children's social background.

### KEYWORDS

positive parenting; daycare centers; primary prevention; intergenerational disorders.

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## A RELAÇÃO EDUCATIVA NA CRECHE COMO FORMA DE PARENTALIDADE POSITIVA: CONTRIBUTOS DE UMA ETNOGRAFIA EM CRECHES DE PORTUGAL

### RESUMO

O artigo baseia-se numa observação etnográfica exploratória em quatro creches acolhendo crianças dos 3 meses aos 3 anos na cidade do Porto, em Portugal. O roteiro da observação etnográfica e da escrita foram os princípios da *parentalidade positiva*. Sendo psiquiatras, preocupados com a transmissão intergeracional dos transtornos que afetam a saúde mental a partir da infância, focamo-nos nas interações dos adultos com as crianças — educadoras de infância e auxiliares de educação. O objetivo foi alargar o âmbito da parentalidade positiva e evidenciar a importância dos seus princípios na relação entre profissionais de educação e crianças pequenas na creche. Salientam-se, como principais resultados, que os princípios da parentalidade positiva — *conhecer*, *proteger* e *dialogar* com a criança — estão, de uma maneira geral, presentes nas creches, ainda que não explicitados, e apresentam variações segundo o ambiente educativo de cada instituição, o qual é permeável ao meio social de origem das crianças.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

parentalidade positiva; creches; prevenção primária; transtornos intergeracionais.

## LA RELACIÓN EDUCATIVA EN LA GUARDERÍA COMO FORMA DE PARENTALIDAD POSITIVA: APORTES DE UNA ETNOGRAFÍA POR GUARDERÍAS DE PORTUGAL

### RESUMEN

El artículo se basa en una observación etnográfica exploratoria en cuatro guarderías para niños de 3 meses a 3 años en Oporto, Portugal. El guion de observación fueron los principios de la *parentalidad positiva*. Como psiquiatras, preocupados por la transmisión intergeneracional de los trastornos que afectan la salud mental desde la infancia, nos enfocamos en las interacciones de los profesionales de la educación infantil y asistentes de educación con los niños. El objetivo era ampliar el alcance de la parentalidad positiva y resaltar la importancia de sus principios en la relación entre los profesionales de la educación y los niños en las guarderías. Los principales resultados ponen de manifiesto que los principios de parentalidad positiva — *conocer*, *proteger* y *dialogar* con el niño — están, en general, presentes en las guarderías, aunque no se declaren explícitamente, y varían según el entorno educativo de cada guardería, que es permeable al entorno social de origen de los niños.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

parentalidad positiva; guarderías; prevención primaria; trastornos intergeneracionales.

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Since 1974, my professional work as a psychiatrist has been undertaken in doctor's offices, clinics, psychiatric hospitals, congresses, and seminars, and I have written two books. In my clinical work, I cared for people who had life-altering disturbances, such as depression, delinquency, schizophrenia, sociopathy, drug use, difficulties in family and social relations, and that contributed to biological illnesses in later stages of life (Menahem, 1992).

For a psychiatrist, these disturbances were learned and grasped through parental figures and the surrounding environment from a very young age (Schiff and Day, 1970), thus configuring intergenerational disturbances. As Winterhoff (2011, p. 60, our translation) affirms, "[...] the child psyche is, first and foremost, formed by the perception that the child has of the corresponding adult as a limit of her own individuality."

These disturbances allowed me to look with greater emphasis at education and the period of childhood, which is a long phase in life dependent on interpersonal relations, social environments, culture, and institutions. By shifting thinking to education,<sup>2</sup> it became evident that the *creche* [nursery] is the focus of my interest.<sup>3</sup> I came to look carefully at these spaces that offer great potential for the development of children from a young age, because it is in this context that a child's basic physical and relational needs are cared for by adult educators and it is where children highly precociously establish social relations. This phase of life, from 0 to 3 years of age, establishes the biopsychological base needed for a healthy structuring of personality. For this reason, the *locus* of the study shifted to nursery schools, turning to the principles of positive parenting (PP) to guide reading their practices. These principles, which are inspired by the rights of children and the conception of children as social actors, were formulated to promote a parental relationship based on good treatment. In this study, their scope is broadened to educational professionals. Thus, the objective of this study is to reveal the pertinence of these principles for interpreting and expanding the relationship of educational professionals with young children in nursery schools.

1 In this paper, the use of writing in the first person singular is justified by the fact that it is an ethnography, to which is added the fact that the researcher has a great relation of exteriority with the context of observation. This is the research of a doctoral student in Education Sciences, whose basic training and occupation is psychiatric medicine. It is the nature of ethnography that the ethnographer is involved in data collection and writing in a very overt way, so the use of the first person is justified. The second author is the scientific advisor of the research in Education Sciences, in which this article is inserted, having, in this article, been responsible namely for orientation and "Writing – Review & Editing."

2 Doctoral student in Education Sciences.

3 Translator's note: the names used for institutions of early childhood education differ by country and region. In this article, the Portuguese word *creche* will be translated as "nursery school" or simply "nursery". The text makes clear the children who attended each facility and their operations.

In this shift from clinical intervention to an educational interrogation, and in the broadening of the principles of the PP to the realm of action of educational professionals, I attribute a central place to the adults who relate professionally with children: teachers and assistants who,<sup>4</sup> in addition to the parents themselves, constitute parental figures.<sup>5</sup> This parental status results from the daily existence of children in their lives, in their comings and goings from home to nursery and back home. For this reason, the teachers and assistants are also strategic educators of fathers and mothers and can conduct informal parental education on a daily basis.

## POSITIVE PARENTING

The theoretical references concerning parenthood arose in the United States with Benedect in a psychological and psychoanalytical approach that also considers more serious psychopathologies of the parental relationship (França, 2013), and later became a transdisciplinary concept (Martin, 2012). The anthropological, sociological, and legal approaches understand parenthood and the parental function within the framework of multiple relations of kinship, going beyond biological ones. Using as examples other peoples and systems of kinship studied by anthropology, sociology, and law, they examine parenthood in contemporary Western society, in the framework of the dynamics of conjugality and of discontinuities introduced between biological filiation and affective one.

Parenthood has also assumed an important place in policies regarding family and protection for childhood since the enactment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CDC, in the Portuguese acronym) in 1989 (UNICEF, 2019), from which emerged three new interlinked concepts that are anchored to the CDC and to the principle that children's interest must be given priority: *PP, responsabilidade parental e criança ator social* [parental responsibility and child social actor] (Daly, 2006). As a contemporary concept in Europe, PP is consecrated in the report of the conference of European ministers responsible for family issues organized by Daly (2006) and which are entitled "*La Parentalité Positive dans l'Europe contemporaine. Evolution de la parentalite: Enfants aujourd'hui, parents demain*". See, in this regard, the publication of the European report coordinated by Pecnik (2006) about parenting in Europe.

I identify in PP a set of guidelines designed to permeate relations between any adults and children, and which steer the relations to the field of health, suitability, and coherence, to help avoid psychological and emotional disturbances.

According to Pothet (2015, p. 97, our translation),

4 Translator's note: in this text, the Portuguese words "educadoras" e "auxiliares" are translated as "teachers" and "assistants", respectively. This is not an effort to specify the professional categories, which become clear through the descriptions provided by the ethnography.

5 Parental figures, in the lay sense, are all of those who, with and without a kinship relationship, are engaged with children on a daily basis.

The sudden preeminence of this topic [of PP] and its institutional origin lead us to question the place occupied by children, their protection, and the interest in defining a reference for policies to support parenthood. However, it should be noted that the concept of the interest of children does not overlap that of protecting the child, which is much more restrictive. While the latter reminds us of the arguments about the concept of risk [...], the former conceives of a child as a 'bearer of rights'.

The institutional recognition of a "child as a subject of rights" dates back to 1992, when the European Parliament issued a Letter on the Rights of the Child. In 1996, Europe adopted a convention on "the rights of children" and continues to take positions in the field through strategies, programs, and recommendations like the one already mentioned issued by the Council of Ministers in 2006, about the promotion and dissemination of the concept of PP.

In sum, and according to the document of the organization *Save the Children* in its Spanish version ("*quieroquetequiero*"), PP and good treatment are guided by three fundamental pillars: *knowing*, *protecting* and *dialoging*, and include 10 principles that will guide the presentation of the reality observed at nurseries:

1. Children have the right to suitable care and guidance;
2. PP is based on: knowing, protecting and dialoging;
3. Emotional ties should be determinant;
4. Affection should be openly demonstrated so that children feel loved;
5. Norms and limits are important: they give children security;
6. Children should participate in decision making processes and feel responsible;
7. Adults can sanction children when they behave badly, although not just in any way;
8. Abuse, insults, threats, and shouting are not effective or suitable for children;
9. Conflicts can be resolved without violence;
10. For children to be good, parents must also be good (Fundación Save the Children, n.d.).

I understand that guiding relations among the significant adults in the lives of the children (parents, teachers) and between them and children by PP principles and the rights of children can avoid the attitudes that cause children to become ill, and are measures for primary prevention. In the case of healthcare, "[...] primary prevention means decreasing the incidence of emotional disorders by reducing stress and promoting conditions that increase competence and coping skills." (Albee, Joffe and Dusenbury, 1988, p. 25).

## NURSERIES IN PORTUGAL: A BRIEF PRESENTATION

Nurseries in Portugal are regulated by the Ministry of Solidarity and Social Safety under Portaria [Decree] nº 262/2011 (Ministério da Solidariedade e da

Segurança Social, 2011), and may be for- or not-for-profit institutions. Article 4 of the measure highlights families and children in the formulation of their objectives. Given that they are dedicated to very young children dependent on adults and their families, the function of guardianship is established, in particular to allow the conciliation of family and professional life. They also have the function of promoting the development of children and providing the care and for the needs that are inherent to this phase of life (art. 5).

This dual orientation of the nursery allows thinking of it as an educational institution located between ambivalences, according to Cardona (1997): nurseries are located between family, education, and the school; between an assistentialist and educational conception; and they serve as “pre-schools”, with special attention given to cognitive development and a concept more focused on the specific characteristics of children, valuing their socio-emotional development; they must also balance working with a concept based on the psychological characteristics of children and another focused on sociological characteristics.

These ambivalences combine with another that shapes the nursery as a response to a need of parents, particularly active couples with work and other responsibilities. In Portugal, nurseries are not part of the educational system, focused on formal education. Thus, the support nurseries provide to helping parents fulfil their responsibilities, rights and duties is present in the very concept of the nursery, found in article 3 of the Decree. In response to a primordial need of children and adults — protection and guardianship during parents’ working hours —, it is understood to be a right of the child. In this sense, article 5 of the CDC and article 18 (points 2 and 3) determine the right of children to their natural caregivers and that these have the right to conditions to meet their responsibilities and duties in relation to children when they cannot take care of them.

## METHODOLOGY

As Tillard (2011, p. 36, our translation) affirms, “[...] the approximation to people whom you want to know in their way of life is at the heart of data collection in ethnography.”. For this reason, the approximation needs to become a presence, which is a condition subjacent to ethnographic research. The duration of the presence supports the patient work of collecting and registering data, and the apprehension of the actions observed in their specific cultural and social context and from the point of view of the actors. This is particularly important in dense contexts of actors, actions, and meanings, as are educational contexts, in which the formal and informal dimensions of education interweave to give texture to the observable environment.

Preparing an ulterior presence in nursery schools, over prolonged time and space, in line with the ethnographic methods, I engaged in an exploratory phase of observation and recording at four “sites”. More than a “walk through the site”, common to ethnography (Silva, 2003, p. 100, our translation), it was a walk between similar sites, the nurseries that constituted the entire space of investigation. Moving between the nurseries, I inserted myself in educational contexts that were

completely unknown to me as a person and as a psychiatrist. Through a presence at each nursery, a limited physical and social space (Marques *et al.*, 2016) and in a time frame in keeping with the research phase in course,<sup>6</sup> I conducted direct observation of the routines at the nurseries, and of the interactions between adults, between adults and children and among the children, trying to capture the educational reality of those contexts, to which I was a stranger and would later abandon.

Given that “The practice of ethnographic research [is not] without any theoretical and or methodological foundation [...] the relation between theory and ethnography is characterized as an intertwined relationship in which a distinction is not possible.” (Mattos, 2011, p. 37, our translation). Thus, the collection of information permitted by the direct observation worked with a theoretical lens that accompanied me and justified my presence, the educational principles of PP and their pertinence in educational contexts.

Even if, in the ethnographic approach, “[...] the greatest presumption [is] that the place of the participant is as an agent of research.” (Mattos, 2011, p. 32, our translation), in the process of analysis I speak of myself and of others through me: of the young children, the teachers, the assistants, the physical context of the nursery, the routines, and a bit about the parents. I try to capture the experience of the children and, if I speak for them, it is through their physical and emotional manifestations, based on the interactions that were established with them. I add that my presence in the nurseries never went unnoticed, and if I did not become native, I also did not feel like an intruder. As an educational environment markedly polarized between female adults (the teachers and assistants) and the small children, I presented myself as a male of advanced age.

In the exploratory investigation, I had access to four private nurseries in the city of Porto, in Portugal, which are designated as CrA, CrB, CrC, and CrD. CrA is located in an urban area. It is attended by middle class children whose parents are professionals, teachers, and upper-level civil servants, and its operations are completely paid for by the children’s parents. Nurseries CrB, CrC and CrD are located in municipal low-income housing projects located in the periphery of the city and belong to local social centers. They have collaboration agreements with the Portuguese state, through the Ministry of Social Security, to guide their operations, allowing the families, many of whose members are unemployed or exercising precarious and poorly paid occupations, to have support of the state for the children to attend the nursery school. These nurseries are attended by children who live in the neighborhood and by children who do not, but whose parents work

6 During the movement of an exploratory character, of ethnographic inspiration, I remained at each nursery full time for three days, totaling 12 days (96 hours) of observation: CrA: from April 30 to May 7, 2019, in classes with children from 4 months to 1 year, 1 to 2 years and 2 to 3 years; CrB: from May 15 to May 17, 2019, in classes for children from 3 months to 1 year, 1 to 2 years and 2 to 3 years; CrC: from May 22 to May 24, 2019, in classes for children from 5 to 12 months, 12 months to 2 years and 2 to 3 years; CrD: from May 27 to May 29, 2019, in classes for children from 4 to 12 months and 1 to 2 years.



nearby. The unequal proportion of these two populations, a variable at CrB, CrC and CrD, contributed to a greater or lesser internal cultural homogeneity and to the differences in the form of operation in terms of relations between educational professionals and the parents. This important educational issue will be returned to, among others, in the final considerations, as an emerging problematic, because “[...] each ethnographic study gives place to results through which emerge new questions [...]” (Tillard, 2011, p. 17, our translation).

My entrance and permanence in the nurseries followed a regularity: after the term of acceptance was signed, on the first day, a welcoming was conducted by the administration, which presented the institution, and explained its history and institutional ties. A walk was taken through the spaces, and I presented to the teachers and assistants who I am and what I would do.

On the following days, I was at each nursery before it opened and at the end of the day to observe the arrival and departure of the children, the form of welcoming and departure, moments at which a direct relationship is established with the parental figures.

After entering the nursery, I would go to the classrooms where the children are found, preferentially the younger ones, and then I followed the daily activities, one room per day, learning their routines, observing the relationships between the adults and the children and the interactions among them. In the field notes I highlight routines, relations, episodes, and regularities, with a look anchored in the recognized aspects of psychology of human development and the principles of PP.

This, for me, involved exploring and discovering the reality of the world — somewhat like a young child. I used the principles of PP previously presented to organize the observations, analyze the data, and weave interpretations. To each one of the principles were associated questions to observe. That is, questions that would allow revealing in the reality of the interactions whether the principles were found or not at each one of the nurseries and that, given space considerations, will not be presented. In the presentation that follows, some of these principles were grouped because they are similar to each other and were combined in the field notes to compose the categories of analysis.

## THE RIGHT TO CARE AND PROPER SUPERVISION — PRINCIPLE 1

The principle presented in this category is based on article 6 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and is centered on the concept of *care*, which, in turn, integrates the *specific needs of the child*. These concepts define the contemporary conception of children as beings in development, who have their own needs, the satisfaction of which constitutes a right. The law establishes that these needs, which are responded to through the care realized by adults, are physical-biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional and that improper or insufficient care for the children give way to different forms of risk and danger (DGS, 2004).

The routines of the nurseries are similar to each other, they are organized in response to the needs of the children who they take in each day and include food, rest, and hygiene, as well as cognitive and socio-emotional needs, such as playing,



singing, and games that contribute to their development and promote their socialization with their peer group.

The children arrive in the morning, usually before their parents go to work, beginning at 7 a.m. and are taken home after 5 p.m. This daily coming and going marks the moments of the beginning and end of the activities at the nurseries. At times, the nursery serves the population of the residential zone where it is located (CrD). Other times, it is also sought by parents because it is close to their place of work (CrB and CrC), or the choice is made exclusively by their restricted social recruitment (CrA). The classrooms are organized according to the children's age with one teacher and two assistants for each group of eight children. The interior spaces are decorated and colored with designs of animals, plants, sun, moon, clouds, and themes related to nature. At times, the designs exhibited were made by the children and at CrA, even by parents who are invited to participate. The rooms are large and have the furniture needed to undertake the main activities: cribs and mattresses for sleeping, pillows for sitting on, tables and chairs sized for children for the works of play and meals.

The spaces are clean, organized and air conditioned. The nurseries visited are one-store buildings, separated from the external environment by fencing and have an outdoor space. Various toys are available to the children, as well as books that they can access without intervention by the teachers or assistants, which leaves them free to choose their toys, although there are also suggested activities, depending on the age of the children.

*Arrive, deliver the children and have them enter: kisses, hugs and waves... holding hands*

Some children hug the person who brought them, others give kisses, others simply wave and give themselves up to an assistant, who also greeted the children. At times, they hug them, the youngest are held on a lap and enter the rooms, the older ones are held by hand, some exchange hugs, the oldest simply run into their rooms. (CrC)

In the attitude of the parents upon leaving their children with the educators and even in the exchange of hugs and kisses, the children register in their minds that their parents are not abandoning them, that there is a link with the educators, who have their parents' complete trust, as well as reinforcement of the ties with other people, a factor that helps construct a healthy personality. This is a very important moment and the norm with which it occurs says a lot about the pedagogical culture of each nursery.

*Play [...] depends on being safe and secure<sup>7</sup>*

The teacher shows works to be painted with pens and guides them about what to do and how to do it. A girl and the assistant play with the other children.

<sup>7</sup> Title of the field note in reference to Gopnik (2016, p. 166).

Three boys play alone. Two girls play with montages. Everyone is calm, they play and paint. (CrD, 1 to 2 year olds)

The children are constantly stimulated through stories, songs, and music with children's themes. At CrB, there are mirrors on the walls at the height of the children. The CrA and CrD conduct activities of recognition of animals (I watched a theatrical skit at CrA and an activity with a photo album of animals). At CrD, activities of recognition of the parts of the human body are conducted, the children are also stimulated to interact with each other and recognize each other with photographs.

*Who am I... who is he or she... they are us*

The teacher distributes everyone's photo, for them to identify each one. I took the photo of a boy who was absent, I showed it to them, and they said: "He did not come to school today". Each child took a photo and showed it to the others, they would say the name of their colleagues. The level of accuracy was high. (CrD, 1 to 2 years old)

I realized that this experience taught about social relations and recognition of each other was being stimulated. The photos of those present were placed on a board. I attributed important meaning to this activity, through which the image of each one would be fixed in the minds of all.

*Food as care*

A six-month old child cries, is placed on the assistant's lap, who gives her soup softly singing a children's song. Two assistants finish feeding two other children. They clean them and change their diapers and place them in cribs. They come back and get two more children who are playing, place them in the feeding chair and give them soup. Always playing and singing children's songs. (CrB, 6 months to 1 year)

The food served to the children is healthy, fruits, soups, juices, with no sugar or salt. These moments are coordinated by the teachers and assistants, who feed those who still do not eat alone. They encourage motor development according to age: stimulating autonomy in feeding, in hygiene and in walking. When necessary, the teachers and assistants immediately clean the babies.

I observed, in this relationship, an association with parental care, combined with professional attitudes, in a context organized to give the children the security of "being cared for" by others who take them in. They offer them what is most important for their psycho-emotional development and to fulfil their basic needs for care, food, protection, and love.

*Sleep... a needed rest*

With the feeding ritual completed, they return to the toy room and begin a ritual of changing diapers, cleaning and preparing for sleep. The nursery is al-

ready in perfect order, with dim light, closed curtains, cribs lined, the sound of lullabies. While one is being changed, the others continue to play normally. Thus, the ritual continues [...], some cry as if they do not want to sleep, perhaps because they prefer to keep playing and do not want to be changed. (CrA, 6 months to 1 year)

After lunch, the children's level of tiredness is perceptible as well as that of the educators and the time to sleep arrives. Since arrival in the morning, the activities continue dynamically one after the other, the body is in action: they run, jump, hug, push, sit, get up, go and come back to the educators' laps, lie down, roll, get up, sing, laugh, and cry. Thus, the psychological, physical, and emotional functions are in action in a continuous flow of stimulus and human relations between the adults and children and among each other.

The educators caress the children, look at them affectionately, softly touch their faces, arms, legs and feet, care for them until they are all sleeping. After lunch, the assistant remains until the teacher returns. I reflect on all that I watched and conclude that this care can help providing the true foundation for the organization of healthy personalities and happy human beings.

*What are stories for? They serve to lose the fear of monsters*

The teacher opens a book with designs of monsters and begins to tell a story as she turns the pages. The objective is the demystification of monsters, because one child had told her that she was scared to sleep because she saw monsters. She gradually began to interact with the children and with the story. In it, the animals are bears, dinosaurs, which take shape in the shadow of the room with the objects that are there. In the story, the monster that was under the bed was a sock, in another, it was a brother, but the brother who came to see if he was sleeping and brought him a doll for company. The teacher asked: "Who has a doll to sleep with?", "Me... me...". They all did. He continues to sleep, and the brother came to see if he was snoring. She asks: "Who has a father who snores?", "Me, me...", they all say. The story ended and she asked: "Who liked the story?", "Me, me...". (CrA, 1 to 2 years)

This event created by the teacher was revealing to me and I came to believe that educators also act therapeutically with children. I saw, in this intervention, a very powerful approach to the demystification of mental images that children compose, which, if they are not worked with in this way, can become powerful neurotic symptoms, generating emotional disturbances that make well-being difficult.

These explanations are denominated by psychology as crystallizations of the process, they help fix positive aspects of intervention and correspond to the cure of the process. I was surprised and became convinced that nurseries that have suitable structures and are coherent with children's needs, in association with teachers who are educated in specific contents and have a strong dose of awareness and affection, truly contribute to the construction of healthy human beings.

## KNOWING, PROTECTING AND DIALOGING — PRINCIPLE 2

As I said previously, children are seen today as human beings in development, individualized people, with their own psychology and whose rights are recognized (Rollet, 2013). This new conception, greatly clarified by psychological and clinical knowledge during the twentieth century, should guide the relationship that adults establish with children, because not only are they unique beings, but potential adults (Dencik, 1988), with childhood being a phase of life in which their psyche is structured and their future forged. This is the paradigm that is focused on the intergenerational transmission of disturbances that affect mental health since childhood.

*Hello, hello, pa, pa, pa...*

One girl, with a toy in her hands, began to make a sound.... “Pa, pa...”. The assistant took a telephone and said “Hello, hello, pa, pa”, and handed her the phone saying “Maria, talk to pá, pá...”; she placed the phone to her ear and repeated twice, “Pá... pá...”, then she throws the phone on the ground and continues to play as she wants. (CrA, 6 months to 1 year)

Since we are young, we learn about the world around us by looking and listening, and through relations. Learning to speak is one of the most extraordinary conquests of small children. Therefore, it is common for teachers and assistants to stimulate speaking among the children who are in the phase of developing language.

Children also learn by listening to what other children say about how the world functions. It is “learning by observation” (Gopnik, 2016, p. 131, our translation). When this knowledge is taken seriously and practiced by adults, it comes to be a very important factor for parents, educators, families and all those people who validate the health and healthy development of children. According to Gopnik (2016, p. 104-105, our translation) “[...] this type of imitation is very interesting from a perspective of cultural evolution. As we see, when children imitate their caregivers, they show how deeply they understand the finality and meaning of their acts.”.

*Communication among equals*

The assistant shows him the shoe and sock, the child sticks out his foot. A teacher changes and dresses the child and the other feeds it. They all speak with the children, as if they were speaking with adults, about their care, giving commands for feeding, acting with love, the environment is welcoming, there are many forms of care. The teachers, assistants, the food workers, the cleaning personnel, everyone at the nursery are actively involved with the children. (CrD, 6 months to 1 year)

The collaborative climate of adults with children allows them to experience security and trust, which can contribute to the formation of responsible, secure, and friendly human beings. The recourse to language, to describe and give meaning to actions, is also an appreciable factor in psychic development.

The teachers call the children by their real names and stimulate them to call each one of the educators by their names. The dialog is constant, and communication of equal to equal is common, that is, the educators speak with the children as if they were speaking to adults, they do not infantilize them. This posture was revealed at all the nurseries.

*Play... not always alone, not always with someone*

At a certain moment a child goes away from a teacher to play alone, soon another and another come. Seven children are now playing together in a group with the two assistants. One boy is outside the group playing with a small car, alone. (CrB, 6 months to 1 year)

A girl plays alone with a doll, at other times, she was with two other girls in harmony. In the group in which the children freely play on the ground, it is perceived that they have autonomy to play alone, in pairs, or threesomes, and, at the end of the time of the work of play, they clean up all the toys in their proper places and return the tables and chairs. (CrA, 1 to 2 years)

The educators make an effort to integrate the children who isolate themselves too much. Those who even still chose to play alone are left to do so. We believe that this stimulates certain regions of their brain involved with the initiation of the development of autonomy. I perceive that the rights of the children to play alone and their real interests are being respected. This is one more opportunity to experience their autonomy by doing what they want, what is most important to them.

*The need to be held is not always perceived*

After a while, the child tries to hug the assistant, she keeps the child away, and plays clapping hands, he shows that he is sad and insists that he wants to be held, and, for a short time, she puts him on her lap, he is content and soon she gets up, the child goes to the group with the other children... (CrA, 6 months to 1 year)

In this attitude by the assistant, there is certainly the lack of knowledge of the importance for a child to be attended to when he or she is searching for human contact with an expression of attention and love, factors that stimulate emotional and cognitive capacities. This need is shaped as one of the most significant. As a psychiatrist, I know that the lack of security is the basis for human suffering and for the development of psychiatric conditions associated to important suffering (Araújo, 2014).

The second principle of PP establishes that, when adults relate with children, they should respect the premises of knowing, protecting, and dialoging. Physical and emotional states that fragilize children — disease, pain, and others — make them particularly receptive to the acts of affection that provide security. If they do not receive this affection, children can feel insecure and unprotected.

*How do adults signify a child's crying? When crying is poorly responded to*

I perceive, when the soup was being served, a boy of African origin crying since the beginning of the feeding; he was in a crib, standing up, and holding

the side of the crib, he was crying very loudly and shrilly, expressing anger and desperation. The educators were carrying the other children and he was left for last. The boy stayed in his crib until all the others finished and were already cleaned by the educational assistant. [...] Finally the assistant picked him up and took care of him, led him to the sink, washed his hands, took him to the table, placed him in the chair and gave him food, he stopped crying, the teacher was singing as she did this and later put him in the crib to sleep. (CrC, 6 months to 1 year)

Upon reflecting on the scene described, I asked myself if there was possibly a repetition of a pattern of behavior at home with the mother or other people with whom he has conviviality. Is he still in a process of adaptation at the nursery? But, in this case, why wasn't he promptly attended to? These attitudes repeated in this phase of development generate feelings of sadness, fear and anger and will be recalled in adult life every time a motive stirs his memory, and the attitudes will always be unpleasant. We call this reality intergenerational disturbances, because they originate in the treatment with very young children. I ask myself, in the uncertainty, if, at times, teachers and assistants are incapable of knowing and understanding the children, as if they feel, think, and react to facts according to their personality and development.

*When crying is responded too well*

A boy who was lying down looking at the ceiling began to cry with his arms extended towards the teacher, she looked and smiled at him, signaled for him to get up, she took his fingers and said "Come...come...". He pushes himself and makes an effort to get up, she helps him, he stands up, she holds him, the two are smiling and walking around the room celebrating. (CrC, 6 months to 1 year)

A child cries in the crib, the assistant immediately gets up and goes to his side... "What is it handssoooooome?... come... I'm here..."; she takes him from the crib and places him in the bed to change his diapers, he cries more intensely, is soon in a clean diaper and stops crying, she brings him to the group. (CrA, 6 months to 1 year)

An intervention with love, companionship, complicity, and support is the basis for the structuring of a healthy personality. According to Araújo (2014), attendance in real time to the needs of a child will have her feel loved and important, with which she will structure her concept of life as — I am important. A child is a being in complete development of his or her psyche, which does not develop in time spontaneously. To develop, a child turns to the coherent and suitable attitudes of parents, teachers, and educators, and they turn to the standards of the culture and of the educational process. For Winterhoff (2011, p. 12, our translation) "[...] daily education [...] can only have a complete effect, placing children on the right path, if at the same time there is a concern that their state of psychic development is at a level suitable to the age."

*When children are troublesome and require educational intervention from an adult*

An 11-month old boy, after receiving food, returns to play with the others, always goes to the door, and comes back. The assistant told me that he is very intense, that he was very impulsive, he wanted everything for himself, he would often leave a toy on the ground and go to another child and take their toy. The assistant was always speaking with him, telling him that the toy belonged to the other, that he did not have the right to take it...she told him to return the toy to the other and finally he did it and they played together. (CrB, 6 months to 1 year)

I observe, in this attitude of the assistant at the CrB, an intuitive form of acting and ask myself about her specific knowledge that allows her to act with behaviors and attitudes of this kind, and to recognize that each person has their context, their specific differences in forms of being, responding to stimuli and relating with life's issues. Identifying a behavior appropriate for the age and psychological structure of the child makes possible suitable interventions by adults. In this case, she resolves with guidance, information, and limits, helping the child to understand and change his attitude. These interventions can function as a guide in the mind of this child at any moment in which he perceives he is in a similar situation.

*The education, attention and communication needed with children and parents*

An 11-month-old child has difficulty moving and stays in the same place for a long time, until an assistant helps him change place. While the other children eat, she watches and at the end she is able to eat. According to the assistant, she has difficulty eating at home, and in the nursery, by seeing the other children eating, she is also able to eat, even if she is listening to the song "Mariana, Mariana" sung by Laura. (CrB, 6 months to 1 year)

I am curious to observe the various temperaments and personalities that emerge in children during their activities. Some behave as dominators, set the rules, and others remain submissive and simply obey. They run, push, pull, take toys from others. They join together, run together, speak, cry, run, caress each other. Some hit the others if something doesn't please them. Some prefer to remain alone. (CrC, 6 months to 1 year)

Given the human complexity found at CrB, I asked myself about the education of the adults who work with the children and that provides them the tools to address various situations each day and contribute to the bio-psychological and social development of the children. These professionals must develop astute observation of the children: to see if they are well fed, washed, rested, and extend their observation to the families, to diagnose the problems of each family. For this reason, the relationship with the family members is so important.

It is clear, at many moments, as in that reported at CrC, that the children are presenting behavior that indicate a lack of protection, guidance, and limits. They are being authentic, in the natural expression of the educational standards of



the social context where the nursery is inserted and that indicates it is economically vulnerable. I ask myself what education the teachers and assistants have had to learn to act properly with the children who present behavior of this type and about how they interact with the parents to establish educational coherence.

Performing a precocious compensatory educational function, the nursery constitutes an educational environment par excellence, and an opportunity for informal parental education in the interaction with the educators, whether this is foreseen in the nursery's pedagogical plan or not. Paradoxically, the distance between the parents and educators was more accentuated at this nursery, perhaps because the conflict could take place more easily given that all the parents were from the same neighborhood.

## THE EMOTIONAL BOND IS DETERMINANT AND AFFECTION SHOULD BE OPENLY DEMONSTRATED – PRINCIPLES 3 AND 4

These principles establish that affection should be exhibited in an expressive manner so that children are and feel loved, because “[...] childhood and intimacy go together [...]” (Gopnik, 2016, p. 20, our translation). In the categories already presented, manifestations of affection can be seen in the treatment of children. They are treated with kindness, patience, and love, occurring with differing intensity and times at the different nurseries. The time of arrival is what makes CrA most different from the others because the greeting of the children is extended to the families. At this nursery, all are greeted in the same way upon arrival to the space of the nursery to which all belong, to the degree that at the others, although the greeting is warm, a distinction is promoted between the nursery as a space for the children and the family.

Nevertheless, a good indicator of the emotional climate is the fact that, upon arriving at the nurseries, the children do not cry or cling to their parents to not go in, to the contrary, they arrive happy, smiling and eager, indicating that they have no reservations about the space. At times it is the parents who show a dependent attachment, and do not smoothly release the child to establish emotional ties with other caregivers.

### *When the adult depends emotionally on the child*

I observe at my side the arrival of a mother holding a child, when she sees the teacher, she extends herself towards her, opening her arms to the teacher who then holds her. Soon the mother tries to take back the child, but she does not want to go back to the mother, even though she insists on taking the child back by force. The child begins to cry and returns to the teacher's lap. The mother simply watches and, for a while, does not accept this and forces the child to return to her arms. The child starts to cry and throws herself at the teacher, opens her arms, and the teacher takes her. Then she smiles at the mother, who simply watches. (CrB, 6 months to 1 year)

The teacher takes the child and, in this way, stimulates the development of her autonomy, with which the child develops their differentiation. The process of dependence (symbiosis) initiates a resolution (Araújo, 2014). The child experiences a more welcoming reality, with protection, care, love, and human warmth. A child's ability to discern what pleases her most and to make choices is innate in human nature, even as a question of survival. The situation revealed the possessiveness and inappropriate effort by the mother to try to deny the child one of her rights, that of being with whom she feels loved and protected. I think, once again, how much it makes sense that the nursery is also an institution of informal parental education.

*The routine act of affection with the children*

After nap time, the children wake up spontaneously, they are greeted by the educators, who are singing. They continue to sing while changing the diapers. Even if they are not understood, they are always *saying* something, they receive a lot of warmth, they do not cry, they are happy and talkative, they receive kisses and are hugged. The teachers or the assistants change their diapers, pass creams, and put on clean clothes. (CrD, 6 months to 1 year)

The tone of voice used by the adults with the children, particularly with the babies, expresses warmth and affection. At times, the affection of the educators is similar to parental love. It is common for the educators to address the children with affectionate phrases. When it is time to sleep and when they wake up, they are especially greeted with joy and affection. Acts with hugs, kisses and caresses are common among all the teachers in their treatment of the children. As Gopnik (2016, p. 92) emphasizes, "[...] the act of care itself creates the bond [...]" because "[...] human beings respond to the act of care." (*idem*, p. 97, our translation). As we observed, affection is openly demonstrated, and the children feel loved.

## RULES, LIMITS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES – PRINCIPLE 5

The fifth principle of PP establishes that rules and limits are important because they provide security, and are necessary for emotional, cognitive, social, and emotional development. It thus affirms that boys and girls should participate in decision making to feel responsible and to understand and accept rules, limits, and responsibilities.

*Now that we finished this activity, who knows what will be the next one?*

"Now that we finished this activity, who knows what will be the next one?" Many respond in unison and loudly: "Lunch!" Then she asks: "And what will we do first?", they respond: "Go to the bathroom", the teacher exclaims: "That's right! Let's go make pee-pee and wash our hands for lunch. Then we will eat and, if you eat quickly, you can still go to the area for free activities...". They are then told to go to the bathroom, then to the cafeteria, and, when they arrive

there, they all sit at a large table where the soup is already served, they eat alone. The teachers stay close by, but no one needs help. (CrA, 1 to 2 years)

It is around these routines associated to satisfying the needs of the children that they begin to internalize a social order, because they find in the nursery a spatial, temporal, and sequential structure of the actions through which, individually and in group, they are initiated and socialized and that subjects them to the relations that they establish, because, as we mentioned, children are social actors. We perceived a broad understanding among the children of the rules established by the nurseries, and that many children awaited to be fed or cleaned after lunch without crying or complaining or acting out.

*Waking up... returning to the routine*

They are told to not get out of bed, to stay in bed until they are called one by one to change their diapers. They sit on the bed and await their turn, they stretch, laugh towards me, and I laugh back. There are two teachers who care for the children, who are organizing them and sitting on the floor next to them, they speak among each other. We do not understand what they say, however, they understand the instructions and the orders they receive from the teachers, such as: "Sit", "Get up", "If you hit someone, say you are sorry", "Stay in bed", "Sit, do not hit anyone", "Sit there, remain quiet", etc. (CrC, 1 to 2 years)

In this nursery, I often observed that the children's actions generate a firm attitude by the teachers and assistants, and, at times, some impatience, justified by the need to control actions considered improper. As a nursery where most of the children are from the municipal housing project, I ask myself if the standards of family education in that environment would be in dissonance with those at the nursery, and, at times, more permissive. This issue returns to emphasize the importance of dialog and the promotion of focused actions between educators and families.

*When saying "I'm sorry" is not to "ask forgiveness", but to affirm the power of the adult*

I go to the meal space and see the plates at the center of the table and the [children] seated and playing with each other, awaiting bibs and instructions to begin to eat. Ricardo gets out of the chair and the teacher says: "I'm sorry", takes him by the arm and leads him back to the chair. (CrC, 1 to 2 years)

This action by the teacher establishes a limit, requires the child to do what he is told, in a firm voice. It is socialization for obedience, where the rules that emanate from the outside guide collective life and that disregard the educational intention of sixth principle, which is nearly absent in this case and in others. However, I could not fail to note the awkwardness in the way that the relationship developed, the semantic ambiguity with which the teacher engaged the child to have him follow the rule. After all, *sorry* is the word children are taught to say when their actions

harm others. Here the word *sorry* was cloaked in irony, which, at times, is used among adults to affirm power.

*By explaining, adults help children understand*

A boy cries, hits the door wanting to return to the area for free activities, the teacher tells him no, because he had just arrived a short time before. She clarifies that everyone is in the room where she and the assistant are taking caring of them all. She continues to explain that now he would have to be with the others, that it was important to be with them all and that he would be cared for by the two educators. He understood and soon all was well. (CrC, 6 months to 1 year)

It is common for children to cry when they face limits imposed by educators, who sought to make certain limits clear through conversations and explanations about their reasons. As an intervention that is positive in form and content, children will develop their capacity of understanding and will accept the limits properly, which will help construct healthy personalities and conscious and confident human beings.

*At times... an adult is an inappropriate educator*

Upon arrival, a boy in the class where I had been the day before, who was 8-months old, came up to me, extended his arms, gave me his hands, smiled, and opened his arms. The teacher said: "No, Pedro! Sit down!". He looked at me with surprise, I felt in that look a request for protection, however, I noted my impotence to do anything for him (I was a simple ethnographic observer, in this case an atypical adult,<sup>8</sup> because I am a man and because of my age in that context). The teacher explained to me: "He went to manipulate you. I had already told him to sit down. But since he doesn't like to be seated, he went over to you". (CrB, 6 months to 1 year)

I reflected and thought: I do not know enough about this child or this teacher to know if the meaning of that action by the child was strategic or if it was a genuine search for affection, an act that expressed the child's own nature. In terms of the teacher, I felt an improper standard of rigidity. In this structural dynamic, where various motivations arise at each moment, it can be expected that beyond the teachers' own educations, there is, in each one of them, a dose of patience, altruism, dedication, and good will, all of this in proportions that should fulfill the needs for their own survival in the energetically demanding educational context that the nursery is for both the adults and the children. In addition, the children

<sup>8</sup> The concept of "atypical adult" was developed by Corsaro (2005a) to refer to the acceptance of their presence by the part of the children in the ethnographic investigation undertaken with them. In my case, the "a-typicalness" is due to the presence, associated to factors of gender and age.

are in a process of becoming persons and therefore have their own human dignity that should guide the action of the adults.

*Now it's time to clean up*

Lunch time arrived. The order now is to organize the toys, the teacher gets a basket and says: "Now we will clean the room!". The children get the toys and take them to the basket... (CrD, 1 to 2)

*Choose the story*

The painting was finished, they stopped playing and sat on the mattress on the floor, and the teacher says: "Let's go! Choose a story". Most of the children vote for the story "Antônio e a Matilde". (CrD, 1 to 2 years)

*I can already go to the bathroom*

The last boy stands up, gives up his pacifier,<sup>9</sup> she takes it and tells him: "Go pee-pee". The boy goes and soon comes back clean and dressed. I noticed that the children are already aware of and informed about the needs of using the bathroom, they all go spontaneously and together, the girls and the boys; always with the supervision and guidance of the educational assistant. (CrD, 1 to 2 years)

Among the responsibilities attributed to the children was the organization of the toys before they go to another space or activity. Similarly, the stimulus to have the children take decisions, for example, when the teacher asks them to choose the story to be read. Stories are ubiquitous in human culture and to tell stories to children is particularly common. They are also guided by and take responsibility for their personal care.

*Time to leave*

One boy always wants to open the exit door, he is waiting for his parents, cries, sits down, distracts himself with the other children. An assistant enters the room with a bottle to make soap bubbles, and calls the children's attention, they change, they become happier and try to grab the bubbles. This also reveals an intelligent and healthy way to help a child change the focus of something that is generating anxiety and calm down (the soap bubbles blown by the assistant). (CrB, 6 months to 1 year)

At the time of waiting for their parents, the children often become anxious and shout, cry, hit someone, the play stops, it no longer makes sense. It was seen that, at CrB and CrC, these were more controlled moments, generating disturbances among the children, who broke the rules of conviviality that were followed contently in previous moments in the rooms. When this behavior took place, the educators sought to re-establish order, generally with toys or play.

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9 *Chupeta*, in Portugal.

This is a moment that generates the sensation of abandonment common in all humans, when something expected does not happen, and it begins at a very young age, when logical thinking that allows understanding is still not developed. This creates a base for generating a personal sense of not feeling important and the belief that one is not loved, and in more serious cases, an existential position (I am not good) as a psychological standard of life (Araújo, 2014). I noted how much the children suffer while they wait for their parents or guardians when leaving the nursery. Love for parents is something significant and expected. It is known that one of the causes of the main intergenerational difficulties is the sensation of abandonment and rejection. The lack of a bond with parents is as determinant for mental illness as is the existence of the bond for health and happiness (Winnicott, 1980).

Moreover, it is late afternoon, the children are at their limit, there is a perceptible level of anxiety and fatigue. I am aware that the time passed in the nursery for a child is very long, it is longer than the work time of an adult, because the child “arrives at work” before the adults and “leaves work” after them. I also perceive that the sense of belonging to the parents is very strong.

## TO PUNISH CORRECTLY IS TO EDUCATE — PRINCIPLES 7, 8 AND 9

The seventh principle establishes that to punish correctly is to educate, and the eighth affirms that shouting, threats, and physical and other punishments are not acceptable. The rules and limits that guide the action of children in the nursery are strongly tied to specific routines of the institution. It is also in this context of interaction that the emergence of tensions associated to disobedience (in child-adult relations) and to recognition and respect for other-children (in interactions among children) that the issue of punishment raises (ninth principle).

*NO... Santiago, stop upsetting Tomás!*

Tomás and Santiago played with a curtain, one pushing the other. The teacher says: “Santiago, stop upsetting Tomás!”. He stops and leaves the game, and both go play with other toys and they play tag. Then Tomás pushes Maria, she falls on the ground and cries. The teacher comes, raises Maria, and says: “Tomás, come say you are sorry to Maria!”. He looks at her, reflects for some time, says he is sorry, the teacher suggests that he agree not to repeat the behavior, he kisses Maria, and they hug and soon everything is ok. (CrB, 6 months to 1 year)

A positive intervention leads to reflection. The educators act firmly and lovingly, setting limits with information, with which the children certainly learn to resolve their difficulties with coherence and love, thus avoiding a spirit of competition and revenge. It is at the nursery that the children meet others with whom they interact, composing their peer groups. Children are innately educable, which allows them to become social beings, in relation to each other. Socialization is a complex process, in which adults are called to be and develop with the children the “voice of reason”, that is, the values that should permeate democratic collective life: liberty,

equality, solidarity, dialog, responsibility, duty, because, as Vasconcelos (1997, p. 208, our translation) affirmed “Children must learn the rules of democratic living [...]”. The situations and the appeal to the rules of conviviality associated to ethical and democratic civility (the imperative of duty associated to the responsibility to act) are constantly learned in the life of the nursery, because children from 6 months to 3 years old are in a phase in which their sensibility is prone to potentially absorb stimuli coming from psychological, cognitive, and anthropological perspectives, according to their neurological development.

According to Ferreira and Rocha (2016), children do not interiorize passively, they are not limited to simple imitation or to mere reproduction, but are involved with creation and participation in the entire transformation process, appropriating information from the adult world and actively constructing, through the production of cultural changes. It is not by chance that this “interpretive reproduction” (Corsaro, 2005b, p. 31, our translation) takes place socially, and as Bronfenbrenner (1996) reminds us, children are part of an ecological context of development and, for this reason, the discontinuities between the rules of civility of the nursery and those of the social group of belonging of the parents and children should be considered. Once again, I think how important it is that educators develop processes of communication with parents, because of their dual position as adult educators of children and educational partners of the parents (Rocha and Ferreira, 2016).

Similarly to what takes place in the change of a hospital shift, the moments of arrival and departure were unique moments for this transfer of information and knowledge, which constructs a paradigmatic unification in the interest of the children. While this was absolutely achieved at CrA, as it seemed to me, it was more precarious the more the social origin of the children was homogeneous and poor.

## SOME FINAL OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES ABOUT THE LEARNING OF THE ETHNOGRAPHER

I believe that the principles of PP contribute exponentially in human evolution to the creation of healthy individuals, because each being carries an innate potential to develop. However, as Winterhoff (2011) maintains, the fact that this tendency is innate does not guarantee that it will truly take place. To do so, adults must establish with children a relationship based on *knowing*, *protecting*, and *dialoging*.

The principles referred to are generally present in the nurseries, even if they are not explicit. Some are clearer, others are more fragile. In all the nurseries, the schedule was organized to provide care to satisfy the bio-physiological needs of the children. Because of its precocious presence in the life of the human being and its caring dimension, the nursery is a context of great importance in the construction of healthy individuals. Upon observing the *right to care and suitable guidance* in the acts of care, coherent, suitable attitudes can be seen that supported the emotional and psychological health of the children.

Upon moving through the nurseries, I became aware of the energy and the efforts the adults needed to interact healthily with the children, without turning to



discipline and severity, which can be inspired by tiredness. *Adults can punish children when they behave poorly, but, not in just any way.* This raises questions about *knowing* children, about the education needed to fulfill such a huge educational task and also raises the second principle which is: *the good treatment of children depends on the well-being of the adult*, who is also a being with needs.

The nursery is a social space, a context of collective life shared by children and adults, and, for this reason, is permeable to values and norms inherent to life in common. If the children's families are their private environment, the nursery is consistently the context where they learn to live in society. It is intended to be a democratic space where each child should be recognized as a person. It is seen that in keeping with their ages and activities, the children were encouraged to *participate in decision making and that they were given responsibilities*, but that they were also inculcated to obey rules inherent to collective routines and imposed limits. When interactions involved confrontation or conflict, they were discouraged and *resolved without violence*, appealing to the respect for the norm and for the other.

The life of the nurseries absorbed my attention completely, and as is common in ethnographic observation, new questions emerged: what educational curriculum did the teachers and assistants have? What degree of security and satisfaction do they find in their careers? I also perceived nuances in the educational environment of each nursery. The moments when the children wait after they arrive, the moments of waiting for the parents at the end of the day, and the way that the teachers and assistants interacted with the parents were indicators of degrees of good treatment and care that deserve particular observation. I could observe the fathers, mothers, and other caregivers at the moments of arrival and departure and the field notes highlight a sense of joy. The marks of the social groups of belonging of the parents is sensed in the life of the nursery, an issue that merely surfaced and that requires later attention.

Finally, in the field notes, I perceived the opportunities for interaction with the children that I denied myself. My interactions were limited by my role as a researcher who wanted to interfere as little as possible despite the fact that they accepted me, turned to me, and disputed my attention, as is normal and good. The children were curious about my presence, they asked me questions, came to me, and took my notebook. That is, they wanted to know why I was in their room.

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