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## **Teaching at the Daycare Center: care in the education of children from zero to three years of age**

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**ABSTRACT – Teaching at the Daycare Center: care in the education of children from zero to three years of age.** This text exposes issues from an institutional research in progress aimed to investigate the meanings of teaching in the education of children from zero to three years of age. Based on the perspective of research-training, this study adopted meetings every two weeks with infant teachers from different public daycare units as methodological strategies, aiming to construct dialogic spaces, utterance construction and teaching perspectives on being an *infant teacher*. The meanings of teaching are constituted by the ability of recognizing the baby as an *other* that changes and redirects daily actions, such as active listening and comprehension, from the ethical care perspective, which in this research is highlighted in relations involving body care.

**Keywords: Teaching. Care. Education. Children from Zero to Three Years of Age.**

**RESUMO – Docência na Creche: o cuidado na educação das crianças de zero a três anos.** Este texto expõe questões de uma pesquisa institucional em andamento que tem como objetivo investigar os sentidos da docência na educação das crianças de zero a três anos. A partir da perspectiva da pesquisa-formação, adotou como estratégias metodológicas encontros quinzenais com professoras de bebês de diferentes creches públicas, tendo em vista construir espaços de interlocução, construção de enunciados e perspectivas docentes sobre *ser professora de bebês*. Os sentidos da docência constituem-se na capacidade de reconhecimento do bebê como outro que altera e reconduz ações cotidianas, como escuta e compreensão ativas, na perspectiva do cuidado ético, o que se destaca, nesta pesquisa, nas relações que envolvem o cuidado corporal.

**Palavras-chave: Docência. Cuidado. Educação. Crianças Zero a Três Anos.**

## Introduction

This text introduces issues from an institutional research in progress that aims to investigate the meanings of teaching in the education of children from zero to three years of age. Based on the perspective of research-training (Andrade, 2010), ever since the second half of 2015, we have conducted meetings every two weeks with infant teachers from different public daycare centers, aiming to construct dialogic spaces, utterance construction and teaching perspectives on being an *infant teacher*. In this text, we will present discussions that emerged from the first five meetings.

The study focuses on understanding the identity of teachers at daycare centers. For Mantovani and Perani (1999), this is a *profession to be invented*, being historically constituted within domestic, hygiene, health and nutrition domains. In a recent study on the construction of teaching at daycare centers at national level and, specifically, in the reality of Santa Catarina state, Rocha and Batista (2015) state that the medical-hygienist perspective excels in the production of an institutional model that functions as the structuring basis of the historical constitution of teaching at daycare centers, materialized in educational and assistance practices. As a counterpoint to and in deviation from the sanitary, medical and hygienist perspectives, it is important to build a perception of the babies and toddlers as active, relational subjects. On the other hand, it is related to understanding the quality of the actions of adults/teachers in their institutionalized relations with babies and toddlers, considering their ability to affect them, developing dialogue, attention, and contact.

Several current studies<sup>1</sup> highlight the potentiality of babies in social relations, identifying them by the ability to initiate contact, develop interactions, support meetings with peers, being relativized as acting marks of the baby in the world the self-centeredness perspective, the emphasis on biological aspects, or the late socialization. In several of these studies, the role of adults/teachers is not the main focus. However, they highlight the way adults structure scenarios for the babies' actions. It is assumed that babies, their movements and the meanings they portray offer clues to dialogical actions on the part of adults/teachers.

Coutinho (2010), based on references from the Sociology of Childhood, stresses the social actions of babies, searching for their constitutive elements. He discusses how much the structuring of daycare centers and the organization of time and space individualize or standardize physical care situations (feeding, bath, sleep...), obscuring the babies' meanings. In addition, he points out how important it is to handle adult responses to the initiatives of toddlers, indicating an important path in the identity and training of teachers. He highlights as relevant aspects to be observed by the teacher: reproduction/production movements of children, relations between play/work, the challenge of learning to *see the children*.

Under another perspective, different studies stress the peculiarities of teaching work with babies. Schmitt (2014) demonstrates some concepts that are important to reflect on teaching within this scenario. On the one hand, there is the simultaneous multiplicity of the actions of the teacher in the interactions with children, since it is part of the teacher work to look, speak and move in different directions at the same time, distributing attention to several focuses. At the same time, the author draws attention to the importance of a contextual pedagogy: thinking the planning of spaces and time as mobilizers of the children's actions, and not only of the direct action of the teacher.

These researches with babies or on teaching in daycare centers are conducted through observation of the social relations in which they are involved with in institutional settings. However, aiming to refining the discussion on the actions and identities of infant teachers, it emerges the importance of listening to them concerning their experiences and training, about their challenges, dilemmas and achievements. This is the path taken in the research that supports this article. The aim is to understand how teachers of babies enunciate the challenges of everyday work in their discourses, reflecting upon them in dialogical processes and comparison of points of view with other teachers. Thus, the research happens together with the formative, reflective, enunciative and dialogical process, triggering new meanings for discussing teaching at daycare centers.

It is about mobilizing the *knowledge experiences* of teachers, from the perspective of Tardif (2014)<sup>2</sup>. For the author, the articulations between teaching practice and knowledge in general are subjected to knowledge that teachers do not produce nor control, which generates some alienation. He claims that a promising way for handling this situation is to emphasize *experiential knowledge*, which appears as a vital core of teaching knowledge, as it allows to sever ties with exteriority to disciplinary and formal knowledge (something they generally receive from others), being composed into an interiority relationship with their own practice.

For Tardif (2014), the experiential knowledge of teachers, knowledge that is experienced at work, is little formalized, even by discursive consciousness. At the same time, it is social knowledge originated from various sources. These aspects, among others, constitute the perspective of an *epistemology of teaching practice*, that is:

[...] work that has as its object the human being and whose execution process is fundamentally interactive, requiring the employee to present themselves personally, with everything that they are, with their history and personality, their resources and limits (Tardif, 2014, p. 111).

Given this, the challenge is promoting formative and research spaces that can be constituted as spaces for the enunciation of teachers about their experiences, also considering them as formative. In our case, the perspective is that of promoting the discursive awareness of

teachers over their practice and reflection over their meanings, contributing to the formation of an *epistemology of teaching practice*.

### **The Research: field and methodology**

Based on the perspective of the construction of a path for *discursive formation*, starting from alterity-based and dialogical relations, we chose to conduct research with teachers as construction of space for production, transformation, and mobilization of knowledge. Thus, throughout the second half of 2015 five meetings of investigative and formative character were conducted with eight infant teachers from two important municipal networks of Rio de Janeiro state. Each meeting lasted 2 hours; it was recorded, later transcribed and analyzed, taking into account current discussions in the field of teaching in the education of children from zero to three years of age. Discussion on body care, which will be further deepened in this study, has gained strength, in addition to other issues such as the relational tension between families and the institutionally recognized professionals as perceived as *auxiliaries*.

The teachers who took part in the meetings as research subjects were students of the Specialization Course in Teaching in Early Childhood Education<sup>3</sup> from 2012 to 2014. During this period, the university offered three classes of that course, with 40 Early Childhood Education teachers enrolled in each one of them. The process of choosing the subjects happened in 2015, through a letter of invitation that was sent to former students of the specialization course, inviting those who worked with children from zero to three years of age to integrate the group. Letters were sent to 32 former students of the course. Of these, nine responded expressing interest in the research-training space, and eight attended the meetings.

The main reason we chose professionals who attended to this Specialization Program was to reflect with them under theoretical common grounds on the education of children from zero to three years of age, without disregarding previously established collective bonds. Another motivator for this choice was recognizing the broad practical and reflection experience of these professionals on previously conducted work, which qualifies them to be included in the research. It is worth mentioning that studies on the training of teachers in Early Childhood Education considers that one hindrance of education, especially at the university, which is traditionally verbalist and disciplinary, is diverting from technicism (work centered on techniques for teaching) to achieve a critical and reflexive perspective, which involves an approximation to concrete realities and teachers' experiences (Kishimoto, 2002). The invitation to teachers for participating in this space for discussion of practices and training based on shared experiences mobilized them in the sense of authorship, of responsibility towards themselves, their actions and in relation to the group.

Micarello (2005) problematizes the gap between theory and practice in educational practices in general, especially as provided by aca-

demic authorities. She states that the fragmentation of theory and practice in continuing education training processes is exacerbated by the fragmentation of the teacher's work itself and by the disregard of their speech and experiences in formative contexts. An important question by the author is: "What conditions are created so that teachers can reflect upon their practices among peers?" (Micarello, 2005, p. 154).

Discussions on teaching in the field of Early Childhood Education and teacher training practices are induced in this context: how to develop methodologies for observation and consideration of the child as a subject of rights, while considering observation a pedagogical action? How to go beyond formative practices that are transmissive and establish dialogic spaces, in which the statements of teachers are able to gain visibility?

We sought to understand the meanings teachers under training constitute about pedagogical practices, while also constituting space and time so that they can reflect on them with a perspective of modification and reformulation. To this end, we take as theoretical draft the perspective of research-training, following Andrade (2010), and of research-intervention in the line of thinking proposed by Castro and Lopes (2008), Freitas (2010) and Macedo et al. (2012).

With regard to research-training, Andrade (2010) suggests the possibility of breaking relations, mostly hierarchical and prescriptive, between researchers/trainers (from the university) and K-12 education teachers. For the author, research-training occurs during an exchange between peers that generates problematizations based on references brought by the researchers. The discourse of K-12 education teachers is emphasized and dialogue is considered a vital movement. Dialogue assumes different points of view, diversity of experience, empathy, and exchange of positions between the research subjects/researchers/teachers in training/trainers. The training perspective acquires a dialogic character and, above all, occurs through exchange of experiences reported, and through the valuation of production and enunciation of meanings provided by teachers in relation to the pedagogical practice with children from zero to three years of age.

Thus, we aim to reflect on what is done and how to do it, what Andrade (2010, p. 2) calls "[...] unlocking the black box of this profession: professional teaching practice". That is, discussing the specificity of infant teaching, (re)proposing the question: what is an infant teacher? We understood this question as a starting point, a provocation for a teaching discourse about practice to emerge, aiming to the valorization of the research subjects and their subjectivities. In addition, research-intervention contributes to the understanding of this methodological path as we consider the idea of intervention not as directed in one way nor as an action of the researcher over the research subjects, but rather as the introduction of reciprocal changes.

Authors like Castro and Lopes (2008) discuss research-intervention in the context of research with children and adolescents, having as a purpose affecting reality, in a process where the researcher also parti-

cipates. Thus, in research-intervention, researchers and researched approach in an activity in which both know, learn, and change. Research transforms what one wants to research, where the challenge of research-intervention is the experience of the research process itself as space for producing meanings. Intervention takes place in a between-places and both ways – from the researcher to the research subjects and vice versa – to the extent that:

The researcher, with the assignment of constructing a research-intervention, not only wants to peer into a given reality, but intentionally wants to create a new reality, based on the meanings shared with their interlocutors. (Macedo et al, 2012, p. 92).

It is thus understood that the meeting between researcher and researched is intrinsically implied in listening and perception, as the premise of research-intervention “[...] is more than a question, it is the intent to question that introduces discourses throughout the research process” (Macedo et al., 2012, p. 102). The meanings produced in these discourses are what leads the subjects involved into a reflexive and questioning attitude.

The concepts of utterance and dialogic by Mikhail Bakhtin, in the field of Philosophy of Language, were also important theoretical bases. According to Bakhtin (2003), utterance is always a link in a discursive chain, responding to something prior and evoking subsequent utterances.

For the author,

The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech communication are determined by a change of speaking subjects, that is, by a change of speakers [...] the speaker finishes their utterance in order to pass the word to the other or replace it with their actively responsive comprehension (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 275).

This way, the listener is considered as being in either a position of responsive comprehension or active listening. Listening or understanding implies responding, even if not immediately. According to Bakhtin, the listener, by understanding the meaning of the discourse, is positioned relative to it as being in an “[...] active responsive position – agrees or disagrees with it (wholly or partially), completes it, applies it, gets prepared to use it” (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 271). In this perspective, “[...] all comprehension is response-productive in this or that way, comprehension always creates a response: the listener then becomes a speaker” (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 271). The author adds that, aside from the *change of speakers*, *conclusibility* is also an important peculiarity of the utterance; that is, when the speaker, from their unique position, has said everything they had to say, then there is the possibility to reply, diverge, concur.

The research process presented here was characterized by active listening and responsive comprehension of the teachers throughout all



meetings. There was frequent provocation of the researchers for the meetings to start as a resume of the previous two weeks, using discussion content that seemed significant. The teachers started referring to the lines of colleagues, presenting a reflective attitude based on those lines. The field of research was like an arena where words and counterwords created changes, new ways of looking at themselves, each other, and new ways of seeing and experiencing teaching with children from zero to three years of age.

### **During Dialogue with Teachers, Teaching Identity with Babies and Ethical Care in Body Care**

We now analyze a first stage of the research path, throughout the second half of 2015. Analyses of five meetings held during this period are presented, with the participation of eight teachers of children from zero to three years of age working in different public daycare centers.

Throughout the meetings, their relation to the body care of infants as marking aspects of teaching in daycare centers was quite present. From a historical-cultural and social perspective, the child is subjectively constituted according to the relations it constructs with the other since its birth; thus, care as a way for creating relationships and recognizing the other serves as basis and marks the meanings of the children themselves.

For Catarsi and Freschi (2013), having an Italian scenario as reference, care is a pedagogical category. This is considered an epistemological foundation in the teaching practice, in that it is a universal aspect of human life. Receiving care implies feeling welcomed by the other in the world. Care means cultivating a dynamic and complex mode of relation that allows subjects to recognize themselves in the world. From a medical perspective, care is related to curing or treating. However, from a social-educational perspective, it is related to the attention to the other, interest in the other. In Education, caring means accompanying the other closely in their development process, enhancing the formative significance of the relation. That means welcoming and encouraging the child, providing the confidence and self-esteem necessary for growth.

Guimarães (2011) contributes to this discussion with the understanding of “care as ethics”. More than a moment of institutional routine or action over children’s actions, care is a way for the adult to establish a relation with the child in pedagogical/educational acts. With regard to adult action, care is being attentive to oneself and the other, developing a responsive and responsible contact manner, listening (with all senses), responding, actively comprehending the child.

In particular, understanding care as a form of social relation (and not simply based on control and discipline), care implies observing, responding, dialoging (not only with words, but with all senses), valuing the other in their initiatives. This way, a pedagogical intent based on an *attentive act* towards the other is observed.



In the field of research with the teachers, during the dialogue that focused the meanings of teaching with babies, it came to our attention how much the body care topic appeared. On the initiative of the teachers, two meetings were basically devoted only to discussing bath and its educational nature. By recognizing the importance of the educational and pedagogical quality of this routine moment, they position their concerns in the form of organization of children in space, time and in how to distribute the materials. Next, a chain of utterances that were constituted during the first meeting. With it, it is possible to observe both the focus on context as bath organizer, in a manner unique to the structuring of space and time, as well as the alterity process emerged from the dialogue between the teachers:

Children have to take a bath at a certain hour, this I couldn't change yet. But, for instance, when I give baths, there are two teams, one in the morning and another one in the afternoon. When I give baths in the morning with my assistant, I have the rule of, please, every child with their product, each child with their shampoo. I know you must be saying *Oh, but that's obvious*, but it's not obvious. What is obvious is that all the children near the wall grab the shampoo of anyone and *shump shump*, so it is a production line (Viviane).

The bath doesn't happen in just a moment, bath happens throughout the day and when the child wants and needs, bath is a necessity. [...] With babies, we, at a certain point in dialogue, talk to them since they've already asked for it, they went to the bathroom door, showed the poop, the children ask for the bath (Barbara).

In my unit, there is a set bath time, and it is hard to remove. So, that time is of tension, everybody gets undressed, I stay in the room, as determined, the agent goes to the bathroom, she takes three or four there and I stay. Now I have some strategies, I put a song, a story, bath music, they get quieter, but I have to keep an eye on them because they're wrapped in the towel, get naked, you have to keep saying *hey, wrap your towel, you're naked* (Bruna).

But what's the argument for having a specified time? (Natasha)

The argument is time. There's only one bathroom for three classrooms. The bathroom is outside the room (Bruna).

When I entered the toddler section, bath was like, it was like a car wash, and then we started questioning that and one of the arguments was this. That's why I asked you the reason. A matter of organizing time, since another group must use the bathroom, but I think that maybe with you showing during your daily routine that it's possible to do... Only it wasn't at the same year, the following year, we started organizing ourselves during a moment of the day, one goes with two children in the bathroom, gives a bath and returns, but they go with all of them. Regarding soap, for me it is something new because, since I started working there, they standardized a brand and request products from that brand from the parents; all parents send them. I never thought about each having theirs. I never asked myself that (Natasha).

The concern of how to organize this bath time is seen as important, considering that it is only possible to accompany children attenti-

vely and intentionally based on the construction of a favorable space-time context.

Barbosa (2000) states that collective life in institutions of early childhood education is structured in everyday life from variables such as the organization of spaces and materials available, offering possibilities to children. In addition, it is structured starting from the moment that generally reproduces the mode of operation of our capitalist and productivist societies, marked by acceleration and fragmentation. In a counterpoint, for Barbosa (2013), time is the variable that expresses movement, energy, rhythm for children and teachers to live the experience of collective daily life with intensity: “[...] it is time that provides the measures for continuity, durability and construction of meanings for life, be it personal or collective” (Barbosa, 2013, p. 215).

In the context of this research, it became more evident the surprise toward possibilities of dealing with bath in a more human way, valuing the singularities in less accelerated and standardized manner. Tensions between meeting the singularities of children and the rules of institutional daycare are evident. On the one hand, they said *this I couldn't change yet* or *it is hard to remove*, a certain submission to institutional rules being evident. On the other hand, they presented alternatives and new organizations of time and space invented in daily life.

Thus, we can recognize the importance of the movements of these teachers with regard to giving an organicity to bath in a routine that meets principles such as autonomy, singularity, comfort, etc. As we have seen, this goes through the context planning (organization of space, materials and time) of this moment. However, listening, observation and attention to the meanings of children seem to be perspectives to be constructed. It is worth mentioning that, in certain moments of dialogue, the teachers consider bath as a *waste of time*, as a period of rushing, fumbling, action towards children. Once again, time established a priori seems limiting for a bath practice that considers the singularities of each child. On the other hand, the lines reveal an effort of the teachers in thinking the bath moment as anything more than a hygiene moment. With this observation, we asked: is bath a moment from routine, from daycare centers, the institution (only), or is it also a moment in the life of the child, with meaning to it resulting in meanings about themselves? Based on the dialogue with the teachers, we reflect on care as ethics during body care, as proposed by Guimarães (2011). Attention to oneself and towards the other, shared attention, are perspectives under construction.

In the discourse of the teachers, we saw that they recognize and value the dimension of care as joint attention, construction space/time of relationships marked by continuity and significance. However, throughout the historic establishment of the field of early childhood education, care – education – appears as dimensions that are dissociated in teaching work and have their correspondence, in most municipalities in Brazil, in the existence of professionals with distinct func-

tional frameworks: teachers, with minimal training in teaching, whose function is legitimized by pedagogical-educational work and auxiliary staff, without training in teaching and whose function is legitimized by body care, seen as something *less*. Even though there are already many discussions in the field problematizing and demonstrating the misconceptions of these dichotomies, in practice, institutions still organize themselves with these two professionals, and this incurs into tensions in the perspective of the shared faculty construction that is not based on dichotomizing pedagogical work. We noticed that the teachers, in this research, face these tensions in their workplaces, especially with assistants of the daycare center, on the grounds that body care is part of their function and that it must be added to planning, thus not being considered help, but rather constitutive of teaching in early childhood education. The relation to the other-assistant contributes to the reaffirmation of the teacher as responsible for body care moments.

Relevant to this issue, the following is a chain of discourses in two days of meetings:

I don't give a bath today in my class because I want to help my assistant, that's not the movement [...] it's not a matter of help, it's work. The child will see me with play dough and will see me during bath (Viviane).

In relation to my role as a teacher, generally only the auxiliary staff gives baths, but I participate of this moment, sometimes they even look puzzled at me while I'm doing this because most teachers don't. It's simply that, for me, it is part of my role, I'm a teacher there too, right? But I think this is construction (Natasha).

I was thinking a lot about what we discussed last week on the issue of routine, of bath with babies, Viviane's line that she said that we, teachers, we're not helping assistants at bath time, and that yes, it's part of our function. I'm not helping you, I'm not cool, that's part of my job. I don't really do anything to help them, but I did not mention that to them yet, I hadn't put it that way. Even for emphasizing it like this, to this specificity, which I think is part of the teacher's work (Bárbara).

Catarsi and Freschi (2013) argue that it is important to understand if the action of care sustains and promotes relations and also if these relations give meaning to the action. The authors emphasize the importance of constant pedagogical thinking, especially with regard to body care moments, carried out daily and marked by gentleness and sensibility. For the authors, a pedagogy of care is also a pedagogy of the body. The critical thinking necessary and the need of being part of a broader educational project are special in these situations, as they comprise behaviors that are marked by habit and excessively spontaneous attitudes on the part of adults. For the authors, routines are spaces of relations, interactions and knowledge. Which relations are established at the bath time in order to mean that this moment is a waste of time, for yourself and the children? Which affects can be built in these moments? How do we stand in an ethical attitude to children for grasping their meanings and rethink ours?

On the third meeting, when discussions on the organizational dimension of bath had run out, the contrast between the valuation of bath time and the discomfort with the frequent questions from parents regarding this topic appears. When the other-family is in a position of recipient of the teachers' discourse, the discomfort with issues related to bath gains strength.

The only thing that the father comes to ask me is, 'look, my son's shoe did not return with him', or 'Ah! My son was bitten here'. He never asks me something like this: 'Look, people, how's my son? Is he interacting with the others too? [...] What has he been learning?' Or: 'What interesting things has he been learning from you?' It's like this, just care. As if parents only expected care (Jaqueline).

I know what you mean, I did a whole discussion that bath is pedagogical, that it is part of the child's routine, that it is very important, just like play dough, and all of a sudden the father asks me about the bath and what am I going to tell him? Look, there's a paper activity that you didn't read [...]. So, the father asks about the bath and I talk about the paper. That's because it's exactly that. When the father asks about the bath, then you say: but the bath is good! And you mention how the bath is. You tell him how that moment is and maybe he gets overwhelmed with how much stuff there's in the bath! At home it is '*pá, tchá tchum and pum*', and here at the daycare center you do all that. I think it's in this perspective, really. We feel very uncomfortable, and when the father asks us there is this issue. And I hadn't thought about this (Viviane, regarding the discourse of the researcher).

Their lines seem to demonstrate that teachers live a paradoxical movement within the daycare center with regard to care as a pedagogical dimension of teaching. On the one hand, they consider care a part of the function of the daycare center teacher and experience tensions with the auxiliaries when they realize that body care constitutes only one of their functions (the auxiliaries). On the other hand, when they talk about their work with the families, seeking to give pedagogical meaning to infant teaching, there is discomfort when the concern of parents refers to body care, such as food, hygiene and sleep.

With the discourse of the teachers and the dialogue between them, it is possible to perceive the displacement of body care from the place of something that concerns domestic, non-reflexive life, to the place of a professional action, as long as it is imbued with an ethical, attentive and responsive perspective with regard to the baby. It seems that when parents ask about bath, they refer to protective care or as attention to individual needs. On the path for constructing teaching professional proficiency, teachers find this perspective unusual, as they understand care as dialogical action, listening, and responding to the child and not a mere action *towards* the child. This tension between the understanding of families and teachers highlights the ambiguity that characterizes the professional development of infant teachers in daycare centers, between control and responsive attention. However, it was quite significant how the teachers valued playing, the interactions and the meanings of children at other moments of their routine. In several

meetings, responding to the question on the specificity of infant teaching, they speak of observation, interaction with what they propose, which still does not appear clearly at the time of the bath (prioritized by them in the discussion).

I think that, for me, like, just quickly thinking, I find my greatest concern in the construction of identity as an infant teacher is to consider the specificities of babies: how they experience the world, how am I supposed to look at that, how are they going to interact with me. [...] I have quite a diversified group. I have really *baby* babies, who just started crawling, and also children who are bigger, who already walk and are starting to talk. So, like, what I call a group identity is that the big ones have this care towards the smaller ones, which they call baby. They stay like this: 'baby, baby'. Then they want to hold them in the lap, sing lullabies to the baby, they pretend they are going to feed the baby. From there, I took the chance to plan things with them regarding this baby universe. I brought a doll for them with fake poo, fake pee. [...] We also created a moment of collective bathing in a bathtub. It was an interesting moment, being able to take advantage of their interest and also to propose some things (Natasha).

I think that specificity will be constituted from a lot of observation (Viviane).

I think more than observation, it will be created a lot of interaction, relation with them. The way you're there every day, what you, at the same time you observe, you're acting along with the child, constructing something with them (Jaqueline).

Here it is evident another meaning of being an infant teacher, that is, from the perspective of an adult who observes and proposes interactions for what the children manifest. This sensibility brought up by the lines shows the vindication of teachers in being recognized as active during interactions and in the ways of expanding the experiences or knowledge of children.

For Tardif and Lessard (2014), the teaching profession is considered the profession of human interactions. The relation with a *human object* passes through the worker's action. Thus, "[...] all work on and with humans makes one return to oneself the humanity of their object" (Tardif; Lessard, 2014, p. 30). Educational work with babies questions the humanity of teachers themselves, bringing up issues related to affectivity and ethics. In fact, within the context of heritage that pertains to our time, it is remarkable the tendency towards bureaucratization and the mechanization of labor, producer of indifference towards the other, especially when this other is understood as *inferior* or *less able*, as is the case of the baby. The discourse of the teachers in this study draws attention to the focus on interactions as central teaching action on daily routine, which arises from the recognition of the baby as subject of initiative, participatory, collaborator, deviating from the possibility of having the baby as an object, as an *it*. Consequently, the meanings of teaching comprise the ability to recognize the baby as an *other* that changes and leads everyday actions once more, which leads teacher Natasha to bring a doll with *fake poo* to an activity room, for instance. Teaching is charac-

terized as active listening and comprehension, ability to recognize and respond to the initiatives of the other, as Jaqueline highlights referring to observation as an objective of teaching. Finally, it is about emphasizing ethical care, responsiveness and responsibility with the babies, be it in moments of body care or any other as the axis of teaching during the interaction with babies.

### **Final Remarks**

We highlight the importance of listening to the teachers in order to understand the meanings they give to infant teaching based on the perception over their own practices and the sharing of meanings enabled by active and alterity-based dialogue. We emphasize the importance of considering the experiential knowledge of the teachers, seeking to reflect upon them, in the dialogue movement, favoring the formation of meanings in teaching at daycare centers.

Although this research is in progress, we risk some conclusions with these initial analyses. We saw, in these meetings, that teaching at daycare centers is lived with tensions between discourses and practices, in which body care emerges as an important dimension of teaching, understood as a pedagogical category. This way, it is possible to recognize that discourses on body care regarding ethics, relationship and teaching seem to be more incipient, requiring further deepening on the part of teachers. They assume in their discourses that care is attention to themselves and the children, but contradictions in narrated practices, imposed and bureaucratic forces that comprise automatism and reflexivity appear.

The meanings of being an infant teacher in care relations are also revealed through the tension between the expectations of families. Here, the contradiction is evident in that there is a certain discomfort on the part of the teachers when parents demonstrate greater concern with body care at the expense of other practices. The meanings of teaching for those teachers cover not only the comprehension and valorization of the body care dimension, but also the need to be recognized as professionals who perform practices beyond these actions and knowledge, or within a perspective in which such actions and knowledge may have an expanded sense, beyond efficientism.

Finally, despite the difficulty in showing the dialogic and attention dimension of pedagogical work in body care (bathing, in the case of this research), we can say that in the utterances, the valorization of the specificities and singularities of children as important meanings in teaching, together with actions of observing and dialoging with them, in games and in other moments of interaction outside the routine involving the body were emphasized. In fact, it seems like a challenge to perceive the Pedagogy of Care as a Pedagogy of the Body that, in addition to the organization context, deals with joint attention, the dialogic exchange that involves verbal and non-verbal communication.

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## Notes

- 1 Ramos (2010), Castro (2013), Martins Filho (2016).
- 2 Tardif (2014) stresses the plurality of knowledge that comprises the teaching experience: curricular, professional (training), disciplinary and experiential knowledge.
- 3 Partnership between the Ministry of Education and several IFEs (*Institutos de Formação e Educação*) in Brazil.

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