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**THE STATUS OF  
CHILDREN AND  
ADOLESCENTS  
IN THE CONTEXT  
OF CHILDREN'S  
LITERATURE:  
CONTRIBUTIONS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION IN THE  
PROMOTION OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

The guarantee of the human rights of children and adolescents has been markedly established in Brazil, by the Statute of Children and Adolescents (BRAZIL, 1990), through Law No. 8069, of July 13, 1990, which reiterates the rights inherent to the life and social security, signaled by the Federal Constitution (BRAZIL, 1988). Even in force, for more than two decades, the Child and Adolescent Statute - ECA (BRAZIL, 1990) has been interpreted from different perspectives, when it comes to identifying the social actors responsible for what was called the System of Guarantees of the Right of Children and Adolescents<sup>1</sup>.

One of our intentions, in proposing university extension actions, was to promote reflections on the rights provided for by the ECA and the Protection Network, as we found, in some of our interventions, that, in school spaces, we still come across education professionals who do not identify as one of the main actors in this great system of rights guarantees. We often see in the media cases of violation of the rights of children and adolescents, negligence that has affected the formation of these subjects, whether in omission or even in the condition of life and violence of various natures..

Based on these and other situations, this text seeks to reflect on the educational rights of all children and adolescents of school age, from a perspective of school inclusion, through the possibilities of accessing ECA knowledge, in educational processes, subsidized by Law number: 11,525, of September 25, 2007, which obliges educational systems to include recurrent ECA content in the elementary

school curriculum. Thus, the discussions present here present extension actions developed during 2017, with education professionals, children and adolescents, having as the main axis of interactions, children's literature, through storytelling.

We will dwell, more specifically, on two extension actions. The first to develop the course 'Literacy and the Statute of Children and Adolescents in the curricular practices of school life'<sup>2</sup>, and, the second, took place through the Storytelling Workshop 'Telling and (re)telling the rights of children and adolescents in basic education: inclusion, diversity and citizenship', both subsidized by PAEX/UEDESC 08/2016.

The development of extension actions was organized in a playful way, with storytelling and production of literary material, focusing on interventions through action research, based on the contributions of Thiollent (2009) and involved children and adolescents assisted by the Reference Center for Social Assistance (CRAS) in the municipality of Braço do Norte/SC and, basic education teachers, in the municipalities of Gravatal/SC and Florianópolis/SC.

Official international and national documents on human rights, with an emphasis on the rights of children and adolescents, were fundamental for thinking about extension actions, as well as the contributions of Abramovich (1997), Ziberman (1981), Vygotsky (1987), Borba (2007), Kishimoto (2010), among others, were important to delve into aspects of children's literature and to learn about the theoretical issues that underlie curricular practices in educational contexts.

1. The Guarantee System for the Rights of Children and Adolescents is constituted by the articulation and integration of governmental public instances and civil society in the application of normative instruments and in the functioning of mechanisms of promotion, defense and control for the realization of the rights of children and adolescents. of adolescents, at the Federal, State, District and Municipal levels.

2. Extension action linked to the Extension Program 'Public Policies and Constitution of Educational Rights in the Context of Curriculum Practices' (PAEX nº. 8/2016/UEDESC/CEAD), coordinated by Professor Cléia Demétrio Pereira CEAD/UEDESC.

## **PROMOTING THE GUARANTEE OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

When we return to the field of children's and adolescents' rights, it becomes relevant to bring the contributions of Phillip Ariès (1981), to understand this historical construction, which calls into question the image of children, as a miniature adult, without any feeling childhood. According to Ariès (1981), until the 16th century, the feeling of childhood was non-existent, even though children were present throughout the historical landmarks of humanity, however, without being recognized as a child. The idea of childhood feeling, according to Ariès (1981), appears between the 17th and 18th centuries, as a way of characterizing the child, in his uniqueness of human life, different from the adult.

Ariès (1981) points out that, even with such discussions, children and women were subjected to exhausting work, because, in addition to cheap labor, they worked up to sixteen hours a day, without any human conditions, whether in relation to hygiene or of rest. The exploitation of children's work in factories, during the Industrial Revolution, at the end of the 18th century, was one of the most perverse attacks on the living conditions of childhood at the time, which, unfortunately, echoes until the contemporary moment in which we live.

Concerns with such situations were recurrent in the 19th and 20th centuries and, with the influence of psychologists and educators, the child, with the feeling of childhood, is now focused on the center of social dynamics and their own development process, consequently, is recognized as a subject of rights. But it was after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

(1989) that the ECA (BRAZIL, (1990) was established in Brazil, which until today, seeks to be implemented in its entirety.

Based on this conceptual and legal framework of the rights of children and adolescents, we propose to work on extension actions with storytelling, through children's and youth literature, in curricular practices, with emphasis on ECA contents (BRAZIL, 1990). In this direction, we rescued below, some concepts related to Children's Literature and its reflections in the learning processes about the knowledge inherent to the ECA (BRAZIL, 1990).

### **CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRICULAR PRACTICES**

The educational process provides educators with a variety of pedagogical practices aimed at the development of children, both in formal and non-formal spaces. Children's literature can contribute, in a meaningful and playful way, to the children's learning process, considering the constant desire to play in their own human formation.

Literature, especially children's literature, has a fundamental task to fulfill in this changing society: that of serving as an agent of transformation, whether in the spontaneous reader/book interaction, or in the reader/text dialogue stimulated by the school. (COELHO, 2009, p.15).

Children are increasingly involved with technologies in their day-to-day and school routine, which we cannot generalize as something bad, but we cannot let electronic media take the place of printed books and moments of group reading, such as the reading circle, which is a very important pedagogical practice in the children's schooling phase.

For Coelho (1997), "a quiet, serene story captures attention, informs, socializes,

educates”. It is a tool that the teacher uses to assist him in his pedagogical practices in order to develop playful, creative classes that arouse the interest of the student. Coelho (1997, p. 12) also points out that:

[...] History is important food for the imagination. Allows self-identification, favoring the acceptance of unpleasant situations, helps resolve conflicts, offering hope. It pleases everyone, in general, without distinction of age, social class, life circumstances. Discovering this and practicing it is a way of incorporating art into life [...] (COELHO, 1997, p. 12)

We therefore understand that, from an early age, the child has opportunities to access books and the most varied children’s stories, as a way to contribute to the process of cognitive and intellectual development. The world of fantasy and fairy tales for Bettelheim (2002, p. 197) “is the primer with which the child learns to read his mind in the language of images, the only language that allows understanding before we reach intellectual maturity”.

The child expands his form of imagination through images and readings that allow him to express his feelings, consequently, develop his creative sense and even recreate something that is presented to him. When listening to stories, the child creates in his mind his own scenario that is translated and developed during the game. We corroborate with Abramovich (1997, p. 37), when he says that stories manage to reach, through children’s imagination, “their hearts and minds, in the exact measure of their understanding, of their emotional capacity, because they contained that element that fascinated her, aroused her interest and curiosity”, and this enchantment is reflected in the child, in its most fantastic and wonderful expression, of the child’s daily life, a moment in which the beautiful and long-awaited “pretend” happens.

The child is capable of recreating and re-signifying the cultural historical context in which he is inserted and incorporating socio-cultural experiences in the relationship with the other, as highlighted by Borba (2007). This way, children’s literature constitutes itself as “a phenomenon of creativity that represents the world, man, life, through the word” (CAGNETI, 1996, p. 7).

For Ziberman (1981), children’s work leads the reader to a broad understanding of existence, in situations of everyday life, in addition to providing children with the development of imagination, attention, memory and fantasy. In this direction, children’s literature becomes an important ally with storytelling, where “[...] the child’s first contact with the text is made orally” (ABRAMOVICH, 1997, p. 10), thus, when listen to children’s stories, biblical passages or invented stories told by the family. Storytelling establishes a relationship between subjects, expands interactions and communication with each other. Abramovich (1997) also points out that storytelling allows awakening the imagination, when the child identifies with the characters, and seeks solutions (or not) for life conflicts, or tries to clarify their own difficulties.

With this, we conceive children’s literature and storytelling as possibilities to contribute to the development of children, in the psychological, social, affective aspects, in particular, in the processes of learning knowledge about the fundamental rights of children and adolescents.

## **STORYTELLING IN UNIVERSITY EXTENSION ACTIONS**

Storytelling awakens a variety of sensations on the part of the subjects who listen and interact with the narrator. For school-age children, this moment becomes a world of fantasy and imagination, as it enables them

to “[...] see with the eyes of the imaginary” (ABRAMOVICH, 1997, p. 17). Furthermore, according to Kishimoto (2010), children develop the ability to understand the world and even make decisions based on their choices.

The child, even a small one, knows many things: he makes decisions, chooses what he wants to do, interacts with people, expresses what he knows how to do and shows, in his gestures, in a look, a word, how he is able to understand the world (KISHIMOTO, 2010, p. 01).

The world of fantasy and imagination is inherent to child development, as well as playing and playful interactions, which directly interfere with this process of psychological development. Vygotsky's (1987) studies, in a historical and social view, of child development processes, have indicated that playing and ludic interactions constitute rich sources of development and learning in psychological processes.

It is in childhood that the taste for reading develops, a moment in which the child expresses his imagination, exposes his ideas, desires, feelings and even creates possibilities of how to touch his own imagination. Children's literature stimulates the critical sense where the child becomes a subject who thinks and can express his opinion.

According to Jolibert (1994, p.14) “you cannot teach a child to read, it is he who teaches himself to read with our help and that of his colleagues and the various instruments”. Opportunities for reading with the child help in the emotional and social development, when having contact with books the child creates a proximity with his own imagination that becomes palpable in the moment of the game where it is possible to materialize what he imagined so much.

Children like to hear stories and also to make comments. They don't like to just listen,

silent. They want to be part of the story. They become readers, listening, seeing, speaking, gesticulating, reading, drawing their history, building new stories. (KISHIMOTO, 2010, p. 7).

We understand that the book used as a toy helps children to appropriate the literate world, as they are able to retell stories, showing that children not only consume culture, but are also producers of it. “The child is worthy of respect and deserves to be treated as an autonomous subject who not only consumes, but also produces culture, assigns meaning to reality, reads, interprets, understands the world” (CABRAL; OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 902).

For Borba (2007, p. 35), interactions with play mobilize creative human activity, “[...] in which imagination, fantasy and reality interact in the production of new possibilities for interpretation, expression and action by children., as well as new ways of building social relationships with other subjects, children and adults”.

Thus, it is essential that curricular practices, in educational contexts, permeate literary practices and that enable “[...] playful expression during narratives, appreciation and interaction with oral and written language, so that the child can take advantage of the popular culture it already has and acquire new experiences through contact with different languages” (KISHIMOTO, 2010, p. 06).

## **ACTION RESEARCH AS A METHODOLOGICAL PATH IN UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

The studies carried out through interventions in the educational contexts in which the extension actions were developed were subsidized by action research, in which the participation of university subjects provided a two-way learning experience. For Thiollent (2009) action research consists



of linking research and action, where the “implicated actors” interact with researchers, seeking to modify the reality in which they are inserted.

The option for formal and non-formal contexts was due to the identification of children identified as being in a situation of social vulnerability, especially those identified as having a disability. Around 40 children between five and ten years old, linked to CRAS and schools in the municipal network of Braço do Norte/SC, and approximately 180 teachers from the educational networks of the municipalities of Gravatal/SC and Florianópolis/SC participated in the extension action. We present below the extension actions developed within the scope of the extension programs, by PAEX/UDESC, number: 08/2016.

### **LITERACY AND THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT STATUTE IN THE CURRICULAR PRACTICES OF SCHOOL LIFE**

This extension action aimed to deepen and understand the historical and social aspects that underlie the insertion of ECA (BRAZIL, 1990) in the school context, through storytelling workshops, as a way of identifying the literacy processes and the contributions of the use of children’s literature in guaranteeing the educational rights of children and adolescents in the schooling phase.

The development of this extension action involved the participation of 40 children, linked by CRAS and attending kindergarten and elementary education in schools in the municipal network of Braço do Norte/SC, and their respective teachers. As a result of the action taken, a study was carried out, which provided for the deepening of the influence of children’s literature on the pedagogical processes and learning of children in situations of social vulnerability.

During interventions with different groups of children, children’s literature was used in a playful way, based on storytelling, which provided participants with an important space for dialogue and exchange of learning.

Telling, retelling, singing, dramatizing, and even producing literary material, were consequent activities of storytelling, which enchanted children and mobilized them to the world of imagination and creation. It was possible to perceive that children’s literature contributes to the child’s appropriation of their own culture, as well as to the production of culture, based on the meaning they attribute to what is in the children’s literature book. We understood with Cabral and Oliveira (2012, p. 902) that “[...] children are active members of society and producers of culture. Whether drawing, reading letters, talking to adults or inventing a fantasy world, children act as producers of culture”.

Image 1 expresses some of the moments of interventions with children developed in this extension action.

The records of this image show the children’s involvement with reading the children’s literature book that allows them to enter the literate world, express their experiences with orality and speech, in which each child attributed a different meaning to the same book. Because it is a story without properly written words, this work, by Juarez Machado (2001), provided its readers with a reading through images, access to the reader’s cognitive knowledge and manifestations of their creativity and imagination.

In the image that follows, we see how many children were involved in telling the story ‘Choco finds a mother’, by Keiko Kasza (2010), which addressed knowledge about adoption, an issue that is very present in ECA (BRAZIL, 1990) and in the everyday life of most children.



Picture 1 – Book reading: “Ida e Volta” (“Go and return”) (Autor: Juarez Machado, 2001).

Source: Authors’ personal collection, 2017.



Image 2: Telling the Story ‘Choco finds a mommy’.

Source: Authors’ personal collection, 2017.

Image 2 expresses the interactions between children and adults during the development of the extension action, mainly with the telling of the story 'Choco finds a mother', which made it possible to know more deeply the family reality of each child.

With the telling of the story, a data survey was carried out, through a graph constructed in a playful way with the children, in order to verify the percentage of children who lived with their parents (father and mother), only with the father or with the mother, and also those who lived with grandparents or other adults responsible for the child's custody. From these data, we found that at least two out of every 12 children lived only with their father or mother, and one out of every 12 children did not live with their father or mother, but with other people extended to the family. and even, without any family ties, as a portrait of the reality of adoption.

With that, "[...] the transforming intervention, based on knowledge has a deinstitutionalizing purpose, which is inherent in the reconfiguration of the child's condition as a subject of rights" (SARMENTO, 2007, p. 42). This way, we understand that storytelling constitutes an important curricular practice, in educational contexts, so that the contents of the ECA (BRAZIL, 1990) are worked integrated with the different curricular knowledge.

### **WORKSHOP 'TELLING AND (RE)TELLING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN BASIC EDUCATION: INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND CITIZENSHIP'**

This workshop constituted another extension action, which aimed to know and understand the rights of children and adolescents, based on the contents of the ECA (BRAZIL, 1990), through storytelling and musicality, with an emphasis on the inclusion

of diversity and citizenship. The extension action was developed with, approximately, teachers from the education systems of the municipalities of Gravatal/SC and Florianópolis/SC.

The workshops were held during the second half of 2017 and, as it is a continuing education for teachers, the focus of interventions with the participants was centered on addressing knowledge related to the human rights of children and adolescents, specifically constituted by the ECA (BRAZIL, 1990), telling and singing stories.

Image 3 reflects the movement of teachers during the storytelling workshop.

During the workshops, we were able to perceive the involvement of the teachers in the proposed activities, which, in a very playful way, with interactions of games and circle songs, provided the participants with exciting moments, where they were rescuing childhood memories, shared with the group.

These experiential situations reinforce our understanding that storytelling is a very significant moment, not only for children, but also for adults, who end up getting involved with their training, the teachers. The activity itself mobilizes the imagination and the transit between the fictional and the real, as Rodrigues (2005) points out. This possibility of transiting between fiction and reality provokes the sensation of bringing the imaginary into the real world, in which "the facts, the scenes and the contexts are from the imaginary plane, but the feelings and emotions transcend fiction and materialize in real life" (RODRIGUES, 2005, p. 4).

### **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

We could conclude by bringing the most different experiences and results obtained, since the two actions involved different audiences who presented different and important responses, both in the intervention





Image 3: Storytelling workshop with teachers.

Source: Authors' personal collection, 2017.

carried out with the children and adolescents attended by the CRAS, as in the storytelling workshop with the basic education teachers.

However, it must be said that the action developed with the children and their respective teachers contributed significantly to the development of the course completion work (TCC), of the CEAD/UDESC Pedagogy Course, of the extension scholarship holders involved, which had as the title "The contributions of children's literature in educational practices and teacher training" (GIN, et al, 2017).

The telling of the story *Pelegrino e Petronio*, by Ziraldo (1983), was one of the references, which made it possible to access knowledge about ECA, in the schooling of children. According to the authors, we can see below the description:

We continued with the proposal to identify the sides (right and left of the body) through the story of Ziraldo's book (1983) *Pelegrino e Petronio*. The children had the opportunity to retell the story to their classmates, some were embarrassed, others more uninhibited, but all amazed by the book as part of the interaction in class. Although at the end of the story the children were able to identify each foot, as right and left, the most significant moment of this proposal was the games that the children played while we were painting the feet of our classmates.

Three girls sitting near the shoes that were scattered around the room (due to the activity of painting their feet) played with the pairs of shoes, attributing dialogue between the shoes:

“Student 1: Good morning! I am the right foot

Student 2: Good morning! I’m the left foot, let’s play?”

Impelled by the desire to tell stories other than the ones they heard, the children continued the game, using the shoes as “actors” in the dialogues. [...] The game after the storytelling allowed the children to enter the imaginary world, where they build stories from their cognitive knowledge and the new knowledge that were built during the storytelling. This way they represent the world around them and give meaning to objects. (GIN, et al, 2017, p. 31)

These social relationships made it possible to organize the pedagogical processes in educational contexts, constituting strategies and procedures used to learn and teach and are characterized as “[...] actions/activities/ behaviors/ways of organizing and triggering the movement of construction of knowledge, of the learning process” (AMARO, 2009, p. 49).

With that, an organization, based on extension actions, whose theme focused on children’s literature, through storytelling, triggers a series of learning processes, mediated by the interactions of children and even their teachers. Kishimoto (2010) points to children’s literature as a possibility to experience narrative experiences, to appreciate and interact with oral and written language, to live with different supports and textual, oral and written genres.

When we finished the extension actions and the studies carried out, we verified how significant these actions were for the participants involved. It contributed to the development of imagination, attention, memory and even literary creation, as well as enabling a break with static teaching, by directly involving children in activities through artistic language.

The literary moments lived in the extension actions with the children and teachers also contributed to a better understanding of different situations that are still strange or unknown to them, such as the interactions of games and children’s literature in the learning processes. However, the path of establishing a closer relationship with the knowledge present in the ECA (BRAZIL, 1990) with the educational contexts, is still challenging, considering that policies aimed at guaranteeing the fundamental rights of children and adolescents need to be present in the formation of teachers, both in initial and continuing education.

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