



## Early Childhood Education and women in *Jornal do Comércio*: Manaus in the 1970s<sup>1</sup>

Educação infantil e mulheres no *Jornal do Comércio*: Manaus, década de 1970

Educación infantil y mujeres en el *Jornal do Comércio*: Manaus en la década de 1970

Kelly Rocha de Matos Vasconcelos  
Federal University of Amazonas (Brazil)

Manaus Municipal Department of Education (Brazil)

Holder of a Fellowship provided by *Fundação de Apoio e Amparo à Pesquisa* of the Amazonas State

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1143-8388>

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/4764260942871994>

[kellymattos\\_am@hotmail.com](mailto:kellymattos_am@hotmail.com)

Moysés Kuhlmann Júnior  
CNPq Research Productivity Fellowship (Brazil)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7564-620X>

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/5395628476390038>

[moyseskj180@gmail.com](mailto:moyseskj180@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The article explores the publication of news about the education of children aged 0 to 7 years old in *Jornal do Comércio* of Amazonas in the 1970s. It takes a social and cultural history perspective and situates education within the context of social relations. Before approaching the news pieces, the text contextualizes Early Childhood Education in the period, as well as the researched newspaper. We selected eight articles from the *Caderno Feminino* and the column *Mulher* on the following topics: daycare centers and kindergarten policies; the importance of toys, play activities and socialization for child development; the transition from preschool to elementary school, and school vacation. It is concluded that, in the context of the expansion of preschool education at the time, the newspaper favored early childhood education discussions in women's sections, with no clear distinction between domestic and public spaces.

**Keywords:** Early Childhood Education. Amazonas. Press.

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## Resumo

O artigo analisa a publicação de notícias sobre educação das crianças de 0 a 7 anos de idade, na década de 1970, no *Jornal do Comércio* do Amazonas. Segue a perspectiva da história social e cultural e situa a educação no quadro das relações sociais. O texto apresenta uma contextualização da Educação Infantil no período e do jornal pesquisado, para em seguida tratar das notícias. Selecionamos oito artigos localizados no *Caderno Feminino* e na coluna *Mulher*, sobre os seguintes temas: políticas de creche e jardim de infância; importância do brincar, da atividade de brincar e da socialização para o desenvolvimento da criança; transição da pré-escola para o 1º grau e férias escolares. Conclui-se que, no contexto de expansão da educação pré-escolar naquele período, o jornal privilegiou a discussão sobre a educação infantil nas seções para as mulheres, sem uma clara distinção entre o espaço doméstico e o público.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Infantil. Amazonas. Imprensa.

## Resumen

El artículo analiza la publicación de noticias sobre la educación de niños de 0 a 7 años, durante la década de 1970, en el *Jornal do Comércio* de Amazonas. Sigue la perspectiva de la historia social y cultural y sitúa la educación en el marco de las relaciones sociales. El texto presenta una contextualización de la Educación Infantil en el período, y del diario investigado, para luego abordar las noticias. Seleccionamos ocho artículos ubicados en el *Caderno Feminino* y en la columna *Mulher*, que tratan de los siguientes temas: políticas de guarderías y jardines de infancia; la importancia de los juguetes, las actividades lúdicas y la socialización para el desarrollo del niño; transición del preescolar a la escuela primaria y las vacaciones escolares. Se concluye que, en el contexto de la expansión de la educación preescolar en ese período, el diario favoreció la discusión sobre la educación infantil en las secciones para mujeres, sin una clara distinción entre los espacios domésticos y públicos.

**Palabras-clave:** Educación Infantil. Amazonas. Prensa.

## Introduction

In this article, we analyze news articles from the 1970s published in *Jornal do Comércio* of Amazonas about the education of children aged 0 to 7 years old, particularly in the columns *Mulher* (The Woman) and *Caderno Feminino*<sup>2</sup> (Women's Section). Our research question was centered around determining which issues concerning children and their education were prioritized in these spaces.

The text is divided into three sections: first, a contextualization of Pre-School Education in the 1970s is outlined; second, thoughts on the research source, *Jornal do Comércio* of Amazonas, are addressed; and finally, the selected subjects are presented and discussed.

## Pre-School Education in the 1970s: a brief contextualization

From the 1970s onwards, there was an increase in the supply of daycare centers and kindergartens of varying quality, in which low-cost and high-quality models coexisted with more structured proposals. The Pre-School Assistance Plan, of the National Department for Children (DNCr) was created in accordance with guidelines proposed by UNICEF (United Nations Children's International Emergency Fund) at the end of the 1960s, and it directed churches of various designations to establish Recreation Centers for the care of children aged 2 to 6 years. The Ministry of Education began to contemplate pre-school education in the II Sectorial Plan for Education and Culture (PSEC) prepared for the years 1975 to 1979, with the purpose of preparing the "culturally deprived" child to access primary education, implementing what is known as "compensatory education," which saw the poor child as someone who needed school education to overcome the needs that characterized their social condition. In 1977, the Brazilian Legion of Assistance (LBA) launched the "*Projeto Casulo*" (Cocoon Project), which aimed to fill vacancies in *Casulo* daycare centers for children aged 0 to 6. The Mothers' Clubs were instrumental in forging relationships with city halls and launching "Daycare centers Fighting Movements" in various parts of the country. Aside from the claims of various sectors of society, the election of candidates opposed to state and municipal governments was another factor that aided the growth of these institutions. The inclusion of daycare centers and preschools as part of Basic Education in the Federal Constitution of 1988 enshrined this process.

This period was marked by the predominance of agreements between Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), municipal and state governments. Literacy classes were prioritized in state preschool institutions to prepare children for primary school. Daycare centers and preschools were prioritized in municipal institutions (CASTRO, 1994).

With the emergence of national preschool education policies, it is important to investigate initiatives that demonstrate Amazonian participation in this process. Following the establishment of the Manaus Free Trade Zone in 1964, a large number of women began to work in the Industrial District (SILVA, 2021). Working families' demand for children's education was most likely impacted because of this.

## Introducing the source: *Jornal do Comércio* of Amazonas

The use of the newspaper as a source in historical research is configured as a "fertile source for knowledge of the past", a "privileged material for the recovery of historical events", which allows us to see the events that hover over the research object in a chronological and panoramic manner (CRUZ; PEIXOTO, 2007, p. 253).

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The revival of historiography in the 1960s and 1970s, with the third generation of the *Annales* school in France, the concern with the history of ordinary people, and the relationship between society and culture in England, helped themes such as childhood, family, and others gain space in historiographical research. Because these are cultural products from which information can be extracted, analyzed, and problematized, printed material, such as newspapers and magazines, came to be considered as relevant sources, which expanded the possibilities of investigation (AZEVEDO; STAMATTO, 2010; BURKE, 1997; LUCA, 2008; HOBBSAWM, 1998; KUHLMANN JÚNIOR; LEONARDI, 2017; REIS, 2000; THOMPSON, 2001).

Another important consideration is the presence of images to illustrate the verbal texts of publications, given that photography is "the result of human action" and that "the photographer, who in a given space and time opted for a special subject and who, for the record, used the resources offered by technology" is a subject of their time and is positioned according to the values in which the society to which they belong is immersed (KOSSOY, 2001, p. 37).

The presentation and contextualization of the selected news articles in the light of the studied theme and understanding the periodicals as a "source of daily information", favors the construction of links with social and political aspects at the local, regional, and national levels in the historical moment studied (MAGALHÃES, 2004) so that, from our interpretation, we may build a narrative or a reading of such studied period (CERTEAU, 1982). Thus, reading not only isolated facts, but the structures that support them, so as to not make the mistake of becoming mere reproducers and narrators of the facts or of a crystallized historiography (KUHLMANN JÚNIOR, 2010).

Education can be found in social relationships, and publications help to materialize and disseminate educational ideas and proposals in the social environment. Newspapers play a formative role and are an important means of communication, serving as a link between the local, regional, national, and global levels. We want to understand how the published materials materialized ideas about Early Childhood Education at the time by interpreting them with a focus on context and details.

*Jornal do Comércio* was regarded as the "dean of local press" and "one of the great symbols of Amazonian journalism, whose discussions provide us with a significant sample of the trends and characteristics of printed culture in the state of Amazonas" (SOUZA, 2010, p. 106). Considered the "most traditional newspaper in the city" of Manaus, it was founded by Joaquim Rocha dos Santos, in his own building located at Avenida Eduardo Ribeiro, No. 11, Centro, in 1904). The periodical went through three phases: the first, from its original conception to the death of its founder (1904 to 1906); the second, under the direction of journalist Alcides Bahia (1906-1908); and the third, which began in 1908 and ended in 1943, when the newspaper was sold to the communication conglomerate *Diários Associados*, owned by Assis Chateaubriand (1892-1968). The 1970s publications chosen for this article occurred during the time when the newspaper belonged to this group. In 1984, the newspaper was sold to businessman Guilherme Aluizio de O. Silva (SOUZA, 2010; MIRANDA, 2017)

In September 1959, Assis Chateaubriand promoted the donation of 49 percent of his empire to 22 employees of his total trust. Chateaubriand donated the remaining 51 percent to the group that comprised that conglomerate in 1962, when he was confined to a wheelchair due to a cerebral thrombosis. Epaminondas Barahuna was present in this group (SIMÕES, 1986). Barahuna had been with the company for 24 years in Manaus when he was appointed director of the *Diários e Rádios Associados* of Amazonas, which owned *Jornal do Comércio* and *Rádio Baré*, on January 15, 1959, a position he held until 1984 (DUARTE, 2015, p. 17; JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/16/1959, p. 1)

In the early 1970s, *Jornal do Comércio* reported that it would undergo restructuring throughout the decade. For starters, because of the purchase of new machinery capable of printing 16 thousand copies per hour in "off-set," the newspaper was the first in northern Brazil

to adopt this technology. It also announced the use of the tele-type and the "radio-photo" service provided by United Press International. The editorial work would be expanded as well, with the creation of news sections and services "in addition to the ease of illustration" (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/01/1970, p. 17). During this period, it featured articles on politics, economics, education, culture, sports, police news, public notices, classified ads, telenovela schedules, religious matters, and other topics, as well as reproductions and information from *Diário Oficial do Amazonas*. We acknowledged that the number of pages published during the week varied between 10 and 20 pages, while the number of pages published on Sunday varied between 30 and 40 pages, including sections with their own numbering.

According to the content of the analyzed reports, the newspaper's readership was made up of a small segment of society that was literate and had sufficient financial means to read the newspaper, people who might be interested in its content and in purchasing the products advertised in the classified ads: politicians, military staff, businessmen, merchants, civil servants, teachers, and so on.

The column *Mulher* first appeared in the 1970s, between 1974 and 1975, and the *Caderno Feminino* section began publication the following year, between 1976 and 1980. Following this period, news about children and women began to appear in other sections of the newspaper, particularly in the sections *Cidade, Grande Manaus, Política* (The City, Great Manaus, and Politics), and the supplement *Ciência e Saúde* (Science and Health), sharing space with articles about policies, projects, and government actions in a variety of sectors, including education, health, and the economy. During this time, it was also announced that the *Caderno Juventude* (Youth Section), a youth-oriented section, would be established.

The column *Mulher*, written by Flora Cardoso, was usually published once a week, but without a set day. We unearthed occurrences of the column on various days, including Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, with subjects related to what was considered feminine at the time. The *Convivência Social* (Social Living) column separated the first vertical half of the page. The page was aimed at a female audience and featured illustrations and captions about the lives of famous female personalities in Brazil and around the world, as well as news about local elite members. In 1976, the *Caderno Feminino* of *Jornal do Comércio* first appears. This supplement, with 5 pages in standard format, was published on Sundays. Beauty tips, women's, men's, and children's fashion, home decoration and organization, physical and psychological health of women, culinary recipes, telenovela premieres or chapter summaries, and guidelines for children's education and dissemination were all included in the titles of articles, images, and colorful illustrations. Thus, the column *Mulher* and *Caderno Feminino* comprised products that would appeal to the growing female audience while also disseminating ideas pertaining to the women's project that was intended to be disseminated to society at the time.

Based on educational statistics, Rosemberg and Amado (1992) found that in Brazil in the 1970s, the rates of literate women were equal to or higher than those of men, and that the majority of students were female. Even in this decade, there was a significant increase in the number of female university students, whose academic performance was superior to that of males in some areas (ROSEMBERG; AMADO, 1992, p. 62).

Based on data collected in the IX General Census of Brazil (IBGE, 1983), we calculated that only 22.9 percent (50,170) of the 219,080 Amazonian inhabitants of the period, over 10 years old, had gone through elementary education, that is, were literate enough to read and access the newspaper; women made up 51.8 percent of the total (25,988). In a news articles item published in 1979, a slight female predominance is also observed among candidates for the entrance exam for the *Universidade do Amazonas* (University of Amazonas), currently known as *Universidade Federal do Amazonas* (The Federal University of Amazonas); out of 13,719 candidates, 6909 were women and 6810 were men (A CRÍTICA, 01/07/1979, p. 3).

## The child and their education in the pages of *Jornal do Comércio*

The theme of early childhood education has appeared on previous occasions in the newspaper's history. In 1910, in the weekly newspaper *Jornal do Comércio* entitled *O Barésinho*, published on Sundays and aimed at children, it was vaguely stated that it would be published everything related to "child education" (*Jornal do Comércio*, 10/16/1910). However, it was not until 1949, following the emergence of women's journalism in Brazil as a commercial product, inspired by the French model (BUIIONI, 2009), that *Suplemento Feminino* (Women's Supplement) was implemented, a Sunday publication that featured articles about children, among other content aimed at the feminine public, which first appeared in 1943, and began to incorporate the *Jornal das Crianças* (Children's Newspaper) column, which had been published since 1928, and where children's stories were featured. *Suplemento Feminino* was published until 1959, when it was discontinued, but *Jornal do Comércio* continued to publish the Sunday publication "*Página Feminina*" (Women's Page), which had been published since 1950 and lasted until 1967, and which also included articles about children. (1928-1967, JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO).

During the course of our investigation, articles on children's education appeared in the general news, along with information about local events. On the initiative of the regional department of Amazonas, the 1<sup>st</sup> Education Meeting of the Social Service of Industry (SESI) was announced in 1973, in which SESI teachers from the country's north and northeast regions met to prepare a "document guiding principle of SESI's educational action in the region." Aida Foschiera and Nélio Parra, both from Brasília and São Paulo, spoke at the event (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 11/30/1973, p. 3)

In 1974, the subject is the "Improvement Course in Pre-Primary Education, with an Overview of Work in Kindergarten", promoted by the *Preciosíssimo Sangue Normal* School and Gym, in collaboration with the Catholic Education Association of Brazil (AEC), and taught by teachers from the *Instituto de Educação Jacobina* in Guanabara. According to the news, the course involved "arts education, including art techniques, children's literature, and theater," as well as "didactics and recreational activity planning". To register, a "fee" was required, and the intended audience would be "educators" and "students" of the Institute's third year of Pedagogy (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 11/30/1973, p. 3).

But it is in publications aimed at the female audience that content with formative intentions appears, with guidelines to families and professionals from educational institutions on the needs of children, addressing the importance of early childhood education and their social needs.

The materials were found through the descriptors "Kindergarten", "Teaching", "Childhood", "Woman", "Child Education", "Child", "Daycare centers" and "Pre-school education" in the Brazilian Digital Newsletter. There are 8 articles, one from the *Mulher* column and 7 from the *Caderno Feminino*, whose titles are: "Holidays - pleasure not suffering", "Learning from the child before educating them", "The effect of early childhood language on school learning", "Language in Kindergarten", "Mathematics helps to think and face difficult situations," "Happiness in toys", "A serious thing called 'Kindergarten'", and "The situation of Kindergartens in F.R.G." are among the eight articles. These texts cover a wide range of topics, including daycare and kindergarten policies, the importance of toys, the relevance of playing for children, socialization for the child's development, mathematics and language learning, and the transition from Kindergarten to Elementary Education. It should be noted that, in addition to the articles examined, there were other news pieces about children's education during this time period.

Five of the seven articles about children in *Caderno Feminino* are located on the fourth page, with two on the cover, sharing space with fashion clothing patterns and step-by-step instructions on how to make them, tips on haircuts and hairstyles, and features of telenovela agendas. There are also images of children performing activities such as washing their hands, playing with toys, or studying in a classroom with their teaching materials.

In the 1975 edition, the column *Mulher* presents an article from Brasília with the title "Holidays – pleasure not suffering". The article is divided into three parts. The first is an introductory text in which it is argued that taking a vacation is everyone's right, but it was previously only the privilege of the wealthy; the second part approaches possibilities for occupying children's free time on vacation, since it is not always possible to leave the house, especially with big families (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/16/1975, p. 12).

Based on the experiences of São Paulo psychologist Maria Margarida de Carvalho, the text recommends practicing art therapy at home. She suggested that families engage in pleasurable activities while on vacation, as rest and leisure were viewed as essential components for maintaining a good health.

In the second section of the article, titled "*CRIANÇA*" (The Child) the idea that vacations are not important for young children is highlighted, as they may harm their ability to interact socially:

A small child in nursery, daycare, kindergarten, or even first grade of elementary school does not require a vacation. School activities always have a playful concern within the modern vision of the school, the relationship and interaction of children. Thus, the school is their little world, their happy place. Vacations, in other words, are unnecessary; in fact, they can be harmful: children who have problems in their social relationships experience a regression in behavior when they go on vacation. Teachers, on the other hand, desperately need a break.... explains teacher Telma Martins Costa Cody (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/16/1975, p. 12).

According to teacher Telma, some schools offered vacation activities in which children could learn various crafts, household chores such as setting a table or making the bed, or even playing games. She suggests a holiday rule, written on cardboard and posted in a visible location in the house, and it is critical that adults consider the children's viewpoint:

Parallel activities for the vacation period have been created in many schools today, primarily in nursery, daycare, kindergarten, demonstrating the pleasant side of vacations when parents are unable to take them somewhere else. They are taught how to set the table or make the bed, as well as various crafts and games.

[...] Maria Margarida de Carvalho suggests establishing a Holiday Regulation: "What is certain is that all family members rest and enjoy themselves". The very elaboration of the regulation is cause for amusement at home. Parents meet with their children and ask what they want to do during this time off from school.

The regulation [...] must be printed on cardboard and nailed in a prominent location in the house. It must also include a clause proposed by the children of the house in the event that someone does not follow it. Children have a much stronger sense of justice than adults. A

fundamental point must be made clear at the family meeting to draft the REGULATION: each one's right ends where the other's begins, i.e., vacations are for everyone. [...] (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/16/1975, p. 12).

In the article's final section, titled "*SUGESTÕES*" (Suggestions), artistic activities such as drawing, crafts, creation-recreation, home decoration, carpentry practice, or contact with nature are suggested:

The growing need for contact with nature can be met during the holidays by practicing gardening; even in an apartment, you can have this contact by caring for plants; woodworking (which the parent can assist with), drawing, crafts, create-recreation: Creation-recreation can be fully explored: if children are already bored with a game, force them to devise new rules so that the game gains new appeal. Try inviting them for home décor activities as well. New arrangements, walls that need to be painted, cushions that need to be covered, in short, there are a thousand things that can be done. (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/16/1975, p. 12).

During the same period, *Jornal do Comércio* published holiday recreation activities for children, such as those promoted by the Social Service of Commerce - SESC (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO; 01/03/69; 01/04/70; 03/31/78). Thus, it is understood that when stating that children did not need vacations because they could harm their development and that there were schools that promoted activities for this period, the reading public may interpret this as an indication to take the children to participate in these holiday activities, as it was a necessity for child development.

The first article analyzed in the *Caderno Feminino* was published in 1976 and was titled "Learning from the child before educating them", and it was divided into three parts: the first, "The child is the being", and "evolution of men". The title appears in larger letters alongside an image (FIGURE 1) of a boy with his shirt sleeves rolled up, arms resting on a sink, and soap in his hands (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 08/08/1976, Caderno Feminino, p. 1).

**Figure 1** - Cover and enlargement of the news image showing a child washing their hands (Elaborated by the authors).



**Source:** Jornal do Comércio, Manaus, August 8, 1976, Caderno Feminino, cover. **Collection:** Public Library of Amazonas.



The news is about the conference "Kindergarten in the Industrial Era," given by psychoanalyst Pedro Figueiredo Ferreira at the II Brazilian Congress of Pre-School Education, held at Park Anhembi in São Paulo by the World Organization for Pre-School Education - OMEP/BRAZIL. OMEP was a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that was founded in Europe in 1948, following World War II, with the support of UNESCO. OMEP/BRAZIL was established in 1955. The Second Conference's theme was "What is Best for the Child" (MOTTA, 2003).

Given that women's work in industries interferes with the mother-child relationship and the child's development, Figueiredo advocates for a one-year leave of absence for mothers after childbirth. He uses France as a model, suggesting that those in charge of children in Brazil study the French program, in addition to building daycare centers inside industries:

One suggestion made by the Psychoanalyst is that those in charge of childhood in Brazil study the French program – for later national adaptation. However, he admits that "it would already be great" if daycare centers were established inside the workplace.

Ideally, there should even be uninterrupted contact between mother and child after the first year of life. A nearly "intrauterine" contact. Ensuring emotional health results in both physical and mental health.

By saying that industrial civilization separated the son from the mother, the Psychoanalyst reminds us that this society is the result of a distorted education (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 08/08/1976, Caderno Feminino, p. 1).

In Brazil at the time, women were only entitled to 84 days of maternity leave. This period was extended to 120 days with the 1988 Constitution (RIMES, OLIVEIRA, BOCCOLINE, 2019). The Psychoanalyst's speech emphasizing the need for daycare centers in the workplace was timely because, while labor legislation required daycare centers in establishments with 30 or more women employed, this provision was rarely followed by employers (KUHLMANN JÚNIOR, 2000).

Another point raised by the lecturer is the method used in child education: imposed education, which prioritizes thinking over reasoning and does not consider the child's personality, which could be extremely harmful:

To understand the child's unique traits, the mother or teacher must observe them in all of their activities. That is, before educating the child, the adult must first become a disciple of the child. They are the ones who will tell you through different communication languages - talking, running, speaking, playing, drawing, sleeping, and listening to stories – the activities you should engage in to process their education.

"Knowledge belongs to the child and not to us, the teacher is the knowledge, but the child is the master of being" says the Psychoanalyst (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 08/08/1976, Caderno Feminino, p. 1).

The speech is similar to the proposals of educator Heloisa Marinho, who defended "an education in which the child's creative activity surpasses in educational value the formal exercises of traditional kindergarten" at the time, implying that the educational orientation would stifle the creative aspect of the child's intellectual and artistic development. (KUHLMANN JÚNIOR, 2000, p. 15).

We discovered two articles on children's language, one published in February and the other in October 1977. The first, titled "The effect of early childhood language on school learning", is located on the lower left side of the page and is organized in three columns with the following subheadings: "DIFFERENT PROGRESS INDEXES," "TALK WITH PARENTS," and "THE TEACHER'S CONTRIBUTION." At the bottom of the first column is an image of a cheerful-looking boy's face and part of his shoulders, apparently resting his chin on a surface, most likely a school desk or table. The text is based on the findings of a study conducted "at the University of Leeds that examined the effect of children's experiences on the development and use of language", and it concluded that "children are brought to their parents' way of thinking through the way in which they speak" and reports the creation of a project called "Early Childhood Communication Techniques" established by the "Britain Board of Schools" to lead teachers to "learn more about the nature of language" in order to develop "teaching techniques to provide many children with the essential experiences of dialogue" (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 02/27/77, p. 4).

In another 1977 publication, *Caderno* reproduces two articles from the *Diário de Pernambuco*, from Recife, written by Zenaide Barbosa, one of which develops the theme of language in early childhood education, entitled "*Idioma no Jardim de Infância*" (Language in Kindergarten), in a text distributed in three columns, with a summary, an introductory part, and four subdivisions: "Gestures and sounds", "Voice and rhythm", "Correct language" and "A real world". The abstract, which appears below the title, is separated by lines at the top and bottom, with bold letters, and emphasizes the importance of language for the child's social development, as learning occurs between the ages of 2 and 7 years, being stimulated by parents and "kindergarten teachers" (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, *Caderno Feminino*, p. 4).

The first paragraph emphasizes the importance of "balance" and "knowledge of one's own personality", as well as "thought development", "mental structuring", and "socialization processes", which are "well linked to the possibility of expression and progress of language". Given that a four or five-year-old child entering preschool has "rudiments of the language", the article suggests that the teacher "start from the real fact" that they work "with a group" that speaks "badly" or "almost" does not speak (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, *Caderno Feminino*, p. 4).

The text introduces the idea that every activity performed by man, including language, is "fundamentally mimic". Sounds and gestures are elements used by children to express themselves, and as a result, "human expression, global and concrete at first", becomes "differentiated and symbolic". As man becomes civilized, they replace "global, spontaneous body gestures" with "oral language". "The pedagogy of the word for preschoolers" must be built on this "base" (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, *Caderno Feminino*, p. 4).

The segment "voice and rhythm" provides guidelines for "the master", who must control their voice while remaining "silent and calm", as children perceive and imitate the teacher's "harmony or defects". Therefore, they must understand how the voice works in order to educate the child's voice, implying that singing is important for vocal development. (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, *Caderno Feminino*, p. 4).

The text informs in "correct language" that "good pedagogy" provides "three fundamental points in pre-primary education: The teacher must: a) "always use correct language"; b) "create a good environment for verbal expression"; and c) "use words whose meaning" has been "captured and try to understand children's language, without losing sight of general development", which is "parallel to intelligence and language education". To accomplish this, the teacher must have good diction, articulating "correctly," and giving "the voice a harmonious and acceptable tone" (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, *Caderno Feminino*, p. 4).

The text also warns the "teacher" not to become infected by the "force of children's language", which can prevent the child from developing a "clear and correct oral language". It is not enough for the kindergarten teacher to have a good vocabulary and teach how to "speak correctly", they must also create opportunities for students to practice speaking through pre-planned exercises, while also valuing games, modeling, and drawing as forms of expression. (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

The final section of the text, "a real world", refers to a reality that must be created by the "master" through a variety of activities that stimulate the child's language development, such as sensory observation in a garden, clippings, and drawing:

The master must create a rich but realistic world for the children to value and categorize. Language education is aided by kindergarten life, but practical life exercises and certain crafts are also beneficial. As a result, if the teacher demonstrates brushing teeth with precise movements and verbal explanations, the children will repeat the movements and sentences, assimilating the meaning of each word. When viewing an animal, a flower, or a toy up close, the sensorial observation and discovery of the object's sensitive qualities is possible. [...] Auditory sensations lend themselves particularly well to this work because they allow children to intuitively guide their understanding of language meaning: the noise of dead leaves, the wind, people walking... Mimic gestures can be used in conjunction with onomatopoeic sounds to reinforce verbalization with body gestures. Following that, the drawings, clippings with the hands without support, and modeling will aid in the assimilation of concepts and the spontaneous repetition of the words registered by observation. [...] "DP – Recife" (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

Interestingly, the use of terms "master" in the beginning of the text and "teacher" in the end, where the work of "washing the teeth" is specified, emphasizes the figure of the woman in the performance of educational activities associated with the "caring for".

The other subject is titled "Mathematics helps to think and face difficult situations", and it has an image of 10 children in a classroom, four of whom are standing and looking at the teacher in front of the classroom, with their eyes turned to the teacher who is in front of the class, from which only her hand and a small part of what appears to be her dress can be observed. The teacher hands out what appears to be a book to the children, who, for the most part, examine it closely. Because of the apparent lack of space in the recorded environment, the children are very close to each other, which causes discomfort when viewing the image. (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/23/1977, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

The image used in the *Jornal do Comércio* of Amazonas edition differs from the one used in the *Diário de Pernambuco*. The Pernambuco publication takes up the entire second page of the women's section of the *Viver* (Living) column<sup>3</sup> from 10/01/1977 (DIÁRIO DE PERNAMBUCO, 01/10/1977, section B, p. 2).

The text is divided into three sections: the introduction, "Methodologies," and "Goals." According to the introduction, the international movement of mathematics teaching, which began in the 1960s, would still cause controversy because it advocated that the student understands the context and knows the basis for solving mathematical problems.

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<sup>3</sup> Aimed at social, film, TV, and women's issues (DIÁRIO DE PERNAMBUCO, 10/01/1977, section B, cover 1).

In "Methodologies", it is stated: "the fundamental principle of the new pedagogy of mathematics was that the student, through current and involving participation, entered the process of 'construction' of mathematics". It was called "situational pedagogy." Thus, Mathematics Education must "seek a balance between knowledge and know-how, because knowing Mathematics is doing Mathematics" (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

In the final section, based on Zoltan Dienes, it considers the existence of three goals for mathematics teaching: intellectual, informative, and utilitarian, which must include motivation, in addition to the contents and methodology, with a didactic that makes it possible to help a greater number of students (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 10/16/1977, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

According to Valente (2012), Zoltan Paul Dienes was at the forefront of proposals from the "*Centre de Recherches en Psycho-mathématique*" at the University of Sherbrooke, Canada, for a modern program for teaching mathematics to children based on Piaget's theories of psychogenesis development.

Another point to consider is how this news is organized, with the first section bringing texts related to two school subjects: Mathematics and Portuguese Language, respectively, with the clearly prescriptive intention of presenting methodological tips regarding the didactic procedures deemed most appropriate and effective at the time.

There is a connection between the activities described in the article and those suggested by Heloisa Marinho in her book *Vida e Educação no Jardim de Infância* (Life and Education in Kindergarten), where activities that contribute to the child's development are suggested. Field trips, experiences with food, making cookies for snacks, observation of insects, collections of leaves, experiences with water, air, and light, among other things, should be part of Kindergarten education. Because "the educator's choice and organization of educational activities would be carried out in collaboration with the class" (KUHLMANN JÚNIOR, 2000, p. 15).

Both on the cover and on page 4 of the January 25, 1978 edition of the *Caderno*, different articles on the importance of toys were published. The cover text, titled "Happiness in Toys" is divided into four sections: "Toys are not a prize", "One type for every age", "Playing also heals", and "Recreation areas meet needs."

The article, which is divided into four columns, takes up more than half of the page. There is a small image of a girl standing, with light skin and hair up to her shoulder, holding the arms of a doll, also light in color and with very short hair, similar to a very small child, between the upper part of the third column. Both were facing forward, with the girl's body leaning slightly forward and her head turned down, as if she were a mother instructing her daughter on how to take her first steps. The girl is dressed in a dark, knee-length gown and dark shoes (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 1).

Three excerpts are highlighted, with larger fonts, bolded, and separated by horizontal lines in the central columns. The first is at the top: "Toys are considered children's art, and every child carries with them a great creative potential", and the second is in the middle:

The level of sophistication of toys for child education does not matter. In reality, all they want to do is play with all of their toys. These are very important for the overall development of the child, and in many cases, they are true cures for psychic illnesses. In these cases, child psychotherapy encourages the child's creative expression and, as a result, healing (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p.1).

The third highlight, at the bottom of the page, states: "It doesn't matter if you break an expensive or cheap toy for a child; it's part of their development". The article discusses the importance of toys for the "physical and mental development of children", regardless of their monetary value, and recommends certain toys based on the ages of the children, because toys, according to psychologists and pedagogues, have a "formative and pedagogical" character. Early childhood children should have "sensory" toys; for children aged one to three years, toys that aid in "physical development" and reduce "aggression" are recommended in addition to sensory toys. For children aged two to four years, toys are recommended to assist in the "development of motor coordination", for those aged five to seven years, "assembling and disassembling games" and "imitation and role-playing". Toys that promote "social behavior" are recommended for children aged seven to nine years old, "electricity concepts" for children aged eight to ten years old, "computer games" for children aged ten to twelve, and toys whose operation requires attention for older children (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 1).

An intriguing issue is the defense of "gendered dolls for boys and girls", claiming that the dolls represent the "nuclear family" and that children must have access to all types of toys, including weapons, in order to "express their aggression". The text uses the innovations of developed countries as examples, such as England, which introduced the "doll that will be a mother", and France, which established the "*Ludoteca*" (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 1).

If there are no conditions for purchasing toys, the child should be provided with "plenty of free space" outdoors, objects for pretend play, spaces where they can play without adult interference, and interaction with other children of the same age group (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 1).

The text then goes on to describe the therapeutic nature of playing, such as child psychotherapy. The child can reveal "their problems, conflicts, and anxieties" through playing. The toy has a "symbolic value", as it can treat and cure "children with psychic illnesses". It concludes by emphasizing the importance of playing before a child enters primary school:

When preparing the curriculum for the first grade of Elementary School, the State Coordination of Pedagogical Norms assumes that all enrolled children have already reached a certain intellectual level. How did they get to this point? Through playing with friends in the building or on the street where they live, in bicycle racing competitions, family impersonations, playing Dad and Mom, children's songs taught by parents or in nurseries, hide-and-seek, and many other games that integrate the child into society and develop their reasoning (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 1).

On page 4, there are two texts about children's education in West Germany. The first, "A serious thing called Kindergarten", consists of a summary in bold letters, highlighted with vertical lines at the top and bottom, and two sections: "Protection" and "The importance of toys". The text is illustrated by an image shown above the title, in which two children sit at a table, writing something in a notebook; in the middle of the table, there is a box with unidentified material, most likely school supplies, and part of the arm and head of a third child can be seen (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

According to the summary, in Germany, the importance of toys and children's coexistence was officially recognized, so much so that in the State of Hessen, there was a regulation that guided the construction of a toy park for children under the age of six in each land with more than three houses:

The high value that doctors and educators place on children's play and coexistence has long been crystallized in official bodies and ministries in the Federal Republic of Germany. Children of preschool age should also have the opportunity to play with other children of the same age outside of kindergarten. This claim of scientists takes on special significance in large cities, which are generally hostile to children and have streets that are unsuitable for playing.

Some states in the Federal Republic of Germany have already enacted legislation based on these considerations. Ekkehar Gries, the Secretary of Interior Affairs of the State of Hessen, for example, recently signed a regulation containing prescriptions for urban constructions. According to this regulation, every plot of land on which more than three houses are to be built must now include a special area designated for a toy park for children under the age of six (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

According to the first paragraph, the installation of the park may also be required in pre-existing buildings if "necessary for the health or protection of children". According to the regulations, the park cannot be more than 100 meters away from the child's house, it must be wind-protected, and must provide a variety of toys, not just a sandbox that must be renewed annually. In terms of "protection", he believes that parks should be built on quiet streets to avoid accidents like the one that killed a three-year-old boy in Baviera-Nittenau. Because children remained in these areas "until dusk", daycare centers and kindergartens would also need to take these precautions.

The final section, titled "The importance of toys", informs the parents that the Youth Departments had sent them letters emphasizing the importance of toys. However, according to a survey conducted by the Sample Institute in Hamburg, a significant portion of mothers did not consider toys to be important after the age of five. Following the emphasis on the importance of playing for the development of children, subsequent prescriptions emphasize the need for primary education preparation. Thus, the Federation and States Commission for Training Planning in Bonn would carry out the project "Kindergartens for five-year-olds", reporting on "model experiences" begun in 1974, which would facilitate the transition of children aged 5 for primary school, and asking the States to develop pedagogical-didactic conditions in cooperation between kindergartens and primary schools, offering specific training to educators, teachers, and pedagogues (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 01/25/1978, Caderno Feminino, p.4).

The dissemination of information about the German experiences highlighted the importance of having play spaces, such as children's playgrounds. It's worth noting that during the same period, there was a significant increase in the number of playground openings in Amazonas (VASCONCELOS, 2018).

The final text, titled "The Situation of Kindergartens in the F.R.G." presents more information about early childhood education in Germany. Below the article, there is a picture of a child sitting at a table covered in paint and strewn papers (FIGURE 2). The child, most likely a boy, holds a paintbrush in his right hand. The left hand holds a small pot of paint in which he appears to wet his brush, indicating that he is painting. (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 07/09/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

**Figure 2:** News page and image enlargement features a child in painting activity (Elaborated by the authors).



**Source:** Jornal do Comércio, Manaus, July 9, 1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 4. **Collection:** Public Library of Amazonas.

The text is divided into two sections: an introduction, and the second titled "Spielmobil – a complementary success". The first part announces the achievement of goals for the care of children aged three to six years in German kindergartens, as well as novelties in methods and toys; and concludes by stating that, according to Dr. Andreas Mehringer, education within the family is irreplaceable, with kindergarten serving as a supplement to the family:

Kindergarten provision in the Federal Republic of Germany has been improved not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. As an example, consider the development of new toys and teaching methods. These new programs will be tested in no less than 240 kindergartens in a program coordinated supraregionally until 1980.

The goal is quite high: it is about learning to live through playing. After all, forms of social behavior can only be learned in a group.

Nonetheless, the entire educational offer in kindergartens should never be used to replace the family. Kindergartens should be an addition to the family [...] (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 07/09/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

In the final part of the news, the "Spielmobil" is presented, an old bus, with vibrant colors, "like a toy square", loaded with toys, costumes, and props, which went to the squares, sent by the Hanau Youth Department, with employees trained to guide the activities (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 07/09/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

The text emphasizes pedagogues and sociologists defending the need to play. Thus, kindergartens would have an important role in children development, particularly in the learning of social behavior. The text quotes a 1976 report from the Federal Ministry of Youth, Family, and Health, which stated that it was "essential that education within the family be supplemented, approximately from the age of four, with experiences outside the family environment". It also refers to the 1975 report of the Federation and States Commission on Planning and Training:

The model attempts show that the institutional pedagogical offer for children aged three to six years old, particularly five years old, was mostly accepted spontaneously by the parents. Except for a few isolated cases in which personal, family, social, and ideological convictions were decisive, parents accepted a convincing pedagogical offer for their preschool-age children, in the sense of a supplement to family education (JORNAL DO COMÉRCIO, 07/09/1978, Caderno Feminino, p. 4).

We understand that these news presented models that should be implemented in Brazil, influencing local policies through the newspaper, which, in conjunction with national and international ones, made up the reality of preschool education at the time. Even though the articles were secondary in the newspaper space, we noticed an obvious projection of contents that permeate primarily maternity and early childhood education as a consumable product by the Amazonian elite woman.

### Final considerations

The beginning of the expansion of Early Childhood Education in the 1970s appears in the news of *Jornal do Comércio*, in articles about specific training for Pre-School Education teachers, such as the 1<sup>st</sup> Education Meeting of SESI, which took place in 1973, and the Improvement Course in Pre-Primary Education, with an Overview of Work in Kindergarten, which took place in 1974, promoted by the *Preciosíssimo Sangue Normal* School and Gym and the Catholic Education Association.

However, texts related to early childhood education were presented in a privileged manner in spaces aimed at a female audience, positioning child education as a female subject, for mothers and teachers, because those who worked in kindergartens, preschools, and daycare centers were women.

Unlike the feminist press, the column *Mulher e Caderno Feminino*, in the field of duties, is positioned as "traditional women's" publications, similar to women's magazines such as *Claudia* and *Nova*, which were launched between the 1960s and 1970s (LUCA, 2008; 2013).

The female press has a subordinate character in periodicals, because supplements and alternative columns emerged as informative material that did not fit into the daily news, being characterized as complementary material, "in the background"; on the other hand, it provided media expansion, giving it more visibility as part of the restructuring of newspapers, since "the media became commercial companies with economic power after the Second World War" (ROCHA, 2006, p. 2).

As a supplement, "only recreation, never the seriousness of the news" is observed in the female press, and "female presence in advertisements is quite significant". When the woman appears, she is almost always in a position of submission to the man, whether it is due to the power of male charm, the job, or the family" (CAVALCANTE, FLORES, 2016, p. 123).

Furthermore, an ideological perspective based on social and historically constructed constraints on what the role of women in society should be is exposed. It is a vehicle for connecting an idealized woman's ideas.

There is a predominance of news related to maternalism, a manipulation of contents that shaped the Amazonian woman's conscience, whose moral assumptions, linked to domesticity, praised femininity. Women would play an important role in the implementation of a civic-Christian educational model, as evidenced by the significant female presence in philanthropic works at the time (ALVES, 2015).



Thus, through female journalism, we confirmed a concern to educate and inform the modern, bourgeois, middle-class woman about the education of children aged 0 to 7. On the other hand, children's education is secondary, sharing space with a set of other themes perceived as particularly feminine, such as beauty, fashion, health, professional career, sex, and so on (BUIIONI, 2009).

The fact that the news is sandwiched between molds, beauty tips, and other female-related issues demonstrates the newspaper's power of influence, as Campos (2007) examined in relation to women and children in the São Paulo press:

seen as one of the focuses of the cultural life of that time and space and as a vehicle in which it was sought to partially order the reality of everyday life, despite its structural claim to totality, it embodied the discursive norms with greater effectiveness precisely because it often did not say clearly what should be done, as occurred in the explicit pedagogical discourse (CAMPOS, 2007, p. 21).

We understand that the texts published in *Caderno Feminino* and *Jornal do Comércio* of Amazonas' column *Mulher* aimed to educate the reader through representations of women who wanted to educate, with the goal of directly influencing school and family institutions. They were articulated with national and even international news, serving as idea disseminators.

Thus, we wonder why there was no specific space for teachers. Why were school subjects mixed in with women's subjects? We emphasize that this set of news strengthens the bond between women, motherhood, and education. When Rosemberg and Amado (1992) examined a set of studies on women and education published in *Cadernos de Pesquisa* (Research Section), they discovered that female school performance was attributed to the school culture's characteristics of obedience, passivity, or protectionism, as follows:

The articles conclude that educational discrimination occurs not in terms of access, permanence, or female school performance, but rather in the sexual ghettoization of school careers. According to the articles, male students prefer courses with technical and scientific content, whereas female students prefer school trajectories linked to languages and humanities, with a clear goal of being prepared for teaching (ROSEMBERG; AMADO, 1992, p. 63-64).

The articles emphasize the importance of Early Childhood Education and its social need, using developed-country models such as Germany, England, and France as examples. It is clear from these materials that aspects of early childhood education and the needs of the child were valued, because news about the education of children aged 0 to 7 years old were based on the opinions of specialists such as a doctor, teacher, and psychologist, who defended the importance of toys, socialization, and a didactic-pedagogical reform.

Because these texts were located in feminine spaces of the newspaper, the female readers (mothers and/or school workers) and even the male readers (parents/teachers) of these subjects were involved in local, national, and international events, indicating what would be the standard model of framework of women's knowledge at the time of the military dictatorship.

Finally, we consider that this research reveals gaps in the history of early childhood education in Amazonas and contributes to studies related to childhood and childhood historiography.

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