

Profile of the Municipal Trainers of LEEI and teacher identity: an analysis of the Northwest Region of Paraná, Brazil ¹

*Perfil das Formadoras Municipais do LEEI e a identidade docente:
uma análise da Região Noroeste do Paraná, Brasil*

*Perfil de las Formadoras Municipales del LEEI y la identidad docente:
un análisis de la Región Noroeste de Paraná, Brasil*

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Abstract: Investing in the initial and ongoing training of teachers through educational programs that expand their theoretical-practical repertoire on the specificities of language learning and its applications in the social practices children engage in could be a pathway toward their humanization. In this context, this research aims to analyze the profile of municipal trainers in the Continuing Education Program *LEEI* (Reading and Writing in Early Childhood Education) and its implications for teacher identity in early childhood education. To achieve this objective, we conducted a mixed-methods study combining a literature review with a questionnaire (containing open and closed-ended questions) administered to 21 participating female teachers. The data analysis revealed that political, institutional, and personal investments are essential to strengthen collaboration between different generations of teachers. This would ensure the systematization of reading and writing practices that contribute to the humanization and empowerment of children from an early age.

Keywords: Teacher Professional Development; Early Childhood Education; Teacher Identity.

Resumo: Investir na formação inicial e continuada dos professores, em processos formativos que ampliem os repertórios teórico-práticos sobre a especificidade da aprendizagem da linguagem e de seus usos nas práticas sociais que as crianças participam,

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pode ser um dos caminhos para a humanização docente. Nesse movimento, objetivamos com esta pesquisa, analisar o perfil das formadoras municipais do programa de formação continuada *LEEI* e as implicações para a identidade docente na Educação Infantil. Para isso, desenvolvemos esta pesquisa por meio de estudo bibliográfico associado a um questionário com perguntas abertas e fechadas, direcionadas para 21 professoras participantes. A análise dos dados levantados revelou que é preciso investimento político, institucional e pessoal para potencializar o trabalho entre diferentes gerações de professoras, garantindo a sistematização de práticas de leitura e escrita que contribuam para a humanização e a emancipação das crianças desde tenra idade.

Palavras-chave: Formação Continuada de Professores; Educação Infantil; Identidade Docente.

Resumen: Invertir en la formación inicial y continua de los docentes, a través de procesos formativos que amplíen sus repertorios teórico-prácticos sobre la especificidad del aprendizaje del lenguaje y sus usos en las prácticas sociales en las que participan los niños, puede ser un camino hacia su humanización. En este marco, esta investigación tiene como objetivo analizar el perfil de las formadoras municipales del programa de formación continua *LEEI* (Lectura y escritura en la educación infantil) y sus implicaciones en la identidad docente en la educación infantil. Para ello, desarrollamos este estudio mediante una revisión bibliográfica combinada con un cuestionario (con preguntas abiertas y cerradas) aplicado a 21 profesoras participantes. El análisis de los datos reveló que se requiere una inversión política, institucional y personal para potenciar el trabajo entre distintas generaciones de docentes, garantizando la sistematización de prácticas de lectura y escritura que contribuyan a la humanización y emancipación de los niños desde la temprana edad.

Palabras clave: Formación Continua de Docentes; Educación Infantil; Identidad Docente.

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Introduction

Children, as historical and social subjects, in the last decades of the 20th century, based on an accumulated legal, scientific, social, and cultural apparatus, have gained rights, and here we highlight the right to education (Brazil, 1988). To consolidate this achievement, it is essential to ensure adequate spaces and times, diversified resources, as well as qualified professionals, in addition to intertwining knowledge with cultural, aesthetic and scientific experiences. In the midst of these discussions and disputes, some guarantees are non-negotiable for these children from an early age: investment in experiences that they can live, play, feel, perceive, imagine, observe, narrate, question and learn about the meanings present in culture, nature and society (Brazil, 2009). In these relationships with the different phenomena of the world, mediated by the appropriations of others, children participate, communicate and express themselves, that is, they manifest themselves through language and are immersed in written culture, as one of the elements with which they interact, '[...] seeking to appropriate it to better understand the world and relate to it' (Baptista, 2010, p. 2).

Organising teaching practices with the aim of guaranteeing these rights in the direction of their humanisation implies considering children and their needs to be and exist in the world. This requires teachers to systematise teaching and learning actions in such a way as to ensure “[...] children have the best opportunities to build knowledge as active members and subjects of a society marked by literate culture” (Baptista; Melo, 2021, p. 3). In this direction, investing in the initial and continuing training of teachers, in training processes that expand the theoretical and practical repertoires on the specificity of language learning and its uses in the social practices in which children participate, may be one of the ways forward.

In this movement, we are particularly interested in the Reading and Writing in Early Childhood Education Programme (*LEEI*⁶), which is nationwide in scope, within the framework of the National Commitment to Child Literacy, with Decree No. 11,556 of 12 June 2023, as a public policy, in collaboration between the Union, the States, the Federal District and the municipalities. One of the aims of this Professional Development Programme is to qualify and expand the training repertoires of early childhood education teachers, with theoretical and methodological support to promote qualitative experiences for children with language practices. This programme is based on teaching materials from the Reading and Writing in Early Childhood Education Collection (*LEEI*) and is currently presented as a perspective in the continuing education process for early childhood education professionals. It has been collectively developed and proposed since 2013, with alternative experiences in different Brazilian cities. This collection of training notebooks aims to train and qualify early childhood education teachers so that they can ‘develop high-quality work with oral and written language in daycare centres and preschools’ (Brazil, 2016a, p. 29).

Throughout 2024 and 2025, Brazilian states, the Federal District, and municipalities became involved in this proposal, which was guided by the principle that introducing children to the social practices of oral communication, reading, and writing ensures their right to engage with written culture in a meaningful and significant way, as participants in social life. In the northwestern region of Paraná, approximately 24 municipal trainers were involved, and the training course included face-to-face meetings, synchronous studies, asynchronous actions, and tasks carried out via a virtual learning environment, totalling 120 hours of coursework. During this programme, each municipal trainer trained and collaborated with the training processes of a class of trainee teachers.

⁶ Portuguese acronym retained for consistency with the original project name.

In view of this, it is important to answer the following questions: what is the profile of this municipal trainer in the north-western region of Paraná and what are the implications for the constitution of teaching identity in early childhood education?

Thus, the objective of this article is to analyse the profile of municipal trainers in the *LEEI* continuing education programme and the implications for teacher identity in early childhood education. To achieve the proposed objective, the research methodology included a bibliographic study associated with a questionnaire with open and closed questions, sent via Google Forms by email to the teacher trainers, which resulted in a total of 21 municipal trainers participating in the research. The instrument included questions related to the age of the teachers participating in the research; gender; length of service in Early Childhood Education; undergraduate course. For the purposes of data analysis, we organised the discussion into two axes: a) teaching and gender relations; b) training and length of professional service.

Profile of Early Childhood Education professionals in Brazil: historical challenges and current perspectives

We are approaching three decades since the enactment of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law 9394/96 – *LDB* (Brazil, 1996), which represented one of the most significant advances for early childhood education. However, complex challenges remain in terms of its effective implementation. The aforementioned legislation establishes that teacher qualification to work at this stage must occur through higher education in a teaching degree or full undergraduate programme, although it still allows, exceptionally, a secondary school teaching course as minimum training.

Even with this regulation, albeit controversial, the challenges of training and qualifying early childhood education professionals remain one of the obstacles that have persisted over the last few decades. This reality can be explained by the legacy of the presence of different professionals without specific training who worked with young children, in addition to the difficulties in defining the profile of the teacher in relation to conceptions of children, childhood, curriculum, pedagogical practice, and other knowledge that shapes the teaching identity at this educational stage. As Soares and Rosseti-Ferreira point out, redefining the role of early childhood education implies thinking about ‘[...] a new vision of children and also a new conception of professionals’ (Soares; Rosseti-Ferreira, 2020, p. 4).

Martins (2007, p. 2) argues that the formation of a teacher's identity is historically constituted and can be enriched or impoverished, depending on the '[...] process that relates to their pedagogical practice.' The teaching profile is the manifestation of their appropriations that fall on their pedagogical practice, and therefore also on the child's formative processes. Unlike many professionals, teachers do not produce material goods; the product of their work is revealed in the humanisation of their students; their work, their practice '[...]' is interpersonal in nature and mediated by appropriations and objectifications '[...]' (Martins, 2007, p. 5) constituted in social relations. In this sense, the teaching identity is formed by multiple determinations that traverse personal, academic, and professional life, in an interrelation between personal meaning and social significance of their performance, which demands specific knowledge and skills that, when appropriated, mobilise their teaching activity.

The quality of educational work with children under five years of age therefore depends directly on professional training. However, despite the legal advances expressed in regulations, guidelines, parameters, and accumulated theoretical production on the concepts of childhood, learning, and child development, what we observe, in the words of the authors, is a '[...]' abysmal gap between these achievements and the practices carried out in the daily routine of institutions' (Soares; Rosseti-Ferreira, 2020, p. 3).

Since the 1990s, there has been a collective effort, through research, documents and proposals that have been developed in various fields, to provide theoretical and practical support for teacher professional development, in line with historical principles recorded in various documents, especially in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI) (Brazil, 2009). Among the regulations and guidelines, there is a central concern that teachers at this stage organise their pedagogical practices through interactions and games, promoting actions that: introduce children to different languages (verbal, gestural, musical, dramatic); bring them closer to diverse discursive genres; broaden their experiences with narratives, appreciation and interaction with social language practices (Brazil, 2009).

These principles expressed in the DCNEI are linked to the educational goals of the *LEEI* by recognising children as authors, readers and writers, ensuring that children's approach to written culture is meaningful and significant, based on repertoires that broaden the experiences of children and also of teachers, as mediators in this learning process.

In the 2024-2025 edition, the *LEEI* programme was aimed at teachers who work specifically with 4- and 5-year-olds and inspires reading and writing proposals as tools that promote child development. To this end, it provided training materials to teachers, organised

into eight workbooks and an insert, each addressing specific aspects of Early Childhood Education and its relationship with teacher training. Through this programme, the aim was to promote a more reflective and autonomous teaching paradigm among early childhood education teachers, understanding it as a process of cultural appropriation that significantly expands learning opportunities for teachers and children (Baptista, 2023).

The *LEEI* programme can be an opportunity to contribute to the constitution and formation of the profile of early childhood education teachers, attentive to the particularities of children's learning and development processes, engaging them in activities to record, analyse and reflect on their educational actions, contributing to the production of knowledge about professional practice and teaching identity. This identity is formed in a continuous process, fostered by the movement of everyday experiences in schools in constant dialogue with the concepts that underpin teaching and contribute to the challenging task *of being a teacher of children*.

Training is necessary not only to improve professional performance or teaching practices. Training is the right of all teachers; it is an achievement and a right of the population, for the sake of quality public education (Kramer, 2005, p. 224).

Ensuring quality continuing education is one of the goals of *LEEI*, which, instead of presenting preconceived answers or ready-made pedagogical models, aims, in the course of study, challenge ideas, raise contradictions and propose reflections to teachers, calling on them to take their place in Early Childhood Education, whose function is to broaden children's knowledge of the world, promoting their encounter with different concepts, experiences and cultural practices produced historically, such as reading and writing.

The challenge of teaching in early childhood education lies in crossing boundaries between adult time and child time, in ways of perceiving the world as a strategy for building a pedagogy aimed at extending bridges between cultural expressions in the collective processes of learning to give meaning to lived experiences. It is about conquering a place that establishes the transit of language between generations, by crossing boundaries between the ways of producing and sharing it (Brazil, 2016a, p. 36).

To explore and encourage discussions on different topics that guide teaching practice, the *LEEI* Programme, through its teaching notebooks and training process, provides theoretical and methodological references, proposing studies and reflection to foster meaningful and contextualised practices. In addition, the authors of the texts contained in the notebooks emphasise that the programme's proposal is not to instil new methodologies and far-fetched proposals in teachers, but to present new ways of teaching, based on the

experiences and practices of other teachers, as well as bringing them closer to texts and contexts in and from the practices described.

This way of understanding cultural education requires reflection on the responsibility of teachers to broaden children's horizons of life experiences in their daily lives at nursery and preschool through cultural activities. It requires an understanding of the formative and transformative dimension of aesthetic and poetic experiences of language in encounters between adults, babies and other children. These and other reflections proposed in the unit aim to contribute to the understanding and appreciation of teachers' cultural education as a fundamental element for the exercise of teaching in Early Childhood Education (Brazil, 2016b, p. 9).

The guidelines contained in the *LEEI* teaching manuals are based on the principle that reading and writing should be incorporated into the daily lives of young children in a meaningful way, taking into account aspects of their development and, above all, that there should be criteria for the quality of the proposed activities, especially by involving the teacher as an author and paying attention to their training and professional performance. This proposal, by focusing on the cultural training of teachers, highlights the importance of a training process that transcends the mere transmission of techniques and the accumulation of knowledge, valuing the space for authorship and creation of teachers, in order to develop the creative, intellectual and autonomous capacity of professionals (Brazil, 2016b). This perspective is directly connected to the discussion on teacher training in Early Childhood Education, in which the ability to reflect, dialogue and expand knowledge collectively becomes fundamental for the promotion of meaningful and transformative pedagogical practices.

The implementation of the Project in the Northwest Region of Paraná and the profile of Municipal Trainers

The *LEEI* programme was implemented in different Brazilian states and the Federal District during 2024-2025, and its uptake in Paraná was significant, culminating in the participation of 399 municipalities. The training structure involved: state trainers; municipal trainers and trainee teachers. The state trainers and municipal trainers were selected through a public call for applications, with criteria tailored to the specificities of each role involved. In Paraná, fourteen state trainers were selected, each responsible for a group of approximately 30 municipal trainers from a region of the state, covering several municipalities. Each municipal trainer was also responsible for a class of teacher trainees, with an average of twenty to forty participants, throughout the project.

This reveals the significant scope of the *LEEI* project in the state of Paraná, the challenges of reaching this diversity of municipalities, and the training concepts that accompany the teaching identity in Early Childhood Education. In the northwestern region of Paraná, the formation of *LEEI* involved approximately 40 municipalities. In this region, the introduction of the *LEEI* Project (2024-2025 edition) occurred progressively, with the active participation of municipal education departments, regional education centres, public schools in coordination with training universities. The involvement of higher education institutions was essential for teacher training and the dissemination of project guidelines, given that the discussion on teacher training in Early Childhood Education was a continuous process, as it requires clarity of purpose and training direction.

The *LEEI* training programme took place between June 2024 and May 2025 and involved the following activities: a) eight face-to-face meetings, with studies of training courses; b) live streams and synchronous activities for further study; studies on reading and writing in early childhood education; educational experiences and practices; c) asynchronous tasks, via a virtual platform. Each municipal trainer participated in these actions and also developed them with their classes of teacher trainees.

Considering that this municipal trainer occupied, during the programme, the role of training and collaborating with the training processes of trainee teachers in her region, it is important to answer: what is the profile of this municipal trainer in the north-western region of Paraná and what are the implications for the constitution of teaching identity in Early Childhood Education?

To address this research problem, the methodology involved a bibliographic study associated with a questionnaire developed using Google Forms with open and closed questions and sent via email to the teacher trainers. According to Gil (2002, p. 44), 'bibliographic research is developed based on material that has already been produced, consisting mainly of books and scientific articles' and aims to expand studies of the phenomenon under investigation, in this research, the profile of teacher trainers participating in the *LEEI* project.

The initial contact was made through the state trainer, to whom we presented the project and its objective, shared the link to the questionnaire, and requested that it be completed. Lakatos and Marconi (2010, p. 184) state that the questionnaire, as a data collection instrument, 'is constructed by an ordered series of questions, which must be answered in writing without the presence of the interviewer.' For this stage, the group consisted of 24 municipal trainers, of which 21 responded to the questionnaire. Based on Weisheimer (2013), we consider that among the different research tools, the questionnaire is a relatively accessible technique, "providing a process of objectification of social data that ensures the conditions of reliability and validity necessary for scientific work" (Weisheimer, 2013, p. 41). Thus, it is

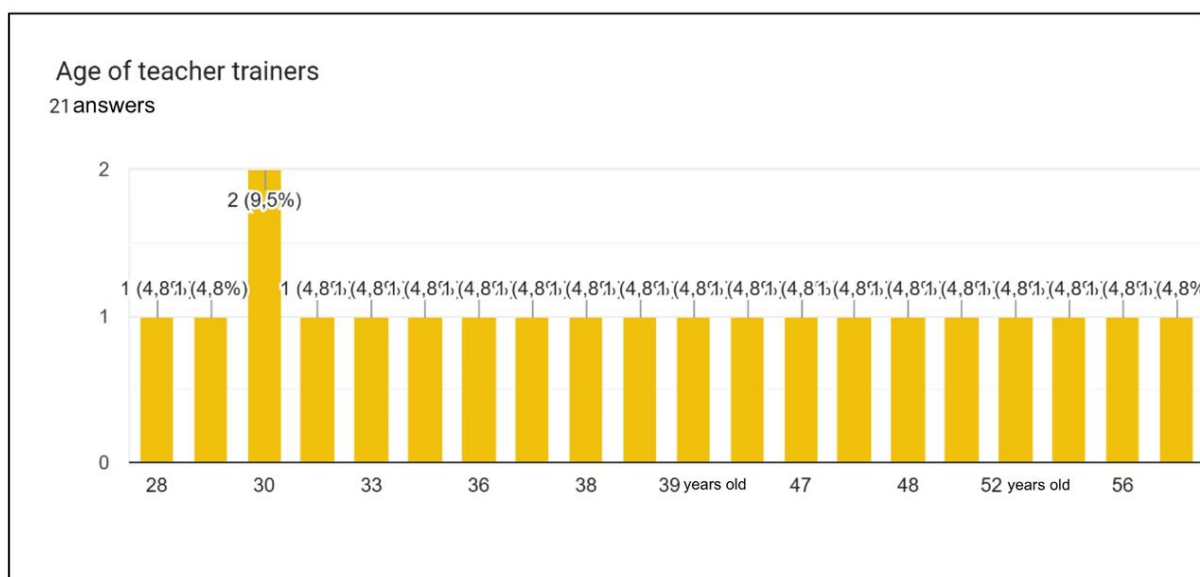
important to clarify that this research was submitted to the university's Research Ethics Committee (UNESPAR/Paranavaí/PR) and was approved under number 84942724.1.0000.9247. All participants agreed to collaborate with the research of their own free will, recording their acceptance in the Free Consent Form.

To this end, we analysed the teachers' profiles using a form available on Google Forms, allowing participants to reflect on the questions posed, namely: a) age and gender of teachers participating in the research; c) length of service in early childhood education; d) length of service in the municipal network; e) undergraduate degree. For data analysis purposes, we organised the discussion into two axes: a) teaching and gender relations; b) training and length of professional experience.

a) Teaching and gender relations

In total, 21 teachers responded to the questionnaire, with the age range of participating teachers varying between 28 and 68 years old, and all identifying as female, as shown in Graph 1 and Graph 2, respectively.

Graph 1 - Age range of participating teacher trainers

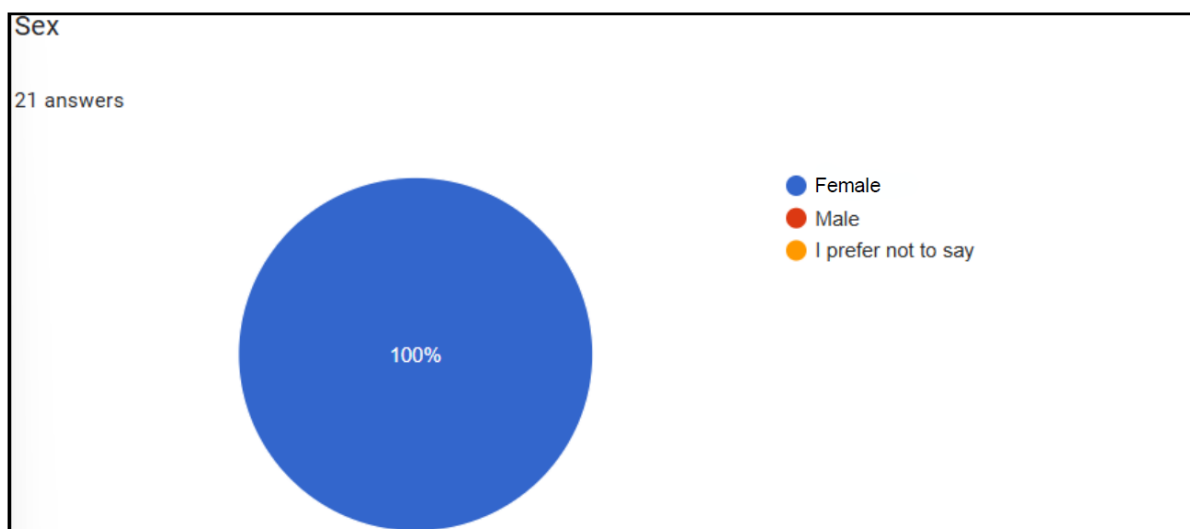


Source: The authors, 2024

This indicates a heterogeneous group in terms of experience and professional background and allows us to observe how different generations of teachers perceive and implement reading and writing practices in early childhood education, influenced by academic training, classroom experiences, and pedagogical concepts. The diversity in age also contributes to an exchange of experiences, providing enriching exchanges that can

favour the construction of more reflective practices aligned with the needs of children in the teaching and learning process. Along with the age range, we found that all research participants are female, as shown in Graph 2, with 100% of them identifying as such.

Graph 2 - Gender



Source: The authors, 2024

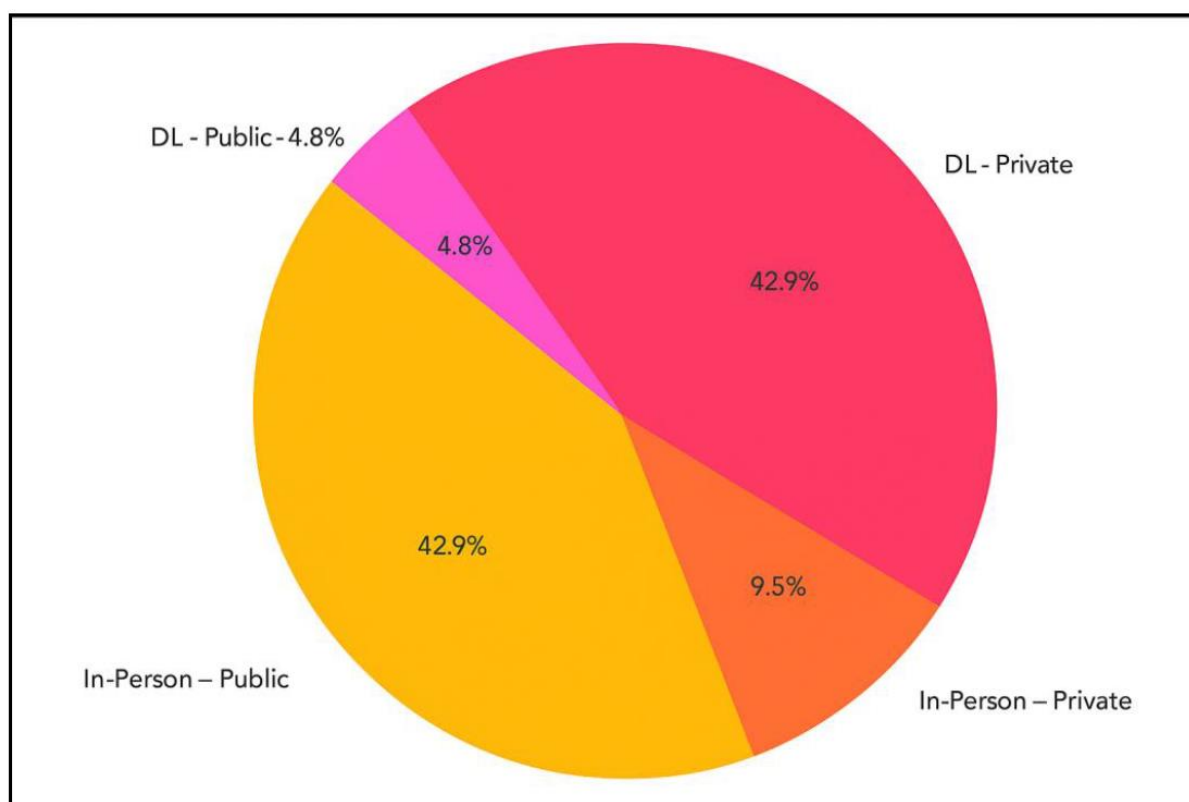
This data reveals that there is still an unbroken stigma surrounding teaching in early childhood education as a profession specifically intended for women. One of the main factors contributing to this prevalence is the historical and social idea that women are responsible for the care and education of young children. As a result, many women occupy different roles at the same time: mother, wife, housewife, and education professional. Teaching has become a suitable field for women, as they naturally possess characteristics that are well suited to the profession: 'the proximity of teaching to the activities required of a mother, caregiving skills, and the possibility of reconciling work at school with domestic work' (Nunes; Nascimento, 2023, p. 2).

This ambiguity between the domestic and professional spheres has accompanied teaching work, especially in early childhood education, with the adoption of terminology such as 'aunts' that is closer to the family environment than the school environment, oscillating between the role of mother/aunt/woman and the educational function (Arce, 2001). This demonstrates the permanence and challenges of overcoming these historical marks surrounding teaching work and establishing professional development policies that can inspire new generations to enter the field of education.

b) Education and professional experience

The pursuit of qualifications accompanies the process of teacher professionalisation. All municipal trainers have degrees in education, and some have more than one degree. As illustrated in Graph 3, 87.5% of the teachers participating in the survey completed their pedagogy course through distance learning, with 42.9% attending public universities and 4.8% attending private universities. Among the other teachers, we highlight that 42.9% of them have degrees in pedagogy from public universities offering face-to-face teaching. The same percentage of degrees were obtained at private universities. In summary, 4.8% of teachers completed their pedagogy degrees through distance learning at public universities.

Graph 3 - Type of Undergraduate Course



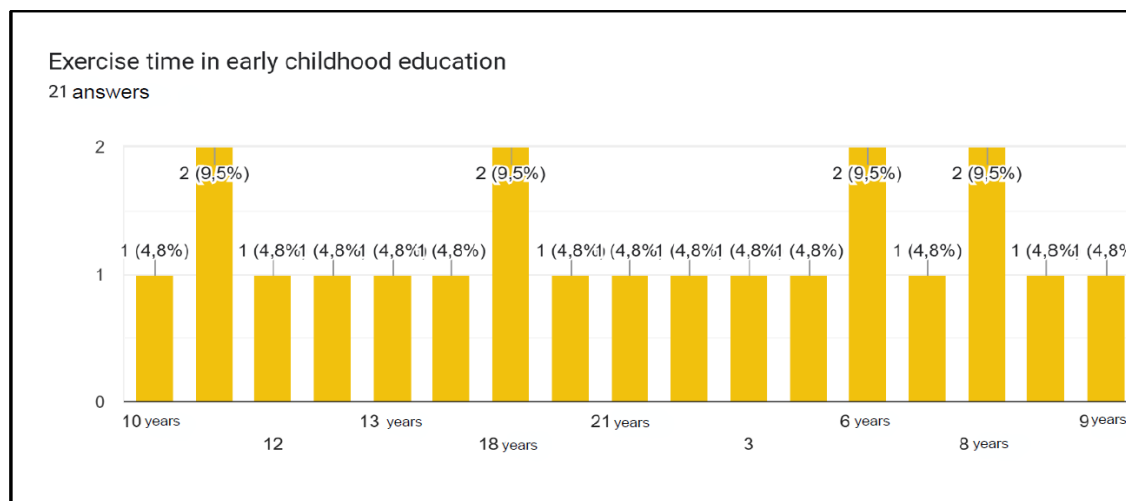
Source: The authors, 2024

Based on this result, we highlight two aspects: teacher qualification and training modality. Regarding the first aspect, all the professionals interviewed have degrees in Education, consolidating their work in Early Childhood Education as professionals trained for the tasks that fall to them as educators, such as the continuing education of teachers in the schools where they carry out their training work.

Regarding the second aspect, the type of training, it suggests that the objective living conditions of many women directly influence their choice of course, their access to higher education,

and their achievement. We reiterate that the need to meet the demands of professional and personal life (Nascimento; Nunes, 2023) drives women to pursue undergraduate courses that offer flexible class schedules and time to perform the required tasks, which may justify the search for distance learning courses that are greater than or equal to face-to-face courses. These aspects also led us to consider the length of time teachers work in early childhood education, as highlighted in Graph 4.

Graph 4 - Length of service in early childhood education



Source: The authors, 2024

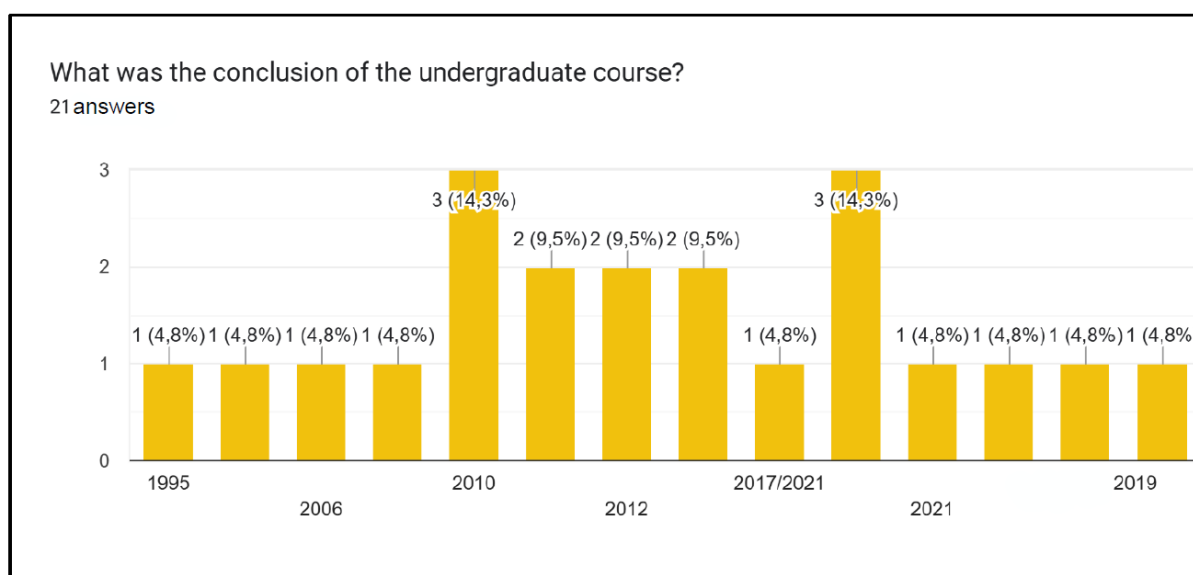
The length of time that the 21 teacher trainers have been working in early childhood education varies, with 4.8% having between 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 21 years of experience, 9.5% having between 6, 8, 11 and 18 years of experience, and two professionals at the beginning of their teaching careers. With this, we emphasise that, in addition to being trained in Pedagogy, most teachers have extensive experience in Early Childhood Education, enabling dialogue between theory and practice in the development of the *LEEI* programme proposals, provided that they are in a constant training process, as the results revealed in Graph 5 suggest, which shows the year of completion of the course. We note that the municipal trainers completed their degrees between 1995 and 2021, with 4.8% graduating between 1996 and 2006. Initial training is one of the formative stages, which allows them to acquire some knowledge related to the specificity of teaching in Early Childhood Education. However, deepening and improving this knowledge requires investment in continuing education. In this regard, *LEEI* becomes an excellent alternative for enriching knowledge and practices related to this educational stage.

In addition to these data, it is important to note that although all of them reported that they work/worked in Early Childhood Education, they held different positions in 2024 during the *LEEI*

training course: four were pedagogical supervisors and two were directors at Municipal Early Childhood Education Centres; nine were pedagogical advisors at Municipal Education Secretariats; two as primary school teachers and four as early childhood education teachers. In view of this, the data reveal that municipal trainers have this length of experience as teachers. However, most do not currently work as teachers in early childhood institutions, which presents a challenge: ensuring that *LEEI* training involves those who work directly with children and that, progressively, their pedagogical practice is constantly reflected upon in the exercise of becoming a teacher of children. This does not mean that qualifying these other professionals who work with early childhood education in the municipalities, whether in the pedagogical team school or administrative offices is not relevant, but the purpose of the programme is to involve, above all, teachers working in this stage of education. Qualifying for the specific nature of teaching in early childhood education requires an identity with the unique characteristics of pedagogical practice, and this is constituted in the training process and continuous professional practice, articulated with different knowledge and skills that define the profile of the early childhood education teacher. This identity is formed and consolidated in this theoretical-practical relationship, in which training repertoires dialogue with professional practice, in unity.

In Graph 5, we observe that most teachers completed their undergraduate degrees more than 10 years ago, a period in which political, economic, and social changes occurred that were reflected in educational processes over the years, that is, ‘[...] social factors determine how this or that type of education is conceived, created, and put into use within a society’ (Scatena, 1996, p. 91).

Graph 5 - Year of course completion

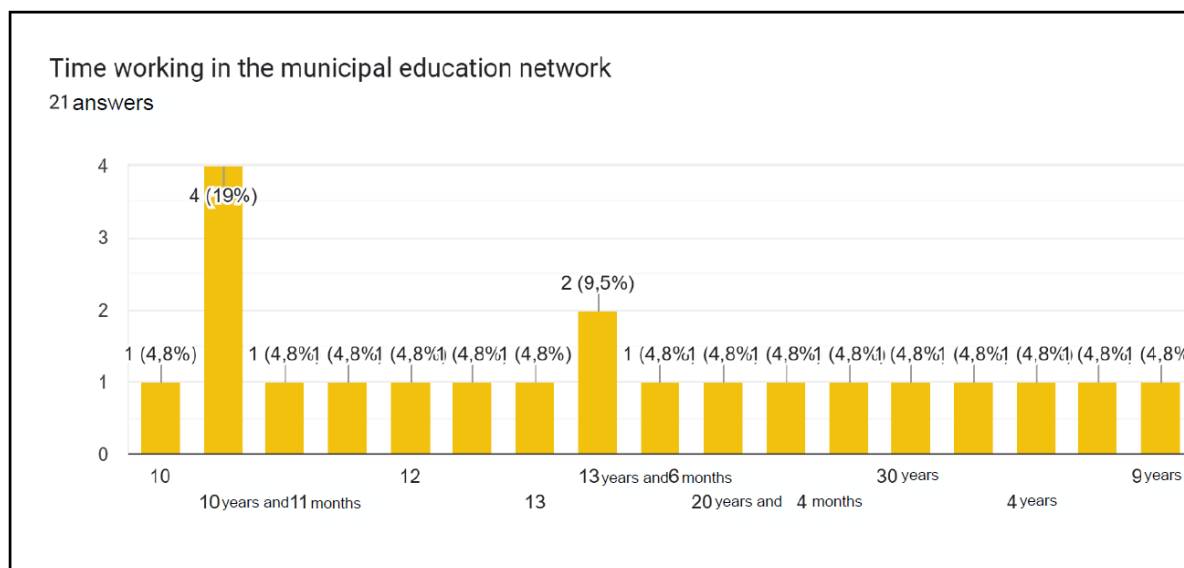


Source: The authors, 2024

In this study, we focus on the current social need for school education: introducing children to reading and writing from early childhood education onwards. We understand that the *LEEI* project proposal meets this need, as it highlights the possibilities of bringing children closer to written culture as a human activity of expression and not as merely technical tasks, especially with children aged 0 to 5 years. We agree with Mello (2006, p. 183) that ‘writing needs to be presented to children as a complex cultural instrument, an object of culture that has a social function.’ Therefore, understanding these processes and the social function of writing requires study, commitment, and intentionally systematised actions, such as the reflections proposed in the *LEEI* project.

Another aspect to be considered in the profile of teacher trainers is the length of service in the municipal network (Graph 6). There is a high percentage of teachers in the Municipal Network who have been working for 10 years and 11 months, resulting in 19% of the total. In addition, 9.5% are teachers who have been working in the profession for 13 years and 6 months. About 15 teachers obtained 4.8%, as they have been working for 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 20 years and 4 months, and also 30 years in the profession.

Graph 6 - Length of service in the municipal network



Source: The authors, 2024

Given the results, it is clear that teachers in early childhood education have longer tenure, reflecting the need for professional and financial stability sought by teacher training. Although we did not include the place of residence of teacher trainers in the questionnaire, we hypothesise that the possibility of living in the municipalities where

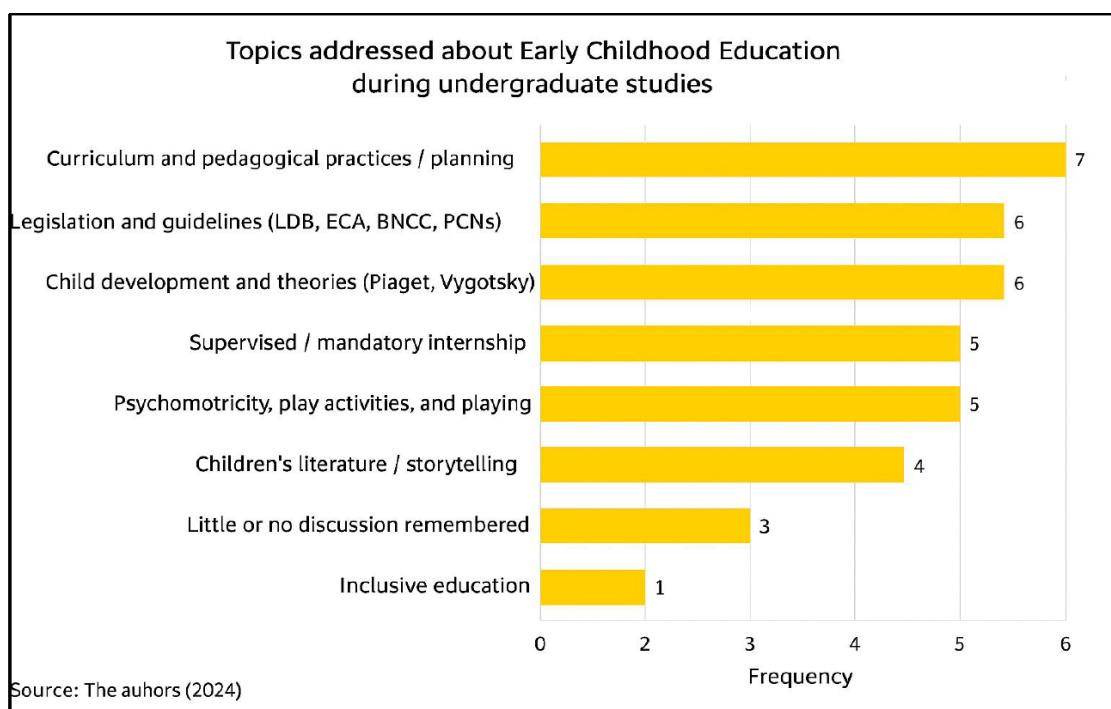
they work as educators may be an important factor contributing to teachers' permanence in early childhood education institutions.

This is reflected in the quality of the actions that will be developed by teachers working in different factors: commuting, support network, family and social relationships, social life, knowledge of local culture and personal financial organisation, i.e., working where they live contributes to professional, social, emotional and financial stability.

In this context, Graph 7 shows the undergraduate course completed by early childhood education teachers, in which the curriculum included basic content for teacher training, such as pedagogical practices and planning, in addition to normative and legislative documents that are guiding criteria in the current educational system.

According to the participating teachers, child development theories were addressed in the curriculum and pointed out by them as relevant to teacher training, as they promote understanding of children's learning and development processes. Other topics such as psychomotor skills, supervised/mandatory internships, inclusive education, recreational activities, play, children's literature, and storytelling were mentioned, as follows.

Graph 7 – Content covered in the Undergraduate Course



Source: The authors, 2024

During their training, we observed that access to content related to Early Childhood Education varies, with only four teachers emphasising children's literature and none of them mentioning reading and writing. We believe that this lack of connection between the content of the undergraduate programme and reading and writing in early childhood education is due to several factors: during the undergraduate programme, this topic was only addressed in relation to the early years of primary education, without covering early childhood education. This results in an absence in the training process of a study and understanding of the social practices of reading and writing in Early Childhood Education and, therefore, content that needs to be included in the continuing education process.

The teachers expressed different understandings and expectations about the *LEEI* programme. Some teachers highlighted the importance of the programme for innovation in teaching, while others mentioned the opportunity to share and gain new knowledge, as well as emphasising the programme's potential to broaden repertoires and perceptions about reading and writing, emphasising the desire to deepen theoretical and practical knowledge about child development and language.

Finally, the teachers also shared their reflections on the challenges of implementing *LEEI*, mentioning the need for greater teacher participation, institutional and family pressure regarding results, and the importance of continuing education to ensure that the proposed practices are effective. Thus, the profile of the teachers reveals experienced professionals who are committed to early childhood education, seeking to improve their practices and contribute to the education of their students in a meaningful way.

These actions contribute to our analysis of the work carried out by these professionals to understand child development and, above all, the way in which they understand and organise their teaching practices in the field of reading and writing. This aspect allows us to observe how different generations of teachers perceive and implement reading and writing practices in Early Childhood Education, influenced by their academic training, classroom experiences, and pedagogical concepts, thus constituting their teaching identity. Age diversity also contributes to an exchange of experiences, providing enriching exchanges that can favour the development of more reflective practices aligned with the needs of children in the learning process. Even though most municipal trainers are not currently teaching in early childhood education, they have worked in this stage at some point in their careers and/or are still involved in training and/or management processes, which means they have a constant need to improve their knowledge of the specificities of pedagogical work with babies and children.

Final considerations

This study showed that the introduction of the *LEEI* Project in the Northwest Region of Paraná has established itself as a training programme capable of challenging historical conceptions of reading, writing and teaching in early childhood education, while expanding the theoretical and methodological repertoires of municipal trainers. An analysis of the profile of these professionals revealed an exclusively female contingent, with a wide age range (28 to 68 years) and a training trajectory marked by a predominance of distance learning courses in pedagogy. This configuration confirms, on the one hand, the persistence of the feminisation of teaching and, on the other, the material mediations that condition women's access to higher education — factors that directly impact the organisation of pedagogical practices and adherence to continuing education policies.

The data collected also showed that, although most participants had more than a decade of experience in early childhood education and in the municipal network, their initial training took place in very different periods (1995–2021), which reinforces the need for continuous updating in light of theoretical and scientific advances in the field. In this sense, *LEEI* proved to be relevant by offering a training programme that values language as a means of human development, promoting experiences that combine science, art and life in the daily routine of daycare centres and preschools. By prioritising critical reflection, dialogue among peers, and recognition of teacher authorship, the programme enables the reframing of previously fragmented practices, shifting the focus from technical early literacy to socially meaningful experiences with written culture.

However, the study also pointed out challenges that need to be addressed in order for *LEEI* to reach its transformative potential: increasing teacher participation; overcoming female work overload; strengthening institutional support networks; and effective coordination between universities, education departments, and educational institutions. The continuity of *LEEI* is a necessary longitudinal strategy to expand the scope of training activities, with the effective participation of teachers working in early childhood education and incentives for them to remain in this educational stage.

In summary, the *LEEI* Programme stands out as a promising public policy by promoting continuing education aligned with the specificities of child development and the demands of a literate society. The studies developed in the Programme allow professionals working in Early Childhood Education to expand and improve their pedagogical practices, equipping them with theoretical and practical principles in the development of oral, reading and writing skills in Early Childhood Education without losing sight of the child and their specific learning needs.

Therefore, in order for the *LEEI* Programme to continue to consolidate itself as a tool for professional teacher development. For the purposes of this article, we emphasise the relationships between the profile and identity of teachers participating in the programme. We highlight the need to advance and deepen the implications of *LEEI* in teaching concepts and practices. However, we understand that its implementation requires political, institutional, and personal investment to enhance collaboration between different generations of teachers, ensuring the systematisation of reading and writing practices that contribute to the humanisation and emancipation of children from their earliest years.

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