

The implementation of early childhood education services in Teresina County (PI): from financing policy to covenant policy¹

*A implementação do atendimento à Educação Infantil no município de Teresina – PI:
da política de financiamento à política de convênios*

*La implantación de la Educación Infantil en el municipio de Teresina - PI:
de la política de financiación a la política de convenios*

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Abstract: This article aims to analyze the implementation of Early Childhood Education within the Municipal Education Network of Teresina, through partnership agreements with community-based, religious, and philanthropic non-profit institutions. This study is based and supported by bibliographic reviews based on documentary research, drawing on scholars such as Adrião and Borghi (2008), Arelaro (2008), Bassi (2011), Gil (2008), among others. The discussion addresses the contributions of the 2007 FUNDEB, the Municipal Education Plan, and the FUNDEB (2020) to the expansion of Early Childhood Education. The study highlights the segment role of Early Childhood Education within the policy of agreements established between the Teresina's educational office (SEMEC) and the institutions in the agreement, through social subsidies destined to those public or private institutions. The findings indicate that FUNDEB and the constitutional 59/09 amendment were significant regulatory milestones for the growth of partnership agreements as a strategy to expand the provision of Early Childhood Education and to fulfill the Plan. However, a decline in the number of enrolled students under such agreements was observed, mainly due to municipalization. Furthermore, the outsourcing of public policies may generate inequalities, weaken municipal management, and foster market-driven interests.

Keywords: Primary Education; Teresina; Implementation; Covenant; Social subsidies.

Resumo: Este artigo objetiva analisar a implementação do atendimento à Educação Infantil (EI) na Rede Municipal de Educação de Teresina, pela via do convênio com instituições comunitárias, confessionais e filantrópicas sem fins lucrativos. Trata-se de um estudo de revisão bibliográfica de base documental que se apoiou em teóricos como Adrião e Borghi (2008), Arelaro (2008), Bassi (2011), Gil (2008), dentre outros. Coloca-se em discussão as contribuições desde o FUNDEB do ano de 2007, o Plano Municipal de Educação até o FUNDEB (2020) para a expansão da EI. O estudo evidencia o

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segmento da EI por meio da política de convênios celebrados entre a Secretaria Municipal de Educação de Teresina – PI e as instituições conveniadas, através de subvenções sociais destinadas a estas instituições. Conclui-se que o FUNDEB e a Emenda Constitucional 59/09 foram importantes marcos regulatórios para o aumento do convênio como estratégia para a ampliação da oferta de EI e o cumprimento do Plano, mas observou-se uma redução no número de matrículas conveniadas, principalmente em razão da municipalização, e que a terceirização das políticas públicas pode gerar desigualdades, fragilizar a gestão municipal e favorecer interesses mercadológicos.

Palavras-chave: Educação infantil; Teresina; Implementação; Convênio; Subvenções sociais.

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la implementación de la atención a la Educación Infantil (EI) en la Red Municipal de Educación de Teresina, a través de convenios con instituciones comunitarias, confesionales y filantrópicas sin fines de lucro. Se trata de un estudio de revisión bibliográfica de base documental que se apoyó en teóricos como Adrião y Borghi (2008), Arelaro (2008), Bassi (2011), Gil (2008), entre otros. Se ponen en discusión las contribuciones del FUNDEB de 2007, el Plan Municipal de Educación y el FUNDEB (2020) para la expansión de la EI. El estudio evidencia el segmento de la EI por medio de la política de convenios celebrados entre la Secretaría Municipal de Educación de Teresina – PI y las instituciones conveniadas, a través de subvenciones sociales destinadas a dichas instituciones. Se concluye que el FUNDEB y la Enmienda Constitucional n.º 59/09 fueron importantes marcos regulatorios para el incremento de los convenios como estrategia para la ampliación de la oferta de EI y el cumplimiento del plan, pero se observó una reducción en el número de matrículas conveniadas, principalmente debido a la municipalización, y que la tercerización de las políticas públicas puede generar desigualdades, debilitar la gestión municipal y favorecer intereses mercadológicos.

Palabras clave: Educación Infantil; Teresina; Implementación; Convenios; Subvenciones sociales.

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Introduction

For a long time, educational services for children in Brazil were linked to philanthropic associations or to social assistance and welfare agencies, with services historically provided by child care institutions. The participation of the State in this context began with public subsidies allocated to private non-profit institutions.

Thus, this article aims to analyze the implementation of Early Childhood Education services in the municipal education system of Teresina, Piauí, based on funding policies and partnership agreements, within a temporal scope covering the years 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, and 2021. This time frame was defined considering that 2008 marked the post-FUNDEB context, following the implementation of the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Enhancement of Education Professionals (FUNDEB) in 2007; 2010 corresponds to the period after the implementation of the Guidelines on Partnership

Agreements; 2014 witnessed the approval of the current National Education Plan (PNE), Law 13.005/2014, valid for ten years from the year of its publication (Brasil, 2014); 2016 refers to the year following the approval of the Municipal Education Plan of Teresina (PME), Law 4.739/2015, focusing on Goal 1, which ensures universal access to Early Childhood Education in preschool for children aged four to five years, and the expansion of Early Childhood Education in daycare centers to reach at least 35 percent of children aged zero to three years by the fifth year of the PME's implementation, and a minimum of 80 percent by the end of the ten-year period (Teresina, 2015); and 2021 is considered as the year following the regulation and enactment of FUNDEB/2020.

In analyzing the data for this study, the following specific objectives were established: (1) to map the Official Gazettes of the municipality of Teresina for the years 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, and 2021, collected through the website of the Municipal Government of Teresina, in order to survey the amounts and values involved in the celebration of agreements with community-based, religious, and philanthropic institutions; (2) to verify whether there was growth in the provision of Early Childhood Education in the municipality under analysis during the implementation of the partnership policy; (3) to identify the entities that signed agreements for the provision of municipal Early Childhood Education in Teresina.

The study was developed as a qualitative and quantitative educational research of a documentary nature, analyzing data available online regarding the provision of Early Childhood Education in the municipality of Teresina, Piauí. According to Gil (2008), documentary research follows the same steps as bibliographic research, with the distinction that the initial step involves exploring a variety of documentary sources. These include unanalyzed primary documents such as official documents, newspaper reports, letters, contracts, diaries, films, photographs, recordings, among others.

In the investigative process to meet the objectives of this article, the first step involved analyzing the documents that supported education policy, both from a macro and micro perspective, including scientific articles, theses, dissertations, extended abstracts, among others, addressing themes such as Early Childhood Education, the municipal education plan, the privatization of education, and FUNDEB. In the second step, a total of 716 Official Gazettes of the municipality of Teresina, Piauí, from the years 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, and 2021, were mapped on the website of the Municipal Government of Teresina. Of this total, only 33 Official Gazettes presented data relevant to the research.

Subsequently, the amounts involved in the celebration of agreements were examined, identifying the expenditures related to Early Childhood Education. The entities that maintain agreements with the municipality of Teresina for the provision of Early Childhood Education

were characterized, and, finally, enrollment data were collected from official sources based on information from the School Census synopses of the selected municipality.

Based on the foregoing, the investigation is structured into the following sections. This introduction presents the research design and the methodological approach adopted. The first section discusses two main topics: “A Brief History of Early Childhood Education,” addressing its validation as the initial stage of Basic Education, the role of the PME, the 2007 FUNDEB, which aimed to finance Early Childhood Education and other stages of education in order to promote equity in provision and improve educational quality, up to Constitutional Amendment No. 108/2020; and “Public-Private Partnerships for the Provision of Early Childhood Education,” which examines the evolution of Early Childhood Education policies in Brazil. This section highlights how the growing demand from social movements for daycare centers led to changes in legislation and educational policies for early childhood. Municipalities began to assume primary responsibility for Early Childhood Education, with the option of establishing agreements with private institutions to address the increasing demand for enrollment and to guarantee access to Early Childhood Education. The text concludes with the presentation of the results, relevant discussions, and, finally, the references.

Brief history of early childhood education

The 1988 Federal Constitution (CF/88) establishes that children up to six years of age have the right to receive care in daycare centers and preschools, a responsibility to be guaranteed by the State. The National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) No. 9,394/96 stipulates that Early Childhood Education is the first stage of basic education and must be divided into two phases: daycare, for children from zero to three years of age, and preschool, for children from four to five years of age (Brasil, 1996).

However, with the expansion of compulsory enrollment in elementary education beginning at the age of six (Brasil, 2006), it became necessary to update the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) to adjust the minimum age for access to preschool. This was accomplished through Law No. 12.796/2013 (Brasil, 2013). In addition to establishing the minimum age for preschool enrollment as four years, this law reaffirmed the obligation of the State to provide free public education to all children and young people between the ages of four and 17. Early Childhood Education is considered essential for the full development of children, as it provides an appropriate environment for cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

Law No. 13.005/2014, which approved the current National Education Plan (PNE) for the period 2014–2024, was the result of a four-year discussion process involving different sectors of society and government. The PNE established as a ten-year goal for Early Childhood Education the universalization, by 2016, of preschool education for children aged four to five years, and the expansion of daycare services to cover at least 50 percent of children up to three years of age by the end of the plan's term (Brasil, 2014).

The PNE (2014–2024) requires that its goals be rigorously followed at both state and municipal levels in order to be effectively achieved. In this context, the correlation between the drafting of the corresponding laws becomes evident, as the goals outlined are consistent with one another. It should be emphasized that the first five goals of the PNE are mandatory in the formulation of the Municipal Education Plan (PME), although there is flexibility to adjust strategies according to the specific circumstances of each municipality.

The PME, as a legal document, is drafted in an inclusive manner, actively involving community participation. This process takes place through forums, municipal conferences, and public hearings. Once formulated, the PME is submitted to the Legislative Branch for review, following its presentation by the Executive Branch. Its subsequent approval and official publication grant it the status of law (Teresina, 2015).

With the implementation of FUNDEB, created in 2007, there was an expansion of resources allocated to Early Childhood Education, ensuring more adequate funding for this stage of basic education. This allowed for investments in infrastructure, teacher training, teaching materials, and other specific needs of Early Childhood Education; however, the amounts transferred were still considered insufficient. Arelaro (2008, p. 60) argues that:

[...] the coefficient for valuing daycare centers and preschools was set below that of the early urban grades of elementary education, which generates a significant difference in expenditure. This occurs because, as demonstrated by previous studies and accounting evaluations, the costs of Early Childhood Education are the highest and cannot even be equated with those of elementary education.

With the increase in resources and their more equitable distribution, it became possible to expand the availability of places in Early Childhood Education, as well as to improve school conditions and ensure the hiring and proper training of qualified professionals.

Constitutional Amendment No. 108/2020 introduced a highly significant change by making the existence of FUNDEB/2020 permanent, whereas previously it had a transitional nature limited to a period of 14 years. This change permanently consolidates the redistributive transfers of resources allocated to basic education, representing a major milestone in the national legal framework.

FUNDEB plays a fundamental role in providing resources for the education sector, being composed of a portion of taxes and constitutional transfers from states, municipalities, and the Federal District. It is also based on the legal provisions for increasing the federal government's share from 10 percent to 23 percent, with this increase to be implemented gradually until 2026 (Brasil, 2020).

Public-private partnerships for the provision of early childhood education

As established in Article 211, §2 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, “municipalities shall act primarily in elementary education and in Early Childhood Education.” In other words, municipalities hold the primary responsibility for providing elementary education and Early Childhood Education, beginning with daycare centers that serve children from zero to three years of age. In this context, daycare centers may be offered by municipal governments either directly or indirectly, through agreements with the third sector. These transfers to municipalities are referred to as social subsidies.

Social subsidies are transfers made to essential public services such as health care, social assistance, and education. According to Article 16 of the Budget Law (Law 4.320/1964), these resources may be transferred to private institutions, provided that cost-effectiveness is demonstrated. This means that the municipality may transfer resources to private institutions if it is more economical than providing the public service directly. These transfers are intended to cover operating costs of both public and private institutions, as long as they have a public character and meet the needs of the population. This constitutional provision aims to ensure access to Early Childhood Education, seeking to serve preschool-aged children and to encourage municipalities to participate in the provision of this level of education (Brasil, 2014).

As seen, there is a clear tradition of agreements between municipal governments and private Early Childhood Education institutions, since most municipalities in the country maintain partnerships with religious, community-based, and philanthropic institutions. From the 1990s onward, this framework was further strengthened.

According to Adrião and Borghi (2008, p. 99), “some of the factors that contribute to strengthening this framework are related to the Funds – Fundef and FUNDEB.” The former prioritizes elementary education and the municipalization of teaching. The latter accounts for the number of enrollments in institutions and the transfer of resources from the Fund to private institutions that have agreements with the public sector.

In Brazil, the allocation of public resources to private initiatives is supported by the Constitution, which, in its education chapter, distinguishes between public institutions,

understood as state institutions, and private institutions. The latter are divided into for-profit and non-profit institutions, with the latter being entitled to receive subsidies from the public authorities, in accordance with Article 213 of the 1988 Federal Constitution:

Public resources shall be allocated to public schools and may be directed to community-based, religious, or philanthropic schools, as defined by law, that: I – demonstrate a non-profit purpose and reinvest their financial surpluses in education; II – ensure that, in the event of termination of their activities, their assets are transferred to another community-based, philanthropic, or religious school, or to the Public Authorities.

As with the 1988 Federal Constitution, the 1996 National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) has undergone updates, and some of these changes concerned the way these welfare institutions were classified, as presented in Article 19 of this law:

Article 19. Educational institutions at different levels are classified into the following administrative categories: I – public, understood as those created or incorporated, maintained, and administered by the Public Authorities; II – private, understood as those maintained and administered by individuals or private legal entities; III – community-based, as defined by law. Paragraph 1. The educational institutions referred to in items II and III of this article may be classified as religious, provided they follow a specific religious orientation and ideology. Paragraph 2. The educational institutions referred to in items II and III of this article may be certified as philanthropic, as defined by law.

More recently, Law No. 13.868/2019 included “community-based” institutions as a third administrative category and made it clear that both private and community-based institutions may be religious and/or philanthropic. This law introduced adjustments to the classification system by amending the wording of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), regulating the legal recognition of community-based, religious, and philanthropic institutions, particularly with regard to their access to public benefits (Brazil, 2019).

Thus, in order to comply with all the guidelines established in the National Education Plan (PNE), Law 13.005/2014, municipalities began, under these provisions, to establish partnerships with institutions and private actors, thereby intensifying the entry of private capital into the municipal education network of Teresina. In the specific context of Teresina, the policy of agreements in Early Childhood Education was implemented as a strategy to expand the number of available places and to guarantee children’s access to this stage of education.

According to Bassi (2011), it is understandable that municipalities, given the high maintenance costs of public daycare centers, which are not fully covered by FUNDEB, and the legal obligation to meet the growing demand of the population for Early

Childhood Education, are encouraged to invest in expanding the use of agreements as a less costly alternative for public budgets, despite the possible limitations in the quality of services provided.

In this way, the agreements signed between the Municipal Department of Education of Teresina (SEMEC) and community-based, religious, or philanthropic non-profit institutions emerged as a means of establishing partnerships and making use of the expertise and infrastructure of these institutions to expand the supply of places in Early Childhood Education. It should be noted that public Early Childhood Education in Teresina, over the years, has gradually undergone a process of municipalization due to various factors. Melo (2020, p. 107) highlights that this process:

[...] beginning with the 1996 National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), Early Childhood Education gradually consolidated its place within the education sector. It can be observed that, even with the approval of the 1988 Federal Constitution, which guaranteed the educational rights of children in daycare centers and preschools, and the LDB/1996, which incorporated it as part of basic education, the decision of the Municipal Department of Education of Teresina (SEMEC) to institutionalize Early Childhood Education under its jurisdiction occurred only in 2007. This political decision was taken by the then municipal secretary of education, Washington Bonfim, as a result of the end of FUNDEF and the beginning of FUNDEB in 2006, which began funding Early Childhood Education. From that point on, there was a considerable increase in enrollments under municipal administrative responsibility, with SEMEC becoming the largest provider of Early Childhood Education in Teresina. This was due to the municipalization of 100 percent of state-level Early Childhood Education and the incorporation of philanthropic and community-based Early Childhood Education institutions that had previously been under agreements with the Municipal Secretariat for Children and Adolescents (SEMCAD).

It is important to highlight that, over the years, these policies and practices have evolved by taking into account community demands, national guidelines, and the specific needs of the municipality. The pursuit of quality Early Childhood Education and the guarantee of universal access are fundamental principles that have guided the policy of partnership agreements in Early Childhood Education in the city of Teresina.

Results

The distribution of public resources through FUNDEB, by means of transfers to the states, the Federal District, and municipalities, represents the transfer of federal funding by the Union to these governmental entities, which, in turn, allocate these resources to

educational institutions. In this way, the government distributes the resources according to specific criteria established in each agreement with partner organizations.

FUNDEB/2020, as a permanent instrument for financing public education under Constitutional Amendment No. 108 of August 27, 2020, and regulated by Law No. 14.113 of December 25, 2020, allows, according to Article 7, paragraph 3, item II, the distribution of public resources to community-based, religious, or philanthropic non-profit institutions that have entered into agreements with the public authorities to meet educational demand (Brazil, 2014).

This significant allocation of resources to the third sector may raise concerns regarding the availability of adequate funding for the expansion and strengthening of the public network of daycare centers and preschools. Such a scenario may result in an imbalance in the provision of Early Childhood Education, with a possible incentive for the creation of more private institutions and a reduction in investment in the construction and improvement of public daycare centers.

According to the perspectives of Pinto (2007) and Arelaro (2008), FUNDEB plays a significant role in consolidating and strengthening agreements between the public and private sectors, as the Fund enables the participation of private institutions through agreements in the process of resource distribution.

In this regard, the FUNDEB/2020 legislation expressly provides in Article 7 that enrollments in non-profit private institutions under agreements may be counted for the purposes of redistributing the Fund's resources. The article ensures the transfer of resources to these entities, whether community-based, religious, or philanthropic, provided they have agreements with the public authorities (Brasil, 2020).

The non-profit welfare institutions under agreement are considered part of the third sector, establishing partnerships with the public authorities. In the specific case of the city of Teresina, there are 19 entities that have maintained or continue to maintain various agreements with the municipality during the years analyzed (2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2021). These institutions benefit from social subsidies, as shown in Table 1 below, which represents the financial investment allocated by the municipality of Teresina to the partner institutions.

Table 1 – Social subsidies

Year	Amount	Partner Institution
2014	R\$ 2.408.477,64	Nossa Senhora da Paz Foundation
2016	R\$ 2.259.940,80	Nossa Senhora da Paz Foundation
2010	R\$ 1.246.920,30	Tapuia Village Mothers' Club
2016	R\$ 1.089.428,86	Father Antônio Dante Civiero Foundation
2010	R\$ 870.309,89	Santa Maria das Vassouras Mothers' Club
2021	R\$ 862.291,68	Nossa Senhora da Paz Foundation
2008	R\$ 484.726,92	Piauí Women's Defense Center – CDM
2021	R\$ 450.279,04	Father Antônio Dante Civiero Foundation
2021	R\$ 376.066,00	Father Antônio Dante Civiero Foundation
2016	R\$ 193.938,48	Integrated Center for Children and Adolescents Cordeiro do Reino
2010	R\$ 165.656,93	Francisco Falcão de Carvalho Foundation
2008	R\$ 162.278,14	Francisco Falcão de Carvalho Foundation
2014	R\$ 144.000,00	Saint Afonso Rodriguez School
2010	R\$ 127.796,09	Nossa Senhora da Paz Foundation
2010	R\$ 114.977,89	Nossa Senhora da Paz Foundation
2010	R\$ 113.226,80	Nossa Senhora da Paz Foundation
2014	R\$ 98.778,68	Father Antônio Dante Civiero Foundation
2021	R\$ 71.602,83	Piauí Association of the Blind (ACEP)
2014	R\$ 67.500,00	Satellite Social Center– CSS
Year	Amount	Partner Institution
2021	R\$ 62,822.99	Piauí Association of Friends of Autistic People (AMA/PI)
2014	R\$ 60,000.00	Piauí Association of Friends of Autistic People (AMA-PI)
2016	R\$ 54,000.00	Satellite Social Center– CSS
2010	R\$ 43,003.31	Father Antônio Dante Civiero Foundation
2014	R\$ 37,200.00	Piauí Association of the Blind (ACEP)
2008	R\$ 36,604.99	Father Antônio Dante Civiero Foundation
2010	R\$ 31,362.43	Santa Maria das Vassouras Mothers' Club
2010	R\$ 25,365.91	Archdiocesan Social Action– ASA
2008	R\$ 17,265.96	Mother Cabrini Association of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
2014	R\$ 13,000.00	Father Pedro Arrupe Early Childhood School
2010	R\$ 10,959.06	Association of Friends of the Little School of Saint Francisco de Assis
2010	R\$ 9,363.22	Integrated Center for Children and Adolescents Cordeiro do Reino
2010	R\$ 9,295.85	Lutheran Center for Assistance and Education
2010	R\$ 8,868.72	Integrated Center for Children and Adolescents Cordeiro do Reino
2008	R\$ 8,160.91	Saint Afonso Rodriguez Agricultural School
2008	R\$ 7,822.54	Pedro Arrupe Social Center, branch of the National Association of Instruction
2010	R\$ 7,819.51	Mother Cabrini Association of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
2010	R\$ 7,366.23	Saint Afonso Rodriguez School
2008	R\$ 7,037.74	Saint Afonso Rodriguez School

2008	R\$ 5,457.93	Integrated Center for Children and Adolescents Cordeiro do Reino
Year	Amount	Partner Institution
2010	R\$ 2,250.00	Satellite Social Center (CSS)
2010	R\$ 2,250.00	Charitable Association of the Ladies of Cidade Satélite
2010	R\$ 1,620.56	Piauí Association of the Blind (ACEP)
2010	R\$ 1,379.10	Piauí Association of Friends of Autistic People (AMA-PI)

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the Official Gazettes of the Municipality of Teresina (Teresina, 2008; 2010; 2014; 2016; 2021).

Based on Table 1, it is evident that the amount spent between 2008 and 2021 on partner schools totaled R\$ 11,778,473.93 (eleven million, seven hundred seventy-eight thousand, four hundred seventy-three reais and ninety-three cents) in the form of social subsidies. Among the organizations that received the largest amounts in subsidies, the Nossa Senhora da Paz Foundation, a philanthropic non-profit institution, stands out, having received a total of R\$ 5,886,710.90 (five million, eight hundred eighty-six thousand, seven hundred ten reais and ninety cents) during the years 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, and 2021.

Furthermore, according to the research data, this foundation received a significant share of the subsidies analyzed, representing nearly half of the total subsidies during the years studied, equivalent to approximately 49.98 percent of the total. It is worth noting that the subsidies allocated to this institution referred to Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education.

It should also be highlighted that during this period there was a considerable transfer of resources, indicating that, after the full implementation of FUNDEB in 2010, the establishment of mandatory enrollment for children aged four and five, and the approval of the Municipal Education Plan of Teresina in 2015, the municipality expanded its partnerships with philanthropic non-profit organizations. This was done in order to comply with Constitutional Amendment No. 59/2009 and the provisions of the aforementioned Municipal Education Plan.

Still according to Table 1, it can be observed that there was a decrease in the number of partner institutions over the years analyzed. While in 2010, 19 institutions received financial transfers, by 2021 only four entities were granted social subsidies. As a result, the number of enrollments in the private partner network progressively declined, as shown in Table 2 below, highlighting the reduction in the participation of these institutions in educational provision over the years.

Table 2 – Enrollments in Early Childhood Education under Municipal Administrative Responsibility and in Non-Profit Private Partner Institutions in Teresina, Piauí.

Administrative Responsibility	2008	2010	2014	2016	2021
Municipal	21,807	21,993	24,964	22,784	24,847
Non-Profit Private Partner Institution	3,283	3,466	2,741	2,487	187
Total	25,090	25,459	27,705	25,271	25,034

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the Educational Data Laboratory and the School Census, (2008, 2010, 2014, 2016 e 2021)

The data presented in Table 2 show a reconfiguration in the distribution of enrollments by administrative responsibility over the years, with a sharp reduction in enrollments in the non-profit private partner network. It can be observed that between 2008 and 2014 there was an increase in enrollments in the municipal network, followed by fluctuations in subsequent years. This reduction in financial transfers, as evidenced in Table 1, directly reflects the significant decline in enrollments in the private partner network, which dropped from 3,283 in 2008 to only 187 in 2021.

Thus, it can be observed that the Municipal Government of Teresina (PMT), over the years, chose not to continue with the “partnerships,” considering that in 2021 only 187 enrollments were recorded in the private partner network. In order to meet Goal 1 of the Municipal Education Plan (PME), the PMT/SEMEC sought strategies through partnership policies. However, possibly as a result of the fund policy, especially FUNDEB/2020, and the process of municipalization of Basic Education in Teresina, there was a significant decrease in 2021 in the number of enrollments in the private partner network.

Moreover, through the partnership policy, the PMT opens the way for a “defunding” of education, creating room for other forms of privatization in the municipality, which may contribute to the privatization of educational provision, the management of public education, and the curriculum.

It should be emphasized that changes in the legal frameworks of basic education that most directly affect funding policies for Early Childhood Education have had significant impacts on the participation of the private sector in education, particularly regarding the expansion of places in Early Childhood Education. This has contributed substantially to the growth of the partnership-based service model. Such a model has been driving municipal education systems to precarize educational provision, without, however, paying due attention to the quality of school buildings and the minimum conditions required for educational services.

In turn, these new regulatory frameworks surrounding Early Childhood Education also help to explain some of the factors that would induce municipalities to adopt partnership agreements as a strategy to expand provision and comply with legal requirements. In the municipality of Teresina, this reality was no different.

Final Considerations

The main objective of this article was to examine and discuss the process of implementing Early Childhood Education, from funding policies to partnership agreements between the Municipal Department of Education of Teresina and the third sector, composed of non-profit institutions of a community-based, religious, and philanthropic nature. To achieve the proposed objectives, the methodology adopted was the collection and analysis of data through documentary research. This approach relied on the consultation of documentary sources such as regulations, norms, and the Official Gazettes of the municipality of Teresina, Piauí. In addition, summaries of the School Census covering the period from 2008 to 2021 were used, obtained from the Educational Data Laboratory and the School Census – IBGE.

With the aim of understanding public policies related to Early Childhood Education as the result of various social, political, and historical influences, a brief historical analysis of Early Childhood Education in Brazil was carried out. It was observed that until 1988 this educational stage in Brazil predominantly had a welfare character. However, with the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, Early Childhood Education was recognized as a universal right for children from zero to six years of age. This constitutional milestone brought important changes to the field.

One of the most significant transformations was the implementation of funding policies, with the creation of Fundef in 1996 and subsequently FUNDEB in 2007, since these funds constitutionally guaranteed the allocation of specific resources to education. This opened the way for several contributions to Early Childhood Education, such as the increase in available resources, the expansion of provision, the improvement of quality, and the strengthening of the educational nature of this stage. Moreover, Early Childhood Education gained greater visibility and recognition at the national level.

With the implementation of FUNDEB in 2007 and the inclusion of Early Childhood Education in the fund, municipalities began to face a significant increase in the presence of private companies offering educational products. These companies took advantage of the lack of objective conditions for the development, implementation, and evaluation of educational policies, seeking to

intervene in this scenario, which may compromise the quality of education provided, since the interests of private companies are driven solely by market-oriented purposes.

The outsourcing of public policies is a theme that generates divergences both from theoretical and political perspectives. There are those who advocate for the direct provision of these services by the State, whether at the municipal, state, or federal level. On the other hand, some argue that outsourcing may represent an efficient and less costly way of implementing public policies.

Beyond these implications, another noteworthy factor in the research was the increase in enrollments in the municipal network. This growth resulted from the complete municipalization of Early Childhood Education previously under the state network, as well as from the incorporation of all Early Childhood Education institutions belonging to various philanthropic and community-based organizations. Early Childhood Education institutions that had previously been under agreements with the Municipal Secretariat for Children and Adolescents (SEMCAD) were incorporated.

Constitutional Amendment No. 59/2009 and the National and Municipal Education Plans were important milestones in strengthening Early Childhood Education in Brazil and in Teresina. With the amendment, Early Childhood Education became mandatory for children aged four and five, granting greater importance to this educational stage. The plans established guidelines and goals for expanding and improving Early Childhood Education, ensuring quality provision. These measures promoted municipalization, the incorporation of philanthropic and community-based institutions, and the expansion of access to Early Childhood Education and other stages of Basic Education in the city, consolidating Early Childhood Education as a fundamental right. However, it is important to emphasize that, despite educational policies guaranteeing children's access to quality public education and the universalization of preschool for children aged four to five, research shows that such provision most often remains only in official documents.

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