

Impact of playful communication on the mental health of children with educational needs*Impacto de la comunicación lúdica en la salud mental de niños con necesidades educativas**Impacto da comunicação do lúdico na saúde mental da criança portadora de necessidades educativas***Aline Voltarelli^{1*}**

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This study aimed to analyze the barriers faced by children with special needs, particularly deaf children, in educational and playful processes, emphasizing the importance of Libras (Brazilian Sign Language) for their inclusion. The methodology involved a descriptive literature review (2014–2023) in LILACS and SciELO databases, using keywords such as "Communication," "Play," "Education," and "Libras." Results revealed challenges like social isolation, inadequate teacher training, and lack of accessibility in schools and hospitals, despite legal advancements like Law No. 10.436/02. The discussion highlighted the need for playful strategies and professional training to enhance communication and mental health. The conclusion underscores that collaboration among schools, families, and specialized professionals is crucial to ensure inclusive education, emphasizing the pedagogical role of play and Libras in child development.

Descriptors: Communication; Playful; Education; Mental Health; Sign Language.**How to cite this article:**

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Resumén

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar las barreras enfrentadas por niños con necesidades especiales, especialmente sordos, en el proceso educativo y lúdico, destacando la importancia de la Libras (Lengua Brasileña de Señas) para su inclusión. La metodología consistió en una revisión bibliográfica descriptiva (2014–2023) en las bases LILACS y SciELO, utilizando descriptores como "Comunicación", "Lúdico", "Educación" y "Libras". Los resultados evidenciaron desafíos como aislamiento social, formación docente insuficiente y falta de accesibilidad en entornos escolares y hospitalarios, pese a avances legales como la Ley n.º 10.436/02. Se discutió la necesidad de estrategias lúdicas y capacitación profesional para fomentar la comunicación y salud mental. Se concluye que la integración entre escuela, familia y profesionales especializados es esencial para garantizar una educación inclusiva, reforzando el papel pedagógico del juego y la Libras en el desarrollo infantil.

Descriptores: Comunicación; Lúdico; Educación; Salud Mental; Lengua de Signos.

Resumo

Este estudo teve como objetivo analisar as barreiras enfrentadas por crianças com necessidades especiais, principalmente surdas, no processo educacional e lúdico, destacando a importância da Libras (Língua Brasileira de Sinais) para sua inclusão. A metodologia consistiu em uma revisão bibliográfica descriptiva (2014–2023) nas bases LILACS e SciELO, utilizando descritores como "Comunicação", "Lúdico", "Educação" e "Libras". Os resultados evidenciaram desafios como isolamento social, deficiência na formação docente e falta de acessibilidade em ambientes escolares e hospitalares, apesar dos avanços legais como a Lei n.º 10.436/02. Discutiu-se a necessidade de estratégias lúdicas e capacitação profissional para promover a comunicação e saúde mental dessas crianças. Conclui-se que a integração entre escola, família e profissionais especializados é essencial para garantir uma educação inclusiva e de qualidade, reforçando o papel pedagógico do brincar e da Libras no desenvolvimento infantil.

Descritores: Comunicação; Lúdico; Educação; Saúde Mental; Língua de Sinais.

Introduction

In the educational process, it is observed that children with special needs face barriers to communicating and participating in playful activities with other children. These limitations can generate discomfort and isolation. Reflecting on these issues is essential to improve the inclusion and cognitive, social, and mental development of these children¹.

It is important to maintain the innocence of being a child, the simplicity of the individual, and the innocence of life during childhood. In the past, children were marginalized from the family, and only when they reached adulthood were they considered individuals capable of expressing opinions and being respected as human beings. There was no significance in the importance of motherhood, and that moment was limited to raising children, thus justifying the lack of interest in childhood at that time. It began in primitive communities in which everyone had to participate to survive, regardless of age^{2,3}.

In the community, in the neighborhood, the child begins his/her process of integration into the family, participating in socio-recreational, cultural, or religious activities with "hearing" children and adults, and continuing this process at school according to his/her needs. Communication in Libras is expressed through signs that arise from the combination of hand configurations, which are the shapes of the hands that can be from fingering, or possible movements performed by the predominant hand (right hand for right-handed people or left for left-handed people), or by both hands³.

Thus, different words can be formed with the same hand position, but they are produced at different points on the body. The signs may or may not have some movements and may have direction. The content of this research points to the demystification that deaf people do not have sufficient intellectual capacity to be independent and must remain dependent on their families for their entire lives. It is also worth highlighting the existence of a deaf community that defends a deaf culture based on the attributes of communication in the world, because their sensory specificities are recurrent difficulties in perceiving sounds⁴.

Libras is Brazilian Sign Language; it is not universal, it is Brazilian. If it were universal, it would be Universal Sign Language. But Libras is Brazilian Sign Language. ASL (American Sign Language) is American Sign Language. Universal is the alphabet in general, but some letters differ from one country to another.

Articulation points are the places in space or on the body where signs are made. Using facial and/or body expression also contributes to the formation of signs, since intonation in sign language is made by facial expression. This language also uses a system of conventions, which are punctuated by the transcription of signs into Portuguese in capital letters; by finger language (manual alphabet), which is used to express names of people, places and other words that do not have signs, and will be represented by words separated by hyphens; by verbs, which will be presented in the infinitive. Agreements and conjugations are made in space; sentences will follow the structure of Libras, not that of Portuguese, and personal pronouns will be represented



by the pointing system. Like other sign languages, Libras does not have a writing system, being an unwritten language. Due to the lack of its writing system, it is transcribed into Portuguese using words that are equivalent to the meaning of the signs⁵⁻⁷.

Sign languages increase their vocabularies with new signs introduced by deaf communities, in response to cultural and technological changes. Because Libras is the sign language of Brazilian deaf people and their best form of communication, it was important and necessary for it to be legalized, so that it would be recognized nationally by all deaf and hearing people, thus enabling better accessibility for deaf people with the medium. In this way, Libras can be present in the daily lives of the entire deaf community, given that this form of communication was recognized in the aforementioned legislation and given the context outlined above, it is clear that it is not an easy language or one that can be taught quickly and easily; on the contrary, it requires teachers to have a whole range of specific and differentiated knowledge.

Therefore, for Libras to be taught and understood appropriately and with quality by the student, the teacher must understand what is expected of him, what the student's desires and expectations are regarding the possession of differentiated strategies and skills on the part of the teacher, as well as the student's dedication to learning this language.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive bibliographic research, developed through a critical analysis of scientific productions related to the investigated theme. Data collection was carried out through a systematic review of articles indexed in the LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences) and SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) databases, complemented by consultation of institutional documents available on the portals of the Federal Council of Nursing (COFEN) and Regional Councils of Nursing (CORENs). The time frame covered publications between 2014 and 2023, selected for their relevance to the central theme of the research: the inclusion of children with special needs, with an emphasis on deafness and the use of Libras as a communication and learning tool.

To select the material, controlled descriptors were used according to the DeCS (Health Sciences Descriptors) systems, including the terms "Communication", "Playful", "Education", "Mental Health", and "Libras". The inclusion criteria prioritized studies that addressed the communication and educational barriers faced by deaf children, playful strategies for inclusion, impacts on mental health, and related public policies, with emphasis on Law No. 10.436/02 that made Libras official. Studies without a direct relationship with the Brazilian context or that did not present a clearly defined methodology were excluded.

Results and Discussion

Even today, special education is a factor in the development of citizenship, which is based on expanding the experience of society, with access to special education as a

right for all those who need it, and it has always been a process marked by struggles. When working in special education, the teacher must have in-depth knowledge of it. It is important to emphasize that it is a challenge to overcome precarious teaching conditions, inequalities in the distribution of opportunities, insufficient teacher training, low pay, and a lack of resources for effective teaching in early childhood education⁶. In special education, it is necessary to work on learning more enjoyably in the form of games, moving towards the more specific aspects of teacher preparation and training, that is, the so-called special didactics. In this case, to deal with the issue of learning, it is advisable to prepare the professional for something enjoyable and effective, since playing and playing, considering physical education in this process, make it possible to move towards more specific aspects of preparation and training in special education⁷.

Children with disabilities demonstrate some characteristics, such as isolation, intellectual disability, and feelings of inferiority, which often differ from other children. Some difficulties are encountered by special children in the art of playing at school, due to the lack of preparation of the teacher, because he does not have the ideal remuneration to invest in courses and learn how to interact with children, for example, deaf children, to encourage special children to play. In this memorial, the focus was to reflect on the relationship between playing and learning for children with special needs.

Today, there is still a large portion of the deaf population that has not had access to sign language. This is due to social isolation or the fact that the family opts for an oralist orientation by taking the deaf person to a school that does not use this language. It is said that this fact causes, in addition to academic deficits, difficulty and/or impediment in the insertion of these people in the job market. From another angle, if the support is provided by someone in the family, there is a tendency to speak for the other person, reflecting a kind of protectionist feeling, "I live with her, I know what is happening", in addition to the lack of privacy⁸.

It is known that hospitals lack qualified nursing professionals to meet the demand of deaf patients. It is necessary to seek improvements to provide better health care for these patients. However, in Brazil, there have already been major legal advances that guarantee accessibility for deaf people, through a Libras translator and interpreter or a professional who is proficient in Libras. The laws known as the Accessibility Law (No. 10,098/00), the Law that made Libras official (No. 10,436/02), and Decree No. 5,626/05, which regulated the Laws, are significant achievements in favor of the rights of people who are deaf and/or have hearing impairments⁹.

Discussions about the presence of a Sign Language (Libras) - Portuguese Language (Language) Translator and Interpreter in hospitals to assist deaf patients began to gain momentum, with legal grounds, following the publication of Law No. 10,098 of December 19, 2000, which established general standards and basic criteria for promoting accessibility for people with disabilities or reduced mobility, by eliminating barriers and obstacles on public roads and



spaces, in urban furniture, in the construction and renovation of buildings and means of communication^{9,10}.

Living with Libras reveals a splendid world, full of possibilities to see it differently. It shows how limited hearing people are in their ability to see the world. Recognizing the existence of cultural aspects experienced by the deaf community provides important reflections about a population that does not consider itself disabled, although they cannot capture the sound stimuli of the world, but mainly points to our incapacities and deficiencies. The prevention of accidents, both domestic and car accidents, requires special attention to prevent hearing loss. Another important issue is vaccination, which protects the population from viral and bacterial infections, such as meningitis, mumps, and measles. Repeated ear infections can also cause injuries that lead to deafness. Educators must seek and be aware of their role in society and understand it, as teachers, in which it is possible to foresee the improvement of care for younger children, reducing social inequalities as well as suffering as much as possible¹¹.

Conclusion

It is important that in schools, in physical education, games and play are used; these serve as a recreational activity and complement in school in the child's teaching-learning process, as a pedagogical means, it can be a great advance in improving the teaching method. For children in need of support, it is essential that everyone involved in inclusion, including school, family, health teachers, therapists and mediators, and physical educators, work in harmony, intending to meet all the child's educational needs to have relationships with other children and communication by participating in playful activities. From this perspective, knowledge and research also reveal that they are not neutral, requiring debate and controversy to advance, as well as to promote, on the part of professionals, a qualified reception of proposals, resulting in the child with special needs being able to be understood and at the same time not leaving with doubts in the teaching-learning process and having better quality in mental health in childhood and early childhood education.

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