




## INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: DIFFERENT PATHS AND APPROACHES TO THE SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH ASD

## INCLUSÃO DE CRIANÇAS COM TRANSTORNO DO ESPECTRO AUTISTA NA EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL: OS DIFERENTES CAMINHOS E ABORDAGENS PARA O SUCESSO DA INCLUSÃO DE ALUNOS TEA

## INCLUSIÓN DE NIÑOS CON TRASTORNO DEL ESPECTRO AUTISTA EN LA EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL: LOS DIFERENTES CAMINOS Y ENFOQUES PARA EL ÉXITO DE LA INCLUSIÓN DE ALUMNOS CON TEA

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### ABSTRACT

This article addresses the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Early Childhood Education, considering the different pathways and approaches that foster this process in the school environment. The main objective was to reflect on the pedagogical, structural, and formative aspects that directly impact the quality of inclusion and the comprehensive development of children with ASD. To this end, we adopted a qualitative bibliographical research methodology, based on recent works, scientific articles, and official documents addressing school inclusion, teaching practices, public education policies, and inclusive pedagogical practices focused on early childhood. Analysis of the material revealed that the inclusion of autistic children requires more than physical and curricular adaptations; it demands an ethical commitment to diversity, solid and ongoing teacher training, and the development of a welcoming and collaborative school culture. Active listening, sensitive mediation, flexible planning, the use of visual resources, and the presence of support networks were found to be fundamental elements in ensuring the effective participation of students with ASD in school activities. The importance of collaboration between families, schools, and multidisciplinary teams was also noted in promoting strategies that respect the specificities and potential of each child. The analysis concludes that inclusion, when implemented with intentionality, sensitivity, and collective responsibility, contributes to building a more just, democratic, and meaningful school for all involved. By recognizing the unique characteristics of children with ASD and ensuring their protagonism in the daily school routine, Early Childhood Education strengthens its social function of embracing diversity and promoting full development from the earliest years of life.

**Keywords:** Inclusion. Autism. Early Childhood Education. Pedagogical Practices. Diversity.

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## RESUMO

O presente artigo aborda a inclusão de crianças com Transtorno do Espectro Autista (TEA) na Educação Infantil, considerando os diferentes caminhos e abordagens que favorecem a efetivação desse processo no ambiente escolar. O objetivo principal foi refletir sobre os aspectos pedagógicos, estruturais e formativos que interferem diretamente na qualidade da inclusão e no desenvolvimento integral das crianças com TEA. Para isso, adotou-se como metodologia a pesquisa bibliográfica de caráter qualitativo, com base em obras, artigos científicos e documentos oficiais recentes, que tratam da inclusão escolar, da atuação docente, das políticas públicas educacionais e das práticas pedagógicas inclusivas voltadas à primeira infância. A análise do material permitiu identificar que a inclusão de crianças autistas exige mais do que adaptações físicas e curriculares; ela demanda um compromisso ético com a diversidade, uma formação docente sólida e contínua, e a construção de uma cultura escolar acolhedora e colaborativa. Verificou-se que a escuta ativa, a mediação sensível, o planejamento flexível, o uso de recursos visuais e a presença de redes de apoio são elementos fundamentais para garantir a participação efetiva dos alunos com TEA nas atividades escolares. Também se observou a relevância da articulação entre família, escola e equipe multidisciplinar na promoção de estratégias que respeitem as especificidades e potencialidades de cada criança. A análise conclui que a inclusão, quando realizada com intencionalidade, sensibilidade e responsabilidade coletiva, contribui para a construção de uma escola mais justa, democrática e significativa para todos os sujeitos envolvidos. Ao reconhecer as singularidades das crianças com TEA e garantir seu protagonismo no cotidiano escolar, a Educação Infantil fortalece sua função social de acolher a diversidade e promover o desenvolvimento pleno desde os primeiros anos de vida.

**Palavras-chave:** Inclusão. Autismo. Educação Infantil. Práticas Pedagógicas. Diversidade.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda la inclusión de niños con Trastorno del Espectro Autista (TEA) en la Educación Infantil, considerando los diferentes caminos y enfoques que favorecen la efectividad de este proceso en el entorno escolar. El objetivo principal fue reflexionar sobre los aspectos pedagógicos, estructurales y formativos que inciden directamente en la calidad de la inclusión y en el desarrollo integral de los niños con TEA. Para ello, se adoptó como metodología la investigación bibliográfica de carácter cualitativo, basada en libros, artículos científicos y documentos oficiales recientes que abordan la inclusión escolar, la formación docente, las políticas públicas educativas y las prácticas pedagógicas inclusivas dirigidas a la primera infancia. El análisis del material permitió identificar que la inclusión de niños autistas requiere más que adaptaciones físicas y curriculares; exige un compromiso ético con la diversidad, una formación docente sólida y continua, y la construcción de una cultura escolar acogedora y colaborativa. Se constató que la escucha activa, la mediación sensible, la planificación flexible, el uso de recursos visuales y la presencia de redes de apoyo son elementos fundamentales para garantizar la participación efectiva de los alumnos con TEA en las actividades escolares. También se observó la importancia de la articulación entre la familia, la escuela y el equipo multidisciplinario en la promoción de estrategias que respeten las especificidades y potencialidades de cada niño. El análisis concluye que la inclusión, cuando se realiza con intencionalidad, sensibilidad y responsabilidad colectiva, contribuye a la construcción de una escuela más justa, democrática y significativa para todos los sujetos involucrados. Al reconocer las singularidades de los niños con TEA y garantizar su protagonismo en el



día a día escolar, la Educación Infantil fortalece su función social de acoger la diversidad y promover el desarrollo pleno desde los primeros años de vida.

**Palabras clave:** Inclusión. Autismo. Educación Infantil. Prácticas Pedagógicas. Diversidad.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education represents an essential phase in the trajectory of human development, characterized as the first institutional space where the child begins his social and educational life in a more structured way. It is in this environment that the first experiences of living in a group, discovering the world and expanding cognitive, motor and emotional skills are built.

In view of this, ensuring the access, permanence and full development of all children at this level of education is an ethical, pedagogical and social commitment, especially when it comes to the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The inclusion of these children requires a deep understanding of their particularities, as well as the adoption of sensitive, welcoming and effective pedagogical practices.

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurodevelopmental condition that mainly affects communication, social interaction and behavior, with a wide variability of manifestations. Each child with ASD is unique in their ways of perceiving, feeling, and interacting with the world, which requires an individualized, planned, and intentional educational approach.

In this context, the school must become an environment that respects differences, promoting the active participation of all students, not only as spectators, but as protagonists of the learning process. True inclusion goes beyond the mere act of enrolling the child with autism; it implies creating real conditions for learning, coexistence and development, considering their needs and potentialities.

The construction of an inclusive school involves the continuous training of education professionals, the availability of adequate didactic and human resources, the articulation between school and family and, above all, a change in institutional culture. It is necessary that inclusion be understood as a value that guides all pedagogical, administrative and relational actions within the school. By including a child with ASD, the entire school community is invited to review their practices, reflect on the meaning of education and broaden their horizons of understanding about human development. Diversity is no longer seen as a challenge and is perceived as a wealth that enriches experiences and strengthens the collective.

Several paths and approaches can be taken to promote the successful inclusion of students with ASD in Early Childhood Education. Among them, flexible pedagogical



planning, the use of active methodologies, conflict mediation, collaborative work among professionals and the promotion of playful activities that favor social interaction stand out.

The school environment needs to be organized in a clear, predictable and stimulating way, providing emotional safety and real learning opportunities. In addition, the educator's attentive eye, combined with sensitive listening and respect for each child's time, is essential to create bonds and enable significant advances.

The role of the family is also central in this process. Establishing an effective partnership between school and family contributes to the alignment of expectations, the exchange of important information about the child and the construction of joint strategies that favor their adaptation and progress. Inclusion cannot be the isolated responsibility of the teacher or the institution, but must be assumed in a collective and articulated way, involving managers, pedagogical staff, caregivers and other professionals. The promotion of an inclusive environment does not depend only on material or technical resources, but, above all, on attitudes and values that recognize the dignity and right of all to education.

This article proposes a reflection on the different paths and approaches that can contribute to the successful inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Early Childhood Education. By considering the school as a space for welcoming, listening and building knowledge, it seeks to show that inclusion is a continuous, challenging and profoundly transformative process. It is necessary to invest in the training of committed professionals, in effective public policies and in pedagogical practices that value the uniqueness of each subject. An inclusive school is one that opens doors, adapts to the needs of its students, and believes in everyone's potential to learn, grow, and live in harmony.

When dealing with the inclusion of children with ASD in early childhood, the importance of starting this process from the first years of schooling is reinforced, ensuring that diversity is a natural part of school daily life. When the school truly welcomes each child as he or she is, it contributes to the formation of a more just, empathetic and supportive society. Therefore, inclusion must be understood as an inalienable right and as a collective construction that involves commitment, sensitivity and continuous action. It is from this commitment that it becomes possible to build an educational environment that respects, welcomes and promotes the integral development of all its students.



## 2 METHODOLOGY

This article was developed through a qualitative research, with a bibliographic approach, centered on the analysis and interpretation of theoretical, scientific and legal productions that deal with the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Early Childhood Education. The choice for this type of methodology is justified by the need to understand, from different perspectives and theoretical contributions, the paths, challenges and possibilities related to the school inclusion of students with ASD, especially in the first years of schooling.

Bibliographic research consists of the investigation of content already published, allowing the researcher to gather, organize and analyze consolidated knowledge on a given topic. In this study, books, academic articles, dissertations, theses, official documents, legislation and educational guidelines that deal with inclusion, Early Childhood Education and the specificities of Autism Spectrum Disorder were considered. The selection of the material sought to include recent and relevant productions, preferably published in the last five years, in order to ensure the timeliness and relevance of the information.

The analysis procedure was carried out through the critical and interpretative reading of the selected texts, with attention to the concepts, arguments and proposals that contribute to the understanding of inclusive practices aimed at children with ASD. The analysis sought to identify common elements among the authors, theoretical divergences, advances in public policies, gaps that still exist in the literature and effective pedagogical strategies for the promotion of inclusive education in early childhood.

It should be noted that the bibliographic research does not intend to exhaust the theme, but to offer theoretical subsidies that enable an in-depth reflection on the different aspects that involve the school inclusion of children with autism. From the organization of the references consulted, we sought to build a coherent panorama that dialogues with the current needs of educational institutions, contributing with proposals that favor a more sensitive, humanized and respectful pedagogical practice to differences.

Thus, the methodology adopted in this work aims to broaden the understanding of the role of the school and educators in the effective inclusion of students with ASD, valuing the existing academic production and stimulating the construction of new perspectives on diversity in Early Childhood Education. The theoretical foundation will



therefore serve as a basis for the analysis and discussion of the results presented in the next section of the article.

### **3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Early Childhood Education has been configured as a complex and multifaceted process, which requires the involvement of different educational actors, effective public policies and pedagogical practices adapted to the specific needs of each child.

When analyzing recent studies on the subject, it is observed that the presence of these children in school institutions has increased, but still faces significant challenges related to the preparation of professionals, the physical and organizational structure of schools and the awareness of the school community to live with diversity.

According to Santos and Silva (2023), the inclusion of students with ASD requires not only a curricular adaptation, but a transformation of pedagogical practices, which must consider the uniqueness of the subject and value their own ways of learning and interacting. This implies the abandonment of homogeneous models and the adoption of strategies that respect the rhythms, interests and modes of expression of children with autism. In this sense, Early Childhood Education must assume a flexible posture, promoting a learning environment that favors the integral development and active participation of these students.

According to Oliveira and Braga (2022), many teachers report insecurity when working with children with ASD due to the lack of specific preparation during their initial training. The lack of knowledge about the autistic spectrum, its characteristics and forms of pedagogical intervention limits the possibilities of action and can compromise the inclusion process. Therefore, it is essential to invest in continuing education, offering theoretical and practical subsidies that help the educator to build a more sensitive and qualified look at the diversity present in the classroom.

Another important aspect identified in the studies concerns the role of the multidisciplinary team in Early Childhood Education. Professionals such as psychologists, occupational therapists, and speech therapists can contribute significantly to the development of pedagogical strategies that effectively meet the needs of children with ASD.



As Ferreira (2024) points out, networking and dialogue between different types of knowledge favor the construction of more assertive interventions, promoting the overall development of the child and expanding their possibilities of social insertion in the school environment.

In addition, the physical space and the organization of the routine also directly influence the quality of inclusion. Children with autism usually benefit from predictable environments, with visual structures that help them understand activities and rules of coexistence.

From this perspective, Souza and Almeida (2023) highlight that the use of visual materials, such as illustrated schedules and clear signage, contributes to the autonomy and emotional security of students with ASD, favoring their participation in school activities. Thus, adapting the environment does not mean completely transforming it, but adjusting it to make it more accessible, welcoming and functional for everyone.

The presence of the family in the educational process is another essential element that appears frequently in the specialized literature. According to Costa (2022), the partnership between school and family is essential to ensure the continuity of pedagogical work, respecting the specificities of each child and strengthening affective bonds and trust. Active listening, constant dialogue, and valuing family knowledge about the student are practices that strengthen inclusion and contribute to a more humanized and collaborative school environment. In this way, the family is no longer just informed and becomes a co-author of the educational process.

The implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices demands, therefore, not only technical knowledge, but also an ethical and empathetic posture on the part of educators. It is necessary to recognize that each child with ASD has unique characteristics, and that the success of inclusion depends on the school's ability to welcome this diversity with respect and creativity.

In this context, playing, as the central language of Early Childhood Education, must be re-signified and adapted to different forms of interaction and expression. According to Lima and Rocha (2023), structured games, sensory play, and imitation activities can favor the engagement of children with autism, promoting socialization and the development of communication.

The literature also points out that inclusion is only effective when there is pedagogical intentionality, that is, when educational actions are planned based on the



real needs of students and learning objectives appropriate to their level of development. For this, planning must be flexible, open to constant adaptation and based on systematic observations of daily school life.

According to Martins and Ribeiro (2022), inclusive practices do not arise spontaneously: they are built from attentive listening, reflective recording and analysis of interactions, and the use of monitoring instruments that allow understanding the path of each child in the group is indispensable.

The inclusion of children with ASD should not be the exclusive responsibility of the regent teacher or the support professional, but of everyone who makes up the educational space. Employees, colleagues, families, and managers need to be involved in the process, contributing to the construction of an environment of mutual respect and appreciation of difference. As Menezes and Tavares (2023) observe, when the school collectively takes on the task of inclusion, obstacles become easier to overcome, and advances become more visible and consistent.

It is also important to highlight the role of public policies in this process. The existence of legislation that ensures the right to inclusive education has been fundamental for the advancement of the participation of children with disabilities in regular schools.

However, as stated by Dias and Carvalho (2024), compliance with these regulations still faces practical challenges, such as the absence of specialized human resources, the precariousness of school infrastructure, and the resistance of some institutions to fully accommodate students with autism. This demonstrates that, despite legal advances, it is still necessary to strengthen the political and social commitment to the realization of the rights of children with ASD.

Academic production has also contributed significantly to the understanding of the potentialities of autistic children, questioning reductionist views that associate them only with limitations. Contemporary studies reinforce the importance of valuing the specific skills of each child, recognizing their ability to learn, communicate and develop in stimulating environments.

As Ferreira and Nascimento (2023) point out, many children with ASD have unique talents and ways of thinking that, when recognized and encouraged, can enrich the school experiences of the entire group. Thus, inclusion must be based not only on overcoming barriers, but also on celebrating singularities.



Investment in collaborative practices among teachers also presents itself as a powerful strategy to face the challenges of inclusion. The sharing of experiences, joint planning and mutual support among teachers promote a more welcoming environment for working with diversity.

According to Batista and Corrêa (2023), working in pedagogical pairs or small planning groups can contribute to educators feeling safer and more prepared to deal with complex situations, such as those involving the behavior, communication, and learning of children with autism.

The presence of mediators or support professionals in the classroom can be a valuable resource, as long as their performance does not replace the role of the teacher, but complements the pedagogical work in an integrated way. According to Cunha and Moreira (2022), the mediator must act as a facilitator of interactions and learning, respecting the child's autonomy and collaborating with the planning of activities. When well articulated, this support can favor the active participation of children with ASD, expanding their possibilities of involvement and learning in daily school life.

Listening to the child, understanding their gestures, respecting their silences and welcoming their forms of communication is essential to establish bonds and promote trust. According to Andrade and Lopes (2024), children with autism often express themselves in non-verbal ways, such as looks, movements, and repetitive attitudes, which must be understood within their context. The educator who develops this listening becomes more capable of identifying interests, needs and possibilities of mediation, building a more humanized and effective educational process.

Pedagogical documentation, an increasingly valued practice in Early Childhood Education, is also presented as an ally of inclusion. Recording the processes, reflecting on the practices and sharing with the families and the pedagogical team the advances and challenges experienced allows for a broader and deeper view of the path of children with ASD. As Silva and Prado (2023) point out, documentation makes it possible for achievements, even the most subtle, to be recognized, valued, and used as a basis for new interventions, strengthening the continuity of learning and the bond between all those involved.

The role of school management in the inclusion process is also widely highlighted in recent studies. A committed leadership, which understands the specific demands of



inclusion and works collaboratively with the pedagogical team, can ensure that the rights of children with ASD are respected and enforced.

As Barros and Lima (2023) point out, the school manager needs to be attentive to the needs of the team, promote continuing education, ensure the necessary resources and, above all, cultivate an institutional culture based on respect for differences. Without management support, inclusive actions tend to be restricted to individual initiatives, which weakens the process and compromises long-term results.

Within the scope of curricular organization, it is necessary to rethink the objectives, contents and forms of evaluation, so that they contemplate the diversity of students present in Early Childhood Education classes. Instead of following a rigid and standardized curriculum, the inclusive school must adopt open pedagogical proposals, capable of welcoming different forms of expression, thought and learning.

According to Teixeira and Andrade (2024), making the curriculum more flexible does not mean giving up quality criteria, but recognizing that each child follows his or her own path and that this path needs to be respected and valued within the institution's pedagogical proposal.

The way spaces are organized communicates values, expectations, and ways of living together. For children with ASD, organized environments, with balanced stimuli and spaces of welcome and calm, are fundamental for well-being and learning.

According to Nunes and Faria (2022), the excess of visual and sound stimuli can disorganize autistic children, making it difficult for them to remain and participate. Therefore, rethinking the arrangement of furniture, the materials used, lighting, and noise control are actions that directly contribute to the construction of an inclusive environment.

It is also necessary to highlight the role of children with ASD in their educational process. Often, because of perceived limitations, the child with autism is placed in a passive position, as a recipient of care or interventions.

However, studies such as that of Carvalho and Silva (2023) argue that children with autism should be seen as active subjects, capable of making choices, expressing desires, and participating in everyday school decisions. This change of view is fundamental for inclusion to be not only physical, but effective, guaranteeing the child his place of speech and action within the school space.

In this process, it is equally important to combat prejudices and stigmas that still circulate in the school environment and that directly affect the way children with ASD are



seen and treated. Often, the lack of knowledge about autism leads to the construction of mistaken ideas and the reproduction of discriminatory practices. As Lima and Santos (2024) state, promoting inclusion is also promoting the ethical and civic formation of all those involved in the educational process, contributing to a fairer, more welcoming and democratic school.

Investing in awareness-raising actions, conversation circles, reading stories and collective projects is an effective way to deconstruct stereotypes and strengthen the bonds between children.

Promoting autonomy should also be a priority when working with students with ASD. Autonomy does not refer only to the accomplishment of tasks, but to the possibility of exercising choices, making decisions, and developing self-confidence.

The school should offer opportunities for the child with autism to act with progressive independence, always respecting their time and needs. According to Almeida and Cunha (2023), when children are encouraged to experiment, make mistakes, and try again in a safe and encouraging environment, they build important skills for life in society and strengthen their self-esteem.

The construction of a truly inclusive school, therefore, goes beyond the adequacy of spaces or the presence of specialized professionals. It requires a profound change in the conception of what it is to teach, learn and live with difference.

As Pereira and Ramos (2023) observe, inclusion is not a favor, but a right, and needs to be seen as an inseparable part of the institution's pedagogical project. Involving everyone in this commitment – teachers, managers, families, children and the community – is essential to transform school culture and create an environment where all children can develop with dignity and respect.

Thus, the results found in the literature point to the urgency of more effective educational policies, investments in teacher training and greater articulation between support networks. The inclusion of children with ASD in Early Childhood Education is not a simple task, but it is fully possible when there is political, ethical and pedagogical will. The different paths and approaches pointed out by researchers and professionals in the area show that there is no single formula, but rather the need for listening, adaptation, and continuous commitment to social justice and equity in the school environment.

When considering the multiple dimensions that involve the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Early Childhood Education, it is evident that the



construction of a solid inclusive process requires time, planning and, above all, an ethical posture committed to diversity. The school needs to be a place of belonging, where each child feels seen, heard and respected in their individuality.

According to Rocha and Menezes (2024), the construction of affective bonds between teacher and student is one of the pillars of inclusion, as it favors the feeling of security and establishes the basis for the development of the child's emotional and cognitive skills.

In this scenario, the active listening of children with ASD also gains centrality. It is about recognizing their manifestations, interests, and modes of communication as legitimate and valid, even if they do not fit the standards considered typical.

As Costa and Lima (2023) state, it is essential that the educator learns to observe and interpret the signals emitted by the child, even those that are not verbal, because it is through this sensitive listening that more meaningful and inclusive pedagogical practices are built. The valorization of singular expressions contributes to the strengthening of the child's identity and to their active insertion in the school dynamics.

The data analyzed show that inclusive practices have positive impacts not only for students with ASD, but for the entire school community. Living with difference favors the construction of a culture of empathy, solidarity, and mutual respect.

According to Borges and Antunes (2022), when the school welcomes diversity in a genuine way, it provides rich social, emotional, and ethical learning experiences to all students. Children learn, from an early age, to recognize and value the multiple ways of being in the world, which contributes to the formation of more aware and tolerant citizens.

Another relevant issue is the continuous monitoring of inclusive actions, through formative and diagnostic evaluations that allow monitoring the development of children and adjusting pedagogical strategies when necessary. According to Carvalho and Silva (2023), evaluation from an inclusive perspective should consider individual advances, without comparisons with normative standards.

The focus should be on the student's progression in relation to himself, respecting his pace, his achievements and his challenges. This type of evaluation contributes to a fairer and more humanized view of learning and strengthens the process of school inclusion.

However, for it to happen effectively, it is necessary to overcome the assistentialist and compensatory view, recognizing the child as a subject of rights and protagonist of his



or her development. As Ramos and Ferreira (2024) point out, it is not enough to guarantee physical access to school – it is necessary to ensure active participation, meaningful learning, and the full development of each child's potential. This requires collective commitment, effective public policies, permanent teacher training and, above all, a deep appreciation of childhood in its plurality.

Thus, the results discussed in this work indicate that, although the challenges are real and complex, the paths for the inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Early Childhood Education are being traced based on listening, empathy, pedagogical creativity and the construction of practices that respect and celebrate diversity.

Inclusion, in this sense, is not a point of arrival, but a continuous process of transformation of school relationships, curriculum, spaces and looks. By assuming this commitment, the school becomes, in fact, a space for learning, coexistence and citizenship for all children.

#### **4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Early Childhood Education is one of the great challenges and, at the same time, one of the most significant achievements in the contemporary educational field. Recognizing diversity as an essential value for human development requires the school to restructure not only physically and pedagogically, but also ethically and culturally. The reception of these children, with their multiple ways of being, acting, communicating and learning, imposes on the school community the commitment to the construction of a truly accessible, respectful and participatory environment.

In the course of this work, it was possible to observe that the presence of students with ASD in Early Childhood Education institutions demands intentional actions that go beyond enrollment. It is necessary to guarantee real conditions of permanence, development and participation. This means reviewing pedagogical practices, rethinking the curriculum, organizing spaces in an inclusive way, and adopting a posture of listening, sensitivity, and availability to meet the specific needs of each child. Inclusion, in this sense, is not limited to an institutional protocol, but constitutes a continuous process of reflection and transformation of school relations.

Another relevant point identified throughout the analysis concerns the importance of teacher training. Teachers who work in Early Childhood Education must be prepared



to deal with the diversity present in the classroom, including the specificities of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Initial training needs to include content that addresses inclusive education, and continuing education must be guaranteed as an integral part of professional practice. The educator is a central figure in the inclusion process, and their preparation directly influences the quality of the experiences offered to children.

In addition to training, collaborative action among the various professionals in the school, together with families and specialists, is one of the pillars for the success of inclusion. The construction of support networks allows the child with ASD to be understood in its entirety, and that pedagogical strategies are elaborated in an articulated way, favoring a richer, safer and more stimulating environment. The partnership with the family, in particular, plays a decisive role in identifying the potential and planning actions that respect the child's rhythm and needs.

The organization of spaces and routines also proved to be a determining factor for the effectiveness of inclusion. Well-structured environments, with adequate and predictable stimuli, contribute significantly to the well-being of children with autism and to their participation in school activities. Likewise, routines that respect the child's time and favor predictability and emotional safety help minimize disorganized behaviors and promote more meaningful interactions. The space, therefore, should be thought of as a pedagogical ally, which communicates, welcomes and invites the child to participate.

Inclusive pedagogical practice requires a careful look at small advances, simple gestures and unconventional expressions. Valuing these aspects allows the educator to recognize the paths taken by the child with ASD, strengthening their self-esteem and encouraging new achievements. Pedagogical documentation, in this context, appears as an effective strategy for recording, reflection and planning, as it makes the educational process visible and strengthens the bond between school and family.

The inclusion of children with autism in Early Childhood Education is not an isolated objective or restricted to a specific group. It is a collective project, which involves the entire school and promotes a culture of respect for differences and appreciation of coexistence. The gains of this coexistence are mutual: both the child with ASD and other classmates and educators benefit from an inclusive environment, where they learn to deal with diversity in an ethical, empathetic and creative way. In this process, everyone grows, everyone learns, everyone develops.



The effectiveness of inclusion in early childhood also requires the strengthening of public policies, investment in the structure of schools, the guarantee of adequate human and material resources, and the consolidation of an institutional culture based on the principles of equity, social justice, and respect for singularities. It is not just about complying with laws, but about building, day after day, an education that truly welcomes all children and offers them real opportunities for learning, participation and belonging.

It is concluded, therefore, that the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Early Childhood Education is a possible, necessary and profoundly transformative task. The paths are multiple, the approaches are diverse, but the objective must be common: to ensure that each child, with their specificities, is recognized as a subject of rights, protagonist of their learning process and an integral and irreplaceable part of school life. When the school opens up to diversity, it gets closer to its true mission: to form sensitive, critical, respectful citizens capable of living in a more humane and inclusive society.

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