

## NARRATIVE REVIEW AND DATABASE RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S CULTURES IN A PLAYGROUND

REVISIÓN NARRATIVA E INVESTIGACIÓN EN BASE DE DATOS: ENTENDIENDO LAS CULTURAS INFANTILES EN UN PARQUE DE JUEGOS

REVISÃO NARRATIVA E PESQUISA EM BASE DE DADOS: A COMPREENSÃO DAS CULTURAS INFANTIS EM UM PARQUINHO

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### Abstract

This work is part of studies on childhood and aims to present the course of construction of the theoretical and methodological foundation guided by the narrative review of literature and database research. The methodology used is anchored in the database search to locate studies on listening to children in playgrounds, in the construction of selection criteria for articles, and in the analysis of the theoretical and methodological contribution of each study, followed by the complement of the narrative review of literature. The discussion process encompasses the details about the choice of articles, reading methodology, and elaboration of exclusion criteria, as well as the enrichment of the theoretical contribution through the narrative literature review. As a result, the need for complementarity between literature review methods is pointed out. The findings point to the strengths and limitations of narrative reviews of the literature and those based on bibliometric data. It is indicated that technology development conditions research activities but does not determine them. Finally, as a result, it is noted that studies on children in playgrounds depend on transdisciplinary dialogues and point to the playground as a place of compensation for children to play in urban contexts. In this way, the entry of researchers into playgrounds can favor the advancement of scientific research that seeks to

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understand children's cultures, as children express themselves through multiple languages, including play.

**Keywords:** Childhood; Children; Transdisciplinarity; Games; Cultural aspects.

## Resumen

Este trabajo forma parte de los estudios sobre la infancia y tiene como objetivo presentar el curso de construcción de la fundamentación teórico-metodológica a partir de la revisión narrativa de la literatura y la investigación en bases de datos. La metodología utilizada está anclada en la búsqueda de bases de datos para localizar estudios sobre la escucha de niños en los parques infantiles, en la construcción de criterios de selección de artículos y en el análisis del aporte teórico y metodológico de cada estudio, seguido de la complementación de la revisión narrativa de la literatura. El proceso de discusión abarca detalles sobre la elección de artículos, la metodología de lectura y la elaboración de criterios de exclusión, así como el enriquecimiento del aporte teórico a través de la revisión narrativa de la literatura. Como resultado se señala la necesidad de complementariedad entre los métodos de revisión de la literatura. Los hallazgos apuntan a las fortalezas y limitaciones de las revisiones narrativas de la literatura y aquellas basadas en datos bibliométricos. Finalmente, como resultado, se observa que los estudios sobre niños en patios de recreo dependen de diálogos transdisciplinarios y apuntan al patio de juegos como un lugar de compensación para que los niños jueguen en contextos urbanos. De esta manera, la entrada de investigadores a los patios de recreo puede favorecer el avance de la investigación científica que busca comprender las culturas infantiles, ya que los niños se expresan a través de múltiples lenguajes, incluido el juego.

**Palabras clave:** Infancia; Niños; Transdisciplinarietà; Juegos; Aspectos culturales.

## Resumo

Este trabalho insere-se nos estudos sobre a infância e tem por objetivo apresentar o percurso de construção da fundamentação teórica e metodológica pautado pela revisão narrativa de literatura e pesquisa em base de dados. A metodologia utilizada ancora-se na busca em base de dados para localizar estudos sobre a escuta de crianças em parquinhos, na construção de critérios de seleção dos artigos e na análise do aporte teórico e metodológico de cada estudo, seguida da complementação da revisão narrativa de literatura. O processo de discussão abrange o detalhamento acerca da escolha de artigos, metodologia de leitura e elaboração dos critérios de exclusão, bem como o enriquecimento do aporte teórico por meio da revisão narrativa de literatura. Como resultado aponta-se a necessidade de complementaridade entre métodos de revisão de literatura. Os achados apontam para as potencialidades e limitações das revisões narrativas de literatura e das pautadas em dados bibliométricos. Indica-se que o desenvolvimento da tecnologia condiciona as atividades de pesquisa, mas não as determina. Por fim, como resultado, registra-se que os estudos sobre as crianças em parquinhos dependem de diálogos transdisciplinares e apontam para o parquinho como um lugar de compensação para as crianças brincarem em contextos urbanos. Desta forma, a entrada de pesquisadores em parquinhos pode favorecer o avanço de pesquisas científicas que buscam compreender as culturas infantis, pois as crianças se expressam por meio de múltiplas linguagens, dentre elas, a brincadeira.

**Palavras-chave:** Infância; Crianças; Transdisciplinaridade; Brincadeiras; Aspectos culturais.

## Introduction

The focus of this paper is to present the way of construction of the theoretical and methodological foundation guided by the narrative review of literature and database research, in the context of studies about the childhoods in playgrounds in a study developed by Morais (2023), one of the authors of this paper. The relevance of researches about children was strengthened in the international scene with the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), of the United Nations Organization (UNO, 1989). In this context, researchers about childhood themes made efforts towards a paradigmatic change, changing the understanding about the role of children in academic researches. Research about children has weakened and the new paradigm points to research developed with children, who are considered historical subjects, producers of culture and geographically located (Alderson, 2005; Corsaro, 2005, 2009, 2011; Farias, 2019; Francischini, 2020; Friedmann, 2020, 2022; Graue & Wash, 2003; Lopes & Fernandes, 2021; Martinelli Ferreira, 2020; Muñoz, 2006, Sarmiento, 2003; Sousa, 2020; Tebet & Abromowicz, 2014; Tebet & Costa, 2021 ; Trevisan, 2020; Voltarelli, 2021; Wiggers, 2003).

The change in understanding about the role of children in academic researches can be illustrated in the article 12 of the CDC (UNO, 1989), which ensures that children have the right to be heard in all processes that concern them. Theoretical and methodological constructions about children's listening are still present as challenges for researchers, because children have peculiar ways of expressing their voices, which requires from the researcher to have theoretical knowledge about multimethods, sensitivity and creativity. Thus, investigations with children tend to be contextual (Arnott & Wall, 2022; Conte & Cardoso, 2022; Friedmann, 2020, 2022; Gobbi, 2010; Morais, 2023; Müller et al., 2015; Staccioli & Rischer, 2017).

For Corsaro (2011, p. 16), children create culture through a phenomenon called “peer culture”. These cultural constructions occur when children jointly interpret the rules, values and norms of society, creating an “interpretive reproduction” (Corsaro, 2011, p. 10). In this context, social institutions such as school, church, parks, museums, etc. They form what Corsaro (2011, p. 38) identifies as a “global web”.

Childhood can be considered as a permanent category in society, as the stories lived by children remain as memories in adults and the permanence of childhood as a social structure becomes evident in the social structure (Qvortrup, 1991 apud Corsaro, 2011, p. 43). Thus, childhood can be compared to a road on which children live, a generational group subordinate to adults.

With regard to researchers' access to the contexts in which children live, there are spaces that are more open to research and others that have greater difficulties in housing a scientific researcher. Religious institutions are part of this sociological structure called "Global Web" and are part of a field that is difficult to access, since, to enter the field, the researcher needs the consent of the religious leader, families and children. Churches shelter "groups of children about whom society knows little, therefore needing to deepen this knowledge" (Graue & Walsh, 2003, p. 122). In this particular, Bastos (2020) considers that in research with children, the researcher needs to have an investigative stance that consider their multiple childhoods and must seek to understand children's worlds, considering all the places where they establish relationships.

Choosing where to listen to the children becomes relevant, because to hear the children's expressions you need to be in the room with them. In this regard, Corsaro (2005, 2011) develops listening to children in playgrounds, understood as the appropriate place to carry out this approach with children.

In this context, the guiding question of the literature review is as follows: how can children be heard in academic research? To answer this question, the article is structured into five sections: (i) Narrative Literature Review, which deals with this slow and gradual way of building theoretical and methodological support, linked to the trajectory of each researcher; (ii) Mapping of research on the playground as a place of childhood(s) in urban contexts, which records the search path in a database, with Boolean operators and identification of theoretical and methodological contributions; (iii) Children's voices in playgrounds: an interdisciplinary look that presents the theoretical and methodological contribution of each study selected to compose the literature review; (iv) Transdisciplinary reflections in the analysis of the theoretical and

methodological contributions of the selected articles that bring a dialogue between the Transdisciplinarity Manifesto and childhood studies and (v) final considerations.

## **Narrative Literature Review**

The training of a researcher in the educational area occurs in a procedural manner. Bortoni-Ricardo (2008) reflects on this research movement among teachers: “The research teacher does not see himself only as a user of knowledge produced by other researchers, but also proposes to produce knowledge about his professional problems, in order to improve his/her practice” (p. 46). In this context, experiences as a teacher can be the beginning of the training process of a researcher in the educational area. Teaching practice requires readings, discussions, presentations, seminars and participation in study and research groups, both in initial training and in different continuing training practices. These intellectual and collegiate activities provide a cultural heritage that contributes to the construction of the theoretical and methodological support embodied in a narrative literature review (Library Teacher Paulo de Carvalho Mattos, 2005; Rother, 2007).

Based on this longitudinal understanding of the researcher's training, when creating a strategy to answer the guiding question, namely: how can children be heard in academic research? It was decided to point out the playground as an appropriate place for children to listen. In this context, we proceeded with the data collection stage, essential for the discussion in this article. Understood as the first stage of mapping, it presents

The Bibliographic Survey, which aims to collect all references found on a given topic. These references can be in any format, that is, books, websites, magazines, video, in short, anything that can contribute to a first contact with the investigated object of study. It is observed that this option does not have a detailed and specific criterion for selecting the material source, it is enough to deal with the topic investigated (Library Teacher Paulo de Carvalho Mattos, 2005, p. 3).

Subsequently, it was decided to start a narrative literature review, as the construction of the theoretical contribution to the field of childhood studies points to listening to children as a complex task. For Vosgerau et al. (2014), the narrative literature review can allow the establishment of relationships with “previous studies identifying recurring themes, pointing out new perspectives, consolidating an area of knowledge and constituting guidelines for pedagogical practices” (p. 170). Another way of carrying out a literature review is guided by the development of the area of bibliometrics, which is anchored in quantitative measurement practices, with the use of vector models, Boolean operators, processing language “with the aim of improving efficiency” (Vosgerau et al., 2014, p. 173). Teixeira and Ferreira (2019) consider that the literature review makes it possible to analyze the methodological profile of publications that investigate a specific topic and can provide a summary of the evidence related to a specific intervention strategy, through the application of explicit and systematized search methods aiming at a critical assessment and producing a synthesis of the selected information.

Thus, the context of technological development is highlighted, which presents important innovations that also affect the work of researchers, through sophisticated algorithms, not always in understandable language for everyone who works with data platforms and which points to searches guided by strategies conditioned by techniques, with keywords (thesauri) and Boolean operators.

Even recognizing the great contribution of technology to research, there are clear limitations in relying solely on data platforms to build the theoretical support of a research. Understanding the language of the algorithms that guide searches on the platforms and the omission of classic texts from the field of study reveal these limitations. Scientific knowledge is characterized by rigor and methodological clarity (Gamboa, 2007; Gil, 2022; Gonçalves, 2003; Trivinões, 1987). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in some aspects, including the basis of interpretation based on the mathematical quantification of the reality researched, in the case of quantitative research. For Gil (2022, p. 32), in qualitative research, the aim is to “through a non-

mathematical process of interpretation, discover concepts and relationships between data and organize them into an explanatory scheme”. Therefore, when developing a methodology for constructing a literature review based on mathematical models, it is expected that the formulas used are clear, understandable and described in the methodological path.

Therefore, qualitative research needs to record in detail the methodological choices made, including those related to the literature review. However, would it be appropriate to insert and describe in a qualitative research the algorithms used in searching the portals that house the databases? Gatti and André (2019, p. 33), when recording the trajectory of qualitative research in Brazil from the 1980s onwards, point out the context of criticism of “quantitative and economistic approaches, implemented in a reductionist way” supported only by the numerical character of the researches. In this sense, when resuming the questioning elaborated in qualitative research, the search algorithms could be open and described with appropriate language to meet the rigor and clarity inherent to the work of academic researchers (Gil, 2022).

The other limitation of a literature review based solely on database research points to the omission of foundational works in the fields, as, depending on the search strategy developed and employed and the micro response time between the insertion of the search sentence and platform response, relevant work may be hidden. Due to all these technological constraints, we sought to map previous studies by reading authors and journals that constitute a reference in the field of childhood studies. The indications were established based on seminars, research group activities and readings in postgraduate courses. These readings indicated new texts that built the theoretical and methodological contribution based on the narrative literature review, that

does not use explicit and systematic criteria for the search and critical analysis of literature. The search for studies does not need to exhaust the sources of information. It does not apply sophisticated and exhaustive search strategies. The selection of studies and the interpretation of information may be subject to the subjectivity of the authors. It is suitable for the theoretical foundation of articles, dissertations, theses, course completion works (Library Teacher Paulo de Carvalho Mattos, 2005, p. 3).

The narrative review of literature on listening to children was anchored in the understanding that the scientific field of interdisciplinary studies on childhood has been constituted by the efforts of researchers based on knowledge based on different disciplines. The complex nature of this object also impacts the methodological issue, as listening to children in their daily lives arises as a challenge that demands theoretical reflections and immersion from researchers in contexts of interaction with children (Arnott & Wall, 2022; Friedmann, 2020, 2022; Lopes, 2018; Müller & Freitas; Wiggers, 2015; Staccioli & Ritscher, 2017; Voltarelli & Barbosa, 2021).

Alderson (2005) reflects on children's participation in academic research when carrying out a systematic review of international literature. The author states that the 1989 UN CRC “links the rights to enter cultural life to the right to play” (article 31) and highlights that “playful methods can improve children’s research imagination” (Alderson, 2005, p. 433). Arnott and Wall (2022), Corsaro (2011), Farias (2019), Fochi (2019), Friedmann (2020, 2022), Leite (2021), Martinelli Ferreira (2020), Sarmento et al. (2020), Staccioli and Ritscher (2017) and Wiggers (2003) present, in their works, the defense of listening to children in academic research as a political, theoretical and methodological foundation. The aforementioned authors make up the theoretical and methodological framework constructed through the narrative literature review.

Study search strategies at the time of literature review constitute a relevant stage of research and reveal at the same time the researcher's rigor and creative capacity, as well as his intellectual sensitivity to the challenge of understanding his object, as “creativity it is a powerful element of the research process, which is in place from the beginning and cannot be defined a priori, as it depends on the research process” (Gonçalves, 2003, p. 63).

Thus, the literature review methodology adopted is not linked to technological development and the rigor of database platform algorithms, but is open to the location of significant studies carried out by researchers who have theoretical and methodological support that dialogue with the context of cultural production of children in playgrounds.

However, by recognizing the value of technology as an expansion of communications between researchers that “could lead to a sharing of knowledge among all humans, a prelude to a shared planetary wealth” (Nicolescu, 1999, p. 1), the narrative review of Literature was increased by searching the data platform, which will be detailed in the next section.

### **Mapping the researches about the playground as a place for childhood(s) in urban contexts**

In order to expand knowledge about academic productions that refer to the playground as a place for childhood(s), in May 2022, a search was carried out on the portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes), selecting the search by “subject”. The time frame established was the period from 2002 (initial year allowed by this search system) to 2021. Due to the scope of this research, the keywords “children” and “playground” were inserted as descriptors to locate studies. In this search strategy, the Boolean operator used was *and*, forming a sentence combined with two keywords. From these inserted indexes, 77 peer-reviewed articles were obtained, which record the selected words in the titles, abstracts or keywords. The areas of publication of these documents attest to the interdisciplinary nature of academic investigations into childhood, as the database indicated studies in the areas of education, psychology, architecture, sociology, history and geography.

After skimming the 77 abstracts, publications that presented the three characteristics were selected: (i) those developed in spaces known as playgrounds, (ii) those based on listening to the voices of children in playgrounds and (iii) those that reflected about the relevance of public spaces for children's development, totaling 14 texts, as shown in Chart 1.

**Chart 1.** Academic productions about the playground as a place for urban(s) childhood(s)

Authors	Year of publication	Developed in playgrounds	They listened to the children	They recorded the relevance of public spaces
Silva and Bolsanello	2002			X
Medeiros	2009			X
Fiaes, Marques, Cotrim and Bichara	2010	X	X	X
Müller and Moura Arruda	2012	X	X	X
Cotrim and Bichara	2013	X	X	X
Martins and Gonçalves	2014	X	X	X
Santos and Silva	2016		X	X
Dias	2017	X	X	X
Farias and Müller	2017	X	X	X
Pinto and Bichara	2017	X	X	X
Souza and Pinto	2017	X	X	X
Sodré and Santana	2018			X
Campos and Ramos	2019	X	X	X
Lopes, Nobre and Niquini	2020	X		X

**Source:** Prepared by the authors.

Of the selected articles, five did not listen to children, but remain in the literature review because they point out the relevance of playgrounds for children's development. Another exception was the work of Farias and Müller (2017) that was not developed in playgrounds, but remained in the reference because it involved listening to children. Furthermore, the children participating in this research indicate playgrounds and churches as necessary equipment in a city. The selected researches involve listening to children, using different methodological tools, namely: field diary, photo-elicitation, observations of children's games and movements, filming, photographs, drawings, map analysis and interviews. The multiplicity of methodological instruments reveals the complexity of developing research with children, as it is necessary for childhood researchers to capture children's voices that are configured in multilingual languages (Arnott & Wall, 2022; Conte & Cardoso, 2022; Friedmann, 2020, 2022; Graue & Walsh, 2003; Morais et al., 2023; Oliveira-Formosinho et al., 2007; Voltarelli & Barbosa, 2021). When seeking to identify the scenarios and institutions that constituted the spatial scope of the investigations, it was observed that the articles dealt with the relationship

between children and public spaces in cities and schools. The construction of the literature review pointed to a lack of studies on the cultural production of children when playing in churches.

From reading and analyzing the texts, it was possible to point out that the authors Silva and Bolsanello (2002) investigated the relationship between caring and educating from a comprehensive education perspective, taking into account that spaces need to be organized so that children, enrolled in early childhood education institutions, develop. The authors, in this study, cite the playground as a necessary structure for schools that serve children in daycare centers. According to them, “young children need all possible infrastructure that can favor their development, whether they are inserted in the context of educational institutions or not” (p. 31).

Medeiros (2009) reflects about “form, use and social interactions developed between residents of residential blocks with a central courtyard, from the users’ point of view” (p. 181). The article records an important reflection between the interaction of children and adults in public spaces. Throughout the text, the author mentions the word “child” in 10 excerpts that narrate contexts of social interactions in the courtyards of the blocks studied. The presence of children in these places is understood by interviewed residents as an indicator of safety and harmony.

Fiaes et al. (2010) discuss the different forms of occupation that boys and girls established in three public playgrounds in Salvador, Bahia. The researchers indicate that playgrounds are places to play for girls and boys living in urban centers, and there is a relevant distinction between the spaces created for children and spaces that are chosen by them to be stages for their games, as “the places for children are those planned and made available by adults while children’s spaces are those that they themselves delimit and delegate meanings” (p. 32). In observations carried out in public playgrounds, the authors point out “that boys and girls have differences in preference for certain areas, they are generally organized in a segregated way and they play different games” (p. 32).

In 2012, Müller and Moura Arruda recorded children’s opinions about aspects linked to sport and leisure in the city of Maringá, Paraná. In that paper, the authors established three questions for children to answer, namely, “what do you like most

about the city? What do you like least? Do you have any suggestions for Maringá?” (p. 514). The analyzes about leisure and sport issues were not chosen a priori, but after the responses of the children interviewed. The authors note that the right to leisure and sport entered Brazilian society only after the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution, and, in 1990, the Child and Adolescent Statute established, in the legal world, this right for children and adolescents. By interviewing the children, the researchers defend the political rights of participation of this generational group in the processes that concern them.

Cotrim and Bichara (2013) expanded the 2010 research carried out in three playgrounds in Salvador, Bahia. In this new analysis, with a more expanded sample universe, the authors identified 111 occupation events “of external urban space” (p. 388), among which, 91 occurred in five public playgrounds and 20 in spaces not planned for children. For the researchers, “playgrounds are nothing more than the effect of an intention to compensate for the daily restrictions that children encounter in the urban environment” (p. 389). The research indicates that there are differences between the spaces planned for children and the unplanned ones: the former present a certain balance between the occupation made by boys and girls, with adults appearing as those who help children with their games, pushing the swing, for example. In the spaces unplanned by children, the occupation becomes mostly carried out by boys and, normally, they are in interaction with adults who participate in games, such as flying kites.

To identify which school spaces were considered significant for children, Martins and Gonçalves (2014) investigated the daily lives of children at a preschool. The researchers understand that “the child identifies with the space through elements of their culture, through rewarding experiences that take place there and through exchanges with other subjects who share the space” (p. 623). The study indicates that there is an order of preference for spaces, with the playground being the favorite place, followed by the sports court and, finally, the children established the classroom as a significant school space.

Santos and Silva (2016) reflect about the occupation carried out by children in a city designed for adults, Catingueira, in Paraíba. For the authors, in the urban context “spaces for sociability are constructed adult-centrally” and “children are often not consulted or called into debates or the primary decisions that involve their lives” (p. 167). However, children overcome obstacles and occupy, with their games, places originally intended for adult activities.

Dias (2017) investigates the place of children in cities using playgrounds in the city of Barcelona, Spain, as the settings for his investigations. The author seeks to “examine and understand the potential of public spaces, their appropriation by subjects/children and the real role they play in the development of urban childhood” (p. 502). This is an empirical research, using multiple methodological tools, including observation and analysis of photos of the spaces studied. In the paper, Dias (2017) provides a historical review of playgrounds with reference to the pedagogical thought of Friedrich Fröbel (1837), with kindergartens, in Germany and the first records of the term playground (1968), in Chicago and Boston (1885), “when doctor Marie Zakrewska took the idea from Germany to the United States, incorporating toys into these spaces” (p. 507). The arrival of these spaces specialized in serving children in Brazil took place in 1930, in São Paulo, when Mario de Andrade was Secretary of Culture. For Dias, the objective of the playground, in the urban context, should be to “foster the well-being and physical, cognitive and social development of children through outdoor play, in contact with nature, combining its main benefits: health, leisure, culture, education, socialization and citizenship” (p. 508).

In 2017, Farias and Müller published a paper proposing a discussion about the city as a space for childhood(s). This publication becomes especially significant for this study as it maintains some points of approximation with the research in production regarding the debate on the role of children in the construction of data and the fact that it deals with children living in Brasília-DF. One of the methodological techniques adopted by the researchers, photo-elicitation, pointed out that the participating children indicate some places as relevant to a city, which can be observed in the authors' description of this representation. “The wooden blocks and other objects represented the macro

landscape of a city, which was composed of social devices, such as: school, church, museums, parks, playgrounds and means of transportation” (p. 270). Thus, it is clear that the playground, for children, constitutes a place of play and coexistence, worthy of being represented in their ideas about cities, as well as churches.

The academic investigation by Pinto and Bichara (2017) aimed to identify children's suggestions for improving the public spaces in which they played in Salvador, Bahia. The authors advocate the right of children to be heard in the processes that concern them and point out that “the majority of them has never been heard by adults about their opinion regarding what they would like to exist in their community and they discredit that one day they will be consulted” (p. 30). As a result, the children point out that there needs to be more public safety and expansion of the areas designated for their games.

Souza and Pinto (2017) discuss the development of creative games in public parks in Salvador, Bahia. The authors consider that the concept of “creativity” applies to all variations of games that rely on an original version. For them, “playing takes place in what is called the Play Zone, which has characteristic elements: the child and their subjectivity, the geographic space in which they are inserted and the temporal space” (p. 408). From observations of the children's experiences in a playground that was being renovated, it was noticed that, when they felt safe with the playground equipment, the children were able to play, demonstrating more creativity. Thus, the authors consider the need for investments in the maintenance of these public equipment.

Sodré and Santana (2018) examined the regulations of the Ministry of Education that dealt with the physical spaces of early childhood education schools. Through a bibliographic survey carried out on the Capes portal, the authors found 11 studies about the relationship between physical space and pedagogical practices experienced in early childhood education schools. In only three of these studies, children were interviewed and their statements indicate that the park and outdoor areas are their favorite places.

In the city of Santa Maria, in Rio Grande do Sul, Campos and Ramos (2019) carried out research and presented the cultural productions that 36-month-old children created

in the context of free play in some school environments, including the playground. The methodology was guided by the ethnographic approach and the data was constructed through observations, filming and notes in the field diary. According to the authors, “in situations of playing with age peers, children construct, negotiate and share meanings, indicating understandings of relationships and social roles”, revealing the playground as a rich place in the production of peer culture (p. 1).

In 2020, there is an experience report about a university extension action that recorded the involvement of the entire school community in the construction of a playground for a public preschool in Diamantina, Minas Gerais. Lopes et al. (2020) indicate that the action of organizing the use of alternative materials to create a playground occurred due to the “absence of appropriate spaces that would encourage the playing and body movement of young children spontaneously” (p. 217). Collective work resulted in a more pleasant environment for children and the strengthening of the culture of movement in the school space.

The mapping and the analysis of these researches indicated that nine articles record the efforts of researchers in listening to children. Such investigations with the participation of children depend on a methodological architecture that is capable of listening to children's voices through procedures that respect the forms of communication constructed by them, namely: the drawing, the games, the sculptures, the interactions and the speeches expressed during symbolic games (Alderson, 2005; Arnott & Wall, 2022; Friedmann, 2020, 2022; ONU, 1989; Wiggers, 2003). Thus, the daily life of the childhoods and the games that are built in it become privileged habitus to develop children's listening strategies (Carvalho & Fochi, 2017; Certeau, 1994; Corsaro, 2011; Farias, 2019; Fochi, 2019; Leite, 2021; Martilnelli Ferreira, 2020; Müller et al., 2003, 2015).

Thus, based on the studies of the theorists in question, the research is anchored in two procedures for constructing a literature review, namely, the narrative literature review and the database search. The choice of the research field is justified by the lack of studies on children and their cultural productions in churches, which is why the playground of a religious institution is the locus of this research. It is understood that children need to be heard with methodologies appropriate to their development, the

literature review developed establishes a dialogue with other research that opted for the ethnographic approach, in which “children are the primary source of knowledge about their own views and experiences” (Alderson, 2005, p. 436). Celante (2014) adds that ethnography is a complex means of producing knowledge, with several research techniques in its favor, so that they offer clues about social phenomena, which are arranged and constructed by the subjects of research now by the researcher.

## Children’s voices in playgrounds: an interdisciplinary look

After mapping research with children carried out in playgrounds and reflecting on the necessary interdisciplinary approach in childhood studies, it is understood that a “Cartesian perspective is not sufficient to understand the complexity and dynamism of reality and the relationships that are established in social and environmental scenarios” (Oliveira, 2018, p. 132) in which children constitute themselves and live their childhood experience.

Thus, the sample of articles presented in Chart 1 was refined because we chose studies that excel in the use of methodologies that guarantee children's listening about playgrounds, in this case, nine articles. We then proceeded to analyze the theoretical framework of each of the selected studies in order to identify the concepts used to understand the cultural productions that children developed in the playgrounds.

**Chart 2.** Theoretical contributions from researches about listening to children in selected playgrounds for the *methodological framework*

Authors and year of publication	Fields of study						
	Blue	Yellow	Green	Red	Light Green	Dark Green	White
Fiaes, Marques, Cotrim and Bichara (2010)	x	X	x	X		x	X
Müller and Moura Arruda (2012)	x		x	X	x	x	
Cotrim and Bichara (2013)	x	X	x	X	x	x	X
Martins and Gonçalves (2014)	x	X	x	X	x	x	X
Dias (2017)	x	X	x	X	x	x	X
Farias and Müller (2017)	x	X	x	X	x	x	X
Pinto and Bichara (2017)	x	X	x	X	x	x	X
Souza and Pinto (2017)	x	X	x	X	x	x	X
Campos and Ramos (2019)	x	X	x		x	x	

  

Sociology of Childhoods	Blue
Psychology	Yellow
Childhood Geography	Green
Children's Story	Red
Everyday pedagogy	Light Green
Anthropology	Dark Green
Comparative Studies	White

**Source:** Planned by the authors.

Thus, after reading and qualitative analysis of the research and, mainly, of its theoretical references, we point out that the research developed by Fiaes et al. (2010) this is a work linked to the field of developmental psychology, also interacting with concepts from other fields. The authors record, in the introduction, a historical, geographical and sociological analysis of the consequences of the disorderly growth of large urban centers on the occupation of city spaces by children. The comparison between two forms of spatial appropriation can be identified when the authors cite Rasmussen (2004), a Danish author, who distinguishes “place for children” from “children's place”, the first being designed by adults to segregate children, offering them protection, and the second, guided by the determination of the children themselves who make them the scenarios of their games. Thus, the authors reveal children's elaborations woven into everyday life and the methodological contribution of anthropology emerges from their analyses.

Müller and Moura Arruda (2012) approach, in the introduction to the work, aspects linked to the city's geography and the defense of children's right to participation. The latter is linked to the field of sociology of childhood. The authors note that children “have stories, experiences, cultures and knowledge that can contribute to the investigation of childhood” (p. 515). In addition to these theoretical assumptions, the authors sought methodological tools for their analysis in urban anthropology and the history of cities. No contributions from psychology or comparative studies were explicitly noted in the article.

Cotrim and Bichara (2013) problematize the little production in the field of child development psychology in external areas. After that, they indicate that the geography of childhood(s) is a recent field that helps to understand the relationship between children and spaces in contemporary times. Thus, they point to the intimate relationship between children's cultural productions, physical contexts and historical time. For the authors, “context and game are closely linked” (Cotrim; Bichara, 2013, p. 389). When describing, in the methodological part, the use of photographs as a tool for constructing data, the authors note that it is a strategy widely used in “anthropology and sociology and which is now beginning to gain space in psychology” (Cotrim; Bichara, 2013, p. 390).

Finally, when mentioning that there are two types of places for children (places for children and places not for children) to develop their games in the urban context, the authors compared two types of occupations carried out by children, with different logics and rules, experienced in children's daily lives.

Martins and Gonçalves (2014), aiming to listen to children, used the methodology of semiotic analysis of drawings, indicating that the research is a study in the field of psychology. In the research results, the playground was indicated as the place of greatest appropriation by children, considering that “children identify with the space due to elements of their culture” (p. 623). This paper seeks an interdisciplinary analysis of children's cultural productions in the school environment, as the understanding of culture is based on anthropological and sociological knowledge, just as space can be understood as a concept from the field of geography and history, since “space is an abstract category and is problematized by several areas of science; this cannot be separated from its relationship with time” (p. 624). The authors also affirm the relevance of everyday life as a path towards appropriation of school spaces by children. There is, in the research methodology, a clear comparative approach about the school spaces most appropriate for children.

Regarding everyday life, a common and relevant aspect observed in these works, the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1990) states that this is essential for understanding the child and the ability of adults to observe, describe, understand and interpret the child's relationships with himself/herself, with others and with the world. The author proposes a more affective knowledge, which enables a relationship of listening and sensitive understanding between adults and children, taking into account cultural and anthropological everyday life. In this way, these everyday spaces, in addition to adding to children's imagination, promote the consolidation of bonds between peers and forms of interaction; This happens, therefore, through coexistence and (re)knowledge of the other's culture (Sarmiento, 2008).

The year 2017 was fruitful in research on children's voices in playgrounds, with the largest number of studies published – Dias (2017), Farias and Müller (2017), Pinto and Bichara (2017) and Souza and Pinto (2017) –, which points to an effort by Brazilian

researchers to understand children's developments in playgrounds as an academic object, which favors the consolidation of theoretical and methodological approaches to listen to children in this space of social interaction.

Dias (2017, p. 501) wrote about the “complexity of the place that children occupy in the city: in urban space and in society”. It is from a theoretical point of view, “the crossing of several fields of knowledge”, notably architecture and urbanism, sociology, anthropology and childhood studies, as it portrays, in this study, “multiple, plural and diverse sociocultural worlds in their way of life, of experiencing and appropriating spaces” (p. 502). The author understands childhood as an object of historiographical study that developed with social movements for the individualization of children and their separation from society, through institutions that protect children, such as schools. In this context, playgrounds can be inserted as compensation for children in lost spaces in big cities. Regarding the contributions of Everyday Pedagogy, the author, despite not mentioning it explicitly, uses everyday life as a source of observations of children. Regarding the issue of the contributions of comparative studies, Dias (2017) makes a small insertion in this field by announcing similarities and distances between playground policies in Brazil and Spain.

Farias and Müller (2017, p. 261) aimed to “understand the urban experiences” of children living in Brasília. The playground appears as one of the public facilities highlighted by children as necessary in a city, as well as churches. The study is developed from a perspective that “involves the theme of childhood and the city in the Human and Social Sciences” (p. 262), once again indicating the interdisciplinary nature of studies involving children. The authors work with everyday concepts and some contributions from comparative studies, such as identifying a logic specific to each child participating in the representation of the city through the photo-elicitation technique.

The opinions of 28 11-year-old children, living in Salvador-BA, were analyzed by Pinto and Bichara (2017, p. 28), using the theoretical basis of historical-critical psychology and the sociology of childhood. The study points to “the need to understand the demands of childhood from the child's own perspective, encouraging citizenship”. Knowledge based on geography becomes evident when the authors discuss the

approximations of the terms “space” and “place”, the latter consolidated in the field of geography studies as linked to the subjects’ affective relationships with space. “It is where the child is able to live their childhood identity, play, interact with friends, among other behaviors” (p. 29). The daily lives of girls and boys were captured for analysis through interviews and drawings. The authors made comparisons between the different ways of occupying public spaces for play, using gender intersectionality.

Souza and Pinto (2017) analyzed the development of creative games in public playgrounds in Salvador-BA. The authors consider that these games derive from a repertoire of original games that take on new contours, which is why they are considered creative. They consider that “playing takes place in what is called the Playful Zone, which has elements and characteristics: the child and their subjectivity, the geographic space in which they are inserted and the temporal space” (p. 408). The study followed these children's cultural elaborations before and after the renovation of a public playground. The methodological paths point to an anthropological orientation, as the researchers made observations of the children in their daily play. The authors compared children's cultural productions before and after the playground renovation and indicated qualitative changes in the way they played in these two different scenarios.

In 2019, Campos and Ramos (2019, p. 1) developed a research with 25 children in an early childhood education school through an ethnographic perspective, with “observations, filming and recordings in field notes during moments of free-choice play of the children on the playground, in the playroom and during activities not directed by adults”. For the authors, anchored in the concepts defended by Corsaro (2011, p. 4), cultural elaborations are “structuring the daily lives of children, in a process produced and shared through social experience, revealing themselves in ways of feeling, acting, thinking and interact with the world and with subjects”. The authors rely on Sarmiento (2003) to analyze the play episodes. The research developed by Campos and Ramos (2019) points to the interdisciplinary nature of studies about children and through the use of multimethods to construct data.

### **Transdisciplinary reflections in the analysis of the theoretical contributions of the selected papers**

The reflections elaborated in the process of mapping the research that carried out listening to children in playgrounds highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of studies on childhood(s) and revealed the possibility of a transdisciplinary approach to this study (Prout, 2010). For Oliveira (2018), the theory that understands the human being in the transdisciplinary dimension admits human existence as an open and dynamic system in constant interactions, forming a network of connections, highlighting that only a transdisciplinary perspective can account for its completeness.

In this context, Nicolescu (1999, p. 1), records in the Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity that “the sum of knowledge about the Universe and natural systems, accumulated during the 20th century, far exceeds everything that could be known during all other centuries brought together.” This complexity of knowledge production points to a transdisciplinary dialogue to understand complex objects, such as childhood.

For Nicolescu (1999, p. 13), “unified theories are very powerful at the level of general principles, but they are quite poor in describing the complexity of our own level”. In the transdisciplinarity manifesto, Nicolescu states that transdisciplinarity is that “which is at the same time between disciplines, across different disciplines and beyond any discipline. Its objective is the understanding of the present world for which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge” (p. 16). Thus, the differentiation between interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity lies in the permanence or overcoming of disciplinary boundaries in/for the analysis of a given reality.

From the literature review, the studies recognize the dialogue between the major areas of knowledge and the search for understanding the object and subjects of research on multiple approaches, namely: the sociology of childhood, historical-cultural psychology, geography of childhood(s), the history of children in Brazil, everyday pedagogy and the anthropology of childhood, the analytical contribution of comparative studies is evident in the mapped studies. In the case of studies on childhood, there are dialogues between border concepts, which sometimes come closer to each other and sometimes find lines of escape (Passos et al., 2020).

In practice, every discipline is a convergence, more or less temporary: not a delimited field, but a connection of lines of interest generated by its various practitioners. And because the rotation continues as its practitioners follow its path, the discipline is procedural and open-ended. When disciplines no longer offer a path to follow, they do not so much make a fragment as unveil it, as their constituent lines fluctuate in other directions only with other lines in other convergences. The general tangle of lines, running here, unraveling there, comprises the great tapestry of knowledge in which the search for it is always in weaving (Ingold, 2020, p. 106).

This “entanglement” announced by anthropologist Ingold (2020) can be illustrated in the relationship between the sociology of childhood and psychology. Corsaro (2011, p. 22) indicates that part of the sociological analyzes about children developed in dialogues with developmental psychology. For him, “much of the sociological study on early socialization in childhood was influenced by the dominant theories of Developmental Psychology”. Even considering children as passive beings, constructivist theories initiated the movement towards children's academic visibility. Regarding the genesis of the articulation between the sociology of childhood and psychology, Mauss (2010, p. 241) indicates that “every study of child psychology, when dealing with and analyzing its ideas based on the psychologist's interrogation, is, to some degree, a sociological study”. The author continues his effort to delimit the field of childhood sociology, distinguishing it from psychology and chooses the environment in which childhood(s) takes place as a distinctive element between these two fields: “it is necessary to add a more specifically sociological study of children's environments, as environments, properly”. The reflection produced by the aforementioned theorist imposes the study of the environment as a basic condition for “the study of determined children” (p. 241).

Prout (2010, p. 733) understands childhood as a complex object that challenges researchers to “face the complexity and ambiguity of childhood as a contemporary and stable phenomenon”. Thus, Nicolescu (1999, p. 12) indicates that complex objects need to be analyzed in a transdisciplinary way, as “complexity is nourished by the explosion of disciplinary research”. This movement of non-hierarchical dialogues between disciplines was evident from the analysis of the theoretical contributions of the texts selected by the literature review construction strategy.

## Final considerations

The literature review constitutes a fundamental phase of researchers' work. And the mix of methods guided by the researcher's training and technology can expand the dialogue between research groups that investigate the same topic, by publicizing the results and thus contributing to the strengthening of educational research. The studies found during the bibliometric review understand playgrounds as urban facilities that contribute to the integral education of children. Furthermore, reflections on child development combined with the perspective of the right to leisure justify the need for playgrounds in urban spaces. These works highlight that playgrounds encourage interaction between adults and children, as well as community interaction during leisure time. Above all, in children's eyes, the playground is considered a favorite place, as it offers a place to play, providing pleasurable experiences. Therefore, the selected works point to the need for investments in the construction and maintenance of these public facilities in urban centers.

In this paper, we chose to build a narrative literature review, complementing it with a search on a database portal for investigations that discussed the topic of children and playgrounds. The literature review aimed to highlight the methodological descriptions of the search, selection and exclusion strategies of works as part of the rigor necessary for scientific construction. The long time of the narrative literature review constitutes an amalgam between the researcher's subjectivity and individual intellectual activities and participation in research groups and studies in which he collaborates.

Regarding the mapping phase of research on children in playgrounds, the need for literature reviews is highlighted to compose the theoretical and methodological contribution of academic studies. The search in the database and the insertion of classic texts in the field, combining the technique based on algorithms with the subjective history of each researcher, makes the theoretical and methodological construction of a research viable. Thus, we recognize that research cannot be determined by technique, but will be somehow conditioned to it.

The need to invest in transparency in the search algorithms of data platforms emerges from the reflections, as the retrieval of texts is guided by human decisions to favor one or another criterion. Therefore, to contribute to the construction of a clear scientific approach, this programming language needs to be shared and recorded during the construction of the literature review.

Listening to children in academic research has been consolidated as a right and presents itself as a theoretical and methodological challenge for researchers in the field of childhood studies. This complexity points to the necessary construction of literature review procedures that value authors who strive to recognize the importance of children and who, through their studies and debates, support the field. The literature review allows the identification and recognition of new productions and the promotion of dialogues and network research work with other childhood researchers. Thus, the papers selected in the literature review addressed playgrounds considering children's voices and point out important aspects for the establishment of policies and practices aimed at strengthening the social agency of this generation.

Children's movements are their own languages, as “children put their whole body into the experiences, surrendering themselves to the dimensions of time to enjoy every second of the intensity of exploring and knowing” (Voltarelli & Barbosa, 2021). Understanding children's cultures and children's language as an object of research reveals the adultcentric culture that supported academic productions about children and that began to be overcome with the sociology of childhood (Corsaro, 2011). To research with children, it is necessary to slow down, take off your shoes, cultivate silence, quiet down in a corner of the playground and wait for an invitation from a child to begin any interaction (Conte & Cardoso, 2022; Corsaro, 2005; Graue & Walsh, 2003). Research with children requires interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogues, in a movement that has been consolidated in work guided by the new sociology of childhood (Prout, 2010) and with the consolidation of productions in childhood geography studies pointing to “a new paradigm” (Lopes, 2018, p. 23).

Researches carried out in playgrounds explore different languages used by children. Some research findings point to the creative capacity of children based on the

physical characteristics of the playground, which favors the recording of mini-stories created by children while they play (Conte & Cardoso, 2022).

It is concluded that children's going to the playground is subject to a double dependence on adults; in the case of this religious community, first the family and then the volunteers who act as teachers. It was found that the religious fields attended by children can be further explored by academic studies, as they make up the global web (Corsaro, 2011). Playgrounds can be improved by listening to children, in movements to politically strengthen children as citizens, worthy of participation in social processes.

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