

● **child studies** ○

Research Centre on Child Studies

Guest editors:

Ana Tomás de Almeida

Fernando Ilídio Ferreira

Pallawi Sinha

Sarah Richards



● **child studies** ○

Child Studies is an international peer-reviewed journal which publishes empirical and theoretical articles focusing on children's social contexts and relations in everyday life, taking a holistic perspective. This journal is a multidisciplinary forum for sharing and discussing issues such as children's rights, development and well-being, generational and intergenerational relations, and the broad societal, political and cultural aspects impacting children's lived realities.



Editors

Assunção Flores
Rui Ramos

Guest Editors for this issue (n. 2, 2023)

Ana Tomás de Almeida
Fernando Ilídio Ferreira
Pallawi Sinha
Sarah Richards

Assistant Editor

Cláudia Pinheiro

Editorial Board

Africa Borges (University of La Laguna, Spain; ORCID ID [0000-0001-8267-4401](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8267-4401))
Amy Hanna (Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland; ORCID ID [0000-0002-1101-5211](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1101-5211))
Ana Claudia Bortolozzi Maia (UNESP-Campus de Rio Claro, Brazil; ORCID ID [0000-0003-4796-5451](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4796-5451))
Ana Lúcia Santos (University of Lisbon, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0003-4758-7462](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4758-7462))
Ana Margarida Ramos (University of Aveiro, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0001-5126-4389](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5126-4389))
Ana Tomás de Almeida (University of Minho, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0003-0036-312X](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0036-312X))
Beatriz Pereira (University of Minho, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0003-4771-9402](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4771-9402))
Bettina Kummerling-Meibauer (Tübingen University, Germany; ORCID ID [0000-0003-0068-5575](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0068-5575))
Eleni Kanira (Birmingham City University, England)
Elizabeth Ann Wood (University of Sheffield, England; ORCID ID [0000-0002-1027-1520](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1027-1520))
Fernando Ilídio Ferreira (University of Minho, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0002-8608-6700](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8608-6700))
Graça Carvalho (University of Minho, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0002-0034-1329](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0034-1329))
Liz Chesworth (University of Sheffield, England; ORCID ID [0000-0003-0576-0650](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0576-0650))
Louise Kay (University of Sheffield, England; ORCID ID [0000-0002-9740-3564](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9740-3564))
Maria Eduarda Giering (Univ. of Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brazil; ORCID ID [0000-0001-8098-4238](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8098-4238))
Marnie Campagnaro (University of Padova, Italy; ORCID ID [0000-0003-1732-0716](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1732-0716))
Miguel Falcão (Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0002-5506-0516](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5506-0516))
Pallawi Sinha (University of Suffolk, England; ORCID ID [0000-0002-2889-3416](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2889-3416))
Paula Regina Ribeiro (FURG - Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; ORCID ID [0000-0001-7798-996X](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7798-996X))
Ruba Fahmi Bataineh (Yarmouk University, Jordan; ORCID ID [0000-0002-5454-2206](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5454-2206))
Sara Reis da Silva (University of Minho, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0003-0041-728X](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0041-728X))
Sarah Richards (University of Suffolk, England; ORCID ID [0000-0003-4811-101X](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4811-101X))
Sonia Byrne (University of La Laguna, Spain; ORCID ID [0000-0002-9267-3354](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9267-3354))
Spyros Spyrou (European University, Cyprus; ORCID ID [0000-0003-0493-1403](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0493-1403))
Teresa Vilaça (University of Minho, Portugal; ORCID ID [0000-0002-5021-2613](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5021-2613))
Vanessa Joosen (University of Antwerp, Belgium; ORCID ID [0000-0001-8060-5728](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8060-5728))
Venka Simovska (Aarhus University, Denmark; ORCID ID [0000-0003-1391-9182](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1391-9182))

Cover design

Catarina Ramos

Publisher

Research Centre on Child Studies
Institute of Education, University of Minho
Campus de Gualtar
4710-057 Braga
Portugal

Email – childstudies@ie.uminho.pt

Site – <https://revistas.uminho.pt/index.php/childstudies>

ISSN – 2795-5915

Support

Editora UMinho (<https://editora.uminho.pt/pt>)

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (<https://www.fct.pt>)





Contents

Editorial – Researching children’s worlds and lived realities in uncertain times	9
<i>Editorial – A investigação sobre os mundos das crianças e as suas realidades em tempos de incerteza</i>	
Ana Tomás de Almeida, Fernando Ilídio Ferreira, Pallawi Sinha, & Sarah Richards	
<hr/>	
A generative, critical childhood studies for uncertain times	13
<i>Estudos da criança críticos e produtivos para tempos de incerteza</i>	
Spyros Spyrou	
<hr/>	
Challenges on implementing a screening system with ages and stages questionnaires (ASQ-PT) in Portugal	19
<i>Desafios na implementação de um sistema de rastreio de desenvolvimento com o Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-PT) em Portugal</i>	
Rita Laranjeira, & Ana Maria Serrano	
<hr/>	
Parental practices exercised in the childhood of authors of sexual assault	37
<i>Práticas parentais exercidas na infância de autores de assédio sexual</i>	
Daniela Baldez Diniz, Lília Iêda Chaves Cavalcante, & Daniela Castro dos Reis	
<hr/>	
Multimodal narratives in contemporary Brazilian children’s literature	55
<i>Narrativas multimodais na literatura infantil brasileira contemporânea</i>	
Diana Navas	
<hr/>	
Child temperament and child-care support are related to better mother-child relationship quality	69
<i>O temperamento da criança e o apoio aos cuidados infantis estão relacionados com uma melhor qualidade do relacionamento mãe-filho</i>	
Sumeyra Yalcintas, & Alison Pike	
<hr/>	
Novice teachers navigating mentoring relationships in the United States	87
<i>Professores iniciantes participando em relações de mentoria nos Estados Unidos</i>	
Jackie Sydnor, Sharon Daley, Tammi R. Davis, & Margaret Ascolani	



● **child** studies ○

N.2, 2023

**EDITORIAL – RESEARCHING CHILDREN’S WORLDS
AND LIVED REALITIES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES**

**EDITORIAL – A INVESTIGAÇÃO SOBRE OS MUNDOS DAS
CRIANÇAS E AS SUAS REALIDADES EM TEMPOS DE INCERTEZA**

Ana Tomás de Almeida

Research Centre on Child Studies, Institute of Education,
University of Minho, Portugal

Fernando Ilídio Ferreira

Research Centre on Child Studies, Institute of Education,
University of Minho, Portugal

Pallawi Sinha

University of Suffolk, UK

Sarah Richards

University of Suffolk, UK

‘Researching children’s world and lived realities in uncertain times’ has driven the priority for the present Special Issue of the Child Studies Journal. After the I International Conference on Child Studies, co-organised by the University of Minho and the University of Suffolk, under the same epithet, the second issue remained a venue to all the participating authors to submit original papers related to, but not necessarily presented at the conference.

In addition, the legacy of the I International Conference on Child Studies also welcome the ground-breaking thinking of the keynote speakers.

The contemporaneity of Child Studies as a holistic and multidisciplinary field of study beckons a heightened scientific and social relevance in times of accrued tension and conflict at the highest rank of international organisations, intricate war scenarios involving the world’s major powers, an always-owing climate crisis, increasing devastation, loss, and poverty in all continents, which are today inexorably affecting the lives of millions of children worldwide. Indeed, from the multitude of disciplines devoted to Child Studies it is recognised that research enables new perspectives, many of which come from the children themselves but often on their behalf, invariably directing attention to acknowledge the position of children within contemporary society, its consequences and urging action of all sectors and political wings. While the Child Studies’ journal reflects such concerns, and, simultaneously, the priorities of young and

experienced researchers that contributed to this Special Issue, it also made possible looking ahead at topics and issues casting the critical role of Child Studies for theory, applied sciences and child-based driven policy. This is very much in tune with the reflective ethos of the I International Conference on Child Studies.

The set of papers included in the Special Issue is headed by Professor Spyros Spyrou’s text on the conference’s topic. “A generative, critical child studies for uncertain times” is a short article addressing essential points for enabling a theoretically robust (as his keynote was), transdisciplinarily reflective, open-ended and engaging dialogue among the diverse actors and audiences of childhood studies. Such a critical stance conveys comprehensive approaches to the diverse and complex realities of children’s lived worlds, without dismissing how uncertainty is conditioning the children’s lives in current times and, inevitably, their future trajectories. It nevertheless entailed a breakthrough towards generative theoretical and methodological assumptions, more prone to relate to children’s lives and childhood as global and diverse phenomena. Bearing in mind the necessity to acknowledge and be responsive to the conceptual and empirical challenges, encompasses a decolonising move, which, in the author’s terms, is a corollary of a “generative” and “critical” child studies.

The second paper “Challenges on implementing a screening system with Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-PT) in Portugal”, co-authored by Rita Laranjeira and Ana Serrano, from Portugal, presents a qualitative study of the professional and familial perceptions concerning the use of the ASQ in early intervention centres. Accounting for the novelty of using standardised assessment tools, and its way (is this because it’s been employed in Portugal?), the data analysis explores the users’ insights on the advantages and challenges in the system of early identification of children with developmental needs at primary care services. Issuing the study’s implications for the practice, the authors highlight the changes perceived in the quality of involvement and interaction between families and professionals, which with increased collaboration set a resourceful capital for parenting knowledge and skills.

In the third paper, “Parental practices exercised in the childhood of authors of sexual assault”, Daniela Baldez Diniz and her co-authors, from Brazil, invest in a topic of relevance and little studied, particularly given the difficulty in accessing perpetrators of sexual abuse. In addition, the study of parental practices to which these subjects were submitted in their childhood is important because it allows a greater understanding of developmental aspects and the influence of contextual characteristics, especially the family environment. The inner sights of perpetrators of sexual assaults regarding parental practices are here representing an important line of investigation to understand the factors and contexts associated with the perpetration of abuse and the phenomenon of sexual violence.

The fourth paper “Multimodal narratives in contemporary Brazilian children’s literature” by Diana Navas, from Brazil, focuses on the integrative nature of different languages shaping narratives that represent an ever-growing portion of the children’s books in Brazil. The popularity of these narratives is analysed through the lens of the synergistic articulation of the literary text with illustration and graphic design. As

materiality of these different languages enhance creativity throughout reading as a dual cognitive and communicative process, it adds value to a creative segment of literature targeted to children. On a rather critical vein, Navas’ paper advocates the importance of expanding the literary world of children to create new readers and contributing to their awareness and critical thinking.

The fifth paper “Child Temperament and Child-care Support are Related to Better Mother-child Relationship Quality” by Sumeyra Yalcintas and Alison Pike, from UK, addresses parenting to convey an analysis of causal factors that influence the mother-child relationship quality. Combining observational and maternal self-report measures to report on a multiplicity of determinants associated to the ecology of parenting, particularly when families are in transition to siblinghood. The study raises important issues related to the bidirectional nature of parent-child relationship, as well as the child individual characteristics, such as the child temperament, and maternal personal and contextual resources. Of particular mention was the provision of child-care support to the quality of mother-child relationship quality during pregnancy before sibling arrival. Besides pointing the practical implications of the study to fruitful interventions, the authors underline the importance of parenting to the benefit of positive child outcomes.

The sixth, and last paper integrating this Special Issue, “Novice teachers navigating mentoring relationships in the United States, is co-authored by Jacqueline Snyder and collaborators, from USA. Focusing on retaining novice teachers in elementary schools via support and mentoring, the paper evidences how mentoring experiences are influential processes while becoming a teacher. As the study adds in-depth and rich stories of novice teachers’ experiences, these testimonies mirror the challenges ahead, the concerns and priorities for policy and practices on induction. The topic accrues relevance in the USA and beyond, as teacher shortage and drop-out rates in the first five years of professional activity undergo a critical state, as timely noted by the authors.

The issues and research questions alluded to in this compilation showcases a diversity of themes, conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches comprised under the disciplinary linkages of Child Studies. Although a glimpse of the wide range and extent of works presented at the I International Conference on Child Studies, the topics addressed in these six papers capture the persisting goal of revisiting and emphasising contemporary research that cast generative and practical knowledge to children and all those involved in their wellbeing. A concluding, overarching statement in relation to childhood studies would be great, here.

Funding

This work was financially support by Portuguese national funds through the FCT (Foundation for Science and Technology) and conducted within the framework of the CIEC (Research Centre on Child Studies of the University of Minho) with the references UIDB/00317/2020 and UIDP/00317/2020.

Abstract

This paper takes the theme of uncertainty as a starting point to argue for a critical childhood studies which does not only wish to produce knowledge about children and childhood but is also responsive to the calls of our uncertain times and seeks to produce knowledge that matters for children's lives. To do this, the paper argues, it is important to critique and deconstruct the current conditions of children's lives but to also produce the kind of knowledge which would have the capacity to offer us new insights into the possibilities for crafting alternative futures for children—with children—that address the uncertainties and difficulties which lie ahead. Developing a critical childhood studies will ultimately help the field move towards decolonising itself by becoming more inclusive and democratic as well as becoming more socially relevant by engaging with its diverse publics.

Keywords: childhood, critical childhood studies, children's realities, decolonizing childhood studies

Resumo

Este artigo toma o tema da incerteza como ponto de partida para defender estudos da criança críticos que não desejem apenas produzir conhecimento sobre crianças e infância, mas que também respondam aos apelos dos tempos de incerteza e procurem produzir conhecimento relevante para a vida das crianças. Neste seguimento, o artigo argumenta que é importante criticar e desconstruir as condições atuais da vida das crianças, mas também produzir o tipo de conhecimento que teria a capacidade de nos oferecer novos *insights* sobre as possibilidades de elaborar futuros alternativos para as crianças – com crianças – que abordam as incertezas e dificuldades que estão por vir. O

desenvolvimento de estudos da criança críticos acabará por ajudar esta área a descolonizar-se, tornando-se mais inclusiva e democrática, além de se tornar socialmente mais relevante ao envolver-se com os diversos públicos.

Palavras-chave: infância, estudos críticos da infância, realidades infantis, estudos infantis descolonizadores

There is no doubt that we live in uncertain times. We are not only confronted with multiple ongoing crises—from the food crisis, to the migration crisis, and the most pressing existential one, the climate crisis—but more importantly we have not, so far, developed adequate responses to these challenges that would offer us some justified hope about the future. This uncertainty and an emerging sense of anxiety about the future is evident in all realms of life and childhood researchers are not exceptional in trying to make sense of how this uncertainty manifests in everyday life. ‘Researching children’s worlds and lived realities in uncertain times’ was the theme title of the first international conference which was jointly organised in September 2022 by the Research Centre on Child Studies at the University of Minho and the Centre for the Study of Children and Childhood at the University of Suffolk. The conference provided generative space for reflecting on what the uncertain times we live in might mean for the research work we do with children and the kind of knowledge we are able to produce.

In this brief, reflective paper, I take the theme of uncertainty (including the opportunities and challenges which it alludes to) as a starting point to argue for an expansive vision of childhood studies—what I will refer to here as *critical childhood studies* (see Alanen 2011)—which does not only wish to produce knowledge about children and childhood but is responsive to the calls of our uncertain times and seeks to produce knowledge that matters for children’s lives. This, in my opinion, is both necessary and essential, not only in order to enhance our understanding of children’s lives but also in order to produce the kind of knowledge that goes beyond a mere critique of the conditions of childhood which is certainly a necessary first step but not a sufficient one. Here, I am thinking of a forward-looking kind of knowledge which would have the capacity to offer us new insights into the possibilities for crafting alternative futures for children—with children—that address the uncertainties and difficulties which lie ahead.

But why call for a *critical* childhood studies? How can a critical orientation for the field offer us knowledge that is valuable for our uncertain times? Or, put another way, why privilege this kind of knowledge production?

To call for a critical childhood studies, is first and foremost to call for knowledge production that is not only attuned to our times and the challenges that children face in their daily lives but also seeks to address the challenges of the future and in doing so make a difference. It is to prioritize and generate the kind of knowledge which critiques and deconstructs the current conditions of children’s lives but is also imaginative and

daring in exploring alternatives which are informed by the structural realities of children's lives as well as their own perspectives and the perspectives of all those who are implicated one way or another in their lives. This is not about foreclosing children's future possibilities for existence but rather offering ways out of the oppressive and largely unsustainable trajectories we are caught in and the disproportionate impact this is likely to have to current and future generations of children. The knowledge which may come out of this kind of critical engagement should be open-ended, reflexive, revisable and humble but nevertheless engaged with ways of improving children's material conditions of life (Spyrou 2018). The aim of a critical childhood studies would then be to retain a highly localised and situated perspective that reflects the empirical realities of the children it seeks to address while simultaneously connecting this perspective with the larger-scale processes at work which escape children's localities but nevertheless impact their lives in significant ways. Producing knowledge about children and childhood that is critical will also inadvertently contribute towards the field becoming more socially relevant. However, in order to become more socially relevant, childhood studies would also have to engage more squarely with its various publics (Spyrou 2021). That would require that we, as childhood scholars, reframe the field and its knowledge productions in ways that allow us to enter into dialogue with our diverse audiences, be they children, parents, social workers, teachers, policy makers, or the general public. A critical childhood studies, in this sense, does not have to lose its acuity and theoretical sophistication (and this might mean that it retains to some extent its specialised jargon for internal use) but it would have to recognise that it needs to communicate effectively in ways that are sensitive and respectful of others beyond the field.

However, this is not just about communicating research findings in accessible ways that inform audiences beyond one's micro-tribe or narrow academic community, though that is of course both necessary and important (Alvesson, Gabriel, and Paulsen, 2017). It is also about engaging in public discussion and dialogue with all those who are implicated in the work of the field whether these are the children themselves, their parents or policy-makers. That means that as a field, childhood studies, will need to get outside its own limited frame of reference, to tap into public discussions and concerns, to participate, listen and engage with its diverse audiences and publics in ways that are democratic and inclusive. Only then would a critical childhood studies be able to produce knowledge that is attuned to children's realities and reflective of their needs.

This leads me to another key component of a call for a critical childhood studies, namely the need for the field to open up to other fields, to move beyond its own (quite often insular) ways of thinking, to consider the kinds of engagements that are happening elsewhere and to become more relational in its knowledge productions. Needless to say, that would also require interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary engagements that open up the field to diverse ways of thinking, philosophical traditions and theoretical orientations that can inform but also challenge some of its dominant assumptions and underpinnings. Rather than being a threat to its standing, such a move would actually enhance its place as a critical field that is dynamic, versatile, and generative rather than stagnant and conventional. I would argue that unless childhood studies can draw on but also inform

through its own knowledge productions other fields and areas of inquiry, it will remain insular and of limited utility to ongoing efforts at addressing social problems and concerns faced by children in the contemporary world (Spyrou 2017).

This brings me to my last substantive point in this short reflective piece, namely, the need to decolonise the field in ways that allow it to become more comprehensive and encompassing, more inclusive and democratic, and ultimately more generative so that it can speak to the diverse needs and complex realities of children's worlds in the third decade of the 21st century. At one level, this would be a move towards overcoming its Anglo-Saxon and largely Western orientation with all the problems which accrue from such an orientation which largely dismisses the rest of the world. It is true that the field today is actively seeking to address this problem (Liebel 2020). But, of course, this is not just about including research work from the Global South (though that is again an important first step). It is also about decolonising entrenched theoretical and methodological ways of thinking and assumptions that have become emblematic of the field but are quite limited or even entirely inappropriate for addressing the diverse realities of children around the globe (Abebe 2019; Twum-Danso Imoh 2022; Smith 2012). Relatedly, it is about considering diverse forms of knowledge that could help enrich our understanding of children's lives—whether these are rooted in local ecological or spiritual practices, affective states of being, or social activism—and which can provide valuable conceptual tools for rethinking childhood and children's place in the world.

A critical childhood studies can only be critical for as long as it strives towards decolonising itself. It is important to note, however, that decolonising has no end point, nor is it merely another frame of being as a field. In that sense, claims about decolonising childhood studies should always be kept in check through a relentless self-critique. A decolonising move requires a lot more than isolated, individual efforts at rethinking the field. It requires ongoing, collective work which challenges colonial and neo-colonial relations and structural inequalities including those that manifest in knowledge production. To do so, childhood studies will need to cultivate a more equitable sphere of activity for the field which can ultimately make a difference in how we see, understand and relate to children's lives and to childhood as a globally diverse social phenomenon.

To conclude, all forms of knowledge production (including research and scholarly productions) entail to some extent choice and are therefore in that sense political. Living in uncertain times creates a deep sense of worry about the future but also a deep sense of responsibility about how to effectively address the crises we are confronted with, each from our respective positionality and professional role. There is already significant work in childhood studies that could be characterized as critical. Enhancing the critical strands of research which currently exist in the field can only strengthen our ability as childhood scholars to make interventions, however small and humble, which address the future of children and childhood in an ethical and responsible way.

References

- Abebe, T. (2019). Reconceptualising Children's Agency as Continuum and Interdependence. *Soc. Sci.* 8(3), 81, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8030081>
- Alanen, L. (2011). Editorial. Critical Childhood Studies? *Childhood* 18(2), pp. 147–150. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0907568211404511>
- Alvesson, M., Gabriel, Y., & Paulsen, R. (2017). *Return to Meaning: A Social Science with Something to Say*. Oxford University Press.
- Liebel, M. (2020). *Decolonizing Childhoods: From Exclusion to Dignity*. Bristol University Press.
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
- Spyrou, S. (2021). Editorial: A Preliminary Call for a Critical Public Childhood Studies. *Childhood* 28(2), 181-185. <https://doi.org/10.1177/090756822098714>
- Spyrou, S. (2018). *Disclosing Childhoods: Research and Knowledge Production for a Critical Childhood Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Spyrou, S. (2017). Editorial: Time to Decenter Childhood? *Childhood* 24(4), 433–437. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09075682177259>
- Twum-Danso Imoh, A. (2022). Framing reciprocal obligations within intergenerational relations in Ghana through the lens of the mutuality of duty and dependence. *Childhood*, 29(3), pp. 439–454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09075682221103343>

Bionote

Spyros Spyrou is Professor of Anthropology at European University Cyprus and currently a Global Visiting Fellow at the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University. His work has explored, among others, the political lives of children and young people (especially in relation to nationalism, immigration and borders) as well as issues of poverty, social exclusion and knowledge production in childhood studies. He is the author of *Disclosing Childhoods* (2018, Palgrave), co-editor of *Reimagining Childhood Studies* (2019, Bloomsbury) and *Children and Borders* (2014, Palgrave) and editor of the journal *Childhood* (SAGE).

Email: s.spyrou@euc.ac.cy

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0493-1403>

Received: April 2023

Published: April 2023

**CHALLENGES ON IMPLEMENTING A SCREENING
SYSTEM WITH AGES AND STAGES QUESTIONNAIRES
(ASQ-PT) IN PORTUGAL**

**DESAFIOS NA IMPLEMENTAÇÃO DE UM SISTEMA DE RASTREIO
DE DESENVOLVIMENTO COM O AGES AND STAGES
QUESTIONNAIRES (ASQ-PT) EM PORTUGAL**

Rita Laranjeira

Research Centre on Education, Institute of Education,
University of Minho, Portugal

Ana Maria Serrano

Research Centre on Child Studies, Institute of Education,
University of Minho, Portugal

Abstract

“Ages and Stages Questionnaires” is a screening instrument that has already been translated, standardised and validated to the Portuguese child population. This study was conducted to understand professionals and parents' perceptions on the use of Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-PT). Families and professionals (early intervention, health and education) from three geographical areas of Portugal (North, Center and Lisbon and Tagus Valley) used this instrument to screen children previously referenced from community services. After the analysis of the screening system implemented and the collected data, a set of keywords allowed us to reflect on the practical implications of the screening and the ASQ system: Motivation; Collaboration; Trust; Knowledge/empowerment; Coordination; Dissemination; Training. Results of this qualitative study are presented with suggestions on enhancing ASQ-PT usage.

Keywords: Ages and Stages Questionnaires, development screening, professionals/families collaboration

Resumo

O “Ages and Stages Questionnaires” é um instrumento de rastreio de desenvolvimento já traduzido, aferido e validado para a população infantil portuguesa.

Este estudo foi realizado para compreender a perceção dos profissionais e dos pais sobre o uso do Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-PT). Famílias e profissionais (de intervenção precoce, saúde e educação) de três áreas geográficas de Portugal (Norte, Centro e Lisboa e Vale do Tejo) utilizaram este instrumento para rastrear crianças, previamente referenciadas, nos serviços da comunidade. Após a análise do sistema de rastreio de desenvolvimento implementado e os dados recolhidos, um conjunto de palavras-chave permitiu refletir sobre as implicações práticas do rastreio e do sistema ASQ: Motivação; Colaboração; Confiança; Conhecimento/capacitação; Coordenação; Divulgação; Formação. Os resultados deste estudo qualitativo são apresentados com sugestões para melhorar o uso do ASQ-PT.

Palavras-chave: Questionários “Ages and Stages”, triagem de desenvolvimento, colaboração profissionais/famílias

Introduction

Early identification of developmental problems in children is essential for achieving their maximum potential and, if necessary, for providing children and their families early intervention as soon as possible. To ensure early identification, it is necessary and fundamental to routinely screen children in child health or pediatric care, as well as in day care centres and kindergartens. It is crucial for each country to have an adequate developmental screening system in place for the early detection of children with special needs or at risk of developmental problems. To implement such a system, a local and regional network must be developed, emphasising the collaboration between services and professionals to promote screening and its importance (Bricker et al., 2013).

Developmental screening determines, through the use of brief tests, if children are developing as expected for their age. This procedure is expected to detect and/or identify children with developmental problems, those who are at risk of developmental delays, requiring a formal assessment, and those who have an age-appropriate development (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; Glascoe, 2005; Meisels, 1989). The importance of developmental screening relies on the malleability of development and the manifestations of delays over time, which can be detected at specific ages (Glascoe, 2005). Therefore, standardised developmental screening instruments must be used to check a child's development at specific ages. The screening process must be efficient, using an instrument that: screens a large number of children, is easy to apply and administer quickly, is easy to interpret, has good psychometric qualities (such as sensitivity, specificity, reliability and validity), is cost-effective, and is norm-referenced (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; Bricker et al, 2013; Division for Early Childhood, 2007; Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 2008; Oliveira, 2017; Squires et al., 2009).

Screening instruments based on parents' reports have shown positive results in economically and culturally diverse populations by providing precise information about

child development (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001). Parental involvement is essential in the screening process, as they are the primary source of information about a child and are those who know their child the best. They can provide valid and essential information that, possibly, may not be otherwise known. Researches have corroborated that the information provided by parents can effectively predict and identify developmental delays (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; Bricker et al., 1997; Bricker et al., 2008; Glascoe, 2000).

Screening instruments are seldomly used in Portugal and most children are identified through observation, mostly done with professionals in the healthcare and education areas. This leads to a potential failure to identify children with developmental problems. It is considered that a screening network for all children is essential to identify developmental problems as soon as possible and to ensure that all children have the same opportunity to maximise their potential and access to early childhood intervention.

Development and adoption of Ages and Stages Questionnaires in the Portuguese population

Ages and Stages Questionnaires, 3rd edition (ASQ-3), is a screening tool that meets the requirements for early identification. It promotes family involvement, in collaboration with health and education professionals to identify developmental problems in children. The questionnaire is expected to be filled out by parents and caregivers, and the results are interpreted by professionals. ASQ-3 also creates opportunities for the promotion of new skills.

ASQ-3 has been developed since the 1980s by Diane Bricker and Jane Squires, along with their collaborators. It emerged in the United States of America to involve parents and families of children in identification screening and intervention for children with special needs or at risk of developmental delay.

ASQ-3 is composed of 21 questionnaires distributed over well-defined age ranges: 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 42, 48, 54 and 60 months. The questionnaires screen the areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal-social. Each questionnaire has 30 items and also has an overall section for general parental concerns.

ASQ-3 questionnaires have an information summary sheet to be filled out by professionals who score it. This sheet includes information about the age interval and a brief child identification information, as well as a graphic bar where each development area's results are placed. The graphic has information about the relation to the cut-off scores for children referral and monitoring. There is also an overall section to write families answers and a guide for score interpretation and follow-up (Squires et al., 2009).

Much more than a screening instrument, ASQ-3 is also a screening system. The ASQ research team developed not only the screening instrument but also a flexible system that can be used in different contexts and services and by different professionals. ASQ-3 is used to screen and monitor children who require development assessment to those

who do not. The ASQ-3 system is composed of four phases: planning the screening/monitoring; preparing, organising and managing the screening programme; administering and scoring ASQ-3 and following up; evaluating the screening/monitoring programme (Squires et al., 2009).

The questionnaires administering and scoring procedures can include several options previously analysed accordingly with the human resources available, with families' characteristics and families' decisions on how they will fill out the questionnaire. Some families might need help from professionals, while others may feel more comfortable filling it out at home and then returning it for scoring and results analysis.

The questionnaires are easy to administer and understand, taking about 15 minutes to be filled out. Professionals who present the results to parents can score it in about 5 minutes. The results can be shared with family immediately or at a later moment.

The ASQ-3 has been translated, standardised and adapted for the Portuguese child population and is denominated ASQ-PT (Graça, 2013; Lopes, 2013; Teixeira, 2013).

Lopes (2013) developed her research with the questionnaires of 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 12 months with a sample of 441 children. Teixeira (2013) developed her research with the questionnaires of 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 and 27 months with a sample of 541 children. Graça (2013) developed her research with the questionnaires of 30, 33, 36, 42, 48, 54 and 60 months with a sample of 926 children. These research samples were representative from the Portuguese population from all the Portuguese geographical territory.

The calculated psychometric measures, reliability and validity of the translated version of the ASQ, included studies of internal consistency by the values of Cronbach's alpha and Pearson's or Spearman's Rho, test-retest and interobserver agreement (reliability) and factor analysis and comparative studies with a risk sample and a sample undergoing therapeutic follow-up (validity).

According to Lopes (2013), Teixeira (2013) and Graça (2013), the results of their standardisation researches demonstrated that the ASQ-PT (2 to 60 months) meets the requirements of a validated screening instrument for the Portuguese population, allowing the early identification of children with development problems.

We conducted a qualitative study to understand the perceptions of early intervention, health and education professionals, as well as families, about the use of ASQ-PT, to understand how parents collaborate during the use of ASQ-PT and to raise awareness among practitioners about its use in early identification. We also aimed to understand if the perceptions of professionals and families in our study were similar to those found in other countries where the ASQ instrument is already validated.

Methods

Our participants were professionals from 3 Local Early Intervention (LEI) teams, health professionals from 4 health centres and one pediatric hospital service, education professionals from 12 kindergartens and day-cares and families. We conducted our

research in three geographical areas of Portugal: North, Centre and Lisbon and Tagus Valley, to get a representation of LEI teams from different regions. All health and education professionals worked in the LEI teams' geographical areas.

Portuguese LEI teams have professionals from different professional areas and from the three coordinated Ministries of National Early Intervention System (SNIPI): Health, Education and Social Security, as established in the Decree-law of Early Childhood Intervention in Portugal (Decreto-Lei n.º 281/2009). The LEI teams have a flexible composition, and have different professionals depending on their specific Ministry. The North LEI team has 12 professionals, the Centre LEI team has 8 professionals and the Lisbon and Tagus Valley LEI team has 12 professionals, as presented in Table 1. Not all the professionals received training in early intervention.

Table 1
LEI teams' constitution

LEI team' constitution	North LEI	Centre LEI	Lisbon and Tagus Valley LEI
Ministry			
Health	1 Physician 4 Nurses 2 Psychologists 2 Social Workers	2 Nurses	1 Nurse
Education	3 Early Childhood Educators	2 Early Childhood Educators 1 Psychologist 1 Social Worker 1 Speech Therapist	3 Early Childhood Educators 1 Psychologist 2 Social Workers 2 Speech Therapists
Social Security		1 Physiotherapist	1 Occupational Therapist 1 Psychometrician 1 Physiotherapist

The participants from the health area were 18 professionals: 4 physicians/pediatricians, 12 nurses, 1 psychologist and 1 social worker. From the education area, 49 professionals participated: 47 early childhood educators, 1 psych pedagogue and 1 director from an education institution. The professionals' geographical areas are presented in Table 2.

We interviewed 14 families that were selected randomly. Interviews were conducted with 13 mothers and 1 tutor of the children screened with ASQ-PT.

Each family decided differently how to fill the questionnaire: parents with the child (4 families), parents without the child (3 families), mother with the child (5 families), mother alone (1 family) and mother with the professional (1 family).

In order to use ASQ-PT instrument in our study, a permission contract with Paul H. Brookes Publishing was signed. We also got authorisation from the authors of the Portuguese version of Ages and Stages Questionnaires.

Table 2
Geographical area of health and education professionals

	Health		Health	
	Number of institutions	Professionals	Number of institutions	Professionals
North	4	2 physicians 10 nurses 1 psychologist 1 social worker	3	13 early childhood educators
Centre	0	0	3	8 early childhood educators
Lisbon and Tagus Valley	1	2 pediatricians 2 nurses	6	26 early childhood educators 1 psych pedagogue 1 director

To carry out our research, we introduced the ASQ-PT instrument and system to professionals whose main goals were to identify developmental problems in children and make referrals for early intervention. Based on the ASQ-3 system (Squires et al., 2009), we defined the phases of screening for the professionals:

1. Planning the screening: determine target population and the resources and administration methods;
2. Organising and managing the screening: identify screening procedures;
3. Administering and scoring ASQ-PT: support parent's completion of ASQ-PT, communicate results with families;
4. Evaluating the screening process.

Early intervention professionals used ASQ-PT to screen children referred to their service. Health and education professionals used the development screening in their services by choosing randomly children to be screened, explaining ASQ-PT screening to families, obtaining families consent for the research and the screening, providing the questionnaires and the results of the screening to families. From a total of 278 questionnaires provided to the different locations of the study, we obtained 91,4% of questionnaires used and scored.

After the screening with the ASQ-PT, to collect our data, we conducted semi-structured interviews using two different script guides - one for interviewing professionals and the other for interviewing individual families.

The interviews were made with sound recording, with the authorisation of the interviewees. One of the health centres did not allowed sound recording so we wrote notes about the information provided.

All interviews were transcribed so we could do a descriptive analysis of the data. We carried out exploratory procedures and a content analysis that allowed us to obtain sets of themes and categories to identify the difficulties experienced by professionals during the implementation of the screening, advantages and fragilities to the use of ASQ-PT, the changes that professionals and families considered that would improve the

screening process and if the interviewees would recommend the ASQ system and the ASQ-PT instrument to other professionals and families. Some challenges were highlighted by professionals and families that can help us to understand the changes that can be taken into consideration when implementing the ASQ system in Portugal.

Results

Our research aimed to gain knowledge about participant's perceptions concerning the positive aspects and aspects to improve when using ASQ-PT by professionals and families as well as the changes they would like to implement in the system or if they would recommend ASQ-PT screening to other families and professionals.

The analysis of the data allowed us to identify seven categories, presented in Table 3, that helped us to reflect on the practical implications of early identification, screening and, more specifically, the ASQ system.

Table 3
Categories and themes

Categories	Themes
Motivation	<p>Health professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When more motivated, talk more with families about screening and its importance and gather information about follow up services that can help families with their child's development. ✓ Service organization and collaborative work. <p>Education professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The need to be actively involved. <p>Families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More motivated when professional is involved. ✓ Value the opportunity of sharing their knowledge about their children with professionals.
Collaboration	<p>Key for relations/interactions between professionals and families</p> <p>Professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More involved and active participation in the screening. ✓ Empower their trust on: parents' answers, the screening result and feel more secure through the process. <p>Education professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Difficulties managing lack of control during the questionnaires filling.
Trust	<p>Professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lack of trust in families about development difficulties and filling the questionnaires. <p>Families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trust in professionals' development knowledge. ✓ Increase trust in professionals due to their involvement in the screening. ✓ Felt their development perceptions about their child were valued by professionals.
Knowledge/ empowerment	<p>Professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reflected on development. ✓ Increased their attention about children's skills. ✓ Got more information about children.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gain knowledge of families' perceptions about their children. ✓ Adapted their practice to empower families <p>Families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Got more knowledge about development. ✓ Reflected, observed and gain more knowledge about their children's competencies. ✓ Felt empowered to help their children develop more competencies and abilities.
Coordination	<p>Between professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More communication is needed. ✓ More shared information about children's skills and abilities. ✓ Education professionals' work needs to be more valued by health professionals. ✓ Need to increase families' involvement. ✓ Need to increase professionals and families trust.
Dissemination	<p>Increases the importance of early identification.</p> <p>LEI Teams Professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Early intervention system, methodology and referral process. <p>Health and Education professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Early identification and development screening – for a better acceptance by parents and the community. <p>Families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mouth to mouth promotion about screening.
Training	<p>Health and Education professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Development and red flags; Early identification; Early childhood intervention; Collaboration work with other professionals and with families. <p>Professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ASQ-PT system and instrument.

About **motivation**, we understood that most health professionals from health centres found difficulties in implementing the screening due to a lack of time and human resources. But we did not detect this specific difficulty in one of the health centres or in the hospital, where professionals decided to work together and take advantage of the opportunity to screen children from their community.

When professionals are more motivated about early identification, it is easier for them to communicate with families about the children's development, screening, and its importance, as well as to provide information about community services referrals.

Education professionals felt they need to be actively involved in the screening process and not just act as intermediaries, as they did in our study.

Families felt more motivated to fill out the ASQ-PT questionnaire when professionals were involved in the screening process. Some families believed that they were the ones who should fill out the questionnaire because of their knowledge about their children. At the same time, they felt more secure in this task whenever they could get professional help to clarify their doubts or when, after filling out the questionnaire, families and professionals reviewed the answers together.

All interviewees considered fundamental the **collaboration** between families and professionals. It is very important that professionals have a good knowledge of their

community so they can identify families who can fill out the questionnaires alone or need help from professionals.

Some professionals reflected on the importance of being more involved and having an active participation to increase their trust in parents' answers on the questionnaires, on the results of screening and to feel more secure during the process. Particularly, some early childhood educators had difficulty managing lack of control in the questionnaire filling when handed to families to be filled by them. This may have happened because some professionals chose not to be involved in the screening process and only delivered the questionnaires and the results to parents, believing that this was a way to not influence families.

Most professionals need to increase their trust in families when it comes to development knowledge and especially when families have the opportunity to fill out questionnaires about their children's development. Despite this, we found that some professionals' motivation is related to a greater sense of trust in families.

According to health and education professionals, families, particularly the disadvantaged ones, may devalue screening because they do not know about development, which means they might not value specific competencies acquisitions.

Education professionals were the group who most referred lack of trust in a screening process when development questionnaires are filled out by families and in the parents' abilities to fill out development questionnaires. We considered some hypothesis: this feeling may come from insecurity issues or difficulty in giving families this task because the professionals feel they are the ones, as development specialists, that should present children's competencies and abilities. Simultaneously, the use of ASQ-PT screening reinforced education professionals' perception of children's development through a formal instrument, giving them the tranquillity and security needed to identify children's developmental problems.

Families confirmed in their interviews that they trust professionals' knowledge about development, and that they contact professionals for information about development, to clear doubts, and to share their concerns. Professionals must be aware of the important role they have in providing families with the necessary development information, guiding them and/or empowering them with newer knowledge to enhance the children's development opportunities. This role also requires on part of professionals' sensitiveness and positive communication, respecting culture and unique ways that each family has of educating their child.

For most professionals, the ASQ-PT questionnaires provide important **knowledge** about child development to families. Some health and education professionals found that the ASQ-PT screening made them reflect on child development and focus more on children's competencies and abilities that may not have been previously detected. These professionals felt that, after the screening, they had the opportunity to gain new information about children and adjust their practices to empower families in specific areas of development and understand parents' perceptions of their children's competencies.

Health professionals working in the hospital stated that if families filled out the questionnaire before the child's appointment, they would be able to make more accurate interpretations of the screening results, allowing them more time to focus on communication with families about their child's development as opposed to focus only on the child's growth and health.

All families interviewed mentioned that they got new knowledge about the development and competences of their children. They were also able to reflect and observe their children differently. By filling out the questionnaires, families became aware of developmental competences that their children had and became more conscious of the competence's children should have at a specific age. For families, receiving the screening results allowed them to have more knowledge about their child's development, understand how to support their child development in following developmental steps, and expand the range of activities they can engage their children to support learning and development.

The importance of **coordination** between different services and professionals is well-known, but there are still gaps. For effective collaborative work among services, better communication is needed and services should not work in isolation.

Education professionals reported difficulties when discussing children's development problems to parents, being afraid of parents' reactions. Additionally, these professionals reported that health professionals do not value their concerns about children's development difficulties.

About **dissemination**, we believe that there are different levels of dissemination that need to be done in Portugal. LEI teams should disseminate information about SNIPI, the work made by early childhood intervention (ECI) professionals and the referral process to primary prevention professionals in health and education sectors.

Health and education professionals should disseminate information about early identification and developmental screening to demystify what it is and increase acceptance among families and society.

Implementing a screening system in Portugal, organised in various contexts, such as health centres, paediatric appointments, kindergartens, day-cares, and LEI teams, will have positive benefits and in turn these experiences will make parents talk about the subject among themselves. Word-of-mouth dissemination by families is a powerful marketing tool.

We believe that all professionals should have access to **training** in their specific areas. Education and health professionals need to be trained in: development, to gain a deeper understanding of milestones and development red flags; early identification and early intervention, so that all children with development problems or at-risk can be detected and referred to SNIPI; and collaboration with families, particularly when families have concerns about children's development and when professionals validate family needs, especially during crisis moments when they are confronted with their children's development difficulties.

Education professionals should also have training in collaborative team work and screening and assessment instruments.

All professionals, including health, education, ECI professionals, and staff members in health and education contexts, should be trained on the ASQ-PT so that they can assist families in filling out the questionnaire if needed.

Changes to the ASQ-PT system suggested by professionals and families were based on their experiences and participation, and focused on identified aspects to improve the ASQ-PT system. These changes reveal a reflection on the process, the difficulties encountered or observed, ways to overcome them, and the level of involvement of the participants.

Education and health professionals would recommend the use of ASQ-PT to their peers to increase an earlier identification of children with development difficulties. For education professionals, this instrument would help to screen children who need early childhood intervention, to clear their doubts about children's development, validating the need of intervention on specific areas of development. Through the screening results, these professionals would validate their perceptions and feel more confident in their referral decisions.

All families would recommend the use of ASQ-PT to other parents for the knowledge about child development achieved, for promoting reflection and for gaining knowledge about their children's competencies. Families viewed collaboration with health professionals as a positive way of understanding better their children's development and making early identification possible. Regarding collaboration with education professionals, families mentioned that these professionals have more knowledge about their children than health professionals.

Discussion

This study, along with the use of ASQ-PT as a development screening instrument, enabled early identification of children who required further assessment and referral to other services, such as early childhood intervention. Professionals working in LEI teams reported an increase in referrals as a result of our research. This validated the importance of primary prevention (Sameroff & Fiese, 2000), early identification (Bricker et al, 2013) and development screening (AAP, 2001; Glascoe, 2005; Squires et al, 2009). By using the same development screening instrument, ASQ-PT, primary prevention professionals can work together to improve early identification and standardised services and procedures.

The ASQ system is flexible and can be used in different contexts and by different professionals. Our research in Portugal was conducted on a small scale, but it helped us to identify the challenges that professionals and families face actually when implementing this screening system. We concluded that professionals and families recognised a large number of advantages on the screening process and the screening instrument, and also for professionals, families and children. Aspects to improve identified by professionals and families focus on organization and dynamics of

professional work, lack of trust in families to fill a development questionnaire, lack of security by some professionals in talking to parents, and lack of importance placed on development screening for early identification of children with development difficulties. These issues can be addressed by increasing collaboration between professionals and families, and by creating and implementing a screening system that is disseminated in the communities so that its importance can be understood.

In our research, some health professionals (in the hospital and in one of the health centres) viewed the ASQ-PT screening as an opportunity to focus families on their children's development and to assist them in their appointments by setting specific goals for development. These professionals considered that the developmental screening with ASQ-PT was the foundation to get accurate results about children's development and to establish better communication with families. They also felt they could explore more about the parents' concerns regarding their child, as mentioned by Bricker et al. (2013). These health professionals demonstrated a good knowledge of their population/community. Not only the motivation but also the organization of services, the relationship between professionals and the emphasis on collaborative work may have had a positive influence on these specific professionals. We concluded that less motivated professionals viewed ASQ-PT screening as an additional activity that would take time away from their other responsibilities. Dworkin (1989) and Direção-Geral de Saúde (2013) highlighted the need for knowledge about development, the motivation factor and the professionals' experience to screen children development.

In health centres, nurses and physicians have a limited amount of time for each appointment. If the ASQ-PT screening is implemented in Portugal in this context, families may get help filling the questionnaires from professionals other than nurses and physicians, to overcome time limitations (Squires et al., 2009).

Health professionals from the hospital emphasised that with ASQ-PT screening they could focus their appointments not only in growth and health but also in development. This way they could gather missing information to complement the screening results and explore some parents' concerns about their children and their competencies specifically (Bricker et al, 2013).

Education professionals mentioned their lack of trust on families to fill a development questionnaire, however they also referred that ASQ-PT validated their concerns and doubts about a child's development as the screening results confirmed their perceptions. This issue validates family's ability to reflect and accurately fill out a development screening questionnaire (Bricker et al, 1997; Graça, 2013; Lopes, 2013; Teixeira, 2013).

Even if education professionals didn't have an active participation, they showed interest in ASQ-PT screening and understood the importance of being more involved in the process, which can increase their motivation in the screening.

By increasing coordination between education and health professionals, we believe that there will be a greater appreciation of the work done by education professionals; better sharing of information about children's competencies and difficulties, earlier

identification and intervention, more active family involvement, and stronger trust relationship may be built or strengthened between professionals and families (Della Barba et al., 2018; Dunst, 2017; Squires et al., 2009).

When the focus is the dissemination about early identification, developmental screening and ECI, the advantages for children, families and society are emphasised (Alves et al., 2018; Bricker et al., 2013).

Some families might associate development screening with a “label” for children by professionals, as difficulties are the focus (Bricker, 1996), but there are families who understand the developmental screening goal as a way of getting information or clearing doubts about their children's development and how to support the child's development.

Families' motivation to fill a development questionnaire when they can show their knowledge about their children and the increase security through the screening process due to a collaboration with the professionals corroborates the results of Squires et al. (2009). Families felt valued and important because they had the opportunity to share their knowledge about their children with professionals. They considered that the ASQ-PT screening increased their confidence in professionals because they were actively involved in the process. Some families mentioned the screening showed them how professionals value their perceptions about their children's development, as the ones who know their child best. These results are compatible with the ones of Bricker et al., (2013), Division of Early Childhood (2014) and Squires et al. (2009).

Families with the ASQ-PT screening felt more informed about their children development and empowered to help their children achieve new competencies and abilities (Squires et al., 2009). ASQ-PT was considered important for promoting their interest, attention and reflection on development and children's specific competencies. They felt that their involvement and interaction were valued and highlighted the promotion of collaboration between families and professionals, which will increase parental knowledge and skills.

Most professionals mentioned that questionnaires should be filled out collaboratively by families and professionals and their collaboration was considered fundamental in the screening process by all interviewed, which corroborates the results of Della Barba et al. (2018). But professionals must help families with low literacy levels or comprehension difficulties (Bricker et al., 2013; Squires et al., 2009), so previously they need to identify these families. This collaboration would be a way of overcoming possible biases in families' responses when filling out the questionnaire without professional assistance, as there can be different perceptions of child development between families and professionals. In Portugal, there still is a perception of professionals as specialists (Carvalho et al., 2016) when it comes to development and assessment. When families and professionals share information and their own perceptions about a child's development, families get greater knowledge and information about their children development and understand better professionals' recommendations (Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 1999). Parents can also detect developmental difficulties in their child, so professionals must validate these concerns (Glascoe, 2005).

With ASQ-PT screening, families and professionals became more empowered about child development as they gained a better understanding of children's abilities and increased family involvement, particularly in education contexts (Bricker et al., 2013).

Education professionals showed us to be unsure if parents will accept what they are sharing and, especially, parents and professionals may have different perceptions of a child's development. These results are compatible with the ones from Germano (2011). When discussing development problems with families, education professionals provide important information and suggest that families talk with the child's physician or pediatrician (Castro & Gomes, 2000). It is important that health professionals stop using development justifications such as "the child is young", "the child has time to develop", "the child will develop at day-care/kindergarten" (Pinto, 2009). This information validates education professionals' perceptions and highlights a gap in service coordination, as well as a possible obstacle to detecting children's problems. Health professionals should value education professionals' perceptions of children's development to enable partnership work between these two primary prevention areas.

Organising a developmental screening system that uses an instrument with strong psychometric qualities, adapted to the Portuguese child population, and involving primary prevention professionals from health, education and early intervention sectors is crucial. In Portugal, there is a need to increase the early identification of children with developmental problems so that they can be referred for early childhood intervention as soon as possible. Additionally, based on neurosciences research, it is important to recognise the potential to positively shape developmental trajectories during critical periods.

In our opinion, the ASQ-PT instrument is suitable for this purpose and its ease of application and scoring will facilitate the screening of a large number of children. Implementing and standardizing a national screening network using this instrument will improve service coordination and strengthen collaboration among professionals.

In the future, the organization of the ASQ-PT system in Portugal should be flexible and adaptable to different contexts and services. A training plan is also essential to empower professionals and ensure they are confident in all screening steps. Disseminating Early Childhood Intervention and SNIPI, screening and its importance and ASQ is crucial to promote family involvement in the process. These are the foundation for enabling professionals to carry out the necessary procedures for referral allowing, this way, universal accessibility to SNIPI support for children with Special Needs and their families.

References

Alves, A. P., Monteiro, I., Silva, P., Santos, P. (2018). *Relatório de Atividade – Avaliação do Funcionamento do SNIPI- 2017*. Comissão de Coordenação do SNIPI.

- American Academy of Pediatrics (2001). Committee on Children with Disabilities. Policy Statement: Developmental Surveillance and Screening of Infants and Young Children. *Pediatrics*, 108, 192-196. <http://doi.org/10.1542/peds.108.1.1922>
- Bricker, D. (1996). Assessment for IFSP development and intervention planning. In S. J. Meisels, & E. Fenichel (Eds), *New visions for the developmental assessment of infants and young children* (pp. 169-192). Zero to Three: The National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families.
- Bricker, D., Allen, D., Clifford, J., Pretti-Frontczak, K., Slentz, K., & Squires, J. (2008). The Relationship Between the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and the Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS). *Early Intervention Management and Research Group*, White Paper n. 1.
- Bricker, D., Squires, J., & Potter, L. (1997). Revision of a parent-completed development screening tool: Ages and Stages Questionnaires. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 22, 313-328. <http://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/22.3.3133>
- Bricker, D., Macy, M., Squires, J., & Marks, K. (2013). *Developmental Screening in Your Community: An Integrated Approach for Connecting Children with Services*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing, Co.
- Carvalho, L., Almeida, I. C., Felgueiras, I., Leitão, S., Boavida, J., Santos, P. C., Serrano, A., Brito, A. T., Lança, C., Pimentel, J. S., Pinto, A. I., Grande, C., Brandão, T., & Franco, V. (2016). *Práticas Recomendadas em Intervenção Precoce na Infância: Um Guia para Profissionais* (1.ª ed.). Associação Nacional de Intervenção Precoce.
- Castro, S., & Gomes, I. (2000). *Dificuldades de Aprendizagem da Língua Materna*. Universidade Aberta.
- Decreto-Lei n.º 281/2009, de 6 de outubro (2009). *Diário da República – 1.ª Série*, n.º 193, 7298-7301.
- Della Barba, P. C. S., Mazak, M. S. R., Miyamoto, E. E., & Ramos, M. M. A. (2018). O Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-BR) e ações colaborativas entre pais e educadores. *Temas em Educação e Saúde*, v. 14, n.º 1, jan-jul, 31-40. <https://doi.org/10.26673/rtes.v14.n1.2018.10581>
- Direção-Geral de Saúde (2013). *Saúde Infantil e Juvenil: Programa Nacional*. Direção-Geral da Saúde. <http://www.dgs.pt/documentos-e-publicacoes/programa-tipo-de-atuacao-em-saude-infantil-e-juvenil.aspx>
- Division for Early Childhood (2007). *Promoting positive outcomes for children with disabilities: Recommendations for curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation*. Division for Early Childhood.
- Division for Early Childhood. (2014). *DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014*. <http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>.

- Dunst, C. J. (2017). Family systems early childhood intervention. In H. Sukkar, C. J. Dunst, & J. Kirkby (Eds.), *Early Childhood Intervention: Working with Families of Young Children with Special Needs* (pp. 36-58). Routledge.
- Dworkin, P. H. (1989). Developmental screening – Expecting the impossible? *Pediatrics*, 83(4), 619-622.
- Germano, C. M. G. (2011). *Processos de identificação e sinalização de crianças com problemas na linguagem oral pelos educadores de infância*. [Master's Thesis, Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa]. Repositório Institucional do Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa. <http://hdl.handle.net/10400.21/1394>
- Glascoc, F. P. (2000). Evidence-based approach to developmental and behavioral surveillance using parents' concerns. *Child Care Health Development*, volume 26(2), 137-149. <http://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2214.2000.00173.x>
- Glascoc, F. P. (2005). Screening for Developmental and Behavioral Problems. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews*, 11, 173-179. <http://doi.org/10.1002/mrdd.20068>
- Graça, P. (2013). *Aferição para a população portuguesa da Escala de Desenvolvimento: Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ3) dos 30 aos 60 meses*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Universidade do Minho]. Repositório Institucional da Universidade do Minho. <https://hdl.handle.net/1822/25609>
- Lopes, S. (2013). *Aferição para a população portuguesa da Escala de Desenvolvimento: Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ3) dos 2 aos 12 meses*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Universidade do Minho]. Repositório Institucional da Universidade do Minho. <https://hdl.handle.net/1822/27384>
- Meisels, S. J. (1989). Can Developmental Screening Tests Identify Children Who Are Developmentally at Risk? *Pediatrics*, 83(4), 578-585.
- Meisels, S. J., & Atkins-Burnett, S. (1999). Assessing intellectual and affective development before age three: A perspective on changing practices. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 20(1), 23-33.
- Meisels, S. J., & Atkins-Burnett, S. (2008). Evaluating Early Childhood Assessments. In K. MacCartney, & D. Phillips, *Blackwell Handbook of Early Childhood Development* (pp. 533-549). Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.
- Oliveira, G. (2017). Neurodesenvolvimento e comportamento. In G. Oliveira, & J. Saraiva (Coord.), *Lições de Pediatria. Volume I* (pp. 212-232). Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra. <http://doi.org/10.14195/978-989-26-1300-0>
- Pinto, M. (2009). Vigilância do desenvolvimento psicomotor e sinais de alarme. *Revista Portuguesa de Clínica Geral*, 25, 677-687. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32385/rpmgf.v25i6.10694>

Sameroff, A. J., & Fiese, B. H. (2000). Transactional regulation: The developmental ecology of early intervention. In J. P. Shonkoff, & S. J. Meisels (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (2nd Ed., pp. 135-159). Cambridge University Press.

Squires, J., Twombly, E., Bricker, D., & Potter, L. (2009). *ASQ-3 User's Guide*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Teixeira, S. (2013). *Aferição para a população portuguesa da Escala de Desenvolvimento: Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ3) dos 14 aos 27 meses*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Universidade do Minho]. Repositório Institucional da Universidade do Minho. <https://hdl.handle.net/1822/25573>

Acknowledgments

This work was financially supported by Portuguese national funds through the FCT (Foundation for Science and Technology) within the framework of the CIEC (Research Center on Child Studies of the University of Minho) projects under the references UIDB/00317/2020 and UIDP/00317/2020.

Bionotes

Rita Laranjeira is an early childhood educator working in Local Early Intervention team in Coimbra/Penacova, SNIPI. As a PhD student, she was a researcher at Research Centre on Education, Institute of Education, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal.

Email: ritadri@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5843-5395>

Ana Maria Serrano is Associate Professor at the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education, and Researcher at Research Centre on Child Studies, Institute of Education, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal. She is Chair of the European Association of Early Intervention (EURLY AID) and member of the Board of International Society of Early Intervention.

Email: serrano@ie.uminho.pt

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6117-4050>

Received: February 2023

Published: April 2023

**PARENTAL PRACTICES EXERCISED IN THE CHILDHOOD
OF AUTHORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT**

**PRÁTICAS PARENTAIS EXERCIDAS NA INFÂNCIA DE AUTORES DE
ASSÉDIO SEXUAL**

Daniela Baldez Diniz

Federal University of Pará, Brazil

Lília Iêda Chaves Cavalcante

Federal University of Pará, Brazil

Daniela Castro dos Reis

Federal University of Pará, Brazil

Abstract

This study aimed to identify positive and negative parenting practices carried out in childhood based on the reports of perpetrators of sexual assault. Therefore, we used a database consisting of 20 interviews with these individuals, whose textual content was submitted to exploratory reading, organisation of a system of categories and subsequent evaluation by judges, obtaining, from the Kappa value, the presence of at least three categories to analyse the interviewees' reports, two negative and one positive. Positive follow-up was associated with school and leisure time, which emphasizes the concern of parents for the education of their children and their well-being, even though the use of physical and psychological punishments has been reported in the process of guidance and supervision. Negligence was present in the report of authors of sexual assault researched, associating this practice with the experience of being left alone at home. Even with the presence of positive and negative parental practices, the predominance of negligence, physical and psychological abuse, suggests that these evidences should be more investigated regarding the impact that they have on the childhood and their implications to suffer or perpetrate the sexual assault in later cycles of life.

Keywords: parenting practices, childhood, authors of sexual assault

Resumo

Este estudo teve como objetivo identificar práticas parentais positivas e negativas realizadas na infância a partir de relatos de agressores sexuais. Para tanto, utilizamos um banco de dados composto por 20 entrevistas com esses indivíduos, cujo conteúdo textual foi submetido a leitura exploratória, organização de um sistema de categorias e posterior avaliação por juízes, obtendo-se, a partir do valor Kappa, a presença de pelo menos três categorias para analisar os relatos dos entrevistados, dois negativos e um positivo. O acompanhamento positivo foi associado à escola e ao lazer, o que enfatiza a preocupação dos pais com a educação e o bem-estar dos filhos, embora tenha sido relatado o uso de castigos físicos e psicológicos no processo de orientação e supervisão. A negligência esteve presente no relato dos autores das agressões sexuais pesquisadas, associando essa prática à experiência de ficar sozinho em casa. Mesmo com a presença de práticas parentais positivas e negativas, a predominância de negligência e abuso físico e psicológico sugere que essas evidências devem ser mais investigadas quanto ao impacto que têm na infância e suas implicações para sofrer ou perpetrar a agressão sexual em momentos posteriores dos ciclos da vida.

Palavras-chave: práticas parentais, infância, autores de agressão sexual

Introduction

Sexual violence against children and adolescents is a universal phenomenon identified in many societies, historical and cultural contexts, with the presence of all social and economic societies, independently from religion, sex and ethnicities. Facing the diversity that marks its occurrence, violence in general, but particularly sexual violence, has been described as socially complex, polysemous and multifactorial (Matos *et al.*, 2013). Studies related to this theme mostly focus on the victim of violence and the violent behaviour (Reis & Cavalcante, 2018), however it has been gradually observed an increase, albeit subtle, of studies related to the authors of sexual assault. Reis and Cavalcante (2018), in a systematic review of studies involving these individuals, published from 1980 to 2013, indicated out a vast scientific production concentrated in North America and countries of the European continent, while in South America the interest in the topic is still recent, but it expands from a greater visibility of the phenomenon of sexual violence in this context.

In this sense, research that aims to understand factors that might be associated to violent behaviour contributes to programmes of intervention and prevention of sexual violence (Wanklyn *et al.*, 2012), and one of the ways of having access to these factors is through the author of sexual assault. That said, retrospective studies have presented as a possibility of identification of conditions in which these subjects have been exposed to during their childhood. In the literature, this process of return to the subject's child and their lived experiences, mainly within the familial environment, offers other variables to

be considered. Wankly *et al.* (2012), by comparing three groups of young authors of sexual assault, noted the presence of 19 risk factors found in the childhood distributed in four domains (individual, family, peers and school). The factors corresponded from aspects of the subject (such as low self-esteem, health issues, drug and alcohol abuse) to risk factors in the family (such as raising methods, child abuse and parental psychopathology). This finding demonstrates that this period of human development is reached by diverse factors that might be presented as a risk, and that these factors within the group of sexual aggression authors are prominent. Among the possibilities of research on childhood, the family environment has a relevant position regarding significant interactions and lived experiences. Studies (Costa *et al.*, 2018; Paludo & Shiró, 2012) have shown that the family of perpetrators of sexual assault often presents certain characteristics that, supposedly, may imply risks for the perpetration of sexual assault, such as unemployment of parents and other caregivers, interpersonal conflicts associated with reconstituted families, abuse of alcohol and various drugs, absence of socioeconomic opportunities, presence of other forms of violence (Habigzang *et al.*, 2005), such as sexual violence (Landi, 2019; Paludo & Shiró, 2012), neglect and physical violence (Marafiga & Falcke, 2020; Sanfelice & De Antoni, 2010) and low communication between family members (Lopes & Gouveia-Pereira, 2017). Such factors are pointed out in the literature as being experiences that occurred in the childhood of these subjects with risks to the healthy development of the child. Within this same environment, there is the use of parental practices that consist of a set of behaviours which parents choose and that concern the way they act with their children, usually with the objective of educating them to reach a specific domain (Pires *et al.*, 2018). Such behaviours exert an expected influence on the social, cognitive and psychological development of children (Sarmiento & D’Affonseca, 2022) and it is in the family that these parental practices are most frequent, as parents are mainly responsible for transmitting information about the world from the early years of childhood (Sarmiento & D’Affonseca, 2022).

In addition to that, it is assumed that many common practices in the family environment can be pointed out as positive or negative for the development of certain behaviours in childhood. In this article, the studies by Gomide (2014) were chosen to assist in the identification of positive and negative parenting practices in the researched context, since the development of its Parenting Styles Inventory - PSI (2006) considers parenting styles as the confluence of forces between different parenting practices (Gomide, 2014). The developed PSI fills gaps referent to the need of instruments that guide professionals in the attend families at risk identified by the inventory (Santos & Coelho, 2020). An important addition to the discussion is that although parenting styles and parenting practices are constructs related to the way parents deal with their children, these denominations mark distinct and complementary ways of visualising this relationship, to mark this differentiation it is worth mentioning that parenting styles deal with the nature of the interaction between parents and children, involving not only parenting practices, but also a combination of values, parents' beliefs, emotional aspects, child's temperament, among others (Lawrenz *et al.*, 2020, Baumrind, 1966), and parenting practices represented by behaviours that denote the way parental figures choose to educate their children.

For Gomide (2014), parenting practices can be divided into practices that favour the development of prosocial behaviours (responsibility, empathy, honesty), called positive parenting practices (PPP) or practices that favour antisocial behaviours (lying, drug abuse, theft and behaviours in conflict with the law), considered negative parenting practices (NPP). Positive behaviours are organised into two parenting practices: positive follow-up and moral behaviour, as shown in Figure 1 below.

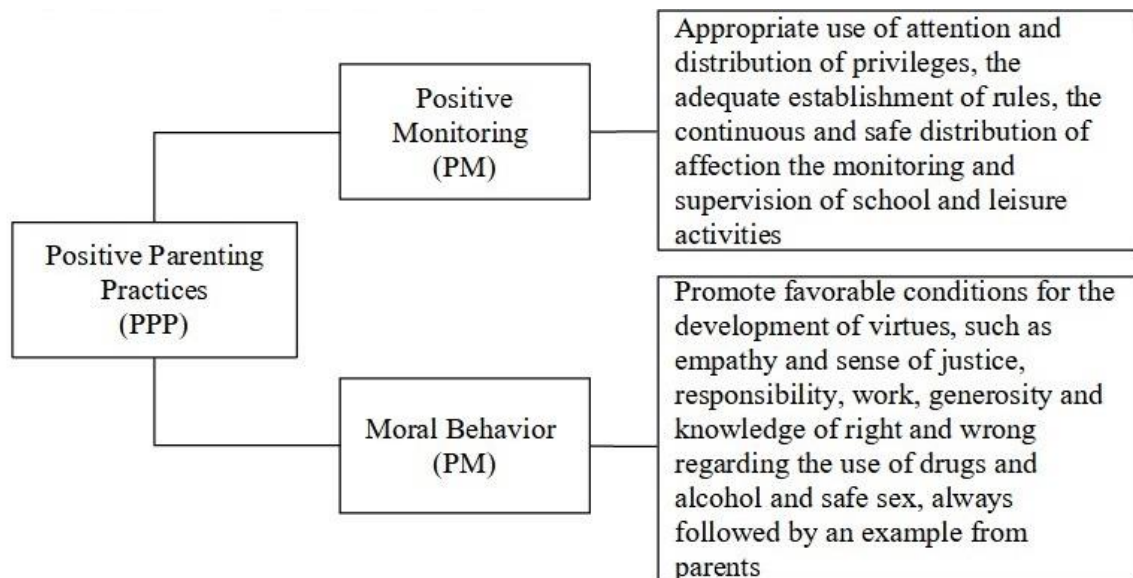


Figure 1. Concept of Positive Parenting Practices

Note. Concepts taken from Gomide (2014)

It is observed that, within each PPP, there is a set of direct practices such as: knowing the life of the child, showing affection and care, transmitting values and discriminating right and wrong to the child, as being strategies of parents in educating their children. Positive practices are seen in the literature as being capable of developing prosocial behaviours in children as empathy (Motta *et al*, 2006, Prust & Gomide, 2007, Salvo *et al*, 2005), in addition to being correlated with the mental health of children and adolescents (Benetti *et al*, 2010; Cid *et al*, 2015).

In contrast, antisocial behaviours can be developed through the use of five negative parenting practices: Negligence, inconsistent punishment, negative trail, relaxed discipline, and physical and psychological abuse (Gomide, 2014), conceptualized in Figure 2 below.

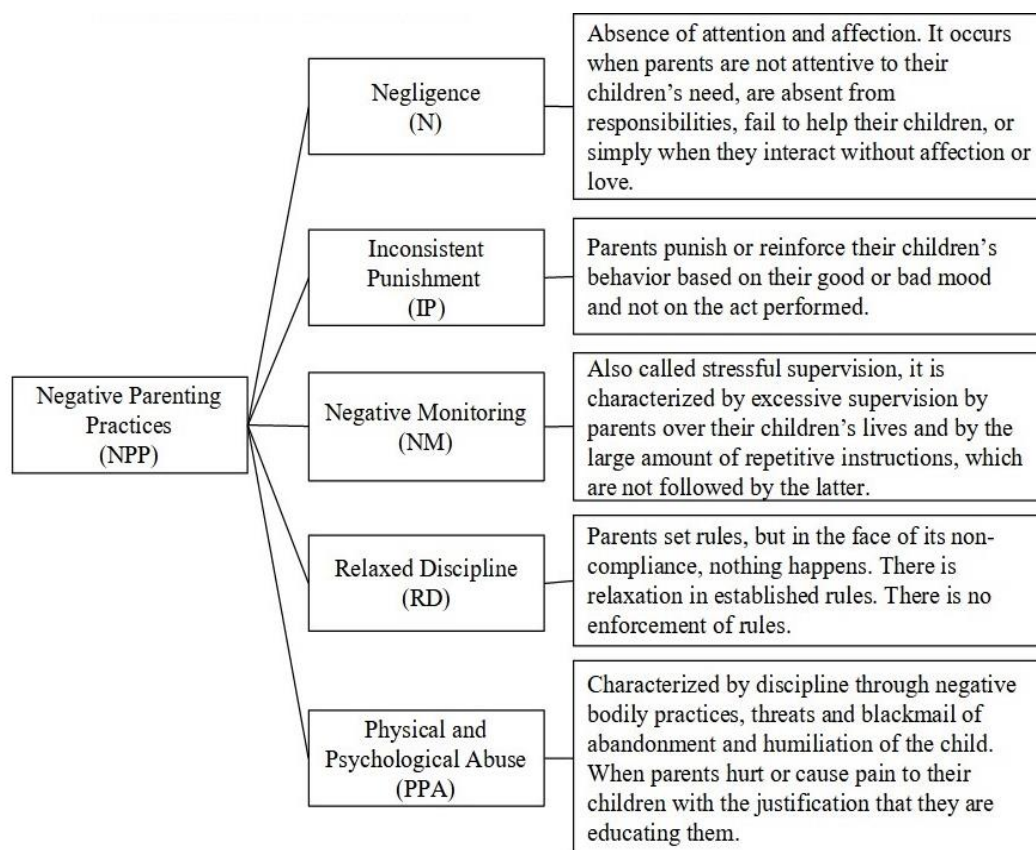


Figure 2. Concept of Negative Parental Practices

Note. Concepts taken from Sampaio and Gomide (2007) and Gomide (2014)

Figure 2 shows several practices performed by parents in order to educate their children. However, within the literature, behaviours such as negligence and physical abuse can result in exposure of children and adolescents to other violence, such as sexual violence (Landi, 2019). The presence of negative parenting practices added to the reduced frequency of positive parenting practices demonstrate to be related to externalizing behaviours (aggressive behaviours and difficulty in following rules) of children (Batista *et al*, 2010; Olsen & Geronasso, 2022).

Although research on parenting practices is extensive and rich, it is difficult to locate in the literature studies that focus on authors of aggression, especially perpetrators of sexual assault. Lopes and Gouveia-Pereira (2017) in a study with three distinct sample groups: sexual abusers, marital violence and homicide, points out that sexual abusers have low communication with family members, this study, in addition to reinforcing the hypothesis that there is a difference between subjects who have committed different crimes, demonstrates that parental practices in the family can be a focus of investigation to understand the phenomenon of sexual violence.

That said, this study aimed to identify positive and negative parenting practices carried out in childhood by perpetrators of sexual assault, in order to generate knowledge about the development of these subjects while they were still children.

Method

This research has an exploratory character, aiming at filling gaps referent to studies on the childhood of sexual aggression authors, and presents a quantitative and qualitative approach, since it first uses a content analysis method based on Bardin's technique in the selection of excerpts of interviews that might correspond to parental practices. Thus, processes of pre-analysis, exploration of the material and treatment of the results were carried out (Silva & Fossá, 2015), to then submit the selected material to a statistical program to validate the textual content with the selected categories.

Research context

The present study was carried out in three prison units in the State of Pará Penitentiary System located in 3 municipalities of the Belém Mesoregion, named here as Prison Institutions A, B and C. The interviews were carried out between 2015-2016.

Ethical procedures

To collect data from this research, the appropriate formal authorizations were requested from the institutions involved in this study, which were the Ethics Committee of the Centre for Tropical Medicine of the Institute of Health Sciences UFPA, the authorization occurred by appear No. 650.210 on May 16, 2014, for the Legal Institutions and the Superintendence of the Penitentiary System of the State of Pará SUSIPE, an authorisation term was used for each. Participants were informed about the objectives, procedures, risks and benefits of the research through the Informed Consent Form (ICF), as well as the guarantee of the confidentiality of their personal information.

Participants

20 sexual aggressors participated, identified here as P1, P2... And so on. One of the participants did not reveal his age, so the average age of the 19 perpetrators of the sexual assault was 39.9 years (SD=10.5), they were mostly adult men, declared themselves brown (60%), had primary education incomplete (55%) and professed the evangelical religion in 60% of the cases, of the 20 interviewees, 11 (55%) practiced sexual violence within the family and 13 (62%) committed crimes against adolescents.

Instruments and Materials

A semi-structured interview script prepared by the researchers of the Author of Violence Study Group (GEAV) Ecology and Development Laboratory (EDL) of Federal University of Pará (UFPA) was used based on a study by Moura (2007). In the interview, there were topics about the characterisation of the participants (age, ethnicity, schooling) and life cycles (childhood, adolescence, adulthood), in which the participant talked about their good and bad memories of each period, activities carried out in the family, school

and neighbourhood, relevant figures and relationships established in each cycle, which made it possible to identify the parenting practices carried out in childhood.

The information obtained was organised in a spreadsheet in which it was possible to systematize the positive and negative parenting practices selected from the analysis of the interview transcripts.

Collection procedures

Regarding the collection, the interviews were conducted in the prison units where the perpetrators of sexual assault were located, each prison unit provided a room, and the semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded with the participant's authorisation by researchers from the GEAV. In the room, there were only the researchers and the participants, so to ensure everyone's safety, the prison units made available a penitentiary agent who was outside and close to the door of the rooms, the request for them to stay outside the interview room came from the researchers themselves in order to favour the establishment of the interview. Besides that, all participants were handcuffed during the interview. The few occurrences that were registered in the records refer to the noise of handcuffs when a participant gestured, the entrance of a penitentiary agent for general information or the voices or yells of other inmates next to the room.

Analysis procedures

After conducting the 20 interviews, the material underwent a transcription and review process in the period 2017-2018, the research phase in which the first author joined the team responsible for the procedure. At the end of this process, all interviews were available for further analysis and research planned by the group. For this article, information was obtained to characterise the perpetrators of sexual aggression surveyed and to identify parenting practices following four distinct stages.

First Stage - Exploratory reading of the interview database

The exploratory reading was carried out in 20 interviews located in the research interview bank, using the Bardin technique, it was possible to locate textual fragments that contained the parenting practices carried out in childhood of these participants. The selection of these fragments followed certain criteria, namely: 1) to be a parental practice, that is, behaviour of the parents or guardians towards the child, now the author of sexual assault, who had the objective of educating him; and 2) to be a memory of the participant that occurred during his childhood.

Second Stage - Database Construction

The identification of parental practices allowed the construction of a new database organized in a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel Software (2010), the spreadsheet contained the system of categories elaborated by Gomide (2014), that is, positive parenting

practices (positive monitoring and moral behaviour) and negative (negligence, inconsistent punishment, negative monitoring, relaxed discipline and physical and psychological abuse) and selected textual fragments. In addition, the spreadsheet had the concepts of parental practices with their respective examples. Such examples were taken from the Gomide Parental Styles Inventory (2014), however, for this work, the phrasal time was changed, placing them in the past to facilitate the categorization process.

Third Stage - Judges' Evaluation

To validate the textual fragments of the interviews arranged in the system of categories, the content was submitted to the appreciation of two auxiliary researchers, in this work called judges. Like the author, the judges carried out a process of categorisation of the material extracted from the interviews, which was stored in an Excel spreadsheet (2010). After reading the interview fragment and understanding the concepts of each parenting practice, the judge would choose by marking an X, which parenting practice is explicit with that behaviour mentioned by the participant.

With the return of the judges, it was possible to find a certain level of agreement between the judges, through the Kappa (K) concordance test, also known as the Kappa coefficient, proposed by Jacob Cohen in 1960. The Kappa coefficient is generally used by health professionals and consists of the calculation performed between the proportion of times that judges agree and the maximum proportion that they could agree, both corrected by agreement due to chance (Alexandre & Coluci, 2011). The Kappa value can vary from 0 to 1, being evaluated as follows: $K < 0$ no agreement, $0 \leq K < 0.21$ slight agreement, $0.21 \leq K < 0.41$ weak agreement, $0.41 \leq K < 0.61$ moderate agreement, $0.61 \leq K < 0.81$ substantial agreement, and finally a value of $0.81 \leq K < 1$ almost perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977 quoted in Matos, 2014), in this work, a Kappa value from 0.61 was considered, that is, substantial values for the analysis.

In the literature, Kappa is commonly used to assess the agreement between two judges (Silva & Paes, 2012). However, considering that this study involved three judges, to perform the calculation of the Kappa coefficient of agreement, the *IBM SPSS Statistics 25 program* was used. Thus, the calculation considered the data of two judges at a time. First, Judge 1 was related to Judge 2, then, again, Judge 1 to Judge 3, and finally, Judge 2 to Judge 3. After the result of each calculation, it considered the simple arithmetic mean of the three results evaluating each parental practice.

Results

In the exploratory reading of the material, 115 fragments of the textual content of the interviews were selected based on the inclusion criteria, and these were organised in a spreadsheet available for the three judged that categorised the fragments in each parental practice. Table 1 shows the arithmetic mean resulting from the Kappa value calculated in relation to the three judges and their level of agreement.

Table 1

Arithmetic mean of the Kappa value calculated between the three judges.

Parental Practice	Average of the 3 judges – Kappa	Agreement level
Physical and psychological abuse	K = 0.865	Nearly perfect agreement
Negligence	K = 0.804	Substantial agreement
Positive Monitoring	K = 0.681	Substantial agreement
Moral Behaviour	K = 0.406	Weak agreement
Relaxed Discipline	K = 0.333	Weak agreement
Inconsistent Punishment	K = 0.258	Weak agreement
Negative Monitoring	K = 0.059	Slight presence of agreement

Source: Prepared by the author of the work.

In three parenting practices (positive monitoring, neglect and physical and psychological abuse) the Kappa value was above 0.61, which represents a substantial level of agreement between the judges and greater consistency of the results obtained. The other parenting practices, moral behaviour, relaxed discipline and inconsistent punishment, obtained a level of agreement considered weak, while negative monitoring showed slight agreement between the judges.

In general, however, it is noted that there was a low level of agreement among the judges, since only three practices obtained results that had agreement at this satisfactory level. The hypothesis discussed for this occurrence is based on the very definition of parental practice, because, when considering it as an expression of behaviours that occur from interpersonal interaction, it is understood that the more complex this is, the greater the probability of it offering openness to other interpretations. Thus, parental practices that involve tangible and observable behaviours, such as physical punishment, humiliation, absence of responsibility, monitoring school and leisure activities, allow greater clarity and resources for people to assess which specific practice a sentence may be referring to. However, the more the behaviour refers to or depends on a more subjective field, such as over-surveillance that can be confused with care, inferring the parents' mood in the use of parental practice or whether or not there was compliance with rules, situations that require more contextual data, in addition to some fragments of texts, understanding and evaluation becomes more difficult to perform, as it requires interpretation and, in turn, is loaded with values, beliefs and personal experiences. Thus, this study analysed only parental practices in which there was substantial agreement between the judges, these practices corresponded to 68 fragments of text, distributed in Positive Monitoring (N=25), Physical and Psychological Abuse (N=31) and Neglect (N=12).

Regarding positive parental practice, it was possible to identify reports involving monitoring and supervision of school activities, use of attention and distribution of affection. Regarding the supervision of school and leisure activities, the authors of sexual assault report moments when parents participated in school meetings, assisted in school activities and encouraged the task of studying. Verified in these report “He accompanied me (to school), took me, like my brothers, to the meeting they went to, when there was a course, in this school thing, when my mother didn't go, my father went” (P20, 37 years old) and reports below:

When I was a child, he helped me to do my homework... he helped me like that, he encouraged me to do my homework, he tried to see my grades, he encouraged me to get good grades, right? he gave me presents [gifts] when I passed the year. (P4, 44 years)

My father who took me every morning by bicycle (to school), and picked me up, it was two kilometres [...]. So that this wouldn't happen, of being late for school, which was in the morning at seven o'clock, so my father would take me and pick me up. (P7, 27 years old)

When it comes to the use of attention and distribution of affection, the participants report events they consider happy in their life trajectory, in which parental figures sought to make them feel special and even create environments in which they felt safe.

It's just a good event, but it's when it's business, when I was going, it's, to complete the year, you know, that the mother used to have those little parties there... [...] It was, she invited friends, friends, you know, and it was joy. (P13, 44 years)

(Given the sexual abuse suffered in childhood) So, she saw it as abnormal, right? In me. Oh, I remember that, because it was a very strong thing, you know? Then, she said: “My son, what happened?”, then, I got that fear, that thing, you know? “Look, look, you won't be beaten, you...” she talked to me in such a way that she convinced me, and I told her what happened, you know? Then, she called the parents of this, this boy, then, she forbade him to go to the house, to go into the backyard to play. (P4, 44 years)

Negative parenting practices that can be analysed are: Physical and psychological abuse and neglect. The use of negative body practices that hurt and cause pain, were frequent in the reports, the participants of 15- and 33-years old states that “I was beaten but... it was... it was my mother's vine. He beat me because I was mischievous”, in other reports physical abuse is also observed, “He (stepfather) hit with whatever he had in his hand. My best friends were my parents, although my stepfather beat me up, but he wanted my best, deep down, deep down he wanted my best” (P19, 26 years old).

My mother (adoptive) raised me, never... when we lied or hid anything, we were beaten. So, I was raised that way. So, I didn't lie, I told my truth. [...] My mother was like this: if I hit, if I fought in the street, when I got home, I would be beaten. And if I was beaten, I would be beaten too, you know? (P11, 52 years)

According to the reports, the use of physical punishments always had a justification to educate them, and for this purpose they even used other instruments such as the vine. In addition to physical abuse, psychological abuse also appeared in textual fragments. Through humiliation:

I was bullied at school and they still didn't like me at home, because I was the little black duck in the family [...] My father is the son of a Portuguese son, you understand? Son of Portuguese are those white people; do you understand? And I was born, I was the only coal, black boy born in the family, it was me, you know? My father called me cursed. (P17, 29 years old).

Then there were the parties, right? There was... There was a table with 12 seats, which was precisely, which were the children he had, right? I was the last to eat, because the foster kids always got last, you know? My (adoptive) mother wouldn't let me, but my (adoptive) father always left it last... (P11, 52 years).

Neglect was the third possible parental practice to be analysed, within the fragments possible to be analysed there is a routine involving the use of parents and religious routines. Like the reports below:

So, she had to choose, or she would take care of us, stay at home and we would starve, or else she would go out to work and try to take care of us, but in her absence, which was necessary, there were several types of things, right? This issue of sexual violence, there was this issue of mistreatment, right? from the very family that could be protecting. (P5, 32 years)

And my father was always traveling, my father was from the stretch, he only lived in the middle of the world. Within a month, it was very difficult to see him. Sometimes, he arrived at night, then, when it was morning, when we woke up, he was gone, he had already paid the alley (left) again. (P13, 44 years)

Sometimes my mother didn't take care of the children, she didn't know about the children, she didn't know what they were doing. [...] my mother only at church, prayer circle thing, midday prayer, vigil, this evangelical thing, you know, then, they left the house free, so, I closed it and went to the street [...] I missed my mother's caresses.. (P17, 29 years)

Discussion

The Kappa coefficient found agreement among the judges in three parenting practices, one positive and two negative, in relation to positive parenting practice, positive monitoring is presented in the literature (Gomide, 2014, Rodrigues & Mendes, 2019, Toni & Silveiras, 2013) as an important variable to avoid antisocial behaviour, as it is characterised by the true interest of parents in their children's lives, adequate establishment of rules, providing safe environments for sharing secrets and demonstrations of affection and care. Through the reports, it is observed that in fact there were times when parents had positive monitoring with their children, mainly related to

school monitoring, Toni and Hecaveí (2014) point out that maternal and paternal practices are predictors of school performance, so the more parents exercise positive practices, among them positive monitoring, the more children tend to increase their school performance. Although most had incomplete elementary education, more than half of the participants reported that while they were in the school environment there was interest from parents and encouragement in academic life, this data can be explained by the view that one has of education, often represented by the school that symbolizes an instrument of economic improvement, social mobility and better chances in the labour market (Silva & Valore, 2019; Lemos *et al.*, 2008), thus there is an appreciation of this aspect in the life trajectory of the child who starts to receive greater attention and participation from parents. It is noteworthy that although positive monitoring does not only involve this aspect, in general, among all aspects that characterised as positive monitoring, only when school follow-up is presented in a more relevant manner in the reports, whereas “adequate establishment of rules”, “continuous and safe distribution of affection” and “adequate use of attention and distribution of privileges” were not found in the reports. Therefore, so that the consequences of a parental practice are effective, different elements are needed, such as frequency, intensity and a set of behaviours throughout the relationships, thus, the behaviour of monitoring specific situations might not be as effective in the behaviour of a child.

As for negative parenting practices, racism and treatment differentiation were observed when there was no consanguinity. Regarding racism, the family is generally seen as an important environment for the construction of black identity (Fernandes, 2018), so when this environment promotes a pejorative view in relation to the child's colour, it can cause psychological impacts that mainly affect self-esteem and the development of self-rejection (Silva, 2018). Thus, practices of humiliation with the intention of educating can develop problems with the way these subjects see themselves, a condition that is apparent in studies on perpetrators of sexual assault, Zilki *et al.* (2020) in a study on the psychological characteristics of these subjects concluded that there is impairment in cognitive, affective and self-perception aspects.

In several studies (Gomide, 2014; Sampaio & Vieira, 2010; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2013, Rodrigues & Mendes, 2019), physical and psychological abuse is pointed out as one of the most harmful parental practices for the development of children and adolescents, being strongly linked to behaviours that violate the law. Araújo (2019) states that dysfunctional families are characterised using violent behaviours and increase the likelihood of dysfunctional behaviours. Understanding that the family is an environment capable of influencing the biopsychosocial characteristics of participants, when this environment has active practices of violence or deals with adverse situations through punishment, children can behave in different environments as they experienced within the family. Attention is paid to the fact that all participants were raised at a time when questions about violent parental practices were little discussed by society in general, only recently with Law No. 13.010/14 (2014), better known as the Palmada Law, families were able to reassess their ways of educating their children in Brazil.

The absence of parental figures due to work issues to maintain the family's

livelihood exposes the economic conditions existing within the family of the participants, the absence of the parental figure made possible the occurrence of other violence. Mata (2019) warns of the care in discussing negligence, since the lack of parental care during childhood can be crossed by several factors, including economic. However, participants who reported neglect also talk about the absence of affection and affection in the relationship with parental figures, this characteristic linked to physical abuse that was frequent may be associated with antisocial behaviours. Rodrigues *et al.* (2013) when evaluating maternal care with babies of different ages, realised that neglect increased accompanying the growth of the baby, despite being a study with babies, it can be inferred that parental figures begin to exercise less their responsibilities as their children grow up, giving them the ability to deal with different situations.

Conclusion

The identification of parental practices, from the Kappa value, demonstrates the presence of at least three categories in the interviewees' reports, being two negative and one positive. Positive follow-up was associated with school and leisure time, which emphasises the concern of parents for the education of their children and their well-being, even though the use of physical and psychological punishments has been reported in the process of guidance and supervision. This data suggests that their experiences were crossed by positive and negative practices, concomitantly. Regarding positive monitoring (N=25), the textual context, mostly, focused on school moments, demonstrating the preoccupation of the parents to their children's education, while other behaviours that characterised this practice were absent, so that positive monitoring is restricted to only one specific behaviour. On the other hand, the use of physical punishments and psychological abuse (N=31), besides having an increased textual context, showed up in different forms, justified and even comprehended by the participants as "common" manners of educating a child. However, it reveals that, even in the presence of a positive parental practice, the negative parental practice might be associated to behaviours that contribute to the behaviour of sexual violence, when a positive parental practice does not appear more frequently or with more intensity in other moments of life. About negligence (N=12), this exposed experiences that the participants were alone at home, but the literature points out a care to discuss this practice, since socioeconomic conditions of the family might interfere in the choice of this parental practice. However, it should be mentioned that, among the reports, it was observed that the absence of the caretakers was felt by the participants, although understood by them, revealing that this negative parental practice could have been more harmful than reported by the participants.

Regarding the limitations of the research, it is noteworthy that because it is a retrospective study, which depends on the memory of the participants, the possibility of verifying the frequency and intensity of these events was not possible to be achieved consistently, using only the information offered by the authors of sexual assault. In addition, the lack of specific questions to investigate parental practice made it difficult to obtain a higher number of experiences that occurred in childhood. The low number of

parental practices in which there was agreement between the judges, allows us to verify how challenging it is to work with this construct when it depends only on the verbal reports of the participants, since the behaviours related to parental practices require greater contextualisation as they are crossed by various interpretations.

Considering these factors and analysing what was possible in this study, it is concluded that, even when the family environment aims to educate and promote development in childhood, factors such as intensity, frequency and sociocultural aspects might influence the occurrence of parental practices and their evaluation as positive and negative in terms of human development. This means that parental practices can constitute an important line of investigation when trying to understand the factors and contexts associated with the perpetration of violence and crimes of a sexual nature. In addition, more studies are expected that highlight authors of sexual assault that may consider existing family relationships or that existed during their life trajectory, studies with younger authors of sexual assault, which have specific questions about parenting practices, which may support more findings of this work in order to understand the phenomenon of sexual violence.

References

- Alexandre, N. M. C. & Coluci, M. Z. O. (2011). Content validity in the processes of construction and adaptation of measurement instruments. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 16(7), 3061-3068. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-81232011000800006>.
- Araújo, R. V. (2019). The child and adolescent in conflict with the law and its microsystem familiar. *Cadernos Zygmunt Bauman*, 9(21). <https://periodicoseletronicos.ufma.br/index.php/bauman/article/view/11794>
- Batista, E. C., Oliveira, B. A., & Pires, S. L. (2010). A influência da família na aquisição de modelos agressivos pelas crianças. *Revista FAROL*, 4(12), 09-25.
- Baumrind, D. (1966) Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior, *Child Development*, 37(4), 887-90.
- Benetti, S. P. C., Pizetta, A., Schwartz, C. B., Hass, R. A., & Melo, V. L. (2010). Environment de saúde mental na adolescência: características familiares, eventos traumáticos e violência. *Psycho-USF*, v. 15, n. 3, 321-332. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-82712010000300006>
- Cid, M. F. B., Matsukura, T. S., & Cia, F. (2015). Relações entre a saúde mental de estudantes do ensino fundamental e as práticas e estilos parentais. *O Mundo da Saúde*, 39(4), 504-513. <https://doi.org/10.15343/0104-7809.20153904504513>
- Costa, L. P., Cavalcante, L. I. C., & Reis, D. C. (2018). Authors of sexual assault in] contextos intra e extra familiar: revisão da literatura. *Mudanças – Psicologia da Saúde*, 26(2), 61-69. <https://doi.org/10.15603/2176-1019/mud.v26n2p61-69>.
- Fernandes, N. C. (2018). Racismo na infância: Impactos psicológicos. *VII Congresso Internacional de Psicologia da UEM. Anais. Teatro Calil Haddad/Campus UEM, Maringá - PR.*

- Gomide, P. I. C. (2014). *Inventário de práticas parentais: Modelo teórico - Manual de aplicação, apuração e interpretação*. Editora Vozes.
- Habigzang, L. F., Koller, S. H., Azevedo, G. A., & Machado, P. X. (2005). Abuso sexual e dinâmica familiar: Aspectos observados em processos jurídicos. *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa*, 21(3), 341-348. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-37722005000300011>
- Landi, C. A. (2019). *Violência sexual contra adolescentes e adultos jovens e estilos parentais* [Master's Thesis, Federal University of São Paulo].
- Landis, J. R., & Koch, G. G. (1977). A one way components of variance model for categorical data. *Biometrics*, v. 33, 671-679. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2529465>
- Lawrenz, P., Zeni, L. C., Jury Arnoud, T. C., Nichele Foschiera, L., & Habigzang, L. F. (2020). Estilos, práticas ou habilidades parentais: Como diferenciá-los?. *Revista Brasileira de Cognitive Therapies*, 16(1), 2-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5935/1808-5687.20200002>
- Lei n.º 3.010, de 26 de junho de 2014. Altera a Lei n.º 8.069, de 13 de julho de 1990 (Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente), para estabelecer o direito da criança e do adolescente de serem educados e cuidados sem o uso de castigos físicos ou de tratamento cruel ou degradante, e altera a Lei n.º 9.394, de 20 de dezembro de 1996.
- Lopes, R. F., & Gouveia-Pereira, M. (2017). Efeitos individuais e familiares em crimes: Abuso sexual, violência conjugal e homicídio. *Análise Psicológica*, 35(3), 323-338. <http://publicacoes.ispa.pt/index.php/ap/article/view/1181>
- Marafiga, C. V., & Falcke, D. (2020). Perfil sociodemográfico, judicial e experiências na família de origem de homens que cumprem pena por estupro de vulnerável. *Aletheia*, 53(2), 90-105. <https://doi.org/10.29327/226091.53.2-7>
- Mata, N. T. (2019). Negligência na Infância: Uma Reflexão sobre a (Des)proteção de Crianças e Famílias. *O Social em Questão*, 45. ISSN: 2238-9091 (Online)
- Matos, D. A. S. (2014). Reliability and agreement between judges: Applications in the area Educational. *Est. Aval. Educ*, 25(59), 298-324. <https://doi.org/10.18222/eae255920142750>
- Motta, D. C., Falcone, E. M. O., Clark, C., & Manhães, A. C. (2006). Práticas Educativas positivas favorecem o desenvolvimento da empatia em crianças. *Psicologia em Estudo*, 11(3), 523-532. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-73722006000300008>
- Olsen, N., & Geronasso, M. C. H. (2022). Estilos parentais e crianças com problemas de comportamento externalizante na escola. *Revista Psicologia em Foco*, 14(20), 160-172. <http://revistas.fw.uri.br/index.php/psicologiaemfoco/article/view/3402>
- Paludo, S. S., & Shiró, E. D. B. (2012). Um estudo sobre fatores de risco e proteção associados à violência sexual cometida contra adolescentes e jovens adultos. *Estudos de Psicologia*, 17(3), 397-404. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-294X2012000300007>
- Pires, M. F. D. N., Roazzi, A., Nascimento, A. M., Souza, B. C., & Mascarenhas, S. A. N. (2018). A influência das práticas parentais no desenvolvimento da criança: Uma revisão de

- literatura. *Revista AMAzônica*, 12(2), 283-309. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6804342>>
- Prust, L. W., & Gomide, P. I. C. (2007) Relationship between Moral Behavior of Parents and filhos adolescentes. *Estudos de Psicologia*, 24(1), 53-60. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-166X2007000100006>.
- Rodrigues, F. D., & Mendes, D. L. (2019) Parental styles and implications in desenvolvimento afetivo entre pais e filhos adolescentes. *Perspectiva: Ciência e Saúde*, 4(2), 69-100. <http://sys.facos.edu.br/ojs/index.php/perspectiva/article/view/428>
- Rodrigues, O. M. P. R., Nogueira, S. C., & Altafim, E.R. P. (2013). Práticas Parentais Maternas e a Influência de Variáveis Familiares e do Bebê. *Pensando Famílias*, 17(2), 71-83. <http://hdl.handle.net/11449/133833>
- Reis, D. C., & Cavalcante, L. I. C. (2018). Autor de agressão sexual de criança/adolescente: uma caracterização da produção sobre o tema. *Ciências & Cognição*, 23(2) 263-276. ISSN 18065821 <http://www.cienciasecognicao.org/revista>>
- Salvo, C. G., Silveiras, E. F. M., & Toni, P. M. (2005). Práticas educativas como forma de predição de problemas de comportamento e competência social. *Estudos de Psychology*, 22(2), 187-195. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-166X2005000200008>
- Sampaio, I. T. A., & Vieira, M. L. (2010). A influência do gênero e ordem de nascimento sobre práticas educativas parentais. *Psychology: Reflection and Criticism*, 23(2), 198-207. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-79722010000200002>.
- Sanfelice, M. M., & De Antoni, C. (2010). A percepção do abusador sexual sobre a (sua) Sexualidade. *Interamerican Journal of Psychology*, 44(1), 131-139. <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/doi/00349690/2010/00000044/00000001/art00014>
- Santos, A. V., & Coelho C. (2020). Definições operacionais e análise funcional de termos presentes nas questões do Inventário de Estilos Parentais (IEP). *Revista Perspectivas*. 11(1), 063-078. <https://doi.org/10.18761/PAC.2020.v11.n1.06>
- Sarmiento, R. S., & D’Affonseca, S. M. (2022). Opinião dos pais sobre práticas educativas parentais. *Psicologia Argumento*, 40(108). <https://doi.org/10.7213/psicolargum40.108.AO08>.
- Silva, A. H., & Fossá, M. I. T. (2015) Análise de conteúdo: Exemplo de aplicação da técnica para análise de dados qualitativos. *Qualit@s Revista Eletrônica*, 17(1). ISSN 1677 4280
- Silva, E. C., & Valore, L. A. (2019). Educação e transformação social: produção de sentidos nos discursos de egressos de um programa social da iniciativa privada. *Psicologia em Revista*, 25(1), 176-197. <https://doi.org/10.5752/P.1678-9563.2019v25n1p176-198>
- Silva, M. C. (2018). O impacto do racismo na saúde mental das vítimas. *Portal dos Psychologists*, ISSN 1646-6977. <https://www.psicologia.pt/artigos/textos/A1229.pdf>

- Silva, R. S. E., & Paes, A. T. (2012). Teste de concordância Kappa. *Educação Continuada em Saúde Einstein*, 10(4), 165-166. <http://apps.einstein.br/revista/arquivos/PDF/2715-165-166.pdf>
- Toni, C. G. S., & Hecaveí, V. A. (2014). Relações entre práticas educativas parentais e rendimento acadêmico em crianças. *PsicoUSF*, 19(3), 511-520. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-82712014019003013>
- Toni, C. G. S., & Silveiras, E. F. M. (2013). Práticas educativas parentais e comportamentos de saúde e risco na adolescência: Um modelo preditivo. *Psicol. Argum*, 31(74), 457-471. <https://doi.org/10.7213/psicol.argum.31.074.AO01>
- Wanklyn, S. G., Ward, A. K., Cormier, N. S., Day, D. M., & Newman, J. E. (2012). Can we distinguish juvenile violent sex offenders, violent no-sex offenders, and versatile violent sex offenders based on childhood risk factors? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(11), 2128-2143. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260511432153>
- Zilki, A., Aguiar, L. L., Perissinotto, R., & Resende, A. C. (2020). Autores de violência sexual e o teste de Rorschach: Revisão de literatura. *Psych. Rev. Sao Paulo*, 29(1), 176-200. <https://doi.org/10.23925/2594-3871.2020v29i1p176-200>

Bionotes

Daniela Baldez Diniz is a Bachelor in Psychology, currently is a Master's student in the Behaviour Theory and Research Programme at the Federal University of Pará, Brazil. Her research includes sexual violence against children and adolescents, family microsystem, parenting practices and parenting styles. Member of the Study Group for Authors of Violence.

Email: danielabaldez.psico@gmail.com

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4879-0753>

Lília Iêda Chaves Cavalcante holds a PhD from the Graduate Program in Theory and Research of Behavior, with a Post-Doctorate from the Graduate Program in Psychology at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Lecturer in the Graduate Programme in Theory and Research of Behaviour at the Federal University of Pará, working at the Laboratory of Developmental Ecology (LED). Professor at the Faculty of Social Service. Board member of the Brazilian Association of Developmental Psychology (ABPD) in the 2018-2020 and 2020-2022 terms. CNPq Research Productivity Scholarship – Level 1C.

Email: liliaccavalcante@gmail.com

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3154-0651>

Daniela Castro dos Reis is a Bachelor in Psychology, psychologist, specialist in People Management, master and doctor in Theory and Research of Behaviour from the Federal University of Pará, Brazil (2016), Capes Honorable Mention Award-2017. Effective

Diniz, D. B., Cavalcante, L., & Castro dos Reis, D. (2023). Parental practices exercised in the childhood of authors of sexual assault. *Child Studies*, (2), 37-54. <https://doi.org/10.21814/childstudies.4533>

professor at the Federal University of Pará, linked to the Graduate Program in Theory and Research of Behaviour. Member of the GT Family, Development Processes and Health Promotion of the National Association for Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology

Email: danireispara@edu.ufra.br

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9505-4516>

Received: February 2023

Published: April 2023

**MULTIMODAL NARRATIVES IN CONTEMPORARY
BRAZILIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

**NARRATIVAS MULTIMODAIS NA LITERATURA INFANTIL
BRASILEIRA CONTEMPORÂNEA**

Diana Navas

Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil

Abstract

Although it is not a contemporary creation, there is evidence in our context of the growth of multimodal narratives addressed primarily to Brazilian child readers. This is the offer of narratives that, based on different strategies, are built not only through the literary text but also through its dialogue with other languages, among which we highlight illustration and graphic design here. Among such works, we propose the reading of *Pra lá*, by Luiz Tatit, Dante Ozzetti and Edith Derdyk (2012); *Era uma vez outra vez*, by Edith Chacon and Priscilla Ballarin (2022); and *O que é que isso é?*, by Alexandre Rampazo (2020). We aim to highlight the need for simultaneous reading of the different languages that make up the book object to reach different reading layers. We also aim to discuss how the reading of multimodal works demands a different kind of reading and reader.

Keywords: multimodality; graphic design; illustrations; interactivity; reader

Resumo

Embora não seja uma criação contemporânea, há evidências, em nosso contexto, do aumento da edição de narrativas multimodais dirigidas, principalmente, ao público infantil brasileiro. Trata-se da oferta de narrativas que, a partir de diferentes estratégias, constroem-se, não só através do texto literário, mas também do seu diálogo com outras linguagens, das quais destacamos aqui a ilustração e o *design* gráfico. Dentre tais obras, propomos a leitura de *Pra lá*, de Luiz Tatit, Dante Onzzetti e Edith Derdyk (2012); *Era uma vez outra vez*, de Edith Chacon e Priscilla Ballarin (2022); e *O que é que isso é?*, de Alexandre Rampazo (2020). Procuramos destacar a necessidade de uma leitura sinérgica das diferentes linguagens que compõem o objeto livro para que diferentes camadas de

leitura possam ser alcançadas. Também pretendemos discutir como a leitura de obras multimodais exige um tipo diferente de leitura e leitor.

Palavras-chave: multimodalidade; design gráfico; ilustrações; interatividade; leitor

Introduction

Although it does not constitute a contemporary creation, in our context, a significant growth of multimodal narratives can be observed, primarily addressed to children. In line with a scenario in which we are immersed in different languages, especially due to technological advances, as well as an important development in the graphic industry, we find ourselves encountering literary works that move from the mono-modality of the printed page to a multimodal construction.

Understanding the concept of multimodality from Gibbons' considerations, for whom "multimodality refers to the multiplicity of semiotic resources within a particular artefact or event" (2012, p. 5), contemporary literary production designed to be addressed to children and young people, is constructed from a multiplicity of languages, of which we highlight illustration and graphic design.

When we think of a literary work, traditionally, what comes to mind is just a well-crafted set of words and phrases, linearly organised, in order to represent characters, actions, spaces, times, thoughts and feelings, regardless of the presence or not of illustrations, as well as typography, colours, layout or the type and weight of the paper used in its construction. However, we are faced today with a different scenario, in which we are invited to read, in addition to the words, also the page itself, in its material aspect, as Baldry & Thibault explain:

What was essentially a linguistic unit 100 years ago has now become primarily a visual unit. The page is no longer, as it was predominantly in the 19th century, simply a convenient division for the purposes of printing. In Western culture, it is increasingly looked upon as a textual unit in its own right. (Baldry & Thibault, 2005 p. 58)

The illustrations and graphic design are assumed as narrative components, narrating together with the literary text. The verbal text has its meanings expanded in close dialogue with the images and design elements – such as typography, colours, paper type and weight, a layout which only becomes possible from a synergistic reading of the different compositional languages of the work.

Therefore, we are faced with works that "require practical capacities for understanding and producing each one of the [languages] (multiliteracies) to give it meaning" (Rojo, 2016, p. 19). In other words, as Hallet explains, "being multimodally literate would therefore be defined as the ability to decipher, decode and 'read' various semiotic modes and their combination in a single act of representation or communication" (Hallet, 2018, p. 4). We are dealing with a type of production that implies

not only changes in how a given story is constructed, but also in how it should be read and interpreted, bringing new demands to the reader and, consequently, new skills. That is why Hallet underlines when referring to the reading process of multimodal novels – which we can extend to other types of multimodal narratives – the need for “a more systematic comprehension and analysis of the modes involved in multimodal novelistic narration and of the textual meaning that the interplay of different semiotic modes in the novel evokes and constitutes” (Hallet, 2018, p. 25).

It is important to observe how it is up to the reader not only to identify the constitutive languages of the work but to interrelate them in their interpretation process and understand how such compositional choices – whether in imagery or graphic terms – contribute to the construction of the diegesis, expanding the meanings raised by the literary text. In this way, faced with such demand, readers have expanded their literary repertoire in not only the act of reading but also their repertoire concerning illustration and graphic design. This aspect is of great relevance for developing more critical and conscious readers in a scenario in which they are immersed in different languages.

Assuming the role of co-author – since they are responsible for combining languages and the (re)construction of meanings – readers of multimodal texts, as we will demonstrate below, undertake a performative reading, which involves different meanings which actively act in front of the narratives.

These narratives constitute a challenge in bringing such demands; they have grown in Brazilian literature and aroused the attention of children's readers. This study aims to discuss these examples of contemporary Brazilian multimodal narratives. To this end, we selected three works – *Pra Lá*, by Luiz Tatit, Dante Onzzetti and Edith Derdyk (2012); *Era uma vez outra vez*, by Edith Chacon and Priscilla Ballarin (2022); and *O que é que isso é?*, by Alexandre Rampazo (2020). From the reading of these works, we intend to highlight the need for a synergistic reading of the different languages that make up the object book so that different reading layers can be reached. In addition, we will highlight how the reading of multimodal works requires a different type of reader and a reading that goes beyond the intellectual level, requiring the presence of different senses and the physical interaction of the reader.

Contemporary Brazilian multimodal narratives: possible readings

The work *Pra lá* was born from a Brazilian song created in 2006 by Luiz Tatit and Dante Ozzetti, two artists with an extensive production of contemporary Brazilian popular music and who, in addition to being friends for over forty years, have a musical partnership that is over twenty-five years old. The song, which is part of the album “Achau”, invites us, through rhyming verses, to think about what lies beyond what we immediately see: “Pra lá do bamba tem a fera/Pra lá da banda tem batera/Pra lá do inverno, primavera/Tem animal onde a gente nem vê /Tem mais país muito além da TV” [Beyond the chaos, there's the beast/Beyond the band, there's drums/Beyond winter, spring/There are animals where we don't even see/There's more country far beyond TV]. The song became a book in 2012 by the publisher Hedra, and its meanings were expanded

upon receiving illustrations and graphic design by Edith Derdyk, a renowned Brazilian plastic artist with extensive experience in graphic works such as book covers, record covers and illustrations. In addition, Derdyk is also the author and illustrator of three children's books: *Estória Sem Fimmm* (Summus Editorial, 1980), *O Colecionador de Palavras* and *A Sombra da Sandra Assanhada* (both published by Editora Salesianas, in 1986 and 1987 respectively).

The complete lyrics of the song are in the book. In it, the rupture of the borders between languages can be observed, right at the beginning of the reading, on the back cover, which warns us of the approximations between literature and music that we will encounter: "PRA LÁ is a song by Luiz Tatit and Dante Ozzetti. It's music, but now it's also a book. Illustrated with sensitivity by the artist Edith Derdyk, it shows us a world always moving forward, over there". These two languages, however, are joined by two others: illustration and graphic design.

Initially, attention is drawn to the horizontal format of the book (26 x 13 cm), which is closely in line with the title "Pra lá". This expression, which suggests a space far from the speaker, the idea of moving forward, gains materiality through the book's format, which, unlike traditional works, expands horizontally. Furthermore, the typography adopted in writing the title contributes to this idea of expansion and movement, as it expands in a concretely way due to the spacing between the letters (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Cover of the book *Pra lá*.

In the book, the lyrics of the song are distributed over a set of double pages, sometimes appearing in a single line, sometimes in two lines, thus disabling the reader's gaze who, in the latter case, must read the sentences not in a linear continuity – as is done when verses are present in a single line – but by the blocks in which they are organised on each of the pages (Figure 2). In verbal terms, we notice the playing with the alternating rhymes, promoting the sonority and the establishment of a rhythm in the reading that can contribute to the approximation and interest of the child reader.

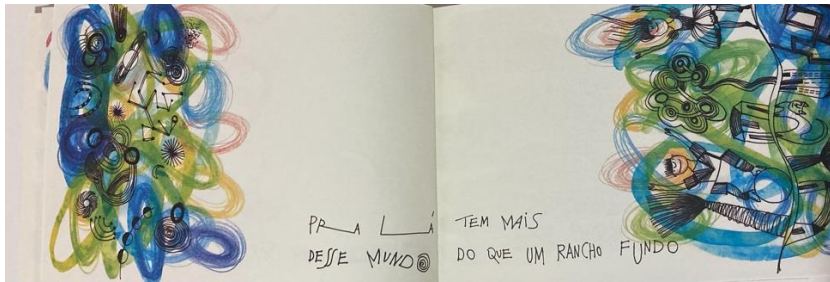


Figure 2. Distributed verses on the double-page set.

The content of the song points us towards the unknown. It invites us to think about what exists beyond what we see: “Tem carnaval muito além do cordão/Pra lá desse mundo, tem mais do que um rancho fundo/Tem mais fazer em saber porque faz/Tem mais querer em querer por demais” [There is carnival far beyond the rope/Beyond this world, there is more than a deep ranch/There is more to do in knowing why you do it/There is more to want in wanting too much] (Tati, Ozzetti & Derdyk, 2012 n.p). This suggestion of vagueness is in dialogue with the colour illustrations, which also show features that are not clearly defined. They merge, as seen in Figure 2, species of circles, and coloured spirals, which can point to the idea of turning movement. At times, the phrases themselves, overwritten, assume the function of illustration (Figure 3), suggesting that letters can act as images and that images can also be constructed by letters, thus breaking the limits between verbal language and visual.



Figure 3. Illustrations constructed from overlapping phrases.

The illegibility itself – a result of overlapping sentences – contributes to materialising the idea of chaos, doubt, and lack of definition beyond what we see, beyond the established order, thus evidencing the strict dialogue between the content expressed by the verbal text and its materialisation through imagery and graphic language.

It is also interesting to observe the exploration of the page's space through the layout. All double-page present feature verses, illustrations and blank spaces, spaces that assume narrative potential, given that the reader can fill them in based on their triadic reading of the verbal text, the illustration and the graphic design. In other words, the page is explored in its material aspect, similar to what concrete artists did in order to

make it possible for what happens in the literary text according to the aesthetics of reception (Jauss, 1994); the gaps are filled by the reader in the act of reading so that meanings can be (re)constructed, occurring “materially” in the pages of this work.

In dialogue with the verbal text and with the illustration is the typography. Written in capital letters, as is common in narratives primarily addressed to children, the phrases are expressed through a typography that, despite ensuring clear legibility, also incorporates the playful concept. As can be seen, the lyrics assume different proportions and are not presented linearly, pointing, as do the illustrations, to the idea of imprecision, unpredictability and movement suggested by the content of the song's lyrics. Let us observe, for example, how the spacing between the letters in the expression “Pra lá” – in the title and all its appearances throughout the work – through the “stretching” of the letters “r” and “l” makes the expression itself seem literally “on the move”, indicating a direction in which the text “walks”; the letter “o”, in turn, gains the connotation of a spiral and, therefore, of a certain continuity, in dialogue with what is suggested by the thematic plan of the work. In addition, the letters themselves take on movements as they are distributed on the page or even seek to materialise the direction to which they point, as is the case of the word “fera” [beast] (Figure 4), which gains tremulous contours as if it materialises the fear provoked by this creature.

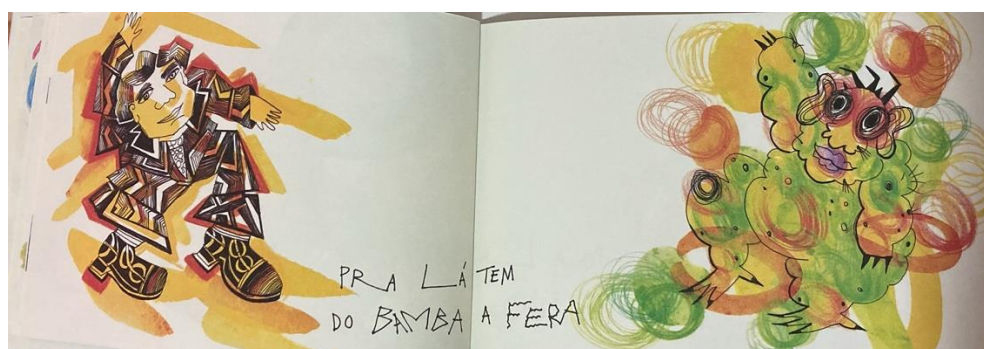


Figure 4. Typographic with an expansion of the expression “Pra lá” and the word “fera” [beast] simulating the tremors provoked by the beast in its interlocutor.

It is worth emphasising that the font size and even the spacing between the letters change according to the meaning conveyed by the verbal text to be “concretised” on the visual level. It can be seen, for example, that in “Tem futebol muito além do placar” [“There is football far beyond the scoreboard”, the word “futebol” [football] expands on the page, while the spacing in the word “placar” [scoreboard] is reduced, making it more compact in the space of the page. This game points, at the thematic level, to the relevance of the game itself and not to its result or the score achieved.

The variation of characters that parade in the pages of *Pra lá* also deserves attention. As the pages turn, we find different characters that make up the same story, de-automating the gaze of the reader – who traditionally expects to find the same characters in the course of the work – thus inviting him to also think about diversity, about the “over there” that exists beyond us.

Thus, there is a consonance between the content expressed by the literary text and the form it assumes, whether in verbal, imagery or graphic terms, so that compositional choices in terms of format, layout, typography, as well as strokes and colours present in the illustration, far from being mere adornments of the verbal text, assume a narrative potential in close dialogue with it, demanding that the reader concatenate the different languages to reach different layers of meaning.

Here again is another example of a multimodal narrative, published in 2022 by Edições Barbatanas, an independent Brazilian publisher that produced works that value the book's materiality. The work features verbal text by Edith Chacon, and illustrations and graphic design by Priscilla Ballarin was constructed collaboratively. The partnership between them extends to other productions, as is the case of *Na casa deles* [At their house] (independent edition, 2020) and *(Des)apontado* [(Dis)appointed] (Ameli, 2020).

While in *Era Uma Vez Outra Vez* [Once upon a time again], the title suggests a repetition of traditional stories, this conception is immediately challenged when we consider the book's materiality. The work is a kind of game book, which presents an illustrated poem, offered across five sheets, printed on offset paper (180 g/m²), and wrapped in a sleeve (Figure 5). Its pages are loose and folded in an accordion format, each side of the leaf corresponding to a stanza of the poem.



Figure 5. Glove and pages that makeup *Era uma vez outra vez*.

The verbal text is constructed from short, rhyming verses: “Era uma vez.../Um mico-leão-dourado/Que vivia despenteado”; “Era uma vez.../Uma galinha-d’Angola/Que jogava conversa fora”; “Era uma vez.../Um elefante muito elegante/Que se equilibrava em um barbante” [“Once upon a time.../There was a golden lion tamarin/ Whose hair was always messed up”; “Once upon a time.../There was a guinea fowl/Who made small talk”; “Once upon a time.../There was a very elegant elephant/That balanced on a string”], whose sound attracts the attention of the child reader, inviting them, at the same time, to de-automatise their gaze through the unusual senses that are suggested from the verses presented. Furthermore, due to the repetition of the syntactic structure throughout the poem, the reader is also encouraged to interact, provoking them to construct other verses based on the suggested model.

In dialogue with the verses, which use simple words in their construction and refer to animals, are the illustrations. In colour, they all take on traits that refer to the universe of children, as if children had created them, an aspect that brings their prime readers closer to the illustrations while simultaneously stimulating the imagination – due to the suggestion and non-referentiality of the images. In the set of all the illustrations, one can see a common character: a bird, present from the sleeve, and which acts as a kind of speaker of the verses – since it is always close to the statement “Once upon a time”, and which, in this respect, can be understood as a kind of figuration of the reader in the work.

The folding of the sheets in an accordion format, in turn, contributes to establishing an atmosphere of expectation since the verses are offered gradually as the pages are unfolded. All of them start with the first page with the phrase “Era uma vez...” [“Once upon a time...”] – accompanied by the illustration of the bird – which, either through the recovery of a well-known expression in the world of storytelling or through the presence of ellipses, incites the child's reading imagination. Only in the final verses – and, therefore, in the last fold – does the reader's horizon of expectations break down – since there is a rupture with what was enunciated regarding the character – and, with it, the establishment of humour of the playful concept. With verses printed on both sides of the paper, the reader is required not only to unfold the page but the very movement of inverting the sheets so that the back of the paper can be (un)folded and read. It is also interesting to observe that, in some sheets, the unfolding of the pages must be done horizontally and, in others, vertically, which, again, collaborates with the rupture of the traditional turning of pages (Figure 6) and invites the reader to a different movement in the act of reading.



Figure 6. Unfolding pages horizontally and vertically.

The book does not have a beginning or end in the traditional sense, as the pages can be read in any order. However, in one of the sheets, which can be considered as a possible “ending”, we are faced with: “Era uma vez... uma centopeia/que se espalhou feito

geleia no prato de trigo do tigre/que não era xadrez/e enganou todos vocês./Não gostou? Então, invente/ era uma vez outra vez...” [“Once upon a time... There was a centipede/That spread like jelly on the tiger's plate of wheat/That was not chess/And deceived you all./Didn't you like it?]. So, invent/once upon another time...”, which breaks with the structure on the other sheets, in addition to clearly highlighting the role of co-author assigned to the reader, a role that can be exercised at different levels. Regarding the verbal text, for example, it is possible for the reader to construct new rhymes for the same animals or to create new verses for other animals, following the same syntactic structure offered throughout the work. Due to its graphic design, in turn, it is still possible for the reader to manipulate the book as an object, as well as reorganising the pages, which promotes a new reading of the poem.

As can be seen, the triad – verbal text, illustration and graphic design – maintains close consonance, constituting the work as a playful whole, built from the simultaneous contribution of each compositional language. Therefore, *Era uma vez outra vez* presents itself as a multimodal work that playfully contributes to the reader's repertoire not only in verbal terms, but also in imagery and graphics.

O que é que isso é? [*What is that?*], by Alexandre Rampazo, published by Ciranda Cultural in 2020, is also a significant example of a multimodal narrative. Born in São Paulo, Alexandre Rampazo graduated in design and is an author of illustrated books and a graphic artist. With a widely awarded work – his production received, among others, the distinction IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) Honour List 2022 and the Jabuti award (one of the most important Brazilian awards) three times, in addition to having works selected for the IBBY catalogue at the Bologna Fair. The works of the author, who is today one of the main authors in contemporary Brazilian literature – with *Se eu abrir esta porta agora* (Sesi, 2018), *Pinóquio – o livro das pequenas verdades* (Boitatá, 2019), *Este é o lobo* (Pequena Zahar, 2020), *Eustáquio – o mágico magnífico* (Gato Leitor, 2022) being some examples of his work – reveal careful work with the triad of verbal text, illustration and graphic design.

In *O que é que isso é?* [*What is that?*], Alexandre Rampazo starts from a typical children's question, which children continually repeat in their desire to know the universe around them. The sentence, as well as the answers given to it, is printed in clearly legible capital letters, reinforcing the idea that it is intended primarily for a child reader. The set of double pages assumes a schematic construction that is repeated throughout the entire work: on the left page, there is an illustration with a child and a certain object – constructed with well-defined lines and in black and white – associated with the question: “What is that?”; on the right page, in turn, we find another illustration, which seems to repeat the object from the left page, but now starting from a new position. A sentence is associated with it, which, however, denies that the image is about the object that we are apparently seeing. So, for example, in the first set of double pages, we have: “O que é que isso é?”, “Uma caixa é que não é!” [“What is that?”, “It's not a box!”] (Figure 7), which generates inquietude, as we are literally looking at a box.

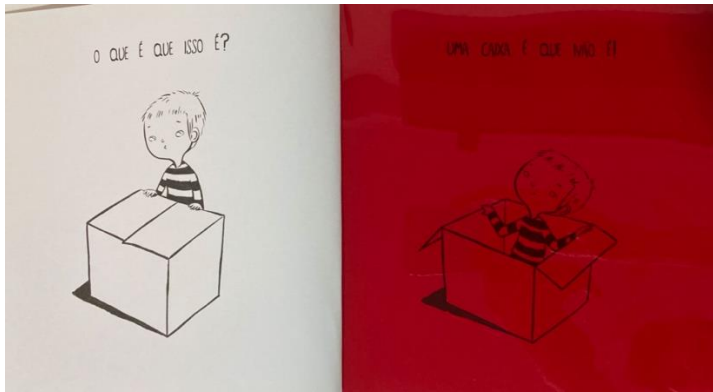


Figure 7. Set of double pages with the structure repeated throughout the work.

However, our attention is drawn to a red acetate sheet between the two pages, which is present on the cover. This material element is responsible for the game established in the narrative, guaranteeing its playful character. This is because, when we visualise the page on the right superimposed with the acetate, there seems to be a contradiction concerning the verbal text (Figure 8). If the verbal text states: “What is that?/It’s not an armchair”, it is precisely the image of an armchair that we come across when we look at the page superimposed by the acetate sheet.



Figure 8. Illustration visualised when superimposed on the acetate sheet.

However, the surprise comes when the reader turns the acetate page, which reveals a new illustration that, in fact, contradicts the one we had previously seen (Figure 9). In it, we are faced with a completely different object from what we had initially conceived.



Figure 9. Unveiled image after turning the acetate page.

More than a game, the presence of this material element guarantees the book the possibility of expressing the purpose of the work: to highlight the imaginative potential of the child in front of objects that the adult's eyes, automated as they are, are incapable of imagining or conceiving at first. The book invites us to look at things beyond their appearance, bringing out the so latent fantasy and creativity in the child's gaze.

A closer reading of *O que é que isso é?* may even suggest a metalinguistic bias. At the end, in the last set of double pages, we have: "What is that?", followed by a phrase that breaks the established syntactic pattern: "What is it? What is it? What is it?" The object we now see is a book, which remains even when the acetate page is turned and appears accompanied by the illustrations that permeate the entire work (Figure 10), thus suggesting the space of the book as being open to fantasy and imagination, the space that makes it possible to create and break with the automation of our gaze faced with everyday elements.

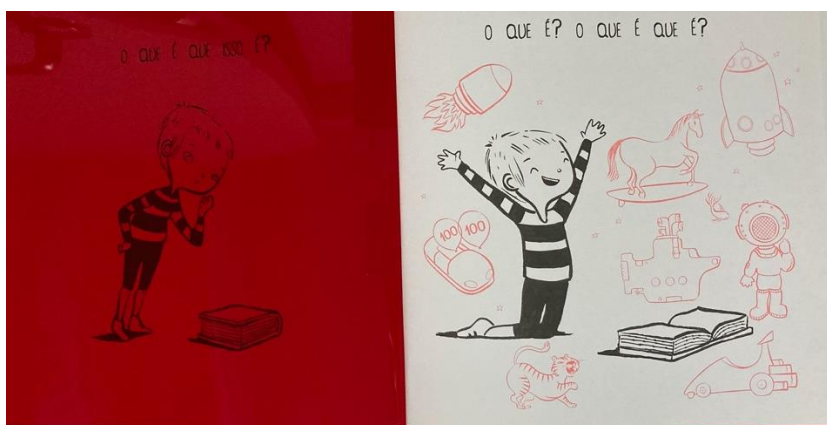


Figure 10. The final set of double pages with the representation of the book.

At this point, we can read a metaphor for constructing the literary text. Although the construction of the literary text makes use of words that are used in our daily lives

and, therefore, immediately understood in their referential sense due to our automated look, the literary text has the potential to break with this crystallised vision, opening possibilities for the same word to assume different meanings due to the game that is established there. It is exactly this idea that materialises in the reading of the work. Associating the automated gaze with the figure of the adult here, Rampazo warns us of the poeticism that, in contrast, permeates the childish gaze; like the literary gaze, it is the gaze of discovery, imagination and rupture, and makes it possible to look beyond appearances, beyond what is immediately present.

Thanks to an element that constitutes part of the book's graphic design – the acetate sheet – the whole game and the ludic character of the narrative can be established. Once again highlights the narrative role that the book's materiality can assume; together with the illustrations, it has the potential to broaden the meanings raised by the literary text and showing how literary reading in the contemporary context cannot be limited to deciphering and interpreting the verbal code.

Conclusion

In *A história da leitura*, Alberto Manguel, an important researcher on the act of reading, tells us:

When coming into contact with the book, the reader establishes an intimate, physical relationship in which all the senses participate: the eyes picking up the words on the page, the ears echoing the sounds that are being read, the nose inhaling the familiar smell of paper, glue, ink, cardboard or leather, the touch caressing the rough or smooth page, the soft or hard binding, sometimes even the palate, when the reader's fingers are moistened on the tongue (Manguel, 1997 p. 277).

This observation becomes even more pertinent when we consider books primarily addressed to children and young people in contemporary times. Due to their multimodal construction, such works demand a reading that involves the different senses and the body in its entirety: reading goes beyond the use of vision and the brain to decode codes; reading implies seeing, touching, feeling, thinking, interpreting, that is, reading with the whole body.

As we can see from the reading of *Pra lá, Era uma vez outra vez* and *O que é que isto é?*, which are examples of contemporary Brazilian multimodal works aimed primarily at children, we are dealing with productions composed of multiple languages – verbal text, illustration and graphic design – without any of them, however, standing out or being able to be read independently without the (re)construction of meanings being damaged.

As the readings suggest, it is a type of production that demands a new type of reading and, consequently, a new type of reader. It is a new type of reading because it involves different senses and an active role on the part of the reader: a reader who is not limited to reading words but who is required to read text synergistically, images and graphic design; a reader whose role is not simply to identify the compositional languages

of the book but to interpret and correlate them so that other meanings can be reached and (re)constructed; a reader who is continually challenged to explore different layers of reading, beyond the verbal text, according to their repertoire and reading experience.

More than providing the acquisition of a literary repertoire, contemporary multimodal narratives invite the reader – of these and many other contemporary works – to expand their imagery and graphic repertoire. They will become capable of understanding the different languages that make up not merely the book, but also the context in which it is inserted, which is constituted of multiple languages that demand recognition and interpretation. More than literary works, multimodal narratives thus contribute to forming more critical and aware world readers, which are much needed in the current Brazilian – and global – scenario.

References

- Baldry, A., & Thibault, P.J. (2005). *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis: A Multimedia Toolkit and Coursebook with Associated On-line Course*. Equinox.
- Cardoso, R. (2016). *Design para um mundo complexo*. Ubu.
- Chacon, E., & Ballarin, P. (2022). *Era uma vez outra vez*. Edições Barbatana.
- Gibbons, A. (2012). *Multimodality, Cognition and Experimental Literature*. Routledge.
- Hallet, W. (2018). Reading Multimodal Fiction: A Methodological Approach. *Anglistik*, 29(1), 25–40.
- Jauss, H. R. (1994). *A história da literatura como provocação à teoria literária*. Translation by Sérgio Tellaroli. Ática.
- Manguel, A. (1997). *Uma história da leitura*. Translated by Pedro Maia Soares. Companhia das Letras.
- Rampazo, A. (2020). *O que é que isso é?* Ciranda Cultural.
- Rojo, R. (2004). *Letramento e capacidades de leitura para a cidadania*. See/CenP.
- _____. (2016). Linguagem: representação ou mediação? *Veredas: revista de estudos linguísticos*, 1 (1), pp. 41–49.
- Santaella, L. (2005). *Matrizes da linguagem e pensamento: sonora, visual, verbal - aplicações na hipermídia*. Iluminuras e FAPESP.
- Tatit, L. & Ozzetti, D. (2012). *Pra lá*. Illustrations by Edith Derdyk. Hedra Educação.

Bionote

Diana Navas has a degree in literature, a master's in literature and literary criticism from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil (PUC-SP), and a PhD in literature from the University of São Paulo, Brazil, having completed a post-doctoral internship at the University of Aveiro, Portugal. She works as a professor and coordinator

Navas, D. (2023). Multimodal narratives in contemporary Brazilian children's literature. *Child Studies*, (2), 55-68.
<https://doi.org/10.21814/childstudies.4526>

of the Postgraduate Studies Program in Literature and Criticism at the PUC-SP, and is a researcher at CNPQ (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development).

Email: dnavas@pucsp.br

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4516-5832>

Received: February 2023

Published: April 2023

**CHILD TEMPERAMENT AND CHILD-CARE SUPPORT ARE
RELATED TO BETTER MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP
QUALITY**

**O TEMPERAMENTO DA CRIANÇA E O APOIO AOS CUIDADOS
INFANTIS ESTÃO RELACIONADOS COM UMA MELHOR
QUALIDADE DO RELACIONAMENTO MÃE-FILHO**

Sumeyra Yalcintas
King's College London, UK

Alison Pike
University of Sussex, UK

Abstract

The current study aims to identify associates of mother-first-born-child relationship quality of an important period that is when expecting a second child. Based on Belsky's determinants of parenting model (Belsky, 1984), we suggested three domains to relate to mother-child relationship quality: maternal personal resources (well-being, effortful control), child characteristics (temperament, behaviour problems) and contextual factors (household chaos, child-care support, marital satisfaction). Forty-five mothers ($M_{age}=34.78$ years; $SD_{age}=3.86$ years) and their typically developing first-born children ($M_{child\ age}=32.26$ months; $SD_{age}=6.27$) were visited at home in the south of England, Sussex, UK, where mothers completed questionnaires and mother-child interactions were videotaped. Results demonstrated that easier child temperament, better maternal well-being, less household chaos and more child-care support were related to more positive mother-child relationship quality. Together the variables explained 23% of the variance in relationship quality. The child's easy temperament, chaos and child-care support provided unique variance in explaining the mother-child relationship. These results contribute to the literature on expecting a second child and yield several implications. The findings also provide guidance for future intervention programmes. In order to improve the mother-child relationship quality, child executive functioning may be a fruitful target for intervention, as well as increased support for child-care and decreased household chaos.

Keywords: mother-child relationship, household chaos, child-care support, child temperament

Resumo

O presente estudo tem como objetivo identificar associações da qualidade do relacionamento mãe-primogênito durante o importante período de espera do segundo filho. Com base nos determinantes do modelo parental de Belsky (Belsky, 1984), sugerimos três domínios para caracterizar a qualidade do relacionamento mãe-filho: recursos pessoais maternos (bem-estar, esforço de controlo), características da criança (temperamento, problemas de comportamento) e fatores contextuais (caos doméstico, apoio ao cuidado dos filhos, satisfação conjugal). Quarenta e cinco mães ($M_{idade} = 34,78$ anos; $SD_{idade} = 3,86$ anos) e os seus filhos primogênitos com desenvolvimento típico ($M_{idade\ da\ criança} = 32,26$ meses; $SD_{idade} = 6,27$) foram visitados em casa no sul da Inglaterra, Sussex, Reino Unido, onde as mães preencheram questionários e as interações mãe-filho foram gravadas em vídeo. Os resultados mostraram que o temperamento mais fácil da criança, melhor bem-estar materno, menos caos doméstico e mais apoio no cuidado da criança estavam relacionados a uma qualidade mais positiva do relacionamento mãe-filho. No seu conjunto, as variáveis explicaram 23% da variação na qualidade do relacionamento. O temperamento fácil da criança, o caos e o apoio aos cuidados infantis forneceram variações únicas na explicação do relacionamento mãe-filho. Esses resultados contribuem para a literatura sobre a expectativa de um segundo filho e geram várias implicações. Os resultados também fornecem orientação para futuros programas de intervenção. A fim de melhorar a qualidade do relacionamento mãe-filho, as competências da função executiva da criança podem ser um alvo frutífero para a intervenção, bem como o aumento do apoio aos cuidados infantis e a diminuição do caos doméstico.

Palavras-chave: relação mãe-filho, caos doméstico, apoio ao cuidado da criança, temperamento da criança

Introduction

There are very few studies that have examined the mother-firstborn relationship when expecting a second born, considering the research showing that there are dramatic changes in mother-child relationships in this transition (e.g., Kojima et al., 2005; Teti et al., 1996), it is important to understand mother-firstborn relationships and the predictors of the quality of those relationships. Therefore, we investigated the associates of observed mother-child relationship quality when expecting a second child. Based on Belsky's determinants of parenting model (Belsky, 1984) we suggested three domains, maternal personal resources (well-being and effortful control), contextual factors (chaos, support, and marital satisfaction) and child characteristics (child temperament and behaviour problems).

Mother-Child Relationship

Positive mother-child relationship quality can be defined as high on warmth, sensitivity, good communication and responsiveness. Mother-child relationship quality in the early years has long term influences on children's development, sensitive parenting during infancy predicts improved emotion regulation in adulthood (Simpson et al., 2007), and early maternal caregiving predicted partner and peer attachment 20 years later (Zayas et al., 2011). It is also salient to understand this relationship during the transition to having another child.

Several studies have shown that mother-first-born child relationships during the transition are often disrupted, in terms of instability in the attachment (Touris et al., 1995), decreased security in attachment (Teti et al., 1996), less playful interactions (Kojima et al., 2005) and less warmth in the relationship (Taylor & Kogan, 1973). Most studies have focused on mother-child relationship quality after the birth of a second child, highly because of post-partum depression. However, pregnancy is a critical stage for maternal well-being; a systematic review demonstrated that women report increased depressive and anxiety-related symptoms in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy (Bennett et al., 2004). To our knowledge, mother-child relationship quality when expecting a second child has not been widely investigated, so it is important to understand protective and risk factors even before the new baby is welcomed. The transition period to having a second child is a family transition that can be stressful for all family members. Research also suggested that a spike is seen in first-born children having problematic behaviours, such as disruptive, aggressive, or noncompliant behaviours. (Volling, 2017). On the other hand, a good quality mother-child relationship might prevent this spike in problematic behaviours. Therefore, we aimed to understand the associates of mother-child relationship quality before the birth of a second child.

Determinants of Parenting

Belsky's model of determinants of parenting suggests that parental functioning is determined by three domains, parental characteristics (e.g., mental health, psychological resources, and attachment history), child characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and temperament) and contextual factors (e.g., support, marital quality, and stress) (Belsky, 1984). According to the model, parental personality, child characteristics, marital relationship, as well as a social network and work environment directly influence parenting. Parental developmental history further influences personality, which then, in turn, predicts child development through parenting together with child characteristics. Belsky further proposes a hierarchy of these domains such that parental personal resources have the greatest influence on the mother-child relationship, followed by contextual resources and support, which is then followed by child characteristics, particularly temperament (Belsky, 1984). The theory suggests that parents' developmental history and marital relationship influence psychological well-being, which in return influences parenting, followed by support and child characteristics. In his later review, Belsky further emphasizes that better mental health of mothers predicts better quality parenting and is the most important predictor; a psychologically stable

parent can cope with difficult temperamental features of the child (Belsky & Jaffee, 2015). In fact, according to the model, difficult child characteristics and less favourable contextual factors can be buffered by parents' psychological well-being.

Maternal Personal Resources

We proposed maternal personal resources as one domain with two important variables, maternal well-being and effortful control to be related with the mother-child relationship. Personal well-being is suggested to be the most effective buffer for the parent-child relationship by Belsky (1984). Better maternal mental health predicts higher parenting quality as reviewed by Belsky and Jaffee (2015). Previous research also demonstrates that mothers with depression tend to show less sensitive behaviours toward their children (Feldman et al., 2009) and more negative affect toward their infants (Campbell et al., 1992, Premo & Kiel 2016). Considering mothers expecting a second child, depleted resources (including sleep deprivation) may hinder their ability to regulate effortful control skills. Evidence also shows that parental effortful control has been linked with more warmth and interactive time spent with children (Bridgett et al., 2011). Therefore, we hypothesized that maternal well-being and effortful control skills would be related to mother-child relationship quality within our sample of pregnant mothers.

Child Characteristics

Child characteristics such as difficult temperament have been linked with poorer mother-child relationship quality. Difficult temperament may include traits may like being highly active, having difficulty adapting to change, having intense emotional reactions and being easily frustrated. Children with difficult temperament may show negative behaviours, such as tantrums, which can make it harder for their caregivers to provide them with the care and support they need. For example, mothers demonstrate more disapproval towards 2-year-olds with difficult temperament (Gauvain, 1995). The first-born children in the present study were aged 2-4, which is an important period for children to learn and acquire self-regulation abilities (Thompson & Goodman, 2010). We expect temperament including self-regulation to play a significant role in the mother-child relationship. The age group also demonstrates more problematic behaviours (Belsky et al., 1996). Withdrawal behaviour predicts mother-child conflict, aggression and delinquency predict conflict with both parents and closeness with mothers predicts less withdrawal (Zhang et al., 2008). These links are bidirectional in nature (Harnish et al., 1995; Moss et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2008). Therefore, we expected child behaviour problems to also play a role in mother-child relationship quality in the study.

Contextual Factors

Finally, we proposed that the contextual factors of marital satisfaction, household chaos and child-care support would also be related to mother-child relationship quality. Applying the spillover hypothesis within families predicts that the quality of one

relationship can reflect on another relationship within a family (Nelson et al., 2009). Marital dissatisfaction and conflict are linked with poorer quality parent-child relationships (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000), whereas more positive marital behaviour predicted more supportive parent-child relationships 9 years later (Tanner Stapleton & Bradbury, 2012). Therefore, we expected marital satisfaction to be an important variable in our contextual factor domain. Household chaos can be described as high noise, low regularity and crowding within the home environment (Wachs, 2005). Household chaos is not only linked with negative life outcomes but also is related to less parental emotional availability (Whitesell et al., 2015). A very recent review on household chaos and family outcomes suggested that household chaos is related to worse parent-child relationship outcomes, such as less closeness and supportiveness, and more conflict (Marsh et al., 2020). Thus, we expected household chaos to be a significant variable in explaining mother-child relationship quality. Support is another important contextual factor and support sources were suggested to be effective to buffer the parent-child relationship (Belsky, 1984). Previous research has demonstrated that higher social support in pregnancy was related to more parental satisfaction and efficacy (Anglely et al., 2015). Additionally, support quantity and high social support satisfaction were positively linked with maternal sensitivity (Goldstein et al., 1996). Taken together, we hypothesized that child-care support, household chaos and marital satisfaction would be related to mother-child relationship quality.

The Present Study

The study aimed to unveil the associates of mother-child relationship quality when expecting a second child. Based on Belsky's determinants of parenting theory, we hypothesized that better maternal personal resources (well-being and effortful control), child characteristics (easier temperament and fewer behaviour problems) and beneficial contextual factors (less household chaos, child-care support, and marital satisfaction) would be related to better mother-child relationship quality. In addition, we examined the independent contributions of each variable to mother-child relationship quality and further tested whether the hierarchy of determinants of parenting (Belsky, 1984) would be present in the sample.

Method

Participants and Recruitment

Forty-five mothers ($M_{age} = 34.78$ years; $SD_{age} = 3.86$ years; *Range*: 25-47 years) and their first-born children ($M_{child\ age} = 32.26$ months; $SD_{age} = 6.27$; *Range*: 18-42 months) were the participants. Twenty-six of the children were boys and 19 were girls. Mothers and their typically developing children were recruited via nurseries and social media (Facebook groups) in the south of England and were invited to participate in the third trimester of pregnancy ($M = 33.43$ weeks; $SD = 4.45$). All of the mothers were cohabitating with the father of the first-born child. Mothers were highly educated; 93.7 % reported

having an undergraduate degree or higher. 44/45 participants indicated their ethnicity as White, which reflects the population from which the sample was drawn.

Procedure

Prior to the home visit, mothers were asked to complete an online questionnaire. The visits were conducted by two researchers and lasted 90-120 minutes. The researchers were trained extensively, had DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks (right to work with children) and had experience in the field. The mother-child relationship was measured by observation. Mother and child were invited to complete three play interactions all of which were videotaped; the researchers left the room. The play sessions were designed according to what is acceptable for this age range (Atzaba-Poria et al., 2014). All materials were provided by the researchers, a) Structured play (five mins), Mothers were asked to play with blocks to make a train, and two cups with a duck, hiding the duck under the cups and read a story with their child, b) Free play (five mins), Mother and child were provided with several toys (e.g., dolls, doctor set, cars, blocks, etc.) and were given no instructions, c) Clean-up session (two mins), Mothers and children were asked to put away the toys together, d) New-born play (five mins), Mother and child were given toys designed to elicit talk and play about the arrival of the newborn a doll, with a bathing and feeding set. Mothers were also asked to complete questionnaires. After the visit, the researchers rated child temperament based on their observations during the visit.

Ethical issues

Ethical approval was gained before recruitment commenced. British Psychological Society (BPS) ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study and mothers provided informed consent.

Measures

Observer Ratings

For the measurement of temperament, although we cannot know the children as much as mothers can, it is also true that mothers can be biased when they are evaluating their own children. For instance, when mothers were asked to evaluate their children explicitly, they tended to overestimate the positive features of their children and underestimate their negative features (Kendziora & O'leary, 1998). Parents may also distort self-reports owing to social desirability, which means they cannot admit problems of their children or negative features, because either they do not have the information or they may not just recall the relevant information (Willis et al., 1999). Therefore, we believe that observer ratings would be more reliable to use.

Relationship Quality

The scale of Relationship Quality of Dyadic Relationship Scales from the fifth edition of The IOWA Family Interaction Rating Scales (Melby et al., 1995) was used to measure relationship quality (RQ). A trained coder evaluated the quality of the relationship between the mother and child from low (0) to high (9). A lower score indicates an unsatisfying, uninvolved or a conflicted relationship while a higher score indicates a satisfying, warm, happy relationship. All four of the videotaped sections were coded separately. The average of the scores from the four sections constituted the overall RQ of the mother-child dyads. The reliability of the four sections was excellent (Cronbach $\alpha = .97$). The inter-rater reliability, the intra-class correlation for nine randomly selected families was $r = .65$.

Child Temperament

The two researchers who conducted the home visits completed a subset of items from The Early Childhood Behavior Questionnaire (ECBQ) very short form with 21 items (Putnam et al., 2006) to assess the temperament of the first-born child on two subscales negative affect and effortful control. After each visit, the researchers indicated and agreed together how often the child showed each behaviour during the visit on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 7 = *always*). The correlation between negative affect and effortful control was high $-.74$, therefore we combined them by reverse coding negative affect and created an easy temperament score, final reliability was excellent (Cronbach $\alpha = .90$). A sample item is “When engaged in play with his/her favourite toy, plays for more than 10 minutes”.

Maternal Self-Reports

Child Behaviour Problems.

Child behaviour problems were measured using The Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (ECBI) (Burns & Patterson, 2000). The scale has 36 items in total and measures conduct problems, inattentive behaviour and oppositional defiant behaviour. In this study we used 34 items, we did not use the items related to siblings. Mothers rated each item on a 7-point Liker-type scale (1 = *never* to 7 = *always*), e.g., “Gets angry when does not get own way” and “Destroys toys and other objects”. The scores were summed to identify the intensity of the problems. Cronbach α was $.89$.

Maternal Effortful Control

Effortful control was measured using a 19- item subscale of the Adult Temperament Questionnaire short form (ATQ, (Evans & Rothbart, 2007). Mothers responded to each statement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *extremely untrue*, 7 = *extremely true*). A

sample item is “I can make myself work on a difficult task even when I do not feel like trying.” Cronbach α was .63.

Maternal Well-Being

The 21-item Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) (Crawford & Henry, 2003) was used to measure maternal well-being. Mothers rated how much each statement was true for them over the past week on a 4-point scale (0 = *did not apply to me at all*, 3 = *applied to me very much or most of the time*). Scores were summed and then multiplied by 2 as the measure suggested. Sample items were “I felt down-hearted and blue”, “I tended to overreact to situations” and “I felt I was close to panic”. The scale reliability was excellent (Cronbach α =.86). Higher scores indicated more symptoms related to depression, anxiety, and stress.

Household Chaos

Mothers completed the short version of the Confusion, Hubbub, and Order Scale (CHAOS) (Matheny et al., 1995). The 6-item scale measures household chaos on a 5-point scale (1 = *definitely untrue*, 5 = *definitely true*). An example item was “You cannot hear yourself think in our home.” Initially, the Cronbach α was low .55, therefore we deleted one suggested item (“The children have a regular bedtime routine (same bed each night, a bath before bed, reading a story”) (reverse-scored)), new α was .59.

Child-care Support

The Family Support Scale (FSS) (Dunst et al., 1988) was used to assess sources of support and how helpful the support was perceived to be. Mothers indicated how helpful each source was in raising their child on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all helpful*, 5 = *extremely helpful*). The eight sources (my parents, my relatives, my friends, my partner’s friends, my partner’s relatives, my partner’s parents, spouse or partner, other parents) as in the original scale were given, and “babysitter” was also added to the scale. Mothers were provided with a nonapplicable option if the given support source was not available for them and if so it was coded as a missing variable. The Cronbach α was .75.

Marital Satisfaction

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Grover et al., 1984), was used to measure marital satisfaction. Mothers rated how true three statements were for their feelings over the past month on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*), e.g., “How satisfied are you with your marriage/your partner as a spouse and your relationship with your partner/spouse?”. The scale had high reliability (Cronbach α = .94).

Data Analysis Plan

In order to understand whether any demographics variables are related with the dependent variable; mother child relationship and therefore to be controlled simple correlations has been conducted. Later on to understand the unique associations we included the variables that were related to the mother-child relationship quality and put them all together as predictors in the multiple regression analysis. All of the analysis were conducted by using IBM SPSS 21 software and data was normally distributed.

Results

The correlation tests indicated that demographic variables, child age, gender and maternal age were not associated with mother-child relationship quality. In order to test the hypothesis that better maternal resources, better child characteristics and better contextual factors relate to better mother-child relationship quality bivariate correlations were conducted (see Table 1). Three of the correlations among the independent variables were significant. More behaviour problems were related to more household chaos, easier child temperament was related to better maternal effortful control and mothers reporting more marital satisfaction also reported better well-being. Easier child temperament, better maternal well-being (fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress), less household chaos, and more child-care support were linked with better mother-child relationship quality. On the other hand, maternal effortful control, child behaviour problems, and marital satisfaction were not directly associated with mother-child relationship quality.

Table 1.

Descriptive and Correlations Among Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Relationship Quality		.35**	-.05	.17	-.29*	-.34*	.32*	.11
Child Temperament Easy			-.07	.27*	-.06	-.13	.11	-.05
Child Behavior Problems				.05	.10	.40**	-.09	-.07
Maternal Effortful Control					-.22	-.15	.09	.18
Maternal Well-Being						.21	-.24	-.39**
Household Chaos							-.05	-.14
Child-care Support								.13
Marital Satisfaction								

MEAN (SD)	7.90 (1.01)	4.65 (1.18)	115.6 (20.24)	4.66 (.51)	7 (4.96)	1.85 (.55)	3.33 (.70)	4.30 (.59)
Range	4.75-9	2.42- 6.75	60-170	3.63- 5.68	0-22	1-3.20	1.86-4.6	3-5

Note: One tailed test was performed throughout. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. $N = 4$

In order to understand each variables' contribution, a multiple regression analysis was conducted with the child's easy temperament, maternal well-being, household chaos, and support to mother-child relationship quality (see Table 2). The overall model was significant $F(4, 40) = 4.32, p < .01$ and 23% of the variance was explained, meaning that easy temperament, maternal well-being, household chaos, and support explained 23% of the mother-child relationship quality. When all variables were in the model, child easy temperament ($B = .28, p < .05$), child-care support ($B = .24, p < .05$) and household chaos ($B = -.23, p < .05$) were significant variables. However, maternal well-being was not significant.

Table 2.
Multiple Regression Model

	Multiple Regression Model						
	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Adj R²</i>
Overall Model				4.32	40	.005	.23
C-Temperament	2.11	.020	.28				
Maternal Well-being	-1.25	.109	-.17				
Household Chaos	-1.71	.047	-.23				
Child-care Support	1.79	.040	.24				

Note. One tail test was performed and standardized B values are reported. $N = 45$

Discussion

The study aimed to understand the associates of mother-child relationship quality when expecting a second child. We expected three domains, maternal personal resources (well-being and effortful control), child characteristics (temperament and behaviour problems) and contextual factors (chaos, child-care support and marital satisfaction) to relate with mother-child relationship quality. Importantly, we used observational methods to measure mother-child relationship quality and child temperament which provides objectivity, by reducing bias in self-reports. The results showed that better maternal mental well-being, easier child temperament meaning that better effortful control skills and lower negative affect, less household chaos and more child-care support were associated with better mother-child relationship quality. Furthermore, all of the variables together explained 23% of the variance, and we revealed that child temperament skills and child-care support and household chaos provided an independent explanation of mother-child relationship quality.

We investigated all possible domains based on Belsky's model (Belsky, 1984) that may contribute to mother-child relationship quality. Belsky predicts that maternal

personal resources will be most important to predict mother-child relationship, however, we demonstrated that child easy temperament and child-care support were the strongest variables. Thus, while finding partial support for Belsky's overall model, we did not confirm his hypothesized ordering of parental well-being > support > child characteristics. In fact, we showed that parental well-being is no longer a determinant when support, chaos and child temperament were in the model.

The results were consistent with previous literature suggesting that child temperament is related to the mother-child relationship (Wittig & Rodriguez 2019). Our findings support and extend this work to observed maternal behaviour. Child-care support was operationalised as the number of support mothers perceive and how helpful each resource is in terms of child-care. We demonstrated that child-care support were associated with mother-child relationship quality even after controlling for chaos, child temperament and maternal well-being. Previous literature has examined social support in general (Angley et al., 2015), and demonstrated an association with parenting. The results of the study show us the importance of practical child-care support when explaining mother-child relationship quality. There is however some evidence from previous research to support our finding. Material support such as helping in child-care and household jobs was helpful in the transition to siblinghood for mothers coping with first-born needs (Jordan, 1989). The current research extends the literature to show that child-care support is related to mother-child relationship quality during pregnancy before sibling arrival.

Finally, household chaos was a significant variable after controlling for child-care support, maternal well-being and child temperament skills consistent with previous research (Marsh et al., 2020). However, since the reliability of the scale was low, the results should be interpreted carefully, and future studies should use a higher reliability scale. On the other hand, maternal well-being was not a significant contributor. *Post hoc* power calculations by using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009) demonstrated good power of .80 with a medium effect size of the study ($f=.30$, (Cohen, 1977). Another important point to consider is that the sample was well-adjusted. Future studies should aim to include a more representative sample of mothers. A very recent study demonstrated that lower parental effortful control and executive functioning predicted more negative parenting in homes with a moderate level of household chaos (Geeraerts et al., 2020). The more positive mother-child relationship could also be linked with better effortful control skills as well as less chaos in the house. Future studies with a larger sample size would enable more complex analyses like moderation.

The study has some limitations that imply further improvement for research on this topic. First of all, the sample size was relatively small. The sample of the study was also socially advantaged considering the fact that 93.7 % of the mothers were highly educated. Future studies should aim to include larger and more diverse samples. Another issue is that the study aimed to have two-time points originally, to include a second-time point 4 months after the second child's birth. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to stop home visits. It would be illuminating to test change in mother-child relations and predictors across at least two-time points. It is worth to mention current research

aimed to have paternal data too, but the contribution rate was very small, future studies need to target fathers to have a complete picture. However, the current study does highlight the period of a second pregnancy, a critical and stressful time period for understanding mother-child relationships. Moreover, understanding correlates may help to develop interventions to improve mother-first-born relationships which seem to be disrupted in this transition.

The study is novel in the context of the sample: mothers expecting second children and contributed to the literature on mother-child relationship quality when expecting a second child. Considering the disruption in the mother-first-born relationship (e.g., Kojima et al., 2005; Taylor & Kogan, 1973; Teti et al., 1996) and first-born children's adjustment problems (Volling, 2017), by highlighting the relationship in this time, families can prepare to have the second child into the family better. Some practical suggestions for intervention emerge from the findings of the current study. Improving child temperament like boosting effortful control skills, providing more child-care support for families, and reducing household chaos may improve mother-child relationship quality. Temperament is conceptualised as stable across time and situation, but in fact, studies show that children's effortful control skills can be fostered (Chang et al., 2015; Gauvain, 1995). Effortful control can be a fruitful target to intervene such as playing games to improve executive functioning and attention, waiting for a desirable item, rewarding waiting times, and praising for waiting and controlled behaviour are all concrete ways to foster effortful control. For example, children's effortful control skills were improved by interventions designed to improve proactive parenting and mothers' verbal scaffolding at age 3, promoted children executive processing and problem solving skills in later years (Chang et al., 2015; Landry et al., 2002). Finally, providing resources for child-care support may also improve mother-first-born interaction when they are together. Improving mother-child relationship quality may also benefit child outcomes as well as foster more harmonious family functioning.

References

- Angley, M., Divney, A., Magriples, U., & Kershaw, T. (2015). Social Support, Family Functioning and Parenting Competence in Adolescent Parents. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 19(1), 67–73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-014-1496-x>
- Atzaba-Poria, N., Deater-Deckard, K., & Bell, M. A. (2014). It takes more than one for parenting: How do maternal temperament and child's conduct problems relate to maternal parenting behavior? *Pers Individ Dif.*, 69, 81–86. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.paid.2014.05.002>.
- Belsky, J. (1984). The Determinants of Parenting: A Process Model. *Child Development*, 55(1), 83. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1129836>
- Belsky, J., & Jaffee, S. R. (2015). The Multiple Determinants of Parenting. In D. Cicchetti & D. J. Cohen (Eds.), *Developmental Psychopathology* (pp. 38–85). John Wiley & Sons, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470939406.ch2>

- Belsky, J., Woodworth, S., & Crnic, K. (1996). Trouble in the Second Year: Three Questions about Family Interaction. *Child Development*, 67(2), 556. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1131832>
- Bennett, H. A., Einarson, A., Taddio, A., Koren, G., & Einarson, T. R. (2004). Prevalence of Depression During Pregnancy: Systematic Review: *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 103(4), 698–709. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.AOG.0000116689.75396.5f>
- Bridgett, D. J., Gartstein, M. A., Putnam, S. P., Lance, K. O., Iddins, E., Waits, R., VanVleet, J., & Lee, L. (2011). Emerging effortful control in toddlerhood: The role of infant orienting/regulation, maternal effortful control, and maternal time spent in caregiving activities. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 34(1), 189–199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2010.12.008>
- Burns, G. L., & Patterson, D. R. (2000). Factor Structure of the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory: A Parent Rating Scale of Oppositional Defiant Behavior Toward Adults, Inattentive Behavior, and Conduct Problem Behavior. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 29(4), 569–577. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15374424JCCP2904_9
- Campbell, S. B., Cohn, Jeffrey. F., Flanagan, C., Popper, S., & Meyers, T. (1992). Course and correlates of postpartum depression during the transition to parenthood. *Development and Psychopathology*, 4(1), 29–47. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S095457940000554X>
- Chang, H., Shaw, D. S., Dishion, T. J., Gardner, F., & Wilson, M. N. (2015). Proactive Parenting and Children's Effortful Control: Mediating Role of Language and Indirect Intervention Effects: Parenting, Language, and Effortful Control. *Social Development*, 24(1), 206–223. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12069>
- Cohen, J. (1977). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (Rev. Ed.)*.
- Crawford, J. R., & Henry, J. D. (2003). The Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS): Normative data and latent structure in a large non-clinical sample. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 42(2), 111–131. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466503321903544>
- Dunst, C. J., Leet, H. E., & Trivette, C. M. (1988). Family Resources, Personal Well-Being, and Early Intervention. *The Journal of Special Education*, 22(1), 108–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002246698802200112>
- Evans, D. E., & Rothbart, M. K. (2007). Developing a model for adult temperament. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41(4), 868–888. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2006.11.002>
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A.-G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using G*Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods*, 41(4), 1149–1160. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.41.4.1149>
- Feldman, R., Granat, A., Pariente, C., Kanety, H., Kuint, J., & Gilboa-Schechtman, E. (2009). Maternal Depression and Anxiety Across the Postpartum Year and Infant Social Engagement, Fear Regulation, and Stress Reactivity. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 48(9), 919–927. <https://doi.org/10.1097/CHI.0b013e3181b21651>

- Gauvain, M. (1995). Child Temperament as a Mediator of Mother-Toddler Problem Solving*. *Social Development*, 4(3), 257–276. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.1995.tb00065.x>
- Geeraerts, S. B., Endendijk, J., Deater-Deckard, K., Huijding, J., Deutz, M. H. F., van den Boomen, C., & Deković, M. (2020). The role of parental self-regulation and household chaos in parent-toddler interactions: A time-series study. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 35, 2, 236-246 <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000814>
- Goldstein, L. H., Diener, M. L., & Mangelsdorf, S. C. (1996). Maternal Characteristics and Social Support Across the Transition to Motherhood: Associations With Maternal Behavior. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 10, 60–71. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1037/0893-3200.10.1.60>
- Grover, K. J., Paff-Bergen, L. A., Russell, C. S., & Schumm, W. R. (1984). The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale: A Further Brief Report. *Psychological Reports*, 54(2), 629–630. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1984.54.2.629>
- Harnish, J. D., Dodge, K. A., Valente, E., & Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group. (1995). Mother-Child Interaction Quality as a Partial Mediator of the Roles of Maternal Depressive Symptomatology and Socioeconomic Status in the Development of Child Behavior Problems. Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group. *Child Development*, 66(3), 739–753. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.1995.tb00902.x>
- Jordan, P. L. (1989). Support behaviors identified as helpful and desired by second-time parents over the perinatal period. *Maternal-Child Nursing Journal*, 18(2), 133–145.
- Kendziora, K. T., & O'leary, S. G. (1998). [No title found]. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 26(4), 247–255. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022650316551>
- Kojima, Y., Irisawa, M., & Wakita, M. (2005). The impact of a second infant on interactions of mothers and firstborn children. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 23(1), 103–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02646830512331330910>
- Krishnakumar, A., & Buehler, C. (2000). Interparental Conflict and Parenting Behaviors: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Family Relations*, 49(1), 25–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2000.00025.x>
- Landry, S. H., Miller-Loncar, C. L., Smith, K. E., & Swank, P. R. (2002). The Role of Early Parenting in Children's Development of Executive Processes. *Developmental Neuropsychology*, 21(1), 15–41. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326942DN2101_2
- Marsh, S., Dobson, R., & Maddison, R. (2020). The relationship between household chaos and child, parent, and family outcomes: A systematic scoping review. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 513. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08587-8>
- Matheny, A. P., Wachs, T. D., Ludwig, J. L., & Phillips, K. (1995). Bringing order out of chaos: Psychometric characteristics of the confusion, hubbub, and order scale. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 16(3), 429–444. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0193-3973\(95\)90028-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0193-3973(95)90028-4)

- Melby, J. N., Conger, R. D., Ge, X., & Warner, T. D. (1995). The use of structural equation modeling in assessing the quality of marital observations. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 9(3), 280–293. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.9.3.280>
- Moss, E., Rousseau, D., Parent, S., St-Laurent, D., & Saintonge, J. (2008). Correlates of Attachment at School Age: Maternal Reported Stress, Mother-Child Interaction, and Behavior Problems. *Child Development*, 69(5), 1390–1405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.1998.tb06219.x>
- Nelson, J. A., O'Brien, M., Blankson, A. N., Calkins, S. D., & Keane, S. P. (2009). Family stress and parental responses to children's negative emotions: Tests of the spillover, crossover, and compensatory hypotheses. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(5), 671–679. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015977>
- Premo, J. E., & Kiel, E. J. (2016). Maternal depressive symptoms, toddler emotion regulation, and subsequent emotion socialization. *J Fam Psychol*, 30(2), 276-85. doi: 10.1037/fam0000165
- Putnam, S. P., Gartstein, M. A., & Rothbart, M. K. (2006). Measurement of fine-grained aspects of toddler temperament: The Early Childhood Behavior Questionnaire. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 29(3), 386–401. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2006.01.004>
- Simpson, J. A., Collins, W. A., Tran, S., & Haydon, K. C. (2007). Attachment and the experience and expression of emotions in romantic relationships: A developmental perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(2), 355–367. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.2.355>
- Tanner Stapleton, L., & Bradbury, T. N. (2012). Marital interaction prior to parenthood predicts parent-child interaction 9 years later. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 26(4), 479–487. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029051>
- Taylor, M. K., & Kogan, K. L. (1973). Effects of birth of a sibling on mother-child interactions. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 4(1), 53–58. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01434184>
- Teti, D. M., Sakin, J. W., Kucera, E., Corns, K. M., & Eiden, R. D. (1996). And Baby Makes Four: Predictors of Attachment Security among Preschool-Age Firstborns during the Transition to Siblinghood. *Child Development*, 67(2), 579. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1131833>
- Thompson, A., & Goodman, M. (2010). *Emotion regulation and psychopathology: A transdiagnostic approach to etiology and treatment*. Guilford Press.
- Touris, M., Kromelow, S., & Harding, C. (1995). Mother-firstborn attachment and the birth of a sibling. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 65(2), 293–297. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0079614>
- Volling, B. L. (Ed.). (2017). *Developmental trajectories of children's adjustment across the transition to siblinghood: Pre-birth predictors and sibling outcomes at one year*. Wiley.

- Wachs, T. D. (2005). *Environmental chaos and children's development: Expanding the boundaries of chaos*.
- Whitesell, C. J., Teti, D. M., Crosby, B., & Kim, B.-R. (2015). Household chaos, sociodemographic risk, coparenting, and parent-infant relations during infants' first year. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 29(2), 211–220. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000063>
- Willis, G., Tourangeau, R., & Ching, P. (1999). *Response errors in surveys of children's immunizations*.
- Wittig, S. M. O., & Rodriguez, C. M. (2019). Emerging behavior problems: Bidirectional relations between maternal and paternal parenting styles with infant temperament. *Developmental Psychology*, 55(6), 1199–1210. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000707>
- Zayas, V., Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Aber, J. L. (2011). Roots of Adult Attachment: Maternal Caregiving at 18 Months Predicts Adult Peer and Partner Attachment. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2(3), 289–297. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550610389822>
- Zhang, X., Chen, H., Zhang, G., Zhou, B., & Wu, W. (2008). *A longitudinal study of parent-child relationships and problem behaviors in early childhood: Transactional models*. 40, 571–582.

Acknowledgements

This article will be included in the PhD thesis of Sumeyra Yalcintas. We are thankful to all of the mothers for their great contribution, they welcomed us to their homes and gave their consent for the study. Thank you Rengim Kilavuz for helping coding the mother-child videos. I personally want to declare my greatest gratitude to my brother, Abdulkadir Yalcintas, whom I lost to Glioblastoma brain cancer in 26.06.2019. He, himself as a PhD student, pushed me to continue my PhD studies and supported me throughout my career. I love you brother, one day we will meet, until then every single article will be dedicated to you.

Bionotes

Dr. Sumeyra Yalcintas is teaching fellow at King's College London and research background is primarily in developmental psychology, particularly in relation to family dynamics, well-being, and close relationships. She received her PhD from University of Sussex November 2021, in Developmental Psychology, M.S. in Developmental Psychology from Middle East Technical University and her BSc in Psychology from Bilkent University.

Email: sumeyra.yalcintas@kcl.ac.uk

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3028-0149>

Yalcintas, S., & Pike, A. (2023). Child temperament and child-care support are related to better mother-child relationship quality. *Child Studies*, (2), 69-86. <https://doi.org/10.21814/childstudies.4511>

Prof. Alison Pike is a Professor of Child & Family Psychology in the School of Psychology at the University of Sussex. Her research focuses on the antecedents and consequences of family relationships, with a particular focus on siblings, and differential experiences of children within the same family. This work has used cross-cultural, family and twin designs to facilitate an understanding at multiple levels of analysis. Prof Pike has appeared as an expert on the BAFTA-nominated documentary series *Secret Lives of 4-, 5-, & 6-year-olds*, and the *Secret Lives of Brothers & Sisters*.

Email: alisonp@sussex.ac.uk

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5795-6159>

Received: February 2023

Published: April 2023

**NOVICE TEACHERS NAVIGATING MENTORING
RELATIONSHIPS IN THE UNITED STATES**

**PROFESSORES INICIANTE PARTICIPANDO EM RELAÇÕES DE
MENTORIA NOS ESTADOS UNIDOS**

Jackie Sydnor

Ball State University, USA

Sharon Daley

Indiana University, USA

Tammi R. Davis

Missouri State University, USA

Margaret Ascolani

Ball State University, USA

Abstract

Amid the national teaching shortage in the United States, it is now more critical than ever to sustain teachers. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to understand which mentoring experiences and induction support can aid in this objective. Framed by Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, this study's longitudinal, qualitative nature explores the experiences of novice teachers (NTs) in elementary schools in the United States whose critical first years occurred amid a global pandemic. More specifically, we focus on the formal and informal support they experienced while becoming a teacher. Analysis of the data, which included in-depth interviews with the NTs revealed two key themes: 1) deprioritising mentoring, and 2) inconsistencies in mentoring. The implications of this study aim to extend the existing literature, offering action-based evidence to improve mentoring and induction. Focusing on the retention of NTs via support and mentoring benefits the field now and into the future.

Keywords: teacher induction, teacher mentoring, teacher shortage, COVID-19 pandemic

Resumo

Devido à escassez nacional de professores nos Estados Unidos, a manutenção desses profissionais no sistema é hoje mais crítica do que nunca. Nesta linha, este estudo visa compreender que experiências de tutoria e apoio à indução podem auxiliar neste objetivo. Enquadrada pela teoria do dialogismo de Bakhtin, a natureza longitudinal e qualitativa deste estudo explora as experiências de professores iniciantes (PI) em escolas dos primeiros anos de escolarização nos Estados Unidos, cujo desempenho profissional inicial ocorreu num cenário de pandemia global. Mais especificamente, concentramo-nos no apoio formal e informal que receberam nesses primeiros anos de exercício. A análise dos dados, que incluiu entrevistas aprofundadas com os PI, revelou dois temas principais: 1) despriorização da tutoria e 2) inconsistências na tutoria. As implicações deste estudo ampliam a literatura existente, oferecendo evidências baseadas em ações para melhorar a orientação e a indução. O foco na manutenção de PI no sistema através de suporte e orientação beneficia esta área no presente e no futuro.

Palavras-chave: indução de professores, tutoria de professores, escassez de professores, pandemia COVID-19

Introduction

Effective mentoring and induction support is critical in supporting novice teachers (NTs). Quality induction aids in the transition between pre-service and first-year teaching (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Induction and mentoring support contribute to better outcomes for NTs, including improved well-being and effectiveness and increased retention, which in turn benefits their students, the school, and the profession as a whole. This study was conceptualised to better understand the experiences of support and mentoring of NTs. A better understanding of the type of mentoring and induction NTs receive can lead to a further understanding of the causes and possible solutions to the current teacher shortage.

The current teacher shortage in the United States is heavily influenced by the unique stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (Steiner & Woo, 2021; Shank & Santiago, 2022). In addition to traditional classroom challenges, teachers today are struggling with elevated personal and professional challenges. For example, Kralovec et al. (2021) highlight several of these new challenges: learning new ways to teach (e.g., integrating different types of technology and teaching formats, Steiner & Woo, 2021), struggling to maintain their health (e.g., elevated levels of anxiety, insomnia, and burnout; Jotkoff, 2022; Baird, 2020), and wondering if teaching is a sustainable profession (e.g., low teacher morale and self-confidence, compounding as the pandemic continues; Diliberti & Kaufman, 2021; Baird, 2020). Further, teachers have shared stories about increased experiences with isolation, mental health challenges, personal loss, illness, and

trauma within their communities (Kralovec et al., 2021). Consequently, NTs are tasked with pioneering their own professional development (Xun et al., 2021).

The longitudinal nature of this study investigates how novice teachers (NTs) experience the beginning of their teaching careers. During the Spring of 2020, the onset of a global pandemic changed the personal and professional lives of teachers everywhere. Novice educators were entering a profession different from what they had experienced as students. Further, this fundamental change did not align with the curriculum of teacher preparation programs. To better understand this lack of alignment, this study investigates the critical first year(s) of NTs' careers. More specifically, this work focuses on the formal and informal support NTs received during their first-year teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bakhtin's (1981) theory of dialogism informed and framed this study. Specifically, Bakhtin's theory of ideological becoming posits that discourses, including those experienced by NTs, are often in tension. This tension, however, is what pushes one to learn and grow as one comes to new understandings. When opposing discourses collide, people are forced to confront those embedded assumptions. These are the spaces in which learning takes place. In her seminal work on learning to teach, Britzman (2003) applied Bakhtin's term *becoming* rather than *being* a teacher, which is used in many socialisation models (Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Lortie, 1975). The conceptualisation of *being* a teacher, rather than *becoming* one, "posits a repressive model of identity and pedagogy, in that both appear as unitary, noncontradictory, and already complete" (Britzman, 2003, p. 49). *Becoming*, on the other hand, provides an alternate understanding that frames ideological development as an ongoing process, never complete. This process is propelled by continual confrontation with competing discourses in what Bakhtin (1981) termed "zones of contact" (p. 345).

The importance of focusing on identity development, what Bakhtin refers to as ideological development, which occurs during the process of becoming a teacher has been well documented (e.g., Sydnor, 2014; Britzman, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001; Alsup, 2006; Larson & Phillips, 2005). Britzman (2003) contends, "The taking up of an identity is a constant social negotiation that can never be permanently settled or fixed, occurring as it necessarily does within the irreconcilable contradictions of situational and historical constraints" (p. 42). She explained further that the development of a teacher's identity involves competing chronologies of becoming - the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), teacher education, student teacher, and newly arrived teacher. This process of becoming has been found to occur over the teacher's lifetime, "with the [first years] ...being of particular importance" (Deal & White, 2006, p. 314). This critical first year in these NTs' careers was fraught with challenges and, too often, little support, which could impact their process of becoming a teacher.

Relevant Research

The induction and mentoring literature are a robust body of work, highlighting two sides of the same coin. On one side, the literature investigates the benefits of induction and mentoring. Within this area of research, effective mentoring and induction strategies are identified and the beneficial outcomes of these programmes are reported. Conversely, the literature also outlines the drawbacks and consequences of induction and mentoring programmes that are not effectively designed or are absent from the academic infrastructure. Within this area of research, the literature outlines unique challenges and struggles educators encounter without proper support. Building upon the current literature, our study considers how novice teachers navigate mentoring early in their teaching careers.

The Importance of Effective Induction and Mentoring Practices

The occupation of teaching is challenging, especially for teachers new to the profession (Harmsen et al., 2019). During the early years of teaching, new educators are often faced with complex, difficult challenges, which change and evolve as their careers progress (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Harmsen et al., 2019). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, NTs experienced stressors specific to their professional experiences, such as classroom management (Peterson, 2017). Further, NTs also expressed concern regarding differentiating instruction and developing curriculum (Gholam, 2018; Peterson, 2017). Today, NTs are faced with additional obstacles related to COVID-19 protocols, such as incorporating new technology tools into their daily lessons (Steiner & Woo, 2020). It has been well established that NTs are vulnerable during the beginning of their careers, specifically within the first three to five years (Bressman et al., 2018; Shank et al., 2022; Soleas & Code, 2020). With the added COVID-19-related stressors, the field of education is experiencing challenges associated with teacher retention (Heubeck, 2021; Shanks et al., 2022; Smith Washington, 2022; Ewing, 2021).

The first step to navigating teacher retention is to identify which induction and mentoring practices are the most effective. Fortunately, quality induction and mentoring can be carried out in a variety of ways (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). For example, Chaney et al. (2020) found NTs benefitted from consistent, monthly support. The support can be provided in the form of mentoring, assistance in lesson planning, networking, collaboration, professional development, and the implementation of effective pedagogical strategies (Chaney et al., 2020; Lisenbee & Tan, 2019; Wexler, 2020). In the same vein, supportive conversations, such as structured dialogues can help to refine and enhance teaching practices, promoting both self-reflection and supportive conversations (Linton & Grant, 2020). Whichever techniques an induction and mentoring program chooses to utilise, Kardos and Johnson (2010) note that effective mentoring is a stabilising mechanism that helps NTs gain their footing. In sum, novice teachers want to discuss their experiences and challenges with other educators. This process has been shown to aid NTs in advocating for their own professional growth via feedback (Wexler, 2020).

Typically, the objective of induction programmes is to support the personal and professional well-being of NTs (Horn et al., 2002; Bullough, 2012; Langdon et al., 2014). The European Commission (2010) found that educational mentoring helped to further NT growth in pedagogical development, as well as professional identity development. From a personal perspective, effective induction programs have been found to aid in the development of critical thinking skills, which benefit NTs' long-term attitudes and Ideologies (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Further, the perceived support NTs receive can help to decrease levels of negative emotions and discontentment (Harmsen et al., 2019). Professionally, NTs have reported elevated levels of pedagogical development and professional identity development when supported by effective induction and mentoring programs (European Commission, 2010). Consequently, when districts have quality induction programs in place, NTs experience a myriad of benefits, including retention in the profession (Wood & Stanulis, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Additionally, increased levels of retention have been shown to improve both teacher and student well-being and performance (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

Consequences of Deficient Induction and Mentoring Practices

While the benefits of induction and mentoring are well supported within the literature, many states do not have plans to implement this type of support. According to a 2019 overview of state mentoring programs compiled by the Education Commission of the States, of the thirty-one states requiring induction and/or mentoring support for new teachers, only ten states require induction and/or mentoring for one year, and 10 other states require induction and/or mentoring for two years. Only seven states require induction and/or mentoring for three years or no more than three years (Barrientos, 2022). One of the states in our study has no state requirement and the other has a two-year program listed. These statistics concur with the cry for quality induction requiring districts to invest in support for educators (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). Investment in educator development can aid in the alignment of NTs' needs with professional training and create a more collaborative work environment (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020).

Without proper support in place, NTs are experiencing elevated levels of personal and professional distress (Shank et al., 2022). Jotkoff (2022) reported that the National Education Association found over 90 per cent of members experienced feelings of burnout due to high levels of work-related stress. Additionally, increased rates of professional isolation are another detrimental outcome contributing to teacher attrition (Simos, 2013). Within the classroom, professional isolation often occurs when NTs are working independently, specifically when there are few opportunities for peer support, co-teaching, or lesson planning with colleagues (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Kardos & Johnson, 2007). The culture of isolation was perpetuated further by COVID-19 protocols. Considering the compounded strain COVID-19 has placed on educators, it is essential that NTs are not tasked with navigating their own mentoring and induction process. Therefore, addressing the wellness of educators should be a principal focus in addressing the current teacher attrition.

In sum, this study extends the literature, offering further evidence for effective mentoring infrastructure. New teachers must have support to navigate the first few years of their careers, especially during a pandemic. The literature supports the utility of such support and is clear that it increases teacher retention; however, many teachers are not receiving the guidance and resources necessary to successfully navigate obstacles unique to the first three to five years of teaching. This work takes the first step in addressing this problem by investigating the challenges NTs are experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

In this study, we employed a qualitative research design. This approach allowed the research team to interpret the lived experiences of our participants (Glesne, 2016). By sharing their experiences through a series of interviews, the research team was offered insight into NTs' teaching lives. Thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2009) allowed us to examine how the NTs described their experiences during their first year of teaching during a pandemic. In this article, we focus on nine participants who took part in four interviews during their first year of teaching. They included graduates from three different teacher preparation programmes to understand the longitudinal experiences of their induction journey. This study was guided by the following research question:

How did NTs experience support and mentoring during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Context

This article focuses on the qualitative data gathered from nine NTs in the United States as they navigated their first-year teaching amid a global pandemic. Each of the NTs completed an elementary teacher preparation program in the midwestern United States in the Spring of 2020. They each had their student teaching experience disrupted by the pandemic, which shut down schools and shifted instruction online. Most of the participants were white females in their early 20s. Further demographic information is included in Table 1.

Table 1.

Participant Demographic Data

Pseudonym	Race (<i>Self-identified</i>)	Age
Charlotte	African American	22
Kourtney	White	22
Regina	White	22
Kathleen	Caucasian / White	23
Melissa	Caucasian	38
Kayla	White	22
Karla	White	24
Bailey	White	22
Lindsay	White	22

Data Collection & Analysis

Qualitative data collection began during the participants' student teaching semesters that took place during the Spring of 2020. Interviews occurred in the Summer of 2020, Fall of 2020, Spring of 2021, and Summer of 2021. A sample of the interview questions can be found in Appendix A. These semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom and were recorded, ensuring accuracy during the transcription process. Prior to interviewing each participant, the study was fully described and informed consent was obtained. Each round of interviews was designed to capture the evolution and function of the NTs' mentoring experiences throughout their first year. This paper focuses primarily on the retrospective interviews that took place at the end of their first-year teaching during the Summer of 2021. Following that interview, a graphical representation of their mentoring network based on their description of their experiences during the interview was created by the interviewer (see Figure 1) and sent to each participant for member checking (Patton, 2002).

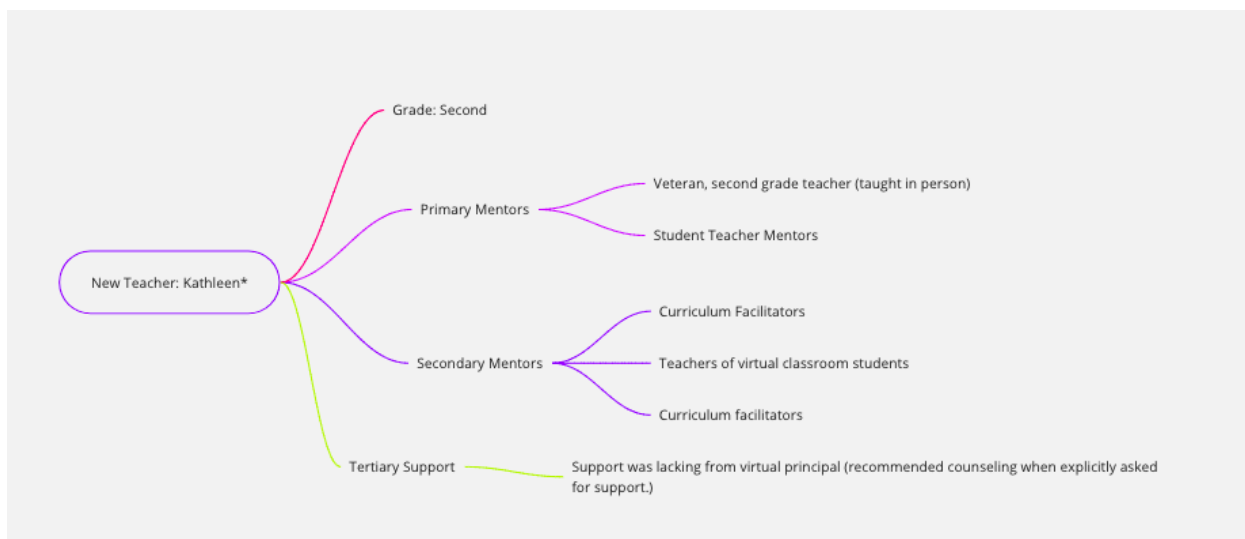


Figure 1. Sample Mentoring Network

Revisions, to the networks, were made based on their review of the networks, resulting in a final version of the representation. Key data from the mentoring networks and interview transcripts were organised into a table (see Table 2).

Table 2.
Mentoring Network Data

Novice Teacher Pseudonym	Grade Taught	Primary Support	Secondary Support	Lacking Support	Network Evolution	Teaching Assignment in Year 2
Charlotte	4th	Fourth-grade team, fourth-grade mentor, instructional coach	Fourth-grade teacher from academy	First month or two, struggling to “keep it together”	Teachers were unable to meet in large groups, more difficult to connect	Maintaining position
Kourtney	3rd	Kindergarten teacher, assigned mentor (4 th -grade teacher)	Cooperating teacher for student teaching	Administration was unable to follow through when support was needed (behavioural management)	Primarily spoke to mentor at the beginning of the year, as the year progressed connected with more people	Maintaining position
Regina	5th	Rose, grade level colleague, principal	Grade-level leader	In the beginning, “everyone kind of forgot I was a first-year teacher”	Began with two teammates, but shifted to one after	Moving to first grade, same district

Kathleen	2nd	Veteran, second-year teacher, student teacher mentors	Curriculum facilitators, teachers of virtual classroom students	Support was lacking from virtual principal (recommended counselling when explicitly asked for support)	feeling like an inconvenience Shifted from teaching assistant (co-teaching) to independent, virtual classroom	Moving to new school, same district
Melissa	5th	Ms Smith, 6 th -grade teacher, fellow, first-year teacher on 4 th -grade team	Support staff checking in	Lacking support in discipline, the principal's office was the last resort and didn't change behaviour	Became more comfortable approaching colleagues with questions	Moving to a different district
Kayla	1st	Academic coach, virtual team member	None mentioned	Broadly, lacking any form of support from both team and administration	The administration was semi-supportive at the beginning, but the support fell off soon after	Moving to a different district
Karla	5th	Administration (feedback and opportunities to observe, team, co-teacher)	Literacy coach, literacy was a high priority this year	Low levels of empathy, high levels of pressure at the beginning of the year, improvement did occur throughout the year.	Disconnect between parents, teachers, team, and administration regarding communication and COVID protocols, the situation improved as the year progressed	Maintaining position
Bailey	2nd	Instructional coach, Vice principal, and school counsellor	Second-grade team	Not noted	Misalignment between support needed at the beginning of the year and what was given	Maintaining position
Lindsay	5th	Fifth-grade team, family and friends (first-	None mentioned	Not noted	Needed more support than received in the beginning	Moving to second grade in the same

generation educator), partner's mother (also an educator)	school/district
---	-----------------

Data analysis involved multiple rounds. The first round was an initial or *pre-coding* (Layder, 1998) which involved recognising repeated concepts. During round one, we coded the data sets from the nine participants, which resulted in preliminary codes. In the second round, we used grounded theory (Glaser, 1978) to identify repeated ideas and/or concepts that occurred to develop, expand, and/or collapse codes. In the third round, we employed Focused Coding and categorised the coded data based on thematic similarity (Saldaña, 2009). To promote trustworthiness within the data analysis process, all four researchers participated in a dialogue to determine the salient themes and reach a consensus regarding the themes when needed. Finally, we chose the two most salient themes based on frequency and intensity in the data and correlation to our research question.

Findings

Preliminary data analysis revealed two primary themes: 1) mentoring deprioritisation; and 2) mentoring inconsistencies. These are presented and discussed in the sections that follow.

“Their eyes were somewhere else”: Mentoring Deprioritisation

Across several interviews, NTs noted that keeping the school functioning was a high priority for administrators and support staff. They consistently shared that the current, school-wide priorities related to health and safety did not align with their training-based expectations when they chose to enter the teaching profession. For example, Lindsey shared, “...it’s just their eyes were somewhere else just because of the year.” She explained that her principal had told her this year was atypical. “She was just like, years just typically aren’t like this. We’re always in [new teachers’] rooms and always making sure that you [have everything you] need.” While disappointed by the lack of support, NTs were mostly understanding of this. She shared, “I totally understand that [the administrators and support staff] are trying to keep the school afloat...I’m just drowning.” She continued, “but it’s okay...it wasn’t personal. I just had to find support, personally and professionally, in other places.” The lack of prioritisation of their support often left them with limited guidance or resources; however, the NTs did not believe this to be intentional but an outcome of “pandemic teaching.”

NTs consistently shared in interviews that they felt somewhat neglected by many of their colleagues. Karla, for instance, shared that “there wasn’t as much empathy for the [new] teachers and what we’re having to go through because I think the admin[istrators] just felt so much pressure.” Most did not feel like it was intentional, but it still left them

unsupported. Lindsay shared, “I feel like the first-year teachers in many districts probably...just got brushed under [the rug]. Like [schools] have other protocols and things to worry about, logistical stuff to prioritise.” Charlotte also understood that mentoring was necessarily lacking due to other school priorities. She shared:

Our [administrators], they were busy - parents are pulling kids out of school, whole classrooms had to go to online learning [when a teacher had to quarantine]. I felt like the support was lacking. But I think across the board, the support was lacking in all schools.

Additionally, many of the veteran teachers who were assigned and/or served as mentors to NTs were not as available as usual. Most veteran teachers were also struggling to navigate new protocols and technology. Melissa described that her mentor was “figuring out what she was doing” at the beginning of the year, so she “didn’t really get a ton of support from her.” Kourtney echoed this as she described helping her mentor with technology saying, “I’ve used computers enough that it wasn’t a hurdle like it was for my mentor.” Further, many veteran teachers who serve as mentors were also planning to leave the profession and had essentially “checked out.” Kayla, for instance, shared:

I had a mentor teacher, and she was really great. But she was one of the [many teachers] retiring. She started off really good at the beginning of the year, but then by the end of the year she was checked out, don’t come and ask me questions.

Observing and being observed by colleagues is a critical part of effective induction support and is typically a priority during an NT’s first year. Given that school personnel were being pulled in so many directions, this often did not happen. Regina described, “It’s quite difficult to go observe people or have people come observe me because that room has to be covered [by a substitute].” School priorities appeared to shift from supporting effective instruction to keeping the school afloat. As a result, the ever-changing protocols and procedures left many NTs to seek out their own support.

“I have to reach out”: Mentoring Inconsistencies

In addition to shifting school priorities, NTs were consistently faced with persistent mentorship challenges. Some were not assigned a formal mentor, and the data suggest that even those who were still needed to strategically seek out additional mentors, including colleagues, friends, and family, to get the support they needed. These extra supports sustained the NTs through their first year. Regina shared that she viewed her teammate as her most consistent support when she stated, “it was nice having somebody that could support me that knew exactly what we were going through.... I would say that one was definitely the most impactful and the most formative this year.”

NTs consistently discussed the challenging environments they were presented with, and the support, they had once expected, was stretched thin. Novice teachers frequently had to seek out support, while others adjusted to little or no support. Kathleen, for example, described herself as the “instigator of communication” in her mentoring

relationships. She shared that once she asked for help, everyone was “so supportive,” including curriculum facilitators, fellow teachers, and even the copy centre. Lindsay also shared this sentiment when she said, “...I knew that I could have reached out to anyone, and they would have helped me navigate in the right direction” but that, “...if I need something I have to reach out because I know that I’m just not going to be on their mind right now.”

For other NTs, the support ebbed and flowed throughout the year. Kayla, for instance, described that her mentor was not “super proactive about seeing if [she] needed anything.” Rather than seeking out mentors elsewhere, Kayla felt left on her own to figure it out. Likewise, during the interview following her first year, Karla named who had been assigned to her, but when asked how she felt supported, she did not mention her assigned mentors at all. Rather, she shared that her “grade-level team” were her primary support, although those relationships were somewhat “rocky at first.” She shared:

We kind of felt like our team wasn’t really working to come together cohesively. And there was some tension.... but it really got better when everybody kind of stepped back and was just like - listen, we’re not going to be successful. And the kids aren’t going to benefit from our lack of collaboration...so we need to get it together, which we finally did...so that was nice.

Bailey, too, experienced support from her colleagues that changed over time and was available primarily when she sought it out herself. She shared, “When my needs changed, or what I didn’t need changed, and I [noticed] who was more available...then I reached out to those people. It was just what I needed, I went to different people for.” While the support changed over time, so did NTs’ perceived need for support. Melissa described:

[At] the beginning of the year, I was [in my mentor’s room] all the time because I had so many questions. And then the longer it went, the more I felt like, I need to try this first, and then I’ll go ask if it doesn’t work. [Over time], I was a little bit more confident in trying before asking.

Others’ experiences were more discouraging. Kathleen had struggled with exhaustion and a sense of being overwhelmed. When she reached out to her principal, she was told she should seek counselling. This immediately shut down the relationship, as Kathleen stopped reaching out to her after this conversation. Rather, she continued to seek and receive support elsewhere: from her assigned mentor, other colleagues, and her mentor teacher during student teaching. Mentoring support was inconsistent within and across participants’ experiences. It ebbed and flowed throughout their first years and varied greatly from NT to NT. The lack of consistent support required NTs to reach out when they needed help rather than having it regularly provided to them.

Discussion & Implications

The findings of this study support the notion that new teachers need formal support, particularly as they are *becoming* a teacher. With new teachers struggling to navigate schools' priorities and inconsistent mentoring, the need for mentoring and induction is now more important than ever. The transition into the profession, which is empirically supported to be most difficult during the first three to five years, is compounded by these new COVID-19-related protocols. Without sound mentoring infrastructure, the field of education may continue to see teacher shortages exacerbated further.

Making Mentoring a Priority

While most NTs were provided with some level of support at the beginning of the year, as the challenges of teaching during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic built, support waned as school priorities shifted. Additionally, modalities and teaching contexts shifted throughout the school year. NTs described moving to virtual instruction as being a catalyst for an “out of sight, out of mind” phenomenon. During this time, more experienced teachers, those who were qualified to mentor, were not in the physical proximity of NTs. This distance made it difficult for more experienced educators to provide informal check-ins and collegiality. Without these once-common encounters, NTs experienced gaps within their professional identity development and growth.

For many teachers, not just NTs, the challenges faced during the 2020-2021 academic year were unprecedented. In some ways, all teachers were first-year teachers. Mentors struggled to navigate new protocols and technology, which contributed to the deprioritisation of mentoring. The novelty of the situation in which they found themselves likely made them less apt to prioritise quality mentoring. This finding underscores the importance of trained and dedicated mentors. While effective teaching is an important skill for a mentor to possess, an excellent teacher is not necessarily an excellent mentor. Mentors who receive ongoing professional development and meet with other mentors to discuss their practice are critical for providing consistent and effective support over time.

Prioritising mentoring is a clear implication of this study. In the US, there is no national policy directing the mentoring and induction support new teachers receive. Therefore, it is up to states, and often school districts and individual schools to make mentoring new teachers a priority. This study adds to the abundant literature demonstrating the criticality of mentoring and induction support for new teachers to keep them in the profession and ensure their effectiveness. Time and funding need to be allocated to providing this support.

Making Mentoring Systematic

Not all NTs in the study were assigned a formal mentor. Furthermore, data suggest that even those NTs who were assigned a formal mentor often needed to reach out to others informally to seek support. These “others” varied from other colleagues/grade-level teammates to friends and family. Several NTs reported that they did not know how

to find a mentor when one was not assigned (or when their assigned mentor did not provide the support they needed). These NTs often felt like they were left on their own to figure it out. This is worrying as NTs encounter many opposing discourses in zones of contact (Bakhtin, 1981) during their first years in the classroom. Without proper support, these spaces can become points of frustration rather than learning opportunities. These informal mentors became the supports that allowed the NTs to make it through their first year in the classroom.

Research suggests that consistent, dedicated mentoring that continues into one's second and third year is critical to improving teaching practice (Stroot et al., 1999). This quality mentoring can "provide a bridge between teacher preparation and practice that supports the distinct learning needs of new teachers" (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). While the COVID-19 pandemic likely negatively impacted the quality of mentoring these NTs received, compared to other years, none of the states in which the participants taught has a comprehensive statewide program to support NTs.

Mentoring support provided to NTs should be intentional rather than left to chance. Therefore, central education agencies (i.e., state departments of education in the US), must enact policies and dedicate funds to ensure systematic mentoring of new teachers. Amid a nationwide teacher shortage, policies that encourage school districts to provide the necessary supports to keep NTs in the profession are imperative.

Impacts on Retention

Moving into their second year in the profession, more than half of the NTs in the study are moving grade levels and/or districts. Participants reported that the primary influence on this decision was a lack of support in their first year. Given the national teacher shortage, NTs were afforded the opportunity to change positions if they so desired as there were many openings available. This movement may have significant impacts on these NTs' students and schools, as well as their professional identity development.

Quality mentoring and induction support is aimed to sustain teachers in the profession, promote NTs' personal and professional well-being, improve teacher competence, and improve students' academic achievement (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Unfortunately, nearly 50 per cent of teachers leave the profession in their first five years (Sutcher et al., 2016). This high rate of attrition impacts student learning and has substantial financial costs to schools. While none of the participants left the profession entirely, the high rate of movement to other schools because of lack of support suggests discontent with their current situations and levels of support and may be an early warning.

Additional research on this unique group of NTs who entered the teaching profession in such tumultuous times would provide necessary insight into how their lack of mentoring may impact attrition rates in the future. Following them throughout their career to longitudinally examine their experiences and rates of attrition would provide useful information for school administrators and policymakers about how to better

support NTs to sustain them in the profession. Further research on the mentoring experiences of NTs entering the profession today, post-pandemic, would also allow investigation of changes in mentoring practices and policies.

Conclusions

Understanding the multifaceted social process NTs experience will help teacher educators, school leaders, and policymakers support, not only this unique cohort of teachers but broader implications, as well. Amid a national teacher shortage, it is more critical now than ever to understand which mentoring experiences and induction support make a difference. Implications from this study add to the literature and support the improvement of teacher retention both now and into the future, which positively impacts student learning and has substantial financial benefits for school districts.

It is important to note the limitations of this study. While the data provide in-depth and rich stories of these NTs' first year in the teaching profession, the sample size of nine does not allow for generalisation across the experience of all new teachers. Additionally, the mentoring experiences shared during the interviews were from the perspective of the NT only; the mentors and other colleagues were not interviewed so their perspectives are not included.

As the teacher shortage reaches a critical state, we continue this longitudinal study to examine the ongoing experiences of these NTs, including whether they remain in the profession. Currently, as they prepare to begin their third year, all are still classroom teachers. Many, however, have shifted grade levels or elected to move to different schools and/or districts, frequently in search of more support and better working conditions. Continuing to follow their experiences with support and mentoring as they make decisions about remaining in the profession may point to important implications about what influences one to stay or leave.

References

- Alsup, J. (2005). *Teacher identity discourses: Negotiating personal and professional spaces*. Routledge.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. (M. Holquist, Ed.). University of Texas Press.
- Baird, K. E. (2020). Caring for educators is the first step in serving students. *Transforming Education Through Technology Journal*. THE Journal. <https://thejournal.com/articles/2020/05/19/caring-for-educators-is-the-first-step-in-serving-students.aspx>
- Barrientos, J. (2022). *50-state comparison: Teacher recruitment and retention*. Education Commission of the States. <https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-teacher-recruitment-and-retention-2022/>

- Bradbury, L. U., & Koballa, T. R. (2008). Borders to cross: Identifying sources of tension in mentor–intern relationships. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(8), 2132–2145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.03.002>
- Bressman, S., Winter, J. S., & Efron, S. E. (2018). Next generation mentoring: Supporting teachers beyond induction. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 73*, 162–170. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.04.003>
- Britzman, D. P. (2003). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*, revised edition. State University of New York Press.
- Bullough, R. V. (2012). Mentoring and new teacher induction in the United States: A review and analysis of current practices. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 20*(1), 57–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2012.645600>
- Chaney, B., Braun, H., & Jenkins, F. (2020). Novice middle school teachers' preparedness for teaching, and the helpfulness of supports: A survey of one state. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 28*(107). <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.28.5001>
- Danielewicz, J. (2001). *Teaching selves: Identity, pedagogy, and teacher education*. State University of New York Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Hyler, M. E. (2020). Preparing educators for the time of COVID ... and beyond. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 43*(4), 457–465. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1816961>
- Deal, D. & White, C. S. (2006). Voices from the classroom: Literacy beliefs and practices of two novice elementary teachers. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 20*(4), 313–329.
- Diliberti, M. K., & Kaufman, J. H. (2020). Will this school year be another casualty of the pandemic? Key findings from the American educator panels fall 2020 COVID-19 surveys. *RAND Corporation*. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR168-4.html
- European Commission (2010). *Developing coherent and system-wide induction programmes for beginning teachers: A handbook for policymakers*. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/school/doc/handbook0410_en.pdf
- Ewing, L. A. (2021). Mentoring novice teachers. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 29*(1), 50–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2021.1899585>
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers College Record, 103*(6), 1013–1055. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0161-4681.00141>
- Gholam, A. (2018). A mentoring experience: From the perspective of a novice teacher. *International Journal of Progressive Education, 14*(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.29329/ijpe.2018.139.1>
- Glaser, B. G. (1978) *Theoretical sensitivity*. Sociology Press.

- Sydnor, J., Daley, S., Davis, T., & Ascolani, M. (2023). Novice teachers navigating mentoring relationships in the United States *Child Studies*, (2), 87-107. <https://doi.org/10.21814/childstudies.4498>
- Harmsen, R., Helms-Lorenz, M., Maulana, R., & Veen, K. V. (2019). The longitudinal effects of induction on beginning teachers' stress. *The British Psychological Society*, 89, 259-287. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12238>
- Heubeck, E. (2021). Mentors matter for new teachers. Advice on what works and doesn't. *Education Week*, 40(32), 22–23. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/mentors-matter-for-new-teachers-advice-on-what-works-and-doesnt/2021/05>
- Horn, P. J., Sterling, H. A., & Subhan, S. (2002). *Accountability through 'best practice' induction models*. Paper presented at the Annual American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. New York City.
- Jotkoff, E. (2022). NEA survey: Massive staff shortages in schools leading to educator burnout: alarming number of educators indicating they plan to leave profession. *National Education Association*. <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/media-center/press-releases/nea-survey-massive-staff-shortages-schools-leading-educator>
- Kardos, S. M. & Johnson, S.M. (2010). New teachers' experiences of mentoring: The good, the bad, and the inequity. *Journal of Educational Change*, 11(1), 23-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10833-008-9096-4>
- Kardos, S. M., & Johnson, S. M. (2007). On their own and presumed expert: New teachers' experience with their colleagues. *Teachers College Record*, 109, 2083-2106. <https://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=12812>
- Kralovec, E., Johnston, M., Mehl, W., Rickel, J., Barrington, J., Encinas, G., Ortiz, K., & Duffy, C. (2021). The value of a teacher's life. *Schools. Studies in Education*, 18(1), 69–85. <https://doi.org/10.1086/713612>
- Kukla-Acevedo, S., (2009). Leavers, movers, and stayers: The role of workplace conditions in teacher mobility decisions. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 102(6), 443-452. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.102.6.443-452>
- Langdon, F. J., Alexander, P. A., Ryde, A. & Baggetta, P. (2014). A national survey of induction and mentoring: How it is perceived within communities of practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 44, 92-105. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.08.004>
- Larson, M., & Phillips, D. (2005). Becoming a teacher of literacy: The struggle between authoritative discourses. *Teaching Education*, 16(4), 311-323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210500345607>
- Layder, D. (1998). *Sociological practice: Linking theory and social research*. Sage.
- Lisenbee, P.S., & Tan, P. (2019). Mentoring novice teachers to advance inclusive mathematics education. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 15(1), 1-27. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1202633.pdf>
- Linton, A. S., & Grant, M. (2020). Developing a mentorship practice through self-study. *Journal of School Leadership*, 30(3), 238-256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052684619887549>
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. University of Chicago Press.

- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd edition). Sage Publications.
- Peterson, N. (2017). The liminality of new foundation phase teachers: Transitioning from university into the teaching profession. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(2), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v37n2a1361>
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.
- Shank, M. K., & Santiago, L. (2022). Classroom management needs of novice teachers. *Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 95(1), 26-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2021.2010636>
- Shanks, R., Attard Tonna, M., Krøjgaard, F., Annette Paaske, K., Robson, D., & Bjerkholt, E. (2022). A comparative study of mentoring for new teachers. *Professional Development in Education*, 48(5), 751–765. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1744684>
- Simos, E. (2013). Why do teachers leave? How could they stay? *English Journal*, 102(3), 100-105.
- Smith Washington, V. (2022). A case study: A novice teacher’s mentoring experiences the first year and beyond. *Education & Urban Society*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245221121664>
- Soleas, E. K., & Code, M. A. (2020). Practice teaching to teaching practice: An autoethnography of early autonomy and relatedness in new teachers. *SAGE Open*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020933879>
- Steiner, E. D., & Woo, A. (2021) Job-related stress threatens the teacher supply: Key findings from the 2021 State of the U. S. Teacher Survey. *RAND Corporation*. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-1.html
- Stroot, S. A., Fowlkes, J., Langholz, J., Paxton, S., Stedman, P., Steffes, L., & Valtman, A. (1999). Impact of a collaborative peer assistance and review model on entry-year teachers in a large urban school setting. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 50(1), 27–41.
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/coming-crisis-teaching>
- Sydnor, J. (2014). Negotiating discourses of learning to teach: Stories of the journey from student to teacher. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 41(4), 1-14. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1090741>
- Wexler, L. J. (2020). How feedback from mentor teachers sustained student teachers through their first year of teaching. *Action in Teacher Education*, 42(2), 167-185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2019.1675199>
- Wood, A. L. & Stanulis, R.N. (2009). Quality Teacher Induction: “Fourth-Wave” (1997-2006) Induction Programs. *The New Educator*, 5(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688X.2009.10399561>

Xun, Y., Zhu, G., & Rice, M. (2021). How do beginning teachers achieve their professional agency and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic? A social-ecological approach. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 47(5), 745–748. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2021.1945415>

Zeichner, K. M. & Gore, J. M. (1990). Teacher socialization. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (p. 329-348). Macmillan Publishing.

Appendix A

Sample Interview Protocol – End of Year 1

1. Congratulations on your first year of teaching [during a pandemic]!
 - a. Just to review and get some context, what was your job this past year?
 - i. What grade did you teach?
 - ii. What school/district?
 - iii. Were you in-person? Virtual? Hybrid? Some messy combination?
 - b. Thinking back on the past year...
 - i. What lessons did you learn about your students?
 - ii. What did you learn about yourself as a teacher?
 - c. Looking forward to next year and beyond...
 - i. What teaching practices that were required due to COVID, do you hope to go away?
 - ii. What teaching practices that were required due to COVID do you anticipate taking forward into the next year and beyond?
 - d. How do you think this experience will shape your future teaching?
2. Now I want to know about some of the highlights and struggles in your first year.
 - a. Success:
 - i. Reflecting back on your first year of teaching, what was your greatest success?
 - ii. Can you tell me a story that is an example of [that success]?
 - b. Challenge:
 - i. Reflecting back on your first year of teaching, what was your greatest challenge?
 - ii. Can you tell me a story that is an example of [that challenge]?
3. Now I'd like for you to think about the people who have supported you professionally this year.
 - a. Who were they? (prompt for 3-5 depending on time)
 - b. Ask follow-up questions about each mentor such as (as appropriate):
 - i. What is your relationship with X?
 - ii. How did the relationship begin? (i.e., assigned, you sought them out, they reached out, family member, etc.)
 - iii. How did X support you?
 - iv. What did you go to X for?

- v. How often did you talk to X about teaching?
- c. How did your support network evolve over the year?
- d. Was the support lacking in any way? If so, how?
- e. Which relationships were the most beneficial?
- f. Ask the participant to draw their mentoring network.

***Follow-up questions will be asked as appropriate.*

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by internal grants from Ball State University and Indiana University.

Bionotes

Jackie Sydnor is Associate Professor in the Department of Elementary Education at Ball State University's Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana, USA. Her research and teaching focus on supporting aspiring teachers' professional identity development and reflective practice.

Email: jtsydnor@bsu.edu

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7686-5738>

Sharon Daley is Associate Clinical Professor at Indiana University. She works in the Elementary Literacy program which is a part of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, in Bloomington, Indiana, USA. Her research focuses on: (1) improving undergraduate teacher preparation; and (2) understanding the reflective practice of pre-service teachers.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4996-0294>

Tammi R. Davis is Associate Professor at Missouri State University. She works in the Elementary Educator program which is a part of the Department of Childhood Education and Family Studies, in Springfield, Missouri, USA. Her research focuses on three lines of inquiry: (1) improving undergraduate teacher preparation; (2) understanding and celebrating the lives of teachers; and (3) promoting culturally responsive pedagogies in both of these areas.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4495-3316>

Margaret Ascolani is Doctoral candidate the Department of Educational Psychology at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, USA. Her research agenda focuses on strategy effectiveness and problem solving.

Sydnor, J., Daley, S., Davis, T, & Ascolani, M. (2023). Novice teachers navigating mentoring relationships in the United States *Child Studies*, (2), 87-107. <https://doi.org/10.21814/childstudies.4498>

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2635-9727>

Received: February 2023

Published: April 2023

