

## Playing in Pedagogy students' discourses: suspended certainties<sup>1</sup>

### *O brincar nos discursos de estudantes de Pedagogia: certezas em suspenso*

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes a series of speeches about playing, produced by Pedagogy students at a university in southern Brazil. Whereas the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (2009) sets playing as one of the axes of the curriculum for this stage of basic education, the question proposed to students was: what is the purpose of play? The analysis, inspired by the perspectives of Philosophy and Sociology of Childhood, found the recurrence of the following ideas: children today do not play anymore; children are born already playing; playing allows knowing children better; a child who does not play does not learn; you cannot play only for the sake of it; playing is the best medicine. This research recommends the need to discuss these views, opening the perspective for the production of other positions about playing, deriving from, perhaps, what children themselves would say about it.

**Keywords:** play, speech, early childhood education, Education

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**Resumo:** Este artigo analisa um conjunto de discursos sobre o brincar, produzidos por estudantes de Pedagogia de uma universidade no Sul do Brasil. Considerando que as Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para Educação Infantil (2009) estabelecem o brincar como um dos eixos do currículo para esta etapa da Educação Básica, a seguinte questão foi proposta às alunas: brincar para quê? As análises, inspiradas nas perspectivas da Filosofia e da Sociologia da Infância, constataram a recorrência das seguintes ideias: as crianças hoje não brincam mais; as crianças já nascem brincando; o brincar possibilita conhecer melhor as crianças; criança que não brinca não aprende; não pode brincar por brincar; brincar é o melhor remédio. Esta investigação recomenda a necessidade de problematizar tais concepções, colocando no horizonte a produção de outros posicionamentos sobre o brincar, a partir, talvez, daquilo que as próprias crianças tenham a dizer sobre o assunto.

**Palavras-chave:** brincar, discurso, educação infantil, Pedagogia

## 1. Introduction

Playing is an essential topic when it comes to Early Childhood Education. This is undoubtedly due to the recognition of the importance of this language in the lives of children and the role it has been assigned in the educational context, so that, as Wajskop (1998, p. vi) affirms, all child education should have a discourse about this activity, even if when it is to limit its importance. Regarding the education of children aged 0-5 years, the current National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (Brazil, 2010) establishes interactions and playing as the guiding axes of pedagogical practices that should compose the curricular proposals of Early Childhood Education in the Country.

According to Law n. 9.394 (Lei n. 9.394, 1996), which establishes the Guidelines and Bases of National Education, it is up to the Pedagogy course to train professionals to work in the area of children's education, even if secondary education is still the minimum level of training required for practicing the profession. In this study, based on empirical research, we aim to depict the discourses about playing that circulate among Pedagogy students and to deepen/problematicize the horizons of objectivity these speeches carry out.

A Foucauldian-inspired analysis of discourse is a great challenge for those that attempt to work in this methodological perspective. Fischer (2001, p.198), inspired by Foucault's studies, warns us that for the analysis of discourses, first of all, we must refuse unambiguous explanations, easy interpretations, and also the insistent search for the ultimate meaning or for

the hidden meaning of things. According to this author, in order to push this endeavor, it is necessary to consider that analyzing discourse requires an account of historical relations, of very concrete practices that are alive in discourses.

Dornelles (2003) draws attention to the displacement that has taken place in discourses about playing throughout history. According to her, at the end of the nineteenth century, through the influence of Psychology, of Pedagogy, and of Medicine, playing began to be used for the purpose of direction, control, and regulation of children, not presenting itself as an activity led by pleasure.

We propose the following question: at the beginning of the 21st century, which discourses about playing circulate among the Pedagogy students of a university located in the mountain region of Rio Grande do Sul? What impact can those discourses have on pedagogical practices in Early Childhood Education?

## 2. The research course

The research was conducted with two groups of students<sup>2</sup>—all women—, during the second semester of 2010 and the first semester of 2011. The first group consisted of 19 students and the second of 23, for a total of 42 participating students.

At the first meeting of the semester, the students were asked the following question: “What is the purpose of play?”. The question was answered individually and in writing by all. They were then invited to share with the group what they had written. During this debate among the students, our strategy was a close listening of the discussion, while at the same time we recorded and took notes of what was considered recurrent in their speeches, as well as of what was rare or appeared only sporadically. Some interventions were made only when we felt the need for students to speak a bit more or to explain in more detail the idea they were presenting so that the argument could be understood.

The analysis of the material written by the students and of the notes taken during the debate occurred later and separately. After the initial reading of the *corpus*, we tried to organize

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<sup>2</sup> In order to preserve the identity of the students participating in this research, their names have been changed.

it into groups by proximity of conception. The notes made during the debate supported the analysis but were not incorporated into the texts of the students.

After the analysis was carried out, we realized that there were many recurrent words; based on this observation, we reorganized the material. After the reorganization of the discourses, we listed some “categories” and began writing the analysis. It is important to note that more than one category could be found in a single student’s discourse, therefore the “map” of conceptions (Table 1) about playing presented by the students was distributed as follows:

**TABLE 1**

	<b>2010 (19 students)</b>	<b>2011 (23 students)</b>	<b>TOTAL (42 students)</b>
<b>The importance of playing</b>	19	23	42
<b>Playing to develop oneself and to learn</b>	14	9	25
<b>The extinction of playing</b>	11	9	20
<b>The naturalization of playing</b>	8	11	19
<b>Playing to imagine and spend time</b>	6	13	19
<b>Playing to reveal oneself</b>	7	11	18
<b>Playing to learn what is right and what is wrong</b>	5	13	18
<b>Playing to prevent social risk</b>	2	4	6

Source: Researchers’ files (2010, 2011)

For Alves and Silva (1992, p. 65), the moment of systematization is therefore a constant movement, in several directions: from questions to reality, from reality to the conceptual approach, from literature to data, repeating and intersecting until the analysis reaches points of ‘significant design of a frame’, which is multifaceted but susceptible to understandable visions.

Inspired by Veiga-Neto (2007, p.19), and using the theoretical tools of the authors selected to underpin our research, such as Brougère (1998); Foucault (1989, 1990, 1996, 1997, 2009a, 2009b, 2014); Larrosa (1994, 2004, 2007); Moyles (2002); and Sarmiento (2007), we tried to understand how these conceptions about playing affected the students and their teaching practices. How could we deconstruct conceptions so strongly assumed? We support that the

return of these analyses to the students could be a powerful and necessary moment for their formation.

### 3. Research results: the discourses about playing that circulate among the participating students

The data revealed very similar results in both groups of students. Although none of the participants questioned the value of play in children's education, the first and the second group presented different questions to justify their arguments. They gave more visibility to the following ideas: 1) the extinction of playing; 2) the naturalization of playing; 3) playing to imagine and spend time; 4) playing to reveal oneself; 5) playing to develop oneself and to learn; 6) playing to learn what is right and what is wrong; and 7) playing to prevent social risk. These are the ideas that we highlight in this article.

#### 3.1. The extinction of playing: do children today not play any longer (or do they not know how to play)?

*"Playing is in extinction!"*<sup>3</sup>. (Fabiana)  
*"Children today do not play anymore"*. (Fernanda)  
*"Children do not know how to play anymore"*. (Ana)

The transformations occurring contemporaneously in the modes and contexts of life of children—and therefore in their infancy—focus on their toys and games. New technology apparently drives such changes. An idealized and romantic idea of childhood seems to be the substratum over which the production of the above-mentioned discourses takes place. In parallel to these statements, the participating students listed a series of toys and games alluding to their own childhood and which today are uncommon among children: *"Children only want to know about staying on the internet or in front of the television, they do not play!"*(Ana, Luiza, and Cristina); *"Children do not know how to play with rhymes, how to jump rope, how to play elastics, how to stilt walk, and*

<sup>3</sup> In this paper, we have translated all participants' quotations from Portuguese into English.

*how we used to do it*” (Fernanda). In that sense, we must ask ourselves how much we are insisting on allocating today’s children to the childhood we once lived—a childhood that has passed. This discussion could not be simplified in a binary logic centered on *playing* × *not playing*, but it must cross the field of difference. Today’s children are different from those we once were; they have other kinds of toys, other ways to play and have fun— their cultural experiences are different from ours and from our ancestors’ (Brougère, 1998). Without judging whether past toys and games are better or worse than the present ones, it is up to us not only to introduce children to the ludic traditions of the past, but also to learn from them about their favorite games.

### **3.2. The naturalization of playing: a spontaneous activity of the child?**

Are children born playing or do they learn how to play? During the investigation, students Rosangela, Caren, Ana Paula, and Virginia stated that “*children play from birth!*”. However, Brougère (1995, p. 97) questions the natural and spontaneous nature of playing and argues that this activity presupposes a social learning, hence one learns how to play.

Smith (2006) considers different modes of playing, emphasizing spontaneous playing, playing with adult participation, and adult-oriented/conducted playing. He does not prioritize one modality to the detriment of others, but he defends the idea that the curriculum must guarantee time and space for the different ways of playing. Furthermore, when we talk about curriculum in Early Childhood Education, we are no longer dealing with ‘activities’ imprisoned in time and in space, with a scheduled place and hour, such as the ‘playing time’, the ‘day of bringing toys’, etc. Playing is one of children’s several languages, and this language is crossed by cultures. In their games, children do not reproduce adult cultures, but, using imagination, they make their own interpretations, opening perspectives for the emergence of children’s cultures.

The idea that playing differs from culture to culture is present in studies by Curtis (2006), Moyles (2002), Olusoga (2011), and Souza (2010). According to Moyles (2002, p.169), for example, just as there are different religious beliefs in our society, there is also a variation in the values associated with the aspects of playing that tend to be culturally based.

Undoubtedly, games and play are important routes of cultural exchanges, because they materialize themselves as processes of relations between people and, therefore, of culture. In a research that deals with the cultural expressions of street children in Angola, Koppele (2012, p.56) reports hearing from one of those children that it would be possible to write a “bible” about the games they produce, showing that playing is a part of the daily life of boys and girls even in situations of extreme poverty, since it is one of the characteristics of children’s cultures (Koppel, 2012). Sarmiento’s (2002) studies show children playing with a *Barbie* doll in an Albanian refugee camp, in Kosovo. And, along that same line, the studies of Feitosa (2011), carried out with children sheltered in an institution in the south of Brazil, ratify the presence of games in the daily life of the children under the State’s guardianship .

Based on these findings, it is possible to understand that children, whether in Angola (Koppele, 2012), in Kosovo (Sarmiento, 2002), or in Brazilian institutions (Feitosa, 2011), are not immune to cultural and economic globalization, yet they do not passively “assimilate” adult culture. According to Sarmiento (2007, p.23), they interpret, according to their own interpretative codes, the cultural productions they receive from multiple instances existing in society.

Benjamin (1999), when observing the universe of toys and games, assures us that an object’s imagery is not determinant of this or that play, because its fluidity is conditioned to the child’s repertoire. Then, considering the children and their world, this researcher states that

After all, a child is no Robson Crusoe; children do not constitute a community cut off from everything else. They belong to the nation and the class they come from. This means that their toys cannot bear witness to any autonomous separate existence, but rather are a silent signifying dialogue between them and their nation. (p.94)

Also in this direction, supported by Cultural Studies, Paraíso (2012, p. 24) states that we can find pedagogy, ways of teaching, and possibilities of learning within the most different cultural artifacts that have multiplied in our society, such as the CD, the DVD, literature books, and toys.



### 3.3. Playing to imagine and spend time: a deficiency of young children's thinking?

Student Carla said that “*playing is to live out imagination; after all, children are still young*”. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that most three- to five-year-old children's games are symbolic, that is, they, according to Smith (2006, p. 26), pretend that an action or an object has a meaning different from its usual meaning in real life; for example, if children spin their arms, imitate the sound of a honk, and distribute bits of paper, they are pretending to be driving a bus, honking, and distributing tickets. If these actions are sufficiently integrated, Smith affirms the child is dramatizing or playing a role (in this case, pretending to be a bus driver). If two or more children are together, involved in the same role play, this is what the author calls sociodramatic play.

However, this does not mean that they will play with “anything”, in “any way”, just to spend time. According to Pereira (2002), children choose each of the characters, the places, the objects and the story.

Sarmento (2002), referring to the studies of Sigmund Freud and Jean Piaget, points out the recurrent form that exists both in the fields of Psychology and of Pedagogy, according to which the child's imagination is understood as a deficit of thought of the child. So, the child is seen as a subject that is devoid of reason, that is, someone who, because of their “imagination” and their games of “make-believe”, would present deficient thinking in relation to the rational thought of the adult. The latter, “more evolved”, is seen as the reference from which the child's thinking is named and classified. Larrosa (2007), in an interview to Alfredo Veiga-Neto, points out that modern science has changed the status of imagination. For the ancient peoples, imagination was essential to knowledge, something which Larrosa (2007, 131) identifies, for example, in the following maxim of medieval Aristotelianism: *nihilpotest homo intelligesinephantasmate*—there is no possible understanding for the unimaginative man. However, modernity shifted imagination to the subjective side, so that it came to be associated, also according to Larrosa, with terms like unreality, fiction, delirium, fantasy, hallucination, dream, etc. Hence it has lost all its cognitive value and is enclosed in this psychologically formless framework. This author points out to the productive capacity of imagination so that imagination, like language, produces reality, increases it, and transforms it.



Based on Sarmiento's (2002) and Larrosa's (2007) thoughts, in this study, children's imaginative capacity is understood not as a deficiency, but as a symbolic production that allows them not only to "escape" from the readymade form, from adult rationality, from the norms and values that we try to impose upon them, but to produce reality. Thus, from this socio-anthropological perspective, we understand that imagination frees the child, like Sarmiento (2002) affirms, to create another world, under the conditions of the harshest adversity, through play and fiction.

Therefore, it is necessary to question and, if possible, to interrupt historical discourses that circulate in different segments of society, including the university, which continue to grant inferior status to children, to imagination, and to games.

### **3.4. Playing to reveal oneself: children's confession?**

"While playing, children express what they truly are" (Flavia). Student Claudia also reported that while they are playing, "they [the children] reproduce their daily lives, show themselves and allow us to know them a little more". Another student, Priscila, said that playing is the most important moment in the routine of children's education, and we "should observe the playing of each child, since children show themselves when they play".

Playing, as it is explored in the discourses of Psychoanalysis, is nothing more than a technique of self-expression, used as a strategy to know what goes on in children's inner lives. This helps understand why many teachers are more interested in observing children's play rather than in playing with children because they do not want or cannot miss a single detail of what boys and girls are "confessing" while playing.

Claudia tells us that "we must always 'keep an eye' on them". This shows a willingness to know about the child as well as the idea of vigilance as a mechanism of power, typical of the disciplinary society (Foucault, 1989). Rose (1999), referring to the "government of the soul", states that attempts have been made to change the visible person through an action on his or her invisible inner world. This way, the inner life of children is also an object of power.

According to the previous statements, the moments of play should be used by the teacher as a “panoptic observation”<sup>4</sup> of the children so that their movements and behaviors are known in detail. In this sense, Psychology has been using toys and games to invade children’s “privacy” and to invent strategies to govern their lives.

### **3.5. Playing to develop oneself and to learn: a teaching methodology?**

The idea of playing with the purpose of enhancing children’s development and learning in the most diverse areas was a recurrent topic in the students’ discourses. For example, Amanda stated that “*it is an important activity to develop physical, cognitive, social, affective, etc. aspects*”. Consequently, participating students’ conceptions of playing emerge from the theories coming from the field of Psychology, especially from the Developmental and Cognitive areas—a science vastly explored in the Pedagogy course’s curriculum. Regarding the productions about playing from this field of knowledge, Olusoga (2011, p.62) warns that initial approaches to developmental psychology and cognitive psychology, such as those used by Jean Piaget, sought to establish universal biological regularities, stages, and “laws” to explain, analyze, and categorize how all children develop and learn. According to Olusoga, this approach mirrored itself in traditional science, in which research subjects were studied outside of their usual contexts under experimental laboratory conditions, engaged in cognitive tasks designed specifically for this purpose.

Lemos (2007, p.87) affirms that, from these approaches, in pre-schools, in general, playing has been transformed into an instrumental didactic device aiming to promoting the whole development of the child. Student Natalia affirms that playing is a “*pedagogical resource to*

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<sup>4</sup> We refer here to what Foucault (1989) calls the typical architectural model of the disciplinary society—Bentham’s Panopticon. This spatial organization ensures the continuous observation of all those involved in the “gears”—whether they are the ones imprisoned in detention houses, the mentally ill in psychiatric hospitals, the factory workers, or the students in schools—avoiding infractions, rebellions, and guaranteeing the constant productivity of each one, as well as the operation of the machine. In this search for the homogenization of the behavior of the mentally ill, the prisoner, the worker and the student, the norm is established and the “standard” is to be reached by the individuals—it is the normalization of individuals. Thus, these disciplinary mechanisms act on bodies as a form of control of individuals, constantly subjecting their forces. Bentham’s Panopticon, in addition to prisons, inspires the organization of the spaces of the psychiatric hospitals, factories, and schools. The latter, more than any other institution, undertook the operation of the disciplinary individualizations, producing new subjectivities and, thus, played a decisive role in the constitution of modern society.

*teach contents in a different way*". Also in this direction, Luisa says that children should "*learn by playing*".

In order to account for the recurring logic of productivity in capitalist society, toys and games are now designed to promote advancement in children's development and learning, and bring such specific guidance on their packaging, including the age indication for their "pedagogical use". This way, society manages the risk<sup>5</sup> that children will deviate from the expected standard.

According to this view, in Early Childhood Education there is concern about the risk of children being affected by the "evil" of not learning what the school wants them to learn, in the way the school proposes that it be learned, and in the moment school considers appropriate for this learning. This represents a social risk that can be managed through playing. Mara's account evidences this context when she states that "*children who do not play lose much in learning, since they do not explore their thinking, do not interact with other children, do not learn their limits and do not interact with the environment*".

Finally, as the above speech shows, for children to learn and to succeed in school, they need to play, and their playing must be closely watched over by adults. At the same time, not "any playing" is required, but one that is appropriate to children's age and that will promote their integral development. The presence of knowledge-power relations permeating children's play is thus made evident, which is reaffirmed by Tatiana, who emphasizes that "*playing is the best methodology for all teachers*".

Therefore, we can affirm that playing is often pedagogized, that is, placed at the service of "making one learn", being used as a strategy to ensure school success for the child population. Contrary to this thought, we cannot consider as equivalent all the discourses that advocate that the teacher should turn to games, since, as Brougère (1998, p.9) indicates, the very idea that one has of playing varies according to authors and times; the way in which it is used and the reasons for its use are equally different.

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<sup>5</sup> The risk, for Ewald (1993, p. 96), means a possible distancing from the norm, hence there is no risk that is not social. Thus, according to the same author, the idea of risk presupposes that all the individuals that form a population can be affected by the same evils: we are all risk factors, and we are all subject to risk. This does not mean that everyone causes and runs the same risks. If the risk defines the whole, each individual is distinguished by one's own probability of risk.

### 3.6. Playing to learn what is right and what is wrong: a means of governing children?

Cristiane warns: “*but be careful, so it’s not like ‘playing for the sake of playing’*. It must have a purpose?”. This warning evidences once again that playing does not escape the rationalization of modern society, committed to individuals’ productivity. After all, as we have already pointed out, while children play, they “show” themselves and they are known in detail by the adult. And knowing children’s innermost selves is a condition of possibility to better govern them. A government that, according to Foucault (2014, p. 321), should be understood as “techniques and procedures for directing men’s conduct. Government of children, government of souls or consciences, government of a household, of a State, or of oneself.”

On the development of the art of governing, Foucault (2009b) identifies, from the sixteenth century until the end of the eighteenth century, “a significant series of treatises that do not exactly present themselves as advice to the prince, ... [but] as arts of government” (p. 88). The concept of “good government” emerges at that time and in this sense the idea of politics appears associated with an art of governing, a technique, or a set of procedures and understandings about society. The government, then, is the one which can gather and lead its people to living well in society or the one which ensures coexistence, introducing in this process the idea of collectivity.

Foucault (2009b) still affirms that, within society, many people can govern:

the father of a family, the superior in a convent, the teacher, the master in relation to the child or disciple—so that there are many governments in relation to which the Prince governing his state is only one particular mode. (p. 93)

Veiga-Neto (2002), in order to reduce the ambiguity of the term “government”, suggests the use of the word “governance” to differentiate government (as an institution) from practices or tactics of exercising power. In addition, it is important to consider that for Foucault (1996), governance refers not only to actions aimed at managing the conducts of others, but also to those actions that are undertaken by all of us in order to direct not only the conducts of the other, but also our own conducts. Playing also seems to be at the service of the moralization and disciplining of children—a strategy used by adults to teach what is right and what is wrong for children, as Aline pointed out: “*through playing, we are teaching culture, rules, and social*

*relationships—what is right and what is not?*. Natalia's statement reinforces the same perspective: *"It is from the mediations of the adult in the game that they [the children] learn to respect others, to wait for their turn, to win, and to lose"*. Amanda also stated that *"The games we teach are fundamental for [children] to grow and to build the world we want"*.

Is the world we want also the world kids want? According to Lee (2010, p. 47), it is necessary to question the assumptions about adults' knowledge, ability, and moral competence which are the bases of the legitimacy of adult control over children's lives.

### **3.7. Playing to prevent social risk: an attempt to normalize deviant children?**

From the "confessions" that children make while playing, the strategies of normalization of children considered as deviant are organized, since, according to Lockmann and Traversini (2011, p. 39), it is through observations of what children do and say that teachers identify those undesirable attitudes that, over time, can aggravate and produce dangerous persons, threats to the peaceful coexistence of a population.

*"Playing is the best medicine for children!"* stated Clara. Based on this metaphor, we could say that in Early Childhood Education children receive daily "doses", at regulated times, of this "pedagogical medication" prescribed by psychiatrists, psychologists, speech therapists, psychopedagogues, or psychomotricists, and administered by the teachers. The doses seem to be administered according to the age of each child and according to the time left over between one activity (or care) and the other scheduled in the routine of the school. They are indicated for the prevention and "cure" of the most varied types of "diseases"—those related to language, to logical reasoning, to socialization, to motricity, to the emotional, etc. In this sense, they are, as Lemos (2007, 81) indicates a device to promote the development of children and, at the same time, the production of normalized and controlled children, based on the imperatives of capitalist society, demanding, more and more, early initiatives of cognitive stimulation, productivity, and political submission.

Rose (1999, p. 41) affirms that psychological sciences are intimately involved with programs, calculations, and techniques for the soul-governance of the child, even when it comes to their play. Also according to Rose (1999, p. 32) we have witnessed the birth of a new form of expertise, an expertise on subjectivity. The author indicates that a whole family of new

professional groups has emerged and multiplied, each affirming their virtuosity regarding the self, in classifying and measuring psyche, in predicting their vicissitudes, in diagnosing the cause of their problems, and in prescribing remedies.

Specialists who provide, among others, psychomotor, psychological, and psychopedagogical services use children's "desire to play" to intervene in their "private selves".<sup>6</sup> That is, games are monitored, controlled and evaluated, as explained by Lemos (2007), and this is done not only to "cure" but also to prevent social risks.

Pedagogy, based on Psychology, seeks to transform toys and playing into instrumental didactic devices to fuel the machine which makes students learn school contents (Lemos, 2007; Olusoga, 2011) and to avoid social risk. When the 'pedagogical toy' was invented, the pleasure of playing was jeopardized; after all, children play not to learn school content, but because whenever they play, they live childhood in its fullness.

## Final remarks

What is the purpose of play? Students' responses to this question provide an important, but partial, insight into the conceptions present in many contexts of initial teacher education in our country.

Issues related to playing, children's cultures, and their relationship to pedagogy need to be discussed and deepened in those undergraduate courses that aim to train teachers for the initial stages of Basic Education. The studies and researches developed by the new Field of Studies of the Child and Childhood seem to open new possibilities for the discourses that conform the present-day pedagogical practices, because they make Pedagogy reconsider its modern conceptions of children.

Considering the fragmentation and complexity involved in the curricula of the Pedagogy courses in Brazil, we face a huge challenge in defending a Pedagogy which respects and promotes playing as an inalienable right of every children.

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<sup>6</sup> The term "private self" is used by Nikolas Rose (1999) to refer to our inner lives, our feelings, our desires, and our aspirations.

Without a curricular revision of the Pedagogy courses, articulated with the CNE/CEB Resolution n. 5/2009 (Resolução Conselho Nacional de Educação/Câmara de Educação Básica, 2009), which defines the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education, and with the new studies on children and childhood, we will continue for a long time in the opposite direction of what children from our times are, think, and need.

In order to understand the importance of the theme in question—playing—for the pedagogical field, it is necessary to reconceptualize, on the one hand, the child as a historical subject and as a person of rights, and, on the other hand, childhood as a permanent generational category. At the basis of this conceptual change is the rejection of a Pedagogy based on the idea of children as incapable, as someone who *is not yet*. We need to keep asking: “What is the purpose of play?” so that other answers can be produced—perhaps even by children themselves.

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*Submitted for evaluation on September 11, 2016; revised on July 26, 2017; accepted for publication on October 17, 2017.*