

Health Education For Diversity: Action Research With Preschool Children

Educação Em Saúde para a Diversidade: Pesquisa-ação Com Crianças Pré-escolares

Educación en Salud para la Diversidad: Investigación-acción con Niños en Edad Preescolar

RESUMO

Objetivo: desenvolver estratégias eficientes de educação em saúde na escola, abordando questões sociais, raciais e de gênero no ambiente escolar, além de outras demandas emergentes na interação com a comunidade escolar. **Métodos:** trata-se de uma Pesquisa-Ação, com o uso de estratégias pedagógicas lúdicas trabalhadas de forma participativa e dialógica. **Resultados:** o desenvolvimento se deu em duas fases, uma virtual e outra presencial, abordando diversos eixos temáticos e houveram dois momentos de avaliação com as educadoras da instituição em relação aos impactos das atividades. **Conclusão:** a proposta mostrou-se exitosa, com algumas fragilidades ajustadas durante a pesquisa, mas reforça-se a necessidade de mais estudos na área. **Contribuições para a prática:** reforça a importância da atuação da enfermagem na educação e promoção à saúde, com relato de experiência exitosa e potencialmente transformadora para os profissionais, estudantes e sociedade.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Educação em Saúde; Educação Infantil; Enfermagem; Preconceito.

ABSTRACT

Objective: to develop efficient health education strategies in schools, addressing social, racial and gender issues in the school environment, in addition to other emerging demands in the interaction with the school community. **Methods:** this is an Action Research, with the use of playful pedagogical strategies worked in a participatory and dialogical way. **Results:** the development took place in two phases, one virtual and one in person, addressing several thematic axes and there were two evaluation moments with the educators of the institution in relation to the impacts of the activities. **Conclusion:** the proposal proved to be successful, with some weaknesses adjusted during the research, but the need for more studies in the area is reinforced. **Contributions to practice:** it reinforces the importance of nursing work in education and health promotion, with a report of a successful and potentially transformative experience for professionals, students and society.

DESCRIPTORS: Health Education; Child Rearing; Nursing; Prejudice.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Desarrollar estrategias eficaces de educación en salud en la escuela, abordando cuestiones sociales, raciales y de género en el entorno escolar, además de otras demandas emergentes en la interacción con la comunidad escolar. **Métodos:** Se trata de una Investigación-Acción, con el uso de estrategias pedagógicas lúdicas trabajadas de forma participativa y dialógica. **Resultados:** El desarrollo se dio en dos fases, una virtual y otra presencial, abordando diversos ejes temáticos y hubo dos momentos de evaluación con las educadoras de la institución en relación con los impactos de las actividades. **Conclusión:** La propuesta resultó exitosa, con algunas debilidades ajustadas durante la investigación, pero se refuerza la necesidad de más estudios en el área. **Contribuciones para la práctica:** Refuerza la importancia de la actuación de la enfermería en la educación y promoción de la salud, con relato de experiencia exitosa y potencialmente transformadora para los profesionales, estudiantes y la sociedad.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Educación en Salud; Educación Infantil; Enfermería; Prejuicio.

RECEIVED: 01/15/2025 APPROVED: 01/27/2025

How to cite to this : Souza AGF, Bragagnollo GR, Almeida IO, Cabral V, Araújo WJS, Santos DS. Health Education For Diversity: Action Research With Preschool Children. Saúde Coletiva (Edição Brasileira) [Internet]. 2025 [acesso ano mês dia];15(93):14436-14445. Disponível em: DOI: 10.36489/saudecoletiva.2025v15i93p14436-14445

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INTRODUCTION

School-aged children experience stigmas and prejudices related to social, racial and gender issues. From a young age, children are continually exposed to information about what is considered “normal” and “beautiful”, internalizing a hegemonic discourse that despises, even if unconsciously, anything that differs from the socially accepted standard, situations that feed back into hate speech and discrimination.⁽¹⁾

Data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) referring to the 2022 Demographic Census revealed that there has been a significant increase in recent years in the number of people who self-declare as black and brown, representing 55.5% of the Brazilian population. In addition, women represent 51.5% of the country's population, but they still dedicate more time to domestic care and earn almost half of what men earn, with an even greater disparity between black and brown women.⁽²⁾ This group is considered to be the most affected by social inequality and discrimination.

These statistics highlight the urgency of combating the social and structural barriers that perpetuate the vulnerabilities of the country's majority populations. It is important to empha-

size that addressing these issues from childhood, in a playful and dynamic way, is crucial to empower and value children from these groups, as well as educating those who do not belong to them from the first years of education.

Education is an instrument for transforming reality, in which the student is the protagonist. The educator must immerse themselves in the reality of the community, connecting popular knowledge with scientific knowledge, with the aim of breaking down social barriers. In this way, educators and students will be able to build a significant change in the reality of life together, emphasizing a horizontal relationship between students and educators, adapting the educational process to the specific audience. In the school environment, it is essential that children experience discussions about race, gender and society in a way that is appropriate to their understanding, offering new perspectives by stimulating critical thinking.⁽³⁾

Considering the racial aspects in school relationships, where structural and institutional racism is permeated from the family to the classroom, the theoretical-practical knowledge of anti-racist education is relevant to promote spaces for decolonizing the minds of teachers and students.⁽⁴⁾ The theorist highlights that the ancestral rescue of conversation and storytelling

is an effective strategy to awaken critical thinking in a playful way, aiming at transgression and transformation.⁽⁵⁾

The storytelling methodology allows learners to get to know each other and their cultural symbols, awakening feelings and affections that contribute to the construction of critical thinking, articulating experience and theory.⁽⁶⁾

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, since March 2020, pedagogical strategies for teaching in a virtual environment were needed, making Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) essential tools for distance education practices.⁽⁷⁾

In this context, it is worth highlighting that ICTs are intrinsic components of childhood and adolescence experiences today. Children and adolescents are increasingly familiar with digital devices and resources, which occupy a significant space in their daily lives. Therefore, incorporating ICTs into the educational environment is a promising strategy, considering that these technologies are already part of the lives of many children within the family.⁽⁸⁾

This research highlights the importance of addressing social, racial and gender issues through various strategies from the first contact children have with school and education, given that children often reproduce preju-

dices and stigmas, even unintentionally. Statistical data and scientific literature justify the need to address these issues through all possible means, aiming to break down structural barriers that place some groups as the main targets of discrimination.

Therefore, using the “EducaSaúde” project and the pedagogical principles of liberating and anti-racist education (3-5), The research aimed to develop health education strategies at school, addressing social, racial and gender issues, as well as emerging demands in child-family-community interactions.

METHODS

Type of study

This is Action Research, a methodology that is based on empirical knowledge of social action for the development of knowledge. (9) This research used Action Research as a methodological basis, which is based on the construction of knowledge associated with interaction with the community, aiming for the researcher to engage with the participants. (10)

Study scenario

The study was conducted at a public educational institution located in a peripheral neighborhood of a city in the interior of the state of São Paulo. Research activities have always been associated with outreach activities. Since 2018, the “EducaSaúde” project has been promoting educational activities in partnership with the community, focusing on the health of children, their families, and educators in a public daycare center. The purpose of the project is to exchange knowledge and experiences that enrich work with children, addressing social and racial issues from the earliest years of education, with the aim of positively impacting children's development.

Participants and study period

The research was conducted be-

tween 2022 and 2023, with data collection beginning in January 2022. However, the activities of the extension project at the institution were already taking place before this period, as an extension linked to the School of Nursing at Unicamp.

The sample consisted of 60 participants, 40 of whom were children aged between 4 years and 5 years and 11 months, and 20 educators linked to the daycare center. The children were selected by convenience, with inclusion criteria being: children actively enrolled in the daycare center, aged four to six years incomplete, and educators with an employment relationship during the research period. The invitation to participate was made to the pedagogical coordinator, who formally authorized the daycare center's participation. Subsequently, the invitation was extended to those responsible for the children through meetings with family members and sending of the Free and Informed Consent Form. The invitation to the educators was made directly by the research team, with the presentation of the project and the signing of the Free and Informed Consent Form. All research was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, ensuring the respect and well-being of the participants.

Data collection and organization

The collection activities took place in the physical and/or virtual spaces used by the “EducaSaúde” extension project. Strategies such as conversations, games, showing videos and films, storytelling and music were developed, focusing on social, racial and gender issues. The activities were developed in two stages: the first was carried out remotely, with virtual meetings with the educators to plan the activities; the development of the activities with the children was carried out by the educators themselves, since the extension students could

not attend the institution due to the health restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second stage occurred when the extension project and this research resumed with in-person activities, carried out in the institution's physical space, after the health restrictions of the daycare center and the School of Nursing at Unicamp were lifted. During this period, seven activities were developed with the children, on different thematic axes, four of which focused on social, racial and gender issues.

During the implementation of these activities, there was a continuous assessment of the impact of the actions on the children. The research team prepared reports and documented images of the activities, in addition to conducting two structured assessments with the educators: one in the middle and one at the end of the project. The assessments were carried out using a form containing five objective questions (evaluated on a numerical scale) and five subjective questions, in which the educators described their experiences and suggested changes; the objective of these meetings was, in addition to strengthening the relationship between the extension students and the educators, to hear about their experiences with the development of the activities, as well as their suggestions for the following year. This assessment was used not only to summarize the results of this work, but also to guide the development of the activities in 2023, which continued to take place through the extension project. After completing the forms, meetings were held to discuss the results. Reports of the meetings between the extension project team were also prepared, for the purposes of planning and evaluating the activities carried out.

It is important to highlight that from 2023 onwards, the project stopped being called “EducaSaúde: playful education promoting quali-

ty of life at school” and started being called “Projeto Amoras: Amor às vidas negras” (Amoras Project: Love for Black Lives), further reinforcing the commitment to anti-racist education and focusing on social, racial and gender issues.

Data analysis

The data collected in the interviews and meetings were transcribed and organized in Word. Data analysis followed the Thematic Content Analysis method, which involved the following phases: pre-analysis, exploration of the material, processing of results and interpretation.⁽⁹⁾ Furthermore, all observations made during the study were recorded in the researchers' field diaries, where aspects such as interactions with participants, the spaces used and the resources employed in the activities were documented.

Ethical Aspects

The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Campinas. The study was conducted in accordance with Resolution 466/2012, which regulates research involving human beings. With CAAE number: 53030221.3.0000.5404, and opinion 5.217.358/2022.

RESULTS

Forty children and 20 educators participated in the study. The children, all in preschool, were between four and five years old and lived in the neighborhood where the daycare center is located, a peripheral region with significant vulnerabilities in terms of sanitation and infrastructure. In addition, the neighborhood is located in one of the regions of Campinas where the highest rates of inequality, violence and drug trafficking are currently concentrated, in addition to the lowest availability of resources in the areas of health, education and housing.

Most of these children depended on public services, such as schools and health units, to meet their basic needs. The families had diverse configurations, including not only fathers, mothers and siblings, but also grandparents, uncles, aunts and uncles, cousins and, in some cases, same-sex couples.

The educators included both teachers and monitors, who helped with activities inside and outside the classroom. Predominantly women, the educators ranged in age from 20 to 60.

A significant number of them lived in the São Marcos neighborhood, which facilitated prior knowledge of the children and their families, both through living in the community and through interactions at the daycare center.

Na Figura 1 estão descritas as atividades desenvolvidas na primeira fase das atividades, que foi realizada de maneira remota (planejada pela equipe de pesquisa e de extensão e aplicada pelas educadoras, que estavam frequentando presencialmente a creche).

Figure 1 - Activities carried out remotely at the institution. Campinas, SP, Brazil. 2022

| Activity | Objective | Proposal |
|--|---|---|
| “Bye bye coronavirus: Protecting myself and my family” | Give a presentation with important information about the COVID-19 pandemic to the teachers and present existing materials and new materials produced by the team to work with the children. | Activities with children: 1. Washing hands with paint 2. Putting masks on dolls 3. Giving “vaccines” to each other |
| “Moving my body during the pandemic” | Reinforce the importance of physical activities for children and propose simple activities that explore the use of the body at school. | Activities with children: 1. Creating my own toy 2. Obstacle course |
| “How to take care of my heart” | Work with the teachers and also with the children on how to approach and deal with grief, especially during the pandemic years, when many people lost loved ones. | Activities with children: 1. Movie Inside Out 2. Storytelling 3. Drawing workshop |

In this phase, the strategies were presented to the educators during virtual meetings via the Google Meet platform by the students of the extension project and discussed together with the daycare team, analyzing their feasibility and relevance. After the adjustments, the activities were put into practice with the children, led by the institution's own educators, and feedback was subsequently given to the extension and research team on the impacts of the activity.

The second phase took place in person, with the participation of the extension students and also the educa-

tors. It is worth noting here that not all of the activities carried out with the children focused on social, racial and gender issues, with some of them being more focused on physical health issues such as healthy eating and tooth brushing, due to the very nature of the methodology of this research. This is because Action Research is based on the researcher's insertion in the researched scenario and on continuous interaction with the research participants, first meeting the most immediate needs of that community and then moving on to the application of the initial research theme.

Therefore, as the demands of more traditional childhood health issues were brought up by the educators themselves, it was decided to work on these issues before the social issues themselves.

The planning of the activities was

based on educational methodologies that had the playful element as the main pillar. The development of the activities with the children took place over a period of one and a half hours, with the supervision of the institution's team of educators and moni-

tors, and was recorded in the form of reports and previously authorized images. Figure 2 describes the four activities focusing on the issues addressed in this study.

Figure 2 - Activities carried out in person in 2022. Campinas, SP, Brazil, 2022

| Activity | Theme | Discussion circle trigger questions | Methodologies used | Digital and physical materials |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Everyone can | Valuing gender diversity | "Can boys clean the house and cook? Can boys be dancers and can girls play soccer?" | Reading of the book "Does Ceci have a pipi?"; presentation of dolls and discussion of their gender and why the children thought that | Book "Does Ceci have a pipi?" by Thierry Lenain, rag dolls by a student from the extension project |
| Valuing the different | Valuing ethnic-racial diversity | "Are people the same? What makes them different? What are the different skin tones? What are the different hair types?" | Presentation of the episode "Zula, the Blue Girl" from Castelo Rá Tim Bum, Construction of a diversity tree with the thumbprints of all the children, clothesline of self-portrait drawings | Video of the episode "Zula, the Blue Girl" by Castelo Rá Tim Bum, cardboard with a tree drawn on it, drawing materials and a clothesline |
| What is a family? Part 1 | Family relationships - Part 1 | "What is a family? What do families do together? What is your family like? What people can make up a family? What are the different types of families?" | Song "Nossa Família", reading of the "Livro da Família"; construction of a mural of qualities necessary for all families brought by the children | Music "Nossa Família" by Mundo Bitá, book "Livro da Família" by Todd Parr, cardboard for creating the mural |
| What is a family? Part 2 | Family relationships - Part 2 | Revisit the questions asked in the last activity.. | Reading of the book "Família é feita de amor"; cultivation of bean seeds in a plastic cup, drawing of the members of their own family | Book "Family is made of love" by Carolina Rodrigues da Silva Souza, plastic cups and cotton, drawing materials |

All of these activities were conducted by extension students, accompanied by the project's coordinating professor and by graduate students responsible for supervising the activities.

As proposed in the work methodology, a partial and a final evaluation were carried out with the educators. The first evaluation was carried out through an online Google Form, to understand the impact of the activities

on the children, from the perspective of the professionals who accompany them daily, in addition to adjusting the points for improvement in the development of the actions.

However, following the precepts of the Action Research methodology, the extension project team, the research team and the institution maintained close contact and an open communication channel so that the necessary

adjustments could be made throughout the development of the activities. The partial evaluation form consisted of five objective questions (four being answered using a numerical scale from 1 to 5 and one being answered with "yes" or "no") and five subjective questions. Five responses were received, which are compiled in Table 1.

Table 1 - Objective questions present in the Educators' Evaluation Form. Campinas, SP, Brazil, 2022

| Questions | Answers (mean) |
|--|----------------|
| Regarding the activities developed by the "EducaSaúde" project, were they useful for working with children in person at the daycare? (scale of 1 to 5) | 4,6 |
| Were the themes appropriate to the children's needs? (scale of 1 to 5) | 5,0 |
| Were the proposed activities adapted to the reality of the daycare and the children? (scale of 1 to 5) | 4,2 |
| Were the activities easy to understand for the children? (scale of 1 to 5) | 4,8 |
| Is the time to carry out the activities (1h/1h30) appropriate? (YES or NO) | SIM |

Furthermore, in this same form, five subjective questions were asked to the educators, namely: "What were the children's reactions to the activities? Tell us a little about how they behaved"; "Did you notice any changes in the children's behavior or attitude after carrying out the activity, considering the topics covered? If so, what?"; "Do you have any suggestions for making the activities better and more adapted to what the children need?"; "What topics do you think would be interesting to work on with the children in the future?" and "Is there any need from the children, the families, the daycare itself or the team that we could help with?"

Some of the responses received stand out: Attentive, sharing their personal experiences and commenting among themselves on the content discussed, in the moments after the conversations (P1) regarding question 1. It is possible to see that the children already have a wealth of knowledge, but it is clear to observe the enrichment of this wealth (P2) answering question 2. More activities such as drawing the proposals (P3) as an answer to question 3. Food, Behavior, Family and Diversity (P1), as suggestions for question 4. If possible, activities related to first aid (P4) as a suggestion for question 5.

The partial evaluation with the educators indicates that the project activities were well received, with an average of

4.6 for their usefulness and 5.0 for the adequacy of the themes to the children's needs. Most educators also considered that the activities were adapted to the daycare reality (4.2) and easy for the children to understand (4.8), in addition to considering the execution time to be adequate. In the subjective responses, the educators reported the children's attention and engagement, observed enrichment in their knowledge and suggested themes such as food, diversity and first aid for future activities, highlighting the relevance of the project and its potential for improvement.

In the second evaluation, the evaluation form consisted of the same objective and subjective questions, answered in a physical document. In addition, this second evaluation, which took place at the end of the school year, included a structured meeting in which the points raised by the educators in the forms were discussed.

Regarding the objective questions, they remained the same as in the previous form, but since people could write, the answers were mostly discursive and not numerical, as suggested in the question. The main consideration made by the educators in this first part of the form was the need to adapt the time of the activities, which should be reduced, so that there would be better use and concentration of the children.

In the second part of the form, as in

the first evaluation, the same subjective questions were asked, with some highlights for the following answers: It was possible to see the involvement of the classes, the themes were in line with the reality of the group and they participated very actively by reporting their experiences (P1). More playful experiences with reduced time, games and figures, theater and musicalization (P2) in relation to the evaluation of the activities already carried out. Conscious use of screens, values, diversity, nutritional education and integrative health techniques as suggestions for topics to be worked on. Always work with the body (the child as an individual with body awareness), human development itself, knowing human development, parents would better understand their children and their phases (P3) as a suggestion of needs to be met.

The annual evaluation of the educators revealed important considerations for improving the project activities. Although the objective questions were maintained, most of the answers were discursive, highlighting the need to reduce the time of the activities to improve the children's focus and concentration. The subjective responses reinforced the active involvement of the classes, who identified with the topics covered. Among the suggestions for improvement, educators recommended more playful activities, such as games and music, in addition to proposing new topics, such as conscious use of screens, diversity and integrative health techniques. The appreciation of the body and human development was also highlighted as a need to be worked on with the children and their parents.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings resulting from the interventions, it was observed that the domestic environment, the family circle and the social and economic context significantly impact child development, not only in cognitive and psychomotor indicators, but especially in the construction of relationships and perception of

society. ⁽¹¹⁾

In addition, socioeconomic context exerts a significant influence, affecting access to educational resources, socialization opportunities and enriched learning environments. In a study carried out in Amazonas that aimed to evaluate the influence of maternal higher education and family income on the motor development of infants, it was highlighted that children from families with lower socioeconomic status often face additional challenges, such as greater exposure to financial stress, less access to educational materials and less participation in extracurricular activities, which can limit the full development of their cognitive and social capacities. These factors contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities, where children from less advantaged backgrounds have fewer opportunities to reach their full potential. ⁽¹²⁾

Furthermore, this reality is directly related to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), since to ensure adequate child development, it is essential that families have access to decent living conditions and that children have access to quality education from childhood. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These goals aim to address social, economic and environmental issues, aiming to eradicate poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all. ⁽¹³⁾

In addition to the immediate family environment, the broader social context, including the community and local infrastructure, plays a crucial role in child development. Communities characterized by strong social cohesion, safety and access to quality essential services, such as daycare centers and schools with good infrastructure and investment, provide an environment that is more conducive to the healthy growth of children. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Strengthening communities is aligned with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which proposes the cre-

ation of inclusive and safe environments for all. ⁽¹³⁾

Interaction with peers and adults outside the family nucleus, especially educators and other professionals, significantly enriches children's social experience, fostering coexistence skills, empathy, and a deeper understanding of social norms and values. The interdependence between the home environment, the family circle, and the socioeconomic context forms a complex ecosystem that profoundly influences child development. Understanding these interactions is essential for formulating public policies and intervention programs that seek to mitigate inequalities and promote more equitable environments that are conducive to the integral development of future generations. ⁽¹⁵⁾ This aligns with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), which aims to promote inclusion and equity. ⁽¹³⁾

The daycare environment proved to be conducive to the development of health education activities, producing positive results. The daycare, as a social space, offers a unique setting where children have the opportunity to share experiences and interact with their peers, learning fundamental principles of coexistence that directly impact their future behavior. In this context, socialization is not limited to the acquisition of social skills, but also extends to the formation of identities and the construction of healthy interpersonal relationships. Interaction with other children and educators promotes empathy and conflict resolution, essential skills for life in society.

Furthermore, the quality of social interactions in childhood is correlated with the development of emotional and social skills throughout life, reinforcing the importance of this initial educational environment. ⁽¹⁶⁾

The topics covered in the health education activities were carefully selected to respond to needs identified by the institution's team and the extension project. This alignment between the activities and the group's demands is essential to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of

learning. It was observed that the sense of collectivity and belonging cultivated among children influences their relationships both inside and outside of school. By promoting an environment where collaboration and mutual respect are encouraged, educational practices contribute to the formation of more aware and engaged citizens. This focus on building supportive communities is related to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), which seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. ⁽¹³⁾

In this sense, teaching practices based on the Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes interconnection and solidarity between individuals, have shown promise in anti-racist education. The Ubuntu approach not only enriches children's understanding of diversity and inclusion, but also proposes a critical reflection on social dynamics, contributing to the formation of a more just and equitable environment. ⁽¹⁷⁾

Furthermore, it was perceived that there was a need to develop active methodologies in early childhood education, in which the student is placed as the central subject of the learning process. These methodologies promote a more dynamic and stimulating interaction, encouraging children to explore their physical space and express their natural curiosity. Activities that involve games, experiments and collaborative projects are examples of how these approaches can be implemented. Action Research, as a methodology that seeks to transform the context through reflection and action, is aligned with the promotion of emerging themes that arise from children's experiences and interests. ^(10,18) This approach not only validates students' voices, but also enriches the educational process, ensuring that learning is meaningful and contextualized, which relates to SDG 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education. ⁽¹³⁾

Children were encouraged to follow playful approaches, with activities such as storytelling, music, educational videos and discussion groups. Studies show that

play is essential for child development, as it facilitates learning by associating new knowledge with meaningful experiences and fun. ⁽¹⁹⁻²⁰⁾ Playful educational interventions are extremely important in the context of the teaching-learning process, being an excellent teaching resource and a great strategy for extension actions in health education programs. ⁽¹⁸⁾

Storytelling, in particular, has been effective in approaching complex topics in an accessible way, allowing children to connect emotionally with narratives. ^(18,21) These findings were confirmed by the assessments of educators and monitors, who reported changes in the children's behavior, in the way they approached the topics discussed and in their relationships with colleagues and educators, showing how school learning impacts the construction of social principles and values. ⁽²¹⁾

In line with the pillars of Action Research, the activities were adapted to the demands of the daycare team, reflecting an ongoing commitment to flexibility and relevance in educational practices. This alignment between the project's actions and the needs expressed by the educators is essential to ensure that the content covered is not only relevant, but also effectively impacts the children's development. In addition to racial, social and gender issues, which are crucial for the formation of critical and civic awareness, practical and immediate issues were also discussed, such as nutrition and first aid. The inclusion of these topics was a direct response to the spontaneous demands of the educators, who realized the urgency of addressing aspects that directly impact the daily lives of children and their families. By integrating health and nutrition issues with anti-racist and social education, the project enriches learning and prepares children for a more conscious and healthy coexistence in society. ⁽²²⁾

An important finding of this process is the need to link the health sector with the education sector to promote comprehensive health. This intersection is essential, as health and education are in-

trinsically linked in human development. Collaboration between students and teachers in the health field and education staff not only enriches teaching practices, but also allows for the identification and meeting of children's health needs more effectively. This collaborative approach allows for a broader understanding of the conditions that affect children's well-being, ranging from adequate nutrition to the promotion of social and emotional skills. By working together, health and education professionals can develop integrated strategies that address children's multifaceted needs, promoting not only cognitive learning but also physical and mental health. ⁽²³⁻²⁴⁾

This partnership between sectors is vital to building an educational environment that not only teaches, but also cares for and protects children, contributing to their integral development and preparing them to be healthy and engaged citizens. This aspect is directly related to SDG 3, which seeks to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all. ⁽¹³⁾

The nurse, as an educator, needs to commit to this role, according to the National Curricular Guidelines for the Undergraduate Nursing Course. ⁽²⁵⁾ This perspective is fundamental, as health education is an effective strategy for preventing diseases and promoting healthy habits. ⁽²⁶⁾ The opportunity to develop educational activities during undergraduate studies is essential to develop fundamental skills that every nurse should possess. By participating in educational activities, undergraduates have the chance to explore and improve communication skills, which are essential during educational activities. In addition, the development of skills such as adapting to the needs of the public, leadership in different contexts, decision-making in complex situations and effective time management are enriched through these practical experiences. These skills not only improve the professional performance of nurses, but also contribute to a more humanized, comprehensive and equitable approach. ⁽²⁷⁾

Finally, the link between health and education professionals was crucial to the success of the work, promoting interaction with the community and understanding of the territory, intrinsic characteristics of Action Research. ^(10,23,24) This collaboration between different sectors is essential for strengthening health and education policies, as it allows interventions to be more integrated and aligned with the real needs of the population.

When nurses and educators work together, they can more effectively identify the health needs of the community, promoting actions that not only address immediate problems, but are also sustainable in the long term. This partnership is essential, and is even more essential in vulnerable contexts, where inequalities in health and education are greater.

Action Research, which involves reflection and action on practice, enables a continuous learning cycle that benefits both practitioners and students. This collaborative approach not only enriches learning, but also fosters a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of the community, creating a positive impact that extends beyond the walls of the daycare or healthcare institution.

Study limitations

Although the research results were satisfactory in fulfilling the objective of this work, it is recognized that there are weaknesses inherent to the chosen methodology. The application of activities remotely, used during the period of health restrictions, still causes difficulties for both those who apply them and for the children, bringing a bias that does not necessarily represent the potential of the activity, but rather a weakness of the communication channel, which is the main limitation of the study. In addition, a small sample was used for this research, making it necessary to reproduce these methods in other scenarios and contexts, strengthening the findings presented here.

Contributions to practice

With the experience of this work, it was realized that the use of methodologies supported by social, critical and anti-racist education, with the use of diverse strategies (storytelling, music, educational videos, conversation circles, games, joint construction of panels, paintings, drawings), was fundamental to keep the children engaged, sensitized and critical. This reinforces the importance of nursing's role in education and health promotion, with a report of a successful and potentially transformative experience for professionals, students and

society.

CONCLUSION

Through the findings of this research, especially the assessment of the educators, it is clear that there is a mostly positive stance regarding the work that was developed and that there are many demands to be explored in the long term, brought by the team. Regarding the way in which the activities were proposed, it is clear that the main weakness perceived was in relation to the time to apply the

activities, which should be reduced, and the use of space, which could be explored more.

Finally, it was concluded that, although the findings of this work were, in general, positive and the weaknesses were critically pointed out, this theme requires more space in the literature, with more studies and reproductions of similar scenarios, to consolidate the findings and assumptions for health education for children.

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