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Caring and Learning Together: A Case Study of Brazil

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Brazil

UNESCO Education Sector

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About the Report

The present report was commissioned by UNESCO within the framework of the Caring and Learning Together: a Cross-National Study on the Integration of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) within Education, implemented as part of its 2008-2009 biennial programme. The study examines the policy of integrating ECCE within the education system, which is being adopted in a growing number of countries. It aims to generate a better understanding of the policy by looking at the experiences of five countries – Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand, Slovenia and Sweden – and one municipality – Ghent in Belgium Flanders – which have chosen this option. The study also looks at why other countries have not followed this course of action. It offers an assessment of integration-within-education, and provides key policy insights and recommendations on the subject.

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1. Introduction

Caring and educating, two actions which were divided in the early days of the provision of services for children, are becoming, little by little, two sides of a single practice devoted to the child's development. Care and education are seen as an integrated initiative of comprehensive care. To care is to educate. To educate is to care. Both are intertwined.

Brazilian society, and especially experts on early childhood, is starting to have a wider understanding of the complementarity of care and education in each action provided to young children. It is very clear in the studies and research concerning children's development, as well as in the scope of laws, rules and policies on early childhood, that a child is a whole subject, that the physical, social, emotional and intellectual aspects are only parts of a single and complete human being, and none of them can be fulfilled without the other.

There is an advanced understanding of child care as the transmission of values and ways of building relationships, thus shaping the self-esteem of the children, conveying to them the experience and spiritual substance so that they may be able to create for themselves a certain vision of the world, of themselves and the other. That is the essence of education. Simultaneously, there is an advanced understanding that everything done in education is, essentially, an act of care, of concern for the complete welfare of the child, leading to healthy and happy growth, i.e., the importance of physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

This understanding in Brazilian society is the result of a process which dates back to more than one hundred years ago and has not yet reached full implementation as far as early childhood education is concerned. The daily practice is still constrained in part by the structure of the services provided by social and education sectors independently of each other and by the common custom, entrenched in many places, of hiring educators with different training backgrounds, and attributing them various activities (related to the body, such as hygiene, nutrition, sleep, and related to the mind: language, speech, thinking) in the same childcare space. Besides the current difficulties in implementing the aforementioned concept, the historical process that has ensured an understanding of complementarity and integration has not yet finished turning. It still needs to get to a point where care and education will not be seen as different actions that relate to each other and are complementary, but as integrated services of care and education, that is, inseparable parts: the same gesture that cares also educates, the same gesture that educates, also cares.

This historical setup has two dimensions, one related to policy and administration procedures, the other related to technical and scientific procedures. The first one came into being over the years through the creation of social organizations, government bodies, legislation and child care policies which were implemented step by step. The technical and scientific focus has been shaped by contributions coming from areas of

developmental psychology, anthropology and culture, philosophy, studies on childhood and the process of human upbringing.

In the first section of this study we will follow this path in order to understand the tangle of lines that are sometimes intermingled, sometimes detached and sometimes running side by side, finally coming together to form, as far as legislative measures are concerned, guidelines and policy frameworks for child care, like a road with its main track leading to education.

In order to get a better assessment of the acts and facts related to public child education and care in Brazilian history, we must put them in the geographic, demographic, economic, political and administrative context of the country.

Brazil's land area is 8.5 million square kilometres, with huge geographical, environmental and climatic differences. The population has a wide ethnic diversity (Indians 0.2%, whites 54%, blacks - black and mulattos - 45.3%, Asians 0.5% (Census 2000). The population's distribution by ethnicity varies according to the region. For example, up in the Northern and Northeastern states blacks make up 70% of the population, whereas in the South whites comprise 83% of the total. By 2008 the Brazilian population had reached 190 million, of which 83.5% were concentrated in urban areas. The average human population density is 21.61 per km², ranging from 423 per km² in Brasília (Federal District), 352 in the state of Rio de Janeiro, and 2.5 in the state of Amazon. The housing deficit in the country amounts to around 8 million residential units. Large and medium sized cities are surrounded by slums without adequate services of sanitation, health, public welfare or child education.

It is also a country with a marked economic inequality: 46.9% of the national income is concentrated in the hands of the richest 10%; the poorest 10% receive only 0.7% of the income. This inequality has been followed by a discrepancy of access to social services such as health care and education, from pre-school to university. The elementary education is mandatory for children aged 6-14 years old and reaches 98% of the population in this age range - but there are significant quality gaps between regions and cities, between cities and rural areas and within the cities themselves. Public education is free at any level, from pre-school to university.

The number of children aged 0 to 6 years is 19,990,000 (10,958 million aged 0 to 3 and 9,032 million aged 4 to 6 years old). The average provision of early childhood education in the country in 2008 encompasses 44.5% of 6-years-olds, with great disparity between day care centres (17.1%) and pre-school (77.6%). The attendance rate of day-care has a socioeconomic influence: only 10.8% of children are from families with a median household income of up to half the minimum wage¹; 18.7% are from the range of

¹ In Brazil, the minimum wage is the lowest monthly wage that a company must pay to its employees for 40 hours of work per week. Such a wage is determined by law and updated every year in the month of May, based on the population's cost of living. As of February 2009, the minimum wage has risen from R\$ 415.00 to R\$ 465.00. Based on the exchange rate in February 2009, the Brazilian minimum wage per month is equivalent to US\$202,17 or €\$155.00.

families with half to one minimum wage; 28.7%, up to two minimum wages, 32% from two to three minimum wages and 43.6% of the children are from families whose average monthly income is above three minimum wages. (Source: IBGE, Census 2000 and PNAD 2007 and 2008).

Women's employment has been, from the very outset, one of the main reasons for the growing demand for nurseries and pre-schools. According to 2008 data, 44.7% of the Brazilian workforce are women, 30% of them support their home expenses and 50.6% live without a husband but with their children. As we shall see below, it's important to note that feminine workers were at the forefront of the struggle for day care centre services and other achievements through organized movements in the 70s.

Early childhood education has long been assumed as a right to be provided to every child since birth in institutions called nurseries, pre-schools or equivalent, such as centres of early childhood education. The demand is increasing fast and becoming a substantial goal of the educational policy and duty of governmental bodies, thanks to strong efforts by civil society organizations. Municipal Councils of Children and Adolescents Rights and the Public Prosecutor are engaged in making education become an actual right of every child.

In spite of these positive aspects, there remains a double challenge: to expand the service to 0 to 3 years (day care centres) and to improve it for all 0-6-years-olds. A crucial point regarding quality, and related to teacher education and the definition of their professional profile, is that education must always be associated with care as far as children are concerned.

Education in Brazil is a right for all and free in public schools, from early childhood to higher education. It is a government's duty and is provided for by the different branches that comprise the federacy: Union (federal government), States, Federal District and Municipalities. The municipality's educational support is mostly aimed at early childhood and elementary education. The states support elementary and high school. The federal government is in charge of higher education. However, these responsibilities are shared according to the principle of cooperation. The Union establishes the guidelines, the policy and the so-called National Plans, as well as providing technical assistance and funding to the states and municipalities, according to their specific needs. The states also establish their own guidelines and complementary rules, in addition to providing further technical assistance and funding to municipalities within their jurisdiction. The Federal District's educational provision is derived from both state and municipality levels.

To summarize, the Brazilian approach to early childhood education is that it is considered a child's right from birth, and that it is the State's duty to provide the educational structure, based on mutual cooperation, and that municipalities are responsible for early childhood education.

2. Historical context of integration and policy build up regarding the right to early childhood education

The main events that allowed Brazil to build up the concepts of complementarity between education and care, of integrality in the child's development and the right to early childhood education can be divided into three historical stages:

- From the beginning of child assistance to re-democratization (1875-1985);
- Period of the National Constituent Assembly, enactment of the Federal Constitution and the drafting of laws that regulate children's rights (1986-1996); and
- Guidelines, policies, plans and programmes aiming to fulfill children's rights (from 1996 to today).

The first stage was characterized by a diversity of initiatives in different sectors attempting to achieve integral care for children. The second stage was marked by intense and diverse social participation which took place in the country after 21 years of military dictatorship, aimed at building the legal framework for the child as a citizen entitled to specific rights. In the current period, the focus of public policies is on children's rights and society is again gaining momentum through several representative organizations.

From the beginning of child assistance to re-democratization: separation and attempts at complementarity of education and care (1875-1985)

Child care for 0 to 6 years-olds in Brazil dates back to the nineteenth century and its inspiration came from Western Europe. The first phase was characterized by the adoption of European ideas of child care: the *day care centres* (amongst other names) created primarily for children whose mothers worked outside their homes (working mothers), for disadvantaged children, orphans or children abandoned by their parents; and *Kindergarten*, mainly for children from wealthy families. The day care centres were focused on assistance; the kindergarten was focused on education.

While the children's economic background was a strong influence regarding the kind of services provided, the goals and activities of the institutions also shaped the characteristics of such establishments. Thus, the nurseries usually concentrated on physical care, health, nutrition, hygiene habits, social behaviour, and sometimes included advice for the family concerning such subjects, plus guidelines on breastfeeding and weaning, food preparation and emotional relationships. The kindergarten, inspired by Froebel, had another approach: the child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive activities, through game-orientated exercises and self-expression.

An important aspect about this early stage, considering the consequences it would bring over the century, is the bipartite vision of childhood: on the one side the children from

poor families, descendants of black slaves and Indians, abandoned, orphaned or with disabilities; on the other, the children from middle and upper classes of the affluent whites. The latter were the model and benchmark for evaluating the development of the former, although the objectives were not designed to help the poor children achieve the same socioeconomic status as the wealthy ones, but to be healthy and physically strong and prepared to contribute to the creation of a strong nation and the development of the country.

The consolidation of these two "models" of children would result, in the middle of the XX century, in paradigmatic designations, such as minor and child. The child was white, well nourished, with a beautiful smile, born in middle and upper class homes, with a predicted future of welfare, health and happiness. The minor child was black, with malnutrition, broken/poor home, highly vulnerable to disease and probably at risk of infant mortality, or, if he or she were to survive, of becoming an outcast. That is, the son of the boss (colonizer, descended from European, white) became a child. The son of the dispossessed (black, descended from slaves, poor) became a minor.

These models, with deep ideological meanings, were not a Brazilian invention. They already existed in Europe, with some differences, but in Brazil there were social conditions that nurtured them so as to inspire feelings and attitudes of the intellectual and professional elites regarding children's policy. When the winds of "new" ideas began to blow from another part of the world, in the 1970s - this time, the United States - with ideological concepts of cultural deprivation and compensatory programmes, that bipartite vision gained a new momentum. It was to decline only in the years 1986-1990, with the increased debate on children's rights during the drafting of the new Constitution and the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente).

The first initiatives for early childhood education were the kindergarten, established in 1875, 1894 and 1909 in Rio de Janeiro, and 1896 in São Paulo. Along with the latter there was a training course for female educators. Located in major cities at the time, the kindergartens were set up in central areas for children of middle, upper middle and upper classes. In 1879, the so-called Leônicio de Carvalho Reform, which established compulsory primary education in all municipalities of the country, determined also that every district should have a kindergarten for children aged up to 7 years. But this never happened.

After that reform, an initiative came from a private institution related to health care, with a comprehensive policy of children's assistance: the Institute for Protection and Assistance of Childhood in Brazil (Instituto de Proteção e Assistência à Infância do Brasil). It was created in 1880 in Rio de Janeiro by the pediatrician Arthur Montecorvo Filho, a staunch supporter of public care for children. The Institute had very broad and diversified goals: (a) to take care of children of up to 8 years, (b) to recommend drafting laws regarding the life and health of newborns, (c) to regulate the service of wet nurses, (d) to watch for child labour and criminal minors, (e) to care for children who were poor, sick, handicapped, abused, and morally abandoned, (f) to create maternities, nurseries and kindergartens.

The Institute had a great influence on the ideas about children and society in Brazil, raising a debate about public responsibility for health, social integration and child development. But it was concerned, with its medical and hygiene-orientated approach, only with poor children, for whom the Institute wanted to attract the support of the middle and upper classes. Its activities were spread throughout several states, in connection with organizations in Brazil and abroad, and it managed to present the Brazilian government with an example of institutional organization concerned with child poverty. Such a model combined government responsibility, including funding, charity and voluntary participation with regards poor children.

Such goals were intended to reach a global level, promoted and guided by the same institution, including health, care and education. The aim was to establish day-care centres, nurseries, care for children of impoverished families, disabled children, unhealthy babies and destitute children.

The above model reveals how the construction of a concept of interaction between assistance, health and education for a child first started in Brazil. It was still a frail beginning, marked by a confluence of children's problems that moved only a few people of social and political influence. It was nevertheless an important step towards child care, mainly for the poor and destitute, in contrast with the "Roda dos Expostos" (literally, Wheel of the Exposed)², although it was conceived as compound of prophylactic measures designed to rescue, redirect and place these children into society as a cheap workforce for the companies. This model, however, didn't work because the problems faced by a private institution to promote such initiatives increased without the government providing a counterpart for the situation.

In 1919 the Department of the Child in Brazil was created by the same founder as the Institute for Protection and Assistance to Children. The Department was meant to conduct and launch studies on the child's condition, to hold conferences, to ensure the implementation of laws related to children and to stimulate initiatives leading to child development. It had the same strategy for children as the Institute.

A historical event was the first Congress for the Protection of Children, in 1922, which warned of the need to overcome the current phase of private charity institutions in charge of child care, and recommended specific laws relating to children's rights and laws on pre-marriage tests, compulsory teaching of puericulture, and pediatrics studies. There were panels on sociology, child care, pedagogy, child medicine, child hygiene and legislation. Participants suggested a regulation for institutions dedicated to children, the end of the "Wheels of Exposed", the creation in the working place of an area reserved for mothers to breastfeed their children, without any reduction to their salaries (in 1943 this

² The "Roda dos Expostos", Casa da Roda (Wheel's House) or Casa dos Expostos (Exposed House), run by the Santas Casas de Misericórdia, took care of abandoned children, daughters of single mothers, women of "bad behaviour" and children rejected by their parents. Families that were very poor and/or of slave origin also knocked on these houses' doors asking that their children be adopted by a wealthy family so as to receive a good education. These houses used to mediate for the children's adoption or assistance by charity institutions.

recommendation was included in the labour legislation called Consolidation of Labour Laws (Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho - CLT), and is still in force today. The participants also claimed there should be a permanent governmental watch over the work of child care. The Congress suggested the creation of laws regarding children's rights to life and health and warned for the need of mandatory reporting of births.

In the National Congress for the Protection of Children, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1933, the educator Anísio Teixeira drew attention to the need for transcending the approach towards pre-school children which only took into consideration their physical capacity and health, because development implied the evolution of mental capabilities and socialization, both of which were attached to education.

In 1940, the federal government created the National Department of Child (Departamento Nacional da Criança-DNCR), linked to the Ministry of Education and Public Health (MESP). Its goal was to coordinate activities related to motherhood, childhood and adolescence, almost the same ones intended by the Department of the Child, of Moncorvo Filho, which operated until 1938. When a ministry solely for health, and detached from education, was established in 1953, the National Department of Child was included. In 1970 it was named the Coordination of Maternal and Child Protection and today its duties are performed by the Coordination of Mental Health.

The disappearance of the word "child" in the title of such bodies has not meant the reintroduction of children within the broader context of child development as a whole. The growing specialization of governmental areas – the specific nature of initiatives by ministries, municipalities, institutions, and foundations – highlights a trend towards an independence of these sectors in the planning and implementation of such programmes. Those aimed at children are also part of this trend, in spite of policy guidelines and techniques designed to reinforce the idea of child integrality and ensure activities that promote the development of different aspects of the subject.

It is worth noting that in 1952, still under the MESP, the National Department of the Child published a booklet which suggesting suitable material for children's education at nurseries, and that there isn't too much difference between that list of material and the ones presented nowadays. In 1967, the same Department released the Plan of Assistance to Pre-School, for children up to 2 years old, including the establishment of maternal schools and day care centres as institutions intended to help families in the education of their young children. Note that the DNCR was by then already located in the Ministry of Health. The Plan attached to these bodies the task of promoting the harmonious development of children by means of experiences that enhanced positive habits and encouraged the ability to gradually adapt to a setting. There was, once again, concern for a more rounded service, linking education and care, including health care, now under the public health policy.

Up to that point the Ministry of Education was not in charge of early childhood education (or even pre-school). Public initiatives, in the wake of private initiatives that sought public support, were concentrated on providing services to children from low income

households. However, in spite of the ambitious approach, these public actions followed a simple and low cost pattern: educational assistance of "poor for poor people."

In 1968 the first Inter-American Conference on the Protection of Pre-School Children was held in Rio de Janeiro, sponsored by the DNCr, OMEP, LBA, FUNABEM, the local Department of Education and UNICEF. This Conference raised the following discussions and recommendations: (a) the need to adopt an interdisciplinary approach designed to create appropriate child care, (b) mother's participation in the psycho-pedagogical tasks at pre-school, (c) the relationship between child health, nutrition and the overall development of the child (d) the presence of educators as an imperative need for any service at pre-schools, (e) the need to converge and link the studies on psychology, pediatrics, linguistics and sociology in order to shape a more complete and adequate picture of the child, and (f) that the Ministry of Education should set up a department in charge of pre-school education.

The Conference sessions were attended by top scholars, government officers and specialists in different fields. Their recommendations showed that there was a sound perception of the need for integrated policies, of interrelated actions and of child care on the whole, combining care, nutrition, health, assistance and education.

The participation of international agencies helped to compel the Brazilian government into getting really involved in child care. On the other hand, it introduced, reinforced and brought about the establishment of low cost models with wide coverage, volunteer work or underpaid and unskilled labourers. By stressing urgent and quick actions, given the distressful situation and the pressing need of solutions, within an outlook of limited resources, the recommendations and initiatives of international organizations didn't manage to obtain the government's commitment to quality in education for those most in need.

In 1969, the Department of Labour, Safety and Hygiene became responsible for ruling the establishment of nurseries within workplaces or set up through special agreements. The Department was also responsible for overseeing such nurseries. As such, another Ministry - this time of Labour – adopted child care responsibilities.

In 1943 a new legal code for labour came into force, Law 5.452/1943, the aforementioned CLT, which obliged trade, industrial, service, and agricultural industries with at least 30 female employees over 16 years old to have an appropriate place for the supervised custody and care of their children during the breastfeeding period (article 389, paragraph 1). The requirement could be met by district nurseries supported, directly or through agreements with other public or private agencies, by the companies themselves, or through a communal system, or by SESI (Social Service of Industry), SESC (Social Service of Commerce), LBA (Brazilian Legion of Assistance, a federal agency attached to the Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance) or trade unions (Law N° 229, 1967). Day care centres were thus formally inserted into the labour legislation, relating to women's working conditions and restricted to the period of breastfeeding. The ability to meet this requirement through agreements with public and private agencies concerning

child care in district nurseries, or through communal system or sponsored by SESI, SESC, and LBA, extends the time and the goals for the "place of custody" in the company. But the law has not been fully complied with and did not really work as a public policy instrument.

The Minor's Assistance Agency (Serviço de Assistência ao Menor-SAM), established in 1941 by the Ministry of Justice, was to target minors of up to 18 years who were delinquent and/or homeless. This agency was replaced in 1964 by the National Foundation for Child Welfare (Fundação Nacional de Bem-Estar do Menor-FUNABEM), located within the Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance. One of its main purposes was "to draft and implement the child welfare policy". Similar institutions were established: (State Foundation for Child Welfare (Fundação Estadual do Bem-Estar do Menor-FEBEM), with the same goals and structure, located in the local Department of Social Welfare. LBA and Funabem divided their target groups: 0 to 6 years-olds and 7 to 18 years-olds, respectively. Both groups were poor, neglected, homeless, and considered "minors." Funabem and Febem agencies had their own facilities, but also made agreements with welfare agencies designed to provide services for children of 0 to 6 years old. In several of these agencies there was an emphasis on repression, and so the whole environment looked very much like a prison, with just a small portion of provisions for reeducation. Some years later, the Funabem became the Brazilian Centre for Childhood and Adolescence (Centro Brasileiro para a Infância e Adolescência-CBIA) which worked closely with the civil society in order to implement the Statute of Children and Adolescents.

Another agency emerged in 1953: the Brazilian National Commission (Comitê Nacional Brasileiro) connected to the World Organization for Pre-school Education, (Organização Mundial para a Educação Pré-Escolar-OMEP) which helped to disseminate ideas about the importance and need of pre-school education in Brazil and called for urgent policies to improve child care. The Commission started out in Rio de Janeiro, but soon many Associations were set up in other states, spreading ideas on early education in public debates, courses, seminars and conferences. The OMEP raised these issues with both civil society organizations and with government offices. In 1980 it held a conference in Brasília on the theme "Children need care", focusing on comprehensive and integrated care from birth to 6 years. The ministries of Education, Health and Social Welfare were represented in the debates and working groups drafted policy proposals. This conference is considered a landmark in decision-making in Brazil regarding pre-school education and the need for a greater link between government agencies aiming at the provision of overall child care and harmonious development.

The Brazilian Legion of Assistance (LBA) has a substantial role in this historical path of care and education. As a social assistance agency, it implemented day-care programmes which included pre-school education. Founded in 1942 to assist families of Brazilian soldiers who were fighting in Europe during World War II, in 1946 its objectives turned to motherhood and childhood. Agreements signed with the Departments of Social Welfare in different Brazilian states and with civil society organizations led it to assist poverty-stricken children aged 0 to 6 years. The first initiatives of this kind were

concentrated on health care and assistance. Then the “Projeto Casulo” (Cocoon Project), launched in 1977, began to reverse this trend, seeking a new component - education. In 1981, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance (MPAS), to which the LBA was linked, released a booklet of practical guidance, "Let's Make a Day Care Centre," spelling out the educational actions to be developed. From then on, the assistance nurseries were launched, not exactly in practical terms, but at least as a methodological approach, to play the role of "guardian" and "pedagogical" unit.

The Cocoon Project is the most significant action taken by the LBA, considering its national scope and the number of children involved. Over four years it provided day-care for about 1,800,000 children, but the goals were in tune with the discourse of that time: to care for poor children, with broad coverage, low cost and participation by families and other volunteers. Although the focus was on assistance, the project had an educational program, technical criteria for signing agreements with social agencies and documents that guided the care of the child.

In 1993 the Organic Law of Social Assistance (Lei Orgânica da Assistência Social–LOAS) brought about several changes in the welfare policy, consistent with the Brazilian constitutional principle that assistance is a right of every citizen, a duty of the State and should be provided to all those who need it. According to that law, "social assistance is linked to other sectoral policies which aim to fight poverty, to ensure social rights, to provide conditions that meet social contingencies and the universalization of social rights"³. The law also proclaimed care in terms of overall protection (as opposed to assistance-orientated care).

The LBA ended in 1995 and its activities and policies related to nurseries were transferred, under the name "Day care centres Maintenance Programme", to the Department of Social Welfare, linked to the Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance – MPAS. The programme lasted until the end of 2008, and reached on average 1.6 million children. But in 2007, with a new policy of social assistance, the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger⁴ allowed⁵ the municipalities which transferred the early childhood education from the Department of Social Assistance to the Department of Education itself to use financial resources of the “Piso Básico de Transição” (Basic Floor for Transition) to provide services for, amongst others, children aged 0 to 6 years, in social actions to support their families. This service is provided in the Reference Centres of Social Assistance (Centros de Referência da Assistência Social - CRAS). With these resources, the priority group should be children aged 0 to 3 years from poor families or living in situations of personal and social risk.

The transition of day care centre management from the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger to the Ministry of Education ended in 2009. An Inter-

³ Law 8.743/1993, art. 2º, § 1º.

⁴ Created during the administrative reform implemented by the federal government in 2004, with part of the duties of the old Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance plus the Zero Hunger Programme, today called Family Allowance (Bolsa Família).

⁵ Portaria nº 460, December 18, 2007.

ministerial Technical Committee was then created, with members from the above ministries and the Ministry of Planning. By then it was perfectly accepted that day care centres and pre-school services should not be social assistance services.

The transfer of management and financing of day-care to the educational area was brought about for two main reasons: (a) from 1988 on, day-care was legally established as a typical educational institution, according to the new Constitution (1988), the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (1990) and the 1996 National Education Guidelines and Framework Law. Education is covered by the educational structure, not by social assistance; (b) the Ministry of Social Development began to reform social assistance by introducing a new policy for this area and creating, in 2004, the Single System of Social Assistance (Sistema Único de Assistência Social–SUAS). It was, in short, a rather conceptual change, which determined the administrative transfer.

The National Institute of Food and Nutrition (INAN), a body responsible for national policy on food and nutrition, linked to the Ministry of Health, was created in 1972 and developed a service for pre-school in the Northeast region, including health care, nutrition and education. The program was conducted by the departments of education of each state and the focus was on children in urban areas of greatest poverty. The contribution of health and education bodies helped to build up a significant experience of common action. The state educational coordination also helped to insert the program into the educational system, with the changes that each considered relevant.

A new Code of Minors (Law 6.697/1979) was passed in 1979, replacing that of 1924, which had consolidated all existing laws regarding care and protection of children. The new law maintained the view of the child not as a person, but as a minor stricken by poverty, deprivation, crime, i.e., a law offender subject to public security, or the underdog, the neglected one, the underfed, with no family care - and therefore the object of assistance and charity. Influenced by the doctrine of the Irregular Situation, the Code of Minors had a distorted conception of the child. It didn't provide any contribution to improving the understanding of overall development and the interrelation of care and education. This conceptual revolution in child care was carried out by the next legislation, the 1990 Statute of Children and Adolescents, which established operational mechanisms for the implementation of children's rights in Brazil.

At the end of the 1970s, working women in big cities, who were more organized, such as in Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro, demanded more public nurseries so that they could work outside their homes. The movement Struggle for Day care centres was born, with a great social impact on the media and strong enough to push for government support. From the very beginning they wanted more than just "a place to leave the children" during working hours. They insisted on care and educational activities in the nurseries. This movement spread throughout the country and today it constitutes an expressive social force in the struggle for early childhood education.

Only in 1974 did the Ministry of Education start to work on early childhood education, by creating the Pre-school Education Service, linked to the Department of Elementary

Education. Later on the Service was renamed Coordination of Pre-School Education - COEPRE, and lastly General Coordination of Child Education – COEDI, linked to the Department of Basic Education.

COEPRE performance was marked by two important moments, between 1976 and 1988, with the construction of the concepts of complementarity between education and care: (a) the joint initiatives of federal government bodies related to children aged up to 7 years old, and (b) the Child and the Constituent National Committee.

The former consisted of meetings in the MEC premises, with directors of the COEPRE, INAN, LBA, and the Coordination of Maternal and Child Health, linked to the Ministry of Health. The objectives were to reach a common understanding on the full development and integration of children and the participation of these government agencies aiming at the implementation of their plans and projects. Although the outcome of these political and technical efforts wasn't a national plan of integrated care for the child, nor the creation of a central body to coordinate the different areas or sectoral bodies, their plans began to show clearly the relationship between different aspects of child development and the need of the sectoral programmes to take common action in order to ensure full attention to the child, and also recommended the search for joint operational action by local authorities. One example is the National Programme for Pre-school Education, approved by the MEC in 1981. It states that harmonious growth and development "...require integrated action by the education, health, nutrition, and social assistance sectors, but must not disregard economic and social measures in order to reach a better income distribution, more social participation and improvement in households" (MEC, the National Programme for Pre-School Education, 1981, pp. 6).

The performance of the COEPRE in the Child and the Constituent National Committee is mentioned in the next item, because it is part of the construction of the new conception of children as subjects, not objects, with the legal right to education from birth.

The COEDI continued to lead this process at a national level. Such action is referred to in item III of this paper.

A new conceptual and legal basis for early childhood education: the Federal Constitution, the Statute of the Child and Adolescent and the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law

This period began in 1985, when the first civilian president was elected (albeit indirectly, by congressmen) after the period of military intervention (1964-1984). A new Constitution was drafted. Several social groups began to organize themselves and put forward their proposals to the National Constituent Assembly. This also occurred in areas related to child care.

The social and political construction of a new approach to children

1986-1988 - the National Constituent Assembly: After 21 years of military dictatorship, Brazil underwent a period of intense debate amongst social movements interested in a new model of society and of State for the country. It was a great national event and highlighted dreams and aspirations which were denied for 21 years. This brought to the political arena a surge of new ideas presented by social groups which were for centuries excluded and ignored by the elite. One of these groups was children. The new Constitution was adopted on October 5, 1988. It was called the "Citizen Constitution", a term which could be applied to children in their new status: subjects, lifted from the latest place in the list of initiatives and policies to the government's top priority, with legal rights, citizens with an inherent dignity, regardless of their circumstances.

An inter-ministerial committee was created with the purpose of gathering institutions, organizing a movement and coordinating studies and discussions to build up proposals for children to be submitted to the National Constituent Assembly, with the express participation of social organizations directly related to children. This committee was the above mentioned Child and the Constituent National Committee. Its composition reflected the intention to stimulate links between different institutions and sectors related to assistance, education and health, but also with the participation of other government agencies in charge of children, plus civil society organizations representing different areas of social action.

The Committee was an initiative of the Minister of Education, who invited ministers of other areas. In 1986 the Committee was set up with representatives of the ministries of Education, Health, Welfare and Social Assistance, Culture, Labour, Planning and the following social organizations: Sociedade Brasileira de Pediatria (SBP), World Organization for Pre-School Education/Brazil (OMEP), National Conference of Brazilian Bishops / CNBB / Pastoral of the Child (CNBB), the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), National Federation of Journalists (FENAJ), National Council of Women's Rights (CNDM), National Movement of Homeless Boys and Girls (MNMMR) and National Front for the Rights of the Child (FNDC). The coordination was assigned to the coordinator of COEPRE, which represented the MEC in the Committee.

Another prominent role was played by the DCA Forum - Rights of the Child and the Adolescent, which also presented to the Committee a Popular Amendment. At the end of the debates, the DCA and the Committee prepared a summary of the proposals which were included in article 227 and others of the new Constitution.

The Committee organized the Children and Constituent National Movement, which spread across the country, sponsored by branches established in all states. Public events, meetings, seminars, conferences, and discussions were held in various places to collect suggestions. Children were very present during this process. The media gave the widest coverage ever to such a cause. The extent and depth of the movement generated an intense participation, interest and political pressure in favour of children.

The work lasted two years, with a variety of technical and political actions which demonstrated that children's rights in Brazilian society are an issue capable of promoting mass meetings, social union and networks, while delivering results that could change the history of child care in the country. The movements occurred in all states as well as the Federal District. Children were the subject of debates in the National Constituent Assembly, in the related ministries, in the media (TV, radio, newspapers and magazines), in schools and pre-schools, universities, the State Legislative Assemblies and the municipal City Council, in pediatric clinics, churches, social movement sites. A petition with 1,200,000 signatures, filed by children, parents, workers and volunteers, requesting the inclusion of children's rights in the Constitution, was delivered to the vice-president of the National Constituent Assembly, with broad press coverage.

This whole movement led to a wider view of children: the "minor" should be a citizen, not a source of problems, a person with legal rights, no longer split in unrelated areas - physical, social, emotional, cognitive - but one whole human being who needs full care in order to be understood and properly supported.

A search into how children's images were portrayed in the press after the National Constituent Assembly, showed a shift in the way they were presented. The Committee's message, which emerged through a democratic process, was captured and assimilated, thereby preparing the path for the new principles and laws that were to regulate the Federal Constitution: the Statute of the Child and Adolescent and the 1996 National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, following the adoption of the Constitution, and later on the Organic Law of Social Assistance - LOAS.

Constitutional principles

The Constitution of 1988 redefined the principles of the Brazilian Republic and restored the democratic State. This new political framework included the child in the context of citizenship and defined new relations between the State and the child. The following are the main constitutional provisions that created a new paradigm for this relationship:

Rights

1. The child is a subject with rights. The rights are mentioned in article 227. The child is therefore viewed as an overall person;
2. The child's rights must be assured with absolute priority by the family, the society and the State;
3. Scope: "...right to life, health, nutrition, education, leisure, profession, culture, dignity, respect, freedom, a family and a social setting", right to be "...safe from all kinds of neglect, discrimination, exploitation, violence, abuse and oppression " (article 227, caput);
4. The right to child education is connected with the rights of their working parents (not just the mother), the education of their infants and dependents (other than biological children, including adopted or those under their care), throughout the period prior to compulsory schooling, i.e., from birth to 6 years of age (no longer only during breastfeeding, as the CLT advocated);

5. Day care centres, with all its duties to care for children of 0 to 3 years, have a new role: education. The Constitution places it in the chapter on Education. It means that the task concerned with younger children is considered an educational activity.

Duties

1. The rights of children (and adolescents) should be fulfilled by the family, the society and the State with absolute priority (article 227, caput);
2. The State has a duty to ensure early childhood education to children up to 5 years old in nurseries and pre-schools (article 208, IV). The Constitutional Amendment 53/2006 reduced from 6 to 5 years old the children entitled to early education, because in 2005 the start of compulsory primary education was fixed at 6 years old;
3. Municipalities are to support, with the cooperation of the Union and the State of their jurisdiction, programmes for early childhood education and elementary education (article 30, VI);
4. Regarding education, the municipalities must act primarily in early childhood education and elementary education.

Decentralization and Participation

The government actions in favour of children's rights (and adolescents) should be organized based on constitutional guidelines:

1. Political and administrative decentralization, with federal bodies in charge of the general rules and coordination, and programme implementation under state and municipal coordination.
2. Participation of social organizations representing different groups to draft policies and oversee the actions at all levels (articles 227, § 7, and 204, I and II).

Relations between federal branches with the purpose of providing full child care and education

Brazil is a federative Republic formed by the Union, the states, the Federal District and the municipalities (currently 5,565), each with their autonomy according to the Federal Constitution (article 18). These federal branches are not divided into hierarchical levels in the political and administrative sense. They are lined up in a horizontal structure instead, with differentiating functions.

The Constitution classifies and defines three types of functions: (a) specific and exclusive, (b) shared and (c) concurrent. Health and public assistance are shared functions, so the Union, the states, the Federal District and the cities act at each stage – on policies and guidelines, planning and implementation. Concurrent functions are education, culture, and the protection of children. The Union is in charge only of establishing the general rules; the states, Federal District and municipalities have to implement them. Thus, with regards early childhood education, the Ministry of Education sets the guidelines and national standards, then provides technical assistance to the states, the Federal District and municipalities, which then develop their own programmes.

Each municipality is responsible for establishing its own policy, drafting its educational project, and creating programmes for early childhood education and elementary education. The only intervention by the Union and the states is to put forward the principles and general guidelines, and provide technical assistance, directly or through the states. One way the Union can act more proactively in order to enhance the expansion and improvement of quality is, for example, by drafting programmes and offering them to the municipalities, along with federal funding. Resources are allocated on request, but tied to each programme. The programmes will always be chosen by the city administration, and can never be imposed by the Union.

Brazil therefore has two constitutional principles governing relations between the Union, the states, the Federal District and municipalities: autonomy and mutual cooperation (Article 23 of the Constitution). When the Constitution established the city as an autonomous branch of the Federative Republic, it did not mean self-sufficiency. The principle of mutual cooperation between the branches aimed to ensure that each be able to fulfill their functions.

The Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA) – Law 8.069/1990

The ECA is the legal status of children as citizens. It established a new approach to children and adolescents in Brazilian society, in contrast to the authoritarian, paternalistic, and repressive approach of the Code of Minors. ECA means citizenship for the child, with legal rights designed to improve development and upbringing. The Statute adopts the "doctrine of full protection" as opposed to the principle of "irregular situation". Three items here, deserve to be highlighted:

1. Political and administrative decentralization regarding the enforcement of children's rights. The Union drafts a national policy and guidelines. The municipalities and the Federal District provide the services, with technical and financial cooperation from the Union and the states;
2. Social participation, through representative organizations, in the public policy-making process, in planning actions and in controlling the actions of the state at all levels;
3. The establishment of a system that assures children's rights and helps children have access to day-care and pre-school and receive a full, quality education. The Guardianship Council (Conselho Tutelar), the National, State and Municipal Councils of Child and Adolescent Rights, the Public Prosecutor and other civil society organizations are required to ensure that children's rights are enforced. Amongst which, the right to education from birth.

National Education Guidelines and Framework Law-LDB (Law 9.424/1996)

The LDB classifies early childhood education as the first stage of basic education "aimed at the development of children of up to 6 years old, as regards the physical, psychological, intellectual and social aspects, in a way that complements the actions of the family and the human setting" (article 29). The day care centres' role is to inaugurate this integral education, which is to be continued at the pre-school.

Early childhood teachers in Brazil are required to have a university degree related to education. A decision taken by the National Education Council in 2005⁶ cancelled the requirement of specific qualifications in early childhood education, amongst other qualifications, in the Pedagogy course, expanding the teacher's field of action. But the same decision required that the course should include practices applied to early childhood education, thus preparing the teacher to, alongside other educational activities, "understand, care for and educate children of 0 to 5 years old, in order to contribute to their "physical, psychological, intellectual and social development, amongst others."⁷ Teachers with high school degrees, but including a specific teacher education in early childhood education, are qualified to teach in early childhood education and in the first four grades of elementary school (article 62). This permission is applied only to regions where there are no teachers with university a degree. The LDB thus marks the professionalization of child education.

Furthermore, the LDB requires that nurseries be integrated into their respective educational systems, over a period of three years (article 89).

In 1996 the Brazilian education legislation thus clearly set up a concept of education from birth, in specific educational settings, aimed at overall development.

Directives, policies, plans and programmes concerning the new paradigm on child care

National directives on early childhood education

The National Education Council, responsible for establishing the rules and guidelines applied by the education system at a national level, is also in charge of regulating children's education, the rules of which are to be enforced by different federal branches in their respective areas. Worth mentioning are the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* and *Operational Guidelines for Early Childhood Education*.⁸

The *Curricular Guidelines* were designed to regulate "the work in nurseries/day-care centres for children aged 0 to 3 years and in pre-schools for 4 to 6 years-olds, in addition to guiding the proposed curricular and pedagogical projects, providing paradigms for the design of these programmes of education and care with quality". They emphasize "the need for integrated work in the area of social policies for children and family, such as health, social services, labour, culture, housing, leisure and sports".

The third guideline relates to pedagogical proposals, which "should promote, in their education and care practices, the integration of the child's physical, emotional, affective, cognitive/ linguistic, and social aspects, with consideration of the child as an integral being, complete and indivisible".

⁶ CNE/CP Parecer n° 5/2005, which deals with National Curricular Guidelines for the Pedagogical course.

⁷ Same as before, article 5° II.

⁸ Resolução CNE/CEB n° 1, April 13, 1999, Parecer 22/98 and CNE/CEB Parecer 4/2000.

And the fourth guideline states: "By considering children as integral human beings who learn to live with themselves, with others and the environment in a gradual and coordinated way, the Pedagogic Proposals to be applied by the child education institutions should pursue the interaction between various areas of knowledge and aspects of citizenship, as basic contents for the creation of knowledge and values".

The Operational Guidelines deal specifically with the transition and integration of day care centres in relation to education. They set rules for linking the child education institutions to the educational system and also pedagogic proposals, preparation of early childhood education teachers, teaching materials and spaces, always taking into account education and care as a whole.

The National Plan for Education - PNE (Law 10.172/2001)

The PNE has a chapter on child education, establishing guidelines for both day care centres and pre-school, in addition to common and specific goals. Some of the directives are the following:

In order to have a pedagogical practice consistent with scientific data and respecting the full process of child development, it is important to overcome the dichotomies of day-care/pre-school, assistance or assistance-based/ education, services to the poor/ education for middle and upper classes, all of which were produced throughout history by misleading political guidance and social practices.

Education and care are an indivisible whole for indivisible children in a development process characterized by steps or stages in which the breakthroughs are the bases and possibilities for the follow-up.

Amongst the goals of the educational role of day-care and its integration into the education system, the PNE establishes that it will:

- provide, by 2011, services for 50% of children aged 0 to 3 years and 80% of those aged 4-6 (goal 1);
- set minimum standards of infrastructure for childcare and pre-schools (goal 2);
- ensure that all early childhood education institutions, day care centres included, have pedagogical projects (goal 9);
- establish mechanisms for collaboration between the sectors of education and health and assist the maintenance, expansion, management, control and evaluation of institutions for care of children 0 to 3 years of age (goal 11);
- ensure that municipalities provide educational materials appropriate to age groups and to the needs of the pedagogical work (goal 13).

The quality of care is also part of the goals: quality parameters are required in early childhood education as a reference for supervision, control and evaluation, as well as an instrument for quality improvement measures (goal 17).

Role of the COEDI: to induce public policies for child education in Brazil and to coordinate policies and the national plan for early childhood education

The Secretariat of Basic Education - SEB, linked to the Ministry of Education, deals with the three stages of basic education: early childhood education, elementary and secondary. Each stage has a specific coordination. The General Coordination of Early Childhood Education- COEDI is responsible for bridging the stages, supporting the national policy for early childhood education and furnishing technical assistance to the states, the Federal District and municipalities in developing their education systems with regards early childhood education.

In pursuit of these activities, the COEDI is guided, like other federal government bodies, by the principles of autonomy and cooperation between federal branches, respecting their own educational tasks and regional diversity. Beyond such general principles, the COEDI has as a guideline for its actions the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, the National Education Plan, especially the chapter on child education, and the Education Development Plan (PDE, in Portuguese). The demands of education systems are also references to its work.

With regards the subject of this study, the COEDI has sponsored public debates and documents that serve as guidance and inspiration to education systems so as to integrate day care centres and education as well as to promote the relationship between education and care.

Some of those documents are: “Policy of early childhood education for teachers” (1994), “Integration of childhood institutions into school systems: a case study of five cities which have faced challenges and made achievements” (2002); “Children's Education National Policy: the right of children from 0 to 6 years to education” (2005), “Programme of initial in-service teachers certificate in childhood education – Proinfantil” (2005); “National parameters of quality for childhood education” and “Basic parameters of infrastructure for early childhood education institutions” (2006).⁹

National Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Teaching - FUNDEB

Created by Constitutional Amendment 53, in 2006, the Fundeb established a new model of public financing for basic education in its three phases: infant, elementary and secondary. Fundeb comprises 80% of public education financial resources, which are distributed according to the enrollment rate in each state and its municipalities. The Union complements the state funding when it doesn't reach the minimum amount per

⁹ The documents released from 2005 onwards are available online: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/seb/index.php?option=content&task-view&id.=556>).

student. From the 4th year on, the contribution of the Union is equivalent to at least 10% of the funding.

In the proposed constitutional amendment submitted by the Executive to Congress, the education of 0 to 3 year olds (day care centres) was excluded from the Fund. An extensive social mobilization of organizations engaged in the struggle for the right to early childhood education in Brazil reversed this situation. Day care centres was included in the Fundeb and this achievement was considered the best improvement of the proposal. During two years of discussion on this proposal for Amendment to the Constitution there was a widespread debate about the significance of education in the first three years of life. The political debate on the role of day care centres as an educational institution has given it a new status in the social and educational scene of Brazil.

With Fundeb, all early education enrollments at the municipal level, including private services provided by non-profit institutions through previous agreements, are entitled to a "yearly amount per student". These amounts are not sufficient to promote the expansion of care. There are other resources from the municipality itself and also from the federal government, through the Proinfância Program, a fund created in 2007 for the construction of new institutions for children aged 0 to 3 years, which can be applied in the expansion.

This was another step forward taken by the Brazilian educational policy to ensure the rights of children to an early childhood education from birth, consistent with the historic effort to integrate care and education in a unique educational process, carried out within early childhood education institutions.

3. The discussion about integration of early childhood education into school systems

The main arguments behind the decision to include education and care within the education framework are conceptual. They date back to ideas of child citizenship and Public Policies. The administrative and financial arguments were placed in the background, linked to the philosophical and political discussions on Person and Public Policies.

The concept of the Child

The historical process previously described consolidated the notion of the child as a social and historical subject who creates and whose development is indivisible. This child cannot be seen just as a physical body that needs care, nor as a mind without a body or an intelligence that develops in a neglected body. The point, therefore, is to create a

consistency of actions regarding child education, taking into account the child as a whole being.

The concept of Public Policy

The Esping-Andersen study (1993) emphasizes that public policies have developed three propositions: i) the universalist proposition, strongly based on State intervention, ii) the corporate proposition, in which social citizenship is structured according to the contributions that each sector provides to the State, and iii) the residual proposition, with the State providing services only to the underprivileged and the market supplying services for those who can afford them.

In Brazil, over the last few decades, public policies are a mix of the universalist proposition, geared to the whole population, to guarantee rights for all (policies of health, education, housing, food, sanitation, public safety etc.) and the residual, for a specific portion of the population, in order to guarantee a right that is incomplete or absent (the assistance policy to meet basic needs to people who live in poverty).

These two concepts - of child and of public policies - reinforce the argument in favour of including early education as part of the education policy: (a) it is a universal right of every child, from birth, and (b) aims to develop human being as a whole, with a harmonious personality, in a process that incorporates physical, social, emotional and mental aspects.

The case calls for consistency between the universal right to education in specific institutions from birth to 6 years and the education policy to ensure such a right. Early childhood education would therefore no longer be linked to social assistance, which is directed to special situations, for example, abandoned children, victims of violence at home or deprived of a family setting, and other situations of vulnerability.

Arguments for the law

When the Federal Constitution, in the chapter on education, established nurseries and pre-schools as childhood education, and a right for all children from birth, it was corroborating the arguments above. Thus, the Statute of Children and Adolescents and the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law addressed early childhood education from birth to 6 years as an education issue, under the responsibility of education systems. Consistently, the new directives of the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS) made contact with the Ministry of Education in order to pass on to the latter the continuity of the programme for nurseries.

Other possible arguments were not considered when this decision was taken. From a financial point of view, there would be no difference if child care was provided in the social or the educational area, as long as care and education were applied. Political arguments may occur at municipal level, where a social assistance agency may fear loss of power and reduction of budgetary resources if the nurseries move to the education area. Once in a while some argue that the municipal system of education might not be

prepared to perform all activities involved in the care of children, which are not the only work in day care centres, but also the relationship with the families, issues of emotional relations between child and family and domestic violence.

The question concerning women's labour or, more broadly, the family, is relevant to the provision of child care services, but can be applied to both the day care centres and the pre-school and doesn't relieve them of the duties of care and education, nor is to a criterion for connecting them to one or another Ministry.

Theoretically, there could have been another route, for example the Social Welfare sector could be responsible for the age group of 0 to 3 years, providing full service of care and education, and the education sector could be responsible for the next age bracket (4 to 6), including care and education. The Brazilian option of placing educational care of children aged 0 to 3 years (and all care traditionally provided by the different modalities of day-care) within the education sector is part of the concepts outlined above and stated in the Constitution and related laws (ECA, LDB, LOAS).

A second consideration, of a pedagogical nature, deals with the continuity of the educational process. In the event of a division of early childhood education into two age brackets (0-3 and 4-6), with a focus on two different areas (care and education, respectively), the child's educational process could be jeopardized. The purpose of ensuring continuity as regards both the method and the content in such a sensitive period of life recommends that both should be under the same policy, the same sector, the same technical and pedagogical guidance.

Accordingly, the idea of creating "child education establishments" for children aged 0 to 6 years in the same space is growing in Brazil, with the necessary internal divisions in specific environments for different age groups. The intention is to avoid a break in the process of early childhood education. To the extent that this type of educational establishment is included in municipal education systems, day care centres and pre-school will cease to exist as separate units.

4. Process and transition at ministerial level

Conceptual change and management transfer

In Brazil, there are two levels for the transfer of responsibility: (a) the national policy of education, with the political-pedagogical guidelines and the national plan for education, managed by the Ministry of Education, and (b) the municipal policy, which includes planning and administration of local education systems, managed by the municipalities. Even if a city has not established its education system, it is responsible all the same for

the municipal schools.

At the first level, the decision-making is based on legal statutes: the Federal Constitution deals with education in the chapter on child education, formally appointing the day care centres and pre-schools as institutions that provide such education. The LDB's goal is the education of children of 0 to 6 years and has provided for a three year period in which nurseries are to move to the education system. The National Education Plan sets targets for both institutions and specific targets for day care centres and pre-school. One is that about 50% of children aged 0 to 3 should receive child care by the year 2011. There is a perfect consistency between the constitutional directives and the ordinary laws, as well as in policy documents and education plans.

Management structure for the transfer

There is no special national body in charge of managing, in an integrated way, the various policies for children in Brazil. Education, care, health, protection, culture, each one has its own sectorial body and/or programmes for children. However, an inter-ministerial group was created, temporarily, to deal with the transfer of the MDS Day care centres Programme to the MEC.

As mentioned in Section I, 3.1, in the year 2000 the National Council of Education consigned rules for integration, with operational details concerning the nurseries' links to the education system, preparation of pedagogical proposals, teachers' education, spaces and teaching materials for the institutions of early childhood education.

The General Coordination of Child Education - COEDI, linked to the Ministry of Education and located in the Department of Basic Education, took up this concept of integral and integrated education, and provided technical assistance to municipalities so that they could make the transfer. Technical guidance, suggestions, strategies, exchange of experiences between the municipalities on the transfer, and the publication of successful experiences are examples of activities performed by the COEDI. It also collaborates with the states, which are responsible for providing technical assistance to the municipalities of their respective jurisdiction. (See chart in Annex I).

In practical terms, the transfer is decided and implemented by municipal governments, whose education systems are autonomous, but submitted to the laws and general rules of the Union and/or the states. At present, there is a diversity of situations – education has been fully incorporated in all day care centres run by social assistance policy and agreements, but there are day care centres still under social assistance management. In the municipalities there are no federal agencies. Therefore, in order to provide technical assistance and follow-up actions, the COEDI uses different means of communication, direct and indirect. It must be noted that decentralization is part of the federative conception prevailing in Brazil, not a measure of the management of public affairs.

The decision to include day care centres in the education's statistical system,¹⁰ and the availability of Fundeb financial resources for childhood enrollment in these institutions, are mechanisms that induce municipalities to make the transfer.

Guarantee of quality services for all children

The principles of national education are applied to all educational levels, whether under responsibility of the Union, the state or the municipality. The same can be said for the question of quality. In the area of early childhood education, the MEC conceived parameters of infrastructure and of quality standards for early childhood education which guide the actions of municipalities and must be enforced, because they are goals of the PNE (goals 2 and 19 of the chapter on Early Childhood Education). Insofar as they are applied, the quality tends to improve from day care centres to pre-school. However, it is well-known that nurseries, whether under the assistance or education structure, are of a lower quality than pre-schools and the main challenge for the education systems is to improve their quality, while expanding them.

Day care centres that serve the children of working mothers are usually open full-time, but a great deal of them are part-time. In such cases, other forms of care and education of children are needed elsewhere. The PNE has fixed the gradual adoption of full-time attendance for children of 0 to 6 years (goal 18), but does not fix the pace or the time to reach it. Fundeb assigns the value of full-time enrollment above part-time, but the difference between them is very small (see Table 6) and doesn't stimulate the education systems to extend to full-time. There are four possible solutions: (a) pressure from families who need to have their children attended to during the whole working day, (b) for mayors and municipal secretaries of education to understand that part-time solutions do not solve the problem of working parents, leaving the child without care and education during four hours per day, (c) actions by Public Prosecutors arguing for an "Adjustment of Conduct" to ensure the child has the right to education, and (d) for the Fundeb to increase the value child/year for early childhood education to a full-time basis, matching the actual cost.

5. Process and transition at the local level

As discussed in the previous points, in Brazil the movements for education of children aged 0 to 6 years also bring to light the duality between pre-school education and care, between education and care for early childhood, plus the interface, sometimes ambiguous, of public and private institutions. Today, even though this duality still means

¹⁰ The education's statistical system and the school census are carried out every year by Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Anísio Teixeira – INEP (Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Studies and Researches).

obstacles to the change of some ideas about care for children, its greatest consequence has been to stimulate the growing concerns about education, regarding the policies as well as the provision of knowledge in the area.

The recent status of the child, concerned with education and rights, which has been achieved through legal victories,¹¹ establishes a more effective system of education on different levels - federal, state and municipal. It is adapted to the different requirements for the integration of day care centres and pre-schools in the education systems and to the consequent need for regulation at the state and municipal levels, such as: the definition of national curricular guidelines, the preparation of ten-year plans for education at national, state and municipal levels, the teacher certificate in early childhood education, amongst others described throughout this report. The process and transition of early childhood education at a local level are actions carried out at municipal level.

Undoubtedly, the legislation, which came into force as the result of mobilization and the demands of the general public, represents a breakthrough in the field of child education. However, children's education still faces challenges to be fully implemented, as regards the extension of care, improvement of quality, funding, insertion of the institutions into education systems, as well as the qualification of teachers. This reality shows the need for a reorganization of early childhood education networks, setting up a transitional period that has been marked by different adjustments of the process.

New tensions are evident in this scenario, especially in municipalities, related to the management of policies and provision of services in the areas of education and social assistance. The idea of integrating early childhood education into the education system characterizes the Brazilian option of integration of policies for early childhood, in contrast to other countries. Brazil has several policies for early childhood - the most significant are related to education, health, welfare and justice/protection.¹² Although in these different policies there is an educational dimension, the children's education is assumed to be a duty of the State and is provided by public and private educational establishments. Thus, the Brazilian option was to define early childhood education as the first stage of basic education, or integrate it into the educational system as a whole, as an educational policy, not as an integrated policy for early childhood.

In this sense, we would like to discuss here the measures taken and their consequences, and to reaffirm the fact that the field of early childhood education has been moving forward: it is regulated, has public resources, has improved the rules, with implications in higher education, in Pedagogy courses - which define new curricular guidelines for the teacher certificate in early childhood education -, in the development of research in the

¹¹ 1988 Federal Constitution; Statute of the Child and Adolescent-ECA, 1990, and LDB, 1996.

¹² Some projects and programmes developed in the federal sector which include children 0 to 6: Ministry of Health - National Programme for Mother Breastfeeding (PNIAM), National Programme of Neonatal Classification, National Programme of Immunization (PNI), National Policy for Nourishing Feeding; Social Assistance - Family Full Attention Programme (PAIF), Bolsa- Família Programme, Care for Children 0 to 6; Ministry of Justice - Sentinel Project (for children and adolescents who are victims of violence, abuse and sexual exploitation), Eradication of Child Labour Program (PET), Children Programme, Centro de Atendimento (SOS).

area and so on. It is possible to show, on the one hand, how the insertion of children's education into the education system has implications for other phases, methods and levels of education, in the sense that educators are obliged to rethink the concepts, by reviewing and adapting practices and positions based on the new relations established in education. On the other hand, one cannot ignore the struggle for creation of an identity for early childhood education, with its own specific aspects, in order for it not to become just a preparation for primary school.

The role of the municipality: the trails

The format of the Brazilian educational system - a decentralized institutional system in which the State is responsible for the education provided through formal programmes - is an option that generates consequences, e.g., not incorporating alternative or non-formal arrangements, as in some other countries. That is, there is a federal system, a district system, 27 state systems and they may reach 5.654 municipal systems. From 1997 on, education in Brazil is composed of two levels: basic and higher education. The first level consists of three steps: early childhood education¹³ (for 0 to 5 years and 11 months old, not mandatory), primary education (compulsory for 6 to 14 years-olds) and secondary education (15 to 17 years of age) (Annex III).

Municipalities are responsible for the organization, maintenance and development of public institutions for their education systems, integrating them into the educational policies and plans of the Union and the states; for providing early childhood education in day care centres and pre-schools, with priority to primary education. They are allowed to operate on other levels of education only when they have fully satisfied the needs of their area of expertise, and with resources above the minimum percentage bound by the Constitution to the maintenance and development of education.¹⁴

The educational institutions of different levels (basic education and university) are classified in the following administrative categories: (I) public, created or built, maintained and managed by the government, (ii) private, maintained and administered by individuals or legal corporations. The private institutions, in turn, fall into several categories: *communal* - those established by individuals or companies, including parent cooperatives, teachers and students, with community representatives; *religious* - established by individuals or corporate groups with a particular religion or ideology; and *philanthropic* - established by individuals or companies with a certified classification as a non-profit social assistance institution.

¹³ It's important to stress that the legal designation of Early Childhood Education – day care centres (0 to 3 years old) and pre-school (4 to 6 years old) – are references to age ranges. In practical terms, however, there are institutions are designated as day care centre to children above 3 years old, as well as pre-schools to below 4 years old. In popular representation, based on tradition, day care centres are usually understood as full-time institutions for poor children (Revisão de Políticas e Serviços de Educação Infantil no Brazil. UNESCO, National Report, p.11).

¹⁴ 18% over the federal net revenue with taxes and 25% of the net revenue from taxes of states and municipalities.

According to the legislation, the municipality has the option of organizing the educational system in three distinct ways, namely: to organize, maintain and develop the public institutions of education, integrating them into the educational policies and plans of the Union and status; to choose to integrate the state system of education, or to create a single system of basic education based on it.

Education systems have an autonomy with which they can complement national legislation through their own standards, specific and appropriate to local characteristics. Municipalities that do not organize the local system of education and do not set up the Municipal Council of Education- CME, remain within the state system and follow the rules set by the local State Council of Education-EEC. In cities where the municipal system of education is organized, it is up to the Municipal Council of Education - CME, to regulate early childhood education. Generally, the rules address criteria and requirements that are beacons for the functioning of the institutions of early childhood education, such as teacher education, physical spaces, including parameters to ensure hygiene, safety and comfort, number of children per teacher, pedagogical proposal, management and required documentation.

Early childhood education is provided by institutions - day-care, pre-schools, schools, centres or nuclei of early childhood education - regardless of their name or designation. They provide daily full-time and/or part-time activities - through daily pedagogical practices, intentionally planned and systematized in a pedagogical project, created together with the school staff and extra-school, and developed by qualified teachers under multiple mechanisms of monitoring and control.

Many municipalities use the physical space of primary schools to expand pre-school classes (children 4 to 6 years). However, it is important to emphasize that this alternative requires that the pedagogical proposal addresses the specific age range and that the space is suitable for the development of pedagogical work in early childhood education.

The municipal scenario today is very diverse, because of the unequal social and economic conditions of Brazilian municipalities. This disparity shows up also in the types of education provided - day care centres, pre-school, primary and secondary -, in the number of enrollments, in the management category of the institutions, and also in the quality of supply - teacher education, physical and pedagogical equipment. To pursue a unit of the system amongst such diversity, to accept and live with differences without making the system dispersed and/or exclusionary, to understand and design the educational area with the involvement, discussion and teacher education of professionals who work in it, implies a series of political, educational and administrative activities that must be sound, objective and with continuous. Here lies the heart of the local transition process, the main challenge of the Brazilian option for a federative structure and municipalization of basic education (with consequences at a political level), by breaking the hierarchical and centralized organization. Thus, if the municipality has weak points or more potential, they appear to a greater or lesser extent in the education policy.

The biggest challenge that this organization is proposing, through cooperation, is to build an education system in which the three government divisions (municipal, state and federal) should act in a coordinated manner with the objective of achieving a public school with quality for all Brazilian citizens. The legal option of establishing a system of municipal schools is based on the construction of democratic management, a public education open to the universalization of access and permanence, and a greater leap forward towards the right to education.

Cities that have organized their own system of education have also the autonomy to set standards for their network of primary education and early childhood education, public and private, being also responsible for the supervision of the institutions of their systems. That is, they define the rules of the democratic management of education, according to its peculiarities, respecting the principles of participation of educators in the preparation of the pedagogical project of the school and of the school community. In such a way, they ensure that basic education schools have access to progressive advances of pedagogical and administrative autonomy and financial management.

Currently in Brazil more than half (54.6%) of the municipalities have opted to remain tied to their state systems, which means they are subject to the rules and supervision of the state they belong to. There are around 2,000 municipal systems of education, which shows the gradual process towards municipal autonomy.

That said, one must consider that the challenges to be faced by the municipalities are not specific to children's education. However, there is no doubt that the integration of day care centres and pre-school to education has required great efforts regarding local policies for new actions - such as the construction of new institutions with appropriate equipment and personnel - as well as for educational policies that were already built. To integrate education into existing institutions requires new demands such as the regulation of specific age ranges, the accreditation of such institutions and their adaptation to new standards, teacher education etc. Indeed, the challenge of integration is twofold: the integration of what exists and of what is going to exist.

This highlights the role of the Ministry of Education-MEC in encouraging the consolidation of educational policies, drafting documents, recommendations, parameters to support states and municipalities in their local policies, toward a consistency in the design of national educational provision. Item 5 of this report will address some of these actions leading to the consolidation of legal reforms.

In the Brazilian educational legislation, municipal councils of education came before the creation of the education systems, as shown by the survey "Profile of municipal councils of education, 2006" (MEC/2007). There are experiences of municipal councils in the 1970s, but their institutionalization occurred only in 1988. According to the document, although the board of education is today part of the educational management structure, historically and in the educational legislation there isn't a direct relationship between the education system and the board of education. In the federal and state sectors tradition has already established links between them, but in the municipalities there are still councils

without a system and systems without a council. In the case of municipal councils of education in municipalities that haven't implemented their education systems, the councils are bodies of collective deliberation in the management structure of the departments of education, according to their powers as specified by the laws that created them (2007, p.17).

As the survey shows,¹⁵ the municipal councils of education state their identity and occupy a specific role in the management and drafting of educational policies with all their progress and challenges. Within the 5,564 Brazilian municipalities there are the following significant achievements: 3127 have a Municipal Council of Education, representing 56% of all existing municipalities; 37% have a local system of education and 33% have a Municipal Plan for Education (SME).

Comparing the 2006 data with those of 2004, it was found that while the creation of CMEs grew by 79%, the SMEs grew by 121% (from 937 to 2,072) and the PME's by 367% (from 392 to 1,830). Between 2005 and 2006 the number of education councils increased by 24.1%, the education systems increased by 35.9% and education plans by 65.8%. These data show a trend towards a rapprochement between PME's, SME's and CME's, which leads to the formation of full local education systems, with councils and education plans. As such, there is progress towards municipal autonomy and the institutional strengthening of education systems.

The integration of day care centres and pre-school at a local level has been effective in three different ways: integration of only the institutions that existed publicly ("transition" of care provided by different departments to the education coordination), integration of only institutions recently created under LDB (the coordination of the older institutions remains in its original departments, such as health, care, work), or preserving the legal principle of integration of both public and private institutions.

It is noteworthy that in the history of early childhood education, the Brazilian State's decision to construct public policies for the education of children stimulated alternative solutions created by the community, such as household nurseries, community day care centres, philanthropic and even for-profit private institutions. Many of them emerged as a consequence of public pressures, of women struggling for the right to a decent place for their children during the working day. Many of them also emerged during the hard years of political repression, in the absence of government actions in favour of low income families, by proposing an alternative education for children, without the rules of an authoritarian State. Although politics have changed for the better, the precarious conditions of many of the nurseries have remained the same. Many communal day care centres still occupy improvised facilities in impoverished areas, like slums, squats,

¹⁵ Among the 2,430 municipalities included in the survey in 2006, 2,038 (84%) have an education council, created by law; 1,289 (53%) have an education system and 1,214 (50%) have an education plan approved by local law. The Southeast region is the one with the highest numbers of CME's (94%) and PME's (66%). The Mid-West represents the highest number of municipalities with SME's (57%). The North has the lowest numbers of CME's (67%), SME's (49%) and PME's (32%), created by local laws (MEC/2007, p.18). These municipalities represent less than half of Brazilian cities.

generally located in the suburbs. These centres face difficulties related to resources from the community and agreements with the government agencies. Institutions relying on public funds to survive and requiring more than resources already receive support through current agreements, so that they provide a better service for poor children (i.e. better facilities and better materials, better qualified educators, etc.).

However, while there is a general misunderstanding in municipalities and states about who is in charge of what, on the other hand the policy of early childhood education has taken on a new lease of life and acquired an identity in relation to national references of quality services concerning infrastructure, pedagogical proposal, functioning, definition of a professional profile (before, anyone could work in the area), and establishment of sources of funding according to the Constitution.

With respect to funding, recently the Fundeb has also included a certain amount of funds for childhood education.¹⁶ This is of particular importance, as far as the role of the State in childhood education is concerned.

Treating day care centres as an educational priority, mostly complementary (not replacing) the family's role in terms of the physical, psychological and social well-being of a child, for the acquisition of knowledge and values essential to the process of development and socialization of children from 0 to 6 years, is a provocative issue for its integration into the education system. It has not been the same for pre-school, which was already part of the concerns of educators and educational policy-makers, albeit marginal, and allegedly a preparatory stage for basic education.

The efforts to mobilize and raise awareness in municipal education systems for the registration, in the School Census, of all educational establishments, accredited or about to be accredited, and even of non-accredited, have brought progress towards no longer thinking of day care centres as assistance-orientated tools.

There are still only few studies that have been made on child education in municipalities about the experiments being developed by the city, especially those which gather a variety of strategies being implemented and their impact arising from the transition of an assistance-orientated service to educational care under municipal auspices. There is no body, in the cities, in charge of coordinating the actions of integrated care, health, protection and education. The principle is to integrate the institutions in the education systems to work on educational features, under the coordination of Education. However, the processes of transition and regulation are varied and different, as well as the conditions in which the institutions operate. Thus, municipalities are facing the challenges resulting from the changing concept of care for children from 0 to 6 years in official discourses and practices: the legacy of assistance-orientated work, a model that guided public and private initiatives for poor children, and characterized a substantial number of institutions and the existence of an inflexible and hierarchical educational system. The core of this issue is the legal achievements: an educational service of quality,

¹⁶ Fundo Nacional de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e Valorização dos profissionais da Educação – Law 11.494/2007.

with qualified teachers, schools with the appropriate facilities for specific age brackets, curricula formulated on the concept of the child in its all of his / her entirety, and not just as a student.

To summarize, the management of early childhood education is primarily a responsibility of the municipal authorities. They are in charge of providing supply, organization and management of their institution network for children's education and also of regulation, monitoring, guidance and supervision of other public and private institutions that exist in their territory.

A decade has passed since the legal responsibility of the municipality for public educational institutions for children was established and in recent years local governments have increased vacancies in nurseries and pre-schools, and hired more teachers to meet these new educational demands. Many municipalities have tried to outline proposals according to their ideological beliefs, their political commitments and economic, social and cultural conditions. Little by little, education is taking centre stage, making the curriculum a political issue leading to debate on the role of the MEC on a national and international level. Discussions on state and municipal political-pedagogic projects have sometimes been underscored by the urgency to define parameters and to develop projects to comply with the law. It is consensual that it is not enough to have the Council setting up the rules on its own. The local Department of Education should also give its advice on institutions, in addition to its financial, technical and pedagogical support, so that they may adapt themselves to new demands.

By following the national curricular guidelines and standards established by the departments of education, schools have educational autonomy. Therefore, it's up to the childhood education institutions to: develop and implement their own pedagogical plans; manage their personnel and their financial and material resources; ensure compliance of established school days; monitor compliance of teachers' work; make contacts with the families and the community in order to create an integration process between society and school, apart from helping parents to follow the development of their children and the pedagogical plan.

Teachers are assigned various tasks, amongst which participation in the drafting of the pedagogical proposal, to monitor the development and learning of children in a systematic and continuous way which allows them to claim authorship of the pedagogical work.¹⁷ Several authors, especially Kramer and Souza (1996), say that teachers should only implement practices and methods conceived by others. In the process of transition, the integration of nurseries and schools as the first stage of basic education requires the creation of spaces for teacher education and reflection, so children and adults do not submit themselves to the new, but to its possibilities, thus becoming also authors. So, to talk about children and adults is to think about plurality, that is, to deal with the differences and perceive them as traces of our human condition.

¹⁷ According to article 13 of LDB.

It is important to assume that the autonomy of educational institutions is still ongoing and has caused intense debate about the construction of identity in early childhood education. In nurseries and schools in Brazil, marked by historically different concepts and types of care, that identity is presented with different profiles, sometimes based on schooling, sometimes on care. There are different conceptions of infancy, of childhood education, and of care. While there is a coexistence of multiple proposals which emerge from social practices, the scientific studies and official documents have contributed to the quest for a unique conception of childhood and education.

6. Consolidation and further reforms

Reiterating what has been said earlier, in Brazil the process of integration of nurseries and schools into the education systems is part of an educational policy that does not dissociate education and care, which is a breakthrough in the idea of assistance-orientated care, that is subjective and the public right of citizens since birth, and which considers the State in charge of providing the services, on a complementary basis, along with the family and the community. These concepts are related to the changes of paradigm related to children, to infancy and to early childhood education. Changes involving the provision of services with quantity and quality to meet educational demands, because the subject of the rights - regardless of any condition such as gender, race/ethnicity, religion, social class - imposes quality in education capable of promoting the full human development of the cultural universe and a participation in the social and natural world, encouraging the construction of a richer subjectivity, promoting exchange and interaction, respecting difference, and improving the physical, emotional and affective welfare. This means, in practical terms, giving children a planned and organized daily life according to their interests and needs, with sufficient and adequate equipment and qualified teachers. In this perspective, integration is a process, a continuous and intense movement, in which old questions are addressed, and there is a move towards overcoming contradictions and dilemmas.

Brazilian reality is multiple, diverse and structurally uneven. The progress in the concepts has not yet overcome the gap in educational opportunities territorially demarcated between centre and periphery, city and country, capital and interior, between districts within the same city, between cities, between states and between regions (MEC, 2007). For the education systems, to reduce unequal educational opportunities is a challenge that begins in early childhood education.

In turn, integration to education means including early childhood education into a field surrounded by political, economic and social issues, in a country that must reverse its historical inequalities. To be at the first stage of basic education means to participate in the national policy for education, with goals to be achieved, as suggested by the National Plan for Education - PNE, approved by Law 10.172/2001, and its most recent,

consequent plan of action, the Development Plan for Education - PDE, 2007. National targets involve all three federal branches and share political, technical and financial skills, as determined by the legal system of cooperation.

Next we will discuss some data concerning childhood education vis-à-vis the PNE targets for this educational phase, in order to draw a picture of the consolidation process of the Brazilian experience related to the integration of nurseries and schools to local education systems.

Access to Child Education

According to the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), the number of children of 0 to 6 years is decreasing within the population, but is still very significant, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Children 0 to 6 years - Brazil, 2001 and 2007

Age	Year			
	2001		2007	
	Total per 1,000	%	Total per 1,000	%
Total	22 070	100.0	19 990	100.0
0 to 3 years	12 295	55.7	10 958	54.8
4 to 6 years	9 775	44.3	9 032	45.2

Source: IBGE, PNAD-National Household Survey - 2001-2006. Microdata.

In 2006, the PNAD survey reported a fertility rate of 2.0 births per woman, reaching the level of population replacement. In 2007, the rate continued to decline to 1.95 birth per woman. With regards to Brazilian regions, the fertility rate revealed different values, indicating a greater number of births in less developed regions, cities and neighbourhoods. The northern region has the highest fertility rate, with 2.6 children per woman, then the Northeast, with 2.29, and the Midwest, with 2.01. In the South there was a rate of 1.78 child per woman and 1.62 in the Southeast. While the fertility rate of Brazilian women has decreased, the surveys have shown that the largest number of poor children are aged 0 to 6 years. UNICEF's report on the Situation of Children in Brazil, 2006, with regards to the Index of Child Development - IDI,¹⁸ showed that in 2004 almost 1,350 municipalities (25%) had low IDI, 3,650 municipalities were in the medium level and only 560 (10%) had a high child development (p.116).

¹⁸ The IDI incorporates variables related to: health care services (prenatal coverage, immunization), education services and family protection to the child in the early years (represented by the schooling level of the parents).

Table 2, by showing the average monthly income of families with children of 0 to 6 years in major Brazilian regions, reveals that the majority of children in this age bracket come from the poorest households.

Table 2: Families with children 0 to 6 years, total and respective percentage distribution, by family's average monthly income *per capita*, according to Big Regions, 2007

Big Regions	Families with children 0 to 6 years						
	Total (1,000 families) (1)	Percentage Distribution, per family's average monthly income per capita (minimum wage) (%)					
		Up to 1/2	More than 1/2 to 1	More than 1 to 2	More than 2 to 3	More than 3 to 5	More than 5
Brazil	15 567	42,8	26,5	15,1	4,0	3,0	1,8
North	1 570	52,4	22,5	10,2	2,6	1,6	0,7
Northeast	4 697	64,1	17,8	7,0	1,7	1,3	0,8
Southeast	6 001	30,0	31,6	19,8	5,3	4,2	2,4
South	2 135	28,8	31,3	23,1	6,2	4,0	2,5
Midwest	1 164	35,5	31,4	15,8	4,5	3,6	3,3

Source: IBGE, National Household Survey, 2007.

Note: Families with at least one child within the age group mentioned.

(1) Including families without income and without income statement.

An inclusive policy cannot ignore the significant number of Brazilian children of 0 to 6 years and their living conditions. To attend institutions of early childhood education is also to be taken care of and to have basic needs met.¹⁹

The School Census, conducted annually, is an important technical support to set up and evaluate educational policies and resource distribution. Information collected by the School Census helps analyse not only the coverage of care, but also the quality of provision in public and private schools around the country. We must remember, for example, that the transfer of funds from Fundeb depends on the number of children reported in the School Census of the previous year and, therefore, their inclusion in the Census is an important achievement for child education.

¹⁹ Since 1955 Brazil has a National School Feeding Programme (Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar - PNAE), which provides, through funding transference, food for the children of childhood education and elementary school enrolled in public schools and others: philanthropic, indians and afro-brazilian communities. The goal is to meet the feeding needs of the pupils during school hours. Today the amount given by the federal government with this purpose, by school day, is R\$ 0.22 per child, and in the schools for Indians and blacks the amount is R\$ 0.44 per *capita* (see www.mec.gov.br).

Table 3, taken from *Report 1 on Schooling Inequalities in Brazil* (Presidency of the Republic, 2006), provides a brief picture of PNAD data between 1995 and 2005, outlining an overview of education access during that decade.

Table 3: Attendance rate of Children aged 0 to 5, by Sex, Color, Household Location, Big Regions and Range of Families Monthly Income per Capita According to Age Groups - Brazil- 1995 e 2005

Brazil, Sex, Color, Household location	0 to 3 years			of age 4 to 5 years		
	1995	2005*	Difference	1995	2005*	Difference
Brazil	7,6	13,3	5,8	42,4	63,7	21,3
Sex						
Male	7,7	13,6	5,9	41,3	63,5	22,1
Female	7,5	13,1	5,6	43,5	63,9	20,3
Difference	0,2	0,6		-2,2	-0,4	
Colour						
White	8,7	14,6	5,9	44,8	65,7	20,9
Black or mulatto	6,2	12,0	5,7	39,8	61,8	22,0
Difference	2,5	2,7		5,0	3,9	
Household situation						
Urban	9,2	15,2	6,0	48,2	67,5	19,3
Rural	2,7	5,0	2,3	25,0	46,3	21,3
Difference	6,5	10,2		23,2	21,2	
Big Regions						
North**	5,6	7,0	1,3	44,3	54,4	10,0
Northeast	7,1	11,7	4,6	47,2	70,9	23,7
Southeast	8,3	15,8	7,5	43,1	67,3	24,1
South	8,6	16,1	7,4	32,8	49,1	16,3
Midwest	5,5	10,0	4,5	34,4	49,9	15,5
Difference South- North	3,0	9,1	6,1			
Difference Northeast– South				14,4	21,8	
Family income per capita						
20% poorer	4,9	9,0	4,1	31,0	53,9	22,9
20% richer	20,3	27,8	7,5	72,0	85,7	13,7
Difference	15,4	18,8		41,0	31,8	

Source: IBGE, National Household Survey (PNAD), 1995 e 2005. In: Presidência da Republic, 2006 ,p.34.

*values harmonized excluding rural population of the North.

**excluding rural population.

It is clear that access to childhood education expanded during that period and most significantly in pre-school. The numbers show that the social and demographic aspects of the population were a strong determinant of access. Especially for children of 0 to 3 years, the expansion meant higher day care centre attendance for middle class children, thus increasing the gap between the richest and the poorest (from 15.4% to 18.8%). In the

range of 4 to 6 years, although the rich still continued to have more access, there was an increase of 22.9% of pre-school attendance for the poor (31% to 53.9%), which decreased the differences in accessibility between the groups.

The *Report 2 on Schooling Inequalities in Brazil* (Presidency of the Republic, 2007) compares data of the National Household Survey in 2005 and 2006, in order to capture the changes underway in the educational sector. The Chart 1 below shows the development of access for children to the first phase of basic education.

Chart 1: Access to quality early childhood education

Indicators	2005			2006		
Attendance rate	Brazil: 13%			Brazil: 15,5%		
Day care centres:	Inequalities *			Inequalities		
Children of 0 to 3 years	Black/Mulatto: 11.6%	White: 14.5%	2.9	Black/Mulatto: 13.8%	White: 17.1%	3.3
	Rural: 4.6%	Urbana: 15.2%	10.6	Rural: 6.6%	Urbana: 17.6%	11.0
	North: 5.8%	South: 16.1%	10.3	North: 8.0%	Southeast: 19.2%	11.2
	20% poorer: 8.6%	20% richer: 27.6%	19.0	20% poorer: 9.7%	20% richer: 29.6%	19.9
Attendance rate	Brazil: 63%			Brazil: 67,6%		
Pre-school:	Inequalities			Inequalities		
Children of 4 and 5 years	Black/Mulatto: 60.6%	White: 65.3%	4.7	Black/Mulatto: 65.4%	White: 70.2%	4.8
	Rural: 44.5%	Urban: 67.5%	23.0	Rural: 50.0%	Urban: 72.0%	22.0
	South: 49.1%	Northeast: 70.9%	21.8	South: 53.7%	Northeast: 73.8%	20.1
	20% poorer: 52.2%	20% + richer: 85.7%	33.5	20% poorer: 58.0%	20% + richer: 87.2%	29.2

Source: IBGE, National Household Survey (PNAD- IBGE), 2005 e 2006. In: Presidência da Republic, 2007, p. 36.

* In percentage points

Access for children aged 4 and 5 is better, as the PNAD survey suggested in 2006: 67.6% of that age range attended pre-school, a percentage that exceeds the PNE's target (coverage of 60% of children aged 4 to 6 years in 2006).

These percentages indicate a more optimistic picture for Brazilian education because, as revealed in the National System for Basic Education Evaluation (SAEB), sponsored by INEP, there is an increase of 32% in the chances of a Brazilian child finishing high school when they have access to early childhood education (PDE, 2007, p.44). Studies have shown that early childhood education has positive effects throughout the education of any child, but with greater impact on the poorest (Campos 1997, Brazil, 2006).

In absolute numbers, the School Census 2000 and 2006 showed an increase of more than 600,000 enrollments in childhood education, mostly in public institutions. As for nurseries, there is a great difference between enrollment in the public and in the private ones, but this proportion increases when we consider the fact that there are communal nurseries – registered as private - which receive public funding due to special agreements with the municipalities. In pre-school, over 70% of enrollments are in public institutions.

Table 4: Number of enrollments in childhood education, in public and private institutions, nurseries and pre-schools. Brazil 2000- 2006 *

	Management	2000	2006
Day care centres	Public	582,238	917,460
	Private	334,626	510,482
Sub-total		916,864	1,427,942
Pre-schools	Public	3,332,173	4,148.226
	Private	1,089,159	1,439.927
Sub-Total		4,421,332	5,588.153
TOTAL		5,338,196	6,016,095

Source: MEC-INEP, School Census 2000 and 2006. In: www.edudataBrazil.inep.gov

* Edudata, source for School Census data, in March 2009 had information to 2006.

Table 5 shows the proportion of the number of institutions (public, private non-profit with special agreements and private with profit) of day-care and pre-school registered in the School Census 2005. Government funding covers almost all the establishments (78.2%) and the vast majority depend on municipal management.

Table 5: Proportion of childhood education institutions - public, with agreements, and private for nurseries and pre-schools – School Census 2005 – Brazil

	Total (100%)	Public	with agreements*	Private**
Total Childhood education	137,912	70.0%	8.2%	21.8%
Day care centres	32,296	53,0%	16.3%	30.7%
Pre-school	105,616	75,1%	5.7%	19.2%

Source: School Census, Inep-MEC- 2005.

* Private non-profit (communal, philanthropic, religious)

**Private profit based

As we have already indicated, early childhood education – services and management – is the priority of municipalities. Each of the 5,564 of them in the country have to make and

implement their policies. According to the 2006 report *Schooling Inequalities in Brazil* (Presidency of the Republic), one of the reasons for the low access of children to early childhood education is that there is an insufficiency of vacancies and financial resources for the public schools. In 2006 almost one-third of municipalities (29.5%) still didn't have public nurseries.

There are no national data about child education demand. Particularly for the age group 0 to 3 years, it is clear that there will always be a part of the population that won't ask for that kind of early education. There is no consensus at all on the importance of day-care for young children, and one of the goals of the PNE is to sponsor discussions with the civil society and especially with parents about child education as a right for all children. However, the poorer families have little chance of receiving it, because of insufficient schools.

With Fundeb's approval, on January 1, 2007 there was an increase in the supply of funds from the Union.²⁰ Inclusion of public nurseries, pre-schools and private non-profit institutions in funding means a great perspective for the expansion of supply. The supplemental role of the Union and the rise of the amount for each student suggest improvement in quality.

Fundeb's approval raises a central issue concerned with funding: the establishment of a student-cost capable of ensuring quality. As the Union is responsible for a share of resources every time that, in a state, the value does not reach the minimum set nationally, this value must be sufficient for the provision of quality as well. In 2009 the Union brought complementary action to one-third of Brazilian states: Alagoas, Amazonas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Pará, Paraíba, Pernambuco and Piauí. The Fundeb has an equalizing role, either through the Union's complementation in states which don't reach the minimum requirement, or in cities of a same state. Although the difference between the minimum and maximum value per student in one year may be as much as the double, disparities were much higher before the arrival of the national funding for education (Fundef and Fundeb).

Table 6 below provides the minimum and maximum values of 2009.

The establishment of quality parameters for early childhood education is one of the goals of the PNE, necessary to reach a student cost that ensures the quality of supply and to support local departments in the choice of criteria for allocation of resources.

²⁰ The Union's complementation is thus defined: R\$ 2.0 billion in 2007; R\$ 3.0 billion in 2008; R\$ 4.5 billion in 2009; and 10% of the Fundo's total as of 2010.

Table 6: Value student-year in day care centres and pre-schools on full-time and part-time basis, minimum and maximum estimated for Fundeb funding, in 2009

Federal Units, according to the minimum and maximum levels	Day care centres full time	Pre-school full-time	Day care centres part-time	Pre-school part-time
Minimum (US\$): Alagoas, Amazonas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Pará, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí.	675.04	736.41	490.94	613.63
Maximum(US\$): Roraima	1,445.04	1,576.40	1,050.94	1,313.67

Source: Portaria Interministerial nº 221 de 10/03/2009.

Note: The UNESCO dollar rate on June 8th 2009, was R\$2.02 (reais).

Carreira and Pinto (2007) conducted a study carried out during the National Campaign for the Right of the Child, in which, after the establishment of quality indicators and the definition of a school with quality standards, they managed to reach a student cost/initial quality (CAQi) by steps and modalities of basic education. The student cost/initial quality for full-time day-care was US\$ 1.872,77, without meals, and US\$2.049,00, including meals; and for pre-school, part-time, the cost for each student in a year was US\$821,28 without meals, and US\$ 885,64 with meals. Comparing these figures with those of Table 5, we can see that the higher cost of student/year in Brazil has not reached the value of CAQi for nurseries. But in pre-school, the student cost in the states of Roraima, São Paulo, Espírito Santo, Acre, Amapá and the Distrito Federal, in 2009, was above the CAQi. This is a sign that funding is becoming more sound in some states and, consequently, in local branches.

For there to be funds to finance child education was fundamental for the consolidation of the sector. But along with the financial support, technical support is also needed for an adequate management of funds, in order to improve quality as well as the monitoring and social control of resources. The latter is calculated by the Fundeb's councils of control and monitoring,²¹ which exist in all Brazilian municipalities. This collegiate body, with public officers and representatives of the school community, is designed to oversee and

²¹ Each council has 2 representatives of the Municipality Executive / Department of Education; 1 representative of teachers from the public basic education; 1 representative of directors of public basic schools; 1 representative of the staff of the public basic schools; 2 representatives of the parents of students from public basic education; 2 representatives of students of public basic education, one of them should be appointed by the students association. If the municipality has a Municipal Education Council and/or a Guardianship Council, one of its members also should be a member of the Fundeb Council. Although there is a minimum number of nine members for each Council, there is no limit in the legislation, but there must be a parity/balance in the number of members.

control the distribution, transfer and application of resources of the Fund at municipal, state and federal levels. Once any democratic process with participation of organized groups is a construct, it has been noticed that this participatory process begins to play an important role in the management and control of public resources for education.

As for the training of managers, apart from local initiatives, there is the School of Management Programme,²² launched in April 2007 by the MEC in partnership with 17 federal universities, intended to train more than 150,000 managers of municipal and state public schools in the coming years. The School of Management offers a specialization of 400 hours for those with a university degree and a 180-hours course of updating for those with high school level. Despite the emphasis on management of basic education, one cannot ignore that according to the systemic approach taken by the 2007 Education Development Plan-PDE, early childhood education and secondary education are considered pillars of basic education. The document mentions the importance of early childhood education for children - all recent studies on education clearly show that learning and development of pupils at elementary level, mainly of children of less educated parents, depend on access to early childhood education (p.8) - and considers children's education as an important basis for their learning and development. This is an assumption that can make a lot of difference in the management of local educational policies.

The expansion of the provision of early childhood education, public and free, especially in nurseries, is imperative for Brazil to achieve the goals of the PNE for 2011: to have 50% of children from 0 to 3 years in childcare and 80% of 4 to 5 year-olds attending pre-school. The consolidation of a democratic and inclusive education policy, in turn, needs to focus, through the three federative bodies, on actions directed primarily at children of 0 to 3 years from disadvantaged families: black, mulatto and rural.

Quality in Early Childhood Education

The expansion of early childhood education cannot take place without quality. This issue was discussed in seminars and publications, universities, state conferences on early childhood education, and the Inter-forums Movement of childhood education in Brazil-MIEIB, in the Ministry of Education, during the drafting of the LDB and soon after its promulgation. The debates sponsored by the MEC with specialists and representatives of civil society organizations resulted in several publications released nationally, among them: *National Policy for Early Childhood Education* (1994a), *For a Teacher Education in Early Childhood Education policy* (1994b), *Criteria for day care centres that meet the fundamental rights of children* (Brazil, 1995), *Pedagogical proposals and Early Childhood Education Curricula* (Brazil, 1996), *Road map for registration and functioning of Early Childhood Education institutions*, Volumes 1 and 2 (Brazil, 1998).

²² Its aim is to qualify directors and vice-directors of public schools at basic education level, to reach democratic management and improve quality. The number of places in specialization and up-to-date courses increased from 4,000, in 2007, to 6,600 in the first semester of 2008.

Also dating back to that period was a sequence of regulations set by the National Council of Education with the purpose of consolidating children's education as the first phase of basic education. Among these rules there were the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education*, the *Operational Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* and *National Curricular Guidelines for Teacher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and early years of elementary school, on secondary level, Normal modality*.

The first mentioned regulation, with legal backing, aims to guide the institutions of early childhood education through the organization, coordination, development and evaluation of their pedagogical proposals, so that they are able to take on the education of children in all its dimensions. This document and, in detail, its report (Report CNE / CEB 22/98) provide principles and fundamentals²³ of the educational dimension that is expected for children and highlights the need for each unit to develop its pedagogical proposal.

Aiming to continue with the consolidation of the educational dimension, teachers from all over the country working with child education in 1998 were given the National Curricular Reference for Child Education - RCNEI (Brazil, 1998). This document, in three volumes, available on the MEC website, was designed, as it says in the introduction, “to serve as a guide to educational thinking with concerns for goals, content and directives for those educators who work directly with children of 0 to 6 years, respecting their teaching styles and the Brazilian cultural diversity” (vol.1 p.3). In spite of the discussions that this guide has caused and still causes in the education sector, the information in it is useful to think about in relation to the curricular and pedagogical dimension of early childhood education and so it has been used by municipalities as a starting point to prepare their curricular proposals, and by schools to prepare their policy-pedagogical projects.

One of the goals of the PNE is precisely the development of policy-pedagogical projects with the participation of educators. As the School Census does not include this indicator, there's no index of childhood education institutions that have policy-pedagogical projects. This is one of the documents usually required for regulation of the units of early childhood education, therefore, it should be included as an administrative document in regulated schools.

The integration of early childhood education into school systems has stimulated the development and review of municipal curricular proposals. There is a movement at the municipal departments of education towards the production of information to help day-care centres and schools in developing their policy-pedagogical projects. Technical issues also highlight the limits and possibilities of local branches in this process, either because of the departments' technical qualification or because of possible partnerships with specialists and universities.

²³ The bulk of the guidelines are: respect for the ethical principles of autonomy, of responsibility, of solidarity and the common good; for the political principles of citizenship, of rights and duties, criticism and respect of the democratic order and the esthetic principles of sensibility, creativity, playfulness and the diversity of cultural and artistic actions.

But the policy-pedagogical project of a school is much more than a formal requirement for its institutionalization. It is the challenge of a collective group, as Kramer puts it (1996), a road that reveals itself through collective walking. Accordingly, the drafting of proposals and projects is a job that requires study, reflection, time and space for discussion in school units, besides the strengthening of the team's work. These are factors that lead to two interrelated and still fragile points related to the consolidation of the area: the working conditions of teachers and their education, initial and continuous.

The integration of nurseries and pre-schools into the education sector has also consolidated the professionalization of the early *childhood education* educator. After the LDB, the teaching role at this stage of education, which was taken up by any professional, became the responsibility of a teacher with a university degree, at licensure level, (although the so-called Normal course is accepted as minimum education for the profession, at secondary level but with pedagogical focus). To be a teacher of the first phase of basic education is to belong to a defined professional category, unionized and therefore with a legitimate association prepared to apply pressure and influence policy-makers.

The LDB equaled the career of childhood teachers to those of elementary school in the early years. As such, teachers have achieved the right to a career plan and benefits of his or her colleagues, like the inclusion in the Law 11.738 of July 16, 2008, which established a national minimum wage for teachers of public basic education. Note that R\$ 950.00 a month for a 40-hour working week, established by this law, benefit a substantial number of early childhood education teachers. Day care centre teachers with a university degree have an average wage of R\$ 759.00 for 30 hours a week, suggesting there are lower averages for teachers without a college degree.

Regarding the qualification of teachers of nurseries and pre-schools, comparing the School Census of 2000 with 2006 we can see a reduction of teachers with only primary education: in nurseries, they decreased from 22.1% to 5.2%, and in pre-schools they dropped from 9.3% to 2.1%. Teachers with complete secondary level in 2006 increased to 60.8% in nurseries and 52.3% in pre-schools; and teachers with higher education in 2006 were 34% in nurseries and 45.6% in pre-schools. The percentages reflect a significant progress, but are still behind the PNE target, which is to have all teachers with at least a complete secondary level by 2006 and 70% with higher education by 2011.

Regarding teacher education, after the creation of the first national fund for education, Fundef, in 1997, teacher education became increasingly more visible in public schools. The in-service teacher education became part of the policies of municipal and state education departments, and also of the Union. With the PDE's perspective of enabling teachers to perform in-service teacher education programmes in conjunction with institutions of higher education and with the technical and financial cooperation of the Union and States, special teacher education programmes were set up.

In the federal area, in order to promote the teacher certificate for teachers without the minimum qualifications required, the following programmes are being developed:

Proinfantil, for teachers of early childhood education, Proformação for those working in the early years of elementary school, and Prolicenciatura for teachers of the final years of primary school who have no licensure.

Proinfantil is a teacher certificate programme of secondary level, Normal modality, for teachers who work in nurseries and pre-schools, public and private (with philanthropic and communal characteristics). The programme is 3,200 hours long and is distributed in four modules per semester, each of them lasting 800 hours, with a duration of 2 years. It is an emergency programme designed to end in 2011, in partnership with public universities, and intended to reach the greatest possible number of the nearly 40,000 teachers without proper qualification.

It is noteworthy that besides the Union initiatives, many states and municipalities also have programmes for teacher education. At state level, there are many experiences of teacher education programmes. For higher education, amongst many other initiatives, there are: Veredas, a programme created through a partnership between the Department of Education of Minas Gerais state and the Federal University of Minas Gerais, with the aim of creating teacher certificates in early childhood education and early years in Pedagogy; the Higher Normal Course (Curso Normal Superior) of Ponta Grossa, a partnership between the state University of Ponta Grossa-UEPG and Electronics University of Brazil (Universidade Eletrônica- UEB), which granted certificates to 2,577 teachers; the PEC-Formação, providing experience of teacher education in the early years of primary education at the higher level, a result of a partnership between the Secretary of State of São Paulo and three universities - PUC-SP, USP and Unesp. This programme provided certificates for about 6,300 teachers in 2002 and in its second edition, PEC-Cities, which included early childhood education teachers, provided certificates for another 4,700 teachers in 41 municipalities of the state in 2008.

The specific character of early childhood education also relates to the universities, regarding scientific production, teacher education, expansion of postgraduate projects, amongst others. Some achievements have already been noticed within universities, such as the inclusion of early childhood education teaching in the Pedagogy courses (see Curricular Guidelines for Pedagogy-Resolution CNE / CP 1, 15/05/2006), which has led to discussions, curricula changes and expansion of production, with a greater academic research, papers and dissertations in the field of early childhood education, since the LDB.

Regarding infrastructure, one of the goals of the PNE is to draw up minimum standards for infrastructure designed to achieve proper functioning of early childhood education. This target was reached in 2006 when, after several regional seminars and forums sponsored by the MEC, two documents were published: “Basic parameters of infrastructure for institutions of early childhood education”, volumes 1 and 2 (Brazil, 2006a), intended to guide the systems in the construction and adaptation of facilities suitable for early childhood education and help them in regulating the institutions that are under their management and supervision, and “National parameters of quality for early childhood education”, Volumes 1 and 2 (Brazil, 2006 b), which deals with quality

education in a comprehensive way, including results of surveys on the subject, the relation between education systems with quality of supply, and quality parameters to be met by the institutions.

The School Census allow us to examine variables such as: size of the schools (number of classes), existence of TV-video rooms, science laboratories and computer facilities, Internet access, library, sports courts (park),²⁴ toilet, water, electricity, sewage facilities and others. Just as the report “Schooling Inequalities in Brazil” (2006 and 2007) points out, we looked at two categories for the study in order to analyze the infrastructure of day care centres and pre-schools, based on the School Census of 2006: the existence of parks (sports court), with space to play in and to ensure psychomotor development of activities in general, adapted to each age group, taking into consideration the conditions of safety and hygiene of the children.

Table 7 below gives a picture of these two variables in public and private schools with data from the School Census of 2000 and 2006.

Table 7: Number of day care centres and pre-schools, public and private, with adequate toilets and sports court (child park) - School Census-Brazil 2000 – 2006

		2000					2006				
		Total	With park	%	with toilet	%	Total	With park	%	with toilet	%
day care centres	public	11,289	575	5.1	4,779	42.3	18,492	1,305	7.1	10,091	54.6
	private	9,628	2,558	26.6	6,869	71.3	16,187	5,955	36.8	13,722	84.8
	Total	20,917	3,133	15.0	11,648	55.7	34,679	6,260	18.0	23,813	68.7
Pre-school	public	61,919	8,230	13.3	10,823	17.5	80,786	11,471	14.2	18,864	23.3
	private	22,698	8,250	36.3	15,394	67.8	26,589	11,561	43.5	21,736	81.7
	total	84,617	16,480	19.5	26,217	31.0	107,375	23,032	21.4	40,600	37.8

Source: MEC-INEP, School Census2000 e 2006. In: www.edudataBrazil.inep.gov

* Edudata, source for School Census data, in March 2009 had information up to 2006

The improvement of the nursery and pre-school infrastructure is a goal that is yet to be achieved. Integrating such institutions into the educational system means perspectives of change for the PNE to improve the infrastructure of Brazilian public schools. With such a goal in mind, in 2007 the federal government, acting together with the municipalities, launched the National Programme for Restructuring and Equipping Public Early Childhood Education-ProInfância, a programme aimed at the expansion of more suitable facilities through the construction of nurseries and childhood schools of early education and the acquisition of equipment. According to the MEC, between 2007 and 2008 the Proinfância invested in the construction of 973 schools in 939 municipalities. The target

²⁴ As the Census covers basic and higher education, without specifying early childhood education, the sports courts are, in early childhood education, spaces for sport activities, usually designated as park.

for 2009 is to finance 500 more units, as well as in 2010. The total resources available through this programme should exceed the R\$ 1.8 billion of 2007 by the end of 2010.

Another achievement for early childhood education has been the inclusion, in 2008, of the National Programme for School Library-PNBE, which distributed 1,948,140 books of literature to 85,179 public nurseries and pre-schools. The books contained verses in several styles and prose (short stories, novels, chronicles, plays, memoirs, biographies) and also books of pictures, comics, and some pieces of classical literature adapted to children.

It is noteworthy also that based on a perspective of including more Brazilian children in the educational system, the duration of compulsory primary education was increased to nine years (Law 11.114/05), with the inclusion of children who are six years old at the beginning of the school year (Law No. 11.274/06). As such, compulsory education in Brazil now includes a larger number of children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, for whom access is difficult. The entrance of six year old children in primary school puts a wider dialogue between the first two phases of basic education into perspective. Child education, with its pedagogical practices aimed at the whole development of children, focused on language(s), expression(s), playground, interdisciplinary knowledge etc., and with its system of monitoring, assessment, and reporting the development of children, has a great contribution to give in a dialogue with elementary school. And this interaction can be useful to consolidate the identity of early childhood education, which, paradoxically, is often based on a model which is inappropriate also for the education of children in the early years of elementary school.

7. Consequences of integration

The major consequence of the integration of day care centres and pre-school into the educational system has been the assertion of the right of children to an education. As noted previously, there has been an expansion of supply and greater investment in the quality of services provided. However, so far there are no surveys on the impact caused by these measures.

8. Lessons, implications and remaining challenges

The first lesson arising from the integration of day care centres and pre-schools into the education system is the historical achievements of the Brazilian children's education which has assigned the State to care for the education of children from birth onwards. The society and the State in Brazil can no longer disregard the constitutional right of these new citizens.

During the establishment of early childhood education as the first phase of basic education, voices from all over the country have come forward to enforce the legal citizenship of the child: those who took up the fight for the identity of children's education from 0 to 6 years, pressing on legislators, constructing together governments an educational policy consistent with democratic principles. Without this mobilization of social movements it would not have been possible to see the achievements regarding the coverage of care, development of a curriculum for children with indicators of quality, financing, participation channels, social monitoring etc. Perhaps this has been one of the biggest lessons experienced by the Brazilian State, which has addressed the challenges posed by society in favour of the option adopted in drafting the national policy for early childhood education.

As Bobbio (1992) points out, the right to education is the right to school education, because it is in the school premises that education is available to children. This was the option adopted by Brazil. The challenge today, as the author reminds us, is no longer to substantiate human rights, but to protect them. An important step in ensuring the right to education was taken when it was designated as a subjective public right, which meant power of action in the protection and defense of an inalienable commodity that was at the same time legally recognized (Horta, 1998 p.6). This power of action implies public pressure on the decision-making process and ground-upwards initiatives when the educational demand is not met. For example, those responsible for children may appeal to the Guardianship Council,²⁵ which acts as advocate toward protecting the right of the child. To meet the demands of early childhood education is to fulfill a duty of the State concerning the right of the child and an option of the parents. The protection of social rights, which addresses Brazilian inequalities, has required the presence of the State and the participatory initiatives of civil society organizations in order to move forward with appropriate policies and their effective enforcement.

This lesson is supported by the idea that children are active social beings, producers of culture, subjects with rights, citizens in progress and whose development has physical, social, emotional and cognitive aspects. This concept implies effort and is a challenge for the rethinking of educational practices in public and private forums, more consistent with the integrality of the child and therefore with the identity of this field of work. The fact that attendance in educational institutions has been focused on education and childcare for 0 to 6 years-olds, in a joint effort with their families, is of particular relevance, due to the novelty of its purpose.

Another lesson concerns the federative model of the State. The importance of the process experienced in recent decades to build the consensus that led to a national policy for early childhood education with the several government bodies plus different sectors of civil society, nongovernmental organizations, city, state and Union councils, legislators, that is, multiple looks, times and spaces, which resulted in the recognition of day care centers

²⁵ Guardianship Council is a permanent municipal public body, with autonomy and designed to oversee the rights of children and the under-aged, according to the principles established by the Statute of Children and Adolescents (ECA). The councilors are directly elected for a 3-year mandate and act as spokesmen of their respective communities, in order to ensure the rights of children and adolescents.

and pre-schools as educational establishments, as part of education systems and, therefore, regulated, managed and supervised by educational bodies has been emphasized. Today, apart from the particularities of this service, they behave like an educational unit.

To be the at first rung of basic education means to participate in the educational policy debate: to define resources, guidelines, programmes and actions. As part of this process it was possible, for example, to take broad actions for the inclusion of day care centres and schools in the Fundeb. Another target of this field is the project to expand and improve the quality of education. Distribution of educational material, books, literature, school transport, meals, construction and reform of physical facilities, as well as teacher education are, amongst others, examples of the integration of early childhood education in educational policy.

The Brazilian choice of system has brought to the political, administrative and theoretical arena a new look at children and their specific education concerns. Maybe this is the greatest implication of the integration of early childhood education.

Based on the analysis made throughout this report, and although not many studies have yet been made on impact, there are obvious achievements arising from the integration of day care centres and pre-school education. There has been progress in the organization of the State on a federative pact, in the organization of education systems, in the definition of financing rules, in the expansion of access, in the discussion on quality parameters and on the specific stage of child education and teacher professionalization. In this sense, the challenges are consequences of the achievements and inherent to the process of sustaining the policy of early childhood education. Which is how it has assumed the diversity, in content and depth, of the many benefits of integration and the challenges to come.

As Brazil is a country of continental dimensions, with significant cultural and regional differences, and high social inequality, the achievements and challenges must be seen within their specific contexts: the challenges for some - federal branches, departments of education, boards and institutions of early childhood education - may be achievements for others. In this perspective the issues are presented below. Some are challenges, some are reflections and recommendations for different levels of management - from policy to day-to-day school - on the consolidation of quality in the first stage of basic education for Brazilian children:

On the concept of early childhood education

The achievements create the need for continuous reflection on how to bring about changes in exclusionary concepts and practices. In this sense, it is important:

- To put into practice the policy- pedagogical idea of the child as a whole, with indivisible body and mind, and the interdependence of physical, social, emotional and cognitive aspects;

- To pursue an identity for the educational services that can repel the sanitation- and assistance-orientated models, as well as the instructional and preparatory school models, dualities that represent barriers to change;
- To establish mechanisms for cooperation between education, health, social protection, assistance, culture, aiming at the integral care of children, complementing the family;
To establish an integrated curricula for day care centres and pre-school, associated with the early years of primary education, breaking up the divisions;
- To create room for a permanent dialogue with primary education educators promoting the exchange of theoretical and practical experiences, especially at this time of transition, with the integration of 6 years-olds in elementary school and its expansion to 9 years; issues about the ongoing assessment, monitoring and report of child developments, on play and games – these are important actions that can contribute to rethinking the related pedagogical proposals for a child of 0 to 10 years.

On national management

It is a duty of the Union to encourage policies and play a supplemental role to the states, the Federal District and municipalities. In recent years, the MEC's efforts in such areas have been visible. However, to promote fairness it is necessary to push policies forward, especially:

- To create, maintain and expand national programmes, offering them to the municipalities, with federal funds, increasing and improving the quality of care;
- To financially support the municipalities and Federal District in the construction, expansion and reform of the institutions of childhood education, as well as to purchase equipment, furniture, toys, books and educational materials;
- To technically support the other federal branches, and promote the teacher certificate in early childhood education and continuing teacher education, in order to not only to encourage those who do not have the minimum education required by law to qualify, but also encourage progression in the teaching career;
- To establish quality parameters for early childhood education as a reference for the supervision, control and evaluation to ensure the adoption of measures to improve quality;
- To disseminate research and studies that show the importance of quality in early childhood education and its role in the educational performance of students;
To interact with state forums on early childhood education in order to evaluate the National Policy for Early Childhood Education;
- To hold regional seminars to discuss the main obstacles to this kind of education as well as the solutions reached.

On local management

The commitment of municipalities and their public and private institutions on the provision of quality in early childhood education requires integrated actions capable of:

- Expanding and extending the provision of a quality public service;
- Creating conditions for access and attendance in day-care to those who have not yet been provided with the service;
- Extending the provision of early childhood education to a full-time basis;
- Encouraging the development of state and municipal plans for education within the legal framework;
Designing goals and strategies of action aimed at the effective integration of the institutions of early childhood education to school systems and the consequences arising from it;
- Investing in the improvement of quality, ensuring space, equipment, toys and materials appropriate for early childhood education, considering cultural diversity and special educational needs;
- Guaranteeing the identity of the institutions of early childhood education, ensuring their autonomy and the teachers' authorship for their work there;
- Promoting and encouraging the participation of teachers in programmes of initial and continuing teacher education;
- Developing a career plan for the teachers of early childhood education;
- Including all nurseries into the education system, whether financed by agreements and/or under social assistance management, or non-accredited;
- Creating conditions for all institutions of early childhood education in the municipality to respond to the School Census;
- Encouraging links between the various departments and sectors, through the implementation of actions and integrating programmes;
- Creating better working conditions for teachers, reducing the number of children per class, ensuring hours of planning, study and teacher education;
- Promoting the inclusion of teachers of non-profit private schools in projects of continuous teacher education sponsored by the Department of Education.

On pedagogical practices

It is necessary to consolidate the space for reflection in the institutions of early childhood education, so that the practices may:

- Be planned, designed and built collectively, taking as a starting point the children of 0 to 6 years, their socio-historical context, their cultural background, relationships, interactions;
- Ensure children the right to play, receive individual care, a comforting atmosphere, contact with nature, hygiene, healthy food, to develop their curiosity, imagination and capacity for expression, and movement in large spaces,

- protection, affection, friendship, for the expression of their feelings and the development of their cultural and religious identities;
- Consider the particularities of children under 3 years old when drafting pedagogical proposals, since, in most institutions, proposals for older children are just adapted to younger children;
 - Promote situations in which professionals, children and families establish a relationship of belonging, so that they themselves feel part of the institution;
 - Think about the educational space as a place of interaction and confrontation between children, and promote the culture of peers, of children and adults – both groups experiencing the discovery of teaching and learning - and of the adults amongst themselves, whoever they are: mothers, parents, teachers etc., who live the intense challenge of questioning one's role, reviewing their knowledge and experiences;
 - Think about daily life critically, offering an early childhood education in which children can develop, build, acquire knowledge and become autonomous and cooperative;
 - Develop shared activities and a permanent dialogue between the management of the institution and the team of educators, children and their families;
 - Overcome the limited idea of education and care as a preparation for primary school and conceive the day care centres and pre-schools as spaces for cultural education;
 - Create a space for different languages to be seen as possibilities for the expression of thought and knowledge of the world and its cultures, as an important process in the shaping of identities, as a relevant axis of work;
 - Establish a cultural environment rich with possibilities, where painting, modelling, design, theatre/body expression, music, literature etc. provide different possibilities of expression;
 - Take into account the way children play, their preferences, because these indicate a production of meanings and actions;
 - Create collective spaces for study and discussion between educators about their experiences with children as a prerequisite for an "educative doing" which is constantly assessing the relations established at the institutional level (educators, children and families) and the current theoretical assumptions, its goals and objectives;
 - Create conditions for continuous teacher education in-service, because this process leads to the construction of pedagogical proposals, especially facing the challenge of linking theoretical concepts with issues of daily practices with children.

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Glossary

CAQI - Student Cost Initial Quality. A study carried out in 2007 by the National Campaign for the Right to Education. It shows how much should be spent per student in basic education so that the country can provide effective and quality education.

CBIA - Brazilian Centre for Childhood and Adolescence, a successor to Funabem.

CEBAS - Certificate of Social Assistance Organization, granted to philanthropic institutions.

CEE - State Council of Education. A board created in several Brazilian states from 1961 onwards under the regulation of the first National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, aiming to guide the educational policy in the states.

The councils' role is to regulate the guidelines of the National Council of Education. Over recent decades this role was expanded to include advisory and deliberative functions.

CF - Brazilian Constitution promulgated in October 1988, prepared by a National Constituent Assembly, after a period of 20 years of military dictatorship.

CLT - Consolidation of Labour Laws. In force since 1943. It comprises the entire Brazilian labour legislation and has been updated ever since with new laws.

CME - Municipal Council of Education. It establishes rules and advises the Municipal Department of Education and may or may not be integrated into the Municipal System of Education. In the cities without a Municipal Council of Education, child education is regulated by the rules of the State Council of Education.

CNBB - National Conference of Brazil's Bishops. Main representative body of the Catholic church in Brazil.

CNCC - Child and Constituent National Committee. Founded in 1986 by a group of seven ministries and nine society organizations and an intergovernmental organization to coordinate the Child and Constituent National Movement which aimed to include the rights of the child within the new Constitution of the country.

CNE - The National Education Council. A body attached to the MEC structure which was established under Law 9131 of 24 November 1995. Its task is to search for democratic alternatives and institutional mechanisms that may ensure the participation of society in the development, improvement and consolidation of national education. The tasks of the Council are normative, deliberative, and advisory to the Minister of Education, helping to carry out duties related to federal authorities in this area, and to propose and evaluate the national policy of education, ensuring quality, law enforcement

regarding education and the participation of society in the improvement of the Brazilian education.

CNDM - National Council for Women's Rights. A body which was established in 2004 attached to the Ministry of Justice.

COEDI - General Coordination of Childhood Education. An agency of the MEC's Department of Basic Education. It is responsible for the federal government's policy and the technical assistance for the education systems in the area of childhood education.

COEPRE - Coordination of Pre-School Education, created in 1974 by the Ministry of Education, in the area of the Department of Basic Education, today called COEDI.

CRAS - Reference Centre for Social Assistance. A body of the Ministry of Social Development in charge of families and children.

DAY CARE CENTRES - Educational institutions for children from 0 to 3 years of age. Available in early childhood educational centres or classes of basic education, with part-time (4 to 5 hours per day) or full-time (8 to 10 hours per day) services. The legal qualification requirement of teachers is higher education, but secondary education teaching certificate ("Normal" course) is also accepted.

DNCr - National Children's Department. A federal government agency, created in 1940 to coordinate activities related to motherhood, childhood and adolescence.

ECA - Statute of the Child and Adolescent. Created under the Law 8069 in 1990. It established the rights of children and adolescents and the duty of the State, the family, and the society in ensuring the fulfillment of these rights.

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - first stage of basic education, consisting of day care (for children aged 0 to 3 years) and pre-school (for children aged 4 to 6 years).

FEBEM - State Foundation for the Welfare of Minors. See FUNDABEM below.

FENAJ - National Federation of Journalists.

FNDC - National Front of Children's Rights.

FNDE - National Fund for Education Development is a local agency of the Ministry of Education, the role of which is to provide resources and implement actions for the development of education, in order to guarantee education of good quality to all Brazilians.

TRAINING OF CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS - According to Article 62 of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, teachers who work in basic education should be graduates of either university and higher education institutions or of

secondary schools for teachers (known in Brazil as *Normal* schools), which are accepted as minimum training for teachers of early childhood education and of the first four grades of elementary school.

Teachers with this secondary level are accepted in some poorer regions where childhood educators with higher education are not available. However, one of the goals of the National Education Plan is that the training in higher level should reach 70% of teachers of basic education by 2011. (See page 52 of report).

FÓRUM DCA - Forum for Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adolescent.

FUNABEM - National Foundation for Welfare of Children, established in 1964, successor to the Office of Assistance to Children (SAM). Funabem was succeeded by the Brazilian Centre of Children and Adolescents (CBIA), under the Ministry of Social Welfare.

FUNDEB - Maintenance and Development Fund for Basic Education and Teaching, created by Constitutional Amendment in 2006.

IBGE - Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. An agency of the Ministry of Planning responsible for surveying statistical studies in Brazil.

IDI - Index of Child Development. It includes variables related to: provision of health services (antenatal care coverage, immunization), provision of education, care and protection that the family must provide to the child in the early years (represented by the education level of the parents). This indicator was created by UNICEF.

INAN - National Institute for Food and Nutrition, created in 1972 attached to the Ministry of Health. It is responsible for the national policy on food and nutrition, as well as food and nutrition programmes of the federal government. INAN was dissolved in 1998 and its functions were absorbed by the Ministry of Health

INEP - Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research. A federal agency linked to the Ministry of Education (MEC), with the mission to promote studies, research and evaluation of the Brazilian educational system, aiming to support the drafting and implementation of policies of education and taking into account parameters of quality and equity, and produce clear and reliable information to managers, researchers, educators and the general public.

LBA - Brazilian Legion of Assistance. An agency created in 1942 by the federal government. It took charge of the area of social assistance directed at families and children alike, through projects of day care centres and special agreements with local authorities in states and municipalities, as well as with community organizations, philanthropic and religious organizations which deal with the care of pre-school children.

LBA became a foundation in 1969, linked to the Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance, but was abolished in 1995. Its assignment was taken over by the Ministry.

LDB - National Education Guidelines and Framework Law. It came into force on 20 December 1996.

LOAS - Organic Law of Social Assistance, approved in 1992. It regulates social assistance in Brazil, following the new principles and guidelines defined by the 1988 Federal Constitution.

MDS - Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, created during the administrative reform of the federal government in 2004. It is responsible for policies on social development, welfare and food and nutrition security.

MEC - Ministry of Education, a body of the federal administration in charge of education at national level.

MESP - Ministry of Education and Health, established in 1930. In 1953 the two areas were split and since then are represented by specific Ministries.

MNMMR - National Movement of Street Boys and Girls, founded in 1985 with the purpose of providing assistance to homeless adolescents of both sexes and training social educators. The long term goal of MNMMR is to encourage street adolescents to participate in the search for solutions of problems that affect their lives and to fulfill their citizenship rights.

MIEIB - Inter-forum Movement of Childhood Education in Brazil. This movement comprises childhood education forums of 25 Brazilian states dedicated to the search for joint actions towards the strengthening of childhood education as a field of knowledge, of professional activity and of public educational policy.

The members of the MIEIB share the principle of non-institutionalization of the movement, in order to preserve its social character. They advocate a permanent opening to the participation of the general public and encourage the plurality of ideas and free expression.

On December 1999 the movement set up a list of activities, including: the need to expand the networks, to improve the quality of services, to effectively integrate childhood education into the education systems, to channel financial resources, to define standards for accreditation and regulation of the institutions as well as adequate training of education workers and its conceptual consistency.

MPAS - Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance, currently Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger.

OAB - Brazilian Lawyers Organization.

OMEP - World Organization for Pre-school Education. A nonprofit society organization founded in Paris in 1948. In Brazil it was established in 1953 under the name OMEP Brazilian National Committee or OMEP Brazil.

PDE - Education Development Plan, attached to the Ministry of Education and created in 2007.

PNAD - National Household Sample Survey. Statistical survey conducted annually by the IBGE, covering the entire national territory by means of samples. It annually collects information on housing, income and workforce, associated with certain demographic characteristics and education.

PNBE - National Library Programme at School. Created in 1997 to expand access to culture and information and encourage the habit of reading among students, teachers, and the population through a wider distribution of collections of books of literature, research and reference.

PNAE - National School Meal Programme. Created in 1955, it has undergone several changes throughout its history, particularly concerning decentralization processes. Currently it guarantees, through the transfer of financial resources, meals for pupils of early childhood education and elementary education enrolled in public, philanthropic, and indigenous schools, as well as pupils from communities of slave descendents.

PNE - National Plan of Education, approved by Law 10172, in 2001, with ten year targets at all levels, stages, and types of education.

PME - Municipal Education Plan. It contains the educational proposals of the municipality, with the setting of guidelines, goals and targets as defined in the National Education Plan. The PME's preparation requires society participation, under the coordination of the Municipal Department of Education.

PRE-SCHOOL - School for children aged 4 to 5 years and 11 months. It is provided both in early childhood education centres or in classes of basic education, part-time (4 to 5 hours per day) or full-time (8 to 10 hours per day). The legal qualification requirement of teachers is higher education, but secondary education teaching certificate ("Normal" course) is also accepted.

PROAPE - Project of Pre-School Pupil Attendance, established in 1977.

PROFORMAÇÃO - A programme set up by the Department of Distance Education. It is a course of secondary level which qualifies students for teaching, held by MEC in partnership with states and municipalities. It is designed for teachers with no specific training who are already teaching in the first four grades, in literacy classes, or in the Youth and Adult Education course held in public schools around the country.

PROINFÂNCIA - A programme for building and equipping childhood education establishments. It was created in 2007 by MEC and is currently managed through agreements with the local City Hall.

PROINFANTIL - Created in 2005 by the MEC, it is a distance learning course of training for teaching, at secondary level, in the “Normal” mode. The students are teachers who work in the municipal and state systems of education, childhood education teachers who work in day care centres and pre-schools of public and nonprofit private network, the latter being philanthropic, religious or community-based, through special agreements or otherwise and who have not the training required by the legislation in force.

PROLICENCIATURA - The programme offers distance training to teachers who are working in the latest years/grades of elementary school or secondary school of the public systems of education. The programme is carried out through partnership with higher education institutions that implement distance teaching courses, with the same duration of regular courses, so that the student teachers may continue their professional activities.

RCNEI - National Curricular Reference for Early Childhood Education. A document comprising three volumes, available on the MEC website, designed to serve as a guide to educational thinking about goals, content and guidelines for educators who work directly with children from zero to six years, respecting their pedagogical styles and Brazilian cultural diversity.

SAEB - National System of Assessment of Basic Education, carried out by INEP-MEC.

SAM - Service of Assistance to Minors. Established in 1941 under the Ministry of Justice. Replaced by FUNABEM.

SBP - Brazilian Society of Pediatrics

SEB - Department of Basic Education, attached to MEC, in charge of the three levels of basic education in Brazil: early childhood, elementary and secondary.

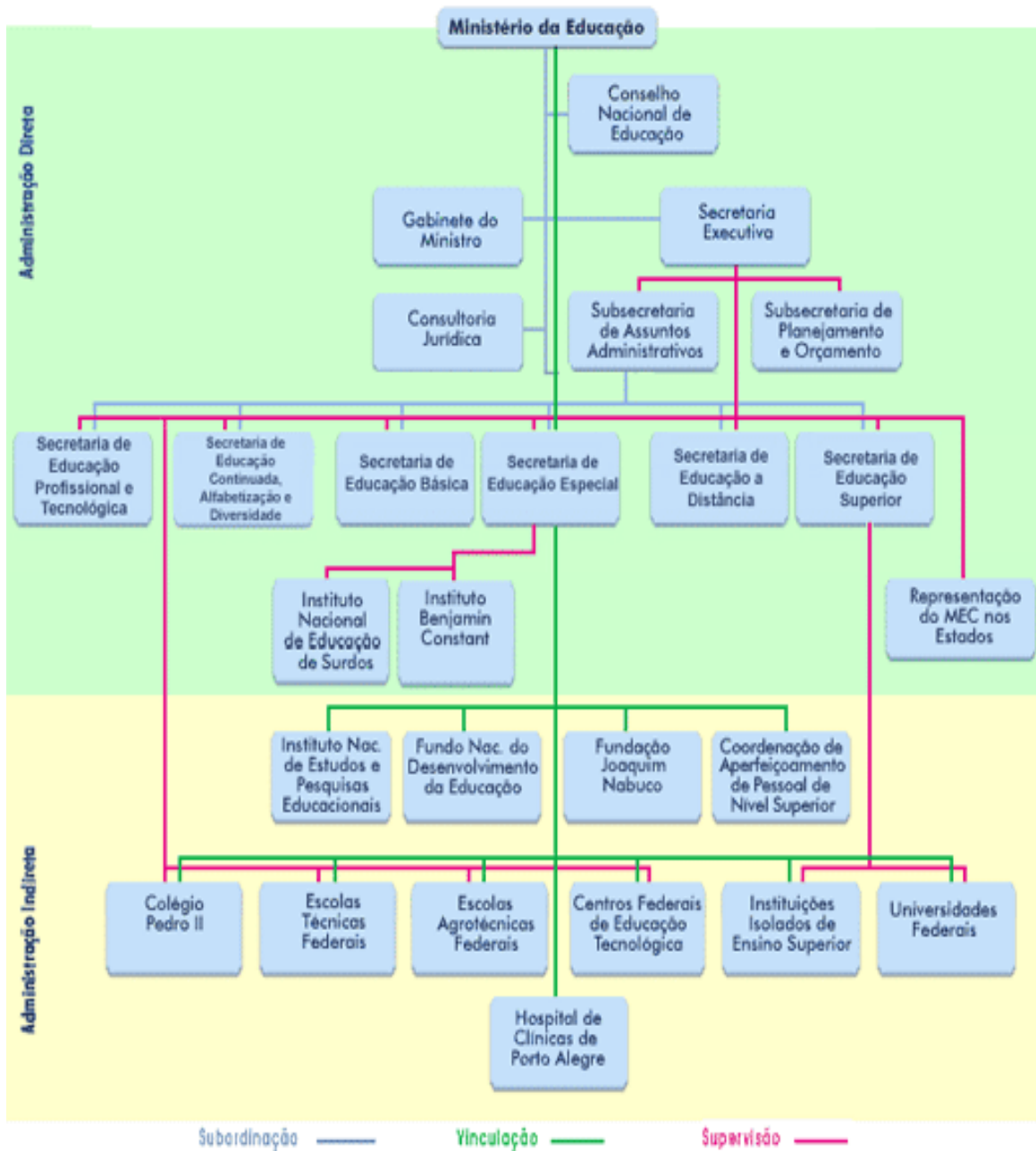
SME - Municipal Department of Education.

SUAS - Single System of Social Assistance, established in 2004.

UNICEF - United Nations International Children’s Fund.

Annex I

Organization of the Ministry of Education



Annex II

Causes and indicators of educational inequalities in Brazil

Causes	Indicators	2005	2006		
Access	Insufficient supply of vacancies in public schools	Relation demand / vacancy for children of 0 to 3 years	No information on demand		
		Relation demand / vacancy for children of 4 to 5 years	No information on demand		
		Percentage of resources applied by Ministry of Education			
	Insufficiency of public funding in public education to finance supply		0.18%	0.18%	
		Number of municipalities with tax earning lower than R\$ 100 million	863	544	
	Childhood education is not considered part of education and first phase of educational process	Percentage of municipalities without public day care centres	32.3%	29.5%	
Quality		Percentage of municipalities without public pre-school	2.3%	0.5%	
	Impaired Infrastructure in public and with agreements		Percentage of children who attend childhood schools without playground	54.6%	53.3%
			Percentage of children who attend childhood schools without proper toilets	48.7%	44.4%
	Downgrading of teaching profession	Average monthly wage of childhood teachers with university degree (30 hours per week)	Brazil: US\$ 375.74	Brazil: US\$ 509.50	
	Inadequate teachers education	Teachers without licensure	14.8%	14.4%	
	Institutional weakness of many municipalities	Proportion of municipalities without Council of Municipal Education	55%	44%	
	Impaired management of education systems and at public schools	Indicator to be constructed			

Source: Presidency of Republic, Schooling Inequalities in Brazil, number 2, 2007, p. 36

Note: The UNESCO dollar rate on June 8th 2009, was R\$2.02 (reais).

Annex III

Structure of the Brazilian Educational System

Levels of teaching and stages		Duration	Age range	Responsible for the Public services suppliers	Responsible for the Private services suppliers	
Basic education	Childhood education	Day care centers	3 years	From 0 to 3 years	Municipality	Private, philanthropic, religious and community institutions
		Pre-school	2 years	From 4 to 5 years and 11 months	Municipality	Private, philanthropic, religious and community institutions
	Elementary (compulsory)		9 years	From 6 to 14 years	Municipality and State	Private, philanthropic, religious and community institutions
	Secondary level		3 years	From 15 to 17 years	State	Private, philanthropic, religious and community institutions
Higher education	Courses by area		Variable	Above 17 years	Union, States, DF and Municipalities	Private, philanthropic, religious and community institutions

Source: LDB (Law 9.394, 1996) - National Education Guidelines and Framework Law.