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Colloquium Humanarum

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES IN DAYCARE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BABY AWARENESS

Práticas pedagógicas na creche e o desenvolvimento da consciência do bebê

Práticas pedagógicas em la guardería y el desarrollo de la conciencia del bebé

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ABSTRACT
The present study was motivated by theoretical findings that indicate that, when working with babies in day care, in general, there are still conceptions that characterize the routine as household chores, focused on protection, food and hygiene, a non-directive teaching job, spontaneous, based on everyday life and waiting for the baby's development to come and that, for this reason, there is no pedagogical work to be done with him. This text aims to defend the pedagogical practices experienced at the daycare as promoters of the baby's awareness development. We understand consciousness as a typically human capacity that develops through social interactions and cultural appropriations since the birth of the baby. This theoretical-bibliographic study is based on historical-cultural theory and its understanding of child development process. This theory has helped us to understand human development from an early age in distinctive periods which each have their leading activities that contribute most to this process. As a result it shows us the necessity of intentional pedagogical practices mediations to provide babies with moments of objects exploration and relationships with more experienced individuals who use speech to signify human actions. Such discussion collaborates with the teacher in his function, who plans and organizes didactic elements in order to enable the baby's development of consciousness in the daycare center.
Keywords: babies; practical experiences; awareness.

RESUMO
O presente estudo foi motivado a partir de constatações teóricas que indicam que, no trabalho com bebês em creche, de modo geral, ainda há concepções que caracterizam a rotina como afazeres domésticos, focado na proteção, alimentação e higiene, um trabalho docente não diretivo, espontâneo, embasado no cotidiano e na espera pelo desenvolvimento do bebê que há de vir e que, por isto, não há trabalho pedagógico a ser realizado com ele. Neste texto temos o objetivo de defender práticas pedagógicas diferenciadas na creche como promotoras do desenvolvimento da consciência do bebê. Entendemos a consciência como capacidade tipicamente humana que se desenvolve, desde o nascimento, considerando as interações sociais e apropriações culturais. De cunho teórico-bibliográfico, o estudo fundamenta-se na teoria histórico-cultural e, sobretudo, nos processos de desenvolvimento infantil. Nesse sentido, a citada teoria nos ajuda a entender o desenvolvimento humano desde a mais tenra idade, assim como seus distintos períodos e respectivas atividades que contribuem de forma significativa para a efetivação deste

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processo. Como resultado, evidenciou-se a necessidades de práticas pedagógicas planejadas, organizadas e desenvolvidas de forma intencional pelo professor de modo a proporcionarem momentos de exploração de objetos e a relação dos bebês com indivíduos mais experientes, sendo que a fala é utilizada para significar socialmente as ações humanas. Tal discussão colabora com o professor no exercício de sua função, o qual planeja e organiza elementos didáticos de forma a possibilitar o desenvolvimento da consciência do bebê desde a creche.
Palavras-chave: bebês; experiências práticas; consciência.

RESUMEN
El presente estudio fue motivado por hallazgos teóricos que indican que, al trabajar con bebés en guarderías, en general, todavía existen concepciones que caracterizan la rutina como tareas del hogar, enfocadas en la protección, alimentación e higiene, un trabajo docente no directivo, espontáneo, basado en la vida cotidiana y esperando que llegue el desarrollo del bebé y que, por eso, no hay trabajo pedagógico que hacer con él. En este texto pretendemos defender prácticas pedagógicas diferenciadas en las guarderías como promotoras del desarrollo de la conciencia del bebé. Entendemos la conciencia como uma capacidade tipicamente humana que se desarrolla, desde el nascimiento, considerando las interaciones sociales y las apropriaciones culturales. De carácter teórico-bibliográfico, el estúdio se fundamenta em la teoria histórico-cultural y, sobre todo, em los processos de desarrollo infantil. Em este sentido, la mencionada teoria nos ayuda a compreender el desarrollo humano desde edades tempranas, así como sus diferentes períodos y respectivas actividades que contribuyen significativamente a la efectividad de este processo. Como resultado, se evidenció la necesidad de prácticas pedagógicas planificadas, organizadas e intencionalmente desarrolladas por la docente para propiciar momentos de exploración de objetos y de relación de los bebés com sujetos más experimentados, y se utiliza el habla para significar socialmente las accions humanas. Tal discusión colabora com el docente em el ejercicio de su función, quien planifica y organiza elementos didáctos a fin de viabilizar ele l desarrollo de la conciencia del bebé desde la guardería.
Palabras clave: bebés; experiencias prácticas; conciencia.

INTRODUCTION

For millions of years animals have lived in the most diverse spaces of the planet. For most, their relationship with nature is the same as that of their ancestors, one of dependence, whether for food or shelter. These animals do not modify nature, they adapt to it to ensure their survival. To illustrate this situation, let us consider primates, some of the most intelligent animals.

There are more than 350 species of primates on our planet today, and since they first appeared more than 65 million years ago, they have adapted to life in different habitats: in forests, in snow, with tides, etc. The anatomy of their hands allows them to firmly grasp any objects they desire, their frontally positioned eyes can accurately assess distances, to walk, run, or jump; crucial life-sustaining skills as they enable them to obtain food and protect themselves from predators, for example, high up in the trees. Their intelligence is superior to that of most other animals. These primates can overcome difficult problems and build lasting relationships and, most importantly, they can remember what they learned through emotional and instinctive interactions that were initiated in the mother/infant relationship (HOLMES, 2009).

Sumatran orangutans in tropical rainforests remain with their offspring until the age of 9, the longest of any primates other than humans. Over this time, infants will learn everything they need to know from their mothers and other family members how to live in the treetops and to protect themselves from predators. The infants will learn how to catch ants and termites, how to identify about 200 types of edible

plants and to distinguish them from poisonous ones, how to tell when a fruit is ripe and judge whether branches can support their weight. In addition to feeding, they will need to learn how to build a shelter between the branches to protect themselves from tropical rainfall and this requires years of practice. It is estimated that wild orangutans can live for about 50 years, thanks to the shared experience of the group as well as the genetic endowment of the species (HOLMES, 2009).

When apes have been placed in laboratories with children of the same age and exposed to the same experiences, particularly problems which require practice and use of objects to be solved, it was clear that human infants were less accomplished in motor and practical skills than the chimpanzees (MUKHINA, 1996). The Soviet zoopsychologist, Nadezhda Ladygina-Kots, adopted a chimpanzee of a year and a half and tried to "educate" it until it was 4 years old. The ape had full freedom in the house, with commercially produced toys and diverse objects at his disposal. His adopted mother tried to teach him the social use of such objects. She concluded in her diary that the chimpanzee's behaviors in games and its emotional manifestations were very similar to those of her son at the same age. At the same time, the chimpanzee was only able to imitate actions with objects, despite reproducing, he did not grasp the meaning of human action (MUKHINA, 1996).

In the wild, primates sometimes use natural objects, such as branches and stones, but they do not prepare tools for later use among members of the group. The use of natural artifacts is limited to practical, immediate action in the moment. The evolution of primates does not seem to transcend the biological plane. From this it is deduced that the behavior of the ape is largely written in the relationship between its genetic make up and the structure of its environment. Even with optimal social and cultural support from its group, it can not develop some human psychological qualities.

For Leontiev (1978), from the moment our ancestors felt the need to transform nature around them into objects and tools that would meet their vital needs, a process of biological transformation began, culminating in the social and cultural changes experienced by our species. As humans dominated and transformed nature, they also transformed themselves.

This relation of humans to nature was only possible due to the complication of the biological system that occurred throughout the process of human evolution. People created objects, elaborated signs to encode them, and socialized these signs among their peers, perpetuating them throughout their history in languages and artefacts. Therefore, human activity enabled us to develop tools, communication, and thought. In this way, the process of humanization for each human being takes as its base our biological inheritance, with the addition of cultural interactions and social life.

So human consciousness, a subjective reflection of reality, despite having a biological basis, develops primarily in social activity. Thus, our psychological activity is informed by a synthesis of our external, material and social relations. However, human consciousness is not formed directly in the relationship between subject and matter. A certain kind of activity with objects is required, mediated by a more knowledgeable other, so that the embedded human meanings are highlighted and assimilated.

Considering the reflections made up to this point, our objective in this text is to discuss the importance of the practical activity of human babies and its implications for the development of consciousness, also highlighting the role of the caregiver/practitioner in this process.

MATERIAL EXPERIENCE AS THE BASIS OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

Because the development of human consciousness is made possible by relationships with the objects of material culture historically constructed by humankind, social practice is indispensable. Babies and infants can only learn about the cultural meaning associated with people, objects, places and events when they are able to participate in cultural activities, mediated by 'teachers' who are willing to support their early efforts to join in. It is this mediating relationship which we want to examine, how babies are actively helped to access the humanity condensed into the things and practices around them and to forge these into an individual consciousness.

We understand that human babies can only enter into relation with the cultural objects and phenomena of the surrounding world through other people and through the establishment of a social process of communication and appropriation. Contrary to biological conceptions of the development of human consciousness, Mukhina (1996) argues that organisms are not determined by their genetic code but by the interaction between this code and their material environment. It is necessary, then, that babies throughout their development are helped to appropriate human forms of meaning and expression and this occurs only in social activity, when there is meaningful engagement with natural and cultural objects.

Thus it is correct to say that, for Vygotskyan psychology, the baby is "[…] a candidate for humanization" (PASQUALINI, 2013 p. 75), a hominid being, representative of the homo sapiens species with all the biological apparatus inherited from thousands of generations that enables it, given certain concrete and objective conditions, to learn and to develop towards its humanization.

Our thinking about human development needs to be focused on the real living conditions into which each individual human being is inserted from a very young age, since, in order to achieve humanization, it is necessary to provide specifically human social relations and appropriate cultural objects to enable this process. We can affirm, therefore, that for the development of consciousness it is necessary that babies come into contact with the forms of human expression, as well as with the material and symbolic objects constructed by humankind, through an education grounded in social practice.

We defend day care as an educational space geared towards cultural participation as a means of supporting the development of human babies' consciousness, emphasizing social interactions with more knowledgeable others, peers and cultural objects.

As in all periods of human development, so for the baby, the general genetic law of development affirms the primacy of external relations in the construction of higher mental functions. However, it is important to clarify that it is not all cultural objects and any social relationships with the environment that will affect the subject and promote development. Human beings are different in their constitutions and

ways of being, precisely because they establish different relations with the people and objects around them. One has to understand the dynamics of the development both of the human psyche in general and of each individual in its singularity.

It is therefore important to overcome some misunderstandings about the role of affect in the process of development of the baby. According to Gomes (2013) and Gomes and Mello (2010), misunderstanding of the affective aspect can negatively influence the educational process. Another common misconception derives from the separation between cognitive and affective processes, as if they were phenomena happening separately, with priority given to the cognitive aspect.

Gomes and Mello (2010, p. 684) defined affect as "[...] what mobilizes, so it reports sensitivity, sensations. Affect, or being affected, is related to the notion of being moved". This definition overcomes the dichotomies between subjective-objective and cognitive-affective. It is through activity that the subject will satisfy their needs. However, necessity as a feature of the state of the organism in itself is not sufficient to produce an activity. The subject must participate in relationships with the natural and / or cultural elements to satisfy their needs. Repkin (2003) explains that the cultural element of activities motivates subjects to act in order to satisfy their psychological needs.

For Leontiev (1978), analyzing the human need to act necessarily involves making an analysis of what moves the person, and the need-object-reason relationship becomes important in this process. Human consciousness is real and arises from the concrete and social life of individuals. Relationships with the social environment and with objects are the key drivers of human life, because it is in these relationships that the necessity to act arises.

According to Leontiev (1978; 1989), human relations can be driven by two kinds of reasons: activities can satisfy vital needs and also psychological needs. We know that in the development of the baby there are vital needs, for example eating and staying warm, inherent to survival, but there are also needs that are socially constructed. Social needs change throughout development, becoming more complex and humanized, since they are historical and culturally situated.

Thus, the material reality that affects a baby, over time, may become less relevant than the meanings associated with cultural interactions. Social needs are related to psychological development so each is dependent on the other. The motive, generated socially, is connected to the interests and psychic needs of each individual. This is why activity is always related to emotions and feelings. The human being is completely involved, because every activity satisfies a need and causes, invokes and awakens feelings of desire or repulsion (when negatively motivated). Therefore humans show emotional interest in reaching the goal that motivated their activity. In the development of the activity, emotions do not appear as part of the activities, but emerge in connection with the actions performed (LEONTIEV, 1989).

Therefore, from birth, babies have fundamental social needs. How they experience reality, culturally oriented in relationships with adults, will shape the dynamics of their development. Vygotsky called this experience an individual relationship that each human being establishes with the world

composed of objects and people. Vygotsky (2010, p. 686) emphasizes the unique psychological characteristics of each individual developing within social experiences: "[…] in the experience, we always deal with the indivisible union of the particularities of the personality and the particularities of the situation represented in the experience."

The importance of understanding the nature of experience lies in the fact that there is a particularity in the way each person lives their relationship with the external environment. This means that the Social Situation of Development changes from the perspective of the child throughout the different periods of development. The external environment does not only change in the sense of new access to objects and physical space, but also in the sense that the developing child is no longer the same and therefore its relation to the situation, even if this remains ostensibly the same, becomes different due to social development.

Vygotsky argued, in 'The Problem of the Environment' (VYGOTSKY, 1994), that three children, of different ages, would each make sense of their mother's behavior in quite different ways. The older child understands the social situation in a more elaborate, more complex way, changing his perspective and therefore his *perezhivanie*, his way of understanding and relating to objects and reality. If different children live in a social environment in different ways, then the 'same' reality will have different meanings for each of them because their previous experiences provide this differentiation of their development. The children experience and give different meanings to each lived situation as a result of their different levels of development and, consequently, their social situations of development will be different even if they share a common social environment. Each child's *perezhivanie*, or attribution of meanings, is informed by their social relationships, as well as by their relationships with the natural and cultural elements around them.

When we observe the experience of different children, that is, the way in which they live in their environment and how they are affected by it, it is possible to identify their social situation of development. Vygotsky (2006) understands the social situation of development as a relationship between the person and context, internal processes and historical achievements in relation to the other and to the cultural. In his own words, Vygotsky (2006, p. 264) states that "[…] at the beginning of each age period the relationship between the child and the surrounding environment, especially the social one, is totally peculiar, specific, unique and unrepeatable [and] we call this relationship the social situation of development of this specific age."

Starting from the concept of the social situation of development, Vygotsky (2006) questions the origin of new formations in certain periods. For him there is a direct link between the social situation of development and the restructuring of the personality in response to experiences. Once developed, the new structures will influence later development. As we have pointed out, the child's relationship with the environment changes qualitatively and this is precisely because the new formation, the restructuring of the personality, is a process. The child at the end of the process is significantly different from the child at the beginning.

The social situation of development, with its particular relations and composition, will shape the direction of the whole process that determines the role and weight of each specific line of development at each age. Therefore, in each stable period, we find a new central formation that will guide the ongoing development process, organizing the construction of a new base for the next stages. Vygotsky (2006) describes everything that is related to the new formation as the central line of development and calls other processes (those already formed and those in the process of formation) ancillary lines of development.

At certain moments, the central lines of development will become ancillary lines and vice versa. This movement occurs because formerly isolated lines of development come to be structured in such a way that they modify the relationship between the individual and the social situation, creating a new formation, a new way of relating to the environment. The relationship reaches a new level. As your needs change, what was once central to your development does not affect you in the same way any more. Previous central lines of development give rise to new and more developed forms, which they will serve as ancillary lines.

To address your current needs, you will look for what affects your current development. In each period of development there is a specific and unique structure which characterizes the social situation of development and the activity that guides development and learning. The theory of periodization of development thus allows us to identify those aspects of the social situation which are particularly salient and significant at particular moments in a child's life.

For Vygotsky (2006), the periodization of development marks changes in the type of relationships experienced between subjects and between the subjects and the material environment. Therefore, in a given period of human development, a certain relationship with reality will be responsible for promoting the restructuring of understanding in a particular way.

Each period of development is characterized by one type of leading activity. It should be noted that the leading activity is not that which the child performs most frequently, but the activity "[...] whose development governs the most important changes in the psychological processes and in the psychological traits of the child's personality, at a certain stage of development." (LEONTIEV, 1989, p. 65).

According to Mukhina (1996), during the first years of life, the human being successively assimilates several types of activities. The first two main activities are communication and action with objects. Elkonin (2009), from the same understanding, conceptualized the first two main activities of the child as: establishing and maintaining direct emotional contact and manipulating objects.

The psychological development of human beings has its contradictions, new interests and needs, arising both from the social situation of development and from the experiences of the subject. In the first years of life, aided by supportive human relationships, the baby will be affected in different ways by developmental activities, adults and objects. At different stages of development the sense a baby makes of an experience will be different because its social situation of development will be undergoing

transformation. This theoretical framework can help us to reflect on our work with babies in day-care centers.

Practitioners need to notice changes in the relationship that infants establish with the environment as their social situation of development changes. By recognizing patterns in the particular details of their behavior we can plan educational activities which will help them to tackle the next stage of development. This is not to say that we must force change in the baby's social situation of development, but that we should consider the psychological movement and not simply relate it to chronological age or to the steps already achieved by the baby. To support development, it is necessary to know about the course of child development, what is distinctive about each period and how each affects individual babies' experiences.

OBJECTS AND ADULTS AS MATERIALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

As stated previously, for the authors of historical-cultural theory, human activity originates in the relationship between humans and the natural and social environment. From the moment of birth the baby can use its sensory apparatus to capture stimuli from the environment, process them psychologically and internalize them, transforming information into development.

Therefore, when we speak of development, we are necessarily speaking about social activity. The activity of any human being begins with a need that relates human and cultural objects through social motives. To have an activity, this chain of need-object-motive relation is necessary, as Leontiev (1978) affirms.

According to Gomes (2013), the need represents a gap at the level of development of the individual. To satisfy it, it is necessary to identify what kind of relationship will fill this gap in order to reorganize the development in its totality. Therefore, when we seek to promote the psychological development of the baby, we need to recognize adults, other children and objects as the materials that affect the baby and therefore promote the development of its consciousness.

In Bozhóvich (1979) understanding, in the first few months, the second order needs appear and develop in relation to the functional development of the brain. The need for new impressions, movement, communication, attention is a need for encounters with what affects you. If any of these needs is not satisfied, this leads to negative experiences that will express themselves in the infant's restlessness, whereas, on the contrary, their satisfaction will be expressed in joy, in the elevation of the general vital tone, in increased cognitive activity and motor excitation.

This need for interaction is visible because the baby will present a special form of activity, emotional communication with adults. In this period the infant is actively engaged in interactions, using its own communicative means, such as looks, touch, smiles and expressive movements. According to Gomes (2013), the affective response that the adult causes in the baby, and the baby causes in the adult, is not natural and spontaneous, but stimulated by the relationship jointly established by both. In this period, it is

up to the adults and, in the nursery, the teachers to establish relationships with the babies so that this inner need is fulfilled.

In addition to satisfying their organic needs, teachers in the day care center create and satisfy the needs of the babies for early auditory, tactile and behavioral cultural impressions, which will enable the emergence of language/communication. The first priority is to introduce the child into the social world and emotional communication is therefore the first leading activity (MUKHINA, 1996).

Colwyn Trevarthen (1979) identified the early period of 'primary intersubjectivity' as a time when communication between baby and carer has no topic and purpose other than celebrating and developing the bond of familiarity. In order for the baby to survive and develop, practical actions are necessary, that is, those conducted by the external world that are directed to achieving a certain result, such as: changing clothes, bathing, feeding, touching, looking and speaking.

In the nursery, it is the practioners who intentionally choose what the babies will come into contact with. Therefore, teachers, as more knowledgeable others, are the bearers of information necessary for babies to develop, "lending" their consciousness to the babies for their development. The interests and needs of babies are thus linked to those of the adults who care for them.

Due to their social situation of development, babies do not recognize the motives and psychic needs which drive adult activity and do not foresee what the adult plans before the act itself. To babies, only the process and product of adult activity is visible, immediately. Babies do not see adults as a collection of separate attributes but as performers of daily activities, in relation with other people and using cultural artefacts (cell phones, pens, papers, clothes, etc.). The baby sees, feels and hears how objects are involved in the routine actions of adults.

In time, the baby will no longer want to stay on a lap, crib or bed. This situation no longer meets their needs, and they will start to look for a new one. As they develop in experiences with adults, the new social situation of development emerges together with new formations in the structure of personality and activity, changes which are the products of structures which are already developed. Their new abilities no longer suit their old ways of relating to the environment and they are no longer interested in things that were once fascinating to them.

Therefore, activity with adults and linked to the manipulations of objects is particularly important. Pure and free communication with the adults who once occupied the central place in promoting development no longer satisfies babies' urges and might even bore or frustrate them. In these interactions, the animation caused by the mere presence of the adult is diminished, there is more interest in the objects and toys associated with the accomplishment of actions. There is an increase in babies' focus on adults' relationships and attitudes to objects and, later, to their actions with them (ÁVILA, 2002). In this way, babies will seek to satisfy their new need, a stage which is a slightly later, after a period of more 'private' 'heuristic play' with objects where the baby's focus is more on her own relationships with the objects. Interest in other people's interest in objects follows from this.

According to Elkonin (2009), the direct "child-adult" communication that leads the child into contact with objects gives way to the indirect "child-actions with objects and adults", which Trevarthen describes as secondary intersubjectivity and which is linked to the triangle of mediation identified by Vygotsky. According to Ávila (2002), this new form of communication with adults influences the development of actions with objects, initiating the first socially enriched manipulations, such as ‘give and take', when the exchange of objects is often marked with heightened affective responses.

The adult is, according to Elkonin (2009), the model responsible for qualitatively affecting the baby's relationship with objects through actions. For this, the adult-baby relationship acquires a new means of motivating the baby's actions: objects and toys.

The baby begins to show interest in objects that adults use: objects used in the bath, food, daily life, toys, etc. Objects take center stage and emotional communication with adults becomes an ancillary line. There is a shift in the infant’s focus, to objects and adults’ actions with them, marking the shift in their interest, from the direct emotional relationship with adults, to a relationship mediated by interest in objects. In this social situation of development, the adult mediates the relation of the baby to the object, and the object mediates the relation of the baby with the adult.

The baby stretches his legs, pushes the adults with their arms looking at the ground and / or objects. With the right interventions, at the end of the first half-year babies seek to look and move towards nearby objects, dragging themselves with the intention of reaching objects of interest. This process takes a long time, because babies have a lot to learn before they can achieve this change in their social situation of development. Zaporózhets (1987) says the interest is linked to the new formations that appear at the end of the first half-year and emphasizes that the protection zones of the cerebral cortex promote organic premises for the formation of the object actions into the manipulating stage of development.

Thus, and this needs to be particularly emphasized, in the first year of life babies are by no means uninterested in the objects around them. Also, the adults do not cease to have an important role to play but now they are partners with babies in their use of objects. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce activities which will involve babies, objects, and adults, because babies can learn a lot more from opportunities to play with objects in the company of adults. For example, when a teacher shows the babies different household objects and they start exploring them; after some minutes the teacher sits close and starts ironing and talking about the object’s social function. Then the babies, for a moment, start to imitate the teacher´s ironing actions (SILVA, 2017).

Image 1 – The baby ironing



Source: Silva (2017).

This situation shows us that the babies had started the initial appropriation of the social meaning of the objects in an elementary way, which is related to the babies' consciousness building. It is important to point out the mediation of the teacher's use of the objects and accompanying language to promote the development of the babies' awareness.

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that understanding this situation and understanding its importance allows us to penetrate the internal dynamic-causal and genetic connections that condition mental development. We believe that teachers can act effectively with babies, supporting their psychological and social development, when they aim to work within the babies' zones of proximal development (VYGOTSKY, 1978).

Thus, according to Mello (1999, p. 22), "[…] the educator should not do the activities for the child, but rather with it: acting as the more experienced partner who works in collaboration, but not in place of the child". It is at this level that the teacher's action should focus. If we are concerned with the development of the child, we need to look towards what is yet to come, what is in the process of being structured and processes that have not yet been consolidated.

In the pedagogical relationship established with infants in the nursery, it is crucial to offer ample possibilities for access to natural and cultural objects, especially cultural ones, and especially symbolic ones. Language will become the main means for sharing attention but, certainly in the first year, non-verbal forms of communication are even more central, so the baby-adult relationship can be full of social and cultural developmental experiences.

However, when we consider the educational praxis of infants in day-care centers, we must consider they are still in their first year of life and generally understand reality in a syncretic way. For this reason, when analyzing a baby's activity it is important to consider the role of the social situation of development.

This will help teachers to recognize when it may be necessary for them to guide babies' attention, helping them to access the experiences needed for their development.

These situations help us to realize the importance of the day care teacher's actions for the development of the baby's psyche. We need to recognize that the process is not simply biologically given but socially mediated and that teachers at day care centers are responsible for this mediation.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The relationship that different living beings have established and still establish with nature organize the life of each species in a different way. Other intelligent animals, such as primates, adapt to their environment without advancing the characteristics of their species. Unlike other animals, when our ancestors felt the need to modify nature, creating objects for daily use, they shared these with their group and created signs to name them. In the process of transforming nature into tools, they themselves were also transformed. Our process of hominization, transcending biological evolution by means of our activity, is what enabled us to develop a human consciousness.

For the development of the typically human consciousness, it is necessary to get in touch with the cultural elements created historically by humanity. Our development is therefore social and historical. However, simple contact between the subject and preexisting human culture will not engender development; this requires the mediation of more knowledgeable others.

Recognizing the fundamental importance, for the development of human consciousness, of contact with the different material and spiritual elements of human culture, we seek in this text to discuss the educational praxis of the teacher with babies in the nursery. In pursuit of this goal, we take up the tools of cultural-historical theory developed by Lev Semenovich Vygotsky.

This theory has helped us to understand human development from an early age in distinctive periods which each have their leading activities that contribute most to this process. When we think of babies, we understand that the materials available for the organization, development, and emergence of new formations in consciousness are familiar people and surrounding objects, whether toys or everyday things. It is, therefore, the relationship with the adult and with objects that will enable the first impressions to be formed in consciousness. In this adult-baby-object relationship, the role of language in the naming of objects and actions is highlighted. Thus, we are convinced that in order to support the development of the baby's consciousness in the nursery the essential materials are the teacher, objects and wider culture which language is important part.

Vygotsky explains that by touching and talking to the baby at different times of the day in the nursery, the teacher affects the senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell) and creates a connection between the outside world and the baby's brain. Over time, the baby will seek this kind of connection with objects independently. This change of focus demands time and quality interactions with the environment.

The affective response caused by interaction with objects motivates the baby to move around and manipulate them.

The teacher's ability to interpret each baby's movements depends on how well they know the babies because, the 'same' action may have quite different meaning when performed by different babies in different situations. It is important to be able to notice what affects and motivates each baby, in other words, to recognize their different social situations of development.

By engaging with babies and getting to know them, teachers will be able to plan, organize and propose meaningful activities that promote development. In these experiences the teacher sits with the babies, individually or in groups, to model and comment on actions with objects and toys in a way which respects the different timings and approaches which are appropriate for each baby.

Day care teachers, in carrying out their task as educators, need to have direct, personal and educational contact with the infants, guiding their learning and development in an intentional, planned and responsive way. They should ensure that each baby is fully able to explore its current developmental period, taking into consideration the objective conditions in the day care setting and, above all, the kinds of mediating activity that can support this process of the baby's development.

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