

SCHOOL WHEN THERE'S NO SCHOOL: THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FROM THE CHILDREN'S POINTS OF VIEW

A ESCOLA NA AUSÊNCIA DA ESCOLA:
REFLEXÕES DAS CRIANÇAS DURANTE A PANDEMIA

Isabel de Oliveira e Silva¹ 

Iza Rodrigues da Luz^{2,*} 

Levindo Diniz Carvalho¹ 

Maria Cristina Soares de Gouvêa² 

ABSTRACT: This article discusses the meanings of school for children between 8 and 12 years old amid class suspension over the COVID-19 pandemic. The comprehension of the children's points of view is based on the recognition of their rights and their ability to participate in social life, as demonstrated by childhood studies in the social sciences. We analyze survey data collected from 2.021 children in Belo Horizonte Metropolitan Region (Brazil). Results indicate that children understand school as a place which has a wide range of functions, among which learning, care, and sociability are included.

Keywords: Childhood. School. Pandemic.

RESUMO: O artigo discute os sentidos da escola para crianças de 8 a 12 anos durante a suspensão das aulas em virtude da pandemia da Covid-19. A compreensão dos pontos de vista das crianças sobre a escola se sustenta no reconhecimento dos seus direitos e da sua capacidade de participação na vida social, conforme tem sido demonstrado pelos estudos sociais sobre a infância. São analisados dados de pesquisa com 2.021 crianças da Região Metropolitana de Belo Horizonte. Os resultados indicam que as crianças compreendem a escola como espaço com funções amplas, que inclui aprendizagens, cuidado e sociabilidade.

Palavras-chave: Infância. Escola. Pandemia.

1. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – Faculdade de Educação – Departamento de Métodos de Técnicas de Ensino – Belo Horizonte (MG), Brasil.

2. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – Faculdade de Educação – Departamento de Ciências Aplicadas à Educação – Belo Horizonte (MG), Brasil.

*Correspondence author: izarodriguesluz@gmail.com

Thematic issue organized by: Levindo Diniz Carvalho, Maria Cristina Soares de Gouvêa and Natália Fernandes

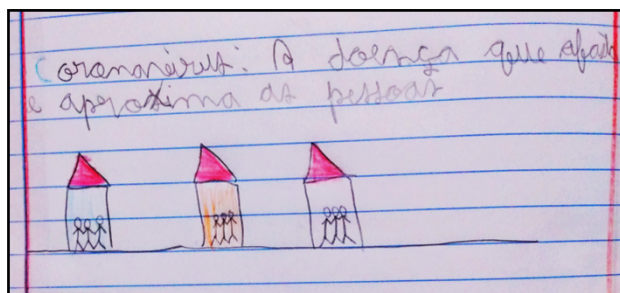
Introduction

The reflection on childhood and education in the context of the health and social crisis is a complex challenge. Although the set of social isolation measures generates impacts on the whole society, the suspension of school attendance impacted especially children, and may contribute to the worsening of social inequalities (TONUCCI FILHO; PATRÍCIO; BASTOS, 2020).

For children, the closure of schools due to the pandemic compromised their circle of relationships, their space for learning, their interactions with other children, with teachers and with the different objects of knowledge, restricting their access to culture and their citizenship training. In addition, not attending school increased the risks of violence,¹ considering that the domestic space is where most of the physical and sexual assaults on children are concentrated and that at school often emerge the reports of domestic violence by children or education professionals (FORE, 2020).

Motivated by these reflections, we developed research in Belo Horizonte and the Metropolitan Region, with the objective of understanding how children were experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. We intended to analyze the social relationships, the experiences and feelings aroused in children between 8 and 12 years old who had their routines changed by the pandemic. We also sought to understand the living conditions of children, especially those who are at greater risk of social vulnerability, for whom the suspension of school attendance can mean a significant drop in quality of life and access to rights, which includes the cultural dimension, food, and physical and emotional safety. In this article, we present part of the results of the research, with the objective of understanding the children's points of view about school and about the situation of suspension of school activities as a measure to control the spread of the coronavirus.²

The central assumption of the research was that children have the right to participate in the processes and decisions that affect them in the different areas of their lives. More than reaffirming the recognition that they are subjects of rights and that they should have priority attention in emergency situations, it is considered that, by foregoing child participation, social life becomes poorer, making invisible the subjects that constitute it and that move different sectors of the economy and culture. In this direction, based on studies on child participation and on childhood in crisis contexts (ALMEIDA; RIBEIRO; ROWLAND, 2018), this research sought to create conditions for listening to children so that the knowledge produced also constitutes a channel of expression of this generational group in the current context of health and social crisis. The relevance of such expression can be confirmed by the paradoxical phrase: "Coronavirus: The disease that distances and brings people together" (Fig. 1), written on a drawing made by a 10-year-old girl participating in the research.



Source: Research collection.

Figure 1. The disease that drives people apart and brings people together (girl, 10 years old).

The survey was conducted between June and November 2020 and had as participants children aged 8 to 12³ years living in Belo Horizonte and 32 municipalities of the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte

(MRBH).⁴ The methodology consisted of an extensive survey, with application of an online questionnaire⁵ that obtained 2,300 returns, of which 2,021 were validated. The exploratory research, carried out in the context of social isolation, was not built on the criterion of reaching a representative sample of children from the MRBH. The technique known as “snowballing” was used to disseminate the questionnaire. Telephone contacts were also made with the education and social assistance secretariats, with social movements and institutions that care for children, requesting help in spreading the questionnaire to the family members responsible for children in the indicated age bracket. In a second stage of the research, interviews were conducted, also remotely, using digital platforms and/or cell phone applications, with 33 children who were willing to participate in this stage. The analysis of the information gathered sought to articulate quantitative and qualitative techniques and, to this end, also relied on programs such as PSPP and NVIVO10. The children were also listened to by sending messages, drawings, and photographs to a virtual environment.⁶ The research followed all the ethical protocols for research with children.⁷

Profile of the Participating Children

Of the total of 2,021 children participating in the first stage of the survey who lived in municipalities of the MRBH, 45.5% were concentrated in Belo Horizonte, followed by the municipalities of Lagoa Santa, which concentrated 7.5%, Ribeirão das Neves, with 7.4%, and Contagem, with 6.7% of the participants. Regarding the age range, we had the participation of 503 children aged 8, 425 aged 9, 409 aged 10, 356 aged 11, and 328 aged 12. Regarding self-reported race/color, 45.4% said they were brown, 39.8% said they were white, and 9.2% said they were black. In addition to these responses, 28 children self-declared yellow, 12 self-declared indigenous, and 27 self-declared other colors, which resulted in a variable set of responses. Of the total participants, four children did not inform and 47 chose the option “don’t know or don’t want to answer” for this question. In relation to the gender of the children, the survey obtained a slightly higher participation of girls, corresponding to 51% of the participating children, while boys represented 47.9%. As with the question on racial self-declaration, we tried to make it possible in the questionnaire to understand other forms of identification and also preserve the right of the child not to answer the question; for this reason, we included the answer options: “other” and “don’t know or don’t want to answer.” We had 1.1% of children who did not inform or did not want to answer this question, and we had no answers in the “other” option. Regarding the administrative affiliation of the school institutions the research subjects attended, we found that 64.4% of the children studied in public schools and 30.6% in private schools.

To define the criteria for choosing the children to be interviewed, the team looked at the profile of those who answered the questionnaire, seeking to contemplate the diversity of gender, race/color, place of residence (Belo Horizonte and Metropolitan Region), school attended (public and private) and age. It also tried to listen to children from groups with little participation in answering the questionnaire, such as black, indigenous, and squatter children. It must be emphasized that, for this selection, there was a careful analysis of all the children who answered the questionnaire and that, also in this case, there was not the criterion of a representative sample of the several groups of children, but the intention of assuring a space for listening to the less represented groups that could help us understand and deepen the themes investigated with the questionnaire. Among the 33 children interviewed, nineteen were girls and fourteen were boys. In relation to racial self-declaration, thirteen declared themselves as mixed race, eight as black, five as white, and two as indigenous; four children did not answer this question and one of them marked the option “other,” but did not detail how she identified herself. Regarding their place of residence: thirteen children lived in Belo

Horizonte and twenty in the other cities of the MRBH that took part in the research. Regarding the type of school, 28 children studied in public schools and five in private schools. The age distribution of the group was as follows: one 7-year-old child; five 8-year-old children; ten 9-year-old children; three 10-year-old children; eleven 11-year-old children; two 12-year-old children; and one 13-year-old child.

Children and School

The conception of the child in Western societies as an “emotionally priceless” good (ZELIZER, 1985), whose socialization and participation in social life should be restricted to the protected spaces of the family and school, occurs as part of the process of social construction of childhood in contemporary times. In the context of a set of social transformations in the public and private spheres, from the 19th century on, in most Western countries, school becomes a responsibility of the State and an obligation of the families; studying becomes a child’s “job.” The social circulation of children is restricted to the domestic space of the family and to educational institutions.

This phenomenon highlights the prevalence of these institutions in the daily lives of children in Western urban societies, while a simultaneous process of recognition of individualization is observed. Analyzing these processes requires considering them interdependent and in the light of the singularities with which children build their social worlds (FERREIRA, 2006).

The contemporary school has assumed a role both in equalizing social and racial inequalities and access to culture, and in reproducing these inequalities and denying the cultural heritage of marginalized groups. This contradiction consolidates the idea that there is also a crisis at school. However, in the midst of a very serious health and social crisis, what does it mean to have schools closed with the restriction of school activities to the domestic or family context?

The absence of the children in the school space and the *presence* of the school in the domestic context questions the process of *institutionalization* of childhood. Thus, two distinct elements are observed: on one hand, the displacement of school times/spaces to the times and spaces of the home, changing the learning processes and their subjects, which is reflected in the family-school-child relationship; and, on the other hand, the absence of school for a significant number of children who had their schooling interrupted.

The analysis of the consequences of the *absence* from school involves the broader picture of living conditions and highlights the complexity of the guarantee of the universal right to education and its weakening in contexts of crisis. Moreover, it calls into question the relationships with families and the risk situation of children.

Meanings of School for Children

The analysis of the survey results confirms the centrality of the school in the lives of the children. Besides being the institution responsible for formal education, other aspects emerged from the answers given to different questions in the questionnaire. In response to the question about what made the child sad in the context of social isolation, the reference to the absence of school was frequent: “I have no contact with school friends, nor with other adults besides my family, I don’t have classes and school activities” (boy, 9 years old, brown, public school, Belo Horizonte); “not being able to go to school, go for a walk, or go to my grandparents’ house” (boy, 7 years old, white, public school, Rio Manso). One can observe that school is mentioned in the

same sequence as other activities and life relations that were interrupted. Statements like these were made by a significant number of children, in answers both to questions about the suspension of classes and about the changes in daily life, the relationships of sociability, leisure and feelings that emerged in the pandemic.

During the first stage of the research (June and July 2020), there was no prediction of how long in-person classes would be suspended. It was the beginning of social isolation measures, which continued in the state of Minas Gerais and in other Brazilian states until the year 2021. Moreover, most schools in the surveyed municipalities, especially in the public-school networks, had not yet established the sending of study materials or other activities for the children to do at home as a way to continue school activities or to maintain ties between teachers and children. However, some of the participating children were already taking on-line classes.



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 2. Infographic “Children and school.”

As explained in the previous infographic, the survey revealed that 85% of the children were in favor of their teachers sending activities to be done at home; and 82.2% of them said they were worried about returning to class. The children who were taking classes through virtual platforms evaluated such resources indicating their inadequacy for their learning process. In the answers to the open questions, all the children who mentioned this aspect evaluated it negatively, as exemplified by the following statement: “I got sadder, I have trouble following the classes and the subjects, I can’t pay attention” (boy, 11 years old, white, private school, Belo Horizonte).

The children also expressed concern with the loss of the 2020 school year: “I miss the teachers’ teachings, because I see that this really hurt the teaching this year, this year is practically lost and we don’t know how to solve this situation” (boy, 11 years old, brown, public school, Belo Horizonte). The children showed fear before the uncertainties of the future, expressing the fear of death, of being alone, of the pandemic never ending and also of the end of in-person schooling, as in the following statements: “fear of death, of being alone, **of not having school anymore**, of not seeing my friends” (girl, 8 years old, white, private school, Belo Horizonte); “I’m afraid that the classes won’t come back and that we will have to stay at home forever” (boy, 12 years old, brown, public school, Belo Horizonte).

In another key of analysis, we can say that the children’s points of view reveal the ways in which the elements of school culture (VINCENT; LAHIRE; THIN, 2001) are understood and experienced by them and, especially, how they integrate the conditions for their learning and social living. In the following statements, we have examples of this reflection:

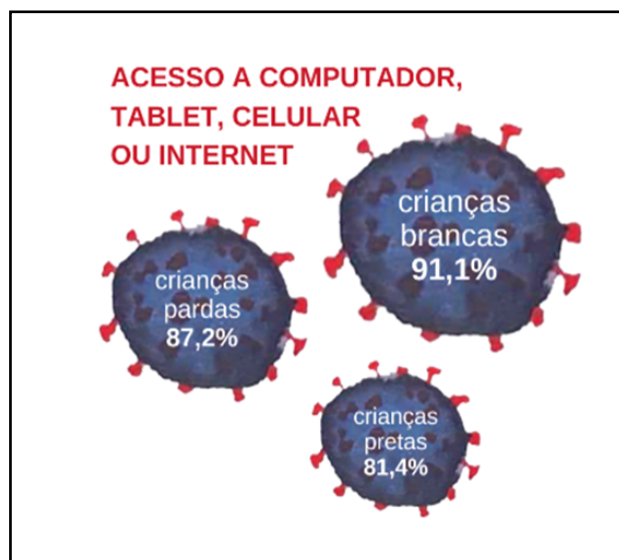
I find it very unnecessary [to have] activities to do at home, besides wasting all our school supplies, notebooks and pencils, which are all new, we don’t learn the subject properly!!!

Because at school we have the teacher's explanation and at home we don't have the teacher to explain the subject or answer questions, they just give us activities to do. I think it's absurd that our parents spend money to buy new school materials and we are using them at home, and if classes start again next year, they will have to buy everything again. And besides that, internet access here at home is very difficult, we can't afford to have a good internet connection to access YouTube and other things to supplement our classes. And there are other things that aren't working out!!!! (Boy, 8 years old, white, public school, Florestal, questionnaire response)

Interviewer: If you could make magic to improve the lives of all children, what would you do? Interviewee: I... would... donate the mask, alcohol gel and food, right? Basic food basket, sometimes even a machine to print the activities. (Boy, 10 years old, brown, public school, Belo Horizonte, interviewed on 02 Sep. 2020)

In the speeches of these boys, the perception that school constitutes a set of artifacts and relationships that do not allow a transposition, without prejudice, from the school space to the family space is observed. In addition, they point out the centrality of material resources in the guarantee of school learning, listing basic food baskets and printer as important elements for their quality of life, in the absence of the classroom school. They relate the economic resources invested by the family in school materials with the inadequacy of their use, which, in their experience, would not revert in the expected result of promoting learning. These children possibly indicate their participation in reflections carried out in the family environment about the economic dimension required for school attendance, which was intensified by the longer time they spent at home. They reveal their understanding that the conditions of remote education supply did not meet the learning needs, nor the right of children and families to count on public responsibility in the supply of material conditions.

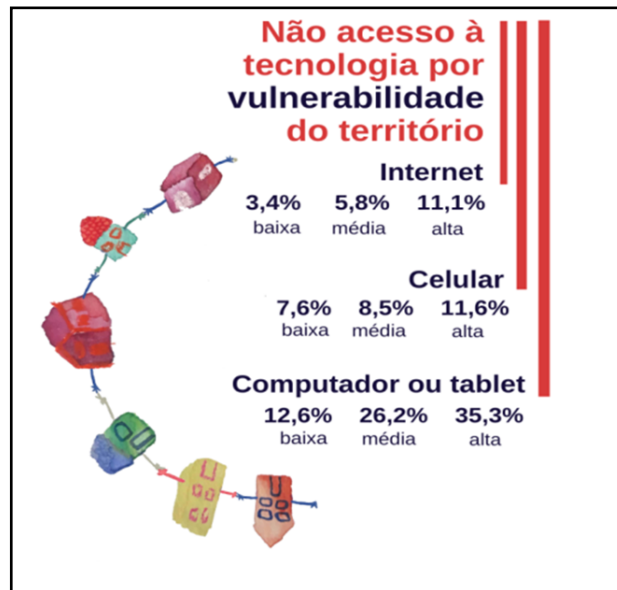
The survey also revealed that inequalities in access to equipment and the Internet reproduce social and racial inequalities. Figure 3 shows that self-declared black children had the least access to digital resources (computer, tablet, cell phone, and Internet). That is, 18.6% of black children had no access to such resources, while for white children this percentage was 9.9%.



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 3. Infographic “Computer, tablet, cell phone or Internet access.”

In the same direction, children whose place of residence was identified as being at higher risk of territorial vulnerability (Fig. 4) showed much lower access to digital resources than children living in territories at low and medium risk of vulnerability. In the case of access to computers or tablets, equipment that could offer better conditions for monitoring remote school activities, the percentage of children living in territories at high risk of social vulnerability who reported **having no access** reached 35.3%.



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 4. Infographic “No access to technology by territory vulnerability.”

Through an interview, an 11-year-old boy clearly indicates the lack of economic conditions to afford the costs of school activities done remotely. In this case, the mother also speaks during the interview, showing that there is a mobilization in the family to ensure the continuity of studies in the remote modality, but that there is a limit that prevents the child’s participation from meeting what seems to be expected by the school:

When I have money, I pay [printing], when I don’t have money, I have to do it on the phone, if I have internet... Mom: 70% of the activities, everything has to be researched... I don’t have enough income to pay for credit [to access the Internet]. I put R\$ 10.00 once a month and there are months that, like this month, I didn’t put any... like I gave [him] a phone, without being able to, so he could study, but he eats a lot of Internet to open the activities... so, I can’t afford it... so I asked the school to print it and I’m waiting for them to answer me by WhatsApp. (Boy, 11 years old, black, public school, Belo Horizonte, interviewed on 18 Sep. 2020 with the participation of his mother)

In dialogue with the studies about the family-school relationship, the previous excerpt confirms that there is a concern of the families from the lower social classes with the school performance of their children and the development of their own ways of investing for the school success of their children (LAHIRE, 2004; ZAGO, 2008). The mobilization of resources for education presupposes a more intense engagement of family members in the face of the scarcity in which they live. When the school adds other demands, it is important that the public policy contemplates the conditions for its effectiveness for all

children in the name of the right to education, not passing on to families the burden of investments that should be state investments.

The suspension of face-to-face classes and remote teaching were evaluated by the children also with regard to the school's primary function of promoting learning conditions. The excerpt from one of the interviews, from a 13-year-old boy, exemplifies the children's assessment of this:

[...] And I also can't learn things over the Internet, like on the computer, on the cell phone, like, I'll take the classes that will start next week, I'll participate, but I don't know if I'll be able to learn a lot of things because I can't stay kind of paying attention, I think it's better than the presential classes because I can pay more attention. (Boy, 13 years old, mixed race, public school, Betim, interviewed in July 30th 2020)

He emphasizes *attention* as an element of the learning process. It should be noted that, at the time of the interview, he was referring to an expectation, since, in his case, the online classes had not yet started. A refined reflection is observed, a perception about his experience in the educational process, whose listening, in the context of the pandemic and also in the *ordinary* contexts of school functioning, should be an integral part of the planning of teaching.

The School as an Environment of Multiple Experiences

The children who had already experienced remote learning revealed in their statements how it was an activity of less importance in their daily lives, disqualifying the efficiency of the activities sent. The perception that learning assumes a context that is inherent to the school space is observed: "Ah, cool, right... when you have nothing to do" (girl, 9 years old, indigenous, public school, Contagem, interviewed on Aug. 31, 2020). "They are so-so [Laughs]. The activities are cool. We remember a little more of school" (boy, 11 years old, indigenous, public school, Jaboticatubas, interviewed on July 28, 2020). "So, for me they are easy, if it were in class, it would have much more context, like this, [...] are some basic things. It's just to make sure you don't run out" (boy, 11 years old, white, public school, Contagem, interviewed on September 3, 2020).

Both in the open answers to the questionnaires and in the interviews, the children brought fundamental elements to think about the function of school in their lives. These children indicate an emptying of the meaning of school contents, which occurs due to the change of spaces, times, and means through which educational relations take place. They also indicate the understanding that only school can integrate their learning experiences of the curricular contents.

In addition to the function of learning school content, the social-affective coexistence was emphasized, both in the relationship with teachers and with colleagues, which only takes place in face-to-face school:

Look, what I miss most about school is seeing my friends, seeing my teachers. There is a teacher of mine [...], you know? Because I miss her a lot, she welcomed me a lot [puts arms together as if hugging and smiles]. She was a very nice teacher, one of my very nice teachers, you know? Because she was my second very nice teacher. And I wanted to... Interviewer: So, you are missing her? Interviewee: Yes, a lot! (Girl, 9 years old, black, public school, Ribeirão das Neves, interviewed on September 12, 2020).

The child's speech refers to the affective dimension of teaching (CARVALHO, 1999), according to which the cognitive elaboration is based on the relationship with the other. This relationship extends to the other students, since interactions among peers are constituents of learning relationships (SMOLKA; GÓES; PINO, 1995).

It is observed that children experience school beyond the classroom, indicating in their statements other subjects, spaces and times for learning and sociability:

Look, I miss the assignments... I'm doing them here, but I miss the assignments... I miss my friends, the teacher, the friends that are not from my class. (Girl, 8 years old, black, private school, Belo Horizonte, interviewed Sep. 2, 2020)

I am missing eating the school snack, talking with my friends and also doing... going to the teachers' class (Girl, 11 years old, black, private school, Belo Horizonte, interviewed July 27, 2020)

At break time, we used to talk, but now we have to eat alone (Girl, 7 years old, white, private school, Belo Horizonte, interviewed on September 4, 2020)

[Changes] occurred because it is much more complicated to take online classes, concentration is worse, I often have a headache from looking at the screen so much, and for me the worst thing is this huge longing to walk around the school, to personally see the teachers and my friends, to go down with my friends to the school library, during recess, to read, and see our cool adult friends, the librarians, to wait for my older sister in the bleachers, while I talk to my friends... It's pretty hard not to have contact with all of this. (Girl, 11 years old, white, private school, Belo Horizonte, questionnaire response)

School is an organizer of children's lives. In this environment, there are rhythms, relationships, tastes, and styles of classes that not only children are familiar with throughout their schooling, but also that help them build a vision of what school is. The statements highlight the complexity of the school experience, which goes far beyond classes and the classroom of each class.

The children's manifestations highlight a meaning of school that is little reflected upon or valued, given the emphasis placed on measurable outcomes. Socializing with friends as an opportunity provided by the school also reveals itself to be an aspect of the very understanding of what school is for children, which is all the more important as cities become hostile as spaces for children to socialize (MÜLLER; FERREIRA NUNES, 2014).

We don't disregard here that these same elements can be object of academic criticism and also of the children themselves, in the sense that sometimes school culture is alien to subjective demands. Although most of the children expressed nostalgia for school, as well as concern about their return, as previously discussed, there were also manifestations of less appreciation for this environment. It is understood that these reflections also reveal the meanings of school. In one of the interviews, a 9-year-old boy presented his perception about school, highlighting the precariousness of the spaces and relationships with teachers, who did not respect his needs. After talking about his former school, he mentioned the one he was attending at the time of the interview as follows:

Interviewee: [The school is] very boring...

Interviewer: What are you at now?

Interviewee: Veeeeeeeeery boring.

Interviewer: Why is it boring?

Interviewee: Because there is no sports court there... The teachers are annoying, it gives us a headache, she almost doesn't let us point our pencils and almost doesn't let us go to the bathroom... She only lets us go to the bathroom if it is an extreme need, then when we have extreme need she says that we can't go to the bathroom... (Boy, 9 years old, brown, public school, Belo Horizonte, interviewed on September 10, 2020).

This speech, contrasting in relation to those that demonstrated that children miss school, also helps us to nuance the emphasis that was present in the research: that school is an environment that children miss. However, it does not contradict the meanings of this institution that became evident when the set of quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed, involving open answers to the questionnaire and also the interviews with a group of 33 children. It does not contradict the sense that the school is experienced by subjects in an integral way, with their affections, their corporeality, their search for making and cultivating friendships with their peers and also with adults. The absence of courts, little consideration and respect from teachers, as reported in this last interview excerpt, is the reverse of what was reported by the other children, reaffirming, therefore, that they experience school as an environment for coexistence and denoting the integral dimension of their experiences.

Final Considerations

To know what school means to children when they cannot attend this institution represented an important challenge. On one hand, the object of reflection was involved in the set of conditions of exceptionality in which the whole Brazilian society found itself as of March 2020. On the other hand, this is an institution that has great capillarity, being present in every place. Therefore, it is part of the daily lives of children, education professionals, and communities on a permanent basis. The suspension of face-to-face classes, as something unprecedented, revealed, not only for the children, but for different social actors, that its functions go beyond the teaching of curricular content.

The centrality of school became evident in the expressive expression of the children that they were worried about going back to school and also that they considered the sending of activities by the school to be developed in the home environment to be adequate. However, it was also expressed by the children's longing for the school environment, their friends and teachers.

The analyses of the open questions, of the justifications for answers to closed questions, as well as the interviews, indicated that the meanings of school are anchored, for the children, in a broad function of the school space and, in a special way, in the possibility of coexistence with other children and adults. This coexistence was expressed as the possibility of relationships, of making and cultivating friendships, of relating to peers and adults in different school spaces. Such relationships also proved to be essential for the learning process, which depends on living together in an interactive context, marked by affective and welcoming relationships. The school affirms itself, in the children's statements, as a collective social space, based on the richness and diversity of interactions and subjects.

The children's evaluations of the remote education indicate its inadequacy, to the extent that the schools were also surprised by the consequences of the pandemic. However, there were no public guidelines for education networks in Brazil during the period of school closures on how to minimize the problems caused by this situation—just as there is no public policy aimed at children, in a flagrant disregard of their rights to be protected as a priority.

In the case of children at greater risk of social vulnerability, who have less access or precarious access to digital technologies and the Internet, it is observed the renunciation of the State in ensuring material conditions to provide the right to education. The children have shown to participate in the family concerns regarding the economic difficulties to follow the remote activities. It can be stated that, in the relationship with school, the context of the pandemic deepens inequalities.

Finally, a statement that is supported by listening to the children, not only in what was discussed in this article, but in the set of manifestations that we could apprehend, is that the children reflect about school, feel its absence and also indicate its possibilities. Possibilities of moving towards a pedagogical project that goes beyond the transmission of content and understands learning as the fruit of a rich relational context. Of absorbing the idea that, as a space of daily attendance and for several years, respectful relationships with the children are coherent with their rights and with the duties of all and that the school and its educational project are sustained by an ethic of care, based on collective interests, in the recognition of the capacities and the otherness of the children.

Authors' Contributions

Conceptualization: Silva IO; Luz IR; Carvalho LD; Gouvêa MCS; **Methodology:** Silva IO; Luz IR; Carvalho LD; Gouvêa MCS; **Investigation:** Silva IO; Luz IR; Carvalho LD; Gouvêa MCS; **Writing - first version:** Silva IO; Luz IR; Carvalho LD; Gouvêa MCS; **Writing - revision & editing:** Silva IO; Luz IR; Carvalho LD; Gouvêa MCS.

Availability of Research Data

Data is available on the survey site: <https://www.infanciaemtemposdepanademia.com.br/>.

Funding

Not applicable.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the participating children; the staff and collaborators of the research project “Childhood in times of pandemics: The experience of children in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte,” and our colleagues at the Center for Studies and Research on Childhood and Early Childhood Education (NEPEI) at the School of Education, Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG).

Notes

1. Research shows that the increase in cases of violence against women also incurs greater risks of violence with children. According to data from Call 180 made available by the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, there was an increase of about 17% in the number of calls with reports of violence against women during the month of March 2020, the initial period of the recommendation of social distancing in the country (GALVANI, 2020). According to data collected by the G1 portal, 2020 showed the highest rates of reports of violence against children since 2013, through the Dial 100 service, of the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights. Still, underreporting is observed, since school professionals are the most responsible for the reports. Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/ciencia-e-saude/noticia/2021/04/20/denuncias-de-violencia-contr-a-crianca-e-o-adolescente-atingem-maior-patamar-desde-2013.ghtml>. Accessed on: April 20, 2021.
2. For more complete data, see <https://www.infanciaemtemposdepanademia.com.br/publicacoes>.
3. Exceptionally, in two interviews, a 7-year-old child participated, who was accompanying her older brother, and a child who had just turned 13 a few months earlier and answered the questionnaire when she was still 12 years old. The profile of the children participating in the research is described in the following paragraphs.
4. The MRBH is made up of 34 municipalities. However, the municipality of Itatiaiuçu did not participate in the survey. The participating municipalities were: Baldim, Betim, Brumadinho, Caeté, Capim Branco, Confins, Contagem, Esmeraldas, Florestal, Ibirité, Igarapé, Itaguara, Jaboticatubas, Juatuba, Lagoa Santa, Mário Campos, Mateus Leme, Matozinhos, Nova Lima, Nova União, Pedro Leopoldo, Raposos, Ribeirão das Neves, Rio Acima, Rio Manso, Sabará, Santa Luzia, São Joaquim de Bicas, São José da Lapa, Sarzedo, Taquaraçu de Minas and Vespasiano. We would like to thank the Municipal Secretariats of Education and Development/Social Assistance of these municipalities in the process of disseminating the survey questionnaire.
5. The questionnaire was available from June 11 to July 15, 2020 and feedback from over 2,300 children was obtained. The entire listening process was conducted based on ethical protocols for research with children. To analyze the information, the challenge of the research was to operate on a hybrid basis: qualitative and quantitative. Such analyses focused on the interpretations of the children, but also on the contrast, the measurement, the quantitative frequencies about the experiences of the children in the 34 municipalities of MRBH in this context.
6. See drawings submitted by the children on the research website: <https://www.infanciaemtemposdepanademia.com.br/>.
7. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG).

REFERENCES

ALMEIDA, A. N.; RIBEIRO, A. S.; ROWLAND, J. Children, citizenship and crisis: towards a participatory agenda. In: LOBO, M. C.; SILVA, F. C.; ZÚQUETE, P. (eds.). **Changing societies: legacies and challenges**. Lisbon: Social Sciences Press, 2018. p. 113-134. v. 2: Citizenship in crisis.

CARVALHO, M. **No coração da sala de aula: Gênero e trabalho docente nas séries iniciais**. 1. ed. São Paulo: Xamã/FAPESP, 1999.

FERREIRA, M. M. “— Tá na hora d’ir pr’á escola!”; “— Eu não sei fazer esta, senhor professor!” ou... brincar às escolas na escola (JI) como um modo das crianças darem sentido e negociarem as relações entre a família e a escola. **Revista Interacções**, v. 2, n. 2, p. 27-58, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.25755/int.290>

FORE, H. Não permitam que crianças sejam as vítimas ocultas da pandemia da COVID-19. **Unicef Brasil**, 09 abr. 2020. Available in: <<https://www.unicef.org/brazil/comunicados-de-imprensa/nao-permitam-que-criancas-sejam-vitimas-ocultas-da-pandemia-de-covid-19>>. Access on: 13 Apr. 2020.

GALVANI, G. Violência doméstica na quarentena: como se proteger de um abusador? **Carta Capital**, São Paulo, 29 mar. 2020. Available in: <<https://www.cartacapital.com.br/saude/violencia-domestica-na-quarentena-como-se-proteger-de-um-abusador/>>. Access on: 30 Mar. 2020.

LAHIRE, B. **Sucesso escolar nos meios populares**: As razões do improvável. São Paulo: Ática, 2004.

MÜLLER, F.; FERREIRA NUNES, B. Infância e cidade: Um campo de estudo em desenvolvimento. **Educação & Sociedade**. Campinas, 2014, v. 35, n. 128, p. 659-674, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1590/ES0101-7330201435128129342>

SMOLKA, A. L. B.; GÓES, M. C. R.; PINO, A. The constitution of the subject: A persistent question. In: WERTSCH, J. V.; DEL RÍO, P.; ALVAREZ, A. (orgs.). **Sociocultural studies of mind**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. p. 165-184.

TONUCCI FILHO, J. B. M.; PATRÍCIO, P. A.; BASTOS, C. **Nota técnica** – desafios e propostas para enfrentamento da Covid-19 nas periferias urbanas: Análise das condições habitacionais e sanitárias dos domicílios urbanos no Brasil e na Região Metropolitana de Belo Horizonte. Belo Horizonte: Cedeplar/FACE/UFMG, 04 Apr. 2020. Available in: <<https://www.cedeplar.ufmg.br/noticias/1229>>. Access on: 22 Apr. 2020.

VINCENT, G.; LAHIRE, B.; THIN, D. Sobre a história e a teoria da forma escolar. **Educação em Revista**, Belo Horizonte, n. 33, p. 7-48, June 2001.

ZAGO, N. Processo de escolarização nos meios populares: As contradições de possibilidade. In: NOGUEIRA, M. A.; ROMANELLI, G.; ZAGO, N. (orgs.). **Família e Escola**: Trajetória de escolarização em camadas médias e populares. Petrópolis: Vozes. 2008. p. 17-44.

ZELIZER, V. **Pricing the priceless child**: The changing social value of children. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Received: Feb. 01, 2022

Accepted: May 23, 2022

Associate Editors:

Maria Rosa Rodrigues M. Camargo and Rita de Cassia Gallego