

INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE NATIONAL PACT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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ABSTRACT

Child development, particularly in early childhood, has a direct impact on cognitive, emotional, and social development throughout life. This study seeks to analyze the implementation of the National Pact for Early Childhood, focusing on Brazilian public policies aimed at the development of children in vulnerable situations, especially in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged regions. The methodology used is qualitative, based on the documentary analysis of legislation and reports of the National Council of Justice (CNJ). The results indicate advances in access to early childhood education, especially in urban areas, but challenges such as regional inequality and lack of training of professionals still persist. It is concluded that, although the pact has promoted important progress, coordinated actions and investments in infrastructure and training are needed to achieve full equity in child development in Brazil.

Keywords: Child Development. Public Policies. Regional Inequality. Professional Training. Early Childhood.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a determining phase for human development, directly influencing the cognitive, emotional and social capacities that shape the individual throughout life. In Brazil, the implementation of public policies aimed at this stage of life has been a priority, considering the specific needs of care, protection and encouragement of the integral development of children. In this context, the National Pact for Early Childhood, established in 2019, emerges as an intersectoral initiative that seeks to promote coordinated actions between different sectors to ensure children's rights and compliance with the Legal Framework for Early Childhood.

The relevance of this theme becomes evident in the face of the socioeconomic challenges that affect child development in Brazil. Studies show that children in vulnerable situations face significant barriers to accessing essential health, education and social protection services, which compromises their full development. Early childhood, in addition to being a critical period for learning and the formation of affective bonds, is also a window of opportunity to promote social equity. Thus, the analysis of policies such as the National Pact for Early Childhood is relevant to understand how the State can act to mitigate these inequalities.

The justification for carrying out this research is anchored in the need to evaluate the impact of these public policies on the reduction of regional inequalities and the promotion of child development. Socioeconomic inequality in Brazil presents complex challenges for the implementation of effective public policies, especially in the North and Northeast regions, where access to essential services is limited. In addition, it is necessary to investigate whether the intersectoral articulation proposed by the pact has been sufficient to overcome the barriers that prevent the full development of children in different contexts.

The problem that guides this study can be described as: To what extent has the National Pact for Early Childhood contributed to the promotion of equity in child development in Brazil, especially in the most vulnerable regions? The question arises from the realization that, although there are advances in certain areas, there is still a long way to go to ensure that all children, regardless of their socioeconomic condition or place of residence, have access to the same rights and opportunities.

The general objective of this research is to analyze the implementation of the National Pact for Early Childhood and its impacts on the promotion of public policies aimed at child development in regions of high socioeconomic vulnerability. From this analysis, it is

intended to identify the advances obtained, the challenges faced and the opportunities to improve intersectoral actions aimed at the protection and development of children.

The contributions of this research include a critical evaluation of public policies aimed at early childhood, focusing on regional inequalities and the impact of the articulation between the health, education, social assistance and justice sectors. The study seeks to provide subsidies for the formulation of more effective and equitable policies, in addition to highlighting good practices that can be replicated in other contexts. In the end, it is expected that this research will contribute to the strengthening of public policies aimed at child development in Brazil, ensuring greater equity in access to fundamental rights

THE NATIONAL PACT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD: THEORETICAL BASIS

Early childhood is widely recognized as a determining phase for the cognitive, emotional and social development of children, being fundamental for the construction of the foundations that will shape their capacities in adult life. According to Melo (2020, p. 13):

There is no longer any doubt that investing in childhood, guaranteeing all children decent living conditions and social equity, generates social and economic gains greater than those produced by any other investments, in addition to laying the foundations of a democratic society. However, for children, more important than preparing for the future is living in the present. They need to live now and in the fairest, fullest and happiest way (MELO, 2020, p. 13).

Melo (2020) emphasizes the importance of immediate actions that ensure a dignified childhood, focusing on children who are in poverty, marginalization, and at risk in areas such as health, education, and security. In this sense, the National Pact for Early Childhood, established in Brazil, seeks to implement intersectoral actions that guarantee the fundamental rights of children. Next, the implications of this phase of development will be discussed, based on different theories, to support public policies aimed at the protection and full development of children.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The period of early childhood is widely recognized as decisive for the integral development of the individual. Vygotsky (1991) argues that social interactions play a central role in this process, as it is through them that the child internalizes the behaviors, norms, and ways of thinking that will shape their cognition and future abilities. By highlighting the social influence on cognitive development, Vygotsky proposes an

interactionist view, where the environment and social relationships not only stimulate, but also structure the child's psychological functions.

This emphasis on external interactions complements the perspective of Monaco (2005), who approaches development from a biological perspective, highlighting the brain plasticity characteristic of early childhood. According to Monaco, the child's brain has a unique capacity for adaptation, making the experiences lived in the first years essential for the formation of neural circuits that will be used throughout life. In other words, while Vygotsky focuses on social influences, Monaco emphasizes the importance of the biological bases that, together, guarantee the integral development of the child.

In this context, Linhares (2021) brings a contemporary view by suggesting that investment in early childhood acts as a form of protection against future challenges. For Linhares, the emotional support and cognitive and social stimuli offered at this stage create mechanisms that help the child to deal with adversity throughout his life. Linhares' metaphor compares this investment to a "vaccine", reinforcing the idea that the earlier adequate development is promoted, the greater the chances of preventing difficulties related to social and emotional inequalities.

The family environment, in turn, emerges as one of the main agents of influence in this process. Lima and Santos (2019) discuss the relevance of the affective bond and family structure in the cognitive and emotional development of children. Unlike approaches that treat development in an exclusively biological or social way, these authors indicate that the family environment acts as a mediator between the two, promoting both the construction of cognitive skills and the strengthening of affective relationships that underlie emotional growth.

René Spitz's view, as analyzed by Duque (2008), offers a clinical perspective on the relationship between development and affect. Her studies with children in orphanages and nurseries demonstrate that the deprivation of affective contact, especially between mother and child, can cause serious damage to physical and psychological development. Spitz identified, for example, that the absence of maternal affection in the first years of life can result in serious pathologies, such as anaclitic depression, highlighting the importance of affective interactions in mental health and child development.

Based on these reflections, Simão and Albrecht (2021) point out that child development does not follow a single pattern, being influenced by a combination of factors that act differently on each child. They emphasize the need for early interventions to correct

developmental delays, something that requires both the action of the family environment and the support of efficient public policies. Thus, the detection of developmental difficulties should be seen as a shared responsibility between family and society.

The impact of socioeconomic conditions on child development cannot be neglected either. Nalin, Messias, and Cavalcanti (2022) discuss the increase in child poverty in Brazil and how this factor limits children's access to essential resources for their development. Economic hardship directly affects families' ability to provide a nurturing and safe environment, exacerbating developmental inequalities. These data point to the urgency of public policies that guarantee access to essential care for all children, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

In this sense, playing is a central tool in child development, as highlighted by Batista Neto *et al* (2021). Playful activities allow children to explore their environment creatively, developing their motor, cognitive and social skills in an integrated way. The act of playing, therefore, is not only a means of fun, but a form of active learning, where the child acquires and experiences essential skills for his adult life. Play, then, can be seen as a bridge between cognitive and emotional stimuli, promoting development in a holistic way.

Based on these perspectives, it is concluded that early childhood is a period of extreme importance for human development, involving a complex interaction between biological, emotional and social factors. By understanding child development as a process that depends both on interactions with the environment and on economic and family conditions, the need for public policies that promote comprehensive support for children is evident. These policies, which range from education to family support, are key to ensuring that children have the necessary foundation for healthy and balanced development. It is in this scenario that the National Pact for Early Childhood emerges as a strategy for the implementation of coordinated actions aimed at the protection and development of children in Brazil.

THE NATIONAL PACT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD: CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The National Pact for Early Childhood, established in 2019, is a strategic initiative created by the National Council of Justice (CNJ) with the objective of promoting the full protection of Brazilian children during their first six years of life. This pact was designed in line with the Legal Framework for Early Childhood - Law No. 13,257/2016 (BRASIL, 2016), which establishes a legal and political basis for the implementation of public policies aimed

at child development. The choice of this specific period, early childhood, is not accidental, but rather supported by scientific evidence that demonstrates that this phase is important for the child's cognitive, emotional, and social development (LINHARES, 2021; VERONESE and RIBEIRO, 2019). In this sense, the pact responds to an urgent social demand to ensure that all children, regardless of their socioeconomic condition, have access to favorable conditions for integral development.

The creation of the pact was based on an in-depth analysis of the situation of Brazilian children, especially those in vulnerable situations. Based on the diagnoses carried out by the CNJ and on various studies on child development, the pact emerges as a comprehensive solution to face the challenges that still compromise early childhood in Brazil. According to the National Early Childhood Diagnosis (CNJ, 2022), Brazil faces significant regional and social inequalities that limit children's access to basic services, such as education and health. The pact, therefore, was structured to mitigate these inequalities, promoting an intersectoral articulation that involves the health, education, justice and social assistance sectors.

This effort to articulate between different sectors is one of the main innovations of the pact. Unlike other policies that often operate in a piecemeal fashion, the National Pact for Early Childhood takes an integrated approach, recognizing that child development depends on a number of interconnected factors. For this reason, the pact is not limited to promoting isolated policies, but seeks to ensure a protection network that involves all government spheres and civil society (VERONESE AND SOUZA, 2020). In this way, the articulation between the government and civil society is seen as a strategy to ensure compliance with the goals of the pact.

In addition, the training of professionals who deal with issues related to childhood is one of the central pillars of the pact. The National Council of Justice has promoted seminars and training throughout the country, with the aim of raising awareness and qualifying magistrates, prosecutors and other legal operators for the specificities of early childhood (CNJ, 2019). These professionals play an important role in protecting children's rights, especially in cases involving complex issues such as adoption, foster care, and child violence. By training these professionals, the pact seeks to ensure that judicial decisions are made based on the principle of the best interests of the child, as established by the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989).

Another important aspect of the pact is the creation of intersectoral public policies that aim to comprehensively meet the needs of children. Programs such as Criança Feliz, which integrate the areas of health, education, and social assistance, are examples of initiatives that have been driven by the pact to ensure that children, especially those living in vulnerable situations, receive the necessary support for their full development (LINHARES, 2021). The intersectorality of these public policies is necessary to ensure that children have access to adequate services, regardless of their socioeconomic status or place of residence.

The pact also recognizes the importance of promoting equitable development among Brazil's regions. Regional inequalities, especially in the North and Northeast regions, where access to public resources and services is more limited, are one of the biggest challenges faced by the pact (IPEA, 2018; CNJ, 2022). To address this challenge, the pact promotes the implementation of specific actions in these regions, seeking to ensure that all children, regardless of where they live, can enjoy their rights fully and equally. Equity in access to public policies is, therefore, a central concern in the implementation of the pact.

In addition to regional issues, the pact is also concerned with the implementation of monitoring mechanisms that ensure the effectiveness of public policies aimed at early childhood. The creation of national indicators, in partnership with the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and other federal agencies, allows the progress of the pact's actions to be effectively monitored (IPEA, 2018). This monitoring is necessary to identify gaps in policy implementation and adjust actions as needed, ensuring that the objectives of the compact are met.

Finally, the National Pact for Early Childhood also recognizes the role of the family in child development. Although the pact involves a strong articulation between the public sectors, it also seeks to strengthen the role of the family as an agent in the development of children. Initiatives that promote the strengthening of family bonds, such as the Legal Framework for Early Childhood, are seen as essential to ensure a safe and stimulating environment for children (BRASIL, 2016). The pact, in this sense, is committed to supporting families, providing the necessary resources and guidance so that they can perform their role adequately.

In this way, the National Pact for Early Childhood presents itself as a comprehensive and innovative policy, whose success depends on a strong articulation between the various

sectors of society and the public authorities. The implementation of the compact is necessary to ensure that all children, regardless of their social status, have access to the rights and opportunities that are guaranteed to them. Next, the alignment of the Compact with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be discussed, exploring how these global goals contribute to strengthening Brazil's commitment to the protection and development of early childhood.

ALIGNMENT OF THE PACT WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The National Pact for Early Childhood is strategically connected with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations (UN), specifically with those that address education, health and justice. By seeking to ensure the fundamental rights of children in their first years of life, the pact reaffirms Brazil's commitment to the 2030 Agenda and its implementation of global sustainability goals. This connection reflects the understanding that early childhood is a critical phase for the formation of full citizens, in line with the need to ensure fair and equitable opportunities for all children, regardless of their origin or social condition.

Among the SDGs most directly related to the Pact, SDG 4 stands out, which aims to ensure inclusive and quality education for all, with a special focus on children in vulnerable situations (UN, 2015). The pact incorporates this goal by promoting actions that seek to strengthen the early childhood education network, articulating public policies that guarantee universal access to early childhood education. Initiatives such as the Happy Child program, for example, are mentioned as practices that integrate education and social assistance to offer a solid learning base from the first years of life (Boaventura and Bentes, 2023). In this context, education is seen as a central pillar for the development of children's cognitive, emotional, and social capacities.

In addition to education, the National Pact for Early Childhood also establishes a strong relationship with SDG 3, which deals with health and well-being. The promotion of comprehensive health for children from zero to six years old is one of the main objectives of the pact, with emphasis on the importance of primary care, nutrition and mental health. According to the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2018), child health is a priority for reducing inequalities, and the pact recognizes that ensuring healthy development depends on adequate and equitable access to quality health services. Thus, alignment with SDG 3 reflects the commitment to address regional disparities in access to

health care, especially in the most vulnerable areas of the country, such as the North and Northeast regions.

Another central aspect of the pact is its relationship with SDG 16, which seeks to promote peace, justice, and effective institutions. The National Pact for Early Childhood, by strengthening the role of the judicial system in protecting children's rights, responds directly to the goals of this objective, ensuring that justice and social protection institutions are properly trained and structured to deal with the specificities of early childhood (VERONESE and RIBEIRO, 2019). The intersectoral articulation between the Judiciary, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the public defender's offices and social assistance policies allow the construction of a safe and fair environment for children at risk, reaffirming the commitment to the promotion of peace and justice for all.

This alignment with the SDGs, therefore, demonstrates how the actions of the pact not only respond to internal demands for child protection and development, but also fit into a global context of goals aimed at sustainability and social equity. Global goals are not just an external reference; they are directly integrated into Brazilian public policies, adapted to the national reality and its regional peculiarities (IPEA, 2018). In this way, the pact becomes an instrument for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, directly contributing to the advancement of the SDGs in Brazil.

In summary, the intersection between the National Pact for Early Childhood and the SDGs reflects a holistic and intersectoral approach that seeks to address the challenges of child development in an integrated way, considering the educational, health, and justice dimensions. This articulation between the national and the global positions the pact as an initiative to promote sustainable development from early childhood, with long-term effects for the construction of a more equitable and inclusive society.

Next, the topic of the challenges and limitations in the implementation of the National Pact for Early Childhood will be addressed, examining the barriers that still hinder the full achievement of its objectives.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL PACT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

By analyzing the implementation of the National Pact for Early Childhood, it is possible to identify a series of challenges that hinder the full realization of its goals. These challenges are intrinsically linked to regional inequalities, the lack of training of the

professionals involved, and the lack of integration between the different government and civil society sectors, all essential elements to ensure an efficient application of public policies aimed at early childhood.

First, regional inequalities represent a significant barrier to the homogeneous implementation of the policies provided for in the pact. Brazil, with its vast socioeconomic diversity, faces difficulties in ensuring equitable access to essential health, education, and social assistance services. This reality is especially serious in regions such as the North and Northeast, which, according to the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2018), have insufficient infrastructure to meet the growing demand for early childhood services. The lack of resources in these areas limits the effectiveness of public policies, creating disparities in children's development in different parts of the country.

In addition to regional inequalities, another significant challenge is the training of professionals who work directly with children. Although the pact has promoted seminars and qualification courses for magistrates and other legal operators (CNJ, 2019), there is still a lack of professionals adequately prepared to deal with the particularities of early childhood. This gap in training directly impacts the quality of judicial decisions and interventions in cases of vulnerability, not always ensuring that children's rights are fully ensured, in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989). In this way, the lack of adequate training perpetuates inequality in access to justice and the necessary care for children at risk.

This lack of capacity building is closely linked to the lack of integration between the different government sectors, another obstacle to the effective implementation of the pact. The National Early Childhood Diagnosis (CNJ, 2022) reveals that, although there are efforts to promote intersectoral articulation, many municipalities still operate in a fragmented manner. This disarticulation prevents the creation of an effective safety net for children, since early childhood issues require an integrated approach that includes health, education, justice and social care. Without this coordination, public policies are fragmented and lose efficiency, compromising the full protection of children.

Another challenge that stands out is the inadequate infrastructure in several regions of the country, particularly in the poorest areas. The lack of material and human resources necessary for the implementation of programs aimed at early childhood prevents public policies from being expanded equitably throughout the national territory (COSTA, 2018). Consequently, this restricts the compact's ability to fully achieve its goals, especially in

regions where child vulnerability is most pronounced, such as in the peripheries and rural areas.

In addition, there are significant difficulties with regard to the monitoring and evaluation of the public policies implemented. The creation of effective indicators to measure the progress of the pact's actions is important to ensure the efficiency of its goals. However, according to IPEA (2018), there are still considerable gaps in data collection and monitoring of results. Without continuous and detailed monitoring, it becomes difficult to identify areas that need adjustments or improvements, which can compromise the achievement of established goals.

The fragmentation of intersectoral policies is another relevant obstacle. In many cases, actions aimed at early childhood are not properly coordinated between the different government sectors, resulting in overlapping initiatives and waste of resources (VERONESE and RIBEIRO, 2019). The absence of effective coordination between the agencies responsible for public policies hinders the efficient execution of the proposed goals, especially with regard to the full protection of children.

One factor compounding all of these challenges is the lack of adequate funding. Without sufficient financial resources, the implementation of policies is compromised, especially in regions where the lack of infrastructure is more severe (BOAVENTURA and BENTES, 2023). Although innovative programs such as Criança Feliz have been created, their scope remains limited due to the absence of investments that can guarantee their large-scale and continuous execution.

Socioeconomic inequalities also play a major role in exacerbating the challenges faced by the compact. According to Nalin, Messias and Cavalcanti (2022), child poverty directly affects the ability of families to provide a favorable environment for the integral development of children. Families in vulnerable situations face greater difficulties in accessing essential services that guarantee child protection and well-being, reinforcing the need for equitable public policies in all regions of the country.

Finally, there are also cultural and political barriers that hinder the full implementation of the pact. In some government spheres, there is a lack of political commitment to prioritize actions aimed at early childhood, which prevents the expansion of public policies (LINHARES, 2021). In other situations, there is cultural resistance on the part of some communities, which still do not fully understand the importance of child protection policies, making it difficult to adhere to the measures proposed by the pact. This

lack of social engagement can compromise the creation of an environment conducive to child development and the effective application of public policies (VERONESE and RIBEIRO, 2020).

In summary, the challenges and limitations in the implementation of the National Pact for Early Childhood are multiple and interconnected. From regional disparities and lack of professional training to cultural barriers and cross-sectoral fragmentation, these obstacles require a coordinated and integrated approach. Overcoming these obstacles is necessary to ensure that all Brazilian children, regardless of their origin or social condition, have access to the rights guaranteed by law and can develop in a healthy and full way.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, centered on documentary analysis and bibliographic review of public policies aimed at early childhood. The theoretical basis considers Brazilian legislation such as Law No. 13,257/2016, which establishes the Legal Framework for Early Childhood, the Statute of the Child and Adolescent - Law No. 8,069/1990 and Law No. 13,431/2017, which defines the mechanisms of specialized listening for children and adolescents who are victims of violence. The examination of these norms is necessary to understand the legal frameworks that sustain public policies aimed at early childhood in Brazil and their interfaces with child development.

In addition to national legislation, the research is also based on reports and seminars promoted by the National Council of Justice (CNJ), specifically those related to the National Pact for Early Childhood, established in 2019. The use of these documents aims to understand both the advances and the limitations of the implementation of the Pact in different regions of the country. As part of this analysis, documents published by the CNJ will be examined, such as the National Early Childhood Diagnosis (CNJ, 2022), which provides a detailed overview of the challenges faced in the application of public policies for children in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability.

The methodology adopted follows the line of studies by Boaventura and Bentes (2023), which propose an integrated analysis of Brazilian public policies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4, related to ensuring inclusive and equitable education. In this sense, the present study seeks to correlate the impact of the National Pact for Early Childhood with the global goals of the SDGs, expanding the discussion on child development in Brazil in a context of sustainability.

The data collected come from official publications available on the CNJ portal, as well as from complementary sources, such as collections of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The documentary analysis will be structured by categories related to the main axes of public policies, identifying the advances in the implementation of these policies and the obstacles that persist, especially in areas of greater social and economic vulnerability. To ensure a critical analysis, the research also includes a literature review of authors such as Vygotsky (1991), Monaco (2005) and Linhares (2021), whose theories contribute to the understanding of the sociocultural and biological aspects of child development.

The analysis of the data will take place through a critical interpretation of the documents, seeking not only to identify failures and challenges in the implementation of policies, but also to highlight good practices that can be replicated in other regions. This qualitative approach will allow a broader view of the impact of the National Pact for Early Childhood on the achievement of child development goals, especially with regard to education and social equity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the National Pact for Early Childhood has promoted significant advances in relation to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and quality education. One of the main advances observed was the expansion of access to early childhood education in the regions served by the program, with special emphasis on urban areas. The "Happy Child" program, for example, has played a central role in integrating education and social assistance services, ensuring continuous support for child development. These results reinforce the positive impact of the pact by strengthening education in the early years of life.

Despite these advances, the compact has also revealed substantial challenges, particularly with regard to regional inequalities. While there has been an expansion in access to education, the North and Northeast regions still face significant gaps. The limited infrastructure of these areas prevents the growing demand for essential services, such as education and healthcare, from being fully met. These socioeconomic disparities exacerbate the difficulties of children in vulnerable situations, as pointed out by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2018), highlighting the urgent need for more specific actions in these regions.

The training of professionals involved in the implementation of the pact represents another central challenge. Although the National Council of Justice (CNJ) has held seminars and training programs for magistrates and legal operators, the shortage of professionals prepared to deal with the particularities of early childhood persists. This training gap compromises the quality of judicial decisions and interventions related to the protection of children, especially in complex cases, such as adoption, foster care, and child violence. The lack of adequate training has direct implications for the application of the principle of the best interests of the child, provided for by the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989).

In addition, the socioeconomic conditions of families continue to be a determining factor in child development. Families in vulnerable situations face greater difficulties in creating a safe and stimulating environment, which is necessary for the healthy growth of children. Child poverty, which mainly affects the poorest regions of the country, continues to limit children's cognitive and emotional development. The insufficiency of investments in adequate public policies aggravates these inequalities, revealing that, although the pact has contributed on some fronts, there is still much to be done to ensure real equity in child development.

Another aspect that deserves attention is the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of public policies. The creation of specific indicators to measure the progress of the pact's actions is a necessity, but there are still deficiencies in data collection and analysis, especially at the regional level. Effective monitoring is important to identify areas that need adjustment and to ensure that established goals are met efficiently. The absence of a continuous evaluation system compromises the pact's ability to correct flaws in implementation and optimize public policies aimed at early childhood.

In summary, the results demonstrate that, although the National Pact for Early Childhood has promoted important advances, especially in relation to SDG 4, challenges remain that need to be overcome for the pact to reach its full potential. Regional inequalities and the lack of adequate training of the professionals involved continue to be critical barriers. For the pact to be fully successful, it is necessary to invest in better intersectoral coordination, expand infrastructure and ensure quality education, ensuring that all Brazilian children, regardless of their origin or socioeconomic condition, have access to a protected childhood with opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS

The main findings of this study reveal that the National Pact for Early Childhood promoted remarkable advances in relation to early childhood education, contributing to the achievement of the SDG 4 targets. The expansion of access to education in urban areas, combined with the integration of social assistance and education services, indicates that the pact is fulfilling its role of promoting inclusive and quality education. However, the results also highlight considerable gaps, especially in the North and Northeast regions, where regional inequalities continue to hinder the full implementation of public policies aimed at early childhood.

To strengthen public policies in this area, it is necessary to pay greater attention to the training of the professionals involved, ensuring that they are prepared to deal with the specificities of early childhood. In addition, the government needs to invest in infrastructure, particularly in the most vulnerable regions, to ensure that all children have access to essential services.

Finally, the study suggests the implementation of a more effective monitoring system, with clear indicators that allow for the continuous evaluation of public policies. This strategy will be important to adjust ongoing actions and ensure that the established goals are achieved in an equitable manner, contributing to the reduction of regional inequalities and promoting the integral development of Brazilian children.

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