

THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOMOTRICITY IN THE INCLUSION PROCESS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM



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ABSTRACT

Psychomotricity is an interdisciplinary approach that connects motor, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects, being a crucial tool in inclusive education, especially for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This article analyzes, through a literature review, how psychomotor practices contribute to the integral development and school inclusion of these children. Fundamental concepts of psychomotricity, its impact on the psychomotor development of children with ASD, its application as an inclusive strategy, effective psychomotor practices, as well as the challenges and possibilities for its implementation in school environments are presented. It is concluded that psychomotricity promotes not only motor and social development, but also a more significant inclusion, highlighting the need for investments in teacher training, adequate resources and public policies that ensure equitable and inclusive education.

Keywords: Psychomotricity. School inclusion. Autism Spectrum Disorder. Inclusive education. Psychomotor development.

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INTRODUCTION

Psychomotricity is an interdisciplinary area that connects body movement to the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of the human being. In the educational context, it plays a crucial role in the integral development of students, especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Children with ASD have characteristics that may include difficulties in social interaction, communication, and sensory processing, which requires different pedagogical approaches. In this scenario, psychomotricity emerges as a fundamental strategy to favor the global development and inclusion of these students in school practices.

School inclusion, as a guiding principle of contemporary education, seeks to ensure the right to quality education for all, regardless of their conditions or challenges. For children with ASD, the inclusive process often faces structural, pedagogical, and attitudinal barriers. In this context, psychomotricity plays an important role in creating learning opportunities that consider the specificities of these children and promote their effective integration into the school environment. Recent studies reinforce that psychomotor interventions have a positive impact on the motor and social development of children with ASD, contributing to greater autonomy and interaction.

Body movement, mediated by psychomotor practices, not only favors physical development, but also stimulates socio-emotional and cognitive skills. According to Wallon, human development is inseparable from bodily experiences, as it is through the body that the child interacts with the world around him. For children with ASD, these interactions are essential for promoting emotional regulation and building social bonds. Thus, psychomotor activities become indispensable tools to promote inclusion in a broader and more meaningful way.

In addition, psychomotricity also contributes to the reduction of stereotyped behaviors, often observed in children with ASD. Through activities that stimulate coordination, balance, and body perception, these children are encouraged to explore their surroundings and interact with others. This process, in turn, favors social inclusion and participation in school activities, promoting more meaningful and inclusive learning.

Another relevant aspect is the training of teachers to work with psychomotor strategies in the classroom. Many educators report difficulties in meeting the specific needs of children with ASD, especially in inclusive contexts. Continuing education, focused on psychomotor practices, can be an effective solution to enable them to deal with these

challenges, providing more appropriate support to children. In this sense, collaboration between educators, health professionals, and family members is essential for the success of interventions.

Therefore, this article aims to analyze the importance of psychomotricity in the inclusion process of children with ASD, highlighting its contributions to motor, cognitive and social development. In addition, it seeks to discuss psychomotor practices as effective pedagogical strategies to promote inclusion and the challenges faced by educators in this context. In this way, it is expected to contribute to the strengthening of inclusive education, ensuring that children with ASD have access to meaningful and transformative learning.

PSYCHOMOTRICITY: CONCEPTS AND FUNDAMENTALS

Psychomotricity is a discipline that studies the relationship between body movement and the emotional, social, and cognitive processes of the human being. According to Le Boulch (1985), psychomotricity transcends the simple execution of movements, as it involves the coordination between body and mind, essential for the integral development of the individual. This approach considers the body as a vehicle for expression, interaction, and learning, especially in educational contexts.

Historically, psychomotricity has gained prominence as a pedagogical tool by integrating the physical and emotional aspects of child development. Wallon, one of the pioneers in the field, highlighted that body movement is essential for the construction of identity and social interaction. For him, psychomotor experiences are fundamental for the development of autonomy and body awareness, allowing the child to recognize himself as part of a social context.

In the educational context, psychomotricity has been widely applied as an effective methodology to stimulate motor and cognitive skills, in addition to promoting inclusion. Vitor da Fonseca (2008) highlights that psychomotor activities play a fundamental role in child development, as they allow the child to explore the environment, overcome challenges and develop skills that go beyond the physical, also covering emotional and social aspects. This aspect is especially relevant for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), who need specific pedagogical approaches to stimulate their interaction with the environment and favor their learning.

Psychomotor practice is also guided by principles that value respect for individualities and the encouragement of autonomy. According to Vygotsky (1991), social

interaction and pedagogical mediation are determinant for the development of children's skills. From this perspective, psychomotricity assumes an integrating role, enabling the student to actively participate in the learning process, even in situations of greater complexity, such as those involving children with ASD.

In addition, psychomotricity not only works on physical development, but also favors emotional regulation. In children with ASD, whose difficulties often involve repetitive behaviors and emotional dysregulation, psychomotor practices can act as a means to reduce these challenges and promote greater stability. This is because psychomotor activities create a structured and safe environment for body expression, reducing anxiety and increasing the child's confidence.

Finally, psychomotricity is based on the idea that movement is a channel for integral learning. For Piaget (2024), bodily actions play a central role in the construction of knowledge, especially in the first years of life. Thus, in the inclusive context, psychomotor practices are presented as indispensable tools to help children with ASD to overcome barriers, integrate into the school environment and actively participate in pedagogical activities.

THE PSYCHOMOTOR DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN WITH ASD

The psychomotor development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has characteristics that differ significantly from the typical pattern, requiring specific interventions. Children with ASD often face difficulties in skills such as balance, coordination, motor control, and body awareness. These limitations can directly impact their interaction with the environment, making it difficult to explore space and carry out daily activities. According to Le Boulch (1985), psychomotor development is an essential basis for learning and social adaptation, which makes its stimulation indispensable in the case of children with ASD.

These psychomotor difficulties are often accompanied by sensory changes that affect the perception of the environment. Children with ASD may have hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity to visual, auditory, or tactile stimuli, which interferes with their ability to process information and respond appropriately to external stimuli. Vitor da Fonseca (2008) highlights that sensory alterations impact motor and social performance, creating additional challenges for learning and school inclusion.

The relationship between motor and emotional aspects is also a striking feature in the development of children with ASD. Often, motor difficulties are associated with high levels of anxiety and repetitive behaviors, such as stereotyped movements. According to Wallon (2007), emotional development is closely linked to bodily experiences, which highlights the importance of practices that integrate these dimensions into the educational process.

In addition, the lack of psychomotor skills can affect the social interaction of these children, since many games and school activities rely on basic motor skills, such as running, jumping, or manipulating objects. Vygotsky (1991) argues that social interaction is an essential element for human development, and psychomotor practices can act as mediators in this process, creating opportunities for children with ASD to actively participate in group activities.

Another relevant aspect is the positive impact that psychomotor interventions have on strengthening the functional skills of children with ASD. Studies show that activities aimed at motor coordination, balance, and body awareness can significantly improve these children's ability to perform everyday tasks, increasing their autonomy and quality of life. This reflects the importance of including psychomotor practices as part of the pedagogical curriculum in inclusive schools.

Finally, the psychomotor development of children with ASD should be understood as a continuous and integrated process. The psychomotor approach, by simultaneously working on physical, emotional and social aspects, allows these children to overcome barriers and reach their maximum development potential. Thus, psychomotricity not only promotes school inclusion, but also contributes to the formation of individuals who are more autonomous and integrated into their social context.

PSYCHOMOTRICITY AS AN INCLUSIVE STRATEGY

Psychomotricity has stood out as an effective strategy in the process of school inclusion, especially for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Through activities that integrate body movement with cognitive and emotional dimensions, psychomotricity favors integral development and promotes the active participation of children in inclusive educational environments. According to Le Boulch (1985), psychomotricity allows the individual to adapt to the environment, facilitating interaction with other people and with the space around him, which is essential for children with ASD.

One of the main contributions of psychomotricity as an inclusive strategy is the possibility of working on fundamental skills, such as motor coordination, balance and spatial perception. For children with ASD, who often have difficulties in these aspects, these activities help them develop greater body control and self-awareness, promoting greater safety in their interaction with the environment. Le Boulch (2001) emphasizes that bodily experience, through the exploration of space and movement, contributes significantly to the child overcoming physical and emotional barriers, promoting their inclusion in the social and educational environment.

In addition, psychomotricity stimulates socialization, one of the main challenges for children with ASD. Through cooperative games and group activities, children have the opportunity to learn to share, wait their turn, and interact with peers, skills that are essential for coexistence in the school environment. Vygotsky (2007) highlights that learning occurs in social contexts, being mediated by interaction with other people. Thus, psychomotor practices create an environment conducive to children with ASD developing social skills.

Another relevant aspect is the flexibility of psychomotricity, which allows the adaptation of activities to the individual needs of each child. This personalized approach is essential in inclusive contexts, where each student has unique characteristics and challenges. According to Wallon (2019), the educator must observe the particularities of each child and adjust practices in order to enhance their capabilities. In the case of children with ASD, this flexibility is even more important to ensure their active participation.

Psychomotricity also contributes to emotional regulation, one of the most challenging aspects for children with ASD. Activities that involve movement and sensory exploration help reduce repetitive behaviors and anxiety, promoting greater tranquility and focus. This is especially important in the school context, where emotional control is necessary for the accomplishment of daily tasks. Studies show that regular psychomotor practices can significantly improve children's behavior and willingness to learn.

Therefore, psychomotricity is an indispensable tool for the school inclusion of children with ASD. By integrating the body, mind, and emotions, these practices not only develop motor and cognitive skills but also promote socialization and active participation in the school environment. In this way, psychomotricity reinforces the importance of a pedagogical approach that values diversity and seeks to guarantee the right to education for all.

PSYCHOMOTOR PRACTICES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Psychomotor practices have proven to be fundamental in the context of inclusive education, especially to meet the needs of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These practices involve specific activities that aim to develop motor coordination, balance, spatial perception and social skills. According to Le Boulch (1985), psychomotricity is essential to promote integral learning, as it connects body movement to cognitive and emotional development, crucial elements in school inclusion.

Among the most common practices are cooperative games, which promote social interaction and teamwork. These activities are designed to encourage collaboration among children, helping them develop skills such as shift respect, empathy, and communication. According to Vayer (1993) emphasizes that psychomotor games offer a unique opportunity for children with ASD to practice and improve their social interactions, in a safe and welcoming environment.

In addition, sensory activities are widely used to work on sensory processing difficulties, common in children with ASD. These practices include the use of materials that stimulate different senses, such as textures, lights, sounds, and movements. Wallon (2019) highlights that sensory exploration is essential for psychomotor development, as it allows the child to establish connections between the body and the environment, favoring emotional and behavioral regulation.

Balance and coordination exercises also play an important role in inclusive psychomotor practices. Activities such as walking on lines, jumping in circles or balancing objects help to improve children's body awareness and confidence in their own body. These practices are especially helpful for children with ASD, who often have difficulties maintaining balance and coordinating movements. Studies show that the regular practice of these activities can significantly reduce motor deficits.

Another relevant aspect of psychomotor practices is the flexibility in adapting activities to the individual needs of children. Personalization is an essential feature in inclusive contexts, allowing each student to participate in a meaningful way. Vygotsky (2007) argues that learning is mediated by social interactions and that activities should be adjusted to the level of development of each child, so that he can progress at his own pace.

Finally, the integration of psychomotor practices into the school curriculum is a strategy that benefits not only children with ASD, but all students. These activities

encourage creativity, autonomy, and teamwork, promoting a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment. Thus, psychomotor practices reinforce the commitment of inclusive education to offer equal opportunities for all, valuing differences and enhancing the capabilities of each child.

CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES OF PSYCHOMOTRICITY IN THE INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH ASD

The implementation of psychomotricity as an inclusive strategy faces several challenges, especially in the school context. One of the main obstacles is the lack of specific training of teachers to work with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Many educators report difficulties in understanding the particularities of the psychomotor development of these children, which compromises the effectiveness of inclusive practices. As pointed out by Le Boulch (1985), the training of educators is essential so that they can act appropriately, promoting activities that respect the individual needs of each student.

Another important challenge is the limitation of material and structural resources in schools. Many institutions do not have adequate spaces or specific materials for the development of psychomotor activities, such as mats, circuits or sensory objects. According to Vayer (1993), the environment should be planned in order to stimulate movement and interaction, which is fundamental for the progress of children with ASD. The absence of these resources makes it difficult to create an inclusive and safe environment.

In addition, the attitudinal resistance of some professionals and members of the school community is a factor that still prevents the full development of psychomotricity as an inclusive tool. Some educators and managers may consider the inclusion of children with ASD an insurmountable challenge, due to the complexity of these students' needs. Wallon (2019) emphasizes that inclusion requires not only pedagogical adaptations, but also a cultural change, in which everyone involved understands the importance of valuing diversity.

Despite these challenges, there are many possibilities for the effective implementation of psychomotricity as an inclusive strategy. The continuing education of teachers, for example, is a viable and essential solution to train them in the use of psychomotor practices. Specific training programs and workshops can provide educators with the necessary knowledge to plan and execute activities that favor the psychomotor

development of children with ASD. This training contributes to a more reflective and inclusive pedagogical practice.

Another positive aspect is the growing development of public policies aimed at inclusive education, which have promoted the creation of specialized spaces and programs in various regions. These initiatives guarantee the technical and financial support necessary to implement psychomotor practices in schools. According to Vygotsky (2007), learning occurs in social contexts that offer adequate stimuli, and public policies can be a means of ensuring that these stimuli are present in all educational environments.

Finally, the integration of families in the inclusion process also presents itself as a promising possibility. When families actively participate in psychomotor activities and collaborate with educators, children with ASD receive more complete and consistent support. This partnership strengthens social bonds and contributes to the overall development of the child, promoting more effective inclusion. Thus, despite the challenges, the possibilities of psychomotricity in the inclusion of children with ASD demonstrate that, with planning, training and collaboration, it is possible to build a quality inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

Psychomotricity stands out as an indispensable tool in the process of inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), contributing to motor, cognitive, social and emotional development. Throughout this article, it has been shown that psychomotor practices offer a significant path to overcome barriers and promote learning in inclusive school environments. As pointed out by Le Boulch (1985), body movement is a bridge between the individual and the world around him, being fundamental for social integration and the formation of essential life skills.

Working with psychomotricity requires a multidimensional approach, integrating the efforts of teachers, family members and specialists. For children with ASD, who often face difficulties in motor and social skills, psychomotricity offers activities that stimulate coordination, balance, and body perception, promoting greater autonomy and confidence. In addition, these practices create opportunities for the development of social skills, such as communication and interaction with peers, aspects that are fundamental for school inclusion.

Despite the numerous advantages, it is undeniable that there are still challenges to fully implement psychomotricity in schools. The lack of continuous training of teachers, the

limitation of resources and attitudinal barriers are obstacles that hinder the creation of inclusive environments. However, as highlighted by Vayer (1993), overcoming these challenges is possible through strategies such as teacher training, investment in public policies and greater collaboration between school and family. These actions are essential to transform the educational reality.

Public policies play a crucial role in making psychomotricity viable as an inclusive tool. Initiatives aimed at teacher training and the provision of adequate materials and spaces can ensure that all children, regardless of their conditions, have access to quality education. In addition, collaboration with the family strengthens the inclusion process, creating more consistent and comprehensive support for the child with ASD.

Psychomotricity, therefore, is not limited to specific interventions, but reflects an educational philosophy that values diversity and recognizes the potential of each individual. By integrating movement, body, and mind, these practices promote an inclusion that goes beyond access to school, encompassing active participation and meaningful learning. This reinforces the importance of adopting pedagogical approaches that respect differences and provide equal opportunities for all students.

In conclusion, psychomotricity is a powerful ally in building an inclusive and transformative education. Investing in psychomotor practices and addressing the challenges associated with their implementation is an essential step in ensuring that children with ASD have not only access to school, but also to a rich and meaningful learning experience. In this way, psychomotricity contributes to a future in which inclusion is effective and all students can develop their full potential.

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