

Methodological strategies for the development of comprehensive competencies in initial education

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Abstract: The didactic strategies arise from the set of methodological guidelines that indicate the techniques, methods, procedures and resources to be more effective in the teaching-learning process of children to achieve their adequate selection in correspondence with the skills to be developed; likewise, these strategies facilitate comprehensive training at the initial education level. The objective of this research was to analyze the methodological strategies that stimulate the development of comprehensive competencies in early childhood education children. The research was descriptive, with the object of study being the pedagogical practice of teachers and parental perception. The techniques used were: documentary analysis applied to the curriculum, didactic guide, educational planning and institutional strategic plan. Surveys and registration of observations were applied to teachers and children, and academic strategies were analyzed in order to develop comprehensive competencies in Early Childhood Education children. A bank of new strategies was designed for the areas of: understanding and expression of language, coexistence, logical-mathematical relationships, identity and autonomy, body and motor expression, artistic expression and relationship with the natural and cultural environment, in order to develop comprehensive competencies in early childhood education.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Methodological strategies, Comprehensive skills.

1. Introduction

The Initial Education is a formative level destined to the attention of the first years of life of the child. Many problems have been detected in learning for the development of

comprehensive competencies; which has created the need to keep teachers constantly updated on new programs and strategies that allow them to respond to these demands.

Initial education is a formative level destined to the attention of the first years of life (0 - 7) of children [4], currently there is great concern regarding the various problems in learning for the development of competences comprehensive, requiring teachers to equip themselves with current knowledge and strengthening programs to respond to these demands, defining and using new strategies to provide solutions to this problem [8].

One of the fundamental elements in the growth of a country is the development of all its inhabitants, where education plays an increasingly important role for society. Initial education is essential, because it allows to lay the foundations for socialization; and it is also considered as a dynamic, complex process that must be revealed and cultivated taking into account the conditions of children, therefore, offering comprehensive training for the development of skills, is to promote the psychomotor, intellectual and affective development of infants, and with it, allow an indissoluble balance with the social and cultural environment and strengthen the process of behavior, skills and abilities.

Initial education implies the design of methodological strategies for the development of these competences through a comprehensive process that allows them to achieve relevant learning for coexistence, the 'know-how' and 'know how to be' according to the needs of infants as indicated. UNESCO (2008) on the four pillars of education [14].

In Ecuador, initial education was born with the reform of the Constitution in the year 2008, in which the sublevels called Initial 1 and Initial 2 were created, contemplated for children between three and five years old. According to the Ministry of National Education (2007), initial education is defined as: A continuous and permanent process of quality, timely and pertinent interactions and social relationships that enable boys and girls to enhance their capacities and acquire life skills, in function of a full development that favors their constitution as subjects of rights. This implies caring for and affectionate and intelligent accompaniment of the growth and development of boys and girls, in healthy and safe socialization environments so that they achieve quality learning. [12]

Initial Education, beyond being a continuous process, is a right of children to guarantee their integral development, in addition to the importance of the training of children in the first years of their life, encourages teachers at this level to obtain adequate preparation, attitudes and skills to enhance the quality of initial education, as well as Escobar (2006) states that: Initial Education is conceived as the educational care of children in the early years that supports families and other relationship environments in his upbringing and education. Initial Education appears, as well as a space, a place where boys and girls, families and professionals coexist, grow, develop and learn together. [6]

The learning environment in Early Childhood Education must offer a harmonious climate full of love, affection and respect so that the exchanges of knowledge are positive and that the children feel free and happy in each day of the day, as well as the parents. sure of the training that infants adopt. Currently, the number of children attending Initial

Education has increased significantly. Taking the 2007-2008 school year as a reference, according to the Ministry of Education (2016), there were 27,470 children between the ages of 3 and 4 enrolled, while in the 2015-2016 school year, this figure increased to 327,940 children [12] (Figure 1).

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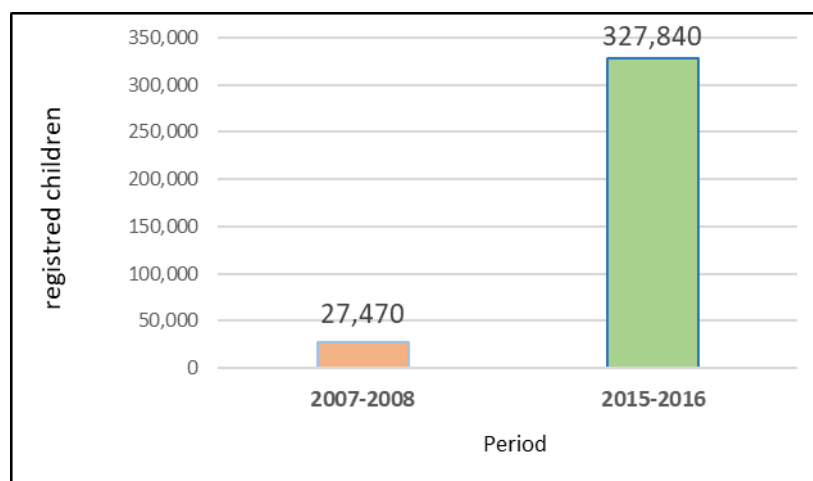


Fig. 1. Registered children attending Education Initial in two periods.

Source: Administrative Records of the Ministry of Education

As shown in Figure 1, the number of students enrolled in Initial Education (3 and 4 years) increased 11.9 times in eight school periods, before which the Ministry of Education provided 100% coverage (327,940) of children who they applied for a place in 2015. [12]

It is necessary to design methodological strategies, visualizing the educational transformations currently being experienced in early childhood education, moving from a traditional model to an efficient model, in order to align and improve childhood education, using innovative methodologies and strategies. that articulate ideals, stimulate, motivate and provide educational, creative, effective solutions in the difficulties of the formative processes, starting from the diagnosis, contextualization and evaluation to enhance the capacities and abilities of the child at the initial level.

One of the most important aspects to enhance the level of initial training is the pedagogical practice of teachers in the classrooms within the fundamental framework of an established curricular design, assuming that planning, conducting and fulfilling the teaching process, proposes a competency-based approach to comprehensive development [15].

A quality education is transcendental for the attention of the integral competences and the establishment of support points for the development of the child in the initial education [2]. Leyva (2011), in his research focused his study on the characterization of the game as a didactic strategy that facilitates the learning processes in the child of the initial level and reported the game as a didactic strategy that facilitates learning in the child of initial education and contributes to a comprehensive training [10].

In this research, mention is made of real situations in the school environment such as game-based learning and methodological strategies established by the curricular design.

As a general objective of the study, it has been proposed to analyze the methodological strategies proposed in the curriculum design of Initial Education and their contribution to the development of comprehensive skills in children of this level of training, assigned to the

CEICHT, establishing which are the methodological strategies present in the pedagogical practice of the teachers of the CEICHT that promote the development of comprehensive competencies in children at this level of training.

2. Methodology

This research was carried out at the CEICHT, which is located in the Ibarra canton, Imbabura province, in the north of the country, in the geographical area known as the inter-Andean region or sierra; on the basin of Chota in the east and on the outer flanks of the western mountain range in the west. The address of CEICHT is at Av. Carlos Barahona and Av. Aurelio Espinoza Pólit.

According to Administrative Resolution No. 0814 DP-INFA-2011, this center is a private, non-profit entity that offers its services to the Technical University of the North and its mission is to provide a care service, comprehensive attention and development of potentialities of the children of students and employees of the aforementioned university.

The research carried out is of a documentary and descriptive type in which the specification of the properties, characteristics and profiles of the population under study [9] was sought, as a basis for characterizing the pedagogical practice of CEICHT teachers, allowing to determine the methodological strategies used by teachers to promote the development of comprehensive competencies in children at the level of Initial Education 1 and 2.

It is a research with a mixed approach, defined by the combination of two different paradigms that in practice are complementary. [9], in this research a documentary analysis applied to the initial education *curriculum* was carried out and a guide was designed for its implementation, the CEICHT institutional strategic plan and the educational planning of the teachers in order to obtain the information. Open and closed question surveys were applied to teachers and parents, in order to reveal the teaching practice regarding methodological strategies employed during the working day and the knowledge of these evaluated by the parents. Observations were made to teachers, boys and girls in order to determine and evaluate the level of cognitive, socio-affective, motor development and the consolidation of language, according to their age and level of training in terms of infants, and the strategies used by teachers during the development of educational meetings.

Each of the variables was studied: *curriculum*, teachers, parents, boys and girls; This made it possible to characterize the pedagogical practice of CEICHT teachers, and also to determine the contribution of the Initial Education *curriculum* design for the development of methodological strategies that promote comprehensive training at this educational level. According to the description of Bernal Torres who has defined this method as one that studies the facts, starting from the decomposition of the object of study into each of its parts to study them individually (analysis) and then these parts are integrated to study them holistically and comprehensively (synthesis). [3]

The population or unit of analysis was represented by 2 members of the teaching staff, 62 parents and 10 children.

This research presented a desk and field research design. The first allowed the analysis of key documents at the macro, meso and micro curricular planning level at the Initial Education

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level. The second facilitated the collection of information on the facts of investigative interest.

In accordance with the stated objectives, the methodological procedure was the recording of observations to the elements that characterize the pedagogical practice of the institution's teachers. A documentary analysis applied to the teachers' planning was carried out in order to analyze the methodological guidelines for the development of comprehensive competencies of the CEICHT. To investigate the methodological strategies used by teachers, the survey technique was applied using the questionnaire as an instrument in order to reveal the elements that revolve around pedagogical praxis.

A content analysis matrix was proposed around the initial education curriculum design and a didactic guide for its implementation, these are normative instruments that regulate the pedagogical practice of this level of training. For this, special attention was paid to the graduate profile declared in the curriculum document, offering a critical and objective analysis of the relevance of the methodological strategies contemplated for the development of each of the knowledge, skills and abilities in terms of competencies declared in the profile. The design of unpublished methodological strategies that promote the integral development of children was carried out, considering for this, the adequate improvement of the curricular proposal of initial education in Ecuador.

Three research techniques were defined, with their appropriate information gathering instruments, for each variable under study.

For the variables: *curriculum*, methodological guide, institutional strategic plan and curricular planning, the content analysis technique was applied using analysis matrices as an instrument. For the variables: teachers and parents, the survey technique was applied with its instrument the questionnaire. Surveys were carried out with parents of the CEICHT, belonging to children of initial education 1 and 2, in order to know, through specific questions, their opinions about the education of their children, in addition to the survey to the teachers to evaluate the methods or strategies currently used in the Institution.

For the variables: teachers and children, the observation technique was used with its instrument the observation record. The instrument to carry out this research technique was the observation sheet, with which it was possible to observe and later analyze the teaching practice and the behavior of the children, thus achieving a clear vision about the influence of the teaching strategies. teaching-learning used so far by teachers, and with this, define which are the most appropriate within this field of training. The data was collected and recorded in tables and figures.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Macro, Meso and Micro curricular application

The curricular design of Early Childhood Education in Ecuador is made up of educational proposals for each level of training. The Constitution of the Republic defines the right of every human being to a quality education, the same that for the initial level exposes a methodology based on the game as the primary strategy of infants.

The *curriculum* is a path that guides teachers with relevant information to improve the teaching process, through a flexible model for daily planning around the needs of each child. The initial education curriculum complies with the appropriate parameters in a general way, establishing bases for meaningful learning, characterizing learning by areas and skills for each level in order to promote an appropriate graduation profile for infants. The proposed guidelines are adequate for this level of training. Its methodological guide, implemented since 2015, guides the educational processes in children from 0 to 5 years old, containing general indications for people who work at the level of public and private training, setting out recommendations to adequately organize the corners or spaces. developed each day. The document prepared has a strategic and practical nature in the implementation of learning environments, giving teachers free creativity to generate innovative proposals to promote meaningful learning in the development of infants.

In the microcurricular analyzes, the CEICHT teachers carry out the weekly planning, thus complying with the elements proposed in the curricular design, displaying aspects such as: learning experience, general description of the experience, integrating element, scope, skills, activities, resources and materials and finally evaluation indicators.

3.2. CEICHT Institutional Strategic Plan

The CEICHT has an Institutional Strategic Plan which consists of the following elements: 1. Introduction, which states the reality of many students who are integrated into UTN classrooms and who have children under 5 years of age, the majority of whom are scarce resources to admit their children to a private institution and others who come from the provinces and do not have a close relative to help them with the care of the infants. 2. Ideology, where the creation of the Children's Center is based to give comprehensive care to the children of the employees and students of the university community. 3. The Improvement Plan, that sets out the projects to improve the quality and coverage of pedagogical care in the CEICHT. Problems such as limited coverage, care services, lack of staff and teaching resources are pointed out here; In addition, the need for an urgent expansion of infrastructure spaces and implementation of rotating corners for the integral development of boys and girls is exposed. 4. The Operational Plan, that exposes the lack of values with indicators, activities, budget and financing. Other issues raised at this point include vision and mission.

3.3. Polls

The surveys carried out focused on two objects of study; the first, the parents, where the opinions of the parents were revealed about the *curriculum* design of Initial Education used by the CEICHT teachers and their degree of contribution to the development of the integral competences of the children in this period of education. The survey consisted of 6 topics with a total of 62 respondents. The first focused on knowing about the perception if the children like to stay in the CEICHT. All parents (62) stated that they feel comfortable that their children belong to the center, which reflects that they receive good treatment from the teaching staff and in general a good work environment.

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Regarding the qualification of the learning achieved by children in the basic areas, since they attended the CEICHT, the initial education *curriculum* (2014) has as one of its objectives to develop gross and fine motor skills to carry out movements and coordinated actions.

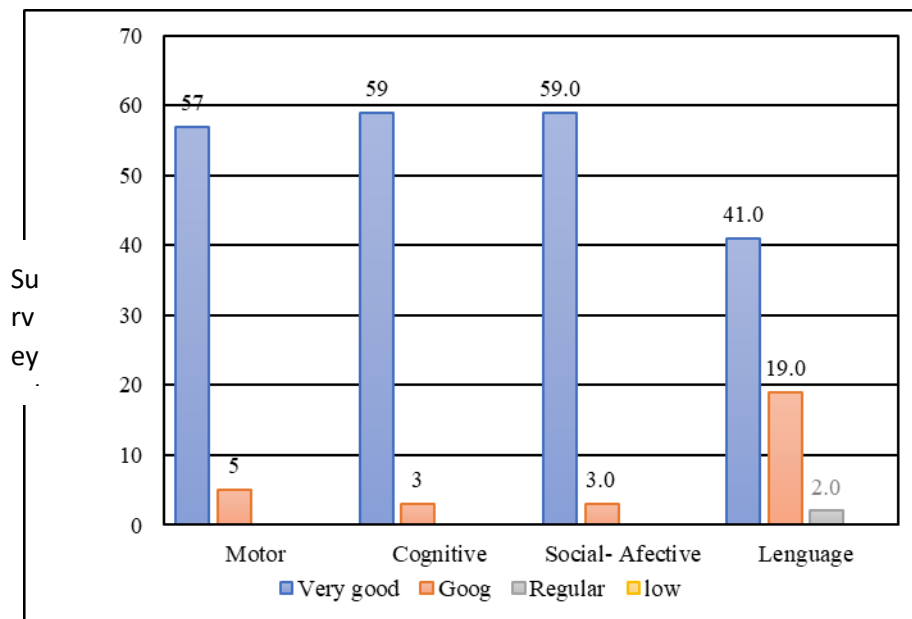


Fig. 2. Paternal perception in learning children reached in the basic areas

Within the motor area, of the 62 parents surveyed, 92% agree with the learning achieved, rating it as very good; In the cognitive and socio-affective area, 59 (95%) parents agree with the learning achieved, rating them as very good. However, in terms of verbal language, 41 (66%) of the parents rated their language ability as good; while 5 of the parents rated this ability as good and 2 of them rated it as fair. These results are indicators to make the appropriate corrections to develop said ability in the best way and therefore the teacher must become even more involved with the verbal manifestations of infants (Figure 2).

Figure 3 shows the perception of the parents surveyed about the level of training of teachers in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities in terms of competencies.

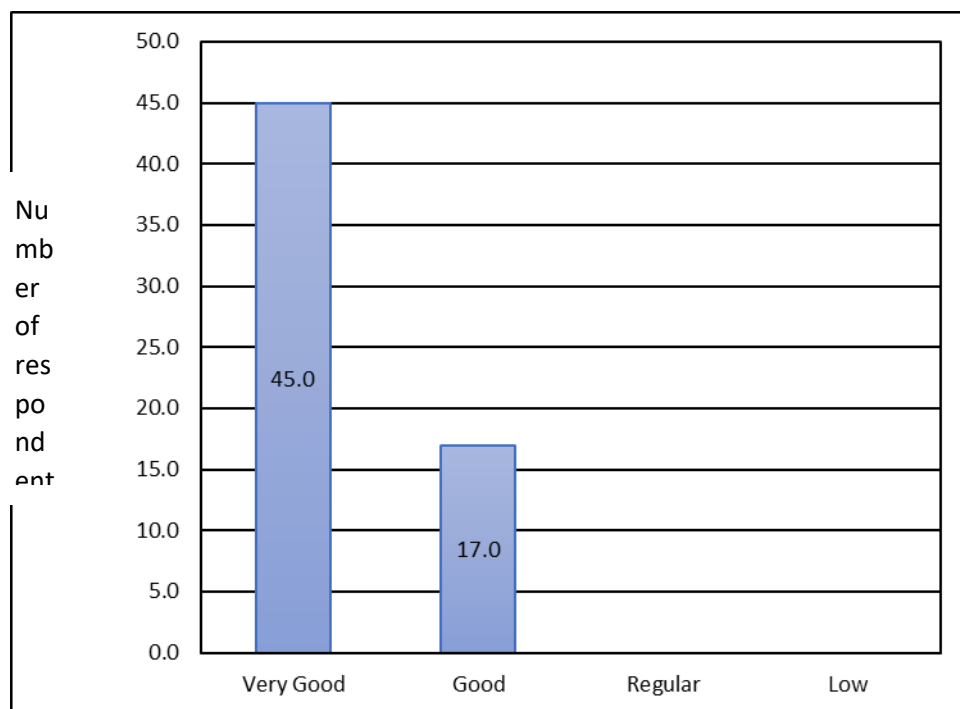


Fig. 3. Parental perception in the knowledge of teachers at CEICHT.

Figure 3 shows the paternal perception in the knowledge of the teachers in the CEICHT. Of the 62 parents surveyed, 45 affirm that the knowledge, abilities and skills of the teaching group is adequate in the learning process required by children in initial education, rating it as very good (62%) and good (38%).

Regarding the parental perception regarding the strategic spaces and corners of the CEICHT infrastructure, Figure 4 presents the responses of the parents.

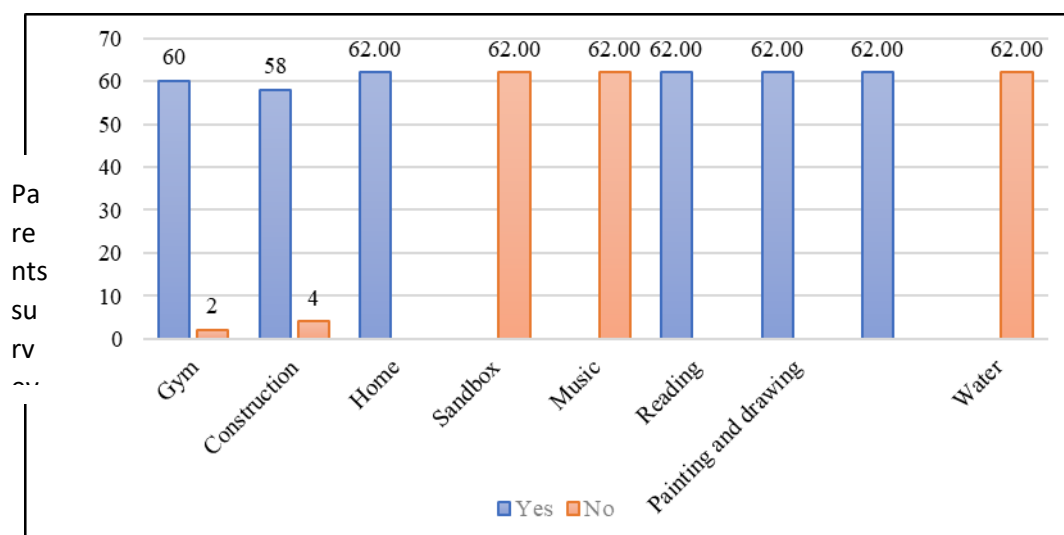


Fig. 4. Parental perception regarding strategic spaces and corners of the CEICHT infrastructure

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Of the nine strategic spaces cited by the survey, Figure 4 shows that the majority of parents affirmed the presence of six of them, such as the gym, construction, home, reading, painting and games place and they also stated that they did not have music, sandbox and water corners within the CEICHT, despite being a requirement established by the Ministry of Education of Ecuador, through the methodological guide for the implementation of the initial education *curriculum*; For this reason, teachers find it difficult to apply the appropriate methodological strategies for the development of integrated competencies of children; however, there is a lack of knowledge of the parents of families about the organization of the rotating corners and it only has three classrooms distributed in toddlers, initial 1 and initial 2, being the infrastructure insufficient for a quality training of infants.

The paternal perception of the intervention of the methodological strategies used by the CEICHT teachers can be observed in Figure 5.

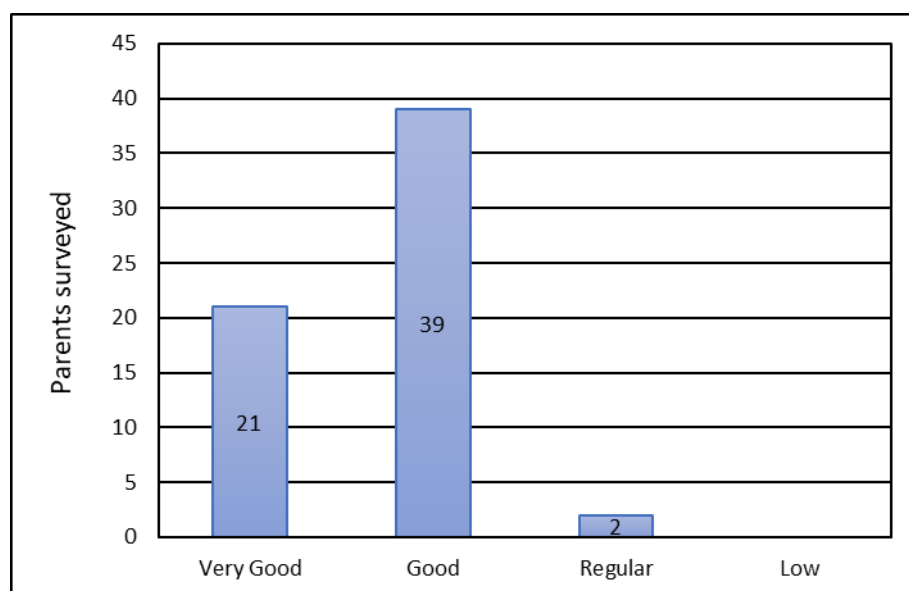


Fig. 5. Paternal perception in methodological strategies used by CEICHT teachers

95% of parents affirmed that the strategies used by the teaching body are rated Very Good and Good; However, it is noted that parents are unaware of the appropriate strategies for the comprehensive training of infants, because they have not developed language and logical-mathematical skills in the best way (Figure 5).

According to the initial education *curriculum* proposed by the Ministry of Education (2014), a methodological strategy for this level of education is Play-Work, this is defined as the main strategy in the teaching-learning process, it is an innate activity of the children that can take many forms and that changes with age. This methodology consists of organizing different learning spaces or environments, called corners, where children play in small groups performing various activities. [12]

Figure 6 presents the perception of parents of the positive changes of their children in attitudes and behaviors due to what they are taught in the classrooms of the center. The areas

that were analyzed were: a. Interest in participating in CEICHT activities; b. Respect for adults; c. Solidarity / cooperation with their colleagues; d. Cooperation in housework; and. Personal hygiene habits; F. Respect for the manifestations of their culture; g. Personal and social development; h) Social Integration; i. Cognitive skills of basic knowledge at the level of reading and the notion of numbers; j. Recognition of their environment (Figure 6).

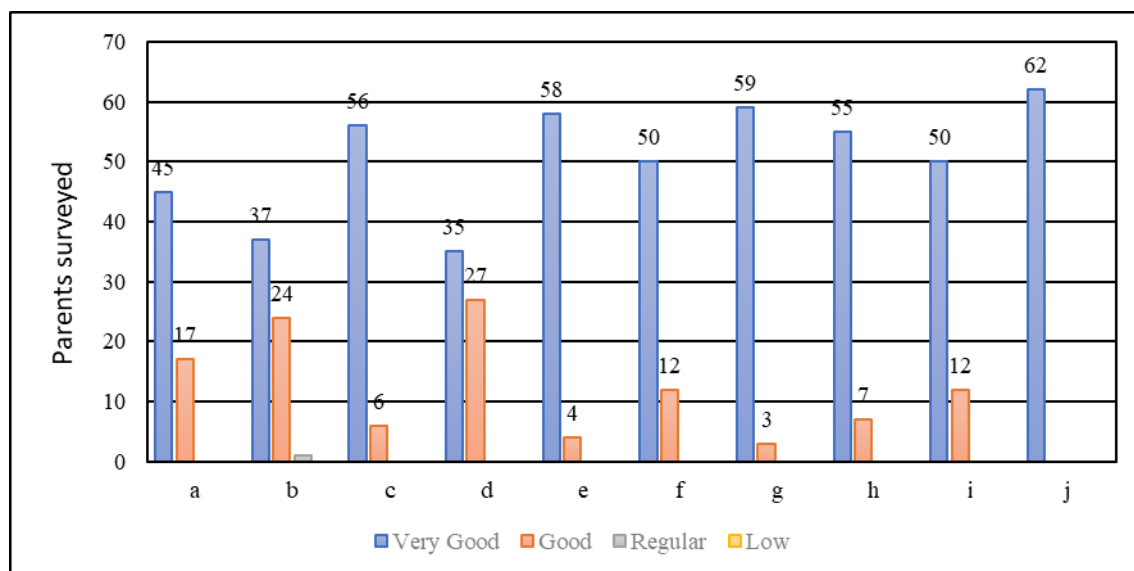


Fig. 6. Paternal perception in the attitudinal and behavioral change of their children in the CEICHT.

Parents expressed that their children have adopted certain behaviors or attitudes, the same as a consequence of belonging to an Initial Education Center. Exposing the results of higher satisfaction to the minor, the parents affirm in 100% that their clients recognize their environment, in 95% they have achieved good personal and social development; They also expressed 94% that their boys and girls have good habits in their personal hygiene in addition to being supportive and cooperative with their peers and having a good social integration, they affirmed with 81% good cognitive skills of basic knowledge at the reading level and the notion of numbers and respect for the manifestations of their culture; with 73% participating in the activities of the Children's Center; and lastly with 60% in respect for adults and 56% in cooperation in housework.

Most of the parents affirmed that the methodological strategies used by the CEICHT teaching body are Very Good and Good, however, it is denoted that the parents do not know which are the appropriate strategies for the integral formation of infants, due to the fact that children have not developed in the best way the skills of language and mathematical logic

Regarding the report of the surveys applied to teachers, 15 topics were established for 2 teachers, yielding the following results (Table 1):

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Table 1. Analysis of the topics of the interview with the CEICHT teachers.

Interview Topics	Response Analysis
Elements proposed by the design of initial education that favor the integral formation of children	Part of the integral formation of children, are the axes of development and learning that are based on three areas: natural and cultural discovery, expression and knowledge, and personal and social development.
The dimensions necessary to consider in the training process for the integral development of children of the initial level.	Motivation, safety, environment, strategies, affectivity, integration, development of activities, play and adequate environment.
The didactic strategies proposed in the curriculum design of Initial Education that contribute to the development of comprehensive skills in children at this level.	Teachers were in favor of teaching strategies if they contribute to the integral development of children.
The teaching-learning methodological strategies used by the teacher to guarantee the integral development of children.	The game, songs, graph-plastic techniques, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, early stimulation.
In the daily activities that are carried out in the CEICHT, the methodological strategies proposed by the curriculum design of Initial Education are applied.	The teaching group affirms in its entirety, the application of these strategies during the daily workday.
Percentage in which the CEICHT favors the integral development of the graduate profile declared in the curricular design inherent to each level of Initial Education training.	70% -80% the characteristics of the graduation profile declared in the initial education curriculum design, therefore, it is evident that the strategies proposed by the curriculum design are not fully applied.
The evaluation strategies commonly used by the teacher to verify the level of development of the learning achieved by the children.	Check cards and partials.
The evaluation strategies commonly used by the teacher to verify the level of development of the learning achieved by the children.	The worksheet, observation and evaluation sheet.
Las estrategias metodológicas propuestas por la guía didáctica del currículo de Educación Inicial empleadas comúnmente en la planificación de la jornada diaria.	The reading corner, construction, cleaning, music, body expression, sandbox corner, specific objective, scope, skill, resources and evaluation were used.
Strategies planned for the daily workday in the classroom	The teachers divided into 3 sections, the first starting section covers the greeting, attendance, weather, motivational song, news and date. The second development section works on students' skills, strategies, resources, evaluations, brainstorming questions about the work to be done, and production and execution of the assigned sheet. The third, the farewell that is done through a farewell song and a shower of questions about what he liked and what not.
The greatest difficulty presented in the training processes and the strategies to solve it.	Language, behavior, shyness, discipline and aggressiveness problems. Among the strategies adopted to solve these problems include proper speech therapy, support in their work, more care and affection for children, integration with the environment, activities within the classroom and keeping them busy with activities.
Those in charge of applying didactic strategies for the development of competencies at the initial education level: coordinator, teachers or parents.	Those responsible must be the teaching staff.

The contents that help the integral development of infants within the curricular programs proposed by the Ministry of Education	The initial education curriculum design, with its programming, helps children at this level to contribute to their integral development.
Frequency of updates related to methodological strategies for the training of children.	The updating of pedagogical strategies varies between 1 month and 1 year, being required by the Ministry of Education, to do it frequently, and free of charge for public service teachers.
Preparation of new strategies that contribute to the development of integral competencies of children at the initial level.	The teachers of the Center state that they have not prepared any unprecedented strategy that contributes to the integral development of infants

3.1. Observation sheets

For the analysis of the observation cards, the focus was on children and finally on teachers. The first with the objective of determining and evaluating the level of cognitive, socio-affective, language and motor development of the children of the CEICHT, thus characterizing the pedagogical practice of the teachers.

The evaluation sample is of 10 children from the center of initial sublevel 2. Table 2 shows the results of the observation sheets of the skills that need to be implemented and developed in the learning experiences.

Table 2. Observation sheet of the skills to be developed in the learning experience

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Aspects	Activities	Present	Absent
Identity and Autonomy	- Say your first and last name, address, age.	8	2
	- Carry out washing actions of the hand, face, teeth with the guidance of an adult.		
Coexistence	- Recognize physical characteristics such as hair color, eyes, among others.	9	1
	- Collaborate spontaneously with teachers in simple activities and situations (garbage in its place).		
Relations with the natural and cultural environment	- Recognize the professions of each service that they provide to the community.	9	1
	- Identify characteristics of animals such as pets.		
Logical mathematical relationships	- Identify nutritious foods and their importance for growth.	3	7
	- Discover and classify basic circular, triangular, rectangular and quadrangular shapes with an attribute (size, color or shape).		
	- Count orally from 1 to 10 with numerical sequence in most of the times.		
	- Identification of notions inside-outside, high-low.		
Comprehension and expression of language	- Identify characteristics of the day-night.	6	4
	- Answer questions about a narrated text about the teacher.		
	- Orally describe images that you see in graphics.		
Body expression and motor skills	- Perform basic articulated movements such as blowing, trying to inflate balloons, tongue movements, lips.	6	4
	- Jump on two feet, catch the ball, walk on straight lines and curves trying to keep control.		
Artistic expression	- Express their experiences and experiences through free drawing.	8	2
	- Imitate onomatopoeitic, natural and artificial sounds.		

During the observation, with the results obtained, it is concluded that the children of the Initial sublevel 2 do not present greater difficulty in coexistence, the relationship with the natural and cultural environment, artistic expression and identity and autonomy. However, there are two areas in which 40% of children have difficulty in body and motor expression and language comprehension and expression. In the field of logical - mathematical relationships, a great deficiency of 70% of the observed children is denoted, who present conflicts in their skills when using these resources. According to Forero-Medina (2020), the implementation of technological didactic resources notably increases the development of logical-mathematical skills in Early Childhood Education children. In this sense, methodological strategies should be strengthened in the aspects in which they denoted low performance and thus be able to comply with the graduation profile required by the Ministry of Education through the initial education curriculum. [7]

This teacher observation sheet was carried out in order to determine the degree of application of the methodological strategies of the CEICHT teachers, proposed by the curricular design, thereby evaluating the development of comprehensive competencies of infants. The evaluation sample is of 2 teachers from the center of the Initial sublevel 2. Table 3 shows the results of the observation sheets of the skills that need to be implemented and developed in the learning experiences.

Table 3. Observation sheet of the methodological strategies used by the CEICHT teachers

Estrategies	Yes	No	Observations
Play	X		
Art	X		
Contact with the nature	X		Few green spaces
Gym	X		Activities carried out in the classroom
Construction	X		
Home	X		
Sandbox		X	There is no space
Music		X	There is no space
CORNERS Reading		X	There is no space
Modeling	X		Activities carried out in the classroom
Dramatic play		X	There is no space
Painting and drawing	X		Activities carried out in the classroom
Quiet games	X		
Water		X	There is no space

In the following sheet, play-work is recognized as the main methodological strategy for the formation of competencies of infants, and, to the corners, as the places where their skills can be better developed. However, despite the fact that the curriculum requires the existence of the corners mentioned and observed, in the CEICHT, the corners of sand, music, reading, dramatic play and water are missing, and others such as gym, painting, drawing and modeling are carried out within the classroom, without having made a modification to it so that the activity is developed in a better way. Lauv (2005), establishes that contact with nature and free play encourage the development of logical thinking, improve attention spans, strengthen motor skills, reduce obesity rates, among others; It is for this reason that these wide spaces should be provided for children in periods of adaptation and recognition of the environment and environment that surrounds them. [eleven]

4. Conclusions

The results obtained allow us to conclude that:

The methodological strategies proposed in the *curriculum* design for initial education are not applied in their entirety due to not having an adaptation of the learning corners.

Updates on the methodological strategies required by the Ministry of Education for teachers of Initial Education, are not fully complied with.

Most of the parents are unaware of the importance of competency-based training, the proper use of the methodological strategies used by teachers and the adaptation of the corners for the comprehensive development of their constituents.

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Children do not reach an adequate development in the field of language and logical-mathematical due to the lack of innovation of methodological strategies in these areas.

With the results obtained in this research, the bases were provided for the realization of the design of a guide of new, innovative strategies, giving way to the game as the main strategy for the development of integral competences of the children of Early Childhood Education of the CEICHT that will be given to get to know other institutions to train teaching staff and improve the achievements of the teaching-learning process of initial education.

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