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Family members' perceptions of the learning of special education students in elementary school

Luciane de Cassia Santos Lopes
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1990-6862

Deolinda Armani Turci
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1820-2092

Abstract: The aim of this article is to highlight family members' perceptions of their children's learning, as Special Education students, in the final years of Elementary School in state schools in the city of Belo Horizonte. Methodologically, this is a case study anchored in field research, based on semi-structured interviews with three family members of Special Education students in the state school system of the municipality in question. After being transcribed, the interviews were categorized and analyzed, using the following analytical categories: family and student profiles, school and learning trajectory, services offered and services used by the students in schools, family-school relationships, family expectations about their child's learning, family members' knowledge of rights and legislation, and family member's suggestions. The results show that the family members interviewed do not feel that they have been included in the educational system's pedagogical practices. It is considered essential that schools maintain partnerships with families and promote not only access, but also permanence, learning and student participation, breaking down educational and social inequalities and the pathologization of differences.
Keywords: families; target audience of Special Education; final years of Elementary School; learning.

1 Introduction

The fundamental principle of Inclusive Education is that all children have access to, remain in, learn, and participate in mainstream schools. In this way, inclusive schools are those that prioritize and ensure these rights, guaranteeing processes and resources for quality education for all who wish to attend them.

In Brazil, 2008's National Policy for Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (PNEEPEI) safeguards the educational rights of students with disabilities, global developmental disorders, and high abilities/giftedness, guiding educational institutions in this regard (Brasil, 2008). Additionally, the Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI) of 2015

ensures an inclusive educational system for students with disabilities at all levels of education and throughout their lives, mandating the government to implement, develop, create, monitor, encourage, and evaluate educational offerings, which must be enhanced through the adoption of inclusive pedagogical practices, case studies, accessibility, intersectoral collaboration, provision of support professionals, and institutionalized pedagogical projects that include Specialized Educational Services (AEE), among other measures (Brasil, 2015).

Despite these and other legal prerogatives in the country, there are still misconceptions and challenges in mainstream schools regarding the retention, learning, and completion of schooling for students targeted by Special Education, particularly in the final years of Elementary Education, which corresponds to grades 6 through 9 in the Brazilian educational system. It is noteworthy that, at this stage, the complexity of the content and the number of subjects increase, posing significant challenges and heightening the risk of dropout. Families also face difficulties in supporting their children's activities, as they may not have achieved this level of schooling or mastered the academic content themselves.

According to research published in 2023 by the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP), there has been a significant increase in the enrollment of students targeted by Special Education across various levels of mainstream schools in the country, from early childhood education to higher education (Brasil, 2023). However, this increase does not always align with the policies and rights that should ensure the retention, learning, and participation of these students in schools.

As Mantoan (2015) points out, inclusion is a process that must occur for all individuals. It goes beyond mere access, requiring schools to prepare for the development of their students. Schools must minimize differences, promoting equality and equity. Tonús and Wagner (2013) argue that mainstream schools are still not adequately prepared to provide quality education to students with disabilities. For these authors, it is essential to reformulate and effectively implement public policies that align with reality. Thus, the discourse set forth in laws must be achievable through conceptual and cultural changes that underpin new pedagogical practices.

Moreover, as Maturana and Cia (2015) highlight:

> The perception of family members/caregivers and the school regarding the process of school inclusion can be quite divergent and its key determinants include the teachers' and school administrators' understanding of disability and the space provided for meaningful and ongoing relationships with parents (Maturana and Cia, 2015, p. 355).

Within the family dimension, it is evident that accepting a child with a disability is not an easy task, as parents' expectations during pregnancy are often tied to ideal personal

standards. Additionally, due to societal exclusion and the biological or medical understanding of disability, both students and their parents face a lack of accessibility, social rejection, challenges in schooling, and the diverse perspectives inherent in this process (Lazzarotto; Schmidt, 2013).

This study, therefore, seeks to explore how the learning processes of students targeted by Special Education, enrolled in the final years of Elementary Education in public schools in Belo Horizonte (MG), occur from the perspective of their families. It is understood that mechanisms safeguarding rights are created based on the demands of social actors. Thus, listening to families and involving them as protagonists in the schooling process contributes to thematic discussions and even to the formulation of educational public policies aimed at the Special Education population, fostering student learning and participation. Therefore, this text aims to highlight the perception of families regarding the learning process of their children, targeted by Special Education, enrolled in the final years of Elementary Education in state public schools in Belo Horizonte.

2 Family and School

The relationship between the school and the family is essential for the learning and schooling of all students. However, families are not always invited to participate in their children's school life, and when they are, it is often to address complaints about the student's behavior. In democratic and participatory school management systems, families are invited to assemblies, collegiate meetings, pedagogical evaluations, and other specific demands. Chechia and Andrade (2005) argue that parental involvement is crucial for students' academic performance and that, contrary to common belief, parents are not indifferent to what happens in their children's school lives. Instead, they expect appropriate guidance from the school to better support their children.

We agree with Mantoan's (2015) assertion that:

> Parents can be our greatest allies in rebuilding the new Brazilian school. They are a stimulating and demanding force for this much-desired reinvention of the school, advocating for the best for their children, with or without disabilities, and not settling for projects and programs that keep repeating the same approaches and masking what has always existed (Mantoan, 2015, p. 30).

For an inclusive school, collective work with the entire school community is necessary, with parents being an indispensable part of this process. When families are heard and supported, they positively contribute to the learning and development of students, especially in a comprehensive approach to human and social formation. In the case of families

of students targeted by Special Education, Duarte (2008) emphasizes that they attribute a symbolic value to the school in their children's development process. Parents expect to be supported in this schooling process. In other words, they desire pedagogical, symbolic, informational, and emotional support that can positively contribute to school inclusion.

Regarding the main challenges faced by families in the school inclusion process, research by Lopes *et al*. (2020) and Chechia and Andrade (2005) highlights the lack of school infrastructure, trained professionals, and didactic, pedagogical, and instrumental resources. These studies reveal that: in general, families are represented by mothers, who take on the primary caregiving role and rarely receive support from other family members or the school itself in the schooling and inclusion of their children. It is urgent for schools to rethink their relationship with families, promoting mechanisms for listening and collaboration in the processes of schooling, learning, and development.

In addition to these aspects, Esquinsani (2021) points out that students in the final years of Elementary Education become "invisible" in school from one year to the next, since these students:

> who were once the focus of attention, abruptly become just one among many others... These are no longer "someone's students" in particular, they don't belong to a specific teacher. There is no longer an emphatic sense of belonging. They cease to be So-and-so's class. They have transformed into merely "students of 6th grade A," deepening their sense of alienation (Esquinsani, 2021, p. 103).

For the author, in addition to the physical transformations that occur around the age of ten when students enter the final years of Elementary Education, they also face discomfort caused by typical changes in this educational stage, such as rotating teachers (and consequently losing a consistent teacher reference), changing class schedules, different subjects, larger class sizes, and more. These changes often go unnoticed by teachers, rendering students invisible to them.

Mantoan (2015) emphasizes that the organizational structure of this educational segment confines knowledge, fragments and specializes learning, as each school subject becomes an end in itself rather than a means to understand the world and human and social differences. Furthermore, it hierarchizes knowledge, sequences stages, and ranks values in a routine that disciplines behaviors and bodies, stripping away modes of being and doing. For students targeted by Special Education, the discomfort is even greater, as:

> The discomfort with students targeted by Special Education (PAEE) in the final years stems largely from the inherent complexity of the schooling process in the final years of Elementary Education, compounded by the presence of students who require a

> differentiated approach and adaptations in relationships and pedagogical practices (Esquinsani, 2021, p. 103).

This discomfort often arises from a lack of understanding about Inclusive Education and the rights of students targeted by Special Education. This reinforces and normalizes the invisibility they experience, further contributing to their school and social exclusion. Duarte (2008) reminds us that the difficulties in schooling for students targeted by Special Education are not only due to architectural barriers, lack of resources, or professional training but also stem from attitudinal barriers present in schools and society.

In this way, maintaining these barriers, as Esquinsani (2021) highlights, is to maintain the invisibility of these students, which "in their peculiarities and idiosyncrasies can be as exclusionary as deliberately segregating them in specific spaces" (Esquinsani, p. 104). It is worth recalling, as mentioned in the introduction, that the Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI) of 2015 guarantees that learning occurs throughout life, across all educational modalities, with assurances of access, retention, participation, and learning.

3 The Methodological Approach: Interviews with Families

This study is derived from a master's thesis presented to the Graduate Program in Education and Human Formation (PPGE) of the Faculty of Education at the University of the State of Minas Gerais (FaE/UEMG). It was approved by the State Secretariat of Education of Minas Gerais and submitted to and approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the same university. The qualitative research was based on a case study and was developed in three stages: a literature review, a documentary analysis of federal and state educational legislation, and semi-structured interviews with 03 (three) families of students targeted by Special Education in Elementary Education within the state school system of Belo Horizonte (MG).

Specifically for this article, the results and analysis of the interviews, conducted in the second half of 2023, are presented. Initial contact with the families was made through an education professional in the municipality, who is part of a WhatsApp group with over 20 (twenty) parents of children targeted by Special Education in the state school system of Minas Gerais. After the research was announced by this professional in the group, 08 (eight) families expressed interest in collaborating and were contacted by the researcher, the first author of this text. However, ultimately, only 03 (three) families were available to participate, including 02 (two) mothers and 01 (one) father of students enrolled in grades 6 through 9 in state schools in the municipality.

The interviews were pre-scheduled and took place at locations chosen by the participants. They were recorded and later transcribed. The analysis and categorization of the

data were based on Bardin's (1977) content analysis. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher reiterated the details of the study, presenting and requesting the signing of the Free and Informed Consent Form (TCLE), which indicated that the interview could be terminated at any time if the participant decided not to continue. The interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes and are identified in this text as E1, E2, and E3. The students are identified as A1, A2, and A3.

The analysis categories, defined after a preliminary reading of the transcripts, were: profile of the family members and students, school trajectory and learning, services offered and utilized by students in schools, family-school relationship, family expectations regarding their children's learning, family knowledge of rights and legislation, and family suggestions. Below, we present key points from the results and analysis of the data.

4 Results and Data Analysis

The interviewed family members (two mothers and one father) are between 30 and 49 years old. Two of them have completed higher education, while one has completed elementary education. Two of the family members self-identify as Black, and one as white. Regarding socioeconomic status, two report an income between 3 and 5 minimum wages, and one reports an income below one minimum wage. The data reveal the youthfulness of the participants, the majority self-identifying as Black, and the leading role of women (mothers) in caregiving and household maintenance.

Concerning income, even though most report earnings above 3 minimum wages, it can be considered that their income is only sufficient for basic family subsistence—given that 3 minimum wages today, on average, represent the cost of living in Belo Horizonte for just one person[1]. This amount is insufficient to guarantee leisure, cultural activities, and various forms of care for a family with more than two members. This aligns with Silva, Basilatto, and Sobrinho (2020), who argue that educational quality is a complex and broad process that must address fundamental aspects to ensure equal conditions and rights for student participation. This also presupposes the guarantee of social rights, such as housing, food, health, social assistance, and more.

Undoubtedly, these rights must be safeguarded by public institutions. It is understood that accessing mainstream educational spaces requires intersectoral collaboration. This is indicated in Article 15 of Law No. 13.146/2015, which mandates the provision of "a network of articulated services, with intersectoral action at different levels of complexity, to meet the specific needs of persons with disabilities" (Brasil, 2015, Art. 15).

[1] According to data from https://www.expatistan.com/pt/custo-de-vida/belo-horizonte.

Regarding the students' profiles, the children of the interviewees consist of two male adolescents (12 and 14 years old) and one female adolescent (13 years old). According to the family members, two of the adolescents have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), with one also having diagnoses of Dyslexia and Irlen Syndrome[2]. The other student has been diagnosed with Intellectual Disability and is suspected of having Autism Spectrum Disorder.

As reported during the interviews by two of the family members, their children's diagnoses were still being finalized. For this reason, we decided to include them in the study, even though students with ADHD are not considered part of the target audience for Special Education under current legislation. Nevertheless, since our interest was to understand the families' perceptions of their children's learning, we also considered Law No. 14.254/2021, which ensures comprehensive support for students with dyslexia, ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), or other learning disorders, guaranteeing care, protection, and collaboration in support networks that enable the students' holistic development (Brasil, 2021).

Regarding school trajectory and learning, the interviewees reported that their children's access to schooling has always been in public schools: initially in Municipal Early Childhood Education Schools (EMEIS) in Belo Horizonte, which serve children aged 0 to 5 years, during early childhood education. Later, and up to the present, in regular state schools in the same municipality, where they attended (and still attend) the final years of Elementary Education (grades 1 to 4, starting at age 6; grades 6 to 9, expected for students aged 11 to 14). At the time of data collection in 2023, A1 was in the 7th grade, A2 in the 6th grade, and A3 in the 9th grade.

The interviewees reported that their children and families were always well-received in early childhood education spaces in the municipality, and that difficulties began mainly after the students entered Elementary Education. It can be presumed that one reason for this is the transition to a different school network, where children begin the process of literacy and reading, in accordance with the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) of 2010 (Brasil, 2010).

Regarding the learning process, the interviewees reported that difficulties began when the students entered Elementary Education, even in the early grades (1st to 4th grade). As mentioned by E1, teachers began reporting issues with reading: "...*because he couldn't read...some suspected dyslexia, but anyway...it was only after he was diagnosed at age six that he managed to learn to read in the second grade at his current school*" (Interviewee 1).

[2] Irlen Syndrome is characterized by a change in visual capacities, word blurring, pain in the eyes, distorted images, light sensitivity and difficulty identifying three-dimensional objects (AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION, 2014).

Even though teaching and learning processes begin early in a child's life, through their interaction with the world, it is with the child's entry into school that reading and writing processes are formalized. In the case of E1, since dyslexia is associated with neurobiological functioning and linguistic processing, the diagnosis often occurs when children enter the school environment.

E2 believes that securing a spot for her daughter in an EMEI only at age 5 may have hindered the child's development. "*It's like...I spent a lot of time with her at the health center, at the emergency room, and it was hard to get a spot. Since she had frequent fainting spells, I was afraid to enroll her in school, worried they wouldn't take proper care of her...it's really hard to see someone looking at your child with judgment...*" (Interviewee 2).

E2's statement is understandable, as the stigma and various forms of violence directed at people with disabilities often exacerbate family behaviors, fostering exclusionary practices, as highlighted by Ribeiro (2016, p. 16):

> Attitudinal barriers are behaviors and attitudes that hinder, impede, or 'block' full participation, the exercise of citizenship, educational inclusion, and the empowerment of people with disabilities. They manifest in discourse and social dynamics and can take on an assistentialist, paternalistic, normalizing, or discriminatory character.

E3 reports no difficulties in enrolling his child in school. According to him, this occurred at age 5, and until then, everything was "normal": "*He was very well received at school. The difficulties started when he turned 7, and the teacher and supervisor identified that something was going on and referred him to a neuropedagogue...*" (Interviewee 3).

It is worth noting that the biological or medical model of disability is still prevalent among education professionals in the municipality. In this model, disability is seen as a disease, an abnormality, something that needs to be "fixed" (Foresti; Bousfield, 2022). As a result, it is common for schools to request medical reports or refer students for evaluations by biomedical professionals, seeking validation in the medical field rather than focusing on educational processes and resources that could benefit students and break down the barriers imposed on them.

Regarding her child's learning, E1 recalls that the challenges began when the child was 6 years old and had difficulty reading. As a librarian and book lover, she found it difficult to accept her child's disability. She often heard teachers comparing her child to other children, which led her to question what challenges and perspectives lay ahead. These situations motivated her to learn more about the diagnoses so as to intervene more effectively.

This mother's statement reflects the understanding of disability as a biological phenomenon, leading to the perception that the "problem" lies with the individual or their family, interfering in the relationships between family, school, and society and promoting

comparisons between students. In contrast, the social model of disability, as highlighted by Foresti and Bousfield (2022), understands and respects the plurality of bodies and focuses on addressing social barriers and societal incapacity to recognize and respect individual differences.

The interviewees emphasize that the greatest challenges they face, since the diagnoses, relate to the specialized care their children require and the lack of access to such care through public health, social assistance, and educational services. All healthcare appointments—with neurologists, psychiatrists, and ophthalmologists—are conducted privately, when the family can afford it. However, the adolescents often fall behind on appointments due to financial constraints. When they seek or receive care through the public healthcare system (SUS), appointments are sporadic, often offered only once a month, failing to meet the students' needs. Regarding pedagogical issues, the interviewees also report difficulty in assisting their children at home, and financial constraints prevent them from hiring a tutor or educational psychologist to help with schoolwork.

This highlights the need for greater collaboration between the education sector and schools with social assistance and healthcare. The challenges faced by the interviewees reveal the absence of an intersectoral and interprofessional policy, a basic right guaranteed to children and adolescents under Article 88 of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA), which presumes intersectoral collaboration in the care of children and adolescents, promoting their full development (Brasil, 1990).

It is also worth noting that, at the federal level, it is a legal prerogative that student evaluations be pedagogical, conducted through case studies and Individualized Educational Plans (AEEs), based on the social model of disability, to identify the barriers faced by students. However, in state schools, the Individual Development Plan (PDI), established by State Education Council Resolution No. 460/2013 (Minas Gerais, 2013), is followed. In line with this, the three interviewees reported that even the state's PDI proposal is unknown to them, indicating that families are not consulted in the preparation of these documents. We understand that it is essential for families to participate in the preparation of their children's school documents, to be heard and informed about their children's educational processes, thereby safeguarding the rights guaranteed by public policies at all levels.

It is important to emphasize that in this state legislation and subsequent laws, the PDI focuses primarily on the students' specific biological, cognitive, behavioral, psychomotor, communication, and language characteristics, which may align with the biological or medical model of disability. Thus, in the PDI model and guidelines, attached to State Education Secretariat Resolution No. 4.256/2020, there is no space to address the students' school and social relationships, the barriers they face, or information on architectural, attitudinal, technological, or other accessibility measures that may impede their learning (Minas Gerais, 2020).

Regarding the trajectory and learning of their children in the current segment of regular public schools in the municipality, the narratives also indicate resignation and frustration, as noted by E1:

> The teachers complain a lot about his handwriting, that he writes poorly, doesn't take notes, doesn't keep a schedule...I can't get him to organize himself. I need an educational psychologist, but I can't afford one. I feel very limited, and sometimes it makes me sad, you know? (Interviewee 1).

E2 reports that, despite the difficulties, her daughter enjoys school:

> I see that she has many difficulties, but she likes being at school when she's feeling well. She plays, does activities, but still can't pay attention, so she doesn't learn properly. But I know it's her difficulty, you know? (Interviewee 2).

E1's observations are supported by Chechia and Andrade (2005), who show that good performance is still associated with neatness, classroom behavior, and care for materials. E2's comments highlight the social role of school, the importance of peer interactions, and the students' desire to be in that space. However, like the other statements, they demonstrate that the school tends to blame the families and the students themselves for being and learning differently from other students.

On the same topic, E3 recalls that the difficulties began after the age of 6, and nothing had been noticed before then. The child was taken to a specialist due to the death of the student's mother:

> And then a lot of things started to surface, including difficulties at school. So, the school referred him to a neurologist, who diagnosed him with ADHD without hyperactivity. Then he had follow-ups with a neuropedagogue, an educational psychologist—all of which I had to pay for, for all the consultations. I see that he has a lot of difficulties, especially with math, which he can't learn. He doesn't know the basics of addition, division, or multiplication, he doesn't know the fundamentals, you know? He couldn't read well before, and he still struggles, but he's improved a lot (Interviewee 3).

Based on E3's response and those of the other participants, it can be inferred that in the state schools of Minas Gerais where the students are enrolled, the perception of disability is still based on the individual characteristics of the students, guided by the biological model of disability, reinforcing stigma and violence. As a social phenomenon, stigma manifests as discrimination and prejudice, leading to the understanding that students with disabilities, "[...]

regardless of their actual impairment, have various aspects of their abilities compromised, especially cognition and communication" (Mendes; Costa; Denari, 2022, p. 16).

The family tries to understand the difficulties of the school environment, often blaming themselves for not being able to secure their children's rights. E1 observes that her child's learning could be better, but she lacks financial resources and time to assist him in his routine, as she needs to work to help with family expenses. She also reports having to pay someone to help her child with schoolwork and acknowledges that her child learns differently due to attention and concentration difficulties. She often feels that the school environment does not provide adequate conditions to support his learning, reinforcing that, as a mother, she strives to help him in his development. The data suggest that the interviewed families struggle to understand Inclusive Education as a right and that the school should adapt to the students' needs, not the other way around, as suggested by Santos and Balbino (2015).

In general, based on the interviewees' responses about their children's school trajectory and learning, it can be said that, despite the advances made by federal and state legal prerogatives, there is still a long way to go in these schools to effectively implement public policies, especially in the provision and availability of resources and services. It is evident here that legal norms help and highlight possibilities, but in these cases, they are not sufficient to ensure the effectiveness of educational policies.

Regarding the services offered and utilized by students in schools, it is important to note that Minas Gerais' educational legislation follows federal laws in providing educational services for students targeted by Special Education, including offering Specialized Educational Services (AEE) and resource rooms in some schools in Belo Horizonte. However, according to E1, even after the diagnosis requested by the school, her child only received this service in 2023, following a directive from the Public Prosecutor's Office, after an 11-year school trajectory without his rights being guaranteed.

She reports that her child learned to read in the second grade of Elementary Education, with the help of a support teacher who was assisting another child in the class. After this six-month support, no further assistance was provided to her child. She also mentions that, even after involving the Public Prosecutor's Office, a support professional was denied—since, according to the health report, the child was not entitled to one. However, from then on, the child began receiving AEE in a resource room. E3 reported that his child currently has a support teacher who also assists other students. In the interviewee's words: "*Now he has a support teacher who also helps other students, but it was a struggle to get that...but I understand that it's hard for the school to provide support for everyone*" (Interviewee 3).

In E3's perception, there are also gaps in the school's welcoming and support strategies. He reports that his child had support at the beginning of 2020, while in the 6th grade, in a resource room that served other students with disabilities. However, after the post-pan-

demic return (in November 2021), this resource was no longer available. Currently, his child has a teacher who supports him in activities but also assists other students. For this reason, he believes the school cannot provide individualized support for students. According to the narratives of E2 and E3, support professionals would be more effective if the assistance were individualized, with one professional per student.

Here, it is essential to highlight the lack of knowledge among parents and schools about the roles of the mentioned professionals. While the families' perspective is understandable, it is important to remember that the responsibility for teaching students lies with the classroom teacher. According to Technical Note No. 19/2010 from MEC/SEESP/GAB, support professionals should only assist with basic needs such as mobility, feeding, and hygiene, providing individualized support to students who cannot perform these activities independently (Brasil, 2010).

Furthermore, the interviewees' statements also revealed the absence of certain services that should be offered by the school, such as AEE for Special Education students. Without this service, the case study and AEE plan are not prepared, compromising the removal of barriers and the provision of pedagogical resources and accessibility. It is worth noting that AEE practices and services are safeguarded by the 2008 PNEEPEI, as well as technical notes such as Technical Note No. 04/2014 from MEC/SECADI (Brasil, 2014).

It can be said that, despite the existence of federal policies and legislation on Special Education from an Inclusive Perspective, they are often unknown, both by the schools themselves and by the families. In some cases, when federal policies are transferred and legislated by states and municipalities, they undergo distortions, preventing services and resources from reaching those in need. This is the case, for example, with the roles of support professionals in schools and the use of the PDI as a substitute for the case study and AEE plan.

What emerges from the interviews is the numerous challenges faced by families in seeking services, resources, and professionals, either through the school or other public services or, in their absence, by hiring these professionals with their own resources when they can afford it. We come to understand that intersectorality, from an inclusive perspective and preserving the school environment as a pedagogical rather than clinical space, can help minimize inequalities and facilitate access to these services and professionals. As highlighted by Pletsch, Sá, and Mendes (2021, p. 14), intersectorality "is understood as a relationship between one or more parts of sectors that have organized themselves to act on a theme, aiming to achieve results in a more effective and sustainable way than a sector acting alone could achieve" and can be a possibility for social justice, aiming to minimize structural inequalities faced by families and students.

In common, the interviewees' reports indicate that the relationship between the family and the school is good. In their opinion, the mere fact that the school welcomes their children is a sign of inclusion. However, as seen in E2's statement, for example, the responsibility and blame for the children's difficulties are still attributed by the school to the family:

> The school welcomes us well, yes. I just think we're treated differently by some people. It seems like they blame us for having to accept our children in school. I think they need to understand that we, as mothers, are not to blame and that we also need help (Interviewee 2).

In addition to these aspects, the narratives of the other interviewees show that they are grateful for the little they receive from the school. They are satisfied with the space and maintain a good relationship with the pedagogical team, while also expressing a desire to contribute to their children's better performance. Still, they seem unaware of their children's educational and social rights, perhaps due to a lack of information or support to assist in their care and education.

Patto (1992) reiterates that complaints and information about children's problems generally form the primary basis of the school's relationship with families. Grounded in biomedical conceptions, teachers demand psychological and medical services for diagnoses, often confirmed by questionable reports but with significant persuasive power over students and families. In this way, the author concludes that the legitimacy of these professionals condemns those deemed incapable and reinforces the idea that the most capable and hardworking will succeed, producing labels for the oppressed without considering the students' social conditions, who come to believe in the discourse of "self-accusation" (Patto, 1992, p. 117).

It is significant to highlight the author's opinion on the persuasive power of educators and the main reason families are called to school: the symptoms attributed to the child and the blame assigned to the parents—revealed, for example, in E2's statement, which emphasizes the different treatment and blame, as well as the need for family support.

The analysis of the interview data underscores the importance of the family-school relationship, as also emphasized in CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2/2001. This legislation states that the sustainability of inclusion in the mainstream education system should occur through cooperative learning in the classroom, teamwork in the school, and support networks. It should also involve the effective participation of the family (Brasil, 2001).

Regarding the families' expectations for their children's learning in the regular public schools where they are enrolled, the interviewees express a desire for other skills to be developed in the institutions, as mentioned by E1:

> He has difficulty with words, but he's very visual. He has other skills, and I need to support him so he can develop better, right? I have expectations that he will graduate and everything, but since I often see many limitations, I encourage him in what he likes to do, so he can move forward and have a profession (Interviewee 1).

E2 suggests that she would like daily life skills to also be taught in school: "*I wish she could manage on her own—take a bus, go to the store, make a purchase, pay, get change. I know she won't be able to do that. Another thing she likes is dancing and music*" (Interviewee 2). E3 expresses a similar desire: "*I wish he could go to the bakery and buy bread, know how to get change. I think these basics would make a difference, because I know he won't learn the other things*" (Interviewee 3).

These statements reflect a discourse they have often heard—that their children need to learn the basics and/or daily routines, either because they won't go far or because formal education isn't for them. They highlight the parents' reinterpretation of what they have been led to believe about their children: providing the basics or just autonomy in daily life. On the other hand, the interviews make us reflect on the importance the school places on certain content over others and how significant it would be to listen to families and students regarding their educational demands and expectations to promote more inclusive education. As noted by Célio Sobrinho (2009), families have expectations for their children's schooling, including the desire for the school to fulfill its social role, especially in terms of reading, writing, and professionalization, so that they can achieve higher levels of education.

Considering that inclusion is a social practice that primarily applies to attitudes and perceptions, knowing the legislation empowers families for more direct and liberating action, as highlighted by Camargo (2017), since awareness of rights helps secure those rights. However, the research data indicate that families know little about the legislation governing Special Education policies in the country, as evidenced by one interviewee: "*I know very little about the legislation and his support. In the municipal school, they gave us reports, but in the state school, I don't receive any*" (Interviewee 3).

The interviewees report that they know some laws exist but don't know where to access them or where to seek information to secure their rights. Unaware of their legally guaranteed rights, the interviewees end up assuming responsibility for their children's learning resources and strategies, in most cases paying for services that could be provided by the school or through partnerships. This highlights the importance of the school also advocating for rights, which can help disseminate legal norms to reduce educational and social inequalities and increase the effectiveness of rights.

When asked about possible suggestions for school services that could assist their children's learning, Interviewee 1, for example, suggests less bureaucracy in accessing services, greater integration between municipal and state networks to complement the services offered, innovative methodological proposals, and extracurricular activities in

spaces equipped with audiovisual, sensory, and playful resources to facilitate learning. Interviewees E1, E2, and E3 also suggest greater support from the public healthcare system in terms of psychological, psychiatric, and other services that could assist in the child/adolescent's development.

In general, what emerges from the families' responses is that many schools still practice integration rather than inclusion of students targeted by Special Education, and that the services offered by public networks are often not easily accessible to everyone. The interviews also reveal that families are interested in their children learning basic math concepts and/or content applied to daily activities to make their lives and their families' lives easier.

Santos and Balbino (2015) conclude that schools are often unprepared for effective inclusion, both due to structural issues and, primarily, attitudinal issues. The conception of "curing" disability is still deeply rooted in school culture, and it is necessary to deconstruct this idea by investing in accessibility, hiring qualified professionals, training teams, and developing new resources and practices for inclusive and satisfactory schooling for all children.

5 Final Considerations

Based on the objective of this article, the data, and the analysis of the interviews, it is possible to affirm that, in general, the interviewed family members do not feel satisfied with the pedagogical practices directed at their children, who are enrolled in the final years of Elementary Education in three state schools in Minas Gerais. They express frustration with the content covered and the services offered by these schools. They indicate that it would be important for the school to problematize and identify the individualities of the students, their difficulties and potential, and adopt more appropriate monitoring and school support practices, aiming to identify and enhance actions that favor their learning process.

Although they feel welcomed by the schools at times, at other times they perceive differential treatment, prejudice, discrimination, and the blaming of these families by the schools. It can be said, therefore, that the research results corroborate discussions that point to the pathologization of students' differences, especially among poor children, as contributing to the production of prejudice and stigma, as well as absolving the school of responsibility for the teaching and learning process.

The lack of resources, services, and intersectoral political partnerships by schools ends up placing the responsibility for children's learning on the parents. Thus, blamed and resigned, these family members seek pedagogical strategies and professionals who can assist in the students' learning process. Additionally, the lack of information about legislation and even about the proposals of Special Education from an Inclusive Perspective contrib-

utes to families relinquishing their rights, including the fundamental right to education and schooling in mainstream schools.

Families need to be heard, invited to participate, and collaborate in the schooling processes of their children, who are doubly invisible: due to the educational segment they are in and their individual differences. As agents of social transformation, the demands of families can help in the implementation and viability of public policies for more inclusive education. The analysis of the research data suggests the urgency of the effectiveness of current public policies, aiming to enhance actions that promote quality education for all and better coordination between what is offered and made available in terms of accessibility, resources, and pedagogical strategies, intending to promote learning by understanding the individual differences of students, based on the social model of disability, thereby breaking down the barriers that students encounter in school, which are even greater in the final years of Elementary Education.

In this sense, it is highlighted that the Specialized Educational Services (AEE) professional can significantly contribute to these practices, through the case study and the AEE plan, developed in conjunction with the classroom teacher, the multidisciplinary team, and the student's family, to ensure the accuracy of information and possibilities. Therefore, it is essential that there are sufficient AEE professionals and resource rooms in all schools to serve the target audience of Special Education.

It is also believed that the intersectorality of education with health and social assistance services will be beneficial, both for students and the entire school community. In this articulation, it is important to safeguard school knowledge and practices and understand the school as a pedagogical, not clinical, space. In this way, more inclusive practices, guarantees of rights, and the fight against educational and social inequalities are ensured.

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MINI BIOGRAPHY

Luciane de Cassia Santos Lopes
Master in Education and Human Formation from the Minas Gerais State University. Graduated in Pedagogy from the Federal University of Lavras. Graduated in Psychology from the Catholic University of Minas Gerais. Member of the Research and Extension Group in Inclusive Education and Psychology (GPEIP).
E-mail: lusanne.cs@gmail.com

Deolinda Armani Turci
Doctor of Social Psychology from the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Postdoctoral researcher in Social Psychology from Rio de Janeiro State University. Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and the Graduate Program in Education at Minas Gerais State University (UEMG). Coordinator of the Research and Extension Group in Inclusive Education and Psychology (GPEIP).
E-mail: deoarmani@gmail.com

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