
PLAY OF CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT: A HISTORICAL-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE¹

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ABSTRACT. It seems to be a theoretical consensus that play is one of the most important activities of child development. Authors from different approaches indicate the centrality of this activity for young children. From the theoretical assumptions of the historical-cultural perspective, our theoretical field of interest in this article, we have seen an increase of scientific papers about child's play. However, from a survey of articles, dissertations and theses written in Portuguese (2004-2014) – at the integrated base of the University of Brasília (UnB) and on oasis br (Brazilian portal of scientific publications in open access) – we could identify a small number of Brazilian studies investigating the role of play in blind and low vision children. By trying to understand this context of academic productions, this article seeks contributing to the mapping of this object of study, signaling the importance of it to the field of psychology, education and public policy.

Keywords: Visual impairment; childhood play behavior; historical-cultural theory.

CRIANÇAS COM CEGUEIRA E BAIXA VISÃO: O BRINCAR NA PERSPECTIVA HISTÓRICO-CULTURAL

RESUMO. Parece ser um consenso teórico afirmar que o brincar é uma das mais importantes atividades do desenvolvimento infantil. Autores de diferentes abordagens indicam a centralidade dessa atividade para as crianças pequenas. A partir dos pressupostos teóricos da perspectiva histórico-cultural, campo teórico de interesse do presente artigo, temos observado um aumento de trabalhos científicos que problematizam a brincadeira infantil. Entretanto, a partir de um levantamento de artigos, dissertações e teses escritos em português, que realizamos entre os anos de 2004-2014, na base integrada da Universidade de Brasília (UnB) e no oasisbr – o portal brasileiro de publicações científicas em acesso aberto –, identificamos um número reduzido de estudos brasileiros que investigam a brincadeira de crianças cegas e com baixa visão. Buscando compreender esse contexto de produções acadêmicas, esse artigo objetiva contribuir para o mapeamento desse objeto de estudo, sinalizando a importância do mesmo para o campo da psicologia, educação e políticas públicas.

Palavras-chave: Deficiência visual; comportamento de brincar; teoria histórico-cultural.

NIÑOS CON DISCAPACIDAD VISUAL: EL JUEGO EN LA PERSPECTIVA HISTÓRICO-CULTURAL

RESUMEN. Parece haber un consenso teórico que el juego es una de las actividades más importantes en el desarrollo del niño. Los autores de diferentes enfoques indican la importancia de esta actividad para los niños pequeños. A partir de los supuestos teóricos de la perspectiva histórico-cultural, el campo teórico de intereses de este artículo, hemos visto un aumento de trabajos científicos que tematizan el juego de niños. Sin embargo, a partir de una investigación de artículos, disertaciones y tesis escritas en portugués, llevados a cabo entre los años 2004-2014, de forma integrada en

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la Universidad de Brasilia (UnB) y oasisbr – el portal brasileño de publicaciones científicas de acceso abierto – identificamos un pequeño número de estudios brasileños que investigan el juego de los niños ciegos y de baja visión. Tratar de entender este contexto de producciones académicas es el propósito de este artículo buscando contribuir a la asignación de tal objeto de estudio, lo que indica la importancia de ésta al campo de la psicología, la educación y la política pública.

Palabras-clave: Discapacidad visual; conducta de jugar; teoría histórico-cultural.

Introduction

As highlight three of the main authors of psychology in the 20th century who devoted special attention to childhood, namely: Donald Winnicott (1896 - 1971), Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Lev Semenovitch Vygotsky (1896-1934), the game plays an important role in child development. These authors agree that the make-believe is a child activity in preschool that deserves attention of psychologists and pedagogues (Piaget, 1975; Piaget & Inhelder, 1995; Vygotsky, 2009, 1998, 1997; Winnicott, 1975).

In the psychoanalytical perspective of Winnicott, the sphere of playing, among others, is understood as a space conducive to the development of emotions; reconfiguration channel of the emotional dynamics that surround the child, as well as space to magnify their experiences with the other social spheres. Within the cognitive perspective of Piaget, the symbolic play is a period in the development that is important to expand the symbolic experience, encompassing notions such as representation and causality, characteristics of the egocentricity in the pre-operative phase.

To Vygotsky, the play of make-believe is the main activity of the child, involving the expansion of the symbolic experience of the child during the ontogenesis through a process of creation increasingly complex, when it is established dialectical relationships between reality and imagination, emotion and cognition, individual and culture (Vygotsky, 2009).

According to the Russian psychologist (Vygotsky, 2009, 1998), when playing, the child experiences situations other than those explored in its daily life, so that the playful experiences broaden its possibilities for intervention and understanding of the world. The creative activity is expanded during the game, constituting itself as typical instance of the childhood universe (Silva, Costa & Abreu, 2015), and the make-believe can be considered as central in the child development.

He states that the child, when playing, is involved in a world where anything can happen; it plays from what it hears and sees, therefore, from its perceptions and impressions of culture. Through a process of association and dissociation of the elements perceived in reality and apprehension of the internal rules of the game, produced by playmates or those who belong to the inventory of culture, the child can go beyond the mere reproduction of reality and move forward, with increasing complexity, toward the creation of new playful scenarios and images (Vygotsky, 1998, 2009).

These considerations of Vygotsky about the relationship between ways of perceiving and ways of imagining, as interconnected dimensions, are important because they put into perspective the imaginative functioning of those children with peculiarities in the development. In this paper, we propose a theoretical-argumentative debate in the context of the historical-cultural perspective about the playing of blind children and with low vision. We asked ourselves: how do studies that have already been conducted problematize the relationship between blind children or with low vision and the creative process, that is, between the make-believe play and perception and imagination in this situation? What are the advances and theoretical limits pointed by previous researches?

The playing and its role in the child development is very present in the studies of Psychology, but we observed, from a bibliographical research about the subject that, the playing of blind children or with low vision is still a relatively unexplored subject of study. Therefore, we intend to deepen theoretically, in this article, the studies about the playing in interface with the visual impairment, showing investigative gaps that deserve the attention of the researchers in the area.

To elaborate this study, we conducted a research about the playing and the child with visual impairment, between the years 2004-2014, on the integrated base of the University of Brasilia (UnB), which gathers various sources of research - such as the Portal of Journals of CAPES/MEC – and on the oasisbr, the Brazilian portal of scientific publications in open access of the Brazilian Institute for

Information in Science and Technology (Ibict), of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI). The search gathered articles, dissertations and theses in Portuguese, published, and conducted in Brazil, mapping what has been published on the subject during the study period. The following joint searches of words on these search sites established, were made: “visual impairment” and “play”; “blind” and “play”; “low vision” and “play”.

Initially, the texts presenting bibliographical review with no research with human beings, those that did not deal with child's play and those that had not focused on the blind child with low vision, were excluded. We also considered texts articulated with other subjects (such as language, mediation and interaction), provided that the play of blind children was clearly part of the research objectives. Besides, after the first selection of texts, we separated the articles, dissertations and theses that addressed the question about the game of make-believe of children with visual impairments, clearly located within the context of the historical-cultural perspective.

We noticed that in the studies analyzed, there was a broad understanding of what childhood is. Regarding the participants observed in the researches, for instance, we noticed that they were between four and twelve years old, being most of these studies related to children aged between four and seven, time of development in which the play takes on leading role.

We found some studies focused directly on the game of blind children or with low vision and others that indirectly addressed the issue. In the field of texts that focus on mother-child interaction, play and related issues, the texts we found are: Oliveira (2004) –dissertation subsequently published as an article by Oliveira and Marques (2005); Sousa, Bosa and Hugo (2005); Silva (2009); Fonte (2011); and Medeiros (2013). Other studies observed were: a) Araújo (2007), who conducted an investigation based on the genetic epistemology to analyze the symbolic play of children; b) Silva and Batista (2007), focused on the use of objects and participation in the play under the concepts of the constitutive language and semiotic mediation in Special Education; and c) França (2008), whose dissertation is dedicated to research the social interaction of blind children with and without constant and specialized stimulation and the social interaction, using, among other procedures, the situations of free play and semi-structured activities through the Operational Portage Inventory. The research was split into two articles: França-Freitas and Gil (2012a) and França-Freitas and Gil (2012b).

There are also the studies of Oliveira (2011), which focused on the body scheme of the child with visual disabilities; and Ferroni (2012), dedicated to the handling of toys by a child with multiple disabilities, seeking to understand teaching and learning strategies. Another line of studies on the subject, focused on toy adaptation research for children with visual impairment, such as the work developed by: Matos (2007); Motta, Marchiore and Pinto (2008); Kamisaki (2011); and Silva (2013); or those dedicated to understand the visual stimuli and motor actions, as can be seen in Schmitt (2014) and Silva and Costa (2014).

Based on the bibliographical survey, in general, we could see the importance of the stimulating intervention of the adult in the play, as well as the importance of the playing for the orientation and mobility of the blind child or with low vision. Studies also point to the play as a promoter of social interaction, knowledge of rules and culture, as well as space for the development of imagination that implies creation of scenarios and representation of roles and other constructive elements of make-believe. Below, we present in detail the considerations discussed in these researches, emphasizing the theoretical collaboration of the historical-cultural perspective.

The Playing in the Historical-Cultural Perspective: the relationship between the game of make-believe and the experiences of the child

As signaled earlier, Vygotsky (1998, 2009) understands the playing as a fundamental activity of child development, accounting for significant and qualitative changes in the development, especially when considering the relationship between the make-believe and the experiences of the child with culture. In his studies on the creative process, the author points out that the child plays from its former experiences. This happens, according to Vygotsky (1998), because, in the play, an imaginary situation is constructed; in this situation, reality becomes staged - that is, disassociated and recombined according to the internal needs of the imaginary game -, in which such staging allows the construction of something new.

Based on Vygotskian principles, Magiolino (2015) explains that the imaginary situation emerges from the cultural experience - from what the child perceives directly or indirectly in its social dynamics. Thus, when a child pretends to be a nurse in a game of make-believe, for instance, its recreates in the playful activity experiential elements of its daily life. The relationship that is experienced with a nurse (directly and/or indirectly) is tensioned by the way the child internalizes this role (in life) and assumes the social function of being a nurse (in the playful situation). It is in the play that the child synthesizes these experiences, embodied in the drama, which is the driving force, so to speak, of the playful activity (Magiolino, 2015).

The reconstruction of the real world is a defining element of the symbolic action, so that when the child plays, it can rebuild experiences with the adult world that are not immediately possible, but truthful when playfully mediated. The child wants to act as an adult, but there are quite specific impediments to this. The child wants to care for a person such as a doctor, for instance, but it cannot do that so effectively; the way to solve this impasse is *playing of caring, of practicing medicine* (Silva, Costa & Abreu, 2015). This need for belonging to the cultural experience and, at the same time, the practical impossibility of doing so, causes the child to elaborate on the imaginary plane that in which it cannot carry out on the concrete plane of life. In the make-believe, the child internalizes aspects of culture, broadening its own personal experiences. (Silva, 2012)

In this line, we emphasize that Vygotsky (2009) warns that the make-believes are not merely a reproduction and preservation of the child's experiences. The play involves, in addition to its imitative aspect, creation; there are insertions of new elements into the playful scenes, revealing modes of interpretation and expression about culture. In this sense, as details Smolka (2009), commenting Vygotsky:

Narrative, make-believe, play, drama, theater emerge as forms of activity that allow the appropriation of several social roles. Based on the experience and through language, children create imaginary situations, in which they can perform duties and assume various positions. These forms of activity enable modes of participation of children in culture, enabling them to internalize and elaborate, anticipate and design knowledge, affections, and relationships. In the active and imaginative performance of social practices, the child unfolds in many others; he/she can take the place of the other in the relationship. (p. 99)

The creative imagination is an activity that, in addition to depend on several factors, is not equal when comparing the child and the adult. These multiple factors have different forms in the different stages of the human development. The meaning of this, according to Vygotsky (2009), is that imagination is directly linked to the experience of the individual; and that children and adults have different interests, which makes the imagination of both to work differently.

Then, Vygotsky (2009) criticizes the view that the imagination in children is richer than in adults, when compared. For the author, imagination reaches its peak in adulthood. What happens in reality is that the child, despite having even limited experiences - when compared to the adult -, relies more on the products generated by its imagination, as well as controls them less. In addition, to Vygotsky (1998), the creation activity exercised in the play allows the child to deepen and broaden its emotional experience, because, in the imaginary situation, the wishes and desires show an indirect satisfaction, subordinated to the learning of rules. The child learns to control its emotions and more immediate wishes on behalf of the satisfaction of another nature, sharing the experiences with the group to which it belongs, assuming roles and staging the ways of acting and thinking of culture and tradition.

Imagination, like any other psychological function, has social genesis, as explains Smolka (2009) about the Vygotskian principles. Imagination is linked to the voluntary activity and development of consciousness, by integrating the system of higher mental functions. Thus, imagination plays a vital role so that actions and will, both social and individual, can be aimed at enabling and potentiating projects and new contents. The child starts to experience a change in its development, as it detaches from the object itself and starts to act in accordance with the meanings imposed to the object by the language, making the objects, in the play, lose their determining force:

The child sees an object, but acts differently in relation to what it sees. Thus, it is achieved a condition in which the child begins to act independently of what it sees. (...) The action in an imaginary situation teaches the child to guide its behavior not only by the immediate perception of the objects or by the situation that immediately affects it, but also by the meaning of this situation (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 127).

In the game of make-believe, the play allows this transgression of the concrete conditions of the object to the possibilities that assumes imagination. In the imaginary play, children learn in the relationship with others, and they can get know roles and transit through themes and varied plots. When a child experiences to be itself and the other, it experiences social models and rituals of the culture. Even if there is a relative freedom in relation to the perceptual field, the imaginary play presents certain subordination to the rules of reality in aspects related to social roles, behaviors and organization of events. However, they are not only mirroring of experiences, but the recombination and creation of situations (Vygotsky, 2009).

In relation to the construction processes of meanings by the child, Goés (1993) remarks that the analysis of the intersubjective functioning in the playful activity is essential. In fact, mediation is a central point to be considered when the play is addressed under the historical-cultural perspective. To Costas and Ferreira (2011), in dialogue with the work of Luria, within the Vygotskian perspective it is not understood as mediation the unsystematic and simple interrelationship between individuals; not even the interactions merely for the imposition of rules, without dialogue or in a way that the practices of language are not present. From the necessary experience with language, through mediation of adults, children shape the *most complex instrumental psychological processes*, so that they start to internalize the world (Costas & Ferreira, 2011). By assuming roles in the game of make-believe, bringing to the imaginary situation the social speeches and the modes of action of adults, children need to operate with the processes of dissociation and new association in the combinatorial game. Mediated by language and based on it, the play allows the child internalization, via dramatization of the concepts contained in the verbal and non-verbal signs.

To understand the imaginary play within the historical-cultural approach implies, therefore, discussing the role of mediation and the relationship between emotion and imagination in the creative process. To both aspects, language is fundamental. To Goés (2000), language provides support for the relationship of the perceptual field with the activity, in addition to expanding the questions about what is created in the plane of imagination. The word allows the child to enter the imaginary plane of play, giving life to new scenarios; the language finds complex achievements in the game of make-believe, expanding the plasticity and the construction of imaginary creations. In ontological terms, there is no creative activity outside the language. To Goés (2000), language mediates a qualitative transformation in the symbolic game, so that children start to construct imaginary planes that will be established in a making-believe by the word.

In this sense, the relationship between the adult educator and the student, and between the students themselves, is essential. In the case of children with some impairment, the relational aspect assumes even more importance, because the adult can promote curricular and instrumental adaptations so that the child develops itself in a more complex way (Siaulys, 2006). We will then address in the next section, the contributions of the historical-cultural perspective for the study of visual impairment. Our argumentation goes toward a theoretical tensioning that aims to problematize the relationships between play (as symbolization sphere), development and disability.

Exploring Imagination: Studies on the Playing of Blind Children and with Low Vision

Vygotsky is among the authors who sought to study the questions on disability, presenting challenges for the study of the atypical development of the child. In his time, the term *defectology* was used for the study of children with various types of mental, sensory and physical disorders.

Regarding the implications of the social interactions in the perception of the defect by both the other of the relationship and the person with disabilities, Vygotsky (1997), already in his time, defended some basic postulates concerning the social dimension of disability. For him, disability changes not only the

way the child interacts with the world, but also how people interact with it, the child. What the author calls *organic defect*, will manifest, as such, from the social interactions.

To Vygotsky (1997), there are two types of disability: primary, which is organic; and secondary, which is presented from the social interactions. Based on the understanding that the development occurs by combining and tensioning the social and the individual, disability can be seen as linked to the way of life of the individuals, as well as to social situations that surround them (Vygotsky, 1997). Thus, in the Vygotskian conception, there is no difference between the development of human beings that are regarded as normal and those regarded as disabled, but in the particular forms of learning.

From these assumptions, it is possible to think of the process of the playing activity for blind children or with low vision as essentially the same as described by the Russian psychologist in relation to children in general. However, even that it is essentially the same process - with the same laws and relationships between reality and imagination, representation of roles and interaction with others, reproduction and creation of the new in the play - the peculiarities and differences arising from disabilities must be taken into consideration by the participants of the play and by the adult who supervises them.

Children with visual impairment construct mental representations from images or ideas of their sensory experiences mediated by language, as stated by Carvalho and Pereira (2013). This is exactly why the play is vital for children with visual impairment. When playing, they can establish relationships with their immediate context and the world, progressing in the apprehension of the meanings, respecting needs and feeding spontaneity, relationship with the other and stimulating senses (Carvalho & Pereira, 2013).

However, how do the academic works have problematized the play in blind children? How do the studies of historical-cultural perspective, particularly in Brazil, have addressed the issue of imagination, disability and childhood? These questionings underpin the theoretical and argumentative base of our following point of analysis.

As explained above, based on the relationship between the play and the visual impairment, we conducted a survey of articles, dissertations and theses published, between 2004 and 2014, about the subject. In the survey, we found several titles related to the play of children with visual impairment. From the criteria established - articles, theses and dissertations about the game of make-believe linked to the historical-cultural perspective -, we found important academic researches that have been conducted across the country and that are articulated in this text as a synthesis of a theoretical contribution that is already consolidated in the area. Those studies discussed topics such as: the importance of the game of make-believe to the development of children with visual disabilities; the presence of adults in the promotion of the play; the social interaction provided by the play; the knowledge of rules and social daily routine by the playful sphere; the creation of scenarios and representation of roles, among others.

Siaulys (2006) conducted a study focused on the play of children with visual impairment, within the historical-cultural perspective, between the years 2004 and 2014, in her master's research about the importance of toys and play to social and school inclusion of children with visual impairment. Starting from Vygotskian principles focused on the centrality of processes of social interaction and culture in relation to child development, the author argues that, in addition to contribute to the possibilities of interaction, adults can also encourage the child to play on a daily basis. According to the author, one way to achieve this is through the adaptation of toys to the needs of each child with visual impairment.

Siaulys (2006), having as methodology the ethnographic research (participant observation, interviews, videographies and document analysis), conducted a study with five youths with visual impairment, previously assisted by her in the institution (Laramara). She was the director of this institution when they were children under five years old. After more than ten years, such youths are invited to talk in the interviews about how they noticed the relationship between the play, including the make-believe, and the learning processes in their development. In addition to them, the author also has as participants in the research five mothers of young children.

The youths of the research conducted by Siaulys (2006, p.100) indicated that:

...The play was essential for their interaction, communication and learning, both in the family environment and in the school and community. They mentioned the importance of toy library, fantasy,

make-believe world, games with the body, running, jumping, exploration of the environment, as fundamental elements for learning and for the physical, sensory and psychological development.

It can be inferred from the studies about the play that this is itself an apprenticeship: the individual learns to play. This means that children learn to play with each other, observing and moving together. This statement is in line with the studies of Oliveira and Padilha (2015) about the play of children considered as normal. However, Siaulys holds a straight forward opinion when referring to blind children or with low vision. She warns that blind children, not seeing what the other children are doing, often feel isolated and marginalized from play if no appropriate support is provided. Thus, Siaulys recommends (2006) that blind children should not be left alone and isolated from others, but should be integrated to the group and, through play activities, opportunities should be created so that they can interact with each other.

Considering the play as one of the pillars of the development in childhood, Hueara, Souza Batista, Melgaço and Tavares (2006) sought to describe the modes of play of children with visual impairment in situations of play on make-believe. The study had the participation of four children, with ages ranging between four and seven years, with visual impairment (low vision or blindness, specifically), in which some of them presented other organic problems associated. Among children, cases of difficulties in the attention to the activities proposed at school were reported. In order to conduct the study, there were six sessions mediated by adults, with two pairs of children, and average duration of 25 minutes with different toys to promote the make-believe, such as miniatures of kitchen and bedroom, dolls and toy cars.

As results of the research, the authors point out that the surveyed children demonstrated ability in representing roles in creating scenes and establishing rules and, in addition, they showed understanding about the use of everyday objects. In the analysis of filmed episodes, the authors show that the recognition of the objects by the child does not only depend on the touch. By observing one of the children, Hueara et al. (2006, p. 365) noticed that "Beatriz [fictitious name] possesses knowledge about the routines and characteristics of the scenes constructed, establishes organized exploration of objects, and maintains, all the time, dialogue with adults. The tactile exploration leads to the recognition of the attributes and properties of the objects, which is confirmed by adults".

Another article, written by Sousa and Batista (2008), seeks to understand the role of playing partners for the development of children with disabilities. The research was conducted with nine children aged between four and twelve years, divided into a group of children between four and six years, and another between seven and twelve years, with diagnosis of visual impairment, of both types, low vision and blindness. Some of these children presented other organic problems, besides the difficulties of learning. As for the analysis that was articulated with several authors, especially in the historical-cultural field, Souza and Batista (2008) selected episodes in two groups of categories, namely: modes of play, individually or in group, and modes of relationship of children, friendly or agonistically. For children, activities with thematic projects, creation of stories and playful activities, using those toys that are more appropriate for each age group, and that could collaborate in the make-believe, were proposed. From the data analysis, the authors stressed the importance of in-group free play situation, as a positive element to build interactions. The authors point out that in the group I - formed by children aged from four to six - there was higher prevalence of the individual actions with the objects, generally mediated by adults. In the group II, of older children, it was observed prevalence of complexity in the interactions, with joint actions and construction of scenes.

Also in 2008, Silva conducted a study showing to be positive the adult intervention - since adults contribute to interactions, proposing activities and collaborating - for the child with visual impairment to play. The author sought in the historical-cultural perspective the understanding about the semiotic dimension of the human activities and interactions to conduct a study on the relationship between language and appropriation of social practices in children with visual impairment and alterations in the development. From a case study of three children between four and ten years old, it was conducted the analysis of the appropriation processes of social practices and social interaction, participation in activities and use of language (Silva, 2008).

The author argues that the development is not linear - a fact that becomes more prominent in children with organic problems. Moreover, she concludes that, although unstable, it does not mean that the development does not occur in these children.

Based on the work of Vygotsky, Nascimento (2010) conducted a study about fairy tales and the process of acquisition and development of language by three blind children between five and six years old. For the study, Nascimento firstly read the story to the children and then provided objects for the game and theater such as dolls, shoes and baskets. Nascimento (2010, p. 69-70) analyzed the following aspects in relation to children: imitative aspects of words and expressions, pragmatic aspects relating to the ability to show feelings and make requests, interrogative aspects, and finally, non-verbal communicative aspects and social interaction. From the results of the research, Nascimento (2010, p. 113) argues that through:

... the narratives of fairy tales, it can be constituted an alternative and stimulating path in the process of acquisition and development of the oral language for blind children. Because of a more expressive performance of the language in such children, it will be reduced the social isolation in which many of them are found.

Besides, the author, emphasizing the work of Vygotsky in the area, reaffirms that the access to language is one of the most important steps for the development of blind children. In addition, the author states that it is essential the social interaction of these children promoted in the play and enabled by the narrative of fairy tales through the manipulation of toys and staging in the style of make-believe.

Ruiz and Batista (2014) carried out another more recent work about the play and the child with visual impairment, and the analysis was conducted based on the material of a research carried out three years before by Ruiz (2011). In this research, the authors focused on the role of mediation in the game, trying to analyze how children with visual impairment interact and play of make-believe with the intervention of an adult researcher. To the authors, the playgroups can significantly favor the interaction of children with visual impairment.

Having as methodological basis the microgenetic analysis, films of episodes of play between two boys with visual impairment (one blind and another with low vision and condition of microcephaly) were carried out. The authors describe how children interacted in the study, using the language to know about the environment and about what was happening around them during the game, which reveals the importance of describing situations and actions of those who live with children with visual impairment; or in other words, the relationship between imagination, language and make-believe. Besides, Ruiz and Batista (2014) suggest that the forms of children with visual impairment play can be changed significantly when the adult is available. The adult, by choosing and providing to children games and toys and allowing the formation and interaction of them in the playgroups - but without interfering in their freedom - contributes to the process of integrating them to the social environment and to the overcome of obstacles. Considering this, it is important that actions focused on these children take into account how the person is constituted, establishes relationships and perceives itself as a social being.

The studies exposed and articulated herein reveal the efforts of researchers of the historical-cultural perspective to break a new investigative territory. Collaborations are important and indicate theoretical gaps that still need to be investigated, especially when we ask ourselves about the modes of composition of the imaginative situation in blind children or with low vision.

Final considerations

The researches in the field of Developmental Psychology, in its various aspects, defend the play as being fundamental for children. Through the play, the child can develop, learning about itself, about others, and about the world. To Vygotsky (2009), the social world is surrounded by human inventions and

“the creation of a creative personality, designed for the future, is prepared by the creative imagination that is embodied in the present” (p. 122).

This quotation leads us inexorably to childhood and to the specificities of this moment in life. Children considered as normal or disabled have in the play a central activity for their integral development. Therefore, the space and situations to occur the playful in all its dimensions should be offered. In this context, the support of adults is fundamental, because it is expected of them to ensure the safety of children, organize and provide contexts that encourage the game, especially in the case of children with disabilities. Besides, in our opinion, the role of the adult indicates, in the above researches, potential advancement in the imaginative activity, because the child when playing together with the adult and/or other colleague fits in a more involved way in the playful dynamics and this reveals the complexity of its symbolic development. For this reason, the games of make-believe - for allowing use of experiences lived in the production of imaginary situations, learning of rules and abstraction that leads to the internalization of concepts - should be encouraged.

The results of the bibliographical research conducted in this article point to the importance of the play for the development of children with visual impairment. In fact, as a socially constructed reality, disability surpasses the merely organic issues. What the historical-cultural perspective punctuates is that the defects are not exactly what will determine who is the individual living in the *body regarded as disabled*, but what will determine who is this individual is how the relationships and social situations in which the individual is inserted are given. The playful exchange and the specificity of the dynamics of the play and the relationships resulting from this activity are fundamental to the development of the blind child or with low vision since it involves, in most cases, the other (who also plays).

However, there are some key issues in the play of blind children that have not yet been discussed and deserve further development, for instance, the use of objects as favorable scenario to think ontogenetic changes in the symbolization processes of the child, the presence of the body and the development of spatial concepts in the assumption of roles. Another element that worth mentioning is the semiotic mediation that occurs through the acquisition and internalization of concepts (scientific and ordinary), linked to the imaginary situation and its relationship with language, in short: what knowledge, about itself and about the world, does the blind child and with low vision reveal when play?

Surely, the studies produced until now are important, but they are still insufficient when we think about the great difficulty faced by people with disabilities in order to be included in the society and the demands aimed at the inclusion. It is important to notice that the production of knowledge contributes to reduce the prejudices and intends to issues related to the promotion of rights. Certainly, by articulating the social and cultural dimensions of development, as defends the historical-cultural perspective, we identified that the researches present a more critical view about the issues involving disability regarding the imaginative and creative aspects, and also about the way that the look at disability is constructed.

In this line, the study of playing for children with visual impairment is important, so that we can think about development in general. Other studies that focus on the topic, especially in the historical-cultural perspective - in view of its revolutionary vision about the relationship between social relations and disability, as well as the central role of the play in ontogenesis - may collaborate, in addition to the discussion in itself, for the promotion of public policies that meet this part of the population, especially at the interface between the fields of psychology, education and social inclusion.

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