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RECEIVED 08 December 2023
ACCEPTED 15 January 2024
PUBLISHED 25 January 2024

CITATION
Martínez-Rico G, Escorcía Mora C and
Pereira APdS (2024) Editorial: Inclusion in early
childhood, teacher-family partnerships, family
empowerment and quality of life.
Front. Educ. 9:1352558.
doi: 10.3389/educ.2024.1352558

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Editorial: Inclusion in early childhood, teacher-family partnerships, family empowerment and quality of life

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KEYWORDS

inclusion, early childhood intervention, family, children, professionals

Editorial on the Research Topic

[Inclusion in early childhood, teacher-family partnerships, family empowerment and quality of life](#)

In recent decades there have been very significant changes in the social vision of disability and social and educational inclusion (Naciones Unidas, 2006; UNESCO, 2020). These changes are reflected in models of intervention and care, in pedagogical approaches to inclusive education and in the field of research itself (Porter and Towell, 2019).

One of the main advances has focused on the care of children with disabilities or possible alterations in their development, putting the focus on the empowerment of primary caregivers, support networks and family quality of life (Martínez-Rico et al., 2022). Intervention models have been based on the implementation of evidence-based practices (recommended practices, Division for Early Childhood, 2014) and intervention in natural settings (McWilliam, 2010). Inclusion of all children must start from an early age (UNESCO, 2020), fostering social participation (Paseka and Schwab, 2020) and ensuring equal opportunities and lifelong learning for all (Meyer et al., 2016; Guralnick, 2023). Education has the great objective, assumed-pointed out by the United Nations, to be inclusive, equitable and of quality from the beginning of life (United Nations, Agenda 2030, SDG 4).

To achieve this important objective it is necessary to identify the advances in research that provide scientific evidence on inclusive education, analyzing its multicultural, social, and family context. The family-centered approach in early childhood has proven to be a solid and effective approach, with extensive results in the field of research, showing a positive impact on family empowerment and quality of life (Perosa Saigh Jurdi et al.). The implementation of models faithful to recommended practices (Division for Early Childhood, 2014), such as the Routine-Based Model (McWilliam, 2010), have a broad impact on child development and the self-perceived competence of primary caregivers. This approach has impacted very significantly on practitioner practices and TA service delivery (Dunst et al., 2019). Key factors for family engagement have also been shown to be one of the essential aspects of childhood inclusion. Inclusive education seeks to effectively promote children's participation both in education and health programs and services and in the natural environments of everyday life in which the child is involved (Olsen).

In this context, the network of supports and parental empowerment constitutes one of the main critical points for overcoming barriers to full inclusion. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of interventions focused on the child's primary caregivers, especially when social and emotional vulnerabilities are identified. This type of intervention is characterized by strengthening confidence in positive parenting, expanding parents' knowledge and collaborative skills to improve interactions with the child in everyday life contexts (Brito et al.).

Inclusive early childhood education implies a support system that includes inclusive quality practices, access to ongoing training and adequate funding policies. Most services request financial measures for all children with special needs in order to hire additional and specialized human resources. The main adaptations are related to instructions, individual interventions and group activities and affect the physical environment, the distribution of time and the development of routines. The results of the research also show that it is necessary to advance in the development of continuous training programs on inclusive practices and to promote the collaboration of pre-schools with specialized health and social services (Dionne et al.).

Consequently, the role of the educational system and, especially, the role of teachers with the most vulnerable groups are determining factors in establishing an adequate alliance between teachers and families (Simón et al., 2022), as well as promoting social participation, functionality and quality of family life. However, the infant school, as a natural and complementary context to the family, still shows difficulties in achieving effective communication between education professionals and, above all, deficiencies in the necessary coordination between education services and health services. The research identifies the need to develop consistent and efficient intersectoral actions, specifically with children who present difficulties in their development, as well as the need to value the role of the teacher in this process and promote more inclusive educational practices (Perosa Saigh Jurdi et al.).

Research must move forward to enable early childhood inclusion also from the field of psychometrics, focusing on cross-cultural adaptation and validation of assessment and intervention scales that detect family needs and strengths of primary caregivers and their environment. Assessment tools developed to analyze support needs and family quality of life are essential to empower families (Nunes et al.).

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This Research Topic of *Frontiers in Psychology Educational Psychology*, dedicated to inclusive early childhood education, identifies key research factors focused on the teacher-family partnership, primary caregiver empowerment, and family quality of life. Understanding the support needs of families who have a child with a disability, or who are at potential risk for developmental impairments, is a critical goal for implementing evidence-based inclusive practices that significantly impact perceived family quality of life. In this regard, health, education and social service providers must give a prominent role to the family as the primary support system for child development.

The research results also underline the need to establish effective coordination between Early Childhood Care and Early Childhood Education to enable inclusive, equitable and quality early childhood education (Naciones Unidas, 2006; SDGs, 2019; UNESCO, 2020).

Author contributions

GM-R: Writing – original draft. CE: Writing – original draft. AP: Writing – original draft.

Funding

The author(s) declare that financial support was received for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. This collaboration was funded by Spanish Ministry Projects: Knowledge Generation, State Program to Promote Research 2021–2023 (ID: PID2022-142309OB-I00), and Capacitas Research Group.

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