

Ecological games and Local Knowledge: a Documentary Approach to Participatory Design With Preschool Children in Venezuela

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ABSTRACT

This article, framed within a documentary research project with a qualitative and hermeneutic approach, analyzed the theoretical foundations and documented experiences that link ecological games, participatory design with children, and local knowledge in the context of Venezuelan early childhood education. The findings were structured based on a systematic review of specialized sources, doctoral theses, scientific articles, and records of socio-educational projects. The authors' hermeneutic analysis identified three thematic cores: ecological play as a formative experience, the foundations of participatory design with children, and the centrality of local knowledge as an anchor for meaningful ecological narratives. The discussion integrated these cores in dialogue with contemporary Venezuelan environmental policies—the 10 Million Trees initiative and the Water Harvesting program—highlighting both the potential and existing tensions. The conclusions indicate that, while the country has valuable isolated experiences, rigorous systematization and the incorporation of these methodologies into the early childhood education curriculum are required to foster environmentally engaged citizens from early childhood.

Keywords: ecological play, participatory design, early childhood education, local knowledge, children's agency, Venezuela, documentary study.

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