Atypical Motherhood And Inclusive Educational Practices: Perceptions, Experiences, And Contributions To The School Environment

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Abstract
Background: *Atypical motherhood refers to the experience of women who assume the role of caregivers for children with disabilities or specific developmental needs. These mothers face daily challenges but also build valuable knowledge through their lived experiences, which can significantly contribute to inclusive educational practices. However, this contribution is still often underestimated in the educational context. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze how the perceptions and experiences of atypical mothers can influence and enhance inclusive pedagogical practices in schools.*
Materials and Methods: *This qualitative, bibliographic, and exploratory study was conducted through a systematic review of scientific articles, books, and official documents. The searches were carried out in May 2025 in databases such as the CAPES Journal Portal, Google Scholar, SciELO, and Redalyc. Boolean connectors (AND/OR) were used with the terms: "atypical motherhood," "mothers of children with disabilities," "inclusive education," and "pedagogical practices." Inclusion criteria prioritized works published between 2019 and 2025, with full-text access and thematic relevance.*
Results: *The theoretical analysis revealed that when schools actively listen to atypical mothers and recognize their empirical knowledge, there are significant improvements in building more humane, accessible, and*

coherent inclusive educational practices. Their contributions promote greater personalization of teaching, strengthen school-family ties, and favor the development of a school culture that truly embraces diversity.
Conclusion: *Valuing atypical mothers as partners in the educational process is essential to advance towards a democratic and welcoming school environment. Their experiences and knowledge represent an important resource for strengthening inclusive education.*
Keywords: *atypical motherhood; inclusive education; pedagogical practices; family participation; school.*

I.   Introduction

Atypical motherhood refers to the experience of women who take on the role of caregivers for children with disabilities or specific developmental needs. These mothers face a routine marked by constant challenges, often rendered invisible by society and educational institutions. According to Pletsch (2021), they assume multiple roles, being not only mothers but also therapists, educators, and advocates for their children's rights.

In the school context, the presence of these mothers proves fundamental to the construction of truly inclusive pedagogical practices. Listening to their experiences and perceptions can contribute to improving the educational process by promoting respect for diversity and individuality among students. As highlighted by Mantoan (2015), inclusion is only possible when there is dialogue between family and school, based on shared responsibility.

However, the educational system does not always recognize the strength of these experiences. In many cases, the atypical mother is seen merely as 'demanding' or 'complaining,' with her contributions disregarded by education professionals. According to Duarte (2022), this stigma distances families and undermines the construction of an inclusive school culture.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that atypical motherhood is not a homogeneous phenomenon. Each trajectory is shaped by social, economic, and cultural factors that influence the possibilities for participation and interaction with the school. Oliveira and Rezende (2020) emphasize that factors such as social class, education level, and access to services directly impact how these mothers engage with educational spaces.

Recognizing atypical motherhood as an active subject in the educational process creates space for a more democratic school, sensitive to the real needs of students with disabilities. As Carvalho (2018) reinforces, inclusive pedagogical practices are built not only through teacher training but also through qualified listening to families and the strengthening of support networks.

Although inclusive pedagogical practices are increasingly associated with active methodologies and innovative approaches, there is still a significant gap in the literature regarding the interaction between these practices and the participation of atypical mothers in daily school life. Little is discussed, for example, about how strategies such as flipped classrooms or hybrid teaching can be adapted to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families' perceptions (Souza & Oliveira, 2022).

Given this scenario, this research is guided by the following question: How can the perceptions and experiences of atypical mothers contribute to improving inclusive pedagogical practices in the school environment? Based on this question, the objective is to understand how these mothers interpret, influence, and engage with the pedagogical strategies adopted by institutions, aiming to highlight their concrete contributions to building a more equitable, participatory, and diversity-sensitive education.

The relevance of this research lies in valuing the lived experience of atypical mothers as a legitimate source of knowledge for the field of inclusive education. In a context still dominated by technical-normative approaches, giving voice to these women broadens understanding of the real needs of students with disabilities and strengthens the bond between school and family. As Silva and Cardoso (2021) emphasize, recognizing parental knowledge is fundamental to developing more humane, collaborative, and effective pedagogical practices.

II.   Material And Methods

This research adopts a qualitative, bibliographic, and exploratory approach, based on the analysis of academic works on atypical motherhood, inclusive educational practices, and family participation in the school context. The searches were carried out in May 2025 using the following repositories and databases: CAPES Journal Portal, Google Scholar, SciELO Brazil, and Redalyc, prioritizing articles published between 2019 and 2025.

Boolean connectors (AND and OR) were used to structure the search with the following combination: ('atypical motherhood' OR 'mothers of children with disabilities') AND ('inclusive education') AND ('pedagogical practices'). The selection of sources considered criteria such as relevance, thematic alignment,

full-text access, and consistency with the research objectives, following the methodological guidelines of Gil (2019) and Minayo (2021).

III.   Theoretical Framework
Atypical Motherhood: Challenges and Potentials in the School Context

Atypical motherhood involves the experiences of women caring for children with disabilities or specific developmental needs, requiring them to engage continuously in multiple roles. This type of motherhood is marked by intense emotional, physical, and social demands, directly affecting relationships with schools and educational processes. According to Pletsch (2021), these mothers take on responsibilities that go beyond domestic care, becoming organizers of support networks and advocates for their children's rights.

These women's presence in their children's school life often represents a silenced yet deeply strategic role. They not only follow school activities but also intervene to ensure curricular adaptations and necessary mediation. As Duarte (2022, p. 113) notes, "atypical mothers occupy an invisible position of protagonism in school inclusion, often being the first to identify shortcomings in educational services and propose solutions".

In many school settings, these mothers are the primary agents ensuring their children's rights are upheld, facing institutional resistance, attitudinal barriers, and pedagogical omissions. Duarte (2022) highlights that the invisibility of these women in educational decision-making reflects an institutional structure still dominated by a technical-bureaucratic logic that disregards non-institutional knowledge. Such exclusion undermines the construction of a truly inclusive educational process.

Beyond daily struggles for adequate services, these mothers often experience loneliness, overload, and exhaustion, exacerbated by the lack of effective public policies and unprepared institutions for dealing with diversity. Rocha (2023) emphasizes that acknowledging the importance of listening to atypical mothers can expand understanding of school dynamics, leading to more humane and responsive pedagogical practices.

Despite these challenges, these mothers emerge as agents of transformation, possessing valuable empirical knowledge about their children's learning, development, and behavior. By sharing their experiences, they provide concrete suggestions for improving pedagogical strategies, becoming fundamental partners in building an inclusive school. As Silva and Cardoso (2021, p. 78) affirm, "the knowledge of atypical mothers must be recognized as a legitimate form of pedagogical knowledge capable of enriching planning and teaching practice".

Inclusive Education and Family Participation in the Educational Process

Inclusive education is based on the principle that all children, regardless of their physical, cognitive, or social conditions, have the right to quality education in mainstream school settings. In Brazil, this concept is supported by legislation such as the 1988 Federal Constitution, the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law No. 9,394/1996), and the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008), which reinforce the importance of specialized educational services within regular schools.

For this model to be effective, active family participation in the educational process is essential. The relationship between school and family should not be seen as secondary but as a central element for the success of inclusion. According to Mantoan (2015), it is through dialogue and the joint construction of strategies that belonging and learning for all students can be guaranteed.

As Mantoan (2015, p. 42) states:

School inclusion is not achieved merely through the physical presence of the student in mainstream education but requires profound changes in pedagogical practices, in educators' attitudes, and, above all, in how families are welcomed and involved in school processes. Building an inclusive school demands ongoing dialogue, openness to listening, and the recognition that diversity is a value, not a problem to be overcome.

Shared responsibility between school and family, particularly for children with disabilities, requires qualified listening and recognition of families as legitimate partners in developing pedagogical practices. This partnership must transcend bureaucratic relationships and build bonds based on trust and commitment to student development. As Oliveira and Rezende (2020, p. 92) emphasize, "inclusion is not sustained solely by educational resources or curricular adaptations but by creating support networks that engage educators, administrators, students, and their families in a common educational project".

However, many schools still remain distant from families, restricting their participation to sporadic meetings or specific activities. This creates an imbalance in the educational relationship, making it difficult to develop strategies that are consistent with the needs of students. Families of children with disabilities, especially atypical mothers, often encounter institutional barriers that make it difficult for them to be heard and included in school decisions.

Thus, strengthening the bond between school and family is one of the pillars for a truly inclusive education. Valuing the experience of atypical mothers as active agents in the education of their children is also a way of democratizing educational processes and promoting pedagogical practices that embrace diversity as a constitutive element of the school.

Inclusive Pedagogical Practices: Concepts, Strategies, and Challenges

Inclusive pedagogical practices aim to ensure the full and effective participation of all students in the learning process, respecting their individuality and specific needs. Unlike isolated or compensatory actions, inclusion requires a transformation in how teaching, planning, and assessment are approached. According to Carvalho (2018), these practices go beyond material adaptation, encompassing the creation of learning environments that value diversity as a pedagogical principle.

Common strategies in this context include collaborative teaching, active methodologies, formative assessment, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These approaches foster student engagement, promote autonomy, and expand access to knowledge. However, their application requires continuous teacher training and the development of a school culture that supports pedagogical innovation (Moraes & Araújo, 2020).

The effective implementation of these practices still faces significant obstacles. Many teachers report difficulties in adapting curricula, meeting inclusion demands, and balancing diversity with academic performance requirements. Additionally, lack of institutional support, time for collaborative planning, and pedagogical resources remain persistent challenges (Machado & Souza, 2021). In this scenario, actively listening to families, particularly atypical mothers, can assist in identifying more sensitive and effective strategies.

As Santos and Lima (2023, p. 65) affirm:

Inclusion is not simply placing everyone in the same classroom but creating situations where all feel they belong, are valued, and are capable of learning. Inclusive pedagogical practices require teachers to adopt a posture of listening, welcome students' and families' experiences, and be willing to continuously rebuild their teaching methods and ways of relating to others.

It is in this movement of listening and reconstruction that the school truly becomes an inclusive space. Pedagogical practices, in addition to being technical, involve an ethical and political stance towards human diversity. Incorporating the contributions of atypical mothers into this process is recognizing that inclusion is strengthened when there is dialogue and co-responsibility among all the subjects that make up the school community (OLIVEIRA; DUARTE, 2021).

Contributions of Atypical Mothers to the Development of Inclusive Practices

Atypical mothers possess unique knowledge, built through their daily experiences with their children and their constant pursuit of services, diagnoses, and adaptations. Although this knowledge may not be systematized academically, it is highly relevant to inclusive pedagogical planning. When their voices are heard by schools, these mothers offer practical contributions that promote the personalization of teaching and the accommodation of students' real needs (Silva & Cardoso, 2021).

The experience of atypical motherhood provides a refined understanding of children's signs, limits, and potential, which can be decisive for the development of more appropriate pedagogical strategies. These women often serve as intermediaries between the school and health, social assistance, and psychopedagogical services, contributing essential information for student support. Their active presence in the school environment fosters the construction of bonds and strengthens the educational process (Rocha, 2023).

However, for these contributions to be effective, schools must abandon hierarchical postures and create spaces for horizontal dialogue. Valuing atypical mothers as partners in the educational process requires an ethical perspective committed to listening, collective construction, and the recognition of the multiple forms of knowledge that permeate education (Pletsch, 2021).

Recognizing the importance of atypical mothers' participation also implies rethinking how schools are organized and how their priorities are established. Rather than limiting family participation to administrative matters or school communications, it is essential to create permanent spaces for dialogue and shared responsibility. The involvement of these mothers can enhance teachers' sensitivity and inspire more creative, flexible, and responsive practices to the diversity present in the classroom (Duarte, 2022).

Thus, atypical mothers should not be seen merely as companions or observers of the educational process but as active collaborators in transforming school culture. Their listening and participation represent a decisive step toward consolidating an inclusive education that truly respects and celebrates differences (Mantoan, 2015).

IV.   Conclusion

The analysis developed throughout this article highlighted the importance of recognizing atypical motherhood as a powerful experience capable of significantly contributing to the improvement of inclusive pedagogical practices. Mothers of children with disabilities not only accompany the educational process but actively influence how schools perceive and respond to diversity.

Throughout the discussion, it became evident that truly inclusive pedagogical practices depend, among other factors, on the sensitive listening of families. The involvement of atypical mothers strengthens the bond between school and community, promotes the accommodation of students' needs, and inspires more humane and responsive ways of teaching.

Moreover, it was clear that the participation of atypical mothers should not be viewed as a secondary form of support but as a strategic dimension of school inclusion. When their knowledge is valued, schools expand their ability to meet the unique needs of students and build a more democratic educational culture.

It is therefore essential that educational institutions advance in creating continuous spaces for dialogue with these mothers, recognizing their lived experiences as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. This not only enriches pedagogical work but also strengthens the collective commitment to an education that respects, welcomes, and transforms.

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