



PROTOCOLS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

An Overview of 23 Countries and International Organizations

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

ACHIEVEMENT

Rodrigo Mendes Institute

CEO

Rodrigo Hübner Mendes

Financial Management

Valquíria Morais

Ana Paula Gimenes

Communication

Vitória Freiria Arguejo

William Truppel

DIVERSA

Laila Micas

Aldrin Jonathan

Juliana Delgado

Teacher Training

Luiz Henrique P. Conceição

Diego Thimm Barcelos

Kátia Cibas

Regina Mercurio

Relationship with Sponsors

Heloisa Salgado

Lucas Mauricio Silva

Information Technology

Renato Soares

REPORT

Translation and research

Luiza Andrade Corrêa

English Version Review

Paula Santos Diniz

Portuguese Version Review

Emiliano Augusto Moreira de Lima

Design

Flávia Ocaranza

Nana de Freitas

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Ashoka

DIVERSA

Volkswagen Group Foundation

Lemann Foundation

Unibanco Institute

Peninsula Institute

Itaú Social

Todos Pela Educação

UNICEF

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OBJECTIVE

The Rodrigo Mendes Institute (IRM) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to collaborate so that every person with a disability has a first-rate education in a mainstream school. Throughout its 25-year history, the systematization and dissemination of inclusive education best practices have been major activities of the organization¹.

In view of the enormous impacts caused by the covid-19 pandemic on education systems all around the world, this research aims to contribute to public managers responsible for planning and implementing public policies which intend to guarantee the right to education for people with disabilities. This involves actions related to the period of social isolation and the school reopening phase.

Based on consultation with experts from different countries around the world and on the analysis of documents of international

organizations and countries that have already developed protocols focused on education during the pandemic period, this research contributes with examples of guidelines, protocols and practices that may serve as reference for education departments, school managers, educators and other professionals responsible for education policies. It should be noted that the profound complexity brought by this new context cannot be used as an excuse for the exclusion of students with disabilities from education.

¹ The contents on good practices of inclusive education produced by the Rodrigo Mendes Institute are available on the DIVERSA portal (www.diversa.org.br).

CONTEXT

The year 2020 was marked by the global pandemic of covid-19 caused by the new coronavirus Sars-CoV-2. On March 11, 2020, WHO declared that the disease caused by this virus worldwide could be characterized as a pandemic². At the same time, several measures to prevent infection were put into practice, such as the increase in hygiene habits and, sometimes, advice on the use of protective equipment, such as face masks. In addition, countries around the world have adopted measures of social isolation or even lockdowns to slow the infection curve, so as not to overburden health systems.

A direct consequence of such preventive measures was the migration of many relational practices of our daily basis to the Internet. Various work activities were transferred to home office, children and teenagers started to study online, our social interactions were mostly migrated to the virtual world by using telephone applications or computers connected to the web. Although distance learning has the potential to expand the offer of opportunities in the field of education, we cannot avoid its intrinsic insufficiency. According to Rodrigo Hübner Mendes, it is evident that the challenge of leaving no one behind gains another dimension in view of the obvious limitations of this model in terms of social interaction and the development of affective bonds.

Simply making a series of video classes available on the internet and waiting for everyone to learn is the proper way to exclude many students. This means that distance learning cannot be seen as a definite answer, but as a complement to the set of face-to-face experiences enjoyed by the students in everyday school life³.

In addition, many people and institutions were not yet ready for this transition (OECD, 2020). The sudden transformation has brought more severe impacts on the most socially vulnerable people and it may end up deepening the existing context of inequality.

In the Brazilian context, we can observe disparities in Internet access, in the opportunity to acquire digital skills and in access to infrastructure. Many Brazilian children do not even have a quiet place to study in their homes, while most Brazilian teachers do not have technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in instruction and are not encouraged to do so (OECD, 2020), which deepens disparities.

2 WHO announces COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic available at: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/news/news/2020/3/who-announces-covid-19-outbreak-a-pandemic> Accessed: May 31, 2020 at 03:40 pm.

3 MENDES, R. H. Covid-19: Distance learning needs to aim for equity. Available at: <https://www.uol.com.br/ecoa/colunas/rodrigo-mendes/2020/04/03/covid-19-ensino-a-distancia-precisa-almejar-a-inclusao.htm>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 03:41.

A crucial problem in the Brazilian reality is the lack of infrastructure to study at home. The ICT Household survey showed that in 2018, among class C households, 43% had computers and Internet access and 33% had only the Internet connection [without a computer]. Most class D and E households did not have access to computers or the Internet (58%). The scenario is quite different in classes A and B, in which only 1% of class A households and 7% of class B households had only Internet connection [without a computer], and the presence of an Internet connection together with the computer is much more common in households in these classes (98% and 88%, respectively). These data show that many of the Brazilian households do not offer the basic conditions to work remotely or study using computers and the Internet, a problem most commonly present in the lower classes.

Another relevant fact is that the level of education is strongly related to the access to the Internet. It is much more common among people who already have higher education level, and the number is much lower considering the population with only elementary education (57%) and even lower among the illiterate (14%). Among school-age people (10 to 24 years old), however, Internet access is more frequent (83% between 10 and 15 years old and 90% between 16 and 24 years old).

In addition to social exclusion, there is the issue of accessibility of websites and applications for people with disabilities. In Brazil, almost a quarter of the population has some type of disability: according to the 2010 IBGE CENSUS, 45.6 million people (23.9% of

the population)⁵. The use of the internet in Brazil changes significantly when comparing people with and without disabilities. In 2016, while 59.3% of the population without disabilities used the Internet, only 36.8% of the population with disabilities had access to it.

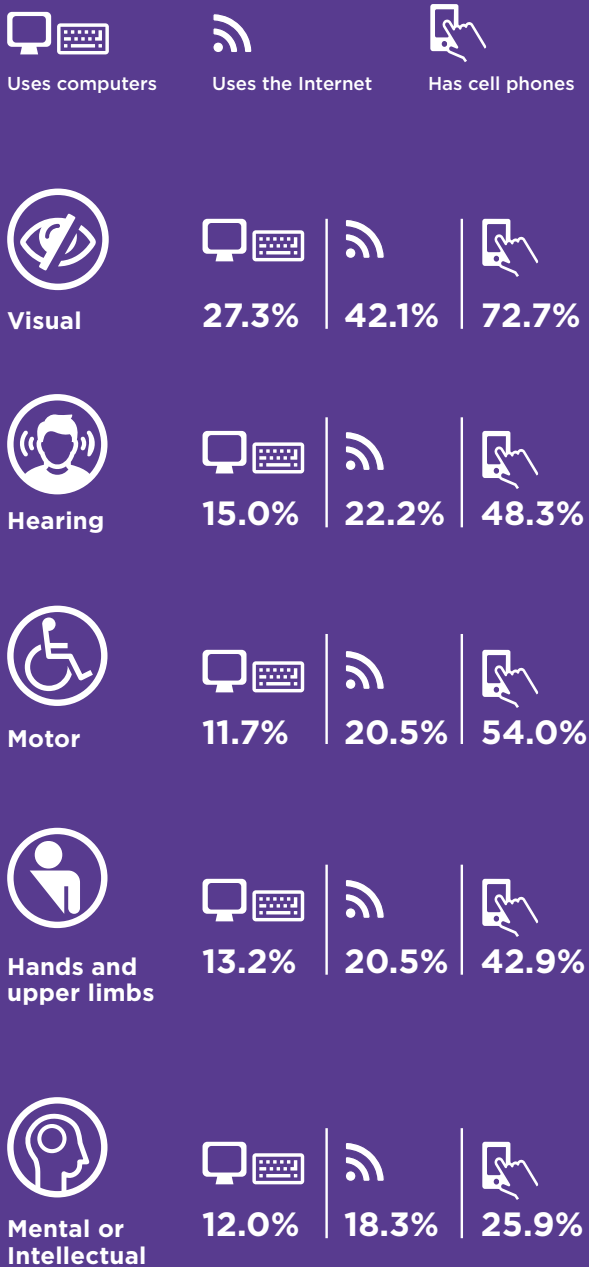
The type and severity of the disability also have an impact on the use of Internet and computers, as shown in the table below:

4 BRAZILIAN NETWORK INFORMATION CENTER (NÚCLEO DE INFORMAÇÃO E COORDENAÇÃO DO PONTO). Survey on the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Brazilian Households, 2018, p. 224. Available at: https://cetic.br/media/docs/publicacoes/2/12225320191028-tic_dom_2018_livro_eletronico.pdf. Accessed: May 31, 2020 at 03:40 pm.

5 IBGE. Pessoas com deficiência (People with disabilities). 2012. Available at: <https://educa.ibge.gov.br/jovens/conheca-o-brasil/populacao/20551-pessoas-com-deficiencia.html>. Accessed: June 11, 2020 at 10:05 am. However, many consider this number to be overestimated.

Residents with disabilities per technology, according to the disability category, (2016)

Total residents (%)



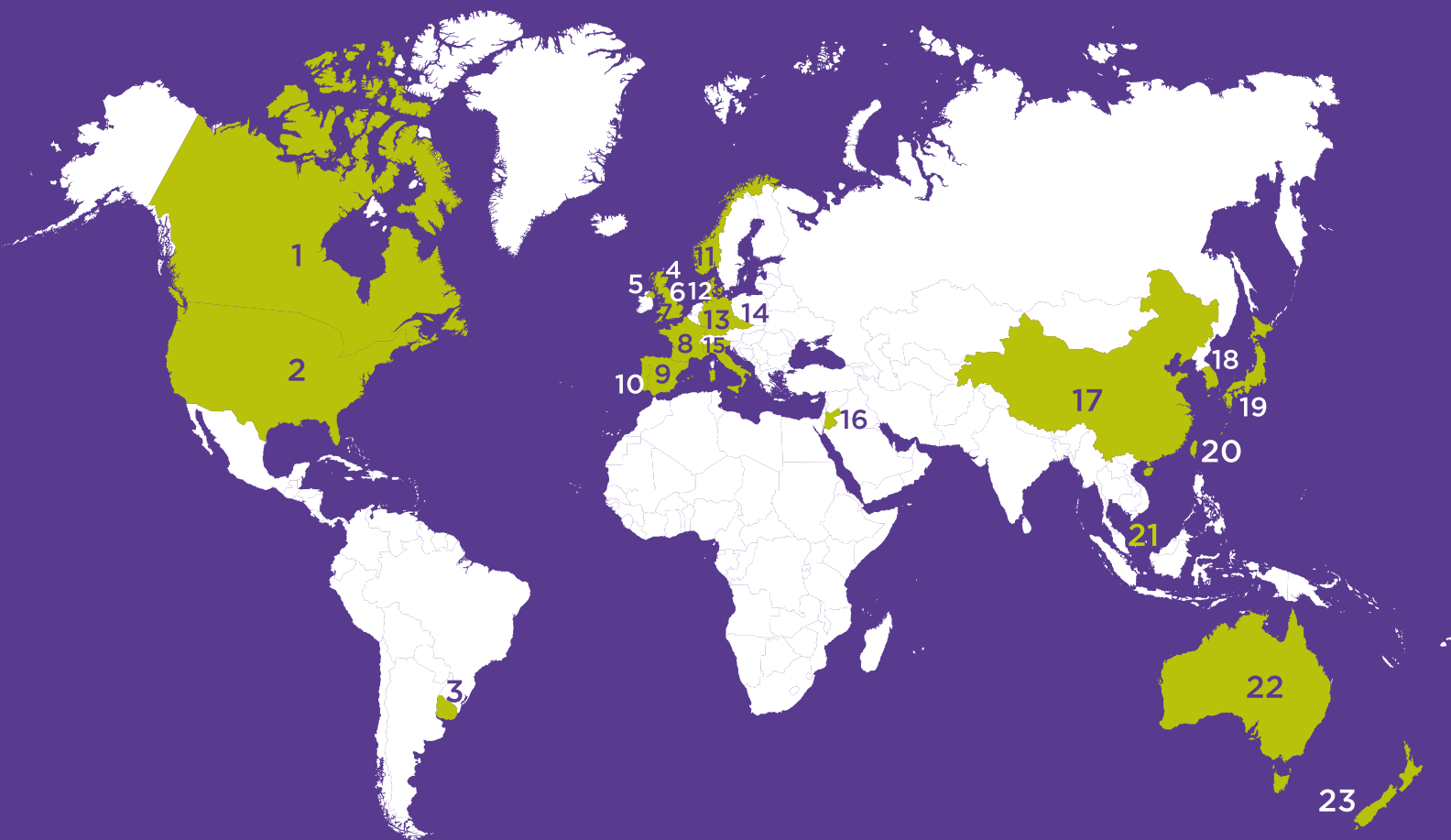
In addition, even for those who use the computer, there is still a big issue regarding the accessibility of Brazilian websites. Only 0.74% have no accessibility barriers. The scenario is a little better regarding educational websites, among which 3.88% do not have access barriers, but the number is still extremely low. The same occurs with news sites (3.03%), corporate sites (2.81%), e-commerce sites (1.30%); and blogs, (1.24%)⁶. The Web Accessibility Primer⁷ aims to try to change this scenario, teaching what to do to make sites accessible to people with disabilities, but until that goal is reached, the period of social isolation may deepen the exclusion.

6 TODOS PELA EDUCAÇÃO. Nota Técnica: O retorno às aulas presenciais no contexto da pandemia do COVID-19 (Technical Note: The return to face-to-face classes in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic). Available at: <https://mwpt.com.br/numero-de-sites-que-falham-nos-testes-do-web-para-todos-cai-mas-ainda-preocupa/>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 03:47 pm.

7 BRAZILIAN NETWORK INFORMATION CENTER; FERRAZ, Reinaldo (coord.); LOPES, Mônica (illustration). - São Paulo: Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2020. Available at: <https://ceweb.br/media/docs/publicacoes/1/20200521074308/artilha-w3cbr-acessibilidade-web-fasciculo-IV.pdf>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 03:48 pm.

Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Norway, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, United States, Uruguay, Wales.

SOURCE: Internet Steering Committee in Brazil, 2020. "Accessibility and Technologies: an overview on access and use of Information and Communication Technologies by people with disabilities in Brazil and Latin America", p. 142.



KEYS:

 Expert guidance

 Reopening guidance after social isolation

1 Canada 

2 United States  

3 Uruguay 

4 Scotland 

5 Northern Ireland 

6 England  

7 Wales 

8 France 

9 Spain 

10 Portugal 

11 Norway 

12 Denmark  

13 Germany 

14 Austria 

15 Italy  

16 Jordan 

17 China 

18 South Korea 

19 Japan 

20 Taiwan 

21 Singapore 

22 Australia  

23 New Zealand 

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

-  UN
-  UNICEF
-  WORLD BANK
-  UNESCO
-  EUROPEAN UNION
-  OECD
-  WHO

METHODOLOGY

This report was prepared based on a set of actions. First, a qualitative documentary research was carried out to consult the reopening guidance after the social isolation (or lockdown) of 23 countries⁸. Thus, searches were carried out on the Internet search engine google.com.br, as well as on the websites of the Executive Branch, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health of the different countries. Some of the documents were translated to Portuguese and are available at the following link: www.institutorodrigomendes.org.br/protocolos-covid19.

Research was also carried out in the following international organizations:

- (1)** United Nations - UN;
- (2)** United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF;
- (3)** World Bank;
- (4)** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO;
- (5)** European Union;
- (6)** Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD;
- (7)** World Health Organization - WHO.

In addition to documentary research, bibliographic research was also carried out on reports and scientific articles considered references in the topic of inclusive education, and a total of 43 experts from all regions of the world were consulted via email⁹. All documents collected were analyzed and their information were systematized and consolidated in this report. The table below lists all experts who responded to emails with information and documents:

8 Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Norway, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, United States, Uruguay, Wales.

9 We would like to thank all the experts consulted who devoted some time to send us information. This help was of great relevance for the preparation of the present work. We are also grateful to Federica Setimmi, who offered to help us on behalf of Catalyst for Inclusive Education.

EXPERTS 

Country	Name	Profile
Australia / Hong Kong	Chris Forlin	Inclusive education teacher, researcher and consultant. Extensive experience in education projects across Oceania and Asia.
Canada	Tim Loreman	Professor of inclusive education. Researcher and consultant in the implementation of inclusive policies around the world, such as Ukraine and Fiji.
Canada and Colombia	Ines Escallon	One of the largest Colombian leaders in implementing the inclusion policy in that country. She moved to Canada and has been responsible for preparing research and reports on inclusion in the world, within Inclusion International.
Denmark	Mr. Stig Langvad	President of Disabled Peoples Organisations Denmark (DPOD); Member of the executive committee of the Danish Association of the Disabled.
England	Mel Ainscow	Professor of inclusive education. International reference for having created, together with Tony Booth, the Index for Inclusion, a very influential tool for evaluating the quality of the inclusion policy.
Italy	Dario Ianes	Professor of inclusive education.
Italy/England	Simona D'Alessio	Honorary fellow and researcher at UCL. Elementary school teacher in Italy.
Jordan	Mr. Mohammed Al-Tarawneh	An engineer, he has a broad participation in policies for the inclusion and reduction of discrimination against young people and women in Jordan.
United States	Bill Henderson	Elementary school teacher and director of Boston's first inclusive school. Author of books and studies on the topic of inclusive education, he is one of the greatest leaders on the subject in the United States.
Wales	Verity Donnelly	Experienced in teaching young people with various types of disabilities in Wales. Researcher of various projects related to the topic within the scope of national and European policies.

SOURCE: Own elaboration.

Therefore, this research shows a global scope and consolidates information from different parts of the world.

GUIDELINES FOR THE READER

This research report is the result of an overview around the world, involving 23 countries, and its aimed at offering references to public administrators, heads of educational institutions, educators and other professionals responsible for planning and implementing actions focused on offering education for people with disabilities during the covid-19 pandemic.

In the first chapter, we bring considerations about the impacts of the pandemic on children and adolescents with disabilities in general. Here, we report cautions regarding:

- (1) the right to accessible information;
- (2) access to therapies during isolation;
- (3) family challenges;
- (4) mental health;
- (5) the right to education

In the second chapter, we make considerations about inclusive education during the period of social isolation. Here, we talk about aspects related to the teaching and learning process, the relationship of the family and students with the school, and the public policies necessary for the most vulnerable contexts.

In the third chapter, we present guidelines on preventive measures that must be taken before and during the reopening of schools, considering the experience of several countries that have already gone through this process, from the point of view of public policies and the teaching and learning process. Regarding public policies, questions are addressed related to returning-to-school criteria, sanitation issues and social distancing.

Finally, we draw a brief conclusion bringing reflections about the Brazilian context. The different parts of this report communicate with each other but can also be read separately.

It is essential to clarify that the information presented in this report should be understood as a possible source of reference for professionals committed to inclusive education. Therefore, they are not prescriptions and should not be simply replicated with expectations of the exact same result. The challenges we are facing are enormous and unique and demand a collective response.



CHAPTER 1

IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The period of social isolation and the pandemic context disproportionately affect the population with disabilities, who may be more vulnerable than the average population. There is no specific and well-produced data about the severity of the disease among people within this group, although they are facing several challenges regarding discrimination in distance education, in health systems and also in the availability of accessible information, which makes them more anxious.

News of the dissemination of covid-19 and its consequences are everywhere. However, is this information accessible to everyone? The UN Special Rapporteur for People with Disabilities, Catalina Devandas, draws attention to the fact that the guidance and support needed for people with disabilities during the pandemic was being neglected¹⁰. The rapporteur points out that the particular needs of people with disabilities were not being considered, for example, the need for the physical presence of caregivers, the necessity to access additional emergency financial assistance to prevent their family from falling into greater vulnerability, the prohibition to discriminate in health system screenings related to the Sars-CoV-2 virus, as well as access to information.

Unicef recommends¹¹ that the message on how to prevent the coronavirus, what to do in case of symptoms and messages related to the reopening

of schools and cities in general are available in different formats to be accessible to everyone:



Braille and large print for people who are blind or have low vision



Written formats or video with text captioning and/or sign language for people with hearing impairment



Easy-to-read version for people who have intellectual disabilities



Accessible web content for those using assistive technologies such as screen reader

SOURCE: Own elaboration based on UNICEF's recommendations.

10 DEVANDAS, Catalina. COVID-19: Who is protecting the people with disabilities? - UN rights expert. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25725&LangID=E>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 03:48 pm.

11 UNICEF. COVID-19 response: Considerations for Children and Adults With Disabilities. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/COVID-19_response_considerations_for_people_with_disabilities_190320.pdf. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 03:49 pm.

It is particularly important and recommended that families talk to their children and explain what is happening in a simple and understandable way¹². Children observe everything around them and feel the tension of their caregivers, but they are often not informed of the context, which causes even more anxiety.

Schools and public administrators must provide accessible materials to everyone providing information on prevention, treatment and also on any changes in context or decisions they take over time¹³. In this period of social isolation, it is essential that schools maintain communication and link with children and adolescents with disabilities and their families.

It is also essential that the entire community engages in making websites and information accessible. There is an international initiative to make statistics related to the spread of the virus available in an accessible way, for example.

The right to information for people with disabilities is only preserved if there is a concern to provide information in an accessible manner, considering the differences, peculiarities and severities of different types of disabilities.

A United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner provides examples of good practice in protecting people with disabilities:

(1) Paraguay and Panama have developed systems to ensure that relevant information is provided in accessible formats. In the same vein, the New Zealand Ministry of Health has a section of its website dedicated to providing information in accessible formats, including sign language and easy to read. The government of Mexico adopted a similar practice.

(2) In Argentina, support persons are exempted from restrictions of movement and physical distancing to provide support to persons with disabilities. Community support networks have developed in Colombia and recruit volunteers that support persons with disabilities and older persons with their groceries and other purchases. Also, in Panama, in an effort to reduce risks, specific opening hours have been allocated for persons with disabilities and their personal assistants for essential purchases.

12 UNICEF. How to work with children and adults with disabilities during Covid-19 and make sure they have a say. 2020.

13 UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. COVID-19 and The Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Guidance. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/COVID-19_and_The_Rights_of_Persons_with_Disabilities.pdf. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 03:49 pm.

14 LITTLEFIELD, Tyler. Accessible COVID-19 statistics tracker. Available at: <https://cvstats.net>. Accessed: June 2020 at 09:03 am.

(3) The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have relaxed initially strict confinement rules and introduced exceptions to permit autistic persons and other persons with disabilities to go outside. France has introduced similar measures¹⁵.

In the following, there are some other precautions that public managers, schools and families can take so that the population of children and adolescents with disabilities has access to their rights and is able to go through this period in the best way possible¹⁶:

and cell phones, it is possible to use telephone calls in order to maintain bonds with the attending professionals¹⁷.

A UNESCO Guide for parents of children with disabilities suggests that isolation can be a time for children to acquire new skills. The Guide's recommendation is that families dedicate themselves to teaching everyday tasks, giving greater autonomy, but always respecting the limits and capacity of the children. In addition, it suggests that parents use materials available on the internet to help children practice new skills¹⁸.

ACCESS TO THERAPIES

Some children with disabilities have a routine of several types of therapy, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, among others. Social isolation can interrupt this routine, since many professionals have to isolate themselves as well. As shown earlier, some countries in the world have made quarantine more flexible for people with disabilities and their caregivers. As in Brazil there is no regulation regarding this subject, if therapy consultations are not in person, it is interesting to maintain the previous routine using online tools whenever possible in order to make the situation less stressful for children and adolescents. In this case, it is possible to make video calls with the therapist to carry out the therapies through videoconferences, with the help of the parents of the child or adolescent with a disability. If it is not possible to make video calls due to lack of access to Internet infrastructure, computers

15 UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. COVID-19 and The Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Guidance. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/COVID-19_and_The_Rights_of_Persons_with_Disabilities.pdf. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 03:49 pm.

16 UNICEF. Tips for parents dealing with COVID-19 lockdown. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/67211/file>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 5 pm.

17 ST CLAIR, Rebecca. Helping someone with intellectual disability during COVID-19. Disability Support Guide. Australia, 2020. Available at: <https://www.disabilitysupportguide.com.au/talking-disability/helping-someone-with-intellectual-disability-during-covid-19>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 07:03 pm.

18 UNESCO. Life in the Times of Covid 19: a guide for parents of children with disabilities. New Delhi, 2020. Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/news/another-covid-19-front-line-parents-children-disabilities>. Accessed: June 13, 2020 at 02:03 am.

The interruption of therapies can mean a stagnation or regression in skills previously acquired by the child. Therefore, it is necessary that the parents are patient and understand the difficulties of this moment, and also that the schools consider these difficulties on returning to school.

household chores and childcare. In addition, parents should focus on quality family time. School activity and therapy monitoring should be done as much as possible, as long as it does not overload family members. Family mental health and stress level directly impact the well-being of children and adolescents with disabilities.

FAMILY CHALLENGES

A significant number of parents of children with disabilities are also experiencing social isolation. In addition to all the mental difficulties that the isolation period imposes, many are working in home office, handling more demands from their bosses and contracting companies to deliver exactly the same old result. Others are experiencing great stress due to unemployment or are having to work outside, at risk for getting infected. Even in this context, parents are also being asked by schools to assist their children in the activities and studies they need to develop, in addition to often having to follow and / or improvise therapies at home, without having the technical expertise to do so.

So many demands at the same time may initiate emotional overload in families that have children and adolescents with disabilities. It is particularly important that all adults in the family share responsibility for

MENTAL HEALTH

Many children and adolescents are unable to understand why they should stay isolated, or the possible consequences of covid-19. Isolation can often amplify the feeling of exclusion, or otherwise impact the mental health of children and adolescents with disabilities¹⁹.

If parents or guardians of children or adolescents with disabilities notice greater irritability, sadness or apathy, they should seek professional help from psychotherapists who are attending through video calls. Sometimes these professionals are the same ones who

¹⁹ Beyond Words: empowering people through pictures, 2020. "Good Days and Bad Days During Lockdown" shows through images the possibilities for good and bad days during isolation.

have attended the children before, other times they are professionals made available by the school to their students and, sometimes, it may be necessary to start a therapy²⁰. Some schools have created an affordable mental health information kit to be delivered to families during isolation²¹.

There are free services that can assist parents, caregivers and children with the necessary psychological support.

EDUCATION

The arrival of the covid-19 in Brazil led to the quick decision to close schools, which have been officially closed since March 23rd. The simplest path was to begin distance (online) education. A guide published by OECD (2020) suggests that education should not be interrupted during the pandemic, and therefore quarantine and social isolation. It suggests a series of measures that aim to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on education. Among them, it is possible to mention

(a) establishing effective communication between school, students, parents and teachers;

(b) identifying ways to promote online education or develop alternative means of delivery, which could include TV programs, podcasts, radio broadcasts, and learning packets either in digital form or on paper;

(c) ensuring adequate support for the most vulnerable families;

(d) when the school provides meals to

students, it should develop alternative means of distribution of food to students and their families;

(e) schools should provide guidance to students and families about the safe use of screen time and online tools to preserve student well-being and mental health, as well as provide protection from online threats to minors.

According to the same document (OECD, 2020), countries should seek strategies so that students can study at home. Among the numerous challenges presented, the main one seems to be access to infrastructure, which includes access to computers, the Internet and a quiet place to study at home, as previously demonstrated. To solve this issue urgently, the institution suggests that governments and schools should explore partnerships with the private sector and community organizations to provide the equipment to students, or that they use media such as television, radio, podcasts or printed content kits to offer education to students. Although the document does not deal with inclusive education, it points out that this moment of isolated studies

20 UNESCO. Life in the Times of Covid 19: a guide for parents of children with disabilities. New Delhi, 2020. Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/news/another-covid-19-front-line-parents-children-disabilities>. Accessed: June 13, 2020 at 02:03 am.

21 SCHOOL EDUCATION GATEWAY. Reach academy Feltham's whole-school, whole-community response to Covid-19. European Toolkit for Schools, 2020.

can deepen the differences in learning among students from different contexts. The United Nations also points out that there is a great chance that the situation of isolation will increase the existing gap among students due to the different contexts in which they experience this moment, increasing school dropout and / or learning difficulties, with a deeper impact on the most vulnerable students²².

Many countries have made available lists of resources that can be used in distance education. Unicef has published a series of considerations for children and adults with disabilities, among which there is the suggestion to ensure that distance learning platforms are safe and accessible to children with disabilities; teachers are trained on supporting children with disabilities remotely; and that any special education programmes are included in measures to ensure continuity of education.²³

In addition, the same document suggests that one must provide support to caregivers of children with disabilities, including those with development and/or intellectual disabilities, in implementing specific consideration when managing care and education of their children at home, and their own mental health and psychosocial wellbeing²⁴.

Schools should closely monitor the development of each of the children and adolescents with disabilities throughout the period of isolation, providing moments of individual tutoring for students with intellectual disabilities, as needed, and accessible support materials considering specific need of every student.

The next chapter of this report will talk about inclusive education during the period of social isolation.

22 UNITED NATIONS COORDINATED APPEAL. Global Humanitarian Response Plan to COVID-19. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global-Humanitarian-Response-Plan-COVID-19.pdf>. Accessed: June 13, 2020 at 02:03 am.

23 UNICEF. COVID-19 response: Considerations for Children and Adults with Disabilities. 2020, p.3. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/COVID-19_response_considerations_for_people_with_disabilities_190320.pdf. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 03:49 pm.

24 Ibid.



CHAPTER 2

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DURING LOCKDOWN

ASPECTS OF PUBLIC POLICY

One of the main issues of distance and online learning is access to infrastructure. This condition of vulnerability is more intense and common in the lower classes, but it can also be a reality for middle class students who attend private schools, since often the family owns only one computer that needs to be used by the adults to work at home.

In public and private schools, it is important to know the study conditions of each student, and the possibility of accessing computers, cell phones and the internet. Different solutions have been adopted in the world to enable children to study in different contexts. Many countries have provided printed materials so that students could do the exercises at home and use mobiles to watch the videos and then take notes due to the lack of access to computers. Some schools have lent computers to families so that the students could use during school closure. Another solution adopted in some countries and also in some regions of Brazil was to broadcast classes and activities via radio or television when it was not possible to access the Internet. Some public schools worldwide have established partnerships with broadband internet providers and technology companies to temporarily provide the equipment to the most vulnerable families (CULLINANE; MONTACUTE, 2020).

Although all these solutions are quite efficient, it is necessary and recommended to understand the specificities of students with disabilities and, when needed, provide the software and programs that are essential for their participation, in addition to ensuring that video materials have printed captions, audio description and sign language translation window, that texts are legible through software, and that the exercises and teaching materials are compatible with their possibilities and capacity.

In all this process of including students with disabilities in the practice of online teaching, it is essential that the teachers of Support Services participate actively in activity planning (MENDES, 2020).

Therefore, it is fundamental to understand, measure and work on these specific conditions so that no one's education is interrupted and, above all, it is necessary to offer means for all students to be able to study, considering the individual aspects of each one.

International specialist in inclusive education Mel Ainscow explains that, at this moment, it is necessary that public managers mobilize resources and establish partnerships to guarantee access to education for all:

In order to foster inclusion and equity in education, governments need to mobilize human and financial resources, some of which may not be under their direct control. Forming partnerships among key stakeholders who can support and own the process of change is therefore essential. These stakeholders include: parents/caregivers; teachers and other education professionals; teacher trainers and researchers; national, local and school-level administrators and managers; policy-makers and service providers in other sectors (e.g. health, child protection and social services); civic groups in the community; and members of minority groups that are at risk of exclusion.²⁵

Another relevant issue is that many children and adolescents depended on the food provided in schools for their nutrition. Good nutrition is a basic and essential requirement for the child to have a good learning process. Therefore, it is particularly important during social isolation that the most vulnerable families continue to receive food provided by the school²⁶.

During online education, one should also pay attention to the overexposure of children to screens (computers, cell phones, television), with digital security and with the availability and use of their data on the internet for commercial purposes, as well as the exposure of children to advertising.

Forward are the main recommendations for this moment:

> **Promote access to infrastructure**



> **Guarantee that the pedagogical materials are created in collaboration amongst class teachers and special education teachers**



> **Ensure nutrition to vulnerable children**



> **Ensure accessible teaching and learning material**



25 AINSCOW, Mel. Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. Vol 6, 2020. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.172958>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 7 pm.

26 SCHOOL EDUCATION GATEWAY. Reach academy Feltham's whole-school, whole-community response to Covid-19. *European Toolkit for Schools*. 2020.

ASPECTS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

UNESCO's Incheon statement, which aims to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote life-long learning opportunities for all," establishes inclusion and equity through education as one of its goals, and also minoring inequalities in access to education and learning. Therefore, it establishes that the goals for education can only be considered fulfilled if they are reached by everyone, including people with disabilities, ensuring that no one is left behind. Countries that follow these recommendations, such as New Zealand, indicate that the education of all students should be planned to focus on those most vulnerable²⁷. The best understanding of this statement is that education will be developed and thought in a less homogeneous and more individualized way, considering the specific needs and skills of each student with or without disabilities²⁸.

Building inclusive online education may be an opportunity to rebuild means of teaching and learning for all students. However, in a situation of lockdown in which the decision to adopt online education is taken abruptly, and is mandatory and unplanned, the practice can be much more complex. It is likely that there will be difficulties in adapting to the online education model, since the education systems still do not adopt the consistent use of technologies and both students and teachers have little familiarity with

distance learning tools. Thus, it is very likely that when the period of lockdown finishes, students will have significant learning gaps (among other issues).

Thus, it is necessary to ensure that the learning of students with disabilities remains effective and efficient, and that it considers both intellectual and academic aspects, as well as the development of social skills.

27 UNESCO. "Incheon Declaration: Education 2030: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All". Incheon: 2015. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000233137>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 06:22 pm.

28 INCLUSION INTERNATIONAL. Webinar Inclusive Education: before, during and after Covid-19. Available at: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/68B8der9-js3GNKQ5ASDUPisW43vfams0iRP-JfzO_kVHcFOIPwY7ATMeNijOKUtNzLuPu4KR7n-gWY?continueMode=true&_xzm_rtaid=aVZ4W6_gRqe14zhfik24Q.1591413397259.e92175c1801e8638bb47fb1c11ecb3a3&_xzm_rhtaid=747. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 05:21 pm.

29 TODOS PELA EDUCAÇÃO. Nota Técnica: Ensino à distância na educação básica frente à pandemia da COVID-19. (Technical Note: The return to face-to-face classes in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic). Available at: https://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/_uploads/_posts/425.pdf?1730332266=&utm_source=conteudo-nota&utm_medium=hiperlink-download. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 07:04 pm.

The first step towards effective online teaching is to establish and maintain good communication with students and their families. A study by the Center for Online Learning for Students with Disabilities indicates that good communication should be **(1)** considerate, **(2)** comprehensive, and **(3)** consistent. It must adopt a long-term plan, try to be compatible with the student's preferred communication times within their routine at home, and share information on student's performance and supporting scheduling routines. Good communication allows both the educators and the child's parents to know the different aspects of this journey, the main difficulties, how that student prefers to learn, among other essential conditions.

However, in the context of Brazil, which has continental dimensions and enormous social and regional differences, this individualized communication is not always possible. Whenever feasible, it is recommended to invest time and human resources in this strategy, but in cases where it is not possible, for example in cases of education through television or radio broadcast, it is important that the teacher bears in mind the differences and specificities of children with disabilities and try to contemplate them in the way they teach, or that creative ways be developed to establish this communication.

Communication is important to maintain the bond and monitor the development of each student, but besides this, one of the principles of inclusive and anti-discrimination education is that everyone learns differently, therefore,

there must also exist several ways to teach. It means that teaching and learning expectations, activities, teaching materials and assessments must have different formats, strategies and possibilities.

It is the role of the teacher, pedagogues, Support teachers and school managers to ensure that all students have an efficient learning, reducing any and all barriers that may prevent the student from reaching the learning expectations stipulated by the teacher and agreed between the parts. At a time when the education system moves to online platforms, this could be an opportunity to rethink the ways of teaching, and to use the crisis as a catalyst for creativity, so that it is possible to create content and materials in different formats to meet the needs of students with disabilities and, consequently, attract and motivate all students in the class. Several activities with the same objective could be created by the teacher, and students might be able to choose which one seems more interesting or appropriate for their possibilities. Another way to include everyone is to provide alternatives for the same activity. Therefore, it can be performed in writing, video, drawing, audio, among other possibilities, or its delivery can be optional.

30 CENTER ON ONLINE LEARNING AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Equity matters: Digital & online learning for students with disabilities. Lawrence, KS. 2016. Available at: <http://www.centeronlinelearning.res.ku.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/EquityMatters2016Final.pdf>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 06:51 pm.

Distance learning can have the advantage of enabling teachers to create specific objectives and paths to tackle difficulties of each student and work on their development. One student may, for example, need to improve writing, while another needs to improve reading and text interpretation. In this sense, obtaining information about the students, including their cultural background, the type of access and quality of infrastructure they have at home, their best skills and competences, as well as the subjects of their preference, and the possible and preferred working hours can help adapt the demands of the teacher to the personal context of each student, stimulating the students' adherence to the proposed activities. Daily tasks, such as grocery shopping, paying bills, cleaning the house, can be used in the learning, creating problem-based learning that encourages students to interact with their parents.³²

Another important skill to be developed is the collaboration among students, with tasks that need to be performed in groups. It is also possible to work on self-management, as students need to organize schedules and be disciplined to study, even when they are at home. Communication, active listening, dialogue, and critical thinking can also be improved through debates on synchronous internet platforms or social networks, in which students are present at the same time and in constant interaction, whenever the infrastructure context allows.

However, the Brazilian reality is mostly of overworked teachers, with the demand to quickly acquire a new teaching skill, as well as new technical skills, which were not previously demanded in their role. This often occurs in conditions in which the teacher himself is at home and accumulates the roles of taking care of the house and other family members, especially their children, in addition to the impacts caused by the pandemic and isolation situation. Under these conditions, it is first necessary to ensure that all teachers have the infrastructure to provide online education to all students (computer, cell phone to record videos, software that may be needed and stable access to the internet). In remote places without internet access, it is necessary for the teacher to be able to record lessons for TV broadcast or to teach via local radio.

Once infrastructure is ensured, it is necessary for all players in the school environment to work together so that activities, tasks and teaching materials are constructed in an accessible manner, considering the specific needs of each student. In an ideal scenario, it is important that teachers receive technical and pedagogical training so that they can increase their efficiency and quality in distance learning.

31 Ibid.

32 SEALE, Colin. Distance Learning During The Coronavirus Pandemic: Equity And Access Questions For School Leaders. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/colinseale/2020/03/17/distance-learning-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic-equity-and-access-questions-for-school-leaders/#6891e4701d4d>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 05:08 pm.

However, even if it is not possible to individualize learning activities and expectations and / or train teachers, the minimum for an inclusive education is to provide accessible teaching materials and activities that are possible and compatible with the characteristics of each student.

UNESCO suggested some recommendations for a good transition to online education in times of Covid-19 (UNESCO, 2020c), as follows:

(1) Examine the readiness and choose the most relevant tools. Decide on the use of high-technology and low-technology solutions based on the reliability of local power supplies, internet connectivity, and digital skills of teachers and students. This could range through integrated digital learning platforms, video lessons, MOOCs, to broadcasting through radios and TVs.

(2) Ensure inclusion of the distance learning programmes, including those from low-income backgrounds.

(3) Protect data privacy and data security.

(4) Prioritize solutions to address psychosocial challenges before teaching. Mobilize available tools to connect schools, parents, teachers and students with each other. Create communities to ensure regular human interactions, enable social caring measures, and address possible psychosocial challenges that students may face when they are isolated.

(5) Plan the study schedule of the distance learning programmes, considering the situation of the

affected zones, level of studies, needs of students, and availability of parents.

(6) Provide support to teachers and parents on the use of digital tools.

(7) Blend appropriate approaches and limit the number of applications and platforms. Blend tools or media that are available for most students, both for synchronous communication and lessons, and for asynchronous learning. Avoid overloading students and parents by asking them to download and test too many applications or platforms.

(8) Develop distance learning rules and monitor students' learning process. Try to use tools to support submission of students' feedback and avoid overloading parents by requesting them to scan and send students' feedback.

(9) Define the duration of distance learning units based on students' self-regulation skills.

(10) Create communities and enhance connection of teachers, parents and school managers to address sense of loneliness or helplessness, facilitate sharing of experience and discussion on coping strategies when facing learning difficulties

It will not always be possible to meet all these guidelines, but it is important to have them as a goal so that they are respected to the greatest extent possible.

Specifically for children with disabilities, Professor Simona D'Allessio indicates that to support inclusive distance learning it is necessary to have:

(1) team teaching, in which class teachers give lessons for children with disabilities and, with the help of the support for learning teachers, adapt, modify and accommodate materials, and also establish goals and objectives for the child with disabilities;

(2) peer support, in which the construction of knowledge takes place in a collective and relational way, through interaction with colleagues on videos, activities in small groups, storytelling by colleagues etc., and

(3) family support, understanding their reality during isolation, choosing goals, offering psychological support, reducing time on screens and offering fine motor activities (D'ALESSIO, 2020).

A very important aspect to be emphasized is the socialization of children and adolescents, which is a two-way process: while helping children with disabilities in their socialization, it also teaches other students in a more inclusive and empathic way, preparing better citizens to live in society. Therefore, it is very important that, whenever possible, even during isolation, students have contact with each other, which does not always need to be mediated by the teacher (except by support teachers or interpreters, when necessary). This can be done through video calls, or even through phone calls or social medias.

Social skills must be part of the curriculum. Ability to relate to others, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and responsible decision-making are essential for the social and professional life of all students. Social

skills are of particular importance to those students with a high functioning autism spectrum disorder, as well as learning disabilities³³. Students with intellectual disabilities must have access to classes in small groups and specific activities to reduce the impact of school closure on their learning. In addition, individual moments may be necessary depending on the characteristics of each student.

Involving students in producing accessible materials can be an interesting strategy. A qualitative research that involved students in the process of preparing tasks together with teachers concluded that the new approaches gave members of the class the opportunities to learn out of their 'comfort zones' and, in so doing, moved the teachers' expectations about the capabilities of their students (AINSCOW, 2020).

As previously mentioned, ideally, technical and pedagogical training should be provided to teachers to enable them to deliver online teaching to students (CULLINANE; MONTACUTE, 2020). This can be done remotely and online, and the teachers' workload and personal context during the pandemic should be considered to assess their availability.

33 CENTER ON ONLINE LEARNING AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Equity matters: Digital & online learning for students with disabilities. Lawrence, KS. 2016. Available at: <http://www.centerononlinelearning.res.ku.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/EquityMatters2016Final.pdf>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 06:51 pm.

Assessment is a crucial part of teaching and is also part of the routine of students in schools. Usually, the assessments measure the absorption of content and demonstration of some skills. In a context of global pandemic and social isolation, the level of stress and anxiety among students is already high, and it may be the case to consider postponing assessments or rethinking assessment practices. Some countries, for example Belgium, have banned certifying assessments, allowing only formative assessments to be taken during the period of lockdown³⁴. Formative assessments are those that are aimed at each person's individual development and provide constructive feedback to students so that they can evolve their learning based on their own individual parameters. In other words, the teacher helps students to evolve, without comparing them with the other students in the class by giving them grades. In the case of students with disabilities, this practice can help demonstrate consistency in the evolution process of their learning, motivate them to keep learning and prevent them from being left behind or giving up studying.

The experience of the Reach Academy Feltham (RAF) in West London created guidelines that can be a source of inspiration. The school planned three hours of learning per day. For each hour, there were 20-minute instructional videos recorded by the teachers. The students would perform their tasks for the rest of the time. Children and young people received printed exercise books, which makes it easier for them to use their cell phones to watch the videos, as they do not need to type. Another strategy to overcome barriers to have access to

infrastructure was that the school itself bought dongles for students and helped negotiate temporary Internet access for everyone, in addition to lending their laptops. Teachers are also available for an hour to answer questions from students and send constructive feedback about the activities they have sent. If the students do not send the activities, the teachers call their parents to understand what has happened. It also helps the school to obtain information about current family conditions, cases of illness, etc. RAF also created a YouTube channel and made the videos available for free for anyone to use. As a way of following students, teachers call their parents once a week and those considered most vulnerable receive call every day³⁵.

A study of 3,170 teachers in Italy, in which 84% are support teachers and 16% are class teachers – some of these teachers are also class coordinators or teacher coordinators for inclusion (30%) – found that less than half (44%) of the students with disabilities attending the respondents' classes have participated in distance teaching in a way that teachers recognize as 'good'. This occurs because distance teaching proved to be inefficient (26%), or it was not offered since it was not

34 CROATIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. Implications of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on education and training: State-of-play in Member States. 2020.

35 SCHOOL EDUCATION GATEWAY. Reach academy Feltham's whole-school, whole-community response to Covid-19. European Toolkit for Schools, 2020.

even conceivable (not planned in the student's Individual Educational Plan (10%). In addition, many participants reported knowing families whose children with disabilities were without access to distance education due to a lack of infrastructure (IANES; BELLACICCO, 2020).

As for support materials, in 23% of cases they were not inclusive. Regarding materials specifically adapted for students with disabilities, in 20% of cases they were not made available. The responsibility for adapting the teaching materials was mostly assigned for the support teachers (92%), with no involvement of other figures such as class teachers (26%) and students (1%) (IANES; BELLACICCO, 2020).

Many teachers identified that students with disabilities worsened their behavior (52%) and also their learning, autonomy and communication skills (62%). Most teachers stated that the collaboration with families is very satisfactory and that it is strictly connected to the specific needs of each student regarding the type and severity of the disability. The study concluded that, although distance learning was implemented satisfactorily in almost all classes, it excluded at least one third of students with disabilities. In addition, for some students, accessible materials were unavailable. Thus, if, on the one hand, distance education has the potential to inform and empower families in educational practices, on the other hand, it is difficult to guarantee the participation of students with disabilities on equal terms with others, which reflects a traditional problem that, although it

demands structural changes, it could be transformed into an opportunity for the teachers of the classes to get to know about socialization and learning of students with disabilities (IANES; BELLACICCO, 2020).

Although there are no reliable data on the Brazilian reality at this moment, it is very likely that the scenario is similar to the one found by the Italian research. Therefore, special attention is needed to ensure that all children have access to learning materials, maintain close contact with schools and, thus, avoid school dropout or a setback in learning. Moreover, these factors should be taken into account when schools reopen, creating compensation strategies, reviewing and resuming the pace of skills and content, as will be seen next.



CHAPTER 3

SCHOOL REOPENING

ASPECTS OF PUBLIC POLICY

The process of reopening schools started to be effectively considered by public managers in several countries, as the levels of contamination by the virus began to decrease. This has already occurred in countries such as Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, South Korea, Spain and the United States. The decision to reopen schools must be made in an intersectoral manner, considering the importance of guaranteeing the right to education and, at the same time, preserving the health of students and their families³⁶.

The areas of education, health, urban transport, social development, assistance and the rights of people with disabilities and others must work together to promote efficient policies for the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools, ensuring their right to learning, their food security and also their physical and mental health. More than that, intersectoral articulation can be an impetus for positive and lasting changes in the educational system³⁷.

In general, countries establish a central guideline in terms of what must be done to prevent the virus from spreading and leave different degrees of autonomy for states and municipalities and even for the school boards.

Schools are not only teaching and learning environments, but are also related to food, socialization, and usually offer emotional support for children and adolescents, in addition to being essential for the families of students with disabilities to return to their work and thus guarantee income for their family. Thus, a number of variables must be taken into account when considering the reopening of schools, and the risks and benefits of this choice must be carefully evaluated. The decision, however, should only be made if it is safe, even for the most vulnerable people, when there is a minimal risk of contamination. After schools reopen, it is important to monitor them to assess transmission rates among people who attend them and their families.

The information note published by UNESCO indicates that the resumption of classes must consider the following factors:

System readiness - assessing the availability of people, infrastructure, resources and capacity to resume functions;

36 FGV. Webinar - Experiências internacionais no contexto de retomada das aulas (International Experiences in the Context of School Reopening). Available at: <https://youtu.be/ADZhgj8A1YE>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 05h15 pm.

37 TODOS PELA EDUCAÇÃO. Nota Técnica: Ensino à distância na educação básica frente à pandemia da COVID-19 (Technical Note: The return to face-to-face classes in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic). Available at: https://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/_uploads/_posts/425.pdf?1730332266=&utm_source=conteudo-nota&utm_medium=hiperlink-download. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 07:04 pm.

Continuity of learning - ensuring learning resumes and continues as smoothly as possible after the interruption; and

System resilience - building and reinforcing the preparedness of the education system to anticipate, respond to and mitigate the effects of current and future crises³⁸.

Assessing the system's resilience at this point is important because isolation may have impacted the income of many families. Thus, it is necessary to consider an increase in the number of students enrolled in public schools. Regarding private schools, there may also be a need for reorganization.

Ideally, in the resumption process, the various actors (managers, schools, teachers, students and families) have a voice, from planning to execution. UNESCO says that the reopening should begin with **(1) consultation with concerned stakeholders;** **(2) intersectoral coordination;** **(3) communication of the details of how it will be done**³⁹. In other words, the reopening process needs to be previously planned and very well communicated to the school community, and the protocols and other information materials must be shared in an accessible manner for all types of disabilities.

It is very important that students and their families have a direct channel with the schools so that they can answer their questions, relieve their anxieties and also plan the most practical issues, such as the arrival and departure times, the hygiene material they will need to provide, transportation to take and

pick up the children, among others. A webinar that took place in New Zealand, a reference country in the control of the epidemic, pointed out that the dialog between schools, students and families helps to reduce anxiety and also contributes to thinking in advance about possible specific situations which may not have been considered⁴⁰.

The experience of countries that have already started resuming classes can serve as a parameter for what should be done in Brazil. The international documents and protocols of the countries surveyed defined recommendations that can be organized in three axes:

(1) criteria for returning;

(2) sanitation issues;

(3) social distance.

38 UNESCO. COVID-19: Education response: Education Sector issue notes, 7.1. April: 2020, p.2. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373275>. Accessed: June 11, 2020 at 10:02 am, our emphasis.

39 FGV. Webinar - Experiências internacionais no contexto de retomada das aulas. (Webinar - International Experiences in the Context of School Reopening). Available at: <https://youtu.be/ADZngj8A1YE>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 05:15 pm.

40 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. Learning Support Need Webinar. New Zealand, 2020. Available at: <https://livestream.com/vidcom/moe-learning-support-needs-webinar-on-well-being/videos/206328645?fbclid=IwAR2K7g056T9cVqec3lit7yNDYNyOpQjFHAHL1M-h-dBpTGNVKB7gDNBZSs>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 05:15 pm.

CRITERIA FOR RETURNING

The return to schools has not been exactly as it was before. What happens is a gradual resumption, which must be carefully planned, considering all the subjects involved, so that no one is left behind and in a way that does not unfairly discriminate against children with disabilities.

The first criterion for return is health status. Students, teachers and staff with symptoms of covid-19, or who have symptomatic family members, diagnosed or expecting test results, should remain at home. If students have symptoms at school, their parents should be contacted immediately to pick them up.

The impacts of school closure on the contagion curve are still inconclusive (LANCET CHILD ADOLESC HEALTH, 2020), but death among children and young people are lower than in other groups according to the data. Although certain children and adolescents with disabilities are at higher risk groups for covid-19, the medical report on disability should not be accepted as a justification for these students to be left behind. **It is important to clarify that there is no automatic correlation between disability and risk. The decision on the return of such students must be taken based on the individual analysis of each case.** It is essential that this analysis involves both families, who hold valuable information about what works best and what are the needs of each student, as

well as medical teams. Such reflection must involve health risk issues and the home context in which the student is inserted. In summary, whenever possible and safe, it is recommended that children and adolescents with disabilities return to classes with other students.

If the student needs a caregiver, a sign language interpreter or any other support professional, that person will be able to accompany him / her in the reopening of schools, as long as he / she does not present any symptoms of covid-19.

SANITATION ISSUES

When returning to face-to-face classes, it is essential to preserve everyone's health. Therefore, hygiene guidelines must be strictly followed, so as to avoid exposing the entire community to the virus.

It is mandatory to improve hygiene measures, including hand washing, respiratory etiquette (i.e. coughing and sneezing into the elbow), facility cleaning procedures and safe food preparation practices. Other hygiene practices are also important, such as disinfecting surfaces, toys and equipment with which students have contact and making cleaning and hygiene materials available in the bathrooms. Water and hygiene facilities are a crucial part for schools to reopen safely, and must be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

Children and young people with disabilities who have difficulties or are unable to perform proper hand washing or disinfection need to be supported by professionals. Students who use wheelchairs and constantly touch these wheels should wash their hands frequently, and they also may choose to wear disposable gloves and/or always have alcohol gel at their disposal. Another alternative is to use antiseptic wipes on their hands⁴³.

As for the use of masks, the research identified a great diversity of guidelines. The World Health Organization is emphatic that masks should only be used as part of a comprehensive strategy in the fight against covid-19 and that masks, on their own, do not protect us from the disease⁴⁴. Recommendations for wearing masks in schools can be grouped into three categories:

Official government protocols must make explicit that it is the responsibility of schools to provide easily accessible information to their entire community about hygiene care. In addition to fixing posters, the school needs to seek other means to guarantee access for all.

All students, teachers and staff need to be trained on the implementation of hygiene measures.

It is also necessary to take special care with food, which must be prepared following all hygiene guidelines and with special attention to the use of gloves and masks. Food should be served in small portions, and children or young people should not be allowed to serve themselves directly from buffets.

41 NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH. COVID-19: Contagion Prevention. Denmark, 2020.

42 OBERG, Anthony. COVID-19 & Disability: Precautions for People in Wheelchairs. American Association on Health and Disability. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smNLPMSzy1U&list=PLw8fXs3gMADVpv6pWI45kmP-PY9kQhtAkq&index=3>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 05:22 pm.

43 Metal surfaces of the wheelchair should be cleaned regularly. Always wear gloves when cleaning. Do not use bleach because they can damage the plastic parts. In: OBERG, Anthony. COVID-19 & Disability: Keeping Wheelchairs Clean. American Association on Health and Disability. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImYo7Upbx-J8&list=PLw8fXs3gMADVpv6pWI45kmPPY9kQhtAkq&index=4>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 05:23 pm.

44 GHEBREYESUS, Tedros Adhanom. WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 5 June 2020. World Health Organization, 2020. Available at: <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---5-june-2020>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 7:03 pm.

Guidelines on wearing masks

MANDATORY USE

In these cases, the masks must be available for free in schools to all students, who must be instructed on how to wear them properly, with detailed recommendations, such as: place them only with clean hands, do not touch the face when using them and change whenever the masks are damp.



- > China
- > France
- > Japan
- > Portugal
- > South Korea
- > Taiwan

RECOMMENDED USE ON CERTAIN OCCASIONS

The recommendations made by these countries are heterogeneous. Wearing masks is foreseen in cases of impossibility of social distancing, observation of symptoms of covid-19 and being at high risk from the disease. Denmark, for example, indicates that the face shields or face masks should be used when team tasks involve prolonged or frequent face-to-face contact, which can occur, for example, in the relationship between students with disabilities and their support professionals.



- > Austria
- > Denmark
- > Germany
- > Spain
- > United States

UNNECESSARY USE

Apparently, countries where contamination rates were very low chose not to indicate the use of masks.



- > Australia
- > New Zealand
- > Norway
- > Scotland
- > Singapore

As for students with disabilities, an individualized assessment of the need to wear face masks are recommended. Some situations illustrate this complexity. The first is that the use of masks impairs the socialization of students with hearing impairment, especially those who practice lip reading or communicate using sign language. In such cases, a possible solution is to adopt the use of transparent masks, preferably throughout the school. If this is not possible, it will be necessary to make it optional for these students, and also for their teachers and classmates on some occasions, maintaining social distancing advised. The same applies to sign interpreters.

Some students with disabilities or who are on the autism spectrum may find it more difficult to tolerate wearing masks.

Children under two years old, or who use a pacifier, as well as people who have reduced upper limb movements and are unable to remove the mask alone when necessary, should not be forced to wear masks, as there is a risk of suffocation.

Finally, it is important to point out that support professionals for students with disabilities must always wear masks, reinforcing the need for transparent masks for sign language interpreters, mentioned earlier. Masks and other possible protective equipment must be changed each and every time the professional helps a new student, and the hygiene procedure must be performed again.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

The most common strategy recommended by the protocols analyzed in the research is to maintain a minimum distance between people, which varies from 1 to 2 meters. This guideline is adopted by WHO, which considers measures of social distancing as the main way to reduce the spread of the new coronavirus.

According to UNICEF, the reopening of schools must provide for social distancing as a way to protect students, their families, teachers and other school professionals. The recommendations are:

- (1)** staggering the start and close of the school day;
- (2)** staggering mealtimes;
- (3)** moving classes to temporary spaces or outdoors;
- (4)** holding school in shifts, to reduce class size⁴⁶.

45 Communication through sign language involves the use of facial expressions.

46 UNICEF. What will a return to school during the COVID-19 pandemic look like? What parents need to know about school reopening in the age of coronavirus. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/what-will-return-school-during-covid-19-pandemic-look>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 05 pm.

Another recommendation that has been adopted by several countries is the gradual return by grades, in order to avoid agglomerations and allow classes to be smaller in the first phases of the return.

Some countries, such as Denmark and Norway, have chosen to start returning to face-to-face classes with younger children who are in day care centers or preschools, as they have more difficulties in adhering to distance learning. Others chose to start with the grades that will provide exams for cycle change or entry into higher education, which was the case in China . There were those who authorized the return of all grades but reduced the time spent at school. In this case, the student goes to the educational institution once or twice a week, or every day for a short period.

Support professionals for students with disabilities can and should meet all the needs of children and adolescents. As mentioned in the previous topics, the recommendation is that the professional does not present any of the symptoms of covid-19 and follows hygiene routines. In addition, they must be counted according to the limit size of classes, and maintain social distance from other students, teachers and other school staff.

In line with the UNICEF guidelines cited above, some protocols also recommend that schools plan the drop-offs and pick-ups of students at different times, thus seeking to avoid crowding. If there is a need for the child's parents to enter the school, it is necessary that they follow all the hygiene procedures provided for.

Social distance is also recommended for students' transportation. In this sense, it is important to offer means of transport that avoid crowds and are accessible to people with disabilities.

It should be noted that, as in the case of health issues, all students, teachers and other school professionals need to undergo training on the implementation of social distance measures.

The following pages summarize some decisions made by different countries regarding public policies previously explored:

47 For more information on complete international protocols, access the following link: www.institutorodrigomendes.org.br/protocolos-covid19.



Germany

PROCEDURE

- Classes take place on a reduced schedule.
- Only part of students per day can attend school for classroom instruction.
- Students in grades 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 will have the opportunity to compensate for the disadvantages of learning in groups of up to eight people in summer schools that emerged during the closure of schools related to the coronavirus. The offer comprises 15 weekly classes and focuses on the main subjects of German, Mathematics and English. Registration is required by June 12.*

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Maximum of 10 people.

NOTES ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- No information.



Denmark

PROCEDURE

- Reopening started at day care centers and preschools because children at that age have less adherence to distance learning.
- In day care centers, activities can be organized with a fixed number of students and staff per group.
- Recreational areas can be used in schools, with few classes at a time and separated by areas.
- It is essential that the classroom is the starting point for children's daily lives and that there are permanent known adults around the children.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Maximum of 10 people.

NOTES ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- At first, students with disabilities stayed at home because they were considered a high-risk group.**

* The criteria for choosing these classes are not explained.

** Informed by Stig Langvad, who also believes that this strategy violates the human rights of children and adolescents with disabilities by assuming that they represent a risk group, regardless of the type and severity of the disability.



Scotland

PROCEDURE

- Schools will not return until August, one week before the end of the summer school holidays.
- Vulnerable students will take classes during the summer holidays.
- Children will sit two meters apart.
- Since most students will only have half the time of face-to-face classes, activities performed at home will be maintained for the rest of the time. School time will increase as soon as it is safe to do so.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Class sizes will be significantly reduced (divided into two or three). It does not explain the number of people per group.

NOTES ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- Children with learning difficulties will have classes during the summer to resume learning.
- Children at high risk for severe covid-19 symptoms should stay home.



Spain

PROCEDURE

- Families can only enter the school building in case of need or indication from the teaching staff or the management team, always complying with preventive and hygiene measures.
- The interpersonal distance will be of at least 2 meters.
- People should give preference to using the stairs.
- The displacement of groups of students through the teaching center will be reduced to a minimum. Thus, the teachers will be the ones to switch room, and not the students.
- The exits and entrances of the classrooms will be organized in a staggered way and must respect the distance of 2m between people.
- Gloves are generally not recommended, but should be used for food handling, diapering and cleaning tasks.
- If it is not possible to guarantee an interpersonal distance of 2 meters, a mask should be worn.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- A size that allows a distance of 2 meters between students.

NOTES ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- Students with health conditions that make them more vulnerable to covid-19 (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic lung disease, cancer, immunosuppression or high blood pressure) can attend the center, as long as their clinical condition is controlled and allowed, and they maintain protection measures strictly.
- There is no specific information about children with disabilities.



France

PROCEDURE

- Going back to school at first is optional and will only be mandatory from July 15.
- It will adopt a physical distance of one meter between each person.
- Schools must organize themselves so that social distance is respected in all contexts and spaces (arrival and departure, recreation, corridors, covered playground, etc.).
- Schools and day care centers will be reopened gradually, regardless of age, respecting health guidelines.
- Wearing a mask is mandatory in all situations where the distance rules are not respected.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- 15 students per class (primary schools, secondary schools, colleges).
- 10 students in kindergarten.

NOTES ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- They can return to classes at the same time as other students, on a voluntary basis and benefiting from appropriate protection measures.
- Employees working with younger children or students with specific needs must wear masks (during classes and breaks).
- Special attention should be paid to teaching hygiene measures to students with disabilities. They should also be able to count on support, where appropriate, from a caregiver or tutor.



England

PROCEDURE

- Maintained in-person attendance at schools for children of essential workers and the most vulnerable students. Vulnerable people are those in situations of economic vulnerability, who are under State protection or who have learning needs with specific plans.
- The rest will return after the summer holidays in August / September.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- There is no information available.

NOTES ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- They will have classes throughout the summer holidays to resume their studies and have the necessary therapies.



Norway

PROCEDURE

- For kindergarten children, where it is difficult to regulate the distance between students, the most important measure will be to limit the number of close contacts to each child and team, for example, with small groups and permanent staff for each group.
- In case of lack of physical space at the school, alternate days, different opening hours and alternative rooms can be introduced.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- 15 children in day care and 10 children in preschool.
- For grades 1 to 7, up to 15 children.
- For grades 8 to 10 (Elementary School), classes of less than 20 students, keeping one meter of distance between them in all situations.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Special services (caregivers, tutors, interpreters) must follow the basic infection control routines according to current recommendations (good hand hygiene and cough, do not appear in case of illness, etc.), but can perform their work normally.
- If there is a need for an interpreter or similar professional, they must also maintain a social distance from others.



New Zealand

PROCEDURE

- Schools and early childhood learning services are open to everyone at Level 2 Alert. Additional public health measures are in place.
- It considers it important that all children can go to school and resume learning as soon as possible.
- Most schools are organizing a phased return to on-site learning, maintaining distance learning options.
- All children and young people can go back to school. This includes students from residential special schools, special day schools and satellite units. The only exceptions are sick children or young people with symptoms of covid-19, isolated or waiting for a test result.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Each school may determine the criteria.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Distance learning will be available for those who need to stay at home and the Ministry staff will continue to support children with learning support needs, in cases where they need to stay at home because they are in at higher risk groups for covid-19 . Students and parents with any questions about distance learning should contact the school.
- Children with disabilities who are not at risk must return to classes.



Portugal

PROCEDURE

- The opening for pre-school education began.
- Students must be organized in groups and maintain that organization throughout their school stay. This group should, as far as possible, have class schedules, breaks and meals organized in order to avoid contact with other groups.
- Teachers, staff and students must respect the safety and physical distance rules of 2 meters.
- All students, teachers and staff must wear masks all the time.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Rooms for a maximum of 10 people, between adults and children.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- People with disabilities will continue to be isolated because they are at risk *.

* The protocol mentions the topic generically, but it is possible that children with disabilities who are not at high risk groups may return.



Singapore

PROCEDURE

- Schools will measure the temperature of students at the entrance.
- All students must wear masks.
- The students' arrival and departure times will be scheduled to avoid crowds.
- Students will have fixed seats and the distance will be of 1.5m between them.
- The return to school classes was staggered by grades.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- There is no information available.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Special schools will open after June 2nd.



Uruguay

PROCEDURE

- The return to rural education began across the country and in all modalities, including high school.
- Schools that have students with specific educational and social vulnerability have reopened across the country, except for Montevideo and the metropolitan area, due to a greater number of cases.
- The last year of high school (baccalaureate) will also be reopened, except for Montevideo and the metropolitan area.
- The distance of two meters between people must be obeyed.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Maximum of 10 people.

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CLASS SIZE

- Special education schools are allowed to open throughout the country, which will be gradually implemented according to the characteristics of each center.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

If you are sick or showing any symptoms of covid-19

→ Stay home



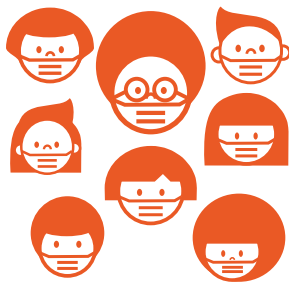
If you go to school



Wash your hands fiercely and frequently



Avoid crowds



Prefer small classes



ASPECTS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The return to face-to-face classes after a long period of social isolation is a complex endeavor. Students come from different contexts, from those children who devoted many hours to their learning, having received personalized support and access to different teaching materials, to those who had no opportunity to study during that time, due to the lack of family or even psychic conditions. These learning gaps must be addressed when returning to school, preventing students from becoming demotivated.

In relation to students with disabilities, the first aspect to be considered is a consistent production of empirical data⁴⁸. Data-based decisions are more strategic. It is important to know the reality of these students during isolation, learning delays and other impacts. Thus, the data serve as a parameter for the development of public inclusion policies.

48 BRAZILIAN NETWORK INFORMATION CENTER. "Accessibility and Technologies: an overview of access and use of Information and Communication Technologies by people with disabilities in Brazil and Latin America". 1. Ed. São Paulo: Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2020. Available at: <https://cetic.br/media/docs/publicacoes/7/20200528104403/estudos-setoriais-acessibilidade-e-tecnologias.pdf>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 06:52 pm.

Upon return, it is necessary to monitor the presence and attendance of children in the school environment. Educational institutions should contact the parents of students who are not attending classes. In view of the eventual loss of family income and the sudden interruption of studies, it is possible that the numbers of school dropouts increase considerably. An early diagnosis and an active search can ensure that many students resume their relationship with the school.

Then, schools must diagnose the learning situation of each of their students and develop strategies to accommodate different needs. Before introducing new curricular content, the guide published by the OECD (2020) mentions that schools should make an intensive review of the content that should have been learned during the period of social isolation.

The UNESCO Issue Note also addresses this issue and recommends a series of strategies and actions to deal with the difference in educational contexts during isolation and possible learning gaps among students. Some of the recommendations are:

- (1)** Ensure a smooth transition from distance learning platforms to classroom delivery;
- (2)** Adjust curriculum and delivery modalities to enable the meeting of key learning objectives for the school year, and to promote the use of more practical approaches to learning such as project-based learning;

- (3)** Rearrange the school calendar based on the curricular priorities of each level of education;

- (4)** implement programmes aimed at students who need to recover or accelerate learning;

- (5)** Adapt the examination/evaluation calendar and content based on a back-to-school learning assessment. This may necessitate the recruitment of volunteer teachers;

- (6)** Ensure professional support is provided for teachers who need to adapt their didactic-pedagogical approaches;

- (7)** Train teachers and students in alternative teaching and learning approaches before, during and after the crisis, in consultation and partnership with teacher-training institutions;

- (8)** Identify strategies and interventions to address learning gaps, especially among vulnerable groups, and to mitigate inequalities that may have been created or exacerbated during confinement. This may include supplementary teaching, tutoring and extracurricular and non-formal learning activities;

- (9)** Determine what to evaluate and how to evaluate;

- (10)** Prioritize the focus on high-stake evaluations and assessments⁴⁹.

49 UNESCO. COVID-19: Education response: Education Sector issue notes, 7.1. April: 2020, p.2. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373275>. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373275> . Accessed: June 11, 2020 at 10:02 am.

Scotland's reopening protocol suggests a blended learning model, that is, part of the classes take place in person and the rest continues to be transmitted remotely. This includes considering the specific needs of children and young people with disabilities and other families in need of support. It also mentions that the reopening plan must have the following characteristics:

BE SAFE

(1) Protect the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people (this includes indirect harms through societal and economic effects) as well as all staff.

BE FAIR AND ETHICAL

(2) Ensure every child has the same opportunity to succeed through their blend of in-school and in-home learning, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

(3) Ability to prioritize learners at key points and/or with specific needs.

BE CLEAR

(4) It must be easy to interpret and understand, and parents, staff and young people should rely on it so that they can plan ahead.

BE REALISTIC

(5) The options are both viable and effective at the level they are applied.

UNICEF recommends that recovery classes be given to students who

may have had difficulties during social isolation and envision the aforementioned possibility of blended learning:

Given the possibility that many schools may not open full time or for all grades, schools may implement 'blended learning' models, a mix of classroom instruction and remote education (self-study through take home exercises, radio, TV or online learning)⁵⁰.

Still, it is possible to take recovery classes for the most vulnerable children during the holidays (CULLINANE; MONTACUTE, 2020).

Another alternative for making up for lost time in isolation is to increase class time by extending hours of study in regular school weeks. A study by the London School of Economics estimated that it would take more than two additional hours a week for a year to make up for each week lost due to the isolation caused by covid-19 (EYLES; GIBBONS; MONTEBRUNO, 2020). Some countries are adopting the strategy of maintaining online instruction for this additional time.

Content review and recovery classes are especially relevant for students with intellectual disabilities. In addition, it is important to remember that all activities

50 UNICEF. What will a return to school during the COVID-19 pandemic look like? What parents need to know about school reopening in the age of coronavirus. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/what-will-return-school-during-covid-19-pandemic-look>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 5 pm.

directly aimed at school inclusion, planning, accessible teaching material offer, provision of caregivers, sign language interpreters and other support professionals must be resumed and strengthened when returning to school. Furthermore, evidence points out that involving families in decisions, including students with disabilities themselves, can be useful in developing more inclusive ways of working⁵¹.

The UK canceled all important exams and assessments to ensure that schools can focus on serving the most vulnerable children and the children of essential workers⁵². The pressure for the syllabus required by classificatory exams can further deepen the differences and injustices in relation to students who did not have the best teaching and learning contexts during social isolation. For this reason, it is interesting to consider the possibility of postponing these tests, allowing schools to have time to resume the content with all students, including using the summer vacation period if necessary.

Although all these documents mentioned bring different approaches, the general idea follows the same direction. We are all experiencing a pandemic unprecedented in history, which will have consequences for students in the short, medium and long term. For the most vulnerable students, these consequences can be even more serious. Therefore, it is necessary that the return takes into account the anxiety involved in this process, the mental health of everybody, and that a subtle, gradual and respectful resumption is made.

The return to face-to-face classes is an opportunity to reevaluate the principles that underlie teaching, give up an approach based on content and pursue individualized, contextualized and inclusive learning objectives. It is more important to preserve students, understand the learning gaps and overcome them, through reinforcement, revision and tutoring strategies, than to overload them with loads of content in the name of "making up for lost time" at such an emotional moment.

51 AINSCOW, Mel. Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. Vol 6, 2020. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 7 pm.

52 UNITED KINGDOM, Government of the. Coronavirus (COVID-19): cancellation of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>. Accessed: June 17, 2020 at 5:09 pm.

CONCLUSION

The global pandemic caused by covid-19 has had profound impacts on all spheres of society. It is common that, in emergency contexts such as the current one, more vulnerable groups, as people with disabilities, are more affected. According to the World Health Organization, 15% of the world's population has some type of disability. This corresponds to more than 1 billion people on the planet.

The purpose of this research is to support managers responsible for planning and implementing education public policies. This involves actions related to the period of social isolation, as well as the reopening of schools. The information sources were a network of 45 foreign experts, protocols from 23 countries and several documents from international organizations, all related to inclusive education during the pandemic period.

Public policies directed to people with disabilities have always involved important intersections and tensions between the areas of Education and Health. In times of pandemic and social isolation, such relationships become even more intense, and demand an intersectoral and conciliatory view by public managers.

The first chapter of the research explores the broad set of rights that must be guaranteed to people with disabilities, regardless of the severity of the moment we face, as the right to information, health and education. In addition, the report stressed the importance of continuing formal

education, as interruptions can cause setbacks in learning.

The second chapter of the document deepens considerations about the education of students with disabilities during the period of social isolation. In this sense, it is recommended that the bond between schools and families and close monitoring of student development are maintained. Educators, support teachers and school managers need to continue to work together to promote inclusive education, especially when distance learning models are adopted. All class and support materials must be accessible to students with disabilities and designed according to their specificities. Building inclusive online education can be a great opportunity to rebuild the ways of teaching and learning.

In its third chapter, the research describes the recommendations offered by international protocols on the school reopening. The public policies mentioned by them were divided into three main areas: **(1)** returning criteria; **(2)** sanitation issues, and **(3)** social distancing. As for the first area, the research points out that there was a diversity of positions regarding the return of students with disabilities to educational institutions. The foreign experts consulted consider that, although certain children and adolescents with disabilities belong to groups at risk for covid-19, the medical report of disability should not be accepted as a justification for these students to be left behind.

It is important to clarify that there is no automatic correlation between disability and risk. The analysis must be made on a case-by-case basis and the decision must involve schools, medical staff, families and students. Students, teachers and staff with symptoms of covid-19 or those with family members who are symptomatic, have been diagnosed with the disease or are awaiting test results may not return. In the case of students prevented from returning to school, it is necessary to establish measures to ensure the continuity of their learning and their socialization with teachers and colleagues. In the second area, the report presents the main hygiene measures that have been adopted around the world, such as washing hands, disinfecting surfaces and wearing masks. All caregivers, sign language interpreters and other support professionals for students with disabilities can also return, as long as they follow the pre-established hygiene measures. In the third area, the research points out that social distancing has been adopted by many countries. In this sense, the main strategies were to reduce the size of classes, schedule entry and exit times, and restrict agglomerations. It is worth mentioning that these professionals must be counted in the process of resizing classes.

As for teaching and learning aspects during the school reopening period, the report addresses the need to monitor the presence and attendance of students with disabilities, in order to avoid an increase in school dropout. The research also points out that it is important to make a diagnostic assessment of what learning was like

during isolation and, based on the results, create different strategies to reduce possible gaps. Among them, it is worth noting after-hours tutoring, distance learning measures, extra classes during school holidays and individual monitoring of students with disabilities.

The research leads us to conclude that public policies aimed at the education of students with disabilities during the covid-19 pandemic period need to consider that, regardless of the complexity of the moment we are going through, the preservation of the right to education must be the main assumption for the creation of any measures and procedures. Public administrators, school principals and educators have the role of ensuring that students with disabilities are not excluded, discouraged or do not drop out of school. It is everyone's responsibility to avoid discriminatory consequences and to prevent the deepening of inequalities. On the other hand, we may be faced with the opportunity to develop more critical, empathetic citizens capable of being protagonists in the process of building a society governed by equity.

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"The profound complexity resulting from the pandemic context does not change, in any way, the fact that children and adolescents with disabilities have the right to quality education."

Rodrigo Hübner Mendes

Achievement



Research support



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