

## **THE CENDI MODEL OF THE 'LANDANDFREEDOM' PEOPLE'S FRONT: THIRTY YEARS OF LESSONS IN THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN NUEVOLEÓN, MEXICO**

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The article reveals the conceptual and pedagogical basis of the CENDI model, revealing the importance of early experiences for the all-round development and personality of the child.

**Keywords:** child development, family preparation, principles of quality education, harmonious development and learning.

Currently, there are 13 Child Development Centres, CENDIs, in 5 municipalities of Nuevo León and the model has been replicated in more than 15 states of the Mexican Republic, reaching a coverage of just over 16,000 children in marginalized urban areas. Through their mission, CENDIs have contributed to the social transformation of vulnerable sectors of the population in the areas where they are located, with a holistic and cultural approach that includes the child, the educator, the family and the community.

The CENDIs' mission is to achieve the highest possible level of development for each child in the socio-emotional, cognitive, language, motor development, health, and nutrition dimensions, as well as in the formation of healthy habits. The main way to achieve our mission has been to prepare families to become agents in promoting the development of their children through systematic planned actions, guided by a team composed of doctors, nutritionists, child educators, psychologists and social workers.

The conceptual and pedagogical framework of the CENDI model is based on theoretical concepts that recognize the importance of early experiences in the comprehensive development and personality of the child. The positive interaction of boys and girls with their environment, which is understood as the family and the community, is key to their comprehensive and harmonious development. Among the essential pedagogical principles to which we believe quality education must respond is that of being a process in which children are at the centre as protagonists; that is, that the design and deployment of actions for the benefit of children should be based on their needs and interests, encouraging their active and cooperative participation in a harmonious and affective environment.

One of these pedagogical principles is the active nature of the CENDI in its relations with the family, with a view to influencing the intra-family educational process and achieving the convergence of actions on the training and educa-

tion of children. Another pedagogical principle followed is the linkage between children's education and the environment, since at this period of their life they learn, are shaped, and develop through the experiences they live through and the direct relationships they establish with the people around them and the public space in their community. The principles relating to the protagonist role of children, the participation of the family and the community in the educational process, together with an approach involving comprehensiveness, interdisciplinarity and intersectorality are essential characteristics.

The CENDIs' proposal to promote harmonious development and learning in enhanced environments has been strengthened by a pedagogical programme focusing on play, interaction with the environment, music, art, sport, movement and use of technology to encourage maximum cognitive, physical and socio-emotional development. A central aspect that the CENDIs have been bolstering is the development of the oral language skills that emerge between birth and the age of three as a foundation for literacy and later reading. These concepts are incorporated into the Abecedarian Approach through three basic elements of the educational programme: learning games, conversational reading with a priority on language, provision of enhanced care.

Comprehensive care is organized into five key childcare processes: medical, nutritional, pedagogical, psychological, and social work. Each area of care is led by a specialist who works daily in an interdisciplinary manner, monitoring and following up on the child's development, while guiding the family through systematic actions. These professionals form a Technical Council, responsible for ensuring the optimal development of the child.

Key processes include social work: foster the integration of Cendis, families and communities; health: achieve an optimal state of health; psychology: encourage children's harmonious development and emotional balance; pedagogy: encourage children's physical, affective, social and cognitive development; nutrition: achieve optimal nutrition for children through adequate nourishment. Early education represent the key that opens the doors to the future and helps to reduce social inequalities. Comprehensive quality care is a powerful equalizer to foster the human, social and economic development of the individual, and his/her family and community and helps to reverse the vicious circle of poverty.

The FPTyL's CENDIs offer their services in two forms of care. The service is aimed at the care and education of children of working mothers who live mainly in marginalized communities and to whom 70% of the places are granted; 15% of the places are offered to the children of our own workers as a work benefit and the other 15% is allocated to the general population, those who do not necessarily live in marginalized communities and who choose the service for its high quality. CENDIs follow an inclusive policy of quality and provide their coverage through the 'Learning Together' Programme, which targets families with children from zero to six years of age living in the communities adjacent to the CENDIs.

Our institution promotes the healthy and effective transition of children. CENDI regulations provide for two education programmes according to the age of the child. The Early Education programme (45 days to 3 years) aims to contribute to the harmonious formation and balanced and healthy development of children during the years of early childhood, thus laying the foundations and premises for the qualities and basic skills of this stage of development, which is characterized by the high plasticity of the brain and the formation of neural networks. The Preschool Education programme (3 to 6 years) provides six training fields: Language and communication, mathematical thinking, personal and social development, physical development and health, artistic expression and appreciation, and exploration and knowledge of the world; developed in fifty skills, which together determine the maturation and preparation of the child for the next level of education and for subsequent learning.

These official programmes have been enhanced over the years through new strategies such as: co-curricular programmes, such as English and computer skills, drawing and modelling, music and dancing, physical education, yoga and karate, which provide these children with the opportunity to penetrate areas of their personal preparation that are not commonly available due to financial limitations. There are also educational reinforcement programmes aimed at addressing critical factors in development, such as adaptation, weaning, early stimulation, language therapy, induction to primary school, and others. Together with these educational programmes, it was deemed necessary to devise extracurricular programmes that are aimed at parents and the community, with the aim of positively affecting the care that they are able to provide to minors enrolled in child development centres, and attempt to reverse negative social conditions that affect the surrounding environment where these children develop.

Currently, the CENDI model is being expanded to also offer comprehensive primary education services (from 6 to 12 years), with great success in learning outcomes. To date, the CENDIs have received 45 quality awards, including the National Quality Award, the Ibero-American Quality Award and the Asia-Pacific International Quality Award, and in 2013 they were selected by the OECD, in its inventory of best practices in early childhood care, as part of the 'Innovative Learning Environment Project' (ILE). In summary, the CENDIs are evidence of the social transformation of vulnerable sectors of the population through the holistic and cultural approach, which includes children, educators, families and community, to contribute to a more just and equitable society.



#### Bibliography

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