



Original article

## **An approach to a pedagogy of the older sibling: Informal learning and affective bonds in family contexts**



**Aproximación a una pedagogía del hermano mayor. Aprendizajes informales y vínculos afectivos en contextos familiares**

**Uma abordagem para a pedagogia do irmão mais velho: aprendizagem informal e laços afetivos em contextos familiares**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The research examined social and educational processes within the family, with an emphasis on sibling socialization and informal pedagogy. Its general objective was to conceive a pedagogical model of the elder brother that explains his pedagogical, affective and culturally significant functions in the family. A domestic ethnographic design, grounded in the dialectical-materialist method, was employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and analysis of family documents, field notes, genealogy, and mapping of domestic space. The study ethnographically characterizes the family context and proposes a model that highlights the older sibling as a pedagogical mediator, integrating teaching, emotional support, and sibling regulation, with potential as an educational strategy complementary to schooling. Its qualitative nature, focused on functional families and the figure of the older brother, limits generalizability and calls for future research on gender, generation and the diversity of sibling contexts.

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**Keywords:** family education; domestic ethnography; older brother; pedagogical model; fraternal pedagogy; socialization.

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## RESUMEN

La investigación examinó los procesos sociales y educativos en el ámbito familiar, con énfasis en la socialización fraterna y la pedagogía informal entre hermanos. Su objetivo general fue concebir un modelo pedagógico del hermano mayor que explique sus funciones pedagógicas, afectivas y culturalmente significativas en la familia. Se aplicó un diseño etnográfico doméstico, sustentado en el método dialéctico-materialista, mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas, grupos focales, observación participante, análisis de documentos familiares, diario de campo, genealogía y mapeo del espacio doméstico. El estudio caracteriza etnográficamente el contexto familiar y propone un modelo que evidencia al hermano mayor como mediador pedagógico, integrando enseñanza, cuidado emocional y regulación fraterna, con potencial como estrategia educativa complementaria a la escuela. Su carácter cualitativo, centrado en familias funcionales y en la figura del hermano mayor, restringe la generalización y demanda investigaciones futuras sobre género, generación y diversidad de contextos fraternales.

**Palabras clave:** educación familiar; etnografía doméstica; hermano mayor; modelo pedagógico; pedagogía fraterna; socialización.

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## RESUMO

Esta pesquisa examinou os processos sociais e educacionais dentro da família, com ênfase na socialização entre irmãos e na pedagogia informal. Seu objetivo geral foi desenvolver um modelo pedagógico do irmão mais velho que explique suas funções pedagógicas, afetivas e culturalmente significativas dentro da família. Foi empregado um delineamento etnográfico doméstico, fundamentado no método dialéctico-materialista, utilizando entrevistas semiestructuradas, grupos focais, observação participante, análise de documentos familiares, notas de campo, genealogia e mapeamento do espaço doméstico. O estudo caracteriza etnograficamente o contexto familiar e propõe um modelo que destaca o irmão mais velho como mediador pedagógico, integrando ensino, cuidado emocional e regulação entre irmãos, com potencial como estratégia educacional

complementar à escolarização. Sua natureza qualitativa, focada em famílias funcionais e na figura do irmão mais velho, limita a generalização e aponta para a necessidade de pesquisas futuras sobre gênero, geração e a diversidade de contextos fraternos.

**Palavras-chave:** educação familiar; etnografia doméstica; irmão mais velho; modelo pedagógico; pedagogia fraterna; socialização.

*For my brother Berto (in memoriam).  
There is a sun shining behind the old guásimo tree in the yard  
where you taught me to count to 10.  
Your pedagogy was always a path, a door without locks.*

## INTRODUCTION

Studies on the impact of homeschooling as a result of sibling hierarchies are scarce in the specialized literature. These informal teaching practices (spontaneous and non-institutionalized) are monopolized by educational systems, starting with the curriculum, and promoted by the teacher as a singular agent and, in many cases, the possessor (in their personal belief) of the "only truth" about what should and should not be learned. However, several authors acknowledge that there is a significant disconnect between the proposed curriculum, what is taught, and what is actually learned (Mena Lorenzo & Mena Lorenzo, 2019), which is why the desired holistic education is not achieved.

In families with multiple children, especially in supportive and intergenerational environments, unique and informal educational processes emerge and develop where younger children model their behavior through observation, the internalization of values, and the transmission of a family legacy that translates into a culture of good behavior and appropriate communication. These criteria have been scientifically supported by various authors: Barbero Aguado *et al.* (2024); Burke and Lee (2020); Martínez Chairez *et al.* (2020); Qiu and Moll (2022), from a sociological or psychological perspective, without delving deeply into their reasoning from a pedagogical standpoint, thus assuming Pedagogy as a science of education.

Other authors recognize that homeschooling among siblings constitutes a primary instance of situated learning (Bogoya Caviedes & Prado Delgado, 2024; Cid García & Marcillo Murillo, 2023; Tapia Martínez & Rodríguez Vela, 2025), where affective bonds, rules of coexistence, language, and social

meanings are consolidated. In this sense, the older brother assumes practices of guidance, accompaniment, correction, encouragement, and protection, shaping a comprehensive formative experience for the younger brother (Benítez *et al.*, 2023; Esteban-Guitart *et al.*, 2024). These practices are, in a way, recognized in key categories of the Historical-Cultural Approach of Vygotsky and Cole (1978) and their followers, who state that the mediating role of culture and symbolic authority has a lasting impact on cognitive-emotional development.

In a singular way, Bernstein (1977) approaches this phenomenon through the theoretical system that he calls invisible pedagogy, assumed as the implicit transmission of criteria, where learning occurs without explicit instructions. However, not always the experiences assimilated by the younger brothers are the result of an inconsistent or misguided teaching. In this sense, Maldonado Díaz (2022) reports that the family regulates communication and the initial sociolinguistic code of children, confirming the intangible weight of this pedagogy. Thus, while visible pedagogy (traditional or modern) operates with logical criteria or structured codes and normalized sequences, invisible pedagogy is sustained in hierarchies and implicit rules, which opens a large field of study in the links between school and family. In a singular way, Bernstein (1977) approaches this phenomenon through the theoretical system that he calls invisible pedagogy, assumed as the implicit transmission of criteria, where learning occurs without explicit instructions. However, not always the experiences assimilated by the younger brothers are the result of an inconsistent or misguided teaching. In this sense, Maldonado Díaz (2022) reports that the family regulates communication and the initial sociolinguistic code of children, confirming the intangible weight of this pedagogy. Thus, while visible pedagogy (traditional or modern) operates with logical criteria or structured codes and normalized sequences, invisible pedagogy is sustained in hierarchies and implicit rules, which opens a large field of study in the links between school and family.

The analyses in the present study point to the need to conceive a pedagogy centered on the educational impact of the older brother, which specifically highlights the active role of children and adolescents in the construction of their learning (Balea Fernández, 2021; Broesch *et al.*, 2021; Zabala Argüelles *et al.*, 2023); and where the focus centered on the figure of the educator is consciously, coherently and controlledly displaced, to signify the transcendental role of the family.

Reinterpreting Cala Peguero (2025), and in order to faithfully characterize, without constraints or superficialities, a model of older brother pedagogy, he is recognized as:

(...) architect of educational paths, builder of methodological alternatives (...) of serene speech, kind manner and attentive listening, of authority with wisdom, without impositions (...) model of humility and passion (...) of pedagogical dialogue as an act of mutual trust (...) tireless educator, generous with knowledge, demanding but humane (...) believing that educating is also an act of love.

This perspective finds vast and consolidated support in precursors of Cuban pedagogy such as José Agustín Caballero (1762-1835), who laid the foundations of philosophical and educational reform; his successor, Félix Varela (1788-1853), who promoted critical thinking and scientific education; José de la Luz y Caballero (1800-1862), who emphasized the study of sciences and human development; and José Martí (1853-1895), the most universal of all Cubans, who integrated education with life, work, and culture, offering a comprehensive vision of educational endeavor.

According to Varela (1788-1853), it is important that "we speak in the language of children; they will understand us." This statement resonates with the principles of the older brother pedagogy, which finds scientific support in peer learning. From constructivist and sociocultural perspectives, it has been demonstrated that peer interaction constitutes a fundamental space for the development of thought, socio-emotional skills, identity, and cultural practices in informal contexts (Lew Levy *et al.*, 2023; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). In this context, the older sibling figure represents an asymmetrical, equal relationship, in which affection and experience are combined to facilitate the transmission of knowledge (Westhoff *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, several studies on primary socialization recognize the influence of sibling bonds on character formation, empathy, and the internalization of social roles (Ricardo Ochoa *et al.*, 2024). According to Muñoz Pérez (2023), the word "fraternal" derives from the Latin "*frater*," meaning brother, referring to a blood tie or a real brotherly relationship. Droeven (2002) reinforces this idea by stating that the term describes a horizontal bond between peers, encompassing everything from solidarity to hostility. From an educational perspective, fraternity has been studied in psychological and behavioral terms, leaving its pedagogical-behavioral dimension and its systematization as an autonomous category unexplored.

According to Brizuela Tornés *et al.* (2021), Cabezas Salmon *et al.* (2023), and Mena Galvez *et al.* (2025), it is crucial to recognize the value of learning outside the formal school system without neglecting the family processes in which siblings develop, which requires unique pedagogical

preparation within the family. This involves avoiding the peripheral way in which the potential of the older brother as an educator, and their roles in accompaniment, supervision, ethical guidance, and knowledge transmission, are treated (Melo Moreno *et al.*, 2020). From a social and cultural perspective, recognizing this pedagogical function implies valuing non-institutionalized educational practices in multigenerational families and supportive communities, demonstrating that the home acts as the primary learning environment beyond the confines of the school.

From a practical perspective, studying the pedagogy of the older brother allows for the design of educational strategies that integrate extracurricular knowledge, enrich teacher training, and promote participatory family education models. It also highlights learning based on affective bonds that strengthen autonomy, empathy, and cooperation. In this sense, the longitudinal observation carried out by the author over more than fifty years, focused on educational practices in school and extracurricular contexts and on diverse family dynamics in everyday Cuban life, reveals that:

- There are no formally valued fraternal educational actions perceived, even though the older brother guides, corrects and accompanies the younger brother in learning situated in the home.
- The affective and hierarchical bonds that structure fraternal interaction and its pedagogical dimension are not fully recognized.
- The everyday transmission of knowledge, values, and norms through family examples and rituals is not systematically made visible.

Therefore, the present study aims to explain the pedagogical manifestations and functions assumed by the older brother in the family environment as a form of informal, affective and culturally significant teaching.

Paradoxically, it's a real challenge, especially when writing in the third person, feeling from the closeness of blood, from nostalgia (that memory of the soul), and from pain. Saint-Exupéry wrote in *The Little Prince* that "what is essential is invisible to the eyes"; Eduardo Galeano said that "we are what we do to change what we are"; and Alberto Cortez sang that "when a friend leaves, an enormous void remains." In these affective memories also dwells a silent pedagogy, called the pedagogy of the older brother (even after he has left).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research adopted the dialectical materialist method, with a qualitative, theoretical-conceptual approach. The analysis focused on the pedagogical manifestations and functions assumed by the older brother within the family environment, considered the study's primary category. A descriptive theoretical design was used, integrating the systematization of academic references with hermeneutic reflection on family experiences, aiming not at empirical generalizations, but rather at the conceptual delimitation of an emerging field.

The study was based on theoretical methods and documentary analysis that allowed the reconstruction of the background of fraternal education, the decomposition and integration of the formative dimensions linked to the role of the older brother, the interpretation of narratives and academic references from a hermeneutic perspective, and the delimitation of related categories in the fields of pedagogy, developmental psychology, non-formal education, and intergenerational cultural transmission, with the purpose of specifying the meanings, tensions, and conceptual gaps associated with this phenomenon.

In addition, empirical methods such as interviews, participant observation, and document analysis were applied, allowing for the coding of units of meaning that inductively led to three categories of sibling learning. The auxiliary techniques employed (family genealogy, mapping of domestic space, and spontaneous document analysis), along with fieldwork, enabled triangulation and a deeper exploration of the findings regarding the pedagogical role of the older brother.

The investigative process progressed from the identification and delimitation of studies on fraternal education and informal pedagogy, towards the systematization and comparative analysis of conceptual frameworks that allowed the recognition of convergences and theoretical gaps, culminating in an integrative synthesis aimed at formulating the educational principles, dimensions and functions that configure a preliminary theoretical model.

The study was based on a reflective ethic that excluded the use of testimonies or sensitive personal data; the author's experiences, accumulated in an intergenerational context, were used exclusively as conceptual examples without empirical value. This delimitation guarantees epistemological transparency by distinguishing between inspiring experiences and scientific evidence.

## RESULTS

### Characterization of the family structure

The data obtained revealed a modified extended and patriarchal family structure, where at least four generations live together or interact closely, with frequent contact and mutual support. Although the main household corresponds to a nuclear structure, the observed practices (such as shared childcare, material exchange and emotional support) constitute an extensive, functional network. Daily authority is exercised within a patriarchal framework, but with significant participation of women in educational and socialization decisions, revealing a matrifocal dynamic embedded in non-hegemonic patriarchal traditions (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Generational characterization of the observed family

Generation	Predominant roles	Relevant observations
First generation	Emotional role models and transmitters of traditional values	High emotional presence and care for grandchildren; shared moral leadership
Second generation	Providers, primary caregivers, household organizers	High employee turnover; all with university degrees; men with decision-making power; high social responsibility
Third generation	Recipients and providers of care, in school or formative stages	Diverse educational backgrounds; some emigrants; strong bond between cousins; high social responsibility
Fourth generation	Primary school stage; recreational activity	Cheerful; studious; respectful

The family case analyzed revealed a dynamic structure where tradition and change coexisted, especially in the organization of caregiving, the symbolic role of women, and educational trajectories—central aspects of socialization and cultural transmission. Authority was negotiated in everyday practices where formal obedience coexisted with implicit agreements, revealing intergenerational tensions. Adult women assumed a decisive role in school and emotional matters, subtly displacing paternal centrality without confronting it, which highlighted contradictions between patriarchal discourse and the matrifocal dynamics that sustained domestic life.

## Emerging categorization

These categories emerged from the discourse and observed scenes, and their subcategories were constructed by theoretical saturation after successive rounds of analysis and triangulation.

### Category 1. The older brother as mediator

Interviews and participant observation revealed that the older brother acts as a mediator between adult authority and younger siblings, both emotionally and educationally. This mediating role, evident in routines, conflicts, and shared tasks, is exercised through horizontal leadership that facilitates the transmission of knowledge and intergenerational bonding within the home.

### Category 2. Forms of affective authority of the older brother

Interviews and field notes showed that the older brother's authority was based not on normative control, but on emotional closeness, example, and shared experience. This hybrid figure of the older brother combined expectations of male leadership with forms of affective authority modeled by women, acting as a bridge between conflicting family models and reinforcing his pedagogical influence on sibling life.

### Category 3. Implicit and explicit learning of the younger brother

This category revealed learning through daily life, both intentional and through imitation or spontaneous repetition, demonstrating the key role of non-formal home learning. During participant observation and interviews, scenes were documented where the older brother taught schoolwork and household chores, combining direct instruction and spontaneous modeling in informal contexts.

Table 2 shows the qualitative analysis matrix of the emerging categories on fraternal learning.

**Table 2.** Matrix of qualitative analysis of emerging categories on fraternal learning

<b>Emerging category</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Observable indicators</b>	<b>Empirical illustration</b>	<b>Applied technique</b>
1. The older brother as mediator	a) Mediation between parents and children	The older brother manages rules, communicates norms, and transmits adult expectations to the younger ones.	"Sometimes I explain to him what Mom or Dad mean."	Interview
	b) Assistance with daily tasks	Active participation in routines: schoolwork, eating, hygiene, organization of materials.	"He helps me pack my backpack and sometimes explains the exercises to me."	Participant observation
2. Forms of affective authority of the older brother	a) Relational authority	The older brother exercises leadership through affection, experience, and trust, rather than through imposition.	"With him I'm not afraid of making mistakes, because he explains things to me and challenges me to do them right."	Interview
	b) Emotional regulation	Ability to contain, calm or mediate conflicts or frustrations without violence.	"When I get upset, he takes me to the patio and tells me to take a deep breath."	Field notes (situation of conflict between siblings)

3. Implicit and explicit learning as a result of the older sibling's educational intervention	a) Spontaneous modeling	Learning by observation or imitation of the older brother's actions, without formal teaching.	"In agricultural work he uses the tools silently and the rest of us imitate him."	Participant observation
	b) Intentional teaching	Direct transmission of knowledge, skills or rules by the older brother.	"First he told me to watch how it's done, then he gave me the opportunity to do it, even to make mistakes without scolding me."	Observation of domestic activity
	c) Relational and care learning	Participation of the older brother in emotional or physical care activities, modeling empathetic behaviors.	"He taught me how to care for pets, and he taught me how to count to 10."	Participant observation /Interview

The matrix shows that the role of the older brother transcends daily companionship, becoming a relevant pedagogical agent within the domestic dynamic. The observed interactions reveal a circulation of knowledge, affections, and norms that reflect the educational nature of the sibling bond in rural contexts.

### Complementary results of auxiliary techniques

Family genealogy revealed the historical persistence of this figure, with transformations in the way he exercised authority across generations; mapping the domestic space made visible the everyday places where he exerted his formative influence, and spontaneous documentary analysis provided a symbolic and affective reading of his value within the relational framework. From this triangulation and the ethnographic work, categories emerged that characterize the pedagogical behavior of the eldest brother in the studied family context:

1. Mediator between adult authority and minors, helping to understand rules, routines and resolve conflicts without imposing.
2. Their authority is affective, based on trust, example and closeness rather than hierarchies.
3. It alternates intentional teaching and spontaneous modeling, transmitting key domestic learning for development.
4. Their presence in central spaces of the home reinforces their visibility and their everyday educational role.
5. It acts as a bridge between family models, integrating male leadership and female care practices.
6. It is symbolically recognized as a reference point in family stories and materials, legitimizing its informal educational function.

## DISCUSSION

The theoretical systematization and the results of applying the domestic ethnographic design allowed us to explain the pedagogical manifestations and functions assumed by the older brother in the family environment as a form of informal, affective, and culturally significant teaching. Thus, the pedagogy of the older brother is conceived according to the following logical-conceptual structure.

### Definition and purpose

The older sibling pedagogy conceives of the systematization of learning and bonds that emerge within the sibling dynamic, highlighting the older sibling's role as a mediator of experiences, an agent of socialization, and an emotional reference point. This model proposes a logical-conceptual framework that allows us to understand how informal teaching and care practices within the family shape a fraternal formative process that transcends the domestic sphere, contributing to the development of social, emotional, and educational competencies.

### Theoretical basis

The pedagogy of the older brother is understood as a process of fraternal socialization that organizes educational dynamics within the family, shaping a model with the potential to contribute to the holistic development of younger children at home. In this context, the older brother is seen as a central pedagogical agent, whose role unfolds within a relational framework characterized by accompaniment, affective authority, and the transmission of both implicit and explicit learning. These

practices correspond to the classic functions of educational action: instruction, teaching, and education.

From the perspective of social mediation proposed by Vygotsky and Cole (1978), older siblings act as developmental agents by facilitating the acquisition of psychological tools such as language, symbolic thought, self-regulation, and the internalization of social norms. Unlike parental figures, their influence is exerted on a level of generational closeness, which fosters a horizontal mediation process based on dialogue, example, and affective proximity.

This mediation takes place through instruction, understood as the daily (and guided) transmission of unstructured and uncertified practical content, rules of coexistence, and social skills that occur outside the school setting. In this dynamic, the older brother serves as a legitimate source of situated knowledge; they integrate both explicit and tacit learning within the framework of family life, thus shaping a fraternal pedagogy that is not institutionalized but profoundly formative.

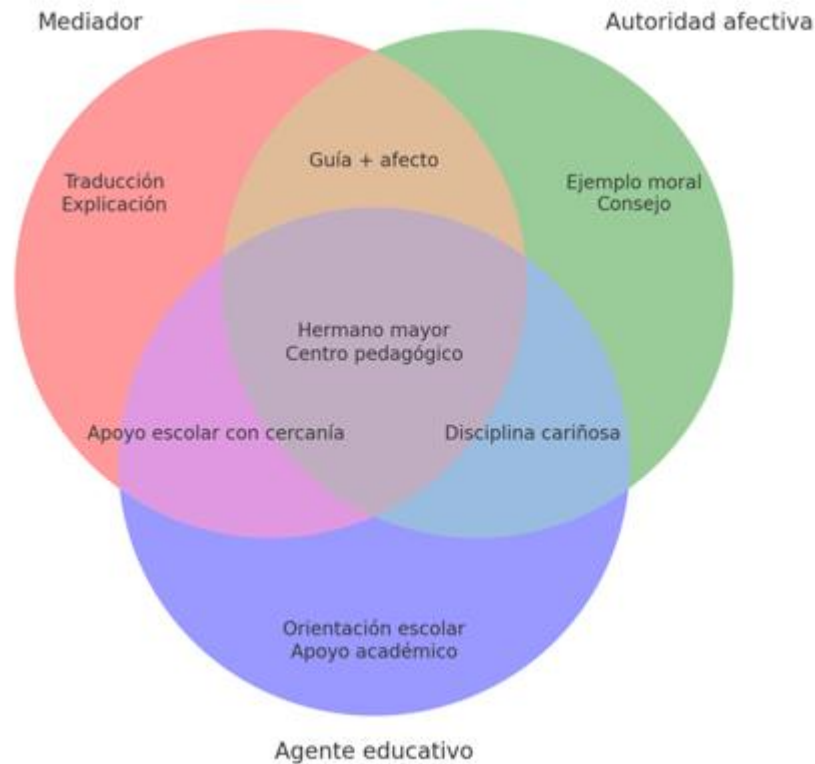
However, this model is most effective in cohesive and stable families, where older siblings can play educational roles that complement and reinforce the work of adults. In contrast, in dysfunctional or fragmented contexts, sibling learning can be weakened or limited in its educational scope.

Teaching, understood as an intentional process of accompaniment, is expressed in the guidance that older siblings provide to younger ones in tackling new or complex tasks. This accompaniment constitutes a true scaffolding that activates the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), allowing learning to occur in interactions mediated by affection and fraternal closeness. Thus, the category of "older brother as mediator" aligns directly with the pedagogical function of teaching. From a critical perspective, a certain tendency toward deschooling is recognized as a way to liberate learning from institutional control.

From a functionalist perspective, the model can also be interpreted as a contribution of the family to the regulation of social order. Within this framework, the older sibling acts as a normative transmitter, ensuring the continuity of values and behavioral patterns. This distinguishes it from the rigid control or competitive rivalry models observed in dysfunctional contexts.

Education, conceived as a holistic formative process, is embodied in the forms of affective authority that characterize fraternal leadership. This is not a coercive authority, but rather a relational and guiding one, which promotes values, moral identity, and emotional regulation (Figure 1). In this

sense, the education provided by the older brother reinforces affective bonds, legitimizes intergenerational transmission, and strengthens the holistic development of younger siblings. Furthermore, the older sibling frequently assumes the roles of guide, role model, and social mediator in a daily pedagogy that transmits values, norms, and relational skills.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of the pedagogical role of the older brother

From this perspective, it is essential that the model provide a context that enhances the educability of the younger sibling and fosters the development of the older sibling. This transition can only be interpreted as a process; that is, through stages that generate personal growth and development. It is therefore important to clarify that the pedagogical model for the older sibling considers the home as a developmental context. This type of context is defined by Clemente Estevan and Hernández Blasi (2005) as: "Each and every environment, with its physical and social characteristics, that frames and surrounds human behavioral change (...) the other people who accompany, collaborate, and participate in each individual change are also considered integral and fundamental parts of the developmental contexts" (p. 19).

From this perspective, the dialectical nature of relationships within the family context strengthens mutual learning and the development of socio-emotional skills, forming a dynamic pedagogical microstructure based on imitation, interaction, and co-construction of meanings. Based on this dynamic, the practices of the older brother are articulated in interrelated dimensions that define their role as mediator, affective authority, and informal educational agent, integrating instruction, teaching, and education, operationalizing their educational capacity, and enhancing the educability of the younger sibling in everyday life.

### **Core dimensions of the pedagogical model**

#### Mediator

The older sibling facilitates rules, feelings, and conflict resolution, acting as a bridge between parental authority and the experiences of younger siblings. This role involves managing tensions and differences sensitively, promoting practical learning in peaceful problem-solving and the negotiation of meaning.

#### Affective authority

Unlike the formal authority of parents, the authority of an older brother is based on emotional closeness and the recognition of their peers. It is exercised horizontally, based on everyday example, establishing the older sibling as a role model whose legitimacy rests on the consistency between their words and actions.

#### Informal educational agent

The older brother transmits values, habits, and everyday knowledge, teaching self-care, household responsibilities, study habits, games, and social skills. This transmission occurs spontaneously, practically, and in context, reinforcing the instruction-teaching-education triad within a pedagogically meaningful environment.

### **Contextual axes of the pedagogical model**

The contextual axis constitutes a framework of the family environment—temporal and spatial—that conditions the older sibling's educational actions, determining where, when, and under what circumstances good practices of mediation, affective authority, and the transmission of informal

knowledge are deployed. The contextual axes encompass the various factors or areas of the family context that structure the effectiveness of this pedagogical action. In this model, these axes are: temporality, family structure, and domestic and practical space.

### Temporality

It defines the evolution of the older sibling's role (from recipient of care, to mediator of rules and emotions, to educator) according to age and the stage of family and personal development. It allows for linking increasing responsibilities with pedagogical legitimacy.

### Family structure

It describes how family structure (patriarchal, matrifocal, etc.) influences authority, leadership, and mediation. It reinforces the idea that sibling learning does not occur in a vacuum, but is mediated by implicit norms and hierarchies.

### Domestic and practical space

It points out that learning takes place in everyday, non-school settings. It highlights "domesticity" as an everyday pedagogical laboratory, where learning is situated, practical, and socially meaningful.

## **Pedagogical mechanisms of the model**

Pedagogical mechanisms are informal strategies through which the older brother exerts educational influence. They operate within the context of the home and daily life, without formal lesson planning, but with a strong impact on the development of values, skills, knowledge, and cultural and emotional dispositions. Their nature is relational, situated, and affective, relying on daily interaction, mutual observation, and shared participation.

The main mechanisms are:

1. Everyday scaffolding: informal formative support through gestures, routines and daily example, guiding the child without a structured plan.
2. Observational learning: imitation and modeling; the child learns by observing the behaviors, attitudes, and values of the adult.

3. Emotional mediation: affective accompaniment; the older brother regulates tensions and strengthens bonds, acting as a bridge between the younger one and the adult world.
4. Fraternal culture: transmission of family practices, customs, rituals and values through daily activities.
5. Family cultural capital: availability and circulation of symbolic resources that facilitate learning through objects, language and shared practices.
6. Guided domestic participation: active integration of the child in household tasks, under the guidance of the older sibling, modeling ways of doing and living together.

These mechanisms demonstrate how the older sibling's influence manifests in daily life, transforming everyday interactions into learning opportunities. In this way, the model reflects the capacity of sibling relationships to foster socio-emotional and cultural development within the home.

### **Guiding principles of the older brother's pedagogical approach**

The older brother exerts his educational influence following guiding principles that articulate mediation, accompaniment, and transmission of knowledge within the family context. Among these principles, the following stand out:

1. Act as a mediator between the environment and the learning of the younger sibling.
2. Provide scaffolding tailored to the zone of proximal development of the younger sibling.
3. Promote learning through observation and modeling.
4. Encourage the autonomy and confidence of the younger sibling.
5. To regulate the teaching-learning processes effectively.
6. Adapt the educational intervention with sensitivity and flexibility to the needs of the child.
7. To transmit family values, norms and cultural practices.
8. To offer constant emotional and affective support.
9. Teach by example, integrating consistency and shared values.
10. Building horizontal relationships based on empathy and mutual recognition.

Taken together, these principles form a coherent framework for the older sibling's pedagogical role, where mediation, emotional support, and the transmission of knowledge are integrated in a balanced way, promoting the integral development, autonomy, and positive socialization of the younger sibling within the family environment.

## **Contributions and limitations of the older brother pedagogical model**

Sibling learning involves older siblings mediating, modeling, and facilitating knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes, constituting a rich form of informal, everyday socialization characterized by authentic interactions. This model combines instruction, emotional support, observation, and negotiation of meaning, integrating the cognitive and affective dimensions into a holistic and meaningful learning experience. It creates spaces for implicit learning through routines, games, and conversations, highlighting the pedagogical potential of childhood and strengthening family cultural capital.

Among its limitations, it is acknowledged that the quality of learning depends on the cultural and emotional repertoire of the older sibling, whose intervention lacks formal planning and systematicity. It can reproduce authoritarian or inequitable models and overburden the older sibling if responsibilities are not distributed rationally. Recognizing its pedagogical value implies broadening the notion of teaching, but requires family and professional support to mitigate risks and complement, not replace, formal education.

## **Educational implications of the model**

The model prompts reflection on how learning occurs in family contexts, highlighting the importance of recognizing informal teaching, valuing siblings as educational agents, and considering the conditions that promote or limit its effectiveness. These implications allow for more inclusive and socially and emotionally aware pedagogical practices that take into account the child's social and emotional environment. Among the most significant are the following:

1. Appreciation of non-school-based learning forms: recognizes that learning also occurs in everyday and affective contexts, outside the classroom, contributing practical, social and emotional knowledge.
2. Expanding the concept of educator: includes the older brother as a pedagogical agent, broadening the notion of who can facilitate meaningful learning.
3. Integration of family education into the pedagogical discourse: highlights the family as a space for development that complements and reinforces school learning.
4. Preventing inequalities and educational overload: warns about the need to distribute responsibilities equitably and protect the right of all children to a full childhood.
5. Promoting peer mediation: inspiring educational strategies that promote tutoring, cooperative learning and horizontal support, reflecting the dynamics of fraternal teaching.

6. Recognition of pedagogical limits: it points out that not all older siblings are qualified to teach, and that the effectiveness of sibling learning depends on the family context and adequate support.

In summary, the educational implications of this model highlight the richness of sibling learning, while also emphasizing the need for guidance and regulation. Recognizing the pedagogical value of the older sibling involves integrating them as a significant educational resource, ensuring that their influence complements formal education.

From this perspective, it is evident that the home operates as an educational setting where cognitive, emotional, cultural, and ethical dimensions are articulated from an integrative vision of learning (Mena & Mena, 2020). This perspective, which is not widely incorporated into school-centered pedagogical models, finds in the older sibling pedagogy a model for understanding education from a community and affective perspective.

This study in this developmental context reveals that the older sibling plays a significant pedagogical role within the family, acting as a mediator between social norms, everyday knowledge, and the developmental processes of younger siblings. This role integrates instruction, teaching, education, and emotional support, generating both explicit learning, such as assistance with schoolwork and practical skills, and implicit learning, such as self-regulation, solidarity, and conflict resolution.

It is observed that the effectiveness of this mediation depends on the stability and functionality of the family structure, as well as the older sibling's emotional disposition, which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge within a zone of proximal development, without replacing the younger sibling's active role. Sibling learning is configured as a non-formal educational strategy with the potential to complement holistic development in contexts where institutional resources are limited.

However, the study has limitations: its qualitative and exploratory approach restricts the generalizability of the results; the selection of functional families prevents comparison with more complex contexts; and the exclusive focus on the older sibling, without considering the younger sibling's perspective or different sibling relationships, limits a complete understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, variables such as gender and generation require more systematic analysis in future research. In summary, the study confirms the pedagogical value of the older sibling as a formative agent within the home, while also highlighting the need for complementary research

that delves deeper into the diversity of contexts, sibling relationships, and socio-emotional factors that shape this educational practice.

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### **Conflict of interest**

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

### **Authors' contribution**

The authors participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.



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