

EARLY CHILDHOOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Thematic Analysis

Early Childhood Thematic Analysis

This Executive Summary presents a summary of the **Thematic Analysis of Early Childhood** produced as part of the **Alagoas Public Policy Observatory** - an integral product of **Vision Alagoas 2030**, a technical cooperation project between UN-Habitat and the Government of Alagoas.

Actions aimed at early childhood are one of the strategic agendas of the current state administration, which is led by the **Secretariat for Early Childhood (Secria)**.

Secria was created in 2023 with the aim of consolidating a state policy for early childhood, based on the broad and significant trajectory of the **CRIA - Criança Alagoana Program**, implemented since 2015 in an intersectoral manner.

Public policies aimed at the comprehensive care and protection of children from pregnancy to 6 years of age are related to different **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, especially the targets and indicators that deal with health, education, reducing inequalities and eradicating poverty.



The Thematic Analysis considered the current scenario of the early childhood agenda in the state government, as well as the level of maturity of this agenda, with the aim of:

Contribute to strengthening the early childhood agenda in the state of Alagoas, pointing out possible ways to establish a state policy that supports and increases municipal capacities; and

Expand the potential of the Alagoas Public Policy Observatory from an early childhood perspective, mapping out subsidies for its improvement as a tool for monitoring and evaluating state and municipal public policies.

Methodology

The following methodological steps were adopted to prepare the Thematic Analysis:

Documentary analysis

Interviews with relevant actors:

- Secria (Secretariat for Early Childhood in Alagoas);
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and
- Government of the State of Rio Grande do Sul

Benchmarking of platforms and data observatories related to early childhood:

- Early Childhood First, from the Maria Cecilia Souto Vidigal Foundation (FMCSV);
- *Observa*, from the National Early Childhood Network (RNPI);
- Early Childhood Friendly Municipality Index (IMAPI);
- UNICEF Platform + UNICEF Seal; and
- Early Childhood Dashboard of the Government of Rio Grande do Sul

Thematic Analysis Structure

The structure is composed by analysis sections, followed by proposed recommendations for strengthening Secria, centered on four areas that are intrinsically interconnected and essential for consolidating an integrated and sustainable public policy:

1. Management and governance
2. Strategic planning
3. Thematic dimensions
4. Strategies for action



Recommendations for Early Childhood

1. Management and Governance

The **collaborative governance** model should be prioritized in early childhood public policies, with **the state government playing a central role in coordinating, supporting and inducing action.**

This approach takes into account Brazil's federative arrangement, in which responsibility for the provision of most public services, especially social programs, is shared by the federal government, states and municipalities.

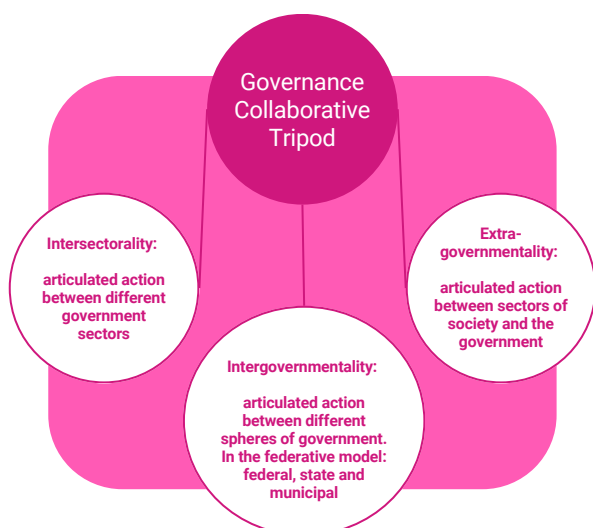
Strengthening this governance is fundamental to facing the "double federative challenge" resulting from the concentration of the implementation of social welfare programs and services in local governments, in a heterogeneous and unequal national territory, with few structural, institutional and financial resources.

The good performance of public policies depends on good coordination and cooperation between the municipalities (the main implementers of actions focused on early childhood) and the federal and state governments.

The collaborative governance model proposed for early childhood comprises a tripod:

- **Intersectorality**
- **Intergovernmentality**
- **Extra-governmentality**

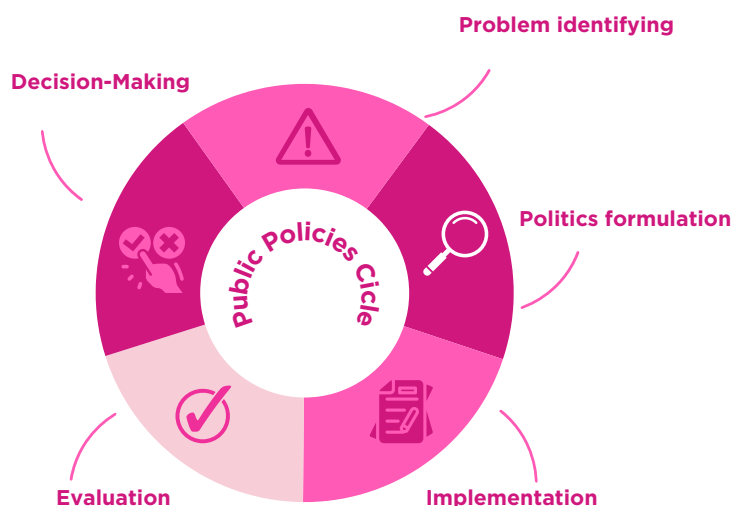
In this model, the creation of **results-based management** mechanisms, based on targets, indicators, monitoring and evaluation processes and organizational learning, is the main requirement for effective governance.



2. Strategic planning

Strategic planning covers the stages of problem identification and policy formulation, with the definition of results, targets, strategies and monitoring indicators.

As such, it is an essential management process and its product can take the form of a State Plan for Early Childhood (PEPI), which guides the implementation of a public policy aimed at the first years of life, over a long-term time horizon.



A successful **monitoring and evaluation process** will make it possible to establish a set of **quantitative or qualitative indicators** for the aspects of the public policy that are to be monitored, evaluated and/or improved.

These indicators can be used at different stages of the public policy management cycle:

- **Effort indicators**, related to the efforts involved in achieving the intended results (inputs, work processes and products generated); and
- **Effect indicators**, associated with the consequences (results and impacts) of the intervention or services offered.

The Thematic Analysis provides a **benchmark of monitoring and evaluation indicators**, built on the analysis of indicators available on monitoring platforms and in specialized publications.

The thematic areas covered by the selected indicators will be presented in the Thematic Dimensions recommendation.

Recommendations for Early Childhood

3. Thematic dimensions

Promoting integral development in early childhood is a multi-sectoral agenda that needs to cover different thematic areas in order to meet the needs and ensure the rights of children at the beginning of their lives.

This development is influenced by factors such as health and nutrition, but also by less obvious dimensions, such as sanitation conditions and racial issues in society.

The proposed indicator framework seeks to address these dimensions, based on the Nurturing Care Framework approach, which synthesizes the **necessary actions into five interrelated and indivisible components**.



Although this conceptual framework considers the influence of the physical and natural environment on child development, the Thematic Analysis suggests incorporating a **sixth thematic dimension**, associated with urban spaces and infrastructures.

The aim is to **pay more attention to the effects that natural and built environments, especially in urban areas, have on the health and development of children at the beginning of their lives**.

4. Strategies for action

The end of Secria's first year of operation in 2023 is a good time to strengthen the early childhood agenda in the state of Alagoas, considering the proposed management and governance model:

- **Intersectorality**, through the **articulation and inclusion of areas** that until then have been more distant from the early childhood agenda, but which are no less important for guaranteeing their rights;
- **Extra-governmentality** and Secria's central role as an **articulator of the different fronts** that are developing in the field of early childhood at state level, boosting and optimizing efforts. For example, the State Network for Early Childhood (REPI-AL), the Parliamentary Front for Early Childhood of the Legislative Assembly of Alagoas and the State Pact for Early Childhood; and
- **Intergovernmentality** and the potential to strengthen the **state's relationship with the municipalities**, given their crucial role in supporting the implementation of early childhood actions, which mostly takes place at the municipal level, with financial, material and human resources.

In this sense, the state government should support municipalities in structuring their own public policies for early childhood, training technical teams to draw up diagnoses and Municipal Plans for Early Childhood (PMPI), and encouraging regionalized actions. Finally, it can also act as the **"guardian" of the Legal Framework for Early Childhood**, ensuring that its guidelines are followed by municipalities.

However, the advancement of Secria's governance potential involves overcoming some challenges, such as:

- **difficulty of articulation** in part of the municipalities, due to political differences; and
- **the availability of financial resources**, which needs to be strengthened internally and then redistributed to municipalities that lack the resources to provide the necessary services.

Summary of Recommendations for Secria


Scope	Recommendation
Governance and Management	Establishing a collaborative governance model between the state and municipalities to enable the implementation of the joint early childhood agenda.
	Reactivate the Intersectoral Strategic and Technical Committees and ensure their functioning.
	Ensure the participation of other branches of government, legal councils, control bodies and civil society organizations.
	Set up a permanent children's council to incorporate their views and wishes into policy.
	Ensure financial resources for the actions planned, in conjunction with the sectoral areas involved, with provision in the Multi-Year Plan (PPA) and in the budget documents.
	Carry out annual monitoring and assessment of spending on early childhood in the different areas of government.
Strategic Planning	Stage 1) Draw up a diagnosis of early childhood in the state, coordinated by the Intersectoral Committee and with the participation of the municipalities.
	Stage 2) Enable a process of listening to families, caregivers and children, so that their wishes and priorities guide and are incorporated into the PEPI.
	Stage 3) Conduct a mapping of state actions that are already underway and prioritize them based on the results of the diagnosis and listening.
	Stage 4) Build the PEPI's thematic lines of action, goals and strategies in a participatory manner, with a time horizon of at least 10 years.
	Step 5) Establish a PEPI monitoring and evaluation system with indicators for monitoring implementation and evaluating results and targets in the medium and long term.
	Step 6) Draw up a medium-term action plan to implement the strategies set out in the PEPI during the period of the current administration.
Thematic Dimensions	Consider the natural and built environment that surrounds the child and influences their development in a substantial way, especially in the urban environment.
	Consider the priority need to provide basic sanitation infrastructure and access to drinking water for all children.
	To consider the importance of the well-being and mental health of caregivers of children in early childhood, according to the premise that it is fundamental to "care for those who care".
	Prioritize prevention and attention to the different situations of violence against children in early childhood.
Strategies for Action	Working in partnership with municipalities to improve and expand the coverage of services offered to pregnant women, children in early childhood and their caregivers.
	Support municipalities in training frontline teams in order to promote humanized and sensitive early childhood care, especially for the most vulnerable populations.
	Developing mechanisms to evaluate the quality of early childhood services, especially in the areas of health, education and social promotion.
	Encourage municipalities to create and maintain spaces for listening and participation by caregivers and children, as provided for in the Early Childhood Legal Framework.
	Articulate with the legislative branch in order to propose and approve state regulations that have a positive impact on early childhood.
	Articulate with the actors of the Rights Guarantee System in order to structure and implement actions to strengthen local protection networks.


Summary of Recommendations for the Alagoas Public Policy Observatory

The table below presents suggestions for improving the Alagoas Public Policy Observatory, since the platform is a robust tool for monitoring state public policies and can be used in the monitoring and evaluation processes of the state's early childhood policy.

Scope	Recommendation	Reference
Data availability	Add indicators for monitoring and evaluating the state's early childhood policy to the database, to be defined in strategic planning.	---
	Provide disaggregators of the indicators, referring to aspects such as race, color, gender, age, income, among others, when relevant, and whenever possible.	Observa
	Expand the territorial scale of the data made available, including data by district, sub-district or census sectors of the municipalities, when possible.	SEADE Foundation - IPVS Data from IBGE census sectors
Platform features	Provide functionality for selecting multiple municipalities and multiple planning regions, in order to allow comparison of indicators between municipalities and between regions.	Early Childhood First SDG Tracker
	Provide a file with a list of all the indicators and their respective technical sheets (metadata).	Observa
	Provide functionality to generate a report, by municipality, with the possibility of selecting one or more SDGs, showing the municipality's performance in each indicator.	Observa
	Provide functionality for downloading graphics as images.	UNICEF Panel
Data visualization	Display the (most recent) value of the selected indicator highlighted at the top of the data display panel	Observa
	Make it possible to view the indicators and historical evolution on an interactive map of the state. Make it possible to select a municipality using the map, leading to the visualization of the graphs.	UNICEF Panel SDG Tracker Profile of Alagoas Municipalities
	Provide a thermometer graph to read the performance of the indicator in relation to the target, when relevant.	Early Childhood First
	Create a "traffic light" or comparison index, classified in at least three levels, making it possible to read the performance of each indicator in relation to the national average.	Early Childhood First Dashboard RS
	When viewing the data for the state of Alagoas, insert the average for the country and the Northeast region for comparison.	Observa
	In the "Values for the municipalities of Alagoas" visualization graph, insert a horizontal line with the average for the state and, possibly, the average for Brazil and the Northeast.	--

Proposed Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluating Early Childhood Public Policies


	Process and product indicators	Result and impact indicators
Health 	Percentage of pregnant women with 7 or more prenatal consultations (A)	Infant mortality rate
	Proper start of prenatal care (C)	Childhood mortality
	Primary Health Care Coverage (C)	Neonatal mortality
	Immunization coverage	Maternal mortality rate
	Proportion of vaginal deliveries in the Unified Health System (D)	Low birth weight
	Oral health coverage (D)	Preventable deaths in children under 1 year old (C)
	Home visits in the first 10 days of life (C)	Percentage of live births to women aged 10-19 (teenage pregnancy)
	Percentage of coverage by family health teams	Total births to adolescent mothers (up to 19 years old) per year - by color/race (A)
	Proportion of hospitals with a neonatal ICU that have a human milk bank service (C)	Ratio of insufficient prenatal care among black mothers to non-black mothers (H)
		Percentage of premature births (A)
		Congenital syphilis incidence rate (E)
		Dengue incidence rate


	Process and product indicators	Result and impact indicators
Nutrition 	Coverage of information on food consumption (C)	Prevalence of underweight in children under 5 (D)
	Coverage of information on nutritional status (C)	Percentage of overweight for age - 0 to 5 years
	Nutritional monitoring between 0 and 4 years (E)	Percentage of low birth weight children in relation to all live births (A)
	Nutritional monitoring of pregnant women (E)	Percentage of children under 5 who are undernourished
		Proportion of households with food security / insecurity (A)
		Severe household food insecurity (C)
		Exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months (F)
		Continued breastfeeding up to 1 year of age (F)
		Early initiation of breastfeeding (F)
		Nutritional status of pregnant women (E)

Proposed Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluating Early Childhood Public Policies


	Process and product indicators	Result and impact indicators
 Early Learning	Proportion of full-time enrollment in early childhood education (D)	Percentage of children aged 0 to 3 attending childcare
	Percentage of schools with adequate infrastructure	Percentage of children aged 4 to 5 attending pre-schools
	Percentage of schools with materials and infrastructure adapted for students with disabilities	Enrollment in childcare centers - by Color/Race (A)
	Proportion of enrolments in early childhood education centers with outdoor area and playground (D)	Proportion of children with disabilities enrolled, autistic spectrum disorder or high abilities/gifted in common classes in early childhood education (D)
	Proportion of education centers regulated by the education council or body (D)	Percentage of children benefiting from the Continuous Benefit (BPC) who are in school (B)
	Proportion of enrolments in early childhood education centers with basic sanitation (D)	
	Number of students per professional in childcare centers (C)	
	Number of students per professional in pre-schools	
	Qualified teachers in childcare centers (C)	
	Qualified teachers in pre-schools (C)	
	Rate of early childhood education teachers with specific continuing education for this stage (D)	
	Demand for childcare places met (E)	
	Demand for pre-schools places met (E)	

Proposed Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluating Early Childhood Public Policies

	Process and product indicators	Result and impact indicators
 Responsive Care	Coverage of the Happy Child Program (A, E)	Single parenthood in the Unified Registry (E)
	Visits by the Happy Child Program, in relation to the target (D)	Percentage and absolute number of birth records only in mother's name (A)
	Proportion of children aged 0 to 5 with disabilities benefiting from the BPC included in the Happy Child Program (D)	Percentage of children up to 1 year of age with civil registration, out of all live births live births (B)
	Availability of children's books at home (F)	Mental health of caregivers (F)
	Availability of toys at home home (F)	Engaging caregivers in early stimulation activities (F)
		Positive discipline practices (F)
		Percentage of children aged 0-59 months left in the care of another child under the age of 10 for more than an hour, at least once in the last week (F)

	Process and product indicators	Result and impact indicators
 Safety and Protection	Coverage of the Bolsa Família Program (C)	Poverty monetary child poverty (B)
	Children from 0 to 6 years old who are not beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Program and are registered with the Unified Registry (A)	Proportion of children aged 0 to 5 benefiting from the Bolsa Família Program (D)
	People covered by Social Assistance Reference Centers (CRAS) (D)	Percentage of extremely poor families in the Unified Registry
	PAIF coverage (B)	Total number of children and adolescents with some form of privation (B)
	Host Family Service Execution Units (A)	Proportion of of children aged 0 to 5 in a household situation of poverty (D)
	Notifications of cases of violence against children aged 0 to 4 (A)	Number of of children aged 0 to 6 in foster care (D)
	Office of Child's Issues coverage (D)	Rate of lethal and intentional violent crimes
		Under-5 mortality rate due to aggression (D)
		Under-5 mortality rate due to accidental causes (D)

Proposed Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluating Early Childhood Public Policies

	Process and product indicators	Result and impact indicators
 Space and Urban Infrastructure	Proportion of children in households with access to basic sanitation	Air pollution (C)
	Percentage of residents in households with poor sewage disposal (B)	Percentage of households in slums
	Percentage of public basic education schools with access to mains water (B)	Percentage of the population of substandard settlements that is black
	Percentage of public basic education schools that have access to sewage via the public network (B)	Hospitalization rate for diseases related to inadequate environmental sanitation
	Percentage of the population served by a water supply service	Rate of hospitalizations of children under 5 years of age due to land transport accidents (D)
	Access to domestic waste collection service (G)	Under-5 mortality rate due to land transport accidents (D)
	Green area per inhabitant (H)	Number of traffic deaths per 10,000 inhabitants (G)
	Street tree planting (H)	Number of pedestrian accidents per 10,000 inhabitants (G)
	Accessibility of sidewalks (G)	Hospitalizations of children aged 0 to 4 due to acute respiratory infection (H)
	Population near cycle paths (I)	Hospitalizations of children aged 0 to 4 due to acute diarrheal diseases (H)
	Proximity to public transport (G)	Percentage of households in risk areas (G)
	Housing deficit (G)	
	Households with internet access (G)	

A Early Childhood First - <https://primeirainfanciaprimeiro.fmcsv.org.br>

B UNICEF Panel - <https://www.unicef.org/brazil/painel-de-dados>

C IMAPI - <https://imapi.org>

D Observa - <https://rnpiobserva.org.br>

E RS Dashboard - <https://primeirainfancia.rs.gov.br/paginas/inicial>

F Countdown to 2030 - <https://data.unicef.org/countdown-2030>

G Guide to Indicators for Public Management -

https://www.cidadessustentaveis.org.br/arquivos/Publicacoes/Guia_de_Indicadores_para_a_Gestao_Publica.pdf

H Social Network for Fair and Sustainable Cities - <https://www.countdown2030.org/early-childhood-development-profiles>

I Early Childhood Friendly Neighborhoods - <https://bernardvanleer.org/pt-br/publications-reports/guias-para-o-desenvolvimento-de-bairros-amigaveis-a-primeira-infancia-bapis>

* Alagoas Public Policy Observatory - <https://observatorio.al.gov.br/> (blue highlight)

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