

Racial quota policy in Early Childhood Education at Pedro II school: trajectory and meanings of an affirmative action¹

*Política de cotas raciais na Educação Infantil do Colégio Pedro II:
trajetória e significados de uma ação afirmativa*

*Política de cuotas raciales en la Educación Infantil del Colegio Pedro II:
trayectoria y significados de una acción afirmativa*

Gabriela dos Santos Coutinho²
Colégio Pedro II

Suzana dos Santos Barbosa³
Colégio Pedro II

Rosana Rodrigues Heringer⁴
Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

Dyego de Oliveira Arruda⁵
Federal Center for Technological Education Celso Suckow da Fonseca

Abstract: This article aims to describe and analyze the process of implementation of racial quotas in Early Childhood Education at Colégio Pedro II, a traditional federal institution located in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Established in 2025, due to the work of the Center for Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Studies of the institution, with the support of the Rectory and the Pro-Rectory of Education, this affirmative policy promoted the entry, that year, of 36 black students aged between 3 and 4 years, representing 50% of entrants in the period. This initiative represented a milestone for Colégio Pedro II and offers a model that can be adopted by other public educational institutions of recognized quality, which, due to the high demand, carry out selective processes for admission. These institutions may eventually be inspired by this experience to reflect and implement policies to promote racial equity in their student admission processes. Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative interpretivist approach, structured as a case study, based on bibliographic and documentary research and analysis of institutional data, articulating NEABI/CPII records and official documents.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education; Basic Education; Racial quotas; Colegio Pedro II.

¹ Translated by Thais Heringer Ramos. E-mail: thaisherigerramos@gmail.com.

² Master in ethnic-racial relations from Cefet / RJ. Teacher at Colégio Pedro II (CPII), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil. E-mail: gabriela.gsc@gmail.com; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/2589327720958166>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8232-7186>.

³ Master in Geography from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Teacher at Colégio Pedro II (CPII), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil. E-mail: barbosa.suzana@gmail.com; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8945445302830250>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5479-3373>.

⁴ PhD in Sociology from IUPERJ. Professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil. E-mail: rosana.heringer@gmail.com; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/9066311393158506>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9033-2823>.

⁵ PhD in Organization Administration from USP. Professor at the Federal Center for Technological Education Celso Suckow da Fonseca (Cefet/RJ), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil. E-mail: dyego.arruda@gmail.com; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5222976964204691>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9514-284X>.

Resumo: Este artigo objetiva descrever e analisar o processo de implementação de cotas raciais na Educação Infantil do Colégio Pedro II, tradicional instituição federal localizada no estado do Rio de Janeiro. Instituída em 2025, devido ao trabalho do Núcleo de Estudos Afro-brasileiros e Indígenas da instituição, com o apoio da Reitoria e da Pró-reitoria de Ensino, essa política afirmativa promoveu o ingresso, nesse ano, de 36 estudantes negros com idades entre 3 e 4 anos, representando 50% dos ingressantes no período. Tal iniciativa representou um marco para o Colégio Pedro II e oferece um modelo passível de adoção por outras instituições educacionais públicas de reconhecida qualidade, que, em razão da alta demanda, realizam processos seletivos para ingresso. Essas instituições, eventualmente, poderão se inspirar nesta experiência para refletir e implementar políticas de promoção da equidade racial em seus processos de admissão de estudantes. Metodologicamente, a pesquisa adota abordagem qualitativa interpretativista, estruturada como estudo de caso, baseada em levantamento bibliográfico, documental e análise de dados institucionais, articulando registros do NEABI/CPII e documentos oficiais.

Palavras-chave: Educação Infantil; Educação Básica; Cotas raciais; Colégio Pedro II.

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo describir y analizar el proceso de implementación de cuotas raciales en la Educación Infantil del Colegio Pedro II, una institución federal tradicional ubicada en el estado de Río de Janeiro. Creada en 2025, gracias al trabajo del Centro de Estudios Afrobrasileños e Indígenas de la institución, con el apoyo de la Rectoría y de la Pro-rectoría de Enseñanza, esta política de acción afirmativa promovió el ingreso, ese año, de 36 estudiantes negros entre 3 y 4 años, lo que representa el 50% de los ingresados en el período. Esta iniciativa representó un marco para el Colegio Pedro II y ofrece un modelo que puede ser adoptado por otras instituciones educativas públicas de reconocida calidad, que, debido a la alta demanda, realizan procesos selectivos de admisión. Estas instituciones podrían eventualmente inspirarse en esta experiencia para reflexionar e implementar políticas que promuevan la equidad racial en sus procesos de admisión de estudiantes. Metodológicamente, la investigación adopta un enfoque cualitativo interpretativo, estructurado como un estudio de caso, basado en la investigación bibliográfica y documental y en el análisis de datos institucionales, articulando registros del NEABI/CPII y documentos oficiales.

Palabras clave: Educación Infantil; Educación Básica; Cuotas raciales; Colegio Pedro II.

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Introduction

Early Childhood Education, the first stage of Basic Education, has gained increasing attention in Brazilian public policies, especially after the promulgation of constitutional amendments (EC) No. 53, of December 19, 2006 and No. 59, of November 11, 2009, and the National Education Plan (PNE) 2014–2024, regulated by Law No. 13,005/2014.

In short, EC No. 53 included Early Childhood Education in the federal funding established through the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education (Fundeb) – which replaced the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Elementary

Education (Fundef), in force from 1996 to 2006, with funding only for elementary education –, thus contributing to the expansion of access and improvement of the quality of Early Childhood Education in Brazilian educational establishments. In addition, this update of the Federal Constitution of 1988 also reinforced the responsibility of municipalities for kindergartens and preschools.

EC No. 59, on the other hand, directly impacted Early Childhood Education in terms of compulsory enrollment and expansion of access. In paragraph II of Article 208 of the Magna Carta it was determined that the state's duty to education would be fulfilled by guaranteeing Early Childhood Education, in kindergarten and preschool, to children up to five years of age. This point, in particular, reveals that Early Childhood Education is a guaranteed right and a duty of the state, even before the mandatory age of Education, which begins at the age of four.

In this vein, the PNE 2014-2024 presented the goal of “universalizing, by 2016, preschool for children aged 4 to 5 years and expanding the offer of Early Childhood Education in kindergartens in order to meet, at least, 50% of children up to 3 years, by the end of the PNE” (Brasil, 2014, s/p). However, the report of the 5th Monitoring Cycle of the PNE Goals, published in 2024, reveals that, until 2022, Brazil had a coverage rate of 37.3% in the care of children from 0 to 3 years old in daycare centers. In the four-to five-year-old age group, the number of children attending preschool reached a rate of 93.0% in 2022 (Brasil, 2024).

According to Bessa (2023), all these legislative initiatives demanded from the Union the formulation of public policies on a national scale. In this context, the Ministry of Education (MEC), through the National Education Development Fund (FNDE), began to act more intensely in the implementation of cooperative actions, demonstrating an expanded commitment to guaranteeing the right to Basic Education. In this scenario, the creation of the National Program for Restructuring and Acquisition of Equipment for the Public School Network of Early Childhood Education (Proinfância) (FNDE, 2007) stands out, an initiative of the federal government aimed at expanding access and improving the quality of Early Childhood Education.

In line with the guidelines of Proinfância, in 2010 a project was developed with the aim of implementing Early Childhood Education at Colégio Pedro II (CPII), a traditional federal institution located in the state of Rio de Janeiro, founded in 1837. The institution, at the time, offered Elementary Education, Regular High School and Integrated Vocational Education, in addition to the Youth and Adult Education Program (PROEJA). As a result of this proposal, prepared by the CPII Board of Education, Early Childhood Education activities began on March 26, 2012 at the Realengo unit, with the opening of ten classes for children aged four and five. In the second quarter of 2014, the institution also began to serve 3-year-olds, as foreseen in the initial project (Colégio Pedro II, 2011, 2017).

Although the participation of the federal sphere in the enrollment of Early Childhood Education is greatly reduced when compared to the other administrative spheres (private, municipal and state)⁶ - due to the legal responsibility for the provision of this level of Education, which falls mainly on the municipalities -, it is essential to analyze the role of federal institutions in the formulation and implementation of public policies aimed at early childhood, considering not only the expansion of access and forms of collaboration between federal entities, but also the possibilities that these instances carry to become a reference in ensuring quality training, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

Therefore, seeking to contribute to the debate on the relevance of federal educational institutions in consolidating the right to quality Early Childhood Education, this article aims to describe and analyze the implementation of the racial quota policy, instituted in 2025, for access of black people to Early Childhood Education in the CPII, highlighting its challenges, strategies and preliminary results. It is important to emphasize that, although this policy encompasses social dimensions and also related to the inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD), the focus of this research fell specifically on the racial profile due to the insertion of two of the authors of this article in the Center for Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Studies of the institution (NEABI/CPII).⁷, which guided the analytical look at ethnic-racial issues in the educational context.

We also emphasize that, although the (re)formulation of the quota policy for students proposed by NEABI/CPII also included elementary education I and II, this article is limited to the analysis of data related to Early Childhood Education specifically.

In theoretical and analytical terms, this study is based on the Brazilian decolonial black perspective (Gomes, 2020), which considers the demand of black social movements for affirmative action in Brazil, at the end of the twentieth century and during the Twenty-First Century, as a struggle against coloniality, articulated with the fight against socioeconomic, racial and gender inequalities. In this conception, coloniality – as a result of the imposition of power that affects the subjective structures of a people - operates more forcefully in some social spaces and institutions, such as schools of Basic Education.

This theoretical approach is also mobilized to debate the concretization of the decolonization process through the black presence in spaces of power and decision. In this

⁶ According to data from the Basic Education Census (Brazil, 2025), in 2024, in the daycare stage, of the 4,187,691 enrollments, 849 occurred in federal institutions, representing 0.02% of the total. In preschool, the scenario is similar: out of 5,304,203 enrollments, 1,487 were in federal institutions, which is equivalent to about 0.03%.

⁷ NEABI / CPII was founded on December 08, 2013 through CPII Ordinance No. 1,934.

sense, the potential of NEABIs and related groups to promote trajectories of epistemological, political and social rupture in the federal institutions in which they operate is considered.

It is important to highlight the relevance of this study for filling a gap in the literature on affirmative action in basic education, especially in early childhood education of federal institutions, such as CPII, which can subsidize the (re)formulation of policies aimed at black students in schools of excellence with selective admission processes.

Methodological aspects

In methodological terms, the research that supported this article presents a qualitative interpretivist approach, in which the analyzes are characterized as drawing explanatory conclusions from interpretations that seek to stabilize the social discourse, converting it into forms amenable to investigation (Geertz, 2008). According to this perspective, the *locus* of study is not the object of study. It is necessary, therefore, to highlight that the purpose of this work is not to study the institution itself, but to investigate the process of implementation of the racial quota policy in Early Childhood Education of the CPII, in 2025.

For this, we resort to a single case study with an incorporated approach (Martins, 2008) to apprehend the totality of a situation – reservation of vacancies for a certain stage of basic education –, describing and interpreting the complexity of the concrete case, organizing the data in terms of a certain unit chosen – the cut of race.

It is worth emphasizing that this research was structured from a bibliographic and documentary survey, as well as based on secondary data from the integrated academic administration system (SIAAC), updated in February 2025.

It was also analyzed the public notices n° 58/2024 and n° 59/2024, which regulate, respectively, the selection processes for admission of students in groups III and IV⁸ of CPII Early Childhood Education for the 2025 school year. The analysis also included the lists of validated registrations, the final results of the draws and the lists of those invited for registration, available on the institution's website. In addition, data were used regarding actual enrollment, provided by the Pro-rectory of Education (PROEN).

Considering that NEABI/CPII played a decisive role both in the formulation of the quota proposal in the selection processes of Early Childhood Education and in institutional discussions, this article uses the authors' field notebooks, which recorded observations and reflections throughout the implementation process of this affirmative action policy within the

⁸ The groups are organized according to the age groups of the children attended: Group III includes students from 3 to 4 years; Group IV covers those from 4 to 5 years (Colégio Pedro II, 2017).

CPII, and letters sent by NEABI/CPII to PROEN between 2021 and 2024 containing claims, political and technical clarifications on the proposal to (re)formulate quotas for Basic Education in the institution, prepared by the nucleus.

Colégio Pedro II: expansion cycles and student profile

CPII was created on December 2, 1837 and was made official by an Imperial decree on the 20th of the same month. Although it was born for the elite of the Empire, over time the institution began to accompany the transformations in public policies aimed at the universalization of Education. The first significant expansion movement took place in the 1950s, with the creation of school sections in the neighborhoods of Engenho Novo, Humaitá and Tijuca, a period in which the School gained notoriety as the “Standard School of Brazil” (Colégio Pedro II, 2025a). Even so, the profile of the students did not change much, since entry to the school depended on passing rigorous classificatory exams, of a notably elitist nature.

Already in the 1980s, the second cycle of expansion was characterized by the creation of units aimed at elementary school I – from Literacy class to 4th grade. In this segment, the main form of admission became the lottery, a method that aimed to make the selection process fairer, avoiding inequalities and promoting greater racial and social diversity among students.

The third phase of expansion, starting in the 2000s, took CPII to more peripheral regions, such as the municipality of Duque de Caxias, in Baixada Fluminense, and the neighborhood of Realengo, in the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro.

It was also in this last cycle of expansion, already in 2012, that Early Childhood Education began to work in CPII. The Realengo unit was chosen to host the initiative due to the availability of physical space and the socioeconomic diagnosis of the region, which evidenced the need to offer public spaces for this stage. In 2013, through Ordinance No. 2,331, the unit was officially named the Realengo Early Childhood Education Unit (UEIR). In 2016, the UEIR was extinguished and, simultaneously, the Reference Center in Early Childhood Education Realengo (CREIR) was established, through Ordinance No. 3,031, maintaining the administrative link to the rectory of the CPII (Colégio Pedro II, 2011, 2017).

It is important to note that in 2012, through Law No. 12,677, the CPII was equated with the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (IFs) and, therefore, its units began to be called *campuses* and the offer of specialization courses began. Since then, the institution has expanded its activities in teacher education, creating more than fifteen courses *lato sensu*, three professional master's programs as of 2019 and, in 2020, the first teaching degree courses in the areas of social sciences, philosophy, geography and history.

It should be highlighted that the early childhood education of the CPII is located in a *campus* with a predominance of black students, according to SIAAC data from February 2025. Among the *campuses* who offer elementary education I (*campus* I) and elementary school II and High School (*campus* II), the *campus* Realengo as the blackest, with 52.6% of black students in Realengo I and 52.5% in Realengo II. In contrast, the *campuses* Humaitá I and II have significantly lower percentages of black students, with 34.3% and 30.2%, respectively. A similar situation is observed in *campuses* Tijuca I and II, with 37.2% and 40.2% of black students, respectively.

At the time of writing, in 2025, the CPII has 14 *campuses*, with 12 in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, one in Niterói and one in Duque de Caxias, in addition to CREIR, located in Realengo, totaling more than 14 thousand students (Colégio Pedro II, 2025b). Data updated in February 2025 indicate 12,848 students in CPII Basic Education alone.

Chart 1 describes the student profile of CPII students both in Basic Education and, specifically, in Early Childhood Education, considering the data on color/race and monthly family income, collected in a self-declared manner at the time of enrollment by the legal guardians of underage students.

Chart 1-student profile of Basic Education and, specifically, of CPII's Early Childhood Education regarding color / race and monthly family income

Self-declared Color/Race	Basic Education		Early Childhood Education	
	Absolute numbers	% in relation to total	Absolute numbers	% in relation to total
Yellow	75	0,6%	1	0,6%
White	6,529	50,8%	69	40,8%
Indigenous	33	0,3%	0	-
Blacks (Blacks + Browns)	5,830	45,4%	93	55%
Undeclared	381	3%	6	3,6%
Self-declared monthly household income	Absolute numbers	% in relation to total	Absolute numbers	% in relation to total
More than 3.5 minimum wages	2,907	22,6%	30	17,8%
From 2.5 to 3.5 minimum wages	1,153	9%	29	17,2%
From 1.5 to 2.5 minimum wages	1,858	14,5%	20	11,8%
From 1 to 1.5 minimum wages	2,155	16,8%	29	17,2%
From 0.5 to 1 minimum wage	1,480	11,5%	25	14,8%
Up to 0.5 minimum wage	815	6,3%	20	11,8%
Undeclared	2,480	19,3%	16	9,5%

Source: prepared by the authors based on data from SIAAC (2025).

Based on the information presented in Table 1, we can make important observations about the student profile of the institution. Currently, 45.4% of basic education students are

black⁹, while 50.8% are white. In comparison with the profile of students at this same level of education in 2019, according to a survey by Coutinho, Arruda and Oliveira (2021), a significant advance is observed: at the time, black students in Basic Education at CPII totaled 37.4%, and white students represented 56.3% of the total. Despite this progress, there is still a path to be followed so that the student composition reflects the demographic reality of the country and the state of Rio de Janeiro. According to data from the most recent demographic Census, 53.7% of the Brazilian population declares itself Black. In the state of Rio de Janeiro, self-declared black people correspond to 54.3% of the population (IBGE, 2023).

According to the 2024 School Census of Basic Education (Brasil, 2025), released by INEP, in Brazil, self-declared black students constitute the majority in the various stages and modalities of education: they represent 54.3% in elementary school I, 55.1% in elementary school II, 53.8% in High School, 55.6% in Professional and Technological Education (EPT) and 74.9% in Youth and Adult Education (EJA). Despite this scenario, there is still a high rate of non-declaration of color/race, a gap that directly impacts the formulation and implementation of public policies aimed at racial equity in education.

In summary, the fact that the CPII represents a percentage of black students in Basic Education below the proportions verified at the national level indicates that, despite recent advances in the inclusion of black students, the institution under analysis still presents a racial profile with a diversity below that desired, reflecting a pattern of historical selectivity that, although mitigated, still persists in the CPII, reinforcing inequalities in access to public institutions of excellence.

Regarding the self-declared monthly family income of CPII Basic Education students, we observed that the analysis of the socioeconomic profile of the students has limitations, since it is based exclusively on the declared monthly family income, disregarding the income *per capita*. The inclusion of the number of residents in the household could allow a crossing of data that would result in a more accurate assessment of the socioeconomic conditions of the students. These data, however, do not make up the list of information collected by the SIAAC, making this type of analysis impossible in the scope of the present study.

In any case, data in Table 1 show striking features of the socioeconomic profile of the CPII. More than a fifth of basic education students (22.6%) belong to families with incomes above 3.5 minimum wages, an expressive rate for a federal public school, whose mission should prioritize equitable access to quality education.

⁹ We consider for the study the classification adopted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), according to which the black population is composed of the sum of individuals who declared themselves black and brown.

Additionally, the high rate of non-declaration of income of basic education students (19.3%) may camouflage the real proportion of high-income students, considering that families with higher purchasing power often choose not to declare these data, which contributes to a lower visibility of socioeconomic inequality. It is also worth noting that this percentage of students who do not declare their family income represented an increase compared to the years 2018 and 2019, in which, respectively, 16.5% and 17.9% of basic education students did not have this type of explicit data, as pointed out by Coutinho, Arruda and Oliveira (2021).

The data referring to the highest income and the undeclared, in the context of enrollment in Basic Education, become even more significant when compared to the percentage of students in a situation of greater socioeconomic vulnerability: only 17.8% of students are in the lowest income groups (up to 1 minimum wage), which exposes a clear underrepresentation of the popular strata.

This scenario suggests that the selective process of admission of Basic Education in the CPII, even when guided by lottery or other forms considered neutral or Democratic, has not been sufficient to democratize access. On the contrary, it tends to reproduce inequalities, favoring families with greater economic, cultural and informational capital.

With regard to Early Childhood Education, in particular, it is important to consider, according to the 2024 Basic Education Census (Brasil, 2025), that the majority of children enrolled in this stage belong to the black racial group. In daycare, 50.6% of children are black, while 48.3% are white and 1.1% are yellow or Indigenous. Already, in preschool, the proportion of black children increases to 55.3%, in contrast to 43.1% of white children and 1.6% of yellow or Indigenous children. In both stages, there is a significant percentage of records without racial identification: 20.6% in kindergarten and 21% in preschool, which evidences an important limitation in the available data.

Returning once again to Chart 1, it can be seen that the data on Early Childhood Education in the CPII reveal that black students represent 55% of the student body, configuring the absolute majority at this level of Education. Then white students make up 40.8% of the total. The percentage of non-declaration of color / race is relatively low, reaching 3.6% of the total. Therefore, there is a racial composition in which blacks are the majority in Early Childhood Education in the CPII, in line with the national profile indicated by the 2024 School Census of Basic Education for preschool. The data reveal an expressive presence of black students among the new generations that enter the Early Childhood Education of the CPII, reflecting a characteristic of the *campus* Realengo as a whole, whose racial composition is strongly marked by the territorial context in which it is inserted.

Regarding the distribution of self-declared monthly family income in Early Childhood Education, 35% of students are from families with incomes above 2.5 minimum wages. The percentage of non-declaration of income, although relatively low (9.5% of the total), remains relevant, and may hide the real proportion of students from families with higher purchasing power. In the intermediate stratum, corresponding to the range of 1 to 2.5 minimum wages, 29% of the students are concentrated. In the lowest income strata, which covers up to half the minimum wage and between 0.5 and 1 minimum wage, participation reaches 26.6% of students.

In summary, the data on Early Childhood Education in the CPII indicate a significant concentration of students in the middle and upper-middle income groups. At the opposite extreme, there is a relatively low presence (26.6% of the total) of Early Childhood Education students from the lowest and most precarious income strata. Thus, it is possible to perceive the presence of limitations regarding the challenge of effective democratization of access to the CPII, either in Basic Education or in Early Childhood Education, in a specific way. Therefore, there is a need to mobilize efforts – notably through quota policies – to have a greater presence of students from the most vulnerable groups in society, including black people, at CPII.

(Re)formulation of the quota policy for black students of Basic Education in CPII

In 2012, Law No. 12,711, widely known as the “quota law”, was sanctioned. This legislation determined that 50% of vacancies in universities and federal institutions of Secondary-Technical Education are intended for students who have fully completed High School (in the case of undergraduate vacancies) or Elementary School (in the case of technical education) in public schools. Within this system of reservation of vacancies, subquotas were also created for self-declared black, brown and Indigenous candidates, people with disabilities, as well as students from families with income *per capita* up to 1 minimum wage¹⁰.

It is worth remembering that Law No. 12,711 / 2012 is the result of a demand by black social movements for recognition, justice and historical reparation. In this sense, even putting the racial criterion subsumed by social criteria, this affirmative policy was constituted as a strategy to confront the persistent dynamics of coloniality and racism that are historically established in education (Silvério, 2022).

¹⁰ Updated by Law No. 14,723, of November 13, 2023.

In any case, the quota legislation carries a limitation because it is restricted to the higher and technical levels of federal universities and IFs, not explicitly contemplating the Basic Education offered by the application colleges linked to federal universities or the Pedro II College – federal autarchy equated to the IFs. In spaces such as the CPII, historically reserved for white elites, and derived from coloniality, a policy that promotes the entry of black and Indigenous students tensions the naturalization of hierarchies (Coutinho; Oliveira; Arruda, 2023). As a secondary effect, but not least important, the presence of these students in these educational institutions challenges the hegemony of Eurocentric knowledge (Borges; Bernardino-Costa, 2021).

In the context of the CPII, between the years 2004 and 2015, the policy of reservation of places for elementary school II was restricted exclusively to the criterion of origin of public school (PE). From 2016, although this priority was maintained, the reservation of 5% of vacancies was introduced by *campus* for candidates with disabilities (PWD)¹¹, marking a first step in broadening the scope of affirmative action. In the period from 2019 to 2023, in addition to maintaining the reserve for public school graduates, the reserve for people with disabilities was consolidated, covering both categories cumulatively (EP+PcD).

However, it is from the reform proposed by NEABI/CPII in 2023 that a qualitative leap is observed in the inclusion policy in the notices for admission of Elementary School II students from the 2024 school year, with the incorporation of criteria such as socioeconomic profile (PSE)¹² and ethnic-racial-black, brown and Indigenous (PPI). However, despite the requests of NEABI/CPII, the policy was implemented for this segment without the concurrency mechanism, which allows quota candidates to initially compete for the vacancies of the broad competition, being redirected to the reserved vacancies only in case of non-approval. In practical terms, the absence of concurrency is not only a technical failure, but compromises the principle of maximum inclusion that guides quota policy, resulting in limited implementation.

On the other hand, the policy of reserving places for Regular and Technical High School (integrated and subsequent) at CPII has undergone a process of gradual expansion. Between 2004 and 2012, the criterion adopted was limited to the reservation for students from public school (PE).

¹¹ The reservation of 5% of vacancies for people with disabilities (PWD) in open calls and in federal educational institutions is in Law No. 13.146/2015 (statute of the disabled), which came into force in 2016.

¹² In the notices, Pedro II school uses the term "social quota" (CS) to refer exclusively to candidates with gross family income per capita equal to or less than 1.0 minimum wage. For this study, we adopted the term "socioeconomic profile" (PSE), because we understand that both the low-income condition and the origin of Public School configure modalities of social quota.

Since Law No. 12,711 / 2012 provided for a period of up to four years for its full implementation – that is, until August 2016 – Regular Day High School was not reached by the quota law between 2013 and 2015. The subcategories PSE and PPI were applied only to regular evening High School, Technical High School and PROEJA. Full implementation, including Regular Day High School, took place only from 2016, when the reservation of 5% of places per *campus* for PcDs was also incorporated, according to the legislation.

As of 2019, there is a jump in the complexity of quota combinations for Regular and Technical High School (integrated and subsequent), with the introduction of multiple possibilities that articulate belonging to public school, socioeconomic profile, racial belonging, in addition to the condition of people with disabilities.

For the year 2025, the reservation of places for High School is modified in accordance with Law No. 14.723/2023 and the normative ordinance MEC No. 2.027/2023. The criteria already used in previous years remain and there is the introduction of the quilombola variable, representing the expansion of the scope of affirmative action to include traditionally marginalized populations, in addition to the reduction of the gross monthly family income ceiling *per capita* from up to 1.5 minimum wage to 1 minimum wage.

It is important to highlight that, in all these levels, the entrance of students occurs through classificatory tests, regardless of the shift or modality of teaching. This selection mechanism, even when combined with affirmative action policies, maintains the meritocratic character of the selection process, which can impact the effectiveness of actions aimed at democratizing access.

With regard to PROEJA, between 2013 and 2015 the Reserve followed the parameters of High School, with quotas for public school graduates and subquotas for low-income students and for black, brown and Indigenous students. From 2016 to 2024, no vacancy reservation mechanism was adopted, which may be related to the low demand for this education segment. As of 2025, however, there is a return of vacancy reservation policies, in line with the criteria adopted for High School, with the inclusion of quilombolas. During this period, the selection process was based on the combination of different criteria, which varied according to the year: conducting interviews in cases where the number of registered students exceeded the number of vacancies, socioeconomic and vocational evaluation, in addition to face-to-face confirmation for effective enrollment.

Elementary School I and Early Childhood Education operate with admission exclusively through public lottery since the implementation of these stages in the institution, in 1984 and 2012, respectively. On this topic, it is necessary to say that, in addition to understanding that the drawing submits to a random criterion the access of the black and

peripheral population to a historically elitized space such as the CPII, perceiving the processes that may or may not result in greater racial equity in access to education implies recognizing that if the criterion of color and race is not paramount in public policies, changes in terms of racial inclusion will be limited.

In March 2022, during the electoral campaign for the rector, the three candidates running for the position signed a letter of commitment prepared by NEABI/CPII. Among the commitments for the construction of an anti-racist school was “ensuring the adoption of affirmative action policies, in particular the reservation of places for black and Indigenous students, in all segments of Colégio Pedro II” (NEABI/CPII, 2022).

In June 2023, a series of meetings began between NEABI/CPII, the rector and the Pro-rectory of Education (PROEN), responsible for the admission of students. Eventually NEABI / CPII also participated in meetings with the Department of Information Technology (DTI), with the Council of Directors (CODIR) and with the Superior Council (CONSUP). These meetings comprised a long process of discussion in which the NEABI/CPII played a key role in raising awareness and institutional conviction, aiming at the adequacy of the processes of entry of students in Early Childhood Education and in elementary education I and II to the political objectives of the reservation of vacancies that was sought to implement in the CPII. Among these objectives, the immediate blackening of the student body and the gradual desegregation of elites in the educational sphere stand out.

The negotiations between NEABI/CPII and the leaders, mediated by PROEN, resulted in the presentation of different proposals for the implementation of the quota modalities. The proposal presented by NEABI / CPII articulated the cutouts of race, class and disability, reflecting an expanded understanding of the idea of social vulnerability. At a CODIR meeting in August 2023, the leaders presented an alternative proposal to PROEN, suggesting the inclusion of the public-school criterion (PE) for the reservation of places in Early Childhood Education and elementary school I, with the aim of receiving children from municipal institutions, which serve children from six months to six years of age.

NEABI / CPII expressed opposition to the use of this criterion both for Early Childhood Education and for elementary education I and II, arguing that the requirement of exclusively public schooling disregards the reality of children who, in their short school history, attended low-cost or precarious private institutions, even for brief periods. To democratize the access of children in situations of social vulnerability, the Center maintained the defense of the adoption of the socioeconomic profile criterion (PSE) in isolation, as an instrument of affirmative action aimed at the social dimension. As a result of the negotiations, NEABI/CPII was able to ensure that the admission notices for Early Childhood Education

and Elementary School I were published without the requirement of Public School origin, although, for the 6th year of Elementary School II, the criterion was maintained, since it had been applied since 2004.

During the discussions, leaders also expressed to PROEN questions about the proposal for modalities of reservation of vacancies presented by NEABI / CPII, expressing concern about the creation of specific modalities for blacks, browns, Indigenous without the requirement of other associated criteria, as occurs in the operationalization of Law No. 12,711/2012, applied to High School and graduation.

In this particular, primarily, it is necessary to remember that the coloniality of being, which operates in the dehumanization and denial of the full existence of black and indigenous bodies, is directly confronted when affirmative policies recognize and legitimize racial identity as a criterion of historical reparation (Thomaz *et al.*, 2025). Thus, the NEABI / CPII clarified that the preference for social affirmative actions expresses the resistance of sectors of Brazilian society to admit the modality of racial affirmative actions, mainly because we constitute a nation that for a long time had the idea of “racial democracy” as an identity pillar, with a greater sensitivity to poverty than to racial inequality (Machado, 2020; Feres Junior *et al.*, 2018). Unlike those who defend the social cut as a predominant criterion, NEABI / CPII positions itself defending that the overlap of blackness and poverty does not necessarily make affirmative action effective for the inclusion of discriminated racial groups, that is, the socioeconomic criterion is not necessarily the best way to promote racial integration, even when there is strong convergence between race and class (Paiva; Almeida, 2010; Feres Junior *et al.*, 2018).

In addition, studies show that: (1) When Affirmative action is based only on socioeconomic criteria, the number of potential beneficiaries from discriminated ethnic-racial groups falls substantially, and the percentage of potential beneficiaries from groups that do not suffer discrimination (white people) rises; (2) the replacement of policies based on race by policies that use only the income criterion can even aggravate the discrimination of the targeted ethnic-racial group, since those individuals in the group that could best qualify for the vacancies offered end up excluded from the benefit—this includes: in this case, Elementary School II, whose entry into the CPII occurs through a meritocratic system with qualifying tests; and (3) the inequality of social opportunities arising from racism, experienced by black candidates, remains in the middle and upper classes (Darity Jr. *et al.*, 2011; Feres Junior *et al.*, 2018; Machado, 2020).

For these reasons, the NEABI / CPII understands that it is essential to have a modality for black people (black and brown) and Indigenous people without any other intersectional cut, as there is for the socioeconomic profile. In the wake of these reflections, the nucleus also

included people with disabilities in a modality without other linked criteria, believing that such a path will contribute to diversity in the CPII more effectively.

In view of the need to prevent fraud in the implementation of the policy and the impacts that prolonged standing in queues during bureaucratic processes can cause to children, NEABI/CPII proposed that the heteroidentification procedure be carried out through the combination of different methods. The families of the selected students took to the rectory the ethno-racial declaration form filled out along with a recent 5 x 7 photograph of the candidate, with a white background, in color, with good lighting and resolution, without filters, in which the candidate is without makeup and without props that can cover the face, hair and neck, and the candidate's presence is not required for document delivery.

The heteroidentification committee deliberated based on the analysis of these photographs and, in the experience of the first year of implementation, most of the students were recognized as black by the five members of the bench. The few cases in which the committee did not recognize the declared racial belonging resulted in the non-qualification of the candidate, and the right to appeal was guaranteed, which was carried out in person. In the appeal phase, the child and his / her legal guardian appeared before the bank to perform a new heteroidentification, with the ethno-racial declaration made by the adult. It was verified, in this stage, the existence of cases in which the poor quality of the lighting of the photograph impaired the initial evaluation, allowing, in the face-to-face analysis, the correct recognition of the racial belonging of the child.

It should also be said that although discussions for the implementation of the reservation of places in the draw for Early Childhood Education and Primary Education I began in 2023, the policy could only be implemented for the 2025 school year due to technical difficulties.

For the full effectiveness of the quota policy, it would be necessary to implement concomitance in the selection process, allowing candidates for reserved vacancies to also initially compete in the broad competition (AC). However, admission to Early Childhood Education and elementary school I was still carried out by manual drawing in physical ballot boxes. To guarantee concomitance in this format, it would be necessary to draw lots for all candidates by the CA and, subsequently, transfer to the specific polls only the non-contemplated quota holders, checking names and registration numbers. Due to the history of high number of registrations, the Pro-rectory of Education (PROEN) considered it unfeasible to carry out this procedure manually. The NEABI / CPII agreed with the evaluation and warned that, without the concomitant *campuses* regions with a greater presence of black students, such as Realengo, could suffer the reverse effect of the quota policy, reducing the enrollment of black students.

It is worth saying that the concept of concomitant competition is implied in paragraph 2 of Article 3 of the Law No. 14,723, of November 13, 2023, which updates Law No. 12,711/2012, stating that “candidates will initially compete for the vacancies made available for wide competition and, if no entry grade is achieved through this modality, they will start competing for the reserved vacancies” (Brasil, 2023, s / p). Thus, the adoption of concurrent competition ensures that quotas are not treated as a maximum limit (ceiling) of admission for benefited students, but rather as a minimum floor to guarantee access.

During the year 2024, the rectory and PROEN provided an electronic system to hold the draw with the concomitance. The first public notices for Early Childhood Education and for elementary school I, with the reservation of vacancies, were published in January 2025.

Results in the first year of implementation of quotas in early childhood education of the CPII

For the 2025 school year, CPII offered a total of 72 places for Early Childhood Education, 24 for Group III and 48 for Group IV. Table 2 shows high enrollment rates per vacancy in the PPI modalities (blacks, browns or Indigenous without income criteria) and AC (Broad competition), in both groups. In Group III, for example, for only four vacancies in the PPI modality, there were 118 validated registrations, resulting in a ratio of almost 30 candidates per vacancy. The AC category concentrates the highest absolute number of registrations, both in Group III (364 registrations for ten vacancies) and in Group IV (471 registrations for 23 vacancies).

In contrast, modalities C4 (PcD + PSE) and C5 (PcD) present a lower number of registrations than the other modalities, even considering the proportionally lower number of vacancies. This difference indicates an underrepresentation of this population in the process.

Table 2 - distribution of vacancies and validated registrations by type of competition and grouping of Early Childhood Education

Modalities	Group III		Group IV	
	Vacancies	Validated Entries	Vacancies	Validated Entries
C1-PPI + PSE	4	53	8	82
C2-PPI	4	118	7	161
C3-PSE	3	27	5	48
C4-PcD + PSE	2	4	3	16
C5-PcD	1	21	2	38
AC-wide competition	10	364	23	471
Total	24	587	48	762

Source: prepared by the authors based on data from public notices CPII n° 58/2024 and 59/2024, as well as information available on the institutional website.

Table 3, in turn, presents the distribution of enrollment in groups III and IV of Early Childhood Education, organized according to the different modalities of admission provided for in the selection notices. Are separately indicated the numbers of students drawn by the wide competition and the reserved places are indicated, as well as the total enrollment in each group and modality.

Table 3 - distribution of enrollments by modality of competition and group of Early Childhood Education

Modalities	Enrollments in Group III			Enrollments in Group IV		
	Drawn in AC	Drawn in the reserved places	Total	Drawn in AC	Drawn in the reserved places	Total
C1-PPI + PSE	0	4	4	2	8	10
C2-PPI	5	4	9	6	7	13
C3-PSE	1	3	4	1	5	6
C4-PcD + PSE	0	2	2	1	3	4
C5-PcD	0	1	1	2	2	4
AC-wide competition	4	-	4	11	-	11

Source: prepared by the authors based on information available on the institutional website and data provided by PROEN

It is worth noting that the candidates drawn by the wide competition, even if enrolled in modalities C1 or C2, are not submitted to the heteroidentification procedure, considering that the enrollment bond is established exclusively by the wide competition. For the purpose of the calculations carried out in this study, these students were admitted as Black, based on the enrollment made.

The analysis of enrollment in groups III and IV shows the effectiveness of the policy of reservation of places for black, brown and Indigenous candidates (PPI). Considering modalities C1 and C2, in Group III, 13 PPI students were enrolled, eight by direct reservation and five by concomitant competition. In Group IV, there were 23 registrations of black, brown and Indigenous children (PPI), of which 15 occurred for reserved places and eight for broad competition.

Considering the offer of 72 vacancies and the enrollment of 36 students in modalities C1 and C2, which include the racial criterion, it is estimated that 50% of those entering Early Childhood Education in 2025 belong to groups covered by the implemented quota policy.

The presence of PPI candidates occupying vacancies due to wide competition, especially in the C2 modality, demonstrates that the quota policy not only guarantees minimum access to this public, but also allows a significant part of PPI students to be contemplated beyond the reserved vacancies, evidencing that their insertion is not restricted to the space of affirmative actions. In summary, the data indicate that the policy acts as a

mechanism to expand access and not as a barrier, since the concomitant competition allows black, brown and Indigenous students to be contemplated in multiple ways, reinforcing the inclusive nature of the affirmative action implemented.

We present below a projection of color / race of Early Childhood Education for the 2025 school year. The projection presented is based on: (I) the departure of students currently registered in SIAAC as belonging to Group V, who will continue to the 1st Year of Elementary School; (ii) the entry of new students in Group III; (iii) the composition of Group IV, formed by Old Students (Group III in the 2024 school year) and newcomers; and (iv) the remaining students who will advance to Group V (Group IV in the 2024 school year).

For analytical purposes, it was decided to group under the category “other” students who declared themselves white, yellow, indigenous, as well as those who did not report their race/color. This choice is justified by the fact that it is not possible, at the moment, to identify the racial self-declaration of newly enrolled students who are not PPI quota holders. Although there is a record of the racial declaration of former students in the SIAAC, the data regarding newly enrolled students have not yet been integrated into the academic system, since the collection of this information occurs at the time of enrollment and its processing is still pending. Students declared black and Brown were also classified as “black”, considering that, in the same way, it is not yet possible to distinguish the racial declaration of the newly admitted PPI quota holders, due to the unavailability of the data collected at the time of enrollment.

Of the students listed in Chart 1, who belong to Group V and will complete Early Childhood Education in 2025, there are 42 self-declared blacks, 26 whites and four did not report their race/color. These students were disregarded in the projection presented.

Table 4 - Projection of race/colour in Early Childhood Education for the school year of 2025

Colour / Race	Group III	Group IV	Group V	Total	% of total
Black	13	34	40	87	51,4%
Other	11	38	33	82	48,5%

Source: prepared by the authors based on data from SIAAC (2025) and in information available in the institutional website and data from PROEN

We emphasize that this is a projection, since other black students may have entered the 2025 selection processes without the use of the PPI quota.

The comparison between the 2024 and 2025 data reveals that the policy implemented for 2025 managed to maintain a high percentage of black students in Early Childhood Education. Although there was a small percentage reduction – from 55.03% to 51.48% – the

fact that more than half of the student body remained composed of black students indicates the effectiveness of the affirmative actions adopted.

If Early Childhood Education is expanded to *campuses* with a whiter racial profile, such as Humaitá and Tijuca, the implementation of quotas will be essential to avoid a predominantly white racial composition, as observed in these units. Considering the growth in total enrollment, the data shows that the racial inclusion policy contributed to the consolidation of a school profile more representative of racial diversity in Brazil. The result reinforces the relevance of the continuity and strengthening of these measures, which guarantee more plural and equitable educational environments.

Final Considerations

The reflections developed in this study allowed us to analyze the challenges and strategies related to the implementation of racial quota policies in Early Childhood Education of the CPII. By resuming the objectives initially proposed, we highlight the need to intensify the awareness and clarification processes with the rector, PROEN and the leaders. As a strategy, the discussions were based on studies conducted by NEABI/CPII members, seeking to substantiate the proposals based on evidence and critical analysis.

Another relevant challenge was the replacement of the drawing in physical ballot boxes by electronic drawing, a fundamental condition to ensure the proper application of the concomitance mechanism and thus strengthen the effectiveness of the affirmative action policy. The adoption of this mechanism in the selection processes of Early Childhood Education proved to be effective for the promotion of racial inclusion. As a concrete effect, 36 black children, aged between three and four years, entered Cpii's Early Childhood Education in 2025, representing 50% of the total new enrollments.

The analysis of the CPII Basic Education student profile shows that black students still do not constitute the majority, in contrast to the racial composition of the Brazilian population, and that the institution maintains traces of elitization due to the predominance of students from high-income and upper-middle-income families. In the field of Early Childhood Education, a scenario of greater racial diversity is observed, as a result of the location of the unit in the *campus* Realengo, whose student composition is already marked by an expressive presence of black students; however, the concentration of students from higher socioeconomic strata also persists in this segment.

In this scenario, the policy of racial quotas not only expands access, but also constitutes an act of insurgency against the multiple dimensions of coloniality that shape the Brazilian social fabric.

As perspectives for future studies, we suggest investigations on the permanence, academic performance and completion of incoming students through affirmative action policies, as well as the analysis of the inclusion of quilombola and Indigenous children.

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