



PESQUISA, MATERNIDADE E O DIREITO À CRECHE: QUEM SÃO OS SUJEITOS DESSE DIREITO?

Research, motherhood, and the right to daycare: who are the subjects of this right?

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RESUMO

Este artigo nasce do entrelaçamento entre pesquisa e maternidade para problematizar quem são os sujeitos do direito à creche no Brasil. A experiência de tornar-me mãe, simultânea ao percurso investigativo sobre acesso à creche, deslocou meu olhar dos dados de matrícula para a compreensão do bebê como sujeito de direitos e provocou a pergunta que orienta o texto. Com base na escrita autobiográfica, na revisão teórica sobre concepções de bebê e na análise de dados do Censo Escolar (2005–2021) referentes à variável cor/raça nas matrículas em creche no estado do Rio de Janeiro, discuto como as políticas de Educação Infantil reconhecem ou silenciam determinadas infâncias. Os achados indicam que, embora juridicamente assegurado, o direito à creche se materializa de forma desigual, atravessado por concepções históricas de infância e por marcadores raciais que incidem desde o nascimento. Concluo que afirmar o bebê como sujeito do direito à creche exige escutar experiências, tensionar invisibilidades e ampliar a compreensão de cuidado, infância e equidade na política pública.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Creche. Bebês. Maternidade. Direito à educação infantil. Desigualdades raciais.

ABSTRACT

This article emerges from the intertwining of research and motherhood to problematize who the subjects of the right to daycare are in Brazil. The experience of becoming a mother, simultaneous with my research trajectory on access to daycare, shifted my gaze from enrollment data toward understanding babies as subjects of rights and raised the question that guides this text. Based on autobiographical writing, a theoretical review of concepts of babies, and analysis of School Census data (2005–2021) on the race/color variable in daycare enrollments in the state of Rio de Janeiro, we discuss how Early Childhood Education policies recognize or silence certain childhoods. The findings indicate that, although legally guaranteed, the right to daycare materializes unequally, shaped by historical conceptions of childhood and racial markers that operate from birth. We conclude that affirming the baby as a subject of the right to daycare requires listening to experiences, challenging invisibilities, and broadening the understanding of care, childhood, and equity within public policy.

KEYWORDS: Daycare. Babies. Motherhood. Right to Early Childhood Education. Racial inequalities.

INTRODUCTION

*Um dia, ela haveria de narrar, [one day she would narrate]
de fazer soar, de soltar as vozes, os murmúrios, [make sound, release the voices, the murmurs]
os silêncios, o grito abafado que existia...[the silences, the existing muffled scream]
(Evaristo, 2017, p. 161)*

Conceição Evaristo's words help to introduce this text, in which research and motherhood get together to raise the question: who are the subjects who have the right to daycare in Brazil? To answer this question, the text starts from an autobiographical writing about the experience of the researcher who investigates the right to daycare and data showing this movement to problematize who is the subject of this right, which demands that we listen to those who were historically rarely heard, amongst them babies and the women caring for them.

Although Brazilian legislation ensures Early Childhood Education as a right, the definition of the subject of this right is not always problematized. We talk about the increase of places, in provision, in funding, and service goals, but rarely question the concept of baby that supports these policies and who the babies that reach this right are. This lack of questioning is not unjustified. In the field of childhood studies, despite advances in understanding children as social subjects, babies still have a marginal place in theoretical formulations, which reinforces the need to build them as their own analytical category (Santos, 2024).

As a methodological and theoretical choice, this text starts with a motherhood experience, not as an intimate testimony, but as a recognition that the place from which one speaks produces effects in the construction of the research object. The displacement raised by this experience allowed us to revisit the concept of baby and to tension previously naturalized understandings. From this perspective, we articulate experience, theoretical production, and political analysis to discuss the concept of baby and its implications for the right to daycare. The text is organized into three sections and the final remarks. In the first section, we present the experience of motherhood and how it helps to delineate the question that guides the text. In the second section, we discuss different concepts of baby and childhood, their historical and discursive bases, and the tensions that emerge when babies are affirmed as subjects of rights. In the third section, we raise data on race/color to discuss who reaches (or not) this right. Then, we will present our final remarks.

When questioning the identity of the subject of right, we seek to shed light on the fact that the struggle for daycare is not limited to increasing provision, but involves disputes about understanding childhood, care, and citizenship in early childhood. The concept of baby guides how the right to daycare is structured, and the materiality of the offer shows who is, in fact, recognized as the policy's priority subject.

In this sense, this text is also built as a gesture of listening and makes visible the experiences that cross the everyday life of babies and the women caring for them, recognizing that the right to daycare is built not only through the norms, but where and when childhood is lived, relationships are established, and produces itself.

BECOMING A MOTHER, THE CONCEPT OF BABY AS AN OBJECT OF ANALYSIS

According to the social logic that organizes motherhood, I became a mother when Miguel was born. However, the experience showed me something else: it was not during labor that I recognized myself as a mother, but in the slow, daily construction of a relationship marked by cuddles, breastfeeding, care, and the exchange of gazes. Motherhood was built in the encounter, in the repetitive gestures, in the shared presence, as a bond woven in the body and in affection. It was during this intimate and relational process that I started to understand that becoming a mother is not a punctual event, but an experience built through interaction.

This process of building a connection has also deeply displaced how I perceived life, how I understood myself as a woman, and the values guiding my choices. Motherhood started a movement of silent review of priorities, wishes, and certainties; what was previously organized in individual projects was now crossed by the presence and existence of another.

If my energy was previously mostly focused on my own projects, dreams, and pathways, motherhood introduced a subtle transformation: I started dreaming from another. The future was no longer an individual horizon but also became a shared responsibility, care, and presence.

As Barros (2020) states, there is a power awakened by parenthood. This power is not limited to the intimate sphere; it organizes perceptions, tenses consolidated knowledge and inaugurates new ways to look at babies and the institutions that welcome them. In my trajectory, this invitation meant revisiting consolidated conceptions and questioning the grounds from which I supported certain understandings about daycare and its place in families' lives.

When highlighting that parenthood calls for a learner's perspective, Barros (2020) also provokes us to perceive that childhood is not a rehearsal for adult life. This idea confronts an understanding ingrained in modern cultures, according to which children and, even more, babies would be subjects in preparation for the future that will give them meaning. If childhood is not a rehearsal, it is complete. Babies cannot be understood only as a promise or investment, but as a subject that lives, experiences, and produces meaning in the present.

The revision movement was not restricted to the intimate sphere; it also crossed how I normally understood babies in my professional and academic trajectories. My understanding of babies was produced in different places. As an Early Childhood Education teacher, I learned to recognize them in institutional everyday life, caring for routines, care needs, and first interactions. In this context, babies appeared as pedagogical subjects, inserted in planned practices mediated by adults who were responsible for their development and well-being. However, the specificity of the pedagogical work with babies still needs to be recognized in teachers' practice, marked by tensions between care and education, and the lack of consolidated references to teach this age range (Salutto, 2025). Hence, starting from concerns from the practice, when entering academic research, this understanding broadened, and babies occupied another place in the analysis. They became a subject of rights and a political category in discussions about provision, access, and daycare funding, and a reference in disputes around the guarantee of the right to Early Childhood Education. In this sense, I developed my master's research about access to daycare, focusing on a territory of great social inequalities and demographic density.

However, during my PhD, when the proposal was to broaden the lenses to investigate daycare access in all municipalities of my state, my pregnancy news and motherhood questioned these understandings in a more radical fashion. Miguel's birth in 2024 placed in the core of the reflection a concrete, sensitive, and dependent baby, but who was also intensely powerful. The first year by his side was a time of shared learning, marked by everyday discoveries, the intensity of the bond, and the experience of care in its more crude and transformative way. Between breastfeeding, interrupted nights, and small wins that seemed to unveil entire worlds, motherhood presented itself as a radical presence. There was a mixture of enchantment and exhaustion, power and vulnerability, belonging and, sometimes, a silent loneliness that follows many women in this process. Though surrounded by affection and support, I perceived that this period

is also an intimate journey, composed of unanswered questions, reinvention of self, and everyday resilience.

After this first year of intense interaction, the return to work was a new journey. The decision to enroll Miguel in daycare was not a simple and immediate gesture, but a process intercrossed by doubts, negotiations, and affective rearrangements. Amidst the wish to continue and the need to return to other spaces of life, the care became shared between the institution and my support network, showing that mothering also implies trusting, sharing, and reconstructing the experience of bonding in new territories. In this movement, I understood that the right to daycare is not reduced to a formal guarantee, but materializes itself into concrete experiences of separation, trust, and building new care relationships. Which institution would receive this baby that leaves for the first time to investigate beyond the well-known family embraces? While searching for a daycare, I recognized Miguel as another, and he also started to recognize the world beyond my existence. In this effort to establish himself, he experienced, and I recorded his movements.

Miguel was on the floor when a ray of light crossed the environment and landed close to his hands. First, the curious and silent gaze. After the body that leans, the hand that stretches, as if trying to touch something that cannot be grasped. His fingers followed the clarity that escaped, returning, insisting, a gesture of discovery that seemed to open a world at that instant. There was a wordless investigation there, an encounter between the body and the light that drew itself in a small gesture, but full of presence (Author's record, 2025).

Figure 1 – Between body and light, Miguel investigates the world in a wordless gesture of discovery.



Source: Author's archive (2025).

This movement of seeing my son throw himself into the world prompted the researcher to broaden her analytical focus beyond the enrollment data and ask: who are the babies, subjects of the right to daycare? The search for evidence to answer this question starts with Miguel's curiosity about life, manifested in the gesture in the image, and in many others, in which I perceive that he produces himself in the relationship, beyond what we offer him. As Guimarães (2009) says, when seeing the other, when interacting with the world, babies see themselves. The constitution of the self happens in the encounter, in the exchange of gazes, in the answer to the gesture, and the presence of the other, so that perceiving babies' gaze means recognizing where they are situated in this responsive movement in which identity and alterity are simultaneously produced.

This everyday scene also shows the need to displace the adult's gaze to recognize the singular ways through which babies experience and express their presence in the world. In this sense, motherhood connects with research on the cartography of babies' everyday lives. These studies show that apparently simple actions reveal peculiar ways of participation and interaction, frequently invisible when interpreted from parameters focused on verbal language or adult intentionality (Tebet; Barros; Costa, 2019).

If the relationship enables us to recognize babies' power, it also highlights that such relationships are intercrossed by social markers that affect care from birth.

Motherhood also produces another movement when showing the racial dimension that intercrosses care in early childhood. Becoming the mother of a black baby raised concerns that surpass the developmental field and an abstract right, reaching the spheres of belonging, protection, and recognition. Miguel does not know yet that he is a black child, but I know that, in some moment, the racist structure that organizes our society will cross his body, pathways, and possibilities. As Santos (2024, p. 45) affirms, "babies are born in a society marked by racism and inequalities and, as previously mentioned, even before their arrival". Anticipating these experiences does not mean denying childhood but recognizing that care is also a gesture of preparation, protection, and resistance.

At this point, Santos's (2024) work contributes when proposing the notion of embrace democratization¹. When displacing the embrace from a purely private space to

¹ Translation note: the term in Portuguese is *democratização do colo*. The word *colo* literally refers to the lap, but it also metaphorically and culturally means lovingly holding a child or anyone who needs care. I opted for the word 'embrace' as it can have both a literal (to hug) and metaphorical meaning.

an ethical and political dimension, the author shows that the gesture of holding, touching, and welcoming is not neutral, but crossed by racial and social markers. The distribution of affection, as well as other opportunities, reveals inequalities established since the first months of life.

As a black Woman, this understanding is not only built at the theoretical level. It inscribes itself in the experience of birthing a black baby into the world and perceiving that the care that surrounds him is crossed by collective (hi)stories of denial, silencing, and resistance. In this context, the embrace is not only a loving gesture, but also becomes a political gesture, an affirmation of humanity and guarantee of belonging (Santos, 2024)

When recognizing the power of the embrace as a space of connection and protection, motherhood has also revealed that caring is an act intercrossed by social and historical disputes before birth itself. Democratizing the embrace as Santos (2024) proposes is not only to amplify affectionate gestures, but to tense the conditions under which certain bodies are seen, touched, and recognized. In this entanglement of experience, care, and belonging, I started to perceive that becoming a mother transformed not only my way of living motherhood but also the object of my research and how I understood who the babies are and which senses are attributed to them in the institutions and policies.

Hence, motherhood displaced my gaze and opened gaps in the naturalized conceptions about babies, revealing that their existence is intercrossed by relationships, discourses, and disputes that predate their arrival at daycare. From this placement, we need to revise the concept of the baby itself, a movement that guides the next section

REVISITING THE CONCEPT OF BABY

Motherhood was not limited to the realm of experience; it broadened my gaze toward theory and what the literature says about babies. Revisiting the concept of baby thus became a necessary move to question naturalized readings and the senses attributed to this condition in the field of childhood studies and public policies.

This personal displacement tensioned previous concepts that, often, understood babies from a linear developmental perspective. The concrete experience of everyday interaction showed the intensity of those interactions, the gazes, the gestures, and the answers that are produced when meeting others. This review dialogues with the provocation from Tebet and Abramowicz (2014), who defend the need to theoretically

constitute babies within the sociology of childhood, recognizing their specificity, and avoiding their subsumption under the generic category of children.

Understanding babies as subjects that build themselves through encounters displaces the ideal of childhood as a preparatory phase or a rehearsal for adult life. On the contrary, it affirms childhood as a time full of experiences, the production of meanings, and the construction of self.

In this sense, Moruzzi and Alonso (2019) affirm the need to listen to babies from the multiple dimensions that establish their experience, recognizing that they question the world through their bodies and their own ways of expression. Beyond verbal language, we need to be aware of how they manifest themselves in gestures, movements, and silences.

Recognizing this power implies problematizing the historical ways through which the baby was produced and states. The authors argue that babies are not lacking in childhood; on the contrary, they are immersed in discursive productions that, in modernity and contemporary times, defined specific ways of caring, sanitizing, and organizing their bodies. Therefore, the establishment of a certain “baby form”, marked by the articulation of medical, nutritional, sanitary, and psychological knowledge. When acquiring a scientific status, puericulture consolidated normative parameters about development and behavior, guiding family and institutional practices.

This perspective highlights that “baby” is not a natural category, but a historical construction crossed by power relationships and standardization. At the same time, there are multiple childhoods, produced in different cultural contexts that establish different ways of caring for and educating the babies’ bodies and subjectivize their experience. If babies establish themselves in the relationship, it is also necessary to understand how this condition was historically produced. This displacement is not only personal; it demands a conceptual review of who the baby is. This review is even more essential when faced with the lack of conceptual consensus about this condition, as different studies use different age delimitations and, frequently, use the term child as a synonym, ignoring babies’ specificities and hindering the recognition of their analytical singularity (Santos, 2024).

Tebet and Abramowicz (2014) argue that thinking about babies implies recognizing their specificities in the social fabric and the limitations of existing references for understanding them, which demand a movement of theoretical reconstruction in the field of childhood studies. The specificity of this condition is developed by Tebet (2013) when provocatively affirming that “this is not a child”. The

author argues that babies cannot be understood as miniature children or simply as the initial phase of a previously defined childhood, occupying an indeterminate place that challenges standardized classifications and demands the creation of new concepts and research methodologies.

Thus, problematizing who the baby is becomes a fundamental condition to understand the meaning of the right to daycare. As Moruzzi and Alonso (2019) point out, babies' experiences are produced in multiple body, relational, and expressive dimensions, which demand displacing perspectives that understand them only through developmental milestones. At the same time, Tebet and Abramowicz (2014) highlight that babies are historically produced by discourses and practices that dictate norms for their bodies and ways of existence, occupying a singular position that challenges categories stabilized in the sociology of childhood.

In this context, we question how public policies recognize babies. Based on what concept does the right to daycare, legally ensured as part of the right to education, operate? Beyond discussing offer, access, and enrollment criteria, we need to question the subjects of this right, because how we understand them guides the forms of institutional organization, care practices, and public policy priorities.

How we understand babies is not neutral. It is historical, political, and intercrossed by disputes. In Brazil, early childhood care was established under a strong social assistance influence, associated with social protection, working mothers, and the regulation of poverty (Campos, 2012). In this context, the baby was produced as an object of intervention, the receiver of hygiene, feeding, and vigilance practices, establishing a service provision more focused on the management of poor childhood than on recognizing babies as subjects of rights.

As Salutto (2025) states, this social assistance tradition contributes to the invisibility of babies as political subjects and citizens, and towards the persistent dissociation of care and education in the institutional everyday life. Hence, daycare is organized less as a space for children's rights and more as an answer to social demands external to them, highlighting that the concept of babies that historically supported the policy was crossed by the perspective of protection and control.

This social assistance tradition consolidated a certain image of babies grounded on frailty and incompleteness, which Sarmento (2005) identifies as the logic of becoming, in which the child is mainly understood as the project of an adult to be led. In the case of babies, this perspective tends to reinforce viewpoints that place them in

the field of dependence and inability, contributing to their invisibility as subjects of rights and social participation.

The problematization of the concepts of baby also demands considering that the experience of childhood is crossed by racial markers that affect the ways of caring and recognition. Santos (2024) shows that, in the everyday life of institutions, affection is not homogeneously distributed. The author demonstrates that the lack of black representation in the spaces, the silence when faced by discriminatory situations, and the lower responsiveness of racialized babies produce exclusion experiences that are established early on.

When denouncing the need to democratize the embrace, Santos (2024) displaces the discussion about racism in Early Childhood Education to the field of care micro-interactions. Looking in the eyes, naming, touching with attention, and answering gestures are practices that affirm humanity and belonging. When these gestures are denied or unequally distributed, we can perceive that the concept of babies that guides the practices is not universal but follows a hierarchy.

This reflection opens the debate about babies as subjects of rights when highlighting that legal recognition does not, by itself, guarantee equal experiences of care. Babies' historical construction as subjects also needs to be analyzed through the perspective of the racial relations that cross Brazilian society, if not we might universalize an abstract childhood that does not encompass the concrete diversity of children's experiences.

With the consolidation of Early Childhood Education as the first phase of K-12 education, mainly since the 1988 Constitution and the LDB 9.394/96, there is an important displacement. Babies are no longer exclusively an object of social assistance and start to be recognized as subjects of rights in the education field. As Rosemberg (2002) analyzes, this milestone was decisive to overcome its philanthropic and custodial character, establishing daycare as a space of the State's duty and children's right. In this context, caring and educating start to be understood as inseparable dimensions, which, according to Kramer (2003), demands recognizing children as social and historical subjects that produce culture. It is a significant advancement because it breaks away from the idea that the educational experience starts only when the child speaks or walks, legitimizing babies' active presence and capacity in the educational scene since their births.

However, this new image of the baby still faces resistance from a developmental logic that fragments it into milestones and normative phases. When defining the

childhood experience through the metric of what they “still need to reach”, this perspective imprisons babies into an identity of absence. As Tebet and Abramowicz (2021) point out, this perspective captures the childhood body into an evolutionary linearity that ignores the capacities of the present. Nonetheless, in everyday life, the child subverts this order, producing meanings in the minimal gestures and interactions that transcend the simple fulfillment of stages. Therefore, the recognition of babies as subjects demands overcoming the developmental rule, validating their social and political experience as a presence that is not summarized into a promise for the future.

At this point, childhood studies broaden the analytical horizon. In this perspective, childhood is not understood as natural data, but as a historically built social category, situated in the generational relationships that organize social life (Sarmiento, 2005).

Thus, babies are not only organisms under development, but also people who establish relationships, experience, and produce meanings in the interactions they live.

Recognizing this dimension implies listening to them beyond verbal language and considering their own ways of expression, which manifest themselves in gestures, movements, rhythms, and affections. In this sense, understanding babies demands displacing the adult gaze and admitting that their experiences communicate through body and sensitive languages, which frequently escape the interpretations centered on orality (Tebet; Barros; Costa, 2019).

The lack of distinction between babies and children contributes to hiding specific experiences and needs from this group, diluting their singularity, and limiting the understanding of their own forms of participation in everyday social life (Santos, 2024).

Nascimento (2013) contributes to this debate when indicating that the recognition of the right to education does not automatically ensure its implementation in children’s concrete experience. The enactment of the right depends on the conditions of provision and the inequalities that cross the education debate, showing the distance between what is recognized and what is lived.

Furthermore, when affirming that daycare is a child’s right, we need to ask which children can access this right and under which conditions. In the specific case of babies, these questions become even more important because they are historically placed in the most vulnerable position in the organization of the provision, and are frequently the last ones to benefit when places are scarce.

Recognizing babies as citizens implies affirming that they are carriers of rights since birth, including the right to education. This means displacing daycare from the

sphere of a concession to the field of structuring public policy. However, the increase of places, by itself, is not enough. When the public debate focuses only on targets, percentages, and funding, there is a risk of ignoring the ethical and political dimensions of this right. The concept of baby that guides policies directly affect how provision is organized under criteria that define priorities and the meanings given to this service.

Hence, when discussing the right to daycare, this text does not start only from the premise that it is a right guaranteed by the law, but from the understanding that this right is crossed by conceptual disputes that produce concrete effects over babies' bodies and experiences.

Questioning this concept is essential because, as Tebet and Abramowicz (2014) stress, babies cannot be understood as miniature children, but as singular beings whose presence questions consolidated theoretical categories and institutional practices.

If babies are subjects of rights, daycare is their right. When displacing the focus on the concept of baby for a subject with a right to daycare, we must analyze the Constitution that affirms the right to education and how this right is interconnected with other social rights, showing its interdependent nature.

For babies, this tension increases. They are frequently in the most fragile space of place distribution, either due to the higher complexity of service, the costs involved, or the administrative choices that prioritize the age ranges closer to compulsory school. Hence, even though babies are formally subjects of rights, their priority does not always materialize in the provision structure.

The hierarchy of childhoods reveals itself in the architecture of low offer. This is precisely the point that this text questions: who is the baby who takes a space in the educational public policy?

DATA ON COLOR/RACE IN ENROLLMENT AND ETHNIC-RACIAL REMARKS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Seeking to perceive how daycare access politics reach, or not, babies equally, one research phase was to collect data from *Instituto de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* (Inep), focusing on the category "color/race" among the enrollment data in the state of Rio de Janeiro, the territory of the research.

This research phase aimed to highlight and monitor policies, in the path proposed by Rosenberg (2013). The time frame was between 2005 and 2021. We chose 2005 because in this year the data "color/race" became obligatory in the enrollment forms.

At the time, the obligation to include the variable color/race in the enrollment forms of all K-12 education was intended to raise the characteristics of the population served and provide information for the National Policy to Promote Racial Equality (Rosemberg, 2006, p. 30).

Since then, the field “color/race” must be filled by the guardians of students under 16 years old and by students over 16. The *Censo Escolar* [School Census] uses the same categories as IBGE: white, black, brown, yellow, and indigenous. If the person opts not to inform this data, there is the option “not declared”. We present below a table regarding the color/race numbers in daycare enrollment:

Table 1: Daycare enrollments by category color/race, state of Rio de Janeiro, 2005–2021

YEAR	Number of daycare enrollment – Color/Race (state of Rio de Janeiro)						
	Total	Not declared	White	Black	Brown	Yellow	Indigenous
2005	106,247	19,985	39,634	13,881	31,531	1,012	204
2006	109,056	20,369	40,854	14,426	32,546	728	133
2007	120,062	44,008	36,420	9,651	29,472	595	117
2008	136,009	38,117	48,525	11,618	37,232	412	105
2009	139,617	36,752	49,819	11,732	40,827	379	108
2010	151,156	39,760	53,435	12,226	45,219	418	98
2011	164,336	44,093	58,705	12,753	48,276	402	107
2012	189,766	49,864	69,425	14,133	55,764	459	121
2013	208,820	59,101	75,356	14,810	58,953	442	158
2014	218,092	66,273	76,220	14,895	60,224	351	129
2015	223,492	73,540	74,404	14,973	60,060	408	107
2016	233,951	83,226	75,076	15,298	59,838	422	91
2017	243,989	87,711	77,232	15,784	62,684	480	98
2018	249,682	99,339	74,892	15,266	59,618	456	157
2019	257,506	108,646	73,003	15,389	59,899	472	97
2020	246,570	113,406	63,568	14,258	54,790	417	131
2021	219,949	104,403	53,549	13,188	48,345	358	106

Source: Created by the authors based on data from the Censo Escolar/ Inep 2005-2021

As we can see, the option “not declared” was the only one that increased continuously, with short periods of retraction during the time. The graph shows an abrupt increase in this option in 2007, followed by a decrease, and an increase since 2012, when it goes from 26.3% to 47.5% of enrollments in 2021, representing an increase of approximately 21 percentage points.

These data raise the question: as a policy that aims for equal opportunities, why do so many guardians opt not to declare the babies’ “color/race”? How do mothers, such as I, who share, beyond the families, the care of their babies, feel when faced by the need to register, among other information, the color/race of their babies?

My motherhood that led to searching for an institution for my son, at that moment, displaced me. Since then, as an Early Childhood Education professional and a daycare principal, I had only experienced one side of this story. At the beginning of each school year during the enrollment period for the municipal education system of Rio de Janeiro, I was faced with embarrassment, doubts, and even help requests when parents would go to the secretary to enroll their babies and were asked: "What is your child's color/race?". We should highlight that, most of the time, children were present during the enrollment and observed the scene, and, when they were older, they sometimes participated in the questionnaire and the embarrassment raised by this question that records a condition that still determines trajectories in Brazil. These situations, added to the expressive option of not declaring babies' and children's color/race show that in our society babies are not yet racialized. Faced by the doubt on what to answer, uncertainty is raised, witnessed by the children present, about the reason for this silence, which, to some extent, indicates a discomfort to be the color one is.

FINAL REMARKS

Regarding the data, although there is a decrease in all aspects, the children's color/race declaration remains more expressive among white and brown people; there is a 3/4 decrease and stagnation in the declaration of the color/race black. The debate on the concept of babies and equity in daycare access needs to be questioned considering the Brazilian complex historical relationship with slavery, the whitening policy, and structural racism. These factors create challenges and point out difficulties in defining the child's "race/color" and what to record in the enrollment. Added to these questions is one's own identity recognition, as expressed by Fanon: "So I took up my negritude, and with tears in my eyes I put its machinery together again. What had been broken to pieces was rebuilt, reconstructed by the intuitive lianas of my hands. My cry grew more violent: I am a Negro, I am a Negro, I am a Negro..." (Fanon, 2008, p. 124). May the scream silenced for years in the throat during this research that guides these lines transform itself into a narrative in Miguel's voice, and in all the power of his life, which for me is already so present in him, but that still needs to be present in public policies. There is no denying the current effervescence of the color/race issues in Brazil. We also cannot deny that the questions managed by the State, aiming to recognize and evaluate social contexts for citizenship and education democratization, have produced

results, though still timid. Target 8 of the *Plano Nacional de Educação* [Education National Plan] (Brasil, 2014), proposes the formulation of policies targeting the schooling of black children and young people, increasing and equalizing the average educational level of black and non-black people. We highlight that the questions and data we raised here need other instruments for a better analysis and understanding; this is an effort to provide words into a narrative that is still little written. We need to reconstruct the complete text together.

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NOTES

WORK TITLE

PESQUISA, MATERNIDADE E O DIREITO À CRECHE: QUEM SÃO OS SUJEITOS DESSE DIREITO?

Research, Motherhood and the Right to Daycare: Who Are the Subjects of This Right?

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