

# O papel da gestão escolar na construção de práticas pedagógicas antirracistas no contexto da educação infantil

The role of school management in the development of antiracist pedagogical practices in early childhood education

El papel de la gestión escolar en la construcción de prácticas pedagógicas antirracistas en el contexto de la educación infantil

Fabiana Pereira Marques US State University of Amapá, Macapá, AP, Brazil marquesf896@gmail.com

Ângela do Céu Ubaiara Brito

State University of Amapá, Macapá, AP, Brazil angela.brito@ueap.edu.br

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### **RESUMO**

Este estudo analisa como a produção acadêmica brasileira tem discutido a atuação do gestor escolar no desenvolvimento de práticas pedagógicas antirracistas na educação infantil. Buscou-se investigar a seguinte questão: de que forma a produção acadêmica brasileira publicada entre os anos de 2015 e 2019 tem refletido a atuação do gestor escolar na formulação e implementação dessas práticas? Para isso, a pesquisa adotou uma abordagem qualitativa, com revisão bibliográfica realizada nas bases SciELO e CAPES, considerando artigos publicados no período mencionado e alinhados ao nível de ensino e ao objetivo estabelecido. Os resultados revelam que, apesar da importância do gestor escolar na estruturação de uma educação antirracista, sua atuação ainda se mostra secundária, uma vez que muitas das iniciativas têm sido propostas por agentes externos à escola. Além disso, evidenciouse a necessidade de ampliar as discussões sobre o tema e de reorientar perspectivas que tentam negar ou minimizar a existência do racismo na educação infantil.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação antirracista; Gestão escolar; Práticas pedagógicas; Educação infantil.

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes how Brazilian academic research has addressed the role of school managers in developing antiracist pedagogical practices in early childhood education. It seeks to investigate the following question: In what ways has Brazilian academic production published between 2015 and 2019 reflected the role of school management in the formulation and implementation of such practices? To this end, the study adopted a qualitative approach, conducting a bibliographic review in the SciELO and CAPES databases, considering articles published during the specified period and aligned with the defined educational level and objective. The results reveal that, despite the importance of school managers in structuring antiracist education, their participation remains secondary, as many of the initiatives have been proposed by actors external to the school context. Furthermore, the findings highlight the need to broaden the discourse on the topic and to reframe perspectives that seek to deny or minimize the presence of racism in early childhood education.

**Keywords:** Antiracist education; School management; Pedagogical practices; Early childhood education.

#### RESUMEN

Este estudio analiza cómo la producción académica brasileña ha discutido el papel del gestor escolar en el desarrollo de prácticas pedagógicas antirracistas en la educación infantil. Se investigó la siguiente cuestión: ¿de qué manera la producción académica brasileña publicada entre los años 2015 y 2019 ha reflejado la actuación del gestor escolar en la formulación e implementación de estas prácticas? Para ello, la investigación adoptó un enfoque cualitativo, con una revisión bibliográfica realizada en las bases SciELO y CAPES, considerando artículos publicados en el período mencionado y alineados con el nivel educativo y el objetivo establecido. Los resultados revelan que, a pesar de la importancia del gestor escolar en la estructuración de una educación antirracista, su actuación sigue siendo secundaria, ya que muchas de las iniciativas han sido propuestas por agentes externos a la escuela. Además, se evidenció la necesidad de ampliar las discusiones sobre el tema y de reorientar perspectivas que intentan negar o minimizar la existencia del racismo en la educación infantil.

**Palabras clave:** Educación antirracista; Gestión escolar; Prácticas pedagógicas; Educación infantil.

## Introduction

Antiracist education is an educational proposal conceived within the Black movement, aimed at transforming schools into pluralistic and inclusive environments. Currently, it is supported by the main regulatory document of Brazilian education, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* – LDBEN) No. 9.394/1996, which aims to support school managers and teachers in constructing pedagogical practices capable of eliminating the ethnic-racial inequalities present in school environments.

Given that this document guides the development of antiracist education from the beginning of schooling, recognizing the benefits it can bring to the establishment of a school environment committed to diversity, respect, and the appreciation of human dignity also entails understanding the responsibilities of educational agents in promoting this pedagogical perspective.

Accordingly, school management is understood as the mediating instance of educational activities between specific institutional spheres and the actors that compose the formal educational space. In this context, the following question arises: how has Brazilian academic production published between 2015 and 2019 reflected the role of school managers in the formulation and implementation of antiracist pedagogical practices in early childhood education?

Investigating this question implies recognizing that its outcomes may offer significant contributions to the Brazilian academic and educational context, particularly since there remains a limited number of studies addressing the intersection between school management and antiracist education in early childhood education.

Furthermore, addressing this question offers an opportunity to present new pathways for democratic management, through which strategies for the effective implementation of antiracist education in schools can be expanded.

Based on these considerations, this article aims to analyze how Brazilian academic production has discussed the role of school management in the development of antiracist pedagogical practices in early childhood education. More specifically, it seeks to examine the contributions of the principle of democratic school



management to the formulation and implementation of antiracist pedagogical practices in early childhood education, considering its relevance to the strengthening of inclusive and equitable education, and to identify the main difficulties and challenges faced by school managers in promoting such practices, analyzing the institutional and structural barriers that impact the effectiveness of these initiatives.

In light of these propositions, it is worth noting that the article is organized into three sections: the first, based on authors such as Lück (2009), Glass (2012), Paro (2016), Macedo (2016), and Libâneo (2018), seeks to establish a close relationship between democratic school management and antiracist education.

The second section, drawing on the reflections of Cavalleiro (2001), Dias (2007), and Oliveira and Abramowicz (2010), discusses antiracist pedagogical practices within the context of early childhood education. Finally, the third section analyzes how studies conducted between 2015 and 2019 have addressed the role of school management in the formulation and implementation of antiracist pedagogical practices in early childhood education.

## Democratic school management and antiracist education: a necessary relation

Reflecting the broader context of life in society, formal educational environments have been facing a problem that has gradually prompted a revision of theoretical discussions and the proposal of new paths for interpretation and evaluation—namely, racism in education or educational racism.

The discussion of the conceptual category "educational racism" is not only recent in Brazil but is also embedded in a set of considerations that necessarily engage with legal provisions enacted for this purpose, among which Laws No. 10.639/2003 and No. 12.288/2010 stand out.

Some of these considerations include, in particular, issues such as the school management model adopted, the formulation of the school curriculum, the debate on public policies aimed at combating any form of discrimination, and the promotion of antiracist education.



A possible definition of this discursive perspective implies, first and foremost, recognizing that antiracist education encompasses what Cavalleiro (2001, p. 150) defines as its "supreme word," that is, the fostering and defense of "equality among human beings."

Such equality, however, is under threat due to the recognition that schools, as part of a structure deeply marked by racism, also function as spaces for the production and reproduction of ideologies that victimize, above all, Black children and youth.

By signaling the need for an immediate and comprehensive rethinking of school culture, this finding reinforces the central principle of antiracist education that "if the school can produce and reproduce prejudices, it can also be a space for the construction of identity, the formation of citizenship, and social transformation" (Pereira; Dias, 2019, p. 32).

However, aware that overcoming racism is no easy task and that "an adequate response to the racial question requires a radical transformation in each of us" (Glass, 2012, p. 885), it is believed that one of the first theoretical-practical steps to be taken consists in developing awareness strategies capable of leading the school community, especially school managers, to perceive the phenomenon of racism in educational institutions as something real and everyday, which must be acknowledged and confronted.

In addition, adopting more flexible models of organization and management, ones that reflect respect for diversity in the school curriculum in its various aspects (social, religious, ethnic, cultural, and gender), is another pathway that strengthens the dialogue between antiracist education and democratic school management.

In this regard, if the proposal of antiracist education nurtures a profound desire for equality as well as respect for diversity and plurality, how can we define democratic management when applied to the educational context?

According to Lück (2009, p. 71), democratic management is a process in which "the necessary conditions and guidelines are created for the members of a collectivity [...] to assume the commitments required for its implementation."

Originated as a principle of public education in the 1988 Constitution and later incorporated into the LDBEN of 1996, this management model has gained increasing



relevance in discussions on educational democratization, as it is through it that diversification of school culture becomes possible.

It is within this framework, for example, that the school–community relationship, active participation, initiative, collegiality, and the sharing of ideas and decisions are valued.

Brazilian authors who study the principle of democratic school management, such as Lück (2009), Paro (2016), and Libâneo (2018), unanimously affirm that participation in decision-making processes and in the execution of such processes is a central dimension of this model.

This assertion rests not only on the fact that participation is the strongest element of democratic practice but also on the understanding that only through it is it possible "to experience non-authoritarian forms of exercising power, to intervene in the organization's decisions, and to collectively define the course of work" (Libâneo, 2018, p. 89).

All these qualities support the belief that democratic management is a viable path to transforming the school environment, for by prompting the (re)organization of relationships among school actors from a more dialogical perspective, it dismantles the hierarchical system that concentrates decision-making power in the hands of the principal and makes possible the construction of a truly antiracist school based on the collaboration of multiple social actors.

Thus, Paro (2016, p. 13) states that, far from being a utopia, the management model based on the "effective participation of parents, educators, students, and school staff" is a fully viable proposal for resolving the conflicts and challenges faced by educational institutions.

Grounded in the potential of this management model to overcome or collectively address school problems, reflection on how the manager can articulate such participation in the educational environment becomes essential in order to avoid homogenizing views of the subject, family, and society that hinder the plurality of perspectives.

Therefore, envisioning the realization of racially critical and antiracist education (Glass, 2012) – that is, education committed to the analysis and confrontation of racial



issues in the school environment – it is argued that the school, in adopting the characteristics of democratic management, should establish governing councils that ensure active community participation in decision-making, and develop close relationships with the Black movement and with researchers from the Centers for Afro-Brazilian Studies (Núcleos de Estudos Afro-brasileiros – NEABs), as these are the actors best equipped to contribute to this objective.

The creation of collaborative networks among the school staff around an antiracist education project, in addition to being necessary, is fully feasible, since the LDBEN (Brazil, 2017) grants schools the autonomy to, in strict compliance with the recommendations of legal provisions, develop their own pedagogical proposals in partnership and shared responsibility with other entities.

The very Opinion No. 003/2004, which approved the National Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations and for the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture (Diretrizes Nacionais para a Educação das Relações Étnicoraciais e para o Ensino de História e Cultura Afro-brasileira e Africana), reinforces this idea by stating that the success of State public policies aimed at an education that promotes reparation, recognition, and appreciation of the identity, culture, and history of Black Brazilians "depends [...] on joint work, on the articulation between school educational processes, public policies, and social movements," since "ethical, cultural, pedagogical, and political changes in ethnic-racial relations are not limited to the school" (Brazil, 2004, p. 5), but rather become the responsibility of all.

Being such undertaking a collective commitment embedded in the fabric of social life, it is unreasonable for the responsibility for building this educational project to continue being attributed exclusively to teachers.

Analyzing the problem from this perspective makes it evident that assigning teachers the sole responsibility for this educational project is equivalent to exempting other members of the school institution – that is, students, managers, staff, and families – from their respective responsibilities.

Within the school context, all must be protagonists of antiracist education. All must be engaged in dismantling prejudices and stereotypes, as well as committed to improving human relations. After all, racism is not a problem that affects only Black



people; it "imprints negative marks on the subjectivity of Black people and also on those who discriminate" (Brazil, 2004, p. 16).

It should be emphasized that one of the first to be invested in this cause must be the school manager. It is the manager's responsibility to lead and motivate the school community in implementing affirmative policies that incorporate ethnic-racial themes into the institution's official plans and projects. Furthermore, the school manager must provide adequate support for teaching practices and promote exchanges between the school and Black movements, with the aim of offering formative and outreach activities for teachers and students.

More than any other educational agent, the school manager must be committed to confronting racism within the institution. After all, a manager who does not take a stand against racist attitudes in the school "ends up ratifying them, demonstrating a viewpoint that can be understood as institutional, since management also represents the entire school" (Macedo, 2016, p. 108).

And, as management is an institutional representation, it is its role to reflect on the activities carried out, promote the decentralization of decisions and tasks, so that the various school actors have the opportunity to actively participate in conceiving the antiracist education project. This project must, imperatively, incorporate the community's real aspirations, desires, and expectations regarding ethnic-racial issues, as established by the National Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations.

The school manager should no longer be seen as a bureaucrat focused exclusively on academic performance and school achievement indicators. The manager of the present must understand that the sharing of power and leadership is essential for transformation to take hold in the school environment. Moreover, they must recognize that effective changes in the institutional routine will only be possible through the construction of dialogues and the provision of collective spaces for questioning and revising practices that contradict the foundations of democratic management.

That said, if racism is a social anti-value that stems from the cultivation of intolerance and the rejection of diversity, both in the family and in society, seeping into the school environment due to the absence of a structured dialogue on its issues, then



there is no other path to reverse this harm than opening the school to confrontation.

This confrontation must be developed with the aim of instilling in individuals, from the earliest years of their schooling, values grounded in respect for differences and human dignity.

## Antiracist pedagogical practices in the context of early childhood education

Early childhood education is a stage of schooling regarded as the ideal moment to work with antiracist practices in the school, as it is during this phase that children begin to construct their identity and to form their "concepts and values about life, beauty, good, evil, ugliness, among other things" (Brazil, 2006, p. 31), which can foster the proper cultivation and learning of ethnic-racial relations.

Moreover, the finding that children at this stage of schooling already understand the effects of racism and display "an awareness of racial differences" (Oliveira & Abramowicz, 2010, p. 212), which may lead them to develop prejudiced feelings toward those who are different from themselves, has increasingly accelerated discussions on the applicability of antiracist pedagogical practices capable of reversing this scenario.

Antiracist pedagogical practices are planned actions aimed at combating racism and preventing racial prejudice and mark-based prejudice<sup>1</sup> from spreading within the school environment and acquiring a broader social presence. The development of such actions is supported by the main regulatory provisions of Brazilian education.

The National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations and for the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture contribute to the construction of antiracist pedagogical practices in schools (Brazil, 2004).

Resolution No. 5 of December 17, 2009, which establishes the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação Infantil – DCNEI), determines that different cultures must be incorporated into the organization of pedagogical proposals in early childhood education institutions, filling the legal gap left by Law No. 10.639/2003, which instituted

the mandatory teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture only for elementary and secondary education.

According to this document, in items VIII to X of Article 8, pedagogical proposals in early childhood education schools must ensure children's cultural appropriation and recognition, as well as their dignity against forms of real or symbolic violence (Brazil, 2009).

VIII - children's appropriation of the historical-cultural contributions of Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, Asians, Europeans, and other peoples from the Americas;

IX - the recognition, appreciation, respect, and interaction of children with African and Afro-Brazilian histories and cultures, as well as the fight against racism and discrimination;

X - the dignity of the child as a human being and protection against any form of violence – physical or symbolic – and negligence within the institution or perpetrated by the family, ensuring that violations are referred to the competent authorities (Brazil, 2009, pp. 2-3).

In light of these recommendations, it becomes evident that early childhood education professionals can no longer underestimate children's cognitive capacities under the justification of their young age (Marques & Dornelles, 2019). Instead, they must be prepared to develop actions that combat any discourse grounded in the idea of racial superiority, helping to delegitimize prejudiced views internalized within the family context.

Aware of the difficulties faced and motivated to assist school managers and teachers in this mission, some authors, based on the guidelines of official early childhood education documents, have proposed a set of practices that are characterized as antiracist by their ongoing commitment to the (re)education of ethnic-racial relations and also to combating racism and all forms of discrimination and differential treatment that persist in the school environment (Cavalleiro, 2001).

Dias (2007), covering the fields of experience in early childhood education,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Original: "VIII - a apropriação pelas crianças das contribuições histórico-culturais dos povos indígenas, afrodescendentes, asiáticos, europeus e de outros países da América;

IX - o reconhecimento, a valorização, o respeito e a interação das crianças com as histórias e as culturas africanas, afro-brasileiras, bem como o combate ao racismo e à discriminação;

X - a dignidade da criança como pessoa humana e a proteção contra qualquer forma de violência — física ou simbólica — e negligência no interior da instituição ou praticadas pela família, prevendo os encaminhamentos de violações para instâncias competentes" (Brazil, 2009, p. 2-3).

demonstrates that these practices can be implemented in various ways – whether through storytelling and reading of children's books portraying Black characters in positions of prestige; through workshops for making dolls and toys connected to Afro-Brazilian and African history; through the reading and reinterpretation of artworks produced by different ethnic-racial groups; or even through posters and murals that have an intrinsic relationship with the cultural diversity present in the school.

Additionally, Silva Jr., Bento, and Carvalho (2012), in the book Early Childhood Education and Practices that Promote Racial Equality (*Educação infantil e práticas promotoras de igualdade racial*), present several other activities, games, and play experiences that schools can use to foster the (re)education of ethnic-racial relations among children.

Among these activities, those associated with language, such as pretend play and dramatization, and those related to image and body, such as creating photo albums of the children and their families and organizing "beauty corners" (cantos da beleza) stand out. These spaces enable meaningful work on children's physical characteristics and on different types of hair, products, accessories, combs, and hairstyles that support the process of building their identity and recognizing their image and body as valued.

These activities are seen as essential to the deconstruction of racism, which manifests itself in early childhood education through "affective and bodily relations between adults and children and in their spontaneous play" (Oliveira & Abramowicz, 2010, p. 221). After all, they contribute to eliminating the feeling many children harbor of not being accepted for their racial identity, as evidenced by their desire to deny their racial condition.

Furthermore, as already demonstrated, schools dedicated to the education of young children must continuously evaluate the organization of their spaces, schedules, and materials so as not to reproduce the erasure of ethnic diversity in childhood and not to offer distorted or stereotypical images of different racial groups.

Highlighting Afro-Brazilian and African histories and acknowledging racial belonging as a necessary element for building a positive identity are aspects that must be considered from early childhood education onward. Otherwise, this will contribute

to reinforcing the structural racism discussed by Silva Jr., Bento, and Carvalho (2012), which specifically affects the learning of Black children.

For this reason, defending that children have these experiences with ethnic-racial themes early in their schooling is not only a way to preserve their constitutionally guaranteed rights but also to ensure that they build positive memories and references about themselves, their histories, and their African and Afro-Brazilian cultures. The argument is pertinent that the absence of such references leads Black children to reject their racial origin and acts as one of the factors perpetuating racism in Brazilian society.

Given the range of reasons presented, the discussion moves forward to the methodological characterization of the research conducted and, subsequently, to the analysis of the selected scientific articles, in order to understand how the aforementioned practices are being applied in the context of early childhood education and to what extent they reflect the commitment of school managers and the school community to building an antiracist education that fosters self-worth, especially among Black children.

## **Methodological Pathway**

This study is characterized as qualitative research, of the literature review type, aimed at developing a reflection on the role of school managers in the development of antiracist pedagogical practices, with emphasis on the analysis and discussion of the context of Brazilian early childhood education.

To this end, the analysis focused on articles published between 2015 and 2019 that relate to the specified level of education. An in-depth search was conducted in the databases of the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and the journal portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* – CAPES), using the following keywords: "antiracist education" (*educação antirracista*), "ethnic-racial education" (*educação étnico-racial*), "antiracist pedagogical practices" (*práticas pedagógicas antirracistas*), and "racism in childhood" (*racismo na infância*).

By applying the keywords and the filters available on each platform regarding

the time frame, language, and type of work, and excluding duplicates – i.e., those available in both platforms – a total of 21 articles potentially related to the topic were found.

However, after reading this preliminary selection, only 7 articles were chosen to compose the corpus of analysis, as they directly or indirectly addressed the role of school managers in connection with the elements pertaining to the sphere of antiracist education, as presented in the table below.

Table 1 – Scientific articles published between 2015 and 2019 in the databases searched

Authors	Title
Aguiar; Piotto; Correa, 2015	Ethnic-Racial Relations and Teacher Education: Situations of Racial Discrimination in Early Childhood Education (Relações étnico-raciais e formação docente: situações de discriminação racial na educação infantil)
Rodrigues; Oliveira; Santos, 2016	Challenges in the Implementation of Law No. 10,639/03: A Case Study of Municipalities in the State of São Paulo (Desafios da implementação da Lei nº 10.639/03: um estudo de caso de municípios do Estado de São Paulo)
Marinho; Martins, 2017	Early Childhood Education and Ethnic-Racial Relations: Impacts of Teacher Education on Educational Practices (Educação infantil e relações étnico-raciais: impactos da formação docente nas práticas educativas)
Cardoso; Cardoso, 2017	Diversity Goes to the Child Care Center: Reflections on the Implementation of Federal Law No. 10,639/03 at the Morro da Queimada Child Care Center in Florianópolis (A diversidade vai à creche: reflexões sobre a implementação da Lei Federal 10.639/03 na Creche do Morro da Queimada em Florianópolis)
Silva; Dias, 2018	Early Childhood Education and Decolonizing Pedagogical Practices: Intercultural Possibilities (A educação infantil e as práticas pedagógicas descolonizadoras: possibilidades interculturais)

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Chaves; Oliveira, 2018	"Jefferson Said My Hair Is Ugly, It's Bad": Curly Hair and the Empowerment of Black Girls in Child Care Centers ("O Jefferson falou que o meu cabelo é feio, é ruim": cabelo crespo e empoderamento de meninas negras na creche)
Marques; Dornelles, 2019	The Myth of the Absence of Racial Prejudice in Early Childhood Education in Brazil (O mito da ausência de preconceito racial na educação infantil no Brasil)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The articles were discussed using a descriptive-explanatory approach, following the discursive textual analysis proposed by Moraes and Galiazzi (2006), who define it as a self-organizing process composed of three stages: unitarization, which consists of gathering data related to the research objectives; categorization, in which similar information is grouped to form the categories of analysis to be discussed; and communication, which involves constructing the text containing the authors' interpretations of the data and the categories formed

As a result of this targeted sequence, the following categories of analysis were selected and applied for the proper execution of the final stage: "The denial, minimization, and recognition of racist practices in early childhood education" and "The role of the school manager in proposing antiracist pedagogical practices," which are discussed below.

## What do the studies say? Analysis of academic production from 2015 to 2019

The analysis of academic production from 2015 to 2019 reveals different perspectives on racism in early childhood education and the role of school managers in promoting antiracist pedagogical practices. On the one hand, there is evidence of the persistence of denial and minimization of racism within educational institutions, which hinders the implementation of effective measures to address it. On the other hand, there are initiatives that acknowledge the existence of the problem and seek strategies to combat it, highlighting the importance of an engaged school management. Thus, the following subsections respectively explore the challenges related to

identifying and recognizing racist practices within the school environment, as well as the fundamental role of managers in formulating and implementing educational strategies that promote racial equity.

## The denial, minimization, and recognition of racist practices in early childhood education

A survey of scientific articles published between 2015 and 2019 shows a growing concern with addressing ethnic-racial issues, including the valorization of Afro-Brazilian and African culture and history, the empowerment of Black children's voices, and the construction of a formative dialogue focused on antiracist practices.

However, while the ultimate aim of these studies is to construct discourse and practice that oppose ethnic-racial prejudice and discrimination, the situations they describe, whether real or theoretical, make explicit the existence of racism that is either denied or minimized. Even when it is acknowledged, the actions that should address it tend to be timid or institutionally limited; that is, the act of recognition often acquires a negative connotation, as can be seen in the descriptions contained in Table 2:

Table 2 – Cases of denial, minimization, and recognition of racist practices identified in the corpus

Authors	Excerpts from the corpus
Aguiar; Piotto; Correa, 2015	"They witnessed nursery teachers commenting on the '[] difficulty of managing certain types of hair,' referring to that of Black children, which they described as 'bad and frizzy.' The interns added to this description by noting the way one of the teachers referred to the children's hair as 'bandit.' According to the teacher's explanation, also recorded by the interns, the hair earned this 'nickname' because it was like a bandit: if it is not 'imprisoned,' it is 'armed' <sup>2</sup> ." (p. 381). <sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Translator's note: In Portuguese, this is a play on words involving "preso" (both "arrested" and "tied up") and "armado" (both "armed" and "frizzy").

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Original: "Elas presenciaram professoras do berçário comentando sobre a '[...] dificuldade de arrumar certos tipos de cabelo', referindo-se aos das crianças negras, que seriam 'ruins e armados'. As estagiárias completam essa descrição destacando o modo como uma das professoras se referia ao cabelo das crianças: 'bandido'.



	"A boy was dragged by the teacher, who held him by his T-shirt, from the classroom to the school office door. The students mentioned that, when they gave the oral report, they did not realize, and therefore did not comment, that the boy was Black." (p. 382).4
Rodrigues; Oliveira; Santos, 2016	"The majority of professionals, whether White or Black, acknowledge the existence of racism in Brazilian society. However, when the subject is racism in school, the prevailing view is that the problem is smaller there, to the point that more than a quarter of participants denied its existence. The perception that racism does not exist in the school environment leads to an important reflection on how to develop pedagogies to combat racism when teachers and managers are unable to identify it within the institution, treating it as something external. Racism is thus seen as a problem of other social spaces, not of the school." (p. 291).5
Marinho; Martins, 2017	"Yes, but I wouldn't call it discrimination, because since they are young, in Early Childhood Education – mine are four years old – I think they don't have much awareness yet. I see it more as them reproducing what they hear at home, that's how I see it. Not that They don't yet know what it means to discriminate; they reproduce what they hear at home, saying 'You're Black,' 'You are' They say something, a word they shouldn't say, but because they hear it at home, they don't really know what they are saying. (Teacher Helena /

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Segundo a explicação da professora, também registrada pelas estagiárias, o cabelo levava esse 'apelido' porque seria como um bandido: se não está preso, está armado" (Aguiar; Piotto; Correa, 2015, p. 381).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Original: "um menino foi arrastado pela professora, que o segurava pela camiseta, da sala de aula até a porta da secretaria da escola. As alunas mencionam que, quando fizeram o relato oral, não se deram conta, e por isso não comentaram, que o menino era negro" (Aguiar; Piotto; Correa, 2015, p. 382).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Original: "A maioria dos profissionais, seja branco ou negro, reconhece a existência de racismo na sociedade brasileira. Porém, quando o assunto é racismo na escola, predomina a visão de que nela o problema é menor, a ponto de ele ser negado por mais de um quarto dos participantes. A percepção de inexistência de racismo no ambiente escolar leva à importante reflexão sobre como desenvolver pedagogias de combate ao racismo quando professores e gestores não conseguem identificá-lo dentro da instituição, situando-o como algo externo. O racismo, assim, é visto como um problema de outros espaços sociais, e não da escola" (Rodrigues; Oliveira; Santos, 2016, p. 291).

	Black)" (p. 60, emphasis in the original).6
Chaves; Oliveira, 2018	"It was the end of nap time in the Mini Group I classroom. At that moment, the 12 children (7 boys and 5 girls) were being carefully observed by the teacher and another educator. However, at a certain moment, Alana, age 3, woke up holding the hair tie that had been securing her curly hair. Without saying anything, she left her classroom, crossed the cafeteria, and went to meet one of the researchers. Her hair had been divided into three small 'birotes' (hair buns) that came loose while she was sleeping. The teacher called out to her and asked where she was going, without receiving a response. Alana arrived and nestled into the lap of one of the researchers without saying anything; but, crying, she placed the hair tie in the researcher's hands, who promptly asked what had happened. She snuggled closer into the lap, looked at the researcher, and said: 'Jefferson said my hair is ugly, it's bad,' and began crying more intensely." (p. 182, emphasis in the original). <sup>7</sup>

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The issue identified in the excerpts presented concerns the emphasis placed on the recognition or non-recognition of racist practices. In other words, while in some instances the articles indicate that respondents, whether school managers, teachers, or student teachers, at some point perceive that an act of racism has been committed,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Original: "Sim, mas eu não digo discriminação, porque como eles são pequenos na Educação Infantil, os meus têm quatro anos, eu acho que eles não têm muita noção ainda, eu vejo muito assim que eles reproduzem as falas que eles ouvem em casa, eu penso assim. Não que... Eles não sabem ainda o que é isso discriminar, eles reproduzem o que ouvem em casa, dizem 'Você é preto', 'Você é' ... Dizem alguma coisa, alguma palavra que não deveria dizer, mas porque eles ouvem em casa, não sabem muito bem o que estão falando. (Professora Helena/ Negra)" (Marinho; Martins, 2017, p. 60, destaque dos autores).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Original: "Era o final da hora do sono, na sala do Mini Grupo I. Nesse momento, as 12 crianças (7 meninos e 5 meninas) eram cuidadosamente observadas pela professora e por uma outra educadora. No entanto, em determinado momento, Alana, com 3 anos, acorda segurando o elástico que prendia o seu cabelo crespo. Sem falar nada, sai da sua sala, atravessa o refeitório e vai ao encontro de uma das pesquisadoras. O seu cabelo estava dividido em 3 'birotes' pequenos que se soltaram enquanto dormia. A professora chamou por ela e perguntou onde ela iria, sem obter resposta. Alana chegou se aconchegando no colo de uma das pesquisadoras, sem falar nada; mas, chorando, pôs o elástico nas mãos dela, que logo perguntou o que tinha acontecido. Ela se aconchegou mais no colo, olhou para a pesquisadora e disse: 'O Jefferson falou que meu cabelo é feio, é ruim', e começou a chorar mais intensamente." (Chaves; Oliveira, 2018, p. 182, destaque das autoras).

in others there appears to be resistance to admitting that one is indeed dealing with racist practices. In such cases, the existence of racism in the school is denied, or attempts are made, in some cases, to minimize the event.

For example, while in the article by Aguiar, Piotto, and Correa (2015), interns in a Pedagogy program face difficulties in identifying racist practices – believing that certain situations they witnessed could not be so categorized – the article by Rodrigues, Oliveira, and Santos (2016, p. 293) shows that some of the school managers and teachers interviewed deny the existence of racism in their workplaces. The explanation for this, according to the authors, lies in a certain novelty surrounding the issue, which manifests as "little or no knowledge regarding the regulations and the teaching on the subject."

In turn, the teachers interviewed by Marinho and Martins (2017) demonstrate certain attempts to minimize racist discourse from students toward students, from teachers toward students, and from staff toward students, believing that one of the approaches is to focus more on the matter of offense than on the acts of racism themselves.

In comparison to the aforementioned positions, the article by Chaves and Oliveira (2018) moves both in the direction of identifying racism in early childhood education, with the aim of curbing it, and toward the formation of practices that confront it rather than minimize it. These practices are fostered by dialogue and the need for exposure rather than silencing, in order to make evident the high level of harm that concealment or denial can represent for the psychological and cognitive development of the children targeted by such practices.

Regarding the other articles, in Cardoso and Cardoso (2017) the focus is the analysis of educational documents that were enacted in Florianópolis (State of Santa Catarina) or that were intended to address the inclusion of ethnic-racial issues and topics in both early childhood education and in the first years of elementary education (*Ensino Fundamental* I) in the municipal public school system.

The authors acknowledge that the documents analyzed show significant advances. In part, they do not yield to the silencing of institutional racism, although they do contain gaps regarding the topic, at times adopting universalist conceptions of

diversity and failing to specify which actions/practices should be prioritized for teacher and student training in addressing racism. According to the authors, such progress is due to the constant advocacy of the Black movement in favor of this legal recognition and its application in the school context.

In turn, the article by Marques and Dornelles (2019), although also focused on legislation, unlike the previous one, places considerable emphasis on the mistaken defense by some managers and teachers of the idea that children are unaware of what racism is – something that hinders the proper implementation of the law – and admits, based on other research, that Black children are less likely than White children to be recipients of affectionate practices.

When this threefold finding of denial, minimization, and recognition of racism is confronted with the proposition of necessary practices to combat it within the educational sphere, the insights presented in Table 3 emerge, indicating some of the practices identified in the studies analyzed:

Table 3 – Examples of anti-racist pedagogical practices identified in the corpus

Authors	Practices
Silva; Dias, 2018	<ul> <li>organization of playful spaces;</li> <li>acquisition and provision of toys;</li> <li>acquisition and provision of a literary collection focused on ethnic-racial themes;</li> <li>incorporation of cultural aspects into the school's regular and festive programming (dances and other artistic expressions of African or Afro-Brazilian origin);</li> <li>encouragement of the positive construction of Black children's self-image.</li> </ul>
Chaves; Oliveira, 2018	<ul> <li>encouragement of the positive construction of Black children's self-image, especially girls;</li> <li>establishment of a circuit of emotional exchanges and attention in order to combat "the unequal distribution of affection in educational spaces" (p. 174).</li> </ul>

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The article by Silva and Dias (2018) reflects, based on interviews with the managers and teachers, on school advances including the treatment of ethnic-racial themes as a legal requirement. The authors use the expression "children and Black" (Silva; Dias, 2018, p. 131), combining a double subjectivity, to refer to the school public who, in their view, are most affected by attempts at silencing and invisibilization. Furthermore, the article diagnoses a gap regarding the playful representation (dolls) of Black boys.

Chaves and Oliveira (2018), in turn, identify themselves as teachers and administrators with extensive experience, which is why they propose to present their lived experiences in dialogue with the theoretical framework pertinent to the writing theme. It is understood that the aim of the article is to discuss the aesthetic representation specifically of Black girls, that is, the body and hair acquire centrality in the work.

In addition, the authors further problematize the use of toys as important tools for combating educational racism and emphasize the role that the playful dimension can acquire as an axis for promoting ethno-racial equality at school. After all, the toy is not a neutral artifact and may likewise reproduce individualizing aspects of learning centered on only one cultural nucleus, that of the white child.

In general terms, underlying the discursive set of this corpus is the idea that it is in the contact and construction of children's subjectivity, socially oriented, that the perception or not of racism is present because, if family and school coexistence stimulate confrontation, discussion, and understanding of ethnic differences, the affirmation of ethnic-racial identity and belonging will be sustained. If the opposite occurs, it is through, for example, the projection of oneself into an idealized and socially acceptable appearance that the denial of one's own self will be concealed.

As emphasized by several authors referenced in the first two sections, among them Libâneo (2018), there can be no practices if there are not one or more agents. And specifically regarding anti-racist pedagogical practices, the study seeks to show that not only the actors closest to the students, in this case, the teachers, but all those who are part of the school circle are equally called upon to take an active part in this

project of revitalizing ethno-racial experiences and subjectivities.

## The role of the school manager in proposing anti-racist pedagogical practices

The identification of the potentialities of the school manager in the development of anti-racist education has occupied a lesser place in Brazilian academic productions published between 2015 and 2019, making it urgent to carry out reflections that address this gap in order to highlight this educational actor and to bring visibility to the reasons behind their still persistent secondary role in the formulation and implementation of pedagogical practices aimed at combating discrimination and educational racism.

Not surprisingly, when focusing on the figure of the school manager, what has been observed is that their performance has been virtually nonexistent regarding the proposition of anti-racist pedagogical practices or the strengthening of those already existing within their professional sphere of activity.

In light of this reality, part of the corpus suggests actions that can be developed by this educational actor, following three basic axes of constitution: the pedagogical, focused on the curriculum; the subjective, focused on building an affective circuit; and the structural, centered on the organization of the school space, as shown in the table below:

Table 4 – Guiding axes for the school manager's role as indicated in the *corpus* 

Authors	Axes
Silva; Dias, 2018	- The manager's actions should follow an intercultural project of decolonization in all its dimensions (of knowledge, of power, of being, of speaking, of seeing). In this way, it is believed that anti-racist pedagogical practices may achieve greater reach and adherence. From this perspective, the curriculum is one of the dimensions highlighted as the starting point for proposing new practices oriented toward human rights education.
Chaves; Oliveira, 2018	- The manager's actions should structure anti- racist practices that originate in the
	construction and reinforcement of an affective

	dimension proves fundamental in daily interactions with students who feel denied and excluded in different situations and by different actors within the educational environment. The proposal is to focus on formulating practices of care and attention that do not underestimate the medium- and long-term psychological damage caused by the enactment of a dynamic of preference versus neglect.  - The manager's actions should be oriented
Marques; Dornelles, 2019	toward proposing anti-racist practices that reconfigure the living spaces of educational actors in training, through, for example, the recomposition of the ludic dimension – an important moment of socialization and of the formation of personality and self-image for learners.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The article by Silva and Dias (2018, p. 118), citing Petronilha Silva, reinforces the intention that public managers operating in formal educational settings must embrace the idea that Brazilian education is undergoing a process of "Blackening", which entails the denaturalization of prejudice and the consolidation of actions aimed at historical recovery, as well as the creation of spaces for speech rather than silencing.

According to the authors, this is one of the most opportune moments for school managers to contribute alongside their peers to the formulation of anti-racist practices, since all eyes are gradually turning to the school to assess whether the winds of transformation have been welcomed and have borne fruit in due time.

One of the recommendations for this educational actor is discursive alignment from an intercultural perspective. That is, one must first identify and acknowledge the weight and semantic load that colonial discourse has imposed on Brazilian society over the centuries and, from a critical recognition of this problem, gather the school community to deliberately deliberate on the construction of its curriculum in an act of decolonization, supported by the principles of democratic management as defined and characterized by Paro (2016).

It is certain that the push toward change faces considerable tension and

resistance, which emerge in the statements of managers, teachers, and student guardians who believe that the progress achieved is already sufficient and that there is little more to be done. Such a stance tips the scales against transformative efforts, fosters the emergence of commonplaces for discursive support, and fills the school with uncertainty. Yet a turning point is reached when the gaze is trained to perceive difference and to address it sensitively, not merely as a matter of legal obligation.

The synthesis thus indicates that anti-racist practices, whose initiative is associated with the school manager, according to Silva and Dias (2018), should focus on reinventing the school, its language, and operational procedures through the reworking of the curriculum, carefully discussed, analyzed, and deliberated by the school community.

Chaves and Oliveira (2018) clearly note that anti-racist practice does not always need to take the form of a grand project designed for execution in specific stages. Any proposal aimed at profoundly altering the school routine in order to correct historical distortions committed by managers, teachers, staff, students, and guardians counts toward changing the scenario.

In this sense, the authors observe that affection emerges as a fertile field from which highly meaningful actions for all involved may arise. In this regard, the school manager, exercising their functional prerogatives, can act by proposing the organization of new institutional routines that prioritize the formation of an affective circuit in which differentiated treatment is set aside in favor of an empathetic approach.

In turn, Marques and Dornelles (2019) find that one possibility to be explored in proposing anti-racist pedagogical practices is for the school manager to focus on the ludic dimension, which is an important part of lived experience and the sharing of experiences during early childhood education.

Play, in addition to being addressed in guiding documents for this educational stage, is also a social practice. Children handle objects and assign meaning to them. Thus, school projects that bring children closer to toys varying in form, appearance, and content can contribute positively to the deconstruction of stereotypes that extend beyond the intimate circles of a given individual.

More broadly, play can also serve as the object of anti-racist pedagogical



practices if the manager, in association with institutional peers, proposes games and activities that integrate rather than divide, allowing children the necessary confrontation to realize that what seemingly separates them is substantially less than what unites them as members of the same society.

Consequently, among the elements emerging from the corpus are proposals for anti-racist actions such as respect for others for who they are – a criterion that stands as an urgent institutional demand; equalizing opportunities for the use of school spaces; and sharing affection without any preferences or stereotyped judgments. Also included are the celebration of moments dedicated to sharing life experiences, as well as encouraging the creation of events that integrate the entire school body in games or varied cultural manifestations; in addition to investing in or designing projects capable of securing public funding or establishing public–private partnerships for the acquisition of goods (books, toys, furniture, etc.) and services that can benefit the broader community.

Part of the articles also stress that the school manager is increasingly being called to play a leading role, not necessarily as the main speaker or as the sole bearer of responsibility, but to recognize the important function they can fulfill in mediating relationships among the other educational actors within their professional circle.

Fully aware of the tasks demanded by their role, the school manager must assume the duty of articulating different segments of society and their sphere of action in order to contribute to the formulation and strengthening of pedagogical practices consciously designed and defined by the collective of educational actors to implement structural changes already inscribed within the path of an essentially anti-racist educational project.

An anti-racist education is not a possibility for the future, but an urgency of the present. The changes each individual must undertake must find a place of acceptance in the present moment, which demands positioning as a complement to discourse and proposals as a complement to ideals. Otherwise, if this path, opened with effort by different actors in past decades and in the face of much resistance from interest groups, is not properly nurtured, it is unlikely that a shift in mentality toward plurality and against racism will become a reality.

## **Final Considerations**

At this point, some important observations about what has been presented stand out, among which are the timid engagement of the school manager in the process of defining anti-racist pedagogical practices and the fact that many of these practices are proposed by agents external to formal educational spaces.

Regarding the first aspect, the articles showed that, although the school manager is listed as a fundamental educational actor in combating racism, their role continues to be that of a supporting figure who has not yet moved to the center of the process, with cases in which they are not even able to perceive the proliferation of racist practices by other institutional actors.

As for the second aspect, it was possible to see that some articles, directly or indirectly, steered their discussions toward problematizing educational racism by proposing measures to curb it. Such responses were articulated by highlighting the legal dimension, pointing to deficiencies identified in the legal framework on the subject; the ludic dimension; the valorization of aesthetic aspects; the strengthening of the pedagogy of affection; the creation of spaces for experiencing and engaging with artistic or literary elements of African and Afro-Brazilian cultures, as well as their histories.

On the other hand, a negative point observed in part of the corpus was the identification of attempts to deny or minimize educational racism. It is alarming that, in some cases, those who should be most committed to combating it are the ones executing actions of segregation and exclusion against a public historically and socially subjected to the rules of cultural hierarchization and to the moral deviations of a population that sustains the false belief that Brazil is a country of equals. These barriers underscore the urgent need to deepen studies on institutional resistance to the implementation of anti-racist pedagogical practices.

One limitation of this study is the temporal and geographic restriction of the analysis, which focused on the years 2015 to 2019 and on the Brazilian context. Future research could broaden this scope by covering longer periods and making international

comparisons to verify how different countries have addressed school management and anti-racist education in early childhood.

In addition, future studies could more thoroughly explore the training of school managers for the implementation of anti-racist practices, identifying specific challenges and factors that may contribute to a more active protagonism of these professionals in structuring effective educational projects. The impact of such practices on children, especially in the construction of racial identity and emotional development, also represents a promising field of investigation.

Throughout each of the two initial sections, the aim was to highlight ways of articulating the school manager's role with democratic principles, as well as to emphasize proposals that could be incorporated into early childhood education in order to break down ethnic-racial boundaries and promote genuine integration among children.

It is evident that excessively complex projects are not necessary for such proposals and intersubjective articulations to materialize. This shows that the claim made by some managers, justifying the lack of transformation due to scarce resources, is unfounded.

What is truly lacking – as the corpus clearly expressed – is, on one hand, the willingness of educational actors to commit to an inclusive, diverse, and ethnically responsible education; and, on the other, the definitive understanding of the urgency of this project, which must be implemented today and not postponed any longer.

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## **Notes**

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The article by Aguiar, Piotto, and Correa (2015, p. 378), one of the texts to be discussed and analyzed, defines mark-based prejudice (*preconceito de marca*) as "a deprecatory view associated with a person's skin color combined with other characteristics, such as level of education, occupation, and personal habits; akin to a tendency to overlook the dark skin of a successful individual."