

# Auxiliares de classe da educação infantil: um balanço sobre editais e pesquisas acerca destes trabalhadores

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## Resumo

Estabelecemos como tema central os auxiliares de classe<sup>3</sup> da Educação Infantil, assim objetivamos conhecer o perfil para ocupação desse cargo e o que as produções científicas revelam sobre o tema. Analisamos três editais de concurso público para o cargo. Assim, realizamos uma pesquisa nos anais da Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação (ANPEd), entre os anos de 2007-2019, e no Catálogo de dissertações e teses da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES). Identificamos que não há consenso quanto ao perfil para ocupação do cargo e que são parcas as produções científicas que tomam como objeto/sujeito de estudos estes trabalhadores.

**Palavras-chave:** Creche. Cuidar e educar. Lugar profissional.

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<sup>3</sup> We chose to use the term *classroom assistant*, but the role is also referred to as: early childhood development assistant, *pajem* (attendant), class assistant, monitor, etc. The variation in terminology occurs from region to region, as there is no consensus regarding the role.

# **Classroom assistants of Early Childhood Education: an overview about public notices and researches on these workers**

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## **Abstract**

We established classroom assistants of Early Childhood Education as our central theme, thus aiming to understand the profile for this position and what scientific productions reveal about the subject. We analyzed three public competition notices for the position. Thus, we conducted a search in the annals of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPEd), between the years 2007-2019, and in the Catalog of dissertations and theses of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). We identified that there is no consensus regarding the profile for this position and that there are few scientific productions that take these workers as the object/subject of studies.

**Keywords:** Day care center. Caring and educating. Professional place.

# **Auxiliares de aula de educación infantil: un panorama de convocatorias e investigaciones sobre estos trabajadores**

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## **Resumen**

Establecimos como tema central los auxiliares de clase de Educación Infantil, por lo que objetivamos conocer el perfil para ocupar este cargo y qué revelan las producciones científicas sobre el tema. Analizamos tres convocatorias de concurso público para el puesto. Así, realizamos investigaciones en los anales de la Asociación Nacional de Estudios de Posgrado e Investigación en Educación (ANPEd), entre los años 2007-2019, y en el Catálogo de dissertaciones y tesis de la Coordinación de Perfeccionamiento del Personal de Educación Superior (CAPES). Identificamos que no hay consenso respecto del perfil para ocupar el cargo y que existen pocas producciones científicas que tomen a estos trabajadores como objeto/sujeto de estudios.

**Palabras clave:** Guardería. Cuidar y educar. Lugar profesional.

## Classroom assistants of Early Childhood Education: an overview about public notices and researches on these workers

### Introduction

For a long period in history, society perceived children as miniature adults, and their specific needs were not met. In other words, there was no sense of childhood as a distinct phase of life. This lack of attention gradually changed due to economic transformations, shifts in societal living arrangements, and advancements in the fields of Psychology, Sociology, and Anthropology, which provided new knowledge and ways to understand young human beings.

With the advent of modernity, society began to show concern and compassion for these young individuals, recognizing them as different from adults and possessing unique ways of relating to and interacting with the world around them. It is in this context that the process of "pampering," care, and protection of children began, with bourgeois families being the first to experience this shift in behavior toward their offspring (Ariès, 2018).

Over time, the need to protect children led to the creation of spaces external to the family. Institutions were built to care for children during specific periods of the day when mothers were absent due to their need to engage in labor outside the home (Kuhlmann Jr., 2015). Thus, in Brazil, daycare centers were initially established to care for children while ensuring that mothers had the conditions to perform labor activities outside the domestic sphere (VIEIRA, 2016).

Now, in the "condition of belonging to the Brazilian education system, the changes implemented within this system impact Early Childhood Education" (Vieira; Cocô, 2018, p. 213). As a result, Early Childhood Education Centers (*Centros de Educação Infantil - CEIs*)<sup>4</sup> The educational qualification requirement for teachers at this stage of Basic Education is established by the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação - LDB*) (Brazil, 1996) and seeks to reinforce the educational status of these institutions. Historically, when daycare centers were linked to Social Assistance, no formal qualifications were required for those working in childcare. It was only necessary to be a mother and to like children, as the responsibility for caring for young children was historically assigned to women (Arce, 2001). In Early Childhood Education classrooms, the teacher is responsible for both caregiving and educating, a dual role that characterizes the specific nature of this stage of Basic Education.

However, the teacher is not the only professional working in CEI classrooms; classroom assistants also work alongside them, primarily handling caregiving tasks. Nevertheless, the work performed by these assistants is ultimately the responsibility of the teacher, as the classroom is

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<sup>4</sup> CEI refers to institutions that specifically serve children in the Early Childhood Education stage.

recognized as the teacher's professional domain. It is important to note that the working conditions for these two roles differ significantly: classroom assistants have longer working hours and receive lower pay.

There is also a clear social division of labor between teachers and assistants, with the role of *educating* assigned to the teacher and *caring* delegated to the assistant, thereby disrupting the caregiving-educating duality. As noted by Azevedo (2013), Tiriba (2005a, 2005b), Campos (1994), Brasil (2010), Santos, Timm, and Souza (2013), Kramer, Nunes, and Pena (2020), Cerisara (1999), and Santos and Ferreira (2019), the caregiving-educating binomial is fundamental in Early Childhood Education. It is inseparable and constitutes a non-transferable task that must be carried out integrally by a qualified teacher, as mandated by legislation.

The study presented here is qualitative in nature, as it seeks to start from the reality in which the subject is situated and what this reality can reveal to us. This approach allows data to be generated through the researcher's immersion in the production context (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). As such, the data were not quantified but rather described based on the reality observed.

Through a document-based investigation conducted in 2019, we sought to identify aspects contributing to discussions about the identity construction of classroom assistants, the development of a professional *non-place*, and the origins of the knowledge mobilized by these workers. To achieve this, we analyzed three public examination notices for the role of classroom assistant to problematize the issue. Additionally, we reviewed the proceedings of the *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação* (ANPEd) from 2007 to 2019 and the CAPES Catalog of Dissertations and Theses, without a temporal limit. This study aimed to understand how the profile for the classroom assistant role had been defined and what scientific literature revealed about the topic.

It is worth noting that the concept of a professional *non-place* is informed by the studies of French anthropologist Marc Augé (1994), who developed the notion of a *non-place*, understanding it as a space devoid of identity and relationships. In Augé's words, "*the space of the non-place creates neither singular identity nor relationships*" (AUGÉ, 1994, p.95).

## **Classroom Assistants: Understanding and Problematising o**

Early Childhood Education institutions have unique needs and conditions when compared to other educational institutions. Serving children from 0 to 5 years of age, professionals working in Early Childhood Education Centers (CEIs) carry out specialized tasks that must take into account the unique characteristics of working with young children. Educational activities must be intertwined

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with caregiving actions. In this context, caregiving and educating are inseparable, as emphasized by the National Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (BRASIL, 2010).

The integration of caregiving and educational practices has been present in CEIs since the emergence of the first institutions serving children, albeit not in the same form as we see today. These establishments originated in Brazil with a distinctly assistance-oriented character, driven by the need to care for young children. Daycare centers in Brazil were initially created to address the needs of mothers rather than the children themselves (Kuhlmann Jr., 2015; Vieira, 2016).

Social transformations in the late 19th century, such as the abolition of slavery and the growth of cities and industries, created a new national scenario in the early 20th century. Factories began to emerge, offering work opportunities for the low-income population and formerly enslaved individuals who migrated from rural to urban areas. However, various factors, including insufficient male wages to support families and the demand for female labor, led many mothers to become factory workers and/or domestic employees (Didonet, 2001). This new reality raised an urgent question: *Who would care for the children?*

To meet this demand, institutions dedicated to childcare were established, focusing on protecting children whose mothers worked outside the home (Kuhlmann Jr., 2015; 2000). This is corroborated by the founding of the first recorded daycare center in Brazil in 1899, which was intended for the children of workers at the Corcovado Textile Factory (Andrade, 2010; Aragão; Kreutz, 2010; Kuhlmann Jr., 2005). As Didonet (2001) states, the origin of daycare centers in Brazil is marked by the triad of *woman-work-child*.

Given the need to protect and care for the children of less privileged women, the early daycare centers were distinctly assistance-oriented and lacked an educational approach aimed at fostering child development. However, it is important to consider that education, understood as the teachings on how to live in society, is inherent in all our actions, as we learn through interactions with peers and the relationships we establish. Thus, even though these early establishments did not intend to provide education, educational acts inevitably occurred within them. Historical records indicate that even institutions solely focused on caregiving unintentionally offered some form of education, as they imparted cultural norms, values, and behaviors (AZEVEDO, 2013).

Linked to the actions of social assistance was the medical field, as hygienists and sanitarians supported the establishment of daycare centers as a strategy to educate mothers about child care and protect young individuals, given the high infant mortality rates at the time. With the

institutionalization of daycare centers, health professionals sought to develop a hygienic alternative to combat the practice of *criadeiras* women from lower social classes who cared for others' children a practice identified as a primary contributor to high child mortality rates (Vieira, 2016). In this context, daycare services assumed an assistance-oriented character and did not prioritize educational activities.

In the early 1970s, Early Childhood Education institutions began to be viewed as spaces to compensate for the "cultural deficiencies" of children from dominated social classes. This perceived "lack" of cultural elements was pointed to as the cause of school failure affecting primary schools, equivalent to today's elementary education (Kramer, 1982). The notion of "cultural deprivation" originated in the United States and influenced Brazilian social thought, even appearing in official documents. This perspective reinforced the view of Early Childhood Education as preparation for elementary school, giving these institutions a compensatory social role.

After the fall of the military regime in Brazil, a climate of change emerged, marked by the restoration of democracy and the achievement of social rights. This directly influenced the promulgation of the Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988), which addressed many popular demands, including the guarantee of the right to education for children, recognizing them as citizens. However, this right was only fully realized through the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) (Brazil, 1996), which recognized Early Childhood Education as the first stage of Basic Education and integrated daycare centers into the education system.

Thus, even "accidentally," educational acts occurred in daycare centers. These were likely not focused on cognitive, motor, or psychosocial development, as seen in contemporary Early Childhood Education institutions. Instead, children's learning was more closely tied to their experiences of living in society. It is evident that educational processes were present in caregiving activities, such as feeding and hygiene routines. In this way, it becomes clear that even during caregiving moments, educational processes took place not in the frameworks emphasized by research on education and child development today, but in teaching children about living in society, moral aspects, and cultural norms.

In this sense, it is evident that there is no separation between the acts of caregiving and educating in the work with children, especially within the scope of CEIs. The professional who provides care also educates, and the one who educates must also provide care, as all practices should encompass both aspects, which can directly influence children's development.

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This inseparability of educational and caregiving acts in early childhood education arises due to the specificities of this age group. There is no division between body and mind, as human beings are integral entities a being that is both body and mind.

Regarding the educational aspect of assistance-oriented daycare centers, Azevedo states that:

[...] according to historical data, even those institutions that served poor children with a philanthropic social function provided some form of education, even though there was no explicit intention to do so. This shows that the adults who interacted with them, while thinking they were merely caring for them, were also transmitting values, beliefs, and cultural ways of social interaction—in other words, they were educating them (AZEVEDO, 2013, p. 96).

Daily caregiving practices carried out without the intentional integration of caregiving and education can, as pointed out by Azevedo (2013), promote educational acts. However, they may not maximize children's development, as this is only possible when caregiving actions are performed with intentionality toward the educational act. This highlights the need to integrate caregiving and educational practices within Early Childhood Education institutions. These practices must take place within the professional space constituted by institutions serving children in the first stage of Basic Education, as regulated by the LDB (Brazil, 1996), which specifies the qualifications required for professionals working in classrooms at this level.

Thus, the responsibility for both caregiving and educational activities is assigned to Early Childhood Education teachers. According to Article 61 of the LDB (Brazil, 1996), a teacher licensed in Pedagogy is the qualified professional for this role. As such, the Early Childhood Education classroom is, by definition, the professional domain of the teacher in this case, the pedagogue legally certified to work at this educational level. All activities related to the processes of child development fall within the scope of their professional responsibilities.

However, alongside the teachers in CEIs, a new role has emerged that of classroom assistants. It is essential to distinguish between *role* and *profession* in this context. A role requires a certain level of knowledge about the work being performed, whereas a profession demands formal training, often at the higher education level, which provides specific expertise. According to Freidson (1996), a profession represents specialization in a particular type of work. In the case of classroom assistants, their responsibilities have been confined primarily to caregiving tasks, such as hygiene and feeding, creating a division between caregiving and educational practices. Moreover, this situation reflects a social division of labor, where one individual is responsible for educating and another for caregiving.

This division contradicts what is mandated by legislation, which calls for the integration of caregiving and educational roles.

The emergence of the classroom assistant role within a space already established as the professional domain of another individual creates the potential for a professional "non-place." This understanding is drawn from Marc Augé's (1994) perspective, which defines a "non-place" as arising when there is no identity-based relationship with the space. Since the Early Childhood Education classroom is the professional space of the teacher, it is not possible for assistants to establish an identity with this space, which is recognized and designated as the professional domain for teaching practices.

Connected to the issue of professional space is another problem: there is no record of specific training for performing the assistant role, nor is it feasible to develop such training, as this role is not officially recognized as a profession. Additionally, discussions and initiatives aimed at abolishing positions associated with this role are underway, as highlighted in the Ministry of Education (MEC) document *National Policy on Early Childhood Education: Upholding the Right to Education for Children Aged Zero to Six*.

Thus, even when the position is created by certain municipalities, its implementation and recognition are not guaranteed, given the ongoing push for its potential elimination.

Another legal document that indicates the classroom assistant role as a position already occupied by another professional is the opinion issued by the National Education Council (CNE/CEB 2/2002). In its text, the document reaffirms the teacher's role within the classroom. At the end of the rapporteur's vote, it states:

1° - The admission of assistants and other non-teaching professionals to work in Early Childhood Education is permissible "ad tempus," according to Law No. 9394/96 and the National Education Plan, with particular emphasis during the initial phase, i.e., for children aged 0 to 3 years.

In this context, classroom assistants are admitted to daycare centers legally, but for a limited period and under a fixed-term contract, which does not indicate national-level regulation regarding the position as an established role. In this regard, we revisit the issue of training, as the report reaffirms the importance of a teaching degree for the exercise of teaching, referencing the LDB, which is the current legislation on the subject. This document also points to the professional non-place of the classroom assistant, as it does not recognize the position as a formal role. It reinforces the understanding and affirmation of the teacher's role in the Early Childhood Education classroom.

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The variations in the training requirements for the classroom assistant role can be identified through the analysis of some public service job announcements and official municipal documents. For this analysis, we considered the 2012 and 2015 job postings from the municipality of Amargosa, BA. The other public document reviewed comes from the city of Conceição da Feira, selected for presenting a distinct requirement.

In both announcements (Amargosa, 2012; 2015) for the public competition in the municipality of Amargosa, the prerequisite is: *“Certificate, duly registered, of completion of high school (former 2nd degree) in teaching (our emphasis), issued by an educational institution recognized by the Ministry of Education”* (Amargosa, 2012, p. 22; Amargosa, 2015, p. 8). Therefore, there is a requirement for training that does not align with the offered position, as the *magistério* qualification is the minimum specific training for teachers up until the year 2024, which marks the end of the National Education Plan (PNE), established by Law No. 13.005 of 2014, which aims to ensure that all Basic Education teachers are licensed.

Moreover, the *magistério* qualification is aimed at professionalizing teachers, as stated by the LDB, and is the minimum required for teaching in Early Childhood Education and the Early Years of Elementary School, up until the date stipulated by the PNE. However, this is not the offered position, but rather that of classroom assistant.

Just as the *magistério* certification, a high school-level qualification, is required as a prerequisite in the aforementioned job postings, an individual with a degree in Pedagogy, a higher education qualification, can also apply for the position. This is supported by legal precedent<sup>5</sup> based on reasonableness and proportionality, which guarantees Brazilian citizens the right to be qualified for appointment to a position through approval in a public competition. This right is upheld because public competitions aim to select the most qualified individuals for the offered position, and a higher education qualification equivalent to the one required aligns with the principle of supremacy needed for entry into the public service<sup>6</sup>.

Another issue with the requirement for a *magistério* qualification is the discontinuation of this course at the high school level. Therefore, the formative requirement for occupying the position violates the principle of *isonomy*, also known as the principle of equality, which represents the

<sup>5</sup> Regarding jurisprudence on presenting higher education qualifications than those required in the announcement, see: <https://www.jusbrasil.com.br/jurisprudencia/busca?q=CANDIDATO+COM+QUALIFICA%C3%87%C3%83O+SUERIOR+%C3%80+EXIGIDA+NO+EDITAL>. Accessed on: January 28, 202.

<sup>6</sup> See more about the principle of reasonableness and proportionality in Moura (2019).

cornerstone of democracy, as it implies fair treatment for all citizens. This principle is constitutionally governed by Article 5 of the Brazilian Constitution, which states: "*All are equal before the law, without distinction of any nature*" (Brazil, 1988). There is no equality when only a portion of the population has access to the conditions necessary to participate in a public competition or selection process, since only individuals who were trained in *magistério* at the high school level before the discontinuation of the course could apply for the offered position.

In the other document analyzed, which is a publication from the official gazette of the municipality of Conceição da Feira, we find a different qualification as a prerequisite: "*Certificate of completion of high school from an institution recognized by the Ministry of Education (MEC); minimum of 2 (two) years of experience in Early Childhood Education*" (Conceição da Feira, 2019, p. 9). In this case, unlike the previous situation, *magistério* is not required, which is the qualification for teachers. Therefore, the prerequisite is general education, along with the minimum 2-year experience in the first level of education.

Hiring individuals without the necessary qualifications could impact public policies focused on the continuous training of professionals working in Early Childhood Education. This is because, as they are not teachers, they will certainly not require, based on legislation (Brazil, 1996), training actions from the public authorities. This could affect the quality of education offered to children aged 0 to 3 years.

Regarding the importance of initial and continuous teacher training in Early Childhood Education, Freire and Ferreira (2020, p. 5) state:

When it comes to teaching in early childhood education, the qualification of this professional is essential, as this level of education is a fundamental foundation for a strong structure of learning. The same is true in the life of the child during early education and the early years. The teacher must provide the child with a solid base that will build throughout their life, as learning and values are constructed from the moment the child enters school until they leave, and these elements last. Therefore, it is necessary to invest in the training of Early Childhood Education teachers, both in initial and continuous training, because only in this way will we have hope for better quality education, with increasingly efficient professionals who are building knowledge in their daily routines and in relationships with their colleagues.

The requirement for initial training and continuous professional development courses for professionals working in the first stage of Basic Education is essential for the construction and consolidation of quality public education, as teacher training plays a strategic role in improving public education. In this regard, Azzi (2008) points out that this training should not be considered in isolation from other public policy actions that aim to improve working conditions.

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Another important element to highlight is the inseparable relationship between caregiving and education, as there is no uniformity in the description of the activities performed by the classroom assistant role. In both public announcements from the municipality of Amargosa, the following description is found:

Participate in the planning, execution, and evaluation of educational activities within Early Childhood Education (daycare) under the Municipal Education Department, in accordance with the guidelines and criteria of the national education plan and the state and municipal plan (AMARGOSA, 2012, p. 22; AMARGOSA, 2015, p. 8).

From this excerpt, it can be understood that the activities assigned to the assistant role in this municipality fall within the educational scope and closely resemble those performed by teachers, as they include: planning, execution, and evaluation of activities. When compared to the description of activities assigned to teaching roles, there are few differences, as we can verify:

Teach in the classroom, in the area in which the candidate is qualified. Participate in the planning, execution, and evaluation of educational activities within Early Childhood and Elementary Education under the Municipal Education Department, in accordance with the guidelines and criteria of the national education plan and the state and municipal plans (AMARGOSA, 2012, p. 27).

Only the first part of the description differs from the text presented for the classroom assistant role, which indicates a similarity in the activities developed and raises the question: what are the similarities and differences in the work activities performed by teachers and classroom assistants? According to the analyzed job announcements, the difference between the two is solely the exercise of teaching for the teacher and the requirement of *magistério* for assuming the position of classroom assistant. This situation suggests that the duties are almost the same, but the working hours, tasks, and remuneration differ. It becomes evident that there is an intentional effort to pay a lower salary for the activities associated with the assistant role.

With a thin line differentiating the activities of teachers and assistants, it is not explicitly stated how daily practices are actually carried out in daycare centers. However, in a study conducted in the municipality of Amargosa, Jesus (2018) found results showing a separation between caregiving and educational activities, a fact also highlighted in the work of Jesus and Cordeiro (2021). In this way, it is also demarcated that the teacher is responsible for planning and executing pedagogical activities, while the assistant is in charge of caregiving, specifically related to feeding and hygiene, aiming for the well-being of the child. This further underscores the disruption of what should be an integrated approach.

In the excerpt from the municipality of Conceição da Feira's document, we see the description of activities with a tendency toward caregiving, as observed:

7 – CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT: Accompanying the child during meals and promoting their autonomy; taking care of hygiene and facilitating the development of health habits; establishing appropriate sleep routines for each child's age; being attentive to signs of health issues that may arise, referring children to appropriate healthcare units when necessary; preventing accidents and providing first aid in case of any accidents, referring the child to appropriate healthcare units when necessary; developing activities that promote rich childhood experiences from the sensory, motor, cognitive, emotional, and social perspectives (CONCEIÇÃO DA FEIRA, 2019, p. 9).

We can observe that the role of the assistant is clearly demarcated and directly linked to caregiving, as it is associated with activities concerning the well-being of the children. Throughout the entire description, there is no mention of activities related to pedagogical aspects, such as planning and developing educational activities. What is mentioned instead is the need to play with the children and seek useful technological resources for their development. From these actions, it becomes apparent that there is a division between who cares and who educates.

From the analyzed excerpts, it was possible to observe two situations. In the first, no dissociation between caregiving and educating as responsibilities of the assistant role was identified. In the second, it is clearly presented that the role is focused on caregiving and protecting children, indicating a split between caregiving and educational actions, which contradicts the guidelines set by the National Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (Brazil, 2010).

Reflecting on this new role, which emerges in a "non-place," without a defined training and lacking uniformity in the assigned functions, requires special attention. Another important element to consider is the *knowledge* involved. This element is key to the following questions: If there is no specific training, since there is no clear definition of the tasks to be carried out or what the role entails, what knowledge is being used to carry out the work of those serving as assistants? What is the origin of this knowledge? How does this knowledge contribute to the practice performed in the exercise of the role? These questions are necessary because we understand that every human job, no matter how simple, requires knowledge from the worker (TARDIF, 2014).

Knowledge comes from various spheres, such as education, professional experience, and social and cultural contexts, among others. Regarding experiential knowledge, we understand that it permeates all professions and is also involved in performing job functions, present in various everyday actions. Thus, in the activities carried out by classroom assistants, we can also find such knowledge, which can be mobilized daily to perform the tasks that make up their responsibilities.

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The concern regarding the theme addressed here emerged from the results of a previous study conducted at the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia (Jesus, 2018), at the Teacher Training Center. The goal of this study was to "understand how the assistants see themselves professionally and what role they occupy in the Early Childhood Education Center" (Jesus, 2018, p. 12). As a result, the author pointed to a denial of the role of assistant, and as a consequence, a state of *being* an assistant rather than *being* one, understanding the function as something provisional (Jesus, 2018).

As a result of the cited research, we found in the space of invisibility the "non-place" of the professional role, marked by the constant denial of the assistant role. In this sense, it is important to highlight that by addressing the "non-place" of the professional role and the knowledge of classroom assistants, we are also contributing to reflections on improving the provision of education for early childhood, as these individuals are part of the classroom environment.

### **Classroom Assistants in Research**

The relevance of the study is justified by the limited scientific production on this topic. This fact can be identified through a state-of-the-art research conducted on the ANPEd homepage and in the CAPES Dissertations and Theses Catalog. The choice of these two research directories is justified by their importance in the dissemination and cataloging of research in the field of Education in Brazil.

On the ANPEd homepage, the last ten national meetings were considered. For this purpose, the proceedings of Working Group (GT) 07 on Early Childhood Education for children aged 0 to 6 years from the annual meetings of 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and the national meetings of 2015, 2017, and 2019 were analyzed. The proceedings from the meetings of 2014, 2016, and 2018 were not analyzed, as they were regional events. In 2012, it was decided in assembly that meetings would occur nationally every other year, with regional meetings taking place in the intervening years, based on Brazil's geographic regions.

In this analysis, only works presented as oral communications were considered, excluding posters and commissioned papers. To refine the total number of works, texts were selected based on titles that included the terms *docente/professor(a)* (teacher), *docência* (teaching), *cuidar e educar* (care and educate), *saberes* (knowledge), *auxiliar de classe* (classroom assistant), and *profissionais* (professionals). The selected papers that contained these terms were read in full, resulting in the following findings.

**Table 1** - Total of Analyzed Works from the Proceedings of the ANPEd Meetings

Year and edition of the meeting	Total works	Total works read
2007 - 30th Meeting	18	2
2008 - 31th Meeting	19	3
2009 - 32th Meeting	16	2
2010 - 33th Meeting	17	3
2011 - 34th Meeting	15	0
2012 - 35th Meeting	18	5
2013 - 36th Meeting	12	0
2015 - 37th Meeting	23	3
2017 - 38th Meeting	17	2
2019 - 39th Meeting	19	7
<b>Total:</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>27</b>

Source: Research data

The last ten annual meetings totaled 174 works linked to GT 07. These presented various themes, such as public policies, sexuality in Early Childhood Education, pedagogical practices, identity construction, ethnic-racial relations, and more. These thematic varieties present in the proceedings reflect the range of research being produced in the country. Among the 27 works read in full, the themes that emerged were:

**Table 2** - Themes of Selected Works

Themes	Number of Works
Teacher Conceptions	2
Teacher Training	8
Training of Classroom Assistants	1
Teacher Identity	1
Teaching Practice	6
Pedagogical Practice	4
Teaching Profession (Professionalism)	4
Knowledge	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

Source: Research data

Based on the chosen terms, we ended up with a total of eight themes, representing a reasonable variety. This result was due to the number of terms used in the search, even though in one case, the title covered two of them. However, the choices were motivated by the relevance of each word for the study in question. Among the themes that emerged, teacher training had the highest number of works, with a total of eight. These works addressed issues such as: initial and ongoing training (Côco, 2010; Nogueira; Almeida, 2012), the relevance of including art and aesthetics in teacher training (Corrêa, 2019; Guedes; Ferreira; Lage, 2019; Guedes; Ferreira, 2017), the analysis of training considering elements of the curriculum and the process of subjectivation of adults and children

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(Bujes, 2009), the analysis of curricular matrices in Pedagogy courses for teacher formation for Early Childhood Education (Kiehn, 2009), and the definition of the training profile for Early Childhood Education teachers (BUSS-SIMÃO, 2015).

Out of the total texts read, six works presented significant contributions regarding the education of children from zero to six years, but none of the analyzed works explicitly focused on the theme addressed in this study. The texts discussed different topics but provided points that complemented each other and contributed to the discussions raised in this research, as we can observe from the following analyses.

When addressing the identity of daycare workers, Cota (2007, p. 8) states that “identities are forged within social relationships, in the dialectical play between differences and equalities: it would be presumptuous to assume that those who care are different from those who educate,” thus pointing to a labor difference between the people who occupy spaces in daycare centers. Moreover, the author also addresses issues such as caregiving and educating, the view of Early Childhood Education teachers, and the association of women’s work with daycare centers.

Teacher knowledge in Early Childhood Education has been a topic of limited study (Sobral, 2017), but two of the texts analyzed address this issue. The authors Girão and Brandão (2012) offer reflections on the knowledge of two teachers who work with children aged 5 to 6 years. The theoretical basis used to understand this knowledge is derived from Maurice Tardif (2010, as cited in Girão; Brandão, 2012), who sees it as plural knowledge and understands the teacher as a subject capable of constructing specific knowledge related to teaching. In this sense, the authors provided a moment of discursive exchange and reflection on practice with the participants, during which they were able to reconstruct and validate their knowledge about pedagogical practices involving reading and writing (GIRÃO; BRANDÃO, 2012).

In addressing knowledge, Dagnoni (2012) sought to answer the following question: “What are the sources of knowledge for teachers of infants?” The article reflects on the sources of knowledge for teachers working with infants in daycare institutions and discusses issues such as: what knowledge is needed to work with infants and the scarcity of research on the topic in education. The text concludes by pointing out how knowledge contributes to the professionalization and identity-building of women working with infants in daycare centers (DAGNONI, 2012).

Batista and Rocha (2015) make a temporal cut of the first half of the 20th century 1908 to 1949 to analyze issues that influenced the construction of the teaching profession in the context of

early childhood education in the state of Santa Catarina. The authors point out that other fields, such as health and religion, played a role in this process. Furthermore, they assert that there was a division between the professionals working in daycare centers and preschools, with the former requiring knowledge more related to caregiving, with an emphasis on health aspects. Another important element highlighted in the study concerns the visibility of women in history, as the figures cited in documents and records usually place men as the protagonists, with women being silenced and their names lost to the past (BATISTA; ROCHA, 2015).

The teaching profession in the state of Santa Catarina is also addressed in Brant's (2017) text. The author reflects on the historical process of how the role of Early Childhood Education teachers was "invented" during the 1970s in the municipality of Florianópolis. She points to the participation in a National Preschool Education Program promoted by the Ministry of Education, which culminated in the *Projeto Núcleos de Educação Infantil* (Early Childhood Education Centers Project) aimed at serving children from lower-income classes, as a factor influencing the creation of the role of the teacher working with children (Brant, 2017). At the end, the author lists four key items: national recommendations, the *Colégio Coração de Jesus* and its Maternal-Infant Technical Course, the ideas of Heloísa Marinho, and the courses from the World Organization for Preschool Education that contributed to the creation of the Early Childhood Education teacher role (BRANT, 2017).

Included in the category of teacher training, but specifically addressing workers in the role of classroom assistants, we find Souza's (2012) work, which reflects on the importance of training for workers in this role through the *Proinfantil* program. The author also raises questions about the hiring process for these workers, which required a minimum education of elementary school and offered low salaries, directly affecting the provision of quality education for children (Souza, 2012). Throughout the text, she discusses issues related to the idea of women as natural educators and the valorization and professionalization of Early Childhood Education teaching (SOUZA, 2012).

According to the data, the research presented in GT 07 of ANPEd reflects the efforts of Brazilian researchers to discuss and deepen studies on children's education, thus covering a wide range of themes. However, this data also points to a limited production regarding classroom assistants, as out of the total of 174 works, only one specifically addressed these workers, who experience specific working conditions within Early Childhood Education institutions.

In the CAPES Dissertations and Theses Catalog, individual searches were conducted without a temporal filter, using the following descriptors: "auxiliar de classe" (classroom assistant), "assistente de classe" (class assistant), "auxiliar de desenvolvimento infantil" (early childhood

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development assistant), "monitor de classe" (class monitor), and "monitor de educação" (education monitor). After the search, the abstracts of the studies found were read, and two works were selected for full reading, as shown in the table below:

**Table 3 - Total of Works Found in the CAPES Dissertations and Theses Catalog.**

Search Term	Number of Works Found	Number of Works Read in Full
Classroom Assistant	2	0
Class Assistant	0	0
Early Childhood Development Assistant	6	2
Class Monitor	0	0
Education Monitor	3	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>

Source: Research data.

Of the 11 works found, 8 were master's level research, one was professional training, and 3 were doctoral research. In terms of concentration areas, 9 works were linked to Postgraduate Programs in Education, one was linked to the Postgraduate Program in Theories and Practices of Theatre, and one to the Postgraduate Program in Public Policies.

The three works related to the descriptor "class monitor" are connected to the fields of Physical Education, Public Policies, and Art. Lima's (1995) work presents a study on the game as an alternative for teaching and learning content in Physical Education, specifically in what he calls the Basic Cycle. The text "Fiscal Education from the perspective of public school students in Ceará: Evaluation of the Fiscal Education and Citizenship Scholarship Project" could not be found for reading the abstract, as it is a work prior to the Sucupira Platform, and there were no records in the catalog. However, articles containing excerpts from the study were found through a search. The third and final work related to the descriptor is a research in the field of Theatre, specifically about the Movement Study Laboratory, which the author refers to as a pedagogical proposal for teaching Art (SCHEFFLER, 2013).

Under the descriptor "classroom assistant," we found two works. The first is the research by Moraes (2014), which sought to understand new perspectives in the education system based on Law No. 11.274/2006, which established changes in the organization of Basic Education stages, extending Elementary Education to a nine-year period, leading to the inclusion of 6-year-olds. The researcher identified challenges mentioned by five participants: the restructuring of physical space to accommodate 6-year-old children, ongoing training regarding the specifics of these children, guidance on the use of pedagogical materials, the need for a classroom assistant, and the reduction of

students per class (Moraes, 2014). In conclusion, she emphasized the need for changes to effectively implement the law (MORAES, 2014).

The second study, conducted by Silva (2016), aimed to understand how intercultural relations manifest in the school environment due to the presence of Bolivian students in the literacy cycle of a public school in São Paulo. The study involved participant observations in 1st Cycle classes (1st to 3rd grade) and interviews with teachers and classroom assistants, who identified issues related to prejudice and discrimination experienced by immigrant children (Silva, 2016). In conclusion, the researcher pointed out the need for the school to rethink its role in ensuring the learning and socialization of all students (SILVA, 2016).

Related to the descriptor "early childhood development assistant," we found 6 works. For two, only the abstract was read, two works could not be found, and two were read in full. The works that could not be found were from years prior to the creation of the Sucupira Platform, and despite searching through various websites, they were not located. Both works are titled "*A Reflective Look at the Organization of Routine in Daycare: A Case Study*" and "*Characteristics of Identity and Competence of the Early Childhood Education Coordinator Teacher*".

The texts for which the abstracts were read were by Foresti (2002) and Santos (2017). Foresti's dissertation, published in 2002, aimed to identify educators' perspectives on their practices with toys in daycare centers, as well as possible training difficulties. A check was also made regarding the types and quantities of toys available in the institution. The results pointed to the use of play in learning, but the teachers demonstrated limited knowledge on the topic. The author concluded that it was necessary to reflect on the theme and incorporate discussions on the psychology of toys in teacher training courses (FORESTI, 2002).

The study by Santos (2017) addressed the curricula practiced with infants in Early Childhood Education institutions and aimed to generate reflections, through teachers' narratives, on the curricula used with infants in the daily routines of daycare schools in the Municipal Education Network of Salvador and their interfaces with educational public policies and teaching with infants. The research also pointed out that daily experiences are influenced by both local and national public policies. The author concluded by indicating the presence of different theoretical-methodological references and how the relationship with infants influences the teachers' educational practices (SANTOS, 2017).

Among the studies that presented themes related to this one, we have the text by Capestrani (2007). The author discusses the impacts of training on the subjective constitution of early childhood development assistants, caused by a high school-level training program (*Curso Normal*) offered by

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the Municipal Department of Education of São Paulo. Throughout the text, Capestrani presents elements that emerged from the narratives, tracing the history of how the assistants arrived at the daycare space and how their work changed before and after the training, which now granted them the social and professional status of teachers. In this way, there is an indication of changes in self-perception among the collaborators, as well as an expansion of knowledge and a renewal in their social practice. Finally, the author points to the need for training processes with a curriculum structure that would enable new knowledge and learning, as well as a change in behavior and perception regarding the development of their work (CAPESTRANI, 2007).

The second work read in full is by Silva (2017), whose goal was to investigate the representations of the career and teaching conditions of Early Childhood Education professionals in the municipality of São Paulo between 1980 and 2015. To do this, the author segments the teaching career into three major moments: the expansion of Early Childhood Education services, the shift from the Department of Social Assistance to the Department of Education, and lastly, the milestone of the first public competition after the departmental changes and the teachers' career plan. Given this historical process, she conducts interviews with three groups of professionals, considering each major milestone. Finally, she presents the idea of the Early Childhood Education professional as closely associated with women, the social conditions, and factors that motivated their entry into the profession. She concludes by emphasizing the need to broaden the debate around the conceptions that link teaching to women, particularly in Early Childhood Education (SILVA, 2017).

As stated, the works associated with the descriptors presented a variety of themes and covered areas such as education, art, and public policies. In the field of education, 9 works were included. Of this total, 6 addressed issues related to Early Childhood Education, and only 2 indirectly mentioned classroom assistants, as they focused on Early Childhood Education professionals, but treated both teachers and classroom assistants as part of the same category. This scenario suggests that within postgraduate studies, there has been a lack of research specifically addressing classroom assistants. This highlights the need for further discussion and in-depth exploration of this topic.

Reflecting on and promoting discussions about classroom assistants is crucial for the construction of new knowledge about the individuals working in the first stage of Basic Education. It also contributes to the understanding that caregiving requires formal training. Since caregiving and teaching are integrated actions and teaching responsibilities, we return to the question: Is there a place for the role of assistant in the Early Childhood Education classroom? The proposal is for this answer

to be problematized, discussed, and reflected upon so that it can contribute to the implementation of public policies and documents that clearly state that caregiving and teaching cannot be dichotomized, and that it is the responsibility of the teacher, a professional qualified with a higher education degree in Pedagogy.

In this regard, we refer to Alves (2003), who emphasizes the need for a non-cartesian writing approach for terms that cannot be dissociated. An example of this is the term *saber-fazer* (know-how) written without a hyphen, as *saberfazer* (together), because there is no knowledge without action, nor vice versa. This leads us to consider the use of the term *cuidar-educar* (care-educate) in the same way. For this study, we problematize the term *cuidareducar*, which, therefore, does not represent isolated functions, nor are they the functions of two different professionals or meant for different audiences. These are intertwined functions in Early Childhood Education because, at this level of education, caregiving and educating occur simultaneously, and the teacher (pedagogue) is the trained professional who exercises these functions concurrently.

## Final considerations

Given the above, the indefiniteness of the role of classroom assistant is evident, meaning there is no consensus. From the analysis of the job announcements, it is clear that there are various possibilities regarding the role of classroom assistants in Early Childhood Education, as well as the lack of a defined training requirement for performing this role. Furthermore, the limited scientific production identified through the state-of-knowledge study addressing these workers points to the need for investigations focusing on the role of classroom assistants and the various aspects and elements that constitute it.

The data presented raise the following question: "How is the construction of the professional non-place formed, and what is the origin of the knowledge used by Early Childhood Education classroom assistants, considering potential public policies?" In this way, aiming to contribute to the scientific production on these workers, this study presents an initial problematization, with data responding to this question found in Jesus.

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