



## Practices of the Itinerant Specialized Educational Service of the Municipal Education Network of São Paulo<sup>1</sup>

*Práticas do Atendimento Educacional Especializado Itinerante da Rede Municipal de Ensino de São Paulo*

*Prácticas del Servicio Educativo Especializado Itinerante de la Red Municipal de Educación de São Paulo*

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**Abstract:** In 2016, the São Paulo Municipal Education Network (RME/SP) implemented the Specialized Educational Service (AEE) in three modalities: Collaborative, Itinerant, and Counter-shift. Due to the lack of national standardization for the Itinerant AEE, this study aimed to analyze the profile and professional practices of Inclusion Support and Monitoring Teachers (PAAIs). A total of 37 PAAIs participated in the study, responding to a structured questionnaire that included both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The findings suggest that these professionals play a role that extends beyond providing individualized pedagogical support to students with disabilities and special educational needs. They act as mediators and institutional change agents, fostering inclusive educational environments. Their responsibilities involve collaboration with school administrators, general education teachers, and support staff, reinforcing the shared responsibility for inclusive education. In addition to instructional adaptation, their work addresses cultural and attitudinal barriers within schools and enhances the connection between educational institutions and external support services. The study highlights the transformative potential of professional development initiatives led by itinerant educators. However, increased in-school presence is necessary to strengthen co-teaching practices, ensure continuous support for students, and promote collaborative planning with classroom teachers. These findings contribute to discussions on inclusive education by advocating for systemic strategies that enhance accessibility, equity, and meaningful participation for all learners.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education; Itinerant Specialized Educational Service; Special Education and Pedagogical Support.

**Resumo:** A Rede Municipal de Ensino de São Paulo (RME/SP) implementou, em 2016, o Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE) em três modelos: Colaborativo, Itinerante e Contraturno. Dada a ausência de uma normatização nacional específica para o AEE Itinerante, tornou-se relevante caracterizar o perfil dos Professores de Apoio e

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Acompanhamento à Inclusão (PAAIs) e descrever sua atuação nesse serviço. Participaram dessa pesquisa 37 PAAIs, que responderam um questionário com questões abertas e fechadas. Os resultados indicam que esses profissionais desempenham um papel que transcende o suporte pedagógico ao estudante público da educação especial, atuando como mediadores e agentes de transformação na construção de uma cultura inclusiva. Sua atuação envolve colaboração com gestores, docentes e demais profissionais da escola, evidenciando que a inclusão escolar é uma responsabilidade coletiva. Além da dimensão pedagógica, o trabalho das PAAIs abrange aspectos culturais e valores que estruturam as relações intraescolares e a interação da escola com a comunidade. O AEE Itinerante favoreceu a articulação entre a escola e os serviços de apoio, consolidando a perspectiva de uma educação para todos, baseada no respeito às singularidades dos estudantes. Observou-se que ações formativas conduzidas pelos PAAIs possuem potencial transformador no contexto escolar, entretanto, a ampliação do tempo de permanência dos PAAIs nas unidades escolares seria necessária para fortalecer a colaboração com docentes da sala comum e garantir maior constância no suporte direto ao estudante. Espera-se que os resultados desta pesquisa contribuam para o aprimoramento das práticas inclusivas, promovendo a equidade e a participação de todos os estudantes no processo educacional.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Inclusiva; Atendimento Educacional Especializado Itinerante; Educação Especial e Apoio Pedagógico.

**Resumen:** La Red Municipal de Educación de São Paulo (RME/SP) implementó en 2016 el Servicio Educativo Especializado (AEE) en tres modelos: Colaborativo, Itinerante y After-Shift. Dada la ausencia de una estandarización nacional específica para la EAE Itinerante, resultó relevante caracterizar el perfil de los Docentes de Apoyo y Monitoreo a la Inclusión (PAAI) y describir su desempeño en dicho servicio. En esta investigación participaron 37 PAAI, quienes respondieron un cuestionario con preguntas abiertas y cerradas. Los resultados indican que estos profesionales desempeñan un papel que trasciende el apoyo pedagógico al estudiante público de educación especial, actuando como mediadores y agentes de transformación en la construcción de una cultura inclusiva. Su trabajo implica la colaboración con gestores, profesores y otros profesionales de la escuela, lo que demuestra que la inclusión escolar es una responsabilidad colectiva. Además de la dimensión pedagógica, el trabajo de los PAAI abarca aspectos culturales y valores que estructuran las relaciones intraescolares y la interacción entre la escuela y la comunidad. La EAE Itinerante favoreció la articulación entre la escuela y los servicios de apoyo, consolidando la perspectiva de una educación para todos, basada en el respeto a las singularidades de los estudiantes. Se observó que las acciones formativas realizadas por las PAAI tienen potencial transformador en el contexto escolar; sin embargo, la extensión del tiempo de permanencia de las PAAI en las unidades escolares sería necesaria para fortalecer la colaboración con los docentes de la sala común y garantizar una mayor constancia en el apoyo directo a las estudiantes. Se espera que los resultados de esta investigación contribuyan a mejorar las prácticas inclusivas, promoviendo la equidad y la participación de todos los estudiantes en el proceso educativo.

**Palabras clave:** Educación Inclusiva; Servicio Educativo Especializado Itinerante; Educación Especial y Apoyo Pedagógico.

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## Introduction

The inclusion of students with disabilities in schools is a fundamental right, supported by national and international legislation, such as the Brazilian Inclusion Law (Brazil, 2015). In Brazil, the trajectory of Special Education (SE) has evolved from a conception of parallel support to mainstream education to a model of Inclusive Education (BRAZIL, 2008). Despite these advances, the implementation of inclusion still faces significant obstacles, such as the need for specialized teacher training, structural adaptations, and pedagogical practices tailored to the needs of students (Beraldo, 1999; Garcia, 2002; Duarte, 2002). The simple insertion of students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms does not guarantee the effectiveness of Inclusive Education (MITTLER, 2003).

Inclusive education necessitates significant transformations in schools, including investments in infrastructure and professional development for teachers. The responsibility for making education accessible cannot rest solely on the shoulders of educators; rather, the conditions of the entire support network must be considered, including materials, equipment, and architectural accessibility.

Since the last decade of the 20th century, the topic of inclusion has gained prominence, with a significant increase in publications in Brazil. Mazzotta (1993 and 2003), Mendes (1995, 2002 and 2014), Beraldo (1999), Garcia (2002), Duarte (2002), Mittler (2003), Guimarães (2003), Castro (1997), Aranha (2001), Lúcio (2004), and Capellini (2004) address the nuances of inclusion.

Every student has the right to have a professional who guides them in their education and believes in their potential. However, it is also important for this professional to promote reflective practices that question the concept of normality and standardization in the school context, which are the result of socially established beliefs.

For a long time, the understanding was that Special Education, organized in parallel with mainstream education, would be the most appropriate way to serve students with disabilities or those who did not fit into the rigid structure of the education systems. This conception had a lasting impact on the history of Special Education, resulting in practices that emphasized aspects related to disability, rather than its pedagogical dimension. The development of studies in the field of education and human rights has been modifying concepts, legislation, and educational and management practices, indicating the need to promote the restructuring of Special Education (Brazil, 2008, p. 10).

It is essential to reflect on how to enhance teaching strategies through the application of specific methodologies and approaches, thus ensuring full attention to the particularities of these students and the effective implementation of specialized support in all educational units,



which, in turn, are privileged spaces for the exchange of knowledge, the construction of learning, and the identity formation of each baby, child, young person, and adult student.

In Brazil, since 1990, Special Education (SE) has been guided by the philosophy and policy of school inclusion, in a process of transformation, migrating from a segregation model to an inclusive education model, driven by international milestones such as the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) and the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994). These declarations influenced the valuing of individual differences and the integration of all students in the same regular educational context. However, the effective implementation of school inclusion continues to present significant challenges, which demand robust discussions and public policies to guarantee the right to education for all, regardless of their personal conditions.

It is essential to note the Salamanca Declaration (1994), which, while advocating for the inclusion of all students in mainstream educational institutions, also acknowledges the need to maintain or expand specialized educational resources for those who require them. This ensures that specific support is offered whenever necessary. By seeking a balance between integration and specialized resources, this document provides fundamental guidelines for developing educational policies that reaffirm a commitment to full and effective inclusion in mainstream schools, while also acknowledging the importance of specialized support.

In the past, these students were provided in a segregated manner, in specialized institutions isolated from the regular education system. This model, which prevailed until the 1990s, was based on a clinical and rehabilitative vision, centered on the disability and the search for a cure or compensation for limitations (Brazil, 2001).

Over the years, Specialized Educational Services (AEE) have been consolidated, defined in the National Policy for Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education – PNEE-EI (Brazil, 2008) as the service intended to offer educational support to students with disabilities, global developmental disorders, and high abilities/giftedness. The trajectory of AEE reveals a process of conceptual and operational evolution, keeping pace with the transformations in educational policies and the deepening of discussions on school inclusion.

The National Policy on Special Education consolidated this new paradigm of Specialized Educational Services (AEE) from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (PNEE-EI) in Brazil (2008) and by the Operational Guidelines for Inclusive Education (Brazil, 2009). In these documents, AEE is defined as a specialized educational service offered in a complementary manner to regular education, designed to meet the specific educational needs of these students. Instead of replacing regular education, AEE aims to complement, enrich and supplement the students' education, ensuring their full participation and development.

The implementation of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE), however, has not occurred homogeneously throughout the country. Challenges to the effective implementation of inclusion, including ongoing teacher training, the availability of pedagogical resources, and adapting schools, persist in various contexts. The pursuit of universal access and the guarantee of quality in AEE remains one of the main challenges for Brazilian education.

The National Policy on Special Education (Brazil, 2008) emphasizes that Special Education Services (AEE) should assume the responsibility of identifying, developing, and organizing accessibility resources that overcome barriers to the full participation of students. This guideline aims to promote equitable educational inclusion, consolidating the commitment to building an inclusive and accessible school for all. From this perspective, the document underscores the necessity for AEE to act effectively in overcoming obstacles that hinder student participation, thereby ensuring fair and inclusive educational integration.

The activities developed in specialized educational support differ from those carried out in the regular classroom and are not a substitute for schooling. This support complements and supplements the students' education, fostering autonomy and independence both in and out of school. Specialized educational support offers curriculum enrichment programs, instruction in specific languages and codes of communication and signaling, technical aids and assistive technology, among other services. Throughout the entire schooling process, this support must be articulated with the pedagogical proposal of regular education. (Brazil, 2008, p.16)

In this context, to achieve substantial progress in comprehensive and effective school inclusion in Brazilian educational institutions, legal regulations now require educational systems to guarantee the enrollment of all students with disabilities, respecting the age range established for compulsory schooling in the country.

Within the framework of national policies, Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE), as described in the Operational Guidelines for Special Education (Brazil, 2009), is configured as a modality of special education that encompasses all levels and modalities of basic education. Its main objective is to offer specialized educational support, guaranteeing the availability of specific services and resources. Furthermore, it seeks to guide educators and students regarding the appropriate use of these resources in the context of regular classrooms.

The inclusion of Specialized Educational Services (AEE) in the Political-Pedagogical Project of regular educational institutions is an imperative foreseen in the guidelines of the National Policy on Special Education (PNEE-EI) (Brazil, 2008). This integration aims to ensure the necessary articulation between teachers responsible for AEE and those of regular classes, promoting a cohesive pedagogical approach aligned with the principles of inclusive education.



The PNEE-EI (Brazil, 2008) emphasizes, in turn, that AEE (Specialized Educational Assistance) should not assume a substitutive character, preserving the full experience of students with their peers in the regular classroom. This provision ensures that everyone has access to the same curriculum and the same learning opportunities, in accordance with the principles of equality and educational equity.

In light of this, according to official documents, Special Education should operate as a cross-cutting modality, encompassing all levels, stages, and modalities of education, preferably integrated into the regular education network. Thus, both The National Policy on Special Education for Early Childhood Education (PNEE-EI) (Brazil, 2008) and Federal Decree No. 7,611/2011 unequivocally assign to the school the responsibility of guaranteeing the provision of Special Education Services.

Similarly, in 2015, the Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI) enshrined a series of rights and guarantees for people with disabilities, highlighting, among these, the fundamental right to education, reaffirming the State's commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities for all citizens.

Article 27 – Education is a right of persons with disabilities, ensuring an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning, to achieve the maximum possible development of their physical, sensory, intellectual, and social talents and abilities, according to their characteristics, interests, and learning needs.

[...] III – a pedagogical project that institutionalizes specialized educational services, as well as other services and reasonable accommodations, to meet the characteristics of students with disabilities and guarantee their full access to the curriculum under conditions of equality, promoting the achievement and exercise of their autonomy (Brazil, 2015).

The São Paulo Municipal Education Network (RME/SP) implemented, in 2016, as part of the São Paulo Policy for Special Education from an Inclusive Education Perspective, Specialized Educational Services (AEE) in three models: Collaborative, implemented during school hours, involving the cooperation of professionals from various areas to meet the individual needs of students, according to the AEE Plan. After-school: Conducted outside regular class hours, in Multifunctional Resource Rooms. Itinerant: Occurs during classes and involves the collaboration of the PAAI (Specialized Educational Assistance Program for Students with Inclusive Education), teachers, and the management team to ensure that students' needs are met, as described in the AEE Plan. (São Paulo, 2016)

The Mobile Specialized Educational Service is a strategy designed to promote the inclusion of students served by Special Education. This model provides pedagogical support directly in school units (SUs) to ensure that these students have access to the curriculum and



educational activities, especially where there is no other model of Specialized Educational Service. However, this approach also faces specific challenges that must be considered.

The Department of Education of the Municipality of São Paulo, since 1993, through Decree No. 33,891, stipulated that educational services for students with disabilities should be guaranteed primarily within the regular school system and in Special Needs Service Rooms.<sup>4</sup>(SAPNEs), which could function as a parallel service. The student was regularly enrolled in a regular class and received educational support outside of regular school hours. (São Paulo, 1993).

Since then, the trajectory of EE in the Municipal Education Network of São Paulo RME-SP has been working to update administrative policies to meet the needs of students in the public education system from an inclusive perspective, that is, taking as a reference the provision of Special Education Services, in order to maintain their access and permanence in regular classrooms, offering pedagogical support to educators and direct support to students.

In the context of the aforementioned municipality, Decree No. 57,379/2016 reinforces the importance of guaranteeing learning opportunities tailored to the specific needs and potential of students, aiming to promote inclusive education for all.

Therefore, the guidelines regarding AEE practices for students with special educational needs are standardized by the Public Policy for Special Education from an Inclusive Education Perspective (PPEE-EI) of the municipality, from 2016, which determines that said service should preferably be carried out in SRM, outside of school hours, as stipulated by current legislation (Brazil, 2011).

It is worth highlighting that, to date, public policies on Special Education have demonstrated a predominance of prioritizing the provision of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) outside of regular school hours in Resource Rooms (SRMs). Furthermore, when analyzing educational policy texts, it is possible to observe that SRM is mentioned as a predominant and essential support service.

However, as Mendes, Vilaronga, and Zerbato (2014) state, teaching in the regular classroom only promotes participation and learning when it adequately responds to the needs of students. Otherwise, it is of little use to extend the time allocated to Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) in the after-school period by one or two hours per week, as foreseen in current Special Education policies. This logic ultimately reinforces the idea that the difficulty lies with the student, when, in fact, the barriers are within the school environment and the conditions it provides to ensure access, participation, and learning.

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<sup>4</sup>Terminology used in 1993 - today, the term used refers to people with disabilities.



When considering Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) carried out in isolation in Multifunctional Resource Rooms (SRM), without proper coordination with the activities performed by the regular classroom teacher, and without a common plan that considers the student's teaching and learning processes, the development of the schooling of students with disabilities risks being directed by civilizing processes that influence educational contexts. These processes, in turn, can establish power relations that dominate, control, and isolate, both symbolically and materially, not only the SRM but also the students served in this space and the specialized educators who work there.

The context of the municipality of São Paulo, as outlined in the 2016 São Paulo Policy, presents three distinct models of Special Education Services (AEE): After-school, Collaborative, and Itinerant. Among them, the possibility of implementing Itinerant AEE stands out, whose proposal envisions special education specialists working itinerantly in schools.

In this model, professionals must conduct training, observations, and collaborative interactions with regular classroom teachers, administrators, and other educators at the school, promoting coordination with all professionals, at all times and in all educational spaces, as well as intersectoral meetings with the support network, in order to ensure full attention to the specific needs of each student, as outlined in the Special Education Service Plan (PAEE).

The Mobile Special Education Service (AEE Itinerante), defined in Article 23 of the PPEE-EI/2016, is explained by the following excerpt:

[...] III - Itinerant: within the shift, in an articulated and collaborative manner with the class teachers, the Management Team, the PAAI and other professionals, ensuring attention to the specific needs of each student, as expressed in the AEE Plan.

In this sense, the Itinerant Special Education Service, as described in São Paulo Policy 8764/2016, does not necessarily correspond to the concept of itinerant teaching or the model previously outlined in the National Policy on Special Education in Early Childhood Education (PNEEPEI) (Brazil, 2008) for Basic Education, which describes that...

Itinerant teaching is a service of guidance and pedagogical supervision, developed by specialized teachers who make periodic visits to schools to work with students who have special educational needs and with their respective regular classroom teachers in the mainstream education system (Brazil, 2001, p. 50).

Therefore, understanding the differences and relevance of itinerant Special Education Services as an essential practice, the existing question involves the following: Is itinerant Special Education Services a promising modality for transforming educational approaches, aiming to reflect a genuinely inclusive education that not only recognizes diversity but also



promotes equity and ensures access to all opportunities offered by the educational system? At the same time, is it possible to eliminate physical, communication, attitudinal, and pedagogical barriers in accordance with the various educational and political actors involved?

Considering the significant difficulty in implementing the inclusion process, especially in public schools, itinerant Special Education services offer a possible solution for achieving inclusive education in mainstream schools.

Thus, it can be said that this article, resulting from the dissertation of (data omitted to avoid identifying the author, 2024), outlined the following objectives: to characterize the professionals who make up the Support Services for school inclusion in the RME/SP; to describe the roles assigned and performed by these professionals, listing the Itinerant AEE; , Additionally, to understand some of the pedagogical practices of the PAAIs who work in the Itinerant AEE.

## Method

The methodological approach taken in this study integrates a descriptive qualitative research master's thesis, which sought to demonstrate who the agents of the Itinerant Special Education Service are, as well as the implementation of the Itinerant Special Education Service, a specific reality of... RME/SP.

Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire comprising both open-ended and closed-ended questions, with 37 participants, to identify key positions that would clarify the objectives.

After approval from the Research Ethics Committee on Human Beings of the Federal University of São Carlos (CEP-UFSCar) the invitation to participate in the research was formalized through a letter of introduction, sent via institutional email, by the Regional Directorates of Education (DREs) of the SME/SP, co-participants.

The study was conducted in the municipality of São Paulo, within the jurisdiction of the 13 Regional Education Directorates (DREs) of the São Paulo Municipal Education Secretariat (SME/SP), locations where the Specialized Educational Assistance Programs (PAAIs) operate, carrying out itinerant Specialized. <sup>5</sup>Educational Assistance (AEE), as foreseen in article 23, chapter III, of Ordinance 8.764/2016. This city encompasses a vast territory and presents a diverse profile. Specifically, a micro-comparative analysis was conducted in relation to Brazil. In 2022, the municipality served an average of 3,776 educational units. (UEs) Furthermore, according to data provided by the São Paulo City Hall portal, approximately 22,000 students have disabilities. (São Paulo, 2022).

<sup>5</sup>São Paulo, SÃO PAULO. Municipal Department of Education. São Paulo Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education. Ordinance No. 8,764, of December 23, 2016. Available at: <https://legislacao.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/leis/portaria-secretaria-municipal-de-educacao-8764-de-23-de-dezembro-de-2016>.



This study identifies the agents of the Itinerant Special Education Service and examines its implementation within the São Paulo Municipal Education Network, exploring its operation, organization, and the challenges faced by the professionals involved. The discussion covers the profile of the teachers who work in this service, the history and referrals made, as well as the dynamics of the Itinerant Special Education Service, with emphasis on the responsibilities of the Support Professionals for the Itinerant Special Education Service. The analysis encompasses aspects such as the organization, operation, and challenges faced by the Itinerant Special Education Service based on daily experience.

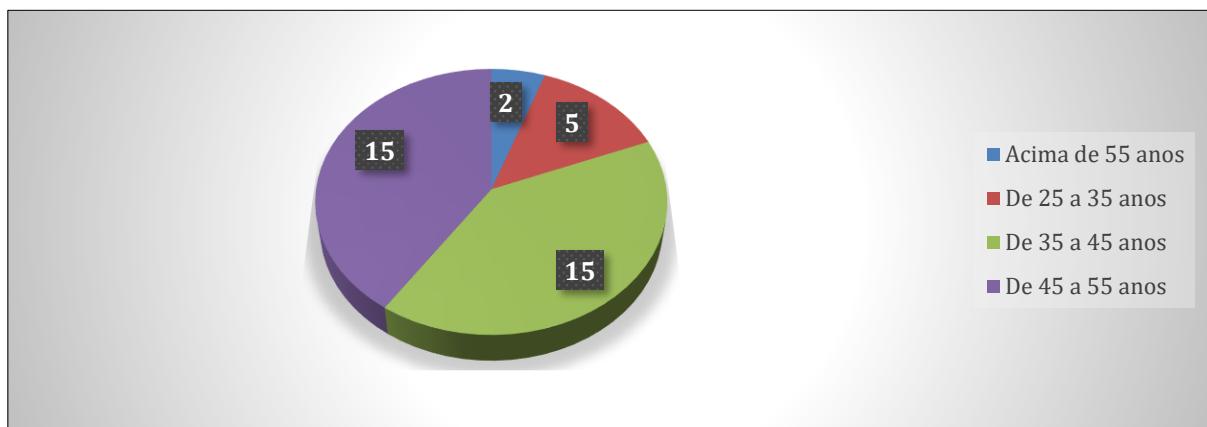
## Results and discussion

The results showed that itinerant Special Education Services face significant challenges, often acting to resolve unexpected situations in mainstream education, and lacking coordination and collaboration with their peers.

The data were presented thematically: Profile of PAAIs (sex, education, and years of experience); Organization and functioning of the AEE (location, schedule, frequency, eligible public, referral, planning, and materials); Partnerships between health and education professionals. Considering the need to maintain anonymity, the participants' proper names were replaced by PAAI. It is a number in the questionnaires.

The questionnaire identified the training and professional experience of the PAAI (Program for the Promotion of Inclusion in Children and Adolescents). Key data included initial training, continuing education, specialization, gender, age, and length of experience of the respondents. The diversity in age ranges and length of experience suggests a varied combination of experiences and new perspectives in the field. This data can serve as a basis for developing policies and continuing education programs, as well as strategies that promote educational inclusion effectively and comprehensively. Graph 1 presents the average age of the participants.

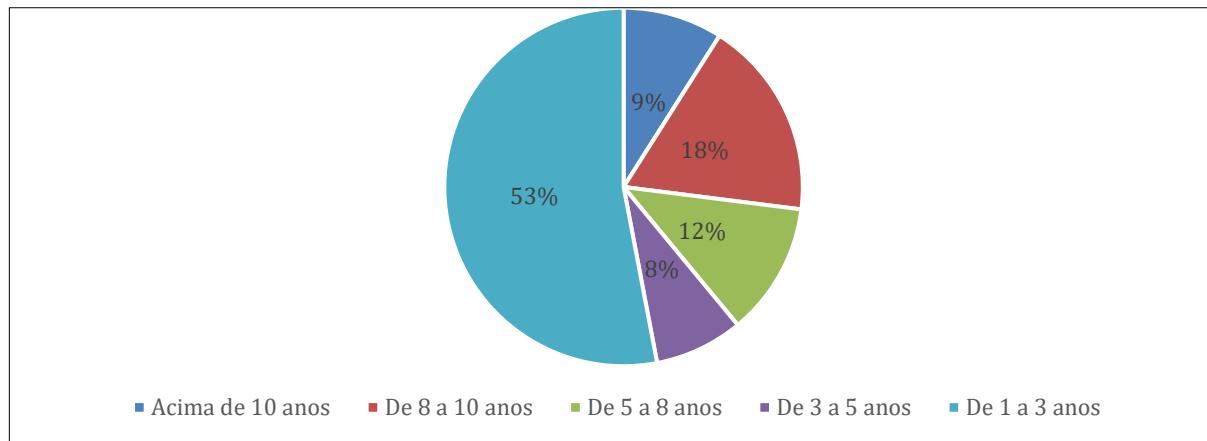
Graph 1 - Age of participants. - Questionnaire



Source: prepared by the author (2024).

It was identified that 40.5% of respondents fell within the 35-45 age range, and 40.5% were between 45 and 55 years old. Regarding length of service, only 9% of the teachers had been in the position for at least 10 years. On average, these professionals have 5 years of experience in the field of Special Education.

Chart 2 - Time in Position - Questionnaire



Source: prepared by the author (2024).

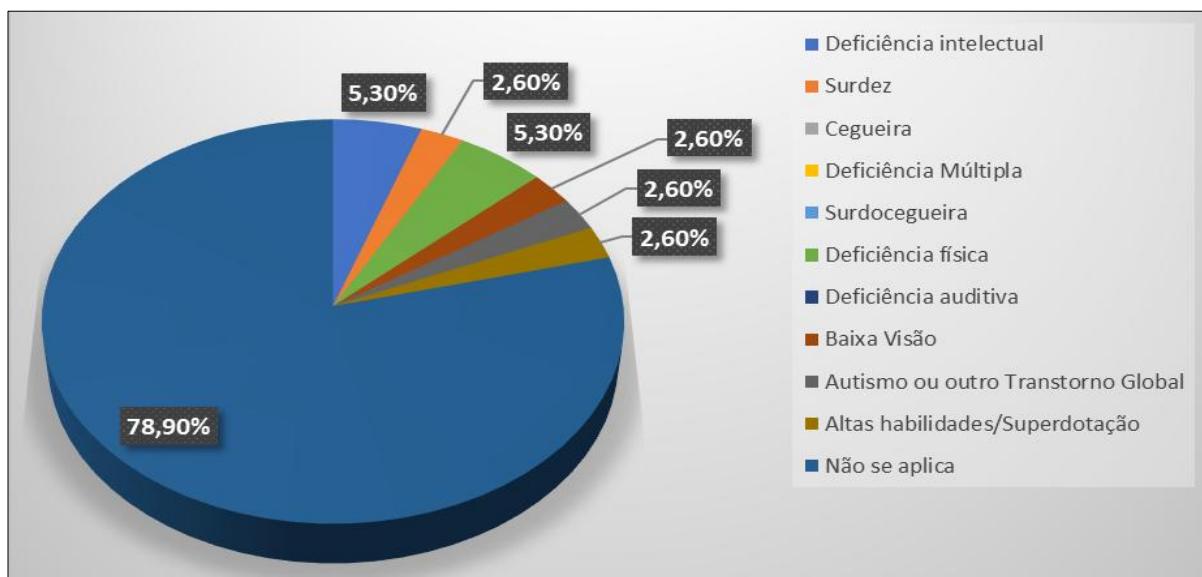
The predominance of female respondents may indicate a trend in the PAAI profession; however, it is essential to promote gender diversity in this field.

The age distribution of respondents suggests a diversity of life experiences and professions. This may contribute to a combination of new perspectives consolidated in the field of Special Education, which can increase the effectiveness of Specialized Educational Assistance. The variation in experience indicates the presence of both beginners and experienced professionals in the area of support and accompaniment for inclusion, which can

be beneficial as it allows for the exchange of knowledge and practices among professionals with different levels of experience.

A significant finding revealed by the research, and deserving of attention, is the low number of people with disabilities, as shown in Graph 3. This data corroborates the analyses of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), which, in its national survey, presented the results of the module on People with Disabilities from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNAD). In the third collection of 2022, the data indicated that approximately 18.6 million people, or 8.9% of the total population, have some disability in Brazil. Regarding professional life, only 26.6% of people with disabilities are employed, in contrast to 60.7% of the general population. Adopting a non-biomedical, but functional model of disability, according to the research, 5.5% of people had a disability in only one of their functions and 3.4% in two or more functions. (Brazil, 2024)

Chart 3 - Number of PAAIs with Disabilities - Questionnaire



Source: prepared by the author (2024).

The questionnaire data provided a comprehensive overview of the profile of the PAAIs (Professional Assistants in Special Education). The predominance of initial training in Pedagogy, combined with specialization in areas of special education, highlights the high level of qualification of these professionals.

Regarding training, 96% have a degree in Pedagogy. In a study conducted by Tartuci and Flores (2013), the initial training profile of teachers working in Special Education Services is predominantly in Pedagogy; the findings of this research reinforce



this data. Of the total respondents, 27% had training in Special Education in a generalist manner, that is, training that covers special/inclusive education without specifying any particular area; 73% had training in other areas of disability/disorder (hearing, intellectual, visual, and autism).

According to Article 12 of Resolution CNE/CEB No. 4/2009 (Brazil, 2009), teachers working in Special Education Services must be qualified to teach and have specific training in Special Education. In this case, 100% of the participants comply with the resolution, as they hold a degree in pedagogy or a teaching degree and complementary training/specialization in the area of Special Education.

Of the 37 participants in the questionnaire, 28 indicated their perceptions about the importance of the Itinerant Special Education Service's practices in the educational context through open-ended questions; the remainder chose not to respond.

In the open-ended questionnaires with the PAAIs (Program for Inclusive Educational Assistance), it was found that they clearly admit to a very pronounced feeling of loneliness, since the work of the Itinerant AEE (Specialized Educational Assistance) is anchored in the relationship between the regular classroom teacher and the student, which generates a kind of distancing from the commitment of the school as a whole in favor of the inclusive education movement. This factor clearly signals a feeling of insecurity, as demonstrated by the PAAIs' statements regarding the implementation of theoretical concepts in executable proposals. Several interacting situations arise from this factor, which will be listed below:

What became evident in the responses from the PAAIs refers to the precarious way in which the Itinerant Special Education Service is configured in practice, which clearly indicates that it should not be carried out in reverse; that is, the functions listed in the PAAI process go beyond the implementation of the Itinerant Special Education Service.

One concerning factor was the need to eliminate a sentiment based on tacit practice at the expense of scientific practice. This is strongly indicated in the open-ended responses of the PAAIs (Program for the Evaluation of Inclusion and Accompanying Students), which suggest that the guidelines provided orally to educators are often not implemented. This highlights the importance of training mainstream teachers. This training is vital to ensure that students with disabilities are not harmed, both academically and personally, due to the adoption of pedagogical practices that are inadequate to their real needs, thus resulting in more setbacks than progress.

PAAI-6 reported on its Mobile Special Education Service, emphasizing the utmost importance of educators following the given guidelines:



We provide Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE), but I cannot cover all the schools. No matter how much we argue, the AEE guidelines are not followed. It is not easy to see schools embracing the cause. I observe the children and talk to the teachers, guiding them. I discuss materials that help overcome barriers, with some suggestions for adaptation. In terms of materials, I always try to provide guidance and offer an action for students to access on Padlet and via email.

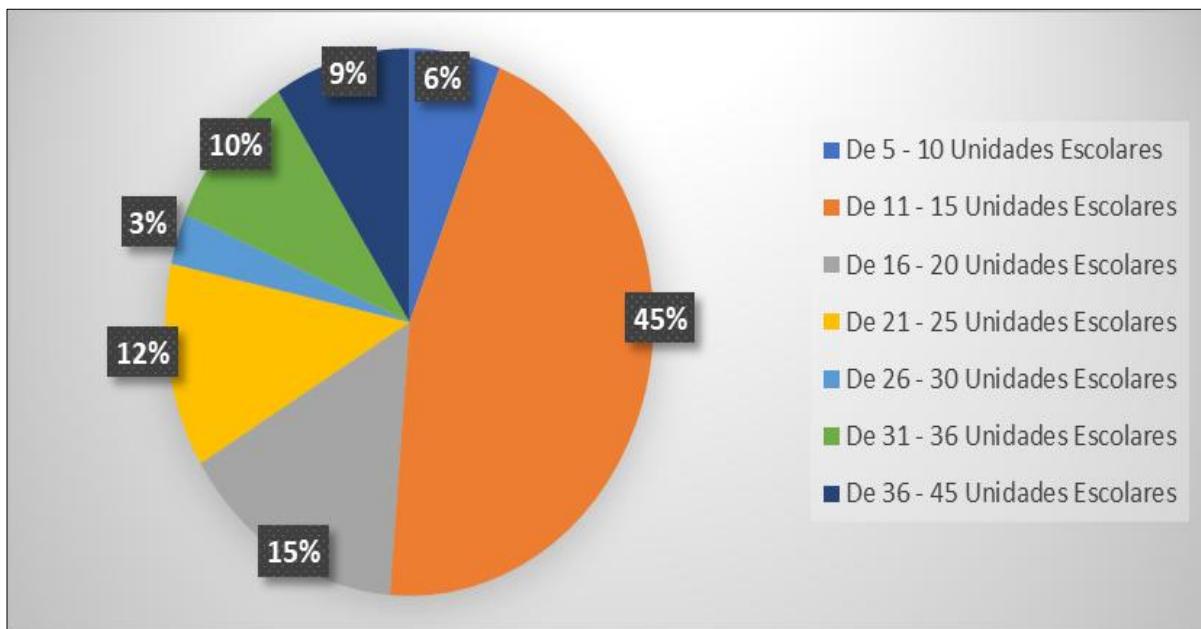
Rocha and Almeida (2008, p. 206) state that the condition for itinerant teaching to be supported and successful is: "it depends on the commitment that the person being guided has to the student's teaching-learning process and is independent of the function they occupy in the school." The results of their research indicated that this itinerant teaching service, when guided in conjunction with the regular education teacher, promotes the student's academic progress, which is the main achievement of this process. The authors also highlight the "possibility of helping the teacher in conducting the student's teaching-learning process and the consequent reduction of uncertainties or insecurity of the regular education teacher when dealing with limitations." (Rocha; Almeida, 2008, p. 2009)

Questions were also raised about the weaknesses of the Itinerant Special Education Service, and 100% of the assessments of the collected data indicate that, despite its importance, significant challenges exist that compromise its effectiveness. The scarcity of human resources and the resistance of some educators to adopting inclusive practices were frequently mentioned by the assessments.

There are no set parameters for the Mobile Special Education Service; therefore, we must consider the number of schools served by each participant in relation to this type of service.

Graphic 4 illustrates the number of schools served by the PAAIs that implement the Itinerant AEE. Since travel distances are not short, the PAAI often opts for itinerancy, which meets greater accessibility demands. Sometimes, schools are left without support during the month. If the number of PAAI staff increases, there will be a greater possibility of monitoring and support in the same school, as the number of Educational Units served by the Itinerant AEE is too high.

Chart 4 - Number of Educational Units.



Source: prepared by the author (2024).

Decree 8764/2016, in its Article 7, across its 15 sections, highlights the specific responsibilities of the PAAI (Program for the Support of Inclusive Education) and the method for analyzing territorial demand, aiming to expand the provision of Specialized Educational Services (AEE), implement guidelines, coordinate ongoing training for educators and administrators, study groups, seminars, and *on-site training*. It also involves participating in discussions about educational practices developed in the Educational Units (UEs), meetings with families and guardians, intersectoral meetings, and the development of actions that guarantee learning, development, and autonomy. Furthermore, it includes conducting itinerant AEE through collaborative work in various educational settings and spaces, as well as the development of pedagogical and accessibility strategies and resources (São Paulo, 2016).

Some PAAIs, in the questionnaire, reported on the exuberant number of UEs they serve:

[...] The current composition of CEFAI, in which each PAAI serves, on average, 30 units (CEIs, EMEIS, EMEFS, EMEFM, EMEBS), not counting forums, GTs, OSCs and urgent demands, makes it humanly impossible to consolidate, in a qualitative manner, the activities specific to AEE in itinerant settings. In reality, what we end up doing is providing guidance aimed at this AEE, but its concrete implementation remains distant. We need to reach, at least every two weeks, the units that most need this initial support, so that they understand what AEE is. How it is consolidated in daily pedagogical practice, without barriers and favoring the skills and characteristics of each baby, child and student. However, we barely manage to reach the direct units once a month.



This characteristic is important for the Itinerant Special Education Service, as the PAAI (Program for the Promotion of Inclusion and Support) does not remain at the school every week, but rather, if possible, twice a month. As highlighted, PAAIs organize their weekly workload of 40 hours to serve more than two schools in a day and then visit the school they serve at least once a month. However, due to the large number of schools, many are not included in the PAAI's itinerant program.

The research revealed that each PAAI (Program for Accessible Educational Assistance) is responsible for 13 to 38 schools, serving an average of 206 students per school. School visits generally occur once a month due to the high number of schools served. From the perspective of the PAAIs, the organizational patterns and arrangements that structure the practice of itinerant AEE (Specialized Educational Assistance) present difficulties in establishing lasting bonds with schools and students due to the limited frequency of visits. This would impact the continuity of service and the effectiveness of pedagogical interventions. Work overload and the diversity of demands were also identified as significant challenges.

David and Capellini (2014, p. 207) indicate that itinerant education facilitates the inclusion of children with disabilities and warn about the scarcity of human resources, stating that:

[...], it has not been able to meet the existing demand and truly monitor the inclusion process, due to a lack of human resources; it only monitors some aspects of the student, often without having contact with the context and the teacher.

The extremely high number of students served by each PAAI (Specialized Educational Assistance Program) in the Mobile AEE (Specialized Educational Assistance) highlights the challenges of the scarcity of Human Resources in the RME/SP (São Paulo Municipal Education Network), but also demonstrates that the Mobile AEE is a fundamental service to guarantee the inclusion of students with disabilities in the network. The lack of human resources poses a significant challenge to the effective implementation of this service, given the difficulty in meeting demand due to the scarcity of PAAIs. The schools are unable to serve all students who need the Mobile AEE, which can compromise the quality of service, as it generates an overload of work, impacting the quality of the work performed and the health of the professionals themselves.

Furthermore, there is difficulty in meeting the specific needs of each student, considering the uniqueness and individual needs of each person. The lack of specialized professionals hinders the provision of individualized and effective support. Just as it impacts learning, the lack of monitoring harms the development and learning of public school students.



To change this reality, it is necessary to invest in public policies that value special education professionals, expand training opportunities, and ensure that all students have access to the specialized care they need.

This reality highlights the importance of investing in adequate training and valuing these professionals to ensure that the itinerant AEE (Specialized Educational Assistance) fulfills its role effectively, promoting not only inclusion but also the development and autonomy of EPAEE (Specialized Educational Assistance Professionals).

## Final Considerations

This study characterized the professionals who make up the School Inclusion Support Service in the Municipal Education Network of São Paulo (RME/SP), described the roles assigned and performed, and, to that end, listed the Itinerant Special Education Service (AEE Itinerante) in order to understand the pedagogical practices of the PAAIs (Professional Assistants for Inclusive Education) who work in the Itinerant AEE in the RME, encompassing their performance, the challenges, and the effectiveness of this model.

In this sense, this study aimed to reflect on the importance of itinerant Special Education Services (AEE Itinerante) as a tool for educational inclusion, bringing to the debate how support services for school inclusion are configured in one of the largest municipal education networks in Brazil, providing insights into an alternative model of AEE that goes beyond traditional service in Resource Rooms (SRM).

This research provided a sample for the literature, highlighting that PAAI, in its implementation of the Itinerant Special Education Service, is characterized by beneficial initiatives that favor curricular access, as it recognizes the value of Educational Units as transformative, motivating, formative, and essential educators in promoting inclusion and ensuring the academic success of students with disabilities.

The results indicated that the Itinerant Special Education Service (AEE Itinerante), with nuances of itinerant teaching, specifically in the São Paulo Municipal Education Network (RME-SP), exemplifies specialized pedagogical support that can contribute to school inclusion. However, it is necessary to promote reflection among educators about their role in this inclusion, as well as to revitalize the Itinerant AEE through collaborative teaching. This approach can offer a solution to overcome current challenges, allowing both AEE models to be articulated more effectively in favor of inclusive education.

The study concludes that the São Paulo Mobile Special Education Service (AEE Itinerante) plays a crucial role in promoting inclusive education, yet faces significant



challenges. This leads to conclusions regarding the expansion of the PAAI (Program for Accessibility and Inclusion) framework to reduce overload and increase the frequency of school visits. Therefore, it is essential to invest in the ongoing education of professionals and in raising awareness within the school community about accessibility and inclusion issues affecting public school students. From the perspective of the PAAIs, the organizational patterns and arrangements that structure the practice of AEE Traveling.

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