

Teaching Work And The Role Of The Teacher In The School Inclusion Of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder (Asd): A Systematic Review

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Abstract:

The aim of this research was to analyze the role of teachers in the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in schools. To this end, a systematic review was carried out under the guidance of the PRISMA guidelines. The searches took place on academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scielo and Scopus, using specific keywords and Boolean operators. Articles published between 2020 and 2023 in Portuguese and of Brazilian nationality were included, excluding theses, dissertations and duplicates, as well as studies unrelated to the topic. The analysis involved assessing the relevance of the articles, reading abstracts and analyzing the works in full, recording key points and evaluating methodological quality. As a result, 11 articles were selected, which found that collaboration between school, family, government and society is fundamental for the inclusion of children with ASD in school, with the teacher playing a central role in this process. Ongoing teacher training is emphasized as an essential practice for inclusion, covering both theoretical knowledge and its practical application. In addition, it was observed that school inclusion goes beyond the academic environment, encompassing students' social and emotional development, where the Specialized Individual Plan (IEP) is characterized as an important tool for personalizing teacher support in the inclusion process. Therefore, respecting differences is crucial to creating inclusive school environments, and the commitment of everyone involved is necessary for the successful inclusion of autistic children, especially the teacher. The teacher must promote adaptive activities and resources so that children with ASD have the means to overcome their interaction, communication and learning difficulties.

Key Word: School inclusion; children; ASD; teacher; lecturer.

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I. Introduction

Inclusive education is a central issue in the contemporary educational scenario, as it seeks to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their differences, have access to a quality and equal education. Inclusive education is emerging as one of the fundamental pillars of the 21st century, redefining the way society conceives and implements educational systems around the world. Inclusion in the school setting goes beyond a simple accommodation for students with disabilities, becoming a guiding principle that embraces diversity in all its forms (NETO et al., 2018).

Inclusive education recognizes that each student is unique, with their own needs, abilities and challenges. School inclusion must eliminate physical, pedagogical and social barriers that can limit access to education and full engagement in learning. At the same time, it must be able to promote collaboration between students with different characteristics and abilities, encouraging mutual understanding and respect for diversity (TAVARES; SANTOS; FREITAS, 2016).

As part of this inclusion, children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have received significant attention, given the challenge that the complexity of this disorder represents for the education system. ASD is a neuropsychiatric disorder that affects communication, social interaction and behavior. Its prevalence has increased significantly in recent decades, which demands an educational approach that meets the specific needs of these children (MATIAS; PROBST, 2018).

Children with ASD face challenges that require an adapted and inclusive educational approach. In this way, it must be recognized that ASD is a spectrum, where its manifestation varies from one child to another. Because of this, some children may have significant difficulties in verbal communication, while others may have exceptional abilities in specific areas, such as math or music (CAMARGO et al., 2020).

However, the inclusion of children with ASD in mainstream schools requires a thorough reassessment of the role of the teacher and the pedagogical practices adopted. Educators play a crucial role in this process, as they need to be not only facilitators of learning, but also active agents of inclusion. School inclusion of children with ASD not only benefits these individuals, but also contributes to building a more inclusive and compassionate society (SOUZA; BORDAS; SANTOS, 2014).

Given this context, the aim of this study was to analyze the role of teachers in the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in schools. By better understanding the role of the teacher in the inclusion of children with ASD in school, this research can offer practical guidance for educators and schools, helping to create more inclusive and welcoming environments. In addition, the results can inform educational policies and teacher training programs, promoting a more effective and sensitive approach to the needs of children with ASD.

II. Material And Methods

This study is a systematic review, which analyzed and synthesized information from authors and academic sources that address the role of the teacher in the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). As this is a systematic review, the research method followed a strict protocol to ensure the appropriate selection of information sources, the critical analysis of studies and the synthesis of relevant findings, corroborating what Galvão and Ricarte (2019) suggest.

To carry out the systematic review, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines were followed, which are a set of internationally recognized guidelines for conducting and reporting systematic reviews (PAGE et al., 2022). Compliance with the PRISMA guidelines included drawing up a review protocol, searching the literature, selecting studies, extracting data, assessing the quality of the works, analyzing the works and drawing up a report with the selected works.

The works were searched in academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar and Scielo. The searches were carried out by associating keywords with the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR", using the following search sequence: ("inclusion") AND ("child with autism") AND ("school") AND ("role of the teacher").

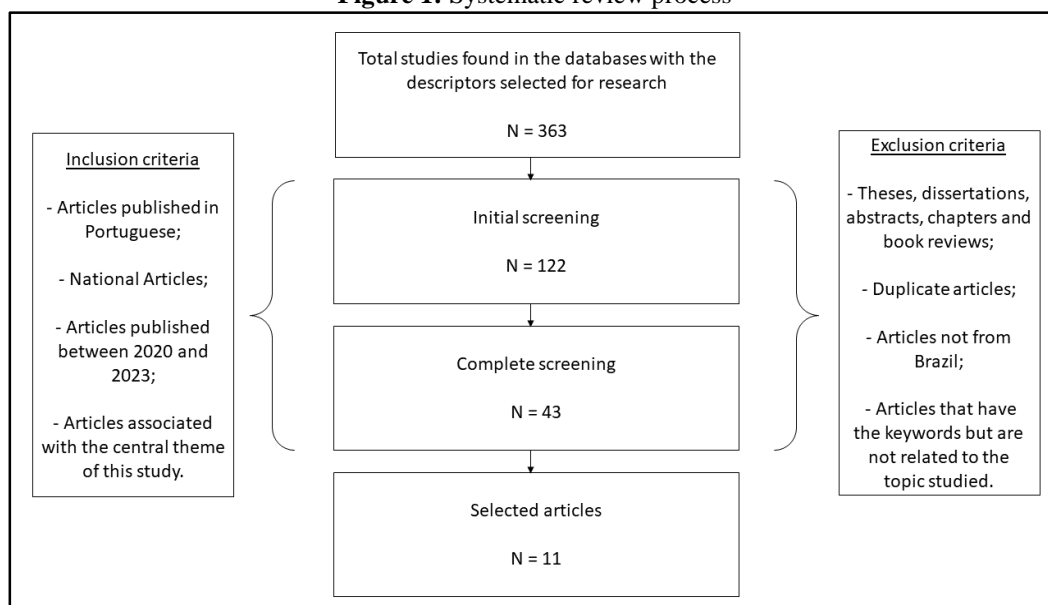
As an inclusion criterion, only articles that addressed the role of the teacher in the school inclusion of children with ASD were selected. The search was conducted considering a defined period of time and included studies published between 2020 and 2023. In addition, only articles published in Portuguese and of Brazilian nationality were selected.

As for the exclusion criteria, theses, dissertations, monographs, abstracts and duplicate articles were discarded. We also decided to exclude articles with Portuguese, Angolan and Mozambican nationality from the systematic review, as well as studies that were not directly related to the topic or that did not meet the established criteria.

As recommended by Moher et al. (2015), the articles were analyzed for relevance according to the established inclusion criteria. The analysis initially involved reading the abstracts of the articles. Subsequently, a complete analysis of the selected articles was carried out to assess whether they provided pertinent information on the role of the teacher in the school inclusion of children with ASD.

During the analysis, the main points covered in each article were identified and recorded, such as the pedagogical strategies recommended for the inclusion of children with ASD, the impact of teacher practices on these children's learning, the research objectives and the authors' conclusions. In addition, the methodological quality of the studies was also assessed during the analysis, considering factors such as the rigor of the research, the clarity of the presentation of the results and the relevance of the methods used. As a result, a sample of 11 articles was obtained, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Systematic review process



Source: Research data (2023).

The articles were summarized in a table with the authors' names, the research objective and the research conclusions. This synthesis was organized into a table that systematically presented the relevant information from each article, making it easier to understand the contributions of each author. Synthesizing the contents of the articles provided a panoramic view of the different perspectives and findings of the studies reviewed, thus highlighting the researchers' conclusions.

III. Result

As a result of the systematic review, 11 articles were obtained that met the inclusion criteria established in this study, thus highlighting the role of the teacher in the school inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Articles selected in the systematic review

Authors	Research objective	Research conclusions
Nunes and Alves (2022)	Discussing school inclusion for students with autism	The inclusion of students with autism in school involves collaboration between the school, the government, the family and society. The teacher plays a fundamental role in this process, as they are responsible for integrating the student into the classroom and facilitating their learning.
Cardozo and Santos (2020)	Discussing the inclusion of children with ASD in school in the midst of social distancing, in times when activities are sent remotely, without direct teacher/student interaction.	The inclusion of autistic students in elementary school requires collaboration between family members and teachers. By getting to know the child's history, this allows the teacher to have information that will help them form an initial bond with these students. It is of the utmost importance that the Specialized Educational Assistance (SEA) teacher has a solid understanding of the concepts and discussions related to childhood and its particularities. Nowadays, it is essential to create opportunities for communication and dialog, both for teachers and families.
Lima and Matos (2020)	To investigate the role of the school in the process of including children with autism; to identify the role of the teacher in autistic development; and to verify the actions developed by the school in the cognitive development of children with autism.	Teachers play an active role in integrating these children into school. The research showed the importance of professional qualifications for all those who deal with special children, emphasizing that training is fundamental to making inclusion effective. It also highlights the school's responsibility as a training and integrating agent in promoting inclusive education, emphasizing the importance of raising awareness about respect and affection in school inclusion.

Cartlotto, Daneliche m and Billerbeck (2021)	Analyzing the inclusion of students with autism in the regular classroom	The text highlights the role of the teacher as a mediator of inclusion, emphasizing their responsibility to create situations that facilitate the process and to deal with conflicts in a way that promotes understanding that differences are characteristics common to all students, regardless of whether they are disabled or not. It also highlights the importance of solid training in inclusive aspects for teachers, as the lack of such training negatively affects their practice. In addition, it highlights the need for support from the family and teaching staff, along with adaptations to the curriculum and activities, in the learning process.
Weizenmann, Pezzi and Zanon (2020)	Investigating the experience of teachers in relation to the inclusion of students with ASD, considering feelings and teaching practices	The teacher plays a fundamental role in the inclusion of autistic children in school, as he or she becomes allied with the students' learning, which facilitates the engagement of children with ASD in the class routine and in their integral development.
Arruda and Azevedo (2022)	Carry out a literature review on the subject of inclusion of students with ASD and, in addition, teachers' views on this issue.	The research emphasizes the importance of the teacher's prior knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the observation of the students to understand their difficulties and abilities, in order to adapt teaching according to their needs. It also highlights the need for ongoing studies to provide bibliographic support for educators and emphasizes the importance of continuing training to ensure inclusive and effective education for students with autism. The role of the teacher is fundamental in the inclusion of these students, and adequate preparation is crucial for their success in the classroom.
Santos and Leite (2022)	Checking how students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are included in ordinary education in a public school in the municipality of Marabá (PA)	The role of the teacher, regardless of their function (manager, coordinator, teacher, etc.), plays a fundamental role in the school inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This is due to their active participation in the inclusive process and in promoting learning. In addition, it is important for the teacher to encourage a good relationship between the autistic student, their classmates and the school community, using adaptive activities and resources/strategies that ensure an organized and inclusive educational environment.
Magalhães and Acioli (2020)	To analyze how kindergarten teachers deal with autistic children enrolled in their classrooms.	The study found that the teacher can help with the inclusion of autistic children in school by seeking knowledge to facilitate teaching performance in the face of the child's needs. Teachers have the role of offering children ways of overcoming their difficulties in interaction, communication and learning.
Santos (2020)	Discuss the theme of playful proficiency in the academic training of teachers that contributes to the development of students with autism spectrum disorder - ASD	The article emphasizes the importance of initial and ongoing teacher training in the inclusion of autistic children in schools. It highlights the need for a body of knowledge, including theoretical foundations, to train professionals in the field of education. Training is compared to the process of cutting a diamond, emphasizing the need for proficiency in the use of playful practices in everyday lessons. The author emphasizes that there is no magic formula for teaching children with autism, but rather the importance of academic training that prepares professionals to be investigators, researchers and observers of the specific educational needs of these students. He concludes by highlighting the need for educational policies committed to inclusion and professionals trained to make a difference in the education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
Vieira and Pereira (2020)	Analyze the possibilities of including autistic people and highlight the role of the teacher in the inclusion of this group of people.	The research showed that the inclusion of autistic children in school depends largely on the teacher, as they interact with autistic students on a daily basis and for a prolonged period. It is therefore up to the teacher to create educational approaches adapted to the needs of the pupils, and ongoing teacher training plays a crucial role in promoting inclusive practices, making learning meaningful for pupils with autism. It is therefore understood that the teacher has a fundamental role to play in the inclusion of autistic children in the school environment, where it is necessary to make these students feel welcome, with a view to non-discrimination and making the most of their potential. In addition, family support is essential in this process.
Limeira et al. (2022)	Explaining the literacy process for students with ASD (autism spectrum disorder)	The text discusses the role of the teacher in the inclusion of autistic children in school, highlighting the importance of preparing teachers to adapt these children and prolong their stay in school. It emphasizes the belief in these children's potential to learn to read and write, requiring clear and functional instructions, often with the help of a Specialized Individual Plan (IEP). The text also emphasizes the partnership between family, school and professional as fundamental to the progress of children with autism, mentioning possible symptoms and challenges faced. It concludes by highlighting the importance of literacy and literacy as essential but challenging processes for children with ASD, emphasizing the need for a tripod: family, educator and institution for an effective literacy and literacy process.

Source: Research data (2023).

Based on the systematic review, it can be seen that the authors of the selected articles address various aspects related to the inclusion of autistic children in schools, highlighting the importance of the teacher's role in this process. Nunes and Alves (2022) emphasize the collaboration between school, government, family and society in the inclusion of autistic students, highlighting the role of the teacher in the integration and learning of these children. This is because the teacher is responsible for integrating the student into the classroom and facilitating their learning.

The teacher plays a central role in the inclusive classroom, as it is the teacher who interacts directly with the students and has a responsibility to create a welcoming and accessible learning environment for all. To this end, creating a welcoming and accessible environment requires an understanding of each student's individual needs, be they related to disabilities, learning styles or other factors.

In line with these prerogatives, Cardozo and Santos (2020) discuss the inclusion of children with ASD in times of social distancing, emphasizing collaboration between family members and teachers. This collaboration is essential because it allows the teacher, by understanding the history and individual characteristics of the child with ASD, to build a more solid and effective initial relationship with the student. By acquiring knowledge about the child's history and personal experiences, the teacher is better prepared to establish an effective initial bond with these students.

Understanding the child's past experiences and individual needs is fundamental to providing an inclusive and welcoming learning environment. It is extremely important that the Specialized Educational Assistance (SEA) teacher has a solid knowledge of the concepts and discussions related to childhood and its particularities, especially in the context of ASD. Knowledge about children involves an understanding of the characteristics of ASD, such as difficulties in communication, social interaction and behavior, as well as the diversity of manifestations within this spectrum. With this knowledge, the teacher is better able to develop teaching strategies and curricular adaptations that meet the specific needs of each child with ASD.

Nowadays, creating opportunities for communication and dialog is essential for both teachers and the families of children with ASD. Effective collaboration between the school and parents is a key element in the success of educational inclusion. Parents are a valuable source of information about their children, including their preferences, interests and challenges. Therefore, promoting an open and receptive environment for communication between parents and teachers is crucial for the development and well-being of children with ASD.

Authors such as Lima and Matos (2020) emphasize the active role of teachers in the school integration of autistic children and the importance of professional qualification. Professional training goes far beyond theoretical knowledge about autism, it covers a number of crucial aspects to ensure that autistic children receive the support they need to thrive at school.

In this sense, teachers need a thorough understanding of the autism spectrum, its individual variations and the associated challenges. This forms the basis for creating personalized teaching strategies that meet the specific needs of each child. In addition, professional training enables teachers to adapt their pedagogical practices according to these needs, which includes the use of differentiated teaching methods, such as alternative communication, visual aids and sensory approaches, to ensure that teaching is accessible and effective for all students.

Also according to the authors, teachers, as professional members of the school environment, play an essential role in shaping students' values, attitudes and behavior. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher, together with the school as a whole, to promote awareness of the importance of respect. Awareness includes respect for individual differences, be they related to disability, ethnic origin, gender, religion or any other characteristic. Raising awareness about respect is the basis for building an inclusive school environment, where every student feels valued and accepted regardless of their particularities.

From the perspective of Carlotto, Danelichem and Billerbeck (2021), the teacher has the role of acting as a facilitator of inclusion, emphasizing their responsibility to create environments conducive to the inclusive process and to address conflicts in a way that promotes the understanding that differences are a natural part of every student's experience, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

In addition, comprehensive training in aspects related to inclusion is necessary for teachers, as the absence of this type of training can have a negative impact on their performance. Thus, teachers should seek to have solid training in special education, as a lack of adequate training in this area can result in difficulties for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students with disabilities or other differences, leading to challenges in the classroom and even situations of exclusion

The authors also point out that teachers must rely on the support of the family and the teaching team, along with making adaptations to the curriculum and activities, in order to guarantee success in the inclusive learning process. School inclusion is a collective effort that requires the commitment of everyone involved to ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

For Weizenmann, Pezzi and Zanon (2020), the role of the teacher is extremely important in the process of including autistic children in school, as they play a crucial role in helping students to learn. The teacher not

only facilitates the engagement of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the class routine, but also contributes significantly to their all-round development.

The integral development of autistic children is a complex process that encompasses not only the academic aspect, but also the social, emotional and behavioral aspects. The teacher plays an essential role in this process, since by partnering with the learning of students with ASD, they can help them acquire not only curricular knowledge, but also essential skills for everyday life.

On the academic side, the teacher adapts their teaching method and materials according to the individual needs of each autistic child, making learning more accessible and meaningful. This can involve the use of visual aids, alternative communication, differentiated teaching strategies and the promotion of a favorable learning environment.

As for social and emotional development, the teacher helps children with ASD to develop social interaction, communication and conflict resolution skills. By creating an inclusive and welcoming environment in the classroom, the teacher promotes the integration of autistic children with their peers, helping to reduce stigma and promote mutual acceptance.

As far as behavioral development is concerned, the teacher can collaborate with health specialists and pedagogical staff to implement behavioral support strategies that help children with ASD regulate their behavior and deal with specific challenges they may face.

Arruda and Azevedo (2022) discuss the importance of the teacher's prior knowledge of ASD and adapting teaching to the needs of autistic children, emphasizing the need for continuing training. Teachers must have prior knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the need to closely observe students in order to understand their difficulties and abilities. This prior understanding and close observation is fundamental for the teacher to be able to adapt the teaching process appropriately and effectively, taking into account the specific needs of each student with ASD.

Thus, the authors highlight the importance of ongoing studies to make bibliographic resources available to educators and emphasize the need for ongoing training to ensure inclusive and effective education for students with autism. The role of the teacher plays a fundamental role in the inclusion of these students, and adequate preparation is essential for their success in the classroom.

The need for ongoing studies to provide bibliographic support for educators means that teachers must be up-to-date with research and best practices related to autism. By carrying out ongoing studies, teachers have access to up-to-date information on teaching strategies, interventions and approaches that are most effective in meeting the specific needs of students with autism. Having access to a wide range of bibliographic resources also enriches understanding of autism, its variations and ways of offering appropriate support.

According to Santos and Leite (2022), the teacher plays a fundamental role in the inclusion of students with ASD in mainstream education, and it is the teacher's role to create an inclusive educational environment. The teacher must encourage a good relationship between the class and the autistic student, as well as with the school community as a whole, in order to use adaptive activities and resources that guarantee an inclusive educational environment. The teacher's active involvement in school inclusion implies that he or she is not only aware of the needs of the student with autism, but also takes proactive steps to meet those needs.

The use of adaptive resources and strategies is essential to ensure that the educational environment is organized and inclusive, which can include the availability of support materials, assistive technologies and differentiated teaching strategies. The teacher must be willing to seek out additional resources and adapt their teaching as necessary to meet the individual needs of each student.

From the perspective of Magalhães and Acioli (2020), teachers play a fundamental role in the inclusion of autistic children in schools by seeking knowledge, which in turn facilitates their performance in meeting the specific needs of these children. When a teacher dedicates themselves to learning more about autism, its characteristics and the best inclusive teaching practices, they acquire the necessary tools to more effectively meet the individual needs of each autistic child in their classroom.

The knowledge acquired allows the teacher to adapt the curriculum, create personalized teaching strategies and offer emotional and behavioral support when necessary. Obtaining this knowledge requires constant research and updating on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), its variations, teaching strategies that have proved effective and available resources

Also according to the authors, the role of the teacher in the inclusion of autistic children is fundamental in providing the means for these children to overcome their difficulties in interaction, communication and learning.

Teachers have the role of offering children ways to overcome their difficulties in interaction, communication and learning. Providing the means for interaction, communication and learning not only facilitates academic progress, but also promotes students' holistic development. By creating an inclusive and stimulating classroom environment, teachers enable students to build healthy interpersonal relationships, express their ideas effectively and acquire the knowledge they need to face the challenges of the ever-evolving world.

According to Santos (2020), the initial and ongoing training of teachers in the context of school inclusion for autistic children is of the utmost importance. The author points out that this training is essential to enable education professionals to deal effectively with the specific demands of these students.

Teacher training is compared to cutting a diamond, highlighting the need to improve their skills and knowledge over time, which implies not only acquiring a solid theoretical basis, but also the practical application of this knowledge in everyday classroom life. The inclusion of autistic children requires proficiency in the use of playful practices and adapted teaching strategies in order to meet the individual needs of each student.

The author emphasizes that there is no magic formula for teaching children with autism, but rather the importance of academic training that prepares professionals to be investigators, researchers and observers of the specific educational needs of these students. Therefore, teachers must be willing to learn continuously, to adapt their teaching approaches and strategies according to the needs of autistic students.

In addition, there is a need for educational policies committed to inclusion. This involves not only training teachers, but also creating school environments that are welcoming and accessible to children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Trained professionals play a key role in implementing these policies and promoting inclusive, quality education for all students.

Thus, the inclusion of autistic children in school depends largely on the teacher, corroborating what Vieira and Pereira (2020) suggest. The authors emphasize that the teacher must create educational practices adapted to meet the needs of students with ASD, and continuous training plays a fundamental role in developing this practice.

It is therefore crucial to create an environment where these students feel welcomed and valued, with the aim of eliminating any form of discrimination and fully exploiting their abilities and talents. Teachers must be prepared to adapt their teaching methods to the individual needs of autistic students, recognizing that each child is unique and may require different strategies. In addition, family support is also important in this process.

The integration between teacher, family and school is also advocated by Limeira et al. (2022), who address the literacy process of students with ASD, highlighting the importance of teacher training and the partnership between family, educator and institution.

The partnership between family, educator and institution is seen as an essential tripod for an effective literacy process. In other words, active collaboration and open communication between these three elements are fundamental to ensuring that children with ASD receive the adequate and personalized support they need to develop in the field of reading and writing

Limeira et al. (2022) also highlight the crucial role of the teacher in promoting school inclusion for children with autism, emphasizing the need for teachers to be well prepared to adapt the educational environment and support these children in order to allow them to remain in school successfully. The teacher must have confidence in these children's potential to learn to read and write, stressing that they often require specific and functional instruction, often with the help of an Individualized Specialized Plan (IEP).

The Specialized Individual Plan (IEP) is an important tool in the context of inclusive education, especially for children with special educational needs, such as those with autism. It is a document that describes the specific learning goals and personalized support strategies for a student with special needs.

IV. Conclusion

Based on this systematic review, it was possible to gain an understanding of the crucial role that teachers play in the school inclusion of autistic children. As revealed by various academic sources, the teacher not only plays the traditional role of teaching, but also acts as a facilitator of inclusion, an advocate for equality and an active partner in promoting the integral development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Collaboration between school, government, family and society is highlighted as fundamental, and the teacher is identified as the key element in the integration and learning of these children. The teacher is the one who creates a welcoming and accessible educational environment, understanding the individual needs of each student and adapting their teaching approach accordingly. In addition, family support is considered essential, establishing a valuable partnership between school and parents.

The Specialized Individual Plan (IEP) has emerged as a valuable tool for personalizing support for autistic children, highlighting the importance of specific goals and functional strategies for their learning.

Ongoing teacher training is emphasized by several authors, focusing not only on theoretical knowledge about autism, but also on the practical application of this knowledge in the classroom context. Teachers must be willing to learn continuously, adapt their approaches and look for up-to-date resources to meet the needs of autistic children.

School inclusion for autistic children is not limited to the academic aspect, but also encompasses social, emotional and behavioral development. The teacher plays a fundamental role in promoting interaction, communication and the holistic development of these children. In addition, awareness of the importance of

respecting differences is emphasized, forming the basis for building an inclusive school environment, where each student is valued regardless of their individual characteristics.

The systematic review reinforces that the inclusion of autistic children in schools is a collective effort that requires the commitment of everyone involved, including teachers, families, schools and society as a whole. It is essential to recognize that the teacher plays a central role in this process, being an agent of change and building a more inclusive and equitable future for children with ASD. Therefore, training, collaboration and ongoing commitment are key elements for the successful inclusion of these children in school.

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