



Classroom Assistants

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



2024-2025

As you are part of the elementary school personnel experiencing the implementation of the classroom assistant service in your school, this document is for you. It offers useful information about this new service.

This information draws on the 2023-2028 Provincial Agreement.





Ojectives of this service

The role of the classroom assistant allows for:

- Increased classroom support for teachers and students so teachers can maximize the time they dedicate to teaching;
- Collaborative efforts which contribute to ensuring an environment that is conducive to learning.

Classroom assistant's role

The role of the classroom assistant is to accompany students, assist teachers, including specialists, in non-pedagogical tasks, and ensure the wellness and safety of students in their school life.

Classroom assistance must be in addition to support services and professional services present in the school. It should not replace or compensate for a lack of services for students in difficulty or with special needs.

Assistance must be given to the class's group of students, and not to a particular student, nor to the whole school.

The classroom assistant is fully part of the school team and their role must be recognized and respected.

It's important that this person's role be clearly explained to the whole school team.

The provisions of the collective agreements prevail over this document for any matter related to working conditions.



Classroom assistant's tasks

The Ministry of Education developed a list of tasks that can be carried out by the classroom assistant.

So as not to confuse tasks or roles already assumed by other personnel such as an attendant or integration aide, a special education technician (SET), or a remedial teacher, listed below are some examples of non-pedagogical tasks a classroom assistant may carry out:

Tasks related to students' safety

- Accompany and supervise students during arrival, dismissal and travel period (passing time), as needed;
- Ensure the management and safety of students, in compliance with the code of conduct and safety measures (for example, provide first aid).

Tasks related to the smooth running of the classroom

- Help with classroom expectations (as needed, intervene with students to uphold class or life rules);
- Support students by ensuring that the climate and environment are suited for learning and the execution of school work.

Tasks related to students' wellbeing

- Contribute to simple follow-ups with students returning to the classroom;
- Help to develop student autonomy (for example, assist with dressing and undressing, contribute to students' management of objects, clothes and school supplies, among other items).

Tasks related to students' school work

- Help students settle in the classroom and get ready to work;
- Answer simple questions in keeping with the instructions given to the students by the teacher;
- Support some students for simple specific needs (for example, supervise a student in the execution of an evaluation).

Tasks related to classroom life

- Assist the teacher in their execution of some administrative tasks (for example, taking attendance);
- Contribute to maintaining classroom order and cleanliness, as well as maintenance of supplies;
- Collaborate in the preparation and posting of various materials (for example, laminating student material, decorating the classroom);
- Collaborate in the organization of events, activities and educational outings (for example, back to school party, museum outing).

Tasks related to meetings

- Attend meetings with parents, as needed.

It is essential that task boundaries be respected. The classroom assistant's job description must be clear, easily accessible and well explained to the whole school team.

Implementation

The equivalent of 4,000 full-time classroom assistants were allocated to all school service centres (SSC) and school boards (SB) in the 2024-2025 school year. The Ministry of Education determines the number of classroom assistants per SSC and SB.

Clarify who can receive classroom assistance

Elementary school teaching personnel, including specialist teachers and 5-year-old preschool teachers, can receive the classroom assistant service. In the case of 5-year-old preschool teachers, the SSC or SB has to analyze needs and take into account the fact that a class would benefit from this part-time additional resource. If that is the case, the classroom assistant is an added service, different from the additional part-time resource in full-time 4-year-old preschool and in 5-year-old kindergarten groups with a high number of students.

In allocating classroom assistants, the SSC or SB pays particular attention to teachers that are new to the profession and to classes with special challenges. In the context of this allocation, the local teachers' union must be consulted through the Labour Relations Committee at the SSC or SB level.

It is incumbent on the school administration to determine the allocation and roles of classroom assistants, in collaboration with teachers and after consultation at Teacher Council.

The school administration is also in charge of creating the positions of individuals called to act as classroom assistants. It must do so by promoting the creation of positions with as many hours as possible to allow for steady schedules. It must also take into account the guidelines included in the teaching personnel's collective agreement, which indicate this support must be between 10 and 15 hours per week per class.

Allocate a significant number of hours

A larger number of weekly hours allocated to classroom assistance in a group is positive, both for the persons occupying these positions and the teaching personnel. Collaboration between classroom assistants and teaching personnel, as well as the development of a relationship with students, can occur more easily. For this reason, it is best to avoid the "sprinkling" of hours and instead offer a significant number of hours.

Clarify the classroom assistant's role

To avoid any confusion, it is important to inform classroom assistants, teachers and the entire school team members of the classroom assistants' role and responsibilities. Tasks fulfilled by classroom assistants must respect the tasks carried out by other personnel and complement the other support services in special education.

Develop collaboration

The relationship between teachers and classroom assistants is based on collaboration. Supervision of the classroom assistant is the responsibility of the school administration. The teacher does not have the responsibility to supervise or manage the classroom assistant and the classroom assistant does not report to the teacher.





Develop good communication

Good communication is a crucial factor in creating a successful relationship between teachers and classroom assistants.

During the pilot project, both teachers and classroom assistants expressed the importance of having consultation time.

Moreover, one of the recommendations that emerged from the assessment of the pilot project is to allocate planning time for teachers and classroom assistants.

Even if there is currently no provision for planning time, nothing prevents the school administrator from supporting you in this matter.

Get support from the school administration

The school administration's support is a winning condition for the success of classroom assistance. When the administration takes on an active role, for example by giving clear guidelines, explaining the tasks that can be carried out by the classroom assistants and making regular follow-ups with them, the experience will be more positive for teachers and classroom assistants alike. Do not hesitate to call on your school's administration for support in these areas.

Stay informed

To promote a seamless implementation of the classroom assistance service, it is important for everyone to share the same understanding. We hope this document will be useful. Do not hesitate to refer to it if needed.

If the implementation of the classroom assistance service does not seem to align with the information presented, or you have questions or are facing challenges, contact your local union.