

Lithuania

Country Overview

Generated: 2024-12-01 10:46:21



Country name

Lithuania

Author of this description

- Vera Coelho, University Institute of Maia - ISMAI

Introduction

Regardless of the global recognition, especially in Lithuania (not sure if necessary; see below), for how important the role of early years education is for a child's development of socioemotional competences, as well as the support for recent research/the recent support for conducting research in Lithuania that highlights the importance of emotional education in those early years for achievement in later school years, there is still a lack of practical recommendations, particularly for children under 7 years of age who attended early childhood education settings in Lithuania. Although (if removing 'especially in Lithuania': Lithuania recognizes the importance of early childhood socioemotional education, which is seen in some initiatives/initiatives that were found,) some initiatives/initiatives were found in these regards, little information about the assessment and implementation of these processes are available in English.

Development

In Lithuania, the Law on Education states that children under seven years of age can enrol in nursery school and kindergarten. Early childhood education and care is referred to as "preschool education" for children from birth through 6 years of age, and as "pre-primary education" for those who are 6 to 7 years of age. Since 2016, one year of pre-primary education has become compulsory in Lithuania (OECD, 2017).

Lithuania shares a tradition of concern with promoting the structural dimensions of early childhood education (ECE) quality (e.g., adequate space, group sizes, staffing, facilities, and hygiene), as well as a focus on the importance of preschool education for a child's cognitive, emotional and social skills development. Although preschool education is not mandatory, there are state level recommendations on what a preschool education curriculum must include. More specifically, pre-primary education has a nationally approved general curriculum that focuses on the development of general competencies such as a child's social, health, cognitive, communication and artistic skills. Additionally, the national level curriculum for pre-primary education in Lithuania underlines the need to consider the development of the children's emotional intelligence, as well as children's psycho-emotional state, (Educational Guidelines | Eurydice (europa.eu)). However, we note that despite such recommendations, each preschool education provider can freely decide on how to design its own curriculum.

In Lithuania, the implementation of socioemotional programmes in early childhood education are scarce and mostly dependent on local initiatives. Although the ECE targets children from 0 to 7 years of age, and aims for developing children's cognitive, emotional and social skills, there are only national level recommendations on what the curriculum must include for children from 6 to 7 years of age, such as pre-primary education. For preschool education, which includes children from 0 to 6 years of age, centres are free to decide on what to include in the curriculum, which can lead to high variability in the teachers' practices for promoting children's socioemotional skills. Although there is little information available, and no national level initiatives were found, some local initiatives for promoting children's social and emotional skills in preschool contexts in Lithuania are described, such as the one carried out by the public company "Vaiko labui".

Assessment

Some evaluation practices are found regarding the programmes being implemented in Lithuania for promoting preschoolers' social and emotional skills. For instance, the programme Zippy's Friends was evaluated on several occasions through an independent entity to ensure implementation fidelity, as well as to assess its impact on children's socio-emotional skills. The results showed that the programme significantly improved the children's ability to cope with daily difficulties, strengthened cooperation, and reduced behavioural problems (e.g., Mishara & Ystgaard, 2006; Monkevičienė, 2014; Monkevicienė et al., 2006; Zipio draugai | Vaiko labui). Regarding the other programmes, to our knowledge, data on the impact of such programmes on children's competencies is not available in research papers published in English.

Intervention

Some local initiatives can be found for promoting children's social and emotional skills in preschool contexts in Lithuania. For instance, the public company "Vaiko labui" has been implementing the international early prevention programme of emotional and behavioural problems 'Zippy's Friends' in Lithuania, since the 2000/2001 school year (e.g., Mishara & Ystgaard, 2006; Monkevičienė, 2014; Monkevicienė et al., 2006). The programme Zippy's Friends in Lithuania can be attended by all children under 5 years of age, including children with disabilities. According to "Vaiko labui" information (Zipio draugai | Vaiko labui), over 229,000 children and over 5,000 teachers have been involved with the programme in several municipalities across the country. This programme was included in the National Programme for Prevention and Assistance to Violence against Children from 2008 to 2010, and the government of Lithuania recommends its implementation in preschool educational settings. In 2020, the programme is being implemented in several municipalities.

Besides Zippy's Friends, preschoolers' social and emotional skills in Lithuania are also developed through the implementation of the Antras žingsnis (Second Step; International Reach | Committee for Children (cfchildren.org) programme since 2004. From 2017 to 2018, about 1,000 teachers were using this programme (Nuo kitų mokslo metų mokyklose – keturios naujos prevencinės programos | KaunoDiena.lt).

References

- Mishara, B. L., & Ystgaard, M. (2006). Effectiveness of a Mental Health Promotion Program to Improve Coping Skills in Young Children: "Zippy's Friends." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21(1), 110–123.
- Monkevičienė, O. (2014). Influence of the Early Prevention Programme "Zippy's Friends" on Self Development of Children's Social Competence and Establishment of Safe Emotional Environment in Educational Institutions. *Pedagogika / Pedagogy*, 116 (4), 71–93.
- Monkevicienė, O., Mishara, B., & Dufour, S. (2006). Effects of the Zippy's Friends Programme on Children's Coping Abilities During the Transition from Kindergarten to Elementary School. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 34(1), 53–60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-006-0104-0>
- OECD (2017). *Education in Lithuania, Reviews of National Policies for Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264281486-e>
- Slušnienė, G. (2019). Possibilities for Development of Emotional Intelligence in Childhood in the Context of Sustainable Education. *Discourse & Communication for Sustainable Education*, 10(1), 133–145. <https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2019-0010>
- Retrieved from: Nuo kitų mokslo metų mokyklose – keturios naujos prevencinės programos | KaunoDiena.lt
- Retrieved from: International Reach | Committee for Children (cfchildren.org)
- Retrieved from: Early Childhood Education and Care | Eurydice (europa.eu)

Citation

This document was generated from the database used to create the Country Overviews Compendium:

Koltcheva, N., V. Coelho, (2022). Social and Emotional Development for Children aged 0 to 7 years old: European Countries Overviews Compendium. EU-SELF Project. ISBN 978-619-233-213-6 (can be downloaded from <https://eusef.nbu.bg>)