

Slovenia

Country Overview

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Country name

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Introduction

Preschool education in Slovenia, through laws and curriculum, focuses on the well-being of children, and providing a safe environment for children in preschool institutions. The kindergarten curriculum has no specific area of learning for social and emotional skills (SES), however, children learn these skills through knowledge about society and other additional activities in class. After reviewing recent literature for the programme “Health in Kindergarten”, a national-based programme for the prevention of health injury and diseases, it was found that some of the program activities and materials can be related to SES development. Also, this document presents other programmes (found during a literature review process), projects and research papers related to intervention for social and emotional skills in Slovenia.

Development

The Kindergarten Curriculum for preschool education in Slovenia focuses on social learning, good communication, and a flexible, safe and inspiring environment. The aims for preschool education in Slovenia as an integral part of the Kindergarten Curriculum include the learning of skills for understanding and accepting oneself and others; learning skills for negotiating and discussing, respecting diversity and teamwork or cooperation; learning skills of empathising, as well as encourage emotional experience or expression, sense of curiosity. Different areas of learning prescribed by the Kindergarten Curriculum does not include social and emotional learning, however, one area of learning includes society with knowledge about oneself and other people, experiencing kindergarten as environment of equal opportunities to participate in activities and everyday life regardless of any type of discrimination and promoting awareness about new cultures and tradition (Kindergarten Curriculum, 1999). Parents can choose the type, public or private, of institutions for their child, as well as the location of the institution. The professional staff need to implement goals and planned activities related to Kindergarten Curriculum and other documents, but they can choose methodologies, materials and specific activities in class.

Assessment

The Kindergarten Curriculum does not define skills and knowledge for children that need to be developed for a specific age range, and professionals do not formally assess children's developmental skills. They observe children's development, learning and functioning in preschool institutions, and provide oral information to parents about progress or developmental problems (EURYDICE, 2021). There is no unique way to record the information in regards to the children's development and functioning in the preschool institutions, and kindergartens choose different ways for that, such as portfolios and protocols.

Intervention

The programme “Health in kindergarten” is a national based programme for preschool children with the goal to develop and strengthen the capacity of kindergartens to create environments that prioritise well-being and health (<https://www.nijz.si/sl/zdravje-v-vrtcu>). In 2006, Institute of Public Health Ljubljana created this programme, and the National Institute of Public Health implemented the programme in kindergartens throughout Slovenia shortly thereafter. This programme is focused on the prevention of health-related content, however, some of the activities and developed materials can be used for emotional and social skills development.

One of the ongoing projects related to SES is the HAND in HAND project, which focuses on the development and implementation of social, emotional, and intercultural (SEI) programmes. The HAND in HAND project will develop an open access systemic policy tool – EU based universal SEI learning programme (a programme for students and school staff) based on an awareness of multiculturalism and diversity that fosters inclusion and develops more tolerant and non-discriminative learning environments for all students (including immigrant and refugee) to prevent discriminative bullying, segregation and early school leaving (ESL) (www.handinhand.si).

There are also other programmes for social and emotional skills development designed within projects or other initiatives but they are for older children. For example, “This is me” project (<https://www.tosemjaz.net/>) that focuses on the development of positive mental health of teens in Slovenia. We also found the implementation and evaluation of programmes related to social and emotional learning. For example, Kozina (2018), in a follow-up study that tested and evaluated the FRIENDS programme (Barret, 2005) in two primary schools in Slovenia. The FRIENDS programme, as a programme for prevention and treatment of anxiety, was tested in this research study by using a multimodal measurement of anxiety with children from grade 8 (12-13 years). The results support the use of the My FRIENDS programme as an intervention for the prevention and treatment of anxiety of children.

References

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Citation

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