

Spain

Country Overview

Generated: 2024-12-01 10:46:23

Country name

Spain

Author of this description

- Vera Coelho, University Institute of Maia - ISMAI

Reviewer

Galina Markova, PhD, Know-How Centre, New Bulgarian University

Introduction

In Spain, the guidelines for preschool education stand for the need of preschool education to support children's socioemotional development, and there has been an increase of investment in the development of children's and youth socioemotional competences in educational settings in the last decade. However, despite the increase in the number of local level initiatives regarding the implementation of interventions in the scope of socioemotional skills, there is still the need for more investment in the area (Aguiar et al., 2017). Rigorous evaluations of the initiatives and interventions conducted in educational settings is still lacking, which may compromise the commitment and engagement of the schools, as well as the sustainability of the interventions over time.

Development

Since 2006 there is a particular emphasis on the social and emotional education and learning in Spanish educational settings, not only since preschool education, but across the lifespan of education. This issue was underlined in the Organic Law 2/2006 of Education that argues that education is the most powerful and adequate setting for supporting children's development of emotional competences and personalities, integrating the cognitive, affective dimensions. Article nr. 71 of the Organic Law 2/2006 of Education underlines that "educational administrations shall provide the necessary means for all students to achieve maximum personal, intellectual, social and emotional development, as well as the objectives established in general terms in this Law.", bringing an awareness to educational settings and its professionals on the need to incorporate practices supporting socio-emotional development in their educational practices.

Particularly regarding preschool education, this is available for free to all children whose parents choose to enrol them, meaning that preschool education is not mandatory. Regardless, almost 100% of children between 3 and 6 years of age attend a formal educational setting in this country. The government is highly supportive of early education as its expected positive role in children's later academic achievement is recognised. The ministry of education highlights that both for children aged from 0 to 3 years of age, as well as for children from 3 to 6 years of age, progressive attention should be paid to the affective development, to the development of language and communication skills, as well as to the promotion of children's abilities to relate with others, solve conflicts, and create positive social relations. Children's motor development, body control habits, and the focus on supporting children's discovery of the physical and social characteristics of the environment are also underlined as important during preschool years in educational settings (<http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/va/contenidos/estudiantes/educacion-infantil.html>).

In addition, guidelines for preschool education recognise the need for preschool education experiences to support children across all developmental areas, encouraging them to achieve a positive and balanced image of themselves. and to develop personal autonomy. Spain presents a decentralised educational system, with educational authorities being managed at autonomous

administrations. The autonomous administration character of educational authorities implies a certain level of autonomy regarding the way and degree in which schools concretize and extend the national policies. Particularly regarding the social emotional learning focus in school/preschool environments, each autonomous community has marked their own statements within the margins allowed by central administrations, creating a wide range of different practices and levels of implements and extension according to local administrators' priorities and guidance (Aguiar et al., 2017).

In this scope, different intervention programmes have been initiated for the social and emotional development of children attending formal educational settings, including more individual approaches as well as global programmes, global approaches, or at the level of the autonomous administrations (Aguiar et al., 2017).

Assessment

Some studies have been published documenting the effects of different programmes aiming to promote children's socio-emotional skills in preschoolers in Spain. Besides the above mentioned, Esteban and colleagues (2010) compared a group of children that was receiving an intervention programme on socio-emotional skills with a group of preschoolers that were not, finding that only children in the intervention group significantly improved their social understanding skills. In the same line, a study with children 6 years of age (grade 1) in Madrid school, authors also found that the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group in the emotional competence after attending an intervention focused on socio-emotional development (Ambrona et al., 2012).

Evidence on the impact of the CRECES programme with preschoolers (a health education programme for children aiming to promote the development of the social and emotional competence) is children's development of socio-emotional competencies and health related habits is also being discussed in Spain (Bermejo-Martins et al., 2015).

Regarding the programme "Aprender a Convivir", some evidence is also documenting its positive effects in the intervention groups, with results showing a significant reduction in antisocial behaviours and conduct problems, as well as a noteworthy improvements in social competence among preschoolers in the experimental group (Benítez et al., 2011; Justicia-Arráez et al., 2015).

We also note that the above mentioned studies have used several socio-emotional skills measures, such as the Child Behavior Checklist- Teacher Report Form (CBCL-TRF; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000), the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale for Teachers and Caregivers, PKBS-2 (Merrell, 2002), the Prueba de reconocimiento emocional (Ekman & Friesen, 2003), a version of the desire-belief-emotion task (Harris, Johnson, Hutton, Andrews, & Cooke, 1989), the Emotion knowledge: Perceval v.2.0 test (Mestre, Guil, Martínez-Cabanas, Escandon, & Gonzalez de la Torre, 2011).

Intervention

Some examples of local level initiatives for preschool education aiming to enhance children's social and emotional skills in Spain include the broader programme conducted by the Marcelino Botín Foundation - Responsible Education programme. This initiative consists of different programmes specific to social and emotional development and has been implemented in more than 100 educational centres in different parts of Spain. The evaluation of the programme implementation shows that the programme can contribute to improve children's academic performance, as well as to decrease children's anxiety.

Another programme widely used in Spain is the adaptation of the American intervention by Marc Brackett, known as the RULER. This programme can be used with children from all ages, from preschool education to higher grades. In Spain, children under 7 years of age may also have access to the validated programme "Aprende a Convivir", which means "Learn to live together", or the programme Educación Emocional, which means "Emotional Education" (Alba et al., 2013; Aguilar et al., 2017, Benítez et al., 2011; Morales et al., 2012). Although there are several local level initiatives

focusing on developing children's socio-emotional skills in early years, we note that we have no information regarding their coverage across the country. Most interventions are timely, without any follow-up on the long-term impact of the intervention thus pointing to the need for further investigating this issue (Aguiar et al., 2017).

References

- Aguilar, P., Lopez-Cobo, I., Cuadrado, F., & Benítez, I. (2019). Social and emotional competences in Spain: A comparative evaluation between Spanish needs and an international framework based on the experiences of researchers, teachers, and policymakers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02127>
- Ambrona, T., López-Perez, B., & González, M. (2012). Eficacia de un programa de educación emocional breve para incrementar la competencia emocional de niños de educación primaria efficacy of a brief emotional education programme to increase emotional competence in children at primary school. *REOP*, 23, (1), 139-49. ISSN: 1189-7448.
- Alba, G., Justicia-Arreaz, A., Pichardo, M. C., & Justicia-Justicia, F. (2013). "Aprender a Convivir." A Prevention programme for Improving Social Competence in Three-to Seven-Year-Olds. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 11(3), 883–904.
- Benítez, J. L., Fernaacute, ndez, M., Justicia, F., Fernaacute, ndez, E., & Justicia, A. (2011). Results of the Aprender a Convivir programme for development of social competence and prevention of antisocial behavior in four-year-old children. *School Psychology International*, 32(1), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034310396804>
- Bermejo, M. E., López, D. O., & Mujika, A. (2018). An exploratory trial of a health education programme to promote healthy lifestyles through social and emotional competence in young children: Study protocol. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 74(1), 211–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13402>
- Esteban, M., Sidera, F., Serrano, J., Amado, A., & Rostan, C. (2010). Improving Social Understanding of Preschool Children: Evaluation of a Training programme. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 8(2), 841–860.
- Justicia-Arráez, A., Pichardo, C., & Justicia, F. (2015). Efecto del programmea Aprender a Convivir en la competencia social y en los problemas de conducta del alumnado de 3 años. *Anales de Psicología*, 31(3), 825–836. <https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.31.3.185621>
- Morales, E., Alba, Guadalupe, Justicia Arráez, A. & Fernández, C. M.. (2012). El programmea Aprender a Convivir para educación primaria. *International Journal of Developmental and Educational Psychology*, 1 (2), 193-199.
- Retrieved from:
<http://www.codajic.org/sites/www.codajic.org/files/Taller-práctico-Educacion-Emocional.pdf>
- Retrieved from: <https://www.vocaeditorial.com/be-happy/>
- Retrieved from :
<http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/va/contenidos/estudiantes/educacion-infantil.html>

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://euself.nbu.bg>)