

Country profile prepared for the
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007
Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

Slovenia

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

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SLOVENIA

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) programs

A. GENERAL INFORMATION, STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

Starting age of compulsory education (if applicable):

Children enter primary education at age 6. [*The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has no recent information regarding compulsory education.*]

1. ISCED 0 PROGRAMS (USUALLY, PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION)

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:

Pre-school education

1.2. Normative age group(s) covered by ISCED 0 programs:

3-5 years of age (Pre-school education in Slovenia caters to children from age 1 to the child's enrolment in primary school at the age 6.)

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators (*source: UIS*)

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	92.1	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio	<i>Not available</i>	
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	85.2 (*)	2004

(*) *Source:* Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2004

1.3.2. *Enrolment ratio by age group, 2002/03 (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable):*

Less than 3 years of age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7
0.0	63.5	75.5	81.6	50.6 56.8(**)	0.0 96.3(**)

UIS estimation. (*) Enrolled in primary education. (**) Primary education enrolment ratio.

1.3.3. *Teachers, 2003/04:*

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
2,565	99.8

(...) Not available.

Note: Including the assistants, the figures are as follows: total staff: 6,792 (of whom female 98.6%, all trained. (Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2004.)

1.3.4. *Funding:*

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	20.60 (2002)

Source: UIS.

1.3.5. *Main source(s) of financing:*

Preschool programmes are financed by public funds, municipality funds, parents, donations and other sources. Fees paid by parents are set by the local community on the basis of the scale classifying parents according to the family income. The basis for the payment is the cost of the programme attended by the child. Parents pay not more than 80 % and not less than 10 % of the cost of the pre-school programme attended by their child. In 2001 parents paid the tuition amounting to 32.4% of the actual costs on the average.

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

Pre-school education includes children from age 1 to the child's enrolment in primary school at age 6.

2.2. Normative age group(s) covered by other ECCE programs:

Children in the age group 1–3 years.

2.3. Estimate number of children covered by other ECCE programs:

Children attending preschool education by age: 1 year and less, 25.6%; 2 years, 48.1%.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING ECCE PROGRAMS (INCLUDING ISCED 0)

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

Pre-school education is regulated by two laws:

The Organisation and Funding of Education Act which regulates the conditions for the implementation and specifies the method of management and financing of education and training in all areas of education.

The Pre-school Institutions Act which regulates pre-school education conducted by public and private pre-school centres (such as tasks of pre-school centres, objectives and principles, types of programmes in pre-school centres, financing, terms and conditions for employment of instructional and professional staff, work obligations of pre-school teachers and assistants, etc.).

Education in pre-school institutions and schools in ethnically and linguistically mixed areas is provided in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, educational legislation, and the law regulating special educational rights of the Italian and the Hungarian ethnic minorities.

3.2. Official body/bodies in charge of supervision or coordination:

The Ministry of Education and Sport makes decisions at the national level about legislation and other regulations.

Inspection is carried out by the School Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia which forms part of the Ministry. It supervises the work of pre-school centres.

The Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education adopts pre-school programmes/curricula and gives opinion on the adequacy of programmes provided by public and private pre-school centres.

The municipalities insure that there are proper conditions for the implementation of the curriculum.

At the level of the pre-school centre annual work plans are discussed and adopted by the Pre-school Centre Council.

3.3. Other entities involved in the provision (e.g. municipalities, local governments) and main types of providers (e.g. public, private, mixed, community-based, etc.):

Pre-school centres can be public or private. Public pre-school centres are established and financed by the municipalities. Private pre-school centres are established by individuals or group of individuals. There are two types of private pre-school centres:

- Private pre-school centres with concession agreements (granted by the local community) which must meet regulatory requirements for public pre-school centre and implement the national curriculum
- Private pre-school centres without concession agreements, which must also meet requirements concerning the staff, premises, equipment and a positive opinion from the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

The pre-school centres' staff consists of pre-school teachers, pre-school teachers' assistants, counsellors and other professional staff, management, administrative and auxiliary staff.

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

- Pre-school teachers: three-year professional college programme at the University of Education
- Pre-school teachers' assistants: four-year secondary school for pre-school teachers' assistants or general secondary education completed with a vocational course in pre-school education.
- Counselling service which may include psychologists, educational specialists, social workers, specialists of social pedagogy, or specialists for children with special needs.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

Conceptual and systemic changes regarding the organisation and financing of education, pre-school centres, compulsory education, secondary general education, technical and vocational education and training, and adult education, were proposed and formed the basis of the new school bills, which were passed by the National Assembly in February 1996.

The new legislation has introduced several systemic changes in pre-school education:

- Possibility of choice between public and private pre-school centres and between various programmes,
- Reduced number of children per group and a reduced number of children per professional,
- Improved organisation of space in pre-school centres,
- Increased level of initial education of pre-school teachers and pre-school teacher assistants,
- Increased level of education of managing staff in pre-school centres.

Within the curricular reform the *National Curriculum for Pre-school Institutions* was created and implemented in all pre-school centres by the year 2001/2002.

The reform prolonged compulsory education from 8 to 9 years. Since 2003/2004 children who reach the age of 6 in the calendar year enter the first class of elementary school. Pre-primary classes which were obligatory one year before entering school have been discontinued.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

There are two types of programmes for pre-school children with special needs:

- Programme of pre-school education with modified provision and additional expert help inside or outside the group, which have been designed for children requiring modifications in work organisation, schedule, space organisation, special therapeutic accessories, didactic and methodological adaptations and.
- Modified Programme for pre-school children for blind and visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, mentally or physically handicapped children, demanding intensive interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary help. The programme includes additional contents for these children to successfully achieve goals.

The guidelines based on the national curriculum are also prepared for children of the two national minority children (Italian and Hungarian national community) who are integrated in ethnically mixed classes. In addition to general aims, specific goals, like bilingual education and education for tolerance, are pursued. The guidelines based on the national curriculum are also prepared for Roma children.

3.8. Special projects/programmes aiming at expanding or improving ECCE:

To ensure the development of the pre-school education the Ministry for Education and Sport and other relevant institutions stimulate research and development projects in this field (self-evaluation, quality in education, etc.) and pay attention to the in-service training of pre-school teachers.

3.9. Information concerning the curriculum (if applicable) or the contents of ECCE programs

Pre-school education in Slovenia includes children from age 1 to the child's enrolment in primary school at age 6 and it is not compulsory. Slovenia has a broad network of public pre-school centres. The system of pre-school education is regulated in a unified manner, which means that a child does not have to change the centre. Teacher and assistants can change group every year or the teacher can take the children to the next age group. This is jointly decided by the pre-school centres and by the parents.

The pre-school centres can offer different programmes regarding the duration (day, half-day and short programs) or the organisation (education and care in the childminder's family, occasional babysitting, pre-school education at home for children with long-term illness, pre-school education for Romany children, pre-school education for children in nationally mixed areas—Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities—, pre-school education for children with special needs).

Pre-school education in pre-school centres is organised in two age groups: the first age group includes children aged 1 to 3 years, and the second includes children aged 3 to school age. The number of children is twelve per first age group, and twenty-two per second age group. However the municipalities can increase the number of children per each age group up to two children. In such a case the municipality must set out their arguments for increasing the number of children per group.

Regarding the staff to children ratio, two professionals must be present at least six hours daily in a class of the first age group, and in the class of the second age group two professionals must be present at least four hours daily. The legislation provides the possibility of establishing groups of children with a more favourable staff to child ratio (depending on whether the group is homogeneous, heterogeneous or combined or is a childminder's family, or if there are children with special needs in the group or in the case of Roma children).

Within the curricular reform the National Curriculum for Pre-school Institutions was drafted and implemented in all pre-school centres by the year 2001/2002.

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

The basic tasks of pre-school centres are helping parents with the general care of the child, improving the quality of life of the family and the children and creating the conditions for the development of the child's physical and mental abilities. The general educational objective of the public pre-school centres is to encourage different areas of the child's stage of development and his/her individual personality and to encourage the child to develop special abilities and skills. The goals of pre-school education in pre-school centres are:

- to develop the child's self-concept and his/her ability to understand others;
- to develop the ability to recognise feelings and encourage the experience and expression of emotions;

- to nurture curiosity, an inquiring mind, imagination, intuition and independent thinking;
- to encourage linguistic development for the purpose of effective and creative use of speech, and, at a later stage, of writing and reading;
- to stimulate artistic experience and expression;
- to stimulate motor abilities and skills;
- to convey the knowledge of various fields of science and everyday life;
- to develop independence regarding personal hygiene and health care.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

The curriculum defines six areas of activities: movement, language, art, nature, society and mathematics. It defines also the global objectives and the objectives of individual area of activity, examples of activities for individual age groups and the role of the adults. The curriculum does not specify the skills which the children should master at the completion of the individual age period.

The objectives of each field represent the framework in which the pre-school teacher chooses the contents and the activity to achieve the objectives. The curriculum emphasises that the various methods and approaches to activities involving pre-school children must take into account the diversity of the age group and enable the integration of the various fields of activity. With various methods and through play, the pre-school teacher stimulates and motivates the children to use various strategies and tools in their search for answers.

3.9.3. Average number of hours per week and average amount of weeks per year:

The opening hours of pre-schools centres in larger cities is up to 11 hours and they are adjusted to suit the need of working parents. They are opened every weekday throughout the year except Sundays and public holidays.

The day programme lasts from 6 to 9 hours and can take place in the morning, in the afternoon or in shifts. The half day programme lasts from 4 to 6 hours. They are both intended for children aged 1 to 6 and include education, care and meals.

Short programmes last from 240 to 600 hours yearly in demographically threatened regions and remote areas. It is intended for children aged 3 to 6. The short programme may be performed throughout the school year or in a more concentrated form within a specific time frame.

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

Not available

[*Main Sources:* EURYDICE Website, Last updated: 2005. National Report on the Development of Education, 2004. EURYBASE 2001/02.]

C. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REGARDING ECCE (TO BE COMPILED IN COLLABORATION WITH UNICEF OFFICES WHERE POSSIBLE)

4.1. Parenting programmes are usually addressed to parents and families of children less than 6 years of age. Please provide information about any parenting programmes in your country according to the table below:

Type of programme	Yes or No (note for each programme)	Estimated number of beneficiaries
Parenting education through early learning centres and child care centres	Larger municipalities organised “The School for Parents” where lectures, discussions about different topics (psychological, social and emotional development of the child, education, literacy, nutrition, etc.) are proposed.	
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	In pre-school centres several health education activities are organised for parents and their children on different health topics depending on the age of the target children group.	
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	Organisation of some parents’ meetings for each age group where they can discuss the children in the group. Organisation of individual discussions about the child Depending on the topic, the counselling service or the head teacher can assist at the parents’ meeting or at the individual discussions.	

As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes		
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	There are several TV broadcasts for pre-school and school children and their parents on national TV. Special attention is given to literacy through specialised periodicals for children and their parents.	
Other (please specify)	Councils of parent are mandatory bodies enabling parents to implement their interests in an organised manner. They are composed of one representative from each group elected by the parents of children in that group. As the body supervising the exercise of children's rights and duties, it discusses head teacher's reports on educational problems and parents' complaints concerning educational provision and proposes solutions to the competent bodies of the pre-school concerned.	

Are any of these programmes targeted specifically toward the vulnerable, poor, disadvantaged or excluded? If so, which ones? (Please provide/attach any additional and relevant information if available).

Information not available

4.2. Is there a national-level system for monitoring children's development or school readiness prior to entering primary school?

At the national level medical checkups for children and adolescents are organised in order to attend the development of the child. There are medical checkups every three months during the first year, and then at the age of 3 and 5.

There are no assessments of school readiness prior to entering primary school unless parents, doctors or the commission for children with special needs postpone school entering for one year.

4.3. Is there a policy on early childhood (ECCE, ECD, etc.) that has been accepted? If not, is there one under development?

Pre-school education in Slovenia is part of the educational system and has been under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Sport since 1993. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs provides different types of subsidies for children and families in order to improve their living standards.

[Information revised by the Ministry of Education, January 2006.]