

## Goals and aims of pre-school education

- Develop skills and abilities to:
  - understand and appreciate oneself and others,
  - debate and resolve issues, appreciate diversity and cooperate or interact in a group,
  - recognise emotions and encourage emotional experience and expression.
- Foster curiosity, exploratory spirit, imagination and intuition, as well as develop critical thinking.
- Nurture language development for effective and creative use of speech, also reading and writing at a later stage.
- Cultivate appreciation of artistic works and the artistic expression.

## Participation

In the 2016/2017 school year, pre-school education was provided in around 1 000 settings: 108 at public, 196 at basic school based and 85 at private kindergartens.

There were 78.7% of all children aged 1 to 6 years enrolled in kindergartens. 95% of enrolled children attended public kindergartens.

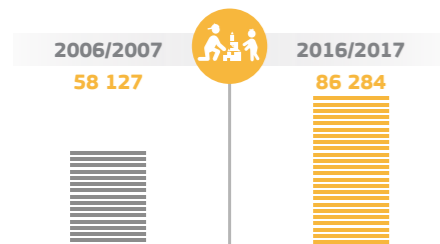
## Kindergarten units and children in pre-school education, 2016/2017

	Units	Children		
		Total	1 <sup>st</sup> age group	2 <sup>nd</sup> age group
Total	944	86 284	25 525	60 759

Source: SURS.

In the last decade, the number of children enrolled in kindergartens increased by almost a half.

## Enrolment in pre-school education

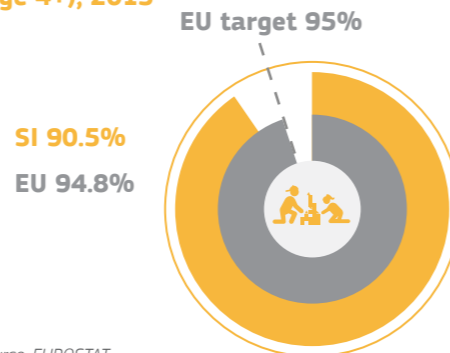


Source: SURS

## International comparison

Even with steady increase in the participation rate of children two years below compulsory school age, Slovenia has not yet reached the EU 2020 target.

## Participation rate in pre-school education (age 4+), 2015

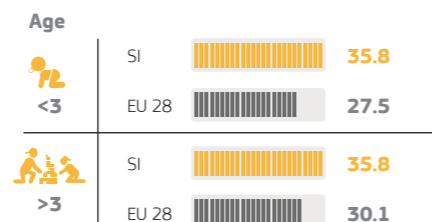


Source: EUROSTAT.

In contrast, Slovenia is among the few European countries with the highest inclusion rate for the youngest children. In 2015, 37.4% of 0–3 year olds were included in formal ECEC, while EU(28) average was at 30.3%. Slovenia has attained the so called Barcelona objective, namely 33% participation rate of 0–3 year olds as a minimum.

Children spend more time in kindergarten compared to their peers in Europe. It is an indicator of trust that people place in the institutions.

## Average number of hours spent per week in pre-school education, 2015



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC.

The system of pre-school education aims to support parents who work. The share of employed mothers is the highest in EU, comparable only to Denmark's and Sweden's.



# PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

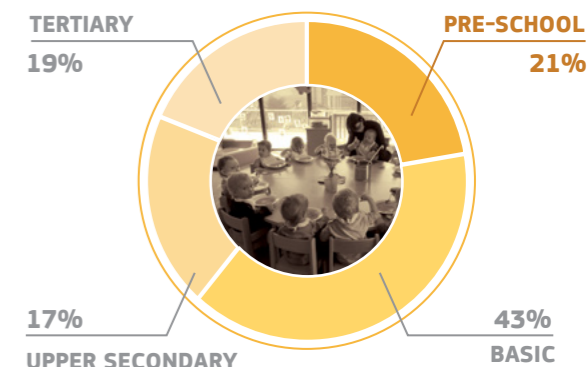
## PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Pre-school education is not compulsory. It is aimed at children of eleven months to six years or compulsory school age.

It is provided by public and private kindergartens. Where necessary, the network of public kindergartens is complemented by private kindergartens that hold a concession. Childcare services may also be provided by registered child-minders.

Kindergartens are **unified institutional settings**. They provide education and care for all pre-school children. Parents have the right to decide on the pre-school programme and kindergarten at their own choice.

## Expenditure on educational institutions by level of education, 2015



Source: SURS.

## The right to admission is universal for all children.

Public kindergartens are established by local communities. Primarily, they are funded by municipalities, but by the state and parents, too. The **fees are subsidized** for all and vary according to the family's economic situation. Third and further children of the same family, as well as economically disadvantaged children attend kindergartens at no cost. Moreover, the latter take priority. From 2018/2019, children one year below compulsory school age not pursuing pre-school education will have the option to enroll on a gratis shorter programme (240 hrs).

## KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

### Programme

Pre-school education is provided in **two age groups**:

- first: children aged 1 to 3 and
- second: children aged 3 to school age.

Kindergartens may implement **full-day, half-day** and **shorter** programmes. Programmes encompass education, care and meals.

The core national programming document is the **Kindergarten curriculum**. It defines the pre-school education in kindergartens as **part of the education system** and so under the auspices of the ministry responsible for education.

It is open and flexible, common to all children aged 1 to 6, it defines goals, fundamental principles, characteristics of pre-school children, as well as areas of activities. However, it is not structured in detail.

It includes recommendations for day-to-day activities, interpersonal relationships, organisation of space, as well as communication with parents.

The curriculum underlines the importance of the imminent hidden curriculum within daily routines that is repeatedly displayed as indirect education.

The curriculum does not aim only at acquiring pre-academic abilities, but also at fostering a **holistic development** of the child.

Kindergartens and pre-school teachers have autonomy to implement the curriculum.

### ACTIVITY AREAS

Activity areas are intertwined. They include global goals, objectives, explanation of the roles adults have and examples of activities.

#### MOVEMENT

- movement concepts, skills, activities
- one's own body
- sport disciplines
- cooperation, diversity

#### ART

- art (experience, learn, appreciate and enjoy)
- aesthetic perception and artistic visualisation
- art forms
- expression and communication with art
- creativity and artistic abilities

#### LANGUAGE

- language development
- culture
- creativity
- literature for children
- linguistic and non-verbal communication skills



### SOCIETY

- democratic principles, diversity, equality
- learn about oneself and others
- life habits
- closer and wider social and cultural environment
- concept of time (historical changes)
- new cultures and traditions
- safe and healthy lifestyle

### MATHEMATICS

- mathematics in everyday life
- mathematical skills, thinking, way of expression
- mathematics as a pleasant experience

### NATURE

- animate and inanimate nature
- one's body, the cycle of life, a healthy and safe lifestyle
- substances, physical space, time, sound, light
- technique and technology
- approaches to learning about nature

### Education staff at kindergartens:

- pre-school teachers,
- pre-school teacher assistants,
- counsellors,
- organizers of health-hygiene regime,
- organizers of meals.

Commonly, **pre-school teachers and teacher assistants** work in pairs. Pre-school teachers hold a bachelor degree and teach 30 hours per week. Pre-school teacher assistants have an upper secondary education qualification and teach 35 hours per week.

**Counselling staff** provide support to children, parents, teachers, management, and other staff. They participate in the planning, and creating or maintaining safe and supportive educational environment to stimulate the optimal development of every child.

**Supplementary documents** aimed at supporting the education staff in upholding the curricular principles include: guidelines and supplements to the Kindergarten curriculum that cover children with special needs, education in ethnically mixed areas, work with Roma children, and integration of migrant children.

**Head teacher** (appointed by the kindergarten council) assume two roles: that of an educational leader and that of an administrative manager.

Kindergartens are **autonomous** in the employment and management of their human resources.

Kindergartens conduct regular self-evaluations and are supervised by the School Inspectorate.

**COMMON FOR  
ALL CHILDREN AGED 1 TO 6**