

Goals and aims of preschool 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 have the 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 2022/2023 school year, preschool education was provided in around 1 000 settings: at 108 public and 97 private kindergartens, and at 207 school-based kindergartens.

There were 84.6% of all children aged 1 to 6 years enrolled in kindergartens. 94% of enrolled children attended public kindergartens.

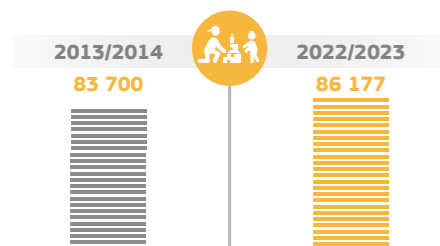
Kindergarten units and children in preschool education, 2022/2023

	Units	Children		
		Total	1 st age group	2 nd age group
Total	992	86 177	27 204	58 973

Source: SURS.

Recent figures of children enrolled in kindergartens show an increase of almost 10 percentage points since 2013.

Enrolment in preschool education

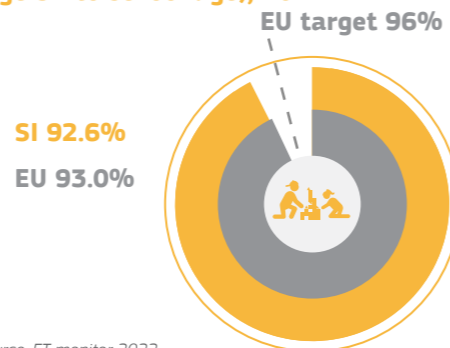


Source: SURS

International comparison

Slovenia is enjoying a steady increase in the participation rate of children between 3 years old and compulsory school age. Nevertheless, it is lagging the EU 2030 target.

Participation rate in preschool education (age 3+ to school age), 2021

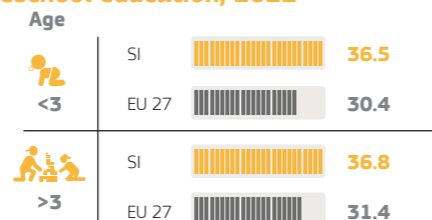


Source: ET monitor 2022

In contrast, Slovenia is among the few European countries with the highest inclusion rate for the youngest children. In 2022, 52.3% of 0–3 year olds were included in formal ECEC, while EU(27) average was at 35.9%. (Eurostat ILC_CAINDFORMAL) 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 preschool education, 2022



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC. (ILC_CAMNFORGO)

The system of preschool 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.



PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

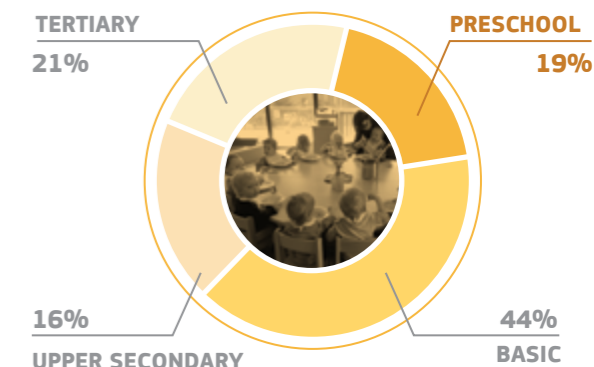
PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Preschool education is not compulsory. It is open to 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 preschool children. Parents have the right to decide on the preschool programme and kindergarten at their own choice.

Expenditure on educational institutions by level of education, 2021



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. Parents with two children attending the kindergarten at the same time do not have to pay for the younger child. Third and further children of the same family, and economically disadvantaged children attend kindergarten at no cost. The latter also take priority. Since 2018/2019, children who will turn five or six by the end of the given school year and who are not attending any other kindergarten programme can enrol in a gratis shorter programme (240 hours).

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

Programme

Preschool 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 preschool 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 preschool 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 preschool teachers have the autonomy to implement the curriculum.

In 2022, Slovenia began **revising the curriculum** by adopting the guiding principles.

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:

- Preschool teachers
- Preschool teacher assistants
- Counsellors
- Organizers of health-hygiene regime
- Organizers of meals

Commonly, **preschool teachers and teacher assistants** work in pairs. Preschool teachers hold a bachelor's degree and teach 30 hours per week. Preschool 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 inclusion of migrant children.

Head teacher (appointed by the kindergarten council) assumes 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 Education Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia.

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