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Slovenian and portuguese preschool teachers: the importance of cooperation with parents

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Abstract

The objectives and strategies of cooperation between parents and preschool teachers depend on how the cooperation is defined at the preschool institution level. In Slovenia, the participation between parents and preschool teachers is determined by a formalized framework and legislation, whose individual articles already contain parts of partner cooperation policies. According to the principle of cooperation with parents, written in the Curriculum for kindergartens, published in 1999, the parents have not only the right to information about the programs and their child, but also the right to participate in the design of life and work in the preschool institution and even the right to actively participate in the educational work. Similarly the preschool education in Portugal has assumed a sense of support and social assistance to families and it is the parents and guardians' duty to participate in the preschool education institutions' boards through elected representatives or representative associations; to develop a relationship of cooperation with educators within a formative perspective; to give an opinion regarding the working hours of the preschool education institution and to participate, on a voluntary basis and under the institution's pedagogical board's guidance, in entertainment and assistance activities. The purpose of this paper is to compare the views of Slovenian and Portuguese preschool teachers on the importance of cooperation with parents especially focusing on some of the personal views of preschool teachers towards different ways of cooperation with parents; towards parental influence on the life and work of preschool institution and towards their competencies regarding cooperation with parents. In the research carried out in 2017 in Slovenia and Portugal (N=386) we applied 100 questionnaires in Portugal and 286 in Slovenia. It has shown that Slovenian and Portuguese preschool teachers are aware of the importance of sharing responsibilities and powers with parents, although formal aspects of cooperation (council of parents and council of public kindergarten) are clearly defined in Slovenian and Portuguese legislation and therefore parents can more effectively communicate their comments and suggestions on the work of kindergarten via their parents' representative in the council of parents.

Keywords: preschool teachers; parents; partnership.

Resumo

Os objetivos e estratégias de cooperação entre pais e professores dependem de como a cooperação é definida ao nível da Educação Pré-escolar. Na Eslovénia, a participação entre pais e professores é determinada por uma estrutura formalizada e legislação, cujos artigos individuais já contêm partes das políticas de cooperação. De acordo com o princípio da cooperação com os pais, escrito no currículo para os jardins de infância, publicado em 1999, os pais não só têm o direito à informação sobre os programas dos seus filhos, mas também o direito de participarem no projeto de vida e trabalho na instituição Pré-escolar e ainda o direito de participar ativamente no projeto educativo. A Educação Pré-escolar em Portugal assumiu um sentido de apoio e assistência social às famílias e o dever destas: participarem na organização das instituições de Educação Pré-escolar, através de representantes eleitos ou associações representativas; desenvolverem uma relação de cooperação com educadores dentro de uma perspetiva formativa; darem uma opinião sobre as horas de trabalho da instituição e a participarem, numa base voluntária e sob a orientação do Conselho Pedagógico da instituição, em atividades de apoio social.

O objetivo deste trabalho é comparar as opiniões dos professores eslovenos e portugueses sobre a importância da cooperação com os pais, especialmente com foco em alguns pontos de vista pessoais de professores no sentido de apresentarem as diferentes formas de cooperação com os pais; verificar o papel dos pais na cooperação e organização da instituição Pré-escolar e as respetivas competências relativas a esta cooperação. Nesta pesquisa realizada em 2017 na Eslovénia e em Portugal (N = 386) aplicamos 100 questionários em Portugal e 286 na Eslovénia. Na análise dos resultados verificámos que os docentes eslovenos e portugueses estavam conscientes da importância da partilha de responsabilidades e poderes com os pais. Os aspetos formais de cooperação (Conselho de pais) e Conselho de jardim de infância público estão claramente definidos na legislação eslovena e portuguesa. Na Eslovénia os pais podem mais eficazmente comunicar as suas opiniões e sugestões sobre o trabalho no jardim-de-infância através do representante dos pais no Conselho de pais.

Palavras-Chave: professores do pré-escolar; pais; parceria.

1 Introduction

The objectives and strategies of cooperation between parents and preschool teachers depend on how the cooperation is defined at the preschool institution level. In Slovenia, the participation between parents (and the limits of their influence) and preschool teachers is determined by a formalized framework and legislation (Kindergarten Act 1996; Act on Organization and Financing of Education 1996 Curriculum for Kindergartens 1999), whose individual articles in our view already contain parts of partner cooperation policies. According to the principle of cooperation with parents, written in the Curriculum for kindergartens (1999), the parents have not only the right to be informed about the programs and their children, but also the right to participate in the design of life and work in the preschool institution and even the right to actively participate in the educational work. In parents' preschool teachers' relation, the importance of sharing responsibilities and powers is stressed, as this is the basis for the development of partnership. The partnership between parents and preschool institution should encourage common commitment to the success of each child design ethos of understanding and openness in relations between parents and preschool institutions and help parents develop a positive role in helping in the education of their child. Partnership between parents and preschool teachers should encourage a shared commitment to the success of the individual child, formed in an ethos of understanding and openness in the relations between the preschool institution and parents. Previous research has shown that cooperation with parents is a key factor for effective education.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Preschool education in Slovenia: formal frameworks of cooperation

System solutions that were in the Republic of Slovenia enacted in 1996, were conceptually justified in the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia, (1995) and later upgraded in the White Paper on Education (2011). In regard to cooperation between parents and kindergarten, the White Paper (1995) states, that the state must provide for the possibility of choice at all levels including at the level of choice of kindergartens and schools, and that parents must be provided with the possibility of "including their children in one of the programs of preschool education in public kindergartens" (p. 48; White Paper, 2011, p. 74). Parents also have the right to choose the program in accordance with their and the child's interests and needs" (White Paper, 1995; White Paper, 2011). It also highlights the need to raise the quality of work with parents by providing more appropriate and accessible information, greater diversity in the range of programs and enhancing direct cooperation between kindergarten and parents.

The Kindergarten Act (2005) defines the rights of parents Article 9, which states that parents' right to choose (...) preschool programs for their children in public or private kindergarten. For children who due to illness cannot be included in the nursery, it can also perform pre-school education at home". Kindergarten must present parents with a special publication, which must "present programs that are

running, objectives, contents and methods of work” (Kindergarten Act 2005, Article 11). Rules on kindergarten publication (1996) states that it must also contain “the rights of parents and children and a way of ensuring the rights, obligations of parents to kindergarten and ways of integration and cooperation with parents” (Article 4). In compliance with the rules is necessary to enable parents to receive a publication before enrolling a child in kindergarten (Article 5). The program for preschool children in public kindergarten is adopted by the Council of Experts for general education that must include ways and forms of cooperation with parents (Article 12). This means that parents are familiar with the mode of cooperation prior to enrollment of their children in kindergarten.

Among the objectives of the Curriculum for kindergartens the goal to improve information and cooperation with parents is emphasized (The curriculum for kindergartens 1999), from which the principle of cooperation with parents, which defines that there must be a publicly written and oral information about the various programs in kindergarten available, is derived (Curriculum for kindergartens 1999). Parents also have the right to prompt exchange of information and in-depth interview of the child with preschool teachers and their assistants and kindergarten parents must provide parents with continuous information and systematic informing of their rights and responsibilities.

To conclude, the Curriculum for Kindergartens conceptually builds on establishing a partnership between parents and kindergarten. The partnership between parents and the kindergarten is defined as a relationship in which professionals and parents are conventionally involved in setting the optimal conditions for the realization of educational goals. The partnership model of cooperation between parents and kindergarten also implies the involvement of parents in their child’s achievement of educational goals.

2.2 Preschool education in Portugal: formal frameworks of cooperation

Preschool Education (PSE) in Portugal is targeted at children between the age of three and the moment they enter compulsory education, which is the 1st Cycle of Basic Education (Framework Act (Law n. 5/97, of February 10). Therefore, this is the first stage of basic education in individuals’ lifelong learning process. In Portugal, there are state Preschool Education institutions and private Preschool Education institutions. Parents are free to choose where to enroll their children. Although the instructional component is free in Portugal, high monthly fees are paid in private institutions due to the non-instructional or social components that they offer. Most private institutions are run by religious orders. Preschool education became universal for four-year-old children in the school year of 2016/2017 (Law n. 65/2015), when changes were made to a previous law which laid down the legal framework for compulsory education and thus established the universality of preschool education from the year in which children completed five years old. At present, such universality is established for all children from the year in which they complete four years old.

According to the primary legislation (Law n. 85/2009), which has been maintained in this regard, universality implies a duty from the State to ensure the existence of a preschool education network which allows the enrolment of all the children covered by law as well as their free attendance to the instructional component. There is no national compulsory syllabus for preschool education, but there are Curricular Guidelines for Preschool Education (CGPSE), which are grounded on the global pedagogical goals defined by the referred Framework Act (Law n. 5/97, of February 10) and are “meant to support the construction and management of the curriculum by each kindergarten’s teacher in cooperation with the educational team of the institution/school center” (Silva, I., Marques, L., Mata, L., & Rosa, M. 2016, p. 5). The first CGPSEs were published in 1997 and were and still are defined as “a set of general and organized principles to be used by preschool teachers to make decisions regarding their practice, that is, to plan and assess the educational process developed with the children” (Silva, quoted by Infante, 2008, p. 29).

Preschool Education has assumed a sense of support and social assistance to families throughout its history, which is why it can be defined as “a set of services which are complementary and/or supplementary to the family educational action and in close articulation with the family” (Homem, 2002, p. 24). We can say that it was seen as a support and continuity of the education given by the family, with an additional goal of providing equal opportunities regarding access to school and the

additional duty of providing children with moments of well-being and safety (Bairrão & Vasconcelos, 1997). When the aim is to offer children the best service and the best conditions, their families' involvement becomes paramount. Therefore, some institutions structure their timetables in order to manage to provide a type of service that most suits families' needs. In article 4 of the Framework Act. (Law n. 5/97, of February 10)

3 Purpose of the study and problem definition

Authors in this paper compare the views of Slovenian and Portuguese preschool teachers about the importance of cooperation with parents. They focused on some of the personal views of preschool teachers towards different ways of cooperation with parents; towards parental influence on the life and work of preschool institution and towards their competencies regarding cooperation with parents. Professional and scientific literature (Maleš 1991; Resman 1992a; Rockwell 1995; Vidmar 2001; Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding in Walberg 2005; Smitu, Sluiterju, Driessenu in Slegersu 2007; Bakker in Denessen 2007; Lim 2008; Šteh 2008; Cankar et al. 2009; Kalin 2009; Downer and Myers 2010; Baroque et. al 2011) uses different scientific terms for cooperation between preschool institution and parents, but what they all have in common is incorporating parental involvement in preschool institution and/or at home. Today it is necessary to consider the interpersonal differences and different social contexts, which on the one hand enable the flow of knowledge and experience, and on the other hand, demand more communication and social skills.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research questions

In accordance with the problem of this research, we formed five research questions:

R1: What are the preschool teachers' views on parental awareness regarding forms of cooperation with preschool institution?

R2: What are the preschool teachers' views about parental influence on the life and work in preschool institutions?

R3: What are the preschool teachers' views on consulting the parents about decisions, which effect children's wellbeing and successfulness in achieving curricula goals?

R4: What are the preschool teachers' views on including parents in the quality assessment?

R5: What are the preschool teachers' views on their competencies regarding cooperation with parents?

4.2 Description of used measurement instruments

Empirical research will be based on quantitative pedagogical research; using descriptive and causal-empirical methods. We will be including more than 100 preschool teachers from Ljubljana region in Slovenia and preschool teachers from Bragança, Portugal. The questionnaire used will be partly closed and partly open type and it will be distributed from May to the first half of June 2017. The research will be completed in August 2017. The data were processed by statistical software package SPSS-X PC and EXCEL.

4.3 Sample description

The study performed in Slovenia included 240 preschool teachers and in Portugal 146 preschool teachers (Table 1).

Among preschool teachers in Slovenia and in Portugal there were only 3% male preschool teachers, which is consistent with the statistics. In Slovenia in the school year 2015, there were only 1,55% (65) of male preschool teachers employed in the first age group and 2,76% (185) in the second age group (Table 2).

Table 1: Gender

Gender	Frequency		Percentage	
	SLO	PT	SLO	PT
Male	7	4	3%	3%
Female	233	142	97%	97%
Together	240	146	100%	100%

Table 2: Education

Education	Frequency		Percentage	
	SLO	PT	SLO	PT
Highschool	86	3	36%	2%
High professional education	113	96	47%	67%
University degree	40	45	17%	31%
Together	239	144	100%	100%

The majority of preschool teachers included in the study had finished high professional education (SLO 47%, PT 67%). There is a difference in the education required to become a preschool teacher in Slovenia or in Portugal. In Slovenia, preschool teachers must have a postsecondary course or higher education degree obtained through an educational or study program in the field of preschool education or higher education in the appropriate direction and completed educational or study program for care and education in the field of preschool education. Preschool teachers in Portugal are required to obtain a specific professional qualification, which is acquired by attending a higher education course leading to a Bachelor degree done at degree completed at schools of higher education and universities (Table 3).

Table 3: Environment of the kindergarten.

Environment	Frequency		Percentage	
	SLO	PT	SLO	PT
urban	142	119	60%	85%
suburban	95	21	40%	15%
together	237	140	100%	100%

The majority of kindergartens were located in the urban areas (SLO 60%, PT 85%) (Table 4).

Most of kindergartens in Slovenia were public kindergartens (97%) but the majority of kindergartens in Portugal were private (56%).

5 Results and discussion

5.1 Preschool teacher views on parental awareness regarding forms of cooperation with parents

First, we were interested in the preschool teacher's views on parental awareness regarding forms of cooperation with parents. Our first research question was What are the preschool teachers views on parental awareness regarding forms of cooperation with preschool institution(R1) (Table 5).

The majority of preschool teachers in Slovenia (96%) and Portugal (85%) believe that, kindergarten always informs parents about all contacts, meetings, conversational hours and parent-teacher meetings (sub question 3) and also the majority of them believes, that kindergarten always (SLO 74%, PT 69%) informs parents about the rules and regulations that they must know to be able to exercise their rights or the child (sub question 2). A good half of Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers believe that, kindergarten always (SLO 67%, PT 62%) or often (SLO 26%, PT 30%) informs parents of what to do if they want to provide information about their child (sub question 4). Some differences in preschool teacher's opinion were shown regarding sub question 1 where the majority (82%) of Slovene preschool teachers believe, that kindergarten always familiarize parents about everything they need to know that their child feels good in kindergarten but only 66% of Portuguese preschool teachers feel the same. Even a bigger difference is shown in sub question 5, where 67% of Slovene preschool teachers

Table 4: Public Type of kindergarten

Environment	Frequency		Percentage	
	SLO	PT	SLO	PT
Public	227	62	97%	44%
Private	7	80	3%	56%
Together	234	142	100%	100%

Table 5: Preschool teachers' opinion regarding forms of cooperation with parents.

subquestions	NEVER		RARELY		OFTEN		ALWAYS		Sum		Average		Std. dev.	
	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT
	0	1	0	5	44	48	206	103	250	157	3.8	3,6	0.4	0,6
	(0%)	(1%)	(0%)	(3%)	(18%)	(31%)	(82%)	(66%)	(100%)	(100%)				
	0	0	11	6	53	42	185	105	249	153	3.7	3,6	0.5	0,6
	(0%)	(0%)	(4%)		(21%)	(27%)	(74%)	(69%)	(100%)	(100%)				
	0	0	1	4	8	18	240	128	249	150	4.0	3,8	0.2	0,4
	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)	(3%)	(3%)	(12%)	(96%)	(85%)	(100%)	(100%)				
	3	2	13	10	63	44	163	92	242	148	3.6	3,5	0.7	0,7
	(1%)	(1%)	(5%)	(7%)	(26%)	(30%)	(67%)	(62%)	(100%)	(100%)				
	1	6	14	37	66	50	166	54	247	147	3.6	3,0	0.6	0,9
	(0%)	(4%)	(6%)	(25%)	(27%)	(34%)	(67%)	(37%)	(100%)	(100%)				

Key

1-Kindergarten familiarized parents about everything they need to know that their child feels good in kindergarten.

2-Kindergarten informs parents about the rules and regulations that they must know to be able to exercise their rights or the child.

3-Kindergarten informs parents about all contacts, meetings, conversational hours, parent-teacher meetings.

4-Kindergarten informs parents of what to do if they want to provide information about their child.

5-Kindergarten enables parents to various other forms of cooperation, such as a school for parents, kindergarten open days ...

believe, that kindergarten always enables parents to various other forms of cooperation, such as a school for parents, kindergarten open days, but only a good third of Portuguese preschool teachers (37%) feel the same. The differences are probably due to different ways of informal cooperation with parents in Portugal, where the organization of a preschool education institution always implies an institution/school center educational project, an institution/school center curricular project and a children's group curricular project.

Table 6: Information for parents.

Subquestion	YES		NO		Sum		Average		Std. dev.	
	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT
Information for parents are current.	243 (98%)	137 (89%)	4 (2%) (11%)	17 (100%)	247 (100%)	154 (100%)	1.0	1,1	0.1	0,3
Information for parents are clearly written/spoken and easy to understand.	246 (100%)	138 (93%)	0 (0%) (7%)	11 (100%)	246 (100%)	149 (100%)	1.0	1,1	0.0	0,3

The results (Table 6) have also shown, that Slovene as well as Portuguese preschool teachers believe, that information for parents is current (SLO 98%, PT 89%) and clearly written/spoken and easy to understand (SLO 100%, PT 93%) as it is the goal of Slovene Curriculum for kindergartens and Portuguese curriculum guidelines for preschool teachers and parents to work jointly and contribute to the improvement of the educational environments both at home and in kindergarten.

5.2 Parental influence on the life and work in preschool institutions

Our second research question was: What are the preschool teachers' views about parental influence on the life and work in preschool institutions.

The research has shown, that in the opinion of the majority of Slovene preschool teachers parents are always (7) informed and aware of the conclusions of the Council of parents (78%); (5) parents can always effectively communicate their comments and suggestions on the work of kindergarten via their representative of the parents' in the council of parents and those suggestions are dealt with and ruled (76%); (3) when planning activities, which require additional payment, kindergarten always ask for the parent's advice and consent (75%); (6) the representatives of the parents' always effectively deal with comments and suggestions concerning the work of kindergarten in the Council of the kindergarten (65%) and (4) in paying contributions kindergarten always takes into account the different financial capacity of the parents (62%). For the sub questions 3,4 and 5, the Slovenian context is similar to the Portuguese preschool teacher's context, however there is a difference in the opinion regarding the work of Council parents. Only a good third of the Portuguese preschool teacher's (35%) believe, that the representatives of the parents' often effectively deal with comments and suggestions concerning the work of kindergarten in the Council of the kindergarten as well as that parents are often informed and aware of the conclusions of the Council of parents (34%). In our opinion the explanation lies in the legal frameworks of cooperation between kindergarten and parents and as written in the theoretical part, the existence of parents or parents' representatives' associations is not commonly seen in Portugal.

Our third research question was: What are the preschool teacher's views on consulting the parents about decisions, which effect children's wellbeing and successfulness in achieving curricula goals (R3).

The majority of Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers answered, that the parents have the opportunity to get acquainted with the annual work plan of kindergarten (SLO 96%, PT 97%); that they have the option of (co)impact on the annual work plan of kindergarten with their proposals (SLO 86%, PT 73%) and that the parents are aware of the kindergartens long-term development plans (SLO 83%, PT 91%). The results are in accordance with parents right to take part in the development of their child's pedagogical path, not only by being informed about what happens in the kindergarten but also by being given the chance to contribute to the enrichment of the educational practice planning and assessment. In Slovenia, representative of parents gets acquainted with annual work plan through the Council of parents which gives opinion on the proposal for a kindergartens development programme and on the annual work plan.

5.3 Kindergarten quality assurance

Our fourth research question was: What are the preschool teacher's views on including parents in the quality assessment (R4).

Parents have an important role in kindergarten quality assurance. The research has shown, that majority of Slovene (86%) and Portuguese (78%) preschool teachers believe, that the preschool teachers are always available when parents want to learn or communicate about the child's habits and problems (phone, other), but only a good half of Slovene preschool teachers (62%) and 42% of Portuguese preschool teacher believe, that parents are often asked about the quality of kindergarten services (In Slovenia they can use a pre prepared questionnaire). Slight differences were also stated regarding the question *How often does kindergarten asks parents about the appropriateness of their working time?* A quarter of the Portuguese preschool teachers (26%) answered that they are rarely asked. It is important to include parents in all elements of the quality assurance because they are an integral part of quality preschool education (Table 7).

Table 7: Satisfaction with parental cooperation

numerus		average		Std. dev.		Min		Max	
SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT
251	133	7.7	7,4	1.71	1,96	1	3	10	10

On the scale 1-10, Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers answered, that they are satisfied with parental cooperation.

Competences for working with parents

Our last research question was R5: What are the preschool teachers' views on their competencies regarding cooperation with parents (Table 8).

Table 8: Satisfaction with competences regarding cooperation with parents

average		Std. dev.		Min		Max			
SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT		
251	158	8.2	8,0	1.32	1,68	3	3	10	10

The majority of Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers also answered, that they are satisfied with their competences regarding working with parents. However, previous research (Berčnik 2014) has shown that parents and preschool teachers have different expectations regarding cooperation, which means that we would have to question preschool teachers in more detail, which competences do they think they have and which they lack. Mostly the problem is dealing or establishing cooperative communication with so called "difficult parents" (Table 9).

Table 9: Professional development.

Subquestion	YES		NO		Sum		Average		Std. dev.	
	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT	SLO	PT
	72 (31%)	69 (48%)	163 (69%)	76 (52%)	235 (100%)	145 (100%)	1.7	1,5	0.5	0,5
	230 (98%)	133 (94%)	5 (2%)	8 (6%)	235 (100%)	141 (100%)	1.0	1,1	0.1	0,2
	205 (87%)	131 (92%)	30 (13%)	11 (8%)	235 (100%)	142 (100%)	1.1	1,1	0.3	0,3
	24 (75%)	10 (59%)	8 (25%)	7 (41%)	32 (100%)	17 (100%)	1.3	1,4	0.4	0,5

The majority of preschool teacher's believe, that knowledge of cooperation with parents is an important part of preschool teachers' professional development (SLO 98%, PT 94%), but only a good two thirds of Slovene preschool teachers (69%) and a bit more than a half of Portuguese preschool teachers (52%) answered, that they did not gain enough knowledge in the field of cooperation with parents during the study. The majority of them would also be prepared to have some additional education in the field of cooperation with parents (SLO 87%, PT 92%). Preschool teachers explained, that cooperation with parents is an important part of preschool education and that it is important to

gain new knowledges and professional insights into the topic. Henderson and Berla (1994) report the key findings of the studies summarized as follows: 1) the family contributes significantly to the child's achievements from early childhood to secondary school; all efforts to improve the child's success are more effective if they include his/her parents; 2) when parents are involved not only at home but also in school, their child's school achievements are better; 3) when parents are involved, the school that their child attends is better (parental involvement also affects the functioning of schools); 4) the child excels at school when his/her parents take on one of four key roles: co-teacher, assistant, consultant or representative of the school management; 5) the more the model of cooperation between parents and schools resembles that of partnership, the higher the child's academic achievement; 6) parents, the school and the community contribute to the child's achievement, with the results being optimal when all three actors work together (pp. 14–16).

6 Conclusion

Kindergartens should help parents to develop a positive and active role in complementing and supporting the life and work of kindergartens in educating their children. Through the research, we established that the majority of Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers believe that, parents are aware of different forms of cooperation with parents because kindergarten always or often informs them about the rules and regulations and about what to do if they want to provide information about their child. Difference is shown in preschool teachers' opinion about enabling parents to collaborate in various other forms of cooperation, such as a school for parents, kindergarten open days, but we believe that this difference is due to different ways of cooperation with parents in Slovenia and Portugal. The majority of Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers also believe that information for parents is current, clearly written and easy to understand as it is the goal of Slovene Curriculum for kindergartens and Portuguese curricula guidelines for preschool teachers and parents to work jointly and contribute to the improvement of the educational environments both at home and in kindergarten. In the opinion of preschool teachers, parent's have the influence on the life and work of kindergarten but, as the existence of parent's representative associations are not commonly seen in Portugal, only a third of Portuguese preschool teachers believe, that the parents can effectively deal with comments and suggestions concerning the work of kindergarten and that parents are often informed and aware of the conclusions of the Council of parents. The majority of Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers also believe that the parents have the opportunity to be acquainted with the annual work plan of kindergarten; they can influence the annual work plan and they are aware of the kindergartens long-term development plans. These results are in accordance with parents right to take part in the development of their child's pedagogical path, not only by being informed about what happens in the kindergarten but also by being given the chance to contribute to the enrichment of the educational practice planning and assessment. In the preschool teachers, opinion, parents also have an important role in the kindergarten quality assurance as they are often asked about the quality of kindergarten services.

7 References

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