



Children's access to play in school

National Adaption Plans

Desk research

Czech Republic

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National Adaption Plan – Desk Research

1. Aim of the Report

National adaption plans – how to adapt playwork in school practice - will contain information on the national education system, where playwork can be fitted into the school day/ curricula and how playwork can be incorporated in school life level. The expected impact is that it will be the basis for the Quality Criteria and Training Plan to be developed. These Criteria and plans will only be partially transferable, so that we have to develop a knowledge-base on how to tailor these to the specific countries.

2. Research methodology

The National Adaption plans will be informed by different sources of information:

- Starting point is this desk research to understand the national school system, stakeholders and relevant influence factors.
- In February 2018, there will be a study visit to UK, to learn from the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning)-Programme, which is a mentor supported school improvement programme and to visit Playwork-Projects in the South of England.
- Following to that, there will be some field research carried out in each partner country. This could be around 10 interviews with a semi-structured questionnaire or some focus groups to discuss the issue and possible implementation of play friendly schools in partner countries.
- Finally, all partner Countries will develop National Adaption Plans to specify their respective strategy to reach the aim of the project.

3. National school system

The following points should be covered:

General education

- Compulsory full-time schooling is 9 years in CR with 1 year compulsory attendance at pre-school. A significant part of primary school education represents after-school care. It is not mandatory but used by roughly 90% parents in first grade and 85% at second due to the school hours from 8 to 12. Few Czech parents work till earlier than 3:30, with many working till no earlier than 4. The attendance declines with age. In fifth grade it is recently only used by about 20%. It is facilitated by teachers or after school educators. In the first and second year children spend about 4 hours in class and 3 to 4 hours in after school care.
- The Czech after-school care centres have significant potential for utilization of playwork. They are a mandatory part of every elementary school under the same head teacher.
- Besides standard school education an option to educate children in compliance with an individual educational plan exists in CR. The individual plan is outlined by a given local school for instance for children with health issues complicating their school attendance, children who are high-performance athletes, or for children whose parents simply choose to educate their children on their own through so-called home schooling.
- Private / Public schools

Public schools: The municipality is the founder covering 100% of operating costs, labour costs are provided from state budget (Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports)

Private schools: (founded and operated by churches or a variety of organizations or natural persons): These schools receive government funding for their students, they don't get funding for investments which is collected through tuition.

Both types are controlled by Czech School Inspection

A great majority of elementary schools are public - in 2016/2017 1.3% of children studied at private schools.

Length of schooldays (half day / full day schools)

School starts at 8 with class length of 45 minutes. 4 classes per day are standard for first grade, 4-5 for second and in third, fourth, and fifth grade 5 classes are standard per school day.

Due to the common use of after school care Czech primary school students spend between 7 and 8 hours at school on average.

School authorities / legal framework (autonomy of schools to decide)

The founder of public schools is a municipality, in case of private schools a legal person.

The main authority for education is Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.

Educational content is outlined by Framework Education Programme which represents the main curricular document. A separate part of it is a program aimed at education of students with light mental deficiency drawn out by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.

From the preamble of the document: FEP supports: ...creating positive social, emotional, and working climate based on effective motivation, cooperation, and activating educational methods.
(<http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/skolskareforma/ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy>)

School administrative agency

- **School Board** ($\frac{1}{3}$ educators $\frac{1}{3}$ founder, and $\frac{1}{3}$ parents)
- **Educational Board** assembled of teachers
- Some schools have also a **student parliament**

Key regarding the direction, focus, and functioning of a school are the head teacher and also receptiveness of the school founder.

School is obliged to admit children from its attraction zone, and meet given quotas for number of children in class (min.17, max.30 children in a class). If the school doesn't have capacity to admit enough children, the founder can be requested to increase of the maximum number of children in class. The founder may decide to accept the request or redirect the applicants to a different school.

Debate on reform

There is recently pressure from MEYS to maximize inclusion of children with special needs in standard schools. This increases the needed number of assistants for whom there are no sufficient resources. The strategy isn't therefore perceived too positively by teachers and parents of "healthy" children.

Two trends exist in the direction of schools:

- 1) Maximizing the well-being of the child, make learning fun, with focus on the school climate, responsibly addressed bullying, etc. This trend also includes alternative schooling in for example Montessori or Waldorf schools.
- 2) Maximizing performance, oriented towards children's admittance to elite high schools.

The head teacher is obliged to secure further education of teachers and educators.

Based on the school's strategic concept the teachers pick training courses they will complete. MEYS offers grant funding for teacher development (School receives funding for its teachers further education from the Ministry). A number of organizations provide a variety of teacher training courses.

It would be suitable to apply for MEYS accreditation (with attractive title and content) and then address the schools with the offer within the Further Education Programme.

School education could significantly benefit from clearer focus on development of cooperation among children. When adults are solving a problem, it is normal to ask around for advice. This is not common at school. At tests and in front of the whiteboard the child is always on their own. Reduction of the FEP, which is basically today's curriculum, would help, too.

From the interview with the director of SCIO (https://plzen.idnes.cz/scioskola-zakladni-vzdelani-ucitel-alternativa-jan-krticka-rozhovor-12q-/plzen-zpravy.aspx?c=A171206_155635_plzen-zpravy_vb)

4. Current /planned school labelling

There is a variety of certificates which can be divided into 3 clusters:

- Healthy lifestyle (with particular focus on nutrition and motor activity)
- Environmental studies
- Humanity and ethics

Examples:

Rodiče vítáni = Parents welcome - a brand (certificate) stating the school is open to parents (parents-friendly)

(<http://www.rodicevitani.cz>)

Addressing: primary schools and Junior High secondary schools also for preschools which have different criteria <http://www.rodicevitani.cz>

Validity of this certificate is one year. The fee for the certificate is 600,- CZK. There is a possibility to purchase an optional plate, also stickers for 100,- as well as English mutation.

Certification criteria:

The requirements are divided into mandatory and optional. They are related particularly to the parents being able to openly communicate with the school representatives, availability of teachers' and other employees' of the school contact information. It includes accessibility of school news and communication of information about the school's holidays and a schedule of open school days and a variety of other school events.

Schools interested in the certificate check online whether they do or don't meet the published minimum criteria necessary for obtaining the certificate. The school has to request approval from the representatives of their parents who may be members of the school board or some other parents' organization. or another operating parent. It is suggested to first discuss the fulfillment criteria also with the representatives of the teachers. Nobody double checks if the school really meets the described criteria. The main arbiter of validity is the community of the school parents, children, and teachers.

The number of recently certified schools is 418.

Skutečně zdravá škola = Truly healthy school

<http://www.skutecnezdravaskola.cz/>

Truly healthy school program (THS) derived from the experience of a similar program in United Kingdom (food for Life partnership FFLP) targeting pre-schools, primary schools, and high schools. Certificate issued by: THS

Is it a not-for-profit? The program is patronized by Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture.

Validity of certificate: The certificate has 3 levels: Bronze, silver, and gold.

The THS is a complex program of quality school nutrition and nutrition education. It seeks to increase appreciation of food, ability to enjoy it and knowledge of its origin and processing. The program helps children develop skills and habits they will need for healthy and successful life. It offers MEYS certified courses for educators, cooks, and also for general public - e.g. courses of cooking for parents and children (1-4 hrs in length priced from 1000 to 1600,- CZK)

Price: Free?

Criteria:

Divided in 4 areas:

- 1) Commitment and culture of feeding
- 2) Quality of food and its origin
- 3) Nutrition education
- 4) Partnership and community involvement

The procedures are clearly written out, with quite demanding documentation - surveying teachers, students and parents is required together with documented planning...

Indicators are written out for criteria fulfilment evaluation: establishing and action group (member of school leadership +teacher+local community), photographs, declarations of honour, names of food and environmentally- friendly detergent suppliers.

Number of recently certified schools 4305

Zdravá školní jídelna = Healthy school canteen

<https://www.zdravaskolnijidelna.cz/>

Designation: kindergarten, elementary school and secondary school

Grants: The State Health Institute is a contributory organization of the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, which also patrons the program

Certificate validity:?, Control mechanisms - not found

Rather confusing manual (75 pages of text!)

<https://www.zdravaskolnijidelna.cz/>

Projects:

Fruit to School

Milk to School

These are 2 projects funded by the State Agricultural Intervention Fund, which financially support farmers and provides a more favorable price for primary schools in the supply of fruit, vegetables and dairy products. Children of a given school can receive products free of charge (based on volunteering) The school signs a contract with an approved farmer for a regular delivery of products.

5. strategies / institutions / resources for Play in each country

In the Czech Republic law of public education there is nothing like a "play strategy" on the government level.

Alternative schools, such as Montessori or Waldorf pay more attention on personality-development and soft skills development but playwork methodology is not generally used in them either.

6. Role / importance of play in National school system

This topic is not mentioned in official school documents. There is a great deal of pressure on safety and prevention of injuries, so dominantly "safe" activity is supported - especially art, music production, science rings ... sports activities almost always involve collective games under the supervision of a teacher or educator.

Children's free play can (to some extent) only be mentioned in preschool, not in elementary school or in a kindergarten. Even in after school care where children spend a good deal of time, regarding play there are almost exclusively organized activities run by the educator.

7. Fit of playwork into school day / curricula

For implementation of the program it seems to be key to identify school with sufficient outdoor space. This is an insurmountable barrier that we have to take into account, especially in schools in larger cities. The closer the school is to the centre of the city, the less space is typically available. Rural schools generally have larger outdoor spaces.

Another necessary condition is motivated head teacher, who is the main motivator and can significantly affect the course and running of a school.

In terms of time, we see the use of so-called "long breaks" (between the 2nd and 3rd class), which the director has the power to extend to 20 minutes. We see the main play potential in the after school care which begins after 4th or 5th class.

Children's safety is the responsibility of teachers and educators for the duration of their stay at school, which is in line with the concept of our project. The legal aspect is included in the school education act, so we cannot see significant obstacles in this respect.

8. relevant stakeholders in your National school system

The following points should be covered:

- teacher and teacher associations
- parents and parent's associations
- play associations
- children's rights organisations
- policy makers
- school bureaucracy
- other relevant stakeholders and their organisations

Existing associations within the school:

There is no national union of teachers nor association of parents. These bodies exist only at the level of the school or they are independent professional or interest groups without a legal framework or official support of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports - such as:

The Association of Primary Education Teachers of the Czech Republic (APZŠ ČR) is an independent, professionally interested organization that brings together pedagogical staff from the field of primary education (www.apzs.cz)

Association of Teachers of History (www.auccj.cz)

Association of Teachers of Citizenship (www.obcankari.cz)

Association of Teachers of Czech as a Foreign Language (AUČCJ) <http://www.auccj.cz/> ...

There are these organizations in each school:

School council - this is mandatory

Subject committee - organized by teachers themselves

SPS - (eng.SFA)School Friends Association, School Friends Club - Parents, Friends, Grandparents () included - Volunteer, some money from school activities (for textbooks, notebooks, etc.)

School bureaucracy:

The school is required to keep the documentation for each pupil.

IVP - (eng. ITP) Individual Training Plan - is completed every 6 months

PPP - (eng. PSP) Pedagogical Support Plan

The schools are filling out everything the region wants - what has been purchased with aids, how many children have come for lunch, inclusive education (there are 3 levels of support levels where one can also take the decision on the need for a teacher assistant

The National Institute for Education (NÚV, www.nuv.cz): The mission of the National Institute for Education, Educational Counseling Facilities and Educational Training Facilities for Teachers (NÚV) is to assist in the development of general, vocational, artistic and linguistic education and to support schools in the field of pedagogical-psychological, educational and career counseling. Further education of pedagogical staff with an emphasis on lifelong learning and cooperation with the EU is encouraged.

NUV helps schools to create their own educational programs and to introduce them into their curriculum. It emphasizes innovation in teaching, individual approach to pupils and modernization of schools.

9. Other relevant topics for the National Adaption Plans in your Country

Please describe any other topic that could be relevant for the implementation of the “Play friendly schools” in your respective country.

10. Sources

Please add all sources for the report here, possibly also other relevant documents you came along while doing the desk research

The links are part of the text

11. Annex

Based on your desk research, please go again through your “National Case” and make it more concrete, based on all information you collected during the base study

Terms of Reference – National Case “Implementation of “Play friendly school”-label in my country

- **Client (target group – beneficiaries)**

Public primary schools, 1-5 classes (children aged 6-12 years old) with afterschool club. The main criterion for addressing a particular school will be a sufficient outdoor space and the willingness of the head teacher to cooperate.

- **Other stakeholders (stakeholders)**

The main target group will be school head teachers who have the power to implement the project. We will also address parents (through the school council) - they can put pressure on schools to apply for inclusion in the program.

Working with the founders of schools in is also important. It is critical though that the head teachers will get involved in the project because they see its potential and it makes sense for them, not because they have been "ordered".

- **main aims/needs of the client in my country?**

The main benefit should be providing children with school environment where they feel comfortable and happy. Secondary results hoped to occur are increase in concentration and resilience and hopefully better learning outcomes.

But as the directors of the schools visited confirm, the teachers will also benefit - less discipline problems, more concentrated pupils and a better overall school atmosphere. The school can also increase credit not only with parents but also with the founder. Understanding of our "product" (how do we respond to these needs?) in concrete terms

Ideas for training program

It will be possible to use part of the educational materials from the VIPER project - especially to understand key play characteristics - freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated.

Create a picture database of model "playgrounds" (place to build dens, sandboxes, cloakrooms, climbing spots, dance floor ...) and inspiring props to support imagination and creativity (costumes, tires, bins, plastic boxes of all kinds,

Teach not only teachers and educators, but also attract volunteers from the ranks of parents and grandparents.

Ideas for quality criteria

The criteria set must be as simple as possible, clear and easily verifiable.

Re-accreditation after 2 years? - Sustainability plan and event. Further development

Sufficient outdoor area + accessibility of suitable internal spaces

A variety of motivating features

Trained staff

Transparency - Allow parents to understand the meaning of the project and see how the spaces are conceived

Existence of supervision

Promotion of the project on the school website

Ideas for accreditation / labeling (re-accreditation)

Schools first need to know that there is something like this – promotion.

The criteria and method of evaluation - the internet - must also be easily traceable

An advantage would be to identify a specific person who will help with the concretization of how to adapt the game space.

First steps in preparation and organization of a sample playwork afternoon at the pilot school have been taken in cooperation with Palacky University.

Ideas for financing