

# Mental health among preschool teachers, assistants and counselors: What are the contributing factors?

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In our study, we examined the mental health of preschool teachers (N = 554), preschool teacher assistants (N = 453) and counselors (N = 138) in Slovenian preschools. We analyzed the factors (workplace characteristics, psychological factors, sources of stress and perceived social support) contributing to mental health assessed with the Professional Fulfillment Index (PFI). The results indicate that the level of social support experienced through various sources does not differ among preschool teachers, assistants and counselors. All three groups reported receiving the most support from their teammates and the least from other preschool staff. We found that teachers experienced the least stress from relationships with colleagues and working with children, while assistants reported the least stress from relationships with colleagues and counselors from working with children. However, all three groups experienced the greatest stress in relationships with children's parents. Differences in overall perceived stress were found between preschool teachers and their assistants and between preschool teachers and counselors, with preschool teachers reporting the highest levels of stress. Finally, the two indicators of mental health, professional fulfillment and burnout, were predicted by perceived social support and perceived stressors in all three groups, while for preschool teachers, professional fulfillment and burnout were also predicted by years of service. With the predictive factors included, we were able to explain between 29% and 48% of the variance in the mental health of preschool teachers, their assistants and counselors.

## Are you currently an Early Career Researcher?

Yes, I am still a student or have not yet received my Ph.D.

**Primary authors:** POGORELC JESIH, Nika (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia); PETROVEC, Živa Manja (Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia); FEKONJA, Urška (Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia); KAVČIČ, Tina (Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)

**Presenters:** POGORELC JESIH, Nika (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia); PETROVEC, Živa Manja (Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)

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