
National study on the mental well-being of primary school children conducted in Romania within the MindPlay project

Background and purpose of the research

The national report of the MindPlay project for Romania has been completed, examining through quantitative and qualitative methods the experiences related to the mental well-being, safety, and early support of early school-age children (especially 6–9 years old) in Romania.

The aim of the research was to explore the emotional, behavioral, social, and attention difficulties observed among children, current practices of early identification and support, as well as the competence gaps and development needs of teachers, school principals, development specialists, and parents.

Additionally, the research examined the expectations regarding the child-friendly tools, easy to apply in practice, to be developed within the MindPlay project.

Participants

A total of 93 people participated in the questionnaire survey, from the following target groups:

- 45 teachers (primary school)
- 29 parents
- 10 school principals
- 9 school psychologists and counselors

Educational professionals and specialists participated in the focus group research.

Key research findings

One of the most important findings of the research is that mental health and behavioral problems are not isolated phenomena in everyday school life.

The most frequently reported problems include concentration difficulties, social conflicts with peers, aggressive or hostile behavior, hyperactivity and impulsivity, anxiety, psychosomatic complaints, and withdrawal.



Based on the focus group discussions, participants identified particularly important challenges such as children's growing impatience, difficulties in emotional and behavioral regulation, the frequency of peer conflicts, the impact of excessive screen time, decreasing frustration tolerance, and the fact that it is often difficult for children to distinguish between playful situations and real aggression.

The research also pointed out that supporting children is not exclusively a pedagogical issue: it requires collaboration between the school, the family, and helping professionals. Strengthening early identification, improving communication between school and parents, and providing practical support for teachers and specialists emerged as priority areas.

Expectations regarding MindPlay tools

Participants consider a MindPlay tool useful if it simultaneously supports early identification, pedagogical decision-making, and development tailored to children's age characteristics. An important expectation is that the tool should not function as a clinical diagnostic system, but rather provide help in everyday pedagogical practice for recognizing and interpreting problems and choosing appropriate pedagogical reactions.

The MindPlay tool should support the following main functions:

- Early identification and decision support: help identify emotional, behavioral, attention, and social difficulties, and provide guidance for further pedagogical or professional steps.
- Game-based and interactive operation: make children's reactions, cooperation, self-regulation, and social functioning observable in a motivating, age-appropriate format for the 6–9 age group.
- Visual and easy-to-understand structure: facilitate children's involvement and quick application by teachers through visual, easily interpretable tasks.
- Structured feedback: provide clear, pedagogically interpretable information about the child's condition, development, and support needs.
- Simple and fast usability: be easy to integrate into everyday school life, requiring no long preparation, special technical knowledge, or significant additional time.
- Digital and physical accessibility: be digital-based, yet also physically usable, even with printable or tangible elements to support classroom application.



Acknowledgments

The openness, professional commitment, and willingness to cooperate of the parents, teachers, institution leaders, and specialists who participated in the survey contributed significantly to the successful implementation of the research. The respondents' feedback shows that supporting children's mental well-being is a common cause in which different actors strive for a real, solution-oriented partnership.

The active participation and constructive contribution, in line with the project's goals, made it possible for the research to produce results based on real needs and experiences.

We hereby express our sincere gratitude to all participants for their valuable support, time, and dedicated contribution to the success of this study!

The MindPlay Team in Romania



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