



# D1.1 State-of-the-art research report

## Literature Review on Early Childhood Teachers' Careers and Professional Development, Teachers' Well-Being (PERMA) and Children's Socio-emotional Support (SWPBS)

### Summary

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## Partnership

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## **What the literature says about teachers' Careers and Professional Development, Teachers' Well-Being and Children's Socio-emotional Support in Early Childhood**

The proW has launched a literature review providing an up-to-date critical overview of early childhood teacher's careers, well-being, and professional development supports. It provides a summary of current views on early childhood education and care (ECEC) informed by Positive Psychology interventions focusing on teacher well-being (PERMA) and School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) frameworks, defines key concepts, and builds on empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals.

Based on empirical research about ECEC workforce in Europe, the review shows that, while ECEC professionals are one of the most important drivers of high-quality ECEC, most countries face issues related to staff shortages, turnover, and an overall low status of the profession (OECD, 2020, ET2020 Working group, 2021). The working conditions and career prospects offered to ECEC professionals have been shown to either facilitate or undermine high-quality practices, with research evidence showing how facets such as positive organizational climate, job autonomy, and job satisfaction are associated with high-quality provision and teachers' satisfaction. Relatedly, continued support for staff training and development is receiving increasing empirical support as one key strategy for the continuous upgrade of a high-quality teaching workforce. Still, the literature has also shown that the relevance and effectiveness of professional development are dependent upon contextual factors, namely features of the workplace. It appears that professional development opportunities can be a powerful tool to increase the quality of ECEC practices and raise the status of the ECEC profession, but attention to the overall ECEC system of a particular country, and to features of the workplace, is needed so that professional development is effective.

The literature review also provides research evidence showing that whereas well-being is clearly important for a strong, motivated, and satisfied workforce, it has received little attention from the literature, which calls for more research and intervention studies. A summary of studies on positive psychology approaches is provided, and the PERMA model is briefly presented giving an overview of its five pillars, namely, Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Based on the current scientific body of knowledge, it seems that the PERMA model is promising in promoting teacher's wellbeing.

Similarly, the School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a useful and effective tool for promoting prosocial skills and reducing disruptive behavior problems in schools. Several key features need to be taken into account for effective implementation, namely providing teachers with continuous training, feedback, and coaching. Giving attention to contextual features such as type of leadership or group-level features and ensuring that a considerable amount of time is provided is crucial to fully develop and implement the model. Thus, key

lessons from the past literature help to shed light on how the model can be successfully implemented with effective outcomes.

Understanding key features of the ECEC systems of the four participating countries (Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, and Romania) is also important for successful implementation. The four countries share several similarities, but there are also specificities important to acknowledge. Differences can be found in workforce features, such as initial education requirements for both teachers and assistants and career progression, which needs to be considered for successful program implementations. Still, there are important similarities, namely the emphasis in the countries' educational guidelines on socio-emotional aspects, learning, and well-being. Considering the specificities of each ECEC system, specific information about each of the participating countries on the workforce is also provided. Overall, while the research is relatively scarce for each country on intervention studies supporting teachers' well-being and children's socio-emotional support, findings are promising. It overall appears that, for each country, intervention studies designed to put teachers' well-being at the core of the intervention while adopting a whole-school approach can be relevant and useful.