

Professional Challenges Faced by Teachers in Early Childhood and Preschool Education

Anka Jurčević Lozančić

University of Zagreb Faculty of Teacher Education

Abstract

In the contemporary world, in which children are brought up and educated, early childhood and preschool education teachers face numerous social, technological and cultural changes and challenges in their work. In a society that is constantly changing, the teaching profession has become a very complex one, and it requires teachers to be sensitive and flexible in their work, to participate in continuous professional development, adhere to high ethical standards, and have a high commitment to work. Even though their work is complex and requires great responsibility, teachers perceive their profession as marginalized in the society and they generally feel disrespected as experts by the public, which results in their dissatisfaction, and consequently a constant fluctuation and shortage of teachers in the labor market at the national and international level. For these reasons, it seems justified to point out that teaching profession needs to be supported by the scholarly community, social changes need to be critically examined and ways to improve teachers' social status and their professional and working conditions need to be proposed in order to reduce teachers' dissatisfaction and, accordingly, increase their job satisfaction and motivation. The high-quality work of a teacher is conditioned not only by their professional activities, but also by job satisfaction. Teacher job satisfaction contributes not only to the quality of teaching and learning, but also to the professional status and well-being of teachers and children.

Keywords: contemporary approach, job satisfaction, competencies, early childhood