



COUNTRY SNAPSHOTS

Key insights on children's mental wellbeing, early identification and support needs across Europe.



**EARLY
IDENTIFICATION**



**EMOTIONAL
WELLBEING**



**FAMILY
PARTNERSHIP**



**TEACHER
COMPETENCES**



**SUPPORTIVE
SCHOOLS**

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EARLY EDUCATION & PREVENTION CONTEXT



The research focused on children in grades **0–3** within early primary education. Teachers play a central role in recognising emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.



The national research involved **106** respondents across **4** groups: **40** teachers, **15** school principals, **15** psychologists/counsellors and **36** parents. Participants represented diverse educational settings, primarily in Flanders, complemented by information from Brussels and Wallonia.



Belgian schools face increasingly complex and interconnected mental-health challenges. Early identification, stronger cooperation with families and access to specialist support are key priorities.



WHO TOOK PART IN THE STUDY? (QUESTIONNAIRE)



TEACHERS

40

37.7%



SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

15

14.2%



SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS/ COUNSELLORS

15

14.2%



PARENTS

36

34.0%



KEY FINDINGS (QUESTIONNAIRE)

MOST FREQUENTLY OBSERVED DIFFICULTIES



Emotional dysregulation and behavioural difficulties

66%



Anxiety, loneliness and social isolation (often hidden)

58%



Peer conflicts and aggressive behaviour

55%



Concentration problems and excessive screen use

47%

TEACHERS REPORT...



Rising emotional and behavioural difficulties in children



Externalising problems are easier to notice than internalising ones



Need more practical strategies for early recognition and support



Access to specialist support is limited due to long waiting lists

TOP TRAINING PRIORITIES



Emotional regulation



Trauma-informed practice



Communication with parents



Intercultural competences



Inclusive classroom strategies

INTEREST IN MINDPLAY TOOLS



82%

Child-friendly, play-based tools



74%

Practical tools integrated into everyday practice



68%

Tools that support early recognition and prevention



65%

Tools that support cooperation families



Schools and families need accessible, easy-to-use, professionally grounded tools that support children without increasing workload.



TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

106



FOCUS GROUPS (EDUCATORS & SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS)

Focus groups were conducted with teachers, school leaders, psychologists/pedagogues and parents to explore everyday practice, challenges, cooperation and expectations for MindPlay tools.



Focus groups with teachers (e.g. 20 teachers)



Discussions with school leaders



Discussions with psychologists/pedagogues



Parents' focus group



Schools from different regions in Flanders



FOCUS GROUP ASSESSMENT

4.62 / 5

Average evaluation score (very high level of satisfaction)



Practical & relevant discussions



Opportunity to exchange experiences



Clear activities & useful materials



All focus group discussions were evaluated very positively. Participants highlighted the relevance of the topics, the clarity of objectives, the quality of materials and the relaxed, constructive atmosphere.



MAIN NATIONAL CONCLUSION



Mental health and well-being in early primary education is a whole-school responsibility. Stronger early identification, family cooperation, access to specialist support and practical, child-friendly tools are essential.



MindPlay tools can support educators and families in recognising early signs and responding effectively.



Play-based and evidence-informed resources can strengthen prevention, reduce the impact of waiting lists and support inclusive education for all children.



Belgium – Country Snapshot

Early education and prevention context

The Belgian MindPlay study explored the mental well-being of children aged **3–9 years** through focus groups and questionnaires involving teachers, school leaders, psychologists, counsellors and parents. The research was conducted primarily in **Flanders**, while additional information from organisations in **Brussels and Wallonia** complemented the national picture. Given Belgium's decentralised education and support system, the study also considered the interaction between schools and regional psychological support services.

The national research involved **106 respondents** across four stakeholder groups (**40 teachers, 15 school principals, 15 school psychologists/counsellors and 36 parents**), complemented by focus groups conducted with educators and school professionals. Participants represented diverse educational settings, bringing together perspectives from classroom practice, school leadership, specialist support and families.

The findings indicate that Belgian schools are increasingly confronted with **complex and interconnected mental-health challenges**. Participants reported rising levels of emotional dysregulation, behavioural difficulties, anxiety, loneliness and social isolation, alongside concentration problems linked to excessive screen use. Particular attention was given to children from **migrant and refugee backgrounds**, whose experiences of trauma, displacement, language barriers and cultural adaptation create additional vulnerabilities requiring culturally responsive support. Belgian stakeholders also highlighted the impact of family instability, chronic stress and adverse childhood experiences on children's emotional well-being.

Teachers emphasised that many emotional difficulties remain hidden because children experiencing anxiety or social withdrawal often do not disrupt classroom activities. At the same time, behavioural problems are becoming more visible and place increasing demands on educational professionals. Respondents described a growing need for practical strategies that help distinguish between typical developmental behaviour and early signs of emotional distress. The study further revealed that schools require stronger cooperation with families, greater specialist support and more structured procedures for early identification and intervention. Participants repeatedly stressed that teachers need practical, child-friendly tools rather than additional administrative tasks. Training priorities focused on **emotional regulation, trauma-informed practice, communication with parents, intercultural competences and inclusive classroom strategies**. Belgian stakeholders also expressed strong interest in play-based diagnostic and preventive tools that can be easily integrated into everyday classroom practice without increasing teachers' workload.

Overall, the Belgian findings present mental well-being as a **whole-school responsibility** that extends beyond individual interventions. Schools require integrated support systems capable of responding to increasing diversity, complex family circumstances and rapidly changing social realities. The MindPlay project was widely perceived as an opportunity to provide practical,



evidence-based resources that strengthen prevention, early identification and inclusive support for all children.



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EARLY EDUCATION & PREVENTION CONTEXT



Teachers are often the first to notice changes in children's concentration, behaviour, emotions and peer relationships (age 5–9). Early identification relies mainly on individual observation and experience.



106 respondents took part in the study: 45 teachers, 16 school leaders, 15 school psychologists/counsellors and 30 parents. The findings reflect classroom, specialist, institutional and family perspectives.



Support is uneven: half of schools share or have no psychologist. Most schools rely on informal procedures and face barriers such as lack of time, training, large classes and limited specialist hours.

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
106



WHO TOOK PART IN THE STUDY? (QUESTIONNAIRE)



TEACHERS

45
42.5%



SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS

16
15.1%



SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGISTS/
COUNSELLORS

15
14.2%



PARENTS

30
28.3%



KEY FINDINGS (QUESTIONNAIRE)

MOST FREQUENTLY OBSERVED DIFFICULTIES (TEACHERS)



TEACHERS FEEL CONFIDENT IN EARLY RECOGNITION...



MAIN BARRIERS (SCHOOL LEADERS)



TOP PRIORITY COMPETENCE NEEDS (TEACHERS)



OPPORTENESS TO MINDPLAY TOOLS



Diagnostic
games



Training
modules



Integration
games



Parent
resources



Stakeholders are open to MindPlay solutions. Tools should be age-appropriate, practical, easy to use and supported by clear guidance and follow-up.



MAIN NATIONAL CONCLUSION



German schools and families recognise children's mental-health needs, but support depends heavily on individual teachers and limited specialist capacity.

MindPlay can strengthen early prevention by combining playful identification and prevention activities with teacher training, parental resources and clear intervention pathways.



Help adults notice
visible and less
visible difficulties



Support emotional
regulation and
peer relationships



Translate observation
into timely,
coordinated action

Germany – Country Snapshot

Early education and prevention context

The German MindPlay questionnaire study focused on children in early primary education, broadly covering the 5–9 age group. Teachers are often the first professionals to notice changes in children's concentration, emotional regulation, behaviour and peer relationships. However, early identification still depends heavily on individual observation and experience rather than on consistently applied monitoring tools and structured support pathways.

The findings show that emotional and behavioural difficulties are a regular part of classroom practice. Of the 45 teachers surveyed, 13 reported encountering mental-health or behavioural difficulties daily and 24 weekly. Together, this means that **82.2% of teachers face such challenges at least once a week**. The most frequently observed difficulties were concentration problems, reported by **71.1% of teachers**, peer conflicts by **62.2%**, anxiety-related difficulties by **42.2%**, hyperactivity or impulsivity by **35.6%**, and withdrawal or social isolation by **28.9%**.

Participants

The German online questionnaire study included **106 respondents**: Teachers: **45**, School psychologists and counsellors: **15**, School principals and management representatives: **16** and Parents of children aged 5–9: **30**

The results represent classroom, specialist, institutional and family perspectives. They should be interpreted as an applied needs assessment rather than as a nationally representative study.

Early identification and available support

Teachers generally considered themselves able to recognise visible difficulties, but their confidence was less consistent when interpreting subtle or internalised warning signs. Only 14 teachers felt clearly confident about early recognition, while 22 felt confident only to some extent and nine did not feel confident. Internalised difficulties—such as quiet anxiety, withdrawal, sadness and emotional overload among children who do not disrupt the class—were described as particularly easy to overlook.

Formal monitoring tools were rarely used. Twenty-nine of the 45 teachers reported using no specific instruments or procedures. Where practices existed, they usually consisted of classroom councils, short emotional check-ins, observation notes, sociograms, emotion cards and individual conversations. Access to professional support was also uneven: only four teachers reported having received professional support, supervision or training, while 30 had received it only partially and 11 had received none.

School leaders confirmed the fragmented nature of the support system. Of the 16 schools represented, seven reported formal early-identification procedures, seven relied on informal procedures and two had no procedures. None of the schools had a full-time psychologist: eight employed one part-time, five shared a psychologist with other schools, and three had no psychologist. Thus, **half of the schools either shared specialist support or had no school psychologist at all**.

Main barriers and competence needs



School leaders identified lack of time as the most widespread barrier, reported by 12 of the 16 respondents. Other major barriers included insufficient training, large classes, lack of practical tools, limited parental engagement and insufficient psychologist hours.

Teachers most frequently wanted to strengthen:

- emotional-regulation strategies: **64.4%**
- communication with parents: **62.2%**
- early recognition of symptoms: **40.0%**
- crisis-response competences: **35.6%**
- promotion of children's social skills: **31.1%**

Psychologists and counsellors similarly prioritised teachers' competence in recognising symptoms and communicating concerns to parents. They identified parental stigma, limited teacher awareness, time constraints and inconsistent communication as the main obstacles to timely assessment. Anxiety, social withdrawal and emotional dysregulation were considered the most important risks for future MindPlay tools to detect.

Family perspective

The parent responses indicate uneven experiences of cooperation and school support. Eleven of the 30 parents reported that a teacher had raised concerns about their child's well-being. Parents' average comfort in discussing mental health with teachers was **2.7 out of 5**, while average satisfaction with school support was also **2.7 out of 5**.

Parents most often requested practical activities that could be used at home, short explanatory videos, parent workshops, communication advice and tools supporting children's emotional self-regulation. Twenty-eight parents said they would or might participate in parent workshops, while 26 would or might support the use of diagnostic games in schools. Several open responses highlighted concentration difficulties, frustration, school anxiety, language barriers, social exclusion and long waiting periods for specialist support.

Expectations regarding MindPlay

Stakeholders showed considerable openness to MindPlay solutions. Among school leaders, 12 of 16 rated their openness to implementation at four or five on a five-point scale. Teachers showed moderate-to-strong willingness to use diagnostic games, with 23 of 45 selecting four or five.

The tools most frequently requested by teachers were:

- integration games for strengthening classroom relationships: **60.0%**
- diagnostic board games: **48.9%**
- digital psychological games: **40.0%**
- communication tools for parents: **35.6%**

School leaders particularly prioritised diagnostic games, staff-training modules, integration games and clear intervention procedures. Across stakeholder groups, the tools were expected to be age-appropriate, evidence-informed, easy to use, integrated into normal school routines and accompanied by clear interpretation and follow-up guidance.

Key conclusion



The German findings show that schools and families recognise children's mental-health and well-being needs, but support remains highly dependent on individual teachers, informal observation and limited specialist capacity. The main gap is not a lack of concern but a lack of time, structured procedures, accessible specialists and practical tools.

MindPlay can respond to these needs by combining playful early-identification and prevention activities with teacher training, parental resources and clear intervention pathways. The strongest potential lies in tools that help adults notice both visible and less visible difficulties, support emotional regulation and peer relationships, and translate observation into timely, coordinated action.





HUNGARY – COUNTRY SNAPSHOT

EARLY EDUCATION AND PREVENTION CONTEXT

The Hungarian MindPlay study focused on children in **Grades 0–3 (approximately 6–9 years of age)**. Teachers are the first professionals to notice emotional, behavioural, attention-related and social difficulties. Early prevention relies mainly on teachers' observation and experience, while schools still lack structured, non-clinical tools for early identification and intervention.

Limited access to specialists, increasing workload and the absence of standardised early screening procedures remain key challenges.



According to the survey,

66%
of teachers encounter
mental health or
behavioural difficulties
daily,
30%
observe them weekly.



Most frequently observed difficulties:

attention and concentration problems, peer conflicts, hyperactivity, impulsivity, anxiety, emotional withdrawal, aggression, low frustration tolerance, psychosomatic complaints and difficulties in self-regulation.



THE STUDY INCLUDED

106
RESPONDENTS

50



Teachers

17



School
Principals

16



School
Psychologists,
Counsellors and
Development
Specialists

23



Parents



EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Schools identify concerns mainly through:

- ✓ continuous classroom observation
- ✓ behavioural changes
- ✓ discussions between teachers and specialists
- ✓ cooperation with parents

However, there is a lack of:

- ✗ standardised early-screening procedures
- ✗ practical diagnostic tools
- ✗ structured referral pathways
- ✗ sufficient specialist capacity



SYSTEM CHALLENGES

- shortage of psychologists and specialists
- large class sizes
- increasing teacher workload and stress
- insufficient practical training and resources
- inconsistent cooperation with parents
- growing impact of excessive screen use and digital overstimulation



WHAT SCHOOLS NEED

- practical classroom-ready tools
- play-based early identification methods
- emotional literacy and self-regulation activities
- integration games promoting cooperation
- teacher training on de-escalation and parent communication
- family-oriented resources supporting home-school collaboration



IMPLICATIONS FOR MINDPLAY

- non-clinical diagnostic games
- engaging play-based learning activities
- practical teacher guidance and resources
- tools suitable for everyday classroom use
- resources that strengthen cooperation between teachers, specialists and families



Hungarian stakeholders strongly support the development of practical, play-based and easy-to-use tools that help identify children's needs early, support emotional well-being and promote cooperation between schools and families.



Hungary – Country Snapshot

Early education and prevention context

The Hungarian MindPlay study focused on children in **(approximately 6–9 years of age)**. At this educational stage, teachers spend most of the school day with children and are therefore the first professionals to notice emotional, behavioural, attention-related and social difficulties. Early prevention relies primarily on teachers' continuous observation and experience, while schools still lack structured, non-clinical tools for early identification and intervention. Although multidisciplinary cooperation exists in many schools, participants consistently highlighted limited access to specialists, increasing teacher workload and the absence of standardised early screening procedures.

The online questionnaire study included **106 respondents: Teachers (50); School Principals (17); School Psychologists, Counsellors and Development Specialists (16); and Parents (23)**.

The findings demonstrate that children's mental health challenges have become a routine part of everyday school life. According to the survey, **66% of teachers encounter mental health or behavioural difficulties daily**, while **30% observe them weekly**. The most frequently reported concerns include attention and concentration difficulties, peer conflicts, hyperactivity, impulsive behaviour, anxiety, emotional withdrawal, aggression and psychosomatic complaints.

Teachers, school leaders, specialists and parents consistently identified several systemic barriers affecting early prevention. Schools rely mainly on pedagogical observation rather than structured assessment tools, specialist support is often insufficient, and teachers reported increasing emotional and professional workload. Cooperation with parents was recognised as essential but sometimes challenging, particularly when discussing children's emotional or behavioural difficulties. Participants also highlighted the growing impact of excessive screen use, reduced emotional self-regulation and declining social skills among young children.

Across all stakeholder groups, there was strong agreement that schools need **practical, play-based and easy-to-use tools** that support early recognition, emotional literacy, behavioural observation and cooperation between teachers, specialists and families. Respondents emphasised that MindPlay should provide non-clinical diagnostic games (pedagogically oriented games supporting the identification of learning support needs), classroom-ready activities, teacher guidance and family-oriented resources that can be integrated into everyday educational practice.



Early support. Stronger together.

The Polish MindPlay study highlights the central role of teachers in early recognition of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties and the importance of strong cooperation between schools, parents and specialists to support children's mental well-being.



WHO TOOK PART IN THE STUDY?



A total of
89
respondents



40
TEACHERS



18
SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS



15
SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGISTS /
COUNSELLORS



16
PARENTS



KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ Teachers are confident in noticing early signs through everyday observation.
- ✓ Emotional dysregulation, peer conflicts, anxiety, learning difficulties and behavioural problems are most common.
- ✓ Internalising difficulties (anxiety, withdrawal, low self-esteem) are hardest to recognise.
- ✓ Schools rely mostly on informal procedures – only 11% have formal early identification procedures.
- ✓ Specialist capacity is limited: half of schools have a full-time psychologist, 44% part-time.
- ✓ Family-school cooperation is one of the greatest challenges.



BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- Growing number of children needing support
- Long waiting times for specialist services
- Limited time for prevention due to administrative burden
- Parents questioning school observations or expecting the school to solve problems without active involvement
- Environmental factors such as family instability, screen overexposure and limited opportunities for social skills development



WHAT SCHOOLS NEED MOST

- ✓ Easy-to-use diagnostic games
- ✓ Preventive group activities
- ✓ Teacher training modules
- ✓ Practical intervention frameworks
- ✓ Tools that fit everyday classroom practice and build emotional literacy, communication and social competence



**TOGETHER WE CAN HELP
EVERY CHILD THRIVE.**

Polish schools have committed professionals with strong observational skills. They need more systematic preventive structures, stronger partnerships with parents, greater specialist capacity and practical, evidence-based tools that support early intervention.



Poland – Country Snapshot

Early education and prevention context

The Polish MindPlay study focused on children aged **5–9 years** attending preschool and the first three grades of primary school. The research confirms that teachers play a central role in the early recognition of emotional, behavioural, and social difficulties, while psychologists, school leaders, and parents contribute essential complementary perspectives. The study highlights a growing demand for structured early identification, stronger cooperation between schools and families, and practical tools that support prevention rather than crisis response.

The findings indicate that mental health challenges are becoming increasingly visible in early education. School leaders identified **emotional dysregulation, peer conflicts, anxiety, learning difficulties, and behavioural problems** as the most common concerns. While teachers generally feel confident in recognising early warning signs through everyday observation, schools continue to rely primarily on **informal identification procedures**. Only **11%** of surveyed schools reported having formally implemented early identification procedures, whereas **77%** relied on informal teacher observations and discussions.

The study included a total of 89 respondents across four stakeholder groups: 40 teachers, 18 school principals, 15 school psychologists/counsellors, and 16 parents.

Despite relatively good access to school psychologists compared with several partner countries, specialist capacity remains insufficient. Half of the schools employed a full-time psychologist, while **44%** relied on part-time support, resulting in limited availability for prevention and continuous intervention. Teachers reported that growing numbers of children requiring support, long waiting times for specialist services, and increasing administrative demands often force schools into a reactive rather than preventive approach.

Across all stakeholder groups, **family-school cooperation** emerged as one of the greatest challenges. Teachers and principals described frequent situations in which parents questioned school observations, delayed diagnostic assessments, or expected schools to solve problems without active family involvement. Participants consistently emphasised that strengthening communication with parents may have a greater impact on children's well-being than additional diagnostic training alone.

Teachers identified the most difficult problems to recognise as **internalising difficulties**, including anxiety, withdrawal, low self-esteem, and sadness, because these children rarely disrupt classroom activities and can remain unnoticed for long periods. In contrast, aggressive behaviour, emotional outbursts, impulsivity, attention difficulties, and poor emotional regulation were more visible and therefore more likely to receive support. Environmental factors—including family instability, parental separation, excessive screen exposure, and limited opportunities for developing social skills—were repeatedly highlighted as important contributors to children's emotional difficulties.

Participants expressed strong support for the MindPlay concept. Schools particularly welcomed **diagnostic games, preventive group activities, teacher training modules, and practical**



intervention frameworks that can be integrated into everyday classroom practice. Stakeholders stressed that future tools should be easy to use, require minimal preparation, function in regular classroom settings, and help teachers interpret children's behaviours while simultaneously strengthening emotional literacy, communication, and social competence.

Overall, the Polish findings demonstrate that schools possess committed professionals with strong observational skills but require **more systematic preventive structures, stronger partnerships with parents, increased specialist capacity, and practical evidence-based tools** that support early intervention before difficulties escalate.





EARLY EDUCATION & PREVENTION CONTEXT



Teachers play a central role in recognizing emotional, behavioural and social difficulties in children aged 5–9 (preparatory grade and Grades 1–3). Schools use practices such as emotional circles, storytelling, role-play, relaxation techniques and calm corners to support well-being.



The study involved **104 respondents** across 4 groups: **45 teachers**, **15 school principals**, **15 school psychologists/counsellors** and **29 parents**. Participants came from both urban and rural schools, with the majority of teachers having extensive professional experience.



Access to specialist support and formal early-identification procedures remains uneven: some schools lack full-time psychologists, and most rely on structured teacher observation and professional discussions.



WHO TOOK PART IN THE STUDY? (QUESTIONNAIRE)



TEACHERS

45

43.3%



SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

15

14.4%



SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS/ COUNSELLORS

15

14.4%



PARENTS

29

27.9%



KEY FINDINGS (QUESTIONNAIRE)

MOST FREQUENTLY OBSERVED DIFFICULTIES



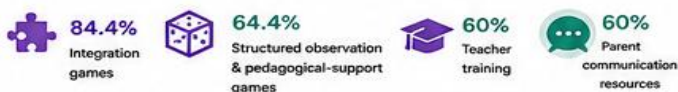
TEACHERS FEEL...



TOP TRAINING PRIORITIES



INTEREST IN MINDPLAY TOOLS



68.9% of teachers would likely use such tools in their classroom (score 4 or 5).



TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

104



FOCUS GROUPS (TEACHERS & SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS)

37 teachers participated in 4 focus groups in Harghita County.

- Miercurea-Ciuc (10)
- Păuleni-Ciuc (9)
- Borsec (10)
- Dărgiu (8)



FOCUS GROUP ASSESSMENT

4.62 / 5

Average evaluation score in the Dărgiu group (Very high level of satisfaction)



Practical & relevant discussions



Opportunity to exchange experiences



Clear activities & useful materials



All four focus groups evaluated the discussions very positively. Borsec group highlighted clarity of objectives, quality of materials and relaxed atmosphere.

TEACHER PRIORITIES RAISED IN FOCUS GROUPS

- Practical training and classroom-ready activities
- Games that build communication, empathy and self-regulation
- Tools to manage conflict and improve cooperation
- Clear guidance on when to observe, how to respond and when specialist support is needed
- Stronger cooperation with families and specialists



MAIN NATIONAL CONCLUSION



Romanian schools are highly aware of children's emotional, behavioural and social needs and already use valuable practices such as emotional circles, role-play, storytelling, relaxation activities and calm corners.



The priority for Romania is to strengthen early prevention through accessible and non-stigmatising observation tools, practical teacher training, clearer referral and cooperation procedures, stronger school-family communication and more consistent access to specialist support.



MindPlay will be most effective when its tools are age-appropriate, engaging, easy to implement and accompanied by clear guidance on what to observe, how to respond and when to seek specialist support.



Romania – Country Snapshot

Early education and prevention context

The Romanian MindPlay study focused on children aged 5–9 attending preparatory grade and Grades 1–3, where teachers play a central role in recognising emerging emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The study confirms that schools are increasingly aware of the importance of early prevention and already use a range of classroom practices to support children's emotional well-being, including emotional circles, storytelling, role-play, relaxation techniques and calm corners.

The national research involved **104 respondents** across four stakeholder groups (45 teachers, 15 school principals, 15 school psychologists/counsellors and 29 parents), complemented by focus groups conducted with educators and school professionals. Participants represented both urban and rural schools, with the majority of teachers having extensive professional experience. While schools demonstrate strong commitment to children's well-being, access to specialist support and formal early-identification procedures remains uneven. Among the participating schools, only two reported formal early-identification procedures, while most relied on structured teacher observation and professional discussions. Likewise, not all schools had permanent access to a school psychologist, highlighting continuing differences in available support across communities.

Assessment of the focus-group study

The focus groups were assessed positively overall. Participants appreciated the relevance of the topics, the opportunity to exchange experiences, the clarity of the activities and the practical orientation of the discussions.

The Dârjiu focus group recorded an average evaluation score of 4.62 out of 5, indicating a very high level of satisfaction. The Borsec evaluation was also described as very positive, particularly regarding the clarity of objectives, quality of materials and relaxed atmosphere, although participants suggested improved time management and clearer structuring of information. Across the four groups, teachers expressed strong interest in practical training, psychological and integration games, case examples and tools that could be used directly in the classroom. However, the available national report does not provide a complete percentage distribution for every evaluation score in each of the four focus groups; therefore, a fully comparable “percentage scoring 1–5” cannot be reported for all locations.

Key findings

Teachers described emotional and behavioural challenges as a regular part of everyday school life. The most frequently observed difficulties were concentration problems (77.8%), hyperactivity and impulsivity (68.9%), peer conflicts (64.4%), and aggressive or oppositional behaviour (57.8%).

Although teachers generally felt confident recognising visible emotional and behavioural changes, many reported uncertainty when distinguishing typical developmental behaviour from early



warning signs requiring specialist attention. More than half (53.3%) felt only somewhat confident in recognising early warning signs, while 57.8% reported not using structured observation tools. Professional development priorities focused primarily on practical classroom competences, especially behaviour management (77.8%), emotional-regulation strategies (71.1%) and responding to crisis situations (51.1%). Teachers also highlighted the emotional demands of their work, with an average burden rating of 4.11 out of 5.

Interest in the future MindPlay tools was consistently high. Teachers expressed the greatest interest in integration games (84.4%), structured observation and pedagogical-support games (64.4%), teacher training and parent communication resources (60%), while nearly 70% indicated they would be likely to use such classroom tools.

Focus-group participants evaluated the discussions very positively, appreciating their practical orientation, relevance and opportunities for professional exchange. The Dârjiu group achieved an average satisfaction score of **4.62/5**, while the remaining groups were also described as highly positive, particularly regarding the usefulness of discussions, materials and practical examples. Because the national report does not provide complete score distributions for all focus groups, comparable percentages cannot be reported without introducing unsupported data.

Main national conclusion

The Romanian findings show that schools and teachers are highly aware of children's emotional, behavioural and social needs, and many already use valuable practices such as emotional circles, role-play, storytelling, relaxation activities and calm corners. However, support remains largely informal and dependent on individual teachers, while access to psychologists, structured procedures and practical guidance varies considerably between schools and communities.

The main priority for Romania is therefore to strengthen early prevention through **accessible and non-stigmatising observation tools, practical teacher training, clearer referral and cooperation procedures, stronger school-family communication and more consistent access to specialist support**. MindPlay is likely to be most useful when its games are age-appropriate, visually engaging, easy to implement and accompanied by clear guidance on what teachers should observe, how they should respond and when specialist support is required.

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