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Ensuring a safe and healthy school environment: a good practise example from Lithuania

Rita Sketerskiene; Justina Racaite; Ruta Maceinaite; Gene Surkiene

Department of Public Health, Institute of Health Science, Faculty of Medicine, Vilnius
University, Vilnius, Lithuania

Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania; Vilnius, Lithuania

National Public Health Center under the Ministry of Health; Vilnius, Lithuania

E-mail: rita.sketerskiene@mf.vu.lt

Background

The state's duty is to ensure a safe and healthy school environment for each and every child and to find the most effective solutions how to achieve it.

Methods

- Analysis of existing legal framework
- Functions of public health institutions
- Intersectoral collaboration possibilities

Results: legal framework

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania; 1992)
- Republic of Lithuania Law on Public Health Care
- Republic of Lithuania Law on Education
 - Article 40. Material Provision of Education and Learning Workload
 - The school's learning environment and the learners' learning load must meet hygiene norms and requirements for learners' safety and health established by legal acts and guarantee implementation of education programmes.

Results: health safety requirements

State level

- Basic health safety requirements for school environment are set by different public health safety regulations for preschools, general, vocational and non-formal education institutions.
- National Public Health Center implements the control system of national public health safety at educational institutions all over the country.

Results: school health services

Local level (60 municipalities)

- Every school has their own public health specialist.
- Specialist's work is based on territorial principle and depends on number of children at each school.
- The procedure for organizing the public healthcare in schools is defined by the Minister of Health together with the Minister of Education, Science and Sport.
- Public health specialists are responsible for helping implement obligatory school environment requirements for managers and founders of schools.

Results: intersectoral collaboration

- Health education is integrated in general education system, allowing education sector to participate in the creation of a healthy school environment.
- Lithuania actively participates in European network of Health Promoting Schools for over 25 years
- School Educational Spaces Competition is one more joint project of health and education sectors, created almost 10 years ago.

Conclusions

Existing legislation, framework of public health institution, close intersection collaboration with Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, clear responsibilities of state and municipalities are helpful in creating safe, healthy and friendly environments in Lithuanian schools