

Early Childhood
Education and Care
Implementation Strategy

Koprivnica Municipality

December 2024

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....	7
2.1 HEALTH CARE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.....	7
2.2 SOCIAL SERVICES.....	11
3.3 EDUCATION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	12
3. QUALITY ASSURANCE – MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	16

1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2024, Koprivnica Municipality together with the municipality of Zborov joined the PRIMOKIZ pilot project initiated by the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) and implemented by Škola dokorán – Wide Open School, n. o. in the Slovak Republic. Its objective is to:

establish a comprehensive early childhood policy (for children of age 0 to 10) that will ensure that high-quality programs for children and parents achieve an optimal impact.

Representatives of the municipality, headed by the mayor, and a representative of Škola dokorán – Wide Open School n. o., signed a memorandum of cooperation in which they agreed to cooperate on the development of a ECEC situation analysis and implementation strategy for children of age 0 to 10, based on the PRIMOKIZ methodology. In this process, the project team of Škola dokorán – Wide Open School n. o. has been providing its expertise and organizational support.

PRIMOKIZ methodology focuses on the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies in the field of early childhood education and care with a specific focus on horizontal and vertical networking and seeks to guide towards the application of the basic project implementation strategy: 'think strategically – act pragmatically'.

A comprehensive, network-based program for early childhood should include the following:

- child- and family-oriented strategic planning,
- educational and care services for young children,
- publicly accessible places, facilities and programmes for children and their families/ caregivers and educators, where they can play and interact with others,
- educational support, health care and social services for families.

The document 'Early Childhood Education and Care Implementation Strategy' for Koprivnica municipality was developed by the local coordinator Marketa Krupová in close cooperation with the local action team and the project team of Škola dokorán – Wide Open School n.o. The Implementation Strategy is based on the findings of the ECD Situation Analysis for Koprivnica Municipality, which identifies the community's developmental needs in the field of early childhood education and care.

In the Situation Analysis it is stated that:

Early childhood development in the municipality is implemented in educational institutions – kindergarten and primary school. Apart from the programmes implemented by these institutions, the municipality has not developed and does not implement systematic programmes in the field of early childhood education and care. The kindergarten and primary school, in addition to the legally prescribed education activities, provide resources (human resources, premises and time) thanks to which activities for children, generally from 2 to 10 years of age, are organised in cooperation with the municipal office and parents. These are not systematic programme activities, but rather one-off events focused mainly on physical activities, creativity, skills, cultural, ecological, and social education.

The municipality does not have a comprehensive program for parents and their children, except for the provision of institutional educational care provided by the kindergarten and primary

school. However, the municipality, in cooperation with the municipal council and civic initiatives, offers thematic events for children and parents, which are conducted on certain occasions on a regular basis each year.

Within the municipality's development programmes and documents, so far there has not been any mention of the intention to create institutional and/or individual networks, which would contribute to improving the quality of early childhood education and care by coordinating their activities and objectives.

The Situation Analysis found that the following actions are needed in order to improve the early childhood education and care in the municipality:

- significant improvement in access to quality healthcare and social services (in the medium term)
- create conditions for rapprochement and exchange of experience between generations
- facilitate community development and citizen involvement in the activities of various stakeholders
- develop conditions for diverse cultural, sporting, recreational activities, and other opportunities for active leisure (including new forms thereof)
- ensure fundamental environmental conditions including the green areas, as well as user-friendly public spaces also suitable for physically and sensory impaired persons, parents with little children and other specific groups of the population
- provision of materials and support for regular leisure and club activities for children and young people

The questionnaire survey conducted within the Situation Analysis found the following core needs of the respondents in the field of ECEC:

- *Improve the paediatric care of children living in the municipality*
- *Enhance the opportunities for children to attend extracurricular activities, sports clubs activities, as well as other leisure-time activities*
- *Provide support to parents of children who have health, financial and/or social problems*
- *Provide a counselling and support programme for pregnant women and parents on parental leave by setting up a clubroom/play hub, so that they can meet, socialise and play together*
- *Raise the awareness of parents about the services to which they are legally entitled, as well as services provided by the municipality.*

Based on the above findings, and considering the municipality's short-, medium- and long-term potential for the development of early childhood education and care in the municipality, our shared **vision** has been developed:

Our municipality strives to be an attractive place for living for all children from their birth onwards as well as for their families. We strive to ensure that their well-being is based on a wide range of opportunities for their full-scale development and on supporting them to fulfil their potential and objectives,

regardless of their social status and individual disadvantages. Their rights are protected and secured by a network of institutions and the efforts of every member of our municipality's community.

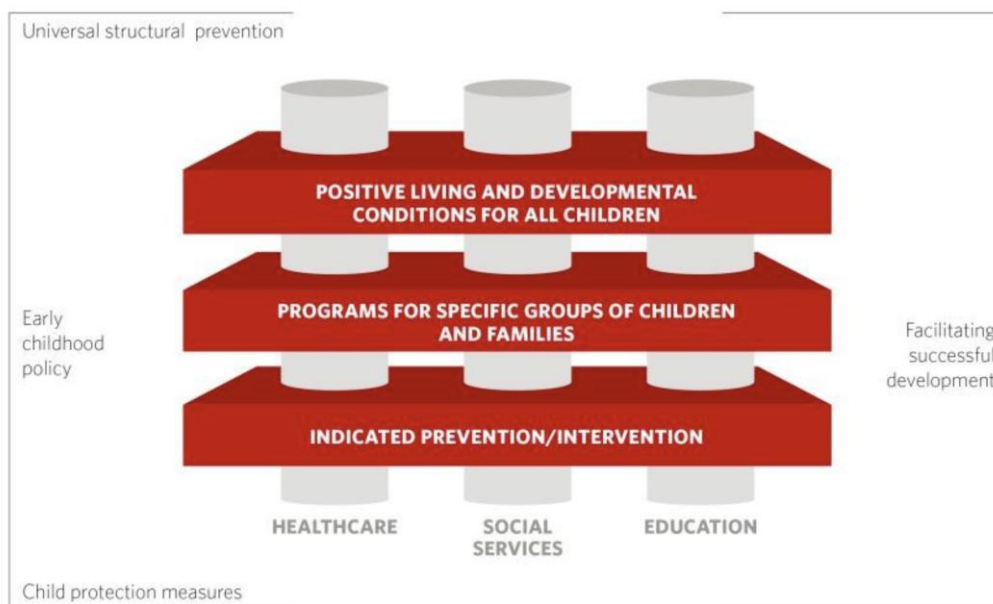
Strategic objectives based on this vision are the following:

- From birth on, every child should be afforded equitable opportunities leading to a successful start in life.
- Responsible parties in the early childhood sector, as well as local authorities, institutions and organizations, should form networks and engage in systematic communication with one another.
- The municipality should provide an adequate number of high-quality early childhood programs and services, in line with existing needs.
- The municipality should proactively pursue its early childhood policy.
- The municipality should provide regular information on strategies and activities, which it pursues in the field of ECEC.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan of the ECEC Strategy for Koprivnica Municipality has been developed in line with the PRIMOKIZ methodology, which focuses on the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies in the field of early childhood development with a specific focus on horizontal and vertical networking and seeks to guide towards the application of the basic strategy of implementation: 'think strategically – act pragmatically'.

Just like the whole PRIMOKIZ methodology is based on the following key elements:



the implementation plan also follows the current situation in the field of early childhood education and care in the municipality in three areas: health care, social services, and education.

The intention of the implementation plan is to follow a holistic approach to early childhood development based on networking in the following ways:

- a) vertical – prenatal care, early childhood education and care, daily institutional care for children of 3 – 10 years of age, including playgroups and preschool up to the period of compulsory education at primary school level;
- b) horizontal – paediatrician, programs for parents, counselling for mothers and fathers, playgroups, creating opportunities for families with children to meet, welcoming environment for children to play in public spaces, infrastructure that considers the needs of children and their families.

The implementation plan is structured in form of tables and comprises the following three areas:

1. health care and healthy lifestyle
2. social services
3. education and personal development.

2. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2.1 HEALTH CARE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

In the field of health care and healthy lifestyle in Koprivnica Municipality, the strategic objectives are focused primarily on the following areas:

- In the long-term, create conditions for setting up a paediatric office in the municipality and thereby significantly improve the quality of health care for children of early age;
- In the medium term, conduct activities that will enable parents of children in early age to obtain the necessary information regarding the improvement of health care and healthy lifestyle of their children, including those parents, whose children do not attend kindergarten;
- In the short to medium term, improve the conditions for and the quality of physical and sports activities of children at an early age and their families.

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Setting up of a paediatric office in the municipality	LT – 2030	Municipal office and council	The premises of the municipal office	Survey of interest Drafting of the project Staffing, equipment and facilities	Regular paediatric care Prevention of children's diseases Improved availability and accessibility of the paediatrician Parents' consultations with the paediatrician	Extra-budgetary funding Paediatrician and other medical staff Natality Premises
Regular parents' consultations with a dentist	ST – 2026	Kindergarten	Premises of the existing kindergarten	Cooperation agreement Preparation of the program	Improving the health of children – prevention and dental hygiene Better awareness of children of age 3 to 6	Voluntary activity of the dentist Natality Cooperation with kindergarten teachers
Regular parents' consultations with a dentist	MT – 2028	Primary school	Premises of the existing primary school	Cooperation agreement Preparation of the program	Improving the health of children – prevention and dental hygiene; improving their own teeth and gum care	Voluntary activity of the dentist Natality Cooperation with kindergarten teachers
Sports equipment for children – football jerseys, sporting goods	MT – 2027	Municipal office and council	Existing football dressing rooms for adult footballers	Purchasing the selected sports equipment	Children living in the municipality will be more interested in sports	Funding Natality

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Trainings with a paediatrician in primary school	MT – 2029	Primary school	Premises of the existing primary school	Programme, staffing and technical facilities and equipment	Better awareness of health and functioning of the human body Improved health of children	Voluntary activity of a paediatrician Funding Nativity Cooperation with primary school teachers
Regular trainings and consultations with certified nurses and hygienists regarding health prevention and protection	MT – 2029	Primary school	Premises of the existing primary school	Engaging an expert and implementer Preparing the plan of trainings and consultations	Cooperation of school and parents working in the healthcare sector Strengthening of the local atmosphere and interpersonal relations Improved knowledge of how to treat children's simple injuries	Voluntary activity of professional staff, parents and teachers.
Construction of a sports dressing room for children in the vicinity of the local football field	LT – 2030	Municipal office and council	Area near the local football field	Project documentation Staffing Construction works	Children living in the municipality will be more interested in sports Better conditions for young athletes	Extra-budgetary funding Nativity
Sports equipment for children of early age in the primary school gym	MT – 2027	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing primary school	Purchasing the selected sports equipment and sporting goods	Building positive attitudes towards sports and physical activity Raising interest in various types of sports Improving the quality of school education programmes	Funding
Construction of a paved area for sports activities near primary school	MT – 2027	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing primary school	Project design Public procurement Responsible person Equipment and facilities	Quality leisure time Improved physical fitness of children Incorporation in the educational process	Extra-budgetary funding Spatial planning

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Regular cycling trips with children of early age	ST – 2025	Primary school in cooperation with kindergarten	In the municipality and in the surrounding areas	Action plan Staffing	Better knowledge of the road traffic rules Improved road safety Cooperation of children with teachers, school club educators and other adults Improved health and physical fitness of children Learning about local realities	Cooperation of primary school and kindergarten, parents and other adults Staffing Cooperation with the police force Plan of activities and promotion thereof
Swimming and skating lessons for children of early age	ST – 2025	Primary school in cooperation with kindergarten	Swimming pool/ice rink near Koprivnica	Agreement on the provision of the swimming pool and a lifeguard Agreement on the provision of the ice rink Transportation by bus	Children acquiring basic swimming and skating skills Improved health and physical fitness of children	Funding Swimming pool/ice rink Cooperation with the swimming pool/ice rink operators
Bicycle parking spaces/bicycle racks	MT – 2027	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing primary school	Purchase and installation of the racks	Development of movement skills via bicycles Environmental protection Better awareness and knowledge of the road traffic rules and application thereof in practice while riding bicycles to school Higher number of children riding their bikes to school	Funding Natality
Fitness area for children	MT – 2029	Primary school	Premises of the existing primary school	Project design Staffing Purchasing the selected equipment	Improved physical fitness of children Building positive attitudes towards strength training and its impact on health Body toning	Funding

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Installation of speed bumps on the road	ST – 2025	Municipal office and council	Access road to the existing primary school	Equipment and facilities Installation of speed bumps	Increased safety of children around school	Funding
Ice rink for children and parents	LT – 2035	Municipal office and council	Existing area near local football field	Project documentation Technical facilities and equipment Support from the Structural Funds	Better skating skills Improved health and physical fitness of children Meeting place for families with children at an early age Intergenerational cooperation of older and younger children	Funding for the construction and operation of the ice rink
Reconstruction of the swimming pool	LT – 2030	Municipal office and council	Existing municipal swimming pool	Project documentation Material resources Staffing Support from the Structural Funds	Improved swimming skills of children Leisure-time swimming Meeting place for families with children at an early age Intergenerational cooperation of older and younger children	Funding for reconstruction and maintenance Staffing (person responsible)

2.2 SOCIAL SERVICES

With regard to social services, which directly or indirectly affect children at an early age, we will strategically focus on the following areas:

- Providing a physical space and a programme structure in order to create conditions for families with children at an early age – especially children aged under 3, or those who do not attend a kindergarten – so that they can share information and help each other with educating and upbringing of their children, and at the same time to facilitate meetings with experts in the field of early childhood education and care;
- Providing social counselling and legal advice to parents of children at an early age.

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Recreation area for parents and children of early age	MT – 2027	Municipal office and council	Grassy area in the municipality	Project documentation Implementation of the project Staff responsible for maintenance of the recreation area	Improving the quality of the community life of parents and children	Project funding Young families in the municipality
Clubroom/play hub for children at an early age and their parents	LT – 2030	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing municipal clubroom	Survey Project design Selection procedure Material resources Refurbishing of the premises	Strengthening of the social relations and of the community life Cooperation among parents Organization of various lectures, trainings and workshops	Spatial planning Funding
Social counselling and legal advice provided to parents	LT – 2030	Municipal office and council	The premises of the municipal office and eventually of the clubroom/play hub	Survey Staffing Funding	Social and legal awareness Information provided to parents and their non-formal education in this field Awareness of parents	Long-term funding necessary to finance the person in charge

3.3 EDUCATION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Although the provision of formal education in the municipality is ensured in the local kindergarten (for children at an early age) and in local primary school (for children of age 6 to 10), in the area of informal and non-formal education there is still room for development, in particular in the following areas:

- Openness of school institutions to parents and children who are not involved in the formal education process due to age or other reasons;
- Improving the material and technical conditions;
- Strengthening the quality of formal, informal and non-formal education services;
- Creating conditions for improving the community life by interconnecting the activities of formal and non-formal education, in particular by involving parents and other caregivers in activities dedicated to children at an early age.

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Reconstruction of the outdoor playground (jungle gyms) for children of early age near the kindergarten	MT – 2028	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing kindergarten – yard/garden	Project design Purchasing the equipment	Improving children’s motor skills Better and nicer social environment	Natality Funding
Gazebo used for education and leisure of children	MT – 2027	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing primary school – yard/garden	Project design Human and material resources Contract for works	Enhance the possibilities to organize the educational activities outside (in the exterior of the school) Innovative pedagogies	Extra-budgetary funding Natality in the municipality
Adding more books in the children's library	ST – 2025	Primary school in cooperation with kindergarten	Premises of the existing library	Project design Purchasing the books	Reading literacy of children will be strengthened Children will be more interested in books and reading Children will read books in their free time	Financial resources provided on regular basis Favourable demographic developments
Establishment of a clubroom/play hub	MT – 2027	Primary school in cooperation with kindergarten	Premises of the existing primary school	Human and material resources	Better availability and accessibility of informal and non-formal education for children at an early age	Extra-budgetary funding

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Renovation of floors in the primary school	ST – 2025	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing primary school	Material resources Staffing Installation of floors	Improved safety in the classrooms and other premises of the primary school More attractive and appealing learning environment Easier maintenance	Funding
Renovation of premises in the kindergarten (stairs and replastering)	ST – 2025	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing kindergarten	Material resources Person in charge and contract for works	Improved safety in the kindergarten Improved environment (including the positive effects on children's health)	Funding
Improving the kitchen equipment in the kindergarten	ST – 2025	Municipal office and council	The premises of the existing kitchen in the kindergarten	Designation of the person responsible Purchasing the selected kitchen equipment	Modernization of premises	Funding
Renovation of the canteen	MT – 2028	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing kindergarten – canteen	Material resources Designation of the person responsible	More attractive and appealing environment Healthier environment	Nativity Funding
New computers in the primary school	ST – 2025	Primary school	Premises of the existing primary school	Participation in a project Submitting application for specific types of IT equipment Designation of the person responsible	Development of technical and computer skills of children Improving awareness about the internet safety Can also be used during leisure activities	Funding Staffing Nativity
Information boards in front of the primary school and kindergarten on the activities of children at an early age	ST – 2025	Primary school	Premises of the existing primary school and kindergarten	Material resources Installation of the information boards	Presentation of activities conducted by children attending the kindergarten and the primary school	Funding
Creating a virtual space in order to provide information about programs for children of an early age in the municipality	ST – 2025	Primary school and kindergarten in cooperation with the municipal office	Existing website of the municipality	Technical resources	Informing the parents of children at an early age about the programmes available for their children	Funding and staffing

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Strengthening of environmental education in primary school and kindergarten – compost bins	ST – 2025	Municipal office and council	Premises of the existing primary school and kindergarten	Purchasing and installation of the compost bins	Fostering environmental knowledge Emphasising the importance of recycling (including among children of early age)	Funding Spatial planning
Starting a meadow-like floral garden	ST – 2025	Primary school	Premises of the existing primary school	Site preparation Purchasing the seeds Staffing	Children become acquainted with the fauna and flora of the surrounding areas Improving the environmental quality	Spatial planning
Engaging the local beekeepers in the educational process	ST – 2026	Primary school in cooperation with the kindergarten	External premises of the existing primary school	Cooperation agreement Material resources Implementation	Raising the environmental awareness of children Building positive relations in respect of the place of children's life and of the local community Improving the quality of the educational process Involving children in community life	Voluntary activity of the members of the beekeepers association Spatial planning Material resources
Plan of cultural activities for children of early age and their parents and family members – Mother's Day, St. Nicholas Day, costume party, Christmas, Easter etc.	ST – 2025	Primary school and kindergarten	Premises of the municipal event hall (culture house)	Agreement with the municipal office Material resources Staffing Technical resources Implementation	Mutual cooperation between primary school, kindergarten and the municipal office Improved cultural experiences of people living in the municipality (including children) Involving the children not attending the kindergarten and their families Improving the community life by engaging the children	Creativity and volunteering of the educators Nativity in the municipality Venue Cooperation with the municipal office

Task	Objective: LT long-term MT medium-term ST short-term	Person responsible for implementation and monitoring	Place of implementation	Steps of implementation	Positive change(s) expected	Feasibility
Engaging the local volunteer fire department in the informal educational process	MT – 2029	Primary school in cooperation with kindergarten	Paved area of the local primary school or the local football field	Cooperation agreement Selecting a suitable location Staffing Examples of work of volunteer firefighters	Building positive relations in respect of the place of children's life and of the local community Improving the quality of the educational process Involving children in community life	Voluntary activity Cooperation with the teachers Well-functioning firefighting equipment
Enhancing the kindergarten availability	LT – 2035	Municipal office and council	Existing building of the kindergarten	Survey Project documentation Staffing Spatial planning Funding	Improved services provided to parents Ability to satisfy the demand Early childhood development	Funding on permanent basis Staffing Natality in the municipality Sources of funding
Plan of sports events for children of early age and their parents	ST – 2025	Primary school and kindergarten	Local sports field	Developing a full-day programme Staffing Cooperation with institutions providing various activities for children	Developing children's physical skills Engaging parents in the sports events	Selecting suitable locations Volunteering of the educators and other people in the municipality Providing fun and entertainment elements Funding

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE – MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Assuring the quality of the programmes provided, as well as the use of material and technical facilities and equipment of the premises dedicated to early childhood education and care is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the implementation strategy. Therefore, we consider the processes of monitoring and evaluation of the implemented measures focused on children living in the municipality to be a very important factor. Also, monitoring and evaluation of quality of these measures play a crucial role in indicating further directions and possibilities for further development with regard to improving the living conditions of young children and their families in the municipality. Their satisfaction can then have a major impact on further positive demographic development in our municipality.

In order to assure the quality of the programmes provided and the measures taken, the following steps shall be taken:

- a) Setting up of a monitoring and evaluation group, which builds on the work of the local action team, and which comprises the following:
 - local PRIMOKIZ coordinator
 - representatives of the local council and the municipal office
 - pedagogues from the kindergarten and the primary school
 - representative of parents of children in their early years
 - other experts invited ad hoc with regard to the specific programme or measure under consideration.
- b) The Monitoring and Evaluation Group monitors and evaluates:
 - the quality of projects submitted for the implementation of programmes and measures
 - adequate staffing
 - taking into account the actual needs of children in early age and their families, as well as accessibility to all
 - the state of implementation of individual measures set out in the implementation strategy
 - updating of the implementation plan as needed.

Monitoring and evaluation will take into account the following criteria:

1. Whether the target focus of the programme, project, measure corresponds to the needs of children in early age and their families.
2. Whether the programme, project, measure is likely to be sustainable in the long term in the municipality.
3. Whether the proposed and implemented programme, project, measure creates the preconditions in order to ensure that all children, parents and families can actually benefit from them.

4. Whether the proposed and implemented program, project, measure is consistent with scientific knowledge about the developmental, social, cultural, educational, and personal needs of children in early age.
5. Whether the proposed and implemented programme, project, measure meets the needs of parents and families of children in early age.
6. Whether the programme, project, measure is adequately staffed with qualified personnel, which provides services of sufficient quality.
7. Whether the proposed and implemented programme, project, measure is sufficiently inclusive and allows for an actual participation of children and their families with different social status and cultural background.
8. Whether the proposed and implemented programme, project, measure sufficiently enables children in early age to perceive themselves as independent actors and strengthens their sense of belonging and identity.
9. Whether the proposed and implemented program, project, measure sufficiently enables the involvement of parents and other adults on a voluntary basis in order to create space for strengthening of the community awareness of citizens.
10. Whether the proposed and implemented program, project, measure is sufficiently in line with the ideological, organizational and target focus of other planned and implemented projects, programs and measures for children in early age in the municipality.