



iJERResearch

International Journal of Education and Research

Vol. 1, Number 2, September - 2026 | Peer-Reviewed Journal

ISSN 2764-9733 | ijerresearch.org

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.23062217

THE MENTAL HEALTH OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS: PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, WORKING CONDITIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

AUTHOR

Alaide Palagano Ferreira: Master's degree holder and doctoral candidate in Education Sciences at UNIDA University, Paraguay; Director of Education and Training at APROMAM, Mauá, São Paulo, Brazil; Municipal Education Supervisor in Mauá, São Paulo, Brazil; Coordinator and Professor at the University Center of Mauá (UNI-FAMA), São Paulo, Brazil.

Contact: alaidepalagano@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the mental health of Early Childhood Education teachers from a critical, broad, and intersectoral perspective. Drawing on authors such as Ferreira, Freud, Campos, and Viegas, as well as the DSM-5-TR, it examines teachers' psychological distress not as an individual pathology, but as a legitimate expression of the structural and institutional tensions that permeate pedagogical work. This qualitative literature review identified three central categories: a broad conception of mental health; working conditions as factors contributing to illness; and the inadequacy of public care policies. The findings showed that teachers' psychological distress is associated with work intensification, emotional overload, loss of autonomy, and the absence of permanent institutional spaces for listening and support. The study also highlights the precarious nature of government policies addressing teachers' emotional health, which are characterized by isolated, informational, and nonpreventive initiatives. It concludes that ensuring educators' mental health is a collective responsibility, requires integrated and continuous policies, and is indispensable to the quality of public education. Caring for teachers means caring for education.

Keywords: Mental Health. Early Childhood Education. Psychological Distress. Teaching Work. Public Policies.