



KAZAKHSTAN

Fact sheet

Total population (2009)	16 400 000¹
Child population, 0-17 (2008)	5 000 000
Children as proportion of total population	31%
Children in residential care, absolute number (2007)	76 308
Children in residential care, rates per 100,000 children (2007)	1 526
Children in residential care, percentage of total child population	1.5%
Proportion of infants below 3 in residential care (2007)	2.6%
Children in guardianship families, absolute number (2008)	28 113
Children in foster families, absolute number (2008)	2 005
Adoption, absolute number (2008)	3 519

Trends in residential care²

In 2007 there were 76,308 children living in 710 state-run institutions and a further 565 in 12 private institutions. Most of these children are not deemed to be without parental care: the total includes pupils at regular boarding schools, sanatoria and 'corrective' internats. Those that are without parental care comprise 17,500 children in institutions under three different ministries, namely Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population. Even out of those who are considered not to have parental care, only one in every six (3,200 in total) is a full orphan; all others are so-called 'social orphans' with one or two biological parents alive, who may be in prison, long-term medical care, or deprived of parental rights among other reasons.

The number of children in institutions and the number of institutions demonstrate a stable trend. About 10,000 children are identified as deprived of parental care annually and 2000 children are placed into institutions. This suggests that, unlike some other countries of Central Asia, extreme poverty and out-migration

¹ All data are from the State Statistical Committee, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan.

² *Residential care* refers to children residing in institutions (e.g. orphanages, children's homes, boarding schools, etc). *Children in formal care* are those living outside their biological families or adoptive families (including institutions, guardianship and foster families).

are not the main reasons for placement of children into institutions. Importantly, the perception of many people employed in the system and the general public regarding residential care is rather positive. A significant increase in government funding for institutions has also contributed to the maintenance of the positive image of residential care. Private businesses are encouraged to provide 'sponsorship' for institutions to provide them with additional resources. This informal flow of resources to institutions is reported to be quite substantial.

At the same time the government is now promoting and funding family-type children's homes (21 homes with over 200 children in them in 2007) and villages (six villages based on SOS Kinderdorf model with 332 children) and youth houses for adolescents who are leaving care (24 houses with 1,240 young people), as well as 'Hope' groups in baby homes (allowing mothers experiencing hardship to maintain links with their babies). The non-governmental services include seven children's homes, three villages and one youth house (both SOS Kinderdorf), and one shelter.

Alternative care

The proportion of children placed in family based care amounts to 31% and remains stable. The main forms of family based care of children without parental care are guardianship, foster care and adoption.

Guardianship with a relative of the child is the most common placement where parents are absent or unable to look after the child. Of the total number of 51,300 orphans or abandoned children, some 28,113 are under guardianship. Another form of family placement is foster care; there were 2,005 children in foster care in 2008. There is a considerable number of people willing to become foster parents. Kazakhstan is the only country in the region where foster care has graduated from a pilot activity to a regular form of child care financed by the government on a regular basis. The main practical difference between fostering and guardianship is that foster parents receive regular child support allowance (about 60 USD) while guardians are not. However, a new Family and Marriage Code is being prepared, which provides for payments to not only foster parents, but also to guardians. Apart from the child support allowance, foster parents are eligible for remuneration for their work (about 100 USD).

Family support services

So far the community-based family support services are being implemented mainly on a pilot basis. These include public and private day care centres for children with disabilities, family support centres and school-based groups. Two day-care centres for children with disabilities operate in Astana and Almaty; this is a first step in de-institutionalization of this category of vulnerable children. Currently NGOs play important role in delivery of such services.

Social work is established as a profession; there are standards for teaching social work at universities. The Association of Social Workers contributes to professional development of people in the sector.

Main reform news

So far residential care is still the prevailing component in the system, but the main direction of the reform puts an emphasis on de-institutionalization and the development of alternative forms of child care, which can be characterized as family support services and family substitute services. Key elements of the reform are

outlined in the government programme 'Children of Kazakhstan' and some of the main features are expected to be incorporated into the current Law on Specialised Social Services and the draft of the new Marriage and Family Code.

Financial resources of the child care system have been considerably expanded due to the general increase in the government's revenues whilst retaining a more or less constant share (0.23%) of total public expenditure.

Attitudes towards the reforms

Different groups of the reform actors seem to have different attitudes towards child care reforms: while central government demonstrate general understanding and positive approach to the de-institutionalization agenda and introduction of alternative forms of child care; local governments are generally supportive of the reform, although being less informed and interested in the change implementation; institutions' staff fearing of jobs loss have much more cautious and protective attitude towards de-institutionalization; and the general public demonstrates so far little understanding of the de-institutionalization agenda.