



KYRGYZSTAN

Fact sheet

Total population (2007)	5 244 300¹
Child population, 0-17 (2007)	1 935 900
Children as proportion of total population	37%
Children in residential care, absolute number (2007)	21 117
Children in residential care, rates per 100,000 children (2007)	1 091
Children in residential care, percentage of total child population	1%
Proportion of infants below 3 in residential care (2007)	0.7%
Children in guardianship families, absolute number (2007)	5 274
Adoption, absolute number (2007)	111

Trends in residential care

Oversight for residential institutions for children is divided among three ministries: the Ministry of Health looks after the infant homes for children up to the age of 3; the Ministry of Labour and Social Development manages the homes for children over the age of 3 who are classified as having mental disabilities, and the Ministry of Education is responsible for all other residential institutions for children, which include *detskie doma* for children aged 4-7, and *internaty* for children over the age of 7. In addition to state-financed institutions (from the republican budget) there are many private orphanages which are not monitored. The majority of institutions and children are under the Ministry of Education. Since 2000 the number of children in residential institutions has increased for 40%, and stood at 21,117 in 2007. The number of institutions has also increased. Majority of institutions are situated far from towns and are of semi-closed character.

Although the principle of placing children to institutions as a last resort is stipulated both in Family and Children's Codes, in practice it is often the easiest option for placement. In some cases improving conditions at institutions has even increased demand for institutions. In general, there is still a "pro-institution" attitude among some officials, institutions' staff and general public. In 2007 the salaries of staff in residential institutions were increased by a presidential decree, which risked

¹ All data are from the State Statistical Committee, Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan and other official sources.

a change in this attitude. Funds for foster care and guardianship, in contrast, have not been approved.

Alternative care

The proportion of children placed in family based care amounts to 23% and is decreasing. Family substitute services are mainly represented by guardianship care. According to the National Statistical Committee, there were 5,274 children living with guardians in 2007 (20% of all children in formal care²). There has been a 12,5% decline since 2000. Monthly child support allowance for children living with guardians is envisaged by the Family Code (in practice it is paid only if a child receives no other allowances or income). Guardians do not receive any payment from the state. Guardianship is traditionally carried out by grandparents and other close family members (80%). Secondly, there is adoption with stable dynamic and over 900 cases in 2007, which amounts to 3% of children in formal care and to 48% of all children placed in families in 2007. Foster care has been only practiced as a pilot service organized by NGOs, without paying remuneration to foster parents. There are also 8 family type children homes with about 200 children living in them.

Family support services

There are pilot institutions transformed into agencies providing family support services, e.g. Belovodsky children's home, now being financed through the budget. Presently there is a need to consider how to replicate the successes of pilot projects (day care centres, adaptation centres for children from families in crisis, rehabilitation centres, family and child support centres, crisis centres for neglected and working children). Curriculum for social work students was introduced at Bishkek State University, although the profession has not been officially recognised yet.

Main reform news

The government has been developing legislative and administrative framework, indicating a shift in favour of alternative forms of family care. The Children's Code (2006) is an example of comprehensive approach to child protection. The focal point of the new structure that is emerging to support child care reform is the Department for Child Protection under the State Agency for Physical Culture, Sports, Youth Policy and Child Protection. The 56 Family and Child Support Units have been established through the EU budget support programme to implement the child care reform at the local level. In addition, Commissions on Children's Affairs are formed as cross-sectoral bodies at the local level in order to monitor the activities of the Family and Child Support Units and approving their most important decisions such as on institutionalisation and placement into foster care.

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