



## TURKMENISTAN

### Fact sheet

<b>Total population (2006)</b>	<b>4 899 000<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Child population, 0-17 (2008)</b>	<b>1 865 000</b>
<b>Children as proportion of total population</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Children in residential care, absolute number (2006)</b>	<b>678</b>
<b>Children in residential care, rates per 100,000 children</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Children in residential care, percentage of total child population</b>	<b>0,04%</b>
<b>Rate of infants below 3 in residential care, per 100,000 children 0-3 (2004)</b>	<b>49.2</b>

The system of child protection consists mainly of social allowances and residential care<sup>2</sup>.

#### Trends in residential care

Institutionalisation of children is not viewed as a pressing issue in Turkmenistan. Rates of children in residential care are relatively low and stagnant. Several factors influence this situation, such as strong family traditions and expanded family ties, the attitude of the government, and the apparent low rate of extreme poverty. Nevertheless, institutions do exist and the problems of the children in them (especially disabled children and social orphans) should not be ignored.

Residential institutions include baby homes, two large and one family-type children's homes, a facility for children with severe mental disabilities, eight pre-school institutions and 14 boarding schools for children with disabilities. In 1999, boarding schools for children deprived of parental care were closed by the order of the president and children from them were returned to their relatives. The number of children in institutions, however, is not reported to have changed.

#### Alternative care

Traditionally, cash benefits are the only form of family support services. The new legislation on cash payments is in force since 2008, additional benefits are to be

<sup>1</sup> All data are from the State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan.

<sup>2</sup> *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).

introduced as of 1 June 2009. Children with disabilities, families with children below the age of three, families with many children and families who have lost their breadwinners count among the recipients of cash benefits. Although amounts of benefits have been increased, the child care allowance amounts to approximately USD 25.

Alternative services are being developed in the form of pilot family support centres at the existing facilities for additional (out-of-school) education for regular schoolchildren.

### **Family support services**

Two traditional forms of family substitute care prevail: adoption and guardianship. Virtually all healthy children in baby homes are adopted; the adoption rate exceeds 50%. Majority (95%) of children left without parents live with their relatives under guardianship arrangements. Guardians do not receive financial support.

### **Main reform news**

The Government is currently working on the new Youth Policy, and the child protection is among the issues to be addressed. The recently adopted new Marriage and Family Code and the Child Labor Law can be mentioned among the main legislative changes.