



TURKEY

Fact sheet

Total population (2008)	71 517 000¹
Child population, 0-17 (2008)	22 500 000
Children as proportion of total population	31%
Children in residential care, absolute number (2007)	16 418
Children in residential care, rates per 100,000 children (2007)	73
Children in residential care, percentage of total child population	0.07%
Children in foster families, absolute number (2007)	973
Adoption, absolute number (2007)	461

Trends in residential care²

The increase in the number of children in need of protection arising in parallel to the process of change in the social, economic and cultural structure of the Turkish society (the imbalances in the distribution of wealth, increased unemployment, rural-to-urban migration and the consequent increase in social and economic problems) has made it necessary to restructure the institutional care services, which constitute the most widely used service model for children in need of protection in the country; hence new models were sought and different service models were introduced together with new planning efforts.

Priority is given to procedures that will allow strengthening the families of children taken under institutional care through social aid and services and thereby ensure that they can retrieve their children from the institutional care as soon as possible. In 2005, as a result of an analysis of the children in institutional care (which indicated that out of 20,000 children in institutions, 12,000 were in institutions because of economic reasons), the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK) initiated a reform process on de-institutionalization. Within the scope of the Return to Family Project launched in 2005, 5,514 out of 21,000 children living under institutional care have been returned to their families or relatives.

¹ All data are from the TurkStat and the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK).

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).

In 2007 there were 10,951 children aged 13-18 living in residential care, including orphanages, Affection Homes, Protection Care and Rehabilitation Centres for children dragged into crime, Care and Social Rehabilitation Centres for child victims of crime and Children's Homes. And 5,467 up to 12 years were living in 90 Nursery Homes.

The SHÇEK has a strategic plan on the reform, envisaging transformation of 10% of residential institutions into home-type units every year, and returning 1000 children to their families every year. Since 2003, 22 orphanages have been closed down, and almost all of other institutions have been transformed into home-type units. In 2008 there were 9 Affection Homes with maximum 10-12 children staying in detached duplex or triplex houses (79 in total), providing care for 632 children. A new service model of Children's Homes (with maximum 5-8 children in the 0-18 age group living in detached houses or apartments, acquired through donations, in close proximity to schools and hospitals in every province, preferable in the provincial centre) has been developed. In 2008 there were 64 children's homes serving 364 children in the 0-12 age group.

Family based care

The main forms of family based care are adoption and foster care. While the number of foster care placements is increasing, the adoption number fluctuates between 450-600 per year.

Family support services

The SHÇEK has started implementing service models aiming at ensuring that the child remains under the care of his or her biological family or relatives without having to leave his or her environment, through counseling services and social aid support provided to the family, avoiding placement under residential care.

"Free Care Service" has been developed by the SHÇEK as a protective and preventive service model, under which the children of families suffering from economic hardship are provided with free of charge services at private crèches (kindergartens) and day care centres, with 5% quota allocated to such children. Currently only 966 children benefit from these services.

Monthly in-cash aid has been increased to 128 USD in January 2009 (which is the highest among the 7 participating countries of the Forum). However, only 0,1 % (23,808) of all children in the country were receiving cash benefits in 2008.