

# Türkiye

## Country Overview

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**Country name**

Türkiye

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**Introduction**

The current Turkish Early Childhood Education Curriculum underlines the importance of the social and emotional development of young children. Although Rakap and colleagues (2018) highlight that this emphasis does not guarantee by itself the teachers' intentional use of practices to support children's social and emotional competence. At least two well-known universal social and emotional learning programmes – Preschool Promoting Alternative THinking Program (Preschool PATHS; Domitrovich et al., 1999), and Second Step from Committee for Children – were adapted and are being implemented in Turkish preschool settings. Given the limited number of information available in English, it is important in the future to deepen the knowledge regarding SEL assessment and intervention practices developed at preschool settings in Turkey.

**Development**

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Turkey is provided via nursery and day care centres for children of 0 to 36 months of age for which the General Directorate of Children Services of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services is responsible. In its turn, preschool education is under the responsibility of the General Directorate of Basic Education and is provided in kindergartens (for children of 36-66 months), and in nursery (for children of 48-66 months). Additionally, there are early childhood educational centres in special education kindergartens (for which the General Directorate of the Special Education and Guidance Services are responsible), for children from 0 to 36 months of age and 37 to 66 months of age who are in need of special education. Although preschool in Turkey is not mandatory, with the exception for the individuals who are in need of special education, it aims for children to benefit from preschool education services for at least 1 year (Eurydice, 2021).

“The aim of preschool education is to ensure that children acquire body, mind and emotion development and good habits in accordance with the general principles and basic principles of national education, to prepare them for primary school, to create a common development environment for children from unfavourable environments and families, and to provide children with a correct and beautiful speech”, (Eurydice, 2021). The current Turkish Early Childhood Education Curriculum (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2013; for children who are between 3 to 6 years) aims to promote several children's developmental areas, including the social-emotional development domain (Ata-Akturk et al., 2017; Rakap et al., 2018). “It is described as a child-centred, flexible, spiral meaning repeatable, eclectic, balanced, play and learning by doing based programme”, (Gulciçek et al., 2019, p. 78). Considering the research-based approach Pyramid Model for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence in Young Children (e.g., Hemmeter et al., 2013), a recent study by Rakap and colleagues (2018; not representative of Turkish preschool teachers and based on one classroom observation) suggested that, without training and professional development support, preschool teachers working in public preschool classrooms in Turkey use few key practices to support young children's social-emotional competence, and tend

to use primary or universal promotion practices more often than tertiary intervention practices. The most observed practices were those related to supportive conversations with children, schedules, routines, and activities, connecting with families, transitions between activities, and collaborative teaming. According to Rakap et al. (2018, p. 19), “although social-emotional development is acknowledged as an important area of development in the national preschool programme, there is no comprehensive curriculum developed in Turkey that focuses on social-emotional development. Therefore, the majority of teachers underutilize systematic and explicit instruction to support young children’s social-emotional competence”.

## Assessment

Regarding universal social and emotional learning programmes in Turkish preschool settings, to our best knowledge, a limited number of publications in English describing its implementation and efficacy are available. Seyhan et al. (2017) mentioned that although some interventions have been implemented, such as Arda & Ocak (2012), Dereli (2008), and Durualp & Aral (2010), additional research is needed to prove the effectiveness of intervention programmes for promoting well-being of children.

## Intervention

Based on our review, it was possible to see that at least two well-known universal social and emotional learning programmes – Preschool Promoting Alternative THinking Program (Preschool PATHS; Domitrovich et al., 1999), and Second Step from Committee for Children – were adapted and are being implemented in Turkish preschool settings.

Preschool Promoting Alternative THinking Program (Preschool PATHS; Domitrovich et al., 1999) was first introduced in Turkey in the scope of a doctoral dissertation (Durmusoglu Saltali, 2010). At least, two more studies are known: Arda & Ocak, 2012; Seyhan et al., 2017. The main findings revealed improvements in children’s social and emotional skills and a reduction in children’s disruptive behaviours and compliance problems. Also, an adapted version of the Second Step preschool-age programme (Committee for Children) is being implemented (<http://www.sdoakademi.com/ikinci-adim/>) at private and public Turkish schools. A recent study that was done in the scope of a doctoral dissertation (Sezer, 2020) analysed the Second Step effectiveness with a sample of children from 36-60 months of age, and found positive effects on the children’s social and emotional skills (assertiveness, self-regulation, attachment/relationship building, and total protective factors).

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