Türkiye
Education Sector
Working Group

Inter-Agency
Coordination
Türkiye

Back to School Parents Survey Report

2024–2025 Academic Year

Education Sector Working Group | November 2024

Inter-Agency Coordination Türkiye

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For further information, please contact:

UNICEF Türkiye, Education Section

Email: ankara@unicef.org

UNICEF Türkiye Country Office

Yıldız Kule Is Merkezi Turan Gunes Blv.No: 106 Floor: 7,
Ankara, Türkiye

T: +90 312 454 1000

F: +90 312 496 1461

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The report drafting was led by UNICEF by Muhammad Israr Khan (Education Specialist/ ESWG National Coordinator), supported by Yasemin Kiziloglu (Education Officer/Information Management), with strategic guidance by Terry Durnnian (Chief of Education).

Contact us

Muhammad Israr Khan

Education Specialist/ ESWG National Coordinator, UNICEF Türkiye Country Office
E-mail: misrar@unicef.org

Amson Simbolon

Education Specialist/ ESWG Southeast Region Coordinator, UNICEF, Turkiye
E-mail: asimbolon@unicef.org

Barış Deyirmenci

Education Officer, UNICEF, Türkiye Country Office
E-mail: bdeyirmenci@unicef.org

1. List of Acronyms

3RP	:	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
ASAM	:	Association for Social Development and Aid Mobilization
BTS	:	Back-to-School
CCTE	:	Conditional Cash Transfers for Education
ECE	:	Early Childhood Education
ESWG	:	Education Sector Working Group
FGDs	:	Focus Group Discussions
IDPs	:	Internally Displaced Persons
MHPSS	:	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MoFSS	:	Ministry of Family and Social Services
MoNE	:	Ministry of National Education
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organisations
PDMM	:	Provincial Directorate of Migration Management
PDoNE	:	Provincial Directorate of National Education
PMM	:	Presidency of Migration Management
STL	:	Support to life
TRC	:	Turkish Red Crescent
UNHCR	:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children's Fund
UTP	:	Under Temporary Protection
WASH	:	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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3. Executive Summary

As Türkiye enters the 2024–2025 academic year, access to education remains a critical challenge for over 1.2 million school-age refugee and foreign children, nearly 20% of whom are out of school.[1] Syrian children under Temporary Protection constitute the largest group, facing compounded barriers such as financial hardship, documentation issues, and the lasting impact of the February 2023 earthquakes that disrupted learning across 11 provinces. These challenges are especially acute in earthquake-affected and underserved regions, where infrastructure damage, overcrowded classrooms, and psychosocial distress continue to hinder school participation. In response, UNICEF leading Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) have prioritized inclusive, data-driven strategies—led by the annual Back-to-School (BTS) Parents Survey—to identify and address enrolment and retention barriers. Insights from the 2023–2024 BTS survey have already informed critical interventions, and the 2024–2025 cycle will deepen this work by guiding targeted support to vulnerable children and families. Continued donor investment is essential to sustain and scale these efforts, ensuring every child has the opportunity to learn in a safe and supportive environment.

The 2024 BTS Parents Survey, conducted by ESWG led by UNICEF, evaluated children's access to education for the 2024–2025 academic year across Türkiye, including 11 provinces impacted by the earthquakes. A total of 2,455 households participated, providing data on 6,082 children (3,303 girls) aged 3-17 from diverse nationalities, including Turkish, Syrian, Afghan, and other refugee groups.

11 provinces impacted by the earthquakes

providing data on **6,082** children

2,455 households participated to the survey

The findings indicate that 79.51% of children school age 6-17 years are currently attending education programmes, while 20.49% are not attending any education programme.

The highest rates of non-attendance are among refugee children, particularly Syrian (20.82%) and Afghan (19.68%), compared to Turkish earthquake affected children (17.42%). Additionally, refugees from other nationalities like Iraq, Palestine, and Ukraine report 30% of school-age children from their communities are not attending any education programmes. Additionally, 45.73% of children not attending education programme are girls, with gender disparities most pronounced among older age groups and refugee populations.

The data shows that early childhood education (ECE) attendance among children aged 3–5 is critically low across all nationalities, with only 19.40% attending and 80.60% not attending any ECE programme. Attendance is particularly low among 3–4-year-olds (13.5%) compared to 5-year-olds (27.3%). Children from earthquake-affected host communities have the highest early childhood education attendance rate at 30%, followed by Afghan children at 25.2%, while Syrian children have the lowest rate at 17.9%.

Several barriers hinder access to education. Systematic and registration barriers account for 37.67% of the issues, with missing identification documents, difficulties in updating address registrations, and a lack of awareness among refugees particularly affecting displaced households. Financial constraints pose another major challenge, impacting 32.19% of households due to high costs of school-related expenses, including uniforms, supplies, transportation, pocket money, and any trips cost planned in schools. School distance and transportation difficulties affect 16.21% of the respondents' ECE and school aged children, particularly those in rural and earthquake-affected areas, where affordable transportation is limited. Economic hardship has led to child labour,

[1] MoNE 2024

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preventing 14.16% of children from attending education programmes. Bullying and social exclusion impact 9.82% of children, particularly refugee students and girls, leading to school dropouts. Additionally, limited disability-inclusive education affects 7.31% of children due to inadequate assistive learning devices, physical accessibility barriers, and insufficient support services. Overcrowded classrooms and infrastructure deficiencies affected 7.08% of students, resulting from high student-teacher ratios, lack of school capacity, and earthquake-related school damage. Around 6.39% of children, as reported by respondents, are influenced by peers who are not attending educational opportunities or pathways. Additionally, language barriers—especially for refugee children with limited proficiency in Turkish—pose significant challenges to both integration and learning. In addition to these barriers, several other factors are negatively impacting children's attendance in education programmes. These include lack of information about available education opportunities, and negative influence from some of the education personnel. Household responsibilities, such as caring for siblings or the elderly, and engagement in agricultural work also hinder attendance. Challenges stemming from the earthquake—including damaged school buildings, loss of educational materials and assistive devices, fear of re-entering concrete structures, and insufficient WASH facilities—have further disrupted education. Moreover, the absence of teachers trained in disability inclusion continues to limit access for children with disabilities.

Beyond the statistical data, qualitative insights highlight additional parental concerns. Many refugee families struggle with address verification, delays in obtaining IDs, and a lack of information on enrolment procedures, leaving children not attending education programmes for extended periods. Psychosocial barriers, including trauma from displacement, earthquakes, and social exclusion, significantly impact children's willingness and ability to return to school. Community attitudes also play a role, as parents of children with disabilities express concerns about stigma and inadequate resources, emphasizing the need for awareness campaigns and inclusive education reforms.

To address these challenges, targeted interventions are recommended. Expanding financial assistance programmes, such as increasing access to conditional cash transfers for Education (CCTE) and scholarships, can support vulnerable families. Enhancing coordination between MoNE, PDoNEs, and PMM to streamline enrolment processes can significantly reduce registration delays. Additionally, improving parental awareness and knowledge is strongly recommended. Enhancing school transportation solutions, including subsidized transport and expanded local networks, will improve access for children in remote areas. Investment in school infrastructure and capacity, particularly in earthquake-affected and overcrowded areas, will ensure accessibility for children with disabilities. Strengthening anti-bullying measures and psychosocial support through school-wide programmes, teacher training, and counselling services is also critical. Improved Turkish and Arabic language support, including intensive language courses and bilingual teachers, will aid refugee children's integration. Promoting gender-inclusive education policies, such as scholarships, mentorship programmes, and proper transport options for girls, is necessary to address socio-cultural barriers. Lastly, ensuring emergency preparedness in education by developing contingency plans, mobile learning units, and alternative education pathways can help minimize disruptions during crises.

The BTS Parent Survey emphasizes the need for multi-sectoral collaboration to overcome barriers to education, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable children in Türkiye. Targeted interventions by MoNE, ESWG, municipalities, and donors are crucial to improving access and retention, especially for refugee and earthquake-affected children. Strengthening coordination between these stakeholders is key to ensuring a swift, effective response that connects emergency preparedness with long-term development.

4. Purpose, Background, and Context

Türkiye is home to one of the world's largest refugee populations, hosting nearly 4 million people, including approximately 1.2 million children. This population includes 2.8 million Syrians under Temporary Protection and about 400,000 asylum seekers from countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Ukraine.[2] In this context, education remains a key component of Türkiye's refugee response, especially for children under Temporary Protection (UTP)[3] and International Protection (UIP)[4], within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)[5].

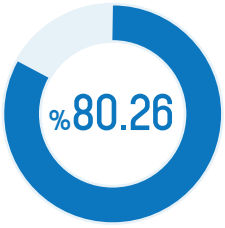
Education in Türkiye is structured into two main types: formal and non-formal. Formal education includes preschool, primary, secondary, and higher education. Non-formal education refers to programmes that complement the formal system, such as language and remedial courses. Education is mandatory for 12 years and is divided into three levels of four years each: primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary.

Despite increasing enrolment of foreign and Syrian children under protection statuses in the Turkish education system, significant challenges remain in ensuring sustained access and retention. Of the 1,269,956 school-aged foreign children residing in Türkiye, 80.26% (1,019,238) are enrolled in schools, while 19.74% (250,718) remain out of school. By education level, enrolment includes: 56,379 in pre-primary (44.48%), 461,246 in primary (97.02%), 334,549 in lower-secondary (94.59%), and 167,064 in upper-secondary (53.19%). The largest student groups include Syrians (842,194), Iraqis (50,783), and Afghans (43,656), with the highest concentrations in Istanbul (184,876), Gaziantep (116,157) and Sanliurfa (74,401).[6]

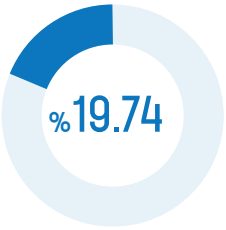
Focusing specifically on Syrian children UTP, 1,071,604 are school-aged, with 842,194 (78.59%) enrolled and 229,410 (21.41%) out of school. Enrolment rates by level include: 47,563 in pre-primary (41.95%), 400,226 in primary (93.35%), 272,441 in lower-secondary (93.75%), and 121,964 in upper-secondary (48.35%). The top three provinces hosting the highest numbers of Syrian students are Istanbul (140,337), Gaziantep (115,451), and Şanlıurfa (73,477). These figures reflect Türkiye's efforts to integrate refugee and foreign children into the national education system while underscoring the persistent challenge of addressing out-of-school populations.[7]

Despite increasing enrolment of foreign and Syrian children under protection statuses in the Turkish education system, significant challenges remain in ensuring sustained access and retention.

Children enrolled in schools



Children remain out of school



[2] Presidency of Migration Management, Migration Statistics, 2025

[3] Foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Türkiye in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection – mostly Syrians (Law No.6458).

[4] The status granted for refugee, conditional refugee, and subsidiary protection – includes Syrians under temporary protection (UT), and Afghans, Palestinians, Iraqis, Yemenis, and Somalis (Law No.6458).

[5] The 3RP is a strategic, coordination, planning, advocacy, fundraising, and programming platform for humanitarian and development partners to respond to the Syria crisis. It comprises one regional plan, with five standalone country chapters covering Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) | The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR (*https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/regional-refugee-and-resilience-plan-3rp*)

[6] MoNE/ or *https://okuladonus.org/documents/foreign-students-statistics-in-turkiye-2024-2025.pdf*

[7] MoNE/ or *https://okuladonus.org/documents/foreign-students-statistics-in-turkiye-2024-2025.pdf*

Refugee and vulnerable children in Türkiye face numerous barriers to accessing education, including registration issues, financial constraints, and limited transportation—especially in earthquake-affected, remote areas. In regions like Marmara and the Aegean, frequent address changes and related issues further hinder school access, contributing to higher rates of non-attendance. Challenges such as child labour, limited support for children with disabilities, overcrowded classrooms, language difficulties, gender inequality, psychological stress, and inadequate early childhood education further impact enrolment and retention. Additionally, weak emergency preparedness and delayed recovery of damaged infrastructure continue to disrupt learning and risk excluding many children. The February 2023 earthquakes significantly impacted the education landscape, compounding existing vulnerabilities among both host and refugee communities. The disaster affected 11 provinces, damaging or destroying school infrastructure and displacing families. Pre-existing issues—such as congestion, limited resources, and challenges in inclusion—were further exacerbated. Provinces like Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Hatay, and Kahramanmaraş remain in urgent need of infrastructure investment and targeted support for displaced children and vulnerable communities.

To gain deeper insights into the obstacles to education, the Back-to-School (BTS) Campaign Problem Log was utilized to record challenges hindering children's enrolment, including particular cases that demanded additional efforts to enrol children in school. Local organisations addressed many of these issues, escalating unresolved cases to UNICEF for central advocacy. Using the problem log[8] as a dedicated reporting tool, 275 cases were collected from 22 ESWG members across 17 provinces. Among these, 22 cases were resolved, 29 remained unresolved, and 224 were referred to public institutions or NGOs for follow-up. The highest numbers of cases came from Kilis (96), Hatay (43), and Şanlıurfa (30). Major barriers included lack of ID or equivalency documentation, financial constraints, classroom shortages, language barriers, administrative refusals, and inaccessibility for children with disabilities. These findings will inform advocacy and strategic responses moving forward.

Türkiye's education sector response is supported through coordinated platforms such as the 3RP, the Earthquake Response, and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The ESWG, established in 2014 and led by UNICEF, plays a pivotal role in aligning national and sub-national coordination efforts to address these challenges. National coordination is led by Ankara, with a sub-national hub in Gaziantep. The sub-national coordination in Istanbul and Izmir is supported by Ankara, ensuring that strategies are effectively adapted to local contexts.

However, despite these well-structured coordination mechanisms, significant funding gaps continue to hinder the sector's ability to reach all affected children. While the education sector received 71% of requested funds between 2020 and 2022, this figure fell sharply to just 36% in 2023. Only 7 out of 22 sector members secured funding that year, leaving substantial needs unmet. In 2024, the sector appealed for $183.63 million, yet by year's end, only 18.6% of the required funding had been received.[9] Nevertheless, efforts persist to strengthen both access to and the quality of education, particularly for children impacted by the earthquakes, with an increased focus on fostering synergy with development actors.

Using the problem log as a dedicated reporting tool, 275 cases were collected from 22 ESWG members across 17 provinces.

[8] https://okuladonus.org/documents/BTS_PROBLEM_LOG_2024.pdf

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Moreover, the 2024–2025 BTS Parents Survey was conducted to gain insights into parental knowledge, awareness, and the specific support households need to enable children's access to education. The survey aims to identify key barriers and propose concrete, actionable solutions to guide sector-wide efforts.

The annual BTS campaign has proven essential for promoting inclusive access and retention. It employs a multi-pronged approach, including the annual Parent Survey, information packs, social media outreach, problem logging, and capacity-building activities such as training on case management guidelines.[10, 11, 12] Special emphasis is placed on supporting children with disabilities and those requiring special education.[13] The campaign also strengthens advocacy efforts through the development of sector-specific advocacy briefs.[14, 15, 16] Its core objective remains to identify and remove barriers to education, particularly for out-of-school children, while promoting sustainable, inclusive educational opportunities for all.

[9] Document - Türkiye: Education Sector Dashboard - National - December 2024

[10] https://okuladonus.org/documents/2024-bts-infopack-en.pdf

[11] https://okuladonus.org/documents/EFCM-Guideline-September-2024.pdf

[12] https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/113377

[13] https://okuladonus.org/documents/briefing-notes-for-accessing-special-education-services-and-referral-mechanisms-july-2024-eswg.pdf

[14] https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/reports/registration-barriers-school-enrollment

[15] https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/reports/transforming-education-access-through-transportation

[16] https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/reports/addressing-peer-bullying-t%C3%BCrkiyes-education-sector

5. Introduction

5.1 Rationale

The 2024 BTS Parent Survey, aimed to gather deeper insights into the educational challenges encountered by refugees, and earthquake-affected Turkish host communities.

By providing an evidence-based foundation, the survey aimed to support MoNE, ESWG members, and other stakeholders respond more effectively to the needs of early childhood and school-age children in these communities. It identifies current gaps and vulnerabilities to enhance educational inclusion and resilience.

The survey explored key issues such as access to education programmes, barriers to school enrolment, including financial difficulties, registration problems, distance to schools, child labour, bullying, and perceptions around the inclusion and support of children with disabilities—as well as other obstacles to quality education.

Survey aimed to analyse critical factors affecting education for refugees from diverse nationalities and those in earthquake-affected areas

Findings are intended to help ESWG members prioritise the identified challenges in their planning, improve access to education, and support the integration of refugee children into the Turkish education system. By engaging various stakeholders, the survey contributes to building long-term educational resilience and inclusive development across Türkiye.

5.2 Objectives and Scope

The 2024-2025 BTS Parent Survey, conducted as part of the BTS campaign, assessed children's access to education for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years as reported by parents and guardians. The survey focused on households, including those under international and temporary protection, as well as host communities impacted by the 2023 Türkiye earthquake. It aimed to analyse critical factors affecting education for refugees from diverse nationalities and those in earthquake-affected areas, such as displacement, enrolment barriers, transportation challenges, child labour, disabilities, access to essential educational resources, and damage to school infrastructure, especially for children from vulnerable groups.

The ESWG oversaw the survey's implementation, analysis, and dissemination, supporting school enrolment efforts through briefings, information packs, and social media. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed, with findings presented visually. The qualitative study, conducted in September 2024, provided additional insights to the barriers and drivers of the behaviour. The final report, which integrated findings from the parent survey, focus group discussions, and individual interviews, provided actionable recommendations to improve educational access, support evidence-based decision-making, and guide future programmes. Data collection was conducted between August and October 2024.

5.3 Methodology

The ESWG led the design and implementation of the 2024 BTS Parents Survey, establishing the terms of reference and data collection tools to assess children's access to education for the 2024–2025 academic year, while reflecting on the previous year (2023–2024). Lessons from the 2023 BTS campaign and Parent Survey have directly informed the 2024 design, emphasizing stronger engagement with sector members through regular coordination meetings that aligned partner actions with identified needs.

The survey targeted households across Türkiye, focusing on children aged 3–17 from various nationalities, including households under temporary and international protection and earthquake-affected host communities. It employed random sampling across Türkiye, including cities like Istanbul, Izmir, and regions in the Southeast, covering a total of 2,455 households. Data was collected through a Kobo link, with a problem log used to track challenges related to registration and enrolment.

ESWG members from various hubs, including Istanbul, Izmir, and the Southeastern region, participated in the data collection process, which took place from August to October 2024. Data was gathered through household surveys using the Kobo tool, supplemented by desk reviews and qualitative inputs from focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews. The survey reached 2,455 households across 45 provinces, including 11 earthquake-affected areas, focusing on issues such as out-of-school children, school dropout causes, and absenteeism. The analysis examined differences based on geographical location, nationality, age group, and displacement status to provide a comprehensive understanding of educational challenges.

The study utilized both quantitative data from the parent survey and qualitative insights from focus group discussions and individual interviews to gain a well-rounded understanding of the challenges children encounter in accessing education. The findings were analysed using statistical tools and data visualisation techniques, resulting in a detailed report to inform targeted interventions.

5.3.1 Sampling Methodology

A structured sampling strategy was implemented for the parent survey, a quantitative study designed to ensure the representation of key groups across the target population. Households were randomly selected to capture diverse regions, including earthquake-affected provinces, areas hosting internally displaced persons (IDPs), and unaffected regions such as Marmara and Aegean. The sample comprised 80% refugee households, including families under international protection, and 20% host community households.

The survey focused on households with children aged 3–17 to provide insights into ECE, and school enrolment, dropout rates, and barriers to education access. This sampling approach ensured a comprehensive and reliable dataset, facilitating an in-depth analysis of educational disparities across Türkiye.

In addition to quantitative study, qualitative research[17] was conducted to capture parental perceptions and complement the survey findings. Six group discussions were held with refugees, primarily Syrians, in Hatay, Istanbul, and Izmir, along with the local population in Kahramanmaraş. Furthermore, three in-depth interviews were conducted to gather success stories and testimonies. The qualitative research sample primarily included parents, mostly mothers aged 25 to 40—whose children were enrolled in elementary, middle, or high school, representing diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

5.3.2 Outreach and Data Collection Methods

To ensure broad participation and capture diverse perspectives, the survey adopted strategic outreach and data collection methods:

Ad Hoc Sector Meetings: National and subnational meetings informed stakeholders about the parent survey's objectives, methodology, and timeline while addressing concerns.

ESWG Member Engagement: Members accessed the survey tool to contribute insights and encourage participation.

Orientation Meetings: Bilateral discussions clarified roles, addressed queries, and streamlined outreach efforts.

Mobile Surveys via KoBo: Household data was collected through a mobile app, facilitating wide reach and minimizing logistical challenges.

Cross-Sector Collaboration: The survey tool was shared with other sectors, such as Protection, to ensure inclusivity.

Independent Completion: Respondents had the option to complete the survey online or offline, enhancing response rates.

Data quality assurance measures were implemented to ensure reliable and accurate insights into educational needs.

[17] https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/113980, https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/113981

5.3.3 Data Analysis and Visualization

Desk Review: Data sources included 2024-2025 MoNE official statistics, the 3RP education sector narrative, field observations, and inter-agency financial tracking systems.

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis: Statistical methods were employed to identify trends, disparities, and barriers in education access.

Data Visualization: Graphs, charts, maps and box stories were used to present findings clearly, supporting decision-making processes.

Reflections and Reviews: Regular feedback sessions with ESWG members ensured data quality, validated findings, and identified areas for improvement.

5.3.4 Limitations of the BTS Parents Survey

Although the BTS Parents Survey aimed to capture a broad range of data, several limitations were identified:

Sampling Bias: Due to the rapid nature of the survey, certain groups may have been underrepresented, particularly those with higher education needs, which were not fully addressed in the parent survey, FGDs and individual interviews.

Language and Literacy Barriers: While survey tools were available in Arabic, English, and Turkish to accommodate diverse respondents, literacy challenges remained, limiting some individuals' ability to engage fully.

Data Collection Constraints: Reaching remote and marginalized populations presented challenges, affecting the inclusivity of the survey.

Self-Reporting Bias: Sensitive topics, such as disabilities, may have been underreported due to social desirability bias, where respondents may have downplayed certain issues.

Interpretation of Disability: Cultural differences may have influenced the reporting and recognition of disabilities, leading to potential underreporting in some cases.

Response Rate Challenges: Achieving a high and diverse response rate proved difficult, which may impact the representativeness of the survey results.

Cultural Differences: Variations in cultural context may have influenced communication and the relevance of certain interventions, underscoring the importance of cultural sensitivity in data collection and analysis.

Data Quality and Security: Challenges related to maintaining data accuracy, confidentiality, and reliability were encountered due to limited connectivity in some areas and privacy concerns.

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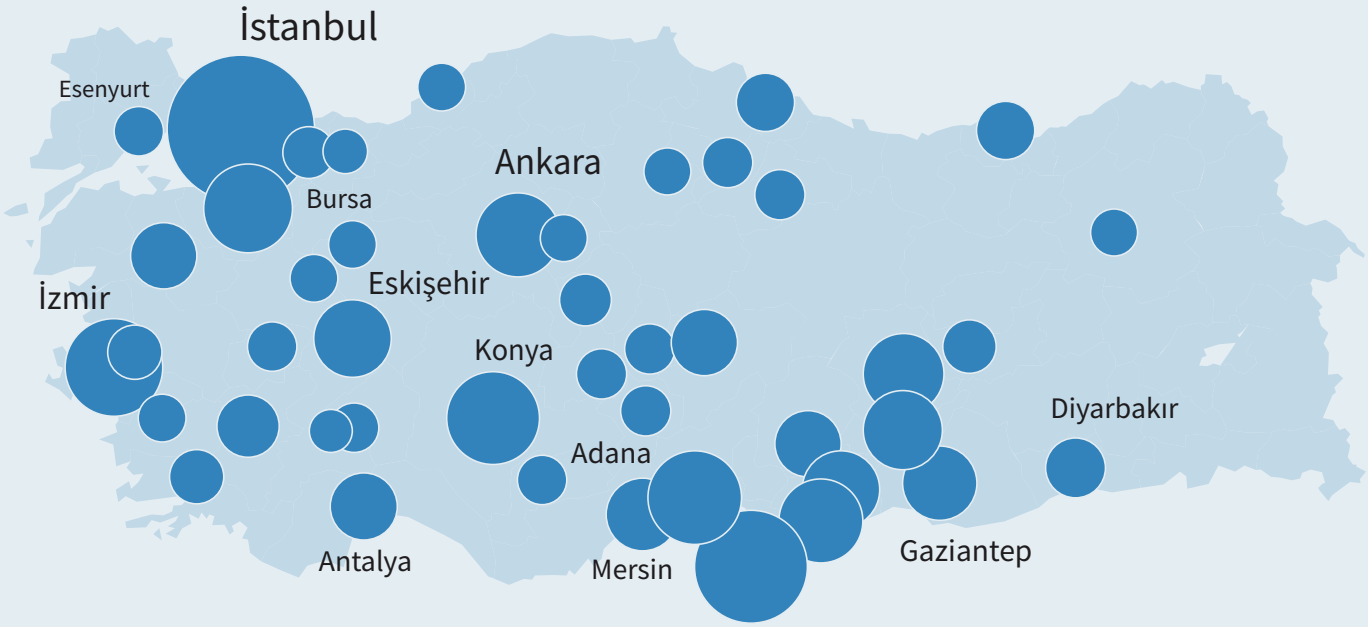
6. Assessment Findings

6.1 Demographic Profile

The 2024 BTS Parents Survey assessed children's access to education in the 2024–2025 academic year across Türkiye, including 11 provinces impacted by the 2023 earthquakes. A total of 2,455 households participated in the survey, providing insights into ECE and school attendance patterns of 6,082 children (3,303 girls) aged 3-17 from diverse nationalities, including Turkish, Syrian, Afghan, and other refugee groups.

Among these respondents, 9.4% were Turkish nationals affected by the earthquake, including those in impacted areas and those who had relocated from these regions. The remaining respondents consisted of 80.77% Syrians, 9.57% Afghans, and 0.40% refugees from other nationalities.

Figure 1. Geo Details – Demographics of All the Assessment Respondents



Source: ESWG Parent Survey

The 2024 BTS Parent Survey, part of the wider campaign, collected insights from households—particularly those under temporary and international protection, and host communities' households affected by the 2023 Türkiye earthquakes—with the active engagement of ESWG members in key hubs such as Istanbul, Izmir, and the Southeastern region. The survey sample spans 45 provinces, with the highest participation from Istanbul (27.17%), followed by Hatay (11.94%) and Adana (6.48%). Moderate contributions (5–6%) came from provinces like Izmir, Konya, and Bursa, while Malatya, Kilis, Ankara, Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Afyonkarahisar, Şanlıurfa, Mersin, Kayseri, Antalya, and Balıkesir each accounted for approximately 2–4% of the data. Additional provinces contributed less than 1%, enriching the survey with broad and diverse geographic representation across Türkiye.

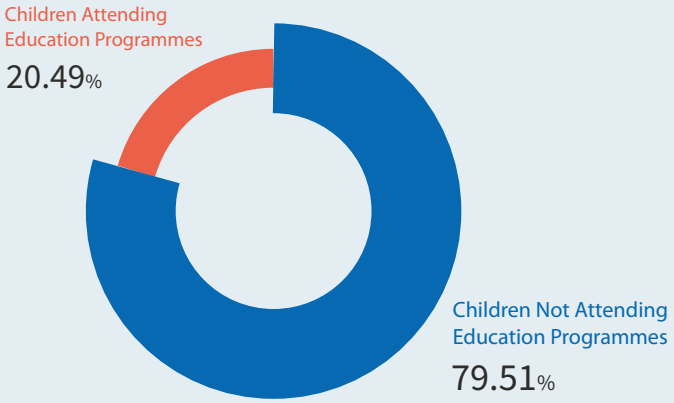
6.2 Profile of School-Age Children in Respondent Sample

Table 1. Profile of School-Age Children in the Survey Sample

All Nationality and age breakdown	Households	Children	Attending	Not Attending	% Children Attending	% Not Attending	% Girls Not Attending
Grand Total ECE (3-5 years)	**451**	**1,258**	**244**	**1,014**	**19.40**	**80.60**	**50**
Age 3-4	263	724	98	626	13.54	86.46	50.80
Aged 5	188	534	146	388	27.34	72.66	48.71
Grand Total School Age (6-17 years)	**2004**	**5548**	**4,411**	**1137**	**79.51**	**20.49**	**45.73**
Aged 6 to 9	927	2,555	1,920	635	75.15	24.85	44.72
Aged 10 to 13	669	1,848	1,647	201	89.12	10.88	52.74
Aged 14 to 17	408	1,145	844	301	73.71	26.29	43.19
Turkish	**Households**	**Children**	**Attending**	**Not Attending**	**% Children Attending**	**% Not Attending**	**% Girls Not Attending**
Total ECE	**34**	**80**	**24**	**56**	**30**	**70**	**44.64**
Age 3-4	18	42	12	30	28.57	71.43	50
Age 5	16	38	12	26	31.58	68.42	38.46
Total School Age (6-17 years)	**193**	**419**	**346**	**73**	**82.58**	**17.42**	**50.68**
Aged 6 to 9	92	202	148	54	73.27	26.73	50
Aged 10 to 13	69	156	145	11	92.95	7.05	81.82
Aged 14 to 17	32	61	53	8	86.89	13.11	12.50
Syrian	**Households**	**Children**	**Attending**	**Not Attending**	**% Children Attending**	**% Not Attending**	**% Girls Not Attending**
Total ECE 3-5 Years	**370**	**1051**	**188**	**863**	**17.89**	**82.11**	**49.02**
Age 3-4	219	620	80	540	12.90	87.10	50.19
Age 5	151	431	108	323	25.06	74.94	47.06
Total School Age (6-17 years)	**1340**	**4606**	**3647**	**959**	**79.18**	**20.82**	**44.73**
Aged 6 to 9	740	2,101	1,583	518	75.35	24.65	42.47
Aged 10 to 13	265	1,535	1362	173	88.73	11.27	54.34
Aged 14 to 17	335	970	702	268	72.37	27.63	42.91
Afghan	**Households**	**Children**	**Attending**	**Not Attending**	**% Children Attending**	**% Not Attending**	**% Girls Not Attending**
Total ECE 3-5 Years	**47**	**127**	**32**	**95**	**25.20**	**74.80**	**62.11**
Age 3-4	26	62	6	56	9.68	90.32	57.14
Age 5	21	65	26	39	40	60	69.23
Total School Age (6-17 years)	**38**	**503**	**404**	**99**	**80.32**	**19.68**	**48.48**
Aged 6 to 9		246	183	63	74.39	25.61	58.73
Aged 10 to 13		150	133	17	88.67	11.33	17.65
Aged 14 to 17	38	107	88	19	82.24	17.76	42.11
Other Nationality	**Households**	**Children**	**Attending**	**Not Attending**	**% Children Attending**	**% Not Attending**	**% Girls Not Attending**
Total ECE 3-5 Years	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Age 3-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total School Age (6-17 years)	**10**	**20**	**14**	**6**	**70.00**	**30.00**	**100.00**
Aged 6 to 9	4	6	6	0	100	0	0
Aged 10 to 13	3	7	7	0	100	0	0
Aged 14 to 17	3	7	1	6	14.29	85.71	100

The survey findings provide an overview of school attendance trends among children of different age groups and nationalities. Among school-age children (6–17 years) in the surveyed households, 4,411 (79.51%) are enrolled in education programmes, while 1,137 (20.49%) are not attending any education programme.

Figure 2. Analysis of the Education Status of School-Age Children



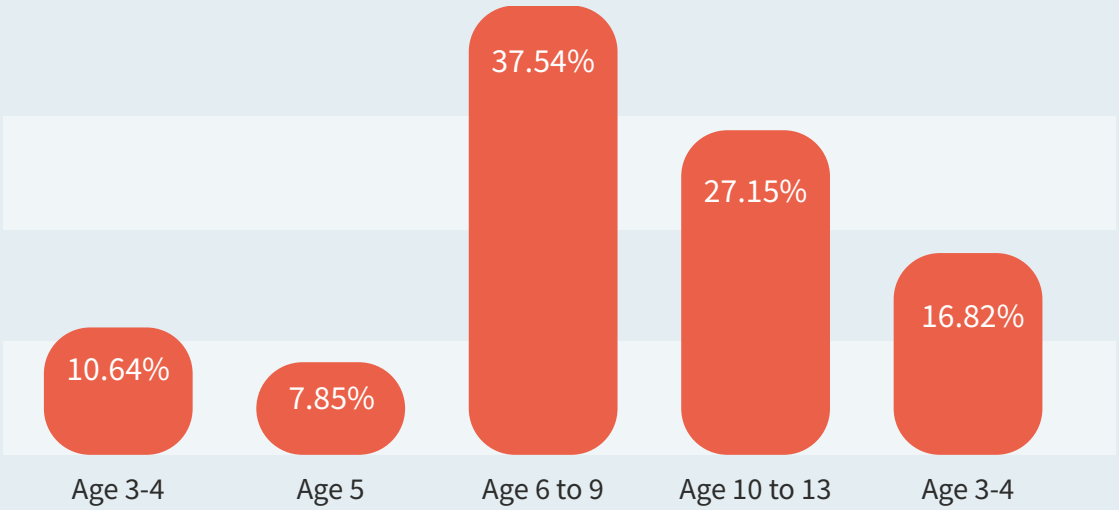
Data reveal notable disparities in attendance rates, with differences seen not only between age groups but also across nationalities. A gender gap is also evident, as 45.73% of out-of-school children are girls. Refugee children, particularly Syrians (20.82%) and Afghans (19.68%), experience the highest rates of non-attendance due to the challenges they face. In contrast, non-attendance rates are lower among host community children (17.42%).

Comparative data from the September 2023 BTS Parent Survey[18] and the May 2024 ESWG Needs Assessment[19] reveal evolving trends in education access and attendance among refugee and host community children in Türkiye, especially in earthquake-affected areas. Disaggregated data across both surveys consistently indicate that non-Turkish children face higher rates of non-attendance status. In 2023, Afghan (21%) and other nationality children (29%) had significantly higher non-attendance rates compared to Turkish children (16%). In 2024, these disparities persisted, with over 50% non-attendance among Afghan and other refugee groups. Syrian children continued to face consistent challenges, with a 29.85% non-enrolment rate in 2024 compared to 18% in 2023, highlighting the need for sustained outreach to younger age groups in particular.

6.2.1 Age Group Distribution

In the surveyed households, the largest group of children is in the 6-9 years age range, making up 37.54%, followed by those aged 10-13 years at 27.15%. Children in the 14-17 years group account for 16.82%, while those aged 3-4 years represent 10.64%. Children aged 5 make up 7.85% of the sample.

Figure 3. Percentage Distribution of ECE (3-5 Years) and School-Aged Children (6–17 Years) in Surveyed Households



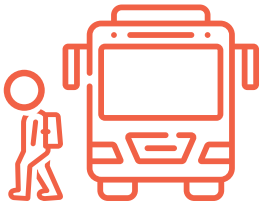
[18] https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/media/17946/file/Back%20to%20School%20Campaign%20Report%202023%20-%202024.pdf

[19] https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/media/18156/file/Education%20Sector%20Needs%20Overview%20Report%20May%202024.pdf

The data shows low ECE attendance among children aged 3–5, with only 19.4% attending and 80.60% not attending. Attendance is especially low for ages 3–4 (13.54%), while 5-year-olds have slightly higher attendance (27.34%). Around 50% of girls are not attending across both age groups.

Children in the 3–5 years age group face the highest rate of non-attendance, primarily due to challenges in accessing ECE. The most cited reason, reported by 60.69% of respondents, is that the child is perceived as too young for ECE. Financial constraints, especially child ECE related expenses, represent the second most common obstacle, affecting 28.97% of respondents. Registration issues accounted for 15.86% of responses, while 13.79% mentioned schools not accepting registrations due to limited capacity—a challenge particularly affecting refugees and younger children. Additional challenges involved the considerable distance to schools (11.72%), low levels of parental interest or awareness (2.76%), and children showing little interest or a tendency to leave home (2.07%).

Children in the 3–5 years age group face the highest rate of non-attendance, primarily due to challenges in accessing ECE.



Of the 6 to 9 age group, 1,920 out of 2,555 children (75.15%) are enrolled in school, leaving 635 (24.85%) not attending any education programme. This group also sees a considerable gender disparity, with 44.72% of non-attending children being girls. The main barriers for non-attendance include registration issues (31.11%), inability to cover school expenses (27.22%), and distance to school (15%). Social factors such as peer bullying (7.22%) and negative influences from peers who are also not attending education programmes (5%) further contribute to dropout rates. Other challenges include overcrowded classrooms (4.44%) and lack of information on education opportunities (2.22%). Additionally, children with disabilities face barriers in accessing disability support (6.67%) and inclusive education facilities, with some affected by the loss of assistive devices due to the earthquake. Post-earthquake factors such as damaged schools and fear of returning to concrete buildings also hinder education access.

Among children aged 10 to 13, 1,647 of 1,848 children (89.12%) are attending education programme, while 201 (10.88%) are not. Despite the high participation rate, gender disparities persist, with 52.74% of the non-attending children being girls. The primary obstacles for this age group include registration problems (33.88%) and financial constraints (26.45%). Moreover, economic hardship is evident in the form of child labour (12.40%) and household responsibilities (2.48%), both of which hinder children's participation in education programmes. Other barriers include overcrowded classrooms (9.92%), distance to school (9.09%), and peer bullying (8.26%). Post-earthquake challenges like school destruction (4.96%) and loss of learning materials (1.11%) further affect education access.

For adolescents aged 14 to 17, 844 out of 1,145 children (73.71%) attend education programmes, while 301 (26.29%) are not. This group experiences a rise in dropout rates, which may be due to socio-economic pressures, and other related issues. Gender disparity is also notable, with 43.19% of non-attending adolescents being girls. The main barriers for this age group include registration obstacles (34.52%) and financial challenges (26.19%). Child labour is a significant factor, with 13.10% of adolescents engaged in income-generating activities. Logistical barriers such as distance to school (13.10%) and social issues like peer bullying (8.33%) also contribute to the dropout rate. Post-earthquake factors, including school destruction and fear of returning to certain buildings, are also present but have less impact compared to younger age groups. Lack of information on education opportunities and overcrowded classrooms are additional factors hindering education access.

6.3 Education Access Barriers Across All Age Groups: Key Findings from Parent Survey and Focus Group Discussions

The issue of children not attending education programmes is multi-faceted, with a range of socioeconomic, infrastructural, and personal factors contributing to their inability to access education.

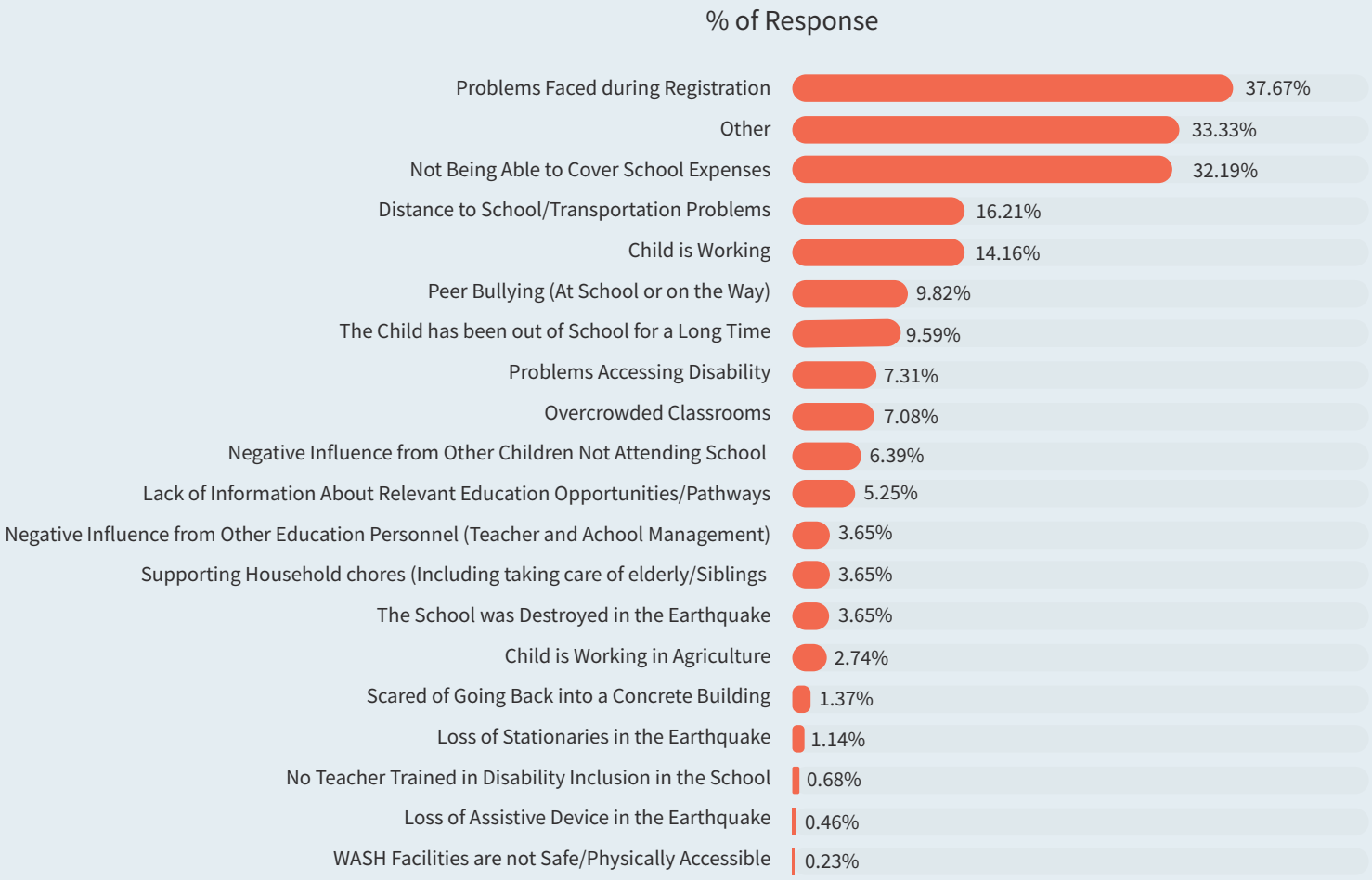
A thorough analysis of the key reasons underscores the complexity and urgency of addressing these barriers. A number of factors hinder children's school attendance, with some being more prominent than others.

1. Registration Barriers and Challenges Among Refugee Populations (37.67%)

Registration difficulties represent the most commonly reported barrier to school access, affecting 37.67% of households surveyed. These issues encompass administrative delays, incomplete or missing documentation, language limitations, and insufficient parental understanding of enrolment procedures. These barriers are particularly pronounced among refugees and displaced communities, who frequently encounter added complications such as verification problems due to frequent address changes, lost identification papers, and procedural bottlenecks at migration offices. While quantitative findings highlight the prevalence of systemic and informational obstacles, qualitative insights provide deeper context, illustrating how the displacement experience exacerbates these challenges. Ensuring smoother and more inclusive registration processes is critical to preventing exclusion and safeguarding educational continuity for vulnerable children.

Beyond registration issues, 33.33% of respondents mentioned "other" reasons for school non-attendance, indicating that factors such as internal displacement due to earthquakes, health issues, or personal challenges may impact children's education.

Figure 4. Reasons for Children Not Attending Education Programme



2. Financial Constraints and Economic Pressures

(32.19%)

Financial barriers, cited by 32.19% of respondents, remain a critical factor limiting access to education, particularly among refugee and low-income households. Families report struggling to cover a range of school-related costs—including transportation, uniforms, stationery, pocket money, optional course fees, and informal financial expectations from school administrations. These expenses can be especially burdensome for households with multiple school-age children. While quantitative data underscores the pervasiveness of financial hardship as an obstacle to enrolment and retention, qualitative findings shed light on how economic shocks—such as those caused by natural disasters—further intensify this burden. In some cases, families resort to child labor as a coping mechanism, which compounds dropout risks. Together, the findings highlight the urgent need for financial support mechanisms and protective policies to prevent economic vulnerability from disrupting children's education.

3. Distance and Transportation Barriers

(16.21%)

School accessibility remains a challenge for 16.21% of families, particularly those living in rural or remote areas where schools are far from home and transportation options are limited or unaffordable. While quantitative data emphasizes distance and transport as logistical obstacles, qualitative insights bring attention to deeper concerns, especially related to child safety during commutes. Parents, particularly girls, express fears around exposure to harassment and insecure travel conditions. These concerns are more acute in underserved areas lacking reliable or gender-sensitive transport solutions. Addressing this issue calls for multi-pronged strategies, including the expansion of nearby schooling options, development of safe and affordable transportation systems in closed collaboration with MoNE or provincial directorates, and potential use of digital or hybrid learning platforms to bridge access gaps.

4. Child Labour

(14.16%)

Child labour continues to be a widespread concern, affecting 14.16% of children who are compelled to work to help sustain their families, often leading to interrupted or discontinued education. Parents report that economic hardship—intensified by crises such as natural disasters—frequently pushes children into income-generating activities instead of school. This underscores the urgent need for comprehensive support measures, including targeted cash assistance and enhancing enforcement of child protection and labour laws, to reduce economic vulnerability and allow children to stay in education.

5. Peer Bullying and Discrimination

(9.82%)

Bullying, cited by 9.82% of respondents, poses a serious obstacle to regular school attendance, as children subjected to peer aggression or harassment in school or during their commute often avoid attending school. This challenge is particularly acute for refugee children, who are more likely to face discriminatory behaviour from both fellow students and teachers. Girls, in particular, are at heightened risk of gender-based bullying. Prolonged absenteeism (9.59%) caused by such experiences can lead to academic setbacks and a decline in self-confidence, complicating efforts to return to school. Tackling this issue requires a multifaceted approach, including the adoption of robust anti-bullying policies, teacher training with a focus on gender sensitivity, and peer support systems. Re-engagement programmes tailored to students who have been out of school are also essential to help rebuild confidence and support successful reintegration. While quantitative data highlights bullying as a key barrier, qualitative insights add depth by illustrating how these experiences are intensified by refugee status and gender-related vulnerabilities.

6. Disability-Related Barriers (7.31%)

Children with disabilities, accounting for 7.31% of the reported barriers, encounter numerous obstacles in accessing education, including physical inaccessibility of school buildings and the absence of learning materials suited to their needs. These challenges are compounded by social stigma and discrimination, which can lead to exclusion and bullying, as reported by parents. The situation underscores the urgent need to enhance inclusive education initiatives in place, improve infrastructure, and ensure that both teaching strategies and school environments are responsive to the diverse needs of all learners. While quantitative data points to a lack of accessible infrastructure and resources including assistive devices, qualitative findings deepen the analysis by highlighting negative societal attitudes and the emotional burden placed on affected families, revealing significant gaps in the current education system's ability to support children with disabilities.

7. Overcrowded Classrooms (7.08%)

Overcrowding in classrooms, reported by 7.08% of respondents, negatively impacts the quality of education by limiting student-teacher interaction and creating challenging learning environments. High student-to-teacher ratios reduce individual attention, hampering both academic performance and engagement. While quantitative findings emphasize overcrowding as a structural issue, qualitative insights reveal additional administrative and systemic hurdles, particularly for displaced and refugee families, that further delay school enrolment and integration. Addressing these issues requires not only expanding school infrastructure and engaging more teaching staff but also streamlining enrolment procedures to accommodate growing and diverse student populations more effectively.

8. Others Complex Challenges Undermining Access to Education

A range of additional barriers and parental concerns further hinder school attendance and enrolment. Peer influence (6.39%), particularly in communities where education is undervalued, can dissuade children from attending school. Tackling these perceptions requires community-focused awareness initiatives that promote the importance of education. Additionally, lack of information about educational opportunities (5.25%) is a significant issue, especially among marginalized and refugee families. This underscores the need for comprehensive outreach efforts to inform parents about the services and options available.

Negative behavior by school staff (3.65%)—including discriminatory or bullying actions—creates hostile environments that discourage children from continuing their education. Addressing this requires teacher training in inclusive practices and stronger accountability systems. Household duties (3.65%), especially caregiving responsibilities often assigned to older children and girls, also impede school attendance. Gender-sensitive support systems and community-based childcare solutions can help alleviate these burdens.

The impact of natural disasters further compounds these challenges. Earthquake damage to schools and learning materials (reported by 3.65% of respondents) has disrupted education in affected regions, highlighting the urgent need for school reconstruction and recovery support. In rural settings, child labor in agriculture (2.74%) remains a persistent obstacle. Furthermore, psychological trauma, such as fear of buildings post-earthquake (1.37%), continues to deter children from returning to school. Psychosocial support and trauma-informed care are essential to help children cope and reintegrate.

Loss of educational materials and assistive devices (1.14% and 0.46%, respectively) particularly affects children with disabilities, emphasizing the need for emergency

learning kits and specialized equipment. Lastly, although less frequently mentioned, inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities (0.23%) can significantly affect school participation, especially among girls. Improving WASH infrastructure is critical to fostering a safe and inclusive school environment.

Parental concerns mirror these barriers, including economic hardship leading to child labor, safety and transportation challenges, post-disaster trauma, bullying and exclusion, and language difficulties for migrant children. While quantitative findings outline the scale of these issues, qualitative data provide nuanced insights into how they uniquely affect Turkish, Syrian, and other nationalities refugee families. Overcoming these challenges calls for an integrated approach that combines procedural reforms with targeted social interventions to support an inclusive, safe, and accessible education system for all children.

6.3.1 Key Drivers of Education Barriers: Insights from Parental FGDs and Oversight

Children from refugee and displaced households continue to experience complex and systemic barriers to accessing and staying in education, as reflected in survey results and focus group discussions with parents. These barriers include administrative challenges, financial difficulties, psychosocial pressures, and social marginalization—often intensified for households affected by the February 2023 earthquake.

A significant concern raised by parents is the complexity of school registration procedures, especially for households, whose lives were disrupted by the earthquake or who are in temporary shelters. For many, address change and verification remain a critical barrier. The inability to update residential addresses in government systems prevents school enrolment, particularly in cases where families have been displaced multiple times or now reside in container settlements. Refugee households, in particular, struggle with securing new or updated identification documents, often facing long delays—up to 40 days—for appointments with the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM). These delays mean children remain out of school for extended periods.

For IDPs and transitional households, frequent relocations create additional challenges in accessing education.

Championing Education

The Legacy of Mohamad Bakri Hamido: In Ataşehir, Istanbul, **54-year-old Mohamad Bakri Hamido** is shaping a future where education is a right, not a privilege. A **Syrian refugee, Arabic teacher, and stone carver**, he has dedicated his life to ensuring his children—especially his daughters—receive the education he was denied.

"Education is my duty as a father. It is a right, a responsibility, and even a sacred trust," he says.

Though societal norms in his community often discourage **girls from pursuing higher education,** Mohamad has defied these expectations, prioritizing his daughters' learning over tradition. His unwavering belief in **knowledge as a tool for empowerment** has come at a cost—he faced resistance from relatives, including his own father, who refused to speak to him for six months because he supported his daughters' schooling.

"For six months, my grandfather did not say a single word to my father," his daughter recalls. "Now, those same people who criticized him call me 'Engineer Lady' and my sister 'Doctor Lady' because they see the success his vision has brought."

Despite never having a formal education himself, Mohamad became **self-taught,** seeking out scholars and learning Arabic grammar, literature, and Islamic studies. His perseverance set a powerful example for his children.

"We realized we couldn't change society overnight, but we could change ourselves. My father made sure we were educated so that no one could take that power away from us."

His belief in **education as a form of resistance** has already begun transforming his community. Families that once arranged **early marriages for their daughters** are now following his lead—choosing education instead.

"Women are the foundation of society," he says. "An educated mother raises an educated generation. Ignorance leads to conflict, but knowledge builds a future."

Through **courage, sacrifice, and an unshakable belief in education,** Mohamad Bakri Hamido is not just changing his family's future—he is **reshaping the destiny of an entire generation.**

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Children often struggle to enrol in schools near their new or temporary residences due to systemic barriers, delays in updating official records, and limited parental awareness. Refugee children face additional structural obstacles, including enrolment caps, restrictions on address registration in certain areas, and insufficient support from educational institutions in navigating the registration process.

Economic hardship, a shared concern across both host and refugee communities, disproportionately affects refugee families who often earn lower wages and rely heavily on civil society organisations for basic services and advocacy. The costs associated with education—transportation, uniforms, school supplies, and other informal fees—are especially burdensome for families with multiple children or no steady income. Driven by necessity, some parents have their children work to support the household income, resulting in school dropout or delayed enrolment.

Psychological trauma and a lack of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services were highlighted by many parents as critical barriers to children's return to school post-disasters. Some children experience fear of returning to formal buildings or social anxiety, particularly after the destruction and loss caused by the earthquake.

Additionally, safety concerns—especially for girls—pose another significant deterrent to school attendance. Parents worry about gender-based harassment during commutes or at school. Reports of discrimination and bullying, not just from peers but also from teachers and school administrators, further alienate refugee children. This not only impacts on their emotional well-being but also their motivation and capacity to continue education.

Refugee children, particularly those with limited Turkish language skills, face difficulties engaging in classroom instruction. This language gap contributes to lower academic achievement and increased dropout rates. Social exclusion and feelings of isolation, often intensified by bullying and a lack of culturally responsive practices, make it harder for these children to thrive in mainstream schools.

Looking ahead, many parents expressed apprehension about their children's ability to re-enrol for the upcoming academic year. Alongside financial and logistical barriers, there is a growing sense of hopelessness among some refugee families—stemming from concerns that, even with education, their children may have limited opportunities for citizenship or formal employment in Türkiye. Parents also questioned whether schools are adequately equipped to support children still coping with trauma, and whether inclusive, safe environments can truly be sustained.

These insights point to the urgent need for a multi-dimensional approach to educational access—one that includes streamlined administrative procedures, expanded psychosocial services, gender-sensitive safety measures, financial assistance programmes, and stronger language and integration support. Addressing these interlinked barriers is essential to ensure all children, regardless of background or displacement status, have equitable access to safe, quality, and inclusive education.

6.4 Issues of School Attendance (by Nationality and Age Group)

The data on attendance in various education programmes for children aged 3–5 (ECE) and 6–17 (school age) across different nationalities indicates notable disparities by age group (3–17 years) and gender.

Among Earthquake-Affected Turkish Households, 82.58% of school age children 6-17 years children are attending education programme, while 17.42% are not. The gender disparity is moderate, with 50.68% of the children not attending education programme being girls, indicating that the issue of non-attendance affects both genders, but girls face higher barriers to schooling.

Various socio-economic and logistical issues contribute to school non-attendance among Turkish children. The most prevalent obstacle, identified by 45.45% of respondents, is the inability to afford school-related expenses, highlighting financial challenges as a key barrier. Additionally, 36.36% cited "other" unspecified reasons, which include factors such as health problems and displacement caused by the earthquake, influencing non-attendance.

Family responsibilities, such as caring for elderly relatives or siblings, prevent 36.36% of children from attending education programme, particularly in resource-limited households. Another 18.18% of

respondents reported that children are engaged in work, further limiting their access to education. Transportation issues and long distances to school were also reported by 18.20%, creating additional challenges for families. Other factors contributing to non-attendance include extended school absences, school distance, and earthquake-related damage to school buildings (all at 18.18%). Overcrowded classrooms and peer bullying, each were mentioned by 9.09%, reflecting concerns about safety and well-being in school environments. The findings from Turkish respondents highlight the complex and multi-faceted nature of school attendance barriers, emphasizing the need for interventions that address financial, logistical, and infrastructural issues, as well as the aftermath of recent disasters like the earthquake.

Among children aged 3–5 in ECE, only 30% are enrolled in an education programme, while a concerning 70% are not. Attendance is particularly low among children aged 3–4. This high rate of non-attendance likely reflects barriers to accessing ECE, including socio-economic, logistical, and related challenges. Of those not attending, 44.64% are girls, indicating a notable gender disparity at this foundational stage of education.

For children aged 6 to 9, the attendance rate improves, with 73.27% of children attending education programme, and 26.73% not attending. While a quarter of children still miss out on education, the non-attendance rate is relatively lower than in the younger age group. Gender-wise, 50% of the children not attending are girls, highlighting the need to address the gender disparity in school access.

In the 10 to 13 age group, the attendance rate is 92.95%, showing that most children have access to education programmes. However, 7.05% of those who do not attend education programme include a high percentage of girls, with 81.82% of the non-attending children being girls. This indicates that while education is more accessible in this age range, gender-based barriers still play a significant role in limiting school attendance for girls.

Among adolescents aged 14 to 17, the attendance rate is 86.89%, which is still relatively high, but there is a noticeable drop compared to the younger age groups. 13.11% are not attending. Among the non-attending children, 12.50% are girls. Although this is a smaller proportion compared to younger age groups, it still suggests that older girls face specific challenges that prevent them from attending education programme, such as distance to school, and socio-cultural pressures.

Breaking Barriers: A Mother's Determination for Her Daughter's Education

In Sultanbeyli, Istanbul, 37-year-old **Noura Akar** is redefining what it means to be a supportive mother. She firmly believes in the **transformative power of education,** encouraging her daughter to dream beyond societal expectations.

"For her, education is the greatest priority in life. It's the key to reaching all positive outcomes," says Noura.

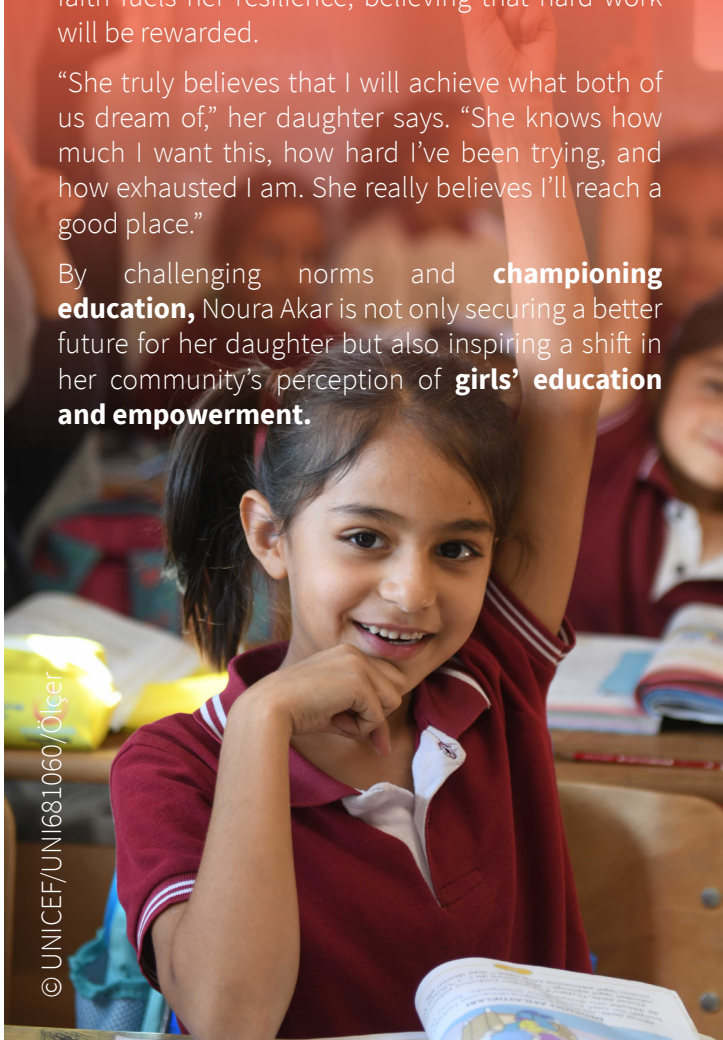
Defying **traditional gender roles**, she deliberately avoids assigning household chores to her daughter, ensuring that nothing hinders her academic ambitions. Despite societal pressures, she **prioritizes education over cultural expectations,** setting a bold example in her community.

"I don't help my mom with house chores. She knocks on my door and brings me things like walnuts, almonds, and fruit juice," her daughter shares. "People criticize her for not making me help at home, but she doesn't care about anyone's opinions—only about our success."

Even though Noura struggles with the **language barrier,** she never misses a school meeting, demonstrating **unwavering support.** Her deep faith fuels her resilience, believing that hard work will be rewarded.

"She truly believes that I will achieve what both of us dream of," her daughter says. "She knows how much I want this, how hard I've been trying, and how exhausted I am. She really believes I'll reach a good place."

By challenging norms and **championing education,** Noura Akar is not only securing a better future for her daughter but also inspiring a shift in her community's perception of **girls' education and empowerment.**



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In Syrian households, A total of 79.18% of school-age children (6–17 years) are enrolled in education programmes, while 20.82% are not. Girls represent 44.73% of the non-attending children, showing a gender disparity in school attendance.

Multiple factors contribute to school non-attendance among Syrian children, with significant challenges including systemic barriers in the registration process, cited by 36.83% of respondents. Issues such as lack of documentation or confusion around enrolment procedures create obstacles to education. Financial limitations are another major issue, with 32.99% of respondents noting the inability to afford school-related expenses.

An additional 33.50% of responses fell into the "other" category, pointing to a variety of less frequently reported reasons for non-attendance, such as health problems, displacement due to the 2023 earthquake, and children being too young for enrolment. Transportation issues, including long travel distances and poor access, were highlighted by 16.62% of respondents as a significant barrier, often made worse in conflict or displacement situations.

Child labour, mentioned by 14.32% of respondents, forces children to prioritize work, especially in agriculture, over education. Peer bullying, both at school and along the route to school, was cited by 10.49%, reflecting broader social challenges affecting school attendance. Additionally, 8.95% of responses highlighted long-term school absences, potentially linked to trauma or social exclusion.

Access to education for children with disabilities is another ongoing challenge, with 7.42% of respondents noting difficulties in securing services for disabled children. Other barriers include negative peer influences (6.91%), unfavourable experiences with teachers or school staff (3.58%), and the destruction of schools building or facilities during the earthquake (3.32%). Addressing these challenges requires improving registration, offering financial support, promoting inclusive education, and fostering safer, more supportive schools to ensure all children can access education.

In the 3-5-year-old age group, only 17.89% of children attend the education programme, while a significant 82.11% are not. Attendance is notably lower for children aged 3–4. The low attendance rate is described as children who are considered too young to attend the education programme, followed by financial barriers, school capacity, distance and lack of parental awareness. Among those not attending, 47.06% are girls, highlighting the challenges faced by girls in this age group when it comes to accessing education.

For children aged 6 to 9, the attendance rate improves to 75.35%, with 24.65% of children in this age group not attending education programme. While the rate of non-attendance is lower than for younger children, there is still a significant proportion of children missing out on education. Gender-wise, 42.47% of those not attending are girls, showing that gender continues to be a barrier to schooling even in this age group.

The attendance rate for children aged 10 to 13 is high at 88.73%, with only 11.27% not attending education programme. However, the percentage of non-attending girls is noticeably high, with 54.34% of the children not attending being girls.

In the 14 to 17 age group, the attendance rate drops to 72.37%, with 27.63% not attending. Among the non-attending children, 42.91% are girls.

In Afghan households, 80.32% of the school age 6-17 years children are attending education programme, while 24.30% are not. The percentage of girls among those not attending education programmes is 48.48%, indicating a notable gender gap in access to education.

The parent survey data reveals that the primary reason children are not attending education programmes is registration-related issues, reported by 34.43% of respondents. This indicates that systemic obstacles may play a major role in hindering school enrolment. The second most common reason, categorized as "Other" (22.95%), is associated with health problems, relocation due to earthquakes, and children being underage. Additionally, financial constraints play a significant role, as 18.03% of responses indicate an inability to cover school expenses. Lack of awareness about available educational opportunities (9.84%) and extended periods of absence from school (8.20%) also contribute to school dropouts. Other notable factors include child labour (6.56%), transportation difficulties (6.56%), overcrowded classrooms (4.92%), and accessibility challenges for children with disabilities (4.92%). Negative influences from school personnel (3.28%) and peers (1.64%) further hinder school attendance. Household responsibilities, including caregiving for siblings or the elderly (1.64%), and damage to school infrastructure due to earthquakes (1.64%) are also mentioned as barriers.

Beyond the Classroom: Fatma Abdullah's Fight for Her Students' Futures

In Sultanbeyli, Istanbul, **33-year-old Fatma Abdullah**, a mathematics teacher, is far more than an educator—she is a **mentor, a protector, and a lifeline** for her students.

Having **escaped war and built a new life through education,** Fatma understands the power of **knowledge, resilience, and support.** She refuses to let her students walk alone on their difficult journeys.

"Students seek support before education. It's important to listen to them," she says. **"Many have been through so much, and if they don't feel understood, they lose hope before they even begin."**

Her role extends beyond teaching formulas and equations. She **stays after school for hours,** having meals with students, listening to their struggles, and guiding them through personal and academic challenges.

"They see me and say, 'Teacher, this is what we're going through.' I spend just as much time listening as I do teaching."

Fatma knows firsthand the **barriers Syrian students face,** from discrimination to economic hardship. Some are **forced to drop out, pressured into early marriage, or burdened with responsibilities that keep them from studying.** She fights for them, offering not just **education but also courage**—the belief that they deserve more.

"I tell them, 'Your situation is normal; I went through the same thing. But you can overcome it.'"

She is **more than a teacher—she is an advocate.** She challenges those who dismiss her students, from **peers who stereotype them to teachers who fail to intervene in harmful situations.**

"I need someone to provide me with psychological support too because I truly understand what my students are going through," she admits.

Through her **compassion, defiance, and relentless commitment to her students,** Fatma Abdullah is shaping **not just better learners, but stronger, more resilient individuals** who believe in their right to succeed.

Among 3-5-year-olds, only 25.20% are attending education programme, with 74.80% not attending. The low attendance rate is due to limited access to early childhood education programmes, and the significant 62.11% of non-attending children being girls. Attendance is particularly low among children aged 3–4, with only 9.68% enrolled in ECE education programme. A significant 90.32% are not attending, and of those, 57.14% are girls.

For children aged 6 to 9, attendance rises to 74.39%, with 25.61% not attending education programmes. However, the gender disparity remains prominent, with 58.73% of the non-attending children being girls. This suggests that girls in Afghan households continue to face higher obstacles to education, even in this relatively younger age group.

In the 10 to 13 age group, the attendance rate is high at 88.67%, with only 11.33% not attending. However, the gender gap persists, with 17.65% of the non-attending children being girls.

Among adolescents aged 14 to 17, the attendance rate is 82.24%, and 17.76% are not attending. The gender gap is again prominent, with 42.11% of the non-attending children being girls, reflecting the ongoing barriers to education for older girls. These barriers are linked to registration obstacles, lack of information about relevant education opportunities and pathways, children are not attending education programmes for a long time, child labour and distance etc.

Only 70% of school age children 6-17 years from other nationalities attend education programme, while 30% do not. The gender gap is high, though the sample size is small (10 households).

There is no data on 3-5-year-olds, suggesting either non-attendance or lack of data collection. Given the low attendance overall, significant barriers exist for this age group. Among children aged 6 to 9, all assessed households' children are attending an education programme. For ages 10 to 13, only 14.29% attend education programmes, with 85.71% not attending education programmes, all of whom are girls, highlighting severe gender-based exclusion. The respondent identified registration barriers as the primary issue, with 100% citing it as the top reason.

In all nationalities, non-attendance is a significant issue, with variations in attendance rates across age groups. Younger children, particularly those aged 3-5, face the highest rates of non-attendance, with attendance improving as children grow older. However, gender disparities are particularly pronounced in the 10 to 17 age groups, with girls representing a disproportionately high percentage of non-attending children, especially in Afghan and Syrian households. Efforts to address the barriers to children attending education programmes must focus on increasing access to education for both boys and girls, while paying special attention to the challenges faced by girls.

6.5 Brief Overview of Early Childhood Education

Table 2. Profile of Early Childhood Education Children Aged 3-5 Years

Early Childhood Education-Age 3-5 Years Children	Households	Children	Attending	Not Attending	% Children Not Attending	% Girls not Attending
Total	451	1,258	244	1,014	80.60	50.00
Turkish Households	34	80	24	56	70	44.64
Syrian Households	370	1,051	188	863	82.11	49.02
Afghan Households	47	127	32	95	74.80	62.11
Other Nationality Households						

The data reveals significant disparities in ECE attendance among 3-5-year-old children from different nationalities. Of the 451 surveyed households, 1,258 children fall within this age group, yet only 244 (19.40%) are enrolled in ECE, leaving 1,014 children (80.60%) unenrolled. The proportion of girls not attending ECE is 50%, indicating a notable gender gap in access to early education.

When disaggregated by nationality, host households impacted by the earthquake show a non-attendance rate of 70% in ECE, with 44.64% of girls not enrolled. Syrian households—comprising the largest portion of the sample—show an even higher non-enrolment rate at 82.11%, with nearly half of the girls (49.02%) not attending. Afghan households report the most significant gap, with 90% of children out of ECE and a disproportionately high rate of non-attendance among girls (62.11%), the highest among all groups.

Figure 5. Reasons for ECE Children's Non-Attendance in Schools/ECE Centres

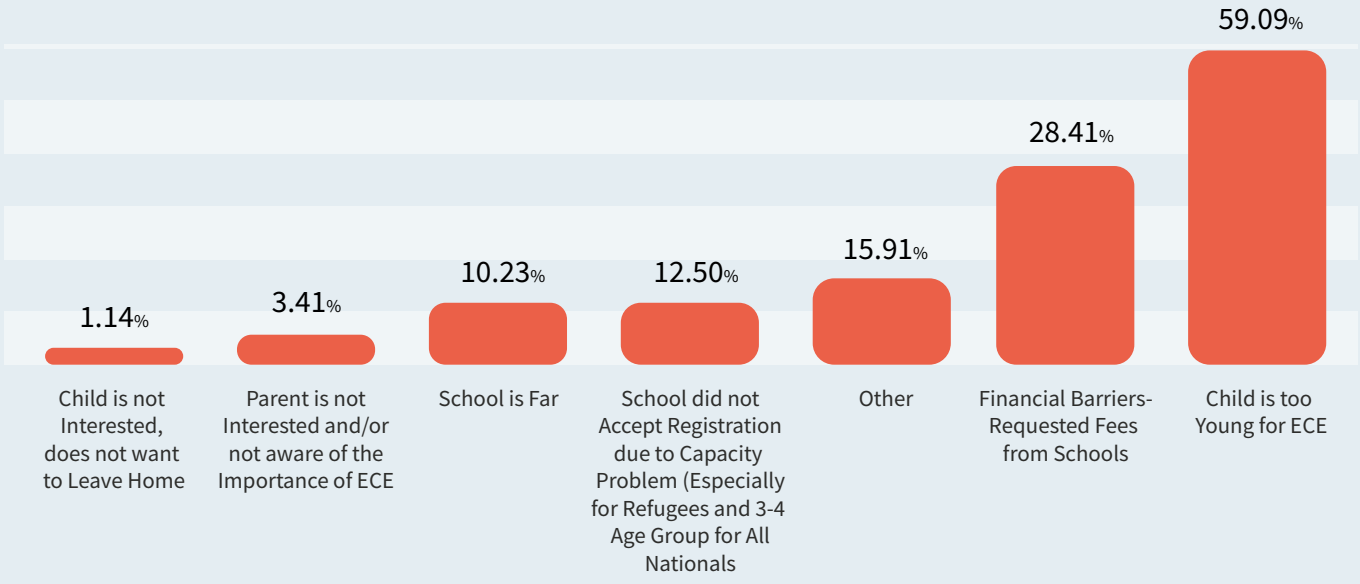


Figure 4 highlights the primary reasons for children not being enrolled in ECE. The most commonly cited reason, accounting for 59.09% of responses, is that the child is considered too young for ECE. This suggests that many parents or guardians may perceive a certain age threshold for enrolment or may not be fully aware of available early education programmes for younger children. Financial barriers, such as school related expenses, are another significant factor, affecting 28.41% of respondents. This emphasizes the economic constraints families face in accessing early education opportunities.

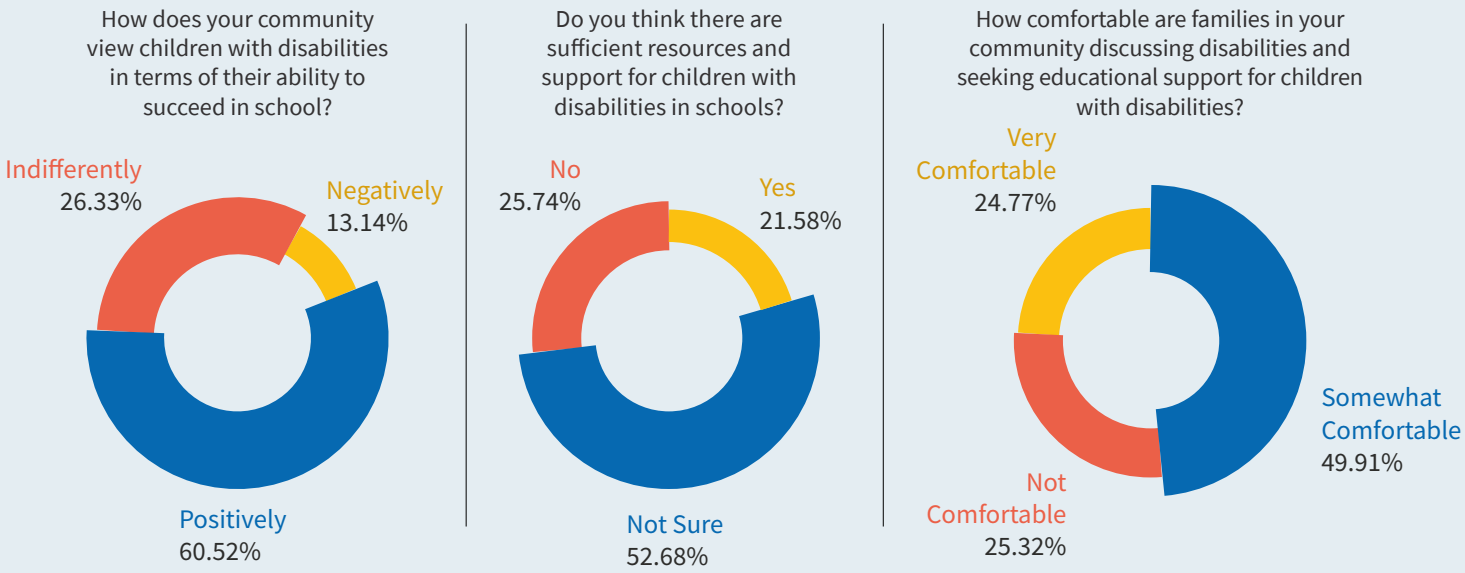
Additionally, 15.91% of responses fall under the category of "Other," with further clarification indicating that many of these cases stem from school registration issues, including a lack of necessary documentation such as ID and address registration. Capacity issues in schools, particularly affecting refugees and children in the 3-5 age group, account for 12.50% of responses. This suggests that supply constraints within the education system are a barrier to broader ECE enrolment.

Geographical challenges also play a role, as 10.23% of respondents indicate that schools are too far from home. Meanwhile, parental awareness and interest in ECE contribute to 3.41% of cases, reflecting a potential gap in information or prioritization regarding early childhood education. Lastly, 1.14% of respondents report that the child themselves is not interested or does not want to leave home, which, although the least cited reason, still reflects consideration in some cases.

Syrian children aged 3-5, who make up 83% of the ECE household sample, encounter significant barriers to enrolment. The most notable challenge is financial difficulties (28.40%), with many families unable to afford school fees. Others, registration issues (16.05%), primarily due to missing IDs or address registration, and further complicated access. School capacity limitations (13.58%) disproportionately impact refugee children, while distance to schools (8.64%) restricts opportunities, especially for those in remote areas. Although only 1.23% of parents recognize the importance of ECE, structural and financial challenges remain the primary obstacles. To enhance access, it is crucial to increase school capacity, provide financial assistance, and streamline the registration process. Additionally, 58.02% of households report that their children are too young for enrolment, exacerbating the issue. Overall, the data highlights a mix of structural, financial, and informational barriers that prevent children from enrolling in ECE. Addressing these challenges through increased awareness, financial support, and improved school accessibility could help enhance early education participation rates.

6.6 Perceptions and Social Behaviour Toward Children with Disabilities

Table 3. Community Perceptions on Children with Disabilities



The Parent Survey data highlights key metrics from responses collected across different regions, focusing on the perception of children with disabilities, available resources, and family comfort levels in discussing disabilities. Parent survey provides a comprehensive overview of educational access challenges, particularly for children with disabilities in Türkiye.

One of the critical findings concerns community perceptions regarding children with disabilities and their ability to succeed in school. The majority of responses indicate positive views (60.52%), while some respondents displayed indifference (26.33%) or negative perceptions (13.14%). These figures highlight the need for awareness campaigns to foster inclusive education and address lingering biases.

Regarding available resources and support for children with disabilities in schools, respondents provided mixed insights. While 21.58% believed there were sufficient resources, a sizable portion was unsure (52.68%), and 25.74% felt that the resources were insufficient. This data suggests gaps in accessibility, awareness, and possibly the distribution of specialized services for children with disabilities.

Another important aspect examined is family comfort levels in discussing disabilities and seeking educational support. The responses indicate that 49.91% of families are somewhat comfortable, while 25.32% are not comfortable, and 24.77% feel very comfortable. The notable percentage of families feeling hesitant or uncomfortable in seeking support suggests the need for targeted interventions to build trust and improve communication between educational institutions and communities.

This initial analysis highlights the main challenges in achieving inclusive education, especially for children with disabilities. The data indicates both positive community perceptions and ongoing barriers, such as resource limitations and societal stigma. These insights can inform advocacy efforts, policy recommendations, and programmatic interventions to enhance school access and support for all children, particularly those facing additional barriers to education.

6.6.1 Parental Perspectives on Disabilities in Education

Children with disabilities experience significant stigma and discrimination in both refugee and host communities. During FGDs and individual interviews, parents shared concerns about bullying and social exclusion at school, which discourages them from enrolling their children in educational settings. There is a strong desire among parents of children with disabilities for societal attitudes to evolve toward greater acceptance and inclusion.

Parents also cite the lack of appropriate resources and specialized support for children with disabilities in schools. Common barriers include accessibility challenges, such as inadequate physical infrastructure, and a shortage of disability-focused services. Furthermore, many parents struggle to discuss their children's disabilities openly due to fear of judgment and a lack of awareness within their communities. This often leads to isolation, making it difficult for parents to seek educational or psychological help. In mixed-focus groups, parents of children with disabilities tend to disengage from discussions, suggesting that they feel uncomfortable sharing their experiences alongside parents of children without disabilities.

6.7 Alternative Education Pathways and Interventions

Refugee children have benefited from programmes provided by ESWG member organisations, which offer mentoring, tutoring, and psychosocial support to help children build emotional resilience and address challenges such as discrimination. Courses in Turkish language proficiency and vocational skills have been identified as key programmes, especially for children not enrolled in formal schooling. These programmes help students integrate into society and equip them with practical skills for future employment. Additionally, non-formal education centers play a vital role in supporting children with homework and academic guidance, particularly for those whose families cannot afford private tutoring or school supplies. For some families, vocational schools, centres offer an attractive alternative to traditional schooling, providing children with the opportunity to gain practical skills that could lead to their future employment.

6.8 Parental Awareness and Interest in Non-Formal Education Programmes

Parents express strong interest in alternative education programmes, such as language courses and vocational training, as these initiatives meet both educational and integration needs. Non-formal education support provided by ESWG member organisations are particularly valued for offering vital psychosocial and academic support, turning challenging situations into positive outcomes. However, access to these programmes is hindered by several factors, including limited availability, inconvenient locations, scheduling conflicts, and transportation expenses.

Moreover, these ESWG member organisations play a key role in raising parental awareness about available resources and encouraging enrolment in non-formal education pathways, helping to overcome these challenges.

7. Planning for the New Academic Year: Challenges and Insights into 2024-2025 School Enrolment for Syrian and Afghan Families in Türkiye

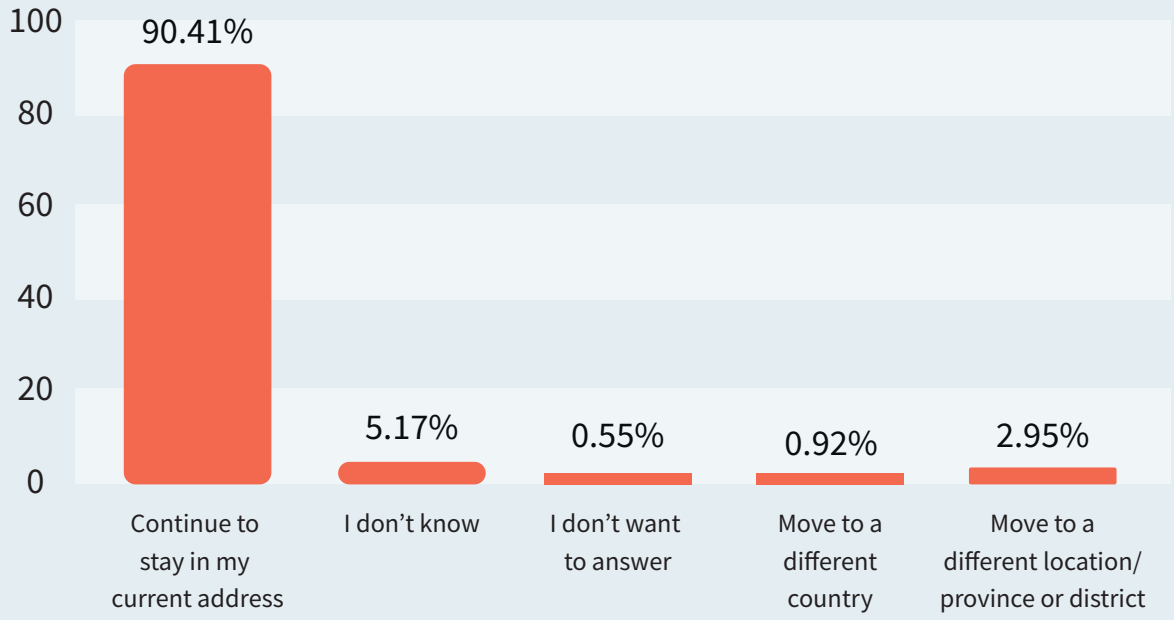
The BTS 2024 survey identifies major obstacles to school enrolment for Syrian and Afghan families in Türkiye for the 2024–2025 academic year. These include financial difficulties, administrative hurdles, transportation challenges, and socio-cultural barriers. Addressing these issues through targeted interventions is essential to enhance school attendance among refugee and vulnerable children.

Family stability and relocation trends have important implications for school enrolment and continuity in the 2024–2025 academic year. The majority of Syrian (91.79%) and Afghan (91.84%) families surveyed indicated that they intend to remain in their current place of residence. This stability is a positive indicator for consistent school attendance, allowing children to continue their education without the disruption of moving to a new location, which often leads to missed enrolment periods, systematic hurdles, and adaptation challenges.

However, a notable proportion of families remain uncertain about their future—7.33% of Syrian and 4.08% of Afghan families reported not knowing whether they would stay or move. This uncertainty poses a risk to children's educational continuity, as families unsure of their settlement plans may delay school registration or withdraw children mid-year. Additionally, a significant percentage of families (4.11% of Syrians and 3.83% overall) expressed intentions to relocate within Türkiye or leave the country entirely. These planned moves could result in school dropouts, loss of academic progress, and difficulties re-integrating into new education systems, particularly if relocation involves crossing international borders.

Given these dynamics, it is critical for education actors to maintain flexible enrolment policies, ensure continuous access to school registration throughout the year, and provide support services for mobile and relocating families. Strengthening communication between households, schools, and local education authorities will also be essential to minimize disruption to children's learning.

Figure 6. Where Do You Plan to Live for the Next School Year (Starting in September 2024)

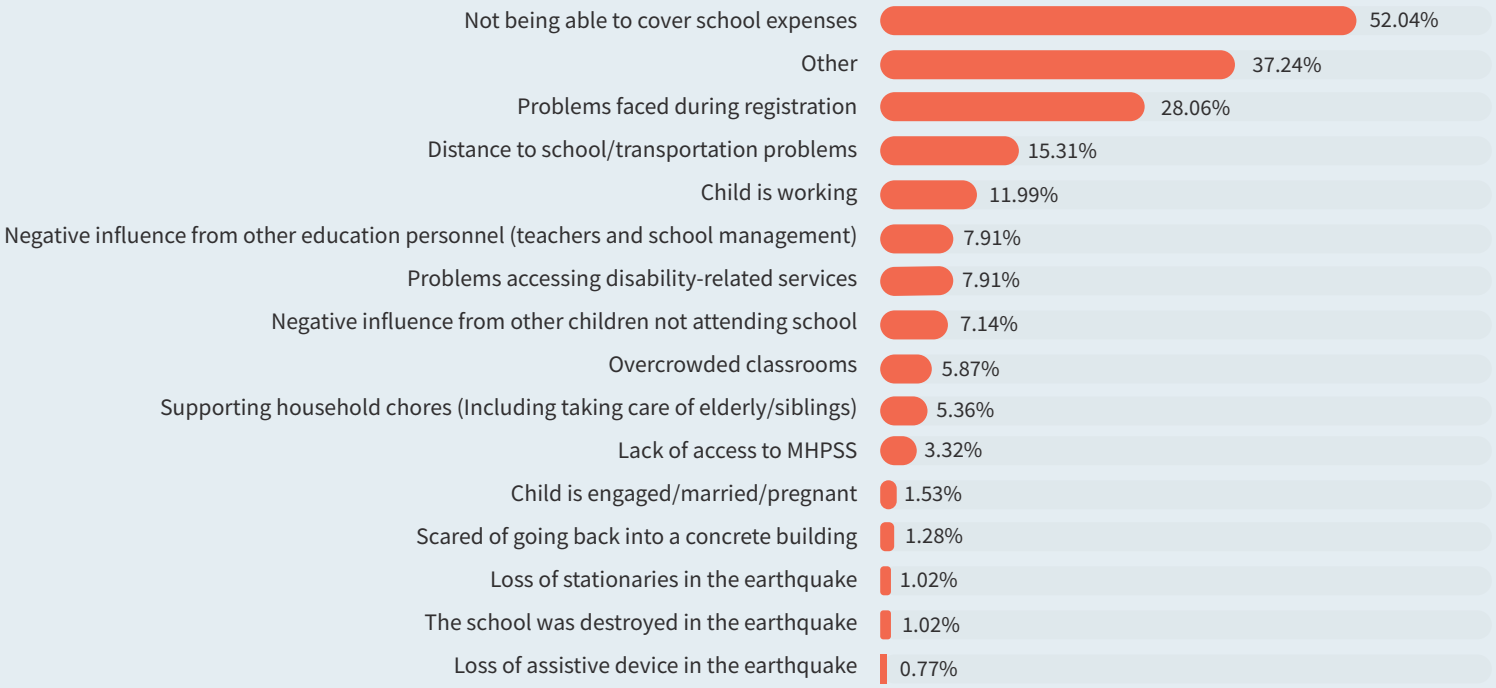


School Registration Intentions

Although living conditions appear stable, there are notable concerns regarding intentions to register for school. Only 60% of Syrian and 44% of Afghan families indicated plans to enrol their children, putting a significant number at risk of being excluded from education. Barriers include financial difficulties, bureaucratic challenges, and lack of awareness about the enrolment process.

Key Concerns About Returning to School

Figure 7. Biggest Concern Regarding Child's Return to Education Programme



As households prepare for the academic year 2024-2025, several anticipated challenges threaten to hinder school enrolment among Syrian and Afghan refugee children. The most pressing concern is financial hardship (52.04%), with 56.01% of Syrian and 20.41% of Afghan families unable to afford school-related expenses. This suggests that without targeted financial assistance programmes—such as support for supplies, uniforms, or transportation, many children risk missing out on education. Registration barriers (28.06%) also remain significant, affecting 44.90% of Afghan and 26.10% of Syrian families, who encounter systematic hurdles and lacking awareness during the registration process.

Transportation challenges (15.31%) are another anticipated obstacle, particularly for families in remote or underserved areas. About 15.84% of Syrian and 8.16% of Afghan families report difficulties reaching schools, indicating a need for school bus services or transport subsidies to reduce dropout risks. Child labour (11.99%) remains a critical barrier, with 12.02% of Syrian and 10.20% of Afghan families relying on children's income. This trend may intensify amid worsening economic conditions, making it essential to integrate child protection mechanisms and offer livelihood support to families.

Furthermore, negative school experiences—including bullying and exclusion—impact 8.21% of Syrian and 6.12% of Afghan children. If left unaddressed, these issues may discourage re-enrolment or contribute to early dropouts. Promoting inclusive school environments and training teachers in child protection and diversity will be key to ensuring sustained attendance. Children with disabilities face compounded challenges, with 7.92% of Syrian and 4.08% of Afghan families reporting inadequate support or infrastructure. Without improvements in inclusive education, these children may continue to be left behind.

Socio-cultural barriers are also expected to influence decisions in the upcoming academic year. Household responsibilities (5.36% Afghan; 4.40% Syrian), mental health challenges (3.52% Syrian; 2.04% Afghan), and early marriage (1.76% Syrian) may prevent children—particularly girls—from continuing their education.

Additionally, 37.24% of households mentioned various other reasons for non-enrolment, such as lack of interest or beliefs related to the child's age and the perceived value of education. These varied and intersecting challenges emphasize the need for a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to ensure equitable access to education in the 2024-2025 school year.

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8. Summary of Key Challenges

1. Registration Barriers (37.67%)

Many school-age children face significant barriers to education due to registration difficulties, which are primarily exacerbated by a lack of parental awareness regarding enrolment procedures. Systematic delays, missing identification documents, and complex enrolment policies further hinder the process, particularly for families in transition, such as those displaced by the earthquake, who often experience long waiting periods of up to 40 days before securing school placement. Additionally, the absence of a standardized school placement mechanism leaves many children unable to enrol due to school quotas or administrative refusals, further limiting their access to education.

2. Financial Constraints (32.19%)

The high cost of education-related expenses, including transportation in remote areas, school supplies—mainly stationery—uniforms, and pocket money, prevents many low-income families from sending their children to school. Limited financial aid coverage further exacerbates the issue, as many vulnerable families, particularly refugees, struggle to access CCTE and other support programmes. Economic hardships driven by the earthquake and inflation have worsened the situation, forcing children to not attend education programme and enter child labour to contribute to their household income.

3. School Transportation and Distance (16.21%)

In rural and earthquake-affected areas, children face significant challenges in accessing education due to the long distances to schools and the lack of affordable transportation options. This issue is particularly severe for displaced families who have relocated to areas without nearby schools, making transportation costs a major financial burden. Additionally, safety concerns, especially for girls who must travel long distances, further discourage school attendance, increasing the risk of absenteeism and dropout.

4. Child Labor and Economic Vulnerability (14.16%)

Children particularly those from refugee and low-income families, are engaged in labour by their households, leading to high dropout rates. Older children, especially girls, often take on household responsibilities such as caregiving, further limiting their ability to attend education programme. Additionally, the financial instability of many households shift the focus away from education, as survival needs take precedence over schooling, leaving children with limited opportunities for learning and personal development.

5. School Safety, Bullying, and Social Inclusion (9.82%)

Bullying and discrimination in schools affect both refugee and host community children, leading to psychological distress and higher dropout rates. These negative experiences discourage attendance and deepen social exclusion, particularly for vulnerable students. Additionally, peer pressure and social stigma create further challenges, making it especially difficult for children with disabilities to integrate into the education system and fully participate in learning.

6. Barriers to Disability-Inclusive Education (7.31%)

Children with disabilities often face significant barriers to education due to the lack of assistive learning devices and specialized programmes, leaving their needs unmet. Many schools also have limited accessibility, with inadequate ramps, elevators, and specialized learning materials, making it difficult for these children to fully participate in education. Additionally, cultural stigma and social exclusion discourage parents from openly discussing their children's disabilities or seeking necessary support, further limiting their access to inclusive learning opportunities.

7. Overcrowded Classrooms and School Infrastructure (7.08%)

Overcrowded classrooms in urban refugee-hosting areas significantly reduce the quality of education, limiting teachers' ability to provide individualized attention to students. Many schools, particularly in regions with high refugee populations, lack the capacity to accommodate all students, resulting in children being turned away due to space constraints. Additionally, the delayed reconstruction of earthquake-damaged schools has caused children without access to safe learning environments, further exacerbating barriers to education.

8. Language Barriers (6.39%)

Refugee children face significant challenges in their education due to limited access to Turkish language support programmes, making it difficult for them to understand lessons and integrate academically. The Ministry of National Education also provides elective Arabic language courses, but a significant barrier to enrolment among refugees is their limited awareness of this opportunity. The absence of bilingual teachers and classroom support further hinders their learning outcomes, leaving non-Turkish-speaking students struggling to keep up with their peers and fully engage in learning.

9. Gender Disparities in Education (5.25%)

Girls, especially in refugee and conservative communities, face higher dropout rates due to early marriage and household responsibilities. Concerns about safety and harassment further discourage families from sending girls to school, particularly in rural and underserved areas, where such risks are often heightened. This combination of factors significantly limits educational opportunities for girls and hinders their academic progress.

10. Psychological and Post-Trauma Barriers (4.82%)

Children who have experienced trauma and anxiety following the earthquake often struggle to concentrate and remain in school. The absence of adequate MHPSS in schools further exacerbates these challenges, leaving students without the necessary resources to cope with the post-disaster trauma and stress, which in turn affects their academic performance and well-being.

11. Barriers to Early Childhood Education (ECE) (3.41%)

Access to preschool education is limited, especially for refugee and low-income children, with many families unable to enroll their children in ECE programmes. A prevalent perception among parents that their children are "too young" for ECE (59.09%) contributes to under-enrolment. Additionally, the lack of financial support for early education further prevents families from enrolling their children in ECE programmes, hindering their early development and educational opportunities.

12. Emergency Preparedness and Education Continuity (3.65%)

The lack of effective contingency planning for disasters has led to extended school closures in earthquake-affected areas, disrupting the education of many children. A slow response to rebuilding schools has further exacerbated these disruptions, particularly for displaced children who are unable to access their previous learning environments. Additionally, limited access to alternative learning options, such as online education or temporary learning centres, has left many students without viable means of continuing their education during these challenging times.

9. Recommendations for Improving Education Access in Türkiye

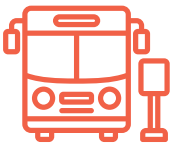
1. Strengthen Financial Support for Education

Expanding financial support is essential to ensuring school access for vulnerable children. It is recommended that the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS), in collaboration with MoNE, UNICEF, and NGOs, extend the CCTE to reach more refugee and earthquake-affected families, with advocacy aimed at increasing education-related cash support. Strengthening collaboration between Education, Basic Needs, and Livelihoods sectors can enhance household support, prevent negative coping mechanisms, and promote self-reliance without disrupting children's education. Need-based scholarships, school grants, and transport subsidies should be expanded, prioritizing families with multiple school-age children. Partnering with ESWG member organisations, and the private sector can boost funding, while awareness campaigns should guide families on accessing available financial aid.

2. Simplify and Accelerate School Enrolment Procedures

To enhance school enrolment and retention, it is recommended that ESWG members, in collaboration with MoNE, implement a structured approach that incorporates targeted outreach efforts to identify out-of-school children and provide continuous support throughout their enrolment journey. Collaboration with MoNE, PDoNEs, and PMM is crucial to streamline registration procedures and address specific challenges faced by refugee families. Regular meetings and communication with these government bodies will help resolve registration issues. Raising awareness among refugee families about registration requirements through community outreach programmes, providing informational materials, and deploying trained volunteers for one-on-one assistance will ensure smoother enrolment. To facilitate timely enrolment, flexible registration policies should allow children without complete documentation to enroll without delays, and temporary enrolment processes should be streamlined for children awaiting ID resolution. Additionally, multilingual support in schools and education offices should be enhanced by providing materials in multiple languages, employing bilingual staff, and developing digital tools to guide non-Turkish-speaking households. Implementing a monitoring system to track refugee registration progress and identify barriers can further improve the process.

3. Overcome School Transportation Challenges



To address the challenges of school transportation in rural and earthquake-affected areas, MoNE in collaboration with local municipalities, international donors, and ESWG members to expand affordable and safe transportation options, such as subsidized school buses and community-driven solutions like carpooling or local transport networks. Financial assistance should be provided to displaced families, and schools should implement safety measures, including trained escorts for children, particularly girls, and safe drop-off points. In addition, ESWG members in collaboration with MoNE should advocate for the establishment of temporary or satellite schools closer to affected communities and partner with local transportation companies to ensure reliable, safe transport. Outreach programmes, in coordination with ESWG members and PDoNEs, should inform families about transportation options. Increased funding from national and international sources will be necessary to sustain and expand these initiatives, ensuring equitable and safe access to education for all children, especially those in remote or disaster-affected regions.

4. Expand and Rebuild School Infrastructure

Strategic leadership from MoNE is essential for securing national funding and establishing a dedicated recovery fund to support infrastructure improvements and create conducive learning environments. Temporary learning spaces, such as prefabricated container schools, should be set up for students during reconstruction, especially in earthquake-affected areas. New school buildings must be earthquake-resistant, and public-private partnerships should be encouraged to speed up reconstruction and ensure safe learning spaces. In addition, MoNE should allocate emergency funding to repair and rebuild earthquake-damaged schools, while also expanding the school network in overcrowded areas like Istanbul, Izmir, and Gaziantep to address class size issues. To ensure inclusivity, all new and renovated schools must be accessible for children with disabilities, incorporating necessary infrastructure like ramps, elevators, and assistive materials, with MoNE ensuring compliance through audits.

5. Improve Social Inclusion and School Safety

To address bullying and discrimination, anti-bullying policies should be strengthened through school-wide prevention programmes, teacher and staff training, and confidential reporting mechanisms for students. MoNE should develop a nationwide anti-bullying action plan that includes social media campaigns and peer-led initiatives. Inclusive education practices can be promoted by raising awareness through campaigns and providing training for school administrators on inclusive teaching methods, particularly for refugee and disabled students. Local NGOs and education sector members should assist schools in establishing peer support groups and community integration programmes. Additionally, MHPSS should be enhanced by increasing the number of school counsellors, integrating trauma-sensitive approaches into curricula, and providing targeted interventions for children affected by displacement, violence, and natural disasters. MoNE and UNICEF led ESWG members should collaborate to expand school-based psychosocial support services, including individual counselling and group therapy sessions.

6. Enhance Support for Students with Disabilities

Specialized teacher training programmes should be expanded to equip teachers with the skills necessary for inclusive education and disability-friendly teaching methods. MoNE should mandate disability-inclusive training for all teachers. Schools should be provided with assistive devices and learning materials, such as braille books, hearing aids, adaptive technologies, and special education classrooms, to ensure full participation for children with disabilities. MoNE, in collaboration with donor agencies, ESWG members should allocate additional funding to support these needs. To further assist students, school-level structures should be strengthened by introducing individualized learning plans for children with disabilities and ensuring accessible transportation options, especially in rural and underserved areas.

7. Develop Language and Alternative Learning Programmes

To support refugee and migrant students in Türkiye, MoNE should introduce intensive Turkish language courses through accelerated programmes in schools and community centers. These programmes should integrate language support into the curriculum, with dedicated Turkish language teachers for non-native speakers. Non-formal education and vocational training should also be expanded, especially for out-of-school children, and flexible models like evening classes should be developed. Investments in digital learning solutions and accelerated programmes will strengthen alternative education pathways. Language support initiatives, such as after-school courses, learning materials, and digital resources, should be implemented. Teachers should receive specialized training, and language support centers staffed with trained instructors should be established. Peer support programmes and family engagement through language classes and community events can further enhance integration.

Additionally, many Syrian refugees need increased awareness about the opportunity to learn reading and writing in Arabic through elective courses offered by MoNE. It is important for ESWG members to actively inform and guide Syrian families about these courses. Gaining Arabic literacy may support a smoother transition for those who choose to return to Syria, and continue their education there.

8. Address Gender Disparities in Education

To support girls' education, scholarships and mentorship programmes are required to be introduced to overcome socio-cultural barriers. It is recommended that MoNE and donor agencies increase the availability of scholarships specifically targeted at adolescent girls who are at risk. ESWG members can further support gender mainstreaming in the education sector by engaging families and community leaders in discussions about the benefits of girls' education through meetings, female role models, and media campaigns that challenge gender norms. MoNE, local municipalities and ESWG should lead awareness-raising efforts. Ensuring safe and supportive school environments for girls is also essential, especially for those who travel long distances. In this context, it is recommended that MoNE, in collaboration with ESWG members, enhance safe transportation options—such as girls-only school buses—and enforce strict policies to prevent harassment.

9. Improve Emergency Preparedness for Educational Continuity

Enhancing coordination among MoNE, local municipalities, and humanitarian organisations is essential for delivering a timely and effective education response that bridges emergency needs with long-term development goals. To maintain learning continuity during crises, it is recommended to develop disaster contingency plans that include remote learning solutions, mobile classrooms, and temporary learning spaces. In addition, MoNE, in partnership with ESWG member organisations, should take proactive steps by pre-positioning emergency education supplies and providing crisis response training for teachers.

10. Sub-Regional Parent Survey Analysis

10.1 Earthquake-Affected Southeastern Region

Overview

The parent survey presents key findings on school attendance and barriers to education in earthquake-affected regions for the 2024-2025 academic year. The data provides insights into the challenges faced by children and families as they navigate the recovery process while striving for access to education. These findings will help stakeholders design targeted interventions to ensure more children return to school.

Survey and Respondent Overview

The survey gathered responses from 909 families, covering a total of 2,557 children. Among them, 385 children were identified as out-of-school, accounting for 15.05% of the population surveyed. Although 84.94% of children are enrolled in school, the remaining 15% face significant challenges in accessing education, exacerbated by the aftermath of the earthquake.

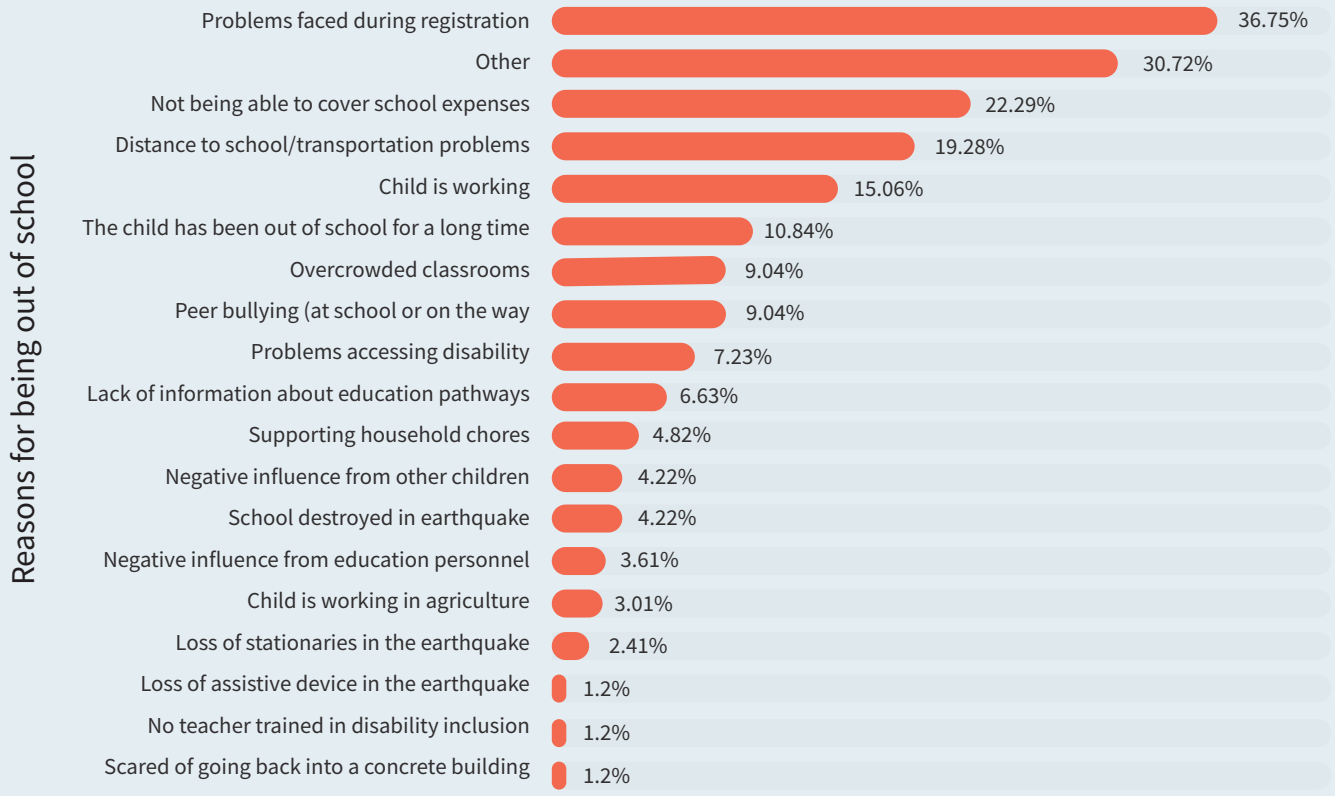
Demographic Breakdown of Out-of-School Children

The gender distribution of out-of-school children is nearly equal, with 51% being boys and 49% being girls. This suggests that both genders experience similar barriers to education.

Age distribution analysis indicates that 56% of out-of-school children are between 6-9 years old, making early-age dropouts a critical concern. Additionally, 17% fall within the 10-13 age group, while 26% are between 14-17 years old, highlighting the need for interventions across all educational stages.

Key Barriers to Education

Figure 8. Reasons for Children Not Attending Education Programme



The most frequently cited barrier to school enrolment is problems faced during registration, affecting 36.75% of out-of-school children. Systematic barriers, documentation issues, lack of parental awareness on school registration requirements, address change, and displacement due to the earthquake contribute to these difficulties.

The second most significant factor falls under "Other" reasons (30.72%), which, as noted in the above figure, primarily include health problems, relocation issues, and children being underage.

Financial constraints also play a substantial role, with 22.29% of respondents stating they cannot afford school-related expenses. Distance to school and transportation problems impact 19.28% of children, as infrastructure damage and displacement have disrupted access to educational facilities.

Additionally, 15.06% of children are engaged in labour, which prevents them from attending education programme. Long-term absenteeism (10.84%), peer bullying (9.04%), and overcrowded classrooms (9.04%) also contribute to school dropout rates.

Access to education for children with disabilities remains a challenge, as 6.63% of families reported difficulties in finding disability-inclusive schools. Furthermore, 6.63% cited a lack of information about education opportunities, highlighting the need for better awareness campaigns and outreach efforts.

Other notable barriers include:

- Household responsibilities **(4.82%)**, including taking care of elderly family members or siblings.
- Negative peer influence **(4.22%)**, discouraging school attendance.
- Schools destroyed in the earthquake **(4.22%)**, limiting available learning spaces.
- Negative influence from teachers and school staff **(3.61%)**, affecting motivation to attend education programme.
- Agricultural labour **(3.01%)**, particularly in rural areas.

Further concerns include the lack of educational materials (2.41%), insufficient assistive devices for children with disabilities (1.20%), and the absence of trained teachers for disability-inclusive education (1.20%). Some children also experience fear of returning to damaged or unsafe school buildings (1.20%), underscoring the psychological impact of the earthquake on students.

10.2 Istanbul Parent Survey Findings

Overview

This parents survey presents an analysis of the back-to-school data for the 2024-2025 academic year, highlighting the challenges faced by children in accessing education. The data provides insight into the proportion of out-of-school children, the key barriers preventing school attendance, and the demographic breakdown of affected students. The findings aim to inform policymakers, educators, and humanitarian organisations in their efforts to address these challenges and improve school enrolment rates.

Survey and Respondent Overview

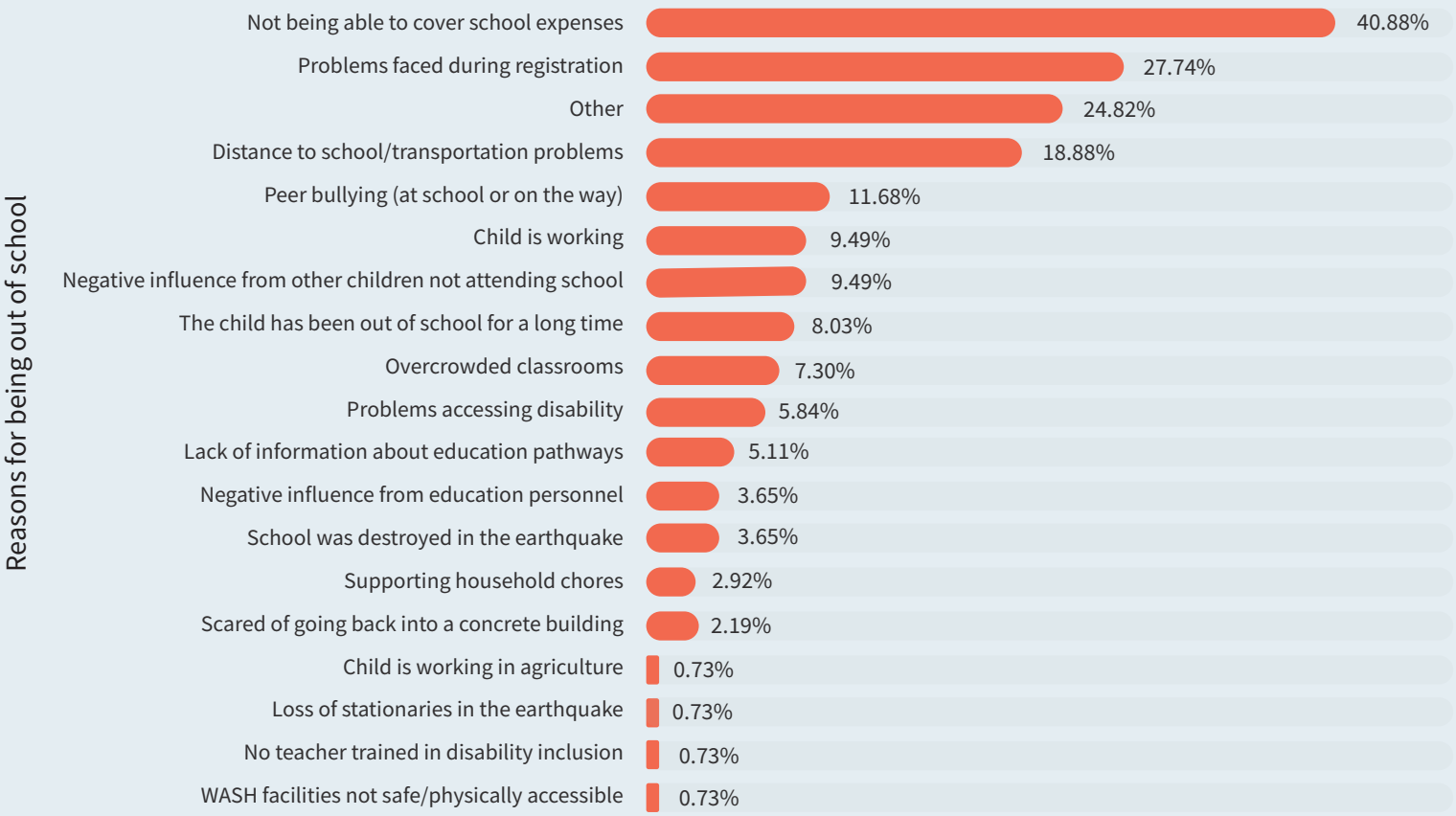
A total of 692 families participated in the survey, accounting for 1,879 children across various regions. Among these children, 348 were identified as out-of-school, representing 18.5% of the total population surveyed. While the majority of children (81.47%) are enrolled in school, a considerable number remain unable to access education due to various barriers.

Demographic Breakdown of Out-of-School Children

The data reveals that boys (57%) are more likely to be not attending education programmes compared to girls (43%). In terms of age groups, the highest proportion of out-of-school children are between 6-9 years old (59%), highlighting concerns about early-age dropouts. Additionally, 28% of out-of-school children are between the ages of 14-17, indicating potential challenges in continuing secondary education. The remaining 13% fall into other age categories, showing that school attendance issues persist across different age ranges.

Key Barriers to Education

Figure 9. Reasons for Children Not Attending Education Programme



The survey identified several key reasons why children do not attend education programmes. The most commonly cited barrier is financial constraints, with 40.88% of families reporting that they cannot afford school-related expenses. This is followed by problems faced during the registration process (27.74%), where bureaucratic and administrative hurdles prevent children from enrolling in school.

Another significant challenge is transportation difficulties, which 18.98% of respondents identified as a barrier to school attendance. Additionally, peer bullying at school or on the way to school affects 11.68% of children, discouraging them from continuing their education. Child labour (9.49%) is also a major issue, as some children are required to work to support their families instead of attending education programmes.

Social influences also play a role, with 9.49% of respondents indicating that negative peer influence from other children not attending education programme discourages their own children from enrolling. Additionally, 8.03% of children do not attend education programmes for an extended period, making reintegration difficult.

Other challenges include overcrowded classrooms, difficulties in accessing disability-inclusive education, lack of awareness of educational opportunities, and damage to school infrastructure due to past earthquakes. Some families also expressed concerns about safety in school buildings and a lack of trained teachers for children with disabilities.

10.3 Aegean Region Parent Survey Findings

Overview

The survey provides an in-depth analysis of the back-to-school situation in the Aegean Region for the 2024-2025 academic year. The data focuses on identifying out-of-school children, the challenges preventing school enrolment, and demographic insights. The findings aim to support decision-makers in addressing key barriers to education and ensuring a higher enrolment rate.

Survey and Respondent Overview

The survey collected responses from 237 families, accounting for a total of 662 children across multiple cities in the Aegean Region, including Aydın, Antalya, Balıkesir, Denizli, and İzmir. Among these children, 94 were identified as out-of-school, representing 14.1% of the population surveyed. Despite 85.80% of children being in school, a considerable proportion still faces challenges in accessing education.

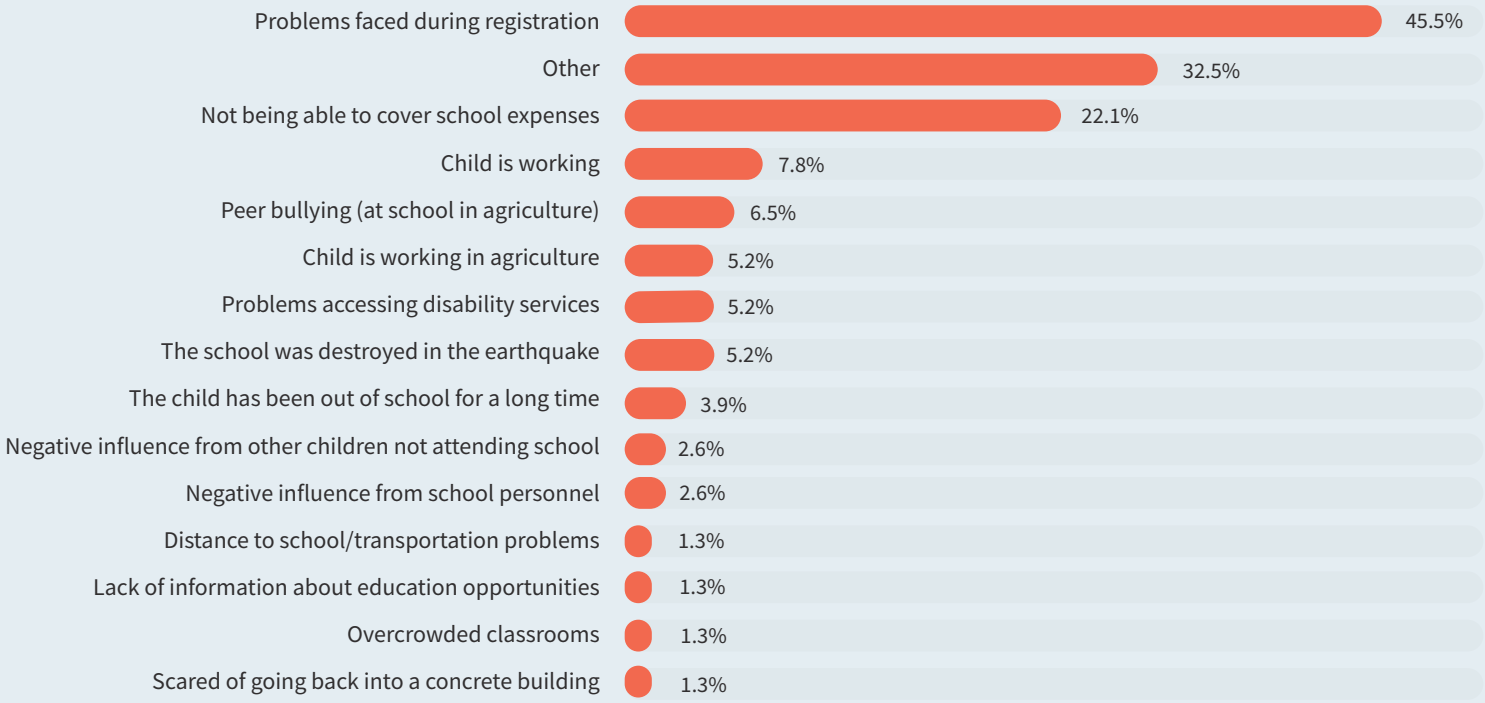
Demographic Breakdown of Out-of-School Children

The gender distribution of out-of-school children in this region is balanced, with 54% being girls and 46% being boys. This suggests that barriers to education are not necessarily gender-specific but are influenced by broader socio-economic and logistical factors.

The age group distribution shows that 37% of out-of-school children are between 6-9 years old, indicating early-age dropouts as a concern. Additionally, 32% fall within the 10-13 age group, while 31% are between 14-17 years old. This pattern suggests that school dropouts occur at all education levels, highlighting the need for interventions tailored to different age groups.

Key Barriers to Education

Figure 10. Reasons for Children Not Attending Education Programme



Several challenges contribute to children being unable to attend education programme. The most commonly cited barrier is problems during the registration process, affecting 45.45% of out-of-school children. Bureaucratic hurdles and administrative difficulties prevent many children from successfully enrolling.

Another significant factor is “Other” reasons (32.47%), which may include personal, family-related, or undocumented issues affecting school attendance. Financial constraints also play a crucial role, with 22.08% of respondents indicating that they cannot afford school-related expenses.

Additionally, 7.79% of children are engaged in labour, while 6.49% experience peer bullying at school or on the way to school, discouraging them from attending. Agricultural labour (5.19%) also affects school participation, particularly in rural areas.

Further barriers include problems accessing disability-inclusive education (5.19%), damage to schools caused by past earthquakes (5.19%), and children not attending education programmes for prolonged periods (3.90%), making reintegration challenging. Social influences, such as negative peer influence (2.60%) and negative influence from teachers and school staff (2.60%), further hinder school attendance.

Other notable barriers include transportation issues (1.30%), lack of awareness about educational opportunities (1.30%), overcrowded classrooms (1.30%), and safety concerns about school infrastructure (1.30%).

Türkiye
Education Sector
Working Group

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Türkiye