

Full Length Research Paper

Comparison of early childhood education (preschool education) in Turkey and OECD countries

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In this study, it was aimed to evaluate how the difference the early childhood education in Turkey and OECD countries. The outstanding point evaluated by the teachers about the difference between the education in Turkey and that in OECD countries and the conditions needing to be improved was the compare of age groups benefiting from the services within the frame of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and the number of teachers and personnel, based on the data obtained. In the research, homogeneous sampling method, of the purposeful sampling, was used. The data obtained from the interview with the teachers was interpreted by means of the content analysis method which is one of the data analysis methods.

Key words: Early childhood education, preschool education, Turkey, OECD countries.

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education is a priority agenda of international institutions as well as countries, and it has a wide application area. Having such an importance, early childhood education has importance and priority internationally and in the top international institutions rather than country policies (Turkish Industrialist and Businessmen's Association [TÜSIAD], 2005). Early childhood education and care (ECEC) policies and programs in the OECD countries have evolved out of remarkably similar historical streams, including child protection, early childhood education, services for children with special needs, and services to facilitate mothers' labour force participation (Berfenstam and Olsson, 1973; David and Lezine, 1973; Kamerman, 2000; Kellmer-Pringle and Naidoo, 1974; Pistillo, 1989). In all the countries, one overarching theme is the movement from private charity, beginning in the early and middle 19th century to public responsibility, evolving largely after World War II. The extent of public responsibility does vary across the countries. In fact, it is the relative emphasis given in public policy to custodial care of poor and disadvantaged children of working mothers, on the one hand, and education and socialization of all children, on the other, that appears to be the most distinguishing variation (Kamerman, 2000).

The practical way of preschool education is more

distinguished in the developed communities which cannot (or do not) integrate the preschool education with the general education systems. Every economical program which needs the labour force of women must have a solution for the future of children. The solution has been found as caring and feeding many children together. Preschool education has been interpreted as caring. Therefore, western specialist stress that preschool education is not only consists of care. When professional baby-sitting shifted from commercial capitalism to industrial capitalism, the need to the workforce of women became an issue on the agenda (Gülcü ud).

ECEC consumes a substantial and growing quantity of resources from both the public and private sectors in most OECD countries. This in turn reflects, in large part, the substantial increases in the labour force participation of mothers of pre-school children in all OECD countries, increases that are enabled by, and increase the demand for, non-maternal care for the children of working mothers (Verry, 2000). The development line of preschool education in Turkey was not like that in Europe. Because the need of changing childcare to education was realized tardily, preschool education developed very slowly until recent years. There are differences and similarities between the European Member counties and Turkey, which is in the accession process. The similarities are the

target and purposes, but the differences are the role of public, models, programs and their contents, the covered community (age groups) and the importance given to the role of family (TÜSIAD, 2005). There are regulations which brought common standards for the Early Childhood Education. The member counties are very sensitive for the education policies and they lean toward making a common regulation in European Union (EU). Moreover, their common purposes about Early Childhood Education (ECE) are similar. The similar common purposes of these counties are development, being free, responsibility, being healthy, self-confidence, citizenship, preparation for school and education in the future (TÜSIAD, 2005).

Aim of the research

The aim of this research is to determine the current state of early childhood education in Turkey from the viewpoint of the teachers by means of comparing the early childhood education in Turkey and OECD countries and determining what should be done for improving the current state of early childhood education.

State of problem

- (i) According to the preschool teachers, what are the differences between the preschool education in Turkey and OECD countries according to the preschool teachers?
- (ii) According to the preschool teachers, what should be done in the preschool education system so that Turkey reaches the level of EU standards?
- (iii) What is the condition of preschool education in terms of the beneficiary age groups and the number of educators and personnel of each student?

METHODS

Research design

In this research, qualitative research technique was used. From the qualitative research designs, phenomenology design was used. As for collecting data, focus group interview was used. In the research, data about the beneficiary age groups, the number of educators and personnel for each child in Turkey and OECD countries were compared, and the place of Turkey was determined in terms of these variants. Therefore, this research can be considered both qualitative and scientific.

Participants

From the purposeful sampling methods, homogeneous sampling method was used in this research. Accordingly, 21 preschool teachers working in the Province of Kilis in Turkey were interviewed.

Demographical features of the research participants

The teachers who participated in the research were selected from 5

different schools. 9 teachers worked in public schools and the other 12 teachers worked in private schools. All of the interviewed teachers were female. The experience period of teachers was between 2 and 8 years.

Data collection

For collecting the data about the opinions of the teachers, the focus group interview was applied in the research. Focus group interview can be defined as "a series of discussions carefully planned in a moderate and non-threatening environment for having the perceptions about a subject determined before" (Yılmaz and Şimşek, 2005). The pilot practice was performed for the focus group interview after the place and technological facilities were arranged and then, the real interviews were performed. In the research, 3 focus group discussions were made and 7 teachers participated in each session

The focus group interviews that were arranged with the participants was performed unstructured with the help of open ended questions. To receive answers to the questions, the interview was performed with 21 preschool teachers working in Kilis province in Turkey. The interview was recorded by means of type recorder, and it was written later. For providing transferability (external validity), purposeful sampling method was applied, and for providing consistency (internal reliability), consistency test was applied. When the consistency analysis of data was performed, it was analysed whether the data were collected in similar processes, and conceptualizing approach reliability (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005) was analysed. In the research, the data were collected by means of asking the same questions to the participants by means of focus group interview. In the data encoding process, the consistency of concepts and themes was cared about.

Data analysis

For the analysis of the data obtained from focus group interviews, "content analysis" approach from qualitative data analysis was applied. The main purpose of the content analysis is to reach the concept and relations for explaining the collected data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). The thematic and conceptual encoding, which was applied in the research, was performed in accordance with the concepts taken from data. The answers to the two of the questions asked to teachers in the focus group interview were turned into texts, and thematic and conceptual encoding were done in the tables for each question.

FINDINGS

The data about the differences between Preschool Education of Turkey and OECD, according to Preschool Teachers, are in the Table 1. The teachers who participated in the focus group that was interviewed stated that they see differences between preschool education in Turkey and in OECD countries in terms of the number of children and age groups which have education, the investment made for preschool education, family- school cooperation, utilities and the services given within the frame of preschool education. The teachers consider the investment made for preschool education insufficient and state that; consequently, the physical conditions and equipments are insufficient. The subject which is most stressed by the teachers is the age groups benefiting from preschool education. They state that preschool education in Turkey addresses 5 - 6 age groups; and therefore, there are not many children benefiting from it. Comparing this with OECD countries, the limitation of age group benefiting from preschool

Table 1. The Teacher's opinions about the differences between the preschool education in Turkey and OECD countries.

Quotation	Theme and Encoding
"While the preschool education addresses to 5-6 age grouping Turkey, it addresses to a wider range of age groups in most of OECD countries."	Beneficiary children 5 - 6 age group
"Most of children who are at the age of preschool education have preschool education in most of OECD countries. But the rate of children benefiting from preschool education is very low in our country"	At low rate
"It is hardly possible to say that the investment made for preschool education in our country is sufficient. Because our schools have not full equipments."	Family: School- family cooperation
"I think that schools- family cooperation is stronger in preschool education in OECD countries"	Current rates
"I think that schools and teachers are provided better conditions to give a better education in OECD countries."	Diversity in the educational services
"There is diversity in the care services provided to children in OECD countries. I don not think that there is such a diversity in our country."	Physical equipments Low rate of investment.
"The greatest difference, of course, is possible with the physical conditions and equipments. However, the teachers working in this field in our country have proficiency to give preschool education."	Financial condition.

education in Turkey is seen as an insufficiency of teachers. Teachers think that school- family cooperation is active in most OECD countries, and they state that they see an insufficiency in this issue in Turkey. The teachers say that families' sensitivity for the cooperation will be very useful.

According to preschool teachers, innovations needed to be done in the early childhood education (preschool education) for Turkey reaches EU standards. Stating that there is not a good school- family cooperation in Turkey (Table 1), the teachers think that the families need to be educated about this issue so that the preschool education meets EU standards. The teachers stated that raising the awareness of families about the importance of preschool education and the need for school- family will be very useful. The teachers stated that institution centred model is used predominantly in Turkey but this is not the right way. They stated that EU standards can only be meeting by means of applying models by considering the condition in which it will be applied. Comparing the current states of Turkey and OECD countries, the teachers see the condition of the education in Turkey is not sufficient and it is necessary to improve it. The teachers stressed that the preschool education in all regions of Turkey should have the same utilities, the condition of the schools in rural areas should be improved and the number of the schools giving preschool education in rural areas should be increased.

The teachers stated that the applications in education should not be done as the applicator desires. The teachers think that it will be useful if the applications are not versified as the teachers' desire, but within the frame

of standards. They also think that the different features of regions and personal differences of students should be considered so that the programs become more effective. Planning the curriculum in accordance with the fact that 7 geographical regions of Turkey have different economic and geographical features is a necessity. That the regions have different utilities makes application of some activities difficult. Planning activities in accordance with the conditions will make it easier to apply them. The teachers see the high number of students in class-rooms as a deficiency. They think that there should be more teachers so as to raise the standards. By the currently applied way, teachers will not deal with many students. Comparing the physical conditions in Turkey and in OECD countries in terms of preschool education, the teachers stated that the physical conditions in Turkey are not at the desired level. In this context, the stressed that improving physical conditions is rather important. A safe and wide place for students and playing areas were especially stressed as the items included in the lacking physical conditions. Comparing Turkey and OECD countries in terms of the age groups' enrolment in day-care and preschools

Since preschool education in Turkey is not considered as early childhood education but a preparatory education for primary school, the children of 0 - 2 age group hardly ever benefit from this education. Figure 1 shows that, the children of 0 - 2 age group did not benefit from preschool education in Turkey in 2003 - 2004 education years. It is seen that the number of children of 0 - 2 age group enrolled in the preschool education with the highest in Denmark and Island is the highest. The countries in which

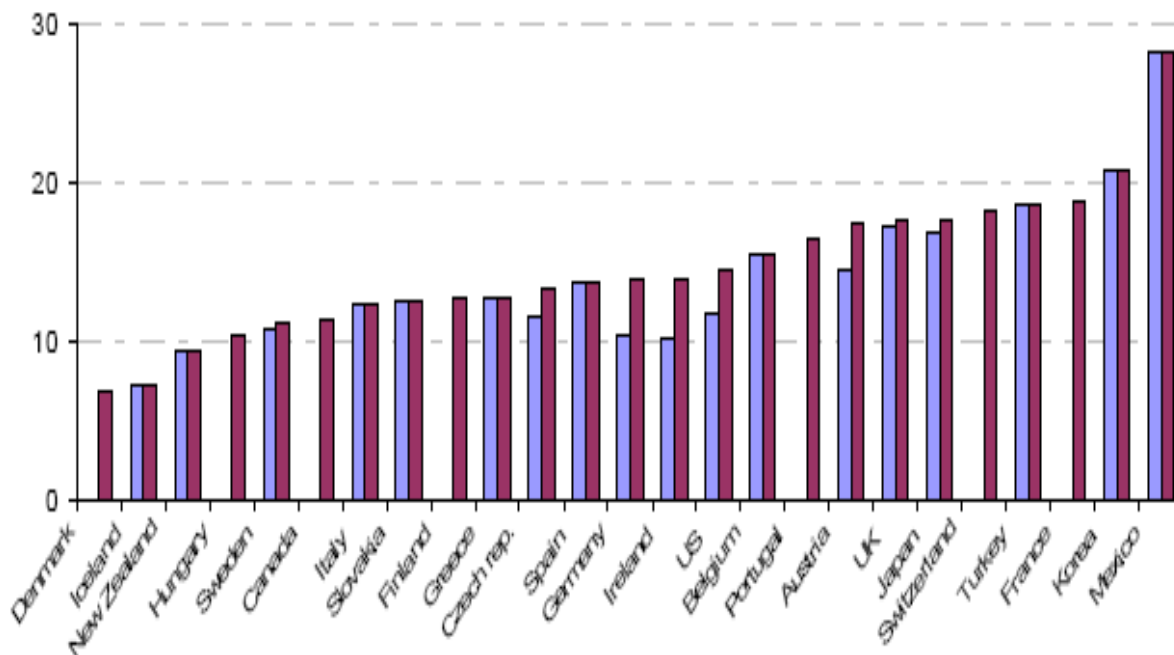


Figure 1. Enrolment rates of children under six in childcare and early education services 2003/04 (Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] family database <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>).

which the children of 0 - 2 age group least benefit from early childhood education are Switzerland, Poland, Mexico, Austria and Czech Republic as well as Turkey.

Figure 1 shows that, there is an increase in the enrolment of 3 - 5 age group to the early childhood education all countries. In Europe, the concept of universal access for 3 - 6-year-olds is generally accepted. Most countries provide all children with at least two years of free, publicly-funded provision before they begin primary schooling. In OECD countries outside Europe, most provide free access to early education only from age 5 (OECD, 2006). The reason why there is an increase in the rate of enrolment to early childhood education in 3 - 5 age groups is that the services given to this category are free of charge. The increase of enrolment of 3 - 5 groups indicates that preschool education is not considered only as "early childhood education." Education systems have recognised for decades that a unified conception of learning in childhood can bring pre-primary education and primary schooling closer together. A wide variety of strategies have been used to link early education to the primary school. In France, for example, a bridging curriculum, focusing on learning areas has been formulated, merging the last year of early education (5 - 6 years) and the first two classes of primary school into a unified cycle (OECD, 2006). In many OECD countries, as well as Turkey, early childhood education and primary education are considered related. Examining the rate of 3 - 5 age group's benefiting from the utilities of early childhood education shown in Figure 1, it is seen that Turkey is also

at the last part of the list. The enrolment of this age group to the early childhood education is highest in France, Italy, Belgium and Spain.

The data in Figure 1 give the percentage of the children benefiting from early childhood education from all ages in OECD countries in Table 3. It is useful to interpret Table 3 in order to see the participation rates of each age group one by one. In Table 3, the percent of enrolment in the early childhood education in different countries from the age of 3 - 6, is given. It is seen that the highest rates of enrolment below the age of 3 are in Denmark (61.7%), Korea (59.4%) and Island (58.7%) in the right order. The highest rates of enrolment for the age of 3 are in France (100%), Belgium (99.3%), Italia (98.7%), Spain (95.9%) and Island (93.3%). Enrolment rate of Turkey is the lowest (1.7%). The 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report (hereafter, the Report) stated that only 53% of the world's countries have ECCE programmes for children under three. These are mostly in North America and Western Europe, Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States are among the regions that are lagging behind (UNESCO Policy Brief on Early Childhood, 2008).

In Turkey, the crèches give service to 0 - 3 age group and nursery homes give service to 3 - 6 age group within the frame of early childhood education (Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Genel Müdürlüğü, 2003). Despite of such a service, children of 0 - 3 age group do not benefit from early childhood education as desired. The highest rates of enrolment for the age of 4 are in France (100%), Spain (100%), Belgium (99.9%) and Italia (100%) in early

Table 2. Teachers' opinions about the innovations needed to be done in the early childhood education (preschool education) for Turkey reaches EU standards.

Quotation	Theme/ encoding
"A fundamental change will start from the family no matter how we make effort in this issue."	Family: Families should be educated about preschool education
"The standards we strive to reach are directly or directly related with education. Therefore, giving the needed importance to the early childhood education is very important for improvement. I think that the main source for improvement in this issue is family."	Education model
"The institution centred models which are applied actively in Turkey restrict the age groups taking service in the early childhood education area. In most of the OECD countries, the age groups which take service are more than those in Turkey. The reason behind this condition is that the institution centred model is given more importance in Turkey."	Only institution centred education model should not be applied
"Early education institutions never or hardly exist in the rural areas. If we want to meet EU standards, we should give education, especially preschool education, in the same condition all over the country."	Education conditions: the same conditions should be provided all over the country
"There is not unity in the applications used by the teachers in the early childhood education. Each teacher uses the applications as he/ she desires. I think it is better to diversify the applications within the determined standards."	The number of institutions giving service in rural areas should be increased
"I think early childhood education is the most delicate areas of education. Therefore, the children between 0-6 should be cared closely and their all needs should be met immediately. This is hard to accomplish by means of a limited number of teachers"	Programs: The applications should be standardized. The programs should be prepared by considering different features of regions and children
If the population of students in a classroom is high, it is difficult for the teacher to deal with their problem. On one hand the population of the class-rooms is high, on the other had, the number of teacher for each student is low. If we want to meet EU standards in education, we should urgently solve these interdependent conditions."	Teacher: the number of teachers should be increased
"All children living in different regions of Turkey have different characters. Because the environment they interact with are different. Every effective early childhood education program should be made by considering such differences..."	Physical conditions a safe environment wide environment
"I don't think Turkey has sufficient physical conditions for giving early childhood education. The physical conditions here mean the equipments and tools we have."	various playing fields physical environment

childhood education. Turkey has the lowest rate in terms of the service it gives to this age group. The highest numbers of students benefiting from early childhood education as 5 age group are in France, Ireland, New Zealand and Spain. The participation of 5 age group in all these five countries is 100%. Turkey, again, has the lowest rate of service to 5 age group (26.2%). However, considering the age group whose enrolment rate is highest in Turkey, it is 5 age group. A number of long-term social and economic trends have contributed to increasing interest in the education of children under five over the past several decades (Barnett 2002; Barnett and

Boocock, 1998). Before 1960, the education of young children was regarded as primarily a matter of parenting in the home. Since that time the percentage of young children cared for by someone other than a parent has risen steadily (Barnett, 2002). The average enrolment rate of 3 age group in the early childhood education in OECD countries is 60.18%. The average rate of enrolment for this age group is 1.7% in Turkey. It can easily be said that the rate of enrolment in 3 age group is rather low in Turkey. The average enrolment rate of 4 age group in the early childhood education in OECD countries is 74.14%. The average rate of enrolment for 4

Table 3. Participation rates in day-care and preschool for children under six, 2004.

	Enrolment in daycare for the under 3 and pre-school from 3 to 6 years (%)			
	Under 3 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Australia	29.0	55.0	64.6	90.9
Austria	4.1	45.9	82.1	93.1
Belgium	38.5	99.3	99.9	99.7
Canada	19.0	-	-	-
Czech Republic	3.0	68.0	91.2	96.7
Denmark	61.7	81.8	93.4	93.9
Finland	35.0	37.7	46.1	54.6
France	26.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Germany	9.0	69.5	84.3	86.7
Greece	7.0	-	57.2	84.1
Hungary	6.9	71.0	92.3	97.8
Iceland	58.7	93.3	95.1	95.9
Ireland	15.0	48.0	46.6	100.0
Italy	6.3	98.7	100.0	100.0
Japan	15.2	67.3	95.2	96.6
Korea	59.4	66.4	27.5	86.7
Luxembourg	14.0	37.9	83.5	96.9
Mexico	3.0	22.1	66.4	95.9
Netherlands	39.0	32.3	74.0	98.4
New Zealand	32.1	82.1	95.1	100.0
Norway	43.7	79.4	86.9	89.0
Poland	2.0	26.1	35.7	46.2
Portugal	23.5	63.9	79.9	90.2
Slovak Repc.	17.7	60.3	71.7	84.7
Spain	20.7	95.9	100.0	100.0
Sweden	39.5	82.5	87.7	89.7
Switzerland	-	7.2	34.4	89.7
Turkey	-	1.7	3.4	26.2
United Kingdom	25.8	50.2	92.0	98.2

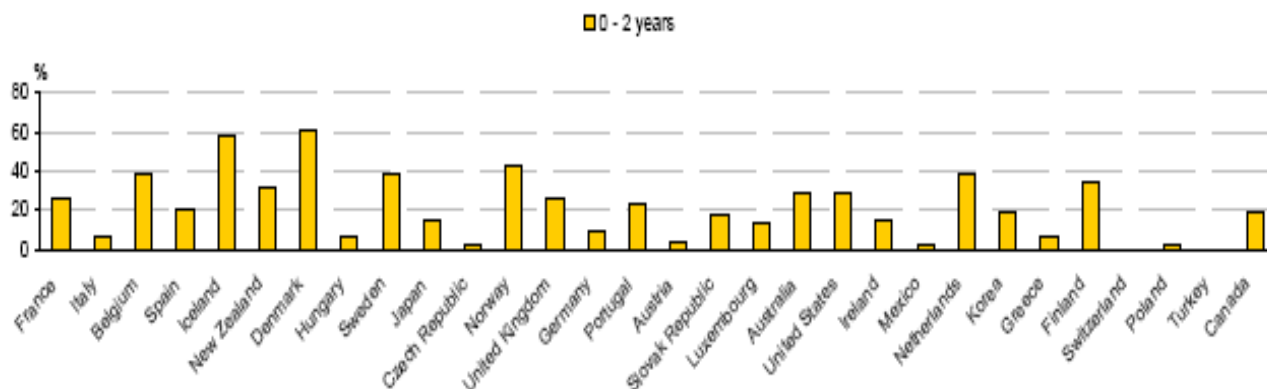
Source: OECD Family Database <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>.

age group is 3.4% in Turkey. The average enrolment rate of 5 age group in the early childhood education in OECD countries is 85.14%. The average rate of enrolment for 5 age group is 26.2% in Turkey. Based on numerical data, it is seen that the enrolment rates of 3, 4, 5 age groups in the early childhood education in Turkey is very low when they are compared with the enrolment rates of OECD countries.

In Turkey, private school give education to 3 - 6 age group, nursery classes give education to 5 - 6 age group, application kindergartens and nursery classes give education to 2 - 6 age group, mobile preschool education service give education to 5 - 6 age group and summer kindergartens give education 5 - 6 age group under the Ministry of National Education (MEB). Under the Institution of Social Service and Children Protection; children of 0 - 12 age group are educated in nursery schools, crèches give service to the children of 0 - 3 age group

and day time nursery schools give service to the children of 3 - 6 age group. It is interesting why the number of children benefiting from the early childhood education is low in Turkey although services are provided to different age groups. The reason for this may be the unawareness of families and their lack of information about the given services. There is a comparison between Turkey and OECD countries in terms of child-to staff and educators ratios in preschools.

Quality of childcare has many aspects such as standards of hygiene and safety, staff-to-child ratios and the size of groups, parent involvement and compliance with certain educational policies, sometimes laid down in a 'curriculum', which are key factors for regulating quality, qualifications, training and remuneration of childcare staff. The extent to which childcare and early education services facilitate parental work commitments is increasingly recognised as an important component of



1. See table PF11.1 for details of different reference years

Average enrolment rate of children aged three to five years of age in pre-school educational programmes (2004)

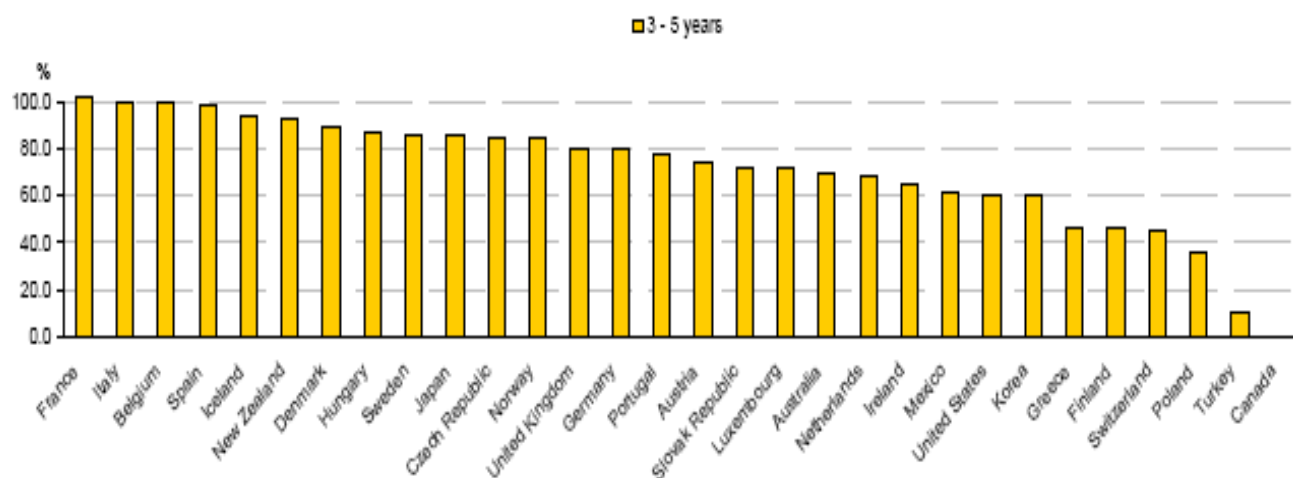


Figure 2. Child-to-staff ratios in preschools (Source: http://www.oecd.org/data_oecd/45/30/37864559.pdf).

quality. The objectives set and the means used to monitor and promote the adoption of high standards of quality of childcare and early education services differ across countries. Although restricted to a single aspect of quality, staff-to-child ratios give a quantitative indication of the frequency of contacts between carers/educators and children. Most countries have regulations specifying the child-to-staff ratio which typically increases with the age of children (OECD Family Database ud.). In Figure 2, it shows that the highest child to staff rations is in Mexico and then in Korea and Turkey consecutively. The highest child to educator ration is in Mexico again. It is followed by Korea, France, Turkey and Switzerland consecutively.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Preschool teachers think that school-family cooperation is insufficient in Turkey when it is compared with OECD

countries. However, according to Aktaş’s public opinion research with the title of “The Attitude of Parents towards Preschool Education and Preschool Education Institutions”, 70.6% of parents make a preliminary research about preschool institutions before they send their children to these institutions but only 8.1% of parents do not any research before they send their children to preschool institutions. In the same research, when the parents were asked whether they would participate to program if there were training programs for parents, 68,4% of parents said that they would participate every time and 12.5% of them said that they would sometimes participate. In this way, the evaluation of parents about themselves is different from that of the teachers about them.

Comparing the preschool education between Turkey and the other OECD countries, the issue they stress is that the age group range is very wide. It is thought that 5-6 age group benefit from preschool education actively.

The thought that preschool education is preparatory for primary education caused such a picture. Among the OECD countries reviewed, the pre-primary approach to education is found in many countries, e.g. Australia, Canada, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. These countries tend to introduce the contents and methods of primary schooling into early education, or as in the case of the United Kingdom, begin school at the age of 5 years (OECD, 2006). In many OECD countries, the opinion about preschool education is that it is preparatory for primary education. This makes a sense that the teachers took part in the research do not complain about how people name this education but complain about the applications. That, the teachers draw attention to the age group benefiting from preschool education in Turkey and makes it necessary to make a comparison based on available numeric data. Although, there are differences between the age groups benefiting from preschool education in Turkey and OECD countries, the age group benefit most in all countries is 5 age group. However, it is very low in Turkey when it is compared with other countries. Although, enrolment rate is high in many OECD countries for 5 age group, this rate is very low in Turkey for this age group. Although, the enrolment rate of 5 age group is higher in many OECD countries, this rate for 5 age group and -5 age groups is lower in Turkey, in comparison with the OECD countries. The highest rates of enrolment in preschool education are in France, Italy, Spain and Belgium. Although, the enrolment rate of children in preschool education increases day by day, the rate of enrolment in Turkey is very low when it is compared with OECD countries. There are many conditions caused such a consequence. The institutions giving preschool education in Turkey do not exist in the rural area densely. The institutions giving preschool education are more dense in the cities which are developed socio-economically. According to the data given by ministry of National Education (2003), the 18.90% of total preschool education service in Turkey is given in Ankara, 18.84% is given in Izmir and 12.45% is given in Istanbul (Early Childhood Policies: Wide spreading Governance and Structure Meting Report, 2003).

The children's attending preschool institutions level in urban is dense. The preschools which have been opened by the permission of Social Services and Children Protection Institution as well as the preschools opened under the public and private institutions are concentrated in big cities. (National Educational Statistics 2006 - 2007). It can also be said that the services are limited in the rural areas are limited (Eurydice, 2007). An other reason of the low number of children benefiting from preschool education maybe family factor. It is possible that the low number of children attending preschool education institution is a result of the fact that families are not aware about the benefits of preschool education or they have little information. Therefore, it will be beneficial to do acti-

vities for promoting the preschool education and informing the families. In many countries as well as Turkey, the term of "preschool education" is used instead of "early childhood education"; therefore, it makes a sense that this education is preparatory for primary education. The rate of early childhood education may also increase if this mistake of naming is corrected. The teachers believe that the number of preschool teachers should be increased; by this way, the teachers will not have to deal with many children. However, according to the Preschool Education Regulation, the students in the preschool institutions, namely kindergartens, nursery classes, and application classes are categorised by grouping. The ideal number for a group is expected to be not more than 25 and not less than 10. If the number of children exceeds the appropriate number for a group, a send group is made (Eurydice, 2007).

The teachers think that the fewer groups are, the more advantageous it is in terms of education. As a result of the fact that teachers stressed the number of educators should be increased in Turkey, the need of comparing the student- to educator and personnel ratios in Turkey and in OECD countries has come into being. Comparing student-to educator and personnel ratios in Turkey and OECD countries, it is seen that the highest student-personnel ratios are in Mexico, Korea and Turkey in the right order; and the highest student- educator ratios are in Mexico, Korea, France, Turkey and Switzerland in the right order. Although, Turkey is behind most of OECD countries in terms of the rates students benefiting from preschool education, it is one of the top countries in terms of student to educator and personnel ratios. This Picture can be evaluated in two ways. First, the low number of preschool children causes the number of teachers and personnel to be high proportionally. In another perspective, Turkey has given importance to educate more preschool teachers in recent years. Although, the current number of teachers is not regarded sufficient by the teachers, still it gives hope. Moreover, the number of educators is high as a consequence of the fact that there is no standard for the educators giving education. It is interesting that although, student to educator ratios are at the top of the order among the other countries, the teacher do not regard the number of teachers as sufficient. This condition can be assessed as the desire of the teachers for giving education in the class-room with very few children.

Another issue that the teachers want to be developed is making the education program by considering the regional and individual features. It is only in the Preschool Education Program for 36-72 months old children that the children taken to preschool education institutions are categorised as kindergartens and nursery classes students. By considering their development features, the activities in the program have been prepared in accordance with the features of the children. The Preschool Education Program for 36 - 72 months old children has

been prepared by means of making amendments. This was possible as a result of the information provided by specialists on the preschool education which has been applied since 1994. Also, the preparation of the preschool program was aided by the feedback from the applicators and under the light of contemporary program development, improvement and learning theories by considering the changing needs of the community (Eurydice 2007). Despite of all these, the evaluation of teachers in this way is interesting.

The issues, wanted by the teachers to be corrected have been developed due to the fact that importance has been given to early childhood education recently. Some teachers' demands which were not applied are taken into consideration and researches are made on them. However, preschool education is on the agenda recently in Turkey and the number of increased researches gives hope for the demands of the teachers to come true. The more people get awareness on the importance of preschool education in the accession process to European Union and more investments in this issue, the conditions will get better in Turkey for preschool education and as a result, Turkey will get to the level of OECD countries, which are advanced.

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