

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEMS OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE 2000s: A TYPICAL EXAMPLE FROM TURKEY

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Abstract – *The general opinion about the importance of pre-school education and about the positive effects of the educational curriculum on children, their families and today's society gains more supporters with each passing day. In particular, the discussions are concentrated on increasing the investment in pre-school education. Providing the pre-school education for children at an intended level depends on the physical conditions, choosing the curriculum and personnel well, and careful planning. The aim of this study is to examine the role of pre-school education in the Turkish education system and to propose suggestions for changes by identifying the problems of programme, control mechanisms, work regulations and personnel rights, physical environment, administration and administrators, staff, finance, parents, self-awareness and self development. It also aims to increase the quality of pre-school education in Turkey in all respects. In this study, a questionnaire has been designed to analyse and evaluate the opinions of Turkish pre-school teachers on 'the problems of pre-school education'. The subjects of the study are 1760 pre-school teachers from public or private educational institutions which are under the provision of either the Ministry of Education, or the Society for the Protection of Children, or practice schools within universities.*

Introduction

Nowadays the importance of a child's early development and the positive effects of a structured educational programme on young children and their parents find acceptance throughout the world. Studies on this subject are gaining an increasing significance. Discussions are centred mostly on investing in early childhood education (Myers, 1996).

Early childhood education can be defined as a process of education and development, which includes the period from birth to the day the child begins primary education, and which plays an important role in his or her subsequent life; during this period, psycho-motor, social-emotional, intellectual and language developments are completed to a great degree, and the personality is shaped by the parents and institutions (Oktay, 1985).

Since pre-school education represents the first step of a child's education, it gains a rightful significance. During this period, the quality of the education affects the growth and life of the child. A high-quality education increases the child's desire for learning and helps him or her to be successful in life (Aktan Kerem & Comert, 2003).

To attain a desired level of pre-school education, it is necessary to select the appropriate physical conditions, programme, and personnel, and to plan carefully (Oktay, 1999). Raising children in good health and in an ideal manner can only be achieved by recognising their development characteristics and their needs in view of these characteristics. Regardless of the level and the place of the education, it is necessary to understand the development stage, interests, needs, and capabilities of the child, the environmental conditions, and to have an idea about the problems that may be encountered. 'An effective education can only be discussed under these circumstances' (Kandır, 1999, p. 82). Without this feedback, it would be hard to implement an education programme, and, furthermore, it would lead to mistakes and even damages, since such a curriculum would be left to chance. 'Children, who cannot benefit from an effective educational curriculum, develop slowly and are bound to carry these negative marks throughout their lives' (Aral, Kandır & Canyasar, 2000, p. 13).

During the period of pre-school education, in order for children to acquire particular behaviours and to support their developments, the required educational styles can only be realised by curricula that meet the developments and needs of children in physically and socially healthy places, and by highly qualified teachers. The conditions affect the teachers' performance to a great degree, no matter what the qualifications of the teachers may be. Therefore, increasing the productivity of pre-school teachers depends on the improvement of work conditions and responding to the related problems (Saracho, 1988; Micklo, 1993). A study on the approach of pre-school teachers to the problems of physical facilities, plans and programmes, methods and techniques, and classroom and behavioural management, revealed that the teachers' perception of certain problems presents dissimilarities which depend on the length of their own education and on their professional experience. In Turkey, pre-school education problems are discussed in various milieus in search for solutions. The aim of this study is to offer some suggestions by examining and identifying the views of Turkish pre-school teachers about the issues of 'programme content, control mechanisms, work regulations and employee rights, physical environment, administration and administrators, classroom management, personnel, finance, parents, self-awareness and self-development'. This research aims to reach some conclusions that may benefit people interested in pre-school education (e.g., teachers, students, parents, administrators, university members, etc.).

Method

The participants

The subjects of the study were 1760 pre-school teachers working in: (i) governmental or private educational institutions under the control of the Ministry of Education; (ii) the Society for the Protection of Children; and (iii) practice schools within universities throughout Turkey. These teachers, which represent the study group, were selected by random sampling technique. At the planning stage, the study aimed to reach 40 provinces in Turkey, which represent 50% of the country. However, anticipating that some provinces would not participate, proposals were sent to 10 additional provinces. Eventually, the study covered 49 provinces, as it was decided to include all those who responded.

Data tools and procedure

The researchers prepared a questionnaire to gather the views of pre-school teachers on the problems of pre-school education in Turkey. The survey consisted of 25 questions which essentially dealt with four areas, namely: (i) personal information, such as the province/district they live in, gender, age, educational status, length of service, the type of school they work in; (ii) their views on the problems in the pre-school field in Turkey (the 2002 pre-school curriculum, personnel, physical environment, administration and administrators, classroom management, parents, control mechanisms, work regulations and employee rights, self-awareness and self-improvement, finance, and expansion); (iii) in-service training possibilities; and (iv) the themes, location and time of the in-service training they would like to attend.

The design of the questionnaire was completed in a number of steps. After scanning the related literature, the questions to be asked were identified and listed in a certain order and logical sequence. The questions dealing with personal information were placed in the first part of the questionnaire. With regards to the order of the remaining questions, a logical sequence from the general to the particular was followed. The questions, which were graded, were either close-ended or half-close-ended. Open-ended questions were avoided because of the difficulties in evaluating, coding and analysing the answers. Experts were consulted to refine the survey, and it was then reviewed in line with their recommendations. The questionnaire was first given as a 'preliminary survey' to a small group of respondents with similar characteristics of the sample group. After evaluating their responses with regards to the comprehension of the questions and the approximate answering time, the questionnaire was given its

final form. The survey was administered during the spring term (February to June) of the 2003-2004 scholastic year.

Data analysis and results

After completing the data collection phase, the incomplete questionnaires were removed before starting the data analysis by using the SPSS statistical package. The results of this analysis – namely, the frequency, percentage and chi-square values – are given in Tables 1-12.

TABLE 1: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by the institution in which they are employed

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Governmental schools under the control of Ministry of Education	1333	75.7
Private schools under the control of the Ministry of Education	206	11.7
Private Schools under the control of the Society for Protection of Children	143	8.1
Governmental schools under the control of the Society for Protection of Children	16	0.9
Schools within universities	42	2.4
Other	20	1.1
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 2: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by gender

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Women	1738	98.8
Men	22	1.3
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 3: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by gender

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
20 years and below	108	6.1
Between 21-25 years	532	30.2
Between 26-30 years	385	21.9
Between 31-35 years	252	14.3
Between 36-40 years	234	13.3
41 years and above	249	14.1
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 4: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by their educational status

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Graduates of Girls' Vocational Schools	356	20.2
Anadolu University Open Education Faculty Pre-School Training Department (specialised instructors)	211	12.0
Graduates of Child Development/ Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training School (junior colleges)	459	26.1
Graduates from Undergraduate Programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Education Schools (bachelor degree)	621	35.3
Graduates from Graduate Programmes of Child Development/ Pre-School Teacher Training/ Kindergarten Teacher Education Schools (masters degree)	33	1.9
Other	80	4.5
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 5: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by length of service

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	266	15.1
Between 1-5 years	593	33.7
Between 6-10 years	303	17.2
Between 11-15 years	221	12.6
Between 16-20 years	248	14.1
21 years and above	129	7.3
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 6: Frequency and percentage values of the classes taught by the pre-school teachers according to age groups

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
3-4 years	174	10.0
4-5 years	250	14.3
5-6 years	1320	75.7
Total	1744	100.0

TABLE 7: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers receiving in-service training

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Receiving	1091	61.9
Not receiving	669	38.1
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 8: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by their preferred location for in-service training

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
In my town	1392	79.1
At a holiday resort	198	11.3
In a big city	170	9.7
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 9: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by their preferred period for attending in-service training programmes

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Between 15-30 June	802	45.6
Between 1-15 September	445	25.3
During the semester break	118	6.7
During the summer vacation	395	22.4
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 10: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by their views about the priority of the problems of pre-school education

Area of concern	Not at all important		Not important		Undecided		Important		Very important	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Programme	19	1.1	56	3.2	120	6.8	487	27.7	1078	61.3
Personnel	19	1.1	44	2.5	116	6.6	553	31.4	1028	58.4
Physical environment	14	0.8	18	1.0	75	4.3	416	23.6	1237	70.3
Administration and administrators	23	1.3	42	2.4	135	7.7	533	30.3	1027	58.4
Classroom management	24	1.4	55	3.1	159	9.0	533	30.3	989	56.2
Parents	9	0.5	37	2.1	87	4.9	514	29.2	1113	63.2
Control mechanisms	33	1.9	104	5.9	242	13.8	734	41.7	647	36.8
Work regulations and employee rights	9	0.5	52	3.0	253	14.4	616	35.0	830	47.2
Self-awareness and self-improvement	17	1.0	39	2.2	132	7.5	423	24.0	1149	65.3
Finance	13	0.7	52	3.0	247	14.0	619	35.2	829	47.1
Expansion	19	1.1	45	2.6	147	8.4	477	27.1	1072	60.9

Chi-square tests were applied to examine the relationships between: (i) the type of institution and personnel / administration and administrators / control mechanisms / work regulations and employee rights / finance; (ii) age and classroom management / control mechanisms / work regulations and employee rights / finance; (iii) education level and administration and administrators / classroom management / parents / work regulations and employee rights / self-awareness and self-improvement / finance / expansion; (iv) length of service and classroom management / parents / control mechanisms / work regulations and employee rights / finance / expansion. Table 12 presents the above listed relationships between the pre-school teachers' demographic information and the problems of pre-school education that were found to be meaningful. The only relationship that was not found to be meaningful was that between the 'type of institution' and the 'work regulations and employee rights'.

TABLE 11: The pre-school teachers' preferred topics for inclusion in in-service training programmes

Categories	1 st Preference	2 nd Preference	3 rd Preference
	%	%	%
Turkish language	6.9	6.4	11.3
Music	5.1	7.8	4.1
Play	4.2	7.0	10.5
Techniques of understanding the child	39.2	14.6	12.0
Parental training	13.7	24.2	12.5
Preparation for literacy	3.2	5.1	10.0
Drama	15.8	16.3	15.0
Creativity	6.8	17.0	21.1
Other (Computer, English, etc.)	5.1	1.6	3.5

The statistically significant relationships displayed Table 12 deserve some comments. To start with, the type of institution in which teachers work was found to be meaningfully related to the pre-school problematic issues of personnel ($p < .05$), administration and administrators ($p < .01$), control mechanisms ($p < .05$), and finance ($p < .01$). With regards to the issue of personnel, the analysis shows that it is the teachers working in an institution within a university that consider this issue as most important (85.7%). The issue of personnel is least seen as important by teachers working in governmental schools under the control of the Ministry of Education (56.6%). Again, the problems related to administration and administrators are most seen as important by teachers attached to a university-linked institution (73.8%), and least seen as important by teachers in public school administered by the Ministry of Education (54.5%).

Teachers working in institutions under the control of the Society for the Protection of Children are most convinced about the importance of control mechanisms (50.3%). The least convinced of this are the teachers working in institutions under the control of the Ministry of Education (34.2%). At the same time, teachers working in institutions under the control of the Ministry of Education are the group of teachers that is mostly convinced about the importance of the issue

TABLE 12: Meaningful relationships between the pre-school teachers' demographic data and the problems of pre-school education

Meaningful Relationships	χ^2 (degrees of freedom = 20)	<i>p</i>
Institution Type / Personnel	33.768	.028*
Institution Type / Administration & Administrators	43.346	.002**
Institution Type / Control Mechanisms	35.080	.020*
Institution Type / Finance	55.949	.000**
Age / Classroom Management	37.145	.011*
Age / Control Mechanisms	39.054	.007**
Age / Work Regulations & Employee Rights	42.091	.003**
Age / Finance	48.776	.000**
Education Level / Administration & Administrators	41.884	.003**
Education Level / Classroom Management	34.732	.022*
Education Level / Parents	38.577	.008**
Education Level / Work Regulations & Employee Rights	42.135	.003**
Education Level / Self-Awareness & Self-Improvement	35.777	.016*
Education Level / Finance	89.961	.000**
Education Level / Expansion	41.136	.004**
Length of Service / Classroom Management	32.838	.035*
Length of Service / Parents	53.986	.000**
Length of Service / Control Mechanisms	40.751	.004**
Length of Service / Work Regulations & Employee Rights	40.523	.004**
Length of Service / Finance	41.971	.003**
Length of Service / Expansion	34.745	.024*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

of finance (48.0%). Finance is least seen as important by teachers working in institutions under the control of the Society for the Protection of Children (25.0%).

The age of the pre-school teachers was found to be significantly related to the issues of classroom management ($p < .05$), control mechanisms ($p < .01$), work regulations and employee rights ($p < .01$), and finance ($p < .01$). The younger teachers – those aged 20 years and below – are the most concerned with the issue of classroom management (64.8%). Classroom management is least seen as important by teachers in the 31-35 year-old bracket (50.8%). Teachers aged between 21-25 years are the most concerned about the problem of control mechanism (42.5%), whilst teachers in the 36-40 age bracket give the least importance to this issue (30.8%).

The work regulations and employee rights are most considered as important by teachers between 36-40 years (53.0%). These regulations and rights, on the other hand, are least considered as important by the younger teachers of 20 years or less (41.7%). Teachers between 26-30 years are, as a group, the most convinced about the importance of the finance issue (52.2%). Finance is least seen as important by the younger teachers (28.7%).

The level of education of the pre-school teachers was found to be meaningfully related to the issues of administration and administrators ($p < .01$), classroom management ($p < .05$), parents ($p < .01$), work regulations and employee rights ($p < .01$), self-awareness and self-improvement ($p < .05$), finance ($p < .01$), and expansion ($p < .01$). The issue of administration and administrators is most seen as important by teachers from the graduate programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training (69.7%). Teachers trained in vocational schools, on the other hand, give the least importance to this issue (50.5%). Again, the teachers from the graduate programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/ Kindergarten Teacher Training are the most certain about the importance of classroom management (63.6%). This issue is least considered as important by teachers trained in vocational schools (49.9%).

The issue of parents is most seen as important by graduate teachers from the four-year programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training (66.5%). Once again, it is the teachers trained in vocational schools who are least convinced about the importance of this issue (54.7%). In contrast, these teachers from vocational schools are the most convinced about the importance of the issue of work regulations and employee rights (51.4%). This issue is least seen as important by the teachers who qualified as 'specialised instructors' from the Open Education Faculty (40.8%).

The issue of self-awareness and self-improvement is most seen as important by the graduate teachers from the graduate programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training (75.8%). At the other

end, the teachers who followed the two-year undergraduate programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training are the least certain about the importance of this issue (60.1%).

Teachers who graduated from the four-year undergraduate programmes are most convinced about the importance of both finance and expansion (69.7% and 66.7% respectively). In contrast, these two issues are least considered as important by teachers trained in vocational schools (36.0% and 52.8% respectively).

The length of service emerged to be significantly related to the issues of classroom management ($p < .05$), parents ($p < .01$), control mechanisms ($p < .01$), work regulations and employee rights ($p < .01$), finance ($p < .01$), and expansion ($p < .05$). In particular, whilst the issue of classroom management was most considered as important by teachers with less than 1 year of service (60.5%), teachers with length of service between 16-20 years emerged at the least concerned with this issue (51.6%). Teachers with less than 1 year of experience were again the group of teachers to give most importance to the issue of parents (69.5%). On the other hand, parents are least seen as important by teachers with 21 or more years of experience (48.1%).

The importance of the issue of control mechanisms is at its awareness amongst teachers with a teaching experience between 1-5 years (38.8%). Teachers with 21 or more years of experience are, in contrast, the least convinced about the importance of this issue (27.9%). Teachers with an experience between 16-20 years are the most convinced of the importance of the issue of work regulations and employee rights (56.5%). This issue is least seen as important by teachers with less than 1 year of experience (36.8%).

Teachers with teaching experience between 6-10 years form the group of teachers that is most certain of the importance of finance (53.8%). On the other hand, the least convinced about this importance are the teachers with 21 or more years of experience (39.5%). Teachers with experience between 6-10 years are again the group that is most in favour of expansion (65.7%). The least keen about expansion are the teachers with less than 1 year of experience (56.0%).

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the views of Turkish pre-school teachers on 'the problems of pre-school education'. After identifying this situation, the next step is to develop a set of recommendations. The participants of the study consider 'physical environment', 'self-awareness and self-improvement' and 'parents' as the three most important issues. An education that helps children acquire the desired behaviours and that supports their development

can only be provided in a physically and socially healthy environment. The participating teachers in fact chose 'physical environment' as the most important issue. Interestingly enough, the only existing standards that are laid down for pre-school education concern the physical environment. But these physical environment standards are not being followed in pre-school education institutions. Given this situation, the Ministry of Education and the Society for the Protection of Children need first to re-examine these standards and then to ensure that everyone abides by them.

Self-awareness and self-improvement was identified by the participating teachers as the second most important issue. The results of the chi-square test reveal that teachers who graduated from the four-year undergraduate programmes consider the self-awareness and self-improvement process to be more important than teachers coming from junior colleges. This suggests that whilst teachers graduating from the four-year programmes are particularly eager to improve themselves, teachers from junior colleges are not so keen about this and are not as open to new ideas in their field. Sahin, Avci & Turla (1997) conclude from their research on the problems of pre-school teachers that these individuals consider self-awareness and development as an important issue because they do not have the time and the possibility to follow new source material or to attend conferences and seminars. This result seems to be in line with the findings of the present study.

The point appears to be that teachers and administrators should receive in-service training at specified intervals in order to be able to follow innovations, enrich their teaching, gain self-awareness and improve themselves. This would however require an increase in the number of in-service training programmes on offer. These programmes should be developed according to the demands, needs and expectations of pre-school teachers, and teachers' attendance should be encouraged. The majority of the teachers who participated in this study graduated from the four-year undergraduate programmes of Child Development or Pre-School Teacher Training, and their length of service is mostly in the range between 1-5 years. The fact that these teachers – with relatively fresh experience in the profession – ranked self-awareness and self-improvement as the second most important issue, necessitates the re-examination of the quality of undergraduate programmes.

The majority of the teachers stated that they would prefer to attend in-service training programmes held in the city where they live. Their favoured topics for inclusion in such programmes are 'techniques to understand children', 'drama' and 'parental education'; these programmes should be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the universities. The techniques to understand children should be a compulsory element of undergraduate programmes, rather than an elective course. Teachers should give in turn more

weight to creative activities in their teaching plans. As to the economisation principle, which is one of the main features of pre-school education, teachers may engage in projects aimed at saving in appropriate areas. For instance, the left over materials can be recycled and reused for other activities, and children can be taught more efficiently when teachers follow new ideas and include them in their plans. It is thus important that teachers keep this principle in mind and apply it to their professional lives.

In addition, 2+2 undergraduate completion programmes should be offered to the teachers who finish from the junior colleges of Child Development Teacher Training. The universities should develop and implement in turn an appropriate curriculum in this field. For, as revealed by McMullen & Alat's study (2002) on the beliefs and problems of pre-school teachers, these teachers must have a deep knowledge of the development of children if they are to give their pupils an education that takes their own development into consideration. Teachers' knowledge about children's development is then expected to reflect in new approaches to planning that lead to the provision of a proper education for children.

The teachers in the study identified parental training as the third most important issue. In particular, the chi-square test established that parental training is mostly seen as important by the teachers who graduated from the four-year training programmes. This indicates that teachers with a bachelor's degree are the most convinced about the importance of parental training. This finding parallels a result that emerged from a longitudinal study by Bracey & Stellar (2003) concerning the effectiveness of pre-school education. According to Bracey & Stellar (2003), parents with a high educational level attach more importance to their children's education, and these parents are particularly sensitive about their children benefiting from pre-school education. Since educational activities offered during early childhood are generally insufficient in Turkey, it becomes important that parents gain more awareness and that measures be taken to provide support in areas with highest needs. For instance, parental training activities may be organised by teachers and related experts at elementary schools; an appropriate environment for such activities may be created at village clinics; parental training may be declared compulsory at institutions that employ a number of people; and non-governmental organisations, municipalities, media organisations, universities and volunteers may be encouraged to increase their activities in this area (Bekman, 2003).

The teachers in the study stated that they do not consider control mechanisms, classroom management, and administration and administrators as major issues. According to the results of the chi-square test, whilst teachers working at institutions attached to universities perceive administration and administrators as an important problem, teachers working at governmental institutions attached to the Ministry of Education do not. Considering that these latter teachers work in

public pre-schools, it becomes once more apparent that there is a necessity to review urgently the administration and control systems. For not only is the selection of administrators who are directly involved in this field primordial, but the number of pre-school inspectors need be increased from amongst the holders of a relevant bachelor's degree.

With regards to the relationship between length of service and classroom management, the present findings suggest that it is the inexperienced teachers who are particularly concerned about classroom management. It appears in fact that as teachers gain in experience the less important they are likely to see the issue of classroom management. This suggests that when teachers are exposed to real-life situations as part of their education, they should also be trained in classroom management. To some extent, the present finding agrees with Boocock's (1995) conclusion from a study on the efficiency of pre-school education in 13 countries that pre-school teachers, in general, view classroom management as an important process.

Recommendations

Since the educational services in Turkey are particularly insufficient in the early childhood period, parents should be made aware about the benefits of pre-school education, and supportive measures should be developed. As discussed in the previous section, there are various ways in which parental training can become a successful reality for the benefit of the whole community. This calls for the various factions within the community to give a helping hand, which may be directly professional (e.g., teachers, schools, universities) or more of an awareness raising nature (e.g., non-governmental and media organisations). The ultimate target is to achieve nationwide parental training.

Teachers and administrators should receive in-service training on a regular basis in order to keep up with the innovations and consequently to enrich their teaching and work practices. This training, which would also benefit freshly graduate teachers, may also address the regulations and the programmes of pre-school educational institutions. For this to happen, there must be an increase in the number of in-service training programmes on offer. It is moreover of utmost importance that these training programmes are designed according to the demands, needs and expectations of pre-school teachers, who must be encouraged in turn to attend these programmes. Given that most teachers prefer to have in-service training programmes in their towns, the organisers would do well to take this into consideration in their planning. The identification of the needs to be addressed in such programmes would also benefit when universities and the Ministry of Education cooperate together.

Selecting administrators from amongst the professional people with pre-school education experience would ensure a more efficient management. It is also recommended that the administrators themselves attend training programmes that address fundamental topics of pre-school education as well as present the latest international developments in this field. Apart from increasing the number of inspectors assigned to pre-schools, it is also important to ensure that these individuals are well educated in this field. Needless to say, the current primary school inspectors should also be trained in pre-school education.

In order to improve the quality of the current practitioners, 2+2 undergraduate studies completion programmes should be set up for those teachers who have completed their child development teacher training in junior colleges. Universities should design and implement an appropriate curriculum for this purpose. Again, pre-school teacher training departments at universities should be provided with qualified staff and technical facilities, and practice schools should be opened within universities to support their undergraduate programmes. It is also recommended – especially in view of the present findings – that ‘techniques of understanding the child’ should be included in undergraduate programmes as a compulsory course instead of an elective. Additional graduate programmes on pre-school education should also be launched.

If the pre-school sector is to flourish, its budget share has to be increased. Indeed, many of the recommendations listed above cannot come to fruition unless there is more money pumped into the system. This does not however exclude that teachers must keep in mind the economisation principle and the imperative to be more creative in the activities they plan. At present, all Turkish pre-school teachers are expected to follow the goals of the Pre-School Education 2002 Curriculum. Still, there is an urgent need for the Ministry of Education and the Social Services Institution to review the current standards of early childhood education and to ensure unity within the system. As part of this reform, different models (Multi-Purpose Centres of Pre-School Education, Home-Centred Education, Mobile Education, Summer School, etc.) can be developed in order for early childhood education to spread nationwide.

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