

Inclusive Education in Turkey

Definition:

Policy and Implementation: Special education in Turkey focusses on integration rather than inclusion. However, educating disabled children constitutes an important aspect of inclusive education in Turkey. There are many obstacles in order to negotiate to create an education system for children with special needs. Foremost among them is the inadequacy in collecting reliable and systematic data about those children. Data shows that a substantial number of children with special needs are not within the education system.

Literacy and graduation data also suggests that women with special needs are more disadvantaged than men. This situation is a striking example of a disadvantageousness based on gender. In Turkey, children with special needs get education in three categories. The least limiting education type for those children is full time mainstream education. In schools within mainstream education, education in special classrooms seen as the mid-limiting category. The most limiting education is in special education schools, generally designed for children with similar specific needs. Boarding special schools, though they are fewer in number are seen as the most limiting of all.

When we look at the number of children who can get special education in primary and secondary levels, we can observe an increase in numbers year by year. In Turkey, there are Guidance and Research Centers that carry out assessments to determine the child's needs and the educational institution most suitable to meet their needs. However, this diagnostic process is currently limited in terms of the specialists and diagnostic tools and materials available. In addition, recent studies by UNICEF and Ministry of Education of Turkey revealed that Turkey diagnosing children with disabilities and special needs in early ages requires improvement.

Teacher education:

Needs and Challenges: In order to develop an inclusive system for children with diverse special needs, Turkey needs many developments. When developing international good practices and international and national laws should be taken into consideration. These good practices show that in order for an inclusive education system to be established, different stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents and school management should work collaboratively.