



# Legal Foundations and Comparative Analysis of Early Childhood Education Practices in The Turkish World\*

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## Abstract

Early childhood education is a very important period for the education and development of the child. Many critical stages in the mental, physical and spiritual development of the child take place in this period. In addition, the gains to be obtained in this period form the basis of the child's education and academic development. Today, while the prevalence of early childhood education is close to 100% in many developed countries, this is not at the desired level in the countries that make up the Turkish World. The aim of this study is to examine the early childhood education in a comprehensive manner in independent Turkish states. In this context, as working group; Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Cyprus, Turkey, and Uzbekistan's document analysis related to early childhood education was carried out adhering to the title specified in the data collection tool. Historical analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. According to the data obtained; The prevalence ratio of pre-school education is the most in Turkey with 45.4%, and the least in Uzbekistan with 23.8%. It is seen that while the start of early childhood education in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and Turkey dates back to primary school, it begins in the early 1900s in other countries. Age classification varies in every country and the education is carried out through this classification in the early childhood education institutions. When the teacher training programs are considered, the teaching profession is acquired through undergraduate education in all countries. However, the right to teach is given in 2-4 years in Azerbaijan, 3-5 years in Kyrgyzstan and in 4 years and 4+1 supplementary training in Kazakhstan, TRNC and Turkey.

**Keywords:** Turkish World; Early Childhood Education; Teacher Training; Document Review; Historical Research.

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## Landasan Hukum dan Analisis Perbandingan Praktik Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini di Dunia Turki

### Abstrak

Pendidikan anak usia dini merupakan masa yang sangat penting bagi pendidikan dan perkembangan anak. Banyak tahap kritis dalam perkembangan mental, fisik dan spiritual anak terjadi pada periode ini. Selain itu, keuntungan yang akan diperoleh pada periode ini menjadi dasar bagi pendidikan dan pengembangan akademik anak. Saat ini, sementara prevalensi pendidikan anak usia dini mendekati 100% di banyak negara maju, ini tidak pada tingkat yang diinginkan di negara-negara yang membentuk Dunia Turki. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pendidikan anak usia dini secara komprehensif di negara-negara Turki merdeka. Dalam konteks ini, sebagai kelompok kerja; Analisis dokumen Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgistan, Siprus, Turki, dan Uzbekistan terkait pendidikan anak usia dini dilakukan sesuai dengan judul yang ditentukan dalam alat pengumpulan data. Analisis historis, salah satu metode penelitian kualitatif, digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Menurut data yang diperoleh; Rasio prevalensi pendidikan pra-sekolah adalah yang paling banyak di Turki dengan 45,4%, dan paling sedikit di Uzbekistan dengan 23,8%. Terlihat bahwa sementara dimulainya pendidikan anak usia dini di Republik Turki Siprus Utara (TRNC) dan Turki dimulai sejak sekolah dasar, itu dimulai pada awal 1900-an di negara lain. Klasifikasi usia bervariasi di setiap negara dan pendidikan dilakukan melalui klasifikasi ini di lembaga pendidikan anak usia dini. Ketika program pelatihan guru dipertimbangkan, profesi guru diperoleh melalui pendidikan sarjana di semua negara. Namun, hak untuk mengajar diberikan dalam 2-4 tahun di Azerbaijan, 3-5 tahun di Kirgistan dan dalam 4 tahun dan 4+1 pelatihan tambahan di Kazakhstan, TRNC dan Turki.

**Kata kunci:** Dunia Turki; Pendidikan usia dini; Pelatihan guru; Tinjauan Dokumen; Penelitian Sejarah

### Правовые основы и сравнительный анализ практик дошкольного образования в тюркском мире

#### Абстрактный

Дошкольное образование является очень важным периодом для воспитания и развития ребенка. В этот период проходят многие критические этапы в умственном, физическом и духовном развитии ребенка. Кроме того, достижения, которые должны быть получены в этот период, составляют основу образования и академического развития ребенка. Сегодня, в то время как распространенность дошкольного образования близка к 100% во многих развитых странах, она не находится на желаемом уровне в странах, составляющих тюркский мир. Целью данного исследования является всестороннее изучение дошкольного образования в независимых турецких государствах. В этом контексте, как рабочая группа; Азербайджан, Казахстан, Кыргызстан, Кипр, Турция и Узбекистан Анализ документов, касающихся дошкольного образования, был проведен в соответствии с заголовком, указанным в инструменте сбора данных. В исследовании был использован исторический анализ, один из качественных методов исследования. По полученным данным; Коэффициент распространенности дошкольного образования больше всего в Турции (45,4%), а меньше всего в Узбекистане (23,8%). Видно, что в то время как начало дошкольного образования в Турецкой Республике Северного Кипра (ТРСК) и Турции восходит к начальной школе, в других странах оно начинается в начале 1900-х годов. Возрастная классификация различается в каждой стране, и обучение осуществляется по этой классификации в учреждениях дошкольного образования. Когда речь идет о программах подготовки учителей, профессия учителя приобретает на уровне бакалавриата во всех странах. Однако право преподавания дается через 2-4 года в Азербайджане, 3-5 лет в Кыргызстане и через 4 года и дополнительное обучение 4+1 в Казахстане, ТРСК и Турции.

Ключевые слова: тюркский мир; Дошкольное образование; Курсы для преподавателей; Обзорный документ; Исторические исследования.

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Early childhood education is a period that covers the 0-8 age range and forms the basis of life. In Turkey, it is used synonymously with the concept of preschool. In other words, Pre-school education, which covers the education of 0-72 months old children in Turkey, is considered as early childhood education (Güven & Efe Azkeskin, 2016). The qualified education to be given to the child during this period will enable him to participate in society as a happy and peaceful individual with all development areas at the desired level in his future life. Today, research in psychology and education provides a better understanding of the importance of childhood and adolescence.

In parallel with the rapid development in science, studies on early childhood education show that it is predicted that children who grow up in adverse social and economic conditions may be deficient in all aspects of development (Gülaçtı, 2012). However, brain research, developmental research and educational practices have revealed the importance of starting education at an early age in order to raise generations with qualified, healthy and desired behaviors. Researches on children's development, needs, learning situations, interests and similar subjects clearly reveal the developmental differences between children who receive early childhood education and those who do not (Koçyiğit, 2016).

According to the data of the European Union Statistical Center Eurostat (2021), in the European Union (EU) in 2019, approximately 97% of children between the ages of 3 and the age of starting compulsory education at primary level received pre-school education. This rate is 38% in Turkey. In addition, this rate is quite low in other countries that make up the Turkish World. The aim of this research is to comprehensively examine early childhood education in independent Turkish States. No similar research could be found in the literature review. For this reason, it can be said that the research is very important research. In addition, the fact that early childhood education is current and important today, and the studies carried out in recent years for the spread of early childhood education especially in the Turkish World reveal that the research is a current study.

## **B. METHODS**

### *Model of the Research*

This research is a historical research based on the examination of documents related to qualitative and quantitative data. Historical research is the

systematic search for information in order to analyze, interpret and describe the past (Wiersma, 2000). These studies, which are carried out to describe the events or phenomena in the past in detail, can be evaluated within the framework of qualitative and quantitative research, depending on whether the data is numerically weighted or not (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In addition, this type of research can be considered as descriptive research as it is oriented to understand, explain and interpret the past situations (Wiersma, 2000). Descriptive research is a research approach that aims to describe the event or situation that is the subject of the research as it exists. The event, individual or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be defined within its own conditions (Karasar, 2019). In this context, this research can be expressed as historical research since it is a research that aims to reveal the situations that occurred in the past independently of the researcher.

#### *Working Group*

The working group of the research consists of Independent Turkish States Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, TRNC, Uzbekistan and Turkey. Turkmenistan was excluded from the study because sufficient scientific data could not be reached. Demographic data about the countries that make up the study group are given in Table 1 in alphabetical order.

**Table 1.**

#### Demographic Data

Country	Total population	Age Population	Number of Children Going to School	Number of Teachers	Number of Institutions	Prevalence Level
Azerbaijan	9.998.500	445.144	126.866	16.934	1803	28,4
Kazakhstan	18.321.606	2.715.282	880.896	94.838	10.314	32,4
Kyrgyzstan	6.389.500	533.408	197.152	7694	1497	36,9
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)	286.257	---	7360	670	507*	---
Uzbekistan	33.255.538	2.903.256	690.975	---	5138	23,8
Turkey	82.003.882	3.446.725	1.564.813	93.302	31.813*	45,4

*\* Number of Branches*

When Table 1 is examined; The total population of Azerbaijan is 9,998,500 according to 2019 data (Azerbaijan State Statistics Committee, 2019b). Again, according to 2019 data, it is seen that the population of preschool age is 445,144, the number of children going to school is 126,866, the number of preschool teachers is 16,934, the number of preschool institutions is 1,803 and the prevalence of early childhood education is 28,4% (Azerbaijan State Statistics Committee, 2019a).

According to 2019 data, the total population of Kazakhstan is 18,321,606, the population of preschool age is 2,715,282, the number of children attending school is 880,896, the number of preschool teachers is 94,838, the number of preschool institutions is 10,314 and the prevalence of early childhood education is 32,4% (Kazakhstan Statistics Committee, 2019).

According to 2019 data, Kyrgyzstan has a total population of 6,389,500 (National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2019b), the pre-school age population is 533,408, the number of children attending school is 197,152, the number of preschool teachers is 7,694, the number of preschool institutions is 1,497 and the prevalence of early childhood education. level of 36.9% (National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2019a).

The most recent census published in the State Planning Organization of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the figures for 2011. According to these data, the total population is 286,257 people (TRNC State Planning Organization, 2017), data on the total population of the country could not be reached. The number of children going to school is 7,360, the number of preschool teachers is 670, and the number of preschool branches is 507 (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus [TRNC] Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2019). The prevalence level could not be found because the age population data were not known.

According to 2019 data, the total population of Uzbekistan is 32,390,000 (State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2019b), the pre-school age population is 3,445,725, and the number of children attending school is 690,975. The number of preschool teachers in Uzbekistan could not be reached. The number of pre-school institutions is 5,138 and the prevalence of early childhood education is 23.8% (State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2019a). In Uzbekistan, the ministry of preschool education was established in 2017 as part of the 2017-2021 preschool education campaign. According to 2018 data, the total population of Turkey is 82,003,882 (Turkish

Statistical Institute [TUIK], 2018), the pre-school age population is 3.446.725, the number of children going to school is 1.564,813, the number of preschool teachers is 93,302, the number of preschool branches is 31,813. and the prevalence level of early childhood education is 45.4% (National Education Statistics, 2019).

#### *Data Collection Tool*

As a data collection tool, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Review Form, developed by the researcher, was used in the context of the purpose of the research. While preparing the form, the literature related to the research was examined and 9 research criteria were determined. The ECE Review Form was sent to 5 expert academicians to get their opinions. As a result of the feedback from the experts, the research criteria were updated in line with the suggestions, and the ECE Review Form was finalized. In this context, the criteria subject to research are; 1. Legal foundations of early childhood education; 2. History and current status of early childhood education; 3. Structuring of institutions and targeted gains; 4. Teacher training strategies are determined as the duties and responsibilities of the teacher. Research data were collected based on these titles.

The data sources of the research are from the Independent Turkish States; Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, TRNC, Uzbekistan and Turkey are the primary data sources that deal with the structure, historical processes, current legal status and teacher training policies of early childhood education (data published by the statistical institutions of the countries, current education laws and official web pages of the relevant states. data covering the established criteria). In this context, the publications of the relevant states containing this data, the relevant laws and published statistical information have been examined.

#### *Data Collection and Analysis*

In the study, written documents in the countries of the research were collected by the researcher. In this process, the embassies, consulates and designated academicians of the relevant countries were contacted and materials were requested. In addition, other data were obtained by examining the official websites of the relevant states in line with the research criteria. The data obtained from the electronic environment were translated by two people who are experts in the languages of the relevant countries and Russian language and were subjected to examination by document review method. Document review is the systematic examination of records or documents available as a data source, which includes the analysis of written materials containing information on the topics to be researched. The obtained data were analyzed by descriptive analysis method.

In descriptive analysis, direct quotations are frequently used to reflect the views of the individuals interviewed or observed in a striking way. The purpose of descriptive analysis is to present the findings to the reader in an organized and interpreted form. The data obtained for this purpose is first described in a systematic and understandable way. Then the descriptions are explained, interpreted and some conclusions are reached (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

In this context, according to the research criteria determined in the ECE Review Form, which was prepared as a data collection tool, the laws on early childhood education and teacher training of the countries that make up the study group, preschool education program books, official statistical data and academic studies that reveal the historical process related to early childhood education publications were reviewed.

## **C. RESULT AND CONCLUSION**

### **1. The Rights of Children in Pre-School Education**

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on pre-school education in Azerbaijan (2019), the responsibilities of the state are as follows; a). Formation and implementation of state policy in the field of preschool education; b). Control of the compliance of the activities of all state - private preschool education institutions with this Law and technical regulations; c). To provide budget arrangements; d). Appointing and dismissing the heads of institutions; e). To provide educational content to all institutions; f). Creating a database for the coordination of pre-school education institutions; g). Approving general health and hygiene requirements and child accommodation standards; h). To publish or cancel the activities of institutions; i). To determine the accreditation and approval rules, to accredit and approve; j). To prepare educational materials of government institutions; k). To provide children's nutrition and medical services in government institutions; l). Developing mechanisms that encourage the establishment and development of institutions; m). To improve the educational process and management in state institutions; n). To ensure that children of foreign nationality and stateless persons receive equal education of citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan as well as residents of the Republic of Azerbaijan; o). To improve the quality and scientific-methodological support of education and the scope of preschool education of children; p). To determine the procedure for admission to preschool educational institutions; q). To create conditions for pre-school education of foreigners and stateless persons legally residing in the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic.

The rights of children in pre-school education are expressed in the law as follows; a). To receive high-quality education in a spiritually and psychologically sound pedagogical environment; b). To protect the person from humiliation and all kinds of physical and psychological violence; c). To be protected from negative information or propaganda; d). Providing access to free medical care; e). To provide quality food in accordance with the standards; f). It is the effective regulation of leisure and leisure time and the provision of favorable conditions for the development of creative possibilities (Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2019).

According to the Education Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, adopted in 2007 in Kazakhstan with amendments to its various articles, the state compulsory preschool education and training is the general education curriculum for preschool education and training, taking into account the specifics of activities for preschool children. "General education curriculum of pre-school education and training; a). To ensure continuity in pre-school and primary education by taking into account the principles of education, upbringing, development and rehabilitation of children; b). To educate the needs, inclinations and abilities of each child; c). The general education curriculum of preschool education simply builds the skills of reading, writing, writing and applying linguistics and is to provide the same basic conditions for learning in primary education. Also; a). The education of children up to the age of 6 (7) in preschool institutions is carried out in pre-school institutions; b). Pre-school preparation is mandatory. Education; It is carried out in pre-school classes in preschool, general education schools, high schools and gymnasiums; c). Pre-school preparation is free in state-owned educational institutions (Kazakh Republic Education Law, 2007).

According to the education law adopted in Kyrgyzstan in 2003 and finalized with various amendments until 2015, pre-school education is; a). "Pre-school education; It forms the basis for individual, physical, intellectual and moral development; b). The ground is prepared for preschool age children in the physical, moral and intellectual development of the child; c). It is aimed to provide financial and material support to all segments of the population and to provide access to education services; d). Preschool children; It is aimed to support the individual abilities of children with age, physical, mental health and development; e). The relationship between preschool education organizations and parents is subject to the agreement between the parties, there is no restriction on rights with this law; f). Preschool education institutions serve from 6 months to 7 years old; g). Pre-school education is carried out in pre-school institutions of



municipal and private preschool institutions and alternative education structures (Kyrgyzstan Education Law, 2003).

In addition, according to Kyrgyzstan's early childhood education and childcare state educational standards; a). "To provide opportunities for equal access to primary school children; b). To ensure the participation of interested parties; c). To protect the legitimate rights and interests of the child, based on democratization; d). To improve the quality of the educational process with various software and scientific and methodological support; e). Supporting children with special needs through inclusive education; f). To support the development of children with developmental games; g). Creating a safe gaming and development environment; h). To increase the effectiveness and quality of the programs (Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2012)."

Preschool education in the TRNC is carried out with the TRNC National Education Law, which was enacted in 1986 and finalized with the amendments made in 1992, 2002 and 2006. According to this law, the scope of pre-school education; It covers the education of children who have not reached the age of primary education, the pre-school education to be carried out by the state lasts for one or two years and is expanded according to a program to cover the entire pre-school education age population. "In addition, the aims and duties of pre-school education are expressed as follows; a). To ensure that children develop in terms of body, mind and emotions, and acquire good habits and useful skills; b). To prepare children for primary education in all aspects; c). To create a suitable environment for children coming from unfavorable environmental and family conditions; d). To ensure that children speak Turkish correctly and beautifully.

In addition, the establishment and structuring strategies of pre-school education; a). Pre-primary education institutions can be opened as kindergarten classes affiliated to primary schools in public schools or as practice classes affiliated with other relevant education institutions, or they can be established as separate kindergartens; b). It is expressed as children who have completed the age of four or five before 31 December of that year are admitted to kindergarten classes and practice classes affiliated to separate kindergartens (TRNC National Education Law, 1986).

In Uzbekistan Education Law, which was enacted by the Ali Majlis in 2016 and made some changes in 2017 and 2018, pre-school education is organized as follows; a). "The content of the education is determined by the Ministry of Public Education and according to the needs; b). The way the institution works and the duration of the children staying in the institution are determined by the charter of the educational institution and its founder; c). Work schedule for a five-day

working week in a state, preschool educational institution, as a rule; It is determined as 12, 10, 9, 5 and 4 hours; d). According to the needs of the children attending the institution, a 6-day working week can be determined; e). The institution organizes the meal in the institution. The application is made in accordance with the hygiene rules; f). Health services for children are provided by the health personnel of the institution and the health personnel of the health authorities of the region where the institution is located; g). The management of the institution provides the necessary conditions for the activity of the health worker; h). The state carries out the professional development of the health personnel of its institution free of charge at least once every three years.” If the procedure for the admission of children to the state preschool education institution is; a). “Children aged 3-7 are admitted to pre-school education institution; b). Admission of children to the institution is made according to the referrals made by the Council of Ministers; c). The number of children in each class of institutions should not be less than 20, not more than 25 years old; d). Filling in groups with children of other age groups is done from the end of the school year to the new school year (June, July and August); e). Education starts on September 2 and ends on June 1 of the following year (Uzbekistan Education Law, 2016).

The legal regulations regarding pre-school education published in the Official Newspaper No. 30827 (2019) in Turkey have taken its final form. According to these regulations; a). “It is essential to conduct normal training for 6 uninterrupted activity hours of 50 minutes a day. However, it is obligatory to conduct dual education in schools where there are children who cannot be registered to the school in the registration area; b). One lesson hour is 40 minutes; c). Children aged 57-68 months are enrolled in kindergarten, kindergarten and practice classes as of the end of September of the year in which the registration is made; d). In schools where there are not enough children to form a group, 36-68 months old children can be enrolled in the same kindergarten; e). Children aged 69-71 months whose enrollment in primary school was delayed for one year and who did not receive pre-school education in the previous year are given priority in enrollment; f). Children with severe disabilities who are unable to continue their education through full-time inclusion/integration and children with multiple disabilities are enrolled in special education classes opened in these institutions, provided that the physical space is suitable and a special education teacher is employed (Official Newspaper, 2019).

## 2. History and Current Situation of Early Childhood Education

The history of early childhood education in Azerbaijan dates back to 1907.

“A child care institution was established in Baku for the first time that year. Here, the physical, artistic, moral and intellectual development of children is defined as the main goal. In recent years, the network of preschool education institutions has been expanded and new preschool institutions have been established in different cities and regions of Azerbaijan (Cabbarov, 2014).”

However, activities were carried out for the development of pre-school education between 1940 and 1980, but the expansion and development of pre-school education largely took place after independence (Hüseynzade & İbrahimov, 2014).

Today, children from 1 year to 6 years old are accepted to early childhood education institutions in Azerbaijan. The obligation of five-year-old children to prepare for school in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan entered into force in April 2010. The period between the ages of 5 and 6 is determined as the preparation stage for school.

“Development perspectives in the field of pre-school education are listed as follows: a). Preparing pre-school education and training programs; b). To manage pre-school education institutions from a single center; c). To provide the economic guarantee of the system; d). To establish the legal basis of education and training; e). To renew the subject of education and training, to adapt it to contemporary methods; f). To prepare, approve and operate in accordance with the educational standards of the state; g). Establishing elite pre-school education institutions; h). Ensuring family participation, raising the child's transition level from the special stage of development in the preschool age period; i). To meet all kinds of needs; j). To increase the level of readiness of personnel, to encourage them to specialize and retrain; k). The transition to new methods in the education and training process is to make experiences, apply innovations, reach positive results and apply them in a wide area (Agamaliyev, 1999).”

In Kazakhstan, the first kindergarten in the country was opened in 1917 in Almaty, within the scope of childhood education. In 1918-35, kindergartens in Kazakh language were opened in Kizilorda, Uralsk and Torgai. In 1956, 888 kindergartens and nearly 48,000 children continued their education. In addition, the Research Institute of Preschool Pedagogy of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, of which Vygotsky was the director for a period, carries out studies to develop the Kazakhstan preschool system (Kokshetau, 2019).

“In 1991, there were 8743 kindergartens across the country, but by 2000 this number had decreased to 1144. After independence, the pre-school education

system started to revive and new institutions were opened in this context. Early Childhood Education in Kazakhstan today is the education, development, upbringing and care of a child between the ages of 3 and 7. Its purpose is to form the initial knowledge and skills necessary for the formation of personality at this age. It is aimed to expand pre-school education by 100% by 2020 and in this context, a program called Balaban has been started (Kazakhstan Ministry of Justice, 2013a)."

In Kyrgyzstan, the foundation of Early childhood education begins in the family and is completed in official institutions called "honey garden" in Kyrgyz. The foundation of preschool educational institutions is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) discarded during the period. While honey gardens were operating in villages before independence, the number of village honey gardens decreased rapidly after independence, and today it is almost non-existent (Polat, 2011). For this reason, after the independence, the rate of getting education in the age population has decreased greatly.

"Early childhood education in Kyrgyzstan is provided as pre-school education and care services for children younger than 76 months. In this context, pre-school education and child care services are handled in three categories; a). State and municipal preschool education institutions, pre-school education and full-time care; b). Institutions for short-term groups and classes of primary school children burden; c). In the form of pre-school education and care services for children who are traveling (Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Education and Science, 2015)."

Pre-school education in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) started with primary schools during the Ottoman period. Sıbyan schools are an educational institution that can be visited in front of all educational institutions in the 16th century Ottoman Society (Right, 2003). Primary schools started at the age of 5-6 and ended at the age of 13-15. In the first periods, writing education was given in institutions called küttab. There was no general educational change in the island under Ottoman rule until the 19th century (Akyüz, 2018).

Today, the TRNC national education system consists of two main parts, formal and non-formal, based on the education system of the Republic of Turkey and as a continuation of the education system implemented in the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus.

"The aim of the pre-school education program in the TRNC is as follows; a). Supporting the development of the 3-6 year old child holistically; b). Curious about learning, inquiring and critical thinking, able to cope with new and unusual situations; have problem solving skills; c). Being able to express himself and using Turkish correctly, beautifully and effectively; d). To lead a healthy life physically, mentally and socially; e). To acquire effective communication skills; f). To show sensitivity towards the natural, social and historical environment in which they

live; g). To be aware of his responsibilities regarding himself and his environment; h). Fair and non-discriminatory approaches in human relations; i). It is to raise students who have developed awareness of the values related to the culture they live in (TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2016)."

The beginning of early childhood education in Uzbekistan goes back to 1891. On this date, the first kindergarten for preschool and school-age children was opened in Tashkent. Children play games with various materials in these institutions, but these institutions were closed several times between 1891-1903 due to lack of funds (Sadıqova, 2013). During the Soviet Union, a preschool education department was established under the Turkestan Education Republic Commissariat. Until independence, pre-school education continued with similar strategies with other states forming the USSR.

"Today, there are efforts to renew the preschool education system. In this context, relevant legal arrangements have been made, and it is foreseen that some arrangements will be made until 2021. Initially, the Ministry of Preschool Education was established in 2017. Then the Ministry of Finance allocated a budget for the reconstruction and repair of preschool educational institutions, as well as the construction of playgrounds, fences of their zones (Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2017)."

The purpose of the preschool educational institution is to lay the foundations of the child's maturity, to increase his interest in knowledge, cultural and moral needs, early study skills, love of science and health. Pre-school education is given by families and pre-school education institutions.

As the beginning of pre-school education in Turkey, the Primary Schools established under foundations during the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmet can be shown. In primary schools, 5-6 year old children were given training on writing, reading the Qur'an, and praying (Derman and Başal, 2010). In the Ottoman Empire, the ideas about early childhood education in today's sense emerged with the Tanzimat in parallel with Europe. After the proclamation of the Republic, the Turkish Education system has been comprehensively restructured (Başal, 2013).

"Necessary recommendations were taken at the National Education Councils, which meet regularly every five years for pre-school education. In this context, studies have been planned for the development and dissemination of education. In 2002, Pre-School Education Programs, which were put into practice to be tried and developed from the 1994-1995 academic year, were prepared and put into effect, and in 2006, the Pre-School Education Program for 36-72 Months-old Children was reorganized (MNE, 2006).

The Pre-School Education Program for 36-72 Months-Old Children was revised again in 2013 in line with the regulations made in the education law.

“Today, Pre-School Education is not within the scope of compulsory education. The general aims of pre-school education by the Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Basic Education [MNE GDBE] (2013); a). Ensuring children's body, mind and emotion development and gaining good habits; b). To prepare them for primary school; c). To create a common upbringing environment for children from unfavorable environments and families; d). It is to ensure that children speak Turkish correctly and beautifully.”

### 3. Structuring of Institutions and Targeted Gains

The structuring of pre-school education institutions in Azerbaijan is as follows; a). “Children's Houses: for children aged 1.5 - 2 years; b). Children's Houses Gardens: for children aged 2 – 3; c). Children's Gardens and Family Gardens: for children aged 3 – 6; d). School Gardens: Educational institutions opened within the body of any school; e). Garden Internats: Educational institutions where families give their children as boarding houses; f). Children's Houses: Educational institutions where orphans, orphans and children in need of care are taken care of; g). Children's homes for disabled and mentally handicapped children: They are institutions where children with special educational needs attend (Seferov & Akkuş, 2005).

In the Early Childhood Education Program Book in Azerbaijan, the scope and achievements of education are emphasized. In this context, extensive explanations such as the development process of the child, its interest in other fields, and the education program are included.

“The program consists of children's activities by groups; provides interpretation in the form of play, profession, work and education. The first part of the program deals with the age characteristics of preschool children (weight, height, activity of the central nervous system, movement, communication, mental development, etc.). In the second stage of the program, it is aimed to gain the habits of upbringing, play, observation, child health and physical development, cultural behavior and cultural hygiene in the next education process in kindergarten (Azerbaijan Republic Ministry of Education, 2013).

The structure of early childhood education institutions in Kazakhstan is as follows: a. “Early age group: for children aged 1-2 years, b. First subgroup: for children aged 2 - 3 years, c. Second subgroup: for children aged 3 - 4 years, d. Middle age: for children aged 4 - 5 years, e. Adult group: for children aged 5 - 6 years, f. Preschool age group: Institutions attended by children aged 6-7 (Kazakhstan Online Public Services, 2018).”

In order for the child to continue in pre-school education, children aged 5-6 are given two years of compulsory and free pre-school education. The gains expected to be realized in the child; a. Children's character development and mental health, b. Protection and reinforcement, c. Ensuring the intellectual and personal development of children, d. Correction of defects in children, e. It is in the form of ensuring the full development of the child.

The family is responsible for supporting the child's knowledge, skills and attitudes provided by compulsory pre-school education, to ensure that the child overcomes the education and training curriculum in schools (Seitkazy, Iskakova & Düysenbenova, 2014).

The structure of early childhood education institutions in Kyrgyzstan according to age groups is as follows; a. "Classes from 6 months to 1.5 years, b. 1.5 - 2 years old classes, c. 2 - 3 years old classes, d. 3 - 4 years old classes, e. 4 to 5 years old classes, f. 5 to 6 years old classes, g. It is in the form of classes from 6 to 7 years old (Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2012)."

Targeted gains in early childhood education; a. "To raise children who are aware of active individual abilities and conditions, b. Providing access to high quality services, c. To develop children's social, cultural, language and personal life skills, d. Cultural development, tolerance and personal relationships, creating gender awareness, e. To enable children to develop comprehensively in order to gain a healthy self-esteem, f. To ensure the relationship between the development areas of the child, g. Contributing to the development of children through games and exercises, homework, rules, h. To ensure the legitimate rights and interests of the child, i. Equal opportunity in education is to raise awareness in the field of physical and social development (Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, 2012)."

The structuring of early childhood education institutions in the TRNC is as follows; a). Nursery: for children aged 0-3; b). Kindergarten: for children aged 4-5; c). Kindergarten: Organized in the form of institutions attended by children aged 6 years. The targeted gains in education are set forth in the program book. In this context, the learning areas of the child between the ages of 3-6; a). "Health and physical development; b). Language, communication and preparation for literacy; c). Mathematics and logical thinking; d). Science, nature and environmental awareness; e). Personal, social and emotional development; f). It is creative and aesthetic development (TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2016)."

The modern preschool education system and the structuring of institutions in Uzbekistan; a). "Kindergarten, kindergarten, nursery school: It is structured as an independent institution or branch; b). Pre-school and primary education: It is structured as kindergarten; c). Pre-school educational institutions that train in one or more aspects: language, artistic aesthetics, sports, etc. structured as institutions; d). Control and Rehabilitation Centers for Vulnerable Children: It is structured as institutions that implement medical hygiene, prevention and rehabilitation, activities and procedures; e). Combined kindergartens: The type of combined kindergarten is structured as development, rehabilitation and health groups (Uzbekistan Education Portal, 2019)."

The main achievements targeted with pre-school education are; a). "To ensure the comprehensive intellectual, moral, ethical, aesthetic and physical development of children, taking into account international educational approaches; b). To direct the population of the age to state or private pre-school education institutions, to implement alternative education programs in this context; c). In institutions; to provide teaching materials, didactic materials, games and toys, fiction books, materials that reflect national cultural and historical values and arouse interest in reading from childhood; d). To create conditions in accordance with the determined standards in order to ensure healthy and proper nutrition of children; e). To regulate the use of technology and mobile games explained for medical reasons; f). To coordinate with the Ministry of Health preventive measures for health care in preschool institutions and the protection of life and health of children (Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2017).

According to the Pre-School Education and Primary Education Institutions Regulation in Turkey, the structuring of pre-school education institutions is classified as follows; a). "Kindergarten: The school opened as of the end of September for the education of 36-68 months old children; b). Kindergarten: The school opened as of the end of September for the education of 57-68 months old children; c). Support education room: An environment designed to provide support education services to students who continue their education through full-time inclusion/integration and to gifted students in the areas they need; d). Application class: It is in the application unit where 36-68 months old children are educated in the field of child development and education in vocational and technical secondary education institutions as of the end of September (Official Newspaper, 2019).

In addition, the preschool education program is a developmental program. With a holistic approach to the developmental program, the child; It supports their



development in this direction by considering their social and emotional, motor, cognitive, language development and self-care skills together. When the learning processes are planned, after determining the developmental levels of the children, their interests and needs and the environmental conditions they live in are taken into account (MNE GDBE, 2013).

#### **4. Teacher Training Strategies, Teacher's Duties and Responsibilities**

A teacher training strategy has been determined within the framework of the law enacted in 2007 in Azerbaijan. According to this law;

“The teacher should be morally developed, have a creative personality, reflection, professional skills, pedagogical skills and inclination to be innovative. The teacher should understand the importance of education, be cultured, know its subject, pedagogy and psychology well, and use personalized pedagogical techniques. Initial training of pedagogical personnel in Azerbaijan is carried out in secondary private educational institutions (colleges and technical schools), higher education institutions (universities, academies, institutes, seminaries, universities and consulates). Postgraduate education and additional teaching staff training is carried out in universities, refresher and education faculties, higher education institutions, Azerbaijan Teachers Institute and its departments, as well as Baku Institute of Teacher Education” (Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2007, para. 8).

Teacher education in Azerbaijan varies between 2-4 years (Mammadov, 2008).

“According to the Kazakh education law, in the preschool education institution; preschool teacher, music leader, health specialist, teacher assistant, Kazakh and Russian teacher, physical education and swimming teacher, speech therapist and psychologist. Teacher education is at the 4-year undergraduate level. The responsibilities of the preschool teacher are as follows; a). Organizes educational activities; b). Makes plans and schedules; c). It helps to define the content, form, methods and tools of education and learning; d). Organizes the development, review and approval of documents; e). Organizes family involvement events; f). It organizes lectures, seminars, consultations, competitions and exhibitions, creates records and documents for educators; g). It coordinates the interaction of educators, psychologists, speech therapists, music directors and other organizations; h). It analyzes children's knowledge, skills and abilities (Kazakhstan Ministry of Justice, 2009).

The duration of teacher education is given in pedagogical colleges, pedagogical universities, teacher institutes, and education faculties between 2-4 years (Kaya & Alçı, 2019).

“The teaching profession in Kyrgyzstan has certain rights that are guaranteed by law. These rights are; a). Free choice in methods and forms of organization of pedagogical activity; b). Having advanced pedagogical experience; c). Protection of their honor and professional dignity; d). Adequate conditions for professional activities; e). It is in the form of state contribution to improve professional level and skills.”

In addition, the duties of the teacher are as follows; a). “To comply with pedagogical ethical rules; b). To operate according to the state education standards of the students in order to ensure the necessary level and quality in the education program; c). To ensure the development of a creative attitude, the formation of high moral norms of behavior; d). To improve the level of professional knowledge and skills; e). It is to prevent behavioral disorders for the emotional, mental and physical well-being of children (Kyrgyzstan Education Law, 2003).

The duration of teacher education is between 3-5 years in pedagogy faculties, pedagogical schools and education institutes (Kaya & Alçı, 2019).

Preschool teacher training program in TRNC is similar to Turkey. Teaching profession is earned with 4 years of undergraduate education. The duties of the pre-school teacher are expressed in the TRNC Teachers Law (TRNC Teachers Law, 1985) as follows: a). “To carry out education and training in the school where the teacher is located, under the supervision and control of the responsible supervisor, in accordance with the law; b). To carry out management works to be given by the Ministry regarding education and training; c). To ensure the development of pre-school children in all aspects (physical, emotional, social, psychomotor, spiritual, mental and language); strive for good habits; d). Planning and implementing classroom activities, classwork, group work; e). Observing children and keeping records of student progress; f). To ensure the educational activities of children with special needs; g). If assigned, to carry out non-formal education activities that will not be continuous in the place of residence; h). To fulfill the duties to be assigned by the Council of Ministers through the Ministry in accordance with the laws in force regarding the social, cultural and economic development of the people; i). It is expressed as performing other works to be given by the Ministry regarding education and training activities.”

The duration of teacher education is given in 4 years in teacher academy and education faculties (Kaya & Alçı, 2019).

In Uzbekistan, the Law on the Status of Teacher was published in 2019. The purpose of this law is to regulate the legal, social and economic relations related to teaching activities.

“The professional basic principles of the teacher are; a). Respect for the humanistic nature of education and training, the rights and freedoms of students, and the preservation of national cultural traditions; b). Priority of legal requirements; c). To realize a personalized approach in the education and training of students; d). To ensure the observance of universal and moral values; e). Within the framework of the love for the country; education of students, gaining high citizenship attitude, emphasizing friendship between nations; f). Regularly education; g). Freedom to choose methods and forms of pedagogical activity; h). Unity of educational principles; i). To develop their knowledge based on the latest achievements in the field of science, technology and culture (Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2019).

Teacher training is given in pedagogy faculties in 4 years (Kaya & Alci, 2019).

In order to be a pre-school teacher in Turkey, a 4-year undergraduate education is required. Teacher is very important in pre-school education. Children only discover in supportive environments where they are valued, loved and feel safe, and they evaluate the learning opportunities offered (MNE GDBE, 2013).

“Teacher qualifications in the field of professional knowledge and skills by the Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Teacher Training; a). Having advanced theoretical, methodological and factual knowledge to include a questioning perspective in the field; b). Having knowledge of curriculum and pedagogical content; c). Acting in accordance with the legislation regarding their rights and responsibilities; d). Ability to effectively plan educational processes; e). Able to prepare healthy and safe educational environments and materials; f). Ability to effectively carry out the teaching and learning process; g). It is defined as individuals who can use assessment, method, technique and tools in accordance with their purpose (Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Teacher Training [MNE GDTT], 2017).”

The duration of teacher education is completed in 4 years in Faculties of Education and Faculties of Theology. In addition, a teaching certificate is given with 4+1 complementary education in education faculties.

## **D. CONCLUSIONS**

In this study, the early childhood education of the independent Turkish States has been examined in a multidimensional way. When the legal foundations of early childhood education in the Turkish world are examined, it is seen that education is carried out within the framework of a certain standard, by making legal arrangements in accordance with universal early childhood

education norms. Looking at the age range; 1.5 to 6 years old in Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan Republic Ministry of Education, 2013), 1 to 6 years old in Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan Ministry of Justice, 2013b), 1 to 6 years old in Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Education and Science, 2015), 3 to 6 years old in TRNC (TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2016), 3-7 years old in Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan Republic Ministry of Health, 2006), 3 to 5 years old in Turkey (MEB TEGM), 2013).

In Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan Republic Ministry of Education, 2013), Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Education and Science, 2015), TRNC (TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2016), Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan Republic Ministry of Health, 2006), and Turkey (MEB TEGM, 2013), it is seen that the learning outcomes that are aimed to be gained by children in the education process are discussed in detail with the pre-school education programs prepared as a book by the ministries, and all the details of the education process are revealed. In Kazakhstan, comprehensive explanations about early childhood education were made in the education laws, but no preschool education program book has been found. However, Uzbekistan has focused on pre-school education in recent years, and within this scope, the ministry of pre-school education was established in 2017 (Uzbekistan Ministry of Health, 2017).

Turkey is the country where early childhood education is most prevalent, which is 45.5%. The main reason for this can be shown as the efforts to include the schooling and the age population in education related to early childhood education in Turkey in recent years. According to 2019 data, the prevalence of pre-school education in the European Union is 97% (Eurostat, 2021b). The breakthroughs in modern early childhood education, which started with Jean Jack Rousseau in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and were founded by Pestalozzi and Froebel, the development of awareness of the importance of early childhood education at the social level, the need for child care services as a result of women's participation in the workforce as a result of the industrial revolution and the increase in production, and the slow population growth and even the decrease in the age population can be considered as important factors in the increase in the prevalence level of early childhood education. Compared to Europe, the prevalence level of early childhood education in the Turkish World is quite low. Although early childhood education started in similar periods to Europe, one of the main reasons for this can be shown as political and economic problems.

Especially after the countries in the Turkestan geography gained their independence after the 90s, it can be thought that the democratic breakthroughs

could not be at the desired level and the economic situation caused the spread of early childhood education to be delayed or even regressed. For example, in countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan, the pre-independence prevalence level decreased somewhat after independence. While there were 8743 kindergartens throughout the country in 1991, this number decreased to 1144 by 2000 (Kazakhstan Ministry of Justice, 2013a). The situation is similar in Kyrgyzstan (Polat, 2011). However, it can be thought that the occupation of a part of Azerbaijan's lands by Armenia for about 30 years, and therefore the expulsion of approximately 1 million people from their homes, negatively affected early childhood education as well as all education. Again, although Uzbekistan established a separate ministry of pre-school education from the ministry of education in 2016 and developed policies related to the expansion of early childhood education, it is the country with the lowest prevalence with 23.8%. Thus, it can be thought that the fact that the population of Uzbekistan is much higher than that of other Turkish states, excluding Turkey, may also have an effect on this situation.

Although the beginning of early childhood education in Turkey dates to the 15th century, it can be thought that the military and economic difficulties and migrations experienced during the imperial period caused early childhood education not to reach the desired level until the beginning of the 20th century. In addition, it can be thought that this situation was caused by the fact that the priority in education was given to the basics at the beginning of the Republic period, the rapid increase in the population of the age, and the budget allocated to education was not at the desired size. Especially in recent years, serious studies have been carried out in terms of both the state and non-governmental organizations on the spread of early childhood education in Turkey. In addition, planning has been made for many years in Turkey to include early childhood education in compulsory education. Finally, in 2009, pre-school education was planned to be included in compulsory education in 2012 at the end of three-year pilots, but because of the changes in compulsory education in 2012, pre-school education was excluded from the scope.

Compared to Europe, the importance given to childhood, awareness of child development, and understanding of the importance of early childhood education are older in the Turkish World than in European countries. While the ancient Greek and Roman law, which forms the basis of traditional western culture, giving the family the right to abandon the baby and give it up for adoption, was one of the important factors in the formation of the perception of slavery in western societies (Ganeri, Martell & Williams, 2011) They were expected to step into the world of adults directly without experiencing anything

related to childhood (Özcan, 2017). In the Western world, from the Ancient Age to the 18th century, children were seen as incomplete adults for about 2000 years (Kuyumcu, 2014). When we look at Turkish society, children are given great importance because they ensure the continuation of the generation and the child is seen as important in terms of family law (Karadoğan, 2019).

While Turks have given importance to the concept of child and childhood throughout history, the fact that they lagged the western world in the last 200 years cannot be ignored, especially the effect of political and economic conditions. The historical process of early childhood education of the Turkic States in the geography of Turkestan shows a similar development since they were under the occupation of Tsarist and Soviet Russia for a long time. The USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences Preschool Education Research Institute, of which the famous developmental psychologist Lev Semiyonovich Vygotsky, who is considered one of the most important scientists in early childhood education, was also the director for a term, has an important role in the planning of early childhood education. Although Vygotsky made important studies on early childhood education in the geography of Turkestan, this did not last long, firstly political conflicts and then his death at a very early age interrupted the process. Early childhood education activities, which started at the end of the 19th century, were interrupted and regressed after the independence of the Turkish states and started to develop, albeit very slowly, from the 2000s. The beginning of early childhood education in Turkey and the TRNC is based on the primary schools, which were started to be established during the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmet in the 15th century, but the establishment of preschool education institutions in the modern sense comes back to the 19th century. In fact, the first state-owned pre-school education institution in Turkey was opened after the Balkan Wars. After the War of Independence, the current economic situation and priorities of the country prevented significant developments in early childhood education until the 1960s. In 1962, the *Kindergartens and Kindergartens Regulation* was published, and formal education was planned (Oktay, 2004). Especially after the 90s, there are serious efforts regarding early childhood education in Turkey.

When the structuring of early childhood education institutions and the targeted achievements are examined, it is seen that the countries of the Turkish World have gone to different institutional structures. Pre-school period: 7 in Azerbaijan (Seferov & Akkuş, 2005) and Kyrgyzstan (Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2012), 6 in Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan Online Public Services, 2018), 3 in TRNC, 5 in Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan Education Portal, 2019), and in Turkey, education is continued by being classified into 4 (Official Gazette, 2019)

terms. The targeted gains were revealed in the form of supporting all development of the child and making their education by modern education.

Considering the teacher training policies of Turkish Countries and the duties and responsibilities of the teacher; teacher training is carried out for 2-4 years in Azerbaijan, 3-5 years in Kyrgyzstan, 4 years in Kazakhstan, TRNC, and 4 years and 4+1 complementary education in Turkey (Kaya & Alci: 2019). In addition, the responsibilities of the teacher are clearly stated in the relevant laws. Looking at other countries; 5 years in Austria, China, France, Iceland, Italy and Poland; 4 years in the Australia, Brazil, England, Greece, Israel, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Spain and USA, 3.5 years in Denmark and Sweden; 3 years in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia and Switzerland teachers are trained for 2 years in Japan and Korea (Altıntaş & Yeşiltepe, 2016).

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