



In its assessment of pre-school education, one component of an ECD policy, the World Bank report finds a large positive economic and social impact. If today's adult generation below the age of 40 had all benefited from one year of pre-school education when they were six years old, family incomes could be up to eight percent higher, one tenth of these families would not live in poverty as they do today, and many more women – about nine percent – could be working or looking actively for a job today.

“When you provide opportunities for children from diverse backgrounds, it drives economic growth by allowing them to break the cycle of poverty that families can get trapped into, where children grow up poor and stay poor their entire lives,” said Ulrich Zachau, the World Bank’s Country Director for Turkey.

“This makes it an economic as well as a moral imperative to make sure that opportunities are blind to circumstance for Turkish children. Achieving that will help the next generation, which will shape Turkey’s future, reaching its full potential.”

For more information including multimedia content, please visit:
<http://www.worldbank.org/tr>

Better Opportunities
for **Turkey’s**
Poorest **Children** will Spur
Economic Growth





Opportunities for children should be 'Blind to Circumstance', says World Bank

Turkish children have vastly different odds of success in life and too often such chances are decided by factors they have no control over, such as how wealthy or educated their parents are, according to a new World Bank report. Opportunities tend to be passed from one generation to the next, the report found. So investing in children and youth will give them the skills to escape that cycle. It also means they can contribute more to Turkey's economic growth and social development, says the report, entitled *"Turkey: Expanding Opportunities for the Next Generation."*

"There are important inequities in Turkish society today, and girls are at a particular disadvantage. A girl born in a remote village to a poor family and parents with primary education degrees will very likely struggle in almost every area of her development," said **Jesko Hentschel, Lead author of the Report.** *"Compared to a boy born to well-off parents with higher education in one of the urban centers at the West coast, she is four times more likely to suffer from low birth weight, she is one-third as likely to be immunized, and ten times as likely to have her growth stunted as a result of malnutrition. Similarly she has a one in five chance to complete high school, whereas the boy will likely finish school and move onto university."*

Stunting – a form of malnutrition – is a significant constraint on children's chances in life as it hampers learning in school. Malnutrition affects almost four out of five children born in a disadvantaged setting of low parental education and poverty, about twenty times higher than for children born into privileged settings. Similarly, more than 80 percent of disadvantaged children lack sufficient access to an adequate iodine supply, which directly impedes childhood development. The problem is particularly acute among disadvantaged girls, who are roughly 30 percent more likely to experience stunting in their growth and development.

Turkey has piloted a number of highly successful programs to reach and support disadvantaged children. Non-governmental organizations play an active role and make a substantial contribution in these efforts. Yet, currently only 6 percent of total public social spending in Turkey reaches children below the age of six – about four times more is spent on a middle – aged or elderly person than on a child. The economic benefits of investing in children, especially disadvantaged children, are very high. These children will then be able to give back to their country for the rest of their lives – by learning more, getting better jobs, earning higher incomes and contributing more to economic development.

"Turkey has set ambitious targets for early childhood development, including strengthening pre-school education and the role that family doctors play in monitoring children's growth and ensuring that families have access to the resources they need," said **Reza Hossaini, UNICEF Representative in Turkey,** commenting on the report. *"These programs, especially boosting early childhood development program for the most vulnerable children, have the potential to make a huge difference in Turkey, improving the lives of children now and those of all Turks in the long run."*