



Among children whose development is at risk in Turkey, Syrian refugee children constitute a significant number. Yet, based on UNICEF estimates, among 860,000 school aged Syrian refugee children in Turkey, only 490,000 are registered to a school.

In other words, an estimated 370,000 children are out of school--many of whom when they do enroll are unprepared, rendering them unable to benefit from public schooling or are at risk of dropping out. Thus, there is an urgent need for programs supporting Syrian children's school readiness by addressing their language, cultural, and psychosocial needs.

This challenge has given ACEV (the Mother Child Education Foundation), UNICEF, GAP (Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Project - Regional Development Administration) and TKV (Development Foundation of Turkey) the impetus to address regions in Turkey with low access to early childhood education, so that these children have a fighting chance to succeed.

Research has established that Syrian refugees' connectivity to their new environment, as well as families, social circles, and the outside world depend highly on their smart phone use and it is very common for refugee families to own smart phones. Making use of this chance to reach out to Syrian refugee families, ACEV, UNICEF, GAP and TKV collaborated with Vodafone Turkey to develop a mobile app specifically catered to the needs of Syrian refugee parents. By reaching parents with vital information on child development and parenting, the First6Years app in Arabic sets out to decrease the opportunity gap for young Syrian refugee children, as well as their families, by not only providing families with key knowledge but also the children with a chance for higher school readiness and success in later life.

The First6Years mobile application was created by the Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) in collaboration with Vodafone Turkey Foundation as a tool to support parents on child development and parenting skills. The app was launched in Arabic to meet the needs of the Syrian refugee population with support from UNICEF, GAP (Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Project) Regional Development Administration, and the Development Foundation of Turkey.

The app was translated into Arabic as part of the "Project for Supporting Access to Inclusive Early Childhood Education by Syrian and Turkish Children." First6Years app not only provides families with useful, practical, and immediate support, but can also be used as a comprehensive "child rearing manual" with up-to-date information on child development.

The content of the app was adapted to Arabic as a comprehensive, up-to-date manual on child development to provide useful, practical and immediate support to families. The First6Years mobile app offers parents age-specific and unique information, as well as tips, under different topics, compiled by AÇEV's own child development experts.

Through the First6Years app, parents can support their children's development under 7 different subjects:

PLAY: Activity suggestions appropriate for each age group

HEALTH: Essential information, tips and warnings on children's health

ON MY MIND: Developmental and health information to keep in mind for every month

DEVELOPMENT: Notes on the physical and mental development of your child

COMMUNICATION: Information on how you can build the most effective communication depending on their age group

SUGGESTIONS: Practical and effective tips for each age group

VIDEOS: Video demonstrations of the content and basic information on child development

The Arabic version of the application can be downloaded free of charge from Android and iOS platforms.

