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Development of Inclusive Education Project

# **BEGEP**

## **Development of Inclusive Education Project**

EuropeAid/139588/IH/SER/TR

### **Intervention 14: Impact Assessment of Identification and Placement Process in Guidance and Research Centres (GRCs)**

### **Desk Research on Educational Evaluation and Identification Process**

08 May 2020



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## List of Abbreviations

BEGEP	Development of Inclusive Education Project
BİLSEM	Science and Arts Centre
CSA	Current Situation Analysis
CwD	Children with Disability
GRC	Guidance and Research Centre
IEP	Individualized Education Programs
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
SEN	Special Education Needs
SITAN	Study on the Situation Analysis



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## Introduction

Intervention 14 aims to improve the effectiveness of the educational evaluation and identification process in GRCs to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). As one of the outputs of Intervention 14, this Desk Research Report aims to understand the dynamics of Guidance and Research Centres (GRCs) in Turkey by mainly focusing on the identification and placement process. In order to present a complete picture, this report also includes, in general terms, the special and mainstreaming education as well as the education that is adapted to individuals with different types of special needs in Turkey.

Both official and national academic resources are referred to in this report, and attention was paid to ensure that these resources are up to date, as in they are published at the latest, in the last decade. Regulations, practices and problems regarding special education, mainstreaming education and GRC services will be summarized from the screening phase to the placement.

### 1. Education for Individual with Special Needs in Turkey

Special Education Services Regulation (2018), Article 4 defines special education as:

*"education that is carried out in a suitable environment with specially trained personnel and with education programs developed to meet the educational and social needs of individuals who differ significantly from their peers in terms of individual and developmental characteristics and educational qualifications".*

Data from the Information Systems of MoNE (referred in BEGEP Current Situation Analysis Report) shows that the number of inclusion/mainstreaming students in Turkey have gradually risen parallel with the amendments on special education policies that have been implemented since the 2000s. In the next decade, mainstreaming education practices become widespread with the emphasis on the importance of special and mainstreaming education. As illustrated in Table 1 below, the most recent numbers of individuals with Special Education Needs (SEN) between January 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup> of 2019, shows that 279,001 individuals have been included in education programs, of which all are in the compulsory education age.



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**Table 1. Individuals with SEN by diagnosis**

<b>Diagnosis</b>	<b>Pre- primary</b>	<b>Primary School</b>	<b>Lower Secondary School</b>	<b>Upper Secondary School</b>	<b>Total</b>
ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)	0	36,395	44,078	136	80,609
Speech and Language Disorders	56	13,283	5,950	404	19,693
Emotional and Behavioural Disorder	2	222	355	36,049	36,628
Mild Intellectual Disability	121	33,458	49,204	1,030	83,813
Visual Impairment	4	1,356	2,011	174	3,545
Hearing Impairment	28	4,832	5,479	370	10,709
Physical Disability	72	12,188	9,562	242	22,064
Autism Spectrum Disorder	16	3,123	1,346	77	4,562
Learning Disability	6	8,190	8,002	173	16,371
Cerebral Palsy	2	470	356	0	828
Gifted/ Talented	0	2	154	23	179
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>113,519</b>	<b>126,497</b>	<b>38,678</b>	<b>279,001</b>

**Source:** MEBBİS, 2019 (from BEGEP CSA Report)

According to the latest data published by MoNE (2018-2019), there are 18,108,860 students enrolled in schools, including private and open education. Amongst them, 1.54% of all students are those who are diagnosed with SEN. 58.9% of these children with SEN are either diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or with mild intellectual disability. As it is seen from the above table, excluding the emotional and behavioural disorder, there is a sharp decrease from in the numbers of students with SEN in upper secondary school, from 126,497 to 38,678. This sharp decrease in the enrolment of students with SEN presents a significant problem where the education is either halted or the access to education is clearly being limited for the upper secondary school, and in both cases this problem must be addressed and analysed for different types and levels of special needs.

The other remarkable number in Table 2 is those of the diagnosed students with special talent. Throughout Turkey, there are more than 179 students with special talents. This can also be regarded as an important issue, especially in terms of identification and placement of students with special talents.



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**Table 2. Number of schools, teachers and students in special education by years**

Date	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers	Number of Students			
			In Special Education	In Special Classes	In Inclusive Classes	Total
<b>2018-2019</b>	1,489	14,043	53,814	49,304	295,697	475,945
<b>2017-2018</b>	1,395	12,846	50,025	45,815	257,770	353,610
<b>2016-2017</b>	1,362	12,009	48,212	42,900	242,486	333,598
<b>2015-2016</b>	1,268	11,595	49,206	36,742	202,541	288,489
<b>2014-2015</b>	1,254	10,596	43,796	32,265	183,221	259,282
<b>2013-2014</b>	1,248	9,733	40,505	29,094	173,117	242,716
<b>2012-2013</b>	1,261	10,344	33,877	25,477	161,295	220,649
<b>2011-2012</b>	814	7,607	42,896	20,968	148,753	212,617
<b>2010-2011</b>	753	6,843	40,189	18,576	93,000	151,765
<b>2009-2010</b>	700	6,005	36,599	15,712	76,204	128,515
<b>2008-2009</b>	670	5,695	30,671	13,015	70,685	114,371
<b>2007-2008</b>	561	4,758	28,252	9,252	58,504	96,008
<b>2006-2007</b>	537	4,979	27,439	9,643	55,096	92,178
<b>2005-2006</b>	495	4,680	25,238	8,921	45,532	79,691
<b>2004-2005</b>	480	4,524	22,082	8,130	42,225	72,437
<b>2003-2004</b>	441	3,441	19,895	7,405	35,625	62,925
<b>2002-2003</b>	490	3,385	17,988	6,912	31,708	56,608
<b>2001-2002</b>	342	2,834	17,320	6,912	29,074	53,306

Source: <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/resmi-istatistikler/icerik/64>

However, MoNE is aware of this issue regarding the students with special talent as well as their identification and education. As mentioned in the 11<sup>th</sup> Development Plan, this issue is addressed through “an Education, Science and Evaluation Board” that would be established for individuals with special skills. By collaborating with universities, intelligence and talent identification and monitoring centres will be established as well as the quality of the intelligence and talent tests will be improved”.<sup>1</sup>

When it comes to the latest data of students with SEN, it is seen that 74.14% of the students with SEN have education with non-disabled children, *i.e.*, they are considered as mainstreamed students. Considering the distribution of students with SEN according to their placement environments, the number of mainstreaming students is 295,697, while the number of students attending special education classes is 49,304, and finally the number of students studying in special education schools is 53,814 (National Education Statistics, 2018-2019).

*"The numbers of students having an education in the hospital and at home are 1,488 and 10,725, respectively; the number of students studying at Science and Arts Centres (BİLSEM) and Research, Development and Application Center (ARGEM) are 39,455 and 167, respectively. According to MoNE statistics, the total number of support education rooms in schools where mainstreaming practices are carried out is 12,807."* (MEBBİS, 2019, retrieved from BEGEP CSA Report)

<sup>1</sup> (11th Development Plan - 2019-2023).



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**Table 3. Number of schools, students, teachers and classrooms in Special Education Institutions**

Type of school	School/ Classroom/ Institution	Number of Students		
		Total	Male	Female
Total of Special Education, Formal Education	1,489	398,815	252,835	145,980
Special Education Schools with Nursery Classes	161	1,351	862	489
Inclusive Education (Pre-primary)		1,260	795	465
Special Education Kindergarten	44	2,110	1,308	802
Private Special Education Kindergarten	6	50	33	17
Primary School (Hearing-Impaired)	32	674	419	255
Lower Secondary School (Hearing-Impaired)	32	1,068	640	428
Primary School (Visually Impaired)	17	511	295	216
Lower Secondary School (Visually Impaired)	17	668	389	279
Primary School (Physically Impaired)	3	274	148	126
Lower Secondary School (Physically Impaired)	3	309	171	138
Primary School (EME)	32	814	536	278
Lower Secondary School (Light Levels of Educable Mentally Impaired)	40	1,408	874	534
Training School of Special Education (I. Grade)	321	9,772	6,480	3,292
Training School of Special Education (II. Grade)	320	8,670	5,477	3,193
Research and Development and Application Center Secondary School (Special Talent)	1	81	42	39
Private Special Education Primary School	12	66	35	31
Private Special Education Lower Secondary School	4	37	19	18
Special Education Class (Primary School)	-	25,836	16,813	9,023
Special Education Class (Lower Secondary School)	-	23,468	14,598	8,870
Inclusive Education (Primary School)	-	115,556	74,091	41,465
Inclusive Education (Lower Secondary School)	-	130,624	81,819	48,805
Special Education Vocational Upper Secondary School (Physically Impaired)	2	77	47	30
Special Education Vocational Upper Secondary School (Hearing-Impaired)	20	1,690	1,022	668
Training School of Special Education (III. Grade)	272	11,436	7,468	3,968
Special Education of Vocational High School (Visually Impaired III. Grade)	2	35	24	11
Special Education of Vocational High School (Mentally Impaired III. Grade)	147	12,629	8,140	4,489
Research and Development and Application Center High School (Special Talent)	1	84	42	42
Inclusive Education (Upper Secondary Education)	-	48,257	30,248	18,009

**Source:** National Education Statistics, Formal Education 2018/'19



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In the 2023 Education Vision document, the quality of services for students with SEN is aimed to be increased. One of the decisions taken to achieve this goal is to establish an "inter-agency monitoring and implementation mechanism under the management of the Ministry of National Education" in order to ensure effective coordination of special education throughout the country. In this sense, improving the technical and physical capacities of all institutional stakeholders of special education and strengthening the cooperation among institutions are both included in the agenda. Accordingly, it is mentioned that "community service practices are associated with GRCs, special education schools and special education centres".

Special education and special talent are handled separately in the aforementioned document. The Special Education Services Regulation (2018), Article 4 defines a person with special talent as,

*"A person who learns faster than his peers, who is ahead in creativity, art and leadership capacity, has special academic skills, understand abstract ideas, likes to act independently in his/her area of interests and performs at a high level".*

Preparing a new legislation for special talented students and restructuring of BİLSEMs are among the determined targets. Besides the development of screening and identification services, the cultural adaptation and the standardization of international intelligence as well as the skill qualification tests are among the aims of 2023 Education Vision.

### 1.1. Groups with Special Needs

Groups with special needs can be regarded as an umbrella term involving all types of special needs, chronic illnesses and special talents. Within the scope of special education in Turkey, the MoNE defined 11 categories of students with SEN: ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), speech and language disorders, emotional and behavioural disorder, mild intellectual disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, autism spectrum disorder, learning disability, cerebral palsy, and special talent. However, in the Special Education Services Regulation (2018), there are no clear and detailed definitions of all groups with special needs.

Groups with special needs (through medical diagnosis) can be defined as follows:

The regulation defines **autism** with its different levels (mild, moderate, severe) as "an individual who needs special education and supportive education because of the limited level of social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, interest and activities".



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Similarly, it also defines intellectual disability with its four different severity levels:

*"Person with mild level of **intellectual disability**: An individual who has limited need for special education and support education service due to mild insufficiency in mental functions and conceptual, social and practical adaptability skills.*

*Person with moderate level of **intellectual disability**: An individual who needs special education and supportive education services in acquiring basic academic, daily life and work skills due to the limitation of mental functions and conceptual, social and practical adaptability skills.*

*Person with severe level of **intellectual disability**: An individual who needs intensive special education and support education service for a lifetime due to the lack of mental functions and conceptual, social, practical compliance and self-care skills.*

*Person with profound level of **intellectual disability**: An individual who cannot acquire self-care, daily life skills and basic academic skills besides mental disability and needs life-long care and supervision."*

Other disability definitions in the legislation:

***Physical disability**: An individual who needs special education and support training services due to disorders in the musculoskeletal and nervous systems.*

***Visual impairment**: An individual who needs special education and support education services due to the partial or complete loss of vision.*

***Hearing impairment**: An individual who needs special education and supportive education services due to partial or complete loss of hearing sensitivity.*

The other types of disabilities not included in the legislations can be defined as follows:

***Language and speech disorders** can be defined as "the inability to speak or having problems in speed, fluency, or expression of speech, and/or in voice" (SITAN on CwD in Turkey, UNICEF).*

***Chronic diseases** are "diseases that persist over time or are frequently recurring. It is also defined as a condition that limits training performance and social harmony negatively because the disease needs persistent care during the period of development" (cited in SITAN on CwD in Turkey, UNICEF). Even though there is no specific explanation for chronic diseases, home or hospital education services are provided for individual with health problems (Special Education Services Regulation, Article 14-15).*

***Multiple disabilities** refer "more than one sensory disability occurs along with physical or intellectual disability. Children and adults with multiple disabilities experience various orthopaedical, mental and emotional problems at the same time" (SITAN on CwD in Turkey, UNICEF). Special Education Services Regulation (2018) includes this group under the title of "education of individuals with more than one disorder". According to Article 13, "(1) For students who are in the age of compulsory education and are unable to attend primary or secondary education programs due to more than one disorder; primarily in special education*



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*schools or within other schools in the settlements where there is no special education school, a class is opened with the approval of the governorship in accordance with the suggestion of provincial or district special education services committee". In those classes special education program is applied on the basis of individual education programs directed by special education teachers. In these multi grade classes, the maximum number of students is determined as four.*

**Gifted/talented person** is defined as a person who learns faster than his/her peers, has a significant leadership, art and creativity capacity, has a special academic ability, can understand abstract ideas, likes to act independently in his/her interests and shows a high level of performance (Special Education Services Regulation, Article 4)

### Medical Diagnosis and **ÇÖZGER** (Special Needs Report for Children)

One of the critical priorities in determining the needs for special education is that individuals who need medical treatment or rehabilitation undergo a medical examination to be diagnosed. For this phase, there is a regulation titled "Regulation on Special Needs Assessment on Children"<sup>2</sup> by Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services and Ministry of Health. According to the regulation, Article 8, the diagnosis process starts with a letter of application by the caretaker to the medical centre authorized to give special needs assessment report. Article 10 explains that "(3) Based on the views of the child, family or caregivers about the child's physical structure and function, environmental and individual factors, with the opinions and contribution of the specialist physician, physiotherapist, ergo therapist, audiologist, psychologist, social worker and related professional staff, family-centred and holistic evaluation can be made". And, in Article 5, it is stated that evaluation and classification is based on ICF-CY (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: Children and Youth version). Reports that are provided to the children can be temporary or permanent, in which the validity period is also stated in the report itself (Article 11, Clause 1). Compared to the temporary reports, the permanent reports (*sürekli rapor*) are prepared for the cases in which the special education needs remain stable or they are observed to be increasing. For other cases, the reports are renewed based on the demand of the caregiver and with the approval of branch doctor regardless of the validity period (Clause 4). Another notable statement in the regulation is that all the reports expire as of the date when the individual with SEN turned 18 years of age. This applies to both The Temporary and The Permanent Reports but the Health Board Reports for the Cases of Terror, Accident and Injury (*Terör, Kaza ve Yaralanmaya Bağlı Durum Bildirir Sağlık Kurulu Raporları*) are excluded from this expiration.

Groups with SEN are listed as follows in ÇÖZGER report:

1. Need for rehabilitation / early support (intervention) to support cognitive functions
2. Need for physiotherapy, ergotherapy, rehabilitation
3. Need for device, orthosis, prosthesis, wheelchair and other equipment
4. Therapy/rehabilitation need for language and speech
5. Therapy/rehabilitation need for hearing impairment/loss
6. Therapy/rehabilitation need for visual impairment/loss
7. Therapy/rehabilitation need for autism spectrum disorder

<sup>2</sup> February 20, 2019 <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2019/02/20190220-1.htm>



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8. Therapy/rehabilitation need for learning disabilities
9. Rehabilitation need at home or hospital
10. Other

## 1.2. The Objective and Principle of Special Education

The principles of special education are defined in the Special Education Services Regulation (2018), Article 5, Clause 1 as such:

- Education service is provided by taking the individual differences, developmental elements and educational needs into consideration.
- All individuals with SEN are benefited in terms of their dispositions, capacities and talents.
- Special education is started at an early age.
- Special education services are planned and conducted without socially and physically isolating the individuals from their environments as well as through sustaining social interaction and integration.
- By making adaptations to the educational process regarding the performance, goals and contents of the individuals with SEN, an environment where they receive education with others is prioritized.
- In order to sustain the education of individuals with SEN of all types and degrees, cooperation with institutions and establishments is essential.
- Individualized Education Programs (IEP) are developed for individuals with SEN and the programs are implemented by further individualization.
- Active participation of family members to the special education process is ensured.
- Special education policies are developed through the collaboration of related departments of universities and non-governmental organizations that are engaged with individuals with SEN.

Becoming an active member of the society, minimizing the dependence for providing the vital needs of everyday life as well as utilizing the individual talents to their maximum extent are among the goals. Special Education Services Regulation (2018), Article 6, Clause 1 explains the objective of special education as "to ensure that individuals with special educational needs use their capacities at the highest level in line with their educational needs, qualifications, interests and abilities, and to prepare them for higher education, professional life and social life".

## 1.3. The General Structure of Special Education Services in Turkey

As it is stated at the beginning, this desk research is conducted primarily based on Guidance and Research Centres and, the identification and placement process in GRCs. In parallel with the topic, this part of the report aims to understand, in general, the processes that occur before the application to GRCs. Under the title of medical diagnosis, an important part of the process has already been summarized.

In the following sections, the screening and pre-referral processes will be explained with their basic components such as the key actors of the processes and their roles.



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### 1.3.1. Screening

Screening process could be defined as the evaluation conducted by the classroom teachers at school for all students in order to detect possible individuals with SEN. In BEGEP CSA Report (2020) the process is named as “first identification” and their purpose is defined as “to identify the students who have difficulty in meeting the basic requirements of the school/class, who are behind their peers in the lessons due to their learning characteristics or who are ahead of them and need support.” “At the end of the first determination process, the pre-referral process is started for the students who have difficulty in following the general education program by the classroom teachers.” (ibid.). There is no standardized screening process in Turkey which makes it possible to draw an inference that there are no screening activities in general regardless of the observable “differences” of students in Turkey. Besides, it is also not possible to find academic studies from Turkey regarding screening activities in schools.

Even though in theory, there are various standardized instruments<sup>3</sup> which are used for the screening process; in practice, this process is only based on the observations and evaluation of the classroom teachers in Turkey. In an article examining the validity of the screening process and evaluating different screening instruments, it is stated that teacher referral could not be regarded as a screening tool but its importance is underlined due to the fact that teachers’ observations and evaluation tools are the first step for identifying students with SEN (Van Der Heyden, Witt & Naquin, 2003). In this article, “teacher referral was operationalized as a teacher contacting the chairperson of the school committee to request a school committee meeting to discuss academic concerns for a particular student.” They also point out the critical role of teachers’ perception for pre-referral.

Guidance Services Regulation (2017) also underlines the critical role of classroom teachers in terms of “cooperation with the guidance service in the studies of the students to realize the learning style, improve their learning skills and increase their academic performance” (Article 35, Clause 1). Even though the details are not specified, 2023 Education Vision document includes a target regarding the classroom teachers: “Certification-based trainings will be organized to increase the skills of classroom teachers regarding guidance services”.

In a qualitative research based on the data from the GRCs in Ankara with 14 administrative personnel, 14 guidance and psychological counsellors as well as 36 special education teachers, more than half of the participants states that the first identification of individual with SEN is by the teachers in the schools (Aslan, Bal, 2014). Other participants in the research have pointed out that the first identification is in the family (ibid.). The same research also presents that the GRCs are not effective in identification by screening. In the SWOT analysis that is carried out in the MoNE 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, the matter of “adequacy of an effective screening and identification system for the identification of individuals who need special education” has been among the weaknesses.

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<sup>3</sup> These instruments include Psychometric characteristics of PVS, Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills-Revised (CIBS-R) and Development Reading Assessment Scores (DRA), Referred Witt & Naquin, 2003.



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### 1.3.2. Pre-referral

Following the first identification by teachers, the process of pre-referral starts within the school by a commission including the class teacher and the psychological counsellor (guidance teacher). The objective of the pre-referral process is to assess the particularities of the students who are only expected to be individuals with SEN and their differences from their peers without referring them immediately to GRCs and IEPs. It can also be regarded as a process to understand whether the student could become able to follow general curriculum in the class as their peers by the interventions of the schoolteachers. If all the interventions in the school does not affect the student positively, then the school decided to refer the student to the GRC for educational evaluation and identification.

However, just like the first identification process, the pre-referral is also an informal process (Kargın, 2007). There is no standard way of managing the pre-referral process, where it is totally based on the initiative of classroom teachers and the guidance teacher. Kargın (2007) explains the general process of pre-referral process as follows:

In the pre-referral process, all measures taken for the student, all implementations, implementation results and all information collected about the student are reported. Thus, the student is sent to the detailed evaluation process with more information. The decision to send the student to the detailed evaluation is a decision that the guidance teacher and the student's family should make together with the class teacher.

Ideally, the referral is a decision which should be taken by all the actors involved in the process. However, the student is sent to GRC for educational evaluation whether the family rejects the referral process or not (BEGEP CSA, 2020). The schools are responsible for screening, pre-referral, registration of the student with SEN, as well as the preparation and implementation of IEPs, placement of the class and finally, the monitoring and evaluation of the programs (BEGEP CSA 2020).

It can be concluded that both the screening and pre-referral processes are not effectively conducted by the classroom teachers. For this phase, the only standardized document is "Educational Evaluation Request Form" which could only be filled for students who are already medically diagnosed and have an official injunction. Individual examples of the screening and pre-referral activities of different schools might be examined in order to understand the current situation in Turkey.

## 2. The Objective, Role and Structure of GRCs

As the first step for institutionalization of special education services in Turkey, Guidance and Research Centres have been established in 1955 (BEGEP CSA, 2020). In the Special Education Legislation (Special Education Legislation 2018, Article 4) GRCs are defined as "the institution that provides the coordinated execution of the services by planning guidance services and special education services". Special education services were managed by the headquarters within the Ministry and by GRCs in the provinces (Akçamete, Kaner, 1999 cited in BEGEP CSA Report).



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Another legislation that is including GRC related articles is the Guidance Services Legislation (2017). Article 17 defines the objectives of GRCs as “to plan, coordinate, conduct and monitor the services provided by the guidance services and special education services in the provinces or districts”.

For the roles of the GRCs, in BEGEP CSA Report, it is also suggested that GRCs should provide schoolteachers with training of environmental and educational adaptations and provide on-the-job mentorship programs to the teachers and preparing related supportive materials.

GRCs are composed of two main departments: **Guidance Services Department** and **Special Education Services Department**. In the following chapters, both departments will be presented briefly. However, regarding Guidance Services Department there is a limited number of documents and details in both literature and in practice. In 2023 Education Vision, reconstruction of GRCs is one of the targets determined in terms of their human resources, physical structure and educational content for the needs of the children.

## 2.1. Guidance Services Department

In the Guidance Services Legislation (2017), Article 18 explains the structure and objectives of Guidance Services Departments of GRCs as: “(1) The guidance services department consists of a sufficient number of staff assigned by the director of the guidance and research centre under the responsibility of the department head.”

In the Guidance Services Department, guidance teachers are mainly responsible for organizing, supporting, monitoring and reporting the guidance activities in their areas of responsibility. They provide psychological support for the applicants or the referrals. They also find, obtain or develop psychological measurement tools and organizing and assisting in distribution of psychological measurement tools to the guidance services. In the legislation, it is stated that they are also responsible for developing and distributing related materials and publications. Among many other duties specified in the legislation, they can provide guidance for school preferences. However, there are no details provided for the profile of applicants.

The guidance teachers in GRCs provide the necessary services for the students with SEN (students who get a precaution measure<sup>4</sup>) (*tedbir kararı*). For the cases where the schools do not have a guidance teacher present, the guidance teachers in the GRCs can provide necessary services or they can organize the guidance teachers of other schools in the area in order to provide the necessary services.

According to the Article 23 of Guidance Services Legislation (2017), counsellors in GRCs are mainly responsible for:

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<sup>4</sup> “Protective and supportive measures are the services of consultation, education, childcare, health and accommodation that take into consideration the wellbeing of the child while maintaining the care within the family environment as well as promoting the education suitable for the appropriate age, the personal and social development.” (Regulation on The Implementation of Protective and Supportive Measuring Decisions Made According to the Child Protection Law, 2006, Article 5)



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- *Using psychological measurement tools for recognition, screening, educational evaluation and identification and orientation of the individual, evaluating the results, and sending them to the relevant departments when necessary.*
- *If it is assigned, supporting the guidance activities of the schools that do not have guidance teachers.*
- *Taking part in educational evaluation and identification process if assigned to special education department.*
- *When necessary, arranging family visits with at least two teachers in the guidance and research centre.*

In the absence of a guidance teacher in schools, guidance teachers working in GRCs follow the development of mainstreamed students who are educated in the support education room, where they guide teachers in this regard. They visit the students at home or in the hospital in order to provide guidance to students whose education is decided at home or in the hospital. This also applies to the preparation of an individualized education plan. In general, GRCs are also responsible for increasing the efficiency of the guidance services by collaborating with guidance teachers in the schools (Aslan, Bal, 2014).

## **2.2. Special Education Services Department**

According to the Guidance Services Regulation, Article 19 (2017), Special Education Services Department is tasked with:

- *Screening activities for individuals with SEN,*
- *Providing educational evaluation and identification services, and run all the processes related,*
- *Preparing family education plan in line with the requirements in cooperation with guidance services department,*
- *Providing necessary support for parents, school managers and teachers on special education services,*
- *In their working area, necessary organizations with province and district special education services board for monitoring the studies in special education classes and support education rooms,*
- *Follow-up the orientation process of the preschool students with SEN,*
- *Follow-up the development of the students with SEN in collaboration with the school guidance service,*
- *Find, obtain or develop psychological measurement tools; and organizing and assisting in distribution of them to the guidance services.*
- *Special education services related publication and distribution of the materials to the relevant actors.*
- *Establishing Special Education Evaluation Committee within the department.*

Within the scope of GRCs, different professionals could be assigned from various educational and professional backgrounds. The ones that are accepted could be sorted as such: Child development and training teacher, education programmer, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, psychometrist, guidance teacher, social worker and special education teacher.



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In the Guidance Services Legislation (2017), duties and responsibilities of a special education teacher are specified in the Article 24. They are responsible for:

- Informing the related actors,
- Participating to the activities of educational evaluation and identification,
- Preparing individualized education plan and evaluation of the results,
- Collaborating with the colleagues regarding the decisions of educational and vocational guidance of individuals with SEN,
- Developing training activities for managers, teachers, parents and students,
- Organizing family visits when it is necessary.

### 2.2.1. Educational Evaluation and Identification

The process of educational evaluation and identification is defined as the collection of developmental information regarding the language, cognitive, social and motor skills of the individual in educational terms, taking into account the data obtained as a result of medical and psychometric measurements (Aksoy, 2019). One of the most important roles of the GRCs is educational evaluation and identification of the individuals within possible need of special education. For the educational evaluation and identification, the first application can be made by the school management, parents or the individuals without a mental disability and who are older than 18 years of age. For individuals who benefit from the care and accommodation services in official institutions, applications are made to the GRCs by the staff assigned by the institution with an official letter (Special Education Services Regulation, Article 7-(2)).

There is a list of documents that are required for educational evaluation and identification, which could be listed as such:

- Written request by the individual, the parents or the school management,
- Foster family document if it is applicable,
- Educational Evaluation Request Form for the students,
- Medical board for disability report if it is needed for referrals,
- Individual Performance Evaluation End of Term Report for the renewal of the reports.

For the educational evaluation and identification, one does not necessarily need to be enrolled in any school. Students demanding an educational evaluation and identification can apply to the GRCs in the area of their schools. For those who are not enrolled in any school, educational evaluation and identification is conducted by the nearest GRC to the individual's residence or to the institution where the individual is getting the care and housing services (Special Education Services Regulation).

#### 2.2.1.1. Evaluation of The Individual

The educational evaluation and identification of the individual is carried out by the special education evaluation board established in GRCs, using measuring tools that are suitable for the individual's characteristics in an appropriate environment. The work and procedures related to the educational evaluation and identification of those who are unable to come to the GRC due to health problems are carried out in environments where these individuals are located (Special Education Services



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Regulation, Article 7, 2018). Works and procedures regarding educational evaluation and identification services are carried out through the MEBBİS-RAM Module (Article 7-3). A maximum length of one-year education plan is prepared for students who are decided to receive supportive education in the institutions that provide services under the Special Education Institutions Law.

The process of educational evaluation and identification is implemented for all types and levels of education (Special Education Services Regulation, Article 9, 2018). Performance evaluation is conducted by special education and guidance teachers. Guidance teachers in GRCs use psychological measurement tools in order to identify, screen, make an educational assessment, and guide the individual with identification, evaluate their results, and refer them to the relevant departments when necessary (Regulation on Guidance Services, Articles 23-1 (e)). Individuals who are found to need special education as a result of educational evaluation and identification are directed to the appropriate education environment and special education service by preparing the Special Education Evaluation Board Report (Special Education Services Regulation, Article 7, 2018).

In a study conducted with experts working in GRCs (Yanık & Gürgür, 2017), regarding the evaluation process and tools, one of the experts pointed out that there was a Broad Evaluation Form for educational evaluation. The remarkable point was that there were extra materials which were not standardized but used for the evaluation regardless: "Everybody has their own materials." In another study that focuses on students with intellectual disabilities, it is stated that GRCs are "using DSM-IV-TR (APA 2000) criteria, including screening, diagnosis, referral and placement" (Meral, 2015). For students with intellectual disabilities, GRCs are using "standardized tests such as Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (Wisc-r), Denver Developmental Screening Test and the Ankara Developmental Screening Inventory to determine Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores and developmental levels" (Meral, 2015). Besides, Leiter International Performance Intelligence Scale is among the tests commonly used in the evaluation process.

Kargın (2007) classifies the fundamental principles of educational evaluation as follows:

- *Variation in the evaluation,*
- *An active and continuous process,*
- *An individualized process,*
- *Evaluation without discrimination,*
- *Valid and reliable evaluation,*
- *Evaluation conducted by the professionals,*
- *Evaluation in different environments,*
- *Evaluation of all ages.*

As one of the principles of educational evaluation, for all the procedures regarding evaluation and identification, opinions of the family members are also considered. Details of involvement of the parents into the process will be discussed further in the desk review.

For the principle of "evaluation without discrimination", even though there are still problems with the language of evaluation tools, there is an exception for foreign nationals in Special Education Legislation (2018): Foreign nationals who have been continuing or will be continuing their education in Turkey can benefit from educational evaluation and identification services provided by GRCs (Article 7-7).



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## 2.2.2. Classification and Placement Process

As a result of educational evaluation and identification, individuals with SEN are decided to be directed to different arrangements of education by Special Education Evaluation Board. The board members must include a GRC deputy, a head of Special Education Department, a guidance teacher, a special educator, a classroom teacher and, if it is possible, a child development specialist.

Decisions made by these boards are approved by the province/district Special Education Evaluation Board, school assignments are finalized after this approval. Decision of placement can be separate special education schools (boarding or day schools), special education classes in general education schools, or mainstreaming environment (Kargin, 2007). Following the placement decision, Individualized Education Plan is prepared. Details of IEP will be further explained under the following title.

With reference to the Special Education Services Regulation (2018), different types of education programs and facilities can be sorted as follows:

**Early childhood education services** are carried out for 0-36 months old children with SEN in special education schools, pre-primary education institutions, educational institutions with a kindergarten, or at home according to the needs of the child and family.

**Science and art centres (BİLSEMs):** The institution providing support training for students who attend formal education institutions while demonstrating special skills in general mental, visual arts or musical talent. The aim is to enhance their abilities and allow the students to use their capacities at the highest level.

**Individualized education program:** A special education program which is prepared to reach the targeted goals in line with the developmental characteristics, educational needs and performances based on the program that is followed by individuals with special educational needs, and that includes support education services to be provided to these individuals.

**Support education service:** Consultancy services provided to the individuals, their families, teachers and other personnel in the school with specialist staff and necessary tools that are in line with the educational needs of individuals with special educational needs.

**Support education room:** An environment designed to provide support education services to the talented students and the students who continue their education through full-time mainstreaming.

**Support education program:** The education program in which the students who are identified with the general mental talent (*genel zihinsel yetenek*) by associating them with all necessary fields and disciplines.

**Education practices through mainstreaming:** Either full-time education along with their peers or part-time education in special education classes, that aim to ensure that individuals with SEN interact with other individuals at all types and levels as well as to achieve their educational objectives at the highest level.



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**Special education classes:** The classes that are specifically opened for the students with SEN who are decided by Special Education Evaluation Board to receive special education in a separate classroom in state and private schools, by the proposition of the Special Education institutions and the approval of the governorship.

**Home education service:** Services that can be provided during the school year, if students who need special education at the age of compulsory education or who are not able to benefit from formal education institutions for at least twelve weeks due to a health problem.

**Hospital education services:** The education given through the classes opened within the hospitals for the inpatient students who have special education needs in compulsory education age.

**Special education schools:** Special education kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and vocational education schools serving individuals with special needs by implementing improved education programs (*Geliştirilmiş Eğitim Programları*) (Special Education Institutions Regulation, 2012, Article 3).

As a result of the detailed evaluation made by the Special Education Evaluation Board in the GRCs, for the students who do not need special education, it is decided that they continue the class they were in. In line with the special education program, preparatory work is expected for individuals with SEN, their families, the teacher(s), the school staff in the institution they will receive education and for the physical structure of the school. However, in the aforementioned research (BEGEP CSA Report), it was observed that in some of the schools this preparation process is not carried out. In this research, preparations in schools for special education is listed as: Planning in the seminar period and boards, informing the teachers, conducting IEP meetings, cooperation between families and institutions, and preparation activities for inclusion.

### 2.2.3. Programming of Training

The stage after the placement is preparing an education program for the students with SEN. The individualization of educational programs for individuals with special educational needs is among the basic principles of special education. It is stated that a maximum of one-year education plan is prepared for the students who are decided to receive support education in the institutions that provide services within the scope of the Special Education Institutions Regulation, and that the expired plans can be renewed if needed. (Article 7-(3) c).

*"In special education schools and special education classes where individuals with SEN continue primary or vocational education programs that are prepared by the Ministry, and special education programs that are prepared according to the educational needs and characteristics of students. In the education of special talented individuals, there are enrichments that will provide high level skills in the fields they are trained" (Special Education Services Regulation, Article 19).*



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There are two types of education programs on the basis of Regulation on Special Education Services: Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Education Programs of Science and Arts Centres. IEP is prepared on the basis of the education program to be followed for individuals with special educational needs.

IEPs include in the Article 20:

- Annual and short-term goals in the education plan,
- The types and duration of the support education service to be provided and the professionals providing the services, and how the services are provided,
- Methods and techniques to be used in teaching and evaluation,
- Teaching materials,
- Measures to prevent or reduce behavioural problems,
- The methods and techniques to be applied to gain positive behaviour,
- The student's personal information.

BİLSEM programs include adaptation, support education, noticing individual talents, developing special talents, project development and management (Article 21).

The role of GRCs here is to determine what the one-year objective will be for the individuals with SEN by the evaluation team. While GRCs determine which program should be applied in the support education programs, it is stated in the relevant regulation that the individuals' IEP should be prepared by the IEP team organized at the school or the institution where they received education.

### **2.3. Individualized Education Program**

As mentioned above, IEP is a legal requirement for every individual with special needs. The individualized education program is a plan that shows where, when, how long, by whom and what objectives the special education services will provide for the individuals with SEN. IEP is also a contract between service beneficiaries and service providers (Kargin, 2007). It is prepared through the participation of all actors responsible for the education of the individual with special needs, rather than being prepared by only one person. In the preparation of the Individualized Education Program, besides the classroom teacher, special education teacher, classroom guide teacher, guidance teacher, other branch teachers and the family, the individuals with SEN themselves also have a role if necessary, as well as if possible.

Since it is also a part of the monitoring and evaluation process, IEP is an important procedure for the recognition and development of the individual with special needs.

### **2.4. Monitoring of Students' Progress and Evaluation of The Effectiveness of The Program**

The monitoring and evaluation process are important in determining whether the objectives are achieved or not. Besides, it is also a crucial activity for measuring and evaluating the impact of the program that is being implemented. In accordance with Article 10 (Clause 1) of the Special Education Services Regulation, monitoring process of an individual is defined as monitoring and registering the development of individuals with SEN by the related schools and institutions at all stages of education



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from early childhood in order to plan special education services and ensure the continuity in education.

In the scope of IEP, monitoring is the systematic collection of information from practitioners and the comparison of this information with the purposes, determined at regular intervals. In the legal framework and the studies carried out, two main aims of the monitoring are emphasized: One is to provide systematic data to the experts who are obliged to implement IEP to make the necessary changes in the methods they use, and the other is to present the IEP team with the data to be used to evaluate the implementation of IEP, its effectiveness, and the suitability of the planned program (Kargin, 2017).

Through monitoring, the IEP team decides whether the long and short-term goals have been achieved or not. It is observed that the monitoring and evaluation phases are related to each other in this sense. Hence, the monitoring process should be followed effectively to evaluate the impact of the program. The evaluation determines whether the students have made progress and whether the changes are necessary for the program is determined. Besides, the team provides the development of IEP with evaluation, and they can also specify whether the appropriate placement was made.

Although the importance of monitoring and evaluation is emphasized, there are several problems in the monitoring process. In the qualitative research conducted by Aslan and Bal (2014), some of the experts participated in the study stated that volunteering, as one of the guidance principles, may cause problems regarding the sustainability of monitoring because in many cases individuals go to counselling only once.

Even though the details are not provided, 2023 Education Vision document includes a target regarding monitoring and evaluating process. In 2023 Education Vision program, both individual, academic and social development of all students, and monitoring and evaluating the development of their schools within the original plans have been determined as a goal. In this sense, transforming the data-driven planning and management system with learning analytics tools and, simplifying existing databases are clearly established goals. According to 2023 Education Vision, the resulting big data will be analysed on the "Learning Analytics Platform" to be established. Thus, it will be possible to evaluate all processes from measuring the effectiveness of the curriculum to the analysis of personnel needs, and even decisions about the individual performance of students. Within the scope of the 2023 vision, the medium-scale pilot implementation of learning analytics tools and the improvement for this is the expected aim of 2020.

## 2.5. Active Participation of The Parents

With reference to Article 14 of Guidance Services Legislation, the active participation of the parents is an important emphasis of the regulation. Based on the regulation, after the processes are begun in GRCs, a committee must be established for evaluation purposes and that the GRC administrator is responsible for forming and leading the committee. For this phase, the family must be a part of this committee. In a study based on the opinions of the GRC experts and the parents of the students with SEN (Yanık & Gürgür, 2017), the parents state that they pay special attention to the evaluation and



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placement process. In the placement process, they do not only try to choose the closest school to the home but also, they pay attention to class size (not more than 20) and teacher factor.

For participation of the parents in the process, the parents point out lack of proper communication between the actors in evaluation and placement procedures. Particularly, the problems the parents mentioned are usually related to the evaluation phase. These problems can be listed as follows: inadequacy of teachers' evaluation skills and materials; lack of professionalism; ineffective guidance and informing activities for parents; bureaucratic issues. In the article (Karasu, 2014), the most notable solution recommended by parents is increasing parents' knowledge in the area to be more effective in evaluation phase. For this reason, parents need to be more informed by GRCs. In conclusion, the studies conducted show that cooperation between parents and GRCs is a serious issue that need to be developed and to be examined deeply. Details of problems of the parents with the process will be discussed under 'Problems Specific to GRCs'.

### **3. Problems Related to Special Education in Turkey**

During the desk research, the academic literature, reports prepared by several institutions, legal framework were analysed in detail. Based on these studies, some long-standing problems of GRCs have been emphasized. It is often underlined that the regulations provide significant opportunities for development and strengthening of special education and guidance area. However, despite some improvements in regulations, there are some flaws in the implementation. The components that cause these problems will be mentioned under the following title.

There are various problems in the whole process from the first identification of the child with SEN to placement. While some sources focus on the procedures of GRCs, the others concentrate on the process of referral the child to GRCs. Considering the process before referral to the GRCs, two important points stand out. The first is related to the process of first identification of a child with SEN, whereas the other is the problems experienced in the referral process. BEGEP CSA Report draws attention to the fact that teachers do not pay enough attention to the problems of students for a long time at school and, therefore, children are involved in the system late. In the same report, it is also mentioned that the teachers lead children to the educational evaluation and identification process early. To put it another way, the individual with SEN might be directed to GRCs without being evaluated enough by their teachers. Accordingly, it could be inferred that assessments made in a short time at school may negatively affect the right decisions taken about the individual.

In another qualitative research, it was touched on problems related to educational evaluation forms. An expert, who is working in a GRC stated that educational evaluation forms are filled by the teachers inadequately, therefore these forms do not provide detailed information about children, while another expert underlined that the same evaluation forms are used for both kindergarten and high school students (Yanık & Gürgür, 2017). It could be concluded that evaluation forms do not change according to the level of education. This can be regarded as a significant problem particularly for the identification and placement of students with SEN.



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Another issue mentioned in parallel with the topics above is that teachers mislead children to GRCs because of a lack of knowledge in the field. In the articles (Kuzgun,2019&Bal, Arslan, 2014), it is underlined that both class and branch teachers do not have satisfactory knowledge of the area. Besides, it is observed that teachers who are working with the children with SEN do not have enough knowledge in the field of special education. Some of the issues related to the lack of information can be listed as: developmental characteristics of children with SEN; planning and adapting educational programs; special teaching methods and techniques; material development; dealing with behavioural problems in the classroom (Kuzgun, 2019). In this context, in a qualitative research based on the data from Ankara GRCs' administrative personnel, guidance teachers and special education teachers, some of the participants stated that classroom and branch teachers must improve their knowledge regarding the field so that they can provide the necessary support with educational methods to follow and get to know children (Aslan, S. & Bal, E. 2014). In addition, some of the participants in the same research emphasize that studies are needed to raise awareness of not only teachers in the schools but also teachers in GRCs regarding the process of identifying individual with SEN.

### 3.1. Problems Specific to GRCs

This part of the report aims to draw attention to certain issues related to the functions and structure of GRCs. Particularly, the primary data gathered by the several field studies are analysed in order to understand the components of differences between legal regulations and the practices. There are several issues that emanate from the GRCs' own procedures. Accordingly, the problems specified within the recent academic studies will be summarized.

In addition to the issues of the difference in procedures of GRCs, one of the most common problems mentioned in the articles is that the process that is being implemented in GRCs could not be performed successfully due to the insufficient number of personnel and the lack of professional qualifications of the staff working in GRCs (Yanık & Gürgür, 2017). Such issues result in many other problems in the activities of GRCs.

One of the observed problems in terms of qualification is the lack of information of the GRC staff regarding evaluation, identification and placement of the students. One of the experts from a field research (Yanık & Gürgür, 2017) explained the situation by stating that the staff just follow the regulations because it is mandated, but the staff itself is not highly professional or trained. This problem is also regarded to be a problem of infra-structure. Likewise, another expert expressed: "There is barely any knowledgeable branch manager with proper training on special education. Even a music teacher can work as a special education branch manager" (ibid.). In this context, the insufficient number of qualified staff that is responsible for the evaluation and identification of individuals in GRCs may lead to misplacement of them. Consequently, the problems in the processes run by GRCs also cause the difficulties in mainstreaming implementations.

According to BEGEP CSA Report, considering the issues related to the functioning of GRCs, another finding mentioned in the evaluation and identification process is that the identification phase takes a very long time while the evaluation process and tests for the identification take place in a very limited time. Both the parents and the experts criticize the time allocated for evaluation in GRCs. Regarding the limited time of evaluation, some experts underline that the evaluation completed in an insufficient



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time does not allow for a healthy and adequate method for identification. In the qualitative research involved with parents and experts (Yanık & Gürgür, 2017), two of the experts pointed out that they evaluate each student in 5 to 15 minutes and come up with some goals for the student. In parallel, another expert in the same study suggests repeating educational evaluations in the schools. Insufficient time allocated for evaluation may also cause the individual to not perform well, or not at all. In addition to the opinions of the experts, the problem that is stated by the parents regarding the place of the evaluation is that the children are unable to perform their real performance in an alien setting. Another issue that is related to the functioning of the GRCs is about the organization of the appointments: GRCs might schedule the appointments to a distant future, which can cause the student with SEN to fall behind, losing a school term (BEGEP CSA Report).

In the Guidance Services Regulation (Article 25), it is stated that the child development teachers, social workers, educational programmers, psychometrists, psychologists, physiotherapists and ergo therapists will be assigned to the GRCs when necessary. However, the remarkable point is that this statement in the regulation is not always put into practice. In the study conducted by Yanık and Gürgür (2017), it was underlined that if only experts from all fields are to be involved in the procedures of the GRCs, some problems could be then overcome. In other words, the absence of such qualified personnel from different fields negatively affect the functioning of the GRCs in practice.

The insufficient number of staff in the GRCs also affects the visits to educational institutions. According to the GRC guideline (2018), school visits are expected to be held at least once a year for monitoring the students with SEN and their educational environment. In their article, Aslan and Bal (2014) also indicate the limited number of GRC staff and the workload as one of the reasons why institutional visits are not being carried out. Again, for the same reasons, it was said that the GRCs could not promote themselves and could not perform their functions of guidance to the teachers and administrators in schools. In order to increase the quality of special education and guidance services, the need for a mobile department in GRCs is emphasized. It is also underlined that the teachers working in the guidance services department should be included in this department.

Another issue stated in the literature is that the guidance services are overshadowed by the special education services due to the increased workload of special education services in GRCs (based on the special education services regulation in 2006). For this reason, it can be inferred that the guidance services of GRCs is not functional enough. One of the key informants' states that the parents are also more conscious about the special education of their children, and the individuals do not apply to the GRCs for their guidance and psychological counselling needs (Aslan & Bal, 2014). The insufficient number of personnel in Guidance Services Department (*Rehberlik Hizmetleri Bölümü*) of GRCs comes up once again as the reason behind this situation (Aslan & Bal, 2014) and should be revised as it has an important place in the scope of 2023 Education Vision.

In parallel with the topic mentioned above, the lack of a systematic implementation for the parents of individuals with SEN in GRCs is another issue and, there is no cooperation with the relevant institutions such as school, NGOs and universities. As mentioned before, although the regulation remarks the importance of collaboration between parents, schools and GRCs in planning, in practice, this is not the case. One of results from the articles (Aslan, Bal, 2014; Kuzgun, 2019; Yanık, Gürgür, 2017; Yurtsever, 2013) is that in order to improve the qualification of special education, GRCs should organize activities for professional guidance to inform educational institutions.



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The significantly low number of school registration of students with SEN is due to lack of informing activities of GRCs for the parents (SITAN on CwD in Turkey, UNICEF). In this sense, the lack of cooperation is an issue that needs to be focused more, in order to increase the quality of service and the impact of education in schools. In addition, it is essential that parents are informed about the special education needs according to the problem mentioned in the studies. GRCs are the key institutions that can inform the parents and schools about special education and guidance. Therefore, additional and comprehensive information related to the purposes of the GRCs should be provided to the schools, the individuals with SEN and their parents.

Regarding the measurement tools used in evaluation special learning difficulties, two foremost problems are confronted. The first of these is the qualitative inadequacy of the measurement tools used in educational evaluation, while another issue is that the training is not sufficient in the application of the tests used in the educational assessment. According to Kuzgun's research (2019), the evaluation is based on the individual's perspective. One of the factors that cause this is the deficiency of a standard material in identification. Based on these studies, it can be assumed that the evaluation and identification can diversify depending on the material used. It is, therefore, vital to underline this issue because the insufficiency in assessment tools and differences can cause individuals with learning disabilities not to meet their special educational needs.

The added argument that is emphasized is that the GRC staff does not receive sufficient training on current developments, therefore, they need in-service training to increase their professional competencies and develop. Repeatedly in the field study which has been conducted in Ankara GRC, experts stated that the in-service training that the GRC staff needed most was related to psychological tests (Aslan & Bal, 2014). In research carried out in 1993, advisory teachers wanted the topic of the tests and techniques used in counselling to be among the points they wanted to be given during the in-service training (cited Aslan & Bal, 2014); (referred Ülküsel, 1993). Concerning the preceding paragraph, looking at the studies carried out in 1993, 2014, and 2019 respectively, it is observed that the dilemma associated with tests and lack of knowledge still resumes from past to present.

In conclusion, in 2023 Education Vision, it is aimed to improve the structure of the GRCs and the services they provide. One of the decisions taken to achieve the goal is to improve the structure of the GRCs' for meeting the current needs. Problems in the GRCs could be summarized as follows: Insufficient number of personnel at the GRCs, insufficient time, non-standardized materials, lack of inter-disciplinary cooperation, providing insufficient information to parents about the educational performance of their children, insufficient informing of parents about inclusion practices, lack of experts and professional competency in different fields of special education. These problems also negatively affect the placement process, and for this reason, should be considered for the activities and regulations toward the improvement of the GRCs.



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