

Child and Parent Friendly Municipality Governance Guide **SURVEY RESEARCH REPORT**



Executive Summary

Child and Parent-Friendly Municipality Governance Guide Project aims to increase the quality of life and welfare of children and parents by developing a road map which would shed light on the services of municipalities. In order to achieve this goal, which will strengthen municipalities structurally in order to be both child and parent friendly; we create suggestions that will guide them on how to transfer this approach to their practices and measure their own development. Likewise we aim to evaluate the impact created by implementing the suggestions during the progress of the project.

We have firstly initiated our project with the questionnaire that we developed and implemented for all district municipalities of Istanbul. With this survey, in order to be child and parent friendly, we asked questions which would enable municipalities to evaluate themselves, their approaches to children and parents in a multifaceted way: from decision-making, to resource management, from the provision of services to the establishment of this understanding in their institutional operations.

The survey was delivered to 37 district municipalities in Istanbul, which are obliged to prepare strategic plans, and as a result 17 district municipalities contributed to the survey. The municipalities which provided answers to the survey represent 48% of Istanbul's total population and 45% of Istanbul's children population.

According to the survey results, 80% of the municipalities, various measures are taken to ensure effective participation of children and parents in decision-making processes. Those who share the number of stakeholders participating to child and parent related issues are only 65% of the municipalities we have examined. In addition, the municipalities that set their strategic goals for children and parents are prone to focus in fields such as education, culture-arts and health for early childhood (lies between 40% and 60%). However, municipalities that set strategic targets for child protection appear to be 60% or less.

Similarly 71% of the resources transferred to children and parents are mostly observed during early childhood. Likewise, in the provision of services for children and parents, the services provided for 0-6 year olds are mostly understood as park building and providing childcare services (80%+). Especially, the establishment of services for the provision of cultural activities, science and technology which are critical for the development of 0-6 year old children, appears to be a serious development area for municipalities. Thus, there has been a

necessity for municipalities to consider the wholistic development of the child at all ages, starting from early childhood period.

Among the services provided by municipalities to parents and families with children, only 59% of the municipalities provide training for parents and 53% reported that they also offer other training areas apart from child development.

We also examined the trainings that municipalities offer to their own staff in order to adopt a child and parent-friendly culture. Half of the municipalities stated that they offer trainings to their personnel related to being well-informed about children and parents.

On the other hand, only 1/3 of the municipalities offer these trainings to their staff, especially in areas such as children's rights, child participation, and disadvantaged groups. Moreover 35% of the municipalities state that there is a specific unit directly dealing with child policies. The fact that existence of an unit that directly deals with child policies will support the adoption of a child and parent-friendly approach as a culture in other units and services of the municipality.

To sum up, according to the survey we conducted for the district municipalities in Istanbul, it can be concluded that the municipalities adopt a supportive understanding of the children and parents in their decision-making mechanisms, resource utilization, and service provision. However, focusing on social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development in different age groups constitutes great importance for supporting wholistic development for each age groups. The related recommendations specific to municipalities for all these areas are shared at the end of this Report.

Introduction

We believe that the adoption of a child and parent friendly approach by local governments is very critical in terms of increasing the quality of life. The fact that we as citizens have close ties with municipalities plays an important role in internalizing such approach. Likewise the establishment and operation of a structure suitable for this approach in local governments and adopting a culture that will be improved by regular measurement will certainly increase the trust of citizens in local institutions.

With this project, we as Argüden Governance Academy (Academy), Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV), the Educational Volunteers Foundation of Türkiye (TEGV), and the Association of Private Sector Volunteers (ÖSGD) and with the contributions of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB),

We aim to provide district municipalities a governance guide in terms of being child and parent friendly and to distribute services and implement policies that support child development at the local level. For the sake of this purpose, we support municipalities in areas such as:

- Contributing to the structural strengthening of their contribution to the development of parents and children,
- Developing suggestions for policies and practices,
- Implementing proposals with the partnership of public-civil society-private sectors

In the first phase of the project, we conducted a survey that allowed the municipalities to evaluate themselves in terms of being child and parent friendly. In the second phase of the project, we will analyse them based on the criteria set we have created over the public information available to citizens. In the last stage, we will discuss the evaluations of the municipalities over both their own and publicly available information with a 360-degree perspective. We will implement public-civil society-private sector collaboration to emphasize the areas that are needed to be developed. Lastly we will share the impact derived from the project in the closing event.

Research Results

In the survey research, which is the first stage of our research, we examined 37 District Municipalities of Istanbul that are obliged to prepare strategic plans. The Municipality of Adalar and the Municipality of Şile were not included in the research since they were not considered in strategic plan preparation scale in accordance with Law No. 5012. Likewise Istanbul is purposefully selected for this research due to its highest population density in Türkiye and well-representation on behalf of analysing quality of life of children and parents.

Research Method

We analyse the approach of child and parent-friendly governance in municipalities from three different dimensions. Below each category is complementary and considered as guidance for municipalities that adopt good governance culture.

The first is **processes** to analyze child and parent-friendly governance in;

- The decision-making process,
- Budget allocation and resource utilization,
- The provision of purposeful services,
- Institutional infrastructure;

The second is **good governance principles (CRAFTED)**:

- Representation and participation,
- Fairness,
- Responsibility,
- Effectiveness,
- Transparency,
- Accountability,
- Consistency.

The third is related to **the implementation of the measurement and learning cycle**;

- Establishing a structure in accordance with good governance principles,
- Effective implementation of the principles determined in the structure and to be compatible with each other,
- Measurements for each< implementation, results by evaluating the structure and corporate governance capacity which is the realization of improvement.

Sources and Collection of Data

A questionnaire was sent to 37 district municipalities to be informed about the existing services or approaches of the municipalities towards children and parents and to address their needs (Annex 1. Survey). A total of 17 out of 37 district municipalities participated in this survey study, and the participating municipalities represent approximately 48% of the population of Istanbul and 45% of the child population. The municipalities that have completed the project survey can be listed as follows:



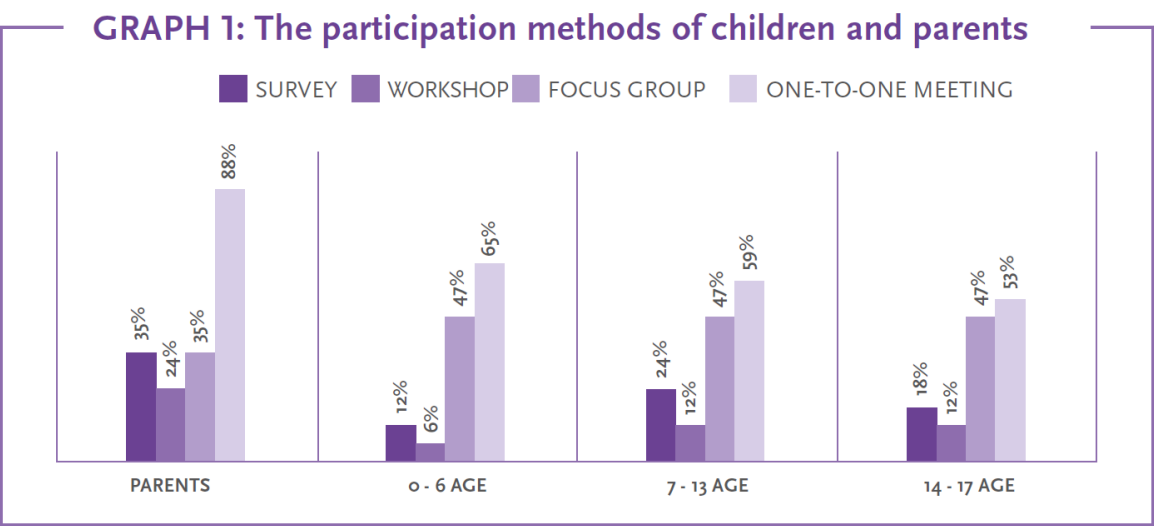
The Evaluation of the Survey Study

The questionnaire was created to cover 4 main processes related to internalizing child and parent friendly approaches among municipalities. The first one is the decision-making process, the second is the budget allocation and resource utilization, the third one is provision of purposeful services and approaches and, finally, the municipality's institutional structure.

1. Child and Parent Friendly Governance in the Decision-Making Process

The first area we examined in municipalities is ensuring children and parents' participation in decision-making mechanisms. 82% of municipalities stated that they have ensured their participation on related planning procedures. Likewise participation of parents was carried out by one-to-one interviews (88%). The participation of children is mostly realized by either one to one-to-one interviews or focus groups depending on varied age groups (Graph1)

In addition, municipalities mostly preferred using methods such as family interviews, focus group, satisfaction surveys, workshops, one-to-one interviews, events, workshops, trainings and interviews in order to ensure participation of children and parents on planning of related issues.



The key for a meaningful participation depends on giving sufficient amount of time to stakeholders to create their authentic views and inter-changing information with them. Providing feedback to the relevant stakeholders after ensuring their participation results in a trust based process. It also establishes confidence of stakeholders in the process and to the institution.

According to the survey results, the percentage of municipalities informing children and parents before ensuring their participation and inviting them to meetings is 88% and the percentage of giving feedback to stakeholders who have previously shared their opinion is 82%. Moreover 65% of municipalities state that they share the list of stakeholders with whom they receive opinions in their strategic plans. Municipalities will be able to manage meaningful stakeholder participation as long as they share a list of stakeholders who have received opinions from in order to adopt a reliable approach related to operating a meaningful participation process.

TABLE 2: The Approaches of Municipalities to Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement



We asked questions about the goals of municipalities for children and parents of different age groups which are written in their strategic plans. It appears that there are goals for children and parents in the strategic plans of all municipalities participating in the survey. However, the municipalities that share the realization rate of these goals on their website are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the municipalities we have examined. We asked about the objectives of the strategic plans of the municipalities for children of different ages and disadvantaged children.

According to given responses, the municipalities:

- A strategic plan in the field of education is mostly created for kids who are over 3 years old, disadvantaged groups and parents.
- Set goals in the field of culture and arts for children between the ages of 7-17 and parents.
- Set goals related to good health for children and parents (50%)
- Considers area of 'child protection' is among the lowest targets in the strategic plan for children and parents.
- The rate of having a children's council, commission, advisory board or similar structure among municipalities is 59%.

TABLE 3: The Distribution/Ratios/Percentages of Municipalities' Strategic Goals for Children and Parents

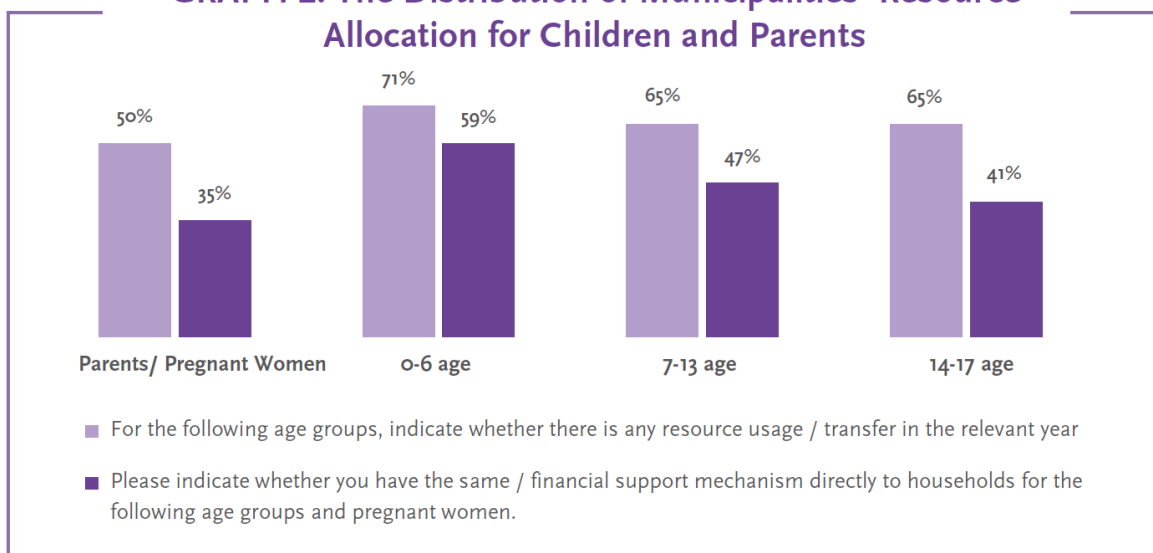
	Parents	0-3 age	3-6 age	7-13 age	14-17 age	Disadvantaged Children
EDUCATION						
CULTURE-ART						
HEALTH						
CHILD PROTECTION						

■ %100-80 ■ %80-60 ■ %60-40 ■ %40-0

2. Child and Parent Friendly Governance in Budget Allocation and Resource Usage

The implementation of decisions to support children and parents takes place by allocating a budget and using the allocated resources. From this point of view, we asked municipalities about the distribution of resources allocated to children and parents specifically children of different age groups, disadvantaged children and parents. According to their responses, the most common resource allocation is carried out for the 0-6 age group (Chart 2). In addition 59% of municipalities realize resource use / transfer for disadvantaged groups.

GRAPH 2: The Distribution of Municipalities' Resource Allocation for Children and Parents



The municipalities report that they transparently share resources allocated for children and parents (94%). In addition, 88% of the municipalities state that they share the use of resources related to children and parents by associating them with the goals in the

strategic plan. Likewise 71% of the municipalities stated that they share the use/ transfer of resources for children and parents on their website. We also asked municipalities about the partnerships they have established with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in resource use and transfer, and their structure. These partnerships are important in increasing the contribution offered to the Sustainable Development Goals as well as contributing to the quality of life of the citizens they serve (SDG 17: Partnerships for Goals). According to the survey responses, 76% of the municipalities establish partnerships with NGOs working in the field of children and parents. These partnerships mainly include providing operational support and promotional-communication support for NGOs (71%) and providing information and human resources support (65%).

3. Child and Parent Friendly Governance in the Provision of Services

We asked municipalities about the public spaces and services offered for the development of children from all age groups and parents. Based on the data we collect from the survey study, we see that the largest proportion belongs to parks in municipal venues, and the lowest is science centres and book centres. In particular, cultural activities, cognitive and scientific approaches, which are critically important for the development of 0-6 year old children, appear as an area open for serious development. (Table 4). When we look at the basis of different age groups;

- For 0-3 year olds, there are mostly parks available for them. However, number of science centres, art centres, multi-purpose centres, pre-school care and education centres, libraries and book centres is very low.
- For 3-6 year olds, the highest proportion belongs to parks and pre-care centres and schools. On the other hand, the rates of centres (e.g. science centre, art centre, multi-purpose centres, library and book centre) that support knowledge and art are very low
- For the 7-13 age group, the lowest rate appears as education centres, science centers and book centers.
- For the 14-17 age group, the highest rate belongs to libraries, art centers and multi-purpose centers.

Apart from education related activities, we also asked municipalities about their provision of services for 0-6, 7-13 and 14-17 age groups

TABLE 4: What type of venues belonging to the municipality are available for children?

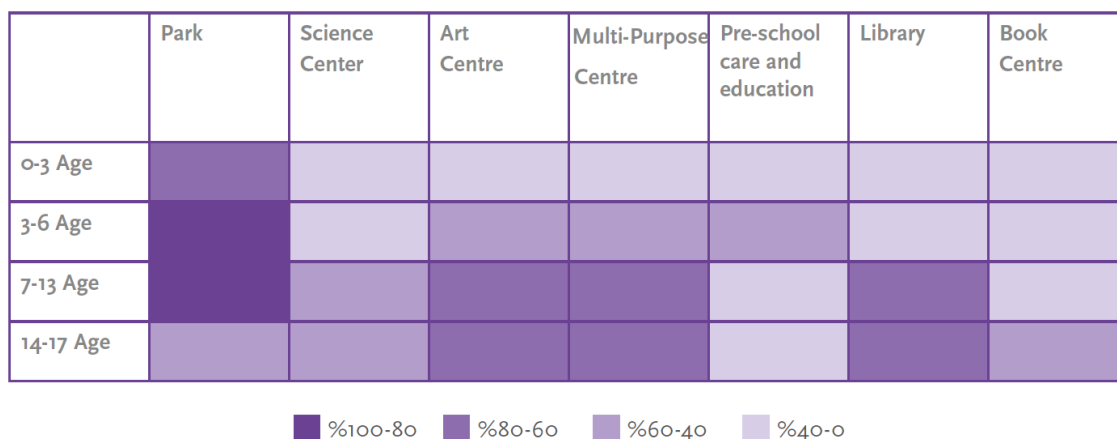
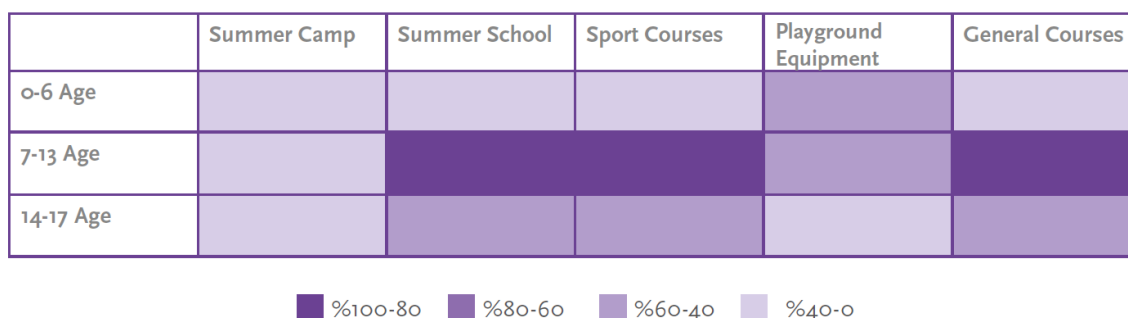


TABLE 5: Apart from educational services, do you have additional services under the following titles for children?



In the provision of these services, municipalities shared that they provide volunteering opportunities to provide 82% of child and parents related services. When we ask the municipalities about the free services they offer for pregnant women and their households, it is understood that these services generally diversify as financial aid, training and seminars for parents, nutrition and health services for pregnant women. In addition to the services offered to children, pregnant women and the households with pregnant women, we requested that the services provided for parents and families with children to be detailed by the municipalities.

According to their responses:

- 59% of municipalities give trainings related to child development for parents
- 53% of them reported that they also offered other services for households where children and parents reside

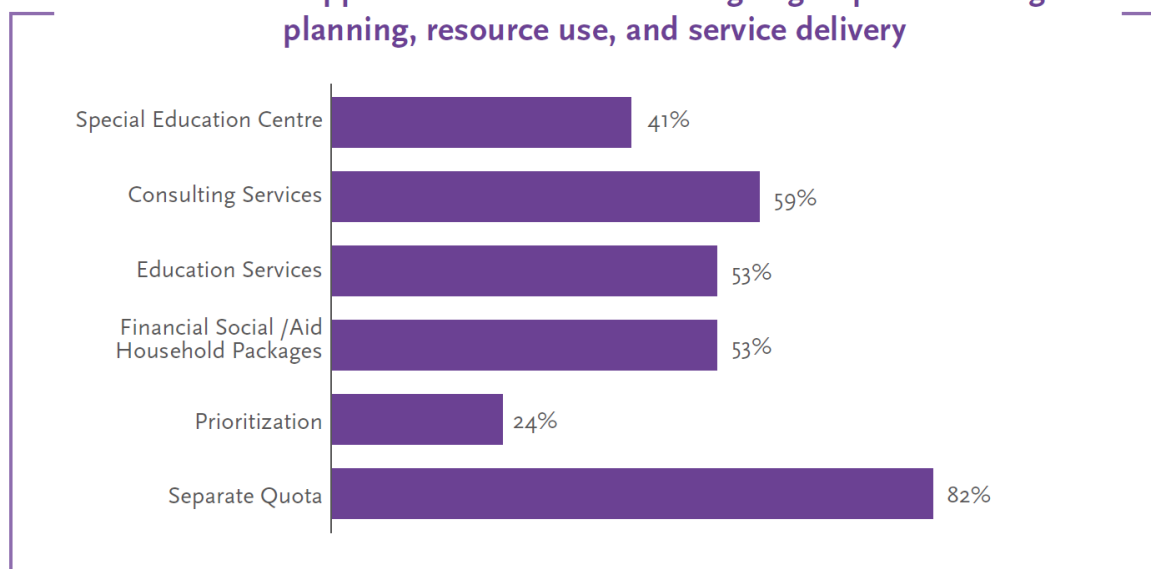
The approach adopted in the service delivery process and the internalization of a culture of continuous learning increase the quality of the service provided. Thus, the quality of life / well-being of the citizen also increases. Based on this understanding, 88% of municipalities share that they conduct research to provide feedback in order to collect opinions and suggestions on the services they provide for children and parents. However, the rate of municipalities that share the results of these feedback on their website is only 47%. The rate of municipalities that measure performance regarding the services provided is 82%, and the rate of municipalities that share performance measurement results is 59%.

In fact, both results suggest that municipalities adopt a continuous development approach. However, it is also understood that the transparent sharing of these results with the public should be improved. The municipalities that adopt a transparent management approach can establish the trust of the citizens. Likewise 3/4 of the municipalities stated that they regularly conduct citizen satisfaction surveys regarding services for children and parents.

All municipalities shared that they recorded the quality of the complaints about the services they provide. Another area of investigation in the questions we ask to the municipalities is the approach adopted and the services provided for children who belong to disadvantaged groups. According to the survey data, municipalities have prioritization and separate quotas for disadvantaged groups (82%).

There is an area of improvement in the provision of supportive household packages (24%) for families in disadvantaged groups (Chart 3). In addition, most of the municipalities have preventive, detection and follow-up mechanisms for incidents such as child neglect, abuse and violence.

GRAPH 3: The approach towards disadvantaged groups at the stage of planning, resource use, and service delivery



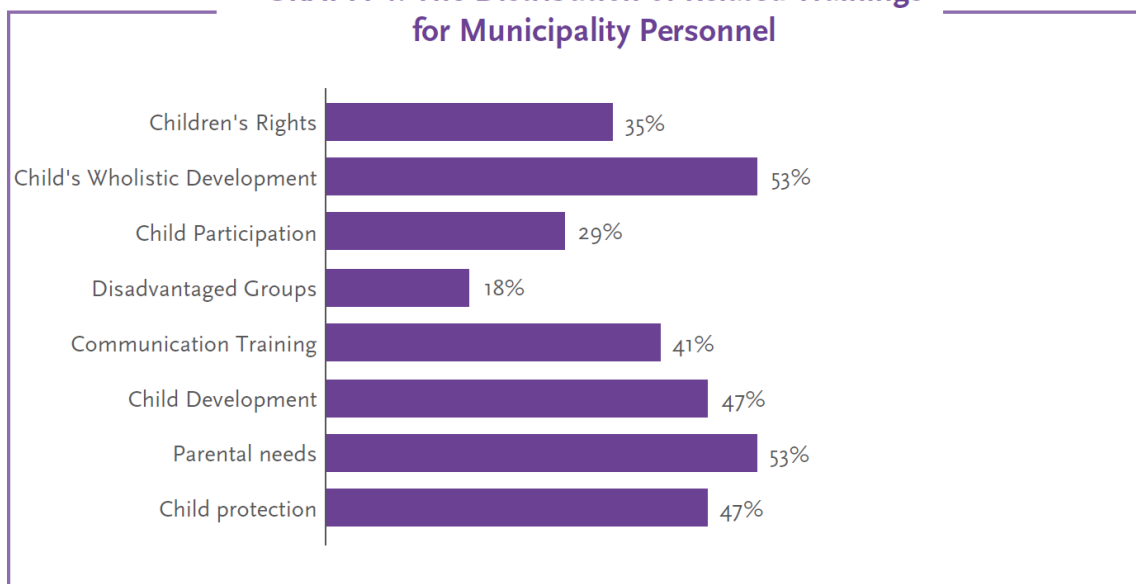
4. Child and Parent Friendly Governance in Institutional Infrastructure

Only with a well-equipped institutional capacity, municipalities can carry out democratic decisions towards children and parents, the resources they allocate and the activities they target in the most effective and efficient way. Efficient and desired functioning of institutional capacity can be achieved by operating the consultation and inspection processes of the municipality in an ethical, transparent and accountable manner. In an environment where external stakeholders do not trust and do not understand the processes, the possibility of cooperation and joint effort is nearly eliminated.

We asked the municipalities about the realization of the trainings that will strengthen the institutional capacities they offer to their own staff who work for children and parents.

According to the results we obtained and trainings offered by the municipalities we see that there is an opportunity for improvement in all of them. For instance trainings on the wholistic development of the child and child development have been carried out in only half of the municipalities. Similarly half of the municipalities organize training on parental needs and child protection. In particular, trainings for understanding / recognizing children's rights and disadvantaged groups should be carried out in order to strengthen the institutional capacities of municipalities. There are important areas for improvement in these matters. (Graphic 4).

**GRAPH 4: The Distribution of Related Trainings
for Municipality Personnel**



According to the survey data Brief notes on the capacity of municipalities to have a child and parent friendly institutional capacity can be listed as follows:

- In the majority of the municipalities parental leave period for the personnel is in accordance with the legal regulations and the usage rate is 100%.
- In 53% of municipalities there are practices and policies to support municipal staff with children apart from parental leave
- Only 35% of the municipalities participating in the survey have a special unit related to child policies.
- Municipalities share ethical values regarding children and principles such as the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child among its their institutional structures (47%)

Conclusion

We have developed questionnaire and implemented survey for all district municipalities of Istanbul from child and parent friendly approach. We asked the municipalities to evaluate themselves in a multifaceted way, from making decisions, to resource management, from the provision of services, to the institutional functioning and the establishment of this understanding.

The 17 municipalities participating in the survey represent 48% of the population of Istanbul and 45% of the child population in Istanbul. In the light of the data we have obtained, it is understood that the municipalities adopt an understanding that supports children and parents in their decision-making mechanisms, resource usage and provision of their services

However, rather than concentrating on different parts of social-emotional, cognitive and physical development in different age groups, these mechanisms need to be created with an understanding that supports wholistic development for each age group.

Policy Recommendations

1. In order to internalize a child-friendly understanding within the municipality, the existence of a child assembly, commission, advisory board or similar structure with child work will support the dissemination of this culture to all processes within the institution.
2. In the provision of services of the municipality, policies should be developed to address the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of children of different age groups as a whole.
3. The child care services and parking facilities are provided for the development of pre-school children. Science, art and cultural activities, which are generally developed for older children, should be extended to the preschool period of children as well.
4. While the municipalities share the results of their research to measure service satisfaction with the public on the website, they should present the results and their evaluations regarding the results all together.
5. Municipalities need to increase number of trainings for their employees to understand the children and parent better. The competencies such as child protection, parental needs, child rights, child development, communication training are very important for the municipality staff working in the field of children and parents.

6. The extension of parental leave to fathers (paternity leave) applied by municipalities for employees with children will support the strengthening of the father's role on the care of children. At the same time, municipalities should carry out activities to increase awareness both within the institution and among the public in order to popularize concept of fatherhood.