



**NATIONAL STATISTICAL SERVICE  
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**



**Report on**

**Child Protection and Care System in the Republic Of Armenia**

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## CONTENT

<b>Proposals and Comments on the New Format of Data Compilation.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Child Care and Protection (at the age of 0-3) System in RA.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The RA State Policy of the Care of Children within the System of Child Care and Protection.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The Prospective and Trends for the development of Child Protection and Care system.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Annex.....</b>	

**Proposals and Comments on the New Format of Data Compilation**

The format of data base introduced within the context of TRANSMONEE project as compared with the previous one is much preferable from the point of view of its usage and maintenance. It is especially evident, as it makes it possible to use just one window to view all the indicator related data as well as to work with them. We also appreciate the fact that all the indicators are reviewed in 2011 to meet the requirements for this type of system of indicators.

As for the labels used to explain the indicators, it would have been much preferable to use the ones with reviewed and “already checked” contents, as in Statistics reviewing is a part of everyday work and it occurs very often, in particular, when it comes to some indicators which are included in the mentioned data base (eg. some indicators that are part of National Accounts and can be reviewed even after several years). It is noteworthy, that data bases of several registers which are part of NSS system were reviewed. Based on the results some data included in TRANSMONEE tables were reviewed as well.

At the same time, we appreciate the efforts to somehow classify the indicators represented in the tables as it makes it much easier for the data suppliers to fill in the necessary data, thus making the work of those agencies responsible for data compilation more effective and efficient.

The working discussions/round tables/ with some specialists has revealed several cases of misinterpretation of a number of indicators. In particular, the definition of Children with Limited Abilities is to be clarified. The problem is that the information on these children received from the schools is incomplete (due to the fact that many children with such disabilities do not attend schools). Besides, the status of Children with limited disabilities has no legal background /is not fixed by the law / and there is no information on the number of such children. It means that all the indicators related to the mentioned above problem are to be reviewed.

The methods of compilation of some indicators concerning juvenile justice are also a problem. In particular, it is challenging to get information on children who are involved in different judicial procedures (civil, administrative, and criminal) regardless their age unless there is a court decision or verdict). Besides, in the case of many sufferers it is almost impossible to disaggregate the received data by age or sex.

As for the clarification of the definitions, the expression “status violation” needs additional clarification.

There are also some problems concerning the timing. It is relevant not only to the data compiled by the NSS but also the ones received from other administrative sources. There are some deviations from the calculations and publishing of poverty and population well being data and the provision of the abovementioned data to UNICEF within the framework of TRANSMONEE project. Problems of similar content occur also with the Ministries of Labour and Social Issues (where the information data bases are yet in the process of creation), as well as the Finance Ministry (which is explained by the fact that the budget payments are to be ratified by the National Assembly at one of its Autumn sessions).

In order to broaden information sources and make their work more clear, we find it necessary to conduct working discussions /round tables/ not only with those agencies responsible for data provision but the responsible of TRANSMONEE as well, in order to be able to develop a more clear data compilation strategy and clarify the issues related to the timing, as well as the relevance of the data collected with the national definitions.

### **Child Care And Protection (at the age of 0-3) System in RA**

Since the ratification of Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Government of Armenia has committed itself to increase efforts to ensure the respect of children's rights in every aspect of life.

Special attention is given to children in need of protection. For these children, public welfare services represent the only possibility to receive the necessary care, and to be protected from forms of exploitation, violence and abuse.

While assisting them, service providers commit to translate into practice the pact that the State implicitly signs with citizens, in particular with the most vulnerable, to ensure their protection and equal access to services.

In general, all the girls and boys in Armenia who during a specific phase of their life would require support from the State to face a difficult situation (involving them and their families) are entitled, according to the law, to be assisted with protection measures, tailored to their needs.

The RoA Law on Social Assistance defines the concept of “social assistance” as “a package of social services provided to persons who face a difficult situation of life, to meet their basic needs and to integrate them into society, as well as to prevent them from becoming vulnerable”.

Social services are generally intended as all those services which contribute to the wellbeing of the population, i.e. health, education, and social protection services.

In the Preamble of the “Convention on the Right of the Child” which was ratified by RA in 1992 it is stated that “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care», this is why it should be in the focus of attention of all layers of the society. According to RA Family Code “A person under 18 years old is considered a child (Article 41, Point 1):

The family is the natural environment for the growth and well-being of children. It allows them to grow in the atmosphere of love and mutual understanding. Children feel protected in their families, they learn to respect and trust the elder generation. The child learns to cooperate with the grownups and to come with help when needed; he feels responsibility for his actions. A children with no family experience as a rule grows individually and socially mutilated.

The choice of optimal ways of placement of children without parental care has always been a topic of many discussions and drafts /projects/ and has served as a basis for many reforms. Hence the efficiency and effectiveness of technologies selected for the placement is of immense importance.

At the same time it is worth mentioning that any placement of children is aimed at solving a number of problems related to the adaptation /adjustment to the environment which replaces the families. Finally, regardless the type of placement, it is considered to be successful if it allows compensating the missing social roles.

In this report several terms and concepts are used the explanation of which is given below:

Orphan – a person under 18 years of age who has lost the only or both parents.

By social adaptation or adjustment we mean the adjustment of the children to the social environment and understanding of social roles /functions/.

The children aged under 18 whose parents or the only parent died, or were deprived of parental rights, were recognized incapable, avoid upbringing or protecting children's rights and interests, as well as were recognized dead, unknown or missing (indeterminate location of parents ) in accordance with order determined by law are considered deprived of parental care, or due to social, economic, health/disability reasons/ they are at the hospital/ , neglect or violence (including children temporarily left behind by migrating parents or where one or both parents are in prison, or refusal to take the children back from the residential care institution surrender their parental rights / .

The survey data show that about 60% of children at the residential care institutions are suffering from severe chronic diseases, in particular injury of central nervous system; about 55% are physically underdeveloped. Children without parental care who live in the residential care houses are lacking self-confidence, as well as the self regulatory mechanisms are weakened. Most of the children suffer from the feeling /sense of/ of danger, they lose interest in everything and their mental development is blocked.

The isolation of children from their mothers for 1-3 years brings to such mental problems which later cannot be restored. Constant changes of micro-social environment; residential care institutions for the preschool age children, residential care institutions for the school age children, have a negative impact on the psychology and health of the child.

Children in such institutions usually start to walk or speak much later than those who live in the families. Health problems are very common with these children. They also have problems at school as only 20 % of the children from residential care institutions are able to catch with the school programs.

During the years following the RA independence there appeared a new group of so called “social orphans”. According to the data for 2011 provided by the RA Social Affairs Ministry /socially honourable population database/ about 69,446 families were registered within the system / the number of children in those families was 158,132 / (Table 1).

*Table 1. The number of families within the system of socially honourable population (those living in difficult conditions) and the number of children in the families*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Number of Families</b>	103,928	94,684	95,130	96,400	87,197	82,194	69,446

<b>Number of Children</b>	208,946	221,000	224,000	221,000	197,261	185,057	158,132
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The so called “hidden” social orphanhood is a new category, which came into being due to the worsening of living conditions of families, demoralization, changes in the attitude towards children, even cases of turning the children out.

Many children are deprived of parental care not due to their parents’ death, but for different social reasons. Urbanization, social shocks, intensive migration of the population, as well as disability or special needs of children in many countries results in the growth of the number of abandoned children. From the legal point of view, refusal is a legal act which is to be officially affirmed by a special legal document. Within three months the parents (the mother) can change their decision and the children will be returned to the family. The study of such cases reveals certain social-psychological problems among these women who have lost their sense of maternity (the most important form of social behaviour).

Based on the study of the reasons for refusals the Belgium Committee on Social Issues related to Women describes three groups of such women. The first and widely spread group- the father of the child leaves the pregnant woman (the future mother), the second group- the mother refuses to take out of wedlock children, and the third group –the low morale and the lack of sense of responsibility.

It is worth mentioning that in 98% of cases the reason is of socio-economical nature, i.e. insufficient financial means and economic conditions to be able to take care of the children, the material problems, unemployment, etc.

One of the main reasons is the poor health of the child. But it must be mentioned as well, that in those cases one of the hidden reasons is the poor social conditions. The parents believe that inadequate development is a disease which cannot be treated and they do not have sufficient means for the treatment and care of the child.

Chechet who is an academician, a member of International Academy of Pedagogy and Social Sciences distinguishes the following reasons for orphanhood:

- Poverty, which is characterized not only by insufficient financial means, but also by the existence of different diseases, illiteracy, and the feeling of not being protected. It stands true not only for poor countries but for some areas of rich countries as well.

- Natural and social shocks /hazards/: They make people leave their settlements and as a result children lose their parents and relatives.

- Changes within the structure of the family. Due to urbanization the once large rural families (many members representing different generations) have transformed into small families, without relatives or neighbours, which previously carried the social protection function.

- Young mothers: The sexual development of the girls occurs at much earlier ages now. Every year all over the world 15 mln. girls get pregnant at the age of 14-20, or have children. Usually their parents or elder relatives undertake the responsibility for caretaking of their children. Cases of refusal or sending the children to residential care institutions occur very often or with the young mothers.

- Violence and abuse: As a result of various types of violence against children in the families (physical, psychological, emotional and sexual) children become homeless or are placed in the residential care institutions.

- Functional disorders: 6-7% of children are born with different functional disorders. In many countries of the world children do not receive any practical, material or psychological-pedagogical support which is necessary for the treatment of the disabled in their families.

- Children suffering from HIV/ AIDS.

There are different types of formal care institutions which are responsible for the protection and care of the children under 3 years of age who are left without parental care. Among them: guardianship, foster families, adoption, orphanages (residential care institutions).

Guardianship is the placement of the child who is left without parental care in the guardian family defining the responsibilities of the guardian. The guardian responsibility will be to protect the rights of the child and to represent his interests, as well as the state authority responsible for the issues related to guardianship. The child may be placed in the guardian family temporarily until the final decision is made (will return to the family of his /her biological parents, adoption or guardianship, or placement in residential care institutions). The guardian has the role of the “first aid”. Not more than three children from problematic /crisis/ families are placed in such families due to the dangerous situations and threat to their life and health.



Based on the foreign experience, as well as taking into consideration the legal needs of the children to be protected by the state, several types of guardianship may be distinguished:

1. Placement for a long period of time. In practice the child lives in the family until the age of 18. The return of the children to their biological parents is almost impossible because of the decomposition or degradation of these families.
2. Placement with a perspective of adoption. From the legal point of view the child is free, and the family is prepared for the adoption procedure and the patronship is viewed as a transitional stage.
3. The placement in guardian families is used also when because of some reasons the child is immediately isolated from his family and there is an urgent need to place him in a child care institution. It is a temporary placement, until he is returned to his family, or adopted, or placed in a basic /main/ guardian family.
4. Placement of disabled children.
5. Short term placement (up till 6 months or regularly for several days) in order to conduct medical examination of the child/ appraise the health/, psychological condition as well as the level of his development.
6. Short term placement (up till 6 months or regularly for several days) in case if the biological parents or the guardian has some serious health problems, or in case of their absence or when they are on vocation.

The psychologists, pedagogs and practical staff are of the opinion that in many cases the isolation of the children from their biological parents is not recommended. This is why as compared with other types of placements; guardianship bares the idea of keeping in contact with the parents.

The main task of the guardian families is to create appropriate conditions for the children to live. These families to a great extent differ from foster families. They don't undertake full responsibility, rights and functions over the child. It is known that the system of guardianship is effective and cheaper. It is 1.5 times cheaper than that of orphanages<sup>1</sup>.

The explanatory dictionary describes guardianship as «a means of protection of personal and property rights of work incapable persons (children without parental care, people with mental disorders).

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<sup>1</sup> Витива Н. Дважды лишенные семьи. Губерния, 2001, N50 (287).

At present guardianship is common with the children who have blood relationship with the guardian (at least one of the parents is a relative). Custody and guardianship is established with regard to the children who are deprived of parental care with the purpose of keeping, rearing and educating children, as well as protection of their rights and interests. The guardians are appointed by Custody and Guardianship bodies. The children who are placed in these families have the same rights and privileges as the ones from the residential care houses.

Guardians fulfil the guardian obligations towards a child under guardianship without remuneration.

In RA based on the Government decision the foster parents periodically receive monetary compensation. The foster parents is responsible for rearing and educating the child. He has a right to apply to the court with a demand to return the child back from any person, including biological parents if he thinks that the child is mistreated or is kept illegally. The law also envisages the protection of the child from any possible violations by the foster parents. In particular some restrictions are envisaged on the child's property.

Based on the increasing number of children in need for residential care a number of legal acts were adopted by the government aimed at social protection of the children.

When choosing between different types of placements the preference is given to families and family type institutions which are reflected in the RA legislation which came into force in 2004. Armenia has joined the UN "Convention on the Right of the Child", thus demonstrating its consent to the statement that a child needs a family and not a residential care institution.

Among different forms of formal care the adoption is widely developed in Armenia. It is considered as a most preferable way of placement of children deprived of parental care.

According to the RA Family Code Adoption is a legal act according to which adopters and adopted obtain rights and obligations stipulated by law for parents and children. The Local self-government bodies undertake the responsibility for adoption. The adoption is to be approved by the court.

Adoption is a legal act due to which adopted children and their descendants with regard to the adopters and their relatives, as well as the adopters and their relatives with regard to the adopted children and their descendants are equated with the relatives by origin in their personal property and non-property rights and obligations.

Based on the data for 2011 the number of children to be adopted was 161 persons (those on the list/ register) (Table 2). During the given period 121 children were adopted (Table 3).

After the independence of Armenia the adoption of Armenian children by foreigners became possible (Graph 1). During 2006-2011 428 children were adopted by foreigners of which 253 girls.

*Table 2. The number of children who are on the central registration list and are subject to adoption by age groups 2006-2011 persons*

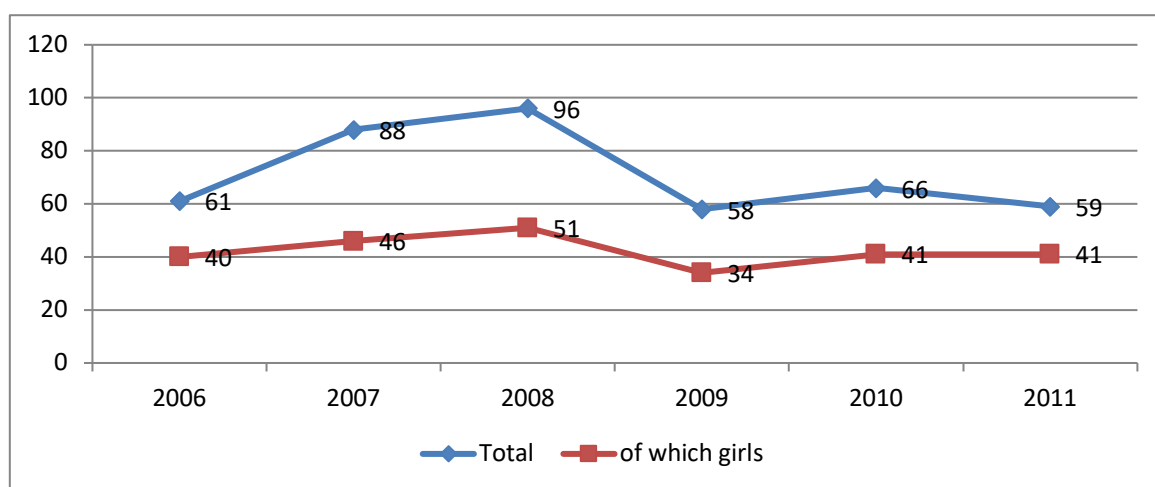
	Total						Out of which girls					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Till 6 months of age	29	33	28	18	23	22	17	18	14	8	13	11
From 6 months till 1 year of age	43	57	46	41	58	55	27	32	26	23	32	36
1 -6 years of age	40	33	33	35	44	37	19	16	15	16	23	21
6 -10 years of age	13	24	10	13	10	17	8	11	6	5	7	9
10 -15 years of age	24	25	10	11	20	21	6	5	1	3	5	5
15 -18 years of age	10	8	1	4	9	9	4	4	-	1	6	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>89</b>

*Table 3. The number of registered adopted children by age groups, 2006-2011.<sup>2</sup> persons*

	Total						Of which girls					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Up till 6 months of age	3	5	6	7	5	4	2	3	4	4	2	3
6 months - 1 year of age	28	41	36	30	36	30	20	22	19	17	18	20
1 -6 years of age	50	69	78	51	57	57	27	36	39	24	34	35
6 -10 years of age	13	20	15	7	16	12	5	10	7	3	7	7
10 -15 years of age	29	17	11	7	17	15	6	2	3	-	10	3
15 -18 years of age	10	10	2	3	8	3	4	4	-	1	2	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>68</b>

*Graph 1. The number of children adopted by foreign citizens, 2002- 2011*

<sup>2</sup> The number of already adopted children may not correspond to the number of children on the adoption list for the given year as some of them may be registered the previous year. The child is considered adopted from the date of his adoption.



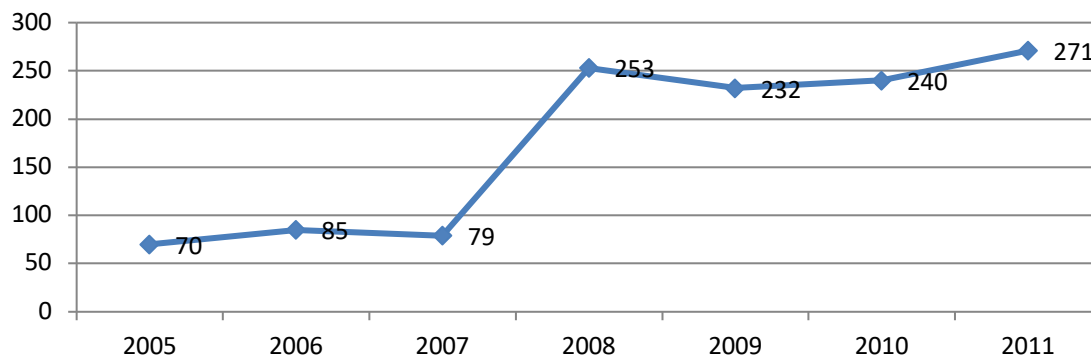
Already during the years of soviet rule (1988) family type residential care institutions were opened in Armenia, which were “children homes” where special blocks of flats were built for families with 10 and more children and the families of those who undertook the responsibility for their care, as well as apartments were envisaged in ordinary buildings for the families with 5 and more children left without parental care (orphans).

Another widely used form of children care is SOS villages, where the children live in separate houses in small groups. In 132 countries worldwide there is similar type of children care institutions. This type of children villages are functioning based on the principles mentioned below:

- In Children villages Mother is the head of the family. It is a profession and devotion at the same time. Through a tough competition only the ones are selected who are ready to give their love to the orphans. The mothers receive initial training.
- The children in SOS villages belong to different age groups and brothers and sisters are not separated.
- Each family permanently lives in a separate comfortable house. There are 12-15 family houses in a village.
- The village is managed by the director, who lives in the village with his family and actively supports (provides assistance to) the families.

At present the number of children under care in SOS villages is 271, which 4 times exceeds the data for the 2005 (Graph 2):

*Graph 2. The number of children under care in SOS villages 2005-2011*



### **The RA State Policy of the Care of Children within the System of Child Care and Protection**

The aim of RA state policy for social protection of the rights of the children without parental care is:

- To protect the rights of children that are left without parental care which are stipulated by RA Constitution, RA Civil and Family Codes, UN Convention on the Right of the Child and RA laws on the “Social Protection of Children without Parental Care” and “On the Children’s Rights” and other legal acts.
- To guarantee the rights of the children and to restore these rights in the case their violation, as well as to exclude any discrimination against them.
- To provide legal basis for the social protection of children without parental care
- To prevent social injustice

Social protection and well being of children without parental care is a top priority of the state. Its main principles are:

- Humaneness,
- Social justice,
- The priority to organize the care and upbringing of children without parental care in families and to support these families

- The definition and provision of minimal social standards aimed at improving the condition of children who are left without parental care and are placed in the educational, healthcare or custodial /guardianship/ institutions.
- The cooperation between state and local government bodies which are responsible for the protection and care of children without parental care and NGOs.

The RA government defines the main minimum indicators of life quality standards for the children who are left without parental care (guarantees) regardless the type of the Child protection and care institution (educational, medical, guardianship) , which include free medical aid and services, provision of food for free, organization of the rest and rehabilitation, legal support, right for apartment, admission to secondary, professional, higher educational institutions (based on the competition results) in accordance with the procedures envisaged in RA legislation.

The children who are left without parental care or their representatives who are in medical, educational or guardianship institutions have a right to demand regular study the correspondence of the quality of the services provided to the minimum norms and standards defined by the RA government. The studies are conducted by authorized state or local self government bodies based on the applications from the children left without parental care or their authorized /legitimate/ representatives of the children, in a manner prescribed by the RA legislation.

The children without parental care need and have a right for special protection and care for their normal development as well as provision of minimum standards of state and local self-government bodies, which are responsible also for the involvement of the children in the social life.

In order to protect the rights of children without parental care who are in difficult situation the social services' regional, educational, guardianship and medical institutions, regardless of their organizational- legal type based on the defined minimum quality social standards must work out social – psychological rehabilitation programs. Social-psychological programs include the assessment of the condition of children, including their health condition, psychological as well as other anti-crisis measures which are to be implemented by regional centres of social services, either independently or together with health care or other organizations.

In case if the rights of the children without parental care are violated, by the decision of the court the person who is to blame for the act is to reimburse the damage, taking into consideration the need for undertaking measures for social adaptation and social-psychological rehabilitation of these children.

In RA there are 7 types of institutions which are responsible for taking care and protecting the children who are left without parental care. These are: orphanages, medical-social rehabilitation centres, support centres, boarding schools, day care centres, pre-school institutions, special public educational institutions.

At present within the system of RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs there are 7 public and 3 non public orphanages (see Table 4). At the beginning of the year the number of children in these institutions was 1102, and at the end of the year it was 1115 (see Table 5). The number of children under one year of age was 69 and 99 respectively (see Table 6).

*Table 4. The number of orphanages by RA marzes and the city of Yerevan for 2006-2011*

		units					
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Yerevan city</b>	Total	3	3	3	3	3	4
	Public	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Non Public	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Ararat</b>	Total	2	2	1	1	1	1
	Public	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Non Public	1	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Gegharqunik</b>	Total	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Public	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Non Public	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Lori</b>	Total	2	2	2	2	2	1
	Public	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Non Public	1	1	1	1	1	-
<b>Kotayq</b>	Total	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Public	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Non Public	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Shirak</b>	Total	4	4	4	4	4	2
	Public	2	2	2	2	2	1
	Non Public	2	2	2	2	2	1
<b>RA Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Public</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Non Public</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

*Table 5. Dynamics in the number of children (2006-2011), persons*

<b>a) Total</b>	Total						Of which girls					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>The number of children at the beginning of the year</b>	<b>1140</b>	<b>1119</b>	<b>1109</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>1225</b>	<b>1102</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>531</b>
Have left	284	280	270	249	316	254	145	138	137	111	150	132
Of which												
Have returned to live with their relatives	78	77	52	41	83	56	35	37	29	23	26	31
Were moved to other residential care inst.-s	36	31	22	18	44	26	15	16	8	9	19	13
Were moved to other institutions providing social services to the old and the disabled	18	11	22	6	1	5	11	2	9	2	1	1

<i>a) Total</i>	Total						<i>Of which girls</i>					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Were adopted	72	92	118	72	77	74	47	49	59	38	50	47
Have dies	26	21	18	20	17	18	11	6	10	7	11	7
Other reasons	54	48	38	92	94	75	26	28	22	32	43	33
Entered (were admitted)	286	263	414	230	331	267	145	123	179	122	161	159
Have moved (were admitted) from other residential care inst.-s	27	19	26	15	18	17	13	9	10	6	7	8
<b>The number of children at the end of the year</b>	<b>1142</b>	<b>1102</b>	<b>1253</b>	<b>1224</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1115</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>558</b>
Of which												
Bed patients	182	193	211	244	203	198	84	99	87	112	88	91
Chronic mental disorders	156	153	133	110	307	293	69	62	52	33	138	129
Those attending schools	562	519	321	406	312	128	311	287	182	217	161	80
Disabled	387	392	402	425	425	466	181	176	176	195	197	207

**b) Public**

	Total						<i>Of which girls</i>					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>The number of children at the beginning of the year</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>374</b>
Have left	260	235	256	191	247	197	131	111	128	91	116	105
Of which												
Have returned to the relatives	75	73	50	41	83	49	33	34	28	23	26	26
Have moved to other residential care institutions	35	29	22	18	44	26	15	14	8	9	19	13
Those who were moved to other institutions which provide social services to the old and the disabled	12	11	22	6	1	5	6	2	9	2	1	1
Were adopted	65	74	118	72	77	71	43	41	59	38	50	44
Have died	26	21	18	20	17	16	11	6	10	7	11	7
Other reasons	47	27	26	34	25	30	23	14	14	12	9	14
Were admitted	241	228	228	188	250	179	123	107	93	102	123	99
from other residential care institutions	27	18	26	15	18	17	13	8	10	6	7	8
<b>The number of children at the end of the year</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>368</b>
Of which												
Bed patients	182	193	211	238	203	198	84	99	87	109	88	91
Chronic mental disorders	152	147	126	109	284	293	67	59	48	32	123	129
Attending schools	385	360	283	304	145	88	209	197	148	155	71	43
Disabled	355	372	381	404	403	444	160	163	162	181	183	195

**c) Non Public**

	Total						<i>Of which girls</i>					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>The number of children at the beginning of the year</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>157</b>
Have left	24	45	14	58	69	57	14	27	9	20	34	27
Of which												
Have returned to their relatives	3	4	2	-	-	7	2	3	1	-	-	5



	Total						Of which girls					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Were moved to other residential care institutions	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Those that have moved to other institutions which provide social services to the old and the disabled	6	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Were adopted	7	18	-	-	-	3	4	8	-	-	-	3
Have died	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other reasons	7	21	12	58	69	45	3	14	8	20	34	19
Were admitted	45	35	186	42	81	88	22	16	86	20	38	60
From other institutions of residential care	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Number of children at the end of the year</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>190</b>
Of which												
Bed patients	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Chronic mental disorders	4	6	7	1	23	-	2	3	4	1	15	-
Those attending schools	177	159	38	102	167	40	102	90	34	62	90	37
disabled	32	20	21	21	22	22	21	13	14	14	14	12

Table 6. Number of Children by Age Groups, 2006-2011, persons

a) At the beginning of the year

		Total						Of which girls					
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Up till 1</b>	Total	32	51	77	67	56	69	23	29	41	34	28	36
	Public	31	38	77	67	56	65	22	22	41	34	28	34
	Non Public	1	13	-	-	-	4	1	7	-	-	-	2
<b>1 - 6 years of age</b>	Total	222	238	226	318	308	324	106	94	90	120	129	136
	Public	199	220	204	186	198	195	92	89	84	68	82	80
	Non Public	23	18	22	132	110	129	14	5	6	52	47	56
<b>7 - 9 years of age</b>	Total	192	177	177	185	170	148	87	82	83	86	80	67
	Public	134	141	140	146	143	125	58	62	63	66	67	57
	Non Public	58	36	37	39	27	23	29	20	20	20	13	10
<b>10 - 15 years of age</b>	Total	430	422	383	408	370	289	221	223	198	208	190	160
	Public	326	302	266	292	263	217	161	152	134	144	129	113
	Non Public	104	120	117	116	107	72	60	71	64	64	61	47
<b>16 - 18 years of age</b>	Total	250	231	246	265	321	272	132	128	132	134	159	132
	Public	237	206	218	179	207	200	121	110	112	83	93	90
	Non Public	13	25	28	86	114	72	11	18	20	51	66	42
<b>19 and over</b>	Total	14	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-
	Public	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Non Public	14	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	Total	<b>1140</b>	<b>1119</b>	<b>1109</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>1225</b>	<b>1102</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>531</b>
	Public	<b>927</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>374</b>
	Non Public	<b>213</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>157</b>

b) by the end of the year

		Total						Of which girls					
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Up till 1</b>	Total	66	91	85	79	93	99	38	47	43	40	48	52
	Public	66	90	85	79	93	92	38	46	43	40	48	47
	Non Public	-	1	-	-	-	7	-	1	-	-	-	5
<b>1 - 6 years of age</b>	Total	245	229	347	318	304	319	106	90	137	128	123	136
	Public	207	200	213	205	186	195	86	81	84	81	72	77

		Total						Of which girls					
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>7 - 9 years of age</b>	Non Public	38	29	134	113	118	124	20	9	53	47	51	59
	Total	196	183	171	195	186	163	93	84	77	98	89	90
	Public	135	147	135	153	153	120	62	65	58	75	74	62
	Non Public	61	36	36	42	33	43	31	19	19	23	15	28
<b>10 - 15 years of age</b>	Total	420	394	403	414	355	299	225	202	204	213	193	165
	Public	313	283	284	295	240	207	165	139	139	146	128	105
	Non Public	107	111	119	119	115	92	60	63	65	67	65	60
<b>16 - 18 years of age</b>	Total	201	205	247	218	302	235	107	118	125	114	144	115
	Public	187	180	160	135	198	170	95	100	75	64	84	77
	Non Public	14	25	87	83	104	65	12	18	50	50	60	38
<b>19 and over</b>	Total	14	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-
	Public	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Non Public	14	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	Total	<b>1142</b>	<b>1102</b>	<b>1253</b>	<b>1224</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1115</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>558</b>
	Public	<b>908</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>368</b>
	Non Public	<b>234</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>190</b>

The orphanages take care after the children under the age of 18 who are left without parental care, or until they return to their biological families, or are adopted, or placed in foster or before the decision on guardianship.

The residential care institutions or collective living arrangements may be of two types: specialized and that of family type. Out of 10 abovementioned residential care houses 2 public and 1 non public ones provide care to the children with mental and physical disabilities.

The family type residential care houses which provide care to the children 3-18 years of age who are left without parental care based on the age peculiarities of the children are divided into two groups:

- Infant houses where the care of 3-13 year old is provided by families,
- Youth houses, where care is provided to the children 13-18 years of age

The medical social rehabilitation centres for children organize the treatment of children with special needs, correct speech disorders, and conduct other complex treatments as well as psychological assistance.

Within the system of the RA Labour and Social Affairs Ministry there are two Day or Social Care centres, where corresponding care services are provided to 200 children.

The Centre for Children Support is responsible for temporary care of the children who are in difficult situation, before returning them to their families or before a decision is made on the guardianship over the child, in all those cases when the placement of the child in a residential care institution is impossible.

There are eight Child night care and protection care centres within the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues system. Within this system care and protection is provided to the children

whose families registered in the family benefit system. According to the data for 2011 boarding schools provide care to 692 children.

The Child Day Care Centres provide social-psychological, educational care services to the children during the day or part of the day. Within the system of RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues there are 2 state day care institutions, and 4 day care centres of “Bridge of Hope” in the Tavush region (Dilijan, Ijevan, Noyemberyan. Berd and nearby villages). Wide scope of services was provided to the children with special needs, as well as those who have some problems of social-psychological nature (462 children in 2011), (see Table 7).

*Table 7. Number of children in the day care centres<sup>3</sup>*

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Children, Total	181	787	789	334	462

The special public educational institutions which function within the system of RA Ministry of Education and Science provide the education and care of children with special needs.

In 2005 by the decision of the Prime Minister the National Commission on Child Protection was established, the main function of which is to conduct a common (unified) policy aimed at the provision of guarantees for the protection of the rights of the children, and the coordination of cooperation the activities of state bodies, NGOs, political and scientific organizations.

According to the decision NIII-N of the RA government dated January 13, 2011 within the framework of the reforms in the sphere of protection of the rights of children the de- institutionalization is considered a priority. The policy conducted in the sphere of child protection and care continues to be of primary interest, which is aimed at strengthening of the child protection and care system, reducing the number of children in the residential child care institutions, prevention of the flow of the children in these institutions, improvement of the conditions in child care residential institutions, social integration of the children under care, creation of optional child care services.

The number of children in the general type orphanages (healthy children) as compared with previous years has reduced by 100, while the number of children in special orphanages increases every year due to the lack of optional specialized services (day centres, rehabilitation centres, etc), as well as the increasing number of children who need special care. In order to solve this problem

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<sup>3</sup> Only the children in the centers which are funded from the state budget are on the list. “Food security and poverty, 2012, January – June”, Information Bulletin, RA NSS, page 17.

the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs cooperates with local and international non public organizations which are specialized in providing similar services.

Within the framework of the project aimed at reducing the number of children in boarding schools, prevention programs were conducted, such as; “De-institutionalization program in Lori”, Fund of Armenian Relief, and since 2011 with the joint efforts of the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and World Vision (Table 8).

*Table 8. The number of children that avoided the risk of being placed in orphanages and special secondary educational institutions<sup>4</sup>*

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Children, Total	274	411	112	210	346

Since 2004 within the system of RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues’ information-analytical “Nork” centre a new data base has been established to preserve information on the children in difficult life situations who are in orphanages, families, healthcare institutions, or are subject to adoption, those who are adopted, as well as the children who by the decision of custody and guardianship bodies are registered as children without parental care as well as , children without parental care who have housing problems.

During the last decade the RA government has developed and implemented a number of projects aimed at protection and development of children.

Already in 2003 based on the UN Convention on Child Rights and the responsibilities undertaken by joining the “World fit for children” which was adopted at the special session on child issues, as well as the RA Law on the Rights of the Child, the RA government has endorsed the National Action Plan On Child Care and Protection for 2004-2015. The National Action Plan was worked out by intergovernmental commission working group which was created based on the RA decision N 558 (2001) with the participation of representatives from: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (as a coordinator), Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Healthcare, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth And Sport Issues, RA Police, RA National Assembly, and NGO-s («My rights», «Orran», «Bridge of Hope», «Child health protection association», «First to the children»).

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<sup>4</sup> “Food security and poverty, 2012 January- June”, information bulletin , RA NSS, p. 17.

The information submitted by the RA in the 2002 National Report to the UN Committee, as well as the information reflected in the RA final report after joining the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, as well as the basic concepts of the reflected in UN Children Summit final document « Giving every child better future » served as a basis for drafting the National Action Plan.

The concepts introduced in the National Program are consistent with the Poverty Reduction Strategic paper and Stable development paper which came to replace the first one.

In the legislation improvement section of the Project it was suggested to review the legislation in the following directions:

- Improvement of the legal background for the protection of rights and interests of ex orphanage alumnae /inhabitants/
- provision of guarantees for the children employed under the age of 18
- strengthening the property and non-property rights of children under 18 years of age
- improvement of the legal basis for child adoption

Within the sphere of social protection the main goals of the National Action plan are.

- improvement and further development of the condition of children,
- creation of incentives for the better life conditions of children,
- development of standards of life for orphanage children
- overcoming difficulties connected with social behaviour and negative trends of transition period
- protection of children who are in a difficult life situation
- creation of community day care centres
- implementation of guardianship
- improvement of the legislation regulating the adoption process
- In accordance with the RA Constitution and international obligations to fully provide physical, mental, moral, psychological and social development of the children
- To strengthen of legal protection of the children
- To harmonize the RA legislation with the reviewed documents of European Social Charter and corresponding international documents

The main goals of the education sector are:

- to prevent the growth of the number of children in boarding schools
- improvement of the quality of preschool education and care
- full correspondence to the demands for education and development of education system
- to review the content of education in accordance with the needs of the civic society and market economy

By its decision N 38 dated September, 2011, the RA government has ratified the “The Child Protection Annual Program for 2012” which is consistent with the principles stated in “Stable development program” ratified by the government decision N 1207 – N (October 30, 2008) as well as all the international obligations undertaken by Armenia in the field of Child protection. In order to strengthen the international cooperation the Republic of Armenia has signed a number of documents out of which from the point of protection and care of the children the mentioned below documents are of utmost importance:

- The Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (which came into force 30.07.2005)
- Agreement on the Cooperation of the CIS Member States in Combating Trafficking in Persons, Human Organs and Tissues (04.09.2006)
- The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption ( 01.09.2007թ )

The Republic of Armenia has also joined a number of ILO conventions, among them The Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour or Forced Labour Convention (No.29), Forced Labour Convention (No.105) and The Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, known in short as the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (N 182

### **The Prospective and Trends for the development of Child Protection and Care system**

The RA government undertakes consistent measures in order to improve the condition of children without parental care and for the protection of their rights. Among them:

- The placement of children without parental care in the families, within the framework of current legislation development of new types of family placements.
- Improvement of the activities of Custody and Guardianship bodies.
- Through the regulation of inter-budgetary relations of relevant structures provision of the implementation of the current legislation on the protection of children without parental care and orphans.
- Involvement of extra budgetary means for funding the educational institutions for orphans and children without parental care.
- Defining a special article in the annual budget for the funding of new constructions of child care institutions and payments for the children (covering the expanses) without parental care.
- Development of the potential of the staff: staff training aimed at improving the social policy and the work
- Development of integral indicators for the improvement of the work of the self government and custody and guardianship

Within the sphere of Child Protection the following priorities can be distinguished;

- To work out and adopt measures for the constant assessment of institutional custody (guardianship) of the orphans and children left without parental care
- Creation of active bodies in the marzies and city communities which will provide necessary support to the families with children, create favourable conditions for the children and prevent social orphanhood.
- to develop and verify additional measures: to work out criteria for recruiting the personnel, as well as new ways of the assessment of the work of the staff, their knowledge and skills.
- Work out programs aimed at supporting the guardian and foster families, etc.
- Work out and implement a system which will enable to assess the resources that are necessary to meet the needs of the children.
- Work out legal norms and mechanisms for the creation of a data base for the children at risk.

- To work out system mechanisms in order to reveal children and families in the risk groups.

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5. RoA Law on Social Assistance (Adopted in 2005);
6. RoA Law on State Pensions;
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