

THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER ROLES AND MOTHERHOOD:  
THE CASE OF “THE FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR AGES 0-18”

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## Thesis Abstract

Ayça Günaydın, —”The Construction of Gender Roles and Motherhood: The Case of ‘The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18’”

This study is an attempt to understand family education policies in Turkey. By analyzing one of the popular family education programs implemented nationwide, “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”, the construction of motherhood ideology and the sexual division of roles in the family are questioned.

The content analysis method is utilized in the study. The family letters that are distributed to the families as the learning materials during the education program are selected as the data of the study.

Regarding the attempt to understand family education policies, the first aim of the study is to analyze the definition of the family in the education program. The question of how the term “family” is defined in the documents of the program is asked in order to examine the characteristics of the family highlighted in the program. Secondly, so as to understand the sexual division of roles in the family, the roles attributed to the family members in the program are questioned, and the roles and responsibilities of fathers, mothers and the children are studied. Lastly, to distinguish the strategic position of women in shaping families, the ideology of motherhood emphasized in the program is analyzed.

To conclude, the content analysis of “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” reveals that the sexual division of roles in the family and the ideology of motherhood that restricts women’s mobility and burdens them with the responsibility of nurturing and caring are reproduced in the education program. In that sense, it is concluded that “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” serves for the continuation of patriarchal relations that strengthen women’s subordination in the family. Lastly, it is highlighted that whilst the “family” as an institution is aimed to be supported and protected by the government’s education policies, the rights of individuals as women and men in terms of gender equality are ignored.

## Tez Özeti

Ayça Günaydın, —“Toplumsal Cinsiyet Roller ve Anneliğin İnşası: ‘0-18 Yaş Aile Eğitimi Programı’ Örneği”

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’deki aile eğitimi politikalarını anlamaya çalışmaktır. Ülke genelinde yaygın bir şekilde uygulanan bir yetişkin eğitimi programı olan 0-18 Yaş Aile Eğitimi Programı’nın analizi çerçevesinde annelik ideolojisinin ve aile içindeki cinsiyetçi rol dağılımlarının inşası sorunsallaştırılmıştır.

Çalışmada içerik analizi yönemi uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın verisi programa katılan ailelere verilen aile mektupları olarak belirlenmiştir.

Aile eğitimi politikalarını anlamak üzere, öncelikle eğitim programında ailenin nasıl tanımlandığı incelenmiştir. Programda dikkat çekilen ailenin özelliklerini incelemek üzere eğitim dökümanlarında “aile” tanımının nasıl yapıldığı sorusu sorulmuştur. İkinci olarak, aile içinde cinsiyetçi rol dağılımlarını anlayabilmek için aile üyelerine atfedilen baba, anne ve çocuk rolleri incelenmiştir. Son olarak, ailelerin şekillenmesinde kadının staretejik konumunu açığa çıkarmak üzere programda vurgulanan annelik ideolojisi değerlendirilmiştir.

0-18 Yaş Aile Eğitimi Programı’nın içerik analizi sonucunda ortaya sunulan veriler ışığında aile içinde cinsiyetçi rol dağılımları ve kadınların hareket alanını kısıtlayan, beslenme ve bakım sorumluluklarını kadınların üzerine yıkan annelik ideolojisinin programda yeniden üretildiği sonuçlarına varılmıştır. Bu anlamda, 0-18 Yaş Aile Eğitimi Programı’nda kadının ailedeki ikincil konumunu güçlendiren ataerkil ilişkilerin devam ettirildiği sonucu çıkarılmıştır. Son olarak, hükümet eğitim politikalarınca “aile” bir kurum olarak güçlendirilmeye ve korunmaya çalışılırken, ailenin içerisinde konumlanan kadın ve erkeğin toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği anlamında haklarının göz ardı edildiği noktası vurgulanmıştır.

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## CHAPTER

### INTRODUCTION

The family is an important focus for government policy because it is an institution that has a significant role in an individual's life. The family serves as the fundamental social unit, producing and raising children, caring for the elderly and disabled, and socializing its members in the basic values of individual character development and in the more general responsibilities of citizenship. In the report of *Study on Educational Needs of Families in Turkey*, the importance of the family is defined as its duties of reproduction and the maintenance of human kind. In the report, the reason why the family is becoming a social institution is given as the role it plays in socialization of a child (ASAGEM, 2011).

However, in recent years, there has been an increasing concern about families' fulfilling their function as a social unit. According to the OECD report, *the Future of the Family to 2030*, in the European Union average household size has been falling (OECD, 2008). It is stated that about 12 percent of the population now lives in one-person households, and over 4 percent are single parents. The report continues as "marriage and birth rates are declining across Europe. Unmarried cohabitation and divorce are widespread and the number of re-constituted families is on the rise" (p.7). The report emphasizes that "these fairly universal trends can be largely explained by a combination

of ageing of the population, lower birth rates, increasing divorce rates and break-up of co-habiting relationships.”

In Turkey, a recent discussion on the family has come up with the replacement of the State Ministry Responsible for Women and the Family by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies during the general election period of 2011. For Seventy First Government period, the new Ministry is planned to serve for and be responsible for women, young people, children, elderly people, and people with disabilities<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the only official mechanism, founded in 1990, responsible for developing and implementing policies to ensure gender equality and empower women, Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW), were placed under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. The objections of women’s organizations, including a petition for the annulment of the change with more than 3000 signatures, were totally ignored and the changes entered into force. In a press release, issued by women’s organizations, women criticized the process and argued that “taking ‘Women’ out of the State Ministry and replacing it with ‘Family’ would be a dangerous and a backwards step for women’s right in Turkey”.<sup>2</sup> Women’s organizations argued that such a change in the Ministry was an indicator of a mentality which associated women only with the family and not trading them as free individuals. In other words, regarding public policies women would only be taken into consideration with their performances of mothering, parenting or being a wife.

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<sup>1</sup> The only woman minister selected for the new cabinet is charged with the newly established Ministry of Family and the Social Policies.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.petitiononline.com/emp01/petition.html>



The issue of family was also on the top of the agenda in Turkish political sphere during the 2011 General Elections. In the election period, all parties situated “the family” at the center of their election campaigns. The ruling party of Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the others, particularly Republican People’s Party (CHP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), gave a higher priority to the family. All of these parties included family policies in their selection manifestations. In AKP’s 2011 election bulletin,<sup>3</sup> it was stated that “despite the severe economic difficulties, we owe our staying alive as a society largely to our strong family structure”. Also, in CHP’s 2011 election bulletin,<sup>4</sup> “Family Insurance” was suggested as a solution to prevent poverty and to strengthen the family; particularly women, children, elderly and disabled. The target of the Family Insurance was defined as to protect the family and it was mentioned that when the family’s necessities of job and nutrition were provided then society would be improved. On the other side, in MHP’s 2011 bulletin,<sup>5</sup> the family was also attributed important properties in terms of protecting and surviving the generations and transmission of national and spiritual properties.

As a matter of fact, the speech of the Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan in the Fifth Family Council in 2008 reflects the government’s point of view on the role of the family within society. In his speech, Erdoğan explains the importance of the family for society and supports the argument of “Strong Family is equal to Strong Society”, which means that strong family structures and family solidarity will prevent the hazardous

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<sup>3</sup> “Her şey Türkiye İçin”, AKP 2011 Seçim Beyannamesi.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.chp.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/Se%C3%A7im\\_Bildirgesi-.pdf](http://www.chp.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/Se%C3%A7im_Bildirgesi-.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.mhp.org.tr/kitaplar/MHP\\_2011\\_SecimBeyannamesi.pdf](http://www.mhp.org.tr/kitaplar/MHP_2011_SecimBeyannamesi.pdf)

effects of social problems and poverty. Erdoğan indicates in his speech that families have important functions in preventing gender discrimination, providing equal opportunities and solving many problems of youth. In addition to this, families are attributed a tremendous function in fighting with the problems of crime and bad habits. That's why the Prime Minister Erdoğan argues that policies addressing families are importantly necessary. The Minister of State for Women and Family of that time, Nimet Çubukçu, also reported in her speech in the Fifth Family Council in 2008 that “the family has been undergoing major changes recently that have direct effects on society, therefore, in order to protect and strength the family, to improve solidarity and commitment among family members, necessary policies should be developed” (p.8).

The scientific and technological developments in the twenty-first century, industrialization, urbanization, migrations all have some effects on the life of the family. As a result, the family has been undergoing major changes that have direct effects on parent-child relationships and on the development of children. As argued by the report on *the Survey on the Educational Needs of Families*, education can have a functional role in this process and it can help parents to deal with the problems of society (ASAGEM, 2011). Therefore, policies addressing education of the family are given priority (Fifth Family Council, 2008). Actually, family education policies have increasingly been taken into the agenda of the government. In the Strategy of the Ninth Five Year Development Plan (2007-2013), it is stated that early childhood training programs for parents will be intensified. Additionally, family counseling centers and

family education programs are suggested as an effort to protect the Turkish family structure against social changes (ASAGEM, 2011).

In particular, family education programs have the following aims: (a) recognizing the importance of early intervention in the development of children, (b) strengthening families and assisting them with their special problems, (c) helping parents cope with the demands of a child, preparing children for the school and enhance their chances for successful integration into the classroom context, (d) increasing personal involvement of the mothers in the intellectual development of their children, (e) demonstrating to the mothers the importance of their role in the development process of a child.

In Turkey, the first systematic family education program was implemented by Istanbul University Faculty of Arts and Science Department of Education in 1982. “The Mother-Father School” program had been maintained for 23 years and after 1989 it was implemented in 27 different cities and reached 17000 families (Özdoğan, 2006). Later on, with the collaboration of Gazi University, the Ministry of National Education and General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education and the UNICEF, “Mother Education Program For 0-4 Ages” was developed. This program was based on a study conducted in 1988. After 1993 the program converted into “Mother Education Courses” implemented in public education centers. Another important education program that had a pioneer role in the area of family education was implemented by the non-governmental organization of the Mother Child Education Foundation (MOCEF). The program was a product of a study conducted between the years of 1982-1986 by a

group of academicians from Bogazici University. After 1993, this program was implemented with the collaboration of the Ministry of National Education, the Social Services and Child Welfare Agency (SSCWA) and MOCEF.

Various governmental and non-governmental institutions have implemented family education programs in Turkey. However, according to the UNICEF's 2006-2010 National Program Action Plan, the coordination of effective Mother and Father Education programs are given to the General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education. Within that period, in order to use the sources provided for family education in an effective way and to prevent repetition of services, and provide a holistic and interdisciplinary point of view for education, health, care, protection, counseling services, national family education policies and strategies were restructured and finally "The Family Education Program For 0-18 Ages" was developed in 2010. The program was also included in 2011-2015 National Program Action Plan and aimed to be sustainable and popular. Developed by the General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non Formal Education under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education, this program is a "Family Education Program" prepared for families with children aged 0-18. The main aim of the program is to improve mothers' and fathers' "parenting skills". In addition, by means of strengthening intra-family relations, it aims to provide children and adolescents to use their existing potentials. The program is divided into seven parts according to the age levels of children: ages 0-3 and 3-6 for the early childhood period, ages 7-11 for the primary school period and ages 12-18 for adolescence. In addition to

this, the program has alternative programs for fathers with children ages 3-6 and 6-11.

Lastly, there is a program for illiterate mothers with children ages 3-6.

“The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”, implemented under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education, is a recent nationwide adult education program in Turkey. The program can be applied in the public education centers as well as various public and private primary school institutions. Since it is one of the recent and popular education programs applied in Turkey for families, “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” is selected as the subject of analysis for this study.

### Statement of the Problem

This thesis is an attempt to understand the construction of sexual division of roles and motherhood ideology in family education policies in Turkey. “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”, applied under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education will be the focus of analysis. By studying “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” the definition of the family, the sexual division of roles in the family, the attributed roles to the women as mothers and to the men as fathers and the roles of children in the family will be examined.

### Research Questions

- 1) What kind of “family” policy is aimed to be implemented through “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”?

- 2) How is the family defined in “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”?
- 3) What kinds of identities are defined for women, men and children within the family in the education program?
- 4) What are the roles and responsibilities of family members in the education program?
- 5) What the strategic position of women is in shaping the family in the education program?
- 6) How are the roles in the family divided between women and men in the Family Education Program for Ages 0-18?

#### Significance of the Study

This study may identify the assigned roles and responsibilities of women in shaping the family and society. It can also trigger discussions on the sexual division of roles within the family, the strategic position of women in the family and the expectations of society from the family. It would also furnish the data on the role of education in shaping family identity and society. The findings of this study would make contributions to the existing data on family education policies implemented by the government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private institutions or volunteer groups.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This second chapter covers the literature about the theme of this study. Firstly it reviews the literature about family education policies and programs. Next, literatures on the motherhood ideology, the definition of the family and the sexual division of roles in the family are taken up.

#### Definition of Family Education

Family education is defined as the systematic training provided by experts to the mothers and fathers in order to contribute child's development (Hoard and Shepard, 2005). The main aim of family education is to guide families during the process of child-raising in order to develop desired behavior and positive change (Üstünoğlu, 1990, Tezel Şahin & Ersoy, 1999). In a broader definition, Kağıtçıbaşı and Bekman (1993) state that family education is a training program aiming to teach mothers and fathers subject-specific skills, to give social and emotional support, to enable parents to join a group of parents, to ensure information exchange between the mother, the father and the experts, to develop appropriate mother-father-child relations and to help parents to reach social resources. The benefits of family education were documented in various studies.

Findings indicated that children of the families that have participated in family education

programs performed a significantly differently and had considerable school achievement when compared with the children whose parents did not participate in such kinds of programs (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990; McBride, 1990; Kağıtçıbaşı et al., 1993; Sucuka et al., 1997; Şahin, 1998; Ersoy and Tezel Şahin, 1999; Zembat and Polat Unutkan, 2000; McDonald et al., 2006).

The aims of family education programs are to develop parent's self-confidence, to change negative behaviors, to support parents and also the other members of the families about child-rearing, child development and education and to improve parent-child relations. Family education programs depend on the point that parents are the first and the most important teachers of children (McCollum, 1999; Zepeda and Morales, 2001; Kurtulmuş, 2003). Therefore, family education programs aim to educate mothers and fathers about parenthood, to control and strengthen family life, and to provide necessary knowledge and skills on parenting and child development (Aral, 1995).

### Importance of Family Education

In order to take opinions from universities, NGOs or voluntary organizations and other public institutions and to establish a national family policy, General Directorate of Family and Social Research started to organize family councils after its foundation in 1990. Through family councils it is aimed to provide the necessary knowledge in on the family and its requirements. In the Third Family Council gathered in 1998 it is highlighted that the family is not regarded as only a social institution, but also as an



important institution of education. In other words, children take their first education from their families (Third Family Council, 1998). However, the family is the institution that is most adversely affected from the social change and globalization process which could affect society and foster violence, neglect, abuse and social conflicts. For this reason, it is also highlighted that parent training programs should be directed scientifically and systematically (Fifth Family Council, 2008; ASAGEM, 2011).

The aim of family education is to inform mothers and fathers on child-raising behaviors, health, nutrition, development, and to help the child gain positive social behaviors, effective communication, and to raise parents' awareness on parenthood and help them develop their parenting skills. Most importantly, it is argued that investment into the future of society through parent training programs contributes to the economic, socio-cultural and human development of a country in a healthier and strong way (Fifth Family Council, 2008).

A vast amount of literature stresses the important role of the family in a child's development (Chow et al., 2004; PTA, 2005; MOCEF, 2009). A child spends most of his/her time within the family environment in his/her early childhood period. The education received in the family is supposed to form the basis for the following years. However, the urgent necessities of changing socio-economic living conditions cause families feel the necessity of supportive education programs in order to implement their fundamental roles of parenthood (ASAGEM, 2011). For this reason, family education programs aim to help families gain parenthood responsibilities, strengthen family ties,

inform families on childcare and education, and support families especially with disabled children.

Previously, families could acquire the necessary qualities of parenting in informal ways, particularly within family structures. Yet, changing family structures, life conditions and the necessity of both parents to work full time have created the need for new supportive strategies for families. As argued by Powell (1990), with the emergence of industrialization the new social variations make education on parenthood, child health obligatory. Families feel themselves insufficient in terms of parenting within the new living conditions (Powell, 1990; Staton, Ooms and Owen 1991).

Sahin and Özbey (2007) discuss the importance of Parent Education Programmes and indicate that parent education programmes encourage families to participate in child's school activities. They defend that the involvement of families to child's school process contributes to the continuity in education and it also has some benefits in terms of the child's self confidence, academic success and relations with the family. For this reason, they state that the development and generalization of various parent education programmes according to the needs of families is urgently required.

### Family Education Program Practices

Despite having similarities in terms of main objectives, family education programs differ as far as the implementation. Home centered family education, family education combined with child education provided in preschool institutions, family education given in adult education institutions, family education via mass media, and family

education from child to child are some of the examples of family education practices (Temel & Ömeroğlu, 1993). Home centered family education provides one-to-one parent education and supports parents' experiences. It involves home visiting and personal interaction. It has been used as a way to serve families that are not easily reached, mostly in situations where parents are isolated and/or they are unlikely to participate in a group environment. On the other hand, in the institution based family education, programmes focus particularly on the ways in which parents (generally the mother) can support the child's development, while in some programmes, parenting groups also provide support to the woman herself. In addition to home visiting and parenting groups, as a kind of distance learning, the media can be a powerful tool in raising awareness about the importance of parenting (Temel & Ömeroğlu, 1993).

In the following, an overview of several popular themes and programs in family education are mentioned. In addition to the programs described below, there are many other programs being initiated and developed worldwide. The programs described here were selected because either they have existed for a period of time or have achieved some significant degree of popularity.

*National Head Start Association*<sup>6</sup>: Head Start is a widespread early childhood development project started after the foundation of the Head Start Act in 1965 in the USA. The Head Start program was designed to be a part of President Lyndon Johnson's the *War on Poverty* campaign and it focused on the educational, social, and nutritional development of children aged three to five years (Batson, 2008). It was hoped that the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nhsa.org/>

program would end poverty transmission from parents to their children by providing a comprehensive preschool program (Ju, 2009).

The Head Start program was the first federally supported primary prevention program of its kind. It provides a range of comprehensive education, health, nutrition, parent involvement, and family support services and has primarily served at risk children and their families. There are two ongoing projects of the association: Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS). HS is a comprehensive early childhood development program that primarily serves at-risk preschool-age children and their families. EHS is a comprehensive early childhood program that serves at-risk children from the prenatal stage to age three, as well as pregnant women and their families. In the early childhood development and health services area, program curriculum addresses the educational needs of each child. In the family and community partnership area, the active involvement of parents through home visits by Head Start staffs, provides opportunities for parents and staff to learn more about each other and strengthens the home-school connection and parent education opportunities. In the design and management area, program policy groups oversee the implementation of Head Start legislation, regulations, and policies (Batson, 2008).

Since it is the major publicly financed early childhood education and care program various studies have been conducted in order to evaluate the effects of Head Start on participants. As an example of these studies Zhai (2008) investigates the effects of Head Start on the outcomes of participants. The results of the study indicate that compared to parental and relative care, Head Start has significant positive effects on

child's test scores. Batson (2008) examines the effects of Head Start in meeting the academic and social needs of at-risk students, based on the perceptions of administrators, practitioners, and parents. The primary data source of the study was interviews with school administrators of Head Start. The findings suggest that educators and parents agreed that Head Start programs had positive effects on at-risk students and their families. Head Start offered educational opportunities, social integration and resources to at-risk students and their families (Batson, 2008). On the other hand, evidence on the effects of Head Start in the literature has been ambiguous. The current debate on the effects of Head Start is stated as the lack of a randomized assignment of Head Start participation. As a result it is argued that selection bias has been a critical issue in evaluating the outcomes of the program (Smolensky & Gootman, 2003).

*The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngster -HIPPY/HEATGER*<sup>7</sup>: HIPPY is an international program that started in Israel in 1969 as a research project. It was developed at the National Council of Jewish Women Research Institute for Innovation in Education, located at Hebrew University. Since then, it has spread to Germany, Turkey, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, the United States and Canada. HIPPY is a parent involvement, school readiness program that helps parents prepare their children aged 3-4 or 5 for success in school and beyond. In order to minimize the chances of unsuccessful early school experiences, HIPPY programs empower parents as primary educators of their children in the home and foster parent involvement in school and community life. The curriculum of the program was designed in order to strengthen

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.hippyusa.org/index.php>

children's cognitive skills, early literacy skills, social/emotional and physical development. The HIPPY program has been repeatedly evaluated since its establishment in Israel in 1969. The focus of the evaluations has been primarily on the children, assessing their cognitive ability, teachers' perceptions of their ability, and improvement in skills such as hand-eye co-ordination. In general, results showed significant differences between HIPPY and control group children and evaluations showed that children participated in HIPPY performed better in reading and language arts than children with no preschool experience (Bekman 1998, Lombard 1994).

*Home Activities for Toddlers and Their Families- HATAF*: HATAF is a two-year home instruction program for young parents, a pre-HIPPY program aimed at training mothers to develop the intellectual abilities of their children through more effective parenting. In the home once a week, in group sessions and in workshops, parents are provided instruction on early childhood education. Each activity is accompanied by an information sheet explaining the nature and the importance of the activity.

*Parents as Teachers Program (PET)*<sup>8</sup>: Started in 1981 in Missouri the program of Parents as Teachers targets parents with children aged 0-3. The PAT program was founded on the belief that parents are their child's first and most influential teacher. It is a home visiting model that provides a broad context of parenting education and family support. It is particularly focuses on families in vulnerable situations. Major goals of PAT include increasing parents' knowledge of child development, preparing young

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.parentsasteachers.org/>

children for success in school, and increasing parents' feelings of competence and confidence. According to the findings of the study conducted by Zigler et al. (2008) the PAT program improved parenting practices in ways that promote both school readiness and subsequent academic achievement.

### Family Education Programs in Turkey

Family education programs in Turkey started after 1980s. The first example of these programs was developed and implemented between the years of 1982-1986 by a group of academicians from Bogazici University. After six years from the completion of the program, its effects were evaluated by the same group of academicians. In 1988, professors from the Faculty of Vocational Training at Gazi University started a project of “Early Education Project for Ages 0-4” and developed education programs for infants and their mothers. Considering the effects of these two programs, between the years of 1993-1994, General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education, with the collaboration of the UNICEF, family education programs started to be popularized (Ömeroğlu et al., 1997; Sucuka et al., 1997; Aral et al., 2002).

Since 1980s, several kinds of home-centered and institutional family education practices have been conducted by the Ministry of National Education in cooperation with non-governmental or governmental organizations, while some of them have solely

been carried out by non-governmental organizations. Some examples of the home-centered and institutional family education applications in Turkey reveal the following:

*The Parent School (Ana-Baba Okulu):* The Parent School was started in 1989 at Istanbul University by the Faculty of Arts and Science Education Department (Çağdaş & Seçer, 2006). This program aimed to train parents with children of different ages about communication, peer relations, developmental stages of children, school performance, and behavior problems. The target population of the project was determined as parents of low socio-economic levels living in the slum areas of Istanbul (ASAGEM, 2011). The program was first started in Istanbul, but then went on to be implemented in various cities in Turkey such as Ankara, Izmir, Gaziantep, Mersin, Ereğli and Bursa (Oktay, 1999). In order for parents to develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards their children, it aimed to provide knowledge on various topics of interest from communicative skills to effective parenting and sexual development. In the Parent School program, topics were listed under three main headings: (1) applications for recognizing the child, (2) applications for communication and interaction in the family (3) and child-oriented applications including applications for communication problems. Studies revealed that in the behaviors of parents who participated in the program, there was a decrease in the “excessive protection” and “oppressive and authoritarian” attitudes while there was an increase in the “equality and sharing” attitudes (Yavuzer, 1995; Güzel, 2006).



*Mother Education Program for Ages 0-4:* Started in 1993-1994, this program was developed with the collaboration of Gazi University, the General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education the supervision of the Ministry of National Education and the UNICEF. The target population of the program was the mothers in low socioeconomic conditions with children aged 0-4. Both home centered and institution based family education practices were applied in the program. For mothers with children aged 0-2, home visiting was performed and for the mothers with children aged 2-4, discussion courses were applied in public education centers. The mother education program involved 25 week courses. The program consisted of two parts: 1) Mother Education Program; 2) Developmental Education Program. In the education year of 2002-2003 “The Mother Education Program for Ages 0-4” was converted into “The Family and Child Education Program for Ages 0-6” (ASAGEM, 2011).

*Mother-Child Education Program (MOCEP):* The Mother-Child Education Program was developed by the non-governmental organization of the Mother-Child Education Foundation (MOCEF) for children aged 5-6 who have not received preschool education services before. In this program, mothers are provided direct support about preschool education. Thus, educational needs of the children who are unable to attend schools are aimed to be met in the home environment. The Mother-Child Education Program has been developed to empower mothers’ educator role by supporting them in their parenting roles and equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary for fostering the cognitive development of their children (MOCEF, 2009). The program lasts for 25

weeks and three-hour group meetings are held in each week. The program applications are carried out in the Public Education Centers and the Community Centers of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency. The Program is currently being implemented nationwide in Turkey through the joint efforts of the MOCEF and the Ministry of National Education and in Europe with the collaboration of other NGO's (MOCEF, 2008). Kağıtçıbaşı, Bekman and Göksel (1995) pointed out the direct effects of the program on mothers such as more effective communication with the children, better relationships in the family and a raised status within the family. Kartal (2007) also mentioned that Mother-Child Education Program had an effect on cognitive development of children and as for mothers it was very useful in terms of involvement in children' school achievement.

*Father Support Program (BADEP):* BADEP is an adult education program developed by MOCEF. The target group of this program includes literate fathers with children aged 2-10 at every education level. The program was designed to help fathers play a more active and positive role in the development of their children (Çağdaş & Seçer, 2006). Studies reveal that fathers who participated in the Father Support Program increased their knowledge of child raising and education, developed communicative skills with their children and spent more time at home with their children and did more activities with their children such as reading books, playing games, and repairing (Kımmet, 2003).

*The Parent-Child Education Program of the General Directorate of Technical Education for Girls of the MoNE:* Launched in 1997, by the General Directorate of Technical Education for Girls of the MoNE, the Parent-Child Education Program aims to train young girls, prospective mothers, other women and men about family members. Training is offered to adults in schools and through regional mobile courses or house visits. The program is continued in 81 provinces and has reached a total of 2,194,003 individuals since it was launched.<sup>9</sup>

*Family Education Program (ASAGEM):* “Training of Mother, Father and Children” is developed by General Directorate of Family and Social Research (ASAGEM). The project first started by determining the training needs of mothers, fathers and children and the report of *Study on the Educational Needs of Families* was published (ASAGEM, 2011). The general aim of “Family Education Program” is to provide families to the necessary knowledge in the area of education, law, media and health. Subjects involved in the program are the status and importance of women in society; domestic relations and family planning; methods for studying productively; child development and education; measures for increasing success; kin marriages; pregnancy, nutrition, and sibling relations; honour killings, violence against women and children; Adolescent psychology, development during adolescence (ASAGEM, 2008).

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<sup>9</sup> (<http://ktogm.meb.gov.tr/dosyalar/annebabageneIgesi.pdf>, 17.08.09).

*Family Education Program for Ages 0-18*: The program was first developed in 1988 by the Vocational Education Faculty of Gazi University and was launched countrywide in 1993. After that it was revised and renamed as "My Family Program for Ages 0-6" in line with the feedbacks received from the field in cooperation with UNICEF in April 2005. Studies continued on the development of the program and in the educational year of 2010-2011 the program was revised again and finalized as "The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18". The program involves home visits and group meetings with families with children aged 0-18. During group meetings, families are provided with information about the development, education, care, and nutrition of their children. The main objectives of the program are stated as providing information, ability and attitudes appropriate for child care, and the development and education of the caregivers and families of children aged 0-18, primarily for the children in hard conditions, through institutionalized family training programs. The program can be applied free of charge in various institutions that serve family and children such as public education centers, counseling and research centers, preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools, family counseling and society centers, health care centers, family and community health centers.

Despite the limited number of family education programs implemented in Turkey, the programs have a remarkable popularity and there is a high level of participation in each district of the country. In the report "My Family Education Program for Ages 0-6", conducted in 2006 by General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education, it is indicated that in 2005-2006 education year, a total number

of 13880 mothers participated in the program in 33 provinces of Turkey. For the evaluation of the program a questionnaire was implemented to the participants. 557 mothers participated in the survey and stated their opinions about the program. As an indicator of the target population, it is stated in the report that 94, 8 % of the mothers that participated in the study were housewives and only 5, 2% of them worked in a paid job. The results also indicated the satisfaction of mothers from the program. 99, 8 % of mothers agreed to suggest the program to their friends or relatives, and mothers reported that the program had positive effects both on themselves and their children.

Additionally, in the report by General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education, *Ailelere Kulak Verelim (Let's Give Voice to Mothers)*, prepared in 2011, one of the participants of “the Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” from Adana commented that:

I participated in this education for my child but it was beneficial for me, too. It was nice to recover my relation with my husband, to become a more productive and conscious mother, and for people to recognize me. Previously, I did not believe that I was valued and I did not know how to talk with people, how to behave. Actually I did not trust myself... Now, I feel confident. I believe I will be a good mother, now my husband sees my effort... There are so many mothers and fathers that lack awareness; they must take advantage of this support... (T.T. –Adana, Appendix B.1.).

On the other hand, a descriptive research study was conducted by ASAGEM in 2011 with the aim of determining the educational needs of the families. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used together in the study. Sample of the research was determined by TÜİK. 700 houses as substitute constituting 10% of 7000 house addresses were determined from the address-based population registration system database of

TÜİK throughout Turkey as the research sample by means of multiphase stratified, systematic, cluster sampling. In depth interviews were conducted with 120 people from 12 regions (10 people from each city) in order to collect the qualitative data of the research. In addition, focus group interviews were made with the participation of 10-12 people from each city. The research findings generally reveal that families have low levels of eagerness for taking part in training. The number of family members wanting to take part in the training programs constitutes one fourth of the total number of the participants. However, it is also concluded that taking all of the families throughout Turkey into consideration, one fourth of families' being eager for taking part in training can be accepted as a sufficient rate in terms of indicating necessity of the training programs.

Various studies in the literature of family education or particularly mother-child education reveal the positive effects of family education programs on the participants. For instance a study conducted by Aksoy (2002) evaluated mothers' opinions on the Mother-Child Education Program. The population sample of the study consisted of 71 mothers. The study revealed that the program had precious contributions both for mothers and their children. As a result, Aksoy (2002) recommended that the program had to be developed with taken into account the participants' views and opinions and it had to be implemented in a wider context to a wider audience. Kaya (2002) also studied families' attitudes on family involvement programs in preschool institutions. 24 people with children going to preschool participated in the study. The semi-structured interview method was applied for collecting data and descriptive analysis method was used. The

findings of the study revealed that families were eager to participate in family education programs applied in preschool institutions. Tezel Şahin (2004) also explored the opinions of mothers and fathers participated in early preschool education programs with a sample of 47 mother and father with children aged 0-4. The study concluded that families had benefits from early intervention programs in terms of providing familiarity to school environment and strong relations with school community. Kuzu (2006) studied the effects of parent involvement studies carried out in preschool institutions on maternal behaviors and its effects on the views of the mothers about preschool education. A total of 90 mothers formed the sample of the study. The results revealed that there was a meaningful difference in terms of women's authoritarian, democratic, overprotective and inconsistent attitudes. Akkaya (2007) examined the teachers' and parents' opinions about the family involvement activities implemented in preschool institutions. The research was carried out based on the opinions of the preschool teachers who work in the independent kindergartens in Eskisehir in 2006-2007 Education year and the parents whose children attend these schools. 25 preschool teachers and 25 parents had been interviewed. According to the results of the research findings, it was observed that teachers' and parents' opinions overlap regarding the organized family involvement activities and the effects of these activities that are applied the individuals; and every individual stated that they were pleased to be a part of these family involvement activities. Özişıklı (2008) studied the views of parents whose children enrolled in the Bogazici University Preschool Center regarding parent involvement. Qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches were used together for this

study. Fifteen parents participated in the interviews and 143 parents participated in the survey study. The study concluded that parents were eager to volunteer in parent involvement that was directed by the preschool center. Güven (2011) analyzed the effects of (family) parent education and (family) parent participation programs on teachers' and parents' knowledge and ability levels. In the research, a mixed method was applied and a total of three teachers who work in state primary schools in Ankara and 52 parents who attend the parent education constituted the sample of the study. It was concluded in the study that the parents who took place in family education believed the necessity of family involvement and were willing to attend the family training and family involvement activities.

Despite various studies conducted with the aim of gaining knowledge about families' views on family education applications and the benefits of education programs to the child and the family, few studies have been conducted about the social and cultural effects of family education programs applied in Turkey. As an example of this social analysis, Bayraktar (2009) studied the subjectivity formations of the urban to migrant women participated in the Motherhood Education Program implemented by Mother Child Education Foundation. It was argued in the study that through the operations of education on motherhood, women became alienated not only from their gender, but also from their class, ethnic and religious identities by desiring a middle-class conjugal family for themselves.

The construction of sexual roles in the family, the roles and responsibilities of women and men as mothers and fathers and the strategic position of family education in



shaping family structure in the family education programs developed in Turkey are the concerns of this current study. Therefore, in order to contribute to the analysis of family education programs from the points of gender perspective, in the following part of the literature, issues on motherhood ideology and the sexual division of roles in the family will be dealt with at some length. This part will shed light to the arguments that will be developed in the discussion part of this study.

### Motherhood Ideology

Nancy Chodorow (1978) defines women's mothering as one of the few universal and enduring elements of the sexual division of the labor. She insists that despite the changes over the past few centuries in society, women have always cared for children, particularly as mothers in families and occasionally as workers in childcare centers or as paid and slave domestics. That's why she analyzes the reproduction of women's mothering across generations. In her influential book *The Reproduction of Mothering*, she argues that an orientation toward nurturing and care becomes part of women's personality because the process of identity formation in girls takes place through continuous attachment to and identification with the mother. In contrast, boys develop a sense of self as independent and distinct from others because they must construct a male identity by a process of separation from and construct with the mother. The sexual and familial division of labor in which women are mothers and they are more involved in interpersonal, affective relationships than men produces in daughters and sons a division

of psychological capacities which leads them to reproduce this sexual and familial division of labor (Chodorow, 1978).

Sara Ruddick's attempt to account for mothers' concern for nurturing and protecting children is also influential in theorizing about motherhood. She attempts to show that mothers' nurturing involves higher philosophical thought (as opposed to instinct), and argues that their focus on protecting and preserving life, fostering growth, and molding an acceptable person grows out of "doing mothering"; that is, "maternal practice". The implication is that anyone who engages in mothering would develop these same concerns (Ruddick 1989, 1995). Ruddick characterizes maternal thinking by three demands: preservation, growth, and social acceptance. "To be a mother" continues Ruddick (1989) "is to be committed to meeting these demands by works of preservative love, nurturance, and training".

Both Chodorow and Ruddick emphasized the social base of mothering and challenged the idea that women were born mothers. Glenn (1994) also contributed to the discussion on motherhood and argued that by depicting motherhood as natural; a patriarchal ideology of mothering locked women into biological reproduction and denied those identities and selfhood outside mothering. As a more detail discussion, Rothman (1994) provides an understanding of mothering deeply rests on three rooted ideologies: an ideology of patriarchy, an ideology of technology and an ideology of capitalism. She argues that these three treads give women the shape and the discordance, what she calls is "the fabric of motherhood". She states that the ideology of patriarchy, technology, and capitalism support each other but they are not the same thing. She describes the term

patriarchy as any system of male superiority and female inferiority. “In a patriarchal kinship system,” continues Rothman, “children are born to men, out of women. That is women, in this system, bear children of men.” She insists that such a system is inevitably dominated, and this is a particular kind of male domination. They are the men who control women as daughters, much as they control their sons, but they also control women as the mothers of men’s children (Rothman, 1994). That is to say, she argues that it is women’s motherhood that men must control to maintain patriarchy. On the other hand, the ideology of technology is described as a kind of to-do list that “when we think of our relationships with our children as a job to be done well, we are invoking the ideology of technology.” Rothman continues her arguments on the ideology of technology:

To do these parenting tasks efficiently, we divide them up into their component parts, organize them, systematize them, rationalize them, budget our time, order our day, program our lives. All of this rationalizing, reducing, dividing, systematizing, and organizing, in the name of efficiency harm to the human spirit. The most obvious application of the technological ideology to motherhood has occurred in the medicalization of pregnancy and of childbirth. From the medical management of pregnancy, with its new, quality-control technology of prenatal diagnosis, through the rigidly monitored control of women’s labour, the focus is on the “mechanics” of production, and not the social transformation of motherhood. It is as if biology were beyond culture, beyond ideology (p.144).

Rothman (1994) states that from the standpoint of the ideology of technology, motherhood is perceived as work and children as a product produced by the labour of mothering. On the other hand, she defines that from the standpoint of the market, not all work is equally valuable, and not all products are equally valued. Therefore, there is no

direct relationship between the value of the worker and the value of the product. She states:

What is essential to capitalism is the accumulation and investment of capital, or wealth, by people who are in a position to control others. Under capitalism, workers do not own or control the products of their own labor. This means we are no longer talking about mothers and babies at all, we are talking about laborers and their products. Babies, at least healthy white babies, are very precious products (p.149).

Elisabeth Badinter (2011) also exemplifies the recent position of mothers in the twenty first century as the laborer of their products (children). By the growth of industrialization in the nineteenth century and the following rapid social changes beginning in the twentieth century, mothers have been seen as having the ultimate control on child-rearing and the total responsibility of shaping the entire psychological and emotional development of their children. In her recent book *Kadınlık mı Annelik mi* (2011) she states that in order to raise a single child it is required for women to spend as much time as it was spent for raising ten children in the past. She calls this situation “the child’s tyranny” and she argues that after being dominated by men for years, today’s world is trying to bring women under the domination of children. She says that families and particularly women are given the enormous responsibility of ensuring the complete development of a child. On the other hand, the critics of Badinter on installing all of the developmental and socialization responsibilities of a child on the shoulders of the family, particularly women is an argument widely supported by various education scientists and policy makers. The main idea of supporters of this argument is that the establishment and maintenance of suitable environments for bringing up children as socially and spiritually

healthy individuals depends on a family's behaving knowledgeably and consciously. For that reason, as natural educators of the children, parents must take part in educational process consciously and systematically (ASAGEM, 2011). As noted by Grover (2005) if given appropriate care, children make remarkable gains in physical and motor development, in linguistic and cognitive functioning as well as dramatic progress in their emotional, social, regulatory and moral capacities. That is why it is so important that children have appropriate supports in terms of the following: protection (an environment that is safe from physical and emotional harm); good health (safe water, hygiene); appropriate nutrition (including exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months), stimulation (opportunities to explore the world, express curiosity, engage in problem solving); language development (listening and responding); and most of all in terms of interaction with and attachment to caring adults.

In order to understand the ideology of motherhood, it is also necessary to look into how fatherhood is constructed and reproduced in society. Studies reveal that due to the increasing participation of women, including mothers in paid work, the division of labour between men and women show a new aspect (Singleton, 2005). Men are no longer the sole breadwinner of the family. Yet, how do women and men divide up the work at home? In her study, Singleton (2005) examines fatherhood in contemporary Australia and mentions that there is a shift in society's ideals of fatherhood, from a model of "father as breadwinner" to the modern version of "the involved father". She defines that while in Western nations such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, practices such as breadwinning, disciplining and protection have long

been expected of, and associated with fathers, more recently, fathers are also expected to be nurturing, tender and willing to be involved in practical aspects of childcare, such as changing nappies. Yet, despite some changes in the ideal father in society, Singleton (2005) concludes that as consistently demonstrated by social research studies in most families, it is the woman who continues to take the leading role in the provision and organization of practical childcare. Glenn (1994) also supports the same argument and insists that despite some changes in fathers' involvement in childcare; mothers are generally considered the experts regarding children. As supported by many other studies, although it is the mothers who have increased the time they spend working for pay, they also continue to spend more time than fathers caring for children and doing domestic work (Craig, 2006b; Fast & Frederick, 2004; Stalker, 2006).

Sunar and Fişek (2005) also argue that in Turkey gender hierarchy is effective in the distribution of family roles. Mothers are primarily responsible for housekeeping and childrearing. In the *Shadow Report on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Combined Periodic Country Report for Turkey*, published in November 2004 by CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), it is reported that:

Mother's secondary status within the family, her obligation to obey and to respect the father, and her responsibility to serve constitutes the significant patriarchal codes for children in modeling the roles of womanhood and manhood... Children grown up with these codes are inclined to adapt the prototypes of "self-sacrificing and suffering woman-strong and dominant man" even if their sociocultural and economic statuses are high (p.10).

Actually, women are assigned certain roles to perform in order to be accepted as "a perfect mother". For instance, Douglas and Michaels (2004) elaborate that to be the best

mothers; their kids should be the center of the universe. They exemplify the roles attributed to women as “The best mothers always smile. They always understand. They never lose their temper ... Their love for their child is boundless, unflagging, flawless, total” (p. 6). In a study, Elif Gizem Uğurlu (2003) explores the representation of motherhood in Turkish commercials. The study results reveal that commercials on cleaning, food and baby products endorse the motherhood ideology attributed women with mothering, giving importance to be clean, responsible from nourishment and childcare. Uğurlu (2003) concludes her study by highlighting the important effects of commercials on constructing gender roles within the family.

All in all, the motherhood ideology and the attributed roles to women such as the sole responsible of housework and childcare are largely undervalued in society, as argued by Kim (2009). This situation contributes to the perception of women’s lesser worth, to women’s lesser power, and to women’s economic dependence on men within the family and outside the household.

The discussion of how the family is defined as a social institution how it serves to reproduce certain sexual roles for women and men and how it maintains the reconstruction of unequal division of roles between women and men will be dealt with in the following part.

### The Definition of the Family

The term “family” has a great deal of meaning. As stated by Poole (2005), the traditional definition of the family as adults and their children related by blood or marriage and

living in the same household is not so simple. There is no one type of family that has existed throughout history. Families always reflect the technological, economic, and cultural forces in their societies. Social trends such as reduced family size, high rates of marital breakdown and declining fertility rates provide insights into the diversity of domestic living arrangements and shifts in personal relationships that have occurred (Gillies, 2003). Given the social, political, cultural and economic shifts that have taken place in society, it is hardly surprising that people's lives have been transformed. Therefore, we can no longer assume that a family consists of a husband, a wife and two or three dependent children. In addition to this, as argued by Poole (2005), families are not natural entities, but are socially constructed and change according to time and place. The way in which families are structured, the role each member plays within the family and the socialization process through which children are encouraged to become responsible adults are all shaped by the cultures into which all humans are born (Sherry & Margaret, 2005).

In the First Family Council in 1990, the family is defined as the smallest social institution settled in the same space, based on the legal basis of marriage and kin relations among relatives (mother, father, children, grandparents and close relatives). The Turkish Language Institution (2011) defines the term family as the smallest social institution based on marriage and blood relations, composed by husband, wife, children and siblings. In the report, *the Survey on the Education Needs of Families in Turkey*, family is defined as economic and social institution made up of mother, father, children and blood relationships of the parties (ASAGEM, 2011). The importance of the family is



stated as it comes from the duties of reproduction and maintenance of human kind. The reason for the family's becoming a social institution is defined as its role, which it plays in socialization of the child. In this way, the family takes a very great part in generating, bringing up and protecting the child and ensuring acceptance of the child into society (p.468). The duties of a family is indicated as meeting individual and social needs like sexual intercourse, reproduction, protection and sheltering, loving and being loved, sharing love, being dependent and independent, belonging, obtaining a status, reliance, self-realization, the care and education of children, the transfer of social customs and ideals and acquired goods and knowledge to new generations. Despite some changes in the definition of the family in the years certain characteristics of it, based on marriage and reproduction of society, stand as the same. Therefore, the definitions of the family mentioned above ignore other relations styles such as extramarital affairs, parents with illegitimate children, same sex relations, etc. Actually, all of these alternative relations are presented as threads to the "so-called family structure":

The family, which is an economic and social institution made up of mother, father, children and blood relationships of the parties, is at the centre of social life in terms of functions it achieves. However, family that previously considered as centre of happy, harmonious and balanced life becomes distant to this outlook gradually as a result of the changes experienced in social life. Rise in divorce rates, increase in number of the single parent families, extension of the concubinage, increase in number of the illegitimate children, rise of drug addiction, rejecting or postponing getting married and having a child late as much as possible drive family, which is an important component of the social system into trouble in the matter of performing its functions (ASAGEM, 2011, p.468).

## The Sexual Division of Roles in the Family

According to the patriarchal family structure, the husband is the head of the family and the breadwinner, the wife is the homemaker and caregiver of their children. Actually, women have always worked, yet the work at home has always been invisible. The breadwinner is the father. Women who work for pay still come home to take care of their children, husbands and parents or in-laws. This dual work or second job (work at home and work for pay) places women at a disadvantage position compared to men. That is to say, housework reflects the sexual division of labor and the construction of gender that defines women's subordinate position in both the family and the labor market.

In her study, Hilbrecht (2009) aims to develop a broader understanding of how mothers and fathers with school-age children allocate their time, how it varies by household composition, season of the year, and work schedule, and how time use is related to subjective well-being in Canadian social context. She particularly explores the amount of time available for leisure, with whom this time is spent and the relationship to quality of life. The study reveals that gender inequality in the allocation of time to important life spheres remains substantial even when faces with very complex challenges in coordinating employment arrangements, family routines, and the school year schedule. It is concluded in the study that with the exception of single fathers, men spend more time on employment-related activities than women regardless of work schedule, while women continue to perform greater amounts of domestic and child care activities. The results of 2006 "Family Structure Research" published by the Turkish

Statistical Institute (TurkStat, 2007) reveal the same results in terms of time allocation of family members. In fact, findings reveal that approximately 80% of the time wives are responsible for cooking, ironing and setting up the meals, while only about 2% of the time husbands seem to take the responsibility for the same chores. While the responsibility for daily shopping seems to be divided more equally (husband: 33%; wife: 38%; together: 27%) chores that are traditionally known to be male tasks seem to be fulfilled by husbands. These tasks include paying monthly bills (husband: 69%; wife: 17%) and fixing and repairing things around the house (husband: 68%; wife: 7%).

In terms of child care responsibilities, the findings of TurkStat's 2006 family structure research are also worth mentioning. Among families who earn minimal wage or less, 98% of the child care providers during the week, are mothers. Even though as income increases there are fewer mothers who are primary caregivers of the children during the day, the percentage of fathers who engage in caring for the children drops down to nearly nonexistent. Among these families 70% of the mothers were primary caregivers; no father is reported to be a caregiver. The rest of the families reported others as caregivers including grandmothers, about 10%; baby sitters, about 18%; and daycares, about 3%. These findings indicate that mothers are clearly the primary caregivers of their children even for higher income families.

The findings of the *Survey on Family Values in Turkey*, conducted in 2010 also support the findings of TurkSat's 2006 research. The *Survey on Family Values* was conducted in order to display values and value structures of family in Turkish society (ASAGEM, 2010). Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in the

study. The sample of the study was determined by Turkish Statistical Institute and 6035 people participated in the study. With regard to the value of the family according to the research, nearly 83.7 percent of participants said that they believed family members should be the first address to turn to when one had financial or emotional problems, which implies the value of the family in society. On the other hand, nearly 50.8 percent of participants said that "raising up the children and doing the housework" were the basic duties of a woman. On the other hand, 64.1 percent noted that men should share the responsibilities at home with women. Despite the findings on division of roles in the family reveal some positive changes in terms of women's position in the family, the findings on the issues of sexuality or loyalty of women within society reveal the strong traditional values of women.

In the study, Kim (2009) discusses women's reality in the context of gender division of labour and defines gender division of labor is a set of arrangements that produces gender, and in which men as a group occupy a more advantageous position than women as a group in its hierarchy of gender relations. By examining women's situations and their choices in the family and in the labor market in the United States and South Korea the study indicates why and how American and South Korean women similarly suffer from the major injustice caused by the gender division of labor. It is argued that many women perform housework and childcare whether they work outside the home or not; many men perform market work and have less responsibility for housework and childcare than women do. The study concludes that gender division of labor is one of the main causes of women's oppression, especially in current society,

where women's work is less valued than men's work. As a result, the gender division of labor in the family refers separate labor assignments in the household according to sex. Many women are chiefly responsible for housework and childcare regardless of their other work; men's chief responsibilities are non-domestic work in the economic sector and in other social and cultural institutions. Lastly, it is discussed that by making women primarily responsible for unpaid or low paid housework and childcare and by making men primarily responsible for wage labor, the gender division of labor tends to benefit men and keeps women, by and large, unequal to men (Kim, 2009).

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the research questions, data source, and the method of the study and the procedure to analyze the documents.

#### Research Questions

The main aim of the study is to analyze the construction of gender roles and motherhood ideology promoted by family education policies in Turkey. With an attempt to understand family education policies in Turkey, one of the nationwide education programs of “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” is selected for the analysis of study. Using this program the definition of the family, the sexual division roles in the family, the responsibilities of women as mothers and men as fathers and the role of children are examined. The following specific research questions are addressed:

- 1) What kind of “family” policy is aimed to be implemented through “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”?
- 2) How is the family defined in this education program?
- 3) What kinds of identities are defined for women, men and children within the family?
- 4) What are the roles and responsibilities of family members?
- 5) What the strategic position of women is in shaping the family?

- 6) How are the roles divided in the education program between women and men in the family?

#### Data Source

In the present study, family letters that are given to the parents as learning materials during the education program are used for the analysis. These materials were obtained from one of the Public Education Centers in Istanbul.<sup>10</sup>

The learning materials of the Family Education Program for Ages 0-18 are;

- Family letters, information sheets, child activity books for the courses for Ages 0-3 and 3-6.
- Family letters and information sheets for Ages 7-11 and 12-18.

For the current study, the family letters for Ages 0-3, 3-6 and 7-11 were selected as for the analysis<sup>11</sup>. Family Letters are the weekly two or three pages sheets address to Mothers and Fathers and include information and summary of the topic discussed in the classroom. The program lasts 14 weeks and a total of 14 weeks letters in each age group was involved in the study.

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<sup>10</sup> All of the education materials of “the Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” are normally assigned only to the experts of the program who are going to apply the program in their education institution. In order to obtain the necessary materials, I first got in contact with relevant department of the General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non Formal Education and I was directed to the public education institutions in which the program had been applied. As a result, the materials were obtained from one of the experts of the program who worked in one of the public education centers in Istanbul.

<sup>11</sup> Family Letters for Ages 12-18 were not included in the study as it was not provided from the institution.

## Method of the Study

In order to analyze “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” the qualitative content analysis method was used. Qualitative content analysis can be defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278). Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as, “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”. Weber (1990) defines content analysis as a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text. These inferences can be the message itself, the sender(s) of the message or the audience of the message (p.9). Krippendorff (2004) emphasizes the relationship between the content of texts and their institutional, cultural and social contexts and defines content analysis as follows: “a research technique for making replicative and valid inferences from data to their context” (p.18). Content analysis is a useful research method for examining trends and patterns in documents. It can help to construct indicators of views, values, attitudes, opinions, prejudices and stereotypes (Bauer, 2000). However, as indicated by Krippendorff (2004) texts do not have single meanings that could be “found”, “identified”, and “described” for the meaning. Texts can be read from numerous perspectives, thus several designations and data can be subjected to various analyses. My approach as a researcher in this study is inspired by the feminist methodology that



studies the social condition of women in a sexist, “male stream and patriarchal society and enlightens people about taken-for-granted sexist practices and the gender-blindness of government and community practices that displaced, ignored and silenced women, led to an unequal and discriminating social order (Stanley and Wise, 1983: 12).

### The Analysis of Documents

The main steps in content analysis are selecting and preparing the data, defining the unit of analysis and developing of the categories, coding of the documents, assessing the consistency of the coding and drawing conclusions from the coded data (Weber, 1990).

The family letters for Ages 0-3, 3-6 and 7-11 in the Family Education Program were selected as the sample of the study. The unit of analysis for this study was determined as the entire sentences and the themes of the selected documents. The categories of the study were developed by inferring the selected documents. The assigned categories are: the definition of the family (Category 1), the role of father (Category 2), the role of mother (Category 3) and the role of children (Category 4). The codes were organized under the defined categories (See Appendix C). In order to provide reliability, after coding the entire data set, the consistency of the coding was rechecked over time by the researcher.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This chapter documents the findings derived from the analysis of the materials of the “Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”. The data source was mentioned in detail in Chapter 3. For the analysis of the study, family letters were used. Major findings were formulated in four discussion themes: the definition of the family, the role of father, the role of mother and the role of children.

This study aimed to analyze the construction of motherhood ideology and the sexual division of roles in “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”. Content analysis of the selected education materials was utilized in the study. The selected materials were family letters for Ages 0-3, 3-6 and 7-11. In the family letters the summary of the topics discussed in the classroom is provided for parents. Each age range includes 14 weeks program. For the Ages 0-3 family letters, the topics are psychical, mental and personality development of a child, balanced nutrition, protection from illnesses and accidents, listening to a child, the child’s grown up and women’s health. For the Ages 3-6 family letters, early childhood years and the importance of the family, social and emotional development of a child, and physical and sexual development are covered. In the Ages 7-11, father and mother attitudes, communication barriers and listening skills, ability of self-expression, ways to gain positive behaviors, ways to change unwanted behaviors, basic habits, sexual development, cognitive and

language development, social, emotional and personal development of a child are involved.

### The Definition of the Family

In the course program of “The Family Education for Ages 0-18”, the target group is defined as parents with Ages 0-18, adults planning to have a child, adults responsible with childcare and pregnant mothers. In all regions of the country families with negative socio-cultural and economic aspects constitute the most basic target group of the program. One basic criterion of the program is that parents should be literate in order to participate in the program. Participation of mothers and fathers with together is preferential. However, it is stated that as accordance with the social and cultural context of the region in which the program is implemented and when considering the preferences of mothers and fathers, different course applications for mothers and fathers will be implemented (MoNE, 2011). That is to say, applications only for mothers or fathers can be arranged.

The aim of the program is described as improving mothers’ and fathers’ “parenting skills” with education studies implemented in nationwide. Mothers and fathers will be educated about the topics of effective listening, effective communication, expressing themselves to the child, spend quality time, conflict resolution and ways of positive discipline and via strengthening intra-family relations it is intended to make child or adolescence use his/her existing potential.

The legal basis of the program is indicated as the emphasis of all national and international legislations on protecting and supporting children and the family. The Constitution, Convention on the Rights of Children, Child Protection Law, 9<sup>th</sup> Development Plan, and Basic Law of National Education are some of the examples the legal treaties. The social and cultural basis of the program is dependent on the argument that the family is the most natural institution that forms the basis of a society. Therefore, it is indicated that the stronger the structure of the family, the stronger the foundation of society. Moreover, it is mentioned that the basic knowledge that each child acquire from her/his family will be the determinant of his/her future achievements. That is why it is stated that there is a need of “qualified” family members. As convenience with the social and cultural basis of the program, the economical basis of the program also emphasizes the important role of the family in child’s development and preventing social and economical disorders. It is mentioned in the description of the program that the distortions in family structures and the negative life experiences of children in the family environment reflect directly on society and raise violence, neglect and abuse and it results in social conflicts. The family is not defined as only a social institution but also as an educational institution, therefore, educational interventions seem as vital not only for individual progress but also social and economical development.

Additionally, the intellectual basis and values of family education are listed in the description of the program as:

- Regardless of age, social and cultural background, and economical status each individual is open to learn and development.

- Each father and mother does his/her best for his/her child.
- Gender discrimination is not favored.
- Participation of both parents is essential and applications are performed within the family integrity.
- Individual, cultural and social differences are taken into account.
- One of the ultimate goals of the program is to make the child use his/her existing potential. The other goal of the program is to improve mothers' and fathers' life qualities.

In relation to the legal, social, cultural, economic and intellectual basis of the program, in the Ages 0-3 and 3-6 early childhood course programs, the important role of the family in child's early development period is emphasized. The family is attributed a fundamental position in the development of a child and as accordance with this it is highlighted that the inefficiency of the family makes a child catch up with the children of the same age difficult:

The family environment plays an important role on the development of a child... The development level of the child depends on the support of the family. In other words, the child whose development is supported by the family is going to be different from the ones who are not supported by the family (Ages 3-6–Week 2, Appendix B.2.).

The early childhood period is very important in the development of a child... If we do not provide the necessary conditions for a child to develop in that period, we would miss an important chance with regard to brain development. The children who do not develop and are not supported enough at that period force to close their gap (Ages 3-6–Week 2, Appendix B.3.).

### Democratic Family Values

Different kinds of family attitudes about child-raising and their effects on children are introduced in each age period of the program. In the Ages 3-6 course program; oppressive, concessive, overprotective and democratic attitudes are defined as some of

the examples of family attitudes that have significant effects on a child's life. Over all, the democratic family attitude is suggested for an effective child-raising behavior and the effects of democratic family attitude are listed as follows:

- Child shows a healthy development
- Child's self-confidence increases
- Child's self-confidence is high and s/he becomes independent but also sensitive to his/her parents' wishes
- As the family is involved with the child's school attainment, child feels herself/himself important and valuable
- Child gets on well with her/his friends and fights less.
- Child gets successful in his/her school (primary, secondary, high and even university) life.

For the Ages 7-11 course program, a democratic family attitude is again suggested as the best way of family intervention with the children. The common characteristics of other attitudes, including ignorant, perfectionist, overprotective, oppressive and concessive, are stated as their negative results on child and parent relations. It is mentioned that all of these attitudes cause child to have problems in terms of developing "real and sincere relations" with his/her parents. Moreover, it is mentioned that children raised with these kinds of attitudes tend to violence and have problems in school achievement.

As mentioned above, a democratic family environment is intended to be gained by families as a positive child-raising attitude. However, the importance of rules and the limits in child-raising are also mentioned and it is stated that "children actually do not object to the rules. Their objection is to the rules that they do not understand and the ways that they are presented" (Ages 0-3–Week 11). Besides, the limits of freedom and the negative effects of "limitlessness" are also mentioned in the program:

We have to present options to our children in order to let them make their own choices. But the options should be limited. For instance, “Today is an egg day. Would you like to have an omelet or a boiled egg?” This kind of approach will help them feel as if he/she is giving their own decisions by making choices (Ages 0-3–Week 11, Appendix B. 4.).

Limitlessness empowers distrust. Always provide limited options. For instance, instead of saying “Wear what you want”, you can say “Now it is bed time, would you prefer yellow or blue pajamas?” (Ages 0-3–Week 11, Appendix B. 5.).

### Equality between Girls and Boys

As convenient with the intellectual basis of the program, equality between girls and boys is strongly emphasized in each age level of the program. Families are advised not to discriminate between their sons and daughters. In the Ages 0-3 course program it is suggested that families should “give boys and girls equal opportunities to express their feelings.” Moreover families are advised that “both your sons and daughters deserve equal attention and love”.

The following statements given in the Ages 3-6 and 7-11 course programs are some of the examples about the emphasis of the program on gender equality:

Circumcision is interpreted as evidence by society that the boy has grown up and is mature. During the circumcision celebrations, the girl may feel negative and sidelined at home. In such a case, the mother and the father may talk to her and support her (Ages 3-6–Week 9, Appendix B. 6.).

Responsibilities should be divided between siblings without sex separation. For instance, girls should not always lay the table or prepare the bed and boys should not always wash the car or do the repairing (Ages 7-11–Week 7, Appendix B. 7.).

## Happiness as a Source of Health

In the second week of the Ages 0-3 course program, during the discussion of “safe maternity”, the main argument is that “a happy family is a healthy family”. Happiness is provided as the cure of surviving a healthy and successful life. Besides, in order to grow up healthy children, families are advised to be “happy”. Especially women are advised to be happy if they want to give birth to a child with strong confidence: “It shows that a happy and untroubled pregnancy enhances the self-confidence of the child” (Ages 0-3–Week 1). From prenatal period to growing up a “healthy” child, families are charged with providing happy and safe family environment: “A happy and untroubled family environment will provide healthy development of your children” (Ages 0-3–Week 2). The program suggests that the only way of growing up healthy children is to be happy: “Healthy children can only be grown up in a happy family environment” (Ages 0-3–Week 2).

## Dealing with Family Economy

The most target population of the program is stated as the families with low social and economic level and in relation with this, there are some suggestions mentioned in the program for fighting with poverty and operating limited budgets. The following suggestions are addressed to women and present “practical suggestions” in terms of family budget policies:

Tend to buy cheaper foods with similar nutritive value. For instance, buy apple instead of banana, pectin instead of honey and jam, rice pudding and



custard instead of biscuits and muffin, tarhana soup instead of vermicelli soup, bulgur pilaf instead of rice pilaf (Ages 0-3–Week 9, Appendix B. 8.).

In the Ages 3-6 course program an example given while discussing the cognitive development of a child also represents the tactics of operating family budget. In this example mothers are advised to think loudly and so as a role model they will be helping their child's cognitive development:

While solving a problem, you can share your opinions and give hints related to your plans. For instance, “I have some money. But I cannot afford the skirt I want. I can buy fabric and sew it myself. So I have also some money left” (Ages 3-6 –Week 6, Appendix B. 9.).

On the other hand, while discussing the early childhood period and the importance of the family in those years, in order to help children improve their “inborn talents”, families are advised to provide the necessary conditions, yet it seems that examples given below do not take into account the social and economical levels of the target families:

Mothers and fathers can create an environment for their children by the experiences (for example reading book, letting their children have their voice in decisions, letting them do sports), by the quality and the frequency of the communication with children, the provided learning opportunities (taking them to the museum, exhibition, theater), and by their model behaviors. When those are provided, the child can reach the peak level of his/her inborn talents (Ages 3-6–Week 2, Appendix B. 10.).

### The Role of the Father

The first letter of the education program in the Ages 0-3 and 3-6, given at the beginning of the training, is referred to fathers and defines the role of father as the breadwinner of the family, who works outside all day while mother deals with the care work:

“You work all the day. You want to come home and rest. Do you know what is proved in all over the world that fathers are at least as important as mothers for the bringing up, education, and the development of the child? We understand that you give this support because of the participation of your wife to this program. Maybe you see your child less as a result of your work conditions. But the time spends with your children is an indispensable need for them... Are you able to save an half an hour for your child? If so, enjoy that half-hour with your child without doing anything else. Within this time, you can contribute to the development of your child and enjoy the time you spend” (Ages 0-3 and 3-6–Week 1, Appendix B. 11.).

Additionally, in this same first week letter, fathers’ responsibility in this program is defined as “supporting” their wives during the application of the learning practices:

“When your wife begins to learn something new, the greatest need will be your support”. Fathers are also thanked for involved in this process and “supporting” their children’s and families’ development: “Thank you for your participation for supporting the development of your child and the family.” The word “support” has been repeated four times in a single page and it has been used so as to define the important role of father in the family. The ways of “support”, on the other hand, are listed in the Ages 0-3 program as below:

- Talk to your children
- Listen to your children
- Play with your children
- Read book with your children
- Take your child to the park
- Help their lessons
- Don’t be angry but help them correct their mistakes
- Show them your love
- Be a role model
- Be consistent (Both you and your wife)
- Lastly, read the letters given to your wife.

Another example of “support” is advised in a picture in the Ages 3-6 course program as an example of the theme about “being role model” (Appendix A, p. 145). The explanation of the picture is given as:

Father, plates in his hand, surely will support in laying the table. He is handing the cup to his son. Mother is bringing the meal to the table. For the expected behavior from the child, mother and father should be a model with their own behaviors. Children imitate their mothers and fathers (Ages 3-6–Week 5, Appendix B. 12.).

### The Role of the Mother

The Ages 0-3 and 3-6 of early childhood course programs emphasize the significant role of mother in a child’s life. In these courses, the responsibility of mother in a child’s “healthy development” is stated as crucial and mothers are situated as the basis of a child’s first development. In the Ages 0-3 course program, the vital role of mother is defined as:

A mother is the center of the life of a baby or a child. The person who organizes the housework, nourishment, dressing, cleaning, and makes the children comfortable and protects their wellness, cares them kindly and supports their socialization is the mother. But a mother in depression may lose her functionality (Ages 0-3 –Week 2, Appendix B. 13.).

In addition to this, as indicated in the following sentences, it is informed that there is a special relation between mothers and their babies. This “relation” is only “belonging to” the mother or the ones who do the “mothering”: “A baby values firstly its mother and the person who protects, looks after and feeds him/her” (Ages 0-3–Week 3, Appendix B. 14.). Besides, to provide this “relationship” women are suggested to breastfeed their

babies, as a kind of “natural” feeding: “The feeding of your baby along the first six months with only breast milk is very important for the baby to establish a positive mother-child relation and social-emotional development and good health” (Ages 0-3–Week 3, Appendix B. 15.). “It is very important for a baby to smell his/her mother and the breast milk” (Ages 0-3–Week 3, Appendix B. 16.). Lastly, motherhood is described as an “experience” that is very different and influential in a woman’s life: “Being a mother is a very different experience from so far. Being a mother changes the feelings, opinions and lives of women (Ages 0-3 –Week 3, Appendix B. 17.).

As mentioned before “happiness” is suggested as the only condition of growing healthy and successful children. As convenient with this argument, women’s health problem after pregnancy is also situated as discordance in terms of providing “healthy and happy” family environment. Besides, as the following statement illustrates while “the mother”, “the baby”, “the father” and “the whole family” can be affected from the “post-natal depression” of the “mother”, the situation of “woman” is never stated. Actually, in this letter about “the childbirth and postnatal period” the word “woman” is never placed at all:

Post-natal depression may affect adversely the mother, the baby and the mother-baby relationship and the whole family, the care of the baby by the mother and the parental role of the mother and the emotional and cognitive development of the baby (Ages 0-3–Week 3, Appendix B. 18.).

For the Ages 0-3 course program, the word “woman” is only used as the title in the thirteenth week: “Becoming a Woman”. In the family letter of this unit, the definition of violence in the family and different kinds of family violence are introduced. Moreover,

the legal rights and actions to be taken for women exposed to violence are described in detail. Yet, the sexist roles attributed to women in society are situated without any questioning:

There are many expectations of women in society. Being a good wife, a good mother, clean, neat, and hardworking, behaving economically, cooking well... We can extend the list. The support given to women to comply with these expectations is unfortunately very little... Whereas you can contribute the happiness of firstly your wife and therefore your family by supporting your wife and letting her build self-confidence (Ages 0-3–Week 13, Appendix B. 19.).

A woman also has expectations from her husband, society and the government. At least, as a human, she expects respect to the fundamental human rights of her. It is requested that everyone should fulfill his/her responsibility for removing the problems faced due to being a woman (Ages 0-3–Week 13, Appendix B. 20.).

Moreover, being role models and showing consistent behaviors are defined as the two basic qualities of good parenting. Both mothers and fathers are advised to be their child's role models by performing consistent positive attitudes both in their relations with their wives or husbands and also with their children:

The mother and the father should react the same way to the same behaviors of the child. The mother and the father should become a precedent as leading by example that is expected from the child (Ages 3-6–Week 5, Appendix B. 21.).

It is important to set a good example for the child. For instance: talking with well-ordered and proper sentences, reading books and newspaper (Ages 3-6–Week 8, Appendix B. 22.).

Lastly, mothers have important tasks in preparing their children to the school. In the 3-6 Ages course program for children in order to gain “study habits” mothers are suggested to do the followings:

When the child makes homework at the first and second grades, the child relieves that s/he is not the only person working at home if mother is busy with some work. Mother may shell vegetables, read a book instead of watching TV series. You shall not to entertain guests or visit friends as far as possible when the child comes from school and makes homework (Ages 3-6–Week 13, Appendix B. 23.).

### The Role of the Children

In the program the words “healthy”, “successful”, “responsible”, and “self-sufficient” are used as the expected child behaviors and to achieve these characteristics the integrity of the family is also required as a necessity: “In order to raise successful and self-sufficient children, mothers and fathers should continue a life hand to hand, willingly, and by appreciating each other” (Ages 0-3–Week 13, Appendix B. 24.).

The child is also aimed to be raised in a scheduled timetable in order to be gained the necessary skills of studying. It is suggested to apply a strict timetable at the very starting of school years of Ages 3-6:

The time of a child after school should be scheduled, that is to say, child should know what to do after s/he comes home. For example the breakfast time as soon as s/he comes, then a bit talk and playing a game, but the game should not be physical fatigue. It helps the child to start to study at the same time every day and gain the study habits (Ages 3-6–Week 13, Appendix B.25.).

The “appropriate” parenting of mothers and fathers ends with the positive characteristics in the child: “The child who develops safe attachment in infancy and sees constant and proper attitudes and behaviors from the mother and the father, becomes an extravert, social, leading, happy, determined on problems, curious and self-confident person” (Ages 0-3–Week 8, Appendix B. 26.). Lastly, the following statement exemplifies the role attributed to the child in the program:

All in all, you would like to raise honest, moral, polite, faithful, responsible, sensitive, fair, helpful, and knows to share and etc. children. It is important to gain these values in the family. If these values are the normal/natural way of living of the family, then it starts to be normal for the children (Ages 3-6–Week 7, Appendix B. 27.).

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter includes the summary of the findings, discussion and the conclusion. The limitations of the study and recommendations for further studies are also provided in this chapter.

#### Discussion and Summary

“The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”, implemented in nationwide in the public education centers and public or private preschool institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education, was selected as the subject of analysis for the study. The family letters which were distributed to the participants of the program were analyzed with the qualitative content analysis method. The family letters involved in the study were the Ages 0-3 and 3-6 (early childhood period), and Ages 7-11 school period.

The necessity of family education programs has long been discussed in the literature. Various studies analyzed the requirements of family education programs and indicated the benefits of such kinds of programs both for families and their children in Turkey (Kaya, 2002; Aksoy, 2002; Şahin, 2004; Kuzu, 2006; Özışıklı, 2008; Güven, 2011). Family education programs are generally developed with an attempt to teach



parents the necessary skills of parenting. The reasons for the necessities of the family education programs are based on the arguments that changing social conditions require parents to learn parenting skills. Developments in social life, new arrangements of individuals and social relations make policy makers and educators develop new educational supports for families. In general, family education programs aim to make families accommodate to the changes and to provide necessary supports, as well as to protect traditional values that are the foundation of the existing society and the family (ASAGEM, 2011). In relation to this, in this current study, the aims of family education programs, the target group that were addressed and the expected outcomes from the programs in terms of being mother, father and children were traced in order to understand the underlying family education policies in Turkey.

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Family

The aim of “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” is stated as to develop “parenting skills” of mothers and fathers. Two basic ultimate goals of the program are stated as to make the child use his/her existing potential and to improve mothers’ and fathers’ life qualities. The findings indicate that family is attributed a kind of central role in growing up “healthy” and “successful” children. Actually, the role attributed to the family is stated as critical in terms of a child’s physical and mental development. As “the first educators” of a child, the role of the family in child’s development and the environment provided to a child in the family are of vital importance in the program.

However, who are the family members that have such an important role in a child's life and how is the term "family" defined, and what does the crucial role of the family in child-raising imply in terms of family policies? These questions were the concern of the study in order to understand the definition of the family and its vital role both for a child and for a society.

First of all, as mentioned in chapter 4, the target group of "The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18" is defined as parents with Ages 0-18 children, adults planning to have a child, adults responsible with childcare, pregnant mothers and adults responsible with childcare. Families with negative socio-cultural and economic aspects are mentioned as the most basic target group of the program. The only criterion of the program is to know reading and writing. Those who are illiterate can only participate in the program of "The Illiterate Mothers Family Education Support Program for Ages 3-6". According to the program description, families only with children or families planning to have a child constitute the main target group of the program. Therefore, "the family" definition in the program involves "mother", "father" and "the existing children" or the "expected children". In accordance with this definition, the education materials of the program, namely "the family letters", address "mother and father" as the greeting. In another words, in these letters, women are only referred as "mothers" and men as "fathers". The main aim of the program is stated as to teach necessary skills of parenting, but as well as providing knowledge on child development it is also aimed to provide education for parents with regard to effective communication, family relations and sexuality. That is why the program is called "family education" but not "child

development”. As the findings illustrate, one of the characteristics of the family that is determined as the target group of the program is its property of reproduction.

Reproductivity is an important function of a family in a society since it defines the continuity of generations, cultures and values. In a broader term, it guaranties the maintenance of the nation both socially and economically. However, reproduction is also a gender issue in terms of defining the ones who provide the maintenance of a society and the ones who reject to obey this duty. The reproductive property of the family highlighted in the program is also supported as an important function in the report prepared by the General Directorate of Family and Social Services (ASAGEM, 2011). The report defines the family as a social institution on condition that it accomplishes the duty of reproduction, which implies the maintenance of human kind. To this regard, it can be argued that this approach limits the definition of the family to the relations in which families “accomplish the duty of reproduction” and therefore it causes to ignore or not to value any other relations of families or family structures, such as families with no children or divorced families, families who adopt children and even same sex relations.

Secondly, the “responsibilities” attributed to the family in the education program have vital importance in terms of developing “healthy and successful” children. Families are responsible with providing the necessary environment for a child’s mental, cognitive and physical and emotional development. The findings reveal that if the family does not provide the necessary conditions for the development of a child, for example if the mother does not recover from the post-natal depression or if the father does not

behave towards his child in a democratic manner, as a result, the child can gain the negative attitudes of tending to violence or lacking a sense of self-confidence. In that sense, families are blamed for not doing their “tasks” properly. According to this point, the individual responsibility of the family is accounted for the failure of the children and all the other social, cultural, structural and economic factors and a child’s own psychodynamics are ignored. As Thurer (1995) states, a kind of mythology is created that there are no bad children, only bad parents. Bayraktar (2009) also elaborates in her analysis of the Mother-Child education program that “the responsibility discourse” is also used in defining the role of the mother. According to this point of view, everything is seen as a part of an individual responsibility, and the woman is accounted for and blamed for her own “deficiency”. What does it imply for women’s position in the family? Thurer (1995) argued that when things go wrong, women tend to get blamed and this has resulted in a level of confusion and self-consciousness among mothers.

### The Supportive Role of the Breadwinner Fathers

The findings of the study elaborate that the family ideology that defines women as the “caregiver” and the father as the “breadwinner” is represented in the education program. Fathers are visualized in the program as the ones who work outside and come back home tired at the end of the day. However, they have also a role of “supporting” their wives and their children. They “support” their wives by letting them participate in the program, and they “support” their children’s development by allocating their time after work.

“The breadwinner” and “the supportive” responsibilities of the fathers in the family are important points to be noted in terms of discussing the sexual division of roles in the family. Fathers earn the livings of their family, they “support” their wives in participating in the family education program, they “support” their children by enjoying time after work, they play with their children, read them books and take them to the park. As a further example, they also “support” their wives by helping them to lay the table. However, none of these responsibilities assigned to fathers involve the fundamental requirements of a child to survive. It is also worth to note that in the education materials, it is taken for granted that men are working outside in paid jobs. The findings of the study do not provide any other representation of a father. Considering the high level of unemployment rate in Turkey,<sup>12</sup> and in the light of the main target group of the program involving families with low income levels, it is thought-provoking that any other family structures that imply women in paid jobs or unemployed parents are not mentioned. This approach prefers not to consider the following situation: In the case of a family structure where both parents are unemployed or only the woman is employed, the challenging questions will be as follows: how is the responsibility of housework shared between men and women, are the roles of women and men in the family changeable according to the job status and who will be responsible with childcare? However, by not taking these different family structures into its agenda, this education program states the father as someone who earns or is supposed to earn a living for the family and adds some supportive tasks to the next of his main

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<sup>12</sup> According to the TurkSat April 2011 Household Labour Survey, unemployment rate realized as 9,9 % in Turkey. [www.turksat.gov.tr](http://www.turksat.gov.tr)

task of “fathering”. On the other hand, despite the various studies arguing the burden of childcare on women as a preventive factor in work participation (Beşpınar 2010; Yirmibeşoğlu, 2008; Özar et al., 2000) women are suggested to deal with the care work and as it is also supported by the *2008 Turkish Population and Health Survey* report they continue to be seen as the main providers of care for their family members.

### Vital Importance of Mothers

As it is mentioned in the findings, mothers are still the only ones who are responsible for children’s early development. Mothers are the ones who provide cleaning, nutrition and childcare. Mothers are also some other responsibilities in the family. They have the responsibility of preparing their children to the school by gaining them the necessary skills of studying regularly. They also contribute to the family economy by not wasting their limited amount of money. They should always be a good role model, behave consistently, and should never lose their control over their children but not be overprotective, neither. Badinter (1992) argues that the pressure on mothers is enormous in the sense that they are expected to do what -usually male- scientific experts dictate about childcare and they are attributed great responsibility whereas the amount of help that they got remained obscured. A remarkable point to be noted at that point is that in the education program any other alternative childcare facility apart from family members, particularly mothers or grandmothers is not mentioned. This lack of alternative childcare facilities in the education program can be interpreted as the denying

of the supportive role of crèches on early childcare and education. In that sense, the family is again situated as the only agent in early childcare and education and the responsibilities of other agents including the government and the employers on providing social policies on childcare are not referred. Moreover, by not mentioning the situations of those working parents who send their children to the crèches, the program again ignores a social reality. In this regard, it can be stated that the program reconstructs the patriarchal structure that gives the responsibility of childcare only to the family and within the family it charges women as the only ones who are responsible with childcare and housework. This approach contributes to the unequal division of labour in the family and the constructions of motherhood ideology that restricts women's identity only to mothering.

### So-called Equality between Sons and Daughters

While the unequal division of roles between women and men continue in the education program, as indicated in the findings, the equality between daughters and boys is advised as a basic characteristic of a democratic family environment. In the family letters of different age levels, mothers and fathers are suggested to give equal chances to their children and they are advised not to make gender discrimination between their children. With regard to this point, in the introduction of the education program it is emphasized that gender discrimination is not favored in the family education program. However, the gender sensitivity emphasized in the program with regard to boys and daughters creates

a dual paradox: On the one hand, sexual division of roles between women and men continue to be reproduced by attributing certain roles to women as mothers and men as fathers. Therefore, women's subordination as a result of unequal division of roles in the family is reconstructed through the education program. On the other side, the so-called gender sensitivity between sons and daughters is advised as a democratic characteristic of a family environment. In that sense, the dilemma of the program is that while parents are advised to be role models for their children, their gendered relations as husbands and wives are not questioned, instead the sexual divisions of roles that promote gender inequality continue to be reconstructed within the program. Yet, they are expected to behave gender sensitively towards their children and are warned not to discriminate.

### The Responsibilities of the Children

The roles assigned to the children are also worth noting in terms of defining the expectations of society from the family, particularly from parents. Children are expected to be raised with positive behaviors of "trustworthy", "honest", "social", "helpful", "moral" and "successful" and "self-sufficient". These values are also expected to be the fundamental basis of a family. According to the modern conservative thought, families are seen as the fundamental basis of society. In the societies where family structures are not disrupted, the social structure of society is also regarded as not disrupted. What is desired for social structure is also desired for the family.



Children are also aimed to be raised in a scheduled way in order to gain study habits. To bring up successful children, most of the task burdens fall on women. Women are charged with programming the timetable of a child after school. They should prepare the necessary environment for a child to study, they are also expected to “do something instead of resting” in order to help their children to study their lessons. In that sense, a woman’s watching TV while her 5 or 6 years old child is studying are undervalued and instead women are suggested to “do cooking” or “read newspapers”. By mechanization of the study with timetables and the exaggerating the “study” “the ideology of capitalism” as argued by Rothman (1994) plays role in defining the women’s duties of motherhood. She argues that we are not discussing mothers and babies at all, we are talking about laborers and their products and she defines it as “the commodification of children and the proletarianization of motherhood” (p. 149).

Another remarkable point to be noted is that, the main aim of the program is described as to help children realize their existing potentials. However, it is also emphasized that children should be raised in certain rules and limitations within the family. Children should be provided options but the borders should also be drawn by the parents. As mentioned in the findings, options can be provided for children; however, as in the case of the “egg example,” two different options can be provided, but the right to choose not to eat an egg is not accorded. In this regard, parents are advised to raise children with self-confidence and democratic manners; however the limits are also advised to be reminded to the children. Therefore, it can be interpreted that it is aimed to

raise children freely within the social borders of the family and society and that those children should not be on the side of a fundamental change.

## Conclusion

By analyzing one of the popular family education programs implemented nationwide, “the Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”, the construction of motherhood ideology and the sexual division of roles in the family are aimed to be examined. Family letters that are distributed to the participants during the education program are selected as the sample of the study. Qualitative content analysis method with an approach of feminist methodology is utilized in the study.

Regarding the attempt of understanding family education policies, the first aim of the study is to analyze the definition of the family in the education program. How the term “family” is defined in the documents of the program, the ones who are included in this definition, and also the ones who are not included in the definition are explored. The findings reveal that the family targeted in the education program is the nuclear one involves the mother, the father and the children. Another significant point is the utmost responsibility of families in child’s development and care. In the family letters families are charged with providing the necessary environment for a child’s mental, cognitive and physical and emotional development and they are also blamed for not doing their “tasks” properly. According to this point, an individual responsibility of the family accounts for the failure of the children and all the other social, cultural, structural and economic factors and a child’s own psychodynamics are ignored.

Second aim of the study is to present the roles attributed to the family members in the program. The roles and responsibilities of fathers, mothers and children and their relations and the strategic position of women in shaping families are examined. As deduced from the findings, it is concluded that traditional family ideology that defined women as the “caregiver” and the father as the “breadwinner” is represented in the program. Moreover, fathers seem to have the responsibility of “supporting” their wives and their children. However, the “supportive” role of the father is not interpreted as an attempt to challenge the unequal division of roles in the family. On the contrary, it can be interpreted that since “the supportive” roles of fathers do not include the basic needs of the nurture and care of a child in the family, it plays an important role in terms of reconstructing motherhood ideology and the unequal division of labour in the family.

Additionally, the gender sensitivity emphasized in the education program with regard to daughters and sons can be interpreted as a kind of paradox since it is not provide a holistic point of view of gender discrimination that involve all the members of the family.

Lastly, the roles attributed to the children are analyzed and it is concluded that children with some positive attitudes that are suggested as the “natural basis of a family and a society” are aimed to be raised. The child is aimed to be raised with the characteristic of “self-sufficient” and “independent”. Yet, it is also noted that borders had to be drawn in order to provide “control” over children and therefore over the “family”.

To conclude, the content analysis of “The Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” reveals that the unequal division of roles in the family and the ideology of motherhood that restricts women’s mobility and burdens them with the responsibility of nurturing and caring are reproduced in the education program. In that sense, it can be concluded that “the Family Education Program for Ages 0-18” serves for the continuation of patriarchal relations that strengthens women’s subordination in the family. That is to say, whilst the family as an institution is supported and protected by the government’s education policies, the rights of individuals as women and men in terms of gender equality are ignored within the family.

#### The Limitations of the Study and Recommendations

One of the limitations of this study is that the findings and the discussion of the study are limited only to the selected documents of an education program; therefore it cannot be generalized to the whole education policies of family education programs in Turkey. Secondly, this study is only limited with the content analysis of the selected documents. An observation of the education program implemented in an institution, and in-depth interviews with the participants and the instructors would provide a broader understanding of the findings. It would provide more discussions in terms of how the themes discussed in the study were reflected by the participants and the instructors themselves.

This study examined the themes family; motherhood and fatherhood, and how they are represented in the content of “the Family Education Program for Ages 0-18”. For further research recommendations, an implementation of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method can be beneficial in order to understand the underlying policies addressed in the program. Additionally, different family education programs implemented by governmental or non-governmental organizations can be compared in a further study in order to explore the similarities and differences in the family education policies.

## APPENDICES

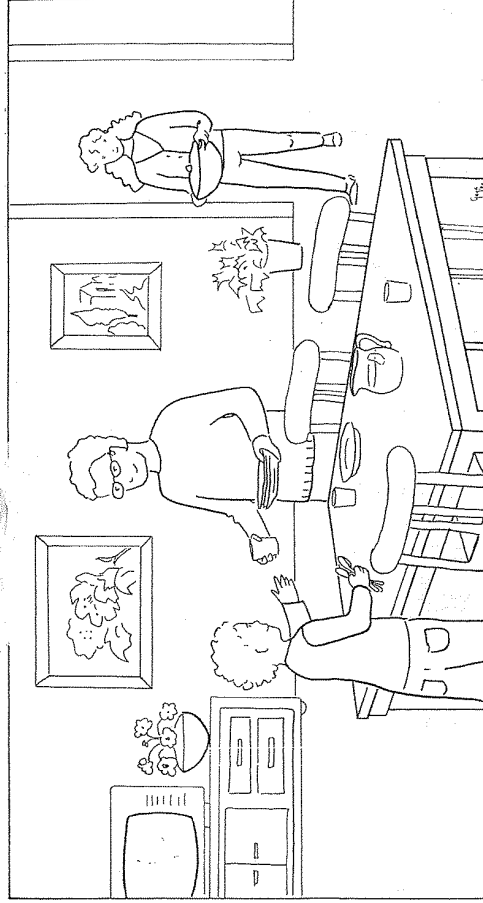
## APPENDIX A: An Illustration from the Family Letters for Ages 3-6

### 5. OTURUM

#### Ek: 1 RESİMLİ DİSİPLİN YÖNTEMLERİ

##### ÖRNEK OLMAK

Baba elinde tabaklar, belli ki sofrayı kurmaya destek olacak. Oğluna bardak uzatıyor. Anne yemeği sofraya getiriyor.



Çocukları yapması beklenen davranışlar için, anne baba da kendi davranışları ile örnek olmalıdır. Çocuklar anne babalarını taklit ederler.

## APPENDIX B: Quotations in Turkish

1. Bu eğitime aslında çocuğum için geldim ama aslında kendime de faydalı oldu. Eşimle aramın düzelmesi çocuğuma daha verimli ve bilinçli anne olmam çevrem beni fark etmesi çok güzel birşey önceleri o kadar değer verildiğime inanmıyordum ve insanlara nasıl konuşulacağını ve davranılacağını bilmiyordum aslında kendime güvenmiyordum... şimdi kendime güvenim geldi iyi bir anne olacağıma inanıyorum artık eşim çabamı görüyor... o kadar bilinçsiz anne baba var ki mutlaka bu desteği alması lazım... (T.T., Adana).
2. Çocuğun içinde bulunduğu aile ortamı onun gelişiminde çok önemli bir rol üstlenir. Çocuğun gelişim düzeyi ailesinin onun gelişimini ne kadar desteklediğine bağlıdır. Yani, gelişimleri desteklenen ve desteklenmeyen çocukların gelişimleri farklı olacaktır (Ages 3-6–Week 2).
3. Çocuğun gelişiminde erken çocukluk dönemi büyük önem taşır... Eğer bu dönemde çocuğun iyi gelişmesi için yeterli şartları sağlayamazsak beyin gelişimi ile ilgili çok önemli bir fırsatı değerlendirmemiş oluruz. Bu devrede yeterince iyi gelişmeyen, desteklenmeyen çocuklar daha sonra arayış çok zorlanarak kapatabilirler (Ages 3-6–Week 2).
4. Çocuklarımıza seçenek sunarak, kendi seçimlerini kendilerinin yapmalarını sağlamalıyız. Ancak seçeneklerimiz de sınırlı olmalıdır. Örneğin; ‘Bugün yumurta yeme günümüz. Omlet mi istersin, haşlanmış yumurta mı?’ şeklinde bir yaklaşım, onun seçim yaparken kendi kararını kendi verdiğini hissedebilmesine yardımcı olacaktır (Ages 0-3–Week 11).
5. Sınırsızlık, güvensizlik duygularını daha da güçlendirir. Mutlaka sınırlı seçenek hakkı tanıyın. Örneğin “istediğini giy” yerine “şimdi yatma vaktin, mavi ya da sarı pijamalarından hangisini giymek istersin?” denebilir (Ages 0-3–Week 11).
6. Toplumda sünnet, erkek çocuğun büyüdüğünün, olgunlaştığının kanıtlanması biçiminde yorumlanmaktadır. Sünnet kutlamalarında kız çocuk evde kendini dışlanmış veya kötü hissedebilir. Bu durumda anne ve babanın kız çocuk ile konuşması, destek vermesi gerekebilir (Ages 3-6–Week 9).
7. Sorumluluklar kardeşler arasında cinsiyet ayrımı yapmadan paylaştırılmalıdır. Örneğin, kızlar hep sofrayı kurma, yatak yapma gibi işlerden erkekler de arabayı yıkama, tamir vb. İşlerden sorumlu olmamalıdır (Ages 7-11–Week 7).



8. Pahalı olup besin değeri benzer, fiyatla daha ucuz olan yiyeceklerle yönelin. Örneğin; muz yerine elma, portakal. Bal, reçel yerine pekmez. Hazır bisküvi, kek yerine muhallebi, sütlaç, şehriye çorbası yerine tarhana çorbası, prinç pilavı yerine bulgur pilavı gibi (Ages 0-3–Week 9).
9. Bir sorunu çözerken yüksek sesle düşüncelerinizi ve ne yapmayı planladığınızla ilgili ipucu verebilirsiniz. Örneğin, “Bir miktar param var. Ama bu para almak istediğim eteğe yetmez. Bu parayla kumaş alıp kendim dikebilirim. Hem de bir miktar param kalır.” (Ages 3-6 -Week 6).
10. Anne bana çocuklarına sundukları deneyimler (örneğin kitap okuması, alınacak kararlarda onun söz sahibi olması, spor yapabilmesi gibi), onunla kurdukları iletişimin niteliği ve sıklığı, sağladıkları öğrenme olanakları (müzeye götürmek, sergiye götürmek, tiyatroya gitmek) ve çocuğa örnek olacak davranışlarıyla destekleyen bir çevre yaratabilirler. Bu gerçekleştiğinde çocuk doğuştan sahip olduğu en üst ısıra ulaşabilir (Ages 3-6–Week 2).
11. Tüm gün çalışıyorsunuz. Eve gelip biraz dinlenmek istiyorsunuz. Ama biliyor musunuz artık bütün dünyada ispatlanan bir şey var ki, babalar da çocuğun eğitiminde ve gelişiminde, yetiştirilmesinde en az anneler kadar önemli. Sizin bu desteği verdiğinizizi eşinizin programa katılmasından anlıyoruz. Çalışma koşullarından dolayı çocuklarınızı belki az görüyorsunuz. Ancak sizin, çocuklarınızla geçireceğiniz süre çocuklarınız için vazgeçilmez bir ihtiyaç. Çocuğunuza günde sadece yarım saat ayırabiliyor musunuz? O zaman, o yarım saati gerçekten başka bir şey yapmadan çocuğunuza ayırın. Bu süre içinde çocuğunuzun gelişimine katkıda bulunabilir, birlikte yaşadıklarınızdan keyif alabilirsiniz (Ages 0-3 and 3-6–Week 1).
12. Baba elinde tabaklar, belli ki sofrayı kurmaya destek olacak. Oğluna bardak uzatıyor. Anne yemeği sofraya getiriyor. Çocuktan yapması beklenen davranışlar için, anne baba da kendi davranışları ile örnek olmalıdır. Çocuklar anne babalarını taklit ederler (Ages 3-6–Week 5).
13. Anne bebeğin veya çocuğun yaşamının merkezidir. Evi düzenleyen, beslenmeyi, giyinmeyi, temizlenmeyi, çocukların rahatını sağlayan, sağlıklarını koruyan şefkatli bakım veren ve onların sosyalleşmesini destekleyen kişi annedir. Ancak depresyonu olan anne işlevselliğini yitirebilir (Ages 0-3–Week 2).
14. Bebek öncelikle annesine ve onu koruyup besleyen ve gereksinimlerini yerine getiren kişilere değer verir (Ages 0-3–Week 3).
15. Bebeğinizin ilk altı ay boyunca sadece anne sütüyle beslenmesi onun olumlu anne-bebek ilişkisi kurması, sosyal-duygusal gelişimi ve sağlıklı olması açısından oldukça önemlidir (Ages 0-3–Week 3).

16. Bebek için özellikle annesinin ve anne sütünün kokusunu duymak çok önemlidir (Ages 0-3–Week 3).
17. Anne olmak o güne kadar yaşanan duygulardan çok farklı bir durumdur. ‘Anne olmak’ kadınların duygu, düşünce ve yaşamlarını değiştirmektedir (Ages 0-3–Week 3).
18. Doğum Sonrası Depresyon anneyi, bebeği, anne-bebek ilişkisini ve tüm aileyi olumsuz yönde etkileyebilir, anne ile çocuk arasında kurulan ilişkiyi, annenin bebek bakımını ve ebeveynlik rolünü, bebeğin duygusal ve bilişsel gelişimini olumsuz etkileyebilir (Ages 0-3–Week 3).
19. Toplum içinde kadınlardan birçok beklenti var. İyi bir eş olmak, iyi bir anne olmak, temiz olmak, düzenli olmak, çalışkan olmak, ekonomik olmak, güzel yemek yapmak... Listeyi uzatabiliriz. Tüm bu beklentileri karşılayabilmeleri için, ne yazık ki ülkemizde kadınlara verilen destek çok az. Oysa siz eşinize destek olarak, onun kendine güvenini artırarak, önce eşinizin ve dolayısıyla ailenizin mutluluğuna katkıda bulunabilirsiniz (Ages 0-3–Week 13).
20. Kadının da eşinden, toplumdan ve devletten yapmasını istediği şeyler var. En azından kendisinin bir insan olarak, temel haklarına saygı gösterilmesini bekliyor. Kadın olmaktan dolayı karşılaştığı sorunların ortadan kaldırılması için herkesin üzerine düşen sorumluluğu yerine getirmesi talep ediliyor (Ages 0-3–Week 13).
21. Anne baba çocuğun aynı davranışlarına aynı tepkiyi vermelidir. Çocuktan yapması beklenen davranışları anne baba da yaparak örnek teşkil etmelidir (Ages 3-6–Week 5).
22. Çocuğa örnek olmanız çok önemli. Örneğin düzgün/tam cümleler ile konuşmak, kitap/gazette okumak (Ages 3-6–Week 8).
23. Okula ilk başladığı zamanlarda (1.-2. sınıf) çocuk dersini yapmaya oturduğunda anne de bir işle meşgul olursa çocuk evde tek çalışan kişi olmadığını group rahatlar. Anne televizyonda dizi seyretmek yerine sebze ayıklayabilir, kitap okuyabilir. Mümkün olduğu kadar çocuğun eve dönüp ders çalışacağı saatlerde misafir çağırmamak çocuğu da misafirlige götürmemek gerekir (Ages 3-6–Week 13).
24. Gelecekte başarılı ve kendine yetebilen çocuklar yetiştirebilmek için anne-babanın birlikte, el ele, gönül gönüle, birbirlerine değer vererek bir yaşam sürdürmesi gerekir (Ages 0-3–Week 13).

25. Çocuğun eve geldikten sonraki zamanı programlanmış olmalıdır, yani çocuk eve geldikten sonra ne yapacağını bilmelidir. Örneğin gelir gelmez kahvaltı saati sonra biraz sohbet ve fiziksel yorgunluk vermeyen istediği bir oyunu oynaması gibi. Çocuğun her gün aynı saatte dersine başlaması, dersi alışkanlık haline getirmesini kolaylaştırır (Ages 3-6–Week 13).
26. Bebeklik döneminde güvenli bağlanma geliştiren, anne/babasından sürekli ve doğru tutum ve davranış gören çocuklar, daha sonraki yaşlarında dışa dönük, sosyal, liderliğe eğilimli, mutlu, sorun çözmede kararlı, meraklı ve kendine güvenli olabilmektedir (Ages 0-3–Week 8).
27. Sonuç olarak dürüst ahlaklı, kibar, doğru davranan, güven veren, sorumlu, duyarlı, vicdanlı, yardımsever, paylaşmayı bilen vb. çocuklar yetiştirmek istersiniz. Bu değerlerin ailede kazanılması önemlidir. Bu değerler ailenin normal/doğal davranış biçimi ise artık onun için de normal olmaya başlar (Ages 3-6–Week 7).

## APPENDIX C: Codes and Categories

C1: The definition of the family	C3: The role of mother
Parenting skills	Caregiver
Child raising	Hardworker
Family values	Happiness
Democratic	Health
Oppressive	Breast milk
Overprotective	Wife
Concessive	Nourishment
Perfectionist	Housework
Ignorant	Cleaning
Gender equality	Depression
Family budget	Pregnancy
C2: The role of father	C4: The role of children
Breadwinner	Inborn talent
Support	Potential
Responsibility	Successful
Role model	Moral
Earn the living	Leading
Hardworker	Healthy

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