

Chapter 5

The Social Exclusion Problems of Children Under Protection in School Life

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ABSTRACT

Children enter the child protection system as a result of neglect or abuse. Due to their past experiences, these children's academic and social-emotional skills lag behind their peers. This situation can result in social exclusion, academic failure, absenteeism, and dropping out of school. The school stands out with its supportive value for children in the child protection system. However, in cases where school personnel do not have sufficient information about the child protection system, policies, and the characteristics of these children, the school cannot fulfill its protective-preventive and supportive role. However, a positive school experience has a protective, preventive, developing, and curative potential, especially for at-risk children.

INTRODUCTION

Children may be deprived of family care and are in the child protection system for many reasons such as migration, poverty, family conflicts, death of parents, parents' mental and psychological problems, neglect, and child abuse. Children who benefit from child protection system support and services encounter two forms of labeling and exclusion. The first of these is the social and emotional problems experienced by children due to neglect and abuse, and the other is society's dogmatic approach to this topic. Both society and the children approach each other with mutual feelings of distrust. Society is reluctant to open its

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arms to these children, who are similarly reluctant and distrustful when it comes to participating in and adapting to society because they could not undergo an adequate process of socialization (Kalaycı, 2007).

Children in the child protection system are excluded from many social areas and may try to hide themselves based on their previous experiences. For example, some children avoid telling their school friends or teachers that they are in the child protection system. However, it is hard to keep this a secret. They need institutional permission for specific events such as visiting a friend's house, inviting a friend home, contributing to the school website, etc. Children in the child protection system have to cope with social value judgments on their own, and they also experience individual difficulties due to their current situation (Erol, 2004; Montserrat, 2014). The media also plays an essential role in forming these value judgments. The way these children's experiences are reported in the media may contain labeling and unethical elements. The media's insensitivity makes it inevitable that these children are going to face discrimination and exclusion.

Publications about children in need of protection provide a wide range of information about the general characteristics of these children, the reasons for protecting them, the problems they face, child protection systems, and care practices. However, the school life of these children, particularly the social exclusion problems they experience at school, is not given the same amount of coverage. Upon review of the literature on social exclusion problems at school, it was seen that the exclusion problems faced by children with special needs and poor family children were emphasized, though the social exclusion problems experienced by children under protection at school are again not covered to the same extent. This section aims to explain

- the general characteristics of children under protection,
- the reasons for their protection,
- the current situation regarding this topic,
- social exclusion from a developmental perspective, and
- social exclusion at school.

BACKGROUND

It is known that children who need child protection services and support mostly come from the disadvantaged or marginalized regions of the country or territory where they live (Waldock, 2019), and children who have been neglected and abused have lower cognitive, language, social, literacy, and mathematical skills than their peers. This can cause problems in terms of school attendance and academic achievement, and can sometimes lead to truancy, dropping out, and delinquency.

School is one of the most critical social institutions after the family. Considering that children spend a significant part of their time at school, the importance of school and teachers cannot be overstated. For children who cannot find enough attention and support in their families, the school takes on the role of "listener" and "valuer." Schools not only support children's academic skills but also their social development and their acquisition of prosocial attitudes and behaviors. through trusted teachers who are positive role models, while helping them discover themselves and the world. Schools are a natural environment in which to monitor students' daily behavior and detect potential risks early. The positive effect of education is that it protects young people against threats by providing a sense of social belonging and leisure activities. It also has the role of providing resources to disadvantaged neighborhoods that

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