



Moving to Turkey with children



Turkey has always been a popular destination to relocate for those that are retired. Making the move with children is less common but it is definitely not unheard of. The pandemic has now opened up the possibility to relocate for all ages, as the reality is that a good proportion of parents can do their jobs anywhere in the world. Turkey, especially Fethiye, can be a wonderful place to raise a family. A big bonus is the great weather for approximately 10 months of the year which means life is much more outside than inside!

There is certainly less pressure on parents due to a few reasons, one of which is that an average Turkish wage does not enable families to 'spoil' their children so there is less pressure to feel the need to keep up with their peers. The lack of residual income also eliminates the need to enroll them in every after school club going. There are lots of sports clubs and other activities available but you won't feel like a bad parent because they are not enrolled in swimming, Rainbows/Beavers, Football, Ballet etc! There also seems less of a need to constantly entertain children in Turkey too, Turkish parents certainly don't put this high on the agenda and this is because children in Turkey have a lot more freedom than in other countries. Most parents will allow their children to play out on the street or wander to the local park alone. Some would say that children stay children for longer in Turkey.

Options for pre-school children

For pre-school children there are several private creches in Fethiye. They generally take children from over 2 years but you can find some that are willing to take them younger. The government schools will also offer some places for pre-school children. This is called anaokul and is for the one or two years prior to starting first school. How many places and how many years they can provide will differ from school to school. Anaokul is free but you do generally need to pay a 'registration fee'.

What age do they start school?

Firstly the system is a 4-4-4 system – 4 years in first, middle and high school. The age children start first school is slightly confusing! They start between 6 – 7 years old. The new school year starts in September and the earliest they can start Year 1 is at 66 months (6.5 years) and the latest is 72 months (7 years). This allows some flexibility for parents if they feel their child is not quite ready to start school. Once they start first school the pace of learning is pretty full on and most children are generally expected to be independently reading and able to write by the end of the first term. Most Turkish parents will opt for their children to defer to the following year so they will be oldest rather than the youngest in their year. One more thing to note is that in first school they keep the same teacher throughout the whole 4 years. Some schools allow parents to choose their child's teacher and others allocate randomly in a lucky dip way!

Private v's Government schools

There are several private schools to choose from in Fethiye and the biggest difference between them and government schools is that private schools provide a longer school day. The extended day allows for more lessons which tend to be extra English and other foreign languages. Private schools also have much smaller class sizes, offer better facilities and more extra-curricular activities. There is currently no international school in the Fethiye area so all lessons are taught in Turkish and follow the Turkish curriculum. However, there are several native English speaking children in the area and most schools will be used to having non-Turkish speaking children start



school. Some parents do feel private schools offer more support in this area but like anywhere all schools will differ so it is best to do your research. The best way to do this is to reach out to other local families through social media – one great resource is a Facebook group called [Fethiye Mummies, babies & Kids](#) which has over 1k members.

The BIG question – what is the school system like in Turkey?

Lesson content is quite prescribed and the teaching style is typically rote in nature. Individual learning plans don't really exist and the system is designed with the average ability child in mind. The government issues textbooks for every subject at the start of the school year and the school will provide a desk and chair, other than that pretty much everything else needs to be supplied by the parents. This includes supplementary books, exercise books and stationery. This is standard throughout all school years. One huge thing to be aware of is the amount of homework children are given is pretty mega! Teachers and Turkish parents can put extreme pressure on children and generally support the idea that the more homework they do the better the child will perform. This doesn't mean you have to follow suit and conform!

Children can be happy and do well in the Turkish education system. Plus, as the saying goes 'a child that has the potential to do well, will do well in any school'. If you are seeking a better quality of life for the whole family and are of the mindset that parenting along with the environment also plays a vital role in the destiny of your child, it really can work for you. You will need to accept that the education system is different but that doesn't mean it's bad. Fethiye does offer a great environment for parents raising young children.

Selahattin of Property Wizard Turkey moved from the UK with his family 8 years ago. At the time the children were 5 and 8 years old and spoke almost no Turkish – shame on Baba! The early days at school had some challenging moments but it certainly wasn't a wholly bad experience. Their peers were very accepting and interested in them. It helped that they were still young and could communicate through play. They adapted very quickly and in no time were age appropriately fluent. They are now both settled and happy teenagers, well as happy as teenagers can be! If you would like any advice on schools or moving with children, please do not hesitate to get in touch info@propertywizardturkey.com.

