



**ISTANBUL  
NURSERY SCHOOL  
OBESITY AWARENESS**

In Turkey, where 3.4 million children are projected to live with obesity by 2030<sup>1</sup>, the Cities Changing Diabetes programme promotes a culture of healthy living among the youngest inhabitants in the city of Istanbul.

**Partners**

- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB)
- Denmark Istanbul Consulate
- Turkish Association for the Study of Obesity (TOAD)
- Diabetic Children's Foundation (DIYACEV)
- KOÇ University



# Tackling root causes of childhood obesity to prevent diabetes

**Obesity among children is a growing problem**

With a diabetes prevalence of 11%<sup>2</sup> and an adult obesity prevalence of 32%<sup>3</sup>, Turkey has the highest rates of diabetes and obesity in Europe. Roughly a quarter of the country's children live with obesity, suggesting that the adult type 2 diabetes prevalence rate will continue to rise if urgent action is not taken.

**Identifying the root causes of obesity in Istanbul**

Istanbul is Turkey's largest city and joined Cities Changing Diabetes in 2020. The same year, an online Social Listening study was conducted to identify major social, cultural and urban risk factors for diabetes. Cities Changing Diabetes looked to identify children's lifestyles, dietary habits and living conditions as root causes of obesity in Istanbul.

**Educational programmes targeting preschool children**

In an attempt to tackle the root causes of obesity identified in the survey, the Cities Changing Diabetes partners in Istanbul created digital and face-to-face educational programmes to positively influence the habits of preschool children and their families.

In the first phase of the programme, children learn about healthy eating, healthy growth and development, and the importance of physical activity through games and experiments.

The second phase of the initiative, the Program for the Prevention of Obesity through Healthy Living Skills, is a 10-week programme that

focuses on different teaching strategies and activities related to nutrition education.

The third phase, Persona Dolls Educational Initiative Approach, allows children to express their feelings, understand the feelings of others, learn about diverse identities and become aware of prejudices and discrimination.

### **Programme implemented across Istanbul**

The programme was implemented across Istanbul in 2021 after a three-month teacher-certification training was run at the Yuvamiz Istanbul Children Activity Centres under the guidance of expert trainers.

In 2022, the Childhood Obesity and Prevention curriculum will be implemented in selected Yuvamiz Istanbul Nurseries. The curriculum will then be implemented in all 150 nurseries in the municipality, ensuring that children and their families understand the importance of healthy living.

