


# Let's Stop Obesity in Children Workshop

## WORKSHOP REPORT

 **March 4, 2025**

 **TÜSEB**  
Koşuyolu Campus  
Istanbul

[tacesse.tuseb.gov.tr](http://tacesse.tuseb.gov.tr)

# President's Message

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Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB) leads innovative studies systematically conducted in the field of health sciences and technologies, providing scientific, technical, and financial support to practitioners and researchers. In this context, it acts with the mission of a domestic and national Türkiye in the healthcare sector and the vision of being an international leader organization focused on R&D. With the motto "Science and Technology for Human Health," it aims to bring new momentum and energy to the healthcare sector. It supports all kinds of scientific and technological studies that have the potential to add value to our country and humanity in order to increase and sustain Türkiye's competitiveness.

Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE) is one of the nine institutes established under TÜSEB. With the motto "Healthy Mother, Healthy Child, Healthy Generations," our Institute's objectives include "to ensure the production, use, and benefit of techniques and methods for determining the causes, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases related to maternal, child, and adolescent health; to make collaborations and partnerships with relevant institutions and organizations in the private, foundation, or public sector for this purpose; and to support entrepreneurship in these areas."

Childhood obesity is nowadays not merely an individual health problem; it has become a multidimensional public health issue that directly affects public health, health systems, and the quality of life of future generations. Obesity emerging at an early age is associated with numerous risks such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiometabolic diseases, and psychosocial problems, and creates a determining impact on lifelong health outcomes. Therefore, strengthening preventive approaches, expanding early diagnosis and monitoring mechanisms, and supporting children's healthy nutrition and physical activity habits are of critical importance.

The "Let's Stop Obesity in Children Workshop" was organized to holistically address the problems specific to this issue. Within the scope of the workshop, our Institute, relevant public institutions, universities, specialty associations, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholders from different disciplines came together to evaluate the causes, consequences, and solution areas of childhood obesity. The views and suggestions emerging as a result of the workshop have been systematically reported and submitted to the evaluation of the relevant institutions and organizations.

Hoping the outcome will be beneficial to our country...

**Prof. Dr. Şirin Güven**

President of the Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute



**TÜSEB** TAÇESE  
TÜRKİYE ANNE, ÇOCUK VE ERGEN SAĞLIĞI  
ENSTİTÜSÜ

*"Çocuklarda Obeziteyi Durduralım"*  
**DÜNYA OBEZİTE GÜNÜ**  
**ÇALIŞTAYI**



**4 MART**  
**2025**



**TÜSEB KOŞUYOLU**  
**YERLEŞKESİ**

## Let's Stop Obesity in Children Workshop

TÜSEB Koşuyolu Campus

MARCH 4, 2025 • ISTANBUL

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# 1. Let's Stop Obesity in Children Workshop

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## 1.1 Objective of the Workshop

The objective of the workshop held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 within the **Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB) Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE)** is to evaluate the causes, current burden, and long-term effects of childhood obesity with a multi-stakeholder approach; to develop actionable policy/project proposals that will strengthen preventive health practices and improve early diagnosis and follow-up processes. The workshop aimed to create a sustainable intervention framework in which family, school, primary care, hospital, local government, and digital health components are addressed together.

## 1.2 Summary

The **Let's Stop Obesity in Children Workshop** conducted by the **Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB) Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE)** was held with the participation of universities, relevant specialty associations, public institutions, non-governmental organizations, and experts from different disciplines. In the workshop, the clinical, behavioral, environmental, and socioeconomic determinants of childhood obesity were comprehensively addressed; structural and practical difficulties encountered in managing the current situation were evaluated.

During the discussions, it was emphasized that the fight against obesity should be based not only on a treatment-oriented approach but also on a prevention-oriented one; healthy nutrition literacy, physical activity, school-based programs, family counseling, and digital monitoring tools should be used in an integrated manner. Furthermore, the need for a common framework regarding the standardization of referral, follow-up, and feedback processes between primary care and secondary/tertiary care became prominent. In the workshop, a common view was expressed that addressing **digital health applications, multidisciplinary health centers**, and public awareness projects together would increase the impact in the fight against obesity.

At the end of the workshop, consensus was reached on the need for a roadmap comprising short-, medium-, and long-term goals; data-driven monitoring systems, early intervention for risk groups, pilot projects applicable at the local level, and models that can be scaled nationally were determined as priority areas. The evaluations obtained are expected to contribute to policy development processes and application guidelines in combating childhood obesity. In this context, particularly **promoting breastfeeding**, regulating nutritional habits at an early age, and supporting increased awareness through **family medicine** were evaluated among the core intervention topics.

## 1.3 Workshop Program

The workshop program was planned to address childhood obesity multidimensionally. Within the scope of the program, following the opening speeches, the current activities and project support mechanisms of **TAÇESE** were shared; international collaboration opportunities, funding sources, and inter-institutional collaborative working models were evaluated. In the subsequent group work, participants discussed priority need areas under the headings of preventive health policies, clinical follow-up processes, school and family-based interventions, **digital health solutions**, and domestic technology development. In the closing section, a common framework was formed regarding concrete steps applicable in the short term and strategic goals in the medium to long term.

**Table 1. Let's Stop Obesity in Children Workshop Program**

TIME	TOPIC
09.30-10.00	Opening and Introductions
10.00-10.30	Obesity in Children
10.30-11.00	Current Situation in the World
11.00-11.30	Current Situation in Türkiye
11.30-12.30	Break
12.30-15.00	Discussion and Evaluation

## 1.4 Workshop Implementation and Analysis Method

The **Let's Stop Obesity in Children Workshop** conducted by the **Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB) Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE)** was carried out with the participation of universities, specialty associations, public representatives, field practitioners, and academicians. The workshop was planned to consist of a face-to-face session, structured group discussions, and joint evaluation sessions. Qualitative views obtained throughout the meeting were classified thematically; using a prioritization approach, short, medium, and long-term actionable suggestions were analyzed under separate headings.

The opening of the workshop was delivered by **TAÇESE President Prof. Dr. Şirin Güven**; the framework surrounding the current state of childhood obesity, its burden on the health system, and the need for national intervention was shared. Following the participant introductions, the mission-vision approach of **TÜSEB** and **TAÇESE** was conveyed, and solution areas that could be developed through inter-institutional coordination were opened to discussion.

## Mission

To be a leading institution in our country developing national and international, multi-stakeholder, evidence-based advanced research and projects aimed at identifying, preventing, and treating problems in the field of maternal, child, and adolescent health.

## Vision

To be a globally leading institution contributing to the establishment of the highest achievable and improvable physical and mental health standards for every mother, child, and adolescent.

## Motto

**Healthy Mother, Healthy Child, Healthy Generations**

In the presentation of **TÜSEB**, within the scope of the productive health triple helix model; it was emphasized that establishing a data-driven collaboration between academia, the public sector, and the application field is decisive in the prevention and management of childhood obesity (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. TÜSEB Health Models A) Productive Health Model; B) Triple Helix Model**

Continuing the workshop, information was presented by **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Özlem Özaydın** regarding the studies conducted by **TAÇESE**, ongoing projects, and research topics being developed in the field of child health.

The human resource capacity, interdisciplinary working structure, and organizational model that bridges the field and academia of **TAÇESE** were shared with the participants (Figure 2).



## Prof. Dr. Şirin GÜVEN

TAÇESE Başkanı

Ekibimiz



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Akademisyen



### Doç. Dr. Hüseyin DAĞ

Akademisyen



### Doç. Dr. Aysu TÜRKMEN KARAĞAÇ

Akademisyen



### Doç. Dr. Özlem ÖZAYDIN

Ar-Ge Uzmanı

## Figure 2. TÜSEB Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE) Personnel

**Batuhan Yeşilyurt, Head of TÜSEB Project Management and Support Department,** outlined his unit's support mechanisms and how to apply to project calls related to childhood obesity.

In this context, it was stated that topics such as school-based obesity screenings, behavior change programs aimed at families, digital monitoring solutions, risk stratification in primary care, and community-based preventive interventions could be formulated into projects.

- Supporting childhood obesity research based on clinical and epidemiological data,
- Strengthening school-family-healthcare service integration with a preventive health approach,
- Contributing to the development of domestic digital health and decision support solutions.

The application process of the Project Management and Support Department is carried out through preliminary evaluation, scientific evaluation, finalization, and monitoring steps, and in multi-stakeholder projects, impact analysis and feasibility criteria are given priority evaluation.

- Receiving applications in a standardized format via the TÜSEB Information Management System,

- Operating the call and peer-review mechanism according to priority need areas.

Further in the program, information was provided by the **TÜSEB Department of Foreign Relations** regarding international funding mechanisms and channels of collaboration. The potential for developing joint projects for childhood obesity with platforms like **WHO, UNICEF,** and **Horizon Europe** was particularly emphasized.

During the analysis process, participant views were gathered under the headings of preventive services, clinical management, public awareness, school policies, digital monitoring, and governance. For each heading, prioritization was made by taking into account criteria of feasibility, sustainability, measurable impact, and inter-institutional coordination.

As a result of this evaluation, a common approach was adopted towards developing education and awareness-focused interventions in the short term, standard monitoring protocols and digital tracking tools in the medium term, and an integrated childhood obesity management model at the policy level in the long term.

In conclusion, the implementation and analysis framework presented in section 1.4 has been structured as a working model that strengthens coordination among stakeholders, supports data-driven decision making, and can produce measurable outputs in the fight against obesity in children.

## 2. Scope Evaluation

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In the scope evaluation section, a consensus was reached that **childhood obesity** cannot be explained solely by individual dietary behaviors; it must be addressed together with multiple determinants such as social environment, school setting, family structure, digital lifestyle habits, and access to healthcare. Participants emphasized that the current burden increases at an early age and metabolic risks are carried over into adolescence.

The main subject areas addressed in the workshop focused on planning early prevention and effective treatment models simultaneously along with the multidimensional analysis of the causes.

- The causes of obesity and the importance of its prevention at an early age,
- Promoting breastfeeding and improving dietary habits,
- Strengthening patient monitoring with digital health platforms,
- Structuring a multidisciplinary approach and pediatric obesity centers in combating obesity,
- Expanding obesity diagnosis-referral trainings for family physicians and healthcare personnel,
- Promoting sports activities and increasing physical activity,
- Developing food safety, school canteen inspections, and healthy nutrition policies.

In the evaluations, strengthening **standard screening** and risk stratification practices in primary care, regularly tracking body mass index percentiles in child follow-ups, and clarifying referral algorithms for high-risk cases were stated among the core priorities. The necessity of a coordinated follow-up approach among **family medicine**, pediatrics, and **pediatric endocrinology** came to the forefront.

The effectiveness of school-based approaches was addressed under a separate heading; concrete suggestions were developed on canteen policies, physical activity durations, teacher-family information chains, and the role of school health teams. It was expressed that there is a need for applicable, low-cost, and scalable intervention models, particularly in disadvantaged regions.

Participants also noted that **digital health solutions** are an important tool for tracking behavior change in obesity management; it was suggested to develop mobile applications, reminder systems, family-focused feedback panels, and anonymous data analytics infrastructures. It was emphasized that these technological approaches must be structured in alignment with clinical guidelines.

The project pool created during the workshop was prioritized according to feasibility and impact potential; education-awareness programs were suggested for the short term, integrated

monitoring protocols for the medium term, and a national childhood obesity action model for the long term. Table 2 presents the prominent core intervention areas in the scope evaluation.

**Table 2. Prominent Topics in the Field of Childhood Obesity**

TOPICS
Standardization of body mass index percentile tracking by age and gender in primary care and creating a national screening algorithm
Implementing a tiered referral and follow-up model between family physicians, pediatrics, and pediatric endocrinology for at-risk children
Strengthening school-based obesity prevention programs and aligning healthy nutrition and physical activity components with the educational curriculum
Expanding nutrition literacy trainings for children and parents, and developing behavior-change focused family counseling programs
Establishing a sustainable tracking mechanism in obesity management with digital monitoring tools, mobile applications, and feedback systems
Developing community-based awareness programs addressing the effects of sleep patterns, screen time, and sedentary lifestyles on obesity
Piloting applicable, low-cost prevention models in disadvantaged regions that account for socioeconomic inequalities
Supporting safe playgrounds, active transportation, and child-friendly physical environmental designs in collaboration with local governments
Developing multidisciplinary evaluation protocols for the early diagnosis of metabolic and psychosocial risks accompanying obesity
Consolidating data collection, monitoring, and evaluation indicators on a national scale; monitoring intervention programs through impact analysis
Increasing innovative project and funding mechanisms for childhood obesity through public, academia, civil society, and private sector partnerships

### 3. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

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The **Let's Stop Obesity in Children** Workshop organized by the **Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute** was held with the participation of health and health-related public institutions, universities, specialty associations, and other stakeholders.

Throughout the workshop, the clinical, behavioral, environmental, and socioeconomic dimensions of childhood obesity were evaluated with a holistic approach; actionable suggestions were developed regarding preventive health services, early diagnosis-follow-up processes, school and family-based interventions, and digital health solutions.

In line with the outputs obtained, a common framework was adopted towards **expanding awareness and education programs** in the short term, **strengthening standard referral and follow-up protocols** in the medium term, and establishing an integrated **childhood obesity management model** on a national scale in the long term.

The priority implementation steps decided upon at the end of the workshop are summarized below:

#### **Prevention of Obesity and Early Intervention:**

- Promoting breastfeeding,
- Reducing the use of high-protein formulas and cow's milk,
- Monitoring and regulating dietary habits during adolescence,
- Increasing awareness through family physicians.

#### **Training of Family Physicians (General Directorate of Public Health)**

It was suggested to create training modules for family physicians regarding obesity diagnosis and referral.

It was proposed to add the heading "Healthy Nutrition" to the "Integration Among Healthcare Facilities" project and to conduct the trainings at regular intervals.

### **Establishment of a Digital Health Platform**

It was suggested to create a digital platform where obese children will be monitored, tracked via a free digital and mobile application, and appointments from polyclinics can be made through the platform.

Evidence-based information sharing, expert opinions, health activities, and motivational content will be offered on this platform.

- Providing personalized nutrition and exercise programs digitally based on the data acquired via the app,
- Enabling healthcare professionals to monitor patients through digital systems.

### **Establishment of Obesity Diagnosis and Treatment Centers**

It was suggested to create pilot centers, one each on the Anatolian and European sides of Istanbul.

The aim is to have multidisciplinary teams present in the centers and to offer a holistic service oriented toward obesity treatment.

The necessity of having a Pediatrician, Pediatric Endocrinologist, Pediatric Gastroenterologist, Social Worker, Psychologist, and Sports Medicine Physician present at these centers—and a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist if needed—as well as the creation of Personnel Distribution Chart (PDC) positions for these staff by the Ministry of Health was discussed.

It was suggested to carry out the necessary works to define a Health Implementation Communiqué (SUT) code for Obesity Polyclinics.

### **Promoting Physical Activity**

It was suggested to create special sports hours for children in collaboration with municipalities and sports centers.

To increase the access of obese children to sports activities, it was suggested to create sports rooms within the Healthy Living Centers of District Health Directorates and to ensure coordination with local governments.

### **Food Safety and School Canteen Inspections**

It was suggested to collaborate with the Ministry of National Education to implement healthy nutrition standards in school canteens.

It was recommended to increase inspections regarding food safety and sugar consumption, to place healthy foods around checkout counters in supermarkets, and to arrange shelves appropriately.

### **Launching Awareness Campaigns (General Directorate of Health Promotion)**

It was aimed to organize public service announcements, social media campaigns, and informative meetings in the fight against obesity.

It was suggested to increase public awareness via public service announcements and media (on billboards, in hospitals, and on public transport), and to carry out activities aimed at raising the consciousness of families and children.

### **Developing International Collaboration (WHO and Department of Foreign Relations)**

It was suggested to adapt good practice examples to the country by collaborating with the World Health Organization and similar projects in Europe.

It was recommended to establish contact with international organizations to provide funding and support in the fight against obesity.

### **Evaluation of Pilot Implementation Results**

Following the implementation of pilot projects, it was suggested to evaluate the obtained data and scale it nationally.

### **Signing a Protocol with MoNE**

- Promoting healthy nutrition in school canteens in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education,
- Re-adding physical education classes led by branch teachers to the curriculum starting from primary education,
- Providing one free healthy meal (recommended breakfast) and clean water in schools,
- Topics such as conducting obesity screenings will be included.

By being evaluated by TÜSEB, TAÇESE, and relevant stakeholders, this report is expected to contribute to taking strategic steps that will facilitate project production within the framework of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborations. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the report will present an application-oriented reference framework for healthcare professionals.

For sustainable success in the fight against childhood obesity, the continuity of collaboration among the public, academia, civil society, and local governments is considered critical. In this context, the report aims to set the ground for joint efforts to be developed at both national and international levels.

The workshop was concluded by presenting good wishes.

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