



2.7.7 Access to education

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Although access to education is free⁹²⁶ and compulsory for six years of primary schooling, usually until the age of 12 (and for nine years, usually until the age of 15, in the KRI),⁹²⁷ an estimated two million children were out of school in 2024.⁹²⁸ Extreme levels of poverty have forced many families to send their children to work instead of going to school.⁹²⁹ UNICEF identified more than 200 000 out-of-school children in Iraq in 2024. Girls were more affected. Closure of IDP camps during the year affected school attendance of children enrolled in schools within the camps.⁹³⁰ (See also section 3.3 on Situation of the IDPs.) Out-of-school children are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, including to child labour.⁹³¹

Rules on whether schools allowed education to undocumented children varied.⁹³² In 2024, Iraqi authorities announced a policy to enrol children without documentation in schools⁹³³ and, the same year, UNICEF reported that over 130 000 children were re-enrolled due to the 'back-to-learning campaign'.⁹³⁴ In total, some 290 000 children returned to some form of educational program in 2024.⁹³⁵ In April 2025, Kurdistan24 reported that a government-led school grant program provided monthly stipends to families enrolled in the social protection network, helping children to return to school.⁹³⁶ The authorities prioritised re-enrolment of girls, including those who have left because of early marriages.⁹³⁷

The educational system suffers from poor infrastructure,⁹³⁸ overcrowded classrooms,⁹³⁹ and shortage of qualified teachers.⁹⁴⁰ Schools are forced to operate in shifts, thus reducing the time of learning for each child.⁹⁴¹ School infrastructure has been damaged over the years of conflict⁹⁴² and 10 000 new schools need to be built to address the infrastructure gap.⁹⁴³ Approximately half of the existing schools do not have basic services such as water and sanitation.⁹⁴⁴ The CRC found that the continued use of schools for military use remains a matter of concern.⁹⁴⁵

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