

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 conflict 942 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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