Turkish National Sovereignty and Children’s Day

What is it?
National Sovereignty and Children’s Day marks the founding of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1920. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, modern Turkey’s founder, dedicated the holiday to children, entrusting them with the future of Turkey’s sovereignty and independence.

How is the holiday visible?
Because it is a public holiday, schools, government offices, and most business close. To celebrate, many people go to public ceremonies and lay wreaths on monuments to Atatürk. The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation has been organizing the children’s festivals since 1979. The company also brings children around the world to stay with Turkish families.

What goes on?
Because Atatürk dedicated the day to the country’s future, Turkish schoolchildren take the seats of the Parliament and symbolically govern on the holiday. The children elect a president who then addresses the nation on television.

The symbols of National Sovereignty and Children’s Day are the globe or a circle, symbolizing the world; the Turkish flag, symbolizing sovereignty; and a group of children holding hands, symbolizing unity.

A week of ceremonies marked by singing and dancing performances are held in the country, culminating in a large performance held at the national soccer stadium in Istanbul.