



Important telephone numbers

Emergency duty numbers Mon–Fri 8.15 am – 4 pm

Herttoniemi–Itäkeskus office tel. 09 310 62300

Kaarela office tel. 09 310 72980

Kallio office tel. 09 310 74074

Kamppi office tel. 09 310 73524

Kivikko office tel. 09 310 73273

Lassila office tel. 09 310 73175

Malmi office tel. 09 310 72874

Maunula office tel. 09 310 69572

Tapuli office tel. 09 310 73483

Vuosaari office tel. 09 310 73028

Sheltered homes in child welfare information tel. 09 310 73015

Emergency Social Services every day, 24 hours tel. 0206 96006

Crisis Emergency Support every day, 24 hours tel. 09 310 44222

Centralised Advice S-info Mon–Fri 10 am – 4 pm tel. 09 310 44000

Further information about
the Child Welfare Act
can be found at www.finlex.fi
and about social services at
www.hel.fi/sosv

*The brochure picture is from photographer and social educator
Miina Savolainen's community art project "Maailman ihanin tyttö"
about ten young women who had grown up in a children's home.
In the decade-long project, young women who had been taken into care
came to be viewed as well-adjusted and valuable.*

Taking children into care

EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO A SAFE UPBRINGING
ENVIRONMENT, A BALANCED AND WELL-ROUNDED
DEVELOPMENT, AND SPECIAL PROTECTION.





In Helsinki, child welfare work and decisions to take a child into care are part of the work of the family centres. Generally, a decision to take a child into care is prepared with the family. The views of the child and his/her relatives are always taken into consideration. If necessary, statements on the grounds for taking the child into care are requested from the child's day care centre, school or family clinic. The responsible social worker prepares the decision in cooperation with the social worker who is familiar with the child's case.

The authorities only resort to taking a child into care and placement in substitute care if shortcomings in the child's care and home conditions seriously endanger the child's health or development or if the child's own behaviour, for example intoxicant abuse or criminal offences, endanger the child's wellbeing.

Decision to take a child into care

Taking a child into care is also called for if open care measures are found to be inadequate or impossible to implement, and substitute care is considered to be in the best interests of the child.

If the child or young person and his/her parents agree to taking the child or young person into care and placement in substitute care, the decision is made by the manager of open care social work. If a child of 12 years of age or over or his/her guardian opposes the taking of the child into care and placement in substitute care, the decision to take the child into care is made by the Administrative Court. A child of 12 years of age or over and the adults who care for the child have the right to appeal the decision to take the child into care to the Supreme Administrative Court.

A child is not taken into care for a fixed period; the decision always remains in force until further notice, i.e. as long as the child needs such care. The decision to take a child into care is made in writing and sent

for information to all of the parties involved. The decision document includes instructions and addresses for appeal as well as the deadline for any appeal. In difficult cases leading to a child being taken into care, conflicts cannot always be avoided. In such cases, social workers guide and advise the parties involved on issues relating to their legal rights.

What does taking a child into care mean?

In practice, a child who is taken into care moves to live in a foster home or child welfare institution, which is then responsible for the child's care, upbringing, supervision and other welfare.

During the period that the child is in care the parents are still the child's guardians. The social worker will discuss with them important issues relating to the child, such as education and health care. Decisions relating to the child are made in collaboration with the child, the parents and other close friends and relatives.

A client plan setting down the purpose and objectives of the substitute care is always prepared in collaboration with the parents. The care plan specifies the child's contacts with those who are closest to the child and any special care the child might need. The plan is updated at least twice a year, always as the child's situation changes or as otherwise required. A client plan to support parenting is also prepared for the child's parents.

Selection of substitute care

The selection of substitute care must always be arranged in accordance with the child's best interests. The substitute care must safeguard the child's care, upbringing and the child's contact with close friends and relatives. The selection of substitute care also takes into consideration the family's language, cultural and religious

background. The child can be placed in foster care, a professional foster home or a child welfare institution. Foster care is care that takes place in a private family home. Professional foster homes are a form of substitute care positioned between foster care and institutional care. Child welfare institutions are children's homes, young people's homes and reform schools.

Termination of care

During the period of care, social workers actively arrange support measures and forms of rehabilitation that could assist the child to return home.

The child may be discharged from care when the reasons for taking him/her into care no longer apply, unless the termination of care is against the child's best interests. A care order expires at the latest when the child reaches 18 years of age. The child's guardians and a child of 12 years of age or over have the right to ask for the care order to be discharged. The decision to terminate care is made by the manager of open care social work or the Administrative Court. The same instructions apply to the termination decision as those for the consultation of the parties involved in connection with the original care order as well as the serving of the decision and the provision of instructions for appeal.

After-care

When a child is discharged from care, he or she has the right to after-care arranged by the social services. After-care provides support for the child in the process of becoming independent, for example in matters relating to housing, income, work and education. After-care ends at the latest when the young person reaches 21 years of age. When after-care ends, the young person can be assisted, if necessary, with the support services he or she requires.

THE KEY PRINCIPLE OF CHILD PROTECTION IS THE INTERESTS OF THE CHILD AND PROMOTING THE CHILD'S WELFARE. THE PARENTS HAVE THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CHILD'S WELLBEING AND UPBRINGING. HOWEVER, THE SOCIAL SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP THE FAMILY IN THE CARE AND UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE STAGE.