



# Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare



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## Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare



Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>In 2014, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities issued a quality recommendation for child welfare for the first time (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Publications 2014:6). The quality recommendation has been now updated, taking into account the cooperation work for child welfare carried out under the Programme to address child and family services. The quality recommendation is intended to guide the child welfare work concerning families and children and to support its organisation.</p> <p>The previous recommendation has been supplemented with quality criteria for substitute care and its monitoring. Multi-professional cooperation in child welfare work is now emphasised more than before. The recommendation supports the development of multi-sectoral team structures. According to the recommendation, the obligation to protect children is best met when there is cooperation and trust between the children and young people concerned, those close to them and the employees. A multi-professional team combines the support measures into a coherent service package that meets the needs of the children and their parents.</p> <p>The recommendation describes the principles guiding the child welfare work by categorising them as follows: inclusion, service system, professionals and work communities in child welfare work, assessment of the need for services, and quality criteria for substitute care and its monitoring.</p> <p>The quality criteria for substitute care was edited by Pia Eriksson, Jaana Tervo and Riitta Laakso (National Institute for Health and Welfare) and Susanna Hoikkala (Central Union for Child Welfare).</p>			
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## FOREWORD

The first Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare was issued jointly by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities in 2014 (Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2014:6). The substance of this first Quality Recommendation remains fundamentally current. Over the past four years, child welfare has undergone development in broad-based cooperation with local and regional government and national actors. The outcomes of the 2016-2018 LAPE programme to address child and family services include quality criteria for substitute care, produced as a collaborative effort by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Central Union for Child Welfare in a process in which contributions were widely sought from experts, service providers and experts by experience from the public, private and third sectors. Quality recommendations gain wider coverage and greater impact when account is taken of the findings of co-creation. It is therefore appropriate to incorporate the content generated by co-creation within the programme to address child and family services into the earlier Quality Recommendation in the interests of introducing even greater specificity and depth to the Recommendation.

The updated Quality Recommendation underscores even more powerfully relationship-based and child-oriented work that caters for the rights of the child. The duty of protection is best fulfilled through cooperation based on mutual trust between children and young people, persons close to them, and child welfare workers. The provisions of child welfare as a multi-professional service is now emphasised to a greater extent. The Recommendation supports the development of multi-sectoral team structures. The purpose of multi-professional teams is to compile the support needed by the child and the parents into a coherent service package.

The Quality Recommendation for child welfare is intended to provide guidance in the provision and organisation of child and family specific child welfare. The Recommendation should be reviewed by:

- all current and future child welfare professionals
- all professionals whose work touches upon child welfare
- supervisors in child welfare
- public servants and elected officials who decide on the allocation of resources to child welfare

The Quality Recommendation is also geared to children and families and those close to them. It focuses on the topics perceived as paramount to quality in child welfare at the time of its drafting and is intended to be updated periodically.

We would like to thank everyone who provided content to this updated Recommendation!

Kirsi Varhila,  
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Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

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# 1 Guiding principles of child welfare work

**Ethical principles cross-cut all objectives in child welfare work and in the Quality Recommendation.**

The ethical sustainability of all decisions must be verified when developing child welfare. All professionals and workplace communities engaged in child welfare work should examine the meaning of the ethical principles in their duties and workplace. Commitment to the key guiding principles of child welfare work reinforces the provision of the right kind of support at the right time.

## **THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CHILD WELFARE WORK ARE ENshrined IN THE CHILD WELFARE ACT (417/2007, SECTION 4)**

In child welfare, action must be taken with as much sensitivity as possible and assistance in open care must be given precedence, unless the interests of the child require otherwise. If substitute care is needed in view of the best interests of the child, this must be arranged without delay. When providing substitute care, the aim of reuniting the family must be taken into account in a manner that accords with the child's best interests. Under the Act, child welfare must:

1. promote the favourable development and wellbeing of the child
2. provide support in child upbringing and care for parents, custodians and other persons responsible for child care and upbringing
3. be aimed at preventing child and family problems, and
4. intervene sufficiently early if problems are found.

This Quality Recommendation contains an extensive introduction to the principles guiding child welfare work, which are based on the ethical grounds for the social and health care field set out by the National Advisory Board on Social Welfare and Health Care (ETENE).<sup>1</sup> The ethical principles arising from the special features of child welfare work are described under each of the five general principles. They complement the principles enshrined in the Child Welfare Act. In the development and assessment of child welfare work, advantage may also be taken of the Advisory Board's publication<sup>2</sup> on the ethics of childhood and youth in the social welfare and health care sector, which discusses the ethics of childhood and youth from the perspective of the participation and consultation of children and young people in particular. The Union of Professional Social Workers Talentia / Committee on Professional Ethics has published ethical guidelines for social welfare professionals (Helsinki 2017). The guidelines also provide an appropriate framework of professional ethics for child welfare work.

## 1.1 Human dignity and fundamental rights of clients

The dignified treatment and protection of privacy of the client are paramount in child welfare. In daily child welfare work, this is reflected in such principles as the equal, non-discriminating and respectful treatment of clients. The rights of the child and the obligations of the State Parties' authorities prescribed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child must be taken into consideration in the activities at all levels. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Finland has ratified, must also be respected. Key sections of the Convention in terms of child welfare are Article 7 on children with disabilities and Article 23 on respect for home and the family. The Ombudsman for Children is an independent state official whose activities are based on the Act on the Ombudsman for Children (1221/2004). A key task of the Ombudsman for Children is to promote the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Ethical grounds for the social and health care field, 2011.

2 ETENE publications 41, 2013.

3 For more information, please see <http://lapsiasia.fi/en/>. The site contains several publications and brochures on the topic.

### CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD<sup>4</sup>

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is a human rights convention applicable to children aged under 18. By ratifying the Convention, Finland has undertaken to amend its legislation and modify its policies to comply with the Convention. The Convention is thus obliging on central and local government, the child's parents and other adults alike.

Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and implementation of children's rights are supervised by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. State Parties report to the Committee at five-year intervals on the progress made with implementing children's rights. The Convention comprises 54 articles in total. Under the Convention, the parents or other legal custodians of the child are responsible for the child's upbringing and care, and they must act in the child's best interest. Government must assist them in this task.

General principles of the Convention include that:

1. All children are equal
2. A child has a right to a decent life and comprehensive wellbeing
3. Adults must find out about children's views and opinions and let children have an influence over their everyday life
4. When decisions concerning children are made, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

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<sup>4</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child (Treaty Series 59 and 60/1991) and the Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## 1.2 Child's best interests

When assessing the need for child welfare and in the provision of child welfare, it is first and foremost the interests of the child that must be taken into account (Child Welfare Act, section 4). When assessing the interests of the child, consideration must be given to the extent to which the alternative measures and solutions safeguard the following for the child:

1. balanced development and wellbeing, and close and continuing human relationships
2. the opportunity to be given understanding and affection, as well as supervision and care that accord with the child's age and level of development
3. an education consistent with the child's abilities and wishes

4. a safe environment in which to grow up, and physical and emotional freedom
5. a sense of responsibility in becoming independent and growing up
6. the opportunity to become involved in matters affecting the child and to influence them, and
7. the need to take account of the child's linguistic, cultural and religious background.

The best interests of the child involve several elements that are central to the child's wellbeing. Child welfare work that serves the best interests of the child requires the workers to conduct a thorough and comprehensive examination and review of the child and the child's life situation, to build trust and to devote sufficient time to ensure that the key quality assurance factors are present in the work: fairness, transparency, reliability, safety and the principle of proportionality in child welfare.

## **Fairness**

The requirements of good governance, including finding out about different options, providing reasoning and treating the client with respect, are highlighted in each phase of client work. In child welfare, fairness can only be accomplished by taking the child's best interests as the basis for the decisions and outcomes concerning the child. When the child's interests are expressed in concrete terms, the reasoning behind a decision is easier to comprehend, also by the children themselves.

In the Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare, fairness refers to implementing all rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as fully as possible. In terms of fairness, the right to non-discrimination plays a key role, as it safeguards the equality of all children regardless of their start in life. In addition to the protection that they need and funding for child welfare from public resources, children must above all be guaranteed the right to participate in making any decisions that concern them.

## **Transparency and reliability**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child underscores respect for the parents' or custodians' responsibility for bringing up the child. A requirement for this, also in child welfare, is knowledge of a child's level of development at various ages and openness about the forms of support and services through which the child and the family can receive the support they need.

Child welfare cases do not always permit decisions that accommodate the preferences of the child and the parent/custodian. For this reason, the operating practices of child welfare, including the decisions taken, must always be predictable and justified.



## Safety and security

In child welfare, safety and security must be taken into consideration in the child's circumstances, relationships and interaction alike. Most importantly, the child's sense of security should be a consideration in every situation, and their sense of security should be promoted. Safety and security must also be examined from the perspective of the child's family and the child welfare worker.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child stresses taking aspects related to safety into account, especially in case of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Particular attention in child welfare must thus be paid to the safety of children placed in out-of-home care. Their safety must be ensured by the adults responsible for their care and protection. Children must have a right to express their opinions, practice a religion and enjoy their own culture without the fear of stigmatisation or discrimination. Children's views must be taken into account in accordance with their age and level of development when matters relevant to them are being considered.

## Principle of proportionality

The action taken by an authority must be in correct proportion to the aims and objectives of assisting the client. The principle is that official action is taken at the lowest level that achieves the required impact (the principle of least invasive intervention). In particular, this principle is stressed in case of involuntary child welfare action.

The social worker responsible for the child's affairs shall be responsible for the assessment and fulfilment of the child's best interests. The municipalities responsible for organising child welfare services are tasked with ensuring that the social workers responsible for children's affairs have i.a. sufficient working hours available to them to review the child's situation, consider and process plans of action, and assess the effectiveness of child welfare actions together with the child and those close to the child.

## 1.3 Interaction

Good interaction includes respect for others. The factors highlighted in good interaction with clients are respect, humanity and empathy. Child welfare work involves the exercise of public authority and taking decisions on which the clients and the workers do not always see eye to eye. The special interaction skills of child welfare workers are evident in their ability to cater for the particular characteristics of the child welfare operating environment, for example the power inherent in their role as authorities, in their personal interactions. Situations relating to taking a child into care and placing a child in substitute

care, for example, call for the ability to deal with a difficult situation in as constructive a manner as possible and without haste, openly and in cooperation with the child and those close to the child.

## 1.4 Quality of work of professional staff

Professionals working in services for children and young people must be aware of both their own responsibility for the child's upbringing in their work organisation and their duty to support parenting. They must also understand their wider accountability for the work they do, to the child, young person, family, their own organisation and society alike. Managers and supervisors must be conscious of their responsibility for enabling work of a high standard and supporting the staff.

## 1.5 Responsible decisions and operating culture

Child welfare is wide-ranging work. Successful work with clients calls for consistent support from the surrounding organisation, immediate supervisors and higher-up management, and political decision-makers alike. Child welfare work today is hampered by the fragmentation of the service system and by inter-sectoral interfaces.

Decision-making, development efforts and service provision must stem from the needs of children, young people and families. The impacts of the decisions made must also be described and assessed from the perspective of children, young people and families. The organisations responsible for service provision along with individual workers should inform children, young people and families of the services in a manner that they can comprehend and also collect their experiences and feedback to support development.

An evaluation framework in table format is attached in Appendix 1 for use as a tool for discussing ethical principles applicable to individual employees/units. When developing services and operating methods, the tool can also be used to check that ethical principles have been accounted for when making changes.

**ONLINE WELLBEING REPORT<sup>5</sup>**

The wellbeing report is an important part of the strategic planning, implementation and evaluation of operations and financial management in a municipality. The online wellbeing report is a tool designed for municipalities in support of management by wellbeing information and decision-making. The tool is suited for preparing extensive reports to cover local council terms and for annual reporting. Its use is based on cross-administrative and cross-functional planning, implementation and evaluation. The tool can be used to produce comparative information in an individual municipality about the status of the residents' wellbeing and services by population group as well as about the municipality's vitality, finances and structures. Municipalities themselves can also input additional information into it. The tool furthermore includes an online preliminary impact assessment method designed to support sustained and effective decision-making. The method can be used in municipalities to conduct preliminary impact assessments of forthcoming decisions and to compare different proposals, which will support the making of the best possible decision. The wellbeing reports adopted by the municipalities and the preliminary impact assessments can be accessed on the tool's website. The primary users of the online wellbeing report and preliminary impact assessments are Finnish municipalities and joint municipal authorities. In addition, the online wellbeing report can be used by other public actors and e.g. institutions for education and research.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hyvinvointikertomus.fi>

## 2 Participation

Enhancing the participation of children, young people and parents is one of the keys to developing effective child welfare services. To ensure their participation, all parties to a child welfare case must be able to feel and trust that they will be heard in their own right, and that they can give their inputs to the case being discussed.

### Involvement in own case

Chapter 4 of the Child Welfare Act (417/2007) discusses a child's involvement. Under section 20 of the Act, in the provision of child welfare, the child's wishes and views must be ascertained and they must be taken into account in a way that is appropriate for the child's age and level of development. Section 24 of the Child Welfare Act meanwhile imposes on social workers responsible for a child's affairs the duty to oversee compliance with the interests of the child and to provide assistance for children or young people in exercising their right to be heard. In addition, they must, where necessary, direct the child or young person to seek legal aid or ensure that an application is made for the appointment of a guardian for the child as provided in section 22. An amendment to section 29 of the Child Welfare Act that entered into force on 1 January 2014 clarified the duty of a social worker or other child welfare worker working with the child or their family to meet with the child in person.

It is essential for the child/young person that information is provided in a form that they can understand and that their views are heard and taken into consideration in a manner consistent with their best interests. Every effort shall also be made to allow the child/young person to influence the work carried out with them: the time, the place and the manner in which the affairs of their life are discussed. It is essential for the child, young person and parents to know whom they can contact in a matter that concerns them; who is the social worker responsible for their case and how to contact this person. It is equally essential that the case workers have enough time to engage with their clients.

### **PARTICIPATION IS SUPPORTIVE OF A CHILD'S WELLBEING**

Based on a study conducted by Riitta Laakso<sup>6</sup>, the sense of participation is one of the key dimensions in the wellbeing of children placed in substitute care. The participation of children in both everyday life and in decision-making that concerns the child's life should therefore be reinforced.

The social worker responsible for a child's affairs has a major role and responsibility in making decisions on the child's life, and the child should be included in this decision-making. However, the study revealed that social workers were perceived by children and young people to be quite distant characters and only few children or young people had the contact information for their social worker. Few also recalled having had any private meetings with their social worker, while social workers changing was a familiar situation for many children. Based on the study, it would appear that communication between children placed in substitute care and the social workers responsible for their affairs should be reinforced in order to allow the two to build a trusting relationship.

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<sup>6</sup> Laakso, Riitta: Finnish Institute for Welfare and Health THL Report 2019

### **Involvement in decision-making**

A child welfare worker must have the basic capacity to work in a manner appropriate to the age and level of development of the child/young person and to interact with the child/young person/family, while management must have access to management structures and practices that support child-oriented work.

In family care, the family carer also takes part in assessing the child's need for support. Family carers themselves shall be also be ensured support in the performance of this task.

It is important to cater for client participation in the supervision of substitute care. The views and experiences of the child and the child's parents regarding the place of substitute care matter. On supervisory visits, private discussions shall be held with the children.

### **PARTICIPATION ARISES THROUGH INTERACTION – SYSTEMIC CHILD WELFARE WORK AS A CASE STUDY**

A systemic approach to child welfare work can help reinforce the participation of the child and those close to the child. A vital element of the systemic approach is to hear the views of all those in attendance about what is going on and what could be done to help. The working plan shall also be prepared on the basis of joint discussions to make it easier for the child and those close to the child to commit to the work.

Ideally, the child and those close to the child join the team in discussing the child's situation and the work to be done. When this is not possible, the discussion undertaken by the team shall be recorded as quickly as possible and it, along with the ideas arising about the family's situation and the ensuing work plan shall be reviewed together with the child and the family on the basis of the recorded entries. The viewpoints of the child and the family are also to be recorded in the client's case file to supplement the team discussion<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information about the systemic approach, please see i.a. Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare THL working paper 7/2017

## **Participation in development**

By involving children and parents in developing the services, child welfare workers and the management responsible for the services can obtain a better understanding of the reality of child welfare work from the clients' perspective. The basic assumption of the Quality Recommendation is that municipalities should draw up a plan for enhancing the participation of children, young people and their parents and for improving child welfare services. This plan may be incorporated into the plan for the wellbeing of children and young people referred to in section 12 of the Child Welfare Act. The plan should include concrete measures by which the participation of children, young people and parents can be promoted and experience-based knowledge can be utilised as part of both everyday child welfare work and the more comprehensive development of child welfare. Ways of implementing the participation of children, young people and families in service development include expert groups, consultations and hearings, and training courses.

## **PARTICIPATION IS BOTH AN ATTITUDE AND A FEELING – CASE STUDY OF YOUNG EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE AT PESÄPUU ASSOCIATION**

The underlying structure of expert-by-experience activities is open cooperation where the clients – children, young people and parents alike – are included in service development as equal partners. The client contributes to the work the perspectives of experience-based knowledge, coping skills, and the ability to get along in the environments that the participants scrutinise together. The experts by experience often also reflect their feelings on the issue to be discussed, and this interaction brings together both experience-based knowledge and theoretical information.

Pesäpuu Association has involved young people who are in substitute care in their development efforts. This gave rise to the team of Survivors, the aim of which is, together with professionals, to consider what aspects of child welfare should be reinforced, what should be prevented and with what issues young people need help and support.

It is helpful for professionals to listen to young people telling their stories in their own words. This helps them to understand the meanings and needs behind the words. Issues may have a different meaning for the experts by experience and the professionals, and the discussion thus promotes a shared understanding.

The Survivors of Pesäpuu Association have classified their own expert-by-experience activities as taking place at three levels:

### **1) Individual level in a group**

The child/young person enjoys experiences of participation and peer support in a group, for example in Forums for Young People. At best, the activities are empowering and help the young people in understanding and sharing their life's events, situation, feelings and thoughts. Even a single encounter or discussion may carry them through a number of tough spots. The ideas the young people come up with can be taken further, but this is not the basic idea of the peer groups or the Forums.

### **2) Community level**

The thoughts, experiences and ideas of children/young people are collected in a structured, ethical and respectful way. At the community level, the young people's expertise is utilised in local area networks and the development of local-level services.

### **3) Societal level**

At the societal level, the young people's expertise is utilised in national child welfare advocacy work.

A precondition for involving children and young people in this manner is that the participating adults are responsible and have certain capabilities and skills. The development work performed with experts by experience must be ethically sustainable. Through open cooperation, child welfare services and services for young families can be made more transparent and effective.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> More about the accomplishment, potential and findings of participation:

*We believe in you – So should you.* Guidelines for life and strength for coping. A handbook of alternative care by young people for young people (available in Finnish, Swedish and English) and manual for adults at <http://lskl.fi/usus>

SALTO Youth Resource Center: We Are All Europeans <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/cultural-diversity/publications/wearealleuropeans/>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Child welfare work should facilitate continuous and trusting interaction between the child welfare worker and the child/young person who is the child welfare client as well as the child's family and others close to the child and other interested parties/persons of importance to the child. It is recommended that social work in child welfare be organised in accordance with the principles of systemic teamwork whenever the organisation of the work with clients allows (S, M<sup>9</sup>)

The members of the network of persons close to the child and their potential for providing social support are determined individually, guided by the needs and preferences of the child/young person and their family. (S)

The child welfare worker, the child's family and others close to the child, and other authorities relevant to the child's case jointly discuss the possibilities other authorities might have of supporting the fulfilment of the child's best interests and assisting the parents in fulfilling their responsibility for the child's upbringing. (S)

The social worker in child welfare ensures that those close to the child are involved in the child's situation in all phases of substitute care. (S)

Management ensure that children, young people and families are included in the development of the services. When a plan is prepared in a municipality to enhance the involvement of children, young people and their parents and to improve child welfare services and such a plan is incorporated into the plan for the wellbeing of children and young people, this issue also becomes more visible for the clients. (M)

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<sup>9</sup> The recommendation refers to the party to whom the recommendation is targeted in brackets:  
S = Staff, M = Management



### 3 Child welfare as a part of the system of services for children, young people and families

The aim is for children/young people to receive assistance and their distress to be detected regardless of where they live and what services they use. The premise is for universal services to support all children, young people and families, and special support (child welfare and other specialised services) to be provided to those who need them, in accordance with their needs. It is vital for the services to make up as coherent a package as possible for the child, young person and family. Universal services provide families with basic-level support while specialised-level support is provided alongside the basic services only for a fixed period determined according to need.

Consequently, the integration of child welfare and family centres, early education and school is an essential part of quality efforts. In practice, this may take the form of e.g. child welfare social work being included in the assessment of need for services already initiated at a family centre, child welfare work in the school setting, or child welfare and a family centre working in tandem to provide parenting support. Specialised services also must be coordinated. Adequate information flows and timely cooperation with children's and adults' substance abuse and mental health services in particular must be ensured in order for the system of services to function in a manner that provides families with comprehensive support.

Besides the child/young person, also the parents and the worker must be able to trust in the system of services and the working methods used within it. The methods must be diverse and the work must take place in a manner that allows the worker also to make observations of the environment in which the child is being raised. Home visits, taking place unannounced when necessary, are a vital tool for determining the circumstances in the child's home. Attention to the range and nature of working methods used within the system of services and their interoperability helps foster quality. The Early Intervention portal<sup>10</sup> may also be of assistance in this respect.

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10 [www.kasvuntuki.fi/en](http://www.kasvuntuki.fi/en)

### **A SAMPLING OF THE VIEWS OF THE MUNICIPALITIES ABOUT THE SERVICE SYSTEM AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES**

Expressed in a child welfare survey of municipalities conducted by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities in 2017:

Compared to 2012, when the survey was last conducted, the availability of services had deteriorated in the past five years, with the exception of home services for families with children and day care as child welfare support in open care.

The availability of home services to families with children had improved markedly from the previous survey, with 74% of respondents being of the opinion that home services as provided in the Social Welfare Act could be arranged as necessary with reasonable effort and delay or, in most cases, with no delay at all. The equivalent percentage for those who were child welfare clients was also 74

The availability of services had deteriorated in respect of all health care services surveyed. The most severe deterioration was seen in the availability of mental health services for children, which five years ago could be arranged as necessary with reasonable effort and delay or no delay at all in 63% of the municipalities surveyed. In 2017, this was the case in only 37% of municipalities and joint municipal authorities responding to the survey.

There were also severe shortcomings and delays in the availability of examinations in health care required to investigate suspected cases of child abuse and the sexual abuse of children.

## **2.1 Cooperation at the level of client**

Child welfare work is challenging work that covers a broad spectrum of life. The responsibility for child welfare work is born by the social worker responsible for the child's affairs, and they work with the assistances of a skilled and capable child welfare team. The decisions taken in social welfare often call for multi-professional collaboration. Situations involving domestic abuse, intimate partner violence or child abuse, for example, require simultaneous and coordinated contributions from numerous professionals. Such situations may necessitate i.a. acute safety measures, end-of-relationship support and crisis counselling, child-care arrangements, health care and medical care as well as therapy for and with the children and the parents, as well as financial arrangements. Even when a child/young person and their family are child welfare clients, each contributing party is responsible for getting the child/young person/parents the assistance they require in respect of the services which fall within that party's ambit.

From the viewpoint of effective cooperation, it is advisable for child welfare to notify the authority that filed the child welfare notification of receipt of the notification and also to give them the name and contact information for the workers or the unit responsible for the case. The provision of contact information facilitates cooperation between the authorities in cases where the matter must be revisited at a later date. When the professional who filed the child welfare notification and the other authorities concerned are moreover involved to an appropriate extent in investigating the child's circumstances and providing support, efforts to support the child and the family can flow in an organic manner. Coordinating the cooperation between authorities in relation to a child welfare case is among the tasks of the social workers responsible for the child's affairs. In this role, the social worker responsible for the child's affairs must ensure that the authorities are aware of the purpose and aims of the cooperation in the child's individual situations.

Client plans may be used to agree on the work to be carried out with the family. The simultaneous preparation of more than one client plan (with e.g. child welfare, early education, adult social welfare and substance abuse care) places a burden on the resources of both the workplace communities and the client. It may moreover result in conflicting objectives, which is why client plans as a rule should be prepared in the form of joint plans shared by multiple authorities.

Multi-professional teams of experts were created to provide support to child welfare workers in their demanding duties. Section 14 of the Child Welfare Act defines the multi-professional team of experts as a team, set up by a municipality or two or more municipalities together, of social and health care representatives, child growth and development experts and other experts needed in child welfare work. The purpose of the team is to ensure that social workers responsible for a child's affairs have at their disposal expertise in child growth, development and health care as well as legal and other expertise necessary in child welfare work. Moving forward, consultative support and specialised expertise will continue to be needed but at the same time, it will be necessary to ensure that the multi-professional support is integrally linked to work with individual children and families.

## 2.2 Duties of management

Child welfare of high quality arises from the efforts of not only individual child welfare workers but also more broadly those of management and the entire organisation. Cooperation between various authorities and a multi-professional approach are needed to ensure that a child/young person as a child welfare client receives the right kind of assistance at the right time. It is the duty of managers in the various sectors and of

political decision-makers to ensure that the structures of the services and organisations support cooperation between experts in children's and young people's cases (including working time allocation, decision-making). Primarily, assistance and support should be provided in the natural growth environment of the child/young person and through services targeted at all children/young people.

The divisions of labour and responsibilities among the various groups of workers and the various services shall be clear-cut, yet the working methods must also possess the flexibility to adapt to the situation of the child and the family. At the organisational level, the continuity of the work must be ensured at transitional points, when the child's service package is supplemented with child welfare actors or when child welfare work ends. The knowledge base of multi-professional work shall be reinforced and tools sought out to coordinate the simultaneous processes involving care, client relationship and the authorities into a whole that reinforces the wellbeing of the child and the family.

Management-level agreements are required to ensure the scope of action for workers and their commitment to a shared work approach. The systemic multi-actor teamwork model in child welfare is also designed as a structure for shared work that brings together the various actors and services into an effective concept that centres on the child and family who are child welfare clients. It is up to management to obtain broad-based commitment to such shared structures and principles of work in all the services.

From the management perspective, worker turnover is a factor that materially diminishes the quality of the work. The high turnover rate of social workers in particular slows down the provision of assistance to children and hampers the creation of trust between child, parents and worker. It is up to management to create the conditions for working that contribute to continuity and employee retention in child welfare work. A focus on wellbeing at work includes such aspects as proper organisation of the work, opportunities for further training, leadership and management of high quality, functionality of the physical work environment, and appropriate case load. Reflective structures that allow workers to contemplate and process their work together in the workplace also support wellbeing at work.<sup>11</sup>

The municipalities should actively disseminate information about child welfare and family services in their area, as information about the services creates an atmosphere of security and trust even when there is (as yet) no need for them. Local contact details help clients to find the services quickly. Information also supports the timely targeting of the services. The service suite in each area is different, as some of the service providers are

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11 E.g. Yliruka, Laura Itsearviointi reflektiivisenä rakenteena (2015) [Self-assessment as a reflective structure].

local and the way in which the services are organised varies. In the descriptions of local services, the Handbook of Child Welfare<sup>12</sup> and the information about services for children, young people and families provided on the Kasvun kumppanit website<sup>13</sup> can be used. It is essential that clients are also informed about Social Ombudsmen and the possibilities of obtaining independent advice in their cases.

In the development of the service system, attention must be paid to the fact that the promotion of a child's wellbeing calls for the identification of concerns and difficulties as well as the location of strengths and resources in a way that caters for the child. A child-oriented approach is what unites the various workers, the parents and the child in cooperation and ensures that the work focuses on matters that support the wellbeing of the child. Client feedback should be systematically collected and utilised so as to channel the clients' experiences of the functioning of the service system to the parties with decision-making power so as to increase the effectiveness of activities.

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12 <http://thl.fi/fi/web/lastensuojelun-kasikirja> (in Finnish only)

13 <http://thl.fi/fi/web/lapset-nuoret-ja-perheet> (in Finnish only)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The child welfare office informs the authority having made a notification of receipt of the notification and provides the name and contact details of the office or worker in charge of the case. (S, M<sup>14</sup>)

The professional who filed the child welfare notification takes part in investigating the child's case and offering support to the extent necessary. Other authorities are involved in the initial investigation as required. (S)

The social worker responsible for the child's affairs coordinates cooperation between the authorities relevant to the child welfare case and ensures that the authorities are aware of the purpose and aims of the cooperation in the individual situations of children and their families. (S)

When a child and a custodian are informed of the fact that child welfare work is about to begin, they are also explained what child welfare work means in practice, and they can be given an information package about child welfare as a printed client's guide and referred to the municipality's website for information about the services. The client must also be informed about the services of the Social Ombudsman and the legal remedies available for the client. (S, M)

At the first meeting – and if necessary, also later – the principles of child welfare work are discussed with the clients (including the possibility of open documentation). (S)

Management support the ability and the opportunities of workers to perform child-oriented and relationship-based work by taking charge of i.a. resourcing, work emphases and expertise enhancement. Management also ensure that the trusting relationship between client and worker is not unnecessarily cut off by e.g. reorganisation. (M)

The support offered to the client and its intensity are tailored to the client's needs. (S, M)

The work practices must be diverse and the methods used reliable. Home visits – if necessary, unannounced visits – are an aspect of child welfare work. (S, M)

The multi-professional team of experts supports child welfare work in its various processes. (M)

Systematic client feedback on the services is collected. (M)

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<sup>14</sup> The recommendation refers to the party to whom the recommendation is targeted in brackets: S = Staff, M = Management.

## 4 Child welfare professionals and child welfare workplace communities

Child welfare social work is demanding work of specialised level for which a university-level degree in social work provides a foundation. Mastering the skills required in the work nonetheless calls for intense support from the workplace community in on-the-job learning following graduation. This includes thorough job orientation, mentoring and other on-the-job learning support during the first few years of working in child welfare. The organisations responsible for child welfare together with the universities in their area should create on-the-job learning models in child welfare social work for new child welfare workers<sup>15</sup>.

Key client work skills in child welfare comprise interaction skills that allow the creation of trusting client relationships. The ability to dialogue both one on one with clients and in group settings is paramount in order to bring about a safe environment where people feel that they are heard. Child welfare workers must be familiar with the rights of the child and capable of putting the child's best interests first at all stages of the work. Workers should be able to embrace diversity and work with people from different cultures. They must be familiar with the principles of good governance and know how to work with transparency relative to clients. They should also be familiar with the legislation and regulations that govern the work. They must be knowledgeable in child development, psychological disorders and trauma, and the factors that put a child's development at risk and those which provide protection. Social work further entails an understanding of the impacts of economic and other inequality on children and families and the ability to cater for this in the work. Child welfare workers must be familiar with the service network, capable of planning their own work and able to operate within extensive networks. Workers must be able to reflect on their own work and the work of their team and to knowingly embrace new learning.<sup>16</sup>

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15 A working group set up by the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare is currently preparing a report on the skill sets required by social workers responsible for a child's affairs and the structures required to support on-the-job learning with an eye to expertise enhancement.

16 Child welfare competence map, University of Turku.

Child welfare workers are in scant supply for a number of reasons. The difficulties in finding qualified candidates for social workers posts and as substitutes, for example, are a serious problem. According to the labour survey conducted by Local Government Employers KT in 2017, municipalities had a labour shortage of 6.4% in child welfare social workers. In social counsellors working in social services and health care, the shortage was 2.5% and in practical nurses, 3.4%. Between 2012 and 2017, municipalities had added 300 new child welfare social workers to their payrolls.

**ASSOCIATION OF FINNISH LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES SURVEY OF CHILD WELFARE IN MUNICIPALITIES 2017:**

- Social work resources were either wholly adequate or quite adequate in 60 % of the municipalities and joint municipal authorities. The greatest labour shortage was seen in substitute social workers. Only one in three municipalities and joint municipal authorities had adequate access to substitute social workers in child welfare.
- Family work resources were wholly or quite adequate in 77 % of the municipality and joint municipal authority respondents while the figure was 52 % in respect of social counselling resources.
- The extent of legal expertise available to social workers was wholly or quite adequate in 37 % of respondent municipalities.

Child welfare is organised differently in different areas. Management and elected officials should ensure that child welfare workers are in a position to perform their work to a high standard of quality. It is up to the individual workers to attend to their personal skills sets and the reinforcement of their professionalism.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health commissioned from Aulikki Kananoja, a former director of social services for the City of Helsinki and *ylisosiaalineuvos* (the highest honorary title in the field of social work), a study on the workload situation in child welfare along with proposals to alleviate the situation<sup>17</sup>. One of the key proposals is the drafting of roadmaps for the transition from municipal to regional child welfare provision along with an updating of child welfare work to cater to current requirements. In her final report, Kananoja proposes that under current circumstances, the case load of individual social workers be capped at 25 clients. However, she also finds that the determination of human resources, including the appropriate case load in the various tasks, falls within the

<sup>17</sup> Kananoja, Aulikki, et al. 2019.



domain of operational management and should not be dictated by legislation. Kananoja's report further proposes that the case load figure be re-evaluated, on the basis of a team approach, once the regional reform has been completed, and finds that the emotional burden caused by the work requires support from the working environment and management. It is also vital that the effectiveness of child welfare services is monitored and assessed.

The human resources in child welfare must allow interactive work and the accomplishment of participation. Municipalities should pay attention to appropriate human resource structures and to sufficient time being allocated to client interaction and the documentation of case work. It is recommended that as a rule, no child welfare worker handle more than 25 clients at any given time under current circumstances, yet it is up to each workplace community to locally determine staffing figures and the volume of time allocated to each client's affairs that best meets the needs of their specific child welfare efforts, taking into account also e.g. regional and substantive factors as well as factors relating to the clients' service needs.

In examining the case load of child welfare workers, regard should also be had to the impacts of changes in legislation. For example, raising the age limit on the right to after-care from 21 to 25<sup>18</sup> increases staffing requirements and necessitates appropriate organisation of the work. The manner of effective work organisation depends greatly on the distances that workers are required to travel and the availability of qualified staff.

Child welfare work can be divided into direct and indirect duties. The use of working hours at the level of the workplace community may be examined for example by allocating an average of 6h/month/child to direct process-related tasks such as investigation of the need for child welfare, client plan, urgent placement, preparations for taking into care, documentation, decision-making, plans, statements, group-specific client work or work with partners, while an adequate number of hours with the social worker and other team members involved in working with the child and those close to the child must be set aside at the active stage of the work. The number of hours required for client cases can vary greatly depending on the challenges and demands of each individual case.

A child's situation escalating into crisis to the extent that child welfare support is required often warrants intensive work with the child and the family. Child welfare work must be capable of being organised so as to allow the work to commence quickly upon receipt of the child welfare notification and the associated initial contact. The investigation into the child's situation and the need for child welfare must be started but at the same time

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18 The amendment of the Child Welfare Act concerning the age limit for after-care was passed by Parliament in March 2019. The extension of the after-care obligation is a wholly new duty imposed on the municipalities and one that calls for additional resourcing (100 % funding).

adequate support should be provided without delay to the child and the family. In order to prepare a plan for the work, a joint appointment for the child and the family should be scheduled without delay to discuss the situation and outline the plan. During the initial weeks and months of new client relationships, child welfare workers should be able to put in intensive effort in order to stabilise the child's circumstances and to allow a good working relationship to be created between the worker and the clients. 'Intensive' in this context may refer to several appointments per week at the very early stages, followed by weekly or bi-weekly appointments. Appointments may need to be scheduled for the child and the family to meet with various members of the team and the network. Throughout the process, one on one meetings with the child must also take place.

Human resourcing must thus allow intensive, relationship-based work of high quality that also accomplishes rights-reinforcing and diligent work as an authority. Flexibility in the case load of individual social workers can be created by organising the work in the form of teamwork. When the entire team is familiar with the child and the family, peak loads can be evened out by allocating responsibility for supporting the child and the family flexibly to different members of the team and the network.

Besides direct work with clients, human resourcing must also take into account the process-related duties of social workers, such as investigating the need for child welfare, updating client plans, making preparations for urgent placement and taking into care as well as other duties relating to decision-making and the role of child welfare worker as an official.

#### **CHILD WELFARE CO-CREATION FACILITY**

The child welfare co-creation facility is a network built jointly by multiple actors as part of the LAPE programme to address child and family services in the interests of bringing together professionals and knowledge in child welfare and social welfare from across the country. The mission of the facility is to produce nationally cohesive principles and operating models for key child welfare sectors in a coordinated manner. The network is committed to the research-based development of child welfare practices and principles and to the participation of clients and collaboration with experts by experience. The parties invited to join in the co-creation facility, which is coordinated by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, include child welfare management and developers, the Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, the centres of expertise and support<sup>19</sup>, the network of centres of excellence on social welfare, NGOs, universities and other higher education institutions, organisations coordinating expert by experience activities, child welfare professionals, researchers and representatives of partners from other sectors of social welfare, health care and education.

<sup>19</sup> For more information about centres of expertise and support, please see Ministry of Social Affairs and Health report 2019:30 (in Finnish only)

The co-creation facility will focus on the development of specialised-level services but also seeks to integrate the development of basic and specialised-level services. Operating under the guidance of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the co-creation facility will outline national policies, principles and practices to steer the day-to-day efforts of child welfare.

The desired benefit is to harmonise work practices in open care and substitute care in child welfare, and systematically to ensure the participation of clients in the development of child welfare and of social welfare for children, young people and families. The co-creation facility is intended to reinforce the systemic approach as the basic orientation to child welfare social work. In the co-creation approach, professional and substantive development are firmly integrated with the legal foundation. The development brings together research data, the expertise of professionals and the experience-based knowledge of clients. Fragmented and disparate local development efforts are gathered into a nationally coordinated entity to reduce overlaps and waste in development work. The efforts will result in a shared understanding of the principles of effective, high-quality work. The special characteristics of child welfare work will be drawn with greater clarity, which will facilitate their communication outside the field as well. The operating model will be linked to guidance provided via the Handbook on Child Welfare.

Child welfare workplace communities also need to reflect on their own activities. It is important for the community and the workers to pause from time to time and ask themselves how their actions are affecting the experiences and access to assistance of the children and families they serve. Workplace communities must have in place structures that make it possible for such pause to be taken. In child welfare work, it is vital for workers constantly to contemplate their own experiences and those of others, to challenge their own beliefs, and to develop new ways of working and thinking.

The requirement of reflective expertise and the mandate of ongoing on-the-job learning apply not only to individual workers but also to entire workplace communities in child welfare and to child welfare services as an organisation. Reflective processes in the workplace promote regeneration in the work and reinforcement of expertise, and also foster the meaningfulness of the work. Child and family specific assessments as well as other child welfare efforts must be examined within the context of the wider organisation. The child welfare process of individual children is affected by the internal policies and guidelines of workplace communities and organisations as well as by their working methods and procedures.

Critical self-assessment should be carried out at the team level as well. Teams accumulate collective professional knowledge that to a significant extent guides the work of individual workers. Although at its best, teamwork can markedly enhance the quality of the work and streamline the processing of child welfare cases, working practices guided to an excessive extent by established ways of thinking and working may well take root

in teams. The shared professional reflection of the team's work helps workers and the workplace community reinforce their professionalism and contemplate their personal motivations for their work. A key aspect of quality assurance in child welfare is attention to the sufficient expertise and work counselling of child welfare workers and management alike. Work counselling provides the organisational framework for individual and collective reflection and also supports knowledge-based expertise in child welfare work.

It is up to the child welfare organisations to ensure that the management of client information conforms with legislation, is effectively organised and provides support for the work. Attention should be paid to documentation and the documentation skills of workers should be reinforced. The procedures for recording information in the case files should be agreed on a local basis. The currency and correctness of documentation is also vital in terms of knowledge-based management. In order to assess the resource requirements and attend to the organisation of the work and support to the workers, management must have access to a child welfare client case register that is based on up-to-date documentation. In practice, this means that the start and also the end of child welfare client relationships must be recorded in the child welfare client register in a timely fashion.

Under section 34 of the Social Welfare Act, a client relationship ends when an entry of no need to provide social welfare is made in the social welfare client file. This provision may also be applied in child welfare such that the child welfare client relationship must end when there is no longer any need to provide child welfare support measures and when planned and targeted child welfare work comes to an end. In terms of the client's legal protection as well, it is important for the ending of client relationships to be recorded in the client register and also notified to the client either verbally or in writing. Child welfare clients should never be assigned a status of 'situation tracking only'. Child welfare work is by nature active and goal-oriented work towards effecting change and it is based on a client plan prepared together with the family.

The transparency of child welfare work, the currency of documentation and client inclusion could be materially enhanced if child welfare workers had at their disposal mobile devices on which to prepare case entries and plans together with clients during e.g. home visits and appointments.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

All workers have the opportunity to contribute to the development of their work and also to take part in any work-related research and development networks. (S, M<sup>20</sup>)

The expertise required in child welfare work is clearly defined and systematic expertise support measures are put in place, especially in respect of workers who are only at the start of their career in child welfare. (M)

The division of duties among workers is further developed, for example between practical nurses, social counsellors and social workers. (S, M)

Management ensure that in addition to professional social work skills, the work organisation has access to legal, psychological, psychiatric and pedagogical expertise. (M)

The basic premise in organising child welfare work is for each child welfare social worker to handle a maximum case load of 25 clients. Case loads per worker are nonetheless affected by regional and substantive factors, and factors relating to the client's service needs, the availability of other resources and resource needs arising from changes in legislation, such as the extension of after-care until the age of 25 instead of 21. Flexibility in the case loads of individual workers can be supplied by organising the work in the form of teamwork. (M)

When developing the work, the negative effects on clients caused by worker turnover are minimised. One of the ways to achieve this is to ensure that there is one worker who stays with the client throughout all the various stages of the child welfare process. (M)

Instead of isolated training courses, the focus in the continuing education and work development of child welfare workers is on on-the-job counselling and instruction. (M)

Work counselling is provided for those engaged in client work. (M)

Child welfare workers are given the opportunity to become child welfare work mentors and to mentor their colleagues in their own or in another work organisation (S, M).

Workers and workplace communities conduct assessments of their own work and make use of research data. (S, M)

Documentation is prioritised. The documentation skills of workers are reinforced and local practices are agreed. (S, M)

The start and end of child welfare client relationships shall be recorded in the child's case file in a timely manner and details of these shall be provided to the client either verbally or in writing. (S)

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<sup>20</sup> The Recommendation indicates the party at whom the recommendation is targeted in brackets: S = Staff, M = Management.

## 5 Assessment during client relationship

The essential duty in the assessment of children and families is the early identification of their need for support so that support can be provided at the right time and to the right extent. Assessment is often a part of the initial stages of a client relationship. The manner in which the assessment is carried out is thus also relevant to the trust created between worker and client. The assessment should be carried out in a manner that in and of itself supports and reinforces the wellbeing of the child and parenting within the family.

During the assessment, every effort is made to protect the child from all risks to development and wellbeing, from violence and from maltreatment. The viewpoint of the rights of the child also entails considering the child to be an active participant in the assessment. The child has the right to obtain information, to express opinions and to be heard. However, the child also has the right to decline to take part in the assessment.

The key obstacle to assessments of high quality is time pressure arising from excessive workloads. A case load of too many clients combined with the time limits imposed for statutory processes may result in systematic assessment error within the organisation, when 'fast-track practices' aimed at workload management are adopted e.g. in the processing of child welfare notifications or in assessments of the child's situation.

Assessments in child welfare work are goal-oriented and supportive. The fact that an assessment is being carried out in a child's case must not interrupt the support and health care services received by the child and the family, nor prevent their commencement. The premise is for an assessment in accordance with the Social Welfare Act to be conducted of the family, and child welfare is involved in this process whenever a need for child welfare is judged to exist.<sup>21</sup> An investigation of the need for child welfare may also be launched directly as its own process. The scope of the investigation into the need for child welfare is determined according to the client's situation. If the investigation results in a child welfare client relationship, the assessment of the situation of the child and the parents is continued at the various stages of the child welfare process.

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<sup>21</sup> Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare THL Guideline 4/2018

Assessments conducted while a child and a family are clients of child welfare shall ascertain the circumstances of the child and the family. It is also important to determine the kinds of support the child and the family feel they are in need of and the kinds of services they are capable of accepting. The child and those close to the child should be given the opportunity to voice their opinions as to their situation and their need for support and to determine objectives for the work. A jointly conducted assessment provides the foundation for client plans to which families are capable of committing. As the client relationship progresses, a vital aspect in assessment is to examine, together with the child and those close to the child, the impact of the support and services provided, and to gauge whether they feel these have been beneficial.

Since children and families often have multi-dimensional needs for support, one of the aims of assessment is also to clarify, already at the outset of the process, the division of labour and responsibility among the various actors as well as the cooperation between them. Assessments carried out together with the child and family along with their networks should result in a mutually prepared client plan and the systematic implementation of the forms of support. Assessments should also ensure that clients experience the service provision as ongoing and continuous. Overlapping and isolated assessments for the various services should be avoided.

Assessments require shared tools, for example a common frame of reference that helps both the child and the family as well as the various professionals to grasp the matters that are to be addressed and the reasons for their consideration. The manner of working together on assessments must be agreed in child and family services with the support of management. A common multi-actor assessment framework that broadly caters for the various sectors of the child's wellbeing would be ideal because it helps the different actors identify their particular roles in the assessment. A common framework serves the various professionals as a shared tool and platform supplemented by the assessments/ investigations carried out by the actors. A common assessment framework also enables the development of online tools, e.g. to allow clients to carry out self-assessments.

The comprehensiveness of the assessment requires the work and the construction of knowledge to be guided by a holistic perception of the person. The wellbeing of the child and the family is considered to consist of different sectors that are examined as a whole. When the provision of support necessitates the acquisition of further in-depth information about a given sector of the wellbeing of the child or family as the client relationship progresses or when changes take place in the situation of the child or family, the comprehensive assessment must be supplemented or elaborated upon in this respect. Assessments are a success when they deliver new information and understanding about the family's situation to the family members and workers alike and they are in a position to deliberate together on the tools that might provide the family with the requisite support.

A child- and family-oriented approach requires equal knowledge on the part of all involved in the assessment. The child's personal knowledge and experiences, thoughts and wishes stand at the core of assessments in child welfare. A child-oriented approach means engaging the child, accumulating information with the child and about the child, and reflecting on and interpreting the information obtained in a shared manner. All encounters relating to assessment must reinforce the child's sense of safety and security, trust and respect. Working methods and e.g. appointments and discussions must be designed with the child in mind. The parents play a key role when assessing the situation of the child and the family and when determining aims, support and services

Assessment principles based on relationships and dialogue mean that assessments strive to uncover the person's genuine personal experience of their own everyday lives and the things they live with. The basic premise is the idea that only truly getting to know a person can lead to 'correct identification'. Working with children should always start out from positive identification, seeking to establish the child's personality, attributes and values. The child should never be approached in a problem-seeking manner in assessments. Instead of striving for what is 'normal', diversity should be respected and resources identified. When looking for solutions, the focus should be on discovering the resources of the child and the family and locating support for them with the help of those with whom they come into contact on a daily basis.<sup>22</sup>

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessing a client's situation is an integral part of the child welfare client process at its various stages and assessments are carried out subject to official liability. (M<sup>23</sup>)

The assessment involves engagement of the child/young person and their parents to gauge their capacity to accept support so that support can be provided in an appropriate manner. (S)

The assessment investigates the overall situation of the child/young person, allowing the interested parties to understand why an assessment is being conducted, what is being assessed and how the assessment will be carried out. (S, M)

<sup>23</sup> The Recommendation indicates the party at whom the recommendation is targeted in brackets: S = Staff, M = Management.

<sup>22</sup> Hanna Tulensalo, Kirsti Kumpulainen and Marjatta Kekkonen (2016) Monitoimijainen arviointi [Multi-actor assessment]. In the book Erytys- ja vaativan tason palvelujen työpajaprosessin raportit [Specialised and demanding level services workshop process reports] Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare THL Working Papers 26/2017.



## 6 Quality criteria for substitute care

The practical implementation of social services shall be lawful, safe and of such quality that the needs of the children can be satisfied and the objectives set for substitute care can be achieved. The quality criteria for substitute care are partly based on provisions on fundamental and human rights and on national legislation that governs child welfare. Owing to this basis, some of the criteria are thus binding in nature. In addition, the criteria involve research-based recommendations on the organisation and provision of high-quality substitute care. The chapter starts out with a review of the key rights of children in substitute care while the criteria themselves contain footnotes to denote items based on other binding regulation.

The viewpoint of the child was taken front and centre in determining the criteria in order to establish the aspects of high-quality substitute care as perceived by the child. Totalling twelve, the criteria are presented process-wise starting from choice of form and place of substitute care, child's arrival at substitute care place, child's everyday life at substitute care place, and removal from and termination of substitute care. A criterion to govern the systematic nature and documentation of substitute care has also been included.

The actors concerned are divided into the following groups: social worker responsible for child's affairs, contracted family carer, party responsible for provision of support to family carer, family carers at professional foster home, worker and dedicated carer/councillor at child welfare institution, institutional service provider and person responsible for the unit, and municipality/joint municipal authority. Owing to the division, the criteria focus on guaranteeing the wellbeing of the individual despite living and growing up in a group of children and a community. The quality criteria for substitute care are presented in Appendix 2.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In the organisation, procurement, provision and supervision of substitute care the various actors shall have regard to all of the quality criteria for substitute care. (S, M)

## 7 Supervision of substitute care

The LAPE programme to address child and family services has prepared a substitute care supervision model<sup>24</sup> which is presented in summarised form in Appendix 3. The model consists of an operating model for substitute care guidance and supervision that is child-oriented and based on the rights of the child. The purpose of the model is to clarify and harmonise current policies as well as the roles and division of responsibilities of the various guidance and supervision actors. The model distinguishes between supervision of substitute care places and child-specific supervision, and caters for the particular characteristics of each specific form of substitute care. The model aims at strengthening the means for placed children and young people to get their needs heard within their substitute care community and also at providing stronger child-friendly legal remedies.

In 2019, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, with funding from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, will launch a research and development project tasked with studying the experiences and treatment of placed children, especially from the perspective of the factors that support and enhance the wellbeing of the children. A second task for the project is to examine factors at various levels that make it easier or more difficult to address shortcomings. A third task is to reinforce and build on ways to address and remedy shortcomings. The project aims to effect change in the manners and structures of consulting children and young people at all levels and thus it aims to influence practices, i.e. to systematically strengthen and enhance the accomplishment of child participation and child consultation in social welfare practices (supervision). Support and guidance are included within the reinforcement of quality and the monitoring of the delivery of quality (control) as a positive dimension of supervision.

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24 Hoikkala, Susanna; Kojo, Raija; Tervo, Jaana; Aaltonen, Teija (2017) Sijaishuollon ohjauksen ja valvonnan malli [Model for guidance and supervision of substitute care].

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The supervision of substitute care must be developed in the municipalities/counties taking into account the prepared supervision model and applying it in the supervision. (S, M)<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The Recommendation indicates the party at whom the recommendation is targeted in brackets:  
S = Staff, M = Management.

## 8 Monitoring and evaluation of Quality Recommendation implementation

In addition to the quality recommendations described above, it is recommended that the plan for the wellbeing of children and young people referred to in section 12 of the Child Welfare Act would describe child welfare quality criteria used by the municipality and qualitative targets for monitoring and developing child welfare. The online wellbeing report and the child impact assessment also give the municipalities concrete tools for evaluating the implementation of child welfare quality.

The implementation of this national Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare is monitored and evaluated nationwide in the context of the child welfare co-creation process and the updating of the Handbook of Child Welfare. This Quality Recommendation will be revised as necessary.

## Key concepts

### Social work with adults

Social work with adults refers to social work targeted at adults that focuses on the individual consequences of such problems as everyday life skills, poverty/subsistence problems, substance abuse and mental health problems, social exclusion and unemployment.

### Client

A child welfare client is a child/young person and their parents whose need for services is being investigated and to whom child welfare services are offered.

### Support in open care

The purpose of support in open care is to promote and support the child's development and to support and enhance the parenting skills and opportunities of the parents, custodians and persons responsible for the child's care and upbringing (section 34 of the Child Welfare Act).

### Human dignity

Human dignity is the foundation of human rights. In the Quality Recommendation, human dignity means that each human being is valuable in their own right.

### Management

Management refers to the local council, committees and top-level public servants.

## Quality

Quality refers to the ability of services to respond to the clients' assessed service needs systematically, effectively, in compliance with regulations and cost-effectively. A high-quality service maintains or improves the client's functional capacity and wellbeing.

## Child

A child in the Quality Recommendation refers to a person under the age of 18.

## Child's best interests

The aim of complying with a child's best interests is to implement all rights contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to ensure the child's comprehensive wellbeing. A child's best interests are specified in concrete terms in section 4 of the Child Welfare Act, which is discussed in Chapter 2 of the Recommendation.

## Child welfare

Under the Child Welfare Act, child-specific and family-specific child welfare consists of an investigation of the need for child welfare measures, a client plan and the provision of support in open care (non-residential care). Child-specific and family-specific child welfare also includes emergency placement of a child and taking a child into care, as well as substitute care and after-care related to these.

## Child welfare institution

The Child Welfare Act (section 57) defines child welfare institutions as children's homes, residential schools and other comparable child welfare institutions.

## Investigation of the need for child welfare measures

An investigation of the need for child welfare measures contains an assessment of the circumstances in which the child is being brought up, and of the prospects for the custodians or other persons who are at that time responsible for the child's care and upbringing to see to this care and upbringing, as well as of the need for child welfare measures (section 27 of the Child Welfare Act). The investigation will be conducted at an extent necessitated by the circumstances of the case in question.

## Network of persons close to the child

Network of persons close to the child refers to all those people who are involved – or who could be involved – in supporting the child and their care and upbringing.

## Young person

In the Quality Recommendation, a young person refers to a person aged 18–24 (entitled to child welfare after-care services).

## Services

In the Quality Recommendation, services refer to the services that child welfare can offer to a client.

## Fundamental rights

The Constitution of Finland (731/1999) defines the fundamental rights whose implementation the state must safeguard for the citizens. Fundamental rights include:

- equality,
- the right to life, personal liberty and integrity,
- the principle of legality in criminal cases,

- the freedom of movement,
- the right to privacy,
- the freedom of religion and conscience,
- the freedom of expression and right of access to information,
- the freedom of assembly and association,
- electoral and participatory rights,
- protection of property,
- educational rights,
- the right to one's language and culture,
- the right to work and the freedom to engage in commercial activity,
- the right to social security,
- responsibility for the environment, and
- protection under law.

## Family care

Family care means the provision of care or other part-time or full-time supervision in the private home of a family carer or in the home of the person cared for (Family Care Act 263/2015, section 3). Professional family care means family care provided in a professional foster home on the basis of a license referred to in section 7 of the Act on Private Social Services (Family Care Act 263/2015).

## Secrecy

Under the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999), official documents shall be in the public domain, unless specifically otherwise provided in an Act. The Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients (812/2000) specifies that any information gathered in child welfare provision on a client of social welfare or other private individual must be kept secret. Secrecy includes the secrecy of documents, duty of non-disclosure and prohibition of exploitation.

## Substitute care

Under the Child Welfare Act (section 49), substitute care means arranging the care and upbringing of a child that has been taken into care, placed urgently or placed on the basis of an interlocutory order referred to in section 83 of the Act away from the child's own home.



# Appendices

1. Assessment framework
2. Quality criteria for substitute care
3. Substitute care supervision model in brief
4. Summary of quality recommendations

## Quality Recommendation, Appendix 1 Ethical principles assessment framework

General ethical principle	To be considered in the implementation of child welfare	An example of how I could assess this in my work	My assessment of what the principle means in my work/work organisation
The actors respect their clients' human dignity and fundamental rights	Dignified treatment and protection of privacy of the client are paramount in child welfare. In daily child welfare work, this is reflected in such principles as the equal, non-discriminating and respectful treatment of clients. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is complied with in the activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I do not answer the phone in the presence of a client.</li> <li>- I take care with documents related to client cases to prevent outsiders from seeing them even by accident.</li> <li>- I am familiar with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.</li> </ul>	
The starting point of child welfare is the child's best interests	<p><b>FAIRNESS</b></p> <p>The requirements of good governance, including finding out about different options, providing reasoning and treating clients with respect are highlighted in each phase of client work. In the Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare, fairness refers to implementing all rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as fully as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I justify decisions concerning the child and explain in concrete terms how they are in the best interests of the child.</li> <li>- I make sure that the right of children who are my clients to participate in making decisions that concern them is implemented.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>TRANSPARENCY AND RELIABILITY</b></p> <p>The Convention on the Rights of the Child stresses respect for the parents' responsibility for the child's upbringing. A prerequisite for this, also in child welfare, is transparent and reliable knowledge of the child's developmental level at each age, and the forms of support and services through which the child and the family can receive the support they need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I take into account the age and developmental level of a child who is my client when I explain what child welfare is and what type of support can be provided.</li> <li>- I tell the family about the options available in the matter and explain what can be done next.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>SAFETY</b></p> <p>In child welfare, safety must be taken into consideration in the child's circumstances, human relationships and interaction alike. Most importantly, whether or not the child feels safe should be a consideration in every situation, and their sense of security should be promoted. Safety must also be examined from the perspective of the child's family and the employee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I establish how safe the child feels and how their sense of security could be promoted. I also remember to check that a child in substitute care feels safe.</li> <li>- I encourage children to express their own views.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTIONALITY</b></p> <p>The actions taken by the authorities must be in correct proportion to the goals and objectives of assisting a client. The principle is that official actions are taken at the lowest level that achieves the required impact (principle of least possible intervention).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When making decisions about actions needed in a child welfare case, I consider which measure would produce the requisite impact but interfere with the independence and privacy of the family as little as possible.</li> </ul>	

QUALITY RECOMMENDATION FOR CHILD WELFARE

General ethical principle	To be considered in the implementation of child welfare	An example of how I could assess this in my work	My assessment of what the principle means in my work/work organisation
Interaction	<p>Good interaction includes respect for others. In good encounters with clients, appreciation, humanity and empathy are highlighted. Child welfare professionals must have particular strengths and skills related to interaction and constructive handling of conflicts with the clients - both children and adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I ask for feedback on my interaction skills from other employees and clients.</li> <li>- I strive to improve my interaction skills and capabilities of resolving challenging conflicts.</li> <li>- If interaction with the client is difficult, I do not stop trying.</li> </ul>	
Quality of work of professional staff	<p>Professionals working in services for children and young people must be aware of both their own responsibility for the child's upbringing in their work organisation and their duty to support parenting. They must also understand their responsibility for the work they do in a wider sense to the child, young person, family, their own organisation and society alike. Management must be aware of their responsibility for providing opportunities for high-quality work and supporting the worker.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I take part in continuing education provided by the employer and also in other respects, I actively strive to upgrade my skills.</li> <li>- I follow new studies being completed in my field and make an effort to draw on the results in my work.</li> <li>- I let my supervisor know if I feel that I cannot work to an adequate quality standard and look for solutions to improve the situation.</li> </ul>	
Responsible decisions and a responsible operating culture	<p>Successful work with clients calls for consistent support from the surrounding organisation, immediate supervisors and higher-up management, and political decision-makers alike. Decision-making, development efforts and service provision must stem from the needs of children, young people and families. The impacts of the decisions made must also be described and assessed from the perspective of children, young people and families. The organisations responsible for service provision along with individual workers should inform children, young people and families of the services in a manner that they can comprehend and also collect their experiences and feedback to support development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is vital that reasoning for the decisions made in the case of an individual client is provided, and I thus pay particular attention to it.</li> <li>- I take part in discussions on the division of duties.</li> <li>- I let decision-makers know if the quality of child welfare in my area is poor and give suggestions on how it could be improved.</li> <li>- I propose in my municipality that we could also introduce the tool for assessing impacts on children in decision-making and draw up an online wellbeing report, if one is not being produced already.</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 2 Quality criteria for substitute care

### BACKGROUND

Substitute care must be lawful, safe and of such quality that the needs of the children can be satisfied and the aims of the substitute care achieved. These current quality recommendations for substitute care are based on the provisions on fundamental and human rights, and on national legislation that governs child welfare. In addition to these, the criteria are informed by research data-based recommendations on the organisation and provision of high-quality substitute care. The linchpin of high-quality substitute care is the rights of the child. Finland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and incorporated it into its national legislation in 1991 (Treaty Series 59 and 60/1991). The Convention contains four central general principles on which all other rights guaranteed under the Convention are founded. These general principles are: the best interests of the child (Article 3(1)), the right of the child to express their opinions and have these taken into account (Article 12), non-discrimination (Article 2), and the right of the child to life, survival and development (Article 6). In 2010, the United Nations issued a separate set of Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, the key contents of which have been taken into account in determining the national quality criteria.

### RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN SUBSTITUTE CARE

Substitute care means arranging the care and upbringing of a child that has been taken into care, placed urgently or placed on the basis of an order issued by an administrative court away from the child's own home.<sup>26</sup> A child's substitute care may be arranged in the form of family care, institutional care or in some other way required by the child's needs.<sup>27</sup> A child may be placed temporarily under the care and upbringing of a parent or other custodian.<sup>28</sup> The social worker responsible for the child's affairs is responsible for the child's substitute care being arranged *in accordance with the child's individual needs*. The purpose of substitute care is to safeguard the balanced development and wellbeing of the child in accordance with the child's individual needs and wishes.

Clients have the right to good-quality social welfare and good, non-discriminatory treatment.<sup>29</sup> This requirement shall be taken into account also in the provision of substitute care (in e.g. choice of substitute care place and during substitute care) regardless of the form of substitute care or the identity of the substitute care service provider. Substitute care providers are also required to respect the human and fundamental rights of the child and to comply with national legislation.

<sup>26</sup> Child Welfare Act (417/2007), section 49(1).

<sup>27</sup> Child Welfare Act, section 49(2).

<sup>28</sup> This may be done when the child's return home is being prepared after placement in out-of-home care or when it is otherwise justified in terms of the child's interests for some other reason. Child Welfare Act, section 49(3).

<sup>29</sup> Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients (812/2000), section 4.

Under the UN Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children, placed children in particular shall be ensured:

- Safety and protection against all maltreatment, abuse and deprivation of liberty
- Contact with persons close to the child in accordance with the child's best interests
- Healthy and nutritious food, taking into account the child's religious beliefs
- Health promotion and health care services
- Education
- The right to develop through play and leisure activities, taking into account children with special needs
- Contact with the children and others in the local community
- Satisfying the needs of their religious and spiritual life and other beliefs
- The right to privacy
- Positive, safe and nurturing relationships with carers
- Adequate supervision
- Supervision and parenting consistent with age and developmental level
- Right of access to a person of trust whom the child may freely contact
- Legal remedies
- Life mementoes and keepsakes, e.g. life story books.

### **Best interests of the child**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convention) was ratified in Finland by law in 1991. Under the Convention, all children (persons under the age of 18) are independent individuals with their own rights. In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.<sup>30</sup> The primacy of the child's best interests is binding on all who work with children. The child's best interests shall be assessed *individually* in accordance with the particular circumstances and characteristics of the child concerned. In this assessment, the child's age and developmental level shall be taken into consideration; the more advanced the child, the more weight shall be assigned to the child's views.

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<sup>30</sup> Convention, Article 3(1).

In our national legislation, definitions of the best interests of the child are provided in i.a. the Social Welfare Act and the Child Welfare Act.<sup>31</sup> In child welfare, the best interests of the child shall be weighed in light of the following:

- The child's balanced development and wellbeing and accumulation of necessary skills and knowledge
- Close and continuing human relationships
- The opportunity to be given understanding and affection, as well as supervision and care that accord with the child's age and level of development
- An education consistent with the child's abilities and wishes
- A safe environment in which to grow up
- Physical and mental integrity
- Becoming independent and a sense of responsibility in growing up
- The child's opportunity to participate and influence their own matters
- The child's right to respect for their own linguistic, cultural and religious background.

Particular attention shall be paid to the most vulnerable children, for example children with special needs due to illness or disability, minority children, asylum seekers and children who were victims of abuse or violence.<sup>32</sup>

### **Right of child to care and protection**

All children have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being<sup>33</sup>. Children shall be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect and negligent treatment and maltreatment. The child receiving sufficient care and protection in their biological family shall primarily be supported. When this is insufficient or not in the best interests of the child, substitute care shall be guaranteed.<sup>34</sup>

Under the Act on Child Custody and Right of Access, a child must be ensured good care and upbringing as well as supervision and protection appropriate for their age and stage of development. A child should be brought up in a secure and stimulating environment and receive an education that corresponds to his or her inclinations and wishes. A child, including one in substitute care, have the right to be brought up with understanding

<sup>31</sup> Child Welfare Act, section 4 and Social Welfare Act (1301/2014), section 5.

<sup>32</sup> General comment No.14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art.3, para.1); GRC/C/GC/14.

<sup>33</sup> Convention, Article 3(2).

<sup>34</sup> Convention, Articles 19 and 20; Child Welfare Act, section 2(3).

and affection. A child must not be subdued, corporally punished or treated offensively in any other way.<sup>35</sup> It should also be noted that the Convention prohibits any inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of children.<sup>36</sup>

Social and health care services as the child's needs warrant as well as other support to promote rehabilitation shall be available to children in substitute care. During substitute care, a child has the right to all health care services required by the child. The child also has the right to basic and early education like all other children.<sup>37</sup> Recovery and re-integration shall take place in an environment that fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.<sup>38</sup>

## Participation of the child

The participation of the child and those close to the child in the planning and implementation of substitute care shall be safeguarded. In other words, the child shall take part in making the plans and decisions relating to their life in a manner consistent with their age, developmental level and capacity and with the necessary support measures in place (e.g. assisted decision-making) so that their wishes and best interests are taken into account.

When the age and level of development of a child are such that the child is capable of forming their own views, it is a fundamental right of the child to be allowed freely to express these views in all matters concerning the child. The views shall furthermore be taken into account in a manner consistent with the age and developmental level of the child. In particular, the child shall be afforded the opportunity to be heard in any legal and administrative proceedings concerning them. Under the Constitution of Finland, children shall be treated equally and as individuals and they shall be allowed to influence matters pertaining to themselves to a degree corresponding to their level of development.<sup>39</sup>

The right of a child in substitute care to participate is binding on i.a. municipal social workers, child welfare institution staff and family carers. The right freely to express opinions means that the child may also decline to participate and express opinions. The child may not be pressured or subjected to undue influence. The freedom of expression of opinions requires the setting for hearing children to be safe and the treatment of the

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35 Act on Child Custody and Right of Access (361/1983), 1(2–3); Child Welfare Act, section 4a. The Act on Amending the Act on Child Custody and Right of Access (190/2019) will enter into force on 1 December 2019.

36 Convention, Article 37(1).

37 Child Welfare Act, section 15; Health Care Act (1326/2010), section 69(1); Child Welfare Act, section 52a.

38 Convention, Article 39, and General comment No. 13 (2011): The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence.

39 Convention, Article 12; Constitution, section 6(3).

child to be respectful. The determination of the child's opinion certainly can entail no harm to the child. The right to make independent decisions is only the strongest form of participation.<sup>40</sup>

Children shall be guaranteed the right to participate in their own affairs individually and in groups.<sup>41</sup> For example, it is recommended that institutions have in place structures to support participation, that children could take part in the drafting and review of self-monitoring plans, and that there would be peer groups that could also contribute to the supervision of substitute care places. Municipalities should consult children and young people in the development of child welfare services and in assessments of the quality of such services.<sup>42</sup>

Child welfare institutions must prepare a plan for good treatment and children may take part in the preparation of the plan if they so desire. The plan shall include the manner in which the children were consulted in the preparation and assessment of the plan, and the plan shall be reviewed together with all children. (Child Welfare Act, section 61b(3).)

### **Right of the child to information and determination of the child's views**

Whenever the need for child welfare is investigated, a decision concerning a child or young person is made, or child welfare is implemented, the child or young person concerned must be provided information about their case. The child must be given the opportunity to express their opinion in the case. A child in substitute care has the right to one on one meetings with their social worker or other child welfare worker in order to discuss their affairs.<sup>43</sup>

Particular attention to the opinions and wishes of the child or young person shall moreover be paid in accordance with the age and level of development of the child or young person.<sup>44</sup> In other words, the right to participate is the right of a child and young person regardless of their age. The older the child, the more weight is to be accorded to their views.

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40 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General comment No. 12 (2009): The right of the child to be heard, paras 22–25. CRC/C/GC/12.

41 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General comment no. 12 (2009) Right of the child to be heard, para 10. CRC/C/ GC/12.

42 Hoikkala, et al. Sijaishuollon ohjauksen ja valvonnan malli. [Substitute care guidance and supervision model] Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare THL Working Papers 19/2017, p. 31–33.

43 Child Welfare Act, sections 5 and 53.

44 Child Welfare Act, sections 5 and 20(1).



The view of the child shall be determined with sensitivity, however, and in a way that does not put undue strain on the relationship between the child and the child's parents or others close to the child. The determination of the child's view is thus the rule, but exceptions can be made if such determination would jeopardise the child's health or development or if it is otherwise manifestly unnecessary.<sup>45</sup>

As a rule, the child is thus entitled to receive information about their case, but in the course of determining the child's views and hearing the child, the child may not be provided with information that would endanger the child's development or would be contrary to another very important private interest of the child.<sup>46</sup> A child is also entitled to information pertaining to themselves contained in an official document pursuant to section 12 of the Act on the Openness of Government Activities unless restricted on the grounds laid down in section 11 of the same Act (for example, the child's best interests being endangered may constitute grounds not to disclose information to the child)<sup>47</sup>.

The social worker shall provide the child with information about the situation of the child and the family as well as the reasons why the child was taken into care and placed in care, in a manner that takes into account the age and developmental level of the child<sup>48</sup>. The information provided shall specify i.a. the manner in which contact between the child and those close to the child is to be arranged and the requirements and potential for the reunification of the family. The information shall be given in such a way that the child comprehends both the substance and the significance of it and the child's trust in and affection for the parents is not undermined.

## Hearing as provided in the Administrative Procedure Act

In child welfare, a child aged 12 or older may be consulted in their own child welfare case alongside their custodian or other lawful representative.<sup>49</sup> The child may request services or object to decisions concerning the child. The child has the right to access documents pertaining to them and shall be heard in a verifiable manner in accordance with section 34 of the Administrative Procedure Act when any decisions are made.<sup>50</sup> The child shall also be served with copies of the decisions made and informed of the possibilities of appeal.

45 Child Welfare Act, section 20(1 and 3); more detail in the Handbook of Child Welfare (in Finnish only) <https://thl.fi/fi/web/lastensuojelun-kasikirja/ty-oprosessi/huostaanotto/huostaanoton-valmistelu/lapsen-mielipiteen-selvittaminen> and <https://thl.fi/fi/web/lasten-suojelun-kasikirja/tyoprosessi/lasten-osallisuus>

46 Child Welfare Act, section 20(4).

47 <https://thl.fi/fi/web/lastensuojelun-kasikirja/toimijat-tyon-tuki-hallinto/hallinto/tiedon-hankkiminen-lastensuojelun-tarpeisiin-ja-sen-luovuttaminen/tietojen-antaminen#Asianosaisen%20ja%20muun%20asiaan%20osallisen%20oikeus%20saada%20tieto%20asiakirjasta> (in Finnish only); text by Mirjam Araneva, LL.M. with bench training.

48 Child Welfare Act, section 53.

49 Child Welfare Act, section 20(2).

50 More information: <https://thl.fi/fi/web/lastensuojelun-kasikirja/toimijat-tyon-tuki-hallinto/hallinto/tiedon-hankkiminen-lastensuojelun-tarpeisiin-ja-sen-luovuttaminen/hallintolain-34-n-mukaisesta-kuulemisesta>. (in Finnish only); text by Mirjam Araneva, LL.M. with bench training.

Even in substitute care, **the views of children** of all ages **shall thus be determined**. A child aged 12 or older **shall be heard in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act** in the context of i.a. the following in relation to substitute care:

- Decision to take the child into care and place the child in substitute care
- Decision to change the child's substitute care place
- Decision to terminate care
- Restriction of contact
- Restriction of freedom of movement
- Isolation
- Special care.

A child aged 12 or older may also independently lodge an appeal against the said decisions with an administrative court.<sup>51</sup>

### Right of child to close relationships and continuity

One of the most important rights of the child in substitute care is the right to maintain contact with parents and others close to the child.<sup>52</sup> This is a right of the child and it can only be restricted in the situations referred to in law and when it is consistent with the child's best interests.<sup>53</sup>

*When a child is placed in alternative care, contact with his/her family, as well as with other persons close to him or her, such as friends, neighbours and previous carers, should be encouraged and facilitated, in keeping with the child's protection and best interests. The child should have access to information on the situation of his/her family members in the absence of contact with them. (UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, Article 81).*

The right of the child to maintain contact with those close to them involves the obligation to assess, on a regular basis, the possibility of family reunification. Under the Child Welfare Act, the aim of reuniting the family shall be taken into account in a manner consistent with *the child's best interests* when preparing and reviewing the child's substitute care client

51 Child Welfare Act, chapter 15. More information: <https://thl.fi/fi/web/lastensuojelun-kasikirja/toimijat-tyon-tuki-hallinto/hallinto/maatok-set-sosiaalitoimessa-ja-hakemusmenettely>. The new Administrative Judicial Procedure Act 808/2019, which repeals Administrative Judicial Procedure Act 586/1996), was passed by Parliament on 19 February 2019. The entry into force (1 January 2020) of the new Act will make appeal of a decision by an administrative court to the Supreme Administrative Court subject to leave.

52 E.g. Child Welfare Act, sections 4(3) and 50, and Convention, Article 9(3).

53 Child Welfare Act, section 62.

plan. This is further supported by the duty to prepare a separate client plan on support for parenting, unless this is manifestly unnecessary.<sup>54</sup>

During the placement, the social worker responsible for the child's affairs or another child welfare worker and the substitute care place shall engage in cooperation with the child's parents and custodians. This applies in particular to decision-making that concerns the child even when decision-making power rests with the accountable social welfare body.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, a child also has the right to constancy and continuity in circumstances and relationships. This supports the child's wellbeing. Repeated changes of environment jeopardise the child's development and the ability to form attachments. Substitute care places as well must secure an ongoing attachment to a specific carer.<sup>56</sup>

Care shall be terminated even before the child turns 18 when there is no longer any lawful need for being in care and substitute care. Care may not be terminated, however, when termination would clearly be contrary to the child's best interests. Besides other factors impacting on assessment of the child's best interests, regard shall also be had to i.a. the duration of substitute care and the nature of the attachments between the child and the substitute care provider.<sup>57</sup>

Any family reunification should be accomplished in a deliberate and systematic manner. It is recommended that the child move back home gradually, and this is usually also in the child's best interests. It is important to take into account the child's age and level of development as well as the factors that initially led to the child being taken into care.<sup>58</sup>

### **Right to post-placement after-care**

A child is entitled to receive after-care after being placed. The right also applies after open-care placement in cases of single-child placements of uninterrupted duration of six months or more. At the latest, substitute care must terminate when the child turns 18 and the right to after-care extends until the young person turns 25. The social worker is obligated, whenever necessary, to prepare a plan together with the young person outlining the services and support measures available to the young person after the

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54 Child Welfare Act, sections 4(3) and 30(2) (subsection 4 from 1 January 2020); UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, Chapter IV.

55 Child Welfare Act, section 52; Government proposal for a Child Welfare Act and certain related Acts, HE 252/2006.

56 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, Articles 60 and 87.

57 Child Welfare Act, section 47 (1 and 3).

58 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, Article 52.

termination of after-care.<sup>59</sup> The purpose of after-care is to make it easier for the child or young person to re-integrate from substitute care and to promote the young person's independence. All social and health care services that can be arranged on the basis of individual need are available in after-care. The duty of after-care also includes support to the parents or other persons responsible for the upbringing of the child or young person, especially in cases of the child or young person returning home after the termination of substitute care. Support may consist of e.g. open care services provided to the parents, or financial assistance.<sup>60</sup> The support offered to the young person, their parents and the persons responsible for upbringing shall be recorded in the after-care client plan.<sup>61</sup>

Young people receiving after-care shall without delay be provided with sufficient financial support and housing. These must be guaranteed whenever insufficient financial means and unacceptable or lack of housing constitute a material hindrance to the rehabilitation of the child or young person.<sup>62</sup>

The authorities and substitute care service providers should have in place clear policies on how to support the child or young person post-placement. In addition, whenever possible a designated person responsible should be appointed to support the young person in living independently.<sup>63</sup> Whenever a child is in substitute care, the child's preparedness for subsequent independent living shall also be taken into account.<sup>64</sup>

## Supervision and legal protection

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the institutions and authorities responsible for the care of children shall conform in particular with regulations concerning safety, health, in the number and suitability of staff as well as adequate supervision of staff. The government is tasked with guaranteeing that compliance with the regulations and the other rights of the child is supervised. Guaranteeing the right of the child in substitute care calls for i.a. a review of legislation and supervision of individual institutions.<sup>65</sup>

The UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children recommend that a register be kept of substitute care service providers, complete with detailed information about the

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59 Child Welfare Act, section 75 and 76. As of 1 January 2020, the right will expire no later than when the young person turns 25.

60 Government proposal for a Child Welfare Act and certain related Acts, HE 252/2006.

61 Child Welfare Act, section 76a.

62 Child Welfare Act, section 76a.

63 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, VII (E).

64 Cf. Act on Child Custody and Right of Access, section 1(3), Child Welfare Act, section 4(2)(5).

65 Convention, Article 3(3); Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child 2011.

operations and finances of the service provider, in the interests of enhancing the potential for substitute care place supervision.

A placed child has the right to have their care, protection and other circumstances relating to the placement subjected to external supervision on a regular basis in addition to self-monitoring. "Care" in this context refers to all activities at the substitute care place that impact on the child's experience. The supervision shall include consultation of the children.<sup>66</sup> The competent supervisory authority is tasked with i.a. hearing the children in its operations, and the authority shall be guaranteed access to the substitute care places.<sup>67</sup>

The municipality that placed the child is tasked with supervising the compliance with law of the placement and the child receiving the requisite services and support measures in the placement municipality during the placement. Regional state administrative agencies shall monitor the operations of child welfare institutions whenever any suspected shortcoming is reported to them and also on their own initiative by means of on-site visits.<sup>68</sup> When supervising, the representative of the regional administrative agency shall provide the child with an opportunity for confidential discussion.

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<sup>66</sup> Convention, Article 25; Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child 2011.

<sup>67</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General comment no. 12 (2009) Right of the child to be heard, para 97. GRC/C/GC/12.

<sup>68</sup> Child Welfare Act, sections 79a and 80.

## Legal protection guarantees for the child

Throughout the duration of substitute care, the social worker responsible for the child's affairs is obligated to ensure that the substitute care place is consistent with the child's best interests. The placing municipality and the responsible social worker in particular are tasked with overseeing that the child's substitute care is accomplished in compliance with the Child Welfare Act and that during the placement, the child receives the requisite services and support measures that the placement municipality is required to arrange.<sup>69</sup>

The social worker responsible for the child's affairs plays a key role in the fulfilment of the child's wellbeing and rights during substitute care. In this work, the client plan for substitute care is a vital tool. The social worker or another child welfare worker shall meet with the child in person at the intervals recorded in the client plan. These meetings shall take place at an adequate frequency.<sup>70</sup> The responsible social worker shall also assist the child or young person in exercising the right of action, refer them to legal aid services when necessary, and in the situations required under law apply for the appointment of a guardian to deputise for a custodian for the child or young person.<sup>71</sup> The municipality is responsible for the adequate resourcing and expertise that allow the social worker to work in a manner that is consistent with the quality criteria. The municipality is also responsible for its own service provision in both family and institutional care, and for the services provided by the service providers contracted by the municipality.

A guardian shall be appointed to deputise for the custodian when the child's custodian is incapable of being impartial or otherwise acting in a manner that is consistent with the child's best interests, or when the designation of a guardian is necessary in order to investigate a case or otherwise to safeguard the child's best interests. The guardian designated to deputise for the custodian is tasked with exercising the child's right of action in respect of those administrative court or social services decisions assigned to the guardian in the child welfare process.<sup>72</sup>

The legal protection of the child shall be understood broadly. Firstly, a child must be informed of their rights in order for them to recognise a rights violation.<sup>73</sup> It should also be borne in mind that children, especially ones who may have been mistreated and neglected, are typically not aware of their rights. They may have grown up in circumstances where they have adopted the role of being ignored and having their needs neglected. A child may not necessarily even understand that they should not have been mistreated, or have any understanding of the concept of mistreatment. Therefore professionals shall be aware at hearings of the child's previous life experience.

69 Child Welfare Act, section 79(1).

70 Child Welfare Act, section 29(1); Child Welfare Act, section 30(1 and 3).

71 Child Welfare Act, section 24(1).

72 General comment no. 12, paras 36–37; UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, CRC Article 12; Child Welfare Act, section 22.

73 Cf. Child Welfare Act, section 5 and Constitution, section 6.

The child shall be aware of whom they may contact in the event of a rights violation.<sup>74</sup> The legal remedies available should be easily accessible for the child so as to ensure that they can de facto have the violation of their rights investigated by an independent third party.

The child shall without delay be informed of the substance and reasons of child welfare decisions and measures. In relation to this, the child shall be informed of the available appeal procedures and legal remedies. The information shall be given in a manner that is understandable and accessible to the child. Besides the age of the child, different methods of communication shall also be taken into account. A child welfare institution shall include in its plan for good treatment details on how the children are informed of the possibility to lodge an appeal or file a complaint.<sup>75</sup>

The following is recommended:

- The information is provided in writing complete with contact information. It is particularly important that at all times, the child is aware of the name and contact information of the social worker responsible for their affairs and that the child is able to reach the social worker without delay.
- The duties of the social welfare ombudsman are explained and the contact information for the ombudsman is provided
- Information is generated for the internet in language that is accessible to children
- Advisory hotlines are established
- The child is treated with respect and informed of the progress of the matter in the event of complaints, appeals, objections and other communication
- All matters involving children are processed with all due haste.

## Legal remedies

Every municipality is required to appoint a social welfare ombudsman who is tasked with providing social welfare clients with advice, assisting them in filing objections, informing them of their rights and also in other respects acting to promote and realise the client's rights. The social welfare ombudsman shall also monitor the development of client rights and client status in the municipality and submit an annual report on this to the municipal board.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Cf. General comment no. 12, paras 46–47; cf. also recommendations to Finland issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, paras 14 and 33(d).

<sup>75</sup> Child Welfare Act, sections 32a(1) and 61b(2)(7).

<sup>76</sup> Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients (812/2000), section 24.

Persons unhappy with their treatment in social welfare or with the quality of social welfare may file an objection with the social welfare unit concerned.<sup>77</sup> The custodian or guardian of a child or another person close to the child may also file an objection with the person responsible for the social welfare unit (e.g. director of institution) or with the municipal officeholder directing social services.

A complaint with the regional state administrative agency may be filed by anyone who believes an authority, an employee of an authority or another party carrying out a public administrative duty has acted contrary to law or failed to fulfil an obligation. Complaints on matters of fundamental importance and broad reach or concerning the area of operation of more than one regional state administrative agency or the entire country as well as matters which the regional state administrative agency is disqualified to investigate due to conflict of interest are investigated by Valvira, the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health. Contracted family carers are outside the scope of the supervision by Valvira and the regional state administrative agencies, which includes not only all other substitute care places but also i.a. the actions of the social worker responsible for the child's affairs in relation to e.g. a child placed in a foster family.

The supreme overseers of legality in Finland are the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice, who shall supervise compliance with law and fulfilment of duties on the part of authorities and officials, employees of public bodies and others exercising public authority. In the performance of their duties, they also monitor the realisation of fundamental and human rights.

A complaint with the Ombudsman may be filed by anyone who believes one of the aforementioned supervised bodies to have acted contrary to law or failed to fulfil an obligation in the performance of its duties. Cases may also be taken under consideration on the Ombudsman's own initiative. The Parliamentary Ombudsman is furthermore empowered to conduct audits and make visits in matters within his ambit. Such audits and visits may concern e.g. a child welfare institution or the child welfare services of a municipality.

The Chancellor of Justice is also empowered to consider complaints and conduct audits and make visits in matters falling within his remit, i.a. authorities and institutions. Contracted family care is excluded from the supervision of both bodies but family care may come under supervision through the supervision of the activities of the child welfare authority.

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<sup>77</sup> Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients (812/2000), section 23.



## ABOUT THE QUALITY CRITERIA AND THE TERMS USED THEREIN

The rights of the child in substitute care presented in the foregoing are binding and they have been mainstreamed into all of the criteria, in which reference is additionally made to other legislation. In other respects, the criteria constitute a quality recommendation.

The quality criteria were prepared within the LAPE programme to address children and family services in 2018 under the coordination of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare in close cooperation with the Central Union for Child Welfare and the substitute care experts in the regional LAPE projects. The cooperation involved a broad base of public, private and third sector experts, service providers and experts by experience.

The drafting of the quality criteria drew on the earlier national and international quality recommendations, criteria and standards as well as recommendations prepared by children and young people themselves (including Hyvä perhehoito -työryhmä. Perhehoitolain toimeenpanon tuki. [Working group of good family care. Support in the implementation of the Family Care Act (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2017); Lasten laatusuosituksset perhehoitoon. Tavallista arkea ja kilttejä aikuisia [Children's quality recommendations for family care. Ordinary everyday life and nice grown-ups (Pesäpuu & City of Espoo 2016); Lastensuojelun ympärivuorokautinen hoito ja kasvatus, valtakunnallinen valvontaohjelma 2012–2014 [Round-the-clock care and upbringing in child welfare, national supervisory programme 2012–2014] (Valvira); "Suojele unelmia, vaali toivoa". Nuorten suosituksset lastensuojelun ja sijaishuollon laadun kehittämiseksi ["Protect the dreams, cherish the hope". Young persons's recommendations for enhancing the quality of child welfare and substitute care (Office of the Ombudsman for Children 2012); Laituri criteria (Central Union for Child Welfare 2004) and report on the quality of substitute care (Hoikkala & Lavikainen 2015) published by the Central Union for Child Welfare; publications of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities on the topic of quality (e.g. LapsiARVI criteria Holma 2009); Quality4Children quality standards (2007) and Mikä jälki jää? [What remains after?] manual for after-care (Pukio & Hipp 2016).

The principles of the national Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare have been mainstreamed into the criteria. The focus in setting the criteria was the viewpoint of the child, i.e. the child's perception of substitute care of high quality. The duties of the actors responsible for the provision of substitute care relative to the child and fulfilment of the criteria have also been outlined. The criteria have been arranged to conform to the child welfare process, starting with choice of form and place of substitute care, progressing to the child's arrival at the substitute care place, the child's everyday life there, and the child's removal from a substitute care place and termination of substitute care. A criterion was also defined to cover the systematic nature and documentation of substitute care. The actors are divided into the following groups: social worker responsible for the child's affairs, contracted family carer, party responsible for provision of support to family carer, family carer at professional foster home, worker and dedicated carer/counsellor at child welfare institution, institutional care provider and person responsible for unit, and municipality/joint municipal authority.

The field of family care service provision is diverse and in the criteria, the actors have been divided into groups from the viewpoint of guaranteeing the wellbeing of the child in substitute care. Family carers at professional foster homes have been differentiated from professional foster homes holding an institutional licence granted by a regional state administrative agency. In these criteria, the latter are classified as institutions. The party responsible for provision of support to family carer may be the service provider in contracted family care or the accountable family care employee as provided in the Family Care Act, such as a municipal employee (e.g. social counsellor) or the social worker responsible for the child's affairs. Legal responsibility for the child's wellbeing, placement and approval of family carers nonetheless always remains with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs and with the municipality that contracts the family carer. Reference to a contracted family carer's entire family is made using the term 'foster family' while the term 'family care home' is used with regard to professional foster homes. The terms 'parent' and 'persons close to the child' as appear in the Child Welfare Act have also been used in these criteria.

The responsibilities of the various actors relative to the child are determined relative to the child as an individual. Hence the emphasis in the criteria is on guaranteeing the wellbeing of the individual even when the individual is living and growing up in a community of children. Not all special groups or special issues could be catered for in the criteria and instead the criteria provide a general foundation on which to start building substitute care quality on an individual basis for each child.

Choice of form and place of substitute care	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Foster care			Institutional care		Municipality/joint municipal authority
		Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	
<p><b>Criterion 1</b></p> <p><b>The child is assigned a substitute care place that is consistent with the child's best interests and meets the child's individual needs. The child's siblings shall be placed in the same place unless this is contrary to their best interests.</b></p>	<p>Conducts a thorough assessment of the child's situation, needs and potential duration of placement. Has an examination of the state of health of the child carried out.</p> <p>Maps the child's social network no later than at this stage.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>In cooperation with another social worker, prepares a decision or application on substitute care in compliance with the primacy of the child's best interests. Takes into account primacy of family care as a form of substitute care.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Social worker is responsible for the process for choosing a substitute place of care. Social worker can consult with other parties working with the child and client guidance groups.<sup>24</sup></p> <p>In choosing place of substitute care, pays particular attention to the reasons for taking into care and objectives of substitute care as well as the child's linguistic, cultural and religious background, and the needs of children with disabilities.</p> <p>Ensures the participation of the child, the parents and other concerned parties throughout the process. Provides the child in particular with sufficient information consistent with the child's age and developmental level and encourages the child to express a view and takes this view into account.</p> <p>Takes into account the opportunities for the child and those close to the child to maintain a relationship as well as the physical distance between the home and the place of substitute care.</p> <p>Offers the service provider the requisite information for assessing the potential to satisfy the child's needs and the placement objectives.<sup>3</sup> Enables active and inclusive dialogue among the various parties concerned.</p> <p>Assesses the implementation and monitoring of arrangements towards reuniting the family. Ensures that the parents' client plans are prepared and that support for them is arranged.</p> <p>Ensures that the placement of a child in another municipality is notified to the placement municipality. (Child Welfare Act, section 78)</p>	<p>Carefully assesses personal potential for satisfying the needs of the child to be placed and safeguarding substitute care that is consistent with the child's best interests and the objectives.</p> <p>Offers a place only to a child/young person whose needs the carer is capable of satisfying with the expertise held.</p> <p>In assessments, takes into account the best interests and needs of the other children in the family and their known relationships both within the family and among the child's social network.</p> <p>Ensures that other members of the foster family accept the placed child and that the child is equal with the other members.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Takes part in family reunification work of the placed child.</p>	<p>Responsible for ensuring that the family carer receives adequate and high-quality training for tasks prior to placement.</p> <p>In the manner agreed, assesses together with the social worker the potential of the foster family to satisfy the needs of the child/young person and to achieve the objectives of the placement.</p> <p>Assesses its potential to provide the foster family with support during the placement.</p> <p>Ensures that the social worker is provided with sufficient information about the family carer in support of the placement decision and attends to other duties agreed with the municipality under contract in keeping with the child's best interests.</p> <p>Takes part in family reunification work of the placed child.</p> <p>Takes part in assessing the efforts to reunite the placed child's family (requirements, requisite resources and support).</p>	<p>Carefully assesses personal potential for satisfying the needs of the child to be placed and safeguarding substitute care that is consistent with the child's best interests and the objectives.</p> <p>Offers a place only to a child/young person whose needs the home is capable of satisfying with the expertise held.</p> <p>In assessments, takes into account the best interests and needs of the other children in the family care home and their known relationships both within the family and among the child's social network.</p> <p>Ensures that other members of the foster home accept the placed child and that the child is equal with the other members.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Takes part in assessing the efforts to reunite the placed child's family (requirements, requisite resources and support).</p>	<p>Wherever possible, takes part in assessing the suitability of the substitute care place.</p> <p>Wherever possible, takes part in assessing the best interests and needs of the other children placed at the unit and in assessing the satisfaction of the needs of the child to be placed and best interests in the group of children.</p> <p>Takes part in assessing efforts to reunite the placed child's family.</p>	<p>Carefully assesses potential for satisfying the needs of the child and safeguarding substitute care that is consistent with the child's best interests and the objectives.</p> <p>Offers a place only to a child/young person whose needs the unit is capable of satisfying with the expertise and resources available to it.</p> <p>Ensures that one or more designated carers and/or counsellors are assigned to the child at the child welfare institution.</p> <p>The person responsible for the unit is responsible for assessing the best interests and needs of the other children placed at the unit, in cooperation with staff members, and assesses the fulfilment of the best interests of the child to be placed and needs in the group of children.</p> <p>Takes into account known relationships both within the unit and in the child's social network.</p> <p>Takes part in assessing the efforts to reunite the placed child's family (requirements, requisite resources and support).</p>	<p>Responsible for ensuring that the choice of form and place of substitute care for each child is based on the Child Welfare Act, obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Alternative Care Guidelines.</p> <p>Responsible for the availability of a sufficient number of substitute care places fulfilling the different needs of children and for the flexible use of these. Also ensures sufficient number of places to fulfil special needs, for example for children with disabilities.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that procurement policies support the choice of a place that matches the child's individual needs and ensures service of high quality.</p> <p>Adopts the national child welfare units register that is under development upon its completion.</p> <p>Ensures the quality and adequacy of recruitment, training and support of family carers. Develops and offers training also to professional foster homes.</p> <p>Attends to the harmonisation of family care and institutional care processes and the flexible use of the various forms of substitute care.</p> <p>Organises choice of substitute care place in a manner that caters for the participation of the child and the family in the decision-making.</p> <p>Ensures the seamless cooperation of open care and substitute care and ensures the operating conditions for careful placement preparation. Ensures that client assistance supports the social work process and that social workers have access to the expertise of client assistance.</p> <p>Ensures that substitute care social work has sufficient expertise and that the work has been resourced in a manner that enables child oriented and participatory processes. Attends to sufficient social work support structures.</p> <p>Attends to cooperation between municipalities in situations where children are placed in another municipality.</p> <p>Ensures that the requisite agreements for the provision of healthcare, medical care, education and training for the child and the parents are prepared and ensures effective cooperation in respect of the services and support required by the child and the family.</p> <p>Monitors the implementation of placements and systematically collects follow-up data, promotes improvements to effectiveness and takes action to address any shortcomings detected.</p>

Child's arrival at a substitute care place	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/ counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 2</b></p> <p><b>The child or young person perceives the relocation to the substitute care place to be safe and predictable, and feels welcome there.</b></p>	<p>Attends to seamless and systematic information-sharing and cooperation between the substitute care place in preparing for the child's relocation as well as during and after it.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Prepares the child well for the placement and attends to the systematic nature and safety of the child's relocation.</p> <p>Promotes the child's own preparedness for the relocation in concrete terms (e.g. visit, letter, photograph, video call). The child gets to know the place even before the choice of place or relocation there.<sup>22</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the child knows where they are going, also in cases that have escalated to crisis. A social worker or another adult whom the child knows is present at the child's relocation.</p> <p>Works closely together with the child's parents and others close to the child during the placement process.</p> <p>Ensures that the child has the chance to bring along important personal items and that the child has personal space at the substitute care place.</p>	<p>Takes part in seamless and systematic cooperation relating to the child's relocation between the substitute care place and the social worker/coordinator.</p> <p>Prepares for the arrival of the child/young person (together with all members of the foster family).</p> <p>Creates a safe setting for the child's arrival and supports the child in getting settled in.</p> <p>Provides the child with the opportunity to bond with the foster family and maintains the relationships with others close to the child.</p> <p>Caters for the child's parents and others close to the child in the way agreed with the social worker.</p> <p>Provides each child with their own room.</p> <p>Ensures that the child can decorate their personal space as they choose and bring along important personal items.</p>	<p>Takes part in cooperation between the foster family and the social worker and enables the seamless and systematic nature of the cooperation.</p> <p>Prepares a written policy for the introduction and relocation phase and ensures that it is applied to each child and situation.</p> <p>Supports the creation of a safe setting when the child arrives and settles in.</p> <p>Ensures that each child has their own room.</p> <p>Supports the family carers in ensuring that the child can decorate their personal space as they choose and bring along important personal items.</p>	<p>Takes part in seamless and systematic cooperation relating to the child's relocation between the family care home and the social worker/coordinator.</p> <p>Prepares a written policy for the introduction and relocation phase and ensures that it is applied to each child and situation.</p> <p>Prepares for the arrival of the child/young person (together with all members of the foster home).</p> <p>Creates a safe setting for the child's arrival and supports the child in getting settled in.</p> <p>Provides the child with the opportunity to bond with the foster home and maintains the relationships with those close to the child.</p> <p>Caters for the child's parents and others close to the child in the way agreed with the social worker.</p> <p>Provides each child with their own room.</p> <p>Ensures that the child can decorate their personal space as they choose and bring along important personal items.</p>	<p>Prepares for the arrival of the child/young person.</p> <p>Is familiar with the introduction and relocation phase policy prepared jointly at the unit and implements it in an individual way relative to the needs and situation of each child.</p> <p>Creates a safe setting for the child's arrival.</p> <p>Gets to know the child and introduces the child to the substitute care place and its policies and to the other children there.</p> <p>Caters for the child's individuality and supports the child in e.g. decorating the child's room with attention to the child's personality and needs .</p>	<p>Takes part in seamless and systematic cooperation with the social worker/coordinator.</p> <p>Prepares a written policy for the introduction and relocation phase and ensures that it is applied to each child and situation.</p> <p>Ensures that there is a safe setting for the child's arrival and supports the child in getting settled in.</p> <p>Arranges the work shifts of the designated carer(s) so that they can be on hand to greet the child and provide support to the child upon arrival.</p> <p>Provides each child with their own room.</p> <p>Ensures that the child can decorate their personal space as they choose and bring along important personal items.</p>	<p>Enables the seamless cooperation between social workers and substitute care places and the systematic information-sharing among the various parties within the framework of their regulation.</p> <p>Ensures that all service providers and the municipality have in place a written policy for the introduction and relocation phases within the framework of their regulation.</p> <p>Requires service providers and substitute care places to have their own room available for each child and to allow the child to decorate their personal space as they choose.</p>

Child's everyday life at a substitute care place	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 3</b>  <b>The substitute care place is a safe place for the child to grow up in. The child feels safe at the substitute care place.</b></p>	<p>Has one on one meetings with the child on a regular basis and makes use of the various ways of hearing the child's experiences. Based on the child's experiences, assesses whether the child feels safe. Reinforces the child's faith in the importance of relating experiences. Attends to the realisation of the child's right to personal integrity and privacy in cooperation with the service provider or family carer. Ensures that the child is not being bullied, abused or stigmatised at the substitute care place or outside it.<sup>4</sup> Cooperates with the substitute care place and other parties concerned in cases of unauthorised absence and enables lawful and safe procedures.<sup>23</sup> Works together with the child's biological parents and others close to the child in situations where they support or enable the child's unauthorised absences.</p>	<p>Ensures and attends to the child being safe and feeling safe. Ensures that the child is not being bullied, abused or stigmatised at the substitute care place or outside it in relationships with peers or adults.<sup>4</sup> Reinforces the child's faith in the importance of relating experiences. Attends to the realisation of the child's right to personal integrity and privacy. Acts in a way that sets safe boundaries for the child. Notifies the social worker responsible for the child's affairs (or the duty social worker) of any unauthorised departure from the family or failure to return to the family from agreed errands, and of other unexpected situations. Finds and when necessary collects a child who fails to return to the family care home. Makes sure that the child is welcomed back. Discusses the matter with the child. When necessary, takes part in investigating the matter together with the social worker and other parties concerned.</p>	<p>Provides the family carers with the support and services they require in accordance with the contract concluded with the municipality. Supports the family carers so that they are able to provide the child with a safe environment in which to grow up. Ensures that the family carers have the capabilities to detect and address any instances of bullying or abuse. Supports the family carers so that they have the capabilities to discuss and address the child's experiences and sensitive topics with the child. Supports the family carers so that they have the capabilities to act in a way respectful of the child's right to personal integrity and privacy also in eventual conflict situations. Supports the family carers in responding to unexpected situations.</p>	<p>Ensures and attends to the child being safe and feeling safe. Ensures that the child is not being bullied, abused or stigmatised at the substitute care place or outside it in relationships with peers or adults.<sup>4</sup> Reinforces the child's faith in the importance of relating experiences. Attends to the realisation of the child's right to personal integrity and privacy. Acts in a way that gives the child a set of safe boundaries. Notifies the social worker responsible for the child's affairs (or the duty social worker) of any unauthorised departure from the institution or failure to return to the institution from agreed errands, and of other unexpected situations. Finds and when necessary collects a child who fails to return to the foster home. Makes sure that the child is welcomed back. Discusses the matter with the child. When necessary, takes part in investigating the matter together with the social worker and other parties concerned.</p>	<p>Ensures and attends to the child being safe and feeling safe. Ensures that the child is not being bullied, abused or stigmatised at the substitute care place or outside it in relationships with peers or adults.<sup>4</sup> Reinforces the child's faith in the importance of relating experiences. Attends to the realisation of the child's right to personal integrity and privacy. Acts in a way that gives the child a set of safe boundaries. Notifies the social worker responsible for the child's affairs (or the duty social worker) of any unauthorised departure from the institution or failure to return to the institution from agreed errands, and of other unexpected situations. Finds and when necessary collects a child who fails to return to the institution. Makes sure that the child is welcomed back. Discusses the matter with the child. When necessary, takes part in investigating the matter together with the social worker and other parties concerned.</p>	<p>Ensures that the staff have sufficient professional skills to respond to the needs of the placed children. Attends to background checks on employees. Attends to employee retention and work counselling for employees, and supports continuing education. Responsible for ensuring that the culture and practices of the unit are lawful and respectful of the rights of the child. Responsible for ensuring that the substitute care place has in place a written safety plan and attends to the job orientation and preparedness to act of employees. Ensures a living environment that is protective, caring, encouraging and inclusive for the child. Ensures and attends to the realisation of the child's right to personal integrity and privacy at the unit. Ensures that the social worker responsible for the child's affairs (or the duty social worker) is notified immediately of a child's unauthorised departure or failure to return from agreed errands, and of other unexpected situations. Prepares written instructions for dealing with unauthorised absences. Finds and when necessary collects a child who fails to return or otherwise arranges for the child's safe return. Makes sure that the child is welcomed back to the substitute care place. Ensures that the incident is addressed with child and with the social worker and other parties concerned.</p>	<p>Attends to background checks on employees and family carers as well as the safety of the substitute care places used. Attends to adequate support and service provision to the child and to the substitute care place. Ensures that the social workers have adequate resources commensurate with the demands of the work. Responsible for guidance and monitoring of the substitute care services used in accordance with the duties mandated for the municipality. Is proactive in order to avoid any 'unnecessary' changes in a child's substitute care places. Ensures that the responsibilities and duties of all parties are clearly delineated in instances of children's unauthorised absence and other unexpected situations.</p>

Child's everyday life at a substitute care place	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 4</b> <b>At the substitute care place, the child receives support for growth and development and the atmosphere at the substitute care place is appreciative of and encouraging to the child.</b></p>	<p>Ensures that the substitute care place provides the child with the environment for growth and development laid down in section 1 of the Act on Child Custody and Right of Access (361/1983) with respect for the child's individuality, sense of security, privacy and participation.</p> <p>Ensures, by learning about the experiences of the children, that the atmosphere at the substitute care place is warm, appreciative and caring of the child and encouraging to the child.</p> <p>Keeps an eye open to ensure that a child in family care feels like a part of the foster family or family care home.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the child receives all information about themselves, the reasons for them being taken into care, and their life circumstances.</p> <p>Ensures that a child has documented memories of their life (for example photos, the documentation of own life).</p>	<p>Attends to and is responsible for the child's basic care and protection (adequate nutrition, catering for any special dietary requirements, adequate rest, health care).</p> <p>Treats the child with understanding, security and affection.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Responsible for and a ensures the adults in the family have sufficient one on one time for the child.</p> <p>Responsible for and ensures the number of placed children is consistent with the law.</p> <p>Builds with the child a relationship based on appreciation of the child and their biological family.</p> <p>Respects and caters for the child's linguistic, religious and cultural background in everyday life.</p> <p>Responsible for the child being of equal status in the family with other family members.</p> <p>Makes the child a part of everyday family life and thus builds a relationship and learns to know the child.</p>	<p>Ensures that each individual foster family has an effective system in place that allows the placed children to receive the support and individual attention they require.</p> <p>Ensures that the entire foster family receives the support they require and that sibling relationships within the foster family are supported.</p> <p>Provides support to the foster family so that the foster parents have the capability to build a respectful and trusting relationship with the child and the child's biological family.</p> <p>Ensures that family carers are provided with the requisite multi-professional support, training and work counselling to enable them to support child growth and development and to respond to the individual needs of the child.</p>	<p>Attends to the child's basic care and protection (adequate nutrition, catering for any special dietary requirements, adequate rest, health care). Treats the child with understanding, security and affection.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Responsible for and ensures the number of placed children is consistent with the law.</p> <p>Builds with the child a relationship based on respect for the child and their biological family.</p> <p>Respects and caters for the child's linguistic, religious and cultural background in everyday life.</p> <p>Acts in a way that makes the child feel comfortable within the group of children at the substitute care place and supports relationships between the children.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the child is of equal status in the family with other family members.</p> <p>Makes the child a part of everyday family life and thus builds a relationship and learns to know the child.</p> <p>Reinforces the child's positive self-image, agency and social skills and reinforces the child's sense of being accepted for who they are.</p>	<p>Attends to the child's basic care and protection (adequate nutrition, catering for any special dietary requirements, adequate rest, health care). Treats the child with understanding, security and affection.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Builds with the child a relationship based on respect for the child and their biological family.</p> <p>Respects and caters for the child's linguistic, religious and cultural background in everyday life.</p> <p>Acts in a way that makes the child feel comfortable within the group of children at the substitute care place and supports relationships between the children.</p> <p>Makes the child a part of everyday life and thus builds a relationship and learns to know the child.</p> <p>Reinforces the child's positive self-image, agency and social skills and reinforces the child's sense of being accepted for who they are.</p> <p>Supports the formation of the child's gender identity.</p>	<p>Responsible for and ensures the staff ratio and professional expertise is consistent with the needs of the placed children.<sup>7</sup></p> <p>Responsible for and ensures the number of placed children is consistent with the law.</p> <p>Responsible for the wellbeing and professional development of staff and monitors employee retention.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the linguistic, religious and cultural background of the child and parent are respected and for the availability of expertise to cater for these.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the child feels comfortable within the group of children at the substitute care place and supports relationships between the children.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the child at the substitute care place receives the services promised to them.</p> <p>Responsible for the substitute care place staff's respectful and fair treatment of the child, for staff respecting the rights of the child and working in a way that is supportive of the child's individual needs and development.</p>	<p>Ensures that substitute care staff have opportunities for professional development and further education as well as the support of management.</p> <p>Attends to the sufficient resourcing of the substitute care services used (additional resources alongside minimum requirements when necessary).</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the individual foster families have in place an effective system to allow them to give the children what they need.</p> <p>Responsible for and ensures the number of placed children at the substitute care places is consistent with the law.</p> <p>Ensures that the substitute care places provide the children with the environment for growth and development laid down in section 1 of the Act on Child Custody and Right of Access (361/1983) with respect for their individuality, sense of security, privacy and involvement.</p>

Child's everyday life at a substitute care place	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<b>Criterion 4 continues</b>		<p>Ensures that the child also becomes a part of the foster family's social network.</p> <p>Reinforces the child's positive self-image, agency and social skills and reinforces the child's sense of being accepted for who they are.</p> <p>Supports the formation of the child's gender identity.</p> <p>Supports the development of the child by encouraging the child to take responsibility commensurate with age and learning life skills, and helps the child in solving problem situations.</p> <p>Supports the child's rehabilitation and identity formation and shapes the child's life story together with the child.</p> <p>Actively seeks out and enrolls in training arranged for family carers and the requisite further education.</p>		<p>Supports the formation of the child's gender identity.</p> <p>Supports the development of the child by encouraging the child to take responsibility commensurate with age and learning life skills, and helps the child in solving problem situations.</p> <p>Supports the child's rehabilitation and identity formation and shapes the child's life story together with the child.</p> <p>Responsible for and attends to personal maintenance and enhancement of professional expertise.</p>	<p>Supports the development of the child by encouraging the child to take responsibility commensurate with age and learning life skills, and helps the child in solving problem situations.</p> <p>Supports the child's rehabilitation and identity formation and shapes the child's life story together with the child.</p> <p>Supports the child's rehabilitation consistently and in cooperation with other parties.</p> <p>Responsible for and attends to personal maintenance and enhancement of personal professional expertise.</p>	<p>Responsible for ensuring that the child is treated with understanding, security and affection.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Ensures multi-professional support for the unit and its staff.</p>	<p>Ensures that children in substitute care receive at the substitute care place the services agreed and commensurate with their needs.</p> <p>Ensures effective service progressions for children in substitute care.</p> <p>In procurement, ensures the sufficient dimensioning, expertise and retention of institution staff.</p>

Child's everyday life at a substitute care place	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 5</b> <b>The child has the opportunity to take part in decision-making concerning their own lives, everyday life at the substitute care place, and their own client relationship.</b></p>	<p>Supports the child's participation in decision-making and monitors the realisation of the child's participation at the substitute care place as well.</p> <p>Provides the child with information consistent with their age and developmental level about their own child welfare case.</p> <p>Informs the child, in a manner consistent with their age and developmental level, of the reasons for their being taken into care and of the plans for the child, going forward.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of their rights and legal remedies.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Allows the child freely to express their views and wishes in all child welfare matters concerning them and takes these into account before taking decisions.</p> <p>Explains to the child the reasons for the decisions and action taken.</p> <p>Discusses with the child the manner of accomplishing participation in concrete terms and, when necessary, advocates for the matter at the substitute care place.</p> <p>Uses methods other than speech when necessary to determine the child's views (e.g. games, drawing, observation of body language, etc.).</p> <p>In ensuring participation, pays particular attention to children with special needs due to e.g. sensory or developmental disabilities.</p>	<p>Ensures and attends to the culture of the foster family being supportive of the child's participation.</p> <p>Enables the child's participation in the everyday life of the family and its planning and decision-making equally with the other children in the family.</p> <p>Determines the child's views and wishes and takes these into account as far as possible.</p> <p>Explains to the child the reasons for decisions.</p> <p>Provides the child with information consistent with their age and developmental level.</p> <p>Supports and encourages the child to self-expression in one-on-one situations and/or in group settings.</p> <p>Caters for any special needs of the child relating to communication (e.g. alternative communication tools).</p> <p>Supports the child's participation and expression of views in decision-making.</p> <p>Reinforces the child's ability and means to influence the everyday practices of the foster family.</p>	<p>Ensures and attends to the culture of the foster family being supportive of the child's participation.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is free to express their views and wishes and that these are also taken into account as far as possible.</p> <p>Ensures support to the family carer in catering for any special needs of the child relating to communication (e.g. alternative communication tools).</p>	<p>Ensures and attends to the culture of the foster home being supportive of the child's participation.</p> <p>Enables the child's participation in everyday life and its planning.</p> <p>Determines the child's views and wishes and takes these into account as far as possible.</p> <p>Explains to the child the reasons for decisions.</p> <p>Provides the child with information consistent with their age and developmental level.</p> <p>Supports and encourages the child to self-expression in one-on-one situations and/or in group settings.</p> <p>Supports the child's participation and expression of views in decision-making.</p> <p>Caters for any special needs of the child relating to communication (e.g. alternative communication tools).</p> <p>Reinforces the child's ability and means to influence the everyday practices of the substitute care place.</p>	<p>Enables each child's participation, when they so desire, in the everyday life of the unit and its planning and decision-making.</p> <p>Determines the child's views and wishes and takes these into account in as much as possible.</p> <p>Explains to the child the reasons for decisions.</p> <p>Provides the child with information consistent with their age and developmental level.</p> <p>Supports the child's participation and the determination of the child's views in everyday life and takes these into account.</p> <p>Supports and encourages the child to self-expression in one-on-one situations and/or in group settings.</p> <p>Reinforces the child's ability and means to influence the everyday practices of substitute care place.</p> <p>Supports the child's participation and expression of views in decision-making.</p> <p>Acts in a way that makes the child feel that their views and opinions matter and are taken into account.</p> <p>Caters for any special needs of the child relating to communication (e.g. alternative communication tools).</p>	<p>Ensures and attends that the culture at the unit supports the child's participation and that a concrete plan is in place along with agreed practices to assess its implementation.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the unit complies with the primacy of the child's best interests and with the involvement of the child so that the child has the right to express their views in all matters concerning them.</p> <p>Ensures that the child's views are heard and taken into account.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the staff at the unit support and encourage the child to self-expression in one-on-one situations and/or group settings.</p> <p>Attends to the unit having expertise and tools to cater for any special needs of the child relating to communication (e.g. alternative communication tools).</p> <p>Ensures that the unit has in place structures supportive of the children's participation in which the children can exert influence as a group.</p> <p>Enables the children's participation in the drafting, evaluation and review of the self-monitoring plan.</p>	<p>Attends to and ensures that children are free to express their views and wishes and that these are catered for as far as possible.</p> <p>Ensures the above with regard to both the social workers responsible for the child's affairs and the substitute care services.</p> <p>Attends to the operating conditions of social workers by using a staff ratio that enables a sufficient number of regular appointments to let the child get to know their social worker and build a trusting relationship with them.</p> <p>In procurement, requires substitute care places to have in place a culture that is supportive of child participation (written description in the self-monitoring plan and information on the way in which the realisation of the right of the child to be included is accomplished).</p> <p>Ensures that child-specific supervision is carried out with care and in a child-oriented way that promotes cooperation with the substitute care place.</p> <p>Ensures that the children are always consulted in the supervision of institutional and family care.</p> <p>Ensures that feedback on their service experiences, their dealings with the social worker and their treatment at the substitute care place is collected on a regular basis from children in substitute care.</p> <p>Ensures that the municipality has in place participation structures to make use of the expertise by experience of children and young people.</p>



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<p><b>Criterion 6</b> <b>The child feels a part of the communities of childhood and youth also outside of the substitute care place.</b></p>	<p>Personally monitors, through visits to the substitute care place and other regular contact with the child and the adults at the substitute care place that the child's school attendance, hobbies and friendships as well as social interaction are supported.</p> <p>Together with the child, custodians and the substitute care place assesses the impact of the child's friends and acquaintances on the child's wellbeing.</p> <p>Supports and enables the child's contact with friends and acquaintances important to the child.</p> <p>Locates educational options, primarily from regular schools, with regard for the child's wishes and needs.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the right of the child to pursue an interest of importance to the child is enabled and granted.</p> <p>Ensures that the child has access to the disposable funds belonging to the child and that the child alone decides on how to spend those funds.<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>Supports and ensures that the child's school attendance, hobbies and friendships as well as social interaction are a part of the child's everyday life and support the child's individual development.</p> <p>Actively supports the child in the aforementioned and furthers their accomplishment with regard to the child's own wishes.</p> <p>Enables and supports contact supportive of the child's wellbeing with friends and acquaintances and assesses the impact of these on the child.</p> <p>Encourages the child in the setting and pursuit of educational objectives.</p> <p>Actively works together with the school and the parents in relation to the child's matters.<sup>19</sup></p> <p>Supports the child in adopting a sustained approach to education and hobbies.</p> <p>Examines and discusses with the child the importance of relationships with other people and supports the child in recognising and assessing these in terms of the child's personal wellbeing.</p> <p>Pays the child disposable funds<sup>10</sup> in accordance with the same principles as other children in the family, for children aged 15 or older at least in the minimum amount.</p>	<p>Ensures that the family carer has the capability to support the child also outside the substitute care place.</p> <p>Provides family carers with support so that the child is included in hobbies, circles of friends and school.</p> <p>Ensures that the family carer has the financial resources needed to allow the child to pursue a hobby or interest.</p> <p>Ensures that the family carer has sufficient expertise to support the child's education.</p>	<p>Supports and ensures that the child's school attendance, hobbies and friendships as well as social interaction are a part of the child's everyday life and support the child's individual development.</p> <p>Actively supports the child in the aforementioned and furthers their accomplishment with regard to the child's own wishes.</p> <p>Enables and supports contact supportive of the child's wellbeing with friends and acquaintances and assesses the impact of these on the child.</p> <p>Encourages the child in the setting and pursuit of educational objectives.</p> <p>Actively works together with the school and the parents in relation to the child's matters.<sup>19</sup></p> <p>Supports the child in adopting a sustained approach to education and hobbies.</p> <p>Examines and discusses with the child the importance of relationships with other people and supports the child in recognising and assessing these in terms of the child's personal wellbeing.</p> <p>Pays the child disposable funds<sup>10</sup> in accordance with the same principles as other children in the family, for children aged 15 or older at least the minimum amount.</p>	<p>Supports the child's school attendance, hobbies and friendships as well as social interaction also outside of the substitute care place.</p> <p>Encourages the child in the setting and pursuit of educational objectives.</p> <p>Supports the child in adopting a sustained approach to education and hobbies.</p> <p>Examines and discusses with the child the importance of relationships with other people and supports the child in recognising and assessing these in terms of the child's personal wellbeing.</p> <p>Actively works together with the school and the parents in relation to the child's affairs.<sup>19</sup></p>	<p>Attends to and ensures that staff support and ensure that the child's school attendance, hobbies and friendships as well as social interaction are a part of the child's everyday life and support the child's individual development.</p> <p>Ensures that the unit has sufficient resources to allow the child to pursue hobbies that are of importance to them and that staff support the child's pursuit of the hobby.</p> <p>Enables and supports contact supportive of the child's wellbeing with friends and acquaintances.</p> <p>Ensures that the unit has sufficient expertise to allow the child's education to be supported.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is paid the disposable funds to which the child is entitled.<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>Responsible for ensuring that the procurement practices and choice of substitute care place have secured for the child and young person a substitute care place where school attendance, hobbies and the maintenance of the child's friendships are accomplished in a way consistent with the child's best interests and catering for the child's individual needs.</p> <p>Ensures that placed children have the chance to attend school on the same terms as all other children.</p> <p>Attends to the right of the child to pursue a hobby by ensuring this as part of service procurement or in the reimbursement of expenses to contracted family carers.</p>

Child's everyday life at a substitute care place	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 7</b></p> <p><b>The child's contact with those close to the child is supported. The child feels that those close to them are treated with appreciation and respect.</b></p>	<p>Uses respectful and appreciative language when talking about the child's family and those close to the child.</p> <p>Promotes contact and mutual respect between the substitute care place and those close to the child.</p> <p>Ensures that the those close to the child are included in the work in the child's case in the capacity of experts in the child.</p> <p>Together with the child assesses the impact of relationships with other people on the child's wellbeing.</p> <p>Ensures that procedures for contact and visits with the child and those close to the child are agreed in a way respectful of the child's wishes and best interests in cooperation with the substitute care place.</p> <p>Monitors the accomplishment of contact as agreed.</p> <p>Attends to the safety of contact and the fulfilment of the child's best interests.</p> <p>Implements any restriction of contact in the way required by law.</p> <p>Investigates the need for regular family work and other services required by the parents. Arranges for and monitors the performance of family work.</p> <p>Ensures the adequacy of the support to the child's parents and others close to the child.</p> <p>In cooperation with the child, their custodians and the substitute care place, defines the roles, rights and responsibilities pertaining to the child's affairs in compliance with the legislation in force.</p> <p>Supports the parents in understanding the child's situation and in supporting the child's placement.</p> <p>Monitors and assesses the impacts of the child's contact on the child's wellbeing in consultation with the child and takes into account the child's wishes in this.</p> <p>Responsible for determining a suitable number of visits by means of a multi-actor approach and in compliance with the law.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the child has a chance to settle in at the substitute care place without distraction.</p>	<p>Uses respectful and appreciative language when talking about the child's family and those close to the child.</p> <p>Supports and enables contact between the child and those close to the child.</p> <p>Together with the child assesses the impact of relationships with other people on the child's wellbeing.</p> <p>Attends to the safety of contact and the fulfilment of the child's best interests during contact in cooperation with the social worker.</p> <p>Maintains contact with the child's biological family in the way agreed in the client plan and tells them how the child is doing, about the child's everyday life, school, etc.</p> <p>Visits with parents or elsewhere are planned together with the social worker.</p> <p>Works together with the custodians and supports the participation of those close to the child in the everyday life of the child.</p> <p>Ensures that any restriction of contact imposed by the social worker is implemented in the way required by law.</p> <p>Ensures that the child has the chance to return to the substitute care place if a visit or home holiday does not go as planned.</p> <p>Undertakes to engage in systematic cooperation with the family and the child's social network.</p>	<p>Uses respectful and appreciative language when talking about the child's family and those close to the child.</p> <p>Ensures that the family carer has the ability and the skills to work with those close to the child and supports them in this.</p> <p>Fosters contact and mutual respect between the family carer and those close to the child.</p> <p>In cooperation with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs, supports the child's parents and others close to the child in understanding the child's situation and being supportive of the child.</p>	<p>Uses respectful and appreciative language when talking about the child's family and those close to the child.</p> <p>Maintains contact with the child's biological family in the way agreed in the client plan and tells them how the child is doing, about the child's everyday life, school, etc.</p> <p>Together with the child, assesses the impact of relationships with other people on the child's wellbeing.</p> <p>Visits with parents or elsewhere are planned together with the social worker.</p> <p>Attends to the safety of contact and the fulfilment of the child's best interests.</p> <p>Ensures that the child has the chance to return to the substitute care place if a visit or home holiday does not go as planned.</p> <p>Undertakes to engage in systematic cooperation with the family and the child's social network.</p> <p>Ensures that any restriction of contact imposed by the social worker is implemented in the way required by law.</p>	<p>Uses respectful and appreciative language when talking about the child's family and those close to the child.</p> <p>Maintains contact with the child's biological family in the way agreed in the client plan and tells them how the child is doing, about the child's everyday life, school, etc.</p> <p>Together with the child assesses the impact of relationships with other people on the child's wellbeing.</p> <p>Visits with parents or elsewhere are planned together with the social worker.</p> <p>Attends to the safety of contact and the fulfilment of the child's best interests.</p> <p>Undertakes to engage in systematic cooperation with the family and the child's social network.</p>	<p>Ensures that those close to the child are included in the work in the child's case in the capacity of experts in the child's situation.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that staff have the skills required to work with people important to the child.</p> <p>Supports and enables contact between the child and those close to the child.</p> <p>Attends to the safety of contact and the fulfilment of the child's best interests</p> <p>Supports the family in understanding the child's situation and encourages them to help the child.</p> <p>Undertakes to engage in systematic cooperation with the family and the child's social network and ensures that regular family work is accomplished according to plan.</p> <p>Ensures that the child has the chance to return to the substitute care place if a visit or home holiday does not go as planned.</p> <p>The physical layout of the substitute care place provides flexible support for visits between children and families.</p> <p>Works together with the child's parents and others close to the child and supports their participation in the everyday life of the substitute care place.</p> <p>Ensures that any restriction of contact decided by the institution or social services is implemented in the way required by law.</p>	<p>Responsible for ensuring that social workers have the expertise and the time to work with the parents of placed children and others close to the children and for promoting cooperation among all parties.</p> <p>In procuring substitute care places, ensures that the places are physically capable by means of expertise and e.g. layout of supporting contact between the child and those close to the child.</p> <p>Ensures the substance and quality of the services procured relative to working with those close to the child in respect of institutions, professional foster homes and private family care providers alike.</p> <p>Ensures the adequacy and organisation of support to the child's parents and others close to the child.</p> <p>Ensures that a client plan is prepared for the parents and that its implementation is monitored.</p> <p>Ensures that the municipality can offer adequate support and peer activities to the child's parents and others close to the child and enables their contributions in child welfare development in the role of experts by experience.</p>

Child's everyday life at a substitute care place	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 8</b></p> <p><b>The child is aware of their rights and the legal remedies available to them, and the substitute care place respects the child's right of self-determination.</b></p>	<p>Records the manner and frequency of one on one meetings with the child in the child's client plan.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>Meets with the child on a regular basis and affords the opportunity to discuss things in private. Alternatively ensures that another child welfare worker meets with the child in person sufficiently often (for at least two hours per month).</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of how to contact their social worker.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is informed of a new social worker in the event of any change.</p> <p>Informs the child of their rights and legal remedies by a variety of means (e.g. verbally and by giving the child a brochure).<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the child knows whom to contact in cases of suspected mistreatment or violation of rights.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Irrespective of the child's age, informs the child of the powers and obligations of the authority and the substitute care place.</p> <p>Tells the child about good treatment at the substitute care place.</p> <p>Ensures through i.a. talking with the child that the realisation of the child's right of self-determination is respected at the substitute care place.</p> <p>Monitors the implementation of restrictive measures and is responsible for these being compliant with law (by means of e.g. records obtained<sup>12</sup> and talks with the child).</p> <p>Assists the child in the exercise of the right of action and ensures that a guardian to deputise for the custodian is appointed for the child when necessary.</p> <p>When necessary, refers the child or young person to legal aid services.<sup>13</sup></p>	<p>Supports the child in maintaining contact with the social worker or other child welfare worker.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of how to contact their social worker.</p> <p>Provides the child with information about their rights and legal remedies.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of whom to contact and in what way in various situations.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the child understands the rules, regulations and aims of the foster family and their own rights and obligations within the community.</p> <p>Distinguishes between upbringing and restrictive measures.</p> <p>Irrespective of the child's age, informs the child of the powers and obligations of the authority and the substitute care place.</p>	<p>Ensures that family carers are aware of the rights and legal remedies of the children.</p> <p>Ensures that all children are informed of their social worker and how to reach them.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is supported in maintaining contact with the social worker and other necessary parties.</p> <p>Ensures that the child has been informed of the rules and aims of the foster family and of their own rights and legal remedies.</p> <p>Ensures that family carers can distinguish between upbringing and restrictive measures.</p>	<p>Supports the child in maintaining contact with the social worker or other child welfare worker.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of how to contact their personal social worker.</p> <p>Provides the child with information about their rights and legal remedies.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of whom to contact and in what way in various situations.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the child understands the rules, regulations and aims of the foster home and their own rights and obligations within the community.</p> <p>Distinguishes between upbringing and restrictive measures.</p> <p>Irrespective of the child's age, informs the child of the powers and obligations of the authority and the substitute care place.</p>	<p>Ensures that the child understands the rules, regulations and aims of the institutional community and their own rights and obligations within the community.</p> <p>Supports the child in maintaining contact with the social worker or other child welfare worker.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of how to contact their social worker.</p> <p>Provides the child with information about their rights and legal remedies.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of whom to contact and in what way in various situations.</p> <p>Irrespective of the child's age, informs the child of the powers and obligations of the authority and the substitute care place.</p> <p>Distinguishes between upbringing and restrictive measures.</p> <p>Is aware of the general prerequisites for using restrictive measures and the specific requirements for implementing each individual restrictive measure.</p> <p>Implements restrictive measures only when necessary and in compliance with the law.</p> <p>Records all restrictive measures implemented in the manner required by law.<sup>12</sup></p> <p>Reviews the restrictive measures implemented and the reasons for the measures together with the child as soon as possible.<sup>14</sup></p>	<p>Ensures that staff are aware of the rights and legal remedies of the children.</p> <p>Ensures that all children are informed of their own social worker and how to reach them.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is supported in maintaining contact with the social worker and other necessary parties.</p> <p>Ensures that the children have been informed of the rules and aims of the institution as well as of their own rights and legal remedies. For example by posting all necessary contact information at the institution and ensuring that the child has access to the means to contact the Social Welfare Ombudsman or the supervisory authorities.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the child has access to legal remedies.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the general prerequisites for using restrictive measures and the specific requirements for implementing each individual restrictive measure.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that staff distinguish between upbringing and restrictive measures.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that restrictive measures are implemented only when necessary and in compliance with the law.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that any restrictive measures implemented are recorded.<sup>12</sup></p> <p>Responsible for the self-monitoring plan including a general plan for good treatment.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the children have/child has the opportunity to take part in the preparation of the self-monitoring plan and that the plan is up to date and freely available for review.</p>	<p>Attends to the availability of social workers and the managed and systematic changes in social worker staffing as well as notifying these to clients.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the child has regular contact with their own social worker.</p> <p>The municipality has in place a policy to systematically ensure that placed children are informed of their rights and contact channels in cases involving shortcomings.</p> <p>Ensures that children and young people also are informed of the Social Welfare Ombudsman by means of ways and tools that are understandable to them.</p> <p>Ensures that the services of the Social Welfare Ombudsman are also de facto available to children and young people.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Ensures that the Social Welfare Ombudsmen notify of their services also to children who are child welfare clients.</p> <p>For example, such notification taking place by child-friendly means and in a way suitable for children shall be ensured.</p> <p>In all contact and contact channels, use is made of communication tools familiar to children and young people, for example digital applications, and the threshold for making contact is lowered.</p> <p>Ensures that the service providers' self-monitoring plans include a general plan for good treatment.<sup>16</sup></p>

Child's everyday life at a substitute care place	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 9</b>  <b>The child is provided the early childhood and other education, healthcare and other basic and specialised services to which the child is entitled.</b><sup>17</sup></p>	<p>Arranges for the child the rehabilitation and other services to which the child is entitled with attention to the child's special needs.</p> <p>Ensures that the child receives the services to which they are entitled already upon arrival at the substitute care place.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that applications are made for all benefits to which the child is entitled.</p> <p>Ensures together with educational administration that child's education/early education functions.</p> <p>Ensures that the substitute care place and all other services are aware of any special needs the child may have and that these are taken into account by the network of professionals surrounding the child taking into account the provisions on secrecy and disclosure of information.</p> <p>Monitors and is responsible for the child's client plan and the supplementary plan for care and upbringing being up to date and under implementation.<sup>18</sup></p> <p>Ensures that a child placed in another municipality receives the requisite services in the placement municipality.<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>In cooperation with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs, applies for all benefits and services to which the child is entitled.</p> <p>Attends to the accomplishment of the child's early childhood and other education and basic healthcare services.</p> <p>Actively works together with the aforementioned parties.</p> <p>Attends to the accomplishment of any rehabilitation which the child may require and takes part in the child's rehabilitation as necessary.</p> <p>When warranted by the needs of the child, the foster family itself also accepts support and assistance and actively seeks out these.</p>	<p>Discusses the effectiveness of the services and their organisation with the family carer.</p> <p>Also hears from the child during visits to the foster family and works closely together with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs in assessing the situation.</p> <p>Ensures that the family carer and the foster family themselves also receive the support they require.</p>	<p>In cooperation with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs, applies for all benefits and services to which the child is entitled.</p> <p>Attends to the accomplishment of the child's early childhood and other education and basic health care services.</p> <p>Actively works together with the aforementioned parties.</p> <p>Attends to the accomplishment of any rehabilitation which the child may require and takes part in the child's rehabilitation as necessary.</p> <p>When warranted by the needs of the child, the family care home itself also accepts support and assistance and actively seeks out these.</p>	<p>Attends to the accomplishment of the child's early childhood and other education and basic health care services.</p> <p>Ensures that any rehabilitation which the child may require is arranged at the institution or attends to its accomplishment in other services.</p> <p>Takes part in the child's rehabilitation as necessary.</p>	<p>Ensures the effectiveness of the services provided by the unit and the placement municipality and the cooperation between the two.</p> <p>In cooperation with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs, applies for all benefits and services to which the child is entitled.</p> <p>Ensures that any rehabilitation which the child may require is arranged and takes part in the child's rehabilitation as necessary.</p> <p>Ensures effective multi-professional cooperation at the institution and with the partners of the institution.</p> <p>When warranted by the needs of the child, the institution accepts support and assistance (from e.g. specialised medical care) and also actively seeks out these.</p>	<p>Responsible at the municipal level for the seamless and effective cooperation between early childhood and other education, health care and child welfare and other social services.</p> <p>Anticipates the needs of placed children and ensures the effectiveness of service progressions.</p> <p>Ensures that the early childhood and other education, healthcare and other social and healthcare services to which placed children are entitled are available to and ensured for them in accordance with their individual needs.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that specialised-level service processes are integrated and care is brought as close as possible to the child's everyday living environment so that a child's need for specialised care does not force the child to relocate unnecessarily.</p> <p>Ensures that specialised-level services are brought to the substitute care place when this is in the best interests of the child.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the special and individual needs of the placed child are fulfilled.</p> <p>Responsible for ensuring that the institution, professional foster home or family carer also receive the support and services they require and that specialised-level expertise is used to support the entire family or community of the placed child.</p>

Moving away from the substitute care place and end of substitute care	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/ counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 10</b>  <b>The child feels that moving away from the substitute care place is safe and predictable</b>  - in situations of family reunification,  - in transitioning to after-care at the stage of becoming independent, and  - when relocating to another substitute care place.</p>	<p>Initiates in a timely manner the preparation of the planned transition/relocation or termination of substitute care in cooperation with all parties concerned and attends to the safety and individuality of the upcoming measure, and also supports the participation of the child/young person in its planning and implementation. Works together with the parents, child and substitute care place in situations of reunification.</p> <p>When necessary, prepares an after-care plan and attends to its implementation. Prepares the after-care plan for a young person who is gaining independence and attends to compliance therewith and introductions to after-care workers in a timely fashion (no less than six months prior to the end of the placement). Maps the social network and support systems of the young person who is gaining independence in advance of the young person transitioning to after-care.</p> <p>Negotiates and agrees responsibilities and the principles of commitment in concrete terms with the social networks and support systems. Ensures that the young person has the support of at least one adult. Attends to systematic work in the transition to after-care and to funds for promoting independence.</p> <p>Ensures that in sudden and unplanned transitions/relocations or termination of substitute care, the reasons leading to this are discussed with the child and other parties concerned.</p> <p>Initiates and attends to the choice of eventual new substitute care place in observance of the primacy of the child's needs and best interests (in accordance with the principles under Criterion 1).</p>	<p>Supports the child's systematic transition to the next phase of life.</p> <p>Undertakes to care for the child until such time that the child relocates.</p> <p>Takes part in the planned reunification efforts.</p> <p>Acts in a way that is safe and supportive of the child even in cases of sudden and unplanned change in substitute care place.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of the possibilities to maintain contact with the substitute care place after the placement. If contact cannot be maintained, assists in locating relationships to replace such contact.</p>	<p>Supports family carers in the work relating to transitional stages and ensures that the primacy of the child's best interests and the child's needs are catered for under all circumstances.</p> <p>Takes part in the collaboration between family carers and social worker in transitional situations. Provides support to family carers in planned reunification efforts/ in cooperation with those close to the child.</p>	<p>Supports the child's systematic transition to the next phase of life.</p> <p>Undertakes to care for the child until such time that the child relocates.</p> <p>Takes part in the planned reunification efforts.</p> <p>Acts in a manner that is safe and supportive of the child even in cases of sudden and unplanned change in substitute care place.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of the possibilities to maintain contact with the substitute care place after the placement. If contact cannot be maintained, assists in locating relationships to replace such contact.</p>	<p>Supports the child's systematic transition to the next phase of life.</p> <p>Cares for the child until such time that the child relocates.</p> <p>Implements family work in accordance with plan in situations of reunification.</p> <p>Acts in a way that is safe and supportive of the child even in cases of sudden and unplanned change in substitute care place.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of the possibilities to maintain contact with the substitute care place after the placement. If contact cannot be maintained, assists in locating relationships to replace such contact.</p>	<p>Supports the child's systematic transition to the next phase of life.</p> <p>Undertakes to care for the child until such time that the child relocates.</p> <p>Enables family work in accordance with plan in situations of reunification.</p> <p>Acts in a way that is safe and supportive of the child even in cases of sudden and unplanned change in substitute care place.</p> <p>Ensures that the child is aware of the possibilities to maintain contact with the substitute care place after the placement. If contact cannot be maintained, assists in locating relationships to replace such contact.</p>	<p>Makes determinations pertaining to both planned and anticipated as well as unplanned and sudden transitions or changes in relocation place.</p> <p>Enables the continued placement of a young person also after the age of maturity when this is in the young person's best interests. Ensures continuity and overlapping processes and work so that the child is escorted through all transitions.</p>

Moving away from the substitute care place and end of substitute care	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/ counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 11</b> A young person gaining independence receives the requisite support and services in after-care</p>	<p>Ensures that the young person has a place to live.</p> <p>Supports the young person's ability and skills to gain independence.</p> <p>Supports and assists the young person in career planning, obtaining education or employment, or arranging other meaningful activities and in coping with the day-to-day of school or work.</p> <p>Implements the after-care plan, flexibly assesses its realisation and ensures that the plan is reviewed with sufficient frequency.</p> <p>Ensures that a young person in after-care obtains the requisite services.</p>	<p>Supports the young person's ability and skills to gain independence.</p> <p>Supports and assists the young person in career planning, obtaining education or employment, or arranging other meaningful activities and in coping with the day-to-day of school or work.</p> <p>Implements the after-care plan in cooperation with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs.</p>	<p>Supports the family carers in training the young person in the ability and skills to gain independence, in the young person's career planning, in locating education, employment or other meaningful activities and in learning everyday coping skills.</p> <p>Supports family carers in the implementation of the young person's after-care plan.</p>	<p>Supports the young person's ability and skills to gain independence.</p> <p>Supports and assists the young person in career planning, obtaining education or employment, or arranging other meaningful activities and in coping with the day-to-day of school or work.</p> <p>Implements the after-care plan in cooperation with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs.</p>	<p>Supports the young person's ability and skills to gain independence.</p> <p>Supports and assists the young person in career planning, obtaining education or employment, or arranging other meaningful activities and in coping with the day-to-day of school or work.</p> <p>Implements the after-care plan in cooperation with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs.</p>	<p>Supports the young person's ability and skills to gain independence.</p> <p>Supports and assists the young person in career planning, obtaining education or employment, or arranging other meaningful activities and in coping with the day-to-day of school or work.</p> <p>Implements the after-care plan in cooperation with the social worker responsible for the child's affairs.</p>	<p>Defines the policies for the after-care of young people gaining independence and enables transitions into after-care that fulfils the individual needs of the young people concerned.</p> <p>Pays attention to the continuity of after-care in procurement practices and enables the procurement of support services supportive of the young person's wellbeing.</p> <p>Ensures the adequacy and availability of after-care services in the municipality.</p>
The systematic nature and documentation of substitute care	Social worker responsible for the child's affairs	Family carer (Contracted family care)	Party responsible for provision of support to family carer	Family carer at professional foster home	Institutional care worker and designated carer/ counsellor	Institutional care provider and person responsible for unit	Municipality/joint municipal authority
<p><b>Criterion 12</b> The child feels that their placement, its monitoring and its documentation is systematic and done for the benefit of the child.</p>	<p>Monitors the implementation of the client plan and the supplementary care and upbringing plan on an ongoing basis with respect for the participation of the child and family and in consultation with the substitute care place, and attends to the regular updating of these plans.<sup>20</sup></p> <p>Enables the participation of the child in planning the placement, monitoring progress and documenting the child's affairs in a way that takes into account the child's age and developmental level.</p> <p>Attends to the appropriate documentation of the child's affairs and for the safekeeping of documents.<sup>21</sup></p>	<p>Complies with the client plan prepared for the child by the social worker. Takes part in the regular review of the plan at least once annually and in the event of changes in the child's need for support.</p> <p>Reports on the child's circumstances to the social worker responsible for the child's affairs.</p> <p>Enables the participation of the child in the reporting in a manner that takes into account the age and developmental level of the child.</p> <p>Documents the child's affairs together with the child and records observations on a regular basis.<sup>21</sup></p> <p>Processes client data in an appropriate manner.<sup>21</sup></p>	<p>Supports the family carers in the implementation and regular reviews of the child's client plan, in the implementation of documentation that is supportive of participation, in regular reporting and in the appropriate processing of client data.</p>	<p>Comply with the client plan prepared for the child by the social worker.</p> <p>Take part in the regular review of the plan at least once annually and in the event of changes in the child's need for support.</p> <p>Report on the child's circumstances to the social worker responsible for the child's affairs.</p> <p>Enable the participation of the child in the reporting in a way that takes into account the age and developmental level of the child.</p> <p>Document the child's affairs together with the child and records observations on a regular basis.<sup>21</sup></p> <p>Process client data in an appropriate manner.<sup>21</sup></p>	<p>Complies with the client plan and the supplementary care and education plan prepared for the child by the social worker.</p> <p>Attends to the reporting of the child's affairs and processes client data in an appropriate manner.<sup>21</sup></p> <p>Enables the participation of the child in the reporting in a way that takes into account the age and developmental level of the child.</p> <p>Documents the child's affairs together with the child and records observations on a regular basis.<sup>21</sup></p>	<p>Complies with the client plan and the supplementary care and education plan prepared for the child by the social worker.</p> <p>Ensures that the plan is reviewed on a regular basis (at least once annually) and in the event of changes in the child's need for support.</p> <p>Ensures that reports on the child's circumstances are submitted to the social worker responsible for the child's affairs on a monthly basis and together with the child.</p> <p>Ensures the appropriate processing of client data.</p> <p>Promotes the participation of the child in the documentation.</p>	<p>Attends to the appropriateness of children's client plans and the appropriate processing of client data.</p> <p>Monitors the progress of placements and changes in substitute care and assesses these as a whole.</p>

## References in chart

- 1 Child Welfare Act, section 32(1)
- 2 Child Welfare Act, sections 41(1) and 50
- 3 Act on the Openness of Government Activities, section 26(3)
- 4 Act on Child Custody and Right of Access 361/1983, section 1(3): A child must be brought up with understanding, security and affection. A child must not be subdued, corporally punished or treated offensively in any other way. The growth of a child towards independence, responsibility and adulthood must be supported and encouraged.
- 5 Family Care Act, section 5
- 6 Child Welfare Act, section 16b
- 7 Child Welfare Act, section 60
- 8 Child Welfare Act, section 53(1)
- 9 Child Welfare Act, section 32a
- 10 Child Welfare Act, section 55
- 11 Child Welfare Act, sections 29(1) and 53(2)
- 12 Child Welfare Act, section 74
- 13 Child Welfare Act, section 24(1)
- 14 Child Welfare Act, section 74a
- 15 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, para 99: "Children in care should have access to a known, effective and impartial mechanism whereby they can notify complaints or concerns regarding their treatment or conditions of placement." NB: also Child Welfare Act, sections 32a and 74a.
- 16 Child Welfare Act, section 61b
- 17 Child Welfare Act, sections 15 and 52a, Health Care Act (1326/2010), section 69(1)
- 18 Child Welfare Act, section 30
- 19 Child Welfare Act, section 52a(2 and 3)
- 20 Child Welfare Act, sections 30(5) and 30a
- 21 Child Welfare Act, sections 33 and 74, Act on Client Documents in Social Welfare (254/2015) and the Data Protection Act (1050/2018)
- 22 Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients (812/2000), sections 16 and 17 subsection 1(1-2)
- 23 Child Welfare Act, section 69a
- 24 Child Welfare Act, sections 41, 43 and 50.



## APPENDIX 3 Key proposals for a substitute care guidance and supervision model

The model was prepared by Susanna Hoikkala, Raija Kojo, Jaana Tervo & Teija Aaltonen. It was published as working paper 19/2017 of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. Helsinki 2017. ISBN 978- 952-302-854-8 (printed), ISBN 978-952-302-855-5 (online).

The report presents a child-oriented substitute care guidance and supervision operating model that is based on the rights of the child. In addition, the report presents tools for ensuring that the legal protection of placed children and young people is accomplished and for raising their awareness of their rights. The aim of the model is to clarify and harmonise current policies as well as the roles of the various guidance and supervisory actors and the division of responsibilities among them.

The model was prepared in 2016 and it is intended as a basis for further discussion and development in cooperation with municipal actors, development actors, professionals, researchers and experts by experience. The report emphasises how it is important in further efforts to focus on and seek out solutions also to how to adapt the 'model' for each theme described in the report to changing service structures and to the other models developed within the LAPE programme for addressing children and family service.

Innovations proposed by the modelling group include the establishment of a national register of substitute care places<sup>i</sup>, the dismantling of current overlaps, harmonisation of supervision documentation, the development of peer review procedures, and reinforcing the knowledge base and expertise in guidance and supervision activities. These proposals put forward in the report are based on the views of the professionals on the modelling team as well as on research data. The report contains descriptions of i.a. the role of the various supervisory bodies. A few examples of the report's contents are provided below.

Among other things, the modelling group proposes the following:

- Information about wellbeing should be mapped interactively and in a child-friendly manner by means of interaction between the social worker and the child. Child-friendly open documentation methods will be utilised in recording the information.

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<sup>i</sup> The national register of substitute care places is under development and a preliminary study on its establishment has been prepared within the LAPE programme to address children and family services.

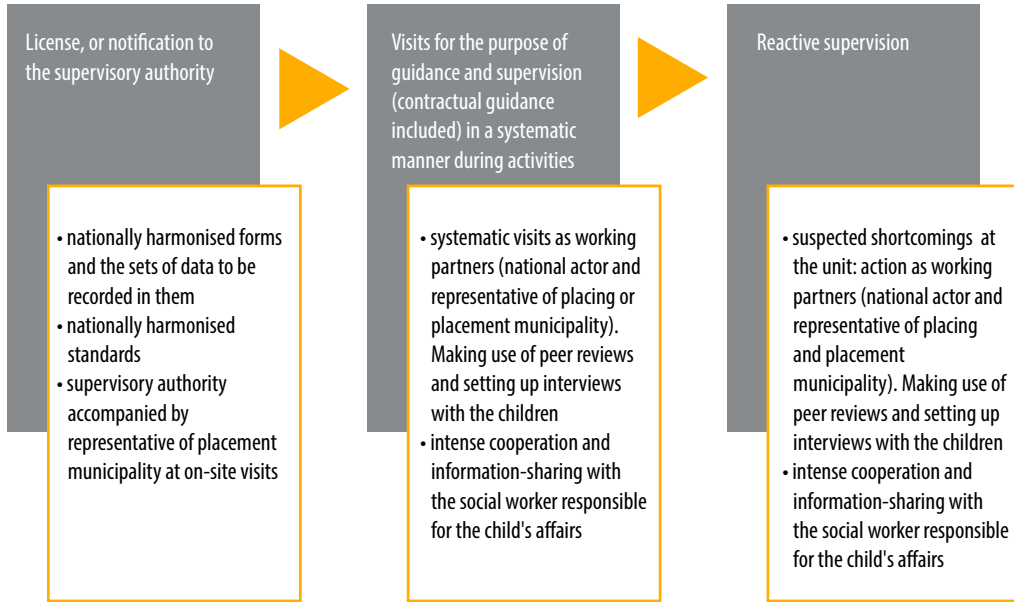


- Compliance with the rights of the child should be systematically monitored (among duties of placing municipality) in substitute care (e.g. currency of client plan, access to persons close to the child)
- The information accumulating from a unit should be compiled for use to support the monitoring of child-specific substitute care implementation.
- The information must be monitored in order to guarantee the child's wellbeing and to reduce structural violence/mistreatment/insecurity. In the same context, attention should be paid to the right of the child to a stable environment and stable relationships.

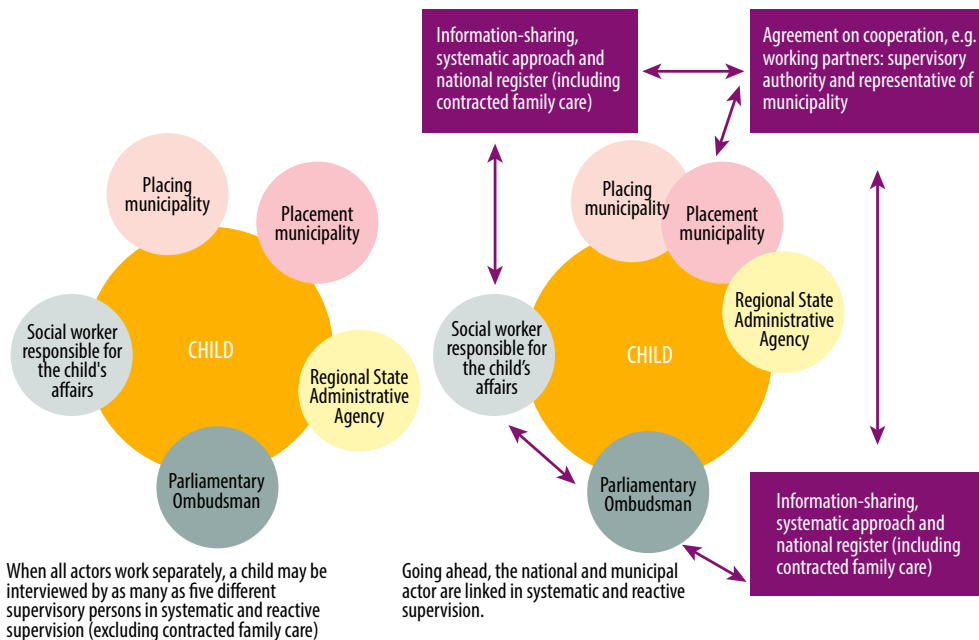
The modelling group paid particular attention to the theme of reinforcing the consultation and participation of the child and prepared a more detailed three-step breakdown on this topic (levels of the individual, group and society). The following will be achieved with the introduction of the model:

- Create more systematic policies at substitute care places for determining the views and experiences of the children.
- Individual children and children as a group will be provided with the opportunity to receive better substitute care and to take part more systematically than at present in the assessment and development of the activities of their particular substitute care environment and in drawing attention to shortcomings.
- The participation of children and their families will be reinforced and they will be better placed to understand and influence their own situation and assess the performance of substitute care.
- Children will be more aware of their legal protection and better informed than at present of the parties whom to contact and the tools for contacting them.
- Children will be provided with safer, more transparent, fairer and more goal-oriented substitute care and the accomplishment of the service provided to the children and of the aims of the care will be monitored at the level of both individual and substitute care unit. There will also be greater regional equality in the service provision.
- In supporting the child's participation, attention will be paid to the ethical principles drafted to guarantee the participation of the child.
- The development of various tools for contacting supervisory bodies will continue.

**Figure 3. Model for unit-specific supervision excluding family care.**



**Figure 4. Child-centred supervision.**



## Appendix 4 – Summary of recommendations

### RECOMMENDATIONS / PARTICIPATION

Child welfare work should facilitate continuous and trusting interaction between the child welfare worker and the child/young person who is the child welfare client as well as the child's family and others close to the child and other interested parties/persons of importance to the child. It is recommended that social work in child welfare be organised in accordance with the principles of systemic teamwork whenever the organisation of the work with clients allows (S, M<sup>1</sup>)

The members of the network of persons close to the child and their potential for providing social support are determined individually, guided by the needs and preferences of the child/young person and their family. (S)

The child welfare worker, the child's family and others close to the child, and other authorities relevant to the child's case jointly discuss the possibilities other authorities might have of supporting the fulfilment of the child's best interests and assisting the parents in fulfilling their responsibility for the child's upbringing. (S)

The social worker in child welfare ensures that those close to the child are involved in the child's situation in all phases of substitute care. (S)

Management ensure that children, young people and families are included in the development of the services. When a plan is prepared in a municipality to enhance the involvement of children, young people and their parents and to improve child welfare services and such a plan is incorporated into the plan for the wellbeing of children and young people, this issue also becomes more visible for the clients. (M)

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<sup>1</sup> The Recommendation indicates the party at whom the recommendation is targeted in brackets: S = Staff, M = Management.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS / CHILD WELFARE AS A PART OF THE SYSTEM OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS AND FAMILIES**

The child welfare office informs the authority having made a notification of receipt of the notification and provides the name and contact details of the office or worker in charge of the case. (S, M)

The professional who filed the child welfare notification takes part in investigating the child's case and offering support to the extent necessary. Other authorities are involved in the initial investigation as required. (S)

The social worker responsible for the child's affairs coordinates cooperation between the authorities relevant to the child welfare case and ensures that the authorities are aware of the purpose and aims of the cooperation in the individual situations of children and their families. (S)

When a child and a custodian are informed of the fact that child welfare work is about to begin, they are also explained what child welfare work means in practice, and they can be given an information package about child welfare as a printed client's guide and referred to the municipality's website for information about the services. The client must also be informed about the services of the Social Ombudsman and the legal remedies available for the client. (S, M)

At the first meeting – and if necessary, also later – the principles of child welfare work are discussed with the clients (including the possibility of open documentation). (S)

Management support the ability and the opportunities of workers to perform child-oriented and relationship-based work by taking charge of i.a. resourcing, work emphases and expertise enhancement. Management also ensure that the trusting relationship between client and worker is not unnecessarily cut off by e.g. reorganisation. (M)

The support offered to the client and its intensity are tailored to the client's needs. (S, M)

The work practices must be diverse and the methods used reliable. Home visits – if necessary, unannounced visits – are an aspect of child welfare work. (S, M)

The multi-professional team of experts supports child welfare work in its various processes (M)

Systematic client feedback on the services is collected. (M)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS / CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS AND CHILD WELFARE WORKPLACE COMMUNITIES**

All workers have the opportunity to contribute to the development of their work and also to take part in any work-related research and development networks. (S, M<sup>2</sup>)

The expertise required in child welfare work is clearly defined and systematic expertise support measures are put in place, especially in respect of workers who are only at the start of their career in child welfare. (M)

The division of duties among workers is further developed, for example between practical nurses, social counsellors and social workers. (S, M)

Management ensure that in addition to professional social work skills, the work organisation has access to legal, psychological, psychiatric and pedagogical expertise. (M)

The basic premise in organising child welfare work is for each child welfare social worker to handle a maximum case load of 25 clients. Case loads per worker are nonetheless affected by regional and substantive factors, and factors relating to the client's service needs, the availability of other resources and resource needs arising from changes in legislation, such as the extension of after-care until the age of 25 instead of 21. Flexibility in the case loads of individual workers can be supplied by organising the work in the form of teamwork. (M)

When developing the work, the negative effects on clients caused by worker turnover are minimised. One of the ways to achieve this is to ensure that there is one worker who stays with the client throughout all the various stages of the child welfare process. (M)

Instead of isolated training courses, the focus in the continuing education and work development of child welfare workers is on on-the-job counselling and instruction. (M)

Work counselling is provided for those engaged in client work. (M)

Child welfare workers are given the opportunity to become child welfare work mentors and to mentor their colleagues in their own or in another work organisation (S, M).

Workers and workplace communities conduct assessments of their own work and make use of research data. (S, M)

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<sup>2</sup> The Recommendation indicates the party at whom the recommendation is targeted in brackets: S = Staff, M = Management.

Documentation is prioritised. The documentation skills of workers are reinforced and local practices are agreed. (S, M)

The start and end of child welfare client relationships shall be recorded in the child's case file in a timely manner and details of these shall be provided to the client either verbally or in writing. (S)

### **RECOMMENDATIONS / ASSESSMENT DURING CLIENT RELATIONSHIP**

Assessing a client's situation is an integral part of the child welfare client process at its various stages and assessments are carried out subject to official liability. (M<sup>3</sup>)

The assessment involves engagement of the child/young person and their parents to gauge their capacity to accept support so that support can be provided in an appropriate manner. (S)

The assessment investigates the overall situation of the child/young person, allowing the interested parties to understand why an assessment is being conducted, what is being assessed and how the assessment will be carried out. (S, M)

### **RECOMMENDATIONS / QUALITY CRITERIA FOR SUBSTITUTE CARE**

In the organisation, procurement, provision and supervision of substitute care the various actors shall have regard to all of the quality criteria for substitute care. (S,M)

### **RECOMMENDATIONS / SUPERVISION OF SUBSTITUTE CARE**

The supervision of substitute care must be developed in the municipalities/counties taking into account the prepared supervision model and applying it in the supervision. (S, M)

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<sup>3</sup> The Recommendation indicates the party at whom the recommendation is targeted in brackets: S = Staff, M = Management.

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Quality child welfare caters for ethical principles throughout. The child should perceive this i.a. by the primary consideration given to the child's rights and best interests, but also in the equal, non-discriminatory and respectful treatment given to persons close to the child. Child welfare workers shall openly review the forms of assistance and services available to support the child and the family. The child should feel that their sense of security is taken into account and promoted under all circumstances. Child welfare workers are professionals who act with humanity and empathy whenever engaging with clients.

A child who is a child welfare client should be able to trust in being heard for who they are. They should be allocated enough time with their case worker and have the chance to influence the time, place and also the manner in which their life comes under consideration. The child should also in other respects have the opportunity to make a difference in the workings of child welfare, for example through systematic feedback collection and the option of participating in the wider development of the services.

The mission of child welfare is best accomplished through trust-based cooperation between the children and young people, those close to them, and the child welfare workers. Such cooperation must be underpinned by responsible decisions and a responsible operating culture. Supervision is also required. The responsibilities of management include ensuring such working conditions for child welfare workers that allow them to perform work of a high quality standard. These are the topics addressed in this Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare.

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