



Euroopan unionin
osarahoittama

Separation in families with children

Ero lapsiperheessä



A child / children and divorce

Children have particular rights. These are set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Finland complies with this convention.

An important part of the convention is the rule that says that children's best interests are most important. When making decisions, adults must always first consider what is best for the child.

The Act on Child Custody and Right of Access includes a child's rights after a separation. According to the act:

- a child has a right to both parents;
- a child has a right to express their own opinion;
- a child's opinion must be listened to, but the parents make the decisions.

The act also says what guardians must do.

(<https://www.finlex.fi/en/legislation/translations/1983/eng/361>)

A child / children and divorce

When their parents separate, a child has the right to keep having a close and safe relationship with both parents.

Guardian = a person who:

- looks after the child;
- makes decisions on the child's matters.

When the parents are joint guardians of the child, i.e. they have shared custody, they decide on many things together.

Child abduction refers to situations where:

- a child aged under 16 years, who lives in Finland, is taken abroad without a guardian's consent;
- the child who was taken abroad is not returned to Finland when agreed.

Child abduction is a crime in Finland.

Separation in families with children

Discuss between yourselves the child's living and custody arrangements.

- Will both parents have custody?
- Whom will the child or children live with?



Child welfare supervisor: book an appointment with a child welfare supervisor. They can help you decide together:

- where the child or children will live;
- when the child will stay with the other parent;
- how much money the other parent will provide for the child's expenses (child maintenance).

If you cannot reach a consensus

Agreeing on family matters

- Professionals can help you agree on matters.

OR

Official decision, district court

If you would like an **attorney-at-law** to help:

- you can pay for their services yourself.

OR

- You can apply for free legal aid from the state. You may be entitled to legal aid if you are on a low income and do not have much money.

Follo mediation (expert-assisted court mediation)

OR

If the parents are not able to agree on the child's matters, they may ask a **district court** to make a decision.

Help during and after a divorce

Support with co-parenting:

parenting and family
counselling
(free)

Many **associations and organisations** offer free **support, guidance and peer support** for those going through a separation.

Guidance, help

- child welfare supervisor (free)
- social guidance and counselling for families with children (free)
- <https://www.suomi.fi/guides/divorce>

Discussion support is provided for free by

- member associations of the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters
- Apua eroon-chat (Help with separation chat)
- MIELI ry: [Mieli Crisis Helpline](#)
- (09 2525 0111)
- parishes.

Videos about separation are available at:

<https://helsinki.mll.fi/ero-lapsiperheessa/>

Languages: Finnish - Swedish - English

Arabic - Somali - Russian



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TAMPERE

**Pirkanmaan
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Niitty 2 -hanke 2023-2026

Yhdessä maahanmuuttajaperheiden
hyvän arjen puolesta

Lisätietoa hankkeesta:
<https://projects.tuni.fi/niitty2/>

Perheinfo-aineistoportaali:
tuni.fi/perheinfo



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