

The new Finnish child strategy – an integrated system to better respond to the needs of children and families

Shaping a healthy environment fit for children

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Civil Society:
Child and
Family NGO's

UN
Committee
for the Rights
of the Child

Child policy
projects in
various
previous
governments



Where could Finland do even better as a nation for and with our children ?

Which challenges should national childstrategy help to solve?

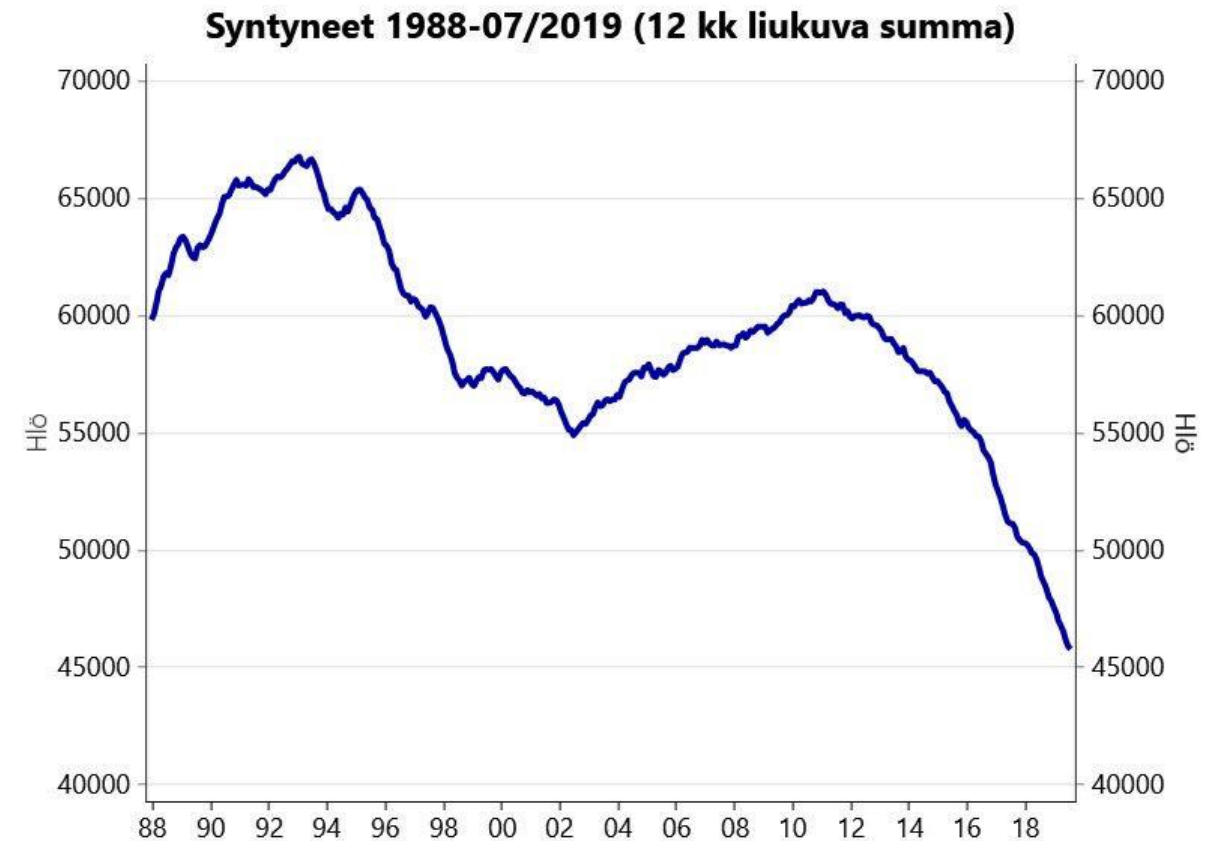
Societal and economic sustainability

- Ageing society
- Sharply declining birth rate

How to improve wellbeing of children?

- To decrease the child poverty rate (13,9%)
- To stop the intergenerational cycle of social exclusion
- Keep up the social mobility
- Combat increasing inequality of child learning and well-being

Children born in Finland annually 1988 – 7/2019



Lähde: Tilastokeskus

Previous government launched the preparatory report: Child's time (3/2019) <https://stm.fi/en/child-strategy>

Together with Ministries of Culture and Education & Social and Health Affairs
Broad based steering board, research network, consultations, dialogues, open process



Starting points of the "*Child's Time*" 2040 - report

- Need for a comprehensive, broad based, long-run, cross-cutting strategy
 - Policies have so far been too fragmented, short-sighted and limited to one government term -> more continuity
- Committing all stakeholders in the society
 - Parliament, different political parties, ministries, municipalities, NGO's, businesses, religious communities, universities etc
 - Families and children themselves
- Based on research and knowledge
 - More than 100 researchers participated in the process of defining "what is wellbeing" and how to promote it
 - Both academic and experience-related knowledge
- To define a common vision towards child and family friendly Finland
- Holistic and systemic perspective to governance

Child rights/Human rights based strategy

Finland has ratified UN convention for the rights of the child 1991.

This is an agenda that unites all political parties and governments.

- Art 2: Human rights apply to every child (under 18) without discrimination (ethnicity, age, religion, disability, parents..)
- Art 3 The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions that affect children
- Art 6 Ensure that every children survive and develop to their individual full potential. Right to a good life.
- Art 12: Adults have to respect the views of the child, consider their opinions and take seriously - irrespective of the age (evolving capacities)



What constitutes well-being of a child?

Human relationships

Learning

Participation

Health

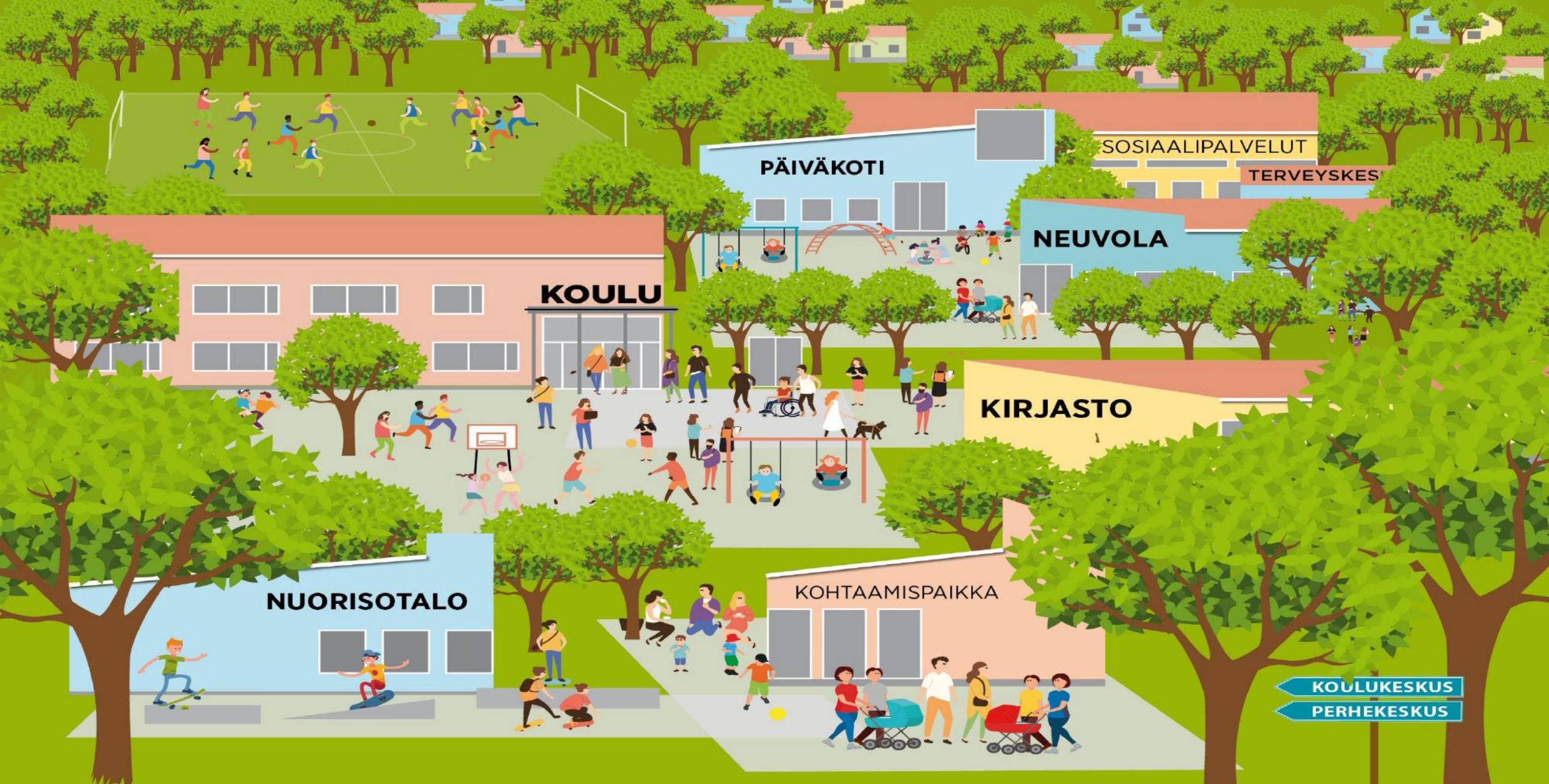
Safety



Healthy environment for children

- message from the research panel for the LAPSI2040

- In order to promote mental health of children
 - To prevent symptoms/negative behaviours we should focus on whole developmental environment of children: parents, peers, day care, school
 - To combat bullying and loneliness in school and peer relationships (school operating culture, emotional skills)
 - Evidence based methods to support parenting
- Support the whole family in case of parents health problems (psychic, somatic, maternal depression, addictions)
 - "Let's talk about children" –method = software
 - Family Center –model to integrate services =hardware



Lasten, nuorten ja perheiden hyvää arkea YHDESSÄ

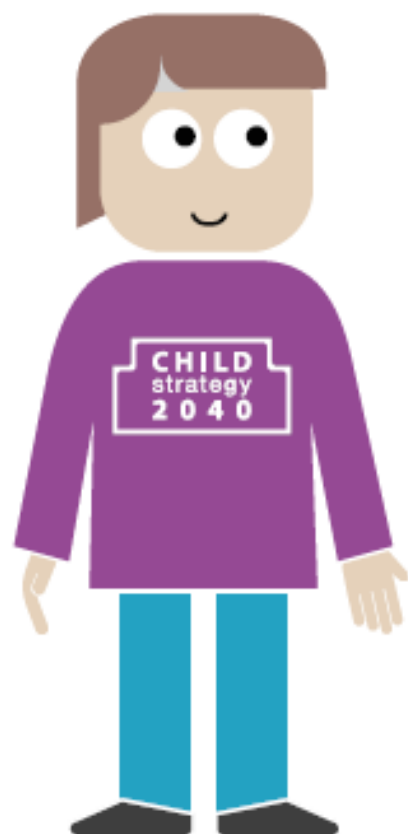
Vision of the "Child's time" 2040 report

- Every child and young person has safe adults in their lives who are close to them and act with their best interests at heart
- Every child, young person and parent or guardian is a member of a community and feels that they belong to it and can make a difference
- Families spend more time together and feel the positive effects
- Children and young people have stronger friendships and feel less lonely
- Every child and young person has a pathway to growth and learning that acknowledges individual differences
- People can have as many or as few children as they wish
- Child poverty will be reduced



Challenge for
Finland 2040:

Child- and family- friendly society



Areas of wellbeing that
emerged from the study

Inclusion

Learning

Relation-
ships

Security

Health

Birth rate

Experience-based and expert
information, information from
consultations

Child's human rights and the related international
conventions and national legislation

Child's best interests, acknowledging children's opinions,
equality, a good life for children

Leadership methods:
towards equality and
non-discrimination in
wellbeing and learning

Administration and decision
making based on the child's
rights and knowledge

- Evaluation of effects on children
- Budgeting for children
- Information on wellbeing and services
- Inclusion of children and young people
- Network management

Child- and family-led culture

- Shared view on children
- Significance of development communities
- Services and support that meet the needs of children, young people and families
- Overall wellbeing of families
- Standards of encounters and interaction

Vision:

Child- and family-friendly
society

- 1 Every child and young person has safe adults who are close to them and act with their best interests at heart
- 2 Every child, young person and parent/guardian is a member of a community and feels that they belong to it and can make a difference
- 3 Families spend more time together and feel the positive effects
- 4 Children's and young people's friendships strengthen and loneliness decreases
- 5 Each child and young person has a pathway to growth and learning that acknowledges individual differences
- 6 People can have as many or as few children as they wish
- 7 Family poverty decreases

What next?

- Present government will nominate in this autumn a parliamentary committee to finalize the child strategy, evaluate the proposed vision, select indicators and to ensure the commitment of all stakeholders including local and regional governments
- The general secretary for the child strategy just started her work (johanna.laisaari@stm.fi)
- Every government will in turn draft its own implementation program to promote the vision 2040
- There are always political uncertainties but I look forward to the child and family NGO's to keep us on track
- Introducing Child budgeting – and child impact assesment – tools are on the agenda of present government
- Ongoing training program for local and regional leaders (LAPE-Academy) 2019
- ITLA-foundation will start in 2020 to train national leaders across education, social and health sectors



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Thank you!

