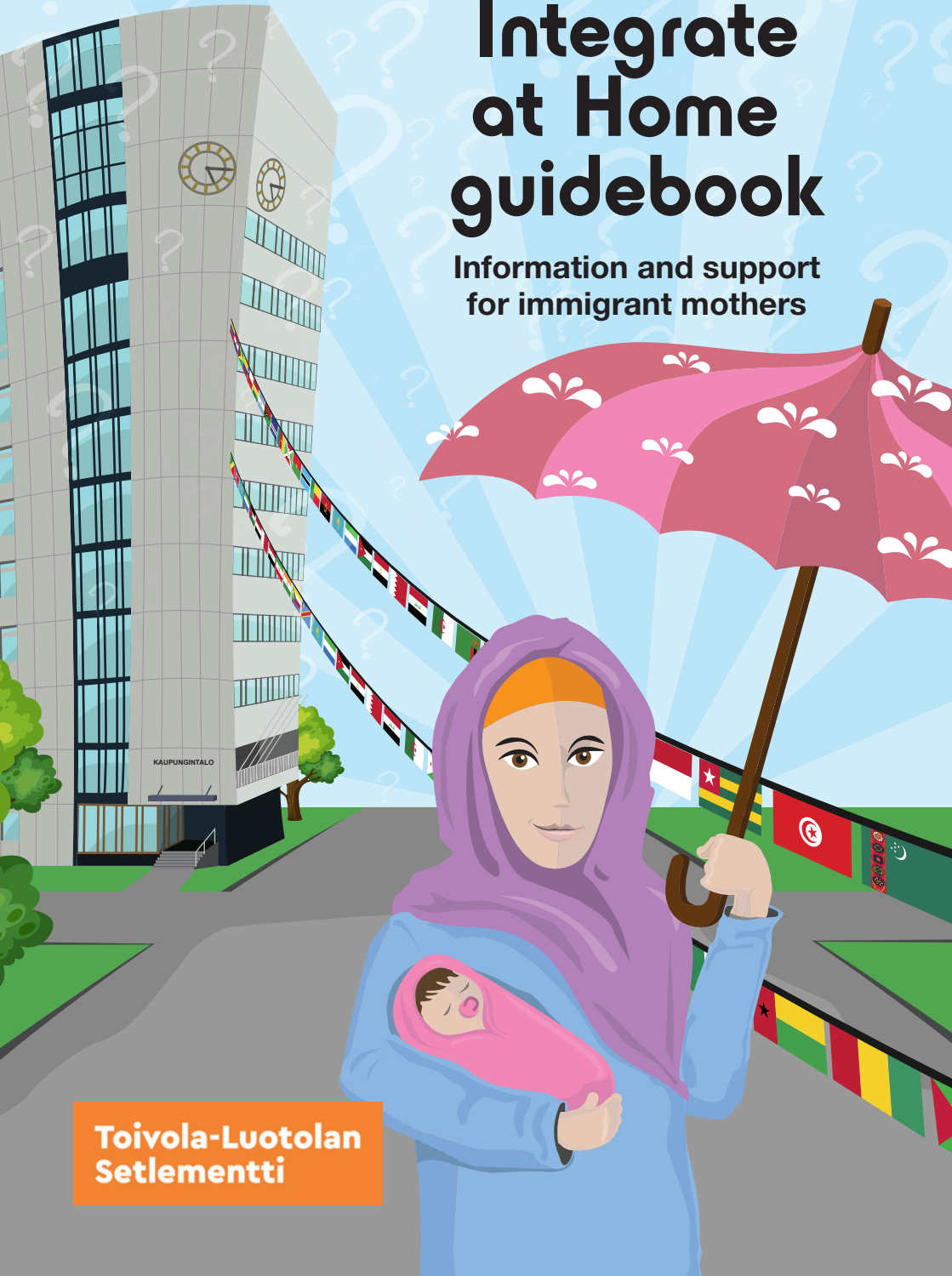


Integrate at Home guidebook

Information and support
for immigrant mothers



Toivola-Luotolan
Setlementti

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INTRODUCTION

Dear reader, welcome to the Integrate at Home guidebook. This guidebook was written to provide everyday support for women and mothers who have moved to Finland and are at home with children, as well as their families. Immigrant mothers who are at home with young children are often excluded from integration training and other integration activities. Consequently, they are not provided with sufficient information about Finnish society and how it functions, and their Finnish language skills remain poor.

Many things change when you move to Finland. Customs and how society operates may be vastly different between your native country and your new home country. Information will help you understand your new country and culture and adapt better.

In Finland, everyone has the right to health, education, work, income and housing, as well as social relationships. Everyone should have an opportunity to participate in and influence matters that affect themselves and society.

Society provides various services that are funded with taxes, such as healthcare and education. In Finland, daycare is arranged

for children to enable their parents to attend studies or work. Daycare and school are free of charge for everyone, regardless of how much money you have or where you live. Healthcare is free for children and affordable to adults. We have noticed in our work that mothers need information and support in the aforementioned matters. This guidebook will provide you with plenty of information and practical instructions regarding what to do as a mother and a responsible family caretaker in Finland.

The guidebook can also be utilised by professionals and planners of activities for immigrant mothers to support group activities, for example. The guidebook can be used as a tool, applying and adjusting the subjects to clients' needs.

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BÄÄÄÄÄ!!



EVERYDAY INFORMATION AND SKILLS

In a new country, everything is new and you have a lot to learn. In Finland, everyone's well-being is taken care of. Society expects people to have certain knowledge and skills.

It is important to learn the language of the new country. Plenty of support and help for language-learning challenges is provided in Finland. You can find reading and writing courses in your home city, as well as Finnish language courses for those with more advanced skills. In some places, you can study and learn Finnish even if you stay at home with your children. In order for you to be a full-fledged member of Finnish society and a party to your own matters, Finnish language skills play a major role in your integration.

When you come to Finland, your matters are probably taken care of by someone else at first. However, please try to be active and ask about your own matters, taking care of them yourself where possible. Information and skills required in everyday life include your personal information, the clock and the calendar, using a computer and a phone, electronic services and taking care of financial matters. In this section, we provide you with information about how society functions and the skills that you should learn.

INTEGRATION – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

When you move to a new country, you are provided with a variety of services, advice and support to help you adapt to society. In Finland, these things are referred to as integration.

- The goal of integration is for the person to feel like a full-fledged member of society who possesses the information and skills needed in their new home country.
- Integration also means the procedures of authorities for promoting the client's integration through means of well-being, health, education and employment.
- The person's rights as a municipal resident begin when they have a municipality of residence registered by the magistrate, and a social security number. Integration services are usually provided for three years. Services for a refugee client are usually taken care of by an appointed social worker or social instructor.
- In addition to social and health services, the

municipality provides education, employment, housing, cultural, exercise, family and youth services. The Finnish Social Insurance Institution (Kela) also operates alongside the municipality.

When you arrive in the country, you are given an initial assessment and integration plan based on your life situation, either at the social worker's office or the Employment and Economic Development Office (TE office). The integration plan lists the services and procedures used to promote your learning of Finnish and provide you with other information and skills needed in society and working life. Your obligation is to commit to realising the plan.

Organisations also play a major role, in addition to the municipality's integration services. Organisations can provide services to support integration, such as help with and advice on everyday matters. Organisations also have various groups in which you can find new friends and meet other people. Do not hesitate to ask whether such services are provided in your municipality!

BASIC INFORMATION

In Finland, your personal information and your family's information are very important. Many matters are taken care of based on your basic information. Finnish services involve filling out plenty of forms on paper and electronically online. Your personal information is needed by service providers, such as your bank, your children's schools, the Finnish Immigration Service, your social worker and Kela.

You must be able to give your name address, telephone number, personal identification number and bank account number, as well as the same information about your children. It is important that you are able to fill out these sections in various forms by yourself. You should memorise them right from the start.

The Finnish personal identification number consists of your birth date followed by a four-character identifier. The personal identification number is always individual-specific. It is used to identify you. No one has the same personal identification number as you. Do not give your personal identification number to anyone but the authorities or the workers who are taking care of your matters.

Be sure to always keep your Kela card and residence permit card with you. You can check the most important information on the cards.

BANKING SERVICES

In Finland, you can have your own bank account, bank card and online banking ID. You can use them to take care of your own financial matters.

You can open a bank account when you have an official identification document. The official identification document can be a passport or an identity card granted by the police. You can open an account at the bank of your choosing.

A bank card is connected to your bank account. You can use the bank card to pay for your purchases at a store or withdraw cash from an ATM. The bank card has its own four-digit identification pass code. Please do not keep your bank card identification number in the same place with the card. Do not tell the pass code for your card to anyone. Memorise your bank card pass code.

Your bank account will also be connected to an online banking ID, which you can use to take care of your financial matters online. You

will receive the ID from your bank when you visit the bank in person. The ID is discretionary and personal. You can use the ID to carry out tasks, such as paying your invoices online and transferring money from one account to another.

You can download your bank's application onto your phone. You can use your phone to conveniently take care of financial matters, such as paying invoices. Your online banking ID is also used for identification in different services. Examples of such services include Kela, the TE office and the Finnish Immigration Service. For example, you can apply for general housing allowance from Kela online with your banking ID.

Do not keep your online banking user ID, pass code and key number list in the same place, such as your wallet! If you lose your wallet with all of your online banking information in it, the finder will be able to log in to the bank with your ID.

ELECTRONIC SERVICE

In Finland, you can take care of almost all of your personal matters electronically online. Many service providers recommend using their electronic services to take care of matters by filling out applications and forms online. Filling out forms electronically makes the processing of matters quicker at institutions such as Kela. Some services require electronic identification.

Electronic identification means that you prove your identity with your online banking ID online and log in to the service of your choosing with the ID.

Electronic identification is used in Finland by service providers such as Kela, TE services, the Finnish Immigration Service, banks, municipalities

and daycare centres. Your personal health information, such as medical prescriptions, can be found online at www.kanta.fi.

You can also use electronic services to apply for Kela benefits, meaning money. The most common benefits provided to families with children are the child benefit, housing allowance and basic social assistance. You can fill out and send applications on the Kela website.

You can also use electronic services to apply for a

place in daycare for your child or enrol your child in preschool. Find out how daycare or school are applied for in your place of residence. Call the school or daycare centre and ask them for instructions. You can also ask your friends for help.

Schools primarily use the Wilma application for communication between home and school. You can log in to the application with your e-mail address. No online banking ID is needed. Ask your child's school for a Wilma username and password.

CLOCK AND CALENDAR

The entire Finnish society revolves around the clock and the calendar. Finnish people are very specific when it comes to time. You must go to work and school on time. If you are continually late, people will think you are unreliable. In school and working life, being repeatedly late can lead to trouble, such as warnings.

If a meeting has been scheduled, people usually arrive 15 minutes early. For example, if you have an appointment at the social services office and an interpreter has been booked for the meeting, it is extremely important that you arrive on time, as using an interpreter is expensive. If you are late, it may be impossible to take care of your matters and the meeting will be postponed.

Reading the calendar and understanding dates is important. In Finland, people are often sent

notices of their appointments by post. The time specified in the letter may be several months away. This is why you have to keep track of important dates. You must understand all appointments for you and your family. For example, if you do not attend a dentist's appointment, you will be sent an invoice for missing the appointment. Not understanding the date is not an acceptable reason for missing the appointment, and you must pay a fee. The dentist will not accept customers who are late, as there are other customers waiting for their appointments. In such a case, you will have to book a new appointment.

You must be able to read the clock and the calendar and know different times, such as 9.00 and 21.00. If you are not familiar with using a calendar and a clock, ask your spouse or friends for help!

POSTAL SERVICE AND DOCUMENTS

In Finland, important documents are usually sent to your home by post. All important documents are posted in a white envelope. The envelope usually has a logo indicating where the letter is from.

Be sure to check that the letter is addressed to your name. Opening other people's letters is prohibited, and you must return them to the post office.

Documents such as appointment confirmations and instructions for health services, decisions by Kela, invoices and letters from the Finnish Immigration Service are sent by post. When you receive a letter, open it and see what it says. Never throw away a letter if you do not know what is written in it. Letters usually contain

important information. Ask for help if you do not understand a letter.

After a hospital visit, you may receive a letter regarding the visit. The letter is personal and you do not have to show it to anyone, if you do not want to. The letter may contain information about why you were in the hospital and what was done to you there. All of your healthcare appointments are recorded on the kanta.fi website, to which you can log in with your online banking ID.

Keep all important letters and store them in the same place. Important documents are usually needed when you are taking care of various matters, such as applying for benefits. You should keep your documents in a folder, for example, where you can find them easily.

KELA

Kela is short for Kansaneläkelaitos (Social Insurance Institution). Kela will provide you with various benefits, meaning money, if you are not employed or your income is low.

Kela carries out duties such as taking care of the social security of people living in Finland in different life situations. The purpose of social security is to ensure a sufficient income

for everyone and take care of people. The social security system is funded with taxes and insurance premiums. Everyone living in Finland pays taxes. Social security consists of services and monetary benefits intended to secure people's income. Social security is, for example, monetary support for families with children, monetary support for unemployed people, housing allowance for rental payments,

student benefits for students and healthcare services. In Finland, everyone is given equal help, regardless of the persons' gender, age, native country, language, religion, beliefs, opinion or state of health.

The Kela card is proof that you are covered by health insurance, which is part of Finland's social security. The Kela card entitles you to healthcare in Finland, as well as reimbursements for medications purchased at a pharmacy. Keep your Kela card with you at all times!

If you need monetary support for living, you can apply for a variety of benefits from Kela. You have to submit an application to Kela to receive money. Applications must be submitted at certain intervals. You can find information on the decision letter from Kela or online in the eServices section of the Kela website, to which you can log in with your online banking ID. You can submit applications online or by using a paper form.

Kela requires various attachments to applications, such as bank statements. The application contains information about what attachments are required. Kela will give you a date by which the attachments must be submitted. You can submit the attachments to Kela on paper or electronically as a photo, for example. The processing of your application will be delayed if you do not submit the required attachments on time. Pay attention to the deadlines.

If your situation changes, submit a new application to Kela. Kela may recover money from you if you have not notified them of your changes. Changes that must be reported to Kela include (but are not limited to) becoming employed, moving and having children.

You can book an appointment at Kela to take care of your matters and ask for an interpreter for the meeting. You can book the appointment by visiting or calling Kela.

TE SERVICES

TE office is short for työ- ja elinkeinotoimisto (Employment and Economic Development Office). Register at the TE office when you want to become a student or find employment. Upon registration, you will become an unemployed job-seeker and a client of the TE office. The TE office will provide you with various services intended to help you find employment. The

services also include integration training. Those training courses usually involve studying the Finnish language and society, as well as skills needed in job-seeking.

The TE office will establish whether you can be paid unemployment benefit, meaning money. The benefit is paid to secure an unemployed

person's income while the person is seeking employment or attending a training course. The TE office will submit a statement to Kela. Kela will pay you the unemployment benefit. You will only be paid if you are ready to accept employment or attend a training course. If you do not follow the TE office's instructions, your unemployment benefit payments can be suspended.

The TE office will book you an appointment for an initial Finnish language test that will take a few hours. The test is used to find out what kind of training would suit you. The test is obligatory in order for you to attend integration training. You do not have to know Finnish in the test. The TE office will create an integration plan for you. An interpreter will also be present, if needed.

The plan will detail what kind of training you need. It will also list things that you need as a member of Finnish society and in working life. Please arrange a carer for your children while visiting the TE office.

The TE office will send a letter to you when a place on a training course is available. The letter will state where and when the course begins. The training course is free. You can also look for a place to study Finnish yourself. You can begin your studies when the TE office gives you permission. The TE office also uses electronic services. You can browse your information by logging in to the E-services section with your online banking ID. If you are having trouble understanding the TE office's messages or letters, ask for help.





2.

FAMILY AND UPBRINGING

This section discusses family and raising children in Finland. Raising children in Finland can differ greatly from the upbringing principles of other countries, so please take your time to familiarise yourself with this section.

The concept of family is rather narrow in Finland, even though there are many kinds of families. In Finland, family can mean a married couple, an unmarried couple living together, a same-sex couple or a single parent, for example. However, the family does not include grandparents, who, in many cultures, are part of the family.

Parenting is more than just ensuring that the children have clean clothes and good food. Teaching different things and skills, such as discussion and listening skills, is a major part of parenting. Raising children involves taking their opinions and feelings into consideration. Children are allowed to actively influence their own everyday life. In Finland, parents seek information about parenting and discuss things with other parents. Family and upbringing involve a lot of internal family matters, but also external factors, such as the use of media and services for families with children.

In this section, we provide you with information and tips regarding what to do as a parent in Finland. You will also receive information about Finnish family life.

FAMILY

In Finland, a family officially consists of the parents and their underage children. The official family does not include grandparents or cousins, even if they live in the same household. The official family is always stated in all official information provided to Kela, the social services office and the school, for example.

A family can also consist of a single parent and children, such as a mother and her children. A family can take this form when the parents divorce, for example. In Finland, people can also have children independently without a spouse.

You can marry another person after a divorce in Finland. In such a case, two families are combined into a stepfamily. You do not need permission from your former spouse or their family to marry another person. No permission is needed even if you and your former spouse have had children together.

In Finland, two people of the same sex can be a couple and get married. For example, two women or two men can get married and have children. It is important to teach your children that same-sex couples and marriages are normal and accepted in Finland.

PARENT AND GUARDIAN

A parent takes care of their child's care and upbringing. A guardian takes care of their child's official matters. A parent and a guardian are often the same person, but it is important that you know the difference between these terms. When a child is born, the mother becomes the child's guardian. The mother's husband is automatically a guardian as well. If the mother and father are not married, the father is not automatically a guardian. In that case, a separate agreement must be made regarding guardianship. You can ask the maternity and child health clinic for advice. Guardianship means taking care of the child's matters. A guardian has the official right to decide on matters concerning their child, such as the child's name, healthcare, religion and place of

residence. The guardian is informed of matters such as the child's health. A parent who is not a guardian is not provided with information about the child by the authorities.

Guardianship ends when the child turns 18. Parenthood continues even when the child has grown into an adult.

You are a parent when you are a mother or father. A parent cares for, raises, helps and teaches their own child. The parent listens to the child. The child is under the parent's responsibility. The parents listen to the child, accept the child's different feelings and provide the child with love and affection, such as hugs and nice words. The parent accepts the child

for who they are. The parent has a maintenance obligation, meaning that they are financially responsible for the child.

The parent sets limits and rules for the child, yet listens to the child's opinion. The parent teaches the child everyday skills, such as getting dressed, cleaning and washing independently. The child

learns social skills from the parents, such as listening and conversational skills. The parents also teach their child what is right and wrong.

Many official documents require you to provide the guardian's information, not the parent's. Be sure to pay attention to what information is requested in the forms.

RAISING CHILDREN IN FINLAND

Raising children in a new country and culture creates a variety of challenges. The culture of the new country may be vastly different from the culture of your native country in many respects. For example, the concept of family may be different in Finland and your native country.

In Finland, children are raised through positive reinforcement and encouragement. Physical discipline, such as hitting and slapping, is not allowed. Compliments and encouragement develop the child's self-esteem, helping the child believe in themselves and others and not hesitate to try new things. Children are encouraged to think independently.

Children are free to speak their mind and disagree with their parents. Talk with your child and listen to their opinions.

It is important that the parents set clear limits and rules and teach them to the child. Discuss the limits and rules with your children. Make sure that everyone follows the agreed upon rules. For example, you can ask the child what they want to eat for dinner. However, you cannot allow the

child to decide to eat nothing but sweets.

Raising a child involves emphasising the importance of school. Going to school is the child's most important task, and you must support it. Show interest in your child's schoolwork, school performance, subjects and friends. Contact the child's teachers, if necessary, and attend parents' evenings. Your interest in your child's schoolwork will help the child become inspired by school. When the child enjoys going to school, they learn better.

The differences between two cultures can cause conflicts in the child. Both children and adults can be confused by the information they receive from daycare and school, and there may be disagreements at home. Support your child and their learning, even if it is in conflict with your own thoughts. You can contact the school or daycare centre if you want to know more about what your child is being taught.

A teenager receives full adult rights when they turn 18. After that, the parents cannot access the child's health or banking information, for

example, without the child's permission. Usually, teenagers move out at this age to go to study or work, for example. A teenager may move alone

to a different city. The teenager may live alone or share an apartment with friends. Girls and boys have an equal right to move out.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Finnish law states that all people under the age of 18 are children.

Parents are responsible for their children. The parents' duty is to protect their children, raise them and take care of them. The parents must always think about the child's best interests when making decisions regarding matters such as moving and divorce situations. Is moving out good for the child? How are the child's needs and wishes taken into consideration in a divorce? The child's views on their own matters, as well as the family's matters, must be listened to and respected. Always do what is best for your child.

The job of children is to play and go to school. Children take part in household chores, but they are not responsible for things such as caring for their younger siblings or cooking. Never leave your children to look after their younger siblings. For example, a ten-year-old cannot be left to look after their two-year-old sibling while you go to the grocery store. Young children must not be left home alone.

The parents take care of their own matters at the bank, medical centre and Kela, for example. There are things that children do

not have to know about, such as financial worries, Kela decisions and matters related to residence permits. Children do not take care of their parents' matters, nor are they used as interpreters.

The child is entitled to a good life. The child must be protected from abuse, violence and neglect. Examples of the aforementioned include:

- financial violence: using the child's money without permission, extortion
- arranged marriage: the parents decide who their child will marry
- sexual violence: fondling, touching, rape
- physical violence: slapping, hitting, hair pulling, roughing

Children are allowed to be themselves, and the child must not be discriminated against within the family, at school, in working life or in society. If a boy wants to play with dolls, he is allowed to. If a girl wants to play with cars, she is allowed to. The children are equal in the family in terms of chores, leisure time and schooling. Girls and boys alike do chores, have equal amounts of leisure time and spend time outdoors and with their friends. The family must have equal rules for all children

EMOTIONS

Emotions are part of every person's life. We feel different emotions in different situations. For example, you can laugh, cry, be angry and be afraid within one day.

Think about your own emotions and reactions, such as why you get angry and what you do when angry. You can teach these emotion-related skills to your children. You can learn to identify your emotions alone or together with your family.

Expressing your emotions is an important skill that you must practice yourself and teach to your child. If you are angry, you must not hit your child, but find another way of expression instead. For example, you can breathe and count to ten. Your children will watch you and follow your example. That is why it is important for you to think about what you do yourself.

An adult can have an abundance of great sorrow, making the child's sorrow look small by comparison. However, the child's sorrow is real to themselves, even if the adult finds it trivial. For

example, your child's toy breaks and they cry a lot. To you, the toy breaking is a trivial matter. However, it can be a great loss to the child.

Allow yourself, your spouse and your child to feel all emotions. If you feel like crying, cry and talk to your child about the emotion: "Mommy is crying because Mommy is sad. There is nothing to worry about." If your child is crying, let them cry and offer comfort: "You are crying and feeling bad. Let me hold you." Everyone is allowed to feel sad and cry. This includes older children and adults. There are no good and bad emotions, as all emotions are needed.

Identifying and accepting emotions helps you understand other people's feelings. Start talking to your child about emotions at a young age. The child will learn different emotions and know when a person is sad, angry or happy, for example. Good emotional skills will later help with relationships in daycare, at school, with friends and in romantic relationships. Talking about emotions is important, even though it can sometimes be difficult.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There are many kinds of violence. In Finland, violence is a crime.

In cases of domestic violence, the abuser can be a spouse, sibling, parent, former spouse, close relative or other loved one. The abuser and the victim are or have been very close.

Changes in the family can lead to domestic violence. Pregnant women and the mothers of young children in particular are at risk of being subjected to domestic violence. Poor sleep and children's temper tantrums can cause irritation and anger. If an adult is unable to control negative emotions and calm down, the

emotions can come out in the form of shouting, calling names or even hitting.

Domestic violence can be physical, financial, social, sexual or religious, among others.

Financial violence can be, for example, using another person's money without permission, take out a loan in another person's name or using someone's account and bank card without permission. No one is allowed to pressure or extort you or force you to spend money or take out a loan. Everyone has the right to decide on the use of their own money.

Sexual violence refers to all kinds of distressing sexual acts, such as unpleasant sexual talk and touching or forcing a person to have sex. Forcing a spouse or domestic partner to have sex is a crime. Everyone has the right to physical integrity, meaning that no one is allowed to touch you without your permission. If you are subjected to sexual violence, contact the police.

Religious violence refers to all kinds of psychological and physical violence related

to religion. Violence related to honour, such as controlling and setting restrictions, is also religious violence. No one must be forced to do things against their will, even when religion is involved.

Finnish criminal law states that female circumcision is prohibited. In Finland, circumcision is a criminal offence. Circumcisions performed abroad are also punishable in Finland.

Forced marriages are a crime in Finland. Forced marriage refers to a situation in which at least one of the two spouses is not allowed to choose who they will marry. In Finland, everyone is allowed to choose who to marry without pressure from their parents, relatives or community. Forcing a marriage outside Finland is also a crime.

If you are subjected to domestic violence, tell your thoughts to a friend, a maternity and child health clinic worker or a doctor, for example. The important thing is that you tell someone reliable. You will receive help, advice and support for your situation. Violence is always punishable.

CHILDREN'S MEDIA USE AND LIMITS

Parents teach their children to use phones, computers and other devices in a sensible manner. It is the parents' responsibility to supervise their children. There is a wide variety of programs that parents are unfamiliar with or unaware of. It is important that you look into things and know what your children are watching and using, and that you give them instructions.






The parents' duty is to limit children's screen time in accordance with their age. Screen time refers to the time spent by the child on a phone, tablet or computer or watching television. Talk with your child about the use of media and agree on a set of rules. The recommendation is that children under the age of five are given around one hour of screen time per day. You can ask for advice from your maternity and child






health clinic, for example. The use of media affects people's behaviour and emotions. If a child has too much screen time, they may develop concentration difficulties or a headache. The child can also become irritated and tired. Children can see frightening things on their phones or television that can carry over to their dreams and cause restlessness and aggression. For example, there are plenty of frightening videos on YouTube. Remember that children of different ages find different things frightening. A three-year-old may be scared of a cartoon ghost while a ten-year-old is not.

Movies, games, Facebook, Snapchat and other programs have age restrictions. You must look

into the age restrictions. Make sure that your children comply with the age restrictions. The age limit is always stated in the information of the application or program. Age restrictions are put into place because not all media is suitable for children.

There are plenty of good and development-supporting games and programs that you can examine together with your children. For example, you can install puzzles, math games and memory games onto a table or phone. Play the games together. Children's programmes develop the child's vocabulary and provide information about various things as well.

-  Suitable for all ages
-  For ages 7 and up
-  For ages 12 and up
-  For ages 16 and up
-  For adults only

-  Tillåtet för alla åldrar
-  Contains violence
-  Contains sex
-  Can cause distress
-  Contains substance use

EVERYDAY RHYTHM AND ROUTINES

Everyday life means ordinary day-to-day life. Everyday life has rhythms and routines around which days are structured. In Finland, almost everyone's life revolves around routines and rhythms – for example, at daycare centres, schools and workplaces. Children's everyday life is easier when the rhythms in daycare, at school and at home are similar. The parents are responsible for the family's everyday life and

decide what the family does. The parents talk with their children and take their wishes into consideration when planning everyday life.

Everyday life is easier with daily routines in place. Routines enable the parents to make sure that their children have enough sleep and outdoor activities, as well as regular mealtimes. The routines repeat every day, such as morning

activities in the morning and evening activities in the evening. The children and the adults know what to do in the morning, afternoon and evening. The parents should discuss routines with the children.

Example of routines:

Morning routines are followed in the morning: waking up, brushing teeth, getting dressed, having breakfast, going to school or daycare. Evening routines are followed in the evening: having supper, putting toys away, brushing teeth, putting on pyjamas, reading a bedtime story and going to sleep.

Families with children usually have two important rhythms: the meal rhythm and the sleep rhythm. Usually, the meal rhythm involves breakfast, lunch, a snack, dinner and supper. Young children’s sleep rhythm involves waking up in the morning, a nap during the day and

bedtime in the evening. The rhythms are based on times; for example, there are set times for meals, as well as waking up and going to bed.

Everyday rhythms and routines provide children with a sense of security. The child knows what will happen when everyday routines repeat. Even a young child will learn what happens after brushing teeth or lunch, for example. Having an everyday rhythm decreases disagreements and makes life smoother.

Everyday rhythms are different for children of different ages. Younger children need more help from adults in their everyday life. When a family has clear routines and rhythms, the children will learn to act independently. Every family has their own routines that may be different from those of other families. If you need help with routines, you can bring it up at the daycare centre or maternity and child health clinic.

SERVICES FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Maternity and child health clinic

Maternity and child health clinics serve pregnant women, families expecting a child, and children under the age of seven and their families. The maternity and child health clinic takes care of health-related matters. There are nurses and doctors working at the maternity and child health clinic.

The maternity and child health clinic will monitor a pregnant woman’s health, as well as the growth and development of the foetus. After childbirth, the clinic will take care of the mother’s health and monitor how she recovers. The maternity and child health clinic also provides birth control services.

The maternity and child health clinic will monitor the child’s growth and development on a regular basis. The clinic will measure the child’s weight and height and examine the child’s vision, hearing and physical development, as well as how they learn various skills. The maternity and child health clinic will also give the child all necessary vaccinations.

The maternity and child health clinic will provide the parents with advice and support for raising children and coping with everyday life. You can talk about any worries you have about your child and family at the maternity and child health clinic.

Family counselling office

The family counselling office serves families. The family counselling office is not for taking care of health-related matters, but for discussions. The family counselling office helps families with problems related to children's upbringing and development, as well as relationships. The family counselling office workers discuss and give advice regarding family matters and carry out various investigations and assessments.

You can book an appointment at the family counselling office if there is a lot of arguing in your family, you are having problems with your relationship or you are facing a crisis, such as falling seriously ill. The family counselling office will also help with any problems related to your child's schooling, such as bullying or absences.

In the event that the parents divorce, the family counselling office will help them find solutions to the child's matters and everyday questions, such as who the child will live with, whether the parents take turns living with the child and who provides for the child. You can book an appointment at the family counselling office yourself or first discuss any problems at the maternity and child health clinic, where you will receive help for going to the family counselling office.

Family work

Family work provides help and guidance for raising children. You can become a family work client through the maternity and child health clinic or your children's school or daycare centre, for example. You can also contact the social services office yourself and ask about family work. Family workers will visit you at your home, talk with you and create a plan for helping your family. The family workers will give you advice regarding various matters, such as upbringing and everyday rhythms. Family work

helps the parents manage and cope with their everyday life. The family workers are bound by professional secrecy, and you can talk to them about even difficult matters.

Child welfare

The parents are always responsible for their children's upbringing and development. Sometimes the parents are unable to take care of their children, whereby Finnish society will help. Finnish law secures safety and well-being for children.

A child is entitled to protection and a safe environment. A family is in need of child welfare services if it is not safe at home, the parents neglect their children or a child endangers their own safety and well-being. Child welfare supports and guides families especially in difficult situations and crises in life.

Child welfare services are governed by law, so all decisions are based on Finnish law. Sometimes the procedures carried out by child welfare services are not voluntary, as decisions are made based on legislation to serve the children's best interests.

It is important to ask for help early. In Finland, service providers do as much as they can to help the family in order to improve the family's situation. Child welfare services can take a child into foster care as a last resort. This is done when the child can no longer live with their parents. Foster care means that someone else takes care of the child outside the child's home. Foster care is only used in situations in which the child's growth and development at home are endangered seriously or the child endangers their own development and safety. Before foster care, the family is offered a wide variety of help to improve the situation. Anyone can contact child welfare services.



3.

HEALTH

Every person living in Finland is entitled to healthcare services. Finnish law states that sufficient social and healthcare services must be secured for everyone. In Finland, healthcare services are provided by institutions such as maternity and child health clinics, schools, dental clinics, health centres and hospitals, as well as private service providers.

Public services are funded with taxes. Public services can be free or subject to a small excess fee. Everyone is entitled to social and healthcare services. Because of that, people may be queuing and you may have to wait for your turn to see a doctor.

In Finland, you can also book an appointment with private healthcare service providers, such as a doctor. The services are usually expensive, but available quickly. If public healthcare is unable to provide you with the necessary treatment, it can be purchased from a private healthcare service provider. In that case, the service will be priced in accordance with the prices of public healthcare.

The quality of the treatment and the professional skills of the workers are not dependent on the place of care. In Finland, private and public service workers have all undergone the same basic training.

Look up the telephone numbers of the dental clinics, health centre and hospital of your city! Additionally, find out what you need these services for. There is often such a wide variety of services available that it can be difficult to find the right one.

Do not hesitate to talk about your health with someone if you do not know where to look for help!

HEALTH CENTRE, HOSPITAL AND EMERGENCY SERVICE

A health centre and a hospital are two different things. If you have a health issue or you are ill, it is important that you know what to do.

Most cities have a designated number for a care needs assessment, through which calls are taken by a trained healthcare professional. They will assess what kind of care or treatment you need. Not all ailments are treated at a health centre or hospital. If you are a maternity and child health clinic client, you can bring up any non-urgent health matters there as well.

Health centres are usually open from Monday to Friday at 8.00–16.00. The health centre provides appointments with a doctor or nurse for people who have fallen ill or are treating a long-term illness. Health centres also provide care needs assessments and treatment for minor injuries. Health centres provide health advice to residents in the area.

Hospitals are open around the clock. Hospitals have different departments, such as a labour ward, an intensive care unit, an inpatient ward and a laboratory. Outpatient clinics treat various illnesses. Hospitals perform surgeries

and provide specialised care. You need a referral to go to a hospital. The referral is an electronic or paper document provided by a healthcare professional. The referral entitles you to specialised care and different examinations, such as laboratory tests and X-ray exams.

A health centre will provide you with urgent care on weekdays in the daytime. Call your local health centre and tell them about your ailment. A nurse will assess whether you need to book an appointment. The nurse can give you home care instructions over the phone. The health centre is closed in the evening and at weekends. In the evening and at night (16.00–08.00), you can call your local hospital, which has a joint emergency service. The emergency service is intended for situations that require urgent treatment. Examples of such situations include shortness of breath, chest pains, fractures and injuries, and illnesses that require immediate care. You can go to the hospital if told so over the phone. If your illness does not require immediate care, you can book an appointment at the health centre when it is open. In a life-threatening situation, always call the national emergency number 112.

CHILDREN'S DENTAL CARE

Finnish people are particular about dental hygiene and care. Parents are responsible for the dental care of their underage children. There is an established dental care routine in Finland.

People brush their teeth twice a day, in the morning and before going to sleep.

Dental care, meaning brushing teeth and

familiarisation with a toothbrush, is started as soon as a baby has their first tooth. A child has their first oral examinations around the age of six months. You will receive an invitation to the examination by post. After the first examination, the child's teeth and mouth will be examined once a year.

You must attend all of your child's dental care appointments. The dental hygienist may contact child welfare services if they are unable to reach the family. After that, a child welfare worker will find out why you are neglecting appointments and assess whether you are able to take care of your child.

Children under the age of ten are unable to brush their teeth independently. The child can brush their own teeth, but an adult has to check that the child's teeth are brushed thoroughly. Offer your child xylitol pastilles or chewing gum after every meal.

If your child's gums bleed when brushing teeth, they have gingivitis, which is an inflammation of

the gums. Gingivitis is usually caused by poor brushing. If it occurs, it is important to brush your child's teeth more thoroughly. Do not stop brushing your child's teeth, even if it hurts. It is for their best.

When a child is born, there are no bad bacteria in their mouth that would cause bad teeth. Do not let other family members use a spoon used for feeding the child. That will cause bad bacteria to be transferred to the child's mouth. The child must always have their own spoon for eating. Never give the child juice, soda or other sugary drinks from a baby bottle. Such drinks will damage the child's teeth.

You can make brushing teeth a fun moment together with your children. You can sing songs and be silly together while brushing your teeth. You can also make brushing teeth a small competition. When you are done brushing, you can give the child a sticker for a job well done. When brushing teeth is fun, your child will do it thoroughly and avoid dental problems.

ILL CHILD AT HOME

An ill child is usually cared for at home. It is common to catch various seasonal illnesses in Finland. The most common illnesses are a fever, the common cold, vomiting and diarrhoea. These illnesses do not usually require hospital treatment or calling an ambulance.

If your child is ill, you must not take them outside the home to go to the grocery store, see their friends or visit their grandparents, for example. Notify the child's school or daycare centre about their illness.

In Finland, children often have the common cold. Common symptoms of the illness include a runny nose, coughing and a fever. Make sure that you have a thermometer and painkillers for children and adults at home. You can buy these products at a pharmacy. When using the hospital emergency service by calling or visiting, a nurse will ask you whether your child has a fever. A child has a fever when their body temperature exceeds 37.5 °C. Learn how to use a thermometer. You can give the child a painkiller in accordance with the instructions. A

single dose of medicine may not cure the child's ailment, whereby the medicine must be given several times. Be sure to always use a new handkerchief or tissue paper when blowing your nose. Make sure that the child drinks enough fluids. The best fluid is water or low-sugar juice. Monitor the child's general condition. If the child eats, drinks and has energy for playing, they are usually fine. Contact the maternity and child health clinic or health centre if the child suddenly has a high fever or the fever lasts several days.

Gastroenteritis, meaning a stomach flu that causes vomiting, is highly contagious and often

starts suddenly. In such a case, the child is cared for at home. Gastroenteritis will reduce the child's appetite, so make sure that the child drinks plenty of fluids. Monitor the child's general condition. Gastroenteritis usually lasts only one day. The illness can easily spread to other members of the family.

Diarrhoea means runny faeces. If your child has diarrhoea, care for them at home and make sure that they eat and drink. Monitor the child's general condition. If their condition gets worse, contact the maternity and child health clinic or health centre.

PHARMACY AND MEDICATIONS

At a pharmacy, you can buy over-the-counter medications without a prescription, as well as medications prescribed by a doctor. Over-the-counter medications include products such as cough medicine, painkillers and allergy medication. If your illness requires medication that you cannot buy at a pharmacy without a prescription, see a doctor. The doctor will assess whether you need medication and write a prescription for you if needed.

You can buy your prescription medication at a pharmacy by presenting your prescription, personal identification or Kela card. Bring your Kela card when going to the pharmacy. The card entitles you to compensation in accordance with the Finnish Health Insurance Act, meaning a discount on your medication.

Pharmacies sell products such as medications for treating aches and the common cold, as well as fever. There are separate products for

adults and children. If you are about to buy medication for your child, check the suitability of the medicine and the correct dosage with the pharmacy staff. You should know how much your child weighs, as medicine is often dosed by their weight. Talk with the pharmacy staff if you need help.

Buy some vitamin D for your child at the pharmacy. Vitamin D is especially important for children to have, as it strengthens their bones and muscles. People get vitamin D from sources such as sunlight. Vitamin D supplements are used in Finland because the sun does not shine very much.

The pharmacy may offer you medicine that has a name different from your prescription. The alternative medicine has the same effect as the prescribed one, but is available at a lower price. The less expensive medicine is offered to everyone.

Prescription medications are bought at a designated desk at the pharmacy. Take a queue number and ask for the medications you need. The pharmacy staff will put your medications in a plastic bag, and you do not have to present them at the cash desk. At some pharmacies, the

medications can be paid for at the prescription desk. If not, the pharmacy staff will give you a paper, which you will then present at the cash desk. The cashier can see the price information on the paper. Other people do not have to see what medications you take.

EMERGENCIES

The national emergency phone number is 112. Only call the emergency number when the situation is serious or life-threatening. Examples of such incidents include a heart attack, an assault, a car accident, a fire, a break-in or other serious situation. You can also call the emergency number when you need the police. The emergency centre will help you over the phone and tell you if you have called the right number. You can call the emergency number for the police, the fire department or an ambulance.

The emergency number can be called free of charge, which means that you can call the number even if your phone has run out of credit. You can call the emergency number even if your phone is locked.

Do not call the emergency number in the case of an ordinary illness, such as your child's vomiting or your own back pain. In cases of an ordinary illnesses and aches, you can contact the health centre in the daytime. At weekends and in the evening and at night, call the emergency service. When you call the emergency number, the operator will ask you questions and assess your need for help. The operator will tell you what to do. Tell the operator your name, what has happened and the address of the

emergency site. Do not end the call until you are told to do so.

Only call the emergency number when the situation is serious. Call the number even if you do not speak Finnish very well! The emergency centre can use an interpreter if necessary.

Download the 112 Suomi application onto your phone. When you use the app to make a call, it will automatically tell the emergency centre where you are!!





4.

HOUSING IN FINLAND

In Finland, housing is included in everyone's basic rights, and all residential areas are safe to live in. You can lease or buy an apartment in Finland. Most Finnish people live in an apartment building, a terraced house, a semi-detached house or a detached house. In Finland, you can live alone or together with your spouse, your relatives, your own family or your friends.

Finnish people's first own home is most commonly a leased apartment. When you move into a leased apartment, you sign a lease agreement with the lessor. As a lessee, you must know your rights and obligations regarding housing matters. It is important that you pay your rent on time and maintain the apartment. You must also follow the rules of the housing company and remember to sort your waste. If you have low income, you can receive monetary support from Kela for paying rent, for example.

There are responsibilities related to housing. Some housing-related matters are the lessee's responsibility, while others are the lessor's responsibility. Some matters are to be taken care of by the maintenance company. It is important that you know these areas of responsibility, so that you know what to do and who to contact in problem situations.

This section discusses important matters related to housing that you should know. Take your time to read about these housing matters so that living at your home will be as easy and pleasant as possible.

LEASE AGREEMENT

A lease agreement is signed when you lease an apartment. The lease agreement is a document that contains information about living in the apartment, as well as the information of the lessor and the lessee. You accept the agreement by signing it. The matters stipulated in the lease agreement cannot be negotiated after signing. Be sure to keep your lease agreement in a safe place.

The agreement states the monthly rent amount and the payment deadline. The agreement contains the lessor's bank account number. In addition to the rent amount, the agreement states other fees and housing-related information. This information includes aspects such as the water rate and electricity agreement, as well as laundry room and parking spot fees.

The lease agreement can be fixed-term or valid until further notice. A lease agreement valid until further notice is in force until it is terminated by the lessee or the lessor. A fixed-term lease agreement is in force for an agreed upon period of time (such as six months).

When signing a lease agreement, you must almost always pay the lessor a rent security deposit. The deposit is an additional sum of money, equivalent to 1–3 months' rent, that is paid to the lessor before moving in. For example, if the rent is € 500 / month, the rent security deposit can be € 1,000. The deposit must be paid within the agreed upon deadline. When you have paid the deposit, you will receive the keys to the apartment. When you move out, you will get your deposit back if you have paid all housing-related fees and taken good care of the apartment.

The period of notice for a lease agreement valid until further notice is one calendar month. For example, if you terminate your lease agreement on 15 March, you must pay the rent until 30 April. When you are about to move out, you must notify the lessor in writing. A fixed-term lease agreement cannot be terminated. Instead, the agreement will end on the date stated in the agreement.

LESSEE'S RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

A person living in a leased apartment has housing-related rights and obligations. When you live in a leased apartment, you are entitled to domestic peace and comfortable living. For example, your neighbours are not allowed to disturb you by making noise at night. Even though your lessor has a key to your leased apartment, they are not allowed to enter your

home without permission. If living in the apartment is detrimental to your health (due to mould, for example), you can cancel the lease agreement immediately without a period of notice.

As a lessee, your most important obligation is to pay your rent on time. The lessor will notify you of any increases to the rent amount. Usually,

the rent amount is adjusted once a year. The rent may remain unchanged or even increase. You must follow the rules of both the lease agreement and the housing company. You are also responsible for making sure that your guests follow the rules as well.

The lessee must ask for the lessor's permission to renovate the apartment, for example. If repair work, such as plumbing, is performed in your apartment, you have the right to be told about it in advance. If you detect any faults, such as a leaky toilet, notify the lessor or the maintenance

company immediately. If you damage your apartment on purpose, you must pay for the damage yourself. The lessor may obligate you to acquire home insurance for the apartment and your belongings. Acquire the home insurance from an insurance company.

The law states that all apartments must have a smoke detector, and the lessee is responsible for acquiring one. You can buy one at a larger grocery store. You can ask the maintenance company for help with installing the smoke detector.

MAINTENANCE COMPANY AND RULES OF THE HOUSING COMPANY

The maintenance company will take care of any sudden and important maintenance work in your apartment. The service is open around the clock. You can find the maintenance company's contact information on the staircase bulletin board. Take a picture of the bulletin board with your phone. You must contact the maintenance company in cases such as an electrical problem, a leaky toilet or clogged pipes. The maintenance company is also responsible for matters related to heating and radiators. Additionally, the maintenance company maintains the yard by taking care of work such as clearing snow and spreading gravel on ice.

The maintenance company will open the door to your apartment if you forget your keys inside. You can call the maintenance company and ask

for the door opening service. The door opening service is subject to a fee.

Every housing company has rules, which are posted on the staircase bulletin board. You can find general housing rules in several languages online.

Many housing companies have similar rules. One of the most important rules is night-time silence. This means that you must avoid making loud noises from 22.00 to 7.00. In Finland, smoking indoors is prohibited, even in your own apartment. If your housing company prohibits smoking, you cannot smoke even on your own balcony. In that case, smoking is only allowed in a designated smoking area. Contact your lessor if people break the rules and disturb your living.

The residents are responsible for the tidiness of the common facilities. The common facilities include areas such as the staircase, the waste bin shelter and the laundry room. Storing bicycles or prams in the staircase is prohibited. You must also not keep any waste bags or other

items in the stairwell or on your balcony for fire safety reasons. The waste bin shelter is not intended for the disposing of large items, such as furniture or electronics. Items that you cannot leave in the waste bin shelter must be taken to a recycling point. This will keep the yard tidy.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

Recycling means reusing items and waste. In Finland, waste is also recycled. When you sort and recycle your waste correctly, it can be used to make something new. For example, glass bottles or plastic containers can be melted down and remoulded into something new. In Finland, everyone must sort their own household waste and use the correct collection bins.

Sort your waste by the material type. You should have separate bins for biowaste, paper, cardboard, plastic, metal, glass and mixed waste. If there is no suitable collection bin in the yard, take your waste to a recycling point. Recycling points are often located in the yard of a large grocery store. You must not take your waste to the collection bins of other buildings. Never throw your waste into the environment!

Do not put medications into your household waste bin. They must be taken to a pharmacy for disposal. Never throw menstruation pads,

food, waste or unnecessary chemicals into the toilet. Instead, put them into the correct waste bins. Cooking oil must be placed into a mixed waste bin in a closed container. Solid fats can be placed into the biowaste container. Never pour cooking oil into the sink, as it can clog the wastepipe.

Do not place batteries into the mixed waste bin. Tape over the ends of used batteries and take them to a collection point at a store.

In Finland, it is common to sell and buy used but intact items and clothes. Intact items are not trash, as you can sell or give them to someone. Reduce your amount of waste by only buying things that you need. You can also use household waste for crafting. For example, you can turn a metal can into a pen container or a flowerpot.

One person's trash is another person's treasure!

HOME MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING

You must tidy up, maintain and clean your home appropriately. The following tips will help you keep your home clean, safe and comfortable.

The floor drain of your bathroom must be cleaned once a month. When you clean the airlock of the floor drain and the wash basin on a regular basis, they will not clog up. Never throw things into the toilet that do not belong there, such as nappies, cotton wool or sanitary napkins. Never leave any household appliances, such as the washing machine, running when you leave the apartment. Appliances that are left running unsupervised can cause water damage or a fire.

Dry your laundry in a room with working ventilation, such as the bathroom. If you regularly dry your laundry in the living room, for example, there will be a lot of humidity that can ruin the structures of the apartment. Do not dry your laundry in the sauna, as that is a fire hazard.

Take care of cleaning your kitchen appliances. Dust and dirt increase the danger of a fire and

shorten the lifespan of household appliances. Clean the extractor hood filter on a regular basis. The extractor hood filter is located above the stove. Cleaning your oven and hotplates on a regular basis is important in order to avoid persistent grime. Clean behind the oven at least once a year by moving the oven. Clean the refrigerator and thaw the freezer once a year. When thawing the freezer, place containers and towels on the floor in front of the freezer. This will prevent water from dripping onto the floor and causing damage.

Clean your home on a regular basis with appropriate detergents. You can buy detergents for cleaning the bathroom, the kitchen and the apartment floors, for example, at a grocery store. You must not use overly strong chemicals, such as chlorite, on floors and home surfaces. Do not mix chlorite with hot water, as it will vaporise and can cause health problems. You should clean your floors with a damp cloth. Do not use too much water when cleaning the floor. Too much water and strong detergents can ruin the floor and other surfaces.

MOVING

When you decide to move, you must first find a new apartment. Terminate the lease agreement for your old apartment in time, one calendar month before moving. After that, you can start taking care of practical matters related to moving.

Prepare for the move well in advance. Acquire an electricity agreement and home insurance for your new apartment in time. If you have children and you are moving to another city, arrange new school and daycare places for them. You must

inform the current daycare centre and school of when the children will move away. You can also check whether you are entitled to relocation allowance from Kela.

You must submit a notification of a change of address to Posti and the magistrate. Start packing at least a week before moving to avoid running out of time. Write the contents of each moving box on the box itself. This will make unpacking easier in your new home.

Carry out a thorough cleaning before relinquishing the keys to the apartment. The goal of the final cleaning is for the apartment to be as tidy as it was when you moved in. When carrying out the final cleaning, clean the oven, the refrigerator and the apartment windows,

and thaw the freezer. Clean the bathroom surfaces and the floor drain. Do not leave any items in the apartment or the storage room. Everything must be taken out. For example, you must not place furniture in the waste bin shelter, but sell them, give them away or take them to a recycling point. The final cleaning is your obligation. If the cleaning is not sufficiently thorough, cleaning expenses can be deducted from your rent security deposit.

Return all keys given to you to the lessor after the final cleaning. If you do not return all the keys, you must pay for a lock replacement. After you return your keys, the lessor will inspect the apartment. If the apartment has been cleaned well, nothing is broken and you have paid your rent on time, you will get your deposit back.

HOUSING SUPPORT AND ECONOMICAL LIVING

You can receive general housing allowance from Kela if your income is low. The housing allowance is intended for paying rent. The sum is determined in accordance with your housing expenses, the size of your family, the location of the apartment and your family's monthly income. Because of this, you may not be entitled to as much housing allowance as a friend of yours. The housing allowance can be no more than 80% of the housing expenses. The housing expenses consist of your rent and water and heating fees. You can also apply for basic social assistance for paying your housing costs.

You can also apply for assistance for paying your rent security deposit if you receive basic social assistance. Additionally, Kela can assist you with moving-related expenses, such as transportation costs. Kela can grant you the rent security deposit or relocation allowance if you have an important reason for moving, such as increased family size, a divorce or a new job.

You can apply for these benefits on the Kela website or with a paper form supplied by Kela. When sending applications, make sure that

you have added all the necessary attachments. The necessary attachments include your lease agreement and bank statements, for example.

The different benefits cover only necessary and reasonable housing expenses. You can affect your own housing expenses through small changes in your everyday life.

You pay for the use of water and electricity yourself. Turn off all lights and electrical devices

when you are not using them. Take quick showers and do not keep the water running unnecessarily. Only wash full machine loads of laundry. Do not heat your apartment by running hot water or heating the oven.

Flea markets and recycling are popular in Finland. You can find furniture, clothes and other items in good condition at affordable prices at flea markets. Only buy what you need. Your wallet and nature will thank you for it.



5.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE AND SCHOOL

In Finland, education is important and high-quality. The Finnish education system consists of daycare, preschool, comprehensive school, upper secondary school or vocational college and higher education, meaning university or university of applied sciences. In Finland, education is provided free of charge, and everyone has the opportunity to receive education. Finnish people usually study for 12–15 years in order to obtain a profession.

A child's learning path starts from early childhood education and care, meaning daycare. The child can be taken to daycare before the age of one, and they can be in daycare until the age of six. The child will learn important skills and the Finnish language in daycare.

In Finland, children go to preschool for a year. The child will start pre-primary education in preschool in the year of their sixth birthday. Preschool lasts for a year. Pre-primary education will prepare the child for starting school.

Comprehensive school starts in the year of the child's seventh birthday. In Finland, comprehensive school lasts nine years. Every child living in Finland receives compulsory education. This means that attending basic education is obligatory.

Comprehensive school is followed by upper secondary education. The most common forms of upper secondary education are upper secondary school and vocational college. Upper secondary education is provided free of charge, but students must buy their own books and other study materials. Upper secondary education lasts around three years. After upper secondary education, students can move on to higher education. Higher education is provided by universities and universities of applied sciences.

It is important that you know about school and daycare matters, as they are a major and important part of your child's life in Finland. The following section describes what early childhood education and care and basic education mean and why they are important to your child. The section also provides tips for good co-operation with the daycare centre or school.

DAYCARE AND PRESCHOOL

Early childhood education and care is also called daycare. Every child has the right to attend daycare. In Finland, children go to daycare to enable their parents to attend school or work. Daycare supports and helps the parents with upbringing.

The goal of daycare is to support the child's growth and development. In daycare, the child learns the Finnish language and various skills, such as concentration and playing with others. If the child's native language is not Finnish, their learning of Finnish is supported in daycare.

Children have various activities in daycare, such as arts and crafts, play, singing and outdoor activities. The days also include a nap and three meals: breakfast, lunch and a snack. Daycare always follows a daily rhythm. Meals and naps take place every day at the same time. Regular rhythms and routines give the child a sense of security.

An early childhood education and care plan is created for every child in daycare. The plan

details what skills the child should practise, for example. Daycare days feature plenty of play, as children learn things by playing. In daycare, the child will learn to do things such as eating and getting dressed independently. The activities are planned in accordance with the needs and wishes of the staff, the children and the parents.

The daycare service is subject to a fee. The fee depends on the family's income and size and how much time the child spends in daycare. If the family has very low income, daycare is free.

The law states that children must attend pre-primary education. Children usually start preschool at the age of six. The purpose of preschool is to practise school skills. A learning plan is created for the child in preschool. Pre-primary education is free of charge and provided for four hours a day. After the preschool day, the child can go to daycare if the parents are at school or work. Children are usually enrolled in preschool online.

THE PARENTS AND THE CHILD'S DAYCARE CENTRE

The daycare centre is an important place for the child, as the child spends a large portion of their day there. You should know what kind of everyday activities your child has at the daycare centre. Daycare is important for things such

as the development of your child's language skills. Be sure to make it possible for the child to have days off from daycare and holidays. Apply for a place in daycare in good time. When you receive the information about your child's

daycare place, go and visit the new daycare centre together with your child. Schedule the visit by calling the daycare centre. During your visit, you can ask questions about daycare and tell the daycare centre staff about your child. The purpose of the visit is for the daycare centre staff to meet the child and the family, and for the family to familiarise themselves with the daycare centre.

Starting daycare is a new situation for the parents and the child. It may take some time to get used to daycare, and the child may cry the first few times they are taken to daycare. The daycare centre staff are professionals, and they can help and calm down your child. Talk with the daycare centre staff about the start of daycare.

Every child is given an early childhood education and care plan at the daycare centre. Both parents should attend the child's early childhood education and care discussion, which is held twice a year. The purpose is to discuss the child's matters, such as what the child likes, what they are good at and what skills they

should practise. You have the right to have an interpreter at the discussion.

Talking with the daycare staff and the child is important. When taking your child to daycare, tell the worker how your morning went. When picking up the child from daycare, ask the worker and the child how the day went and what they did in daycare. Be sure to follow the care time reservations – in other words, drop off and pick up your children exactly at the agreed upon times. In Finland, people are specific about care times.

Your obligation is to ensure that your child has all the necessary items, such as nappies, indoor shoes, a change of clothes and outdoor clothes, with them. Be sure to write your child's name on all of their clothes. In daycare, children go outside twice a day, even if it rains or the temperature is freezing. When it is raining, your child must have mud trousers and gloves, as well as rubber boots. In winter, it is important to wear several layers of clothing under the snowsuit: a wool suit, wool socks, thin and thick gloves, a thin and a thick hat and proper winter shoes.

THE CHILD'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Talking and our native language are important to all of us. Native language means the language that the child learns first at home from their parents. The native language is a language in which a person can accurately express their feelings. The native language is an important part of the person's own culture.

Speak your own native language with your child. The child must know their native language well in order to be able to learn a new language. You can support the child's learning of your native language at home through means such as talking, listening to music from your native culture and watching programmes in your

native language. If the child has poor native language skills, it will be more difficult for them to learn Finnish. Children start learning in their infancy, so start talking to your child as soon as they are born.

Daycare will help the child learn Finnish before starting school. Pictures are used to support speech in daycare. In daycare, children sing, say nursery rhymes, read books and play various games that develop language skills. The child's Finnish language skills also develop in everyday life at the daycare centre with other

children and adults. The parents do not have to teach the child Finnish, as it is better for the child to learn the language in daycare.

If the child's native language is not Finnish, an FSL (Finnish as a Second Language) plan will be created for them in daycare. The goal of the plan is to support the child's learning of Finnish in daycare, as well as the development of their native language skills at home. Be sure to talk openly with the daycare centre staff if you have any questions about your child's language learning.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

In Finland, every child receives compulsory education. Children start school in the year of their seventh birthday. The child receives their compulsory education by completing Finnish comprehensive school. Finnish comprehensive school consists of grades 1–9.

The school year starts in August and ends in late May or early June. The summer break is from June to the end of July. The school year features other holidays as well, such as an autumn break, a Christmas break and a winter break.

The child's school week follows a timetable. The timetable shows you what subjects the child has at school and how long their school

days are. Make sure that the child has all the necessary schoolbooks and items, such as pencils, in their backpack. The parents' job is to make sure that the child goes to school and does their homework.

The teachers will contact the parents if the child is often late for school. Make sure that you are adhering to the timetable. At school, children receive one free meal a day. If your child has dietary restrictions, such as allergies, notify their teacher.

Children study different subjects at school. In the first grade, children start learning Finnish, English, mathematics, environmental studies, religion or ethics, music, visual art, crafts and

physical education. The child will start studying Swedish and elective studies later on.

If your child has insufficient Finnish language skills, they will start comprehensive school in preparatory education. In preparatory education, the child will learn the language and studying skills needed at school. Preparatory education involves studying Finnish and other

school subjects. When the child's language skills improve, they will transfer to a normal school class.

Every class has its own teacher. You can contact the teacher of your child's class regarding all matters related to your child. It is important that you know the teacher's name and telephone number.

THE PARENTS AND THE CHILD'S SCHOOL

Your child needs plenty of support and help from the parents when starting school. Tell the child that school is important and encourage them. School is a major part of the child's everyday life, so the parents must show interest in their children's schooling.

The parents enrol their child in school. You will receive enrolment instructions from the preschool or by post. You can enrol your child in school online or by visiting the child's local school, for example.

The parents' job is to see that the child goes to school. Make sure that the child goes to school on time and has all the necessary school equipment with them. Ensure that the child has enough sleep, eats well and engages in physical activity. When these things are taken care of, going to school is easier for the child.

You should place the child's timetable in a place such as the refrigerator door. The timetable

shows you what subjects the child has at school and how long their school days are. Ask the child about any upcoming tests. Help the child prepare for tests by reading together, for example.

You will support your child's schooling when you show interest in their school matters. Ask the child every day what they have learned at school and what they did on breaks. This will make the child feel that you are interested in their schooling and find it important. Supporting the child's schooling also means talking with the child's teacher. You can contact the teacher by calling them or via Wilma, for example.

The family's matters often affect the child's school performance. Problems at home can cause the child to have issues such as concentration difficulties. Because of this, the teacher should be told about situations such as the parents' divorce. The teacher can support the child when they know what the

family's situation is. The teacher is bound by professional secrecy.

Schools also hold various celebrations and events in which the parents can participate, such as Christmas and spring celebrations. You should attend parents' evenings and discussions, as they are important for the child's schooling.

The parents of all the children are invited to parents' evenings. At those events, you will be told about the school's common matters and upcoming events. The teacher talks with the parents personally at parents' discussions, which focus on the child's schooling. Remember that you have the right to have an interpreter at parents' evenings and discussions, as well as other discussion situations with the teacher.

ELECTRONIC SERVICES AND APPLICATIONS

Schools and daycare centres often take care of matters via different phone applications. Most schools use the Wilma application. Wilma serves as a channel for communication between the home and school. Daycare centres utilise different applications for reserving care times. Find out how care times are given at your child's daycare centre and follow the instructions provided.

A place in daycare can be applied for online or with a paper application. Be sure to apply for a place in daycare for your child at least four months in advance. For the daycare application, you will need your own personal information as well as that of your children and the information of your workplace or educational institution, if applicable. Additionally, you must state in the application where you would like your child to go to daycare and how much daycare they need. Enrolment in preschool is carried out early in the year online or with a paper application. You can ask a friend for help, for example, if you do not know how to fill out the applications. Reserving

care times for your child at the daycare centre is your responsibility.

Check with your child's daycare centre how care times must be reserved. If you do not reserve care times for your child, they cannot attend daycare. Make sure that you adhere to the scheduled care times and always pick up the child at the right time at the daycare centre. Talk with the daycare centre staff if you need help with reserving care times.

You can notify the daycare centre of your child's absence via the application used by the daycare centre or by calling or messaging the daycare centre. Notify the daycare centre if your child cannot attend daycare due to an illness, for example. Notify the daycare centre of your child's holiday times as well.

Most preschools and comprehensive schools use the Wilma application. Communication between the home and school is carried out with Wilma. Ask for a username and password

from your child's school and ask the teacher for instructions for using the application. Read Wilma every day. Teachers will write entries regarding your child's schooling on Wilma. You can see on Wilma if your child has been absent from school or late for a lesson. The teachers will write an entry if problems, such as bullying, occur at school. Wilma features important information for parents regarding matters such

as holidays and trips. You can also see your child's homework and upcoming exam days on Wilma. Ask what application your child's school uses. The school staff can help you with putting the application to use.



Kemin kirjasto

6.

FINNISH CULTURE, RELIGION AND LEISURE TIME

Human rights, equality, non-discrimination and personal space are important to Finnish people. It is normal for a young person to move away from home and become independent. Finnish women work as well, even if they have children. In fact, Finland is one of the most equal countries in the world. Finnish society is very organised. We can trust the law and authorities, such as the police.

Finnish people's biggest dreams include starting a family, obtaining a good education and job and buying their own home and car. The family usually has one or two children, and many also have pets, such as a dog or a cat. Every family and person has their own ways.

Finnish people like to spend their leisure time by visiting each other's homes and meeting friends or engaging in hobbies and outdoor activities, for example. People can spend their leisure time however they want. One person may enjoy going to the library, while another person likes to go to the gym.

The Finnish conversation culture can be very different from your own. Finnish people tend to be quiet when meeting new people. They like to think about what they are going to say and are usually frank. People are not angry, even if they may appear angry to you. Finnish people act in a calm and collected manner at parties and celebrations and avoid playing loud music. Conversations are calm and polite.

The majority of Finnish people are Christians, but religion does not play a major part in typical Finnish everyday life. However, Christian ceremonies are common, and almost all Finnish people attend them regardless of their religious views.

This section provides you with information about values important to Finnish people, customs, lifestyles, hobbies and the significance of religion.

FINNISH CULTURE

Justice, honesty and equality are important to Finnish people. The law states that women and men are equal. Both can work, and both are responsible for taking care of the home and the children.

In Finland, you can trust other people and the authorities. Honesty is valued in Finland. Do not tell a Finnish person what you think they want to hear. Always be honest when answering questions and do not hesitate to state your own opinion. Be sure to keep any promises you make. If you break promises, people will find you unreliable.

Finland has freedom of speech. You have the right to express your opinion, even if it differs from someone else's opinion. In Finland, people are often frank and honest about their own opinions.

Finland has a democracy, which means that a person has the right to participate in society's activities. Every citizen aged 18 or older has the right to vote and an opportunity to influence society. Citizens vote on the president and parliamentarians, for example.

Finnish culture is very individual-oriented. A

person decides on their own matters, which is a right granted by Finnish law. The person's family, relatives or community do not decide on the person's matters. For example, you get to decide on your place of residence, educational institution, spouse and starting a family yourself.

Finnish people appreciate modesty. Usually, Finnish people tend to dress low-key, avoiding drawing attention to themselves. Finnish people avoid talking loudly, taking others into consideration and listening to one another. Finnish people find studying, working and diligence to be important.

If you visit a Finnish person's home, remember to agree on the visit beforehand. Do not be offended if the time is not good for a visit. Finnish people value privacy. Remember to take your shoes off when entering a Finnish person's home.

In Finland, everyone is addressed by their first name. Finnish people greet each other by shaking hands. However, you do not have to shake hands if you do not want to. You can hug a friend. Kisses on the cheek are not common in Finland.

FINNISH PEOPLE'S EVERYDAY LIFE AND RELIGION

Finland has freedom of religion. This means that everyone can choose their own religion, or they can choose to not have any religious faith.

The majority of Finnish people are Christians and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. You may come from a country in which religion

plays a major role in people's everyday life. In Finland, the influence of religion in everyday life is barely noticeable. The everyday life of Finnish families usually includes working, the children's schooling and hobbies. However, Christianity is talked about openly at a general level.

Religion is a personal matter in Finland, and talking about a person's own relationship with God is difficult. Everyone can decide how they maintain their relationship with religion. However, many Finnish Christians like to attend religious ceremonies.

There are four religious ceremonies important to Finnish people. The first one is baptism. In the ceremony, the child is welcomed as a member of the parish at a church or home and given a name. The second one is confirmation. 15-year-olds go to confirmation class, where they learn the basics of Christianity. Upon confirmation, the young person becomes a full-fledged member of the parish. The third one is the

wedding ceremony. In the wedding ceremony, the couple commits to each other publicly, asking for God's blessing for the marriage. The fourth is the funeral ceremony. In the Christian faith, death is not the end of everything. The funeral blessing gives hope of a new life and going to Heaven.

Religious holidays are part of the calendar and mark days off for everyone, regardless of their religion. On public holidays, families often get together to spend time and rest.

Going to church is not a major part of Finnish people's everyday life. People go to church most often for a wedding or a funeral. The conventional custom is for Christians to gather for a church service on Sunday and pray together. However, the majority of Christians pray quietly by themselves. In other words, practising Christianity is a personal matter that is usually not shown to other people.

FINNISH PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND DAYS OFF

There are national public holidays in Finland. On public holidays, most people have a day off from work. Store staff may have to work, but stores can have exceptional opening hours. Hospitals' emergency services are always open. Usually, all offices are closed on public holidays.

Schools and most daycare centres are closed

on public holidays. Note that the school year features a Christmas break, an autumn break, a winter break and a summer break. School holidays are often longer than the holidays of working parents.

Families often have their own traditions that they follow on national public holidays. Holidays

important to Finnish people include Christmas, Easter, May Day and Midsummer. On holidays, families spend time together. Many holidays are related to Christianity.

Some holidays are flag days. That means that people hoist the Finnish flag to a pole. There are

also other flag days, many of which are related to Finnish culture. For example, Kalevala Day on 28 February is a celebration of Finnish culture. Culture-related flag days are not holidays. Mother's Day is always the second Sunday of May and Father's Day is the second Sunday of November. They are also flag days.

The most common Finnish public holidays:

New Year's Day (1 January)	May Day (1 May)
Epiphany (6 January)	Midsummer Eve
Good Friday	Midsummer
Easter Day	All Saints' Day
Easter Monday	Independence Day (6 December)
Ascension Day	Christmas Eve (24 December)
Pentecost	Boxing Day (26 December)

HOBBIES, EXERCISE AND LEISURE TIME

In Finland, people have hobbies. Hobbies mean fun leisure time activities, such as arts and crafts, music or exercise. Hobbies give you opportunities to meet new friends, take time for yourself, feel good and learn new skills. In Finland, mothers also have hobbies outside the home.

The most common hobby among Finnish people is exercise. There are many ways to exercise, such as cycling, walking or going to the gym. Exercise has a significant effect on people's health and energy. Exercise prevents diseases and helps you sleep better. You will stay in good

physical condition, meaning that you will have more energy and stamina. It will make you feel good as well. You should exercise often, at least three times a week.

Children should be physically active as well. A child under the age of eight should have three hours of exercise a day. Children's exercise can be, for example, outdoor activities on a playground, physical games at home and light exercise, such as walking or cycling with the parents. The family is an important role model to a child. Make exercise a part of the whole family's everyday life.

You should also find a hobby for your child. Hobbies are a good way to spend energy and find Finnish friends. Children should not just stay home and be on their tablet or phone in their leisure time. If your child has no hobbies, you can suggest some fun activities, such as drawing, arts and crafts, reading or outdoor activities. Children need instructions and guidance from an adult for many things. It can be difficult for the child to start new things without an adult's support.

Leisure time means free time during which you can do whatever you want. In addition to having hobbies, Finnish people like to spend leisure time with their family and friends, for example. Leisure time is meant for relaxing and recovering energy for work and studying. Children often spend their leisure time playing with friends at each other's homes or outside. Ask a parent of your child's friend whether your child can come over to play. You can also agree at what time your child will be dropped off and picked up.

LIBRARY

Finnish people read a lot. In many families, the parents read bedtime stories to their children. Reading books aloud develops the child's imagination and language skills and strengthens the bond between the parent and the child.

Every city and major municipality has a library, which can be used free of charge. At the library, you can read and borrow books, magazines, movies, games and music. The library can order books in many languages from other libraries. Do not hesitate to ask your local library for books in your native language. The library has books with which you can independently study the Finnish language. For example, children's picture books are good for that purpose.

Books are borrowed with a library card. You can fill out an application for a library card at the library. Bring your personal ID so that you can be given a

library card. You can ask the library staff for help. Libraries are quiet places where loud talking is not allowed. You can study and work in peace at the library. Libraries often have a computer that can be used free of charge.

Books, games, magazines and CDs have different loan periods. You can see the loan period on the loan receipt. You can renew books loans at the library or online, thus increasing the loan period. If you do not return your books on time, you will have to pay an overdue fee. If you accumulate numerous overdue fees, you will be banned from borrowing materials. The ban will be lifted when you pay your overdue fees.

Libraries have a children's section as well. The children's section features books and games for children. Children can also play and read books aloud in the children's section.



7.

MOTHERHOOD

In Finland, most women have their first child at around the age of 29. Having children is usually planned well in advance. People like to take their time to get to know their spouse and discuss starting a family. Couples are often together for a few years before they have children. The majority of Finnish people want to study, obtain a profession and work before having children. Ideally, the family's financial situation is stable before the child is born.

Pregnant women are taken care of and examined often and in depth. Finnish healthcare is reliable. Maternity and child health clinics provide pregnant women with important support. At the clinic, you can safely talk about things such as your thoughts, worries, problems and wishes.

Giving birth in Finland may be different from giving birth in your native country. The period after childbirth may be very different from your expectations, making it important to talk about it with friends or at the clinic.

In Finland, everyone has freedom of self-determination. A woman can choose whether she wants to become pregnant or not. When pregnant, the woman can decide whether she wants to keep the child or have an abortion. Couples discuss these matters, but the woman always makes the final decision.

Mothers are provided with a variety of benefits and services. Important benefits include the parental allowance, the home care allowance, the maternity package and the child benefit. These benefits are paid by Kela to mothers and parents in Finland.

This section discusses motherhood, pregnancy, childbirth, benefits and related matters in Finland.

PREGNANCY

In Finland, pregnancy is monitored closely at the maternity and child health clinic. Take a pregnancy test if your period is late by two weeks. You can buy a pregnancy test at a grocery store or a pharmacy. If you are pregnant, contact the maternity and child health clinic and make an appointment. Remember to ask for an interpreter!

The maternity and child health clinic will provide you with support and security during your pregnancy. You can talk about all of your thoughts, fears and wishes and ask questions at the clinic. You can trust the maternity and child health clinic workers, as they are bound by professional secrecy. The maternity and child health clinic provides plenty of information about various restrictions and recommendations related to pregnancy, such as food restrictions and recommendations regarding exercise and vitamins.

Be sure to tell the maternity and health clinic workers if you have been circumcised. Circumcision affects examinations and giving birth. The clinic workers are familiar with circumcision.

The clinic will give you a maternity card. You must always bring it when going to the maternity and child health clinic or the maternity outpatient clinic

of the hospital for an ultrasound examination. Information about you and the progress of your pregnancy will be recorded on the card. The maternity card features important phonenumber, such as those of the maternity and child health clinic and the labour ward of the hospital. Familiarise yourself with the maternity card. Ask the maternity and child health clinic if you do not understand what is written on the card.

In Finland, pregnancy is counted accurately: weeks + days. For example, 25+3 = 25 weeks and 3 days. You can see the pregnancy weeks on the maternity card. Usually, children are born in pregnancy week 40.

During your pregnancy, your spouse is allowed to participate in monitoring the pregnancy by attending clinic visits and ultrasound examinations, for example. In Finland, spouses attend these visits actively. Pregnancy is very important to spouses as well.

During pregnancy, the mother has many examinations. Small blood samples and urine tests are taken at the maternity and child health clinic. Two or three ultrasound examinations are performed during a pregnancy. The purpose is to find out how far the pregnancy has come and examine the baby's development.

CHILDBIRTH IN FINLAND

In Finland, women usually give birth at a hospital. Giving birth at home is not common. Vaginal birth is favoured as the birthing method, as it is

natural and safe. C-sections are performed only in a planned manner or in emergencies. There is usually a health-related reason for a C-section.

You can visit the labour ward before giving birth. Talk with the maternity and child health clinic workers about coming for a visit.

There are various safe pain relief methods available for childbirth. For example, you can use a heating pad, water and laughing gas. You can also have various forms of pain-relieving anaesthesia, such as an epidural injection to your back. These are designed to help mothers get through childbirth. You can talk about pain relief at the maternity and child health clinic before giving birth.

Childbirth is an important experience for both parents. In Finland, the spouse often accompanies the mother during childbirth. Their role is to support the mother throughout the entire birthing process. The spouse can massage, caress and talk to the mother. The important thing is for you to feel safe. You can also ask a friend or relative to accompany you during childbirth.

A midwife and a doctor will be there to help the mother give birth. They will not be present at all times, but they will check the situation regularly and when needed. The midwife will help and guide the mother through childbirth and check the condition of the baby and the mother several times. If necessary, the doctors will administer pain medication and anaesthesia.

Remember to ask for an interpreter! You have the right to know what the midwives and doctors are doing and how the birthing process is coming along. You have the right to ask questions and talk to the nurses about your feelings and pains.

If you are afraid of giving birth, do not hesitate to talk about it at the maternity and child health clinic. The fear of childbirth is commonly discussed in Finland and there is help available.

AFTER CHILDBIRTH AT THE HOSPITAL AND AT HOME

After childbirth, the mother and the baby will stay at the hospital for around 3–5 days. The doctors and nurses want the mother and the child to be well. If the mother and the child are not well, they can stay at the hospital longer. Hospitals have visiting hours. Only the baby's father, siblings and grandparents are allowed to visit. Friends or other relatives are not allowed at the hospital. The labour ward is a peaceful and quiet place.

Washing your hands is very important when caring for a newborn baby. The baby can easily have a bacterial or viral infection and fall ill. For this reason, everyone who touches the baby must wash their hands.

In Finland, it is commonly thought that a newborn baby should not be visited for the first two or three weeks. People want to take that time to be with their family at home and get

to know the baby. They do not want bacteria or viruses in the home. People with a cold or illness, or people who have recently been ill, are not allowed to visit to prevent the baby from falling ill. A minor cold may be insignificant to an adult, but dangerous to a baby.

A nurse from the maternity and child health clinic will visit the family's home a few days after the mother and the baby have been discharged. The nurse will measure the baby's weight and height and talk with you about how you are feeling.

The mother will be given a follow-up examination 5–12 weeks after giving birth. The follow-up examination involves talking about your pregnancy, the childbirth process and the post-partum period. You will also be given an

internal examination. The purpose is to check that everything is fine and that there are no infections. You will receive a certificate for the follow-up examination, which you must submit to Kela for parental allowance.

The topic of birth control will also be discussed during the follow-up examination. Breastfeeding is not a reliable way to prevent pregnancy. There is no telling when the mother will start having her period again. It is important that the mother uses appropriate birth control if she does not want to become pregnant again right away.

It is important for the mother to eat healthy food and exercise. Walking with a pram is good exercise for a new mother. Healthy food and exercise help the body recover from childbirth and alleviate tiredness during the infancy period.

BIRTH CONTROL

In Finland, a woman has the right to decide on matters concerning her body. The woman is allowed to use birth control if she wants to. Birth control is the woman's right.

The purpose of birth control is to prevent pregnancy and protect the user from sexually transmitted diseases. You may have to try several birth control methods to find one that suits you. You can talk about different birth control methods at the maternity and child health clinic or when seeing a doctor. Healthcare workers are reliable and bound by professional secrecy, which means that they will not tell anyone about your personal matters.

In Finland, all birth control methods are reliable and carefully researched. They do not cause developmental disabilities or infertility. The most commonly used birth control methods in Finland are the following.

A condom provides good protection against pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Its contraceptive effectiveness is lower than that of birth control pills, for example, because the condom can break.

An intrauterine device is placed inside the womb. It is installed by a doctor. The same intrauterine device can be used for 3–5 years.

Birth control pills are taken at the same time every day. If you forget to take the pill, you can become pregnant. There are a few different kinds of birth control pills.

A birth control patch is a patch that is placed on your arm or buttock, for example. You can put it on yourself. The patch is worn for three weeks, after which it is taken off for a week. Then it is replaced with a new one.

A contraceptive implant is implanted on your arm under the skin. The procedure is carried out by a doctor or a nurse. The same implant can be used for 3–5 years.

Sterilisation is a procedure in which the woman's fallopian tubes are closed. After that, she cannot become pregnant. Sterilisation is a final solution that prevents you from becoming pregnant. A man can also be sterilised.

Another birth control method is emergency contraception. It is a tablet that must be taken no later than 72 hours after intercourse. Emergency contraception is not a recommendable birth control method. You may take it if your birth control fails (the condom breaks, for example) or you have had unprotected intercourse. You can buy an emergency contraceptive tablet at a pharmacy without a prescription.

BREASTFEEDING AND BOTTLE FEEDING

Exclusive breastfeeding is favoured in Finland. It means that the baby is only given breast milk. Breastfeeding is important, as mother's milk is healthy and safe for the child. The child receives important vitamins from breast milk. Breastfeeding can be difficult at first. It can cause pain and demand a lot of patience. The baby must not be given sugar or honey water. Babies under the age of one must not be given honey. When the baby is hungry, they will open their mouth, turn their head and put their hands in their mouth. The baby's crying does not always mean that they are hungry. The baby may cry due to being tired, having a stomach ache or wanting to be held. There are many possible reasons for the crying.

In Finland, a family with a baby is given only a little external help. The grandparents or other relatives are often too busy to be able to help the mother care for the baby. The parents themselves are responsible for caring for the baby.

Rest is important during the breastfeeding and infancy period. Rest helps you breastfeed and produce enough milk. There are plenty of chores, possibly older children, cooking and cleaning to be taken care of at home. It is important that your spouse performs household chores, as the baby requires a lot of your time. Breastfeeding and taking care of the baby's needs are the mother's most important tasks.

It is not a problem if children's toys and things are scattered about or the dishes have not been done.

Sometimes, the mother is unable to breastfeed and wants to start bottle feeding. Bottle feeding is a good alternative that enables the mother to rest. The mother can sleep while the father takes care of the baby. Stores sell various bottles and baby formulas. Remember to hold

the baby when bottle feeding. You can observe the baby when holding them. The baby must never be left alone to bottle feed in a pram or on a bed, for example.

The maternity and child health clinic will help you with breastfeeding-related matters. At the clinic, you can talk about bottle feeding, your condition, breastfeeding and whether you are producing enough milk.

ABORTION

In Finland, a woman has the right to terminate her pregnancy. The abortion must be performed before the 12th week of pregnancy. It can be performed later only for a serious reason, and it requires a special permit.

Possible reasons for terminating a pregnancy include the following:

- You are under the age of 17 or over the age of 40.
- You have had four children.
- You have become pregnant as a result of rape.
- You are ill and unable to care for the child because of your illness.
- The child is diagnosed with a difficult disease or physical defect.
- Childbirth and caring for the child would endanger your health.

The majority of abortions are performed for social reasons. Examples of social reasons include problems in the family, such as a divorce or domestic violence. A poor financial and

employment situation and housing problems can also be reasons for terminating pregnancy.

There are two abortion methods: medication or dilation and curettage. The majority of abortions are performed with medications. Call the health centre and book an appointment. Talk with the doctor and nurse about abortion and different options. They will help you.

The woman makes the decision on an abortion. She can ask for her spouse's opinion, if she wants to. However, the decision is hers, even if her spouse disagrees. No one has to know about the abortion. Nurses and doctors are bound by professional secrecy, so they will not tell anyone.

An underage person can have an abortion without her parents' permission. The parents will also not be told about the abortion unless the girls wants them to be. It is important to have a warm and safe relationship between the children and the parents, so that the child can talk to their parents about things without fear.

THE MOTHER'S RESOURCES

In your native culture and country, the duties of a father and a mother may be different from those in Finland. In your native country, the mother can be the person who takes care of all household chores and cares for the children. The father of the family may be working. In Finland, fathers are family-oriented and participate in caring for the children and household chores, just like mothers. A family-oriented man always thinks about his family's best interests. In Finland, family-oriented men are valued. When two people want to have children, it is a mutual decision. When the parents take care of the family's matters together, both will feel better and have more energy.

There is a lot to do in a family with children. Household chores, such as cleaning and cooking, take up a lot of time. Chores should not take up so much of your time that you have no time to play or talk with your child without interruptions. In Finland, time with the family is valued and tidiness at home is not the most important thing. There is no need to clean the toilet or floors every day or pick up the children's toys several times a day. You should learn to

tolerate slight untidiness, so that you can have time for your family and yourself. Your own well-being and your family are more important than having a tidy home.

The mother's own time is often talked about in Finland. Your own time means time that you spend without your children and spouse. On your own time, you can do things that you enjoy. For example, you can meet your friends or rest by yourself. The important thing is that you recover your energy. Having time for herself is important for the mother's well-being. Talk with your spouse about your thoughts and wishes. Make it possible for both of you to have time for yourselves. This will help you manage everyday life better.

Everyday life can sometimes be hard for a family with children. For example, children's terrible twos and temper tantrums can be challenging to the mother. Talk with your friends if you are tired. Your friends can also give you good tips and advice. You can turn to the maternity and child health clinic for help if you feel overwhelmed by tiredness.

SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR MOTHERHOOD

Maternity and child health clinic

The baby is taken to the maternity and child health clinic on a regular basis. The clinic also monitors the mother's condition. You can talk to the clinic staff about anything related to

motherhood and your family. The workers will help you and give you advice.

The child's name

After birth, your child is automatically given a

personal identification number. The Digital and Population Data Services Agency will send you a document. The document states the child's personal identification number. Write the child's full name and native language on the document. You can give your child 1–4 first names. Spell the names accurately, as the names will be forwarded to the maternity and child health clinic, Kela and all official information. Return the document before the baby is three months old.

Maternity and parental allowance

You will be paid maternal allowance when you start your maternity leave. Book an appointment at Kela a few months before the child is due. You will be paid maternity allowance for four months. After that, you will be paid parental allowance until the child is nine months old.

When the parental allowance payments stop, think about what you want to do. Do you want to study or work, or stay at home? If you decide to stay at home, apply for home care allowance from Kela. You can receive home care allowance until the child is three years old. Remember to ask for an interpreter!

Paternity leave

The father is entitled to paternity leave. The paternity leave lasts 54 days in total.

When the child is born, the father can stay

at home with the mother for 1–18 days. The father must notify his educational institution, workplace or the TE office of the paternal leave two months in advance. When the father is on paternity leave, he can apply for paternal allowance from Kela. The father can use the remaining leave days when the mother starts studies or work.

Child benefit

Kela pays child benefit for every child under the age of 17 in Finland. The benefit amount is determined by how many children you have. You can apply for the benefit when applying for maternal allowance. If you are a single parent, you can apply for a single-parent supplement to the child benefit.

Maternity grant

Kela will provide you with a maternity grant. You can choose whether you want to receive the grant as a maternity package or a sum of €170. You will need to get a pregnancy certificate from the maternity and child health clinic and submit it to Kela. You can apply for the maternal grant when you have been pregnant for five months.

The maternity package contains plenty of baby clothes in different sizes, such as caps, trousers and winter clothes. The package also contains childcare supplies, such as a toothbrush, nail scissors, a hairbrush and a thermometer.



Integrate at Home guidebook **Information and support for immigrant mothers**

The guidebook can be found online at www.toivola-luotola.fi (Finnish, Arabic, Dari, Somali, English, Russian)

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The purpose of this guidebook is to provide immigrant mothers and women with information and skills required in Finnish society. The guidebook can also be used by professionals to support their own work. The guidebook is also available in Finnish, Arabic, Dari, Somali, English and Russian at www.toivola-luotola.fi.

The Meri-Lapin äitien järjestölähtöinen kotoutuminen (Organisation-based Integration of Mothers in Sea Lapland) project (ESR) promotes the integration and everyday empowerment of immigrant mothers. The project also involves providing group activities and personal guidance to help mothers have a good life, participate and be part of Finnish society. The objective of our operations is to increase mothers' knowledge and skills, confidence and independence as family caretakers and women.

The Meri-Lapin äitien järjestölähtöinen kotoutuminen project is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of North Ostrobothnia and the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA) 2018–2020.

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