

# Finland - 2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

*This summary provides key highlights from the first Biennial report on the Child Guarantee implementation in Finland. It is not exhaustive or evaluative.*

## Roll-out of key services

**Early childhood education and care:** Child-to-staff ratios in day-care centres have been lowered, and children's access to tailored support for development, learning, and well-being has been strengthened. The *National Child Strategy* has promoted inclusivity through multilingual lesson materials and parent-teacher evening resources.

**Education and school-based activities:** An extended compulsory education was introduced in 2021, ensuring free textbooks and tools. The *Right to Learn* program strengthened basic education by addressing achievement gaps, prioritising local school admissions, improving literacy, reducing class sizes, and reforming financing to promote educational equality.

**Healthcare:** Finland has undertaken a reform of the healthcare system. All children have access to free child health clinics or student welfare services. These services monitor growth, promote health and well-being, support families, and provide early identification and intervention for special needs. Reforms in mental health legislation aim to improve service availability, alongside action plans to support youth struggling with substance use.

**Healthy nutrition:** Free school meals are provided to all primary and secondary students, ensuring access to nutritious meals with fruits, vegetables, and a main course through public catering services. The new *Nordic recommendations* focus on the use of a larger amount of plant products.

**Adequate housing:** To address the rising electricity prices, support was provided to families, including VAT reductions and direct aid. Social assistance for families with children increased in 2023, but child benefits' real value is still much lower than in 1994.

## Resources

- [Full Biennial Report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee](#)
- [Finland Child Guarantee National Action Plan – Eurochild overview](#)
- [Eurochild Finland Country Profile 2024](#)

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Finland collects a great deal of information on children in various registers and statistics, but Finnish statistics do not fully comply with the classification of the EU monitoring framework, and thus not all information is available.

## Funding to implement the Child Guarantee

The Child Guarantee is part of Finland's *National Child Strategy*, with 0.5 million € allocated annually for its implementation. 6 millions € were allocated for 2022–2023 to develop structures, establish good practices, and map new opportunities with different stakeholders. The *Right to Learn programme* awarded EUR 152 million in grants to developing early childhood education and care. The Ministry of Finance also prepared a child-oriented budget for 2023–2024, focusing on expenses for children and families.

## Target groups

The target groups have been listed in the National Action Plan and Eurochild's overview. A *report on the realisation of the welfare and rights of Sámi and Roma children in Finland* increased the information available on these target groups.

## Lessons learnt and further development

The *Finnish Biennial Report* highlights efforts to develop a structured knowledge base on children to enhance policy efficiency and improve data. It also addresses challenges in coordinating benefits and services and early interventions, with future plans on increased financial support, social security reforms, and expanded services for children.

## Relevant trends

- The participation in early childhood education and care for children at risk of poverty and social exclusion is 28.8%, compared to 42.7% for children not at risk.
- The number of children placed outside the home by child welfare services decreased slightly by 1.5% from 2021 to 2023. Slightly more than half of those placed outside the home by child welfare services (55%) were in family care in 2022.
- The *2023 School Health Promotion Study* found that 56.2% of girls (aged 14-16) eat school lunch daily, compared to 68.3% of boys in the same age group.
- According to the *School Health Promotion Survey*, in 2023, 17% of girls in grades 8 and 9 and 39% of boys of the same age felt that their state of health was very good.