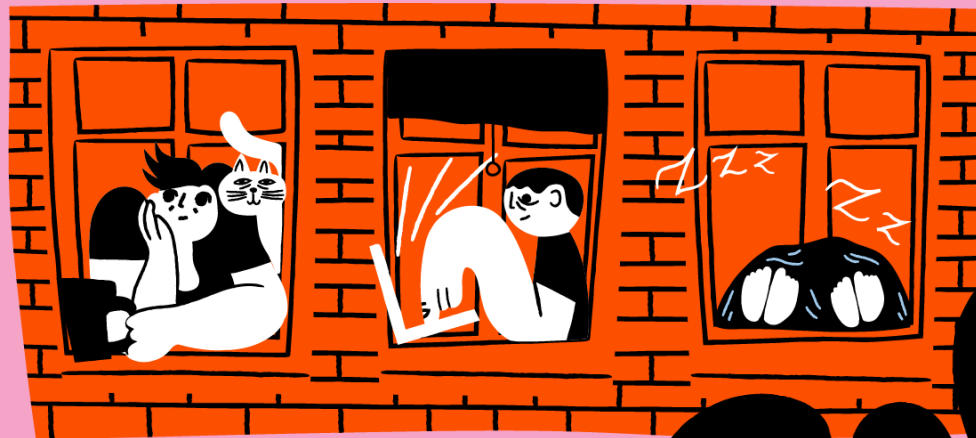


# Children's rights in child welfare substitute care

Illustrations by Lille Santanen



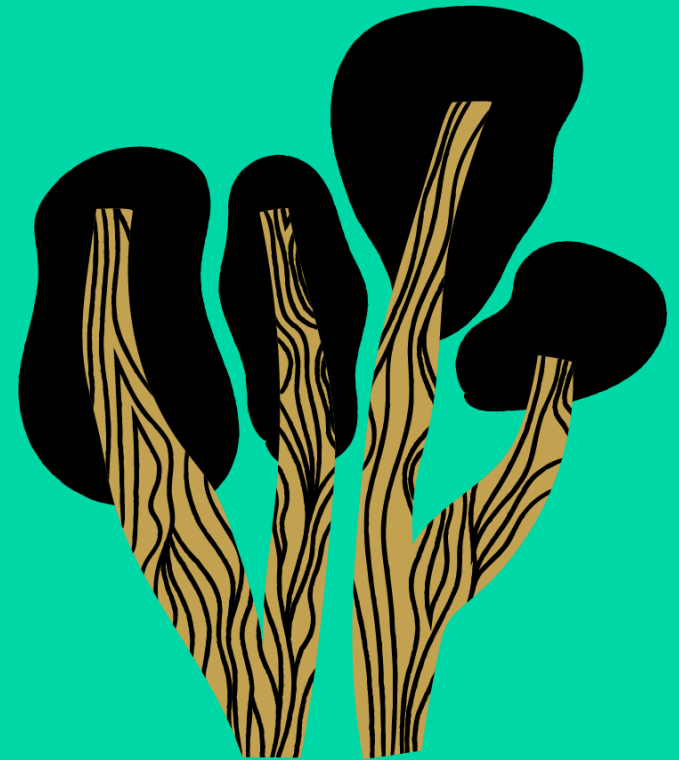
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# Your rights in child welfare substitute care

Children have their own rights that protect them. These rights have been agreed on internationally, and they are also written into Finnish law. An important law that protects children in Finland is called the Child Welfare Act.

In this brochure, we explain your important rights when you live in substitute care, meaning when you are in care outside of your home.

You have the right to be heard, to receive the care you need and to live a safe everyday life. A child welfare social worker is involved to ensure that your rights are respected.



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# You have the right to care and wellbeing

- You have the right to live in a safe place, where adults respect your rights and consider what is best for you.
- You have the right to health care, schooling, hobbies, leisure, and rest.
- You are entitled to your own money and can decide how to spend it.
- You have the right to be treated equally.
- You have the right to be yourself and to be appreciated for who you are!



# You have the right to meet with your assigned social worker

You have been assigned a social worker who will meet with you regularly and make sure you are treated fairly and well.

You can always ask to meet your social worker or send them a message. Your assigned social worker is there for you and wants to know how you are doing.

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# You have the right to keep in touch with your loved ones

You have the right to stay in contact with your loved ones. Communication can include meetings, phone calls, and sending messages in different ways.

Your assigned social worker will work with you and your loved ones to create a plan for the best ways to keep in touch.

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# You have the right to receive information

You have the right to be informed about matters that concern you, including the reasons why you cannot live at home.

You also have the right to get answers to your questions, for example, about what needs to happen for you to be able to move back home.

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# You are entitled to your own opinion

You are entitled to your own opinion. You have the right to express what you think and want, and you can disagree with adults.

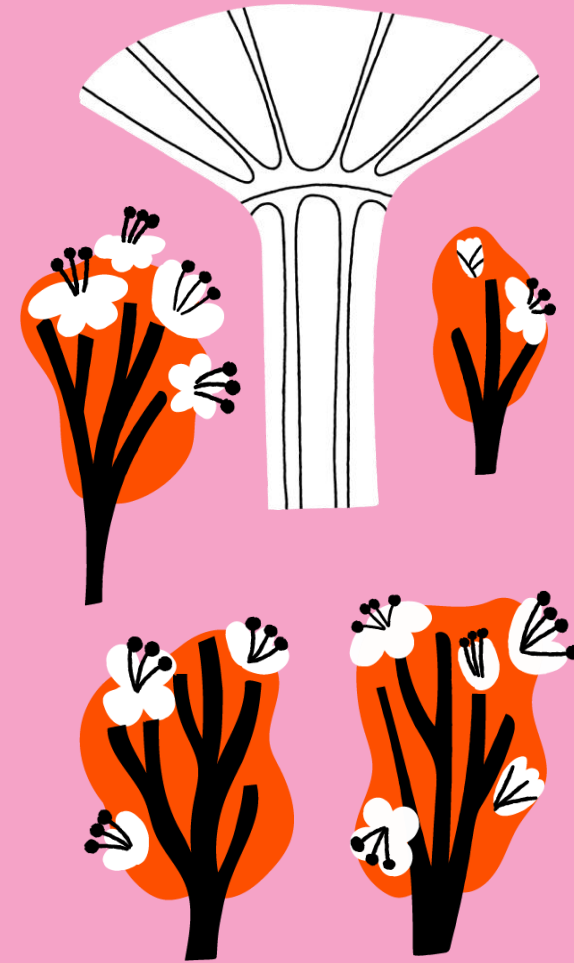
From the age of 12 onwards, you will also be formally given the chance to share your views on matters that concern you.

# You have the right to receive a client plan and the decisions that concern you

A client plan will be created together with you, your family, and the adults who take care of you. This plan will cover all the important matters, such as:

- how your substitute care placement will support you and manage your affairs
- when and where you will meet with your loved ones and your assigned social worker
- the conditions that would allow you to return to live with your parent or guardian
- the opinions of everyone involved in the discussions

From the age of 12 onwards, you will also receive your client plan and the decisions concerning you in writing.



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# Your rights may sometimes be restricted

Restrictions are always used to ensure your safety. They cannot be used as a punishment for breaking rules. A formal decision is always made regarding any restrictions. You must always be told why the restriction is in place and when it will end.

Examples of restrictions:

- Your communication with your parents or loved ones may be limited if it puts you or others at risk.
- If you are at least 12 years old and do not wish to be in contact with someone close to you, your wish must be respected.
- If you live in a children's home, your belongings may be checked, or your freedom of movement may be limited in situations allowed by law.



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# Your rights are enforced

Children's rights are the responsibility of adults. Your assigned social worker and other adults will make sure that your best interests are protected.

If you feel you are being mistreated, please tell your assigned social worker.

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# You have the right to give feedback

Your assigned social worker will guide you on how to submit an objection or complaint. You can also provide feedback, appeal decisions that concern you, or contact the following bodies:

- Regional State Administrative Agency (AVI):  
[www.avi.fi/en/services/government-agencies/enforcement-and-reporting-violations](http://www.avi.fi/en/services/government-agencies/enforcement-and-reporting-violations)  
[asiakaspalvelu@avi.fi](mailto:asiakaspalvelu@avi.fi)  
tel. +358 29 501 6780
- Parliamentary Ombudsman of Finland:  
[www.oikeusasiames.fi/en/complaints-to-the-ombudsman](http://www.oikeusasiames.fi/en/complaints-to-the-ombudsman)  
[oikeusasiames@eduskunta.fi](mailto:oikeusasiames@eduskunta.fi)
- Ombudsman for Children:  
[www.lapsiasia.fi/en/contact-information](http://www.lapsiasia.fi/en/contact-information)  
[lapsiasiavaltuutettu@oikeus.fi](mailto:lapsiasiavaltuutettu@oikeus.fi)  
tel. +358 29 566 6850

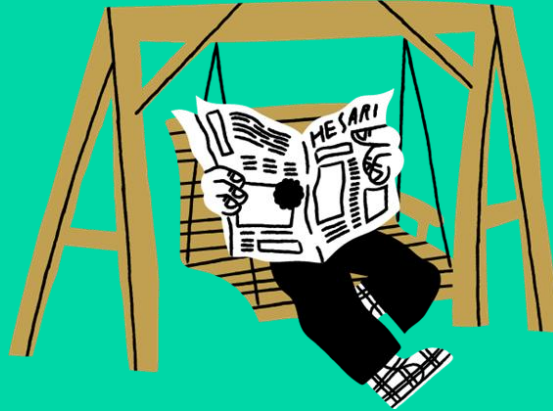


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# Your information is handled with due care



Information about your affairs is recorded in the system. Writing down information helps us make sure we don't forget important details.



Your information will only be shared with others if the law allows it and if it is in your best interests.



If you want to prevent your information from being shared with your parents, talk to your assigned social worker. The social worker will consider whether this is possible.

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**You have the right to a safe  
life and to be heard.**

**You matter!**

[More brochures on the rights of children](#)

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