

BUILDRES Project

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EU COUNTRIES DESK RESEARCH

Partner organisation: University of Thessaly

Research on: Finland

1. Country overview

As of **October 2024**, Finland's population stood at **5,635,560 residents**, showing a slight overall decrease due to low fertility despite modest migration gains ([Statistics Finland, 2024a](#)). In **2023**, Finland registered **43,383 live births**, the lowest number since national records began in 1900, while the **total fertility rate (TFR)** fell to **1.32 births per woman** ([Statistics Finland, 2024b](#)). Preliminary data for 2024 indicate a slight increase in births (around 43,700) but a **further TFR decline to approximately 1.25**, continuing a downward demographic trend (Yle News, 2025). The **average age of mothers at first birth** in 2024 was **30.3 years**, while the **mean age of all mothers** at childbirth reached **31.9 years**, showing a gradual postponement of parenthood ([THL, 2024](#)).

Since 2010, Finland has experienced a persistent decline in fertility, influenced by delayed family formation, changing values among young adults, and economic uncertainty. **Cohabitation is widespread**, and **nearly 60 % of births occur outside marriage**, reflecting a high degree of social acceptance of diverse family models ([Statistics Finland, 2024b](#)). Surveys show that the **ideal family size** remains close to two children, suggesting a continued gap between desired and actual fertility (OECD, 2023).

Finland has one of the **highest female employment rates in Europe**, about **77 %** among women aged 20 - 64, and nearly universal access to **public early-childhood education** (OECD, 2023). Mothers typically return to work within 12 - 18 months after childbirth, supported by **flexible parental-leave schemes** and **municipal daycare rights**, which guarantee each child a place in early-childhood education once parental leave ends (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2024). Finnish society values **gender equality, shared parenting, and work-life balance**. Public opinion strongly supports equal division of caregiving between parents, and this is reinforced by **the 2022 parental-leave reform**, which introduced **equal, non-transferable leave entitlements** for both parents ([European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024](#)).

Finland's comprehensive welfare model integrates **income-related parental benefits, universal child allowances, maternity grants, and home-care support**. The *Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela)* provides a **child benefit (lapsilisä)** of **€94.88 per month** for the first child, increasing for each additional child, with **supplements for single parents** (Kela, 2024a). Additional supports include the **maternity grant, home-care allowance, and flexible care leave**, ensuring financial continuity and choice between home and institutional childcare (Kela, 2024b).

2. Healthcare services available & accessibility

Finland operates a **universal, publicly funded healthcare system** based on residency rather than employment status. The system is organised by **municipalities**, financed through **tax revenues and national subsidies**, and overseen by the *Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (STM)*. Every resident, including EU citizens and legally registered migrants, has access to **essential healthcare services**, including **maternal, reproductive, and child health care**, either free of charge or at a minimal cost (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2024).

Maternal and child health care are provided primarily through the **neuvola** (maternity and child health clinic) system, a cornerstone of Finnish preventive healthcare. Pregnant women receive **free prenatal check-ups, screenings, and postnatal follow-up** through their local neuvola, typically staffed by public health nurses and doctors (THL, 2024). These clinics also provide **counselling on contraception, breastfeeding, and early parenting**, and are credited with contributing to Finland's exceptionally low rates of maternal and infant mortality.

Regarding **reproductive health**, abortion is legal and accessible under the **Abortion Act (239/1970)**, which permits termination up to **12 weeks on request** and up to **20 weeks** for medical or social reasons. Since 2023, Finland has simplified the process by allowing women to obtain abortions without multiple physician approvals (Finnish Parliament, 2023). **Assisted reproductive technologies (ART)** are regulated under the **Act on Assisted Fertility Treatments (1237/2006)** and are available to **heterosexual and same-sex couples as well as single women**, with partial reimbursement through public healthcare (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2024).

Mental health services are an integral part of the public health system and have been prioritised in Finland's *National Mental Health Strategy 2020–2030*. Services include **primary-level counselling, psychiatric outpatient care, and crisis support**, provided by municipalities and hospital districts. In recent years, access has been expanded through **digital mental health platforms** such as *Mieli.fi* and *MentalHub.fi*, which offer self-help tools and professional chat-based support in multiple languages ([Mieli Mental Health Finland, 2024](#); [MentalHub, 2024](#)).

While the healthcare system provides universal coverage, **regional inequalities** remain particularly between urban centres like Helsinki and sparsely populated northern regions. However, **Finland's extensive e-health infrastructure**, including **electronic health records, e-prescriptions, and digital consultations**, significantly enhances accessibility, continuity, and coordination of care nationwide (OECD, 2023).

3. Financial and Social Benefits Related to Family, Parenthood, and Health

Maternity and Paternity Leave

In Finland, following the 2022 reform, each parent is entitled to **160 days of parental leave**, of which **63 days are transferable** between parents, allowing for flexible family arrangements (Kela, 2024a). Pregnant employees may begin their **pregnancy allowance (*raskausraha*)** 30 - 50 days before the expected due date, compensated at approximately **90 % of previous income** for low and middle earners and at a lower rate for higher incomes (Kela, 2024b). Fathers and non-birthing parents are eligible for the same number of leave days as mothers, reinforcing equal caregiving responsibilities (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2024).



Family and Child Benefits

All families residing in Finland are entitled to a **universal child benefit** (*lapsilisä*), paid monthly until the child turns 17. As of 2024, the amount is **€94.88 for the first child, €104.84 for the second, €133.79 for the third, €163.24 for the fourth, and €182.69 for the fifth and subsequent children** (Kela, 2024c). **Single parents** receive an additional **€73.30 per child per month**. Families also benefit from **maternity grants**, a one-time benefit provided either as the iconic *baby box* or a **€170 cash option**, and **home-care allowances** (*kotihoidon tuki*) for parents caring for children under three at home (Kela, 2024d).

In addition, Finland provides **flexible care allowances** (*osittainen hoitoraha*) that support part-time work for parents of children under school age, promoting work–life balance (OECD, 2023). Low-income families may also access **means-tested housing and income support**, and families of children with disabilities receive additional allowances (*vammaistuki lapselle*), ensuring inclusive support across different family circumstances (Kela, 2024e).

Non-Governmental and Community Services

Finland's robust civil society complements state welfare through advocacy, counselling, and psychosocial support. **Mieli Mental Health Finland** provides crisis helplines, parental guidance, and digital therapy resources ([Mieli Mental Health Finland, 2024](#)). **The Family Federation of Finland (Väestöliitto)** offers counselling on relationships, sexuality, and fertility for both Finnish and migrant families (Väestöliitto, 2024). Additionally, **Save the Children Finland (Pelastakaa Lapset ry)** supports low-income families with material aid, family counselling, and child-protection advocacy ([Save the Children Finland, 2024](#)).

Hotlines and Emergency Services

- **116 117 – Non-emergency Medical Helpline** (connects to local healthcare advice)
- **112 – European Emergency Number**
- **09 2525 0111 – Mieli Crisis Helpline (24/7)** (available in Finnish, Swedish, English, and Arabic)
- **116 000 – Missing Children Hotline** (operated by Save the Children Finland)

Digital Resources and Online Platforms

Families and residents can access official guidance and online services through:

- www.kela.fi – child, family, and parental benefits;
- www.stm.fi – national policies on families and equality;
- www.mieli.fi – mental-health information and crisis support;
- www.vaestoliitto.fi – reproductive health and family counselling;
- www.pelastakaaalapset.fi – child protection and family assistance.

Name of the organisation	Kela – Social Insurance Institution of Finland
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	Finland's national social-security body providing child benefits, parental allowances, maternity grants, home-care support, and sickness benefits for residents and families.
Country	Finland
Mail	asiakaspalvelu@kela.fi
Phone	+358 20 634 2550
Website	www.kela.fi
Address	Nordenskiöldinkatu 12, 00250 Helsinki
Name of the organisation	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (STM)
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	Government ministry supervising Finland's healthcare, family, gender-equality, and social-policy systems. Designs legislation on parental leave, reproductive rights, and welfare.
Country	Finland
Mail	info@sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee kirjaamo.stm@gov.fi
Phone	+358 295 163 000
Website	www.stm.fi
Address	Meritullinkatu 8, 00170 Helsinki
Name of the organisation	THL – Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	National research and public-health institute collecting data and providing guidance on maternity, reproductive, and mental health; operates the neuvola (maternity-clinic) framework.
Country	Finland
Mail	kirjaamo@thl.fi
Phone	+358 29 524 6000
Website	www.thl.fi
Address	Mannerheimintie 166, 00271 Helsinki
Name of the organisation	Mieli Mental Health Finland
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	Major NGO offering nationwide crisis helplines, counselling, and digital mental-health support in several languages; also trains professionals and promotes suicide prevention. Finland
Country	Finland
Mail	info@mieli.fi
Phone	+358 9 2525 0111
Website	www.mieli.fi
Address	Maistraatinportti 4 A, 00240 Helsinki
Name of the organisation	Väestöliitto – Family Federation of Finland
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	Non-profit organisation providing family, fertility, and sexual-health counselling for citizens and migrants; conducts research and advocacy on equality and well-being.

Country	Finland
Mail	info@vaestoliitto.fi
Phone	+358 9 2280 5260
Website	www.vaestoliitto.fi
Address	Kalevankatu 16, 00100 Helsinki