

# Methods of inclusion – Inclusion of individuals and families

In inclusion at the individual level, use can be made of typical environments of children and young people, such as children's day care centres, schools, other educational institutions, organisations or youth centres and workshops. Children and young people who could be otherwise difficult to reach can be consulted in reform schools, youth detention centres or family rehabilitation centres.

For individual inclusion to be successful, it may be necessary for several different parties to work together and form networks with each other and for use to be made of different professions and the professional expertise of volunteers.

Families are regularly included, for example, in community planning and early childhood education.

With regard to participation, the concept of family can be interpreted more broadly and include those adults who are important to a child even if they are not the child's custodians.

It should, however, be remembered that children have the right to participate independently and not just as members of a family.

For an inclusion process to be successful, it is essential to assess the experiences of children and young people both as individuals and as members of different groups and to recognise the importance of both.

With respect to inclusion, Finland has frequently relied on group and representative structures. Development of inclusion at an individual level still poses a challenge. During the past decade, however, various online tools such as otakantaa.fi and nuortenideat.fi have been developed. Utilisation of various tools provided by social media is also useful in reaching out to young people and their families.

Consultation events are among the most typical means of consulting individuals. Children and young people participate only rarely in consultation events that are aimed at everyone. Attention needs to be paid to the atmosphere of consultation events, especially when dealing with children. Children must be made to feel that all opinions and thoughts are allowed and may be expressed, and that all opinions and thoughts are valued.

It is often difficult for small children to put their wishes and objectives into words. Their families and people who work with them often have information about their needs. However, consulting children through their families should not mean taking away the possibility of children to express their views themselves.

Cooperation between different authorities can be useful in family inclusion. It is important to notice and analyse the kinds of families that respond and the kinds of families that do not. For example, only some families can be reached through municipal or private child care.



## nuortenideat.fi

### Nuortenideat.fi website service

Nuortenideat.fi is a service enabling all young people in Finland to exercise influence. The national website Nuortenideat.fi is part of the Ministry of Justice's online democracy services. Young people and well as actors in the youth sector (e.g. municipalities, organisations and schools) have been involved in the development work. The service can be used by young people and bodies working with them. The Nuortenideat.fi website provides a low threshold for users to have a say and express their opinions on how to develop organisations' activities.

### Objectives of the service:

To support interaction and cooperation between young people, the municipality, educational institutions, organisations or other operators.

To highlight the opinions of young people, discuss them and take them into account in decision-making.

To offer young people an accessible and equal opportunity to speak, ask and be heard.

To offer young people the opportunity to follow the consideration of issues and decisions made regarding them.