

MEETING PLACE SERVICES

Meetings between a child and their parent at a meeting place



Helsinki

Supported and supervised meetings, supervised exchanges

A child has the right to meet with the parent they are not living with. If there are any particular concerns regarding the meeting between the child and parent, the meetings can be held at a meeting place. The purpose of the meeting place is to ensure that the child's meetings with their parent take place in accordance with the child's best interests.

Support or supervision may be required:

- if the child does not know their parent or the child and parent are not used to spending time together
- if the parent has serious substance abuse or mental health problems
- if the child has witnessed or experienced violence by the parent
- if there is a risk of the child being abducted
- if there is conflict and/or a lack of trust between the parents.

Supervised meeting

Supervised meetings are carried out at a meeting place. The supervisor is within seeing and hearing distance throughout the whole meeting. A supervised meeting is the last resort if a supported meeting or supervised exchange is not sufficient to secure the best interests of the child.

Supported meeting

Supported meetings are carried out at a meeting place. The meeting supervisor starts and ends the meeting, monitors the progress of the meeting and, if necessary, supports both the child and the parent. However, the supervisor does not spend the whole time in the same room as the child and parent.

Supervised exchange

Sometimes the biggest challenges in the meetings between the child and parent are the parents' difficult relationship and their encounter during the exchange situation. A supervised exchange can be used to protect the child from disputes between parents or avoid mental and physical violence between the parents.

At the beginning and end of the meeting, the child is brought to the meeting place, where the supervisor makes sure that the child is passed safely from one parent to another in accordance with the agreement or decision. The actual meeting takes place away from the meeting place, most often at the home of the meeting parent.

The meetings and supervised exchanges can be arranged without the parents meeting each other

An interpreter is used during the meetings if necessary.

Starting meetings at the meeting place

An agreement verified by a child welfare officer or a court's decision

The meeting place service is free of charge to the families of children living in Helsinki. The service is available when the family have an agreement verified by a child welfare officer or a court's decision on the matter. When drawing up the decision or agreement, the need for support or supervision is assessed on a case-by-case basis. The duration of the meetings at the meeting place is 1–3 hours at a time, and meetings can take place 1–2 times per week. Meetings at the meeting place are always held in accordance with the verified agreement or court decision; the meeting place cannot change the form of supervision or the number of meetings.

Service decision

If you already have an agreement or court decision on supported/supervised meetings or supervised exchanges, it must be submitted to the Family Law Services Unit of Helsinki, which will assign a meeting place for your family. The City of Helsinki purchases the meeting place service from service providers through competitive bidding.

An employee of the Family Law Services Unit will discuss the family's situation with the parents before making a service decision. Agreements or court decisions arriving at the meeting place services are processed in order of arrival. The service decision for the meeting place service is sent to both parents; the service decision contains the contact details of the meeting place.

Starting meetings

To start the meetings, the parents must first contact the meeting place assigned to them in the service decision and book an appointment for the initial interview. The meeting place always strives to arrange the meetings in accordance with the agreement/decision. However, the parents should note that the meetings take place within the framework in which it is possible for the meeting place to provide the service. The parents agree on the meeting times and other practical arrangements with the meeting place. A report will be drawn up on each meeting or supervised exchange, which can be given to the parent upon request.



Delivery of the agreement or decision

A court decision or an agreement verified by a child welfare officer not employed by the City of Helsinki must be submitted to the Family Law Services Unit at sote.tapaamispaikkapalvelut@hel.fi by secure email from the following link <https://securemail.hel.fi/>

or by post:

Perheoikeudelliset asiat / Tapaamispaikkapalvelu
PO Box 8620
00099 City of Helsinki

Please also provide your telephone number and email address.

If possible, also provide the contact details of the other parent.

For more information on meetings arranged with the support of the meeting place, please call 09 310 28 889 or send a secure email to sote.tapaamispaikkapalvelut@hel.fi.

For other contact information, please visit <https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/social-health/family/law/supervised-and-supported-meetings/supervised-meetings>.

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