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## Section 92

### Grounds applied from 1 January 2024 onwards in allocating places in early childhood education

HEL 2023-012828 T 05 01 00

#### Decision

The Education Committee's Finnish Sub-committee has decided that from 1 January 2024 onwards places in early childhood education are allocated according to the following grounds:

1. Guardians choose one to three early childhood education units from which they would like to receive a place for their child. The choices are considered in a numerical order from 1 to 3.
2. The child is allocated a place in an appropriate early childhood education unit that is close to their home and according to the places available in the units. When allocating early childhood education places, the start date on which the child needs the service is also taken into account. When applications are processed, the start dates are considered in periods of two weeks and in line with the statutory four-month deadline for allocating a place.
3. If there are more applicants to an early childhood education unit than the unit has available places, the following grounds are applied to allocation:
  1. Siblings will be granted places in the same unit whenever possible. It is not always possible to allocate a place in the same early childhood education unit for the sibling of a child in pre-primary education, an integrated special group, a special group for children with multiple disabilities, or in a language immersion group. A place is allocated in the same early childhood education unit for the siblings of children receiving early childhood education in Finnish sign language whenever possible.
  2. If there are more than one applicant with the same start dates to whom the sibling principle applies, a place in the early childhood education unit nearest to each applicant's home is allocated. If the child has any siblings in other early childhood education units, this is taken into account when determining which unit is the closest to the applicant's home. In assessing the distance, the HSL



Journey Planner is used to find the shortest walking distance or distance by public transport from the child's home to the early childhood education unit.

If the child requires support for growth and learning, a place in a unit other than that closest to their home can be allocated to the child. If necessary, the need for support must be proved with a statement from a specialist that is appended to the application.

From August 2024 onwards, a place in Daycare Taneli can be allocated to children with a hearing disability and children who use Finnish sign language at home. A number of places at Daycare Taneli is reserved for children with a hearing disability and children who use Finnish sign language at home. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of reserved places, children with a hearing disability are prioritised.

If the start date of early childhood education cannot be determined in advance in a situation referred to in section 17, subsection 2 of the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care, the guardian must apply for a place in early childhood education as soon as possible and in all cases, at the latest, two weeks before the child needs to have a place. In such an event, the guardian must provide a document proving that the need is due to employment, studies, training or relocation to another municipality due to employment or studies.

When applying for a place in shift care, documents from both parents proving that the need is due to shift work must be appended to the application.

If there are no differences between applicants, the decision may be made by considering the child's best interest and any child-specific grounds after all other grounds for allocating a place in early childhood education have been considered.

If the family requests that an already allocated place in early childhood education is changed to another place, the same grounds are applied to the request as to new applications.

Decisions on the allocation of places are usually issued a month before the need for care starts at the latest. If a guardian decides to reject an allocated place, the guardian must notify the matter as soon as possible and at least within a week from receiving information of the place.



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In addition, the Committees' Finnish Sub-committee decided that the decision it issued on 8 September 2020 (section 34) is repealed on 1 January 2024.

The same grounds for allocating places in early childhood education also apply to education in Swedish, with the exception of early childhood education provided in Finnish sign language.

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**Requesting review**

Instructions for requesting review, Education Committee

**Decision proposal**

The Decision is in line with the proposal.

**Rapporteur's  
rationale**

The grounds for allocating places in early childhood education are changed for the part of early childhood education in Finnish sign language; otherwise, the grounds remain as they were. Early childhood education in Finnish sign language is centralised to Daycare Taneli from 1 August 2024 onwards. In addition, the grounds are made more specific by requiring that the sibling principle is applied in Finnish sign language early childhood education. Children with a hearing disability and children who use Finnish sign language at home can attend early childhood education provided in Finnish sign language.

According to section 5 of the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018), municipalities must provide early childhood education and care to the scope and in the types of activity that meet the needs in their municipality. Municipalities must strive to provide early childhood education near the users of the service with consideration given to the distribution of residents and transport connections. According to section 6 of the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care, municipalities must provide early childhood education and care for children whose municipality of residence within the meaning of the Municipality of Residence Act (201/1994) is the municipality in question. In addition, section 4 states that the interests of the child must be considered as the first priority in the planning, organisation and provision of early childhood education and care and the associated decision making.

All applicants entitled to receive early childhood education services receive a decision on the matter. In client assistance, the guardian is informed of the different options for early childhood education, so that the guardian can decide which of the options best meets their needs. The aim of the municipality is to offer a nearest free place in one of the units chosen by the guardian.



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Siblings will be granted places in the same unit whenever possible. Separate allocation grounds and processes are applied to pre-primary education, integrated special groups, special groups for children with multiple disabilities, and language immersion groups. Therefore, it is not always possible to allocate a place in the same unit to the children's siblings in these groups.

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### Need to reform the grounds

Centralising early childhood education provided in Finnish sign language to Daycare Taneli helps with strengthening the inclusion and equality of children and the development of their language skills. The children have the opportunity use Finnish sign language with other children and to receive any support they need. Early childhood education provided in Finnish sign language supports the families' use of a shared language.

### Customer consultation

Customers were consulted in the development of the early childhood education services provided in Finnish sign language in network meetings held in 2022 and 2023. In the meetings, the participants highlighted that the rights of children using Finnish sign language to inclusion and equality and to belong in a group are best respected in an environment with other children using Finnish sign language.

### Specifications to the grounds

Allocating a place that is as close to the user of the service is the most purposeful way. Therefore, applications pertaining to a period within two weeks are considered in relation to start dates. These are processed as a batch and the applicants whose application pertains to the first and fifteenth of each month and applicants whose application pertains to the sixteenth and 31<sup>st</sup> of each month are processed as separate batches. All applications are processed according to the statutory four-month deadline. The start date is considered in the allocation only if there are no other distinguishing factors between applicants. Applications for early childhood education in Finnish sign language are processed two times per year.

Public transportation in Helsinki comprises several modes of transport. The Public Transport Planning Guidelines for HSL's Transport Services (2016) is based on fixed-minute timetables whenever possible where the same departure minutes are repeated every hour. The start time for the calculations is Monday morning at 7:30. A key factor in the service level of the actual transport options from the perspective of passengers is that transfers work well. The shortest walking distance or distance by public transport suggested by HSL Journey Planner is used to assess the distance between a child's home and an early childhood education unit. The party making the decision generates the information with the HSL Journey Planner and reports the shortest distance suggested by the Journey Planner. If the child has any siblings in other early childhood education units, this is taken into account when determining which unit is the closest to the applicant's home.

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### Assessment and monitoring



The process of allocating early childhood education places and the overall process of applying to early childhood education is regularly monitored and assessed. In addition to the new grounds, the process will be comprehensively renewed and developed. Assessment and monitoring focus on how many children receive a place in the unit their guardian requested, and the travel times of guardians from their home to the early childhood education unit are surveyed two times each year. Special attention will be paid on client assistance and service, and communication on the grounds.

#### Effects on child

Section 4 of the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care states that the interests of the child must be considered as the first priority in the planning, organisation or provision of early childhood education and care and the associated decision making. Early childhood education must be provided close to the users of the service. The continuation of the child's educational pathway to pre-primary and primary education and the principles of local daycare and local school are considered to the fullest extent possible when places in early childhood education are allocated. The allocation of early childhood education places must ensure that the child is respected, that the child can create as stable relationships with the early childhood education personnel as possible, and that the child gains diverse experiences in being part of a group of their peers. By centralising early childhood education in Finnish sign language to Daycare Taneli, children's right to improve their skills in their Finnish sign language and the families' use of a shared language can be respected.

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