

A photograph of two young children of African descent hugging outdoors. The child on the left is a boy with a slight smile, wearing a blue hoodie. The child on the right is a girl with a large afro hairstyle, laughing joyfully with her mouth open, also wearing a blue hoodie. The background is a soft-focus green landscape.

# City of Vaasa's Child-Friendly City Action Plan 2023-2025

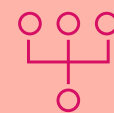
Isla Varpula  
Coordinator, Child-friendly city



# Child-friendly city model is a tool that allow us to



Identify areas where we need to make improvements in terms of children's rights



Define actions to ensure the application of children's rights in Vaasa as effectively as possible



Regularly monitor our progress and development

# Background

## General principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



Non-discrimination and equality [Article 2]



Best interests of the child as a primary  
consideration [Article 3]



Right to life and development [Article 6]



Considering the child's point of view [Article 12]

# Vision

**” A flourishing and capable Vaasa, where people live happily.”**

In Vaasa, we prioritize the well-being of children and adolescents. At the same time, we ensure that their everyday life run smoothly, where they receive high quality services, their environment is safe and welcoming, and every individual finds their own path during studies and as well as on free-time.



# Goals

1

The city has clear guidelines for the systematic implementation of Child Impact Assessment (LAVA), and a team of qualified professionals is involved in its application.

2

The city staff and key stakeholders are familiar with children's rights through orientation programs.

3

The city promotes opportunities for all children and youth to participate in hobbies and spend meaningful free-time.

4

Public transport routes, schedules, and bicycle lane maintenance are developed.

5

The city has inclusive participatory structures that considers the children's point of view at different ages while planning and developing services.

# Departments in Charge

**1st Goal (LAVA-group):**  
Officials, supervisors, and elected officials

**2nd Goal (Children's Rights):**  
Trainings, communication, early childhood education, primary education, youth council

**3rd Goal (Opportunities for Hobbies/Activities):**  
Sports services, youth services, cultural and library services, primary education

**4th Goal (Public Transportation and Cycling):**  
Municipal Engineering

**5th Goal (Participatory Structures):**  
Children councils, youth services, urban planning, integration services



## 1<sup>ST</sup> Goal

The city has clear guidelines for the systematic implementation of Child Impact Assessments (LAVA), and a team of qualified professionals is involved in its implementation.



**Current situation:** Baseline level 1; Target level 2

**Goal type:** Indicator-Based Goal

**Theme:** Child's best interest

### Actions:

1. Forming a small working group to plan LAVA
2. Creating a LAVA assessment model to use
3. Training staff on the LAVA process

## 2nd Goal:

The city's staff and key stakeholders are to become familiarized with children's rights as part of orientation programs.



**Current situation:** Baseline level 1; Target level 2

**Goal Type:** Indicator-Based Goal

**Theme:** Children's rights in municipal structures

### Actions:

1. The city is to put together an orientation package on children's rights for those working with children and youth.
2. Professionals working with children and youth receive both basic and advanced training on children's rights.

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## 3rd Goal

The city supports all children and young people in their opportunities for hobbies and meaningful free time.



**Current situation:** Baseline level 2; Target level 3

**Goal Type:** City's own goal

**Theme:** Equality

### **Actions:**

1. Sports services provide guided and individualized physical activities in basic education, focusing especially on children at risk of exclusion and those with reduced functional capacity.
2. Establishing the Harrastaminen Vaasa model.
3. Culture and library services organize cultural events for children.
4. Free sports trials are organized for all primary school students.
5. Family sports (hoppis) events are regularly organized for free for children of all ages.

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## 4th Goal

Public transport routes, schedules, and bicycle lane maintenance are developed.

**Current situation:** Baseline level 2; Target level 3

**Goal Type:** Goal based on children's perspectives

**Theme:** Best interests of the child

### Actions:

1. Buses' schedules will be reviewed and coordinated with school hours.
2. The winter condition of bike paths will be assessed, as well as snow removal and sanding will be monitored on popular routes.



## 5th Goal

The city has inclusive participatory structures that considers the children's point of view at different ages while planning and developing services.



**Current situation:** Baseline level 2; Target level 3

**Goal Type:** Indicator-based goal

**Theme:** Participation

### Actions:

1. The city commits to developing implementation of elementary school and daycare-aged children's impact and consultation operations.
2. In youth services, a model will be implemented where young people decide on a portion of the budget allocation for the youth center.
3. A model for consulting children will be created to prioritize the implementation of new local sports areas and gathering places.
4. Activities will be provided for immigrant children in the early stages of migration in integration services.

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# Committee

- **Chair:** Christina Knookala, Director, **Department of Education**
- **Vice chair:** Virve Flinkkilä, Director, **Welfare Department**
- Isla Varpula, Coordinator (Child-friendly city), **Welfare Department**
- Tiina Rintanen, Service Manager, **Early Childhood Education**
- Kari Nummela, School Director, **Primary Education**
- Marianne West, School Director, **Primary Education**
- Maria Karvonen, Equivalent Director, **Early Childhood Education**
- Mika Pietilä, Director, **Youth Services**
- Mika Lehtonen, Director, **Sports Services**
- Sanna Bondas, Director, **Cultural and Library Services**
- Jari Karjalainen, Director, **Corporate Governance**
- Päivi Korkealaakso, Director, **Urban Planning**
- Jukka Talvi, Director, **Municipal Engineering**
- Suvi Aho, Service Manager, **Vähänkyrö Area Administration**
- Henni Kurvinen, Administrative Manager, **Corporate Governance**
- Aaro Helo, Chair, **Youth Council**
- Susanna Saari, Communication Planner, **Communication Department**
- Tarja Koukkunen, Service Manager, **Ostrobothnia Welfare Area**
- Kirsi Ikäheimonen, Executive Director, **Setlementti ry**
- Anne Salovaara-Kero, Director, **Mieli ry**

## More information

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