





**SUOMI  
FINLAND**

# **FINNISH MATERNITY AND CHILD HEALTH CLINICS**



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## Meeting societal challenges with innovative practices

Finland has long embraced social innovations as a way to improve the life of its citizens.

Perhaps the best-known examples are the innovative ways Finland has worked to improve **mothers' and children's health**.



## History of neuvola

Maternity and child health clinics, *neuvola*, were introduced in the 1920s.

The clinics were created to improve a nation's health by focusing on its children.





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The clinics aim to provide **comprehensive support to the whole family** in order to give every child, regardless of their background, a healthy start in life by providing healthcare and practical advice.





**MATERNITY AND CHILD  
HEALTH CLINICS,  
NEUVOLA, ARE A PART OF  
EVERY FINN'S LIFE**



## Maternity package

The maternity package – or “baby box” – is another Finnish social innovation. It provides mothers with items to make it easier to look after their baby, but it also seeks to promote health consciousness.









# Timeline of maternity and child health clinics

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**1920s**

The first maternity and child health clinics were established

**1938**

The maternity package – or “baby box” – was introduced

**1944**

The Act on Child Health Clinics was passed requiring every community in Finland to open a child health clinic

**1949**

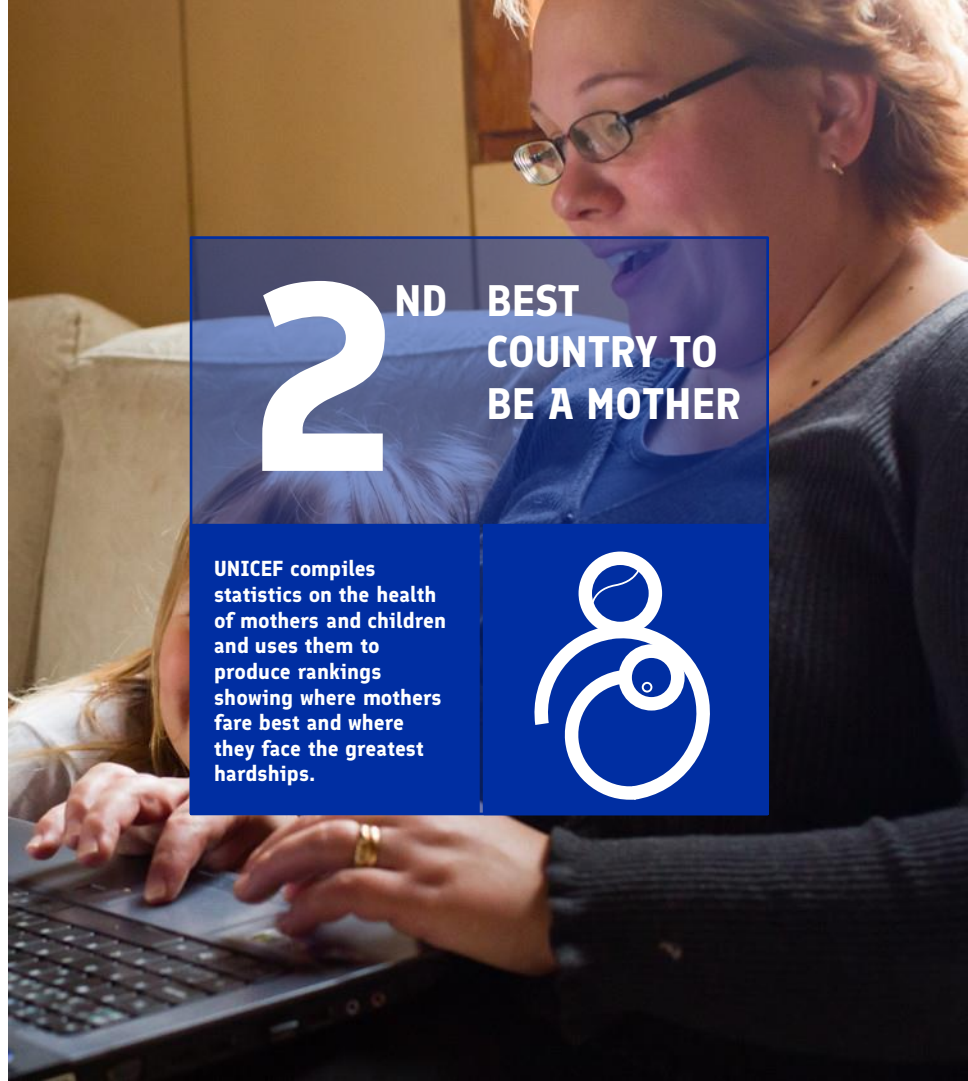
A network of municipal maternity and child health clinics covers the whole country



## Improving health and equality

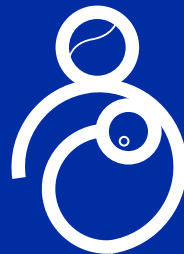
Since the 1920s, mothers' and children's health in Finland has improved dramatically.

Infant mortality in Finland is among the lowest in the world, and Finland consistently ranks at or near the top in rankings for the best place to be a mother.



**2<sup>ND</sup> BEST  
COUNTRY TO  
BE A MOTHER**

UNICEF compiles statistics on the health of mothers and children and uses them to produce rankings showing where mothers fare best and where they face the greatest hardships.





# The goals and objectives of maternity and child health clinics

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- to promote the health and wellbeing of pregnant mothers and their families
- to reduce health inequalities in society
- to monitor and support healthy pregnancy and the growth and development of children
- to identify any need for special support as early as possible
- to provide support and assistance when needed







## How do the clinics work?

Expectant mothers normally meet with a nurse or a doctor 11–15 times during pregnancy.

Attending a maternity clinic is one of the preconditions for eligibility for maternity benefit.





## How do the clinics work?

Child health clinics assess the physical, mental and social condition of children under school age (0–7), provide vaccinations and support parents in providing secure, child-focused upbringing. Careful attention to the relationship of the parents also plays an important role in the work of the clinics.





**THE SERVICES OF THE  
CLINICS ARE AVAILBALE  
AND FREE OF CHARGE FOR  
ALL FINNISH RESIDENTS**







## Supporting the whole family

The maternity and child health clinics have also changed with the times.

Instead of focusing purely on children and mothers and their physical health, the clinic network now aims to encourage good parenting with emphasis also on the role of fathers.

The basic idea is to provide comprehensive support to the whole family.





**TODAY, SPECIAL EMPHASIS  
IS PLACED ON THE ROLE OF  
FATHERS AND PARENTAL  
RESPONSIBILITY**





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Thank you







