



LASTENSUOJELUN KESKUSLIITTO
CENTRAL UNION FOR CHILD WELFARE

The Central Union for Child Welfare Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The Central Union for Child Welfare (CUCW), founded in 1937, is a central organisation that works to promote child welfare and ensure that children's rights are implemented in full. The Central Union's members include NGOs as well as municipalities and wellbeing service counties.

The CUCW's strategy for 2022-2025 determines the measures to be taken to face the ever-changing challenges in the operational environment.

Our **vision** is to ensure that every child has a happy childhood. Our **mission** is to strengthen the conditions for a good childhood and the implementation of the rights of the child. We run our operations in a courageous, humane, responsible and equal manner.

CUCW's work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the national legislation, policy and guidance. We believe that **all politics is child politics**. We highlight the perspective of the rights of the child in decision-making and promote the use of child-friendly decision-making tools, the implementation of the national Child Strategy and the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

We work for that **children's rights to be themselves are fulfilled**. CUCW promotes the right of every child to his or her own identity and seeks to reduce discrimination against different minority groups.

We want to ensure that **every child has a safe life**. The Central Union contributes to ensuring the implementation of efficient and high-quality services in contexts such as family centres and child welfare operations and works to ensure that all children can have a childhood free of violence.

CUCW aims for that **children and families are optimistic about their future**. The Central Union aims to reduce the shadow of the coronavirus in the lives of children, young people and families, to empower children and young people in the face of climate change¹ and to make their voices heard in society.

1. Child Protection Policy

The CUCW's Child protection policy is developed to ensure the highest standards of professional behavior and personal practice to ensure no harm occurs in any situation to children during their involvement in any CUCW's activities or projects. CUCW is committed to safeguarding all children, irrespective of ability,

¹ Environmental ethical principles (in Finnish)

https://www.lskl.fi/wp-content/uploads/LSKL-ymparistoeettiset-periaatteet_.pdf

ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality, and culture. Any illegal, unsafe, or abusive conduct towards children is prohibited.

We are aware of the possible risks that may occur while engaging directly or indirectly with the young people and children during our events or projects. With help of different risk assessments we will do all in our powers to reduce those risks to the minimum.

All the CUCW's work is based on respecting and promoting children's rights and human rights. It is important to us that we carry out our work in an ethically sustainable manner. We want to encourage others to do the same, and therefore our child protection policy is opened to everyone to follow and implement.

2. People

The Central Union for Child Welfare employs some 30 people. The union's highest decision-making body is the General Assembly, which meets twice a year. The 1+12-member board, assisted by the executive committee, is responsible for operations and decision-making. CUCW has over 120 members. CUCW wants to make sure that all the staff and members are aware and fully committed to the Child Protection Policy. The responsibility to protect children applies to staff, partners, experts, or other individuals acting on behalf of the children, adolescents and families.

CUCW's recruitment processes have strong child safeguarding measures in place. During our recruitment process we make sure that all our interns and advisors are aware of child safeguarding and committed to our Child Protection Policy.

As the CUCW wants to promote the participation of children and make sure that young people's voices are heard, the organisation arranges annually a gathering for young people who have been customers in child protection services. During these and other events that directly engage children and young people the CUCW is committed to designing and delivering programmes that are safe for children.

- CUCW's staff is empowered to call out behaviors of members, which are not in compliance with child protection policy.
- In case any concerns of inappropriate or abusive behavior towards children arise in context of the operations of the organization, CUCW informs relevant agencies and authorities.
- At every CUCW event there is a specially appointed person who can be addressed directly in the matter of any suspicion of possible risks and will take safeguarding measures.
- A Child protection Focal person will be appointed to make sure that the CUCW child protection policy is implemented into all the working processes starting from leadership.

3. Procedures

In our work, we bring out the voices of children and young people, and we always want to do it in an ethically sustainable way. With the help of our **Code of Conduct for staff and associates**, we aim to ensure a safe atmosphere for every child and young person participating in our activities.

CUCW produces knowledge through different kind of research and development work. All collected data is protected appropriately. Appropriate safety and consent measures are applied whenever taking photos, audio or audio-visual record or otherwise depicting children. In context of interviewing and reporting, both confidentiality as well as children's right to have their views and to be heard must be considered.

3.1 CUCW's Code of Conduct for staff and associates²

Transparency

- Any kind of harassment, discrimination or bullying is strictly prohibited at our events. In our events, every child and young person is valuable and accepted as they are.
- We respect the opinions of children and young people, and give them space to express their ideas.
- We work together and do not talk over or past the children.
- Every child and young person is treated equally.
- We do not discriminate against age, gender, origin, citizenship, language, religion, belief, opinion, political view, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other person for a related reason.
- The participation of children and young people is voluntary and they have the option to cancel participation at any stage.
- All those working with children and young people, regardless of job description or professional title, must commit to the code of conduct when participating in events organized by the CUCW.
- Ethical instructions concern the interaction between adults and children as well as between children.
- The privacy of children and young people is protected. Participants are bound by a duty of confidentiality towards children and young people in sensitive matters concerning The protection of children's and young people's privacy is taken into account in such arrangements in events as well as in various publications and products.
- In our events, the spaces where the use of social media and photography take place are separately marked absolutely forbidden.
- If media representatives participate in the event, they must also commit to the ethical guidelines and be in contact with the Central Union representative before the event.

Courage

Every child and young person has the right to safety participation. The code of conduct is visible in events and "confidential status" signs remind everyone to adhere to the instructions. The open atmosphere makes activities meaningful and allows talking about negative things whenever a child or young person feels the need for it.

Each of us can contribute to building an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome. If we see or experience anything at the events, for example harassment or bullying, the matter should be addressed right away. Every CUCW's event has a contact person that should be contacted in on the low threshold in case of harassment or in matters or questions about bullying. The person goes through the situation confidentially and makes agreements on possible follow-up actions. It is crucial to make sure that no one is left alone with the matter, and that it is brought to the attention of adults immediately. The contact information of the contact person is clearly pointed out at the information points during our events, or he/she will be presented in person at the beginning of the event.

² [CUCW ethical guidelines when working with children \(in finnish\)](#)

Humanity

The participation of children and young people must be in accordance with the purpose. We plan all our activities to be child-friendly, and we strive to make it possible for every child's participation meaningful. We try to take this into account when choosing the venue, the accessibility of the premises so that participation would be possible for everyone. More detailed information about accessibility is provided in connection with the events.

4. Accountability

The CUCW's strategy determines the measures to be taken to face the ever-changing challenges in the operational environment. The strategy is evaluated every fourth year, including the Child protection policy.

CUCW will regularly monitor the implementation of its Child Protection Policy and procedures. All participants are offered the opportunity to give feedback. There is a system of regular reporting to key management forums, including Director level, to track progress and performance on child safeguarding, including information on safeguarding issues and child protection cases.

Every year we gather feedback from our events, which provides us with necessary information for further development of our events and work in general. A survey is sent out to all the participants after the events. The result of the survey is reported to the CUCW's 1+12-member board, which is responsible for operations and decision-making.

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