Draft:

FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE 2026

Declaration

Parenting in Transition – How Do We Support Families with Children?

Finnish society is undergoing a transformation in parenting and child-rearing. Family life has changed, concerns about the wellbeing of children and young people have increased, and parents face increasingly complex expectations. At the same time, the birth rate has declined, further highlighting the importance of families for the future of Finnish society.

The Foundation for the Future 2026 conference brought together policymakers, researchers, civil society organisations and other stakeholders at the Little Parliament Annex in Helsinki on 23 September 2026 to discuss how Finnish society can strengthen parenting, support families with children and ensure a safe environment for every child to grow up in a changing world.

We, the undersigned, believe that:

1. The family is the most important environment for a child's development

A child's first and most important environment for growth and development is the family. Parents have the primary responsibility for raising their children, while society's role is to support parenting and enable a safe childhood for every child.

2. Care work is a foundation of society

Caring for children, older people and other loved ones is socially valuable work. The importance of care for wellbeing, social stability and the future of society must be better recognised in policymaking and decision-making.

3. Supporting families with children is an investment in the future

Investing in the wellbeing of families is not an expense but an investment in the future. The impact of economic, social and educational policies on children and families should be assessed from a long-term perspective.

4. Supporting parenting is the responsibility of the whole of society

Parenting should be supported through maternity and child health clinics, early childhood education and care, schools, civil society organisations, working life and policymaking. Trust between families and society must be strengthened.

5. Families must have genuine freedom of choice

Families must have the opportunity to choose the ways of organising childcare and everyday family life that best suit their individual circumstances, without their choices being disproportionately steered by financial incentives or structural arrangements.

6. Raising and educating children is a shared responsibility

Children's upbringing and education are built on cooperation between the home, early childhood education and care, schools, civil society organisations and wider society. Instead of creating divisions, we need partnership, trust and a shared sense of responsibility.

An Invitation to Cooperation

We invite policymakers, civil society organisations, researchers, religious communities, employers and all stakeholders committed to the wellbeing of families with children to work together to build a Finland where every child has the right to a safe childhood, caring adults and a strong family.

Supporting families with children is not merely a question for today. **It is a solution for Finland's future.**

Adopted at the Foundation for the Future 2026 Conference
Citizens' Hall, the Little Parliament Annex (Pikkuparlamentti)
23 September 2026

Lapsiperheiden Etujärjestö ry
Suomen Kotiäidit ry
FEFAF (European Federation of Parents and Carers at Home)