

A guided hobby

**enriches the lives of
children and their families**





Are there children in your family? Have you heard this about guided hobbies for small children?

“Our Ahmed is a very energetic seven-year-old. Sometimes I feel like he is always on the move. He says he is bored multiple times a day. I have so many chores to do and a baby who needs my attention. Ahmed’s father works a lot and his big sister has her own interests. Even Grandpa gets tired with Ahmed. I had hard time coming up with fun activities for him.”

Why do we have hobbies? What kind of financial support can you get for hobbies? These are some of the questions this hobby guide seeks to answer. This guide compiles observations, insights and experiences obtained during Sateenkaari Koto’s hobby project. It explores the themes introduced in the video deeper. The guide aims to explain why a hobby can be important to a child and give you inspiration for guided hobbies!

In Finland, children and young people tend to have free time after school when their homework and other tasks are done. Sometimes it can be difficult to find something fun to do. In Finland, nearly all children and young people, as well as many adults, have a regular weekly hobby. A hobby is a leisure activity that allows you to enjoy yourself. An enjoyable activity helps people relax after school or work. Having a regular hobby can also

prevent the development of bad habits, such as substance use and crime.

A hobby is usually chosen according to one’s interests. Different cities offer different hobby opportunities for children and young people. Hobbies for children and young people include, for example, sports, dance, music, art and drama. Some hobbies are subject to a charge, but many are also free of charge.

Learn more about hobbies for children and young people:

infoninland.fi/leisure/hobbies-for-children-and-young-people



Have you already watched our video on the benefits of hobbies for children?

youtube.com/watch?v=8yFcCHnFYUI



In a hobby group, your child learns important skills: how to listen to instructions, concentrate on the task at hand, and stay calm. They also develop language skills.

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Our Sofia has been attending a drama club after school. I have been so happy to see Sofia learn new skills. Her concentration has also improved. Previously, she got quickly frustrated when facing an obstacle or when she did not get what she wanted immediately. Now, she waits for her turn more patiently.

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Hobbies have many positive effects on children's and families' everyday lives. In a guided hobby group, children can develop specific skills, for example, practise agility and social skills through football. A family can also engage in an activity together. It is always good when guardians cheer for their children or participate in the activities.



Remember that a guided hobby is only one way to engage in enjoyable activities! Children can also pursue a hobby independently alone or with friends in their home environment. For example, reading, gaming, handicrafts or jogging are fun and instructive ways to spend time!



**These skills will help your child in school.
They will also stay healthier and sleep better.**

“ We had difficulties with Ahmed in evenings because he was never tired. He was always full of energy. He had trouble waking up in the morning and was sleepy at school.
After starting football, he falls asleep quickly after practice.
I think the physical activity makes him tired.
After his evening snack and washing up, he becomes calm and falls asleep faster.
Mornings have also become easier because he wakes up fresh and rested. ”

Skills learned through hobbies help children pay attention at school and find new interests. A hobby can even develop into a child's future profession! Enjoyable and instructive leisure activities support both mental and physical well-being. Regular exercise improves one's focus at school and work. It also helps children relax and fall asleep in the evening. Various art hobbies, on the other hand, keep the mind clear and curious, bringing variety to daily brainwork.



Some Finnish comprehensive schools have classes with emphasis on different subjects (for example, language, science, art, music or sports). Getting in one of these classes may require prior knowledge and skills acquired through a hobby.



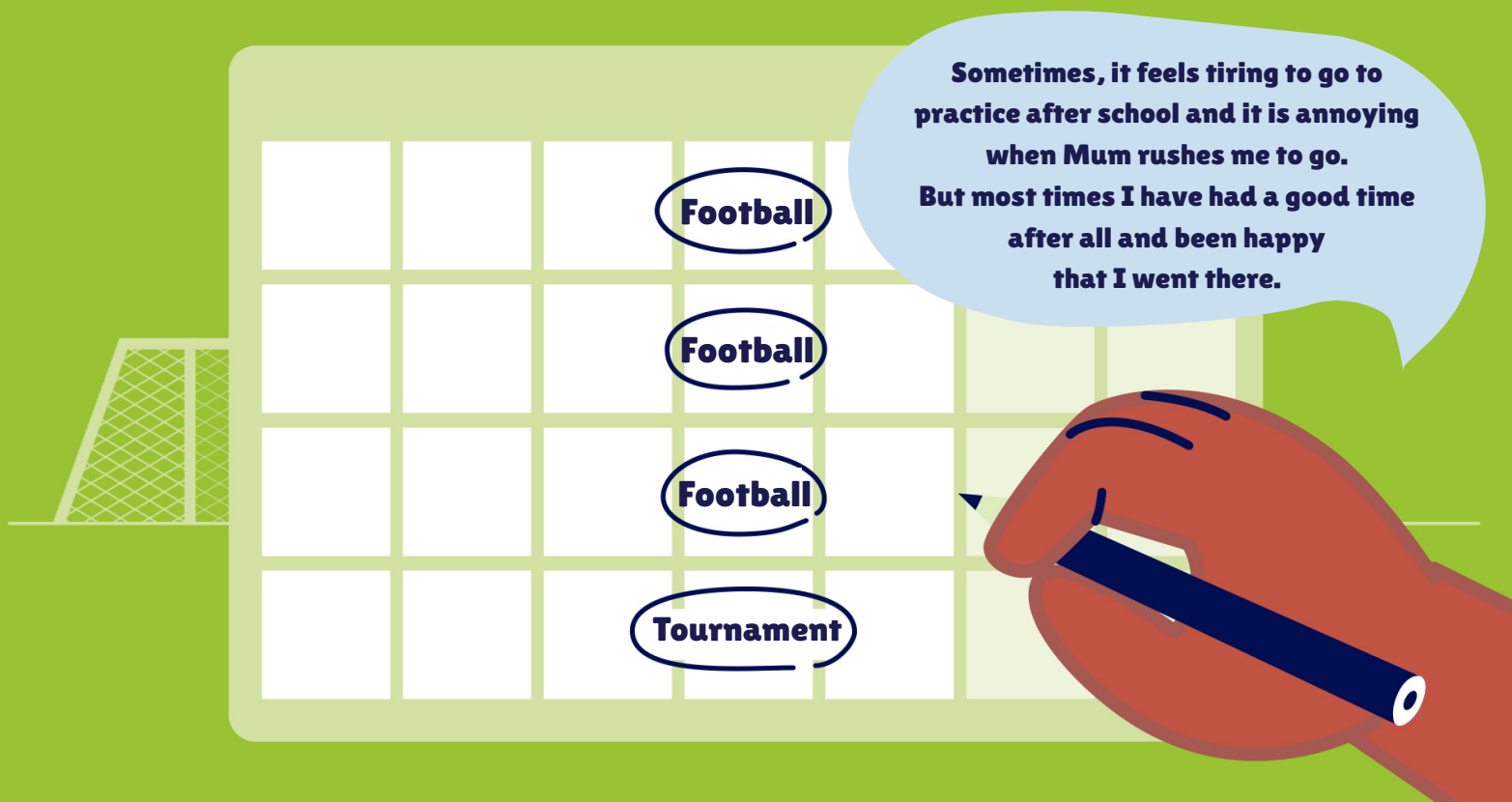
In a hobby group, children make new friends and feel a sense of belonging. Such experiences prevent loneliness and exclusion, and promote good use of leisure time later on.

“ *Hilma has made new friends through football. Her friends also invite her out to play and kick ball in their free time. It is wonderful that she has friends to spend time with. I would be worried if she simply loitered around without anything to do. She could end up with company that teaches her bad habits, for example, to bully others or break things.* ”

In a guided hobby group, children can make friends and learn teamwork. The sense of belonging in a group also contributes to well-being significantly. An enjoyable activity and the sense of belonging help prevent social exclusion and bad habits, such as substance use and crime.



A new hobby is an opportunity to explore a new living environment and find nice friend groups. It is also often possible to continue an older hobby in the new environment.



When children attend a hobby group regularly, they learn commitment.

Children also learn repetition and commitment in a guided hobby group. These skills are needed both at school and in working life. In many guided hobbies, it's important to be at the agreed place, at the agreed time. On the other hand, there are also more relaxed hobbies that you can do whenever you have time. It is a good idea to explore different options to find a hobby that best suits your child's situation.

Ball games, such as football, are difficult to play as a team sport if only three of fifteen players come to the practice. An upcoming football tournament requires the players to consistently learn new things and practise what has already been learned. Without regular practice, a child's skills do not improve and they fall behind their teammates. In an art hobby, a child may be required to create a piece by utilising techniques learned in previous lessons. Doing so is impossible if the child has not learned the skills required. Therefore, it is crucial to attend a guided hobby group regularly – even if the child does not feel like going. Regular participation builds a routine that makes continuing the hobby and improvement possible. Unchanging routines create a sense of security and help children and young people learn new skills.



Children can start a hobby by trying it for a couple of times or, for example, through hobbies that are arranged in connection with the school days. When an enjoyable activity is found, it is time to discuss the commitment required to maintain the hobby. Different hobbies require a different level of commitment from the child and the family.



By going to the activity itself, the children learn to do things with courage. It is also good for parents to know that their child is going to a safe activity.

It is possible to try many hobbies near the child's home in connection with the school day. However, if the child wants to commit to a specific hobby, they have to leave their own neighbourhood to go to, for example, a swimming hall or an artificial turf field. In that case, it is important to memorise the route to the hobby location. It is often possible to make arrangements for walking together or carpooling with other children and families.



New hobbies can be explored together with a parent, guardian or friend. In this way, the parents' are also introduced to the instructors and the environment. You can practise traveling to the hobby location together and think if the child is ready to go there alone or with a friend or a sibling.

“Sofia is so enthusiastic about performing arts and acting that the instructor of the school's drama club encouraged her to join a local theatre's drama group. It is held across town, so walking there was not an option. I was unsure about Sofia taking the bus alone. Now, a total of three children have joined the drama group and they have practised taking the bus together from a bus stop in our neighbourhood to the theatre and back. Everything has gone well after practising it together. The mother of one of Sofia's friends has also promised to take the children by car in winter. I no longer hesitate to let Sofia take the bus to her hobby. It is important that Sofia gets to continue acting.”

Which hobby would interest your child? Talk about it with your child and explore the possibilities together.

Information about different hobbies is available in many places. On the website of your city or municipality, you can find information about events organised by the city, the local sports and youth facilities as well as hobbies that are arranged in connection with the school days. Hobby organisers often have their own website or you can learn about their activities on social media.



For example, the following pages on the website of the City of Turku provide information about leisure activities: The pages of sports and fitness services contain plenty of information about services for different age groups, including Children's Wonderland (*Lasten liikunnan ihmemaa*) and Mihi sports groups for 12–19-year-olds, exercise counselling and sports equipment rental services. The page also has a list of sports clubs and associations operating in Turku: turku.fi/en/culture-and-sports/sports

The pages of cultural services provide information about, for example, library and museum services as well as available benefits and discounts: turku.fi/en/culture

The website also has a separate page for hobbies for children and young people, where you can find links to various activities (in Finnish). Explore local youth facilities and activities for holidays or the courses of the Art and Activity Centre for Youths Vimma: turku.fi/kulttuuri-ja-liikunta/lasten-ja-nuorten-harrastaminen

Use Turku region's recreation calendar to find hobbies by area or type of hobby, for example: vapaa-aika.turku.fi/en-FI?sort=countViews

The Finnish model for leisure activities consists of government-funded hobby activities for comprehensive school students. Nearly all municipalities in Finland organise after-school hobbies, "hobbies in connection with school day", for children and young people free of charge. They offer opportunities to try new sports and skills and spend time together after the school day. Ask for your school's hobby schedule from the school staff. You can also find more information about these hobby groups on your city's website. For example, you can find the after-school hobby clubs organised in Turku here: turku.fi/en/turku-model-leisure-activities



You can find hobby organisers on social media or online by searching for your city and the desired hobby. For example, "Turku + art education" or "Turku + theatre hobby". In addition, various adult education centres offer many courses from languages to handicrafts and music: for example, search for "Turku + adult education centre".

Many hobbies are free of charge and may also be supported.

Different organisations and clubs grant financial support for children's hobbies. Cities and municipalities as well as Kela can also support children's and young people's hobbies financially.

Hobby buddy

Hobby guide

Hobby card



“SOS Children's Villages grants a hobby subsidy called “Dreams Come True” (*Unelmista totta*) to children aged 7–17 based on donations, if the start or continuation of a child's hobby is threatened by the family's challenging financial situation.” Learn more about the subsidy and find subsidised hobbies here (in Finnish): unelmista.fi/

Save the Children Finland's “hobby subsidy promotes the equality and inclusion of children aged under 18 whose opportunities to have a hobby are threatened by their family's financial situation.” Learn more and apply here (in Finnish): pelastakaalapset.fi/hae-tukea/harrastustuki/

Many sports clubs, national sport associations and other hobby organisers have their own support/ sponsorship schemes. You can enquire about them directly from the hobby organiser.

Hope ry's “hobby subsidy is for children and young people aged 6–17 who are covered by Finland's social security system. The subsidy is intended for a regular hobby, and it is paid directly to the organiser against an invoice. You can apply for the hobby subsidy if there is a risk of your child having to drop out of their hobby or if the child is unable to take up a hobby due to the family's financial situation. The hobby subsidy is made possible by private and corporate donations.” Learn more and apply here (in Finnish): hopeyhdistys.fi/tarvitsen-apua/

Starting from January 1, 2025, the City of Turku will provide every 7–19-year-old resident with an annual Boostii benefit for sports activities. Children and youth can use this benefit to cover the costs of organized sports activities offered by clubs or associations in Turku. You can find up-to-date information about the Boostii benefit on the city's website: turku.fi/en/boostii



If you are unsure about trying a new hobby alone, organisations such as the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare and Finnish Red Cross organise buddy/friend services, through which you can find a friend for a hobby.

HVALA
MERCI
MAHADSANID

AITÄH
ASANTE
SHUKRAN

KIITOS
SALAMAT
TACK

Sä Osaat project 2022–2024. Funded by the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA), the Sä Osaat (You Can Do It) project was active in Eastern Turku for three years. The project aimed to support the opportunities of children aged 5–10 to participate in sports, art and well-being activities in the region and create a sense of inclusion for children, young people and families. During the project, various hobby groups and experiments were organised with five different partners.



nouveau
Language

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