

Home and Family

Kela[®]

Benefits for families with children and housing benefits



Contents

Home and family	1
Support for families with children	2
Who can get benefits for families with children?	2
Before the child is born	3
After the child is born	4
Support for adoptive parents	6
Kela Card	6
Child benefit	6
Child care allowances	7
When a child gets ill	9
Child maintenance allowance	9
Application and payment	10
Housing support	11
Who can get a general housing allowance?	11
How much general housing allowance can you get?	12
Calculating your housing benefit	14
Application and payment	15
Kela is at your service	16
Report all changes	16
Appealing a decision	16
Contact information	17

Home and family

This brochure tells you what financial benefits Kela gives to families with children and for housing.

Benefits for families with children are available to all such families. The housing benefit is affected by the amount of income and property you have. Only those who have small incomes get it.

Kela grants support on the basis of applications only, so all benefits must be applied for from Kela. You can apply for a benefit on the internet or by filling in an application form

 at www.kela.fi/asiointi
(in Finnish) or
www.fpa.fi/etjanst
(in Swedish)

The requirements you must meet to qualify for benefits from Kela have been specified in various legislative acts. When Kela makes a decision about granting a benefit, the applicant's circumstances are considered individually.

The circumstances of applicants and their need for support can vary a great deal. Therefore, the amount of support given varies too.

This brochure explains the main issues in 2015 concerning housing

benefits and the benefits available to families with children. The information is current to 1 January 2015. Not all the details of the different types of benefits are included.

The exact amounts of benefits and income limits can be found in a separate supplement to this brochure, which is available online for printing at www.kela.fi/family and www.kela.fi/housing, or which you can request from a Kela office.

More information about services

Other benefits connected with home and family are, for example:

- benefits in case of illness
- financial aid for students
- benefits received by those doing their military service
- unemployment benefits.

They are described in separate brochures.

You can get information about important services for families with children – such as daycare, school and rental housing – from the municipal government office in your own locality, or from its website.

Information about public health care services is available from child health clinics and health centres.

Support for families with children

Kela provides financial assistance to families with children in many ways, starting from expecting a baby. With the help of Kela, parents can be with their children during the important first months. Later, Kela supports the care of the child and costs caused by having a child.

Kela's benefits to families with children are the following:

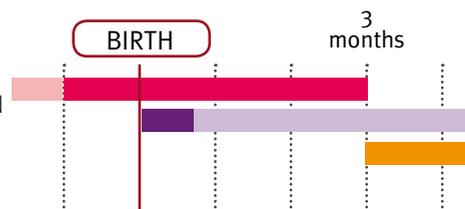
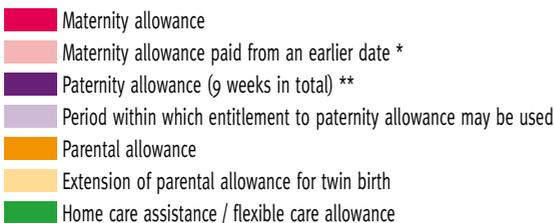
- maternity grant
- maternity, special maternity, paternity and parental allowance
- child benefit
- child care allowances
- assistance for ill and disabled children
- child maintenance allowance

Who can get benefits for families with children?

You can get benefits for families with children from Kela if you are covered by the Finnish social security system and you live in Finland permanently. Others who work in Finland can sometimes get assistance as well.

If you have lived in another country or are moving to another country, check your social security status from Kela. Moving to or away from Finland can affect the benefits paid by Kela.

KELA'S BENEFITS TO FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



* 50 or 30 days before estimated due date ** can be taken in several shorter periods

Before the child is born

Pregnancy certificate

When you think you may be pregnant, contact your locality's maternity clinic. Maternity clinic services are free – they don't cost anything. You can get good advice from the child health clinic for your pregnancy period and birth. Along with this, the health of the mother and fetus are monitored.

You must have a medical examination once before the fourth month of pregnancy has ended. You get a pregnancy certificate from a doctor or child health clinic. You need it when you apply for assistance from Kela.

Maternity grant

When a pregnancy has lasted for 5 months, you have the right to a maternity grant. A maternity grant is, as you prefer, a maternity package or a tax-free sum of money totalling 140 euros. The maternity package contains baby clothes as well as care products and materials.

Maternity allowance

Mothers normally go on maternity leave 30 days before the calculated time of birth. In this case, mothers receive a maternity allowance. It is paid for a total of 105 weekdays – about 4 months.

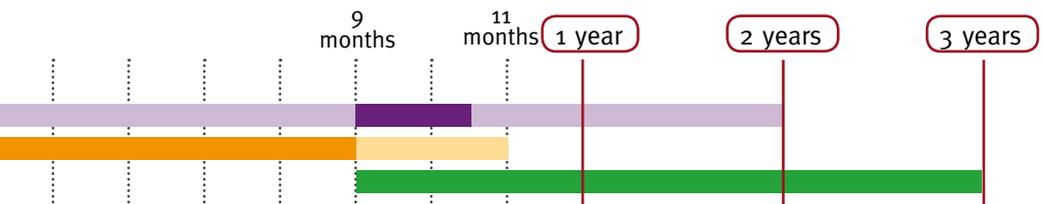
Mothers can go on maternity leave 50 working days or less before the calculated time of birth, in which case the payment of maternity allowance will begin earlier as well.

Apply for a maternity allowance no later than 2 months before birth.

Remember to inform your employer about your maternity leave no later than 2 months before it starts.

Special maternity allowance

If you come in contact in your work with radiation, chemical agents or infectious disease, you can stay away from work as soon as the pregnancy is confirmed. You get a special maternity allowance during this time.



After the child is born

After a child is born, the mother and father normally spend time at home with the child. Kela pays a parental daily allowance during this period, which safeguards the family's income.

Maternity allowance

After the child is born, the mother's maternity leave continues for about 3 months. A maternity allowance is paid to mothers during this time.

Paternity allowance

A father can have at maximum 54 free days – in other words, about 9 weeks. Of this time, you can spend 1–18 weekdays or 3 weeks at home with the mother during the same period.

You can have the rest of the leave after the parental allowance has ended. You can take the leave all at one time or break it up into shorter periods.

If you have already had 18 weekdays free, you can still have as many as 36 weekdays free. If you haven't had any of this leave yet, you can have all 54 weekdays free.

You can take paternity leave while the child is still under two years old. During the paternity leave, Kela pays you paternity allowance. You get this money if you live with the child's mother.

Apply for paternity allowance no later than 2 months from the date the child is 2 years old.

Inform your employer about your paternity leave no later than 2 months before your leave starts. If your leave is at maximum 12 weekdays, tell your employer no later than one month before.



**For more information, call
020 692 226
Monday to Friday
from 8am to 6pm**

Parental allowance

Either the mother or father can take parental leave. The mother or father can also have this free time in turns. Parental leave lasts 158 weekdays – about half a year.

Kela pays parental allowance for the parental leave to the parent who is at home caring for the child.

When the parental allowance ends, the child is about 9 months old. If the family has twins, Kela pays an additional 60 weekdays of parental allowance.

The requirement for parental allowance is the mother's medical examination after the birth. Kela needs a certificate before it can start paying parental allowance.

Apply for parental allowance one month before you start the leave.

The mother and father can also work part-time and look after the child for half a day in turns. For this period, Kela pays partial parental allowance to both parents.

How much can you receive?

Maternity allowance, special maternity allowance, paternity allowance and parental allowance are calculated the same way. The amount of the allowance is normally specified according to the applicant's working income.

The allowance is always smaller than one's salary – normally about 70% of one's income.

It is paid on the basis of weekdays, which also includes Saturday.

If you are paid a salary during your parental leave, Kela pays the allowance to your employer.

The allowance is also affected by whether or not you have studied or been ill or without a job. The smallest allowance is about 600 euros per month. A student, for example, gets this lowest amount.

The allowances paid to parents are subject to tax. Tax is withheld in keeping with your tax deduction card.

Pension and annual holiday adds up for the worker when on maternity, paternity or parental leave.

Support for adoptive parents

Kela supports the parents of an adopted child in largely the same way as biological parents. Adoptive parents cannot get maternity allowance, but they get a longer parental allowance period. Parental allowance is paid from the day when you first have the adoptive child under your care.

The father of an adoptive child can have paternity leave on the same terms as other fathers.

If you adopt a child from another country, you can apply for assistance from Kela to help cover the costs of adoption.

Kela card



When a child is born in Finland, information about this goes directly from the hospital to the population register and from there to Kela.

The child gets a personal identity code and, once he or she has a name, a Kela Card (a health insurance card). The card is mailed home.

Child benefit

Kela pays child benefit for each child until the end of the month when the child is 17 years old.

Child benefit is paid according to the number of eligible children in the family:

- For the first child €95.75 per month
- For the second child €105.80 per month
- For the third child €135.01 per month
- For the fourth child €154.64 per month
- For the fifth and each additional child €174.27 per month.

A single parent gets an increase which is €48.55 per child per month.

The child benefit is tax-free income. Child benefit is normally paid to the mother or father or other guardian.

You can apply for child benefit either in a separate application or at the same time you apply for maternity, paternity or parental allowance.

Child care allowances

After the parental leave, you can

- look after your child at home and get child home care allowance
- arrange private daycare for your child and get child home care allowance or private day care allowance
- work for up to 30 hours per week and get flexible care allowance
- place your child in municipal (local) daycare.

Child care leave

After the parental allowance period, a father or mother can stay at home on an unpaid child care leave to look after their child until the child is 3 years old.

Tell your employer about your child care leave no later than 2 months before it starts.

Child home care allowance

If a father or mother takes care of a child under 3 years old at home, the parent can apply for child home care allowance. The caregiver can also be someone else, such as grandparents or a private daycare provider. Child home care allowance is not available if the child is in municipal (local) daycare.

The child home care allowance consists of a basic amount and an additional amount.

The basic amount is

- €342.53 per month for one child under age 3
- €102.55 per month for each additional child under age 3
- €65.89 per month for children who have reached age 3 but are still under school age.

The additional amount can be paid for one child only. The highest it can be is €183.31 per month. The additional amount is linked to the income of the parents.

The child home care allowance is taxable income.

Your home municipality (locality) may pay a municipal supplement to your child care allowance. Ask the social welfare office or Kela for more information.

Private day care allowance

Private day care allowance can be applied for if there is a child in the family who is under school age and looked after by a caregiver or other daycare provider paid by the family. Private day care allowance is not available if the child is in municipal (local) daycare.

The allowance includes a basic amount of €174.38 per child and per month. You may also be eligible for an additional amount of up to €146.64 per child and per month. The additional amount is linked to income. Kela always pays this assistance to the caregiver or to another daycare provider you are paying. The private day care allowance is taxable income.

Flexible care allowance

You can work 30 hours or less per week and spend the rest of the regular work week looking after your child. In this case you will be paid less but you will receive a flexible care allowance from Kela.

Kela provides flexible care allowance for children under age 3.

Both the father and the mother can receive flexible care allowance. They must stay away from work and look after their child at different times. For example, this can mean that the father works on different days than the mother.

The flexible care allowance is paid according to how much you work.

The amount of the allowance can be either €244.18 per month or €162.78 per month depending on how much on average you work per week. See Kela's website for details on the limits: www.kela.fi/flexible-care-allowance.

Kela pays flexible care allowance for one child at a time. The flexible care allowance is taxable income.

Partial care allowance

You can receive partial care allowance if you work no more than 30 hours a week while looking after a child. Kela pays partial care allowance for children who are in the first or second year of school.

The partial care allowance is €98.09 per month. It is taxable income.

When a child gets ill

If your child gets ill, you can take him/her to the municipal (local) health centre or to a private doctor. Kela compensates you for part of the fees and treatments that a private doctor prescribes. Along with this, you can get compensation for medicines. Kela does not offer compensation for health centre treatments.

Temporary care leave if a child under the age of 10 gets ill

When a child who is under 10 years old suddenly gets ill, you can stay away from work on a temporary care leave to look after him/her. This can last a maximum of 4 days. Employers are not required to pay you during a temporary child care leave.

Caring for a child who is seriously ill and/or disabled

Kela also offers support for the care of a child who is seriously ill and/or disabled.

The benefits and services available from Kela are:

- special care allowance for a parent who looks after a child under 16 years of age
- disability allowance for a child under 16 years of age
- medical rehabilitation

Child maintenance allowance

If parents separate, the children often stay with one of the parents. The other parent, who is liable for the maintenance of the children, pays child support for them.

Sometimes the parent liable for maintenance does not pay child support, or there is no liable parent. In such a case Kela can pay child maintenance allowance to the parent in whose custody the child is.

Kela pays child maintenance allowance if

- the parent liable for child support has not paid it
- due to the financial circumstances of the parent liable for child support, the child support is smaller than the child maintenance allowance.
- a child is adopted by only one parent
- the paternity of a child born out of wedlock has not been confirmed.
- paternity has been confirmed, but it was not possible to confirm child support at the same time.

The child maintenance allowance is €155.17 per month for each child. It is free from tax.

Useful information for persons liable for maintenance

If Kela pays child maintenance allowance, it will collect any unpaid child support payments from the person liable for maintenance. This is called child support debt.

If your financial situation is such that you cannot pay off your child support debt to Kela, you can apply to Kela for an exemption.

Application and payment

You can apply for all of Kela's benefits for families with children online at

 at www.kela.fi/asiointi (in Finnish) or www.fpa.fi/etjanst (in Swedish)

You can also print the forms which you can get from Kela online at

 www.kela.fi/forms

or from Kela's offices.

- Deliver or send the filled-in application form to a local Kela office.
- Check the application dates.
- See the application form for a list of the documents you need to send with it.



For more information, call
020 692 226
Monday to Friday
from 8am to 6pm

You can also go to Kela's offices to get more information.

Payment of allowances

When Kela has handled your application, you get a decision about the allowance sent to your home. The amount of the benefit and the grounds on which it has been granted to you are stated on the decision. You get a decision even if it is negative.

Kela pays maternity, paternity and parental allowances to the mother's or father's bank account. Payment is made retroactively, usually every four weeks.

Child benefit payments are deposited to the mother's, father's or other guardian's account on the 26th of each month. If banks are closed on that date or the payment date follows a holiday, child benefits are deposited earlier.

Housing support

The housing support available from Kela takes the form of:

- general housing allowance
- housing supplement for students
- housing allowance for pensioners and
- housing assistance as a part of the conscript's allowance for those doing their military service

Only the general housing allowance is described in this brochure.

Who can get a general housing allowance?

Kela pays a general housing allowance for costs related to housing. You can get a general housing allowance if your income is small and you live in Finland permanently. Housing allowance can be paid to one person or to a household.

'Household' means those living permanently in the same residence. Normally a household is made up of a married or unmarried couple or a family. One person can also be a household.

The general housing allowance can be paid for rented, partial-ownership, right-of-occupancy or owner-occupied homes. The last includes single-family homes and homes in a housing cooperative.

- **Rented homes:** You can get a housing allowance for rent as well as for water and heating costs if they are paid separately.
- **Single-family homes:** Property maintenance costs as well as part of the interest paid on housing loans are taken into account as housing costs.
- **Units in a housing cooperative:** Housing costs include the maintenance charge, any water and heating charges paid separately from the maintenance charge, and a share of the interest paid on housing loans.
- **Right-of-occupancy homes:** Housing costs include the maintenance charge, any water and heating charges paid separately from the maintenance charge, and a share of the interest paid on housing loans.
- **Partial-ownership homes:** Housing costs include the rent and any water and heating charges paid separately from the rent.

Housing costs

Water charges are accepted as housing costs if you pay them separately and on top of the rent or maintenance fee. For water charges €19 per person and per month is accepted.

Heating charges are accepted as housing costs if you pay them separately and on top of the rent or maintenance fee. For single-person households the amount of heating charges accepted is €41. If the household consists of more than one person, €14 is added in heating costs for each additional person.

If you live in a single-family house, included in the maintenance costs are water and heating costs and other expenses that living in a single-family house entails.

If you have a housing loan, 73% (or nearly three-fourths) of the interest charged on the loan is accepted as housing costs.

How much general housing allowance can you get?

Housing allowance can be at most 80% (or four-fifths) of your housing costs. You always pay at least 20% (or one fifth) of your housing expenses yourself. A housing allowance does not cover all housing expenses, however – only acceptable housing costs specified in accordance with the law.

Acceptable housing costs are subject to maximum limits. This is referred to as maximum allowable housing costs.

If the acceptable amount of housing costs exceeds the maximum allowable housing costs, the amount of the allowance will be calculated based on the maximum allowable housing costs.

The maximum allowable housing costs depend on the number of adults and children living in the same home and the municipality in which the home is located.



For more information, call
020 692 221

Monday to Friday
from 8am to 6pm,



go to Kela's website at
www.kela.fi/housing,



or visit a Kela office.

Municipality in which your home is located

The municipalities (localities) are divided into 4 groups according to the cost of living there. The first group of municipalities includes Helsinki. It has the highest cost of living, so a bigger housing allowance is received there.

The next group includes Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen.

The third group includes Hyvinkää, Hämeenlinna, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Järvenpää, Kajaani, Kerava, Kirkkonummi, Kouvola, Kuopio, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Lohja, Mikkeli, Nokia, Nurmijärvi, Oulu, Pori, Porvoo, Raisio, Riihimäki, Rovaniemi, Seinäjoki, Sipoo, Siuntio, Tampere, Turku, Tuusula, Vaasa and Vihti

All other municipalities make up the fourth group.

Example

Maija lives in a rented home in Helsinki. She pays €800 per month in rent. The maximum allowable housing costs for a single-person household in Helsinki are €508 per month. The housing allowance is calculated on the basis of the maximum allowable housing costs, not Maija's rent of €800.

Example 2

Helli sublets a home in Kemi. She pays €291 per month in rent. The maximum allowable housing costs for a single-person household in Kemi are €362 per month. The housing allowance is calculated on the basis of the rent paid by Heli, that is €291, because the rent does not exceed the maximum allowable housing costs.

Basic deductible

Before the final amount of the housing allowance can be known, a basic deductible is taken away from the housing costs.

Its size depends on

- the gross income per month of the adult members of the household
- the number of adult and child members of the household.

The bigger the income is, the larger the deductible. If income is very small, there is no basic deductible at all.

'Gross income' means income before taxes.

Income

The amount of the housing allowance is affected by

- earned income (your salary for instance)
- capital income (for example rental income or interest on deposits)
- many social security benefits (for example labour market subsidy and sickness allowance).

The amount of housing allowance is not affected by:

- certain social security benefits (for example income support/social assistance, study grant, child benefit or informal carer allowance)
- the income of a minor child who is a member of the household
- incidental income such as a gift or an inheritance.

An earned-income deduction will be introduced in the housing allowance scheme with effect from 1 September 2015. It means that, for each member of the household, a sum of €300 per month will be deducted from their income from work or self-employment.

See Kela's website at



www.kela.fi/housing

for more about how income affects the amount of the housing allowance.

Calculating your housing benefit

The housing allowance is calculated as follows: First the basic deductible is taken away from housing costs. The housing allowance is equal to 80% of the remaining amount.

Example

Jaakko lives by himself in a rental home which is located in Turku. He pays €700 per month in rent. Jaakko's gross income (income before taxes) is €705 per month.

Calculation:

- Due to low income there is no basic deductible.
- The maximum allowable housing costs for single persons living in Turku are €411 per month.
- The housing allowance is calculated on the basis of the maximum allowable housing costs, not Jaakko's rent of €700.
- The housing allowance is equal to 80% of housing costs, or $411 \times 0.80 = €328.80$ per month. Jaakko pays $700 - 328.8 = €371.20$ per month out of pocket. (This calculation reflects the situation in 2015)

Application and payment

You can apply for a general housing allowance on the internet at www.kela.fi/asiointi (in Finnish) or www.fpa.fi/etjanst (in Swedish).

You can also print the forms which you can get from Kela online at www.kela.fi/forms, or from Kela's offices.

- Deliver or send the filled-in application form to a Kela customer service point.
- Check the application dates and income limits.
- See the application form for a list of the documents you need to send with it.

Payment of the housing allowance

When Kela has handled your application, you get a decision about the allowance sent to your home. The amount of the allowance and the grounds on which it has been granted to you are stated on the decision. You get a decision even if it is negative.

Kela pays the general housing allowance to your bank account on the first banking day of the month.

The housing allowance can also be paid directly to your landlord.

Kela's reviews the housing allowance every year. Your housing allowance may also be reviewed earlier than this if your life situation has changed – for example, if your income gets bigger or smaller.

Kela is at your service

On the Internet

Your contacts with Kela can be handled easily online. You can get information about Kela's benefits on Kela's website. There are tools to calculate the amounts of benefits. (Please note that this service is available in Finnish and Swedish only.) Kela's website is at

 www.kela.fi

Kela's online customer service is a safe and secure channel for online contact. Sign in to the online service with your own online banking codes or the mobile certificate on your phone.

Through Kela's online customer service, you can:

- apply for Kela benefits
- submit additional documents
- get information about the handling of your application
- report changes
- stop the payment of benefits.

The online customer service is at

 www.kela.fi/asiointi
(in Finnish) or
www.fpa.fi/etjanst
(in Swedish)

By telephone

 **Benefits for families with children**
020 692 226

 **Housing benefits**
020 692 221

By contacting a Kela office or citizen service centre

Kela's offices are at your service in all matters connected with Kela benefits.

Address information for the Kela office or citizen service centre nearest to you is available on the the Internet at

 www.kela.fi/offices

Addresses and customer service numbers are also listed in the local telephone directory.

By booking an appointment

You can book an appointment for an office visit or for phone service. It's a good idea to schedule an appointment if there is a major change in your circumstances or you need to discuss a complicated matter.

Schedule an appointment at

 www.kela.fi/appointments
or call Kela's customer service number.

If you need interpreter assistance, contact Kela or see www.kela.fi/ interpretation for more information.

 www.kela.fi/interpretation

Kela's employees must keep all personal matters secret. They are not allowed to speak of matters regarding their clients to outside persons.

Report all changes

If you receive a Kela benefit, do remember to inform us quickly if there are changes in your situation. These can be, for example, changes in your housing or income situation, changes in the number of children, or changes in your relationship with your spouse or partner.

Recovery of overpayments

If Kela pays too much in benefits because of incorrect information, it must ask you to pay back the overpayment.

 **Overpayment Recovery Centre**
020 634 4940

Appealing a decision

You can apply for a change to a Kela decision. Instructions on how to appeal are provided with each benefit decision. If you have questions, please call the telephone number below.

 **Benefits for families with children**
020 692 226

 **Housing benefits**
020 692 221

Social Security Appeal Board

Telephone 0295 163 800
www.somla.fi

You are welcome to contact us! Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Conscripts _____ 020 692 220
Housing benefits ____ 020 692 221
Pensions and
retirement _____ 020 692 222
Kela card and European Health
Insurance Card _____ 020 692 223
Rehabilitation _____ 020 692 225
Families with children _ 020 692 226
Moving to or from
Finland _____ 020 634 0200
Death of a family
member _____ 020 692 228
Sickness _____ 020 692 224
Support during
unemployment _____ 020 692 230
Disability benefits ____ 020 692 231

Kela's brochures in Easy English

Brochures printed and online: www.kela.fi/muutkielet
suomeksi | på svenska | Davvisámegiella | eesti keel | Русский

Home and Family

Benefits and housing allowances
for families with children

Health and Rehabilitation

Compensation for illness and daily allowances,
rehabilitation and disability benefits

Studying

Financial support for students and
allowances for military conscripts

Unemployment

Financial support for the unemployed

Pensions and retirement

Pension security, housing allowance and care allowance

Moving to or away from Finland

How to get into the Finnish social security system
and what happens when you move
from Finland to another country