

Introduction to the Estonian child protection system and the role of Social Insurance Board

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Child Protection Act

The Act came into force on 1st of January 2016.

The aim of the Act is to recognize the value of every child in society, to ensure clear principles to protect children's rights and to ensure children's well-being.

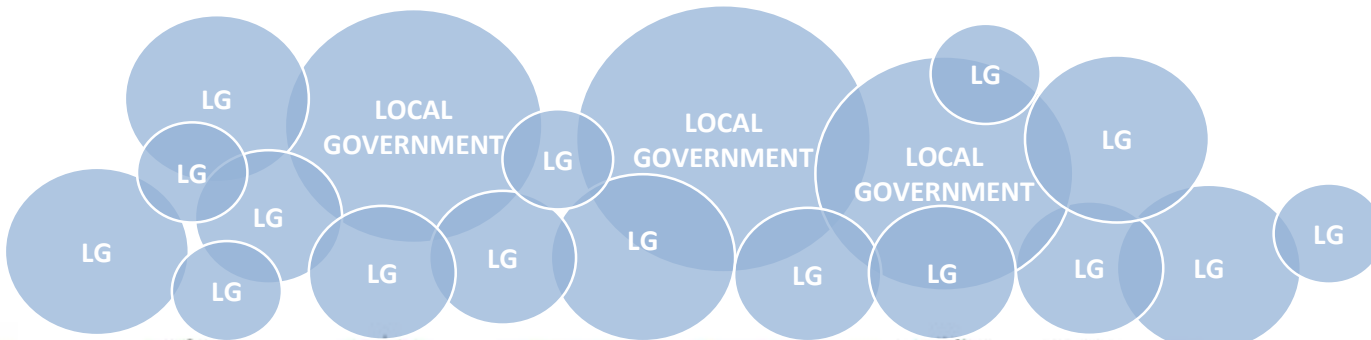
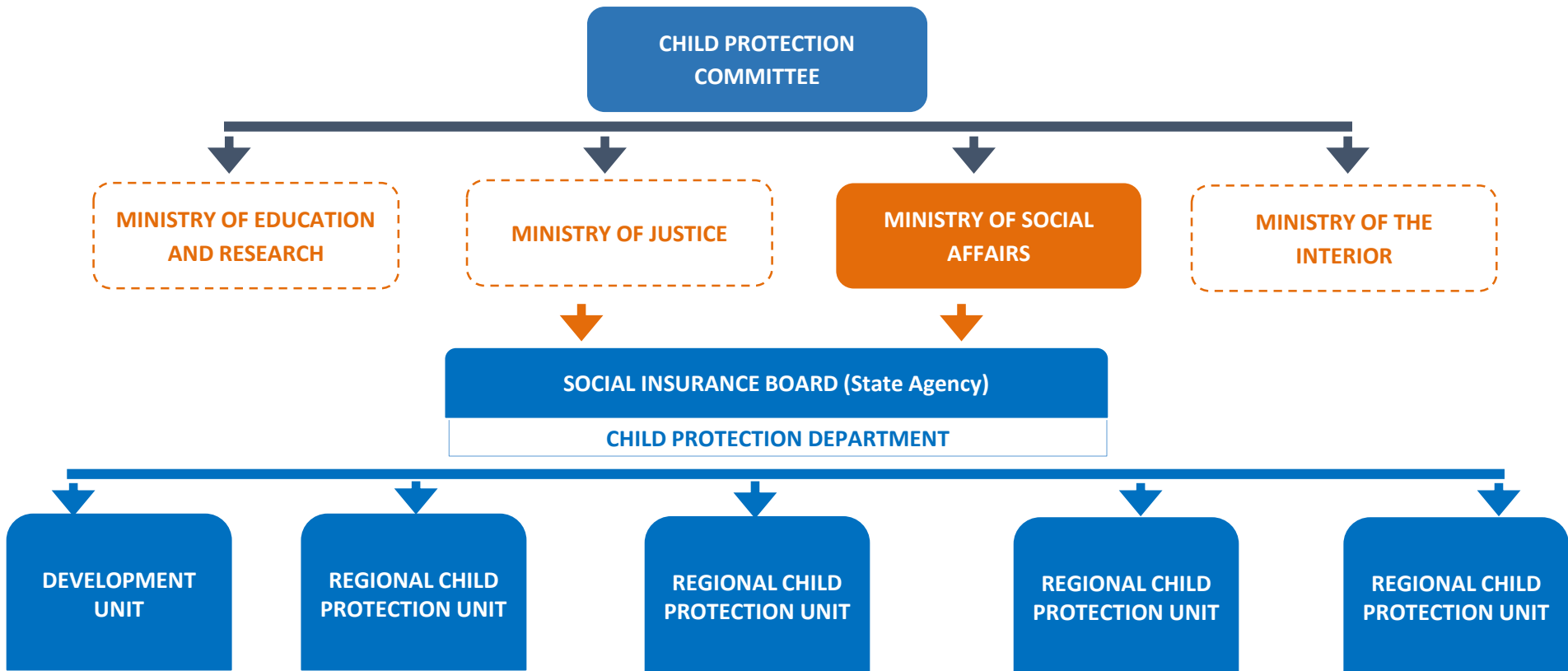
The Act emphasizes

- prevention and early intervention;
- multisectoral approach and integration of services;
- cooperation between the State and local municipalities.

The main investments made by the State to implement the Act:

- building up the national child protection unit as a part of Social Insurance Board;
- building up the in-service training system for child protection workers;
- building up the supervision system for child protection workers;
- piloting several programs and services for children and their families.

Estonian Child Protection System



The Estonian Social Insurance Board and Child Protection Department

Estonian Social Insurance Board is a governmental institution acting under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Objective - administration and implementing of the social security and welfare legislation.

Child Protection department was established in order to:

- Implement the governments' policies and strategies
- Act as a central organisation between the State and the local governments
- Co-ordinate and strengthen cross-sectoral prevention and cooperation in child protection
- Enhance the quality of intervention and ensure the wellbeing of children



Child Protection Department

Has 4 regional teams

Eastern Region – 2 counties, 16 local governments

Western Region – 4 counties, 14 local governments

Northern Region – 3 counties, 23 local governments

Southern Region – 6 counties, 26 local governments

+ Development Unit in Tallinn

In each regional team:

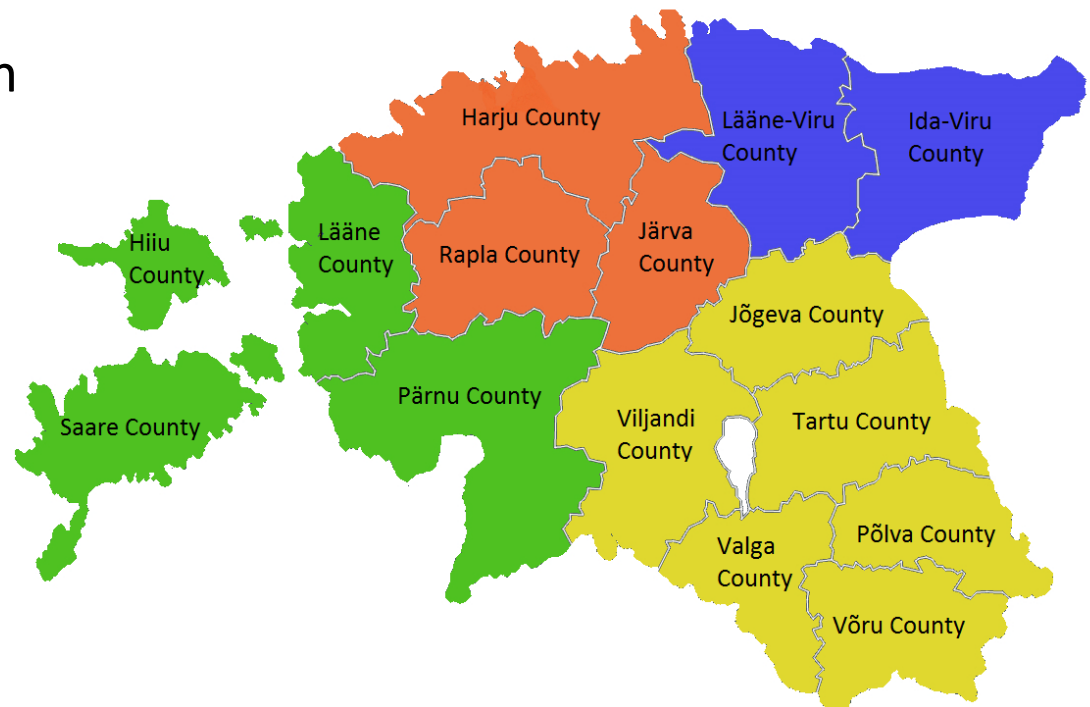
Team leader

Adoption specialist

Case workers

MDFT team

Project co-ordinators



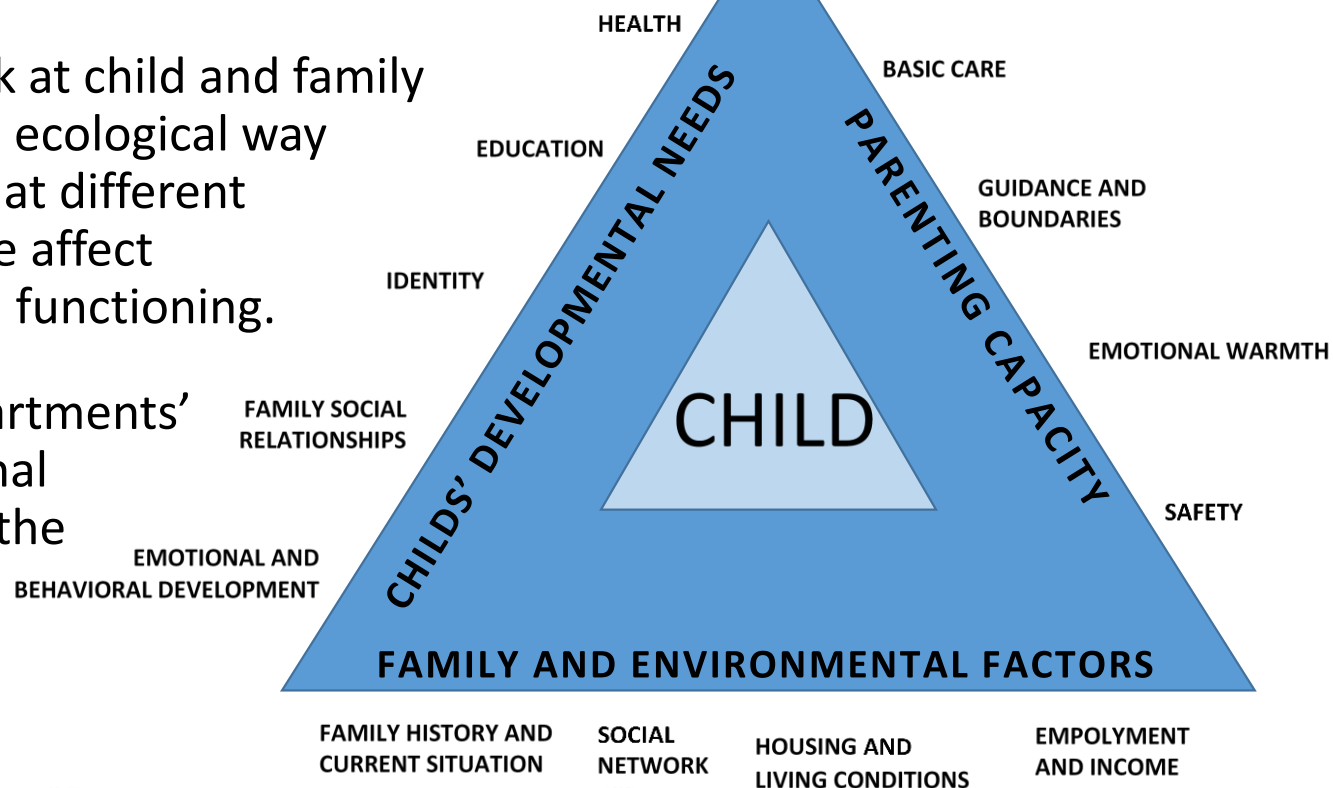
Tasks of Child Protection Department

- Developing **guidelines** for local governments. Current main project is **The Child Welfare Assessment Guidebook**

Based on Swedens' BBIC framework and is a more compact version of the Child Welfare Triangle (UK Department of Health, 2000)

General idea is to look at child and family welfare in systematic, ecological way and to understand, that different aspects of a childs' life affect his/her wellbeing and functioning.

Child Protection Departments' goal is to finish the final adjustments and put the guidebook to use by the end of 2017.



Tasks of Child Protection Department 2

Offering counselling and assistance to local governments

- ✓ with resolving child protection cases: national – 268 cases in 2016
and international – 98 in 2016
- ✓ with preparing of a of development plan supporting the well-being of children - 8 in 2016
- Organising the professional supervision of child protective social workers – 246 specialists in 2016
and their professional network (since 2017)
- Providing 24/7 counselling service for State and local government specialists – 1318 calls in 2016
...inc. cases where a child is in immediate danger – 9 child/
parent separation decisions

Tasks of Child Protection Department 3

- Maintenance of Child Helpline 116 111 – 2414 calls in 2016
and Missing Children Helpline 116 000 – 39 calls in 2016
- Coordination of cross-sectoral prevention, cooperation and outreach (awareness raising, newsletters, campaigns, seminars) – about 320 meetings and trainings organized in 2016
- Managing adoption cases: international – 11 children in 2016
and national (since 2017, 24 so far)

Adoption specialists are mobile, at the moment we have about 250 petitions for adoption in nation-wide registry (STAR)

In addition to preparing the adoption, our specialists also help adopted people find information about their origin (biological parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters etc.).

Tasks of Child Protection Department 4

- **Develop and offer services** for children and families
- ✓ **MDFT** (Multidimensional Family Therapy) - a long-term family-centered treatment for youth with severe behavioral problems (delinquency, substance abuse, criminal behavior).
- ✓ ESF Project „**Improving the quality of alternative care**“ - support services to those who provide family-based alternative care (phone-, internet- and group counselling, individual psychological counselling for family, family mentoring) and professional supervision for specialists at residential homes; support person for young people leaving care; training courses/guidelines for monitoring alternative care.
- ✓ **Support services for children** (age 0-17) **with significant and severe disability** who require great need of care (personal assistant, caretaking, transport to service).
- ✓ **Childrens' House** (*Barnehus*) - child-friendly interdisciplinary service for children suspected or confirmed to have been sexually abused.

Main changes in 2018

- **Dissolution of Juvenile Committees** – a committee operating at local governments or county governments that who had committed an offence
- Changes in **Social Welfare Act**
- ✓ **Closed Institution Service** for children with very severe behavioural problems
- ✓ **Alternative care** – Moving towards family based care and professional foster families instead of institutionalised care. Local governments will be responsible for organizing alternative care services
- National registry of foster families (STAR, similar to adoption registry)
- Assessment of families (inc. current foster families)
- Finding and training new foster families (PRIDE)
- Support services for foster families

State and administrative supervision

- State supervision over compliance with the requirements provided in Child Protection Act
- Social Insurance Boards' **Quality Department** exercises **state supervision** over
 - ✓ Requirements established for **persons working with children**
 - ✓ Requirements established for **local governments**
 - ✓ Requirements established for **institutions that provide services for children** (e.g. rehabilitation services)
- ..and **administrative** supervision over
 - ✓ Requirements established for **local governments**
 - ✓ Requirements established for **Child Protection Officials**
- *From 2018:*

Requirements established for substitute homes and child care services (currently the County Governments duty)



Thank you!

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