

The Onni community centre in Liipola and the Liipola day care centre

Onni, the community centre with a day care centre, school and library operating under one roof, is located in Liipola, Lahti. The large gymnasium built in the centre is open for all local residents, and there are also plenty of other spaces for residential activities.

The Onni community centre provides care and education for children aged between one and ten. Onni has a day care centre with pre-school groups and school classes from grades one to four. The familiar environment makes it easier for the children to transition from one level to the next. The school currently has around 135 pupils and the day care centre 160 children.

The Onni community centre in Liipola also has facilities for pupil welfare and oral health care services, and a service kitchen scaled to the needs of the building. Onni serves as a neighbourhood hub and a living room to residents, who are drawn to the place by its library containing around 12,000 books. While staff is present during the building's opening hours, the self-service hours are every day from 7 am. to 10 pm.

The gymnasium's 600 square metres serve the residents of the region and city. The gymnasium has a stage with mirrors and bars, which makes the space also suitable for dance troupes and music groups. The building also holds spaces intended for joint use: a woodworking shop, a visual art and textile workshop, a media studio, and a relaxing space referred to as a sensory room, suitable for uses such as small book clubs. The activities by the local residents are coordinated by a building host.



Liipola day care centre

The Liipola day care centre provides a multicultural growth and learning environment that is safe and respectful for all children. The day care centre's activities emphasise interpersonal skills, the rich world of language, and the joy of physical activity and play. Together with parents of the children, the children's learning, growth and welfare is supported by a multiprofessional, competent personnel. Our strength lies in a well-functioning daily life, a regular daily rhythm, and teaching, rehabilitation and care integrated in the children's days.

The Päijänne Tavastia family centre and Perhetilkkä meeting place

An operating model for family centres has been introduced in Päijänne Tavastia with an aim to bring together the people, services and activities providing help and support to children, young people and families. From the perspective of professionals, the operating model gathers together professionals from various fields, and joins fragmented services. From the perspective of children, young people and families, the purpose is to offer support and solutions in a timely and preventive manner. The family centre is implemented as a network of operators joining the services and support by municipalities, the joint municipal authority, organisations, congregations, and peers. The operating model for family centres is concerned with measures that improve welfare among the residents in the municipality as well as services and operating models that work smoothly.



The practical work of the operating model is steered by the regional LAPE cooperation group, which meets once a month and includes representatives from all municipalities in the Päijänne Tavastia region (and also Myrskylä and Pukkila), the leadership of the administrative branch of the Päijänne Tavastia Joint Municipal Authority for Welfare, congregations, organisations, and education providers. The cooperation group determines a vision for the county, and the activities are further strengthened by solutions shaped at the regional level. The family centre's management team is in charge of operative leadership. The team includes the management team for child and family services at the Päijänne Tavastia Joint Municipal Authority for Welfare as well as representation from the leadership of education services, and congregations and organisations in the municipalities. The practical work is also implemented by three persons in charge of family centres and a family centre coordinator.

The Perhetilkku meeting place

The Perhetilkku meeting place of the services for families with children by the Päijänne Tavastia Joint Municipal Authority for Welfare provides different families and agents with a space that can be used for meeting others and spending time together. Perhetilkku provides family café and breakfast porridge activities that follow an idea that everyone is welcome to pop in – mothers with their babies and grandmothers and schoolchildren alike, for instance. The space is used for organising events that are open for everyone as well as meetings for more carefully determined groups, such as parents with special needs children or those expecting a baby. Organisations are involved in the activities.



The Perhetupa meeting place

Perhetupa has been operating in Lahti for 12 years. The agent responsible for the Perhetupa activities is the Lahti Mother and Child Home and Shelter Association, which carries out preventive and correctional childhood protection work and extensive activities related to safety that put emphasis on supporting early interaction between the parent and child, crisis work, prevention of violence, and providing help related to divorce and separation. The association's approaches have been expanded, particularly to open services.

The aim of the activities carried out at Perhetupa is to

- reduce experiences of loneliness among parents and children, and strengthen families' social relationships.
- support the development of peer support, sense of community and involvement for families.
- increase parents' coping in daily life as well as resources through the Perhetupa activities.

The open Perhetupa activities are aimed at all families with babies and little children aged 0–6 in the Päijänne Tavastia region. Most visitors are families from Lahti. Grandparents and siblings are also welcome

to Perhetupa. Parents may also come to the meeting place with a family worker or some other support person. The child care service is aimed at children aged 0–6. Temporary child care is offered to families based on social and financial grounds. The participants are mothers aged 20–45 and the children are primarily under 2 years of age, mostly babies (aged between 1 month and 1 year). Many of the mothers are single parents.

The PERHETUPA activities are civic activities that are voluntary for families. When arranging activities, children are placed at the centre and paid attention to in various ways during the day. Children are provided with, age-appropriate activities, with rich possibilities for experiences. It is made sure that children feel safe and are interacted with based on their age level.

Family background does not restrict access to the activities. Those using the Perhetupa meeting place are viewed as visitors, not clients. No record is kept on the families. The parents can personally decide what to share with other families and employees. The parents are provided with peer support and, if necessary, more individual support as well as guidance from the Perhetupa employees. People can visit Perhetupa several days per week and spend time there from morning until noon, have coffee and eat with their children, meet other parents and discuss with the staff. The implementation and planning of the Perhetupa activities takes into account the changing needs of families and changes in the operating environment. Perhetupa employs a responsible family worker (50%), an employee specialised in families with babies (50%), a family meeting place instructor (85%), and a children's instructor (50%).

Opening hours:

- Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 9–14 (ages 0–6)
- Thursday at 12–15 (baby meetup for under-1-year-olds)
- temporary child care: upon agreement during Perhetupa's opening hours, priced at €8/session (max 3 h), preliminary registration

Peer group activities guided by Perhetupa employee alone or together with other professionals: :

- family training for pregnant single mothers and baby meetups
- a group for immigrant mothers and children who have been granted asylum
- Haikarakahvila ('Stork café') activities for families expecting a baby

Independent peer groups:

- Other work activities of the Mother and Child Home and Shelter Association use the Perhetupa premises for their group activities
- Other groups meeting at Perhetupa include follow-up groups for the families participating in the family training, a group of single parent families, Russian families, and a group for multiple-birth families.

Case management:

- verbal guidance and brochures on the services available for families with children
- support in the form of discussion
- information for families who have moved to the area from other municipalities and abroad
- referring families to other support services if necessary (incl. the association's own services)

Renting the premises:

- The Perhetupa premises are available for rent at an affordable rate for the purposes of the families' peer groups and for children's birthday parties
- the spaces have a high use rate; the activities are also often organised in the evenings and on weekends

The centre's activities in numbers:

Open activities:

- Around 400 different families per year
- Around 25 adults and 30 children per day
- Total number of visits 6,710 (3,126 visits by adults and 3,584 by children)
- Child care: provided on 24 occasions
- Open on 157 days per year

Regular activities for families:

- 35 children's music sessions (outside instructor)
- 6 sessions of yoga for babies (outside instructor)

Group activities:

- 15 peer groups arranged together with partners and families (73 times)
- 6 groups arranged by the Mother and Child Home and Shelter Association (46 times)
- sleep rhythm training (7 sessions)
- 60 birthdays + christenings
- Groups instructed by the Perhetupa employees:
 - 10 family training sessions for pregnant single mothers
 - 15 immigrant mother/child group sessions

