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### 1. The child's legal capacity

In Finland the minimum age of criminal responsibility is 15.

In other issues, the minimum age at which a case can be brought to court varies between 12 (health issues, placement in care), 15 (employment, asylum, migration issues, education issues, administrative sanctions) and 18 (family issues).

### 2. Access to adapted proceedings

Investigations targeting children are as far as possible assigned to police officers with training or experience in this task. Larger police departments have units or police officers specializing in investigating crimes against children. As a rule, investigation of crimes against children is in all police departments channeled to investigators who have professional skill and particular competence in investigating this type of crimes.

The Prosecution Service has a system of special prosecutors to ensure expertise in an area of specialization and to maintain and develop the professional skills of prosecutors. There is a group of special prosecutors who are specialized in violence against children and women. They train other prosecutors in their field of expertise.

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The Ombudsman for Children promotes the interest of children and implementation of children's rights on a general level but does not handle individual cases.

### 3. Child-specific support mechanisms and procedures

Since the beginning of 2016, also a video-recording of a 15-17 year old victim can be used as evidence in court in cases where the victim is in need of special protection.

According to the Criminal Investigations Act, the criminal investigation authority shall, when necessary, consult with a physician or other expert on whether investigation measures may be directed at a person under the age of 18 years.

As a rule, interviews with child victims and witnesses are conducted by police officers with training or experience in this task. The interview may also be conducted by a health care professional.

In connection with the University Hospitals of major cities, there are dedicated centers of expertise that specialize in hearing minor victims of a crime. The police work in a close-knit cooperation with these centers.

### 4. Training of professionals

The Ministry of Justice regularly organizes advanced training for judges, court staff and legal aid officers in child psychology, legal psychology, rights of victims, human rights and special needs of victims who have been sexually abused. Also prosecutors may take part in the training.

The Office of the Prosecutor General organizes training for prosecutors that deal with cases of sexual and physical abuse of children. The topics include child development, child psychology and how to conduct an interview with a child.

Training of police officers includes training on child psychology, communication skills and how to conduct an interview with a child. A special qualification as an expert is given to those professionals who have conducted special training carried out by the National Police Board.

### 5. Access to remedies

A complaint about the prosecutor's decision not to prosecute can be submitted to the Prosecutor General, who has the right to initiate a new consideration of charges.

### 6. Family life

The first stage in the adoption process is adoption counselling provided by municipal social welfare organs and Save the Children Finland. Adoption counselling is free of charge for customers. For the purpose of submission of an application for adoption permission and petition for the granting of an adoption, the provider of adoption counselling shall provide a written report on the provision of adoption counselling. The report shall provide the necessary information about those concerned and their circumstances.

Based on the report the Adoption Board makes the decision on granting permission for adoption. The adoption of a minor child requires a permission granted by the Adoption Board in domestic as well as in intercountry adoptions. Permission is valid for two years. The applicants may apply extending the validity of the permission.

There is only one type of adoption. Once an adoption has been granted, the adoptee shall be deemed the child of the adoptive parents and not of the former parents.

The adoption permission is not needed if the adoptee is the child of the prospective adopter's spouse or a child who has otherwise already been cared for and brought up by the prospective adopter in an established manner.

As a rule, those adopting from abroad must, in addition to receiving adoption counselling, always apply for intercountry adoption services. Such services are provided by the City of Helsinki Social Services Department, Save the Children Finland and Interpedia.

At the end of the process the adoption shall be granted by judicial decision.

[Child-friendly justice in Finland](#)  (534 Kb) 

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