

# Systemic practice in child welfare services in Finland – a multi-case study

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# Introduction

## MULTIPRAX research project

- a multiple case study of three bilingual welfare counties conducted from 2022 to 2024, funded by the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
- The focus of the research is on the everyday effects of the systemic approach when working with children and families.
- The Finnish systemic approach in child protection and family welfare services is a further developed version of the UK's Reclaiming Social Work model (the Hackney model), which integrates systemic family therapy orientations, methods and tools as part of child protection social work.

# Data collection

- Analysis of strategic documents such as the Strategies of Wellbeing Services Counties and the Service Strategy.
- Survey (n=34) of leaders and experts in child welfare and child and family social work.
- Interviews of both key informants (n=19) and of practitioners (n= approx. 35) in three areas.
- Ongoing; a follow-up of the survey and interviews of clients will be carried out, as well as documentation from one area will be collected.
- Clients will be interviewed during spring – early summer 2024.
- Turbulence in the field have impacted the data collection!

# Results so far

The systemic practice from the professional point of view:

- The systemic team meetings functions as an arena for developing professional competence
- The systemic team meetings supports wellbeing at work in turbulent times
- The systemic team meetings enable collective and shared knowledge
- The systemic team meetings enables client participation and considering the client perspective
- The weekly systemic meetings can be perceived as a burden in hectic times when the work load is heavy

# Conclusions

- The use of the systemic approach is still somewhat random and therefore the results considering the everyday effects of the approach are indicative.  
“We actually discussed if we really need a systemic team meeting every week, but decided that we have to keep doing it as the risk is that we won’t get it back if we give it up. “ one of the interviewed professionals social counsellors said.
- The professionals need additional, research-based education in order to develop their skills further.
  - The systemic approach provides a holistic perspective on the children’s situation, empowering social workers with more supportive tools for the families.
- A systematic collecting of feedback and developing client involvement is also needed.
  - Clients are not always aware of their case being discussed in the systemic team and this means that the professionals can not report back to their clients what was discovered during the team meeting. This way of using the systemic team is called consultative discussion.

**Thank you for  
your attention!**

