

Seinäjoki Model Preventing Childhood Obesity 2019 City of Seinäjoki, Finland

The City of Seinäjoki has been determinedly working towards reducing the childhood obesity and towards promoting health and welfare. During the 2000s, we became aware that the numbers for childhood overweight and obesity had significantly increased in South Ostrobothnia. In 2013, the City of Seinäjoki set a goal of the Welfare Programme to reduce the numbers of obese children and to prevent the related illnesses. The goal was to change the lifestyles of children and families to the healthier, through lifestyle guidance, nutrition and physical activities, and an environment that supports a healthy way of life.

At Seinäjoki, the development work aiming at systematically reducing the number of obese and overweight includes a cross-sectorial cooperation and long-range multisectoral work that the leadership and administrative branches have committed to. The Overcoming Obesity Programme of Seinäjoki City is coordinated by the Health and Welfare Promotion Unit. The programme will also be continued during the council period of 2017-2020.

Seinäjoki City's multisectoral model to reduce childhood obesity was described in the Overcoming Obesity Programme Modelling Project during 2017 and 2018. The Seinäjoki Model is based on the municipalities statutory responsibility in Finland to promote the health and welfare of its residents. The Modelling Project was done by utilising the development and education base of Seinäjoki City. The main goal was to instil the municipalities with the multisectoral health development work related to preventing obesity and overweight, and to promote the welfare of the residents.

Municipalities and cities of very different sizes and all over Finland have committed to being pilot municipalities (Rovaniemi, Lapinlahti, Turku, Siilinjärvi, Sastamala and Municipal Federation of Raahe Region). A very versatile picture can be received from the instilling and application of the Seinäjoki model, but the evaluation requires long-term observing. Each of the pilots had noticed an alarming development of obesity in children and youth and wanted to intervene. The role of the municipalities in promoting health and welfare of the residents had also been recognised in all of the pilot municipalities.

In the centrum of the model is the Health in All Policies (HIAP) approach, where the municipalities, communities and companies work together to promote health and welfare, as well as the development of an environment that supports well-being. The report describes the theoretical context of the Seinäjoki Model, actions taken in the city's sectors and the modelling process with six other Finnish municipalities.

The model also includes an online training programme The Healthy Kids. The training programme is directed for all city sectors, from urban design to social and health care



services. The Healthy Kids training programme was produced together with the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences.

The Overcoming Obesity Programme of Seinäjoki City has been developed into the Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki (HKS) development and education platform. The aim of the platform is better health and quality of life for children and families. The HKS development and education platform strengthens our professional skills and will produce continuous training in the future.

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