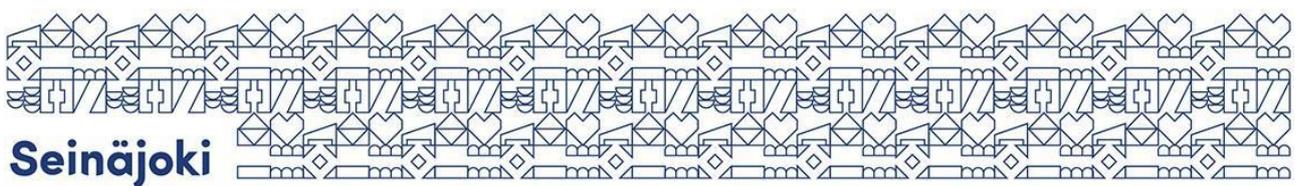




'Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki' model



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1 Where it all began

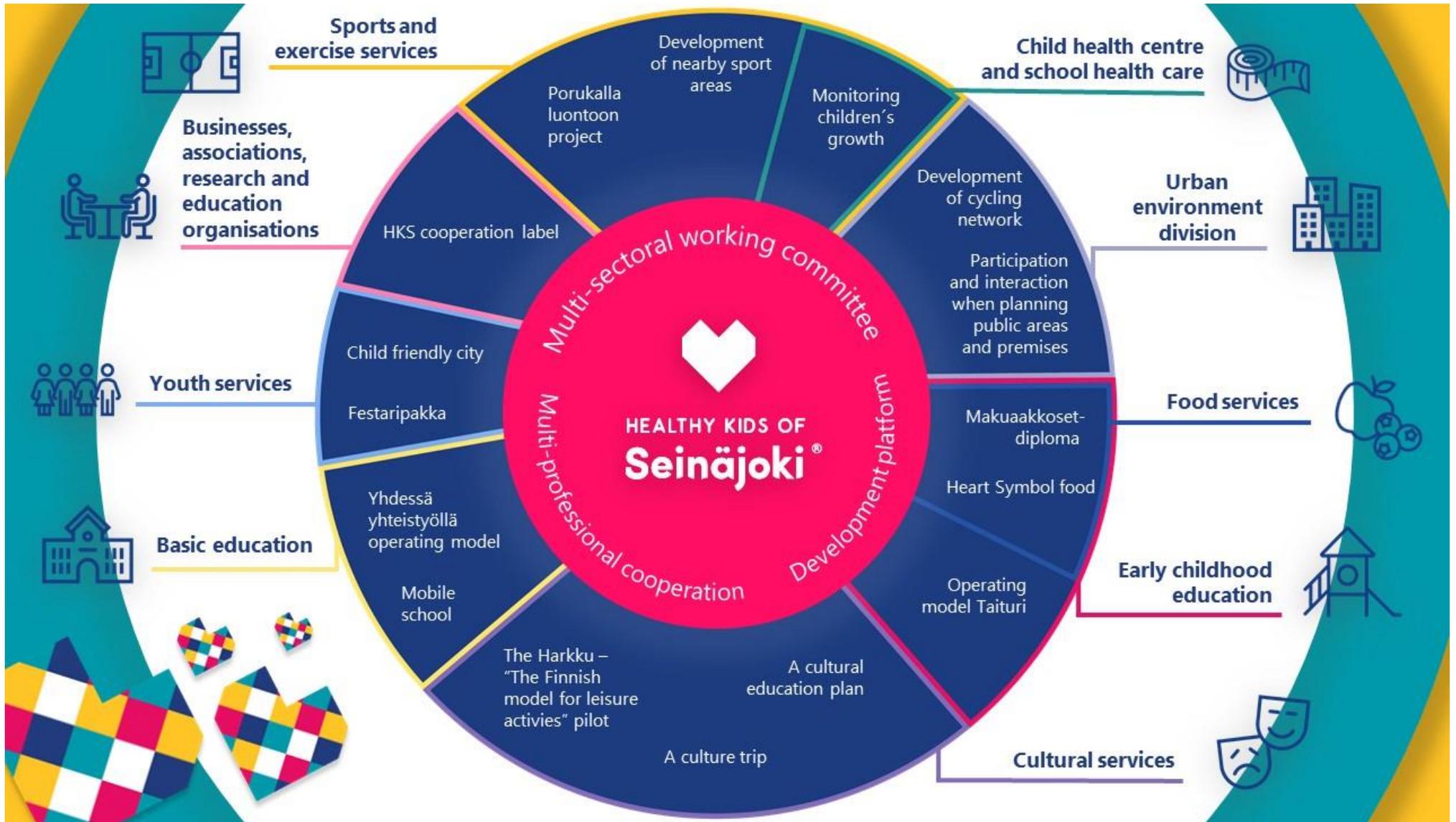
The Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki model is based on the National Obesity Programme launched in 2013, which was implemented in Seinäjoki in the years 2013–2020. The programme was based on the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare's (THL) National Obesity Programme for the years 2012–2018. The results of Seinäjoki's programme received both national and international attention, which resulted in the Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki operating model. *The Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki development platform as a regional strength and source of business growth* project in the years 2019–2021 focused on creating a development platform that aims to involve companies and organisations operating in the Seinäjoki area in promoting the well-being and health of children, young people and families with children.

2 Focus on multi-professional cooperation

Welfare management, i.e. promoting the well-being and health of the area's residents, is based on laws and regulations, and the operations are also guided by national health promotion recommendations. Seinäjoki's HKS model aims to highlight how well-being promotion work belongs to all sectors. Both the health care centre's physician and the person sanding the driveways do important work to promote the well-being and health of the residents.

At the heart of the Seinäjoki's Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki (HKS) model is the Health in All Policies (HIAP) approach, in which the city's various sectors, organisations and companies jointly contribute to the well-being and health of the population, and build an environment for children, young people and families with children in Seinäjoki that supports well-being. The main driving idea of the HKS model is the multi-sectoral cooperation between different operators. Inclusion is also an important part of the work, so the HKS operating model involves children, young people and families with children as part of the development of services by involving them by various means. When local residents have the opportunity to influence the planning for well-being and their own living environment, they are content and thus feel better. In order to monitor the progress of the work, it is important to link the objectives to the municipal welfare report and plan, as well as to other local and sectoral plans and strategies concerning children, young people and families with children.

The graph below shows how the HKS operating model affects each sector and entity, taking into account the well-being of children, young people and families with children living in the area (Graph 1). Examples of operations as well as multi-sectoral joint projects and operating models according to the HKS model are listed in the graph. This is a good example of how different sectors and industries work together to promote the well-being of children, young people and families with children.



Graph 1: Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki model

The mayor has set up a multi-sectoral HKS steering group, where representatives of different sectors, organisations and companies meet together. The steering group consists of operators from different sectors in the city, as well as from Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, Into Seinäjoki Oy, Sedu and the Hospital District of South Ostrobothnia. The organisations in the steering group are represented by the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. The HKS Steering Group supports the promotion of the well-being and health of children, young people and families in Seinäjoki and offers the opportunity for cooperation and the setting of common goals. The Steering Group coordinates HKS operations and its continuous development, cooperation with companies and communities, and evaluates the HKS operations and its effectiveness to support information management.

The steering group also manages the HKS cooperation label and decides on the criteria on which companies and organisations can use the label. The cooperation label is awarded to organisations applying for it who promote the well-being and health of children, young people and families with children through their own activities.

The HKS development platform offers companies and organisations the opportunity to develop solutions in an authentic urban environment together with users and other companies and stakeholders. The aim of the platform is to develop new solutions for promoting the well-being and health of children, young people and families with children.

3 Examples of sector-specific models

3.1 Child health centre and school health care

During the obesity programme, Seinäjoki started to monitor children's growth statistics more closely. Since the official end of the programme, monitoring has continued at the child health centre for children aged 2 and 5 and 1st and 5th graders. Different indicators help to monitor the health and well-being of children and families with children, and through that invest in the right entities in guidance situations. The aim is to guide and listen to families through various meetings, such as family coaching, parents' nights and examinations. In addition, with various customer and citizen panels, surveys and other participation tools, the citizens are encouraged to participate in the development of the city. The city also strives to cooperate closely with various organisations, such as the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL) and the Finnish Heart Association, which are actively involved in the everyday lives of families. Cooperation with the Hospital District of South Ostrobothnia's outpatient clinic services for paediatric patients is also an important part of monitoring the well-being of children and young people in particular. A project to promote going into nature together with other people ('Porukalla luontoon'), which has been carried out in cooperation with sports

services, encourages adults and children to have joint exercise moments. In the project, sports services organise guided sports and playtimes outdoors, which are open to everyone and take place in daycare centre yards and in the surrounding area.

3.2. Early childhood education

The various legislative, guiding documents for early childhood education and care as well as council-level objectives include promoting the well-being of children in the everyday life of early childhood education and pre-school education. The specific aim is related to preventing the social exclusion of children, healthy nutrition and increasing physical activity.

Food services and early childhood education plan the food offered to children in a joint cooperation. *Sapere* is a food education method in which children get to know the world of food through their senses. Several day care centres in Seinäjoki have been awarded the *Makuaakkoset diploma*, which is a recognition granted to daycare centres for promoting nutritionally, educationally and ecologically sustainable eating. The diploma shows that the daycare centre ensures that the objectives for nutrition and health education as well as for education on the teaching of manners is set for day-care meals are fulfilled.

The city's sectors and other actors, such as architects, cooperate, for example, when designing the locations of daycare centres and their indoor and outdoor premises. Children are also involved in the planning. This will make the premises versatile and encourage children to be creative, to have different social structures (friend relationships, play) and to move around. The yards of the daycare centres are used by residents of the residential area in the evenings. This has been actively marketed to the residents of the area. Operating equipment for adults will be acquired for the yards of the new daycare centres, as well. Early childhood education encourages families to jointly use nearby sports facilities. Moving in the close surroundings of your home and exploring nature does not require special equipment, and it is possible for everyone.

There are parents' groups operating in day care centres that enable the social interactions of children's parents and the innovation operations. In addition, various government grants and project funding will be used to develop these working methods that support the overall well-being of children in early childhood education and pre-school education. Together with cultural services, an ever-evolving operating model ('Taituri') for early childhood education and care has been created.

3.3 Basic education

In basic education, health and well-being are featured according to the themes that change every 1-2 years. A cooperation group is active in the planning of pre-school and elementary education in order to plan teaching and club activities as multi-sectoral as possible. Basic education also cooperates with cultural operators for education to take into account the support provided by culture for well-being. Several Seinäjoki comprehensive schools are participating in the Mobile School ('Liikkuva koulu') programme, which encourages schools to take into account the possibilities of increasing physical activity in a multi-sectoral way in the structure of the school day and during school trips. Schools aim to design nearby sports facilities so that they are at good locations and easily accessible. The aim is to utilise sports gyms in schools in the evenings by coordinating the use in cooperation with sports services.

Separate operating models, such as positive pedagogics, mentoring activities in basic education and the *Yhdessä yhteistyöllä* operating model aim to emphasise the importance of cooperation and communication in promoting well-being and health. The *Yhdessä yhteistyöllä* operating model is based on the utilisation of multi-professional competences, the participation of pupils and the cooperation between home and school. The operating model strengthens the culture of trust and increases social equality. The operating model is discussed annually in a community pupil welfare group and reviewed with the pupils and staff. In addition, the pupils' guardians will be informed about the operating model. The operating model is already used in early childhood education, so children are familiar with the model when moving to basic education.

3.4 Youth services

Youth services are part of the multi-sectoral working group EHKÄPÄ, which focuses on preventive substance abuse work for children and young people. The aim of the working group is to prevent and reduce the harm caused by substance use to substance users, their loved ones as well as to society. The aim is to include preventive substance abuse work in the operating idea of the different occupational groups, to support parenthood and to carry out substance abuse work as planned, continuous and transformative. Seinäjoki implements the national *Pakka* operating model, which is a model developed for preventing alcohol, tobacco and gambling harm. The aim of the operating model is to communally prevent substance abuse in the locality. In Seinäjoki, the operating model has been used, for example, in the *Festaripakka* operations. The *Festaripakka* operations promote responsible partying and an urban environment free of intoxicants. The aim of the operations is to prevent the use of drugs by young people and to increase safety, especially during summer events. In addition, the operations include an extensive PR campaign, implementation to the city and training for retail stores and restaurants. The *Festaripakka* operations are carried out in cooperation with the city's operators, event organisers, authorities, local businesses, organisations and residents.

The operations of Seinäjoki Youth Council are organised out of the youth services. The Youth Council cooperates with local young people, youth services and municipal decision-makers, among others. The Seinäjoki Youth Council is actively involved in the city's decision-making and deserved recognition of its activity when it was elected youth council of the year in 2020.

The *Tolkkupaja* project is a youth services development project that aims to support and guide young people under the age of 30 towards inclusion, education and working life. The project strengthens young people's life skills and functional capacity, as well as social skills and strengths that clarify young people's future plans. Functionality, creativity, inclusion and one's own strengths are at the heart of the project. The contents of the project work and action groups are implemented together with young people and professionals from different fields.

3.5. Food Services

As has already been pointed out above, food services cooperate with early childhood education and basic education. On the early childhood education side, food service representatives plan the food that will be served together with the children. Basic education cooperates with food services in order to develop school meals from the point of view of users, e.g. at the hand of the school food committees. In addition, food services take into account the instructions of the *Heart Symbol* in their food preparation, which means that lunch is a good choice from a health point of view. Food services know that food is more than just nutrition. That's why food services also want to invest in, for example, the comfort of the dining area and the customer service skills of the food service personnel. The goal of food services is that the customer can enjoy their meals in a comfortable environment without haste, enjoying their mealtime with all their senses. Food services also want to support local entrepreneurship by providing local food. Suppliers include Atria, Lapuan leipä, Pirjon Pakari and Kurikan Kotipirtti.

3.6 Cultural services

As the HKS model affects the decision-making of each sector, culture in Seinäjoki is seen as a topic that runs through each sector and is developed together with experts from different sector. The city has a *cultural education plan* that runs from early childhood education to 9th grade. The City of Seinäjoki's cultural education plan offers all pupils in grades 0–9 of comprehensive schools a cultural trip that includes visits to cultural institutions and sites in the Seinäjoki area. The visits include supporting guidance for the art experience, as well as teaching materials for class work. In addition, workshop activities and visiting performances from different aspects of art are organised in the schools of the area. The contents of the

cultural visits are planned in cooperation with experts from the fields of education and culture. In addition, there is a lot of cultural work done in Seinäjoki with the elderly citizen. The message of cultural services is that culture belongs to every age group. Cultural services want to be on the side of the weaker party; especially those who can't access culture themselves. Cultural well-being means the individual or communal experience that culture and art increase or are connected to well-being.

During spring 2021, a joint pilot of cultural, educational and welfare services was launched in Seinäjoki in connection with children's hobbies. The *Harkku – harrastamisen arkku* pilot includes themes of hobbies, friends, culture and sports. The aim is to provide children with meaningful activities in connection with the school day, to raise their self-esteem and knowledge, and to develop social relationships. In the pilot, the worker goes to schools to meet students, hear feedback and children's and young people's ideas for developing their activities. Particular attention will be paid to reaching children and young people who have not found a meaningful hobby. Additionally, the pilot is looking for ways to support children's and young people's self-motivated hobbies. The target group of the activities is grades 1 to 9 of comprehensive education as well as pupils in additional education.

The Children's Cultural Centre Louhimo is a children's cultural centre specialising in music and circus in the City of Seinäjoki. Louhimo's operational idea is to work to improve the well-being of children and young people by providing them with high-quality arts and cultural services and by making art and culture with them.

3.7 Sports and exercise services

The previous paragraphs have already highlighted projects in sports and exercise services with different sectors such as early childhood education and basic education. Sports and exercise services want to reach children and young people who are excluded or opt out of traditional club sports. Due to the growing popularity of self-motivated physical activity and the diversification of the variety in sports, sports services have been involved in building e.g. frisbee golf courses and kick scooter and skateboarding facilities. The aim is to prevent obesity and obesity-related diseases among children and young people by encouraging families to exercise activity. One example is the previously mentioned *Porukalla liikkeelle* project, in which one of the measures of the project has been the establishment of family sports clubs. In addition, sports services employ a sports instructor focusing on children's and young people's sports offerings, who cooperates interdisciplinary with early childhood education, teaching services and youth services. Swimming school activities have also been integrated into educational activities so that sports services coordinate swimming school activities from early childhood education to sixth grade in cooperation with early childhood education

and basic education. It should also be noted that in Seinäjoki there are no sports facility fees (excluding ice rinks and swimming pools) for children under the age of 18.

Sports services are also involved in the development of the urban environment in order to enable an environment that supports well-being. Sports services are actively involved in the planning of residential areas already during the zoning phase, so that the routes and nearby sports areas are taken into account and planned in the vicinity of schools. In addition, sports services annually update the plan for sports facility construction, remind of and plan accessible sports facilities (including nature sports) and invest in the year-round use of sports routes.

3.8. Urban environment

When developing the urban environment, cooperation plays a vital part. As previously mentioned, when planning public areas and premises, children, for example, have been asked of their opinions and ideas. Efforts have been made to create functional and stimulating yards and play areas. Efforts have been made to design the yard areas of public buildings as versatile as possible, and various shared equipment, such as a carpet washing place, has been designed for public places. The cycling network has been developed since 2015 and aims to make Seinäjoki a model city for sustainable mobility by 2030. With the cycling programme, changes have been made to city centre cycling, cycling lanes, cycling conditions and connections as well as to bike parking, for example. With this, the aim has been to encourage residents to cycle because it promotes health and reduces everyone's carbon footprint. In addition, the city has invested in the development of local transport and renewable fuel, so that Seinäjoki is also involved in slowing down the progress of climate change.