

Programme

Expert Seminar in the Field of Family Foster Care

30th of November 2026, Copenhagen



MENTAMÁLARÁÐIÐ

Ministry of Children, Education, Research and Culture



**Danish Authority of
Social Services and Housing**

Nordic Perspectives on Quality in Foster Family Care

The expert seminar will focus on common challenges and development across the Nordic countries in the field of foster family care. Drawing on experiences and perspectives from research and practice, we will explore how to strengthen the quality of foster family placements across the Nordic countries to both current and prospective foster families.

The seminar will focus on different approaches and possible solutions that can contribute to stable, safe and high-quality foster family placements for the benefit of children, young people and foster families.

Through presentations, knowledge sharing and workshops, participants will have opportunities to discuss shared Nordic challenges, explore different approaches and solutions, and draw inspiration for their own work to strengthen the quality of foster family placements.

The seminar is held as part of the Danish and Faroese Presidencies of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2026.

Registration: To register, please follow this link: <https://sbst.nemtilmeld.dk/1565/>

Deadline is 22 October 2026.

Programme

09:00	Arrival, Registration and Light Breakfast
10:00	Welcome and Opening Remarks By the Danish and Faroese Presidencies: • Ellen Marie Klarskov, Director, Danish Authority of Social Services and Housing • Hanne Nielsen, Head of Division, Danish Authority of Social Services and Housing • Elsa Østergaard, Head of Division Faroe Island Ministry of Children, Education, Research and Culture
10:20	My Experience in Foster Care in Denmark – the Good and the Bad By Jean Skjoldemose and Saniya Bech, Peer Consultants, The Danish Association of Children and Youth in Care and Care Leavers (De Anbragtes Vilkår) - A sociopolitical NGO working with and for people that are or have been placed in care as children or youth.
10:50	Supporting Foster Families in Denmark: What Do We Know and What Do They Need? By Senior Researcher Nina Thorup Dalgaard and Senior researcher Maiken Pontoppidan, VIVE – The Danish Center for Social Science Research
11:35	Short Break
11:45	Nordic Perspectives on Support for Foster Families • Equipping Foster Parents for Their Role – Faroese Experiences with Support, Guidance, Ongoing Training and Supervision By Oddbjørg Balle, Manager at the Child Protection Agency in the Faroe Islands • A Brief Outline of how Support and Oversight for Foster Families are Organised in Iceland By Guðbjörg Gréta Steinsdóttir, Team Supervisor, The National Agency for Children and Families • Training and Assessment of Prospective Foster Parents in Norway By Beate Børja, Department Director, Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir)
12:45	Lunch

- 13:40 **Children's and Young People's Experiences of Instability in Foster Family Care: what Research Tells Us**
By Senior Research Scientist Marian Ådnanes and Research Manager Silje L. Kaspersen, SINTEF – a European research institute
- 14:30 **Coffee Break**
- 14:50 **Thematic Breakout Sessions**
1. **Matching Children with Foster Families – A Danish Model for Supporting the Quality of the Matching Process**
By Senior Consultant, Ida Lautrop-Rasmussen, The Danish Authority of Social Services and Housing and Birgitte Schjær Jensen, Ph.d., Founder and Senior Advisor on Child Welfare, Social Services and Organisational Development
2. **Well-being and Learning for Children in Foster Family Care – Danish and Finnish Examples of Supporting School Attendance, Well-being and Learning**
- **The Finnish SISUKAS model: Supporting Pupils Living in Foster Family Care**
By Hanna-Leena Niemelä, Development Manager, Pesäpuu Association - a Finnish national child welfare organization
 - **Helping Children in Foster Care to Learn: Lessons from *Me and My Foster Family* – A Danish Research Project**
By Charlotte Jacobsen, Head of Research, and Siddhartha Baviskar, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, University College Copenhagen
- 15:50 **Remuneration for Foster Families in Sweden**
By Lisa Skutin, Investigator, The National Board of Health and Welfare Sweden
- 16:45 **Concluding Remarks and Closing**
By the Danish and Faroese Presidencies:
- Hanne Nielsen, Head of Division, Danish Authority of Social Services and Housing
 - Elsa Østergaard, Head of Division Faroe Island Ministry of Children, Education, Research and Culture
- 17:00 **End of Meeting**

Presentations and Session Descriptions

My Experience in Foster Care in Denmark – the Good and the Bad

By Jean Skjoldemose and Saniya Bech, Peer Consultants, The Danish Association of Children and Youth in Care and Care Leavers (De Anbragtes Vilkår) - A sociopolitical NGO working with and for people that are or have been placed in care as children or youth.

Jean and Saniya will give an insight in to their personal story about living in foster care – both the good and the bad. They also speak on some key points regarding what quality in foster care means from the perspective of the child.

Supporting Foster Families in Denmark: What Do We Know and What Do They Need?

By Senior Researcher Nina Thorup Dalgaard and Senior researcher Maiken Pontoppidan, VIVE – The Danish Center for Social Science Research

What does it take to support foster families in providing children with stable and supportive relationships? Drawing on research from the Holding a Foster Child's Mind in Mind project, this presentation brings together findings from a cluster-randomised trial and complementary qualitative and observational studies. We explore how foster parents understand their role, how relationships and institutional contexts shape foster care, and what this means for supporting different foster families. Together, the findings highlight important tensions and challenges in current approaches to foster care and point to new directions for research, practice and policy.



Following the presentations, there will be a joint reflection on foster families' support needs and what is important when designing and providing support.

Nordic Perspectives on Support for Foster Families

- **Equipping Foster Parents for Their Role – Faroese Experiences with Support, Guidance, Ongoing Training and Supervision**

By Oddbjørg Balle, Manager at the Child Protection Agency in the Faroe Islands

How do we support and equip foster parents for their role in a small island community? With around 100 foster families, the Faroe Islands have one nationwide Foster Care Service. The Child Welfare Act provides the overall framework, but how support is designed, organised and developed in practice is largely up to the Foster Care Service. In this presentation, we will share our experiences with support, guidance, ongoing training and supervision, as well as some of the opportunities and challenges that come with being a small service.

- **Brief Outline of how Support and Oversight for Foster Families are Organised in Iceland:**

By Guðbjörg Gréta Steinsdóttir, Team Supervisor, The National Agency for Children and Families

An introduction to the education, guidance and counselling available to foster parents. The main focus will be a new specialist approach to supporting foster parents caring for children with additional needs through professional supervision, practical support and collaboration with those involved in the child's care.

- **Training and Assessment of Prospective Foster Parents in Norway:**

By Beate Børja, Department Director, Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir)

The presentation will briefly introduce Norway's new national Solid programme for the training and assessment of prospective foster parents. It will provide insights into the programme's combination of e-learning, group sessions and individual assessment, as well as the support provided to foster families through competence support teams. The presentation will also highlight how a national standard can contribute to stable foster placements and consistent, high-quality support across Norway.



Following the presentations, the discussion will focus on the overarching frameworks that underpin support for foster families, including legislation, policy, organisation and funding. The different forms of support will also be discussed, and what experiences and approaches can be shared and transferred across the Nordic countries.

Children's and Young People's Experiences of Instability in Foster Family Care: What Research Tells Us

By Senior Research Scientist Marian Ådnanes and Research Manager Silje L. Kaspersen, SINTEF – a European research institute

The presentation will explore what instability means from the perspectives of children and young people in foster care, the consequences of it, the factors that contribute to stability and continuity, and the lessons these findings offer for policy and practice. The presentation is based on a systematic literature review and is part of an ongoing research project financed by The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir).



Following the presentation, there will be a joint discussion of the key points raised and the challenges and possible approaches that participants recognise from their respective countries to strengthen continuity for children in foster family care.

Thematic Break-out sessions

Participants will have the opportunity to take part in one of two thematic sessions, focusing either on matching children with foster families or on the well-being and learning of children in foster family care. Each session will begin with a presentation, followed by a joint discussion and reflection.

1. Matching Children with Foster Families – A Danish Model for Supporting the Quality of the Matching Process:

By Senior Consultant, Ida Lautrop-Rasmussen, The Danish Authority of Social Services and Housing and Birgitte Schjær Jensen, Ph.d., Founder and Senior Advisor on Child Welfare, Social Services and Organisational Development

Research indicates that a poor match between a child and their foster family placement can often lead to placement breakdowns. The Danish Authority of Social Services and Housing has developed a model to strengthen the matching process between children and foster family placements. The model aims to support an appropriate match between the child and the foster family placement, including through a more inclusive process involving the child, their parents and the foster family. The presentation will introduce the matching model and explore its practical and organisational application, as well as its potential to strengthen practice.

2. Well-being and Learning for Children in Foster Family Care – Danish and Finnish Examples of Supporting School Attendance, Well-being and Learning:

- **The Finnish SISUKAS model: Supporting Pupils Living in Foster Care:**

By Hanna-Leena Niemelä, Pesäpuu Association - a Finnish national child welfare organisation

The presentation will introduce the Finnish SISUKAS Model, a model for collaboration around children in foster care, with a particular focus on supporting their education, learning and well-being. It will outline the goals and key elements of the model, including the child's participation and experiences. The presentation will also describe Pesäpuu's role in developing and implementing SISUKAS, as well as the results and impact of the model in Finland.

- **Helping Children in Foster Care to Learn: Lessons from *Me and My Foster Family* – A Danish Research Project:**

By Charlotte Jacobsen, Head of Research, and Siddhartha Baviskar, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, University College Copenhagen

The presentation will introduce the project *Me and My Foster Family*, which explores how support for children in foster care may be strengthened in concrete ways. Focusing on improving the children's ability to learn, we ask: Can children's support needs in relation to learning be made more visible by means of screening tools? And can greater visibility lead to better support? To answer these questions, we draw on experiences and results from 10 Danish municipalities describing the organizational changes made as well as the screening tool and learning interventions introduced. What went right, what went wrong – and why?

Remuneration for Foster Families in Sweden

By Lisa Skutin, Investigator, *The National Board of Health and Welfare Sweden*.

As part of a government assignment, the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare has examined how remuneration for foster families is determined in Sweden. This includes the factors influencing the level of remuneration and expense compensation, as well as how the growing share of foster families supported by private consulting agencies affects remuneration. The presentation describes how the government assignment was carried out, as well as the findings, analyses and proposals that were developed as part of the assignment. It also provides a Nordic perspective by comparing the overall principles for remuneration of foster families in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland.



Following the presentation, participants will discuss how remuneration can reflect the role and responsibilities of foster families while supporting quality, transparency, recruitment and retention. The discussion will also explore the challenges addressed by different remuneration models and other important financial conditions for foster families.

Participants

The participants comprise stakeholders and representatives from Denmark, Finland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Åland.

The target audience for the expert seminar is civil servants and government officials in, for example, agencies, directorates and ministries, who work with legislation, knowledge and the support of practice in the field of family foster care. The target group also includes organisations representing municipalities, regions and municipal leaders working in the child and family welfare field, including foster family care.

We aim for an equal distribution of the 75 places.

Practical informations

Venue: Eigtveds Pakhus, Strandgade 25D, DK-1401 Copenhagen K, Denmark

Registration: Deadline is 22 October 2026. To register, please follow this link:
<https://sbst.nemtilmeld.dk/1565/>

Price: Participation is free of charge. Costs for transportation and any accommodation are covered by the participants.

Contact information:

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