

About kinship care

Att vara nätverkshem – översättning till engelska



When a child cannot live at home with the parents, it can sometimes be best for the child to be placed with a relative or other close acquaintance, in what is known as kinship care. Kinship care is a type of foster home that is assessed and supported by social services.

Foster home

An individual home that takes in children and provides them with permanent care and upbringing on behalf of the Social Welfare Committee.

Kinship care

A foster home consisting of one or more relatives or other close acquaintances.

Relatives

For example the child's grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles.

Close acquaintances

For example friends, neighbours of the child and the child's family, or staff at the child's school or preschool.

Children who are not able to live with their parents

Most children in Sweden have their needs met and live in safe and sound conditions together as a family with their parent(s). It may be necessary for some children, however, to live in a different home, if their parents cannot provide them with the care and security to which they are entitled. In cases like these, social services in the municipality where the child lives are responsible for placing the child somewhere other than the child's own home.

Social services must first consider whether the child can be taken in by a relative or other close acquaintance, in what is known as kinship care. The idea behind kinship care is for the child to be able to retain the security provided by their relationships and contact with where they come from and their natural networks.

This publication is protected under the Swedish Copyright Act. The source must be stated for quotes. Reproduction of images, photographs and illustrations requires the author's permission. The publication is available as a PDF on the website of Socialstyrelsen.

The publication can also be produced in alternative formats upon request. Questions about alternative formats should be sent to alternativformat@socialstyrelsen.se

Social services always assess what is best for each individual child based on their situation. It is often best for the child to live with people they know, but sometimes it is best for the child to live outside their network. Where this is the case, social services can help the child stay in touch with their network in a different way.

Kinship care assessment

If a relative or close acquaintance is willing to take the child into their home, social services must assess the conditions for this in the same way as other foster homes are assessed. The assessment will include:

- the family's life situation, housing arrangements and local environment
- the family members' personal circumstances, qualities and ability to provide care

Social services also need to obtain information about the intended foster parents from various registers, e.g. social services' own register and the Police Authority's suspect and criminal records register. Some information can only be obtained by social services with the consent of the foster parents.

Social services must also carefully monitor the child's wellbeing in the home where they have been placed. The child and the host family will therefore receive regular visits from the child's social worker throughout the child's time there.

The foster home's remit

When a child is placed in a foster home, the child's guardians, social services and the foster home have a shared responsibility to ensure that the child's needs for care, security, upbringing, supervision and guidance are met. The foster home therefore needs to work closely with both social services and the child's guardians.

Being a foster home can involve:

- building up a safe and loving relationship with the child that fosters development
- helping the child to have a good life
- helping the child with schooling, e.g. by monitoring homework and attending parent meetings
- helping the child receive health care and dental care
- supporting the child in contact with family and friends
- working with the child's guardians on both everyday matters and bigger issues such as choice of schools
- working with social workers and other professionals in order to meet the child's needs.

Support and training

All foster homes, including kinship family, are entitled to support and training, so as to put them in the best possible position to look after the child. This support can be structured in different ways. For example, it can be provided through individual contact with a caseworker at social services or through instruction, both individually and in groups.

The support needs to be structured around the child's relationship with their kinship family. For example, the support needed by grandparents may be different to that needed by the child's former teacher. Support needs can also change over the course of the placement.

Financial allowance

A foster home is entitled to receive an allowance from the date the child moves in with them. The allowance for kinship family follows the same recommendations as those of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) for other foster homes. These recommendations are not binding, and each municipality makes its own decision on how much allowance should be paid. The allowance can change over the course of the child's placement, because there may be a change in circumstances, e.g. the child's age or needs.

You can read more about foster homes' remit at socialstyrelsen.se/mininsats.

