



Pelastakaa Lapset - Rädda Barnen
Save the Children

CHILD PROTECTION AND FINNISH HOTLINE ANNUAL REPORT 2021

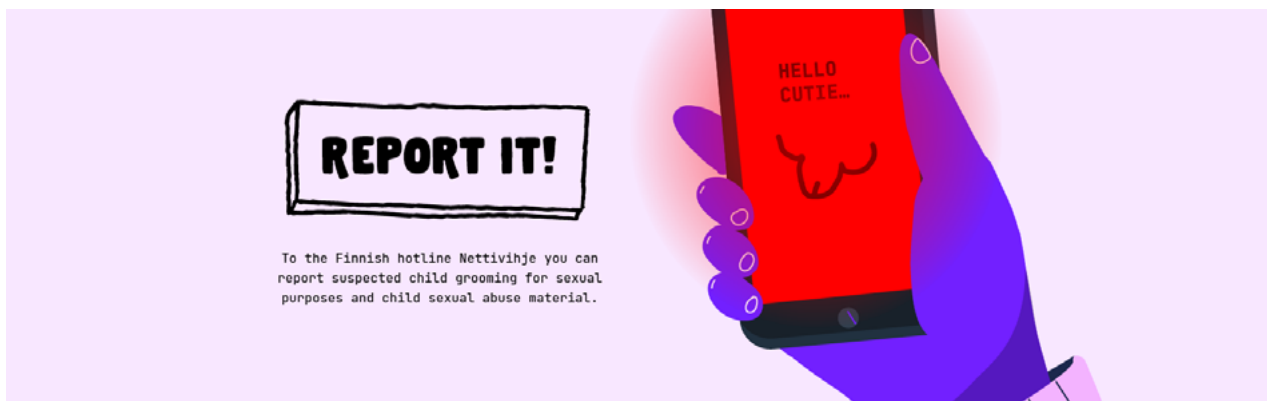
Child Protection and Finnish Hotline

The aim of the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline, a function run by Save the Children Finland, is to prevent the sexual abuse of children, to promote early intervention in sexual offenses against children, and to speed up the removal of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from the internet. A child's right to be protected from all forms of abuse lies at the heart of our work.

The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline began operations in 2002. The operations are part of the activities of the Finnish Safer Internet Centre (FISIC), which aims to ensure a better and safer digital environment for children. The work of FISIC is carried out in collaboration with The National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI) and The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL). Save the Children Finland is also the national representative of the ECPAT network in Finland, and a member of the global network of hotlines INHOPE.



Image: The three main focus points of The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline activities.



Hotline work and classifying images

The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline maintains the Hotline service (Nettivistie service in Finnish), which received 3,439 reports on activities and material related to the sexual abuse of children in digital environments in 2021.

The Finnish Hotline is part of the International Association of Internet Hotlines [INHOPE](#), which enables a rapid transmission of information regarding illegal material to the authorities and service providers, regardless of the country in which the illegal material is hosted. In addition, The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline also collaborates with [Project Arachnid](#), a program run by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, which analyses child sexual abuse material in order to expedite its removal from the internet. Read more about the Finnish Hotline's annual statistics for 2021 at the end of this report.

- The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline analysed 7,906 images/videos in 2021 in the ICCAM system used by the INHOPE network.
- The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline analysed 113,184 images in Project Arachnid in 2021.

A large proportion of sexual offenses against children are not brought to the attention of the authorities, for example, because of the high threshold involved in notifying the authorities of a suspected offense or illegal material. With the help of the low-threshold Hotline service, it is also possible to bring to the attention of the authorities such situations that, for one reason or another, are not reported directly to the police. In this way, increasingly more sexual offenses against children can be solved and child sexual abuse material can be effectively removed from the internet. The Finnish Hotline is maintained in close cooperation with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

Increasing knowledge and understanding

Through the production and sharing of information, and through offering training and education, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline aims to prevent sexual offenses against children and to promote early intervention. In 2021, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline revamped its [website](#) and produced a number of materials for professionals, children and young people and their guardians:

- [Grooming in the eyes of a child - a report on grooming experienced by children and young people aged 11-17 online](#) (also available in [Finnish](#))
- [My body My Limits - a guide for young people. Information on the sharing of nude images and sexual communication](#) (available only in Finnish and [Swedish](#))
- [Everyday pictures of children in a sexualizing context](#) (also available in [English](#) on the website of Save the Children Denmark)
- [Test Your Knowledge survey: How can an adult working with children keep the children safe online?](#) (available only in Finnish)
- [Posters and pictures for free use](#) (poster available only in Finnish and [Swedish](#))
- In addition, Telia Finland Oy, together with Save the Children, produced a [digital parenting kit](#) (only in

Finnish) that helps parents protect their child's use of the Internet.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the materials could not be distributed in the normal way at events and meetings, so the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline posted the materials to more than two hundred school nurses. In addition, material packages were also sent to youth workers throughout Finland, and online versions were marketed in the trainings of professionals working with children.

Doctoral researcher Mikkel Rask Pedersen from the University of Aarhus and Save the Children Denmark was a visiting researcher in the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline at the end of 2021. During the visit, Mikkel Rask Pedersen, among other things, wrote new material to be published in 2022 for professionals about sexual interest in children.

All produced materials are available in the Finnish Hotline's resource bank: nettivihje.fi/materiaalipankki



Image: Social media material produced in 2021 (in Finnish)

KAAPPAA KUVA!

Ota kuvakaappaus tai valokuva näytöstä, jos saat epäilyttäviä viestejä aikuisilta. Kuva toimii todisteena aikuisen laittomasta toiminnasta ja voi auttaa saamaan kiinni rikoksen tekijän.



 Pelastakaa Lapset

 Yhteisrahoitettu Euroopan unionin
Verkkojen Eurooppa -välineellä

Image: Social media material produced in 2021 (in Finnish)

In 2021, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline trained more than 3,200 professionals in 28 training sessions. Training was provided on child sexual abuse online and on the prevention of sexual abuse, e.g. for social, health care and educational professionals. The 'My Body Belongs to Me' ('Kehoni on minun' in Finnish) training events were completed in the spring of 2021, and in the autumn of 2021 the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline began training events for professionals and students, in cooperation with the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. The training events will continue in 2022. In addition, a survey of professionals was conducted to find out the kind of material that professionals working with children would like to have in order to support their own work to prevent sexual violence against children.

The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline organised the "Ilmoita älä sivuuta" (Report it don't ignore it) webinar for professionals working with children and young people, as well as those working with offenders and people who have sexual interest in children in November 2021. The police and other authorities and decision-makers were also welcomed to participate. The webinar featured speeches by professionals, researchers and authorities on child sexual abuse, and how sexual offenses against children could be prevented.

The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline implemented two advertising campaigns in 2021. One of the campaigns was aimed specifically at children and young people, and the other at adults. The advertising campaigns were implemented as targeted advertising on Instagram and Facebook. The advertising campaign for children and young people also included Finnish social media influencers Maiju Voutilainen and Mikael Sundberg (@Mikirotta), who provided children and young people with information about sexual harassment, grooming and Finnish Hotline activities on Snapchat and Instagram.

More than 430,000 people were reached through advertising campaigns. The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline was also presented in the 'Vain elämää' program (the Finnish version of The Best Singers series broadcast) on Finnish Nelonen commercial television channel, and several interviews were given to various media parties during the year.

Children and young people were also reached through cooperation with Save the Children Finland's online youth centre Netari. The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline organised two thematic events for children and young people regarding sexual harassment and the sharing of nude images at Netari's Momio and Discord evenings. In addition, social media posts were regularly shared with children and young people through Netari's own Instagram account. There was also a collaboration with the 'Sua varten somessa' project. The project's Instagram account hosted an Instagram live event regarding the grooming of children for sexual purposes, and Finnish Hotline advisors were there to discuss and answer questions.

In 2021, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline organised a workshop with young people to develop its operations. In the workshop, the team received feedback and development ideas on the Finnish Hotline directly from the young people. During the year, children and young people were also involved in working on materials and campaigns that were aimed at them.

Advocacy work

Through long-term advocacy work, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline promotes the rights of children to be protected from sexual abuse. The aim is to achieve key changes in policies and structures for the protection of children, both in Finland and internationally. The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline issued, among others, the following statements/comments on strategies and reforms in 2021 (in Finnish):

- [Statement on the draft government proposal to Parliament amending the Criminal Code of Finland and related laws](#)
- [Statement on terminology related to sexual offenses against children](#)
- [Comment on the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights of the Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU\): Legislation world-wide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse](#)

In addition, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline was included in other Save the Children Finland statements, such as a statement related to the National Children's Strategy Implementation Plan.

During 2021, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline was heard at a number of events for decision-makers. The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline carried out advocacy work, especially in connection with the comprehensive reform of Chapter 20 of the Finnish Criminal Code and the use of terminology that respects children. For example, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline was heard at an [expert hearing organized by the Ministry of Justice on a draft proposal for a com-](#)

[prehensive reform of the legislation on sexual offenses.](#)

In addition, the advocacy work, launched in 2020, was continued in favour of the urgent adoption of the European Commission's temporary proposal for a regulation by disseminating information directly to decision-makers and participating in joint contributions from international actors. The temporary regulation sought to allow the continued use of certain digital tools for a limited purpose: to protect children from sexual abuse. The temporary regulation was adopted in the EU in July 2021.

In addition, the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline participated in the activities of several networks and working groups in 2021. The Child Protection and Finnish Hotline represented Save the Children Finland e.g. in the following working groups and networks: Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (in Finland: NAPE), Steering Group for the Prevention of Violence against Children (Non-violent Childhood), Anti-Grooming Working Group of National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme (VANUPO), The Finnish Civil Society Platform against Trafficking in Human Beings (IKV) and SeriE network.

Save the Children Finland was chosen in 2021 [as a member of the Lanzarote Convention of the Council of Europe, which monitors the Lanzarote Treaty](#) in the role of an 'observer'. In the committee Save the Children Finland represents the entire Save the Children International organisation. In addition, Save the Children Finland participated in the drafting of the National Implementation Plan for the Lanzarote Convention as an advisory expert to the multidisciplinary working group of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

About the Finnish Hotline

The Finnish Hotline is a reporting service to which anyone can report if they suspect they have encountered material or activities related to child sexual abuse on the internet. Finnish law and the common operating principles of the international INHOPE network are followed in handling the reports received in the Finnish Hotline. The aim of the INHOPE network is to speed up the removal of illegal material from the internet by facilitating the flow of information to authorities and service providers. You can report to the Finnish Hotline:

1. Child sexual abuse material, CSAM (also anonymously)
2. Grooming of a child or young person (under 18) for sexual purposes online
3. A nude photo or video of a child or young person (under the age of 18) which has spread online
4. Child (under 18 yrs.) trafficking for sexual purposes
5. Sexual harassment of a child or young person (under 18) online

In 2021, a section was added to the Hotline reporting form to include the sexual harassment of a child or young person online. The category was added as it is hoped to lower the threshold for children and young people to report online sexual violence. For example, children and young people may perceive a sexually explicit message sent by an adult as sexual harassment. The issue was raised in a workshop organised by the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline with children and young people to develop the Hotline in the spring of 2021.

The Hotline privacy statement is available at: pelastakaalapset.fi/en/finnishhotline/privacy

Reports will be processed within 48 hours of arrival. All information referring to illegal material and activities will be forwarded to the Finnish authorities for evaluation and possible follow-up and further measures. Information (URL) about material found to be possibly illegal and infringing on children's rights on a foreign server is passed on to the INHOPE hotline of the country where the illegal material is hosted. The hotline will assess the material according to the legislation of the country in question and passes the information on to both local authorities and service providers, so that the material can be removed from the internet as soon as possible.

With illegal material hosted in Finland, the Finnish Hotline is also in direct contact with the service provider, urging them to contact the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). Due to Finnish legislation, the Finnish Hotline cannot provide the service provider with a URL containing illegal material in order to remove the material or require the service provider to remove such material. However, in some countries, the INHOPE hotline may require the service provider to remove material that is hosted in their country. Much of the illegal material contained in the reports is hosted outside Finland, so it is important to pass on the information in the INHOPE network. The information is passed on to other hotlines through the [ICCAM system](#) operated by INHOPE, from which the information is also passed on to the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the [International Child Sexual Exploitation database \(ICSE\)](#). Material on the pages that require registration or downloading the material, is not checked by the Finnish Hotline, but information about these reports is passed directly to the National Bureau of Investigation.

Reports that address suspected child sexual abuse, such as grooming a child for sexual purposes, are assessed,

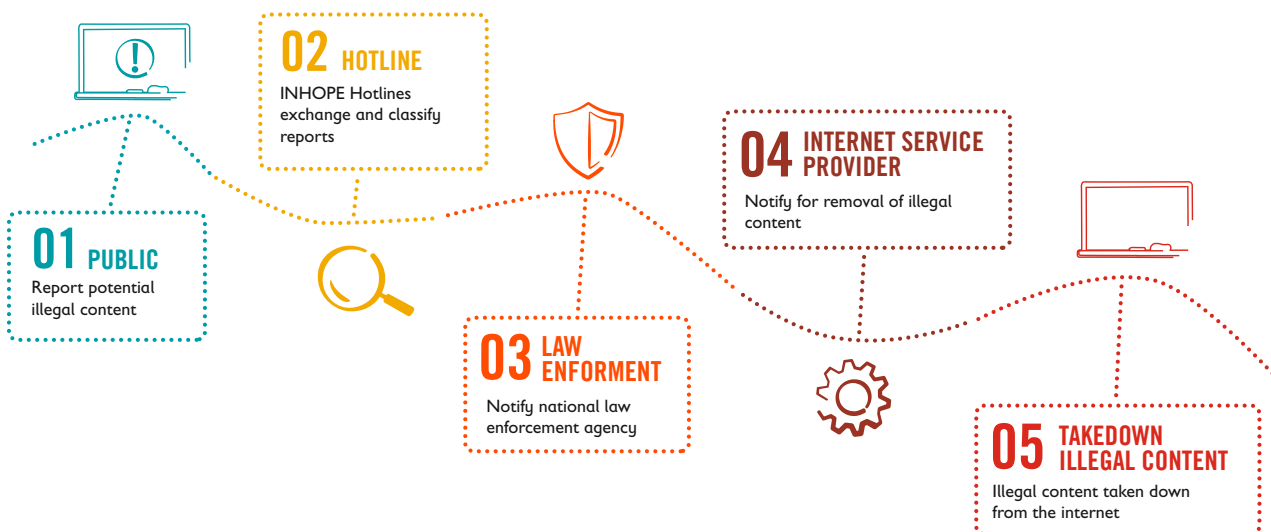


Image: Processing a report concerning material proving evidence of child sexual abuse.

and forwarded to the National Bureau of Investigation for possible further investigation and measures. In addition, the Finnish Hotline always makes a child protection notification if there are concerns for the child's safety and when there is enough information about the child to make the notification. The sender of the report is also offered advice and guidance on services. Such support can be offered when an email address is included in the report form.

Self-generated CSAM

Self-generated CSAM usually refers to an image or video recording in which a child is groomed to pose or commit sexual acts in front of a camera. According to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), self-generated CSAM has increased internationally by 77% in 2020, compared to 2019. The situation is believed to have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and related quarantines. The phenomenon affects children of all ages, most often girls aged 11–13.

The material is most commonly produced in the child's own bedroom, bathroom, or other home environment. It can be clearly seen from the pictures that the child has recorded the images themselves. The image may be a selfie, for example. The image or video material may also be produced via a webcam and the offender has recorded the events and shared the recording online. The child may either be aware of the recording or believe that there has been a bilateral confidential agreement that it will not be recorded. The situation may also involve stronger coercion and the child may have been blackmailed to produce more material with previously shared footage. The child may also be offered a form of reward in return for images and videos.

Sometimes the material has been produced via a consensual relationship with a person of the same age, but the material has then either been accidentally leaked to outsiders or has been intentionally passed on by the recipient of the material. A minor may also commit a crime by sharing such material that they have received from another minor. Material produced with consent and material produced as a result of grooming are the result of very different circumstances and situations, but, regardless of the circumstances or purpose for which the material was originally produced, the distribution of the material is sexual abuse of the child and a threat to the child's well-being.

Parents and guardians play a major role in how children learn to function in a digital environment. It is important for adults to be present in the digital life of children. It would be important for them to discuss the sharing of sexual images and the risks involved with children at an early enough stage. Blaming the victims is still commonplace, which is a challenge when seeking and receiving help. Both children and all adults working with children should be aware of the phenomenon, as well as what to do in a situation where intimate material is disseminated, and which parties can provide support and assistance in such a situation.

Read more about the topic:

- Thorn 2020: "[Thorn Research: Understanding sexually explicit images, self-produced by children](#)"
- INHOPE: "[What is self-generated CSAM?](#)"
- IWF 2021: "[IWF Annual Report 2020 - Face the Facts](#)"
- Ecpat Sweden 2021: "[Everything that is not a yes is a no](#)"
- Save the Children 2021: "[My Body My Limits — A Guide for Young People. Information on the sharing of nude images and sexual communication](#)" (available only in Swedish and Finnish).

Information on reports received in the Finnish Hotline in 2021

In 2021, a total of 3,439 reports were sent to the Finnish Hotline. One report refers to one web address (URL) or one description of suspected illegal activity. Each URL may contain a single image or video, or even hundreds of images or videos.

The number of reports and the contents of the reports vary somewhat from year to year. In 2021, the Finnish Hotline received 682 more reports than during the previous year. The monthly variation in the number of reports was great. There were fewer reports than average at the beginning of the year, but the number of reports increased in the autumn and the highest number were received in October. The potential impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the growth or fluctuation of the number of reports within a year cannot be assessed.

Of the reports received in 2021, 35% contained child sexual abuse material or activities related to sexual abuse, such as grooming a child for sexual purposes. There is no percentage change from the previous year. In addition, 6% of the reports contained material that sexualises a child (grey area material), some of which is illegal in Finland. The proportion of material that sexualises a child has tripled, although, relative to the total number of reports, such material remains scarce. 41% of the reports contained information about sites in which the material had been removed, required downloading, or was password-protected. 18% of the reports were classified as other material. Part of this concerned material in which it was impossible to make a reliable estimate of the age of the person in the material. In this case, the material cannot be classified as illegal. The share of unavailable or removed material increased from the previous year, while the share of other material decreased.

In 2021, the majority (88%) of reports containing child sexual abuse material included material in which a child was assessed to be 3–13 years old. In the previous year, this figure was 68%. 6% of the children who were sexually abused were under the age of 3. There is no noticeable change in this age group, compared to the previous year. Another 6% of the reports concerned the sexual abuse of 14–17-year-olds. In this age group, the change was large: the corresponding figure for the previous year was 32%. Due to age-related challenges, the proportion of children aged 14–17 could, in fact, be higher than the statistics presented in this report.

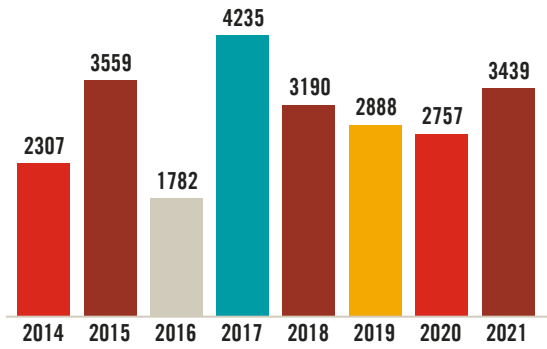
We have raised, e.g. in our statement on the reform of the Finnish Criminal Code, that the law does not currently provide adequate protection for young people under the age of 18 who have passed puberty. There is a danger that some of the illegal material will remain unidentified when the child's age is estimated only by assessing their physical development.

In 2021, more girls than boys were amongst the victims in the CSAM reported. 92% of the material contained sexual abuse against girls, and 74% had only girls as victims. The proportion of girls has increased significantly from the previous year, when 70% of the material depicted sexual abuse against girls and 62% had only girls as victims. The proportion of boys as victims has fallen accordingly. 24% of the material contained sexual abuse of boys. The corresponding figure for the previous year is 38%. In 2021, 6% of the material contained sexual abuse of only boys. The change is significant, with 32% of the material in the previous year containing sexual violence against boys alone.

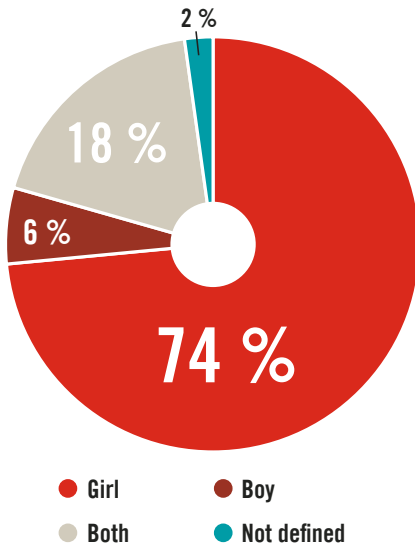
In 2021, about half of all CSAM reported contained penetrative acts. In 12%, the focus was on the genital area. 9% of the material contained sexual activity without an adult and 17% with an adult. 15% contained sadism or other forms of brutality. Significant changes, compared to the previous year, were that sexual activity without an adult decreased by a half and the brutality of the material increased. In the previous year, material containing sadism and other forms of brutality accounted for 4% of all material, so there has been an almost fourfold increase.

In 2021, the Finnish Hotline received increasing numbers of reports regarding sites on the dark web containing child sexual abuse material.

Number of reports received during years 2014-2021

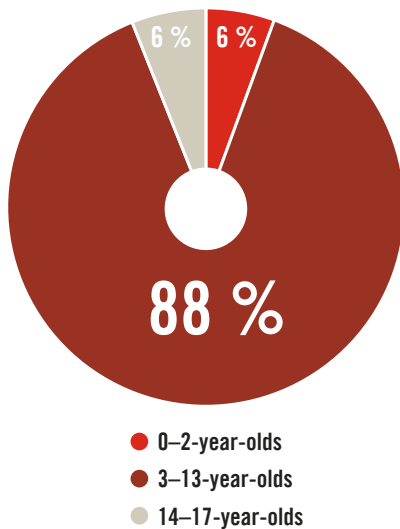


Child sexual abuse material categorised by gender (n=860)



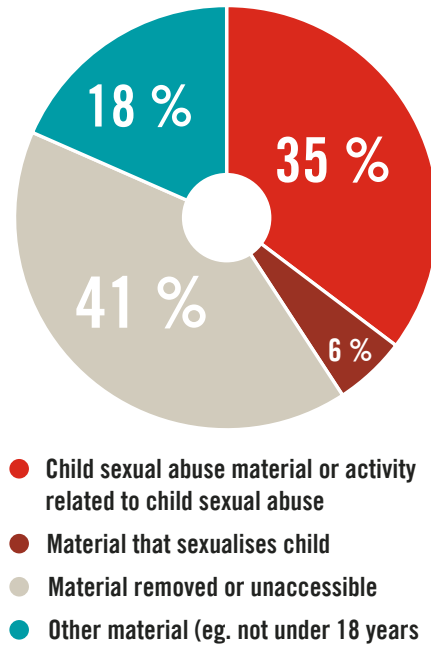
- Girl
- Boy
- Both
- Not defined

Child sexual abuse material categorised by age (n=860)



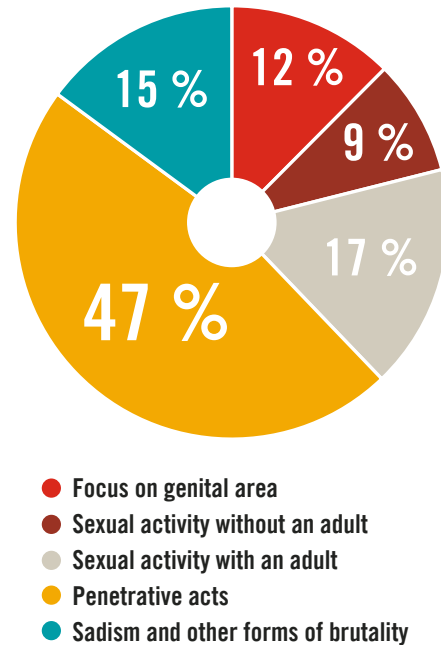
- 0-2-year-olds
- 3-13-year-olds
- 14-17-year-olds

Reports received by the Finnish Hotline (N=3439)



- Child sexual abuse material or activity related to child sexual abuse
- Material that sexualises child
- Material removed or inaccessible
- Other material (eg. not under 18 years)

Child sexual abuse material categorised by the type of sexual abuse



- Focus on genital area
- Sexual activity without an adult
- Sexual activity with an adult
- Penetrative acts
- Sadism and other forms of brutality

In co-operation with:



INHOPE

KANSALLINEN AUDIOVISUAALINEN INSTITUUTTI
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Pelastakaa Lapset - Rädda Barnen
Save the Children

Save the Children Finland is a politically and religiously independent non-governmental organization founded in 1922, which fights for children's rights in order to immediately and permanently improve children's lives in Finland and all over the world.

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