

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Legal name	Suomen lastenkulttuurikeskusten liitto ry Suomen lastenkulttuuriliitto ry (1.1.2025)
English name	Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers Association of Children's Culture in Finland (1.1.2025)
Short name	AFCCC
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EXPERTISE

The Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centres (AFCCC) originated from the cooperation between children's cultural centres, which began in 2003. Today, the Association comprises 36 children's cultural centres and over 40 cooperation members from across Finland.

AFCCC supports the operation of professional cultural centres for children and young people in Finland and promotes expertise in children's culture, as well as increasing its visibility. Our goal is to ensure that every child and young person has equal opportunities to participate in high-quality art or cultural activities of their choice and to create their own artistic content. Another aim is to integrate art and culture into every child's education. AFCCC's member organizations offer a wide range of cultural services and multi-disciplinary arts education for children throughout Finland.

AFCCC organizes networking opportunities for its members and other stakeholders. The strategic values of the network are quality, equal opportunities, child-centeredness, and the promotion of art. Association has 18 employees (6.11.2024).

AFCCC also makes proposals, provides expert opinions and recommendations, and offers expert assistance on issues related to children's arts and culture. As a guiding principle, its members adhere to the standards set out in the Quality Manual of Children's Arts and Culture. AFCCC is involved in various projects as an expert, cooperation partner, or lead partner, advocating for access to children's arts and culture and the cultural rights of children and young people.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

AFCCC coordinates significant initiatives and projects. One of the most prominent is the [Art Testers](#) cultural education program, which annually takes all Finnish 8th graders (around 65,000 students) to visit one or two top-tier art attractions across Finland. School groups receive tickets and transportation to events such as opera or theatre performances, concerts, or art exhibitions. Despite being voluntary for schools, the participation rate is 100%. In the school year 2024-25, Art Testers entered its eighth



term, having brought nearly 800,000 eighth graders and their teachers to art experiences. It is the largest and only national cultural education program in Finland and has won several awards, including the Democracy Award from the Finnish Ministry of Justice in 2022.

We also promote the creation of [Cultural Education Plans](#), which support the implementation of arts, culture, and heritage education in municipalities for children from early childhood through basic and upper secondary education.

For three years, the AFCCC held the position of contact point for the Finnish Model for Leisure Activities, a national government program aimed at ensuring that every child and young person has access to free extracurricular activities during the school day.

The association, along with its network, has produced several internationally recognized guides, including the *Quality Manual of Children's Arts and Culture*, the *Accessible Arts Education Guide for children's cultural centers and basic art education institutions*, and the *Guide to Sustainable Development for Children's Cultural Centers*.

Available for viewing and downloading: <https://lastenkulttuuri.fi/en/childrens-culture/>

NETWORKS AND PROJECTS

AFCCC is a founding member of the Finnish Observatory in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education, part of ENO (the European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education). The association is also a member of ENCC (the European Network of Cultural Centres).

AFCCC actively promotes international cooperation in children's arts and culture, with a focus on professional development, adopting new practices, and showcasing Finnish expertise. It coordinates the Creative Europe project *Mind The GAP* (2024–2026), through which partners establish cultural education laboratories in schools. AFCCC is also a partner in the Creative Europe project *Poets of Today – Voices of Tomorrow* (2022–2025), bringing young poets into schools and publishing poetry.

Previously, the association coordinated the Youth Learning Through Arts project, an Erasmus+ Strategic initiative under Youth in Action, which ran from 2021–2022. AFCCC also led a Nordic Children's Culture project funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture in 2021-2022.

The association's director, Alekski Valta, serves on the boards of both ENCC and ENO and is a member of ACEnet (Arts and Culture Education network) and CAN (Community Arts Network).

Keywords (association): cultural education, children's culture, children's rights, children and youth as audience, audience engagement, promotion of accessibility, developing competence of professionals in children's culture, advocacy work

Keywords of network (members): same as above + multi-arts, media education, children's theatre, environmental education, handicrafts, museum pedagogy, visual arts, Experimental Colour Workshops for Babies, child health clinic cooperation, exhibitions, public art, circuses, the 'Time Travel' method, cultural education, family events