



Custody and maintenance of a child and determination of parenthood 2022

Number of children under joint custody unchanged, even though the number of separate child custody agreements continued to decrease

MAIN FINDINGS

- Today joint custody is becoming the default solution if parenthood is acknowledged already during pregnancy.
- For the reasons mentioned above, the number of agreements on custody of the child has declined by a quarter from the 2018 level.
- Of all agreements on child custody, joint custody was agreed in 77 per cent of cases, while the mother got sole custody in 20 percent, and the father in 3 percent of cases.
- The number of dual residence agreements is growing. Dual residence was involved in already in one in three (33%) agreements on residence.
- Child support agreements were confirmed in 49,656 cases, which was three percent fewer than a year earlier.
- In 2021, paternity was confirmed in 22,735 cases, and maternity in 165 cases.

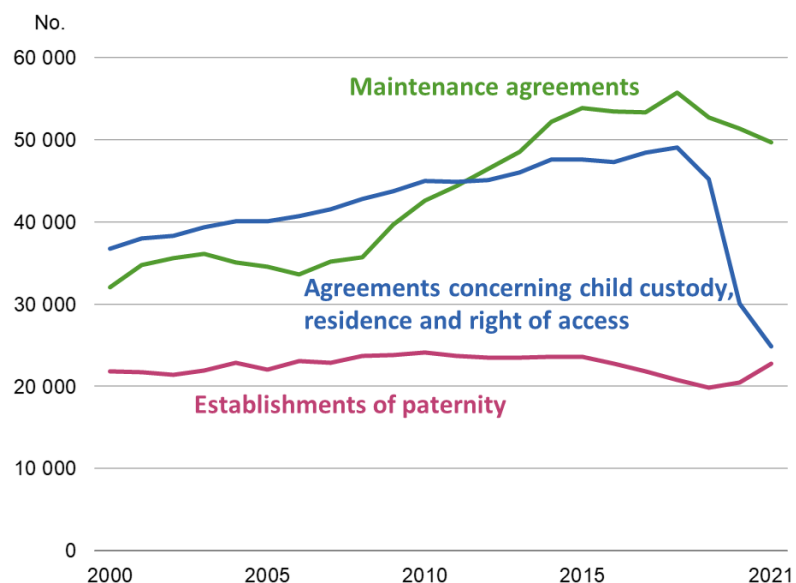
As a result of the legislative amendment that entered into force in December 2019, a person who recognises paternity or maternity before the birth of the child becomes the child's guardian without a separate agreement when parenthood is confirmed on the basis of recognition¹. Due to the legislative amendment, the number of separate child custody agreements was halved both in 2020 and 2021. Taking into account the recognition of parenthood during pregnancy, the number of children in joint custody remained unchanged.

Out of all child custody agreements, 77 per cent (5,632 agreements) concerned joint custody, while 20 per cent (1,425 agreements) gave sole custody to the mother and around 3 per cent (208 agreements) gave sole custody to the father. According to data received from the Digital and Population Data Services Agency, a caregiver other than the parent(s) was registered for 486 children in 2021.

In 2021, the paternity of 22,735 children born outside of wedlock was confirmed. Recognition of parenthood was received in 83% of cases before the birth of the child and 17% after birth. The Digital and Population Data Services Agency confirmed the maternity for 165 children.

Child support was agreed upon in 49,656 agreements (-3% from the previous year). The number of agreements in proportion to those under the age of 18 has remained fairly stable in recent years, reaching 4.8% in 2021. Child support was agreed upon in 49,656 agreements (-3% from the previous year). The number of agreements in proportion to those under the age of 18 has remained fairly stable in recent years, reaching 4.8% in 2021.

Figure 1. Agreements under family law and cases of confirmed paternity, 2000–2021.



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¹ [Act on Child Custody and Right of Access 361/1983](#)