



Children & Families



Mynd frá VMST

Family and Household

- Most people in Iceland live with other family members or friends/roommates while others live alone.
- A home consists of people that live together and share costs, or individuals who live by themselves.
- The family forms are varied, e.g., a single parent with their children, couples with children from previous relationships, same-sex couples with children or people in a partnership.
- Pets are quite common in Iceland, particularly dogs and cats.
- The elderly live in their own home for as long as possible. Many get services from their municipality like cooked meals delivered, house cleaning and home nursing.
- Nursing homes are for seniors who need a lot of help and care.

Family and Household - Continued

- Around 4000 children are born in Iceland each year. The average age of women giving birth is 28 years.
- It is common for people to live together as a couple and have children before getting married.
- Family composition varies. Children often live alternately with their mother and father if the parents don't live together. Sometimes new partners and half-siblings are a part of the family.
- Same-sex couples can get married, adopt children and/or undergo fertility treatments.
- Single women also have the option of adopting a child and/or artificial insemination. www.island.is/ofrjosemi-og-taeknifrjovgun
- Surrogacy is prohibited in Iceland.



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Housing

- In Iceland, people live in detached houses, semi-detached houses, apartment buildings or farmhouses.
- Most houses in Iceland are heated with hot water.
- The houses are sturdy and can withstand cold and earthquakes well.
- Most people live in their own housing, but the rental housing market is also big.
- Sometimes people will rent industrial buildings to live in but that can be dangerous and detrimental to your health.
 - A high-risk situation could be created in a fire since fire safety measures for industrial buildings are not the same as for residential buildings.
 - Such housing is referred to as unapproved housing and the authorities can shut it down.

Housing - Buying

- People buy apartments or houses through real estate agencies. Housing for sale is advertised in newspapers and online. Real estate agencies should protect the interests of both buyers and sellers and make sure that everything is done legally.
- It is possible to get a loan from a bank or pension funds. However, it is always necessary to have some capital yourself for the down-payment for the apartment.
- Buyers must take a close look themselves at what kind of housing loan they want to take. Loans are indexed or non-indexed, with varying interests and for varying lengths of time. www.aurbjorg.is
- A participation loan is a resource for those with less income and assets who are buying their first property. www.hlutdeildarlan.is
- Interest benefits are paid off housing loans. They are both income and assets based.



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Housing - Leasing

- You can lease housing through individuals, leasing companies or municipalities.
- The Icelandic Student Services (Félagsstofnun stúdenta) at the University of Iceland and the University of Akureyri lease apartments to university students. www.studentagardar.is, www.festaha.is
- Individual's rights are better guaranteed by making a lease agreement. https://hms-web.cdn.prismic.io/hms-web/74f02966-f2ff-46ba-97eb-55768f5eff41_Husaleigusamningur_EN_12112020_FORM.pdf
- If a lease agreement is registered (at the Districts Commissioner's office), you can apply for housing benefits.
- Registration is the official registration of documents.
- Housing benefits are income-based. www.hms.is/husnaedisbaetur
- It is not possible to get housing benefits when leasing a single room or industrial housing. www.leigjendasamtokin.is

Housing - Primary Expenses

- If you own an apartment or a house, you must pay:
 - Instalments of the housing loan.
 - Real estate tax (housing tax to the municipality).
 - Housing insurance (fire insurance and home contents insurance).
 - Heat and electricity.
 - Water and sewerage fees.
 - Residents' association fund (if you live in an apartment building you pay mutual costs for the building).
- If you're leasing an apartment or a house, most expenses are usually included in the rent.

Housing - Cleaning, Damp, Moisture and Mold

- In Iceland, it's often warm inside houses and cold outside so moisture forms in windows, which can cause mold and damages. It is therefore important to dry moisture, open windows and ventilate daily, also in winter. Damp and mold damage housing.
- It is important to **not** pour water on floors and fixtures when cleaning. Flooring in Iceland is usually parquet and fixtures are made from wood panel. Too much water will destroy floors and fixtures. Lessees can be liable for this.
- Normal household cleaning includes wiping surfaces with a damp cloth, vacuuming floors and washing them with a damp mop that's been wrung out with hot (soapy) water. Sinks and sanitary fixtures are scrubbed with a sponge and the appropriate detergents.
- There are many detergents available and it's reasonable to choose environmentally friendly products.



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Apartment Buildings – Communal Areas and Conduct

- A communal area is the mutual property of the residents in an apartment building.
 - Communal areas are: Stairwell, bicycle storage and waste storage, parking lot (or parking garage) and garden. No additional items like furniture, appliances or tires should be stored in communal areas.
 - Sometimes residents will take turns vacuuming the stairwell, changing the garbage bins and moving the lawn, but sometimes the residents' association fund will buy those services.
 - Sorting garbage for recycling is important. Most buildings have recycling bins. It's usually sorted into paper, plastic, organic and other waste. Cans, glass and aluminum (food cans) should also be sorted and taken to the recycling skips in your district.
 - All non-recyclable waste should be put into bags and closed tight before the garbage is thrown in the garbage bins/garbage shoots in the communal area.



Housing - Apartment Buildings

- Apartment buildings have residents' associations. The board of the residents' association (chairman and treasurer) is elected. All major decisions on developments in the building require the approval of the majority of residents in a meeting.
- It is important to know the rules of your apartment building. If you're not sure, just knock on a neighbor's door and ask - it's not a problem.
- Good conduct, consideration and collaboration between the residents is important in apartment buildings.

Birth of a Child – Right to a Maternity/Paternity Leave

- Maternity/paternity leave is 12 months in total since 2021.
- The independent right of each parent to maternal/paternal leave is 6 months, it is permitted to transfer up to 6 weeks to the other parent.
- Maternity/Paternity Leave Fund pays maternity/paternity leave and it is income-based. The right to receive maternity/paternity leave is related to the time and ratio spent in the labour market before the child is born. Individuals earn these rights.
- Students can also apply for maternity/paternity leave if they have a child while studying, if conditions on study progress are met.
- Those who have a child and are neither employed nor studying can apply for a maternity/paternity allowance. This allowance is not high. www.vinnumalastofnun.is/faedingarorlofssjodur

Care Allowance for Disabled Children

- A care allowance is for the legal guardians of disabled children or children with long-term illnesses.
- It is intended to provide financial support for their care and to meet expenses that come with the children. www.tr.is/fjolskyldur/umonnunargreidslur
- Care allowances can be paid from birth to 18 years of age.
- An example of services offered to the parents of disabled children is regular *short-term care* for the disabled which gives parents and siblings a resting period. Personal assistance is, for example, when an employee handles recreational activities for a disabled child or adult.
- If a child is thought to have a developmental variation, the first stop is the health care clinic (see part 4).

Day parents

- Day parents provide residential day care for children over 6 months old. Day parents are responsible for care and upbringing and are responsible for the mental and physical welfare of children under their care.
- They work independently but require a permit from the municipality where they work, which also handles mandatory monitoring and counselling of day parents..
- Day parents handle the registration and admission of children themselves.
- The tariff is optional, and each day parent decides their own tariff, but municipalities subsidise part of the day care fees.
- In order to become a day parent, certain conditions must be met, courses taken, and a permit obtained from the municipality.

The Rights of Children and Adolescents in Iceland

- There is a 10-year compulsory schooling in Iceland. From 6-16 years old (grade 1-10).
- Adolescents have the right to a secondary level education (16-18 years).
- Parents are responsible for their children attending school and doing their homework.
- Parents both have the right, and are obligated, to participate in and monitor their children's education.
- Students of foreign origin have the right to special classes in Icelandic.
- Primary schools use interpreters and translations of information that is essential for parent-teacher communication.
- The general rule is that children attend primary school in their district and follow their peers through the grades, regardless of their ability or previous schooling before coming to Iceland.



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A Few Items Regarding the Rights of Children and Adolescents

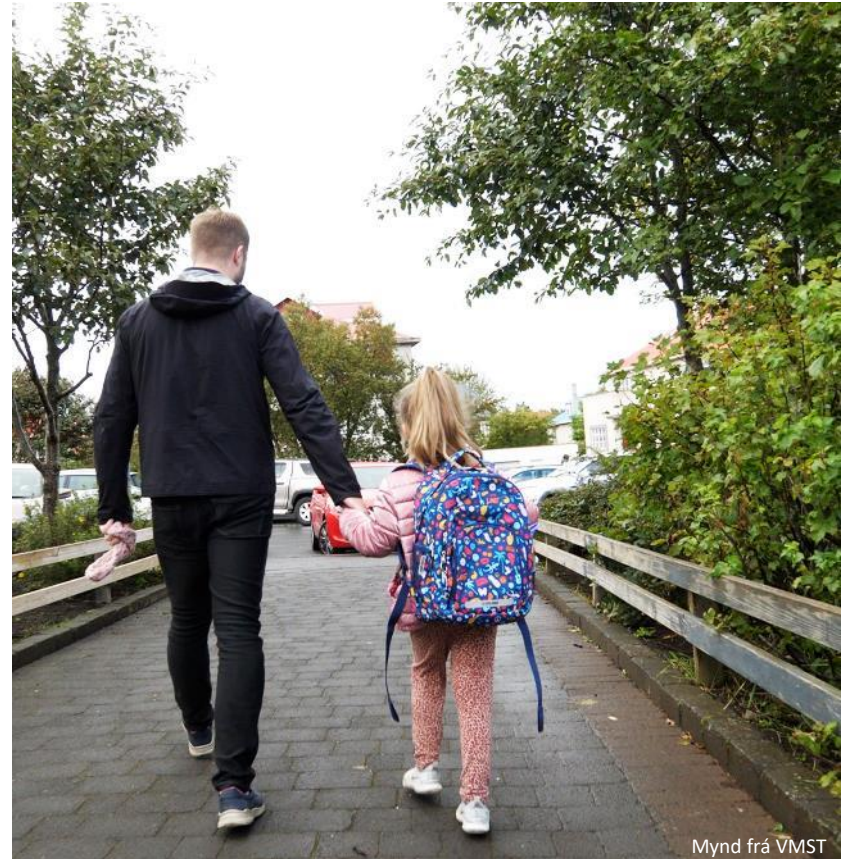
- A 10-year-old child can go to the swimming pool by themselves (if they can swim), but it is the parents' responsibility to not let a child who can't swim go to the swimming pool by themselves.
- A 12-year-old child has the right to be consulted regarding medical treatments.
- A 12-year-old child can decide for themselves whether they want to join a religious organisation or resign from one.
- A 15-year-old adolescent is an independent party in child welfare cases.
- A 15-year-old adolescent is considered legally responsible for their actions. Their offences are punishable.
- Having sexual intercourse with an individual younger than 15 years old is punishable.
- A 16-year-old adolescent can seek medical assistance from a doctor/health care clinic without their parent's knowledge.
- The year an adolescent turns 16 years old, they are obliged to pay taxes on their wages and a premium to a pension fund.
- 17-year-old adolescents can take a driving test or a motorcycle test.
- Individuals become of legal age at 18 years old and from then have autonomy and are financially competent.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - A Few Important Items from the Convention

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is in effect in Iceland.
- When a child is born it is obligatory to report it to the National Registry of Iceland (doctor, midwife or the mother). The names of the parents must be registered, as well as information on whether they live together. www.skra.is
- Parents are responsible for their children and children have the right to their care.
- Parents are obliged to support their children, that is provide food, clothes, shelter, and other aspects of a constructive lifestyle. The responsibility of parents to support their child lasts while adolescents attend secondary school, even if they have reached 18 years of age.

The Convention on the Rights of a Child - Continued

- Parents are obliged to make decisions regarding their child's personal issues. A child's opinion is given more importance as the child matures and a 7-year-old child has the right to voice their opinion.
- Parents are obliged to put the interests of the child first.
- The Convention on the Rights of a Child prohibits violence and abuse towards children.
- A child has the right to know both its parents and associate with both, even when the parents do not live together.



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Parenting

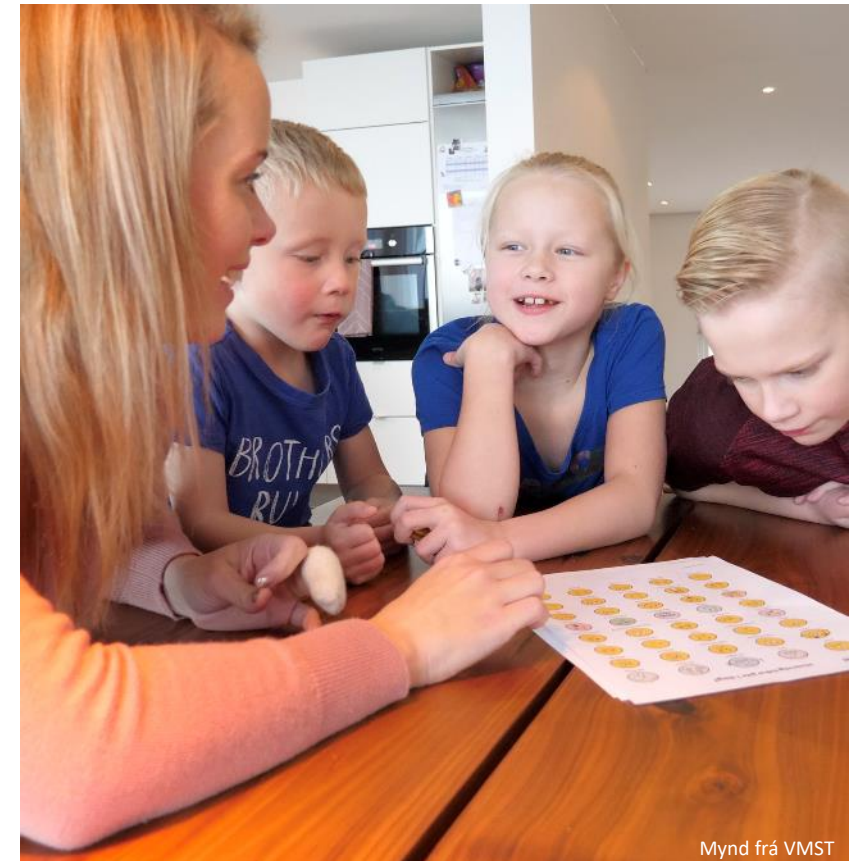
- Ideas on childhood and parenting have changed over time.
- Today, childhood is a time to play and learn. Parents want to spend time with their children and know as much as possible about what goes on at their children's school and leisure activities.
- The collaboration of home and kindergarten/school is important.
- Most parents also want to know their children's friends and their parents.
- In Iceland, parents often communicate casually through social media regarding their children's friendship or leisure activities.

Parenting - Continued

- Children learn many things outside the home and are influenced by society. It is important to let children express their experiences, opinions and thoughts.
- Most parents sometimes find parenting difficult.
- Corporal punishment is illegal in Iceland. Neither teachers nor parents can subject children to corporal punishment.
- Health care centers and municipalities' social services offer useful courses for parents on parenting that works and ways to bring out positive skills.

Example: www.heilsugaeslan.is/serthjonusta/namskeid/uppeldi-sem-virkar

- In parenting, routine is good and having few but clear rules on what is and is not allowed - and following them. In order to reinforce positive behaviour, it's necessary to notice it and praise children when things are going well.



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Parenting - Continued

- ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is an example of a disorder that can cause discomfort and difficulties for children, both in their private lives and at school. You can get help at www.adhd.is
- The website www.heilsuvera.is is a public page with a plethora of useful information and educational materials on physical and mental health and development for all stages in life.
- Additionally, advice can be sought from professionals or friends, by reading articles or books, listening to lectures, attending courses or finding (reliable) information online.

Adolescents

- Adolescence, the age of 13-18, is often challenging., both for the adolescents and their parents.
- Their self-image is being formed and young people are impressionable.
- Studies show that the most effective preventative measures against young people's alcohol and drug use are positive time spent with parents and organised sports and leisure activities.
- It's important to notice changes in adolescents' behavior and seek help immediately, e.g., at the school, health care clinic, from a psychologist or certified organisations if need be.



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Phone and Screen Usage of Children and Adolescents

- Children today are growing up in an environment that's loaded with devices and technological innovations. By using these devices sensibly, they can be a part of a good upbringing.
- Children's first experiences with smart devices should always be with parental guidance and children's screen time is the parents' responsibility.
- Too much screen time can have a negative effect when it replaces positive activity, such as social interaction, exercise, sufficient sleep and a healthy lifestyle. See instructions on screen time based on a child's age.
- www.heilsuvera.is/efnisflokkar/throskaferlid/uppeldi-barna/skjarinn-og-bornin



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How Long Children and Adolescents are Permitted to Stay Outdoors

- There are rules on how long children and adolescents are permitted to stay outdoors:
 - Children under 13 years of age should not be out in public after 20:00.
 - Adolescents aged 13-16 years should not be out in public after 22:00, unless they are going straight home after an authorised school, sports or youth event.
 - During the period from 1 May to 1 September, both groups are permitted to stay outdoors for a further two hours (until 22:00 and midnight).
 - Parents have a right to not permit their children to stay out that late. www.samanhopurinn.is

Freedom of Children and Adolescents

- Many who move to Iceland think that children and adolescents in Iceland have a lot of freedom.
- Children and adolescents often play outdoors without supervision and during summer, they often stay outdoors until the evening.
- Icelandic society is generally considered very safe and because of the sparse population, children have been able to travel around their immediate surroundings by themselves or with friends more than in many other countries.
- However, always take the age and development of children into account when outdoors by themselves and ensure their safety.
- It is important for children to have a framework, e.g. a specific time they are to come home, time for homework, mealtime and bedtime.

Participation in Leisure Activities is Important

- Participating in leisure activities, e.g., sports helps children and adolescents in many ways, e.g. by:
 - Making friends.
 - Learning and practicing Icelandic.
 - Gaining shared experiences with their schoolmates.
 - Developing new skills.
- The Red Cross and other organisations provide grants for leisure activities for the children of refugees and/or low-income families. It is also possible to get a guide and language friend through the Red Cross. www.raudikrossinn.is/verkefni/innanlandsverkefni/flottafolk-og-innflytjendur/flottafolk-og-innflytjendur/to-do/
- It is important to feel that you are a part of the community you live in. That happens, for example, by participating in the same things as others and being treated equally.
- In sports or other leisure activities, Icelandic language skills aren't tested as much as in school, so children and adolescents have an opportunity to flourish from the beginning of their life in Iceland by participating in such activities.



Child Protection Services

- Some parents need short-term or long-term support. Some children are neglected or live under conditions that threaten their safety and wellbeing.
- Each municipality provides child protection services for its residents.
- The role of child protection services is to support families with the child's interests at heart, regardless of their origin or nationality.
- Child protective services try to work on all cases with the cooperation of the parents and legal guardians of the child.
- This is in accordance with Icelandic law on child protection and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The Government Agency for Child Protection monitors the child protection services in Iceland. www.bvs.is

Child Protection Services - Services

- Service can be in the form of counselling and guidance, even within the home or as assistance with participation in children's leisure activities or other activities.
- Sometimes children will go to a support family every month or for longer temporary foster care. Some children go into long-term foster care with foster families.
- Child protection services can rule on placement outside the home for a two-month period. Longer placements must be reviewed in the courts, i.e. district court and sometimes the Landsréttur Appeal Court.

Violence and Negligence Towards a Child

- Violence and negligence can have a severely damaging effect on a child's development.
- A child who lives under circumstances where they experience great fear or violation is more fragile later in life.
- Neglect of a child also refers to a mother who endangers the life of her unborn child.
- Both the general public and public bodies have an obligation to notify child protection service if they believe that a child:
 - is living under unsatisfactory conditions of upbringing.
 - is subjected to violence or other degrading conduct.
 - is severely endangering their health and development.



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Negligence - Continued

- Physical negligence refers to factors like lack of food, poor clothing that's not appropriate for the weather and season, lack of hygiene and unsatisfactory housing. Also, that a child is not taken to a dentist and a doctor and stimulation for motor development is not attended to.
- Negligence regarding care and supervision is, for example, leaving a child home alone for long periods when they are not of age or maturity. Also being outdoors later than is permitted. It also applies when a child is not protected or is endangered due to a parent being incapacitated, e.g. due to alcohol or drug use.

Negligence - Continued

- Negligence regarding studies is, for example, not monitoring the child's attendance at school and homework. Also, not attending to the school's notifications that a child needs special services. (Homework support is available at schools and organisations like the Red Cross and the Salvation Army)
- Emotional negligence is a lack of emotional support, security, attention and encouragement. That also includes not providing a child with natural discipline and boundaries in parenting.
- Professional and social negligence refers to a lack of resources at school or social and health services to equalise the terms and circumstances of people and seeking means of improvement. Also, not responding to reports of negligence or violence.

Violence Towards a Child

- All psychological and physical punishment is considered violence and their application can be punishable by imprisonment.
- All violence in a home where there are children is also considered violence against children.
- Violence manifests in various ways and spanking children, hitting them with your hands or a belt, pushing or shaking them and using hands or objects against children is considered physical violence.
- Any kind of humiliation, denigration, screaming and threatening is psychological violence.
- The effects of violence on children is i.a. the subject of the documentary *Let's Talk About Violence (Tölum um ofbeldi)*
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrXnAtUPmMw&feature=youtu.be
- www.kvennaathvarf.is

Child Protection Services - Report

- Child protection service cases often begin when parents or a child make contact and seek assistance.
- There are also reports from schools, kindergartens, hospitals, health care clinics, the police, neighbors or others who are concerned about the welfare of the child.
- Reports can be submitted anonymously and electronically or by phone.
- All who work in the public sector have an obligation to notify any concerns about a child's wellbeing. These notifications are never anonymous.
- All reports are investigated. Cases are either dropped or suggestions are made on how to assist the child and their family.
- Children's protection and 112 can be notified about a child's situation. You must notify the **municipality** where the child lives or, in case of emergency, contact the emergency line at 112.

Child Protection Services - Miscellaneous

- The main goal of child protection services in Iceland is to ensure the welfare of children, not least by assisting families in creating a good family life.
- Don't let your children intimidate you, the parents, with child protection services and let them do things that you don't agree with or let go of normal discipline and boundaries in parenting.
- On the City of Reykjavík's website is a helpful pamphlet in several languages about children: www.reykjavik.is/sites/default/files/ymis_skjol/skjol_utgefid_efni/vid_og_bornin_okkar_2018_is_en_baeklingur.pdf

Marriage: Rights and Obligations - a Few Items from the Marriage Act

- Anyone who is over the age of 18 years and unmarried can get married.
- No one can be forced into marriage.
- Spouses have equal rights within the marriage and equal duty towards each other and their children.
- Spouses should parent their children together and divide household tasks as evenly as possible between them, as well as household expenses and family support.
- Spouses have joint finances. Spouses are obliged to provide each other with information on their finances.
- A married couple's assets are communal. Spouses can have private assets but for it to be legal, a so-called *prenuptial agreement* must be made and registered with the district commissioner.
- You can get married by a priest and the director of a religious organisation, the district commissioner or their representative or by a civilian solemnizer (for example at Siðmennt).



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Cohabitation

- When people live together as a couple but are not married, they are cohabiting.
- You can register cohabitation at the National Registry of Iceland.
- Individuals can then, for example, use their partner's tax card for tax deduction but do not have the same rights as married couples.

Divorce

- A married couple can apply for a *legal separation* jointly or separately (living in separate places). A divorce can be applied for six months after a legal separation. You can do this at the District Commissioner's Office.
- In the event of a divorce or legal separation, an agreement must be made with the district commissioner for the custody of children, determination of legal residence and child support payments. The District Commissioner calls the parents in for a meeting or an online hearing.
- When couples who have children together divorce, the parents normally get joint custody.
- In the event of a divorce, a residence permit on grounds of marriage is no longer valid. A new residence permit on other grounds must be applied for if there is interest in continuing to live in Iceland. www.utl.is

Child Support Payments

- A parent in the child's legal residence can claim child support from the other parent to meet the cost of supporting the child.
- Basic child support from 1. July 2023 is ISK 43,700.
- Child support is the child's right and shall be used to feed, clothe and provide housing for the child.
- If a child is born out of cohabitation or wedlock, parents can make a child support agreement.
- Parents can handle the collection and payments of child support themselves.
- The State Social Security Institute can also act as an intermediary for payments to the parent at the legal residence, upon request. Apply here www.tr.is
- Information at www.island.is/medlag

Violence in Relationships

- Violence is prohibited by law in Iceland. That includes within families, in romantic relationships, with partners and spouses.
- What is considered violence according to law?
 - Abusing another human being physically, sexually, physiologically and/or financially.
 - Causing another human being fear or injury.
 - Isolating another human being or breaking them down psychologically.
 - Spanking children or slapping them.
- **Violence in intimate relationships (domestic violence)** occurs when the perpetrator of the violence is related or connected to you, e.g., a partner, ex-partner, family member, friend or caretaker.



Violence and Aid

- The Icelandic police takes domestic violence, as well as other violence, seriously. You can always call 112.
- At www.112.is you can participate in a real-time online chat with an emergency operator and get help and information.
- 1717 is the Red Cross' emergency phone number and the online chat at www.1717.is They provide psychosocial support and guidance on resources.
- Violence is when somebody does something that hurts you or causes you discomfort. Violence occurs irrespective of gender, age, sexuality or other. Violence is, f.ex., psychological violence, physical violence, sexual violence, financial violence and digital violence.

Aid Violence - Continued

- **Kvennarádgjöf** (counselling for women) is operated. There, they provide free legal and social counselling for women and men. There is no need to provide personal information. www.kvennaradgjofin.is
- **Kvennaathvarf** (women's shelter) is operated in Reykjavík for women and children who have had to leave their home due to violence. You can stay there and receive counselling and support. www.kvennaathvarf.is
- **Bjarkarhlíð** in Reykjavík and **Bjarmahlíð** in Akureyri are centers for victims of physical, psychological or sexual violence. These centers are available to both men and women and provide consultation, education, and support. www.bjarkarhlid.is og www.bjarmahlid.is
- **Stígamót** is a counselling and support center for both women and men over the age of 18 who have been the victims of some form of sexual violence www.stigamot.is
- **Heimilisfriður** is a knowledge center for violence that takes place within close relationships and a treatment center for male and female perpetrators of violence. www.heimilisfridur.is

Effects of Violence

- Being the victim of violence can have long-lasting negative effects for the victim.
- Children are badly affected by bearing witness to violence in the home, for example violent behavior between their parents. The effects can last a long time and can cause the children and adolescents to develop feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and fear.
- In Iceland, it is considered abnormal and wrong to subject other family members to violence. Although these matters can often be a sensitive subject, everyone stands to benefit greatly; whether it be the perpetrators, victims or children; from seeking help and no longer having to live in a violent environment.

Equality and Equal Opportunities

- Legal provisions regarding equality and equal opportunities are a major part of Icelandic law.
- Equality for everyone is an important value in Icelandic society. This means that everyone is considered equal; regardless of their gender, age, qualifications, cultural background, origin, disability, religion, gender identity, or sexuality.
- Gender equality has advanced significantly over the past decades. There are significantly more women in the labour market than before and today, the number of women in the labour pool equals that of the men.
- However, certain professions remain primarily staffed by women although the government urges both men and women to seek education in a variety of industries.
- An association of women of foreign origins operates in Iceland. www.womeniniceland.is
- The Directorate of Equality has published a booklet, in several languages, with important information for immigrants in Iceland. <https://www.jafnretti.is/is/samfelag-og-vinnumarkadur/rettur-thinn/rettur-thinn-mikilvaegar-upplysingar-fyrir-innflytjendur-a-islandi>



Domestic Life

- Domestic life in Iceland is like that seen in other societies: People go to work or school, come home, cook dinner, take care of homework and chores, or relax.
- Participation in leisure activities is widespread in Iceland, both among children and adults. Many women and men exercise regularly, before or after work. Many are also involved in other social activities, choirs, or volunteer work.
- Couples with children will often divide their time equally between their individual hobbies or exercise regimes and who should drive and pick up the children for their leisure activities.

Recycling

- People in Iceland will often use Facebook pages or certain websites to buy and sell used items, such as clothing, furniture, toys, equipment, and cars.
- There are also many second-hand markets where clothing, furnishings, and furniture can be bought at bargain prices. Góði hirðirinn is a large second-hand market and all the profits from items sold there go to support charitable causes.
- The Red Cross manages stores that sell second-hand clothing.
- Kolaportið is open on weekends, a large marketplace in downtown Reykjavík that sells food, and both new and pre-owned items. People can reserve a booth to sell items there. www.kolaportid.is
- Sorpa is a company that manages several recycling centers in the Reykjavík metropolitan area. There you can take everything that requires recycling or safe desposal. www.sorpa.is



Recreation

- The Red Cross website has a list of free and affordable recreational activities available in the Reykjavík metropolitan area.
- Libraries can be found throughout Iceland. There, people can find books in various languages, particularly children's books. Libraries have cozy nooks for reading and great facilities for children to play and read books.
- Some libraries will also have computers, 3D printers, sewing machines, and other services available to guests.
- The libraries will also stage diverse cultural activities. www.borgarbokasafn.is

Recreation - Continued

- The swimming pools in Iceland are available to all genders. Swimming pools can be found throughout Iceland and there are many located in the Reykjavík metropolitan area.
- Swimming is an affordable and healthy activity. Icelandic pools have hot tubs and steam baths and will often have water slides and toys for children. Going swimming is a major part of Icelandic culture.
- Swimming is a compulsory subject in Icelandic primary schools and swimming pools will sometimes offer swimming lessons for adults.
- Swimming pools have specific changing rooms for men and women. Everyone showers without their swimsuit before entering the pool and in Iceland that is not considered an issue.
- Children can go to the pool by themselves at 10 years old but only if they can swim. Children are always the responsibility of their guardians at the swimming pool.



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Recreation - Continued

- There are many playgrounds around the city and in all towns. Playground equipment can also often be found in open areas and some have an outdoor BBQ.
- Hiking is popular and there are many interesting hiking trails and outdoor recreation areas all over the country. In the Greater Reykjavík area, going to Laugardalur, Elliðaárdalur, Heiðmörk and Öskjuhlíð is popular. It's necessary to wear shoes that are suitable for hiking and dress appropriately.
- Bicycle rides are fun in the summer and there are many bicycle paths around Reykjavík.
- Nauthólsvík in Reykjavík has a man-made beach with hot water flowing into the sea. When the weather is nice, it's fun to go on a beach trip there. In fact, some people go sea swimming all year round.
- The Húsdýragarðurinn Zoo & Park (fjölskyldu- og húsdýragarðurinn) is in Laugardalur in Reykjavík. There you can see Icelandic farm animals and a few wild animals. The park also has various playground equipment for children.



Recreation - Continued

- During summer, many people travel around the country or to a summer cottage. You can rent summer cottages from trade unions.
- Town fairs are held in various locations in summer and are fun to visit. On the first day of summer, districts and towns have entertainment events for children. On the Icelandic National Day (June 17) there are great celebrations in all municipalities. In August, Reykjavík celebrates big events like Culture Night and Reykjavík Pride.
- An organisation for native language education for children offer native language classes for children in multiple languages.
- Sunday school for children is operated on Sunday mornings in most churches. Many religious organisations have children's activities.

Recreation - Continued

- Many people go skiing during winter. It is very popular with children to go snow-sledding and slide down slopes.
- The National Theatre (Þjóðleikhúsið) and Reykjavík City Theatre (Borgarleikhúsið) are the biggest professional theatres in Iceland. They offer diverse theatre productions, including for children. In summer, theatre groups for children operate and tour the country.
- Harpa is the national music hall and conference centre and is located by the Reykjavík harbour. Various concerts and opera performances are held there.
- There are many cinemas in Iceland. Children's movies are dubbed in Icelandic but other movies have Icelandic subtitles.
- Iceland has numerous museums with diverse exhibitions.



Recreation - Continued

- Many also go to the shopping centres or the town centre to have a look around. Visiting family and friends is also classic.
- Ice cream drives are a fun tradition, you go for a drive and stop to buy ice cream on the way - also in winter. Cozy nights are nights the family spends together to watch a fun movie or play a board game and have a nice dinner or a treat.
- Facebook is widely used in Iceland to advertise products and events. Fun events for children and adults are listed under "events".
- There are also many groups on Facebook that advertise products and services at an affordable price or for free. Town districts and municipalities also have Facebook groups where people can ask questions and chat about various things in their district or town.

Good to Know - Many Things are Electronic

- In Iceland, you can find information on most things online.
- All companies have a website where you'll find information about opening hours, services and pricing.
- You can also buy tickets to concerts, the cinema and the theatre online and receive an electronic ticket.

Videos on the Rights of Disabled Children in Iceland

- Icelandic 1: <https://youtu.be/N-vRkyMWDyg>
- Icelandic 2: <https://youtu.be/ZEBelSwz1og>
- Icelandic 3: https://youtu.be/dkwt7U_Ukvs
- Polish 1: <https://youtu.be/yrH8EStyOxA>
- Polish 2: <https://youtu.be/9TjOeuPNW-M>
- Polish 3: <https://youtu.be/MFZkV6iBxPw>
- Arabic 1: <https://youtu.be/Ws2knub159s>
- Arabic 2: <https://youtu.be/f0Fc2klr69k>
- Arabic 3: <https://youtu.be/3Oxrm32lPo8>
- English 1: <https://youtu.be/sl10sJeLiQo>
- English 2: <https://youtu.be/5v431cpjQB8>
- English 3: <https://youtu.be/8tzltnVcJWk>
- Spanish 1:: <https://youtu.be/eP6aA2JxThA>
- Spanish 2:: <https://youtu.be/1BbVrmBsMK8>
- Spanish 3:: https://youtu.be/bkyOP_CUYAw

Websites

www.112.is

www.1717.is

www.adhd.is

www.aurbjorg.is

www.bjarkarhlid.is

www.bjarmahlid.is

www.borgarbokasafn.is

www.bvs.is

www.facebook.com/Midjamalsoglaesis

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www.heimilisfridur.is

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