

# **A child-centered theory for contact family support**

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This article presents a synthesis of two recent doctoral dissertations of Support Family Intervention (SFI), comparable to contact family intervention in Sweden. The aim is to develop a child-centred programme theory for SFI and conceptualize the use of support family as a child and family welfare intervention in Finland. Support families are volunteers who provide support to children and parents coping with a range of psychosocial challenges. The child usually spends one weekend a month with a support family. The article is methodologically based on a meta-ethnography, and it combines 1) the programme theory that guides the use of intervention and the 2) children's lived experiences of the SFI. As a result, we suggest a supplemental child-centred programme theory to the current programme theory. Three key clarifications are made. Firstly, a clarification considering the supportive properties of the support family environment for the child. Secondly, the emphasis on the multiple relationships the intervention provides the child as a key element of the intervention. Thirdly a more nuanced and active description of the child as a stakeholder in the intervention is needed.