



# Statistics on family law 2023

The Family Law and Parental Support Authority (MFoF) is responsible for the official statistics within family law.

The statistics are collected from Sweden's municipalities via a web survey provided by Statistics Sweden. Collection occurs once a year and refers to the previous year. The statistics are available on MFoF's website, together with the survey, technical report, quality declaration, etc. This fact sheet summarizes parts of the statistics for 2023 and is described in comparison to previous years. The results are reported at national level and are stated in total number and number per 10,000 inhabitants.

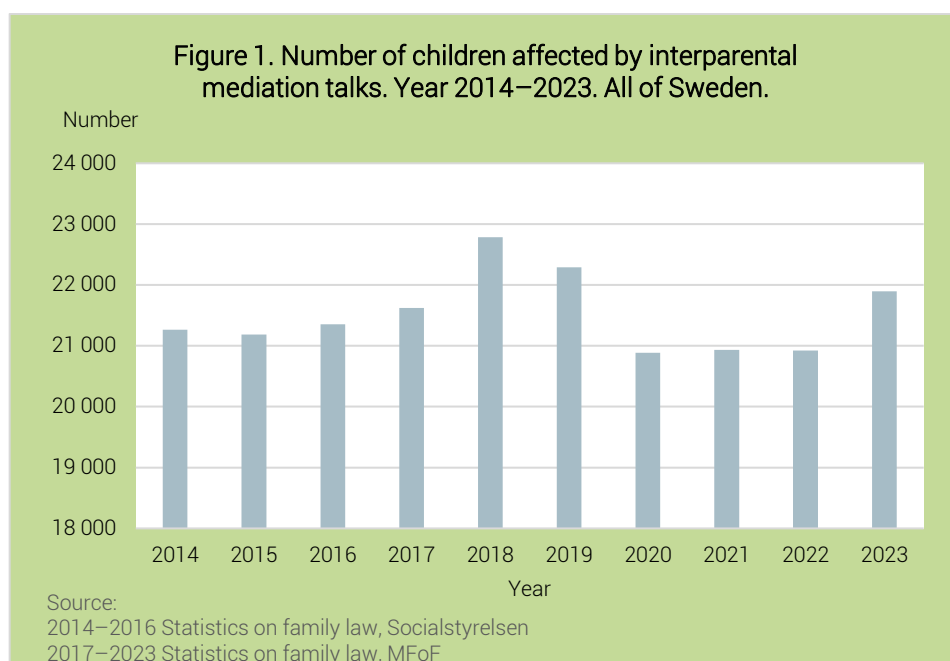
## Statistics on family law for 2023 show, among other things, the following:

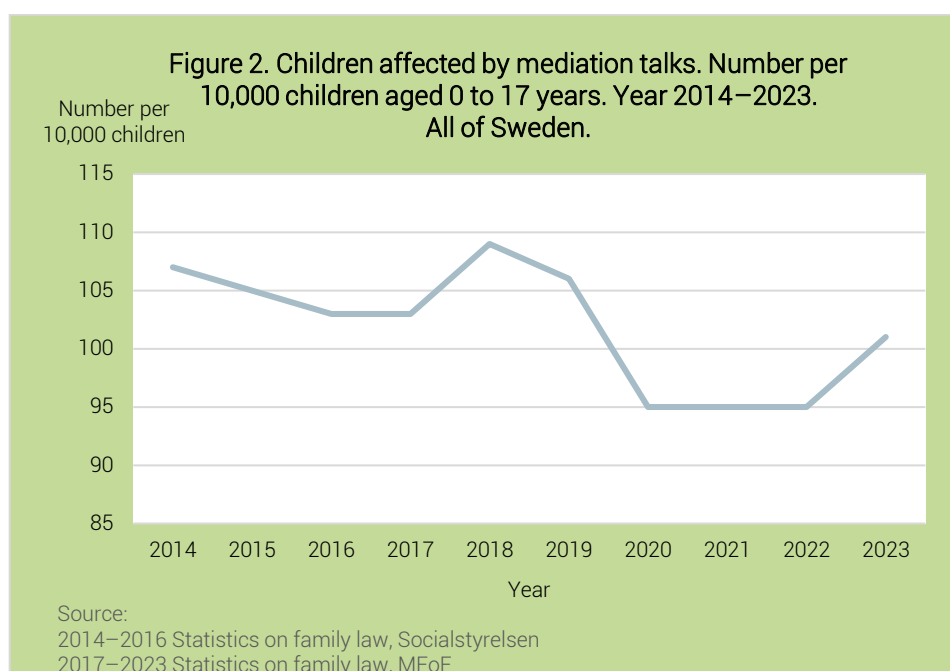
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## The number of children affected by mediation talks has increased compared to the three previous years

The purpose of mediation talks is to assist the parents in reaching an agreement regarding the custody, residence of, and access to, a child. Mediation talks can be arranged at the request of the parents or be initiated by a court.

In 2023, the number of children aged 0-17 years whose parents participated in mediation talks was 21,894. Of these, 984 were initiated by court action. Statistics for the last ten-year period show that the number of children affected by mediation talks was lowest in the years 2020-2022, with around 21,000 affected children, and highest in 2018 with almost 23,000 affected children (Figure 1). Figure 2 shows the number of children affected per 10,000 children between 0 and 17 years of age. This number ranged between 103-109 in the years 2014-2019, and then decreased to 95 in the years 2020-2022. In 2023, the number then increased to 101 children per 10,000.

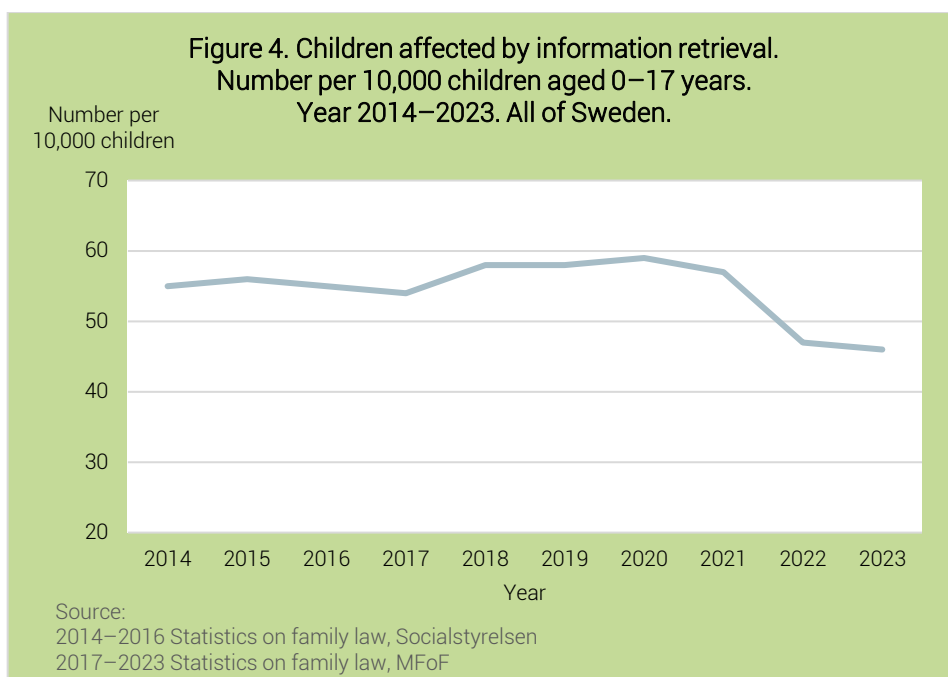
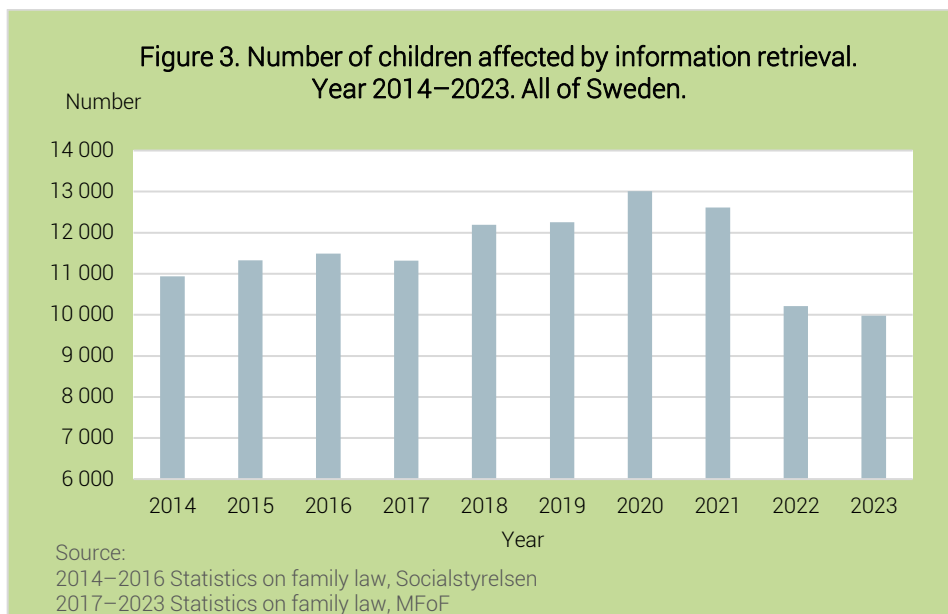




## The number of children in retrieval of information requests has decreased

Before a court makes an interim decision regarding custody, residence or access, the court can request a retrieval of information, also known as expedited information, from the social welfare board.

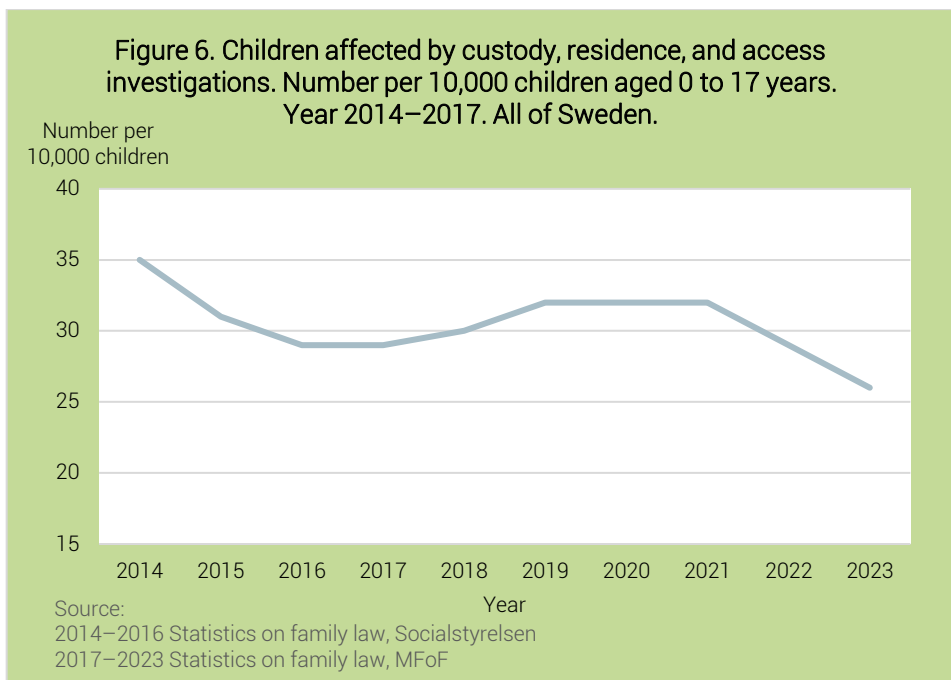
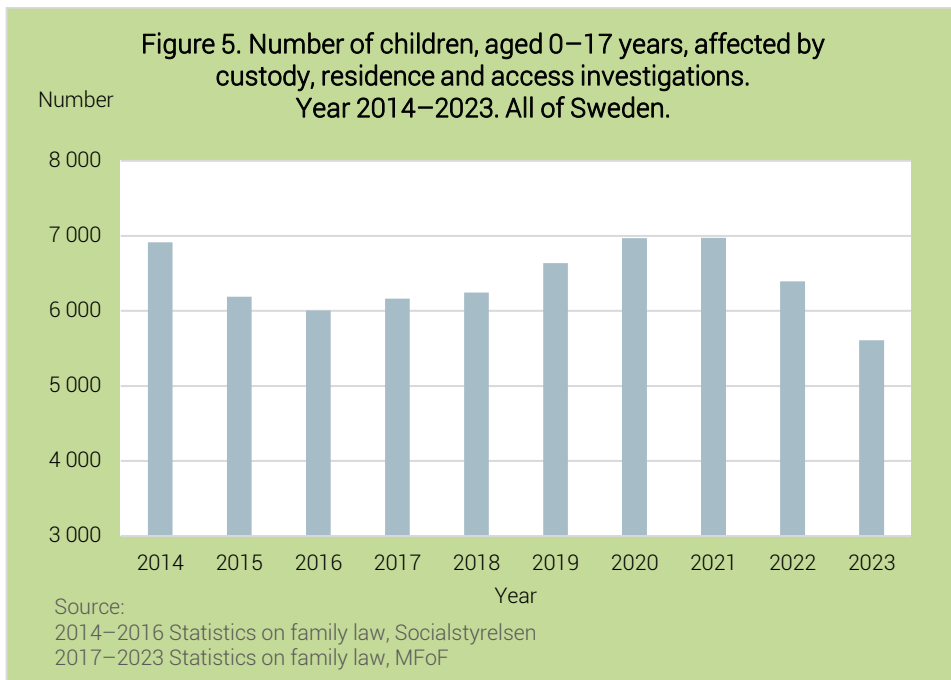
In 2023 there were requests for retrieval of information for 9,979 children aged 0–17 years (Figure 3), which corresponded to 46 children per 10,000. The number of children affected by retrieval requests has thus continued to decrease and the 2023 figure is the lowest in ten years (Figure 4).



The number of children in investigations involving custody, residence and access is the lowest in ten years

In 2023, a total of 5,607 children aged 0–17 years were subject to investigations of custody, residence and access. This is a continued decrease compared with the previous year and the lowest number in 10 years (Figure 5).

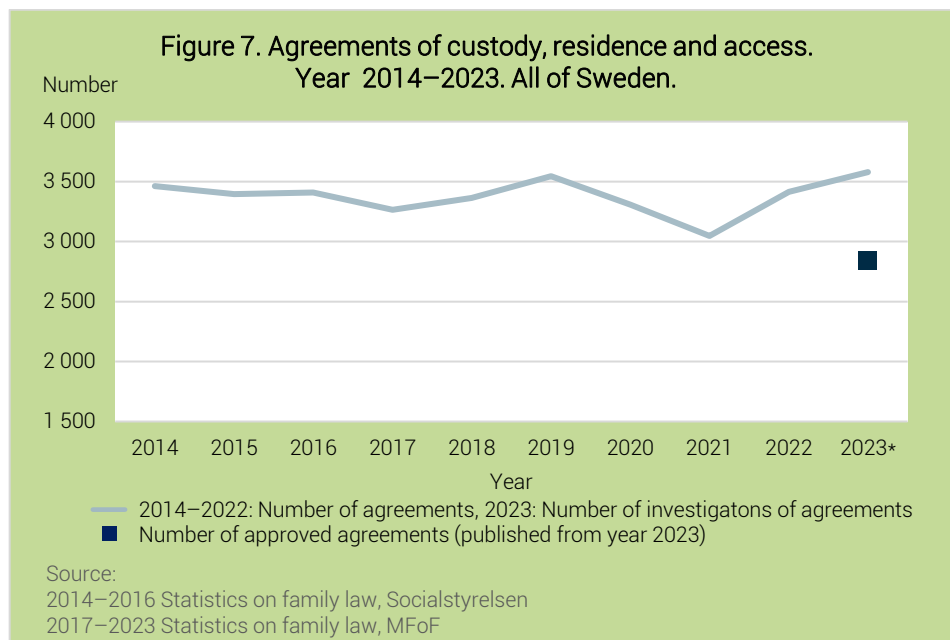
The number of children per 10,000 in the age group 0–17 has decreased over the last 10-year period from 35 children in 2014 to 26 children in 2023 (Figure 6).



### Statistics on the number of approved agreements, published for the first time, amount to around 2,800

In 2023, a total of 3,579 investigations of agreements regarding custody, accommodation and access were carried out (Figure 7). Comparisons with previous years should be made with some caution since the question was reworked slightly before the collection in 2023 to clarify that the number of agreements refers to the number of investigations of agreements. Of the

investigations of agreements, 2,841 agreements were approved in 2023, which corresponds to 79%. Statistics on the number of approved agreements were not been published before the year 2023, and thus comparisons with previous years are not possible.



\* In 2023, the formulation in the survey was reworked to clarify that 'the number of agreements' refers to 'the number of investigations of agreements'. Also, 'the number of approved agreements' was placed as a sub-question. The number of approved agreements is being published from the year 2023.

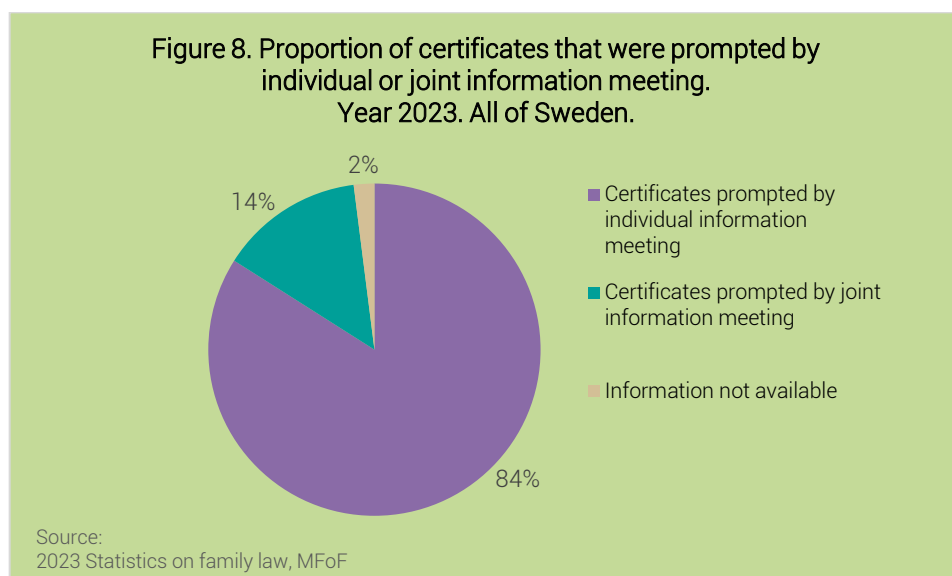
## The majority of certificates relate to individual information meetings

Since 2022 the municipalities have been responsible for offering an information meeting to parents who are considering going to court with conflicts over custody, residence and access. It is also required that any parent who wishes to initiate court proceedings regarding a dispute must have first taken part in an information meeting.

The Act on Information Meetings was introduced with the best interests of the child in mind, and with the hope that in many cases the information meeting will help parents avoid going to court. The aim of the meeting is to inform parents about the options for finding consensual solutions in matters of custody, residence and access. The meeting can be held jointly with both parents or separately. The social welfare board issues a certificate to parents who participated in an information meeting.

From the year 2023, statistics about information meetings are being included in the official statistics on family law. A total of 10,861 certificates were issued among the country's municipalities in 2023. Of these, 84% related to individual

information meetings and 14% to joint information meetings. Information was missing for 2% (Figure 8).



By following the development of the family law area, various trends can contribute to analysing whether the information meeting is having the effects intended by the legislators. In recent years, the statistics show, for example, a downward trend regarding the number of children who are affected by retrieval of information and investigations concerning custody, residence and access. At the same time, statistics in 2023 show that the number of children affected by mediation talks is increasing, compared to the three previous years. The introduction of information meetings may be a contributing factor in such trends, but this still needs to be monitored over time.

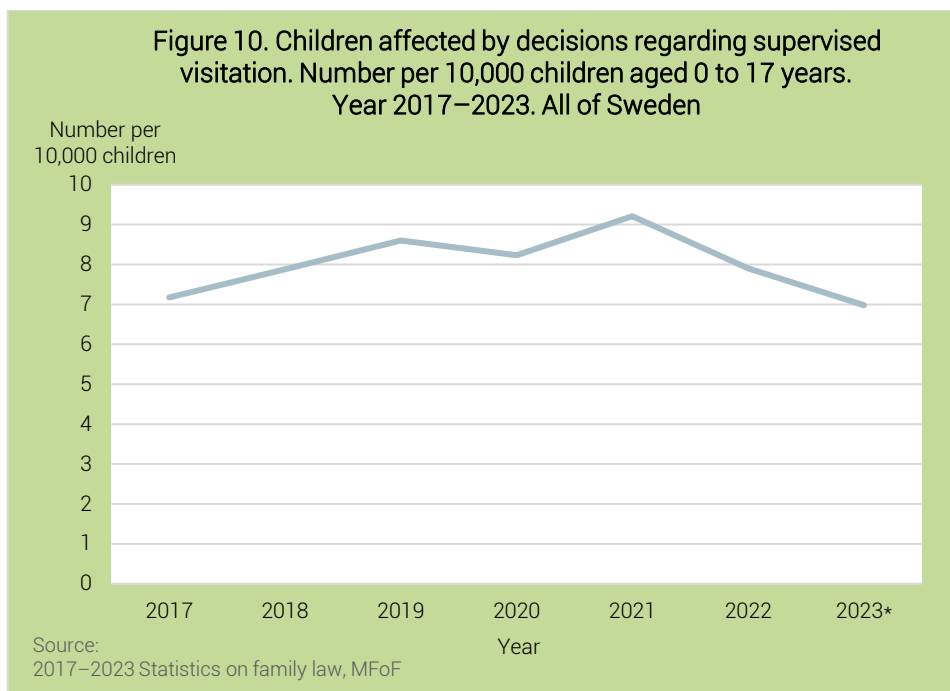
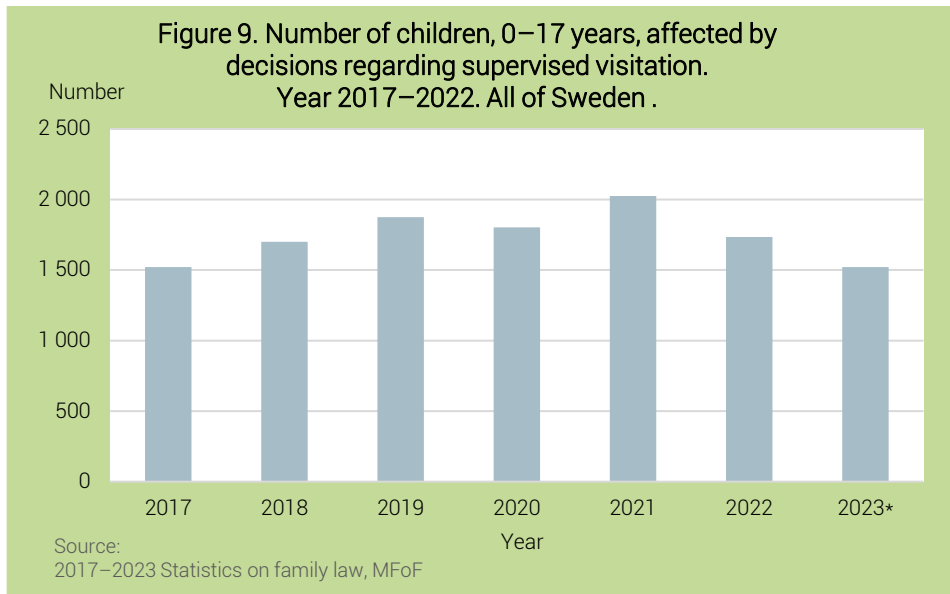
According to official statistics from the Swedish National Courts Administration, civil cases regarding *claims for custody of children, etc. have slightly decreased*, from 6,115 in 2022 to 5,987 in 2023<sup>1</sup>. The National Courts Administration's statistics include both disputes between private individuals and cases in which the social welfare board is the plaintiff. The statistics of the Family Law and Parental Support Authority (MFoF) refer to information retrieval requested by the court in civil cases between private individuals. In addition, MFoF's statistics are based on the number of children involved, while the National Courts Administration's statistics are based on the number of civil cases (which may include several children), which means that the data are not completely comparable.

## The number of children in decisions regarding supervised visitations continues to decrease

In 2023, there were 1,520 children aged 0–17 years affected by decisions regarding supervised visitations, representing a continued decrease since the

<sup>1</sup> National Courts Administration, Court statistics 2023.

previous year (Figure 9). The number of children per 10,000<sup>2</sup> corresponded to 7 in 2023 (Figure 10). Statistics over the last seven years show an upward trend in the years 2017–2021, which then decreases over the past two years.



\* In 2023, the question in the survey was slightly reworked.

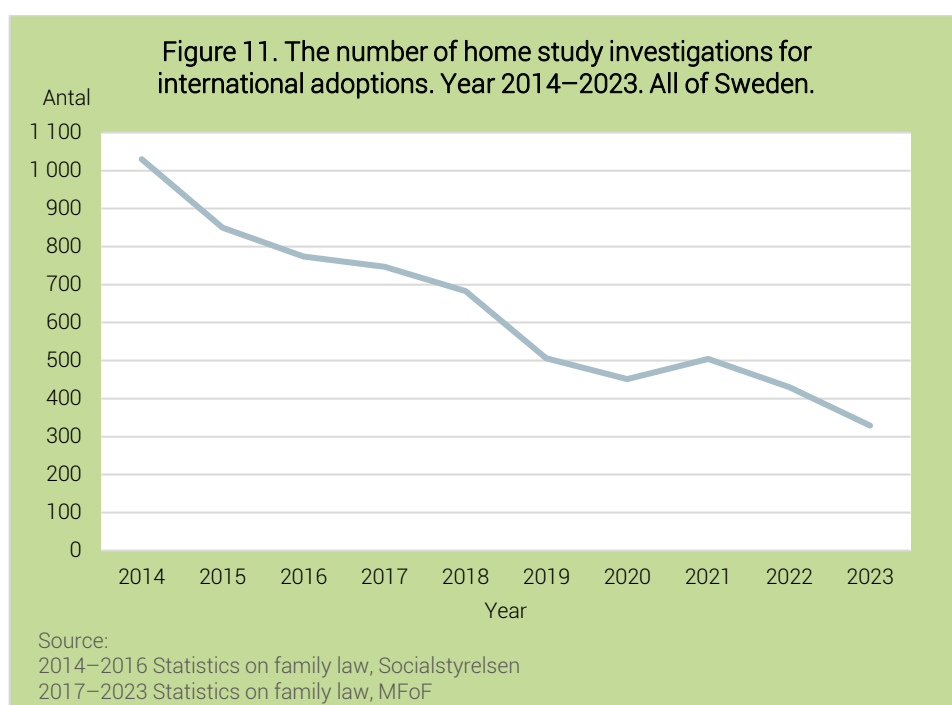
<sup>2</sup> Calculated using data on children 0–17 years in the population. Source: Statistics Sweden (SCB), Statistical database, Population. Available via [www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se](http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se)



## The number of home study investigations continues to decrease

Before an international adoption can take place, the person wishing to adopt must apply to the social welfare board for consent to adopt. A home study investigation serves as a basis for the social welfare board to decide on the applicant's suitability as an adoptive parent.

The number of home study investigations has decreased significantly over time. In 2014, just over 1,000 investigations were carried out compared to 329 carried out in 2023, representing a 68% decrease in consent investigations over a 10-year period (Figure 11). Of the home study investigations carried out in 2023, 10 investigations resulted in a refusal to grant consent.



## The number of paternity investigations by social welfare boards continues to decrease

Statistics for 2022 showed that the number of investigations of paternity by social welfare boards had decreased drastically since parents were enabled to acknowledge their parenthood themselves and to report joint custody, via an e-service at the Swedish Tax Agency. In the years 2010–2020, approximately 60,000 paternities were established via social welfare boards. In 2022, the number was 17,173. In 2023, the number of established paternities via social welfare boards was 9,972, representing a further decrease.

With regard to parenthood, the 2023 statistics show that there were 269 cases of parenthood determined via social welfare boards. The year before, 2022, the

corresponding number was 330. Statistics on parenthood were not published before the year 2022.

## Facts

**Mediation talks** are talks held by professionals in order to reach consensus on issues concerning custody, residence, access and livelihood.

**Retrieval of information** refers to collected information, stated in chapter 6, section 20 of the Parental Code, which the court receives from the social welfare board before an interim decision is made concerning custody, residence or access.

**Custody, residence and access investigations** are reports that provide the court with a basis for decisions concerning custody, residence or access.

**Agreements** of custody, residence and access are agreements that are drawn up between parents who agree on custody, residence and access. The agreement becomes legally binding when it is approved by the Social Welfare Committee.

**Supervised visitation** means that a person assists in the child's visitation with a parent. The court makes a judicial decision on supervised visitation and the social welfare board implements the decision by appointing a person to be custody support.

**Home study investigations** are investigations according to chapter 6, section 12 of the Social Services Act. Such assessments are conducted for the purpose of giving the social welfare board a basis for decisions on consent for a private home to receive a child from abroad for the purpose of adoption.

**Investigations of paternity and parenthood** are assessed by the social welfare board in order to determine who the child's other parent is, when the person who gives birth to the child is unmarried. An investigation may concern paternity, parenthood, single parenthood, or fatherhood/motherhood if either or both parents have changed their gender. Paternity and parenthood can be established through acknowledgement or through a judicial decision. Since January 2022, parents have been able to confirm parenthood using an e-service at the Swedish Tax Agency.

**Information meetings** are talks with parents in conflicts over custody, residence and access, who are considering going to court. The social welfare board is responsible for offering an information meeting. The meeting can be held jointly with both parents or separately. A certificate is issued to parents who participated in information meeting.

### More information

Statistics on family law are available on MFOF's webpage. Most of the statistics are available per municipality and/or county.

[www.mfof.se/statistik\\_familjeratt](http://www.mfof.se/statistik_familjeratt)

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