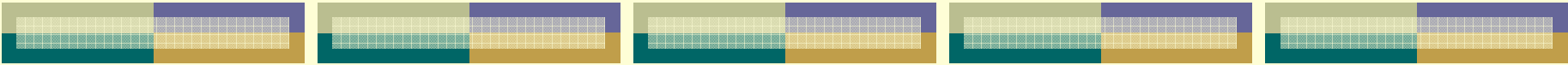



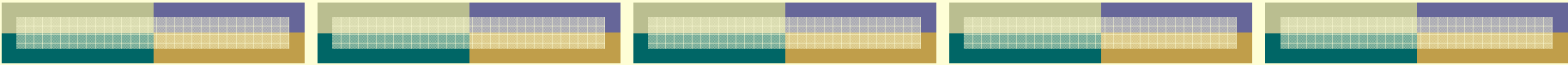
Empowering children - finding work after care.

Pille Vaiksaar

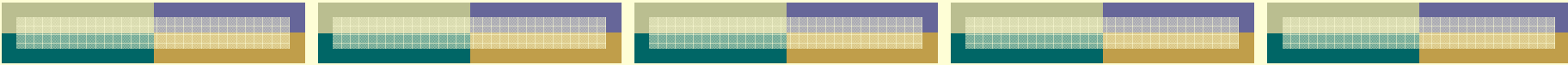
Viljandi Children Aid and Social Center, Estonia

7.-8.october 2009 Vilnius

- 
- What does the statistic tell about fostercare and how is the situation with leaving care and aftercare in Estonia?
 - How does our institution support youngsters to get a job - concrete examples.
- 

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- About 67 % of children who need fostercare live in the fosterfamilies and 33 % in the substitute homes.




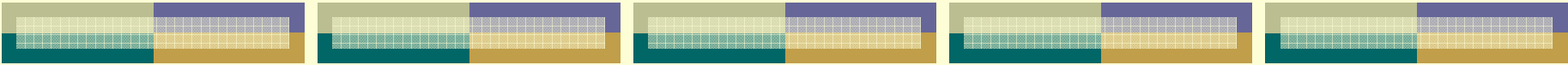


The number of substitute homes has been almost the same for last 10 years (1998-2008) but the number of children in the institutions has decreased.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Substitute homes	37	35	39	37	38	38	38	39	35
Number of children	1 715	1 814	1 881	1 539*	1 549*	1 683	1 621	1493	1322


*In 2003 and 2004 not all children with disabilities were counted because of the statistic system changes



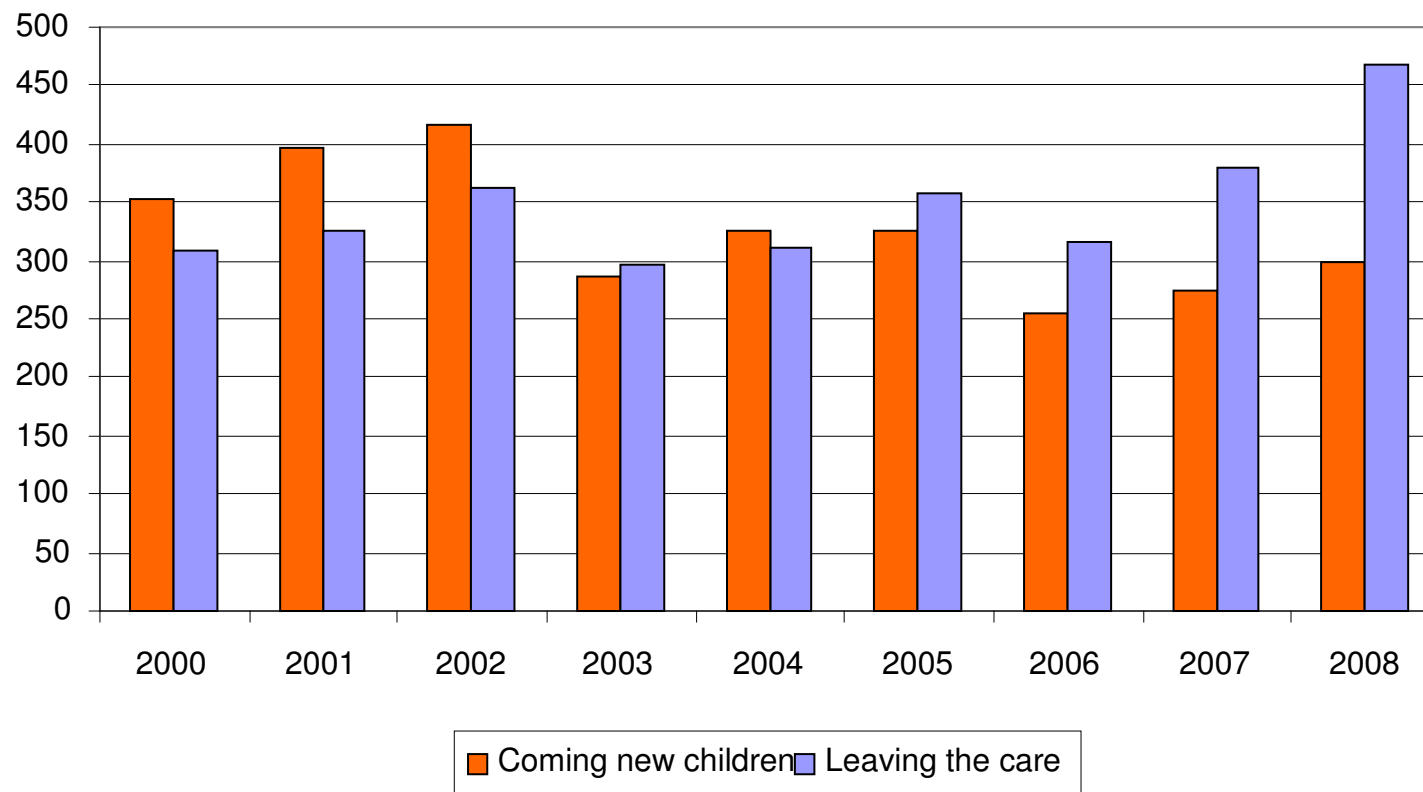


The number of children moving to the institutional care and leaving the care shows that from 2002 there are more children leaving the care than coming to the substitute homes.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
moving to the care	352	396	416	286	326	326	255	274	298
leaving the care	310	326	362	296	311	358	317	381	469




Movement of children coming and leaving fostercare service



Bigger changes in 2008 because of reorganizing institutions and moving children from one institution to the other.




Children leaving the substitute homes:

- start independent life (ca 30 %)
 - move to fosterparents or custody (ca 10 %)
 - move back to biological parents (ca 10 %)
 - move to the other institutions (ca 30%)
- 




Leaving care and aftercare in Estonia

- There are not many special projects for children leaving care and for aftercare in Estonia
 - System is mainly built on the support and services provided by the state and municipalities
 - Substitute homes and care in the family should prepare the young persons for independent life
- 




Support by the state and municipalities

- Municipality has a duty to provide a young person with help and assistance when leaving care and provide the housing
 - The independent life grant for young persons leaving care in Estonia is 380 EUR
- 




Case plan

- Before a child is going to the care (foster family, custody or substitute home) the case plan shall be prepared by the local municipality together with the child.
 - Reality today - municipalities don't take enough initiative in planning the child's adulthood long before the child is going to leave the institution.
- 



Support in reality

- Municipality often doesn't have a flat for a care leaver and cannot help youngster to find a job
 - The substitute home often
 - have better contact with the youngster leaving the care than municipality
 - provide direct material support for care leavers like providing them with elementary things (furniture, clothes, dishes) and sometimes also help with transport
 - provide direct assistance to the young person and on some cases it might last for years
- 



Alone in the labourmarket

- To survive in our society is more difficult for a youngster coming from the institution
 - no emotional support from the family
 - no economical support from the family
 - no relatives and friends who could help to find a job






How to get better prepared for the independent life ?

- To become stronger for the labourmarket and more self-confidenced is necessary that youngsters
 - Get used to work from the early age
 - Get to know different proffessions
 - Practice different jobs





Working in the refuge for homeless animals

- youngsters get very positive feedback
 - it works like a therapy for children
 - youngsters have got friends - mentors
- 




Selling newspapers

- developes interpersonal skills
- teaches:
 - what works with different people
 - how to deal with setback






Working at the private firm

- doing simple work - mowing the grass, storing things in the warehouse
 - working together with “real men” who don`t make any concessions
 - workmates take a youngster as an equal partner
 - getting feedback from “real men”
 - background – teamwork, very close everyday contact between social worker and employer
- 




Working at our institution

- helping in the group with severely disabled children
 - the goal for the youngster – to earn money to get a driving license
- 




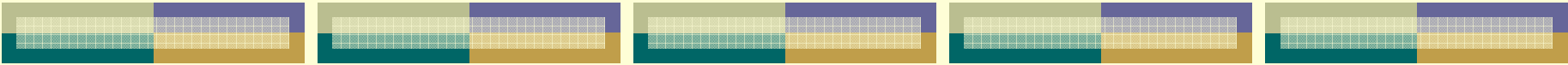
Disabled youngsters in our institution:

- helping the other children who need more help – bringing them to school and kindergarten by wheelchairs
 - bringing food for the “family” from the kitchen from the neighbourhood
 - shopping food etc. for the “family” in town alone
 - cleaning roads in the schoolyard in the neighbourhood
 - mowing the grass in the schoolyard
 - picking the apples
 - working in the greenhouse
- 




“Pillow- factory” project

- contact with the employer
 - explanation – who is a disabled person, how can they react, what work can they do, what kind of help they may need, how can we support etc.
 - cooperation with workmates on the concrete workplace and explanation to them
 - coming to the workplace with youngsters and explaining situation to them
 - teaching youngsters to come to work alone
- 




“From the institution to the supported living “ (2000...)

- moving to the flat
 - practising homework, cooking, shopping
 - working at our institution
 - finding work outside
- 



Conclusions:

- The best way to help the child is to get her/him used to work from the early age
 - Some children leaving care can find a job themselves
 - Many children need support by finding a job and keeping it
 - Supporting youngsters in this field has been initiative of our workers
 - Anything is possible!
- 

Thank You! 😊

