

Births 2020

Annual review

Turn in the birth rate was especially visible among persons aged over 30 and highly educated

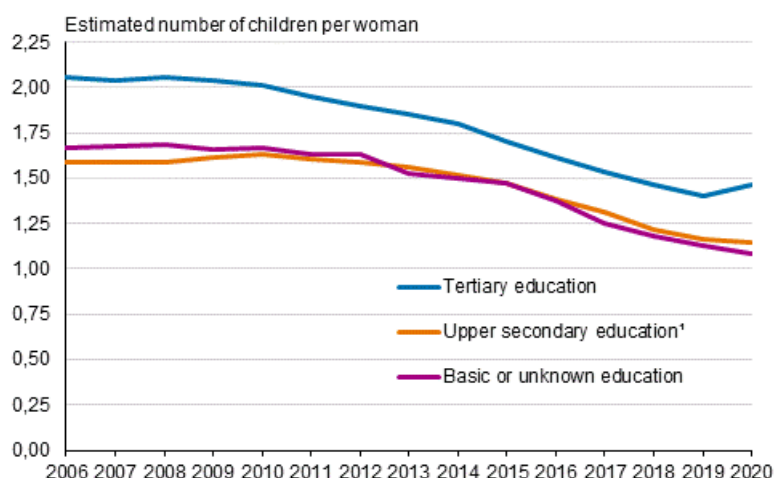
According to Statistics Finland's data on population changes, the birth rate rose slightly in 2020, from 1.35 to 1.37 children per woman. The change in the birth rate was particularly visible for women aged 30 to 39, whose fertility grew most. Women's total fertility rate rose only among highly educated, but among men there was an increase in all educational groups.

Among women the birth rate turned upwards only among tertiary educated

In 2020, the birth rate of highly educated women started to rise after a prolonged decline. The birth rate of highly educated women has last risen in 2008.

The birth rate continued to decline for women with lower than tertiary level education. However, there was only a very slight fall in the upper secondary level. The fall was also somewhat smaller among those with only basic level education than in the year before.

Total fertility rate of women born in Finland by level of education in 2006 to 2020



1. Includes post-secondary non-tertiary education.

The data here concern only mothers and fathers born in Finland. Some qualifications completed abroad are missing from Statistics Finland's Register of Completed Education and Degrees, for which reason the qualification data of many persons born abroad are deficient.

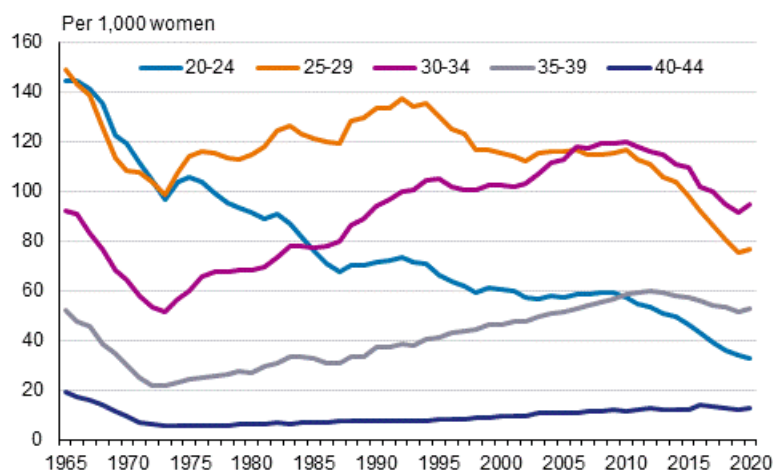
In 2020, the upward turn in the birth rate appears to be different in men's educational groups than women's. For men, the birth rate has turned upwards in all three educational groups (Appendix figure 1).

Children were born most to women aged 30 to 34

The birth rate rose last year most in the age groups aged 30 and over, that is, among those with the highest fertility rate before the decline in the birth rate in the 2010s. For example, the strong rise in fertility for those aged under 25 would have been divergent due to the prolonged increase in the age of family formation. In 2020, the fertility rate rose most in relative terms for those aged 30 to 34, by four per cent. The share of this age group in the total birth rate is also biggest, 35 per cent in 2020. The risen birth rate last year was also explained by the higher fertility rate among persons aged 25 to 29 and 35 to 44.

The fertility rate of persons aged under 25 continued to decline. Its share of the total birth rate has decreased to 13 per cent in 2020, while it was 17 per cent in 2010 and 21 per cent in 2000. With the gradual rise in the age at which children are had, the fertility trend of those aged 35 to 39 and 40 to 44 has been rising for a long time. The share of those aged 35 to 39 in the total birth rate is already nearly one fifth and together with those aged 40 to 44 as high as close on one quarter.

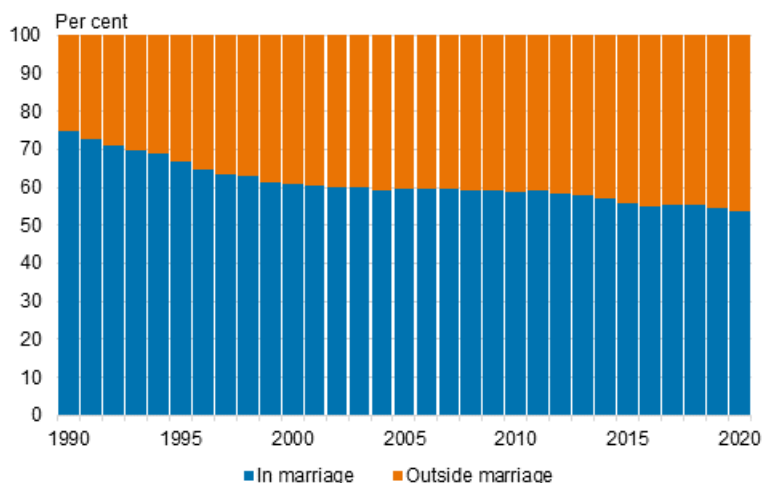
Fertility by age group in 1965 to 2020



Smaller share of children than before born to married parents

The share of children born to married parents diminished rapidly in the 1990s, after which the share has declined further but at a slower pace. In 2020, altogether 54 per cent of all children were born to married parents, while in 1990 this share was 75 per cent.

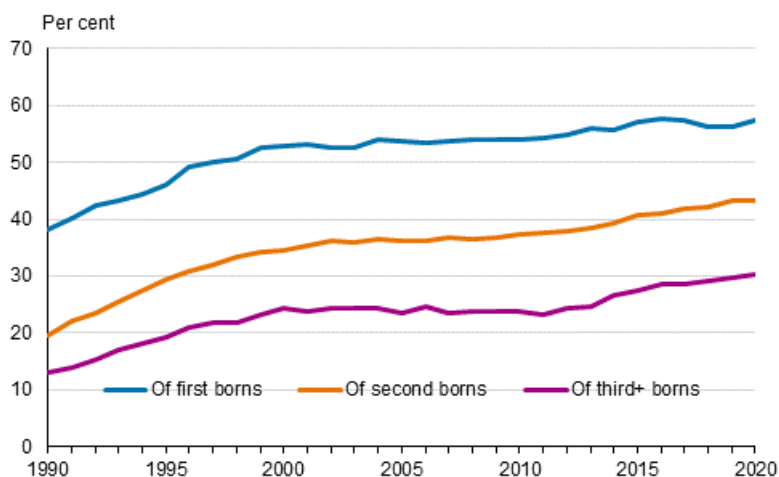
Live births in and outside marriage in 1990 to 2020, per cent



Examined by the order of the child born, it can be seen that more than one-half of first-born children are born outside marriage. In 2020, the percentage of persons born outside marriage was 57, in 1990 it was still 38. The trend of children born outside marriage is also rising when looking at those born as second-born or at least third-born children. However, the growth in the share of children born outside marriage as second-born or at least third-born has accelerated more clearly in the 2010s. This trend can be interpreted as the significance of being married at the time of birth of a child having fallen for later children of the family as well.

A majority of children born outside marriage are born to cohabiting parents. This is indicated by that in nearly nine cases out of ten children born outside marriage the mother and father of the child lived together.

Live births outside marriage by birth order in 1990 to 2020, per cent



Only little differences between Nordic countries in the age of becoming a mother, Iceland excluded

By 2016, first-time mothers in Finland and Norway had reached the average age of first-time mothers in Sweden and Denmark. Since then no major differences have developed between the countries, but by 2020 the average ages again differ somewhat from each other.

In Iceland, the first child has for a long time been born to younger parents than in the other Nordic countries. However, the start of parenthood has also been delayed in Iceland, in recent years even faster than in other

Nordic countries. As a result, first-time mothers in 2020 were, on average, only good one year younger in Iceland than elsewhere in the Nordic countries.

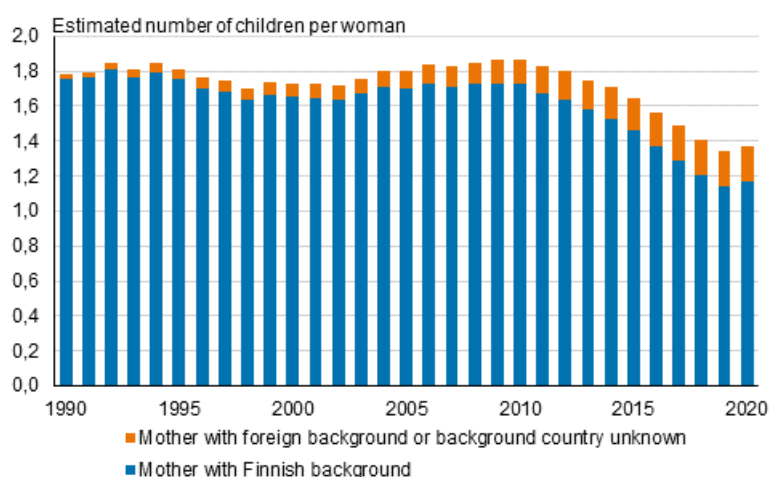
The average age of first-time fathers differs more clearly between the countries than that of mothers. The average age of becoming a father in 2020 still has clear country-specific differences. The average age of fathers was 31.6 years in Finland and 30.7 years in Iceland in 2020.

In all Nordic countries the average age of first-time fathers is around two years higher than that of first-time mothers.

Share of persons with Finnish background in the birth rate did not decrease any more

Measured by the total fertility rate, the share of women with Finnish background in the birth rate remained unchanged in 2020, 85 per cent. The total fertility rate for the whole country was 1.37 children per woman, of which the share of women with Finnish background was 1.16 children per woman. In 2010, the total fertility rate for the whole country was 1.87 children per woman, of which 1.72 were of Finnish background. This corresponded to 92 per cent of the birth rate in the whole country.

Total fertility rate broken down by mother's origin in 1990 to 2020



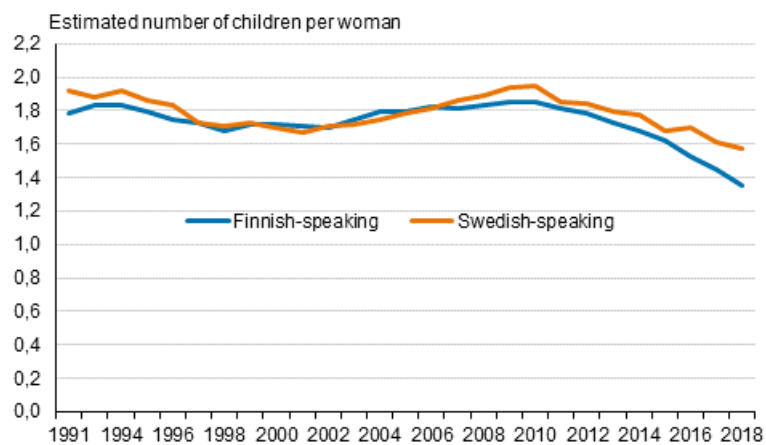
The share of persons with foreign background in the birth rate of the whole country has increased slowly from the 1990s and is currently 15 per cent of the whole country's birth rate. In the corresponding time, the share of women with foreign background in all women aged 15 to 49 has, however, grown slightly more slowly and is slightly over 11 per cent at the end of 2020. The growth in the number of women with foreign background has been big, from close on 10,000 in 1990 to around 126,000 in 2020.

Further information about the birth rate according to origin is available on Statistics Finland's Immigrants and integration thematic pages in the section [Birth rate](#).

Birth rate of Finnish-speaking persons rose slightly in 2020 — the birth rate of Swedish-speaking persons still higher

Since 2006, the birth rate of Swedish-speaking persons has been slightly higher than that of Finnish-speaking persons. In the last decade, the birth rate has fallen in both language groups, but in 2020, the total fertility rate of Finnish speakers rose from 1.29 to 1.32 children per woman. In 2020, the total fertility rate of Swedish-speaking persons was ever higher, 1.51 children per woman. The total fertility rate was 1.95 for Swedish-speaking persons and 1.85 for Finnish-speaking persons in 2010.

Total fertility rate of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking women in 1991 to 2020



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Appendix table 1. Confinements by number of foetuses in 2000 to 2020

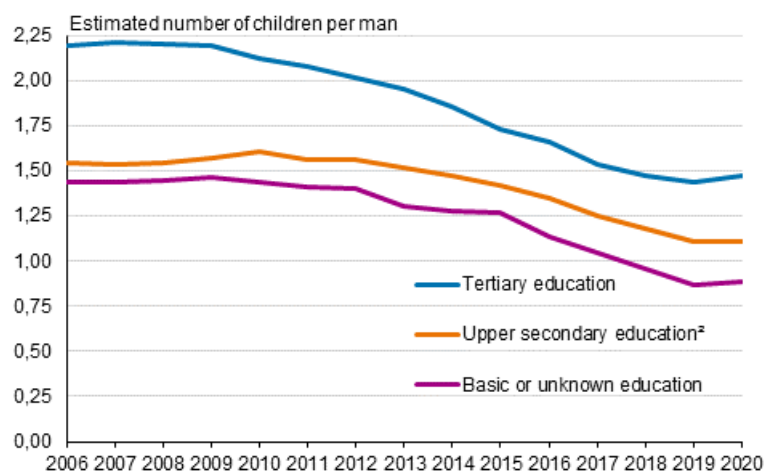
Year	Number of foetuses				
	Total	One	Two	Three	Four
2000	56 056	55 148	899	9	-
2001	55 511	54 658	843	10	-
2002	54 882	54 043	829	10	-
2003	55 962	55 122	834	6	-
2004	57 067	56 206	844	17	-
2005	57 066	56 212	847	7	-
2006	58 136	57 252	871	13	-
2007	58 024	57 125	889	10	-
2008	58 845	57 981	854	10	-
2009	59 759	58 896	850	13	-
2010	60 216	59 284	919	13	-
2011	59 253	58 398	841	14	-
2012	58 836	58 030	794	12	-
2013	57 484	56 692	785	7	-
2014	56 605	55 825	771	8	1
2015	54 890	54 144	738	8	-
2016	52 230	51 494	730	5	1
2017	49 762	49 066	690	6	-
2018	47 083	46 459	618	6	-
2019	45 153	44 574	572	7	-
2020	45 962	45 348	607	7	-

Appendix table 2. Stillbirths by age of mother, marital status and birth order of child calculated from mother's all children 2020

Age	Marital status									
	Mother married					Mother not married				
	Birth order					Birth order				
	Birth order of child total	1	2	3	4+	Birth order of child total	1	2	3	4+
Age of mother total	64	25	22	8	10	56	34	11	7	4
- 19	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
20 - 24	3	2	-	-	1	8	5	3	-	-
25 - 29	19	9	8	1	1	14	9	2	3	-
30 - 34	21	9	6	3	3	12	8	1	2	1
35 - 39	13	4	5	3	1	17	9	4	1	3
40 - 44	7	1	2	1	3	4	2	1	1	-
45 -	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

Appendix figures

Appendix figure 1. Total fertility rate of men born in Finland by level of education in 2006 to 2020 ¹



1. Information on fathers of children born outside marriage is obtained only when paternity is confirmed, and that is why it is received at a delay. For this reason, there may be slight deficiencies in the data for 2020 concerning fathers. For around one per cent of children, information on fathers is completely missing.² Includes post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Quality description, births 2020

1. Relevance of statistical information

The main source used when producing Finnish population statistics is the Population Information System, which is maintained by the Digital and Population Data Services Agency and the state department of Åland. From 1975 Statistics Finland has obtained population data from the Digital and Population Data Services Agency.

The last population registration was carried out in Finland on 1 January 1989. After that the Population Information System has been updated by notifications of changes. The data stored in the Population Information System are specified in the act on Population Information System and the certificate services of the Digital and Population Data Services Agency (21 August 2009/661). Notifications on population changes for the past year are expected by the last day of January of the following year.

Statistics Finland's function is to compile statistics on conditions in society (Statistics Finland Act of 24 January 1992/48). These also include demographic statistics.

In accordance with the Act on the Municipality of Domicile, the municipality of domicile and the place of residence of individuals are recorded in the Population Information System. The municipality in which a person lives or the one construed by the inhabitant as the municipality of domicile on the grounds of residence, family ties, livelihood or other equivalent circumstances, or to which the inhabitant has close links due to the aforementioned circumstances is deemed the municipality of domicile. (Act on the Municipality of Domicile, 201/1994.) The population registered in the Population Information System is divided into those present and those absent. Those present are permanent residents of Finland, either Finnish nationals or aliens. Those absent are Finnish nationals who when emigrating from the country have reported that they intend to be absent from Finland for more than one year, with the exception of Finnish nationals who are diplomats and those working in development co-operation (Act on the Municipality of Domicile, 201/1994.) Only changes in the population resident in Finland are taken into account when compiling statistics on vital events. Persons moving to Finland from abroad are classified in the population statistics if the place of residence they have declared as their municipality of domicile is later confirmed as their place of residence.

Births

'Liveborn' is the term for a newborn who breaths or shows other signs of life after birth. Only liveborn children of women permanently resident in Finland are taken into account in the population statistics.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition, 'stillborn' is the term for a newborn with a birth weight of at least 500 g or, if the birth weight is not available, a newborn born dead after a pregnancy lasting 22 weeks or more. The WHO definition has been in use since 1987. From the 2003 vital statistics onwards, the same national definition is used as in the cause-of-death statistics: 'stillborn' is the term for a newborn with a birth weight of at least 500 g, or a newborn born dead after a pregnancy lasting 22 weeks or more.

Children are classified according to family status as legitimate or illegitimate. A child born in wedlock is legitimate. A widow can give birth to a legitimate child if the pregnancy began while still married. A child born out of wedlock is illegitimate. Cases where the mother has married the child's father after the child's birth are also considered illegitimate in these statistics. According to law, such children only become legitimate as of the date when their parents enter into a marriage contract with each other. In this vital statistics publication the child's family status is primarily given by the mother's marital status, that is, whether the mother was married or not. Unmarried, widowed and divorced women, and women widowed after a registered partnership, separated from a dissolved registered partnership or living in a registered partnership are classified as not being married at the time of the child's birth.

The new Maternity Act entered into force on 1 April 2019, according to which a child can have two mothers (253/2018). The woman having given birth to a child is the biological mother of the child. The child's other parent can be the father or the child can have two mothers. The woman who consented to the fertility

treatment in agreement with the birth mother, as a result of which the child was born, can be established as the second mother of the child.

The birth order is determined in two ways: either all live births to the mother are taken into account, or only the live births during the present marriage are included.

The health care unit has to report liveborn children to the Population Information System. (Statute, 128/2010).

Births must be reported to the Population Information System at the latest on the day following the birth or at the latest on the day after the child's birth has been reported to the health care unit or health care professionals.

The Digital and Population Data Services Agency does not collect data on stillbirths. These data are obtained from stillbirth certificates written out by physicians. The health care unit or the physician in question forwards the certificate to the National Institute for Health and Welfare, which sends it to Statistics Finland (Statute 948/1973 and Act 459/1973).

In the vital statistics the number of stillbirths may differ somewhat from the number of stillbirths in the cause of death statistics. The deadline for data on stillbirths is shorter for the vital statistics than for the cause of death statistics.

The excess of births over deaths, that is, natural population increase means the difference between births and deaths. The crude birth rate refers to the number of births per 1,000 persons of the mean population. The proportion of stillbirths refers to the number of stillborn children per 1,000 liveborn and stillborn children. The general fertility rate indicates the number of liveborn children per 1,000 women of the mean population aged 15 to 49. The age-specific fertility rate indicates the number of live births per 1,000 women of the mean population in the age group in question. This same principle is applied for calculating age-specific legitimate or non-marital fertility rates. The legitimate fertility rate is calculated per married women and the non-marital fertility rate per non-married women. The total fertility rate is obtained by adding up the fertility rates calculated for one year. The rate refers to the estimated number of children born to a woman, given that the fertility rate of that statistical year prevails during the whole reproductive period of this woman on condition that the woman does not die before the end of the said period. The reproduction of the population refers to a change of a generation into a new one. Reproduction is measured by gross reproduction rates or net reproduction rates that generally indicate the ratio between the sizes of the daughter's and mother's generations. The fertility and mortality of the mother's generation before the end of the childbearing age is taken into account in the calculation of the net reproduction rate. In the gross reproduction rate this mortality is not taken into consideration. If the net reproduction rate calculated per one woman is less than one, the daughter's generation is smaller than the mother's generation and the mother's generation has not reproduced itself.

2. Methodological description of survey

The main source used when producing Finnish population statistics is the Population Information System of the Digital and Population Data Services Agency. A Population Information System is updated with information it gets from persons experiencing vital events and parishes of the Evangelical-Lutheran and Greek Orthodox churches. Hospitals send information of births to the maintenance of the Population Information System. Local courts take information of decisions of adoptions and divorces dealt in the court into the Population Information System. Statistics Finland receives the updated data on vital events on a weekly basis from the Population Register Centre.

The deadline for delivering data to Statistics Finland on vital events in the statistical year is the end of January of the following year. The exception to this is the data on stillbirths, which were expected by the end of September. Data on population changes in statistical year delivered to Statistics Finland after this date are included in the data of the following year. Data on events relating to years (statistical year-4) through to (statistical year-1) and reported between February (statistical year) and January (statistical year+1) are included in the statistical year data.

Starting from the statistical reference year 2018, additions or corrections are expected to the background data in the population change data until the end of February following the statistical reference year. The total number of vital events established at the end of January does not change, however, but the aim of the additions and corrections is to improve the quality of the data.

3. Correctness and accuracy of data

In general, the Population Information System of the Digital and Population Data Services Agency can be considered very exhaustive as regards persons. In order that a person obtains a personal identity code, he or she has to be registered in the Population Information System. It is difficult to live in Finland without a personal identity code. A personal identity code is needed so that one can work legally, open a bank account, have dealings with authorities and so on. It can be safely assumed that Finland cannot have any substantial numbers of 'moonlighters' who receive their pay in cash for periods of over one year, for example. Staying in Finland for at least one year is the prerequisite for registering into the population of Finland.

After abolishment of yearly checking of domicile registers (January 1) in 1989 the Population Information System has been maintained only by notifications of changes to population information. Their correctness is determined by a reliability survey made on the addresses in the Population Information System.

The Digital and Population Data Services Agency has charged Statistics Finland with the task of conducting a sample survey on correctness of address information. Around 11,000 people are asked whether their address in the Population Information System is correct. In the most recent survey in 2012, the address was correct for 98.9 per cent of the respondents.

4. Timeliness and promptness of published data

Final vital statistics are published yearly in April to May, except for those on stillbirths, which are available in October. Since 1999 the regional division used has been that of the first day of the following year. Thus the municipalities that unite on the first day of the new year are already combined in the statistics on the last day of the previous year. Information on the vital statistics of the united municipalities before the unification is available from 2003 onwards.

Preliminary population data by municipality are available by month.

5. Accessibility and transparency/clarity of data

Basic population data are available in electronic form by municipality or with larger regional divisions than municipality in Statistics Finland's free 'Population' online service (Statistical databases) at: http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/tilastotietokannat/index_en.html

General information and long time series on the population of the whole country can be found from the home page of Demographic Statistics at: http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/synt/tau_en.html

Population statistics from 1750 have been digitised into PDF format in the National Library's Doria service:

[Publications on Population structure and Vital statistics in Doria \(in Finnish\).](#)

[Publications on Population censuses in Doria \(in Finnish\).](#)

The chargeable information service contains more specified information about the population by sub-area of municipality, for example.

6. Comparability of statistics

Comparable regional vital statistics time series are available free in the StatFin online database service. The tables always indicate which regional division is used.

Vital statistics data on the numbers of births, deaths and marriages contracted are available from 1749 onwards. From 1776 there are data about mothers having given birth by five-year age group and from 1936 about all children born by age of mother. After the statistical revision of 1877 collection of data on deaths was started by one-year age group, which made it possible to begin calculation of accurate mortality and lifetime tables from the 1880s onwards. On account of this statistical revision, annual collection of data on migration and divorces was also started from 1878.

7. Coherence and consistency/uniformity

Statistics Finland's other statistics use the data of demographic statistics as basic information on population. Consequently, Statistics Finland's other statistics correspond to demographic statistics.

THL, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, maintains a register of births and publishes information about parturients, deliveries and newborns. The figures of THL differ somewhat from those of Statistics Finland. Statistics Finland's figures include among women giving birth those who are permanently resident in Finland at the time of the birth of the child, while the THL register of births contains all women having given birth in Finland and their children.

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Source: Births 2020. Statistics Finland