

VERKANAPPULAT, LASTENTALO MUKULAX AND APULA TO JOIN FORCES – GROWTH PLANS BACKED BY SENTICA

Child day-care service providers Verkanappulat Oy, Lastentalo Mukulax Oy and Apula Oy join forces and aim to become a nation-wide day-care service provider. Funds managed by the Finnish private equity company Sentica become majority owner and partner of the new group. The owners of the companies retain a significant stake and continue as operating leaders in the group.

Verkanappulat Oy, Lastentalo Mukulax Oy and Apula Oy provide comprehensive day-care and pre-school services for children aged between ca. 1 and 6 years in Varsinais-Suomi, Southwest Finland. In total, the companies currently operate 24 day-care centers, which serve over 1,300 children, in nine different municipalities in the region. The entrepreneurs, Mrs. Minna Takkula, Mr. Kimmo Takkula and Mr. Hannu Rantanen, have long experience of working and doing business in the day-care sector. The day-care centers focus on providing high-quality care for the children; for instance, own centralized kitchens provide the day-care centers with organic food and own specialist teachers visit the day-care centers regularly.

"We have been increasing the number of our day-care centers steadily ever since the first Verkanappulat day-care center was opened in 2000," says Minna Takkula, entrepreneur of Verkanappulat and Apula. "The planned next step is to open new day-care centers around Finland, as we believe that there is demand, also outside Varsinais-Suomi, for the kind of day-care services that we provide. Backing from Sentica helps us to take this next step," she continues.

"Joining forces with Verkanappulat and Apula is a natural extension of the long co-operation we have had with Minna and Kimmo. In the new group, the companies remain under Finnish ownership, which is something that I am particularly excited about, as we continue our work for high-quality Finnish day-care", explains Hannu Rantanen, entrepreneur of Lastentalo Mukulax and Apula.

"We have been looking at the private day-care services market for a while and find it interesting. The group formed by Verkanappulat, Lastentalo Mukulax and Apula has a strong foothold in the Varsinais-Suomi region, and it is in a great position to grow and become a nation-wide high-quality day-care service provider. We are excited to partner with the entrepreneurs and support their growth and development plans", states Mr. Aitor de la Torre, partner at Sentica.

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***Verkanappulat Oy**, established in 2000, is a company specialized in the provision of child day-care services. Currently, the company operates seventeen day-care centers in eight municipalities in Varsinais-Suomi. www.verkanappulat.fi*

***Lastentalo Mukulax Oy**, established in 1999, is a company specialized in the provision of child day-care services. Currently, the company operates five day-care centers in Turku. www.mukulax.fi*

***Apula Oy**, established in 2011, is a company specialized in the provision of child day-care services. Currently, the company operates two day-care centers in Raisio. www.apulapaivakodit.fi*

***Sentica Partners Oy** is an independent private equity company focusing on owning and developing Finnish mid-sized and small companies. Funds under Sentica's management amount to some 480 million euros, with fund investors consisting mainly of Finnish institutional investors and European fund of funds. www.sentica.fi*