



PEOPLE
PLACES
OPPORTUNITIES
A BRIGHTER
TOMORROW

STABLE
CHILDREN
STRONGER
SOCIETIES

Second Family

A social infrastructure architecture for children who have lost family stability, but should not lose dignity, continuity and a future.

SAFE
PEOPLE
BRIGHTER
FUTURES

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A child who loses a stable family environment does not only lose a place to sleep.

They lose continuity.

They lose rhythm.

They lose predictable adults.

They lose the quiet feeling that tomorrow will be held by someone.

And if the system answers that loss only with shelter, supervision and administration, then the system is already too small for the problem it is trying to solve. That is the starting point of Second Family. Second Family is my concept for redesigning institutional child care as a complete social infrastructure system.

Not as a better building.

Not as a nicer institution.

Not as symbolic charity.

As infrastructure.

Because children without stable family environments need more than protection from immediate harm. They need emotional safety, personal space, stable adults, psychological support, medical access, education support, mobility, activities, talent development, ordinary daily life and a credible path into adulthood. Those needs cannot be treated as separate services. They have to be designed as one operating system.

Today, too many child-care systems protect survival while quietly losing potential. A child may be fed, housed and supervised, but still grow up without continuity, without attachment, without a stable emotional structure, without enough individual attention, without personal dignity in daily decisions and without a real transition into adult life.

That is not enough. A child who has already lost family stability should not be placed in an environment that communicates minimum value.

The system itself should communicate something different:

You are worth space.
You are worth structure.
You are worth care.
You are worth continuity.
You are worth choice.
You are worth investment.
You are worth a future.

This is why Second Family is built around the idea of substitute family infrastructure.

The name is intentional.

It is not an adoption model.

It does not pretend that an institution can magically become a biological family.

It recognizes reality more seriously than that.

Adoption is important, but adoption cannot be the only structural answer. There are not enough families willing or able to adopt, and no system should be built on the assumption that private individuals will solve a public and social infrastructure problem alone. For example, in the Polish system, there is an issue regarding the complete termination of parental rights and placing a child for adoption. That is why, sometimes, even if there is a family willing to adopt a child, it is impossible for legal reasons.

Second Family is designed for the children who remain inside care.

For them, the question becomes:

How do we build a system that gives them the closest possible experience to continuity, belonging, development and adult support?

My answer begins with the physical architecture.

The basic model is a six-storey U-shaped building. The U-shape matters. It creates a protected internal environment and allows the building to separate functions while keeping the whole system connected. The structure can hold institutional capacity, but the daily life inside it must not feel institutional.

**A home may operate for approximately 120 children.
But no child should feel like one of 120.**

That distinction is central.

The architecture separates total capacity from emotional scale.



Children live in apartment units, not dormitory-style floors.

Each apartment is structured around normal domestic logic: individual bedrooms, individual small bathrooms, shared living space, daily rhythm and a smaller group of belonging inside the larger infrastructure.

The apartment becomes the emotional and functional unit of the system.

A child should not experience care as a corridor, a bed and a schedule.

A child should experience care as a place that feels recognizably close to home.



The side wings of the building contain the children's apartments.

The central wing contains caregiver apartments and internal support functions.

Caregivers are not treated only as shift-based staff. They are part of the living architecture. Their apartments are designed so they can live with partners and, where relevant, with their own children. This is a deliberate design decision. A care environment becomes stronger when the adult layer is not only professional, but also domestic, stable and relational.

The model is especially suited to people who want children but cannot have them. In recruitment logic, such people can be prioritized because their motivation may naturally align with long-term caregiving, emotional availability and the desire to build a family-like environment.

This does not turn care into adoption. It creates a residential care model where children are surrounded by adults who do not only work in the building, but live inside its social structure.

The staffing model is one of the most important parts of the architecture.

It is not based only on headcount.

It is based on age, attachment, stability and continuity.

For children above six years old, the model assumes approximately one caregiver for six children.

For children below six years old, the model assumes approximately one caregiver for three children.

For children below two years old, the model assumes approximately one caregiver for three children, with those children living directly with the caregiver inside the caregiver's household.

This matters because the youngest children cannot be treated as a staffing-ratio problem.

At that stage of life, care is not only supervision. It is touch, smell, voice, feeding, sleep, night response, physical closeness, rhythm and repeated emotional regulation. For very young children, care has to resemble a home.

That is why the youngest children live directly with caregivers. The child experiences the caregiver not as a rotating adult from a corridor, but as the adult presence of the home. And those caregivers should not rotate unnecessarily.

A caregiver who takes care of three two-year-old children should, as a principle, continue with that same group until they are six. Then, when those children are older and move into the next stage of the system, the caregiver stays with her group but combines it with another group of three six-year-olds

The operational details can be managed administratively.

But the principle is clear:

Children need stable adults. The system should not casually replace the adults around them.

Older children live in apartment groups with age-appropriate ratios. Children under six need higher adult availability. Children above six can function in larger groups with structured support, school rhythm, activities and psychological care.

The staffing logic is developmental, not administrative.

The ground floor functions as the shared infrastructure layer of the home. It includes the systems that make the building complete: cafeteria, sports area, gym, small cinema, activity rooms, therapy rooms, medical access, administrative offices and shared social spaces.

These functions are not amenities. They are part of the child-development system.

Food creates rhythm and community. Sport gives movement, discipline and physical release. Cinema, workshops and activity rooms create normal life, culture, joy and shared experience.

Therapy and medical rooms bring specialist support inside the system instead of pushing every need outside the building.

The psychological layer is central.

Children entering care often carry abandonment, grief, neglect, instability, violence, attachment disruption or developmental delay. Second Family places psychologists, therapists, speech therapists and developmental specialists inside the operating model.

Support is not an occasional intervention. It is part of the environment.

The education layer is built around continuity and talent recognition. The system supports school performance, tutoring, extracurricular activities, mentoring and scholarships.

Its task is not only to protect children from harm.

Its task is to increase their future options. That is a crucial difference.

Care systems often preserve survival while losing potential. Second Family is designed to identify and develop potential: sport, music, science, technology, art, craft, leadership, entrepreneurship or any other capacity that may otherwise disappear inside institutional life.

Talent identification becomes a structural function of the home.

The mobility layer is also part of the architecture.

Every home needs its own movement capacity: coaches, nine-seat vans and smaller cars for caregivers. The model includes two coaches, five nine-seat vans and smaller cars for caregivers.

It also includes two permanently employed coach drivers.

This allows school transport, medical visits, therapy, sports events, cultural access, trips, holidays, family contact where appropriate, emergency movement and flexible daily operations.

Mobility expands the children's world. A child in care should not be limited by the building because transport is difficult. Dedicated vehicles make the home capable of taking children into life, not only keeping them safely inside.



But Second Family is not only about the large structural layers.

It is also about ordinary life.

Because dignity often lives in details.

Children should not receive clothes as anonymous institutional supply.

School shopping and clothing shopping should happen as normally as possible. A caregiver takes two or three children to a shop and buys clothes with them, within a reasonable budget.

Not luxury for the sake of luxury.

Not shoes for 700 zł because of a logo. But also not the cheapest clothes with no choice, no taste and no personal decision.

The point is simple:

Every child should feel normal.

Every child should have some influence over how they look, what they wear and how their own space feels.

Rooms should also adapt to children. When children change, rooms should change with them.

Paint, small furniture elements, pictures, frames, colors, style, details. A child's room should not feel like a neutral bed assigned by a facility. It should feel like a space that can become theirs.

For that reason, every home should have a dedicated renovation and maintenance team. A building of this size needs constant care anyway. That same team can maintain the infrastructure and adapt rooms to children's needs as children grow, move or leave.

The physical environment should follow the child.

Not the other way around.

Children should also have pocket money.

The amount changes with age, but the principle is basic: children need their own small budget for personal needs.

This is not a decorative detail.

It teaches choice, responsibility, planning and ordinary independence.

At a certain age, children should have phones.

This can be organized through long-term partnerships with telecom companies such as T-Mobile or other operators willing to support the system in a structured way.

From around the appropriate school stage, laptops should become standard tools for learning and functioning.

Not shared institutional devices that disappear after one lesson.

Personal tools.

Owned by the child.

Used for school, development, communication, interests and future competence.

There should also be a dedicated gift budget.

Birthdays, Children's Day and other occasions should not disappear into institutional routine.

Caregivers should buy gifts adapted to the child: sometimes smaller, sometimes larger, depending on age, needs, effort, interests and context.

For younger children, it may be toys.

For older children, it may be electronics, sports equipment, creative tools or something connected to a specific dream.

Some things will stay in shared rooms.

Some will break.

Some will leave with the child because they belong to them.

That is normal life.

And normal life is part of the architecture.

The financing model also has to be designed seriously.

Second Family should operate through a foundation structure with transparent funding and reporting.

Public institutions may support the model where such funding is available, but the remaining financing should be negotiated with companies.

The goal is not random symbolic support.

The goal is stable, committed financing.

Large companies can declare recurring payments for a specific home or for specific cost categories inside that home.

A telecom company could support phones and connectivity.

A technology company could support laptops.

A food company could support nutrition.

A construction or maintenance partner could support building operations.

A bank or corporate foundation could support scholarships and transition apartments.

The exact partners may differ.

The principle remains the same:

Companies capable of covering real costs should be asked to cover real costs.

Of course, private individuals should also be able to contribute.

Every 100 zł matters.

But the architecture cannot depend only on small donations.

A serious child-care infrastructure needs serious financial commitments.

This is why the funding model combines corporate commitments, possible public support, private donations and transparent foundation management.

The budget should be used responsibly, but not cheaply.

There is a difference.

Responsible spending means children receive what they actually need, caregivers are paid properly, the building is maintained, transport works, therapy is available, education is supported and dignity is visible in daily life.

Cheap spending often means the system survives on paper while children absorb the message that they are a cost to be minimized.

Second Family rejects that message.

Caregivers should receive decent salaries.

That should not be the first place where the system negotiates downward.

If we want stable, emotionally available adults to build long-term relationships with children, we cannot design the role as underpaid sacrifice.

The same applies to drivers, maintenance teams, psychologists, therapists, medical support and operational staff.

The system has to respect the people who make it work.

Transparency is essential.

People and companies financing a specific home should be able to see where the money goes.

The foundation should publish detailed reports.

A dedicated public website can show budgets, categories, purchases, sponsor participation and impact.

The reporting can be detailed without violating children's privacy.

It can show that a birthday gift was purchased, that a laptop was funded, that a scholarship was awarded, that a room was renovated, that transport was maintained, that therapy hours were delivered.

Where legally and ethically appropriate, stories can be shared with consent and care.

The point is not exposure.

The point is trust.

People should see that money does not disappear into a system.

It becomes clothes, rooms, transport, therapy, education, gifts, salaries, food, holidays, scholarships, laptops, phones and transition housing.

It becomes structure.

It becomes dignity.

It becomes a future.

One of the most important parts of Second Family is what happens after eighteen.

Institutional care often creates a cliff.

Before eighteen, the young person is inside the system.

After eighteen, the system weakens or disappears.

Second Family replaces that cliff with a runway.

Young adults leaving the home can move into supported, affordable transition apartments.

They can study, work, continue therapy if needed, receive mentoring, learn budgeting, build independence and remain connected to the support system while gradually taking full responsibility for adult life.

The objective is not dependency.

The objective is controlled transition.

A young person leaving care needs time, housing stability and adult support to enter society without collapse.

That bridge should not be an external afterthought.

It should be part of the system from the beginning.



Second Family is scalable by design.

At full ambition, it can operate as a European network of up to 1,000 modern child homes.

The goal is not one exceptional building.

The goal is a repeatable social infrastructure standard.

A network of this scale allows shared procurement, staff training, operating manuals, design templates, therapy standards, scholarship programs, transport standards, educational partnerships, digital administration, reporting systems and impact measurement.

The model can adapt to national legal systems while keeping its core standard:

- Apartment-based living.
- Stable caregiver households.
- Age-based care ratios.
- Specialist support.
- Internal mobility.
- Personal rooms.
- Pocket money.
- Normal shopping.
- Phones and laptops.
- Birthday and holiday budgets.
- Education and talent development.
- Structured transition into adulthood.
- Transparent financing.

The broader value is not only humanitarian.

It is international

Second Family is a child-care project, but it is also a human-capital architecture.

Children who leave care unsupported face higher risk of marginalization, unemployment, addiction, homelessness, crime, unstable relationships, untreated trauma and long-term dependence on public systems.

A stronger care architecture changes that trajectory.

The return appears across decades.

Fewer people pushed to the margins.

More emotionally stable adults.

More educated workers.

More identified talents.

More specialists entering the market.

Lower downstream social costs.

Stronger families in the next generation.

Greater national resilience.

A country that loses children in care loses future adults, workers, parents, specialists, artists, entrepreneurs and citizens.

A country that builds serious child-care infrastructure protects future social capacity.

Second Family turns that principle into architecture.

The value logic is simple:

Convert institutional risk into social capacity.

The child receives home-like structure, stable adults, specialist care, education support, mobility, activities, dignity, personal choice and a transition path.

Caregivers receive housing, purpose, family-compatible living conditions, fair pay and a role deeper than shift work.

Funders receive measurable infrastructure impact rather than symbolic charity.

The state receives better long-term outcomes: fewer unsupported care leavers, lower marginalization, stronger workforce participation and a higher probability that hidden talent enters society instead of being wasted.

The system works because it treats the child's life as one connected structure. Housing, care, therapy, school, movement, talent, personal space, money, technology, adulthood and dignity are designed together.

That is what infrastructure systems architecture means in this case.

It is the ability to take a deeply human problem and convert it into a system that can be built, operated, financed, scaled and governed.

Someone may say that many children in ordinary families do not have conditions this good.

I understand the comparison, but I reject the conclusion.

Children in ordinary, loving families may not always have perfect material conditions. Their parents may struggle financially. They may not have access to every activity, every device or every opportunity.

But they have something no institution can fully replace.

They have parental love.

They have family belonging

They have a home that is truly theirs.

Children who enter institutional care have already lost that chance.

They have not lost it because they asked for more than other children.

They have lost it because their parents died or the adults and systems around them failed, disappeared, collapsed or were unable to protect them.

So the question should not be:

“Why should they receive such good conditions?”

The question should be:

“If they have already lost a normal family home, why would we also deny them a serious chance at a normal life?”

And if a child in a so-called normal family does not receive love, warmth or safety, then that is not an argument against Second Family.

That is a problem for social care. Because lack of love, lack of safety and lack of emotional warmth should never be used as the benchmark for a normal childhood.

Second Family is not only about improving child care. It is about refusing to accept that children who have already lost so much should also lose structure, dignity, potential and the future.

They do not need an institution that stores them safely until adulthood.

They need a second structure of belonging.

They need adults who remain.

They need rooms that can become theirs.

They need ordinary choices.

They need birthdays that matter.

They need support that does not disappear at eighteen.

They need a system that sees the whole child, not only the administrative case.

They need a path.

Second Family is my architecture for that path.

Mateusz Chrzanowski

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A stylized, handwritten signature of 'Chrzanowski' in a light blue color.