

PARTNERSHIPS END, PARENTING IS A LIFELONG COMMITMENT



Dear fellow citizens,

The writer Erich Kästner is reported to have said, "You may have your point of view, but you should be able to change your mind".

We all know that separation and divorce can cause severe emotional strain on all concerned. This particularly holds true if parents persist in their viewpoints and cannot reach an agreement on their future responsibility for their children.

In Karlsruhe we aim to support parents by helping them to find a consensual solution in good time. Karlsruhe's Social Services cooperate with various advice centres and initiatives, the family court and lawyers in order to achieve this goal.

These are the key elements of Karlsruhe's strategy.

This brochure gives an overview of the various offers available.

In Karlsruhe, one of the Social Services' tasks is to participate in the divorce proceeding at the family court. The Social Services fulfil their task by helping parents come to terms on the best arrangement for their children.

The Social Services' staff have considerable experience in advising and accompanying families during this difficult time of their lives.

The City of Karlsruhe would be glad to provide this service also to you and your family.

Martin Lenz
Deputy Mayor

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WHY ARE WE ADDRESSING YOU AS PARENTS?

From numerous discussions with families in this phase of life, we know about the different emotions you may go through.

Maybe

- you feel grief and pain over the loss of the partnership;
- you hope for a new life to begin;
- you are worried about how life might go on;
- you feel relieved because there will be no fighting or conflict any more;
- you are mad at each other and would prefer to stay out of each other's lives;
- you feel humiliated and threatened and need protection.

A separation is a hard time for parents and children. The children would prefer their parents to stay together. However, quite often this is not possible.

WHAT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR SITUATION?

Partnerships end, parenting is a lifelong commitment, which means:

- You need to separate your being a partner from being a parent.
- Even after a divorce, parenting does not end.
- Children are the key driving force for parents to find a consensual solution.
- Even in case of a separation, children have a right to both parents.
- No parent would intentionally harm his or her child.
- After a separation, parents decide themselves how to redistribute family responsibilities.
- Family members can see the crisis as a chance to reorganise their lives.
- In case of non-consensual separation, parents may lose sight of their children's interests.

PARENTAL CARE

JOINT PARENTAL CARE

Joint parental care goes on after the divorce unless a request for an individual arrangement is filed with the court. After the separation, children generally live with one parent. Decisions affecting their everyday lives are made by this parent.

Such decisions may be:

- Organisation of everyday life
- Organisation of leisure time
- Medical consultations
- Clothes, nutrition and so on

Parents will have to make a joint decision in matters of major importance.

Such matters may be:

THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE

- Holidays abroad, holidays in a crisis area, survival holidays
- Student exchange programmes stretching over a year
- Emigration

RELIGION

- Baptism, communion, confirmation or conversion to another religion. Even a guardian has to request authorisation from the family court. From the age of 14 children can decide which faith they want to follow.

HEALTH

- Vaccination - yes or no (measles, pertussis, polio and so on)
- Operations that can be planned in advance (circumcision, hernia)
- Narcoses
- Earrings, piercings, tattoos
- Medication with considerable impact on health
- Engagement in extreme sports

KINDERGARTEN AND SCHOOL

- Choice of type of school and decision if and when a child should attend a day care centre
- Special school types (Montessori, Waldorf, boarding school)
- Early or late school enrolment (six or seven years of age)
- Person providing day care

APPRENTICESHIP

- The parents having custody decide about the conclusion of an apprenticeship or employment contract. If a guardian or a curator has been appointed, they have to inform the court.

MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN'S PROPERTY

- Inheritances and gifts
- Real property
- Management of securities and equity funds

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

- Take legal actions on behalf of the child,
- Credit agreements, lease contracts or longer-term rental contracts,
- Contracts of sale beyond pocket money and everyday needs.

RIGHT TO A NAME

- In this case, only parents with custody have the right to decide. If the child lives in a reconstituted family or a foster family, the family court can register the child with the new family name. The respective request is to be submitted by the legal representative; a guardian or curator has to request authorisation from the family court.

CLAIMING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT BENEFITS

- This is a matter for parents with custody to decide. If the child's welfare is at stake, the Youth Welfare Office will ask the family court to restrict or withdraw custody and to transfer the right to claim educational support benefits to a guardian or a curator.

In case of imminent danger, for example accidents or emergency surgeries, each parent may decide immediately how to proceed. If parents cannot find a common ground in matters of considerable importance, the family court may, on request, empower one parent to take decisions.

JOINT PARENTAL CARE OF NON-MARRIED PARENTS

If parents are not married at the child's birth, they nevertheless have both a right to custody:

- If they agree to exercise custody jointly (custody declaration).
- If the family court grants parental responsibility to both parents upon request.

SOLE CUSTODY

Parental care can be partly or completely transferred to only one parent. To this end, a request is to be submitted to the family court. The family court will grant this request if the second parent agrees or if it is to be expected that the termination of joint custody and the awarding of sole custody to the requesting parent is in the best interests of the child.

If parents cannot reach an amicable custody arrangement, the court will ask the Social Services for their support.

VISITING RIGHTS

Every child has the right to a positive relationship with both parents. It is important for a child to sense that it can continue to rely on its parents in the future and that its wish for contact to the other parent will be supported.

If parents cannot find a common ground, they can refer to the counselling provided by the Social Services or the psychological advice centre, or request mediation. They may also apply to the family court for a decision on visiting rights. These visiting arrangements do not only have to mirror the child's needs but have to take into consideration the "quality" of parental attachment and relationship. In case of wrongful use of visiting rights, the latter can be restricted by the family court. In exceptional circumstances, the Social Services may offer the possibility of accompanied visits. Visiting is not always in the best interest of the child. If violence or abuse is part of the family history or if the children refuse to maintain contact with one of the parents, this has to be taken into account.



THE SOCIAL SERVICES' OFFERS

We support parents in working out – where possible – consensual concepts of how to manage parental care and visiting rights.

During the entire process of separation and divorce, the Social Services' qualified personnel offer counselling and mediation. If necessary, they can provide for interpretation services.

Moreover, you can discuss personal, educational and financial issues that put a strain on you during the process of separation.

Conversations are confidential and covered by the obligation of professional secrecy.

Our advice and support is free of charge.

According to the strategy pursued by Karlsruhe, we cooperate with the Karlsruhe Family Court, lawyers, various counselling services and interest groups affected by these issues. This has proved to be very useful, especially in contentious situations. Instead of exchanging written pleadings worsening the dispute, the parties should try to find a speedy and consensual solution during the hearing before the court. This is where you, as parents, play an important role. We will contact you beforehand (see the website explaining Karlsruhe's strategy: www.karlsruherweg.de).

Cases involving the endangerment of a child's welfare (including abuse and violence) are not suitable to be handled according to this strategy.

ACCESSIBILITY

You will find the competent branch of the Social Services in your district by contacting:

Bezirksgruppe Nordwest

Kochstraße 7

Telephone: 0721 133-5303, Fax: 0721 133-5749

(Centre part of Weststadt, Hardtwaldsiedlung, Nordweststadt, Knielingen, Neureut, Nordstadt)

Bezirksgruppe West

Thomas-Mann-Straße 3

Telephone: 0721 15116-0, Fax: 0721 15116-240

(Mühlburg, Daxlanden, Alt-Grünwinkel, Albsiedlung, Rheinstrandsiedlung including Nußbaumweg)

Bezirksgruppe Südwest

Albert-Braun-Straße 2 a/b

Telephone: 0721 133-5305, Fax: 0721 133-5399

(Oberreut including Kleinseeäcker, Stadtrandsiedlung, Heidenstücker'siedlung, Ruppurr)

Bezirksgruppe Mitte-West

Kochstraße 7

Telephone: 0721 133-5311, Fax: 0721 133-5759

(Innenstadt West, Südweststadt, southern part of Weststadt, Beiertheim, Bulach)

Bezirksgruppe Mitte-Süd

Zähringer Straße 34

Telephone: 0721 133-5307, Fax: 0721 133-5309

(Innenstadt Ost, Südstadt, Dammerstock, Weiherfeld, western part of Oststadt)

Bezirksgruppe Ost

Beuthener Straße 42

Telephone: 0721 133-5306, Fax: 0721 133-5359

(Waldstadt, Geroldsäcker, Rintheim, Hagsfeld, southern part of Oststadt)

Stadtamt Durlach

Sozialer Dienst, Pfnztalstraße 33

Telephone: 0721 133-1917, Fax 0721 133-1989

(Durlach, Stupferich, Hohenwettersbach, Grünwettersbach, Palmbach, Wolfartsweier, Zündhütte, Bergwaldsiedlung, Grötzingen)

E-Mail: sodi@sjb.karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.karlsruhe.de/sodi

OFFERS OF THE DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE, CURATORSHIP AND GUARDIANSHIP

The departments of the Office in Charge of Social and Youth Affairs and of Durlach Stadtamt give advice and support to single parents, in particular regarding children's maintenance claims.

You can apply for a special kind of assistance (in German Beistandschaft) in issues involving the determination of paternity and the recovery of maintenance for a minor child. The child's interests in these fields will then be advocated for by a qualified employee of the named departments.

Each parent who either has sole custody in the respective area of responsibility or with whom the child resides is entitled to apply for this assistance. In order to initiate this kind of assistance, a simple written request to the Youth Welfare Office will do. The request can be restricted to certain issues. Moreover, assistance can be ended or restricted anytime by a simple written declaration.

Parental care is not restricted in any way by the assistance. Initiating assistance is free of charge.

ADVANCED MAINTENANCE FUND OFFERS

If a child below the age of twelve years lives alone with a parent and does not receive sufficient maintenance payments from the other parent, it might be entitled to receiving advances on maintenance payments. The respective applications can be submitted to the offices cited above (advanced maintenance funds).

Internet: www.karlsruhe.de/b3/soziales/einrichtungen/abt-b

ACCESSIBILITY

Karlsruhe City Centre

Stadt Karlsruhe, Sozial- und Jugendbehörde, Abteilung B
(City of Karlsruhe, Office in Charge of Social and Youth Affairs, Section B)
Beistandschaften, Pflegschaften und Vormundschaften und
Unterhaltsvorschusskasse (Assistance, curatorship, guardianship and
advanced maintenance funds)

Sozial- und Jugendbehörde

(Office in Charge of Social and Youth Affairs)

Hebelstraße 21, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 133-5528 (secretariat and information)

Fax: 0721 133-5529

**For the areas of Durlach, Aue, Bergwald, Grötzingen,
Grünwettersbach, Hohenwettersbach, Palmbach, Stupferich,
Thomashof und Wolfartsweier**

Stadtamt Durlach, Jugend und Soziales (Youth and Social Affairs)

Pfinztalstraße 33 (Marktplatz), 76227 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 133-1970

Fax: 0721 133-1989

OTHER COUNSELLING AND CONTACT CENTRES IN KARLSRUHE

PSYCHOLOGISCHE BERATUNGSSTELLEN OST UND WEST FÜR ELTERN, KINDER UND JUGENDLICHE (PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVICE CENTRES EAST AND WEST FOR PARENTS, CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS)

Otto-Sachs-Straße 6, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 133-5360

Fax: 0721 133-5449

E-Mail: pbs@sjb.karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.karlsruhe.de/b3/soziales/einrichtungen/pbst

We offer parents advice on all issues related to arrangements for parental care and visiting rights as well as concerning the impacts of separation and divorce on children. Children and adolescents are involved according to their age and receive support in dealing with difficult family constellations. In order to jointly reflect on the particular situation of blended families, new partners can also be involved in the counselling.

Additionally, our advisory services include parent and children groups centred on the following topics: separation, divorce and step families. For further information or to fix an appointment, just give us a call or stop by during our open consultation hours on Wednesdays from 3 pm to 5 pm in Otto-Sachs-Straße 6 or at Durlach Town Hall, Pfinztalstraße 33.

EHE- FAMILIEN- UND PARTNERSCHAFTSBERATUNG (MARRIAGE COUNSELLING, FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP COUNSELLING)

Nelkenstraße 17, 76135 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 842288

Fax: 0721 856051

E-Mail: info@eheberatung-karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.eheberatung-karlsruhe.de

A team of counsellors of different professional backgrounds (psychologists, medical doctors, theologians, lawyers) offers psychological advice and mediation in crisis situations (marriage, family) and separation. Native tongue counselling is available in different languages.

In addition to single and couple counselling, we also offer group sessions.

PRO FAMILIA ORTSVERBAND KARLSRUHE

Amalienstraße 25, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 920505

E-Mail: karlsruhe@profamilia.de

Internet: www.profamilia.de

- single and couple counselling in marriage crises
- Single and couple counselling before considering separation and divorce
- Information on family law provided by lawyers
- Accompanying consultation during separation and divorce disputes
- Family mediation

Contribution to the costs according to the financial means of those seeking advice.

BRÜCKE (BRIDGE)

Gespräche – Information – Lebensberatung (Conversations - Information - Life counselling)

Kronenstraße 23, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 385038

Fax: 0721 3844459

E-Mail: info@bruecke-karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.bruecke-karlsruhe.de

Opening hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday from 10 am to 1 pm and from 3 pm to 6 pm, Wednesday from 4 pm to 8 pm

The association "Brücke" is open for all those who need someone to talk to in acute crises and difficult living situations and who are looking for information and/or professional assistance. Counselling takes place individually, for couples, families or in groups.

During the opening hours, "Brücke" is directly accessible without prior registration.

Discretion and confidentiality are essential elements of the counselling; the visitor is not charged any fees and has the option to remain anonymous. The facility is supported by the Protestant and Catholic Church.

DIAKONISCHES WERK KARLSRUHE

Hilfe rund um Schwangerschaft, Familie, Leben (Guidance concerning on topics such as pregnancy, family, life in general)

Stephanienstraße 98, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 167-245

Fax: 0721 167-169

Counselling on social law and family law issues during separation or divorce for fathers and mothers with small children.

FRAUENBERATUNGSSTELLE SKF (COUNSELLING FOR WOMEN SKF)

Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen e.V. (Social Service by Catholic Women)

Akademiestraße 15, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 91375-18

Fax: 0721 91375-75

E-Mail: frauen@skf-karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.skf-karlsruhe.de

- You live in a difficult relationship?
- Are you currently in a separation or divorce situation?
- Are you trying to achieve parental care and visiting rights arrangements?
- Do you live in a violent relationship?
- Are you looking for information and advice concerning stalking?

In all these situations, we, a team of social pedagogues with additional therapeutic training, are glad to offer you advice and support. We normally opt for individual discussions, but, if desired, we also offer counselling for couples.

In cooperation with the Domestic Violence Advice Centre we offer counselling sessions for you and your partner. This offer is both addressed to the victim of violence and to the person using violence.

Our support and advice is of course free of charge and confidential. SkF also offers accompanied contact arrangements.

MÄNNERBÜRO KARLSRUHE E. V. (COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR MEN)

Sophienstraße 169, 76185 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 29828

E-Mail: mann@maennerbuero-karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.maennerbuero-karlsruhe.de

Männerbüro is a network set up by men for other men. This is where men can exchange views in discussions, counselling sessions, group offerings, common activities and events. Moreover, Männerbüro is involved in youth work. It helps people to help themselves and provides support not only in crisis situations. A personal initial counselling session for men is free of charge and can be fixed after prior arrangement by phone.

FRAUENBERATUNGSSTELLE (COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR WOMEN)

Verein zum Schutz misshandelter Frauen und deren Kinder e.V. (Association for the Protection of Abused Women and Children)

Kriegsstraße 148, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 849047

Fax: 0721 8305831

E-Mail: info@frauenberatungsstelle-karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.frauenberatungsstelle-karlsruhe.de

We offer psychological and psychosocial counselling and legal information for women:

- during separation and divorce
- in situations of physical, psychological or sexual violence caused by a partner
- in personal crisis situations
- in issues regarding the child's right to maintain contact with the non-custodial parent (arrangements, implementation and legal requirements)

Counselling by Turkish native speakers as well as topic-specific groups are part of our offer. Counselling is free of charge and confidential.

CARITASVERBAND KARLSRUHE E. V.

Referat für allein erziehende Familien (Lone Parent Families' Unit)

Sophienstraße 33, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 9243-0

Fax: 0721 25439

E-Mail: caritas@karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.caritas-karlsruhe.de

- Information on questions related to divorce
- Personal conflict management
- Reorientation and restructuring in a new family situation
- Shaping a reliable concept for visiting rights
- Keeping up or developing communication between parents despite the crisis situation
- Opportunities to meet other parents

VERBAND ALLEIN ERZIEHENDER MÜTTER UND VÄTER (ASSOCIATION FOR SINGLE PARENTS)

Karlsruhe section

Baumeisterstraße 56, 76137 Karlsruhe

Luise-Riegger-Haus

Telephone: 0721 97689697

E-Mail: vamy-karlsruhe@web.de

Office hours:

Tuesday 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, Thursday 10 am to 12 pm
(Irregular office hours during school holidays)

Meetings:

- Swimming every first Saturday of the month
(Registration hotline 0721 9862210)
- "Meeting for kids" every fourth Sunday at 3 pm at the Ecumenical Centre located Lichtenbergstraße 46 – 48
- Regular meetings every third Sunday at 7 pm at "Brauhaus Kühler Krug" located in Karlsruhe, Wilhelm-Baur-Straße 3a

ACCOMPANIED/SUPERVISED CONTACT

DEUTSCHER KINDERSCHUTZBUND OV STADT UND LANDKREIS KARLSRUHE E. V. (GERMAN SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, SECTION KARLSRUHE CITY AND REGION)

Kaiserallee 109, 76185 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 842208

Fax: 0721 843270

E-Mail: info@kinderschutzbund-karlsruhe.de

Internet: www.kinderschutzbund-karlsruhe.de

Whenever parents living separately find it difficult to set up and respect visiting arrangements, the German Society for the Protection of Children offers counselling to the parties concerned. Its qualified staff also help to establish conflict-free contacts between the child and the parent with visiting rights (accompanied contact).

SOZIALDIENST KATHOLISCHER FRAUEN E. V. (SKF) (SKF) (SOCIAL SERVICE BY CATHOLIC WOMEN)

Karlsruhe Section

Akademiestraße 15, 76133 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 91375-27

E-Mail: bu@skf-karlsruhe.de

Every child has the right to maintain contact with both parents.

Skilled social workers with additional background in education support the child when it comes to meetings with the parent who has visiting rights. Appropriate playrooms are available for parents and their children. The person accompanying the visit ensures a calm and relaxed interaction. Throughout the session, the child's best interests are a primary consideration. Both parents can have accompanying conversations with specialized personnel.

In general, five sessions are initially authorized by the competent Social Service.

INTERESSENVERBAND UNTERHALT UND FAMILIENRECHT (ISUV/VDU E. V.) (INTEREST GROUP FOR MAINTENANCE AND FAMILY LAW)

Karlsruhe/Pforzheim section

E-Mail: info@isuv.de

Internet: www.isuv.de

“Divorced People Support Each Other”. The Interest Group for Maintenance and Family Law (German abbreviation ISUV) is a politically neutral and independent association operating throughout Germany. As a non-profit association, ISUV advocates for the interests of parents and children affected by separation and divorce. Most of its active members work on a voluntary basis. Quite often, they are concerned by separation and divorce themselves and can give helpful advice.

Every second Tuesday of the month, the Karlsruhe/Pforzheim section organises lectures and discussions relating to the issues of separation and divorce. These events usually take place at 7pm on the premises of AWO Kreisverband Karlsruhe, Haus der Familie, Kronenstraße 15 in Karlsruhe. They are open to everyone and free of charge. However, registration via mail or by phone is requested. Please regularly check our website and the event calendar.

FURTHER INFORMATION

LEGAL ADVICE

A lawyer will advise you on all legal matters. Under certain conditions, the costs of counselling services ("legal aid for counsel"), legal representation and court fees ("legal aid for proceedings") may be assumed. Your lawyer will provide you with further information in this respect.

The Anwaltsverein Karlsruhe e.V. (Karlsruhe Lawyers' Association) offers legal advice for low-income citizens.

Get more information from

Amtsgericht Familiengericht Karlsruhe (Local and Family Court)

Lammstraße 1 bis 5, 76133 Karlsruhe
Telephone: 0721 926-5000

BROCHURES

The following federal ministries offer free brochures and information on the fields of child and youth welfare services, family law and law of parent and child (Kindschaftsrecht):

Bundesministerium für Familien, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)

11018 Berlin
E-Mail: info@bmfsfj.de
Internet: www.bmfsfj.bund.de

Bundesministerium der Justiz (Federal Ministry of Justice)

Mohrenstraße 37, 10117 Berlin
E-Mail: broschueren@bmj.bund.de
Internet: www.bmj.bund.de

You can also order the brochures of the above mentioned ministries by contacting the Federal Government's Publications Service:
Telephone: 01805 778090 (14 Euro cents per minute, additional charges may apply from mobile phones).
E-Mail: publikationen@bundesregierung.de

PERSONAL NOTES



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Stadt Karlsruhe (City of Karlsruhe)
Sozial- und Jugendbehörde
(Office in Charge of Social and Youth Affairs)
Sozialer Dienst (Social Services)

Internet:

www.karlsruhe.de/b3/soziales/einrichtungen/sodi/trennung_scheidung

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