



What can I do for my child right now?

You can continue to be there for your child during this time. The situation may feel unsettling for your son or daughter, but your presence and actions can offer comfort. It's helpful if you can provide us with:

- A favourite cuddly toy or comfort item
- A family photograph (if available)
- Clothing
- Any necessary medication or school supplies
- Identity card or passport
- Health insurance card and your child's medical records ('U-Heft')

When speaking with us, make it clear that you want to find a joint solution and actively contribute to it. This will reassure your child and give them confidence.



When does emergency protective care end?

Emergency protective care ends once the conditions for your child's safe return home are met. We'll support you through this process if needed or upon your request.

Sometimes, continued care in a residential group or foster family may be considered the best next step by everyone involved. If you apply for such support, the emergency care period will end.

If no joint solution can be found, the family court will decide what is in your child's best interest.



What can I do if I disagree with the emergency protective care?

You have the right to object to your child's placement in care.

If there is an acute danger, the youth welfare office (Jugendamt) must immediately inform the family court (Familiengericht). The court will then decide on the next steps. You may seek legal advice. Until the family court makes its decision, the placement remains in effect.

Ombudsman services for children's social care can also provide information about rights and complaints procedures for young people and their legal guardians. You can find your regional ombuds office at www.ombudschaft-jugendhilfe.de.

Taking a child into emergency protective care is stressful for everyone involved. But a crisis and temporary separation can also be a chance to reflect and find new paths forward for your family. We – and your child – need you for that!



Who is there for me now?

Specialists from the social service department at the youth welfare office are available to answer your questions.

They can also refer you to additional counselling centres where you, as parents, can receive advice and support. Please take advantage of these resources.



Further information on child protection

<https://www.unterstuetzung-die-ankommt.de/de/das-machen-wir/fuer-alle/kinderschutz/>

WHEN A CHILD IS TAKEN INTO EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE CARE

Initial answers to your questions

What is happening?

Where is my child?

What happens next?

What can I do?

Who can help me?

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DAS JUGENDAMT.

(YOUTH WELFARE OFFICE.)
Support that makes a difference.

Dear parents,

When a child is taken into care, it can trigger strong emotions in families, such as anger, frustration, confusion, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, or doubt. This flyer is intended to answer some of your most important initial questions.

Children and young people have the right to live with their family, to receive adequate care, and to grow up in an environment free from violence. If they are in danger, the youth welfare office must act and may need to provide a safe place at short notice.

Our goal is to work with you to find the best solution for your child and to end the emergency protective care as quickly as possible.

What is emergency protective care?

Emergency protective care is a temporary measure to protect children or young people in an acute crisis or dangerous situation. Temporary accommodation – such as in a residential home or with an emergency foster family – ensures that the child or young person is safe and cared for.

During this time, the youth welfare office decides where the child will stay, and arranges everything necessary, including meals, medical appointments, and – if possible – school or nursery attendance. Your wishes and expectations as parents will be taken into consideration wherever possible.



When can a child be taken into emergency protective care?

A child can only be taken into care under specific conditions, as outlined in Section 42 Book 8 of the German Social Code (SGB VIII).

The youth welfare office (Jugendamt) is entitled to take a child or young person into care if there is an imminent threat to their physical or emotional well-being. This may be the case, for example, if a young person is found alone by the police at night, if parents are unable to provide adequate care due to illness, or if a child experiences violence.

In such situations, the youth welfare office is legally required to act in order to protect children and young people.

Further, if children or young people themselves ask for protection because they cannot return home or are afraid, the youth welfare office must take them into care.

The decision to place a child into care is never made by one person alone. It is carefully considered by several professionals. Parents and children are involved in this decision-making process as much as possible.

Only if it is necessary for the child's protection can an exception be made.



Where is my child?

Your daughter or son is temporarily living elsewhere. Sometimes, suitable people your child knows – such as relatives or family friends – can care for them.

Often, children or young people stay in a residential home or with an emergency foster family during the care. These places provide round-the-clock care by trained professionals. Staff explain the situation in a child-friendly way and help your child get in contact with someone they trust.

To protect the young person, we may not always be able to share their exact location.



What happens next?

Emergency protective care aims to avert immediate danger. You are and will remain your child's parents. This is a temporary measure. We will stay in close contact with you and discuss the situation in detail.

We will also clarify if and when you can speak to or visit your child. You are welcome to bring a trusted friend or family member with you to these meetings.

Other questions we will discuss together include:

- What does your child need to feel safe and well cared for?
- What do you need to be able to resume parenting and caregiving?
- Who can help and support you?

The aim is to develop a viable plan for your child that everyone can agree on as much as possible.

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