



When parenting is a problem

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For the sake of readability, the text in this brochure has been written in the masculine form. Where the text refers to 'he', this may also be taken to mean 'she'. Where the brochure refers to 'parents', this may also be taken to mean 'parent' (with or without partner), carer(s) or legal representative(s). The term 'child' refers to all children and youths under the age of 18. The term 'client' refers to 'parent(s)' or 'child(ren)'.

When parenting is a problem

Parents raise their children. It is their right and their duty. If a family has been dealing with problems, they may or may not have reached out for help in their social network or from professional organisations. However, a child's family circumstances may be so difficult that this type of help is not or no longer sufficient and a child's development is jeopardised. This is when the Child Care and Protection Board steps in to carry out its statutory duty. This brochure contains information on how this works.

The Child Care and Protection Board

A child depends on his parents for his development. They are responsible for his care and upbringing so that he can develop into an independent adult. When parents cannot or do not take that responsibility, a child's right to a healthy and stable development may be jeopardised. In such cases, the Child Care and Protection Board, as a government organisation, is responsible for safeguarding this right of the child.

General information about the Board is available in the brochure *About the Child Care and Protection Board - Each child is entitled to protection*. On the back of this brochure, you can see where to get this brochure.

> Children at the forefront

The Child Care and Protection Board is charged with safeguarding the rights of children whose development is or may become jeopardised. Therefore, a child's interest is at the forefront in everything the Board does. At the same time, Board employees realise that the intervention of the Board can be an emotional and drastic event for both parents and children.

Do you have concerns about a child?

Do you, as a parent, neighbour, family member or teacher, have concerns about a child? Do you suspect the child is neglected, abused or suffers from other serious parenting problems, please contact your local branch of 'Veilig Thuis' (Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Counselling and Reporting Centre - AMHK). For an overview of AMHK addresses, go to www.vooreenveiligthuis.nl or consult a directory. 'Veilig Thuis', often in cooperation with a municipal youth care institution, tries to help the family to solve their problems with voluntary assistance.

If a family has problems, it may request the help of its social network or professional organisations such as 'Veilig Thuis', a community team, Youth and Family Centre (CJG) or municipal youth care institution. A family may also come into contact with 'Veilig Thuis' or youth care if other people are worried about a child's upbringing. All families have issues from time to time. This does not have to be a bad thing as long as parents manage to solve their problems together with their child. However, sometimes a family's problems are so serious that they endanger the development of the child. This is the case when parents neglect, abuse or molest their children. But there are also other problems that may have a negative impact on a child's development. In this brochure, we refer to these problems as parenting problems. 'Veilig Thuis', a certified institution or a youth care institution authorised by the municipal authorities may be report this situation to the Board.

> The Child Care and Protection Board

If you are unable to solve your problems with 'Veilig Thuis' and/or voluntary assistance and the upbringing situation continues to pose a threat to the development of your child, 'Veilig Thuis', a certified institution or a youth care institution appointed by the municipal authorities report the situation to the Board. The Board reviews, with the family concerned, its network and the care providers involved whether the assistance provided is sufficient to eliminate the threat to the child's development. If the actions and results are insufficient, the Board conducts an investigation, The Board promotes the interests of the child. Agreements are made with various parties about the way in which assistance is organised prior to and during the child welfare investigation and about the child's safety.

The Board conducts an investigation into your child and your family to ascertain whether the upbringing is so severely jeopardised that mandatory assistance is required. If the Board thinks this is the case, it requests the court to impose a child protection measure. Please read page 3 of this brochure to see which measures there are and what they entail.

Sometimes, the Board itself observes or suspects there are serious parenting problems. This may occur when the Board itself is already carrying out an investigation, for example because a child has come into contact with the law. In such cases, the Board can decide to carry out a child protection investigation. The Board informs any youth care institutions involved and the municipal authorities of its decision to launch an investigation.

The role of the Board

In a child protection investigation, a child welfare investigator assesses how the parenting problems can be solved and whether a child protection order is needed. He holds interviews with various parties. In his decisions, he consults other Board employees. The working method of the Board has been officially laid down in a quality framework. Information about the framework is available in the brochure *About the Child Care and Protection Board - Each child is entitled to protection*.

> The investigation

The purpose of the investigation is to determine how parenting problems can be solved and which help from the network and/or professional organisations is needed. If voluntary help is not an option, it is assessed whether a child protection order is called for. During the investigation, the Board's employee, the child welfare investigator, wants to get a clear picture of your child, his development and the circumstances in which he is raised. For instance, the child welfare investigator reviews your parenting methods and any outside help you may or may not receive.

He holds one or more interviews with you and your child. Any other children from the family are also involved in the investigation. He also talks to other parties involved, if he deems this necessary, such as teachers, the family doctor or other care workers.

In the course of his investigation, an investigator is supported by a behavioural specialist and, if necessary, a legal expert. The behavioural specialist assesses how you and your child interact. In a joint consultation, the Board employees take all decisions in the investigation together. The child welfare investigator's supervisor is ultimately responsible for the investigation. The child welfare investigator consults your family about the investigation's approach and keeps you and your child informed.

> The report

The investigation of the Board into your family is concluded with a report, in which the child welfare investigator provides the findings of the investigation.

He states the course of the investigation and important information in the report. He also describes you and your child's opinion on the concerns over the parenting problems and possible solutions. If needed, he includes the information provided by the other parties involved. He also includes the opinion of the Board about the parenting problems and presents recommendations on the solution. The child welfare investigator discusses his preliminary report with you. If your child is sixteen years or older, the child welfare investigator will also go through the report with him. Incorrectly stated facts can be altered or removed and other comments can be added to the report in an appendix, after which the report is finalised and you and your child (of sixteen or older) receive a copy. If the Board requests a child protection order in the report, the court also receives a copy. If assistance is required, the Board also sends a copy of the report to a support agency.

> The decision

In the report, the child welfare investigator describes how the situation of your child can be improved. You may be recommended to seek help.

The Board gives advice about what should be done to safeguard the development of your child, so that he can develop into a healthy and independent adult. Preferably with you, the Board looks for a solution that is in the interest of your child. The current and future situation of your child are taken into consideration.

It may turn out that the further involvement of the Board is not necessary, for example because the parenting problems have been resolved during the investigation. Furthermore, the Board may find that mandatory assistance is not needed at the moment. However, it may recommend you to seek voluntary help.

If after the investigation the Board decides not to request the court for a child protection order, the municipal authorities, represented by the mayor, may request the Board to submit the case to juvenile court to assess whether a family supervision order is needed.

> Mandatory assistance

If mandatory assistance is in the best interest of your child, the Board requests the court to impose a child protection order.

The investigation may have revealed that the development of your child is so seriously threatened that assistance needs to be mandatory. In that case, the Board requests the court to impose a child protection order. A child protection order is a drastic measure, both for parents and children.

Below you will find information on child protection orders.

Child protection orders

The court may impose a child protection order. There are various types of child protection orders. The family supervision order and the removal from parental authority are discussed in this section. In order to safeguard the development of a child, the court may impose a child protection order. The most common child protection order is the family supervision order, while the removal from parental authority is the most severe measure.

1 > Family supervision order

If a child's development is jeopardised and voluntary help is no longer or not sufficient, or if parents reject assistance, the court may impose a family supervision order. The child is assigned a family supervisor from a certified institution. The family supervisor assists the child and the parents to solve their parenting problems. The parents remain responsible for the upbringing, but their parental authority is restricted. The parents as well as the child are required to follow the instructions of the family supervisor. The child stays at home, in principle. However, the court may decide that it is in the child's best interest to place him in a foster home, temporarily or otherwise.

If a child is in acute danger and needs to be removed from his home immediately, the Board may request the court to impose a provisional family supervision order with an authorisation for custodial placement. During the provisional family supervision order, the Board continues its investigation. Parents and children are assisted by the family supervisor.

The brochure *When your child has been placed under supervision* provides more detailed information about the family supervision order. On the back of this brochure, you can see where you can get this brochure.

2 > Removal from parental authority

If parents are unable to care for and raise their child, the court may terminate their parental authority. This decision is taken based on the following grounds: if a child is raised in circumstances that severely threaten his development and the parents are incapable of bearing responsibility for his care and upbringing within a time period acceptable for the child, or if parents have abused their parental authority. In these cases, the court decides that another party has authority over the child, either temporarily or permanently. The authority is usually exercised by a certified institution, which effectively is the child's guardian. The child is raised in a foster family or foster home. Although officially the parents no longer have authority over the child, the family supervisor involves them as much as possible and keeps them informed about the child.

At the request of a certified institution, the Child Care and Protection Board may initiate an investigation into the need to remove parental authority from the parents. If after the investigation the Board decides not to request the court to remove parental authority from the parents, the certified institution and foster parents who have been taking care of the child for longer than one year may request the court through the Board to assess whether it is necessary to remove parental authority from the parents.

> Duration of measure

A family supervision order is imposed for a maximum of one year, which can be extended by successive one-year periods. Removal from parental authority generally lasts until the child reaches adulthood, but parents have the option of requesting the court to reinstate their parental authority after several years.

The court may impose a child protection order. There are various types of child protection orders.

The family supervision order and the removal from parental authority are discussed in this section.

In order to safeguard the development of a child, the court may impose a child protection order.

The most common child protection order is the family supervision order, while the removal from parental authority is the most severe measure.

> Court ruling

The courts do not take child protection orders lightly. They are interested to hear the parents' opinion, who may choose to be assisted by a lawyer. If the child is twelve years or older, the court also asks for his opinion.

In its decision, the court uses the information from the Board's report. The court is under no obligation to accede to the Board's request.

> Appeal

If parents disagree with the decision of the court, they have to ask a lawyer to file an appeal for them. The Board may also lodge an appeal.



More information

> Questions?

Do you have other questions about the work of the Child Care and Protection Board? Please direct them to your Board contact person, or contact your local Board branch. The addresses and route descriptions of the various branches are available on www.kinderbescherming.nl. Here you can also find information about the organisations that cooperate with the Board.

> Other brochures

About family supervision order

- *When your child has been placed under supervision*

About the work of the Board

- *About the Child Care and Protection Board - Each child is entitled to protection*

These brochures are available:

- on www.kinderbescherming.nl
- at all Board locations

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