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Child and Youth Welfare Services in the district of

Department of Children, Youth, Family



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Dear reader,

This brochure provides information about the various services and offers that the Heide District Department of Children, Youth, and Family offers you.

Dedicated employees are committed to

- Making children strong, helping them develop their abilities and talents and grow up healthy,

- Helping young people to be self-confident and self-reliant

- Accompanying, advising and supporting families for more harmony at home,

- Shaping the environment in a family-friendly way.

This is their way of making a significant contribution to the success and sustainability of our society.

If you have questions or would like to utilise our offers, do not hesitate to contact the respective person.



What does the Youth Welfare Office do?

The Department of Children, Youth, Family – this is the name of the Youth Welfare Office in the Heidekreis – supports parents and guardians in the rearing, care and education of children and adolescents. In doing so, it focuses on preventive, family-supporting offers that help create positive living conditions for families.

The tasks range from

organising high-quality children's

guidance, providing parenting guidance and protecting the best interests of the child to promoting opportunities for young people and creating a child- and family-friendly environment.

Anyone can turn to the Department of Children, Youth, Family, especially children and adolescents if they have problems or are in crisis situations.

The offer is complemented by the family and children's service, where the district has commissioned free youth welfare agencies to offer advice on-site to children, adolescents, parents and families. Children's day care is one of the focal points.

Children's welfare

Children have a right to grow up safe and sound. It is the job of the Youth Welfare Office to protect the well-being of children and adolescents. Employees of General Social Services take cues when a child might be in danger. They make contact with the affected family in order to develop solutions together with them. They work closely with other institutions, such as day care centres, schools, doctors and the police. The focus is on the question: What needs to change so that the well-being of the child or young person can be once again ensured? In exceptional cases, the Youth Office will take children into care to ensure their well-being. The children can return to the family when the parents are ready to accept the help they need and thereby ensuring their children's well-being.

If the parents do not accept help or, despite help, the welfare of the child is permanently endangered, a decision may have to be taken by the family court.

Protecting children properly – a difficult tightrope walk

The family is under the special protection of the state. The care and education of children is primarily the responsibility of the parents. Children should not be endangered, especially not in their parents' home. The Youth Welfare Office is obliged to investigate whenever there is any indication that children could be in danger.

When it comes to children's welfare, it is important to keep a balance between parental rights and the interests of the child: In what ways does the well-being of the child have to be endangered in order for the state to intervene with these constitutionally secured parental rights?

Professionals often have to make these risk assessments in complex familial situations. This presents a special challenge, especially when parents are not involved. In order for our staff to react appropriately and correctly to the demands of the situation, the quality of the work is constantly under review and further developed.



General Social Services

Sometimes parents only need advice for their concerns and problems with their children. Sometimes, however, the situation in the family is so off-course that they no longer know how to proceed. In these situations, families, children and young people can contact **General Social Services**. Professionals mediate in the case of conflict, provide expert advice on educational problems as well as family law conflicts and offer information on further tailored help for education or psychological support options. Establishing a bond of trust and considering the needs of all involved are important guiding principles of the work.

Assistance with parenting

Some parents need more intensive help with childrearing for a while. With their work, the professional staff of **General Social Services** aim to support parents so that they can cope with their children and as a family in the long run. In individual cases, appropriate help is provided – this can take the form of parenting advice, a parenting course, family social assistance or immediate help to the child or adolescent.

If further coexistence with the family is not possible, the Youth Welfare Office, with the involvement of the family, looks for a suitable foster family for the child or makes arrangements at a good facility. Depending on the family situation and agreement with parents and children, this change of accommodation may be temporary or permanent.



Foster Care Service

In order to continue to be able to help future children who have fallen into crisis through no fault of their own, the district of Heide is looking for caregivers to take on responsibility for this crucial task and accept a foster child lovingly and impartially. **Foster Care Service** offers foster parents preparation, qualification, counselling and training as well as financial support.

Separation and divorce counselling

When there is a crisis between parents and in the case of separation or divorce, the General Social Services (in cooperation with the counselling centres) offers advice and assistance in questions of cohabitation, issues of family conflict management and the responsible handling of parental care, including proceedings before the family court. Together with the parents and, depending on their age, the children, professionals look for solutions that prioritise the welfare of the children.

Help for teenagers in criminal proceedings

When young people commit crimes, they are assisted by Youth Welfare in criminal proceeding, which plays a mediating role between the young person and the juvenile court.

Adoption

If parents recognize that they cannot live permanently with their children, or children are not growing up in their family of origin for other reasons, the staff of the **Adoption Agency** look for the best possible adoptive parents. The focus is always on the well-being of the child. Adoption is possible for unrelated children, relatives or stepchildren living in Germany or abroad.



Economic Youth Welfare

Assistance with parenting

The section **Economic Youth Welfare** implements any socio-pedagogical assistance to education deemed legally necessary by General Social Services.

Fees and costs of day care

Even after the introduction of the elimination of fees for day nurseries (Kindertagesstätten) for children from the age of 3 years to school entry, fees are still charged for the other forms of care (Krippe, Hort, Spielkreis). Despite a fee scale, these costs cannot always be borne by the families alone. In these cases, the fee may be covered in whole or in part based on income. We also process applications for childcare costs and set a staggered cost contribution.

Federal parental assistance money (Bundeselterngeld) and advice on claiming parental leave

Applications for federal money can be obtained from the cities and municipalities of the district as well as via the internet and are processed here.

In addition, we offer the possibility of counselling for questions on how to claim parental leave. Further information can be found on the homepage of the district of Heide: www.heidekreis.de.



Guardianship / court-appointed legal guard

If parents are no longer able or not permitted to best represent the interests of their children, the children will receive a **guardian**. If no suitable individual guardian is available, the Youth Welfare Office is named official guardian by the family court and looks after the interests of the child.

It is possible to apply for the establishment of a **court-appointed legal guardianship**. We then clarify – if necessary – the paternity of the child and establish child support.

A court-appointed legal guardianship does not restrict parental responsibility. We are kept informed by the registry office about any births of children whose parents are not married to each other and immediately offer the mothers comprehensive counselling and support.

In addition, paternity acknowledgments, custody declarations and child support obligations can be certified. The notarisations are free.

Benefits under the UVG

Insofar as those required to pay child support are unable to do so or cannot pay because of incapacity to work, we will – upon application – ensure the minimum support amount under the UVG.



Youth Care

Youth Work

Especially in rural areas, the many youth groups associated with clubs, associations and other organisations make a valuable contribution in the field of **youth work**. In this way they promote the self-esteem, independence and social interaction of young people and encourage them to be engaged in their social coexistence. Promotion and support for this work, which is usually done by volunteers, is an important responsibility of the Youth Welfare Office. In addition to financial support for the many activities of the youth organisations, professional qualifications, further education and training of voluntary youth leaders are further tools at work.

Extracurricular youth education

Learning takes place not only at school, but also in many extracurricular learning settings. In **Jugendhof Idingen**, Heide has a well-equipped educational institution which offers children and young people a variety of educational opportunities in creative, political, social, health, cultural, natural history and technical subjects. Aligned with the methods of youth social workers, these opportunities have been well received and

enjoy great popularity. More information can be found online at: www.jugendhof-idingen.de.

Youth Social Work

Getting started in life can be hard, so our staff coach young people to help compensate for social disadvantages in the transition from school to work.

With the youth workshop **TuWat**, the district maintains a facility that helps young people to take their first steps in the employment and vocational training market.

Individualised support plans, tailored to the personal situation of the adolescent, are the basis for the work of the team of supervisors, which consists of practical instructors in addition to socio-pedagogical experts. A delayed acquisition of the degree **Hauptschulabschluss** is just as possible as it is to complete compulsory education.

The program **JUGEND STÄRKEN** ("Strengthening the Young") is aimed at young people between the ages of 14 and 26 who refuse to attend school, have graduated school without any prospects or have dropped out. The facility helps young people to find their way back into regular day-to-day life and to participate in the educational opportunities punctually and reliably. The aim of this support system

is to strengthen personal, social and professional competences, as well as to improve and complete academic fundamentals. Manual skills can be discovered and encouraged in the workshop area. Every young person receives personal advising and mentoring, can orientate themselves professionally and take advantage of recreational and educational offers.



Youth welfare

Young people are exposed to many dangers that they themselves cannot adequately assess. The tasks of the Youth Welfare Office include occupational safety, dealing with alcohol and other drugs as well as the youth media protection team, which deals with the risks of computer games and the Internet. The Youth Welfare Office offers preventative services and, together with the police, also carries out checks on compliance with youth protection laws.

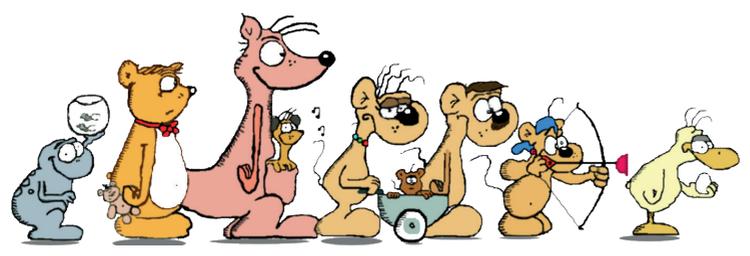


Educational Counsel-

The Soltau Educational Counselling Centre offers advice for families, parents, children, adolescents and young adults in difficult educational and life situations. For example, counselling can be about

- individual questions about education,
- clarifying and dealing with family problems,
- a diagnostic assessment of developmental abnormalities,
- cases of separation and divorce, custody and employment conflicts,
- problems between young people,
- cases of domestic violence,
- crisis intervention within the framework of child protection.

The professionals are first and foremost parents, but also have an offer for staff in the educational field - schools, kindergartens etc. - and an open ear for all who are worried about a child-grandparents, neighbours, friends, etc. The team consists of psychologists, psychotherapists and social workers. All counselling sessions are of course confidential and free of charge.



Turning Points Counselling Centre for Sexual Violence

This Educational Counselling Centre provides advice and support for

- Children, adolescents and young adults who have been affected by sexual violence,
- Parents, neighbours and friends who are unsure if a child or young person is at risk,
- Teachers, educators and doctors or other professionals who seek expert advice in the case of suspected abuse,
- Clubs, associations and institutions with questions about sexuality and abuse,
- Children and adolescents who have violated others' boundaries,
- Educational and training events for educators, teachers, and social educators,
- Preventative events for children and adolescents in schools, kindergartens and clubs to educate about different forms of and protection against sexual violence.





Early childhood education and care

The Specialist Group on Early Childhood Education and Care supports day care centres and staff in providing good quality care.

The counselling centre advises kindergartens on concept development and implementation, as well as in how to work with quality development concepts. The counselling offers socio-pedagogical experts support in the reflecting on their professional activities, communication and conflict counselling. In addition, it covers topics relating to legal regulations, planning, establishment and operational management of day care centres.

Professionals, administrators and day care providers can call on specialists in language training to offer a special range of counselling services with language as a focal point. As part of the "Framework for language education and language promotion in day care centers in the district of Heide", financial resources will also be made available for further training and additional specialist hours.

If day care professionals have questions about the development or behaviour of a child they care for, they may ask for case-specific advice. A further course of action, for example intervention options for the day care centre, will be worked out together in a resource- and solution-oriented way.

The day care counselling centre advises in all questions surrounding children's day care. The spectrum ranges from advising and auditing day care professionals to counselling and coordinating the eight family and children's services in the district of Heide.

The family and children's service centres advise parents close to home in all matters of day care and arrange day care personnel as needed. If you would like to be active in day care yourself, you can also receive comprehensive information here.

Networks: Early Help, family midwifery

For a good start to family life, the Youth Welfare Office's "Early Help" network informs about support and counselling services so that families know from the start who they can turn to.

Its mission is to develop locally and regionally coordinated support services for parents and children, in cooperation with the counsellors of the local family and children's service.

In this way, help and support can be offered and provided early on if needed. For example, "early help" includes the use of family midwives in their child's first year of life and the issuing of welcome information bags for new-borns. The Youth Welfare Office thus helps to protect children's well-being from the very beginning.





Youth Welfare Planning

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In order to ensure that its services meet the needs of children, adolescents and families, Youth Welfare Planning develops a coordinated system of youth welfare services. It keeps an eye on which facilities, services and other offers are needed and in which quality and takes into account the wishes and interests of the users. The sponsors of the free youth welfare are involved at an early stage.

Quality development and assurance

Because life situations and problems can change quickly, especially for young people, the concepts and offers of the Youth Welfare Office must be constantly rethought and adapted. Therefore, ensuring and improving the quality of our professional activities in all work areas is a daily task.

We have systematic methods of quality assurance and development in place. This also applies to child protection. Examples of quality assurance measures are:

- Advice from colleagues,
- Safety nets, schedules and documentation,
- Systematic assessment and analysis of one's own work,
- Regular professional training.

Information

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The following informational brochures, flyers and online offers are available for you:

Brochures/Flyers

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Early Help

Online offers

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www.heidekreis.de

The district of Heidekreis, information, resident services and contact details.



www.jugendhof-idingen.de

The district youth education centre. Find current offers here.



www.familienwegweiser-heidekreis.de

Information about children and families!





Contacts

Department of Children, Youth, Family	.....	Ms Böhling Phone: 05162 970 -567
Youth Welfare Planning	.....	Mr Stöckmann Phone: 05162 970-385
Networks: Early Help, family midwifery	.....	Ms Muscas, Ms Cohrs Phone: 05162 970-489
General Social Services	.....	Mr Köhne Phone: 05162 970-380
Foster Care Service	.....	Ms Kose Phone: 05162 970-679
Economic Youth Welfare	.....	Mr Kunz Phone: 05162 970-378
Guardianship/ Court-appointed legal guardianship	.....	Ms Livermore Phone: 05162 970-390
Youth Care	.....	Mr Mehmke Phone: 05162 9898-40
Educational Counselling	.....	Ms Kirch-Grütter Phone: 05191 970-771
Turning Points	.....	Ms Barz, Mr Tödter Phone: 05191 970-772
Early childhood education and care	Ms Langenhop Phone: 05162 970-296

Legal notice

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Department of Children, Youth, Family

