HAMBOORG.CITY

Free platform for foreigners in Germany

✓ 24/7 Assistant in Your Language
✓ Official Document Scanner
✓ Deadline Reminders
✓ Benefit Calculators

hamboorg.city — is and will be FREE

Jugendamt — Tasks, Support Services, and Parental Rights

What the Jugendamt does, what support it provides, and what rights parents have in Germany.

Deutsche Begriffe: Jugendamt | Kinderschutz | Sorgerecht | Inobhutnahme | Hilfe zur Erziehung | Kindeswohl

---

What is the Jugendamt?

The **Jugendamt** is a **municipal authority** that exists in every city and district. It is responsible for all matters concerning **children, young people, and families**. Many foreigners know the Jugendamt primarily as "the authority that takes children away" — but this is a **misconception**.

The Jugendamt is first and foremost a **support and counseling service**. Inobhutnahme (removal of a child from the family) is the **very last resort** and only occurs in cases of **acute child endangerment**.

Tasks of the Jugendamt

Counseling and Support

• **Parenting counseling** — for problems with child-rearing, school difficulties, adolescent conflicts

• **Family counseling** — for marital problems, separation, divorce

• **Childcare placement** — entitlement to a childcare place from age 1

• **Youth work** — youth centers, holiday programs, sports activities

• **Financial support** — maintenance advance, economic youth assistance

Child-Rearing Support (HzE)

If parents need **support with child-rearing**, the Jugendamt offers various forms of assistance (§§ 27–35 SGB VIII):

Form of Assistance	What is it?
Parenting counseling (§ 28)	Consultations with specialists (psychologists, social educators)
Socio-pedagogical family support (§ 31)	A family worker regularly visits the home
Educational advisor (§ 30)	Support for the child/young person
Day care group (§ 32)	Afternoon supervision with educational support
Full-time foster care (§ 33)	Child lives with a foster family
Residential care (§ 34)	Child lives in a group home/facility
Intensive socio-pedagogical individual support (§ 35)	For young people in special crisis situations

Important: These services are **voluntary** — you as a parent must consent (unless child endangerment is involved).

Child Protection

The Jugendamt has the **duty** to protect children from harm:

• **Neglect** — inadequate nutrition, hygiene, medical care

• **Physical abuse** — hitting, kicking, injuries

• **Emotional abuse** — constant yelling, humiliation, isolation

• **Sexual abuse**

When child endangerment becomes known (e.g., through neighbors, teachers, doctors):

1. The Jugendamt **investigates** the report

2. Home visit — specialists visit the family (usually announced in advance)

3. Support offer — counseling, family support, assistance

4. Inobhutnahme — only in case of acute danger (child is temporarily placed in care)

Your Rights as a Parent

Principle

Parental rights in Germany are specially protected by the Constitution (Art. 6 GG):

> "The care and education of children is the natural right of parents and their primarily incumbent duty."

This means: **You decide** how to raise your children — as long as **child welfare** is not endangered.

Right to Counseling and Support

• You have a **right to counseling** from the Jugendamt — **free of charge**

• You can **request child-rearing support** — the Jugendamt must review whether you are eligible

• You have the right to **participate in choosing the type of support** (right of choice, § 5 SGB VIII)

During a Home Visit

• The Jugendamt **cannot enter your home without your consent** (inviolability of the home, Art. 13 GG)

• **Exception:** In case of **acute danger** (imminent threat), the Jugendamt can act without your consent — but must **immediately** involve the family court

• You have the right to an **attorney** (in family court proceedings, an attorney is often appointed)

In Case of Inobhutnahme

If the Jugendamt places your child in care:

• The family court must decide **by the next working day at the latest**

• You have the right to **immediate notification** and **a hearing**

• You can hire an **attorney** (legal aid may be available)

• The child receives their own **legal representative** (the child's attorney)

• Inobhutnahme is **temporary** — the goal is always to reunite with the family

Custody Rights

Joint Custody

• **Married parents** — automatically have joint custody

• **Unmarried parents** — the mother automatically has sole custody; the father can file a **declaration of custody** at the Jugendamt or with a notary (free of charge!)

Custody in Case of Separation/Divorce

• Generally, **joint custody** remains in effect

• Only through a family court petition can a parent be **deprived** of custody

• The **right to determine residence** (where the child lives) can be regulated separately

Legal Representation (Beistandschaft)

The Jugendamt can serve as **legal representative** for the child (§ 1712 BGB):

• Assistance with **paternity establishment**

• **Child support calculation** and enforcement

• Free and voluntary

Services Provided by the Jugendamt

Maintenance Advance

If the child's support-obligated parent **does not pay**, the Jugendamt steps in:

• For children up to age 17

• **Amount (2026):** €187–314/month (depending on the child's age)

• **Apply** at the Jugendamt

• No time limit (previously maximum 72 months)

Childcare Fees

• The Jugendamt **covers childcare fees** if you cannot afford them

• Apply for **economic youth assistance** at the Jugendamt

• Based on income — often fully covered for recipients of citizen's benefit or those with low income

Education and Participation (BuT)

• Allowance for **school supplies** (€156/year)

• **Meals** at school/childcare (free)

- **School outings** and class trips
- **Tutoring** if needed
- **Sports clubs/music school** (€15/month)

Common Misconceptions

"The Jugendamt takes children away from their parents"

False. Inobhutnahme is the **very last resort** and only permissible in cases of **acute child endangerment**. In over 95% of cases, the Jugendamt **works together** with parents to improve the situation.

"If I go to the Jugendamt, they will take my child"

False. The Jugendamt is a **counseling service**. If you voluntarily seek help, it shows your **responsibility as a parent** — not the opposite.

"The Jugendamt favors German parents"

False. The Jugendamt is required to treat all families **equally**, regardless of nationality, religion, or immigration status.

"My country doesn't have a Jugendamt, so I don't need to worry about this"

In Germany, the Jugendamt has a **statutory mandate** (SGB VIII). It is important to understand German child protection rules — for example, **physical punishment** of children is **prohibited** in Germany (§ 1631 BGB: "Children have the right to education without violence").

Tips for Foreign Families

1. **Don't be afraid** — the Jugendamt is a support service, not a criminal court
2. **Actively seek help** — parenting counseling is free and confidential
3. **Non-violent parenting** — physical punishment is prohibited in Germany
4. **Declaration of custody** — unmarried fathers should file the declaration
5. **Request an interpreter** — the Jugendamt must provide an interpreter if needed
6. **Apply for maintenance advance** — if the other parent does not pay

---

hamboorg.city/knowledge/article/jugendamt/
hamboorg.city jest i zawsze będzie za darmo