



YOU &

the Youth Care Support Centre

Dutch



Opgroeien

Jeugdhulp

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WHAT IS A YOUTH CARE SUPPORT CENTRE?

The Youth Care Support Centre (OCJ) is a service of the Opgroeien agency which is in turn part of the Government of Flanders.

If there are problems or difficulties in your life, support workers will look for solutions together with you and your family. But sometimes a solution cannot be found and the situation remains unsafe or threatening for you or your family.

In that case, the support worker or the Public Prosecutor's Office will register your situation with the Youth Care Support Centre.

The Youth Care Support Centre will then investigate whether it is necessary for the support to be monitored by the authorities and, thus, for it to intervene in your situation. This is then called social necessity. ■

WHAT DOES SOCIAL NECESSITY MEAN?

SOCIETY FINDS IT NECESSARY TO INTERVENE, FOR EXAMPLE IF THE SUPPORT IS NOT WORKING WELL BECAUSE A YOUNG PERSON OR HIS OR HER PARENTS NO LONGER WISH OR, INDEED, REFUSE TO COOPERATE.

WHAT DOES A YOUTH CARE SUPPORT CENTRE DO?

The Youth Care Support Centre has three duties:

1. It **investigates** whether the authorities should intervene in your situation.
2. **Together with you, your family and your network**, it assesses what support you need or whether it should monitor your existing support.
3. It makes a **referral** to the juvenile court if necessary.

1. INVESTIGATING WHETHER THE AUTHORITIES MUST INTERVENE IN YOUR SUPPORT

If a support worker or someone else has registered you with the Youth Care Support Centre (OCJ), the OCJ will invite you, your parents and the person who registered you for a meeting. The OCJ will ask about your situation and about the support you have already received. Together you will look at whether your home situation is safe and whether you have sufficient opportunity to grow up in a safe and loving environment, surrounded by the people that are important to you.

You will have several meetings with the counsellor, who is bound by professional secrecy.

The counsellor will discuss with you, your parents and your network the things that are going well, what is not going well and what you want to change. Everybody has the opportunity to tell his or her story.

The Youth Care Support Centre conducts an investigation

The OCJ holds a number of meetings to find out what your situation looks like. It will look into the concerns, who is concerned about your situation and why. It will look at whether you have received support in the past and how that worked. And it investigates what is going well in your home, at school, in the support you are now receiving, etc.

When the investigation is complete, the Youth Care Support Centre takes a decision about whether or not to intervene in the support.

The Youth Care Support Centre takes a decision

If the OCJ decides that it is **not necessary** to monitor you and your family, the OCJ will not start an investigation. The OCJ can, however, refer you to a (different) support worker.

If the OCJ decides it **will** monitor you? It can then:

- > Start support or monitor the current support.
- > Refer you to the juvenile court judge (see p. 10).

After the investigation, the Youth Care Support Centre will invite you, your parents and often also the person who registered you for another meeting. You will receive an explanation on:

- > The decision by the OCJ on whether or not to monitor you and your family;
- > What, according to the OCJ, will have to change to ensure you can grow up in a safe, loving and protected environment.
- > What the OCJ can do together with you, your parents and your network to make the necessary change possible and who or what is required for this.
- > How the OCJ will further monitor you and your family.

2. STARTING OR MONITORING SUPPORT

The support started or monitored by OCJ is **voluntary**. You and your parents need to agree.

But you can't decide to change or stop the support all by yourself: you, your parents, your network, the OCJ and the support workers must decide this together.

How to start or monitor support?

The OCJ makes a clear agreement with you, your parents, your network and the support workers about what must change, what exactly is expected from everyone, and draws up a clear plan together with you.

The OCJ ensures that the support you need can be started or monitors the support that you are already receiving. The OCJ monitors the support and the plan drawn up for you to see whether things are working and makes adjustments where necessary. To do this well, the support workers must share important information about the progress of your support with the OCJ (**obligation to provide information**).

If you want to know what help is available, it's best to check on the www.jeugdhulp.be website.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THE CONTACT DETAILS OF AN OCJ?

THIS CAN BE FOUND ON THE JEUGDHULP.BE WEBSITE UNDER THE HEADING CONTACT.

What the OCJ does for you?

You will have your own counsellor at the OCJ. The aim of the counsellor is to ensure you can grow up in a safe, loving and protected environment, supported by the people who are important to you. This is why your counsellor will ask you, your parents and your network a lot of questions about when it is safe, what is not going well, when you first felt unsafe and what you want to change to avoid it in the future.

Your opinion and that of your parents and your network are very important here, since this is all about your life.

Every step the counsellor takes will be explained properly to you, your parents and your network so you always know what is happening and why.

It is very important for the counsellor to be able to work well with you, your parents and your network so that everybody knows what he or she is concerned about, what is going well and what must change. The counsellor, together with you, your parents and your network, will think about how you can work on those concerns so that things go better for you so you will no longer need the counsellor's support.

YOUR COUNSELLOR AT THE YOUTH CARE SUPPORT CENTRE

Name:

E-mail:

Telephone number:

Can be reached at:

If you have questions or want to talk about something, you can also reach out to your counsellor for help. Together with the other counsellors at the OCJ, he or she will take decisions that are necessary for you to be able to grow up in a safe, healthy and loving environment. Your counsellor is bound by **professional secrecy**. He or she is not allowed to pass on any information about you and your parents.

If it is necessary to pass on information, your counsellor will inform you of this. If your counsellor wishes to make a change to the help you receive, you and your parents need to agree. Once they do, your counsellor will expect you and your parents to cooperate. If you do not cooperate or do not agree, the OCJ can refer your case to the Public Prosecutor's Office (see page 10).

3. REFERRAL TO JUDICIAL YOUTH SUPPORT

The Youth Care Support Centre (OCJ) can refer your file to the Public Prosecutor's Office:

- > If you are in imminent danger.
- > If it no longer proves possible to work together in voluntary youth support.

The Public Prosecutor's Office can refer your file to the juvenile court. The juvenile court can start judicial youth support. This support is **mandatory**, i.e. whether you and your parents agree or not.

The counsellor will notify you in advance that the OCJ will be referring you to the juvenile court. You and your parents are then given the opportunity of agreeing to the OCJ proposal during the **commitment meeting**. During that meeting, you may also, if you want, bring a trusted person or (juvenile) lawyer. If you are able to reach agreements and everybody cooperates, it will be possible to continue in voluntary support.

Want to know more about judicial youth support?

Read the 'You and the juvenile court' brochure. read the brochure on the www.jeugdhulp.be website, under Actua/Publicaties.

What if you need urgent support?

Are you scared that something will happen to you or that somebody is going to do something bad to you? Are you in danger?

Contact your counsellor or support worker as quickly as possible. They are bound by professional secrecy. This means you can ask them not to pass on certain things. But if you are in danger, they can involve the juvenile court. It may decide to take you into protection immediately. That is an 'urgent measure'. This is the case when there is:

- > physical violence
- > psychological violence
- > sexual abuse

Is it extremely urgent? Phone the police (101) or the emergency number (112) immediately.

If you do not know who to turn to in this kind of situation, call 1712 (contact point for abuse, violence and child abuse). They will tell you what to do. Your call will not be listed on a telephone bill. Therefore, you can call from home without anyone knowing.

Want to chat? Phone, mail or chat with Awel: www.awel.be or on number 102.

WHAT IF YOU ARE NEARLY 18?

Youth support normally comes to an end when you turn eighteen. The Youth Care Support Centre will no longer monitor you.

Would you still like support as a (young) adult? Then you can go to:

- > the Centres for General Social Welfare Services (CAW)
 - > the Youth Advisory Centres (JAC)
- > the Centres for Mental Healthcare (CGGZ)
- > the social services of the health fund
- > the Public Social Welfare Centre (OCMW)
 - > etc.

Perhaps you are not yet ready to stand on your own feet. Adults can also face problems, certainly if you are on your own. **Talk this over with your counsellor well in advance.** He or she can help you, for example, if you:

- > would like to spend some more time with your foster family or in your facility
- > want to live on your own under supervision
- > need other support.

Your counsellor will point you in the right direction for continued youth support. ■

*More information can be found on the jeugdhulp.be website under the heading
Topics/Young adults*

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS WITHIN THE YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE?

Within the youth support service, you have a lot of rights, but also some obligations.

More information can be found at:

- > www.rechtenindejeugdhelp.be
- > www.jeugdhulp.be
- > www.jeugdhulp.be/themas/rechten-in-de-jeugdhulp/rechten-voor-het-kind

Prefer a brochure? Then take a look in:

- > 'This is how it works at the integral youth support service' (brochure for over 12s)
- > 'My rights within the youth support service' (brochure for under 12s)

You can request these brochures via info@kinderrechtswinkel.be, www.kinderrechtswinkel.be or on number 070 21 00 71.

For information about children's rights in general, go to:

- > Het Kinderrechtencommissariaat: www.kinderrechtencommissariaat.be
- > De Kinderrechtswinkels: www.kinderrechtswinkel.be

QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS

Do you have a question? A complaint?

Talk it over with a friend, your teacher, a support worker, a youth worker. If they can't help you with your questions or complaints, talk things over with your counsellor. Your counsellor will look for a solution together with you, your parents and your support workers.

If for some reason you can't talk to your counsellor and you have a question or complaint about the youth support you are receiving, you can contact the Young People Helpline (JO line). JO line will work to resolve your issues and questions.

If necessary, they will undertake an independent investigation into your complaints. ■

Do you have a question? A complaint? Talk it over with a friend, your teacher, a support worker, a youth worker

JO LINE (YOUNG PEOPLE HELPLINE)

Call us free-of-charge on 0800 900 33

- > Monday from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
- > Wednesday from 1.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.
- > Thursday from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 pm.
- > Friday from 1.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Email

to jo-lijn@opgroeien.be

Write to:

JO line
Hallepoortlaan 27
1060 Brussels

Published by

Katrien Verhegge
Administrator General Opgroeien
Hallepoortlaan 27
1060 Brussels

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