

The Swedish social service work for the best interests of children – Information for parents

Many families get help from the social services

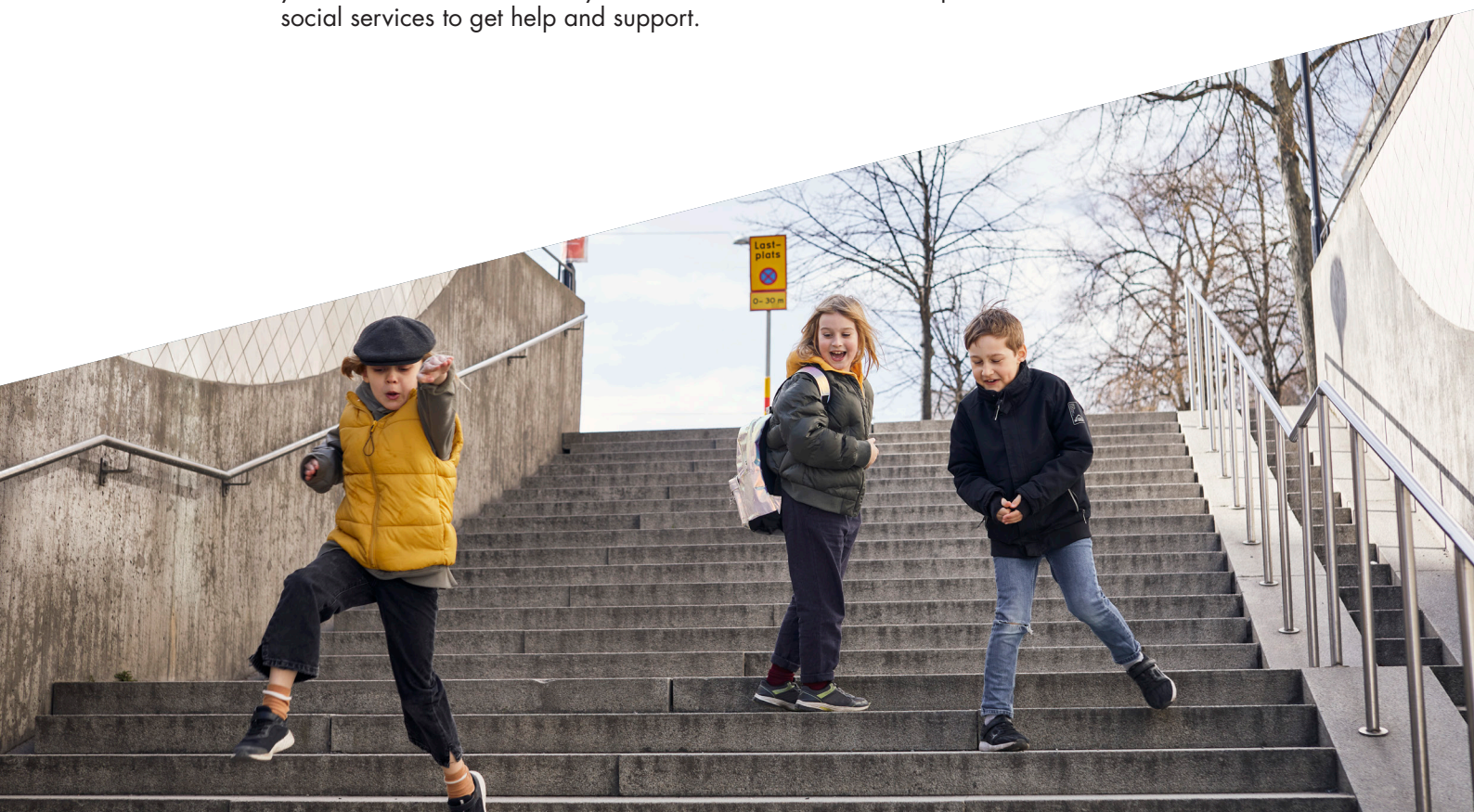
There are social services in all municipalities. They have trained social workers with special expertise in children's needs, whose job it is to make sure that all children can have a secure childhood. In practice this may involve supporting families where one of the parents has a mental health issue or substance misuse. The social services also have to protect children and parents who are victims of violence or abuse.

The first step is to see what help can be given in the home

The social services can provide assistance in many different ways. Usually, an agreement is reached about what support is best. For example, families who have a lot of conflicts can meet a person who is good at helping families solve that kind of problem. Parents can get support in their parental role, either in personal counselling or in groups. It can be possible for children to have a contact person or to meet other children in the same situation.

Everyone can apply for support and protection

If you think that you need support or protection, you can contact the social services yourself and tell them about your situation. Both children and parents can contact the social services to get help and support.



To talk to the social services, you contact their department in your home municipality. Their phone number should be given on the municipality's website, along with other ways of contacting them.

If you feel concern you can notify the social services

Everyone who suspects that a child may be coming to harm can notify the social services. A notification does not mean that you report a parent; you report your concern about the child. If staff in preschools, schools or health care suspect that a child is coming to harm, they must, by law, notify the social services.

You make this notification direct to the social services. If you just want to ask questions about a child's situation, you can do so without giving the name of the child.

What happens next?

If the social services make the assessment that a child may need protection or support, it is their duty find out what is best for the child and the family. This is called investigating the child's situation. Both parents and children can take part in the investigation and give their version. The social services may also need to talk to other people who know the child, such as relatives and teachers.

What can the social services say?

Everyone who comes into contact with the social services must be able to rely on sensitive information not being passed on. This is why the social services have great responsibility for protecting information; what is called secrecy. As a custodian you will normally get to know everything that concerns your child. But the social services must not tell you anything that can expose the child to a serious risk. The older the child is, the more the child decides. So older children may need to consent to custodians finding out certain information.

Support if the child cannot stay on in the home

If living at home does not work, the child may need to live somewhere else for a time. The child may, for instance, have to live with another family, or foster home, or in a home for care or residence (HVB). In such a situation parents have the right to receive support from the social services. They can, for example, get help to be better at parenting. The objective is always to make things as good as possible for the child.

Koll på soc – for older children

Koll på soc is a website for children about the Swedish social services and how they can help children and young people. It is available in Swedish, English and Arabic.

www.kollpasoc.se

