



2.6.1 Child and youth services in the context of child welfare endangerment

The state is **obliged to protect children and adolescents against threats to their welfare** (Article 6 para. 2 sentence 2 of the Basic Law; Section 1666 of the Civil Code; Article 1 para. 3 and Article 8a of Book 8 of the Social Code).

The term **“threat” in the context of child welfare** is understood to mean “a danger of such a magnitude that, if not addressed, is highly likely to cause considerable damage to the child’s development” (Federal Court of Justice, 1956).

All child and youth services activities must be directed at preventing such threats from arising in the first place (broad interpretation of child protection) or to avert them in time (narrow interpretation of child protection).

Parents and children/adolescents must be offered suitable assistance to avert any threats.

If parents refuse such assistance, the youth welfare office must intervene in order to protect their children (taking into custody/referral to the family court in cases involving intervention in parental custody rights).