

## Dear Parents

At the moment you are facing a situation of upheaval serious for you as well as for your children, and you do not know what will be the future of your family after the court proceedings. What you hope to see is a quick ending to the family dispute and an equitable decision by the court. In this context, the children's welfare is in many cases a major point of conflict.

It is not always clear to the parents and/or to the court where your children should live and who should care for them to ensure that the children thrive. If the court needs a broader basis for its decision, it can engage a specialist of the psychiatric and/or psychological field to prepare an assessment.

The purpose of an assessment is not to determine a 'good' or a 'bad' parent, but to show what each child needs for the healthiest possible development, and under what conditions this can best be ensured. The assessors are specialists able to examine your child in a way suitable for children. Therefore an assessment will usually not as such be a strain on your child.

The assessor's task is to examine the child individually as well as in its relationship to you as parents in areas important to its development such as for example in terms of the child's state of development, taking into account your parental functions. The assessor will be neutral towards the parents and focus on the child's welfare.

In the first interview held for the assessment, the assessing process will be explained in detail to you as a parent and you can ask questions about the procedure. Therefore an initial analysis of the case records will be followed by interviews with the parents and the children, with school-related and therapeutic persons of reference, with paediatricians, with welfare advocates, and with social offices involved. In addition, observations will be made about the relationship between a parent and the child, psychological tests will be carried out, and a home visit will take place in many cases as well. As parents you will be informed about the results and recommendations provided by the assessor once all examinations have been completed.

Subsequently the court will try to find the best possible solution for your children together with you as parents on the basis of the assessment. In the event of a refusal by the parents, the court will make a decision.

Good cooperation of all those involved will help to shorten the processes.

The costs of the assessment will be accounted according to expenditure. They will be invoiced to the parents unless they are in need.