

Strasbourg and its actions concerning families and young children

The Policy for Families and Young Children constitutes a priority for the City of Strasbourg. The city's actions within this domain cover several areas and levels, including child care, parent support, child protection, maternal and child welfare, school health and welfare and successful schooling.

1. Child care:

Strasbourg has 20,000 children aged from birth to 6 years.

The Family and Children's Service has around 280 agents, of which 260 are involved in child supervision and parental support in the municipal establishments set up within Strasbourg. As well as this, there are around 800 people employed by associations that work in the childcare sector and are subsidized by the city.

In 2006 the Family and Children's Service had a working budget of €21,539K, of which €9,484 were in the form of subsidies.

The Family and Children's Service ensures the care of children aged from birth to 6 years old in 40 municipal establishments. At the same time it monitors the proper functioning of the 65 care centres run by associations that the city subsidizes, thus ensuring the coherence of the service provided throughout the area covered:

- **Collective care:** 14 collective and multi-care day-care centres, 26 part-time centres, 7 municipal kindergartens, 16 parental nurseries, 17 play centres for 3 to 6 year-olds.
- **Family care:** 6 private nurseries, 1,200 authorised child-minders

In 2006, 8,757 children were cared for in Strasbourg: 6,210 children aged from birth to 3 years old and 2,547 children aged from 3 to 6 years old.

The cost of a place in childcare is around €14,000 per annum, or €1,100 per month.

Financing: parents around 20%, (€0.32 to €2.52 per hour depending on income); family allowance 40%, city 40%.

2. Parent support:

Another activity covered by the Family and Child Service is parent support. Within this context the Service directly manages or provides support for 11 parent/child support centres open to children accompanied by their parents or their child-minder. Moreover, at the beginning of 2006 the City of Strasbourg established four relay points for child-minders.. These relay points provide information and their role is also to encourage exchanges between child-minders with animation around themes associated with childhood and its development.

3. Child protection:

The City of Strasbourg is unusual in that it has a child protection service. This service provides aid for minors and some young majors encountering multiple and serious difficulties. Its activities revolve around three central points:

- Under the authority of the Departmental Council, the service exercises **educational measures** which may be legally or administratively required. These measures consist of following up minors and young majors in their homes.

- The Child Protection Service also carries out **social investigations and psychological reports** ordered by the Judge of the Juvenile Court.
- The City of Strasbourg also has a unique organization in the Bas Rhin *département*: the **Point Rencontre** (Meeting Point). This neutral place makes it possible to have recorded visits, by order of the Family Affairs Judge, between minors and one of their parents in the event where there is difficulty in exercising the right of parental authority.

In 2006, the city followed up 2,338 minors, including 1,844 for educational action in the community (AEMO) measures.

4. Maternal and child protection:

The City of Strasbourg also fulfils public health missions under the authority of the Departmental Council:

- Within this context, its mission is to protect the health of pregnant women and promote the physical, mental and social well-being of children aged from birth to 6 years and that of their family. The Maternal and Child Health Service (PMI) of the City of Strasbourg also runs a family planning and education centre under the authority of the Departmental Council.
- It also has a school health and welfare unit which is concerned with health and welfare protection and education for children aged from 6 to 12 years in nursery and primary schools and carries out reports on their health and their social situation. These children also benefit from dental hygiene screening and care carried out by the dental health clinic.

In 2006 the city carried out 16,285 medical examinations through its neonatal care centres, 2,590 medical reports involving the school health service to prepare for children entering the first year in primary school and 1,679 reports for children in their final year there.

5. The project for successful schooling:

The main objective of this project is to help children through the educational and schooling years towards personal success by assuring individualized support both for children and their family, taking into account all their needs. This means that the accent is placed on the multi-disciplinary character of this action (educational, schooling, social, cultural, sports and so on), together with the necessary involvement of the parents in this approach. Actions carried out within this project will be able to cover support for parental duties, learning, education for responsible social behaviour, health awareness etc.

Particular attention will be paid to children in situations where they are at a pivotal time or in a particularly fragile situation, notably at the beginning of the schooling cycle and adolescence. Eventually, a total of 1,000 children could be concerned.

Moreover, the City of Strasbourg has a body responsible for organizing nursery and primary schooling, (*Caisse des Ecoles*), whose mission is to conduct educational, cultural and health- and welfare-oriented activities in favour of children in nursery and primary schools, within the context of this project of successful schooling.