

Amalthea services in the system of social and legal protection of children



Why are we AMALTHEA?

According to the Greek mythology, Amalthea was a nanny-goat who suckled Zeus and became thus the first foster parent.



What are we striving for?

Our work is based on the assumption that the best place for child's life is his/her family – own, adoptive or foster one.

9,000 CHILDREN LIVE OUTSIDE A FAMILY

of which:

1,233 in infant homes,

other children are placed in youth detention centres, children's homes, children's homes with schools, young offender centres, homes for persons with disabilities, facilities for children in need of immediate help such as Klokánek (Kangaroo) centres.

More than 16,000 children grow up in a substitute family care.

More than 8,200 foster families of which a half of them are related

340 foster families for temporary stay

Source: MoLSA – 2013 Statistical Yearbook, 2014 press releases

Current facts from the system

- 46% of children are placed in infant homes outside their own family for social reasons, 18% for social-health reasons, 36% for health reasons.
- In the Czech Republic, **there is no ban on institutionalisation of children in early childhood.**
- Until nowadays, the **attachment theory** has not been either a generally or professionally accepted basis for the system of care for children at risk.
- What we need is to **work more with the children's own families** and thus prevent social deprivation of the family and give support to the extended family.
- We need to **find more long-term foster parents** for children who cannot grow up at home.

HOW LONG AND WHAT HAS AMALTHEA BEEN DOING?

- The organisation was established in 2003
- We support families that face a difficult situation and in which the child is in danger of withdrawal from parents' care.
- We support substitute families that have been entrusted to take care of a child and children in foster or adoptive care.
- We support pregnant women and their partners in a difficult situation.
- We organise a pre-school children club.
- We contribute to raising awareness of the topic, we look for new foster parents.
- We offer education, we contribute to transformation of the system of care for children at risk.
- We operate all over the Pardubice region – 3 teams of field social workers, 2 outpatient centres.
- We cooperate with volunteers and external experts.

METHODS OF WORK IN AMALTHEA

- principles of case management – (interactive) **case conferences**, connection of services for the benefit of families and children
- **family meetings** – support of the family in search of a solution to the child's situation
- techniques for work with children – **timeline, eco-map, book of life, family tree, child's profile, traumatic head, protective shield, moving calendar, fairy tales and stories**
- **evaluation of the attachment style** of the child and (substitute) parents
- therapeutic methods – **filial therapy, touch therapy, interaction video training, dyadic development therapy, Pesso Boyden System, Psychomotor therapy**

Support for the family and the child

since 2007

**services for children
and their own families**

since 2012

**services for pregnant women and
their partners**

TARGET GROUP – FOR WHOM

families with children

(Danger consists in unsuitable conditions in housing, financing, reduced childcare skills, parents' illness, domestic violence, etc.)

pregnant women and their partners in a difficult situation

(absence of housing, lack of money, children withdrawn in the past, some of the parents grew up in care institutions themselves, addiction to habit-forming substances is often in their history)

INCLUSION IN THE SERVICE

- Most frequently upon recommendation by the DSLPC that has the family in their records
 - at the family's request
- at a request of a third party (school, physician, etc.)

The service is always voluntary for the family!

HOW DOES THE SERVICE TAKES PLACE?

- Evaluation of the child's and family's situation – current state, risks for the child
- Individual plan of the child's protection, definition of the family's orders – to what attention will be paid and in which order (in terms of priorities).
- Work itself in the family – regular visits directly to the family, approximately once a week
- End of the service, evaluation – approx. after 12 months, follow-up plan

WHAT DO WE OFFER I

Services depend on the needs of the family and particular orders.
We do not assume responsibility for the family.

support at managing care for the children and their development

- information, practicing, lending aids, specialised care

assistance at coping with discipline problems in children and
reinforcement of relations in the family

- work with rules, limits, arrangement of expert help

accompaniment at negotiation with authorities

- assistance, support, defending client's rights

WHAT DO WE OFFER II

assistance at searching for a housing

assistance related to financing (increase of income, arrangement of benefits, negotiation with creditors, payment of debts)

volunteers' involvement (tutoring, spending leisure time with children) – assistance and training for parents

material support – when the child becomes endangered and standard systems cannot help (foodstuffs, material for infants, school aids)

OUR EXPERIENCE

- In most families, improvement occurs in several areas, after the end of the service they are able to solve their problems themselves.
- If the family cannot ensure a corresponding care for the child, we make efforts to secure a smooth transition to the substitute family and keeping in touch with the child's own family, we do not view it as a failure.
- To support the child's own family is more economical viable than other solutions.
- Most families do want to take care of their children and have positive ties established among their members, however, they need support and help at securing the basic conditions.

Substitute Family Care Centre

since 2003

**services for children and their
substitute families**

since 2011

search for new foster parents

PARENTS who cannot take care of their child temporarily or in the long run

Illness

Difficult situation

The family's social situation

Are dangerous to the child

Parents died



CHILDREN

Severe experience

Big injuries in the past

Suppressed potential of life

Uncertainty about what will come next...

FOSTER PARENTS



...attachment...
...sharing...
...education...

Childcare abilities and skills

Opportunity to secure a safe and loving environment for a child

Willingness to encourage the child to keep in touch with his/her own family

Willingness to learn, cooperate, think about the child and educational approach to the child

Field and outpatient services for children and substitute families

counselling (social, psychological, special pedagogical)

Assistance at substitute family care – at least once a month

crisis intervention

support at the children's contact with their parents

support at communicating with other parties (DSLPC, schools, care institutions, pedagogical and psychological support centres, etc.)

education, respite services for substitute families by offer of afternoon, weekend and few days' activities, regular **activities of a volunteer with the child** directly in the family or outside the family

We are able to help children and foster parents when...

- ...they are failing in establishing good relationship
- ...the child escapes from the family, steals things, lies, harms himself or herself, suffers from mood swings, behavioural disturbances, aggressiveness...
- ...when foster parents do not know how to **teach a child with a particular type of disability**
- ...when the situation in the family **is difficult for the foster parents' own children to handle**
- ...when the child **hides real emotions, is afraid of touch, does not accept himself/herself, does not trust other people**
- ...when the children do not know **who their parents are** and why they cannot grow up with them
- ...when foster parents **do not understand behaviour of the adopted child**
- ...when the child underwent a **severe trauma** and finds it difficult to be in a new family

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