

Information about parenting support

## Parenting support in Västmanland

As a parent or other close family member of a child, you are the most important person in his or her life. This puts you in a very good position to influence your child's health and well-being in a positive way. But it is not always easy to know what to do or what to keep in mind. Then it can be good to know what kinds of support are available.

Parenting support includes various kinds of assistance and support to improve parenting ability and strengthen the relationship between parent and child. Having a good relationship with his or her parents is a good foundation for a child's development throughout childhood and adolescence, and even into adulthood.

At [www.1177.se/vastmanland/foraldraskapsstod](http://www.1177.se/vastmanland/foraldraskapsstod) you can read more about what parenting support is and what kinds of support are available, and you can find contact information for your particular municipality. In this PDF file, you can read in your own language about the various organizations involved. To make things simpler, we have chosen to write "parent". However, we intend this to include not only biological parents but also other legal guardians as well as any other adults who carry the main responsibility for a child.

## Maternity care and child health-care services

### Mödra- och barnhälsovården

The maternity-care services (mödrahälsovården, MHV) provide not only care and support for pregnant women but also parenting support, for example through parents' groups preparing for childbirth and parenthood. If you visit a maternity-care centre (mödravårdscentral, MVC) or midwifery clinic, you will usually see a midwife. Among other things, you can receive advice about lifestyle issues and birth control.

The child health-care centre (barnvårdscentralen, BVC) is where your child may come for health check-ups and vaccination from right after birth until the start of the preschool year (förskoleklass). As a parent, you may receive support and advice relating to your child's health and development. BVCs are usually to be found at a local health centre (vårdcentral) or family centre (familjecentral), but home visits may also be an option. BVC visits are voluntary and all parents are welcome. Visiting a BVC costs nothing.

### Health-care services Hälso- och sjukvården

The health-care services provide care and support for both children and parents, in various ways. Local health centres (vårdcentraler) have a wide-ranging function when it comes to outpatient care in the community. Besides actual care, they are able to offer support and advice regarding your child's well-being. Further, the paediatric and adolescent health-care services (barn- och ungdomshälsan, BU-hälsan) are able to offer psychological treatment for schoolchildren and young people who are resident in Västmanland and suffer from mild to moderate mental ill-health. BU-hälsan has three clinics across the county: in Västerås, Köping and Fagersta. Only children and young people who show symptoms of mental ill-health can apply.

For children who have been in contact with the school health-care services, a local health centre or similar and still have major difficulties in their everyday life, at school and with friends, a further option is the paediatric and adolescent psychiatric services (barn- och ungdomspsykiatri, BUP). BUP investigates, treats and supports children and young people under the age of 18 years who suffer from serious mental ill-health, such as depression, anxiety and difficulties dealing with emotions and relationships with others. Those who seek help from BUP for the first time should contact BUP Start. This is a clinic located in Västerås which is responsible for the entire county and constitutes the gateway to BUP.

BUP, the paediatric and adolescent rehabilitation services (barn- och ungdomshabiliteringen) and paediatric clinics offer parenting support in cases where a child has an illness, another medical condition or a disability. The rehabilitation services are mainly intended for persons with a permanent disability, but they are also able to provide the close family of such persons with support and knowledge.

### **Open pre-school Öppen förskola**

Open pre-school is for parents or other adults with responsibility for children who are not enrolled in a regular pre-school. It offers the children an opportunity to play and to meet other children in a stimulating environment, while their parents may exchange ideas and experiences relating to their children and to parenthood with other parents. The professionals who work at the open pre-school can give advice and support on issues relating to children or to the role as a parent.

Open pre-school is usually free of charge. The specific arrangements may differ from one municipality to the next. Participants do not need to enrol in any way but are able to attend when they wish. A further function of open pre-school may be as a meeting place for parents born outside Sweden, which may help them grow their network of contacts in Swedish society.

### **Family centres Familjecentral**

A family centre (familjecentral) is a joint operation involving the maternal-care services, child health-care services, open pre-school and outreach branches of the social-welfare services. Some family centres also provide other types of support for parents. The staff of a family centre typically includes midwives, nurses, pre-school teachers and social workers, and sometimes also family counsellors, youth recreation instructors, psychologists and doctors. Whatever their profession, they all work to ensure positive child-health development. Family centres target children and parents, and they aim to promote health, take early preventive action and provide support.

### **Pre-school and compulsory school Förskola och grundskola**

Pre-school (förskolan), compulsory school (grundskolan) and special compulsory school for those with intellectual disabilities (grundsärskolan) are important spaces that create opportunities for collaboration in meetings between children, their parents and their teachers. During the pre-school years and early school years, everyday meetings with teachers when dropping children off and picking them up represent an important type of universal support for parents. Drop-off and pick-up times are also important occasions for exchanging information and collaborating about the child. Other important such occasions include parents' meetings, information meetings and recurrent individual meetings with the child's main teacher.

## School health-care services **Elevhälsan**

The school health-care services (elevhälsan) are able to offer children help and support to assist their well-being, development and learning – all the way from the pre-school class (förskoleklass) to upper-secondary school (gymnasieskolan). Among other things, the school health-care services provide information and offer supportive counselling for pupils and parents about issues such as pupils' satisfaction with school, a healthy lifestyle, mental health, behavioural problems and disabilities. Children may come there for regular health visits and to be vaccinated. Both children and their parents are free to visit or contact the school health-care services.

## Social-welfare services **Socialtjänsten**

Parents may sometimes feel inadequate. For instance, this can happen if their children do not settle in well at pre-school or school, or if they show signs of risk behaviour. In such a situation, it is possible to contact the municipal social-welfare services (socialtjänsten) for various kinds of advice and support. And if you feel concerned about a child who is not your own, you can also contact the social-welfare services for advice and support in relation to that concern.

The social-welfare services offer family treatment, a contact family (who will take in the child for a day or two a month) and family support. Such interventions are often decided only after an investigation. Those investigations are intended to determine the need for support and the right to support under the Social Services Act (socialtjänstlagen). Families with children who have disabilities can apply for support under the Support and Service Act (lagen om stöd och service, LSS). Such support may include a short-time residence for the child, a contact person and a replacement service in the home. Families, where a parent has a disability, can apply for guidance and practical support in the home. This is called residential support (boendestöd) in many municipalities.

## Web-based parenting support **Webbaserat föräldraskapsstöd**

There are several websites providing information and advice on issues relating to care for children and child development. Examples where the information has been checked by experts in the respective fields to ensure that it is correct include 1177 Vårdguiden and Gravid.se.

## Civil society **Civilsamhället**

Within civil society, support is offered by sports clubs, cultural associations, mental-health associations, children's-rights organisations such as BRIS and Save the Children (Rädda barnen), study associations, religious communities and others.

Many parents find it easier to approach a civil-society arena. For example, civil society may offer help in locations where the public sector is not represented, or it may have a theme that better suits individual parents.