



INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE

Child Protection

Casework, technical assistance and advocacy

Child protection

Child protection is a term generally used in legal regulations and to describe measures taken by authorities and NGOs to protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Child protection is necessary when the wellbeing of the child is threatened, such as to his or her physical, cognitive or mental health. In accordance with international standards, every child has basic fundamental rights related to their protection, including rights to:

- Have their best interests taken into consideration
- Be protected from violence, abuse or neglect
- Have a relationship with both parents
- Participate, express their opinions, and have their views considered in decision making processes that affects them

Child protection in cross-border situations

In some cases, decisions regarding the most suitable child protection measures involve more than one country. This is especially so in cases where children are moving, or are likely to move, across borders. For this reason, cross-border communication and cooperation between authorities/ professionals is indispensable. When the welfare of a child is at risk, appropriate measures for their protection must be taken at the place where the child is located as soon as the need arises, regardless of the child's nationality. In many cases, to be able to make a decision in the best interest of the child it is necessary to obtain information from abroad. For example, relating to: the case history; family members; or about the situation in the other country.

ISS advocates for:

- The best interests of the child being respected as a paramount consideration
- Preventing the need for protection measures
- Given that conflicting interests may exist, a mediation oriented approach (see [ISS factsheet](#))
- Use of in country qualified social workers, given that counsellors and decision-makers may need information from abroad (assessments, home studies, follow up reports etc.)
- Full co-operation between central authorities, and other expert bodies that can assist with finding a solution. This is particularly important when working in international family kinship, with children on the move, and in international kafalah (see [relevant factsheets](#))

Guiding international standards and ISS internal documents:

- [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [General Comment No. 14 on Best Interest](#)
- [1996 Hague Convention](#)
- [Guidelines, Promoting the Human Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Transnational Child Protection Cases](#)
- [ISS Manual](#)
- [ISS Factsheets, esp. On Kinship Care and Alternative Care](#)

ISS-Casework services include:

- Reporting high-risk situations (= "Child protection alert")
- Locating a child
- Obtaining reports on the assessment of a child's situation
- Obtaining reports on the assessment of a family or institutional placement abroad
- Counselling to professionals and private persons
- Support in decision making regarding the future arrangements for the child

Technical assistance and advocacy include:

- Dissemination of information to professionals
- Training of professionals on child protection in cross-border child protection
- Support in national law/ policy reforms
- Active participation in expert consultation groups
- Work with UN and regional treaty bodies