



Fatherhood, child maintenance and parental custody

Information sheet for unmarried parents

Fatherhood

If you are the child's biological father and not married to their mother, you should recognise your child before the birth or shortly after. You can do this at any registry office in Switzerland. The documents you need will differ depending on your nationality and marital status; the register office will tell you what to bring. Once you have been recognised as the child's father, this gives your relationship with the child a legal basis, including the associated rights and obligations (with the exception of parental custody, see the 'Parental custody' section for details).

Being recognised as the father will also mean you are listed as such in the civil status register and on the child's birth certificate. The registration gives the father and the child rights and obligations by law (e. g. the right to personal contact, the obligation to pay child maintenance in the event of separate households). If a father is not listed in the civil status register for an extended period of time, Child and Adult Protective Services (Kindes- und Erwachsenenschutzbehörde, KESB) will explore the necessary steps.

Child maintenance

What child maintenance comprises

Child maintenance comprises maintenance in kind (care and upbringing) and financial payments. The financial payments are sub-divided into cash maintenance and childcare maintenance. Cash maintenance is intended to cover cash expenses for the child. This includes the cost of food, clothing and accommodation and for external childcare such as daycare facilities or nurseries. Childcare maintenance covers the costs incurred when a parent looks after the child themselves and can't work, or can only work to a limited extent, during this time.

How to make arrangements on child maintenance

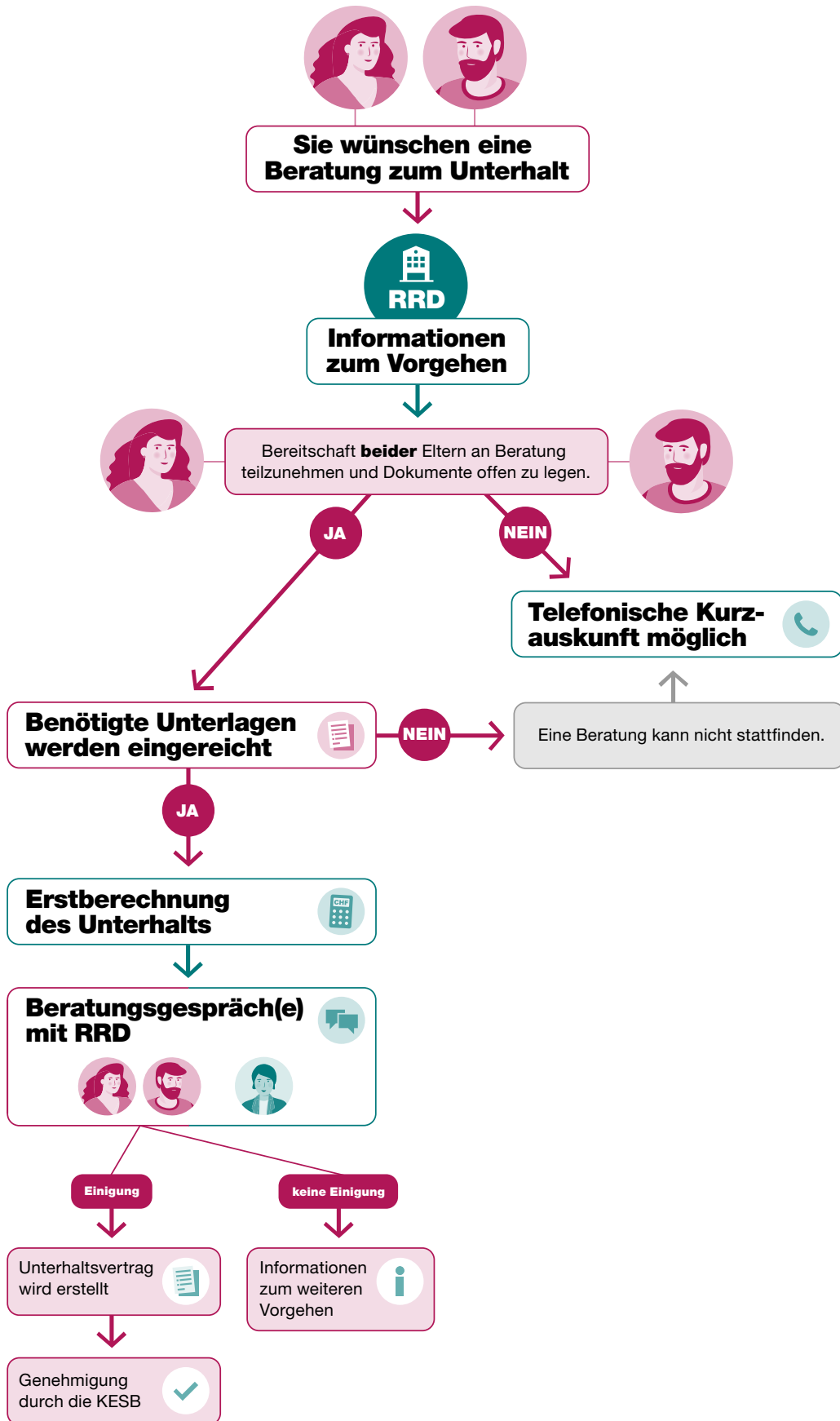
As parents, you are jointly responsible for your child's maintenance. If you're not married or live apart, you should agree on your contributions (maintenance in kind, cash maintenance and childcare maintenance), taking into account your financial circumstances and the childcare situation. It makes sense to record your arrangements in writing. These arrangements only apply to the child once they have been approved by Child and Adult Protective Services (KESB).

If you are unable to reach a mutual agreement, you can submit a claim for maintenance to the competent court. In this instance, the court will decide on the maintenance contribution for the child.



Advisory process

The Regional Legal Service (Regionaler Rechtsdienst, RRD) offers advice and support with drawing up maintenance arrangements. This advisory process is described below.



Parental custody

Parental custody (also known as «custody rights») is the right to make decisions for a child when they can't do that for themselves. If you have parental custody, you can make decisions on matters relating to their schooling, religious upbringing, medical interventions and the like. Parental custody also includes the right to decide where the child resides or to move with the child to a different location.

Parents generally share parental custody if they have made a declaration to this effect. The court or Child and Adult Protective Services (KESB) will only agree on a parent having sole custody if joint parental custody is not in the child's best interests.

Support from the Regional Legal Service

As unmarried parents, you can seek advice from the relevant Regional Legal Service (RRD) on matters relating to fatherhood, child maintenance and parental custody. In particular, the Regional Legal Service will help you with drawing up maintenance arrangements and parental agreements.

Please note that the advice on child maintenance and parental custody is subject to both parents agreeing to participate in this process.

The advice is free, up to a cap of a set number of hours.

Contact details

Your Regional Legal Services (RRD) within the Canton of Zurich
www.zh.ch/eltern-in-trennung → **Unterhalt & elterliche Sorge**

Affoltern am Albis	Im Winkel 2, 8910 Affoltern am Albis, tel. 043 259 93 37
Bülach	Schaffhauserstrasse 53, 8180 Bülach, tel. 043 259 95 00
Dietikon	Badenerstrasse 5, 8953 Dietikon, tel. 043 259 93 05
Horgen	Bahnhofstrasse 6, 8810 Horgen, tel. 043 259 92 48
Wetzikon	Guyer-Zeller-Strasse 6, 8620 Wetzikon, tel. 043 259 80 30
Winterthur	St. Gallerstrasse 42, 8400 Winterthur, tel. 043 253 94 91 Hotline opening hours: Mondays, 2:15 pm to 4:15 pm and Wednesdays, 9:30 am to 11:30 am
City of Zurich	Social Services (Soziale Dienste) are responsible for these services within the City of Zurich: Soziale Dienste Fachstelle Elternschaft und Unterhalt Albisriederstrasse 330, 8047 Zürich www.stadt-zuerich.ch/elternschaft



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