



## The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Market

### Legislation on aid and assistance to children and adolescents:

In recent years there is more openness on the topic of sexual assaults on children, and more conferences have taken place.

### Recent activities:

- In 1994, 1999, and 2000 conferences on children and adolescents have taken place.
- In 2000 the year of the children of Greenland has put more focus on the conditions of children.
- More debates in parliament (Landsstinget) have pointed to a reformation of the legislation.

A co-ordination group and several work groups have been set up with the purpose to evaluate and revise the Greenlandic parliamentary law on support to children and adolescents.

### New Policies:

- The course of action in the revised legislation is based on the principle of honouring the child's needs instead of the present principle of support and minimal interference.
- The finance of aid and assistance according to the law is being re-evaluated in order to ensure the needs of the neglected children.
- The legislation is accommodated to the child's needs.
- Evaluation on the best way to ensure the child's needs of care, continuity, and coherence in life.

### Recovery programs to children and adolescents who have been severely neglected, including sexually assaulted:

The social committees of the municipalities have the responsibility of giving advice and assistance to the parents, or the custody holder, or the person who is actually taking care of the child or the adolescent, when:

1. the child or adolescent has no breadwinner,
2. the breadwinner is unable to take care of the child or adolescent in an adequate way,
3. the child or adolescent has difficulties adapting to the environment, the school, or the society,
4. the child or adolescent is not adequately taken care of or brought up, or
5. the child or adolescent lives in unsatisfactory conditions.

The aim is to make the child or adolescent stay at home. The authorities may decide to remove the child or adolescent, if the problems cannot be solved when staying at home. The child or adolescent may be placed at a foster home or at a residential home for children and adolescents.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Market runs 10 residential homes for children and adolescents. In Greenland children and adolescents are placed in children's homes when severely neglected and therefore in need of psycho-social support and recovery. Each child's home has its own method. For example, the Umannaq Children's Home runs project oriented recovery programmes. Qasapermiut is a ship project with the pedagogic and developmental purpose to have fishing and hunting as a starting point. 3 residential homes for children and adolescents also offer family recovery programmes.

There are following special residential homes/projects for children and adolescents with special needs:

- Meeqqat Illuat (the Children's Home); an observation and recovery home for children of average intelligence who have adaptation difficulties of such a nature that ordinary measures of social and pedagogic character at home are inadequate. If possible, the children will be discharged for home after a stay of 1 or 3 years at Meeqqat Illuat.

- Aja (Aunt); a special home for adolescents with a weak personality, either due to a traditional psychiatric problem or due to severe social, family or personal relationships, such as sexual assaults or other forms of severe neglect.
- Matu (the Door); a special home for young men with sociopathic antisocial behaviour.
- The Girl's Project; a special home for girls with personality disorders.

The office of residential homes gives guidance and supervision to the personal at the residential homes.

For children who are already placed at a residential home, the office can offer:

- Short talk programmes.
- Inlet therapy; intensive therapy programmes with smaller groups of children in the open.
- Individual therapeutic programmes.
- Therapeutic group programmes.

The Individual therapeutic programmes and therapeutic group programmes are only available for children who are placed in residential homes in Nuuk.

