



**Where can I  
get support**

- **Educational**
- **Psychological**
- **Social**

# **INFORMATION BROCHURE**

**FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS OF CHILDREN**

**List of support service addresses in your  
county in the Greater Poland Voivodeship**

This publication has been prepared within the framework of the activity "School Community Well-being", implemented under Module 2 of the Government Programme "Friendly School", aimed at promoting equal educational opportunities for children and young people in the period 2025–2027.

This publication was issued with financial support from the Government Programme, co-funded by the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) under the European Funds for Social Development Programme 2021–2027.

**Where can I get educational, psychological and social support?  
An information brochure for parents / guardians of children.**

Copyright© by 2026 Fundacja Migrant Info Point

Author: Izabela Czerniejewska

Content supervision: Alicja Skrzypczak, Aleksandra Dziurzyńska, Małgorzata Kuzdra, Aleksandra Ksokowska-Robak, Marek Lasota, Mateusz Wiliński.

Proofreading: Justyna Knieć

Translation: Patrycja Zawłocka, Patrycja Salamon

Design and Layout: eCommerce Team

Publisher: Fundacja Migrant Info Point

Poznań 2026



# INTRODUCTION

## Dear Parents and Legal Guardians!

This guide was created to help you find support for your children and the whole family in three areas:

- educational (related to school and education),
- psychological (emotional support),
- social (support during difficult life or financial circumstances).

There are many organizations in Greater Poland offering free help in these areas. This support is open to all parents and guardians (Polish and international), as well as children and young people. If you or your child need support, do not hesitate to use the services of the institutions and organizations dedicated to helping you. You don't need to know the regulations or how the support system works. You just need to report to the relevant institution, where the staff will explain the next steps. Support is mostly available in Polish; however, even a fundamental understanding of the language, or translation assistance from a friend, another parent, or a neighbor, can help overcome the difficulty. Some institutions and non-governmental organizations provide assistance in foreign languages, including English, Ukrainian, Russian, Spanish, among others. Sometimes, all it takes is asking for help – it can be that crucial first step.

In this publication, you will find:

- information on where to find help,
- guidance on when to approach a given institution,
- addresses and phone numbers of institutions in your county.

Asking for help is nothing to be ashamed of. Especially when it comes to children, young people, and those who look after them.

Izabela Czerniejewska

and the Migrant Info Point Foundation team



# HOW DOES THE SUPPORT SYSTEM WORK IN POLAND?

---

The support system for children, youth, and parents / legal guardians in Poland consists of several interconnected areas.

**The education system** is first and foremost about schools and nursery schools - the institutions closest to children and their parents or legal guardians. A child's struggles often first come to light right within the school or nursery school environment. A child with learning difficulties can receive support from specialists at psychological and pedagogical counseling centers or institutions collaborating with these centers and schools.

**The psycho-educational support** system mainly consists of counseling centers that diagnose a child's educational, emotional, developmental, and language difficulties. Parents or guardians can contact the counseling center directly and without a referral if they see a need for it. Schools may also refer parents to the counseling center as a recommended resource for consultation.

**The mental healthcare system** primarily consists of community centers and mental health clinics for children and youth. These institutions employ child psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychotherapists within the framework of the National Health Fund (NFZ). This system provides support when the difficulties concern emotions, behavior, trauma, mental health crises, or general mental well-being. In case of emergencies, it is best to contact a crisis intervention center.

**The social services** supports the entire family, not just the child. Social Assistance Centers (OPS) provide assistance when: a family faces financial or housing difficulties, needs the support of a family assistant, experiences domestic violence, or needs material, financial, legal, or organizational aid. Support from Powiat Family Assistance Centers (PCPR) may prove essential when: a child has a disability, the family requires specialized assistance, foster care or adoption is involved, or there is a need for rehabilitation programs, camps, or equipment.

**Migrant families** can receive assistance from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and institutions dedicated to migrants, but also from other places that support parents / legal guardians / children facing specific difficulties. Most often, these include: legal assistance, language support, consultations and support related to adapting to life in a new country. Many organizations also offer programs for children and young people.

**Parents don't need to know exactly where to seek help.** Every institution should offer assistance and, if they do not provide the required services directly, refer you to the right place.

It is worth knowing that support for children and youth is offered by **both public institutions and non-public / private facilities**. Public institutions offer assistance and **do not charge any fees**. Non-public (private) clinics and therapy centers offer similar services and often have

shorter waiting times, but they **charge a fee**. To find out whether a facility is private, simply look at their website or description. They usually use words like "niepubliczna" (non-public) or "prywatna" (private), or display a pricing list. Public institutions usually have the words "publiczna" (public) or "na NFZ" (NFZ-funded) in their name, or they operate within city or district structures. If a facility requires payment, it means it is a non-public (private) entity.

**Non-governmental organizations** acquire grants and subsidies, which allows them to **offer their services free of charge**.

# EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

If you have any concerns about your child's behavior and learning at school, you should first speak with their homeroom teacher. You can also make an appointment with the school psychologist, educational counselor or or intercultural assistant.

## Where to seek support when your child is struggling at school?

Your child may need extra educational support if:

- they have difficulty reading or writing,
- they have trouble concentrating,
- they have trouble understanding the material at school,
- they experience difficulties with the Polish language,
- they have learning gaps from their previous school,
- teachers raise concerns about their behavior or academic progress.

## Schools and nursery schools

### What assistance can the school offer?

- **Organize additional specialist activities** (see the textbox).
- **Adapt the teaching methods to the child's needs**, even if they don't have an official diagnosis, e.g.:
  - slower work pace,
  - additional explanations,
  - simpler instructions,
  - personalized approach to teaching.
- **Arrange Polish classes for non-native speakers** if the child comes from another country or is returning to Poland.
- **Provide support from a psychologist or school counselor**, particularly when dealing with concentration, emotional, or motivational issues.
- **Provide guidance on when to seek help from an external specialist, e.g., at a counseling center.**

### Classes conducted by specialists at school

Depending on the problem and available resources, the school or nursery school may organize:

- **corrective-compensatory classes**  
for children with difficulties in writing, reading, and auditory/visual analysis and synthesis;
- **remedial classes**  
for students who struggle to keep up with the curriculum or have educational gaps;
- **speech therapy**  
when a child has speech or language difficulties (including foreign children);
- **social-emotional learning classes**  
support with concentration, emotional regulation, behavior, and cooperation;
- **psychological support sessions**  
attention and memory exercises, stress management training, along with the observation and evaluation of the child's functioning.

### What kind of support can a nursery school offer?

Nursery schools are also obligated to offer psychological and educational support.

They can provide:

- **specialized sessions**
  - speech therapy,
  - therapeutic sessions for children with emotional, social, or developmental difficulties,
  - corrective-compensatory classes (e.g., when perceptual difficulties or delayed speech development arise);
- **observation and support for the child's development** (e.g., assistance with speech, self-help skills, peer interactions, and managing emotions);
- **adapting working methods**
  - simple instructions,
  - working in small groups,
  - activities supporting speech development, concentration, and motor skills,
  - extra review,
  - a calmer daily routine;

- **ongoing communication with parents**
  - updates on the child's progress and difficulties,
  - recommendations for at-home activities and practice,
  - suggestions on when to consult a specialist.

### **When does a school or nursery school refer a child to a counseling center?**

When, despite support:

- difficulties persist or escalate,
- the teacher notices potential developmental or emotional disorders, or language difficulties,
- a diagnosis, evaluation, or certificate is required,
- more specialized classes are needed, which the facility cannot provide.

## **Psycho-educational counseling centers**

**If you have doubts about whether the child should be diagnosed, talk to the homeroom teacher, psychologist, or school counselor.**

**If you feel a specialist consultation, opinion, or diagnosis is needed, please contact a counseling center.**

**If you're not sure where to find the counseling center, ask at your school and make an appointment.**

A psycho-educational counseling center is an institution that evaluates child development, diagnoses learning and behavioral difficulties, and provides support and recommendations for both parents and the school. Appointments at the counseling center are **free of charge and do not require a referral**.

Every school works with the counseling center assigned to its **district**. Find the counseling center designated for your district. If you're not sure where to find the counseling center for your district, ask at your school. Appointments at the counseling center are **free of charge and voluntary** - parents decide if they want to use the support. You may experience longer waiting times for an appointment at the counseling center.



## What support can a counseling center offer?

- **evaluating the child's difficulties**  
(psychological, pedagogical, and speech therapy assessments; developmental diagnoses),
- **issuing documents required by the school**  
(e.g., formal opinions and certificates of need),
- **providing support to older students and parents**  
(information, consultations, recommendations for at-home activities)
- **referring to other specialists** if needed,
- **conducting therapy sessions**, if available at the center.

If you approach the counseling center with a problem, the specialists will conduct an initial interview, suggest appropriate evaluation for the child, and explain the steps that the school and the parent or legal guardian can take to provide support.

Counseling centers also issue certificates and opinions for children and students with disabilities, including those with physical impairments, the deaf, the hard of hearing, the blind, the visually impaired, and those on the autism spectrum.

**The counseling center's services are tailored to the needs of the child or family.** This means that a formal diagnosis, the issuance of a document, or a consultation with a psychologist or educator will not always be necessary.

### What documents can the counseling center issue?

- **Diagnosis**

A diagnosis is a description of how a child functions – in their learning, emotions, behavior, speech, or overall development. Specialists identify: the nature of the difficulties, the mechanisms behind the problems, the child's strengths, and what actions will support the child. A diagnosis is the basis for issuing an opinion or a certificate, but it does not constitute an official school document on its own.

- **Opinion**

An opinion is an official school document that contains a description of the child's difficulties, guidelines and recommendations, and information on how the teachers should adapt their teaching.

An opinion may concern, among other things:

- specific learning difficulties (e.g., dyslexia and dysgraphia – difficulties with accurate reading and writing),
- difficulties with concentration, emotional or social functioning,
- the need for an Individualized Educational Path (ZŚK - *Zindywidualizowana Ścieżka Kształcenia*),
- language difficulties in students learning Polish as a foreign language.

The school has an obligation to take the opinion into account. Based on the opinion, the school will receive guidelines for teachers on how to work with the student, such as extended time for exams or a reduced number of tasks. These recommendations may also apply to the eight-grade exam and the Matura exam, for example by granting extended time for the examination.

- **Certificate**

A certificate is issued when a child has more serious or permanent difficulties requiring special organization of learning. The certificates concern, among other things:

- disabilities (intellectual or physical, resulting from the autism spectrum, or from visual or hearing conditions),
- risk of social maladjustment (i.e., behavioral or emotional difficulties that cause the student to struggle with following rules and finding themselves in a peer group, family, or school environment),
- medical conditions and/or illnesses that make attending school impossible or difficult.

The school has an obligation to implement the certificate.

Based on the certificate, the school prepares an IPET (Individual Educational and Therapeutic Program - *Indywidualny Program Edukacyjno-Terapeutyczny*), and the child may be provided with: rehabilitation classes, support from a school psychologist and a school counselor, additionally employed teachers, an adapted curriculum, as well as other forms of assistance.

### **When should you contact the counseling center?**

- When the child's difficulties persist despite support from school/nursery school.
- When a teacher or homeroom teacher reports concerning behaviors.
- When the child has serious difficulties with reading, writing, speech, concentration, or emotional regulation.
- If you suspect ADHD, dyslexia, speech disorders, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or other developmental difficulties.
- When the child does not speak Polish well and needs an evaluation of their educational needs.

### **How to make an appointment for your child at the counseling center?**

- Find the counseling center designated for your district - if you don't know where it is, ask at the school.
- Register your child by phone or in person.
- Complete the application form, describing the difficulties you observe as a parent / legal guardian. If you have any information regarding your child from a homeroom teacher, psychologist or counselor from their current or previous school (including a previous country of residence), it is worth attaching it.

## Next steps at the counseling center

The counseling center operates in a way tailored to the family's situation and needs. You can receive:

- consultations with a psychologist, counselor, or speech therapist - a conversation about challenges,
- diagnostic assessments tailored to the child's age and specific difficulties,
- discussing results and recommendations – for parents / legal guardians,
- issuing the necessary documentation - diagnostic reports, opinions, or certificates,
- consultations when a specialist from the center explains the next steps and how to cooperate with the school.

## Early Intervention Centers (OWI) and Early Development Support (WWR)

Early Intervention Centers (OWI) and Early Development Support (WWR) centers offer free, specialized assistance for young children experiencing developmental issues, disabilities or requiring additional support. These centers support the entire family – not just the child, but also parents, providing them with guidance and a future action plan.

### The centers can be used by children:

- from birth to the age of 7,
- with an early childhood development support opinion (issued by a psycho-educational counseling center),
- with suspected developmental delays or difficulties (at OWI centers - also without additional opinions).

### The support provided by Early Intervention Centers (OWI) and Early Development Support (WWR) includes:

- speech therapy (speech and communication),
- physiotherapy (physical and motor development),
- educational therapy (cognitive skills, school readiness),
- support from a psychologist (emotions, behavior, relationships),
- consultations for parents on how to support their child's development at home.

**Early Intervention Centers (OWI)** are medical facilities. Their services are funded by the NFZ and admit children based on **a doctor's referral**. The referral may be issued by specialists including a pediatrician, neonatologist, pediatric neurologist, or a rehabilitation physician. There is no catchment area.

**The Early Development Support (WWR) centers** diagnosis takes place at the district psycho-educational counseling center. Therapeutic and developmental sessions can be conducted

at a location chosen by the parent or legal guardian. Ask at the counseling center for a list of facilities offering **Early Development Support (WWR)**.

The OWI does not have a catchment area. Parents can choose any facility in the voivodeship.

## Other institutions – where else can you get help?

Apart from schools, nursery schools and psycho-educational counseling centers, there are other institutions that can support the child and family with educational difficulties. Depending on the nature of the difficulties, it is worth considering:

**Non-governmental organizations and foundations**, which often provide:

- tutoring and learning support,
- support for children of migrants,
- consultations and support groups for parents,
- workshops supporting children's emotional development.

### **Community youth centers**

Community/ Sociotherapeutic youth centers or youth after-school clubs are facilities typically run by the municipality or city, non-governmental organizations, or church parishes. These places often organize tutoring, learning support, and other forms of support for children and youth.

# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

---

**When might a child need psychological help?**

## **A child or teenager might need psychological support if:**

- they are often sad, withdrawn, or excessively anxious,
- they have anger outbursts or difficulty controlling their emotions,
- they avoid school, or report stomachaches or headaches for no apparent reason,
- they have experienced traumatic events (such as migration, loss of a loved one, abuse, or experiencing war),
- they struggle with relationships, anxiety, stress, or concentration,
- they experience depressive states, self-harm, or have suicidal thoughts,
- teachers or parents observe a clear change in their behavior.

## **School and nursery school**

**If you suspect psychological difficulties in your child, talk to their homeroom teacher and/or the school psychologist or counselor.**

If your child experiences emotional issues or behavioral problems resulting from stress, anxiety, trauma, or other burdens, begin by discussing them with the homeroom teacher and the school psychologist or counselor.

## **Psychological support provided by school and nursery school includes:**

- observing the child at school, providing information on the child's functioning,
- the child's daily functioning at school and nursery school,
- indicating whether external support is necessary,
- providing guidance to the parent or legal guardian on how to help the child in a given situation.

## Psychologist and psychotherapist for children and youth

In the event of concerning symptoms related to emotional or psychological problems, you can consult a psychologist or psychotherapist for children and youth. Children and youth can use this support up to the age of 21, until they graduate from high school. Treatment covered by the NFZ is free and does not require a doctor's referral.

### When to consult a psychologist?

- You notice changes in the child's behavior, emotions, or school performance.
- The child is more often sad, anxious, angry, or withdrawn.
- Increased tension, frequent conflict, and a breakdown in communication occur at home.
- You want to understand what is happening and what to do next, rather than acting blindly.
- You have a gut feeling that 'something is wrong,' but you can't find the words to describe it.

**A psychologist** helps diagnose the problem and determines whether therapy or a psychiatrist is needed, or if simple support is enough.

### When to consult a psychotherapist?

- If the difficulties persist for months or keep coming back, and your child is suffering emotionally, even if they seem to be coping on the outside.
- If recurring problems appear (such as anxiety, anger, low self-esteem).
- Relationships with peers, parents, and siblings are difficult.
- You have a feeling that this isn't an isolated incident, but something deeper.
- You want real change, not just 'for things to be better for a little while.'

**Psychotherapy** is a process that helps children understand themselves better and cope with life.

### Where to find a child psychologist and psychotherapist?

- **Community psychological and psychotherapeutic care center for children and youth (NFZ).** This is a place where psychologists and psychotherapists work. It is worth checking the addresses closest to your home, as catchment area applies. No referral is required to see a psychologist at the center.
- **Mental health center for children and youth (NFZ).** In addition to a psychologist and a psychotherapist, you can also find a child psychiatrist here. **Please note:** To make an appointment with a clinic psychologist or psychotherapist, you need **a referral, for example, from a family doctor.** You don't need a referral to see a psychiatrist.
- If you are looking for a **private** child and adolescent psychologist or psychotherapist, check reviews and availability on platforms like **Znany Lekarz** <https://www.znanylekarz.pl/>.

### What support can a child and adolescent mental health clinic provide?

- psychological consultations (**referral**),

- individual psychotherapy (**referral**),
- family therapy (**referral**),
- support of a community therapist (**no referral required**),
- child psychiatrist consultation (**no referral required**).

## Psychiatrist for children and youth

### When to consult a psychiatrist?

- When a child expresses thoughts of self-harm, death, or the meaninglessness of life.
- There are incidents of self-harm or strong impulsive behaviors.
- Symptoms are very severe (deep sadness, intense anxiety, lack of sleep).
- The child stops functioning – doesn't go to school, doesn't eat, doesn't sleep.
- A psychologist or therapist says directly: "a psychiatric consultation is needed."
- Pharmacological treatment or urgent intervention may be needed.

A visit to a psychiatrist does not automatically mean they will prescribe medication - the goal is to ensure the child's safety and protect their health. The psychiatrist will evaluate mental health condition, recommend appropriate treatment, and may refer to therapy. They can also provide support to the parent / legal guardian. A visit to a child psychiatrist at a mental health clinic (NFZ) is free and does not require a doctor's referral.

Psychiatric treatment for children and youth can be provided in several ways:

- **outpatient** (medical or psychological consultations, or psychotherapeutic sessions),
- **community care** (home or community visits),
- **day care** (medical care, therapeutic activities, and psychotherapeutic sessions organized as a part of the treatment, 3 hours a day, 5 days a week, for a set period of time),
- **inpatient** (24-hour stay in a hospital ward, hostel, or care and treatment facility).

### Where to find a child psychiatrist?

- **mental health centers for children and youth (NFZ)**

In mental health centers, you can make an appointment with a child psychiatrist without a referral.

- **psychiatric hospitals and clinics**

Some hospitals have child psychiatry wards, hospital outpatient clinics, or day care wards. There, you can receive a consultation with a child psychiatrist, and the child can also be admitted

to a psychiatric hospital ward. Psychiatric wards feature **hospital schools** - this way, your child continues their education. Hospital schools are also run within day care wards.

- **private practices and mental health center**

If you need a quicker appointment, you can see a child psychiatrist privately (for a fee).

## Crisis Intervention Center (OIK)

The Crisis Intervention Center (OIK) is a place that provides immediate, short-term psychological support to people experiencing a crisis - including children, teens, and adults.

The OIK helps when a sudden, difficult situation arises (e.g., abuse, severe stress, trauma, family crisis), by offering immediate consultation with a psychologist, social support, and occasionally legal assistance and further guidance. **If life or health is at risk and the crisis is mental health-related - go to a psychiatric hospital immediately.**

### What support can a Crisis Intervention Center (OIK) provide?

- immediate psychological support (often 24/7),
- assistance in crisis situations (e.g., abuse, trauma, sudden loss, severe stress),
- crisis intervention and short-term support,
- evaluating the situation and planning a further path of care,
- consultations with a social worker,
- help with required documentation and direction to relevant institutions,
- sometimes short-term housing for those in need of protection (depending on the facility).

## Helplines for children and adolescents

All helplines for children and adolescents are free of charge and anonymous.

- **116 111 - Helpline for children and youth**  
24-hour, anonymous, also offering online chat.
- **800 121 212 - Children's Helpline of the Children's Rights Ombudsman**  
Help for children, teens, and adults regarding children's issues. Available 24/7.
- **800 120 002 - The "Blue Line"**  
Helpline for children, youth, and adults experiencing domestic abuse.
- **800 119 119 - Helpline and chat for children and adolescents (also in Ukrainian)**  
Psychological support, available every day during set hours.



# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR PARENTS / LEGAL GUARDIANS

When does a parent or guardian need psychological help?

## A parent/ guardian can reach out for psychological support when:

- they are worried about their child's behavior or emotions,
- they don't know how to react to their child's difficult behavior or emotions,
- they themselves are experiencing severe stress, helplessness, exhaustion, anxiety, or depressed mood,
- the family is facing a difficult situation (e.g., migration, illness, breakup, financial issues),
- they need a conversation and advice on how to support their child while also taking care of themselves,
- they are trying to understand how to react to their child's difficult behavior,
- they want to improve communication within the family,
- the parent or child has experienced a traumatic event, such as war, abuse, the loss of a loved one, or sudden migration, and needs a safe environment to talk or specialized support.

## Institutions offering psychological support for parents / legal guardians

A parent / legal guardian can receive free psychological support at public institutions (covered by the NFZ). To make an appointment for a psychological consultation under the NFZ, you need a referral from a family doctor or another specialist. Non-governmental organizations do not require referrals, their help is free of charge. Psychological help is also provided for a fee at private psychology clinics.

### Psycho-educational counseling center

- **The choice of the center is determined by the catchment area** of the child's school.
- **A referral is not required, and assistance is provided free of charge**, although the waiting time for an appointment can be extended.
- **Consultations with specialists:** a meeting with a psychologist, educational counselor or speech therapist about the child's difficulties (educational, emotional, linguistic, or developmental).

- **Explanation of diagnosis results:** specialists will explain what the test results mean, what the child's needs are, and how to support them.
- **Parenting and educational guidance:** specialists will help parents/guardians understand how to react to difficult behaviors and how to support the child's concentration, learning, emotions and daily functioning.
- **Information about available forms of school support:** counseling center staff will explain what support the school is required to provide (e.g., specialist classes, adaptations) and what documentation may be required.
- **Referrals to other specialists or facilities:** if necessary, parents will be guided on where to find therapy, medical treatment, rehabilitation, or social support.
- **Support for parents of children with special educational needs certificate:** specialists will help understand how to plan therapy and how to cooperate with the school.

### **Mental Health Clinic or Mental Health Center (NFZ)**

- **Support is free of charge, a referral** from a family doctor or another specialist to a psychologist or psychotherapist **is required**.
- **Consultations with a psychologist or psychotherapist:** a parent / legal guardian can discuss their concerns, parenting issues, or their own emotions related to the child's difficulties.
- **Psychoeducation regarding support for the child:** a specialist explains how to react and support a child in crisis, and how to build a secure relationship.
- **Family therapy:** joint sessions for the family aimed at improving communication, relationships, and coping with family hardships.
- **Consultation with a psychiatrist:** a parent / legal guardian can discuss the diagnosis, treatment, concerns regarding medication, or the child's symptoms.

### **Crisis Intervention Center (OIK)**

- **Immediate consultation with a psychologist:** support in situations of severe stress, family crises, abuse, sudden incidents, or difficult emotions regarding your child.
- **Support in evaluating the child's situation:** the psychologist helps parents / legal guardians understand what is happening, explore potential causes of the difficulties, and learn how to react in the initial hours of a crisis.
- **Action plan for a crisis situation:** OIK helps determine what to do next - which institutions to contact, and where to seek specialized or medical help.
- **Support in cases of abuse or safety risks:** OIK provides information on available forms of protection, can help contact the police or other emergency services, and may provide shelter in justified cases.
- **Legal and social advice:** a parent / legal guardian can receive guidance regarding the rights of the child and family, available social support options, procedures, and next steps.

- **Referral to relevant institutions:** OIK helps quickly find suitable support: Social Assistance Centers (OPS), schools, Powiat Family Assistance Centers (PCPR), or non-governmental organizations.

### **Schools and nursery schools**

- **Consultations with the school counselor and school psychologist:** specialists help you understand the child's difficulties, suggest what steps to take at home, and offer support available within the school or nursery school. A parent / guardian will find out what extracurricular, specialist, or remedial activities are available for the child.
- **Support in contacting institutions:** A school/nursery school can help the parent make an appointment at a counseling center, social services (OPS, PCPR), or other institutions especially if the parent doesn't know where to go. The school psychologist or counselor will explain what support is available to the child, what the school's responsibilities are, and how cooperation with the counseling center works.

### **Non-governmental organizations**

- Specialized non-governmental organizations providing psychological support offer free consultations, support groups for parents, and activities for children and parents. The extent of the support depends on acquired grants and subsidies.

### **Private psychology clinics**

- If time is a priority, you can turn to private psychology practices. They often offer psychological and psychotherapeutic consultations, along with family therapy.

## **Helplines for parents and legal guardians**

- **800 100 100 – Helpline for Parents and Teachers**  
Support with parenting issues, and children's school and emotional problems.
- **800 800 602 – Helpline for Parents of Children in Crisis**  
Psychological support for parents dealing with their child's difficulties.
- **800 121 212 – Children's Helpline of the Children's Rights Ombudsman**  
Support for parents concerning child safety and children's rights.
- **800 120 002 – The "Blue Line"**  
Support for families experiencing domestic abuse; legal and crisis support.
- **116 123 – Helpline for adults experiencing an emotional crisis**  
Anonymous psychological support for parents overwhelmed by stress, anxiety, or a difficult situation.

# SOCIAL SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

---

Social services are a support system for families experiencing a difficult personal or financial situation and who need help in meeting their basic needs. It includes both **material support** (e.g., welfare benefits, in-kind support) and **specialized support** (such as a family support worker or help with administrative procedures).

## When may a family need support from social services?

A family can receive support from social services if:

- **experiencing financial difficulties** – lacking funds for food, clothing, medication, bills, and housing costs,
- **facing a difficult life situation** – e.g., breakup, illness, job loss, sudden crisis,
- **needing support in caring for and raising children**, organizing daily routines, and contacting schools and other institutions,
- **experiencing housing problems** – e.g., debt, risk of eviction, very difficult living conditions,
- **there is domestic violence or a threat to safety**,
- **there is a child with a disability** requiring funding, equipment, or specialized programs,
- **the family is facing a long-term illness**, disability, or other health-related challenges,
- **the family is struggling with administrative tasks** – needing support in contacting authorities, institutions, and schools.

Social services are provided free of charge through public institutions. The main institutions are Social Assistance Centers (OPS), schools, Powiat Family Assistance Centers (PCPR). Social support (financial, material, basic needs, or humanitarian) can also be provided by other institutions: schools, parishes, community centers, or non-governmental organizations.

## Social Assistance Centers (OPS), Municipal Social Welfare Centers (MOPS) and Municipal Family Support Centers (MOPR)

They can provide services including:

- **financial support** (welfare benefits, subsidies),
- **in-kind support** (food, clothes, school/baby supplies, children's meals),
- **support from a family assistant** in organizing daily routines and contacting institutions,
- **help with administrative procedures** and paperwork,
- **support in situations of domestic violence** or sudden crisis,
- **information about the availability of additional services** (community centers, support programs, non-governmental organizations).

These centers are **the best place to start** if a family is struggling with finances, basic needs, or organizing their daily routines.

**Municipal Social Welfare Centers (MOPS)** are social welfare centers located in cities (e.g., Gniezno). They serve the exact same purpose.

**Municipal Family Support Centers (MOPR)** are located in cities with county rights. In the Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) region, MOPR centers are located in: Poznań, Kalisz, Konin, and Leszno.

## Powiat Family Assistance Centers (PCPR)

Powiat Family Assistance Centers (PCPR) are institutions operating at the county level that offer specialized support for families, children, and people with disabilities. They help when a family's needs go beyond the basic help offered by OPS, especially in situations requiring long-term, comprehensive, or specialized support.

PCPR can provide services including:

- support for foster and adoptive families,
- support for people with disabilities – funding for equipment, rehabilitation retreats, and rehabilitation services,
- specialized support programs and services for children and families,
- legal and social advice,
- coordination of Early Development Support (WWR) (in some counties),
- help in crisis situations when beyond-standard intervention is needed,
- support for care leavers in gaining independence.

The PCPR is the best place to turn to when a family needs specialized, long-term support, especially regarding disabilities, foster care, or difficult life circumstances that require the coordination of various forms of support.

## Social Services Centers (CUS)

Social Services Centers (CUS) are institutions that bring together different types of social support in one place. CUS are being developed as a modern method of providing local support – instead of dealing with multiple offices, a family can turn to a single center. CUS do not operate in all municipalities – they are established only where the local administration has decided to restructure the OPS or create a new social services structure. CUS can operate as the entity that handles the responsibilities of the OPS or as a separate unit – alongside the OPS.

# SUPPORT FOR FOREIGNERS AND MIGRANT FAMILIES

---

**Foreign children have the same rights to education and basic support as the children of Polish citizens**, regardless of their country of origin, residency status, or knowledge of the Polish language. Parents can also access the available forms of support, especially when the family is facing educational, emotional, or social difficulties. In Poland, there are no separate support agencies providing educational, psychological, and social assistance specifically for foreigners; they can use the generally available public institutions.

**For Ukrainians:** children and youth (up to 18 years of age) **have the right to access free medical care** in Poland, including Primary Health Care (POZ) and subsidized medications, if **they are beneficiaries of temporary protection and hold a PESEL number with the UKR status** (since March 5, 2026).

**For people from other countries:** free healthcare is available to individuals in specific situations, including: retirees and pensioners, employed persons, holders of the Pole's Card (Karta Polaka), women during childbirth and the postpartum period, and individuals granted international protection. Regulations are subject to change. **Check if you are eligible for free healthcare.**

In the Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) region, there are many active **non-governmental organizations dedicated to migrants** – in these places, foreigners can receive support tailored to the specific situations migrants face. The employees at these institutions speak foreign languages and are familiar with the rights and obligations of migrants, as well as the laws governing the legal stay and employment of foreigners in Poland.

## Social assistance for foreigners

Foreigners who have been granted **refugee status** or **subsidiary protection** in Poland can benefit from assistance provided for up to 12 months under the so-called **Individual Integration Program (IPI)**, designed to support their integration process. Support under the individual integration program is provided based on an application submitted to the starosta (head of the county) through the Powiat Family Assistance Centers (PCPR) or Municipal Family Support Centers (MOPR), within 60 days of the foreign national being granted refugee status or subsidiary protection.

Social Assistance Centers (OPS) and Powiat Family Assistance Centers (PCPR) also provide support to foreign families living in Poland who find themselves in difficult life or financial situations; however, the availability of social assistance depends on their residency status and citizenship.

Full access (identical to that of Polish citizens) is granted to:

- citizens of the European Union (EU) / the European Economic Area (EEA) / Switzerland who reside in Poland,

- foreigners with the right to permanent residence, long-term EU resident status, refugee status, subsidiary protection, permission for humanitarian stay, or temporary protection.

These individuals are eligible for all types of support from the OPS and PCPR, including financial support.

At the OPS, foreigners who hold a temporary residence permit, are staying in Poland on a visa or visa-free travel, or have the right to reside based on family reunification (but without permanent residence) can get in-kind assistance (e.g., food, clothing, emergency support), family assistant support, counseling, and crisis or domestic violence intervention. They will not always receive cash benefits.

The PCPR also support foreign families, especially when special needs arise within the family, such as a child's disability, the need for rehabilitation, foster care support, or specialist services.

**Institutions and organizations dedicated to migrants** can provide:

- legal support and counseling (residence legalization, school, work),
- help with handling administrative and official formalities,
- help with school and nursery school enrollment,
- free activities for children – educational and integration workshops, and tutoring,
- support with family integration into their new environment,
- Polish language courses,
- career counseling,
- psychological support,
- help with adaptation and integration,
- support in crisis situations.

### Important information for foreigners

- Most forms of assistance are free of charge.
- You don't need a referral.
- You don't need to know the regulations or speak Polish to ask for help.
- You can always contact the office via phone, email, or in person to ask a question.
- The school can help you in contacting any institution.

Contact details for local institutions can be found later in this guide.