



Partnership and Children

Partnership

Parents' Rights and Duties

Being a Parent

Childcare

Family Reunification

Conflicts

Partnership

In Switzerland, there are many different ways in which people live together. If you want to get married, you need to be at least 18 years old. Both spouses have equal rights.

Living Together

Much has changed in Switzerland over the last few decades. Many unmarried couples live together (cohabitation, Konkubinats). The couples may also have children together. There is no set division of roles between the partners. This means that men and women do not have to handle certain tasks in the relationship.

Same-sex couples may also live together, for example a man with a man or a woman with a woman. They have the same rights as other couples and can also get married.

Marriage

In Switzerland, you must be 18 years old in order to get married. Same-sex couples can also get married: a man can marry a man and a woman can marry a woman. If you wish to get married, you need to contact the registry office of Basel-Stadt (Zivilstandsamt). The registry office then initiates the "marriage preparation procedure". For example, the office examines whether both partners meet the requirements for marriage. After the procedure has been completed, the wedding must take place within three months. The registry office offers more detailed information on the procedure and the necessary documents.

If one partner still lives abroad, it is possible to file a request for the partner to enter Switzerland (marriage preparation). You can then both get married here in Switzerland. The registry office might suspect that you are engaging in a marriage of convenience (Scheinehe). A marriage of convenience is when you get married only in order to enable one of the partners to live in Switzerland. The registry office can deny the marriage. If you have already got married, the office can declare the marriage invalid. The marriage will then be rescinded. You may also lose your residence permit as a result of the marriage of convenience.

Rights and Duties

Spouses have equal rights and duties by law. They have equal status in the marriage. Both spouses must marry by choice. A forced marriage (Zwangsheirat) is when someone is compelled into a marriage. If the authorities discover a forced marriage, they can declare the marriage invalid. People who force others to get married are prosecuted.

Do you believe that you are being forced into a marriage? The counselling centre zwangsheirat.ch can support you. It is free to call. The telephone number is: 0800 800 007.

Family Planning

Do you have questions about family planning, pregnancy and sexuality? There are counselling centres for this purpose in Canton Basel-Stadt. These centres provide information on various topics, such as contraception, sexual problems, sexual health, sexual diseases or if you have an unwanted pregnancy. They also advise you if you are expecting a child or already have children.

Divorce

Are you married and do you want to get divorced? In that case, you can request the divorce at Basel-Stadt civil court (Zivilgericht). You can request the divorce alone. Or you can request the divorce together with your spouse.

Did you get married abroad? You can also get divorced according to Swiss law. However, you will need to have lived in Switzerland for at least one year, and Switzerland must be your main domicile. If you get a divorce, your residency status may be affected. Perhaps you will no longer be allowed to live in Switzerland after the divorce. Are you currently undergoing naturalisation? You might no longer be able to become a Swiss citizen after the divorce.

Can you stay in Switzerland after the divorce? It is best to ask a counselling centre for marriage and families or a centre for legal advice. Special rules apply if you are a victim of domestic violence.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/partnership-and-children/partnership

Parents' Rights and Duties

When you have a child, you need to report the birth to the registry office immediately. If you are married, custody over your child is automatically regulated. If you are not married, you need to take care of custody yourself.

Notice of Birth

You need to report the birth of every child to the registry office (Zivilstandsamt).

Please note: you must go to the registry office at the place your child is born. In other words, you might not necessarily need to go to the office at your place of residence.

The child is born in hospital:

The hospital will send the documents to the registry office. You do not need to take any other action yourself.

The child is not born in hospital:

Perhaps you give birth to your child at home or somewhere else in the world. In this case, you need to report the birth to the registry office yourself. You have three days to do so. The registry office will tell you what documents you need to submit.

Good to know:

A child born in Switzerland does not become a Swiss citizen. The child does not automatically receive Swiss citizenship.

Acknowledging Paternity

You are married and having a child:

The husband will automatically be registered as the father. If the husband believes he is not the father, he can go to court and dispute his paternity.

You are unmarried and having a child:

The father of your child will not automatically be registered as the father. He can go to the registry office before or after the birth and recognise the child. If the father does not wish to recognise the child, the mother can go to court and request that he recognises the child.

Parental Authority

As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring the well-being of your children. That is your right and duty (parental authority, elterliche Sorge). For example, you need to raise your children and pay the costs of living for your children. You also need to represent your children legally until they reach 18 years of age.

You are married:

You both have the same rights and duties towards your children.

You are not married:

The father must first recognise the child. Afterwards, you can both voluntarily declare in writing that you wish to provide for your child together (gemeinsame elterliche Sorge). You can do so if the father has recognised the child at the registry office. Or you can also go to the child welfare authority (Kindesschutzbehörde, KESB).

If you do not agree on the right of custody, the child welfare authority will decide.

If you have questions or need support, you can turn to a family counselling centre.

Maintenance

If you have separated, you are both still required to provide for your child. You should therefore discuss who should look after the child and who should pay how much money (maintenance, Unterhalt).

You both pay for the maintenance of your child. Perhaps you have to pay more or less than the other parent. Or perhaps you do not have to pay anything. This depends on how much money you earn and how much you look after the child. If you cannot agree with the other parent, you can go to court.

A parent is not paying their contribution:

If the other parent does not pay their contribution for the child, you can ask the commune at your place of residence for assistance. The commune will help you get the money. It might disburse the money for the maintenance if you are entitled to the money. This is called alimony advance (Alimentenbevorschussung).

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/partnership-and-children/parents-rights-and-duties

Being a Parent

It is not easy to raise a child. Sometimes, you might wonder what is good for your child. It can be very helpful to discuss this with other parents. A number of different counselling centres can also help you.

Meeting Points

There are plenty of programmes for mothers and fathers. Here you can talk to other parents or do something together with your child.

- Toddlers' groups (Krabbelgruppen) are for babies and young children up to 2 years of age. Here you can get to know other parents.
- Parent-child gymnastics (with the mother, the father or both parents and the child) are for parents with young children. You can play together, exercise and have fun. Most communes offer these gymnastics programmes.
- Community centres (Quartiertreffpunkte) offer different events for parents and children.
- Libraries and games libraries have offers for young and older children and their parents.

Parental Education

In Canton Basel-Stadt, there are courses for parents on a wide variety of topics. There are also special courses for migrants. For example, there are courses on the Swiss school system. Some classes are also offered in foreign languages.

Educational Counselling

If you have any questions on raising your children, a number of counselling centres can help. For example, if you have babies and young children under 5 years of age, you can go to parental counselling (Elternberatung).

In the event of urgent questions, there is a parental hotline. Here you can get advice from experts. You pay the normal landline rate when you call. Telephone: 0848 35 45 55. Or you can write an email. You can find the address on www.elternnotruf.ch.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/partnership-and-children/being-a-parent

Childcare

Many fathers and mothers continue working after their child is born. For this reason, there are special childcare options in Canton Basel-Stadt. For most of them, you need to pay.

Day-Care Centres (KITA)

Your child is supervised all day at day-care centres. Day-care centres (Kindertagesstätten) are abbreviated to "Kitas" in German. Most Kitas are for children from the age of 3 months until school. Some Kitas also supervise school children before school, during lunchtime and after school.

You need to register your child well in advance, because the waiting lists are long. The prices charged by the Kitas vary. The commune pays a portion of the costs for some Kitas. You can ask the Kitas and the commune about how much it costs and how to register your child.

Playgroups

Many children attend a play group (Spielgruppe) before they start school. In the play group, children aged over 3 years meet without their parents. A trained supervisor occupies the children. The children play and do crafts together, for example. Play groups are voluntary.

Does your child not speak German at home? Your child can start a play group to learn German. This will make it easier for your child when they start school.

Day Schools / School Lunch

At all primary levels and secondary levels, there are day school programmes (Tagesstrukturen) at school or nearby. A day school programme means that the children stay at school over lunchtime and receive a meal. After school, someone looks after the children and the children can do their homework.

Do you want your child to attend the day school programme? You will need to pay for it. The costs depend on how much you earn. Your child can then go to the day school programme on one day or multiple days per week.

Day Families

You can also have your child looked after by a day-care family (Tagesfamilie). A day-care family is a family who takes care of your child all day or before and after school. Agencies can help you find a suitable day-care family. The agencies also inform you about how much a day-care family usually costs.

Babysitters / Emergency Situations

In Switzerland, young people can also work as babysitters on evenings or weekends. The young people are paid for this work. The Swiss Red Cross in Basel-Stadt (SRC) has a list of agencies for babysitters who have previously attended a course.

Emergency child care

You may have an emergency and urgently need someone to look after your child. For example, you or your partner need to go to hospital and no-one can take care of your child. The Swiss Red Cross in Basel-Stadt (SRC) offers emergency child care. You need to pay for this care. However, some health insurers assume the costs.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/partnership-and-children/childcare

Family Reunification

If you live in Switzerland, members of your family can also move to Switzerland. However, certain requirements need to be met. If relatives or acquaintances want to visit you in Switzerland, you may need to apply for an entry visa. This depends on which country your visitor is from.

Family Reunification

If you live here, direct relatives or your spouse may also be able to move to Switzerland (family reunification, Familiennachzug). Which family members can you submit a request for? This depends on your nationality and your residency status. Your family may also be able to move here even if you are only provisionally admitted and have an F permit.

The migration office (Migrationsamt) decides on whether your family can join you in Switzerland. The migration office will inform you about what you have to do and what documents you need.

Please note:

You need to request the reunification of your family within a certain deadline. The deadline for children is shorter than for adults, such as your spouse.

Marriage Preparation

Do you live in Switzerland and want to marry someone from another country? You can apply for entry to allow you to prepare the marriage (Vorbereitung der Heirat). This enables your partner to enter Switzerland prior to marriage and you can get married here.

The migration office (Migrationsamt) decides whether your partner may enter the country. The office will inform you about what you have to do and which documents you need.

Entry Visa

Do your relatives or acquaintances from your country of origin wish to visit you in Switzerland? They will need an entry visa for Switzerland. It is often not easy to obtain a visa. Sometimes your visitors need to present an invitation letter that you have signed. Or the visitors must guarantee that they can finance themselves (declaration of commitment, Verpflichtungserklärung).

The Swiss embassy abroad decides on whether people receive a visa. The embassy provides information about what your visitors have to do and which documents they need. You can also obtain information from the migration office (Migrationsamt).



**Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets,
brochures)**

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/partnership-and-children/family-reunification

Conflicts

Are you experiencing conflicts and arguments in your partnership or family? A number of different counselling centres can help you. Violence in the family and between spouses is forbidden. On "Hello Basel-Stadt" you can find a section dedicated to domestic violence. There you can find more information on the topic.

Conflicts in Partnerships

If you are having problems in your partnership, you can obtain help from specialists (marriage counselling, Eheberatung). There are special counselling centres that look for solutions with you. Usually the first meeting is free or you have to pay less for it.

Conflicts in Families

When you have children, there can sometimes be difficult situations. This is stressful for you as a parent and for your children. It is best to seek help if you are unsure how to handle a situation.

Help for parents:

- You can obtain personal advice at the family counselling centre (Familienberatungsstelle).
- If you have questions on parenting or are worried about your children, you can contact the parental hotline. Here you receive advice from specialists over the phone on 0848 35 45 55 (you pay the normal landline rate) or by email.

For children and youths:

- Children and youths can call the children's hotline, write an email or SMS or use the chat service. Telephone: 147 (the call is free of charge).

Domestic Violence

Violence in the family is a criminal offence and is forbidden. Those who use violence can be prosecuted. Any form of violence is prohibited. No-one can use violence against others in the family: whether against the spouse or against the children. When authorities learn about violence in the family, they are compelled to take action. Do you experience violence in the family? There are offers where you can find support. The offers are free and confidential.

- Frauenhaus / Väterhaus (women's or men's shelter): If women or men experience violence, they can go to the women's or men's shelter for a certain period of time. They can seek protection there with their children. Women can call the women's shelter day and night. Telephone: 061 681 66 33.
- Children's hotline: Children and youths can call the children's hotline. The call is free of charge. Telephone: 147.
- Do you feel threatened by someone in your family? Then call the police. Telephone: 117. The police may expel the perpetrator from the home for an extended period of time. In that case, the perpetrator is not allowed to enter the home.

On "Hello Basel-Stadt" a section is dedicated to domestic violence. There you can find more information on the topic.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/partnership-and-children/conflicts