

Friday, 21 July 2017

[Login](#) / [Register](#)


TAKE THE NEXT STEP
M.A. in Second Language Learning & Teaching!

[Learn more](#)

UNYP UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK IN PRAGUE

Prague Daily Monitor

SUMMER FUN
@PBS
10. - 21.7. & 7. - 18.8.



Právo: More Czech children returning from institutions to parents

ČTK | 20 JULY 2017

Prague, July 19 (CTK) - The number of children who have returned from institutional care to their biological parents has increased by one-third in the Czech Republic in five years, which reflects a changed approach of authorities and social workers to problem families, daily Pravo writes today.

In 2011, 953 children returned to their original families from children's homes, but five years later it was 1403 children.

When it comes to alternative family care, which has only been preferred in the past few years, 329 children returned from foster families to their biological parents in 2014, while a year later it was 381.

This is a success though the number of children in state care has been rising, Pravo says.

The number of children in institutional or alternative family care increased by 6,000 in the past 20 years. Most of them were taken from their families because of social problems. The figures would have been even higher if these families had not received a helping hand, the paper writes.

It says the "activating services" help families in need to stand on their own feet again. One of them is the Advisory Centre for Citizenship that helps some 5000 clients a year.

Its director Miroslav Dvorak cites an example of a mother addicted to alcohol who neglected the care of her children, aged five and six years, who ended up in institutional care. The mother, who was striving for their return, contacted the advisory centre. She underwent an inpatient detox therapy and the centre helped her find a job and get a community flat.

"We submitted a proposal for the abolition of institutional care (of her children) and the court approved it," Dvorak said, adding that his centre keeps cooperating with the family.

The association succeeds in reuniting the original families in 75 percent of cases though in some of them the whole process lasts up to several years.

The most frequent cause of placing children in institutional care is the family's poverty if the biological parents lack a proper housing and financial means, they have long been unemployed and dependent on welfare or they live on the minimum wage only. They often live in socially excluded localities or ghettos. Some parents suffer from a physical or mental disability, most of them have low education, are indebted or addicted to alcohol or drugs, Dvorak said.

A family may also get into a difficult situation if one parent dies or is hospitalised and there are no other relatives to help look after the children. In other cases, children are taken from the parents who fail in their upbringing, which may be manifested by truanting and domestic violence, or they do not manage the care since they have too many children, he said.

Another usual "handicap" is if they come from an ethnic minority, such as the Roma people, which is an obstacle to finding a job and renting a flat. These parents are sometimes very young, have criminal records or they are single without partners, he added.

The centre must first find out whether the biological parents have a sufficiently strong and true motivation to win their children back. It also tries to get other relatives involved in the situation. If the conditions in the family improve, the centre applies for the abolition of

institutional care and supports more frequent contacts between the parents and their children, Dvorak told Pravo.

Besides, the centre and similar organisations focus on preventive services in families threatened with a collapse. "We consider the prevention of dividing families the most important task," Dvorak told Pravo.

The office for children's social and legal protection (OSPOD) sometimes recommends a family in need to the advisory centre, but its workers mostly find such families during their field work, Dvorak said.

Nevertheless, he points out that the state could ease the situation of many families by across-the-board measures, for instance, a law on social housing that the Chamber of Deputies has not approved, however.

hol/t/ms

Copyright 2015 by the Czech News Agency (ČTK). All rights reserved.

Copying, dissemination or other publication of this article or parts thereof without the prior written consent of ČTK is expressly forbidden. The Prague Daily Monitor is not responsible for its content.

