



Deutsches  
Jugendinstitut

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# Children in child protection:

How they **access** measures

How they are **socially constructed**

How they **live their child protection experiences** as adults

Prof. Dr. Vanessa Schnorr, Catholic University of Applied Sciences Mainz, Germany

Prof. Dr. Judith Haase, Catholic University of Applied Sciences NRW, Münster, Germany



# Our Topics

1. ‚Child protection careers‘- insights into the DFG-project

2. The child as a 'crown witness'

3. Child protection must be organised

4. Child protection and biography

5. Conclusion and discussion

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## „Child protection careers“- insights into the DFG-project

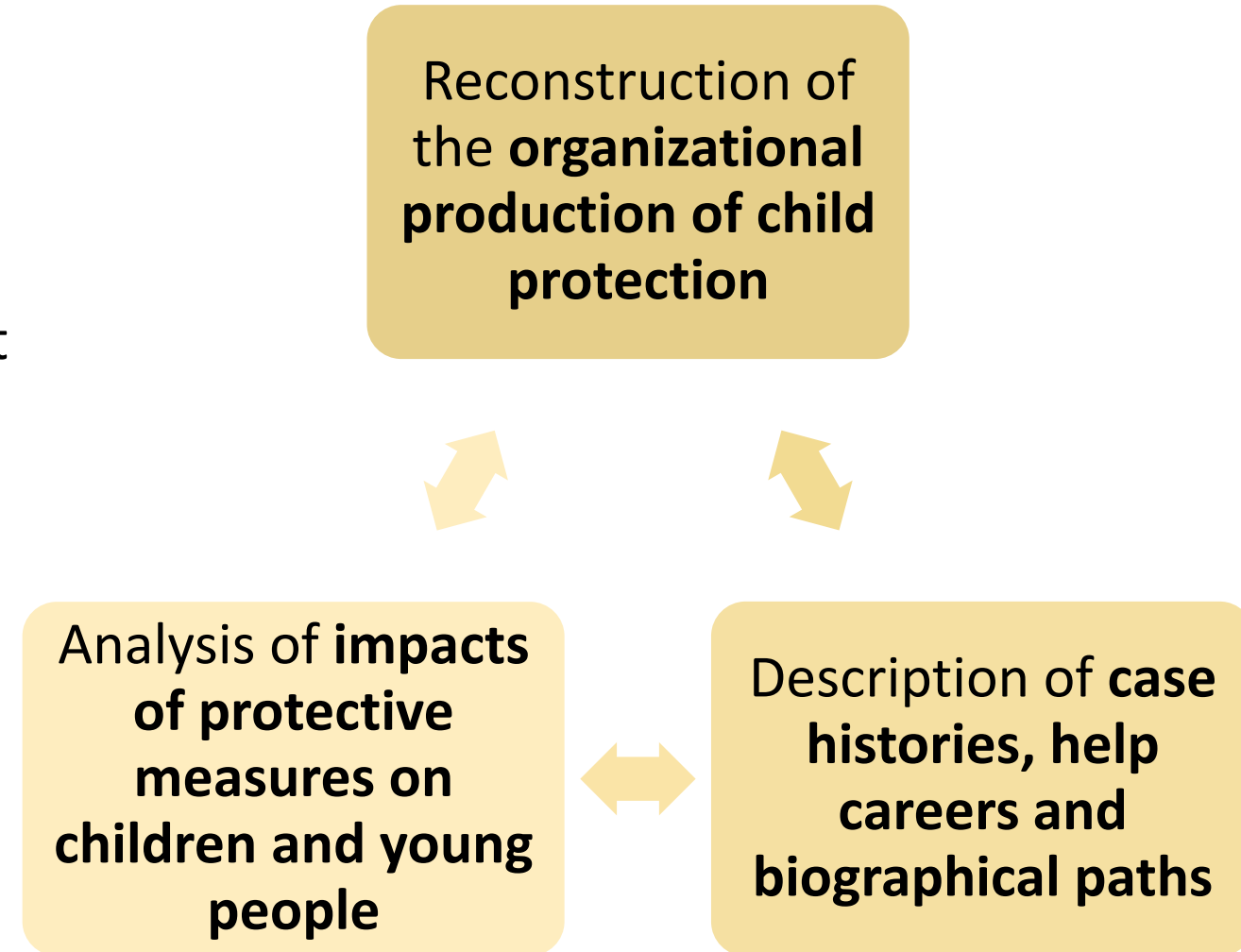
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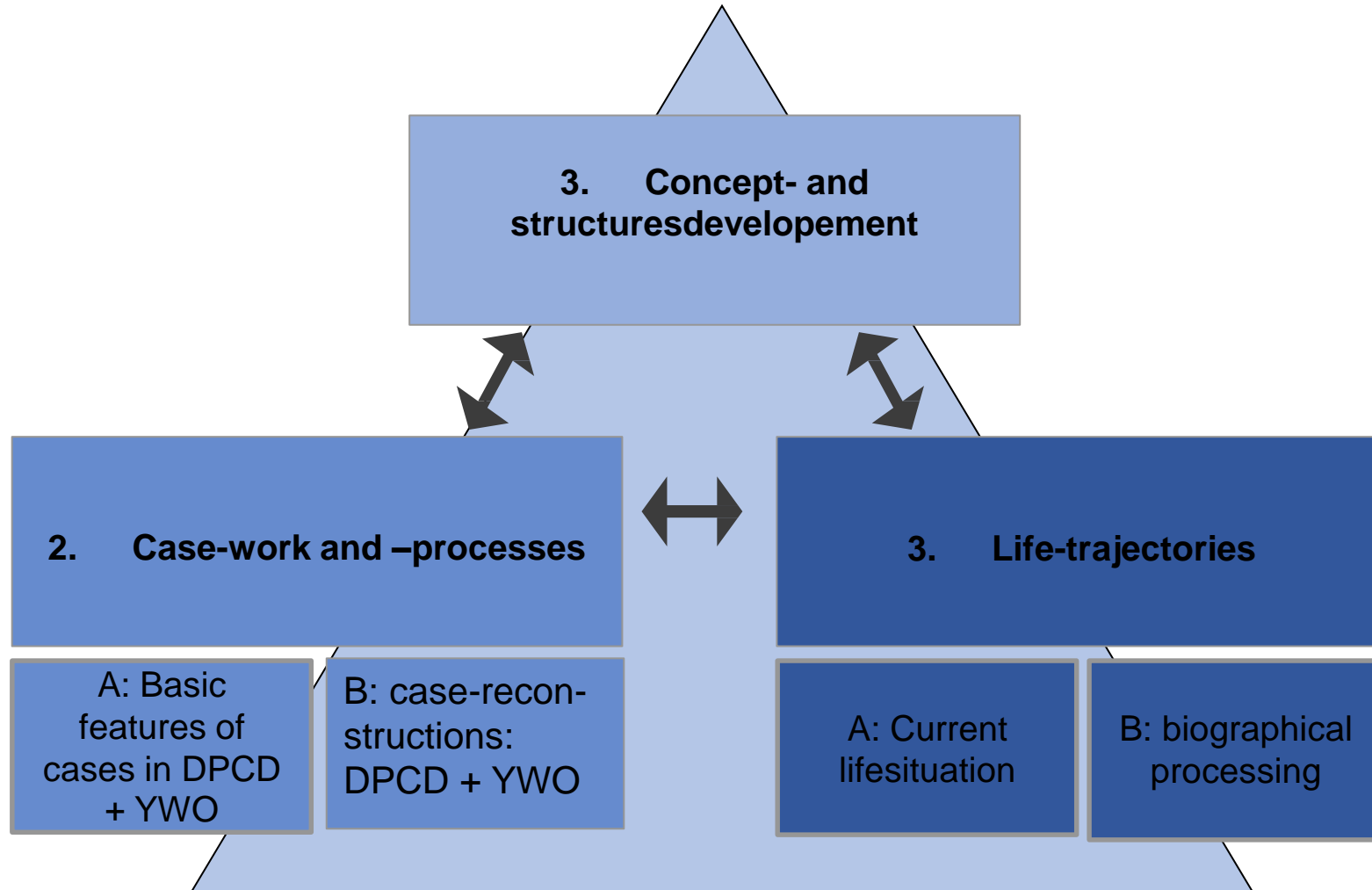
# Database and project goals

Extensive file material from 30 years of child protection activities in Düsseldorf:

- approx. **5000 case files** from an outpatient Child Protection Diagnostic Center (CPDC) (1985-2014)
- **> 400 Concept documents** of the outpatient Child Protection Diagnostic Centre (CPDC) (1985-2014)
- **900 corresponding individual case files** of the Youth Welfare Office (2005-2014)
- **8 biographical interviews** (2019-2020)



# Project features and design



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## The child as a 'crown witness'

Perceptions and constructions from professionals regarding children in child protection

# Researchquestion and -method

## Question

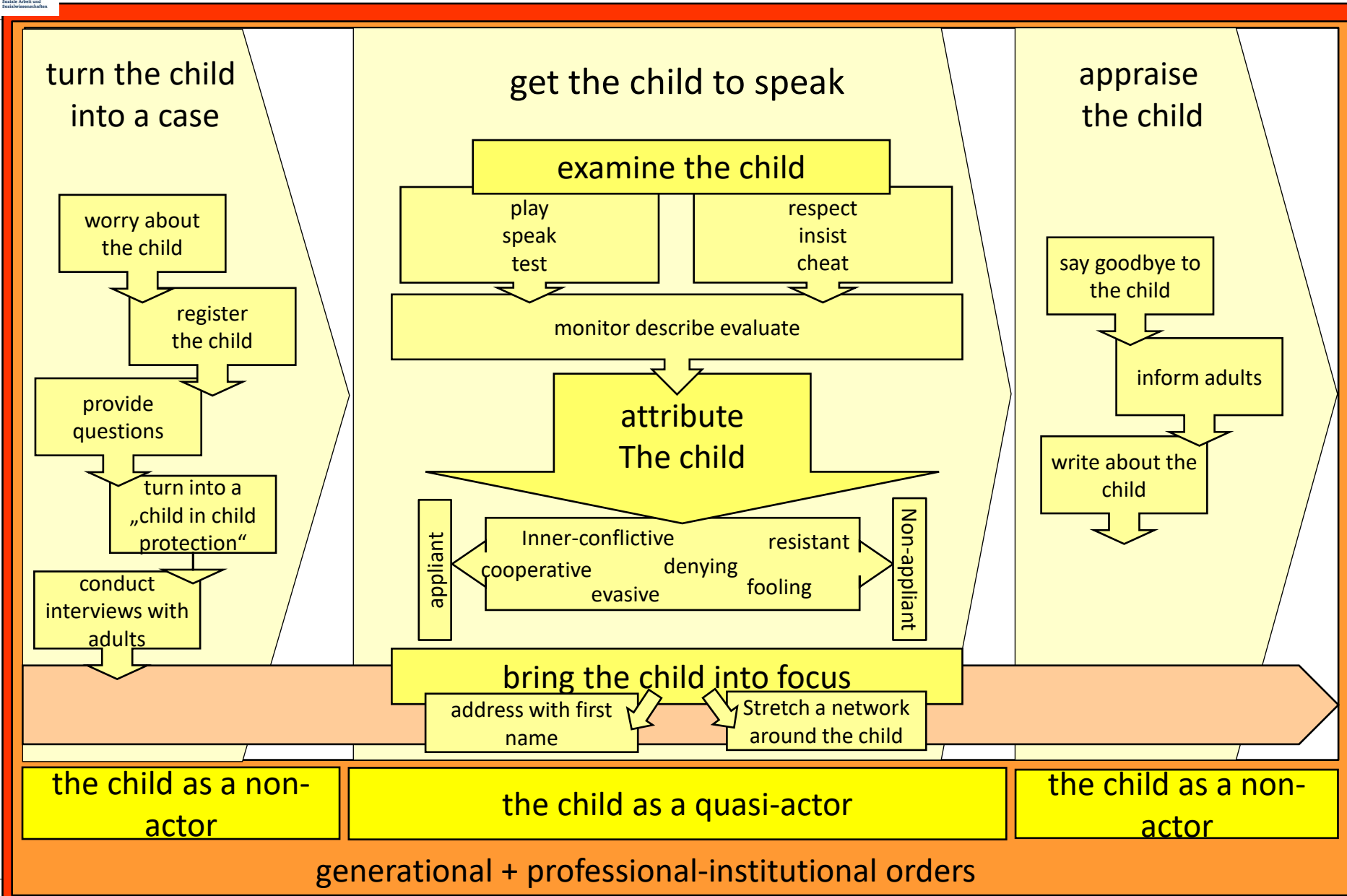
In which manner is the child socially constructed in child protection?

## Method

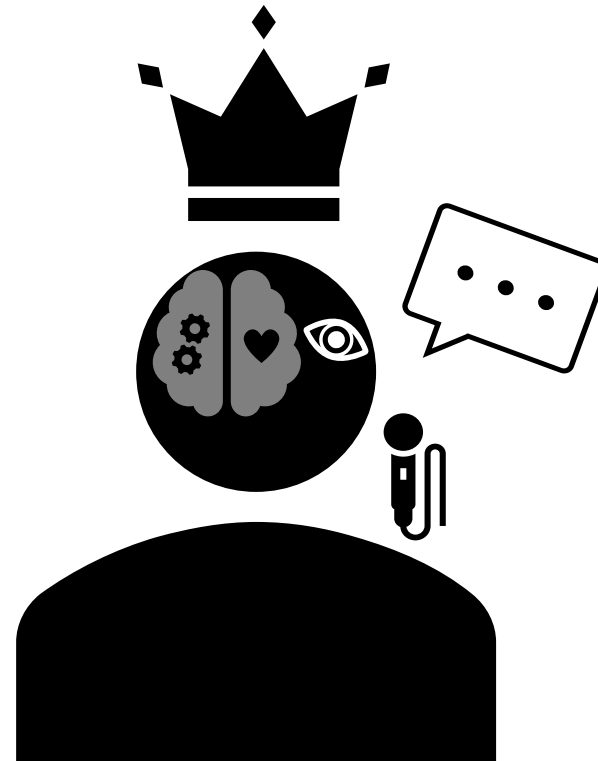
Grounded theory methodology: qualitative analysis of 32 case records from the outpatient Child Protection Diagnostic Centre (CPDC)



# the child as a crown witness



# The child as a crown witness



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# Child protection must be organized

Analyses of casework between an outpatient Child Protection Diagnostic Centre (CPDC) and a public Youth Welfare Office

# Collaboration – our questions

1. How does a stressful situation in a child's life become a child protection case?
2. How do the youth welfare office and the medical child protection organization work together?

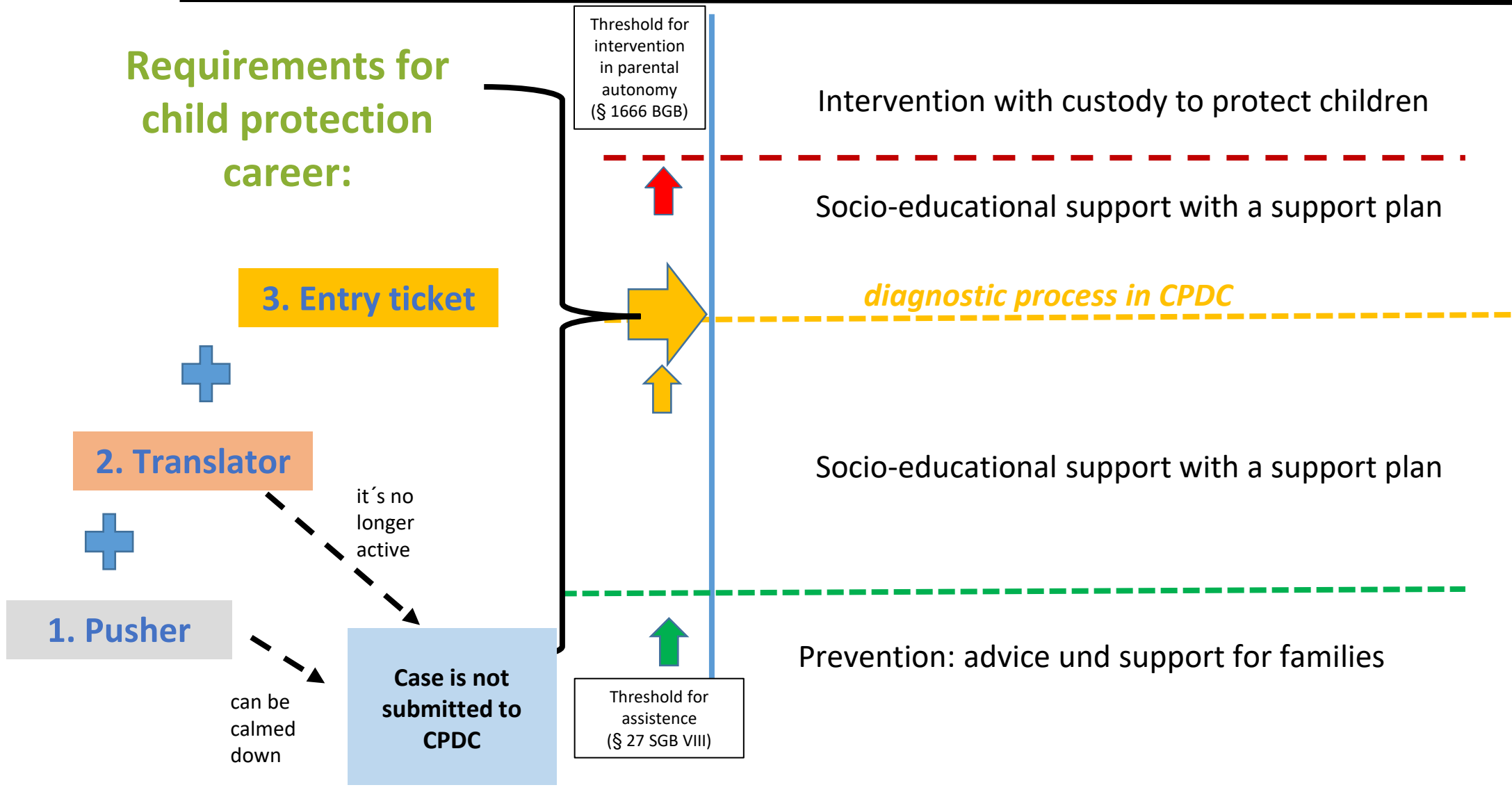
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MÜNSTER

# 1. How does a stressful situation in a child's life become a child protection case?

## Requirements for child protection career:



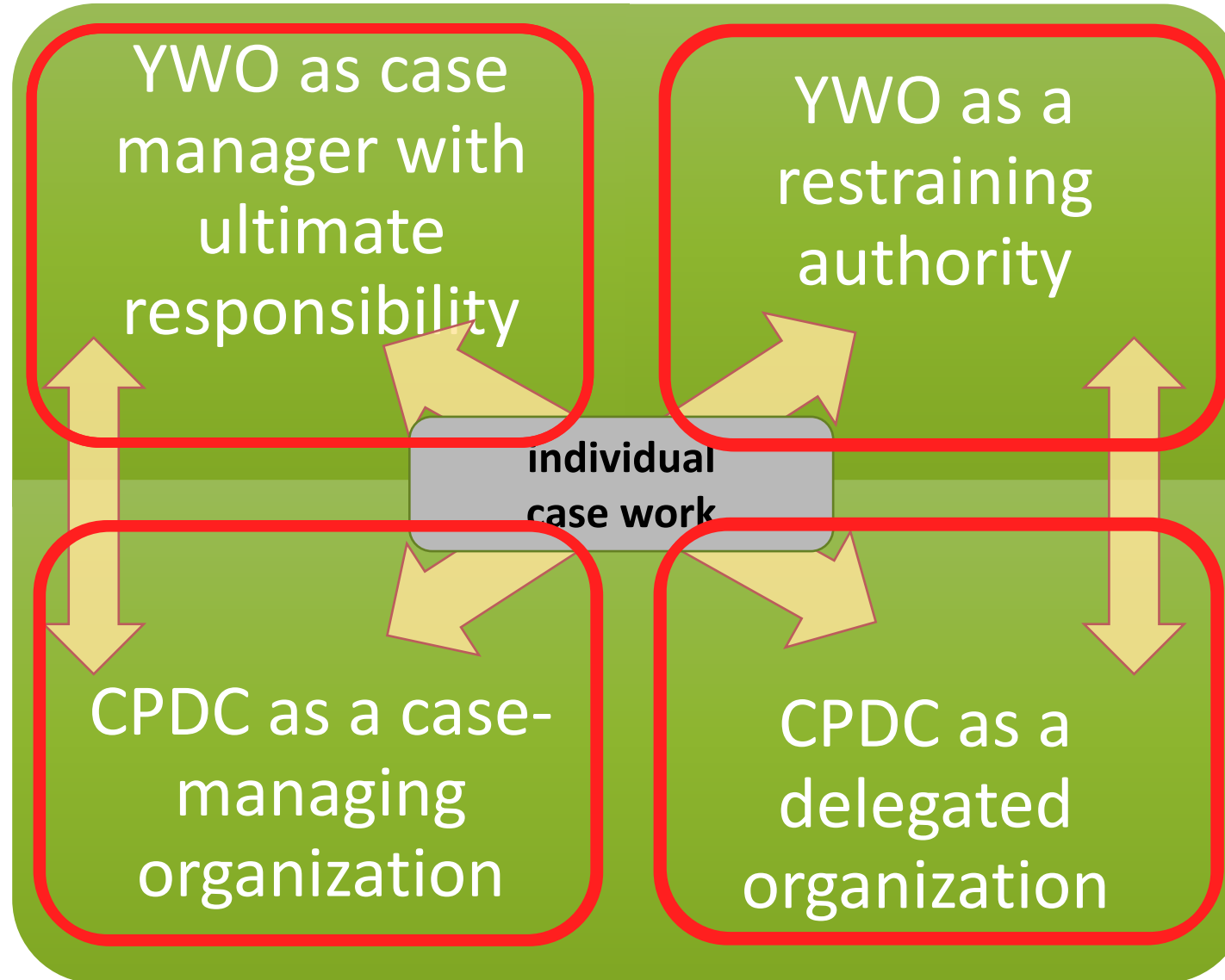
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## 2. How do the Youth Welfare Office and the outpatient Child Protection Diagnostic Centre work together?





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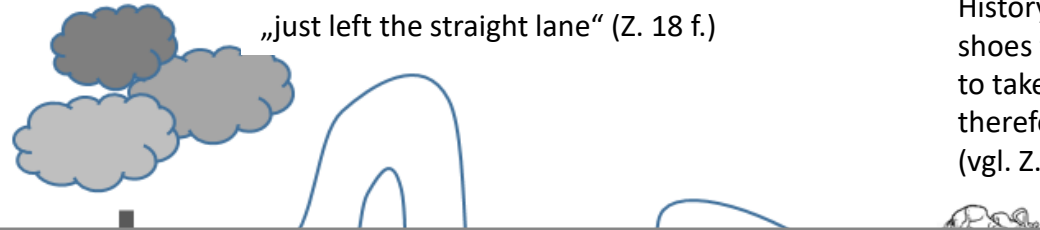


## Child protection and biography

Experience and biographical processing of protective measures of former "child protection children"

## Refuges help to survive

“Clouds condensed on many fronts” (Z. 313 f.)



„just left the straight lane“ (Z. 18 f.)

History as a pair of shoes that are not easy to take off and are therefore omnipresent (vgl. Z. 202 f.)

**"So it's always like this, even [...] with the medical child protection organization, it's always so divided. I'm, I'm infinitely grateful, ne (I: mhm) and I would never negate that. I mean, everything that could have helped me during that time, I absorbed like a sponge and um (-- ) yes, but some things, you still slip through"(Larissa Z. 349-351)**

middle-class family  
Kindergarten  
primary school

Bullying at  
grammar school  
Change father  
Diganose father  
suicidal thoughts  
brother

Critical family situation  
Eating disorder  
Admission to child/adolescent psychiatry  
Getting to know antifascists  
Experience of abuse and belief in child abuse

## Separation as salvation



**"Yes, because I basically went my own way more with my parents than with outside help, I'll put it that way. (..) (.hhh) So I don't know (.) how long I was there in the child protection outpatient clinic, (..) (.hhh) but even if I did, I actually learnt more from my family here than from outside help" (Klara Z. 264-267)**

Family of origin

Tempo-  
rary  
foster  
family

Permanent foster care

Integration into the family

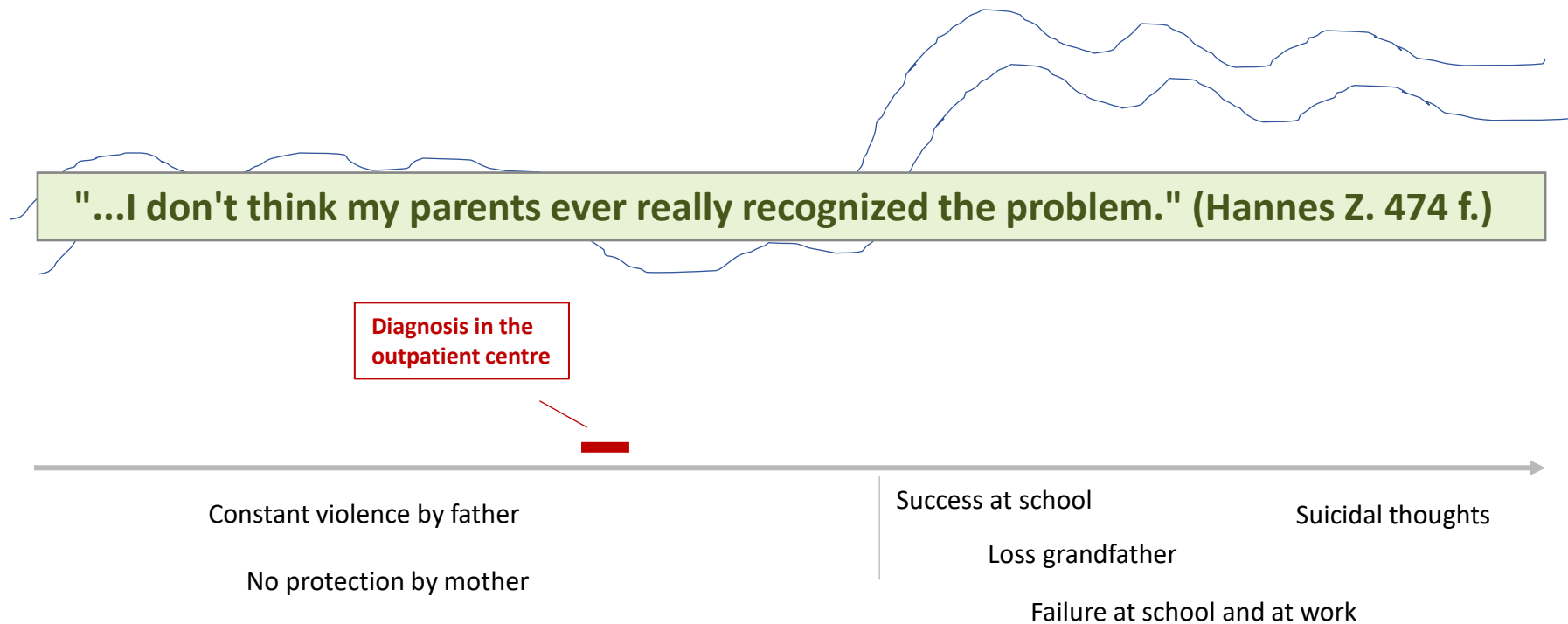
Therapies, support, assistance

Developmental delays  
Catching up through targeted support

sporting and social volunteering

Making and maintaining friendships

## Child protection as a temporary time out - but without lasting protection



## Summary and conclusion

- Children and young people want to be protected effectively and sustainably; they want their everyday lives to be noticeably improved through help and intervention.
- Children and young people experience child protection processes positively and, if something has really been done for them, as a place and life experience of effective protection.
- Children and young people think in terms of people, not organizations; they need and want support, time and consistency.
- Children and young people can experience child protection as an area of empowerment, self-efficacy and autonomy

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## Questions?



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## Discussion

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## Thank you for listening!

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# References

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Schrapper, Christian; Kindler, Heinz (i. E.): Kinderschutzkarrieren: Rekonstruktion von organisationalen Entwicklungen, Gefährdungserfahrungen, diagnostischen Vorgehensweisen, Interventionen und biographischen Verläufen in einer westdeutschen Großstadt 1985-2014. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa. Status: angenommen.