

# Norway's Children Are Being Taken from Their Homes

For most parents the thought of Child Protective Services showing up on the doorstep is terrifying. It's even more terrifying when you believe you are innocent of the charges brought against you.

That's the case with a Romanian-Norwegian couple known as [Marius and Ruth Bodnariu](#). Shortly before Christmas last year, Mrs. Bodnariu was alarmed when her two grade school daughters never returned from school. Her alarm intensified when the Norwegian child protection system (the Barnevernet) showed up on her doorstep and demanded she come for questioning, bringing her three youngest along. Unbeknownst to Mrs. Bodnariu, her husband had just been arrested at work and brought in for questioning as well.

Charges against the couple are sketchy, but seem to stem from the parents' discipline methods. [Vice News reports](#):

*"Norwegian officials said that they couldn't discuss the details of the case because of privacy rules. But [reports](#) said that a school principal first raised concerns about the family, and Ruth admitted to the Barnevernet officials that that she would spank the children, which is illegal under Norwegian law.*

*'Not every time when they do something bad, more occasionally,' she [told](#) the BBC, referring to how often she resorted to spanking. Officials, she added, 'didn't find any physical marks or anything like that when they had medical examination on them, they were, are, all fine.'"*

As the Bodnariu family's website [explains](#), "Norwegian authorities have outright admitted, and clarified, that they

are unfamiliar with, and uncertain of, the nature and quality of parental care that Marius & Ruth have provided to their children.”

The vague nature of the charges has led to an international outcry, particularly since the Norwegian child protective service has been known to be abusive against parental rights in the past, as the following paragraphs from Vice explain:

*“But Norwegian childcare experts have raised red flags about the Barnevernet. Last year, before officials took the Bodnarius’ children, 170 psychologists, social workers, and other professionals signed a public [letter](#) to officials saying the system needs reform.*

*‘Children are removed from the home on very weak evidence characterized by speculative interpretations,’ the letter said. ‘Too often we see that biological parents, who do not have all the world’s resources behind them, stand no chance against a big and powerful public apparatus. We see a tendency for decisions based on incomplete observation basis and tendentious interpretations.’*

Although the Bodnariu situation is geographically far removed from the U.S., their scenario raises an important question over who has true authority over a child. From many appearances, the Bodnariu parents seem to be models of [authoritative parenting](#) – a method which experts say is what works best for raising children. When the government removes a child from a loving home where the parents exercise discipline, has the government become a more severe instrument of abuse than the situation which they were allegedly removing the child from?