



NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION WEEK

27 May to 3 June 2012

Key Messages

This year, government is embarking on a massive campaign to raise awareness of the rights of children as articulated in the Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005). The campaign, known as **Child Protection Week**, will be commemorated from 27 May to 3 June 2012 under the theme: *Working Together to Protect Children*. This is a five-year theme, from 2011 to 2015, and was adopted on 28 October 2010 by the National Child Care and Protection Forum. The theme upholds the Government's commitment to child protection, in partnership with civil society. The campaign will emphasise the responsibility of everyone to create a safe and secure environment for our children.

Government has demonstrated great leadership in ensuring that the Constitution, legislation, policies and international instruments are in place to provide statutory protection towards providing a better life for children. The **Children's Act of 2005**, 2005 sets out the principles relating to the care and protection of children, and defines the related parental responsibilities and rights. It is important that children know and understand their rights. The Act sets out general principles and promotes the best interests of the child. The Act includes, amongst other things, principles on:

- parental responsibilities and rights
- children and courts
- children in need of care and protection
- adoption
- protecting children from abduction and child trafficking.

Child Protection Week places the spotlight on how we all are affecting policies, programmes and social responsibilities to meet the basic rights of the child. Strengthening the mechanisms of coordination between all sectors and spheres remains a national priority to fast-track the roll-out of programmes and delivery of services for children, as provided for in the legislative instruments of children's rights.

Leaders and partners are encouraged to use the same messages to communicate a collective approach to the scourge against child violence and abuse. As a society, we must raise awareness on the rights of children and increase access to supporting services and programmes.

Key messages	Supporting statements
<p>Wear the Green Ribbon to show your support to protecting the rights of our Children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Green Ribbon was adopted by the National Child Protection Committee in 1994. Like a tree, it symbolises life and growth associated with children. They need to be nurtured and conserved. ▪ Be an active participant and partner in the promotion of the rights, care and protection of children. Let's speak with one voice against child violence, abuse and neglect. ▪ Parents, caregivers, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, domestic workers, academics, celebrities, faith-based organisations, public servants, police officers, traditional leaders and political leaders, etc. all have important roles to play in protecting children from violence, abuse and neglect. The efforts will inform citizens of the prevention and early intervention programmes of supporting departments and agencies. ▪ We urge you to know and understand the Children's Act, 2005 and participate in the activities and dialogues of Child Protection Week. ▪ Volunteer your expertise and services to play your part in households, communities and professional environments. ▪ We ask the private sector, non-profit organisations and communities to support Child Protection Week by wearing and displaying the Green Ribbon.
<p>Government is steadfast in protecting children's rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preventing and combatting crime against children is a priority for government. A high-level ministerial team has been formed, convened by the Ministry of Social Development, to devise short- and long-term measures to deal with crimes in South Africa, including those committed against children. ▪ Family violence, child protection and sexual offences units (FCS) have been reintroduced in all 176 South African Police Service (SAPS) clusters across the nine provinces. There are currently 2 155 detectives placed at these units, issued with 1 276 vehicles. Previously, the FCS units consisted of only 1 864 detectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Child Protection Unit was established to prevent and combat crimes against children. It renders a sensitive service endearing to the child victim; and deals with cases of rape, incest, assault, attempted murder, kidnapping and abduction, crimes regarding the abuse/exploitation of children, domestic violence, child care, child pornography and the sexual exploitation of children. ▪ Comprehensive places of safety such as the Thuthuzela care centres provide care and psychological support to survivors of sexual abuse. ▪ The President set up the dedicated Ministry of Women, Children and People with Disabilities in 2010 to elevate and mainstream

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	<p>issues of children in the overall business of government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Socio-economic hardships and challenges such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, and alcohol and substance abuse can result in unsafe and hostile environments for children. Thus, programmes are in place to ensure that children's basic rights to food, education, shelter, healthcare, family or alternative care and protection from abuse and maltreatment are protected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millions of children continue to benefit from the provision of free primary healthcare, school feeding schemes and the No-Fee School Policy for children from poor families. • These interventions ensure that children grow up in an environment where they can blossom to their full potential. ▪ <u>The Strategy and Guidelines for Children Living and Working on the Streets</u> provide different stakeholders at national, provincial and local levels with guideline to develop their own programmes for the management of children living and working on the streets. ▪ To remain relevant in the socio-economic changing South Africa, amendments to certain sections of the Children's Act, 2005 were made, such as lowering the age of adult from 21 to 18+ and allowing those above 12 years access to HIV testing and contraceptives. In this regard, the Child Act, 2005 was aligned to <u>Section 28 (3) of the Constitution</u>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child in the South African context refers to any person under 18, unless married or emancipated by order of court. Any person over 18 is considered an adult. • Registration of existing children's homes, places of safety and shelters registered under the previous Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74 of 1983), for specific purposes, to transform into child and youth care centres.
<p>Let us strengthen our collective efforts against child abuse, neglect and exploitation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A multisector response is required to address and end the scourge of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. The well-being of children depends on YOUR support! ▪ An Inter-Ministerial Committee was formed at the 2012 Early Childhood Development (ECD) Conference after participating departments adopted the Declaration on ECD. Government and stakeholders committed themselves to a programme of action that promotes the well-being of children and protects, among other things, their rights. ▪ Government will ensure that those who abuse or neglect children face serious consequence for their actions. Strong warning must be directed to perpetrators of child trafficking,

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	<p>child pornography, corporal punishment, bullying and initiation at school as well as abductions, exposure to pornography, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members of society, including children, must work together with law-enforcement agencies in combating abuse, neglect and exploitation of our children. ▪ Report Child Abuse toll-free (0800 05 55 55). ▪ The public is encouraged to strengthen and develop community structures which can assist in providing care and protection for children. ▪ We commend the good work by departments, non-profit organisations and community-based groups that work tirelessly for our children.
<p>"It takes a village to raise a child" - African Proverb</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This African proverb calls for a collective responsibility of communities to raise children, where "Your Child is My Child". All parents, guardians and older members of the community should look out for each other's children. ▪ Government believes that protecting children and creating safe and secure environments is everyone's responsibility and is achievable. ▪ The well-being of children depends on functional, nurturing and protective families and communities that are able to meet their children's basic needs. ▪ The <u>Green Paper on National Families Policy for South Africa</u> is the central focus of government's intervention to strengthen this building block of society. ▪ We call upon all role players: professionals, individuals, guardians/parents and family members entrusted to care and protect children to play their part and fulfil their duty of caring for our children.

Fact sheet

SOUTH AFRICA'S ACHIEVEMENTS:

South Africa is doing well to reduce infant and under-five child morbidity and mortality:

- **10,3 million children** receive the Child-Support Grant through the [South African Social Security Agency](#).
- **Immunisation coverage** has increased from 63% in 1998 to 89,6% in 2010 with the highest coverage of 95,5% achieved in 2009.
- South Africa saw a landmark achievement of a **50% reduction in the transmission of HIV from mothers to children** between 2008 and 2010. The proportion of children whose mothers are HIV-positive who were infected decreased from 8% in 2008 to 3,5% in 2010.
- We more than doubled **Grade R** enrolment, from **300 000 to 705 000** between 2003 and 2011, and are set to meet the target of 100% Grade R enrolment by 2014.
- Making education legally compulsory **for children aged seven to 15 years** (or up to Grade 9, whichever comes first) is evidently yielding results. Ninety-nine per cent **of seven- to 15-year-olds** and **83% of 16- to 18-year-old children** are attending educational institutions.
- **There are 12 million** learners enrolled with a total number of **365 447** educators employed in public schools. More than **848 000 children** are exposed to an educational environment that has the potential to shape their social, cognitive and emotional skills.
- Government subsidises over **514 000 of the total of 19 331** registered ECD centres in the country.

SOUTH AFRICA'S SUPPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN:

- [United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children \(2000\)](#),
- International Labour Organisation's Convention: [Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 182 \(1999\)](#)
- [Hague Convention of the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, 1996 \(Act 72 of 1996\)](#).

NATIONAL LEGISLATION THAT SUPPORTS THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN:

- [Social Assistance Act, 1992 \(Act 59 of 1992\)](#), as amended
- [National Health Act, 2003 \(Act 61 of 2003\)](#)
- [South African Schools Act, 1996 \(Act 84 of 1996\)](#) [Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 \(Act 75 of 1997\)](#) – child labour
- [Child Justice Act, 2008 \(Act 75 of 2008\)](#) – children's access to courts
- [Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act, 2007 \(Act 32 of 2007\)](#)
- [Birth Registration and Death Registration Act, 1998 \(Act 43 of 1998\)](#)
- [Refugees Act, 1998 \(Act 130 of 1998\)](#)
- [Correctional Service Act, 1998 \(Act 111 of 1998\)](#)
- [Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, 2008 \(Act 70 of 2008\)](#).

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