



MEDIA RELEASE

GETTING SOUTH AFRICA READY TO IMPLEMENT THE CHILDREN'S ACT



The last week of May each year is known for the collective action in the country to campaign for the rights of children.

Child Protection Week (CPW) 2008 will run from 26 May to the 1st of June, which is International Children's Day. For the last 10 years, the country has galvanized efforts during this period to make sure that the nation sharply focuses on children.

This year's CPW has unfortunately been marred by the horrible attacks on children and their families in Johannesburg and surroundings. Victims have included both South African and immigrant families. Children who are already facing abject poverty in informal settlements have been exposed to the added trauma of attacks or witnessing attacks. It is our obligation therefore as Free Staters to put our foot firm on the ground and act against any potential act of xenophobia as this is derailing and defocusing us from the real work of ensuring that a better life for the children of our country is achieved.

We must use CPW to remember all children who have been affected by the violence, and to provide relief. As we say in our country, any child is my child.

During CPW, the Department is calling for greater unity, in partnership with the media, civil society, the religious community and society in general in the promotion of children's rights. During the first few years of the campaign, CPW was celebrated under the theme *Child Protection is Everybody's business*. In later years the theme was changed to *Caring Communities Protect Children*.



Whilst the essence of the previous themes is not lost, we are focussing in 2008 on *Getting South Africa ready to implement the Children's Act* as the theme that must guide

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our collective effort. This is in recognition of the two landmark pieces of legislation that have been signed into law by the President, the Children's Act of 2005, and the Children's Amendment Act of 2008. The Children's Act provides a comprehensive framework for children to enjoy Constitutional rights and to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.



The country has waited more than a decade for these two pieces of legislation. They have far reaching implications and ramifications regarding the constitutional rights of children. The laws intend to give meaning to the rallying cry and slogans of the children's movements such as *Making South Africa fit for children; Bana Pele, Children First* and *Abantwana Kuqala*.

The Free State Child Protection Week will be Launched at Matete Matches Secure Care



Centre in Kroonstad to coincide with the occasion of the Handing over of the facility to the community of Moqhaka. This is indeed a demonstration by the Department that it truly cares and is committed to delivering a better dispensation for the children of our country.

It is pleasing to see that government is not alone in the effort to improve the plight of the children. As it is, we are grateful to the enthusiasm and contribution of Ntataise Trust in Viljoenskroon which has trained 48 Early Childhood Development (ECD) Practitioners, thanks to the contribution by the ETDP Seta – these are graduating on Monday, May 26, 2008. In recognition of this critical contribution towards skills development, the Department has awarded Ntataise Trust a contract to train 150 ECD Practitioners towards a Basic Certificate NQF level 1 which started in March 2008 to end in August 2009.

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The events of the Child Protection Week have been preceded by the Outreach Campaign for Access to Social Grants and Social Welfare Services , wherein the Department of Social Development is working with the Department of Home Affairs, the South African Social Security Agency and the South African Police Service with the support of the Municipalities of the Free State – to ensure that Children are enabled to access Social Grants, that those who do not have Birth Certificates and IDs do access these in order to access grants. Ours is indeed a concerted effort to ensure that we fight poverty and expand access to a better life for all.

The schedule of the Child Protection Week is as follows:

EVENT	DATE	PLACE	DISTRICT	TARGET
Handing over of Matete Matches Secure Care Centre to the Moqhaka Community & Launch of the Child Protection Week	26 May at 14:00	Kroonstad	Fezile Dabi	Kroonstad Community
Awareness campaign on the effects of Malnutrition to children of 0-5 years	28 May at 13:00	Winburg	Lejweleputswa	Parents of children in crèches and parents earning CSG
Addressing child poverty & children's right	29 May at 10:00	Jagersfontein	Xhariep	Parents & Children of 12-18 yrs
Addressing children about child abuse, neglect & preventative measures	29 May at 10:00	Constantia (Kroonstad)	Fezile Dabi	Parents & Children of Grade 4-7
Reflection of children's rights & neglect through artwork	31 May at 10:00	Bloemfontein	Motheo	Grade 6 & 7 pupils from rural schools
March to Phuthaditjhaba Magistrate Court	2 June at 10:00	Qwa Qwa	Thabo Mofutsayana	500 school children, 200 teachers and members of Child Care Forum.

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It is our trust that the media and the community of the Free State will take it to heart to ensure the safe guarding of the rights and the living conditions of the Children of our country. Let us join hands to ensure that we build caring communities that protect all our children from abuse, neglect, hunger, vulnerability and many social ills.

End.

**For further particulars and enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact:
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