The Department of Social Development (DSD) introduced Child Protection Week (CPW) in 1997, in order to raise awareness, as well as to mobilise all sectors and communities towards the perspective of holistic development and the care and protection of children. The Child protection Week (CPW) has become an annual campaign to educate and mobilize communities to put children first.

Humanity began with the road to creating a better life for children a long time ago. The first legal step in realizing the rights of children was the 1924 Declaration of the Rights of the Child which stated that “Mankind owes to the child the best that it has to give…” The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 1989.

This Convention entered into force or became legally binding on UN Member States and Parties that were signatory in September 1990. After the establishment of a democratic government in 1994, South Africa under President Mandela ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In so doing, the Province committed itself to implementing the principle of “A Province fit for children”.

Consequently; the needs of children are considered paramount to all programs, services and development. Government’s legislative pieces and policies viz, the Constitution, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Child give guidance toward providing a better life for children.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Today, children in South Africa live in a society under a Constitution that has the highest regard for their rights and for the equality and dignity of everyone. Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is not only a basic value, but also an obligation clearly set out in Article 28 of the South African Constitution. This constitutional right is given effect in the Children’s Act and other relevant legislation. In its simplest form, child protection addresses every child’s right not to be subjected to harm.
THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER (CPR)

The CPR is used to record information about the abuse, neglect or exploitation of children. This information will be used to determine patterns and trends of abuse or deliberate neglect of children. The information will also be used for planning and resources allocation purposes to prevent the abuse and deliberate neglect of children and protect children on a national, provincial and municipal level. The National Department of Social Development (DSD) is managing the administrative functions of CPR, parts A and B on a daily basis and monitors the registering of cases in provinces. Currently, the register is functional in all provinces.

The existing data collection tools i.e. the National Child Protection Register need to be strengthened. There are core factors contributing to the vulnerability of children including lack of care, poor social capital and capacity, context, resources and circumstances. For instance the number of orphans due to HIV&AIDS is still increasing according to the maternal orphan’s surveillance system. The other contributing factors may be attributed to the high level of poverty, unemployment, unwanted teenage pregnancy, family disintegration and the death of young parents or caregivers.

South Africa’s long history of socio-politically motivated violence has also given way, in many parts of the country, to a high occurrence of criminal violence, with severe consequences for children’s issues pertaining to children that require inter-sectoral and integrated collaboration and approach.

It complements other rights that, inter alia, ensure that children receive that which they need in order to survive, develop and thrive.

CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

Amongst other rights, section 28 (d) and (e) of the South African Constitution states that every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation and be protected from exploitative labour practices. Children need special protection in an inter-sectoral and integrated collaboration and approach because they are among the most vulnerable members of society. They are dependent on others for care and protection.

a. Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities experience exclusion because of barriers in different environments. Most of these children may have moderate to severe disabilities which will require earlier
identification and permanent consistent interventions. It is critical to put in place mainstreaming programmes for them and develop professional expertise for purposes of progressive measures.

Special focus needs to be placed on welfare services, health care and education of these children. For instance, there is a need to integrate approximately 467 000 children with disabilities into the education system. The provision of assistive devices will enhance their quality of life.

b. HIV and AIDS

South Africa has a generalized HIV and AIDS epidemic driven largely by sexual transmissions and continues to create a growing number of vulnerable children and orphans without adult protection. Many children are considered to be highly vulnerable to the pandemic through circumstances such as HIV infection at birth or through unprotected sex, living in a household with sick or elderly caregivers, being abandoned, and living in a household that cares for many children. Furthermore, the scourge of HIV and AIDS has posed huge challenges for children by losing one parents or both parents, or by having to take on adult responsibilities prematurely, taking care of sick and dying caregivers/parents and after their passing on, having to take sole charge of the household.

CHILD PROTECTION

Both the Children’s Act No. 38 / 2005, the National Policy Framework and the Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Management of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (CANE) (2004), advocate for a coordinated and integrated approach by all government departments and civil society organizations to maximize efficient utilization of resources and enhance an effective response system for child victims and those at risk of abuse.

Services to children are generally classified in terms of the four levels of intervention, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory and re-unification services. The Children's Act adopts a developmental approach, emphasizing the state’s role in strengthening the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect children and provides for measures to prevent children being separated from families.

Government has instituted various instruments and mechanisms for the protection of children, with a focus on prevention and early intervention services in place.
THEME OF THE CHILD PROTECTION WEEK AND BEYOND - “Working Together To Protect Children”

SUB-THEME “Each for all and All for Each: Communities Protecting their Own”

CHILD PROTECTION WEEK CAMPAIGN

The Campaign will focus on the following:-

✓ **Build up activity to Child Protection Week - Community outreach:** Taking services to the people (Intersectoral partnership with other key stakeholders in the child protection system)

✓ **Opening Launching of Child Protection Week**- In the identified area.

✓ **Launching of Early Childhood Development Centers**- In the Prioritized Townships around Gauteng

✓ **Door-to-door campaigns** – In identified hot spots

✓ **Community rally** – Identified area / hot spots

✓ **Children’s Dialogue**– focusing on responses to specific social ills plaguing communities

✓ **Media** – briefings, radio voiceovers & newspaper blogs to create the necessary hype to get communities mobilized against abuse. The Campaign will be launched by the MEC in a high level media session

✓ **School talks** – focusing on child abuse, neglect and exploitation

✓ **Family Preservation** - awareness and training on family preservation and mediation services

✓ **Bringing back the dignity of a Girl and Boy child** – distribution of dignity packs

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the child protection awareness campaign are:

- To advocate for children’s rights, educate and mobilise families and communities about their responsibility towards the protection and care of children.
- To reduce the incidence of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (CANE) through awareness campaigns.
• To mobilize communities in dealing with Child Abuse Neglect and Exploitation

OUTCOMES

The outcomes of child protection awareness campaign are:

• To uphold government’s commitment to protect and promote children’s rights in partnership with civil society.
• Mobilize communities in the fight against Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

TARGET GROUPS

Children under the age of 18 years living in South Africa, with specific focus on the following groups:

• Child Headed Households (CHH).
• Early Childhood Development (ECD).
• Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCC’s).
• Children with Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses.
• Refugee, migrant children, trafficked and unaccompanied minors.
• Families, communities and civil societies in rural and urban areas.
• Teenage Pregnancy,
• Vulnerable children, with special focus on children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.
• Children Living and Working on the Streets.
• Refugee, migrant children, trafficked and unaccompanied minors.

ROLE PLAYERS

The following role players are regarded as important for the campaign, but do not exclude other relevant stakeholders who might have a direct or indirect impact:

• Office of the Premier
• Department of Health
• Department of Agriculture
• Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation
• Department of Community Safety
• Department of Finance
• Department of Education
• Department of Local Government and Housing
• Department of Treasury
• NGOs, CBOs and FBO
• Local Government
• Municipalities
• Men’s organizations (brothers for life, men as partners, men for change, Sisonke Gender Justice)

**TARGET AREAS**

Focus of child protection awareness campaign to be on the following:

- Areas where there is high prevalence of child abuse, neglect and exploitation and teenage pregnancy, Substance Abuse.
- Families, communities, CYCCs and schools (ECD and partial care facilities, pre-schools and primary schools) in urban and rural areas.

Due to the importance and relevance of the child protection campaign, target areas are not restricted to the above-mentioned but include all other areas depending on the needs of the community.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CORE DEPARTMENTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

**Department of Social Development**

Key function is to ensure that all South African children enjoy the protection that they are assured of in the Bill of Rights. DSD’s responsibilities amongst others include:

- Coordinating the implementation of the National Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for Prevention and Management of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation within government and non-governmental sector.
- Leading the process of establishing Child Protection Committees at provincial, district and local level in partnership with provincial counterparts.
• Ensuring that services are delivered within the welfare sector to protect children on all four levels of intervention.
• Coordinating child protection awareness campaign at national, provincial and local level.
• Convening interdisciplinary child protection conferences.
• Coordinating services and linking all concerned with the necessary resources and support systems through effective case management.
• Arranging alternative care for children in need of care and protection as well as recruitment, selection, training and support of temporary safe care parents, foster parents and child and youth care workers.
• Designing preventive and developmental activities to combat child abuse.
• Recruiting, selecting, training, supporting and retaining volunteers.

**Department of Education**

Educators are in an excellent position to ensure the prevention and management of child abuse, neglect and exploitation due to their daily contact with children. At local level the GDE must:

• Identify children at risk or barriers to learning.
• Recognise suspected and/or instances of abuse.
• Notification and reporting of child abuse to a designated social worker.
• Support children in the school environment.
• Provide prevention services by educating learners on life and parenting skills.
• Facilitate access to free and basic education for all including refugee children.

**South African Police Service**

The focus of SAPS for the prevention and management of child abuse, neglect and exploitation include the following:

• Ensure that a case of child abuse, neglect and exploitation can be reported to a police station.
• Initiate the investigation of the case and collection of evidence.
• Establish whether the perpetrator is known and the possibilities of immediate danger or threat to the child.
• Notify and report a case of child abuse, neglect and exploitation to a designated social worker.

• Ensure that the best protection is provided to the child, he/she is dealt with sensitively, secondary traumatisation is avoided and the best interest of the child is taken into account.

**Department of Health**

At the district and local level the GDH must ensure the:

• Provision of primary care and school nurses who focus on preventative services.

• Provision of care for the child victim of abuse, both physical and psychological.

• Collection of medico-legal evidence for the successful prosecution of perpetrators in the criminal justice system.

• Referring children appropriately to psycho-social and health professionals as guided by the referral protocol at primary level.

• Organising child health awareness campaigns in collaboration with other stakeholders.

**Department of Justice and Constitutional Development**

Roles and responsibilities of DoJ and CD, amongst others include:

• Administers Children’s Courts. These courts adjudicate all matters relating to statutory intervention. These include granting adoption orders, foster care placements, determining access and custody, referrals, etc.

• Administers the High Courts. As the upper guardian of all children, the High Courts have original jurisdiction to try all matters relating to children.

• The following courts are also important in Child Protection:
  
  o High Court.
  
  o Family Court.
  
  o Maintenance Court.

• Responsible for prevention campaigns regarding children’s matters pertaining to the law.
**Department of Correctional Services**

- It provides for the rehabilitation of offenders with a view to prevent further abuse, to identified victims and potential future victims.
- Responsible to promote children’s rights within correctional services – internally and to communities.

**Department of Labour**

A Labour inspector appointed in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 may promote, monitor and enforce compliance with an employment law by:

- Conducting child labour inspections and advising children on their rights.
- Investigating child labour complaints reported to them.
- Referring child labour cases to SAPS and DSD, where the child resides in terms of the Child Labour Enforcement Policy.
- Monitor and Enforce the Regulations on Hazardous Work for Children in South Africa
- Monitor and enforce Sectoral Determination 10: Children in the Performance of advertising, artistic and cultural activities, South Africa.
- Report child abuse and children in need of care to SAPS and DSD in terms of section 110 and 141 of the Children’s Act, 2005.

**Department of Home Affairs**

The DHA:

- Promotes and facilitates the registration of all children at birth.
- Promotes and facilitates the provision of enabling documents.
- Promotes and facilitates family reunification in the cases of refugee children.
- Grants special protection to refugee children or children seeking refugee status.
- Ensures that refugee children receive counselling and exposure to developmental programmes such as sport and life skills training.
• Provides for the protection of children from exposure to pornography.
• Protects children against being used in the production of pornographic material.

Civil Society Organisations

Civil Society Organisations including NGOs in child protection sector are responsible for amongst others:
• To investigate cases when there is reasonable evidence to suspect that the child is in need of care and protection.
• To take preventive or protective measures where necessary.
• On-going case management and ensuring that each child’s needs are met, that he/she is protected from secondary abuse, that the necessary on-going services are delivered and that the child is re-unified with the family.
• Collaborate with other stakeholders in organising child protection awareness campaigns.

Departments not mentioned above are not prohibited to have child protection activities during the week and DSD will have a supportive role to all departments.

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES (PEIP)

According to the Children’s Act, prevention programmes are provided to families with children in order to strengthen and build their capacity and self-reliance to address problems that may or are bound to occur in the family environment which, if not attended to, may lead to statutory intervention. Early intervention programmes, on the other hand, are provided to families where children are identified as being vulnerable to or at risk of harm or removal into alternative care. Practitioners and policy makers at all levels of governance should understand their obligations within the legal policy context in order to ensure effective, replicable and sustainable PEIP.

MUNICIPALITIES

Local Government and Municipalities are responsible to:
• Raise Awareness regarding child abuse; whilst rendering promotional services towards the elimination of CANE.

• Facilitate the development of programmes and community services in relation to CANE.

• Integrate and partner with Department Social Development, all relevant departments and NGO’s to provide services to children and combat child abuse (CANE).

• Provide support services, facilities and recreational resources for the Prevention and Early Intervention regarding CANE.