



NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR CHILDREN

The purpose of this document is to introduce the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) to the children of South Africa and to ask for their inputs in the development of the NPAC.

INTRODUCTION

Children are an important part of our country and the rights of every child are important. Children's rights are those things that every child has for their survival, protection, development and participation.



All rights are equally important. All children have the same rights, no matter who they are and where they are. We find the rights of all people living in South

Africa in the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution. All the rights in the Bill of Rights are for children and adults, but our Constitution gives special additional rights to children in the country to make sure that children are protected and to make sure that we do the things that are best for our children. These can be found in section 28 of the Constitution. It also says that a child is a person under the age of 18 years.

South African children can also find more of their rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). (The United Nations is where all countries of the world come together to agree on important matters; and a Convention is a formal agreement signed by the countries to obey the same law). All countries in the world, except for two, agreed that children have the rights as described in the CRC. South Africa decided to follow to the CRC on 16 June 1995, which means that the government should make sure that every child has all the rights in the Convention.

South Africa also decided to follow the provisions for children's rights in the African Union's Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children's Charter), which have most of the rights covered in the CRC, but also add some

rights that are unique to children growing up on the African Continent. *As you read of the rights please know that rights and responsibilities go together.*

Now you know that South Africa is taking the rights of children seriously. It is covered in our Constitution and we have agreed to follow the rights as described in the CRC and the African Children's Charter. The Government of South Africa has the duty to make sure that the rights of children living inside our borders are implemented and protected. This is not as easy as it sounds as different parts of government are responsible for different rights of children, for example children who are sick go to a clinic that falls under the Department of Health; children go to schools that fall under the Department of Basic Education; and children who need protection from abuse are helped by the Department of Social Development.

There is a special government department called the Department for Women, Children and People with Disabilities whose work it is to make sure that all parts of government work together so that all children's rights are protected and implemented. This Department will do this through the development of a National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC).

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN (NPAC)?



A National Plan of Action is a plan for the whole country showing what needs to be done for children. This plan that the DWCPD is developing focuses on the rights of children that is why it is



called a National Plan of Action **for Children**. The NPAC brings together all the commitments that the Government made to ensure that children's rights are protected and implemented. It tells you step-by-step the things that need to be done to ensure that children are alive, healthy, protected, feel safe, well taken care of, educated and able to participate in matters important to them. A National Plan of Action for Children tells what needs to happen to make sure that rights of children are implemented, who is responsible and by what date.

It is a plan just for children that make sure that the Government takes its duties serious and attend to the rights of all children in the country. The plan is written based on the responsibilities of the different parts of government to ensure that children's rights are protected, promoted and fulfilled. It also involves getting ideas from communities, parents and children themselves on what should be in the plan.

This booklet will tell you more about the NPAC for Children and how you can participate by sharing your ideas and suggestions. When we are done writing the NPAC for Children, we will also have a special summary for children.

SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN THE COUNTRY

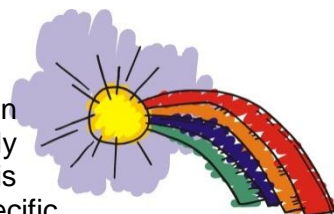
A NPA for Children is also based on the situation that children find themselves in the country. We need to know what is working for children and what is not working. We need to know whether some children live in more difficult situations than other children. We need to know how many children, boys and girls, there are in the country, and what their ages are. All of this helps us to do a NPA for Children that will make sure that all children are included; and no child is left out.



We know that there are 18.6 million children in the country (people under the age of 18 years) and that 49.7% are girls and 50.3% are boys. This already helps us to plan better on how we should provide for all of these children. Then we know that 64% of these children are poor and

about 10,6 million children receive the child support grant. The more information we have about children, where they live and how they live, the better our plan will be. This is why a very important part of the NPAC will be to describe the situation of children in the country.

LEADING THE NPAC



The NPA for Children can only be successfully implemented if there is someone or rather a specific government department that takes the lead and make sure that it is implemented. The President of the country created a special government department to do just that. This is the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities (DWCPD), which is a special government department that makes sure that special rights of women, children and people with disabilities are protected.

As the leader of the National Plan of Action for Children, the DWCPD will make sure that the following things happen:

- A National Plan of Action for Children is developed for 2012 to 2015 through the participation of everybody that is required to be involved, including children.
- All parts of government work together to make sure that the National Plan of Action for Children is implemented.
- Regularly check whether different government departments do what they committed to do to implement children's rights. This is called monitoring and evaluation.
- Make sure that children's voices and ideas are heard in the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children.
- Provide feedback to everybody, but especially children, on how we are doing in the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children.

WHAT WILL THE NPAC LOOK AT?

The NPA for Children will look at different areas that need attention to ensure that children's rights are implemented. This will be done by dividing the NPA for





Children into different parts that look at specific areas. We must remember that no one part is more important than the other parts. All parts are important to make sure that children of South Africa grow and develop.

The main parts of the National Plan of Action for Children will look at the following:

A: Child Survival, which can also be described as child health. This part will look at the things that are important to make sure that babies are born healthy and stay alive; health services for children; good food for children, and children living with HIV and AIDS. If you have any ideas on what the country can do more to make sure that all children are healthy and live healthy lives, please let us know by giving your inputs to this area.



B: Child Development, which will look at the important things that need to happen to ensure that all children grow, learn and develop to be the best persons that they can be. This part will give attention to the support that young children need for their early childhood development; children in schools; children living with a disability; children living in rural areas; importance of play; to mention a few. There can be much more areas than this that are important for the growth and development of children. Let us know what other things you think are important that will help children to grow, learn and develop.



C: Child Protection, which will look at things that are important to keep children safe and cared for. Some of the areas that this part will look at are how to protect and support children who are victims of abuse and violence; protecting children from rape and sexual abuse; children who are orphans/without parents; children living on the streets; children who have clashed with the law; children living in children's homes; and a few more similar areas. Share with us on what you think need to be done to improve the safety of children. What about issues such child neglect, early forced marriages and child killings?



D: Standard of Living, which will look at children who are poor; the houses that children live in; children's access to clean water and toilets; clean and safe cities, towns and communities; parks and recreational facilities for children; and children receiving grants. If there is anything else that you think is important, please tell us.



E: Children's Participation, which will look at how children's voices should be heard in their homes, at schools, by people, including government, providing services to them; and communities. Also see the next paragraph on children's involvement in the National Plan of Action for Children.



When each of these parts are finished, it will give a good idea on what South Africa's Plan is to make sure that children are well taken care of; live a healthy life; are able to learn; feel protected; and able to participate in all matters important to them.

CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE NPA FOR CHILDREN

We have mentioned earlier that children should be part of the development and implementation of the NPA for Children. This is your right as a child, as the NPA for Children is about you and other children in the country, and for that reason Government has the duty to make sure that you are part of it.



The first step of your involvement is to share with us what you would like to see in a National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC). This is why we developed this booklet to tell you more about the development of the NPA for Children so that you can make a contribution. See the last section on how we would like to get your ideas and suggestions.

The second step is to make sure that all parts of government understand that children have the



right to share their views and ideas on matters that affect them. This requires from them to make provision and create opportunities for children to take part in these important matters, whether it is education or climate change, it does not matter, children's views are important.



The third step is that we make sure that we regularly talk to you on the implementation of the NPA for Children. This is important when we check how well we are doing in implementing the plan, but also what changes might be needed to the plan in the future.

If you have any ideas how we can ensure children's involvement and participation in the best possible manner in the National Plan of Action for Children, please tell us!

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

We need your help and ideas to make sure that the National Plan of Action for Children deals with the issues that are important to you. Here are some ideas on what you can do to take part in the writing of the NPA for Children:



- (1) Tell your friends about the NPA for Children that South Africa is developing. Then ask them whether they want to join you to share ideas and send it to us. Write down all these ideas on paper or draw pictures that describe it. If you feel like it, write a poem or a short story! Whatever you like, which will tell us what you want in the NPA for Children? Also speak to younger children, and get their ideas.
- (2) Use the questions below to tell us what you think!

- What do think are the most important things that the NPA for Children should look at?
- What are the things that children in your community struggle the most with?
- What things have you seen that work well in your community/ school/ area that might also help other children in other areas?
- How can you help to make sure that the NPA for Children is implemented and monitored?
- How do you think should children participate in the implementation and monitoring of the NPA for Children?

(3) Remember, all ideas are important!

(4) Keep on the lookout for other opportunities where you can be involved to tell us what you think.

(5) During various sessions where children are participating there will also be WORKSHEETS on different areas which you can use to share ideas. You can also download these from our website (<http://www.wcpd.gov.za/children/>).

We look forward to your ideas and can't wait to receive them.

You can use any of the following ways to share your ideas with us:

By mail (in an envelope ) addressed to:

Ms Sinah Moruane
 Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities
 Private Bag X 9193
 Pretoria
 0001

By email:
 sinah@dwcpd.gov.za

By SMS:
 0828033018