



childline

South Africa

☎ 08000 55 555

Media Release

The Need to Protect Children from Harm at all Times

REFLECTIONS ON CHILD PROTECTION WEEK?

As we enter Child Protection Week (28th May to 4th June 2017, and reflect on the South African news reports of the past few months, it would appear that children themselves have little to celebrate in relation to their safety and the protection of their rights within the home, within the school and in the wider community in which they live.

Despite some of the best legislation and policy in the world – law and policy that says

- The best interests of the child are paramount
- Children have the right to a name and a nationality
- Children have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect
- Children have a right to health care
- Children have a right to education
- Children have the right to be safe from harm

We have read and seen in the media reports about

- The rape and killing of children
- Children who may not have therapy after years of abuse and exploitation because the criminal court case in which they must testify, and which has been pending for two years has not yet been finalised
- Children born in South Africa to foreign mothers without documentation who are denied a birth document
- Children who die in traffic accidents riding without a secure safety belt on or in the back of a bakkie
- Children who may not attend school due to service delivery protests
- A lack of specialist paediatric health care in many of South Africa's health facilities and no specialised hospital for children in the provinces that collectively have 75% of South Africa's children living in them
- 60 Billion Rand lost to the national budget each year due to corruption.

The list could be a lot longer. But it hurts to continue.....

Child protection week this year should be a week in which we do not target children. (How do we expect a 6 month old baby, a 3 year old toddler to protect themselves?) We should be targeting our politicians, governments, private sector, communities, faith and religious leaders' families and those with responsibility to look after children-ADULTS- to look deeply at the role they play in ensuring protection of children in their life space.

We should be challenging all citizens who love their country to think child – how safe, how loved, how nurtured are the children in my family, in my community, in my town, city or rural area? What can I do to make children's lives better, safer and more secure? South Africans talk about children as our Country's future – the reality is that they are our country's present – if we do not look after and protect the rights of children now, South Africa's future will be bleak indeed.

A person never stands so tall as when they kneel to love, help and protect a child.

As citizens of this country, let us then use this National Child Protection Week to awaken the commitment of every single person in South Africa to start taking responsibility for the protection of children”.

Ways that YOU can take Responsibility to Help Protect Children

- Know the ‘Rights of Children’ and discuss these with your family and friends.
- Provide a quiet, uninterrupted time each day to ask your children about their daily activities. This will give them an opportunity to tell you about things that may be worrying them, should such a situation arise.
- Never send children alone to the shop or on other errands.
- Always check the references of any new baby-sitters, care-givers or nursery schools.
- Don’t let children go to shopping malls or places of entertainment unless supervised by a responsible adult.
- Remember safety in numbers: If children walk to school or use public transport, ensure that they know to go with at least one friend.
- Under no circumstances leave a child waiting unattended outside school or other places.
- Accompany children to toilets in public places.
- When children are invited to visit or stay overnight, always get to meet the family before giving your permission.
- Monitor the content of films and television programmes watched by your children and use the parental control button on the remote where available.
- Make sure that your electronic devices, such as cell phones and computers, are password protected to prevent unsupervised use by children.
- Introduce a house rule: No hitching of lifts or accepting lifts from strangers at any time.
- Ask questions if a child starts coming home with extra money or unexplained gifts.
- ***Let your children know they can talk to you or call Childline, on 08000 55 555, if anyone should say or do anything that makes them feel embarrassed or uncomfortable in any way.***

Other useful information is available for parents / caregivers, educators, children and youth on the Childline website: www.childlinesa.org.za

The New Childline Online Counselling Service @ www.childlinesa.org.za

In its endeavour to continue being relevant and keep up with the times, Childline South is pleased to announce that it is now going to be able to meet young South Africans where they are at: **online**.

The new Childline Online Counselling, Protection and Intervention Service is to be officially announced by Childline South Africa at the Official Launch of National Child Protection Week 2017, in KwaLanga Cape Town, on Sunday 28 May.

The service is offered nationally **Monday - Friday**, initially **from 14h00 to 18h00**. It is available free of charge to children and youth in South Africa, under the age of 21 years, as well as to adults with concerns about children and child-related issues.

Chatrooms may be accessed by visiting the Childline website: www.childlinesa.org.za and then clicking on the “Chat to a Counsellor” button. Connections are instantaneous and all conversations are one on one with a trained and experienced counsellor. Privacy and confidentiality are always maintained - unless we feel that you are in immediate danger or you agree that you are in need of further help.

The dedication, commitment and hard work of the teams at Childline South Africa and CreationLabs resulted in the creation of the new online counselling chat system, on the Childline website, in order to provide greater accessibility to the much-needed services that the organisation provides.

The additional objective of the online counselling service is to ensure that Childline is accessible to children and young people with disabilities - particularly those who have hearing and speech impairments.

Online Safety Tips from Childline South Africa:

- Always have the approval of your parent or care-giver before going online.
- Be very careful about giving your cell phone number or home telephone number to others online.
- Do not give out personal information online.
- Never agree to a private offline chat with a stranger either on a cell phone or on the Internet.
- When in a public chat room do not reveal any personal information such as your phone number, residential address or name of school (if a learner), or any personal information about your family and friends.
- Remember that some people use public chat rooms to find children. They make up facts about their identity and age so be careful about accepting information as true.
- Keep any password private and never give it to anyone.
- Keep online relationships ONLINE. Do not personally meet with people.

The Childline 24-Hour Toll-Free Crisis-Line 08000 55 555

In operation for more than 30 years, the Childline Crisis-Line continues to be the primary contact point for concerned callers. The number, which provides an invaluable educative service, receives over 44 000 calls per month from children and adults, across all provinces. However, the predominant age group for young callers is 10 - 14 years.

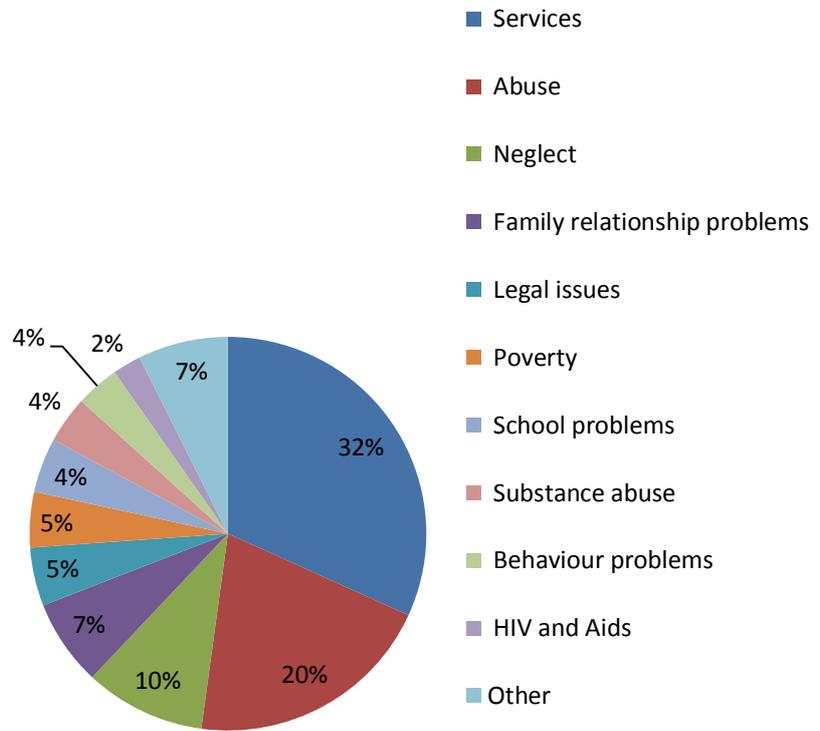
Thanks to the continued generosity of Telkom over the years, this toll-free number can be accessed free-of-charge from any landline in South Africa and more recently Vodacom, MTN and Cell C are also providing the service at no cost to callers on their mobile networks. Modern technology now enables faster response time through the direction of calls to the closest Childline office from the site of the caller.

Childline National Statistics for the Financial Year ending 31 March 2017

More than 44 000 calls per month were received through the Childline 24-Hour Toll-Free Crisis-Line during the financial year ending 31 March 2017.

A wide number of issues and problems relating to children are addressed by trained Childline Counsellors. This includes: Abuse (physical, emotional and sexual); Child pornography; Abuse at school by educators; Abandonment; HIV and Aids; Relationship problems with peers, parents or teachers; Sexual problems and pregnancy; Depression and attempted suicide; Neglect and financial problems; Learning and educational problems; Bullying and harassment; Homeless children and begging; Divorce, custody and access; Sibling issues; Loneliness and substance abuse.

Primary Childline Crisis-Line Call Categories 2016-2017



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