

Child Protection Week



National Child Protection Week is an annual campaign of the Government of South Africa to promote a culture of respect for children's rights and to ensure that all children grow up in an environment that is safe from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

What does Child Protection Week highlight?

Child Protection Week focuses on child safety and the awareness of child trafficking. Unfortunately, child trafficking remains a lucrative business and continues to violate the rights of an estimated 1.2 million children every year.

In South Africa alone, an estimated 247 000 children work in exploitative labour, including prostitution and other sexual exploitation. Children are also trafficked for cheap or domestic labour, to hawk or beg, for arranged marriages, and for dangerous or illegal work (such as mining or drug trafficking).

What can you do?

You don't have to be a parent to be concerned about, and instrumental in, the prevention of child trafficking. As a neighbour and community member, you also have a role to play.

Here is what you can do:

- Raise awareness about child trafficking.
- Do what you can to help alleviate poverty – it's one of the biggest contributing factors to the problem.
- Educate children and make sure they know what their rights are.
- Teach children not to talk to strangers (make sure they know what is meant by 'stranger',

as a child's definition of the term may differ from yours) and not to accept gifts or lifts from anyone.

- Promote self-confidence and resilience in children so they can resist peer pressure.
- Make sure children are supervised at all times – if you are able to, provide a safe haven for children after school and during holidays.
- Get involved in community projects that keep children safe and off the street.
- Keep an eye on unfamiliar adults who befriend children or buy them gifts.
- If you are a parent, make sure you know where your child is at all times and encourage them to tell you their whereabouts or contact you if they are going to be late.
- Parents, family members, and neighbours should create bonds with children and encourage open communication, so that children feel comfortable talking to an adult when they are in trouble.
- Report suspicious activity to the police.

Words to remember:

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."
~ Nelson Mandela

We are all encouraged to remember these words this Child Protection Week, and to take action wherever possible in ensuring the protection of our children and our country's future.