

# SA urged to assist vulnerable children

As the winter season sets in, Social Development Minister Bathabile Dlamini has called on South Africans to assist vulnerable children, who have no one to look after them, as National Child Protection Week comes to a close.



(Image: Wikimedia Commons)

"We call on South Africans who have the means to lend a helping hand to the less fortunate, especially children, as we enter the cold season by offering food, blankets and warm clothing," said Dlamini.

The Minister's comment comes as the National Child Protection Week (CPW) comes to a close today [Sunday].

CPW is observed in South Africa annually to raise awareness of the rights of children as articulated in the Children's Act of 2005.

The whole country was hit by a severe cold front from Friday and the South African Weather Services forecasts that temperatures will remain low until early next week, with frost in many places.

Dlamini also called on children living in the streets to seek refuge in shelters. She also appealed to all shelters and places of safety to open up their facilities to vulnerable children and to liaise with the department for support for the duration of the winter season.

For support with blankets, shelters may contact Dianne Dunkerley of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) on 083 289 5594. For support with food and link up with food banks, shelters may contact Peter Netshipale on 083 583 6364.

Meanwhile, North West Premier Supra Mahumapelo on Saturday called on communities and sectors to unite and partner

with government in creating safer and healthier environments for children to thrive.

"Everyone should play their part to stop child abuse, neglect and exploitation. We wish to remind our communities that failure to report any known form of abuse committed against a child constitute an offence," said the Premier.

On Wednesday, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu) said that children face challenges of safety on daily basis in their homes, communities and schools.

"Other challenges facing children include the lack of sufficient nutrition; lack of proper education; being orphaned due to HIV and Aids; physical, sexual and emotional abuse. As Sadtu we would like to reiterate the old saying - "It takes a village to raise a child".

This means that respecting the rights of children and protecting them is the responsibility of everybody - communities, the elderly, churches, parents and teachers," said the union.

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