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Child and Youth Care

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Child Care Work as a Craft
Brian Gannon

Factsheet: At what age can children act independently from their parents and when do they need their parents' consent or assistance?
Prinslean Segeel



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As 2005 comes to a close...

By Merle Allsopp

As the year closes down - as it seems to do in a very palpable way in South Africa - and we round up this year's work, ticking off some items from our lists and bravely piling up things we definitely will get to next year, most of us take time to think about what the year has meant to us. Many colleagues will be remembering those who have passed on - colleagues, family members, friends, and people (adults and children) we have worked with. As the year closes we give thanks for the lives of child and youth care workers who have contributed their skills and compassion to the children of our country.

Many will think back to the achievements of the year. How many families in our programs were reunified? How many children went back to school? How many young people passed the school year? These statistics form part of annual program evaluation, and will at some stage be analysed and understood in terms of inputs, budgets and indicators. But at Christmas time many of us will allow ourselves to feel the joy of these successes. We gather together with our teams to recognize one another's contributions and take a moment to revel in the sense of having come through the year together!

When reflecting on Association activities many of our minds will immediately jump to Conference... a different thing to different people! We may think of the youth input, Thom Garfat's keynote, Dr Mattera's powerful plea, or the sense of inspiration that the occasion left us with. If we were part of the planning committee we may have a complex mixture of images and experiences that play through our minds! But hopefully all of us are able to think back to something we have done differently with young people and families as a result of what we have

learned at Conference 2005?

And as our reflections move to the broader picture of child and youth care in the country, many of us may be aware of the extent of the growth in our regions. SAQA-accredited training has taken place in over 10 places in the country, stretching trainers and participants in new ways. Some of us have embraced the 'new dispensation' on training with gusto; others have been dragged into it, still wishing that things were as they were! Whichever category we fall into, we can reflect on this as the year that child and youth care training moved onto a new plane - one where we are able to account for learning that has taken place.

Of course, as we think along these lines, we must flag that profound milestone in the development of South African child and youth care this year - the inauguration of the Professional Board. "At last" most of us will be thinking!

The demand for child and youth care workers has grown dramatically in 2005, with the Department of Education announcing the opening up of posts for two thousand workers in schools across the country, and the social services department in KwaZulu Natal creating sixty-five new posts in the public service. And this is only the public sector!

But perhaps one of the greatest achievements of 2005 is a little less obvious. This year has surely seen a greater interest in, and respect for community-based child and youth care work in South Africa than any previous year. Child and youth care workers are being developed in all provinces at community level, gradually being seen as crucial in providing relief and assistance to vulnerable families. The work that they are doing is proving the value of child and youth care work in the context of poverty and HIV/AIDS. As 2005 comes to a close, and particularly at Christmas time, it is perhaps appropriate that we salute community-based child and youth care workers across the country. ●

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS

The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-profit organisation in South Africa which provides the professional training and infrastructure to promote healthy child and youth development and to improve standards of care and treatment for troubled children and youth at risk in family, community and residential group care settings.

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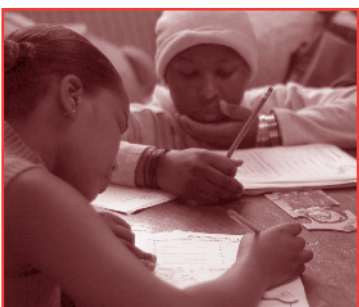
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