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Child & Youth Care Work

Tribute to
Nelson Mandela

A Journal for Those Who Work with Orphaned, Vulnerable and At-risk
Children and Youth and their Families



Reclaiming Disconnected Kids
John Seita

Problems as Opportunity: Meeting Growth needs
Martin Brokenleg & Nicholas J. Long

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS



Congratulations to the South African Child and Youth Care Field!

Merle Allsopp

It has finally happened! The Government Gazette has published regulations to the Social Services Professions Act of 1978 that require all people who work as child and youth care workers in South Africa to register with the South African Council for Social Service Professions.

This announcement represents the culmination of almost three decades of development and advocacy within the child and youth care work sector in South Africa.

The achievement raises us, as a country, into the league of countries like Denmark and Canada where people who work in the lifespace of children are expected to be professionals – and are treated as professionals through similar regulatory mechanisms. This move to regulate the child and youth care field recognises the importance of child and youth care workers – and it reflects the value we, as a country, place on children. It recognises that those who work with children in the trusted and familiar territory of the 'lifespace' must do so only when they are trained to do so – and when they subscribe to a code of ethics that govern their actions while providing this professional service.

This is a development which can be described in the idiom – crossing the Rubicon – meaning that we have moved into new territory, moved into a new phase from which there is no turning back.


It unfortunately does not mean that the profession will instantly be highly regarded, and appropriately remunerated. It does not mean the immediate end to professional territory disputes, professional one-upmanship and jostling for position. It does not mean that all provinces will immediately offer tertiary training in child and youth care work.

But what it does mean is that this lays a foundation from which the field will be able to move forward in all of the important areas for development of the field – tertiary education, remuneration levels, role and scope clarification, the development of specialisations, and the refinement and development of formal knowledge in the field. It provides a point of acknowledgement and recognition from which we, as the child and youth care work fraternity, will be able to advocate for the development of the field in all of these areas.

It does mean that child and youth care work is regarded in South Africa as an autonomous profession – a profession in its own right. It means that the significant

contribution to social welfare services for children and families made specifically by child and youth care workers is recognised. It means child and youth care work is acknowledged, and that there is a specific body of knowledge that 'belongs' to child and youth care work. It means that our society recognises that child and youth care workers need to be trained before they start to work with children and families. And it means that the South African public can expect from child and youth care workers a level of ethical practice as per a national code of ethics. Most importantly, the statutory regulation of child and youth care work means that the field has gained the respect of colleagues in related fields, and the respect of the lawmakers. In giving thanks for this respect, I believe we need each of us to do our part to demonstrate that that respect has been well founded and well placed – in our field as a whole and in us as individual practitioners.

And we need to thank the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care, the SA Council for Social Service Professions – and Minister Bathabile Dlamini, the Minister of Social Development, whose faith in child and youth care workers is undoubtedly a major factor in bringing us to this joyous point.

Onward SA child and youth care work!
Onward! 

Child & Youth Care Work

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Contents

Volume 32 No. 3 Child and Youth Care Work

4th Quarter 2014



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Nelson Mandela

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| | |
|--|----|
| Editorial | 2 |
| Merle Allsopp | |
| Reflections on Registration and Regulation | 4 |
| Jackie Winfield | |
| Easy Guide to the Regulations for Child and Youth Care Workers | 5 |
| Registration as a Child and Youth Care Worker: Frequently Asked Questions | 6 |
| Malala Yousafzai, Girls' Right Activists and The Youngest Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Nicia De Nobrega | 9 |
| 20 Year Old Article :The Child Care Career Development Towards A Profession Wilma Hoffman | 10 |
| NACCW 20th Biennial Conference 2015 | 14 |
| Isibindi Success Story Boniswa Genge | 17 |
| Child Rights in the Digital Age - Executive Summary Amanda Third, Delphine Bellerose, Ursula Dawkins, Emma Keltie & Kari Pihl | 18 |
| Isibindi Success Story | 22 |
| Social Service Workers are Addressing Ebola's Widespread Social Impacts Amy Bess & Alex Collins | 24 |
| Social Development Month Prof. Antoinette Lombard | 26 |
| Reclaiming Disconnected Kids John Seita | 28 |
| Policy on Discipline of Children by Parents and Caregivers at Home Deptment of Social Development | 32 |
| Focus on...Aziwe Magida | 33 |
| Problems as Opportunity: Meeting Growth Needs Martin Brokenleg & Nicholas J.Long | 34 |
| A Day At Waves For Change | 36 |
| Activities | 38 |
| Success Against Violence International Conference | 41 |
| NPO Governance Issues: Quick Guide - Agenda Items and Questions for Board Meetings Ricardo Wyngaard Attorneys | 24 |

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