Who should protect our children?

The Governement of South Africa has the best interests of the child at heart. This is evident in the child protection mechanisms such as domestic legislation and international instruments that the country has ratified as a commitment to the protection of children's rights. These mechanisms include:

- The Children's Act 38 of 2005 (as amended). This is the primary law aimed at giving effect to children's constitutional rights, including access to social services
- The Sexual Offences Act 32 of 2007
- The Child Justice Act
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999

Child protection is everybody's responsibility. We want a South Africa fit for children. Children should be free from abuse, neglect and exploitation! Children's rights are human rights. Let's stand up for our rights! Children, empower yourselves - know your rights and exercise them responsibly!

If your rights as a child are being violated or if you want to help someone report abuse, neglect and exploitation, then contact us at one of the following SAHRC offices.

PROTECT OUR CHILDREN, REPORT ABUSE
CHILD LINE HELP LINE
0800 055 555

For further information, visit www.sahrc.org.za, or send e-mail: info@sahrc.org.za or contact any of the SAHRC offices:

Head Office/Gauteng
Forum 3, Braampark Office Park, 33 Hoofd Street
BRAAMFONTEIN
☎ (011) 403 0684 • Fax: (011) 877 3600

Eastern Cape
84-88 Oxford Street, Oxford House, EAST LONDON
☎ (041) 582 4094 • Fax: (041) 582 2204

Free State
50 East Burger Street, 1st Floor TAB building, BLOEMFONTEIN
☎ (051) 447 1133 • Fax: (051) 447 1128

Gauteng
Floor 2, Forum 3, Braampark Office Park
33 Hoofd Street, BRAAMFONTEIN
☎ (011) 877 3750 • Fax: (011) 403 0668

KwaZulu-Natal
First Floor, 136 Victoria Embankment, DURBAN
☎ (031) 304 7323/4/5 • Fax: (031) 304 7323

Limpopo
1st Floor, Office 102, Library Garden Square, Corner of
Schoeman and Grobler Streets, POLOKWANE
☎ (015) 291 3500 • Fax: (015) 291 3505

Mpumalanga
4th Floor Carltex Building, 32 Bell Street, Nelspruit
PO Box 6574, NELSPRUIT
☎ (013) 752 8292 • Fax: (013) 752 6890

North West
170 Klopper Street, RUSTENBURG
☎ (014) 592 0694 • Fax: (014) 594 1089

Northern Cape
45 Mark and Scott Road, Ancorley Building, UPINGTON
☎ (054) 332 3993/4 • Fax: (054) 332 7750

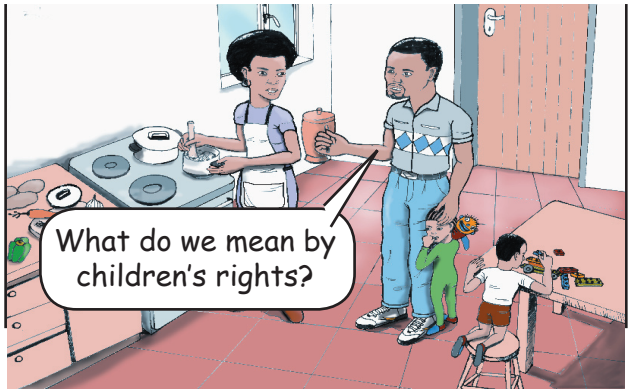
Western Cape
7th Floor, ABSA Building, 132 Adderley Street, CAPE TOWN
☎ (021) 426 2277 • Fax: (021) 426 2875

south african human rights commission

Transforming society
Securing rights
Restoring dignity

Children have rights too

BUT rights should be exercised RESPONSIBLY



What are Children's Rights?

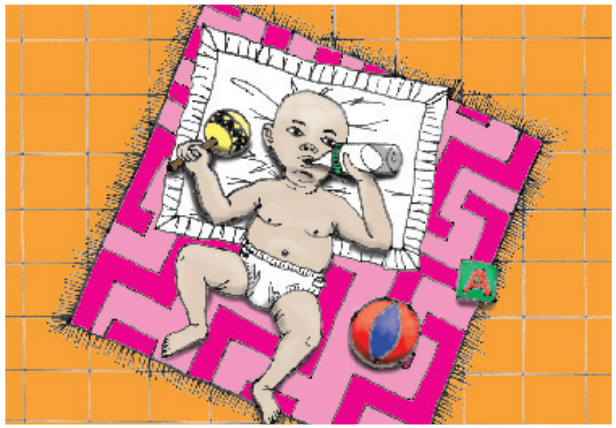
Children's rights are those rights found in Section 28 in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa and they form the basis for the best interest of the child in all matters affecting children. These rights aim to protect ALL children up to the age 18 years from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation and they include the right to:

- a name and nationality from birth;
- family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;
- basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services;
- protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation;
- protection from exploitative labour practices which are inappropriate for a person of that child's age or place at risk the child's well – being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development;
- protection against detention except as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, separately from detained persons over the age of 18 years; and to be afforded legal representation at state expense.

Children, empower yourselves - Know your rights and accept your responsibilities!

Chapter 2 of our Constitution contains the Bill of Rights which applies to everyone. Some of these rights which apply to children should be exercised responsibly by everyone including children themselves. These rights are:

- A right to family care, love and protection and the responsibility to show love, respect and caring to others, especially the elderly.
- A right to a clean environment and the responsibility to take care of their environment by cleaning the space they live in.
- A right to food and the responsibility not to be wasteful.
- A right to good quality education and the responsibility to learn and respect their teachers and peers.
- A right to quality medical care and the responsibility to take care of themselves and protect themselves from irresponsible exposure to diseases such as HIV/Aids.
- A right to protection from exploitation and neglect and the responsibility to report abuse and exploitation.



Children have a right to dignity and bodily integrity

Many children are neglected, abused, hurt, insulted and exploited. Anyone who denies you your rights is breaking the law.

Our Constitution states that all people have a right to dignity. This means that no one may abuse, exploit or hurt you, either physically or mentally.

Children, let no one deny you your rights! If you or someone you know suffers any form of abuse, get help. Our Constitution protects you.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) is equipped to help you. There are other individuals and service providers who can help such as:

- Child Line, Toll free 0800 055 555
- A responsible adult such as your parent, neighbour, teacher or priest
- A social worker
- The South African Police Services (SAPS)
- A medical practitioner such as a doctor or nurse