



SIKHULA SONKE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
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OBSERVING UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY WHICH IS NOW WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

This year marks the 68th year that World Children's Day has been celebrated across the world. On the 20th November we celebrate and honor children, but today, as adults, caregivers, parents and custodians of children's rights we are concerned about the state of young children, not just in South Africa but across the world. Young children are exposed to all sorts of social ills, some even perpetrated by the people that children have entrusted their lives to. ***Who have we become?***

In South Africa, it looks like we wake up every day to new social ills that trample deeply on children's rights. The days where children could walk and play freely, and be kind to people they do not know are long gone and over. In turn, this has destroyed the social fibre of ubuntu as caring communities. Instead, our communities are riddled with incidents of kidnapping of young children, drug trafficking, children in gangs, all sorts of abuses and many more. Now, the latest concern is pit bull dog attacks and the rising number of children who have been mauled. The government appears to be dragging their feet when it comes to legislation that deals with these issues. ***When is the good time to safeguard the future of this country, our children?***

Sikhula Sonke Early Childhood Development releases this statement to invite this country at large - no matter which line of work or business are you in - to do something around development, nurturing, protection and safeguarding young children of this country. We also wish to salute and honour all of our partners in development for their roles towards ensuring that children's rights are being observed in whatever ways possible. Early Childhood Development funding partners, government departments and grassroots organizations are indeed playing a huge role. Sadly this is not enough towards upholding children's rights and ensuring that children of this country are growing up in a safe, stimulating and nurturing environment. ***More needs to be done.***

My closing comments in this statement is that South Africa has a great potential and many resources towards leading from the front in addressing the issues highlighted on the Sustainable Developmental Goals. ***What is it that is holding us back?*** South Africa has its National Development Policy Plan which addresses many issues that surround children's development and safety. ***Is this a window dressing for other countries?*** We, as the country, have a great Integrated National Early Childhood Development policy, ***Why does it look like we do not know where to start?***

Not a single political party issued a statement this past Sunday of the World Children's Day - which means "***Kusekude engqinibeni***" ***Khanenze ngcono MaAfrika ngabantwana belilizwe.*** On this day, we honor you children of this World.

God Bless,

Mdebuka Mthwazi

Executive Director: Sikhula Sonke Early Childhood Development