



**social development**

---

Department:  
Social Development  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

# **STRATEGY TO SUPPORT FAMILIES FACING THE REMOVAL OF A FAMILY MEMBER**

**SEPTEMBER 2017**



## INDEX

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION 1: BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	8
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	9
1.3 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS.....	10
1.3.1 Impact of removal.....	10
1.3.2 Services.....	11
<b>SECTION: 2. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 LEGISLATIVE MANDATE.....	12
2.2 INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS.....	15
<b>SECTION 3: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 VISION AND MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.....	16
3.2 PURPOSE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY TO..... SUPPORT FAMILIES FACING THE REMOVAL OF A FAMILY MEMBER	16
3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY.....	17
3.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	17
<b>SECTION 4: RESPONSE STRATEGY TO SUPPORT FAMILIES FACING.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>THE REMOVAL OF A FAMILY MEMBER</b>	
4.1 APPROACHES.....	19
4.2 KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES STATED IN THE WHITE PAPER..... FOR FAMILIES, 2013	21



<b>4.2</b>	<b>FAMILY INTERVENTIONS.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>4.2.1</b>	<b>Family strengthening services.....</b>	<b>21</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family support</li></ul>	
<b>4.2.2</b>	<b>Family preservation services on four levels.....</b>	<b>22</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevention and Promotion, Early Intervention, Statutory intervention and protection services</li><li>• Reunification/Reintegration and after care services</li></ul>	
<b>4.3</b>	<b>FAMILY INTERVENTION PROCESS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>SECTION 5: COORDINATION AND MONITORING.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5.2.1</b>	<b>Monitoring.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5.2.2</b>	<b>Evaluation.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>SECTION 6: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>32</b>



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are a number of evident and positive changes since the adoption of the White Paper on Families (2013) specifically in the realm of policy and legislative reform, recommended changes in institutional arrangements, models of service delivery, human resource. However, a number of approaches to service delivery are still identified to be lacking behind to accomplish comprehensive results on individuals and families.

Over the years, the Department of Social Development has also accelerated its development strategy process in order to inform practice and to assist the transformation process. The Department of Social Development strives to promote and ensure a concerted effort from practitioners and service providers, to shift towards a preventative and early intervention paradigm.

In line with the Integrated Service Delivery Model (2005) a complete delivery of services cycle is achieved through the provision of services at all the four levels of intervention, which include: prevention, early intervention, statutory and reunification and aftercare services. Reunification and reintegration of persons back into their families and communities are referred to in White Paper as most important (White Paper on Families 2013).

The concept of aftercare services previously denoted a service that was provided particularly for persons whom were separated from their families and after a certain period of time placed in alternative care. These services were designed to assist and ensure a seamless reintegration of persons back into the families and communities that the system deemed appropriate.

Family Preservation ensures that individuals are nurtured, cared for and supported. These services have become imperative to service rendering to families as they focus on building strong family bonds. This can be achieved when families are empowered and supported with the aim to restore their well-being to regain family resilience and optimal social functioning.



## social development

---

Department:  
Social Development  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

The strategy to support families facing the removal of a family member seeks to assist the family to deal with the issues that necessitated the possible removal in the first place and to facilitate should removal has to take place, the reintegration and reunification of the family member into the family and community life after separation.

The strategy shall provide guiding principles that when effectively executed will assist with reuniting and reintegrating removed family members with their families whilst strengthening the family structure to care and support their members.



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **Aftercare**

The Children's Act (Act No 38) of 2005 defines aftercare as the supportive services provided by a social worker or social service professional to monitor progress with regards to the child's developmental adjustment as part of family preservation or reunification services.

Aftercare is the professional care and support that the child, family and community receive during and after life of separation with the objective of achieving family reunification and reintegration.

### **Child**

According to the Children's Act (Act No 38) of 2005 a child means any person under the age of 18 years.

### **Community**

The White paper for Social Welfare (1997) defines community as a group of people living in the same geographical area in close proximity of each other having a common background and share same interest, culture, needs and problems within the society.

### **Family**

A societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence.

### **Family preservation services**

Are services to families that focus on family resilience in order to strengthen families, so as to keep families together as far as possible.



## **Family Resilience**

It is the ability of families to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges.

## **Family strengthening**

It is the deliberate process of giving families the necessary opportunities, relationship, networks and support to become functional and self-reliant. The strengthening of families is driven by certain core areas, namely: family economic success, family support systems, and thriving and nurturing communities.

## **Family member**

According to the Children's Act (Act No 38) of 2005, a family member in relation to a child, means a parent of the child, any other person who has parental responsibilities and rights in respect of the child, a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or cousin of the child, or any other person with whom the child has developed a significant relationship, based on psychological or emotional attachment, which resembles a family relationship.

A family member can however, also belongs to a family without children

## **Family Reunification**

It is the process of empowering and supporting parents, extended family and young people in care which aims at enabling those young people to be united with their family and or communities (Guidelines on Family Reunification, 2012).

## **Reintegration**

It refers to integration of children and adults back in their families and communities. It is to renew with regard to any state or quality to restore and bring together again the whole (Criminal Procedure Act 51, 1977).

## **Family Support**



Families support in the context of the strategy means the improvement of family well-being and long-term empowerment by increasing the family's coping skills.

Family support will be based on the family system as a unit and will include family centeredness, empowerment and participatory decision making.

Families facing challenging circumstances with their family resilience being compromised will need an intensive level of support with regular contact with dedicated service providers to help them to resolve complex problems they are facing.

### **Strategy**

A strategy is a method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as the achievement of a goal and objectives to provide a solution to a problem/s over a period of time.





## **SECTION 1: BACKGROUND**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

The White Paper on Families (2013) views the family as a key development imperative and seeks to mainstream family issues into government-wide, policy-making initiatives in order to foster positive family well-being and overall socio-economic development in the country. It envisages well-functioning families that are loving, peaceful, safe, stable and economically self-sustaining, that also provides care and physical, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual and intellectual support for their members.

It is important to recognise that families have inherent capacities and strengths that sustain them in times of prosperity, as well as adversity. These qualities should form the basis of intervention within families. Families could however, be confronted with social ills such as substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, child abuse, neglect which negative impact on the functionality of families which could if necessary, bring about the removal of a family member/s from their family environment, causing the family to battle with coping with their changed situation.

This Strategy will explore the impact that the removal of family members through intervention has on the family.

### **1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Family removal or separation is the physical and emotional distancing between at least two or more family members in an arrangement which can be stressful and traumatic to the family members. The separation of family members can have both a positive and/or negative impact on the family.

In some instances the removal of a family member could bring temporarily relief to the family (family member being removed to a rehabilitation/treatment centre in cases of substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness) however, when a child is being removed due to child abuse and neglect or being in conflict with the law the situation



could heavily impact on the family placing the family in crisis and at risk of further disintegration.

The support services families in these circumstances require is as a rule not well coordinated among service providers. Services are mostly rendered to the removed members and little attention if any is given to the family as a whole. This imbalanced manner of support leaves families ill prepared for the process or adjustment and adaptation both the family and the family member has to go through long before the reintegration of the removed family member is even considered. The Department is developing this strategy so to close the identified gap in service delivery that render families vulnerable. The strategy also focuses on ensuring that families receive the necessary support services to prepare the family to accept that the reunification and reintegrate the removed family member back into the family with again require that the family adjust and adapt to the situation.

### **1.3. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

Desktop research has been done on the impact of the removal of family members on the family and on the support services necessary to accommodate both the needs of the removed family members and the family. The research included both international and national resources.

#### **1.3.1. Impact of removal**

Internationally, a study was conducted by UPENN Collaborative Community Integration in the United States under the topic "Removal from the home: Resulting trauma'. The research was aimed at reviewing the impact of removing children from their homes to foster care. The foster care system is meant to be a temporary solution, yet removing a child from his or her family can be traumatic.

One of the research findings is that although an abusive family would be harmful to children, the process of being removed from one's home and placed in foster care has consequences and can have negative effects on the family that can last a lifetime.

In South Africa whilst the family can be considered the most important unit for offering family members stability and a secured environment, families are facing a variety of



challenges that do not guarantee the above. Family life has become increasingly diverse and complex, leaving families vulnerable to different forms of stress. Families could be at risk of being disintegrated due to a number of social ills such as substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness and child abuse and neglect (Gray & Lombard, 2008: 134).

### **1.3.2. Services**

#### Internationally

In the United Kingdom services rendered by Family Life highlights that coping with the aftermath of having your children removed by social services is a very painful experience for parents and close family members. The Organisation provides intensive intervention, information and advocacy to parents and families whose children are involved with children services due to welfare needs or concerns.

Research conducted by Jacquelyn McCroskey, William Meezan on Family Centred Services: Approaches and Effectiveness, examines the current understanding of the most promising and effective means of serving families. Emphasis is placed on issues related to planning and services delivery, such as coordination and system reform, financing, targeting, relationships between workers and families, and efforts to strengthen entire communities.

#### Nationally

In South Africa, whilst the family can be considered as the most important unit for offering family members stability and a secured environment. According to the White Paper on Families (2013) it is imperative to have well-functioning families that are loving, peaceful, safe, stable and economically self-sustaining that also provides care and physical, emotional, psychological, financial and intellectual support for their members. Families, however, are faced with a variety of challenges that do not guarantee the above.

A number of families require special services and protection because they find themselves in vulnerable situations due to circumstances beyond their control, such as poverty, disability, family conflict and dispute, substance abuse, child and youth at



## social development

---

Department:  
Social Development  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

risk of offences and crime and neglect and abuse of children. A number of families require special services and protection because they find themselves in vulnerable situations due to circumstances beyond their control, such as poverty, disability, conflicts, substance abuse, child and youth at risk of offences and crime, neglect and abuse of children.



## **SECTION 2: LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS**

### **2.1. LEGISLATION MANDATE**

#### **2.1.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996**

Within South Africa, chapter 2 in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996) entrenches the right of every person to human dignity, equality and to Freedom and security. It imposes a duty on government to take appropriate steps to ensure that the human rights of persons are respected.

#### **2.1.2. White Paper on Families, 2013**

The White Paper is guided by three strategic priorities. The promotion of healthy family life, family strengthening and family preservation. Promotion of healthy family life focuses on efforts to prevent the breakdown of family life by promoting positive attitudes and values about the importance of strong families and communities that support families. Provision is made in rendering family preservation services on a statutory intervention and protection level for the removal of family members should the family not be able or will not provide a safe environment to all family members.

#### **2.1.3. White Paper on Social Welfare, 1997**

Section 51 of the White Paper mandates the Department to develop and implement appropriate social service programmes for offenders, victims and their families where needed in order to promote their integration into society. DSD is also responsible to assist children to reunify children with their families and communities, if possible.

#### **2.1.4. Integrated Service Delivery Model, 2005**

The major goal of the Service Delivery Model for Social Services is therefore to provide a comprehensive national framework that clearly sets out the nature, scope, extent and level of social services, and form the basis for the development of appropriate norms and standards for service delivery.



### **2.1.5. The Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Act, Act No 70 of 2008**

The key intervention highlighted in the Act is the delivery of after care services and reintegration programmes for the integration of people, who abuse substances, into their families and communities after treatment.

### **2.1.6. Domestic Violence Act, Act 116 of 1996**

The Domestic Violence Act stipulates that: “any member of the South African Police Services must, at the scene of an incident of domestic violence or as soon thereafter as is reasonably possible or when the incident of domestic violence is reported, render such assistance to the complaint as may be required in the circumstances, including assisting or making arrangements for the complainant to find a suitable shelter and to obtain medical treatment.

### **2.1.7. Children’s Act, Act 38 of 2005**

The Children’s Act gives effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Constitution, set out principles relating to the care and protection of children, define parental responsibilities and rights, and make further provision regarding Children’s court proceedings.

### **2.1.8. Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, Act No 32 of 2007**

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, Act No 32 of 2007 repeals the common law offence of rape and replaces it with a new expanded statutory offence of rape, applicable to all forms of sexual penetration without consent, irrespective of gender.

### **2.1.9. Older Persons Act, Act No 13 of 2006**



The Older Persons Act is meant to deal effectively with the plight of older persons and the promotion and maintenance of their status, rights, well-being, safety and security and provides for matters connected therewith.

#### **2.1.10. Child Justice Act, Act No 75 of 2008**

The Child Justice Act aims to establish a criminal justice system for children, who are in conflict with the law, in accordance with the values underpinning our Constitution and our international obligations, by among others, creating, as a central feature of this new criminal system for children, the possibility of diverting matters involving children who have committed offences away from the criminal justice system, in appropriate circumstances, while children whose matters are not diverted, are to be dealt with the criminal justice system in child justice courts.

#### **2.1.11. Social Housing Act, Act No 16 of 2008**

The Social Housing Act was developed to help with the establishment and promotion of the sustainable environment and its general principles is to give priority to the needs of low and medium income households in respect of social housing development. It also must ensure the respective housing programmes are Responsive to the needs of women, children, child-headed households, person with disabilities and the elderly. It aims to afford residents the necessary dignity and privacy by providing residents with a clean, healthy and safe environment.

#### **2.1.11. Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, Act No 7 of 2010**

The Bill gives effect to the Republics obligations concerning the trafficking of persons in terms of international agreements, to provide for an offence of trafficking in persons and other offences associated with trafficking in persons, to provide for penalties that may be imposed in respect of the offences, to provide for measures to protect and assist victims of trafficking in persons, to provide for the coordinated implementation, application and administration of this Act, and to prevent and combat the trafficking in persons within or across the borders of the Republic and to provide for matters connected therewith.



## **2.2. INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS**

### **2.2.1. African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child, 1990**

Article 17 (3) outlines the essential aim of treatment of every child during trial and if found guilty of an infringement, the penal law shall be his or her reformation as well as re-integration into his or her family and social rehabilitation.

Article 18, states that families are the natural unit and basis for society in which protection and support is provided for the establishment and development of family members.

### **2.2.1. United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child**

The convention describes the human rights of children. It indicates rights of the child to survival and protection from harmful influences. It further emphasized the right to be protected against abuse and exploitation. The convention has

Four founding principles which are non-discrimination, best interest of the child, the child's right to life and respect for the views of the child.





## **SECTION 3: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 VISION AND MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### Vision

A caring and integrated system of Social Development services that facilitates human development and improves the quality of life.

#### Mission

To ensure the provision of comprehensive social protection services against vulnerability and poverty within the constitutional and legislative framework, and create an enabling environment for sustainable development.

### **3.2 PURPOSE FOR (GOAL OF) THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY**

Whilst the family can be considered the most important unit for offering family members stability and a secure environment, families are facing a variety of challenges that do not guarantee the above. Family life has become increasingly diverse and complex, leaving families vulnerable to different forms of stress. A number of families require special services and protection because they find themselves in vulnerable situations due to circumstances beyond their control, such as poverty, disability, conflicts, substance abuse, child and youth at risk of offences and crime, neglect and abuse of children

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:11) acknowledge that all families, regardless of lifestyle, inevitably face serious problems or crisis at some point in their life cycle. Indeed, most families become temporarily dysfunctional in response to persistent stress while some have learned to call upon certain internal assets and strengths, allowing them to rebound from adversity.

The strategy seeks to find simple practical solutions for families faced with disruption or dissolution of their family, circumstances which can be harmful or impact negatively on the family as a unit. The strategy will promote well-functioning families and prevent vulnerability so to develop an emotional and functioning balance in the family so that



the family system can cope effectively with any individual members' intrinsic or unresolvable challenges.

### **3.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY**

The strategy seeks to:

- To empower and restore the well-being of families to regain self-reliance and increased social functioning during, after the removal of a family member and when reunification and reintegration of the family member takes place.
- To strengthen, support and preserve the family as the primary caregiver as far as possible.
- Facilitate reintegration into family and community life after separation
- Empower and develop coping skills of families at risk.
- Ensure the development of an integrated referral system.

### **3.4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Family centred orientation: the family is the central focus and should not be seen in fragmentation. Decisions made must be in the best interest of the family members and family.
- Strength-based approach: Seeks to identify, use, build and reinforce the strengths and abilities people already have.
- Partnership: The family members are important role-players in the multidisciplinary team.
- Empowerment: The process has to be empowering for the family member and the family to be resilient and self-reliant.
- Collaboration: Inter-agency collaboration and shared vision amongst stakeholders is of utmost importance.
- Participation: This principal is important for all family members as individuals, as well as for the whole family.
- Family resilience: Families have inherent capacities and strengths that sustain them in times of prosperity as well as adversity.



## **SECTION 4: RESPONSE STRATEGY TO SUPPORT FAMILIES WHEN FACING THE REMOVAL OF A FAMILY MEMBER**

### **4.1 APPROACHES**

- **Integrated approach**

The Department of Social Development's integrated Service Delivery Model expects the Department and Civil Society Organisations to provide continuum and collaborative services starting from primary prevention throughout to tertiary interventions so as to holistically address all forms of social ills (Department of Social Development, 2005).

Research shows that less attention often goes to the capacity of the Department and Civil Society Organisations to provide services to help stressed families prevent social ills or challenges before they occur. Families are not empowered to stabilise the home and provide more appropriate care for their family members ( Felistas Nhedz, Mankwane Makofane, DEPT Of Social Work, University of South Africa, Pretoria: The experiences of Social Workers in the provision of family preservation services)

During the intervention process, services must be delivered with the aim of increasing the family's coping skills. Coordination of services and collaboration by different stakeholders is important for the interest of the whole family.

- Crisis situation that necessitated the removal of a family member needs to be dealt with and be stabilised.
- Identify and address root causes of risk, harm, abuse and exploitation and implement strategies to address the causes.
- Identify needs and strategies of families in their social context and provide necessary programmes skills development, family diversion and therapeutic programmes that build resiliency.
- To build protective and resilience factors for children and families through responsive intensive programmes.

- **Social Developmental approach**



Many interventions based on the developmental theory seek to change behaviour. These interventions are based on in depth observation of family member's interaction and communication. The intervention seeks to change the way the family members learn, think and act in order to promote resilience. Also seek to reduce children's/ family's vulnerability in potentially risky situations.

- **Family systems and ecological approach**

The strategy seeks to highlight the family-centred service approach, which encompass family support services for families coping with normal parenting stresses, and family preservation designed to help families facing serious problems and possible out of home placement.

Family support and family preservation are often referred to as family centred services because many of these programs share a guiding philosophy and emphasis responding to family needs and strengths.

No service program can provide all that is needed to support and strengthen every family. A system of well-coordinated, accessible, family centred services must rest on a foundation of a healthy community that affords adequate basic services and Opportunities for education, housing and employment. Efforts to strengthen family-centred services will be insufficient unless the basic needs of families are met.

Goals for family centred services

- Programs need to focus on family strengths and interventions need to focus on the family as a unit.
- Family support and to preserve families.

- **Strengths-based approach**

Strengths-based social work intervention in rendering services to families implies moving away from the deficit approach to a strengths-based approach the recognises the resourcefulness of families and their members. The strengths perspective is



closely linked with empowerment as it seeks to identify, use, build and reinforce the strengths, abilities and potential of their members.

## **4.2 KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES STATED IN THE WHITE PAPER FOR FAMILIES, 2013**

In the White Paper on Families (2013) three key strategic priorities are identified that need to guide the delivery of services to families by the Government and Civil Society namely:

- Promotion of healthy family life
- Family strengthening
- Family preservation

The strategy to support families facing the removal of a family member is located under two strategic priorities namely, family strengthening and family preservation.

### **4.2 FAMILY INTERVENTIONS**

#### **4.2.1 Family strengthening**

Family strengthening refers to the deliberate process of giving families and their members the necessary opportunities, relationship, networks support and protection, especially during times of adversity and change (Moore et al, 2002).

Family strengthening emphasises family focused, rather than an individual –focused approach in development and poverty reduction policies and programmes.

- **Family support**

The Department and the Civil Society Organisations offer family support services to promote social competencies and behaviours that contribute to parental, child and family health and development for all families.

These services are based on the premise that all families may experience stressful life circumstances and inadequate support as a result of normal transitions, economic



pressures, changing social conditions and a lack of, or access to resources and services within communities.

- **Characteristics of family support**

Family support services link families with support networks, resources and services and require an intersectoral interdisciplinary approach. Family support can be offered on three levels namely on individual, family and community level.

Family support programmes provide a wide variety of services to counteract stresses, link families together through therapeutic and counselling services. They may convene peer support groups, offer educational programs such as training in relationship building, communication skills, etc. Respect for individuals, family members and cultural differences are often reinforced.

Family support programmes work with individuals and family members as a unit to increase family capacities.

#### **4.2.2 Family preservation services on four levels**

Family preservation is generally understood as keeping families together as far as possible. Rendering of specific services and programmes which are intended to strengthen families in crisis and if possible reduce the removal of family members from troubled families.

Family preservation services are rendered on four levels and of which the target groups are: (1) resilient families and communities (2) family in crisis (3) families at risk and (4) families in transition. The philosophy that guides family preservation includes the assumptions that families are constantly engaged in a process of development and growth, and that all families have strengths to draw upon.



- **Family preservation on prevention and promotion, early intervention, statutory intervention and protection**

Family preservation programmes encourage the family to realise its potential by building on the skills of family members and by enhancing family support systems.

For purposes of this strategy family preservation services target families that are facing serious and immediate threats to family functioning and stability and whose family members are in danger of out-of-home placement.

Family preservation services on the level of early intervention, statutory intervention and protection and after care and reunification/reintegration include interventions based on a number of theoretical orientations. Interventions included in the basket of services for families such as therapeutic and mediation services (that could include crisis intervention or trauma counselling), statutory and protection services and after care and reunification services are rendered.

Family preservation services are rendered in accordance with the intervention process that includes: intake, screening, family developmental assessment, family developmental plan, intervention. Should these services be successful termination of services could be considered. Families, however, that require support services and are faced with the removal of a family member require continuous services to be rendered and/or referral to the most appropriate service provider.

The programs emphasize the idea that a supportive, empowering and respectful relationship with families facilitates change, and stress the need to respond to the

Family reunification is one of the goals of family preservation services delivered to the family. Aftercare implies services to reconstruct the family after life of separation. The main objective of after care services is to support the family to be able to function and fulfil their responsibilities to all the family members.



- **Family reunification/reintegration and after care services**

Family reunification is an integral part of the philosophy of preserving families and of permanency planning with emphasis on ensuring continuity of care for the family members.

Family reunification is a dynamic process based on the family members and the family's changing qualities, needs and potential. As a form of preserving families, reunification encompasses:

- A belief that most families can care for their members, if properly assisted and supported
- Establish an ongoing partnership to ensure integrated service delivery by a multi-disciplinary team with the family members as the key team members.
- Family reunification services should be offered for as long as needed to maintain reconnection of family members with their families.

Reunification and aftercare refer to family preservation services delivered to the family of origin to:

- Address the risk factors that necessitated the removal of the family members
- Assist the family in the transitional period after the removal in order for the family to stabilize and enter into a reunification process after a period of separation.
- Integrate/reunify family members
- Provide support services to families that enhance the self-reliance of families and promote well-functioning families.

The ultimate goal will be that families be reunified, if possible. Prevention and early intervention should be rendered to the family to keep the family together, and to prevent disintegration.





#### 4.3.2 Characteristics of After Care and Family Reunification

- After care and family reunification services are rendered after statutory intervention took place and family members has been placed in alternative care or rehabilitation/treatment centres.
- After care services refer to family preservation services delivered to the family of origin to address the risk factors that necessitated the removal of the family member/members. Also, to assist the family in the transitional period after the removal, in order for the family to stabilise and enter into the reunification process.
- With reunification, the time frame for service delivery range from 6 months to 2 years depending not only on stipulations in the court order formulated as part of the statutory process, but also on other factors such as the risk factors that have led to the crisis that led to the removal of the family member/s in the first place. (It is common for such a crisis that should it remains unattended, that over time it would lead to complete a complete family breakdown).
- The removal of a family member from their families is a major loss for all the parties involved. Children in particular, may have feelings of rejection and a loss of sense of belonging, as well as being detached from family. Family reunification services should ensure that a new relationship be built between the family member in alternative care and the family which only will be possible if regular contact between the family member and the family be established. Family members need to learn to trust each other again. Regular contact will ensure that family relationships will be maintained and that trust will be restored. Addressing these aspects may take longer for some families and their members than for others.
- For families, especially parents, there may be feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Having a family member removed from the family reflects on parental capabilities and relationship skills. Family members may feel guilty for their contribution to the removal thus the need for aftercare services to the family.
- The separation of family members from the family of origin sometimes removes them from their cultures and immediate environment. Most children are placed



on a temporary or permanent basis in places of care that do not necessarily honour and/or recognise their culture and traditions. Children and other family members tend to lose touch with their cultures depending on the time period they have been removed from the family, which impacts on the re-integration process. This is something that takes a lot of creativity and patience to address and could prolong the reunification process.

### **The guiding principles for after care and family reunification services**

After care services implies the reconstruction of the family. It is necessary that a developmental implementation plan with the family be developed, with family reunification as one of the objectives. This should take place immediately after a temporary or permanent placement of the family member.

The main aim of the statutory intervention is to ensure the safety and well-being of the family members that has been removed from the family, or the protection of the family. Such an intervention provides the family with the opportunity to address the risk factors that the family was facing with whilst addressing the specific needs of the family. The main objective of after care services is to support the family to be able to function and fulfil their responsibilities to all their family members. Therefore:

- Family reunification is an integral part of the philosophy of preserving families and of permanency planning with emphasis on ensuring continuity of care for the family members.
- Family reunification is a dynamic process based on the family member/s and the family's changing qualities, needs and potential.
- A conviction that the family of origin is the preferred co-rearing and caring unit as far as possible.
- A belief that most families can care for their member/s, if properly assisted and supported, and
- The reunification of a family member/s to take place as soon as possible. If possible, to ensure that family relationships are maintained and preserved.



- Children in care or family members in treatment centres or incarceration, their biological families, foster families, other caregivers, social workers and other service providers should establish an ongoing partnership to ensure integrated service delivery by a multi-disciplinary team with the family members and families as the key team members.
- Human diversity is acknowledged and respected.
- A commitment to on-going contact between the family member and family is essential in preparing for the reunification of family members with their families. The service providers delivering after care services to the family and those rendering services to individual family members, should work in close cooperation with one another.
- Family reunification services should be offered for as long as needed to maintain and sustain the relationship between family members and their families.

#### **4.3 FAMILY INTERVENTION PROCESS**

Social work services to families have to be rendered according to the social work generic service delivery model and follow the steps from intake to termination or referral.

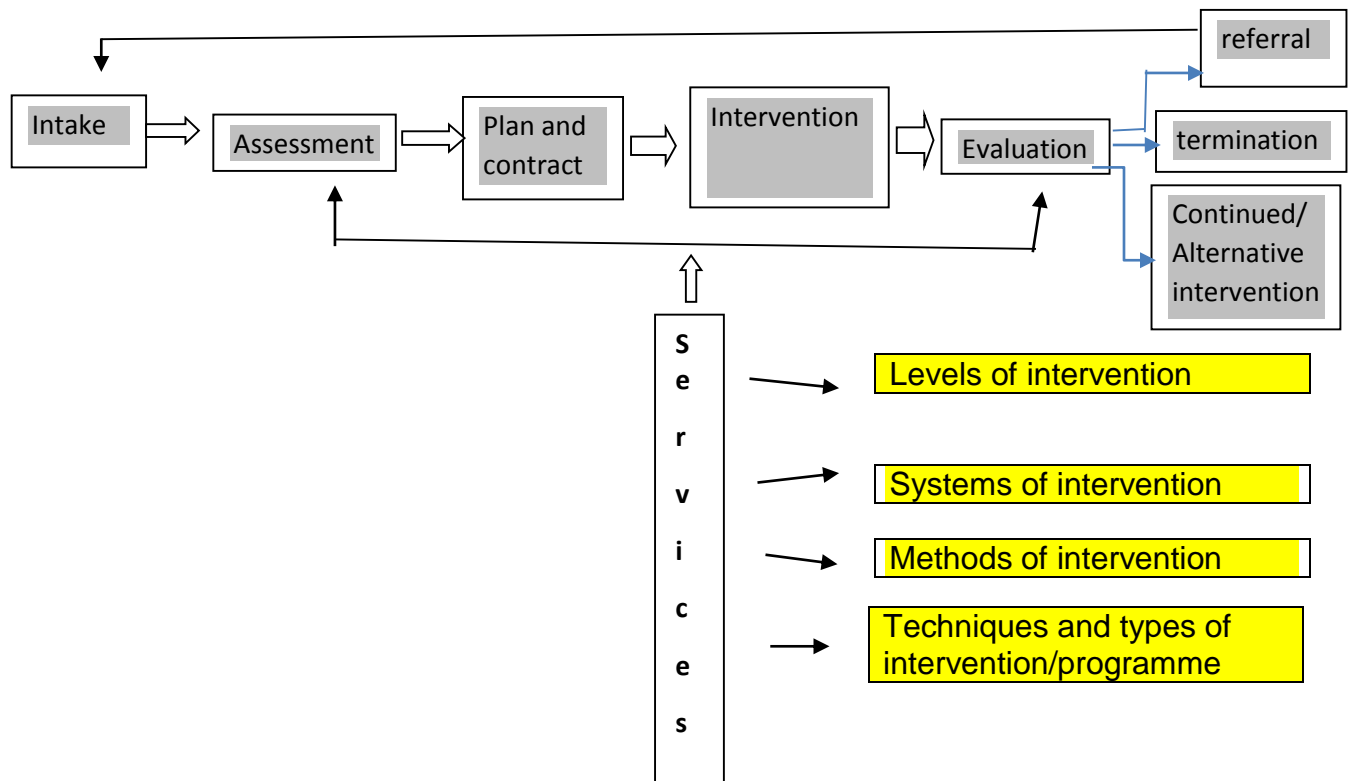
The main tool in rendering family preservation services are a trusting and sound social worker-client family relationship through-out the family intervention process as is illustrated below:

**Diagram 7.5 Generic service delivery model and generic intervention processes (Framework for Social Welfare Services, 2013)**



# social development

Department:  
Social Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





## **SECTION 5: COORDINATION AND MONITORING**

### **5.1. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS**

There are various key stakeholders that need to collaborate and coordinate services to ensure effective support for the family and the reintegration of their family members. The Department of Social Development is the lead Department which will coordinate the implementation and the monitoring of the implementation of support services to families.

This strategy will provide a platform for the Department of Social Development at National, Provincial and district level to facilitate supportive services to families facing the removal of a family member at grassroots level in close co-operation with other role- players in government and civil society.

### **5.2: MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

#### **5.2.1. Monitoring**

Monitoring of the programmes and services to families is essential to measure progress and achievements, to set objectives and the implementation of services to families by all stakeholders. Monitoring will assist service providers to effectively plan and manage their programmes to families by providing regular feedback on the quality and impact of service delivery to families and the availability of resources within the community.

The Chief Directorate: Monitoring and Evaluation and Directorate: Families shall develop monitoring tools which will form the basis of the strategy. The tools shall be designed in a manner that they promote collective collaboration, amongst and between implementing stakeholders and the beneficiaries thereof (Department of Social Development, 2008/14) The primary objective for developing the monitoring tools on the implementation of the strategy is to:

- Providing constant feedback on the extent to which the set objectives of the strategy are achieved;



- Identifying potential problems at an early stage and propose possible solutions;

#### *How should monitoring conducted*

Provincial coordinators should ensure that they respond to the annual indicator on family preservation services rendered to families.

Evaluation can also be done through quarterly reports indicating the successes and challenges experienced regarding the implementation process of the strategy in a quarter.

#### *How should data flow*

- Primary data will be collected from social service practitioners at local level and will be electronically captured at the District Office and be sent to the provincial Office for consolidation and then to the national Office.
- The National Office should undertake on site visits to the provincial offices at least once a year to monitor the implementation of services to families.

### **5.2.2 Evaluation**

The implementation of the strategy shall be evaluated continually to assess its efficiency and effectiveness by all responsible key stakeholders.

The strategy shall be implemented jointly by the personnel within the provincial Department of Social Development and the respective civil society organisations.

The provincial department of Social Development shall make a budget available to implement the strategy.



## **SECTION 6: CONCLUSION**

The strategy seeks to empower and build the resilience of families facing the removal of a family member by building their capacity to be able to deal with the challenges that necessitated the removal of a family member.

The risk factors will be addressed that led to the removal of a family member and to facilitate the development of stable, reliable and well-functioning families.

The strategy will empower family members to be able to provide appropriate care and support for themselves and the removed family member when being reintegrated back into the family.

It is important that there must be coordination and integration of services for holistic intervention.

Service providers through a working partnership, will ensure that there is continuum of care for the whole family.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### References

Baker, M. 2001. Families, Labour and Love. Family diversity in a changing world. Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin.

Becvar, D.S. & Becvar R.J. 2006. Family therapy: a systematic integration, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson Education, ICL.

Goldenberg, H & Goldenberg, I. 2002. Counselling today's families, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont: Thomson Higher Education.

Nichols, M.P. 2011. Family therapy: the essentials of family therapy, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

National Department of Social Development 2013. White Paper on Families. Pretoria.

National Department of Social Development. 2015. Manual on Family Preservation Services. Pretoria.

National Department of Social Development 2012. Guidelines on Reunification services for families.