



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

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INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS WEEK 2025

International Child and Youth Care Workers' Week 2025 (#cycw2025) is celebrated globally from 5 May to 11 May 2025 (first full week of May) under the theme "*Global Belonging in Child and Youth Care*" that underscores the profession's commitment to fostering a sense of belonging among its practitioners and the children, youth, and families they serve.

Child and youth care work is a recognised profession in South Africa regulated by the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work under the auspices of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). On 31 March 2025, there were 556 child and youth care workers and 10,105 auxiliary child and youth care workers registered with the SACSSP. The profession is growing.

Child and youth care workers and auxiliary child and youth care workers practice in a variety of settings such as child and youth care centres (including secure care centres) under the auspices of the provincial Departments of Social Development as well as in the non-governmental sector work in child and youth care centres and in community-based programmes, which include outreach programmes to children living and working on the streets, the RISIHA Programme (a community-based child protection programme aimed at protecting orphans and vulnerable children), as well as the NACCW's Isibindi Ezikoleni project focussing on providing psychosocial services in schools.

This year's theme also embraces the child and youth care work profession's growth, and it acknowledges the significant strides made in distinguishing itself as a unique profession within the social services sector in South Africa, in particular since the mid-twentieth century. The profession had a long journey led by many pioneers in child and youth care work in the country, while in South Africa it was also shaped by global experts in the field, contributing to the richness of the theory and practice that underpins child and youth care work. An important milestone in the evolution of the profession is its recognition as regulated profession within the wider social service professions family since the passing of the *Regulations for child and youth care workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers and student child and youth care workers* by Government Notice No. 838 published in Government Gazette No. 38135 of 31 October 2014. It introduced an era where there is assurance that any person entering the profession has the required proficiency (qualifications and being a fit and proper person) to practice child and youth care work and he or she is required to adhere to the ethical standards as prescribed by the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work. Importantly, the titles of *child and youth care worker* and *auxiliary child and youth care worker* are protected by law since 2014 under the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978, and practitioners are required in terms of this Act to register with the SACSSP in order to practice their profession, similar to the other social service professions that also falls under the regulatory authority of the SACSSP.

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NON NOBIS – Not for ourselves

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The SACSSP appreciates that the achievements of the child and youth care work profession also coincide with some challenges such as lack of parity in career paths, limited study opportunities for persons to qualify as child and youth care workers from higher education institutions, amongst others. *“In South Africa, we take this opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of the past 50 years, the persistent challenges, and the critical role of this workforce in contemporary society. We take pride in the established settings where child and youth care workers engage with at-risk children, including community-based, health, educational, justice, and child and youth care settings”*, says Mr Donald Nghonyama, Chairperson of the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work.

The Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work believes that this year’s theme of *International Child and Youth Care Workers’ Week* also highlights the importance of unity, collaboration, and professional support in the ongoing development of the profession, and in navigating the complexities of engaging with children and youth. *“Together, we can make a lasting difference and create a safe space where our youth can thrive and reach their full potential. Let’s continue to foster a supportive environment that empowers them to succeed”*, says Ms Samantha Baron, Vice-Chairperson of the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work says.

The SACSSP would like to recognise the role that child and youth care workers and auxiliary child and youth care workers play as part of the social service professions cadre in the country and across the world, and is wishing them an *International Child and Youth Care Workers’ Week* that appreciates the achievements of the profession, while also using this time to find solutions on the challenges the profession is faced with.

The SACSSP also wishes to make use of this opportunity to congratulate the *National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW)* on its 50th anniversary in 2025. Professional associations play an important role as representative bodies that advance the interests of the professionals who are members and the continuous development of the profession their members represent.

ISSUED BY: SACSSP Communications

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ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SERVICE PROFESSIONS

The *South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)* is a regulatory body established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 (“the Act”) with the purpose to regulate the social service professions in South Africa as prescribed in the Act and the Regulations thereto. Two Professional Boards are established and constituted under the auspices of the SACSSP, i.e., the Professional Board for Social Work and the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work. The SACSSP, in conjunction with its Professional Boards, regulates the professions of social work and child youth care work in aspects pertaining to registration (entry to the professions); minimum requirements for education and training (qualifications); professional conduct and ethical behaviour; ensuring continuing professional development; and fostering compliance with standards for professional practice. By regulating the professions, it protects the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. To safeguard the public and indirectly the professions, registration with the SACSSP in terms of the Act is a prerequisite before practicing social work and child and youth care work; and no person may use the title of social worker, social auxiliary worker, child and youth care worker, and/or auxiliary child and youth care workers or practice as such, without being registered with the SACSSP.