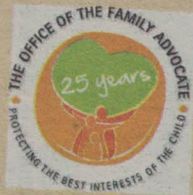


...S HAVE ...HTS TOO ...o protect kids

ccess and the care of the children.
 ■ He or she also deals with cases where children were born outside marriage and parents want to make arrangements to have access to the children.
 ■ The family advocate can intervene where a child is taken out of the country by one parent without the permission of the other.



CONSULT THE FAMILY ADVOCATE IF:

- You are in a dispute regarding contact with or care of a child, or if you want to draft or register a parental rights and responsibilities agreement. This is a legal agreement regarding the care of their child which can be registered with the family advocate.
- You want to amend or end a parental rights and responsibility agreement registered with the family advocate.
- There is a dispute about whether the father of a child born out of wedlock satisfies the requirements to acquire full parental rights and responsibilities in terms of the law.
- A court has made an order for the family advocate to conduct an inquiry into the best interests of the child.

How the office benefits the people

If an agreement is reached on the care and contact of their children, the case does not go to court, saving lots of time and money. Courts will not easily grant a divorce if there is a dispute regarding minor children without the recommendations of the family advocate. The family advocate can amend or end agreements. This means parents don't have to go to court to change an agreement. Plans registered with the family advocate have the same legal effect as a court order. Courts or judicial officers are required by law

to consider the recommendations of the family advocate when making a decision.

QUICK FACTS

- The family advocate cannot become involved in any matter already finalised by the court.
- The family advocate cannot be subpoenaed as a witness. A recommendation by a family advocate is not enforceable unless incorporated in a court order.
- The family advocate is a neutral institution and cannot act as a legal representative.



Chief family advocate
Petunia Seabi-Mathopé.
Photo by Jabu Kumalo



Zibuze Kunene of Dads in the Picture.
Photo by Jabu Kumalo

Fathers take charge!

By **JABU KUMALO**

THE Office of the Family Advocate helps many people to sort out their difficulties.

Zibuze Kunene of Dads in the Picture, which works closely with the Office of the Family Advocate, told *Daily Sun* that the more you speak to fathers about their kids, the more you get a positive response.

"We encourage fathers to play a meaningful role in the lives of children, even neighbours' children," he said.

He said it was unfortunate sometimes that cops create animosity between fighting parents.

"In most cases, it is the mothers who run to the police and then dads go into defensive mode," he said.

He said this is where the Office of the Family Advocate is very useful. "The advocate is a neutral mediator. In this office, both parents are equal," he said.

Jannie Kruger said he was sceptical in 2005 when he started proceedings but his ideas changed after working with the family advocate, especially with professionals such as Salomie Langeveldt and senior advocate Chris Maree.

"I recommend that parents should contact them and get free expert advice. I have never known such professionalism," he said.

In 2007 Jannie was the first father after the introduction of the amended act to receive a favourable decision. Dr Norbert Peter, who is based in Australia, first came into contact with this office in 2007 and again in 2012. On both occasions his daughter had been abducted and she was successfully sent back.

"Both times, I could pick up my daughter in Pretoria and bring her back to Australia. My daughter is very thankful that I fought for her. I was supported in an excellent professional way," he said.



the doj & cd

Department:
 Justice and Constitutional Development
 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA