When will the Department of Social Development remove a child from his/her home?

The Department of Social Development and/or SAPS may remove a child from his/her home when the child needs care and protection.

Here is a list of a few examples of a child in need and/or care :

1. When the child is being abused at home either physically, verbally and/or mentally;

2. When the child is neglected, malnourished, exposed to alcohol/drug or sexual abuse;

3. When the child is abandoned;

4. When the child lives in circumstances that will harm his/her physical/mental/ social wellbeing.

When SAPS and/or a social worker from the Department of Social Development ("the Department") receives information indicating that a child may be a child in need of care and protection, the Department will send social workers to investigate the child's circumstances. If the circumstances indicate that the child needs care and protection, the social worker will approach the Children's Court to obtain a court order authorizing the removal of that child. The court will then keep a steady hand on the matter and will closely monitor further investigations.

Should the social worker investigate the matter and deem it necessary to immediately remove the child, they may remove the child without a court order. This usually occurs when a time delay will put the child's life in danger. They will, however, be obliged to bring the matter to court the very next day.

It is important to note that the removal of a child is always the last resort, and a child will only be removed from his/her home if it is in the child's best interest.

As members of the public, we also have a duty to report a child that might need

care and protection. It is, however, important to remember that we should only report when we can substantiate our conclusions with facts.

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