

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

QUESTION PAPER

WRITTEN REPLY

Note: * Indicates translated version.

FRIDAY, 3 JULY 2026

7. Ms W F Kaizer-Philander to ask Mr J J Londt, Minister of Social Development:

In the light of concerns raised by Badisa West Coast regarding the shortage of suitably qualified safety and foster parents in the province:

- (1) What measures is his Department implementing to (a) recruit, (b) assess, (c) train and (d) retain suitably qualified safety and foster parents, particularly in regions such as the West Coast;
- (2) how many approved (a) safety parents and (b) foster parents are currently registered in each district of the province;
- (3) what strategies are in place to reduce the waiting times for the placement of children who require alternative care;
- (4) what additional support, including (a) financial, (b) psychosocial and (c) training support, is provided to ensure that safety and foster parents are adequately equipped to care for vulnerable children?

Reply:

- 1) (a) The Department hosts engagements in communities and conducts periodic media campaigns to recruit safety and foster parents.
- (b) The Department conducts formal screening of prospective safety and foster parents as required in the Children's Act. This includes suitability checks against the Child Protection Register, criminal records, home visits, and social work assessments.
- (c) The Department and funded NPOs provide training to safety and foster parents on the Children's Act, the roles and responsibilities of safety and foster parents, child development, trauma-informed care, behaviour management, Child Protection

procedures, and working with social workers and the courts. Refresher and ongoing developmental training are provided where required. This includes specialised training provided on caring for children with special needs.

(d) Safety and foster parents are provided with ongoing support and retention services to strengthen their caregiving capacity, promote placement stability, and enhance the well-being of children in their care. These support services include:

- Regular supervision, monitoring, and guidance provided by designated social workers.
- Access to psychosocial support and counselling services, where required.
- Participation in support groups to encourage peer learning, mutual support, and the sharing of experiences.
- Ongoing training and capacity-building programmes to strengthen parenting skills and enhance the quality of care provided.
- Assistance in addressing placement-related challenges and facilitating access to appropriate support services.
- Payment of the prescribed safety parent fees for safety parents and access to the foster child grant, administered by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), for eligible foster parents where children meet the prescribed qualifying criteria.
- The Department also funds certain organisations such as Agape and Iris House to train and support safety and foster parents across the province.

2)

West Coast

Office	Foster Parents	Safety Parents
Atlantis	389	10
Swartland	789	11
Saldanha	329	20
Bergriver	39	22
Cederberg	115	8
Matzikama	474	23
NPOs	874	138
Total	3009	232

Metro East

	Foster Parents:	Safety Parents:
Khayelitsha SDA 1	388	35
Khayelitsha SDA 2	560	16
Khayelitsha SDA 3	416	37
Eersteriver	657	11
Somerset West	201	14
Kraaifontein	93	20
NPOs	965	133
Total:	3280	266

Metro North

	Foster Parents:	Safety Parents:
Bellville	430	18
Delft	+ 918	29
Langa	489	11
Elsiesriver	215	5
Milnerton	377	17

Cape Town	0	4
NPOs	983	0
Total	3412	84

Metro South

	Foster parents	Safety parents
Athlone	264	15
Fish Hoek	63	8
Gugulethu	1048	21
Mitchells Plain	632	18
Philippi	319	30
Retreat	757	26
Wynberg	255	0
NPOs	2001	0
Total	5339	118

Cape Winelands/Overberg

	Total Foster Parents	Total Safety Parents
Breede Valley	861	22
Breede River	239	11
Witzenberg	398	25
Cape Agulhas	399	26
Overstrand	524	10
Swellendam	361	14
Theewaterskloof	631	68
Drakenstein	795	25
Stellenbosch	16	5
NPOs	2599	206
Total	6823	412

Eden Karoo

	Foster Parents	Safety Parents
Beaufort West	7	17
Laingsburg	2	11
Murraysburg	2	6
Oudtshoorn	0	4
Kannaland	0	12
George	3	16
Knysna	0	5
Bitou	1	4
Mossel Bay	3	7
Hessequa	2	13
NPOs	1424	175
Total	1444	270

(3) To reduce waiting times for the placement of children requiring alternative care, the Department and Designated Child Protection Organisations implement a range of measures aimed at increasing placement capacity, strengthening service delivery, and improving the efficiency of the placement process. These measures include:

- The ongoing recruitment of additional safety and foster parents to expand the pool of approved caregivers.

- Strengthening partnerships with Designated Child Protection Organisations to enhance the availability and coordination of placement services.
- Prioritising emergency safety placements for children who require immediate care and protection.
- Strengthening case management and placement coordination by designated social workers to facilitate timely and appropriate placements, including the implementation of case management tools like the Social Worker Integrated Management System.
- Expanding the availability of temporary safe care facilities and services, where required, to respond to urgent placement needs.
- Promoting family preservation and reunification services, where appropriate, to prevent unnecessary alternative care placements and facilitate the safe return of children to their families (where this is deemed to be in the best interests of the child).
- Continuously monitoring placement demand and the availability of safety and foster parents across districts to support effective planning, resource allocation, and service delivery.

(4) (a) For safety parents – emergency kits are provided by the Department and safety fees are paid. For foster parents, assistance is provided by the Department with Foster Grant applications to SASSA.

(b) Ongoing psychosocial support is provided to promote placement stability, strengthen caregivers' resilience, and enhance the well-being of children. This includes:

- Regular supervision, monitoring, and guidance by designated social workers and social service practitioners.
- Counselling, therapeutic support, and crisis intervention services, where required.
- Caregiver support groups that promote peer support, shared learning, and the exchange of experiences.
- Referral to specialised services to address the specific needs of children and caregivers.

(c) Safety and foster parents receive ongoing training and capacity-building support to enhance their knowledge, skills, and confidence in caring for vulnerable children. Training is delivered by the Department of Social Development, funded non-governmental organisations, and Designated Child Protection Organisations (DCPOs), and includes:

- Orientation and compulsory pre-service training for prospective safety and foster parents.
- Ongoing developmental training and refresher programmes, based on identified needs.
- Parenting skills development and guidance on the rights and responsibilities of safety and foster parents in terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005.
- Information on relevant legislative and policy developments.
- Specialised training to equip caregivers to respond effectively to the needs of children who have experienced abuse, neglect, trauma, or behavioural challenges and/or children with special needs.
- DSD also funds NPOs to render support meetings/parenting workshops to existing and prospective foster parents.

