

The Objects of the Children's Act are to strengthen and promote family life, but specific assistance is only provided to children in child headed households (section 136 Children's Amendment Bill). Both radio programmes show that children are made vulnerable by HIV in a number of ways, being an orphan does not mean that you have no family, but it does mean that you need extra support. We recommend that the prevention services are strengthened in chapter 8, to include support to grandparents looking after orphans, and to ensure that all families are able to access the basic necessities of life. The use of sewing schemes like the one in Ingwavuma, where local people provide prevention services should also be considered. Families also need counselling and support to deal with the loss of a loved one.

Recommended changes to the Bill

Purposes of prevention and early intervention services or programmes

144. (1) (1) Prevention and early intervention services or programmes must focus on:

- (a) preserving a child's family structure in situations of vulnerability
- (b) Developing of appropriate parenting skills and the capacity of parents and care-givers to safeguard the well-being and best interests of their children;
- (c) establishing appropriate interpersonal relationships within the family;
- (d) promoting the well-being of children and the realisation of their full potential;
- (e) preventing the neglect, abuse or inadequate supervision of children and preventing other failures in the family environment to meet children's needs;
- (f) preventing the recurrence of problems in the family environment that may harm children or adversely affect their development;
- (g) diverting children away from the child and youth care system and the criminal justice system; ~~and~~
- (h) avoiding the removal of a child from the family environment;

- (i) providing assistance with issues of trauma and grief in families affected by illness, death, separation, violence or natural disasters;
- (j) providing practical assistance and guidance for older persons, children and young adults who are serving as caregivers for children;
- (k) providing assistance to families with children with chronic illnesses; and
- (m) providing assistance to children in families with sick or terminally ill caregivers and children living in child headed households

(2) Prevention and early intervention services or programmes ~~may~~ must where necessary include –

- (a) assisting families to obtain the basic necessities of life and to access essential services;
- (b) empowering families to obtain such necessities and access essential services for themselves.
- (c) providing families in desperate need with the basic necessities of life including food, clothing, and shelter