



GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY  
AND CHILD WELFARE

# MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE FACILITIES IN NAMIBIA

March 2009







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# FOREWORD



The Namibian Government places high priority on the well-being of its children and youth. The launch of the National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children followed by the National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children is evidence of this commitment. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is coordinating the implementation of the Namibian National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children. Part of the activities is to ensure that the special protection and rights of the Namibian children, who are placed and cared for in residential child care facilities such as children's homes, places of safety, shelters and other alternative care settings, is upheld at all times. Whereas facility managers and caretakers are responsible for ensuring quality care is provided to children, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare's Child Welfare Directorate is responsible for the policy, guidelines, registration, regulation, monitoring and supervision of such facilities in terms of the Children's Act, 1960 (Act No.33 of 1960).

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is therefore proud to introduce these Minimum Standards for Residential Child Care Facilities, which are essential to ensure that the rights and protection of children in residential child care facilities are promoted and implemented.

However, the most vital message from me would be that the placement of children in residential care should be a last resort; rather children should be integrated into families as often as possible. In the event of a placement into a residential facility, thorough assessments should be carried out and a care plan developed with the best interest of the child. All care providers, facility managers, and social workers should thoroughly acquaint themselves with the contents of these important standards in order to provide the best quality care to our Namibian children.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare wishes to sincerely thank Pact Namibia, through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funding made available through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for the support extended to develop these standards.

I also express deep appreciation to my management, staff and social workers at all levels, the staff of Ministry of Health and Social Services, facility managers and staff, caregivers, the many other stakeholders and most importantly all the children who contributed to these standards.

We sincerely hope that implementation of these minimum standards for residential child care facilities, which are fully in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and United Nations Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care for Children, will contribute to improvements in the alternative care of children in Namibia. It is further hoped that use of the quality standards will complement other developments to rapidly bring Namibian alternative care practice up to a level of international excellence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marlene Mungunda'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Hon. Marlene Mungunda (MP)  
**Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare**





# PREFACE

This *Minimum Standards for Residential Child Care Facilities* is the result of a participatory and consultative process with many of the people involved in alternative care in Namibia, including the children and young people themselves. It is a step forward that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has undertaken for the care and protection of orphans and vulnerable children in Namibia.

Several consultative workshops were held between July and November 2008 with social workers and policy makers from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, relevant persons from the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Legal Assistance Centre, the Ministry of Justice, and residential child care facilities in Caprivi, Kavango, Otjozondjupa, Khomas and Erongo Regions. The input from the field visits and interviews led to the development of a quality standards framework which was discussed in a two-day workshop in August 2008. Representatives of all stakeholders were invited to this event, including residential child care facility managers, caregivers, young people living in facilities, and representatives of the different ministries. Together the participants worked in groups to develop the standards and to identify the guidelines for how to achieve the standards. The consultants attached to Pact Namibia, together with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare's Control Social Workers, refined the draft document further at a workshop held in Windhoek in October 2008. This was attended by majority of the regional social workers of the Ministry and key representatives of Namibian non-governmental organisations involved in the provision of alternative care. All comments made at this workshop are incorporated in this final version of the Standards.

This *Minimum Standards for Residential Child Care Facilities in Namibia* is designed to assist child care service providers, ministerial staff, social welfare partners, and other stakeholders concerned with the quality of child care, to establish, maintain and manage high quality care services for children in Namibia. It is also to be used by those who are responsible for the registration and monitoring of residential child care facilities in Namibia. Currently, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is responsible for implementation of these Standards.

This document of the Standards is linked to two other documents developed as part of the process - a handbook for implementers containing further information on alternative care options, how-to-do advice and supporting materials and a child-friendly version presenting the Standards from a child's perspective.

Children and their needs were central to the development of these Standards. Let their best interests also be the central focus point during the implementation of the Standards and close to the hearts of those working with them.

Sirkka Ausiku (Ms)  
Permanent Secretary  
**Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare**

# DEFINITIONS



## RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Residential Child Care Facilities are those places that are used primarily for the temporary or long-term reception of children found in need of care and protection with the purpose of providing care and protection.

## PLACE OF SAFETY

A Place of Safety established under Section 42 of the Children's Act (Act No. 33 of 1960), and includes any place suitable for the reception of a child into which the occupier or person in charge thereof is willing to receive a child.

A Place of Safety is primarily designed for the temporary care or transitional care and protection of children in the statutory process whilst awaiting the finalization of the children's court inquiry or designation to alternative care such as foster care, children's home, vocational training or rehabilitation centre.

The Place of Safety placement is done through a 48-hour or 14-day Detention Order obtained from the Children's Court, which is renewable every 14 days for a maximum of six months pending further investigations.

## CHILDREN'S HOME

Any residence or home maintained for the reception, protection, care and bringing up of more than six children or pupils, apart from their parents. Children's Homes do not include any schools of industries, any reform school or residential school.

A Children's Home placement is done through the issuing of a Court Order by a Children's Court. A Children's Home placement is long-term but not permanent and the child can be reintegrated back with the family or can be discharged before attaining the age of eighteen (18) years.

## SHELTER

A Shelter is an open-door residential facility, providing temporary accommodation to street children or children in difficult circumstances only through referral (which can also be self-referral) and as part of a range of services aimed at meeting the specific basic and developmental needs of children under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Shelters primarily make provision for a process of social integration of children living on the streets and the informal management of these children, outside the law enforcement system through child care, psychosocial support, education and training.

# ACRONYMS

GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
MoHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
PACT	Private Agencies Collaborating Together
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
RCCF	Residential Child Care Facility
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



# MINIMUM LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

## for Setting Up Residential Child Care Facilities (RCCF) in Namibia

**Before an organisation or individual(s) can start providing any service or receive children into their care:**

1. The organisation responsible for the RCCF must be registered as a Welfare Organisation with the responsible Ministry, currently the Ministry of Health and Social Services, in terms of Section 19(1) of the National Welfare Act, 1965 (Act No.79 of 1965).
2. The RCCF must be registered with the responsible Ministry, currently the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, as required by Section 42 of the Children's Act 1960 (Act No. 33 of 1960).
3. The premises of the facility must comply with all legal requirements of national and local governments and all documents regarding ownership of the premises, safety requirements and construction permissions must be in place and available for examination.







# INTRODUCTION

This document, *Minimum Standards for Residential Child Care Facilities in Namibia*, is designed for all those who are responsible for planning and providing alternative care services to children and also registration and monitoring of residential child care facilities (RCCF) in Namibia. The Standards listed here are intended to be achievable outcomes for children. How they can be achieved is described in detail below each Standard. Measurement of the provided care can be assessed against these guidelines.

The Standards are grouped into five chapters and presented in the following order:

## 1. ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

This chapter comprises of all Standards on the setting up and organisation of the facility, including the legal requirements and necessary documentation.

## 2. MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

This chapter includes the management arrangements and staff related issues such as recruitment, training and development of staff, employment practices and policies and procedures that need to be in place.

## 3. PREMISES

This chapter covers all issues around the buildings and safety requirements.

## 4. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Chapter 4 includes Standards about financial management, fundraising, planning, administrative procedures and the complaints procedure of the RCCF for children, parents and staff.

## 5. CARING FOR CHILDREN

This chapter is divided into four areas:

- a. Admission and Decision-making.
- b. The Care Taking Process.
- c. Leaving Care.
- d. After Care Support.

# LIST OF STANDARDS



CHAPTER	SUBJECT	STANDARD
1	Organisational Issues	1 Background Information
		2 Identity and Name
		3 Needs Assessment
		4 Statement of Purpose
		5 Transparency and Accountability
2	Management & Staffing	6 Management Attributes
		7 Management Arrangements
		8 Staff Complement
		9 Staff Attributes
		10 Staff Training & Development
		11 Staff Management
		12 Employment Practices
3	Premises	13 Premises
		14 Safe Environment
4	Administration & Finance	15 Financial Management
		16 Fundraising
		17 Planning the Residential Service
		18 Complaints Procedure
		19 Administrative Procedure
		20 Admission
5	Caring for Children	21 Care of Siblings
		22 Care Giving Responsibilities
		23 Child Participation
		24 Case Recording
		25 Progress Reporting
		26 Health
		27 Diet & Nutrition
		28 Right and Access to Education
		29 Parental/Family Participation
		30 Right to Play & Leisure Time
		31 Physical, Social & Emotional Development
		32 Reintegration of the Child in the Family/Community
		33 Transition to Independent Living
		34 Communication during Transition to Independent Living
		35 Follow-up Support and Contact

# CHAPTER 1.

# Organisational Issues

## STANDARD 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**The organisation or association wishing to establish and operate a RCCF has a file (updated regularly<sup>1</sup>) which provides detailed background information about itself.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The file should provide evidence of the good standing and reputation of the organisation or association that would warrant placement of children in their care.
2. The file should contain information outlining the constitution, policy, management and regulatory arrangements, and structure of the organisation or association. It should also provide evidence of when and how the organisation or association was formed, its expertise and area(s) of competences.
3. The file should include financial records for the last 2 years (or since the organisation or association was formed if this is shorter). These records include an overview of available funding and capital of the organisation or association.
4. The file should clearly outline what would happen to facilities should the organisation or association cease to exist or be dissolved.
5. In the case of foreign (non-Namibian registered) organisations, evidence must be provided to show that all necessary legal permissions to operate in Namibia are in place and documented.
6. Where the organisation or association providing or seeking to provide the RCCF is based on a specific value outlook (e.g. a religious or social mission or vision) the file must clearly explain how the value base will influence daily child care practice and how children, who so wish, will be allowed to practice their own religion and traditions.

## STANDARD 2 - IDENTITY AND NAME

**The organisation/RCCF has a clearly defined legal and organisational identity and a name, which clearly relates to its activities and the community.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The name of the organisation/RCCF must not duplicate that of any other organisation/RCCF.
2. The organisation/RCCF name (and image<sup>2</sup>) must not carry negative or discriminatory connotations or label children in any possible manner.
3. Proper justification must be provided when an organisation/RCCF is named after a particular individual.
4. The name of the organisation/RCCF should not be displayed<sup>3</sup> at the buildings where the children live or on the vehicles used to transport children.

<sup>1</sup> Such that all the evidence provided is up to date.

<sup>2</sup> In terms of logo, other activities, popular understanding etc.

<sup>3</sup> The name can however be used on official documentation.

## STANDARD 3 - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**A needs assessment is carried out in consultation with the regional office of the responsible Ministry and a report of the assessment is submitted prior to establishment of the RCCF.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. Evidence is available to show that, in consultation with the social worker of the responsible Ministry, a situation analysis of the real problem on the ground has been carried out to identify the type and number (statistics) of children in need of residential care in the region.
2. This needs assessment will show how what is already available has been considered to avoid duplication.
3. The need for the type of facility must be based on the needs assessment.
4. The reason for the choice for the setting up of a shelter, place of safety or a children's home is clearly described and explained in relation to the needs identified.
5. Evidence is provided to show how the local community has been consulted.
6. The needs assessment will reflect the situation analysis, the findings and recommendation and documented support of stakeholders (including orphans and vulnerable children forums) of the initiative.
7. The needs assessment is updated in the organisation's annual report.
8. The organisation responsible for the RCCF should be able to adjust their purpose according to the needs in the community.
9. A Statement of Purpose is developed from the needs assessment results.

## STANDARD 4 - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**The RCCF has a clear Statement of Purpose covering its aims and objectives and the services to be provided.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The Statement of Purpose will include aims and objectives and other information that clearly outlines the care, support and protection that will be provided and how the overall well-being of the children will be achieved. It will specify the targeted age-group and the characteristics of children to be cared for and how special needs will be met.
2. The Statement will explain how referrals will be received and processed.
3. The Statement will clearly describe the admission criteria that will operate and explain what measures will be taken to meet children's need at this particular time.



## STANDARD 5 - TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The RCCF operates in a transparent and accountable manner.

### Achieving the Standard

1. The RCCF has an updated strategic plan and annual work plans which are submitted to the responsible Ministry regularly.
2. The RCCF produces an annual report including an audited financial report (audited by an external accountant) that is sent to the responsible Ministry and donors.
3. The RCCF has a complaint procedure in place to which children, parents/relatives, staff and external stakeholders have easy access<sup>4</sup>.
4. The RCCF maintains personal files for all children and staff. The RCCF has appropriate procedures in place to ensure good practice with regard to file content, file accessibility and file security.

<sup>4</sup> This should be in formats appropriate to the various audiences.



## CHAPTER 2.

# Management and Staffing

### STANDARD 6 - MANAGEMENT ATTRIBUTES

**The RCCF is managed by people with the necessary skills and experience in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.**

#### Achieving the Standard

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1. The Manager/Principal and Deputy Manager/Vice-Principal (if such a post exists) of the facility have relevant professional qualifications and appropriate human resources and financial management skills and experience to carry out their tasks.
2. All management posts have up to date job descriptions and the required educational levels/qualifications are clearly described.
3. All managers have appropriate knowledge and experience with regard to the developmental needs of children and young people.
4. There is evidence of how RCCF managers are maintaining and developing their knowledge and experience.

### STANDARD 7 - MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

**The organisation responsible for the RCCF has the necessary management skills and financial expertise to manage the RCCF efficiently and effectively and have the necessary knowledge and experience of child care to ensure a professional service.**

#### Achieving the Standard

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1. The management structure and procedures of the RCCF are clearly described explaining authority, roles and responsibilities of both the Board of Directors of the registered welfare organisation responsible for the RCCF and the management staff of the RCCF.
2. A Code of Conduct is in place and communicated with the Board of Directors, staff, parents /relatives of the placed children and the social worker of the responsible Ministry.
3. A handbook covering policies, procedures, guidance, legal information and insurance details is in place and all employed staff have easy access to it. The handbook is updated regularly.
4. A complaints procedure is in place and communicated with the Board of Directors, staff, parents/relatives of the placed children and the social worker of the responsible Ministry.
5. A human resources policy is in place for all staff, which is communicated with the Board of Directors and all staff.
6. Monitoring and supervision mechanism of all staff and volunteers is in place.



## STANDARD 8 - STAFF COMPLEMENT

The RCCF has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff.

### Achieving the Standard

1. The RCCF has adequate administrative capacity. The administrator has sufficient administrative and financial knowledge and skills to comply with all legal requirements and accountancy rules.
2. The number of care giving staff is adequate to the number of children in the RCCF meeting the children's needs. There is at least one caregiver for every seven children.
3. Every RCCF has ancillary (support)<sup>5</sup> staff to support the caregivers in their task and to promote the well-being and safety of the children and premises.
4. It is a pre-requisite for every RCCF to make use of social workers and psychologists for professional guidance<sup>6</sup>.

## STANDARD 9 - STAFF ATTRIBUTES

Everyone<sup>7</sup> working in the RCCF are people suitable to work with children and young people and able to safeguard and promote their welfare.

### Achieving the Standard

1. The RCCF has job descriptions and person specifications for all posts.
2. The RCCF has an open and transparent recruitment procedure in place that offers current staff and children an opportunity to contribute.
3. Everyone working in the RCCF has documented clearance from the police that they do not have a criminal record and are fit to work with children and young people.
4. The RCCF takes up references from previous employers and clients for everyone working in the RCCF.
5. All staff in the RCCF signs the Code of Conduct and adheres to confidentiality on all matters including disclosure of information about the children and their background.

<sup>5</sup> Ancillary means support staff, for, laundry, gardening, cleaning etc.

<sup>6</sup> The social worker and/or psychologist's time involvement will be based on the number of children and their specific needs.

<sup>7</sup> This applies to all staff whether permanent, temporary, seasonal, consultant or unpaid (e.g. volunteers).

## STANDARD 10 - STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The RCCF has a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up to date with professional and legal developments.

### Achieving the Standard

1. The RCCF/ welfare organisation provides staff with access to regular development and training opportunities.
2. The RCCF ensures that primary caregivers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child or young person placed in their care.
3. All primary caregivers are provided with specific formal training by an accredited trainer/ training institute, when they do not have a professional qualification relevant to caring for children.
4. All staff have personal development plans which are reviewed and updated annually.

## STANDARD 11 - STAFF MANAGEMENT

Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers the best possible care within the resources available.

### Achieving the Standard

1. Care is organised on a family type model with children living in small groups, preferably in homes in the community enabling the RCCF to make available at least one full time caregiver for every seven children.
2. Where care is provided by a couple alone, they should not care for more than eight children.
3. There is evidence that staff give children appropriate individual attention and respond to their personal needs.
4. When there are children in the RCCF who are differently abled (disabled) or with special needs, this should be reflected in a higher staff-children ratio to ensure that adequate attention is given to each child.
5. The primary caregiver is responsible for all major care activities e.g. personal care, meals, homework and recreation. This is necessary to promote a family environment and serves as good basis for adult-child bonding.
6. The assistant caregiver is responsible for all household chores and provides support to the primary caregiver in caring for children.
7. When the primary caregiver(s) is (are) not available, assistant caregivers move in to be with the children and children are not moved out to another setting.
8. Volunteers can act as assistant caregivers or for additional activities. Volunteers may never be primary caregivers and attachment figures for the children.
9. Volunteers work according to clear instructions and always under supervision.
10. Every staff member and volunteer working in the RCCF is supervised by senior staff through individual and team meetings.
11. Individual meetings with staff have a clear purpose and include provisions to supervise staff. Supervisory meetings are recorded in the staff files.
12. Homes using foreign staff or volunteers should seek proof of insurance. Obtaining insurance is the responsibility of the foreign person. All non-national persons setting up homes and their staff must provide evidence of legitimate residence and work status in Namibia.



## STANDARD 12 - EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

The RCCF/organisation responsible for the RCCF is a fair and competent employer with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and volunteers.

### Achieving the Standard

1. The RCCF/organisation has clear and transparent arrangements for contracts, salaries and benefits in line with Namibian Labour laws.
2. The RCCF/organisation has documented human resources management procedures with regular job evaluations, feedback, appraisals (annual job performance) and reporting.
3. All employed staff are offered an orientation and induction programme to make them familiar with the RCCF/organisation and the tasks they need to perform.
4. The RCCF Manager ensures that staff members have full understanding of what is expected from them.
5. All employed staff have the opportunity to be involved in important decision-making about the RCCF/organisation. At a minimum staff, as a group, have the opportunity to meet every three months with the Manager and once a year with the RCCF/organisation's governing body.
6. Whenever possible the RCCF recruits couples as primary caregivers to give the children a good role model.
7. The RCCF employs relief staff caregivers in cases of emergencies.
8. Staff that are found guilty of seriously violating rights, abusing or physically harming children are dealt with in accordance with the relevant laws. This is laid down in their working contracts.



# CHAPTER 3.

# Premises



## STANDARD 13 - PREMISES

**The RCCF premises are fit for the purpose of caring for children. The RCCF is organised in a family type way with small groups and primary caregivers.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The RCCF operates as small groups, each with permanent caregivers, in order to create a family environment for the children – a maximum of 10 children per unit.
2. Where possible the RCCF/group is based in the community to allow children full participation in community and family activities.
3. Each family-type group will have separate bedrooms for girls and boys and at least two bathrooms (boys/girls).
4. If the RCCF accommodates children with disability or special needs the buildings are adapted to be accessible and safe for these children.
5. The names of the RCCF/organisation may appear only on administration or central buildings.

## STANDARD 14 - SAFE ENVIRONMENT

**The premises provide a safe environment for the children to live, play, do home work activities and enjoy family life. The environment and facilities at the premises ensure privacy for the children and safety of their personal belongings.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The premises are safe for children and have all the required safety certificates from the local authorities.
2. Each group home/ group space is equipped with leisure space, tables for home work and a living room. The dining space ensures that children and caregivers can have meals together around the table in a family setting.
3. Every child has its own bed with no more than 4 children in a shared bedroom: no more than 2 young people aged 15 plus per room.
4. Children aged 5 and over will only sleep in rooms with other children of the same gender.
5. Every child has its own closet for clothes and a drawer or cabinet that can be locked for personal belongings.
6. The living space or any facility used by the children (e.g. minibus) should NOT be labelled.
7. Children will not be photographed at outings without the prior permission of the children and those legally responsible for them.
8. All repairs will be dealt with immediately.

# CHAPTER 4.

# Administration and Finance

## STANDARD 15 - FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**The RCCF/organisation ensures that it is financially viable at all times and has sufficient resources to fulfil its obligations.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The RCCF/organisation can at all times prove its financial viability and sustainability (e.g. by donor commitments and/or secured capital sufficient to cover the running costs of the facility for a period of three years).
2. An annual audit of the financial records is carried out by an accredited accountant.
3. The audited financial report is added to the RCCF's Annual Report and is sent to the responsible Ministry by July 1 of the each year.
4. The responsible Ministry will provide feedback about it to the RCCF/ organisation.
5. Audited reports should be monitored by the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) in order to protect the organisation.
6. Financial records are maintained according to clearly laid down financial policies and procedures.

## STANDARD 16 - FUNDRAISING

**The RCCF/organisation has a transparent fundraising strategy and proper and accountable registration and spending of donations and Government support.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The RCCF/organisation responsible for fundraising has a clear fundraising strategy and tools in accordance with the legal restrictions for the privacy of children.
2. All incoming donations are recorded and visible in the financial records of the RCCF/ organisation. A fundraising documentation file is in place showing incoming donations and justification of spending.
3. Children will not be misused<sup>8</sup> in fundraising activities.
4. Pictures of children and personal stories will be used for fundraising purposes only with permission of the children and the person legally responsible for the child. This permission is recorded in the fundraising documentation file.
5. In the case of foreign/international donors, the donations are justified according to the legal requirements of GRN and the donor country.
6. In the case of donations linked to individual children, no child will be treated in a different way to children who have no individual donor.

<sup>8</sup> Misuse implies fundraising through street shows, begging etc.

## STANDARD 17 - PLANNING THE RESIDENTIAL SERVICE

The running of the RCCF is based on transparent and accountable project planning and appropriate and timely reports are delivered to the responsible Ministry.

### Achieving the Standard

1. The work of the RCCF is based on annual planning, control and reporting in compliance with the legal requirements for RCCF and based on the Statement of Purpose and registration with the responsible Ministry.
2. When requested in writing by the responsible Ministry the RCCF will, within one calendar month, supply a report detailing the circumstances of the RCCF and relevant activity (e.g. care of children, developmental activity, financial situation etc).

## STANDARD 18 - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The RCCF has a complaint procedure for children, parents, guardians and staff. All involved are informed about this procedure at the time of the child's admission.

### Achieving the Standard

1. Children, their parents/relatives receive a leaflet explaining the complaints procedure of the RCCF and how they can address any complaints they may have. This information is age and language appropriate and children are informed how to use the procedures.
2. The RCCF complaints procedure incorporates an appeal mechanism and the opportunity for the complainant to have his/her complaint adjudged by someone independent of the RCCF/organisation.
3. If the RCCF accommodates more than 25 children, a committee is established by the Board of Directors of the organisation responsible for the RCCF to assess cases for appeal that cannot be dealt with between the caregivers and the children/ their parents and supervision staff.
4. Complaints expressed lead to concrete measures to solve the situation with solutions that promote the well-being and safety of the children and their rights.

## STANDARD 19 - ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

The RCCF follows appropriate administrative procedures and maintains records relevant to the running of the home as required by the relevant Act and Regulations.

### Achieving the Standard

1. A filing system is in place to ensure that all records are maintained and stored in line with the requirements of the responsible Ministry and other legal authorities.
2. The management of the RCCF ensures that staff have access to the necessary information regarding safety and emergency situations (fire, break in, missing children etc.).
3. Phone numbers of persons to call in emergency cases are visible for staff and children near the phone (landline phone or cell phone with sufficient airtime).
4. Children and staff practice regularly what to do in cases of emergency (fire, break in etc.).
5. The Manager and primary caregivers of the RCCF<sup>9</sup> know about the responsible Ministry's plan for evacuation of the children in case of emergency (related to the specific area).

<sup>9</sup> Particularly in areas of the country with higher risks of flooding etc.





# CHAPTER 5.

# Caring for Children

## 5.1 ADMISSION AND DECISION-MAKING

### STANDARD 20 - ADMISSION

**The child and his/her family of origin receive support during the decision and admission process and are involved in the decision-making process.**

#### Achieving the Standard

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1. The RCCF provides maximum support to the child and his/her family of origin during the process of decision-making on admission and induction period.
2. Admission criteria do not discriminate on gender, race, culture, religious background or health status. When the RCCF is offering service to children with disabilities, the facility must be fully accessible and adapted to the needs and safety for these children. The Statement of Purpose (Standard 4) of the RCCF must be respected and adhered to.
3. Unless there are reasons agreed with the responsible Ministry, groups of children living in the RCCF should include mixed genders and ages.
4. The Ministry's social worker should be actively involved in ensuring that the needs of the children are met.

### STANDARD 21 - CARE OF SIBLINGS

**Siblings are cared for together and helped to keep in contact.**

#### Achieving the Standard

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1. Unless there are reasons agreed with the responsible Ministry, siblings are given all the opportunities to live together; for example living in the same house/group.
2. Where, for justifiable reasons, it is not possible for siblings to live together, the RCCF encourages and facilitates contact between them.
3. All financial and other resources and support are provided to allow siblings to maintain contact.

## 5.2 THE CARE TAKING PROCESS

### STANDARD 22 - CARE GIVING RESPONSIBILITIES

The RCCF caregiver's relationship with the child is based on affection, understanding and respect.

#### Achieving the Standard

1. The caregiver pays individual attention to the child and makes a conscious effort to build up trust and to understand him/her. The caregiver always communicates openly, honestly and respectfully with the child.
2. Respect for the child means that physical punishment is never used<sup>10</sup>. Caregivers are trained in respectful and effective behaviour management.
3. Respect includes recognition of the importance of the background of the child. When possible and desired by the children, they get the opportunity to speak their home language and can undergo important cultural and religious rites.
4. Participation of the children in decisions about their daily life is encouraged and made possible. Children are invited to speak up and are listened to and their opinions are taken into account when every day decisions about the living conditions in the home are made.
5. Personal information about the children, including their family and health status, is treated in a respectful manner and not revealed to visitors without the permission of the child.
6. Media is not allowed at the RCCF without prior permission of the management of the RCCF.
7. Children are protected against abuse and exploitation.
8. Through affection and respect caregivers set an example and thereby encourage and help children to respect each other.

<sup>10</sup> The RCCF's Code of Conduct for staff should prohibit the use of physical punishment and violation should lead to dismissal.



## STANDARD 23 - CHILD PARTICIPATION

**Children and youth are included in all decisions that affect their life according to their age and maturity. These include decisions about their current placement, about contact and reintegration in their families, transition to any other placement, leaving care and preparation for independent living.**

### Achieving the Standard

1. The RCCF shows that it encourages children to participate in decision-making in relation to their living circumstances. This can be in the form of a children's panel with representatives elected by the children and/or regular house meetings, in which children can freely express their opinions and there is evidence that their opinions are taken seriously.
2. Children are included in the development of their individual care plans and co-sign these plans when this is age and development appropriate. The implications of the care plan are explained to all children according to their age and maturity.
3. Children have free access to their responsible Ministry social worker and can speak with him/her privately.
4. Children are prepared for independent living throughout the duration of their placement and are offered special independent living activities from age 15 years.
5. Children are included in decision-making about contact with their birth families and relatives, have free access to contact with them but are not forced to make home visits if this is against their will and/or best interest.
6. Children are given maximum appropriate choice and involvement in decision-making regarding their immediate and future circumstances

## STANDARD 24 - CASE RECORDING

**The RCCF ensures that an up to date, comprehensive case record is maintained for each child or young person in their care which details the nature and quality of care provided and contributes to an understanding of her/his life events. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in her/his care.**

### Achieving the Standard

1. Each child has an individual file which contains personal legal documents (birth registration, death registration of the parents (in case of orphans) and court orders) and a background report including information where and how to reach parents or relatives in case of emergency.
2. Each child's file contains the individual care plan of the child and all evaluations and updates.
3. Each child's file contains progress reports from schools and other available information about the child.
4. All files must be kept in a safe place to which only authorised persons have access.
5. Children and young people are allowed access to their background information and other file materials<sup>11</sup> according to age and maturity. Information is shared with them in a sensitive manner.

<sup>11</sup> School reports, care plan, birth certificate.

## STANDARD 25 - PROGRESS REPORTING

**A system is in place for reporting the progress of each child to the social worker of the responsible Ministry, the child's family and other relevant stakeholders in the life of the child.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The care of all children is based on an individual RCCF care plan. All stakeholders in the child's life are given the opportunity to be involved in the development of this plan.
2. The RCCF care plan is regularly<sup>12</sup> evaluated and updated and progress is reported to the child's parent or guardian and the responsible Ministry's social worker.
3. Children are involved in the development and evaluation of their RCCF care plan according to their age, emotional development and maturity.
4. When any change occurs in the child's life that may have an effect on the child's placement or future (e.g serious illness, death of parent or guardian - or death of the child) the RCCF will immediately notify the responsible Ministry.

## STANDARD 26 - HEALTH

**Children have access to and receive adequate health care.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The RCCF ensures that all children in their care get a medical check up at admission and have access to medical treatment and health care and provides the necessary resources if hospital treatment is needed (e.g. medication).
2. Medical records are completed and kept in the child's personal file with strict confidentiality.
3. All caregivers are trained in the treatment of transmittable diseases and take all precautions to prevent harm to children in their care and themselves.
4. Medication is always kept in locked cabinets with clear access guidelines.
5. In the event that children have any disability, disease or infection, parents and weekend and holiday caregivers receive training in care and treatment and use of medication.
6. At the time of admission it is clarified who has the authority to take decisions on medical matters. Agreement is also reached concerning which RCCF staff can take decisions regarding urgent operations and medical treatment.
7. Parents or legal guardians are always informed in cases of serious accidents, illness, pregnancy or death of the child.
8. Children receive appropriate health education. Safe reproductive health education is a priority for children above the age of 7 years old when education about sex and sexuality should start.
9. The RCCF adheres to all general hygiene standards in all its activities including preparing food and personal hygiene.

<sup>12</sup> Normally this is done annually.

## STANDARD 27 - DIET AND NUTRITION

**Children are provided a nutritious diet that is culturally sensitive**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. Children are provided with a nutritious, balanced and culturally sensitive diet.
2. The RCCF allocates sufficient resources to prepare this diet and caregivers are trained in preparing healthy meals for a large family.
3. The RCCF is responsible for monitoring that the children receive a diet that complies with their individual needs (e.g. medication and allergies) in order to promote their best possible health.
4. Where possible and age appropriate, the children are encouraged to assist in preparation of meals as a contribution to the learning of household skills and independent living.

## STANDARD 28 - RIGHT TO EDUCATION

**Every child in the RCCF is unconditionally provided with appropriate and relevant education suitable to their capacity, circumstances and developmental needs and is given assistance to make effective use of the education provided. Children attend school in the community. Where a kindergarten or pre-school is part of the RCCF this is open to children from the community.**

### Achieving the Standard

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1. Children living in the RCCF receive their care/education in a community education facility.
2. When the RCCF includes a school or kindergarten, it is at separate premises, and open to children of the local community and follow the Namibian mainstream curriculum for public or private schools.
3. The school is registered with the Ministry of Education.
4. Children receive primary and secondary education in programmes that lead to optimum use of their capacities and potential. Where needed the children are encouraged to participate in extra classes to ensure that they can remedy any deficits in their educational career due to the situation before they were placed in RCCF.
5. Caregivers ensure that children have space and time to do their home work studies and prepare projects in an appropriate environment.
6. Children are provided with the necessary resources to participate in school: appropriate school uniforms, books, stationary and contributions to school outings and excursions.
7. The learning process of the children is closely monitored and school reports and certificates included in their files or displayed in the home to encourage them and praise results.
8. If children drop out of school, appropriate measures are taken to provide them with vocational or skills training to improve their chances to compete for job opportunities in the future.
9. Children have the right to express freely their future plan and decide on their further educational and professional careers.
10. Scholarships for university students are actively sought to guarantee completion of their studies even when they leave the RCCF for independent living during their studies.
11. Children with learning difficulties or other special needs receive special education and are provided with additional equipment (Braille computer, hearing equipment etc.) to guarantee that they can reach their full potential.



## STANDARD 29 - PARENTAL/FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Unless prohibited by a court order or responsible Ministry decision, parents and relatives are involved in all decisions regarding the care of their children. They take active part in taking care of children during holidays and weekends where this is in the best interest of the children.

### Achieving the Standard

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1. Parents or relatives are actively encouraged to maintain contact with their children while they are in the RCCF and helped to ensure that the child's contact with their community and traditions is maintained.
2. The RCCF cooperates with the responsible Ministry's social worker in construction and supervision services to families in order to help facilitate the child's smooth re-integration when possible. This includes facilitation of home visits during school holidays and weekends.
3. When direct contact with the parents or relatives is not in the best interest of the child, parents and relatives are helped to provide information to assist the child to know about his/her background and reason for placement in the RCCF.
4. Parents are encouraged to give children permission to bond with their caregivers in order to ensure the development of a positive relationship.

## STANDARD 30 - RIGHT TO PLAY AND LEISURE TIME

Children can play in a safe and stimulating environment that supports friendships, relation with the children from the community and their individual and group developmental needs.

### Achieving the Standard

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1. The RCCF ensures that every child has access to play equipment that is age appropriate and supports the development of the child in all aspects.
2. Children have sufficient time to play and meet with their peers in a relaxed and fun atmosphere.
3. The RCCF has access to a playground or play area that is child friendly and open to the children's community friends. It has the basic equipment that stimulates physical and mental growth of the children.
4. Children are supervised during their free time according to their age and ability.
5. Children with special needs are provided with appropriate toys and opportunities to play and relax.
6. Children participate in community activities and clubs in the community to encourage their integration into the society and help them develop special abilities or talents.

## STANDARD 31 - PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Children are supported to achieve their physical, social and emotional development.**

### Achieving the Standard

1. Activities and assistance that support the social and emotional development are based on the individual needs of the children and laid down in the RCCF care plan. Caregivers are trained to treat children in a supportive manner and to carry out activities that support the physical, social and emotional development of children.
2. Children are supported to overcome trauma and establish self-esteem and resilience.
3. Where needed children are referred to specialists/ therapists or relevant programmes to help them overcome trauma. They are assisted to make effective use of the help available.
4. Children are supported to make life books and/or memory boxes to ensure that their roots and background are known and they understand why they are in the RCCF.
5. Children are encouraged and supported to participate in extra-mural activities (teamwork, community activities).
6. Staff are trained to talk with children about difficult moments in their lives and about (sexual) abuse.

## 5.3 LEAVING CARE

## STANDARD 32 - REINTEGRATION OF THE CHILD INTO THE FAMILY/COMMUNITY

**Children are provided with support to enable effective transition from the RCCF to the family and community.**

### Achieving the Standard

1. When children are ready to reintegrate into their families or communities, the RCCF prepares and supports them through a step-by-step process.
2. Children are given the maximum help to prepare for the change process, through visits, counselling and preparation of their personal belongings.
3. Children are involved in the decision-making of reintegration and are given maximum appropriate choices and ample time to ensure that they agree with the reintegration and they can bring forward issues that need to be resolved to support re-integration into the community.
4. Children are provided with telephone numbers and other contact details by the RCCF so they can seek help after the change of placement.
5. When children are returning to their family etc., those caring for them in the future are given all possible support, advice and assistance.

## STANDARD 33 - TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

**Children and young people are continuously prepared for independent living and empowered to cope and adapt to life's challenges in the outside world.**

### Achieving the Standard

1. Children and young people are supported in becoming self-reliant, self-sufficient and participating members of society. They have access to education and have opportunities to acquire life skills and good values during placement.
2. Caregivers ensure that children are aided to develop self-sufficiency in accordance with the needs identified in their care plan. Caregivers in particular focus on involving children in daily responsibilities according to age and level of understanding.
3. Children and young people are supported in developing their daily care skills: dealing with money, legal matters, insurances and other practical matters.
4. Young people due to leaving care are actively prepared for this through special programmes, independent living training apartments or camps where they receive training to assume responsibilities, to integrate values and norms and to develop life skills.
5. Caregivers explore the child's/ young person's interests and plans activities which support the further development of his/her knowledge and life skills.
6. Children and young people are supported to develop a social network and in maintaining contact with people in this network.
7. Young people leaving care are assisted to find appropriate and affordable accommodation and provided with the basic equipment and furniture to start independent life.

## STANDARD 34 - COMMUNICATION DURING TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

**All parties involved in the leaving care process are provided with relevant information in accordance to their role in the process and level of understanding. At the same time, the child/young person and his/her family of origin have the right to privacy.**

### Achieving the Standard

1. The RCCF cooperates with the responsible Ministry's social worker in managing all relevant information, ensuring confidentiality, proper documentation and access for all involved parties.
2. All legal documents/procedures for discharge of the young person from the RCCF are completed. The young person receives all personal documents held by the RCCF (e.g. birth certificate).
3. The young person is properly informed about the leaving care process and the different possibilities for future life in accordance with his/her age and understanding.
4. The young person is fully involved and empowered to participate in decision-making about the leaving care process. He/she participates in the planning and implementation of the leaving care process.
5. The young adult is given the opportunity to determine to what extent his/her family of origin may be involved in the leaving care process.

## 5.4 AFTER CARE SUPPORT

### STANDARD 35 - FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT AND CONTACT

Children and young people who have left the RCCF have the opportunity to receive assistance and support.

#### Achieving the Standard

1. The RCCF has an open door policy. Children and young people who have lived there can always return to the RCCF for advice and support. They may visit their previous group mates and where possible are invited to events as part of the RCCF family.
2. The RCCF maintains contact and follows up with the children and young people when they leave the facility to monitor their progress.
3. The RCCF ensures that the children and young people leaving the facility acquire all national documents e.g. an Identity Document/Card.







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