

Care and Support for Vulnerable Children in Schools: The Case of Child-headed Families

Mokgadi Agnes Ursula Mohlakwa

*Faculty of Education, Department of Education Management and Policy Studies,
University of Pretoria, Groenkloof Campus, South Africa
E-mail: agnes.mohlakwana@up.ac.za*

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ABSTRACT A vulnerable child refers to a person who is under 18 years of age. The South African law expects educators to take responsibility for caring for the learner. The common law regarding duty of care is imposed on the educator in loco parentis. This article aims to explore ways and means through which child-headed households can be cared for and supported in schools. Reference is made to the seven roles of the teacher, with special focus on the pastoral role in the context of these children. The questions addressed are: How can schools better care for children in child-headed households? Are practising educators empowered to deal with challenges facing learners both at home and at school? The main method of data collection is document analysis. Initial findings indicate that children in child-headed households need support and protection in dealing with their unfortunate circumstances.