



CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW

**CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW CONCERNED ABOUT CONSISTENT SCHOOL
SHORTAGES IN GAUTENG**

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The Centre for Child Law notes with concern reports at the beginning of 2018 stating that approximately 31 000 children still had to be placed in schools.

The Centre is extremely concerned about the impact that this state of affairs has on children, and parents of children, that are placed into schools late. Late placement is likely to cause anxiety amongst children and parents; particularly for children who are placed in schools after the term has begun and have to catch up with their peers. Parents are put under pressure because stationary, uniforms and other school materials are purchased late. The late placement of additional learners into schools would also necessitate that the Gauteng Department of Education approach and consult the Provincial Treasury for additional financial resources. The Centre believes that this can all be avoided with better planning from the Gauteng Department of Basic Education.

The Centre calls on the Gauteng Department of Basic Education to make use every available measure to ensure that there are enough school places in the province. The Centre acknowledges commendable attempts made by the Department in this regard: attempts to make single medium schools dual medium to maximise the use of existing schools; building new schools-reports indicate that 48 new schools have been built since 2004; and increased budget allocated to building of schools. The Centre is of the view that the proposed amendments to the Schools Act will also play a crucial role in making school places available.

The Centre however is of the view that more needs to be done particularly in the area of planning; better planning by the Gauteng Department of Basic Education needs to occur. In 2016, the Centre launched a report titled "*Budget & Bricks: Progress with school infrastructure following the Rivonia Primary School case.*" The report found that

there are no clear figures on whether there are enough places in schools in Gauteng. How many actual places exist in schools could be anywhere between 1 454 414 and 1 858 307. These are not enough to cater for the number of learners in Gauteng; in 2012 it was that there were approximately 1 957 100 learners.¹ The report further found that the Department's approach to projecting trends in learner numbers is methodologically poor. The report found that without information on the number of actual school places and proper projection of trends in learner numbers, no proper planning and provision of infrastructure can occur. This therefore results in continued late placements that, in most cases, results in overcrowded classrooms.

The report provided suggested solutions to the problems identified which, amongst others include the updating of the school infrastructure master list so that it accurately reflects the actual capacity of each school based on the school infrastructure norms and standards. A further solution was improving project trends in learner numbers at the district level using population and migration data from Stats SA; the annual DBE Snap Survey data on learner numbers and past growth trends in learner numbers.

These suggested measures would ensure that better planning is carried out and children are placed in schools at the appropriate time. The Centre for Child Law remains committed to engaging with the Gauteng Department of Basic Education on the report and recommendations in it.

Ends.

For further information please contact the Centre for Child Law on 012 420 4502.

The report "Budgets & Bricks: Progress with school infrastructure following the Rivonia Primary School case" can be downloaded in PDF [here](#) (5MB).

¹ These figures reflect the status quo at the time that the report was released.