



The best gift you can give a child,
is to help change their destiny.

How many times in your life have you had a life changing experience?

Listen to the unheard and unspoken voices of children whose lives changed because others cared...

OUT IN THE COLD

"My life changed on a cold winters night when my mother left me behind a fuel filling station, wrapped in only a small blanket, scarcely a day after I was born. I was hidden from sight but found by a passer-by who heard my whimper and took mercy on me. She called the South African Police, who then made contact with an Abba Social Worker and I was taken to a safe place, where I received loving and safe care until I was placed with a Forever Family, who adopted me. A family where I could grow up like any normal child and where I was accepted despite my background."

PLACED IN A BOX

"My life changed when I was two days old. A kind hearted person found me abandoned and alone, took me to baby saver box (baby bin) and placed me inside. He then disappeared into the night. The social worker who removed me from the baby bin said i was very hungry and had not been bathed since birth. I was cared for and all my needs met until the day I became part of my forever family."

ISOLATED & ALONE

"I was found on an ice cold winter's night dressed in three baby grows and wrapped in a woolly blanket. i was lying on a park bench completely isolated and alone. A community member found me and took me to the police station. The paediatrician said I was only a week old. That night my life changed because now I am part of a loving caring family of my own."

BROTHERS

"Our lives were changed when Social Workers attended to myself and my twin brother's plight after our mother died during our birth. My brother was born first, was HIV infected and was clearly disabled as a result of cerebral palsy. I was born a healthy baby boy. We spent many days in hospital but we found a home in a Temporary Safe Care facility where we spent four years until my brother found a suitable, loving facility for Special Needs Children and I found a Forever Family who adopted me as their own."

These are the stories of abandoned and neglected children who have had their lives and destinies changed. They form only a small portion of the thousands of children, with different stories and often different outcomes, who were also saved.

Unfortunately, there are many others of who cannot be accounted for and whose fate is unknown.

Who is saving lives & changing destinies?

Who are these wonderful people who saved not only these babies and children but thousands of others, who changed each one of their destinies from certain death, neglect and suffering to life?

They are the many caring people who selflessly and continuously save the lives of the vulnerable and abandoned, including community members, family members, doctors, nurses, SAPS officials, social workers and many concerned individuals.

They are the people who heard, saw, found and reported! People who cared enough NOT to turn a blind eye, but to do their part by rescuing these helpless, deserted little ones.

Why are there so many babies in crisis?

The reality in South Africa is that there are so many pregnant women and young girls in crisis, women who form part of horrific numbers of females who become pregnant, not of their own will or with their permission, but pregnancies that are forced on them through rape, violence, cultural beliefs and abuse.

These women and young girls, some still in their school going phase, who cannot afford in any way to have a child is always left behind after forced criminal and violent actions, with no other option than to "get rid of the baby", a decision which could end the life of an innocent baby and very often the mother as well – all because of a lack of support, knowledge and options.

The statistics around child abandonment in South Africa are truly sad and utterly overwhelming, and continue to increase at an alarming rate. See below a graphic we recently did for a social media post showing the grave statistics:

 **3 500⁺** BABIES ARE ABANDONED ANNUALLY

 **2 out of 3** ABANDONED BABIES DIE

65%  OF ABANDONED BABIES ARE NEW BORN

90% OF ABANDONED BABIES ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 1 



Why is intervention necessary?

Women in crisis are very often alone, traumatised, and rejected by their families, faced with no support and desperate to solve their problem of an unplanned pregnancy in the fastest possibly way. This situation leaves the door open for cruel and sad alternatives like, abandonment, abuse and often murder of babies.

The statistics around unplanned crisis pregnancies, especially in young girls under the age of 18 is incredibly sad and troubling. New figures released by the Gauteng Department of Health (August 2021) show that **23 226** teenage pregnancies were recorded in Gauteng between April 2020 and March 2021, of which **934** were of girls between the ages of 10 and 14. Experts believe, however, that the actual number of teen pregnancies are in fact much higher than officially recorded.

The reasons and factors driving childhood pregnancy is complex and varied and includes young girls being victims of rape; lack of parental care; poverty and access to education around reproductive health to name but a few.

These unwanted pregnancies most often are complicated and go hand-in-hand with severe trauma, rejection by family and community, social stigma, depression and a number of health risks to both mother and child.

At Abba we believe that it is imperative that there is positive intervention and support to ensure the best possible outcome for both mother and child.



Who is Abba?

The word "Abba" refers to a Hebrew word meaning "Father, protector and provider". This is the kind of care we at Abba want to ensure that the abandoned children we deal with will receive as we find their forever family.

Abba was established in 1983 as a result of the many stories of vulnerable babies and small children who were in dire need of intervention into their circumstances and unable to fend for themselves.

As told in the testimonies above, many children are left destitute on a daily basis, by their parents or significant others.

Abba, now known as Abba Specialist Adoptions and Social Services, is a registered Non-Profit Organisation (NPO), a registered Child Protection Organisation (CPO) with the necessary Adoption Accreditation as well as a registered Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) with a clear Vision to **enable 360 degree child protection by strengthening, supporting and building families.**

Abba takes the protection of children very seriously and believes that it is the duty of the State as well as Civil Society to take responsibility for the plight of destitute children. Abba is also of the opinion that, in saving children's lives and securing their future at an early age, the consequences of not intervening, are decreased. These negative outcomes include:

- Children growing up without biological families.
- Children growing up with/amongst people who abuse and maltreat them.
- Children placed in unsuitable facilities where they are introduced to a lifestyle that is detrimental to normal development.
- Children becoming street children, beggars, substance abusers and criminals from a young age.
- Children becoming part of the uneducated and unemployed statistics.
- Children being placed in jail and/or other formal juvenile facilities, which are not conducive to the instilment of positive life skills and principles in their lives.
- Children becoming wards of and the responsibility of the state and indirectly the financial responsibility of the tax paying South African.

About us

Abba has a national footprint with official offices in four out of nine provinces in South Africa. All our services, awareness and educational programs are therefore also offered nationally.

Abba has 31 full time permanent employees nationally the organisations program is based on relevant international and National Legal instruments and policies applicable to the field of Adoptions and Child protection.

Abba has taken in and positively impacted the lives of over 4771 babies since 2005.

What does Abba, the organisation, do?

Abba has four key focus areas:

1. Abba renders a service to marginalised birth families and young women and teenagers facing **unplanned pregnancies**. Abba has developed programs, focussing on equipping, building capacity, and empowering such families and individuals through education and information sessions which also include provision of Option Counselling as well as support and protection if necessary.

Abba believes that the best place for a child is in their own family and will always pursue that option first. Preventing the removal and separation of children from their family of origin is the main primary focus of Abba's prevention strategy. For that reason a child is only deemed destitute and alternative care should be considered only after all efforts to re-unite the child with his/her own family has failed.

Over the last 17 years we have counselled 3563 birthmothers, who experienced unplanned pregnancies and provided them with option counselling and support.

2. A second preventative focus area is that of **raising awareness, community and stakeholder engagement, capacity building and training**. Abba engages communities in early intervention and supportive programs through local community leaders and organisations.

At the same time communities are sensitised and mobilised in respect of the reality of child abandonment, unplanned crisis pregnancies and adoption through targeted discussion and campaigns. Relevant universities, hospitals, clinics, schools, and community bodies available within communities are constantly involved in actions to this effect.

Awareness and engagements are required since according to research, South Africans have a limited understanding of the facts around adoptions, unplanned pregnancies and child abandonment.

Abba has four key focus areas:

- 3. Child protection and statutory services** as well as **permanency planning** in respect of abandoned, orphaned and adoptable young children who are in need of permanent alternative care.

We believe that children should grow up in stable, safe, happy, strong and permanent family settings. We therefore strive to render child protection services that will ensure that children can be placed in permanent family environments within the shortest time possible.

We further strive towards keeping children in their families and work towards preventing removal of children. The child's family of origin is always the first option for a child's placement and placement in alternative care will only be considered if necessitated and is always based on the principle that the child's best interest should be of paramount importance in all matters pertaining his/her future.

- 4. Services to adoptive parents** is an integral part of Abba's focus. Abba provides specialised adoption services which are facilitated by experienced adoption social workers, having a registered speciality in adoptions, and working within a multi-professional setting.

The organisation renders services from a child centred perspective and therefore recruitment of adoptive parents is in accordance with the profile of the children in need of adoption placements.

According to a breakdown of the profile of children that appear to be in need of adoptive placement, 90% of the children legally available for adoption are currently black South African Children, mostly over the age of 8 months and often presenting with some form of special needs.

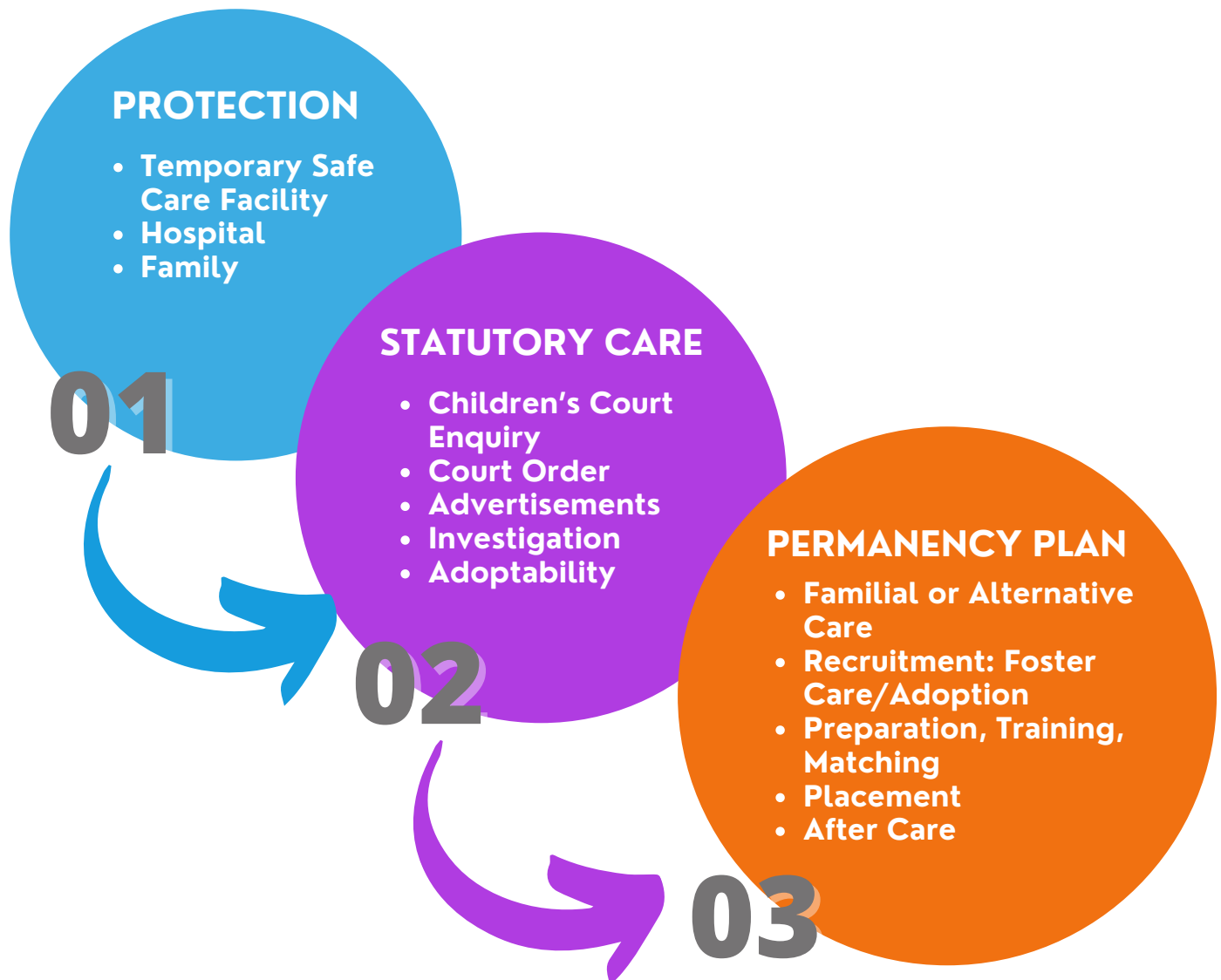
Based on sound adoption theory and in line with legal compliance we screen and capacitate adoptive parents as well as offer post adoption support and care.

Abba has screened, prepared and provided post adoption support to 2952 adoptive parents over the last 17 years.



What happens to a child entering the Abba system?

The chart below shows what happens when a child referral is received by Abba:



Abba placed 3545 children in forever families between the years 2005 and 2021. This represents an average of 209 children who found loving, caring families annually.

How can you help change the destiny of abandoned children?

Our mission is to continuously protect vulnerable children and mothers as well as the community at large. Our resources are currently under immense pressure making it difficult to fund our already stretched programmes, the high volumes of cases as well as our diligent staff and social workers.

While we do receive a small percentage of our funding from government the deficit is vast and we have therefore come to rely heavily on sponsorships and donations and need your help to continue the work we have set out to do with unwavering resolve.

Help us to help the children of South Africa and at the same time help the country from being flooded by children who have to be subsidised by the state until they become destitute young people who are unemployed and have to once again be supported by the State through grants, which we all know is not enough and in many cases leads to other "survival" methods which in the end is not in the best interest of the child or the people of South Africa and the State.

Below are three programmes where we require urgent support. Small acts of kindness make a big impact. Help us change a child's destiny.

- Crisis Pregnancy Programme
- Placing children in forever families
- Adoptive Parent Screening, Training & Support

If you feel that our cause aligns with your CSI vision and goals or led to get personally involved with Abba, please contact our Marketing Coordinator on jeana@abbaadoptions.co.za for additional information.

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