CHASE SA
Collaboration for Harm Reduction and Alcohol Safety in the Environment in Southern Africa

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CENTERING CHILDREN IN THE ALCOHOL ENVIRONMENT AS PART OF A WHOLE SYSTEM RESPONSE FOR CHILD WELL-BEING

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Abstract: As public health researchers, we must address alcohol as a direct and indirect risk to children's wellbeing. Within the CHASE-SA consortium, we prioritise children as a vulnerable group whose needs and international rights require prioritisation in alcohol policy processes. We argue that alcohol policy is a key lever in overall child wellbeing and should be understood as part of a whole system response from government. Our work maps policy challenges and opportunities to centre children in policy processes, forming part of a broader advocacy strategy to push governments to recognise alcohol policy development as a central part of a whole system response for child wellbeing SDG's.

Methods
Prospective policy analysis explores the political-economy of policy change to advance new agendas. Our research is forward-looking, bringing stakeholders together to document and discuss intersecting alcohol policy issues as critical for overall child wellbeing, using document reviews and discussions with CHASE-SA researchers and international partners to inform strategic action.

Findings
Preliminary findings show government responses to alcohol-related harm are slow and fragmented, lacking a whole-system approach. In South Africa, FASD programmes focus mainly on behaviour change and early diagnosis, neglecting underlying political and economic drivers on consumption. Commercial actors shift blame for alcohol harms to individuals, avoiding accountability. Policies often fail to recognize children as rights holders, weakening protections.

Conclusion
A more integrated, rights-based approach to policy making is needed to ensure alcohol

policy development is understood as a critical part of a whole system response for child well-being that centres children's interests.

Topic: Alcohol policy to achieve the SDGs
Why alcohol matters: the breadth of harm and arguments for policy

Keywords: Children, Rights, well-being