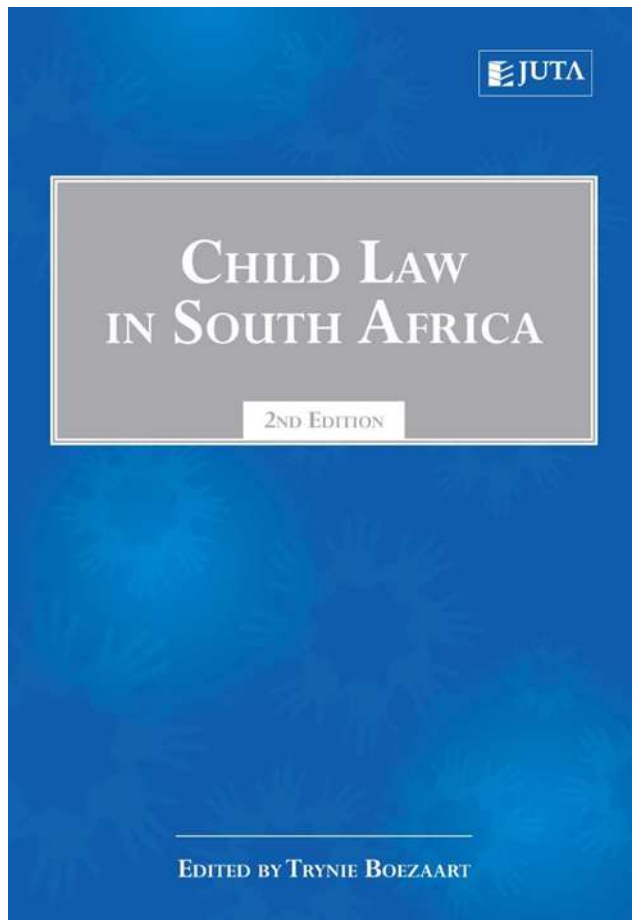


Book Review



CHILD LAW IN SOUTH AFRICA

(2nd Edition)

Edited by Trynie Boezaart
(853 pages)

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***"Child! do not throw this book about;
Refrain from the unholy pleasure
Of cutting all the pictures out!
Preserve it as your chiefest treasure."***

– Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)

Not every child grows up to become an adult. But every adult was once a child. It is said we never lose the inner child we once were. This ever-present living reality of childhood permeates every aspect of human existence across the world.

The law relating to children is consequently broad and all-pervasive. It extends to every aspect of our cultural, economic, political and personal lives.

This completely revised second edition of *Child Law in South Africa* is a remarkable and comprehensive introduction to the reach and complexity of child law. The editor modestly acknowledges that it cannot address each and every issue pertaining to children, but serves rather as a source of first reference. Nevertheless, Professor Michelle Karels of the School of Law at the University of South Africa calls this a book that..."seamlessly accomplishes its goal of harmonising the various branches of child law into an accessible yet persuasive volume."

The contributions of the 22 authors provide incisive insights into the profound impact of recent legislative changes, developments in regulatory frameworks, the latest research findings in this field, and ground-breaking judicial interpretations from our courts. Work done at an international level is also incorporated into the topics discussed. There is a separate index listing 33 international conventions, protocols, covenants, declarations, charters and guidelines dealing with the rights of children.

The approach adopted by the authors is holistic in all matters relating to children and involves a variety of practitioners, including social workers, psychologists, educationists and health care professionals. This allows crucial issues, including consent to medical treatment and surgery of children, learners' rights to education, and sexual offences against children, to be addressed in a multi-disciplinary way.

The topics analysed in the various chapters will provide precious guidance and understanding of the issues to a broad readership and reflect the enormous scope and dynamics involved in child law. From parental responsibilities to the rights of unmarried fathers under customary law, from intercountry adoption to school discipline, from children as witnesses to international child abduction, there is a wealth of information that has been trawled and brought to the surface.

The eminent scholar and editor Trynie Boezaart BA LLB LLD, Professor of Private Law at the University of Pretoria, is an advocate of the High Court of South Africa, founder of the Centre for Child Law at the University of Pretoria, and has served as an acting judge of the High Court. She has authored *Law of Persons* since its first edition in 1995, and also its companion volume *Law of Persons Sourcebook*, both now in their sixth edition. She edited the first edition of *Child Law in South Africa* in 2009, and has published widely on numerous aspects of the law of persons and related fields.

The contributing authors are all highly regarded experts in their fields. The quality of the publication is further enhanced by "the guidance and direction provided by an anonymous peer review" and the comments of two further independent "leading experts in child law", all of which is generously acknowledged by the editor. She also expresses her appreciation to publisher Juta for all its "effort and support throughout the process." It was, says the author, "a team effort". That is a good way to approach anything involving children.

Review by Louis Rood BA LLB (UCT), Consultant at Fairbridges Wertheim Becker Attorneys.