



# Every Word Counts

Supporting the learning of babies and young children

An early literacy programme by Wordworks

## Summary

This programme can be used across a range of community settings to introduce new knowledge about early learning to those who care for and work with babies and young children. It provides practical ideas for supporting the development of language, early literacy and maths concepts, from birth to 5 years of age. Wordworks trains trainers and equips organisations to integrate the programme and resources into their work with parents and caregivers through home visits or parenting group sessions. ECD practitioners and playgroup facilitators can use what they learn through the programme in their daily interactions with children in pre-schools and playgroups.



## Programme goals

- Build an understanding of the importance of loving, responsive parenting, and the positive impact of talking with babies and young children.
- Introduce parents and caregivers to what is meant by baby learning as well as to early literacy and maths concepts.
- Share practical ideas and resources on how to support and stimulate learning in ECD centres and at home, and demonstrate how learning activities can be integrated into daily routines.

## How the programme works

- Organisations apply to partner with Wordworks and attend EWC training.
- Wordworks provides resource-based training (either over 3-days or 9 monthly 4-hour sessions) for up to three trainers/programme managers/coordinators from an organisation.
- The training equips people to integrate EWC into their organisation's ECD work.
- Organisations run an EWC pilot project over the course of a year. A pilot can be:
  - the full 40-hour EWC training in monthly or quarterly sessions (with the same participants);
  - a 4-hour workshop on a different EWC topic each quarter (with the same participants);
  - a 4-hour workshop on the same EWC topic each quarter (with different participants);
  - 16 short awareness raising sessions on EWC topics in community settings and/or public facilities (with different participants at each session);
  - 2-hour onboarding and 2-hour follow-up workshops on the Wordworks app each quarter (with different participants in each quarter);
  - incorporating knowledge and resources gained through EWC training in your regular work with children and colleagues.

We encourage our partners to develop pilots that suit their own contexts and capacity – please communicate with us if you would like to run a pilot that differs from these guidelines.

- Partners commit to attending all Wordworks training sessions, to once a year providing Wordworks with a summary of their pilot projects, to attending Refresher workshops and to participating in a learning and support visit from the EWC team.
- Those who have attended Wordworks training receive a certificate at our Refresher workshop once they have completed and reflected on their pilot and submitted a portfolio of work to us.

## Overview of course content

Wordworks trainers share information, ideas, activities and materials, and build skills and confidence during the training through a participative approach to learning.

The programme:

- is based on the latest research into language, early literacy and maths concepts for babies and young children;
- gives many practical examples of how to support language, early literacy and maths in informal ways that are appropriate for babies and young children, with an emphasis on learning through play
- encourages routines around activities such as storytelling and book-sharing;
- focuses on ‘how to’, as well as ‘why’ early learning activities are important.

The Every Word Counts programme is based on six books:

### Book 1: Talk, play and sing (birth to 2 years)

Tells how babies and very young children learn to communicate and play.



### Book 2: Talk and sing (3 to 5 years)

Focuses on communication with children from three to five years.



### Book 3: Play (3 to 5 years)

Introduces the many aspects of play for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years.



### Book 4: Share books (birth to 5 years)

Shows how to share books with babies and children up to five years.



### Book 5: Draw and write (3 to 5 years)

Describes how children begin to draw, make marks and write using scribbles and letters.



### Book 6: Enjoy maths every day (3 to 5 years)

Explains how to use everyday activities to build maths concepts with young children.



## Programme results

### Parents benefit

- They learn how to support their babies' and young children's learning at home.
- They build new routines and work towards positive parenting habits.
- Their self-esteem and confidence grows as they experience success.
- They become role models in their communities.

### Babies and children benefit

- From birth, they engage in responsive, loving communication.
- They receive important learning support at home and in ECD centres.
- They are encouraged to learn through play.
- They show progress in spoken language, and are supported to build early literacy skills.

### Trainers and Community Workers benefit

- Their knowledge about early language and literacy learning for babies and young children grows.
- Their attitude towards parents and young children becomes more respectful.
- Their skills as facilitators, trainers, practitioners, home visitors and community workers flourish.

## Materials and resources

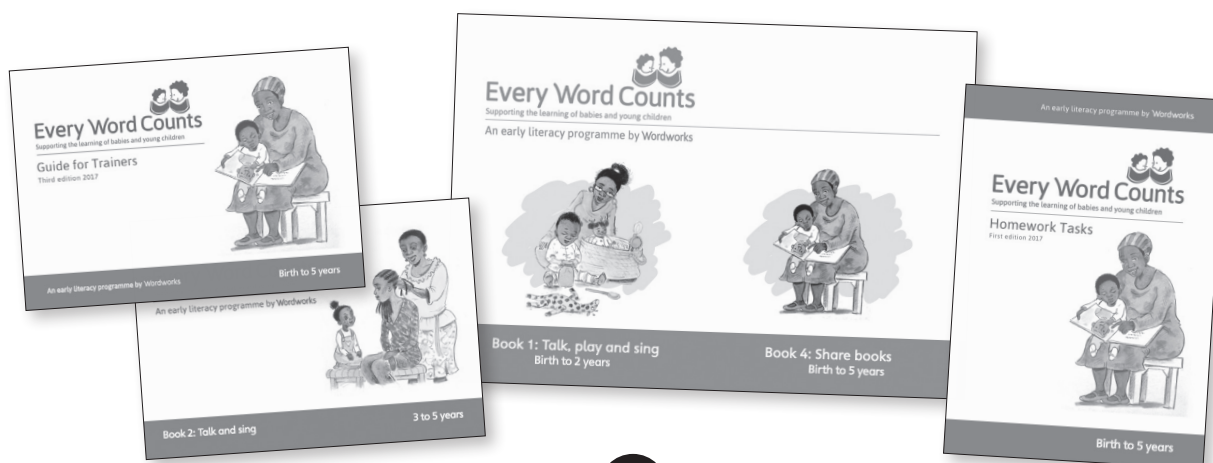
Organisations receive a trainer's file at the Wordworks training, which includes training materials, additional reading, handouts, M&E and reporting templates, portfolio and certificate guidelines, and flash drive with electronic versions of supporting documents and videos.

Participants receive workshop materials and resources at the Wordworks training.

Organisations can select any combination of the following materials for their pilot, depending on the kind of training they plan and the participants they work with. Wordworks provides a limited set of materials for the pilot and organisations can purchase more if needed:

- Guide for Trainers.
- A5 colour or black and white books.
- A3 colour flip charts (designed to be used in workshops where facilities for power point presentations are not available).
- Workbook for participants.
- Homework tasks booklet (assists with planning and monitoring).

The EWC books, flipcharts and workbook are available in English, isiXhosa, Afrikaans and isiZulu.



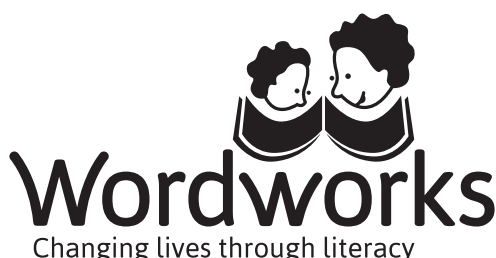
## Are you interested in knowing more about Wordworks?

Wordworks is a South African non-profit organisation that focuses on early language and literacy development in the first eight years of children's lives. Since 2005 we have worked in under-resourced communities with those adults best positioned to impact on young children's language and literacy development – parents and caregivers, family and community members, home-visitors, early childhood development practitioners and Grade R teachers. We offer training, resourcing and on-site mentorship for four early language and literacy programmes:

- Through the Every Word Counts Programme, trainers are equipped to train home-visitors and ECD practitioners to strengthen the early learning component of their work with families and caregivers of babies and young children (birth to five years).
- Through the Home-School Partnerships Programme (HSPP), facilitators are trained to run a series of workshops over eight weeks to empower and inspire parents and caregivers of children aged 4 to 8 years to support informal learning at home.
- Through the Ready Steady Read Write Programme, co-ordinators are trained to set up and manage a team of tutors who support pairs of children for at least six months as they learn to read and write.
- Through the Stellar Programme, trainers are equipped to train and support Grade R teachers to strengthen their teaching of language and literacy.

In parallel to our training and capacity building, we develop, produce and distribute innovative, high quality, multilingual user-friendly teaching and learning materials to support early language and literacy learning. These materials are available to those who train with us, and selected resources can be downloaded from our website. Wordworks has also contributed to knowledge development in the field of early language and literacy learning through publications and presentations at conferences. We have developed tools that we share with partners to evaluate early literacy work, and we are increasingly building our capacity to gather and share evidence on the impact of Wordworks programmes in order to ensure our work is responsive to learning, and contributes to research on early language and literacy in the South African context.

Part of our ongoing work is to keep in contact with individuals, organisations, institutions and schools within our network and connect them with information, opportunities, campaigns and resources as well as with one another. We are working collaboratively to grow an informed, capable, resourced and motivated network of individuals, organisations, institutions and schools that promote the importance of, and work effectively for the improvement of children's early language and literacy, through their association with our programmes and materials.



---

Contact us for more information about our training packages.

**Email:** [info@wordworks.org.za](mailto:info@wordworks.org.za) **T:** +27 (0) 21 788 9233 **F:** +27 (0) 86 775 7930

2 Jacobs Ladder, St James, Cape Town 7945

**[www.wordworks.org.za](http://www.wordworks.org.za)**

**Stay in touch:** [www.facebook.com/wordworksSA/](https://www.facebook.com/wordworksSA/) **Get involved:** [www.wordworks.org.za/getinvolved/](http://www.wordworks.org.za/getinvolved/)

**Support Us:** Standard Bank • Swift code SBZAZAJJ

IBAN: 036009 27 037 3837 | PBO: 93022252 | NPO: 044-776