



# Home-School Partnerships

Supporting informal learning at home in the early years

An early literacy programme by Wordworks

## Summary

This programme can be used to facilitate a learning space for parents in which to share knowledge and ideas about children's language and early literacy development. The programme builds co-operation between families and schools, and encourages parents in their role as their children's first teachers. Wordworks trains, provides resources and mentors facilitators, who run weekly workshops for parents and caregivers of children aged four to eight years. The workshops run for 2½ hours a week over eight weeks. Workshops are usually run at schools by Foundation Phase and ECD teachers, but successful programmes have also been run by librarians and NGO trainers at community centres.



## Programme goals

- Provide guidance, ideas and resources on how to support and stimulate learning at home, particularly early language and literacy learning
- Develop stronger relationships between homes and schools
- Promote understanding of the important role that parents have to play in their child's education
- Foster a culture of learning among families

## How the programme works

- Individuals, schools or organisations apply to set up the programme.
- Wordworks provides a 2½ day resource-based training for two to four facilitators from a school/organisation.
- The facilitators are equipped to go back to their school/organisation and run the eight-session Home-School Partnership programme.
- The school or organisation invites parents to attend the eight-week programme.
- Facilitators deliver the programme through a series of weekly 2½-hour workshops, for a group of 20–30 parents and caregivers.
- All parents who attend the course receive stationery and resources, and a certificate on completion of at least five of the eight sessions.

## Overview of course content

Parents find out more about how young children develop and learn. They learn how their attitude and approach to parenting can improve their child's progress at school. They learn about and try out activities to support early learning at home. All course sessions are interactive and practical, and parents are provided with take-home materials.

**Session 1**



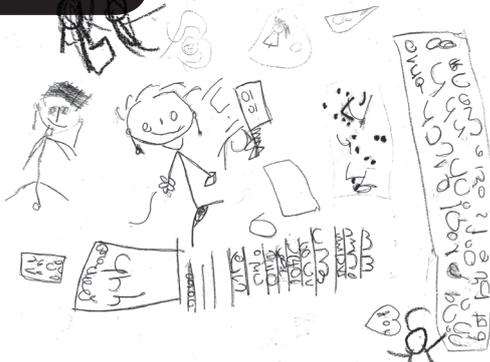
Focus on parents as their children's first teachers.

**Session 2**



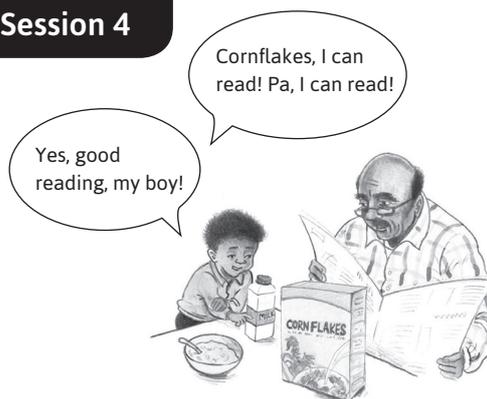
Focus on learning language.

**Session 3**



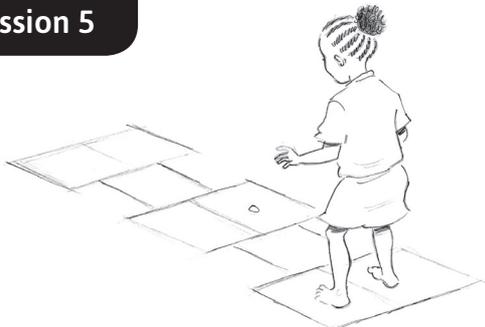
Focus on drawing and have-a-go writing.

**Session 4**



Focus on reading and writing.

**Session 5**



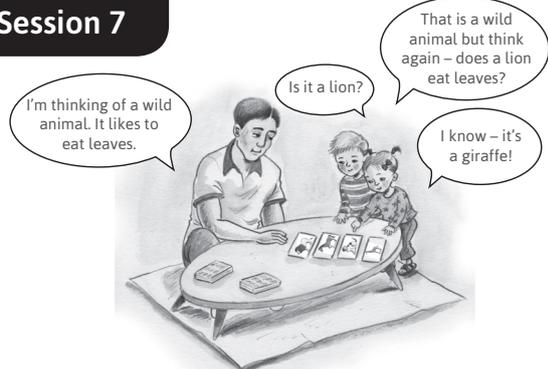
Focus on developing children's big and small muscles and games to support physical development.

**Session 6**



Focus on early maths using the world as our classroom.

**Session 7**



Focus on using card and board games to promote language and learning.

**Session 8**



Summing up the programme, celebration and certificates

## Programme results

### Parents benefit

- They learn how to support their children's learning at home.
- They shift their routines and work towards positive parenting habits.
- Their self-esteem and confidence grow as they experience success.
- They are inspired to become volunteers at school, reading-club leaders or even to study further.

### Children benefit

- They receive important support and encouragement at home.
- They experience smoother and more positive transitions from home to school and back again.
- They are more confident, participate more in class and have a more positive attitude to school.
- They show progress in spoken language, reading and writing.

### Facilitators benefit

- Their knowledge about early language and literacy learning grows.
- Their attitude to parents becomes more understanding and respectful.
- Their skills as facilitators, leaders and speakers flourish.
- Their facilitation skills positively influence their teaching style.

## Resources

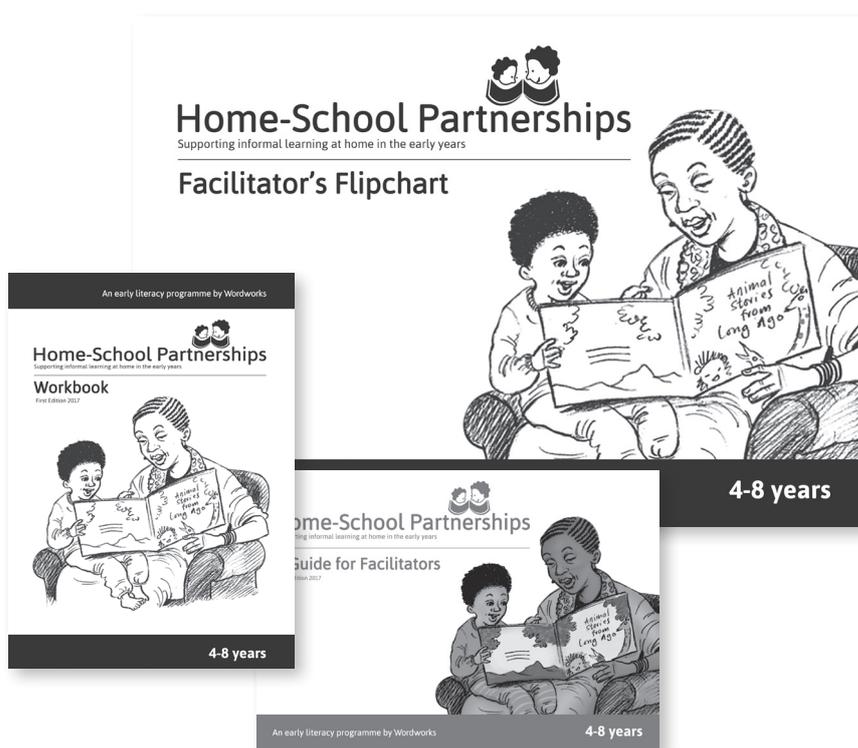
The following resources are provided by Wordworks to those running the Home-School Partnership programme:

### For facilitators

- A facilitator's guide
- A parent workbook
- A poster flipchart
- A flash drive with additional resources.

### For parents

- A workbook
- Booklets: 'Supporting learning at home' and 'My Body in Space'
- Games: Animal cards and manual, language board games, manual, counters, dice
- Stationery pack: A drawing book, a pen, crayons, scissors, dice and a folder.



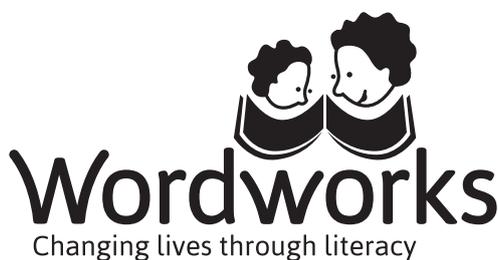
## Are you interested in knowing more about Wordworks?

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.



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Contact us for more information about our training packages.

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