

JULY 2014

A message from Angelique Twiss...

(Programme developer: STELLAR programme)

Although every year of learning is vital in a child's school journey, we know that Grade R is crucial for laying essential foundations for formal schooling. It can, however, easily be regarded as a year of play and exploration without fair understanding of the depth of learning that takes place in this dynamic space. The demands of the Grade One curriculum are immense, and even more so for children starting school without the preparation provided by a high quality Grade R year.

To enable Grade R children to build their early language and literacy skills, Wordworks has developed the STELLAR teacher training programme ('Strengthening Teaching of Early Language and Literacy in Grade R'). By immersing children in story-based learning experiences and related language-rich activities, we aim to ensure that they are better prepared for Grade One, with the confidence to be good listeners, speakers and emergent readers and writers.

I have had the privilege of training teachers over the last three years to take Grade R children on this STELLAR learning experience. These teachers have demonstrated the dedication, creativity and passion needed to change young lives in our country, and I am deeply inspired by their commitment to this enormous responsibility.



Angelique Twiss with some Grade R teachers from Hout Bay.



Home School Programme goes rural

Parents from 5 schools and 2 creches in and around Montagu have recently signed up to attend the 7-week HSP programme, facilitated by the teachers and funded by Rotary SA and Rotary UK. Here parents from Lammeroes in Bonnievale and their teacher-facilitator discuss some of the ways they can support informal learning at home.

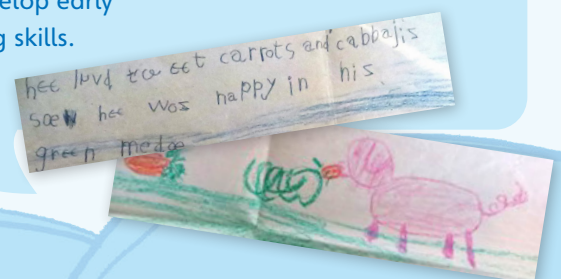
STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...

On Mandela Day, 18th July, the Wordworks team members will be visiting the library in Masiphumelele to read stories with children from the community.

Have you decided how you will be spending your 67 minutes?

Top tip:

Writing after reading a story together is an excellent way of building early literacy. After talking about the favourite parts of the story and drawing a picture, you can help children put their ideas into a sentence. Encourage children to 'have-a-go' at writing the sentence themselves – even if this means using scribbles, patterns and odd letters. Or you can scribe for children by writing each word slowly as the child says the sentence. Both are great ways to develop early writing skills.





My story

“As a young boy I enjoyed listening to stories told by my teachers and Sunday school teachers.

My mother, eldest sister and Sunday School teachers had a great influence on me because they always encouraged me. At High School I learnt judo which taught me to respect myself and others. I also learnt not to jump to conclusions.

I enrolled at a Teachers College but dropped out because of peer pressure from friends who were doing apprenticeships. They teased me about wanting to become a teacher as they saw it as a female’s job. Deep down, I always wanted to be a teacher.

After 10 years at a Diesel Engineering Company, I was retrenched. Two years ago I was offered a job as a gardener at the school. The Acting Principal asked me to volunteer with the Wordworks Early Literacy Programme as she had seen how successful it was at another school.

I was keen to do it because I have seen people struggling as they are unable to read and write. I really enjoy working with the children and I feel glad when I see how they smile when they get things right. I just want them to become something in life.”



This story was shared by Alfred Hendricks. He is a volunteer at St Anthony’s Primary School, and one of our few male volunteers.

Did you know?

During the last 3 months of pregnancy and the first 3 months of life, the nerve cells in a baby’s brain get connected to form circuits that are needed to sense and think. These connections are strengthened by the baby’s early interaction with the mother and father. It’s a bit like tennis, where one player ‘serves’ the ball and the other player ‘returns’ it. So when the baby smiles (serves), the parent responds (returns) with a smile, a word, a touch, or all of these. Every time our child serves, we must return!

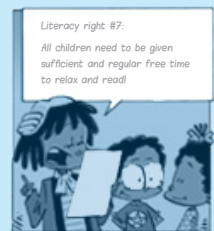


For the full explanation go to: <http://www.ngo-pulse.org/article/simple-early-triggers-help-our-children-learn>

Did you see?

The Children’s Literacy Charter was recently launched by Nal’ibali. This charter is an invitation to adults to support children’s literacy learning and a reminder of what young readers need in order to build their literacy skills.

Find the Charter at:
http://nalibali.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/A4_Childrens_Lit_Charter_english-FINAL.pdf



For more information visit our website: www.wordworks.org.za, or keep up to date with our activities by following us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wordworksSA.