



# Home-School Partnerships

Supporting informal learning at home in the early years

An early literacy programme by Wordworks

## Summary

This programme is designed 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 five to eight years. The workshops run for 2½ hours a week over eight weeks. Workshops are usually run at schools by Foundation Phase 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 three-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



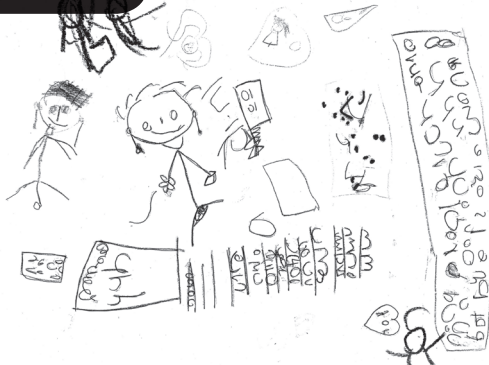
Focus on parents as our children's first teachers.

### Session 2



Focus on learning language.

### Session 3



Focus on drawing and have-a-go writing.

### Session 4

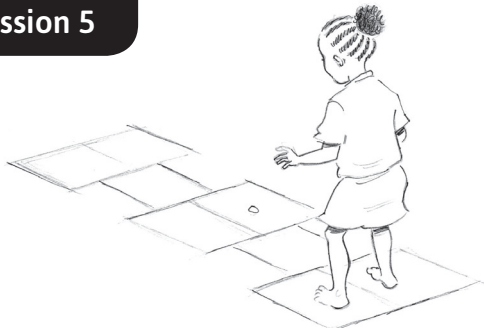
1. Cornflakes! I can read!  
Pa, I can read!

2. Yes, good  
reading, my  
boy!



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

1. I'm thinking of a  
wild animal. It likes to  
eat leaves.

2. Is it a lion?

3. That is a wild  
animal but think  
again – does a  
lion eat leaves?

4. I know – it's  
a giraffe!



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

### Session 8



Summing up the programme, feedback and planning ahead, 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

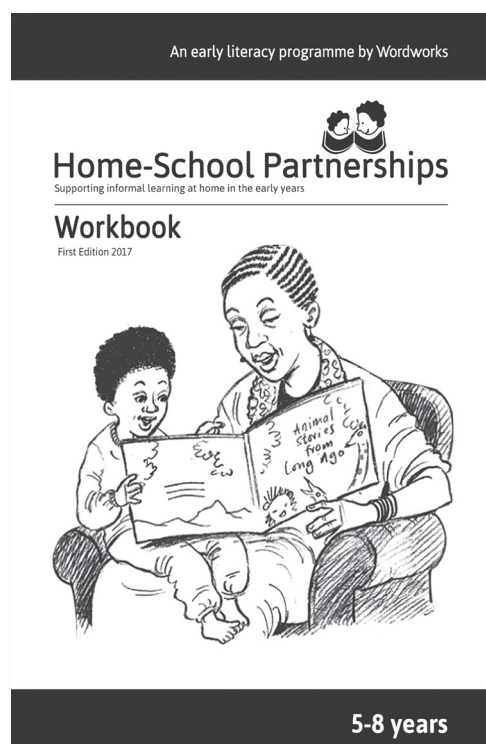
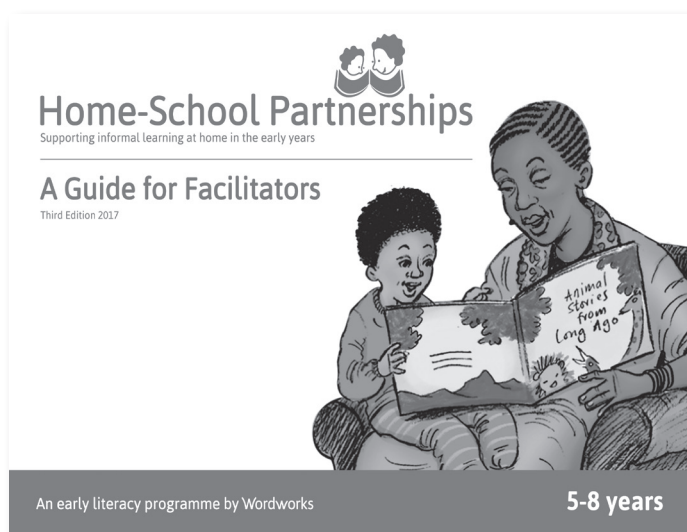
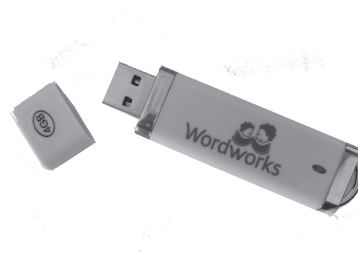
The following resources are provided by Wordworks to those running the Home-School Partnerships programme:

### For facilitators

- Guide for facilitators
- Workbook for parents
- Memory Stick for facilitators
- Literacy Game Pack.

### For parents

- Workbook for parents
- Literacy Game Pack
- A story book
- A drawing book, a pencil, crayons, scissors and a folder.



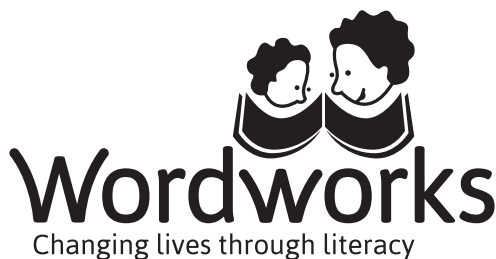
## Are you interested in knowing more about Wordworks?

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. Wordworks offers training, resourcing and mentoring for partners who wish to run, train on, and/or manage our early language and literacy programmes in their own networks.

- Every Word Counts Programme (0–3 years): Trainers are equipped to train home visitors to strengthen the language and early literacy component of their work with families and caregivers.
- Little Stars Programme: (3–5 years) (programme in development) Trainers are equipped to train ECD practitioners to strengthen their teaching of language and early literacy, and reach out to parents to support language learning at home.
- Stellar Home Language Programme (5–6 years): Trainers are equipped to train Grade R teachers to strengthen their teaching of language and early literacy and reach out to parents to support language learning at home.
- Home–School Partnerships Programme (5–8 years): Foundation Phase teachers are equipped to facilitate eight workshops of 2½ hours each, to empower and inspire parents to support informal learning at home.
- Ready Steady Read Write Programme (5–8 years): Co-ordinators are equipped to set up and manage a team of tutors who work with pairs of children for at least six months as they learn to read and write.

Wordworks contributes to language and early literacy learning through publications and presentations at conferences. We have developed tools that we share with partners to evaluate their early literacy work, and share evidence on the impact of Wordworks programmes.

We are working collaboratively to grow an informed, capable, resourced and motivated network of schools, organisations and institutions 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.

**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)**

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