

FROM SHELLEY

A recent survey has shown that children in no-fees schools learnt 50 to 75% less in 2020 compared to what they normally learn. When we consider that 70% of schools in South Africa are no-fee schools, this is a national crisis. We have failed our children. This year, rotational teaching and the threat of a third wave means that the risk of learning losses remains ever present. We cannot afford to let another cohort of children grow a year older without the learning opportunities that they need in order to learn to read and write. The scale of the crisis means we must work together in partnership and the urgency of a response means we must build on what we already know works. Solutions must be scalable and cost effective.

An example of this is the work happening in the Western Cape with NGOs in partnership with government to support parents and caregivers to help their children to make up for lost learning time in literacy and maths. Through the TIME project, families are being provided with cost-effective resources and messaging that explains how to use the materials. Teachers are supporting parents and caregivers to use the materials and important connections are being built between homes and schools. We are so encouraged to see how families are building learning and fun activities into their weekly routines.

Most importantly we know that this work with families is not only about improving literacy and maths results. These words are from a father who attended the Wordworks Home-School Partnerships Programme and they remind us why engaging families is so important for our children, our communities and our country:

I now listen to my children more, I now understand them more, who they are, and in doing so, I no longer impose who I am and who I want them to be, but try to bring out in them, the best of who they are. The restoration of family is high up on my list of priorities now. And that's what I see, since I went to that workshop. From personal experience, I have realized that as we keep our children from experiencing how it is like to think and make decisions for themselves, and experience the consequences of their decisions we either end up with kids that are compliant and obedient, but will be completely at sea when they leave home, or rebellious kids who will wrestle anyone for their freedom soon as they realize you are trying to with-hold it from them. So thank you for making me realise that.



Shelley O'Carroll,
Director of Wordworks



Launch of the new TIME Programme



Home learning programme for Grade R and Grade 1

Our new TIME at home learning Programme for Grade R and Grade 1 was launched in February. The resources were developed by Wordworks and RED INK, have been endorsed by the Western Cape Education Department and are being used in 49 259 homes, thanks to the hard work of 3000 supporters from participating partners - 8 districts, 28 organisations and 232 schools and centres.



TIME stands for 'Together In My Education' and calls for schools, parents and communities to work together with young children to ensure strong learning foundations.

TIME's engaging resources and accessible daily activities encourage families to create regular space for interactive learning. TIME supports children's language, mathematics and life skills, and provides daily activities for the whole year.



All the materials are open source and are available in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. Find downloadable Term One and Term Two materials and support messages, audio and videos, on our data free website here: <https://www.homeliteracy.org.za/time/>.

It is not too late to join our bulk print run for Term Three. Go to [t8xUicA12zkfaDa8](https://www.homeliteracy.org.za/time/) to sign up for your school or organisation.



Wordworks remains in touch, even while social distancing!

We are sharing practical early literacy tips for families in different languages on our website: <https://www.homeliteracy.org.za/>



Training to use the Wordworks early literacy Programmes

Term One always means Training of Trainers at Wordworks, and this year our team rose to the challenge of online learning, with 494 people attending courses to equip themselves to run Wordworks programmes in their contexts.



Wordworks team members conducting on-line training.

As you will see in the different stories in this newsletter, we developed and offered a range of online courses - small and large, self-study and facilitated, multi-lingual and in language streams, local and national! We would like to thank all participants for their flexibility and willingness to adjust to new ways of working with Wordworks, and for all the experience they bring to our training and conversations. We have learned so much from all of you!

Launch of the Little Stars pre Grade R classroom programme

Building on a successful pilot, these colourful and practical materials have been especially developed to support language teaching across the pre Grade R year. They are available in bilingual sets (A/E, X/E, Z/E) and include stories, classroom resources and interactive activities to build strong language and emergent literacy foundations.



If you are an ECD teacher, please visit this website and find out how you can purchase these beautiful resources, at a nominal price: <https://littlestars.org.za/>.



Home-School Partnerships

Supporting informal learning at home in the early years



Hard copy HSP materials went to all our on-line trainees.

112 new Teacher-facilitators
and **34** new schools

participating in HSP in 2021

A packed HSP training programme this term is showing results! Many Teacher-facilitators are completing the programme with parents from their schools and experiencing the joy of parents graduating with new confidence and skills to support young children's informal learning at home.

HSP Trainer & mentor: 'It is heartwarming to know that teachers are committed and go beyond their teaching time to attend the Home-School Partnerships teacher-facilitator workshops. These teachers are keen to conduct their 8 sessions to help parents support their children's learning.'

HSP Teacher-facilitator: 'These training sessions always get me to up my game as a teacher and to help the parents of my learners. I'm excited to attend the next training session and can't wait to conduct our parent sessions once it is safe to do so.'



Please visit our Facebook page where we share more pictures and reports of the HSP parent workshops and graduations at schools in our network: <https://web.facebook.com/wordworksSA>



Little Stars

Supporting early language and literacy teaching in pre-Grade R

144 participants from
24 organisations across
5 provinces in
six 3-day online workshops

Our ECD team's online marathon meant a very busy and fulfilling month. The range of training offered allowed participants from across the country to select appropriate courses, connect and share experiences. The different backgrounds of practitioners and organisations allowed for this learning to translate into every context.

ECD Trainer: 'Knowing that we have worked together in a new space and yet again changed lives through literacy is amazing!'

ECD Participant: 'I had to take 3 days leave to do this and it was absolutely worth it! Can't wait to implement.'

Find out more about our ECD programmes here:
www.wordworks.org.za and on our Facebook page here:
<https://web.facebook.com/wordworksSA>



Ready Steady Read Write

Supporting children learning to read and write

122 participants from
3 provinces in **5** online planning
and training sessions

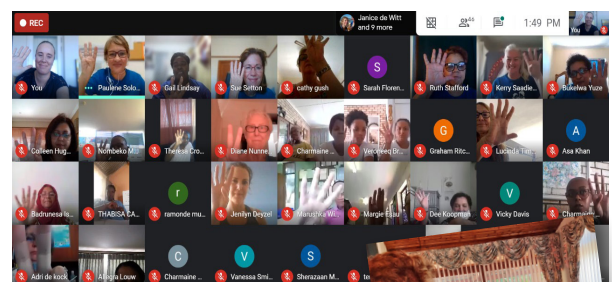
In our RSRW Programme on-line planning meeting, we met 67 participants (Learning Support teachers and Coordinators) from schools and organisations in the Western and Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal who have signed up to run their tutoring programmes again this year.

We also ran a 4-day online training session with 55 participants to get our tutor programme rolling in newly signed up schools and organisations.

The training used a blended training approach involving on-line live training, and Wordworks very first self-study online course modules with support from mentors in online chat groups

RSRW Trainers: 'We were excited to see how months of work on a new platform would be accepted by participants who were used to being trained in-person. There were all round warm feelings at hearing the participants' feedback at the end of the course; and seeing how some adults, just like ourselves, were learning something new along the way too.'

Read more about our Ready Steady Read Write programme here: <https://www.wordworks.org.za/ready-steady-read-write/>





Did you know?

Our data free home learning webpage, set up to support parents suddenly responsible for their children's education due to Covid-19, has been growing, with new programmes and materials joining the popular Wordworks cell phone App.

Visit this page for informal literacy activities for 0 – 4 years, as well as the more structured TIME Programme activities for Grade R and Grade 1. <https://www.homeliteracy.org.za/>. Share with your friends and networks.



Did you see?

We have been building up our training video library, to support the understanding of various literacy activities that are part of our training programmes.

You can view some of these videos on Wordworks SA YouTube channel, as well as on our home learning website: <https://www.homeliteracy.org.za/>



Wordworks is growing!

Wordworks has welcomed two new team members this term. Colleen Hughes is our new Head of Operations, and Jacqui Botha, after working for many years in a part time capacity, is now fully on board as Lead Designer and Materials Coordinator.



Colleen



Jacqui

We also welcome two new members to our board: Jennifer Khumalo and Nangamso Mtsatse.



Jennifer



Nangamso

The skills and experience these wonderful women bring have already greatly enriched our organisation.

Why should we care about the children's amendment bill?

"From time to time there is a new law that has the potential to bend the arc of SA's social and economic development. The Children's Amendment Bill is such a law."

Follow the @CentreForEarly ChildhoodDevelopment Facebook page for regular updates on this Bill, and the ECD sector.



<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2021-05-09-why-we-should-care-about-the-childrens-amendment-bill/>