Quality Early Childhood Development for **EVERY CHILD**

WELCOME TO OUR MAY 2019 NEWSLETTER

DOWNLOAD PDF VERSION
It is a well-known fact that the correlation between early learning, high educational achievement and household income is undeniably strong. It thus seems so obvious that in order to give every child a chance of success in life, each child needs to have access to quality early learning opportunities. In a country like ours, characterised by vast inequality, the powerful tool of early education can be the great equalizer needed, giving ALL children access to educational opportunities, regardless of their background. For the past 14 years, Masikhule has been committed to this in our community.

We have taken this rightful access to early learning one step further this year by initiating an Early Intervention Project under the guidance of two Occupational Therapists. We are proud of this comprehensive project, which includes assessment and early identification of learning barriers, equipping teachers and caregivers with access to quality learning and teacher resources (through our Teachers’ Early Learning Resource Library), as well as Occupational Therapy group intervention with groups of 4 to 5 year olds at identified, community-based pre-schools.

This program really puts Early Intervention into perspective. Children in these communities are on the back foot due to a number of reasons beyond their control. Our view is that we need to capacitate the teachers to ensure ALL children are part of an Inclusive Learning Program where children are dealt with insight, sensitivity, knowledge and confidence. This intervention will ensure that children enter formal school better prepared and with a solid developmental and learning foundation.

Our learning has been immense - the responses from teachers and children have been heart-warming - and the initial results incredibly positive. We look forward to sharing more of these results with you.
Early intervention is key to future development. Based on our findings of screening 4 to 5 year olds in marginalised communities over the past few years, we have found widespread barriers to learning (learning problems) that are not being addressed due to:

(a) lack of knowledge of teachers, parents, community 
(b) lack of resources and referral opportunities and 
(c) lack of intervention by learning specialists such as Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Remedial Teachers, etc.

To address this we approached the Douglas Murray Trust (DGMT) who believe, as does Masikhule, that "ECD is the most powerful investment in human capital that a country can make".

We are thrilled that our Early Intervention Project funding application was successful, and 2019 has seen us implement this project with very encouraging results thus far.

Our Project has four areas of focus - namely:

- **Screening** and assessing of children by an Occupational Therapist
- On-site **Occupational Therapy group** sessions
- **Teacher Enrichment Workshops** by an Occupational Therapist
- **Teachers' Early Learning Resource Library**.
In order to establish what issues are evident within the ECD Centres that we mentor, Anjo du Preez, an experienced OT, has undertaken the screening of 4 - 5 year old children's general development (physical, fine and gross motor, perceptual, language, early literacy and numeracy, etc). These results have provided us with ground data - before any intervention - and the screening will occur again towards the end of this year, in order to establish whether or not our programme has had any positive impact.

THERAPY GROUPS

Experiencing the Lazy 8 with Anjo.
Having worked in the marginalised communities of the Helderberg for 14 years, Masikhule is well aware of the dearth of assistance provided to children living here with regards to therapy of any kind. With this in mind, we have developed a range of intervention activities, and now that we have completed the initial screening, Anjo is busy with Occupational Therapy group sessions with the children at identified Centres in order to address development, learning and overcome barriers to learning.

TEACHER ENRICHMENT WORKSHOPS

Of course, for ongoing and sustainable results, we need to capacitate the teachers too - which is where our Teaching Enrichment Workshops (TEW) come in. These have been developed and are presented by Leanne Keet, our Founding Director - herself an OT - to 20 pre-school teachers and principals per annum. These TEW's highlight the challenges the children are facing (based on the assessment results); how they can be assessed and identified in the class; why these skills are important for school readiness and how teaching can be adapted and enhanced to facilitate these barriers to learning.

Topics include:

- Postural control and balance
- Pencil grip and development of scissor cutting
- Basic concepts
- Visual motor integration
- Visual perception skills
- Bilateral integration and Crossing the Midline
- Observations and Report Writing

Attendees also receive educational, developmental and skills-specific resources (games, material, equipment) to ensure the specific learning areas can be addressed and improved.

TEACHER’S EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE LIBRARY
An integral part of implementation is the availability of appropriate resources - which are often short in supply in the ECD Centres we work with. Our Library, now in its third year, is stocked with the resources needed by the teachers. These include theme bags, educational toys and games, posters, fantasy corner items, age-appropriate books in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. There are also three computers, WiFi and a printer available to the members - which currently stand at 20. Teachers access the resources that they need to implement their learning on a regular basis, and are guided by skilled ECD experts.

To ensure that the knowledge gained at the TEW’s is implemented in the optimum manner, teachers attending the TEW’s are visited by our Occupational Therapist at their ECD centres and receive further support and guidance in the use of equipment and resources.

Assessment towards the end of 2019 would advise further roll-out of these steps, and may, in future, include parents of the children receiving therapy to enhance this therapy in the home.

EVENTS

MASIKHULE CAST ON 4 KIDS 2019
We are immensely grateful to Erinvale Hotel and Spa for offering to host the Masikhule Cast On 4 Kids 2019!

We look forward to seeing you there!

HOW CAN YOU HELP!

To break the cycle of poverty we all need to invest in sound foundations - i.e. quality ECD programmes in stimulating, safe environments with the required nutrition and resources.

This is what Masikhule is all about! Our pillars are:

* Training
* Mentoring
* Nutrition
* Capacity Building
* ECD Business Management

Please consider a monthly donation - however big or small - it will help Masikhule remain sustainable.

Contact us on info@masikhule.org for more information.
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Masikhule makes a positive contribution to the upliftment of communities through skills training, mentorship and capacity building in the field of Early Childhood Development.

WAYS TO GIVE

WHAT WE DO TRAINING DONATE

Copyright © [*CURRENT_YEAR*], *LIST:COMPANY*. All rights reserved.

*IFNOT:ARCHIVE_PAGE* *LIST:DESCRIPTION*

Our mailing address is:

*HTML:LIST_ADDRESS_HTML* *END:IF*

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list

*IF:REWARDS* *HTML:REWARDS* *END:IF*