Quality Early Childhood Development for EVERY CHILD

As we all work at adjusting and coping with the unprecedented situation COVID19 has created, Masikhule would like to keep you abreast with our efforts to continue to serve our communities as best we can.

During this challenging time our thoughts are with our beneficiaries, staff, and their families. We have continued to work remotely, accessible via email, cellphone and social media – as well as to hold weekly team meetings via Zoom. Our team has remained flexible, committed and creative throughout, and we plan to continue meeting each challenge with solution-driven determination.

“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”

Socrates
LOCKDOWN - PHASE ONE

When lockdown was announced and the ECD centres were closed, our initial thoughts were to support the principals and their staff as best we could. To this end we formed a WhatsApp group of over 70 principals in order to ensure correct and relevant information pertaining to ECDs was shared to them, and guidance and support could be offered. Our other major concern was the thousands of children attending these facilities who would no longer be receiving a meal at their centres every weekday.

In summary, this article outlines our activities for the first two weeks of lockdown:

LOCKDOWN - PHASE TWO

As lockdown was extended we continued sending daily stimulation activities to the principals (as well as on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) for them to share with their parents as a way to ensure the children were being kept busy and stimulated at home.

In early April we coordinated and assisted with the delivery of 525kg of JAM porridge (each kilogram will feed a child a nutritious breakfast for a month), along with an additional 804 soaps. We have also been involved in the coordination of food for community soup kitchens and on-going supply of soap and hand sanitizers to the community.
It quickly became apparent that there was a huge need for financial relief for principals, their staff and the families from their centres. Our team was fielding daily calls of distress regarding women and children in dire need of food, electricity and hygiene products. Consequently we put out a call for funding for store vouchers and by mid-April we were able, thanks to multiple generous donations received, to purchase 700 vouchers of R250 each, which could be redeemed at Shoprite, Checkers and USave.

We have also shared motivations for parents to pay what they can towards the ECD centres, despite them being closed. This is because they will need to reopen at some stage, parents will need to send their children back to the centres when they return to work, and the principals have overheads to cover. Of great concern is the fact that the vast majority of principals have not been able to pay their staff salaries during this time. Having trained staff is essential in ECD centres, so these educators and carers need to also receive some form of payment in order for them to be available once they can return to work. We stressed that COMMUNICATION IS KEY in this regard - and have definitely observed more support from parents where the principal is actively engaged with their parents.
"Without intervention, 30,000 ECD operators serving the poorest communities run the risk of closure. Up to 175,000 people will be left unemployed and 1.5 million children would be left without early learning services and a safe place of daycare.” But, despite ECD being DSD’s flagship initiative, it does not seem to have funding to keep these centres afloat."

Please take the time to read this excellent article by Robyn Wolfson Voster to get a clear picture on what ECDs are facing:

https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-05-05-part-one-the-challenges-of-hunger-and-education/?fbclid=IwAR2xjthmD38iXCqHOPxwIkDzTkIZXbChN3BAKcMb9phGQSFmE7SF5Rih aZU

Through our partnership with JAM (Joint Aid Management), we will be distributing over 1,800 food parcels to families from 38 ECD centres in need during the week of 11 May (collected and distributed by our trusty principals). For those not on the JAM programme, we offered food and essential needs support to another 600 families from 16 ECD centres in the form of printed vouchers (also collected and distributed by these principals) to be redeemed at Shoprite, Checkers and USave.

Once again, amazingly generous contributions have made this possible, and we are very thankful for these, as well as the extremely helpful team at Shoprite who assisted us through this process.
NEW FOCUS

With Level 4 being implemented without any direction with regards to ECD centres being reopened, we reassessed our activities and have decided that our role as trainers and mentors are now more in need than ever. To this end, we have decided to develop a COVID19 Management Programme and we are now working at putting together all the protocols, training and support an ECD centre will require in order to reopen. This will include relevant First Aid training and resources, child trauma counselling, documentation requirements, protocols for screening and sanitization. We will also include COVID19-specific HR and financial management practices, adapted from our Business Management training.

We will endeavor to support the principals, not only with information and guidance, but also with the basic requirements needed to ensure the ECD centres will be able to open in a state of readiness and compliance. As the overwhelming majority of the community-based ECD centres we work with do not have the finances to implement these requirements, we appeal to you for assistance!

Although the Department of Social Development has yet to issue blanket compliance requirements, we have found from experience that these do not always take the centres in marginalised communities into account and in addition, any equipment provided would not be for unregistered Centres – which is the case in over 80% of the centres we work with.

Therefore, we will be looking for assistance for funding a range of items, which includes:

- 4 000 face shields for 2 – 5 year olds
- 4 000 face masks for 2 – 5 year olds
- 500 face shields and masks for educators
- 75 hand-held thermometers
- Sanitizing stations
- Soap and hand sanitizers
- Cleaning equipment
- Disposable gloves
- 1000 Perspex table dividers.
Thank you for supporting us while we continue to share our daily stimulation activities, offer guidance and support, as well continue to pilot our Curriculum Programme and develop our COVID19 training for the principals and educators in order to ensure they are as prepared as possible to reopen their centres, ensuring the safety of their children, their families and themselves.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT PLEASE!

SnapScan
DONATE SnapScan

We could not have made the interventions mentioned without the amazing donations that have been received - and we are truly grateful to everyone who has contributed in any way towards these. We hope you will continue to support us and encourage others to do so too.

To make instant, secure payments with SnapScan, simply download the app on your smartphone and register to scan.

For deposits:

Beneficiary Name: Masikhule Childcare
Beneficiary Bank: FNB
Branch Code: 200512
Account Number: 62430665812
SWIFT #: FIRNZAJJ
Please email info@masikhule.co.za with your details and proof of payment.

Reminder that we are a registered NPO and PBO and can issue a Section 18A tax certificate if you require.
THANK YOU FROM THE MASIKHULE TEAM - STAY SAFE!

We look forward to a successful 2020 together!

WAYS TO GIVE

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

WHAT WE DO    TRAINING    DONATE

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