

Masikhule has been making a positive contribution to the upliftment of communities through our Early Learning Programs, Skills Training, Mentorship, Nutrition, Early Intervention and Capacity Building in the field of Early Childhood Development since 2005. We are proud to present this Annual Report - showcasing our achievements over the past financial year.



ECD TRAINING



ECD MENTORSHIP



EARLY INTERVENTION



ECD RESOURCES



NUTRITION



ONLINE



REGISTRATION

MESSAGE FROM MASIKHULE'S BOARD CHAIR

I am in the fortunate position to observe the developments at Masikhule from close by and every time I am again amazed at what Masikhule has achieved. Every time I think they won't be able to do any better, they prove me wrong. And when they face challenges, they know how to turn them into opportunities. These achievements are only possible because of the strength of the team. Every woman has her own talents that complement the talents of the other women in the team but one thing they all have in common: their passion and commitment to ensure quality early childhood education, while empowering women in their respective communities.



When I refer to Masikhule, I include not only the formidable women running and working at Masikhule but also the amazing educators who day after day relentlessly run and teach at the crèches and pre-schools. It is through the power of this cooperation and the ongoing efforts to establish and address the needs, that this project grows from strength to strength. Masikhule is true to its name: "we are growing".

Of course, none of this would be possible without the ongoing commitment and involvement of so many enthusiastic supporters and funders. Not only does it ensure the financial sustainability of Masikhule's projects, it also motivates and encourages the whole team.

Thank you. I salute you all.

Greet De Wulf








TRAINING






Our Early Learning Program (ELP) training has been developed over the past 20 years to provide ECD educators in marginalised communities with relevant, practical and stimulating content. Our uniqueness lies in the fact that our programs have been overseen by a team of specialist Occupational Therapists and educationists, with specific input to ensure learning and development is inclusive, remains focused on development through sensory- and perceptual-motor play and sensitive to the needs of all children. Over 75 ECD Centres and more than 2000 young children aged birth to 5 years benefit from our programs, providing them with a sound early learning foundation and the best start in life.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM (ELP) TRAINING

ELP 0 - 3 YEARS

-  16 Training sessions
-  20 Attendees
-  60 Mentorship visits
-  20 Resource | Baby & Toddler kits
-  20 Stationery kits

ELP 3 - 5 YEARS

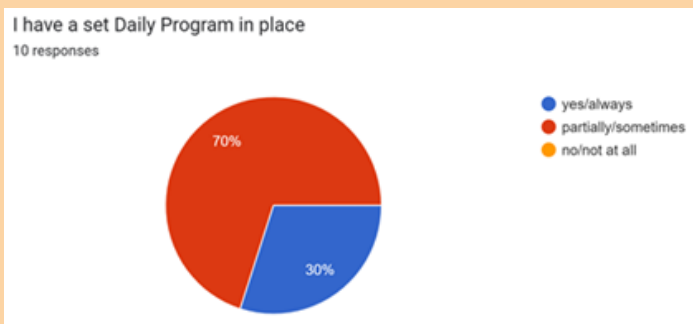
-  20 Training sessions
-  16 Attendees
-  62 Mentorship visits
-  417 Theme bags accessed from Masikhule's Library in addition to 80 ELP theme bags
-  16 Stationery kits

After an initial assessment, we found that 80% of attendees had NO prior formal training and were not implementing a recognised and holistic learning program. Results of post-training assessment showed that 100% of graduates were actively implementing the Masikhule ELP. Educators reported being more confident, professional and felt valued with an increase in their self-esteem and enjoyment of teaching. Holistic child development through purposeful play was observed by the mentors, with the young children actively engaged in well-prepared activities.

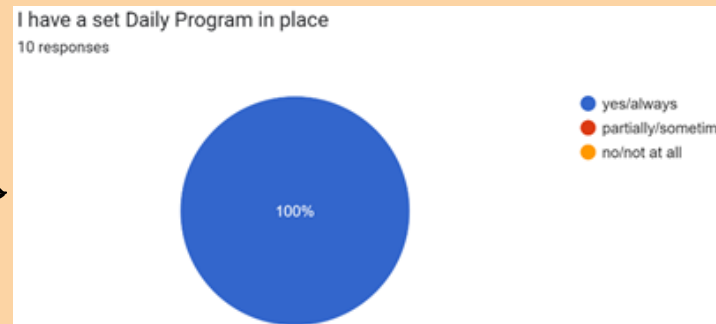
The attendees each received Resource and Stationery Kits to ensure they have the tools and equipment to implement the diverse range of activities included in the ELP.

Regular use of MASKOT (Masikhule's online program) has assisted in scaling the ELP, expanding the impact to include more staff and parents. We are proud of our theme-based ELP and the difference it continues to make in the lives of children, educators, caregivers and parents.

Pre Training Educator Screening



Post Training Educator Screening



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING



21 ECD Centres



21 ECD Principals



7 Training sessions



42 Mentorship visits

Presented in collaboration with GROW and covering:

- personal and professional leadership development
- personal and business financial planning and management
- WCED-registration of an ECD Center
- quality ECD program with practical implementation plans
- labour relations and basic conditions of employment
- management of children with divergent behaviours



FIRST AID TRAINING



55 ECD Centres



59 ECD Educators attended



55 First Aid kits provided



+2000 Children benefitting

Not only is first aid certification a requirement for registration with the Department of Basic Education, but the safety of children in an ECD Centre without trained staff and an up-to-date first aid kit is severely compromised. In August 2023 we held 4 First Aid Training workshops. There are now First Aiders who will be able to assist in their ECD Centres, homes and communities - meaning lives could well be saved.



MENTORSHIP

Community-based ECD Centres are mentored and developed with a goal of them becoming confidently independent and quality centres of learning.

Masikhule mentors those who have trained with them within their own environments to ensure successful implementation of our Early Learning Programs.



60 ECD Centres

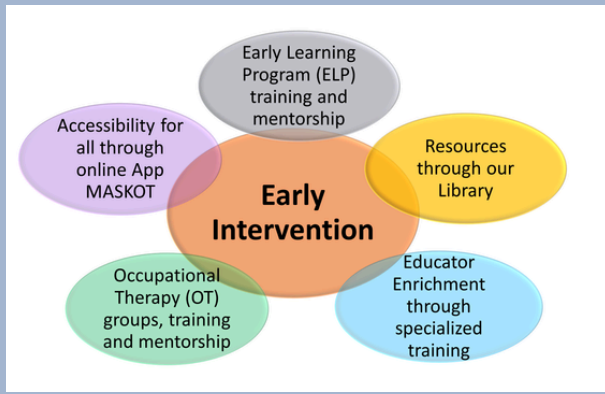


242 Post training mentorship visits





EARLY INTERVENTION



Masikhule's Early Intervention strategy includes training, guiding and supporting ECD practitioners to truly understand development; to gain insight into the link between early development and learning; to know how to recognise delays (without labelling children); and most importantly, to gain knowledge and strategies to improve and develop these areas of delay. Our Occupational Therapy (OT) activities, group therapy, training and mentorship ensures all children are on track.

TEACHER ENRICHMENT WORKSHOPS (TEW)

- 16 ECD Centres
- 20 TEW sessions
- 16 ECD educators
- 78 OT mentorship visits

Our TEWs are incorporated into the ELP training and are based on educators gaining knowledge and insight into child development, how to identify developmental and learning delays and most importantly, how to work on those areas within the preschool setting, ensuring that all learning is inclusive. The ECD practitioners expressed that they have gained much knowledge from the TEWs. They have been able to apply what they have learned and have noticed an improvement with certain children who needed additional input. It has also helped boost their confidence to identify children with learning and developmental delays as well as how to work on specific skills to help the children keep on track with their early learning skills.

Scissor Skills - OT Trick

To help a child keep their elbows tucked in against their bodies, ask them to hold a piece of cardboard under their arm while handling the scissors. The arm should always be relaxed next to their side.

OT for ECD MASIKHULE we are growing!

Copy Designs

Cut strips from a toilet roll inner and give each child 6 - 8 strips. Now let them copy the different designs.

OT for ECD MASIKHULE we are growing!

Learning about Direction
Left, Right, Up and Down.

Encourage children to move their arms in a specific direction.

Then ask them to colour the arrows according to the colour key:

OT for ECD MASIKHULE we are growing!

Toilet Roll Bird

Remember thumb on top

Give each child a toilet roll inner, a pair of scissors and crayons. Encourage them to snip the top of the toilet roll and add eyes and a beak.

OT for ECD MASIKHULE we are growing!

OT GROUPS

- 3 ECD Centres
- 37 Group therapy sessions
- 48 Children directly benefitting

Another 8 ECD Centres received once-off OT group sessions to assist children and educators with specific challenges.

Three ECD Centres received OT group sessions - and aims were set to improve and develop occupational enablers such as muscle strength, muscle tone and postural control, as well as developmental skills such as bilateral hand coordination, visual motor integration, fine motor, and gross motor skills. Language development, independence and emergent literacy and numeracy skills were also developed. At the start of the year, most of the children lacked confidence and needed additional input to get back on track with their early learning skills. There were noticeable improvements in basic concepts, fine motor skills, and gross motor skills. By the end of the year, most of the children could identify and name the appropriate colours, shapes, numbers, and positions in space. There was a great improvement in core muscle strength, which had a positive influence on postural control and shoulder stability. This in turn improved fine motor skills such as pencil grip and control, and cutting. Additionally, the OT group sessions also benefited the ECD practitioners as they had the opportunity to observe and assist the OT and apply what they observed.



SCREENING

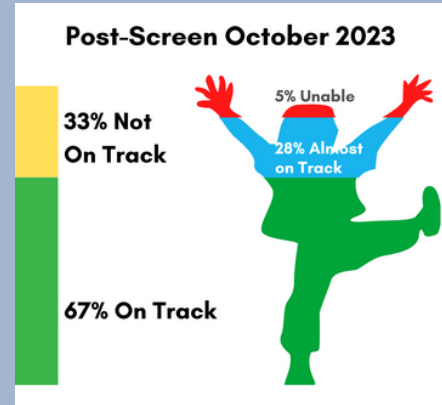
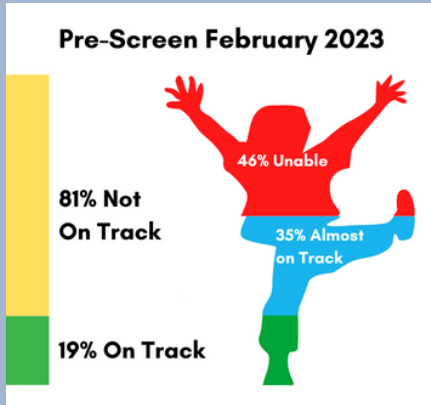


94 children screened in February 2023
 64 children re-screened in October 2023
 (number discrepancy due to absenteeism and relocation)

At the beginning of the year, 43% of children were **not** on track with their early learning skills, 38% were almost there and only 19% were on track.

Most children struggled with gross motor skills, fine motor skills, pencil grip and control, scissor skills, VMI, basic concepts and memory.

At the end of the year, 67% of the children were on track with ALL of these skills. This was the positive combined result of ECD practitioners receiving ECD training, mentorship, access to ECD resources, and TEW and full access to our online program, MASKOT. Additionally, 48 of the children received monthly OT group sessions.



ONLINE - MASKOT

Masikhule's objective of offering practical, relevant and holistic Early Learning Programs in Early Child Development for ALL, has been facilitated by the introduction of MASKOT - Masikhule's open-source online program to ensure anyone, anywhere can benefit from these resources.

MASKOT = Masikhule Keep On Track. It is also being successfully incorporated in our training to ensure a sustainable ELP. Thanks to Beeline for being our trusted IT partner.



176 Active members end Feb 2024

RESOURCES TO ACCESS

Early Learning Program 0 - 3 years	Early Learning Program 3 - 5 years
ELP Resources	Classroom Resources
OT for Development	OT for ECD Videos
Developmental Checklists	Extra Play Ideas



Keep Children On Track

Holistic Online Early Learning Program and Resources for ALL.

MASKOT | Keep Children On Track

Masikhule's free-to-access Early Learning Program and Resources App.
Engage, Share and Learn with MASKOT.

www.masikhule.org

<https://www.beeline.life/organization/maskot/academy>



NUTRITION

Masikhule recognises the value of optimal nutrition on early growth, development and learning. Over 2 000 young children of 6 months to 6 years from over 40 ECD Centres receive nutritious daily meals through Masikhule partnerships.

Read more [here](#)



42 ECD Centres received porridge
29 ECD Centres received pre-cooked frozen meals



36 Deliveries for collection



13 375 Kilograms fortified porridge
267 500 Bowls of porridge served



75 250 Pre-cooked meals provided



1994 Children receiving daily breakfast porridge



17 Wonderbags provided



ECD REGISTRATION

Masikhule is one of 17 Service Providers in the Western Cape tasked by the provincial Department of Basic Education to assist ECD Centers with the process of registration as a partial care facility with the department. Over the past year we have provided this service to 76 ECD Centers in the areas of Somerset West, Sir Lowry's Pass and Chris Nissan Park.

Our services to the ECD community include assisting with registration, liaising with municipal and provincial departments and conducting site and support visits - with more than 100 site visits during the year and over 300 contacts made relating to compliance queries regarding registration.

Over the past year, the Registration Team is pleased to report that 8 ECD Centres received full registration certificates and 4 ECD Centres received conditional registration certificates from the Department of Education.



76 ECD Centres



+100 Site visits





ECD RESOURCES and SPECIAL PROJECTS

Masikhule's Early Learning Resource Library (ELRL) successfully ensures that over 50 ECD Centres from disadvantaged communities have access to a variety of teaching materials and resources, educational toys, games and books needed to implement a stimulating early learning program.

Special Projects are also introduced annually to improve emergent literacy, numeracy and developmental skills e.g. outdoor play equipment projects, reading corner and book projects.

EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE LIBRARY (ELRL)



55 ECD Centre members



629 Deliveries



951 Theme bags issued



4925 Reading books issued



23 945 Total items issued



+2200 Children directly benefitting

The Masikhule Early Learning Resource Library (ELRL) has had a productive and positive year, with a consistent increase in service delivery to our ECD Centres. These figures support Masikhule's belief that the resources provided by our Resource Library are much needed by educators to present a holistic learning program in their classes. The delivery/collection service offered to our members has been a great success. This service ensures that educators can remain at the school during school hours, while still having access to much needed educational resources. The ELRL relies on our amazing team of 8 volunteers to assist with the checking of returned theme bags and quality control.

The Masikhule Library had 191 theme bags available for lending in February 2024. The growing membership and increased demand during the past year urges us to continually develop and create new theme bags for the ELRL.



EARLY LITERACY



52 ECD Centres



15 Reading Corner units



+7000 Books



+2000 Children benefitting

Thanks to funding received Masikhule was able to install 15 reading corners, together with play mats, educational toys, games and a variety of age- and language-appropriate books. We also distributed over 6200 books donated by Book Dash for children to take home and for the ECD Centre's reading corners. The educators, children and parents (and siblings at home) have all benefited from this valuable on-going literacy project.



GROSS MOTOR PLAY



4 ECD Centres



743 Children benefitting

Thank you to our funders for the fun climbing frames installed at ECD Centres in Eerste River, Chris Nissan Park and Strand.



BAG HOOKS



34 ECD Centres



1314 Bag hooks installed

Most of the ECD Centres we work with have very little space in which to work, play and store resources. Thankfully one of our long-term and very special partners was swift to come on board and fund these Bag Hook installations. These bag hooks not only free up space they also help to instill good habits, reduce clutter, and keep bags and their contents in better condition.



FIRE SAFETY - FIRE EXTINGUISHERS, SIGNAGE AND TRAINING



14 ECD Centres



70+ ECD Educators trained



14 Fire extinguishers provided



602 Children benefitting

Every child deserves the right to education in a safe environment and protecting lives is important to us – plus a fire extinguisher is a legislative requirement for ECD centres to be compliant for registration. In June 2023 we supplied centres in need of fire extinguishers which were appropriately mounted along with their required signage. Staff were given basic training on how and when to use these extinguishers and were also given helpful tips on kitchen safety in their centres.

TABLET PROJECT



17 ECD Centres

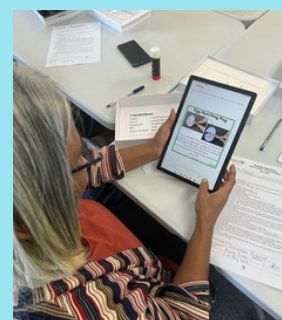


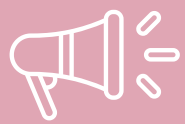
68 ECD Educators



17 Tablets & monthly data

Thanks to our funders for ensuring 17 ECD Centres have access to MASKOT and ECD management programs - available on their own tablets. This has also ensured better planning, improved collaboration between staff and the children ultimately benefiting from our ELP that is freely available.





EVENTS

ECD HUB and BLOOM ECD CONFERENCE

On 15 March the Masikhule registration team held a successful a Masikhule ECD Hub evening for 65 ECD Centres, hosted generously by Somerset House, and organised in response to a need voiced by many principals to have a place where ECD heads and staff can connect, share knowledge, learn from experts in the field and collectively find solutions to the challenges that they face.

Somerset House hosted their BLOOM ECD Conference on 21 October where our founder, Léanne Keet, presented and which was enthusiastically attended by 20 community-based ECD Principals.



CECD ECD CONFERENCE

Our founder, Léanne Keet, presented 2 papers at the CECD Conference in September 2023 on Masikhule’s online early learning program, MASKOT, and the importance of early intervention, and Occupational Therapy in particular, to ensure children are on track.

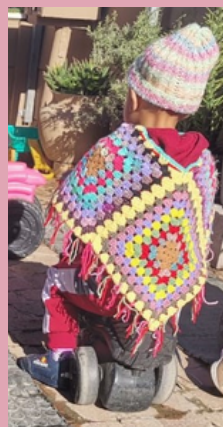
TWO OCEANS MARATHON

In April the intrepid Felicity Gallagher once again took up this mighty challenge to “run with a purpose” to raise funds for Masikhule. Felicity raised over R19 000.00 to install fully-stocked book nooks at four ECD Centres. Our grateful thanks to Felicity and her supporters.



CAST ON 4 KIDS

On Mandela Day 2023 we hosted our annual Cast On 4 Kids and were blown away, once again, by the overwhelming support and generosity in our community. The multiple blankets, beanies, scarves and knitted toys were gratefully received by 20 ECD Centres – thank you for helping us to make a difference.

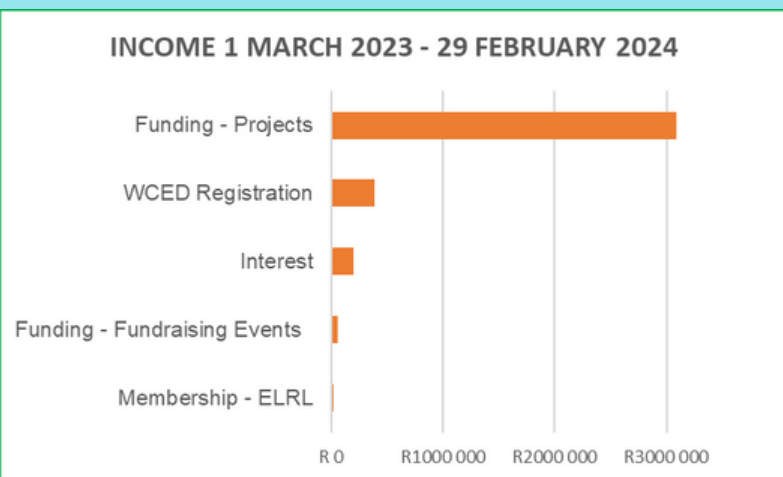
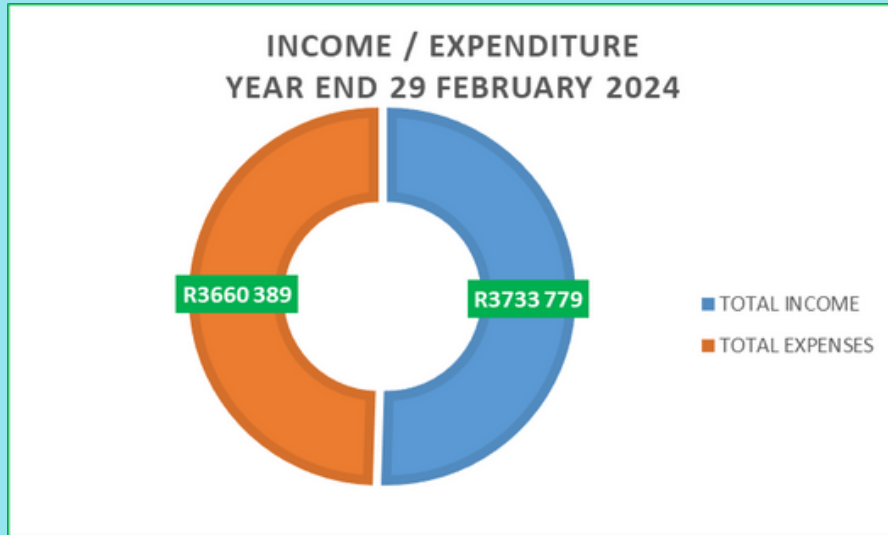




FINANCIAL MATTERS

Thanks to the generous funding received from a wide range of local and international sources - corporate, organisations, companies, trusts and individuals, plus our own fundraising efforts - we have managed to continue with our training, mentoring, nutrition program, early intervention and capacity building pillars of service - as well as our online program MASKOT. We managed to retain a reasonable reserve to provide cover for unexpected changes in income and expenditure to ensure we can implement new strategic priorities should we need to.

Thanks to sufficient funding we have accommodated our growth in activities by renting additional office space for storing training items and resources for distribution, along with our office/training venue and Early Learning Resource Library.



THANK YOU

Being consistent in our focus areas, being true to our core values, building relationships and partnerships based on trust and respect, believing in true empowerment, knowing we can make a difference and regarding challenges as opportunities continues to guide us as an organisation and ensures our success.

We cannot do this alone and so it is with the deepest sense of gratitude to our funders, our monthly donors, supporters, volunteers and beneficiaries for continuing on this journey with us. Thank you to the dedicated Masikhule staff, our Advisory Board, the ECD community we serve and all those who share our vision and goals for the future.

With gratitude, Léanne Keet (Founding Director)



“Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child’s soul.”

Friedrich Froebel

To stay in touch and support our efforts:

