



Inclusive Education WESTERN CAPE



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YEAR END MESSAGE FROM IEWC

Dear Members and Colleagues

2013 has been an incredibly exciting and challenging year for IEWC. We are excited by the fact that many of our funders are recognising the importance of the work we do. They are seeing the value of skilling teachers to manage the diversity of learning needs in their classes as a crucial way to improve learning outcomes. The importance of early identification of barriers to learning and early intervention strategies has also been of particular relevance to the Western Cape Department of Social Development and we have been funded to train over 750 ECD Practitioners in inclusive practice. The increasing demand for our work has been a challenge for us in terms of capacity and we are delighted to have expanded our administration and facilitation staff.

We have also increased our focus on advocacy for the effective implementation of inclusive education in South Africa and the Western Cape in particular. We have worked on submissions on a number of documents and policies and remain on the steering committee of

the Right to Education for Children with Disabilities campaign.

Whilst we acknowledge the many systemic and other barriers to realising a fully inclusive education system in South Africa we are greatly encouraged by the many educators and schools who have made it their mission to ensure each child is included and supported to participate in learning opportunities in ordinary public schools and pre-schools.

We would like to thank all of our members and the colleagues who share in our passion for inclusion for all of your efforts and support in 2013. We wish you all a very blessed and peaceful festive season and we look forward to working with you in the new year to ensure each precious child is given the opportunity to reach their full potential in our education system.

Blessings

Robyn



IEWC staff at Kirstenbosch

TALKING ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL REPORT

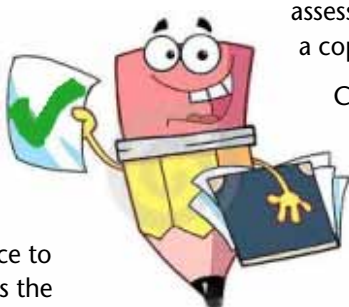
Children who struggle with formal learning often end the year with a school report that focuses on the negative aspects of their performance. The codes 1–4 are used to indicate to what extent the child has achieved the required level of the grade they are currently placed into. The WCED Report Card format does not give space to reflect progress at a lower grade level – unless the teacher refers to this in the short remarks section.

Whilst it is important to have an honest assessment of how a child is performing in relation to his or her age group, we often urge teachers to try to reflect positive aspects of learning in order to avoid a child being regularly faced with a sense of failure. The child who regularly receives a report card of code 1's and 2's can easily feel discouraged, as can his or her parents who get the impression that nothing is being achieved.

When reading your child's report, try not to convey anger or disappointment about low grades. Rather make a note to speak to the teacher as soon as an opportunity arises. Take time to chat with your child about how the term or year has been for them – what they have enjoyed and what has been especially difficult. Explain that everyone is good at some things and not at others and that the challenge is to discover what are his or her particular strengths and interests.

If it has been recommended that your child repeat a grade, try to emphasise that this is an opportunity to better grasp some of the things they have learnt during the year, or to give them more time to work at some aspect of learning that has been difficult. It is not so easy to see friends moving on to the next grade whilst they stay back, and extra support might be needed to prevent a dip in self-esteem or a loss of heart.

Remember to note down anything new you have noticed about your child's learning, and if he or she has had any



assessment or therapy, be sure to give the school a copy of this report to put onto his/her profile.

Consider attending one of IEWC's "Passport to Learning" workshops to see how you can build a clearer picture of your child's learning journey and form a proactive partnership with their teachers.

Getting to know you ...

The school holidays can provide an opportunity for a different kind of "homework"!

We all learn in different ways, have different interests and talents, and the school holidays can provide a good opportunity to help your child learn more about his or hers.

Not only do we have different learning styles and ways of learning, but we also have different kinds of "intelligences". The more we know about how a child learns and what interests him or her, the more we can know and develop his /her strengths. This is especially important for children who experience difficulties in school or who have a disability of some kind.

Different "intelligences" relate to our ability to use words and numbers, but also music, movement, art, how well we relate to people or the natural world. The idea of multiple intelligences was developed largely by Howard Gardner and you can learn more about this on various websites – or by paying a visit to our Resource Centre.

What are some of the different ways of learning?

- By listening ...
- By touching & feeling ...
- By doing ...
- By seeing ...

... and different ways of approaching learning?

- Step by step – by thinking through ...
- Observing & analysing ...
- Open-mindedly – prepared to try anything once ...
- Practically – down-to earth ...
- Most of all ... remember that children learn through play, be it on a beach, in the forest or at home ...

Members of the IEWC team have put together some ideas of how to help children have fun and learn at the same time ...

– Caroline Taylor



SCHOOL AWARDS: A time for celebration or an experience of exclusion?

A parent at a southern suburbs primary school shared their view.

I am in very strong agreement that the system of recognizing or acknowledging most of the kids in a class but leaving out just a few is absolutely wrong. This is not the message a school should be sending to kids ... "you were not good enough" because essentially that's what this kind of system is saying. Added to that, 99% of the kids not being recognized are children of colour. I have *never* been one for tokenism or free riding, but I am a *very strong advocate* of empowering kids especially because the message you send them at this vulnerable stage is one they take for life.

For example, I was the township overweight child at the back of the class laughed at and teased by everybody, until a mentor took me under his wing and told me I could be someone. He put me into a sports program, a year later I became the captain of my junior school rugby team, two years after that after writing over 50 letters to one of the most elite private schools I got a scholarship and then another one at UCT after high school all because one person took the time to acknowledge me and encourage me. Please understand that I say this not to parade or toot my own horn in any way but just show what encouragement can do to literally alter a destiny.

Every child has something to give. It is up to us as parents and educators to find out that one thing that child is good at and encourage and acknowledge them. Who knows how bright that flame will burn in the future? At the last school

that my kids attended in Los Angeles, the teacher took the time to acknowledge just one thing in each child in front of their peers and school. I cannot even explain how bright those faces shone when that encouragement came. Even the so called "difficult kids" wanted that acknowledgment and started rising to what their mentors believed they could become. The school had this amazing phrase, "It's not how smart you are, it's how you are smart!" Every kid is SMART at something. So the kid who might not be the mathematics genius was recognized for his sporting, or whatever his talents were. Train a child in the way they should go and when they are old they will return to it. Recognise each for *their* talents not just the talents we think are appropriate.

We have an opportunity to turn lives around by our words and actions. I encourage you very strongly to not let just a few kids sit their watching their peers being told they are amazing while they feel like losers. The ultimate losers become us as educators and parents because we failed to recognize these little ones for what *their unique callings* were. We cannot put one cookie cutter standard of what should and should not be acknowledged. Every child has something they are good at that should be recognized before their peers. That could be the very spark that lights a fire inside of them to live up to that acknowledgement.

Here's to a very colourful and bright future that recognises and celebrates the power of our diversity as the strength and backbone of this amazing country!

Opinion ... WCED's Systemic Evaluation

A number of schools in the South Metropole have raised with us their concerns regarding the manner in which the Provincial Systemic Evaluation is conducted – and its negative impact on their efforts to meaningfully include and evaluate learners in a supportive way.

This year's Evaluation seems to have taken place in the midst of some confusion about whether learners whose needs are being specifically accommodated may be exempted or not – although applications via the school psychologists had been made and acknowledged.

Learners who had been steadily progressing as a result of a supportive process in school suddenly found themselves subjected to the stresses of very formal test conditions overseen by external invigilators, and required to sit through 2 tests in one morning. The same learners had received concessions during the ANAs but were not granted any in the Systemic Evaluation process. The rationale behind this was not clear.

Educators understand the need to gain insight into the levels of literacy and numeracy, but regard this evaluation process in

stark contrast to the ANAs which is conducted by the teachers themselves and providing results that can inform their lesson planning and assist with understanding whether and to what degree a child needs extra support or not.

They feel that the Systemic Evaluation not only results in vulnerable learners feeling extremely stressed but produces a skewed measurement of a school's performance – based merely on the ability of the children to perform under pressure rather than the effort made to support and uplift their level of learning.

These concerns have been expressed by the very schools that were acknowledged by Minister Grant at our recent Inclusive Teaching recognition event – the same schools that have participated in various Inclusion Indabas organised by both the WCED Head Office, and their own District. As a result they have been informed that adapted assessment is no longer acceptable and that White Paper 6 is "not policy". Mixed messages indeed!

We are awaiting a response to these concerns, and have asked for an opportunity to discuss the matter in more depth with WCED officials.

– CT

How do you prepare a child for a new schooling environment?

There's a big difference between being school-ready and being ready for school. School-readiness covers whether a child has the capabilities to work within the environment we choose for that child, which says little about the child's inherent capabilities, and a lot about whether he can mould himself sufficiently enough to work within a chosen environment. This is not to say the environment is bad, but more adaptation happens from the child's side than the environment's.



Angela Hutchison

But being ready for school, whether pre-primary, junior or senior school, or even a new company later on, is much more about the anxieties that go with having to enter and adapt to a new environment. Pre-primary is a bit of an unknown and children either go happily, oblivious to what they will be facing, or struggle to separate, or maybe it's the parents who struggle to separate.

But beyond that first point, children realise there are expectations of them; they realise people will make judgements about them; they are careful about the images they portray about themselves. They are constantly in a position where they balance fitting in, even blending in, with standing out and being unique.

How do parents prepare children for any environment they enter? Given we have no control over the entire experience. And how do teachers handle kids in the environment? Even if we choose that environment, it is impossible for it to meet our children's needs 100%. So how do we make sure our children cope inside it, without compromising who they fundamentally are?

The rules are simple. People can handle just about anything if a couple of key things are in place before they set out on a new journey. But we should start this sooner, rather than later.

- Firstly, **total acceptance** for who the child is. Not who we think he should be or wish she was like. Just who the child is. And ideally from at least one adult in the world, preferably both parents and an outside person, but really, one adult person who sees the child for who he is. And provides that acceptance through empathy and acknowledgement and empowerment and not constantly wanting to provide solutions to the child or suggestions about being different to who she is in order to make the environment work. When Warren Buffet, the financial guru, was asked about the best advice he ever got, he turned the question round to say that his father had accepted him fully. And that was the key to his success. No self-doubt grown from

seeds planted by others.

- **Support for his struggles.** There is a very big difference between supporting a child through the pain and struggle of the school system and just finding solutions for the child constantly or defending the environment because it was chosen. Any environment is going to come with challenges. When a child feels supported through tough times, without the parent always stepping in to correct or change the situation or moan at someone, rather empowering the child to find solutions within the constraints, then the child can trust herself. Defending the environment sends a strong message to the child that she is wrong, when no environment is going to be a perfect fit. It's okay to empathise, without attacking the environment either. Just being accepting of the lack of fit in certain areas. There may come a time when the fit is just so bad, you make a change, and that is okay too. But hopefully not prematurely or without consideration.
- **Respect for her point of view.** Listening to what children say and mean is an essential part of figuring out what is working and what isn't. Often parents take issues personally, they push buttons within the parents and the child barely notices. Keeping a keen eye on where the child is actually at, is way more important than how the parent experiences the environment.
- **Encouragement.** People often think encouragement is about cheering from the sidelines without any content. Saying things like "you'll be fine, there's nothing to worry about" and other phrases that are said to make people feel better. The truth is that these statements make people feel worse. They completely disregard a child's emotional landscape and basically may as well say – whatever you are feeling is wrong, you must just feel they way I say you should feel and then everything will be okay. Encouragement is about truly recognising the things a child does that make the child feel good and wonderful about himself. It is a greater skill. That requires more thought than batting away concerns with flippant statements.

If I were to summarise this, I would say it is better to spend time helping a child manage the environment he is in, working to the pros, managing the cons, understanding the benefits and the pitfalls, rather than blaming the child or the environment you have chosen for any issues that crop up.

– Angela Hutchison
Family Counsellor

A MOM'S STORY OF PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

Tess Salusbury

Tess is the mother of 4 year old Justin who was born with cerebral palsy, mild spastic diplegia, and who cannot yet walk independently. This year Justin has been attending a mainstream playschool. He has been accepted into the nursery class of an independent school in Cape Town for next year. It is their first experience of having a student with cerebral palsy. Tess writes ...

I can tell you what I think now about readying everyone for school, although in a year's time I might have a different opinion. Hindsight is 20/20 and I am sure to learn all the things I wish I *had* done soon enough. But here are a few of the things I have found useful so far:

- Be POSITIVE towards the school. It is easy for parents of special needs kids to feel brittle and defensive – anticipating rejection. It is also easy to get demanding upfront – you do have rights, but laying it out there from the start makes you someone the school fears not someone they feel will be easy to work *with*. Mostly people who have gone into education want to make a difference and if you approach them by asking for their help, and inspiring them with the difference that they can make they will take your issues on with enthusiasm. There are many teachers who relish the chance to be creative, reinvent how things work and learn something new. Try and appeal to this side of them.
- Get everyone talking to everyone else BEFORE the problems start. I don't believe that this process is ever going to be an easy one. If you can build an interactive team with pre-planned avenues for dealing with issues as they come up, it (hopefully) means less unnecessary conflict. We had discussions with the teacher, special needs coordinator and head of pre-primary, and they met with Justin's nursery school teacher and therapists repeatedly over the past couple months.
- Approach the school in good time. We approached them a year in advance WITH the specialist reports so they could read them and think at leisure. When it was time for admissions, we sat down together to discuss expectations on both sides, plus any conditions on their part. They asked for a full-time

facilitator (not always possible I know) and wanted more regular than usual follow-ups.

- Plan ahead and assess what can be done in terms of preparation. The physiotherapist and OT helped us better understand Justin's needs and how we could prepare him. This involved a visit to his playschool to see him in the school environment, as well as taking him to visit his new school (quite informally) and letting him become familiar with playground, library and the classroom that will be his next year. This helped everyone get to know him.
- Offer training for the staff. In our case with a specific focus on CP. (IEWC can advise on this!)
- Discuss the role & responsibilities of the facilitator in the classroom (vis-a-vis the specific school and teacher). And most importantly – discuss communication channels.

Still on my to-do list is to communicate with the other parents in the class when we arrive next year. Another mom I know, who has a son with CP, said she stood up at the parents meeting and introduced herself and explained their situation. I was thinking maybe of writing a letter. I'd like to explain a few things like:

1. What Justin's actual problem is (for parents who are too afraid to ask).
2. Why he has a facilitator (she is there not just to help him, but also to make sure he doesn't take too much attention away from their own child) and what her qualifications are – since she will be interacting with their children as well.
4. How I would like to be approached on this issue. I want to encourage them to ask me questions if they have any – to know I am not going to be bristly with them.
5. What we tell Justin about his disability – in case their kids ask them, and they are not sure how to explain it without offending us.

As far as preparing Justin himself goes – I must be honest – apart from making sure he knows the school and the teachers, it has been about chiselling away encouraging him to participate, to engage, to try ... and with remarkable success!



Justin, preparing for school

More on transitions – “He really struggled to settle in”

In our June newsletter we discussed the tears and anxiety of a little Grade 1 girl, and others who struggled with the transition to big school. Many big boys and girls cannot cry but find the transition from Foundation phase to Intermediate and Senior phases equally difficult and even more so the transition to High School. How can teachers and parents support these transitions? How can we assist the children to overcome the transition barriers?

Let us look at Trevor's transition to Intermediate phase. He did fairly well in Foundation Phase. His literacy skills developed above average but he tended to be a slow reader and writer. His teacher, Sheila, always made sure that he had enough time to finish his tasks because he became nervous and confused if pushed to finish. His teacher was worried that he might find the faster pace difficult in Grade 4 but she felt that she could not bother the teacher with all her concerns. Trevor really struggled in the new class and developed tummy or head aches in the morning before school. On his better days he went to school courageously but often came home dejected and with lots of work to complete. Trevor's parents contacted Sheila. They discussed the situation and Sheila realised that she had made a serious mistake by not alerting the Intermediate Phase teacher. She undertook to do this but also opened up the discussion on how one could prepare children and their families for smoother transmissions. From this discussion a number of suggestions came that might be worth following up:

- Grade 3 or Grade 7 teachers can use a standardised form to alert the new Grade or Home-room teacher about specific challenges, e.g. time management, reading or writing barriers, peer rejection, etc. If possible arrange a meeting with the new teacher and share successful strategies to address the barriers.

- Alert senior teachers If there are conditions at home that need to be taken into consideration, e.g. poverty, strife, alcohol or drug abuse.
- New teachers must make sure that they have access to the child's learner profile and other important documents. Check for health conditions, e.g. frequent ear problems which might have caused hearing deficiencies. Check for intervention reports.
- Parents and or teachers must make time to chat to learners about the new phase or school, academic insecurity, social adjustment challenges, fears for bullying etc.
- Use a questionnaire that might help him to verbalise positive and negative feelings about the transition, e.g. I AM NERVOUS ABOUT ..., SOME THINGS I WILL MISS ARE ..., I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO ...
- Teachers in the new phase (Grade 4 and 8) can play a significant role once they know and understand the learner better. Sometimes it helps to observe the child's social activities and to support him to make new friends. Joining in extra curricular activities might help him to meet different friends and to feel more at home.
- Consider counselling if you suspect that the learner is really concerned about the transition or not coping well and or struggle to adjust for a long period.
- Support learners in writing up their own profiles to draw their attention to and develop their confidence in expressing themselves.

– Laetitia Brummer

Please read “How do you prepare a child for a new schooling environment” in this edition



HOLIDAY FUN ACTIVITIES

Having quality family time doesn't have to cost a lot – with Cape Town's lovely beaches and parks, but if you are looking for some fresh ideas, have a look at www.capetownkids.co.za and www.capetownmagazine.com

Planet Kids

Wherry Road, Muizenberg

Planet Kids will be open every day during the school holidays. All children are welcome, including children with disabilities.

Details: www.planetkids.co.za or 021 788 3070



The Giraffe House Wildlife Awareness Centre

c/o R304 (towards Stellenbosch) and R101 (towards Paarl)

This is a relatively new centre which aims to provide easy access to some of our wonderful wildlife and bird species. Entrance Fee: Adults R 45.00 and Children (2–15yrs) R 25.00

Details: 021 884 4506 or www.giraffehouse.co.za

Green Point Promenade & Green Point Park

Perfect for a family outing with scooters, bikes and picnic baskets.

Details: 021 430 7399 (Entry free)

World of Birds Sanctuary

Valley Road, Hout Bay

Children can see and interact with the animals they only see in text books in school! It is wheel chair accessible and when the kids get tired there are pushcarts around the sanctuary to hop on.

Details: 021 790 2730, info@worldofbirds.org.za

The Clay Café

Old Oakhurst Dairy Farm, Main Road, Hout Bay
Pottery painting.

Details: 021 790 3318 www.claycafe.co.za

Cape Town Science Centre (CTSC)

370B Main Road, Observatory

A world of discovery under one roof! For the kids that love science or are just willing to do something fun and different. Entry: From R 38.00

Details: 021 300 3200, www.ctsc.org.za

Strawberry Picking

This is a great family fun activity and for the little ones excited about starting school this can be a great counting exercise. Below are our recommendations.

Polkadraai Strawberry Farm

Stellenbosch Arterial Road between Stellenbosch and Kuilsriver, Details: 9am – 4pm daily, 021 881 3303

Mooiberge Strawberry Farm

R44 Stellenbosch, Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays: 9:30am – 4pm, 021 881 3222

Mountain Breeze Farm Stall & Resort

Opening Hours: 9am – 4:30pm daily on R44 between Stellenbosch and Somerset West

Details: 021 880 1700

ENJOY!!!!

– Blessing Tsiga and Natalie Watlington



You can also enjoy the V&A Waterfront, a steam train to Simonstown or the toy train in Greenpoint

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE: TERM 1 (2014)

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION & DURATION	DATE, VENUE & TIME
EDUCATOR WORKSHOPS		
Understanding & managing ADHD in the classroom (Educators)	An introduction to some of the many varied tools available to educators to assist them in effectively teaching children with ADHD. 1 x 2 hour session / R120 non-members R100 members	4.02.14: Bellville 5.02.14: Somerset West 6.02.14: Rondebosch 2.30-4.30pm
Understanding Inclusion and identifying barriers to Learning (Educators)	- An introduction to Inclusive Education in the South African context - Understanding barriers to learning - Identifying barriers to learning by using the Word Picture 1 x 2 hour session / R120 non-members R100 members	11.02.14: Bellville 12.02.14: Somerset West 13.02.14: Rondebosch 2.30-4.30pm
Bullying: Developing a Bullying strategy as a whole school (Educators)	- Involving the learners, parents, educators and community in managing bullying - Establishing a bullying policy - Understanding bullying behaviour 1 x 2 hour session / R120 non-members R100 members	18.02.14: Bellville 19.02.14: Somerset West 20.02.14: Rondebosch 2.30-4.30pm
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	- An introduction to UDL - The benefits of planning for diversity - Practical lesson & assessment planning incorporating UDL principles 2 x 2 hour sessions / R120 non-members R100 members per session	25.02.14: Bellville (1) 26.02.14: Somerset West (1) 27.02.14: Rondebosch (1) 4.03.14: Bellville (2) 5.03.14: Somerset West (2) 6.03.14: Rondebosch (2) 2.30-4.30pm
ECD PRACTITIONERS / GRADE R & 1 EDUCATORS		
Ladders for learning in ECD (Grade R Educators / ECD Practitioners)	Practical session to develop the skills to ladder activities so that each child can access learning starting at the level they have already mastered. 1 x 3 hour session / R150 non-members R120 members	12.02.14: Bellville 13.02.14: Somerset West 14.02.14: Rondebosch 1.30-4.30pm
Early identification of barriers to learning (Grade R Educators / ECD Practitioners)	Introducing a simple tool to identify early the real barrier to learning a child may be experiencing. Discussing ways to ensure information does not get lost when a child transitions to a new school or phase. 1 x 2 hour sessions / R120 non-members R100 members	12.03.14: Bellville 13.03.14: Somerset West 14.03.14: Rondebosch 2.00-4.00pm
PARENT WORKSHOPS		
Passport to learning (Parents)	- Becoming an active partner in your child's learning - This interactive workshop helps you to gather information in an easy and user-friendly way resulting in a "passport to learning" for your own child 1 x 2 hour session / R80 non-members R50 members	22.02.14: Bellville 08.02.14: Somerset West 01.03.14: Rondebosch 10am-12noon
SERVICE-PROVIDERS / PROFESSIONALS / NGOs		
Negotiating the Education System - Accessing Support for Vulnerable Learners (NGOs and service-providers working with children and families - across Western Cape)	- The current structures of school provision in the W Cape - The rights and responsibilities of parents - Ways in which service-providers can guide and assist families in accessing support for their child 1 x 3 hour session / R150 non-members R120 members	12.2.14: Rondebosch 9am-12noon

Contact us to book your place on: Tel: 021 762-6664 Fax: 021 762-2254 Email: info@included.org.za Website: www.included.org.za

A minimum of 20 participants are required to run a workshop. Discounted rate for members. On-site support following training is recommended.

Workshops can be tailored to meet your specific training needs.



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Supporting diversity in education