



JULY 2016

Newsletter



Inclusive
Education
SOUTH AFRICA

In This Issue:

From the Director's Desk.....	2
Mandela Day 2016.....	3
The Benefits of Attending an ECD Centre.....	4
Making a Difference.....	6
Term 3 – Setting goals for your child for the second half of the year, and beyond!.....	7
Support at schools.....	8
Progression and Promotion.....	9
PLAY – The Conference (12–14 July 2016)	10
The start of EPWP 2016!.....	11

Contact Us

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From the Director's Desk

The third term of the school year marks the time for teachers to consider those children who may be possible candidates for repetition or progression. There is much debate about this issue, with policy not being understood and support for learners and their parents not adequately provided.

Whilst we believe there is merit in a learner who will not benefit from repeating a year moving forward with his peers, what is absolutely critical is that he/she moves to the next grade **with support**. The reality for many learners is that they are functioning below grade level and may have a level of learning potential lower than that of their peers. This is especially true of learners experiencing cognitive barriers to learning. Whilst some learners benefit from another year in the grade to "catch up" to their peers, some do not. For these learners progression into a higher grade with friends and peers of similar ages is important for social development. However these learners must be supported to learn at the level at which they are accessing the curriculum. Inflexible teaching and assessment at the higher grade level only frustrates learners and widens learning gaps.

Progression without support has irreversible and lifelong consequences for learners and for the South African economy. Over 66% of our learners drop out without having completed Grade 12. Many of these learners have struggled academically at school and have been progressed **without** support throughout their school career. When it becomes apparent that they will not complete Grade 12 and are not even able to pass Grade 9 drop out or push out from school is the only offered option.

Implementation of the promotion and progression policy has created significant challenges for both schools and parents. It becomes apparent that teachers often view progression itself as being the problem, whereas the real issue lies with the fact that support is not given to progressed learners. The alternative to progression would be keeping learners indefinitely in a grade. This affects self esteem, social development and behaviour and is not appropriate.

We have dedicated this newsletter to the issue of promotion and progression and trust that you will find the articles to be both beneficial and informative. We would also welcome your feedback and comments.

**Inclusive
Education**
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INFORMATION & SUPPORT
HELPLINE



Did you know...?

IESA's Resource Centre operates a helpline that responds to a wide range of enquiries from parents, teachers, and other professionals regarding support for learners who have special needs or are experiencing barriers to learning.

Referrals reach us via hospital clinics, social workers and other service-providers, as well as directly from parents or teachers. Our aim is to encourage and enable parents to engage as informed and active participants in their child's schooling, as well as to mobilise and assist teachers to provide meaningful support to the learners in their care.

We are here to assist you with information and advice about inclusive education policies, the schooling system and sources of support to children and to the adults responsible for their learning and care.

At times, further support is needed in the form of accompaniment or mediation on behalf of a parent or family and their child, either at school or an Educare Centre. This may result in the drawing up of an Individual Support Plan to guide the accommodation of learning and other needs within the school programme, in line with the Department of Education's Inclusive Education policy.

Please contact us regarding any queries you may have. We would be happy to assist you.

Caroline Taylor & Natalie Watlington

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Director,
Robyn Beere

Mandela Day 2016

Since the start of July, most organisations have been planning and thinking of exciting initiatives in order to celebrate Mandela Day by pledging 67 minutes of their time. Madiba quotes and numerous messages he deemed important were posted all over Facebook and other social media platforms.

For us at IESA, it gave us the opportunity to focus on what was important to us and so we chose to share a few personal stories from our own staff members as the month progressed. It was important that our clients realised that, for some of us, the journey towards inclusion has been a personal one. As an organisation we are very proud of the fact that we not only 'talk the talk', but 'walk the walk' as well.



Personal journeys and stories are what make us as a country so diverse. Being based in the heart of Wynberg, a bustling and diverse community, the reality is that so many people pass by our offices on a daily basis, each with their own story, often involving some experience of exclusion. This was important to us and we therefore felt that in celebrating this Mandela Day, we wanted to meet with our "fellow man" and therefore, as a sign of goodwill, our sixty seven minutes had to demonstrate that they mattered.

And so, on the 18th July at 09:00 am, our team rallied together and with some donations from the staff and the organisation, we handed out warm cups of coffee, doughnuts, muffins and biscuits to passers-by. This gesture was received extremely well. A few pedestrians stopped to chat and we were able to hear



their stories and share a bit about the work we do. It was the first year that the whole team embarked on an initiative together and most certainly it has been the most exciting and worthwhile cause thus far.

A well-known quote of Mandela says, "Sometimes, it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom."

In order for a generation to be great, we must restore and highlight their sense of dignity. This was our purpose for Mandela Day – to show our community by our small gesture that indeed they were worthy of love, care and respect.



Written by,
Natalie Watlington

The benefits of attending an ECD centre

According to 2011 SA Statistics research has shown that only 64% of 0–4 year olds take part in ECD activities. Furthermore, only 35% of the 64% attend an ECD facility.

What is happening to the other 36%? How are these children going to catch up for lost time? What if some of these children are ones that are living with a disability or another barrier to learning?

Early childhood development is a critical stage of a child's development. Unfortunately in SA the 0–4 year olds are not yet an educational priority. Emphasis is on grade R, that is, children that are turning 6 years old. Failing to prepare the child prior to grade R has a major impact on his ability to process new knowledge/ skills effectively in the years to come.

Early exposure to stimulation will enhance holistic development and ensure the identification of challenging areas of development in the child at a very young age. This makes the road to support a longer and more effective one. From birth the human mind is driven by the need to enquire. The new-born will respond to noise, cry when experiencing discomfort etc. It is essential to continue the process of stimulation by making sure that 0–4 year olds interact with peers, learn through play, enjoy cognitive stimulation, receive well-balanced nutrition and develop muscles well through physical activity.

Just imagine keeping a child isolated. Some children are facing this exclusion because of socio-economic, intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. The state, at District Office level, could have a better database and reporting system in place so that it can be picked up when parents /guardians fail to register a child at least at the age of 2 years. The majority of these children should then be potty-trained and starting to be able to play in groups. Stimulation can be offered at home and at an ECD facility. I am of the opinion that every child should attend either a playgroup or a crèche. Financial need should not be the reason for withholding the child. Unemployed citizens' children could gain access via an alternative payment strategy or parents/guardians could make their services and time available. This does not mean that there will be free services for some families and in this way self-respect, dignity and self-worth will not be negatively impacted.

It should be part of Children's Act that all ECD facilities should accept all 0–4 year olds, without discrimination. This will then reduce the number of young children that are not included in ECD programmes. In this way the subsidies and nutritional feeding schemes reach the correct target group. For these strategies to work the effective functioning of local authorities is of utmost importance.

When all young children are rightfully included in ECD centres, the whole family benefits. If our families are functioning better, our communities will become better and more productive environments. When one part of society functions well this has a ripple effect on the greater society.

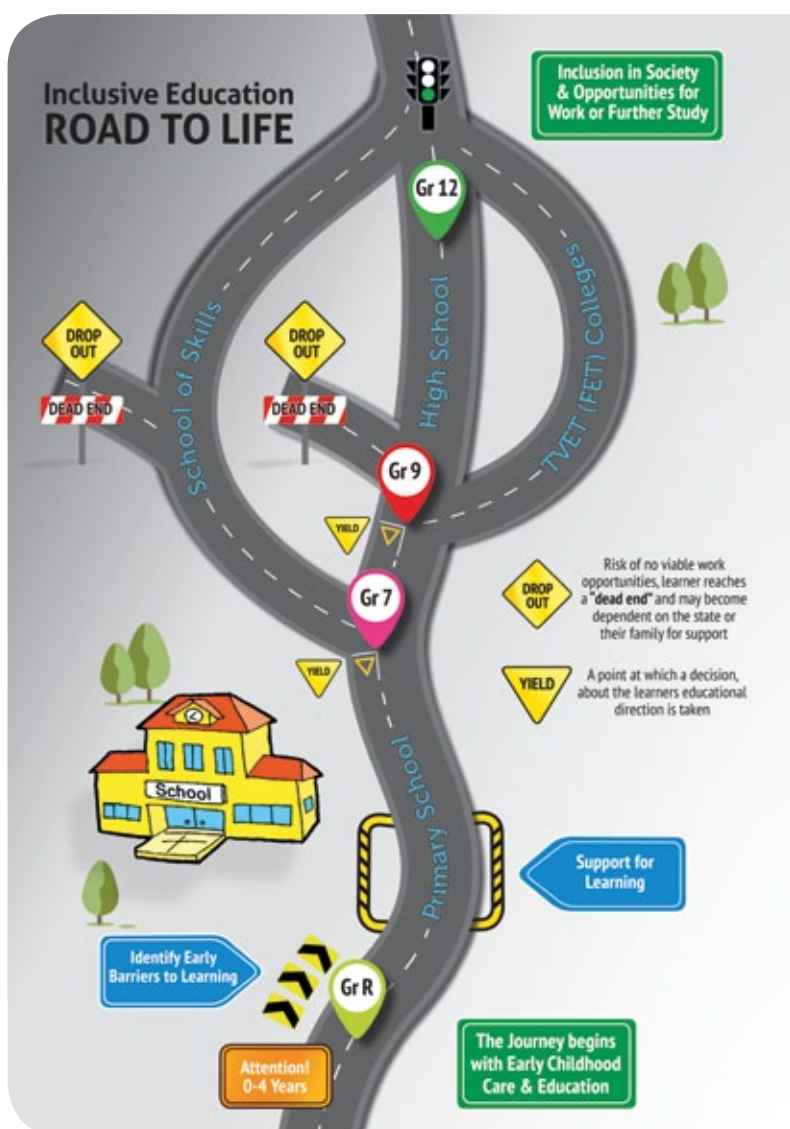
In 1998 at Palmtree Educare a grandmother, Mrs. Hermanus, came to enquire about registration for her grandson, Aiden.

At first glance, Aiden looked well dressed and cared for. A boy with a friendly smile. Mrs. Hermanus was fortunately honest when she completed the registration form. From the information it was clear that Aiden experienced disabilities. I enquired about his habits, and what were the do's and don'ts. Aiden was introduced to the group and I explained to them that Aiden wants to come and play and learn new words. He attended Red Cross Children's hospital for speech therapy. I had to send them his activities/work done and a short report on progress or concerns in class. This continued for two years. He greatly improved his vocabulary at his level of ability and learned to adapt socially to his new classmates. He enjoyed art and the jungle gym was a hot favorite. Aiden graduated and attended Vanguard Primary for grade R. The school referred him to Mary Harding Special School. Aiden is turning 18 years old and will receive a senior certificate at the end of this year, 2016.

Aiden is a smart, independent young man who was granted an opportunity to develop at his own, unique pace and with the correct support that he needed. He was not judged. He was accepted and could enjoy the fun and laughter while learning through play. To his fellow classmates, he was no different from them. Children are cool. They don't

have issues, attitudes or prejudice in the ways that we as adults do. They go with the flow!

Aiden's mom could go to work instead of staying at home, hiding him away. The family no longer dealt with the pressure of him not attending crèche. Including him in the early stages of his developmental years was a great advantage. Aiden lives a normal independent life. He prefers to travel on public taxi to Mary Harding School because he does not want to be labelled as someone who needs to go on special transport.



Written by,
Ashleen Marcus

Making a Difference

Revised and Enlarged: 2015 PDT Training Manual

We are delighted to announce that our new revised Persona Doll Manual is hot off the press. The new 90 page manual has a fresh new look in full colour. The content and information will be familiar to those who have worked with the old manual. We have extended and updated the contents in line with current thinking and terminology. The new manual is a learning tool that will provide information to the trainer and the trainee and has space for notes.

Two new sections have been added in response to feedback and specific concerns that practitioners have highlighted over the years: an Anti-bias approach; Child Development and Psychosocial Support; and the Persona Doll Approach. The PDA section highlights why we use Persona dolls, what are they, how to choose them, how to give them an identity and some wonderful stories that can be used to address social issues.

We are proud that the manual is endorsed by the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative REPSI.

It is a practical resource with user friendly information that will be of great benefit to all practitioners working with young children.

The new manual is divided into 4 sections

- Anti-Bias Approach
- Child Development and Psychosocial support
- Persona dolls
- Resources



The four sections include information on human rights, terminology that is unpacked and explained, and a section on practical counselling strategies and referrals. In addition to this, we have included a number of new stories and ways of using Persona Dolls in different contexts.

We would like to encourage all practitioners who are working with Persona Dolls to purchase this very exciting new resource and actively engage with the contents.

If you would like a copy of this manual you can email us on info@pdt.org.za or check our website www.pdt.org.za

Term 3 – Setting goals for your child for the second half of the year, and beyond!

Term 3 is a busy term that seems to jump into action after the 3 week break!

This can be a good time to look together at your child's report and set some goals for the second half of the year and to reassure him or her of your support in working towards them.

Remember to focus on areas of progress and achievement, even if they are not at grade-level, and also not just on academics. Your child then gets a sense that strengths and talents lie in different places for different people. A feeling of success is the greatest motivator!

If there are concerns about progress, then the beginning of Term 3 can be a good time to make an appointment with your child's teacher/s to discuss what kind of support /s she is getting. Together with the teacher you can look at what steps could be taken this term and in so doing approach whatever is planned in partnership.

If your child is attending any therapy or clinic appointments, remember to share any updates with the teacher. Short feedback reports are helpful for the teacher to place on record to inform any later decisions. Be aware of, or ask questions about any concessions or accommodations that may be appropriate for your son or daughter.

If an Individual Support Plan has been drawn up at school, this acts as a reference in terms of which specific goals were identified earlier in the year.

The ISP is an important part of the Inclusive Education support process that is gradually being introduced into schools as the DBE training programme progresses.

As outlined elsewhere in this newsletter, Term 3 is when "promotion and progression" meetings take place at schools. Teachers will be considering whether any children might benefit from repeating a grade, or need to be "promoted with support". This is where supporting evidence will be called for by the district officials and parents need to be aware of the process so that they can contribute any relevant information.

For some learners, especially those in the Intermediate Phase, the gap in terms of keeping up with the curriculum may show signs of widening. This is often the case with second language learners or those with learning disabilities, where the terminology and vocabulary, especially in written form, are making them increasingly uncertain. It can really help if parents or other family members can help explain new concepts and new or difficult vocabulary in their child's home language.

Where families are seeking 2017 school admission for Grades 1 or 8, first phase applications will be finalised at the end of this month, and there will be a second opportunity to secure a place. It is important to make application at more than one school and to at least have your child's name on a waiting list. Keep letters as evidence of school application, even if unsuccessful, so that the Department can see where you have applied to date and assist you find placement.

Remember that our team is here to advise if you are uncertain about next steps.

Wishing you a successful term!



Written by,
Caroline Taylor

Support at schools

Effective support at school level is fundamental to ensure that every child experiences learning. This works better when teachers work in collaboration with the previous teacher who a comprehensive report about the child who is being progressed to the next grade. The new teacher needs to know the support needs of the child in order to give appropriate support. This kind of support should be reviewed after some time to see if there is progress or a need to change intervention strategies. By so doing the teacher keeps good track of how the child is doing, whether she is progressing or not.

This has worked well in our project schools where teachers shared expertise on how to support learners, for instance, differentiating the curriculum and of course with parent involvement in the process. Through this approach children feel welcome, included and can achieve their potential.

Another important aspect that needs attention is support to children during transition from one phase to another.

This is a very difficult time for some learners where they need to adjust in many new things including change in LOLT in some schools, increase in number of learning areas/subjects done and new teachers. Parents should be encouraged to visit the school before the transition and plans to help children feel safe and settled should be in place. Class hand-over meetings should be organised where teachers and support staff make sure that the new teacher has a clear understanding of the needs of all children. The whole process is to ensure that the right support for learning is in place.

These pictures show learner support in the classroom:



Grade 1 teacher supporting a child to master copying words



Grade 5 teachers explains how the parents should assist the child in doing homework: Teacher-parent relationship

Progression and Promotion

Once again the time has come for Pre-Progression! This is an opportunity for the school to address all issues of concern and also to make informed decisions regarding progression and promotion together with the District panel. For many educators and Heads of Department this is a very stressful and time consuming process. Perhaps the following tips might help!

Clarity on terms 'progression and promotion'

Progression means the advancement of a learner from one grade to the next in spite of the learner not having complied with all the promotion requirements. (To prevent learner from being retained in a phase for a period exceeding four years.)

Promotion means the movement of a learner from one grade to the next when the learner meets the minimum required level of achievement per subject in a particular grade. (*Gov. Notice 2432, Gov. Gazette*)

Report Remarks in case of Progression

3 Options:

1. Years in Phase: *'Due to years in phase ... progresses to Grade 2 with support.'*
2. Age cohort: *'Due to age ... progresses to Grade 2 with support.'*
3. Progresses with support: *'... Progresses to Grade 2 with support.'*

Pre-Progression

1. Make sure your school's learner Cemis information correlates with your schedule information.
2. Be ready on the date and time slot scheduled.
3. Proof of learning support interventions of Educator and School Based Support Team should be made available if learners are not promoted to next grade.

4. Appendix A needs to be completed for at-risk learners every term.
5. All work books and assessment papers should be ready for moderation.
6. Arrange timeously for supervision in classroom while educator has to meet with District Progression and Promotion Team.

To conclude:

Parents should at all times be informed about the progress of the learner. Make sure that meetings with parents take place at least once a term and that the options and progress of at-risk learners are discussed timeously. Request the parent's signature at every information session and keep a paper trail of these discussions!

Schools with Immigrant learners should make sure that they have clarity on the Progression and Promotion requirements for Home Language and First Additional Language. If there are any uncertainties, the District Office should be contacted immediately.

The Progression Scenarios provided in the 'Progression and Promotion Guidelines and Requirements for Gr R-12' are of great value with regards to immigrant learners, as well as deaf and blind learners.

Progression decisions should always be made in the best interest of the learners, taking into account the holistic performance of the learner throughout the year.

Written by,
Elize Coetzee

PLAY – The Conference (12–14 July 2016)

Theme: The Theory and Practice of Play in Early Childhood.

Cotlands, the Department of Basic Education and UNICEF supported by The LEGO Foundation hosted this national conference on the importance of play-based learning during early childhood. The conference took place at the Aviator Hotel near OR Tambo Airport in Johannesburg and saw approximately 400 Participants from all over the South Africa gather with one purpose in mind ... PLAY! And play was what we did during these three days. Every aspect from registration to closing of the conference was done through play, even tea and lunch breaks included time for play!

Day 1 – The importance of Play for the young child

Day 2 – Play-based learning in childhood

Day 3 – Resources in developing play-based learning in early childhood

At lunch-time on day 2, we celebrated **Cotlands' 80th Birthday** party. These celebrations included a clown, pop-corn, candy floss, party-packs etc. – everything we would include in a children's party!



Opening remarks were by Yulia Privalova Krieger, Deputy Representative, UNICEF South Africa.

PLAY is a fundamental Child Right – safeguarded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child which South Africa ratified on 16 June 1995.

- ARTICLE 31 of the CRC lays this rights-based foundation for play,
- The intention of this CRC article is also found in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the South African Constitution's Bill of Rights.

The Committee on the Rights of Child, in their interpretation of the CRC on this right to provide guidance to State Parties, reaffirmed that play is a fundamental and vital dimension of childhood, as well as an essential component of physical, social, cognitive, emotional and spiritual development. The General Comment no 17 on the Right to Play indicates that play is linked to and is essential to ensure children's full enjoyment of all the other rights in the Convention.

But PLAY is not only a right; it is also fundamental to human development – from the very beginning of life.

So, one can say that Play is an 'enabler' right – as it is important for the enjoyment of other rights – including the right to development; the right to education, the right to health, the right to participate; the right to protection.

During the conference, researchers and experts shared their views and insights on the importance and value of play in early childhood in Africa and around the world.

Play labs were scheduled in the afternoon and participants could go and enhance their practical skills and knowledge, enabling participants to better apply this in practice.

Written by,
Cindy Olivier

The start of EPWP 2016!



On Monday 4th July 2016, IESA's offices were bursting at the seams with 70 excited Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) Classroom Assistants who arrived for a verification session with representatives from the Independent Development Trust.

This is an annual session at the start of each new year of the project, whereby participants are formally registered and introduced to the processes and systems to be followed.

We were delighted to be allocated 70 work opportunities this year – up from 50 last year – and we quickly identified new candidates to be placed at several schools and ECD centres around the Western Cape.

This year, we have placed EPWP Assistants in 8 primary schools and 39 ECD centres, where they will be working closely with the educators and practitioners to provide support to children who are dealing with various barriers to learning.

We were encouraged to hear of the success stories that have come from this program, including former participants who have chosen to study their ECD levels as a result of their experience of working in the centres.



IESA is 100% committed to this transformative project and we look forward to a third successful year of supporting inclusion in action via our EPWP work opportunities.

Written by,
Jacqi Dudley

JOIN IESA FOR AN AFTERNOON WITH ADEN THOMAS FROM HEART 104.9FM

where we will be debating some of the most pressing challenges facing education in South Africa today!



Panelists

- Robyn Beere** – Director, IESA
- Louise van Rhyn** – Director, Partners for Possibility
- Berenice Daniels** – Director, WCED Inclusive & Specialised Education Support Services
- Cindy Engelbrecht** – ECD Specialist, IESA



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Date: 24th August 2016

Venue: Nassau Theatre, Groote Schuur High School, Palmyra Road, Newlands

Time: 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm (Education debate and IESA AGM)

Registration and Tea from 2 pm

Cost: Free

(for a maximum of 100 participants)

To book your place contact Natalie
Tel 021 762 6664 | natalie@included.org.za