

**L**eadership is critical to success, whether it is in government, business, civil society, faith-based organisations, community organisations, the world of sport (think of the important role of the team captain in our 1995 rugby World Cup success) or any of the other aspects of life. What made me think of this is the 20 young South Africans who we worked with for a full week, earlier this month and who will return in September for another week. Funded by the National Department of Social Development, we selected 20 young South Africans who work in the children's sector. They come from a number of provinces, were male and female and had different levels of experience. A common characteristic of all 20 was a deep desire to make a difference in people's lives and a desire to learn. Five had themselves started the NPO in which they work and others worked in prominent NPOs such as Nal'ibali, Sikhula Sonke, Mikhulu Trust, LETCEE, and Early Inspiration.

What struck me was the openness of these young people and their willingness to challenge and to learn. As part of the programme they will now be mentored by four coaches who will keep contact with them and will also visit them at their place of employment.

The content during the week covered leadership, fundraising, professionalism, starting an NPO, social media and communication, and was presented by NPO leaders in Cape Town including Tracey Chambers from the Clothing Bank, Chaeli Mycroft from the Chaelie Campaign, Lizo Madinga from Afrika Tikkun, Mdebuka Mthwazi from Sikhula Sonke, Dr Shelley O'Carrol from Wordworks, and Marion Wagner from Breadline Africa. Two donor organisations shared knowledge on the funding process with the participants.

The programme was designed by Jessica Blom and myself, is very competently managed by Jessica and builds on the leadership work we did over our first six years from 1994 to 2000 and which won us the President's Award for ECD from President Nelson Mandela in 1998. Many of the current ECD sector leaders across the country were part of our training in the 1990s.

To the right is a photograph of the group and their names. Watch these names, and also remember the name Jessica Blom. These under 30-year olds are going to lead the children's sector into the future. We will repeat this programme in 2019, and we intend to take this programme global over the next few years.

Enjoy reading this edition of EARLY YEARS.

ERIC ATMORE  
Director



'Young Leaders For Children' participants (LEFT to RIGHT, from bottom left): Gloria Marinus, Jabulisile Mzila, Siphokazi Nkwinti, Peliwe Mbulali, Jessica Ronaasen, Danica Le Fleur, Moipone Segopa, Sizwe Frans, Thanduxolo Mkhoyi, Kaathima Ebrahim, Lebohang Ntsie, Simbongile Vuba, Jessica Blom, Pumza Ndamase, Mario Lewis, Ntokozo Ndlovu, Louis Louw, Asemahle Dyaphu, Siyanda Mtshotana, Deon Mungadi, Banetsi Mphunga

## BOOK CELEBRATES MADIBA'S LOVE OF CHILDREN

~ Cape Times Staff Reporter

To celebrate Nelson Mandela's love for children on what would have been his 100th birthday, the Centre for Early Childhood Development, together with the Cape Town Museum of Childhood, have developed the 'Madiba and Children' book, which will officially be launched on 18 July - Mandela Day 2018.

The 64-page coffee table book includes a unique collection of photographs and stories from people who met Madiba as a child, as well as artworks from almost 100 children from various schools, including Athlone Church of Christ Educare Centre, Inthsinga Primary School, Ukhanyo Primary School, Rosmead Primary School, Livingstone High School and Westerford High School.

People who have contributed their stories include Danny K and Nandi Yengeni, daughter of Tony Yengeni, among others.

Programme manager Bridget Kahts said: "We are very excited. Every year we do something for Mandela Day. It would've been his 100 birthday so we wanted to do something big and celebrate his legacy and love for children.

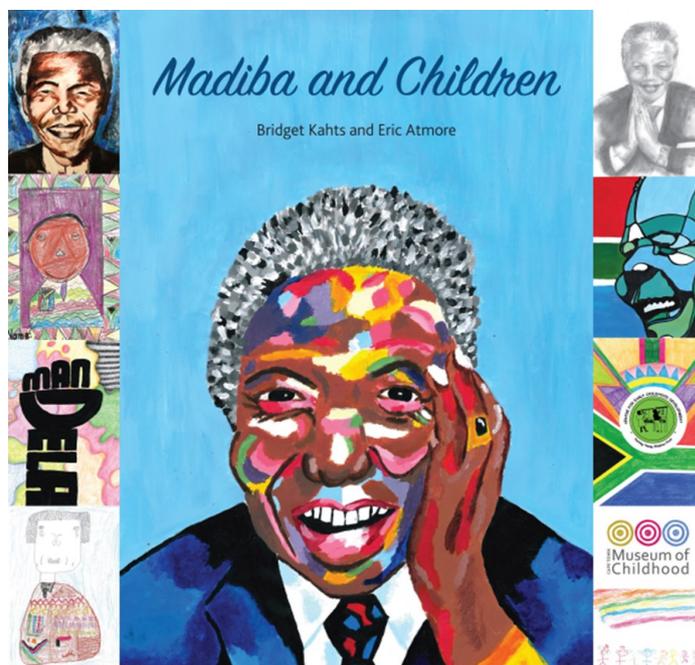
"There are children's artworks on every page, so children will enjoy paging through, and their parents can read the stories to them. We decided on a book because it's something that can last the way his legacy lasted."



She said there was so much to learn from Madiba in the way he prioritised children. "He took time to talk to children. People prioritise talking to adults, while he would spot a child and take time to talk to make that child feel special and important.

"Many children in the country don't feel heard. We believe that stimulating children, giving them attention, is so important and can have a lifelong benefit in their life."

The 'Madiba and Children' book will be launched with an event of between 200 and 300 people, including the children from the participating schools, the individuals whose stories are told in the book and other guests.



There are 1 000 copies of the book and it will be distributed free of charge. Each child represented in the book will receive a copy and will attend the launch.

Article available at

<https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news/book-celebrates-madibas-love-of-children-15480254>

## HOW CAN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE FOSTER NURTURING CARE?

This year's World Health Assembly marked a turning point for young children around the world with the launch of the Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development Framework. Developed by the WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank, in collaboration with many partners, the framework provides both a call to action for governments and other stakeholders to invest in early childhood development and an emerging roadmap for how to do so. Central to the framework is the concept of nurturing care, which encompasses five critical components that enable young children to "survive and thrive."

## EARLY YEARS

The framework identifies five strategic actions to support nurturing care and contribute to efforts to reach national and global early childhood development targets.

As policymakers and programme managers consider how to operationalise this framework in their own countries and contexts, they will need to turn their attention to the early childhood workforce. The practitioners who work directly with young children and their families as well as those who train, supervise and support them are essential for making nurturing care a reality. For that reason, the framework calls for all countries to “strengthen the capacity for the workforce to support responsive caregiving and early learning among all families and children, including those with additional needs.”

**We offer three suggestions for readying the workforce to support nurturing care:**

### 1. Build consensus around the concept of nurturing care within and across workforces

The early childhood workforce is very diverse and includes highly trained professionals as well as community volunteers or paraprofessionals - community health workers, preschool teachers, home visitors, social workers - working in clinics, centres, schools and homes. Although these workers share a focus on young children, a recent landscape analysis developed under the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative (ECWI) found that there is no common set of expectations of what practitioners working in the education, health, and social protection sectors should know and be able to do. Furthermore, in South Africa, ECWI research suggests that nurturing care may not be a familiar concept or considered part of the health practitioners' scope. Often the emphasis remains on ensuring survival and monitoring children's health and growth, rather than comprehensive attention to responsive caregiving or early stimulation to support their development.



The Nurturing Care Framework provides an opportunity to build bridges across workers, including those who may not view themselves as part of the early childhood workforce, and generate consensus around what nurturing care means, why it is relevant for each type of provider, and how it can be applied or adapted. This may require clarification of job profiles and

professional competences to take into account the importance of nurturing care. If done collaboratively, implementation should foster a sense of community and increase vitally important communication within and across sectors and workforces.

### 2. Enhance training and professional development to integrate nurturing care

The framework recommends building off existing resources and platforms by integrating support for responsive caregiving and early learning within a range of existing government and non-governmental services. It will be important to expand and reinforce the existing skills of early childhood workers so that they are equipped to support young children's development and strengthen the knowledge and practices of their parents or caregivers. The health sector is particularly well positioned to support nurturing care given that pregnant women and mothers with young children frequently interact with health providers and services during the first 1,000 days. For example, PATH is working with multiple countries to integrate early childhood development messages into health systems by providing training and support for community health workers and clinicians.

In many cases, training and ongoing professional development will need to be updated to include an emphasis on nurturing care, and it will be important to align training with professional and program standards. One lesson we learned from ECWI studies of the workforce in Peru and other countries is the importance of extending training beyond the frontline providers, so that these practices are reinforced by those who supervise or mentor them. Furthermore, there is often a need to ensure coordination between the departments responsible for developing training materials and tools with those departments directly overseeing early childhood practitioners and utilizing the tools in their day-to-day work.

### 3. Address working conditions that constrain early childhood practitioners in supporting families

Early childhood workers understandably may be concerned that nurturing care is a new task to add to their long list of responsibilities. However, if done well, it should strengthen existing services and enable workers to better respond to the needs of children and families. We have learned from focus groups of early childhood practitioners in Peru, South Africa and Ukraine that frontline workers are motivated to do their work, even under difficult circumstances, because of their positive influence in the lives of children and families. Shifting to a more integrated comprehensive, family-centered approach can amplify the impact of practitioners' existing work, which may help further strengthen workers' commitment to their important and challenging roles.

That said, the practical consequences of integrating nurturing care should not be overlooked as many early childhood workers are already overstretched and underpaid. Some questions that will need to be addressed include: What kinds of support do workers need to better incorporate nurturing care? Should

caseloads be reduced to support greater intensity of their work with children and families? Given that the successful implementation of the Framework depends on the workforce, this is a critical moment to consider and address the persistent poor remuneration and working conditions and community visits with families. The new policy is a meaningful step to address nurturing the early childhood field more generally.

Movements in this direction are already happening. In South Africa, the recent National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy calls for the integration of early stimulation messages and activities into home and community visits with families. The new policy is a meaningful step to address nurturing care across sectors, however, reforms to already-stretched community health worker programs can be difficult to implement and sustain without more comprehensive data to understand the level of training, tasks, or caseloads of the present workforce. Thus, the framework may provide an opportunity to help reduce the isolation of paraprofessionals by connecting them to a common effort, elevating their status, as well as providing them a greater system of support.

### On the journey to foster nurturing care together

It is heartening to see diverse stakeholders unite behind the concept of nurturing care. As the workforce is at the centre of providing nurturing care, the framework has enormous potential to bring diverse early childhood practitioners under a single umbrella, with a common vision and terminology to connect and amplify their work. Through our involvement with the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative, co-hosted by ISSA and R4D, we also look forward to supporting countries in their efforts to operationalize the framework.

Article available at  
<http://www.earlychildhoodworkforce.org>

## MALNUTRITION SERIOUSLY AFFECTS CHILDREN IN NUMBER OF PROVINCES: STATSSA

~ Ernest Mabuza

Malnutrition remains a serious problem facing South African children, with Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal having the highest number of young children who are stunted - while the North West and Western Cape have the highest percentage of children who are underweight.

This is contained in a report released by Statistics South Africa on the latest evidence on the realisation of government's early childhood development (ECD) goals for children aged from birth to six years. The report found that Gauteng (34.2%), Free State

(33.5%) and KwaZulu-Natal (28.5%) had the highest percentage of children who were stunted, compared to other provinces. North West (12.6%) and Western Cape (11.9%) had the highest percentage of children who were underweight.



“Government feeding programmes target mostly primary and secondary schools with limited service to only some ECD centres. More targeted feeding scheme interventions need to be done either through the primary health care system or through social services to reach all children at risk of malnutrition,” the report said.

StatsSA said nutrition interventions for pregnant women at risk needed to be put in place in order to prevent low birth weights. Cabinet approved the ECD policy in 2015 to promote optimal child development from conception to nine years.

The essential components to promote optimal child development include nutritional support, maternal health, child health, social services, support for primary caregivers and stimulation for early learning.

The report found that there were 8.2-million children aged between 0 and 6 years, comprising 15% of the country's total population. It found that 40% of these children lived with both parents, 46% with their mothers, 12% with neither parent and only 2% with their fathers. The report said attendance of any early childhood development programme for young children was necessary as part of school readiness by the time they had to enrol in Grade R.

“Unfortunately ... almost half of three-year-old children did not participate in ECD learning programmes (49%), close to 29% of children aged 4 did not attend in ECD learning, and among children aged 5 or 6 close to 13% each did not go to any facility or participated in ECD-related learning.”

Article available at  
<https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-02-27>