

Joanna Atson



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A New Game Plan: Joanna Atson

Participant: ECD Teacher Training
– Teacher, Jack and Jill Educare



The children's hands and feet tackle the climbing nets with spider-like dexterity before refocusing first on the monkey bars and then the rubber tyres.

"If we weren't here I don't know how working parents would cope. I think other people would look after their children, but then they wouldn't necessarily be learning anything like they can here," says Joanna Atson, teacher at Jack and Jill.

She is walking around the playground, keeping a watchful eye on the children during their break.

Thinking back to late 2005, there were no swings or jungle gyms here, not even a classroom. But in 2006, over three months, CECD, in partnership with Bright Kid Foundation, delivered four edutainers sponsored by the Haley Foundation, the Zoe Carss Education Trust, and the Western Cape Department of Social Development.

In March 2006, Jack and Jill was launched.

Today, there are 75 children enrolled and Joanna has 11 children in her group.

Joanna first volunteered at the centre two days a week. When the fieldworkers from CECD asked her if she was interested in doing the Level 4 National Certificate in ECD course, she enrolled.

"I never thought I could be a teacher because I used to work in a shop, but I joined and went through with the studies because I wanted to move up in life. The children's parents were very encouraging and it was a very good experience for me," says Joanna.

Having completed her Level 4 Learnership, the quality in Joanna's playroom has improved drastically.

"I'm so thankful to CECD that I could do this course; I'm so thankful that I can teach. When I first started at Jack and Jill as a volunteer I would ask the teachers what I needed to do, but now I know what to do.

"The trainers showed me how to work with other people's children. I also studied their teaching styles and their body language," she says.

Today Joanna is passionate about shaping her learners' futures.

"I'm proud to be teaching because maybe in 20 or 30 years some of the children here might be pilots, doctors and teachers.

"My grandson is also here and if he or one of his friends were to go to college or receive a bursary to study further, and if they were able to provide for their families, that would make me very happy."