

Annual Report

2025/2026



Centre for Early Childhood Development

Committed to putting young
children first in South Africa



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Our vision

To create a society that puts young children first, meaning that there is **quality ECD** programmes across South Africa, so that all children can grow and develop to their **full potential.**

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a dark grey polo shirt and white shorts, stands on a blue swing seat. He is holding the chains of the swing and smiling at the camera. The background shows a playground with various equipment, including a blue slide and a red structure, under a clear blue sky. A large tree is visible behind him.

About us

The Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) is a non-profit organisation, working throughout South Africa to improve and expand ECD programmes offered to young children, through a range of programmes and activities.

The reality is that millions of children in South Africa grow up in poverty, with limited access to crucial services, including insufficient access to quality ECD programmes. Research shows that these programmes; ECD centres, home-visiting early learning programmes, nutrition programmes, etc., have the transformative power to change the trajectories of the lives of vulnerable young children, setting them on a path to thrive. Without access to these programmes, children's growth, development and ability to reach their full potential is negatively impacted.

As such, our mission is to support the ECD workforce and caregivers of young children, to provide high quality early opportunities to the children in their care, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty and reducing inequality in South Africa. This is achieved by increasing and improving equitable, quality ECD programmes for young children from vulnerable communities, so that they can grow and develop to their full potential.

Director's overview

The year under review has been a year full of activity at the Centre for Early Childhood Development. We are now in our 32nd year of providing quality early childhood development programmes across South Africa. Over this time, we have impacted positively on many hundreds of ECD centres, ECD governing bodies, and thousands of ECD teachers, caregivers, parents, and children.

The past year has again seen many highlights. Our Advocacy and Social Justice Unit, working with the City of Cape Town, has brought about numerous very positive policy and process changes for ECD centres. Now we have much work to do with the other 256 municipalities across South Africa, to bring these municipalities to a point where they view the development of our youngest children as a priority.

We have shaped broader government ECD policy, but policy



alone is not enough. National ECD policies are still not being implemented by government, at all three tiers of government, to any significant degree.

So, our responsibility continues.

During the past year we continued to advance child rights and child protection. We have engaged significantly with authorities in the provinces and at municipal level. In this current year, we will upscale our efforts and get more organisations and the private sector on board, in support of young children.

Our flagship programme, the Cape Town Museum of Childhood, continues to be a huge success.

Since opening in October 2021, almost 60,000 individuals have visited the Museum. Our Museum, the only one on the African continent and one of only three world-wide, is a treasure to visit. This is a credit to my colleagues who make Museum visits such a warm experience.

Over this year we continued to work In the Western Cape, Northern Cape and the Eastern Cape provinces. We have been able to provide ECD opportunities to many thousands of vulnerable children.

Last year I wrote that our youngest children are still not having their needs and rights met. The lack of political will to meet children's needs is evident when we look at what government is doing in regard to ECD. Policy is not adequate or implemented, budgets are inadequate, and with some exceptions, government officials do not implement the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy, approved by the Cabinet in December 2015. As we continue with our work into our 33rd year as an organisation putting young children first, we realise that the road ahead is long and the responsibility is huge.

Thank you to all who contribute to putting young children first in communities across South Africa.

Eric Atmore, Director

A group of young children, mostly of African descent, are sitting on the floor in a classroom or community center. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The child in the foreground is a young girl with dark skin and hair, wearing a red and white striped shirt. She is pointing her right index finger upwards. Behind her, several other children are visible, some wearing light blue shirts. The background is slightly blurred, showing a simple indoor environment with a white wall and a patterned rug.

Our programmes include:

- Integrated ECD Centre Programme
- ECD Centre and Aftercare Registration
- Family Outreach Programme
- Cape Town Museum of Childhood
- Advocacy and Social Justice
- ECD Research

Our reach

During the period 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, we worked mostly in three provinces across South Africa: the Western Cape, the Northern Cape, and the Eastern Cape.

We reached, supported, and worked with the following:



627 ECD Centres
Supported



351 ECD Principals &
Teachers Trained



12 ECD Centres
Upgraded



34 Education
Equipment Kits
Provided



228 Caregivers
Worked With



62 After School Care
Centres *Supported*



8 Playgroups
Reached



3,587 Other
Adults *Reached*



10,733 Children
Directly Reached



At least 13,409 Children
Indirectly Reached



34,095 Followers
on Social Media

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Our Activities:

Integrated ECD Centre Programme

Our Integrated ECD Centre Programme aims to develop ECD centres that are empowered, are sustainable and offer quality early education and care to young children.

Eastern Cape - Kouga ECD Project

“Strengthening ECD Centres, Building Communities:
Five Years of the Kouga ECD Project”

Over the past five years, our Kouga ECD Project has worked across 33 ECD centres in the Kouga Local Municipality. This project is run in partnership with Africa A+ Schools and supported by the Kouga Wind Farm Community Development Trust. What began with a comprehensive needs assessment in 2019 has grown into a transformative, community-rooted initiative that has measurably improved the quality of early learning for thousands of young children in the region.

The project's impact is most powerfully captured in the numbers. Across 16 teaching and learning evaluation indicators, centres achieved an average increase of 43 percentage points from baseline to the end of Year 5. In fact, they achieved nearly four times their baseline score. In the areas of compliance, management, health, and safety, the centres recorded an average improvement of 31 percentage points over the same period. Most significantly, the project had its greatest impact on ECD centres that started with the least, a strong correlation of -0.8 between baseline scores and overall improvement means that, in effect, the project actively reduced inequality in the standard of ECD programmes across the area by greatly raising the performance of the weakest centres.



Above: MJA Daycare before their infrastructure upgrade. | *Below:* MJA Daycare after their infrastructure upgrade.





Before



After

Kouga ECD Project (continued)

The project also succeeded in building something that will outlast the formal programme cycle: a genuine ECD community. Principals and teachers who had operated in isolation had developed networks of mutual support, with local facilitators who are confident and who mentor new teachers and run workshops independently.

The close-out function held in August 2025 brought together principals, teachers, facilitators, and partners to mark the end of this chapter with pride and emotion. One principal captured it best: "I'm not educated but today I stand here as a principal, with other principals... Being educated or going to school does not end because you are old."

Clockwise from top left: Makhulu Daycare - At the start of the project. | Makhulu Daycare after they received an infrastructure upgrade - a total transformation at the ECD centre. | Children and teachers in their new classroom at Angels Daycare. This centre also received a major upgrade. | The close-out function on 07 August 2025 brought together principals, teachers, facilitators, and partners to celebrate five years of growth and transformation.



Northern Cape - Kathu ECD Project

Now in its third year, our Kathu ECD Project is delivering meaningful, measurable change across 27 ECD centres in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality in the Northern Cape. Funded by Kathu Solar Park and implemented by CECD, in partnership with Africa A+ Schools, the project supports ECD centres in Kathu, Kuruman, Deben, and Olifantshoek. By providing teacher and management training, education resources, infrastructure upgrades, onsite support and mentoring, and facilitating training for a team of local facilitators, for parents and ECD forums, this project ensures that young children in these communities have access to quality early learning, no matter their circumstances. A growing team of local facilitators is now planning and leading onsite demonstrations independently, a deliberate sustainability strategy to ensure support continues beyond the project. The project also made tangible physical investments, with Obama Daycare and Reaiteka Pre-School each receiving brand-new playrooms. Equipment provision has been equally transformative, with the percentage of centres reporting zero availability of certain resources dropping from 40% at baseline to just 5% at follow-up.



Above: Parents from Deben designing a poster during a workshop. | The children and principal from Obama Daycare in their newly built playroom.
Below: A young teacher from Skilpaadjies during an onsite demonstration. | Local facilitators warmly greeting children during their onsite demonstration at Liefdeslyfies.



Northern Cape - Loeriesfontein ECD Project

During this reporting period, we continued to implement our ECD programme in the Loeriesfontein community, in the Northern Cape. Through this programme, funded by Loeriesfontein 2 Wind Farm, we were able to provide support to a local ECD centre that accommodates 40 children and employs three teaching staff and one support staff. Since many children in the community are unable to access the ECD centre due to limited space and due to caregivers not being able to pay fees, we also set up and supported a playgroup, run by a local facilitator, for ten children. We also piloted a parent education programme for 25 parents of children aged birth to 2 years.

During this project, we provided ongoing mentoring and support to the ECD centre teachers to promote quality ECD opportunities for the young children in their care. The project also included mentoring and support to the governing body of the ECD centre to further promote the quality and sustainability of the ECD services offered in the Loeriesfontein community.



Clockwise, from top left: CECD trainer, Kirsty Johnson, demonstrating different activities to teachers. | Kirsty demonstrating how to use 'loose parts' to the playgroup facilitator. | Parents of children in the ECD Centre at a Parent Education Workshop. | Parents in the community with children aged birth to 2 years during a Parenting Workshop.



Northern Cape and Western Cape - Roggeveld ECD Project

In 2025/26 we implemented Year 1 of our Roggeveld ECD Project in Laingsburg, Matjiesfontein and Sutherland, funded by Red Rocket Energy's Roggeveld Wind Farm. Six ECD centres are part of this project. Fifteen teachers received training and coaching on teaching strategies to improve the quality of the early learning environments. Eight principals and their governing bodies also received management training and support to ensure the sustainability of these ECD centres. Through this project, each ECD centre received brand new first aid kits or top-up equipment for their first aid kits, as well as new fire safety equipment or had their fire safety equipment serviced to ensure safe learning environments for the children attending.

Through our monitoring and evaluation efforts, it was found that meaningful progress and encouraging shifts were made across the ECD centres and among the ECD centre staff, reflecting a growing culture of quality care, learning, and professional development.



Clockwise from top left: A teacher training workshop in Laingsburg, focused on improving teaching strategies. | Staff at Sneeuwlokkie Bewaarskool in Sutherland, receiving first aid kits. | A teacher training workshop with the ECD teachers on the project. | A management training workshop with principals and governing body members from the ECD centres on the project.



Western Cape - Matjiesfontein Primary School Upgrade Project

In October 2025, CECD started work on our Matjiesfontein Primary School Upgrade Project. This project includes a large-scale infrastructure upgrade and the provision of equipment in order to enhance the quality of the learning environment at Matjiesfontein Primary School, creating an environment within which children can thrive. To date the upgrade work completed has included painting of the multi-grade primary school inside and out, extensive repairs to the Grade R and Pre-grade R toilets, a kitchen renovation, refurbishment of the computer lab, and developing plans for a new main toilet block for the older children and staff. Classroom equipment as well as fire safety equipment, first aid equipment and signage has been provided to the school. This project is supported by Red Rocket Energy's Brandvalley and Rietkloof Wind Farms.



Before



After

Above: The kitchen facilities at Matjiesfontein Primary School before and after the infrastructure upgrade.

Below: Before and after the refurbishment of the computer facilities at Matjiesfontein Primary School.



Before



After

Western Cape - Oasis ECD Project

Funded by Oasis Group Holdings (Pty) Ltd, the Oasis ECD Project started during this period with the successful recruitment of 40 ECD centres across Cape Town, and the completion of baseline assessments at these centres. An introductory session was held with principals from each of the centres to formally introduce the project and provide an overview of the project aims. The enthusiastic participation from both principals and teachers has established a solid foundation for the successful implementation of the project, which includes ECD teacher training, leadership and management training, mentoring and support, and the provision of equipment and resources.



Left to Right: Principals from the 40 ECD centres across Cape Town, partaking in an activity during our introductory session. | A classroom in one of the ECD centres on the project; Tippy Tots in Woodstock. | All of the principals on the project.

Western Cape - RECM Foundation ECD project

Our RECM Foundation ECD project provides practical, onsite training and support to the principal and teacher at Faith Educare in Pelican Park, Cape Town. Our experienced trainers provide support on both the learning programme and management of the ECD centre, to ensure that the young children at Faith Educare have access to high-quality early learning that fosters their holistic development in a well-run ECD centre. During this period, meaningful progress was made in strengthening teaching and learning at Faith Educare and the management practices of the centre. The activities implemented support the principal's capacity building, improved classroom practice, and enhanced the learning environment. Faith Educare also visited the Cape Town Museum of Childhood where the children enjoyed a memorable learning experience.



Above, left to right: CECD trainer, Kirsty Johnson, and Faith Educare principal, Gwendoline Speelman, during the first onsite session at Faith Educare. | The children from Faith Educare at the Cape Town Museum of Childhood.
Below: Kirsty conducting practical onsite support visits to Faith Educare to help improve teaching and learning strategies and practices.



Western Cape - Kalkfontein Daycare Centre

Led by a strong and committed governing body, Kalkfontein Daycare Centre continues to go from strength to strength. With the generous support of the Varda Foundation, CECD has been providing a monthly subsidy to the centre covering essential operational costs (including nutrition, water, gas, and electricity) ensuring that the basics are in place so that the children at the ECD centre can focus on what matters most: learning, play, growing, and development.



Above: The children of Kalkfontein Daycare Centre engaging in various activities in their playroom, during a site visit to the ECD centre.

Western Cape - Nyanga Educare

With the generous support of GrandWest, this project enabled the renovation of the bathroom facilities at Nyanga Educare, creating a safer, more hygienic, and dignified environment for the 140 young children in their care. At the outset, the existing facilities were in poor condition, with broken toilets and inadequate sanitation. Recognising that access to safe sanitation is closely linked to children's constitutional rights to basic education and dignity, the project transformed Nyanga Educare into an ECD centre where children can access quality learning opportunities in a safe and healthy environment. The renovation work included replacing windows and burglar bars to improve ventilation and security; installing new basins, taps, and plumbing; repainting all bathroom areas; replacing damaged toilets; converting the staff toilet into an accessible facility for persons with disabilities; upgrading nappy-changing facilities; tiling floors; and installing mirrors, towel rails, and doors on children's toilet cubicles to ensure privacy. As a result, the upgraded facilities now provide a clean, safe, and inclusive space that supports children's health, dignity, and overall development.

Before



After



Clockwise from top left: Bathroom facilities before the upgrade. | The children's new bathroom at Nyanga Educare. | Principal, Thembeku Rumbu, standing in the newly renovated children's bathroom. | Representatives from GrandWest, CECD and Nyanga Educare standing together during a visit to Nyanga Educare.



Western Cape - Mayoral Fund Infrastructure Project

CECD has continued to support two ECD centres on City-owned property, Eyethu Educare Centre (in Nyanga) and Care Educare (in Enkanini, Khayelitsha) with support from the City of Cape Town Mayoral Fund. During this period, we supported Eyethu Educare to get a formal lease agreement in place with the City of Cape Town – something they have not had since they started operating forty years ago. Following the receipt of the lease agreement we assisted the ECD centre with electrical repairs and with getting the required firefighting equipment in place. We have assisted Eyethu Educare to get started on the City's Modernisation Tool (a system designed to streamline ECD compliance) so that they can get their fire and health clearance certificates. This has been a very slow process due to complications and issues with the Modernisation Tool, but we continue to follow up regularly and look forward to seeing this ECD centre have all the required municipal compliances in place.

Care Educare received initial building plan approval, but following a request from the City of Cape Town to change the building material, new plans were submitted for which we are still awaiting approval. We look forward to receiving the necessary approval so that we can move forward with construction. The work on both of these ECD centres continues to provide valuable insight that will be used to support more ECD centres going forward.



Left: The staff and some of the children from Eyethu Educare Centre in Nyanga.

A young child with curly hair is sitting at a red table in a classroom. The child is wearing a green shirt with a floral pattern and is holding a green object. In the background, there are other children and a blue bowl on the table.

Our Activities:

Registration

Our Registration Programme aims to support ECD centres through the process to register as a partial care facility, which is a legal requirement for an early learning programme caring 7 or more children. This is critical for ECD centre sustainability and their capacity to offer quality programmes.

ECD Centre Registration Project

CECD is one of 17 organisations in the Western Cape tasked by WCED, to assist principals of ECD centres with the process of registration as a partial care facility.

According to the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, ECD centres must register as a partial care facility with the Department if they are looking after seven or more children.

During this period we worked with 438 ECD centres, caring for approximately 13,143 children and employing approximately 2,400 ECD teachers in the Metro South of Cape Town (including Steenberg, Lavender Hill, Muizenberg, Ocean View, Masiphumelele, Rondebosch, Westlake and other areas), to support each ECD centre through the Bana Pele ECD Mass Registration process. During this period, we provided registration support to these ECD centres, through onsite support visits, telephonic support, registration workshops, and by conducting assessment visits at ECD centres who successfully completed their online applications for registration. During this reporting period we were able to support 126 ECD centres to obtain their bronze-level registration.



Above: ECD Assistant, Lauren Haupt, speaking with a principal during an onsite support visit.
Below: ECD Assistant, Abigail Daniels, providing registration support to ECD principals.



Afterschool Care Registration Project

CECD is tasked by the Western Cape Department of Social Development to assist operators of afterschool care centres with the process of registration as a partial care facility. According to the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, afterschool care centres must register as a partial care facility with the provincial department if they are looking after seven or more children of school going age. During this reporting period we worked with 62 afterschool care centres who accommodate an estimated 2,333 children and employ 224 staff in the Metro South area of Cape Town, to support them through the registration process. During this period, we provided registration support to these centres, through telephonic and online support, and we facilitated two registration support workshops during which afterschool care operators received one-on-one support with compiling their portfolios of evidence for registration.



Left: A registration support workshop for the aftercare centres on the Afterschool Care Registration Project.



Left: ECD Assistant, Tatum Dyson, providing telephonic support to a principal that runs an afterschool care centre.



Our Activities:

Family Outreach Programme

Our Family Outreach Programme empowers families and communities in vulnerable areas to enhance care and early learning for their young children.

Sweet Home Family Outreach Programme

With support from the Ackerman Family Foundation, the MacFarlane Family Foundation, and the WCED, CECD continued to offer our family outreach programme to 25 families in the Sweet Home, Philippi, community. The programme provides home visits, parent workshops, psychosocial support, and has two weekly playgroups operating within the community.

We remain grateful to the committed caregivers who continue to welcome our family outreach worker into their homes and actively participate in the home visits and parent workshops. Appreciation is also extended to the four playgroup facilitators, who are former programme participants, for their ongoing dedication and voluntary support in facilitating the two weekly playgroups to 24 children in Sweet Home.



Above: Family Outreach Worker, Nontembiso Leve, playing a game with the caregivers during a parenting workshop on creativity and play. *Below:* Playgroup facilitator, Lindeka Gilifatyi, talking to children on their activity for the morning



Kanana Family Outreach Programme

During this reporting period, with support from the Ackerman Family Foundation, and the MacFarlane Family Foundation, we expanded our family outreach programme to Kanana in Gugulethu. Significant time was invested in community entry, relationship building, and engagement with local stakeholders.

Community members and stakeholders expressed a strong need for the programme within the area, and our family outreach worker successfully recruited 25 families to participate in the programme. Caregivers have shown strong interest in the home visiting component of the programme, as well as an appreciation for the food vouchers provided, which assist families in purchasing nutritious food and other essential household items.



Clockwise, from top left: CECD family outreach worker, Nontembiso Leve, with a caregiver and her children during a home visit. | Nontembiso using play dough to illustrate the various parts of the face to a child on the programme. | Caregivers at a parenting workshop focused on creativity and play.

Ocean View Family Outreach Programme

With support from the MacFarlane Family Foundation and WCED, we continued to implement our family outreach programme in Ocean View for the second consecutive year. The programme, supporting 50 caregivers in the community, has been strengthened through the support and collaboration of key stakeholders, including the Ocean View Library, Open Doors, and the South African Police Service, who have contributed valuable information and expertise.

In February 2026, CECD established a community playgroup in Ocean View facilitated by two former programme caregivers. The playgroup has been well received and continues to provide valuable support and engagement opportunities for children and caregivers in the community.



Above: The children from the playgroup visiting Ocean View library. | A young girl during a home visiting session which focused on 'my body'.
Below: CECD family outreach worker, Lisa Jurgens, meeting with Ocean View South African Police Service. | Juliana Rubain from Open Doors presenting at a parent workshop focused on Child Safety and Protection.



Red Hill ECD Programme

With support from the Government of Monaco, Humanus Personalservice GMBH and the MacFarlane Family Foundation, our Red Hill ECD Project delivers four key interventions within the Red Hill community: a family outreach programme, work with five ECD centres, fatherhood initiatives, and community development activities.

During the reporting period, a range of programmes and activities were implemented to strengthen families and support community development. These included fatherhood workshops and a father-child play day, which provided opportunities for fathers to strengthen their relationships with their children through meaningful engagement and play. Our family outreach programme continued to provide ongoing support to 50 vulnerable families within the community through regular home visits, four playgroups for 48 children, and referrals to relevant services.



Clockwise from top left:
Caregivers showing off the puppets they made during a 'Play and Creativity' parent workshop. | A fatherhood workshop, facilitated by a friend of CECD, Michael Dyson, with a group of fathers in Red Hill. | Children enjoying an outdoor activity at Siyakhulisa ECD Centre in Red Hill.

Red Hill ECD Programme (continued)



Above: Children enjoying free play at one of the playgroups in the community of Red Hill. *Below:* Participants at their certificate ceremony after completing a basic sewing course.



Support to the five ECD centres, with enrolment of 135 vulnerable children, continued throughout this period with monthly onsite mentoring and capacity-building visits aimed at strengthening the quality of the ECD programmes available to young children and their families.

As part of our community development efforts, ten women from the community took part in a Basic Sewing Course. The programme concluded with a certification ceremony that celebrated participants' achievements and showcased the garments they had created during the course. In addition, 30 women participated in job readiness workshops, which equipped them with the skills and confidence needed to enter the workforce.

To further support skills development and employment opportunities within the community, seven women enrolled to complete an ECD Level 4 qualification through the College of Cape Town. This qualification will enhance their knowledge and practical skills in ECD, enhancing their employability within the ECD sector.



Our Activities:

Cape Town Museum of Childhood

Housing a national collection of childhood-related exhibits, the museum aims to capture the heritage of childhood and the role that children play in society, whilst celebrating childhood and uplifting children. This is achieved through an interactive space that allows an opportunity for children, families and communities to celebrate childhood, to gain insights into childhood and to learn about childhood heritage.

Cape Town Museum of Childhood

The Cape Town Museum of Childhood opened its doors to the public in October 2021. The museum has welcomed 56,333 visitors since opening and 11,528 visitors in the last year alone. We remain actively engaged with museum visitors and the communities we reach through our outreach programmes. Highlights from the museum include:

The Museum School Visit Programme

The museum continues to host our schools programme on Tuesday mornings. The programme includes a guided museum tour, story readings, arts and crafts activities, and interactive sessions on childhood games. Each programme is then also tailored to suit the specific needs and age group of the visiting school.

During this reporting period, our museum hosted 25 school group visits. Participating schools included Learning Tree Educare (Lavender Hill),



Clockwise, from top left: Visitor Experience Officer, Navarne Weeder, giving learners from Mary Kihn a tour of the museum. | A school group visit from the learners and staff from Suretha's Daycare. | The museum's pop-up exhibition at the Cape Flats Book Festival. | A learner from Modderdam High School painting a tote bag during an Imagine Nation Art Project workshop.



Cape Town Museum of Childhood (continued)

Mary Kihn School (Observatory), Micklegate Primary School (Rondebosch), Covenant Primary (Strand) and Ithemba Labantu Preschool (Philippi).

In addition, the museum welcomed visits from organisations such as 9 Miles Project, Ubomi, and Marsh Memorial Child and Youth Care Centre. Through these group visits, the museum welcomed 549 children during this time.

Cape Flats Book Festival

Once again, this year, our museum was invited to participate in the annual Cape Flats Book Festival held in Mitchell's Plain. For the festival we hosted a pop-up exhibition that featured a creative space where children could write their own stories, as well as an area to enjoy classic games such as snakes and ladders, dominoes, and five stones. The event provided an opportunity to network with other organisations and share information about the museum and its offerings with attendees.



Museum Visitor Experience Officer, Bomikazi Nomzanga, hosting story-reading sessions, at the museum and at ECD centres and schools, as part of "Bomikazi's Book Club".

Cape Town Museum of Childhood (continued)

Imagine Nation Art Project

The museum received funding from the City of Cape Town to facilitate visual art workshops for 480 children across three Cape Town communities. The project was implemented in partnership with art facilitator Mark Jeneker in Mitchell's Plain and Zaid Philander from the Vrygrond Peace Garden. Four workshops were hosted in Mitchell's Plain, reaching 129 children, while four workshops in Vrygrond reached 160 children. In addition, the museum hosted a series of workshops, reaching 202 children.

Community exhibition events showcasing the children's artwork were held in Vrygrond and Mitchell's Plain following the completion of the workshops. The project concluded with a final exhibition at the museum in November 2025, where artwork produced during the workshops was displayed and celebrated. Through this initiative, the museum exceeded its target and reached a total of 491 children.



The Imagine Nation Art Project's workshops and exhibitions in Mitchell's Plain (*top*), Vrygrond (*left*), and at the Cape Town Museum of Childhood in Rondebosch (*middle*).



Our Activities:

Advocacy and Social Justice

Our Advocacy and Social Justice Unit inspires action through amplifying voices, and mobilising and unifying the ECD sector.



Advocacy and Social Justice

CECD's Advocacy and Social Justice Unit works to increase awareness and engagement of ECD rights, needs and issues among: 1) individuals so that they can take action and hold government accountable and 2) decision-makers in the sector, to create a more enabling and inclusive regulatory framework for ECD that is pro-poor and equitable, and substantially increase public funding for ECD to address inequality in ECD provision.

Some highlights of the Unit's work this year include:

An Advocacy Call: Addressing Local Government Barriers for ECD Centres

Our Advocacy and Social Justice Unit has been addressing local government barriers for ECD centres. Addressing barriers to ECD centre registration is critical as it ensures centres meet health and safety standards and enables more

vulnerable ECD centres to access the government ECD subsidy, ensuring equitable access to ECD. There is much evidence that municipal barriers are a significant obstacle to ECD centre registration.

We have continued our targeted advocacy initiative, which began in December 2022 with a pilot in the City of Cape Town – to challenge and transform the local regulatory environment in which ECD centres function, so that it is more enabling, equitable, and responsive to the realities of ECD centres on the ground.

We continued our active participation in the mayor-led City of Cape Town ECD task team, which addresses registration challenges and offers effective, context specific solutions – reimagining the City's

Advocacy and Social Justice (continued)

approach to ECD to create an enabling regulatory environment. We had various meetings with Executive Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis, Deputy Mayor Eddie Andrews and City of Cape Town senior officials to discuss the progress achieved under the different workstreams aimed at removing various regulatory and financial barriers to municipal compliance.

Among the major highlights is the City's Municipal Planning Amendment By-law, which came into operation on 1 October 2025, allowing ECD centres in specific zonings to operate without having to obtain land use approval from the City, provided certain conditions are met – a massive win for the ECD sector.

Another highlight has been updating and expanding the development charges exemption criteria, with the exemption application process significantly streamlined and the timeframe shortened.

Through the ECD task team, we are developing a regulatory system for ECD centres in informal



Clockwise from top left: Meeting with mayoral committee member for Community Services and Health, Councillor Francine Higham, and the Community, Arts and Culture Development department. | A mayor-led City of Cape Town ECD task team meeting. | A site meeting with Deputy Mayor Eddie Andrews and his team in Khayelitsha. | Another productive ECD task team meeting.



Advocacy and Social Justice (continued)

Settlements. To date, we have successfully trialed one way for an ECD centre in an informal settlement to obtain land use approval and building plan approval.

We have been working with the City to release a video series which aims to inform the ECD sector about the City's municipal compliance requirements and importantly share the progress achieved by the Mayor's ECD task team. The introductory video was released on 1 June 2025 and can be viewed here: bit.ly/4pIGSqS.



Left: The inaugural “ECD Indaba 2025: Strengthening Early Childhood Development - Planning Reform and Local Government Compliance” at the City Council Chambers on 02 August 2025.

Right: The City of Cape Town Executive Mayor, Geordin Hill-Lewis, with Minister of Basic Education, Siviwe Gwarube, and Deputy Mayor Eddie Andrews, at the inaugural ECD Indaba.

Our initiative with the City of Cape Town, which affects at least 2,620 centres, 99,908 children and 13,606 staff, presents a real opportunity for scaling to other municipalities across South Africa.

City of Cape Town ECD Indaba

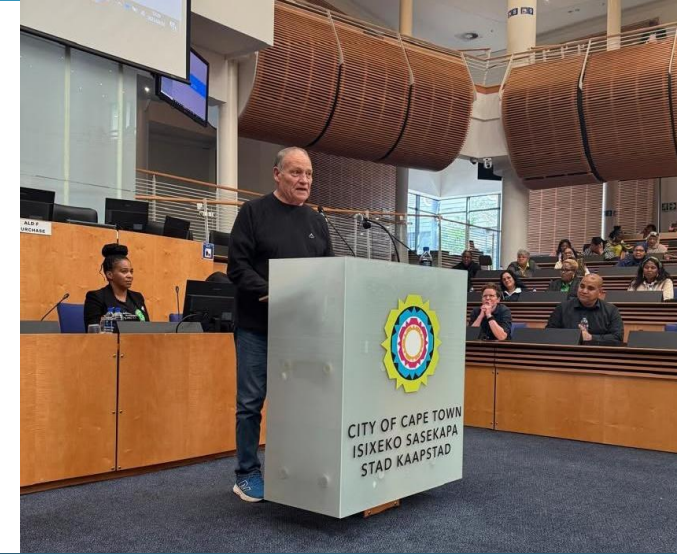
Together with the City of Cape Town, we organised and facilitated the inaugural “ECD Indaba 2025: Strengthening Early Childhood Development - Planning Reform and Local Government Compliance”. This event took place on 02 August 2025 in City Council Chambers at the Cape Town Civic Centre and was attended by approximately 400 people.

Advocacy and Social Justice (continued)

The ECD Indaba created a dialogue with the ECD sector and national, provincial and local government. The value and success of this event prompted the City of Cape Town to host a second ECD Indaba including an exhibition, named “Pathways to Compliance”, in which we participated in November 2025.

ECD Stories

We released a video exploring ECD centre principals' perspectives on the Department of Basic Education's Bana Pele Mass Registration Drive. It captures principals' reflections on whether the initiative has made registration faster, compliance easier, and access to the ECD subsidy more achievable. You can watch the video here: bit.ly/4y1xYbP



Clockwise from top left: CECD's Advocacy and Social Justice Unit Manager, Yusrah Ehrenreich, speaking at the inaugural ECD Indaba. | CECD Director, Prof Eric Atmore, addressing the delegates at the inaugural ECD Indaba. | Deputy Mayor Eddie Andrews and Councillor Francine Higham at the City of Cape Town's second ECD Indaba. | A scene of CECD's 'ECD story' video.



Advocacy and Social Justice (continued)



Through our **community engagement** we attended 39 ECD forum meetings and participated in various information sessions reaching over 900 ECD principals and staff members across the city, including (clockwise from top left:) Bonteheuwel, Delft, Valhalla Park, and Makhaza.



Other Important Work

In May 2025, our Advocacy and Social Justice Manager, Yusrah Ehrenreich, attended a symposium in Johannesburg hosted by Real Reform for ECD, which brought together lawyers, researchers, policy experts, the ECD workforce, and activists to discuss the potential for the right to ECD to exist and be enforceable in South Africa law. Here Yusrah hosted an issue station on local government, aimed at engaging with public interest lawyers who would like to get involved and provide legal support on specific issues faced by the ECD sector.

This year, our Unit was successful in removing charges for ECD centres to pay, amounting to R934,769 and has a pending decision to remove charges for an ECD centre amounting to R479,806.



Our Research

The aim of the research we carry out at CECD is to enhance awareness and understanding of the importance of ECD, and the needs and rights pertaining to young children. This is done to:

1. empower communities,
2. transform societal norms,
3. increase advocacy efforts,
4. strengthen policy and governance, and
5. improve and adapt ECD programme design for the development of young children in South Africa.

An ECD Resource Hub Feasibility Study

During this reporting period, CECD completed an innovative research project in the Saldanha Bay Municipality. The West Coast Community Trust contracted CECD to conduct research on the ECD services and needs in the area, interview a variety of stakeholders, and develop a comprehensive action plan to guide the creation of a dynamic ECD Resource Hub based in Saldanha Bay, to serve the wider Saldanha Bay Municipality. This was an exciting project, that could lead to the development of something new and innovative in ECD in the country; an initiative which will allow for the implementation of a holistic set of services for the ECD community at large, and explore the impact from these interventions.



Monitoring and Evaluation

During this past year, we also carried out ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all our ECD programmes. These activities included conducting baseline and follow-up assessments of ECD centre functioning, teaching and learning practices, and caregiver behaviours and knowledge. The data was analysed and written up, and impact reports were produced for the various projects and programmes.

Through our monitoring efforts, we ensure that our programmes are on track, remain of the highest quality, and are having the intended impact on the participants in the various intervention activities. Through our evaluations we have found significant positive impacts on the participating ECD centres, ECD staff, and the caregivers with whom we work. A snapshot from an impact report on one of our multi-year Integrated ECD Centre Programmes, the Kouga ECD Project, highlights some of the positive impact we are seeing:

Average performance for all ECD centres across 17 indicators.

	Cohort 1 Baseline	Cohort 1 - Follow up - Year 1	Cohort 1 - Follow up - Year 2	Cohort 1 change (first to last)	Cohort 2 - Baseline Year 2	Cohort 2 - Follow up - Year 2	Cohort 2 change
Registration: DoE (Partial Care 0-5)	12,5%	25,0%	39,1%	26,6%	31,3%	50,0%	18,7%
Registration: NPO Directorate	37,5%	39,6%	31,8%	-5,7%	30,0%	35,7%	5,7%
Registration: DoE Grade R	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	11,1%	19,0%	7,9%
Registration: Other	33,3%	31,3%	25,0%	-8,3%	40,0%	26,8%	-13,2%
Income & Funding (in addition to fees)	0,0%	30,6%	24,2%	24,2%	28,9%	47,6%	18,7%
Administration	18,8%	54,2%	90,9%	72,2%	53,3%	82,1%	28,8%
ECD Centre Policies	23,0%	64,7%	79,1%	56,1%	28,2%	68,1%	39,8%
Children's records	60,4%	75,0%	94,3%	33,9%	75,8%	93,8%	17,9%
Human Resource Management	38,9%	55,6%	67,7%	28,8%	43,7%	67,5%	23,8%
Governing Body information	51,7%	41,7%	38,2%	-13,5%	28,0%	24,3%	-3,7%
Financial administration	59,5%	59,5%	70,1%	10,6%	56,2%	71,4%	15,2%
Parental Involvement	25,0%	63,9%	36,4%	11,4%	44,4%	50,0%	5,6%
Premises	26,2%	33,3%	29,9%	3,7%	33,3%	41,8%	8,5%
Facilities	55,3%	59,8%	66,1%	10,8%	53,9%	73,4%	19,4%
Infrastructure	23,8%	78,6%	87,0%	63,2%	59,0%	90,8%	31,8%
Health, safety and nutrition	52,8%	56,9%	69,7%	16,9%	48,9%	61,3%	12,4%
Classroom Space	75,0%	77,8%	81,8%	6,8%	74,4%	88,1%	13,7%
Active Learning	23,8%	78,6%	87,0%	63,2%	59,0%	90,8%	31,8%
AVERAGE	34,3%	51,4%	56,6%	22,3%	44,4%	60,1%	15,7%

An average increase of 22.3 percentage points!

An increase of 15.7 percentage points!



Our Events During the Year

In addition to our programme activities, we hosted several successful events throughout the year. This included the following:

ECD Career Expo

On 26 August 2025, we took part in the Metro Central Education District's Career (MCED) Expo at Bergsig Primary School, Bonteheuwel.

This expo gave Grade 7 pupils from Bonteheuwel and surrounding areas the opportunity to learn about career paths and be inspired by messages of hope. The expo was hosted by MCED in partnership with local primary schools, and formed part of the Life Orientation programme.



Sewing Project Graduation

Ten women from Red Hill completed a seven-month sewing project course under our Red Hill ECD Project, supported by the Government of Monaco. This project was facilitated by a local entrepreneur Nolubabalo Mbanga in Masiphumelele. The programme equipped playgroup facilitators, caregivers, and community members with sewing skills. Participants created garments and items from scratch, from aprons to dresses. The project concluded with a certificate ceremony at the Cape Town Museum of Childhood on 17 March 2026, where the women showcased their handmade work.



ECD Exhibition at False Bay College

On 26 March 2026, we took part in False Bay College's ECD Principal Engagement Exhibition in Khayelitsha. The event gave us the opportunity to present our services directly to ECD principals.



Youth Career Expo in Retreat

On 23 and 24 April, CECD presented at the Youth Career Expo in Retreat. We enjoyed encouraging youth to pursue a career in early childhood development. Some 2,000 youth enjoyed the expo from areas all around Cape Town!



Child Protection Week

Child Protection Protests

During Child Protection Week, 25 May - 1 June 2025, communities in which CECD works, Red Hill and Ocean View, held protests to mark this important occasion. Families from our Family Outreach Programme, along with ECD teachers and librarians we partner with, joined together to advocate for the protection of young children.

Child Protection Activity

In addition to the Child Protection protests – CECD facilitated an age-appropriate activity to help children in Red Hill understand safety, their rights, and how to identify trusted adults they can approach when they feel unsafe. The activity encouraged participation, communication, and awareness in a child-friendly manner, while fostering a safe and supportive environment.

Child Protection - Parenting Workshops

Workshops were hosted in Red Hill, which aimed to equip caregivers with the knowledge and strategies to create a safe home environment. This included protecting infants and young children from hazardous objects, harmful substances, neglect, and abuse.



Opening MJA Educare

On 08 August 2025, CECD facilitated the opening of a new facility for MJA Daycare, an ECD centre on our Kouga ECD project. Thanks to the support of the Kouga Wind Farm Community Development Trust and Fly & Help, this ECD centre received a brand new building as part of the project's infrastructure work. It is now a spacious, resourced, safe and stimulating place of learning for the young children attending each day.



Opening of Angels Daycare Centre

On 5 November 2026, we celebrated a major milestone: Angels Daycare Centre in Kruisfontein moved from a wendy house into a brand-new brick-and-mortar building. Thanks to the support of the Kouga Wind Farm Community Development Trust and the RECM Foundation, the centre's young learners now have proper classrooms to grow and learn in.



Kouga End of Project Event

In August 2025, CECD celebrated the conclusion of the Kouga ECD Project with stakeholders, principals, and teachers - honouring five years of collaboration, growth, and meaningful impact in early childhood development.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Africa A+ Schools for their outstanding partnership, and to the Kouga Wind Farm Community Development Trust. Without their commitment and vision, this project and its far-reaching results would not have been possible.



City of Cape Town ECD Indaba Exhibition

From 5 to 7 November 2025, CECD took part in the City of Cape Town's ECD Indaba Exhibition, along with various other ECD organisations, at the Cape Town Civic Centre. This was an important opportunity for the ECD sector to hear directly from City officials and engage with various stakeholders.



CECD's ECD Conference

From 30 September to 2 October 2025 CECD, in partnership with the College of Cape Town, Crawford Campus, hosted our 17th national ECD conference, titled: **'Quality Early Childhood Development in South Africa: Celebrating Three Decades of ECD in South Africa – Lessons from the Past, Opportunities for the Present, and Shaping the Future.'** The conference took place face-to-face at the College of Cape Town, Crawford Campus, with 220 delegates. This was an opportunity to bring together a diverse and passionate community of ECD principals, teachers, students, activists, academic researchers, non-profit organisations, donors, government representatives, and legal advocates. Across three inspiring days, the conference offered rich opportunities to learn, reflect, and collaborate - featuring 35 breakaway sessions, 14 dynamic Khawuleza presentations, and four insightful panel discussions. A key takeaway was clear: every one of us has an essential role to play in ensuring quality early childhood development for all children. To read more information on the conference, you can follow this link: www.qualityecdconference.co.za.



Sincere Thanks

to all our funders, sponsors, partners and supporters for helping us put young children first!



Ian Palmer | Z. Tropper | Minrath Charitable Trust | Sarah Fox
Children's Convalescent Hospital | West Coast Community Trust |
Individual Donations | With special thanks to the ECD centres
and staff and caregivers who work with us.

100% of the Ditikeni distribution was used to provide ECD
programmes for black African children in South Africa.

Red Rocket includes Brandvalley Wind Farm (Pty) Ltd; Rietkloof
Wind Farm (RF) Pty Ltd; & Roggeveld Wind Power (RF) (Pty) Ltd.

Our Team

As at 31 March 2026
(photographs left to right, top to bottom)



Abigail Daniels - *ECD Assistant*
Alvita Julies - *Museum Assistant*
Amanda Mbali - *Community Engagement Officer*
Aziza Schreuder - *Development Worker*
Bomikazi Nomzanga - *Museum Visitor Experience Officer*
Boniswa Gquma-Lisa - *Office Administrator*
Bridget Kahts - *ECD Operations Manager*
Chanel Joseph - *Museum and Family Outreach Manager*
Charlotte Tinnion - *Strategic Projects Manager*
Claire Pearce - *Research and Communications Co-ordinator*
Eric Atmore - *Director*
Fatima Kelly - *Registration Assistant*
Gloria van Rensburg - *Family Outreach Worker*
Jessica Blom - *Deputy Director*
Kirsty Johnson - *Development Worker & ECD Trainer*
Lauren Haupt - *ECD Assistant*
Lisa Jurgens - *Family Outreach Worker*
Michaela Ashley-Cooper - *Research and Communications Manager*
Najwah Mukadam - *Events Co-Ordinator*
Navarne Weeder - *Museum Visitor Experience Officer*
Nontembiso Leve - *Family Outreach Worker*
Roz Witbooi - *General Manager*
Sarah Atmore - *Infrastructure Manager*
Tatum Dyson - *ECD Assistant*
Thembisa Nkohla - *Development Worker*
Yusrah Ehrenreich - *Advocacy and Social Justice Manager*
Zahra Manji - *Funding Manager*
Zena Haynes - *ECD Programme Manager*

Centre for Early Childhood Development

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