

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2024



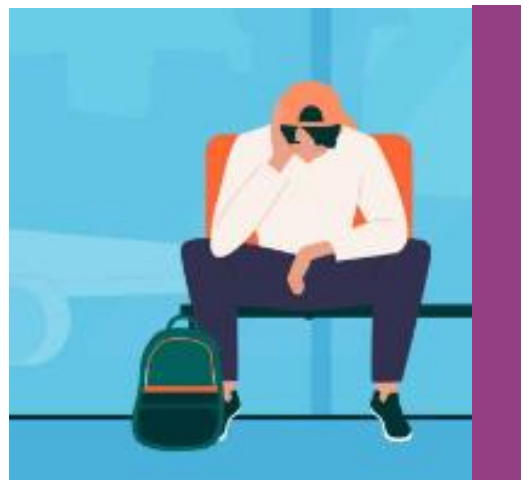
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Safety and security don't just happen; they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear.

— *Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa*

The September 2024 newsletter is delayed due to recent travel obligations but we wanted to share the exciting stories of SAPPIN and its individual organisations with you anyway.

Read about some of the wonderful things that happened during July – September 2024!



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY



South Africa is renowned for its rich tapestry of cultures, each contributing unique values, beliefs and practices that shape the parenting landscape. As a parenting support organisation operating in this vibrant context, it is essential to recognise and celebrate our diversity. Cultural competence is not merely an added benefit; it is a fundamental requirement for effectively supporting parents and fostering healthy family dynamics.

In September 2024, in celebration of Heritage Month, we took a step towards showcasing the beauty of diversity in parenting cultural practices through stories from the SAPPIN members. Staff members from the SAPPIN organisations were able to share some positive cultural practices that were used in their own upbringing and some that they pass on to their own children, as they raise them.

Represented here were the following cultures: Afrikaans, Jewish, Sepedi, Setswana, Swati as well as the Zulu culture. It would have been wonderful to share more diverse narratives and hopefully, we will be able to do so in the future but for now, we loved and enjoyed sharing these amazing tales that reminded us of the significance of parenting in one's life and the role that cultural practices play in the parenting space.

This was what was shared:

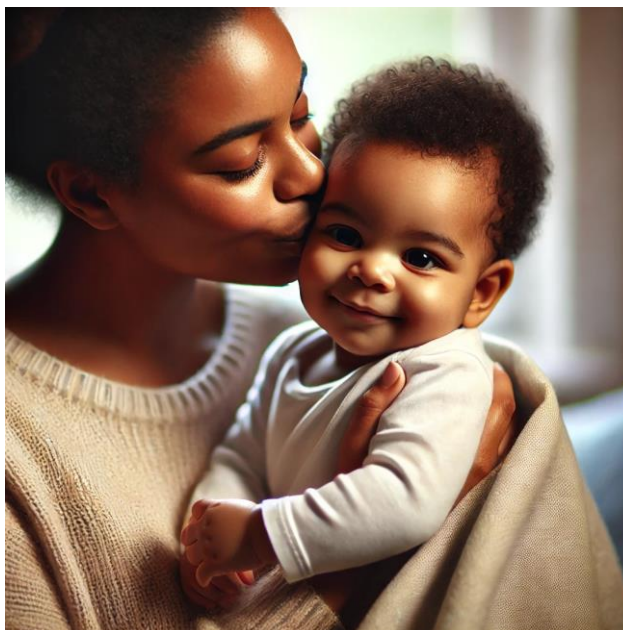
- Sepedi culture, parents give their children names that celebrate them. The name 'Sereto' is given and it celebrates who they are and indicates that they are capable of greatness.
- Memoirs from the Zulu and Swati cultures show how children are taught moral lessons through idioms, and how mothers and aunts come to help a new mother care for her infant child, sharing their knowledge and helping her practically care for her new baby. It also entails passing down knowledge of how to bury a baby's umbilical cord and how that connects them with their home. The babies remain in the home and isolated from the outside world for 3 months as a way of protection. Parents also teach their children to pray to God. We also heard that they have ceremonies where they celebrate with sage to connect with their ancestors.
- There were stories of how, in the Afrikaans culture, babies can be given biltong to help them along the developmental milestone of teething. The baby finds this soothing and enjoyable. The importance of music and learning about different composers as well as the passing down of the love for music, were shown to be central among Afrikaans people. We heard how this led one member to learn more about the impact and importance of music on the nervous system, as an adult.
- Narratives were shared about how Jewish people sit around a table and share meals and stories as a family.
- In the Setswana and Sepedi cultures idioms are also used to teach children and a central thread of these idioms for one member was, 'that when a family works together, they can achieve anything as well as how a task tackled by a group can be completed with ease'.

These practices connect us. We share similarities that we do not always realise but we also see the incredible unique values belonging to specific cultures. There is something that can be gained from each culture and as we carry on supporting parents, we realise the wonder of who they are and what they may want to pass on to their own children.

Moreover, cultural traditions often provide a framework for conflict resolution, discipline, and education. For instance, many African cultures prioritise storytelling as a means of teaching moral lessons and cultural values. By recognising and integrating these practices into support programs, organisations can enhance their relevance and effectiveness, fostering a deeper connection with the families they serve.

It is important for SAPPIN to stay informed about the cultural dynamics in South Africa and utilise resources that reflect the diversity of parenting styles. By integrating these principles, our organisations can effectively support parents while honouring the rich cultural heritage that exists in South Africa. This approach not only helps in building trust but also strengthens communities.

COMPENDIUM OF AFRICAN INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS



SAPPIN is privileged to be part of this compendium that was released by the African Early Childhood Network earlier this year. This compendium has international reach and allows SAPPIN to highlight the importance of collaboration and networking.

Find the compendium here: <https://afecn.org/compendium>

SIBAMBISENE GIVES HOPE TO PARENTS LIVING WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE



Throughout 2024, CWBSA launched the Sibambisene parenting programme in collaboration with NACOSA, aimed at supporting parents who use drugs. This innovative programme is designed to strengthen family relationships, improve parenting skills and create a stable environment for children. CWBSA trained staff from **8 implementing partners** across **4 provinces**: Gauteng, KZN, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape. Following a comprehensive **5-day training**, facilitators received ongoing remote coaching and quality monitoring visits to support implementation and skill enhancement.

Adapted from the evidence-based Sinovuyo Caring Families Programme for Young Children, the objectives of the Sibambisene are to:

- **Build positive parent-child relationships** by equipping parents with practical skills to engage meaningfully with their children.
- **Enhance self-care and mental well-being** among parents, fostering peer support.
- **Strengthen understanding** of children's rights, parental responsibilities, and available support services.
- **Equip parents with positive discipline strategies** and problem-solving skills to navigate challenges.
- **Encourage supportive family dynamics** by involving co-caregivers and extended family members.

The pilot phase of the Sibambisene has shown promise in fostering resilience and family cohesion by addressing core parenting skills, addiction and relational dynamics.

Approximately, 99% of participants in 3 of the implementing organisations were male and overall attendance has been very high in all groups. Feedback shared was that participants felt more confident to be part of their children's lives where they had not felt welcomed before. They are already advocating the programme to other parents they know.

As one participant in Durban remarked: "It has felt great to be seen" and one father noted: "... helped me connect with my children but it also improved my relationship with my own parents".

Moving forward, CWBSA will refine session lengths, enhance co-caregiver involvement, and explore opportunities for further rollout. Together, we are building stronger, more supportive communities!

To find out more, please contact Anna Booij at anna@cwbsa.org

Parentline SA



Remember to share the Parentline number with your network and friends.
To use Parentline SA WhatsApp “hi” to +27 87 813 4290 and follow the prompts.

Topics currently covered on this low-data, easy-to-use support chatbot include the following:

1. Child Behaviour	2. Child Development	3. My Well-Being	4. First 1000 Days
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Always Crying 2. Behaves Badly 3. Positive Parenting 4. Biting 5. Hitting 6. How to Play 7. Self-regulation 8. Ignoring 9. Tidying Up 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Touchpoints 2. Social Touchpoints 3. Sleep, Sit, Activity 4. Screen time 5. Child Sexual Development (about to be added) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I Am Stressed 2. I Am Angry 3. Parental Confidence 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First 1000 Days 2. Breastfeeding 3. Breastfeeding Time 4. Birth Breastfeeding 5. Healthcare 6. Raising Child 7. Support Details

Child Nutrition will soon be added. The topics currently cover the years 0 - 6 years old for children. We will be covering the years 7 - 12 years old by the end of the first quarter of 2025 and 13 - 17 by the end of 2025.

Deepening Nutrition, Education and Parenting: EAT LOVE PLAY TALK's Approach Using Local Trainers in ECD Centres



As we wrap up 2024, the EAT LOVE PLAY TALK (ELPT) parent education programme has reached a meaningful milestone on its journey to empower parents and caregivers across South Africa. This year, the integrated programme took great strides with its adaptable facilitation and "train-the-trainer" model, which has proven to be a powerful approach to bringing sustainable change in local communities. By equipping local leaders and Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners with the skills and confidence to deliver essential nutrition, early learning and responsive caregiving guidance, EAT LOVE PLAY TALK has planted seeds for a healthier, more engaged generation.

The EAT LOVE PLAY TALK (ELPT) programme was delivered in several communities across South Africa in 2024 namely;

- Hammarsdale, KZN
- Worcester, WC
- Randfontein, GP
- uPhongolo, KZN
- Molteno, EC
- Rustenburg, NW
- Nkomazi, MP



2024 IMPACT REACH

Key Learnings from the ELPT Programme

1. Building a Network of Master Trainers

The creation of a robust network of master trainers has been one of the cornerstones of ELPT's success. These trainers are not just educators; they are community leaders who understand the unique challenges and strengths of their local environments. By empowering them to lead, we've established a system of mutual support and knowledge-sharing that has proven invaluable. As the programme scales, experienced trainers mentor newer ones, ensuring that the quality of training remains consistent while fostering a collaborative learning environment.



2. Prioritising Facilitation Skills

We've learned that strong facilitation skills are essential for the success of our trainers. The initial 3-day intensive training focuses on these skills, preparing master trainers to handle diverse group dynamics and effectively communicate key messages. This foundation is crucial, as it boosts their confidence and ability to model effective facilitation techniques, which are then passed on to caregivers. The result is a ripple effect where the quality of training at the top cascades down to the grassroots level.

3. Using Contextually Relevant Stories and Resources

One of the most powerful aspects of the ELPT programme is its use of context-appropriate stories and resources. These narratives resonate deeply with local communities, making the messages we're trying to convey not only relevant but also memorable. The flexibility to adapt these stories to fit the specific needs of different communities ensures that the training remains engaging and impactful. This adaptability is further enhanced by the practical resources we provide, such as Book Dash books and food cards, which caregivers can use in their daily lives to reinforce what they've learned.



4. Simplifying Messages While Providing Comprehensive Support

We've found that simplicity is key when it comes to delivering health messages that stick. The ELPT programme emphasises clear, straightforward messaging supported by comprehensive guides for trainers and caregivers alike. Each session has a specific goal, which helps keep the training focused and ensures that the core messages are consistently

communicated. This approach not only makes the sessions more engaging but also ensures that participants walk away with a clear understanding of what they need to do.

5. Maintaining Close Proximity Between Training and Supervision

Another critical factor in the success of the train-the-trainer model is the close proximity of master training and ongoing supervision to the programme rollout. Continuous support is provided to facilitators to ensure that the training sessions are not only effective but also enjoyable for participants. This ongoing supervision helps maintain the integrity of the key messages, ensuring they are passed down accurately from master trainers to facilitators and ultimately to caregivers.



Challenges and Adaptations

While the train-the-trainer model has proven to be a powerful tool for scaling up public health messages, it is not without its challenges. One of the biggest hurdles is ensuring that the key messages remain intact as they are passed down through the training chain. This requires a careful balance between customisation for local relevance and adherence to the core objectives of the programme. To address this, we've established feedback loops through platforms like WhatsApp, allowing trainers at all levels to communicate challenges and insights, which are then used to continuously refine the programme.

Additionally, the scale of data collection required to monitor and evaluate the programme's effectiveness can be daunting, especially in resource-limited settings. We've piloted the use of WhatsApp for data collection, which has improved accessibility but also highlighted the need for more scalable, automated solutions in the future.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the ELPT programme, it's clear that the train-the-trainer model offers a sustainable and scalable method for disseminating critical public health messages. By building a strong network of master trainers, prioritising facilitation skills and using contextually relevant resources, we've been able to make a meaningful impact in

communities across South Africa. However, the journey is far from over. As we continue to adapt and refine our approach, we remain committed to empowering local communities and fostering positive, lasting change for the children and families we serve.

Through the lessons we've learned and the challenges we've overcome, we are more determined than ever to do more, together. For the South African Parenting Programme Implementation Network (SAPPIN), EAT LOVE PLAY TALK stands as a testament to the power of community-centred, scalable interventions in the nutrition education field. As we look towards 2025, the impact of this year's efforts will continue to grow as trained facilitators pass on their knowledge, fostering resilience and self-sufficiency within their communities. We have big plans for scaling into more centres and more communities in 2025.

Together with implementing partners, we are paving the way for more adaptable, responsive, and impactful early childhood programmes across South Africa, keeping child health and family empowerment at the heart of our collective mission. We welcome collaboration and if you are seeking support in delivering nutrition education to parents, we invite you to reach out to us for partnership opportunities.

Find out more about ELPT on our website: <https://domore.org.za>

TRANSFORMING PARENTING SUPPORT – A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



Parenting, recognised as a cornerstone of child development, confronts multifaceted challenges worldwide. Socio-economic disparities, limited access to health care, inadequate educational provisions and societal pressures collectively contribute to the complexities encountered by parents. However, within the South African context, these challenges are compounded by unique historical, socio-economic and political factors.

Despite the nation's progressive policies and commitment to children's rights, deep-rooted inequalities persist, alongside insufficient support structures for parents and caregivers.

South Africa's child population, estimated at 22 million, remains particularly vulnerable due to widespread poverty, inequality and associated risks.

The government, a signatory to various international and regional treaties safeguarding children's rights, bears the responsibility of providing comprehensive and sustainable parenting support. The South African Parenting Programme Implementors Network (SAPPIN) envisions, for the period 2024–2030, the universalisation of parenting support aimed at fostering caregiving practices across the lifespan. This initiative seeks to ensure that South African parents and caregivers receive the requisite services and assistance essential for nurturing well-rounded children.

Read more - https://support-parents.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/South-Africa_SAPPIN_Final.pdf