



What work does Wordworks do?

Wordworks is a South African nonprofit organisation that focuses on early language and literacy development in the first eight years of children's lives.

Since 2005 we have worked in underresourced communities with those adults best positioned to impact on young children's language and literacy development – parents and caregivers, family and community members, home-visitors, early childhood development practitioners and Grade R to Grade 3 teachers.

We support a growing network of individuals, schools, organisations and institutions that promote the importance of, and work for the improvement of children's early language and literacy, through their association with our programmes and materials.

We provide initial training and support for those using our resource-based programmes in homes, classrooms and community settings.

Programmes are sustained through ongoing relationships with Wordworks, including refresher training and events, input and guidance, access to resources and opportunities, sharing of learning and support for programme monitoring and evaluation.

Partners are encouraged to join Wordworks in public education and advocacy, sharing knowledge and ideas about how to build early language and literacy so as to open doors for all our children.

What is our approach to language and literacy?

Our programmes all include messaging about the importance of language for literacy development and the need to build children's home language in the early years as a foundation for the acquisition of a second language.

We advocate for children to have access to multilingual, language-rich stories and books, as well as meaningful experiences with print.

We also know that letter-sound knowledge and phonological awareness are key predictors of whether children learn to read and write and we have developed resources and guidelines to support these important foundations for literacy.

Our programmes are based on an emergent literacy perspective and the idea that learning to read and write is a process that happens over time in the context of supportive and responsive relationships.



Are you interested in knowing more about Wordworks' programmes?

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Find out more

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Every word counts

Supporting babies' and young childrens' learning

This programme can be used

across a range of community settings to introduce those who care for and work with babies and young children to new knowledge about early learning and practical ideas for supporting the development of language, early literacy and maths concepts, from birth to 5 years of age.

Wordworks trains trainers and equips organisations to integrate the programme and resources into their work with parents and caregivers through home visits or parenting group sessions. ECD practitioners and playgroup facilitators can use what they learn through Every word counts in their daily interactions with children in creches and playgroups.

This programme is for parents and caregivers of babies and children up to 5 years of age.



Home-School Partnership Programme

Supporting informal learning at home

The programme can be used to

facilitate a learning space for parents in which to share knowledge and ideas about children's language and early literacy development. The programme builds co-operation between families and schools, and encourages parents in their role as their children's first teachers.

Wordworks trains, provides resources and mentors teachers to facilitate weekly workshops for groups of parents of children aged five to eight years. The workshops run for two hours a week over eight weeks.

This programme is for parents and caregivers of children aged 4-7 years.



An emergent literacy in-service teacher training programme

The programme can be used to provide resource-based training to strengthen the teaching of language and emergent literacy in Grade R.

Wordworks trains and mentors Grade R teachers and STELLAR trainers. The programme offers 5-day training and monthly workshops for Grade R teachers to support their classroom practice within a 2-week story based framework. The programme aims to give opportunities for reflection and planning and deepens teachers' understanding of the important role they play in building early language and literacy.

This programme is for Grade R teachers working with children aged 5-6 years.



Ready, steady... read and write!

An early literacy support programme

The programme can be used in Grade R to build a solid language and literacy foundation and as an early intervention in Grade One. It can also be used to support Grade Two and Three children to learn to speak, read and write in a second language.

Wordworks trains and mentors site Co-ordinators who manage and support tutors to work with pairs of children, on a weekly basis for at least six months. Many of the tutors are women who volunteer from local school communities. No qualifications are required.

This programme is for tutors working with children aged 5-8 years.

