



Early Learning Special Needs Experts

Gauteng Grade R Improvement Programme

Nature of the contract

This is a one-year research and development project. Wordworks is looking for a number of specialists to make up a multi-disciplinary team.

- Immediate start desirable, dates to be negotiated
- Full or part time, full year or short term - hours and rate to be negotiated
- Based in Cape Town or Johannesburg/ Pretoria

Background

Wordworks is a technical partner in a multi-stakeholder project, led by the Gauteng Department of Education, now moving into its third year of work. The programme provides daily classroom programme activities and resources aligned with CAPS, together with teacher training and system support to achieve improvement in Grade R language and mathematics learning in Gauteng. Training has been rolled out to all public ordinary schools for Home Language in 2022 and will be for Mathematics in 2023.

The classroom programmes are designed to promote inclusivity in the classroom and special needs teachers have been encouraged to attend training along with teachers from public ordinary schools. At the same time, the project is committed to a more rigorous engagement with the requirements of learners with special needs to ensure that LSEN teachers and ultimately special needs learners benefit from the programme.

In 2023, Wordworks is leading on a research and development project that will put forward recommendations, where appropriate, for cost-effective adaptations to the Grade R language and mathematics classroom programmes and training materials to ensure a good fit for different special needs constituencies.

Purpose of the Early Learning Special Needs experts

The experts will work closely with the Gauteng Inclusion and Special Schools Directorate as well as the ECD Curriculum Directorates, under Wordworks leadership, *as a multidisciplinary team*, collectively bringing together **knowledge and experience** in the following areas:

- Classroom-based /field research
- Early learning curriculum/ materials development/ analysis
- Education for young learners with speech, language and/or hearing, sight or intellectual challenges

The experts will also have knowledge and experience in the following domains of **specialised support**:

- Health, including mental health
- Vision (blind, low vision/partial sightedness, deaf blindness)
- Hearing (deaf, hard of hearing)
- Communication (little or no functional speech, requiring Augmentative and Alternative Communication)
- Motor
- Cognition (moderate or severe)
- Neurological and neurodevelopmental impairments (e.g. epilepsy, cerebral palsy, attention deficit disorder, specific learning disabilities, traumatic brain injury, foetal alcohol syndrome and autism)
- Behaviour and social skills

*Drawing on each team member's expertise and availability, the team will **undertake the following research activities***

- Field research into the uptake and curriculum differentiation in special education classes. This can include the adaptation of the classroom programmes.
- Research engagements with special needs teachers, advisors, curriculum experts and academics (e.g. interviews, focus groups)
- Desktop analysis of the existing Grade R Improvement Project's materials and methodology to support Grade R learners with special needs.

The goal is for the team to **deliver**:

- An assessment of the extent to which the Home Language and Mathematics classroom and training activities and materials are useful in the special education context.
- Recommendations, as appropriate, for cost-effective modifications that would improve their fit for purpose
- A framework for a supplementary support pack (*notes/ guidelines, adjusted activities/materials and training module*) for the Grade R Improvement Project
- Recommendations for improvements on the current approach to curriculum differentiation in the core materials and training modules.

Person specification

Education & Experience requirements:

- Bachelor's **degree** in Education. A specialisation in Special Needs Education. (A Master's degree would be an advantage).
- Proven experience as a **special needs education** teacher/advisor/ academic/ specialist (Experience with more than one special needs area would be an advantage)
- Experience of working with **young learners** with at least one of the special needs listed above (Experience in Grade R would be an advantage)
- Knowledge of current special needs education **Home Language and/ or Mathematics curriculum** focus areas, as well as teaching and assessment methodologies for the Foundation Phase (Knowledge of Grade R curriculum would be an advantage).
- **Research and/ or materials development** experience in the field of early education (Special needs education experience in research/ materials would be an advantage)

Personal Qualities

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English (An African language and/or South African Sign Language would be an advantage)
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to work well in a team
- Solution-oriented, goal-directed, resourceful and resilient
- Accountable, methodical, reliable
- Ability to take initiative and work independently
- Comfortable with feedback and direction

Applications

Please submit

1. A letter of motivation which clearly
 - Motivates your interest in this work
 - Sets out how your application meets the requirements for this position
 - Specifies the particular areas of expertise you would bring to the envisaged multi-disciplinary team
 - Indicates where you are based, the number of days per month and which months you would be available in 2023, your preferred daily rate (you may provide a range)
2. Your abridged CV (no more than 5 pages)
3. Names and contact details of three referees. Indication of the context in which you worked with each one. (Please advise your referees that we may be in contact with them)

If you have queries about the nature of the contract, please contact Kerry Saadien-Raad (Project Manager) kerry@wordworks.org.za

Please send your **5-page CV and a 1-page motivation letter to recruitment@wordworks.org.za by February 21, 2023**. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted by **March 01, 2023**.

Please visit www.wordworks.org.za for more information on the organisation.