

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE



*Celebrating 28 years of Making a Difference where it matters most . . .
. . . to young children
1993 - 2021*

Vision:

“All children should enjoy a gentle, just and stimulating childhood”.

Mission:

“Lesedi Educare is committed to making a difference where it matters most . . . to young children, by supporting holistic Early Childhood Development (ECD) through its training, education and support programmes.

We firmly believe that positive early learning opportunities and experiences are of lasting benefit and lay the vital foundation for positive young adults who are able to realise their innate potential, thus contributing fully to the development of their communities and to society as a whole.”

Background:

- Lesedi Educare is an accredited Early Childhood Development (ECD) Resource and Training Organisation, based in Bloemfontein, Free State province, South Africa. Although the major part of Lesedi’s work is in the Free State, the organisation also provides its services to communities in the Eastern Cape bordering on the southern Free State.
- Since 1993, through its training, education and support services, Lesedi has actively reached out to young children and families living in difficult circumstances in both rural and urban communities. Lesedi has grown very significantly over the years: in 1993 Lesedi reached 288 children living on farms, and the organisation currently reaches a total 12,440 children through the various components of its Integrated ECD Care Package.
- Lesedi has 21 permanent and 4 part-time staff members, and has an active Board of Directors who meet regularly.



- Lesedi networks nationally and provincially with a wide variety of relevant stakeholders, and is a member of the National ECD Alliance, SA Congress for ECD, NECTA (E. Cape) and the Ntataise Network.



- Over the years Lesedi has won a number of awards in recognition of its contribution to ECD in South Africa, with the most recent being in December 2020 when Lesedi received the SmartStart Kganya Award “for always looking for ways to maximise our reach and improve delivery”.

Programme Approach:

Deep concern for the well-being of young children has dictated the direction which the organisation’s programmes have taken over the years, and this concern is at the core of every step which Lesedi takes.

Through the various components of its “Integrated ECD Care Package” (IECP), Lesedi responds in an integrated and holistic way to the needs and well-being of young children.

Central to Lesedi’s IECP is the firm belief that community ECD Centres and Structured Community Playgroups are well placed to provide valuable nodes of early education, care, support and community outreach, focusing on young children and families living in especially difficult circumstances.

Lesedi’s IECP focuses on:

◆ *The quality of ECD provision for young children through community ECD Centres:*

- ECD Level 4 Practitioner Training Programme,
- ECD Centre Enrichment Programme



◇ ***The quality of childhood for young children and their well-being in the family, at home and in the broader community***, especially reaching out to young children who, because of their life circumstances, have no access to any ECD programme.

- Community Development and Family Support Programme which includes the Level 4 community development training of ECD Outreach Practitioners (ECDOP's), who work through community ECD Centres with the community in the vicinity of the ECD Centre, on a variety of interventions based on the needs of the community, and especially the needs of young children, eg. weekly structured playgroups for children who have no access to ECD provision using the ECD Centre as a valuable resource.
- The SmartStart ECD Social Franchise is also now included in our outreach to children who have no access to ECD, and this is facilitated through SmartStart Playgroups and Day Care Mother Groups. In July 2018, Lesedi was appointed as a Regional SmartStart Franchisor.

◇ ***Direct outreach:***

- Through Lesedi's 2 Come-and-Play Buses and Mobile ECD Unit, reaching out to the many young children and their parents/caregivers, who are outside of any ECD provision, especially in informal settlement communities and isolated rural communities. This is facilitated through a structured playgroup programme, and every effort is made to include young children with disabilities in all playgroup activities.



Note: Lesedi's accredited Level 4 training for ECD Practitioners and ECD Outreach Practitioners leads to nationally recognized qualifications and credits in Early Childhood Development and Community Development.

Through the 3 components of its IECF, Lesedi works towards providing "a gentle, just and stimulating childhood for all children" (Lesedi's Vision).

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on our Programmes:

Of Special Note: During 2020 all of our programmes were disrupted by the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, and it was certainly a very different and unpredictable time to be operating as an ECD organisation, but also a very valuable time for self-reflection and adjusting our response.

- **Bus and Mobile Structured Playgroup Programme:** With extended lockdowns in place and the suspension of our playgroup programmes, nutrition and food security became the focus of our attention. Our house-to-house delivery of food parcels enabled our playgroup facilitators to keep contact with our children and their families, and to focus on their well-being as well as to encourage and support the continued enjoyment of early learning and fun play activities at home.



After a very uncertain 7 months of COVID 19 and various levels of lockdown, we were able to welcome our children back to playgroup sessions on 19 October 2020. We worked hard at making sure we were ready and safe for our children to return. It was a long road and

through thorough planning, and much teamwork, we have put all the measures in place to ensure a continued, risk-minimised, early learning environment.



- Presently we are reaching 640 young children directly through our Bus and Mobile ECD Unit Structured Playgroup Programme;
- Our 2 Come-and-Play Bus Teams facilitate 16 (8 per Bus) regular weekly playgroup sessions in 9 informal settlement communities on the outskirts of Bloemfontein.
- Our 2 Mobile ECD Units facilitate 16 (8 per Mobile unit) regular weekly playgroup sessions in communities in 11 rural Free State Xhariep District communities.
- All playgroups focus on young children with no access to ECD, due to their difficult life circumstances.
- Sustainable Nutrition: We have continued with our focus on sustainable nutrition and food security, and are in the process of assisting our playgroup families to establish household food gardens.



- **Expansion of Lesedi’s SmartStart Outreach:** In addition to our existing areas of operation in the Central Free State, after in-depth consultations between the SmartStart Hub and ourselves, Lesedi took over existing SmartStart Social Franchise Programme outreaches in the Eastern and Central-Western Free State as from July 2020.
- **ECD and Community Development Training Programmes:** Although contact training was disrupted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, our digital lives have now “taken off”, and our trainers are delivering training using digital platforms, enabling us to continue with our training programmes. Going forward, we envisage facilitating “blended training” which will be a combination of digital and contact sessions.

Outreach Statistics through Lesedi’s IECP:

ECD Practitioners reached:

62 ECD Practitioners in training
126 ECD Practitioners awaiting verification by the ETDP-SETA
 188

ECD Outreach Practitioners reached (Com.Dev):

30 ECDOP’s in training
65 ECDOP’s awaiting verification by the ETDP-SETA
 95

Number of ECD Centres reached :

176

Children reached :

640 Directly through Bus and Mobile Unit Playgroups
10560 Indirectly through community ECD Centres
 11200

Parents / Caregivers reached:

268 Directly through Playgroup Progr. (UNICEF Parent Support Progr.)
4576 Indirectly through community ECD Centres & Trainees (estimated)
 4844

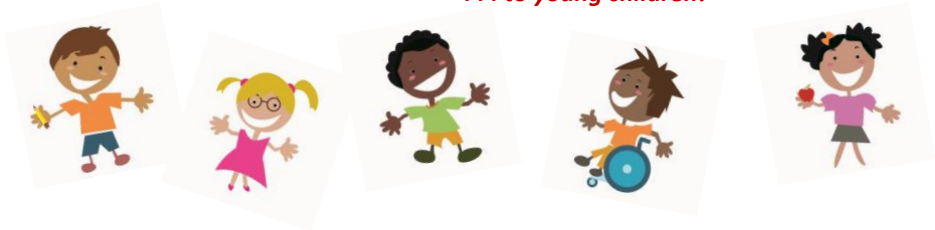
SmartStart

180 SmartStarters
 1236 Children outside of ECD reached

TOTALS:

1371 Children and Adults reached directly by Lesedi
16372 Children and Adults reached indirectly by Lesedi

***Access to a gentle childhood is a right which all children should enjoy,
But in the far-from-ideal world in which we live,
It is the children who suffer most, and a gentle childhood is not theirs to enjoy.
The future of our country, and indeed our world,
Lies in very small hands, and their future lies in our hands!
We all need to make a difference where it matters most . . .
. . . to young children!***



Contact Details

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Registrations:

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PBO: 930005573 (Tax Exemption & Section 18A)

Accreditation: ETDP10024

March 2021.