

# 1 Introduction

#### SOUTH AFRICAN STATE OF NUTRITION

Stunting effects 27% of children under five years old

46% of SA households bring home less than R1,000 per month

Obesity: 13% of children > 5 years in SA (more than double the global average)





The South African based EAT LOVE PLAY TALK Parent Education Programme has been developed for Early Childhood Development (ECD) principals, practitioners and playgroup facilitators to engage in conversations and activities with parents and caregivers of children up to 5 years of age on the themes of: healthy eating, building loving relationships, playful learning and language development.

This light touch programme uses train the trainer approach with local communities to see the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of both educatioan and nutrition. Research provides evidence that parent education delivered by local facilitators in community-based programmes can be implemented with great success (Baker, 2014; Carter, 1996, in Samuelson, 2009:6).

Nutrition messaging can be delivered by paraprofessional facilitators in community contexts with great success. Recent developments in the field of parent education programmes is the inclusion of local parents or practitioners as group programme facilitators in community settings (Day etal.,2012; Ronaasen, Steenkamp, Williams, Finnemore & Eley, 2021).

The sessions include opportunities for participants to share what they know from their own experience and to gain new information which is based on guidelines provided by the Department of Health and nutritional researchers. The sessions are fun, interactive, and informative using graphics with embedded public health and play based messaging.

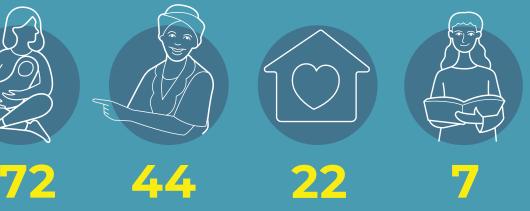
## 2 Methodology

#### A pilot project was conducted in 4 communities across South Africa.

Using group work principles and online training sessions to support and equip the master trainers (n=7), they trained 44 facilitators from 22 ECD centres. Reaching a total of 572 caregivers of children (ages 0-5 years). Survey data and ongoing monitoring and evaluation measures provided attendance and on-going process data for pilot evaluation that support the pilot goal which was to embed public health nutrition messages into parent education resources and deliver them through locally run parenting groups

#### HOW IT WORKS

- NKOMAZI | UPHONGOLO | MKHUZE | WORCESTER ----



ers Facilitators ECD Centres Master Trainers

Children 0-5 years



## 3 Results

Improvement in nutrition knowledge was recorded through pre and post KAP questionaires, as well as qualitative feedback focus groups. Lessons learnt in the designing and creation of the material will be shared. This pilot has lessons and evidence for social work educators and group work specialists working in community based contexts.

#### FACILITATOR TRAINING FINDINGS...

What did you like about the training?

I like the training as we are working as a group and sharing some ideas.

I learn it's easy to communicate with others even if you don't know them and children need love to talk about what ever trouble them.



26,1%
Emerging (happens sometimes)

Training review feedback:

Now that you have had the introductory training, how confident to you feel about delivery ELPT to parents? n = 80





Presentation skills - presents key messages clearly in an understandable language n = 23

Not very confident

## 4 Key Messages

- Introduction to responsive caregiving
   Pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Complementary feeding +6 months
   Role of affordable protein
   Importance of fruit and vegetables
- Sources of good carbohydrates
   Family togetherness

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### 5 Conclusions

Build the capacity of ECD centre principals and practitioners to facilitate parent support groups linking to education and nutrition.

Facilitators have a better understanding of the importance of good nutrition and healthy eating habits for young children. The use of a train the trainer model is ideal for equipping ECD principals and practitioners with necessary group work skills for parent engagement.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS



Supporting public health messaging should be a priority in group work interventions because of the link to public services in under-resourced area's



When training community based facilitators to deliver public health messaging, group work skills are vital for success.



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