Enhancing Parental Engagement: Assessing the impact of the 'Caregiver Learning through Play' Programme in South Africa
The Consortium

The Learning through Play consortium members are:

**Prime Partner**: Experience in curriculum-based ECD Parenting and Play programmes and NGO training in 7 provinces

**Lead Partner in M&E and Advocacy**: Experience in integrated ECD programming across 5 provinces, M&E & Advocacy

**ECD Network and Implementing Partner**: Network of 21 ECD organisations. Over 40 years experience in curriculum development, programming & networking in 7 provinces

**Implementing Partner**: Experience in evidence-based Curriculum development, Parenting and Play programmes in 2 provinces
Caregivers are empowered in their role as educators and gain knowledge and skills to engage in and actively incorporate Learning through Play (LtP) in their daily interactions with their children.

Practitioners (including community healthcare workers, social workers, ECD practitioners, etc.) understand their role in facilitating playful interactions between caregivers and children and are capacitated to engage with caregivers to facilitate LtP in the home.

Practitioner training providers include the active engagement and support of caregivers as a core component in their training programmes, with an emphasis on LtP.

ECD administrators and policy makers understand and integrate home-based LtP into programmatic implementation, training, and quality assurance.
Beneficiaries, Partners and Stakeholders in the Project

The Lego Foundation
Local Government
Provincial Government
National Government
Business Sector
Community Stakeholders and Community Based Organisations
Consortium Partners who implement the programme

Applying a Whole of Society Approach

Funded by the Lego Foundation
Department of Basic Education, Department of Social Development, Department of Health, Further and Higher Education Institutions, Business Sector as Nutrition Partners
Local community structures and grassroots community based organisations as partners
Four implementation partners in 7 provinces of South Africa
Target caregivers and ECD practitioners of 600000 children under 6 years of age
The methodological approach

Curriculum and Delivery Strategy
- The CLTP curriculum is evidence-based
- Delivered face-to-face and instructor lead
- Two sessions of 4 hours
- Followed by digital messaging support

Programme Focus
- Responsive care parenting
- Learning through Play (LtP) interactions between caregivers and young children (0-6 years) in the home

Impact Measures and Indicators
- The programme's impact was assessed through an initial evaluation of Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) of caregivers around the importance of play and monitoring of caregivers’ stress and depression levels.

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## Progress to date (1.5 years into implementation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Reach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Level</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Caregivers reached</td>
<td>123,849</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practitioners reached</td>
<td>2,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systems Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration of aspects of CLTP into DBE’s National Parenting Program (NPP)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support to DBE’s NPP roll out</td>
<td>4 provinces</td>
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Impact Progress (Caregiver Level)

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
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<tr>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRACTICE</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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Emerging Themes and Trends:
Motivation and Digital Messaging

- Eager to learn
- Want to improve own and children’s lives
- Perceived increase in employability
- Meal vouchers and nutritional support addresses food insecurity
- Certificates and recognition

Digital Key messaging

- Well received
- Not main locus of awareness
- Worked better for Outcome 1 intervention than for Outcome 2
Emerging Themes and Trends:
Attitude towards Learning through Play (LtP)

Before:
Beliefs focused on love and basic needs, not play.
Views play as a distraction from learning

After:
Beliefs shifted to appreciate the importance of holistic development
Now encourages children to play
Emerging Themes and Trends:
Attitude towards Memorisation and Rote Learning

Before:
Memorisation and Rote Learning seen as important

After:
Play and holistic development is a key aspect
Reduced focus on memorization and rote learning
Emerging Themes and Trends: Attitude towards the role of ECD centres and programming

Before:
- ECD centre programme has sole responsibility for children’s learning
- Parental role is limited to meeting basic needs

After:
- Play and holistic development in ECD centre programmes is a key aspect of future success
- Shared and supportive role between ECD centre programme and caregivers to promote holistic development and learning through play
Emerging Themes and Trends:
Play can happen anywhere and without toys

Before:
Believes that children NEED toys to play
No time to play with children

After:
Shift in attitude to acknowledge that play can happen anywhere any time and no special toys are needed
Still struggling to find time to play with children
Home environments are not as conducive to play as they would like it to be
Emerging Themes and Trends:
Implementation and Practice

Focus area for deeper learning and better emphasis in 2023

- Possibly a narrow understanding of the role of play on development
- Ages and stages of play not explicit
- Unsure how to play with babies and very young children
Emerging Themes and Trends:
Parent Child Bond and Relationship

Caregivers report that children demonstrated:

- Improved communication skills
- Improved social skills

Some concerns about blurred boundaries between being children's friend vs when discipline is needed

Relationship improved
Thank You

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ELRU
The LEGO Foundation