

Building education on solid early development foundation

Basic education is once again in the spotlight following the release of the matric results by the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga.



© rawpixel – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

Although a higher pass rate was achieved for the class of 2017, Candice Potgieter, CEO of The Unlimited Child, maintains that it is an opportune time to reflect on the overall state of education in South Africa – and in particular Early Childhood Education (ECE). Potgieter says the fact that approximately less than 50% of preschool children in disadvantaged communities in South Africa currently have access to quality ECE is bound to directly influence matric results.

“When you build a house, you should build it on a solid foundation so that it will stand strong. The same principle can be applied to ECE. Proper groundwork in the formative years will ensure success later on in life – if a child has a good foundation of numeracy and literacy, their potential to succeed is much greater,” says Potgieter.

She explains that learning through play with appropriate and quality resources has a powerful effect on a child’s formal education. Research such as the longitudinal study conducted by James Heckman has shown that children who have been through an early childhood development (ECD) programme are more likely to thrive in school, embark on tertiary education, find a job and eventually make a positive contribution in creating the foundation for a prosperous society.

Potgieter is of the opinion that although early childhood education should be viewed as a long term investment, it could potentially be the most cost effective investment yielding the greatest gains for us as a country.

“Learning is a continuous process that starts much earlier than school-going age. It begins at birth and this country needs focus on assisting parents and caregivers to ensure that children are school-ready when they enter primary school. This will definitely result in setting up our schools and teachers for success,” concludes Potgieter.

For more information, visit www.theunlimitedchild.org.