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SEPTEMBER 2026

How To Lighten Your Parental Emotional Load

Can We End Child Stunting In SA By 2030?

Big Dreams Don't Need A Classroom

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The Hidden Emotional Load on South African Parents



South African parents are carrying more than packed lunches and busy schedules, they are carrying an unseen emotional load shaped by safety concerns, economic pressure and work-life demands. Kelly Eyre, Quality and Pedagogy Lead, Dibber South Africa, explores how strong early years education partnerships can help lighten that burden for families.



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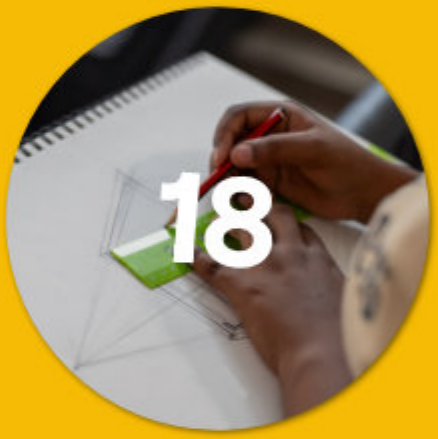


Can South Africa End Child Stunting by 2030?

More than a quarter of South African children under the age of five are stunted. In 2026, the state will embark on a mission to end child stunting by 2030 and tackle malnutrition among young children. Achieving it will require sustained partnership, disciplined resource allocation and targeted technical expertise.

Big Dreams Don't Need a Classroom

As learners begin considering their next step after school, many families face an important question: What does higher education look like when flexibility and personalised learning have always been part of the journey?





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We're into Spring and it's the beginning of a new cycle in so many ways. You all would've noticed that the last few issues have been heavily focused on supporting parents of older kids, particularly matriculants. This issue would like to take a little break from the intensity of matric and turn our heads towards the little ones again.

How many of us are aware of the emotional and cognitive loads that we carry as parents? Someone once told me that you can't fill another's cup when yours is empty. Kelly Eyre, Quality and Pedagogy Lead at Dibber South Africa, reminds us that when we put in the hard yards early on, we can lighten the load in your children's later years.

We also bring you four amazing South African children's books that explain the world we occupy from a distinctly local perspective in the most creative ways.

On a more serious note, more than a quarter of our children under the age of five are stunted. We take a look at how the government and private sector are working together to end stunting by 2030.

It is also with great pride that we have partnered with EduXplore 2026, South Africa's largest series of homeschooling events across the country. If you're attending, pop round to our stand and say hi!

And as ever, remember that your best is good enough.

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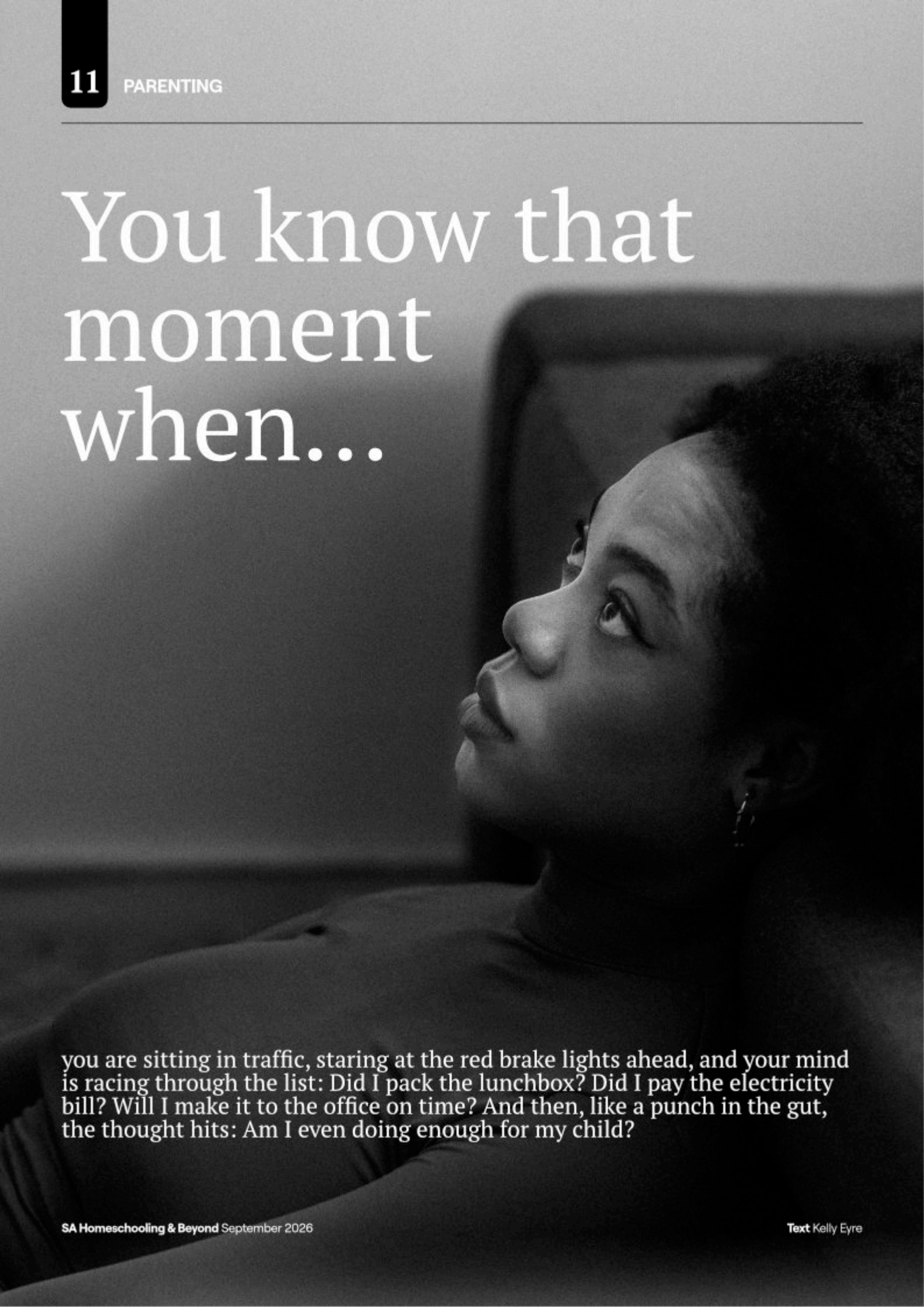
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You know that moment when...



you are sitting in traffic, staring at the red brake lights ahead, and your mind is racing through the list: Did I pack the lunchbox? Did I pay the electricity bill? Will I make it to the office on time? And then, like a punch in the gut, the thought hits: Am I even doing enough for my child?

Text Kelly Eyre

The Hidden Emotional Load on South African Parents



South African parents are carrying more than packed lunches and busy schedules — they are carrying an unseen emotional load shaped by safety concerns, economic pressure and work-life demands. Kelly Eyre, Quality and Pedagogy Lead, Dibber South Africa, explores how strong early years education partnerships can help lighten that burden for families.

This is the reality for so many South African parents. We are carrying an invisible weight that no one sees, the emotional load that comes with raising children in a country where safety concerns, economic uncertainty, and relentless work-life pressure collide every single day. It is not just about getting through the day; it is about holding it all together while the ground beneath us feels shaky.

We wake up to headlines about rising costs, load-shedding schedules, and crime alerts. Then we rush to pack lunchboxes, navigate traffic, and show up at work like everything is fine. But beneath the surface, many of us are running on fumes, trying to be present for our children while silently wondering if we are failing them. Parenting here is not about perfection. It is about survival. And yet, in the middle of this chaos, something powerful often goes unnoticed: the role of early childhood education in lightening that load.

Because here is the truth: when parents feel supported, children thrive. High-quality early childhood education does not just teach ABCs; it becomes an emotional anchor for families. It is the teacher who notices your child's anxious face and gently reassures them. It is the predictable routine that gives your little one stability, so you can breathe a little easier. It is the educator who greets you by name, shares a small win about your child, and reminds you that you are doing an excellent job, even on the days you feel like you are barely holding on.

Well equipped schools understand this. They do not see parents as people who simply "drop and go." They see you as partners. They know that when you walk through the door, you are not just handing over a child, you are handing over your heart, your worries, your hopes.

And they meet that with Heart Culture: a way of being that says, "We see you. We are with you." It is the quiet reassurance that you are not alone in this. It is sending a photo of your child's joyful moment during the day so that, stuck in traffic, you feel connected instead of guilty. It is creating spaces where children feel loved, and parents feel seen.

Imagine this: a mom who has been up all night worrying about bills walks into a centre where her child runs into the arms of someone who truly knows them. The teacher smiles, says, "He told me the funniest story today," and suddenly, for a moment, the weight lifts. That moment matters. It is not just childcare; it is care for the whole family.

And here is the thing: you do not need a Pinterest-perfect routine to ease the emotional load. Start small. Create one predictable ritual, like a bedtime story or a morning hug. Name feelings aloud, for yourself and your child. "I'm tired today, but I'm happy to be with you." Lean on your child's educators, share what is hard, and celebrate what is working. Partnership starts with honesty.

Parenting in South Africa is tough, but you are not alone. When early years education is done right, it does not just shape children; it strengthens families. It reminds parents that they do not have to carry the emotional load alone. And in a world that feels uncertain, that kind of support is everything.

ctia Chefs Training & Innovation Academy

The Future Is Served: Why Cheffing Is One of Today's Most Exciting Careers







For generations, becoming a chef was seen as a traditional career choice. Today, that perception has changed dramatically. The culinary world is a global, creative and entrepreneurial industry — and for young people looking for a career that combines creativity, travel and real-world skills, there has never been a more exciting time to become a chef.

At Chefs Training & Innovation Academy (CTIA), we have seen this evolution first-hand. Proudly South African and internationally connected, CTIA has built a reputation for excellence and innovation, including being named Africa's Best Culinary Training Institute at the World Culinary Awards.

What sets CTIA apart is its strong connection to the hospitality industry. With more than 400 industry partners across South Africa, students gain valuable practical experience in real-world hospitality environments while they study. CTIA also offers a 100% employment guarantee, supporting students as they take the important step from education into the workplace.

Beyond South Africa, CTIA's international partnerships create opportunities for graduates to pursue careers across the globe — from international hospitality groups to luxury destinations and kitchens abroad.

And what makes culinary skills particularly exciting in the age of AI? You can't automate passion, creativity, hospitality or the human experience. Chefs create experiences, solve problems under pressure, lead teams and transform ingredients into something memorable. Technology may change the way kitchens operate, but the ability to create, innovate and connect with people will always have a place at the table.

> **"Cheffing is a practical, creative and globally relevant career path where passion can become a profession."**

A culinary career can also mean seeing the world. Imagine working aboard a luxury cruise liner, waking up in a different destination, working with an international team and earning in foreign currency. For ambitious young chefs, opportunities like these can turn a qualification into a passport to the world.

For homeschooling families, cheffing offers something particularly valuable: a practical, creative and globally relevant career path where passion can become a profession. Whether the dream is to become an executive chef, open a restaurant, create food content, work in luxury hospitality or travel the world, the possibilities extend far beyond the traditional kitchen.

The future of cheffing is about creating, leading, travelling and innovating — and the world is hungry for the next generation of chefs.

Ready to explore a future in food?



Discover CTIA's accredited full-time, part-time and online programmes, campuses, career opportunities and pathways into the global hospitality industry.

Visit www.ctia.co.za and start your #ChefLife



How South Africa Can End Child Stunting by 2030

Ending child stunting by 2030 is an ambitious goal. Achieving it will require sustained partnership, disciplined resource allocation and targeted technical expertise.

South Africa has made a clear and encouraging commitment to its youngest citizens. In his recent address, President Cyril Ramaphosa reaffirmed government's intention to end child stunting by 2030, stating during the State of the Nation Address:

"More than a quarter of South African children under the age of five are stunted... In 2026, the state will embark on a mission to end child stunting by 2030 and tackle malnutrition among young children."



Jenny Martin, General Manager at Compact Foods, leverages 25+ years of pharma and FMCG experience to drive commercial success through strategic leadership, team development, and deep regulatory insight. She has also served on the Self Care Association of South Africa's (formally SMASA) Executive Committee for several years.

Text Jenny Martin



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"More than a quarter of South African children under the age of five are stunted. In 2026, the state will embark on a mission to end child stunting by 2030 and tackle malnutrition among young children."

This commitment, aligned with the National Strategy to Accelerate Action for Children, represents a pivotal moment. It signals recognition at the highest level that nutrition in early life is not only a social priority, but a national development imperative. The question now is not whether we invest in children. The question is: "How we optimise that investment for maximum long-term return?"

Much of the current public conversation rightly focuses on Early Childhood Development (ECD). The 2026 National Budget's allocation to expand ECD access reflects a strong commitment to school readiness and foundational learning.

Yet stunting does not begin in a classroom. It begins during pregnancy and in the first two years of life, the first 1,000 days, when brain architecture, immune systems and physical growth are developing at extraordinary speed. If nutrition is inadequate during this window, the effects on cognitive development and lifetime productivity are profound and often irreversible.

By the time a child enters an ECD centre, much of the neurological foundation has already been laid. This is why the President's emphasis on early nutrition is so important. It recognises that ECD expansion and stunting reduction efforts are complementary, but not identical. Access to early learning must be matched by physiological readiness to learn.

For National Treasury and corporate South Africa, the first 1,000 days represent one of the highest-return investment opportunities available.

Preventing stunting is associated with:

- → Improved educational outcomes.
- → Higher lifetime earnings.
- → Reduced healthcare costs.
- → Greater workforce productivity.
- → A stronger future tax base.

In economic terms, early nutrition is human capital formation at its most foundational level.

When viewed through this lens, funding for early-life nutrition is not merely social expenditure. It is long-term economic infrastructure.

The government has articulated a clear national objective. The opportunity now is alignment. Corporate social investment in South Africa exceeds R13 billion annually, with a significant proportion directed towards education and community development. By strategically aligning a portion of this capital with the national anti-



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stunting mission, the private sector can amplify impact while supporting a defined government priority.

This is not about creating parallel systems or critiquing existing allocations. It is about reinforcing them. Programmes that expand ECD access, such as the Bana Pele ECD Registration Drive, play a critical role in bringing children into structured early learning environments.

Strengthening nutrition in the first 1,000 days ensures that those children are cognitively and physically prepared to benefit fully from that access. Providing evidence-based solutions that align with national stunting reduction objectives. Leveraging local manufacturing capacity to ensure scalable, cost-effective delivery.

Through a collaborative framework — Raise a Life. Raise a Nation. — we believe the private sector, government departments including the Department of Social Development, and specialised nutrition partners can work in concert to accelerate progress towards the 2030 target.

South Africa has taken an important step by placing child stunting firmly on the national agenda. The strategic pivot now required is not a change in direction, but an intensification of focus.

If we treat the first 1,000 days as a central pillar of economic policy — alongside education reform, industrial growth and fiscal consolidation — we can unlock compounding returns that last decades.

For Treasury, this means safeguarding the productivity of future generations. For corporates, it means aligning investment with measurable, nation-building outcomes. For communities, it means children who are able not only to attend school, but to thrive there.

The foundations of a stronger South Africa are already being laid. By working together to strengthen investment in the first 1,000 days, we can ensure those foundations are built to last.

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As learners begin considering their next step after school, many families face an important question: What does higher education look like when flexibility and personalised learning have always been part of the journey?

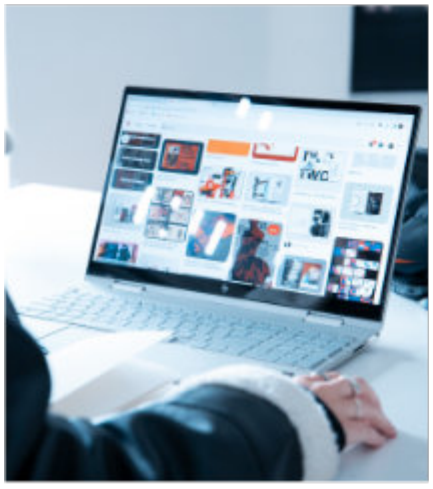


For homeschooling families, education has never been about fitting into a traditional mould. It's about creating opportunities that align with a learner's strengths, interests, pace, and ambitions. It encourages curiosity over conformity, independence over routine, and a belief that learning can happen anywhere.

At Inscape, we believe those values shouldn't end when school does.

Our Distance Learning qualifications are designed for students who want the freedom to study from wherever they are while gaining an accredited qualification that prepares them for meaningful careers in today's rapidly evolving world. Whether a learner dreams of launching a business, creating brands, designing spaces, shaping digital experiences, or pursuing advanced studies in design, there are multiple pathways available through Inscape's distance offering.

What makes distance learning particularly appealing to homeschooling families is that it allows students to continue learning in a way that may already feel familiar. Learners can





develop their skills, engage with their studies, and work towards recognised qualifications without being tied to a physical classroom. They gain the flexibility to balance academics with personal pursuits, creative projects, entrepreneurial ventures, work opportunities, and family commitments.

Beyond flexibility, Inscape's programmes are industry-focused and future-oriented. From Entrepreneurship and Digital Marketing to Fashion Design, Interior Decorating, Architectural Technology, and User Experience Design, students are equipped with practical skills that can be applied directly in the workplace or used as a foundation for further study. For graduates wanting to deepen their expertise, postgraduate options such as the Advanced Diploma in UX Design and BA Honours in Design provide opportunities for continued growth and specialisation.

Choosing a higher education institution is about more than selecting a qualification. It's about joining a community that understands how people learn, create, and grow. At Inscape, students become part of a dynamic network of creatives, innovators, entrepreneurs, and changemakers who are shaping the future through design thinking and fresh perspectives.

"The world is changing. Careers are evolving. New opportunities emerge every day for those willing to think differently and embrace possibility."

The world is changing. Careers are evolving. New opportunities emerge every day for those willing to think differently and embrace possibility.

For homeschooling learners who have already learned that education isn't confined to four walls, distance learning offers an exciting next chapter.

Because big dreams don't need a classroom. They need curiosity, commitment, and a place where potential can thrive.

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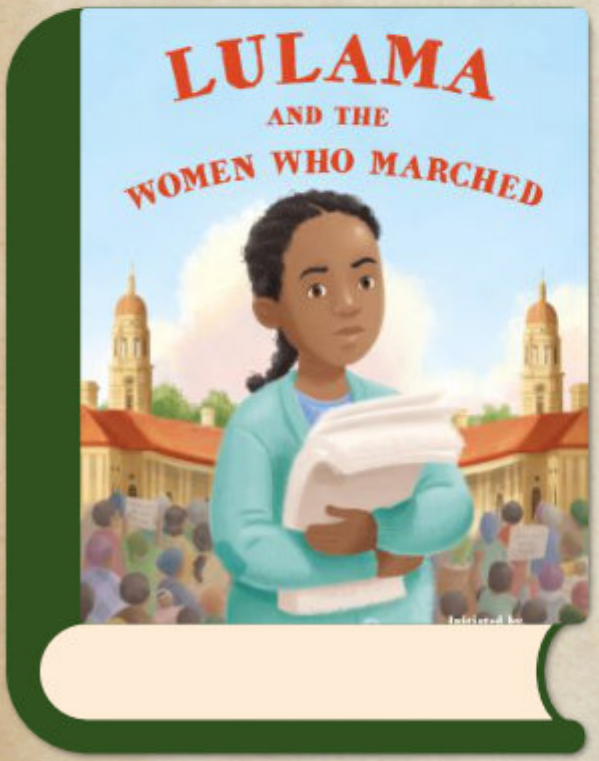
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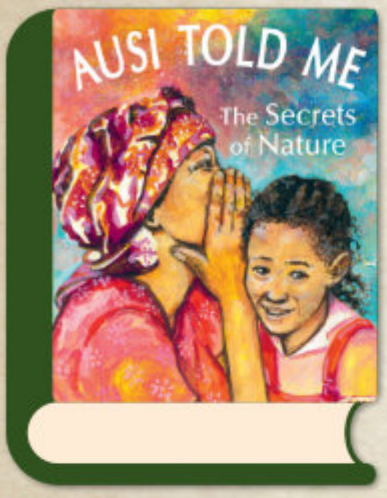


Lulama and the Women Who Marched

by Nonikiwe Mashologu

"I hope to create stories that help children see themselves in history, celebrate courage and compassion, and discover the power of their own voices." - **Nonikiwe Mashologu**

Join Lulama on an unforgettable journey to the historic Women's Mar ch of 1956. As she travels with her mother and Auntie Lindiwe to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, Lulama begins to understand the unfair pass laws that made life difficult for Black families, especially Black women. But she also discovers something even more powerful: when brave people stand together, they can change history. Inspired by the true story of the 20 000 women who marched peacefully for justice on 9 August 1956, this beautifully told story celebrates courage, hope and the strength of unity.

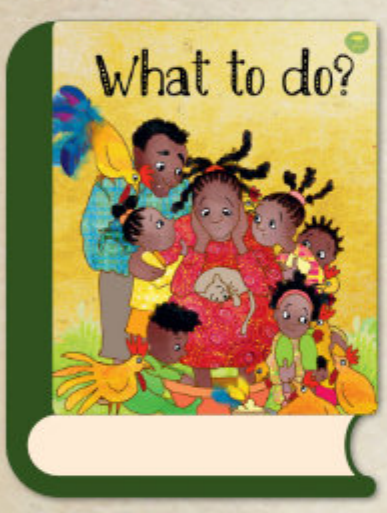


Ausi Told Me: The Secrets of Nature

Authors: June Bam & Kelly Collier
Illustrator: Pierre Cloete

***"Ausi's teachings are a celebration of life, love and the importance of preserving the world around us."* - Kelly Collier**

In this beautifully illustrated children's picture book, part of the "Ausi Told Me" series, we embark on a magical journey with Ausi, an ancient matriarch and ancestor, who shares the timeless secrets of nature with a group of little children. Wise Ausi guides the children and teaches them the connections between earth, water, fire, wind and the celestial bodies. They discover how these elements are not only vital for survival but also for nurturing a deep respect for the land.



What to do?

Author: Carole Bloch

***"For me, its charm is that it is full of humour and silliness. Yet at the same time, it makes us think some serious thoughts."* - Carole Bloch**

What to do? is a humorous folktale retelling about a family that experiences chaos in their home and who seek advice from a wise old woman. This story shows the benefits of sometimes listening to advice, even if it seems illogical at first. It is intentionally written to be rhythmic and catchy so that it can be read aloud, even by children. This assists them in becoming independent readers.



Milani's Gift

Authors: Lebo Mazibuko
Illustrator: Monique Mortimer

***"We all get scared sometimes, but overcoming that fear is where the magic lies."* - Lebo Mazibuko**

Milani's Gift is a story about a girl who is afraid to sing in front of others despite her talent. One day, her father discovers her hidden talent and encourages her to sing at school – but when the big moment comes, Milani freezes. With the help of her teacher, Mrs Jiya, Milani overcomes her fear and discovers the joy of sharing her gifts with others. This is a relatable story that is perfect for young readers who need a little encouragement to be brave and confident.

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How a humble teacher's passion for Mathematics became an iconic South African institution for learner support.



What began as one teacher's passion for helping learners truly understand Mathematics has grown into one of South Africa's most trusted educational brands across major subjects from Grades 7 to 12.

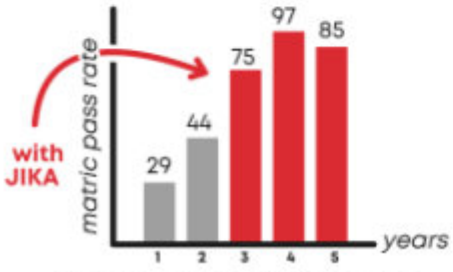
In 1971, Anne Dommisse began teaching Mathematics and Physical Science at Groote Schuur High School in Cape Town. Her philosophy was simple but powerful: learners learn best when they first wrestle with a problem themselves and are then guided through a clear, logical solution. At a time when rote learning dominated classrooms, Anne's approach focused on understanding, confidence, and independent thinking — with exceptional results.

After marrying Dave Eadie in 1973 and starting a family, the couple decided to turn Anne's teaching methods into a book so more learners could benefit. Working late at their dining room table — long before computers and word processors — Anne handwrote the mathematical content while Dave prepared the diagrams. Their first publication, "The Answer", was born.

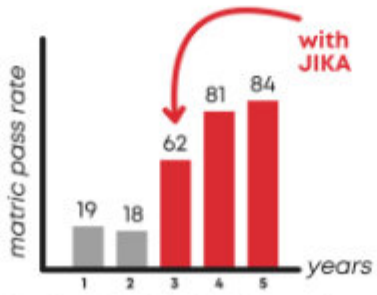
Demand for the Maths guide grew rapidly, followed by requests for additional grades and subjects. From these humble beginnings, The Answer Series (TAS) developed into a nationally respected range of study guides written by experienced subject specialists and trusted by learners, parents and teachers across South Africa.

Over the years, TAS has become known for clear explanations, worked examples, accessible language, and learner-friendly guidance that encourages self-study and genuine understanding rather than memorisation.

The effectiveness of TAS has also been demonstrated through pilot projects conducted with provincial education departments, where learners using TAS study guides showed significant improvements in matric pass rates.



Shayandima Senior Secondary



Reuben Ntuli Senior Secondary

Today, TAS continues its mission of making learning easier, more engaging, and less intimidating. Its latest development is a comprehensive Grade 7 Mathematics publication designed to help learners navigate the challenging transition to high school. The focus is not simply on getting the right answer, but on understanding concepts, developing problem-solving skills, and building confidence along the way.

Perhaps the greatest reward for founders Anne and Dave is the feedback they continue to receive from grateful learners and parents, like:

"I went from getting no A's to getting straight A's thanks to The Answer Series."

"I used The Answer Series in matric in 1988 — now I'm buying them for my daughter."

"Outstanding explanations, examples and exercises!"

More than fifty years after it began around a family dining room table, The Answer Series continues to help South African learners discover that with the right guidance, understanding really does change everything.

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