

Early Care Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation launches its #NoOneLeftBehind campaign

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Early Care Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to increasing access to early childhood development (ECD) in disadvantaged areas through upskilling women, has launched its #NoOneLeftBehind campaign.



Early Care Foundation, formerly ASHA Trust, has had a rich and meaningful journey in South Africa since 1938. It has facilitated the upskilling of women in disadvantaged communities to operate stimulating and educational childcare facilities for children under the age of five. A report released by UNICEF in May 2017 states the first 1000 days of life - between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday - is a unique period of opportunity when the foundations for optimum health and development across the lifespan are established. The right nutrition and care during the 1000-day window influence whether the child will survive and their ability to grow, learn and rise out of poverty.



In South Africa, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated an already fragile sector, resulting in over one hundred thousand ECD practitioners losing their jobs. The knock-on effect is not just higher unemployment in communities, which is already an overwhelming challenge. It also means that these children in vulnerable communities lose access to safe, educational early care facilities and the creche's associated daily nutrition.

As part of its mandate, the Early Care Foundation reaches beyond just supporting the development of stimulating early childhood learning environments. The Foundation also works to help women, upskilling them and ensuring collaborative, safe environments that provide them with emotional support alongside vocational, educational opportunities. Early Care Foundation believes that in doing so, it ensures that these women are well capacitated to afford children with the optimal mental and social development required to lay the foundations for their learning.



"A good foundation in the early years of development is crucial in providing the right building blocks to achieve productive adulthood and provide the next generation with the necessary skills to get the best start in life. Moreover, educated, healthy people, participate in, and contribute to, their societies' financial and social welfare. Therefore, I am delighted to support the #NoOneLeftBehind campaign to restore quality early childhood services, and thereby to support rebuilding vulnerable communities," comments Dr Tshepo Motsepe, Patron of The Early Care Foundation.

The Early Care Foundation #NoOneLeftOut Campaign aims to raise R4.8 million to support the reopening of existing ECF sponsored pre-schools forced to shut because of the Covid-19 pandemic and get 1000 children back into a stimulating learning environment, providing a roadmap for women back into employment. Individuals and corporates can sponsor an individual child for a month at R400 or a full year at R4,800. There is also the option to sponsor a teacher's salary at R4,000 a month. ECF believes that capacitating schools to offer a high-quality education is vital for getting the sector functional again.

"The last eighteen months have been extremely challenging for the women and children we support through our training programmes. Unfortunately, many have not reopened their schools because of the economic impacts of the pandemic and its mitigation measures. This has further limited children's access to supportive environments for this critical phase of brain development and the nutrition needed to support learning potential. The Early Care Foundation is committed to enabling many facilities to recover and encourage the children to return to the environments in which they thrive. To rebuild South Africa, we need to prepare the children of South Africa better," says Ipeleng Mohlala, CEO of Early Care Foundation.

For more information on adding your support to the #NoOneLefBehind Campaign, you can contact Early Care Foundation on www.earlycarefoundation.org.

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