Opening doors to literacy for young Deaf children

Enabling bilingual development

ECD Knowledge Building Seminar

Kirsty Maclons – Sign Language Education & Development (SLED)
South African Sign Language (SASL) is a rich beautiful language that is used for discussing politics, describing photosynthesis or designing a poem. But more importantly it is the language that the Deaf child can use to achieve literacy and access an equal education.
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 24

since we have ratified it, the South African government is required to do the following:

Facilitate the learning of sign language

Take appropriate measures to employ teachers, especially Deaf teachers, who are qualified in sign language

Train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education (including ECD) in sign language.
Opening Doors to Literacy for Deaf Learners

Foundation Phase Reading Scheme

Currently 20 SASL DVDs and accompanying reading books

Illustrated stories reflect current situation of Deaf children in South Africa

Age-appropriate signed and written text encourages literacy based on sight.
ECD and Foundation Phase Teachers at Ekurhuleni School for the Deaf learn SASL

Achieve SLED
SASL Stage One
Achieve SLED
SASL Stage Two
“These are children that I am so proud of. I have been inviting the district officials to come and observe, but they are refusing. But I am so proud – I use the DVDs, the books, proper Sign Language structure but I was so stubborn and sticking to my Signed English for sometime. I couldn’t understand why it was necessary to switch off the voice. But now I am quiet and my children understand me and it is all so beautiful.”
Opening other doors
SASL is not yet the 12th official language.
The SASL curriculum for Deaf children is still being developed:
Who will teach it?
What will they use to teach it?
Insufficient materials
ECD practitioners/teachers of the Deaf are not required to use SASL as a LOLT
“Now I’m so confident communicating with the children without limiting myself and limiting them, thinking they know nothing.... they are slow - all those kinds of negative thinking....... I have peace and fulfilment because I’m now doing the right things. I have a different perspective: Deaf learners are so intelligent, so flexible. They are unique individuals that I don’t underestimate any more.”

Nonhlanhla Tshabalala, ECD Practitioner, Ekurhuleni School for the Deaf
Thank you

info@sled.org.za
www.sled.org.za