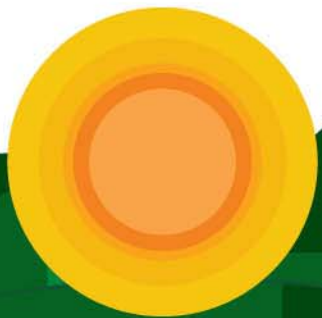


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association**

hope for children with disabilities

# **A Successful South African Model of Early Intervention**



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# Good ECD programmes

- provide direct learning services to children & support to families;
- Target younger and disadvantaged children;
- are of long duration, high quality, and sufficient intensity;
- are integrated with community functioning, family life, health, nutrition, and local educational systems.



- An urgent need for a framework for translating & applying what has been learned.



- One possible approach - the Sunshine Centre Association's START Home Intervention Programme catering for children from birth to seven years.

# Strong points of START

- Training is central to the approach
- An indigenous response by S. A. therapists and teachers to perceived need in local communities.
- It supports all families, especially those with disabled children & enables parents to play a proactive role in their children's development



The START programme uses simple checklists designed for use by ordinary people as a guide



Creative but simple activities are used to encourage developmental progress in specific areas.

It starts from birth

Ordinary household items are used for stimulation purposes.

The checklists allow for more efficient use of time.



They are not intended for use as a diagnostic instrument in order to classify, label & categorise children.

They give a sense of direction & enable appropriate support to be given to the child at the time it is needed.

Partnerships are formed with families



The growth of both the parents' & the communities' capacity and skill is facilitated.

This programme has been particularly effective in communities disadvantaged by poverty, social disorganisation and inaccessible or non-existent services.

Trained parents are used as home visitors.

The empowering and informing of parents is vitally important for the successful, effective accommodation of their child within the educational system.



START trained parents set up their own crèches

- This helps to break up the poverty-disability cycle
- Provides stimulation & basic education for children
- Gives support to families



Income-generating projects often become associated with these day-care centres.



The START Home Intervention Programme can be a catalyst for the broader development of the whole community.

This is important in S. A. where specialised resources are scarce

In too many cases children are disabled by the system.

Secondary disabilities develop & become habitual e.g.

- negative self concepts,
- feelings of failure etc.

These characteristics interfere with the desire to explore, take risks & learn.

Can affect future life chances badly.

Failure is habit forming. Children learn to fail just as they learn to read – through practice & experience.



## So what do we do ?

The Sunshine Centre Association's START Inclusion Model:

- Designed to help pre-school children to realize their full potential
- Learning delays identified through a simple check listing process.
- Use of stimulating activities reduces risk of serious disability developing



## S.C.A's Inclusion training:

- Practitioners taught to screen for/identify developmental delays/ learning difficulties in pre-school children
- Checklists provide a guide for stimulation of the developmental process
- They signal areas needing remediation in an easily understood way
- Trainees learn how to match the child's need with appropriate activities which stimulate development.



They are taught why it is essential to intervene early in a child's life

Inclusive education approaches are taught

**All** learners should benefit from this approach

It shows teachers how to use the support system available in the community.

The checklists provide a 'scheme of work' for the year  
S.C.A provides support from their therapists



## Conclusion

To paraphrase J.F. Kennedy:

*The problems facing the disabled, their families and those working with them will never be solved by cynics and sceptics, but by people who can dream of things that never were.*



South Africa has set in motion a dream that few thought was possible. Children with a disability can be part of that dream.

# Thank you for listening

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