The Foundations for Learning Campaign is a call to schools, teachers, communities and learners to focus on reading, writing and numeracy.

Parents, the future of your children is in your hands! As responsible parents, the most worthwhile investment you can make is in your children’s education. Join teachers and the Department of Education in laying sound foundations for learning, especially during the early years. A solid foundation in reading, writing and numeracy will provide opportunities for success for our children throughout their lives.

Teachers, to ensure our children get a quality education, we need committed teachers, like you. Make every effort to keep informed and knowledgeable on what learners need to learn and also understand of the ways in which this can be taught and learnt.

I appeal to you to be part of the Minister of Education’s call to action. South Africa needs you and is depending on you because our children, who are our future, are in your hands.

What do you want to do when you grow up?

I have big plans! But first I need to make sure I am the best I can be. How do I do this? Easy! I work hard at school, I learn to read, write and solve problems. It’s not as hard or as boring as it sounds! Learning can be fun. Have you heard about the Foundations for Learning Campaign?

It’s all about how teachers, parents, communities and us are coming together to bring about a change in education. What changes, you ask? Well, we have been challenged to improve our reading, writing and numeracy skills. This will bring about good changes, not only to our lives, but also to our country. Are you up to the challenge? I sure am!

Remember that the future lies in your hands! Help to lay a solid foundation for learning for a bright, South African future.

Get ready for Grade R

Grade R learners are trying many things for the first time, they are active and curious. They need space, a variety of materials and large blocks of time to try out their ideas, gain experience and expand their learning. A Grade R programme must provide a strong foundation on which children can build the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.

Grade R teaching and learning time

The minimum contact teaching time for Grade R is 22 hours and 30 minutes a week. This works out to 4 hours and 30 minutes per day. The formal teaching allocation for literacy and numeracy in the Grade R classroom is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time allocation per day</th>
<th>Total per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>1 hour and 50 minutes</td>
<td>9 hours and 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>1 hour and 30 minutes</td>
<td>7 hours and 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>What children do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome to school!</strong></td>
<td>Arrival time</td>
<td>Children arrive and pack away their bags. They gather together on the carpet or chairs set in a circle. While waiting for their friends to arrive, children may explore the different areas of the classroom. Children show their presence at school by placing their name cards or symbols in a colour-coded container (same colour as their small group).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good morning!</strong></td>
<td>Health check</td>
<td>Children say good morning to their friends and teacher. Children answer questions about any health problems, for example, they show plasters over any cuts and bruises. Children discuss the weather and the programme for the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning circle</strong></td>
<td>Morning circle</td>
<td>Children participate in the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s work!</strong></td>
<td>Work time</td>
<td>Children choose what to do, interacting with materials in the interest area of their choice. Children must count how many are already at an interest area before joining in. If too full they need to choose somewhere else to play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-55 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small group time</td>
<td>Six to eight children meet the teacher to engage in a particular activity planned by the teacher on a mat or around a table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>during work time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tidy up time</strong></td>
<td>Tidy up time</td>
<td>Children pack away all material and equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome children and be available to chat to any parent who may need to relay a message.

They gather together on the carpet or chairs set in a circle. Children may explore the different areas of the classroom. Placing their name cards or symbols in a colour-coded container (same colour as their small group).

Run a quick head to toes check of each child. Keep Children answer questions about any health Children discuss the weather and the activities and events for the day. Do this throughout the day, any time a new activity starts.

My times songs or rhymes, announcements, concepts or skills. 10-15 minutes

Children develop a sense of Children know what will happen next and can prepare themselves for the programme for the day.

My times

45-55 minutes

Provide stimulating materials and challenging activities. Observe, interact, join in, support and assist children.

Children's needs are catered with special needs.

Six to eight children meet the teacher to arrival time (for example, red, green, blue and yellow).

Use the small groups already allocated to the children for educational trips, and special

Activities

10 minutes –

Attempt to see all children each day.

Children's tables and chairs

Place signs at the various interest areas, indicating how materials in the interest area of their choice.

Let's work! Work time

45-55 minutes –

Prepare the room for the next activity.

Snack time 15 to 20 minutes

Sing and dance

Clean up time

10 minutes

Display the daily

Celebrating and labelling materials:

Storing and labelling materials:

Storing and labelling of materials for art

Creative or an art area:

Creative art area

Storage for art materials

Literacy activity centre

Shelves for display of books, puzzles, floor covering and cushions to sit on

Creative or an art area: Drawing, painting, gluing and playdough are just some of the activities completed in this area. Most of these activities are presented and completed on child-sized tables at which four to six children can sit. Others can also be completed on a plastic sheet on the floor or even on an outside area.

Reading corner:

Books should be placed in a quiet part of the classroom. A simple shelf filled with books and attractive cushions or chairs is all you need. Change the books regularly to attract children to sit quietly with a book. Place use this area for time-out or punishment. Screens or other dissonances such as shelves can be used to separate this area from the rest of the classroom.

Reading corner

Writing area:

This area is to encourage children to explore writing and drawing. It can include paper, envelopes, cardboard, pens, pencils, erasers, origami, magazines, newspapers, an array of copies (including left-handed ones) and stencils (both pictures and letters).

Organise the space:

Blocks and puzzles area:

This area should be somewhere where the blocks will not be knocked over by children. Making puzzles of various sizes and shapes can be made available in this area. Mixture can also be added to make it more interesting and imaginative play area. Well-labelled and stored puzzles can also be available here. Make sure the puzzles are clearly marked in separate containers.

Blocks and puzzles area

With the parts of the daily

Classroom layout

Children have a natural desire to explore their world. A stimulating environment will enable spontaneous and safe discovery.

Planning the indoor learning environment

Choosing materials:

- Choose materials that will interest the children and reflect their experiences and cultures.
- Children love to use real things because these objects enable them to imitate the roles of adults.
- See more on resources for the Grade R classroom on page 6.

Fantasy corner:

Create various fantasy situations for children to explore. Ideas include hospital, post office, kitchen, tea party, fire station and petrol station. This area needs to be changed regularly to keep the children's interest and to expand their experiences. Keep a stock of clothing and other props available. Decide on a theme and then get help from parents and companies in the community for resources to fill the space.

Fantasy corner

Creative art area

Storage for art materials

Literacy activity centre

Children's tables and chairs

Storage for writing materials

Life skills activity centre - Fantasy area

Fantasy play materials for children, including storage facility

Large carpet area

Teacher's chair

Numberic activity centre

Numeracy activities and educational games

Display area/theme table

Nature and discovery table and display area/board

Creative art area

Storage for art materials

Literacy activity centre

Children's tables and chairs

Storage for writing materials

Life skills activity centre - Fantasy area

Fantasy play materials for children, including storage facility

Large carpet area

Teacher's chair

Numeracy activity centre

Numeracy activities and educational games

Display area/theme table

Nature and discovery table and display area/board

Storing and labelling materials:

- Store materials in places where they will be used, within reach of the children. Store in clear or open containers such as see-through plastic containers, trays or baskets.
- Store materials in the same place to give children a sense of security and independence.
- Write labels on containers and shelves, using easily understood symbols or drawings, magazine pictures, real objects, tracings or even catalogue pictures. This makes it easy for children to take and return materials on their own. Label both the shelves and the containers.

Storing and labelling materials
Teachers – make 12 symbols. As each month passes place a symbol next to it to show progression. In this way, children can see how many months have passed and how many are still to come. Butterflies or birds flying around the animals will work well as symbols.
Adequately resourcing your Grade R classroom may seem like a daunting task. However, many of the equipment needed can be donated by parents, businesses in the community or even handmade.

Below is a list of the minimum educational equipment needed for both indoor and outdoor use, as prescribed by the Department of Education:

### Indoor equipment
- 10 pairs of blunt-nosed scissors
- Floor mat/blanket
- Paint, at least three colours, and paint brushes (enough for one group of 6-8 learners)
- Large wax crayons (10 packets)
- 5 packets water-soluble wall-paper glue
- Paper glue (non toxic)
- 1 box of paper (computer or waste paper)
- 10 storybooks (could be handmade) Look out for ReadRight storybooks in the Sunday Times magazine
- 1 teacher resource book of poems and rhymes
- 1 pack of shapes
- 1 set of blocks
- 6 peg boards with pegs and patterns
- Beads and lace for threading
- Stacking cups of different sizes
- Puppets – a set of family puppets
- Balls (at least 3)
- Bean bags (enough for 1 group)

Quantities are for a Grade R class of 30 learners.

### Outdoor equipment
- Climbing apparatus: jungle gym, nets, ladders
- Swinging: swings, monkey ropes, tyre swings
- Sliding: slide, ramps, flattened cardboard boxes
- Play house, large boxes, tunnels (cement pipes or large drums)
- Sand and water play: sand pit or sand tray, bath or basin, tins, plastic containers, mugs, cake pans, funnels, sieves, colanders, spoons, jugs, plastic bottles, squeeze bottles, sponges, containers with holes, straws, egg whisks
- Painting: paper, paint and brushes and string and pegs to hang up paintings to dry
- Small plastic tables and chairs
- Balls
- Jumping: skipping ropes, tyres, tubes, old mattresses
- Pulling, pushing and riding: boxes, plastic crates with a rope to pull it along, tyres, tricycles, wheelbarrows and prams
- Balancing: balance beam, planks supported by bricks, tyres, see-saw and stilts (rope and tins)
- Bean bags
- Pretend play: traffic signs and tracks, steering wheels of old cars, hats, helmets, adult-sized clothes, bags, empty boxes (cereal, food, etc), tins, plastic containers, sunglasses, binoculars, old suitcases

### Other equipment to be provided (could be homemade or donated by parents)
- Cups and saucers, pots and pans (for fantasy play)
- Posters (could be cut from old magazines or newspapers)
- Puzzles (at least for two groups – 12, 20, 36 and 48 pieces)
- Games (sequencing, memory, matching, etc)
- Mechanical construction set (wheels, screws, nuts and bolts)
- Dolls
- Maths blocks (at least one set)
- Dice (numbers and shapes)
- 2-D shapes, for example, pattern blocks, tangrams, cardboard cut-outs
- 3-D objects, for example, blocks, collection of different-shaped blocks
- Collection of containers of different shapes and sizes
- Plastic balance scale
- Teacher’s abacus
- Coloured sticks of different lengths
- A4 sized chalk boards and coloured chalk
- Wooden cars (enough for one group)
- Board games
- Lego or other construction apparatus
- Containers to store apparatus in
- First aid kit

### Adding resources to your classroom
Through careful planning, you can easily add more materials to the interest areas in your classroom.

Planning helps us to think about what we want to add, how we will get the materials, by when do we want them and who can help.

**Step 1:**
- Make a list of all the materials you already have in the various areas.

**Step 2:**
- Make a list of all the materials you would like to add to the various areas.

**Step 3:**
- Make a list of people who can help you collect the materials, for example, parents, learners, staff, factories, shops, banks, churches, family members and friends.

**Step 4:**
- Call a parent meeting to explain what you need and why you want those materials.

**Step 5:**
- Invite parents to help you label and store the materials.
Welcome children and be available to chat to any parent that may need to relay a message.

### Activity Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What children do</th>
<th>What teachers do</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children arrive and pack away their bags.</td>
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<tr>
<td>They gather together on the carpet or chairs set in a circle.</td>
<td>Arrival time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While waiting for their friends to arrive, children may explore the different areas of the classroom.</td>
<td>15-30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children answer questions about any health concerns.</td>
<td>Children discus the weather and the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children develop a sense of safety and security.</td>
<td>It is important to structure each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children chose what to do, interacting with materials, in the interest area of their choice.</td>
<td>This determines what activity – addition or subtraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children participate in music and movement activities.</td>
<td>Supervise routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children go to the toilet and then wash their hands.</td>
<td>Supervise routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children listen to and participate in storytelling. Children share own stories or work completed during work time.</td>
<td>Engage children in stories being told, ask responsive questions, allow and encourage children to be actively involved in the story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### My Times

- **Register of attendance.** Check which name cards or symbols were not placed in containers, get children to identify who has not yet arrived.
- **10 minutes**
- **Children say good morning to friends and teacher.**
- **Run a quick head to toes check of each child.** Keep teacher.
- **10 minutes**
- **Children discus the weather and the day.**
- **Children participate in music and movement activities.**
- **15 to 20 minutes**
- **Children enjoy energetic, noisy, physical play.**
- **20 to 30 minutes**
- **Children go to the toilet and then wash their hands.**
- **Hand washing and toilet time**
- **15 minutes**
- **Children wash their hands.**
- **Providing clean water, soap and towels.**

### Display the daily programme

Display the daily programme low enough for children to reach. Encourage them to follow the programme and discuss the activities for the day.

### My times

Personalise the daily programme by filling in the times in which you complete the allotted activity.

- Teachers are able to put into practice the values and educational philosophy of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS).

The parts of the daily programme are like paving blocks along a path. In each activity block, there is a learning activity such as time for children to participate in group activities, routines for eating, toilet and rest times, and outside play.

**Collect your own ReadRight storybook in the Sunday Times magazine**
Why is play important?

All over the world children play. Famous architects were once children who showed a love for building when they were very young. Famous singers and dancers first showed their talents when they were children. Many professional and famous people showed their interest in particular fields when they were very young children. They were the ones who were encouraged and supported by their teachers and parents to be spontaneous, explore and experiment.

Play involves not only the use of materials and equipment, but also words and ideas that help children develop literacy and thinking skills. Play also promotes problem-solving, critical thinking, concept formation and creativity. Social and emotional development are also enhanced through play.

Different types of play

Children engage in many types of play based on the development of their thinking, reasoning, language and social skills. There are different types of play:

**Exploratory play:**
Children enjoy exploring the properties and functions of materials such as wool, string, glue, play-dough, sand, stones and water.

Develops self-control and social skills: As children share materials and play together, they learn to co-operate, listen to others and to stand up for their own ideas.

**Constructive play:**
Children enjoy building and making things with blocks, cardboard rolls and tubes, scrap pieces of wood, Styrofoam, plastic bottles, boxes or tins.

Develops experimentation and logic: When children play with materials such as blocks, clay, sand, and water, they develop skills in logic. They experiment with cause and effect, with counting and sorting things and solving problems.

**Pretend play:**
Children enjoy pretend and role play with real materials such as dress-up clothes, hair dryers, mirrors, helmets, suitcases, kitchen utensils and tools.

Pretend play helps children to learn to think abstractly and to look at things from someone else’s perspective. Pretend play is also connected to early literacy, mathematical thinking, and problem-solving.

**Games:**
Children enjoy card and board games, and they enjoy using materials to make their own games such as cards, dice and game counters.

Learning to enjoy learning: When children do activities they have chosen, learning is enjoyable. It’s based on their own interests and gives them a sense of competence.

At home parents can:

- Provide materials that children can use in a variety of ways: blocks, paper and crayons, dolls and toy animals, balls, playdough, etc.
- Encourage children to play with ordinary household objects like pots and pans and outdoor materials like sticks and stones.
- Provide simple toys that encourage children to be active and use their imagination, not just to watch or listen while the toy does tricks.
- Play with your children, ask them questions about their play ("What are those animals doing?"); and point out things you notice ("You used a lot of bright colours in that picture!")

What can you do as a parent to help your children succeed in school?

Encourage your children to explore and learn in your home environment. The way teachers help children at school. Help your children become independent, enthusiastic and curious learners. You don’t need to buy a lot of special toys or equipment to turn children into creative thinkers.

The best thing you can do is to be a good listener and to talk with your children as you go about your normal, everyday household routines. Here are ideas to turn everyday activities into rich learning experiences for your children.

Set the table.

**Involve your child in figuring out what is needed:**

You might say ...

- How many people are eating supper tonight? So how many plates do we need? How many forks? Let’s count them out. Now let’s give one to each person: one fork for Mommy, one fork for you...

This helps your child learn to...

- Count objects correctly
- Follow simple instructions
- Accept responsibility
- Match one-to-one when counting

Read storybooks together.

**After you’ve read a book to your child, discuss it:**

You might say ...

- Who is this story about? What happened to him? What did he learn? How do you think he felt? Now it’s your turn to read this book to me. You can read the pictures.

This helps your child learn to ...

- Listen to a story and explain what happened
- Use language to describe events and express feelings

Look at family photos together.

Try looking at an album together with your child as if you were reading a book.

You might say ...

- What’s that? What’s she doing? What do you think he’s saying? How do you think she feels? Do you remember going to this place? What did you do there?

This helps your child learn to ...

- Identify himself as a member of a specific family and cultural group
- Use language to describe events
- Interpret pictures

For more information on how to get hold of your copy of Grade R Practical Ideas, which includes support for creating stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments, support for managing the learning programme and responsive interaction, contact:

**Mrs ML Samuels**
Department of Education
Tel: (012) 312-5435
Fax: (012) 323-0002

Get more information and lists of resources for your Grade R classroom check out this book.

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A note on Grade R:

Young children learn by doing. Play is the work of children. Through a variety of activities and routines children are being prepared for more than just the next grade; they are being prepared for life-long success.