

NOAH'S ARK EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

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We make early learning fun!

PROSPECTUS

Noah's Ark was founded by Felicity Champkins, with no expertise except a love of children, in her garage in Underberg in 1992. It was born out of compassion for the rural underprivileged children of the District for whom there was no early childhood education. It came to the notice of the KZN Department of Education, at that time only just beginning to address the need for early childhood development. The DOE enrolled Felicity on its



Teacher Thabi tells a story – Grade R no.2

courses and after several changes of venue Noah's Ark settled into its present magnificent premises. Noah's Ark continues to maintain close ties with the KZN DOE. Noah's Ark is registered with the Department of Social Welfare. It still has the same Principal and most of its teachers are long-serving.

The school now includes children of all races, with an enrolment of some 22% white, 3% 'mixed race' and 75% black. Most of these African children are drawn from local townships – Underberg, Himeville, Goxhill – and further afield like Bulwer, Lotheni, Stepmore. In terms of the Credo which

expresses its philosophy and approach to the critical foundation years of a child's development and to which principal and teachers subscribe, Noah's Ark makes no distinction between children of different races, creeds or social background.



Our paleontologists creating fossils of plaster of Paris and chicken bones

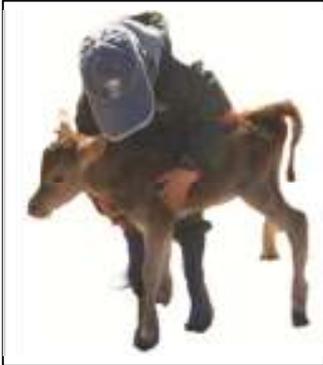
Teaching, at Noah's Ark, is a process of self-discovery, of learning by experimentation and activities engaging all senses to accommodate all the learning styles. Our Credo states that "we believe our children have enormous potential, that they can absorb much more than we would ever expect and it is our duty as teachers to explore those boundaries and maximize their developmental domains." It is this belief that drives our teachers in developing our children from the age of two years through the Grade R level.

All our teachers are ECD - qualified, embrace fully the DOE Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and attend In-Service Training on a regular basis, keeping up to date on the latest ECD developments.



Warm blankets for the cold & potatoes for empty bellies – a distribution at KwaPitela

Noah's Ark is a well-resourced school, enjoying the close support of our Generation Joy associates in Seattle, Washington who visit us annually, and parents, the community and local churches. We have strong fund-raising drives to maintain our resources. We reach out to the disadvantaged in our community, having established Pre-Primary and Nursery Schools in Himeville Low Cost (Jabulani) and Goxhill, giving support to several crèches and nursery schools in Underberg Low Cost Township.



Calf love – on an environmental visit to a dairy farm

Located in the heart of a productive farming community – dairy, beef, sheep and timber – our children enjoy environmental outings to farms where the farmer's wife always has a glass of fresh milk and cookies for the kids.

We can never overlook the fun element in our school – children learn through fun and the best teachers make learning fun. It makes our teachers among the very best.

We believe that our children must learn respect for one another and, situated as we are in spacious grounds with the beautiful backdrop of the Drakensberg Mountains, this respect must extend also to the natural environment in which we are privileged to live.

ASIFUNDE SONKE (*Let us learn together*)

In early 2013 Noah's Ark opened its doors to a group of 16 aspirant ECD teachers on a Level 4 ECD course accredited to SETA and SAQA. They meet on Saturday mornings in the big Grade R classroom and will shortly graduate. Felicity Champkins is their trainer through training modules and these teachers are transforming their establishments, which before were nothing more than drop-off points for working mothers, into functional crèches and pre-schools where early learning takes place. Not all of these Saturday candidates are in schools, but our survey shows that the lives of 386 children will be influenced.

In early 2014 teachers in schools in the Centacow/Creighton/Ubuhlabezwe area approached us because they wanted to be trained as ECD teachers – news travels fast, in Africa. This group eventually swelled to 21 and meets in the Grade R Classroom on Wednesday afternoons. Again, their trainer is Felicity Champkins and a survey indicates that these teachers will influence the lives of not less than 592 children.

In 2015 there are 46 aspirant teachers asking for training, the great majority from Centacow – Creighton areas. All of these are in schools for whom the only means of transport to Himeville are the minibus taxis. Transport alone will amount to some R2,7million over the two years of training. But ... the influence upon young lives will be immense. Noah's Ark will provide the training and the venue.

ACCOLADES

Over the years Noah's Ark and its Principal have received several prestigious awards:

- 2008 KZN DOE Community Developer of the Year, KwaZulu-Natal
- 2010 KZN DOE Master Trainer Award
- 2014 ABSA Bank Award: Runner up, Grade R Practitioner of the Year, KZN
- 2014 ABSA Bank Award, ECD Trainer of the Year: First in Province
Second Nationally



LOOKING AHEAD ...

Noah's Ark will need to upgrade two classrooms to a standard that will demonstrate a well set-up ECD learning environment and upgrade their outdoor equipment to include sensopathic areas and apparatus for gross motor development..