



MATJANA PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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TEACHING AT MATJANA USING THE PLAY BASED LEARNING APPROACH

Matjana Preschool is using play-based learning approaches for teaching and learning. This month we will hear more about teaching using play-based learning, an approach by which children learn through playing, and which is advocated by the Swazi Ministry of Education.



Applying ECCD knowledge in a classroom

Khetsiwe, who is halfway through her early childhood care and development (ECCD) training has learned about play based learning approaches at college. "I didn't understand why there was so much time for play in the school timetable

until I learned the importance of play at college this year," she said. In our timetable play is 80% of the time. This includes free and guided play which has been shown to be the best approach to promote learning in early childhood. Khetsiwe said she didn't know that until she learned in at college. "I just

thought the teachers wanted the kids to have fun using the school equipment."

School starts at 8:00am but some kids arrive at school just before 7:00am because they come with their siblings who are at primary school. Those kids, usually get inside the

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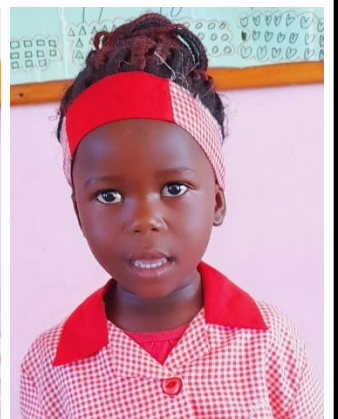
preschool premises and play with all the outdoor equipment while other kids are still making their way to school. Upon arrival they would join their classmates on the swings or climbing frame and play until school starts. "The swing is their favourite thing, it is very rare to find kinds outside and no one on the swings," said Khetsiwe.

There is sometimes even fighting when playing with swings as some kids would not want to give others a chance or complain that

MEET THE



MATJANA KIDS



NAME:	Melokuhle Mbonane	Rubby Akhona	Praise Sihlongonyane
MEANING:	Waiting for good achievements		
FAVOURITES AT SCHOOL:	Playing with dolls	Drawing and writing	Playing with blocks
FAVOURITE FOOD:	Rice and fish	Rice and beans	Rice and beef stew
WANTS TO BE A:	Doctor	Nurse	Teacher
TEACHERS SAY:	She is very stubborn	Shi is very shy	She too young but is very clever

TEACHING AT MATJANA USING PBLA

“So and so doesn’t want to push me”. Unfortunately, there is only one swing remaining because the others broke.

When school starts, they would do assembly for few minutes where they would sing church songs and pray. One of their favourite songs goes “We are building up a temple, we are building up the temple of the Lord, boys come and help us, girls come and help us”. Teacher Nokphila who was once a student at Matjana preschool said they also used to sing that song too, with their lungs out.

Fantasy area

When we asked Nokuphila and other

former students what they liked about preschool, most of them mentioned something that goes with play e.g. swings, blocks, tyres, dolls etc. This makes us happy to know that the students are enjoying, and we are following the approach to learning recommended by our Ministry of Education and early childhood experts around the world. “In everything we do we try as much as we can to look like play or a game, so that the kids learn and enjoy,” Khetsiwe said

It is always interesting to hear kids talking to themselves whenever they are in the fantasy area, when they are imitating their family members. As you can imagine this is the loudest station which helps kids to improve their social and emotional skills.



Khetsiwe said she once heard one of the girls saying, “Hey sister-in-law feed your baby! Don’t you hear her crying?” and one of the boys saying “Speed the car! We are now late for work. They are going to fire us.” He said this while busy making the sound of cars and although he didn’t

know it, he was also learning to be creative and solve problems that might arise later in life.

Parents are worried

However, some parents have raised concerns that their kids do not know how to write because they spend a lot of time playing. One parent said, “When I asked my child what she was doing at school, she would always say they were playing.” She was concerned that her child could not yet write their name. We are happy that some parents managed to raise their concerns and ask why preschool education involves so much play. We are planning a meeting with the parents to let them know why their children play at school and what they learn in the process. From now on we plan to explain to parents at the beginning of each year and made them aware of the importance of play.

Outdoor equipment

We had quality outdoor equipment which was bought about 10 years ago. They now need to be repainted and some should be replaced. For example, we need to replace a broken swing and repaint most of the outdoor material to prevent rusting. This will ensure that we have the equipment we need to give our students the most diverse play-based learning experience possible.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

We are looking forward to get more donations for other projects e.g. play equipment which as said in the newsletter that we need to replace and maintain most of the outdoor equipment. It is with great pleasure to say that we are still able to pay wages monthly for our staff. Thank you for your generous support. If you haven’t yet been able to support our school, please consider making a donation in the details below:



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Bank	Standard Bank	The Community Mutual Group
Account Name:	Matjana Preschool	Friends of Matjana Preschool
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