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

Foundations for Learning

A campaign for YOU!

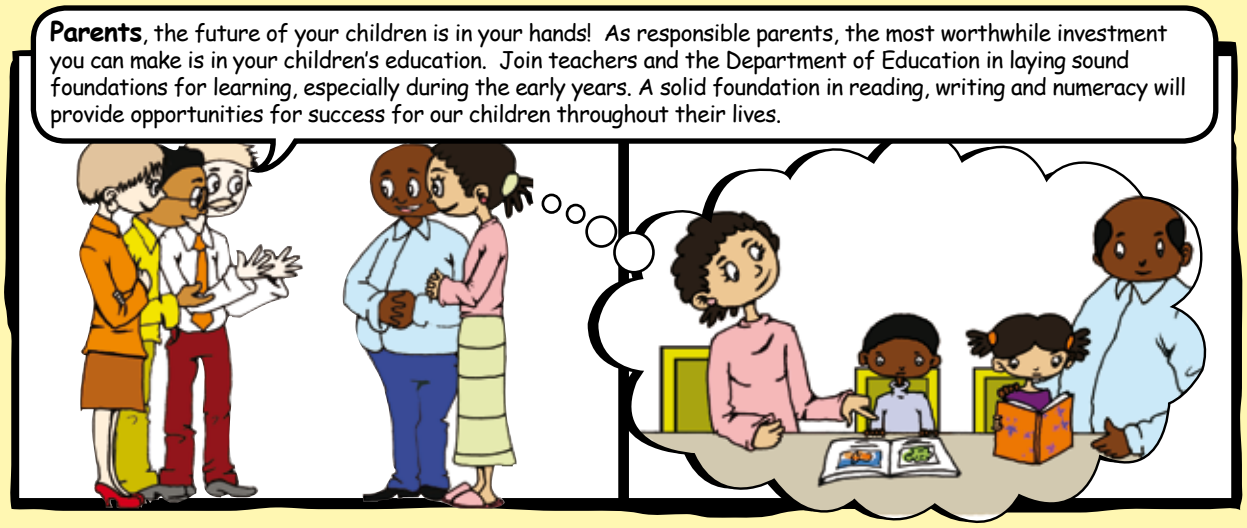
This supplement is in support of the Foundations for Learning Campaign, launched by the Minister of Education, Minister Naledi Pandor, in 2008. The campaign is a response to persistent poor performance in reading, writing and numeracy by many children in classrooms across South Africa – critical learning areas that are a necessary foundation to further learning and lifelong success.

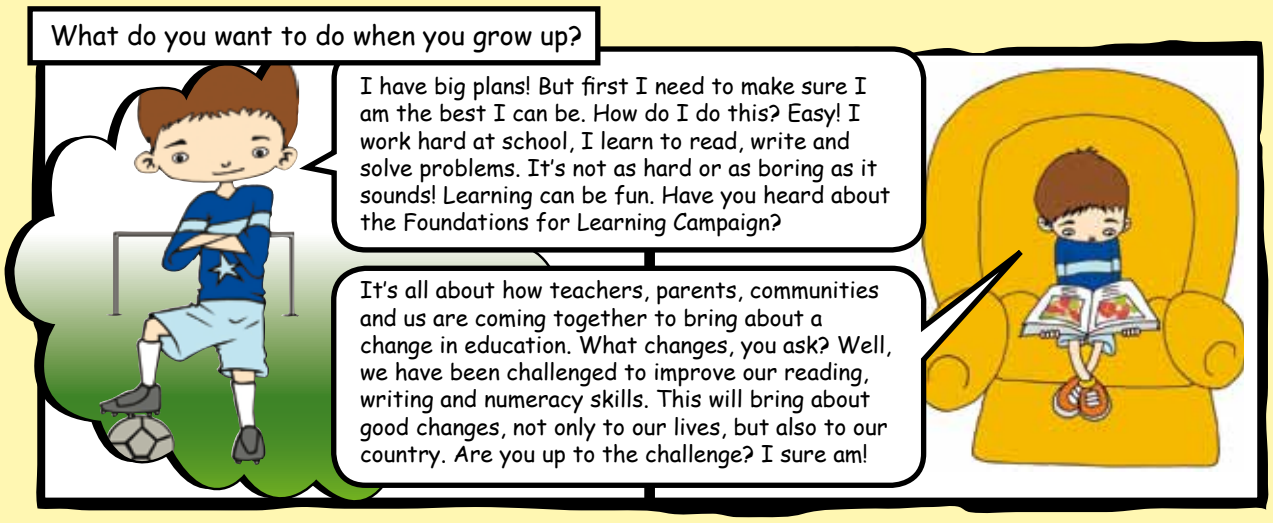
The goal we in the Department of Education have set ourselves is to ensure that, by 2011, all learners in our schools demonstrate age and grade appropriate competencies in literacy and numeracy and that average learner performance in all primary schools in these areas is at least 50%. Working together with you, we know we will achieve this.

I hope you find this resource useful in your teaching and that you take as much pleasure in using it as we did in putting it together!

We look forward to 2011 with great anticipation – and to the nationwide celebrations of our children's improved performance in literacy and numeracy.

Palesa Tyobeka
Deputy Director General
General Education and Training





Contents

Inside this Grade R focused supplement, you will find:

Pages 2 and 7
Planning your programme: a double page spread of a daily programme for use in the Grade R classroom.

Page 3
Classroom layout: learn how to arrange your classroom and how to accommodate the various learning areas.

Pages 4 and 5
Birthday chart – a poster for you to use in your classroom. Just add small flashcards with each child's name, symbol and date.

Page 6
Resources for the Reception class: get ideas on what to include in your classroom.

Page 8
Focus time for parents: tips and ideas for parents on what to do with their preschooler at home.

* 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:

	Time allocation per day	Total per week
Literacy	1 hour and 50 minutes	9 hours and 10 minutes
Numeracy	1 hour and 30 minutes	7 hours and 30 minutes

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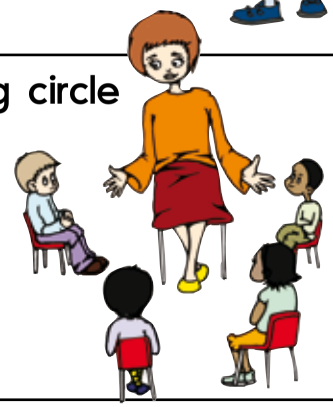
Why is a daily programme important?

It is important to structure each day. This determines what kinds of interactions children have with their classmates and with the teacher during specific times. A well-structured daily programme, with time blocks, ensures that:

- Children develop a sense of safety and security.
- Children know what will happen next and can prepare themselves for the next activity.
- Children's needs are catered for, including those children with special needs.
- Children spend their time on stimulating and challenging learning experiences and teachers can spend more time with them.
- Teachers can prepare children for unexpected changes such as visitors, weather conditions, educational trips, and special events or traditions.

The daily Programme

Activity	Time	What children do	What teachers do
Welcome to school!	Arrival time 15-30 minutes My times	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).	Welcome children and be available to chat to any parent who may need to relay a message.
Good morning!	Health check 10 minutes My times	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.	Register of attendance. Check which name cards or symbols were not placed in containers, get children to identify who has not yet arrived. Run a quick head to toes check of each child. Keep a health record of any signs of illness observed or medication given. Refer cases that need attention. Fill in the weather chart for the day. Mention any birthdays. Go through the daily programme and mention the activities and events for the day. Do this throughout the day, any time a new activity starts.
Morning circle 	Morning circle 10-15 minutes My times	Children participate in the activity.	Introduce new material (new theme for the week), ideas, songs or rhymes, announcements, concepts or skills.
Let's work!	Work time 45-55 minutes My times	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.	Provide stimulating materials and challenging activities. Observe, interact, join in, support and assist children. Place signs at the various interest areas, indicating how many children can play there (a card with pictures of children cut out from magazines will work well). Assess popular areas and materials. Add interesting items to attract children to areas less used. Give children five minutes' warning before the end of an activity – especially work time.
	Small group time 10-15 minutes – during work time My times	Six to eight children meet the teacher to engage in a particular activity planned by the teacher on a mat or around a table.	Present special activity, for example, working with numbers, experimenting with materials or using materials and objects to solve problems. Make the materials available for further use the next day. Use the small groups already allocated to the children for arrival time (for example, red, green, blue and yellow). Attempt to see all children each day.
Tidy up time	Tidy up time 10 minutes	Children pack away all material and equipment.	Join children in packing materials and equipment away. Sing a clean-up song to indicate when it's time to clean up: "It's clean-up time, clean up time. We all join in to clean up now."

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

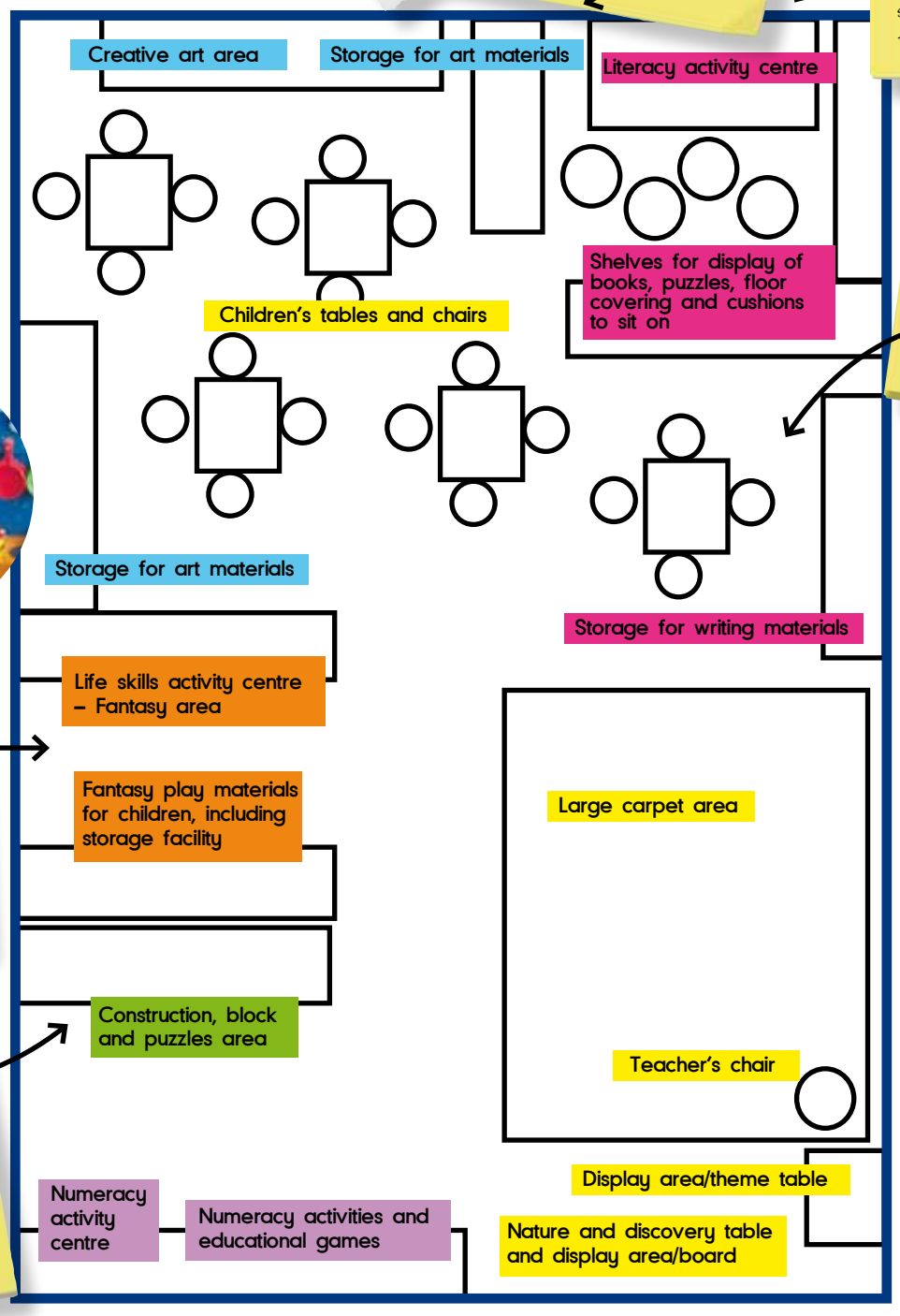
Choosing materials:

- 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.

Creative or 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 in an outside area.

Reading corner: Books should be placed in a quiet part of the classroom. A simple bookshelf 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. Never use this area for time-out or punishment. Screens or other dividers such as shelves can be used to separate this area from the rest of the classroom.

Writing area: This area is to encourage children to explore writing and drawing. It can include paper, envelopes, cardboard, pens, pencils, khokis, crayons, magazines, newspapers, pairs of scissors (including left-handed ones) and stencils (both pictures and letters).



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 widen their exposure. Keep a box 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.

Blocks and puzzles area: This area should be somewhere where the blocks will not be knocked over by children walking past. Building blocks of various sizes and shapes can be made available in this area. Motor cars, plastic animals and aeroplanes can also be added to make it a 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.

Organise the space:

- Lay out interest areas to provide activities such as block play, art and writing activities, pretend play and reading activities.
- Provide space for transition activities such as greeting time, story time and snack time.
- Make visual borders to separate the areas by using low shelves, chairs, mats or carpets, rope or low homemade cardboard screens that children can see over and be seen.
- Allow enough space in each area for a small group of children to play comfortably. Make signs indicating how many children can play in one area at a time (a picture of three children, a hand with three fingers held up, etc).
- Allow space at children's eye level to display their own drawings, paintings or any other work. Provide a space on a small table or low shelf to display children's own models.
- Constantly change and adapt these spaces throughout the year.
- Have a display or interest table near the carpet area. This table can display the theme for the week, or a new skill to be learnt. Sometimes the table can be a "touch and learn" table (instruments, shoes, materials, etc) and other times it can be a "look only" table. All items on the table should be labelled.
- Allocate a space in the classroom for children to store their personal belongings. Lockers or shelves should be labelled with the child's name or symbol.

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 of materials for art

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Pull-out poster

Birthday Chart

January

February

May

June

September

October

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.

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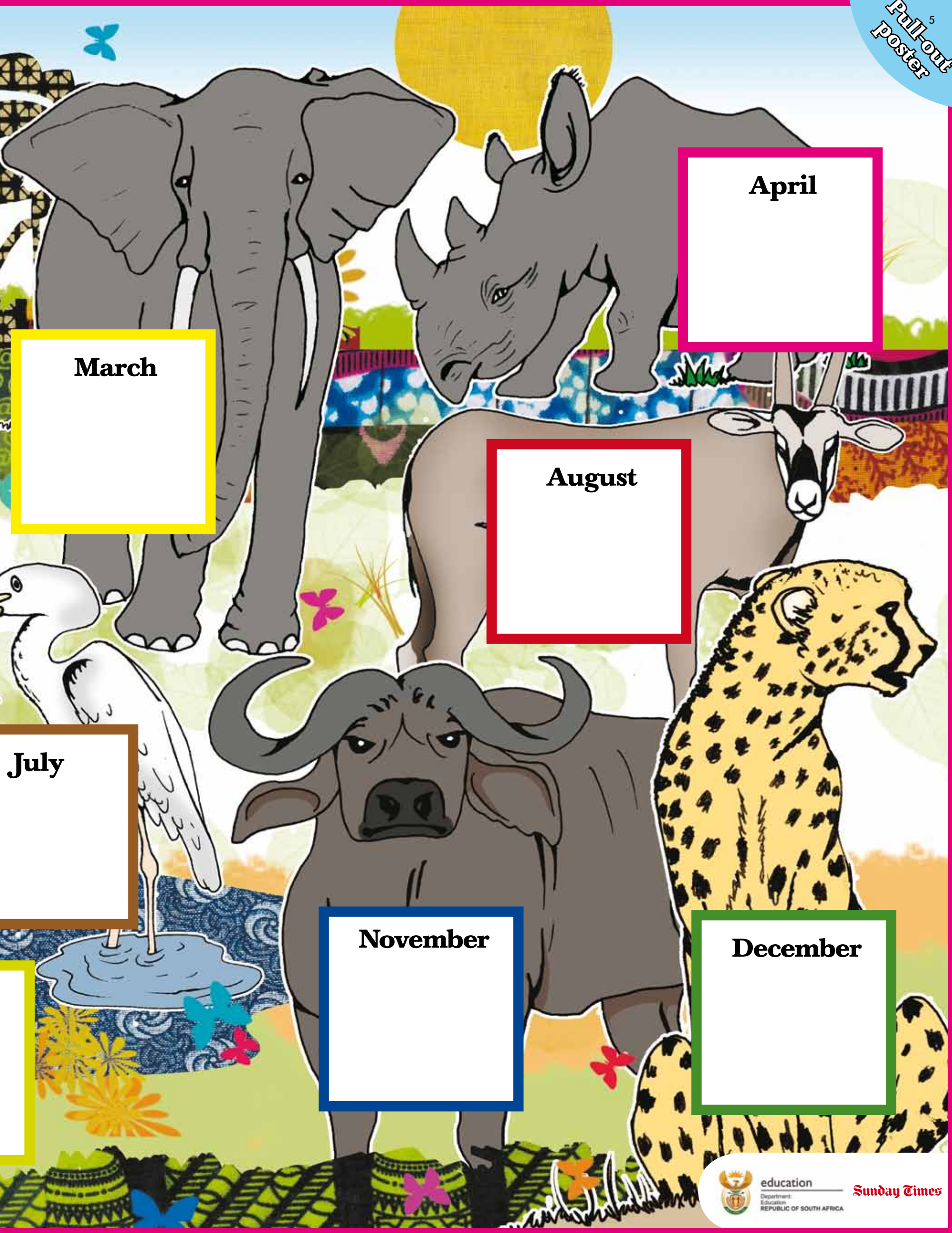

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Resourcing your Grade R classroom

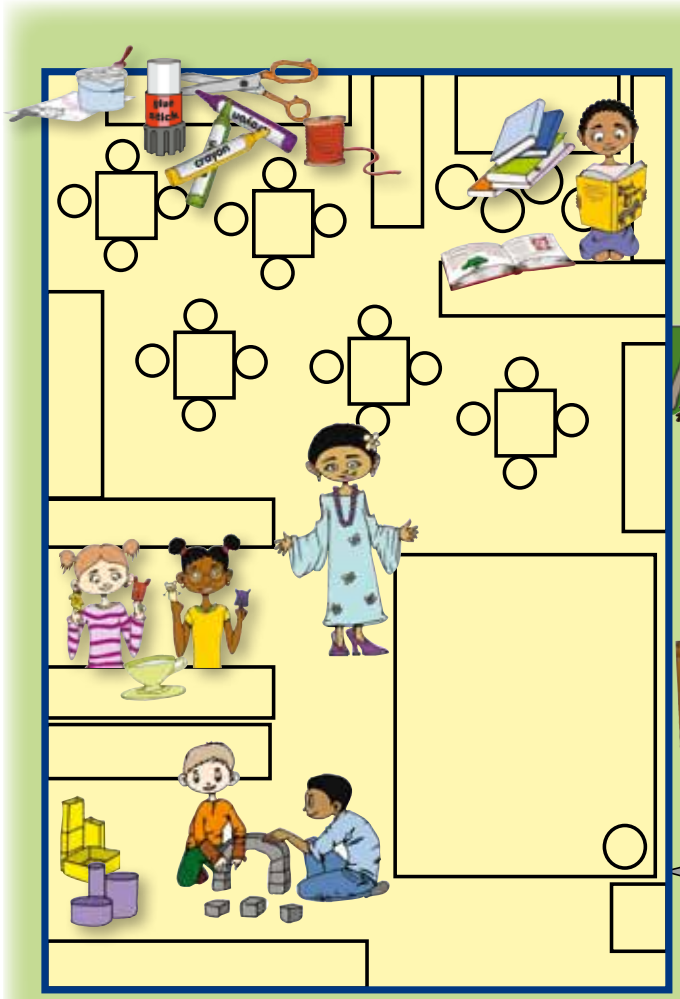
Adequately resourcing your Grade R classroom may seem like a daunting task. However, many of the equipment needed can be donated by parents, businesses in the community or even handmade.

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/ucansi/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 laces 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.



Divide your outdoor space into different play areas. These can be spaces for:

- Children to run, climb and jump
- Children to play in small groups
- A quiet place for children who prefer to sit and relax
- A place for children to experiment (water, sand and science activities)
- A place for pretend play

Remember – Safety is important! Always make sure that the outdoor play area and equipment is safe and clean.

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 mattress
- 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 boxes
- 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.

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- 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.

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.

	My times		
Washing up	**Hand washing** 10 minutes My times	Children wash their hands.	Provide clean water, soap and towels.
Let's eat	**Snack time** 10 to 15 minutes My times	Children enjoy a morning snack.	Talk to children about what they did during work time. Prepare the room for the next activity.
Sing and dance	**Music and movement** 15 to 20 minutes My times	Children participate in music and movement activities.	Present music and movement activities. Here is a fun, active song for you to sing and move to: Hokey Pokey You put your right foot in, You put your right foot out, You put your right foot in And you shake it all about. You do the Hokey Pokey And you turn around, That's what it's all about. You put your left foot in... You put your right hand in... You put your left hand in... You put your right shoulder in... You put your left shoulder in... You put your whole self in...
Let's play	**Outdoor play** 20 to 30 minutes My times	Children enjoy energetic, noisy, physical play.	Join in children's play, talk to them and assist where needed.
Washing up	**Hand washing and toilet time** 15 minutes My times	Children go to the toilet and then wash their hands.	Supervise routine.
Story time	**Story time** 10 to 15 minutes My times	Children listen to and participate in storytelling. Children share own stories or work completed during work time.	Engage children in stories being told, ask responsive questions, allow and encourage children to be actively involved in the story. * Collect your own ReadRight storybook in the Sunday Times magazine

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Sunday Times

Pull-out poster

Focus time for parents!

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.

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.

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, playdough, 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 to 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:

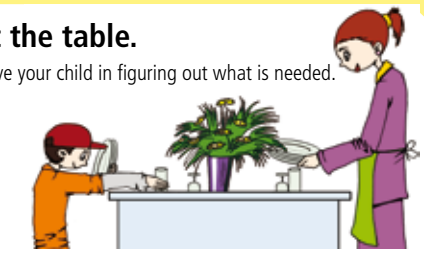
- Provide materials that children can use in a variety of ways: blocks, paper and crayons, dolls and toy animals, balls, playdough, etc.
- Encourage children to play with ordinary household objects like pots and pans and outdoor materials like sticks and stones.
- Provide simple toys that encourage children 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

*** Collect your own ReadRight storybook in the Sunday Times magazine**

Look at family photos together.

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

You might say ...

Who'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

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

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:

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Little Library Reading Kit

WIN! We have one set of three Little Library Reading Kits to give away to one school! There is a set for literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Indigenous and innovative, the Little Library Kits introduce literacy, numeracy and life skills to children aged 5 to 9 years. Each boxed set contains five copies of the 12 storybooks, plus a Big Book of each for class reading, 12 colourful posters, and a teacher's guide with useful notes and ideas for teaching stories as well as activity sheets that can be photocopied and used in the classroom.

For sales information contact Customer Services Department on 021 412 7800 or info@cup.co.za

Write to us and tell us why your school deserves to win this prize. The winning letter gets the Little Library!

Post your letters to ReadRight Little Library – PO Box 1654, Saxonwold, 2132. You must include your first name, surname, age, cellphone number, postal address and school name and address.

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