

SOUNDS SURVEY June 2012



1. PREAMBLE:

The first SOUNDS sets (alphabets and training DVD only) were piloted at selected township and rural preschools in 2010. Further sets were handed out during 2011, so that each preschool affiliated to the Knysna Education Trust received one set, and teachers began their training in English. At this stage SOUNDS kits were assembled, with information in a flip file in Afrikaans and Xhosa to assist the teachers, as well as a polar fleece mat for 8 learners to sit comfortably in a circle on the floor. In January 2012, thanks to the DG Murray Trust, a SOUNDS kit became available to every class in the 22 Knysna Education Trust preschools (and they did not need to be shared any longer), and Thobeka Henge joined the KET team, so that SOUNDS methodology could be communicated to the teachers in Xhosa. The SOUNDS co-ordinator could communicate in Afrikaans. This was an improvement in every way, and the teachers also understood how to record their learners' progress. Appropriate phonetic word lists have been compiled and distributed for use in Xhosa and Afrikaans classes.

It will become apparent from this survey that the information supplied by both preschool teachers and volunteers is informal in nature, and is an indication only. It is not possible working in the local township conditions to have scientific results to formulate into absolute truths.

2. EVIDENCE FROM GRADE 1 TEACHERS:

A list of learners was compiled to try to track learners, who had had SOUNDS in 2010 and 2011 in KET preschools and Grade R, now in Grade 1, in 5 local township primary schools. 172 learners were identified during June 2012 and the following information was supplied by Grade 1 teachers with regard to their performance in Literacy after 6 months in Primary School:

91 good – excellent

52 average – satisfactory

29 weak

3. KET PRESCHOOLS SURVEY:

21 KET preschools replied. Information from both teachers and volunteers has usually been consistent.

There are a number of factors that must be considered, as this is not a homogenous group.

3.1 Some classes consist of mixed ages and languages. It is recommended that children learn SOUNDS in their mother-tongue, with a group who speak the same language. However, there are also foreigners (from Malawi / Zimbabwe) in the classes who must be accommodated.

3.2 It took some preschools longer than others to start the SOUNDS programme at the beginning of 2012. Parents waited for their January wages to pay for transport to collect their children from the Eastern Cape where they spent their summer holidays with extended family.

3.3 Learners in township preschools come and go, joining and leaving classes throughout the year.

3.4 At some times of the year it is normal to have fluctuating attendance at preschools, when siblings are on school holiday, long weekends etc.

3.5 Teachers have varying levels of commitment. One admits "...although I'm not doing it as often as I should....Kinders is opgewonde, wil dit doen.....Doing often, it could be so much better."

3.6 By June 2012, learners who had been learning SOUNDS for 16 months, some of them 21 months, knew all the letter-sounds, and could form and read 5 – 6 letter words. They could also write the words spontaneously with a stick on the beach at an outing to the Heads and decipher appropriate word cards (sand, stones, water etc.) Decoding (reading) as a skill develops later in the normal learning process than encoding (forming phonetic words).

3.7 Teachers in the preschools are certainly becoming more confident and capable as they become more familiar with the programme, and the learners have more scope for experimentation. There are many 2 and 3 letter words in Afrikaans, most Xhosa words are longer and cannot be introduced immediately.

4. GRADE R: 8 Xhosa classes, 13 Afrikaans classes (2 have 2 languages, listed together)

<u>Time on SOUNDS Programme</u>	<u>Letter-sound knowledge</u>	<u>Forming words</u>	<u>Reading words</u>
16 months and 21 months	All	5-6 letters	5-6 letters
14 months	All	5 letters, names	
11 months	19		
11 months	13	starting 3-letters	
11 months	11	3 letters	
10 months	All	4,5,6 letters	
9 months	14	3 letters	
9 months	All	3 letters	
9 months	11...all	2-3 letters	
5 months	18	starting 4 – 5 letters	
5 months	17	3 letters	
5 months	15		
5 months	14...all	3 letters, own words	
5 months	12...all		
5 months	11		
5 months	9		
5 months	8	5 letters	
4 months	11	3 letters	I
3 months	8		

5. 4 – 5 Year-old classes: 4 Xhosa classes, 10 Afrikaans classes.

<u>Time on SOUNS Programme</u>	<u>Letter-sound knowledge</u>	<u>Forming words</u>
12 months	All	
5 months	16	3 letters
5 months	15	4-5 letters
5 months	13	
5 months	9...14	starting 3 letters
5 months	9...12	
5 months	9 (3 languages)	
5 months	8...12	
5 months	8	3 letters
5 months	8	
5 months	8	
5 months	6	
5 months	6	
3 months	6	

6. 3-4 year old classes: 4 Xhosa classes, 3 Afrikaans classes

<u>Time on SOUNS Programme</u>	<u>Letter-sound knowledge</u>	<u>Forming words</u>
5 months	12	starting 3 letters
5 months	12	
5 months	10	
5 months	6...12	
5 months	6...9	names
5 months	6...8	starting 3 letters
5 months	6	

7. Under 3's (Babies): 7 Xhosa classes, 5 Afrikaans

<u>Time on SOUNS Programme</u>	<u>Letter-sound knowledge</u>	<u>Forming words</u>
5 months	9	
5 months	8	
5 months	8	
5 months	6	
5 months	6	
5 months	4...12	
5 months	4...6	
5 months	4	
5 months	4	
5 months	4	
5 months	4	
5 months	3...6	

- 8. There is clearly a wide range of performance in all age groups.** This will depend on time spent on the programme, as well as many other factors within each preschool. Some teachers are delaying the word-formation stage of the programme, and are waiting for their

learners to know all the letters first. This is not necessary, and they should start introducing word-building as soon as possible.

However, there is no doubt that this programme will have a profound effect on performance in literacy in years to come for every one of the learners who has been introduced to SOUNDS during his / her preschool years.

9. CLOSING COMMENTS:

VOLUNTEERS: Babies' teacher is very enthusiastic!

This child seeks reassurance from others sometimes.

This group 4/5 years much better than younger group. Their concentration much better and they could play quite simple games, ie placing foot or hand above the letter with confidence and enjoyment. Their sense of achievement was evident.

This group were very confident and engaged. Their orientation of the letters with the Braille was excellent...they are quick to catch on to new ways of presenting the material. The success of SOUNDS was very apparent...and for the next 6 months their progress will be exponential, mainly because they enjoy it and the reward is so instant.

As you saw, the group are making progress. I am enjoying going there and I think that (the teacher) is doing a wonderful job.

Grateful thanks to every volunteer who has made the time to visit his / her preschool regularly and to get to know the teachers , the children, and the programme. It is a true labour of love!

TEACHERS: The children are very excited when we began with SOUNDS in the morning. They learn very well.

Some of the children are very clever...

Die kinders is baie opgewonde wanneer ons met die SOUNDS begin werk.

We are still busy doing only letter. They can't read because of their age.

I don't want to rush, before I am actually sure by doing words.

Thank to the SOUNDS it open a whole new world for the learners.

The SOUNDS help the children's speech and they can also recognise the sound when it is on someone's t-shirt.

They enjoy working with SOUNDS. They can write their names and point to each others if they see SOUNDS.

They all enjoy doing their SOUNDS and they are very good at it.

Some of them put the words in order and some of them put it backwards.

The SOUNDS helps the teachers and the children a lot. It's easy for the children to recognise the SOUNDS and their speech improves.

I see improvement every day.

SOUNDS helps the children with their reading skills. The children build their own words with the SOUNDS.

The children love doing SOUNDS.....and it is fun for them to work with the sound and learn new letters.

I am very proud of that group. They enjoy the SOUNDS.

Teachers, you are doing wonderful work with your learners and the SOUNDS programme!

Keep it up! I am proud of you all!

Lesley Satchel, SOUNDS Co-ordinator, Knysna Education Trust. 27 June 2012