

# What is needed to change the trajectories of young children in SA?

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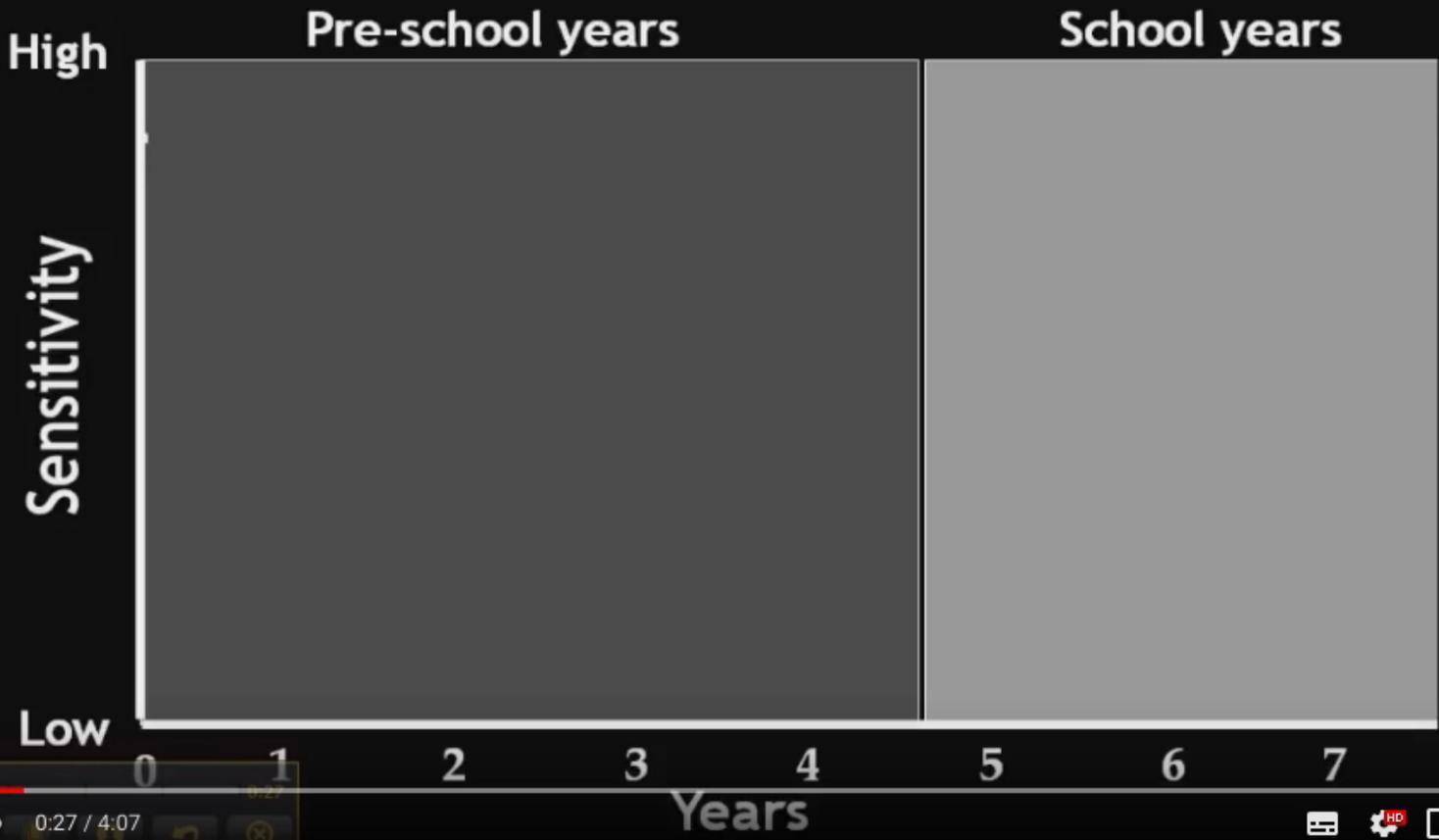
**78%**  
of Grade 4  
learners  
cannot read  
for meaning.

**50%**  
of learners who  
start school do not  
reach Grade 12

**Unemployment  
crisis**



# Sensitive Periods in Early Brain Development



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# What does 'ECD' include?

An essential package of services for all children aged 0-6 years



**Maternal and child health services**

Including antenatal care, PMTCT, physical & mental health screening, psychosocial support and immunisation



**Nutritional support**

For pregnant women, mothers and children



**Support for primary caregivers**

Including parenting skills and psychosocial support



**Social services**

Including birth registration, access to social grants, responsive child protection services and psychosocial support



**Stimulation for early learning**

Including access to quality, age-appropriate early learning programmes

# There is a significant correlation between elements of the essential package and child development outcomes

Based on data collected in multiple studies using a population based child outcomes tool developed and standardised in South Africa – the EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES MEASURE (ELOM)





# Core ELOM components

## **Direct Assessment: 23 items**

- Gross Motor Development
- Fine Motor Coordination & Visual Motor Integration
- Emergent Numeracy & Mathematics
- Cognition & Executive Functioning
- Emergent Literacy & Language

## **Teacher & Direct Assessment**

- Social & Emotional Development & Awareness
- Approaches to Learning (persistence, attention & concentration).

## **Teacher Assessment Only**

- Self- Care (4 point scale)
- Social Relations with adults & peers (4 point scale)
- Emotional Functioning (3 point scale)

# Better child health and nutrition is associated with better learning outcomes

Children with higher height-for-age scores (healthier and less likely to be malnourished) performed significantly better on all ELOM domains and on the ELOM total score



# Socio-emotional wellbeing is important for brain development

Greater socio-emotional wellbeing in children is associated with better learning outcomes. Children who feel safe and are protected from toxic levels of stress do better.



# Well designed and implemented early learning programmes do make a difference

Children with access to two or more years of a high quality early learning programme perform better on the ELOM. Higher programme exposure is associated with significantly better performance

Importantly: The benefits are most pronounced for poorer children. This is consistent with international research.

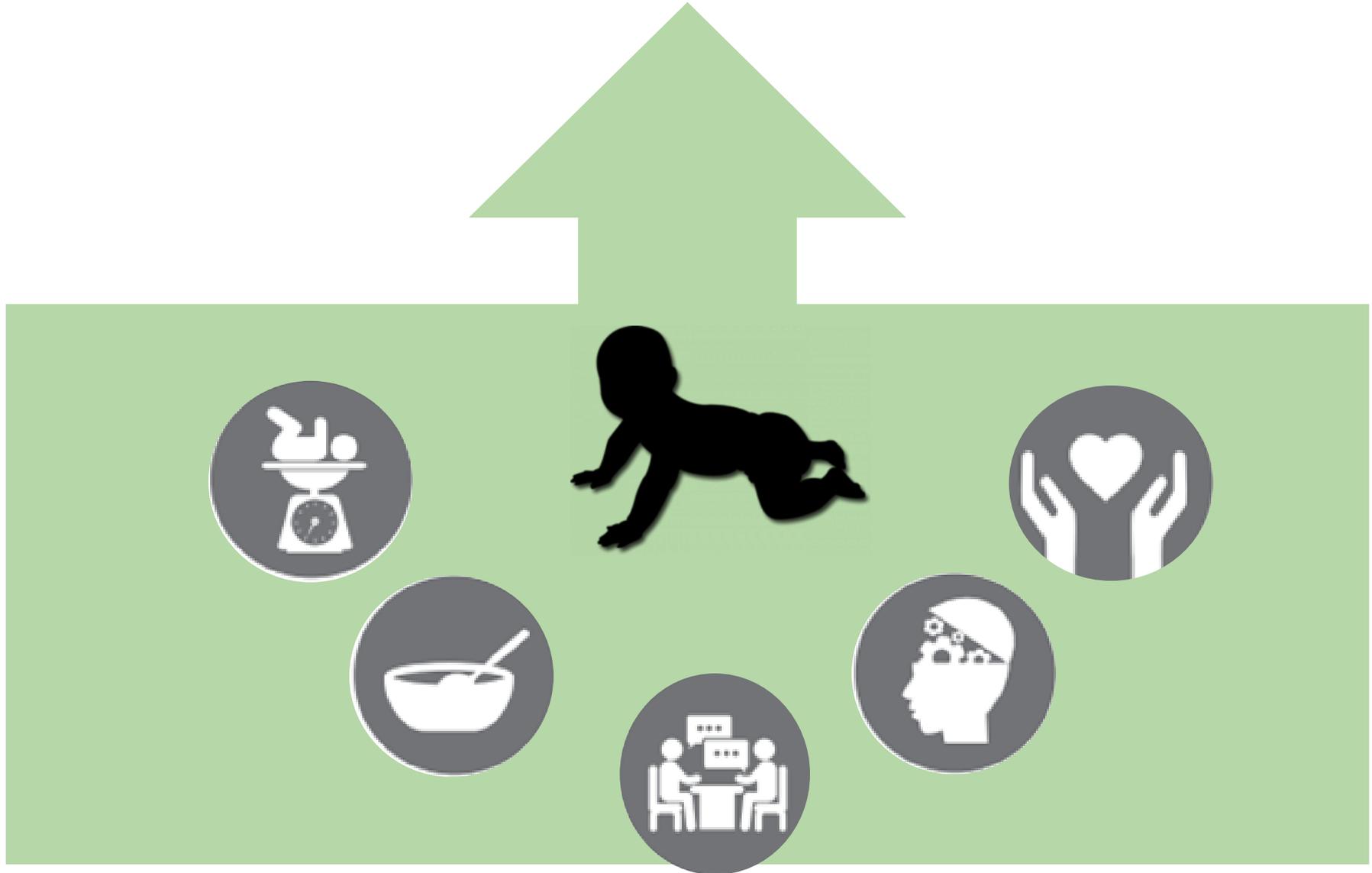


# Having access to children's books in the home does matter

Children with greater learning resources at **home** performed significantly better on two developmental domains – cognitive and executive functioning and visual motor integration and fine motor coordination.



**Children who have access to this essential package of services and support are more likely to start school ON TRACK, with all the associated benefits**

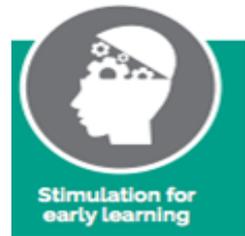




GOOD

FAIR

POOR

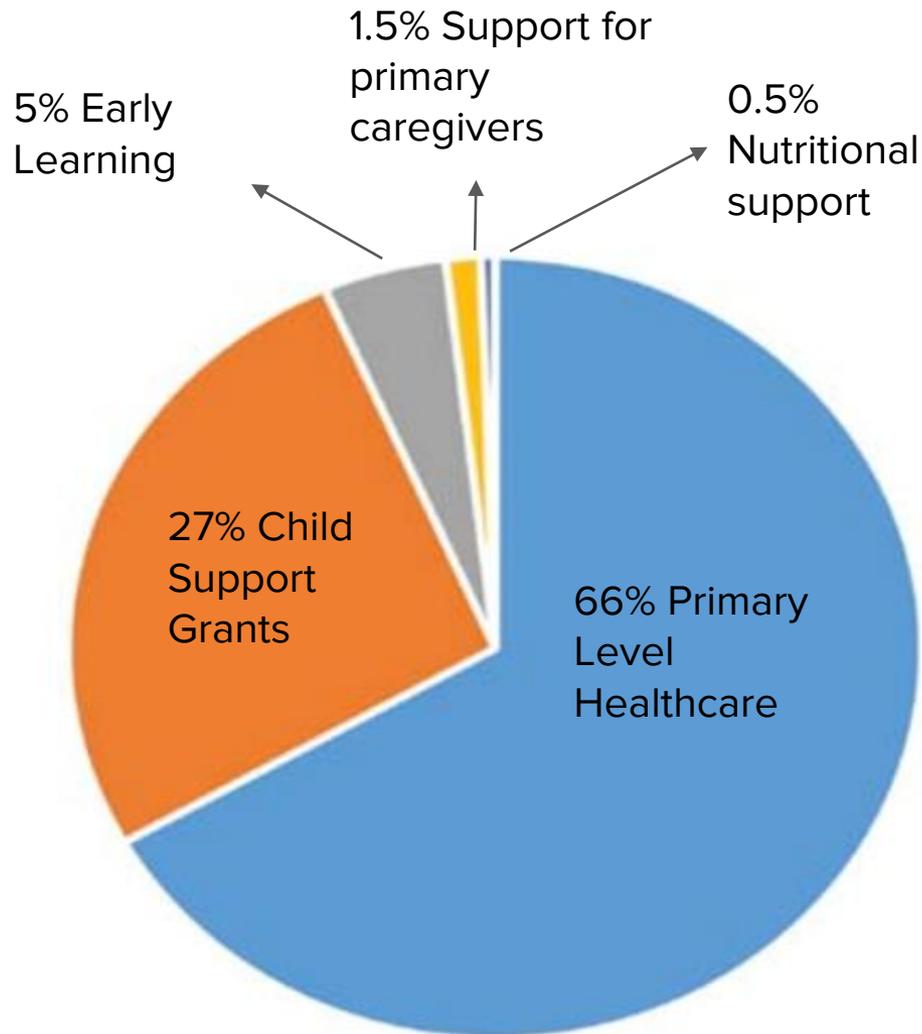


There are 7m children aged 0-6 years in SA

65% live below the poverty line

How are we doing in the delivery of an essential package?

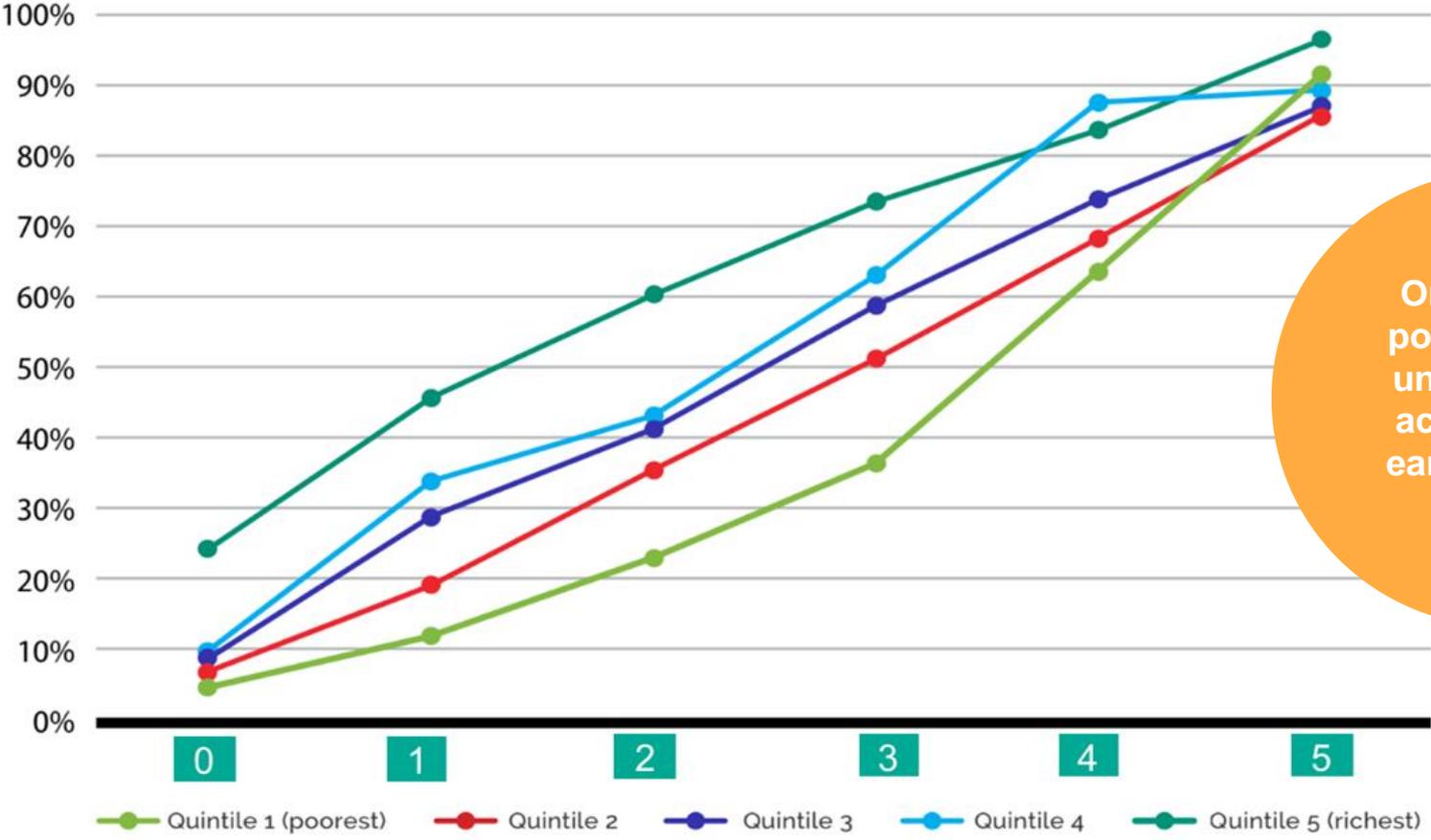
# Breakdown of R75 billion spent on ECD in 2018



AND - If we combine spending on early learning, early nutrition and parenting support = <4% of the value of the education budget

Given what we know about early brain development, this is not enough to power better educational outcomes and build much needed human capital

# Inadequate funding makes access to early learning opportunities prohibitively expensive for the poorest households

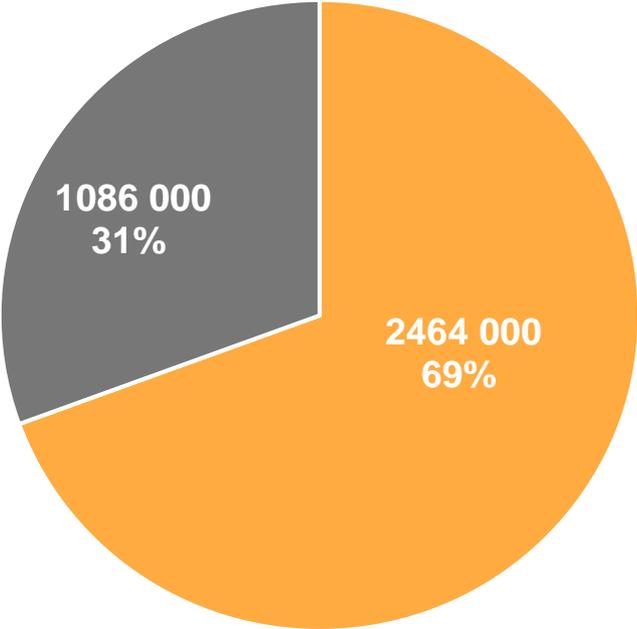


Only 12% of poor children under 6 have access to an early learning subsidy

Source: GHS (2017) Analysis by Children's Institute (UCT)

# Early Learning Opportunities for young children, by Age

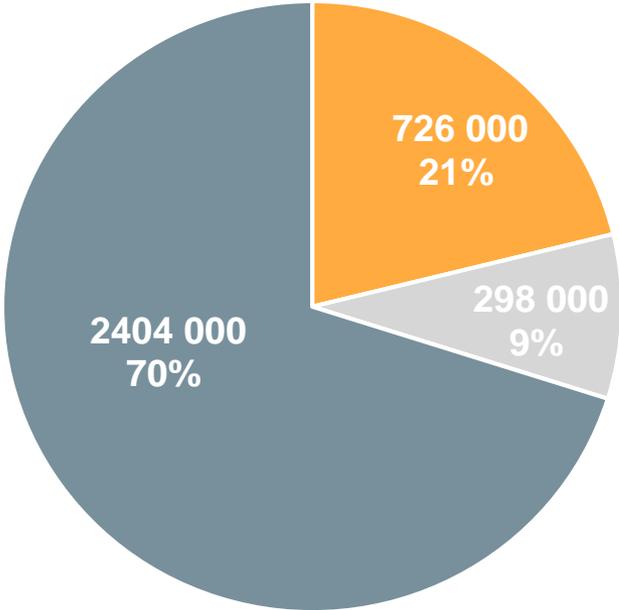
Children aged 3-5 years



- Early learning group programme or Grade R
- Not attending any early learning group programme

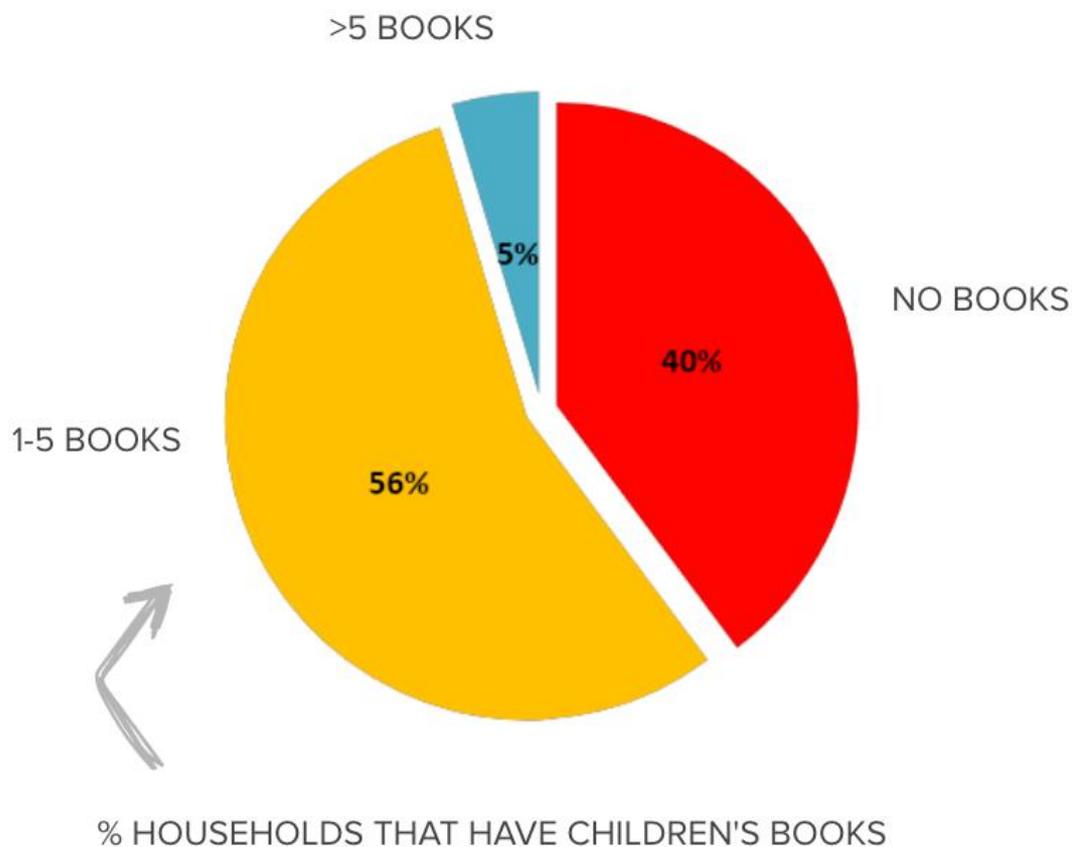
# Early Learning Opportunities for young children, by Age

Children aged 0-2 years



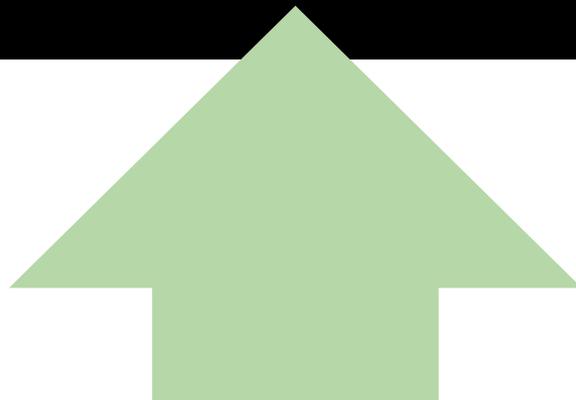
- Preschool, nursery school, creche, educare centre or playgroup
- Daymother / childminder / gogo
- At home / not with a childminder or in a group environment

# Proportion of children with access to books in the home





**31% of children under two years of age in SA are stunted due to chronic malnutrition**





Less than half of all children aged 4-6 years in SA are on track in key areas of cognitive development – the poorest children are **MOST AT RISK**



<b>Developmental domain</b>	<b>% achieving standard on the ELOM</b>
<b>Gross Motor Development</b>	<b>36.9%</b>
<b>Fine Motor Control and Visual Motor Integration</b>	<b>20.5%</b>
<b>Emergent Numeracy and Mathematics*</b>	<b>36.4%</b>
<b>Cognitive and Executive Functioning</b>	<b>26.6%</b>
<b>Emergent Literacy and Language</b>	<b>37.8%</b>
<b>ELOM Total</b>	<b>28.5%</b>

**May 2018 - children randomly selected from variety of ELPs in six provinces (N=506)**

## We cannot continue with business as usual!

We have to significantly **strengthen and coordinate** our ECD efforts  
The FUNCTION SHIFT presents us with a great opportunity to do just that



Need a well capacitated  
'hub' to lead and  
coordinate, with  
necessary authority



Need more and  
smarter  
financing

Underpinning this – we need better routine and surveillance  
data systems and tools to ensure access for all children to  
quality services

# The SA Early Years Index

Will monitor trends over time in the % preschool children who are on track

Index data may be used in a number of ways –

- Reporting on SDG 4.2.1
- Tracking progress in reducing inequality over time
- Raising public awareness on the importance of ECD and on the role of parents
- Providing evidence to support greater investment in early childhood interventions (from all sectors)
- Supporting effective targeting of resources by identifying critical gaps
- Understanding which interventions (or combinations thereof) are most effective in improving early childhood outcomes
- Identifying further research needed
- Informing an innovation agenda for ECD



**basic education**  
Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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