

# UNIT NINE

## Reading and writing long texts – Engaging with the ECD Sector

### In this Unit you will address the following:

#### Unit Standard 119631

- Use language for learning
- Know where and how to find and use information
- Use information well in order to learn more

#### Unit Standard 12469

- Use different ways to read different things
- Judge why something was written, who it was written for, and what the circumstances might be
- Look for meaning and understand writing
- Question how language is used in writing
- Understand the use of acceptable practices in text and how text is organized

#### Unit Standard 119636

- Write things which show that you know who are writing for and why you are writing
- Use grammar (the way words are used in sentences) to arrange or structure what you write.
- Use accepted practice for structuring what you write
- Plan your writing, do a practice, check it and correct it.



### 1. Reading longer texts

If a document is well written we can often find clues for meaning from the way the writing is organised and how the sentences are structured. In Unit 1 you scanned headings and pictures to get clues about meaning. Throughout the course you have used a dictionary, or asked other people the meaning of words. You have explored how you read different things for a different purpose. When you read a longer text you may have to use many of the skills you have learned. Let's give it a try.

Read the following speech by Education Minister, Naledi Pandor. Take your time. You may want to read it more than once in order to answer the questions. Remember to prepare yourself for reading. Scan the speech quickly, look for headings and think about questions you want to ask.

**Address by the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, MP, at the Early Childhood Development Conference, Birchwood Conference Centre, Johannesburg<sup>14</sup>**

Ladies and gentlemen, as most of you will know, this year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, in which a commitment was made to open

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the doors of learning and culture to all.

It is an appropriate moment to reflect on whether we have taken significant steps towards achieving that important goal.

### **What have we achieved?**

The education sector has achieved a great deal in ten years of freedom. Thousands of our teachers are now better qualified, pro-poor nutrition programmes ensure that young learners do not go hungry at school, our participation rates are comparable to those in developed countries, more girls than boys participate in secondary school and girls do better than boys at key competency tests, the backlogs in infrastructure have been aggressively reduced, and early childhood development and Grade R programmes have been significantly expanded.

### **Grade R**

The focus in the past few years has been on phasing in the reception grade (grade R), a preparation year prior to entering primary school, in both community based and public schools.

The recent expansion of enrolment (by just under 12 per cent per year) of five-year-olds in the reception grade suggests that the goal of (full) enrolment of 800,000 five-year-olds in publicly funded reception grade education will be reached by 2010. Moreover, the expansion of ECD has enabled the training in ECD activities of a number of people in poorer communities as practitioners and assistants.

### **Challenges**

There are still inequalities in access to pre-primary education. The department's ECD audit in 2000 revealed that almost twice as many children in urban areas received pre-primary education as in rural areas.

We know that poverty is worst in our rural areas. The ministerial committee on rural education reported last week, and there are some important recommendations it made that we will soon put into practice. But we know that more needs to be done in regard to pre-primary education for the 6.4 million children under 7 years old. And more in particular needs to be done to enrol children with disabilities in ECD provision.

Our particular challenge here is that nearly a quarter of our children under 5 are stunted and one in 10 underweight for their age. The youngest and those in rural areas are worst affected. We know that maternal education is the key to child survival and that women in rural areas have suffered most from the legacy

of inadequate education under apartheid.

What this means is that many children are simply unprepared for the transition to formal schooling. And the evidence is clear for all to see in the results of the key competency tests, like the one last year that found more than 60% of Grade 3s in the Western Cape are not achieving literacy and numeracy levels required by the national curriculum and 15% could not read or calculate at the most basic level.

I expressed my concern about these results at the time and I do so again now. Our response is to strengthen those interventions that improve quality. And a further response is to strengthen intergovernmental collaboration.

Collaboration

As we all know, children's needs and their care cuts across various fields of study, departments, institutions, and organisations.

This was acknowledged in White Paper 5, where there was a commitment to the development of a strategic plan for inter-sectoral collaboration.

A draft integrated plan has been developed by the education department, in collaboration with the office on the rights of the child, the department of social development and the department of health. This is going through governmental approval processes, and should be ready for implementation in April 2005.

We have realised that this is an enormous task, and are engaging with the NGOs and with other ECD stakeholders in realising our vision.

This conference is a first attempt in this country to bring together different interest groups nationally and internationally to discuss, and debate issues to construct knowledge relating to integrated / inter-sectoral planning and service delivery for young children.

The main groups represented in this conference are parents, ECD practitioners, teachers and trainers. There are also government officials from the departments of social development, office on the rights of the child in the President's office, education, local government, health and correctional services. Many national and international ECD organisations and institutions are also represented.

Internationally we recognise that even though the world is becoming more and more aware of the need to invest in young children, UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report (2005) indicates that half of the world's 2 billion children live in dire poverty and deprivation.

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I would like us to acknowledge that it is a challenge for our country to be hosting this conference at this time and in the face of this urgent need to improve the provision of ECD services. We know and remember that young children suffered tremendously through various forms of deprivations under apartheid.

As we move into the second decade of our freedom and democracy, we have time to reflect and assess how far we have gone to change and improve the lives of our children and to identify ways in which we can increase access to resources and services particularly for orphaned and other vulnerable children.

We are currently, led by the department of social development, in the process of refining the children's bill. Once legislated the bill will provide the legal basis for provisioning and planning for children's needs.

ECD is very close to my heart.

I am fascinated by how children grow and learn.

As a parent I have had the pleasure and privilege of raising my own children. I played with them, taught them, guided them, and ensured that they were cared for and loved. Motherhood and the new demands made on fatherhood are roles to be treasured, and society needs to recognise these roles in order to ensure that children are well protected and nurtured.

### **What is the right balance between the roles and responsibilities of parents and the state?**

The early years of a child's life are precious for the critical learning that takes place. Parents are always a baby's first educators. But a child needs to have access to early learning so that he or she can be set on the path towards structured learning. We all know that learning through play increases a child's focus and attention at school and in turn improves their chances of being successful later in life. Language skills, number skills, and learning to share all grow when quality early learning provision is available.

That is why I am determined that effective early learning should be available, affordable, and accessible to all.

But we have this strange habit in South Africa in thinking that the state is responsible for everything.

Although the government is currently improving access to health care and social grants, the role of parents in ensuring that their children actually access these services is very critical. In addition, parents must do what they can, often

in difficult circumstances, to keep their children healthy and safe. The state is obligated to provide necessary support where there is a need and to create job opportunities where possible.

The early childhood development programme – as proposed by education white paper 5 - uses a model of implementation that seeks to develop ECD practitioners in the communities in which they live, thus stimulating skills development and job opportunities. An estimated 19 800 predominantly female parents and care givers will be trained over a five-year period, so as to improve the quality of ECD provision for children aged 0 to 4 years old in the same communities. Furthermore, 10 000 educators will be trained for 5 year olds in the reception grade at schools.

This can only be beneficial for the development and success of children after they leave ECD programmes and enter the schooling system. The investment in ECD will pay off in lower repetition, higher achievement, and better cognitive development of our children when they enter the schooling system.

#### **What is the right balance between the role of the state and the role of civil society organisations?**

Much work has been done in collaboration with non-government organisations and donor agencies. These donors have made a difference to the lives of young people through the funding of different ECD programmes, mostly targeting children under five. We would like to learn from those experiences, and it is through this conference that you can share lessons learned with us.

We need to continue working hand in hand with organisations that are providing services to children on the ground so as to improve our current initiatives and develop new life-changing strategies for all in the ECD sector.

#### **Research and monitoring**

One important aspect in helping to improve the way we provide services to children is in the inclusion of research, monitoring and evaluation in ECD programme development and implementation.

These three processes provide a basis for not only improving what we do for children but also when used appropriately they enable us to be more efficient and effective in the use of all available resources.

It is therefore critical that we create time and space in ECD for research that is linked to new initiatives. We should also make use of existing research from our different countries to learn and share from each other's experiences and skills in this aspect.

### Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are privileged to be hosting this conference in the interests of young children, and would like to see it as the beginning of realising the vision that we have for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), where through engagements like these, we are able to share ideas and resources on meeting the ECD challenges.

I would like to conclude by saying, in the words of Kofi Annan: "Can there be a more sacred duty than our obligation to protect the rights of a child as vigilantly as we protect the rights of any other person? Can there be a greater test of leadership than the task of ensuring these freedoms for every child, in every country, without exception."

Thank you



Time needed  
110 minutes

### Activity 1: Reading for meaning and reading for information

#### Work with a partner

Think about the format of a speech and discuss:

1. What does someone normally say at the beginning and end of a speech? Look at the heading, the first paragraph and the end of the speech.

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2. What about the format tells you that this is a speech?

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3. Find a word in the heading that means a speech and write it down.

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The heading tells you that Naledi Pandor is the Minister of Education. Early in the speech Naledi Pandor says “The ministerial committee on rural education reported last week, and there are some important recommendations it made that we will soon put into practice.”

4. What do you think a Ministerial Committee is?

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Read these two paragraphs again:

“As we all know, children’s needs and their care cuts across various fields of study, departments, institutions, and organisations...

...This was acknowledged in White Paper 5, where there was a commitment to the development of a strategic plan for inter-sectoral collaboration.”

5. What does ‘inter-sectoral collaboration’ mean?

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6. Write down an example of another sector that Naledi Pandor refers to in the speech.

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In this paragraph Naledi Pandor talks about children who are unprepared for the transition to formal schooling. She says

“And the evidence is clear for all to see in the results of the key competency tests, like the one last year that found more than 60% of Grade 3s in the Western Cape are not achieving literacy and numeracy levels required by the national curriculum and 15% could not read or calculate at the most basic level.”

7. Where does the Minister get her information about 60% of Grade 3s from?

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The Minister gives a quote that

“ ... half of the world’s 2 billion children live in dire poverty and deprivation.”

8. Where does she get her information from?

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One challenge that the Minister mentions is access to pre-primary education. She says

“The department’s ECD audit in 2000 revealed that almost twice as many children in urban areas received pre-primary education as in rural areas.”

9. How can you check this information?

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10. Write down three challenges in ECD that you can identify in the Minister's speech.

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**What have you learned?**

Sometimes you can guess the meaning of words that you don't understand by thinking about words that you know. You know this is a speech but the heading talks about an address. You can guess that another word for speech is address. You can also guess that a ministerial committee is a committee set up by the minister.

But other times you don't want to guess. You want to know that the information you are given is accurate. For example, the Minister is careful to say that she got her information about half of the world's children living in poverty from UNICEF's State of the world's Children Report (2005).



**Time needed  
70 minutes**

**Activity 2:  
Interpreting and analysing**

**Work alone**

You guessed earlier that inter-sectoral collaboration means different departments and organisations working together.

1. What do you think the purpose of the conference was? Why do you say so?

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2. What do you think the purpose of the speech was? Why do you say so?

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3. Who do you think the target audience of the speech is? Why do you say so?

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The Minister talks about many challenges and successes.

4. Give two examples of what Ms Pandor thinks the education sector has achieved. Do you agree that these are successes? Say why or why not.

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5. Write down four examples in the speech where the Minister talks about challenges.

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6. Why do you think Ms Pandor concludes her speech with the quote from Kofi Annan?

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7. Discuss all your answers with a partner.

**DICTIONARY:****Advocate –****What have you learned?**

The Minister gives her opinion on many things to do with children. She also uses emotive language by talking about commitment to the Freedom Charter, and when she talks about what we have achieved in 'ten years of freedom', the 'challenges' that lie ahead and what we all 'need' to do.

But she has not relied on emotive words to get her message across. She has organised her speech to talk about successes first. This helps the listener to feel strong enough to think about the challenges. When she has finished talking about the things we need to share and do she motivates us with an emotive quote from Kofi Annan.

You may disagree with what she thinks are successes and challenges. But if she succeeded in getting people at the conference to share ideas and talk about inter-sectoral collaboration then she achieved what seems to be the purpose of her speech.

**Advocating for ECD**

In her speech Naledi Pandor was advocating for people in different sectors and organisations to share their ideas and work together to meet the challenges of ECD in South Africa. She was using a speech to try and persuade and encourage people to accept her ideas of working together and sharing. You saw how she used facts and emotive language in her speech to do this.

So advocating means pushing an idea in a way that you think will persuade and encourage people to do something. Different people advocate in different ways. Some people write long articles and publish them in magazines. Other people write pamphlets and fliers and put them in people's post boxes or on their cars.

You have seen workers standing outside a shop with placards. This is a way of advocating for higher wages. Sometimes people advocate for a boycott of a company. Think about the slogans that are written on those placards. Often they make demands, and sometimes they criticise something or someone, like the boss. A slogan can also talk about something complicated in a short way. Slogans are:

- Clear and to the point
- Short and snappy
- Persuasive or emotive

**Time needed  
60 minutes****Activity 3:  
A way of advocating for ECD!****Work with a partner**

Use the skills you used in Unit 1 to interpret this cartoon. Share your interpretation with a partner.



1. What is the woman advocating for?

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2. What is the man suggesting?

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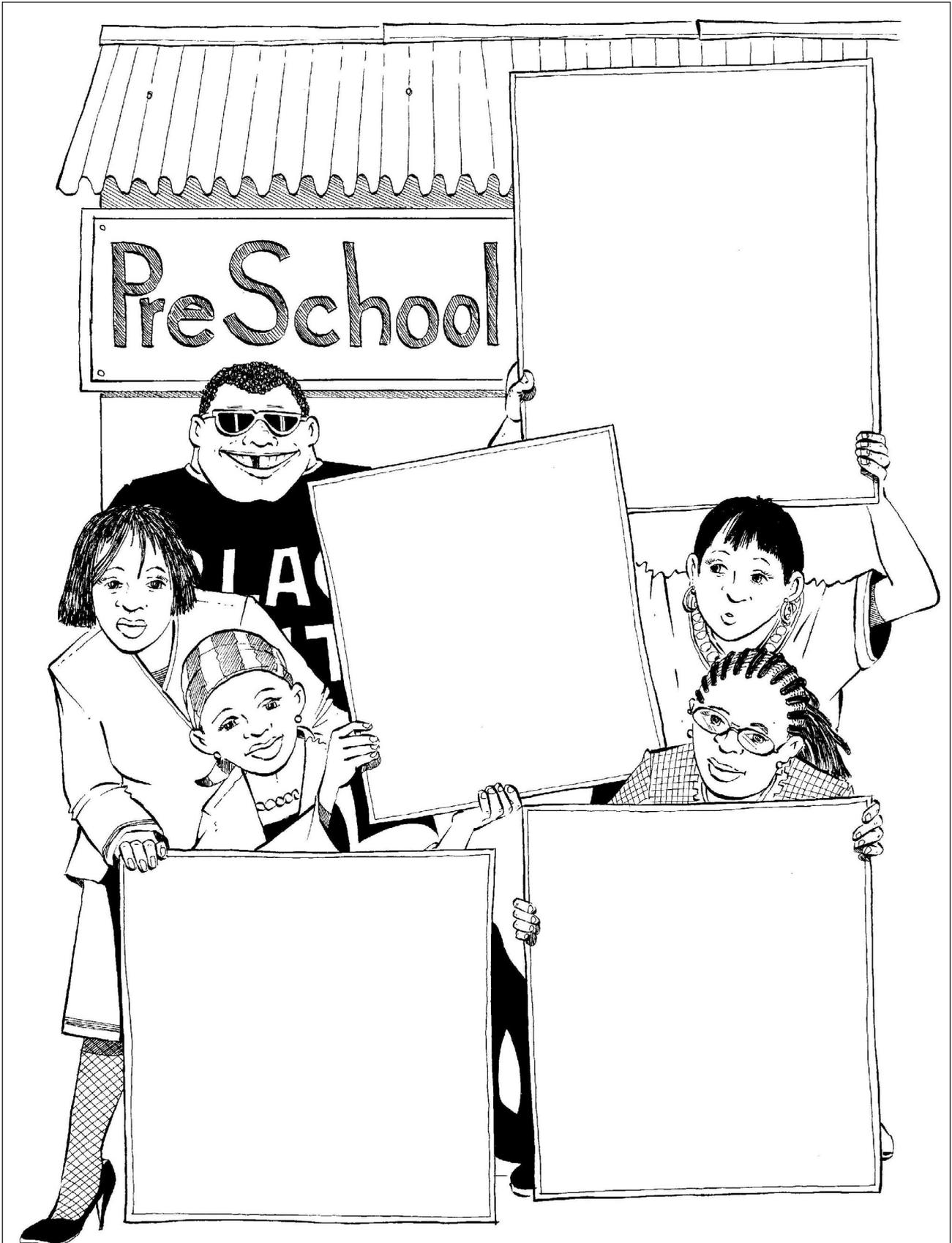
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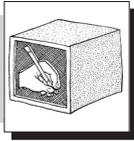
3. Look at the challenges that you wrote down in Activity 1 from Naledi Pandor's speech. Choose two and write a slogan for each one. Remember a slogan should be:

- Clear and to the point
- Short and snappy
- Persuasive or emotive

4. Share and discuss your slogans with a partner. Fill in all your slogans on the placards in this next picture. If they cannot fit you will have to try and write a shorter slogan with the same meaning.

5. You can have fun by adding in more of your very own ideas and slogans, not just the ones that Naledi Pandor thinks are important!





Copy your slogans and put them in your portfolio.



### What have you learned?

The kind of language you use when you give information is different from the kind of language you use when you advocate. You can see that the language in the slogans is persuasive and emotive language. When you made your slogans you changed your style of language to make it shorter and sharper.

We thought of these slogans for fun:

- Free Fundamentals training for ECD practitioners!
- Books for children in mother-tongue!
- Children should be seen and heard!
- Fair wages for ECD practitioners!



## 2. Writing a children's book

There are many people who have tried to write children's books. Not all of them have been successful because it is not easy. But here is an opportunity for you to try. You know what children like to read and you know what you like to read to children.

These are the guidelines for your book:

- The book must have a purpose.
- The book must be fun to read (though the children may learn something from it too).
- The book must be suitable for an adult to read to children between the ages of 4 and 7 years old.
- The book must be at least 8 pages, including pictures.
- The book must have hand-drawn or cut out pictures that are related to the words.



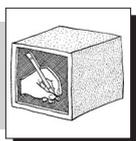
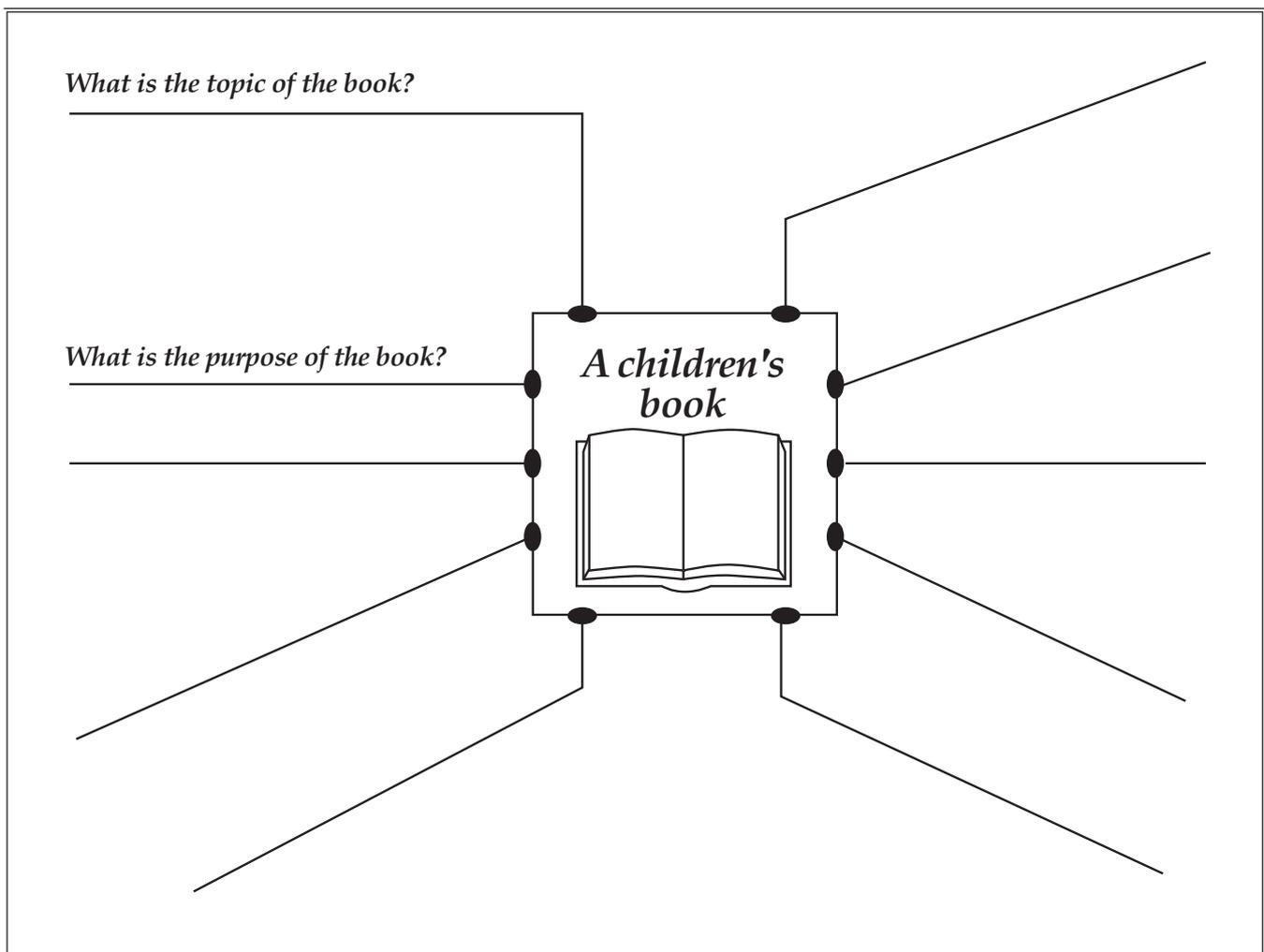
**Time needed**  
60 minutes

### Activity 4: Writing a book for children.

#### Work alone

Start thinking about your story in more detail. Fill in ideas on the following mind map or in notes as you work through the questions.

1. What is the purpose of the book?
2. What topic do you think will interest children between 4 and 7 years old?
3. Write down some ideas about the topic that you want to include in the book. Think about the length of the book. Don't have more than one or two ideas on one page, with a related picture. Even though an adult may read the story the children will want to see pictures. Write these ideas on the blank lines around the centre of the mind map. Write down ideas for pictures too. Add more lines if you need to.



Copy your mind map or notes and put them in your portfolio.

### **What have you learned?**

You can see that it is important to plan what you are going to write. It is the same with anything that you write. There are many things to think about when you write a children's book. When you think about the topic you need to remember what the purpose of your book is and who the target audience is.

### **Thinking about language**

Now you have a topic and some good ideas about what you want to say that will be interesting for children. Before you write think about the language that you are going to use. You know that there is certain language that is not suitable for small children, such as rude words, abusive language, language that is violent and so on. This next activity will help you to think about other language issues when you write your story.



Time needed  
60 minutes

## Activity 5: Editing language

### Work alone

1. Read this next piece of writing. Don't be surprised if you cannot understand it very well.

jo and sipho both sit in the sun thinking they are as quiet as a gentle breeze jo has a dog called bark jo looks after bark because he likes bark bark is lying in the sun next to jo and he is also quiet a car drives past and makes a noise like thunder bark barks at the car jo shouts to bark stop barking and bark lies down sipho says it is good if bark barks he can protect us

2. Try and edit it before you read the proper first draft, just for fun.

We have edited this so that it makes sense. This is what we did to change it.

- We filled in the punctuation so that it makes sense. Watch out! There is a trick here with the capital B.
- We re-wrote the text in the past tense. Think about which tense is easier to read and more story-like.

This is what it looked like after we edited it.

Jo and Sipho both sat in the sun thinking. They were as quiet as a gentle breeze. Jo had a dog called Bark. Jo looked after Bark because he liked Bark. Bark lay in the sun next to Jo and he was also quiet.

A car drove past and made a noise like thunder. Bark barked at the car. Jo shouted to Bark "Stop barking!" and Bark lay down. Sipho said "It is good if Bark barks. He can protect us."

3. Compare the two versions and check that we have edited it correctly. Do you think it is suitable for children now?



### What have you learned?

When you compare the first, unedited version with the second draft you will notice some important differences. These are also things you need to think about when you write your story for children.

- Punctuation in a children's book needs to be correct. Children learn by example! We warned you about the trick! Check that the name Bark has a capital letter, but the verb bark does not.
- Children love to be able to re-tell a story and even act it out. This is easier to do if the author uses direct speech. It also makes the story sound more real. You can see that Jo speaks to his dog directly. Siphso also speaks to Jo in direct speech. Don't forget to use the correct punctuation for direct speech.
- Usually a children's story is written in the past tense, because it flows better and is less patronising to the children. But notice that the direct speech is in the present tense because that is what people are saying.



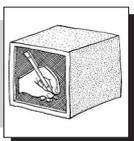
**Time needed**  
120 minutes

### Activity 6: Write your own book

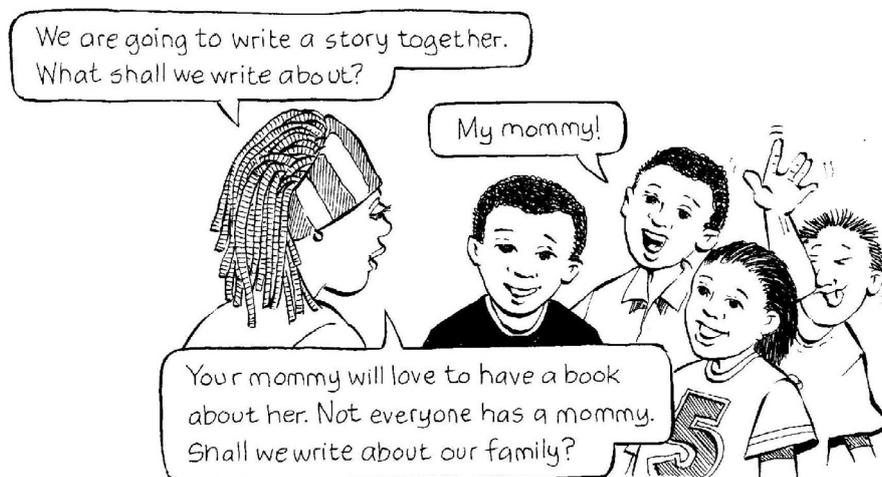
#### What you need:

Pen, paper, magazines, glue, scissors, crayons and inspiration!

1. You have made some important decisions about your writing. Now you can write the first draft. Don't be nervous. If you don't like what you write the first time you can try again.
2. When you have written something that you are happy with give it to someone else and ask them to edit it. Remind them to think about that language issues in Activity 5. You don't have to be shy. Remember that you are going to edit someone else's book as well.
3. Decide if you agree with the editing suggestions, and re-write your book as a second draft. If you are happy with it you can put it together in a book format with pictures added. Draw your own or use cut out pictures from a magazine.
4. Don't forget to give your book a title and write down the author's name. Yes, that's you!



Make a copy of your book and put it in your portfolio!



### Linking your learning with your ECD work

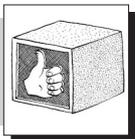
- Children may not be able to read or write long texts. But they can listen to you telling and reading stories.
- Children can tell you stories to write down. These can be made into books which the children 'write' and illustrate.
- What kind of things do you think children can record?
- What do you think children can learn from recording?



### Journal Reflection

Spend time thinking about what you have learned. Write down all your thoughts, ideas and questions about your learning in your journal. Use these questions to guide you:

- What did you learn about writing a children's book?
- Write down one or two questions that you still have about writing for children.
- How will you use what you learned about writing for children in your everyday life and work?
- Will you change your way of working with children because of what you have learned about writing for children? What will you change?



### Self-assessment Checklist

Reflect on the Outcomes that were set for this unit. Use one of these icons to record how well you can do these things now. Think about what you know, what you can do and how you can use what you have learned.



Well

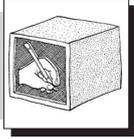


Quite Well

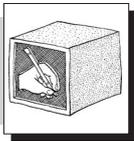


Not Well

I can:	
Use language for learning	
Know where and how to find and use information	
Use information well in order to learn more	
Use different ways to read different things	
Judge why something was written, who it was written for, and what the circumstances might be	
Look for meaning and understand writing	
Question how language is used in writing	
Understand the use of acceptable practices in text and how text is organized	
Write things which show that I know who I am writing for and why I am writing	
Use grammar (the way words are used in sentences) to arrange or structure what I write.	
Use accepted practice for structuring what I write	
Plan my writing, do a practice, check it and correct it.	

**Assignment 4:**

1. Read the book that you wrote to a child or a group of children. While you are reading take note of the following things:
  - a. Did the children enjoy the story? How do you know?
  - b. Could the children understand the story? How do you know?
  - c. Could the children understand the pictures? How do you know?
  - d. What will you do differently next time you write a children's book?
2. Write at least a page to describe what you noted.

**Assignment 5:**

1. Write an article for an imaginary ECD magazine. The article can be about anything. Here are some examples of things you could write:
  - a. A funny story that one of the children told you.
  - b. An incident with parents at your centre which made you realise that you needed to make some changes.
  - c. How ECD training helped you to improve your centre
  - d. Your 10 best ideas for how to improve your relationship with parents and get them involved
  - e. Your 10 best ideas for improving your centre
  - f. How GR R in your area has impacted on ECD sites
  - g. Why ECD practitioners should receive a proper salary

Remember to write a rough draft, edit it, and then write out a final draft.