

## **PRESS RELEASE: #LovePlayTalk campaign to mobilise Worcester parents**

Worcester, 10 October – A community dialogue will bring together Worcester parents today. The event will equip parents with skills to make positive differences to their children’s lives during the vital early developmental years.

The dialogue will be hosted by parenting campaign #LovePlayTalk, in partnership with Western Cape Government Health and Worcester non-governmental organisation FASfacts.

#LovePlayTalk focuses on the earliest years of a child’s life, the period from conception until age two, which are the most important when it comes to healthy physical and mental development.

#LovePlayTalk helps parents understand the importance of this growth phase and supports them in taking simple, everyday actions in the home which encourage the best development possible. These simple actions are organised around the themes of loving, playing, and talking – adding up to the campaign name of #LovePlayTalk.

The campaign is rooted in scientific evidence, which shows that responsive care and stimulation during early childhood leads to children growing up to perform better in school, obtaining better paid jobs in adulthood, and being less likely to suffer from ill-health or to abuse drugs and alcohol.

“We know parents are their children’s first and most important teachers. They have the power to help their children reach their dreams in the future. The simple everyday actions we encourage don’t require any resources aside from quality time,” says #LovePlayTalk Campaign Manager Jabu Tugwana.

“We are hosting a series of community events in the Western Cape, as well as other provinces with the view of mobilising parents to give their children the best possible start in life. Each event will include a parenting dialogue, which is a safe space for parents to share lessons and talk about the opportunities and challenges they have experienced in supporting their children’s development in the early years,” says Tugwana.

“There will be a range of specialists present at each event, such as social workers and nurses, to provide support, if it’s needed,” she adds.

The parenting dialogues will be followed by immerse experiences which will give parents ideas and tips on how to implement the simple actions at home.

The #LovePlayTalk community events are supported by a weekly #LovePlayTalk radio programme on 11 SABC radio stations around the country. In the Western Cape, the show broadcasts on Tuesdays at 21:00 on Umhlobo Wenene FM.

Parents can also receive additional support and advice on the #LovePlayTalk parenting support Facebook page and on the loveplaytalk.mobi webpage, which is accessible on all cell phone models with internet connection.

*#LovePlayTalk campaign manager Jabu Tugwana is available to discuss the campaign and community events. To arrange, please contact Svetlana Doneva on 0827976103 or [svetlana@ilifalabantwana.co.za](mailto:svetlana@ilifalabantwana.co.za).*

### **Further information for editors:**

#LovePlayTalk was launched by Ilifa Labantwana in 2015. Ilifa Labantwana is a national programme that aims to provide implementation evidence, build national capacity and galvanise informed

political support for the provision of quality Early Childhood Development services at scale, focusing on the poorest 40% of children under six.

[www.ilifalabantwana.co.za](http://www.ilifalabantwana.co.za)

FASfacts is a non-governmental organisation, which aims to educate the general public on the effect of alcohol consumption during pregnancy on the unborn baby.

<http://www.fasfacts.org.za/>

Western Cape Government Health delivers a comprehensive package of health services to the people of the province. Information and resources for their First 1000 Days campaign can be found on the link below:

<https://www.westerncape.gov.za/first-1000-days/>

*Key messages about early childhood development:\**

The brain develops at its most rapid pace in the first years of life

Early intervention is the answer because it becomes progressively harder to fix problems in brain development with age.

Early stimulation and interaction with parents and caregivers jumpstarts the journey of brain development, and a lifetime of learning.

How children are parented or cared for in the first years of their lives can affect brain function for the rest of their lives – and may even affect future generations.

At the age of 3, a child's brain is twice as active as an adult brain.

87% of brain weight is acquired by 3 years of age.

50 – 70% of energy consumption in the first few years of life is allocated to brain development.

\*Source: Unicef, *Building Better Brains* (2014)