



From Safer Holidays to Sharper Minds

March 2026

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School holidays are here and as South Africa approaches the Easter long weekend, an important time for family and community connection, we remain focused on the safety of our children.

While the holidays bring joy, they also highlight systemic risks. In a country where **43% of alcohol consumers engage in binge drinking**, the burden of alcohol-related harms, road incidents, and domestic instability falls disproportionately on our youngest citizens.

Protecting children from harm is only half of the equation; the other half is nurturing their immense potential.

We are proud to announce that our **Brain Power Competition** officially opens for submissions on 13 April and runs for six whole weeks.

This initiative is designed to highlight the importance of early learning, language development, and responsive caregiving. By investing in the "brain power" of our children today, we are securing the human capital South Africa needs for tomorrow.

Thank you for continuing to hold the hands of South Africa's children.

Warm regards,
The Hold My Hand Team



Hold My Hand Webinar



17 MARCH
11.30am SAST



Live on

zoom

Mapping the 'birth to three' landscape

Hold My Hand and **SAPPIN's** webinar on Mapping the "birth to three" landscape attracted a fantastic audience last week. If you missed it watch [here](#).

Click to access the [survey findings report](#), [survey dashboard](#), [overview of the dashboard features](#), [emerging themes](#) and [MERL insights](#).

We are pleased to share a [discussion paper](#) that emerged from a workshop around measurement of caregiver responsiveness and early learning from birth to three. Participants from various sectors noted that without common indicators, standardised data collection systems, and shared measures of caregiver-child interaction and child development, it's difficult to track programme reach and quality, compare outcomes, identify promising practices or evaluate overall effectiveness.

The workshop report recommended concrete next steps including: a situational analysis of the birth to three measurement landscape; a brief highlighting the gaps in data and the implications of this to create demand; a list of tools to measure birth to three child outcomes; and an investigation of how established global tools have been used effectively, and how elements of these may translate into SA needs and context. This discussion paper serves to address some of these gaps and recommendations.

If you would like to keep updated on this topic, please fill out this [Form](#)

[Watch Webinar Recording Here](#)



Brain Power Competition



Is your child a future leader?
It starts with you.

Submissions open: **13 April 2026**

Closing date: **23 May 2026**

On 13 April we are launching the Brain Power Competition. We invite parents, caregivers, siblings, NGO's, teachers and anyone who interacts with children, to share their everyday moments, singing, storytelling, reading and playing, that "wire" a child's brain for success. Keep an eye on our social media pages and register on WhatsApp to submit.

WhatsApp Us



Network Nuggets

**Every Adult is an Advocate
for children: to see and to be heard**

Every day, 3 000 children are born in South Africa. For roughly 17 of them, today marks the start of a life with hearing loss. Without universal screening, most will not be diagnosed until they are two years old, far past the critical window for language and cognitive development.

Hold My Hand believes every adult is an advocate, but advocacy must be backed by a system that works. This month, we look at 'Network Nuggets', innovative models from Siyakwazi and Small Projects Foundation that prove we can bridge the gap between private expertise and public need. Stories like these are the blueprint for a national Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programme that South Africa can no longer afford to delay.



[Read More](#)

The Perspectives Series

We have a new vision for children, what happens now?

The National Strategy to Accelerate Action for Children (NSAAC), recently approved by Cabinet, calls for an all-of-society effort to improve the lives of children and teens. It will have to be integrated into government's plans and the work of different departments — but government cannot do this alone. There is a role for all of us: ordinary citizens, faith-based organisations, business, trade unions and civil society.

In this webinar, we asked: What must happen now? Tamsin Metelerkamp (Daily Maverick), Mesuli Kama (Hold My Hand), Sanjeev Raghubir (Shoprite Group), Lorato Trok (The Nal'ibali Trust) and Bontle Motatsa (NSAAC Children & Adolescent Representative and student at North West University) discussed what it will take to turn this national commitment into action. If you missed it, you can still watch it.

[Watch Here](#)

News From Our Community



SUSTAINABILITY
INSTITUTE

A collective response to children's wellbeing

The Sustainability Institute director, Vanessa von der Heyde recently spoke to David Harrison CEO of the DG Murray Trust, about what South African children are facing regarding access to quality education and daily nutrition.

Countries like Brazil and Chile have had great success through campaigns that educate and mobilise action. It's a systemic shift required by all stakeholders, and Hold My Hand is the umbrella campaign that we hope will unite South Africa's efforts to address these gaps.

[Watch Full Interview](#)



Mindspark at KHULA

KHULA Education has announced the launch of a new Mindspark pilot at Amoibe Primary School, delivered in partnership with the Edutech Institute. This pilot forms part of their wider commitment to strengthening Maths and English outcomes in rural classrooms through the careful and considered use of digital tools.

[Read More](#)



Advocacy Webinar

Families4Children and the South African Parenting Programme Implementers Network (SAPPIN) are two leading Parenting Support advocates in South Africa. They invite you to their joint advocacy webinar on Parenting Support for Development to be held on the 2nd of April 2026 from 9.30 to 11.30 am.

The objective of the webinar is to support informed dialogue around the advocacy we can and should be engaging in to universalise sustained parenting support in South Africa and work out our next collective steps to make this a reality for all parents and children.

[Register Now](#)



Children's Right to Early Childhood Development

Research from the University of Johannesburg reminds us that early learning starts in a child's home, shaped by relationships, care, and everyday interactions. Yet many families still face barriers to ECD access and the resources needed to support development at home.

- Book-sharing is a powerful way to support early learning.
- Investing in caregiver support is essential.

If we're serious about children's rights, we must start early.

[Read More](#)

Our Community

Meet some of our new community members!

We're growing, and it's beautiful to see more hearts and hands joining the journey.



Aligned is dedicated to supporting young people, specifically those in Grades 9–12 and post-matric, as they navigate the critical transition from secondary education into further training, employment, and purposeful adulthood. Aligned addresses the "transition gap" faced by South African youth, particularly in under-resourced communities, where limited access to guidance and psychosocial pressures often lead to post-matric stagnation.



Midlands Community College (MCC) reaches both urban townships and deeply rural communities, providing structured, supportive learning programmes that respond to real needs. With a focus on quality, relevance, and accessibility, MCC continues to build a more inclusive education system, one that enables long-term personal and social development.



The Luloyisa Foundation is a Non-profit Company (NPC) that focuses on advocating for the dignity and rights of women, children, the disabled, and the LGBTQ community in Nyanga Townships and surrounding areas of Cape Town, South Africa.

[Join Our Community](#)

Stay connected

Get the latest updates, inspiring stories, and ways to make a difference by following us on social media.

Together, we're creating a brighter future for South Africa's children and teens. Thank you for holding hands with us on this incredible journey.

Want to share your latest news?
Drop an email at news@holdmyhand.org.za



Together, we will change our future.

Thank you for being a vital part of our mission to put children at the center of our future. Your involvement makes all the difference!

