



Love, trust
and over 250
organisations
putting children first

September 2026

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It's Deaf Awareness Month, and this year's theme, "Love and Trust," is a good reminder of what Hold My Hand is really about: connection doesn't depend on how a child hears the world, it depends on whether the people around them can reach them in a language they understand, as early as possible.

We're asking something new: what's your love language with your child? Especially in the first 1 000 days, when every coo, cuddle and conversation is laying the groundwork for a lifetime of connection.

Rethink Your Drink is bringing Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day to life through The First Home, an exhibition in

Cape Town exploring motherhood, alcohol harm and the environments that shape our children. Grab your free ticket below.

Metro Lives, the series of public dialogues on what municipalities can do for children, landed in Johannesburg this past month, and the conversation is heading to eThekweni next.

And, some good news worth pausing on: **over 250** organisations have now signed up to join the Hold My Hand community, each one telling us the same thing in a different way: "We want to put children at the centre". That's whole-of-society action in motion, and worth a celebration.

Hold My Hand



Deaf Awareness Month

love and trust don't depend on how a child hears

Being Deaf doesn't stop a child from learning, connecting or thriving, and reaching them in a language they understand, from as early as possible is what is needed and this starts with early screening.

Every day in South Africa about 17 babies are born with permanent hearing loss, more than 6 000 a year. The National Strategy to Accelerate Action for Children (NSAAC) names newborn hearing screening as a catalytic intervention, calling for earlier identification, timely intervention and stronger support for caregivers. Right now, screening is still far from universal, which means many children are only identified years after birth, years of language and connection they can't get back.

Read our full press release, featuring the Western Cape's Little Ears newborn screening programme and Hold My Hand's Dr Noxolo Gqada, alongside our Every Child Heard policy brief.

[Read the Press Release](#)[Read the Policy Brief: Every Child Heard](#)

Coming Soon

what's your
Love
language

We're about to launch a new conversation: **what's your love language with a child?**

The first 1 000 days, from pregnancy to a child's second birthday, are a window of opportunity that never opens twice. Every bit of eye contact, every song, every back-and-forth "conversation" with a baby who can't talk yet is brain-building, connection-building work. This campaign is about helping parents and caregivers see their everyday moments of love for what they are: the foundation of a child's whole future.

Watch this space, the campaign lands soon.

RETHINK YOUR DRINK PRESENTS

THE FIRST HOME



AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE
9 SEPTEMBER 2026
HOMECOMING CENTRE

TICKETS



Rethink Your Drink presents *The First Home*

On FASD Awareness Day, 9 September, Rethink Your Drink is launching *The First Home*, an immersive exhibition exploring the environments that shape women, children and families, and the role alcohol has played in South Africa's history and our lives today.

Move through interactive spaces exploring motherhood, alcohol harm, FASD, and the policies and choices that could build healthier environments for children. It's a space to learn, reflect, create and imagine what we could do differently.

Homecoming Centre, 15 Buitenkant Street, District Six, Cape Town

Wednesday, 9 September

1pm - 9pm

Book Your Free Ticket

over **250 organisations**,
one movement

Some numbers are worth pausing on. Over **250 organisations** have now joined the Hold My Hand community, each one choosing to put children at the centre of their work. That's not a coincidence, and it's not government or any one sector acting alone. It's health workers, educators, NGOs, businesses and community groups all deciding that children can't wait.

This is exactly what whole-of-society action looks like: not a single hero organisation, but hundreds of hands, all reaching for the same goal. If your organisation hasn't joined yet, now's the time.

Join the Hold My Hand Community



METRO LIVES

eThekwini

MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

18H00

 **KZNSA Gallery | Durban**

What can Municipalities do for children?

Children don't get to vote, but where they grow up, whether there's a safe park nearby, a registered early learning programme, clean water, more libraries than liquor outlets, is shaped almost entirely by municipal decisions. That's the question at the heart of Metro Lives, our series of public dialogues on what local government can do for children and families.

The series opened in Cape Town in July, moved to Johannesburg last month, and now it's eThekwini's turn.

KZNSA Gallery, Durban | Monday, 29 September, 6pm

Whether you work in local government, civil society or you're simply a parent who wants your municipality to take children seriously, this conversation is for you.

Join us online to watch, share your views and ask questions. Message us if you work with children in eThekwini to join in person: info@holdmyhand.org.za

Register here to Watch Online

News From Our Community

Lefa AI | DESIGNED & CONVENED BY **humanStudios**

What do you think? AI in education

Lefa AI, a national initiative to help make sense of AI in South African Basic Education, wants to hear from the people closest to the education system.

Lefa AI has created 4 short, anonymous surveys to understand different perspectives, experiences, hopes, and concerns around AI in education:

Teachers:<https://tinyurl.com/4x667uvk>

Parents & Caregivers:<https://tinyurl.com/26njw6sp>

Civil Society Organisations:<https://tinyurl.com/43e4efbj>

EdTech Organisations:<https://tinyurl.com/2p9sr8y6>

They are also starting off a first of five webinars exploring the different ways AI is impacting basic education in South Africa.

Register for Webinar



Toolkit supports youth-friendly digital health

A new Youth-Led AI Chatbot Toolkit helps organisations design and implement AI-powered chatbots that provide young people with accessible, youth-friendly health information and support.

The toolkit shares practical guidance and resources for developing chatbots with young people, with a focus on making digital health services relevant, safe and responsive to their needs.

Learn More



Lights On After School returns

Lights On After School South Africa is back for its seventh year, celebrating programmes that give children and young people safe spaces to learn, play, connect and grow.

Led by The Learning Trust and YearBeyond, this year's "Switched On! Ready to Learn. Ready to Play. Ready to Grow." campaign also highlights how the after-school sector creates skills and work opportunities for young people. In its fourth cycle, the Social Employment Fund supported programmes reaching more than 700 000 learners and created over 3 000 paid opportunities for young people.

Read Now



Fighting Holiday Hunger

In Nyakallong, Free State, the We Care Daycare Centre is keeping its kitchen open during school holidays to ensure children don't go hungry when school feeding programmes pause. The centre feeds up to 200 children a day, providing nutritious meals to children from several local schools.

The initiative highlights how community organisations are helping bridge the gap for families facing unemployment and food insecurity, while also supporting children's wellbeing and ability to learn.

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.



Tshepong was established in 1996 to combat the stigma around disabilities, to provide day care for persons with intellectual disabilities specifically. Today the organisation provides early childhood education hand in hand with the Department of Education, childhood nutrition, basic health care, skills development and vocational training to persons with intellectual disabilities, and re-opened a protective workshop in 2026.



The Restore Justice Healing Hope Trust is an organisation working to transform responses to crime, violence and incarceration through restorative justice and trauma-informed practice. Founded in 2012, Restore works with young people in prison, formerly incarcerated people, their families and communities, recognising that harm affects individuals, relationships and wider communities.



Door of Hope is a faith-based organisation dedicated to protecting and caring for abandoned and vulnerable babies and children. Its mission is to give children who have been abandoned a safe place to live, loving care, and the opportunity for a secure and hopeful future. The organisation provides Baby Homes for infants, and operates a Baby Saver Box as a safe alternative to unsafe abandonment.

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!