hold my hand
Action for Children and Teens



10 reasons

to hold a child's hand this November

November 2026

Issue No. 20

This Children's Month

Every day, around 3 000 babies are born in South Africa. What happens to them in their first years and in their teens, shapes the country we'll all live in.

This November, we're marking Children's Month with 10 reasons to hold a child's hand. Each one links to a priority in the National Strategy to Accelerate Action for Children (NSAAC). Together, they're our country's to-do list for children and teenagers.

One of those priorities is in the spotlight this month. On 10 November 2026, the Constitutional Court will hear DGMT's case against extended liquor trading hours in the Northern Cape. DGMT wants the court to confirm that the hours are invalid because the public wasn't properly consulted, to clarify the rules for sorghum beer and to recognise government's duty to protect children from alcohol-related harm. The outcome could shape liquor laws across the country and you can read more here.

Hold My Hand

10 reasons to hold a child's hand

1



Because strong families raise strong children.

When parents and caregivers get the support they need, children feel it first.

2



Because every child deserves to grow up.

Too many babies and young children still die from causes we can prevent.
Read Mortality Study

3



Because no baby should be born with HIV.

Every pregnant woman deserves the testing, treatment and care that keeps both her and her baby safe.

4



Because food is brain fuel.

Hungry children can't grow, learn or play properly. Closing the food gap is where it starts.

5



Because talking, reading and playing build brains.

The earliest years are a window that doesn't stay open forever. Every conversation counts.

6



Because every child should have the same chances.

Early screening for hearing and vision means problems get picked up early and no child gets left behind.
View vision webinar

7



Because children deserve to be safe.

That means protection from abuse, violence, injuries and harmful substances – including the harm caused by heavy drinking.

8



Because teens need health care that works for them.

Including sexual and reproductive health care that's easy to reach and free of judgement.

9



Because learning should lead somewhere.

More young people in quality education and training, with real pathways from school into work.

10



Because teens who know who they are can shape their lives.

Identity, agency and connectedness help teenagers find their place and their voice.
View teen webinar
and listen to teen identity podcast

News From Our Community



Are you ready? Because Keready!

Growing up comes with big questions.
Who am I? Where do I fit in?
Who do I want to be?

Keready is a podcast for teens, by teens. It's real conversations about the things we don't always get to talk about – from how social media shapes the way we see ourselves, to bullying, friendships, family and finding your value on your own terms.

No lectures. No judgement. Just honest talk about life online and off, and about working things out as you go. You don't need to have it all figured out – that's what growing is for.

Listen Here



The first 1 000 days package

New mothers can need up to 12 clinic visits in their baby's first six months. The National Department of Health's First 1000 Days Package for Mothers and Children can cut that to five by caring for mother and baby together – same day, same room, same health worker.

From before pregnancy to a child's second birthday, the guide helps health workers check for food insecurity, support maternal mental health and encourage parents to love, play and talk with their babies. It's the joined-up care for families that the NSAAC calls for.

Download Package



Why teen identity is a public policy issue

Who teens become isn't just a personal journey. Their sense of purpose, belonging, self-worth and agency is shaped by the people and systems around them: family, friends, community and the services they can reach.

In the latest episode of DGMT's Learning Lunch podcast, Shirley Eadie, who leads the teen identity work at Hold My Hand, explains why South Africa needs a national response. Right now no single department owns this, and community programmes can't reach every teen on their own.

Learn More



Building an ECD Ecosystem

No single programme can give young children everything they need to thrive. In uPhongolo, northern KwaZulu-Natal, the DO MORE Foundation and Lulamaphiko have spent years connecting the pieces: food, early learning, health care, caregiver support and safety. They've done it with local practitioners, government and partners including the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and Book Dash.

A new case study tells the story through the people driving it, from ECD practitioners who kept going against the odds to the networks now growing around them. It shows what a whole-of-society approach looks like on the ground.

Read Case Study

Our Community

25 new organisations signed up to Hold My Hand in October.
Welcome to the network!

- HIVSA
- The Earth Centre
- Mhtaleni Preschool
- SJ Academy Group
- Do More Foundation
- Siyakhula Preschool
- Makema Foundation
- Baby Therapy Centre
- The Village Safe Haven
- Safer Stops Association
- Christian Feeding Centre
- Bonelela Daycare Centre
- Loyiso Lindani Foundation
- Botshabelo Youth Services
- Zamakulungisa Foundation
- Beacon of Excellence Africa
- Strive New Culture Foundation
- Endeared Kids Therapy Centre
- Prosperity Development Centre
- Progress Playgroup and Prechool
- Sivulingqondo Community Project
- Ghetto Rovers Youth Development
- Social Development Initiative Foundation
- Molobela Sons and Daughters Foundation
- Base Integrated Rural Development Nature Conservation

You're now part of a growing movement of government, civil society, business and communities walking alongside children and teens.

For more than 30 years, Pretoria's Baby Therapy Centre has helped young children with disabilities and developmental delays reach their full potential. It combines daycare with therapies, from speech and play therapy to hydrotherapy and music therapy. It also trains caregivers and reaches children in disadvantaged communities.

Through Qhakaza Girls, the Social Development Initiative Organisation (SODIO) helps adolescent girls stay in school, build confidence and become leaders. Mentorship, life skills and leadership development help girls face challenges such as teen pregnancy, gender-based violence and substance abuse. It currently supports 50 girls and plans to reach more.

HIVSA drives health and social transformation by implementing community-based programmes that empower families, strengthen resilience and promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents and youth, with a specific focus on low-income, HIV-affected communities in 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!