
Cotlands: An Evaluation of our Work

Toy Libraries

Cotlands currently owns and operates 21 toy library depots and mobile toy libraries as part of its ECD programmes around the country. The impact of our toy libraries over the past financial years is indicated below:

Toy libraries Key Performance Indicators				
	2024	2023	2022	2021
Number of toy library members	709 ^{LA}	344	369	84
Number of play sessions at the toy library	328 ^{LA}	65	64	62
Number of children served	6 123 ^{LA}	3 023	1135	880
Number of toys lent out	42 996 ^{LA}	37 537	22 617	5 698

Early Learning Playgroups

Cotlands currently runs 91 Early Learning Playgroups (ELPGs). The impact of our ELPGs over the past financial years is indicated below:

Early learning playgroups Key Performance Indicators				
	2024	2023	2022	2021
No. of ELPG ELFs and ELFAs	47 ^{LA}	53	54	49
No. of ELPG playgroups	91 ^{LA}	79	78	46
No. of ELPG sessions	6 726 ^{LA}	7 326	6 004	2 191
No. of children enrolled	1 391 ^{LA}	1 124	1 122	636
No. of meals served	185 082 ^{LA}	167 340	120 748	40 054
No. of referrals	*117 ^{LA}	75	45	12

Previous External Evaluations

Cotlands playgroup model, which is supported by toy libraries, was externally evaluated in 2017 and 2018. In 2017, the impact of our playgroup programmes were measured, using the Early Learning Outcome Measure (ELOM) tool.

The ELOM indicates whether an early childhood development (ECD) programme is effective in preparing children for Grade R, and identifies areas for programmatic improvement. The study confirmed that Cotlands playgroup programme enhances the developmental outcomes of children.

In 2018, Cotlands, was selected to participate in the Early Learning Programmes Outcomes (ELPO) study. ELPO indicates whether a programme is effective in preparing children for Grade R, and also identifies areas for programmatic improvement. The comparative results being illustrated in the table below.

Playgroup Programme	Baseline Score (based on ELOM profiles for children 50-59 months)	Endline Score (based on ELOM profiles for children 60-69 months)	Extent of Change
Cotlands	32.6	52.6	20.0
Organisation 2	36.9	50.1	13.2
Organisation 3	33.9	47.7	13.8

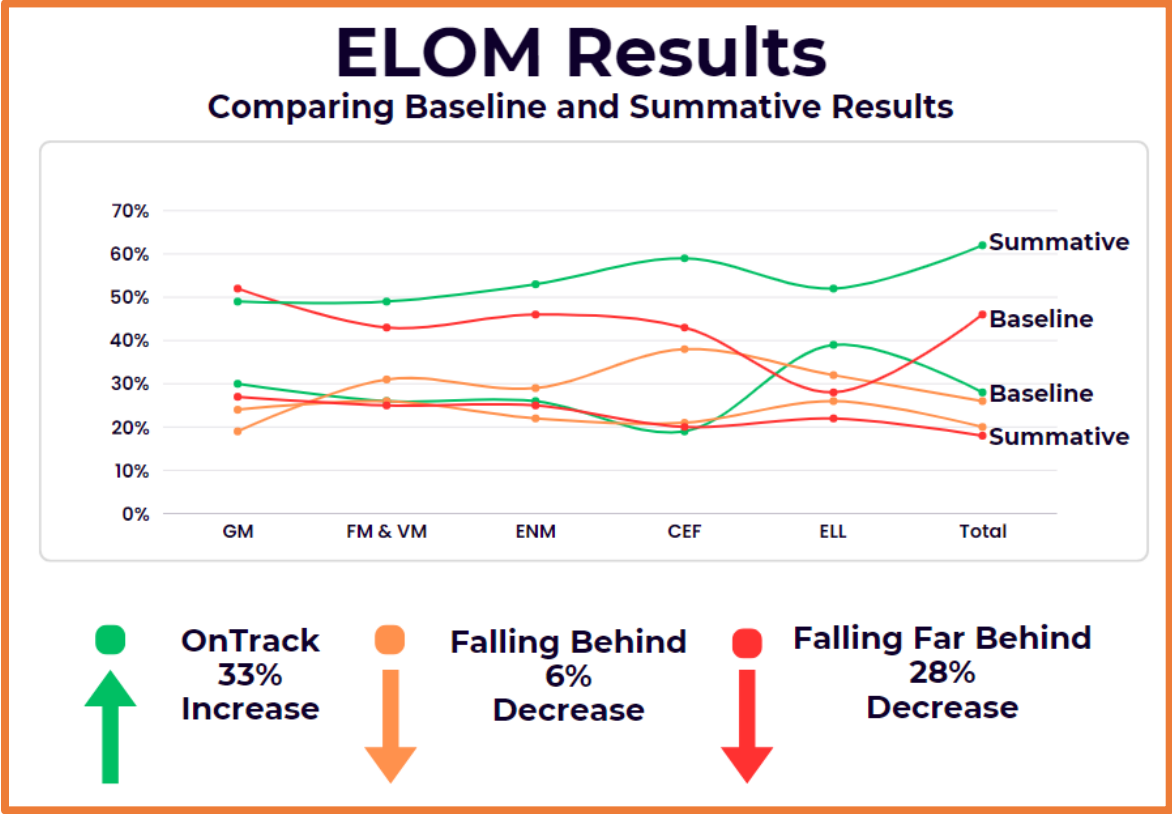
This has been the first study to determine the effectiveness of a low dosage playgroup model in South Africa. The study suggests that carefully controlled and supported playgroups of sound quality, with school-readiness-targeted curricula can make a difference for the poorest children. Given the challenge of meeting the needs of all young children in South Africa in the short to medium term, the fact that playgroups can shift ELOM total scores on average by between 10 and 20 points is encouraging.

Overall, children attending Cotlands early learning playgroup programme made the most gains (20 points) to get close to the ELOM standard (54.38) at end-line.

November 2023 ELOM Assessments

In November 2023, Cotlands playgroup model was externally evaluated using the ELOM tool. The evaluation found that, across all ELOM domains, there was an increase in the percentage of children on track, and a decrease in children falling behind and falling far

behind. Cotlands managed to increase the results by 33% for children who are on track for school [See graph of ELOM results below].



LEARNING AREA	INCREASED PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ON TRACK
Gross Motor Development	19% Increase
Fine Motor Coordination Visual Integration	23% Increase
Emergent Numeracy and Maths	27% Increase
Cognition and Executive Functioning	39% Increase
Literacy and Language	13% Increase (Strong baseline in language)
Learning Overall	33% Increase