



PAEDIATRICS PHYSIOTHERAPY GROUP

A Special Interest Group
of The South African Society of Physiotherapy



Paediatrics Physiotherapy Group
paediatrics@saphysio.co.za

The South African Society of Physiotherapy:
NPO Registration Number: 106-154
VAT Registration Number: 4390268409
Unit 4 Parade on Kloof Office Park, 1 The Parade, Bedfordview, Gauteng, 2007
Tel: 011 6153170

AMATHEMBA & PHYSIFUN "Our Hope" for children with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Paediatrics SIG Social Responsibility Project UPDATE By Chantelle van den Berg



The SASP Paediatrics Physiotherapy Group's Social Responsibility Project for 2016 is Amathemba, a special needs school for children with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in Cape Town. As we know, most children with FAS have varied motor skill problems, that presents as poor coordination or balance or a global delay in development. Motor developmental delays are often overshadowed by the cognitive, behavioural and growth factors affecting these children. We need to provide these children with fun therapeutic exercises focusing on their global motor skill development and enhancement for balance, coordination, strength and flexibility. We want to assist these children to develop a strong foundation to all movement and participation in play activities and class room participation.

We have been assisting the teachers and children by introducing the PhysiFun Programme at the main school and pre-school. This will help the children fulfil their 'physiotherapy' needs in a time efficient, fun and sustainable way. The PhysiFun concepts and programmes are easy to use and learn, which makes it a great movement intervention for a school as it empowers the teachers, assistants, caregivers and the children!



We commenced with the intervention programme by hosting the PhysiFun Teacher Training Day on Saturday 23 July 2016. Physiotherapist and PhysiFun Representative Esther Geretto presented the training educating the attending Amathemba teachers and Home of Hope Caregiver Representatives on child neurodevelopment, posture, class room activities, self-calming techniques, class-break activities, and sensory-motor exercises whilst gaining an understanding about Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), developmental coordination disorder (DCD) and various other aspects affecting a child's performance and participation in the class and playground/sporting activities. During this training we also handed over all the training manuals, equipment and therapy items. We have sponsored over R7 000 worth of equipment and toys for the school.





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The second component of the intervention is the PhysiBall Group Class programme that is currently in its implementation phase from 2 – 31 August 2016 at the pre-school. This Physiotherapy-based group exercise programme for young children focusses on gross motor skills and postural work including coordination, ball skills and balance. Lizet van der Merwe and her team of Physiotherapists did a school visit and consult session end of July 2016 and started with the PhysiBall programme's training and implementation on 2 August 2016. They have been and will continue to visit the pre-school twice weekly orienting the children to the equipment, toys and exercises whilst demonstrating and guiding the teachers through the programme and how to run the classes. On 2 August 2016, Lizet also handed over the Thrive Toys Goodie bags containing a set of EduBeans Bean Bags and Motor Learning Puzzle Set to each child in the pre-school class. Each child was also provided with his/her own ball, therapy mat, Physiotherapy ball, bean bag and hoola-hoop. Many of these children are in foster care and come from very difficult environments where they have never even had their own toys. Now they have more than they can hold onto!



The third part of the intervention is the monthly follow-up visits. Esther Geretto is the contact for the main school regarding monthly follow up visits from August till November 2016 to assist with any class room modifications, activity assistance, individual child needs consults etc. Lizet vd Merwe and her team is the contact for the pre-school who will be providing the monthly follow-ups from September till November 2016, after the PhysiBall implementation period in August 2016.

We have also invited Amathemba to our Annual Paediatric Neurodevelopment Conference on 15 October 2016 in Johannesburg as our VIP's and special guests. The Conference will take place on National Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Awareness day.

We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to our community, educate and empower teachers as well as assist these children in need.

A big thank you goes out to the Paeds SIG GEC and Tracy Prowse for the support, Kerry-Ann Phillips from the Paeds SIG Western Cape branch who assisted with the training day as well as Esther and Lizet our Paeds SIG members and PhysiFun Representatives who are making this project a great success!

We look forward to bringing this programme to another school in need in a different province in 2017.

-Chantelle van den Berg