

Africa Play brings fun back into learning

In the near future, classrooms will be vibrant spaces where fun and acquiring knowledge blend seamlessly as the Basic Education Department wants to make play a fundamental block of learning.



© rawpixel – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

Following the President's announcement at the State of the Nation Address that Early Childhood Education (ECD) centres will migrate from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education, Minister Angie Motshekga has hit the ground running.

On Monday, the Basic Education Minister announced that South Africa will host the Africa Play conference from 25-27 February 2019.

The Africa Play Conference, the first of its kind in Africa, will explore how learning through play can improve the quality of early childhood development and become an integral part of education systems.

"It gives us great pleasure to announce that we will be hosting the first ever international Africa Play conference with our esteemed partners - UNICEF, the Lego foundation, and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa

(ADEA).

“We are at the cusp of greatness and this is one of those developments that gives us great hope that we are getting there,” said the Minister.

Set in a playful atmosphere, the conference will bring together 400 thought leaders, educators, policy makers and researchers from around the world to discuss, share insights and inspire new ideas and ways of learning that will equip children all over Africa to become creative and engaged lifelong learners.

The conference is in light of a growing body of research that points to play-based learning as a key means of improving children’s academic performance and personal development.

“As government, we are paving the way towards 21st century opportunities by preparing our children in the four critical areas, namely the 4Cs - collaboration and teamwork; creativity and imagination; critical thinking and communication,” said the Minister.

Lego Foundation representative Michael Reinvillard kicked off the event by giving delegates Lego blocks to play with to demonstrate the multifaceted nature of learning.

“It is important that play is incorporated in the learning environment of children, as play is the first thing that children use to learn,” he said.

UNICEF South Africa representative Sanjay Wijesekera said by placing play at the core of learning, children will learn skills that they will require to join the workforce in the 21st century.

At the conference, Ministers will have space to caucus amongst themselves, give reflections on the three-day conference and finally co-create a communique on embracing learning through play for quality improvement.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>