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IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTRE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

PORTRAITS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF THREE TARGET COMMUNITIES IN CAPE TOWN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	1
What is Early Childhood Development (ECD)?	2
ECD Disparities in the Western Cape	3
ECD Census Statistics	4
Community Portraits	5
Spatial Data	9
What Do Caregivers Say?	10
Aspects of Healthy ECD	11
Resource Case Comparison	12
Safety	12
ECD Centres	14
Public Play Areas	19
Community Resources	20
Conclusions	22



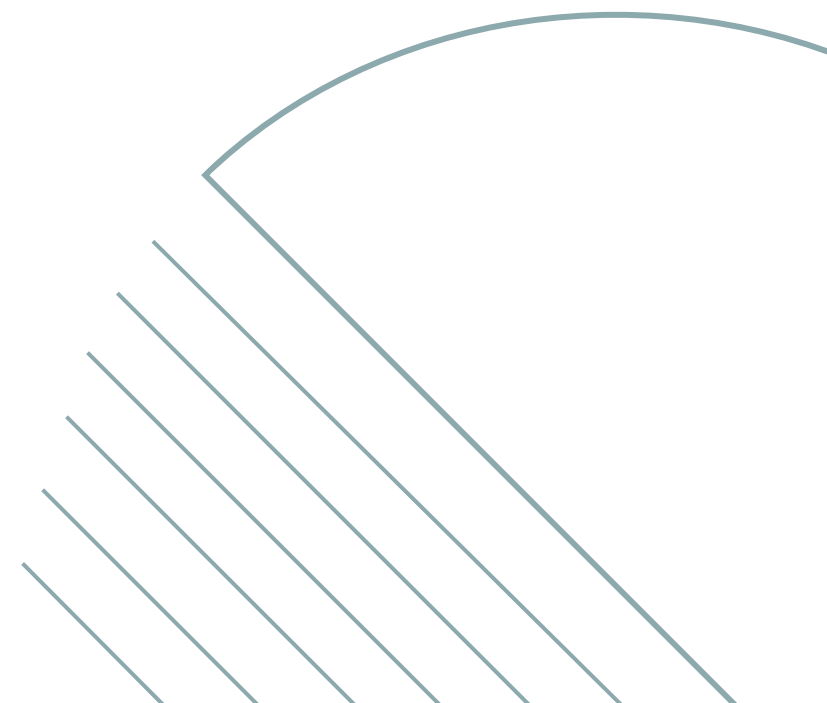
OVERVIEW

This document aims to create a portrait of early childhood development in Cape Town. Through examining target communities and comparing the individual resources in each of them, it will spread awareness of the disparity in childhood development in South Africa. This document is a deliverable for a 2023 study, from which its data and photos are sourced.

The data presented in this document originate from a 2023 study conducted by Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) students in partnership with the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD). The research study examined resources for early childhood development in three communities in Cape Town: Red Hill (informal settlement), Ocean View (township), and Claremont (city suburb). The data was collected through interviews, geospatial maps, and observation.



CECD Staff and WPI Student Research Team (2023)



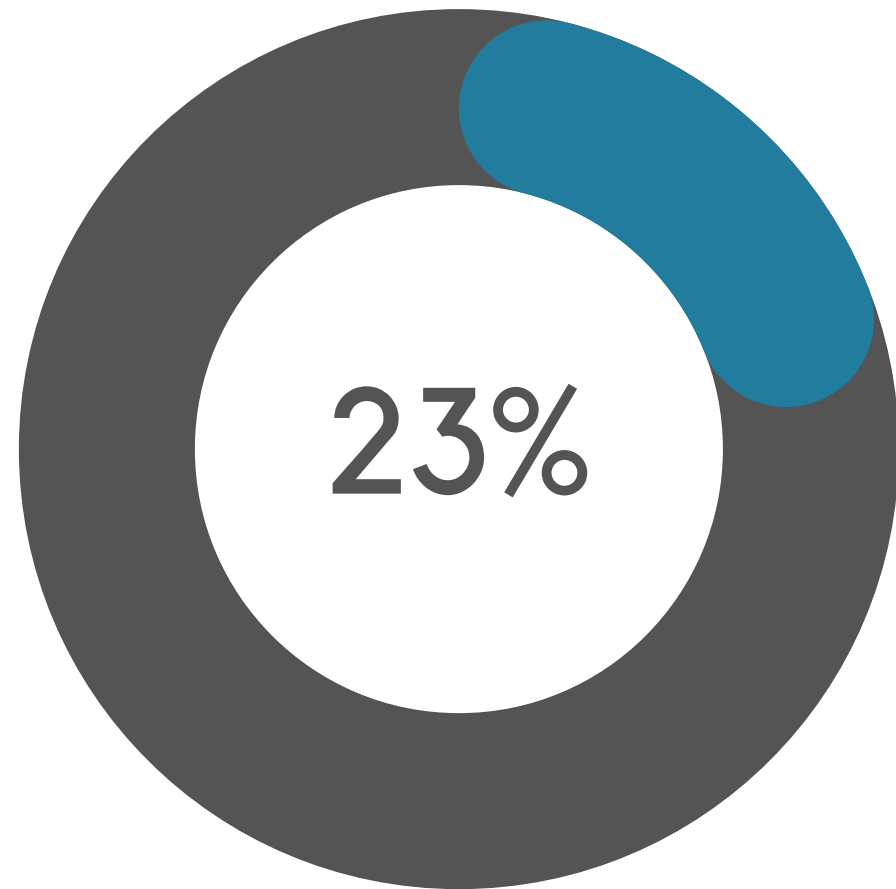


WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT?

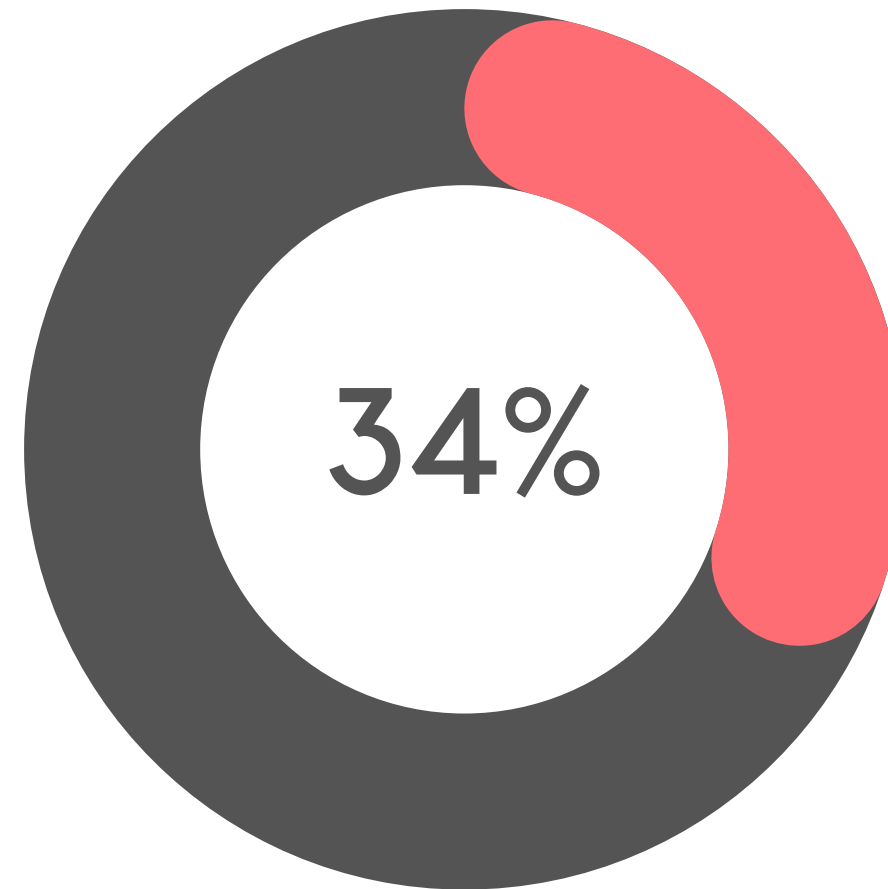
Early Childhood Development (ECD) refers to the initial period of a child's growth after birth (ages 0–5 years) when foundational functions form through parental care and other aspects of the external environment.

A child's cognitive and behavioral habits that are learned during this time rely on a supportive environment for them to reach their full capability.

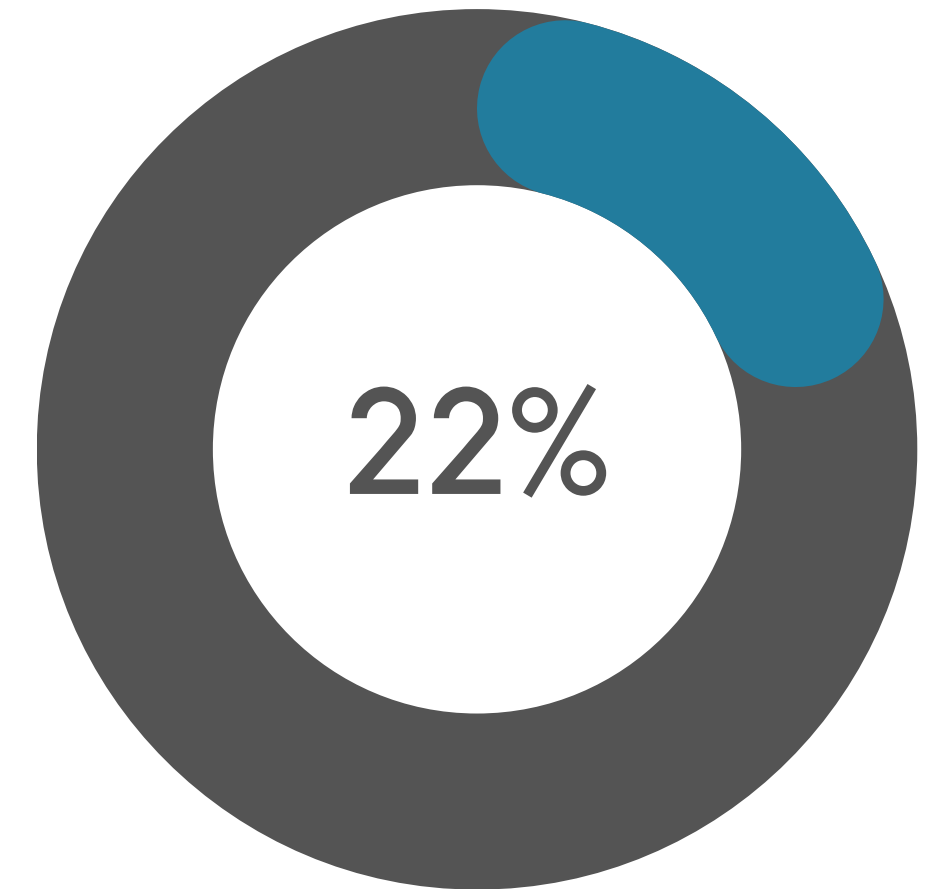
ECD DISPARITIES IN THE WESTERN CAPE



461,000 CHILDREN LIVE IN POOR-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS



ABOUT 1 IN 3 CHILDREN AGES 3-5 DO NOT ATTEND AN ECD CENTRE OR GRADE R



ABOUT 1 IN 5 CHILDREN ARE STUNTED (HEIGHT NOT ADEQUATE FOR AGE)

42,420

Early Learning
Programmes in South
Africa

1,600,000 : 198,361

children enrolled

ECD employees

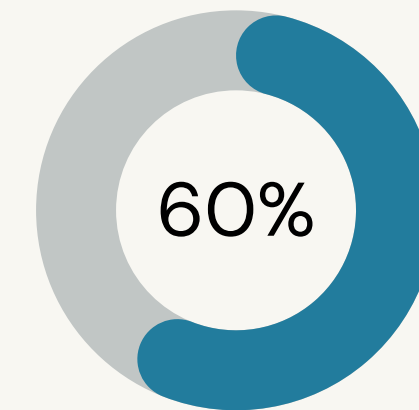
Only 56% have suitable books for children

34% do not have access to outdoor equipment to play

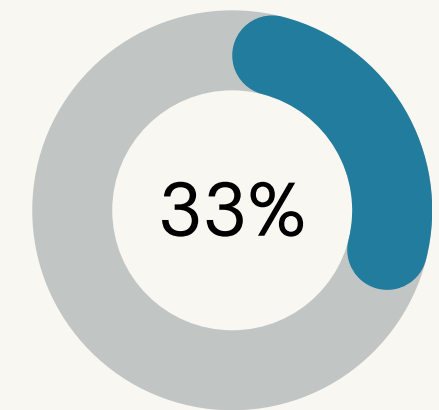
Over 200,000 children lack birth registration in South Africa

ECD centres have an average of 39 children compared to an average of 4.7 staff members

ECD CENSUS STATISTICS



OF CENTRES
ARE
UNREGISTERED



OF CENTRES
RECEIVE
SUBSIDIES

COMMUNITY PORTRAITS

RED HILL
INFORMAL SETTLEMENT



OCEAN VIEW
TOWNSHIP



CLAREMONT
SUBURB





Red Hill

Community Type: Informal Settlement
Location: Near Simon's Town

Established in the 1980s, Red Hill has a population of approximately 1000 people, the majority of whom are Black, speaking Afrikaans or Xhosa. Separated into four camps, A, B, C, and D, Red Hill's housing consists of constructed shacks of corrugated metal scraps, leaving its residents vulnerable to the elements and wildfires.

RESOURCES

- 1 Library/Community Centre
- 7 ECD Centres
- 1 Play Deck
- 1 Public Playground
- No Health Clinic



STATISTICS

- Approx. 2000 Children
- 43% of the population is unemployed

Gained access to running water in 2005 and electricity in 2007



Ocean View

Community Type: Township

Location: Southwestern Cape Town Peninsula

Ocean View was established in the 1960s as a township for coloured people who had been removed from areas that had been declared as White. As of the 2011 South African Census, 91% of people identify as coloured and 7% as Black African. Housing has become overcrowded in some areas, and as a built community, the area has more resources than an informal settlement typically does, though inadequate for the growing population.

RESOURCES

- 1 Library/Community Centre
- 15 ECD Centres
- Approx. 7 Public Playgrounds
- 1 Health Clinic

STATISTICS

- Approx. 1 269 Children Ages 0–4 (9.4% of population) (2011 census)
- 48% of Households with Monthly Income R3 200 or less (2011 census)





Claremont

Community Type: Suburb

Location: Central Cape Town

In 1913, Claremont became an official suburb of Cape Town, while previously it had been an independent municipality. It was declared a White area in 1979 under the Urban Areas Act. While Claremont was primarily a residential area up until the 1970s, the community has experienced an increase in commercial activity, as well as an increase in building development

RESOURCES

- **2 Public Libraries**
- **30 ECD Centres**
- **Approx. 16 Public Playgrounds**

STATISTICS

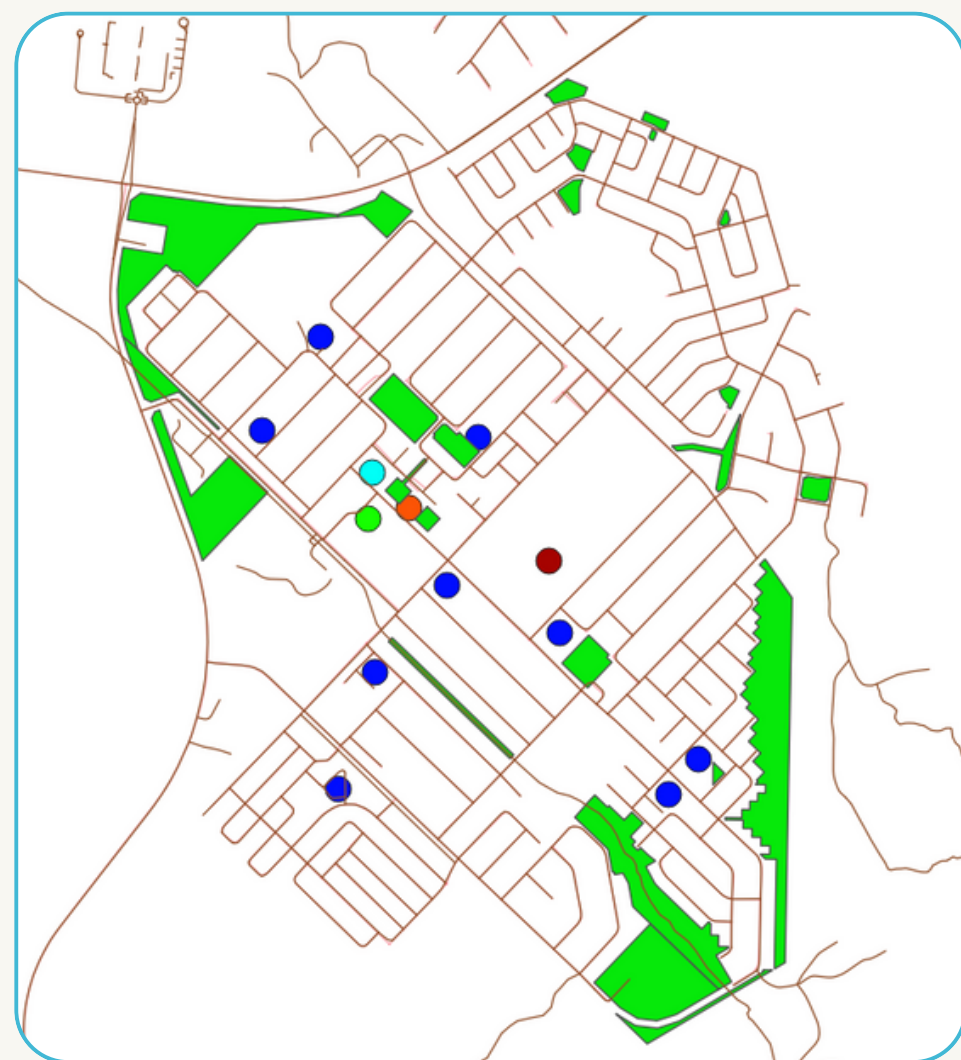
- **Approx. 998 Children Ages 0–4 (2011 Census)**
- **R43 000 Average Monthly Income (2016 State of Claremont Report)**



SPATIAL DATA

Many of the resources in informal settlements are undocumented by the government. The difference between **Red Hill's** resources and the other target communities is visible in the spatial data provided by the City of Cape Town, due to its location on a private property.

Ocean View



As shown, **Claremont** has a high number of ECD resources. Libraries, healthcare facilities, play parks, and sports fields offer children many options. The density of these resources allows safe travel between each location.

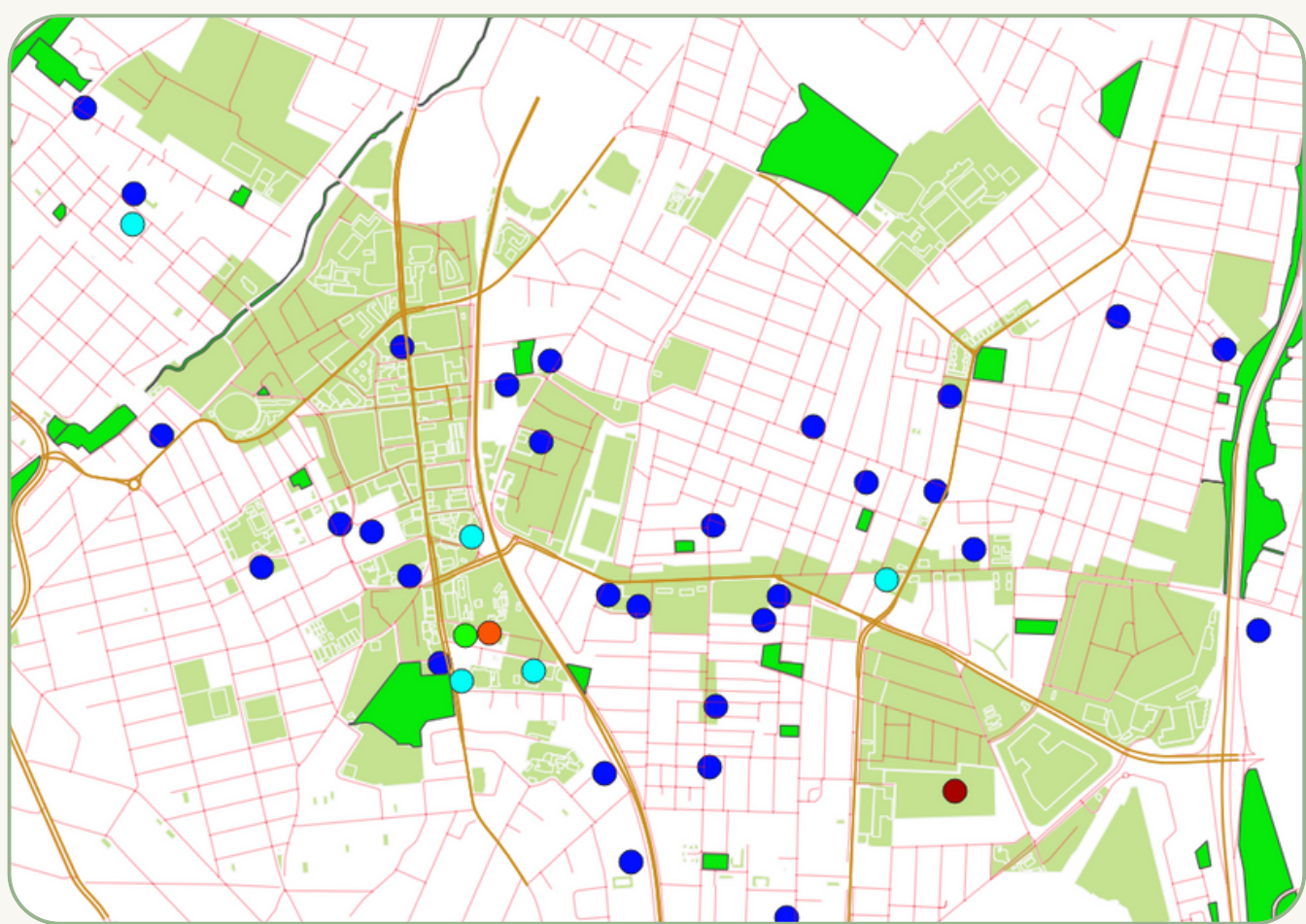
Red Hill



- Parks
- Place of Industry
- Sports Grounds
- Health Care Facilities
- Libraries
- Community Centres
- Places of Worship

Ocean View contains several resources for ECD, however, more resources are needed throughout the community for an effective environment for ECD. Increased libraries, health care facilities, quality parks, and other resources are needed.

Claremont



What Do Caregivers Say Are Most Important for Healthy ECD?

lots of love

-- ECD Principal, Claremont

you need to be giving them more attention

-- ECD Principal, Red Hill

their safety... it's very important to me

-- ECD Principal, Red Hill

understanding and someone to hear them... clean water and access to medical care

-- ECD Principal, Claremont

feeding... you can't teach or run any programme without doing that first

-- Tracy, ELRU

4 ASPECTS OF HEALTHY ECD

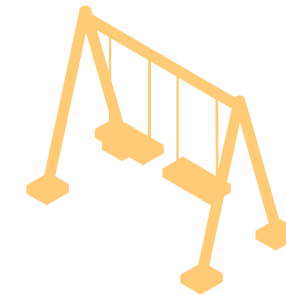
determined important through interviews and data collection



SAFETY



**ACCESS TO
QUALITY ECD
CENTRES**



PLAY AREAS



**COMMUNITY
RESOURCES**

SAFETY

Safety is considered an important factor for healthy early childhood development. However, there is a wide disparity in perceived community safety for children between Red Hill, Ocean View, and Claremont. Factors contributing to the safety of children in each of the target communities were documented through interviews with parents and visual assessments of the environment.

RED HILL: CAMP C

- Primarily women + children in settlement during working hours
- The streets where children spend most their time are pedestrian dirt roads with very little traffic

open, rocky, garbage-littered street where children play in Red Hill



When interviewed if the streets were a safe place for their children to play, two mothers stated **“Not really... but I don’t have a choice.”**

OCEAN VIEW

pavement where children play beside graffiti wall

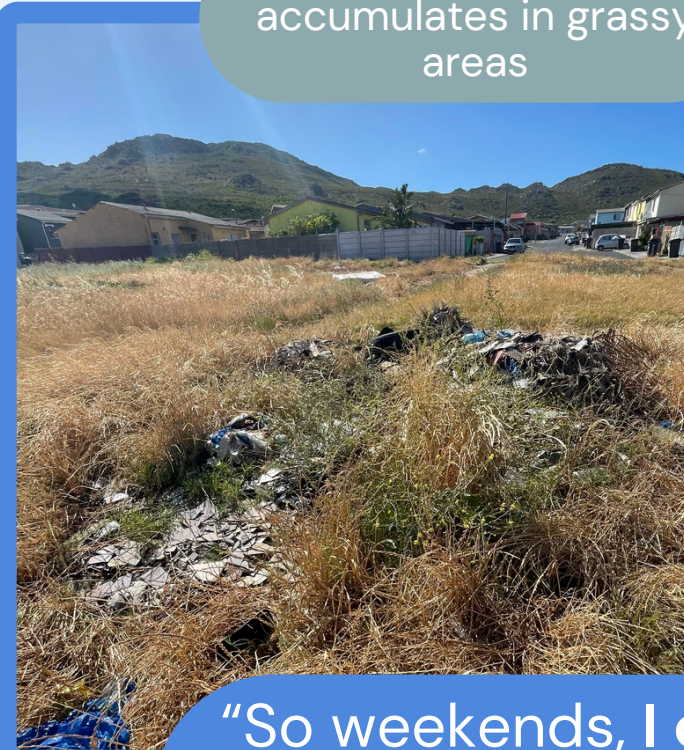


- Unsafe playgrounds and parks due to gang activity
- Prevalent drug abuse
- Lack of motivation or healthy activities for young adults
- 20% are unemployed (2011 census)

OCEAN VIEW (CONT.)

584

total contact crimes in Ocean View (2021/2022) including murder, assault, & robbery



considerable trash accumulates in grassy areas



general area surrounding rundown playground comprised of trash and graffiti

"So weekends, I don't actually take her around in Ocean View to the parks because it's not safe. So I'll take her maybe outside Ocean View... a lot of people can't afford it... South Africa is one of the most unsafe places in the world for women and children... especially in Cape Town. It's really not safe."

-- Ocean View parent

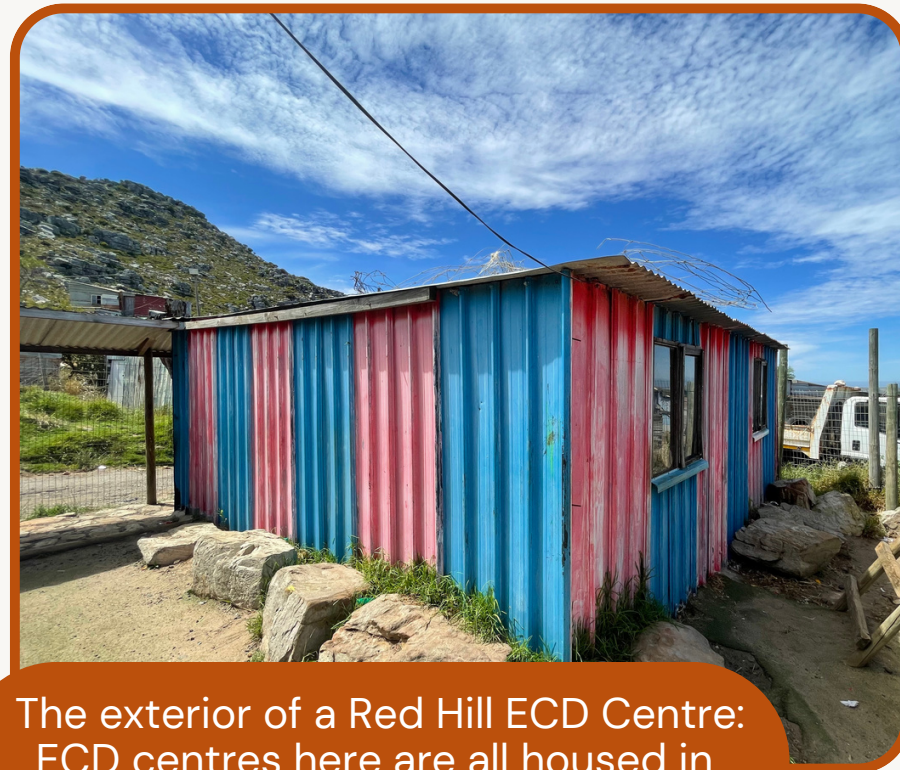
CLAREMONT

- Relatively safe parks and fields for children
- Private properties are safely gated off
- Clean, well-maintained streets with higher traffic
- Community members report it less relaxed than previous years, but still a safe environment for children
- 4.7% are unemployed (2011 census)

"It's... a lot safer than other areas. But children that are brought up in Claremont might not have as free reign as children from other areas, so the children are probably less street smart and the parents are more... protective."



typical street in Claremont



The exterior of a Red Hill ECD Centre: ECD centres here are all housed in informal structures of corrugated metal

The exterior of an independent Ocean View ECD Centre: a mix of ECD centres hosted within residential homes and others housed in their independent structures



The entrance hallway of a Claremont ECD Centre: almost all are housed in independent buildings built or renovated specifically to be a centre

ECD CENTRES

And raising children also in Cape Town can be very scary. So you as a parent, you need to do everything in your power to make sure that the ECD centre, for example, your putting your child in, is a good centre... [with a] teacher that knows what she's doing. People you can trust.

-- Ocean View parent

The differences between ECD centres are stark across varying types of communities. Informal settlements like Red Hill have centres in informal structures with a high student:teacher ratio and minimal teaching resources and space. Centres in townships like Ocean View have more space and resources, though lower quality due to lack of funding. Suburbs like Claremont tend to have many centres of high quality and a range of activities for the children.

Kitchen facilities in Red Hill (top) versus Claremont (bottom)

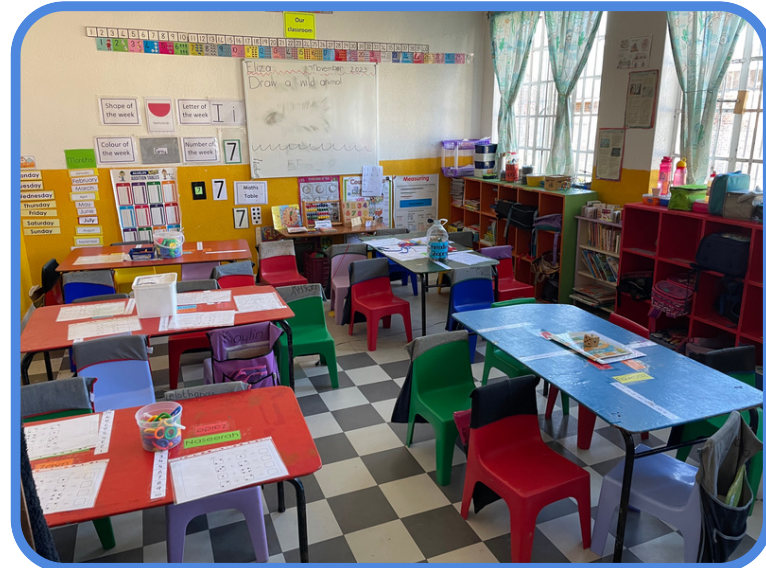


TYPICAL CLASSROOM



Classrooms differed between the three communities through their physical attributes and their academics. Red Hill's ECD centres were comprised of separate structures, and the classrooms (not pictured) were mostly concrete or dirt floors. Ocean View's ECD centres were rooms with tile or carpet flooring, and one contained multiple areas of play: creative play, musical instruments, reading, and a carpeted area. Claremont's classrooms were of newer matching equipment, in a building specifically renovated for ECD.

The sink and toilet facilities in Red Hill (left) vs. Claremont (right)



Classrooms in Ocean View (top & middle) and Claremont (bottom)

ADDITIONAL SPACES

Claremont's ECD centres contained a separate eating area. Meanwhile Red Hill and Ocean View ate in their classrooms and on the morning carpet respectively.



Ocean View and Claremont both had areas to facilitate different forms of play. These different types of spaces foster different types of creativity and imagination.

Claremont had a designated nap time with mattresses and sheets for each of the students.



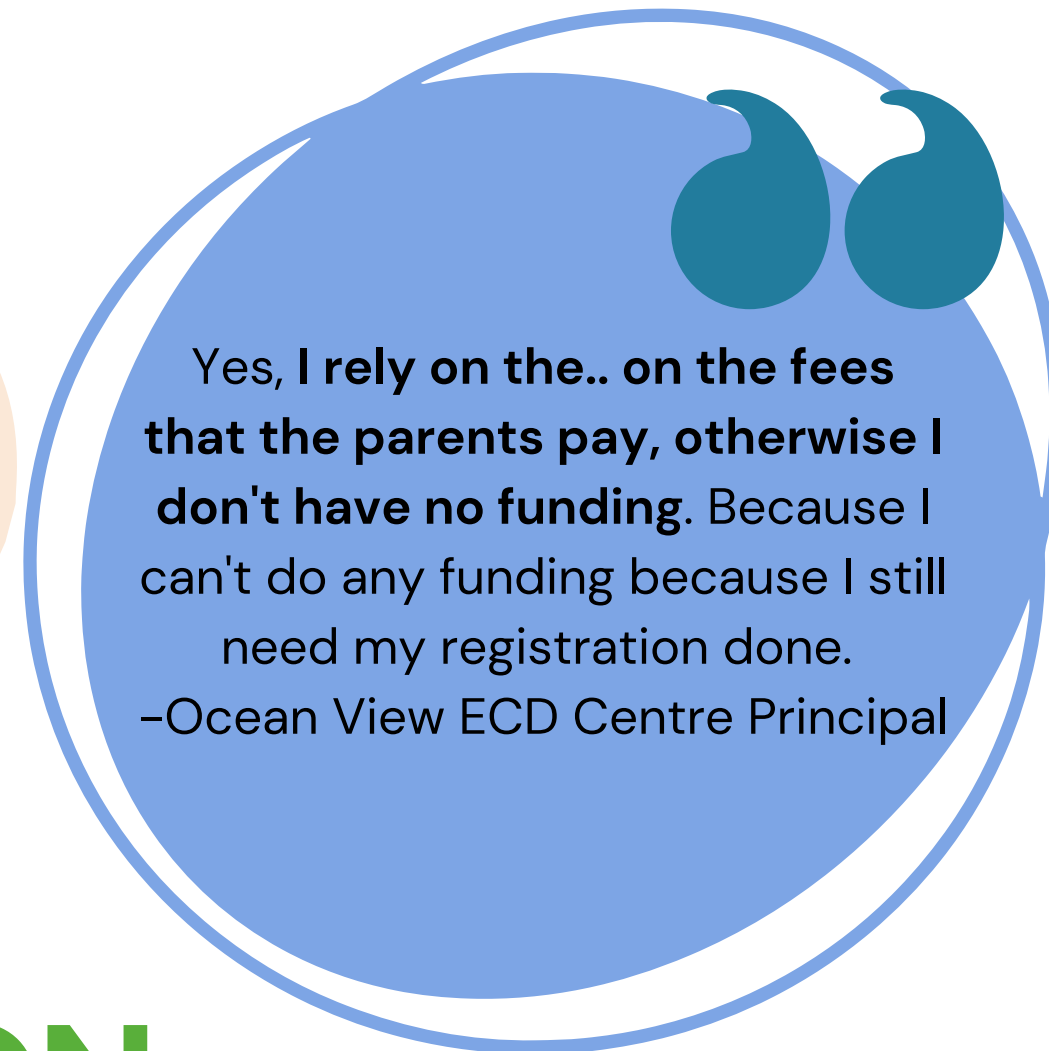
Red Hill Obtaining basic land agreement is the biggest issue. With the Red Hill Settlement being on private land, ECD centres do not have lease agreements on their property, which is required for the city's zoning agreements.

Ocean View The largest challenge is meeting adequate standards for property, fire, and health codes. When inspections occur, identified issues take lots of time and money to resolve. Without funding, principals are forced to rely on parental payment.

Claremont Securing land agreements and meeting health/building standards is not an issue. The challenge is having to pay an admin penalty fee for operating as an unregistered ECD centre. The sum of these costs is unmanageable for most centers.



Because you need to have a [house] plan, we don't have a plan... You need to bring in the fire department to come check, the health department. **It's not easy.**
-Red Hill ECD Centre Principal



Yes, I rely on the.. on the fees that the parents pay, otherwise I don't have no funding. Because I can't do any funding because I still need my registration done.
-Ocean View ECD Centre Principal



But they want me to pay a levy of like, just under **500,000 Rand**....nobody in their right like business mind has got [that amount of money] just in my back pocket and give it over to the government.
-Claremont ECD Centre Principal

ECD REGISTRATION

ECD Centres must register with the government to receive funding. However, in order to register with the government, the centres must meet the minimum requirements set by the National Department of Education. While all the target communities face challenges in ECD registration, these challenges tended to differ.

ECD CENTRE PLAY AREAS

Play areas contribute to a child's physical and mental development by providing an environment for exercise and social interaction. The safety of the area, involving both the built environment and human threats, affects how often it is used. The play areas observed in the three target communities varied greatly in maintenance and use.

OCEAN VIEW



ECD centre with large play area and diverse equipment.



Play areas ranged from very large to a one-room patio.

Overall, ECD centres in low-income areas contained less diverse areas for play, and the equipment contained missing pieces or more visible wear.



RED HILL: CAMP C



Play areas consisted of:

- a climbing structure
- tires
- turf/sandy area



Many of the play areas consisted of reused car tires for swings and climbing structures. This was more prevalent in the informal settlements and townships than the suburbs.

CLAREMONT



Holes in the swing set (top) and tunnel (bottom) from corrosion and unaffordable cost of maintenance



One centre had a garden patch to teach the process of gardening hands-on



Some ECD centres have the luxury of considering aesthetics in their designs. This playground was designed to look like it was made out of large sticks.



One centre contained a tiled patio, areas to sit, a climbing wall, a vertical garden, a green space, and a play set.



Claremont ECD centres often included green space and landscaped areas for children to play. This offered more diverse options that encourage creativity and physical exercise.



Themed parks, such as the "Choo Choo Park"



Variety of well-maintained equipment in a safe, gated area



Many public grass fields for sports and activities



CLAREMONT

16 Public Play Areas

OCEAN VIEW

7 Public Play Areas

Dissected play equipment due to gangs stealing and selling wood and copper pieces



Relatively unused playground equipment due to lack of maintenance



Broken glass and litter in playgrounds due to vandalism



Ungated, unsafe playground for children

PUBLIC PLAY AREAS



The Deck: recently built by America Share, used by children as a safe place to play

Unmaintained, unused jungle gym moved to edge of camp to make space for library



RED HILL: CAMP C

2 Public Play Areas

Ocean View + Red Hill Hospital

The False Bay Hospital in Fish Hoek is the only health clinic for both Red Hill and Ocean View residents. It is a 30-minute drive from Red Hill, with many residents forced to use unreliable taxi services.



Exterior of False Bay Hospital

One Claremont Hospital, Life Kingsbury Hospital, has a designated paediatric wing, surgical care, emergency services, and proximity to many other health care professionals such as physiotherapists, dermatologists, dentists, etc.



Claremont Hospital

COMMUNITY RESOURCES: HOSPITALS



Exterior of Life Kingsbury



Interior Lobby of Life Kingsbury



Red Hill Library/ Community Centre

Community centre built by the charity AmericaShare. It contains resources such as books and computers. Parents say their children come after school for homework help. There is also a safe, gated green space for children to play.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES: LIBRARIES

Ocean View Public Library

The library contains learn-to-read books, young adult fiction, multiple computers, physical/mental health awareness, textbooks, and study guides.



Claremont Public Library



The public library is a large space with several community programs, many computers, and an entire floor for youth.

CONCLUSIONS



Safety, quality ECD centres, public play parks, and adequate community resources are all **essential factors** for establishing healthy ECD.

Our observation and documentation of ECD resources in Red Hill, Ocean View, and Claremont revealed **distinct disparities** in the **quality, quantity, and accessibility** of these resources.

We hope that the information provided in this report will assist the **Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD)** in advocating for the well-being of young children in urban environments.