



Business Plan

Executive Summary

The Parent Centre (TPC) is a registered non-profit organisation, working mainly in the Western Cape, but responds to requests anywhere in the Republic, that provides a range of preventive services for parents seeking the support and help they need, before problems become entrenched.

By promoting positive parenting, The Parent Centre enables parents, guardians, caregivers and teachers to facilitate the healthy emotional development of the child. This enhances the child's capacity to be a resilient, caring, competent and creative member of society.

This business plan outlines how The Parent Centre operates, its management and services offered.

2011

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of The Parent Centre's programmes is to offer parenting skills training, support groups and counselling services that will promote healthy, secure relationships between parents/caregivers and their children regardless of socio-economic conditions. Secure attachment between infants and their caregivers contributes significantly to healthy emotional, cognitive and physical development of children. It provides children with the foundation for positive self-esteem, confidence to explore their environment and develops resilience to cope with stressful circumstances. To be quality parents (whether biological or foster parents, or other caregivers) makes enormous demands on emotional resources. Consequently, they often need both information, skills and support that will help them to bring up their children to be emotionally secure, healthy and intelligent and able to take care of themselves and their own children.

Despite the many structural changes that families have undergone, and the different situations and lifestyles, the family continues to be a framework within which children learn about life and adulthood. Regardless of background and lifestyle, all parents share many common needs and concerns.

In South Africa, families continue to be challenged to overcome the damage created by the inhumane policies of the previous regime that resulted in the systematic breakdown of family relationships. Rapid social changes, economic hardship and the breakdown of traditional methods of raising children have further left parents feeling overwhelmed, unskilled and powerless in communities that are largely under resourced.

All parents want the best for their children. However, many who provide inadequate protection, nurturing and guidance to their children, tend to be parents who are themselves despairing. They are often depressed and feel out of control of their own lives, which interferes with their availability and ability to think about their children's needs. Many have not had nurturing parenting models themselves, or have been the victims of neglect or emotional, physical or sexual abuse. Even parents in relatively secure circumstances feel unsure when they find themselves having to face the normal and common challenges as their children grow through various stages. Parents easily feel that they have failed: having to manage a crying baby, a stubborn toddler, prone to tantrums, a shy child, bed-wetting, sibling rivalry, aggression in the playground, failure at school, experimentation in adolescence, single parenting and loss is a struggle for even the most experienced, informed and confident parent.

The Parent Centre (TPC) provides a range of preventive services for parents seeking the support and help they need, before problems become entrenched.

VISION

The Parent Centre strives to contribute to a society in which every parent/caregiver is able to raise resilient and well-balanced children in ways in which they can develop their full potential, protected from victimisation and abuse in communities free from violence.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Parent Centre is a non-profit organisation working mainly in the Western Cape.

Through primary prevention, we aim to:

- Facilitate the safety and healthy emotional development of the child from birth to early adulthood;
- Promote the well-being and self-esteem of the parent/caregiver;
- Prevent child abuse, victimisation and neglect;
- Contribute to the prevention of teen pregnancy, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS;
- Enhance the child's capacity to be a resilient, caring, competent and creative member of society; and
- Encourage the establishment of a loving, nurturing environment that strengthens the family and society.
-

We do this by working directly with parents, caregivers and educators – and indirectly by collaborating with other people and organisations which support and work with parents.

We offer training in positive parenting and support to people and communities wanting to promote the practice of positive parenting. We offer counselling and support to parents/caregivers.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Centre adopts a developmental approach: the focus of training is on positive parenting and support for parents and caregivers at risk. This is accomplished through structured training, home-visiting programmes, community talks and support groups as well as individual counselling and support on all aspects of parenting and child development. Emphasis is placed on developing and nurturing the parents' own self-esteem and coping skills—both critical for effective parenting.

The Parent Centre's **main objectives** are:

1. To enhance positive parent-child relationships in order to strengthen families and prevent family breakdown
2. To enhance educators' understanding of and effectiveness in managing child behaviour both in- and around the classroom
3. To strengthen communication and behaviour management techniques of parents (all primary caregivers) as they are the most significant adults in the child's early life

4. To raise awareness of parenting skills in the broader community through community education and training that is aligned with the National Qualifications Framework
5. To empower communities through the training of trainers.

The Parent Centre's Philosophy

Preparing children for the world they will face as adults is an awesome and challenging task. Parents and caregivers need to recognise that equipping children with a positive self-esteem that will enable them to act wisely and assertively in their lives is the most important responsibility they carry. However, parenting is not instinctive. Attitudes, information and skills need to be learned and many parents and caregivers lack confidence or are ill equipped for the task of providing the emotional containment, information and skills their children need to realise their creative potential.

In this context, and within a developmental framework, the approach to delivering services is participatory, which ensures that parents and caregivers take ownership of, and responsibility for, applying their new knowledge and skills.

THE PARENT CENTRE: HOW WAS IT BORN?

The Parent Centre was born in 1983 in response to a research study conducted by Cape Town Child Welfare Society, in 1978. This research clearly identified a need for support and information on child development and parenting skills among both the communities being served as well as among professionals who worked with parents and caregivers. This resulted in the establishment of Family Focus, later renamed The Parent Centre, as a project of Cape Town Child Welfare Society. It offered programmes designed to prevent child abuse and neglect by equipping parents and child caregivers with the skills they needed.

In 1997, a project that had small beginnings some 14 years previously, was well established, and matured into an autonomous branch of the Cape Town Child Welfare Society.

As a function of changes in the legislation governing welfare- and not-for-profit organisations, The Parent Centre was forced to sever its dependency on Cape Town Child Welfare Society, and became an independent entity in 2001. It does, however, retain a connection with the broader child and family movement through its membership with different forums within the sector.

Positive parenting, and the need for support and education in this regard, is a universal need, and one that The Parent Centre is committed to meeting in South Africa. Operating within the framework of social development in South Africa today, The Parent Centre is an active participant in the arena of Early Childhood Development, infant mental health, and the rights of women and children. In addition, it is committed to the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, and strives to support parents in ensuring that all children enjoy these rights.

SERVICES

The Parent Centre services fall within four primary areas of activity viz., parenting & community empowerment & support, parent-infant services, teen-parent skills development and counselling. The last three receive support from the community education and training services, as all TPC workers require further training in the specific area of parenting service before going into the field.

1. Parenting & Community Empowerment & Support (PACES)

As has been noted above, this division offers services to both TPC's field workers, as well as to learners from outside the organisation. Below we provide a list and a brief summary of the key areas that the training programmes cover.

1.1. Child care, Parenting & Leadership

Parent training programmes i.e. workshops and talks that address the most common parenting needs and concerns are offered year round to various audiences including the general public, parent bodies and staff of preschools and schools, antenatal and post-natal clinics.

- Working in teams
- The development of healthy children
- Care for babies and toddlers
- Problem-solving techniques
- How individuals can contribute towards creating a caring environment for people who are vulnerable
- Dealing with HIV/AIDS
- Developing active listening skills
- Group Facilitation (See 2 below)

1.2. Group Facilitation

Group facilitation (train-the-trainer) training is regularly offered to professionals and other individuals who wish to become involved in parenting work in their communities. This may be the TPC's own field workers, staff of other NGOs, religious organisations, parent bodies, or community workers. It is through this programme that our practical approaches to positive parenting are extended to parents throughout the country. The programme deals with

- Facilitating learning in development practice
- Discussing one-to-one; family and community dynamics and value systems
- Basic lay counselling in a structured environment
- Building relationships with children

Learners in this programme will have completed at least one other learning programme (usually either Child care, Parenting & Leadership or Teen Parenting), all of which are available through The Parent Centre.

1.3. Teen Parenting

The Parent Centre trains community members (See 2 above) to run teen parenting groups. They, in turn offer this programme to teenage parents and caregivers both in and out of school. It is currently a six-month programme (minimally 20 x once-weekly sessions) that assists these young parents and caregivers to develop parenting skills to cope with the challenges of being parents. Among the areas addressed are:

- The development of healthy children
- Care for babies and toddlers
- Human physical development and sexuality
- Working in a team or group
- Relationship skills and responsibilities
- Apply problem-solving techniques
- Understanding and dealing with HIV/AIDS
- Active listening skills in the care and support environment
- Identifying and supporting the abused child
- Financial management

1.4. Parent-infant

- The development of healthy children
- Care for babies and toddlers
- Working in teams
- Problem-solving techniques

2. Parent–Infant Services

The primary focus of this is preventing child abuse and victimisation, antenatally and until the infant is at least six-months old, through promoting and encouraging sensitive and responsive parenting, enhancing parent-child relationships. This results in more successful social relationships in older children and adults. The home visiting programme is offered in the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities, where the incidence of postnatal depression is estimated to be in excess of 37% and parent-infant interactions are typically extremely poor. Health clinics and maternity obstetric units refer mothers, who are vulnerable or at risk, and visits have a supportive, educative and therapeutic function.

3. Individual counselling

The Parent Centre provides counselling and support for all parents as well as to participants in its programmes. The Counselling Programme is

designed to be problem-specific and short-term in duration. It aims to engage the parent(s) in a partnership through which advice, information and skills are shared so that the parents' own problem-solving ability is developed. The desired outcome of each encounter is to promote the practice of positive parenting so as to enhance the development of the child and facilitate the emotional and psychological well being of the whole family. In all instances, clients are also encouraged to attend the various community-based support groups or training programmes, as this provides an additional source of information and support.

ADAPTING TO CHANGING NEEDS: EVOLVING SERVICES

The need for The Parent Centre's services is clear, demonstrated both by its 28-year existence, as well as the demographic characteristics of South Africa's population:

- ± 20% are between the ages of 10 and 17
- 52% of young women are under the age of 20 when their first child was born
- 49% of all youth, male and female, are still at school when their first child was born
- 3.3% of households are headed by children between the ages of 12 and 18 years usually as a result of AIDS-related illnesses and/or death in the family (This needs to be regarded as a conservative estimate)

In addition, The Parent Centre has participated widely in research into the family, child development and parenting issues and is widely respected for its contributions in this regard.

- **University of Cape Town, the University of Reading (UK) and the Winnicott Institute (UK)**
In the parent-infant services programme, the home visiting Thula Sana project in Khayelitsha
- **Foetal Alcohol Related Research (FARR) programme with the University of Cape Town and the Wayne State University, USA**
The Parent Centre provided intervention for participating families.
- **Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)/ University of Stellenbosch "Whole Child Initiative"**
to develop a primary care model of intervention and supervision to promote mother-child interactions for mothers in rural areas.
- **Unisa/Medical Research Council lead study on Prevention of Injuries and Violence**
as a contributing organisation.

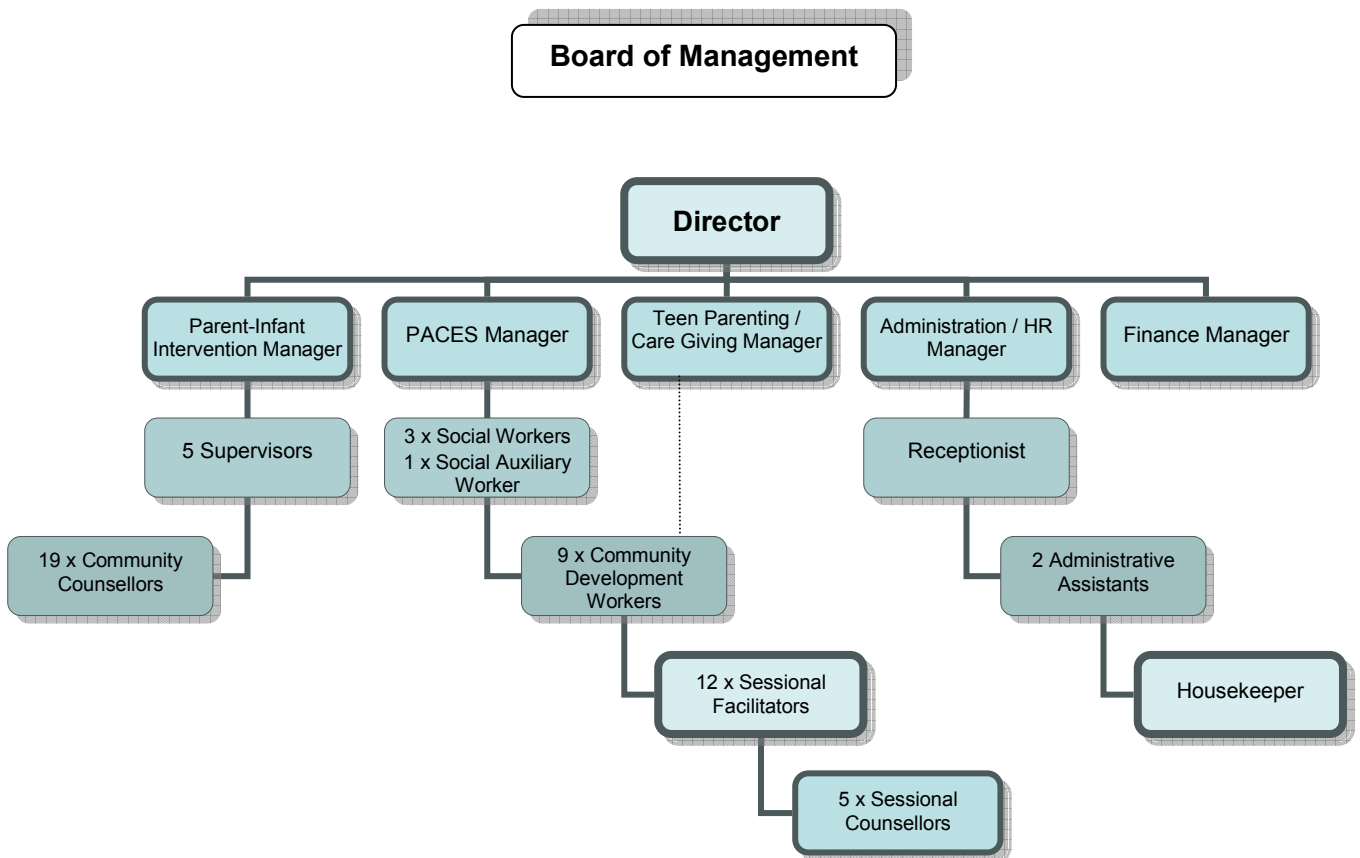
Based on this need, The Parent Centre is engaging in a number of initiatives that will both add value to its services, as well as permit it to extend its reach beyond the Western Cape Region:

- Accreditation as a training provider through the SA Council for Social Service Professions
- Capturing its methodology and programmes into a compendium of materials that will make the services replicable, thus enabling The Parent Centre to reach into areas that are in desperate need of programmes geared towards preventing child abuse through supporting child care givers and parents.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Parent Centre is a voluntary association and a registered non-profit organisation (005-605 NPO; PBO Reg. no: 18/11/13/448)). It is governed by

a board of management and headed by a director, as is reflected in the organisational chart below.



Members of the Board of Management

Chairperson	Vanessa Pather	CCMA Commissioner & Trainer
Vice Chair	Shona Sturgeon	Senior Lecturer, School of Social Development, University of Cape Town
Treasurer	Deborah Coombe	Chartered Accountant (private practice)
Members	Vanessa Minnaar	Early Childhood Development Sector Manager, Provincial Education Department
	Khairunesa Nagdee	Retired businesswoman
	Nomfundo Ntoyanto	Deputy Director, FAMSA Western Cape
	Hoosain Ebrahim (Dr)	Psychologist (private practice)

Staff

The Parent Centre is able to offer its services to a broad range of communities because of its unique combination of employed professionals, and contract community workers. The core of employed staff provides the stability and continuity that the organisation needs and the contract workers allow it to be flexible in meeting the needs of the communities it serves.

Mrs Celeste Van der Merwe (M Soc Sci. (Clin)), is the Director, and she is assisted by professionals and community development workers comprising both trained and sub-contracted personnel.

Detailed *curriculum vitae* of both board and staff members are available on request.

MARKETING

Marketing the services of an organisation such as The Parent Centre is challenging, as it must serve two broad markets: its clients, which are drawn from every sector of the community, and the donors whose support enables TPC to make services available at reasonable rates, or where necessary, at no cost to the beneficiary.

Market definition

For the purpose of this business plan, the primary target market must focus on TPC's clients. Any person who must care for a child is a potential TPC client, irrespective of the socio-economic group from which s/he comes. Having noted this, the primary market for TPC's services is to be found in under resourced communities, where communities are often marginalized and disempowered; these people find it particularly difficult to access what few resources might be available.

Employers, recognising the challenges that their workers face, particularly those on the shop floor, invite TPC to give talks to employees: this is a market that The Parent Centre wishes to explore. This would serve two purposes:

1. assisting employers to better support their workers through building coping skills that can be used in the home, reducing stress that is often the result of domestic problems (thus also increasing productivity)
2. generating income from beyond the donor pool, which will reduce dependence on income from the state (subsidies) and philanthropic sources (donors)

Marketing Tools

As has already been noted, marketing is a particular challenge for The Parent Centre, and an acknowledged area of weakness. Consequently steps are being taken to address this, in the form of the recent appointment of a Marketing Assistant, working closely with the Financial Manager and the Director. In the meantime, a number of tools and strategies are employed:

- word-of-mouth, particularly in the case of clients who have benefited from TPC's services
- dissemination of information through public speaking opportunities (business and service organisations), parent-teacher associations, community newspapers and radio stations
- targeted distribution of newsletters to members and interested parties
- referrals from clinics, schools and other NGOs, as well as other service providers e.g. community doctors
- networking
- a presence on the Internet at <http://www.theparentcentre.org.za>; Facebook and Twitter.

ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The Parent Centre operates in a highly charged and fluid environment, and its 28-year existence is a testimony to the organisation's ability to transcend difficulties posed from a number of quarters. That the organisation emerged during the politically fraught 1980s and has survived and transformed through the 1990s into the new millennium clearly establishes The Parent Centre as a vital part of the social and development network of the Western Cape and broader South Africa.

Key successes include:

- Twenty-eight years that have established The Parent Centre as a "brand" with a "product" that works: primary prevention
Inherent in TPC's approach are elements of "healing" for both the client and the worker. This encourages continuous individual growth for all involved
- The "ripple effect" of clients' positive experiences
- Tenacity: the organisation has survived and remains relevant and focused despite serious funding challenges

Business strengths and opportunities

Notwithstanding successes, The Parent Centre recognises the need to regularly review the environment so that it can build on its strengths and exploit opportunities that present themselves.

Strengths

- Services are focused and relevant
TPC specialises in areas where it has an established track record. This is supported by regular professional input and client feedback which leads to further upgrading of skills.
- Accountability through evaluation processes (internal/external); statistical and financial accounting systems
- Dynamic staff who are respectful of clients apply knowledge and skills in a mature manner. They go the extra-mile and have a clear understanding of the communities and their specific dynamics.
- Principles and service delivery are never compromised

- Adherence to the principles and practices of people empowerment
- Capacity building to enhance the sustainability of all of the Centre's programmes.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Parent Centre's opportunities can be divided into two broad categories, viz. for marketing/fundraising and for services

Marketing/fundraising

- Initiate new fundraising initiatives, e.g. bequest and loyalty programmes
- Increase membership
- Reaching out to business (corporate/private)
- Upgrade marketing material (newsletter, brochures, audio-visual media)

Services

- Establish strategic partnerships/alliances to combine skills with those organizations who can also address the fundamental needs of clients/communities
- Extend services beyond the Western Cape, particularly with the emphasis on primary/preventive elements
- Exploring other options for counselling provision so that it can become more accessible to all sectors in communities
- Reaching out to business (corporate/private)

Business weaknesses and threats

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of mobility i.e. no drivers' licences, particularly of the community development workers
- Physically, only being active primarily in one province, although responding to requests outside of the Western Cape.
- Inadequate transport resources for projects – this has somewhat been relieved with the purchase of an additional vehicle.

THREATS

- Becoming overwhelmed by the huge need/demand for services
- Financial challenges regarding the increase of capacity sufficiently to meet the increased demand.
- Donor demands e.g. truncating the training time frame which compromises quality of sustained learning
- Competitors i.e. other NGOs whose staff (and private practitioners) have been trained by TPC.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Parent Centre's operating budget for the 2010/11 financial year, is in excess of R4 million, and it will be funded through a range of strategies as follows:

Income Stream	%
Fundraising (grants, corporates, individuals, bequests, etc.)	61%
State subsidies (provincial and local government)	34%
Fees from clients (membership and services, including training)	4.5%
Interest on investment	1.28%

Given TPC's track record, and that it has developed a strategy to increase income from fundraising, income levels are likely to grow, albeit slowly. Recognising the unpredictability of sustained income from philanthropic sources, The Parent Centre is seeking other income-generating opportunities e.g. gearing up of fee-paying clients through engaging with employers to provide services for a fee, as well as extending services beyond the province through the establishment of strategic partnerships. This shift away from fundraising is a considered strategy to improve the medium- to long-term viability of The Parent Centre.

Current fee structures

Fees are charged for both training and for counselling services.

Counselling

Individual clients typically pay for counselling services, which are usually charged out on a sliding scale. However, clients that make use of this service can be divided into two categories, viz.,

1. From indigent communities who may or may not be employed¹, or who may receive some sort of financial support in the form of grants or family assistance.
2. Those who can afford it, do pay for counselling services.

Clients are expected to pay, even if the contribution is nominal. They are subjected to a simple means test to determine which fee, on a sliding scale, applies. This strategy ensures commitment and reinforces a sense of value in the services.

Workshops (training)

Training is available to both individuals and organisations.

¹ Clients who are employed are not necessarily in the formal sector, and therefore proof of actual income is difficult to establish

Individuals

The fees for training programmes are set in advance, and those learners who are not in a position to make a contribution may, on a case-by-case basis, apply for a bursary, or to have the fee waived.

Organisations

Service and religious organisations are requested to provide a donation that covers the cost of transport and basic subject handouts. However, for other organisations that wish to contract The Parent Centre's professional services, these are charged out at a rate that varies between R 150 and R 250/hour, depending on whether the organisation is for- or not-for-profit.

Subsidised training is offered to staff of NGOs and Community-based organizations (CBOs) when funding is made available for such purposes.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Any interested party is invited to contact the organization (telephonic, fax, e-mail, website, facebook, twitter and/or physically visit) and request information about the nature and extent of services offered. Annual report and quarterly newsletters are available – the latter also sent to members, Community-Based-Organizations, Primary-and High Schools and other Welfare Organizations on our mailing list.

Language preferences, particularly as regards counselling and workshops are adhered to as strictly as possible. As regards printed material in Afrikaans and Xhosa, this is currently only available in the form of worksheets/handouts used during workshops and talks. This matter is on a high priority list i.e. to ensure that all relevant information regarding the organization and its services is available in the three official languages of the province.

Access to information about our clients who receive counselling is limited – based on the confidential, therapeutic relationship built up between the client and counsellor. The Receptionist will confirm whether a client has attended appointments or not, but will refer the matter to the counsellor concerned for further follow up. The client is given the prerogative to decide on the disclosure (if any) of any information about him/herself.

CONCLUSION

This document outlines the strategies through which The Parent Centre will continue striving to achieve its vision for every parent and childcare giver in the Republic of South Africa to have access to preventive and support services so that they can adequately fulfil their roles as child-nurturers.

Celeste Van der Merwe
DIRECTOR