

WATCH: Closing nutrition and education gaps that are stunting South Africa's youth

A staggering 21.18% of children in South Africa will be stunted by 2025, according to the Shoprite Group's newly released [Food Index](#). Stunting impacts children's physical and cognitive growth and they are more likely to drop out of school and face a greater risk of becoming entrapped in an unending cycle of unemployment and poverty.

Unemployed Bertha Moloi (44) finds comfort knowing her daughter Khanyi (5) receives at least one nutritious meal a day. She is one of the 479 children enrolled at 10 ECD (Early Childhood Development) education centres in Soweto who benefit from the [Shoprite Group's](#) support.

ECD centres play a crucial role in providing young children with a solid foundation for their future education and life. However, many of these centres face significant challenges in terms of infrastructure, resources, training, and support.

The Moloi mother and daughter duo feature in a short film which highlights the need ECD centres have for comprehensive assistance. The challenges faced by these centres are often interconnected, and a holistic approach – with ongoing support and guidance from committed organisations – is necessary to address them effectively.

“South Africa's youth hold the key to its future success and corporate partnerships can play a central role in shaping the course of their growth and development. This can be achieved through proactive participation and investment in initiatives that promote education, skills development, nutrition and overall well-being,” explains Sanjeev Raghbir, Head: Sustainability and CSI for the Shoprite Group.

Over the past year, the retailer which supports over 114 ECD centers, has served more than 7,200 meals per day to children at ECDs across South Africa as it continues to invest in programmes that improve nutrition and food security while enhancing the children's day-to-day experience.

Bertha says that Khanyi's overall well-being has improved since joining Cutie Pies ECD in 2021, adding that her academic progress is also evident.

“She recognises the alphabet and is already writing legibly.”

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