

iZinto Materials Centre – an introduction

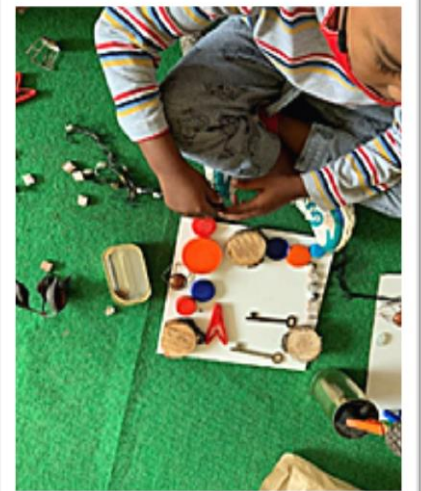


iZinto is a centre that collects, curates and displays materials predominantly made up of discarded items that no longer serve their original purpose. The concept is based on the Reggio Emilia Schools' REMIDA, a centre in Italy that views "waste materials" as sources for inquiry and creativity which underpin much of the Reggio Emilia philosophy of early childhood education. "iZinto" means "things", or "items" in isiXhosa.

iZinto in South Africa was launched through **Africa A+ Schools (A+)** in 2019 and is integral to the **A+** approach. The **iZinto** collection includes a variety of household recyclables, such as bottle tops, plastic containers and lids, to wood flooring and carpet off-cuts and fabrics. The centre is home to unusual objects that invite inquiry, such as large plastic bobbins and heavy duty cardboard tubes, as well as found natural objects, such as shells and stones. Collectively, such materials are referred to in education as "loose parts", as distinct from ready-made toys and equipment, and are usually available at no cost.

Our **iZinto** centre is currently located at the Centre for Creative Education in Cape Town where, apart from being a resource for local teachers, ECD centres and **A+** facilitators, it is a place where education students can learn how loose parts may be used in creative teaching and learning. The aim of **iZinto** is to inspire creativity, reflection, and sustainable teaching practices through inquiry learning and the arts.

Many of the materials can be used as loose parts in classrooms. Loose parts offer children diverse opportunities for learning. For example, playing with wooden flooring off-cuts may open up learning around arrangement, balance, and height through stacking, placing, and constructing. Through designing and redesigning, children discover the physical properties of materials and this stimulates further experimentation. The idea is similar to that of playing with blocks or sand, but greatly expanded to include much more varied materials and activities. This encourages children to collaborate, solve problems, and be creative in their learning.



For more information, or to organize a workshop in the use of loose parts, please contact:

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Visit our website at <https://africaaplus.org.za> or Instagram at [izintoafrica](https://www.instagram.com/izintoafrica), or Facebook at www.facebook.com/AfricaAplus

We are physically located at **iZinto Materials Centre**, Centre for Creative Education, 4 Victoria Road, Plumstead, Cape Town.