**PARENTS, CARERS and COMMUNITIEs the first and most important teachers of their children.**

**A brief for STEM Everyday STEM workshops**

The adults who look after babies and the young children before they are formally educated are so important in the lives of the children. You share much of their time in their critical early years for learning about their world before they go to school. We appreciate that you are teachers, which in this work is a good thing. Learn a but everyday STEM is not like school science subjects, it is in action, the key is having the actions work for you, or not! You are not telling children (except how to use certain items like some tools, scissors, properly and safely) but helping the children experience science (STEM) in action in their everyday.

The Science, technology and numeracy you use everyday and other activities like fishing, crop growing, special to your community are done in your community. You spend much time with these children. By being with them, keeping them safe, and all the opportunities for the children whom you look after as your employment if you care for the children of others, through the everyday activities you both do which are everyday science actions. You regularly do everyday activities such as washing up, choosing what to wear to suit the weather, preparing food, cooking, opening a door, throwing a ball, for example, all of which are essential activities for children to try doing and understand as well as the play activities you provide as part of your care for them. Furthermore children in their everyday learn to think practically and to problem solve. These are not for tests and grades as in many school systems, but these are life skills, learning how to do things and solving everyday challenges. All these activities are science in action, maths in action, engineering and technology in action.

 You are expert at using these actions andhave the skills needed. Letting children carry them out is essential for their foundation of learning in these important skills and practice. You facilitate their play with toys, many of which are showing science in action. Many children have no manufactured toys but are ingenious in utilizing everyday items to investigate and use play with in their surroundings. Such play is important. Don't let people tell you,  “Oh play”, and, “A waste of time”; it is part of children’s work and vital in their development in science, maths and technology. Encourage it.

Encouraging these early learner to be involved in play and the everyday tasks is one of the most important things you can do for these children in this vitally important first stage in their learning. Helping them to hear and learn the words and talk about what they are doing is vital. But encouraging them in such activities, before they can talk themselves. Is also important. Children need to hear you talk and name things. This is how they learn about communicating with language. Encourage them to ask questions and find out their own answers as they make sense of their world. Praise them. Encourage them! Tell them they are action scientists!

You are the most important person to do this, together with their parents if you look after children. It is not about giving the right answers and telling them school maths and science words and facts. It is about looking at things, wondering, investigating: thinking and doing. Encourage these emergent scientists and technologists to develop the mind set that “*they can do*!” Fining that their own solution, sometimes collaborating with others, to solving an issue doles nylon work is a more valuable experience than solving the problem at once!

In CASTME workshops we invite you to do emergent everyday activities through the eyes and hands of a child and realise the science, maths and technology is STEM in action. Remember too that doing these things, sharing, discussing, uses language skills, which children develop through doing.

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CASTME links science, technology and mathematics (STEM) educators across the Commonwealth.  It has a UK-based board of trustees, with regional branches or groups in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

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