

Children's access to social assistance¹

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The Constitution of South Africa, Section 27 (1) (c), says that, "everyone has the right to have access to social security including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance". The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her development (Article 27).

The number and proportion of children aged 0 – 14 years receiving the Child Support Grant (CSG) in South Africa in June 2005

The government is obliged to support children directly when their parents or caregivers are not able to support them adequately due to poverty. This is done primarily through social assistance programmes such as the CSG. The fundamental purpose of the right to social assistance is to ensure that persons living in poverty are able to access a minimum level of income sufficient to meet basic subsistence needs so that they do not have to live below minimum acceptable standards. The CSG is a cash grant to the value of R180 per month per child. In June 2005, the CSG went to nearly 6 million children from 0 – 14 years old. Using the *General Household Survey 2004*, Budlender calculated that some 8.8 million children are eligible for the CSG. This is 65% of all children in the eligible age group.

Using these eligibility rates, it is estimated that 67% of eligible children are able to access the Child Support Grants across the

country. The extension to the age of 14 years began in April 2005; so there is still room for improvement in the uptake rates. By these calculations, a little more than 2.5 million eligible children had yet to access the financial support of the CSG. In order to access the grant, children's caregivers make an application and pass an income test. Children are eligible for this grant if their primary caregiver and his/her spouse have R800 per month or less in income and live in an urban area and formal house. Those who live in rural areas or informal housing in urban areas must earn R1,100 per month or less in order to qualify for this grant. There is substantial evidence that grants, including the CSG, are being spent on food, education and basic goods and services. (Samson, Lee, Ndlebe, Mac Quene, Van Niekerk, Gandhi, Harigaya & Abrahams 2004). (For more details about this indicator refer to page 67.)

Table 5: The number and proportion of children aged 0 – 14 years receiving the Child Support Grant (CSG) in South Africa in June 2005

Province	Child population		Children eligible for the CSG		Children receiving the CSG		Uptake rate	
	Number		Number	%	Number	%		
Eastern Cape	2,205,694		1,616,774	73	1,078,442	67		
Free State	725,750		511,654	71	361,318	71		
Gauteng	2,137,682		1,006,848	47	723,432	72		
KwaZulu-Natal	2,905,733		2,057,259	71	1,338,045	65		
Limpopo	1,890,829		1,353,834	72	990,194	73		
Mpumalanga	999,662		681,769	68	489,663	72		
Northern Cape	240,585		156,621	65	101,728	65		
North West	1,131,625		804,585	71	465,242	58		
Western Cape	1,227,683		605,248	49	365,655	60		
South Africa	13,465,243		8,792,804²	65	5,913,719	67		

SOURCE: Department of Social Development (2005) *SOCPEN database*. Pretoria: Department of Social Development. Eligibility analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT, using Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

¹ Social assistance is made up of non-contributory social grants to adults and children, funded as part of the South African national budget.

² Due to rounding-off error, this figure does not reflect the exact sum of the provincial estimates.

The number of children receiving the Care Dependency Grant (CDG) in South Africa for June 2004 and June 2005

Social assistance is available to children with special care needs in the form of a cash grant called the Care Dependency Grant (CDG). This grant is provided to caregivers of children who require permanent home care because of severe disability. We are not able to develop an uptake rate of the CDG because there is little data on the number of children living with disability in South Africa, and none on children who are severely disabled and in need of 24-hour care. Although the grant is targeted at children with severe disabilities, children with chronic illnesses are eligible for the grant once the illness becomes disabling.

In the context of AIDS, the grant can assist caregivers to care for children who are very sick. In June 2005, 85,698 children were receiving the CDG. This figure is up by 7% from 2004, when just over 80,000 children were receiving this sort of support. From April 2005, the value of the grant was R760 per month. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 67.)

Table 6: The number of children receiving the Care Dependency Grant (CDG) in South Africa for June 2004 and June 2005

Province	June 2004	June 2005
Eastern Cape	18,246	19,925
Free State	3,210	3,401
Gauteng	10,522	11,468
KwaZulu-Natal	20,510	20,994
Limpopo	8,844	9,609
Mpumalanga	4,188	4,273
Northern Cape	1,853	2,186
North West	6,424	6,961
Western Cape	6,290	6,881
South Africa	80,087	85,698

Source: Department of Social Development (2005) *SOCPEN database*.
Pretoria: Department of Social Development.

The number of children receiving the Foster Care Grant (FCG) in South Africa for June 2004 and June 2005

The Foster Care Grant (FCG) is a non-contributory cash grant to the value of R560 per child per month. It is available to foster parents who have had a child placed in their care by an order of the court. The grant was initially intended as financial support for children who had been removed from their families and placed in foster care for protection against situations of abuse or neglect. However, it is increasingly being used to provide financial support to children who have lost parents because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic or other causes.

At the end of June 2005, nearly 272,000 children from birth to the age of 18 years were receiving a FCG. This is 56,000 more than in June 2004 – a 26% increase. It is not possible to calculate an uptake rate for the FCG. If we compare the 272,000 children receiving the grant with only the orphan figures for example, it is clear that only a small proportion of children who under current policy would be eligible on their orphan status alone are receiving this grant, as more than half a million children had lost both parents in 2004. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 67.)

Table 7: The number of children receiving the Foster Care Grant (FCG) in South Africa for June 2004 and June 2005

Province	June 2004	June 2005
Eastern Cape	39,772	53,383
Free State	25,140	33,653
Gauteng	28,281	34,647
KwaZulu-Natal	49,462	57,351
Limpopo	18,718	25,615
Mpumalanga	7,642	12,662
Northern Cape	8,693	9,480
North West	14,154	19,000
Western Cape	23,903	26,026
South Africa	215,765	271,817

Source: Department of Social Development (2005) *SOCPEN database*.
Pretoria: Department of Social Development.

Sources

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