

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 ELIGIBLE CHILDREN (0 – 13 YEARS) RECEIVING THE CHILD SUPPORT GRANT (CSG) IN SOUTH AFRICA

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 live below minimum acceptable standards. The CSG is a cash grant to the value of R190 per month per child as of April 2006. In July 2006, the CSG went to over 7.4 million eligible children aged 0 – 13 years.

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 under the age of 14 years (Budlender, Rosa & Hall 2005). Using this eligibility rate, it is estimated that 84% of all eligible children access Child Support Grants across the country. The extension to the age of 13 years began in April 2005 and between June 2005 and July 2006, over 1.5 million new children received the grant. By

these calculations, a little more than 1.4 million eligible children in 2006 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 jointly 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 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 83.)

¹ Social assistance is made up of non-contributory social grants to adults and children, funded as part of the national social security budget. 'Non-contributory' means that grant recipients do not pay any monetary contributions toward the fund, as is the case with other social security schemes, such as social insurance.

TABLE 5: The number and proportion of eligible children (0 – 13 years) receiving the Child Support Grant in South Africa in June 2005 and July 2006

Province	June 2005		July 2006	
	Children receiving the CSG Number	Take-up rate %	Children receiving the CSG Number	Take-up rate %
Eastern Cape	1,078,442	67	1,413,830	87
Free State	361,318	71	417,076	82
Gauteng	723,432	72	862,346	86
KwaZulu-Natal	1,338,045	65	1,746,944	85
Limpopo	990,194	73	1,200,185	90
Mpumalanga	489,663	72	613,008	77
Northern Cape	101,728	65	121,332	89
North West	465,242	58	604,525	75
Western Cape	365,655	60	431,514	71
South Africa	5,913,719	67	7,410,760	84

Source: Department of Social Development (2005: 2006) *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, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa.

SOURCES

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THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN RECEIVING THE CARE DEPENDENCY GRANT (CDG) IN SOUTH AFRICA

Social assistance is available to children with special care needs in the form of a cash grant called the Care Dependency Grant. This grant is provided to caregivers of children with severe disabilities who require permanent care. The value of the grant was R820 per month from April 2006. Although the grant is targeted at children with severe disabilities, children with chronic illnesses are eligible for the grant once the illness becomes disabling. The grant can assist caregivers to care for children who are very sick with AIDS-related illnesses, for example.

It was not possible to develop a take-up rate of the CDG because there is little data on the number of children living with disability in South Africa, or on children who are severely disabled and in need of

full-time care. In July 2006, 92,853 children were receiving the CDG. This figure is up by 8% from 2005, when 85,698 children were receiving the grant.

The provincial figures also indicate interesting trends in the numbers of children receiving the CDG. The Limpopo province shows a slight increase between 2004 and 2005, and – surprisingly – decreases by more than half in 2006. Equally surprising, the Northern Cape province shows a huge increase between 2005 and 2006, with the 2006 figure being five times more than the previous year. The reasons for these unexpected trends are unclear, but may be influenced by lack of understanding regarding the eligibility criteria. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 84.)

TABLE 6: The number of children receiving the Care Dependency Grant in South Africa between June 2004 and July 2006

Province	June 2004	June 2005	July 2006
Eastern Cape	18,246	19,925	20,367
Free State	3,210	3,401	3,679
Gauteng	10,522	11,468	12,140
KwaZulu-Natal	20,510	20,994	24,098
Limpopo	8,844	9,609	4,532
Mpumalanga	4,188	4,273	2,582
Northern Cape	1,853	2,186	10,553
North West	6,424	6,961	7,791
Western Cape	6,290	6,881	7,111
South Africa	80,087	85,698	92,853

Source: Department of Social Development (2004; 2005; 2006) SOCPEN database. Pretoria: Department of Social Development.

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN RECEIVING THE FOSTER CHILD GRANT (FCG) IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Foster Child Grant is available to foster parents who have a child placed in their care by an order of the court. The grant was initially intended as financial support for children removed from their families of origin 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 whose parents have died. The FCG is a cash grant to the value of R590 per child per month as of April 2006.

At the end of July 2006, over 351,000 children from birth to the age of 18 years were receiving a FCG. This is nearly 80,000 more children than in June 2005 – a 29% increase. Take-up of the FCG varies substantially between provinces. The Northern Cape province shows a massive increase between 2005 and 2006 in the number

of children receiving the grant, with the number of recipients in 2006 almost three times more than in 2005. Similarly, 24,069 more children are receiving the grant in KwaZulu-Natal in 2006 than in 2005 – a 42% increase. The Limpopo province is the only province to show a decline of 7,363 in the number of children receiving the FCG between 2005 and 2006.

It is not possible to calculate a take-up rate for the FCG. However, when comparing the 351,702 children receiving the grant with, for example, only the double orphan figures, it is clear that only a small proportion of children who, under current policy would be eligible for the grant on the basis of their orphan status alone, are receiving the FCG. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 84.)

TABLE 7: The number of children receiving the Foster Child Grant in South Africa between June 2004 and July 2006

Province	June 2004	June 2005	July 2006
Eastern Cape	39,772	53,383	68,197
Free State	25,140	33,653	40,712
Gauteng	28,281	34,647	40,576
KwaZulu-Natal	49,462	57,351	81,420
Limpopo	18,718	25,615	18,252
Mpumalanga	7,642	12,662	11,462
Northern Cape	8,693	9,480	36,020
North West	14,154	19,000	27,737
Western Cape	23,903	26,026	27,326
South Africa	215,765	271,817	351,702

Source: Department of Social Development (2004; 2005; 2006) SOCPEN database. Pretoria: Department of Social Development.