We want children to thrive!

Nurturing care helps children to grow, learn and develop the confidence to meet life’s challenges. It unlocks children’s full potential so they can do well at school, follow their dreams, and help build a healthier and happier society.

Yet many families are struggling to survive.

The sustainable Development Goals aim to end poverty, create safer homes and communities and improve services and job opportunities. Find out how we can use these goals to transform services, support families and help children thrive.

Contents
How are children doing in South Africa? ......................... 2
What are the Sustainable Development Goals? .. 3
What do children need to thrive? .. 4
How can we support children and families? .......................... 6

* Key words
Look on the back page to find out what the words in pink mean.
How are children doing in South Africa?

Since 1994, South Africa has made good progress: More children have water and electricity. Fewer children live in poverty, and fewer children die before their fifth birthday. But children still faced many challenges in South Africa. Poverty, hunger and violence continue to limit children’s chances of a better life.

68% of children live in poverty

Child poverty is highest in the Eastern Cape where 80% of children lived below the poverty line in 2015. That is less than R965 per person per month or R32 a day.

GOOD NEWS

- 68% of children have clean water at home
- 77% of children have basic sanitation
- 89% of children have electricity

BAD NEWS

- 27% of young children are stunted
  They don’t get the food they need to grow and learn
- 42% of children experience abuse or neglect
- 78% of grade 4 learners cannot read with comprehension and understanding

Visit www.childrencount.uct.ac.za to find out more about children in South Africa.
What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

In 2015, 193 countries agreed to work together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

These 17 goals promise to end violence, poverty and hunger, improve children’s health and education, and create a more equal world so that no one is left behind.

The SDGs don’t just want to create a better life for children today. They are asking us to think ahead, to use our resources wisely, and to protect the planet for future generations.

These goals are all connected, and different government departments will need to work together to achieve the SDGs.

For example, for good health (goal 3) we also need good food (goal 2), clean water (goal 6), and a safe environment (goal 16).

By working together to achieve the SDGs we can support families and help children thrive.

We want to make a better life for ourselves.

Find out more about the SDGs at: worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org

#PutChildrenFirst
#ProtectOurFuture
#SayNoToViolence
#EndPoverty
What do children need to thrive?

All children need nurturing care. They need good health, good food, a safe environment, opportunities to learn, and caregivers who respond to their needs. Together these 5 ingredients of nurturing care protect children from stress and help them develop their full potential.

1. **Good health**
   Children need a safe, clean and healthy environment and access to health care services.

2. **Good food**
   Children need a healthy diet including vegetables, fruits, grains, meat, eggs and dairy products to grow, learn and stay healthy.

3. **A safe environment**
   Children need to be protected from violence and neglect in their homes, schools and communities.

4. **Opportunities to learn**
   Children learn from the moment they are born. They need caregivers who make learning fun, who encourage them to explore and find out about the world, who read stories to stimulate their imagination, and who show an interest in their school work.

5. **Responsive caregivers**
   Children need parents and caregivers who pay attention to how they are feeling and who respond quickly when they need help. A mother comes when her baby cries. If he’s hungry, she will feed him. If he’s sad, she will comfort him, and if he’s bored she will play with him. Responsive care protects children from harm and helps children learn and build healthy relationships.

Nurturing care helps children grow, learn and develop the confidence to follow their dreams and overcome challenges – from their very first steps to finding a good job and starting a family of their own.
Nurturing care helps us:

- Protect children from stress
- Unlock children’s full potential
- Improve children’s school results
- Increase employment
- Build a stronger economy
- Create a more caring society

What are your dreams for the future?
Children have the right to be protected from violence and abuse. So let’s work together to create safer homes, schools and communities. We need to control access to guns and alcohol, and we need to teach life-skills so that people learn to resolve conflict peacefully. Parents need to know that it is not okay to hit children or make them feel small. Positive discipline is a better way to teach children right from wrong. And when children do get hurt, we need to make sure they get help.

1 Safety

Children have the right to family care. But parents and caregivers also need support from friends and family. They need a safe environment in which to raise their children as well as schools, clinics and child care services.

Parenting programmes help caregivers support children at each stage of their development. Health and social services can help families struggling with depression and domestic violence, and should take action to protect children from harm.

The Child Support Grant helps with the costs of raising a child.
No matter where we come from, we are all special in our own way.

**3 Nutrition**

*Children have the right to basic nutrition and health care services.* Children who get sick often or don’t have enough to eat will struggle to grow and to learn. 1 in 5 children live far from their clinic. Home visits from community health workers can help close the gap and improve children’s health and nutrition by showing families how to feed and care for young children, and when to go to the clinic for help.

We also need to work together to end poverty, increase employment, and make sure all children have access to food, clean water and sanitation.

**4 Reading**

*Children have the right to play and to learn.* Children who cannot read will struggle to learn. So let’s get reading right! We need to make time to read every day – in the classroom and when we get home. And children need books – not just school books, but also story books and picture books that make reading fun.

**5 Inclusion**

*Children have the right to dignity and equality.* Schools and clinics need to be child- and family-friendly. All children should feel welcome and be treated with care, dignity and respect.
What is the South African Child Gauge?

The South African Child Gauge is a book about children in South Africa. In 2017, it looked at what we can do to help children thrive and reach their full potential. Visit www.ci.uct.ac.za or call 021 650 1473 to find out more.

This guide was developed by the Children’s Institute at the University of Cape Town with the help of young reporters from RX Radio – a radio station run by children for children at Red Cross Children’s Hospital with thanks to: Thameenah, Amirah, Jesse, Alex, Zaahra, Umar, Alaweyah, Aziza, Alande, Kauthar and Jayla.

Visit www.rxradio.co.za to find out more.

* Key words

**Caregivers:** anyone who cares for children, such as a parent or family member

**Development:** growth or progress. For example, children develop and learn new skills, or we can grow our country’s economy

**Depression:** to feel sad and without hope

**Domestic violence:** violence in the home between husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends

**Gauge:** to measure things. The South African Child Gauge measures progress for South Africa’s children

**Nurturing:** caring and protecting someone while they are growing up

**Nutrition:** the food children need to grow and stay healthy

**Positive discipline:** rewarding children for good behaviour, instead of punishing them for behaving badly

**Responsive care:** caregivers who listen to children, take them seriously and who offer help when needed

**Rights:** things every child should have or be able to do, e.g. the right to education. These rights are protected by the Constitution, the highest law in the land

**Survive:** to live (and not die)

**Sustainable:** lasts for a long time. For example, if we use water carefully, it won’t run out

**Thrive:** to be healthy and happy, to grow, learn and to develop your full potential

**Transform:** to change