

Broad overview of the *South African Child Gauge 2016*

The *South African Child Gauge*[®] is published annually by the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, to monitor progress towards realising children's rights. This issue focuses on children and social assistance.

PART ONE: Children and Law Reform

Part one outlines recent legislative developments that affect the lives and rights of children. This issue comments on the White Paper on National Health Insurance, which reiterates Government's commitment to universal health coverage; the approval of the National Integrated Policy on Early Childhood Development; critical amendments to the Children's Act; and the Child Care and Protection Policy, currently being developed by the DSD, which will pave the way for the Third Amendment Bill. The section also looks at recent case law promoting children's rights to social assistance, education and participation, and developments in international child law. See pages 10 – 19.

PART TWO: Children and social assistance

Part two presents a collection of nine essays that address key questions on social assistance – including its possible expansion – with the aim of informing and promoting national dialogue around social assistance for the benefit of children. Essays 1 and 2 provide the context to social assistance for children in South Africa. Essays 3 and 4 focus on the evolution and impact of the Child Support Grant, while essay 5 explores and addresses concerns and misconceptions around social grants. Essay 6 looks at the initial and continued challenges in the implementation of the grants. Essay 7 describes the current crisis in the foster care system, and presents a social assistance option that could alleviate the crisis. Essay 8 presents arguments and policy options for expanding social assistance for children. And essay 9 summarises the discussion around the continued role of social assistance for children, and future directions. See pages 20 – 101.

PART THREE: Children Count – The numbers

Part three updates a set of key indicators on children's socio-economic rights and provides commentary on the extent to which these rights have been realised. The indicators are a select subset taken from the website www.childrencount.uct.ac.za. See pages 102 – 135.