

Demography of South Africa's children

Helen Meintjes, Annie Leatt and Lizette Berry (Children's Institute)

The United Nations General Guidelines for Periodic Reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, paragraph 7, says that reports made by States should be accompanied by "detailed statistical information ... Quantitative information should indicate variations between various areas of the country ... and between groups of children ..."

The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004

In 2004, there were just over 18 million children in South Africa. They make up almost half (49%) of the country's population. The most children living in either KwaZulu-Natal (21%) or the Eastern Cape (18%). A further 15% live in Gauteng and 14% in Limpopo. Most children are Black. Only in the Western and Northern Cape provinces are Coloured children in the majority. Girl and boy

populations are almost equal. Of all children, 40% are currently aged between 6 and 12 years old, with one-third (33%) of all children being younger than this. These gender and age patterns apply nationally, as well as provincially. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 67.)

Table 1a: The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004 by province

Province	Number	%
Eastern Cape	3,215,847	18
Free State	1,063,842	6
Gauteng	2,641,736	15
KwaZulu-Natal	3,792,375	21
Limpopo	2,615,606	14
Mpumalanga	1,307,865	7
Northern Cape	337,192	2
North West	1,488,646	8
Western Cape	1,558,708	9
South Africa	18,021,817	100

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, University of Cape Town (UCT).

Table 1b: The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004 by population group

Population group	Number	%
Black	15,070,505	84
Coloured	1,533,497	8
Indian	310,163	2
White	1,098,908	6
Other	6,610	0
Unspecified	2,134	0
South Africa	18,021,817	100

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

Table 1c: The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004 by age group

Age group	Number	%
0 – 5 years	5,949,840	33
6 – 12 years	7,124,436	40
13– 17 years	4,947,541	27
Total	18,021,817	100

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

Table 1d: The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004 by sex

Sex	Number	%
Male	9,495,371	53
Female	8,525,503	47
Unspecified	943	0
Total	18,021,817	100

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

The number and proportion of orphans living in South Africa in 2004

In South Africa in 2004, there were approximately 3.3 million 'orphans' – children who had lost a biological mother, father or both parents. This is equal to 18% of all children in South Africa. In 2004, 827,755 (25%) of all orphans were resident in KwaZulu-Natal; and a further 715,713 (22%) were resident in the Eastern Cape.

The death of one parent can have different implications for children to the death of both parents, as can the death of a mother relative to the death of a father. Research suggests that the absence

of a mother in particular may have greater impact on children than the absence of a father (Case & Ardington 2004). In 2004, 12% of all children had lost a biological father only, whereas 3% of all children had lost only their mother. A further 3% of all children were documented to be 'double orphans', having lost both biological parents. It is important to note that the majority of all orphans in South Africa – 68% – are paternal orphans, having lost a biological father. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 67.)

Table 2: The number and proportion of orphans living in South Africa in 2004

Province	Maternal		Paternal		Double		Total orphans	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	97,878	14	516,778	72	101,057	14	715,713	22
Free State	40,938	20	121,996	59	42,628	21	205,562	6
Gauteng	62,319	17	262,623	71	47,231	13	372,173	11
KwaZulu-Natal	165,125	20	515,584	62	147,046	18	827,755	25
Limpopo	47,016	12	304,330	75	56,042	14	407,388	12
Mpumalanga	45,853	20	145,875	64	37,904	17	229,632	7
Northern Cape	9,556	18	33,595	65	8,593	17	51,744	2
North West	37,588	12	213,956	69	58,281	19	309,825	10
Western Cape	27,473	16	125,171	75	13,902	8	166,546	5
South Africa	533,746	16	2,239,908	68	512,684	16	3,286,338	100

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

The number and proportion of children living in child-headed households in South Africa in 2004

There is much concern that the number of children living in child-headed households will rapidly increase due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and that extended family networks will no longer be able to support orphaned children. While there is little evidence to support this notion, it is nonetheless important to monitor the prevalence and nature of child-headed households (Meintjes & Giese 2004). It seems likely that many child-headed households exist only temporarily (Meintjes & Giese 2004; Hill, Ardington & Hosegood 2005).

According to an analysis of the *General Household Survey 2004*

by Debbie Budlender, there were 106,741 (0.6%) children living in 53,000 (0.4%) child-headed households. The proportion of children living in child-headed households relative to those living in adult-headed households is therefore very small: 99% of children live in households where adults are resident. Almost two-thirds of children living in child-headed households were 13 years and older. More than 60% of all children living in child-headed households in July 2004 were located in Limpopo (38,754) and the Eastern Cape (28,718). (For more details about this indicator refer to page 67.)

Table 3: The number and proportion of children living in child-headed households in South Africa in 2004

Province	Adult-headed household		Child-headed household		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Eastern Cape	3,187,129	99.1	28,718	0.9	3,215,847
Free State	1,060,069	99.6	3,773	0.4	1,063,842
Gauteng	2,639,886	99.9	1,850	0.1	2,641,736
KwaZulu-Natal	3,781,330	99.7	11,044	0.3	3,792,375
Limpopo	2,576,852	98.5	38,754	1.5	2,615,606
Mpumalanga	1,300,668	99.4	7,197	0.6	1,307,865
Northern Cape	337,094	100.0	98	0.0	337,192
North West	1,473,965	99.0	14,681	1.0	1,488,646
Western Cape	1,558,082	100.0	626	0.0	1,558,708
South Africa	17,915,075	99.4	106,741	0.6	18,021,817

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

The number and proportion of children living in income poverty in South Africa in 2004

Children have a right to financial support through social assistance when their families do not have enough money to care for them adequately. Levels of income poverty are important because they tell us how many children may not be able to have their basic needs met; and this indicates how many children are living with severely constrained resources. Income poverty is often closely related to poor health, education, physical environments and personal safety.

Child poverty is very high in South Africa. Two-thirds (11.9 million) of children in South Africa live in households that have R1,200 per month or less. Rates of child poverty differ across the country. Limpopo has the highest rate of child poverty, at 81%. The Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State provinces have higher rates of child poverty than the national average. Nearly all poor children (95%) in South Africa are Black. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 67.)

Table 4: The number and proportion of children living in income poverty in South Africa in 2004

Province	Poor household		Non-poor household		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Eastern Cape	2,533,770	79	682,077	21	3,215,847
Free State	721,868	68	341,974	32	1,063,842
Gauteng	1,170,640	44	1,471,096	56	2,641,736
KwaZulu-Natal	2,623,460	69	1,168,915	31	3,792,375
Limpopo	2,118,486	81	497,120	19	2,615,606
Mpumalanga	910,901	70	396,964	30	1,307,865
Northern Cape	212,735	63	124,457	37	337,192
North West	1,071,098	72	417,548	28	1,488,646
Western Cape	542,192	35	1,016,516	65	1,558,708
South Africa	11,905,150	66	6,116,667	34	18,021,817

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

Sources

Case A & Ardington C (2004) *The impact of parental death on school enrollment and achievement: longitudinal evidence from South Africa*. Cape Town: Centre for Social Science Research Working Paper No. 97, University of Cape Town.

Committee on the Rights of the Child (1996) *General Guidelines for Periodic Reports: 20/11/96. CRC/C/58. Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Geneva: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Hill C, Ardington C & Hosegood V (2005) *Who is looking after children in the era of HIV and AIDS?* Presented at the South African AIDS Conference, Durban, 6 – 8 June 2005 (Poster).

Meintjes H & Giese S (2004) *Spinning the epidemic: the making of mythologies of orphanhood*. Paper presented at the WISER symposium on 'Illness and Death in the time of AIDS', University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 27 – 29 October 2004.

Children's access to social assistance¹

Annie Leatt, Helen Meintjes and Lizette Berry (Children's Institute)

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) *SOCOPEN 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

Budlender D, Rosa S & Hall K (2005) *At all costs? Applying the means test for the Child Support Grant*. Cape Town: Children's Institute and the Centre for Actuarial Research, University of Cape Town.

Samson M, Lee U, Ndllebe A, Mac Quene, K, Van Niekerk I, Gandhi V, Harigaya T & Abrahams C (2004) *The Social and Economic Impact of South Africa's Social Security System*. Cape Town: Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996.

United Nations Children's Fund (1990) *First Call for Children. World Declaration and Plan of Action from the World Summit for Children*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.