

Children's access to housing

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Section 28 (1) (c) of the Constitution of South Africa gives children "the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services, and social services". Article 27 of 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/her development.

The number and proportion of children relative to their area of residence in South Africa in 2004

It is useful to know where children are living because the type of area is closely related to services and facilities available and accessible to them. In addition, the location of children in urban or rural areas directly influences their access to formal housing. More than half of South Africa's children (54%) live in rural areas. Furthermore, 96% of rural children are Black.

There are marked provincial differences in the rural and urban distribution of the population. The Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces are home to about three-quarters (74%) of all rural children in South Africa. Gauteng is almost entirely urban and the Western Cape is 87% urbanised.

Adults living in rural areas often move to urban centres in search of work, while their children remain in rural areas. Babies younger than one year are more likely to be living in urban areas than older children, suggesting that babies born in urban areas initially remain with their mothers. According to an analysis of the *General Household Survey 2004* by Debbie Budlender, after one year of age, the proportion of babies in urban areas drops from 53% to 49%. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 69.)

Table 16: The number and proportion of children relative to their area of residence in South Africa in 2004

Province	Urban		Rural		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Eastern Cape	753,285	23	2,462,562	77	3,215,847
Free State	718,994	68	344,848	32	1,063,842
Gauteng	2,547,854	96	93,882	4	2,641,736
KwaZulu-Natal	1,386,456	37	2,405,919	63	3,792,375
Limpopo	302,005	12	2,313,601	88	2,615,606
Mpumalanga	454,836	35	853,029	65	1,307,865
Northern Cape	254,097	75	83,095	25	337,192
North West	497,297	33	991,349	67	1,488,646
Western Cape	1,348,411	87	210,297	13	1,558,708
South Africa	8,263,235	46	9,758,582	54	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 relative to their type of housing in South Africa in 2004

Children have a right to adequate housing. This means that they should not have to live in informal dwellings. In South Africa, almost 2 million children live in backyard dwellings or shacks in informal settlements. Children in formal areas are likely to have better access to facilities than those in informal settlements, who are also more exposed to hazards such as shack fires and paraffin poisoning.

Housing provides the context for family life. Since migrant labour often leads to children living apart from their parents in rural areas, access to formal housing enables children to live with their parents in urban areas. Nevertheless, the greatest proportions of inadequately

housed children are in the provinces with large metropolitan centres, since it is in these areas that rapid urbanisation leads to the growth of informal settlements.

About a third of all children (32%) living in informal and backyard housing are in the Gauteng province. According to an analysis of the *General Household Survey 2004* by Debbie Budlender, there is great racial inequality in children's housing: 99% of White children live in formal housing, while only 62% of Black children live in formal houses, and 12% are inadequately housed. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 69.)

Table 17: The number and proportion of children relative to their type of housing in South Africa in 2004

Province	Adequate		Inadequate		Traditional dwelling		Other/unspecified		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Eastern Cape	1,065,495	33	194,295	6	1,948,109	61	7,948	0	3,215,847
Free State	772,108	73	197,868	19	91,306	9	2,560	0	1,063,842
Gauteng	1,976,132	75	632,261	24	10,655	0	22,688	1	2,641,736
KwaZulu-Natal	1,970,587	52	353,776	9	1,468,012	39	0	0	3,792,375
Limpopo	2,240,499	86	78,507	3	294,887	11	1,713	0	2,615,606
Mpumalanga	1,056,842	81	145,457	11	103,507	8	2,059	0	1,307,865
Northern Cape	308,951	92	22,167	7	5,422	2	652	0	337,192
North West	1,335,874	90	119,614	8	33,158	2	0	0	1,488,646
Western Cape	1,304,895	84	236,082	15	0	0	17,731	1	1,558,708
South Africa	12,031,383	67	1,980,027	11	3,955,056	22	55,351	0	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 overcrowded dwellings in South Africa in 2004

Over 4.5 million children, or a quarter of all children in South Africa, live in overcrowded households. A dwelling is overcrowded when there is a ratio of more than two people per room (excluding bathrooms but including kitchens and living rooms). Overcrowding is related to a shortage of housing. Although the government has been providing new housing, this is not enough to keep up with the pace of population growth and urbanisation.

Overcrowding is a problem because it can undermine other needs, like privacy. Children in crowded households may struggle to negotiate space for their own activities. Overcrowding also places children at greater risk of sexual abuse, especially where boys and

girls have to share beds, or children have to sleep with adults. Children under the age of six years old are marginally more likely than older children to live in overcrowded households. According to an analysis of the *General Household Survey 2004* by Debbie Budlender, a strong racial bias is also evident: over 90% of all children living in overcrowded households are Black, and less than 1% are White children.

Overcrowding is also a problem when services and other programmes do not take into account the size of the household. Children who live in crowded households not only have less living space, but may also have poorer services. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 69.)

Table 18: The number and proportion of children living in overcrowded dwellings in South Africa in 2004

Province	Overcrowded dwellings		Non-crowded dwellings		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Eastern Cape	983,080	31	2,232,767	69	3,215,847
Free State	316,466	30	747,376	70	1,063,842
Gauteng	623,892	24	2,017,844	76	2,641,736
KwaZulu-Natal	880,827	23	2,911,548	77	3,792,375
Limpopo	494,894	19	2,120,712	81	2,615,606
Mpumalanga	309,242	24	998,623	76	1,307,865
Northern Cape	102,113	30	235,079	70	337,192
North West	409,174	27	1,079,472	73	1,488,646
Western Cape	442,052	28	1,116,656	72	1,558,708
South Africa	4,561,740	25	13,460,077	75	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

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.