

# Children's access to housing

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Section 26 of the Constitution of South Africa provides that "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing", and section 28(1)(c) gives children "the right to ... shelter".

Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her development" and obliges the State "in cases of need" to "provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to ... housing".

## The number and proportion of children living in formal or informal housing or traditional dwellings in South Africa

Access to services is one of the seven elements of 'adequate housing'. Children living in formal areas are more likely than those living in informal or traditional dwellings to have services on site. They are also likely to be closer to facilities like schools, libraries, clinics and hospitals than those living in informal settlements or rural areas. Children living in informal settlements are more exposed to hazards such as shack fires and paraffin poisoning. Children's right to adequate housing means that they should not have to live in informal dwellings.

Just over 2.6 million children in South Africa lived in backyard dwellings or shacks in informal settlements in 2006. While there has been an increase of nearly 300,000 children in informal households since 2002, the proportions show that the distribution of children in formal, informal and traditional dwellings has remained fairly constant over the five-year period. This is surprising, given the delivery of nearly 2.5 million houses since 1994.

It appears that the number of children living in informal housing has increased across most of the provinces between 2002 and

2006. In North West province, a significant increase of over nine percentage points is recorded for children living in informal housing. The greatest proportions of inadequately housed children are in the provinces with large metropolitan centres. The proportion of children in informal dwellings in Gauteng has increased from 22% to 29% and in the Western Cape from 17% to 23%. These apparent increases should be regarded with caution however, because of the wide confidence intervals.\* Limpopo has the lowest proportion of children in informal housing in 2006 – just 4.5%. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal also have relatively small proportions of children in informal housing – about 10% – but also have by far the largest proportion of children living in traditional dwellings (42% and 35% respectively).

According to an analysis of the *General Household Survey 2006*, there is great racial inequality in children's housing: 98% of all white children live in formal housing, while only 63% of all African children live in formal housing, and 16% of African children are inadequately housed.

\* A confidence interval is a statistical range into which the true value is estimated to fall 95% of the time. It is therefore important to refer to when interpreting the data.

TABLE 18a: The number<sup>+</sup> and proportion of children living in formal housing in South Africa in 2002 – 2006

Province	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	1,067,000	38*	1,266,000	44*	1,065,000	33*	1,241,000	40*	1,529,000	48*
Free State	706,000	71*	726,000	74*	772,000	73*	830,000	74*	838,000	75*
Gauteng	2,123,000	77*	2,067,000	74*	1,976,000	75*	1,830,000	69*	1,922,000	71*
KwaZulu-Natal	2,123,000	55*	2,139,000	56	1,971,000	52*	1,906,000	50*	2,085,000	55*
Limpopo	2,046,000	82	2,116,000	84	2,240,000	86	2,208,000	84*	2,295,000	86*
Mpumalanga	1,004,000	77*	1,044,000	79*	1,057,000	81*	1,043,000	77*	1,137,000	81*
Northern Cape	273,000	91*	272,000	91*	309,000	92*	290,000	86*	297,000	86*
North West	1,222,000	85*	1,246,000	86*	1,336,000	90*	1,149,000	79*	1,091,000	76*
Western Cape	1,306,000	82*	1,296,000	82*	1,305,000	84*	1,172,000	75*	1,159,000	74*
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>11,871,000</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>12,173,000</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>12,031,000</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>11,667,000</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>12,352,000</b>	<b>68*</b>

<sup>+</sup> Numbers have been rounded off to the nearest thousand.

\* This proportion should be interpreted with caution, as the confidence interval is relatively wide.

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007) *General Household Survey 2002*; *General Household Survey 2003*; *General Household Survey 2004*; *General Household Survey 2005*; *General Household Survey 2006*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Marera DS, Children's Institute, UCT.

TABLE 18b: The number<sup>+</sup> and proportion of children living in informal housing in South Africa in 2002 – 2006

Province	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	373,000	13*	272,000	9	194,000	6	215,000	7	291,000	9
Free State	185,000	19*	182,000	19*	198,000	19*	211,000	19*	226,000	20*
Gauteng	603,000	22*	681,000	25*	632,000	24*	799,000	30*	780,000	29*
KwaZulu-Natal	506,000	13*	343,000	9	354,000	9	498,000	13*	372,000	10*
Limpopo	69,000	3	80,000	3	79,000	3	136,000	5	118,000	4
Mpumalanga	169,000	13*	147,000	11*	145,000	11*	168,000	12*	140,000	10
Northern Cape	25,000	8*	25,000	8*	22,000	7*	39,000	11*	42,000	12*
North West	163,000	11*	150,000	10*	120,000	8	263,000	18*	296,000	21*
Western Cape	266,000	17*	273,000	17*	236,000	15*	358,000	23*	368,000	23*
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>2,358,000</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2,152,000</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1,980,000</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2,686,000</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2,633,000</b>	<b>14</b>

+ Numbers have been rounded off to the nearest thousand.

\* This proportion should be interpreted with caution, as the confidence interval is relatively wide.

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2003; General Household Survey 2004; General Household Survey 2005; General Household Survey 2006*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Marera DS, Children's Institute, UCT.

TABLE 18c: The number<sup>+</sup> and proportion of children living in traditional housing in South Africa in 2002 – 2006

Province	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	1,393,000	49*	1,343,000	47*	1,948,000	61*	1,672,000	53*	1,345,000	42*
Free State	82,000	8*	66,000	7	91,000	9*	69,000	6	49,000	4
Gauteng	3,000	0	1,000	0	11,000	0	12,000	0	1,000	0
KwaZulu-Natal	1,191,000	31*	1,345,000	35*	1,468,000	39*	1,433,000	37*	1,309,000	35*
Limpopo	383,000	15	336,000	13	295,000	11	268,000	10	244,000	9
Mpumalanga	132,000	10*	125,000	9*	104,000	8*	137,000	10*	118,000	8*
Northern Cape	3,000	1	3,000	1	5,000	2	5,000	1	5,000	1
North West	36,000	2	56,000	4	33,000	2	47,000	3	44,000	3
Western Cape	4,000	0	1,000	0	0	0	1,000	0	0	0
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>3,226,000</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3,274,000</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3,955,000</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3,645,000</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3,156,000</b>	<b>17*</b>

+ Numbers have been rounded off to the nearest thousand.

\* This proportion should be interpreted with caution, as the confidence interval is relatively wide.

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2003; General Household Survey 2004; General Household Survey 2005; General Household Survey 2006*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Marera DS, Children's Institute, UCT.

#### TECHNICAL NOTES ON THE INDICATOR

This indicator shows how many children (aged 0 – 17 years) live in formal housing, which is used as a proxy for adequate housing. It also reflects how many children live in inadequate or informal housing – this includes informal dwellings in informal settlements and backyard dwellings. 'Traditional' housing in rural areas is a third category, which is not necessarily adequate, but is not always defined as 'inadequate' in official estimates of the housing need.

South African housing policy has no clear or consistent definition of adequate housing since 'adequate' includes a range of attributes. Some of these are very technical, for instance relating to the quality and size of the dwelling. There are also qualitative descriptors of 'adequate' housing. However, the main attribute used to determine the housing backlog is

the type of dwelling. This indicator provides a fairly crude measurement of adequacy, calculated purely on the basis of housing type.

For the purposes of this indicator, 'formal' housing is made up of the following types: dwelling or brick structure on separate stand, flat or apartment, town/cluster/semi-detached house, unit in retirement village, room or flatlet on a larger property. 'Informal' housing consists of the following housing types: informal dwelling or shack in backyard, informal dwelling or shack in informal settlement, dwelling or house/flat/room in backyard, caravan or tent. (These housing types are listed as options in response to the housing question in the *General Household Survey*.)

For more data, visit [www.childrencount.ci.org.za](http://www.childrencount.ci.org.za)

## The number and proportion of children living in urban or rural areas in South Africa

The most recent data on children's urban/rural status is taken from the *General Household Survey 2004*; thereafter the variable was no longer reported due to complexities in the definition. This is a pity because information on the whereabouts of children helps to throw light on population movement and urbanisation, and can inform spatial targeting.

More than half of South Africa's children (54%) lived in rural areas in 2004 – equivalent to almost 10 million children. Looking back over three years, the figures are fairly consistent. If anything, there was possibly a slight increase in the proportion of children living in rural areas (from 52% in 2002 to 54% in 2004) – but this may not be statistically significant.

There are marked provincial differences in the rural and urban distribution of the population. This is because of the distribution of cities in South Africa, and the creation of 'homelands' under the apartheid government.

The Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces in 2004 were home to about three-quarters (74%) of all rural children in South Africa. The most rural province, proportionately, was Limpopo, where only 12% of children lived in urban areas. In the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, there is more of an urban-rural split. Children living in Gauteng were almost entirely urban-based (96%) and 87% of children in the Western Cape were in urban areas.

Adults living in rural areas often move to urban centres in search of work, while their children remain in rural areas to be cared for by grandparents or other family members. 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. The proportion of babies in urban areas in 2004 dropped from 53% to 49% after one year, and to an average of 44% for five-year-olds.

TABLE 19a: The number<sup>+</sup> and proportion of children living in urban areas in South Africa in 2002 – 2006

Province	2002		2003		2004	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	713,000	25*	700,000	24*	753,000	23*
Free State	692,000	70*	654,000	67*	719,000	68*
Gauteng	2,627,000	96*	2,690,000	97	2,548,000	96
KwaZulu-Natal	1,544,000	40*	1,409,000	37*	1,386,000	37*
Limpopo	245,000	10	275,000	11*	302,000	12*
Mpumalanga	452,000	35*	466,000	35*	455,000	35*
Northern Cape	217,000	72*	224,000	75*	254,000	75*
North West	464,000	32*	476,000	33*	497,000	33*
Western Cape	1,397,000	88*	1,395,000	88*	1,348,000	87*
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>8,351,000</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>8,290,000</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>8,263,000</b>	<b>46</b>

+ Numbers have been rounded off to the nearest thousand.

\* This proportion should be interpreted with caution, as the confidence interval is relatively wide.

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2004; 2005) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2003; General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Marera DS, Children's Institute, UCT.



TABLE 19b: The number<sup>+</sup> and proportion of children living in rural areas in South Africa in 2002 – 2006

Province	2002		2003		2004	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	2,123,000	75*	2,182,000	76*	2,463,000	77*
Free State	298,000	30*	326,000	33*	345,000	32*
Gauteng	114,000	4*	89,000	3	94,000	4
KwaZulu-Natal	2,289,000	60*	2,422,000	63*	2,406,000	63*
Limpopo	2,256,000	90	2,258,000	89*	2,314,000	88*
Mpumalanga	854,000	65*	852,000	65*	853,000	65*
Northern Cape	84,000	28*	75,000	25*	83,000	25*
North West	967,000	68*	977,000	67*	991,000	67*
Western Cape	193,000	12*	191,000	12*	210,000	13*
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>9,179,000</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9,370,000</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>9,759,000</b>	<b>54</b>

<sup>+</sup> Numbers have been rounded off to the nearest thousand.

\* This proportion should be interpreted with caution, as the confidence interval is relatively wide.

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2004; 2005) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2003; General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Marera DS, Children's Institute, UCT.

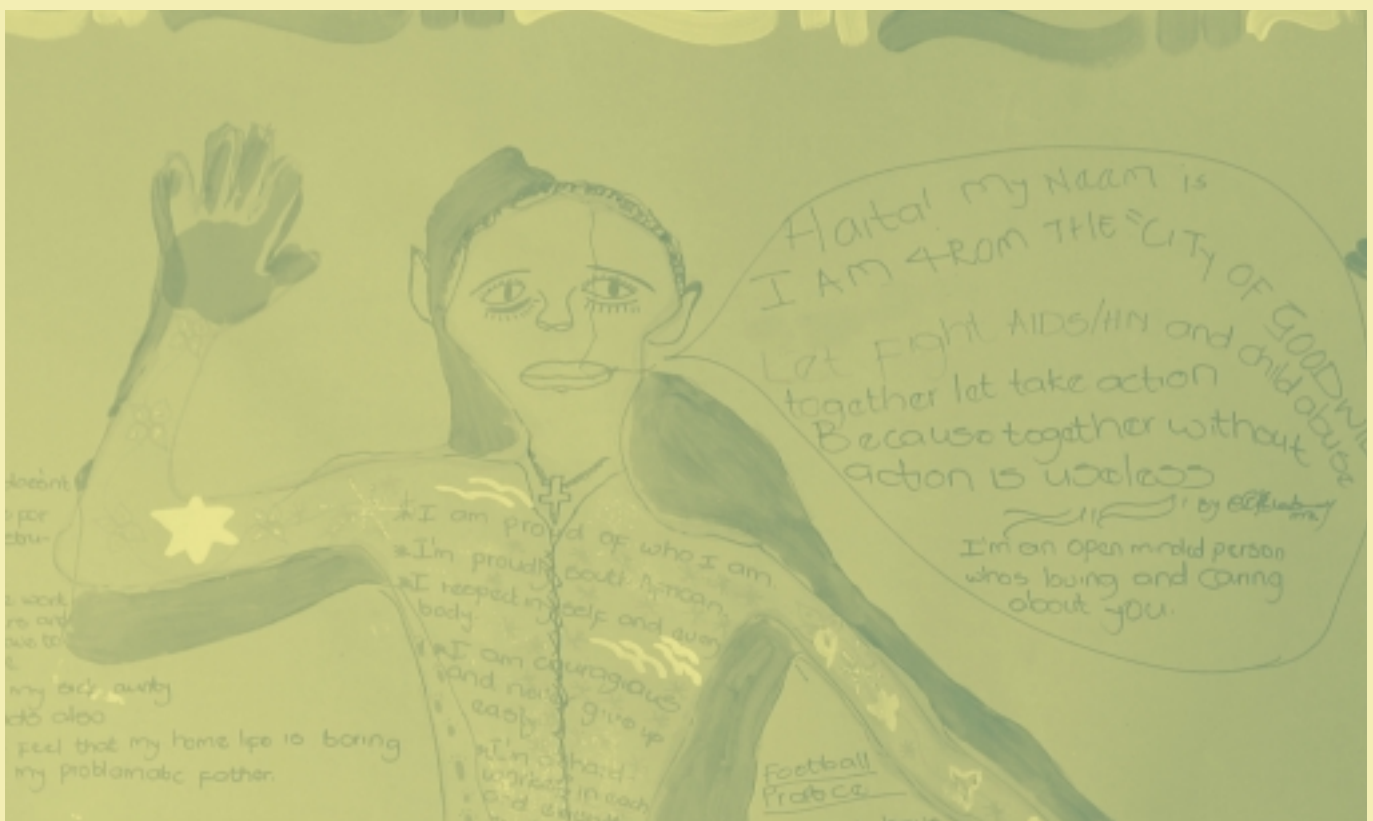
#### TECHNICAL NOTES ON THE INDICATOR

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children (aged 0 – 17 years) living in urban and rural areas. The classification between urban and rural is described by Statistics South Africa as 'rather fluid', and some areas have been reclassified in the past few years.

This is mostly because the 'semi-urban' category was removed in the 2001 Census, resulting in a slightly more inclusive 'urban' classification. This variable is not available in the *General Household Surveys* after 2004.

#### SOURCES FOR CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO HOUSING

- 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.



For more data, visit [www.childrencount.ci.org.za](http://www.childrencount.ci.org.za)

## The number and proportion of children living in overcrowded dwellings in South Africa

For a house to be regarded as habitable, it must provide enough space so that overcrowding does not occur. Nearly 5.2 million children lived in overcrowded households in 2006. This represents 28% of the child population – a significant increase of four percentage points from 2002. This increase is not simply the result of a growing child population. While the number of children in South Africa has grown by just over 700,000 between 2002 and 2006, the number of children in overcrowded households has increased by nearly 940,000. Overcrowding is related to a shortage of housing and also to the size of houses being built. Not enough new houses have been built to keep pace with population growth and urbanisation.

The provinces in which there have been significant increases in overcrowding are Gauteng (up 10 percentage points, from 21% to 31% of children living in overcrowded conditions in 2002 and 2006 respectively), and KwaZulu-Natal (up five percentage points, from 24% to 29% in 2002 and 2006 respectively). Data from the Western Cape suggest a steady increase in overcrowding during the five-year period, with an increase of eight percentage points between 2002 and 2006, from 26% to 34%. The wide confidence intervals\*, however, mean that it cannot be said with certainty that this is a significant increase. In the North West province and Lim-

popo, the data suggest a slight drop in overcrowding rates. This may reflect child urbanisation and account for the increase in overcrowding rates within provinces with large metropolitan areas.

Overcrowding is a problem because it can undermine children's needs and rights, such as the right to privacy, and health: communicable diseases spread more easily in overcrowded conditions. Children in crowded households may struggle to negotiate space for their own activities. They may also have less access to basic services such as water and electricity as services and other programmes do not take into account the size of the household. Children under the age of six years are marginally more likely than older children to live in overcrowded households.

As with other indicators on the quality of living environments, there is a strong racial bias: 30% of African children lived in overcrowded households in 2006, and 89% of all children living in overcrowded households are African. Although the coloured population is far smaller, a similar proportion (29%) of coloured children live in overcrowded conditions. There are significant increases in the rate of overcrowding across all race groups, but the greatest increase between 2002 and 2006 is found in the white population, where the proportion of children living in overcrowded households has increased significantly, from 2% to 7%.

\* A confidence interval is a statistical range into which the true value is estimated to fall 95% of the time. It is therefore important to refer to when interpreting the data.

TABLE 20: The number<sup>†</sup> and proportion of children living in overcrowded dwellings in South Africa in 2002 – 2006

Province	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	863,000	30*	898,000	31*	983,000	31*	1,015,000	32*	1,044,000	33*
Free State	254,000	26*	252,000	26*	316,000	30*	325,000	29*	342,000	31*
Gauteng	566,000	21	631,000	23*	624,000	24*	792,000	30*	847,000	31*
KwaZulu-Natal	914,000	24*	754,000	20	881,000	23*	937,000	24	1,104,000	29
Limpopo	524,000	21	493,000	19*	495,000	19*	442,000	17*	495,000	19*
Mpumalanga	250,000	19*	290,000	22*	309,000	24*	342,000	25*	356,000	25*
North West	394,000	28*	428,000	29*	409,000	27*	389,000	27*	359,000	25*
Northern Cape	75,000	25*	85,000	28*	102,000	30*	110,000	32*	108,000	31*
Western Cape	409,000	26*	378,000	24*	442,000	28*	502,000	32*	532,000	34*
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>4,249,000</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4,209,000</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4,562,000</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4,853,000</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5,186,000</b>	<b>28</b>

<sup>†</sup> Numbers have been rounded off to the nearest thousand.

\* This proportion should be interpreted with caution, as the confidence interval is relatively wide.

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2003; General Household Survey 2004; General Household Survey 2005; General Household Survey 2006*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Marera DS, Children's Institute, UCT.

### TECHNICAL NOTES ON THE INDICATOR

Children (aged 0 – 17 years) are defined as living in overcrowded dwellings when there is a ratio of more than two people per room (excluding bathrooms but including kitchen and living room). There is no standard measure of overcrowding in South Africa, but there are many international definitions. The definition used here is derived from the United Nations Human Settle-

ment Programme (UN-HABITAT) definition, which is a maximum of two people per habitable room. The data is taken from the *General Household Survey*: number of rooms occupied (excluding bathrooms and toilets). The overcrowding ratio is obtained by dividing the total number of household members by the total number of rooms occupied by the household.