

Income and Social Grants - Take-up of the Foster Child Grant

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Definition

This indicator shows the number of children whose caregivers are accessing the Foster Child Grant (FCG) in South Africa, as recorded in the SOCPEN administrative data system of the South African Social Security Agency.

The number of children receiving the Foster Child Grant in South Africa, 2005 – 2009					
Province	Number of child beneficiaries				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Eastern Cape	53,383	68,197	81,404	92,556	86,176
Free State	33,653	40,712	45,122	48,685	49,030
Gauteng	34,647	40,576	51,719	59,405	64,047
KwaZulu-Natal	57,351	81,420	111,582	113,459	137,463
Limpopo	25,615	36,020	44,201	50,709	55,689
Mpumalanga	12,662	18,252	21,813	25,664	29,293
North West	19,000	27,737	31,821	38,351	43,656
Northern Cape	9,480	11,462	14,494	15,376	16,307
Western Cape	26,026	27,326	28,735	28,955	29,818
South Africa	271,817	351,702	430,891	473,160	511,479

Source • South African Social Security Agency (2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009) SOCPEN database. Pretoria: SASSA.

- Notes
1. SOCPEN figures are taken from mid-year (June/July), to coincide with data collection for the annual General Household Survey
 2. For trends from 1998 to 2009 (April figures), see the Social Grants link on the home page

What do the numbers tell us?

The Foster Child Grant is available to foster parents who have a child placed in their care by an order of the court. It is a non-contributory cash grant valued at R710 per child per month in April 2010. The grant was initially intended as financial support for children removed from their families of origin and placed in foster care for protection against situations of abuse or neglect. However, it is increasingly used to provide financial support to the caregivers of children who have lost their biological parents because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic or other causes. The appropriateness and effectiveness of this approach has been questioned.¹

At the end of July 2009, caregivers of over 500,000 children were receiving a FCG, then valued at R680 per month. The number of grants has doubled since 2004, with figures increasing by more than 100% in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West provinces. Take-up of the FCG varies substantially between provinces, and nearly half of all grants go to just two provinces: KwaZulu-Natal (137,463 grants) and Eastern Cape (86,176 grants).

It is not possible to calculate a take-up rate for the FCG as there is no accurate record of how many children are eligible for placement in foster care.

Technical notes

SOCPEN (the administrative database of the Department of Social Development) records the Foster Child Grants paid out per month according to the number of children and their caregivers (beneficiaries). Figures are taken from the daily report on the last working day in July.

Strengths and limitations of the data

There has never been a published review of the SOCPEN database, and the extent of the limitations of validity or reliability of the data has not been quantified. However, it is regularly used by the Department of Social Development and other government bodies to monitor grant take-up.

References and related links

¹ Meintjes H, Budlender D, Giese S & Johnson L (2003) Children 'in need of care' or in need of cash? Questioning social security provisions for orphans in the context of the South African AIDS pandemic. Joint working paper of the Children's Institute and the Centre for Actuarial Research, University of Cape Town. Available: www.ci.org.za/depts/ci/pubs/pdf/hiv/workp/fostercare/foster_care.pdf



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