

Income and Social Grants - Care Dependency Grants

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Date: July 2010

Definition

This indicator shows the number of children who are accessing the Care Dependency Grant (CDG) in South Africa, as recorded in the SOCPEN administrative data system of the South African Social Security Agency.

The number of children receiving the care dependency grant in South Africa, 2005 – 2009

Province	Number of child beneficiaries				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Eastern Cape	19,925	20,367	20,253	19,269	19,452
Free State	3,401	3,679	3,924	4,187	4,325
Gauteng	11,468	12,140	12,667	12,740	13,020
KwaZulu-Natal	20,994	24,098	27,855	30,878	32,798
Limpopo	9,609	10,553	11,396	12,004	12,475
Mpumalanga	4,273	4,532	5,018	5,449	5,758
North West	6,961	7,791	7,795	8,542	9,022
Northern Cape	2,186	2,582	3,403	3,642	3,873
Western Cape	6,881	7,111	7,310	7,503	8,365
South Africa	85,698	92,853	99,621	104,214	109,088

Source • South African Social Security Agency (2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008) SOCPEN database. Pretoria: SASSA.

Notes 1. For trends from 1998 to 2009 (April figures), see the Social Grants link on the home page

What do the numbers tell us?

Social assistance is available in the form of a cash grant to the caregivers of children with special care needs. The Care Dependency Grant is a non-contributory monthly cash transfer to caregivers of children with severe disabilities who require permanent care. It excludes those children who are cared for in state institutions, because the purpose of the grant is to replace lost earnings of the caregiver looking after the child. It also excludes infants under one year because young babies have full-time care needs, whether or not they have disabilities. The child on whose behalf application for a grant is made needs to undergo a

medical examination that forms the basis for eligibility. In addition, the parent must pass an income or means test.

The value of the grant is linked to that of the adult disability grant and old-age pensio, and increased to R1,080 in April 2010. Although the grant is targeted at children with severe disabilities, children with chronic illnesses are eligible for the grant once the illness becomes disabling. The grant can assist caregivers to care for children who are very sick with AIDS-related illnesses, for example.

As children with severe disabilities and chronic illnesses need substantial care and attention, a parent may decide to remain at home to care for their child or to employ a caregiver to care for the child while the parent is at work. In these cases, households lose out on an extra source of income or need to pay for an additional caregiver. Children with health conditions may need to attend hospital often, and may need medication or equipment. These extra costs can put strain on families that are already struggling to make ends meet. Poverty and chronic health conditions are therefore strongly related.¹

It is not possible to calculate a take-up rate for the CDG because there is little data on the number of children living with disability in South Africa, or on children who are severely disabled and in need of permanent care. In July 2009, nearly 110,000 children were receiving the CDG, then valued at R1,010 per month. The provincial distribution of CDGs is fairly consistent with the distribution of children. The provinces with the largest numbers of children, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, also receive the largest share of CDGs. All provincial figures show a fairly consistent and gradual increase in access to the CDG over the five-year period.

The Department of Social Development and its grant implementation agency, SASSA, are currently reviewing the assessment tool for the CDG, to make it more reliable as a targeting tool.²

Technical notes

SOCPEN (the administrative database of the Department of Social Development) records the Care Dependency 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 Berry L (2002) *The Social Assistance Needs of Children with Chronic Health Conditions: The Application and Comparison of Two International Instruments in the South African Context*. Unpublished Masters thesis. University of Cape Town.

² Philpott S, Berry L & Hall K (2009) *Consolidated Report from the Pilot of the Care Dependency Grant Assessment Tool*. Commissioned by the Department of Social Development.

Berry L & Smit A (2008) *Social assistance needs of children with chronic health conditions: a comparative study of international and South African eligibility assessment instruments*. Unpublished manuscript. Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

Community Agency for Social Enquiry (2005) *Investigation into the increase in update of disability and care dependency grants since December 2001*. Commissioned by National Treasury and the Department of Social Development.



This fact sheet has been updated with the financial support of the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD), a partnership programme of the Presidency, Republic of South Africa and the Delegation of the European Union. The content of this document is the sole responsibility of the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the Presidency or the European Union.



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