

# Executive summary

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The advent of democracy in 1994 presented the South African government with the opportunity to change the trajectory of all children. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution (1996) signalled the primacy of the rights of children in Section 28. The South African government ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2000. Children, defined as individuals under the age of 18 years by the Constitution, comprise just over a third of the population.

Children's estimated share of the total population has decreased from 42,5 per cent in 1993 to 36,8 per cent in 2011. The estimated total child population increased from 16,2 million in 1993 to 18,5 million in 2011. While the total population increased by 32,2 per cent over the period, the child population increased by 14,6 per cent.

This chapter examines the progress South African children has made in the democratic period between 1994 and 2011. The demographic shifts over the period and the changes in household characteristics and living arrangements are examined. Child poverty trends are looked at and whichever poverty line one uses, poverty rates have declined over the period 1993 to 2011, however, poverty rates remain high.

An important determining factor in children's well-being is their living environment, the section on access to basic services show a steady increase in access to these services, however, this was off a very low base. Two key policies and programmes, viz. the child support grant and early childhood development is examined in some detail. The CSG has been an unmitigated success, however some improvements can be made. The ECD intervention has increased access for poor children off a low base, but too few poor children benefit and younger children, in particular are being overlooked in service provision, the current model is deeply flawed. If we want to make a significant impact on child poverty, this area must be given serious attention.

The child share of the population by province shows that Limpopo had the highest share of children in its population in 1993 and retained its position in 2011. The Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal follow with 48,7 per cent and 47 percent in 1993 and 40.4 per cent and 39,6 per cent in 2011. In contrast the Gauteng child share of the provincial population was the lowest in 1993 at 32,1 per cent and decreased to 30.5 per cent in 2011. The 2011 population shares suggest that the legacies of apartheid remains in that Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal with large rural populations are the provinces where the former homeland areas were located.

The number of households in South Africa has increased substantially, from around 8.5 million in 1993 to 13.0 million in 2011. The two early surveys are consistent with one another, indicating that children were present in two thirds of households in the period around 1994. More recently, households containing children have dropped to under 60 per cent of all households. Child-only (or 'child-headed') households are not visible on the graph as they have remained well below 1 per cent. Over the period 1993 to 2011 has been a decline in 'nuclear' families and an increase in the complex /extended family type.

The spatial distribution shows that children are disproportionately represented in rural and non-metropolitan areas. A greater proportion of children, 42 per cent are found in households located in 'tribal authority areas', (many former 'Bantustans') while only 29 per cent of adults reside in these areas. This raises some concern as many of these areas have poor municipal infrastructure poor levels of service delivery and limited employment

opportunities. A smaller proportion of children, 41 per cent, live in urban formal households while 53 per cent of adults reside in these areas.

The patterns of parental co-residence for children show that about a third of children live with both their parents in 2011. The proportion of children who live with both parents has decreased from 42 per cent in 1993 to 33 per cent in 2011. In terms of actual population numbers, the estimated number of children who live with both parents decreased from 6.8 million in 1993 to 5.9 million in 2011. Over the same period, the number of children living with neither of their parents increased from 2.8 million (17%) to 4.4 million (24%).

Paternal orphaning is the predominant form of orphaning. However there has been a substantial increase in all orphan categories over this period, even if one discounts the 1993 figures. Between 1995 and 2011 the number of paternal orphans increased by 25 per cent; the number of maternal orphans increased by 160 per cent; and the number of double orphans increased by a massive 290 per cent. The rising number of double orphans is driven largely by increased maternal orphaning rates, which in turn are driven largely by HIV/AIDS.

Even though child poverty rates have fallen dramatically, a large number of children remain living in poverty. In 2011, over eight million children (almost half the child population) live below the Statistics SA lower bound poverty line of R456. Over two million children live on less than \$1.25 (R194) a-day, an “ultra poor” line designed as an absolute minimum in poor countries. A decline in the poverty rate does not necessarily translate into a decrease in the number of poor children, this discrepancy arises because of population growth.

There are substantial differences in poverty rates<sup>1</sup> across the nine provinces, Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal in particular have consistently high rates of poverty across all years. However, it is also in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape that we see real decreases in the child poverty rate between 1993 and 2011.

Children’s living environment is vitally important for their well-being as basic services are essential for hygiene, health and survival. Access to water and sanitation in particular is essential as poor sanitation is associated with diarrhea, cholera and skin diseases amongst others.

Over the period 1993 to 2011 access increased on aggregate from 43 per cent to 64 per cent respectively. However, this leaves more than one third of children without access to piped water on site in 2011. These aggregate figures hide the large discrepancies between provinces. Using the PSLSD 1993 dataset, we see that in 1993 in both Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, 12 per cent and 23 per cent of children respectively had access to piped water services. In contrast children in Gauteng and the Western Cape have access rates of 93 percent and 95 per cent respectively.

In 1993, 17 per cent of children in homeland areas have access to piped water. In 2011, this was still the case for only 30,8 per cent of children living in rural ex-homeland areas. If one were to use the measure of access to water within 200 metres of the dwelling site, then access increases significantly. By definition, the percentage of children with access within 200 meters is higher than that for children with piped water on site.

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<sup>1</sup>There is a wide margin of error in the PSLSD, while we can confidently claim that there has been a real decline in child poverty, we cannot claim this for all provinces when comparing the 1993 and 2011 data.

Sanitation is an area where there have been significant challenges in delivery. For the country as a whole there was a steady increase in access, for children access to this service on-site, remains limited with 33 per cent of children having access in 1993 and 47 per cent in 2008. However, what these figures show is that by the end of the period, fewer than half of all children had this service in their homes.

There are significant provincial disparities, what the average masks is that for children in the Western Cape and Gauteng, largely urban provinces, access to a flush toilet on the dwelling site is relatively high at over 90 per cent. In Limpopo Province only 13 per cent of children have access to this service, for the Eastern Cape, KZN and Mpumalanga access is around 30 per cent. The Free State Province has made significant progress over the period 1993 to 2008 and has increased access from 25 per cent to 65 per cent.

The trend for children in households which use electricity as the main source of energy for cooking purposes. All forms of electricity are included, whether from the mains, a generator or solar energy. Over the period 1993 and 2011 there is a marked improvement in the percentage of households that mainly use electricity for cooking, in four provinces Gauteng, Western Cape, Free State and Northern Cape is at 80 per cent or above. Even for the poorer provinces of Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KZN about half the households use electricity for cooking.

In 1993, 9,6 per cent of children in homeland area lived in households that used electricity as the main source of energy for cooking. In 2011, this was still the case for a much higher 41,2 per cent of children living in rural former homelands.

The CSG at R100 per child per month was introduced in 1998 for children 0-6years of age, this grant replaced the apartheid-era state maintenance grant (SMG) which was accessed mainly by white and coloured children. From an initial low take-up rate there has been rapid expansion from a zero base in 1998 to 8 million children in 2008 increasing to 10.9 million children in 2012. The CSG is arguably the most successful poverty alleviation intervention of the government in the democratic period.

While the rapid take-up of the CSG attests to its successful implementation, there is a significant number of poor children who are eligible but are not receiving the grant, analysis of the NIDS 2008 by McEwan, Kannemeyer and Woolard, (2009) show that there were about 2,8 million children who were eligible, but not in receipt of the grant. Analysis of the NIDS 2010, by Woolard, Buthelezi and Bertscher (2012) show that approximately 3,2 million children who are eligible do not receive any of the child grants. Of these children who are eligible for the CSG, but not in receipt are very young children, infants and those newly-eligible age groups (Woolard et al 2012, DSD, SASSA and UNICEF 2012). There has been surprisingly little improvement in early access to the CSG over the last few years. This is of particular concern as early receipt has positive impacts on children's wellbeing.

Over the period 1994-2011 there has been a significant increase in access to centre-based care, albeit from a low base. It is estimated that over a million children 0-4 years are in an ECD facility or some form of out-of-home care, of these 467,000 receive means-tested subsidies in 18,826 registered centres. While the NIP has proposed different forms of provision, the focus has been on centre-base care. This is largely due to the current service delivery model whereby a non-profit organisation with a constitution must be set up, according to a set of norms and standards. This entity must register with the Department of Social Development. Once the registration has been approved then the entity may apply for the per-learner subsidy. The subsidy is paid per learner per day and is meant to cover nutritional and other basic needs, not salaries. Section 98 of the Children's act makes provision for conditional registration.

The institutional and human resource capacity that is required to set up an ECD centre and the registration requirements and the funding model often inadvertently excludes poor children (Harrison, 2011). Furthermore, the centre-based model is targeted at 3-5 year olds, with less emphasis on appropriate service provision for younger children. Approximately 20 per cent of 0-4 year olds from the poorest households have access to some form of ECD provision, which is of variable quality. This is of considerable concern as supporting early development is an intervention that contributes to poverty alleviation in the short-term and inequality over the longer term (Biersteker Child Gauge, 2012).