

South African Child Gauge[®] 2017

Survive • Thrive • Transform: Invest in children for sustainable development

Key challenges

Poverty, violence, hunger and lack of educational opportunities continue to compromise the development of South Africa's children and that of future generations:

• 29% of children live below the food poverty line.¹



27% of children under-five are stunted² – a sign of chronic malnutrition that compromises children's health, education and employment prospects.

42% of children have experienced some form of maltreatment (whether sexual, physical, emotional or neglect).³

58% of children cannot read fluently and with comprehension at the end of grade 4.4

51% of 21 – 24-year-olds are not in employment, education or training.⁵





All children need nurturing care⁶ – caregivers who are sensitive and responsive to children's needs for health, nutrition, safety, emotional support and stimulation. These five elements are essential across the life course and mutually-reinforcing. Together they protect children from adversity - promoting their optimal development and unlocking the human potential needed to drive national development.

Transform services and systems

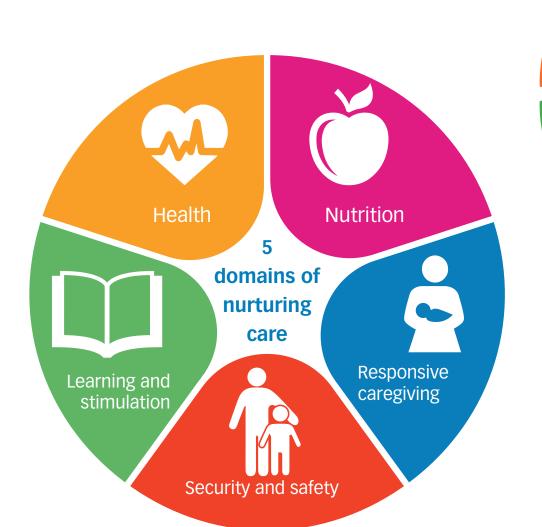
The following elements are essential to ensure that services are responsive to the needs of children and families and provide seamless support across the life course.

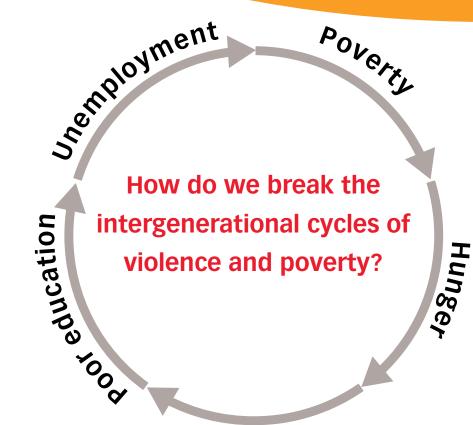
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Violence

South Africa's priorities

To promote children's optimal development, we need to adopt an equitable and inclusive approach to service delivery and invest in their care, safety, health, nutrition and education.

Care

Responsive, nurturing caregivers help protect children from toxic stress, and provide a secure foundation for learning and healthy relationships. Yet parenting often breaks down due to poverty, violence and isolation.⁸ It is therefore vital to:

- provide practical support such as maternity leave, child care and social assistance;
- provide emotional support and intervene early to address depression and domestic violence;
- invest in parenting programmes to help caregivers understand child development and promote positive discipline; and
- support community-based programmes to reach out to vulnerable children and families.



Violence and trauma have a severe, long-lasting impact on children and increase the risk of perpetration or further victimisation. Therefore we need to invest in evidence-based strategies to prevent violence and take these to scale:⁹

- teach alternatives to corporal punishment;
- limit access to alcohol, drugs and firearms;
- challenge social norms that support violence;
- strengthen response and therapeutic services; and

1 2 Statistics South Africa (2016) General Household Survey 2015. Pretoria: Stats SA. Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT. 2 Department of Health, Statistics South Africa (Research Council & ICF (2017) South Africa (Research Report). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Neglect in South Africa (Research Report). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Neglect in South Africa (Research Report). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Neglect in South Africa (Research Report). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Neglect in South Africa (Research Council & ICF (2017) South Africa (Research Report). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Neglect in South Africa (Research Report). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Neglect in South Africa (Research Report). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Neglect in South Africa (Research Report). Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Neglect in South Africa (Research Report). 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Achieve Sustainable Development Goals

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

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The SDGs call for an integrated and inclusive approach to development. The 17 goals are designed to safeguard the planet for future generations and to build a more equitable world. With a focus on ending poverty and reducing violence, hunger, poverty and inequality, the SDGs have the potential to create an environment that enables children to not only survive but thrive and reach their full potential.7

Intersectoral collaboration

Safety

- support parents and caregivers, and provide social grants and cash transfers;
- create safe schools and communities;
- improve access to life-skills programmes.

Health and nutrition

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Inadequate child care and feeding practices, household food insecurity, unhealthy living conditions and poor access to health care services contribute to the high levels of stunting in South Africa which continue to compromise children's health and cognitive development.¹⁰ To improve children's health and nutrition we need to:

- invest in community health workers to extend health care and support to vulnerable households;
- increase the value of the Child Support Grant to meet children's nutritional needs and ensure it reaches all eligible children; and
- establish a broad social movement to address the root causes of malnutrition, promote intersectoral collaboration and advocate for child health equity.

Reading needs to be prioritised to ensure that all children have a solid foundation for lifelong learning. To ensure that children can read fluently and with comprehension by the end of grade 3,

- we need to: invest in teacher training, feedback and support;
- provide graded readers in the language of learning and teaching;
- make time to read every day both in and outside the classroom;
- eliminate large classes; and

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 develop a standardised annual assessment to track progress and diagnose problems.¹¹



Education

Inclusion

Many children in South Africa do not receive the services and support they need to thrive – especially children with disabilities who often experience stigma and exclusion. To ensure more equitable and inclusive services, it is important to:

- disaggregate data so that we are better able to identify and target support for vulnerable children;
- strengthen links between services to ensure an integrated package of services and support across the life course; and
- work closely with children and their caregivers to ensure services are welcoming, caring and inclusive.¹²