

Children & social assistance: Investing in children

Why invest in social grants for children

The right to social assistance

- Parents have the primary responsibility for providing for children's well-being. But where families are unable to meet children's basic needs, the Constitution says they are entitled to receive State support:

"Everyone has the right to have access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance.

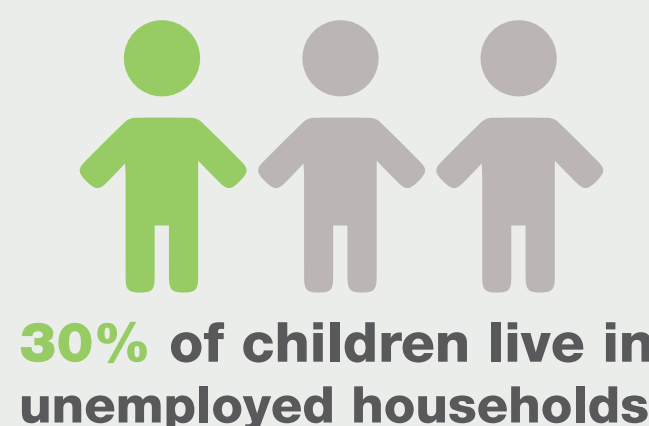
"The State must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of [this right]."

Mitigating child poverty²

- Poverty undermines people's dignity and compromises children's survival, growth, education and employment chances.
- The need for social grants is widespread: 6 out of 10 children live below the upper bound poverty line – in households with a per capita monthly income of less than R923 in 2014 prices.

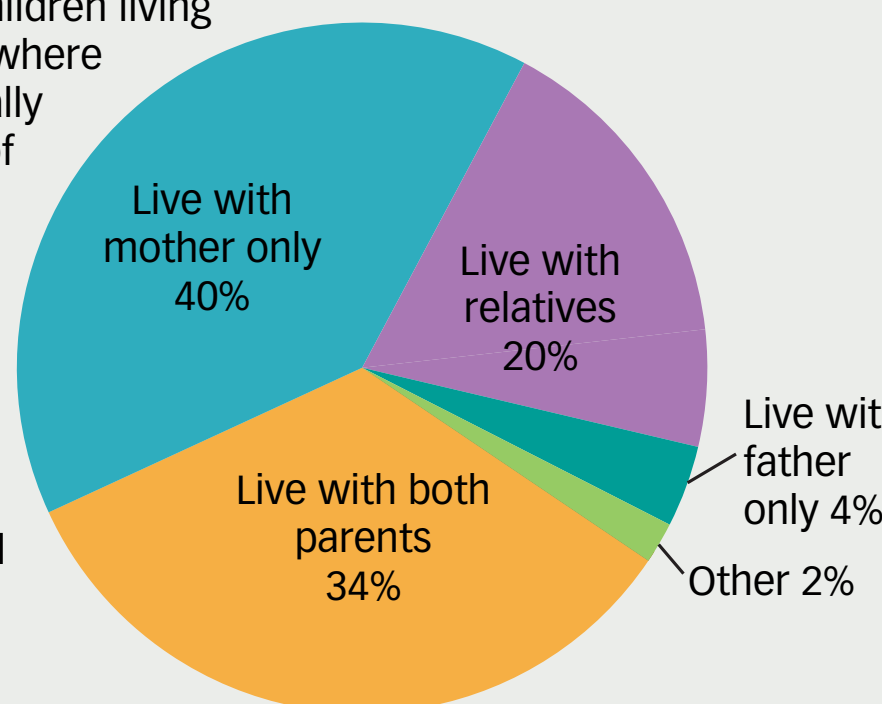


- Child poverty is linked to adult unemployment: nearly one-third of children (5.5 million) live in households with no working adult.
- Unemployment remains stubbornly high. In 2016, official unemployment stands at 27%, and increases to 36% if one includes discouraged work-seekers.³
- Where there is little or no income from work, social grants can help families meet children's basic needs.



Supporting care of children⁴

- Three-quarters of children live with their biological mother, while 38% live with their biological fathers, and only one-third live with both their parents.
- Women often carry a double burden of care and financial support for children. Yet women are less likely to find employment, and when they do find work, they are likely to earn less than men.
- Household forms are often fluid as adults and children move to access education, employment and child care: 20% of children in South Africa live with relatives rather than their parents.
- This rises to 28% of children living in former homelands where families have historically taken on the burden of care for children of migrant workers.
- The Child Support Grant is therefore targeted at the child's primary caregiver rather than only the biological parents, and is designed to "follow the child".⁵



How social grants benefit children

Social grants have proven effective in reducing child poverty and improving children's health, nutrition and education outcomes.⁶ The earlier – and longer – a child receives the Child Support Grant (CSG), the greater the impact.⁷

Nutrition

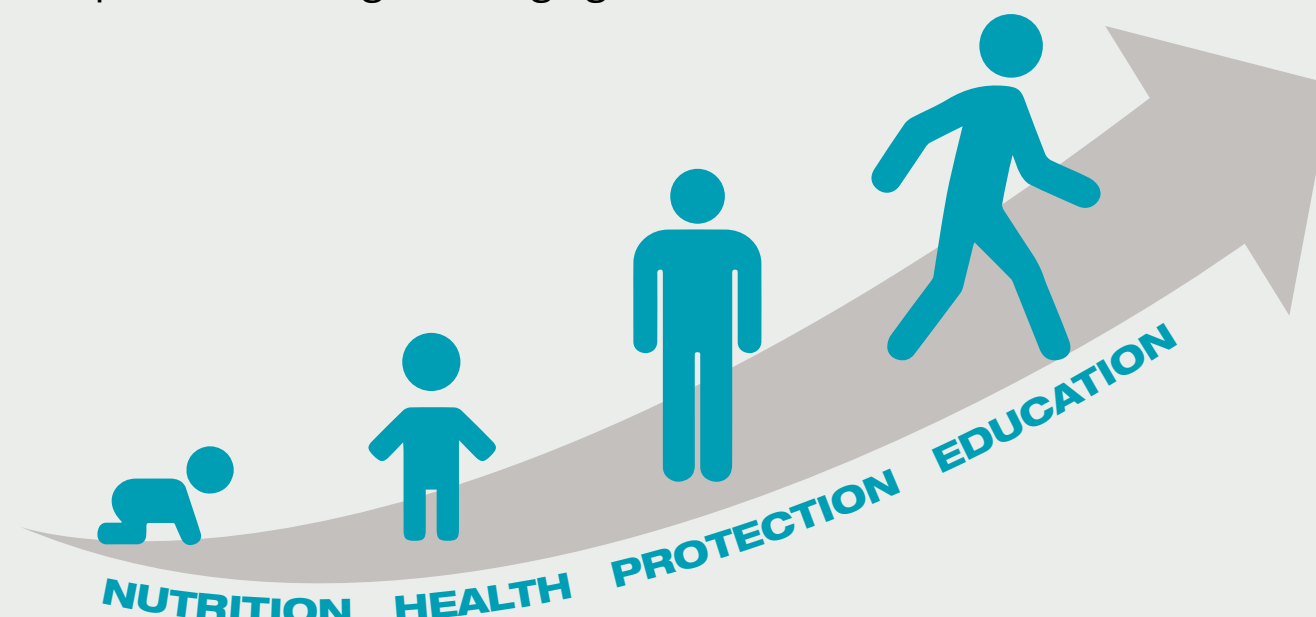
- The CSG enables households to increase expenditure on food and has a positive impact on child hunger and nutrition.⁸

Schooling

- Access to the CSG is associated with improvements in school attendance, while early and continued receipt of the CSG may have a positive effect on grade progression and learning outcomes.⁹

Adolescents

- The CSG has a protective effect in adolescence. Early receipt of the CSG is associated with reduced alcohol and drug use and delayed sexual debut among teenage girls.¹⁰ Household receipt of the CSG helps reduce the incidence of transactional sex and sex with older partners amongst teenage girls.¹¹

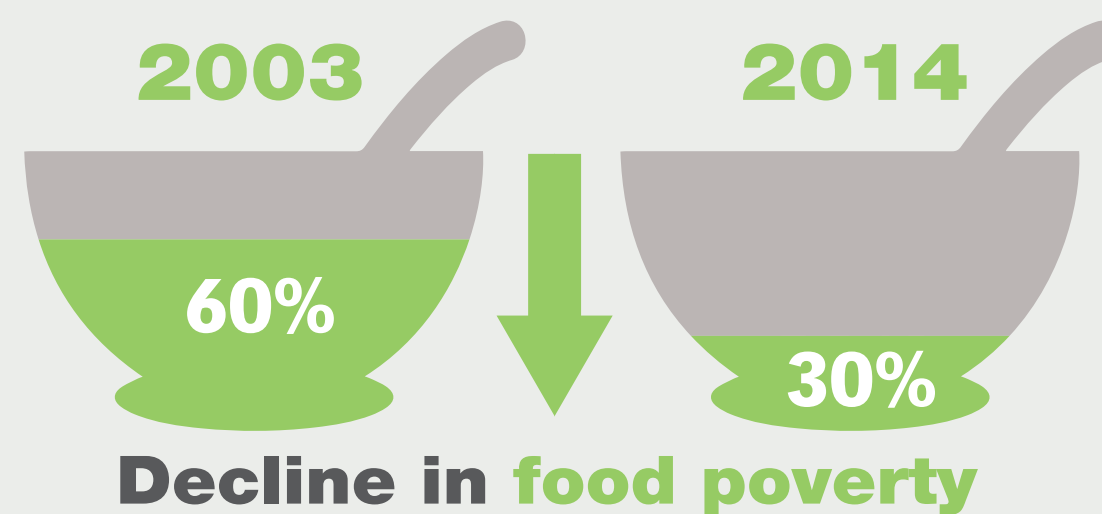


Work-seeking

- The CSG also enables caregivers to seek employment by contributing to travel and child care costs.¹²

Poverty and inequality

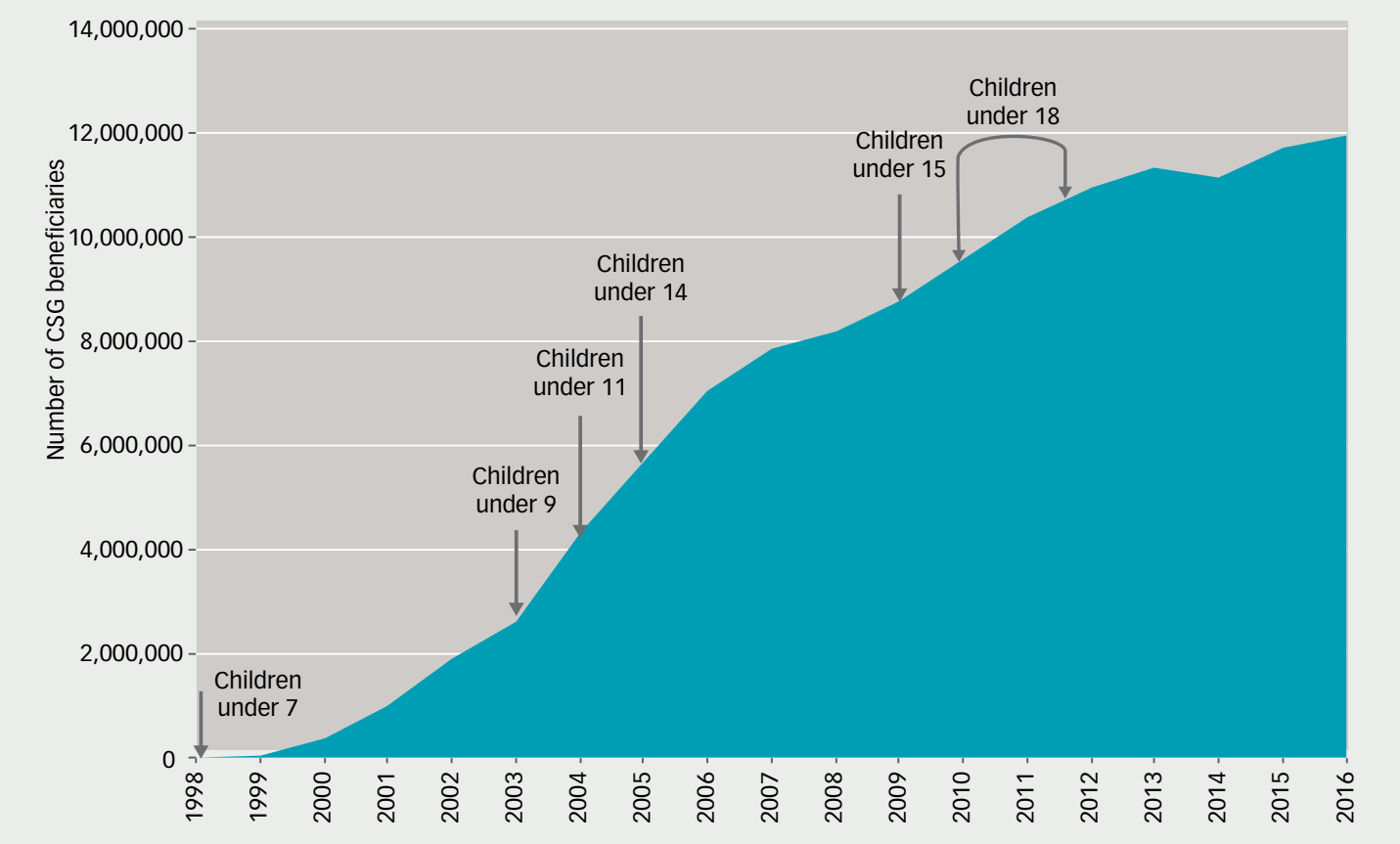
- Social grants are well targeted with 75% of government spending on social assistance going to the poorest 40% of households.¹³
- The CSG has helped halve the proportion of children living below the food poverty line (the most severe measure of poverty).¹⁴



- To support children's optimal development, the CSG should be linked to a broader basket of support services – including access to education, health care and social services.
- It is also essential to address the underlying causes of poverty and inequality, by improving the quality of education, stimulating job creation and promoting inclusive economic growth.

How the Child Support Grant has grown

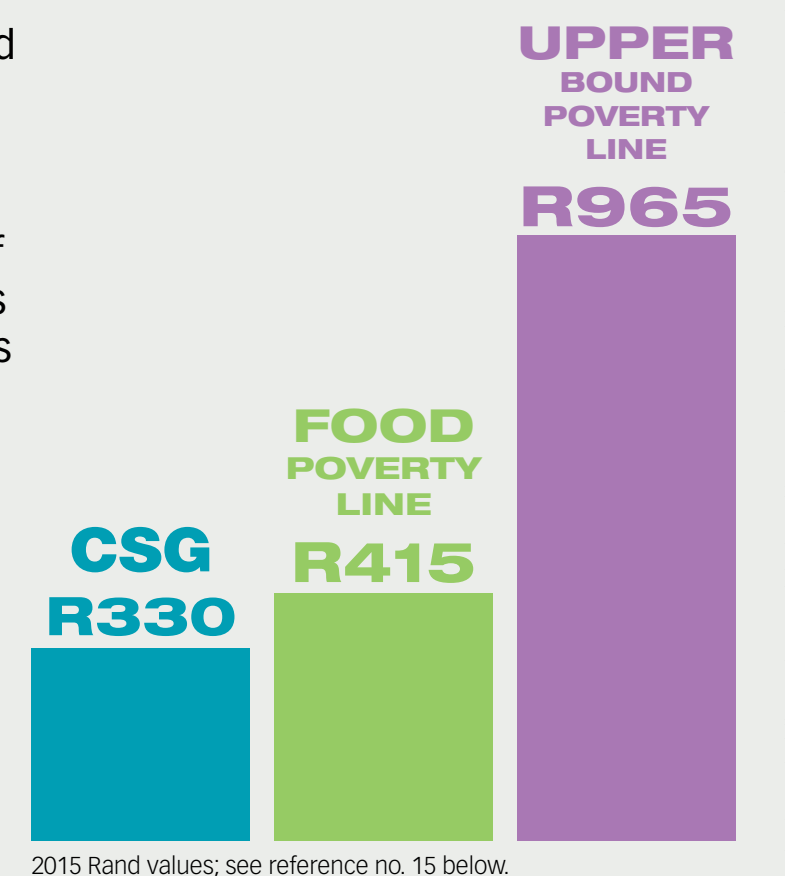
- The CSG was introduced at R100 in 1998 to improve the nutrition of children under seven years old. The grant amount, age and income thresholds have increased over time, so that in 2016 the CSG is valued at R360 and targets all income-eligible children under the age of 18.



Sources: National Treasury (1998 – 2007) National Treasury Intergovernmental Fiscal Review. Pretoria: National Treasury, South African Social Security Agency (2008 – 2015) SOCPEN monthly reports. Pretoria: SASSA. Analysis by Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT; Delany A & Jhoma S (2016) Implementation of social grants: Improving delivery and increasing access. In: Delany A, Jhoma S & Lake L (eds) South African Child Gauge 2016. Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT.

- The CSG has a wide reach and provided essential income support to 12 million children in 2016.

- Yet the small grant amount of R360 per month (R12 a day) is not enough to meet children's basic needs. In 2015 it was below the food poverty line (a measure of basic nutrition) and was less than half the value of the upper bound poverty line (which includes an allocation for basic shelter, clothing, transport and education).¹⁵ This remained true in 2016.



Some challenges remain¹⁶

- Despite its rapid expansion, one in five eligible children still do not benefit from the CSG (1.8 million children). Take-up is particularly low among children under one year.
- The earlier a child receives the CSG the better the outcomes, so children should receive the grant as soon as they are born.
- Key barriers include: difficulty accessing the required documents, confusion around who qualifies for the grant, and an application process that is often time-consuming and costly.
- Beneficiaries are at times treated with disrespect – in particular teen mothers and refugees who report hostility and suspicion from some SASSA officials. Yet caregivers are entitled to receive the CSG from the age of 16, and refugees have been entitled to receive the CSG since 2012.¹⁷
- Accurate information is needed at community level and grant beneficiaries are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect.

Social grants for children

Three social grants are aimed at children. Each serves a different purpose and has different eligibility requirements:

Table 1: Social grants for children

	Child Support Grant	Care Dependency Grant	Foster Child Grant
Purpose	Income support for caregivers of children living in poverty	Income support for caregivers of children with a physical or mental disability who require and receive permanent care or support services (requires a medical assessment)	Support for foster parents who have been legally appointed by the court to care for a child (requires a valid court order)
Grant value (per child per month, Oct 2016)	R360	R1,510	R890
Means test (income threshold, Oct 2016)	Single caregiver: R3,600 per month or R43,200 per year Married caregiver (joint income): R7,200 per month or R86,400 per year	Single caregiver: R15,100 per month or R181,200 per year Married caregiver (joint income): R30,200 per month or R362,400 per year	Not means-tested (income not taken into account)
Age threshold	Below 18 years	Below 18 years	Below 18 years; or up to 21 if child is in education or training
Residency status	South African citizens, permanent residents and refugees	South African citizens, permanent residents and refugees	South African citizens, permanent residents and refugees
Number of beneficiaries	11,972,900	131,040	470,015

Sources: South African Social Security Agency (2016) You and Your Grant 2016/17. Pretoria: SASSA. SASSA (2016) Social grant to increase in October. Media release. Accessed 5 October 2016. <http://www.sassa.gov.za/index.php/newsroom/216-social-grant-to-increase-in-october>. SASSA (2016) SOCPEN database – special request. Pretoria: SASSA.
Note: No. of beneficiaries as of March 2016. Grant amounts and the income thresholds are updated each year; contact SASSA for latest figures.

Know your rights¹⁸

Who can apply for the Child Support Grant?

The person who applies for the grant must:

- Be the primary caregiver of the child (the person responsible for meeting the daily care needs of the child)
- Be over the age of 16
- Be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee
- Be living in South Africa
- Pass the means test and fall below the income threshold (see table 1).

The child must be under the age of 18 and not living in a state-funded institution. A caregiver cannot apply for more than six non-biological children, or receive the grant if he or she is paid to care for the child.

What documents do you need?

- Proof of identity, marital status and care arrangements**
 - Identity document (ID) or refugee permit of caregiver (and spouse, if married)
 - Birth certificate or ID of the child
 - If married: proof of marriage (e.g. marriage certificate or affidavit)
 - If not the child's parent: proof you are the primary caregiver, e.g. an affidavit from a police official or the biological parent; a social worker report or letter from school principal.
- Proof of income**
Provide proof of income for caregiver (and spouse, if married) e.g. bank statements, payslips, pension slips, UIF card, maintenance order or affidavit if you have no income or supporting documents.
- School attendance**
Officials may request proof of school attendance for children between 7 and 18 years old. However, this is not an eligibility requirement. If the child is not attending school or you don't have proof of attendance, officials may not refuse to process the application, or stop the CSG.

d) Alternative forms of identification

If you don't have a birth certificate or ID, Regulation 11(1) allows you to use alternative documentation to apply for the CSG. This should include an affidavit on a form provided by SASSA, and, if available, proof of having applied for a birth certificate or ID from Home Affairs.

The following documents will support your application but are not essential:

- A sworn statement by a reputable person (e.g. a councillor, traditional leader, social worker, priest, school principal) who knows you and the child; and/or other documents such as a baptism certificate, school report or clinic card.

All copies must be certified (signed by a commissioner of oaths).

How will you be paid?

- If your application is approved, you should receive your first payment within 3 months.
- Once your grant is approved, you will receive a SASSA payment card and can use this card to access your money, for example, through SASSA pay points, participating shops or ATMs.
- You can apply for social relief of distress (vouchers or food parcels) while waiting for your grant to be processed.
- If your application is not approved, you should receive a letter giving reasons for the rejection. You have the right to appeal.

Are deductions allowed?

The CSG is designed to help families meet children's basic needs, so no funeral insurance may be deducted from children's grants¹⁹ and no unauthorised deductions are allowed from SASSA-branded bank accounts.²⁰ To report disputes, call the SASSA toll free number 0800 60 10 11 or visit a SASSA office.

For more information

Call the SASSA toll-free helpline: **0800 60 10 11**.
For paralegal support and advice call the Black Sash helpline: 072 66 33 739 or email: help@blacksash.org.za.



References

1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Section 27. 2 Hall K & Sambu W (2016) Income poverty, unemployment and social grants. In: Delany A, Jhoma S & Lake L (2016) South African Child Gauge 2016. Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT. 3 Statistics South Africa (2016) Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 2, Statistical Release P0211. Pretoria: Stats SA. 4 Hall K & Bulender B (2016) Children's contexts: Household living arrangements, poverty and care. In: Delany A, Jhoma S & Lake L (2016) South African Child Gauge 2016. Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT. 5 Lund F (2008) Changing Social Policy: The Child Support Grant in South Africa. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. 6 For more discussion and references, see: Grinspun A (2016) No small change: The multiple impacts of the Child Support Grant on child and adolescent well-being. In: Delany A, Jhoma S & Lake L (eds) South African Child Gauge 2016. Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT. 7 Department of Social

Development, South African Social Security Agency & United Nations Children's Fund (2012) The South African Child Support Grant Impact Assessment: Evidence from a Survey of Children, Adolescents and their Households. Pretoria: UNICEF South Africa. 8 For example, see: Agüero J, Carter M & Woolard I (2007) The Impact of Unconditional Cash Transfers on Nutrition: The South African Child Support Grant. International Poverty Centre Working Paper 39. Brasília: International Poverty Centre, UNDP. 9 See no. 7. 10 See no. 7. 11 Cluver L, Boyes M, Orkin M, Patel M, Mowena T & Sherr L (2013) Child-focused state cash transfers and adolescent risk of HIV infection in South Africa: A propensity-score-matched case-control study. The Lancet Global Health, 2013(1): 362-370. 12 Eyal K & Woolard I (2011) Female Labour Force Participation and South Africa's Child Support Grant. Paper presented at the Centre for the Study of African Economies 25th Anniversary Conference, Oxford, 20 – 22 March 2011. 13 Bhorat H & Cassim A (2014) South Africa's welfare success story II: Poverty reducing social grants. Africa in Focus, Washington DC: Brookings Institution.

14 See no. 2. 15 See no. 4. 16 Delany A & Jhoma S (2016) Implementation of social grants: Improving delivery and increasing access. In: Delany A, Jhoma S & Lake L (eds) South African Child Gauge 2016. Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT. 17 Martin P (2014) Children's rights to social assistance: A review of the Child Support Grant. In: Proudlock P (ed) South Africa's Progress in Realising Children's Rights. Cape Town: Children's Institute, UCT. 18 This section draws on: South African Social Security Agency (2016) You and Your Grant 2016/17. Pretoria: SASSA; Chennells C (2015) Paralegal Manual 2015. Cape Town: Education and Training Unit & the Black Sash. 19 Section 26A of the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004, Amendment: Regulations relating to the application for and payment of social assistance and the requirements of conditions in respect of eligibility for social assistance. Government Gazette, 39978, Notice 10597, Regulation 511 (6 May 2016). 20 See no. 19. (Social Assistance Act Section 21.