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Support Grant for
ALL
our children



PART TWO:

Children and social assistance

Part two presents nine essays that examine the impact of social assistance on children's lives and opportunities for further expansion. The essays outline:

- reasons for investing in social assistance for children
- children's living conditions and care arrangements
- the evolution of the Child Support Grant
- evidence of its positive impacts on child well-being
- common concerns and misconceptions
- implementation challenges
- impacts on the foster care system and a potential solution
- policy options for expanding social assistance for children
- critical considerations and future directions.

Overview

Part two presents nine essays that reflect on the origins, successes, challenges and ongoing development of social grants for children in South Africa. The essays unpack the contribution that the Child Support Grant (CSG), in particular, has made to alleviating child poverty and improving health and well-being indicators for children.

Children and social assistance: An introduction

(pages 24 – 32)

The South African Constitution guarantees the right to access to social assistance for those in need. The first essay introduces South Africa's system of social grants and outlines why social assistance is important in supporting the well-being of children. It briefly describes the evolution of social assistance programmes worldwide and the distinctive make-up of social assistance for children in South Africa. It highlights the need for social assistance to form part of a broader package of complementary measures for children.

Children's contexts:

Household living arrangements, poverty and care

(pages 33 – 38)

The socio-economic contexts in which children live and their families, households and relationships with others impact on their need for, and access to, social assistance. This essay describes where children live, who they live with, and the patterns of child poverty. It outlines how the CSG was designed to take into account the reality of family structures and care arrangements in South Africa, and touches on child and caregiver mobility, which has implications for children's access to social grants.

The evolution of the Child Support Grant

(pages 39 – 43)

Introduced nearly twenty years ago, the CSG is now recognised as one of South Africa's most successful poverty reduction programmes. This essay looks at the political, economic and social factors that shaped the conception and initial implementation of the CSG, and factors that impacted on the subsequent expansion of the grant which now reaches almost 12 million children.

No small change: The multiple impacts of the Child Support Grant on child and adolescent well-being

(pages 44 – 54)

A growing body of research is showing that, globally, social assistance is ensuring positive outcomes for children and families. This essay reports on the impacts of the CSG on young children, school-age children and adolescents, as well as on households and caregivers. The essay also briefly considers how these impacts could be strengthened.

Common concerns and misconceptions:

What does the evidence say?

(pages 55 – 59)

There is considerable evidence of their positive effects, but public perceptions of social grants – and those that receive them – are often negative. This short essay interrogates common concerns, such as whether or not social grants discourage work or encourage teenagers to have children simply to access the grant. It also considers concerns about how recipients use social grants, and the affordability of the social grants system.

Implementation of social grants:

Improving delivery and increasing access

(pages 60 – 67)

This essay highlights the progress made in delivering social grants and expanding access since the first democratic elections in 1994. It goes on to focus on the changes made to the grant's initial design and implementation, and presents current and emerging challenges.

Social assistance for orphaned children living with family

(pages 68 – 74)

This essay considers how the use of the foster care system to meet the often poverty-related needs of orphaned children living with family has precipitated a crisis in the foster care system. The increasing number of children receiving the FCG has placed additional strain on social welfare services, culminating in the lapsing of foster care orders and a High Court order for the Department of Social Development to find a "comprehensive legal solution".

Glossary of key terms	
Conditionality	The use of conditions: Actions that must be met or carried out to receive a benefit such as a social grant.
Poverty line	Poverty lines are generally expressed in monetary terms and are usually set at a minimal desired level of income (or expenditure) to cover the cost of basic needs. There is no single poverty line. For a more detailed description of the poverty lines used in South Africa see box on p. 112.
Social assistance	Non-contributory programmes that provide material support – either cash or in-kind – to those who are unable to support themselves. In South Africa this primarily takes the form of social grants.
Social insurance	Contributory schemes – such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) – providing government assistance to cover unexpected events and employment risks.
Social protection	Public and private measures that alleviate poverty and reduce vulnerability. Definitions vary in scope; in this publication social protection is understood as being broader than social security. See box on p. 25 for a summary of the functions of social protection.
Social protection floor	A minimum level of social protection or standard of living below which no-one should fall. A social floor prescribes the basic income security and essential services that everyone should be able to access.
Social security	<p>The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997, chapter 7) defined social security as covering “a wide variety of public and private measures that provide cash or in-kind benefits or both; first, in the event of an individual’s earning power permanently ceasing, being interrupted, never developing, or being exercised only at unacceptable social cost and such person being unable to avoid poverty, and secondly, in order to maintain children.”</p> <p>It refers to the social security system in South Africa as consisting for four elements: (a) private savings, (b) contributory social insurance, (c) non-contributory social assistance and (d) social relief (short-term measures).</p>

Expanding social assistance for children: Considering policy proposals

(pages 75 – 98)

South Africa’s social assistance system still faces challenges and gaps, and the State has a constitutional obligation to progressively realise the right to social assistance for those in need. In this essay, different authors present five policy proposals for strengthening and expanding social assistance in support of children. The purpose of the essay is to stimulate debate and discussion about future directions. The essay also provides a set of principles as a starting point for evaluating policy options.

Social assistance for children: Looking back, thinking forward

(pages 99 – 101)

The National Development Plan recognises the essential role that social assistance – as part of a social protection floor – plays in tackling poverty and inequality in South Africa. This final essay reflects on the successes of the CSG and advocates for debate and critical engagement around future directions.