Children's access to housing

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Section 26 of the South African Constitution provides that everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing. In addition, Section 28 (1) (c) of the Constitution gives children "the right to … shelter". Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her development".

THE NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF CHILDREN LIVING IN URBAN OR RURAL AREAS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The most recent data on children's urban/rural status is taken from the *General Household Survey 2004,* and there are no comparative figures available. It is useful to know where children are living because the nature of services and facilities, and access to such services and facilities, relates closely with the type of residential area in which children live. In addition, the location of children in urban or rural areas directly influences their access to formal housing. More than half of South Africa's children (54%) live in rural areas. This equates to almost 10 million children.

There are marked provincial differences in the rural and urban distribution of the population. The Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces are home to about three-quarters (74%) of all rural children in South Africa. Children living in Gauteng province are almost entirely urban based and 87% of children in the Western Cape are in urban areas.

Adults living in rural areas often move to urban centres in search of work, while their children remain in rural areas. Babies younger than one year are more likely to be living in urban areas than older children, suggesting that babies born in urban areas initially remain with their mothers. According to an analysis of the *General Household Survey 2004*, the proportion of babies older than one year in urban areas drops from 53% to 49%. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 85.)

TABLE 19: The number and proportion of children living in urban or rural areas in South Africa in 2004*

| Province | 2004 | | | | |
| | Urban | | Rural | | |
	Number	%	Number	%	
Eastern Cape	753,285	23	2,462,562	77	
Free State	718,994	68	344,848	32	
Gauteng	2,547,854	96	93,882	4	
KwaZulu-Natal	1,386,456	37	2,405,919	63	
Limpopo	302,005	12	2,313,601	88	
Mpumalanga	454,835	35	853,029	65	
Northern Cape	254,097	75	83,094	25	
North West	497,296	33	991,349	67	
Western Cape	1,348,411	87	210,297	13	
South Africa	**8,263,234**	**46**	**9,758,581**	**54**	

* Variable unavailable for 2005.

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005) *General Household Survey 2004*. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa. Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

THE NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF CHILDREN LIVING IN FORMAL OR INFORMAL HOUSING OR TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Children's right to adequate housing means that they should not have to live in informal dwellings. Traditional dwellings are not regarded as informal although they may lack the services and infrastructure that accompany formal housing developments. Children who live in formal areas are likely to have better access to facilities than those in informal settlements, where children are also exposed to more hazards such as shack fires and paraffin poisoning.

In South Africa in 2005, nearly 2.7 million children lived in back-yard dwellings or shacks in informal settlements. It appears that the number of children living in informal housing has increased across most of the provinces between 2004 and 2005, particularly in the North West and Western Cape. Conversely, the number of children living in formal housing has decreased in seven of the nine provinces, with the North West showing a decline of 11% over the same time period. However, variance between 2004 and 2005 figures should be regarded with caution.

Housing provides the context for family life. Since migrant labour often leads to children living apart from their parents in rural areas, access to formal housing enables children to live with their parents in urban areas. Nevertheless, the greatest proportions of

inadequately housed children are in the provinces with large metropolitan centres, since it is in these areas that rapid urbanisation leads to the growth of informal settlements. Nearly a third of all children (30%) living in informal and backyard housing are in the Gauteng province.

According to an analysis of the *General Household Survey 2005,* there is great racial inequality in children's housing: 98% of all white children live in formal housing, while only 60% of all African children live in formal housing, and 16% of African children are inadequately housed. The Eastern Cape (53%) and KwaZulu-Natal (37%) provinces have the largest proportions of children living in traditional dwellings in 2005. These children often have less access to basic services than those living in formal dwellings in urban areas. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 85.)

TABLE 20a: The number and proportion of children living in formal housing in South Africa in 2004 and 2005

Province	2004 Formal housing		2005 Formal housing	
	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	1,065,495	33	1,241,426	40
Free State	772,107	73	829,871	74
Gauteng	1,976,132	75	1,829,946	69
KwaZulu-Natal	1,970,586	52	1,905,624	50
Limpopo	2,240,498	86	2,207,529	84
Mpumalanga	1,056,842	81	1,042,565	77
Northern Cape	308,952	92	289,588	86
North West	1,335,873	90	1,148,504	79
Western Cape	1,304,895	84	1,171,553	75
South Africa	**12,031,381**	**67**	**11,666,607**	**65**

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2005; 2006) *General Household Survey 2004. General Household Survey 2005.* Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa.
Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

Table 20b: The number and proportion of children living in informal housing in South Africa in 2004 and 2005

Province	2004 Informal housing		2005 Informal housing	
	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	194,295	6	214,500	7
Free State	197,868	19	210,601	19
Gauteng	632,261	24	798,857	30
KwaZulu-Natal	353,776	9	498,065	13
Limpopo	78,507	3	136,419	5
Mpumalanga	145,457	11	167,995	12
Northern Cape	22,167	7	38,638	11
North West	119,615	8	263,201	18
Western Cape	236,082	15	357,822	23
South Africa	**1,980,028**	**11**	**2,686,098**	**15**

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2005; 2006) *General Household Survey 2004. General Household Survey 2005.* Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa.
Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

Table 20c: The number and proportion of children living in traditional dwellings in South Africa in 2004 and 2005

Province	2004 Traditional dwelling		2005 Traditional dwelling	
	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	1,948,109	61	1,672,185	53
Free State	91,306	9	68,970	6
Gauteng	10,655	0	12,471	0
KwaZulu-Natal	1,468,012	39	1,432,913	37
Limpopo	294,888	11	267,996	10
Mpumalanga	103,506	8	136,821	10
Northern Cape	5,422	2	5,006	1
North West	33,157	2	46,962	3
Western Cape	0	0	1,392	0
South Africa	**3,955,055**	**22**	**3,644,716**	**20**

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2005; 2006) *General Household Survey 2004. General Household Survey 2005.* Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa.
Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

PART THREE: Children Count – The numbers

THE NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF CHILDREN LIVING IN OVERCROWDED DWELLINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Over 4.8 million children – more than a quarter of all children in South Africa – lived in overcrowded households in 2005. A dwelling is overcrowded when there is a ratio of more than two people per room (excluding bathrooms but including kitchens and living rooms). Overcrowding is related to a shortage of housing. Although the government has been providing new housing, it is not enough to keep up with the pace of population growth and urbanisation.

Overcrowding is a problem because it can undermine other needs, like privacy. Children in crowded households may struggle to negotiate space for their own activities. Overcrowding also places children at greater risk of sexual abuse, especially where boys and girls have to share beds, or children have to sleep with adults. Children under the age of six years are marginally more likely than older children to live in overcrowded households.

Overcrowding is also a problem when services and other pro-grammes do not take into account the size of the household. Children who live in crowded households not only have less living space, but may also have poorer services. (For more details about this indicator refer to page 86.)

Table 21: The number and proportion of children living in overcrowded dwellings in South Africa in 2004 and 2005

| | 2004 | | 2005 | |
| | **Overcrowded dwellings** | | **Overcrowded dwellings** | |
Province	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	983,080	31	1,014,754	32
Free State	316,466	30	324,778	29
Gauteng	623,892	24	792,040	30
KwaZulu-Natal	880,827	23	936,564	24
Limpopo	494,894	19	441,662	17
Mpumalanga	309,242	24	342,272	25
Northern Cape	102,113	30	109,631	32
North West	409,174	27	388,785	27
Western Cape	442,052	28	502,030	32
South Africa	**4,561,740**	**25**	**4,852,515**	**27**

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2005: 2006) *General Household Survey 2004. General Household Survey 2005.* Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa.
Analysis by Debbie Budlender, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

SOURCES

- *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996.*
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 44/25.* Geneva: United Nations.
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