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Now most children get grants

Kwanele Butana

MORE than half of SA's children receive child support grants, up from 70 000 in 1998 to nearly 11 million.

According to the UCT-based Children's Institute, there were more than 18 million children in SA in 2010.

Addressing the Child Support Grant Impact Assessment Report launch in Gugulethu yesterday, Social Development Minister Bathabile Dlamini said: "Guided by the constitutional requirement of progressive realisation of the right to access to social security, the government steadily ensured that all children up to the age of 18 were brought into the social grants system."

This financial year's allocation for social grants is less than 3.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product, and Dlamini said that the child sup-

port grants programme would receive less than 1.5 percent of the GDP. The government is planning to spend about R105 billion this financial year to provide for all its social grants.

The report showed that children who received grants from birth had strong capabilities and grew up with a lower risk of being trapped in poverty.

The study, commissioned by the Department of Social Development, Unicef and SA Social Security Agency, was co-ordinated by the Economic Policy Research Institute.

In order to qualify for child support grants, the applicant must be the primary caregiver of the child or children on whose behalf the application is made. The applicant and spouse must meet the requirements of the means test (wealth test), and one cannot apply for more than six non-biological children.