

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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Child-support grant not an incentive for teenage pregnancy

Far fewer teenagers give birth today than was the case two decades ago. Between 1987 and 1989 there were 124 births per 1 000 teenagers but only 58 in 2008. This is according to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

In 1998 there were 81 births per 1 000 among teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19. In 2008 there were 58. Between 1998 and 2008, births per 1 000 decreased by 28%.

These figures were published by the Institute in its annual *South Africa Survey*.

'The figures show that over time women have given birth less. This can be attributed to increased access to contraceptives,' said Nachi Majoe, a researcher at the Institute.

In 2003 there were nearly 20 000 pupils who fell pregnant. In 2004 the number increased to 37 000 and in 2005 it decreased to 25 000. Between 2003 and 2004 the number of pupils who got pregnant increased by 85%. Between 2004 and 2005 there was a decrease of 32%. Between 2003 and 2005 the number of pupils who got pregnant decreased by 25%.

Majoe said, 'Overall, fewer pupils got pregnant, even though there was a peak in 2004. The decrease in pregnancy is similar to the trends in births and can therefore also be attributed to access to contraceptives as well as to changes in sexual behaviour.'

In 1998 there were 230 000 child-support grant beneficiaries. By 2003 there were 1.9 million beneficiaries and in 2004 the number increased to 2.9 million. In 2005 there were 3 million child-support grant beneficiaries and in 2006 there were 7 million such beneficiaries. In 2008 there were 8 million child-support grant beneficiaries. Between 1998 and 2008 child-support beneficiaries increased by 3 000%.

'The number of child-support grant beneficiaries increased substantially over the years. However, the overall decrease in births per 1 000 teenagers and pupils who fell pregnant shows that there is no direct correlation between the number of teenagers who fell pregnant and the number of grant beneficiaries. This data contradicts the view that the child-support grant is an incentive for teenage pregnancy,' Majoe said.

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