

Press Release



SOUTH AFRICAN
INSTITUTE OF
RACE RELATIONS

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

www.sairr.org.za

For immediate release

18 January 2012

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Children on social grants increase thirteen-fold

The number of children receiving social grants has increased 13 times since 2001, according to the latest *South Africa Survey*, to be published by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg next week.

Overall, social grant beneficiaries have increased by 333% since 2001, from 3 449 537 to 14 932 061, with child support grant beneficiaries rising by 1 200%, from 800 476 in 2001 to 10 387 238 in 2011.

Old-age pension beneficiaries have increased by only 40% in the same period, while war veterans receiving grants have decreased by 85%. This is according to *Estimates on National Expenditure* published by the National Treasury in 2011.

Until 2008 only children up to the age of 13 years qualified to receive the child support grant. In 2009 the age increased to 14. In February 2011 the Government announced the extension of the child support grant to all children up to the age of 18 years.

Some have argued that the child support grant acts as an incentive for teenage pregnancy. According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the number of pregnancies among girls aged 15 to 19 years peaked in 1996, two years before the child support grant was introduced, and has been declining ever since. In addition, only one in five teenage mothers receives the grant.

'Contrary to HSRC research, however, the Limpopo health and social development department published a report in November 2011 showing that pregnancy in schools is increasing. Some 16% of the participants admitted to falling pregnant to obtain access to the child support grant,' Ms Lerato Moloi, a researcher at the Institute, said. Ms Moloi said that more research needs to be conducted to determine the existence and extent of such a link.

more

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Children on the child support grant account for 70% of all people on social welfare and they receive R260 a month. The child support grant accounts for 36% of total grant expenditure. Old-age pension beneficiaries receive R1 140 a month. Therefore, although pensioners account for only 18% of all people on social welfare, the old-age pension accounts for the largest proportion of grant expenditure (39%).

By 2013 the number of child support grant recipients will have increased to 11 303 073, so that another one million children will be supported by the State, said Ms Moloji.

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