

Press Release

For immediate release



SOUTH AFRICAN
INSTITUTE OF
RACE RELATIONS

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

www.sairr.org.za

Date: 11 March 2013

Media Contact: Thuthukani Ndebele Tel: 011-482-7221 E-mail: thuthukani@sairr.org.za

Only a third of children live with both parents

Only 33% of children in South Africa live with both their parents. The rest live with single parents, on their own, with relatives, or in foster care, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Just over 39% of children live with their mothers only and about 4% live with their fathers only.

Skip-generation households accommodate about 8% of children. These are households in which two non-consecutive generations are found, in other words in which children live with their grandparents or great aunts/uncles but without their own parents.

Child-headed households, where the oldest resident is younger than 18 years old, accommodate 0.5% of children.

The remaining 16% of children include those living in care homes and with relatives other than their biological parents, grandparents, or great aunts/uncles.

Thuthukani Ndebele, a researcher at the Institute, said the living arrangements of children can have an impact on their future. Those who live without both parents are often more vulnerable to poverty and unemployment, and may also be exposed to various forms of abuse. In turn, research previously published by the Institute suggests they may be more likely to have behavioural problems or even turn to crime. Children living with both parents are statistically less likely to become teenage parents or drug and alcohol abusers, and perform better at school.

Apart from burdening the elderly, the absence of parents can also contribute to an increasing state welfare bill. For example, foster care grant beneficiaries increased more than tenfold, from just over 53 000 in 2001 to nearly 600 000 in 2011/12. In 2011/12, foster care grants cost the Government R442m, Mr Ndebele said.

ends