



Why accessing the Child Support Grant in the First Thousand Days matters

practical workshop

Sikunye seeks to equip and support churches to care for families in the First Thousand Days (FTD). This reflection is part of a range of Practical Workshops hosted by Sikunye, aimed at equipping churches to become FTD-Friendly.

[Watch the video here](#)

*What is the Child Support Grant?

The Child Support Grant is one form of support that can make a meaningful difference for young children and their families. In South Africa, 49.1% of children aged 0–17 live in poverty, nearly 1 in 2 children. For many of these families, social assistance is an important part of meeting a child's basic needs. The Child Support Grant is one way the South African government supports children living in poverty, helping caregivers meet the costs of raising children when household income is very limited.

*Who is the Child Support Grant for?

The primary caregiver of a child under 18 years old who lives in South Africa, for a family who earn below a specific annual income (see resource links below to find the most up to date information on this amount)

primary caregiver =

the person primarily responsible for the child's day-to-day care like food, shelter, and support for the child.

*Why is the Child Support Grant important?

While the Child Support Grant is not enough to support a family on its own, where families are receiving and using the grant, evidence is showing:



an increase in food security



a decrease in hunger

The grant helps families afford more food and a greater variety of nutritious foods, contributing to better child growth and nutrition.



an increase in school attendance



a decrease of stress in the household

Early access is linked to children being more likely to stay in school later in life.

A reliable monthly grant helps caregivers meet basic needs, reducing financial stress and creating a more stable environment for children.

The Child Support Grant doesn't solve food insecurity, *but it can make a meaningful difference* to families living in poverty.

Early access to the Child Support Grant matters

The earlier families can access support, the more opportunity there is for that support to make a difference during the crucial First Thousand Days. One South African study found that children who started receiving the Child Support Grant earlier had better height-for-age outcomes at around age two, particularly when they began receiving it in the first few months of life.

The Child Support Grant cannot remove poverty or provide everything a child needs. But during these early years, every bit of support matters: helping families provide food, get to the clinic, buy nappies and basic supplies, and respond to their child's needs with a little less financial pressure.

Early access matters because it gives families support when children are growing and developing at their fastest.

How can you support early access?

As FTD-friendly churches, we can support early access to the Child Support Grant by building supportive relationships, listening to families and understanding their needs.

1. Understand the family's needs

If a family is not accessing the grant and may be eligible, find out what is making access difficult. Do they know about the grant and how to apply? Do they have the required documents? Understanding their circumstances helps us offer the right support.

2. Offer practical support

Depending on the family's needs, we can:

- Help caregivers find out where and how to apply.
- Explain what documents they need.
- Assist with the application process or connect them with someone who can.
- Help with transport or accompany them where appropriate and possible.
- Follow up if they encounter barriers.
- Connect them with other forms of support where needed.

3. Empower, rather than create dependence

Our goal is not to do everything for families, but to help remove barriers so caregivers can access available support and make informed decisions for their children. Sometimes this means helping with a practical step, sharing accurate information or connecting a family with someone who can help.

Common concerns and how to respond

Concern	What the research tells us
"The grant encourages people not to work."	The CSG is a small contribution towards the costs of caring for a child, not a replacement for an adult income. Research suggests social grants can also help caregivers meet basic needs and participate in economic activity.
"People have children to get the grant."	Research has not found evidence that the CSG is a significant driver of teenage pregnancy. Young mothers report using the grant largely for the costs of caring for their children.
"People misuse the money on alcohol or luxuries."	Misuse can happen, but it should not be generalised to all recipients. Research shows CSG households tend to spend more of their household income on food and other basic needs.
"The grant creates dependency."	Receiving the CSG does not mean someone is unwilling to work. It is intended to support children in households where income is insufficient to meet their needs.

Resources

**click on the blue name to open a link*

- [SASSA Child Support Grant 2026, Do I qualify?](#) A quick way to check if you or others qualify for the Child Support Grant
- [Child Support Grant SASSA leaflet](#): the official SASSA leaflet with information for required documents and how to apply for the grant



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