

Recorded live births: South Africa, 1998–2010

Metadata

The metadata file contains the following information for each variable:

- **Descriptive name of variables:**
A brief description of the variable name
- **Variable name:**
The name of the variable (provided in brackets) and as heading for the value labels
- **Type and position of the variable:**
The type and position of a variable within a record is recorded in the format *type (@xxx L)*. The *type* specifies if the variable is a numeric or a character (string / alphanumeric) variables). *@xxx* indicates the position (column) at which the variable starts. *L* indicates the length of the field.
- **Note to users:**
The note is provided for each variable to provide additional information for further clarity on questions and definition of concepts.

Other relevant information available on the Statistics South Africa website (www.statssa.gov.za) or from User Information Services:

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2010
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2009
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2008
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2007
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2006
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2005
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2004
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2003
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2002
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2001
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 1998,1999,2000
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 1997
- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 1995

Methodology

1. System design

1.1 Data collection and processing

The registration of births in South Africa is governed by the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1992 (Act No. 51 of 1992), as amended, and is administered by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) using Form DHA-24 (Notice of birth), which recently replaced Form BI-24 that was previously used. Notice of the birth must be given by one of the parents or; if neither parent is available to do so, the person having charge of the child or a person requested by the parents to do so. The person requested to register the birth must have a written mandate from the child's parents which must also include the reasons why neither of the parents is in a position to register the birth. The birth of a child outside the country; where at least one parent is a South African citizen; can be registered at any South African Mission abroad. Documentary proof in the form of a birth certificate of the foreign country must accompany the Notice of Birth.

The Act states that a child must be registered within 30 days of birth. Where the notice of a birth is given after the expiration of 30 days from the date of the birth, the Director-General may demand that reasons for the late notice be furnished and that the fingerprints be taken of the person whose notice of birth is given. Where the notice of a birth is given for a person aged 15 years and older, the birth shall be registered if it complies with the prescribed requirements for a late registration of birth.

Following the registration of a birth, a birth certificate is issued by the DHA. Citizens and permanent residents receive computer-printed abridged birth certificates and non-citizens receive handwritten certificates. The information of South African citizens and permanent residents is captured on the National Population Register (NPR). The following persons and particulars are eligible to be included on the NPR:

- All children born of South African citizens and permanent residents when the notice of the birth is given within one year after the birth of the child.
- All children born of South African citizens and permanent residents when the notice of the birth is given one year after the birth of the child; together with the prescribed requirement for a late registration of birth.
- All South African citizens and permanent residents who, upon attainment of the age of 16, applied for and were granted identification cards (or books).
- All South African citizens and permanent residents who die at any age after birth.
- All South African citizens and permanent residents who depart permanently from South Africa.

Data capturing of information on births is done by DHA officials. The data is captured directly onto the Population Register Database at Nucleus Bureau. These transactions are used to update the database of the NPR and the population register database. As soon as the DHA has captured the data; the data is made available on the mainframe. The data is then downloaded via ftp; or collected from the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) written on a CD by Stats SA.

For the purpose of producing vital statistics, the following system is followed: all the civil transactions carried out at all DHA offices are written onto a cassette every day. At the end of every month, a combined set of cassettes is created containing all the transactions done for the month. These transactions are downloaded and the birth transactions are extracted for processing at Stats SA. The year in which the births are registered is the registration year. Using this information, Stats SA provides a breakdown of the registered births according to the year in which the births occurred.

While birth information sent to Stats SA is the same as that in the population register, there is a difference in the format between the two. On one hand, Stats SA's data are based on births registered during the year (registration-based), while on the other hand, entries in the population register reflect the date of birth.

1.2 Municipal demarcation

The DHA captures information on places based on magisterial districts using the twelfth edition of the Standard Code List of Areas (Central Statistics Services, 1995). Stats SA then recodes the magisterial districts into district councils (DCs), metropolitan areas (metros) and provinces based on the 2011 municipal boundaries. The data sets for 1998 to 2010 have all been recoded according to the 2011 municipal boundaries.

It should be noted that the distribution of births by DCs, metros and provinces are approximate figures; as there was no perfect match of magisterial districts for all DCs, metros and provinces since some magisterial districts are situated in more than one DC, metro or province. Such magisterial districts were allocated to the district council where the majority of the land area falls (see the folder on maps). The only exception was with Nigel in Gauteng province. The majority of the land area of Nigel magisterial district is in Sedibeng district council (which is mainly farm areas and therefore sparsely populated) while the majority of the population lives in Ekurhuleni metropolitan area. As such, Nigel was classified to Ekurhuleni and not Sedibeng.

Magisterial district of birth refers to the district of birth occurrence for births registered before 15 years of age. For those that were registered from 15 years of age, district refers to the district of birth registration. Furthermore, from 2009, the processing of late birth registrations from age 15 were centralised at the DHA head office in Pretoria. As such, the late birth registrations processed in Pretoria from 15 years have a district code of Pretoria; even if they occurred in other areas. There were a few exceptional cases which were registered in Pretoria; but were not captured using the Pretoria code.

2. Coverage

The target population is all births recorded on the NPR between 1998 and 2010 for South African citizens and permanent residents, regardless of which year the birth occurred. All births that occurred in South Africa with parents being non-South African citizens or not permanent residents were excluded.

3. Confidentiality

The information remains confidential to Stats SA. The Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No.6 of 1999) prohibits the disclosure of information regarding individuals to any person concerned or their lawful representative. Therefore, the information published on recorded live births does not include personal information about the child or its parents; and is released in such a way that no individual can be identified.

4. Contents of the CD

The data file provided contains the following 11 variables:

- 1) Year the birth was processed / registered
- 2) Year in which the birth occurred
- 3) Month in which the birth occurred
- 4) Sex of the child
- 5) Age of the father
- 6) Age of the mother
- 7) Status of birth registration
- 8) Code of the magisterial district of birth occurrence
- 9) Name of the magisterial district of birth occurrence
- 10) District municipality of birth occurrence
- 11) Province of birth occurrence

Users are cautioned on the following limitations of the data:

- *Father's age* had a high percentage of cases where information was unspecified or unknown for all the years.
- Data for 1998 and 1999 have incorrect information on *month of birth*, which could not be resolved.

Note:

- **Unknown** : refers to cases where the answer provided is not correct or not possible given the options available.
- **Unspecified**: refers to cases where no response was given.

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Information for each variable

Year the birth was registered (RegistrationYear)

Numeric: (@1 4)

1.	RegistrationYear
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Note to user:

This variable specifies the year in which the birth was registered.

Valid range: 1998–2010

Year of birth occurrence (BirthYear)

Numeric: (@5 4)

2.	BirthYear
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Note to user:

This variable specifies the year in which the birth actually occurred. Not all births are registered within the year in which they occurred. All births registered later than the year of birth are allocated to their year of birth occurrence.

Valid range: 1911–2010

Month of birth occurrence (BirthMonth)

Numeric: (@9 2)

3.	BirthMonth 1 = January 2 = February 3 = March 4 = April 5 = May 6 = June 7 = July 8 = August 9 = September 10 = October 11 = November 12 = December 98 = Unknown 99 = Unspecified
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Note to user:

This variable refers to the month in which the birth occurred. The month of birth for births that were processed in 1998 and 1999 was not recorded correctly and it is recommended that *month of birth* for these years should not be analysed.

Sex of the child (Sex)

Numeric: (@11 1)

4.	Sex 1 = Male 2 = Female
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Note to user:

This variable provides information on the sex of the child.

Age of the father (FatherAge)

Numeric: (@12 3)

5.	FatherAge
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Note to user

This variable provides information on the age of the father. The majority of births do not have information on this variable.

Valid range: 15-99

Unknown: 998

Unspecified: 999

Age of the mother (MotherAge)

Numeric: (@15 3)

6.	MotherAge
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Note to users:

This variable provides information on the age of the mother.

Valid range: 12-54

Unknown: 998

Unspecified: 999

Status of birth registration (RegistrationStatus)

Numeric: (@18 1)

7.	RegistrationStatus
	1 = Current
	2 = Late

Note to user:

This variable provides information on the status of birth registration, i.e, if the birth was registered within the year of birth or later. It is derived from the year of birth registration and the year of birth. Current birth registrations refer to births that were registered within the year of birth; while late birth registrations refer to the births that were registered later than the year of birth.

Place code of the magisterial district (MagisterialDistrictCode)

Character: (@19 7)

8.	MagisterialDistrictCode
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Note to user

This variable refers to the codes of the magisterial districts captured on the National Population Register using the Twelfth Edition of the Standard Code List of Areas.

Valid range:0-99999990

Unspecified:99999999

Name of the magisterial district (MagisterialDistrictName)

Character: (@26 50)

9.	MagisterialDistrictName
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Note to user:

This variable refers to the names of the magisterial district using the Twelfth Edition of the Standard Code List of Areas.

District Municipality of birth occurrence (DistrictMunicipality)

Character: (@76 50)

10.	DistrictMunicipality
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Note to users

This variable provides information on the district municipality where the birth occurred. It is derived from magisterial district codes.

Province of birth occurrence (Province)

Numeric: (@126 2)

11.	Province 1 = Western Cape 2 = Eastern Cape 3 = Northern Cape 4 = Free State 5 = KwaZulu-Natal 6 = North West 7 = Gauteng 8 = Mpumalanga 9 = Limpopo 98 =Unknown 99 =Unspecified
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Note to user

This variable provides information on the province where the birth occurred. It is derived from magisterial district codes.