stats sa

Department:
Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Recorded live births: South Africa, 1998–2024

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 supply 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, 2024

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2023

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2022

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2021

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2020

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2019

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2018

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2017

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2016

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2013, 2014, 2015

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2012

- Statistical releases on Recorded live births, 2011

- 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

Data collection and processing

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 Department of Home Affairs (DHA) using Form DHA-24 (Notice of Birth), to register births for persons aged 30 days and below. Form DHA-24/LRB is used to register births for persons aged 31 days and older. Notice of the birth must be given by one of the parents, or if neither parent is available to do so, the person having legal guardianship of the child. 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. All births registered from 31 days and older must comply with the prescribed requirements for a late registration of birth. The application for this registration should include a clinic (immunisation) card; a letter/note from the hospital where the child was born; a letter from the first school attended by the child; and an affidavit prescribed for the late registration of a birth. No registration of birth shall be done for a person who dies before notice of his/her birth has been given.

Following the registration of a birth, a birth certificate is issued by Department of Home Affairs. Citizens and permanent residents receive computer-printed abridged birth certificates and non-citizens receive hand-written 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 officials at the DHA directly onto the Population Register Database at the Nucleus Bureau. These transactions are used to update the database of the NPR and population register. As soon as the DHA has captured the data, the DHA makes the data available on the mainframe. The data are then downloaded via ftp or collected from the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) written on a CD by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA).

For the purpose of producing vital statistics, the following system is followed: every day all civil transactions carried out at all Department of Home Affairs offices are written onto a cassette. At the end of every month, a combined set of cassettes are created containing all 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 the 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 of format between the two. On the 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.

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 2016 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 Nigel in Gauteng. The majority of the land area of the Nigel Magisterial District is in Sedibeng District Council (which comprises mainly farm areas and is therefore sparsely populated), while the majority of the population lives in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Area. As such, Nigel was classified under Ekurhuleni, 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 onwards, 'district' refers to the district of birth registration. Furthermore, from 2009, the processing of late birth registrations from age 15 was centralised at the DHA head office in Pretoria. As such, late birth registrations processed in Pretoria from 15 years have the Pretoria district code, even if they occurred in other areas. There were a few exceptional cases that were registered in Pretoria but that were not captured using the Pretoria code.

2. Coverage

The target population is all births recorded on the Birth Register for the years 1998 to 2024. All births that occurred in South Africa but where the parents were non-South African citizens or not permanent residents, have been 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 his/her lawful representative. Therefore, the information on recorded live births published 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. PORTABLE DATA FILE CONTENTS

The data file provided contains the following 11 variables:
1) Serial Number
2) The year the birth was processed/registered
3) The year in which the birth occurred
4) The month in which the birth occurred
5) Sex of the child
6) Age of the father
7) Age of the mother
8) Status of birth registration
9) The name of the magisterial sub-district of birth occurrence
10) The district municipality of birth occurrence
11) Province of birth occurrence

The metadata file contains the following information for each variable:

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  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 *(@xxx   L)*, where *@xxx* indicates the position (column) at which the variable starts, and *L* indicates the length of the field.

- **Note to users:**

  The note is provided for each variable to supply additional information for further clarity on questions and definition of concepts.

The location of birth registration offices.

Births that are registered within South Africa are linked to birth registration offices across the country. The registration offices are spread throughout provinces, district municipalities (as proclaimed by the municipal demarcation board) and the magisterial district (as defined by the department of justice and also provided with associated codes).

Stats SA receives a number of variables used to structure the data, among these is a variable called magisterial sub-district also equivalent to births registration offices from DHA, the source is the original *Magisterialdistictname* also defined by DHA. To enable comparison user should note that the magisterial sub-district names changed over the years, for examples;

- Mhlabathini is now called Ulundi in Zululand District
- Messina is now called Musina
- Sekhukhuneland and Sekhukhune refer to one place
- Maluti-Matatiele is a combination of Maluti and Matatiele previously reported separately.

Information for each variable

Serial Number (SerialNo)   Numeric: (@1   12)

1.	*SerialNo*

Note to users

This variable refers to the unique birth record identifier. The sequential serial number is used as a primary key for the recorded life birth within the registration year.

Valid range: 199800000001– 20240863858

The year the birth was processed (RegistrationYear)   *Numeric: (@13   4)*

2.	RegistrationYear

Note to users
This variable refers to the year when the birth was processed.
Valid range: 1998–2024

Year of birth occurrence (BirthYear)   *Numeric: (@17   4)*

3.	BirthYear

Note to users
This variable specifies the year when 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: 1875–2024

Month of birth occurrence (BirthMonth)   *Numeric: (@21   2)*

4.	**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

Note to users
This variable refers to the month in which the birth occurred.

Final code list
1 = January
2 = February
3 = March
4 = April
5 = May
6 = June
7 = July
8 = August
9 = September
10 = October
11 = November
12 = December
99 = Unspecified

Sex of the child (Sex)   *Numeric: (@23   1)*

5.	**Sex** 1 = Male 2 = Female

Note to users
This variable provides information on the sex of the child.

Final code list
     1 = Male
     2 = Female

Age of the father (FatherAge)   *Numeric: (@24   3)*

6.	**FatherAge**

Note to users
This variable provides information on the age of the father. The majority of births do not have information on this variable.
Valid range: 10–140

Final code list
Unknown: 998
Unspecified: 999

Age of the mother (MotherAge)   *Numeric:(@27   3)*

7.	**MotherAge**

Note to users
This variable provides information on the age of the mother.
Valid range: 8–140

Final code list
     Unknown: 998
     Unspecified: 999

Status of birth registration (RegistrationStatus)   *Numeric: (@30   1)*

8.	**RegistrationStatus** 1 = Current 2 = Late

Note to users
This variable provides information on the status of birth registration; that is, 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.

Final code list
     1 = Current
     2 = Late

Magisterial district seat (SeatCode)   *Character: (@31   5)*

9.	SeatCode

Note to users
This variable refers to the magisterial district seat using the 2020 municipal demarcations.

Final code list

(See codelists)

District municipality of birth occurrence (DCCode)   *Character: (@36   4)*

10.	DCCode

Note to users
This variable provides information from the district municipality where the birth occurred.

Final code list

(See codelists)

Province of birth occurrence (Province)   *Numeric: (@40   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 = Foreign

Note to users
This variable provides information from the province where the birth occurred.

Final code list
            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 = Foreign
            99 = Unspecified