

# COVID-19 in children and adolescents in Gauteng

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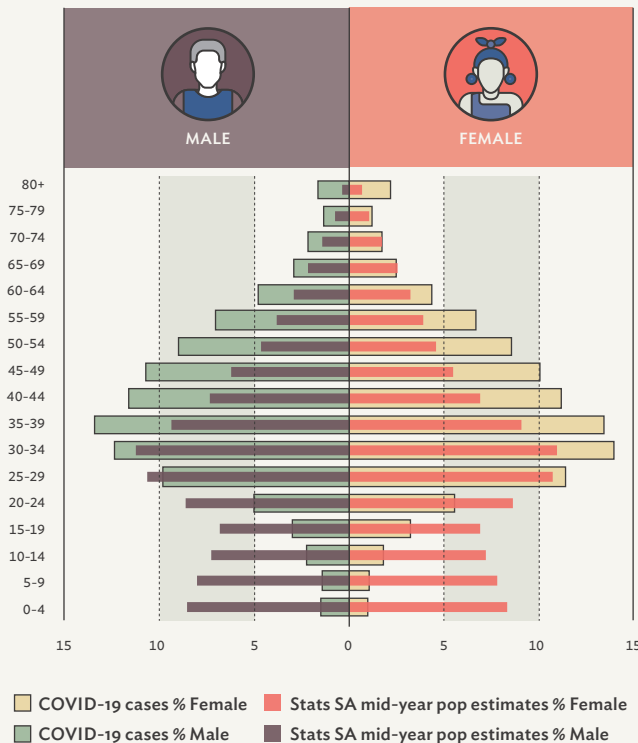
**Source**  
Gauteng Department  
of Health Mpilo database  
(data downloaded  
02 November 2020)

Globally, preliminary data on COVID-19 suggests that children and adolescents (0-19 years) typically comprise a small fraction of recorded cases, and are less likely to get seriously ill or die as a result of COVID-19. Between 06 March to 27 October, children and adolescents constituted 8% (n=16250) of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in Gauteng Province, with 17-19 year-olds contributing the largest share (29%) of cases among the 0-19 year-olds. The total number of COVID-19 cases amongst those aged 0-19 years is proportionately much lower than for the adult population. However, the proportion of child and adolescent cases increased from the end of lockdown level 3, suggesting an increasing risk as restrictions eased.

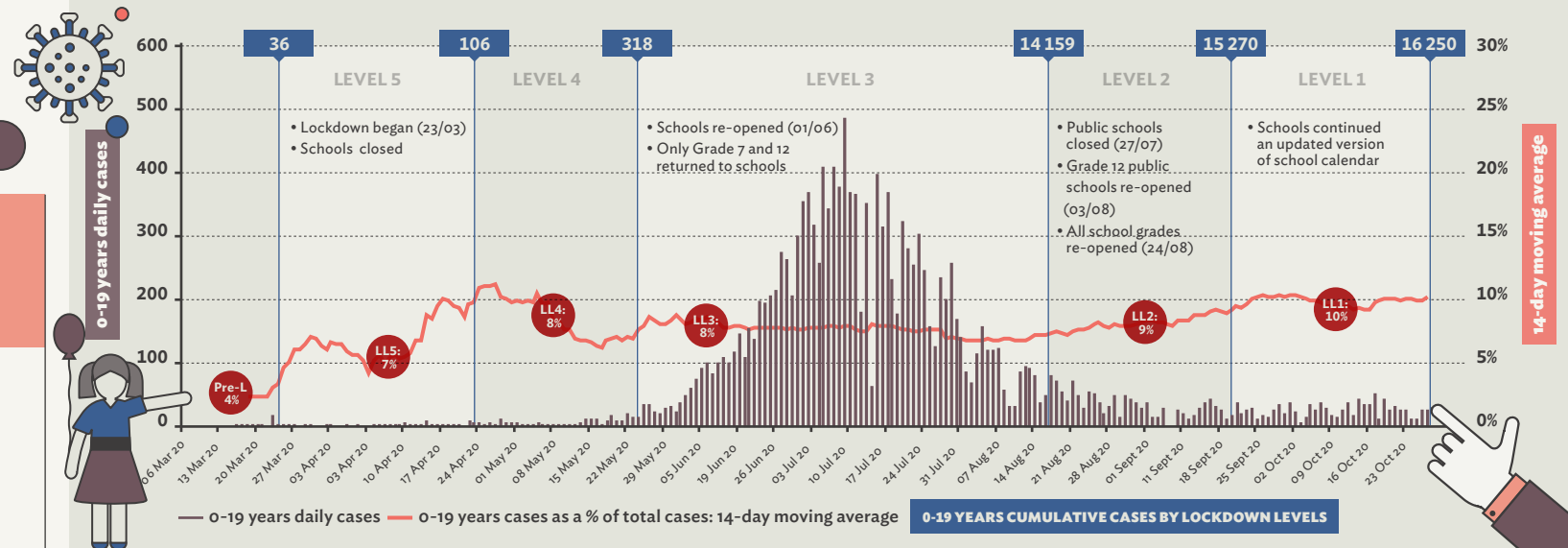
Related GCRO research project:  
Responding to the COVID-19  
pandemic in Gauteng

## GAUTENG AGE PROFILE & COVID-19 CASES BY GENDER

Relative to the share of the population, there is an excess of COVID-19 cases in working age and elderly age brackets, and proportionately fewer cases in younger age groups, especially amongst those aged 0-19 years



## CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN GAUTENG: 06 MARCH TO 27 OCTOBER 2020



### Of the total number of COVID-19 cases among children and adolescents (n= 16 250)



**THE LARGEST PROPORTION WAS MADE UP OF 17-19 YEAR-OLDS**

**29%**

- Reasons could be that the 17-19 year-olds are more likely to present as symptomatic, and therefore more likely to undergo testing; that they are more mobile and socially active than younger children; and that they returned to school earlier than other children
- About 15% of schools with Grade 12 learners reported cases. They were three times more likely to report COVID-19 cases than schools without Grade 12, but with Grade 7 learners, where 5% of schools reported cases (Gauteng Department of Education, 2020)
- Grade 12 learners from low-income households are more likely to live in conditions where home-schooling is difficult, and it is a challenge for them to stay on top of school workloads, including matric exams. They may also struggle with adherence to COVID-19 protocols, due to limited resources and poor infrastructure

### Infants (< 1 year) are more likely than younger children (1-10 years) to test positive for COVID-19

**6%** OF ALL COVID-19 CASES AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WERE IN INFANTS (<1 YEAR)



- Reasons could include immature immune systems, smaller airways and a higher risk of infection from close contact with mothers.
- Male infants account for a higher proportion (55%) of positive COVID-19 tests among infants than females (45%).