THE PROGRESS OF CANADA'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH

2006

Canadian Council on Social Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Canadian children and youth live in a highly complex world. They have many opportunities. And there are struggles. These challenges are reflected in this 7th edition of *The Progress of Canada's Children and Youth*.

Not only is a young person's world complex, it is full of contradictions.

There is increasing evidence of the critical importance of early childhood education and care to a child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Yet the majority of Canada's children do not have easy access to the quality child care that promotes their healthy development.

For youth, options and choices in higher education abound. Yet the rising costs of post-secondary studies have become a huge barrier for many students and their families.

Technology has brought the world to children's fingertips with almost limitless information and communication possibilities. Yet cyberspace also exposes them to bullying, exploitation, and information overload.

More young people than ever have jobs. But few of those jobs provide stability or any opportunities for advancement. And some of the jobs are downright dangerous. Onerous student debt and other financial pressures are becoming commonplace as this young generation sets out on its adult life course.

Like previous generations, most parents today juggle to balance their responsibilities at home and work. But with increasingly unstable jobs, limited child care, and few or no extended family networks to provide support, it is a stressful mix. Many parents struggle to keep their families adequately fed, clothed, and housed. Yet through it all, most succeed in providing the love and care that are basic ingredients of every child's healthy growth and development.

While the majority of Canadian children and youth are doing quite well, the opportunities afforded to certain groups are limited. Children and youth with disabilities, Aboriginal children, poor children, recent immigrants, and visible minority youth face obstacles on many fronts.

In order to determine the well-being of our children and youth, it is not good enough to speculate or extrapolate. We must monitor the relevant domains of their lives – comprehensively and diligently. Otherwise, how will we ever know how they are actually doing?

National monitoring is essential to understanding the well-being of our children and youth. It helps inform policies and supports effective programs. It provides warnings so that we can address problems before they become crises. And monitoring tells us whether we are making any headway with the problems that already exist.

That is the goal that drives the methodology of this *Progress* report.

Inside these pages, researchers at the Canadian Council on Social Development report on indicators of well-being identified by experts when *Progress* first began in 1994. And over the years, the indicators have been re-confirmed – with relevant additions.

This project addresses two overall categories of indicators: environmental (input) and progress (output) indicators. Together, they identify the influences which shape the lives and development of children, youth and their families, and they measure the outcomes of that growth and development. The report is structured in this way because – notwithstanding the importance of genetic makeup – the well-being of children depends heavily upon the environments in which they live. Healthy children and youth most often emerge from healthy families, and healthy families are promoted and supported by healthy communities.

To examine the context of the lives of Canada's children and youth – the inputs – *Progress* looks at the following:

- Their experiences within their families (Family life);
- How well their families are doing financially (Economic security);
- Their exposure to risks from environmental toxins, crime, and injury (Physical safety);
- Services and supports that help sustain their development, such as health services, child care, schools, and recreational facilities (Community resources);
- To what degree their communities value them and engage them in community life (Civic vitality).

To measure indicators of progress – the outputs – the report looks at the following:

- The physical and emotional health of children and youth (Health status);
- How young people relate to their peers, families, and the wider community (Social engagement);
- Their experiences in and the results of formal and informal education (Learning);
- Their experiences at work (Labour force profile of youth).

Taken together, they provide a detailed snapshot of the well-being of children and youth in Canada.

The CCSD and its members and partners across the country are committed to Canada's children. We invite educators, community activists, health care professionals, and social service providers to work with us in advocating for more effective, equitable and inclusive policies and programs. And we offer this report as one tool to help achieve that goal.

The ultimate challenge, of course, is to influence programming and policy at all levels – nationally, in the provinces and territories, and locally – to better support the healthy development of Canada's children and youth.

A tremendous amount of data are generated and synthesized for each *Progress* report. Due to space limitations, only a relatively small quantity can be presented in this printed version. But additional material is available on our website. Visit www.ccsd.ca/pccy/2006/ to access the web-exclusive supplementary data.

PORTRAIT

Canada's children and youth are an increasingly diverse group. In addition to providing an overview of the hard data – who they are, how many, where they live – this section highlights certain aspects of their lives.

Tracking this information is important to the development of policies and programs that respond to their needs.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Number of children & youth
- Aboriginal children & youth
- Young immigrants

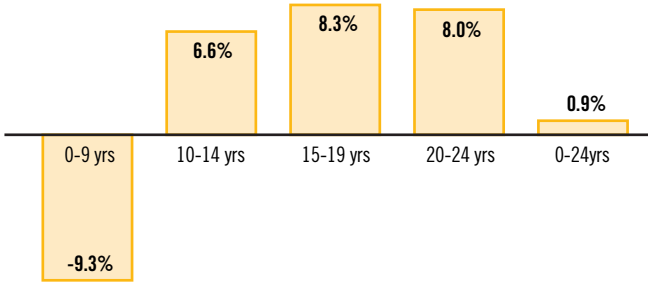
CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CANADA

Young people under age 25 form a substantial part of the Canadian population. In 2004, almost one-third (32%) of all Canadians were children and youth. And over the last 10 years, this population has increased 1%; by 2004, they numbered more than 10 million.

The change was not uniform among all age groups. The number of young children – those under age 10 – declined by more than 9%, from 4 million in 1994 to 3.6 million in 2004. Over the same period, the number of youth aged 15 to 24 grew by more than 8%, to 4.4 million.

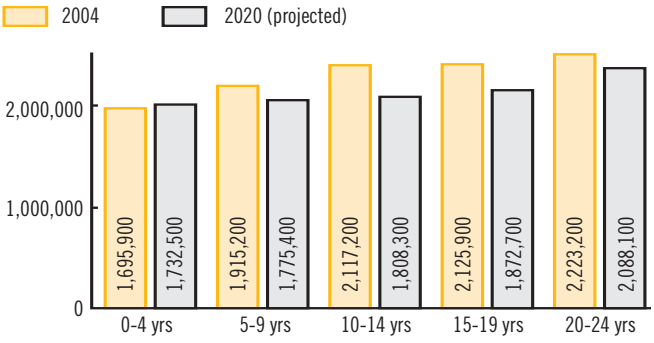
The changes between 1994 and 2004 also varied across the provinces and territories. The largest decline in the number of children under age 10 was in Newfoundland (32%), while Ontario had the smallest decline (3%). Over that period, the number of youth aged 15 to 24 grew by 25% in Alberta, 17% in British Columbia, and 13% in Ontario; in Newfoundland, the number of youth declined by 29%.

PER CENT CHANGE IN NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH, 1994 TO 2004



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Annual Demographic Statistics, *1995 & 2004.*

INTO THE FUTURE: CANADA'S CHILDREN & YOUTH



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories, *Catalogue 91-520-XIB.*

What will the future bring?

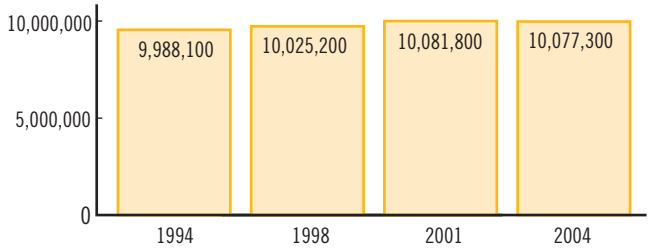
By 2020, the number of children and youth under age 25 is expected to decline to 9.3 million from the current 10 million, and they will account for a smaller share of the population – from 32% in 2004 to 26% by 2020. This decline is expected among all age groups except infants and preschoolers.

Where do they live?

The vast majority of Canadian children live in cities. In 2001, over three-quarters (76%) of all children and youth under age 20 lived in urban areas – up from 74% in 1996. (Urban areas are those with a population of at least 1,000 and no fewer than 400 persons per square kilometre.) In fact, in 2001, almost two-thirds (64%) of all children and youth under 25 lived in Canada's largest cities (or Census Metropolitan Areas) – up from 61% in 1996.

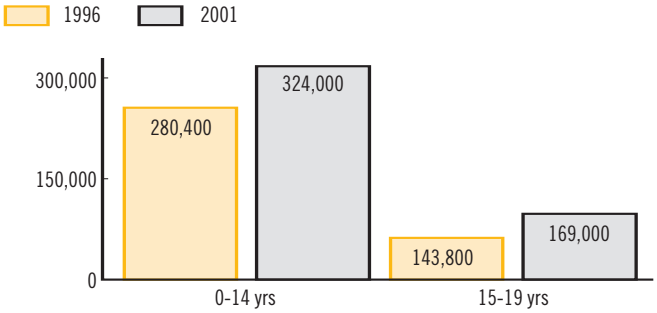
KEY INDICATORS

NUMBER OF YOUNG CANADIANS UNDER 25



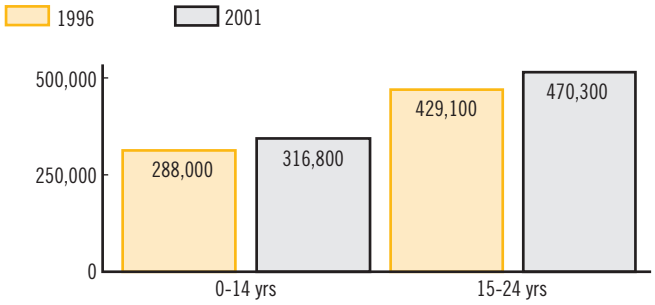
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Annual Demographic Statistics, *1994, 2003, & 2004.*

NUMBER OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Census of the Population, *1996 & 2001.*

NUMBER OF YOUNG IMMIGRANTS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Census of the Population, *1996 & 2001.*

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A growing population

In 2001, there were almost half a million Aboriginal children and youth in Canada. Between 1996 and 2001, their numbers increased by 16%, with the highest growth rate among youth aged 10 to 19, which rose by over 25%. Over the same period, the number of non-Aboriginal children and youth declined by 1.3%.

About half the increase in this population is due to demographic factors, such as a high birth rate. Greater awareness of Aboriginal roots likely accounts for another portion of the increase, as more people identify themselves as Aboriginal. As well, while not all reserves are included in Census counts, a larger number were in 2001 than in the past.

Among all Canadian children and youth, one in 20 reported Aboriginal identity in 2001 – 5.1%, up from 4.2% in 1996. About 65% of Aboriginal children and youth identify themselves as North American Indian, just under 30% as Métis, and about 5% as Inuit. Of the three groups, the largest population gain between 1996 and 2001 occurred among the Métis, where the number of Métis under age 25 grew by 31%.

A young population

Overall, Aboriginal people are a much younger group than non-Aboriginal people. Children and youth under age 25 comprise 51% of Canada's Aboriginal population, whereas they make up only 32% of the non-Aboriginal population. In fact, one-third of the Aboriginal population is under age 15.

Where do Aboriginal children live?

Almost two-thirds of all Aboriginal children and youth – over 318,000 – live in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Another 25% live in Ontario and Québec.

The concentration is highest in the Prairies and in the North. So while Ontario has more Aboriginal children and youth than any other province or territory – with over 86,000 – they comprise just over 2% of the young population in Ontario. This is in striking contrast to their proportions in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Territories.

CHILD & YOUTH POPULATION REPORTING ABORIGINAL IDENTITY, 2001

	% AGED 0-14	% AGED 15-24
NF & LB	5.7	4.9
PEI	1.7	0.9
NS	3.3	2.5
NB	3.8	2.9
QC	1.8	1.3
ON	2.5	2.1
MB	23.1	17.0
SK	24.9	16.6
AB	8.7	6.5
BC	7.4	5.6
YK	32.7	36.1
NWT	63.0	58.2
NV	94.6	90.4
CANADA	5.7	4.2

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Census of the Population, *2001.*

Census data show a slow but steady growth of Aboriginal people residing in cities. In 2001, almost half (49%) of the population who identified themselves as Aboriginal lived in urban areas, up from 47% in 1996.

What will the future bring?

By the year 2017, the number of Aboriginal children and youth under age 25 is projected to grow by almost 20%. The largest increase, however, will be among those aged 15 to 24; that group is expected to grow by over 26%. In addition, the number of Aboriginal adults aged 20 to 29 is projected to rise by over 40% – more than four times the expected growth rate (9%) for the same group in the overall population.

In the three Territories, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, the proportion of Aboriginal children under age 15 is projected to rise. By 2017, 37 of every 100 children in Saskatchewan and 31 of 100 in Manitoba will be Aboriginal (compared to 25 and 23 respectively in 2001).

DIVERSITY

Canadian children and youth are ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse. In the last Census, more than 200 ethnic origins were reported. The changing source countries of immigrants to Canada – from Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Central and South America – have contributed to greater ethnic diversity. Many children now report multiple ethnic ancestries as a result of increasing intermarriage.

In 2001, the most frequent ethnic origin reported for those under age 25 was Canadian – 4.2 million. The next most common origins reported were British Isles (3.2 million), European (2.9 million), and French (1.6 million). Over one million children and youth reported having Asian origins, with the majority being East and Southeast Asian.

Linguistic diversity

Children in Canada speak a variety of languages. In 2001, over 960,000 children and youth under age 20 – or 12.4% of that population – reported having a mother tongue other than English or French. This was an increase from 1996 (10.9%), even though the total population of this age group remained virtually the same over that period.

Anglophones – children and youth who reported English as their mother tongue – represented the majority (at two-thirds) in both 1996 and 2001. Just over one in five children and youth were francophones, citing French as their mother tongue.

Of the almost one million children whose mother tongue was neither English nor French, Chinese was the most common language reported in both years.

LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

	1996	2001
Persons under age 20 whose mother tongue is neither English nor French	**855,565**	**962,130**
PROPORTION WHO SPEAK:	**%**	**%**
Chinese	19.5	19.2
Punjabi	6.8	7.9
Spanish	7.4	6.5
Aboriginal languages	7.4	6.2
Arabic	4.9	5.9
German	5.4	5.0
Polish	5.0	3.7
Vietnamese	3.8	3.3
Urdu	1.6	3.2
Portuguese	4.8	3.1
Persian (Farsi)	2.0	2.8
Tamil	2.2	2.7
Italian	4.4	2.7
Tagalog (Pilipino)	2.5	2.7
Russian	1.3	2.3
Korean	1.6	2.3
Greek	2.0	1.4
Somali	1.4	1.3

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Language Composition of Canada, *2001 Census.*

When looking at the languages children speak at home, the picture is somewhat different. Only 8% of children and youth under 20 most often speak a non-official language at home, lower than the 12.4% who reported having a non-official mother tongue.

Visible minorities

In 2001, 16% of Canadians aged 5 to 24 belonged to visible minority groups – up from 11% in 1991. The majority of children in visible minority groups (71%) live in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. In fact, close to half of all children and youth under age 18 in Toronto and Vancouver are members of visible minority groups – 44% and 43% respectively.

Among all visible minority children and youth under age 25, the three largest groups are South Asian (23%), Chinese (22%), and Black (20%).

By the year 2017, it is projected that about one of every five people in Canada will be a member of a visible minority group. They will tend to be younger, because the proportion of children and youth in the visible minority population will be greater than among the rest of the Canadian population.

IMMIGRATION

In 2001, more than 316,000 (5.5%) Canadian children under age 15 were immigrants, up from 5% in 1996. Over 470,000 (11.8%) youth aged 15 to 24 were immigrants, up from 11.4% in 1996.

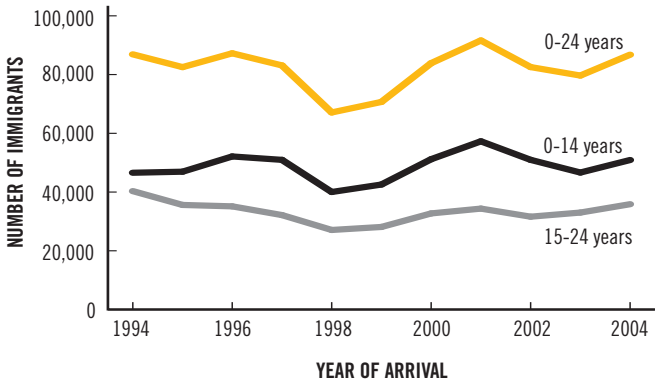
Among immigrants who arrived in Canada in 2004, 37% were under age 25. Of these 87,000 young newcomers, 51,000 were under age 15, and 36,000 were aged 15 to 24. The number of young immigrants was 9% higher than the previous year, but almost identical to the number who arrived in 1994. Fluctuations over the decade ranged from a low of 67,000 in 1998, to a high of 92,000 in 2001.

Today, it is estimated that 20% of Canada's young people under age 18 are immigrants or children of immigrants; by 2016, they will constitute 25% of Canada's children.

Immigrant children and youth come to Canada under a variety of circumstances. In 2003, 66% of those under age 15 were in the economic class, meaning their parents were selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy. About 19% were in the family class of immigrants, meaning they were sponsored by a Canadian citizen or by a relative who was a permanent resident. Slightly more than 5,200 immigrant children under age 15 came as refugees in 2003. They accounted for 14% of all young newcomers that year.

Among immigrants aged 15 to 24, the picture is somewhat different: 51% came in the family class and 31% were in the economic class. Just over 5,400 youth came as refugees, accounting for 16% of all newcomer youth.

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND YOUTH, 1994 TO 2004



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Citizenship and Immigration's Facts and Figures, *2002, 2003 & 2004.*

Countries of origin

According to 2001 Census data, 52% of immigrants under age 25 came to Canada from Asia; of those, 20% were from Eastern Asia and more than 12% from Southern Asia. In addition, 21% of immigrant children and youth came from Europe, and almost half of those were from Eastern Europe. Just over 8% came from Central and South America, 7% came from Africa. Less than 5% came from the United States.

Increasingly, immigrant children and youth speak neither English nor French upon their arrival in Canada. That was true for almost three-quarters (74%) of all immigrant children under age 15 in 2002, up from two-thirds in 1996.

FAMILY LIFE

The structure of the family and the character of relationships within it make up the primary setting for child development.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Family structures
- Parental employment
- Family functioning

CANADIAN FAMILIES CHANGING

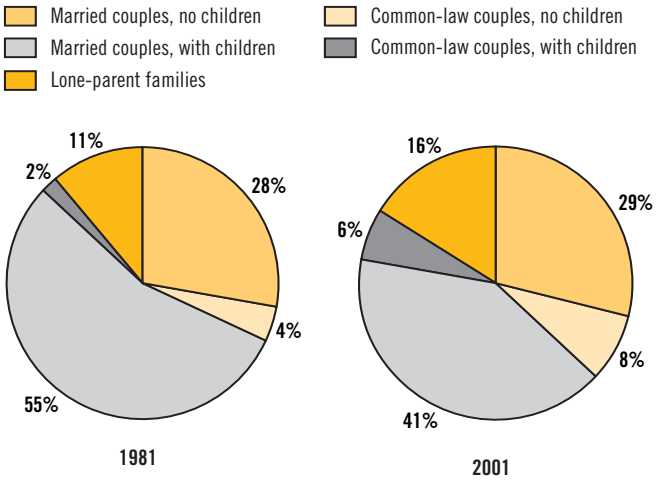
The family provides the most significant influence on a child's development. Families provide physically for children – with food, shelter and clothing. They teach children skills, values and attitudes to help them participate in society, and through nurturing and support, foster their self-esteem. They protect them from harm. By providing these developmental foundations, families enable children and youth to be independent, healthy members of society.

In a rapidly changing world, families are changing, too – in a number of ways.

Couples with children at home now represent a declining proportion of Canadian families. Married couples living with children under 25 still constitute the largest group, but they declined from 55% of families in 1981 to 41% by 2001. Over that same period, the proportion of married or common-law couples without children rose from 32% to 37% of all families. The proportion of lone parents and common-law couples with children also rose.

Various factors have contributed to these trends. Some couples delay having children and others choose not to have any. As well, population aging results in more children having moved out on their own.

THE STRUCTURE OF CANADIAN FAMILIES, 1981 & 2001



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Census, *1981 & 2001.*

Fewer babies

Between 1994 and 2003, the annual number of births in Canada decreased by 14% – from 385,114 to 331,522. This trend was evident across all provinces and territories, with Newfoundland reporting the largest decline (28%), and Nunavut the smallest (0.7%).

Delayed motherhood

Two decades ago, only one-quarter of women giving birth were over age 30; by 2003, nearly half (48%) were aged 30 or older. Mothers aged 30 or older were in the majority in Ontario (54%) and British Columbia (53%).

Between 1994/95 and 2002/03, the number of births among women aged 35 to 39 rose by 19% and among those aged 40 to 44, by 53%.

Smaller families

Large families are becoming rare. These days, families with children average 1.8 children at home, down from 2.0 in 1981. Family size declined among married couples and lone parents, but among couples in common-law relationships, the average number of children remained about 1.7 in both 1981 and 2001.

In 2000, two-thirds of children under age 12 had one sibling or were the only child in their family. This proportion has been relatively stable since 1994. The proportion of children under 12 with three or more siblings declined from 11.1% in 1994 to 9.7% by 2000.

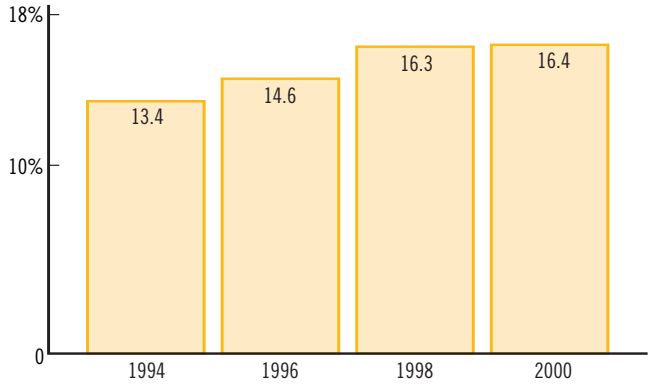
Fewer marriages & divorces

In 2003, there were about 145,000 marriages in Canada – down 9% from 1994. In 1981, about 65% of both women and men could be expected to marry at least once by the time they reached age 50. By 2001, this was true of only 51% of women and less than half of Canadian men.

The number of divorces is also declining. In 2003, there were about 71,000 divorces in Canada – down 10% from 1994. All provinces and territories, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, reported a drop in the number of divorces. The Canadian divorce rate peaked at 41% in 1986 and has remained relatively stable at around 38% since 1996.

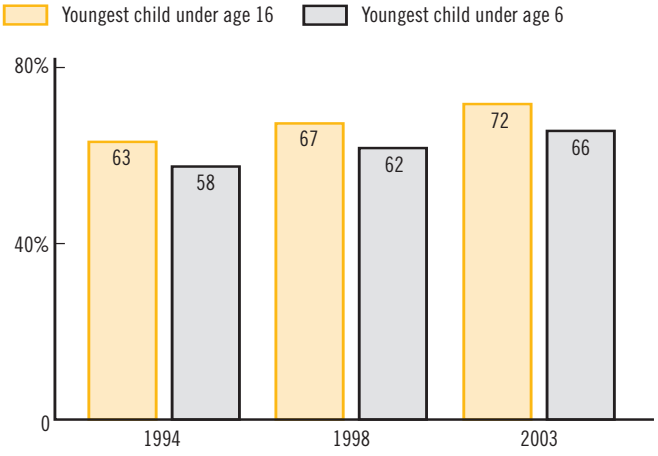
KEY INDICATORS

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12 IN LONE-PARENT FAMILIES



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, *1994, 1996, 1998, & 2000.*

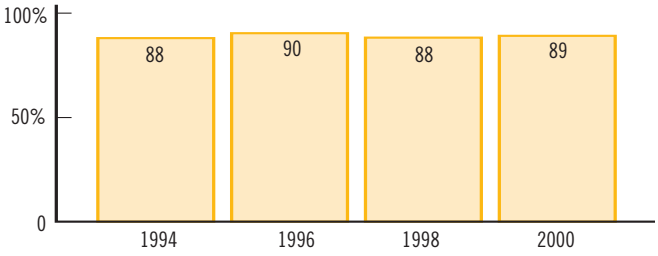
WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT RATE, BY AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2003.*

FAMILY FUNCTIONING

% OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12 IN FAMILIES THAT FUNCTION WELL



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, *1994, 1996, 1998, & 2000.*

More common-law families

In 2001, about 733,000 children under age 15 lived with common-law parents – more than four times the proportion of 20 years earlier (3% in 1981; 13% by 2001). And younger children are more likely to live with common-law parents. In 2001, 17% of children under age 5 lived with common-law parents, compared to 9% of those aged 10 to 14. Children in Quebec were much more likely to live with common-law parents – 29%, compared with 8% of children elsewhere in Canada.

While the number of children under 15 living with two married parents rose from 3.9 million in 1981 to 4.6 million by 2001, their proportion fell substantially – from 84% to 68%.

Many blended families

In 2000, almost 279,000 children under age 12 – 6% of all children in this age group – lived in blended families. Younger children (those under 6) were more likely to live in blended families; by 2002, almost 7% did so, up from 6% in 1994.

Same-sex families

For the first time in 2001, the Census gathered data on same-sex families. There were an estimated 34,000 same-sex couples that year – accounting for 0.5% of all couples – but many believe this number to be an underestimate. The proportion was highest in Quebec, British Columbia, and the Yukon (0.6%).

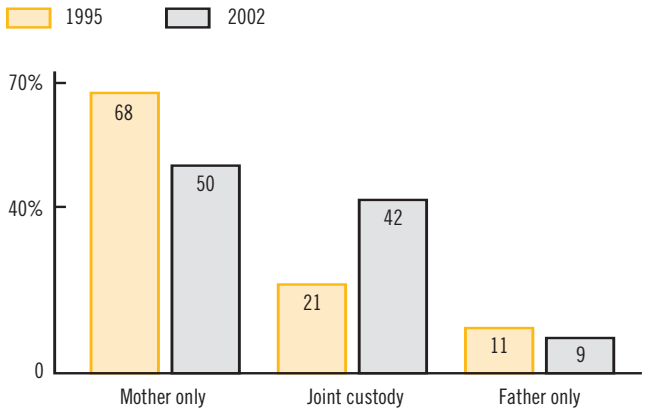
According to the Census, at least 3,000 of these same-sex couples were raising children. Most of the children were born to mother-father unions which later ended in divorce, with the lesbian or gay parent obtaining custody. Increasingly, however, lesbian couples are giving birth or adopting children, and gay couples are choosing to adopt.

Child custody arrangements

Who receives custody of the kids following divorce? The answer has changed quite dramatically. In 1995, more than two-thirds of custody orders ruled in favour of the mother, but by 2002, that was true in less than half the cases.

Court rulings have increasingly favoured joint custody arrangements, but this varies considerably across Canada. In 2002, families in Prince Edward Island were the most likely to have joint custody awarded (77%), followed by families in Alberta and the Northwest Territories (68%). Quebec had the lowest rate (25%). Mothers were most often awarded custody in Quebec (62%), Ontario (59%), and British Columbia (51%).

COURT-ORDERED CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Divorces, *2001 & 2002, Cat No. 84F01213XPB.*

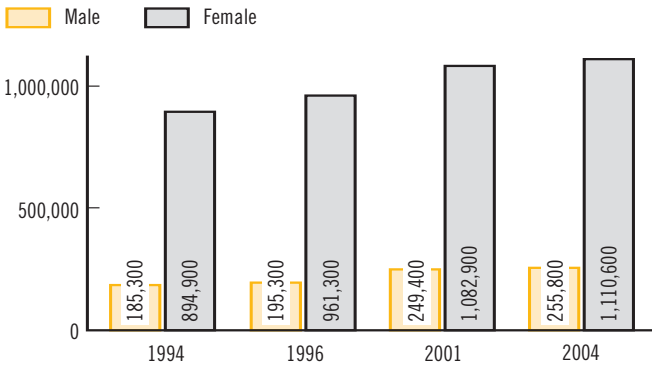
More lone parents raising children

Lone-parent families accounted for 25% of all Canadian families with children in 2004, up from 21% in 1994. Back in 1961, only 11% of families were headed by lone parents.

There were about 1,366,400 lone-parent families in 2004 – an increase of 27% in only 10 years. Eighty-one per cent of these families were headed by women.

Although the number of female lone parents is much higher, male lone-parent families have increased at a greater rate. Over this 10-year period, the number of female lone parents rose by 24%, while the number of male lone parents grew by 38%.

LONE-PARENT FAMILIES, 1994 TO 2004



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Annual Demographic Statistics, *2004, CD ROM 91-12*

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Young population

Overall, about one-third of the Aboriginal population in 2001 were under 15 years of age and 17% were aged 15 to 24. In other words, half of the Aboriginal population were under age 25. By contrast, about one-third (32%) of the non-Aboriginal population were under 25. Between 1981 and 2001, however, the proportion of children and youth in the Aboriginal population declined, while the share of older age groups increased. The fertility rate in the Aboriginal population has been declining over time. In the 1960s, it was four times the Canadian rate; today, it is 1½ times the Canadian rate.

Living in cities

Almost three of every 10 Aboriginal people (28%) lived in large urban centres in 2001. Aboriginal children under 15 now make up 30% to 40% of the Aboriginal population in most large urban centres in Western Canada. Furthermore, the size of the Aboriginal youth population (15 to 24 years) more than doubled between 1981 and 2001 in all major urban centres from Sudbury to the west coast; in Saskatoon, it increased nearly five-fold.

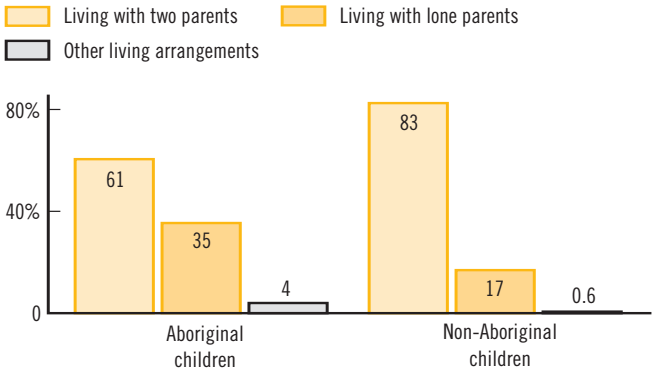
Lone-parent families

In 2001, far fewer Aboriginal children under age 15 lived with two parents, compared to non-Aboriginal children.

Among those living on reserves in 2001, 65% lived with two parents and 32% lived with a lone parent. The remaining 3% had other living arrangements. Among Aboriginal children in large urban centres, 46% lived with a lone parent; in smaller centres, 40% lived with a lone parent. On rural non-reserves, 23% lived in lone-parent families.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that for a variety of social and economic reasons, many Aboriginal households are multiple family households. On reserves, it is estimated that about one in 10 households in 2001 was a multiple family household. In urban areas, about 2% were multiple family households.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL CHILDREN UNDER 15, 2001



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, A Demographic Profile, *2001 Census Analysis Series.*

"Aboriginal family life, like that of other families in Canada, has undergone enormous changes in recent decades. The Aboriginal family in traditional, land-based societies was, until recently, the principal institution mediating the participation of individuals in social, economic and political life. The extended family distributed responsibilities for the care and nurturing of its members over a large network of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. While many Aboriginal people have moved to the city, and many others residing on reserves and in rural towns and villages engage in wage labour rather than traditional harvesting, the notion of the caring, effective, extended family continues to be a powerful ideal etched deep in the psyche of Aboriginal people."

Marlene Brant Castellano. Aboriginal Family Trends: Extended Families, Nuclear Families, Families of the Heart. *Ottawa: Vanier Institute of the Family, 2002.*

PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT

Dual-earners the norm

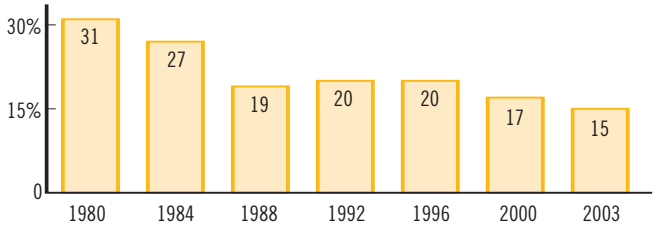
In 2003, 15% of two-parent families with children had only one income-earner, down from 21% in 1994 and 30% in 1980. Sixty-five per cent of female lone-parent families had only one earner in 2003, up from 49% in 1994.

Increasing numbers of mothers now participate in the workforce. In response to women's rising aspirations and growing economic pressures, the proportion of employed women with children under age 16 has climbed steadily – from 40% in 1976 to 72% by 2003.

The increase in women's employment is particularly notable among women with very young children. In 1984, less than half (46%) of mothers whose youngest child was under age 6 were employed; by 1994, 58% were employed, and by 2003, two-thirds (66%) were in the workforce. Among women whose youngest child was under age three, 63% were employed in 2003.

The unemployment rate among women with children under 16 declined from 10.3% in 1994 to 6.3% in 2000. It rose to 7.2% by 2003.

TWO-PARENT ONE-EARNER FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, 1980 TO 2003



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Income Trends in Canada, *various years.*

Mothers working full-time

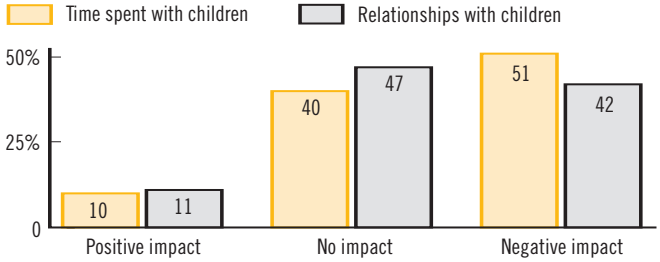
Among employed women with children under age 16, almost three-quarters (74%) worked full-time in 2003. This was also true for women with very young children. Seventy-three per cent of employed women with children under age three worked full-time.

Since 2000, average hours of work have been declining for both men and women. In 2003, the lowest average hours on record were reported – 36.5 hours per week for men and 28.8 hours per week for women. (This includes part-time workers.) Despite that, the proportion of women working 41 hours a week or more rose from 9% in 1976 to 13% by 2003, while those working 35 to 39 hours per week dropped from 21% to 17%.

Juggling work & family

Difficulties balancing work and family responsibilities was an issue identified in previous *Progress* reports. It is still a problem for many families, according to a 2001 national survey of more than 31,000 employees of medium and large organizations. Over half said that work had a negative impact on the time they spent with their children; 42% said it had a negative impact on their relationships with their children.

WORK-LIFE IMPACTS, 2001



Source: Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins. Work-Life Conflict in Canada in the New Millennium: A Status Report. *Ottawa: Health Canada, 2003.*

Employees with child or elder care responsibilities are less likely to feel that their families are well adapted. Thirty-five per cent of male employees with dependent care responsibilities said they were completely satisfied with their level of family adaptation; this was true of 47% of male employees without such responsibilities. Similarly, 32% of female employees with dependent care responsibilities said they were completely satisfied with their level of family adaptation, compared with 44% of female employees without such responsibilities.

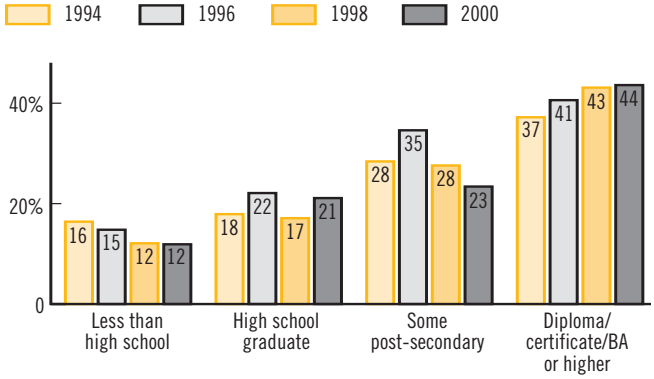
Lost work days

Work days lost due to personal reasons – such as one's own illness or disability or other personal and family demands – have been increasing. In 2003, full-time employees missed an average of nine days of work, compared to 7.3 days in 1997. Women were absent from work more days than their male counterparts: 10.2 days for women, versus 8.1 days for men in 2003. The presence of preschool-aged children influences work absences, especially among women. In 2003, mothers employed full-time lost an average of 4.5 days due to family responsibilities, compared with four days among fathers.

Parental Education

More children are living with parents who have post-secondary education – and the trend continues to rise. Almost half of both mothers and fathers of children under age 12 have a post-secondary diploma, certificate or degree.

MOTHER'S EDUCATION
% OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, *1994, 1996, 1998, & 2000.*

FAMILY DYNAMICS

How family members relate to one another and how well parents are feeling influences children's lives. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), *Progress* tracks a number of indicators of family dynamics, including parental health and well-being, the quality of family relationships, and parenting styles.

Healthy parents

The majority of children live with parents who report that they are in very good or excellent health. But that rate has been declining. In 2000, 71% of children under age 12 lived with parents in very good or excellent health, down from 75% in 1994. In 2002, 72% of children under six had parents who were in very good or excellent health, down from 77% in 1994.

While only a small minority of children live with parents who are depressed, the impact on the child's well-being can be significant. Parents who are depressed are often withdrawn, tired and despondent about the future. This creates a very stressful family environment. In 2000, less than 10% of children under age 12 lived with parents who were experiencing symptoms of depression, down slightly from 1994 (11%). Unfortunately, children in low-income families are more likely to live with a parent who is depressed. In 2000, 20% of children in low-income families (under $30,000 per year) had a parent who was depressed, compared to 6% of children in families with incomes over $60,000.

Supportive parents

Parenting style has long been recognized as a critical influence on healthy child development. Fortunately, most children live with parents who have supportive and positive approaches to parenting.

In fact, the vast majority of parents score well on a scale that looks at "effective parenting," including approaches to discipline and consistency. This rate has been increasing over time.

According to a scale which measures positive parenting behaviours such as giving praise, talking, playing and laughing together, in 2002, 92% of children under age two lived with parents who had a positive parenting style – virtually the same rate as in 1994 (91%). And for older children, there has been an increase in positive parenting style since 1994. Rates of positive parenting styles were the same, regardless of the gender of the child or the family income.

Younger children are more likely than older children to have parents who consistently use positive parenting approaches.

Family functioning

The *quality* of family relationships is particularly important for healthy child development. Research shows a significant connection between family dysfunction and mental health problems among children. The NLSCY measures family functioning by looking at how well a family works together – for example, how they solve problems, communicate with each other, treat each other emotionally, and assume their various roles.

Fortunately, the majority of children live in families which function well. "Dysfunctional" families experience a great deal of stress in their daily lives. They often live in poverty and have few social supports. Children in families with incomes under $30,000 were twice as likely to live in dysfunctional family circumstances as children in families with incomes over $60,000.

YOUTH IN FAMILIES

Young adults living at home

In Canada, there has been a growing trend for young adults to remain in – or return to – their parental home. In 2002, 60% of young people aged 20 to 24 lived with their parents, up from 56% in 1992.

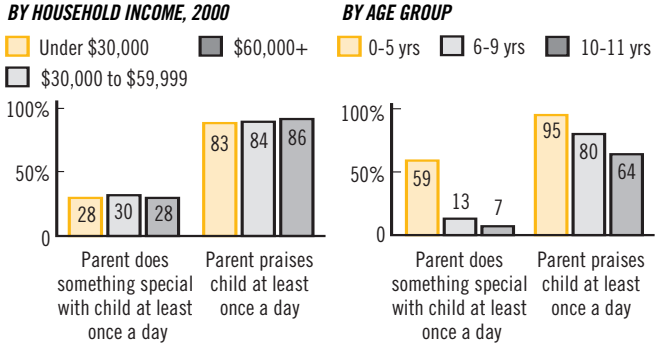
Young men are more likely than women to live at home with their parents, but the proportion for both genders increased between 1994 and 2002. In 2002, 64% of men aged 20 to 24 lived at home, up from 60% in 1994; among women in this age group, 55% lived at home, up from 51% in 1994.

Less likely to marry or live common law

Of the almost 900,000 young adults aged 20 to 24 who lived away from home in 2002, 31% were either married or living common law, a decline from 35% in 1994. Young women were more likely than men to be married/common law (40% and 21% respectively). About 17% of the young adults who lived away from home in 2002 lived with preschool- or school-aged children, slightly less than was the case in 1994 (18%). Young women were more likely than men to live with preschool- or school-aged children (22% and 10% respectively).

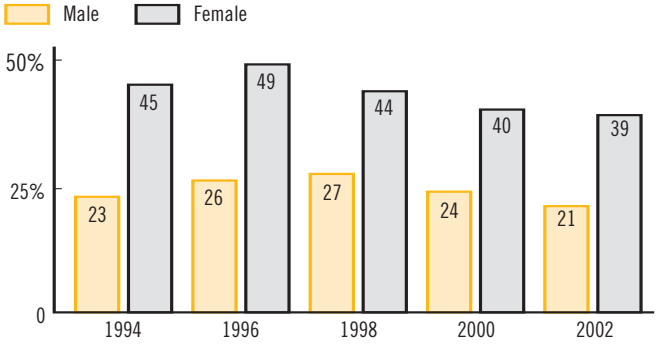
Young adults are increasingly favouring common-law relationships over marriage. However, despite an increase in the proportion of common-law unions, there was an overall decline in the number of young adults living as couples.

POSITIVE PARENTING, 2000
% OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, *1994, 1996, 1998, & 2000.*

YOUNG ADULTS AGED 20-24 LIVING AWAY FROM HOME IN RELATIONSHIPS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Income and Labour Dynamics, *various years.*

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Economic security refers to an assured standard of living that provides families with the resources and benefits necessary to participate economically, politically, socially, culturally, and with dignity in their community's activities.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Family income
- Child poverty rate
- Family expenditures

ECONOMIC SECURITY OVER THE DECADE

One of the primary indicators of children's economic security is their family income. Family income directly affects children's living conditions, their opportunities to participate in school and community activities, and ultimately, their sense of well-being. While many other factors can influence children's healthy development, family income is recognized as one of the key determinants.

Growing inequity

Between 1993 and 2003, the average annual pre-tax income for families with children under 18 rose by 19%, to $76,400. This increase more than kept pace with inflation. Economic growth through the late 1990s and early years of this century fuelled the increase in average family incomes.

These benefits were not shared equally, however. The gap between families with the highest incomes and those with the lowest grew over the decade. Gains were greatest among the wealthiest 10% of families with children: their average pre-tax income rose by

AVERAGE ANNUAL FAMILY INCOMES*, 1993 TO 2003
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18

YEAR	LOWEST	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	HIGHEST	CANADIAN AVERAGE	RATIO OF HIGHEST TO LOWEST DECILE
1993	$15,000	$25,600	$35,900	$44,700	$53,500	$61,800	$71,100	$82,300	$98,900	$154,100	$64,300	10.3
1995	$13,500	$24,700	$35,400	$45,000	$53,800	$64,500	$73,600	$85,000	$102,100	$159,200	$65,600	11.8
1997	$13,500	$24,000	$34,400	$43,500	$53,500	$63,400	$73,700	$85,600	$103,300	$169,500	$66,500	12.6
1999	$14,700	$27,400	$37,500	$47,400	$57,000	$66,600	$77,500	$90,900	$109,300	$186,400	$71,500	12.7
2001	$16,000	$29,200	$39,600	$49,200	$59,600	$69,600	$80,500	$93,800	$114,700	$204,300	$75,700	12.8
2003	$16,100	$29,500	$39,300	$49,100	$59,800	$70,200	$81,200	$95,400	$115,500	$208,300	$76,400	12.9
% increase 1993 to 2003	7.3	15.2	9.5	9.8	11.8	13.6	14.2	15.9	16.8	35.2	18.8	
$ increase 1993 to 2003	$1,100	$3,900	$3,400	$4,400	$6,300	$8,400	$10,100	$13,100	$16,600	$54,200	$12,100	

** In constant 2003$*
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, *masterfile.*

35% – from $154,100 in 1993 to $208,300 by 2003. The poorest 10% of families experienced much more modest income growth over the decade. By 2003, their average annual income had risen by 7%, to $16,100.

This means that in 2003, the richest 10% of families with children had $13 for every $1 of income of the poorest families. Ten years earlier, the ratio had been $10 for every $1. This growing income gap further marginalizes children and youth in the lowest-income families, and it can threaten their healthy development and life chances. Many families in the lowest income group are recent immigrants, visible minorities, Aboriginal people, lone-parent families headed by women, and people with disabilities.

Working-poor families struggle

Changes in the labour market have affected incomes at the low end of the scale. Precarious forms of employment are increasing, with more temporary work, part-time, contract, and seasonal jobs. Non-standard employment now makes up 37% of all jobs in Canada, compared to 25% in the mid-1970s. This means that fewer workers are able to obtain jobs with enough pay, hours and benefits to allow families to make ends meet.

Even people working full-time for the whole year are not necessarily keeping their heads above water. One indicator of this problem is the increasing proportion of poor children who have parents in the labour force. Almost one-quarter (24%) of children living in poverty in 1993 had at least one family member who worked full-time all year. By 2003, the proportion was 31% – almost one in three. Despite significant economic and employment growth over that period, the poverty rate for children under 18 in families where one member worked full-time for the full-year remained virtually unchanged (9%).

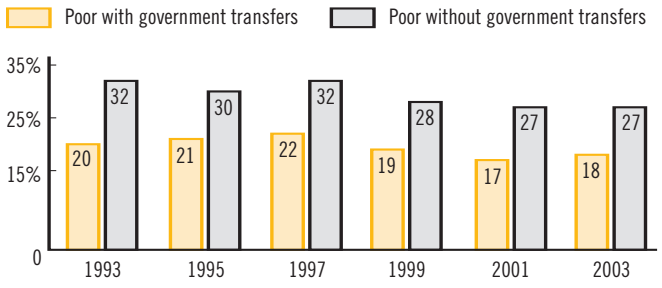
Government transfers

According to a Statistics Canada study, government transfers – such as the National Child Benefit, Employment Insurance (EI), and the GST credit – continue to play an important role in supporting families in times of volatile market incomes and more precarious employment.

One way of seeing this effect is to look at the number of children who were *not* living in poverty as a result of government transfers. In 2003, government transfers helped 628,000 children avoid poverty. Without those transfers, Canada's child poverty rate would have been 27%.

Increases to the National Child Benefit have been particularly important, since the value of EI and Social Assistance has been significantly eroded.

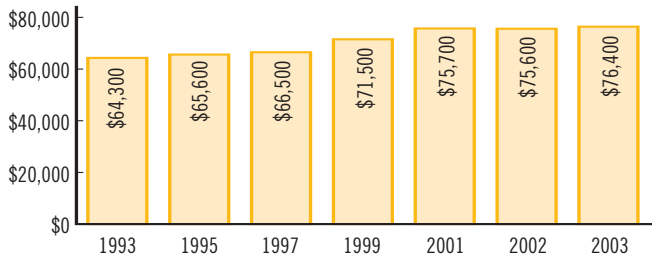
PROPORTION OF CHILDREN WHO WOULD BE POOR, WITH AND WITHOUT GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, *various years.*

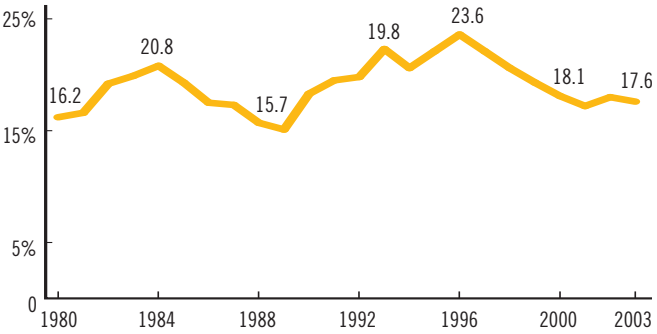
KEY INDICATORS

AVERAGE ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18



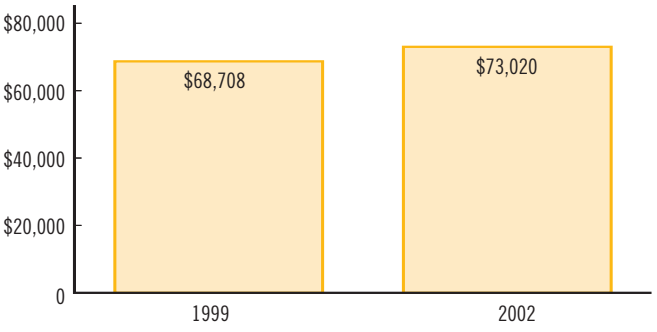
Note: Total pre-tax family income includes government transfers, in constant 2003 dollars.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, *various years.*

CHILD POVERTY RATE



Note: Children under age 18.
Source: Statistics Canada, Income Trends in Canada 2003.

AVERAGE TOTAL EXPENDITURES*
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18



** In constant 2002$*
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending, *1999 & 2002.*

CHILD POVERTY RATE (%)

	1989	1996	2000	2001	2002	2003
NF & LB	20.0	25.9	26.5	21.6	23.8	21.8
PEI	13.2	17.4	14.8	12.6	12.4	11.3
NS	16.0	23.0	18.6	19.1	20.5	20.7
NB	17.7	19.7	16.4	14.8	16.9	17.3
QC	15.9	24.2	20.4	19.4	17.7	16.7
ON	11.6	23.1	16.2	15.1	16.4	16.1
MB	22.5	26.9	23.3	22.5	22.7	22.1
SK	21.7	25.2	20.0	19.1	20.3	18.3
AB	19.0	23.8	15.6	14.9	14.5	15.6
BC	14.3	22.8	18.9	19.9	24.2	23.9
CANADA	15.1	23.6	18.1	17.2	18.0	17.6

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Income Trends in Canada, *2003.*

CHILD POVERTY

In 1989, the House of Commons unanimously resolved to "seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000." Even three years after that deadline, more than 1.2 million Canadian children still lived in poverty – one child of every six.

Child poverty declined somewhat during the late 1990s and into the new millennium, largely due to economic growth and social investments. But progress appears to have stalled.

Female lone-parent families have the highest poverty rates. Their situation improved between 1993 and 2001, but has deteriorated since then. Children in female lone-parent families have a poverty rate three times that of all children, and four and a half times that of children in two-parent families. In 2003, child poverty rates in the provinces ranged from 11.3% in Prince Edward Island to 23.9% in British Columbia.

Poverty deepens

While reducing the *number* of children living in poverty is an important goal, reducing the *depth* of poverty is equally important. Some incomes are so low that families can barely survive.

The depth of poverty is measured by the distance between average low incomes and the LICO. It is a critical indicator of the impact of both public policies and labour market forces.

Poor couples with children were, on average, $9,900 below the LICO in 2003 – a marginal improvement from 2000. Female lone-parent families were an average of $9,600 below the poverty line in 2003 – 6% worse than in 2000.

Children living in two-parent families with no earners – most of whom depend on Social Assistance – experienced the deepest poverty in 2003. These families lived $15,300 below the poverty line, on average. For these families, the depth of poverty has remained stubbornly high since the mid-1990s. And it is higher than it was in 1989.

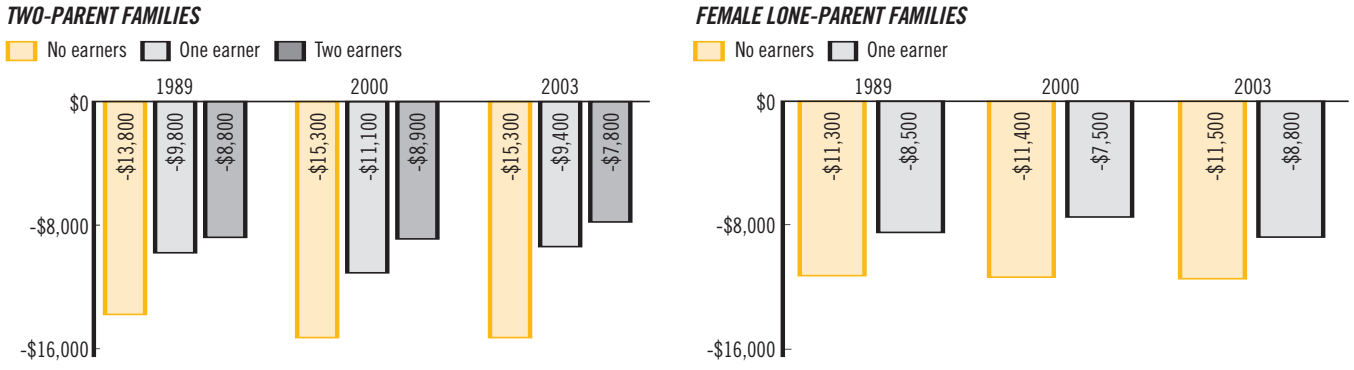
Chronic poverty

Some children move into and out of poverty, usually as a result of their parents' success – or lack of success – in finding a full-time, well-paying job. The financial impact of a family break-up or reconstitution also moves families into or out of poverty.

Previous *Progress* reports have presented evidence which indicates that deep and persistent poverty has a critical effect on both the short- and long-term development and well-being of children. For example, children who live in persistent poverty are less likely to be academically prepared to start school. When they get there, they have less positive, less successful school lives – with poorer scores in reading, math, science, and writing. They are more likely to have emotional problems, to exhibit anxiety and aggressive behaviours, and hyperactivity. They are more likely than their non-poor counterparts to become involved in illegal activities.

THE DEPTH OF CHILD POVERTY, BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18

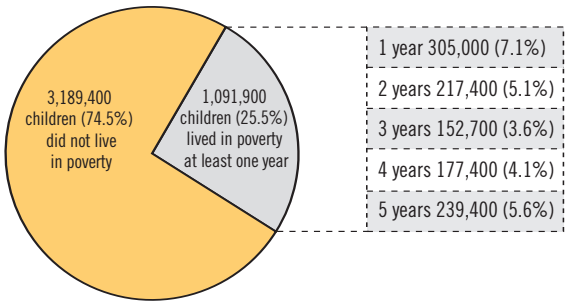


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Income Trends in Canada, *2003.*

Between 1996 and 2000, 488,000 children and youth under age 18 (10%) spent five or more years living in poverty. Fortunately, a smaller proportion of children are living in persistent poverty. Three-quarters of children under age 18 in 1999 did not experience poverty between 1999 and 2003, while one-quarter lived through at least one year of poverty over that period. One in 17 children (6%) spent the entire five years living in poverty.

PERSISTENCE OF CHILD POVERTY

NUMBER OF YEARS CHILDREN UNDER 18 LIVED IN POVERTY BETWEEN 1999 AND 2003

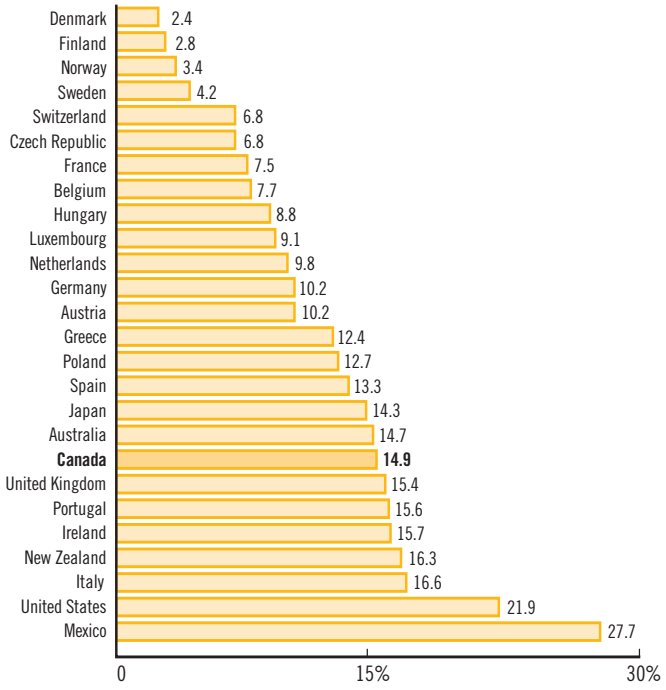


Note: Low income cut-offs before taxes, 1992 base.
Sources: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics *masterfile (1998-2003) and* Income Trends in Canada *(1993-2001).*

International comparisons

In a 2005 global survey of child poverty rates, UNICEF ranked Canada 19th out of 26 industrialized countries. Every country which spent more than 10% of GDP on social programs for families with children had a child poverty rate below 10%. This included Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden – all with child poverty rates below 5%. By contrast, Canada devotes a little over 5% of GDP to social programs and our child poverty rate is almost 15%.

INTERNATIONAL CHILD POVERTY RATES (%)



Source: UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre. Child Poverty in Rich Nations 2005.

Poverty is measured using Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs), 1992 base. LICO takes into account the size of the family and the community in which the family lives. In 2003, the LICO line was $31,952 for a family of four living in a large urban centre and $26,396 for a family of three.

WHO IS POOR?

Some Canadian children and youth are more likely than others to live in poverty. This is particularly true of Aboriginal, recent immigrant, and visible minority children, and those with activity limitations.

For example, Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 had a poverty rate of 37% in 2001, compared to 19% among non-Aboriginal youth. As well, 42% of immigrant children under age 15 were poor, compared to 17% of Canadian-born children.

Among all immigrant children and youth, recent immigrants were the most likely to be poor. Almost half (49%) of children under 15 who immigrated between 1996 and 2001 were poor, compared with 31% of those who immigrated between 1991 and 1995, and 25% of those who immigrated between 1986 and 1990.

While poverty among these four vulnerable groups remained high, the rates declined overall between 1996 and 2001. The poverty rate for children under age 15 with activity limitations decreased by 23% and among Aboriginal children, by 21%. The poverty rate for Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 declined by 18% and for visible minority youth, by 19%.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BE POOR?
% OF CANADIANS WHO ARE POOR, BY AGE GROUP AND SELECT VARIABLES

	UNDER AGE 15		AGED 15 TO 24		ALL CANADIANS	
	1996	2001	1996	2001	1996	2001
Total population	23	19	24	20	20	16
With activity limitation	37	28	38	31	31	23
Without activity limitation	23	18	23	19	18	15
Immigrant population	51	42	41	33	28	22
Non-immigrant population	22	17	21	17	18	15
Aboriginal population	52	41	45	37	43	34
Non-Aboriginal population	23	18	24	19	19	16
Visible minority group	43	34	39	32	36	28
Non-visible minority group	20	16	22	17	18	14

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using custom data runs from Statistics Canada's Census, *1996 & 2001.*

FAMILY EXPENDITURES

In 2002, two-parent families with children had total expenditures averaging $73,020 – an increase of 6.3% from 1999.

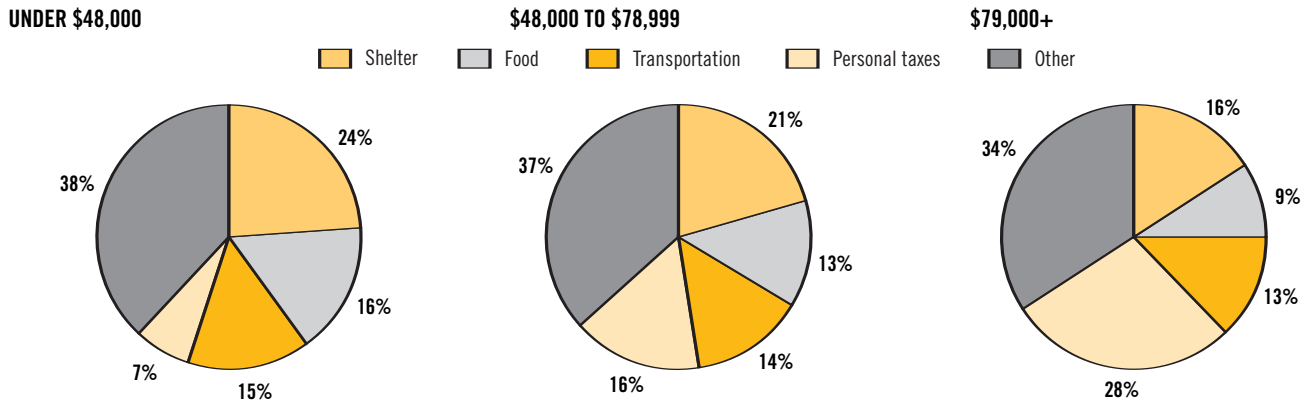
The most dramatic increase in expenditures was for education, which included items such as textbooks, tuition, and school fees. In 2002, two-parent families spent an average of $1,464 on education-related expenses, an increase of 23% from 1999. Education costs have been steadily increasing, rising by 36% between 1996 and 1999, then by another 23% from 1999 to 2002.

Two other areas showing large increases were expenditures on gifts and donations and household furnishings, both of which rose by 20% between 1999 and 2002.

Transportation costs were not far behind. They rose from $8,449 to $9,816, an increase of 16%. Families also spent more on health care. Two-parent families with children spent an average of $1,594 on health care in 2002, up 13% from 1999.

While most expenditures rose, spending in three areas declined – child care, clothing, and reading materials.

AVERAGE EXPENDITURES, BY LEVEL OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2002
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18



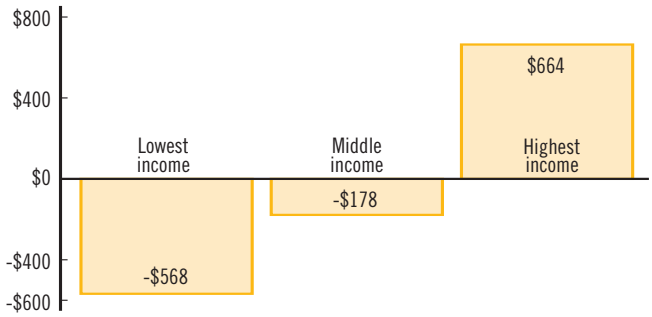
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending, *2002.*

Spending patterns vary

Low-income families spend proportionately more of their income on food and shelter. In 2002, low-income families with children under 18 spent 24% of their total income on shelter and 16% on food. For high-income families, the top expenditures were for personal income taxes (28%) and shelter (16%). For families in the middle-income range, the top expenditures were for shelter (21%) and personal taxes (16%).

After all the bills were paid, families in the highest income group had money left over at the end of the month to put into their savings. Families in the middle and lowest income groups did not.

MONEY LEFT AT MONTH-END, AFTER ALL EXPENDITURES, 2002
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18

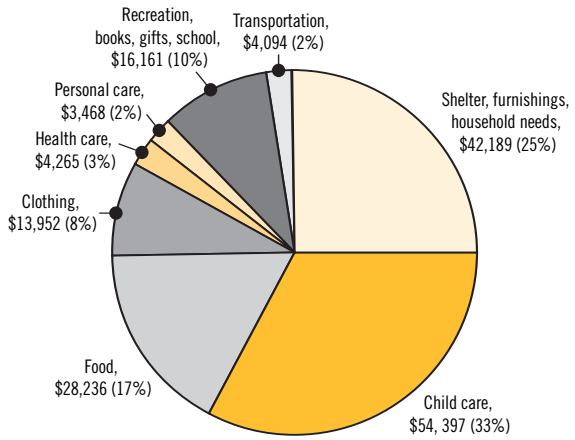


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending, *2002.*

COSTS OF RAISING CHILDREN

As every parent knows, it is expensive to raise children today. The Manitoba government tracks these costs, and according to their data, in 2004 it cost $166,762 to raise a child from birth to age 18.

ESTIMATED COSTS OF RAISING A CHILD TO AGE 18, 2004



Source: Manitoba Agriculture and Food. "Estimated Cost of Raising a Child to 18 Years," *in* Family Finance, *2004.*

PERCEPTIONS OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Canadian youth are feeling somewhat less secure about their families' economic situation, but they are more optimistic about their own employment.

In 2003, when asked how adequate they thought their family's income was in meeting its basic needs, 56% of youth aged 16 to 24 felt that it was adequate. This was down 7% from 2001.

Only 14% of youth in 2003 said there was a good chance they could lose their job over the next couple of years, compared to 21% who felt this way in 2001. Youth were also more optimistic about finding an equivalent job within six months if they had to – 16% in 2003, compared to 14% in 2001. In addition, 88% felt that if they lost their job, their family would help them out.

PHYSICAL SAFETY

Physical safety refers to the quality of children's natural and built environments and the threats to their personal safety and well-being.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Air pollution
- Injury rates
- Crime rates

Just as children need consistent, loving relationships with their family and friends, they also need safe environments in which to grow and play. A safe environment includes having access to clean air, water, and land. It also includes protection from crime and violence, and measures to reduce the risk of injuries. Providing children with a safe environment is the responsibility of all Canadians – parents, schools, health-care providers, police, and community members.

In the following articles, we look at key factors that affect children's physical safety. We examine the quality of the air they breathe and harmful contaminants such as lead and pesticides that may be present in their communities. We discuss water quality – another basic need for physical safety. And we present the latest statistics on crime in Canada, along with youth perceptions of their neighbourhood safety.

The leading causes of injury deaths for young people over the age of one occur on our roads and highways. We therefore examine trends in road crashes, the risks posed by drinking and driving, and the use of protective devices like seat belts and bicycle helmets.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Outdoor air quality

Poor air quality presents a serious threat to children's physical health and safety. Many regions of Canada have unacceptable air quality, particularly in the summer. European and North American research demonstrates that exposure to air pollution harms children's development. It puts them at risk of life-threatening health complications and diseases, and the damage may begin as early as in the womb.

Traffic-related air pollution is a particularly serious threat to children's health and safety, and much of Canada's air pollution comes from traffic. According to Pollution Probe, transportation is the largest single human-produced source of outdoor air pollution in Canada.

What is smog?

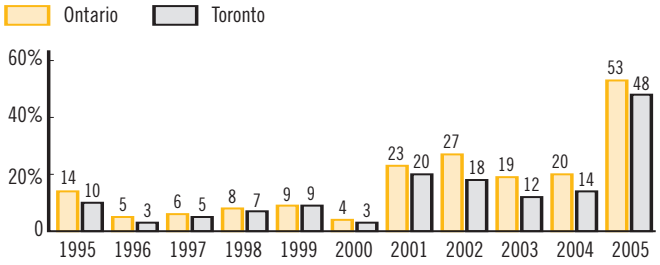
Smog is a mixture of airborne chemicals produced by motor vehicles and industrial pollution. Sunlight causes the pollutants to react, creating smog. It is a particular concern in urban centres, but smog travels with the wind, so it also affects less populated areas.

There are no safe levels for human exposure to the primary components of smog – ground-level ozone and airborne particles known as particulate matter. These pollutants adversely affect human health even at very low levels, and long-term exposure to low levels may be even more damaging than short-term exposure to high levels.

Short-term exposure to smog irritates the eyes, nose and throat, and decreases lung functioning. Heart and lung diseases can be aggravated. In some cases, smog can cause premature death. On days with high levels of smog, the number of doctor visits and hospital admissions due to respiratory problems rise.

In Ontario, the number of smog advisory days rose from 14 in 1995, to 20 by 2004. According to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, between 1995 and 2004, Ontario had the lowest number of smog advisory days in 2000 (4) and the highest number in 2002 (27).

SMOG ADVISORY DAYS IN ONTARIO & TORONTO



Source: Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Air Quality Ontario, *and Toronto Environmental Alliance,* Toronto Smog Report Card, *2005.*

Lung functioning

Recent research in southern California revealed that exposure to high levels of air pollution, primarily from motor vehicles, impairs children's lung development. Researchers studying youth aged 10 to 18 over an eight-year period found that those who lived in smoggy communities were nearly five times more likely to have clinically low lung function, compared to teens living in low-pollution areas. Scientists believe that these findings can be generalized to other areas with similar pollutants.

Lung damage has both short- and long-term consequences. In the short-term, young adults may be at higher risk of developing respiratory conditions. In the long-term, they face a greater risk of serious health problems and premature death. The lung development deficits observed in this study are likely irreversible.

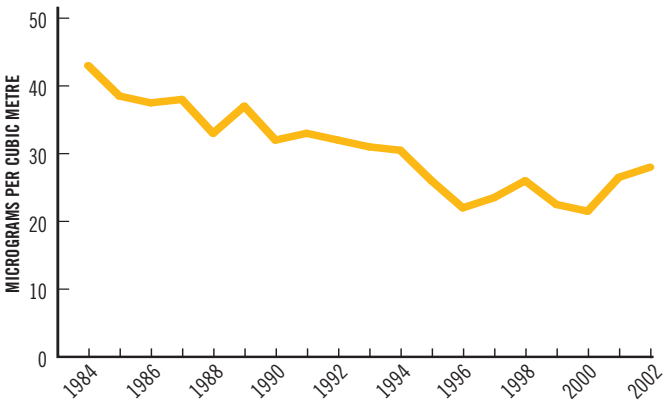
European research has also found a link between exposure to air pollution and decreased lung functioning and growth rates in children. A review of this research by the World Health Organization concurred that children's health is being adversely affected by air pollution. They strongly recommended a reduction in children's exposure to air pollutants, especially from traffic.

Effects on the unborn child

There is also evidence that air pollution affects fetal development, pregnancy outcomes, and infant heath. A recent study in New York City found that pregnant mothers exposed to air pollution gave birth to infants with damaged chromosomes. These mothers lived in densely populated neighbourhoods with varying levels of a carcinogenic pollutant from motor vehicles, diesel bus

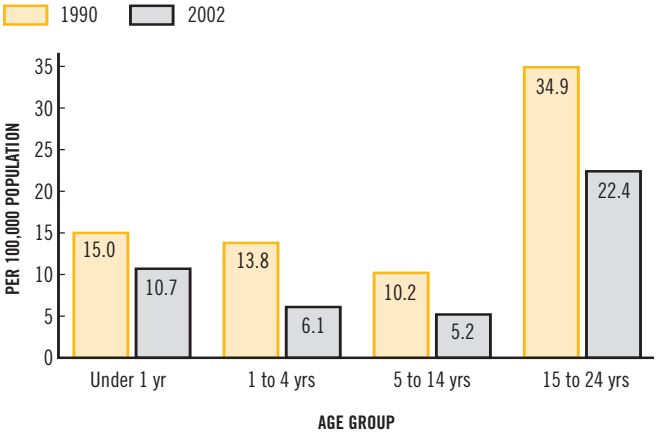
KEY INDICATORS

AIR POLLUTION: PEAK LEVELS OF FINE PARTICULATE MATTER ($PM_{2.5}$) IN SELECT CANADIAN CITIES



Source: Children's Health and the Environment in North America: A First Report on Available Measures and Indicators – Country Reports. *Public Review Draft, September 2005.*

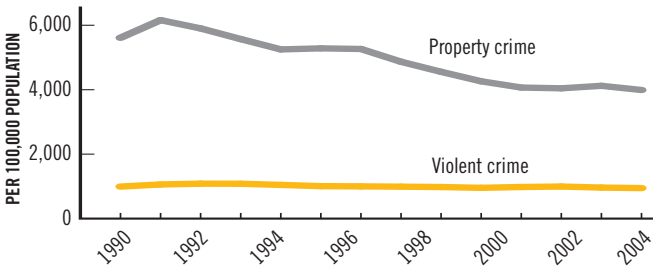
DEATH RATES FROM UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the World Health Organization's Statistical Information Mortality Database and Statistics Canada's CANSIM Table 102-0540.

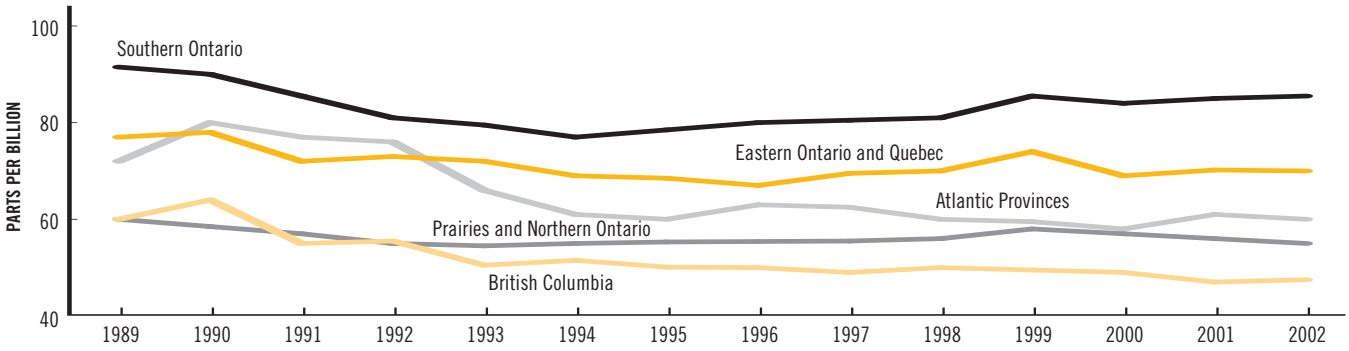
CRIME RATES

OVERALL CANADIAN POPULATION



Source: Statistics Canada, "Crime Statistics 2004," in The Daily, *July 21, 2005 and* Canadian Crime Statistics 2000, *Catalogue 85-205.*

PEAK GROUND-LEVEL OZONE IN CANADIAN REGIONS



Note: Ground-level ozone levels are heavily dependent on the weather, with the highest levels occurring in the warmer months.
Source: Children's Health and the Environment in North America: A First Report on Available Measures and Indicators – Country Reports. *Public Review Draft, September 2005.*

depots, and residential heating sources. Other studies have linked exposure to these air pollutants and the resulting chromosomal damage with an increased risk of developing cancer. Again, these research findings are relevant to other populations with similar concentrations of air pollutants.

Ground-level ozone

Ground-level ozone is formed when two common air pollutants – nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) – react together as the sun heats up the air. It is one of the primary components of smog.

According to Environment Canada, more than half of all Canadians live in areas where ground-level ozone reaches unacceptably high levels in summer. Although these levels fluctuate from year to year, they have not improved significantly over the last 13 years in the Prairies, Ontario, or Quebec. The corridor from Windsor to Quebec City has higher ozone levels more often and for longer periods of time than other areas of Canada. About 50% of the air pollution in that corridor comes from the United States. The Lower Fraser Valley in B.C. and the southern Atlantic region are also prone to problems with ground-level ozone.

Fine particulate matter

The other major component of smog – fine particulate matter – comes from burning fuels for transportation, industry, and residential heating. The airborne particles can be in solid or liquid form. Fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) consists of the smallest particles, with diameters of 2.5 micrometers or less. They pose the greatest risks to human health because they can penetrate deep into the lungs.

With better monitoring techniques, it is now possible to track trends in fine particulate matter. Historical data from 10 to 15 urban centres show an overall decline in peak levels of $PM_{2.5}$ from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. After that, improvements seem to have stalled.

Tracking data from 1998 to 2000 showed that Toronto and Edmonton had the highest average concentrations of fine particulate matter. In Edmonton, there was a significant decrease in the level of fine particulate matter, but its average remained high. In the other cities examined – Vancouver, Montreal, and Saint John – the concentrations of fine particulate matter generally held constant.

Emissions

While emissions of many air pollutants have declined or remained stable over the last decade in Canada, the rates remain unacceptably high. Between 1990 and 2001, emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO_2) decreased significantly, and emissions of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds were moderately reduced.

Internationally, Canada remains a major air polluter. According to a recent United Nations report, Canada has one of the worst records for greenhouse gas emissions among industrialized countries. Greenhouse gas emissions include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulphur hexafluoride. And while Canada has pledged to cut emissions by 6% from its 1990 level over the period 2008 to 2012, our emissions were up 24% by the end of 2003.

Why are children at particular risk from air pollution?

- Their systems are still in the process of developing.
- Their lungs and airways are not yet mature, so they are more susceptible to the effects of air pollution.
- The surface area of their lungs is comparatively large and absorbs pollutants easily.
- Children breathe more rapidly and more deeply than adults, inhaling more air and proportionately more pollutants.
- They often breathe through their mouths which allows more polluted air to enter directly into the lungs.
- They spend more time outside being physically active.
- Because of their smaller size, they are closer to vehicle tailpipes where harmful pollutants are concentrated.

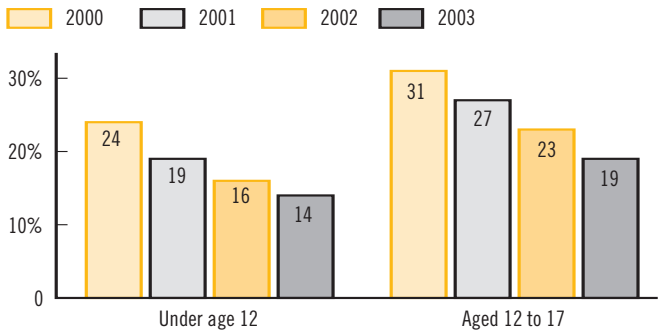
INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Children exposed to environmental tobacco smoke (second-hand smoke) are at increased risk of bronchitis, pneumonia, lower respiratory tract infections, chronic ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome.

According to the Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, 16% of children under 18 were regularly exposed to second-hand smoke at home in 2003. The proportion was higher among youth aged 12 to 17 (19%), than among children under age 12 (14%).

Fortunately, the proportion of children and youth who are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke at home has been declining since 2000.

EXPOSURE TO SECOND-HAND SMOKE IN THE HOME



Source: Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, *Household Component, February to December, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003.*

LEAD

Moderate or low-level exposure to lead in early childhood can cause adverse and persistent neuro-behavioural effects, including cognitive deficits. Studies suggest that children are most susceptible to the damaging neurological effects of lead during the first three years of life as brain development is taking place.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) define the threshold blood lead level that should trigger intervention as 0.48 umol/L – well below the 1.45 threshold that existed in 1975.

There is no Canada-wide assessment of blood lead levels in children. The majority of studies have evaluated the impact of specific sources of lead pollution, such as from smelters or metal reclamation plants. In 1994, it was estimated that more than 66,000 Canadian children might have blood lead levels greater than the CDCP standard.

Serious cases of lead poisoning in Canadian children are rare, largely due to public health efforts to remove lead from gasoline and paint, and control emissions from industrial sources. But recent research suggests that children's physical health may be at risk from new and persistent sources of lead exposure.

Canadian researchers Tsekrekos and Buka say a growing body of evidence suggests there is *no* acceptable threshold for the adverse effects of lead on developing central nervous systems. And they warn that lead exposure may be so prevalent, the effects are not easily recognized. In fact, understanding the role that low-level lead exposure may play in neuro-developmental disorders is still in its infancy.

New sources of lead exposure from consumer products – many of which are intended for children's use – are being discovered on the commercial market. As well, old sources of lead exposure persist. For example, lead dust can be generated in homes where lead-based paints have been used, particularly homes built prior to 1960. This is especially dangerous for babies and crawling children, because their breathing zone is closer to the floor, thus increasing their exposure to lead dust. Older dwellings may also have lead pipes that leach into the drinking water. In 2001, 24% of children under age five lived in housing built before 1960.

PESTICIDES

While the long-term effects of some pesticides are not yet known, others have been linked to increased risk of cancer, disruptions to endocrine systems, and negative effects on reproductive systems. When young developing brains are exposed to pesticides, it can result in intellectual deficits and neuro-behavioural problems such as ADHD.

Children are at particular risk from exposure to pesticides because their bodies are in a rapid growth state, with cells dividing and systems developing. Some organ systems mature early in life, while others are not fully developed until adulthood. And because children eat more food and drink more liquids than adults, on a weight for weight basis, they are exposed to proportionately more pesticide residues.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians recently sounded the alarm about pesticide use, particularly in relation to children's health.

The College was concerned that government approval of pesticides has been based on studies that were not adequately comprehensive or systematic, and many were poorly constructed. Following its own comprehensive review, the College concluded that exposure to *all* commonly used pesticides is associated with adverse health effects.

These findings have particular importance for children. They absorb, metabolize and excrete chemicals differently than adults, thus increasing their susceptibility. Children also have greater exposure because their diets are more heavily concentrated in specific foods and they have more hand-to-mouth behaviour, including eating soil. Small children spend hours on the ground – areas with the highest concentrations of pesticides.

All three levels of government are involved in the regulation of pesticides. The federal government is responsible for product safety, approval, and labelling requirements; provincial governments control the sale and handling of products and licensing applications; and municipalities oversee the development of by-laws regulating pesticide use on public and private lands.

In 1991, the small town of Hudson, Quebec became the first Canadian jurisdiction to ban the use of cosmetic pesticides on both public and private property. Over the last decade, municipalities of all sizes have followed suit. Today, about 70 municipalities have adopted pesticide by-laws in some form, with the largest being the City of Toronto (population 2.5 million) and the smallest being Saint-Paule, Quebec, with a population under 200. When all the current regulations and by-laws come into full effect, it is estimated that over 11 million Canadians – approximately 35% of the population – will be protected from exposure to synthetic lawn and garden pesticides.

In 2002, the federal Pest Control Products Act was passed to amend the way pesticides are regulated in Canada. By the spring of 2006, the Act was still not in force.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS IN NORTHERN CANADA

Scientists first discovered high levels of mercury and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the Arctic in the 1980s. Recent studies from the Northern Contaminants Program – involving the federal and territorial governments, regional health authorities, academics, and Aboriginal communities – found that Inuit mothers have higher levels of these contaminants in their bloodstreams than Dene, Métis or Caucasian mothers living in the same geographical areas.

The problem was traced to differences in traditional diets. High levels of contaminants were found in marine species such as seals, polar bears and beluga whales, which are important in the Inuit diet. Land-based animals such as caribou, artic hare and moose – traditional food sources for the Dene and Métis peoples – had relatively low concentrations of these contaminants.

Traditional foods offer significant nutritional, social, cultural, economic, and spiritual benefits to people of the North. They are also healthy alternatives to the limited range of foods imported from the South, which tend to have higher fat content. In fact, there is growing evidence that the increase in processed foods from the South is linked to rising rates of illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, not historically associated with Aboriginal peoples.

In collaboration with Aboriginal leaders, partners in the Northern Contaminants Program developed a response that preserved the traditional diet, while reducing the risks from pollutants. Northern communities were advised to lower or eliminate consumption of certain species of animals and to eat more of other species.

WATER QUALITY

Clean water is critical to human health. The quality of Canada's drinking water hit the headlines again in 2005, when families were evacuated from the First Nations community of Kashechewan in Northern Ontario because the local water supply was contaminated.

Unfortunately, water quality issues in First Nations communities are not new. In 2002, the National Aboriginal Health Organization stated: "For Canada's Aboriginal communities, contaminated water is repeatedly identified as a major source of concern and a perennial cause of illness." This statement was supported in the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey 2002/03 which found that:

- One-third of First Nations adults consider their household water unsafe to drink.
- Over 70% of all adults resorted to alternative sources for drinking water.
- While most (63%) get their water by pipe from a local source, about 17% use water from a well and 16% have it delivered by truck.
- Among those who said their water was unsafe to drink, over 90% resorted to other sources for drinking water.
- The most common alternate source was bottled water – 62% of all Aboriginal respondents, compared to 35% of Canadians who report drinking bottled water at least once a week.

Concerns about water quality are not limited to First Nations communities. In 1999, an estimated 23.7 million Canadians were on public water distribution systems. Most of these systems have processes designed to kill bacteria and other pathogens and reduce the concentration of various chemicals. Another 6.8 million Canadians depend on private water supplies, mostly groundwater wells. There is no national program to track how many private wells have water treatment or disinfection systems and how many may be contaminated.

UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children and youth over the age of one. Youth are particularly at risk – in 2002, almost 1,000 young people aged 15 to 24 died as a result of unintentional injuries.

Fortunately the death rate has been declining. Between 1990 and 2002, the injury death rate declined by 44% among children aged one to four, by 49% among those aged 5 to 14, and by 36% for youth aged 15 to 24.

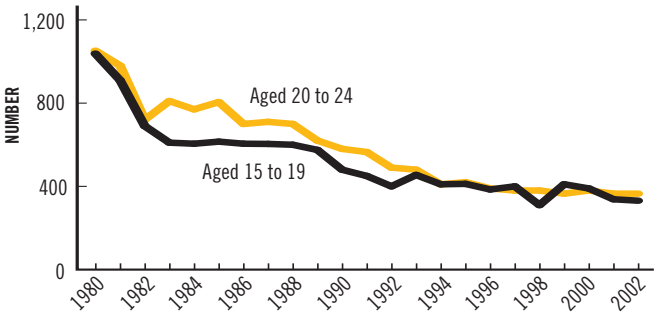
Road crashes

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young Canadians. They account for more than one-third (35%) of all deaths among 15- to 19-year-olds, and just under one-third (30%) of deaths for those aged 20 to 24. In 2002, 331 teenagers (15 to 19 years) and 365 young adults (aged 20 to 24) died in road crashes. A further 29,000 teenagers and 30,000 young adults were injured.

The highest fatality rates are found among teenaged drivers aged 16 to 19. Youth have higher fatality rates than older drivers, both in terms of the number of road deaths standardized by their proportion of the licensed driver population (per-driver fatality rate), and higher rates based on the amount they drive (standardized per-distance).

And while road crashes remain a significant threat, there have been substantial improvements over the last two decades. The rate of road fatalities among teens aged 15 to 19 declined by two-thirds between 1980 and 2002, and by 62% among those aged 20 to 24. Unfortunately, progress has stalled in recent years.

ROAD DEATHS AMONG CANADIAN YOUTH

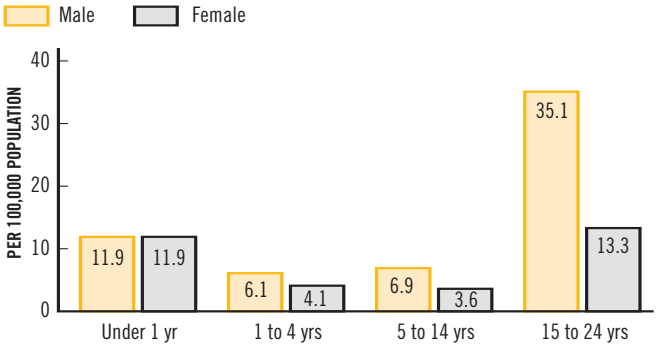


Source: Traffic Injury Research Foundation, Deaths and Injuries to Young Canadians from Road Crashes, *2004.*

Gender differences

At all ages above age one, boys are more likely than girls to die of injury-related causes. Male toddlers aged one to four are 1½ times more likely to die of unintentional injuries than female toddlers; school-aged boys are almost twice as likely (1.9 times), and young men aged 15 to 24 are 2.6 times more likely to die from unintentional injuries than females in their age groups.

INJURY DEATH RATE, 2000



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the World Health Organization's Statistical Information Mortality Database.

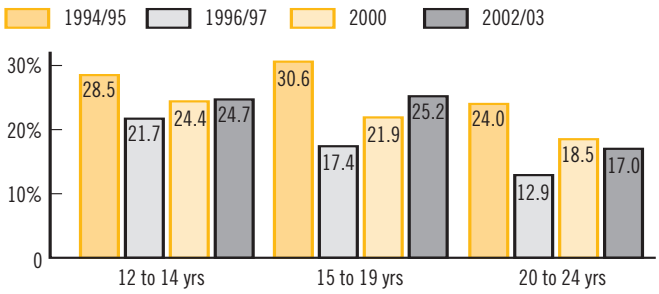
Young men are also more likely than women to be injured. In 2002/03, 28% of boys aged 12 to 14 were injured in the previous 12 months compared to 21% among girls. For those aged 15 to 19, 28% of boys and 18% of girls were injured. Among those aged 20 to 24, 21% of men and 13% of women were injured.

Injury rate

While there are year-to-year fluctuations, the overall injury rate is declining. In 2002/03, approximately 1.2 million youth aged 12 to 24 – representing 28% of the population – reported that they had been injured in the previous 12 months. The oldest group (those aged 20 to 24) had the lowest injury rate, but they also had the highest death rate from unintentional injuries.

YOUTH INJURY RATES

% INJURED IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Population Health Survey *and the* Canadian Community Health Survey, *1994/95, 1996/97, 2000, & 2002/03.*

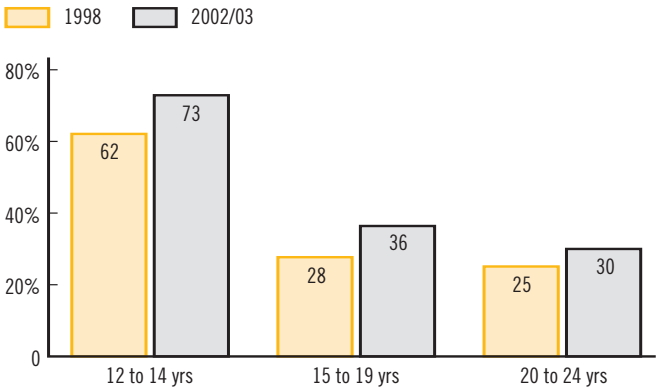
More than half (57%) of these unintentional injuries required treatment in a hospital emergency department. This was true for 63% of teens aged 12 to 14, 58% of youth aged 15 to 19, and 57% of those aged 20 to 24. Young men were more likely than women to sustain injuries which required emergency room treatment (61% compared to 55%).

Helmet use

Young people can take protective measures to prevent injuries. Using bicycle helmets and seat belts are two prime examples. The use of bike helmets among children and youth rose from 1998 to 2002/03, but usage declines with age.

There were no gender differences in the youngest age group (12 to 14 years), but there were among older groups. Only 33% of young men aged 15 to 19 used bicycle helmets most of the time or always, compared to 41% of women. By age 20 to 24, the gender gap had widened: 26% of men and 37% of women regularly used bike helmets.

USE BIKE HELMETS MOST OF THE TIME OR ALWAYS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Population Health Survey *and the* Canadian Community Health Survey, *1994/95, 1996/97, 2000, & 2002/03.*

For car seatbelts, the vast majority of 12- and 13-year-olds (90% in 1996 and 92% in 2000) said they always or often wore a seatbelt. The percentages were virtually the same for boys and girls and for children living in low- and high-income families.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

According to researchers, young drivers are a serious traffic risk. Canadians tend to underestimate traffic dangers associated with young drivers and overestimate the danger of youth drinking and driving because of their inexperience and risky driving practices. But alcohol is less likely to be an issue in crashes involving teen drivers than among drivers in other age groups.

Between 1998 and 2005, the proportion of Canadians who said that in the past 30 days they had driven a vehicle within two hours of drinking decreased from 19% to 15%.

There were significant age differences in these self-reports. In 2004, less than 12% of drivers under age 20 said they had driven after consuming alcohol, compared to 22% of those aged 19 to 24, and 28% of those aged 25 to 34.

These age differences were consistent between 2001 and 2004. Over this four-year period, teenaged drivers and seniors (65+ years) were the least likely groups to report that they drove after drinking.

Over the limit

The proportion of Canadians over age 18 who said that during the previous year they had driven while over the legal blood alcohol limit declined from 9% in 1998 to 7% in 2005.

Those aged 20 to 24 had the highest proportion of driving while over the legal limit, and teens had the second highest. Researchers warn, however, that teens' perspectives may differ from that of other drivers because graduated licensing systems restrict them to a blood alcohol limit of zero. There may also be a link between youth drinking habits, such as binge drinking, and driving over the legal limit.

Alcohol-related deaths

There has been a decrease in alcohol-related deaths, both in numbers and as a proportion of total deaths. In 2002, 37% of vehicle deaths among youth were alcohol-related, down from 47% in 1998.

In 2002, 146 teen drivers (16 to 19 years) died in alcohol-related crashes, down from 187 deaths in 1999. (The lowest number was 134 recorded in 1998.) Among drivers aged 20 to 25, the number of fatally injured dropped from 282 in 1998 to 261 in 2002.

Over two-thirds (68%) of fatally injured teen drivers (16 to 19) in 2002 had not been drinking, slightly better than in 1998 (64%). Among those aged 20 to 25, 56% of the drivers fatally injured had no alcohol in their system, up from 49% in 1998.

GRADUATED DRIVERS LICENSES

Since 1994, 10 provinces and two territories have implemented some form of graduated licensing for new drivers. Nunavut is considering such a program. Although there are variations among the programs, all but two jurisdictions have adopted multi-phased licensing with learners and intermediate stages.

The implementation of these graduated licensing programs has contributed to the decline in road crash deaths among young people. Studies of the effectiveness of programs implemented in Ontario and Nova Scotia in 1994, Québec in 1997, and British Columbia in 1998 all reported that collisions were reduced among all age groups of novice drivers. For new drivers aged 16 to 19 licensed in Ontario in 1995, the overall collision rate under the graduated program was 31% lower than the rate among novice drivers in 1993, before the program was introduced. In Nova Scotia, the crash rate among 16-year-old drivers declined by 24%. And in Québec, a 5% reduction in fatalities and a 14% reduction in injuries were attributed to the graduated licensing program.

CRIME AND PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

The crime rate in a community is one indicator of the safety of our children and youth. While it is difficult to measure crime, the data indicate a decline in the number and rate of reported crimes. The statistics depend on the number of people reporting crimes, the diligence of police in making arrests, and the reporting methods.

Crime rates decline

Other than an increase in 2003, the overall crime rate has generally been falling since it peaked in 1991. Police reported about 2.6 million offences in 2004, resulting in a crime rate that was 12% lower than a decade earlier.

In total, about 300,000 violent crimes were reported to police in 2004, the majority being common assaults. The violent crime rate was down 10% over the decade, but 35% higher than 20 years ago.

Police reported nearly 1.3 million property crimes in 2004. Property crime has generally been declining since 1991, except for a notable increase in 2003. The rate of break-ins fell 4% between 2003 and 2004, to just under 275,000 – 36% lower than a decade ago. More than half (56%) of break-ins were residential.

Youth feel less safe

Between 1998 and 2002, fewer youth aged 16 to 24 considered their neighbourhoods to be very safe places to live. In 2002, 72% of youth felt their neighbourhoods were very safe from violent crime, a decrease from 1998 (78%). Similarly, 68% felt very safe from exposure to property crime in 2002, also down from 1998 (73%).

Among young children, their perceptions of safety at school are a good indication of how safe they feel. In 2000, just over half (57%) of 10- and 11-year-olds felt safe at school all of the time, up slightly from 1994 (53%). A further 35% felt safe at school most of the time. Among this age group, 62% felt safe going to and from school all of the time, up slightly from 1994 (60%). A further 27% felt this way most of the time.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community resources are the opportunities and supports available to children and youth within their local communities, including education and training, housing, health care, child and family supports, and leisure and cultural activities.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Participation in recreation
- Access to child care
- School enrollment

PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION

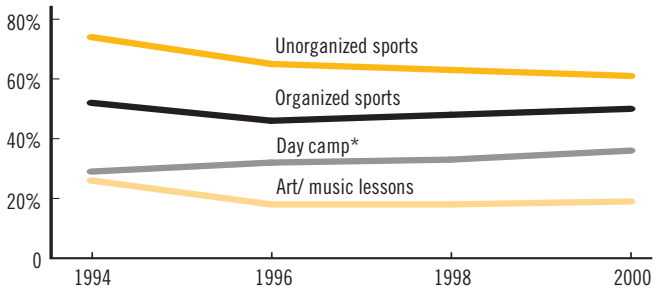
Using data from the NLSCY, *Progress* monitors the participation of children and youth in recreational activities. Changes in rates between 1996 and 2000 were mixed, with one exception – poor children continue to lack access to recreational opportunities. Regardless of the type of activity, children in lower-income families participate less than those in higher-income families.

Between 1994 and 2000, the participation of young children (aged 4 to 9) in sports activities declined, including informally organized sports, as did their participation in art and music. Participation in day camps rose slightly. Among youth aged 10 to 13, their participation in sports and in art/ drama/ music also declined, while participation in clubs remained relatively stable.

Children with disabilities

According to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, nearly two of five school-aged children with disabilities could not participate in social or recreational activities in 2001 because of their disability. The likelihood of being left out increased dramatically with the severity of the disability: 21% of children with a mild disability, 30% of those with a moderate disability, 49% of children with a severe disability, and 74% of those with a very severe disability were prevented from participating in leisure activities.

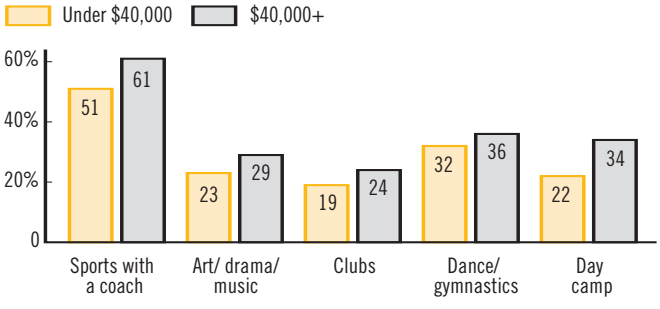
TRENDS IN WEEKLY PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AGED 4 TO 9



** Children aged 6 to 9*

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1994, 1996, 1998 & 2000.

WEEKLY PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH AGED 10 TO 15, BY FAMILY INCOME, 2000



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 2000.

Multiple reasons were given:

- There were no local facilities available (21%);
- The facilities were inaccessible (10%);
- No accessible transit to take them to the facilities (14%);
- Activities were too expensive (34%);
- Child was physically unable to participate (55%);
- No attendant was available to assist the child (54%);
- Lacked the required assistive aid or device (15%).

BENEFITS OF RECREATION

All children and youth should be entitled to participate in recreational activities. The benefits of doing so are far-reaching:

- Physical benefits such as greater muscle strength, bone density, and mass; improves motor fitness and aerobic capacity; reduces childhood obesity; promotes better overall health and growth.
- Aids the development of motor and cognitive skills.
- Improves mental health.
- Improves self-esteem and self-concept.
- Reduces anti-social and criminal behaviour.
- Helps develop leadership skills and social skills; fosters cooperation and sharing; enhances creativity; encourages participation in community life.
- Improves academic performance.

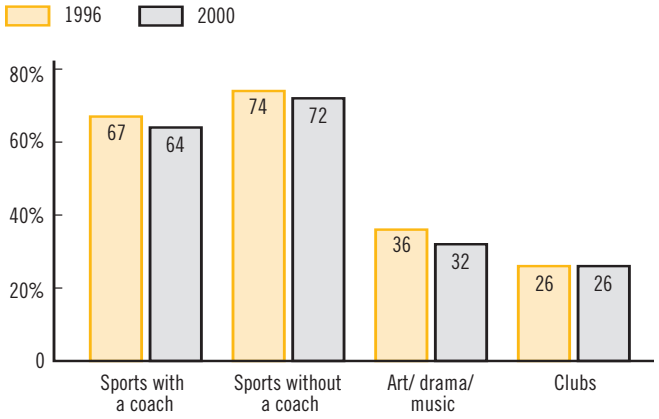
SPENDING ON RECREATION

From 1993 to 2003, the trend in municipal government investments in recreation and culture showed declines in the late 1990s, followed by an increase in the new century. Spending by local governments dropped from $185 per person in 1993 to $177 in 1997/1998, then rose to $198 in 2003.

KEY INDICATORS

PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION

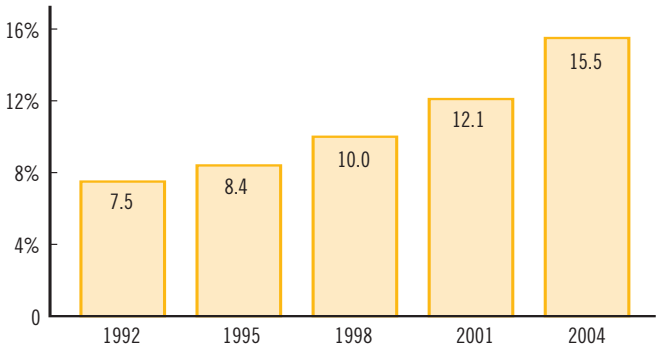
% OF YOUTH (10 TO 13 YRS) WHO PARTICIPATED AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK IN:



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1996, 1998 & 2000.

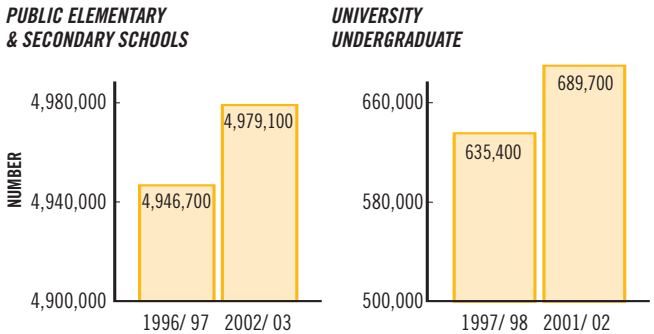
TRENDS IN CHILD CARE

% OF CHILDREN (0 TO 12 YRS) FOR WHOM THERE IS A REGULATED CHILD CARE SPACE



Source: Martha Friendly and Jane Beach. Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada, 2004. *Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, 2005.*

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT



Source: Statistics Canada, Summary of Public School Indicators for the Provinces and Territories, *Cat. 81-595 MIE2004022, and* The Daily, *July 30, 2004.*

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

In order for parents to be able to participate in the labour force or pursue educational studies, they need access to reliable and good quality care for their young children. It is well-established that quality early childhood education and care supports the healthy development of children and contributes to their life chances – for academic success, health, and independence. Some data are available on the number of child care spaces in Canada and the care arrangements that parents choose, but there is far less information about the quality of care.

Since 1994, there has been a significant increase in the use of child care in every province. Child care use varied among the provinces in 2002, from a low of 42% in Alberta, to a high of 66% in Quebec.

Over half (53%) of children aged six months to five years were in some form of child care in 2002 – up from 42% in 1994. For children aged six months to three years, 52% were in care, as were 54% of 4- and 5-year-olds.

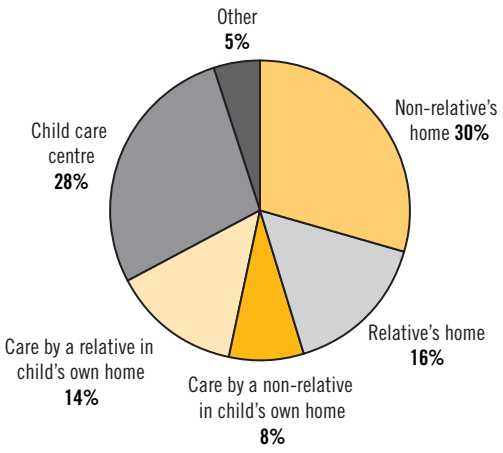
CHILD CARE IN THE PROVINCES
% OF CHILDREN AGED 6 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS USING CARE

	1994	2002	% INCREASE 1994 TO 2002
Newfoundland and Labrador	36	51	42
Prince Edward Island	42	63	50
Nova Scotia	39	53	36
New Brunswick	39	56	44
Quebec	44	66	50
Ontario	44	50	14
Manitoba	42	52	24
Saskatchewan	45	54	20
Alberta	39	42	8
British Columbia	36	48	33

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth *and Statistics Canada's* The Daily, *February 7, 2005.*

The two most common types of child care arrangements in 2002 were centre-based care and care provided in another person's home by someone who was not a relative. The proportion of children in child care centres rose from 19% in 1994 to 28% in 2002, and for care provided in a non-relative's home, the proportion fell from 44% to 30%. Over a one-year period, 17% of families had to change their main child care arrangement at least once. Children in low-income families were more likely to use centre-based care, and those in high-income families were more likely to have care provided in a non-relative's home.

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS, 2002
MAIN CARE ARRANGEMENT FOR CHILDREN AGED 6 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 2002.

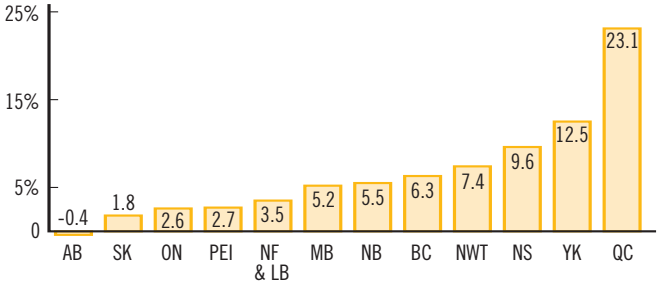
Availability of child care

In 2004, there were regulated child care spaces for only 15.5% of Canadian children aged 12 and under. This was an improvement from 1992 (7.5%) and up from 2001 (12.1%). The proportion of children in regulated care varied across the country, from 4.9% in Saskatchewan to 30% in Quebec.

The supply of regulated child care spaces doubled from 1992 to 2004 (745,254 spaces). Growth was greatest between 2001 and 2004 when approximately 151,000 new spaces were established. More than half (87,000) of these new spaces were set up in Quebec, which had 43% of all regulated child care spaces in 2004, up from 40% in 2001.

The supply of regulated child care spaces is unstable. Data for 2003/04 show that in three provinces/territories, more centres closed than opened. In four more provinces, the ratio of centres closing to others opening was 40% or more. In Nova Scotia, for example, 28 new licenses were issued, but 24 centres closed – for a closure rate of 86%. In Ontario, there were 349 new licenses and 256 centres closed, for a closure rate of 73%.

% CHANGE IN AVAILABLILITY OF CHILD CARE, BY PROVINCE/ TERRITORY, 1992 TO 2004
% OF CHILDREN FOR WHOM A REGULATED CHILD CARE SPACE WAS AVAILABLE



Source: Martha Friendly and Jane Beach. Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada, 2004. *Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, 2005.*

Since 2001, only two provinces have increased the level of income that a family can have and still be eligible for a child care subsidy. Many provinces have not changed their eligibility levels since 1995 or even earlier. Generally, when eligibility levels go up, fewer families qualify for child care subsidies.

ELIGIBILITY LEVEL FOR FULL CHILD CARE SUBSIDY, BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY

NET INCOME FOR LONE-PARENT FAMILY WITH ONE CHILD

	1992	2001	2003/ 04*
Newfoundland and Labrador	$ 9,960	$14,160	$14,160
Prince Edward Island	$10,080	$13,440	$13,440
Nova Scotia	$16,500	$16,812	$16,800
New Brunswick	$11,664	$15,000	$15,000
Quebec	$12,000	n/a	n/a
Ontario	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manitoba	$13,787	$13,787	$13,787
Saskatchewan	$19,668	$19,668	$19,800
Alberta	$18,710	$20,520	$28,080
British Columbia	$18,756	$18,984	$16,764
Northwest Territories	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nunavut	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yukon	$17,772	$20,424	$20,424

Notes:
**As of March 31, 2004*
Net income not adjusted for inflation
Quebec provides publicly funded services rather than subsidies to select families.
Ontario municipalities determine eligibility levels using a provincial needs test in which income is only one factor. Province-wide information is not available.
Saskatchewan determines eligibility for subsidies based on gross income.
The Northwest Territories uses a needs test in which income is only one factor. Territory-wide information is not available.
In Nunavut, a needs test is used in which income is only one factor. Territory-wide information is not available.
Source: Martha Friendly and Jane Beach. Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada, 2004. *Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, 2005.*

Unfortunately, there are no comparable data on child care fees across the provinces/territories or over time. The latest available cross-Canada information is from a 1998 study, "You Bet I Care!" In two provinces, fees for regulated child care spaces are set by the government: in Quebec, parents pay $7 per day for child care for children of all ages; in Manitoba, the government sets maximum fees based on age groups (in 2003/04, for example, $18.80 per day for 2- to 5-year-olds).

Total provincial/territorial spending for regulated child care rose from $762 million in 1992 to $2.4 billion in 2004. Quebec accounted for 65% of this spending ($1.56 billion), up from 58% in 2001. Between 2001 and 2004, Quebec increased its spending on child care by $468 million, while the rest of Canada spent $44 million more.

From 1992 to 2004, provincial/territorial allocations for regulated child care have ranged from an 11-fold increase in Quebec to a decrease of 20% in Alberta. Since 2001, Alberta, British Columbia, and Nunavut have reduced their allocations for regulated care, and the increases in many other provinces/territories have been small with fluctuating financing. Only Newfoundland, Quebec, and Saskatchewan have steadily increased their allocations for regulated child care.

Child care in not-for-profit centres – including some publicly operated centres in Ontario and Quebec – accounted for 80% of the available spaces in Canada in 2004, up from 70% of spaces in 1992 and 77% in 2001. There were wide variations among the provinces. For example, 88% of the regulated child care spaces in Quebec in 2004 were in not-for-profit centres, compared to only 27% of the spaces in Newfoundland and Labrador. Between 2001 and 2004, the number of spaces in for-profit centres in Ontario grew at more than three times the rate of spaces in non-profit child care centres.

% OF ALL REGULATED CHILD CARE SPACES THAT ARE IN NOT-FOR-PROFIT CENTRES

	1992	2001	2004
Newfoundland and Labrador	22	36	27
Prince Edward Island	65	54	30
Nova Scotia	60	57	55
New Brunswick	57	n/a	30
Quebec	82	86	88
Ontario	76	83	78
Manitoba	90	92	92
Saskatchewan	94	99	100
Alberta	35	44	46
British Columbia	61	58	n/a
Northwest Territories	83	100	100
Nunavut	n/a	400	100
Yukon	86	73	74

Source: Martha Friendly and Jane Beach. Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2004. *Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, 2005.*

CHILD CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

About three of 10 children with disabilities – 54,330 children under age 15 – were in some form of child care in 2001. Preschoolers under age five were the most likely to be in child care (56% of children with disabilities), while 38% of children aged 5 to 9 and 17% of those aged 10 to14 were in some form of care arrangement.

Children with more severe disabilities, particularly school-aged children, were the most likely to be in some type of care arrangement. Among children aged 5 to 14, 35% of those with very severe disabilities, 29% with severe disabilities, 27% with moderate disabilities, and 18% with mild disabilities were in some form of child care in 2001. And those with the most severe disabilities were more likely to have more than one type of care arrangement.

For preschoolers with disabilities, the variations were less pronounced. Those with severe or very severe disabilities were slightly more likely than those with mild or moderate disabilities to be in child care (58% compared to 56%). They were, however, more likely to have two or more types of care arrangements: 19% compared with 14%.

CHANGES IN PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT TO ACCOMMODATE CHILD'S DISABILITY, BY SEVERITY LEVEL, 2001

	CHILD UNDER AGE 5		CHILD AGED 5 TO 14			
	MILD TO MODERATE DISABILITY	SEVERE TO VERY SEVERE DISABILITY	MILD DISABILITY	MODERATE DISABILITY	SEVERE DISABILITY	VERY SEVERE DISABILITY
Parent quit work	21%	26%	9%	15%	26%	37%
Parent changed work hours	27%	37%	18%	29%	40%	51%
Parent turned down promotion	14%	25%	8%	14%	24%	31%
Parent worked fewer hours	31%	49%	21%	29%	43%	54%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, *2001.*

Refusal of care services

Finding child care options can be frustrating for any parent, but for parents of children with disabilities, it can be particularly trying: 16% said they had been refused daycare at some point due to their child's disability. About 20% of children under age 15 in low-income families had been refused care because of their disability, compared with 14% of children from higher-income families.

Among school-aged children (5 to 14 years), 39% of those with very severe disabilities were refused care in 2001. Similarly, 18% of children with severe disabilities, 9% of those with moderate disabilities, and 4% of children with mild disabilities were denied child care at some point due to their disability. Among preschool-aged children, about one in five was refused care, regardless of the severity level of their disability.

Not surprisingly, this has an impact on parental employment. Overall, the families of 55% of children said the child's disability had some impact on their employment. In 39% of the cases the mother's job had been affected, for 6% of children the father's job had been affected, for 8% of children both parents' employment was affected, and for 2% of children, the employment of another family member was affected.

In order to provide care for a disabled child, many parents quit their jobs or alter their work arrangements. Parents of children with the most severe disabilities were more likely to work fewer hours, turn down promotions or employment opportunities, change their work hours, or leave the labour force entirely.

Even if parents of disabled children have dropped out of the labour market in order to provide care for their child, they often still require additional care so that they can attend to other family needs. Among parents of all children aged 5 to14 with disabilities, 34% said they needed support for daily activities due to the child's disability in 2001. For example, 13% needed help with housework, 24% required child care so that they could attend to other family responsibilities, and 31% needed time to attend to personal activities. Two-thirds of those who required such support had unmet needs.

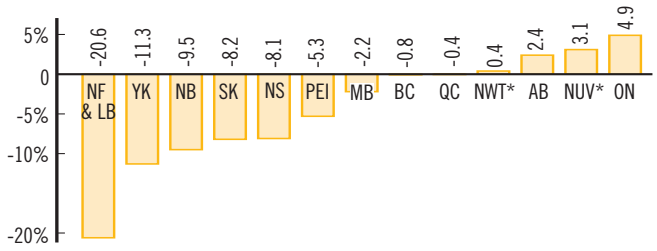
SCHOOLS

Education is one of the most important community resources for children and youth. Schools not only provide academic learning, they also give young people opportunities for social and emotional development.

Between 1997 and 2003, overall enrollment in Canadian elementary and secondary schools rose slightly, but nine of 13 provinces and territories experienced declines. Ontario, Alberta, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories were the exceptions, with the highest growth in Ontario (4.9%) and enrollment of over two million.

School enrollment is generally related to demographic trends, such as the trend to smaller families with fewer children. In Ontario, the increase in enrollment may be related to the province's higher proportion of immigrant families. In Newfoundland and Labrador, which had a 21% drop in enrollment over this six-year period, the decline may be related to a large out-migration from the province. The other Atlantic provinces all reported decreases of 5% or more.

% CHANGE IN TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, 1997 TO 2003



Note: Data for the Northwest Territories pertain to 1999/00 to 2002/03 and for Nunavut, 2000/01 to 2002/03.
Source: Statistics Canada. Summary of Public School Indicators for the Provinces and Territories. *Cat. No. 81-595 MIE2004022.*

Private schools

Between 1995 and 2000, enrollment in Canadian public schools grew by less than 1%. Over that same period, enrollment in private schools rose by 15%. By 2000, there were 312,400 young people in private schools – 6% of all elementary and secondary students. The largest increase in private school enrollment was in Newfoundland, with a 79% increase. Ontario followed with an increase of 34%, and British Columbia with 19%. In New Brunswick, private school enrollment declined by 6% and in Quebec, by 1%.

Growth in education spending

Spending on education has been increasing faster than inflation. In 1997, Canada spent $6,672 per student, and by 2003, the figure had climbed to $7,946 – an increase of 19%. Inflation over this period grew by only 12%. Ontario was the only province where total spending per student grew at a rate below inflation.

Education in the northern territories is costly. In 2003, the per-student cost was highest in the Yukon ($14,300), an increase of 26% since 1996. Expenditures were lowest in Atlantic Canada, with Nova Scotia having the lowest education costs per student in 2003 ($6,402). Prince Edward Island was close behind ($7,038), and Newfoundland and New Brunswick both spent about $7,300 per student.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The vast majority (96%) of children aged 5 to 14 with disabilities go to school. Of these, 65.1% attend a regular school, 26.1% attend a regular school with special education classes, 6.4% attend a special education school, and 2.3% say they attend some other type of school. Of those attending regular schools, 62.4% are in regular classes, 29.1% have a mix of regular and special education classes, and 8.5% attend only special education classes.

Special education services

Trying to access special education services reveals problems in the system. Nearly one-third (31%) of all children with disabilities have difficulties getting the special ed services they require. In 2001, older children (aged 10 to 14) were slightly more likely than younger children (aged 5 to 9) to experience difficulties in this area: 33% compared to 29%.

Children with the most severe disabilities have the most difficulty accessing special education services. Over half (53%) of school children with very severe disabilities, 42% of those with severe disabilities, 32% with moderate disabilities, and 11% with mild disabilities faced problems in 2001 getting the required services.

The vast majority of parents (82%) cited "insufficient staffing or insufficient special education services" for these difficulties. There were also problems getting children tested (51%), and communications problems with the child's school (48%). Most parents cited multiple reasons for the difficulties in accessing special ed services for their child.

The lack of special education staff within schools affected children of all ages and both genders equally. It was more likely to affect children with the most severe disabilities.

Getting a child tested in order to qualify for special services was more difficult for girls, for older children, and for poor children than it was for their counterparts. It was somewhat less of a problem for very severely disabled children.

Communications problems with the child's school also created difficulties in accessing special ed services. There were only slight differences across severity levels and by gender, but older children were more likely than younger children to encounter this problem. Low-income parents were much more likely to cite communications problems with the school: 62% compared with 43% of other parents.

What supports do they require?

About 70% of children with disabilities (102,950 children aged 5 to 14) require personal supports while at school. These are aids, devices, or services related to their education such as recording equipment, amplifiers, Braille computers, tutors, note takers and the like. In 2001, the majority (74%) had their needs fully met, while another 19% had partially unmet needs, and 7% had their needs completely *unmet*.

A small proportion (7%) require building modifications such as ramps, automatic door openers, elevators, or accessible washrooms in the schools. Of these children, 77% had their needs fully met, 11% had partially unmet needs, and 12% had their needs completely unmet.

Severity of disability: Statistics Canada constructed an index to measure severity of disability based on the intensity and frequency of the activity limitations reported. For children aged 5 to 14, severity is classified into four groups: mild, moderate, severe, and very severe. For children under age five, severity is divided into two groups: mild to moderate, and severe to very severe.

DIFFICULTIES ACCESSING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES, 2001

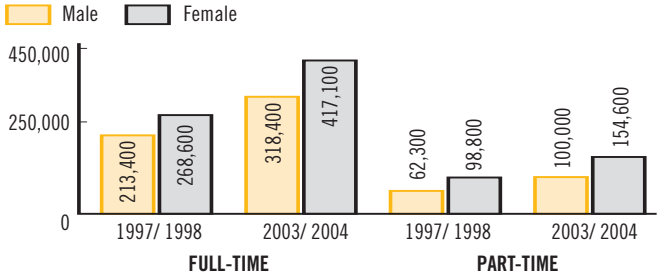
	CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES					
	AGED 5 TO 9	AGED 10 TO 14	AGED 5 TO 14			
REASONS CITED BY PARENTS			BOYS	GIRLS	POOR	NON-POOR
Services not available locally	37%	47%	45%	38%	38%	43%
Insufficient special ed staff	82%	83%	82%	83%	80%	84%
Communications problems with the school	41%	52%	48%	47%	62%	43%
Difficulties getting child tested	48%	53%	49%	56%	57%	50%
Other reason	36%	43%	40%	39%	35%	42%

Note: Multiple reasons could be cited; categories were not mutually exclusive.
Source: Calculations by the CCSD using Statistics Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, *2001.*

TRENDS IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Enrollment in university and college programs has been rising. Between 1997/98 and 2001/02, the number of students enrolled in undergraduate programs rose by 20%. The largest increase was among full-time students, whose numbers grew from 573,100 to 735,600 over this period (28%). Full-time enrollment among women rose by 33%, and by 22% among men.

UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

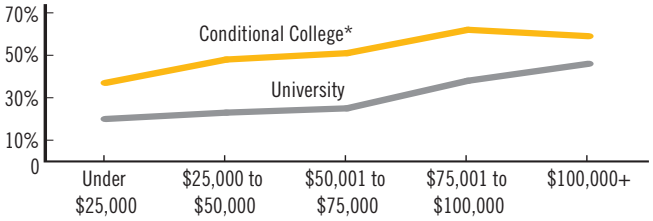


Source: Statistics Canada. The Daily, *October 11, 2005.*

Not surprisingly, youth from high-income families are much more likely to attend university than those from low-income families. According to a Statistics Canada study, in 2001, young people in families with annual incomes of $100,000 or more attended university at a rate double that of youth in families with incomes below $25,000. About 46% of young people aged 18 to 24 in high-income families had completed or were enrolled in university studies, compared with 20% of youth from low-income families. This participation gap in university attendance did not change significantly between 1993 and 2001.

The participation gap by family income was much smaller among college students. However, among 18- to 24-year-olds who attended college but not university, the gap widened.

% OF YOUTH (18 TO 24 YRS) IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, BY ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME, 2001



** Participation in college/ not attending or have completed university*
Source: Statistics Canada, Participation in Post-secondary Education in Canada: Has the Role of Parental Income and Education Changed over the 1990s? *Cat. No. 243 (11F0019MIE2005243), 2005.*

Tuition fees

University students faced another tuition fee increase in 2005/06. Average undergraduate tuition fees were $4,214, up from $4,140 in 2004/05. Fees have almost tripled since 1990/91, and they are 22% higher than they were in 2000/01.

Between 1990/91 and 2003/04, average tuition fees rose faster than inflation. Over that period, tuition rose at an average annual rate of 8% – four times the average rate of inflation (1.9%) as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

In 2005/06, tuition rose in eight provinces. In Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba, the increases were about 1% or less. Fees remained virtually unchanged in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Saskatchewan. The biggest tuition increases were in the Atlantic: New Brunswick (6.7%), Prince Edward Island (6.2%), and Nova Scotia (4.6%). In Newfoundland/ Labrador, Quebec, and Manitoba, tuition fees were below the national average. Quebec undergrads pay the lowest fees in Canada as a result of a tuition freeze that has kept their rates at less than half the national average since the late 1990s. Nova Scotia has the highest fees, with average undergrad tuition at $6,281. In British Columbia, tuition fees have risen by 88% since 2000/01, while they have declined by 22.7% in Newfoundland and Labrador.

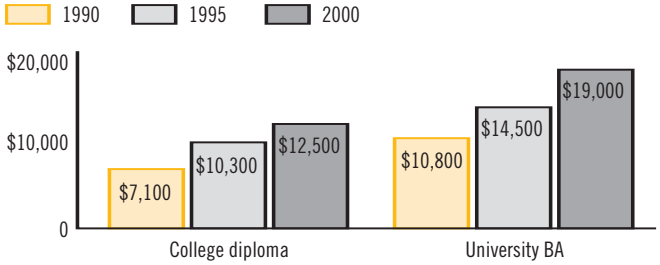
In addition to tuition, students must also pay other compulsory fees for things like recreation and athletics, student health services, student associations, and other services for full-time students. These fees are generally exempt from any provincial tuition fee policies. For undergraduates, such fees make up, on average, 12.6% of the total fees students are required to pay to the institution. Nationally, these additional fees rose by 3.5% between 2004/05 and 2005/06.

Student debt

With increased tuition, there is a need for more financial assistance. According to a 2002 survey, 26% of post-secondary students aged 18 to 24 had used government student loans to finance their academic year. Government loans were the major source of borrowing among undergraduates. Between 1990 and 2000, the average debt incurred by graduates at the Bachelor's level increased by 78%. Since 1995 alone, the average student debt has grown by 30%. Average debt was lower among students attending colleges, but this has also been climbing.

Students are usually required to start paying off their student loans within six months of graduation. Several factors affect a student's ability to pay off this debt, including the amount owed, their employment earnings, interest rates, and personal circumstances. College students who graduated in 2000 and were able to pay off their student debt by 2002 had an average income of $32,000, compared to $25,800 for those who had not paid off their debt. Among university BA graduates in 2000, those who were debt free within two years had an average income of $36,700, compared to $32,500 for those who still had outstanding student debt.

AVERAGE STUDENT DEBT* AT GRADUATION



** From government student loans*

Source: Statistics Canada. National Graduates Survey, *1990, 1995, & 2000.*

KIDS HELP PHONE

Kids Help Phone is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is an increasingly important resource for children and youth. Professionally trained counsellors provide immediate, confidential support by phone or via the web to young people in 3,000 Canadian communities every year.

More youth are communicating with Kids Help Phone on-line. In May 2004, the organization's web counselling services – "Ask a Counsellor" and "Express Yourself " – were re-launched with improved graphics and navigation. The number of on-line questions received each month more than tripled. The organization estimates that for every question answered, an average of 33 more youth benefit by reading the counsellor's response.

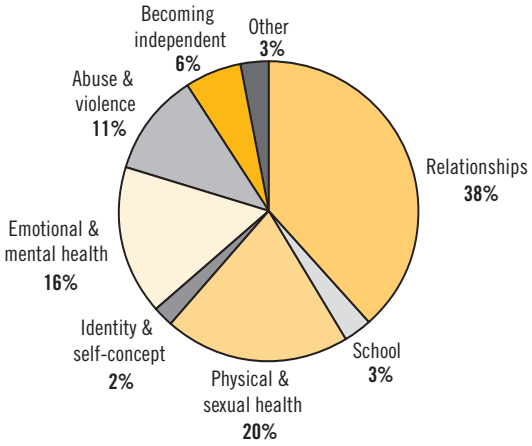
Most youth ask questions about relationships and issues around physical and sexual health.

Help Line stats

- 20,175 hours of phone counselling was provided in 2004 – up from 20,081 hours in 2003.
- 2,847 web posts were received in January 2005 – up from 841 in May 2004.
- 42 Chapters were operating across Canada in 2004 – up from 37 in 2003.
- There were 2,500 Student Ambassadors in 2004 – up 25% from 2003.

KIDS HELP PHONE, 2004

REASON FOR THE CALL:



Source: Kids Help Phone, Annual Report, *2004.*

HOUSING

In 2001, 15% of all Canadian children under age 15 – 782,400 young people – lived in inadequate housing. This was down from 17% in 1996.

There is ample evidence linking adequate housing with healthy child development. Good quality, stable, and affordable housing increases a child's chances of success at school, helps families connect to their community, and is an integral part of healthy neighbourhoods.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), acceptable housing means a dwelling that does not require major repairs, is suitable in size and make-up for the family, and costs less than 30% of before-tax household income. A family is considered to be in "core housing need" if their dwelling does not meet one of those standards.

Affordability is the major factor for most Canadians in core housing need, and these households are predominantly renters. In 2001, renters were 3½ times more likely to be in core housing need than owners. Of all renter families with children, 34% lived in core housing need.

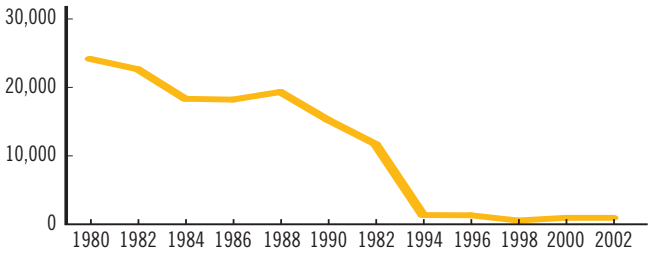
Some groups of young people are at higher risk than others. Living in a lone-parent household increases the risk: 41% of children in lone-parent families lived in core housing need in 2001, compared to 9.3% of those living with both parents in a single family household. For Aboriginal children and youth living off-reserve, 32% were in core housing need in 2001, compared to 14% of non-Aboriginal children and youth.

BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The federal government's role in housing has been steadily eroding since the 1980s. In 1993, the government decided to cancel all federal spending on new housing. As a result of declining federal and provincial government supports, combined with declining private sector involvement, very few affordable rental units are being built.

In 2001, the Affordable Housing Framework Agreement promised substantial new funds for housing from the federal government to the provinces and territories. Four years later, the National Housing and Homelessness Network estimated that less than 12,000 new homes had actually been built or planned – only 10% of the total promised.

PRODUCTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, 1980 TO 2002



Source: Campaign 2000. Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada, *2005.*

HOUSING ON RESERVES

The dismal living conditions of Aboriginal people were in the spotlight again in 2005, when residents of the Kashechewan reserve in northern Ontario had to evacuate the community because of contaminated drinking water. Media coverage showed overcrowded and rundown housing with inadequate space and sanitary facilities.

Of the 398,400 Aboriginal households in Canada in 2001, close to 20% live on reserves. According to a CMHC study, "Aboriginal households face tremendous challenges in obtaining adequate housing, including low incomes, unemployment, and legal impediments on reserves." The lack of dwellings – with an estimated shortfall of 20,000 to 35,000 units – results in overcrowding, accelerates housing deterioration, and leads to social and health ill effects.

In 2001, 22.4% of Aboriginal households on reserves were inadequately housed and unable to afford appropriate housing. In 2002, 16.8% of Inuit households were overcrowded and said to be in core housing need. Aboriginal people are also over-represented among the homeless.

At a First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues in November 2005, the federal government promised $5.1 billion over five years to alleviate poverty among Aboriginal people. The government also promised to improve housing stock and maintenance, address the problems of emergency shelters and native home ownership, and provide funding to improve water regulation on reserves.

HOMELESSNESS

There is no complete picture of homeless children and youth in Canada, but snapshots done in major Canadian cities reveal worrisome numbers. A 2003 study by CMHC confirmed what urban centres have been reporting for years – homelessness among families is a growing problem.

The Halifax Regional Municipality surveyed homeless individuals in both 2003 and 2004. Youth under age 24 comprised 31% of those surveyed in 2003, and 34% in 2004. Family conflict was cited as the main cause of homelessness: 21% of cases in 2003 and 32% of cases in 2004. Family conflict was also the leading cause of homelessness among youth in 2004, reported by 58% of those under age 18 and 31% of those aged 19 to 24.

The 2005 Greater Vancouver Regional District Homeless Count revealed a doubling in the homeless population since 2002 – from 1,049 to 2,112. The number of people at risk of homelessness due to economic factors also increased significantly – from 80,000 people in 1991 to 126,500 by 2001.

Ottawa's first report card on homelessness found that families with children under 18 stayed in emergency shelters longer than other groups in 2004 – an average of 45 days, compared to 40 days for single men and 31 days for women. Ottawa youth aged 12 to 18 stayed in emergency shelters for an average of 23 days in 2004.

Calgary has seen a steady increase in the number of homeless people counted since 1994. The homeless population grew by 29% between 2000 and 2002, while the city's population grew by only 5% over that period. In 2004, 104 homeless families were enumerated – an increase of 148% in two years. (Families were defined as a couple, a couple with one or more children, or a lone adult with one or more children.) The dramatic rise in homelessness may be partially explained by an increase in the number of facilities surveyed.

In Toronto, 11,679 children and youth under age 25 used emergency shelters in 2002 – more than one-third of the total. The number of people using emergency shelters rose 21% from 1990 to 2002 (31,985). The number of two-parent families with children using shelters was almost three times higher than in 1990.

The 2003 CMHC study cited the following as the main causes of homelessness among families: a lack of affordable housing; poverty; family violence; and inadequate funding for social programs. The study included Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Peel Region, Toronto, Montréal, Québec, Saint John, and Halifax. Toronto was the only city in which family homelessness declined. Between 1998 and 1999, the number of one- and two-parent families using emergency shelters in Toronto rose, then declined dramatically after September 11th, 2001. The CMHC study said this was partially attributable to the adoption of more restrictive federal immigration policies that had reduced the number of refugees and other newcomers seeking temporary shelter in Canada. The City of Toronto also attributed the decline in numbers to the success of programs helping families with housing issues and working to prevent homelessness.

ACCESSING HEALTH CARE

Research has shown that increasing the size and number of health care services like hospitals does not necessarily lead to better health outcomes. But having ready access to health care *is* important in treating children and youth for chronic or life-threatening illnesses or injuries and ensuring a healthy start in life. The *quality* of health care services is vital to maintaining and enhancing the health of Canada's children and youth.

Canada's publicly funded health care system enables most children to see a physician. In 2000, 84% of all children and youth under age 18 had seen a physician at least once over the year. For children under age six, 90% had seen a physician, as had 83% of those aged 6 to 11, and 78% of teens aged 12 to 17. Of these young people, 80% had seen a family doctor and 29% had visited a pediatrician. There were no differences based on family income. However, access to a dentist did show variations: 60% of children and youth under 18 in low-income families had visited a dentist at least once over the year, compared to 76% of those in higher-income families.

Issues of access to care and timely care are now driving the health agenda in Canada. For families and children, these issues are particularly important. According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, youth are more likely than older Canadians to feel that their health care needs are unmet. This was particularly so for young women aged 20 to 24: almost 20% in 2002/03 said they had unmet health care needs at some point over the previous year, a slight improvement since 2000/01.

Youth were also more likely than adults to have difficulties accessing primary health care services. This includes routine care from a family doctor (for annual check-ups or ongoing care for an illness, for example) or care for a minor, non-life-threatening problem.

UNMET HEALTH CARE NEEDS

% WHO REPORTED HAVING UNMET NEEDS IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	12 TO 14 YRS		15 TO 19 YRS		20 TO 24 YRS		OVER AGE 25	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
2000/ 01	5.2	5.7	8.7	14.5	13.3	19.8	11.1	14.0
2002/ 03	4.5	6.1	7.8	11.7	11.5	18.5	10.0	12.5

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2000/01 & 2002/03.*

Alternative health care

Increasing numbers of Canadians – both young and old – are seeking care from alternative health care providers such as massage therapists and acupuncturists. In 2002/03, 11.5% of young adults aged 20 to 24 did so, up from 10.8% in 2000/01. Young women were more than twice as likely as men to contact alternative health care providers, and older youth were more likely than younger teens to use these services.

CONTACTED AN ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

% WHO SOUGHT ALTERNATIVE CARE IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	12 TO 14 YRS		15 TO 19 YRS		20 TO 24 YRS		OVER AGE 25	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
2000/ 01	2.2	3.1	4.6	7.8	7.5	14.2	8.7	15.0
2002/ 03	2.3	3.0	3.9	9.2	7.0	16.2	9.7	17.4

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2000/01 & 2002/03.*

CIVIC VITALITY

Civic vitality refers to the strength of social networks within a community, region, province, and country. It is reflected in the presence of institutions, organizations, and informal practices that people create to share resources and build attachments with others.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Participation in elections
- Participation in volunteer activities
- Charitable donations

INTRODUCTION

Civic vitality encompasses the social and cultural environments of children and youth – the world beyond their families, where they experience their day-to-day lives. It includes their local communities, schools, churches, organizations, and all of the public spaces they use. Civic life can be as close as the neighbourhood, or as extended as the workplace for a first job; it can be as simple as the quality of casual contact, or as profound as the presence of a life mentor. Civic vitality means that there are people beyond the family who contribute to children's lives and their well-being.

The civic vitality of a community is reflected by a number of things. It includes the value placed on children and the people who value them, the expectations for the future – both for the children themselves and for the larger community – and levels of collective support which focus on or include children. A vital community is one which provides young people with opportunities to grow and develop to their full potential; it encourages them to participate in local initiatives, and advocates on their behalf through organizations like the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada.

To measure the extent to which Canadians participate in civic life, *Progress* tracks indicators of adults' commitments – such as their level of charitable giving and voting rates. *Progress* also tracks indicators of youth's opportunities for participation in civic life through their own voting patterns and memberships in community organizations and groups.

YOUTH VOTING

Youth vote at lower rates than older Canadians. About 25% of eligible voters aged 18 to 24 voted in the 2000 federal election: 22% of those aged 18 to 20 and 28% of those aged 21 to 24. Among the Canadian population overall, 61% voted, as did 83% of seniors aged 68 or older.

In the June 2004 federal election, it was the first opportunity for young people aged 18 to 21½ to vote; 39% of them did so. The Chief Electoral Officer warned that these results could not be compared to other elections due to differences in methodologies. He believed that the problem of low voter turnout among youth had not necessarily been resolved. Young people continue to vote at rates nearly 35 points lower than adults aged 57 and older.

Studies of the 1993, 1997, and 2000 federal elections found that age was the strongest predictor of voter turnout: young people were less likely than older Canadians to vote, and their voting rate was declining over time. Between 1990 and 1998, the reported voter turnout dropped significantly – from 88% to 81% – with most of the decline occurring among young people.

An analysis of the nine federal elections held between 1968 and 2000 showed that average voter turnout was 74% for the six elections prior to 1990; this dropped to 67% for the three elections after 1990. The study concluded that most of this decline was the result of a "generational effect." Voter turnout was two or three points lower among baby-boomers (those born between 1945 and 1959) than among people born before 1945; it was 10 points lower among Generation X (those born in the 1960s) than among baby-boomers; and it was another 10 points lower among people born since 1970 than it was among Generation X.

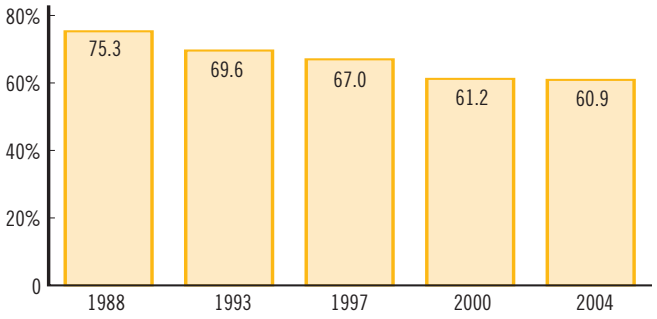
Other studies indicate that many youth who don't vote remain uninvolved in the electoral system, and they do not vote when they get older.

The falling youth vote is a worldwide phenomenon. The U.K. Electoral Commission concluded that low voter turnout in the 2001 election was primarily due to youth not voting. In the U.S., only 36% of youth aged 18 to 24 voted in the 2000 presidential election.

In a recent survey, young people aged 18 to 24 were asked why they did not vote. The most common response was that they were not interested, didn't care, or were apathetic. Others cited being too busy with work/ school/ family. Overall, the reasons given for not voting appeared to fall into two broad categories: those related to the lack of integration of young people into the political system, and attitudes of apathy or political distrust among young people.

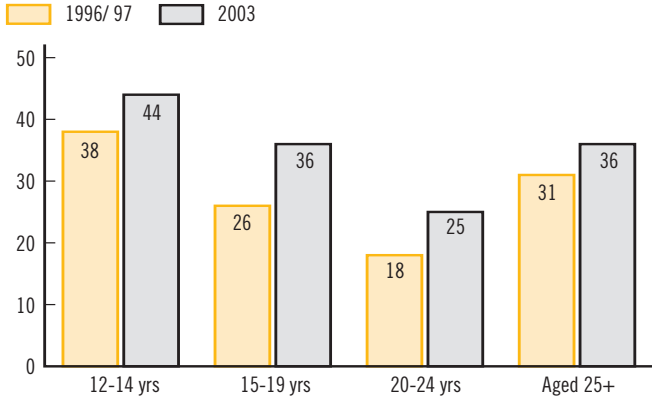
KEY INDICATORS

CANADIAN VOTER TURNOUT RATE FOR FEDERAL ELECTIONS



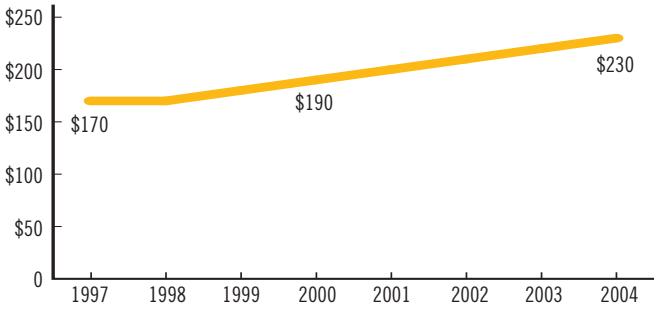
Source: Elections Canada website: www.elections.ca.

PARTICIPATION AS MEMBERS OF A VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION/ ASSOCIATION, BY AGE GROUP



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's National Population Health Survey, *1996/1997 and the* Canadian Community Health Survey, *2003.*

MEDIAN CHARITABLE DONATIONS, CANADA



Source: Statistics Canada, Cansim Table 2005111017101233539.

When asked what should be done to get young people more interested in politics, about half the young people surveyed identified strategies to improve education and information. Other suggestions involved changes to the political system that would encourage more youth involvement.

REASONS GIVEN BY YOUTH AGED 18 TO 24 FOR NOT VOTING, 2000

Not interested; don't care; apathy	28.0%
Too busy with work/ school/ family	22.6%
No appealing candidates/ parties/ issues	13.9%
Away from riding/ province/ country	7.9%
Problems with registration	7.4%
Vote is meaningless; doesn't count; election is foregone conclusion	6.5%
Lack of faith/ confidence in candidates/ parties/ leaders	6.3%
Lack of information about candidates/ parties/ issues	6.3%

Note: Open-ended questions were asked and multiple reasons could be given. Percentage of respondents who cited each reason.
Source: J.H. Pammett and L. LeDuc, Explaining the Turnout Decline in Canadian Federal Elections: A New Survey of Non-voters, *2003. www.elections.ca*

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE MORE INTERESTED IN POLITICS?
SUGGESTIONS FROM 332 YOUTH AGED 18 TO 24

Improved education, information	**47.7%**
More education in the schools	23.0
More dialogue/ exposure/ general education	9.0
More emphasis on personal relevance, benefits, jobs	8.0
More advertisements, media exposure	7.7
More education in the home	0.0
Political system change, involvement	**42.7%**
More issues relevant to youth	26.7
Recruitment, involvement of youth	7.3
Younger candidates, politicians, leaders	4.7
Better politicians, leaders, parties	2.3
Electoral reform, democratic reform	1.7
Changes in conduct of politicians	**24.3%**
Government relate better to/ understand youth	10.6
More honesty, responsibility, accountability in politics	6.1
Make politics less complicated, more interesting, fun	7.6
Other	**1.8%**
Nothing/ don't know	**3.2%**

Note: Multiple suggestions could be given. Percentage of respondents who cited each suggestion.
Source: J.H. Pammett and L. LeDuc, Explaining the Turnout Decline in Canadian Federal Elections: A New Survey of Non-voters, *2003. www.elections.ca*

VOTER TURNOUT

There has been a steady decline in voter turnout from one federal election to the next. For Canada overall, the rate of voter turnout fell by 19% from the 1988 federal election to the one in 2004, and the rate declined in every province and territory. In the Northwest Territories, voter turnout dropped by 40%, and in Newfoundland and Labrador, by 27%. The smallest decline was in the Yukon.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OF IMMIGRANT YOUTH

Our growing diversity raises important questions about the well-being of newcomers to Canada. Are immigrants – and young immigrants in particular – actively engaged in their communities? Do they have opportunities to participate in meaningful ways?

Canadian immigrants may have very different understandings of what is meant by social and civic engagement. There may also be structural and cultural barriers that limit their participation. Here we look at different measures of civic engagement to see some of the ways in which immigrant youth contribute in their communities.

Overall, there is a growing trend towards greater community involvement among immigrant youth. This is a positive indication of commitment, particularly in light of the economic challenges faced by many new Canadians. Growing levels of civic engagement help foster more dynamic and more inclusive communities.

PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC AND COMMUNITY LIFE
IMMIGRANT AND CANADIAN-BORN YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24

	IMMIGRANTS		CANADIAN-BORN	
	2000	2003	2000	2003
Volunteer rate	18%	35%	31%	39%
Donation rate	71%	n/a	65%	n/a
Group membership rate	36%	62%	48%	64%

Note: Questions about these issues in the two surveys were different, so direct comparisons should not be made. Data in the 2003 GSS under-represents the number of donors, so are not used.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating *and the 2003* General Social Survey.

Volunteering

Volunteering is on the rise in the general population after a decline in the late 1990s. According to the General Social Survey, 35% of immigrant youth volunteered for nonprofit or charitable organizations in 2003, almost double the rate in 2000.

Giving

The vast majority of Canadians make charitable gifts, either directly to individuals or to organizations working to improve the quality of life in their communities. This is certainly true of Canadian immigrants. In 2000, 82% of immigrants made charitable contributions, a slightly higher proportion than among Canadian-born residents (80%). The donation rate was also higher among immigrant youth than Canadian-born youth: over two-thirds of immigrants aged 15 to 24 made financial contributions in 2000.

Participating

A third way in which Canadians support their communities is by joining nonprofit and charitable organizations and participating in their work. In 2000, just under half of all immigrants (48%) and one-third of immigrant youth were members of an organization, group, or club, including unions. By 2003, the youth membership rate was considerably higher: 62% of young immigrants aged 15 to 24 participated in community groups or associations.

INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Young people are becoming more active in community life. Between 1996/97 and 2003, there was a 41% increase in the participation of youth aged 15 to 19 as members of voluntary organizations or associations. Among young adults aged 20 to 24, the increase was 39%, and for adults over age 25, their participation in community groups rose by 16%.

Young women were more likely than men to participate in voluntary organizations or associations, and the increase in young women's participation rate exceeded that of men.

Participation rates varied across Canada. Quebec had the lowest rates in 2003 among all age groups. For teens aged 15 to 19, the rates were highest in Ontario and British Columbia, and for young adults, the rates were highest in B.C. and the Atlantic.

The rate of increase also varied. Between 1996/97 and 2003, over 80% more B.C. teens participated in voluntary groups and associations, and for teens in Ontario, the increase was 44%. In the Prairies, the rate of increase among teens was 16%. For young adults, the greatest rate of increase was in Quebec (65%), while Ontario had the lowest (22%).

How much time do young people spend in these activities? The majority participated at least once a week: 71% of those aged 12 to 14; 66% of teens aged 15 to 19; and 57% of young adults aged 20 to 24.

MEMBERSHIP RATES IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS/ ORGANIZATIONS, BY AGE AND GENDER

	AGED 12 TO 14		AGED 15 TO 19		AGED 20 TO 24	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
1996/ 1997	40%	37%	24%	27%	17%	18%
2003	38%	50%	31%	42%	22%	27%
Percentage change 1996/1997 to 2003	-3.5%	35.9%	28.5%	52.6%	30.0%	47.8%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's National Population Health Survey, *1996/1997 and the* Canadian Community Health Survey, *2003.*

MEMBERSHIP RATES IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS/ ORGANIZATIONS, BY REGION

	AGED 12 TO 14		AGED 15 TO 19		AGED 20 TO 24	
	1996/ 97	2003	1996/ 97	2003	1996/ 97	2003
Atlantic	41%	53%	33%	41%	18%	29%
Quebec	30%	22%	14%	19%	10%	17%
Ontario	36%	49%	30%	43%	21%	26%
Prairies	42%	49%	32%	36%	20%	27%
British Columbia	52%	53%	23%	42%	18%	29%
Northern Territories	n/a	40%	n/a	27%	n/a	28%

N/A: Young people in the Northern Territories were not surveyed in 1996/97.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's National Population Health Survey, *1996/1997 and the* Canadian Community Health Survey, *2003.*

NONPROFIT AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations are an integral part of Canadian life. They provide a wide variety of services, in areas such as sports and recreation, religion, social services, grant-making and fundraising, arts and culture, and development and housing. They help millions of Canadians get involved in efforts to address vital community needs.

The first National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations identified about 161,000 organizations across Canada in 2003. Of these, 23% served children or youth.

Virtually all such organizations rely on volunteers to some degree, and more than half rely solely on volunteers. Many nonprofit groups today are experiencing problems fulfilling their missions. Among the areas posing the greatest problems were those that involved recruiting and retaining volunteers (cited by about 57% of organizations), planning for the future (58%), and obtaining funding (48%).

CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Canadians have been giving increasing amounts of money to charities. According to income tax data, taxpayers claimed more than $6.9 billion in donations in 2004. This was the highest amount ever contributed, 6.3% higher than in 2003.

In addition, more people are giving. Just over 5.8 million Canadians made a donation in 2004, an increase of 3.5% over the previous year. The number of donors rose in every province and territory; the greatest percentage increase was in the Yukon (16%), followed by Nunavut (10%) and British Columbia (6%).

The median amount contributed per donor was $230, with variations among the provinces and territories. Nunavut reported the highest median donation at $390, followed by Prince Edward Island ($340) and Newfoundland and Labrador ($310). The Northwest Territories reported the lowest median donation, at $210. This pattern has been consistent since 2000.

The median donation has increased by 35% since 1997. It has risen everywhere, with the Yukon leading the way, followed by Alberta.

ENGAGING YOUTH IN VANCOUVER

In 2003, the City of Vancouver hired four youth to move forward a Civic Youth Strategy. Bringing young people on staff at City Hall and recognizing their expertise has been credited with generating progress on a number of youth issues in the city.

This Civic Youth Strategy is Vancouver's 1995 policy commitment to support youth and involve them in municipal decision-making.

The Youth Outreach Team works in partnership with youth-based organizations, service providers, and young people themselves to ensure that civic resources are used as effectively as possible to support Vancouver youth in leading healthy and fulfilling lives. The Team also provides opportunities for youth to get involved in civic issues that are important to them, through local action and policy development.

The Youth Outreach Team has worked with a variety of groups:

- the Mayor's Office, to provide education and support about how to effectively engage youth in public forums;
- the Planning Department, on how to tap into the assets of local youth using a community asset mapping tool;
- the Engineering Department, on how to design and deliver interactive discussions on graffiti;
- the 2010 Olympic Bid Corporation, on how to engage youth in consultations and decision-making;
- secondary school staff, on how to engage youth and local community members in discussing and improving school safety.

City officials cite the young people on staff as the key factor in moving its strategy ahead. Staff no longer ask *why* they should engage youth, but rather *how to*, and they turn to the Youth Outreach Team for suggestions.

As a result of this work, all residents of Vancouver have the opportunity to witness and celebrate youth achievements.

CIVICALLY ENGAGED?

A Commentary on Youth Civic Engagement

by Peter Amponsah

As I sit here and write, I cannot forget that six months ago, a very close friend of mine was murdered. Jason Huxtable was 18 years of age, employed, college bound, and loved by his family and friends alike. His accused killer is a 15-year-old youth.

Jason's family had lived in a low-income neighbourhood of Toronto, known for its crime and violence, but they managed to relocate to another area with comfortable living and a "peace of mind" aura. Jason was visiting a friend in another low-income neighbourhood close to where he used to live. He was murdered for being "an outsider."

Much can be said about Jason's death, his killer, and the events that transpired that afternoon of August 30th, 2005. However, what I'd like to draw attention to is the fact that both Jason Huxtable and his accused killer were children – Canada's children.

* * *

In November 2005, I went to Parliament Hill in Ottawa with an organization that serves youth. I wanted to talk about the low rates of civic engagement among people my age. I believe that civic engagement is low because there are too few civic and social activities to help stimulate a sense of community among youth. I wanted to tell them that my experience shows there is a direct relationship between well-organized activities, ongoing youth programs, and a willingness to include youth as meaningful community members.

I met with a room full of politicians who were very aware of the impending federal election. Toronto had just experienced its "Summer of the Gun," and politicians of all stripes were staking out their territory. Some felt that the law – and only the law – would provide the answers to the escalating gun violence. I made the case that these issues are more complicated, and that answers must come from many different collaborative efforts, including the promotion of youth civic engagement.

Civic engagement means the active participation in public affairs. It requires that a person be interested in public issues. It involves the notion of belonging, the experience of investment and ownership in your community.

My own route to civic engagement came through political action. As an adolescent, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to be part of various youth groups, and it was through those influences that I developed my sense of citizenship and social awareness. I became increasingly comfortable in discussions about democracy, rights, and responsibilities. I devoted time to civic issues and services to better my community. I saw that my actions had an effect on the larger vision of an inclusive community, and it is this value that has kept me active and involved.

In my experience, one of the keys to youth activism and participation is information. It is the catalyst that spurs action. Youth – and particularly those from disadvantaged homes, who would benefit enormously from engagement in civic activities – do not come forward because they don't have the information. They don't see their actions as having any chance of influencing change, and they don't see any way to make their voices heard. The result is alienation. Their presence and actions seem minuscule compared to the systems that surround them.

It is clear that the types and forms of relations among people have been altered by the technological revolution of the 20th century. I've heard people cite this as the source of the decline in civic engagement. But I don't blame technology.

One of the problems I see is organizations competing to try to attract youth participation, trying to outdo each other to be youth-friendly. Some may be driven by funders looking for the latest innovation in youth programming, who see an increase in participation as proof that their programs are succeeding. There are also organizations that engage youth in a token fashion in order to improve their public image. These kinds of motives detract from the effectiveness of real relationships between organizations and youth – and if the relationships aren't genuine, they won't last.

There are many benefits to be gained from youth civic engagement. Young people can gain a sense of solidarity and learn from their participation; and as a society, we all gain from youth's contributions to building a better future. If too few youth are civically engaged, where does the responsibility lie: the individual or the society? I think it should be viewed as a collective responsibility; if a society has a vision for the future, the onus is on all of us to ensure that there *will* be a future.

Engaging today's youth in activities helps give them hope that the society believes in them, and sees the value in investing in them and working for a better future. It's also a way to give hope to disadvantaged communities that are struggling with a variety of social ills. Civic engagement is a powerful tool that can help disadvantaged youth develop a sense of belonging, and it can help revitalize relations between citizens and their society.

I think the first priority should be to listen to the youth who are actively engaged in working for change. Youth activism is a huge untapped resource. In Toronto, many youth groups have come together to voice their concerns about violence and its many causes. Working for real social change is not easy; sometimes it's difficult to see progress. But if we continue to pride ourselves on the Canadian principles of democracy, rights, responsibility, and freedom, then youth – the future of Canada – must be encouraged to have a greater say and a larger influence on the affairs of our society, including its structures of governance.

Peter Amponsah was born in Ghana, West Africa and moved to Toronto at the age of three. He is currently in his fourth year of the bachelor of social work program at Carleton University in Ottawa. In 2004, he was Vice President of the Ghanaian Student's Association at Carleton, and he is currently Vice President of the Carleton Black Student's Union. Peter has been involved with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Ontario for six years, serving on their Provincial Youth Council, and volunteering at his home club, the Albion Boys & Girls Club, and with other youth programs. In 2002, he served on the Board of the Albion Neighbourhood Services, a community service agency in North Etobicoke. Peter spends his time coaching, mentoring, and counselling youth in his home town of Rexdale.

HEALTH

Health status refers to the capacity of people to achieve optimal well-being. It includes physical, social, and emotional health, as well as physical and social risks to well-being.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Self-rated health status
- Infant mortality rate
- Death rates

HEALTHY YOUTH?

The teenage years and those of young adulthood are often considered to be the healthiest in one's life. In many ways, that is true. Death rates for this group have declined over the years. Smoking rates have also dropped. And young women are less likely to have unintended pregnancies.

There are, however, some worrisome health trends – in particular, rates of physical activity, obesity, asthma, and sexually transmitted infections. This chapter of *Progress* highlights these important developments.

A good place to start is to recognize what young people themselves are saying about their health. In 2003, 67% of youth aged 12 to 24 said they were in very good or excellent health, but this proportion has come down considerably over the last four years. In 1998, 73% of youth had rated their health so positively.

Young girls aged 12 to 14 were more likely to say that they were in very good or excellent health (68% compared to 66% for boys). Among the older age groups, however, young men 15 to 24 gave higher ratings of their health than their female peers. Overall, very few children and youth reported that they were in fair or poor health.

What about stress? In 2003, almost one in four young people aged 18 to 24 said they felt stressed "quite a lot" – a proportion virtually unchanged from 2000. Women were more likely than men to say they felt quite stressed (26% compared to 21%).

FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN & YOUTH

The 2002/03 First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey provides important insights into the health of children and youth living in First Nations communities. The survey included 228 First Nations communities in all provinces and territories except Nunavut. Here are some of the highlights:

Children under age 12

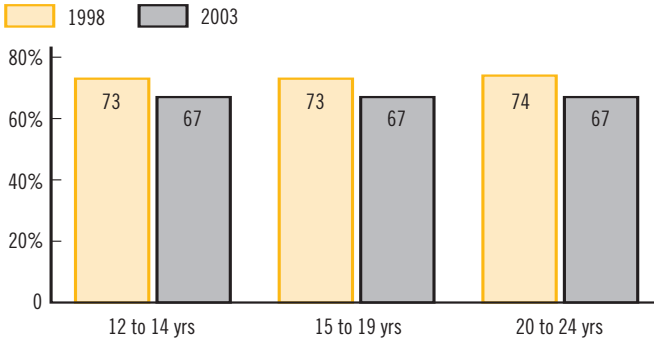
- First Nations children are no more or less likely than Canadian children generally to be born with low birthweights (5.5% vs. 5.6%), but they are more likely to have high birthweights (21% vs. 13%).
- About three of five children were breastfed (63%) – a higher proportion than in 1997 (50%), but lower than the Canadian average (80%).
- Half of children aged 3 to 5 participate in physical activities every day, compared to 37% of children aged 9 to 11.
- More than half of children were either overweight (22%) or obese (36%).
- The rate of disabilities among First Nations children was almost double that of all Canadian children.
- Nearly one in five (18%) First Nations children experienced at least one injury that was serious enough to warrant medical attention in the year before the survey. The rate was higher than among Aboriginal children living off-reserve (12%) and among Canadian children overall (10%).
- The vast majority of children (94%) got along very well with their families with no difficulties, or quite well with hardly any difficulties.
- Overall, 15% of children had an emotional or behavioural problem. The rate was higher for boys than girls (18% vs. 12%).
- The most common chronic conditions among children were: asthma (15%); allergies (12%); chronic ear infections or problems (9%); chronic bronchitis (4%); and learning disabilities (3%).

Youth aged 12 to 17

- Although the vast majority of First Nations youth (90%) participated in physical activities once a week or more, only about half (45%) were considered "sufficiently active" – that is, they engaged in 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity most days of the week.
- About four in 10 youth were overweight (28%) or obese (14%).
- Among youth aged 15 to 17, First Nations smoking rates were three to four times higher than the rates for all Canadian boys (47% vs. 13%) and girls (61% vs. 15%).
- About four of 10 (42%) said they consumed alcohol in the previous year. Among those who did, nearly two-thirds (65%) had five or more drinks at a time at least once a month.

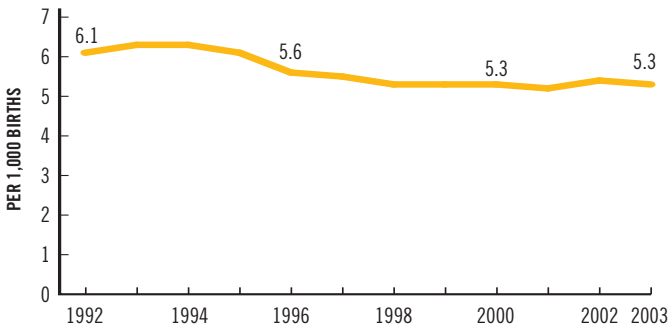
KEY INDICATORS

VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT SELF-RATED HEALTH



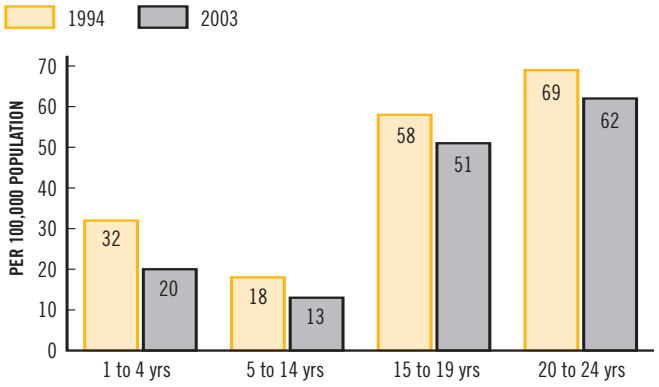
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the Canadian Community Health Survey, *2003 and the* National Population Health Survey, *1998.*

INFANT MORTALITY RATE



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Cansim Table 102-0030.

DEATH RATES, BY AGE GROUP



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Vital Statistics, Births & Deaths *databases.*

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN LIVING OFF RESERVES

The health of Aboriginal children living in non-reserve areas is slightly lower than that of all Canadian children, according to parental responses in the Aboriginal Peoples Survey. In 2001, 83% of parents of Aboriginal children under age six living off reserves rated their child's health as excellent or very good. Among the Canadian population as a whole, 90% of parents rated their children's health so highly.

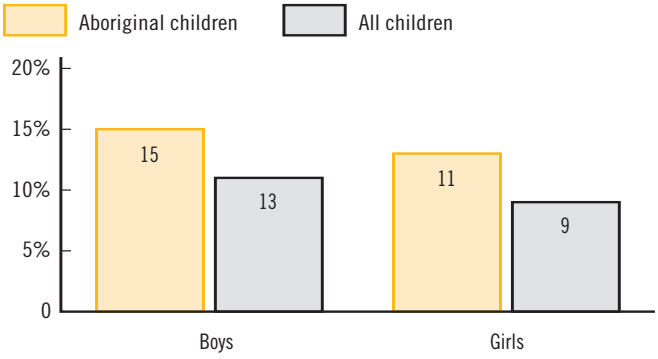
As children get older, this gap in health ratings becomes narrower. Among Aboriginal children aged 6 to 14 in non-reserve areas, 82% were reported to be in excellent or very good health, compared to 86% of all Canadian children in that age group. Among Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24, 69% reported having excellent or very good health, compared to 71% for youth in the general population.

There were differences within Aboriginal populations. Among children under 15 years, 79% of Inuit and 84% of Métis children were said to be in excellent or very good health. For North American Indian children in non-reserve areas, 81% reported excellent or very good health.

Higher injury rates

Unintentional injury is one of the leading causes of death and disability among Canadian children. Parents reported that about 13% of Aboriginal children under age 15 living in non-reserve areas had been injured seriously enough to require the attention of a doctor, nurse, dentist or traditional healer in the year prior to the survey. That rate was slightly higher than for Canadian children as a whole (11%). Falls and sports-related injuries were the most common, accounting for more than 68% of all injuries. Aboriginal boys had higher injury rates than girls.

UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES, BY GENDER, 2001



Note: Aboriginal children under age 15 living in non-reserve areas, injured in previous 12 months
Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, A Portrait of Aboriginal Children Living in Non-reserve Areas, *2001.*

Breastfeeding

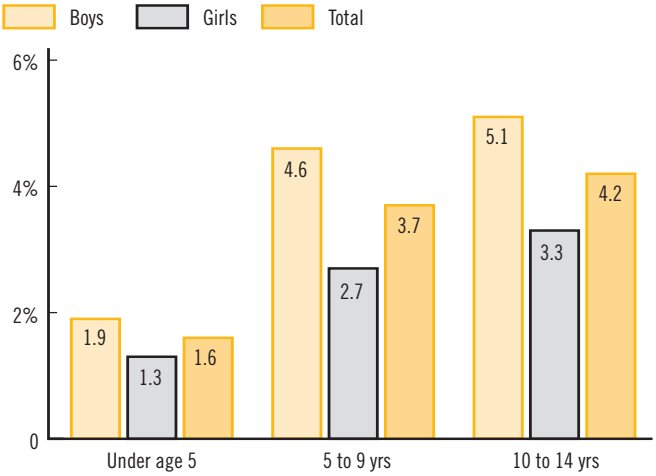
The Aboriginal Peoples Survey found that 67% of all children under age 15 in non-reserve areas had been breastfed by their mothers, compared to 82% among all Canadian children. The trend appears to be rising – about 72% of non-reserve Aboriginal children under age six were breastfed, compared with 63% of children aged 6 to14.

There were no significant differences in breastfeeding rates among Inuit, North American Indian, and Métis children. There were, however, differences in *how long* children were breastfed. Inuit children have traditionally been (and continue to be) breastfed for longer periods than other Canadian children. For Inuit children, breastfeeding continued for 15 months, on average, compared with eight months for North American Indian children and seven months for Métis children

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

There were 180,930 children under the age of 15 (3.3%) living with a disability in Canada's provinces in 2001, according to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Boys tend to have a higher disability rate than girls, and the rate tends to be higher among older children. This may be the result of injuries or illnesses acquired as children age, or it may result from underlying conditions that only become apparent later in life. Unfortunately, 2001 PALS data do not include information on children in the territories.

DISABILITY RATES, BY AGE GROUP AND GENDER, 2001



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, *2001.*

Among children under age 15 with disabilities, 57% had mild to moderate disabilities, and 43% had severe or very severe disabilities.

PALS identified five types of disabilities among children under age 5: hearing, seeing, developmental delay, chronic illness, and unknown. The most common type was developmental delay (68% of those with disabilities), followed by chronic illness (63%). Children may have more than one type of disability.

Among school-aged children (5 to 14 years), chronic conditions and learning disabilities were the most commonly identified (65% of those with disabilities).

Unmet needs

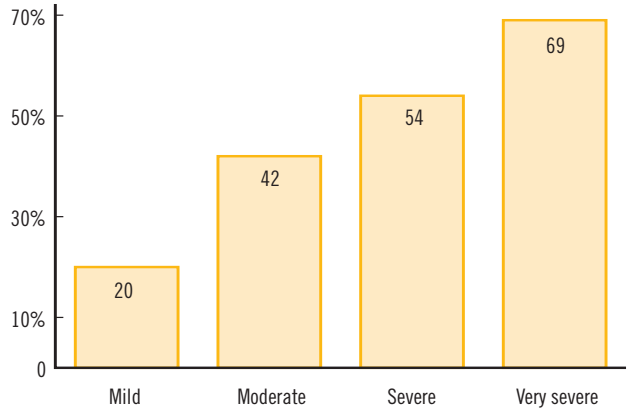
Over two-thirds of school-aged children with disabilities – 104,800 children – required some type of aid or device related to their disability. Among children with mild disabilities, 50% required an aid or device; for those with severe disabilities, it was 90%.

Just under half of school-aged children who required an aid/device had an unmet need in this area. More than one in 10 had *none* of the aids or devices they required.

Adults fare better than children in this regard. Over two-thirds of adults with disabilities had their needs fully met, but among children with very severe disabilities, the opposite was true – more than two-thirds *did not* have their needs fully met.

Many of the aids required were related to learning disabilities. Unfortunately, children with those requirements also had fairly high rates of unmet needs. For example, of the 40,280 children who required computers to assist their learning, 21% reported an unmet need. Of 8,700 children who required voice-activated or synthesis software, 48% had an unmet need. And 28% of the 39,000 children who required a tutor didn't have one.

UNMET NEEDS FOR AIDS/ DEVICES, BY SEVERITY LEVEL, 2001
CHILDREN AGED 5 TO 14 WITH DISABILITIES



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, *2001.*

Impact of unmet needs

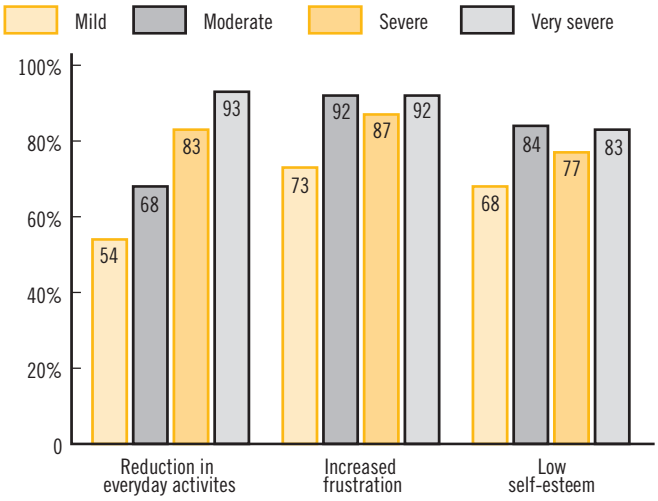
The vast majority of parents (84%) whose children had unmet need for aids/devices said this had a negative impact on the child's life. The rate of impact was about the same for boys and girls, and there was little variation by severity level or age. However, parents living below the poverty line were slightly more likely than higher-income parents to say that their child's unmet need had a negative impact (87% compared with 83%).

These parents identified three important impacts: a reduction in the child's regular, everyday activities; increased frustration; and feelings of low self-esteem. Boys were slightly more likely than girls to have to reduce their everyday activities. Among children experiencing negative impacts due to unmet needs, 82% of boys suffered low self-esteem, compared with 77% of girls. Boys and girls were equally likely to experience frustration.

Older children with disabilities were more likely than younger ones to have to reduce their everyday activities because of unmet needs for aids/devices: 84% of those aged 10 to 14, compared to 75% of children aged 5 to 9. Older children were also more likely to experience frustrations (91% compared to 85%).

The severity of a child's disability was an important factor. Unmet needs might be expected to have a more negative impact on children with severe or very severe disabilities. However, children with moderate disabilities and unmet needs reported frustration and low self-esteem at rates as high as or slightly higher than children with more severe disabilities.

IMPACT OF UNMET NEEDS FOR AIDS/ DEVICES, BY SEVERITY LEVEL, 2001
CHILDREN AGED 5 TO 14 WITH DISABILITIES



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, *2001.*

Affordability

Financial considerations underlie many unmet needs. Among children with some form of unmet need, 67% of their parents said the required aid/device was too expensive; 53% said the item was not covered by insurance. In addition, 21% said the aid was not available locally, and 25% didn't know where to obtain it.

Some children with disabilities require special features to enable them to get into and around their homes, such as ramps, lifts, automatic doors, grab bars, or widened doorways. In 2001, 6,600 children with disabilities (4%) needed aids/devices to enable them to enter their home, and 10,000 children (6%) required special features within the home.

While their number and proportion were relatively small, the rate of unmet need among these children was very high. For those requiring special features to enter their homes, 21% had partially unmet needs and another 42% had *none* of their needs met. For children requiring special features within the home, 13% had some unmet needs, while another 48% had none of the aids/devices they required. Once again, parents identified cost as a major reason for these unmet needs.

TOP 10 PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES,* BY AGE GROUP AND GENDER, 2000

	% OF CHILDREN 5 TO 12 YRS			% OF YOUTH 13 TO 17 YRS	
	GIRLS	BOYS		GIRLS	BOYS
Bicycling	92	90	Walking	83	78
Swimming	91	91	Bicycling	69	83
Playground equipment	90	83	Swimming	77	74
Walking	88	83	Basketball	44	58
Tobogganning/ winter play	78	77	Social dancing	61	43
Skating	72	65	In-line skating	51	50
Soccer	47	70	Skating	53	46
In-line skating	59	59	Running/ jogging	41	42
Running/ jogging	56	55	Soccer	32	40
Basketball	34	45	Volleyball	41	35

** Participated at least once in the previous 12 months*
Source: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2000 Physical Activity Monitor.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & WELL-BEING

Physical activity is essential to children's healthy growth and development. Regular physical activity improves cardiovascular fitness and helps develop strength, flexibility, and bone density. It helps young people maintain a healthy body weight and improves cognitive performance. It promotes their self-esteem and a greater sense of well-being.

Over the last eight years, physical activity levels among children and youth have fluctuated. (Physical activity is classified as being regular, occasional, or infrequent.) In 2002/03, 78% of youth aged 12 to 14 said they were physically active on a regular basis, 15% were active occasionally, and 7% were infrequent. The trend was similar for teens aged 15 to 19, but "infrequent" physical activity had the highest rate among young adults 20 to 24 years.

There have been some positive changes over time. The rate of *regular* physical activity increased slightly from 75% in 1994/95 to 78% in 2002/03 among youth aged 12 to 14. Among teens (15 to 19 years), the rate rose from 67% to 76%, and among young adults (aged 20 to 24), from 61% to 71% over that period.

Regardless of age, boys were more likely than girls to say they participated in regular physical activity in 2002/03. That trend has remained consistent for at least a decade.

Physical education

For many school-aged children, much of their physical activity is linked to school settings. And for some children, physical education classes are their only source of physical activity.

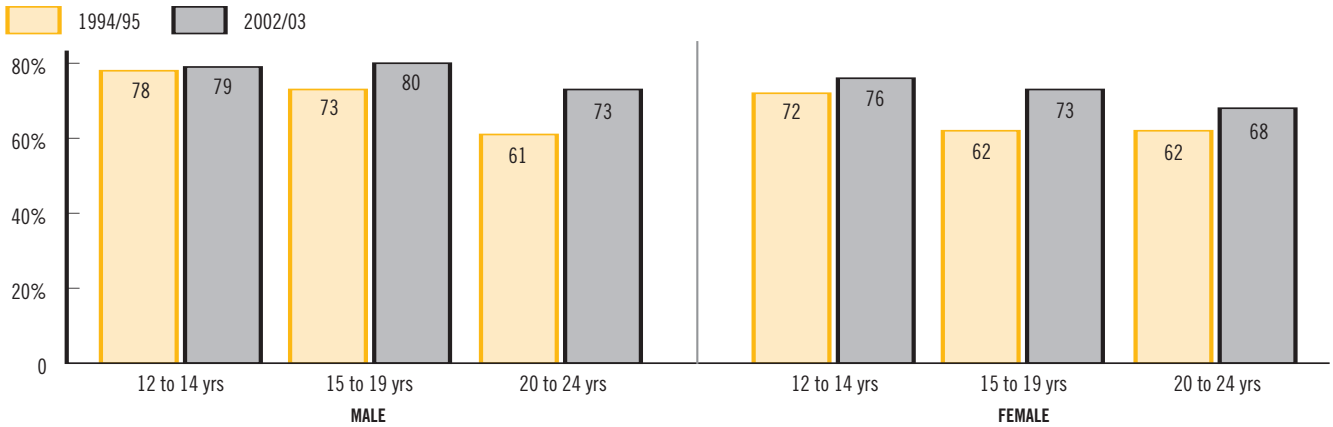
In 2001, 54% of Canadian schools said their policy was to offer daily physical education classes, but only 16% actually did so. Class time devoted to physical education averaged less than one hour per week for elementary students and from 40 to 75 minutes per week for senior secondary students.

According to the 2000 Physical Activity Monitor, parental reports indicated that 41% of children under age 17 had only one or two days per week of physical education classes and 10% had none; 27% had phys-ed classes three or four days a week, and 21% had daily classes.

Recreational activities

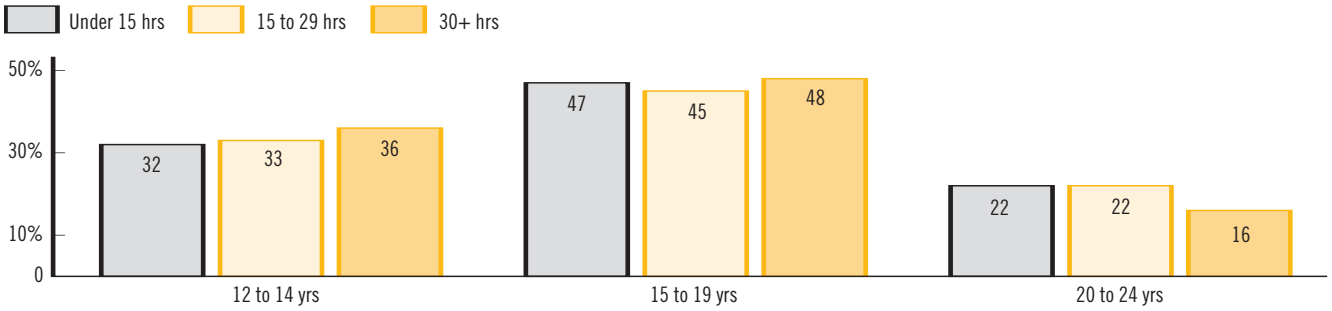
In 2000, the top five recreational activities for children aged 5 to 12 were bicycling, swimming, using playground equipment, walking, and tobogganing/winter play. Among youth aged 13 to 17, the top activities were walking, bicycling, swimming, running, and social dancing.

PARTICIPATION IN REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, BY AGE GROUP AND GENDER



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2002/03 and the* National Population Health Survey, *1994/95.*

TIME SPENT PER WEEK ON SEDENTARY ACTIVITIES, 2002/03



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2002/03.*

OBESITY

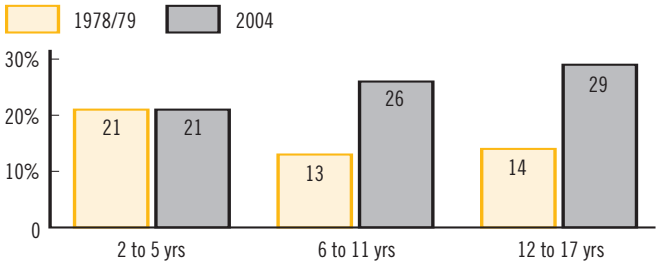
Canadian children are getting fatter. In the past 25 years, the proportion of young people who are overweight or obese has jumped from 15% to 26%. In 2004, 1.6 million children and youth aged 2 to 17 were overweight (1.1 million) or obese (507,000).

Obesity rates do not vary greatly between young boys and girls. In 2004, 18% of both genders were overweight, while 9% of boys and 7% of girls were obese. However, gender differences do appear among teens – 11% of males aged 12 to 17 were obese, compared to 7% of females.

Changes in overweight/obesity rates over time are most dramatic among older children.

Overweight/obesity rates were highest in Atlantic Canada in 2004, with Newfoundland having the highest combined rate (36%). The rate was lowest in Alberta (22%), while the Canadian average was 26%.

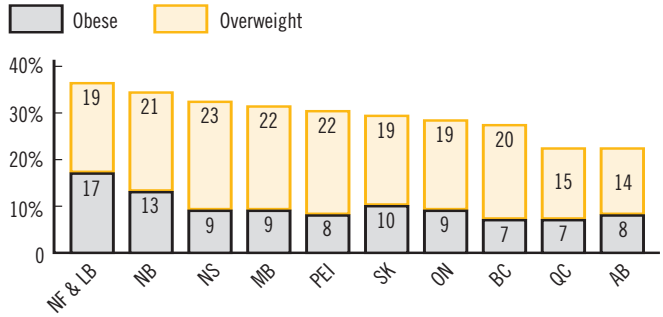
TRENDS IN OVERWEIGHT/ OBESITY RATES



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2004 and the* Canada Health Survey, *1978/79.*

OVERWEIGHT & OBESITY RATES, BY PROVINCE, 2004

CHILDREN AGED 2 TO 17



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2004.*

Eating habits

Canada's Food Guide recommends five to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. In 2002/03, the majority of children – regardless of age group – ate less than the recommended amount. Among children aged 12 to 14, 52% ate less than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Similarly, the majority of youth aged 15 to 19 (56%) and young adults 20 to 24 (61%) ate less than the recommended number of servings.

There were clear variations in eating habits between boys and girls. Girls, regardless of age, were far more likely to eat fruits and vegetables. In 2002/03, 45% of girls aged 12 to 14 consumed the recommended servings per day, as did 39% of boys. Among teens 15 to 19 years, 41% of girls and 34% of boys ate the recommended amount. In the oldest age group (20 to 24 years), the rates were 39% among women and 29% among men.

Sedentary lifestyles

Many children today lead sedentary or physically inactive lifestyles. They often sit in front of a television or computer screen for hours, which contributes to problems of obesity. In 2002/03, almost half of all children and youth spent 15 to 29 hours per week in sedentary activities. Younger children were more likely than older youth to be physically inactive.

Between 2000/01 and 2002/03, there were no significant changes in the amount of time young people spent on sedentary activities. There was a slight decline – from 24% to 22% – in the proportion of children aged 12 to 14 who spent 30+ hours a week being inactive.

Although there were not large differences in rates between boys and girls, some patterns emerged. In 2002/03, children aged 12 to 14 were more likely than older youth to spend 30+ hours a week in sedentary activities, and boys were far more likely than girls (25% compared to 19%) to be so inactive.

HUNGER

In 2000, 1.2% of all children aged 2 to 11 experienced hunger due to poverty, according to the NLSCY. That was a slight improvement over 1994 (1.5%) and 1998 (1.6%).

Among children who went hungry, 32% went without food regularly or every few months. When their child was hungry, 30% of parents said they visited a food bank, 30% asked relatives for help, and 21% said they themselves ate less or skipped meals.

Rising use of food banks

Since 1989, there has been a steady increase in the number of Canadians using food banks, according to Hunger Count which tracks food bank usage over a one-month period each year. In 2004, over half of food bank users (55%) were families with children.

The proportion of children and youth under 18 using food banks rose from 38% in 1989 to 42% by 2004. During the tracking period in 2004, 317,242 children and youth used food banks – an increase of about 166,000 over 1989.

The proportion of working-poor people has doubled from 6% of food bank users in 1989 to 13% in 2004, according to Hunger Count. A 2005 Toronto survey also highlighted this phenomenon. According to the Daily Bread Food Bank, "work has become less able to support families in large urban areas such as Greater Toronto where the costs of living are the highest in Canada." In their survey, 14% of the food bank clients identified employment as their principal source of income, and another 7% had income from both employment and social assistance.

ASTHMA & ALLERGIES

Asthma is a chronic lung condition characterized by breathing difficulties. Children with asthma have extra-sensitive airways which narrow or become obstructed when irritated. It is the most common chronic respiratory disease among children, accounting for about one-quarter of all school absenteeism. The condition affects twice as many boys as girls in childhood, but more girls than boys develop the condition as teenagers.

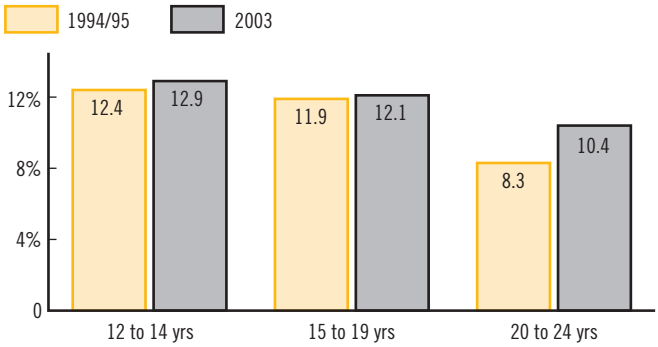
In 2003, over 637,800 children and youth suffered from asthma – 12.9% of all Canadians under age 25. The asthma rate among teens aged 15 to 19 was slightly less (12.1%), while 10.4% of young adults aged 20 to 24 had the condition.

Between 1978 and 1994, asthma rates for young people under age 20 increased significantly – from 2.3% to 12%. The proportion has remained relatively stable since then, but rates continue to climb among young adults 20 to 24.

As noted above, there are gender differences in asthma rates which change as children age. In young teens 12 to 14 years, 14% of boys and 11.7% of girls suffered from asthma in 2003. Among youth aged 15 to 19, 11.1% of boys and 13.1% of girls had asthma. And for young adults 20 to 24 years, 8.8% of men and 12.2% of women had asthma.

In 2003, asthma rates were lowest in British Columbia for all age groups. Rates were relatively high in the Atlantic Provinces.

ASTHMA TRENDS, BY AGE GROUP



Source: Statistics Canada. CANSIM 104-0001.

ASTHMA RATES, BY PROVINCE, 2003

	12-14 YRS	15-19 YRS	20-24 YRS
NF & LB	15.3% *	13.5% *	16.9% *
PEI	17.6% *	13.6% *	n/a
NS	17.2% *	18.6% *	10.7% *
NB	13.0% *	15.7%	13.0% *
QC	11.5%	11.6%	10.3%
ON	13.4%	12.6%	9.5%
MB	17.7% *	9.4% *	n/a
SK	13.1% *	12.0%	10.0% *
AB	13.9%	13.3%	14.7%
BC	10.1%	9.1%	8.7%
CANADA	12.9%	12.1%	10.4%

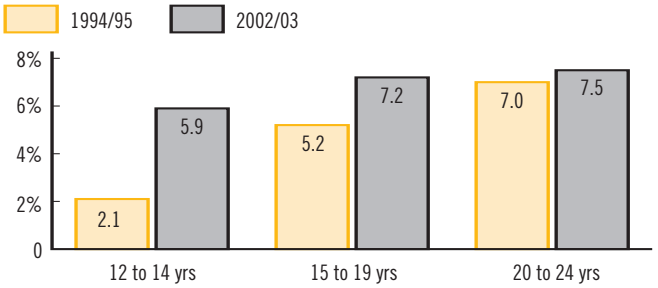
** Numbers should be used with caution*
Source: Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 105-0201.

Food allergies

Over the last eight years, food allergies have increased across all age groups in Canada.

Food allergies were more common among women. In 2002/03, 9% of women aged 20 to 24 reported food allergies compared to 6.1% of men. Among teens aged 15 to 19, 8.2% of women and 6.2% of men had food allergies. For young teens 12 to 14 years, boys were slightly more likely than girls to report having food allergies (6% and 5.7%).

TRENDS IN FOOD ALLERGIES AMONG YOUTH



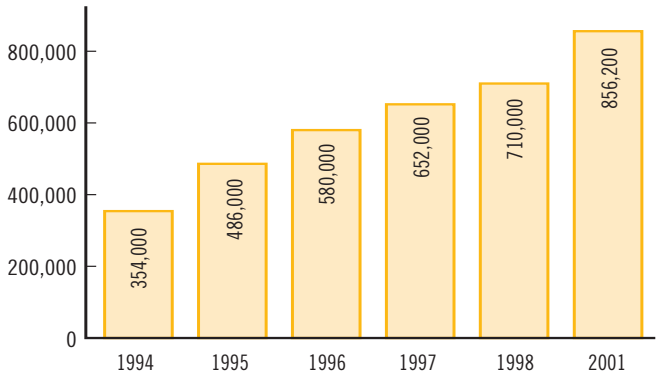
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2002/03 and the* National Population Health Survey, *1994/95.*

RITALIN USE

Over the last decade in Canada, the use of prescription medications to treat children's behavioural problems has skyrocketed. Methypheindate or Ritalin is commonly used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

An estimated 1.57 million visits were made to physicians' offices for ADHD in 2001, including repeat visits. This represents an increase of 20% since 1997. Eighty-two per cent of those visits were for children and youth under age 20. Among children under age 10, there was no difference in the number of doctor visits for girls or boys. Gender differences emerged with age: 76% of the doctor visits for ADHD were made by boys and 24% by girls.

RITALIN PRESCRIPTIONS



Source: IMS Health, 2001.

The number of prescriptions for Ritalin grew by 142% between 1994 and 2001. Between 1994 and 1998, the growth in prescriptions was highest in Quebec and lowest in British Columbia.

In 2001, Ritalin was prescribed by many different medical specialists. General practitioners/family doctors wrote 42% of the prescriptions and paediatricians wrote 39%. Psychiatrists (15%), neurologists (3%), and other specialists (1%) wrote the remainder. Of patient visits when Ritalin was discussed, office-based physicians recommended the drug for treatment of ADHD in 89% of those visits.

Misuse

Ritalin is primarily prescribed for the treatment of ADHD in children. But its nicknames – *Kiddie Cocaine*, *The R Ball* or *Vitamin R* – indicate that Ritalin has also become a recreational drug used by young people in both the U.S. and Canada. Teens use Ritalin to stay awake, increase attentiveness, suppress appetites, or to produce a feeling of euphoria. In a 2002 Canadian survey, a higher proportion of boys than girls in Grades 9 and 10 said they used Ritalin to "get high" – 8% of boys in both grades, compared to 4% of girls in Grade 9 and 5% in Grade 10.

The use of Ritalin as a recreational drug can be very dangerous, with effects similar to cocaine. Many teens believe that Ritalin is safe to experiment with because it is so widely prescribed and used by classmates or siblings. However, high doses of stimulants like Ritalin can lead to serious malnutrition, tremors/muscle twitching, fevers, convulsions, headaches, irregular heartbeat, anxiety, restlessness, paranoia, hallucinations, and formication (a sensation of ants or worms crawling over the skin).

RITALIN PRESCRIPTIONS, BY REGION

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	% CHANGE, 1994 TO 1998
Atlantic	34,000	44,000	56,000	60,000	67,000	97.1%
Quebec	87,000	116,000	148,000	183,000	204,000	134.5%
Ontario	137,000	183,000	216,000	235,000	251,000	83.2%
Prairies	63,000	95,000	102,000	120,000	131,000	107.9%
British Columbia	33,000	48,000	57,000	54,000	57,000	72.7%
Canada	354,000	486,000	580,000	652,000	710,000	100.6%

Source: IMS Health. ADHD Snapshot, *2001.*

ALCOHOL USE

A majority of Canadian teens and young adults consume alcohol. In 2002/03, 19% of youth aged 12 to 14 consumed alcohol, as did 72% of those aged 15 to 19. Among young adults 20 to 24 years, 88% had consumed alcohol in the previous year. Drinking in the youngest group has declined since 1994/95. There were no dramatic changes in alcohol consumption in the other age groups.

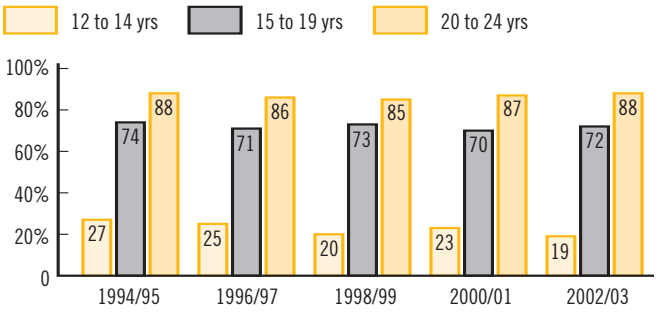
The majority of both young men and women drink alcohol. While there have been fluctuations over the years in gender drinking rates among those aged 15 to 19, men 20 to 24 years were consistently more likely to drink than their female peers.

Frequency

The majority of teenagers drink alcohol one to three times per month. In their teens and early 20s, young men tend to drink more frequently than women.

When young people were asked if they had ever been in a vehicle with a driver who had had too much to drink, the responses were very different, depending on the person's age. In 2002/03, 6% of youth aged 12 to 14 said they had been in such a situation, up from 4% in 1996/97. Among older teens (15 to 19 years), the proportion grew from 15% to 18%. And among those aged 20 to 24, the proportion was higher and rising faster – from 18% to 24% between 1996/97 and 2002/03.

TRENDS IN ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION,* BY AGE GROUP



** In the previous 12 months*

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2000/01 & 2002/03 and the* National Population Health Survey, *1994/95, 1996/97 & 1998/99.*

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION,* BY GENDER

MEN	1994/95	1996/97	1998/99	2000/01	2002/03
15-19 yrs	70%	70%	69%	73%	74%
20-24 yrs	89%	89%	84%	85%	91%
WOMEN					
15-19 yrs	71%	73%	74%	73%	70%
20-24 yrs	82%	82%	84%	85%	85%

** In the previous 12 months*

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2001/02 & 2002/03 and the* National Population Health Survey, *1994/95, 1996/97 & 1998/99.*

SMOKING

Fewer youth smoke today than was the case a decade ago, and it is much less prevalent among teens than it was in 1981.

In 2003, 22% of teens aged 15 to 19 smoked daily or occasionally, down from 29% in 1994. In 1981, teen smoking rates were far higher: 42% among young women and 45% for men.

The greatest decline over the decade was among daily smokers. Fewer than 14% of teens in 2003 said they smoked daily, down from 20% in 1994 and 22% in both 1996 and 1998. Young women and men were equally likely to be daily smokers in 2003 (13.5% and 13.9% respectively). These rates were down from 1998/99, when 25% of young women and 19% of men smoked daily.

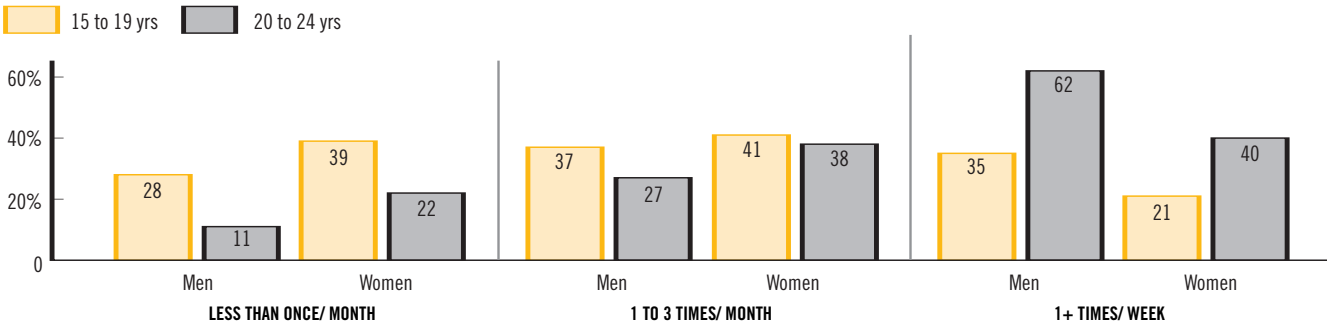
Among teens who smoke, the majority still light up every day. More than six of 10 teen smokers did so every day in 2003, down from eight of 10 in 1998.

And while there were almost 447,000 teen smokers in 2003 – 280,655 of them daily smokers – they were not the norm. Over 1.5 million young people – 78% of this age group – did not smoke, and 1.2 million (58%) had never smoked. These patterns were similar for both young men and women.

Smoking increases sharply with age. In 2003, 15% of teens aged 15 to 17 were smokers, compared to 24% of youth aged 18 to 19. Girls aged 15 to 17 were more likely than boys to smoke (17% and 13%).

Youth smoking is unevenly distributed across Canada, and it tends to follow adult smoking patterns. The lowest rate was in British Columbia (14%) and the highest was in Saskatchewan (28%), followed closely by youth in Quebec (26%).

FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION, 2002/03

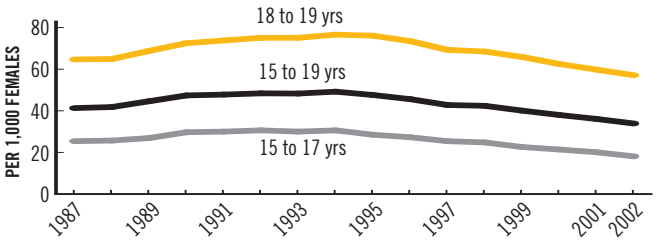


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, *2002/03.*

SEXUAL HEALTH

In 2002, 35,547 Canadian teens became pregnant. Of these, 67% were aged 18 and 19, 31% were 15 to 17 years old, and 1.3% were younger than 15. The teen pregnancy rate has been declining since 1994. In 2002, 44% of the young pregnant women gave birth, 54% had therapeutic abortions, and 2% miscarried. Teen pregnancy rates vary widely among the provinces and territories, from 24 pregnancies per 1,000 teenaged girls in PEI to 120 per 1,000 in Nunavut.

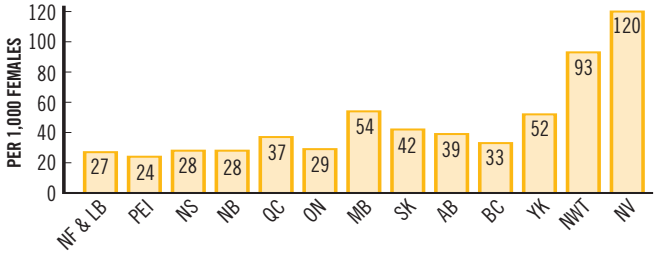
TEEN PREGNANCY RATE, BY AGE GROUP



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Pregnancy Outcomes, *1974 to 2002.*

TEEN PREGNANCY RATE, BY PROVINCE & TERRITORY, 2002

TEENS AGED 15 TO 19



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Pregnancy Outcomes, *1974 to 2002.*

Sexually transmitted infections

Chlamydia is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted bacterial infection (or STI) in Canada. Between 1997 and 2002, infection rates rose by 60% in the population overall, but increases were even higher among youth.

From 1991 to 1997, chlamydia rates declined among teens aged 15 to 19 and young adults 20 to 24 years. From 1997 to 2002, however, the rate rose by 76% among men aged 15 to 19 and by 42% among women. For those aged 20 to 24, the rate increased by 92% among men and by 102% among women.

Women account for more than two-thirds of reported cases of chlamydia, and two-thirds of the reported cases are among those aged 15 to 24. It can permanently affect long-term fertility and is suspected of contributing to Canada's rising infertility rates. Public health agencies believe this STI is likely under-detected.

The reported rate of gonorrhea also increased among young people between 1997 and 2002. For men aged 15 to 19, the rate rose by 34%, and among women, by 38%. For young adults aged 20 to 24, the rate of gonorrhea increased by 74% among men and by 43% among women. Unlike chlamydia, males account for more than 60% of the reported gonorrhea cases.

Sexual intercourse

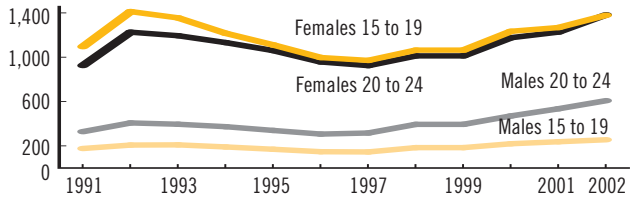
Between 1988 and 2002, the proportion of Grade 9 students who had sexual intercourse at least once declined among both boys and girls, but the decline was greater among boys. And for Grade 11 students, the proportion who had sexual intercourse at least once declined among males, but not among females.

It was more common for sexually active students in 2002 to report having intercourse "often" than was the case in 1988 – across both Grades and genders. Thus, while slightly fewer students are having sex, those who do tend to be more sexually active.

The most common reason students gave for not having sex was that they were "not ready." This response was more common among girls than boys, and more common among Grade 9 students than those in Grade 11. More boys than girls in both Grades cited "not having the opportunity to have sex" as their main reason. Only a small proportion of students – and more girls than boys – cited "fear of pregnancy" as the main reason. Less than 2% said they abstained from sex due to fear of HIV/AIDS or other STIs. The most common reasons given for having sex were "love for the person," "curiosity/ experimentation," and "influence of alcohol/ drugs."

Students were likely to engage in sexual activities other than intercourse. In 2002, about one-third of Grade 9 students (32% of males and 28% of females) and just over half of Grade 11 students (53% of males and 52% of females) engaged in sexual activities other than intercourse.

REPORTED CHLAMYDIA RATES, BY AGE GROUP AND GENDER



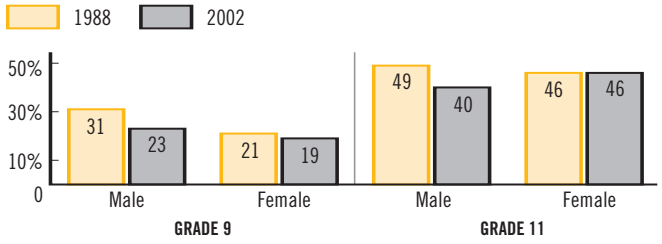
Source: Health Canada. 2002 Canadian Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance Report.

Fewer sexual partners

The percentage of youth who have more than one sexual partner seems to be declining. According to the Canadian Youth, Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Study, 43% of male students in Grade 11 in 2002 reported having had only one sexual partner, up from 29% in 1988. Among female Grade 11 students, the proportion rose from 47% to 54%. Fewer Grade 11 students reported having six or more partners. Among men, those with six or more partners dropped from 24% in 1988 to 15% in 2002, and among women, the proportion declined from 11% to 9%.

SEXUALLY ACTIVE YOUTH, BY GRADE AND GENDER

% WHO REPORTED HAVING INTERCOURSE AT LEAST ONCE



Source: W. Boyce; M. Doherty; C. Fortin; and D. MacKinnon. Canadian Youth, Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Study. *Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2003.*

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Social engagement refers to relationships or involvements – both positive and negative – with family members, peers, community members, local institutions, and at the broadest level, with society.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Relationships with parents
- Relationships with friends
- Youth crime rates

YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

Two recent Canadian studies show that positive relationships with family, friends and other people in the community are important to healthy youth development.

Higher levels of family connectedness and more positive relationships with parents are associated with higher levels of self-rated health, lower anxiety levels, and lower rates of smoking and alcohol use. As young people get older, friendships become increasingly important and they provide youth with an opportunity to develop social and emotional skills.

Relationships within families

A primary feature of a good parent-child relationship is effective communications.

A Health Canada study found that both boys and girls confide more easily in their mothers than their fathers. This declined with age for both genders.

The study also found that most youth reported having a happy home life in 2001, but this also decreased as they got older. By Grade 10, 15% fewer girls said they were happy with their lives at home than was the case in Grade 6. The majority of students across the grades felt trusted by their parents, valued what their parents thought of them, and desired parental approval. Again, these feelings declined with age.

There are clear gender differences in relationships with parents. For example, more boys than girls in Grades 6 to 10 said they were understood by their parents. Older girls – those in Grades 8 and 10 – were less likely to say their parents understood and trusted them. They were less satisfied with their home life, had more arguments, and more desire to leave home. Conflict with parents appears to be a normal part of development as youth move towards independence. Gender differences in this area may simply reflect different approaches to parenting sons and daughters.

The Health Canada study found that overall, Grade 10 students who had a more positive relationship with their parents were more likely to be satisfied with their lives.

Friends are important

Establishing friendships is fundamental to youth development, and children with close friends tend to have better social and academic outcomes. Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby says, "It would be difficult to overestimate the role of friends in teenage lives."

When high school students were asked to indicate what was very important to them, 85% put friends at the top of their list, along

with "freedom." Young women were more likely than men to identify friends as being very important – 90% compared to 80%. When asked what gave them a great deal/quite a bit of enjoyment, friends again topped the list (94%), followed by music (90%).

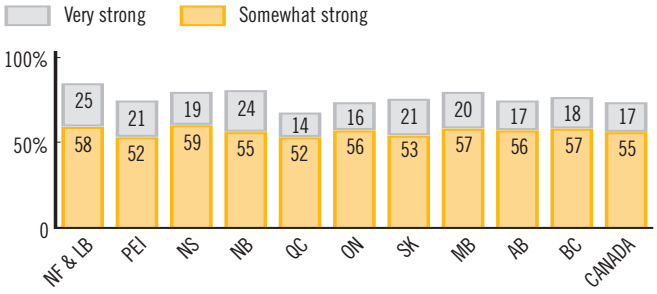
According to the Health Canada study, most students in Grades 6 to 10 said they had three or more close friends, although slightly fewer Grade 10 students had that many close friends. Talking to a best friend about things that really bothered them was easier for girls than for boys, but increased with age for both groups. More girls than boys – at all ages – found it easier to talk to same-sex friends about things that bothered them. In 2002, slightly more young men than women found it easy to talk to opposite-sex friends.

Time spent with friends is a good indicator of youth involvement with their peer group. The amount of time boys spent with friends was relatively stable from Grades 6 to 10. For girls, however, it decreased in Grade 10. This could be the result of self-imposed or parent-imposed limits. And there seems to be a downward trend in the proportion of students who spend five or more evenings per week out with friends.

Community matters

According to a CIHI study, a sense of belonging to one's community is associated with higher levels of health. And data from the Canadian Community Health Survey indicate that almost three-quarters (72%) of youth aged 12 to 19 felt a sense of belonging to their community. There was some variation among the provinces.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY BELONGING AMONG YOUTH AGED 12 TO 19, 2003



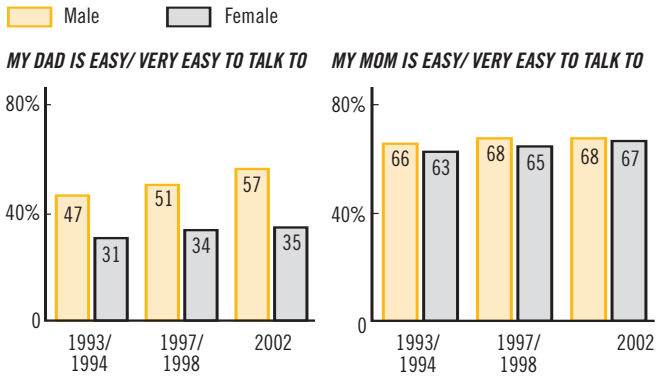
Source: Canadian Population Health Initiative. Improving the Health of Young Canadians. *Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2005.*

Aboriginal children & friends

The vast majority of Aboriginal children living in non-reserve areas have harmonious relationships with their friends, according to the Aboriginal Peoples Survey. Only 3% of Aboriginal children aged 6 to 14 living off reserves didn't get along well with other children. The majority (58%) got along "very well, with no problems." Among those aged 6 to 9, 81% reported a positive relationship with other children, as did 91% of Canadian children generally.

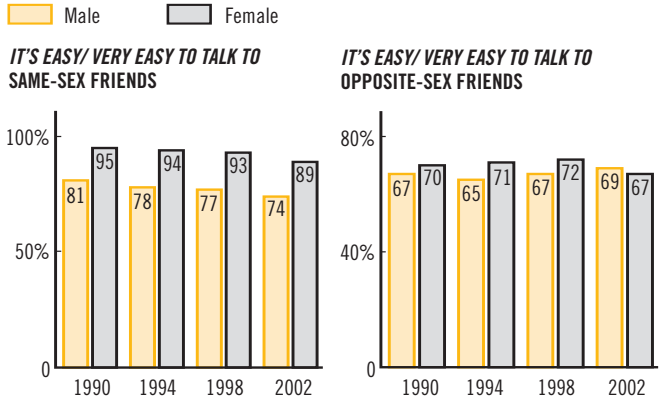
KEY INDICATORS

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS:
GRADE 10 STUDENTS TALK ABOUT THINGS THAT REALLY BOTHER THEM



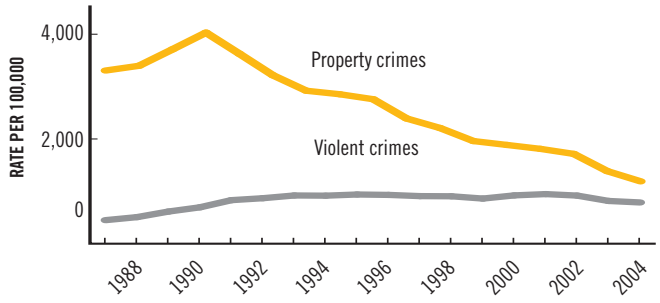
Source: Health Canada. Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children: A World Health Organization Cross-National Study, *1989/90, 1993/94, 1997/98, & 2002.*

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS:
GRADE 10 STUDENTS TALK TO FRIENDS ABOUT THINGS THAT REALLY BOTHER THEM



Source: Health Canada. Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children: A World Health Organization Cross-National Study, *1989/90, 1993/94, 1997/98, & 2002.*

YOUTH CRIME RATES
YOUTH AGED 12 TO 17



Source: Statistics Canada. "Crime Statistics," in The Daily, *July 21, 2005.*

YOUTH CRIME

Between 2003 and 2004, the overall youth crime rate declined by 4%. About 78,000 youth aged 12 to 17 were charged with a Criminal Code offence in 2004 – down 6% from the year before. A further 101,000 young people had their cases handled by means other than the laying of formal charges, down 2% from 2003.

In 2004, the rate of violent crime among youth fell by 2% from the previous year. Since 1995, the highest rate for violent crime occurred in 2001, but the rate has been dropping since then. Most categories of youth violent crime declined in 2004, including a 30% drop in the homicide rate and a 2% drop in robberies.

The youth property crime rate has also been falling, dropping by 8% in 2004. Most types of property offences decreased, including an 11% drop in motor vehicle thefts and an 8% decrease in break-ins.

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN & YOUNG TEENS

Lots of friends

In 2000, 93% of young teens aged 10 to 15 said they had many friends. Girls were slightly more likely than boys to feel this way, and family income made no difference. The majority of young people also said they got along easily with their peers. Younger teens were more likely than older youth to feel that way. There has been no significant change in these survey results since 1994.

Who can they turn to?

In 2000, 83% of young teens aged 10 to 15 said they had someone other than friends they could talk to about their problems. Younger children – those aged 10 and 11 – were more likely than the older teens to feel that way (90% compared to 78%), and girls were more likely than boys (86% and 78% respectively). Family income made no difference to these results. Again, these proportions have remained relatively stable since 1994.

Youth aged 10 to 15 said they were most likely to talk to their mothers about problems. Eighty-three per cent said they would speak with their mothers, while 62% identified their fathers. As teens get older, they are less likely to feel comfortable speaking with a parent, which further accentuates the importance of the other relationships in their lives.

Getting along

About 32% of young people aged 10 to 13 said they had no problems with their friends. Forty-three per cent said the same about their mothers, and 45% said they had no problems with their fathers. Only 20% said they got along very well with their siblings. These proportions have remained consistent over time.

Girls were less likely than boys to say that they got along with their mothers "without problems" – 41% compared with 46%. Older teens were less likely than younger teens to get along with their parents.

In 2000, almost two-thirds of parents of young children aged 4 to 9 reported that their children got along very well, without problems, with their friends – an increase of five percentage points since 1994. Parental reports indicated that girls were more likely than boys, and younger children more likely than older children, to get along very well with their friends.

GETTING ALONG VERY WELL WITH FRIENDS, 2000
PARENTAL REPORTS ON THEIR CHILDREN AGED 4 TO 9

BY GENDER		BY AGE GROUP			
GIRLS	BOYS	4-5 YRS	6-7 YRS	8-9 YRS	4-9 YRS
67%	61%	69%	62%	61%	64%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the NLSCY, 2000.

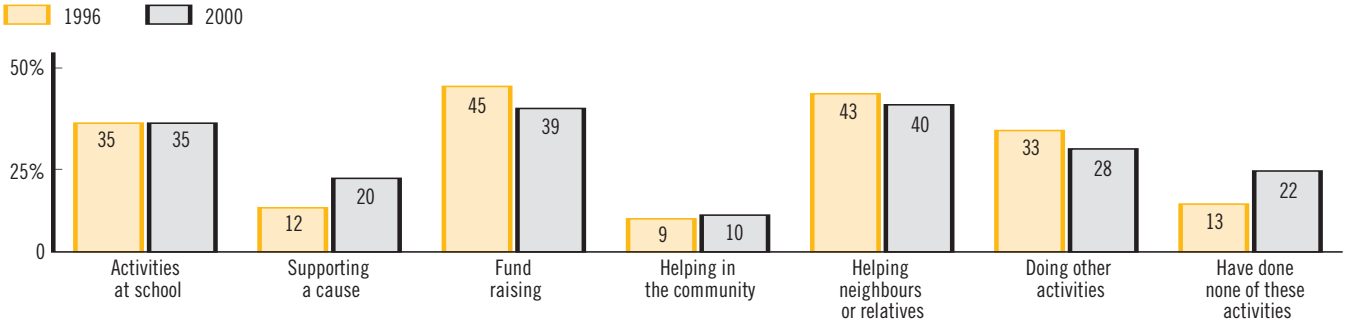
YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

Children aged 12 and 13 are engaged in a variety of volunteer activities at school, in their neighbourhoods, and their communities.

While most children in this age group are involved in some type of volunteer activity, the proportion who said they were not rose from 13% in 1996 to 22% by 2000.

Girls were more likely than boys to volunteer at school (40% compared to 30%). Children in higher-income families (over $40,000 per year) were more likely than those from lower-income families to volunteer at school (37% compared to 29%). Of the 12- and 13-year-olds who volunteered, more than half (59%) did so a few times a month, and one-quarter volunteered less than once a month.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES* AMONG 12- & 13-YEAR-OLDS



** Over previous 12 months*
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the NLSCY, 1996 & 2000.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect increased by 125% between 1998 and 2003, according to the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect.

This is the second national study conducted by the Public Health Agency of Canada which examined investigations by child welfare services. The enormous increase in substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect is attributed to three key factors:

- An increase in cases of children's exposure to domestic violence and emotional maltreatment (identified as the most important factor).
- A shift in the way child welfare workers classify cases, with a much smaller proportion being classified as suspected. The introduction of structured assessment tools and new competency-based training programs may account for this.
- Better identification of victimized siblings. The number of investigated children has increased at a faster rate than the number of investigated families.

An estimated 217,319 child investigations were conducted in 2003 – or 46 investigations per 1,000 children aged 0 to 15. Of these investigations, 47% (103,297) were substantiated, which translates to 22 cases of substantiated maltreatment per 1,000 children. (These data are based on all Canadian jurisdictions except Quebec.) In another 13% of investigations (28,053), there was insufficient evidence to substantiate the abuse or neglect, although it was suspected by the investigating worker.

Of the 40% of investigations that were unsubstantiated, most involved reports made in good faith. The researchers estimated that only 5% of reports tracked by the study were considered to have been made with malicious intent.

Neglect was the most common form of substantiated maltreatment, accounting for 30% of the cases. Twenty-eight per cent involved exposure to domestic violence, 24% concerned physical abuse, 15% were emotional abuse, and 3% were sexual abuse.

Girls made up 49% of victims. They constituted a larger proportion of victims of sexual abuse (63%) and emotional maltreatment (54%). Boys were more often victims of physical abuse (54%), neglect (52%), and exposure to domestic violence (52%).

In 10% of substantiated cases, the children were physically harmed, and in 3% of the cases they required treatment. In 27% of cases of physical abuse, the abuse continued for more than six months.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Overall rates of physical and sexual assault against children by family members rose between 1998 and 2002, then declined in 2003. These data were collected from 71 police services across Canada, representing 46% of the national volume of crime.

According to this study, nearly one-third (32%) of all sexual assaults against children and youth in 2003 were perpetrated by family members, as were one in five physical assaults (21%).

Children are more likely to be victims of family-related assaults as they get older. For sexual assaults, the victimization rate was highest among girls aged 12 to 14, and for physical assaults, the rate was highest for 17-year-old women – about 2.5 times greater than for 17-year-old men. Among children under age 12, family-related physical assaults were higher for boys than for girls, but females aged 13 to 17 suffered higher rates of physical assaults than males in that age group.

It is widely understood that these data underestimate the problem because they represent only the incidents that were reported to police. Youth aged 15 and older – and particularly those aged 15 to 17 – were the least likely of all age groups to report their victimization to police. The most common reason given by youth for not reporting the incident was that it had been "dealt with another way" (47%), while 15% "feared revenge by the offender."

Witnessing family violence

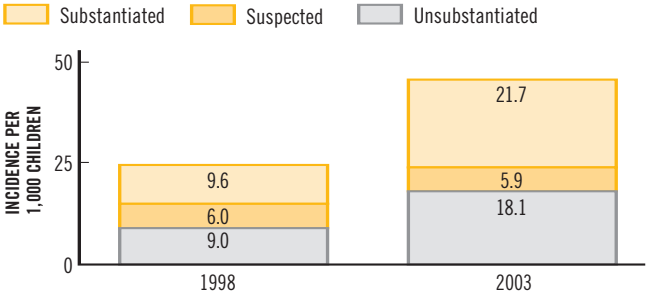
According to the 2004 General Social Survey, 394,000 victims of spousal violence – 33% of all such victims – said their children saw or heard the abuse. Among these victims, 40% said they feared for their lives and 44% said they were physically injured.

Living in shelters

According to a survey of Canadian shelters which provide residential services for female victims of abuse, more than 95,000 women and children sought refuge in 2004. In 1998, 91,000 had come to the shelters; the numbers rose between 1998 and 2002, then declined slightly. According to Statistics Canada, the 7% decrease in admissions between 2002 and 2004 was largely due to a 12% drop in the number of children being admitted with their mothers.

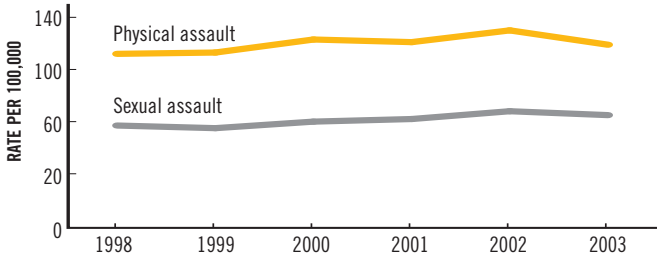
"Snapshot" surveys are conducted to see how many women and children are admitted to shelters on a given day. On the day of the survey in 1993, about 3,100 women and children were admitted to shelters for reasons of abuse; in 2004, that number had grown to 5,009 – a 62% increase.

CHILD MALTREATMENT INVESTIGATIONS IN CANADA, EXCLUDING QUEBEC



Source: Public Health Agency of Canada. Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, 2003: Major Findings, *2005.*

CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL AND PHYSICAL ASSAULT BY FAMILY MEMBERS



Note: Children under age 18; reports to a subset of police departments.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada's Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2005.

EXPOSURE TO TV VIOLENCE

Research over the last decade has shown a clear correlation between watching violence on TV and childhood or teen aggression – establishing a short-term effect of TV violence on children's behaviour.

Researchers from the University of Michigan have now found a correlation between viewing television violence in early childhood and aggression in young adulthood. The study concluded that "overall, these results suggest that both males and females from all social strata and all levels of initial aggressiveness are placed at increased risk for the development of adult aggressive and violent behaviour when they view a high and steady diet of violent TV shows in early childhood."

In 2000, about one-quarter of Canadian children aged 2 to 11 watched television shows or movies in which there was a lot of violence – about 4% did so often and 21% sometimes watched. About one-third never saw such shows. Since 1994, the proportion of children who sometimes or often watch violent programs has decreased slightly, with more children reporting that they never or seldom see violent shows.

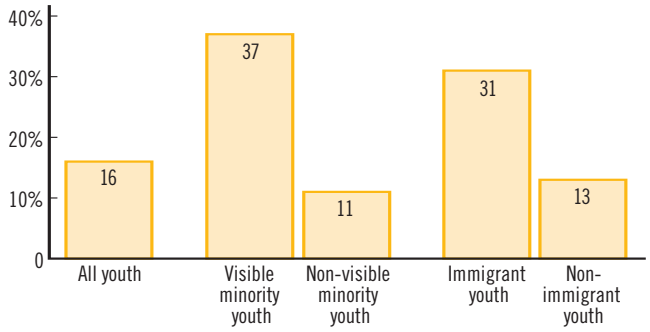
Teens are much more likely to be exposed to violence on the screen. Almost one-quarter of 14- and 15-year-olds said they often watched violent programming.

FACING DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination limits young people's opportunities and their feelings of inclusion in society. Visible minority and immigrant youth are far more likely than other youth to experience discrimination, according to the Ethnic Diversity Survey.

Visible minority youth aged 15 to 24 were more than three times as likely to experience discrimination as non-visible minority youth. And immigrant youth were more than twice as likely to experience discrimination as non-immigrant youth.

DISCRIMINATION AMONG YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24, 2002



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Ethnic Diversity Survey, *2002.*

BULLYING

Bullying is increasingly recognized by parents and school authorities as a serious problem. Incidents of bullying at school have declined since 1998 among students aged 10 and 11, but they are still no lower than in the mid-1990s. In 2000, 75,000 children aged 10 and 11 were bullied "at least some of the time," and another 122,000 (20%) said they were "rarely" bullied.

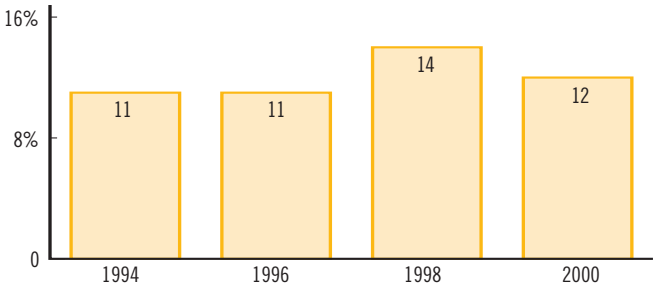
Boys are more likely than girls to be victimized. Fourteen per cent of boys and 10% of girls said they were bullied at school at least some of the time.

Children in low-income families are particularly vulnerable. In 2000, 20% of 10- and 11-year-olds in families with incomes under $40,000 per year said they were bullied at least some of the time at school, compared to 9% of children in higher-income families.

According to leading Canadian researchers Debra Pepler and Wendy Craig, bullying is about asserting power through aggression, and repeated bullying consolidates the power relationship between the bully and the victim. Bullying in the playground is an indicator of future sexual harassment, dating aggression, workplace harassment, marital aggression, child abuse, and elder abuse.

Bullying can take many forms, with the most common being teasing, excluding, or spreading lies about the victim, according to the *Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children* survey. Among students in Grades 6 to 10, girls were more likely to report being teased and having rumours spread about them. Boys were more likely to report physical victimization. For both boys and girls, the reported rates of physical victimization decreased with age. Sexual harassment increased with age for girls, but not for boys.

YOUTH AGED 10 & 11 WHO WERE BULLIED AT SCHOOL "AT LEAST SOME OF THE TIME"



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the NLSCY, 1994, 1996, 1998, & 2000.

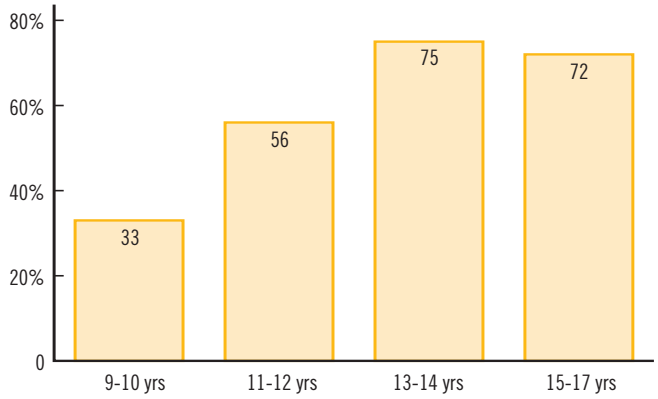
INTERNET DANGERS

Chat rooms

The Internet has become a major part of young people's social lives. They send e-mails, chat with friends and family, download music, and play games. In a 2004 Ipsos-Reid survey of teens aged 12 to 17, 43% said they used the Internet for e-mail every day and a further 30% used it a few times a week. Almost half (48%) used chat rooms daily, while 29% chatted several times a month. Another 23% said they only chatted on-line once a year or never.

Chat rooms provide an interactive medium where young people can have live, real-time conversations with several people at once. Some chat rooms have moderators, while others do not. Teens are attracted to chat rooms because they can talk with others about topics of interest. According to a 2001 study by the Media Awareness Network, 60% of Canadian youth aged 9 to 17 have used chat rooms. As age increased, so did the likelihood that young people were accessing chat rooms.

USE OF INTERNET CHAT ROOMS, BY AGE GROUP, 2001



Source: Media Awareness Network of Canada. Statistics on Canadian Youth and Chat Rooms, *2001.*

A dark side

While chat rooms can provide a quick and easy way for youth to communicate, they can also have a darker side. Because of the anonymity they offer, chat rooms can be used for inappropriate sexual discussions and harassment. They can also be used to promote violence, hateful attitudes, or offensive activities. More than any other place on the Internet, chat rooms can be used as a cruising ground by sexual predators.

According to the Media Awareness study, a majority of young Canadians are using chat rooms, but only 12% of parents say their children do so. Of children using chat rooms, 85% said they chatted from home, but were unsupervised. When asked about their experiences with chat rooms, 43% said they had encountered someone on the Internet who had requested personal information about them, such as their photograph, phone number, or address. Only 8% had told their parents about the request. Close to half (46%) of the children surveyed said that someone had made unwanted sexual comments to them while in a chat room.

Cyber bullying

While most interactions on the Internet are positive, there are many cases where it has been used to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate others. This is called cyber bullying or electronic bullying.

The 2001 Media Awareness study found that one-quarter of young Canadian Internet users had received e-mails containing hateful messages about others. A 2002 British survey found that one-quarter of youth aged 11 to 19 had been harassed via computers or cell phones. A recent U.S. study found that 57% of students in Grades 4 to 8 had someone say hurtful or angry things to them on-line, and 13% said that this happened frequently. The latter study also found that 35% of students had been threatened on-line and 42% had been bullied while on the Internet. Unfortunately, however, 58% of those surveyed had not informed their parents about the Internet bullying or threats against them.

LEARNING

Learning refers to achievements in academic subjects such as reading, writing, abstract thought and mathematics, and in non-academic skills such as athletics and the arts.

KEY INDICATORS:

- School readiness
- Feelings about school
- Educational attainment

SCHOOL READINESS

Research shows that the most successful children in school are those who were nurtured and stimulated when they were toddlers and preschoolers – either at home or in early learning and child care settings. Such children are exposed to books, ideas, and number concepts, they are introduced to problem-solving techniques, and they have opportunities to develop their social and emotional skills in group settings. With the skills acquired through these activities, and children's innate abilities and temperament, they have a learning base upon which they can thrive. And they arrive at school ready to learn.

One measure of school readiness among 4- and 5-year-olds is the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. This test assesses a child's verbal ability and scholastic aptitude by having them look at pictures and identify the picture that matches a word spoken by an interviewer. The majority of Canadian children in 2002 (70%) scored within the normal range. The proportion who scored in the advanced range (17%) was up slightly from 1994, and the proportion scoring in the delayed range was down (13%).

HOW DO STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL?

School is a big part of children's lives, and learning is vitally important to their development. How they feel about their school experiences contributes to their success. Data indicate that children who are strongly connected to schools tend to do better academically and they are more likely to aspire to post-secondary education.

In 2000, over half (56%) of students aged 10 to 15 said they liked school very much or quite a bit. But school is less popular with 14- and 15-year-olds than with younger children. In 1998, a higher proportion of *both* older and younger students said they liked school.

Most students feel they are doing well at school. In 2000, 38% of teens aged 10 to 15 said they were doing well; a further 31% felt they were doing very well. Just over one-quarter (27%) said they were doing "average" at school, and only 5% felt they were doing poorly or very poorly. Older students were less likely than younger ones to say they were doing very well in school. Among students aged 14 and 15, only 26% said they were doing very well, while 28% of those aged 12 and 13 and 37% of 10- and 11-year-olds felt that way.

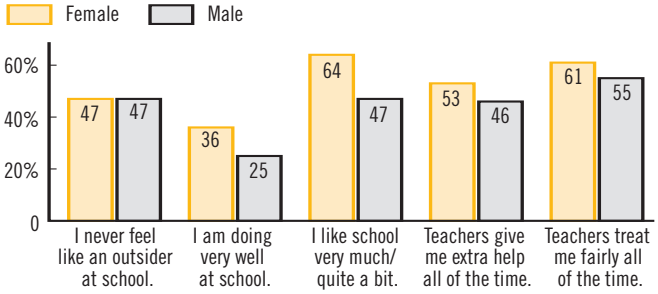
A majority of students in both 1996 and 2000 said their teachers treated them fairly. In 2000, 58% of teens aged 10 to 15 felt their teachers treated them fairly all of the time. Not surprisingly, students who felt their teachers were *not* treating them fairly were less likely to say they liked school or were doing well at it. These students were also less likely to aspire to university.

Parental support is important to students' confidence and their aspirations. In 2000, among students who said their parents were always ready to help, 32% felt they were doing very well in school, 21% liked school very much, and 72% hoped to get at least a university degree. Among those whose parents were sometimes, rarely, or never available to help, only 12% felt they were doing well at school, only 8% liked school a lot, and 62% aspired to get at least a university degree.

Boys were less positive than girls in almost all aspects of their attachment to school. One area where the genders *were* equal was in "never feeling like an outsider."

FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL, BY GENDER, 2000

STUDENTS AGED 10 TO 15

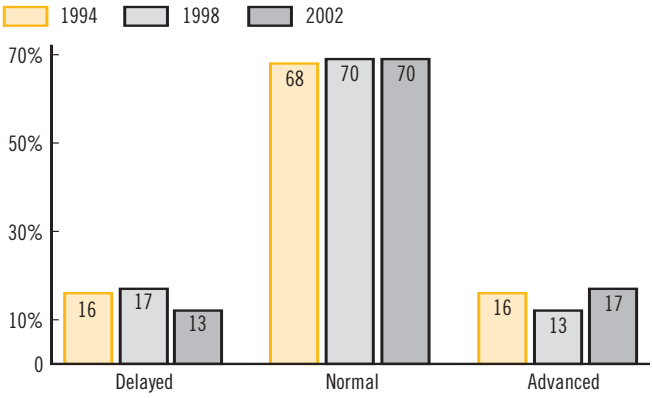


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the NLSCY, 2000.

KEY INDICATORS

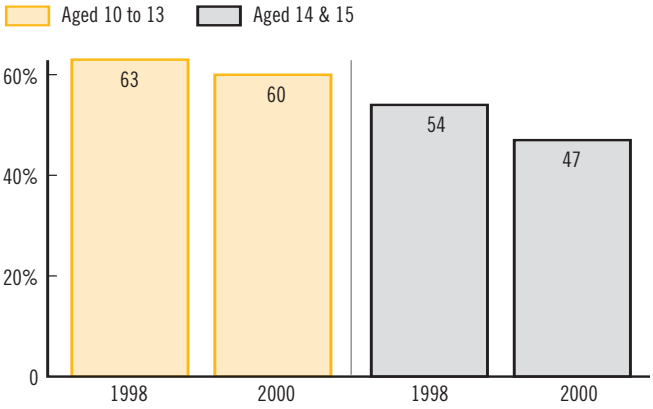
SCHOOL READINESS OF 4- AND 5-YEAR-OLDS

PEABODY PICTURE VOCABULARY TEST RESULTS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the NLSCY, 1994, 1998 & 2002.

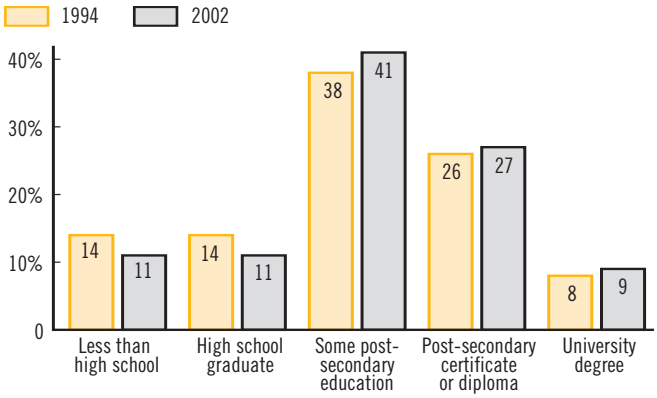
FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL: STUDENTS WHO "LIKE SCHOOL VERY MUCH/ QUITE A BIT"



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the NLSCY, 1998 & 2000.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

YOUTH AGED 20 TO 24

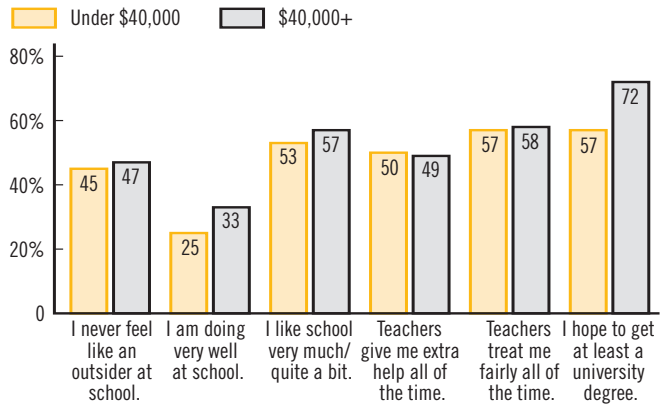


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, *1994 & 2002.*

Youth from lower-income families were less positive about their school experiences than those from higher-income families. Twice as many lower-income students felt they were doing poorly at school (8%, compared to 4% of higher-income students). Fortunately, however, lower-income students were equally likely to feel that their teachers treated them fairly and gave them extra help when needed.

FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL, BY FAMILY INCOME, 2000

STUDENTS AGED 10 TO 15

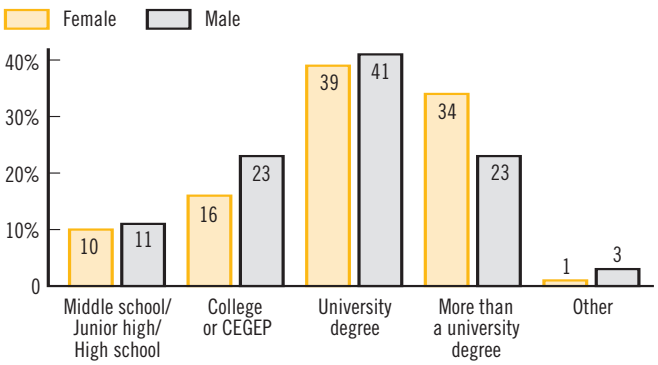


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the NLSCY, 2000.

High aspirations

Among students aged 10 to 15 in 2000, 88% aspired to post-secondary education, with 40% hoping for a university degree and 28% aspiring to more than one degree. As was the case in 1996, students from households with incomes over $40,000 per year were more likely than lower-income students to say they hoped to get at least one university degree. Girls were more likely than boys to say that they wanted to get more than one degree.

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF STUDENTS AGED 10 TO 15, 2000



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the NLSCY, 2000.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Increasing numbers of youth are completing high school and participating in post-secondary education. In 2002, more than three-quarters (77%) of young adults aged 20 to 24 had achieved some post-secondary education – up from 72% in 1994. Just 11% of this group had less than a high school education, down from 14% in 1994.

There were gender differences. Young men were more likely than women to have less than a high school education (13% compared to 8%). Young women were more likely to have at least some post-secondary education (82% and 74% respectively), and they were twice as likely to have a degree (12% compared to 6%). Young men and women were equally likely to have obtained a post-secondary certificate or diploma.

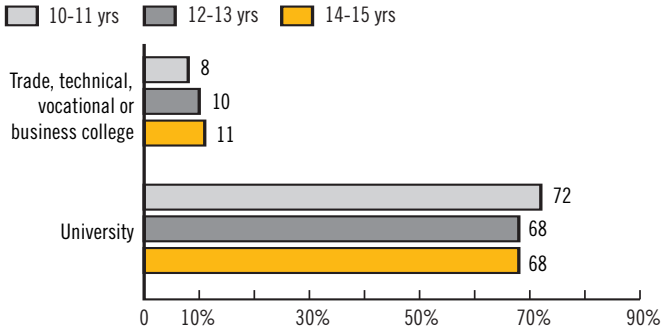
PARENTS, CHILDREN & SCHOOL

Parental involvement in children's schooling and their expectations concerning education have a critical impact on how well the children do at school.

Parental aspirations

In 2000, 78% of parents of children aged 4 to 11 said they hoped their child would go on to university, compared to 76% in 1994. The older the children get, however, the lower the parental expectations. Sixty-eight per cent of parents of teens aged 12 to 15 hoped their child would go on to university, 11% hoped they would attend business college or trade school, and 13% hoped their child would attend a community college or CEGEP.

PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS FOR CHILD'S EDUCATION, BY AGE GROUP, 2000



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the NLSCY, 2000.

Parents have higher expectations for girls than for boys. Among parents of children aged 4 to 15, 77% hoped their daughters would go on to university, while 72% had the same hope for their sons.

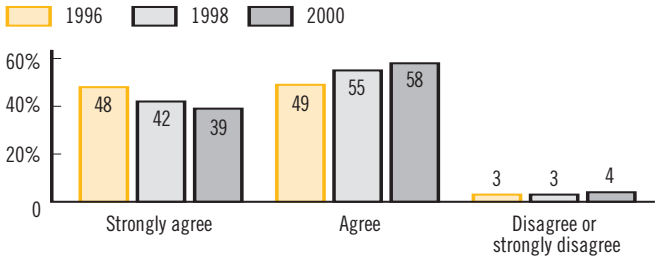
Financial barriers limit the educational expectations. Sixty-six per cent of parents with family incomes below $40,000 hoped their child would go to university, compared with 79% of parents with incomes over $40,000 per year.

Involvement in the school

The majority of parents still feel welcome in their child's school, however, the welcome is becoming less robust. In 2000, parents were less likely to say they "strongly agreed" with the statement that "parents are made to feel welcome at school." As children get older, parents were less likely to feel welcome. In 2000, 41% of parents of children aged 6 to 9 and only 25% of parents of 14- and 15-year-olds strongly agreed with that statement.

PARENTS FEEL WELCOME IN CHILD'S SCHOOL

CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 13

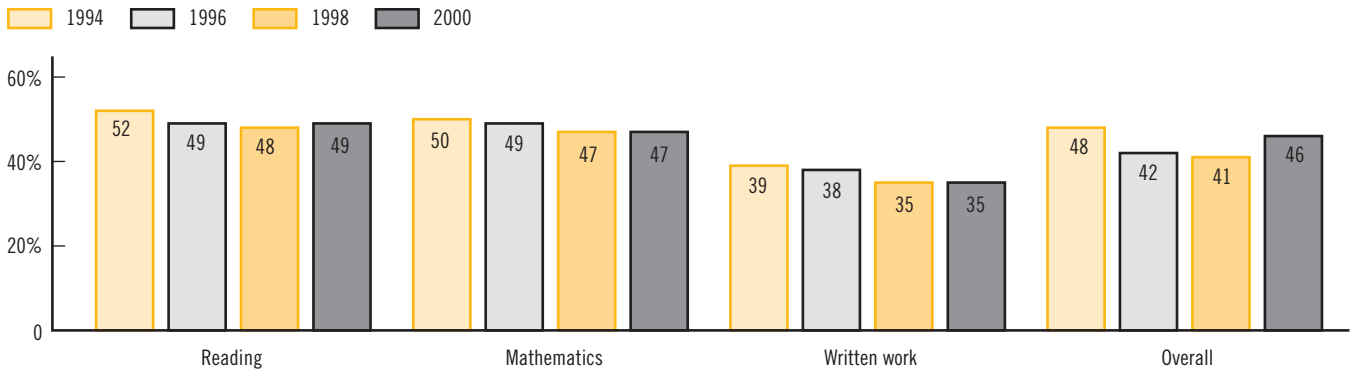


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the NLSCY, 1996, 1998 & 2000.

There were no differences among parents of girls or boys. Income made a difference, however. Low-income parents (under $30,000) of children aged 6 to 13 were twice as likely to disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that they felt welcome in their child's school.

How involved are parents in the school? The vast majority participated by visiting the classroom, attending parent-school meetings, attending a sport, arts or academic event, or through fundraising. The most common activity was visiting the child's classroom. In 2000, 97% of children aged 4 to 13 had a parent who did some kind of activity at the school, virtually the same proportion as in 1996. The older the child, the less likely parents are to be involved in the school. In 2000, 99% of 4- and 5-year-olds had a parent who was involved, compared with 80% of 14- and 15-year-olds. Low-income parents were less likely than higher-income parents to participate in school activities.

PARENTS REPORT THAT THEIR CHILD IS DOING VERY WELL IN:
CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 11



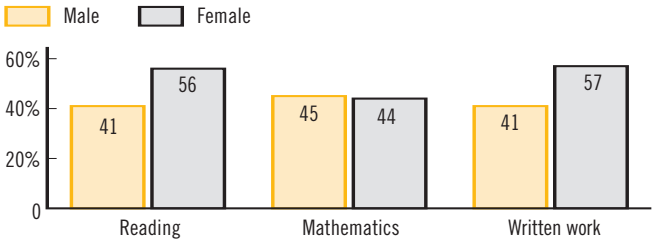
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the NLSCY, 1994, 1996, 1998 & 2000.

Gender differences

In 2000, about half (46%) of children aged 6 to 11 had parents who felt their child was doing very well in school. That was lower than in 1994 (48%), but better than the intervening years. Parental reports about their child's attitude towards going to school have remained consistently positive over time.

There is a gender gap in parental assessments of children's academic performance. Parents of girls were more likely than parents of boys to say that their child was doing well in school. In 2000, 50% of parents said their daughters were doing very well overall, compared to 37% of parents of boys. This gender gap was also evident in parental assessments of their child's reading and written work. In math, the proportions were about equal for girls and boys.

PARENTS IN 2000 REPORT THAT THEIR SON OR DAUGHTER IS DOING VERY WELL IN:
CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 15



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata files from the NLSCY, 2000.

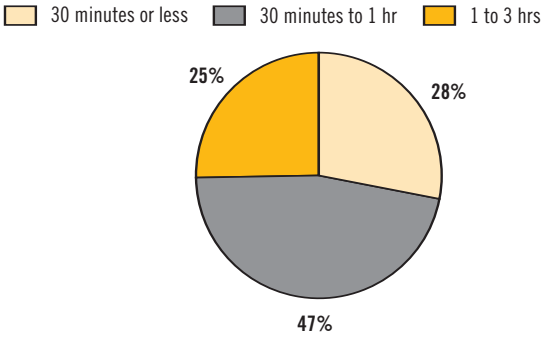
HOMEWORK

Canadian children between the ages of 8 and 15 are spending significant amounts of time on homework, according to a 2003 survey by Ipsos Reid.

Almost half of the children surveyed spent an average of 30 minutes to one hour each evening doing homework, while one-quarter spent between one and three hours. Homework levels varied among the regions.

According to the NLSCY, children are being assigned homework more often. In 2000, 57% of youth aged 6 to 15 were assigned homework daily, up from 48% in 1996. Among children aged 6 to 9, 53% had daily homework, as did 59% of teens aged 10 to 15.

TIME SPENT ON HOMEWORK EACH DAY, 2003
CHILDREN AGED 8 TO 15



Source: Ipsos-Reid Survey. "Top 7 goals of what parents say children need for successful education," February 2003.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES YOUR CHILD SPEND ON HOMEWORK EACH DAY?

	BY REGION				
	ATLANTIC	QUEBEC	ONTARIO	PRAIRIES	BC
Less than half an hour	20%	25%	28%	32%	30%
Half to one hour	46%	55%	42%	42%	53%
One to 3 hours	33%	20%	28%	26%	17%
More than 3 hours	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ipsos-Reid Survey, "Top 7 goals of what parents say children need for successful education," February 2003.

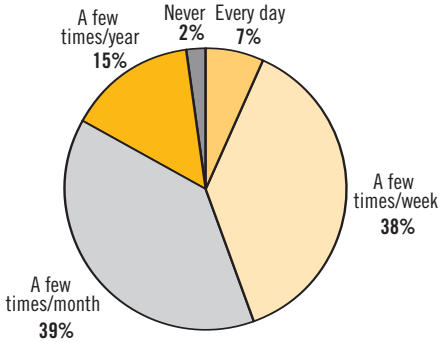
LEARNING ON THE NET

The use of information technology in the home has grown tremendously over the last six years. In 2003, 55% of all Canadian households had at least one family member who regularly used the Internet at home – up from 29% in 1999. Internet use from home was highest in British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta, where approximately six of 10 households were connected to the Internet.

The potential access to information through the Internet has increased exponentially. According a 2004 Ipsos Reid survey of teens aged 12 to 17, almost half said they used the Internet every day or several times a week to do research projects or assist them with homework.

Young people from wealthier families are more likely to have access to these important learning opportunities. According to a 2003 Statistics Canada survey, 82% of households in the highest-income group had a family member who used the Internet from home, compared with 45% of households with incomes between $24,001 and $39,999. However, the lower-income group had the highest growth in new connections to the Internet from home over the year (13%).

INTERNET USE FOR HOMEWORK & SCHOOL PROJECTS, 2004
YOUTH AGED 12 TO 17



Source: Ipsos-Reid Survey. "Canadian Teens Avid Music Downloaders and Gamers," 2004.

IMMIGRANT, VISIBLE MINORITY & ABORIGINAL YOUTH

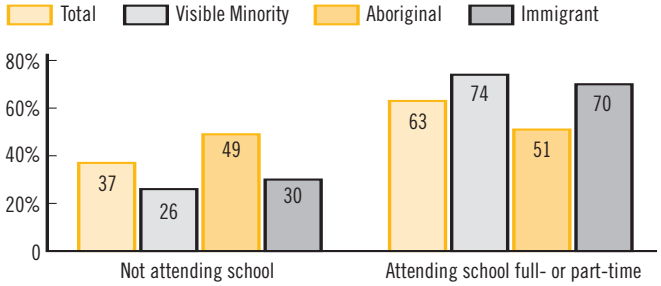
According to the 2001 Census, 63% of youth aged 15 to 24 were attending school, most full-time (57%) and some part-time (6%). Immigrant and visible minority youth were more likely than the overall youth population to be in school full-time, and Aboriginal youth were less likely to be in school.

More Aboriginal youth completing high school

School attendance among Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 in major urban centres has increased substantially, according to Statistics Canada. Between 1981 and 2001, their school attendance rate rose by 74% in Montreal, by 66% in Edmonton, and by 40% in Saskatoon. Over this period, the gap in school attendance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth narrowed in some centres – Montreal, Sudbury, and Winnipeg. In Toronto, Regina, Calgary, and Vancouver, the gap widened.

More Aboriginal youth living off reserves are *completing* high school as well. In 1996, just over half (52%) of non-reserve Aboriginal youth aged 20 to 24 had incomplete secondary school as their highest education level; by 2001, this figure had declined to 48%. While this was an improvement, it is still much higher than among the general youth population (26%). Among Inuit youth in this age group, those with less than high school education dropped from 66% in 1996 to 59% by 2001. And among Métis youth, 47% had less than high school in 1996; by 2001, the proportion had dropped to 42%. For North American Indian youth living off reserves, however, the proportion remained unchanged, at 62%.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, 2001
YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's 2001 Census, *custom runs.*

And while the proportion of Aboriginal youth without high school completion declined in many urban centres, the proportion of non-Aboriginal youth without high school declined even more between 1981 and 2001. As a result, the education gap between the two groups widened.

ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL YOUTH AGED 20-24, NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND WITH LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION, SELECT CITIES

	ABORIGINAL (%)				NON-ABORIGINAL (%)			
	MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE	
	1981	2001	1981	2001	1981	2001	1981	2001
Montreal	35.7	20.7	32.8	12.6	24.9	14.1	22.0	8.9
Ottawa-Hull	30.0	24.0	34.6	12.6	23.8	11.0	20.1	6.2
Toronto	45.8	25.6	35.8	19.0	24.8	12.1	21.4	7.4
Sudbury	47.1	25.9	40.7	18.9	25.9	10.6	24.6	8.1
Thunder Bay	30.3	23.8	55.6	30.1	29.0	13.3	21.9	9.9
Winnipeg	65.5	37.3	62.4	32.4	31.0	16.0	26.7	10.3
Regina	52.5	27.2	67.2	34.3	31.4	14.5	27.1	7.9
Saskatoon	55.2	42.9	57.8	30.3	32.2	15.4	22.8	10.3
Calgary	52.7	32.4	41.2	30.6	27.4	16.1	24.0	10.4
Edmonton	50.0	42.1	47.8	33.3	28.1	18.7	24.7	11.5
Vancouver	45.5	33.1	34.4	22.2	26.9	10.8	21.0	7.2

Note: For comparability with later years, Montreal counts in 1981 exclude the Kahnawake reserve which was within the Montreal CMA in 1981, but did not participate in the 2001 Census.

Source: A.J. Siggner and R. Costa, Aboriginal Conditions in Census Metropolitan Areas, 1981-2001. *Statistics Canada Cat. 89-613-MIE, No. 008, 2005.*

Also over this 20-year period, Aboriginal males fell further behind their female counterparts in terms of high school completion. In the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, the main reason young men gave for dropping out of school was boredom; for young women, the main reason was pregnancy or having to look after children.

Post-secondary educational attainment has increased among Aboriginal youth. From 1981 to 2001, most of the urban centres showed a large growth in numbers of young Aboriginal adults who had a post-secondary degree or diploma. Overall, 27% of Aboriginal men aged 25 to 34 had completed post-secondary education in 2001, compared to 22% in 1981.

Immigrant & visible minority students

According to the 2000 Youth in Transition Survey, a majority of Canadian 15-year-olds said they hoped to obtain a post-secondary education. Immigrant and visible minority youth had even higher aspirations. Even controlling for school performance and socio-demographic factors between the groups, immigrant and visible minority youth had higher post-secondary aspirations.

Over three-quarters (77%) of first-generation immigrant youth hoped to get a university education of one or more degrees, compared to 60% of Canadian-born youth. Visible minority youth were much more likely than their non-visible minority peers to aspire to a second university degree.

POST-SECONDARY ASPIRATIONS OF IMMIGRANT AND VISIBLE MINORITY TEENS, 2000

	15-YEAR-OLDS (%)			
	IMMIGRANT	NON-IMMIGRANT	VISIBLE MINORITY	NON-VISIBLE MINORITY
Don't know/ No response	9	11	10	11
High school	4	7	3	7
Technical/ college	10	22	9	23
University	26	27	26	27
2nd Degree	51	33	52	32

Source: H. Krahn & A. Taylor, Resilient Teenagers: Explaining the High Educational Aspirations of Visible Minority Immigrant Youth in Canada. *Prairie Centre of Excellence, 2005.*

Among young women who were both members of a visible minority group and first-generation immigrants, 84% aspired to go to university, compared to 63% of their Canadian-born non-visible minority peers. For young visible minority immigrant men, 75% of aspired to university compared to 51% of their Canadian-born non-visible minority counterparts. Young visible minority immigrants in higher-income families and with higher-educated parents were more likely to aspire to university than those in families with lower incomes and lower levels of parental education.

LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

Young Canadians participate in a number of national and international learning assessments.

Canadian students did very well in the 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which surveys mathematics, reading, and science skills among 15-year-olds. PISA began in 2000 and is conducted every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In 2003, 41 countries participated.

Only Finland had significantly better results than Canada in reading scores. In mathematics, two countries out-performed Canada (Hong Kong-China and Finland). In both science and problem-solving, Canadian students were ranked 5th behind students from Finland, Hong Kong-China, Japan, and Korea.

Provincial results

On reading tests, the mean performance of Canadian students did not change significantly between 2000 and 2003. Students in Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island were the only ones to show significant decreases in reading performance. On science tests, Canadian students' results declined overall, with students in Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan showing the most significant decreases.

PISA includes two mathematical tests. One deals with concepts of space and shape. In this area, Canadian students' results did not change significantly from 2000 to 2003. The second PISA math test explores change and relationships. On this measure, Canadian students improved in 2003. Those in Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia showed the most significant gains.

COMBINED MATHEMATICS SCORES, BY PROVINCE, 2003

	15-YEAR-OLDS	
	FEMALE	MALE
Newfoundland & Labrador	512	522
Prince Edward Island	501	500
Nova Scotia	509	521
New Brunswick	509	515
Quebec	534	541
Ontario	524	536
Manitoba	521	535
Saskatchewan	518	515
Alberta	544	554
British Columbia	534	542
Canada	530	541

Source: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Statistics Canada, Measuring Up: Canadian Results in the OECD PISA Study, *2004.*

A key area of concern was revealed in another study. According to the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, literacy levels declined between 1994 and 2003 among Canadians aged 16 to 25. The decline was predominantly found among youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds, as indicated by their parents' education level.

Gender differences

According to the latest assessments, Canadian girls tend to do better in writing and reading tasks, while boys do better in mathematics. Boys also have a slight edge in science. These gender differences in student achievement have been identified as an international phenomenon.

Girls continue to demonstrate writing skills at a significantly higher level than boys, according to the Canadian School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) which assesses skills of 13- and 16-year-olds. Because of the gender gap in results seen on the 1994 and 1998 writing tests, efforts were made to make the 2002 test more engaging to boys. And while the gap narrowed, girls at both ages still outperformed their male peers. For example, 15.7% more 13-year-old girls than boys attained Level 3 (average) or higher in 2002, compared to 19.5% in 1998.

The PISA assessment also found gender differences in reading tests among 15-year-olds. The estimated average score for Canadian girls was 546 and for boys, the score was 514. Saskatchewan and New Brunswick had the largest gender differences in reading scores. In Saskatchewan, young women scored 46 points higher than men on the reading test; in New Brunswick, there was a 40-point difference between the female and male scores.

Girls performed significantly better than boys on the PISA reading test in 40 of the 41 countries participating.

While the 2000 PISA tests for science showed no significant differences between genders, young Canadian men performed slightly better than women on the 2003 tests. The estimated average score for boys was 527, compared to 516 for girls. The largest gender differences in science results were in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Ontario.

In 2000, three countries including Canada showed significant gender differences in mathematics performance. In 2003, boys' performance on the combined mathematics scale was significantly better than girls in 27 of the participating countries, including Canada. Generally, however, the size of the gender differences were small.

LABOUR FORCE PROFILE OF YOUTH

The labour force profile of youth refers to the nature and extent of youth involvement in the paid labour market.

KEY INDICATORS:

- Youth participation rates
- Youth employment rates
- Youth unemployment rates

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Many factors affect how youth today participate in the labour force.

More young people are delaying their careers or vocations by staying in school longer. They understand that post-secondary education is an important pathway to a good job. It is by no means guaranteed, however. When they do seek work – often part-time during the school year and full-time over the summer – the jobs help pay for their student tuition and living expenses.

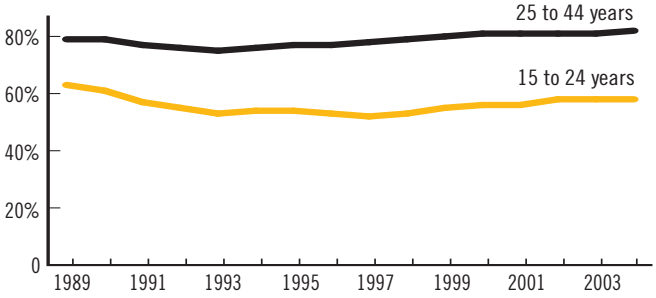
When young people finish their schooling and seek work, they enter a tough labour market that offers mainly part-time, temporary or contract positions. With limited options available, many youth work at part-time jobs. Of the 1.1 million young people aged 15 to 24 working part-time in 2004, 20% said they did so because of business conditions or because they could not find full-time jobs.

Over the last decade, a higher proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 have been participating in the labour force, either by working or looking for work: 68% in 2004, compared to 64% in 1994. Young men were slightly more likely than women to be in the labour force in 2004. However, participation rates are lower than the pre-recession rates of 1989.

In 2004, 58% of young people were employed. The rate was virtually the same for men and women. It was higher than in 1993 (53%), but still below the 1989 rate (63%). By comparison, the employment rate for adults aged 25 to 44 rose over that same period, from 79% in 1989 to 82% by 2004.

One of every three unemployed workers in Canada today is a young person. The unemployment rate – that is, the proportion of young people 15 to 24 who want to work but cannot find jobs – declined from 18% in 1994 to 13% in 2004. But it is still higher than in 1989 (11%). This youth unemployment rate is more than double that of adults aged 25 to 44 (6.5%).

EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUP



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005.*

Young people with post-secondary education are much less likely to be unemployed. About 8% of youth (15 to 24 years) with a university degree were unemployed in 2004. By contrast, 25% of youth with less than high school, 21% of those with some high school, and 12% of high school graduates were unemployed.

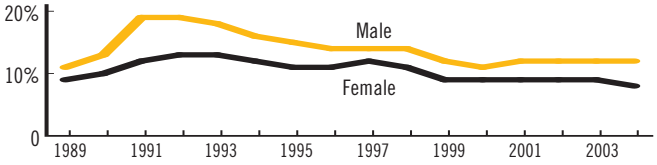
What does student employment look like today? In September 2004, 39% of full-time and 72% of part-time students aged 15 to 24 were employed, up slightly from 2000 (38% and 71% respectively). In July 2004, 59% of those who intended to return to full-time studies were working, compared with 57% in 2000.

YOUNG ADULTS AT WORK

The unemployment rate for young adults aged 20 to 24 is 58% higher than the rate for adults aged 25 to 44 – despite the fact that young people today are more highly educated than at any other point in Canadian history. And while young adults have fared somewhat better than teens in terms of unemployment, they still had an unemployment rate of 10.3% in 2004, virtually unchanged since 2000.

In 2004, 40% of young adults were students. Their unemployment rate in August of that year was 8.5%; the corresponding rate for non-students was 11.3%. The unemployment rate for young men not in school was 13.1% and for women, 8.9%.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY GENDER
ADULTS AGED 20 TO 24



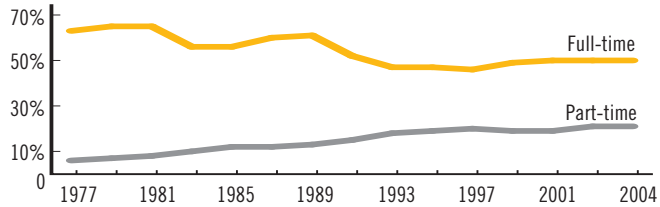
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005.*

In 2004, 71% of young adults (aged 20 to 24) were employed, compared to 74% in 1989. During the 1990s, the lowest employment rate for this group was in 1993, when it fell to 65%.

Fortunately, the gender gap has all but disappeared. In 2004, 72% of young adult men and 70% of women were employed. By comparison, 76% of men and only 63% of women in this age group were employed in 1976.

Among employed young adults, 30% have part-time jobs. Their rate of part-time work has increased steadily since 1976 – as a result of the economic recession in the 1990s, but primarily due to increased post-secondary enrollment.

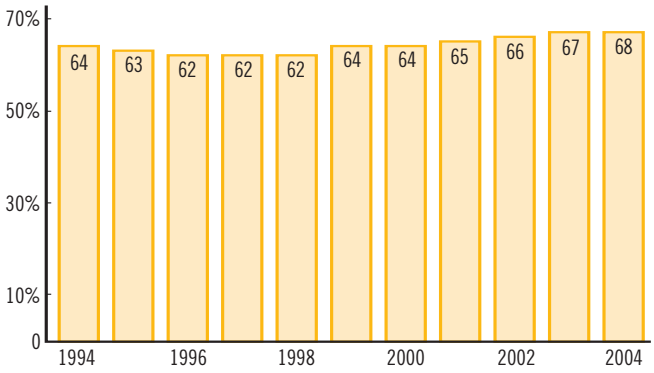
EMPLOYMENT RATES
ADULTS AGED 20 TO 24



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005.*

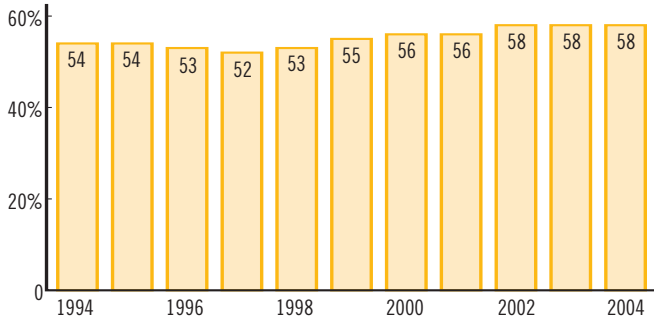
KEY INDICATORS

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES
YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24



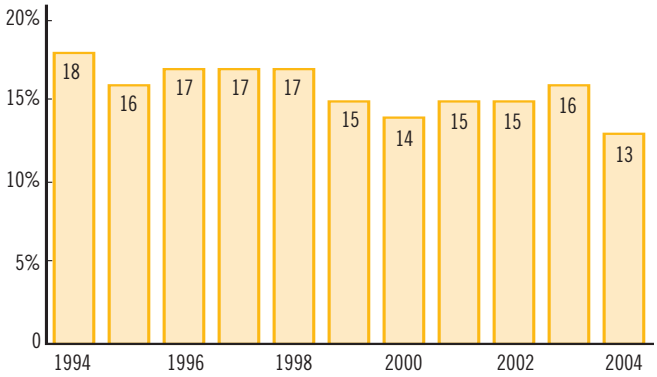
Source: Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005, Cat # 71F0004XCB.*

EMPLOYMENT RATES
YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24



Source: Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005, Cat # 71F0004XCB.*

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES
YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24



Source: Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005, Cat # 71F0004XCB.*

TEENAGERS AT WORK

Entering the labour market is a key transition from adolescence to adulthood. Working during the teenage years can help smooth that transition. Summer jobs and part-time work during the school year provide teens with valuable work experience and independent income.

Employment trends for teens aged 15 to 19 are similar to those of young people aged 15 to 24: their employment rate has improved, but not fully recovered from the early 1990s recession. Employed teens as a proportion of their peers remained virtually unchanged from 2002 to 2004, at 45%. That was an improvement over 1997 (37%), but well below the 1989 rate (52%).

Teens have different employment experiences, depending on where they live. In 2004, the highest teen employment rate was in Alberta; the lowest was in Newfoundland.

EMPLOYMENT RATES (%), BY PROVINCE
TEENS AGED 15 TO 19

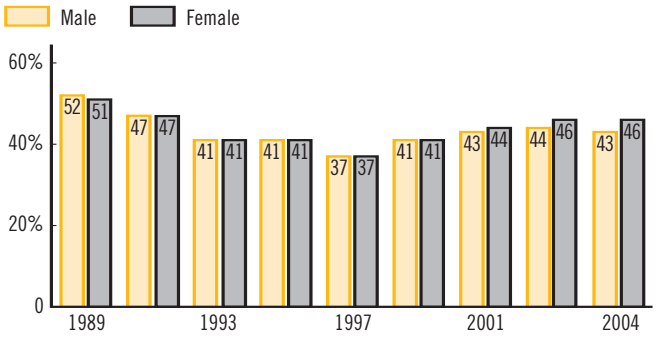
	1989	1997	2004
Newfoundland & Labrador	25	17	31
Prince Edward Island	48	43	47
Nova Scotia	43	33	44
New Brunswick	39	33	44
Quebec	44	29	42
Ontario	59	39	45
Manitoba	54	38	52
Saskatchewan	49	48	49
Alberta	55	48	54
British Columbia	55	39	41
Canada	52	37	45

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005.*

Gender gap reversed

The employment market has improved more for teenaged girls than for boys. In 2004, girls had a higher employment rate than boys, a reversal of the situation in 1989. In 1997, the employment rate for both genders dipped to 37%, but girls have now rebounded to 46% and boys to only 43%. Neither group has rebounded to their 1989 employment rates.

EMPLOYMENT RATES, BY GENDER
TEENS AGED 15 TO 19



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005, A2.*

High teen unemployment

In 2004, the unemployment rate for teens aged 15 to 19 was 18%, well above the 1989 rate (13%) and higher than in 2000 (16%).

The difference in unemployment rates between teens and adults aged 25 to 44 has grown over time. At the end of the 1980s, the teen unemployment rate was 1.8 times the adult rate; by 2004, it was almost three times the adult rate (2.8).

Part-time work common

Most working teens have part-time jobs. In 2004, 70% of all employed youth aged 15 to 19 worked part-time. Young women were more likely than men to work part-time (76% compared to 63%), but that has changed over time. In the early 1980s, the rate of part-time work was equal between young women and men.

Since 1989, the rate of part-time employment has increased for both genders, and the rate of full-time employment has decreased. Teens who stay in school are more likely to seek part-time rather than full-time work, but many young people who are not in school may be working part-time because it is the only work they can find.

Many teens who drop out of school return later to complete their studies. There is a risk, however, that some will be marginalized and excluded from the mainstream job market if they are out of school and unemployed for long periods of time.

JOBS AT 14 & 15

Young teens – those aged 14 and 15 – are also engaged in the labour market. The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) helps us understand their experiences.

Work during the school year

More than one in five (22%) young teens aged 14 and 15 in 2000 said they had worked for an employer in the previous week, up from 16% in 1998. Forty-eight per cent said they had worked for pay at odd jobs (up from 36% in 1998), 14% had worked at a family business, and 18% had worked without pay.

When asked what kind of job they had worked at most in the previous week, odd jobs came out on top, at 52%. Nine per cent had worked in a restaurant, 8% in a store, and 6% in other service-related jobs such as construction or hospital work.

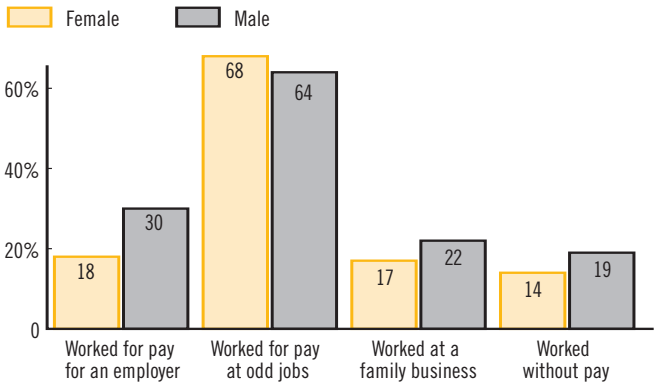
The majority of young working teens (70%) work less than 10 hours per week, down from 73% in 1998. Young men and women worked virtually the same number of hours per week, but youth in low-income families worked more – 33% of teens aged 14 and 15 in low-income families (under $40,000) worked more than 10 hours a week, compared with 28% of those in higher-income families.

The majority (84%) of young teens said that work did not cause them to study less. This was the case for both young women and men.

Summer employment

More than three-quarters (78%) of young teens said they had worked during the summer, up from 62% in 1998. One-quarter had worked for pay for an employer, and almost two-thirds had done odd jobs. There were differences between the experiences of young men and women.

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT, BY GENDER, 2000
TEENS AGED 14 & 15



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the NLSCY.

Young teens in low-income families were as likely as other youth to work over the summer. They were just as likely to work for pay for an employer, but less likely to work at odd jobs (65% for those in low-income families and 69% for other youth), or in a family business (18% and 25% respectively).

Just under half (44%) of young working teens had a summer job which lasted less than six weeks. Another 46% worked for six to 10 weeks over the summer, and 10% worked for more than 10 weeks. More than half (55%) worked for less than 10 hours in a typical work week during their summer job, and 15% worked over 30 hours.

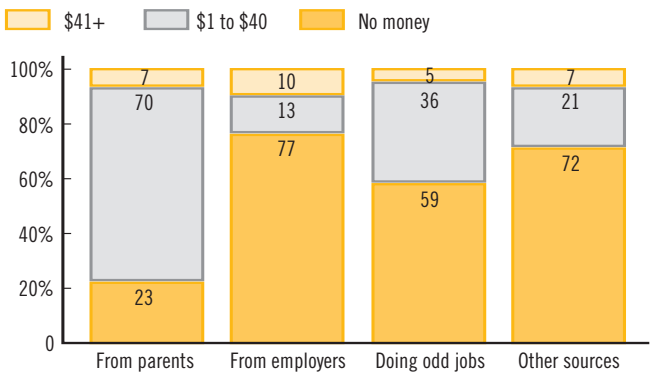
Again, there were differences by gender. Young women were more likely than men to have jobs that lasted less than six weeks. That was true for 50% of young women and for 39% of men. However, more young women worked longer hours: 17% worked more than 30 hours per week over the summer, compared to 12% of young men.

Youth & money

In 2000, more than three-quarters (77%) of teens aged 14 and 15 received money from their parents in the previous week, virtually unchanged from 1998. Twenty-three per cent said they were paid by an employer, 41% received money from doing odd jobs, and 28% received money from other sources such as gifts. Young teens in low-income families were just as likely as those in higher-income families to receive money from their parents, but they were less likely to receive money from an employer (20% compared to 24%) or from odd jobs (36% and 43% respectively).

How much money did they get? Almost three-quarters (70%) received $40 or less a week from their parents.

MONEY RECEIVED IN THE PREVIOUS WEEK, 2000
TEENS AGED 14 & 15



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the NLSCY.

COMMENTARY

by Andrew Jackson

Work, school and economic independence

A number of factors have contributed to a declining position of youth in the job market over the past couple of decades. Key has been the very soft job market through much of the 1980s and 1990s. Young workers are hard hit by recessions, since new hiring tends to come to a halt, and only slowly picks up in periods of recovery.

But perhaps the most dramatic change of the past decades has been the greatly increased rate of young adult participation in full-time education. Good jobs not requiring such qualifications have become increasingly difficult to find. The fact that young women now have career aspirations at least equal to those of men underpins even higher enrollment rates for young women than for young men.

The transition from full-time school to full-time work and economic independence has been pushed back for a significant proportion of youth. About half of all young people now enter some form of post-secondary education immediately after high school, and many do not seek a full-time job until their mid-20s or even later. Many young people move back and forth between work and education for an extended period. At the same time, more and more young adults bear a heavy burden of student debt. While increased educational attainment is a good thing and strengthens the eventual prospects for stable employment at decent wages – and young Canadians are probably the best educated in the world – the transition to work is taking longer and longer, and is becoming more difficult.

Most students seek work of some kind. Many full-time students want part-time work during the school year and full-time summer jobs. The financial need to combine work and studies has become greater with increased tuition fees, and paid work is needed to gain experience and access to better jobs. At the same time, post-secondary education has become more and more important as a means to access reasonably well-paid and secure jobs which provide ladders to other opportunities. Young workers who are high school dropouts or who have only a high school education are at increasing risk of being unemployed, or being able to find only very low-paying jobs with no future.

Job quality

The post-industrial economy has witnessed the expansion of low-wage, low-skilled jobs in private services. These are the jobs that now typically provide "ports of entry" to the labour market for young adults. But, rather than moving quickly to the bottom rungs of what turn out to be "career jobs," many youth, including well-educated youth, spend several years in a series of low-wage, low-skill jobs in sectors like fast food and retail. Most young people are working in parts of the job market which typically provide low wages, limited – if any – pension or health benefits, and part-time or unstable hours. The majority (51%) of young women aged 15 to 24 work in trade or accommodation and in food services, as do 39% of young men.

Thirty per cent of young adults aged 20 to 24 work part-time. Most young adults who are studying full-time want only a part-time job, at least during the school year, but this number is still of concern. It is often assumed that part-time jobs provide a "flexible" way to balance work and school. But part-time jobs also usually offer only highly variable and unpredictable schedules, especially when employers can pick and choose among a roster of part-timers who all want more hours than are available.

One big change in the job market in recent decades has been the rise of temporary or contract jobs, that is, jobs with a defined end-date. As employers have restructured work to make jobs more precarious and contingent, and less secure, they have often done so by making changes which principally affect new hires. In other words, much of the impact falls on young workers entering the job market. More than one in five (21%) new hires is now in temporary jobs – double the proportion of 1989.

The fact that young workers are likely to be in part-time and temporary jobs means that they are less likely than adults to qualify for EI benefits when they do become unemployed, even though they pay premiums for every hour worked. While one in three unemployed workers is a young worker, they make up just 12% of new claims for regular EI benefits.

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This excerpt is from *Better Educated, Badly Paid and Underemployed: A Statistical Picture of Young Workers in Canada*, by Andrew Jackson, published by the Canadian Labour Congress. Research Paper #33, July 2005.

ABORIGINAL & YOUNG WORKERS OF COLOUR

According to a recent study by Andrew Jackson of the Canadian Labour Congress, Aboriginal and visible minority youth have higher unemployment rates.

In 2001, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 was 23%, compared to 14% for all youth. Unemployment varied considerably, depending on the city in which they lived.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH AND ALL YOUTH, CANADA & 9 CITIES, 2001

	ALL YOUNG WORKERS (%)	YOUNG ABORIGINAL WORKERS (%)
Vancouver	13.8	17.9
Edmonton	10.9	16.6
Calgary	10.0	13.7
Regina	12.3	23.1
Saskatoon	12.5	22.5
Winnipeg	10.7	19.5
Ottawa	12.3	14.1
Toronto	12.0	13.8
Montreal	11.8	14.6
CANADA	13.7	22.8

Source: Andrew Jackson. Better Educated, Badly Paid and Underemployed: A Statistical Picture of Young Workers in Canada. *Research Paper #33. Canadian Labour Congress, July 2005.*

According to the CLC study, visible minority youth – and black youth, in particular – have lower employment rates than average. Forty-one per cent of visible minority youth were born in Canada, which means they were almost certainly educated in the Canadian system and speak English or French well. Yet in 2001, only 44% of all visible minority youth aged 15 to 24 and 48% of those born in Canada were employed, compared to 58% of all youth. And among black youth born in Canada, only 33% were employed.

EARNINGS

In 2004, young people aged 15 to 24 earned, on average, $10.49 per hour. In constant dollars, that was up only slightly (1.7%) from 1997. In 1997, young women's hourly wages were 91% that of men's; by 2004, the proportion dropped slightly, to 90%. Young women's hourly wages grew by only 1.4% between 1997 and 2004, while men's rose by 2.1%.

Hourly wages differ considerably among the provinces, with B.C. and Alberta having the highest. Youth in Alberta had an increase of 10.6% in hourly wages between 1997 and 2004, while rates in B.C., Newfoundland & Labrador, and Ontario declined.

AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE RATES BY PROVINCE, 2004
YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24

	AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE	% CHANGE, 1997 TO 2004
Newfoundland & Labrador	$ 7.96	-3.3%
Prince Edward Island	$ 8.61	2.1%
Nova Scotia	$ 9.07	8.5%
New Brunswick	$ 9.19	5.8%
Quebec	$10.57	3.1%
Ontario	$10.42	-0.9%
Manitoba	$ 9.65	5.2%
Saskatchewan	$ 9.99	6.4%
Alberta	$11.08	10.6%
British Columbia	$11.24	-4.7%
CANADA	$10.49	1.7%

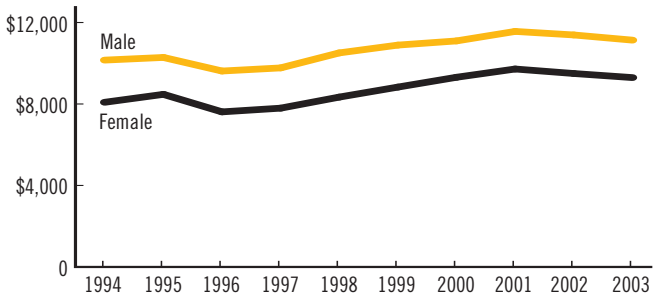
Source: Calculations by the Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005.*

The average hourly wage of youth is 56.7% that of all workers. This gap has grown by less than 1% since 1997.

On average, youth aged 15 to 24 earned $8,900 in 2003. Taking income from all sources into account, their average income that year was $10,200. Teenagers (aged 15-19) earned much less. Their average earnings in 2003 were $4,200, compared to $12,700 for young adults (aged 20-24). Teens' average income was only $4,800; for young adults, it was $14,600.

Between 1994 and 2003, average incomes for young people aged 15 to 24 rose by 12%, but young women's income was still only 83% that of young men's. In fact, the income gender gap has declined among teens and grown among young adults. The income of teenaged women was 90% that of men's, while the figure for young adult women was 81%.

AVERAGE INCOME* BY GENDER
YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24



** In constant 2003$*
Source: Calculations by the Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *2005.*

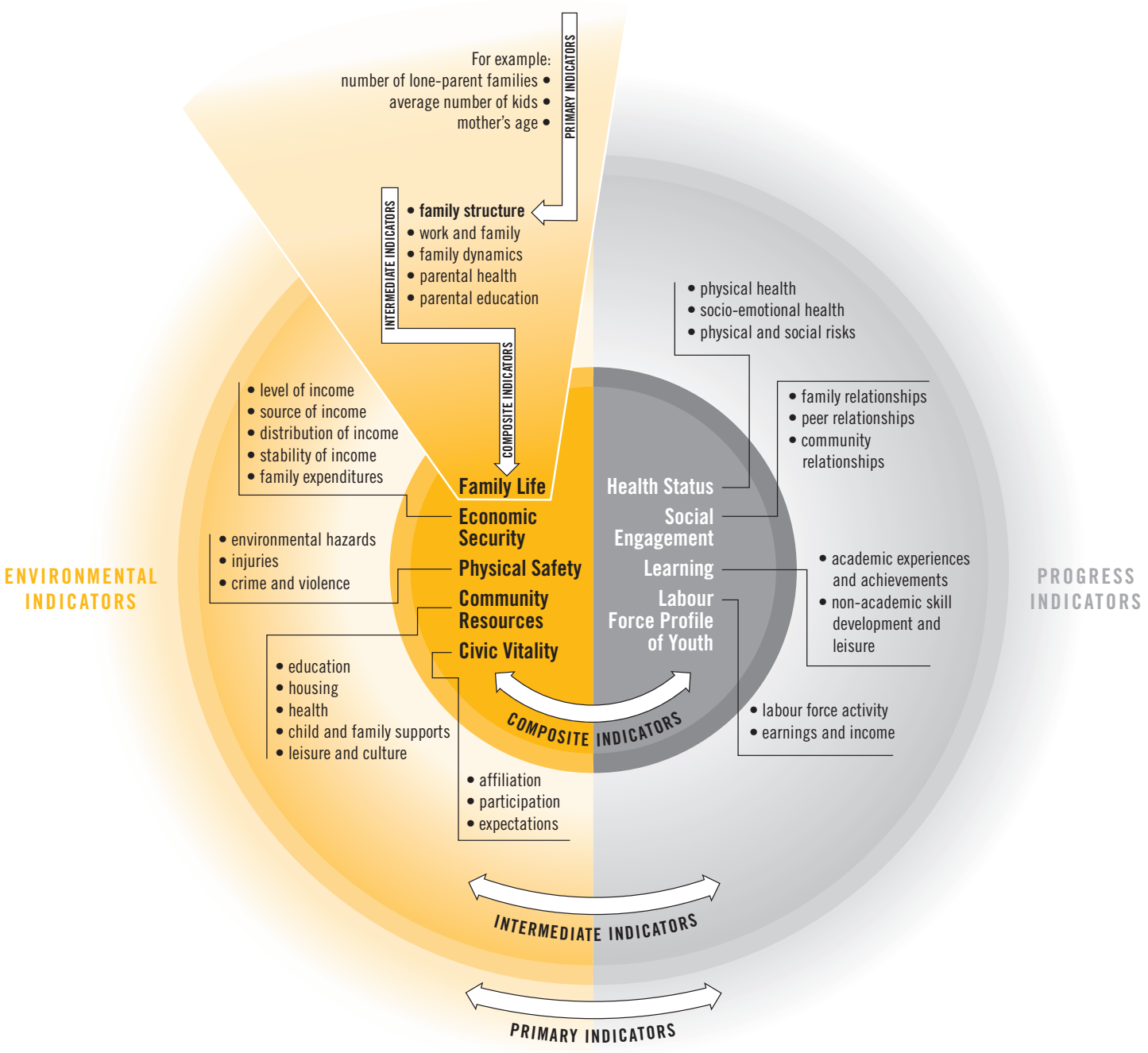
TECHNICAL NOTE

The Progress of Canada's Children and Youth is based on a large database of information on children, youth and families in Canada. It is built on environmental indicators, which represent the developmental influences that affect child development, and progress indicators, which are general measures of how well our children and youth are faring.

A three-tiered model has been developed to organize the wealth of data the CCSD has assembled on selected environmental and progress indicators. Primary indicators constitute the first tier. They represent a single measure of data calculated over time against a base period to indicate the direction of change.

Primary indicators are grouped under a number of intermediate indicators, the second tier. These indicators represent key determinants or outcomes of child well-being. The intermediate indicators are grouped into a third tier of composite indicators that assess both the environment of child development and children's progress through specific developmental periods.

Because of space limitations, *The Progress of Canada's Children and Youth* presents only a small portion of the research. The following chart outlines the model of composite and intermediate indicators that are used.



DATA SOURCES

The primary data for *The Progress of Canada's Children and Youth 2006* have been calculated by researchers at the Canadian Council on Social Development using information from the databases listed below. Additional data sources follow and they are listed according to the section of *Progress* in which they were used. Sources for the charts are provided with each chart.

Primary Data Sources:

National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), developed by Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, collects information on over 20,000 children (newborns to 15 years of age). Starting in 1994, the NLSCY will survey these children every two years until they reach adulthood. In the first cycle of the survey, both the child's primary caregiver and teacher were asked to provide information, as were children aged 10 and 11. In the second cycle of the survey in 1996, children aged 12 and 13 were also included, and in the third survey cycle in 1998, children aged 14 and 15 were included. The NLSCY includes a broad range of family, household, and community characteristics affecting child development. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2002 surveys.

Canadian Community Health Survey

The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), conducted by Statistics Canada, collects information regarding health determinants, health status, and health system utilization across Canada. The CCHS targets persons aged 12 or older who are living in private dwellings in the 10 provinces and three territories. The CCHS covers approximately 98% of the Canadian population aged 12 or older. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the Cycle 1.1 (2001) and Cycle 2.1 (2003) surveys.

National Population Health Survey

The National Population Health Survey (NPHS), conducted by Statistics Canada, collects information related to the health of the Canadian population. A cross-section of information is obtained by surveying all members of the survey households (58,000 individuals). To collect longitudinal information, one respondent per household, aged 12 years or older, is surveyed (18,000 individuals). Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1994/95, 1996/97, and 1998/99 surveys.

Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics

Started in 1993, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) is an ongoing longitudinal survey that interviews each sample member over a six-year period. The longitudinal nature of this survey as well as its extensive data content allows analysis of issues related to the labour market and income, including low income and changes in income over time. Data used in this issue of *Progress* are from the 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2002 surveys.

Census of the Population, 1996 & 2001

Statistics Canada's 1996 and 2001 Censuses provide national coverage of the entire Canadian population, including variables on demographic, social, cultural, labour force, and income data, as well as details on dwellings, households, and families. Generally, data are presented for Canada, the provinces, territories and for Census Metropolitan Areas. Some tables include comparisons with data from earlier Censuses.

Survey of Household Spending

This survey offers information about spending on a wide variety of goods and services, as well as data on dwelling characteristics and household ownership of equipment. The survey collects information such as household and family expenditures for food, shelter, child care, health care, recreation, reading materials, education, taxes, pension contributions, and much more. It also collects data such as the type of dwelling, tenure (owned or rented), number of rooms, and heating equipment used, as well as information on household equipment and vehicles. This survey replaces HFE and FAMEX. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1999 and 2002 surveys.

Labour Force Survey

Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) collects monthly information on the labour market activities of Canada's working-age population, including specific subgroups in the population. The microdata capture personal characteristics for all individuals in the household – such as information on age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, and family characteristics – as well as detailed labour force characteristics for household members aged 15 and older – such as information about hours of work, wages, occupation, duration of unemployment, and the like. Data are available by province and for the three largest Census Metropolitan Areas of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver.

Survey of Approaches to Educational Planning

This new survey was conducted by Statistics Canada in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada. Done in October 1999 as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey, it is the first household survey to collect detailed information on how Canadians prepare for their children's post-secondary education. Data concerning 20,353 children aged 18 and under were collected, including detailed information on both the children and the households. The survey identified financial preparations made by parents to prepare for their children's post-secondary education – such as savings being set aside, potential demands for student loans, and the like – along with non-financial preparations such as communicating parental aspirations and expectations, the extent of parents' involvement in children's learning and schooling, and their attitudes and practices concerning homework and television viewing.

Ethnic Diversity Survey

The Ethnic Diversity Survey was developed by Statistics Canada, in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage, to provide information on the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of people in Canada and how these backgrounds relate to their lives today.

The survey covered topics such as ethnic or cultural ancestry and identity, family background, religion, language use, social networks, interactions with others, and civic participation. The survey was conducted from April to August 2002. About 42,500 people aged 15 and older were interviewed by telephone in the 10 provinces.

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