

## CHILD POVERTY IN TORONTO

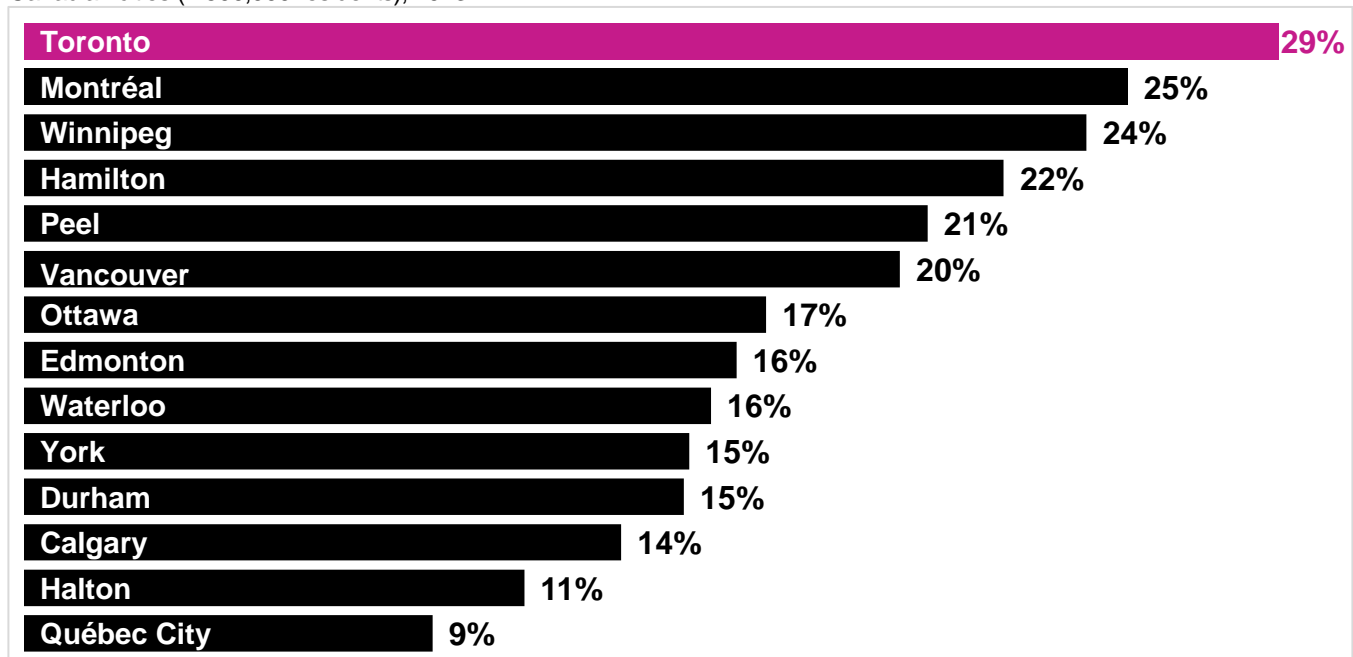
This fall, Toronto City Council will vote on the adoption of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy.

The Canada-high child and family poverty rates reported here underscore the need for a strategy that includes clear targets and timelines, strong action, and significant investment starting in the 2016 budget.

- ▶ New Statistics Canada data shows that Toronto continues to have the highest child poverty rate amongst large cities in Canada.
- ▶ In Toronto, 28.6% of children were living below the Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) in 2013.
- ▶ Child poverty is next highest in Montreal (25.1%) and Winnipeg (24.2%).
- ▶ Toronto also has the highest child poverty rate in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, followed by Hamilton (22.3%) and Peel (20.6%).
- ▶ As reported in [The Hidden Epidemic](#) last year, children of colour, Indigenous children, children from single-parent or newcomer families, and children with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty in Toronto.
- ▶ Individuals of non-European backgrounds are up to 3 times more likely to be living on low-incomes in Toronto.

## Amongst large urban areas in Canada, Toronto has the highest percentage of low-income children

Figure 1: Percentage of children aged 0-17 years in families with incomes below Low Income Measure After Tax in large Canadian cities (> 500,000 residents), 2013



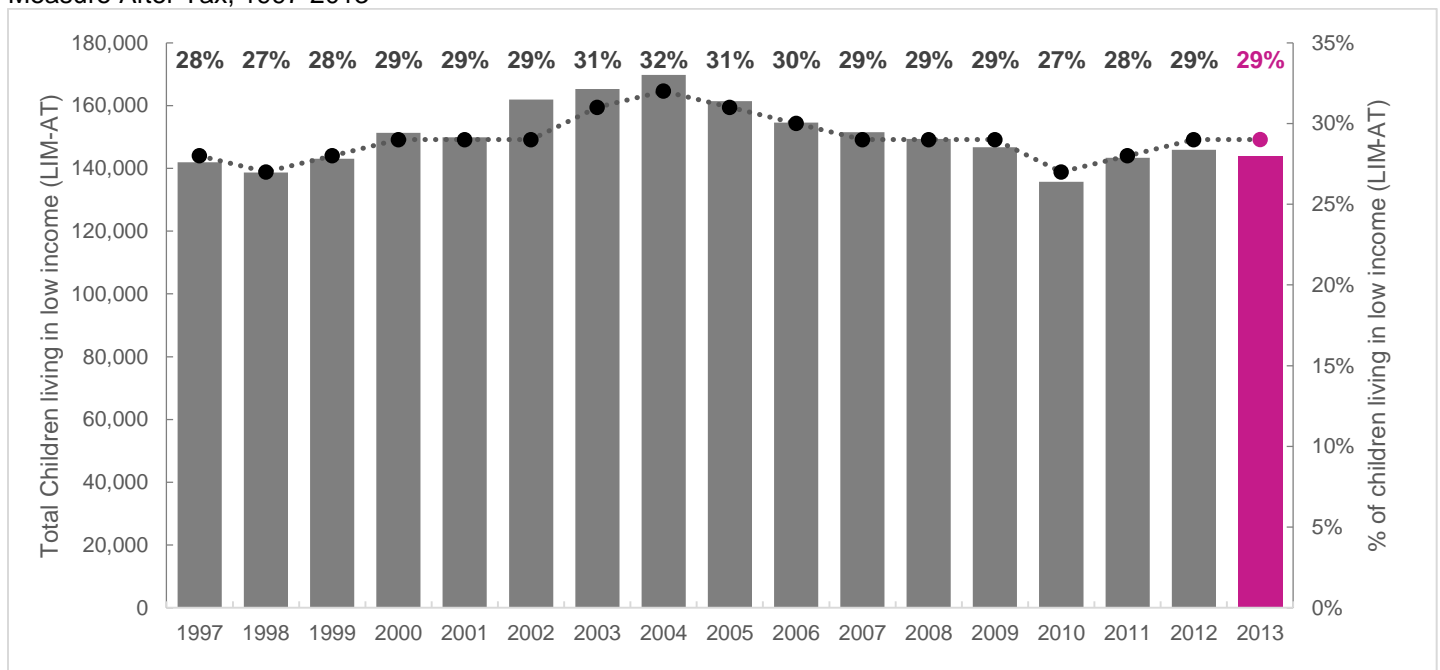
Source: Statistics Canada T1FF, 2013

# CHILD POVERTY RATES REMAIN HIGH IN TORONTO

- ▶ Child poverty in Toronto remained persistently high in 2013 at 28.6%.
- ▶ There were slight reductions in child poverty rates in parts of the Greater Toronto Area: rates in Peel and Durham were down 0.3 percentage points, while the child poverty rate fell by 0.8% in Halton.
- ▶ The child poverty rate in Toronto fell from 32% to 27% between 2004 and 2010 – in part due to the implementation of national and provincial child benefits – but progress has stalled and been reversed since 2010: rates in 2013 are at the same level they were in 2007.

## Low income rates among Toronto children remain stuck at 2007 levels

**Figure 2:** Percentage of Toronto children aged 0-17 years living in families with incomes below Low Income Measure After Tax, 1997-2013



Source: Statistics Canada T1FF, 1997-2013

### Technical notes

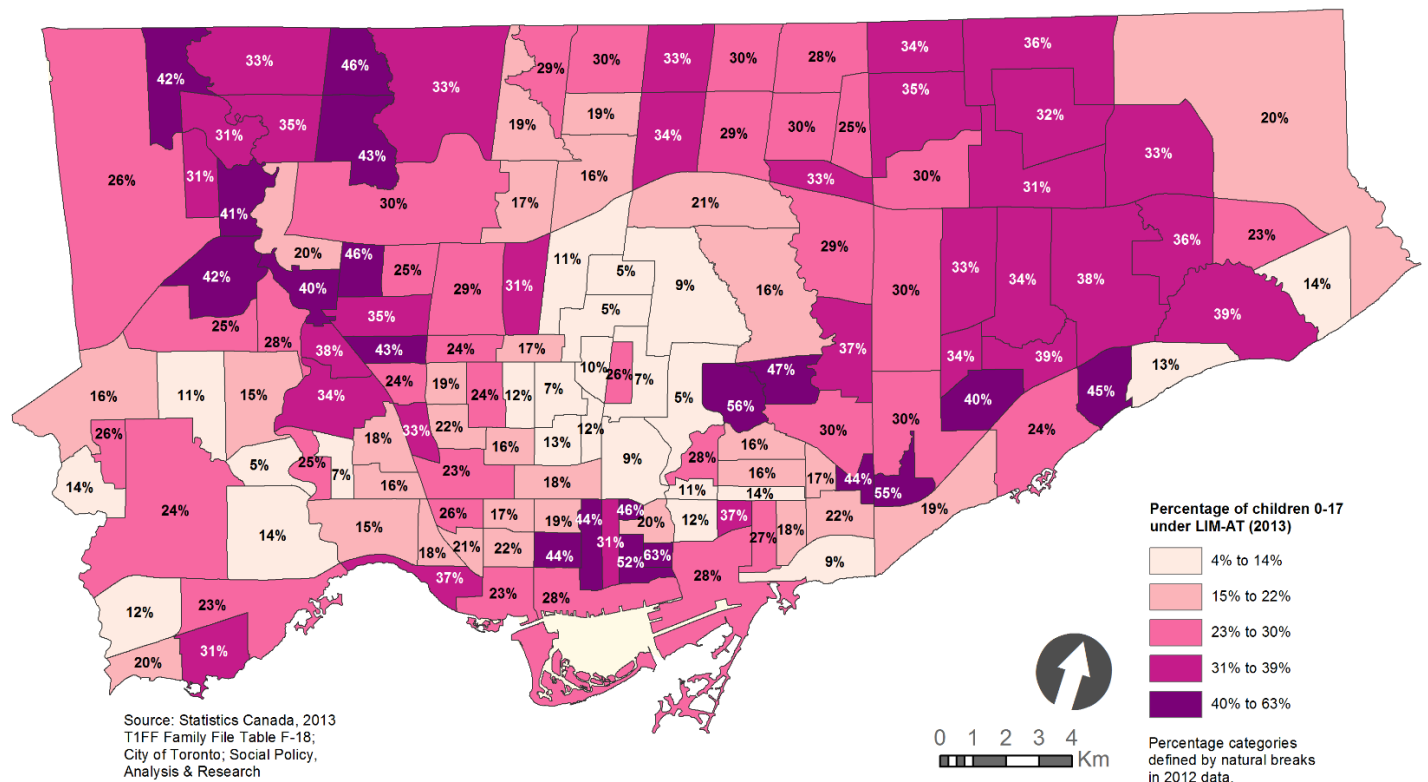
"Urban areas" in Figure 1 refers to Census Divisions as identified by Statistics Canada. While their composition varies somewhat between provinces, Census Divisions typically reflect "Upper Tier" municipalities. The Census Divisions listed are all those with a 2011 census population of 500,000 or greater.

Statistics Canada has no official, government-mandated poverty line. The Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) employed in this report was chosen as it is considered the best available statistic, collected annually at the local level from tax filer data. Tax filer data operates on the concept of the census family rather than a household. LIM-AT is calculated as 50% of median after-tax income of families (adjusted for family size). In 2011, the LIM-AT threshold for an individual not living in a census family was \$16,456, and for a family with 2 adults and 2 children under 16 it was \$32,912. According to Statistics Canada, tax filer data provide a useful way of looking at trends over time and comparing and contrasting low-income rates of different geographies. For further notes and limitations on use of tax filer data, see *The Hidden Epidemic*, p. 30-1, or Statistics Canada's [webpage](#) on the T1 Family File.

# A DIVIDED CITY: VAST GAPS IN CHILD POVERTY BY NEIGHBOURHOOD

- ▶ A stark disparity in children’s economic security persists between Toronto neighbourhoods.
- ▶ Neighbourhood-level low-income rates for children range from a high of 62.9% in Regent Park to a low of 4.7% in Lawrence Park South.
- ▶ Average child poverty rates in Toronto’s ten most “linguistically diverse” neighbourhoods (as rated in 2011) are about 4 times higher than rates in the least linguistically diverse neighbourhoods (32.5% vs 8.5%).
- ▶ Regent Park, Thorncliffe Park, Oakridge and Moss Park continue to have poverty rates above 50%, the highest level in the City in 2013.
- ▶ In contrast, Lawrence Park South, Kingsway South, Leaside-Bennington and Lawrence Park North once again have the lowest child poverty rates 2013 (all had rates of 5.2% or lower).
- ▶ Overall, 18 neighbourhoods had child poverty rates over 40% in 2013, including 8 in the north-west area of the city and 5 downtown.
- ▶ 18 of 25 neighbourhoods in Scarborough had child poverty rates greater than 30%.

**Figure 4:** Percentage of Children Aged 0-17 years living in families with incomes below Low Income Measure After Tax, 2013, by Neighbourhood.

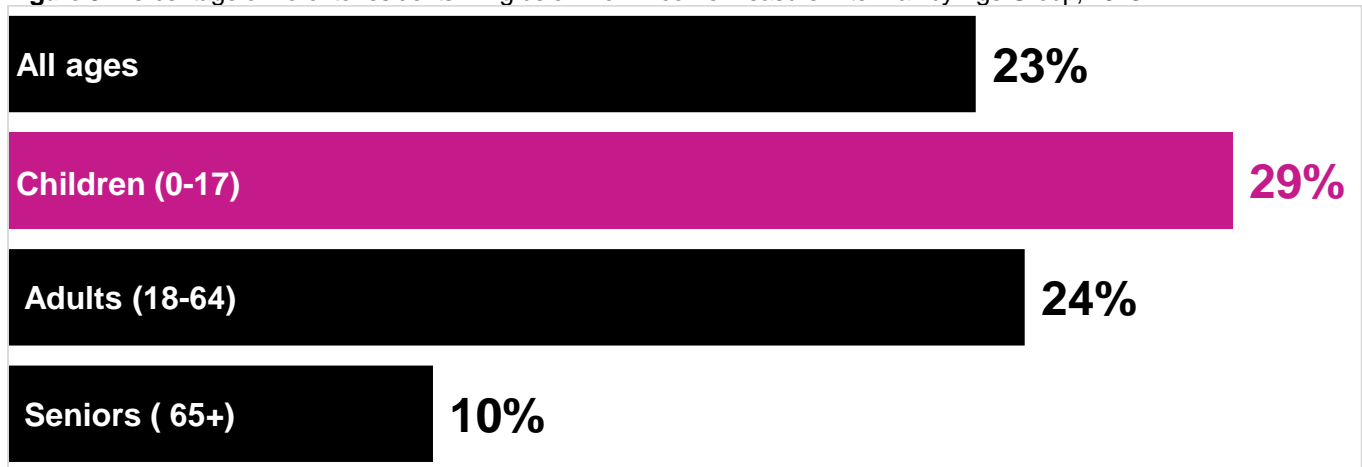


# CHILDREN ARE MOST AT RISK FOR POVERTY

- ▶ Across age categories (children, adults and seniors), children in Toronto are the most at risk of experiencing poverty.
- ▶ Toronto has the highest percentage of total population living on low-incomes in 2013 among large cities in Canada (22.6%); next highest was Montreal (21.2%) and Vancouver (19.9%).
- ▶ Toronto also has the highest percentage of working-age adults living on low-incomes in 2013 (23.7%), again followed by Montreal (22.9%) and Vancouver (19.0%)
- ▶ Amongst large cities, Toronto has the fifth highest rate of seniors living below the Low Income Measure (After-Tax) at 9.9% (Peel, York, Vancouver and Montreal all have higher rates).
- ▶ The percentage of seniors living on low incomes in Toronto increased from 9.1% in 2012 to 9.9% in 2013 – with almost 4,000 more Toronto seniors falling into in poverty

## Children are the age group most at risk of poverty

**Figure 3:** Percentage of Toronto residents living below Low Income Measure After Tax by Age Group, 2013



Source: Statistics Canada T1FF, 2013



*Prepared jointly by the Alliance for a Poverty-Free Toronto, Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change, Family Service Toronto (Ontario Campaign 2000), and Social Planning Toronto.*

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