



## Press Release

### **Nova Scotia has the worst provincial child poverty reduction record over 30 Years – shows the 2021 Report Card**

November 24, 2021

**Halifax, NS** -The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia (CCPA-NS) released the **2021 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia: Worst Provincial Performance over 30 Years**. This report provides the 2021 Child and Family Poverty rates for Nova Scotia, based on 2019 data, the most recent available data. Between 1989 and 2019, child poverty rates decreased in every province and territory. However, Nova Scotia has performed the worst in reducing child poverty from 1989 levels. Nova Scotia has the highest rate in Atlantic Canada and the third-highest provincial child poverty rate in Canada, a consistent ranking over the last several years. As the report card details:

- Nova Scotia’s child poverty rate in 2019 was 24.3%, down from 24.6% in 2018.
- 41,230 children are living in poverty in Nova Scotia.
- Almost 1 in 4 children in Nova Scotia live in poverty.
- 24.4% was the child poverty rate in 1989, when the promise was made to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000, **which means poverty has only been reduced by 0.1 of a percentage point in Nova Scotia over 30 years.**
- 27.8% was the child poverty rate in Nova Scotia in the year 2000, when it was supposed to be eradicated.

Dr. Lesley Frank, Tier II Canada Research Chair in Food, Health, and Social Justice at Acadia University, co-author of the report and Research Associate with the CCPA-NS says of this year’s report card, “I think 30 years of pre-pandemic evidence is enough to demonstrate that poverty has been legislated into existence through chosen policy approaches to social welfare and inadequate social programs that leave families and individuals struggling in deep poverty. With things undoubtedly worse now, swift and transformative action is paramount for the wellbeing of our children, families, and our province.”

“As we outlined in our recommendations in the report, to eradicate poverty governments must deal with income and wealth inequality, which requires both a focus on fostering a labour market that provides good jobs and economic security, as well as transforming social policy, investing in social housing and other public infrastructure. The Nova Scotia government should implement a poverty eradication strategy that includes legislated targets and timelines and is responsive to the



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diversity of needs of all those living in low-income,” says Dr. Christine Saulnier, co-author of the report and Director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia.

Co-Author, Laura Fisher, Sociology PhD student at Dalhousie and CCPA-NS Research Associate, had this to say: “The data presented in this report card show the positive effect of government income benefits to reduce poverty, which accounts for lifting 26, 810 children out of poverty in Nova Scotia. The Canada Child Benefit is responsible for 87% of this reduction overall. While the CCB has been a welcome help, many thousands of families still face deep poverty. It is unacceptable to leave a single child in poverty, we must demand change. It is past time for the province to step up.”

Trina Fraser, Executive Director of the East Preston Day Care/Family Resource Centres, shared this: “The report echoes the urgency, we in day-cares and family resource centres are witnessing on a daily basis. It also clearly presents the frustrations our early childhood teachers and program staff leaders experience daily, despite governments’ best efforts. The 17 recommendations provide a good start to develop a strong innovative action plan that at its core needs to have the voice of those living with poverty and those in power to enact change, not just listening but committed to the necessary changes.”

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For more information or to arrange an interview with one of the co-authors, contact Lauren Matheson, 902-579-9555 (cell) or [lmatheson@policyalternatives.ca](mailto:lmatheson@policyalternatives.ca)

The report is available on the CCPA-NS website <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/offices/nova-scotia/publications>

*The CCPA-NS is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social and economic justice, as well as environmental sustainability.*