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Half a million Ontario children growing up in poverty, new report shows

TORONTO – Half a million Ontario children are growing up in poverty, a new report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) revealed today.

“Newly released data for 2019 show that 500,000 children in this province are growing up knowing what it’s like to never have enough,” said Randy Robinson, report co-author and Ontario director of the CCPA. “Poverty can mean poor nutrition, substandard housing, missed opportunities, and ongoing stress and anxiety. All of these can have lifelong effects. In a province as rich as Ontario, in a country as rich as Canada, we’re out of excuses to end poverty.”

The child poverty rate in Ontario fell steadily from 23.4% of all children in 2013 to 17.6% in 2019, largely due to a relatively strong job market and increased government transfers like the Canada Child Benefit, introduced in 2016, the CCPA report notes.

“The downward trend in child poverty is good, but there’s no guarantee it will continue,” said Robinson. “We still need action, and if we’ve learned anything from the COVID-19 from the pandemic, it’s that if governments dare to use the tools at their disposal, they can do big things.”

The CCPA report, *Poverty in the Midst of Plenty*, makes 17 recommendations to tackle the crisis. The report proposes strategies to improve employment incomes of parents, increase social assistance rates, move ahead with Indigenous reconciliation, build more non-market housing, implement stricter rent controls, invest more in public education, make post-secondary tuition free, and use the tax system to re-distribute income and reduce inequality.

“The data presented in today’s report paint a picture of child and family poverty, but they also reveal a province of incredible wealth—one whose institutions and power structures do more to keep people in poverty than lift them out of it,” said report co-author Ricardo Tranjan. “Our recommendations are concrete steps that governments can take now.”

Poverty in the Midst of Plenty was produced in cooperation with Campaign 2000, a national coalition of 120 organizations devoted to ending child and family poverty. To view an interactive map of Canada showing child poverty rates by federal riding, [click here](#).

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