



## Press Release

### **2022 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia: Kids Can't Wait**

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**Halifax/Kjipuktuk** -The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia (CCPA-NS) released the **2022 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia: Kids Can't Wait**.

Findings based on 2020 data:

- Nova Scotia's child poverty rate in 2020 decreased by 24.3%. This is the most significant single-year reduction on record (between 2019 and 2020).
- 31,370 children were living in low-income families in Nova Scotia.
- 18.4% or more than 1 in 6 children, with much higher rates for children who are racialized, immigrants or Indigenous.
- Nova Scotia had the fourth-highest child poverty rate in Canada and the highest in Atlantic Canada.
- Government benefits reduced child poverty by 55.9%, lifting 26,810 children aged 0-17 out of poverty in NS. Without those transfers, the child poverty rate would have been 41.4%.
- Without the temporary pandemic benefits (including the CERB), the child poverty rate in Nova Scotia would have increased. Nova Scotians received 99% of temporary benefits from the federal government (only 0.3% from the provincial government).

Dr. Lesley Frank, Tier II Canada Research Chair in Food, Health, and Social Justice at Acadia University, co-author and Research Associate with the CCPA-NS, says of this year's report card, "For years, we have drawn attention to just how deep poverty is in Nova Scotia. The data consistently show that small changes by the government did little or nothing to change our child poverty rate. This report card shows that poverty can be reduced, and it can be done swiftly. Pandemic benefits – a bold action– lifted 14,500 children out of poverty in a single year. Sadly, the bold move was only temporary. Nova Scotia continues to perform poorly at reducing poverty. Generations of kids have paid the price of our government's slow, incremental action."

"I am not surprised, but I am troubled to see that child poverty is so much higher for racialized children and immigrant children in Nova Scotia," says María José Yax Fraser, Capacity Building Committee Chair for the Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax.

As Yax Fraser points out, "The rate for racialized children in NS (29.5%) was almost double the rate for non-racialized children (15.8%). The poverty rate for immigrant children in Nova Scotia is



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32.6%, more than double that of non-immigrant children (15.9%). This rate is significantly higher than the national average (18.8%), meaning they are more likely to live in poverty if they immigrate to Nova Scotia. The report also shows that poverty is gendered, with higher poverty for lone-mother-led families. Access to child care is an equity issue for immigrant and migrant women, particularly for lone mother-led families. Not only access to services but access to information defines how they experience inequity. The data point to the need to use an intersectional lens and invest in programs and services that respond to the root causes of these higher rates, addressing inequities in pay, employment, and ensuring everyone has access to services regardless of immigration status.”

“This report card demonstrates that there is a way to significantly reduce poverty in our province, which is sustained systemic investments in benefits to increase the income of those living in poverty. COVID benefits made a substantial difference; however, once those benefits ended, we saw the depth of absolute poverty, which is deeper than I have ever witnessed in my 25 years of working in community,” says Michelle Ward, Executive Director of Kids First Association – a Family Resource Program serving Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties.

Ward continues, “Having the highest child poverty rates in Atlantic Canada should cause all of us to hold our heads in shame. We can no longer afford as a province to ignore poverty – now is the time where as individuals, we can make a difference by giving voice to those who cannot and demand political action and policy change.”

One of the highest poverty rates by census area in the report card is Digby at 27.3%, and one of the highest by family type is for children living in lone mother-led families with a rate of 37.8% compared to children living in families with two parents (9.9%). As Trish McCourt, Executive Director of the TriCounty Women’s Centre, underlined, “Women’s Centres provide support to women and their families in rural communities where they face additional challenges with respect to economic disparity. We know that women who are marginalized due to intersecting factors such as poverty, gender, and race are also at increased risk for gender-based violence. We urge governments to provide direct support that puts money in their hands to meet their immediate needs, lifting them and their children out of poverty and supporting them to stay there.”

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



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