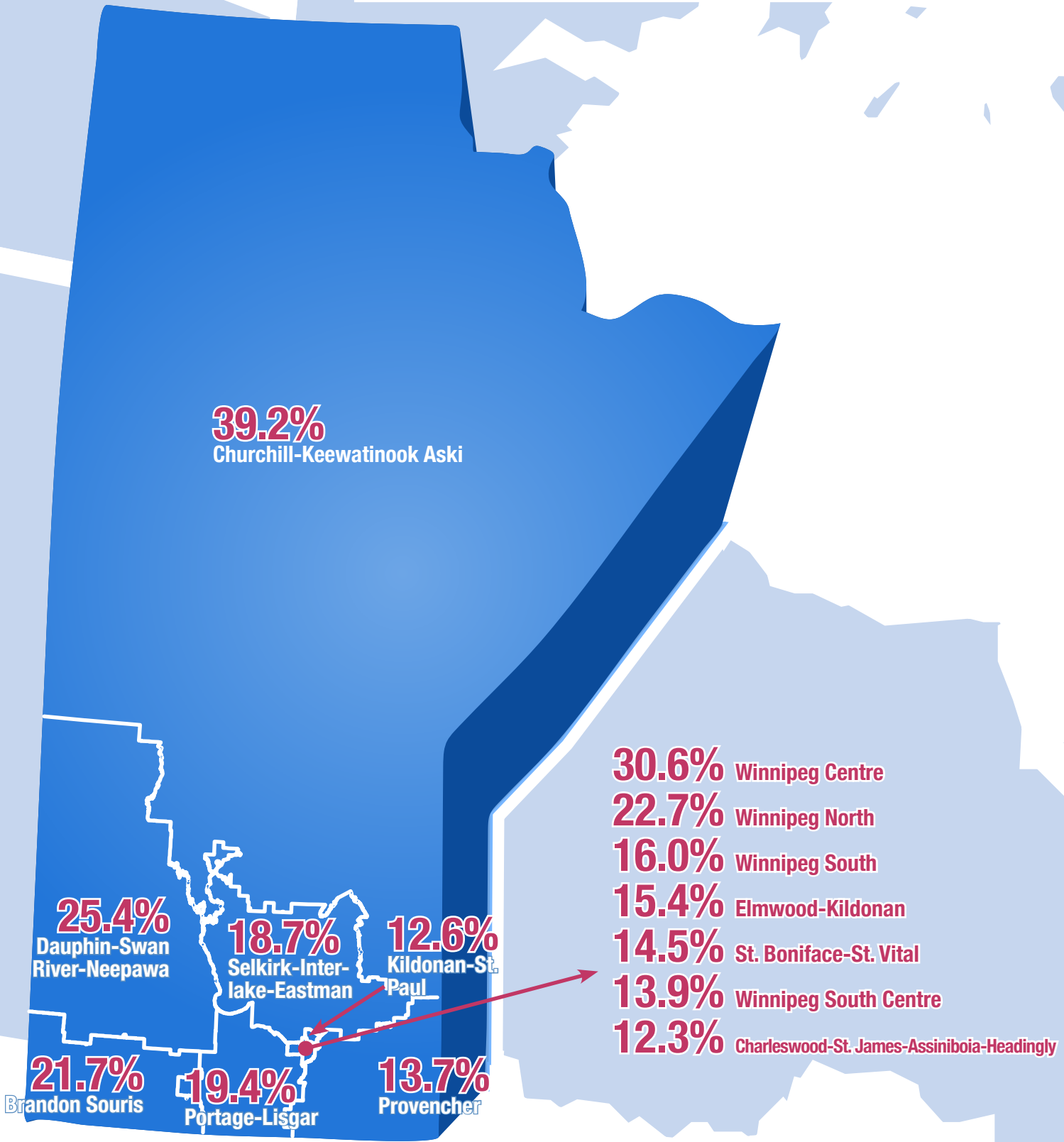
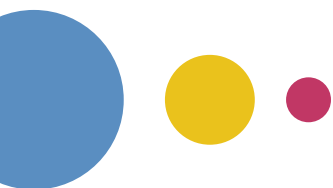


CAMPAIGN 2000
END CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY

POVERTY, THE PANDEMIC AND THE PROVINCE
Manitoba Child and Family Poverty, February 2023





**On November 24th, 1989,
all Members of Parliament
voted to end child poverty
in Canada by the year 2000.**

**Campaign 2000 has tracked
progress yearly.**

**Manitoba remains the
province with the highest
rates of child and family
poverty.**

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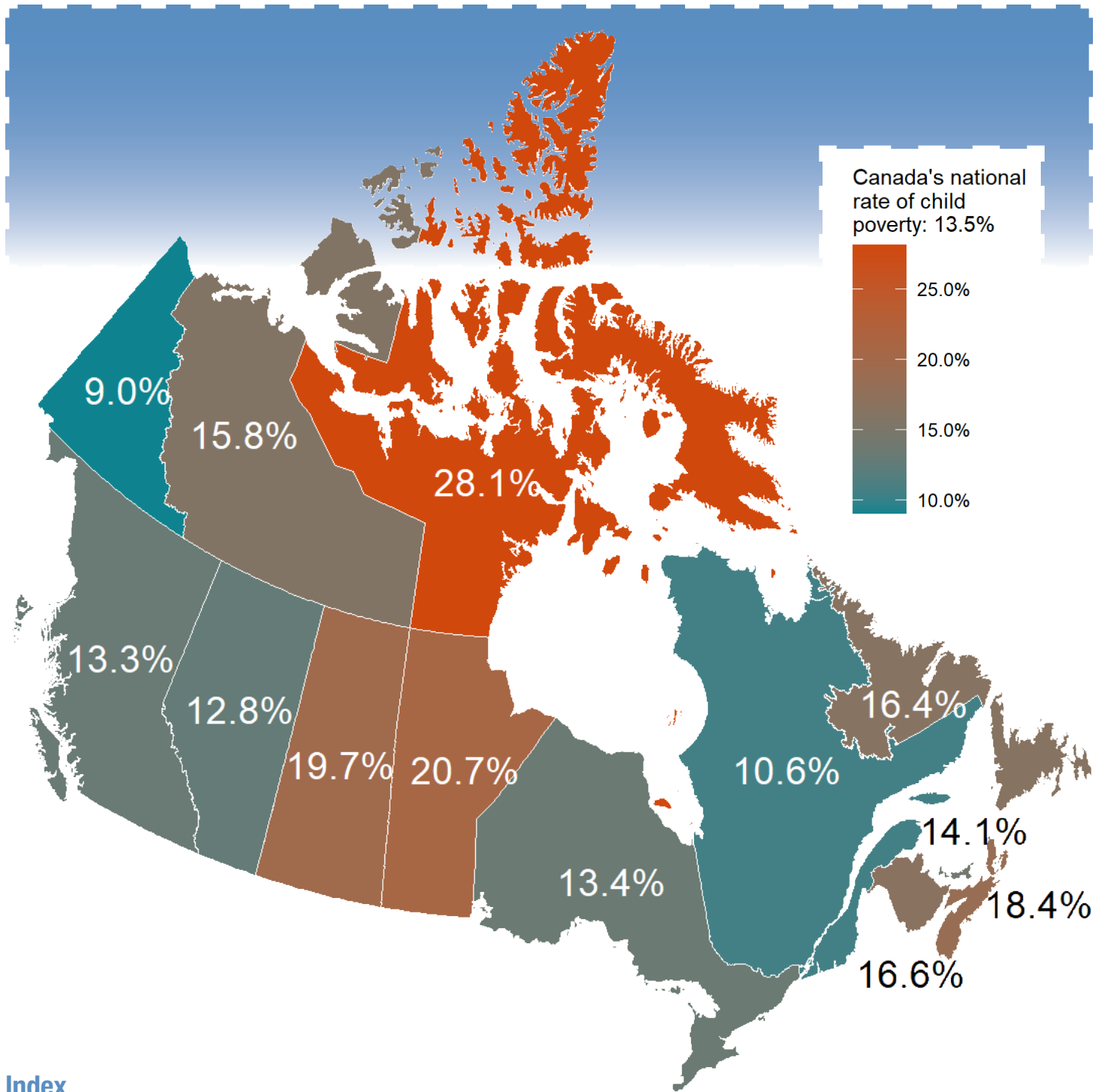
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**CAMPAIGN 2000
END CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY**



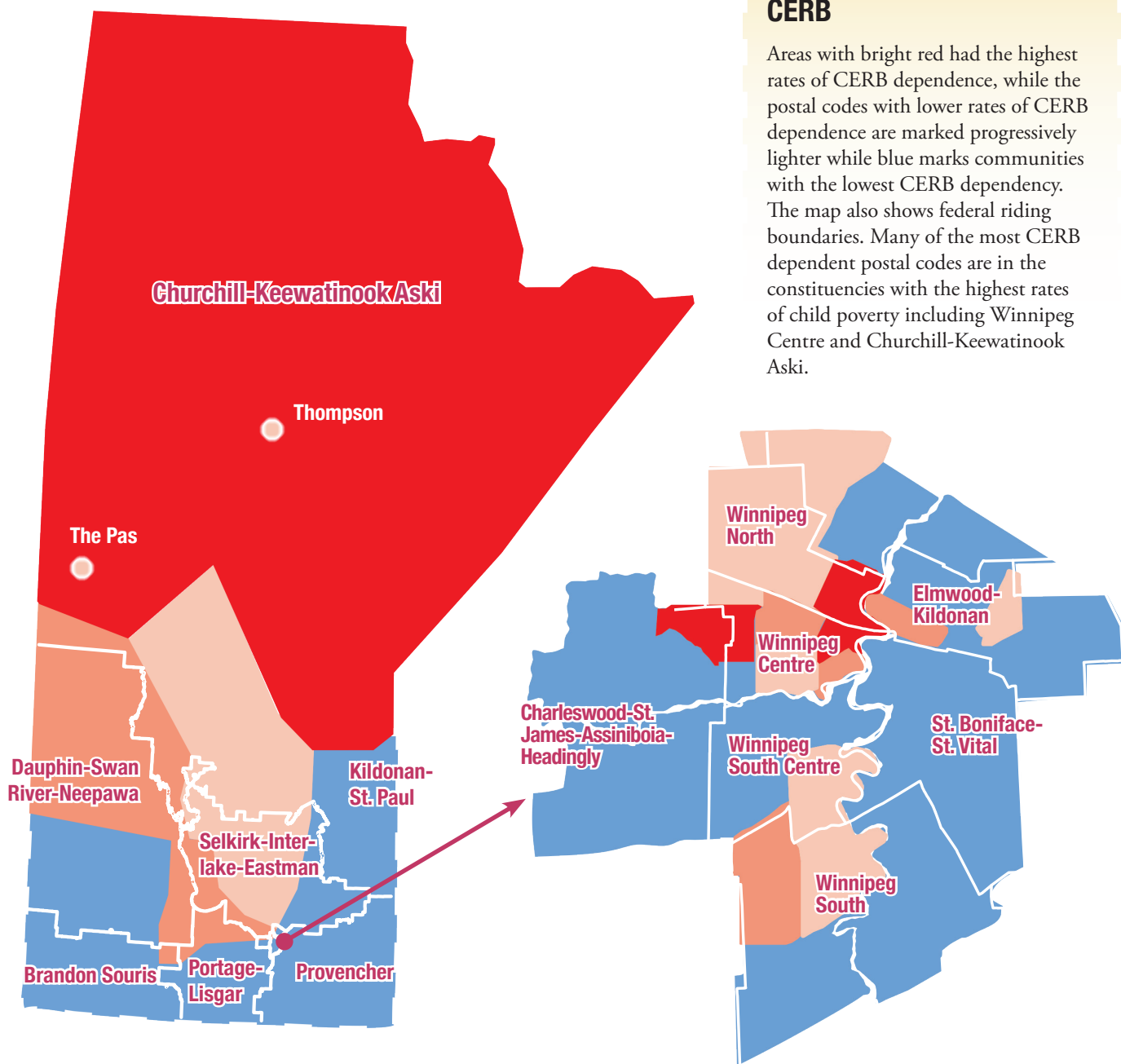


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CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT (CERB) DEPENDENCY BY POSTAL CODE

Manitoba and Winnipeg, 2020



Households in low-income neighbourhoods were much more likely to rely on CERB benefits. Based on postal code data obtained by Canadian Press and shared with Campaign 2000, we found that neighbourhoods with a higher prevalence of households below the LIM threshold were more likely to have higher rates of CERB dependence than neighbourhoods with lower incidence of low-income households. We measured CERB dependence by multiplying the

percentage of households who obtained CERB multiplied by the number of weeks they relied on the benefit. Areas with the highest CERB index ratings included inner city Winnipeg neighbourhoods, Centennial, Douglas East and Chinatown/Exchange District, and Northern Manitoba. Communities in southern Manitoba such as Cartier, Altona and Winkler had the lowest CERB dependence scores.

2020 DATA IN 2023 CONTEXT

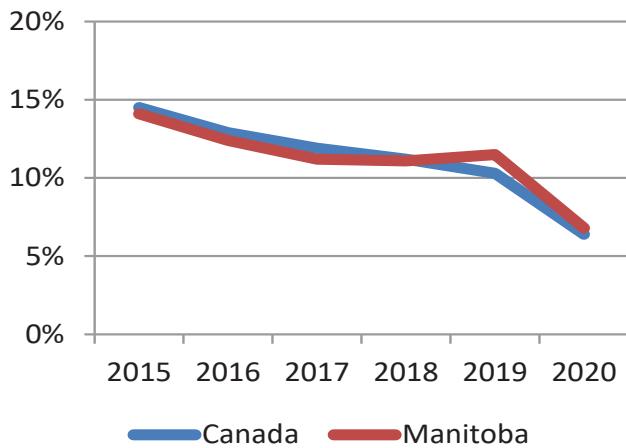
The rates of child and family poverty in this report are from 2020 given the two-year time lag on the release of tax filer data. 2020 was, of course, the first year of the pandemic. We knew then that the unprecedented and very necessary spending by governments to mitigate the harms of necessary lock-downs and other restrictions would demonstrate a marked effect on child and family poverty. And we were right. A large investment in temporary benefits such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) produced a marked decline in poverty rates. Unfortunately, given the current soaring costs of food, fuel and other necessities of life due to crippling inflation rates, and with the addition of higher interest rates, we know that today, people are back to struggling more than ever.

As a province, we have failed to capitalize on this ‘CERB Effect’ with directed investments to better support those most in need. Even by the 2020 numbers, Manitoba is still the province with the highest rates of child and family poverty. Two of our 14 federal ridings are in the unenviable top 5 and three are in the top 10. Over 20% of our youth, our future, lived in poverty, during the additional chaos and fear of the pandemic.

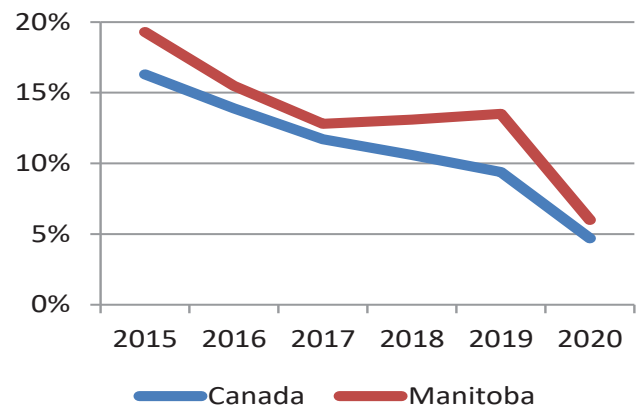
Two of our 14 federal ridings are in the unenviable top 5 and three are in the top 10.

THE CERB EFFECT

POVERTY RATES, CANADA AND MANITOBA
(MARKET BASKET MEASURE)



POVERTY RATES, CHILDREN 18 AND UNDER, CANADA AND MANITOBA
(MARKET BASKET MEASURE)



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey 2020. <https://doi.org/10.25318/1110013501-eng>

MANITOBA FEDERAL RIDINGS	CHILD POVERTY RATES	NATIONAL RANKINGS
Churchill-Keewatinook Aski	39.2%	2nd
Winnipeg Centre	30.6%	3rd
Dauphin-Swan River-Neepawa	25.4%	9th
Winnipeg North	22.7%	15th
Brandon Souris	21.7%	22nd
Portage-Lisgar	19.4%	35th
Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman	18.7%	46th
Winnipeg South	16.0%	96th
Elmwood-Kildonan	15.4%	114th
St. Boniface-St. Vital	14.5%	142nd
Winnipeg South Centre	13.9%	155th
Provencher	13.7%	159th
Kildonan-St. Paul	12.6%	191th
Charleswood-St. James-Assiniboia-Headingley	12.3%	202nd

It cannot be emphasised enough, though, that the 2019 to 2020 decrease accounts for 75.5% of the total 2000 to 2020 decrease in Manitoba.



CERB AMNESTY NOW

Furthermore, because the CERB and CRB programs were delivered as taxable benefits, they are subject to claw backs and repayments for some recipients, leaving these households in deeper poverty in future years unless both federal and provincial governments provide amnesty arrangements.

We could have done better and as this report lays out, we will continue to see the results of this failure in health and educational outcomes as too many of our systems, and our government that is responsible for the implementation, remain either inaccessible due to barriers or have policies that actively harm the people they are supposed to support.

These latest data show that Canada is pointing in the right direction. Canada has surpassed its target for a 50 percent reduction by 2030 relative to 2015. Likewise, Manitoba has far exceeded its decidedly unambitious poverty reduction strategy goal¹ of a 25% reduction in child poverty. Manitoba Minister of Families Rochelle Squires correctly noted in the legislature that there were 35,000 fewer children below the MBM poverty line in 2020 compared with 2015.² It cannot be emphasised enough, though, that the 2019 to 2020 decrease accounts for 75.5 % of the total 2000 to 2020 decrease in Manitoba. This decrease can largely be attributed to federal programs put in place during the first year of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The various income support and stimulus programs put in place by the federal government since January 2020 have totalled \$351 billion representing nearly 16% of Canada's GDP.³ The International Monetary Fund viewed that these financial supports helped Canada to avert a potentially unprecedented economic crisis.⁴ Programs like CERB and the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) provided a level of economic protection for millions of Canadians exceeding the supports that were available pre-pandemic. The success of these programs demonstrated that when government has a will to act, resources will be made available to confront even the most grave economic and social problems. Their effectiveness also raises the question of why widespread and obdurate poverty has been allowed to persist with such limited fiscal response until the additional crisis of a pandemic.

The maximum benefits under CERB and CRB amounted to \$500 per week. While this is still below a living wage for most households, the programs offered simplified and expedited access and benefit levels higher than many would have received through traditional Employment Insur-

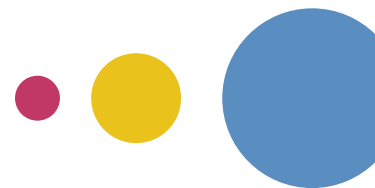
ance and much higher than were available through social assistance programs like Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance (EIA).

When examining these data, there are several cautionary considerations to keep in mind. Firstly, many of the measures responsible for this encouraging trend were temporary actions taken in response to the pandemic. Some programs created in 2020 were phased out by 2021. Statistics Canada warns, "Therefore, to some degree, the changes observed in market income, government transfers and poverty rates in 2020 were likely temporary."⁵ Furthermore, because the CERB and CRB programs were delivered as taxable benefits, they are subject to claw backs and repayments for some recipients, leaving these households in deeper poverty in future years unless both federal and provincial governments provide amnesty arrangements.

Although poverty rates declined in Manitoba, very little of this success can be attributed to provincial programs or policies. In its annual review of social assistance programs across Canada, the Maytree Foundation found that Manitoba was among the jurisdictions that offered only limited COVID related benefits for EIA recipients.⁶ Manitoba provided a one-time \$200 payment to individuals on EIA-Disability, but otherwise no provincial COVID related benefits were directed to low-income people. The bulk of COVID related improvements to EIA incomes came from federal programs in 2020.

For just some of today's context, we need only look to recent Manitoba Harvest reporting:

Today a quarter of food bank recipients are people with jobs, 50% more than just one year ago. An ever-growing number of food bank recipients are Indigenous, now over 40%. This number speaks to the more substantial injustice and intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous people in Manitoba including food insecurity, food affordability and the availability of nutritious foods. Harvest is also seeing a record number of children using food banks in Manitoba, 15,000



every month who are in both single parent and dual parent households.

Some Statistics:

- *Food Bank use has doubled since 2019*
- *69% of food bank recipients are women*
- *40,000 people access Harvest Manitoba food banks each month*
- *15,000 are children*
- *73% of food bank recipients make less than 20,000 annually (Majority EIA)*
- *82% of food bank recipients said they have no income left for recreational activities including for their children.*

The average amount of EIA for a family of four is \$2,774/month. Food bank clients reported that their average monthly bills excluding food were \$1,501.81. This included rent, utilities, cable/internet, phone, and childcare. The average cost of food for that same family is \$930/month in Manitoba. This leaves about \$342.19 a month for any other items that might need to be purchased during the month including medications and other health related costs, household repairs, recreation, and transportation costs, leaving very little for savings or a cushion for emergencies.⁷

The province did make some effort during the pandemic to mitigate the risk of homelessness by instituting a freeze on evictions. However, rents were not ‘forgiven’ but accumulated as a result. The Manitoba Not-Profit Housing Association hosts the province’s new Rent Relief Program, which provides accessible and no-interest loans to protect housing stability.

There were a number of program changes that can account for changes to the number of applications received as well as the number of approved loans over time.

The application itself changed in April, 2022, to screen out ineligible applicants at the beginning of the process, including those living in Mani-

toba Housing, those who do not have current arrears, those who will be unable to pay their rent in the future despite the loan, and strongly encouraging people who have already applied not to reapply, but rather to contact the program directly.

Additionally, the number of approved loans has varied as case workers refer people to more appropriate resources where the loan may not be the best option for them, and have started working closely with applicants to develop reasonable repayment plans with Manitoba Housing and only approving loans for utility arrears in cases where a repayment plan cannot be made and the arrears are impacting their ability to remain housed.

This is a much needed program but, again, the data indicates both the continuing need for relief and investment in the program. Additionally, the program evaluation found that the program works best for people with temporary reductions in income due to transitions, for example on or off benefits, or employment or education transitions, but cannot address the major need for more affordable housing for very low income households.

Later in this report we detail what the province could be doing better through better implementation of Early Learning and Child Care, Child and Family Services and a more targeted approach with the benefits such as the Family Affordability Package. Something else that cannot be noted enough, money was ‘found’ to avert a full economic meltdown during the pandemic. Lives were saved by government investments. However, again, we have to ask: Why did we wait this long? And more importantly: Will we truly commit to a ‘just’ recovery for all and not just the more privileged amongst us? If we don’t, we will continue to pay the very real costs, some outlined later in this report, while others, such as increased crime and the costs of our current largely ineffectual justice system, for our failure. The overarching question is: Do we want our and our children’s futures blighted by heartbreakingly preventable poverty?

Will we truly commit to a ‘just’ recovery for all and not just the more privileged amongst us? If we don’t, we will continue to pay the very real costs, some outlined later in this report, while others, such as increased crime and the costs of our current largely ineffectual justice system, for our failure. The overarching question is: Do we want our and our children’s futures blighted by heartbreakingly preventable poverty?

APRIL 2021 – DECEMBER 2022

	Apr 1 to Jun 30/21	Jul 1-Sept 30/21	Oct 1-Dec 31/21	Jan 1-Mar 31/22	Apr 1-Jun 30/22	Jul 1-Sept 30/22	Oct 1-Dec 31/22
Applications Received*	243	550	796	802	583	443	571
Loans Approved	29	139	110	153	198	110	137

*This line captures all eligible applications only and does not reflect those that are ineligible for any reason. Participants are often difficult to reach or decide they are not interested in pursuing the application once they realize it is a loan not a grant. After three unsuccessful attempts to contact a participant, their file is closed.

CHILD POVERTY AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

Results suggest in both rural and urban areas, babies born in the lowest income areas were at higher risk of being born preterm compared with babies born in high-income areas.

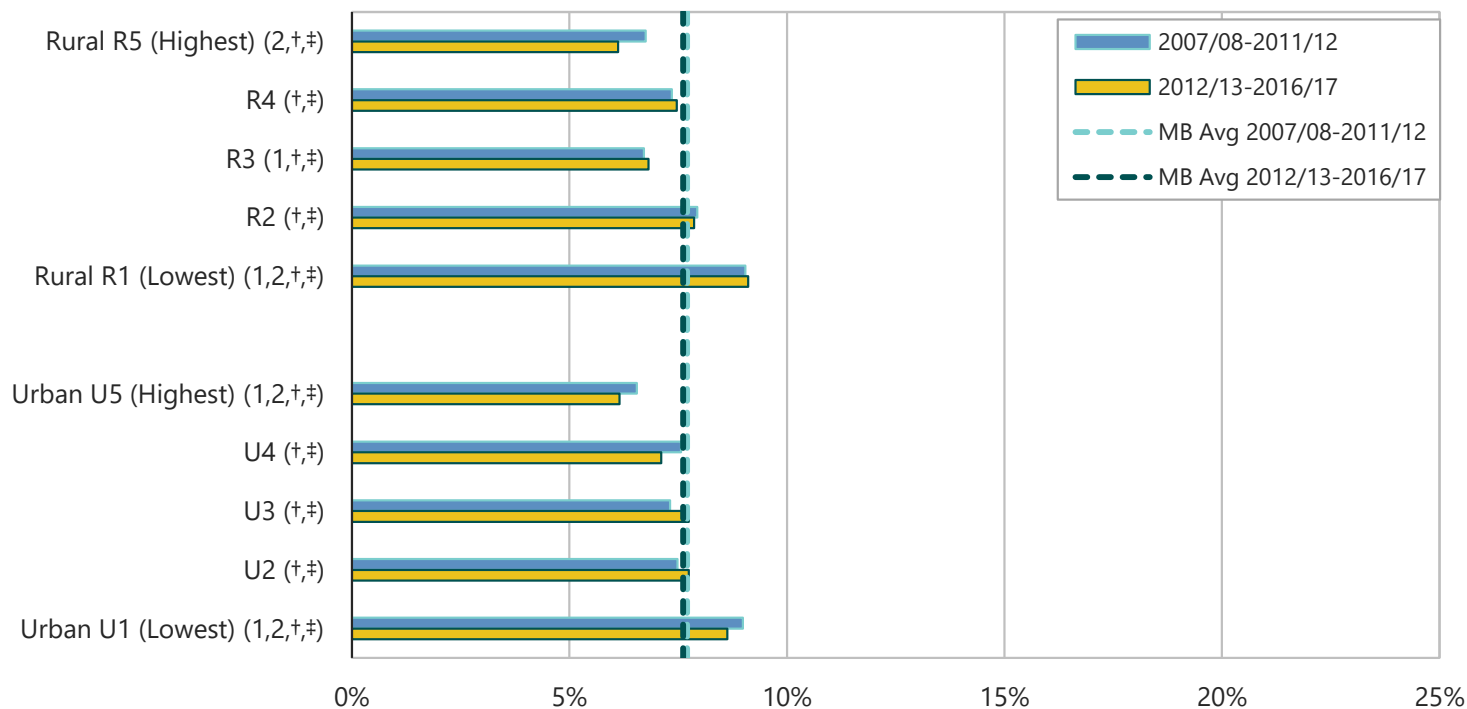
Poverty is a driving factor causing many negative health outcomes in children. Income is a major social determinant of health and has a large impact on health and health care use in Canada.¹ Children living in poverty face worse physical and mental health outcomes compared to their more advantaged peers², and are at an increased risk of having disabilities, chronic health issues, mental health concerns, and weakened social relationships.³ In Manitoba, low-income has been linked to several negative child health outcomes including increased risk of preterm birth, child mortality, dental extraction surgeries and suicide.⁴

Pre-term birth rates

The prenatal phase is an important period for both newborn and long-term health outcomes (see for example, Boivin & Hertzman, 2012). Heightened exposure to risk factors including severe stress, substance use, and poor nutrition can cause negative birth outcomes like low birthweights and preterm births.⁵ Women living in poverty are more likely to experience risk factors like severe stress, which may be caused by income insecurity. A 2019 report associated rates of preterm births in Manitoba with income.⁶ **Figure 1** shows preterm birth rates in urban and rural areas in Manitoba by income quintiles. Results suggest in both rural and urban areas, babies born in the lowest income areas were at higher risk of being born preterm compared with babies born in high-income areas.

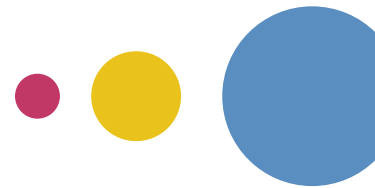
FIGURE 1: PRETERM BIRTH RATE BY RURAL AND URBAN INCOME QUINTILES, 2007/08-2011/12 AND 2012/13-2016/17

Maternal age-adjusted average annual percent of live in-hospital births



- 1 indicates income quintile's rate was statistically different from Manitoba average in first time period
- 2 indicates income quintile's rate was statistically different from Manitoba average in second time period
- † indicates statistically significant linear trend across income quintiles in first time period
- ‡ indicates statistically significant linear trend across income quintiles in second time period

Source: Fransoo et al., 2019

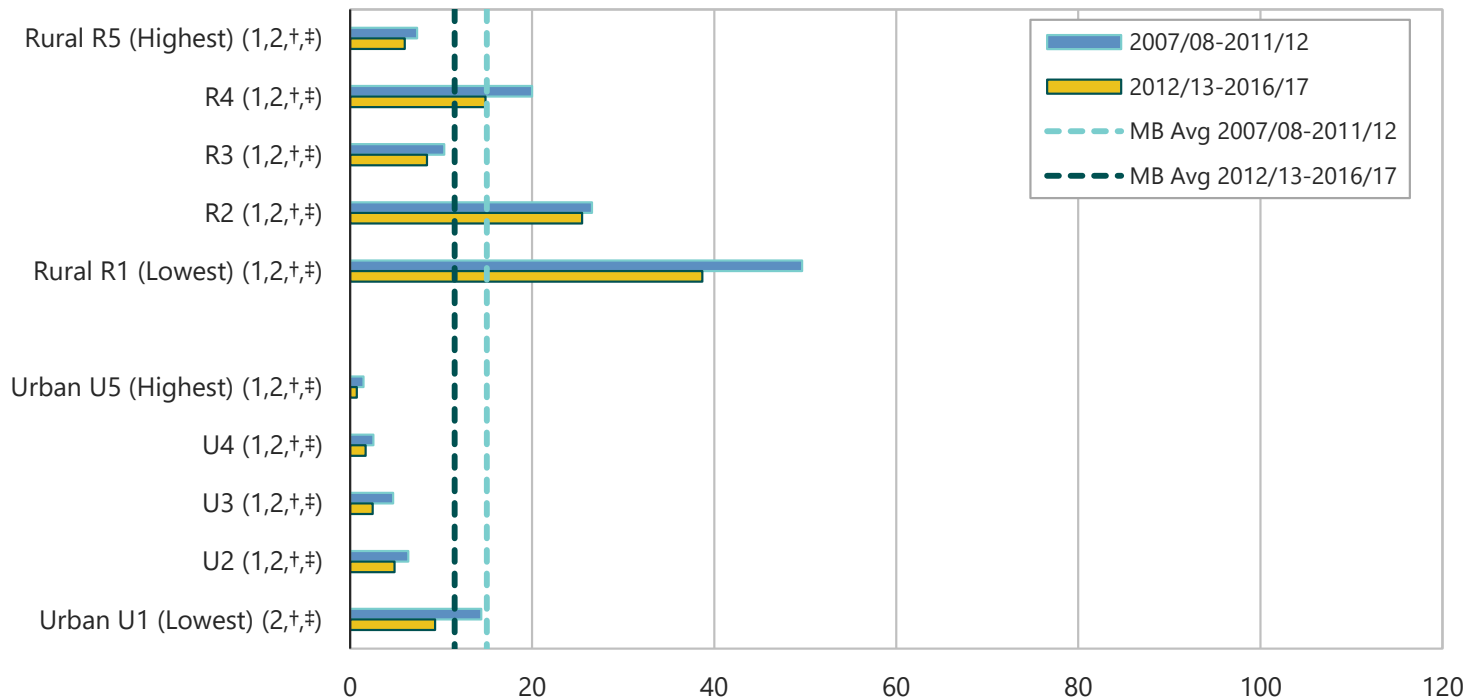


Child Mortality

Child mortality is defined as the death of a child between 1-19 years old. Injury and poisoning are the most common causes of child mortality in Manitoba.⁷ Child mortality is a relatively rare outcome for children in Manitoba, but as **Figure 2** shows, there is a strong correlation between income and child mortality with the highest rates in the lowest income areas. Of particular note is the high child mortality rate in the lowest rural income area.

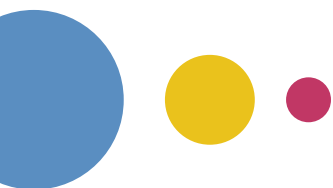
FIGURE 2: CHILD MORTALITY RATE BY RURAL AND URBAN INCOME QUINTILES, 2007-2011 AND 2012-2016

Age- and sex-adjusted average annual rate of death per 1,000 residents age 1-19



- 1 indicates income quintile's rate was statistically different from Manitoba average in first time period
- 2 indicates income quintile's rate was statistically different from Manitoba average in second time period
- † indicates statistically significant linear trend across income quintiles in first time period
- ‡ indicates statistically significant linear trend across income quintiles in second time period

Source: Fransoo et al., 2019

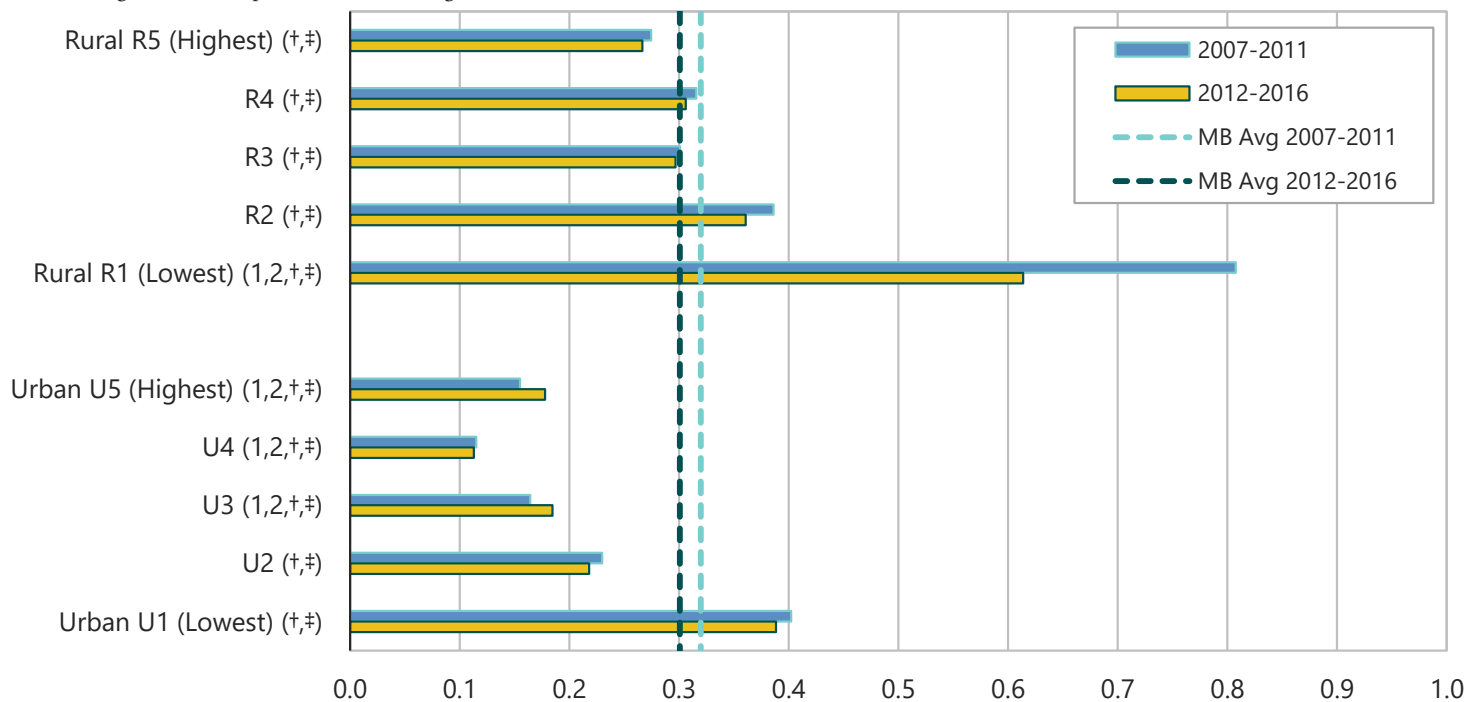


Dental extraction surgeries

Although tooth decay is very common among children, the most severe early childhood tooth decay may require dental surgery under general anesthetic. These dental surgeries are associated with income among Manitoba children. **Figure 3** shows dental extraction surgery rates in rural and urban areas in Manitoba by income quintiles. Results indicate children living in rural, low-income areas have the highest rates of dental extraction surgeries in the province. For children living in both rural and urban areas, those in the lowest income areas experience the highest rates of dental extraction surgery compared with their peers living in the highest income areas.⁸

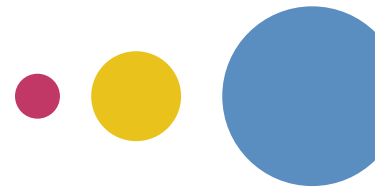
FIGURE 3: DENTAL EXTRACTION SURGERY RATE BY RURAL AND URBAN INCOME QUINTILES, 2007/08-2011/12 AND 2012/13-2016/17

Crude average annual rate per 1,000 residents age 0-5



- 1 indicates income quintile's rate was statistically different from Manitoba average in first time period
- 2 indicates income quintile's rate was statistically different from Manitoba average in second time period
- † indicates statistically significant linear trend across income quintiles in first time period
- ‡ indicates statistically significant linear trend across income quintiles in second time period

Source: Fransoo et al., 2019

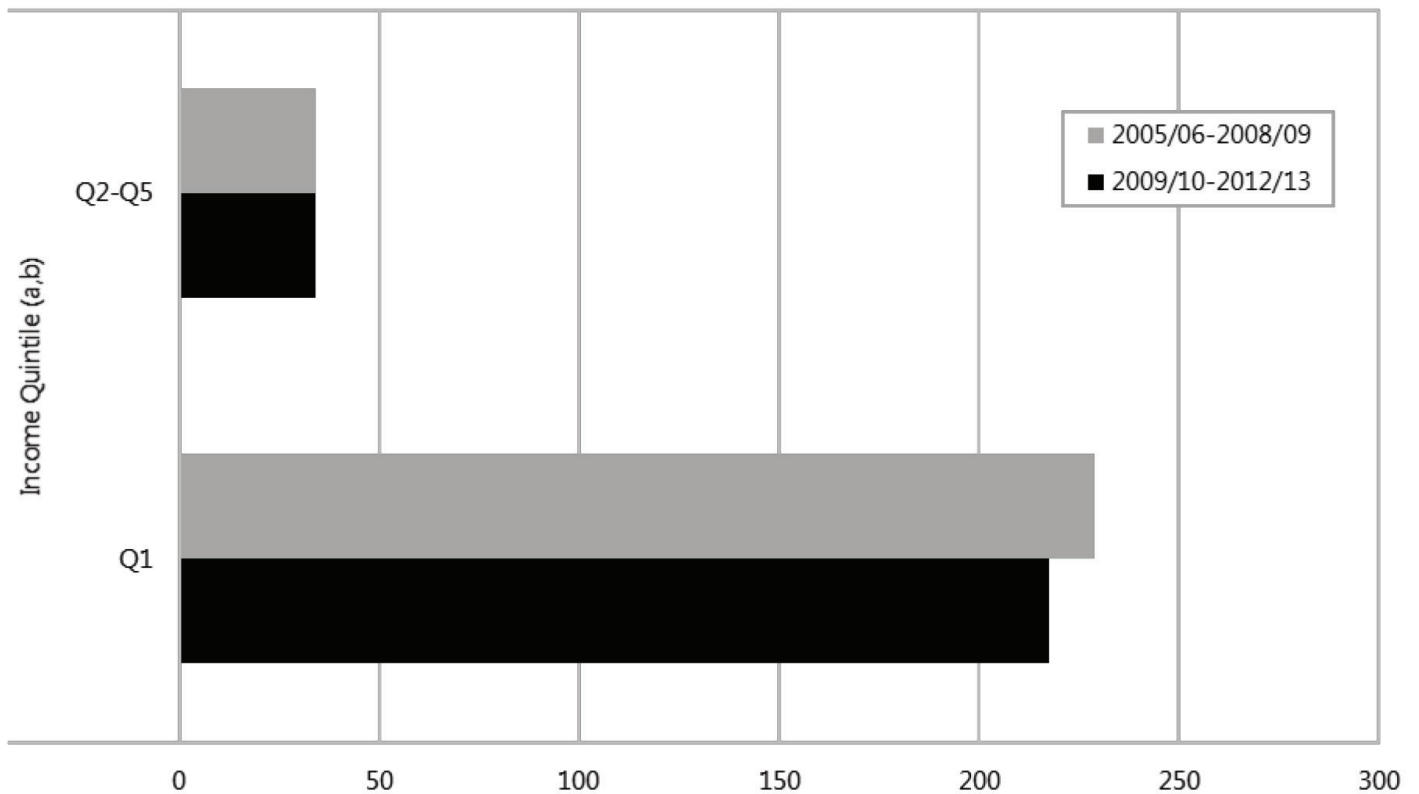


Suicide and attempted suicide rates

Low income is also a concerning risk factor for child and youth mental health. A 2016 report titled *The Mental Health of Manitoba Children*⁹ studied suicide rates by income quintiles in Manitoba, among other indicators. Results from **Figure 4** show suicide rates are much higher among adolescents in low-income areas compared with adolescents living in higher-income areas.¹⁰ The report also indicated that rates of attempted suicide were higher in low-income areas compared with higher income areas in Manitoba. Over the 4-year study period (2009-2012), 78% of those who had attempted suicide or died by suicide had a diagnosis of a mental disorder.¹¹

FIGURE 4: RATE OF SUICIDE AMONG ADOLESCENTS AGED 13-19 BY INCOME QUINTILE

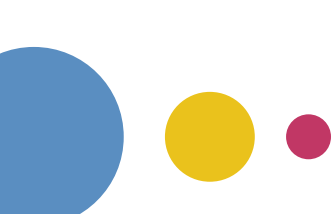
Age- and sex-adjusted, per 100,000 adolescents, four-year time periods



a indicates a statistically significant difference across income quintiles for the first time period ($p < 0.01$)

b indicates a statistically significant difference across income quintiles for the second time period ($p < 0.01$)

Source: Chartier et al., 2016



First Nations children in Manitoba face worse physical health outcomes compared with all other Manitoba children.

Income and health outcomes are interlinked, and low income is a significant factor leading to adverse physical and mental health outcomes throughout childhood. First Nations children in Manitoba are at greatest risk of living in poverty and face the greatest risk of negative physical and health outcomes compared with all other Manitoba children.

Indigenous child health outcomes: colonialism, structural and systemic racism

Indigenous children in Manitoba face the greatest burden of poverty compared with all other children in the province. High poverty rates among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children are directly related to impacts of colonialism and ongoing structural and systematic racism. Government sanctioned policies like the residential school system, the Indian Act and the Sixties Scoop contribute to intergenerational trauma which continues to impact many Indigenous children and families.¹² Research suggests racism is a driving factor behind First Nations children's risk of experiencing health issues.¹³ Prolonged exposure to racism can lead to chronic stress, which negatively impacts both mental and physical health.¹⁴ Moreover, historical and ongoing oppression, family trauma and stressful life circumstances also contribute to negative health outcomes of First Nations children.¹⁵ Indigenous children and families in Manitoba face consistent challenges in accessing equitable healthcare based on funding, delivery systems, and jurisdictional disputes between federal and provincial governments, and between regional health authorities and tribal council areas.¹⁶

First Nations children in Manitoba face worse physical health outcomes compared with all other Manitoba children. This includes higher rates of diabetes, hospitalizations, and major dental surgeries. First Nations children also experience worse mental health outcomes compared with all other Manitoba children including higher rates of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), increased instances of substance use disorders, schizophrenia, suicide attempts and suicidal deaths. Suicide rates are so concerning on some Manitoba First Nations communities, community leaders have called a state of emergency and deemed the issue a 'suicide crisis.'¹⁷ More information on the health and wellbeing of Manitoba First Nations children is available in the 2020 report *Our Children, Our Future: The health and well-being of First Nations children in Manitoba*.¹⁸

Conclusion

Income and health outcomes are interlinked, and low income is a significant factor leading to adverse physical and mental health outcomes throughout childhood. First Nations children in Manitoba are at greatest risk of living in poverty and face the greatest risk of negative physical and health outcomes compared with all other Manitoba children.

MANITOBA CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY BY THE NUMBERS

In this section we present the facts about child and family poverty in Manitoba. How does child and family poverty compare to the rest of Canada? Is it getting better or worse? What do the numbers say about the link between racism and poverty? How much do government income support payments help? How deep is the poverty for Manitoba families below the CFLIM threshold?

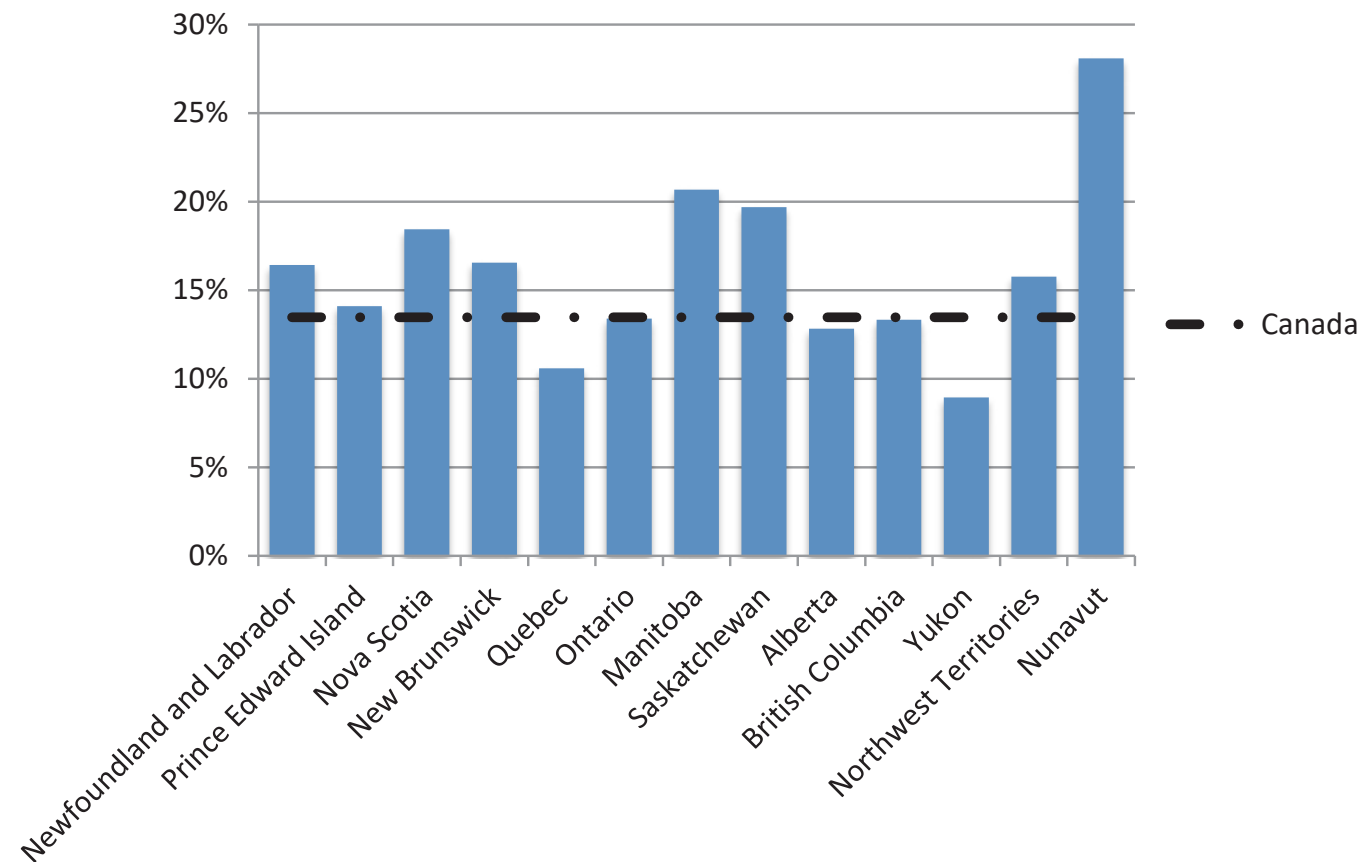
Figure 1: Manitoba is the province with the highest child poverty rate of any province at 20.68%. This is 7.21 percentage points above the rate for all of Canada. It means more than 1 in 5 of Manitoba's children struggle in poverty.

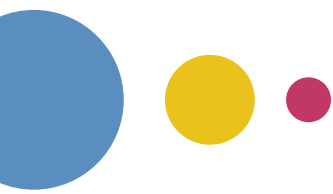
That is 64,670 children, 13,357 more than the entire population of Brandon in 2021.

Only the Territory of Nunavut has a higher rate of child poverty at 28.09%. Nunavut's high rate of child poverty can largely be explained by the history of colonial degradation of its economy, culture and society that has had a long and intergenerational impact on the Indigenous people who constitute the vast majority (86%)¹ of the territory's residents.² This is not to say that Indigenous Peoples in Manitoba have not suffered the same, but they constitute a much smaller percentage of Manitoba's population, 18%.³

Manitoba is the province with the highest child poverty rate of any province at 20.68%. This is 7.21 percentage points above the rate for all of Canada. It means more than 1 in 5 of Manitoba's children struggle in poverty. That is 64,670 children, 13,357 more than the entire population of Brandon in 2021.

FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 18 AND UNDER IN LOW INCOME FOR CANADA, PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES
(CFLIM After-Tax)



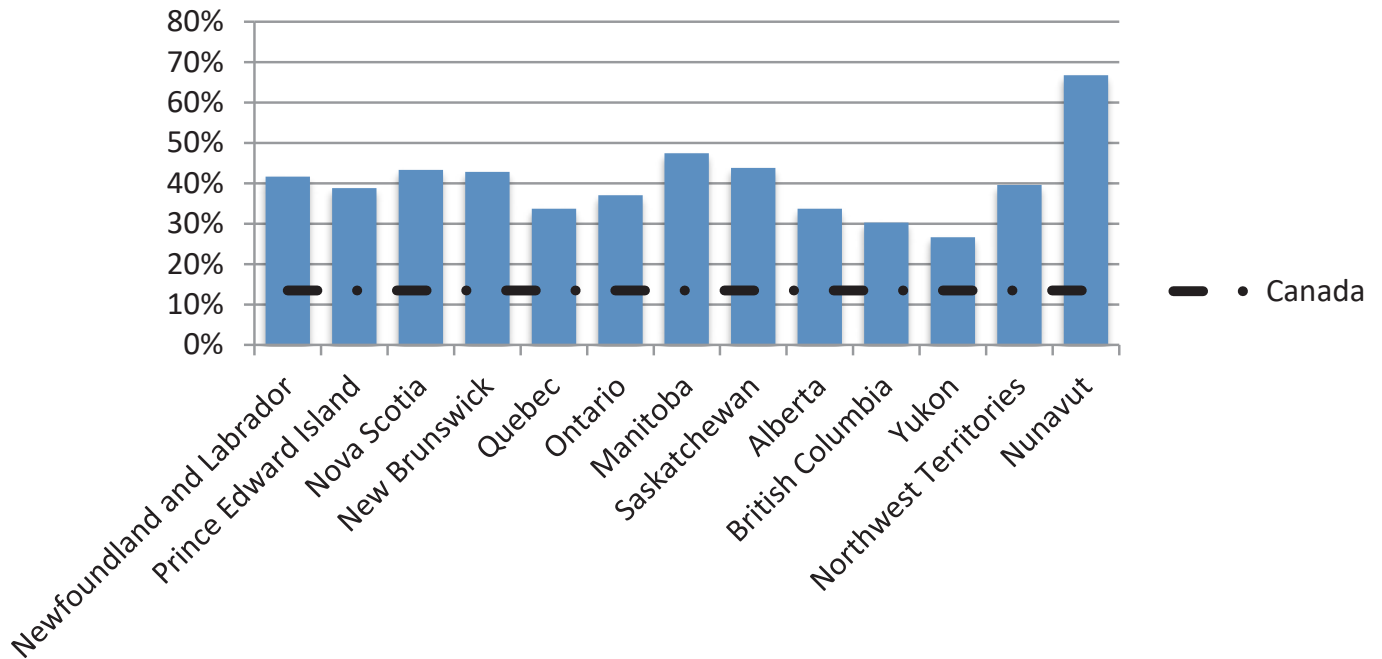


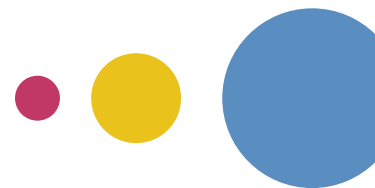
In Manitoba, almost one in four pre-school children are living with the damaging effects of poverty.

Figure 2 contains an even more concerning picture. It focuses on child poverty affecting pre-school children, those under 6. As noted in other sections of this report, this is a very important developmental period in which the foundations for lifelong health, education and overall well-being are laid down,⁴ and poverty has been shown to be highly corrosive to the successful unfolding of these developmental processes.⁵

For all of Canada the poverty rate for pre-school children is .7 percentage point higher than for all children (14.2% versus 13.5%). But in Manitoba the poverty rate for pre-school children is 3.3 percentage points higher than for all children (24.0% versus 20.7%). The Manitoba poverty rate for children under six is almost ten percentage points higher than for all of Canada. In Manitoba, almost one in four pre-school children are living with the damaging effects of poverty.

FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS UNDER 6 IN LOW INCOME FOR CANADA, PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES (CFLIM AFTER TAX)



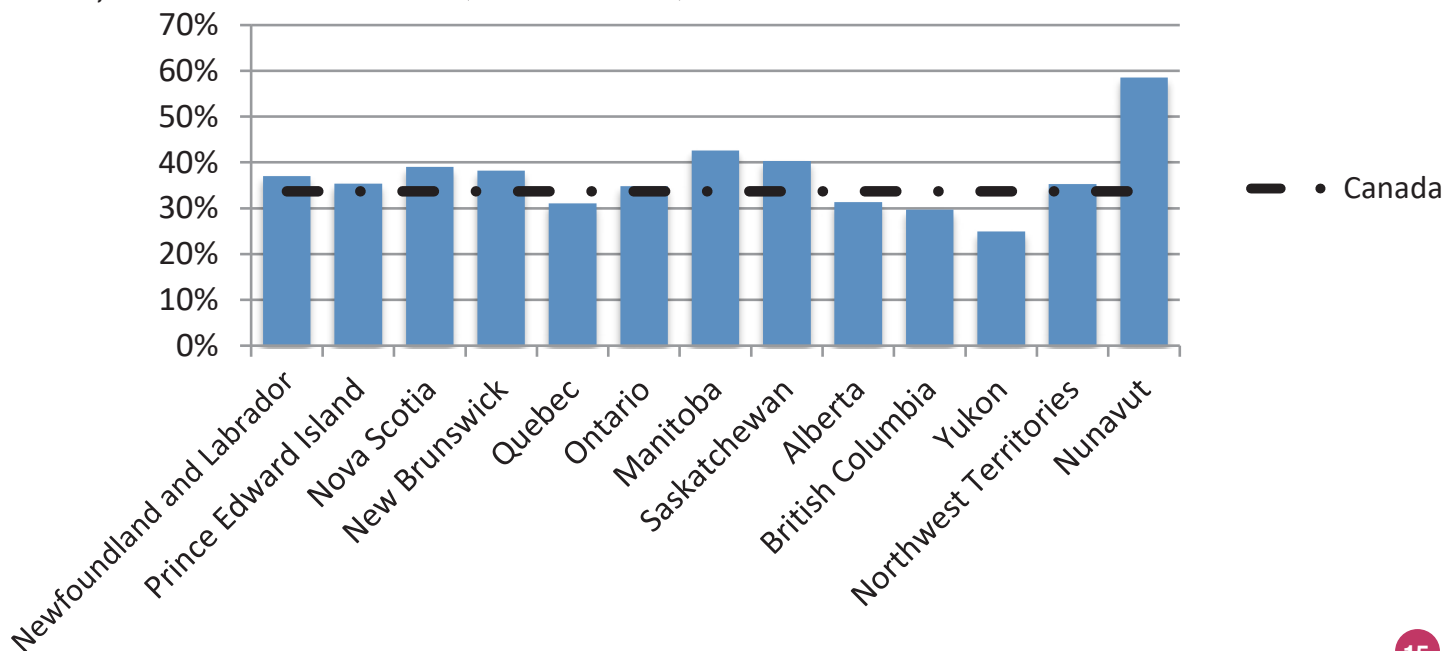


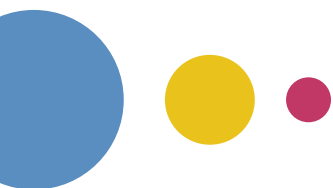
Many people believe the myth that children are poor because their parents don't work. **Figure 3** indicates how wrong this is. This figure contains only those children who lived in households which received market income in 2020. Statistics Canada's⁶ definition of market income is: "The sum of employment income (wages, salaries and commissions, net self-employment income from farm or non-farm unincorporated business and/or professional practice), investment income, private retirement income (retirement pensions, superannuation and annuities, including those from registered retirement savings plans [RRSPs] and registered retirement income funds [RRIFs]) and other money income from market sources during the reference period." The great majority of market income is employment income.

In all of Canada, more than one third (33.7%) of children whose households received market income would be in poverty if they did not also receive government transfers. In Manitoba, it would be 42.6%. Manitoba's market income child poverty rate is the highest of any province and is 8.9% higher than the rate for all of Canada.

In all of Canada, more than one third (33.7%) of children whose households received market income would be in poverty if they did not also receive government transfers. In Manitoba, it would be 42.6%. Manitoba's market income child poverty rate is the highest of any province and is 8.9% higher than the rate for all of Canada.

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 18 AND UNDER IN LOW INCOME ON THE BASIS OF MARKET INCOME ALONE FOR CANADA, PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES (CFLIM AFTER-TAX)





As well, the maximum benefit in the Manitoba Child Benefit for low-income workers is \$420, while in Alberta the maximum child benefit is \$1,128, in Ontario it is \$1,403 and in Quebec it is \$2,430.

Figure 4 includes children in all households, whether or not those households received market income. It demonstrates the percentage decrease in the child poverty rate based on the receipt of transfers from the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments. It makes it clear that government transfers are very significant in reducing child poverty in Canada. For all of Canada, government transfers improved the child poverty rate by 61.8%.

Manitoba achieved the third lowest improvement rate at 53.5%. This was 8.3 percentage points below the national rate of improvement. Only Nunavut (52.9%) and Saskatchewan (51.9%) had slightly lower rates of improvement.

Since federal transfers are uniform throughout Canada, this highlights the need for the Manitoba provincial government to improve its income transfer programs. This should include increasing Employment and Income Support payments. For example, Manitoba provides the lowest benefits for a two-parent family with two children outside the Maritimes.⁷ As well, the maximum benefit in the Manitoba Child Benefit for low-income workers is \$420, while in Alberta the maximum child benefit is \$1,128, in Ontario it is \$1,403 and in Quebec it is \$2,430.⁸

FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN POVERTY RATE FOR PERSONS 18 AND UNDER ON THE BASIS OF GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS FOR CANADA, PROVINCES, AND TERRITORIES (CFLIM AFTER-TAX)

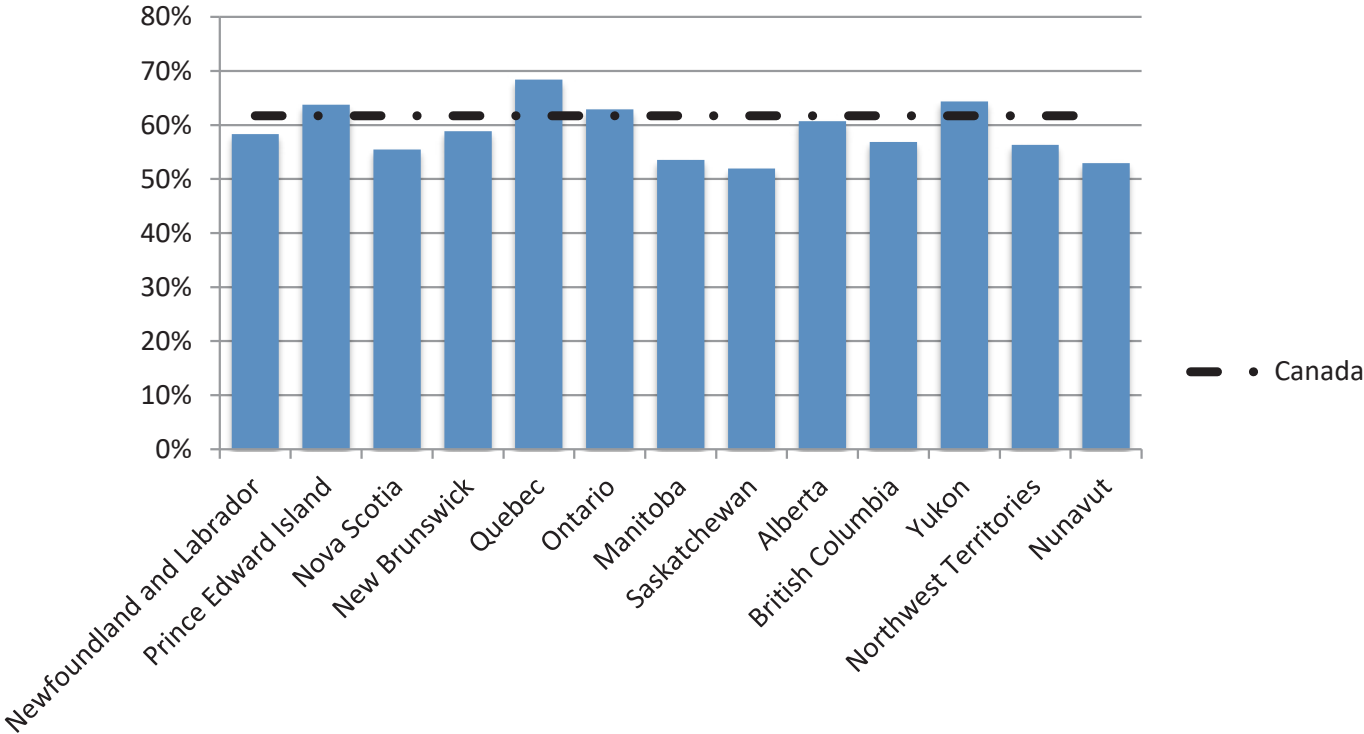


Figure 5 uses 2021 census data to compare the child poverty rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in Manitoba. It demonstrates significant over-representation of Indigenous children in poverty. 19.4% of Indigenous children live in poverty, which is 5.9% above the non-Indigenous child poverty rate of 13.5%.

Among those with single Indigenous identities, First Nations children have the highest poverty rate at 41.6% followed by those who do not identify as Indigenous, but report treaty Indian status or registration with a band at 36.6%. 19.5% of Metis children and 15.9% of Inuit children live in poverty. Children with multiple Indigenous identities have a poverty rate of 32.1%.

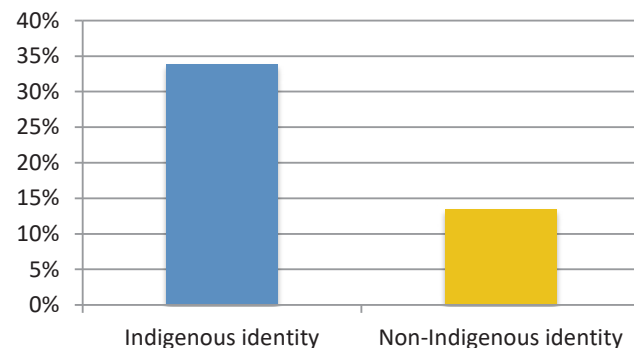
These are outrageously high child poverty rates which reflect the results of colonialism, marginalization, and discrimination.

Figure 6 displays the child poverty rates among visible minority children in Manitoba using data from the 2021 census. According to Statistics Canada,⁹ “visible minority refers to whether a person is a visible minority or not, as defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”

The poverty rate for non-visible minority Manitoba children is 19.9%. Groups of visible minority children with significantly higher poverty rates include those identified as Arab (39.8%), West Asian (37.7%), Chinese (30.1%) and Black (25.0%).

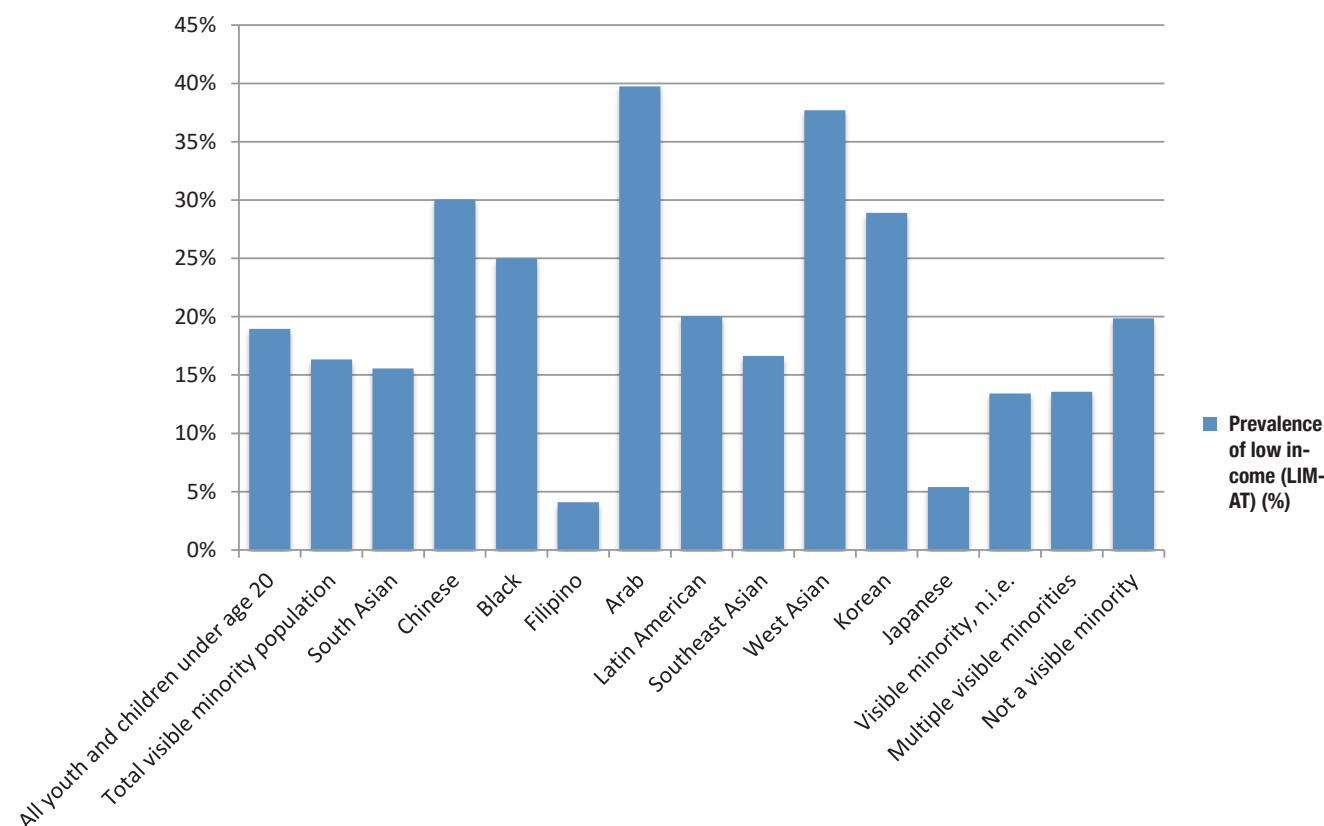
Racial discrimination in the labour market and educational system are likely key factors. As part of its poverty reduction strategy, the Government of Manitoba should be working with these communities to develop culturally appropriate plans to reduce disturbingly high child poverty rates.

FIGURE 5: PERSONS 18 AND UNDER IN LOW INCOME BY INDIGENOUS IDENTITY (CFLIM AFTER-TAX)



Among those with single Indigenous identities, First Nations children have the highest poverty rate at 41.6% followed by those who do not identify as Indigenous, but report treaty Indian status or registration with a band at 36.6%. 19.5% of Metis children and 15.9% of Inuit children live in poverty. Children with multiple Indigenous identities have a poverty rate of 32.1%.

FIGURE 6: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 19 AND UNDER IN LOW INCOME BY VISIBLE MINORITY STATUS (CFLIM AFTER-TAX)



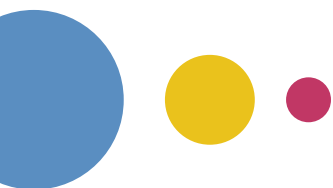


FIGURE 7: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 18 AND UNDER IN LOW INCOME BY IMMIGRATION STATUS

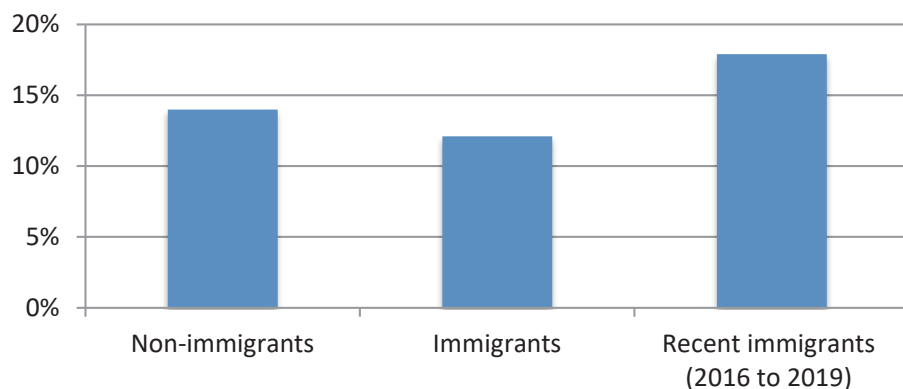


FIGURE 8: PREVALENCE OF LOW-INCOME, CHILDREN UNDER 18, TWO PARENT HOUSEHOLD, T1FF data

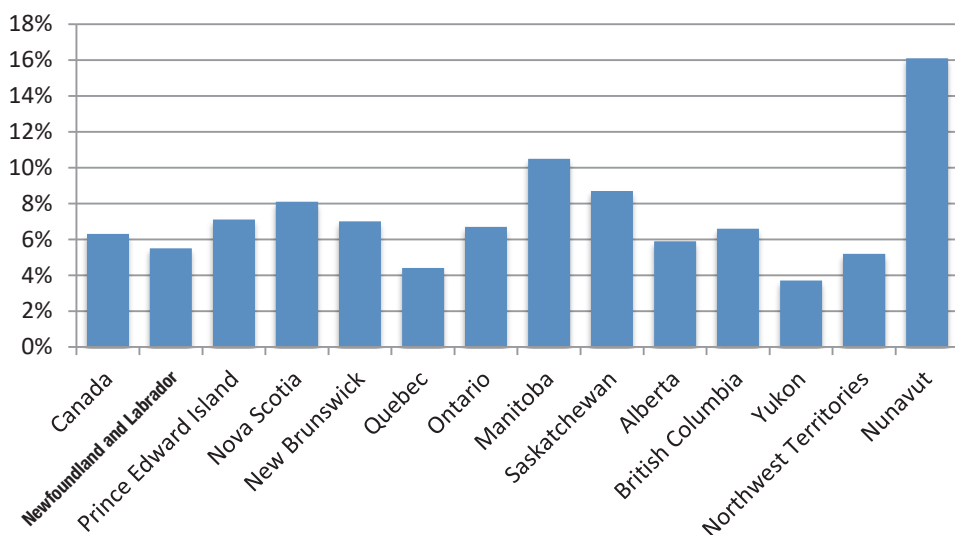


Figure 7 uses 2021 census data to describe the child poverty experience of immigrants. The child poverty rate for non-immigrant children in Manitoba is 14.0%. Overall, the rate for all immigrant children regardless of time of immigration is lower at 12.1%. However, the rate for those who immigrated between 2016 and 2019 was 3.9 percentage points higher at 17.9%. This must be considered in the context of the reality that more serious effects are related to longer duration of poverty, but many children experience significant deleterious effects when they live in poverty for shorter durations.¹⁰

Figure 8 describes the poverty rate for children living in two parent families in Canada and in every province and territory. Children in two parent families tend to exhibit lower poverty rates than those in single parent families because of the availability of two salary earners in most of these families (in 2020, both parents may have received employment-related pandemic benefits).

Manitoba exhibited the highest rate of poverty of children in two person families of any province (10.5%), 4.2 percentage points above the national rate of 6.3%.

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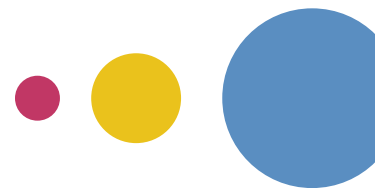


Figure 9 describes the poverty rate for children in single parent families, both those headed by women and those headed by men, in all of Canada and the provinces and territories. Almost half (49.6%) of these children are living in poverty in Manitoba, 13.1 percentage points above the national rate.

Figure 10 displays child poverty rates from 2000 to 2020 for Manitoba and Canada. It is noteworthy that in every year Manitoba's rate is significantly above that for all of Canada. The Manitoba rate decreased by 10.2% in the 21 years from 2000 to 2020. However, the largest component of this decrease, 7.7 percentage points, occurred between 2019 and 2020, and is due to federal pandemic benefits to families. The 2019 to 2020 decrease accounts for 75.5 % of the total 2000 to 2020 decrease in Manitoba.

With withdrawal of pandemic benefits, we will very likely see child poverty rates increase.

FIGURE 9: PREVALENCE OF LOW INCOME CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN ONE-PARENT FAMILIES, T1FF data

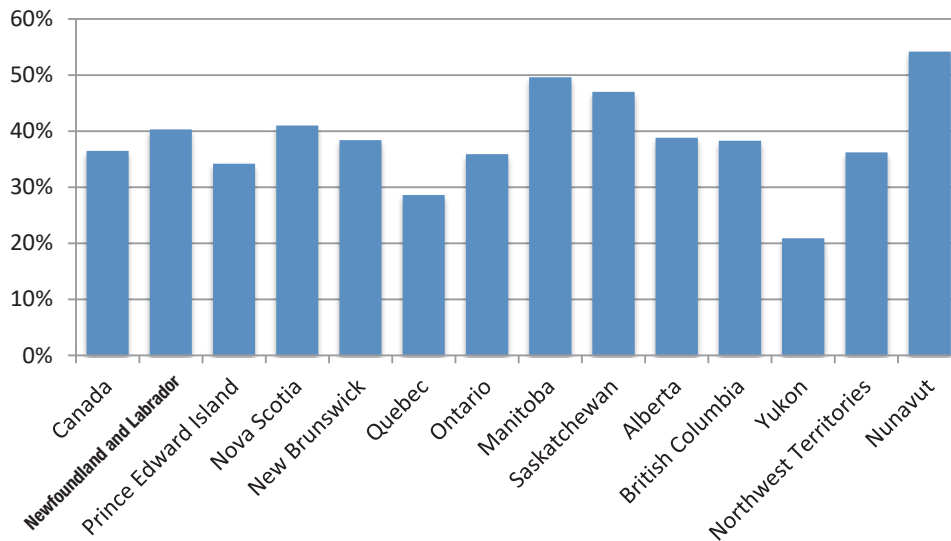
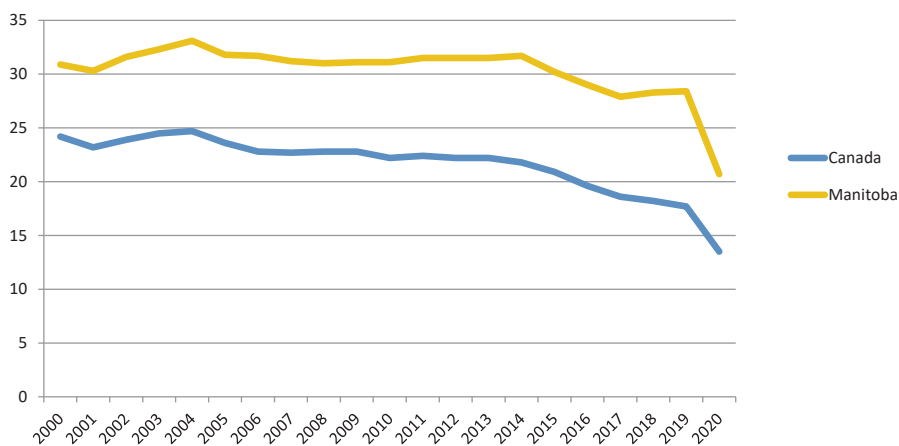


FIGURE 10: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 18 AND UNDER IN LOW INCOME, CANADA AND MANITOBA (2000 TO 2020)



With withdrawal of pandemic benefits, we will very likely see child poverty rates increase.

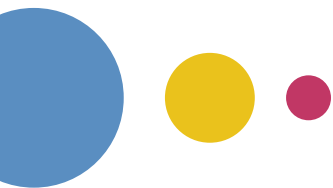
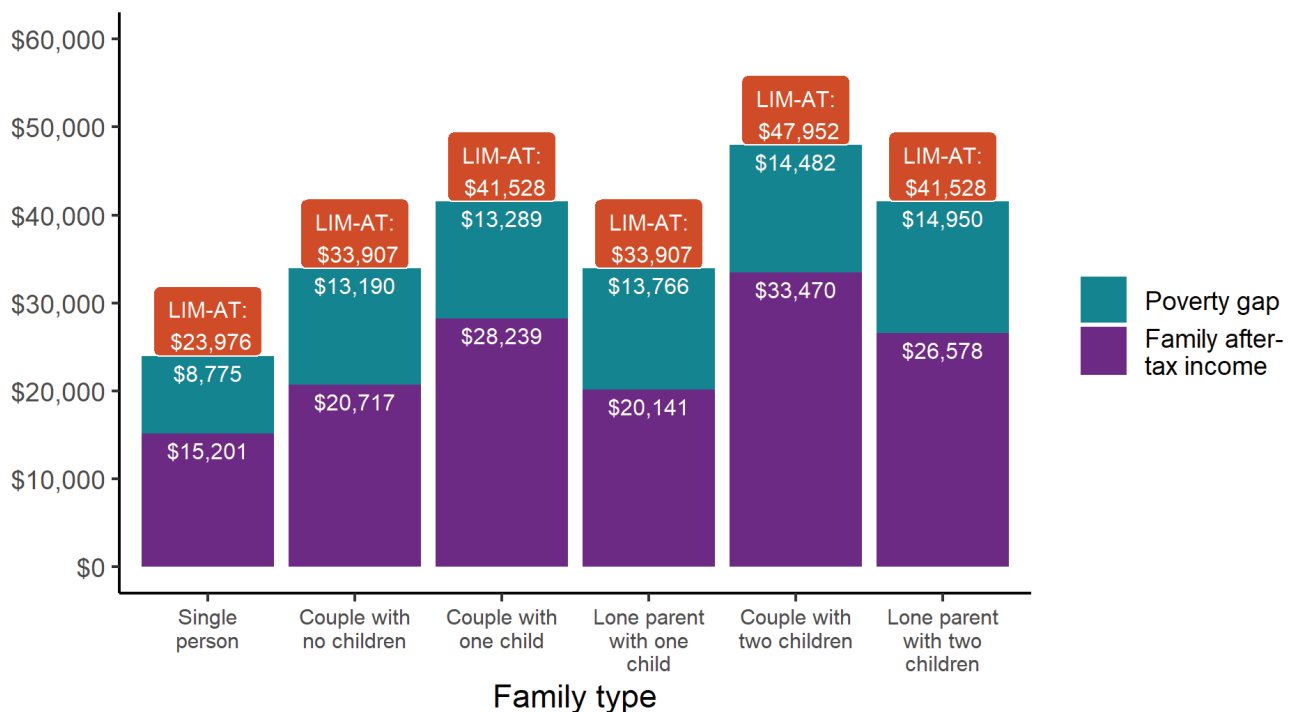


Figure 11 includes only children in poverty. It focuses on the depth of child poverty rather than on the rate of child poverty. The analysis is based on the median, the point halfway between the poverty threshold and the income of a family with a child with the lowest income as an indicator of the disposable income of a typical family in poverty... The gap between, the median and the Census Family Low Income Measure After tax threshold indicates how much more disposable income a typical family in poverty of a particular structure and composition would need for their children to reach the poverty threshold.

In Manitoba, this gap for families with children ranges between \$13,289 and \$14,950, indicating that the children of families in poverty are living far below the poverty threshold. This gap represents the median for families living in poverty, which is to say that half of children living in poverty in Manitoba, or 32,335 children, have even lower incomes and live in even deeper poverty.

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FIGURE 11: DEPTH OF POVERTY FOR PERSONS 18 AND UNDER



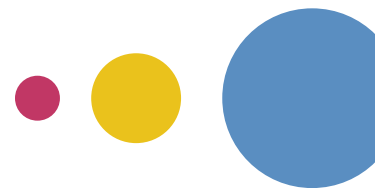


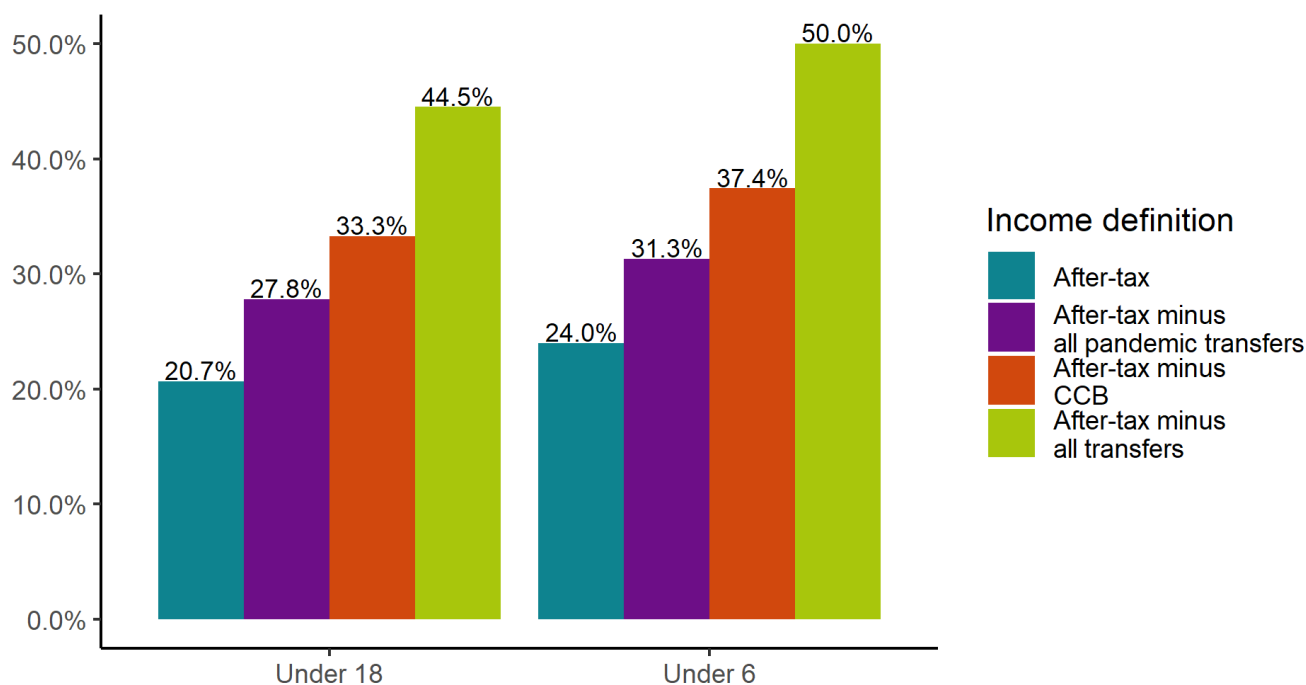
Figure 12 demonstrates the effect of government income support transfers in reducing child poverty in Manitoba. For all children, the child poverty rate would have been 27.8% rather 20.7% without these federal pandemic benefits. Without the Canada Child Benefit, the total child poverty rate would have been 33.3%. Without any government income support transfers, Manitoba's total child poverty rate would have been 44.5%.

There is a similar pattern for children under six. Without pandemic benefits the Manitoba child poverty rate for children under 6 would have been 31.3% rather than 24.0%. Without the Canada Child Benefit, it would have been 37.4%. Without any government income support transfers, half of Manitoba's children under 6 and their families would be in poverty.

Without the Canada Child Benefit, the total child poverty rate would have been 33.3%. Without any government income support transfers, Manitoba's total child poverty rate would have been 44.5%.

For all children, the child poverty rate would have been 27.8% rather 20.7% without federal pandemic benefits. Without the Canada Child Benefit the total child poverty rate would have been 33.3%. Without any government income support transfers Manitoba's total child poverty rate would have been 44.5%

FIGURE 12: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 18 AND UNDER WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN IN POVERTY WITHOUT PANDEMIC BENEFIT



CHILD POVERTY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Poverty is also associated with a child's educational outcomes and low income has been linked to poorer academic achievement, abnormal structural brain development, restricted language development, and an increased risk of experiencing food insecurity.

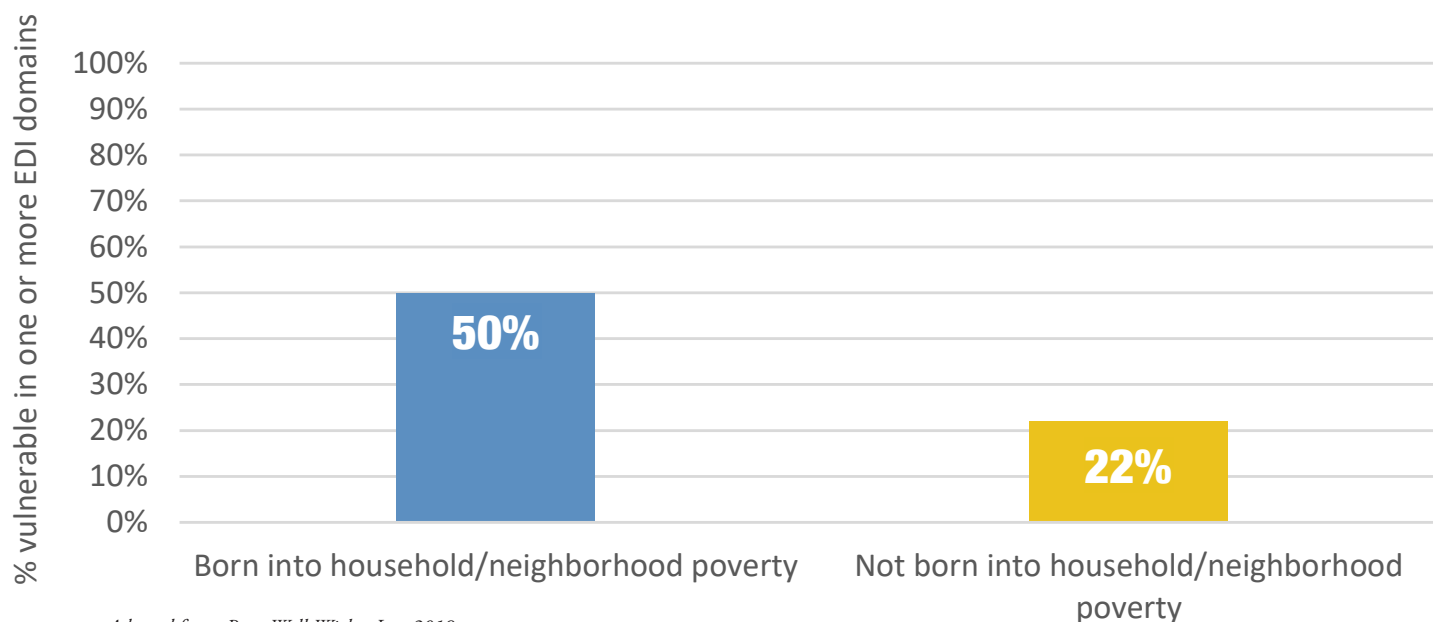
Early childhood development is characterized as the physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development of a child.¹ During a child's early life, development is highly reliant on social and physical environments.² Stressors like poverty, family violence and maltreatment can impact the healthy development of a child's brain, and socioeconomic status is an important predictor of brain health, behavior and learning.³

Child poverty and educational outcomes

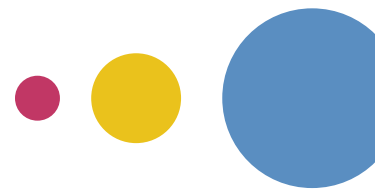
Poverty is also associated with a child's educational outcomes and low income has been linked to poorer academic achievement, abnormal structural brain development,⁴ restricted language development,⁵ and

an increased risk of experiencing food insecurity.⁶ Research suggests family risk factors, which are correlated with neighbourhood socioeconomic status, are an important factor for a child's school readiness.⁷ Based on a 2019 study, **Figure 1** shows that 50% of children living in poverty in Manitoba are entering school developmentally vulnerable (or at risk of experiencing challenges at school), compared with 22% of children not living in poverty.⁸ Early developmental vulnerability has lasting impacts into adulthood with heightened risks of cognitive problems and psychosocial adjustment later in life.⁹ Throughout school years, children with lower incomes tend to score lower on standardized tests and are much less likely to pursue higher level education.¹⁰

FIGURE 1: DEVELOPMENTAL VULNERABILITY IN KINDERGARTEN, BY POVERTY LEVEL



Adapted from: Roos, Wall-Wieler, Lee, 2019.



Child poverty and toxic stress

Children living in poverty are also at an increased risk of dealing with harmful levels of stress. Consistent and prolonged interactions with stressors like poverty can cause traumatic stress, also known as toxic or chronic stress, and can cause several negative health and educational outcomes for children.¹¹ Children exposed to toxic stress at an early age are more likely to develop behavioral problems, and stress can damage areas of the brain that control the capacity for planning and reasoning.¹² As a result, children with high levels of toxic stress may experience impaired judgment, memory, attention, and self-control. Toxic stress in children can have lifelong impacts with increased risks of chronic disease like high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.¹³

Conclusion

Addressing poverty in childhood can have lasting positive impacts on educational outcomes. Low income has been correlated with heightened experiences of toxic stress in childhood, damage to brain development, and increased developmental vulnerability in school. To address some of these negative childhood outcomes and improve a child's academic readiness, policies and resources must focus on reducing family risk factors, such as poverty. An example of an income support program that associated an increase in income with positive educational outcomes was the Manitoba Basic Annual Income Experiment (Mincome). The Mincome experiment provided a guaranteed annual income to families over a four-year period in a small town in Manitoba in the 1970s. A study of the Mincome program found that fewer young people (particularly boys) withdrew from high school before grade 12 during the years of the program, and hospitalization rates fell by 8.5%.¹⁴

Consistent and prolonged interactions with stressors like poverty can cause traumatic stress, also known as toxic or chronic stress, and can cause several negative health and educational outcomes for children.

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EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE: Still too Barrieted

The Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry Report acknowledged that early childhood education programs “can significantly benefit children and their parents” and that the “pre-school years offer the most significant opportunity to influence children’s capacity to learn throughout their life time.”

Given Manitoba’s ‘record’ of being the province with the highest rates of child and family poverty, we would all benefit if our government worked to fulfill its commitment to Jordan’s Principle by putting all children first.

The Province of Manitoba signed the Canada-Manitoba Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement in August 2021. The agreement will bring \$1.2 billion in federal funds to Manitoba over the next five years. It should increase the supply, affordability, inclusivity and quality of ELCC in the province. It should provide Manitoba with the opportunity to create a quality system that ensures a skilled an expert workforce. ELCC, given its importance in future childhood development, should be a respected and fulfilling career.

The federal government identified a number of priorities that guided the negotiations with each province and territory as the Canada-wide agreements were developed. These priorities include:

- reducing parent fees in regulated child care by an average 50 percent by the end of 2022;
- reducing parent fees in regulated child care to an average of \$10 a day by 2025-26;
- valuing the work of early childhood educators (ECEs) and providing training and development opportunities to support quality in child care;
- building a strong baseline of publicly available data as a basis for monitoring and measuring progress; and
- expanding services primarily through non-profit and public delivery.

The Manitoba Context

There are 201,000 children between the ages of 0-12 years, and only 18.7% of these children have access to regulated child care.¹ And until recently, less than 19% of these children are receiving subsidized care.

Access to high quality early learning and child care (ELCC) has been a barrier for families for decades, but especially for lower income families. This means that too many of Manitoba’s most vulnerable are unable to ever discover the many

benefits of quality ELCC programming. Evidence routinely demonstrates that this essential human service, that is both educational and caring, is a critical part of decreasing poverty rates and increasing long term health and wellness for children and their parents. The Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry Report acknowledged that early childhood education programs “can significantly benefit children and their parents” and that the “pre-school years offer the most significant opportunity to influence children’s capacity to learn throughout their life time.”² Manitoba has the highest percentage of Indigenous people in its population among all 10 provinces, and Winnipeg has the largest number of Indigenous people among all Canadian cities. Thirty percent of children under the age of six in Manitoba are Indigenous, compared to eight percent in Canada overall. Given that Indigenous families are over-represented in poverty, we must prioritize Indigenous led approaches to ELCC. Non-Indigenous early learning and child care stakeholders must commit to listening to and engaging with Indigenous governments, leaders and families to understand the value of Indigenous ways of knowing and world views if we are to address systemic racism and the impacts of colonialism. Given Manitoba’s ‘record’ of being the province with the highest rates of child and family poverty, we would all benefit if our government worked to fulfill its commitment to Jordan’s Principle by putting all children first.

Again, the research has been done on the positive impact that quality child care programming has for children and families, and yet, far too many continue to struggle to access the supports they need to live a good life, especially during the most important years for development – early childhood. While the supply of regulated child care has steadily grown over the years, it remains unaffordable for many low- and modest-income families. Programs are inequitably and unevenly distributed across the province, and early childhood educators are under-valued and very

often underpaid. The percentage of families receiving a full or partial subsidy has declined significantly over the years. In 2001, 47.6% of spaces were occupied by a child receiving a fee subsidy; by 2020 the percentage had dropped to 16.8%, and in actual numbers there were only approximately 4500 receiving any form of fee subsidy.

The current system of fee subsidies does not serve low- and modest-income families well. In addition to meeting financial eligibility criteria, almost all parents must be working or attending school to receive a fee subsidy. Many children who would benefit from regular participation in a full-day child care program cannot participate if their parents do not meet the social criteria. Families without regular, stable income fluctuate between being eligible and not eligible for fee subsidy as their income changes. For example, parents who are students may be eligible for fee subsidy during the school year, then lose their eligibility over the summer if they are employed. They may not be able to afford child care, remove their child from licensed child care and then lose their space when school starts again and they are once again eligible for subsidy. The maximum income levels at which parents may receive a full or partial subsidy were raised as of February 6, 2022, but are still low, and remain intrusive for families who have to prove a “need” for child care and financial assistance.

What is needed is a rights of the child based approach. The Manitoba government must develop a comprehensive, multi-year expansion plan for regulated early learning and child care. However, simply expanding supply is not enough. The plan must ensure that newly developed, regulated child care spaces are:

- affordable – for all parents, regardless of financial circumstances or parental activity;
- suitable – high quality, inclusive and welcoming of all children, responsive to the unique needs of parents and conveniently located;

- sustainable – with adequate, ongoing system-level funding and infrastructure supports; and
- staffed – with well-educated, fairly compensated, and nurturing educators.

Early Learning Educators are Essential

Early childhood educators are the main contributor to quality provision, and there can be no expansion without a robust investment in a qualified, consistent and capable workforce. To meet expansion targets and the developmental needs of young children, investing in the workforce to ensure fair wages and working conditions, job security and stability, access to pre-service and in-service education will be essential.

In March 2019, the Manitoba Child Care Association submitted a petition with more than 26,000 signatures, gathered in a four-week period, urging the provincial government to increase funding for non-profit child care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care and to improve quality and stability in the workforce.

The early childhood workforce is the key to the province’s ability to meet its expansion targets and to ensure quality provision. A comprehensive, coordinated workforce strategy is needed to address the many issues facing the sector.

It is time that all families get the supports they need now, and for the future. We have a lot of work to do, and MCCA has created a detailed *Roadmap to a High Quality Early Learning and Child Care System in Manitoba* that lays out what needs to be done to make sure this happens for Manitoba’s children, families, communities. If we truly want to see a decrease to poverty rates for families, child care is a key part of the solution.³

To meet expansion targets and the developmental needs of young children, investing in the workforce to ensure fair wages and working conditions, job security and stability; access to pre-service and in-service education will be essential.

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FAMILY AFFORDABILITY PACKAGE MISDIRECTED

The education property tax rebates (EPTR) disproportionately benefit higher income households. These households are more likely to own property, own more properties, or properties of higher value. Low-income households are more likely to be renters and not benefit at all from the rebate. Meanwhile, a separate program called the Education Property Tax Credit (EPTC), which both renters and homeowners are eligible for, has been reduced. Most beneficiaries saw a reduction in benefits from \$700 to \$437.5. As a result, rather than reducing poverty, the changes to the education property tax system have increased inequality in Manitoba.

In August of 2022, the Manitoba government introduced a suite of measures collectively called the Manitoba Family Affordability Package, ostensibly to assist families in these times of soaring costs and record high interest and inflation rates. However, the investments were not well targeted to low income households and so their effectiveness in mitigating inflation for the most vulnerable families was limited.

This section examines the impact of the package on Manitoba families. We also explore how more targeted investment could have dramatically reduced child poverty, even without significant increases in the overall size of the affordability package.

The measures, totalling \$87 million, included one-time benefits to families and seniors as well as small increases to individuals on EIA (Employment and Income Assistance) and EIA-Disability. Additionally, the province launched a temporary grant program to assist food banks.

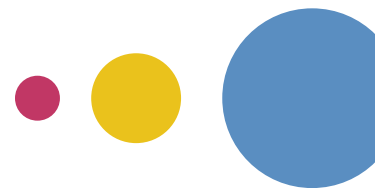
The table below lists the main elements in the Manitoba Affordability package. The largest part of the program was the families component. This program provided \$250 for the families with one child, age 18 or under, and \$200 for each subsequent child. All families with net incomes under \$175,000 were eligible. The total cost of this component alone was \$63 million.

MANITOBA AFFORDABILITY PACKAGE			
Group	Benefit	Eligibility	Cost
Families, with children 18 and under	\$250 for first child, \$200 for each subsequent child	Income under \$175,000 in 2021	\$63 million
Seniors	\$300	Income under \$40,000	\$16 million
EIA	\$50 per month increase in General Assistance, \$25 per month for EIA-Disability		N/A
Food banks	Temporary Grants		\$3 million

Community groups and anti-poverty experts criticized the package for providing insufficient support for those most affected by the increased cost of living while spending too much on those who arguably have resources to easily weather high rates of inflation. For families below the poverty line, \$250 does little to counteract the higher costs of basic necessities. Meanwhile, families with after-tax incomes of 175,000 thousand received the same amount.

Additionally, the Provincial government provided tax rebate cheques to Manitoba households and businesses that owned property equal to 37.5% of the education property tax assessed for each property. The total cost of this program was \$349.9 million in 2022, and is expected to rise to \$450 million this year. The Province has also touted this as a major component of its measures to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

The education property tax rebates (EPTR) disproportionately benefit higher income households. These households are more likely to own property, own more properties, or properties of higher value. Low-income households are more likely to be renters and not benefit at all from the rebate. Meanwhile, a separate program called the Education Property Tax Credit (EPTC), which both renters and homeowners are eligible for, has been reduced. Most beneficiaries saw a reduction in benefits from \$700 to \$437.5. As a result, rather than reducing poverty, the changes to the education property tax system have increased inequality in Manitoba.



To study the impact of Manitoba’s affordability package on reducing child poverty, we examined a sample of households obtained through Statistics Canada’s Public Use Microfiles (PUMF) of the Canadian Income Survey database for 2018. From this sample, we obtained data on 154 households in Manitoba with children who were below the Low Income Measure (LIM) of poverty. We then looked at how much money these families would have received through the Manitoba Affordability Package, and compared these results with the depth of poverty data for these households. From this, we were able to calculate how many of the households would have been raised above the LIM threshold as a result of the affordability package.

Secondly, we compared how these households would have been affected had the whole of the families component, i.e. \$63 million, been directed only to families below the LIM threshold instead of spread out among wealthier families with net household incomes up to \$175,000. Thirdly, we conducted the same analysis if the whole of education property tax rebate were applied to low-income families instead of targeted to property owners.

The results of this analysis were stark. Of the 154 families in our sample, only 4 (2.6%) would have received enough money through the Family Affordability Package to lift them above the LIM poverty line. This included two households with one child and one household with three children who were within \$249 of the poverty line, as well as one household with three children with an income less than \$649 below LIM. As we report in the ‘by the numbers’ section of this report, Manitoba has among the highest depths of child poverty among all provinces. This means that it takes more money to lift Manitoba children out of poverty than other jurisdictions. The small payments in this program were insufficiently scaled for that task.

The results of this analysis were stark. Of the 154 families in our sample, only 4 (2.6%) would have received enough money through the Family Affordability Package to lift them above the LIM poverty line.

EFFECT OF 2022 AFFORDABILITY PACKAGE ON LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN MANITOBA								
Manitoba Affordability Payment Received and Additional Income Required to Reach LIM								
Frequency Count								
		Additional Income Required to Reach LIM						Total
		<=249	450-649	650-849	850-1049	1050-1249	>=1250	
Affordability Payment Received	250	2	0	1	2	2	45	52
	450	0	0	0	0	0	47	47
	650	1	1	0	0	0	31	33
	850	0	0	0	0	0	14	14
	1050	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
	1250	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total		3	1	1	2	2	145	154
Total Reached LIM		3	1	0	0	0	0	4/154 = 2.60%

However, we found that better targeting could have substantially increased the benefit of the program. If the whole of the family affordability payments had been directed to low-income households, the payments could have been considerably higher. Instead of \$250 for the first child and \$200 for each subsequent child, the program could have provided \$974 per child for the same total cost. This would have made the program 3.75 times more effective at reducing child poverty. Instead of raising 4 out of 154 households above the LIM threshold, there would have been 15 out of these households above LIM, reducing child poverty by nearly 10%.

EFFECT OF TARGETED AFFORDABILITY PACKAGE ON LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN MANITOBA

Manitoba Affordability Payment Received if Applied only to Families Below LIM and Income Gap to Meet LIM

		Frequency Count							Total
		Additional Income Required to Reach LIM							
		<=974.17	974.18-1948.36	1948.37-2922.54	2922.55-3896.72	3896.73-4870.90	4870.91-5845.08	>=5845.09	
Affordability Payment Received if only Applied to Families Below LIM	974.18	5	4	3	5	3	4	28	52
	1948.36	0	2	3	2	3	1	36	47
	2922.54	2	0	2	3	0	1	25	33
	3896.72	0	0	1	0	1	1	11	14
	4870.9	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	6
	5845.08	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Total		7	7	10	10	8	8	104	154
Total Reached LIM		7	3	4	0	1	0	0	15/154 = 9.74%

*Payment totals arrived at by dividing sum of families portion of Affordability payments (63,000,000) by total number of children in families below LIM in MB (64,670) and multiplying by number of children per family. Number of Children * (63,000,000/64,670)

Our third analysis looked at the potential effect of adding the education property tax credit to reduce child poverty instead of being used to assist property owners. A recent survey by Probe Research conducted on behalf of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that 58% of Manitobans would have rather seen the rebate directed towards improved services.¹ We find that if these funds had been directed towards reducing child poverty, the effect would have been substantial.

Of the 154 families in our sample, 86% would have been lifted out of poverty in this scenario.

EFFECT OF TARGETED AFFORDABILITY PACKAGE PLUS EPTR ON LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN MANITOBA

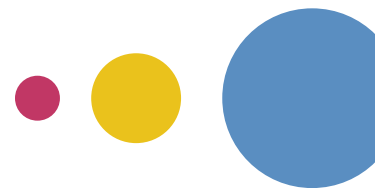
Payment Received if Combined with Education Property Tax Rebate and Additional Income Required to Reach LIM

		Frequency Count			Total
		Additional Income Required to Reach LIM			
		<=6386.27	6386.28-12772.54	12772.55-19158.81	
Payment Received if combined with Education Property Tax Rebate	6386.27	29	23	0	52
	12772.54	12	35	0	47
	19158.81	10	20	3	33
	25545.07	4	7	3	14
	31931.34	3	1	2	6
	38317.61	1	1	0	2
Total		59	87	8	154
Total Reached LIM		59	64	8	131/154 = 86.06%

*Payment totals arrived at by dividing sum of Education Property Tax Rebate (350,000,000) and families portion of Affordability payments (63,000,000) by total number of children in families below LIM in MB (64,670) and multiplying by number of children per family. Number of Children * (413,000,000/64,670)

Sources: Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0135-01 Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/1110013501-eng>; Statistics Canada Canadian Income Survey: Public Use Microdata File

Of the 154 families in our sample, 86% would have been lifted out of poverty in this scenario.



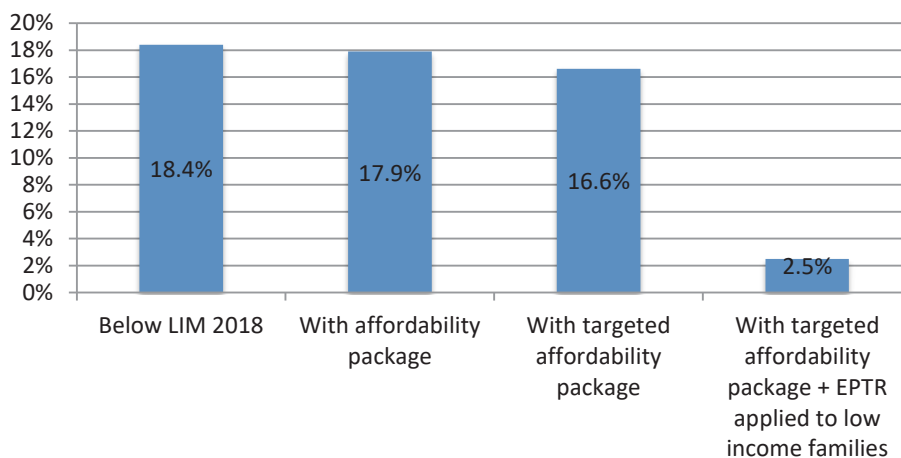
To better understand the limited impact of the Provincial government's affordability package on reducing child and family poverty, we compare the actual low income rate for children 18 years of age and under in Manitoba, with the various modelled scenarios described above. The existing affordability package would have reduced the low income rate from 18.4% to 17.9%. A more significant reduction would have been achieved by applying the full family affordability package to low income families only. This would have reduced the child poverty rate to 16.6%. By applying the education property tax credit to reducing child and family poverty, only 2.5% of children in Manitoba would have been in poverty based on this model. Under the existing affordability package, 1,352 out of 52,000 children would have been lifted above the low income threshold. The more targeted program would have helped 5,064 while the third model would have lifted 44,720 children out of poverty.

Given that the education property tax rebate is expected to increase in 2023, we conclude that the Provincial government has the resources it needs to end child and family poverty in Manitoba.

Manitobans of all social groups and income levels have been affected by the increases in the cost of living over the past two years. However, the impact for some households has meant that luxury consumption is curtailed, while for others it has meant cutting back on basic necessities. Governments during the pandemic have shown that when there is political will, the resources can be made available to protect households while keeping the economy afloat. If fiscal resources are properly directed, governments have the capacity to end child poverty and should do so.

Under the existing affordability package, 1,352 out of 52,000 children would have been lifted above the low income threshold. The more targeted program would have helped 5,064 while the third model would have lifted 44,720 children out of poverty.

FIGURE 1: MANITOBA LOW INCOME RATE, CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18, MODELLED FOR VARIOUS SCENARIOS



Governments during the pandemic have shown that when there is political will, the resources can be made available to protect households while keeping the economy afloat.

WEAVING LIFE STORIES WITH SYSTEMIC REALITIES

Children aging out of the child welfare system are at very high risk of experiencing poverty as adults.

The stories of the young people and families we work with are heartbreaking, complex and preventable.

Manitoba continues to lead the country with the number of children in government (Child and Family Services/CFS) care. In 2022, there were over 9,000 children in care across Manitoba.¹ That is nearly 1/6 of all children in care across the entire country.² The 2022 Winnipeg Street Census, the point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness, showed that 75% of those counted were Indigenous. Further to that, 92% of that 75% spent time in government care and over half of all respondents first became homeless at the age of 18. These numbers point to the reality that the CFS care system is a direct path to homelessness for far too many youth, primarily Indigenous youth but also others.³ Children aging out of the child welfare system are at very high risk of experiencing poverty as adults.⁴

In November of 2018 MLA Bernadette Smith introduced an amendment to the Child and Family Services Act that prevents the government from making apprehensions due to poverty.

CFS Act Part 3 Child Protection

17(3) Economic and social advantages not determinative: A child must not be found to be in need of protection only by reason of their parent or guardian — or if there is no parent or guardian, the person having full-time custody or charge of the child — lacking the same or similar economic and social advantages as others in Manitoba society.⁵

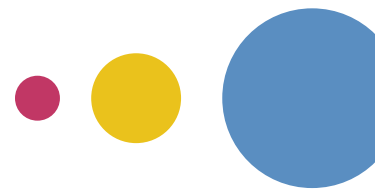
This amendment reflects the experiences of those impacted by CFS who believe that poverty is often the reason for apprehensions. Since this amendment has passed, very little has changed. CFS does little to support parents in poverty by providing the basic needs of the child. Children are still removed for poverty related reasons and while there is an increase in young people being

granted Agreements with Young Adults (AYAs, also known as extensions of care), there are few supports available for those transitioning from care who do not have permanent ward status.

Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network and Fearless R2W are both committed to supporting individuals impacted by CFS in Manitoba. We have observed parents trying to get their kids back and 18 year olds not receiving the support they need in employment, education, health, housing and more. The stories of the young people and families we work with are heartbreaking, complex and preventable. Past Campaign 2000 reports have made recommendations⁶, while others such as the September 2018 *Transforming Child Welfare in Manitoba*⁷ have not been enacted and documents such as the UN Convention on the Right of the Child have not been respected.⁸

The very existence of our organizations is evidence that more needs to be done to support those affected by child welfare.

'Chante' was 18. She had moved into her apartment six months earlier, and was just starting to feel settled. It had been hard at first. Moving from her group home that was always filled with other girls, the sounds of fighting or laughing filling the hallways, to her little space that always seemed quiet. Except for the thumps from the footsteps of the neighbours above her, or squeaks from the old radiator. But she was starting to settle in. A knock at her door interrupted her thoughts. It was her landlord, coming to ask her when she would be paying her rent. She was surprised, her rent was always paid directly



from her agency to the landlord. Thinking back, Chante realized she hadn't seen her worker in a few months. She gave her agency a call. She was dismayed to be informed that she was no longer a ward of her child and family services agency. She was now responsible for paying her own rent and living expenses. She had to find her own way. Within two months, Chante was couch-surfing, her belongings packed in boxes and garbage bags and stowed in someone's garage to wait for her until she could find a new place. Despite her best efforts to be successful in school and to find a part-time job to support herself, Chante continuously struggled, eventually falling into addictions, and never truly finding stability.

The child welfare system is the not-so-distant cousin of the colonial practices of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop, implements that were created for the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into mainstream Western culture. "First Nations children have higher rates of involvement with child and family services, including apprehensions, compared to all other children in Manitoba. Close to one-third of all First Nations children in Manitoba spend some time in care of child and family services during their childhood."⁹ This higher rate of child welfare involvement "reflects the larger structural inequalities, systemic racism, current child welfare policies, and the legacy of the residential school system and Sixties Scoop."¹⁰ While there is increased awareness and understanding of the colonial structure that undergirds the child welfare system, and attempts to improve legislation

and policies, "the child welfare system remains rooted in the colonial structures that ensure the continuation of structural inequities and systemic racism."¹¹ It will take intentional, drastic changes to create a system that is truly centered on the well-being of children and families.

In general, "young people today continue to rely on their social support networks, including their parents, friends, and communities, throughout their adult lives."¹² Youth aging out of care are deprived of this social support network, and the outcomes have been well documented. "Youth 'aging out' of care in Canada are up to 200 times

the child welfare system remains rooted in the colonial structures that ensure the continuation of structural inequities and systemic racism

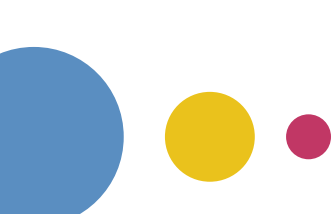
more likely to experience homelessness than their peers who are not in care, with Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ youth experiencing an even higher risk."¹³ As in Chante's story, many young people age out of care and are no longer able to afford the rental costs of their independent living placement due to challenges securing or maintaining stable employment or accessing financial support through adult services. "The majority of youth who age out of care live in poverty,"¹⁴ struggling to balance financial responsibilities with limited financial resources.

Due to 'placement bouncing' or frequent moves while in care, many young people struggle to achieve their high

school diploma because of the disruptions and changing schools. As a result, many do not dream of pursuing post-secondary education. "Being a former foster child is a significantly larger obstacle to post-secondary achievement than is living in a low-income family, being a first-generation newcomer student or being a particular gender or race alone."¹⁵ Education is a priority for Chante, a goal instilled in her by a former foster mother and the staff at the community centres she would attend as a child. But despite numerous attempts to attain her G.E.D. in different adult learning centres, she has so far been unable to find the stability in her life that would allow her to focus on her education. Her reading comprehension and writing skills are not at the level she would like them to be, because English is not her first language, Cree is. It took Chante many years to tell her supports about the language barrier she was experiencing.

Securing stable housing, financial resources, and education are only three of the challenges young people face as they age out of care. Health and mental health resources are also limited.

'Samuel' grew up in government care for most of his life. He lives with mental health challenges, and can be difficult to work with. Two weeks before his 18th birthday he told a staff at the community centre where he went for meals, 'John', that his time in care would be ending soon. Knowing that Samuel was a permanent ward, John called Samuel's social worker and asked what the plan of care was to be for Samuel, and if he would be offered an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA). The worker was not



There can be more scenarios like Myles. Whether through the support of a committed foster family or an independent living program. If young people receive the community and supports they need as they near the age of adulthood, there will be fewer instances of young people aging out of care into poverty, homelessness, and other vulnerable situations.

supportive. John arranged a meeting with Samuel's worker, their supervisor, and a few other supports from the community that worked with Samuel. In the end, the agency refused to offer Samuel an AYA, stating that they had connected him to adult disability services, and he would have to learn to work with them. A few weeks later, John spotted Samuel in the community. He did not look well. John approached him and Samuel expressed the difficulty he was having accessing the adult supports. He no longer had his medications, and he was not feeling well. John waited with Samuel at the local walk-in clinic, and afterwards purchased him a meal. John gave Samuel his phone number and told him to call the next day so they could work together to get him connected to adult services. Samuel did not call, and John has no idea where he may be today.

Samuel's story illustrates the difficulty many young people who age out of care face when they do not have the support they need to maintain a continuity of services and supports. In this case specifically a continuity of medications that would help this young person stay in a healthy state of mind. When young people age out of care, the health and mental health supports that they have come to rely on are immediately withdrawn.

'Myles' was super good at basketball. After living on the street previously, he spent much of his time outside and away from his group home to avoid abuse. He

would tell the neglectful 'care-givers' he was sleeping over at a friend's but would often sleep outside if a friend was unavailable.

After understandable trepidation his friend's parents contacted CFS and became his foster parents, but instead, treated him as their own son.

After completing high school, Myles went on to post-secondary studies on full scholarship. Myles flourished in an environment of stability, meaningful relationships, and community. He was given time to heal and to explore - all while learning respect and premier work ethic. His 18th birthday came and went, celebrated as if he'd been first born to his 'new' parents. He was not forced to pack his bags, or prove why and how he would benefit from more time with extended support and services. He stayed at home into adulthood focused on studies and his future.

Over time, Myles excelled in employment, married his partner, and grew a family of his own - with his forever family by his side. He continues to honour them at every conceivable chance as his now parents, grandparents, and guardian angels.

There can be more scenarios like Myles. Whether through the support of a committed foster family or an independent living program. If young people receive the community and supports they need as they near the age of adulthood, there will be fewer instances of young people aging out of care into poverty, homelessness, and other vulnerable situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA

Federal transfers are up in 2023/24 by \$744 million above 2022/23 levels. Manitoba is now receiving \$3.5 billion in equalization payments. The per capita allocation of total federal dollars has gone from \$2,627 in 2014/15 per Manitoban to \$4,135 in 2023/24 per Manitoban. Over the past ten years, equalization payments to Manitoba have increased from \$1.75 billion to \$3.51 billion. Equalization payments are meant to ensure that services and outcomes in Manitoba are equal to other provinces and therefore should be targeted to child poverty as Manitoba has persistently had the highest rates of child and family poverty of all the provinces.

TARGETS AND TIMELINES

1. **End child and family poverty in Manitoba in the 2023-2024 budget. Use federal transfers and target direct provincial benefits to bring all families above the CFLIM-After Tax Measurement**
2. **Immediately enact the systems change recommendations below to assist in the long-term maintenance of a Manitoba without child and family poverty**

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

1. Develop a strategy that prioritizes the job creation of well-paying jobs and training opportunities for people seeking employment and accessing education.
2. Increase the minimum wage to a living wage which is currently set at \$18.34 to allow for people to afford their basic needs as per the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba study, *A Family Living Wage for Manitoba*.

IMPROVE INCOME SUPPORTS

1. Immediately introduce a Livable Basic Needs Benefit that lifts all Manitobans up to or above the Census Family Low Income Measure After Tax (CFLIM-AT). This would include supporting the basic cost of raising children in families with children. The Liveable Basic Needs Benefit will transform EIA as a first step towards introducing a basic income by removing conditionality from assistance, increasing its universality and improving

its adequacy. Progressive steps to improving this benefit will provide a basic income guarantee for all Manitobans.

2. Should the Government of Canada agree to an income based CERB Amnesty, nullifying the requirement for anyone at or below the CFLIM-AT poverty measurement to repay the CERB if they had later been found to be ineligible, the Province will agree to not garnish any current or future provincial benefits or income support programs by counting the CERB money as income. The Province of Manitoba underspent by millions as people moved off EIA to CERB. Attempting to clawback funds in these continuing difficult times will only set people further back.
3. Change the focus of the current Employment and Income Assistance program so that it prioritizes training and education over employment so people can move into well-paying and more sustainable employment.
4. Double support for Extended Health Benefits through the rewarding work program. The current social assistance program presents a barrier for people leaving EIA. While receiving EIA, participants are eligible for health benefits including basic dental, prescriptions and vision care. These benefits end when they leave EIA. While some benefits may be extended for up to two years through the Rewarding Work Program, not all households leaving EIA are eligible. Moreover, the two-year time limit of Rewarding Work may be insufficient for families to guarantee their health will be protected in the long-term. We recommend an immediate doubling of Extended Health Benefits through Rewarding Work, to increase the number of households eligible and the length of time of their eligibility. Meanwhile, the federal and provincial governments should work together towards making extended health coverage, including prescription drugs, vision care and dental coverage universal for all families as an essential part of Canada's health system.
5. Improve resources for community run free tax filing services to ensure that families can access all of the benefits to which they are entitled.
6. Ensure benefit programs, such as the Healthy Baby Prenatal Benefit, are indexed to inflation.



HEALTH

1. Development of a unified and seamless health care system to ensure First Nations children have equitable access to all provincially funded health and social services as per *Our Children, Our Future: The Health and Wellbeing of First Nations Children in Manitoba*: http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/FNKids_Report_Web.pdf.
2. Eliminate discrimination and racism at all levels of the health care system, beginning with health care providers and extending to policies that place First Nations children and families at an unfair advantage as per above report.
3. Implement Jordan's Principle. Families involved in child welfare should be provided with medical services without using jurisdiction/placement/status in care as a reason to not render services. Parents should be able to seek support for their health or their children's health without fear that their children will be apprehended. ***"In recognition of Jordan, Jordan's Principle provides that where a government service is available to all other children, but a jurisdictional dispute regarding services to a First Nations child arises between Canada, a province, a territory, or between government departments, the government department of first contact pays for the service and can seek reimbursement from the other government or department after the child has received the service. It is a child-first principle meant to prevent First Nations children from being denied essential public services or experiencing delays in receiving them. On December 12, 2007, the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion that the government should immediately adopt a child-first principle, based on Jordan's Principle, to resolve jurisdictional disputes involving the care of First Nations children."*** (Source: Definition from CHRT)
2. Eliminate the requirement that only parents who work or attend education or training programs are eligible for the fee support as affordable early learning and child care must be available for all children and families.
3. Prioritize the creation of licensed space in low-income neighbourhoods.
4. Provide interested parents with barriers to employment the opportunity to become Early Learning and Child Care educators to staff new spaces. (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/opinion-education-reform-early-childhood-adult-1.6256876>)
5. Ensure all Early Learning and Child Care programs are staffed by well-educated and fairly compensated educators who enjoy good working conditions, have opportunities for ongoing learning and career advancement, and are respected for their contributions to the well-being, education and development of children.
6. While early learning and child care must be universal in approach, additional supports and processes are needed to address and reduce barriers to access. Children with developmental delays or disabilities are welcomed into and are able to fully participate in all child care settings with the supports they require. Programs serving Indigenous families, newcomer families, francophone families, low-income families, and families living in conditions of risk have the resources necessary to provide the additional supports that may be needed.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

1. Modernize the affordability mechanisms and move the ELCC subsidy to a sliding scale based on annual tax returns, with low income parents (any who fall below the CFLIM-After Tax measurement) paying no fee.

HOUSING

1. Establish a supportive housing model for families working towards reunification after Child and Family Service involvement that has family sized units and wrap around supports. Potential model: *IRCOM is a one of a kind place; a home to hundreds of immigrants and refugees from across the globe, who are secured with long-term, affordable, and safe housing, together with holistic, wrap around programs and services for parents and children alike. IRCOM is the "receiving family" for those who have no one in Canada to receive them; a home where each person finds belonging and dignity, all*

of which is essential so they can meaningfully integrate into their new community. (source: IRCOM Website, Feb 2023)

TRANSIT

1. Reinstate the 50/50 funding model with municipal centres that have public transit on the condition that the funds will be used to deliver a low-barrier, low income bus pass.
2. Ensure anyone on income assistance has access to a free monthly bus pass.
3. Work with municipal centres that have public transit to eventually move towards fully subsidized systems. Mobility is essential. A free public transit system will benefit all low-income Manitobans and the environment as it will encourage people to drive less.

OLDER YOUTH SPECIFIC

1. Increase service coordination for youth aging out of care to prevent poverty. We advise that this includes a variety of tactics such as pre-approvals, skipping line ups and designating specific workers and resources to address the service delivery within that system.
2. Systems in Manitoba (CFS, EIA, schools, etc) must coordinate to provide continuity of education for youth aging out of care. This means young people should not be cut off from benefits or penalized for continuing their education and resources should be expanded to support the completion of high school or other additional education programs. Youth should not be kicked off of EIA if they are completing school after they age out of care.
3. Designate specific EIA case workers to support and manage the files from youth aging out of care. The number of workers dedicated to this should be relative to the number of cases being managed so as not to overwhelm the workers so they can provide adequate attention to cases.
4. Through EIA create positions of mentors that will connect with and walk with young people aging out of care as they explore the career path of their choice. We also recommend that the Manitoba government transition their summer programs into year long

programs with special attention to hiring youth aging out of care. *Examples: Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) provides wage subsidies to employers from not-for-profit organizations, the public sector, and private sector organizations with 50 or fewer full-time employees, to create quality summer work experiences for young people aged 15 to 30 years. (Source: Gov of Canada Website Jan 2023). Green Team grants create summer employment opportunities for youth aged 15 to 29 years. Approved Applicants provide a variety of community development projects that improve neighbourhoods, promote community involvement and help develop young leaders. The employment period is between May 1 and September 30. Priorities for the 2023 summer season are focused on: community based organizations and municipal governments that can offer full-time employment opportunities for youth; projects that support COVID-19 response and recovery efforts; and projects that can demonstrate community need and partnerships.*

MEASUREMENT

1. The Government of Manitoba should adopt the Census Family Low Income Measure After Tax (CFLIM-AT) as its official measure of poverty. This measurement is comprehensive; including well-being, living standards and comparing social exclusion among the population. The CFLIM-AT provides a more accurate poverty measure that allows for comparison of future success and failures.
2. The Government of Manitoba should use T1 Family File (T1FF) taxfiler data to measure poverty. It is a reliable and broad source with a more inclusive sample of family's income situations.

MEASUREMENT AND METHODOLOGY

This report measures poverty using the Census Family Low Income Measure After Tax (CFLIM-AT), which is defined as 50% of median income for a particular family size (see Table 1 for thresholds). The Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM) is a relative measure of poverty which tracks changes in living standards and compares the living standards of low-income individuals and families to that of the rest of society. The CFLIM is based on the census family.¹ The CFLIM is calculated using data from the T1 Family File (T1FF) tax file. It is a reliable and broad source of annual income data that includes communities with high prevalence of poverty such as populations of the territories, First Nations People living on reserve, those living in institutions, parents under 18 and people living in the territories. Selecting the after-tax measure takes government transfers into account. Due to a two-year lag in data release for tax filer data, this report examines the year 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Government transfers for this year include the range of emergency pandemic supports federal, provincial and territorial governments put in place (see Annex 1).

The 2021 census was the source of data for analyses related to poverty rates of Indigenous, visible minority and immigrant children. In the census the LIM is based on the household² rather than the census family.

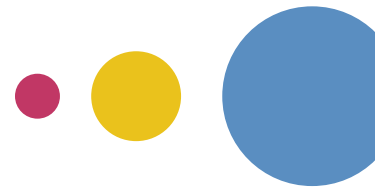
The Official Poverty Line in Canada is the Market Basket Measure (MBM), which was entrenched into legislation

in June 2019 when the Poverty Reduction Act (PRA) came into effect. The MBM is a consumption-based measure, calculated using the Canadian Income Survey (CIS), establishing a low-income threshold by costing out a basket of goods and services that an individual or family would need to purchase to have a ‘basic’ and ‘modest’ standard of living in a particular geographic region using five categories: food, clothing, shelter, transportation and a category of ‘other’ essential items. Families with a disposable income that is less than the threshold for their region are considered to be living in poverty. There are currently 53 baskets costed out for various regions across the provinces. The CIS is a much smaller sample than tax filer data (CIS surveyed approximately 72,000 households in 2020 compared to nearly 29,000,000 individual tax filers), is subject to sampling error, and results in lower poverty rates.

Beyond this, relative poverty measures like the LIM have been shown to be more strongly correlated with child developmental³ outcomes and health status.⁴

Family type	CFLIM-AT (\$)
Single person (no child)	23,976
Lone parent with one child	33,907
Lone parent with two children	41,528
Couple with one child	41,528
Couple with two children	47,952

Source: Statistics Canada (2022). *Technical Reference Guide for the Annual Income Estimates for Census Families, Individuals and Seniors. T1 Family File, Final Estimates, 2020, Table F.*



ANNEX 1

List of temporary pandemic benefits available from the governments (federal and provincial) during COVID-19 in 2020 included in calculations in this report card. Some were taxable and others were not. The list of provincial benefits is not exhaustive.

Included in government transfers (taxable)	
Canada Emergency Recovery Benefit	Taxable amounts included in line 13000 of the T1 Form (other income).
Canada Emergency Student Benefit	
Canada Recovery Caregiver Benefit	
Net Canada Recovery Benefit - CRB less repayments	
Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit	
Provincial/Territorial COVID-19 financial assistance payments	

Included in provincial refundable tax credits (non-taxable)	
Manitoba Seniors Economic Recovery Credit	This list of provincial non-taxable benefits derived during the T1FF processing is not exhaustive. Some COVID-related benefits were not estimated due to a lack of information
Ontario Support for Families	
BC Emergency Benefit for Workers	
BC Seniors supplement Covid enhancement	
Ontario GAINS Covid Enhancement	
One-time climate action tax credit increase (BC)	
One-time tax-free payment for disabled individuals and parents of disabled children	This amount is non-taxable and is not attached to a specific benefit. It is paid-out to individuals with a Disability Tax Credit Certificate and/or to individuals who are in care of children with disability.

Included in old age security benefit (non-taxable)	
One-time tax-free payment for OAS recipients	While the OAS is a taxable benefit, this one-time payment is tax-free.

Included in net federal supplement (Guaranteed Income Supplement) (non-taxable)	
One-time tax-free payment for GIS/Allowance recipients	While the GIS is a taxable benefit, this one-time payment is tax-free.

Included in federal child benefits (Canada Child Benefit) (non-taxable)	
One-time CCB COVID payment	This amount is non-taxable and was paid-out at the same time as the May regular CCB payments.

Included in GST credits (Goods and Services Tax) (non-taxable)	
One-time GST Credit COVID payment	This amount is non-taxable and was paid-out at the same time as the April regular GST payments.

2020 DATA IN 2023 CONTEXT

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- 2 Manitoba Hansard, March 24, 2022. https://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/42nd_4th/vol_29a/h29a.html#srpb
- 3 International Monetary Fund. 2021. *Fiscal Monitor: Database of Policy Measures in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*. <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Fiscal-Policies-Database-in-Response-to-COVID-19>
- 4 International Monetary Fund. 2021. *2021 Article IV Consultation Staff Report: Canada*. Washington: IMF.
- 5 Statistics Canada. 2022. *The Daily, March 23, 2022*. "Canadian Income Survey, 2020" <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220323/dq220323a-eng.htm>
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CHILD POVERTY AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

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- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.

- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Chartier, M., Brownell, M., MacWilliam, L., Valdivia, J., Nie, Y., Ekuma, O., Burchill, C., Hu, M., Rajotte, L., Kulbaba, C. (2016). *The Mental Health of Manitoba's Children*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Centre for Health Policy. http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/MHKids_web_report.pdf
- 10 Ibid.
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WEAVING LIFE STORIES WITH SYSTEMIC REALITIES

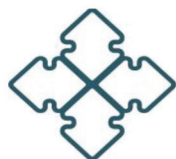
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MEASUREMENT AND METHODOLOGY

- 1 **Census family** is defined as a married couple and the children, if any, of either and/or both spouses; a couple living common law and the children, if any, of either and/or both partners; or a parent of any marital status in a one-parent family with at least one child living in the same dwelling and that child or those children. All members of a particular census family live in the same dwelling. Children may be biological or adopted children regardless of their age or marital status as long as they live in the dwelling and do not have their own married spouse, common-law partner or child living in the dwelling. Grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present also constitute a census family.
- 2 **Household** refers to a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada or abroad. The dwelling may be either a collective dwelling or a private dwelling. The household may consist of a family group such as a census family, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, of a group of unrelated persons or of a person living alone. Household members who are temporarily absent on reference day are considered part of their usual household.
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