

New Alberta Child Poverty Report Shows That a Return to Normal Should Not Mean a Return to Rising Poverty Levels

February 20, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EDMONTON – The Edmonton Social Planning Council and Public Interest Alberta have jointly released a report on the state of child poverty in Alberta. The report finds that 1 in 6 children, or over 160,000 children, in Alberta are living in poverty. This is a return to pre-pandemic levels of poverty after a temporary decrease in poverty due to COVID-era supports that were in place in 2020. While many welcome a post-pandemic “return to normal,” this should not include a return to increasing rates of child poverty.

“The onset of COVID times was challenging for many, but governments providing stability and a temporarily boosted safety net definitely alleviated the worst poverty,” said Bradley Lafortune, Executive Director of Public Interest Alberta. “However, a ‘return to normal’ has meant too many people returning to precarious low-wage jobs that do not pay a livable wage. During times of high costs of living and stagnant wages, governments have to dramatically rethink our social safety net to lift people out of poverty.”

“The House of Commons’ original goal to end child poverty by the year 2000 has been missed, and child poverty continues to persist nearly a quarter century later,” said Sydney Sheloff, the Strategic Research Coordinator at the Edmonton Social Planning Council. “We have the knowledge and the resources to meaningfully make a difference for those living in poverty, but governments are lacking the political will to follow through. It is our hope that these reports serve as a wake up call to foster conversations on the current dire situation and ways forward to improve the lives of those who feel the impacts of poverty every day.”

The report examines common sense policy solutions to the crisis of child poverty, including robust investment into affordable and non-market housing and a robust and accessible network of high-quality and affordable child care options to foster healthy childhood development and allow for greater workforce participation.

-30-

For media inquiries, please contact:

Sydney Sheloff, Strategic Research Coordinator
Edmonton Social Planning Council
sydneys@edmontonsocialplanning.ca