

New report finds largest increase in child poverty rates on record: 1.4 million children now live in poverty

OTTAWA – Nearly 1.4 million children in Canada lived in poverty in 2022, according to a new report released today by Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty, a national non-partisan coalition monitoring federal progress (or lack thereof) on child and family poverty. In two years from 2020 to 2022, child poverty rates increased by nearly 5 percentage points when nearly 360,000 additional children fell into poverty.

“The numbers in this report card are shocking, even to those of us who track this issue,” said Leila Sarangi, National Director of Campaign 2000 and lead author of the report. “Every province, territory and the City of Toronto have seen their largest annual increase in rates of child poverty within the last two years. Certain groups who face systemic marginalization in our communities are disproportionately affected. It’s been thirty-five years since the federal government signed on to uphold all children’s rights and eradicate child poverty but clearly, the federal poverty reduction strategy is failing. We are heading quickly in the wrong direction and failing our children, again.”

The new national report card, *Ending Child Poverty: The Time is Now*, shows that the jump in poverty rates in 2021 was the first increase in 10 years, and the latest increase in 2022 was the largest on record. It has been five years since the federal government legislated their poverty reduction strategy, but families are living in deeper poverty than they were in 2015, the year from which the government measures progress. In 2022, Canada saw a return to child poverty rates higher than in 2019 when the government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy came into effect.

“The Nunavut report card finds that one in two children under six live in poverty but the data that’s available underestimates the real experiences of poverty. Nunavut has the highest child poverty rates by far, and the highest increases. This is a consistent trend in our territory,” said Jasmine Redfern, President of Amautiit Nunavut Inuit Women’s Association. “Poverty is so deeply connected with experiences of colonialism. Decolonization and self-determination are prerequisites for ending poverty in this country.”

“Government policies and programs must be approached as poverty reduction strategy initiatives. The \$10aDay Child Care Plan is a great example of a significant new investment that could be used for poverty reduction,” said Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now. “We have been making the case for a zero to ten dollar a day maximum system of childcare, and government-led initiatives to expand the availability of not-for-profit and public licensed child care programs, to ensure that the one and a half million children in this report card can access the program and end the exclusion of low-income families from this essential public service.”

Campaign 2000’s report card provides bold and achievable recommendations to advance social and economic equity, income security, decent work, childcare, housing, pharmacare and more. The national report card will be released in coordination with provincial, territorial and local report cards from partners in New Brunswick, Ontario, Nunavut, and Toronto. Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador report cards will be released in the coming weeks.

“We’ve put forward a platform with nearly 60 recommendations that federal parties can adopt to create a meaningful plan,” Sarangi added. “This report card is both an alarm bell and a call to action.”

The report card launch will be in Ottawa at the Impact Hub on November 19 at 10 AM ET. Community partners will gather to mark the 35th anniversary of the passing of the unanimous all-party federal resolution to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Speakers will address issues of poverty, childcare, gender-based violence, colonialism and discrimination. Media are invited to attend. Register on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/community-launch-2024-national-report-card-on-child-and-family-poverty-tickets-1068225163219>

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CONTACT INFORMATION

National Contacts:

Leila Sarangi, National Director of Campaign 2000, leilasa@familyservicetoronto.org, 647-393-1097
Porte-parole français disponible, Melanie Doucet, Ligue pour le bien-être de l'enfance du Canada, 438-871-3777
melanie@cwlc.ca

Provincial and Territorial Contacts:

Nunavut: Jasmine Redfern, Amautiit Nunavut Inuit Women's Association, 613-447-9124, redfern.jasmine@gmail.com

Northwest Territories: Suzette Montreuil, Alternatives North, 867-445-6825, suzette@hotmail.com

Yukon: Kristina Craig, Executive Director, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, 867-334- 9318, ed@yapc.ca

British Columbia: Adrienne Montani, First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society, 604-288-8103, adrienne@firstcallbc.org

Alberta: Sydney Sheloff, Edmonton Social Planning Council, 780-423-2301 ext. 354, sydneys@edmontonsocialplanning.ca

Saskatchewan: Miguel Sanchez, 306-550-7322, miguel.sanchez@uregina.ca

Manitoba: Sid Frankel, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, 204-295-3749, Sid.Frankel@umanitoba.ca

Ontario: Mithilen Mathipalan, Ontario Coordinator, Campaign 2000, 416-666-8491
mithilenma@familyservicetoronto.org

Toronto: Jin Huh, Social Planning Toronto, 647-210-1186, jhuh@socialplanningtoronto.org

New Brunswick: Heather Atcheson, Human Development Council, 506-799-2317, heather@sjhdc.ca and Liam Fisher, Human Development Council, liam@sjhdc.ca, 506-636-8549

Nova Scotia: Cherise Carlaw, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia, 902-943-1513
cherise@policyalternatives.ca

Prince Edward Island: Mary Boyd, 902-969-2693, MaryBoyd@live.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador: Colin Corcoran, Community Sector Council NL, colin@cscnl.ca and Lindsey Hynes, Community Sector Council NL, lindseyhynes@cscnl.ca

BACKGROUND

Key Findings from the 2024 National Report Card, *Ending Child Poverty: The Time Is Now*:

- Nearly **1.4 million children live in poverty** in Canada, or roughly **1 in 5 children**.
- From 2021 to 2022, the child poverty rate rose by 2.5 percentage points, **the largest annual increase in child poverty on record** (+195,170 children).
- **Families lived in deeper poverty**. On average, family incomes fell \$14, 276 below the low income measure, after tax in 2022 compared to \$10,050 in 2015.

- **Child poverty increased in every province and territory.** The highest increase for children under 18 was in Nunavut (+6 percentage points) and among the provinces in Ontario (+3.5 percentage points).
- **More than 110,000 families with children** fell into poverty in 2022.
- **Nearly all children (99%) under 18 years old** who do not live in families live in poverty.
- **Nearly one in two children (45%) growing up in lone-parent families** live in poverty.
- **The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is losing effectiveness.** On average, it reduced child poverty by 8.8 percentage points annually. In 2022, it reduced child poverty by 7.8 percentage points, the lowest reduction to date.
- In 2019, the Minister of Disability inclusion was given a mandate to **double the amount of the Child Disability Benefit.** To date, there has been no movement in this urgent area.
- **Poverty rates for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children remain significantly higher than rates for non-Indigenous children.** Ending poverty for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families depends on realizing their rights to their traditional lands, territories and resources.
- **Racialized and immigrant children experience disproportionately high rates of child poverty** due to systemic racism, discrimination and barriers to services and employment.
- There is **wide income inequality** among families with children. The after-tax average income for families with children in the top 10% was 18 times higher than the average income of those in the bottom 10%.
- **Addressing intersectional and systemic discrimination with poverty reduction initiatives is essential** to reducing the high poverty rates experienced by children from disproportionately marginalized groups.
- **New investments are needed**, including broadening access to the CCB, creating a new End Child Poverty Supplement for those in low income, and ensuring adequacy of the CCB children's disability benefit.
- Establishment of a standard \$0-\$10 a day per family sliding scale fee model of childcare to enable access for families in poverty is needed. Canada's **universal childcare plan must include low income children.**

Campaign 2000 is a non-partisan, pan-Canadian network of 120 national, provincial and community partner organizations committed to working to end child and family poverty, hosted by Family Service Toronto. To download 2022 report cards or for more information, please visit <http://www.campaign2000.ca>.
