

## New Report Finds Record Increases in Child Poverty Rates in Ontario

**For Immediate Release** – 1 in 5 children in Ontario were living in poverty in 2022, according to a new report by *Ontario Campaign 2000* a provincial coalition of over 70 partner organizations committed to eradicating child and family poverty. For two years in a row, from 2020 to 2022, Ontario experienced the highest increases in child poverty rates ever recorded. In 2022 alone, child poverty rates in Ontario increased by 3.5 percentage points, the fastest-growing child poverty rate among the provinces.

“Child poverty rates in Ontario are increasing at an alarming rate,” said Mithilen Mathipalan, Ontario Coordinator for Campaign 2000. “And the experiences of marginalized communities paint a starker picture. Disparities persist in poverty rates among First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children, racialized and immigrant communities, people with disabilities and women. Coming out of COVID, we are not seeing solutions to address the structural and root causes of poverty in Ontario.”

The new provincial report card, *Tackling Child Poverty: A Call for Bold Solutions*, found that over 100,000 more children in Ontario were living in poverty in 2022. Families with children were living in deeper poverty than years prior, with lone-parent families particularly affected. Of the Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), Windsor had the highest child poverty rate (23.2%) while Guelph had the lowest (13.9%).

“For six years and counting, the provincial government has kept the Ontario Works rates frozen, despite record high cost of living and a 20% increase in the prices of goods and services since 2018,” said Asif Khan, Research and Policy Analyst at the Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC). “Ontario needs a fundamental realignment in its approach to poverty reduction backed by a meaningful strategy that includes at least doubling social assistance rates.”

The 2024 report card comes as Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy approaches renewal in 2025. The report card lays out an evidence-based, inclusive and achievable path toward ending child and family poverty in Ontario. It offers over 20 recommendations that would address gaps in income security, child care, child welfare, youth mental health, housing, food security, and decent work.

“As a community agency supporting vulnerable individuals and families across Ontario, we see firsthand the results of policy choices that contribute to poverty,” said Chris Brillinger, Executive Director of Family Service Toronto, the backbone agency of Ontario Campaign 2000. “We work to improve the lives of women and gender-diverse people fleeing violence, people with developmental disabilities and youth and families with mental health needs, many of whom live in poverty and are struggling with long wait times and accessing the services they need. Increasing investments and eliminating barriers to services for these populations is vital.”

“All levels of government must work together in poverty eradication and the province plays a key role in that,” added Mathipalan. “This report is a call to action for decision-makers to make bold choices to stem rising poverty among children and families. The future of our province's children depends on the decisions we make today.”

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### BACKGROUNDER

#### Key Findings from the 2024 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Ontario, *Tackling Child Poverty: A Call for Bold Solutions*

- More than half a million children (550, 080) under 18 are living in poverty or nearly 1 in 5 children.
- Child poverty rates increased by 3.5 percentage points representing over 100,000 children between 2021 and 2022, the largest increase on record.



- Ontario had the largest increase in poverty compared to all other provinces.
  - Rates of poverty for children under 6 were at 20.4% (174, 740 children).
  - Ontario's child poverty rate is higher than the national rate for children under 18 and under 6.
  - Child poverty existed in all 121 federal ridings across Ontario, Toronto Centre had the highest level of child poverty with more than one-third of children living in poverty in that riding.
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#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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*Ontario Campaign 2000 is a provincial coalition of over 70 active partner organizations committed to eradicating child and family poverty in Ontario, hosted by Family Service Toronto. To download the 2024 report card or for more information, please visit <https://ontariocampaign2000.ca/>*