

2018 Toronto Child & Family Poverty Report: Municipal Election Edition



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Research and data analysis support provided by the City of Toronto is gratefully acknowledged. We also thank Well Living House and Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto for providing data from Our Health Counts Toronto. Special thanks to Dr. Janet Smylie, Director of Well Living House at St. Michael's Hospital, Sara Wolfe, Community Knowledge User at Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto, and Dr. Raglan Maddox, Post-Doctoral Fellow and Research Associate at St. Michael's Hospital for preparing Our Health Counts Toronto data and providing context.

Financial support for this report was provided by the Children's Aid Society of Toronto and the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada. Social Planning Toronto would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of its key funders, City of Toronto and United Way Greater Toronto.

Design support was provided by Peter Grecco.

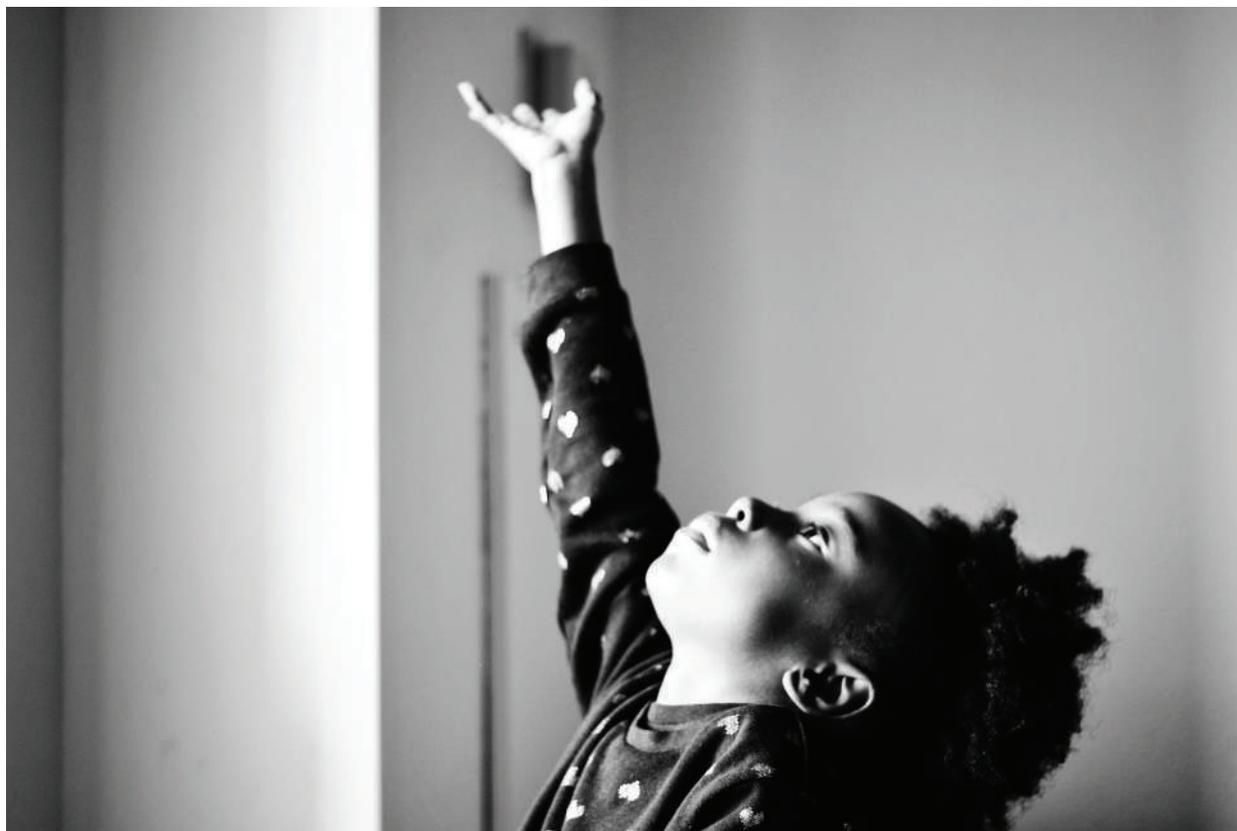
We also thank Jasmin Kalaw, a student at Ryerson University, for preparing the low-income ward maps, and Steven Farber and Jeff Allen, Department of Human Geography, University of Toronto, Scarborough, for transit data and mapping support.

We would like to acknowledge that the land on which this work was carried out is the traditional and unceded territories of the Huron-Wendat, Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, and the Métis Nation, and is home to Indigenous people of many nations. This territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We hope to honour the spirit of the Dish With One Spoon agreement by working to build a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous communities in Toronto, as we seek to ensure that all families and children have access to needed services and supports.

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Executive Summary

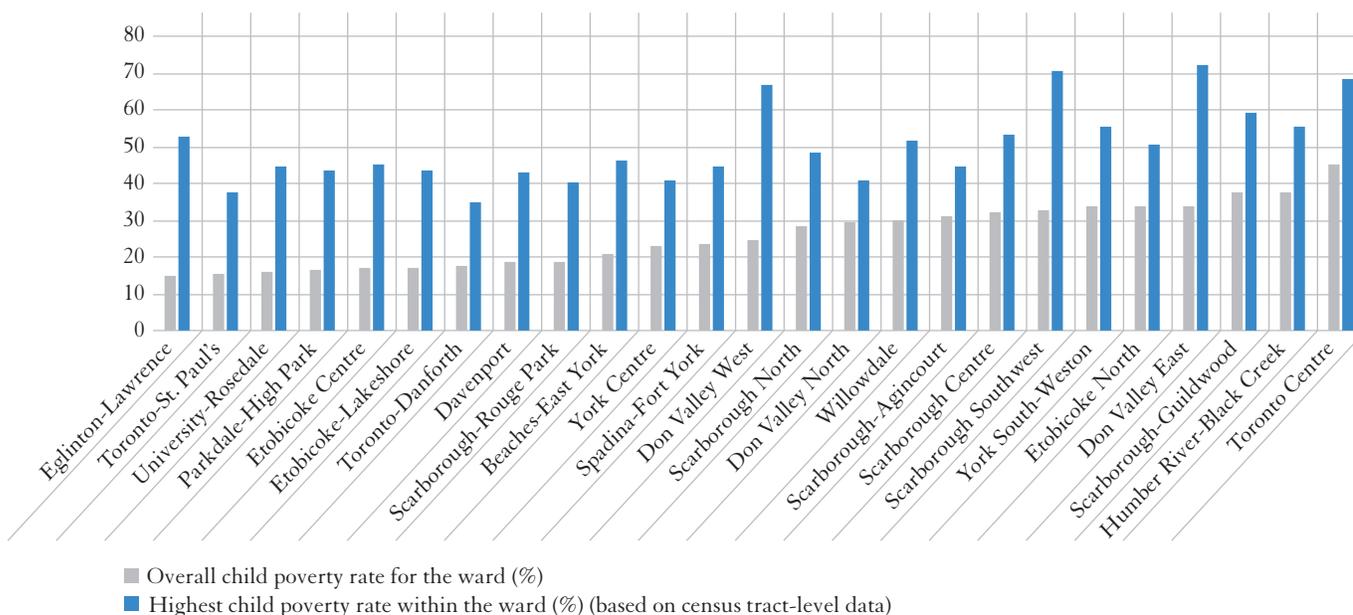
The *2018 Toronto Child and Family Poverty Report* draws on newly released census data to reveal a disturbing picture of child and family poverty in Toronto and in every single ward across the city.¹ With Toronto residents set to go to the polls on October 22, the report authors call on all candidates for Toronto City Council to commit to bold action in response to the pervasive hardships experienced by families in our city.

Key Findings

- 1) Child poverty affects families in every single ward in Toronto
- 2) The highest rates of child poverty are among Indigenous, racialized and newcomer families
- 3) The city of Toronto has higher rates of child poverty than the Toronto region for all groups of children

1) Child Poverty Affects Families in Every Single Ward in Toronto

- Across the city, more than 125,000 children (26.3%) live in low-income families
- Child poverty is widespread in Toronto’s wards
- 10 of the city’s 25 wards have overall child poverty rates between 30.2% and 45.2% and include areas within the ward with rates of child poverty as high as 72.3% (based on census tract-level data)
- Even among the 10 wards with the lowest rates of child poverty, areas within these wards have child poverty rates as high as 35% to 52.6% — 2 to 3.5 times higher than the overall rates



Source: Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by federal electoral district]. Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 98-401-X2016045. Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by census tract]. Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 98-401-X2016043.

¹ Data are reported for the City of Toronto and the city’s 25 wards. In the midst of the 2018 municipal election, the Government of Ontario imposed a 25-ward structure on the City of Toronto, replacing the city’s recently adopted 47-ward structure. This decision was met with considerable public opposition and legal challenges. At the time of the publication of this report, the 25-ward structure was in place. However, legal challenges were still ongoing.

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2) The Highest Rates of Child Poverty are among Indigenous, Racialized and Newcomer Families

- Shamefully, 84% of Indigenous families with children in Toronto live in poverty
- One third of racialized children (33.3%) in Toronto live in low-income families, while in comparison 15.1% of non-racialized children live in poverty
- Greater proportions of racialized children live in poverty, and child poverty rates are unacceptably high among children who are West Asian (59.5%), Arab (58.8%), Black (43.6%) and Latin American (36.1%)
- More than 40% of children born outside of Canada (1st generation) live in low-income families compared to over 25% of children born in Canada with at least one parent who is an immigrant to Canada (2nd generation). Children who were born in Canada and whose parents were also born in Canada (3rd generation or more) experience the lowest rate, with just over 10% of children living in poverty.
- Poverty rates are much higher for children from racialized groups compared to non-racialized groups for each generation. For example, among children who were born in Canada and whose parents were born in Canada (3rd generation or more), the poverty rate for racialized children is twice that of non-racialized children (22.8% vs. 10.7%).
- First generation newcomer children have extremely high rates of poverty, including staggering rates within the Arab (70.5%), West Asian (68.3%), Korean (57.5%) and Black (48%) communities.
- Children who are of West Asian (44.4%) and Black (42.1%) backgrounds have very high poverty rates even when they were born in Canada and have parents who were born in Canada (3rd generation or more).

3) The City of Toronto has Higher Rates of Child Poverty than the Toronto Region for All Groups of Children

The 2017 report, “Unequal City: The Hidden Divide Among Toronto’s Children and Youth”, showed similar trends among racialized and newcomer children in the Toronto region (Census Metropolitan Area, CMA; see appendix for map of Toronto CMA, GTA and area municipalities). However, the data presented in the 2018 report shows that children living in the city of Toronto have higher poverty rates than children in the Toronto region for all groups - all children, racialized and non-racialized groups, specific racialized groups, and racialized and non-racialized groups by generation status – reinforcing Toronto’s dubious title of child poverty capital.

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Taking Action

We are releasing this report in the lead up to the municipal election with a goal of engaging all candidates for Mayor and City Council in a discussion of solutions to poverty, and to call on all candidates to commit to bold action to address the crisis of child and family poverty in our city.

In 2015, Toronto City Council unanimously adopted TO Prosperity: Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy, which aimed to create, by 2035, a city where “everyone has access to good jobs, adequate income, stable housing, affordable transportation, nutritious food and supportive services.”

Since the adoption of TO Prosperity, Toronto City Council has introduced some important initiatives to advance the strategy but the city has a long road ahead to make good on its commitment to achieve a poverty-free Toronto. Toronto's ongoing affordable housing and homelessness crisis, shortage of good jobs, lack of affordable child care, and costly and inadequate transit service are testament to the struggles many families face and the challenges that the new council must tackle.

We urge all candidates for Toronto City Council to commit to the following actions:

1. The full funding of TO Prosperity including funding for
 - a. 7,200 new supportive housing units, 8,000 new affordable rental units² and 1,000 new shelter spaces
 - b. A 30% reduction in TTC fares for an additional 157,000 lower-income adults
 - c. 11,500 new child care spaces, including 5,000 subsidized spaces
 - d. 40,000 new community recreation program spaces
2. The adoption of measurable targets and timelines to assess the city's progress in advancing TO Prosperity and making positive change in the lives of Toronto residents struggling with poverty
3. Partner with and meaningfully engage residents and community groups in this work, including evaluating the plan's progress in reaching its targets



² Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation defines affordable housing as housing costing less than 30 per cent of a household's monthly gross income.

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To combat child poverty in Toronto, all council candidates must:

4. Commit to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action as one approach to supporting Indigenous children and families, with a particular focus on Call to Action 7: "We call upon the federal government to develop with Indigenous groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians".
5. Develop, implement and evaluate urban Indigenous poverty reduction and income security programming.
6. Address Indigenous-specific barriers to accessing employment and education programs, services, and supports.
7. Address barriers for Indigenous peoples in accessing existing healthy nutrition and food security programming.
8. Develop and fund Indigenous-focused food banks with healthy nutrient-rich food options and land-based traditional foods.
9. Develop and implement Indigenous-focused curricula regarding healthy nutrient-rich food options and land-based traditional foods within the education system.
10. Advance systems and programs that promote and support traditional Indigenous food gathering practices.
11. Fully fund all of the City's strategies that have been passed by Toronto City Council, including the TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy, Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, Toronto Newcomer Strategy, Youth Equity Strategy, Child Care Growth Strategy, and Housing Opportunities Toronto.
12. Create and fund Racial Justice and Gender Equity Strategies.
13. Consistently collect disaggregated demographic data – by gender identity, ethno-racial background, (dis)ability, sexuality, faith/spirituality, etc. – for all City programs and services.
14. Fully implement gender-responsive budgeting for the City budget.
15. Create, fully fund and staff equity offices, including offices focused on Indigenous peoples, gender, immigrants, accessibility, anti-black racism, and racial justice.

We need strong leadership at City Hall to make good on the city's commitment to creating a prosperous, equitable and inclusive city for all. Toronto residents can't afford four years of inaction and half measures. The well-being of Toronto's 125,000 children living in poverty is at stake. These children and families deserve better.



Introduction

In 2015, Toronto City Council unanimously adopted TO Prosperity: Toronto’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, which aimed to create, by 2035, a city where “everyone has access to good jobs, adequate income, stable housing, affordable transportation, nutritious food and supportive services.” Since the adoption of TO Prosperity, City Council has supported some important initiatives to advance this strategy:

- Free public transit for children aged 12 and under
- Discounted transit fares for adults receiving social assistance and disability support
- A social procurement policy that improves access to city contracts for equity-seeking groups
- Expanded city services including child care, recreation, student nutrition, library programs, youth hubs and shelters

Despite these initiatives, the city has a long road ahead to make good on its commitment to a poverty-free Toronto. The latest statistics underscore the high levels of poverty in our city and the challenges facing the next Mayor and City Council:

Child and family poverty at disturbing levels

- As this report attests, over one in four children live in low-income families, with much higher rates for children who are Indigenous, racialized and newcomers.

Affordable housing and homelessness crisis

- Nearly half of households in our city are renters. A total of 47% of tenant households lack affordable housing, spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs.
- The social housing waiting list is at a record high with just under 100,000 households waiting for affordable housing, including over 24,000 families. In addition, the shelter system is full, leaving our most vulnerable residents at even greater risk.

Good jobs in short supply

- Over half of Toronto workers lack full-time, permanent jobs with benefits. Women, youth, newcomers and members of racialized groups are especially affected.

Expensive child care and too few spaces

- Toronto’s child care fees are the most expensive in the country with an infant space at more than \$20,000 a year. Three-quarters of families can’t afford it. Toronto only has licensed child care spaces for one in five children under age 13, and almost 13,000 children are on the waiting list for a subsidized space. Lack of child care can result in barriers to parents joining the workforce or transitioning from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program.

High transit fares and inadequate service

- After paying rent and taxes, families earning the minimum wage spend an average of 35% of their remaining income on transit. Residents, particularly those outside of the downtown core, are tired of waiting for transit to arrive – and when it does arrive, they often find no space on the bus, streetcar or subway car, with riders crammed in like sardines.

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Toronto is a city of great wealth and prosperity. We can do better, and for the 125,000 children living in low-income families in this city, we must do better.

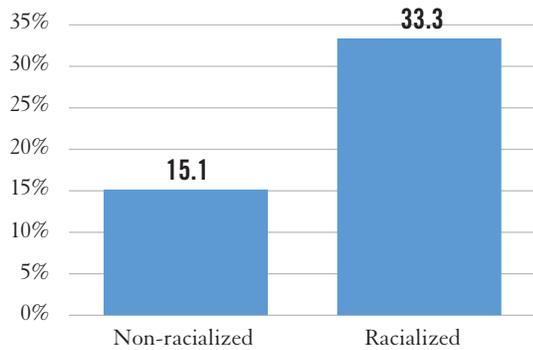
This report uses newly released data from the 2016 Census to create a picture of child and family poverty in Toronto and in every municipal ward across the city. It presents a disturbing picture of the reality of child and family poverty in Toronto. It underscores the need for the next Mayor and City Council to make a serious commitment and take real action to improve conditions for families struggling in this city. In particular, Council will have to address the disproportionality of poverty impacting particular communities including Indigenous children, racialized children, and children in families of West Asian, Arab, Black and Latin American backgrounds.





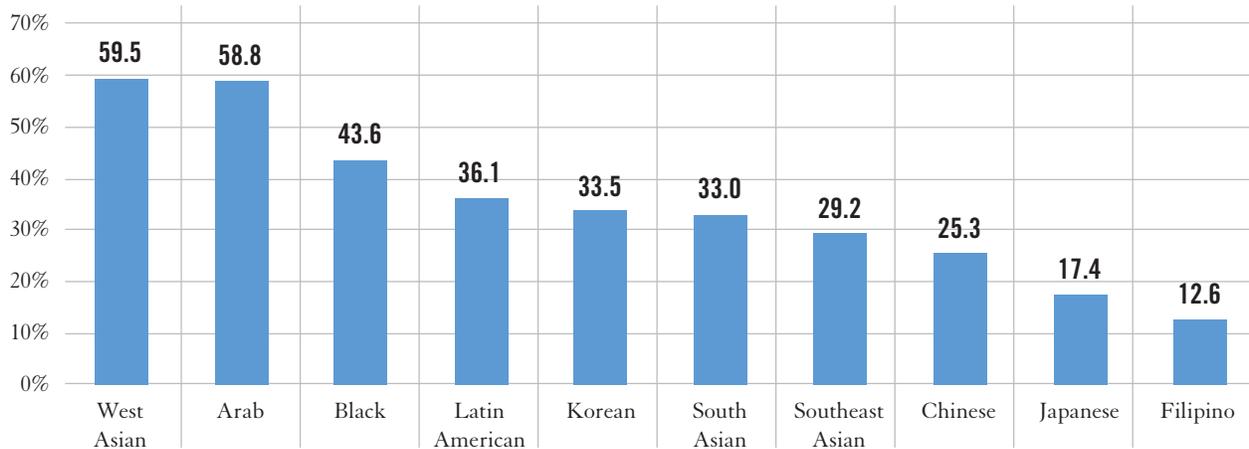
City of Toronto Child & Family Poverty Statistics

Figure 1. Child Poverty Rates for Racialized and Non-racialized Groups, City of Toronto, 2015



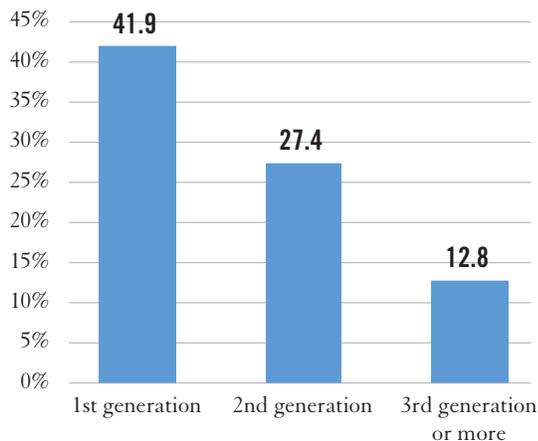
Children (under age 18) from racialized groups have twice the poverty rate compared to those from non-racialized groups.

Figure 2. Child Poverty Rates for Specific Racialized Groups, City of Toronto, 2015



Children with West Asian, Arab, Black and Latin American backgrounds have the highest rates of poverty among specific racialized groups.

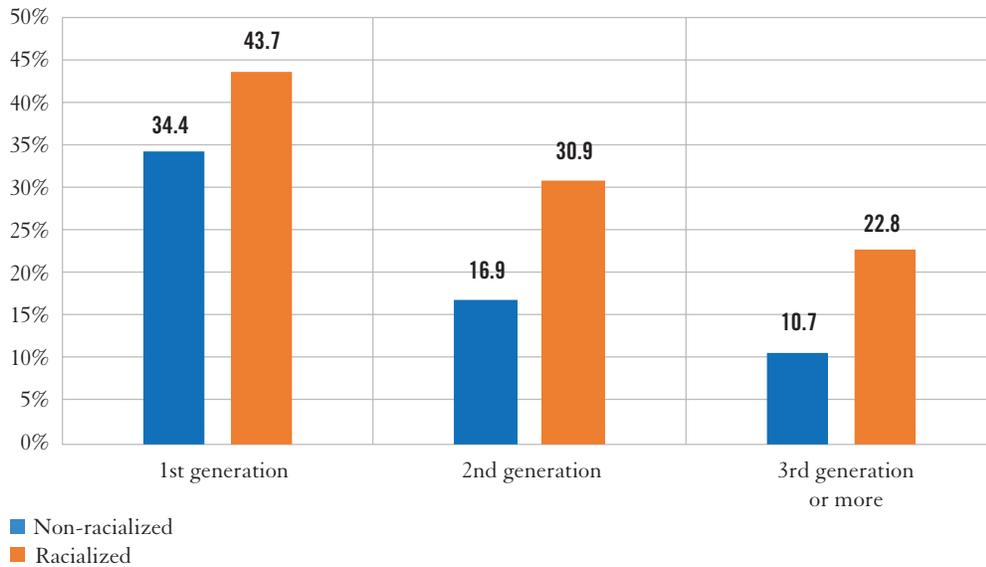
Figure 3. Child Poverty Rates by Generation Status, City of Toronto, 2015



Children born outside of Canada (1st generation) have the highest rate of poverty, followed by children born in Canada with at least one parent who was born outside of Canada (2nd generation). Children who were born in Canada and whose parents were born in Canada (3rd generation or more) have the lowest rate of poverty at less than one-third of the rate of children born outside of Canada.

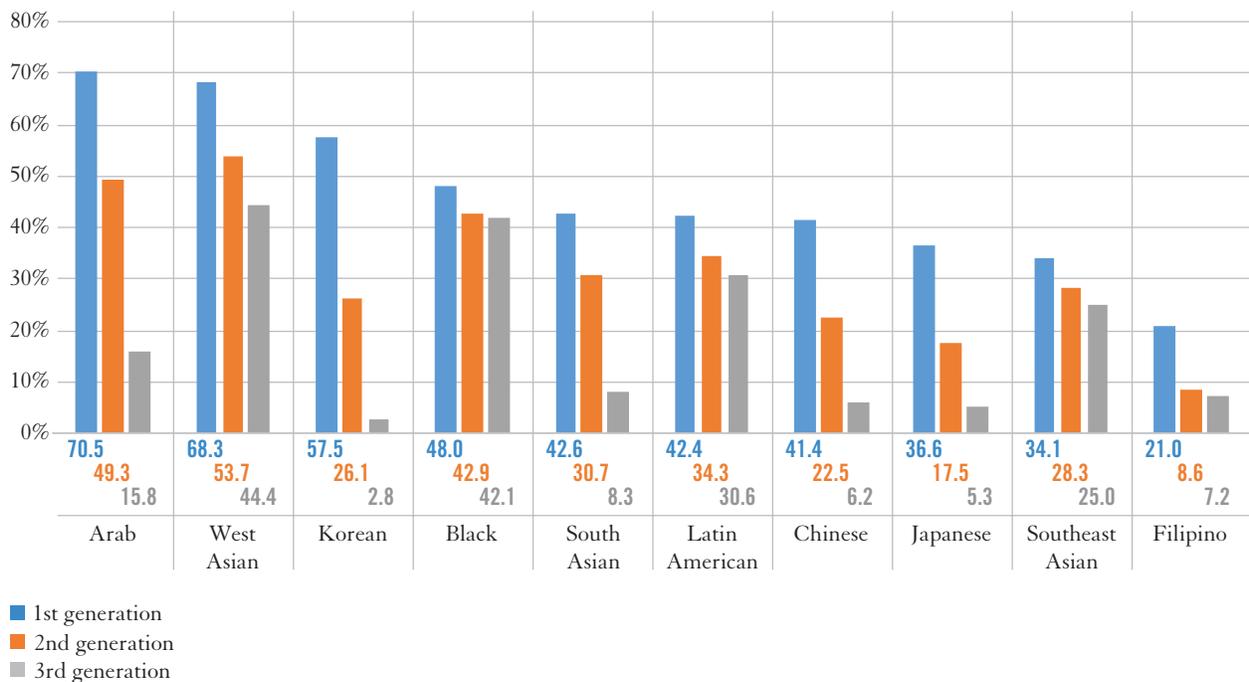
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Figure 4. Child Poverty Rates by Generation Status for Racialized and Non-racialized Groups, City of Toronto, 2015



Poverty rates are much higher for children from racialized groups compared to non-racialized groups for each generation.

Figure 5. Child Poverty Rates by Generation Status for Specific Racialized Groups, City of Toronto, 2015



Children who are of West Asian and Black backgrounds have very high poverty rates even when they were born in Canada and have parents who were born in Canada (3rd generation or more).

Indigenous Families with Children in Toronto

Our Health Counts (OHC) Toronto³ is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Toronto. Participants were recruited using Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS), a statistical method which used social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the City of Toronto. OHC Toronto data is used for the Indigenous section in the Toronto Child and Family Poverty Report due to significant Canadian Census data limitations about the accuracy of the Indigenous population. OHC Toronto study findings indicated the Indigenous community is well connected and that there are 14,000 Indigenous children living in Toronto (1). This is three to four times higher than the population estimated by Statistics Canada (1, 2). The undercounting in the Census is due to a number of data quality challenges, including misclassification errors and non-response bias which systematically contributes to a significant underestimate of inequities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada (1, 3).

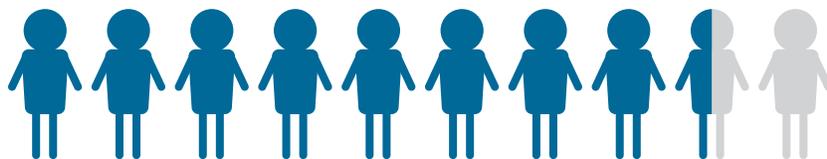
The Indigenous community in Toronto is well connected, has strong retention of Indigenous languages, and a strong sense of cultural identity.

Similarly to Indigenous adults, urban Indigenous children face significant socioeconomic barriers. For Indigenous peoples generally, lower socioeconomic status is an outcome that has impacted generations through the mechanics of colonization that has eroded power, social structures and Indigenous community resources (4-6). The erosion of social structures, added stressors and other associated impacts resulting from colonization are well documented (6), directly and indirectly impacting socioeconomic status and experiences of children. Indigenous children are over two times more likely than non-Indigenous children to live in low-income families. Indigenous children are the fastest growing population group of the urban population with substantial opportunity for change (7).

Indigenous children are over two times more likely than non-Indigenous children to live in low-income families.

However, Indigenous children living in urban areas also tended to experience poorer health outcomes than their non-Indigenous counterparts (8). The residential school system as well as past and present apprehension of Indigenous children continues to impact the health and well-being of Indigenous children and families (9, 10). This is a critical concern, especially given the links with children's and community health and wellbeing.

84% of Indigenous families with children are low-income

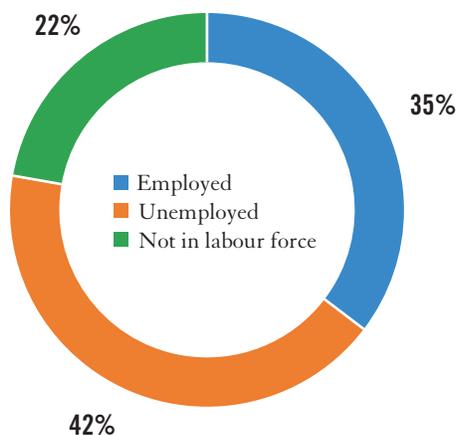


More than 8 in 10 Indigenous families are living in poverty in Toronto.

Our Health Counts Toronto found that approximately 84% (with a 95% Confidence Interval of 77.4-90.9%) of Indigenous families with children under the age of 18 were living below or at the before-tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) in 2014-2015.

³ For more information about Our Health Counts Toronto, please see appendix, Rotondi et al. (1) and/or Firestone et. al. (17).

Figure 6. Employment Status for Indigenous Families with Children, City of Toronto, 2016



42%
of Indigenous families with children were unemployed



Source: Our Health Counts Toronto, 2016.

Housing and Mobility

Housing is a key determinant of health and wellbeing (11). Unstable housing has been associated with poorer overall health (11), unmet health care needs, and higher emergency department use (12). High levels of mobility often coincide with unstable, crowded housing and can impact participation in the labour force and education system. Indigenous people living in urban areas experience higher levels of mobility and precarious housing conditions than non-Indigenous people (8). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (6) highlights the connection between loss of traditional territories, unemployment, and attendance at residential schools to the high levels of unstable housing among Indigenous people in Canada.

7%

of families with children are precariously housed or experiencing homelessness

44%

of families with children have moved at least once in the last 12 months

31%

of adults with children gave up key needs, such as groceries or transportation, to meet housing costs at least once a month

Of Indigenous families with children living in Toronto in 2014-2015, 93% had stable housing.⁴ As described below, the stable housing measure reflects a basic level of housing access that does not incorporate issues such as affordability, adequacy or suitability of the housing. A total of 7% were precariously housed or homeless. Between 2013-2014, 44% of families with children moved at least one time in the last 12 months. One in three adults with children gave up key needs to meet shelter/housing-related costs at least once a month.

⁴ Stable housing: Indigenous adults who indicated living in a house or apartment (alone or with partner/family/friends), Native/Indigenous housing, Public housing/community housing, Co-operative housing or Student housing (includes stable housing or institution). Precariously housed: Indigenous adults in rooming/boarding/group homes, motel/hotel, or recovery/second stage house; institution, living in a nursing home, medical/psychiatric hospital or drug/alcohol/addiction treatment facility. Homeless: living at a friend/family/partner's house, in a homeless shelter, or on the streets.

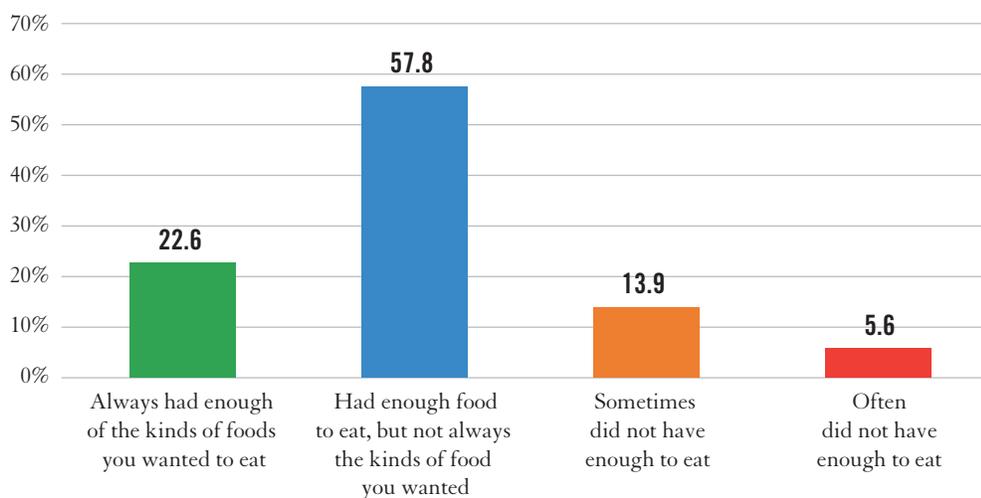
Food Security

Traditional and country food consumption has been severely impacted by colonial policies, such as forced relocation, the restriction of traditional hunting and food production practices, and settler control of food provisions allowed in Indigenous communities (13, 14). Due to high rates of insecure housing and poverty among urban Indigenous people, there is also a reliance on nutrient-poor store-bought foods to meet dietary requirements (15). Access to and consumption of traditional foods are important methods for alleviating food insecurity and improving health among Indigenous peoples (16).

One in five Indigenous adults with children in Toronto indicated that they and others in their households sometimes or often did not have enough food to eat.

Most Indigenous adults in Toronto have a strong sense of cultural identity, and express a strong desire for traditional ceremonies, medicines and foods.

Figure 7. Food Security Status for Indigenous Families with Children, City of Toronto, 2016

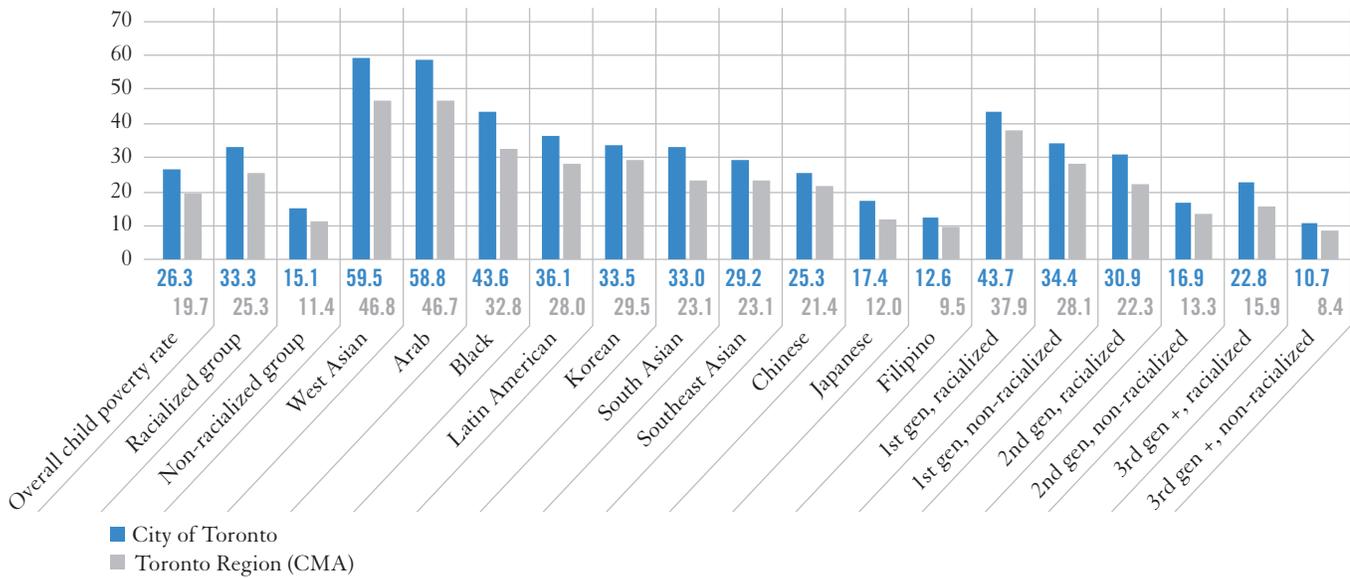


Source: Our Health Counts Toronto, 2016.

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Child Poverty: City of Toronto & Toronto Region

Figure 8. Child Poverty Rates for Selected Groups, City of Toronto and Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, 2015



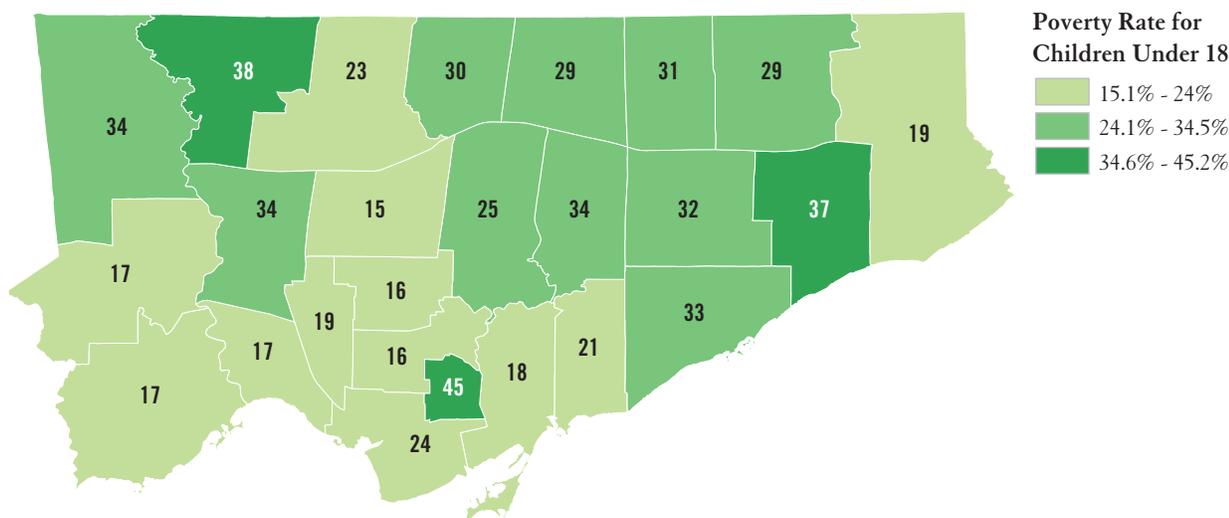
Source: Statistics Canada – 2016 Census of Population. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016211. Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, Toronto Census Division. (Data accessed via semi-custom table courtesy of the Community Data Program).

The City of Toronto has higher rates of child poverty than the Toronto region (based on Census Metropolitan Area) for all groups, reinforcing the City of Toronto’s dubious title of child poverty capital (see appendix for map of Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, GTA and area municipalities).



Child Poverty Rates for the 25 City Wards

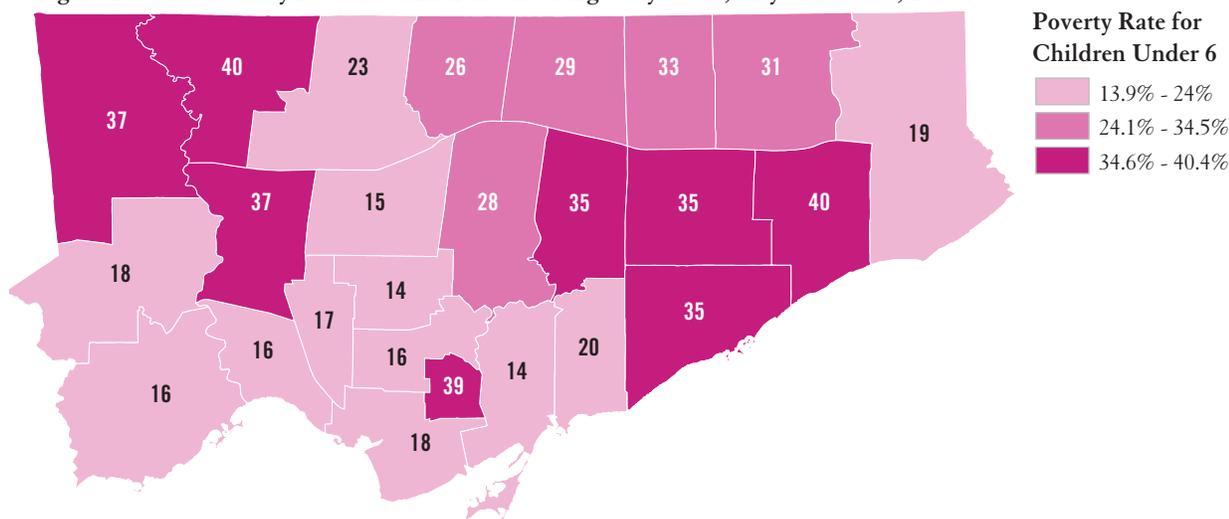
Figure 9. Child Poverty Rates for Children Under Age 18 by Ward, City of Toronto, 2015



Source: Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by federal electoral district]. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-401-X2016045.

In the city of Toronto, 26.3% of children under the age of 18 live in low-income families. Toronto Centre, Humber River-Black Creek and Scarborough-Guildwood have the highest rates of child poverty among the 25 wards.

Figure 10. Child Poverty Rates for Children Under Age 6 by Ward, City of Toronto, 2015

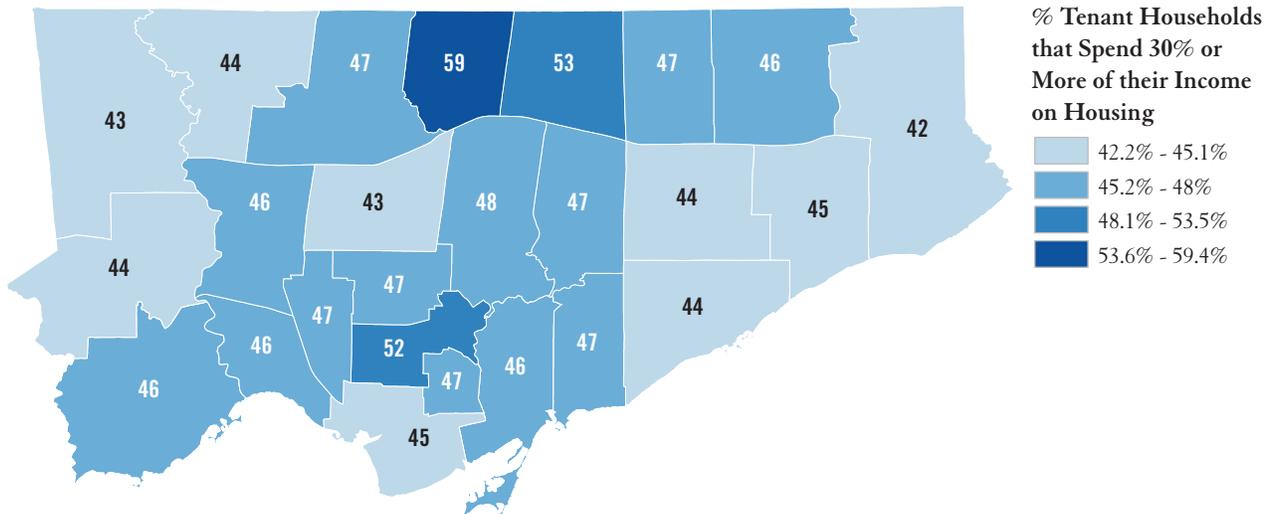


Source: Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by federal electoral district]. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-401-X2016045.

The city's poverty rate for children under age of 6 is also 26.3%. The highest rates of poverty for children under age 6 are found in Humber River-Black Creek, Scarborough-Guildwood, Toronto Centre, Etobicoke North, York South-Weston, Don Valley East, Scarborough Centre, and Scarborough Southwest.

Social Determinant of Health Indicators

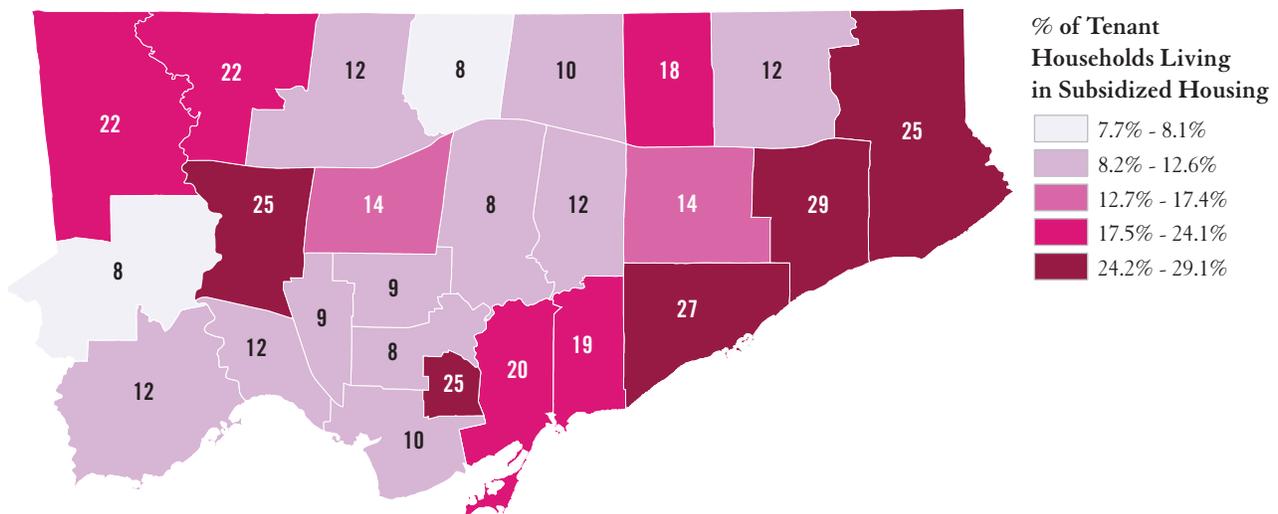
Figure 11. Percentage of Tenant Households Spending 30% or More of their Income on Housing by Ward, City of Toronto, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by federal electoral district]. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-401-X2016045.

The high cost of rental housing is a crisis in Toronto. Among tenant households, 46.8% spend 30% or more of their income on housing. In each ward, large numbers of tenant households lack affordable housing. The highest percentage of tenant households without affordable housing are found in Willowdale, Don Valley North, and University-Rosedale.

Figure 12. Percentage of Tenant Households Living in Subsidized Housing by Ward, City of Toronto, 2016



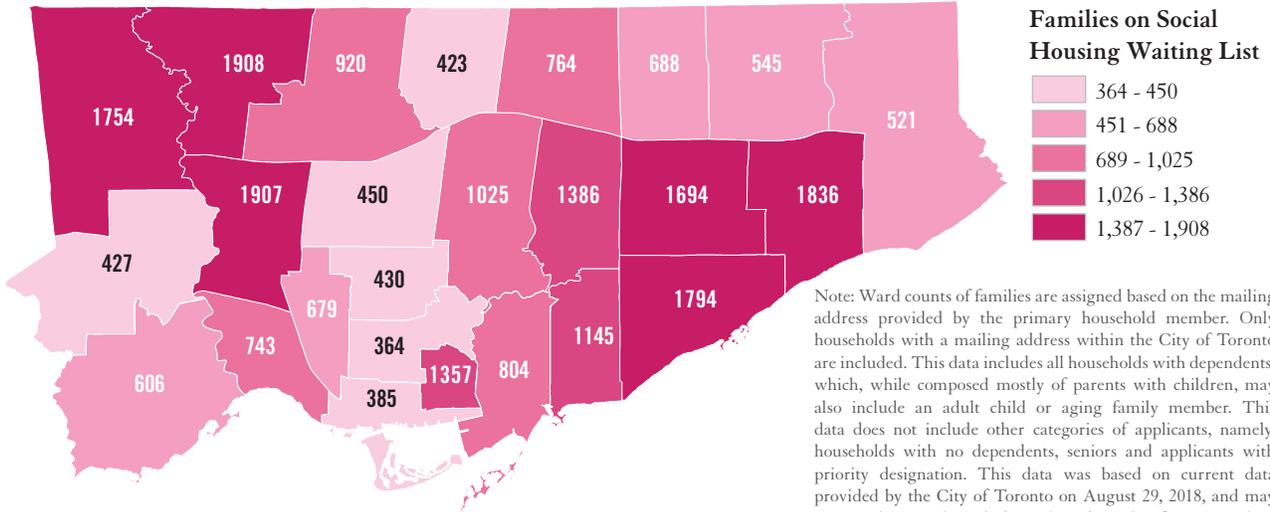
Source: Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by federal electoral district]. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-401-X2016045.

Subsidized housing is an important support that is not available to the great majority of residents in Toronto. In the city of Toronto, only 15.1% of tenant households live in subsidized housing (including Toronto Community Housing, nonprofit housing and co-op housing). In Toronto, the highest percentage of tenant households with subsidized housing live in Scarborough-Guildwood, Scarborough Southwest, Scarborough-Rouge Park, Toronto Centre, and York South-Weston.

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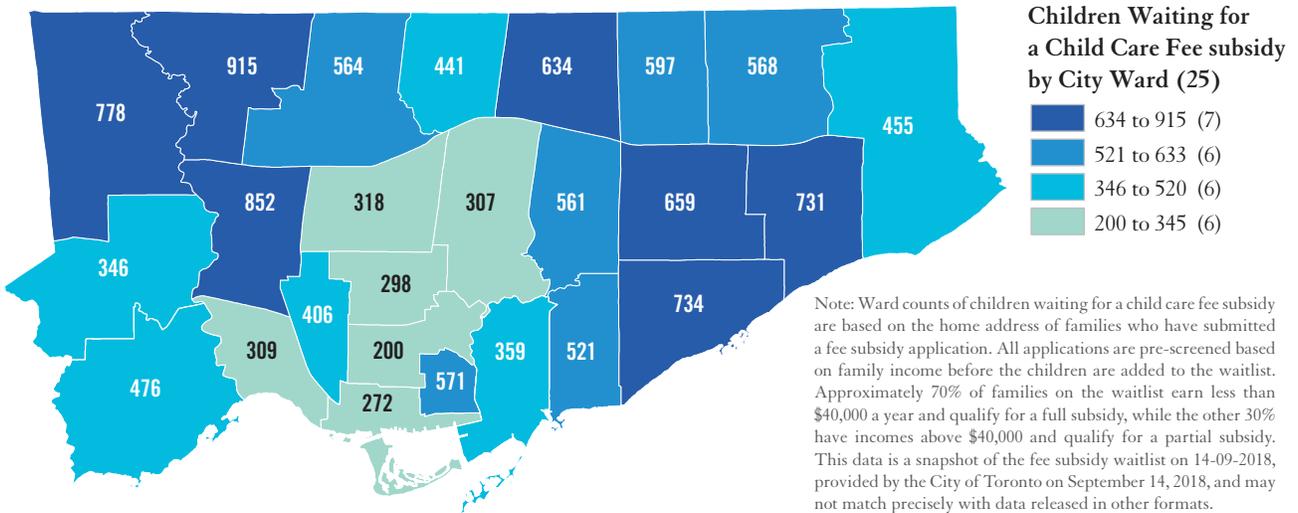
Figure 13. Number of Families Waiting for Subsidized Housing by Ward, City of Toronto, 2018



Source: Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, City of Toronto, 2018

Just under 100,000 households are on the waiting list for subsidized housing in Toronto, including 24,555 families as of August 29, 2018. Etobicoke North, Humber River-Black Creek, York South-Weston, Scarborough-Guildwood, Scarborough Centre and Scarborough Southwest have the largest number of families waiting for subsidized housing in the city.

Figure 14. Number of Children Waiting for a Child Care Fee Subsidy by Ward, City of Toronto, 2018

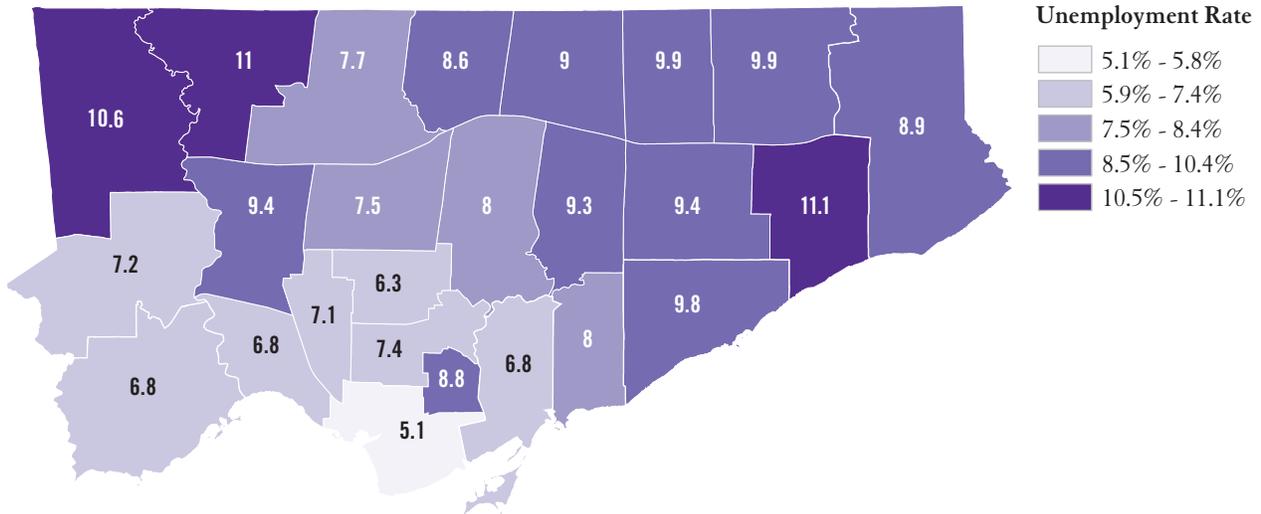


Source: Children's Services, City of Toronto, 2018

12,944 children are on the waiting list for a child care fee subsidy as of September 14, 2018. Etobicoke North, Humber River-Black Creek, York South-Weston, Don Valley North, Scarborough-Guildwood, Scarborough Centre and Scarborough Southwest have the largest number of children waiting for subsidized child care in the city.

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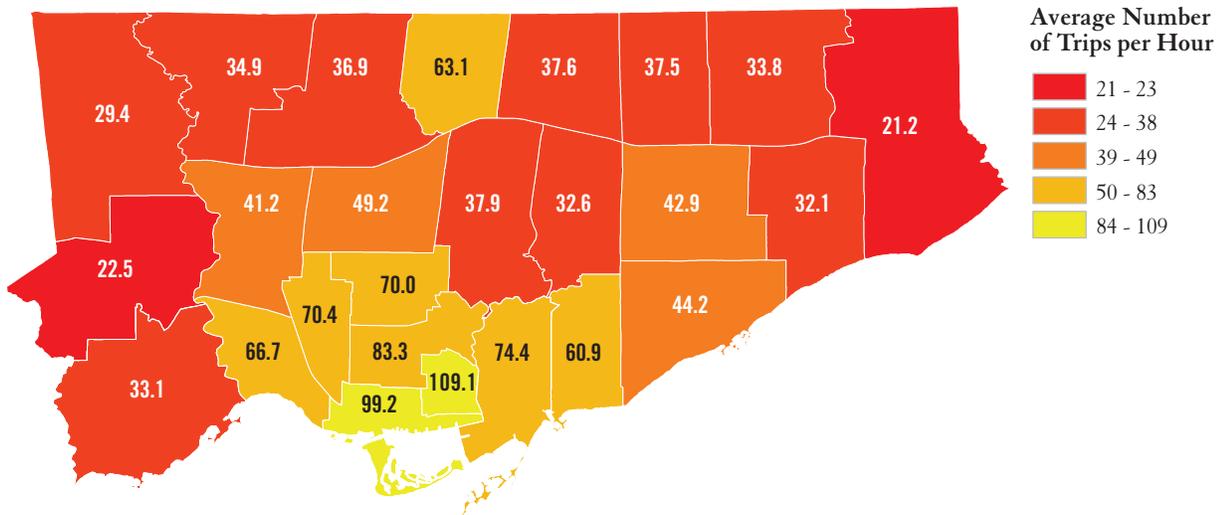
Figure 15. Unemployment Rates for Residents Aged 15+ by Ward, City of Toronto, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by federal electoral district]. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-401-X2016045.

Lack of access to employment leaves families struggling to make ends meet. Unemployment rates vary by ward from a low of 5.1% to a high of 11.1%, according to the 2016 Census. The highest unemployment rates are located in Scarborough-Guildwood, Humber River-Black Creek, and Etobicoke North.

Figure 16. Average Number of Transit Trips per Hour that Can Be Reached Within an 800 Metre Walk on a Weekday by Ward, City of Toronto, 2018



Source: City of Toronto, 2018 TTC Routes and Schedules GTFS data, available at Toronto.ca/open. Additional analysis walking network data by Jeff Allen, University of Toronto.

A strong public transit system is critical to accessing employment and community resources. The map shows the average number of transit trips per hour that can be reached within an 800 metre walk on a weekday in each ward. The average number of trips varies widely from less than 40 in Etobicoke and most of North York and Scarborough to over 60 in Willowdale and throughout the old city of Toronto, with the highest averages of 99 and 109 in the downtown core. Data is based on the TTC schedule for August 2018 and a walking network dataset.

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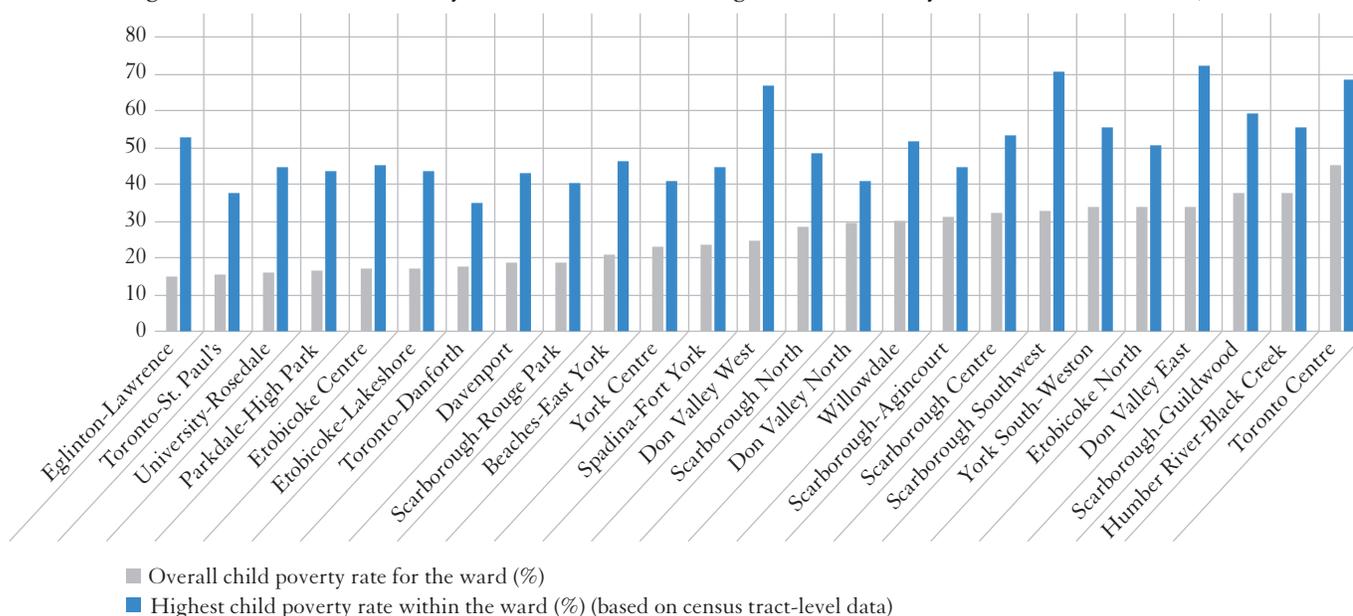
Ward Profiles

The next section of the report provides ward profiles for each of the city’s 25 wards. Each ward profile includes:

- A map showing the child poverty rates by census tract within the ward for children under the age of 18⁵
- A map of the city showing the location of the ward
- A graph showing poverty rates and housing and employment indicators for the ward and the City of Toronto
- The percentage of children in the ward living in poverty
- The highest child poverty rate within the ward based on census tract data

These profiles demonstrate how the overall rate of child poverty for each ward camouflages areas within the ward where a large percentage of children in live in low-income families. Figure 17 shows the overall rates for each ward and the highest percentage of child poverty within each ward based on census tract data.

Figure 17. Overall Child Poverty Rate for Each Ward & Highest Child Poverty Rate Within Each Ward, 2015

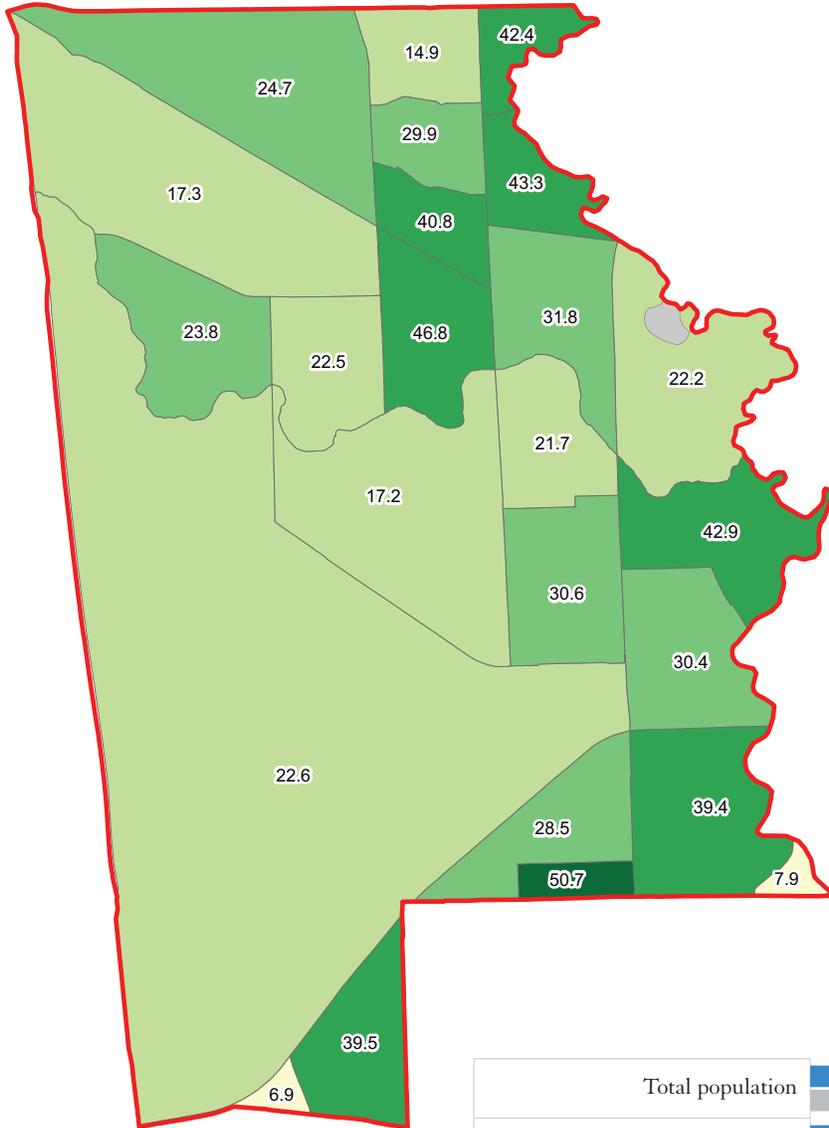


Source: Source: Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by federal electoral district]. Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 98-401-X2016045. Statistics Canada (2017). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [by census tract]. Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 98-401-X2016043.

⁵ See appendix for details regarding the ward maps and census tract data

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Etobicoke North



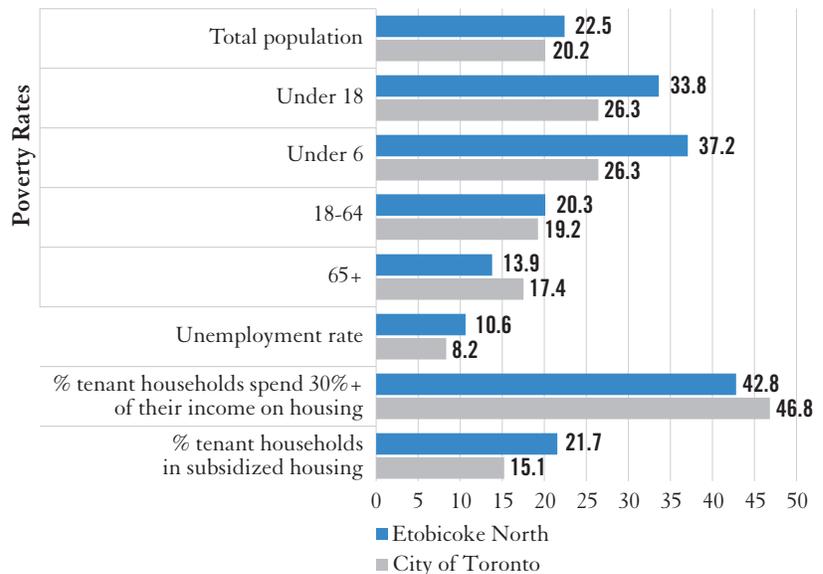
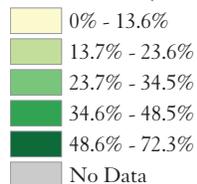
33.8%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

50.7%

highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Etobicoke Centre

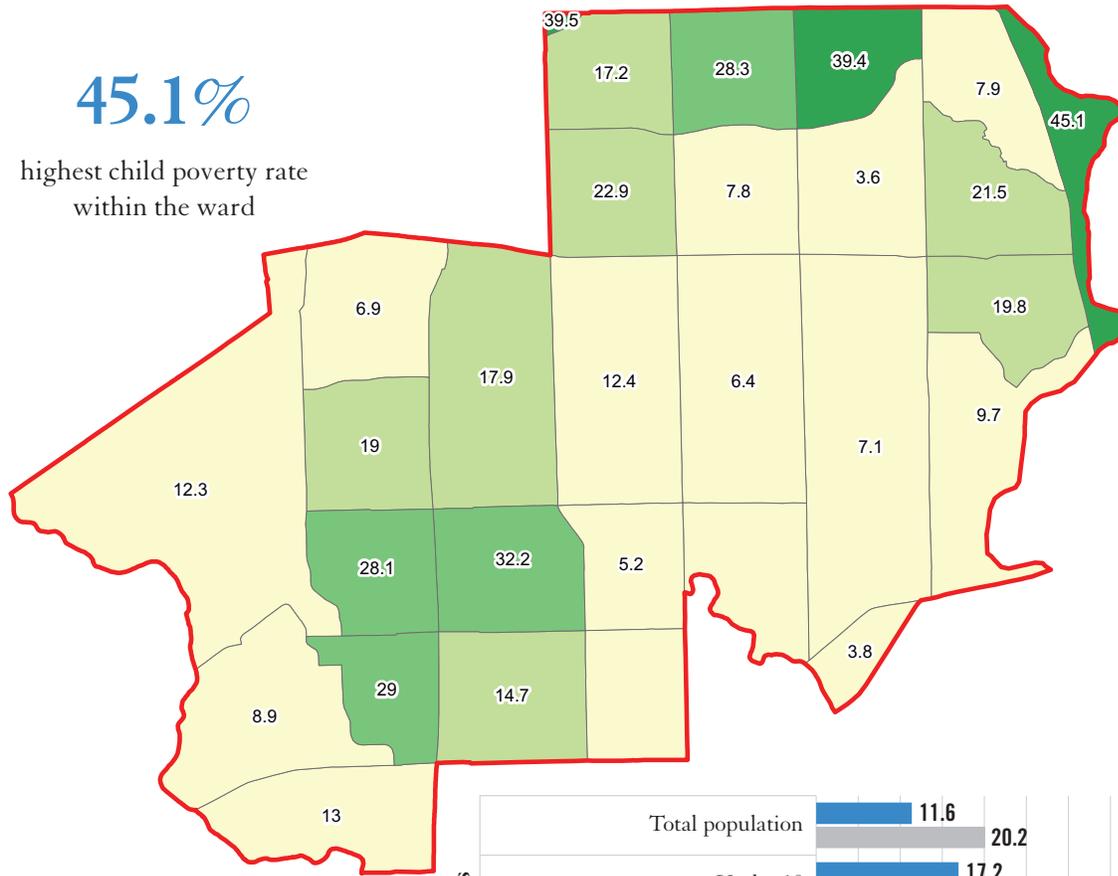
17.2%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

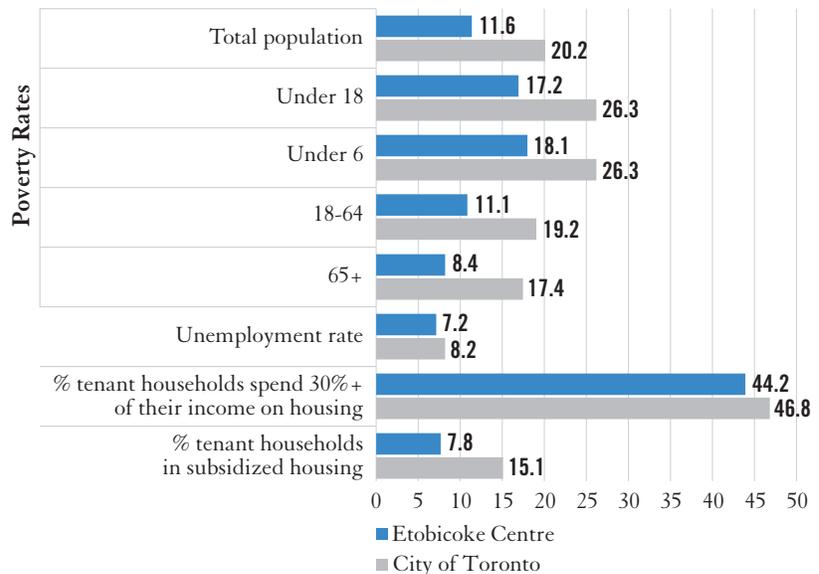
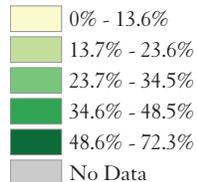


45.1%

highest child poverty rate
within the ward

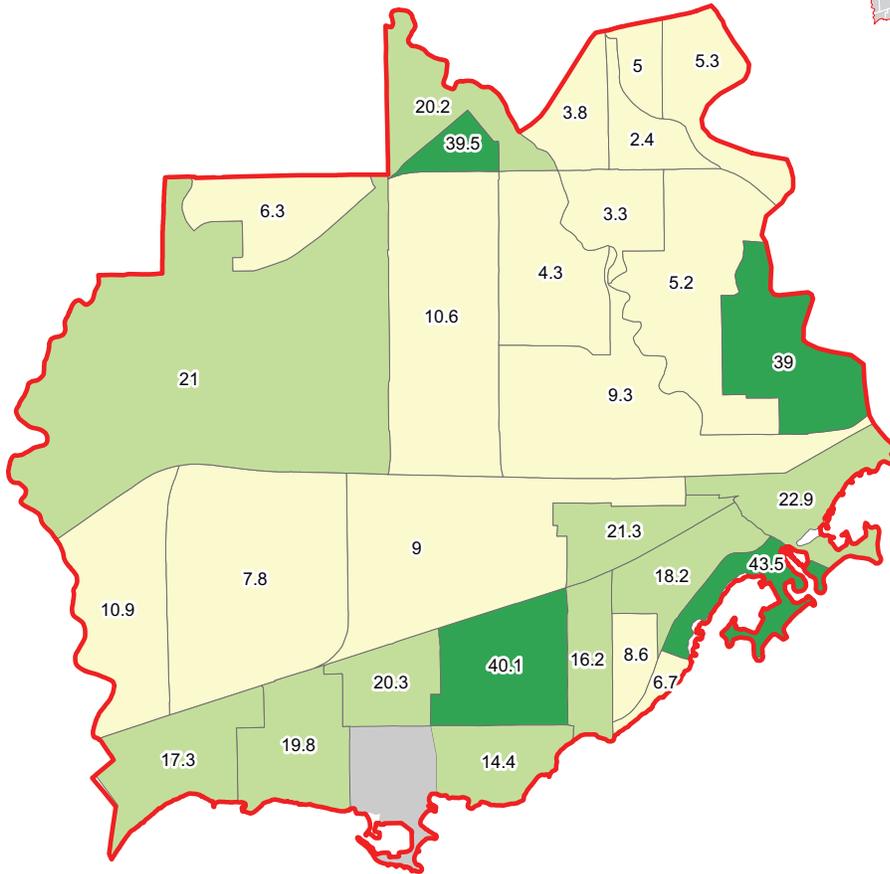


Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Etobicoke-Lakeshore



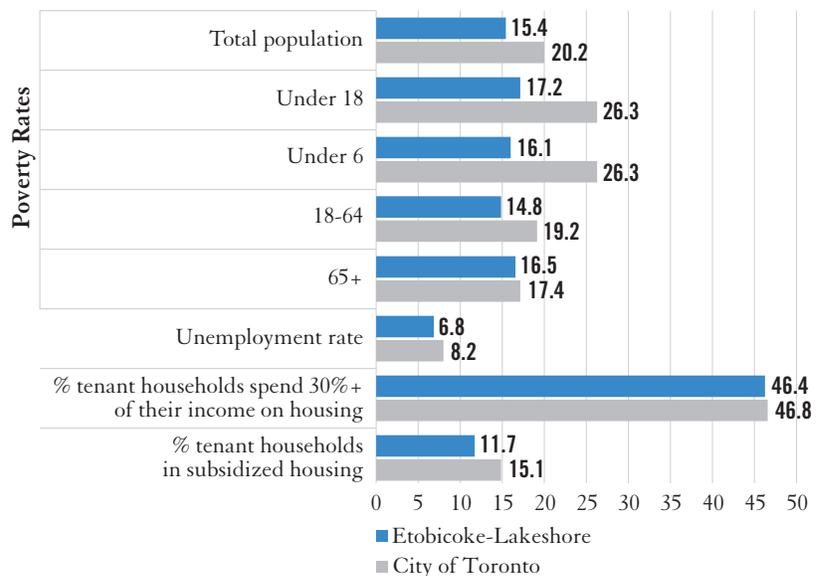
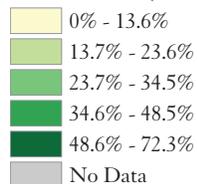
17.2%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

43.5%

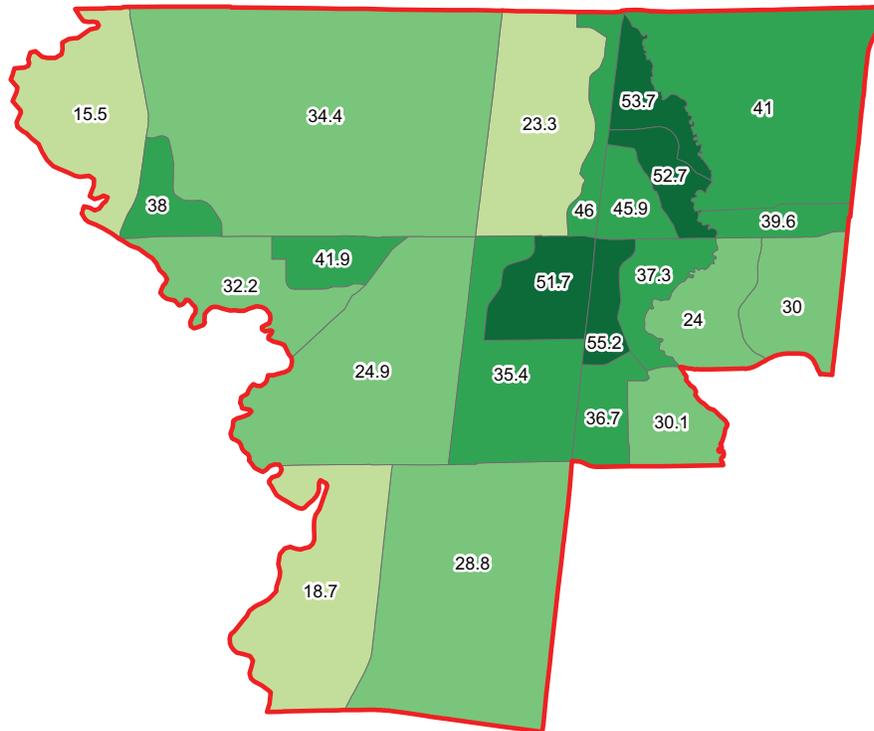
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Humber River-Black Creek



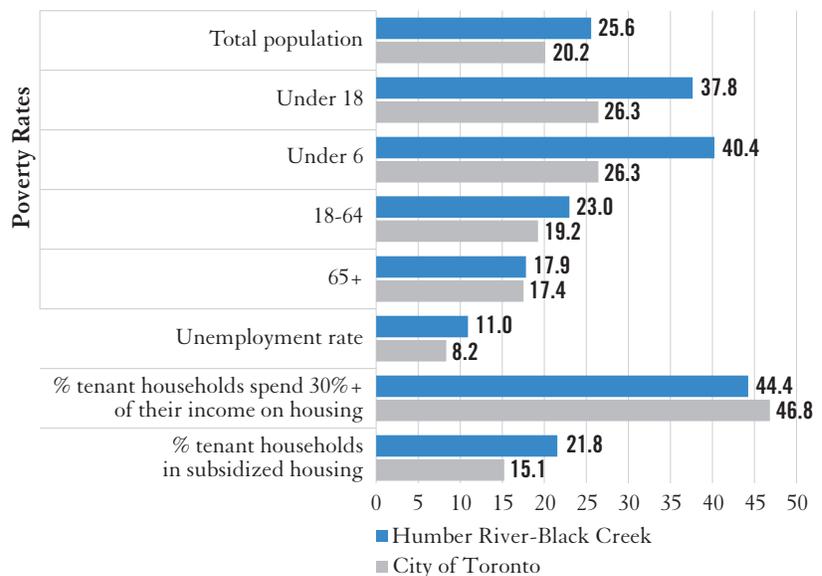
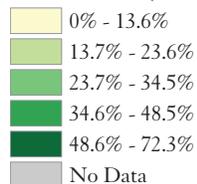
37.8%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

55.2%

highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in
Low Income (LIM-AT)



2018 Toronto Child & Family Poverty Report: Municipal Election Edition

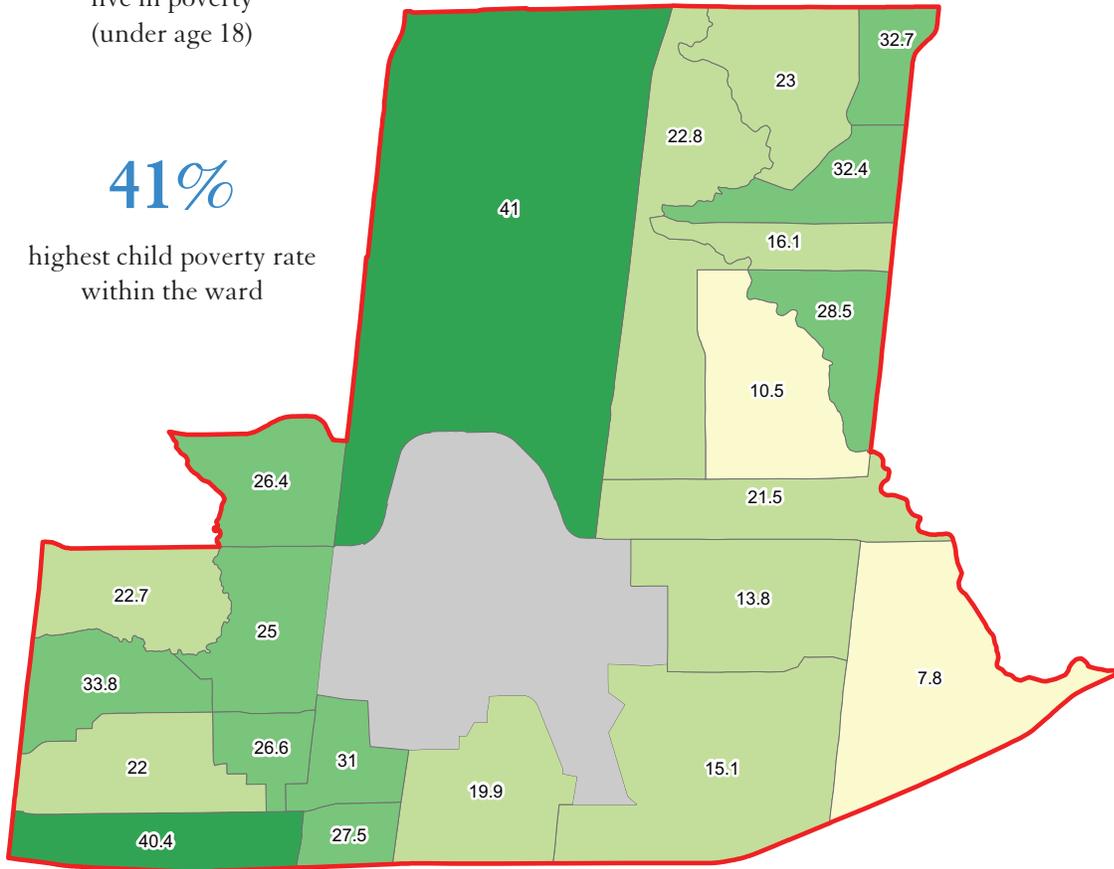
York Centre

23%

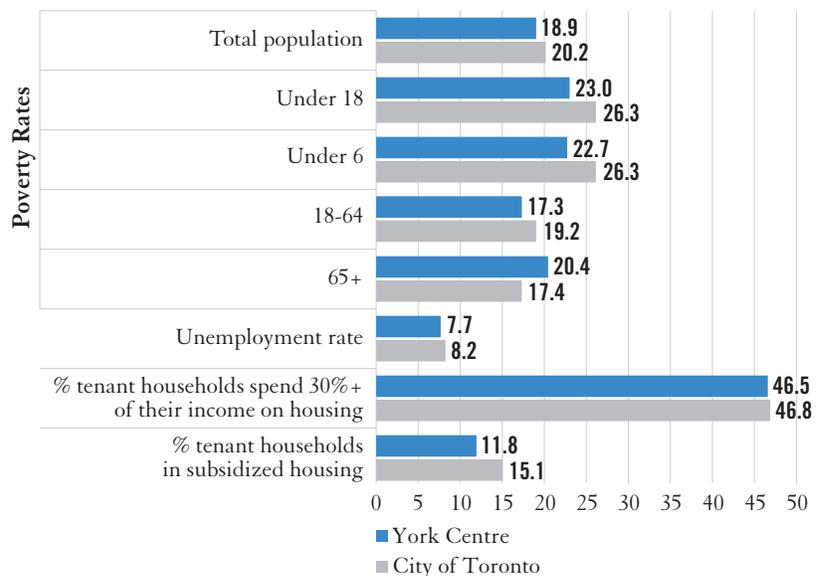
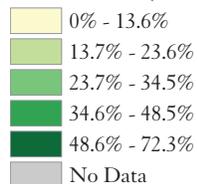
of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

41%

highest child poverty rate
within the ward

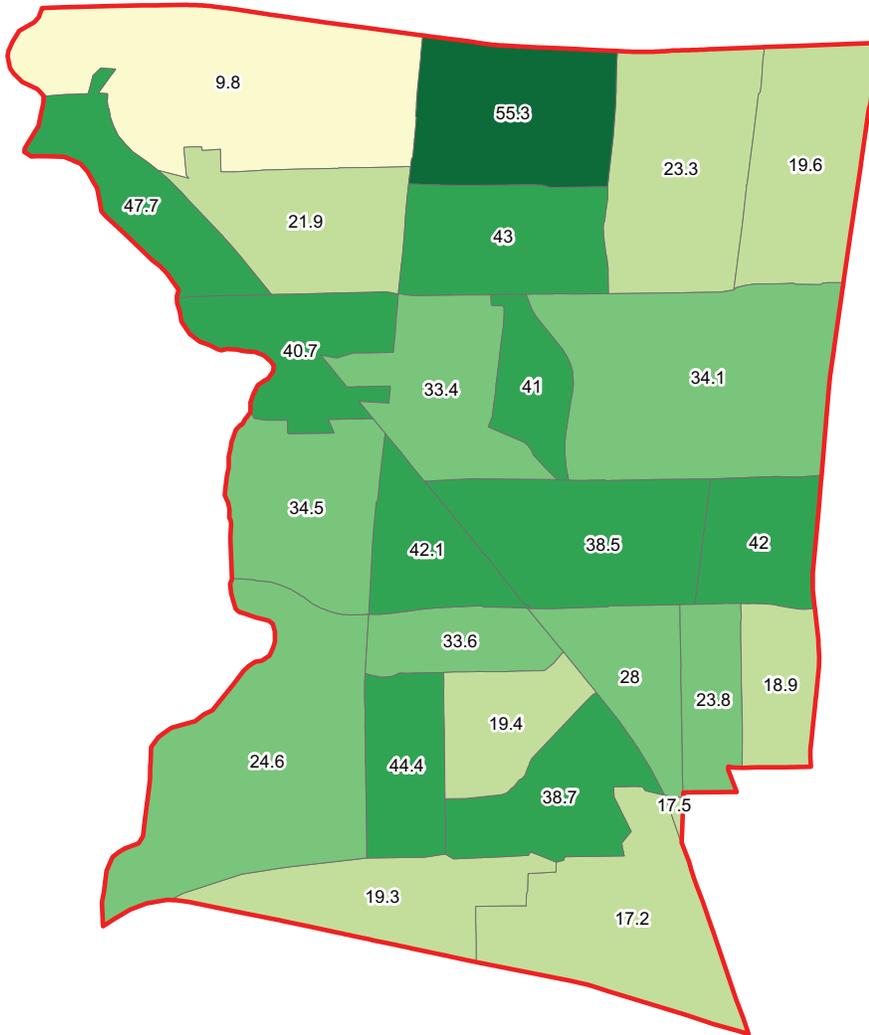


Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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York South-Weston



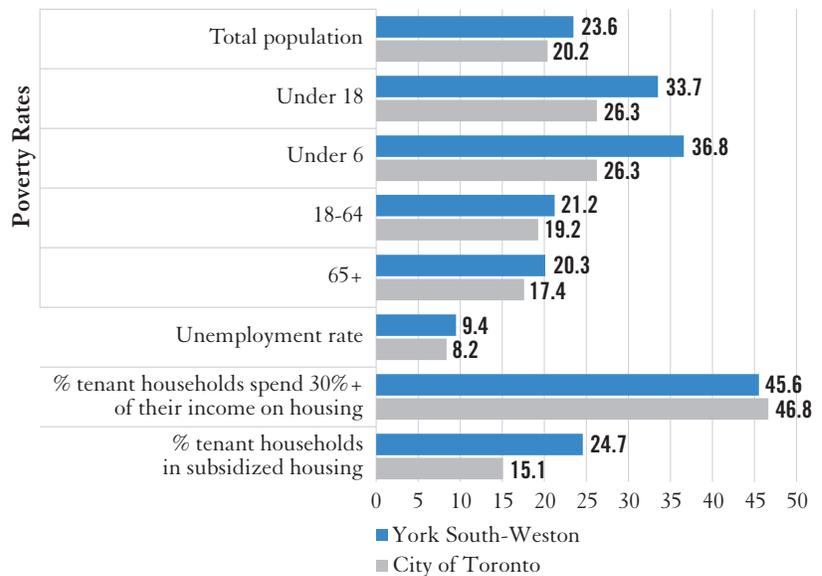
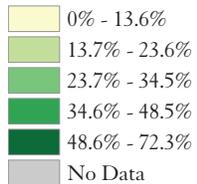
33.7%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

55.3%

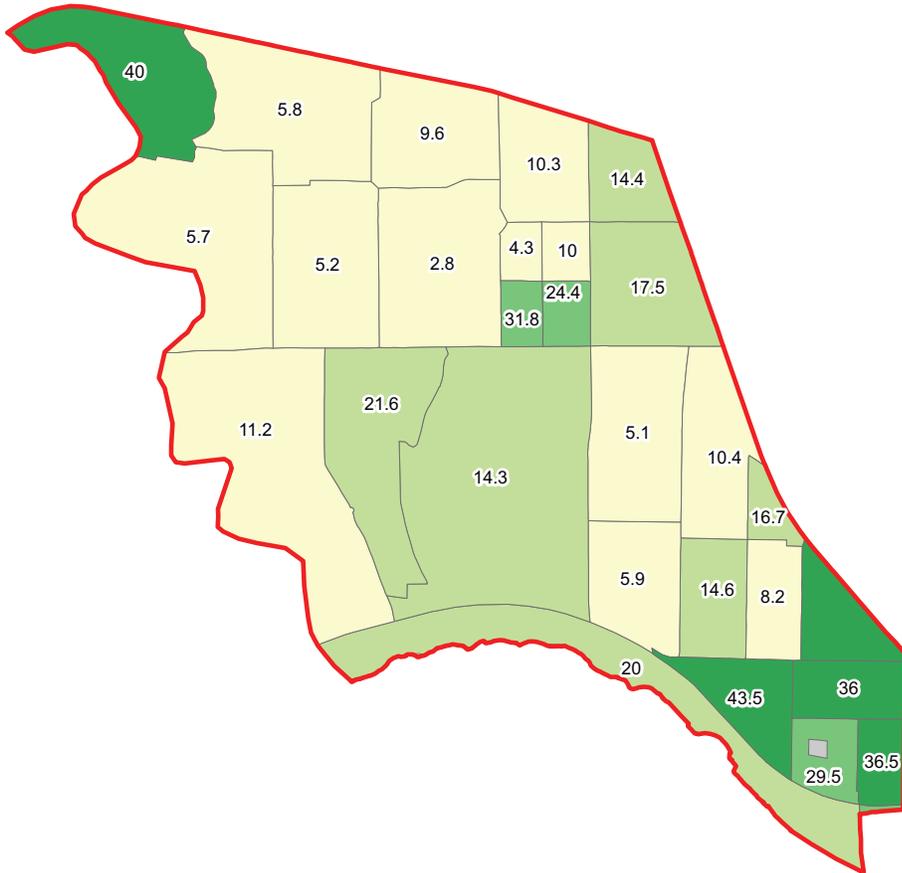
highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Parkdale-High Park



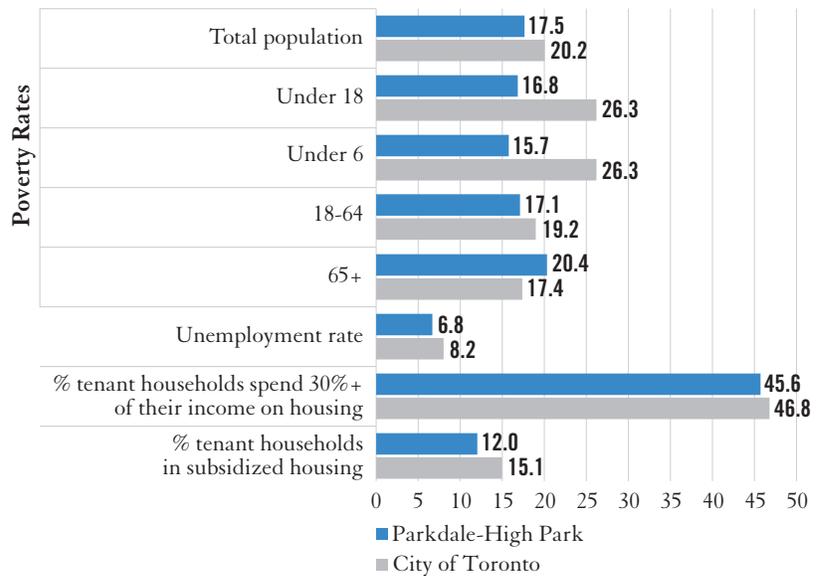
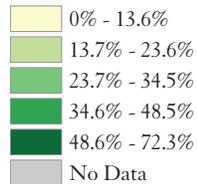
16.8%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

43.5%

highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Municipal Election Edition

Eglinton-Lawrence

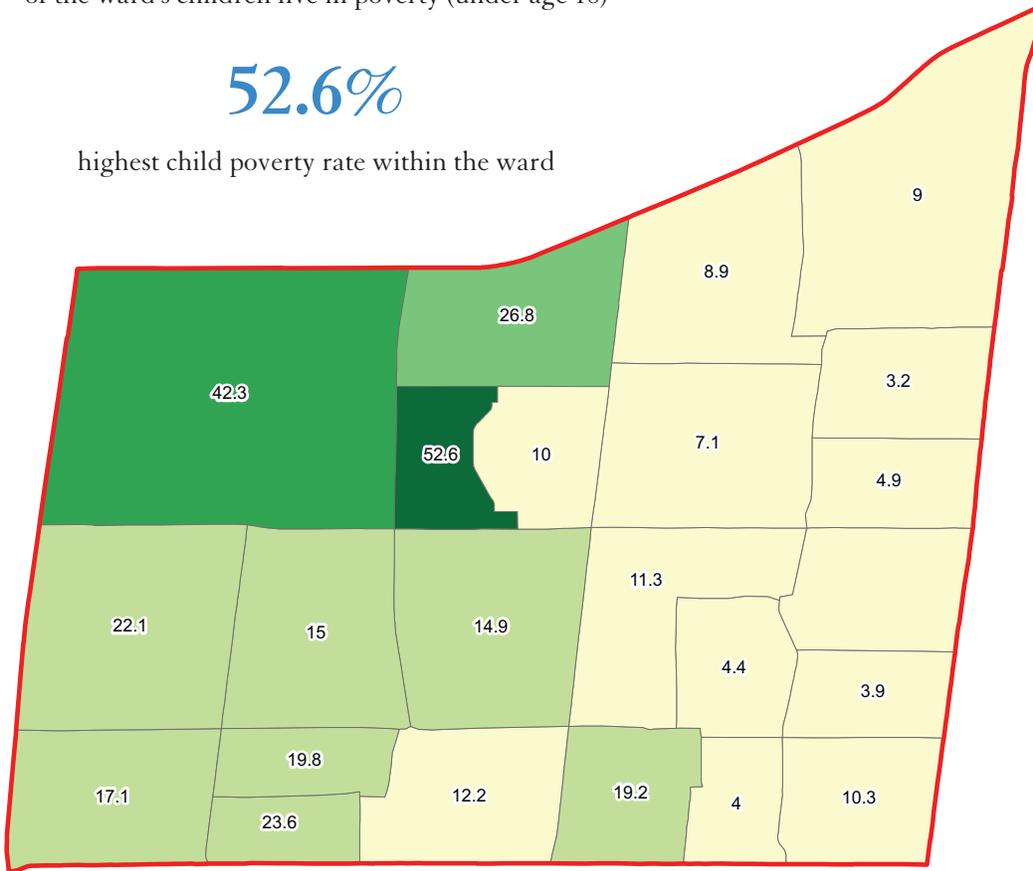
15.1%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

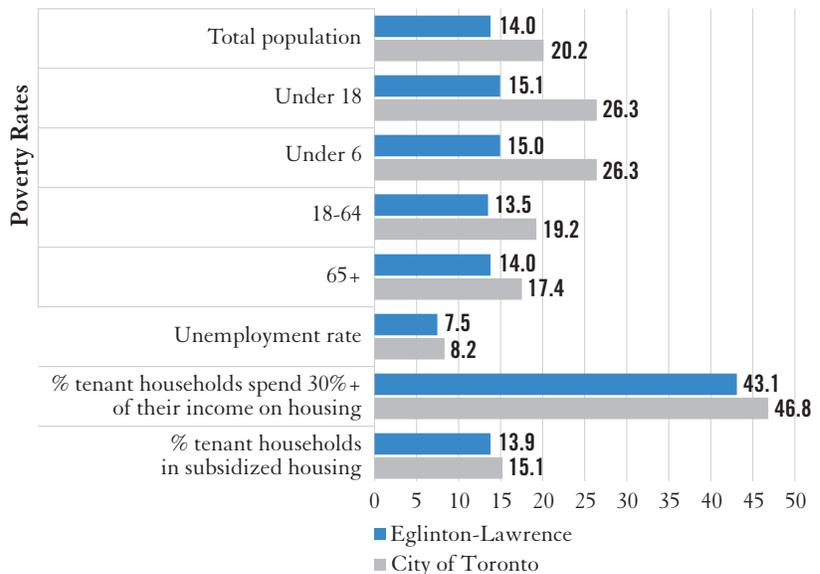
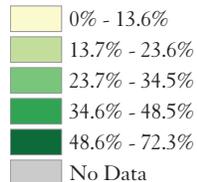


52.6%

highest child poverty rate within the ward

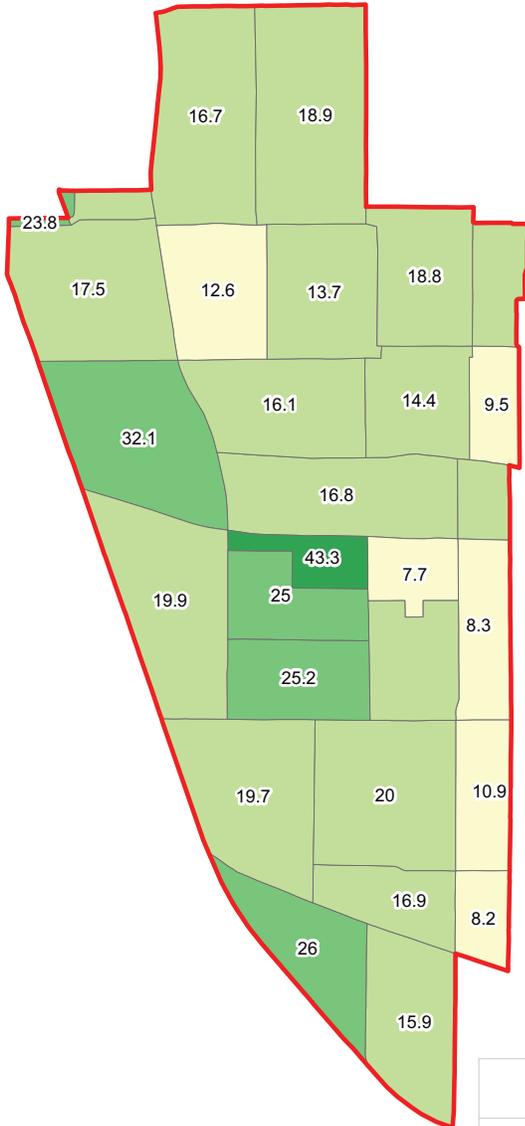


Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Davenport



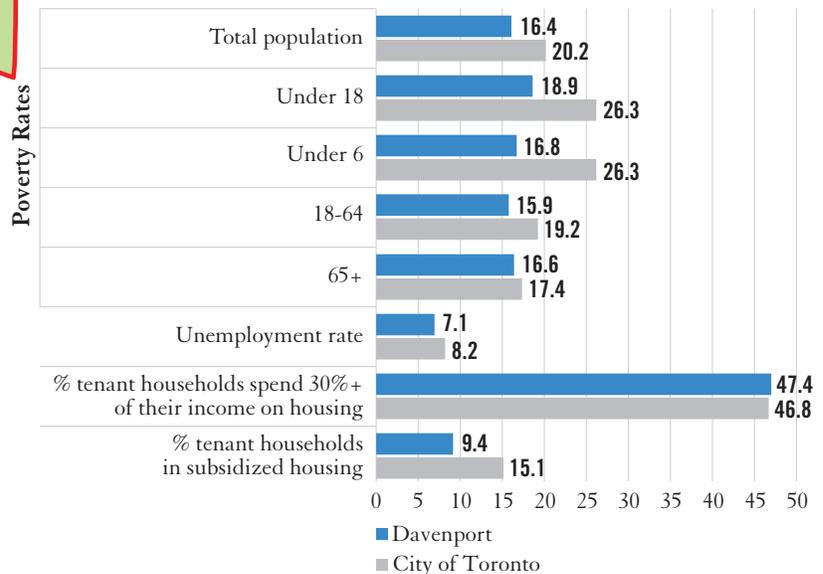
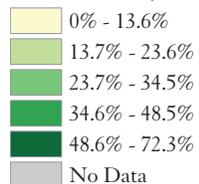
18.9%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

43.3%

highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Municipal Election Edition

Toronto-St. Paul's

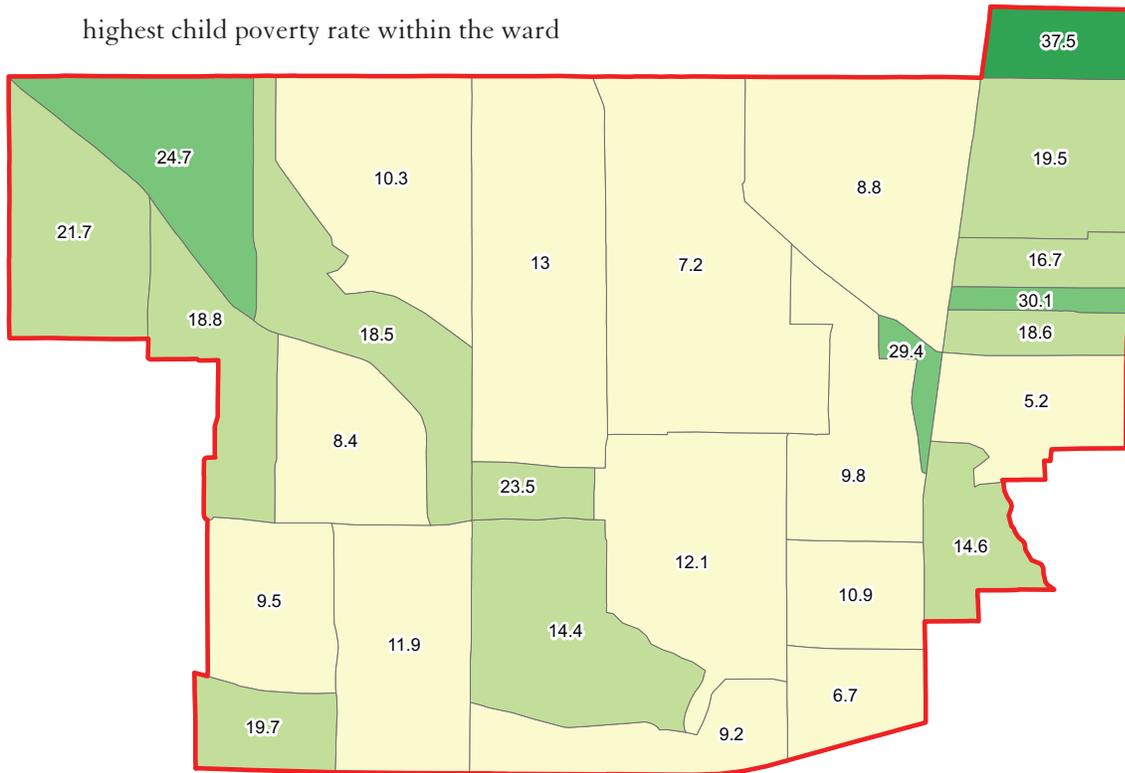
15.5%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

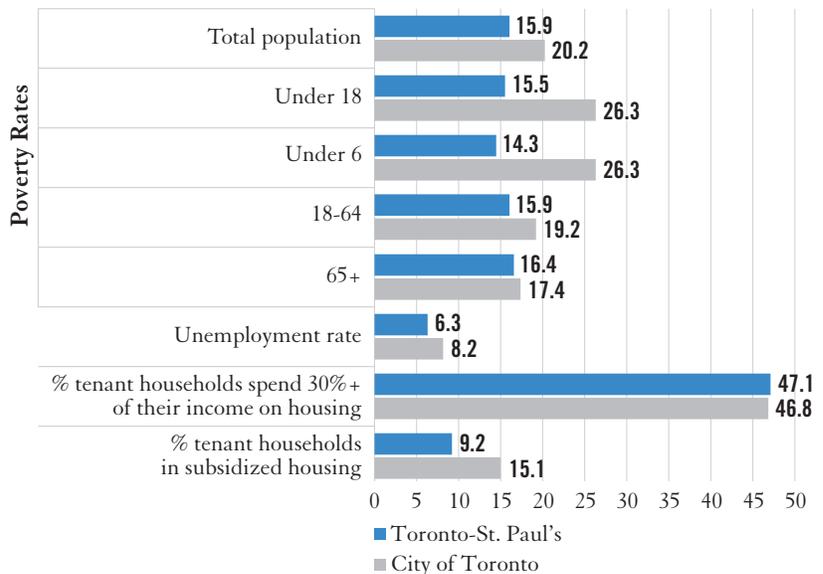
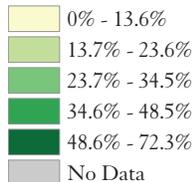


37.5%

highest child poverty rate within the ward



Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Municipal Election Edition

University-Rosedale

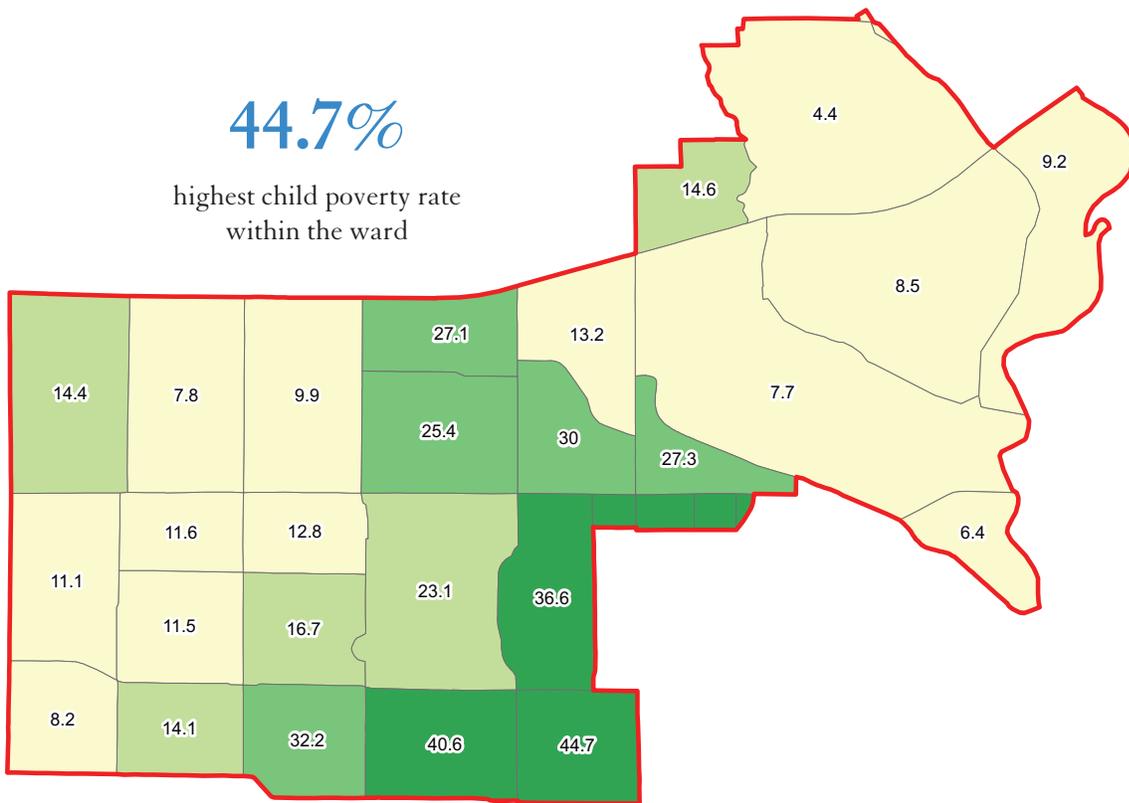
16.3%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

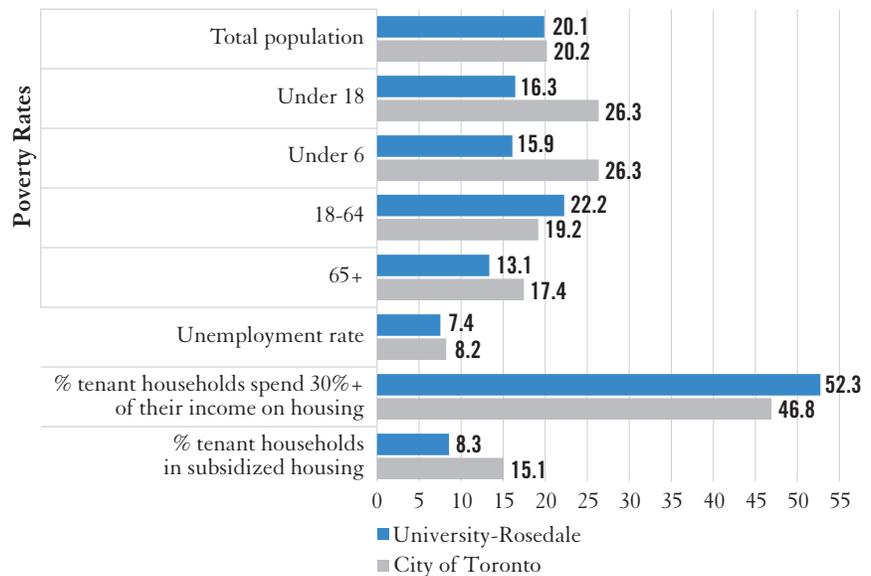
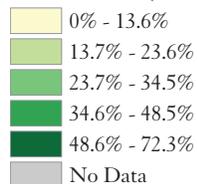


44.7%

highest child poverty rate
within the ward

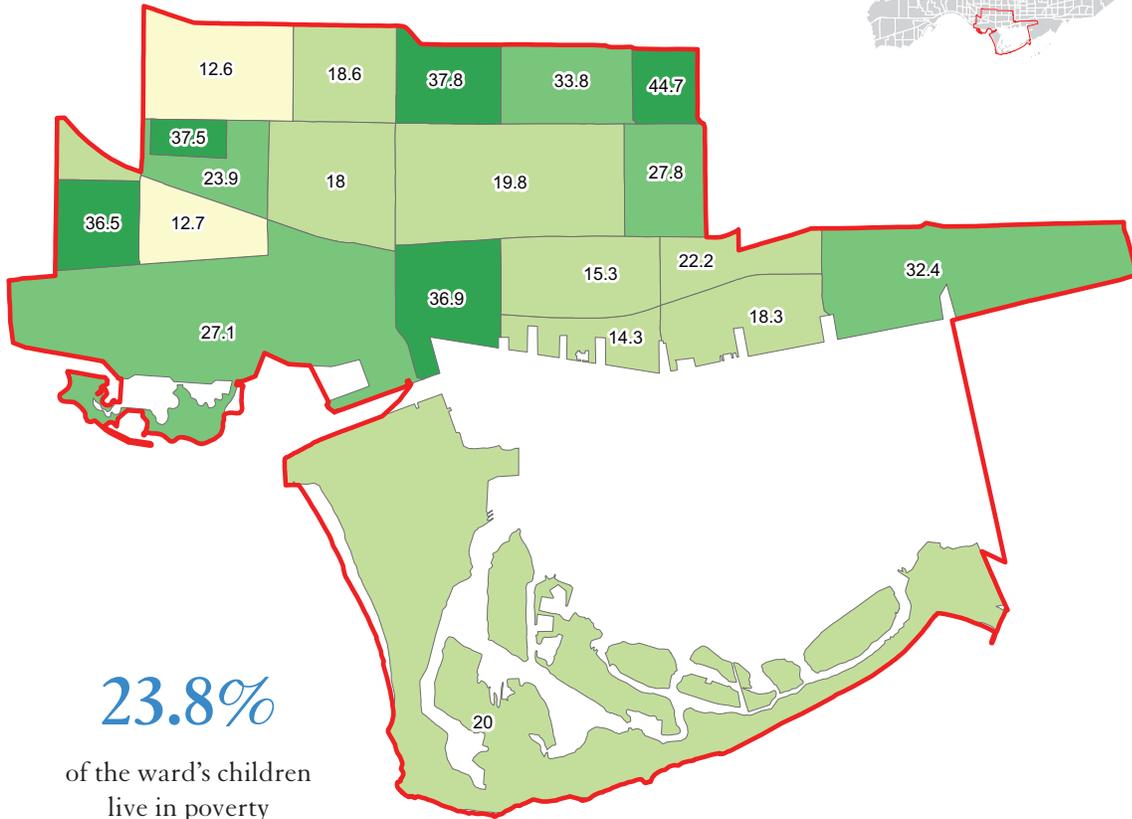


Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Municipal Election Edition

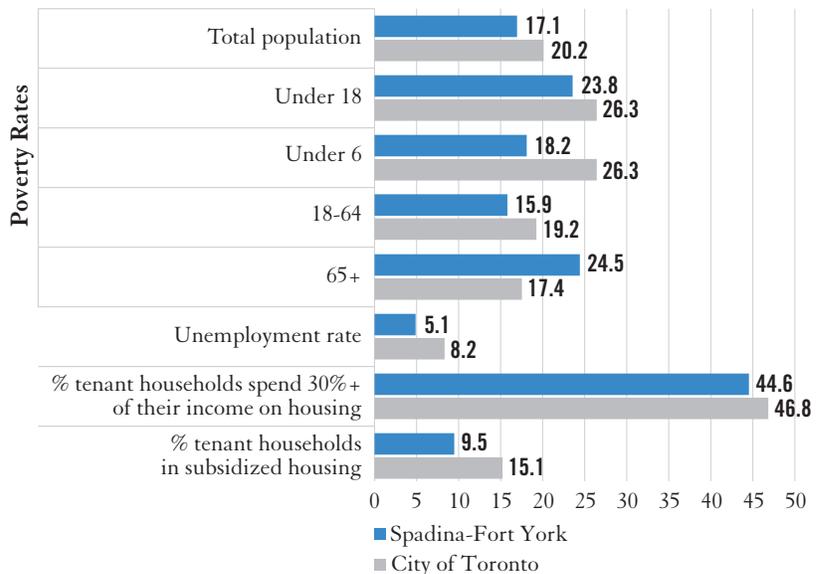
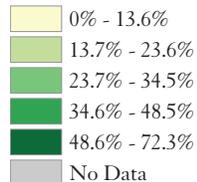
Spadina-Fort York



23.8%
of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

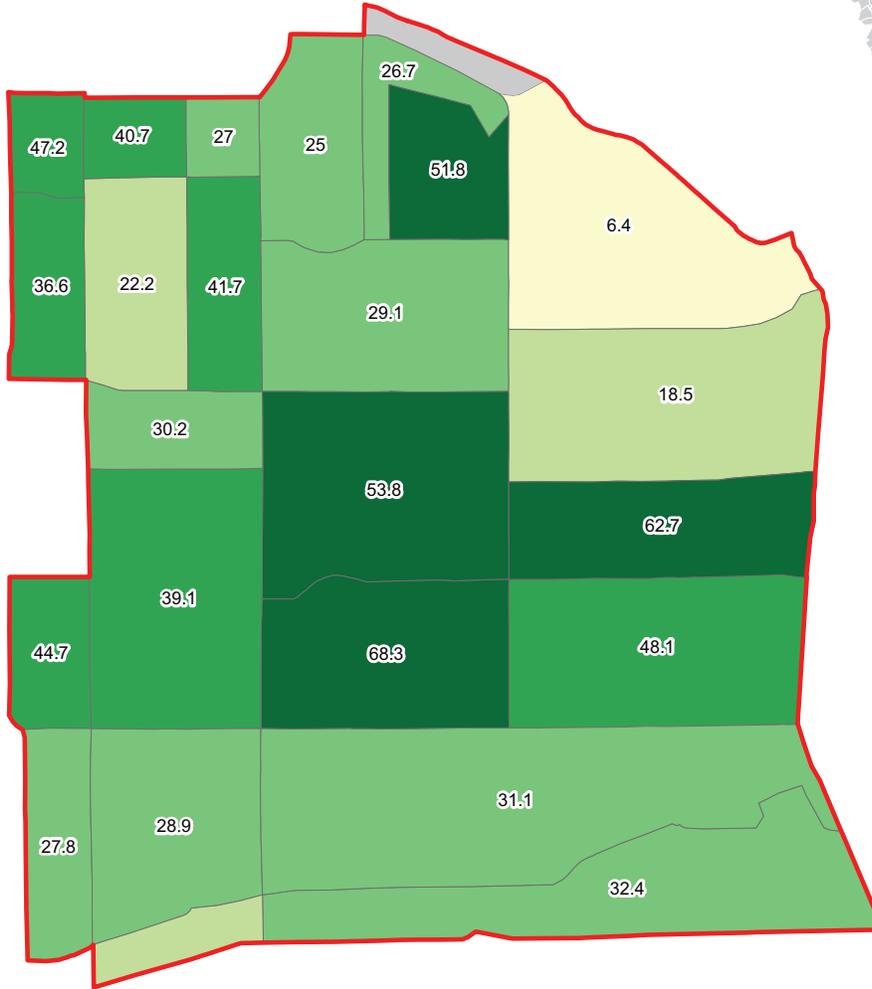
44.7%
highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in
Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Municipal Election Edition

Toronto Centre



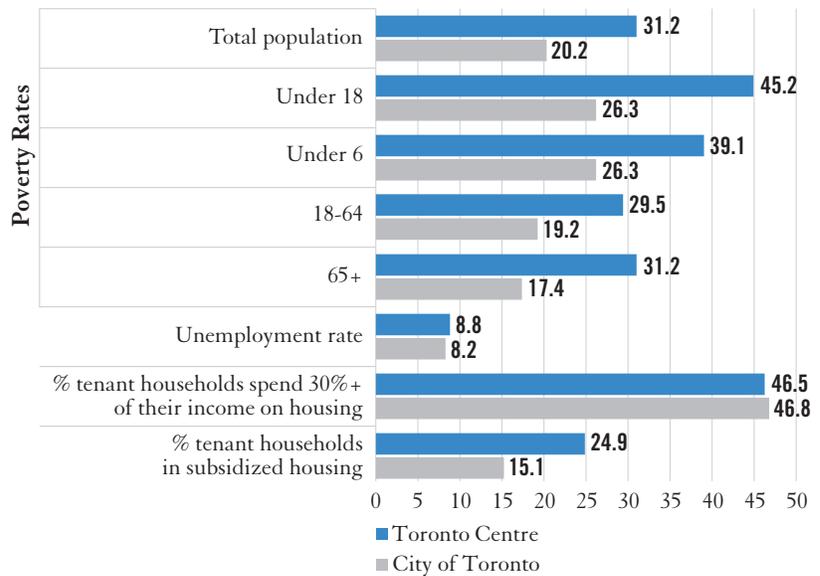
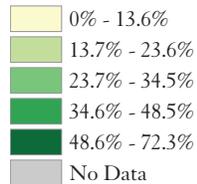
45.2%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

68.3%

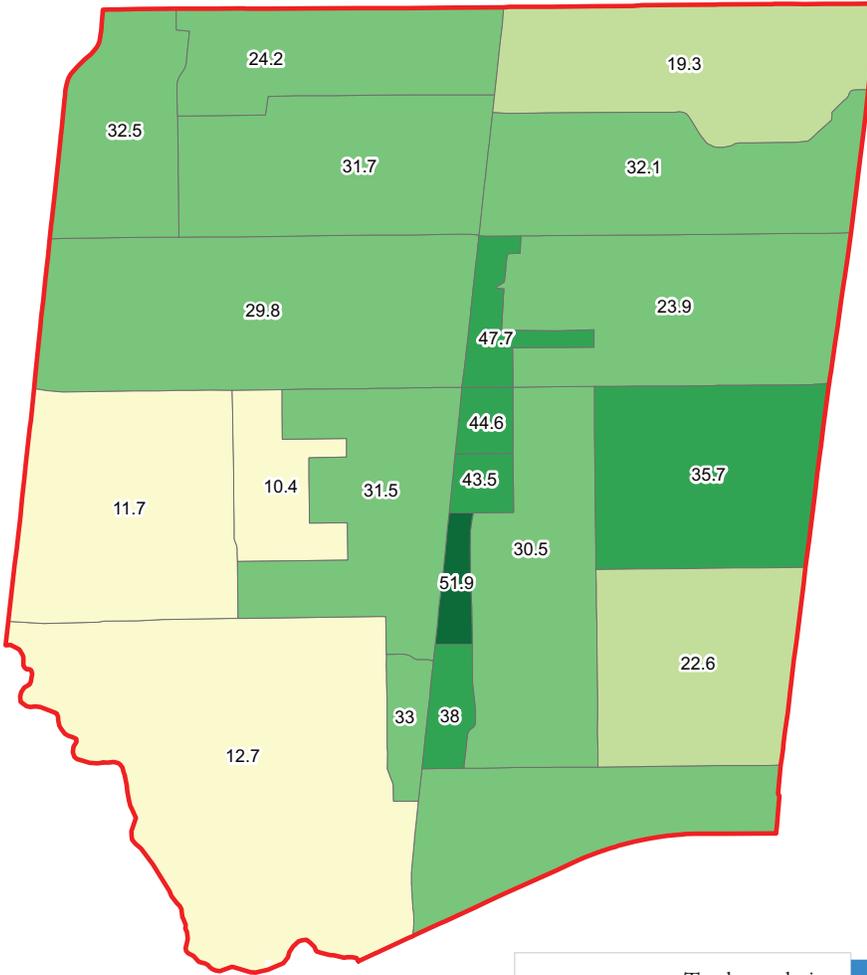
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Willowdale



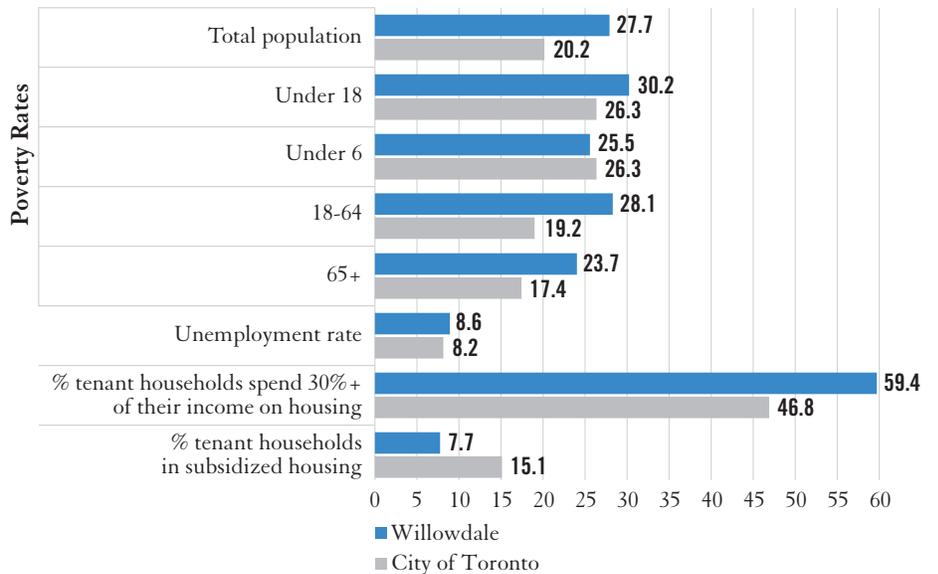
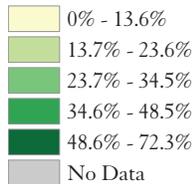
30.2%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

51.9%

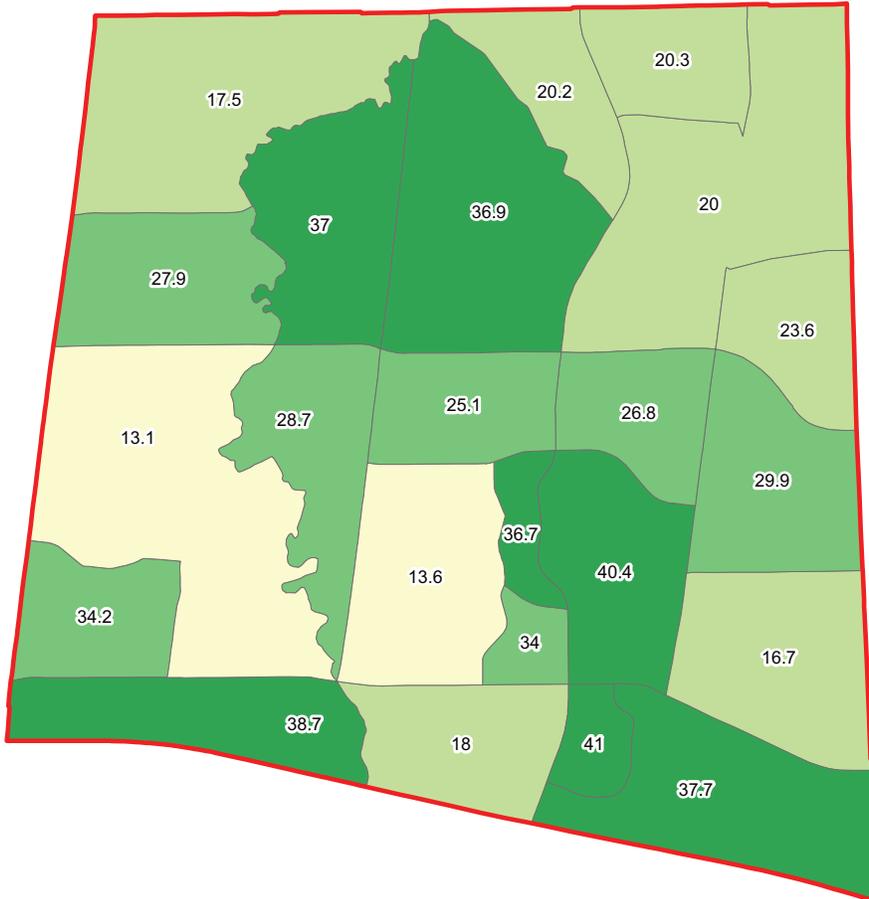
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Don Valley North



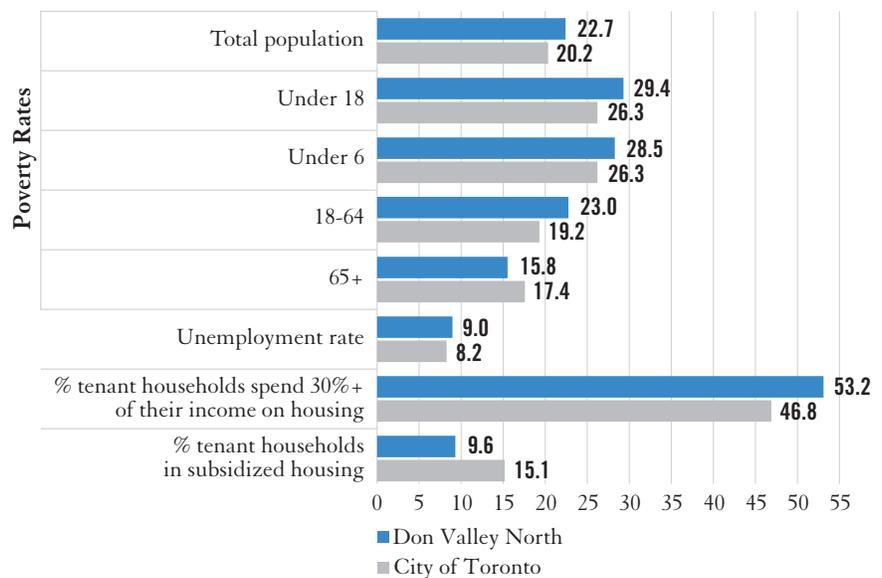
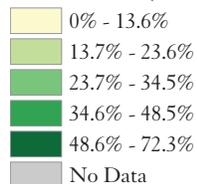
29.4%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

41%

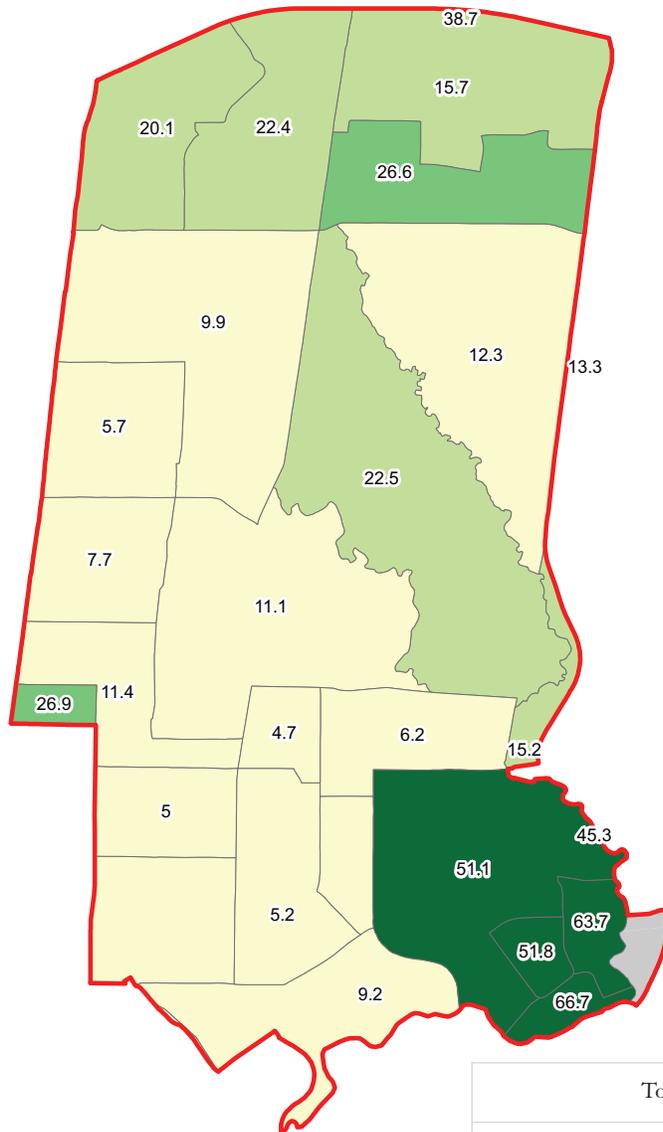
highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Don Valley West



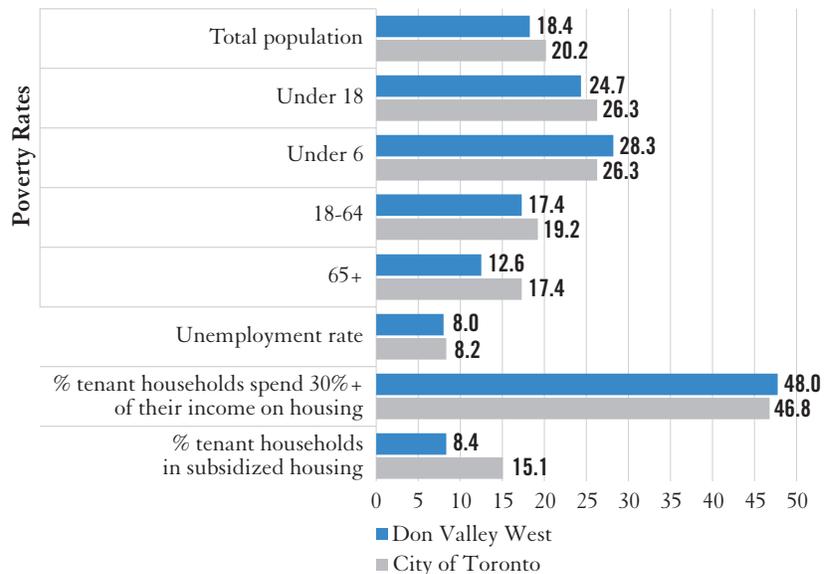
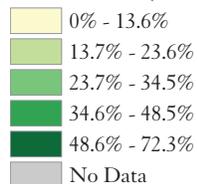
24.7%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under 18)

66.7%

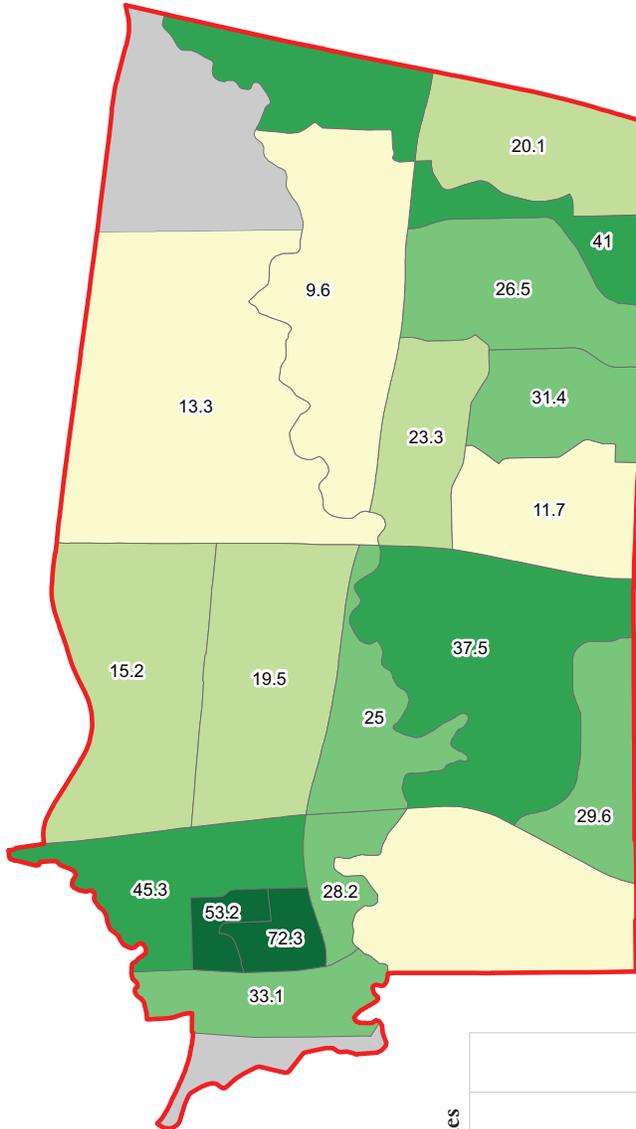
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Municipal Election Edition

Don Valley East



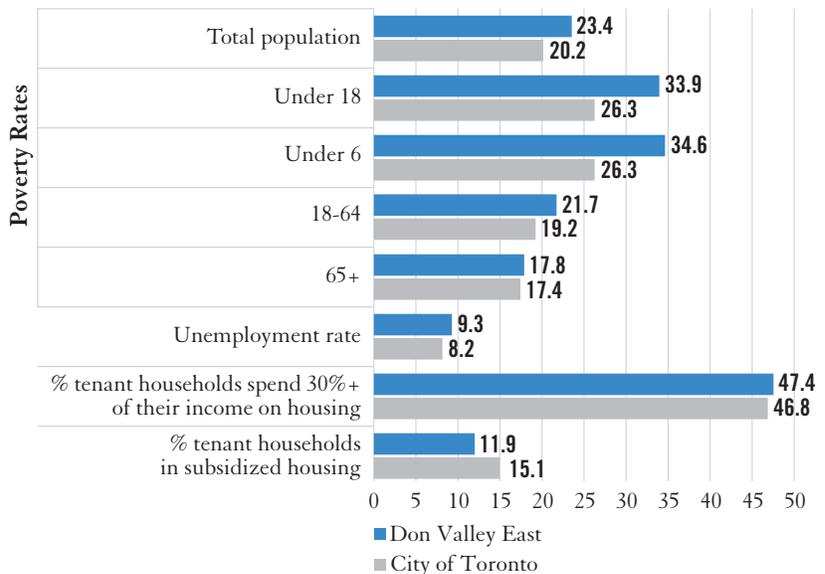
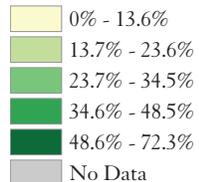
33.9%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

72.3%

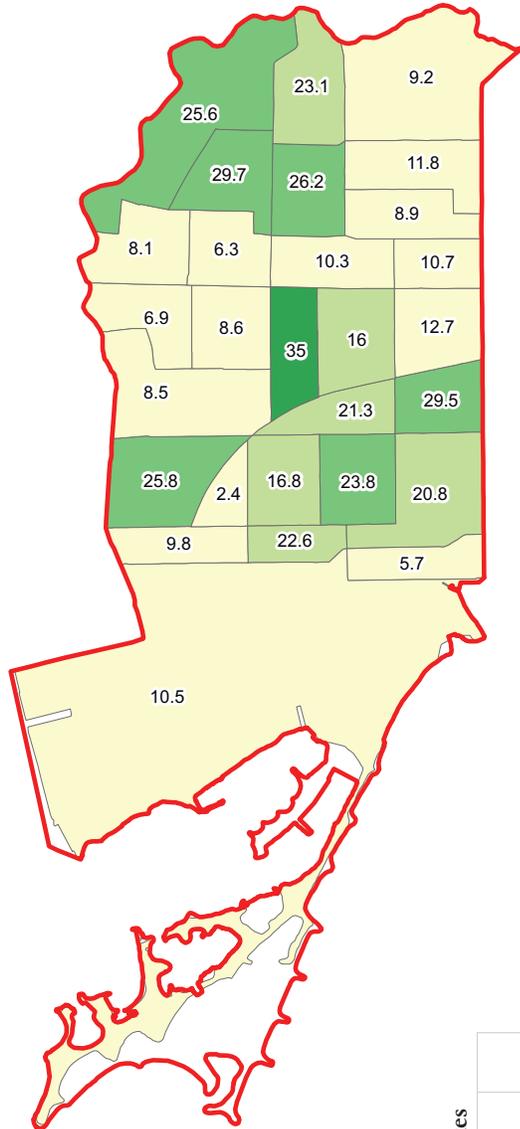
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Municipal Election Edition

Toronto-Danforth



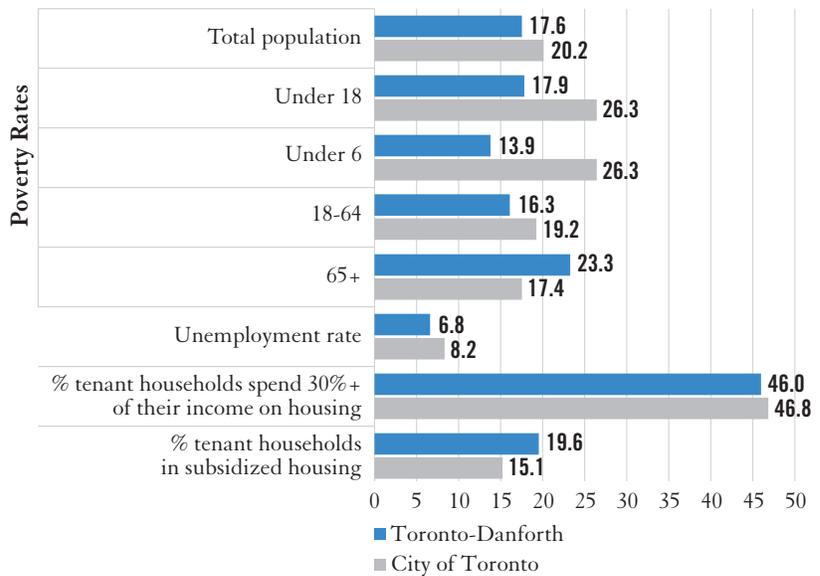
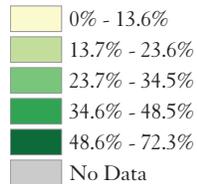
17.9%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

35%

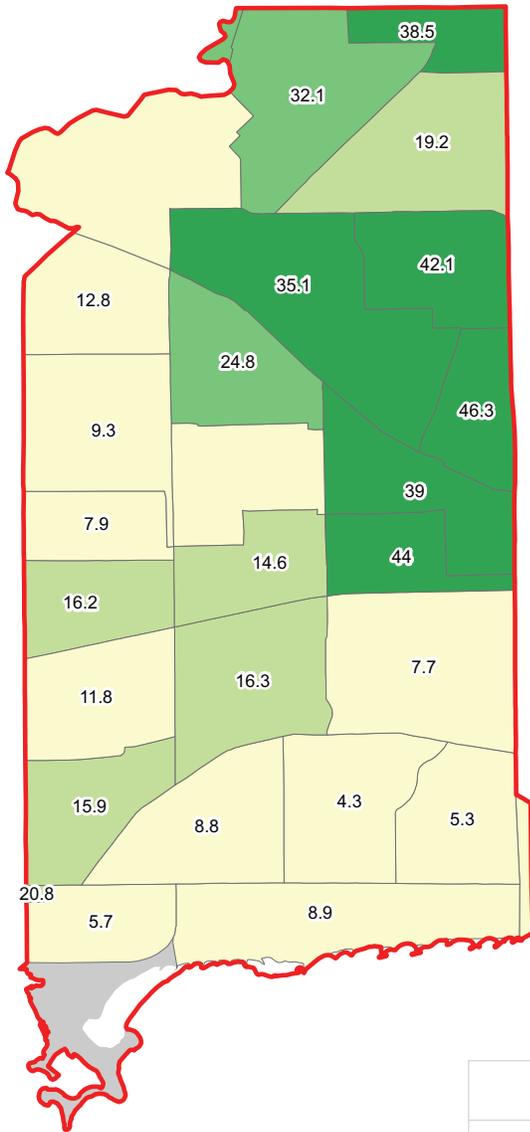
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



2018 Toronto Child & Family Poverty Report:
Municipal Election Edition

Beaches-East York



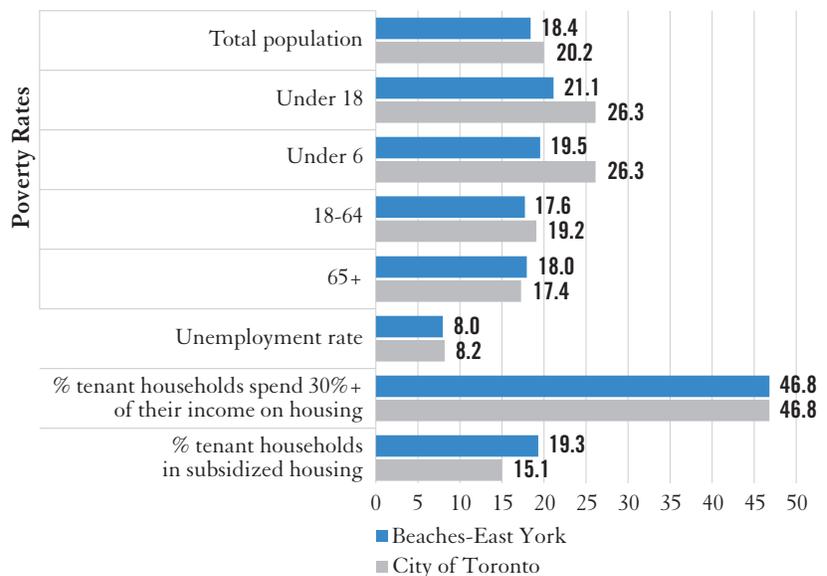
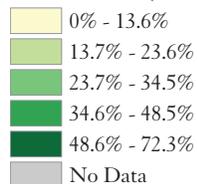
21.1%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

46.3%

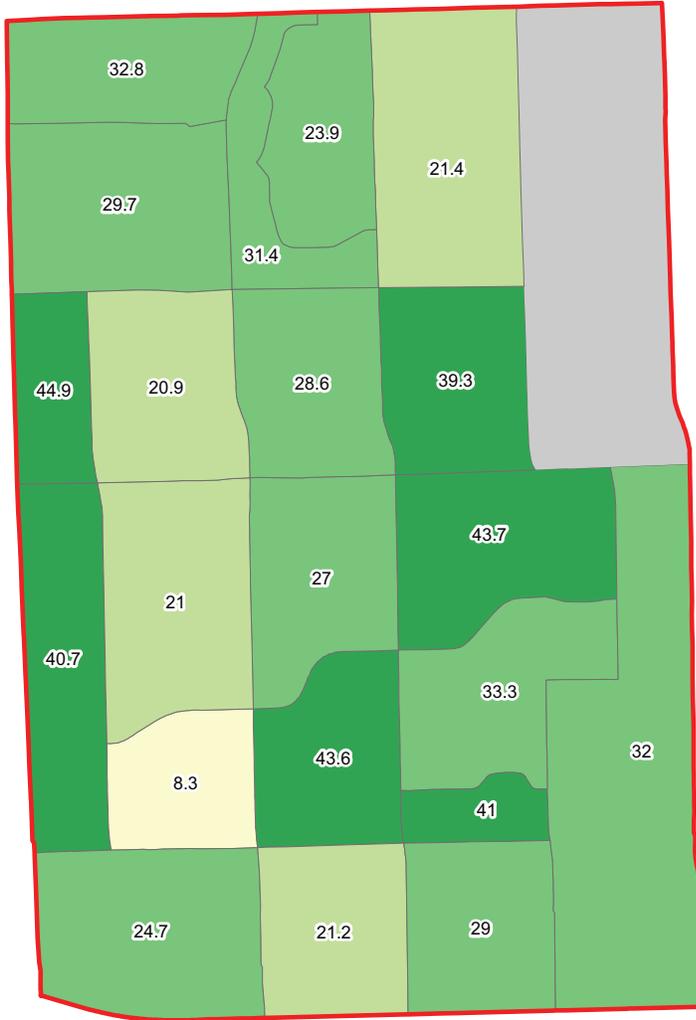
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



2018 Toronto Child & Family Poverty Report:
Municipal Election Edition

Scarborough-Agincourt



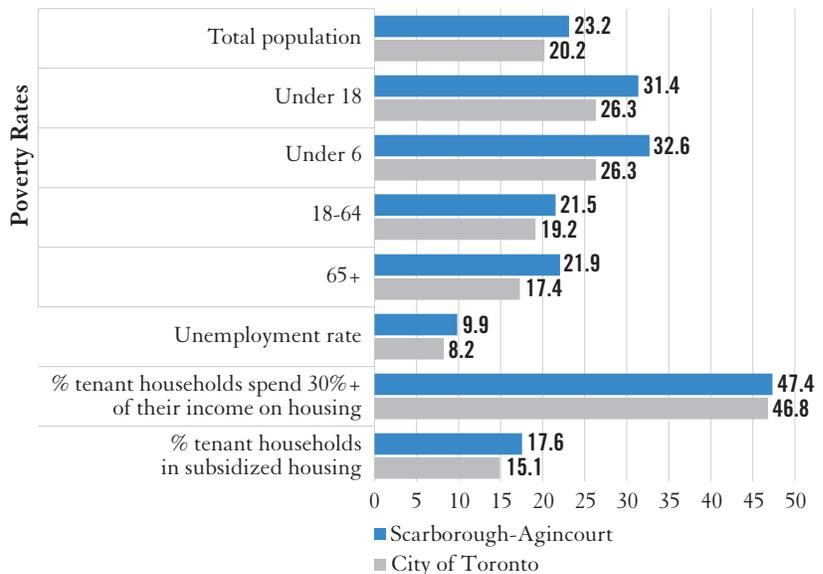
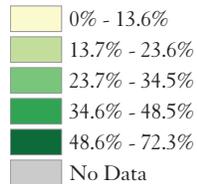
31.4%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

44.9%

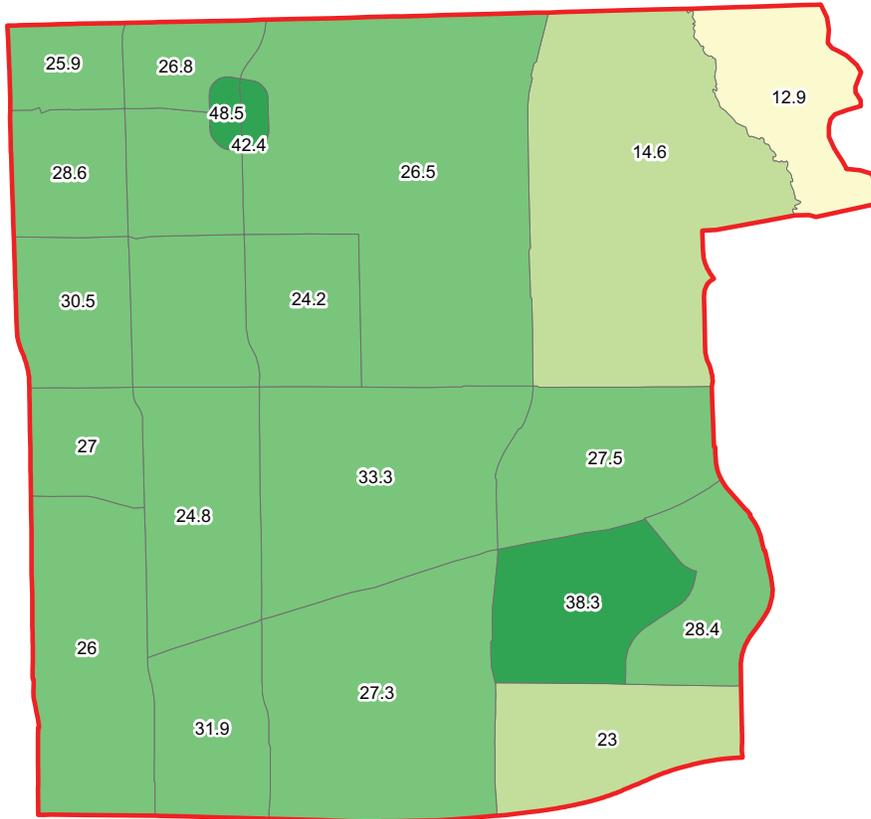
highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in
Low Income (LIM-AT)



2018 Toronto Child & Family Poverty Report: Municipal Election Edition

Scarborough North



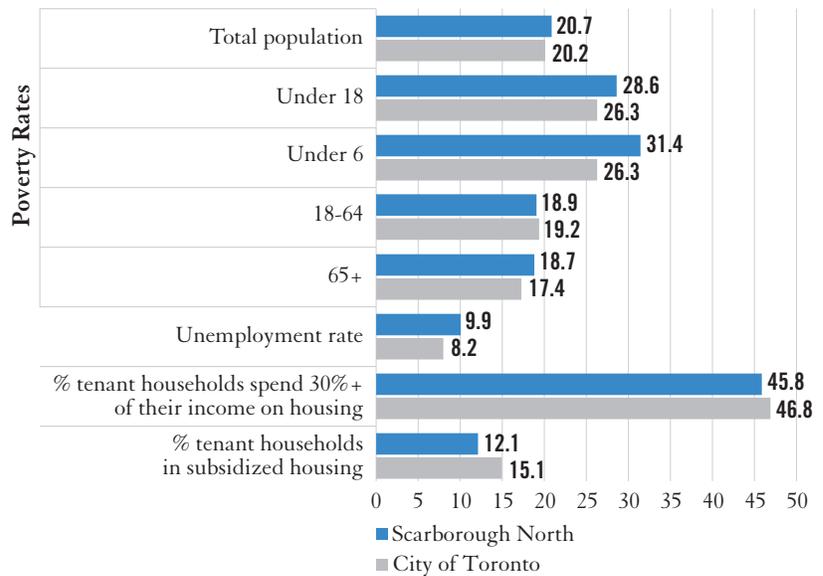
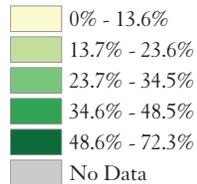
28.6%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

48.5%

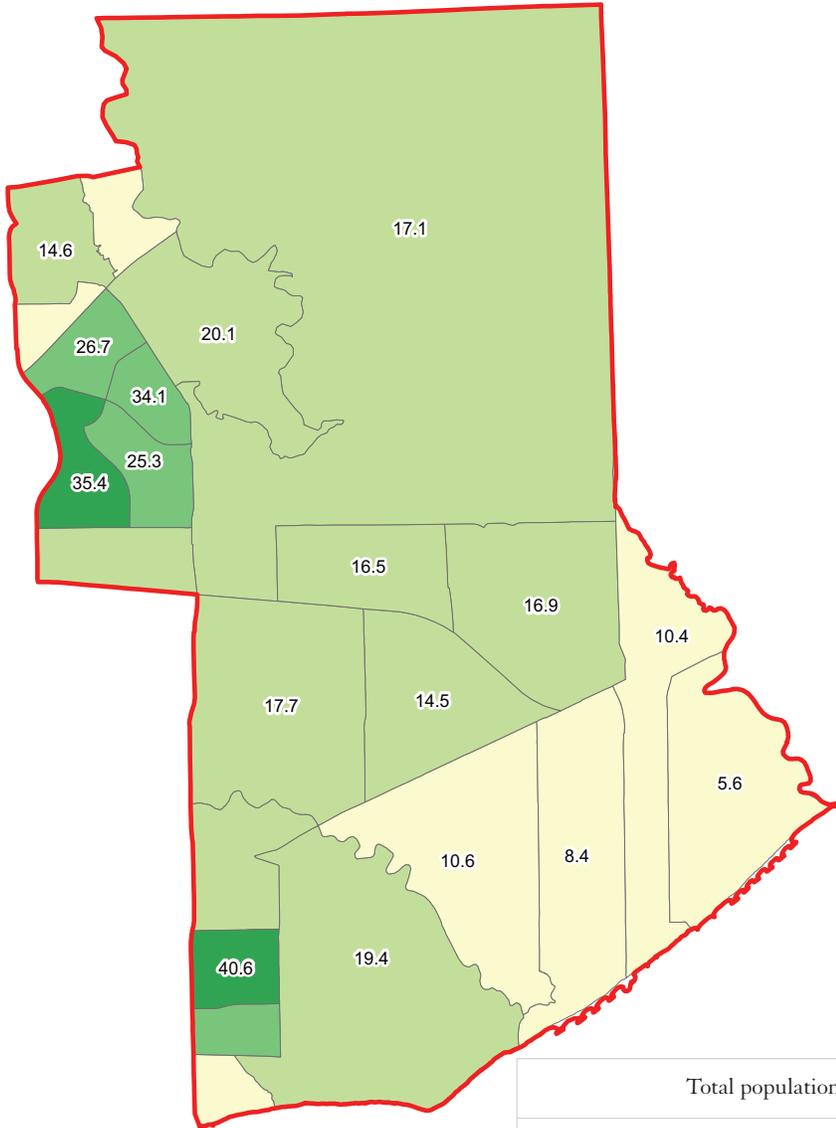
highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



2018 Toronto Child & Family Poverty Report:
Municipal Election Edition

Scarborough-Rouge Park



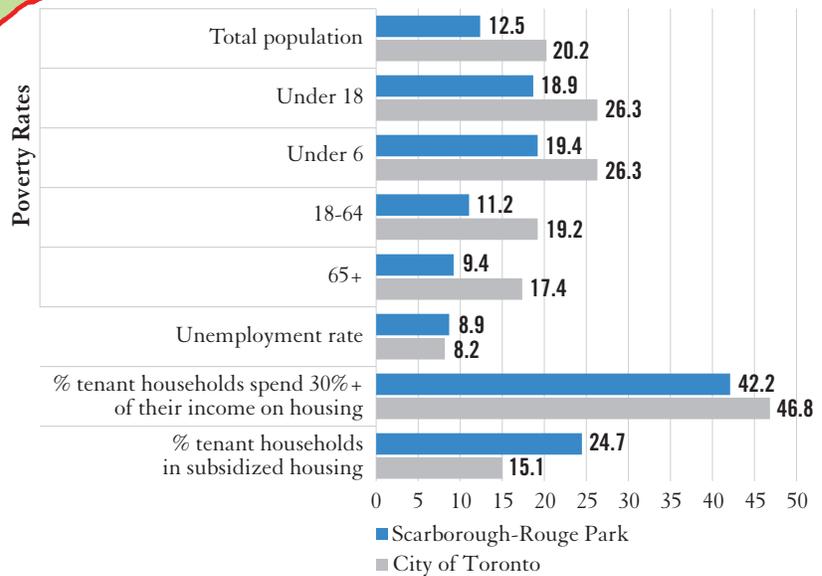
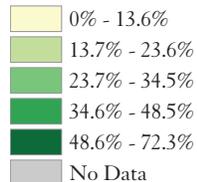
18.9%

of the ward's children
live in poverty
(under age 18)

40.6%

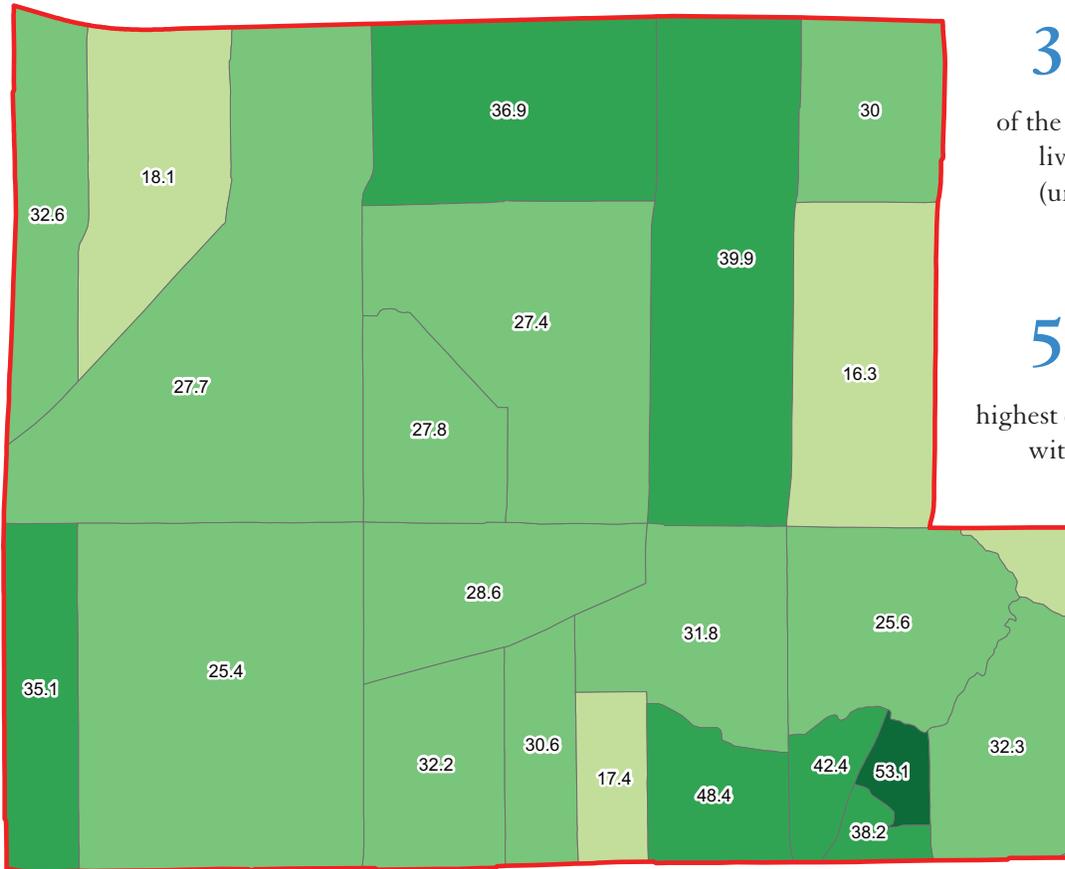
highest child poverty rate
within the ward

Children (0-17) in
Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Scarborough Centre



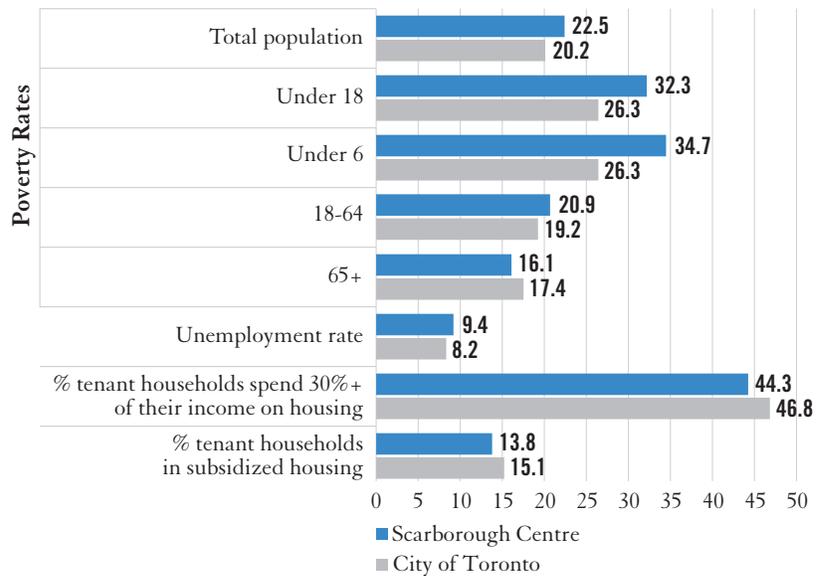
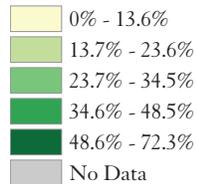
32.3%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

53.1%

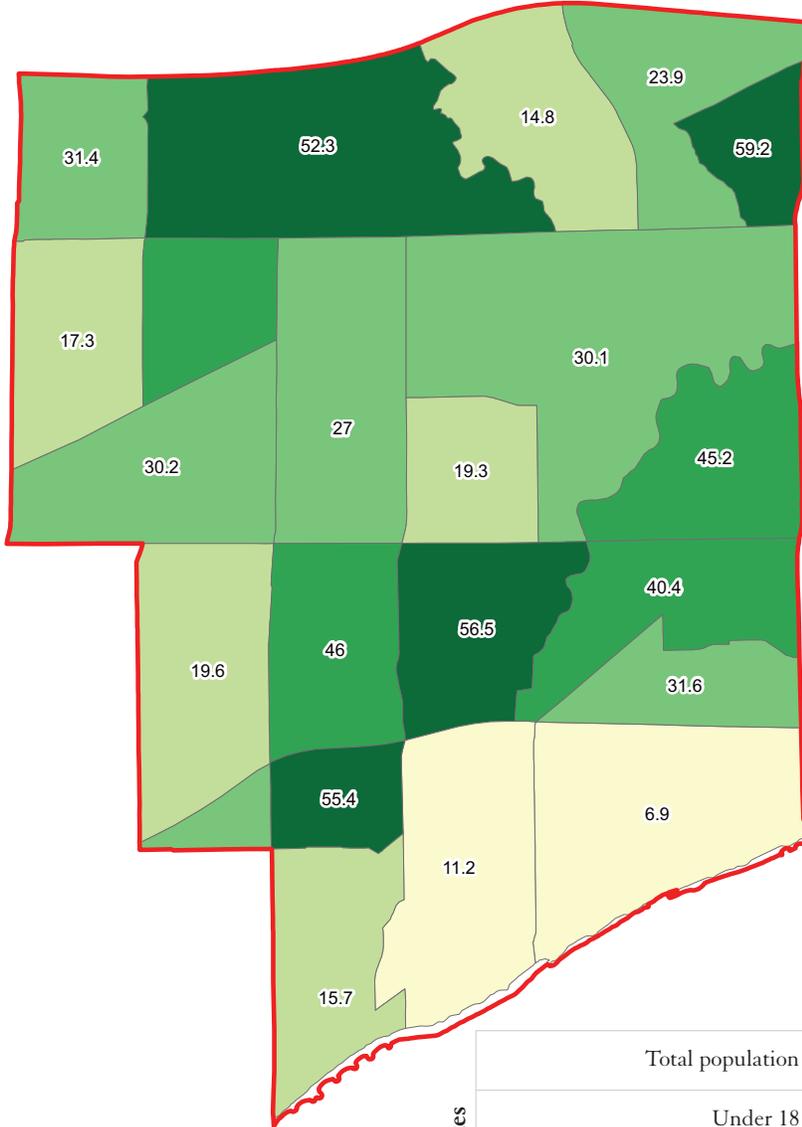
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Scarborough-Guildwood



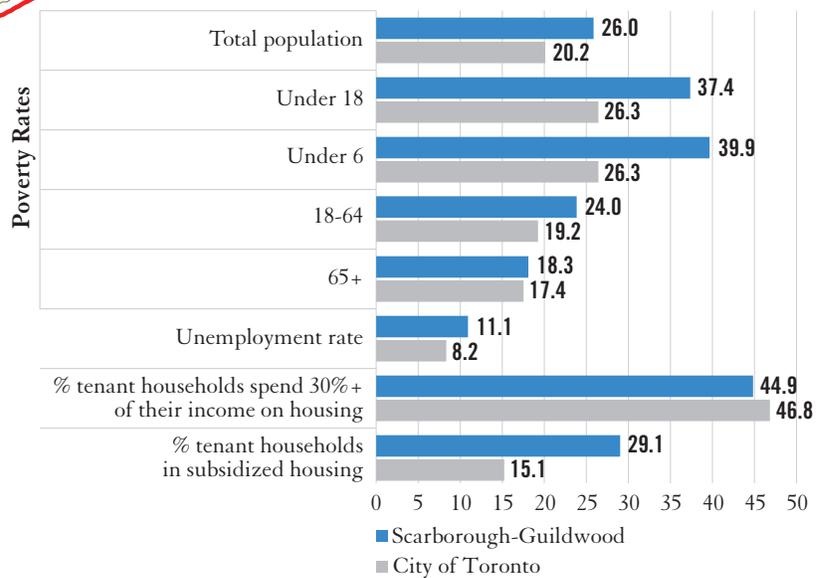
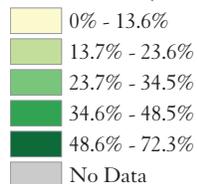
37.4%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

59.2%

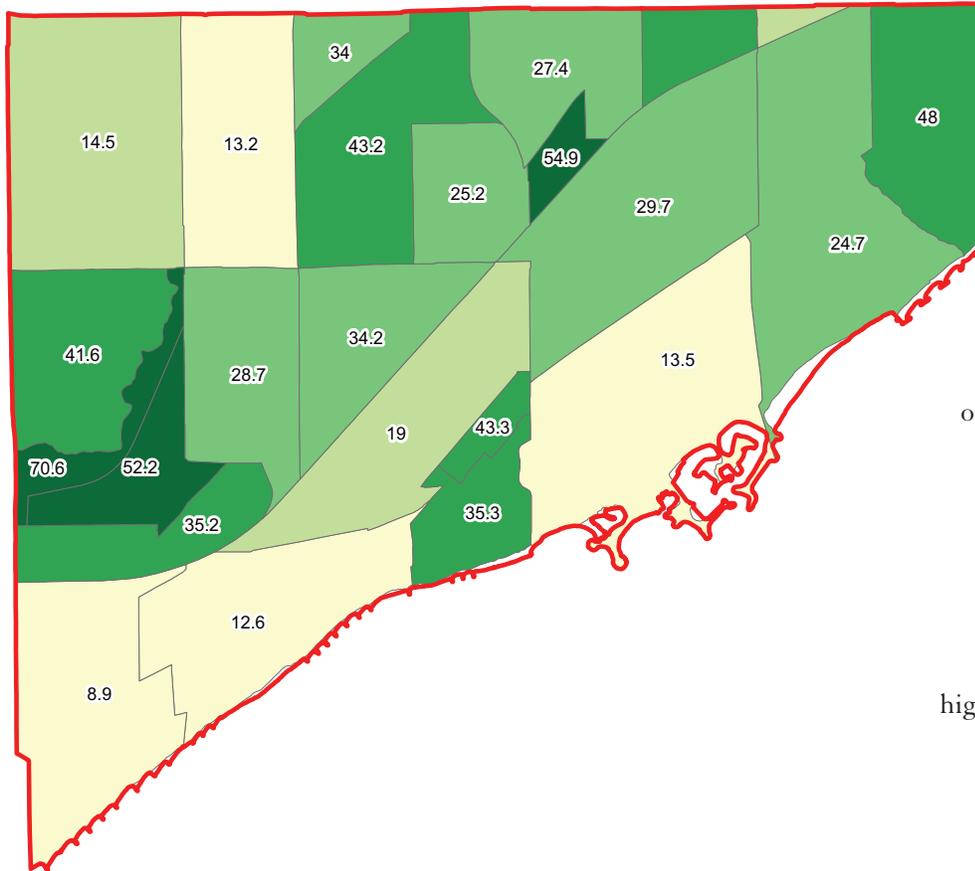
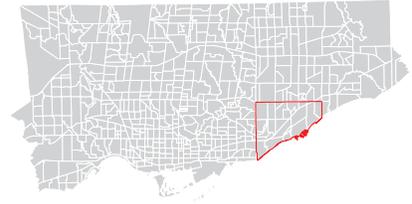
highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



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Scarborough-Southwest



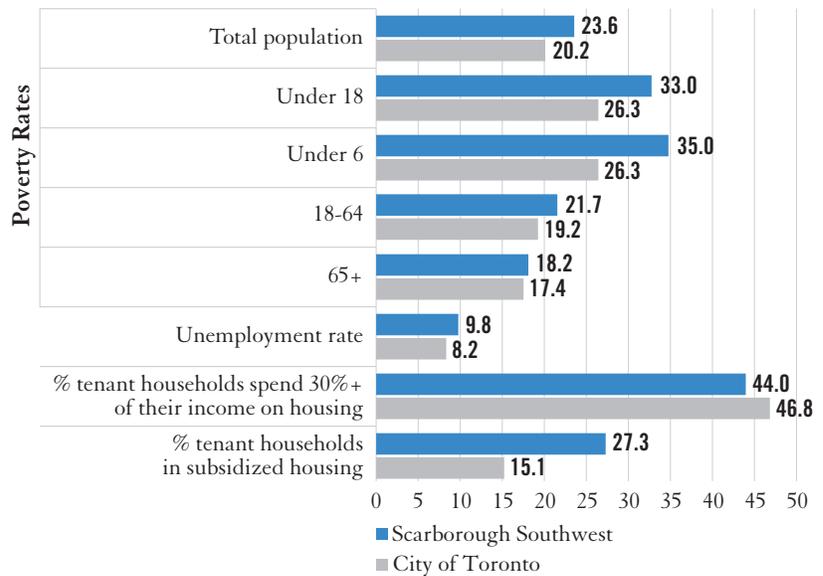
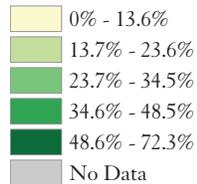
33%

of the ward's children live in poverty (under age 18)

70.6%

highest child poverty rate within the ward

Children (0-17) in Low Income (LIM-AT)



Conclusion

Child poverty affects over one-quarter of the city's children with rates over more than 30% in several wards and pockets of poverty as high as 72.3%. Families are struggling in every ward of the city. Even wards with lower overall rates of child poverty include areas where child poverty is all-too common – at double or triple the ward's overall rate.

The highest rates of child poverty are among Indigenous, racialized and newcomer families. Many families are struggling with the high cost of rental housing, significant barriers to accessing subsidized housing, high unemployment levels, and inadequate public transit service, particularly in areas outside the downtown core. There is a need for both city-wide and targeted action to support families from communities facing the highest levels of poverty.

Despite City Council's adoption of a Poverty Reduction Strategy three years ago, Toronto continues to occupy the unenviable position of child poverty capital of Canada. Compared to the Toronto region, the city of Toronto's child poverty rates are higher for all groups – for children under 18 and for groups based on race and generation status.

Toronto residents go to the polls to elect the next Mayor and City Council on October 22. The new Toronto City Council will have an important choice before it: whether it will take the action required to tackle the crisis of child and family poverty in this city or not.

In 2015, Toronto City Council unanimously endorsed TO Prosperity: Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The strategy provides a bold vision for transforming Toronto into a thriving and inclusive city for all. However, Council did not fully invest or implement the plan, with only half of the plan's actions completed in 2017 (25).

The next Mayor and City Council need to meet this bold vision with bold action.

We urge all candidates for Toronto City Council to commit to the following actions:

1. The full funding of TO Prosperity including funding for
 - a. 7,200 new supportive housing units, 8,000 new affordable rental units⁶ and 1,000 new shelter spaces
 - b. A 30% reduction in TTC fares for an additional 157,000 lower-income adults
 - c. 11,500 new child care spaces, including 5,000 subsidized spaces
 - d. 40,000 new community recreation program spaces
2. The adoption of measurable targets and timelines to assess the city's progress in advancing TO Prosperity and making positive change in the lives of Toronto residents struggling with poverty
3. Partner with and meaningfully engage residents and community groups in this work, including evaluating the plan's progress in reaching its targets

⁶ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation defines affordable housing as housing costing less than 30 per cent of a household's monthly gross income.

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To combat child poverty in Toronto, all council candidates must:

4. Commit to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action as one approach to supporting Indigenous children and families, with a particular focus on Call to Action 7: "We call upon the federal government to develop with Indigenous groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians".
5. Develop, implement and evaluate urban Indigenous poverty reduction and income security programming.
6. Address Indigenous-specific barriers to accessing employment and education programs, services, and supports.
7. Address barriers for Indigenous peoples in accessing existing healthy nutrition and food security programming.
8. Develop and fund Indigenous-focused food banks with healthy nutrient-rich food options and land-based traditional foods.
9. Develop and implement Indigenous-focused curricula regarding healthy nutrient-rich food options and land-based traditional foods within the education system.
10. Advance systems and programs that promote and support traditional Indigenous food gathering practices.
11. Fully fund all of the City's strategies that have been passed by Toronto City Council, including the TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy, Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, Toronto Newcomer Strategy, Youth Equity Strategy, Child Care Growth Strategy, and Housing Opportunities Toronto.
12. Create and fund Racial Justice and Gender Equity Strategies.
13. Consistently collect disaggregated demographic data – by gender identity, ethno-racial background, (dis)ability, sexuality, faith/spirituality, etc. – for all City programs and services.
14. Fully implement gender-responsive budgeting for the City budget.
15. Create, fully fund and staff equity offices, including offices focused on Indigenous peoples, gender, immigrants, accessibility, anti-black racism, and racial justice.

We need strong leadership at City Hall to make good on the city's commitment to creating a prosperous, equitable and inclusive city for all. Toronto residents can't afford four years of inaction and half measures. The well-being of Toronto's 125,000 children living in poverty is at stake. These children and families deserve better.

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Appendix – Notes on Data Sources

Census

At the time of the writing of this report, Statistics Canada had no official, government-mandated poverty line. This changed on August 21, 2018 when the federal government's new Poverty Reduction Strategy named the Market Basket Measure (MBM) as Canada's Official Poverty Line. Statistics Canada is currently undertaking a review to update the MBM because it will be used to track the effectiveness of federal anti-poverty programs. Given MBM poverty thresholds are still being updated using current data, this report uses the Low-Income Measure – After Tax (LIM-AT). The use of the LIM-AT is consistent with our previous reports, which presented the LIM-AT because it is widely considered the best available measure of low income and is highly reliable at lower levels of geography such as the census tract level.

This report uses data from Statistics Canada's 2016 Census and Our Health Counts Toronto (a survey of Indigenous people). Income data from the 2016 Census are based on 2015 incomes. Statistics Canada uses high quality data from tax returns and other administrative sources to estimate income for the Census. This practice started with the 2006 Census.

Data are reported for the City of Toronto and the city's 25 wards. In the midst of the 2018 municipal election, the Government of Ontario imposed a 25-ward structure on the City of Toronto, replacing the city's recently adopted 47-ward structure. This decision was met with considerable public opposition and legal challenges. At the time of the publication of this report, the 25-ward structure was in place. However, legal challenges were still ongoing.

Our working group first developed this report using the 47-ward structure. In response to the provincial government's action, we also ran the data using the 25-ward structure. Both sets of analyses demonstrate the pervasiveness of child and family poverty in Toronto and the hidden pockets of poverty within every ward in the city – based on the 47-ward and 25-ward boundaries. Regardless of how you slice it, child poverty is a disturbing and unacceptable reality in our city.

Each ward profile includes a map showing child poverty rates by census tract. Census tract boundaries are not aligned with ward boundaries. For this reason, some census tracts cross the boundary of one ward into a neighbouring ward. Child poverty rates for those census tracts were checked to ensure that the rate represents the level of child poverty within the part of the census tract shown on the map. Dissemination area level data was used to check this data as dissemination areas are smaller than census tracts. Maps were adjusted accordingly based on this process.

Our Health Counts Toronto

Our Health Counts Toronto (OHC) aims to address the gaps in health information systems and to ensure that urban Indigenous communities have ownership, access, control, and possession of data that impacts their health and wellbeing (1, 17). The OHC model recognizes that Indigenous community leadership and investment are essential for successful health programming and services for Indigenous individuals, families and communities. OHC project processes were structured to ensure respect, cultural relevance, mutual capacity building, representation, and sustainability.

Innovative Methods: Our Health Counts Toronto



OHC Toronto uses Indigenous community driven processes to generate a comprehensive health information platform to understand and address critical gaps in urban Indigenous health and wellbeing. The study was co-led by the Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto (SGMT) and the Well Living House Action Research Centre for Indigenous Infant, Child and Family Health and Wellbeing (Well Living House) at St. Michael's Hospital. Given the traditional role of midwife as knowledge keepers of birth stories and family information, SGMT was a fitting organizational community custodian for Indigenous health data in Toronto (18).

Trained local interviewers implemented the OHC survey using Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) among Indigenous adults in Toronto for the generation of population-level prevalence estimates (1). RDS is a chain-referral technique that is recognized internationally by scientists as a cutting-edge method of gathering reliable information from hard-to-reach populations. Due to data collection systems issues, including sampling bias and frequent systematic misclassification, RDS was selected for OHC because it builds on the existing strength of social networks and kin systems known to be in Indigenous communities. This allowed for the generation of unbiased estimates of a population's composition by adjusting for different probabilities of being sampled and by use of a structured recruitment frame (19-21).

The RDS process began through the careful selection of individuals to begin recruitment, also called 'seeds'. To participate in the study, people needed to self-identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit or Métis), be 18 years of age or older, and reside within the geographic boundaries or use services within the City of Toronto. Study participants, including the 20 seeds, received a coupon to participate, provided informed consent and then completed a health assessment survey. Participants then received 3-5 coupons to refer people from their social networks to participate, expanding through successive 'waves' of peer recruitment (1).

For the purposes of this study, all analyses are restricted to those who reside in the City of Toronto. There was no explicit time limit for recruitment, however, community posters and information boards included the study completion date of 31 March 2016. All participants were encouraged to complete the study prior to that date.

RDS analyses was used to characterize and describe the results, including sociodemographic information. This was performed in the RDS package (V.0.7.7) in R (22) using RDS-II weights (23). Bottleneck plots and appropriate statistical tests were used to examine convergence and test assumptions of RDS, such as recruitment and non-response biases (24). Seeds were excluded for analysis purposes.

More information on the OHC methodology is detailed in Rotondi et al. (1) and Firestone et. al. (17).

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Survey Question	Answer	Estimate	95% Confidence Intervals (CI)	
			Lower CI bound	Upper CI bound
Living below LICO	Yes	84.1	77.4	90.9
Housing	Stable housing	92.7	85.4	100.0
Housing	Precariously housed or homeless	6.6	0.0	13.9
How many times have you moved in the past year?	None	56.4	41.5	71.2
How many times have you moved in the past year?	At least once	43.7	28.8	58.5
Which of the following statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the past 12 months	Sometimes or often you or others do not have enough to eat	19.5	7.1	31.9
Which of the following statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the past 12 months	You and others always had enough of the kinds of foods you wanted to eat	22.6	11.9	33.3
Which of the following statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the past 12 months	You and others had enough to eat, but not always the kinds of food you wanted	57.9	43.6	72.2
How often do you have to give up important things to meet housing costs	Never	35.6	20.3	50.9
How often do you have to give up important things to meet housing costs	A few times a year	33.2	18.9	47.6
How often do you have to give up important things to meet housing costs	Once a month	21.1	8.9	33.4
How often do you have to give up important things to meet housing costs	Several times a month	10.0	4.1	16.0
Is your dwelling in need of major repairs?	No	64.0	50.2	77.8
Is your dwelling in need of major repairs?	Yes	36.0	22.2	49.8

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Map of Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), GTA & Area Municipalities



A JOINT REPORT OF

Social Planning Toronto

Well Living House, Centre for Urban Health Solutions (C-UHS)

Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, St. Michael's Hospital

Community Development and Prevention Program, Children's Aid Society of Toronto

Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

Family Service Toronto (Campaign 2000)



Well Living House

St. Michael's

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