



# PORTRAIT

Canada's children and youth are an increasingly diverse group. In addition to providing an overview of the hard data – who they are, how many, where they live – this section highlights certain aspects of their lives.

Tracking this information is important to the development of policies and programs that respond to their needs.

## KEY INDICATORS:

- Number of children & youth
- Aboriginal children & youth
- Young immigrants

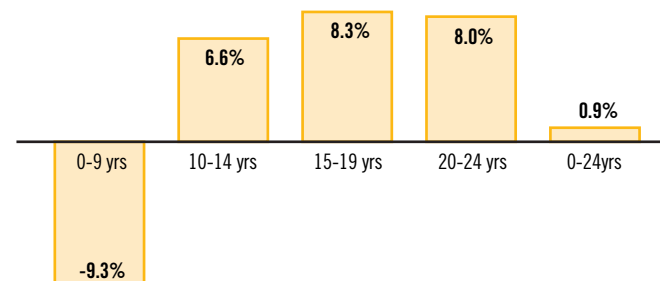
## CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CANADA

Young people under age 25 form a substantial part of the Canadian population. In 2004, almost one-third (32%) of all Canadians were children and youth. And over the last 10 years, this population has increased 1%; by 2004, they numbered more than 10 million.

The change was not uniform among all age groups. The number of young children – those under age 10 – declined by more than 9%, from 4 million in 1994 to 3.6 million in 2004. Over the same period, the number of youth aged 15 to 24 grew by more than 8%, to 4.4 million.

The changes between 1994 and 2004 also varied across the provinces and territories. The largest decline in the number of children under age 10 was in Newfoundland (32%), while Ontario had the smallest decline (3%). Over that period, the number of youth aged 15 to 24 grew by 25% in Alberta, 17% in British Columbia, and 13% in Ontario; in Newfoundland, the number of youth declined by 29%.

PER CENT CHANGE IN NUMBER  
OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH, 1994 TO 2004

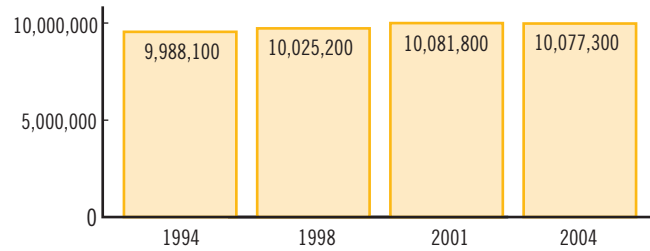


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Annual Demographic Statistics, 1995 & 2004.



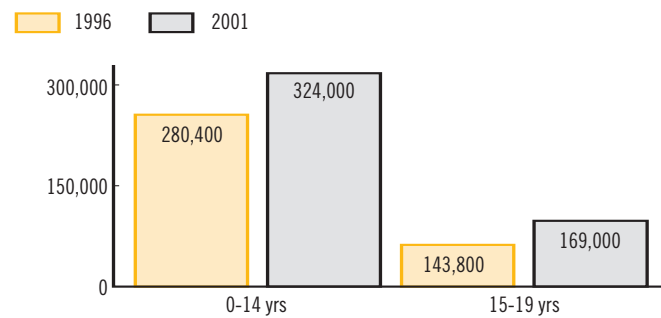
## KEY INDICATORS

### NUMBER OF YOUNG CANADIANS UNDER 25



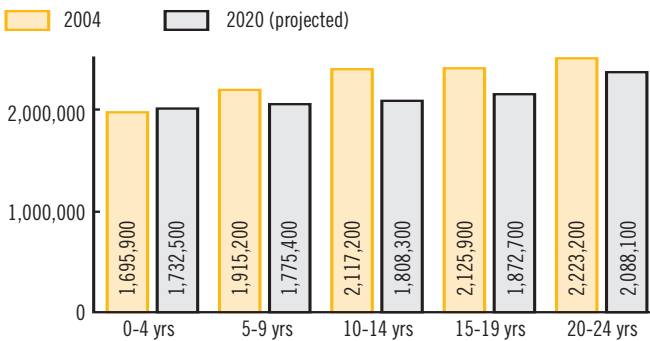
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Annual Demographic Statistics, 1994, 2003, & 2004.

### NUMBER OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Census of the Population, 1996 & 2001.

### INTO THE FUTURE: CANADA'S CHILDREN & YOUTH



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories, Catalogue 91-520-XIB.

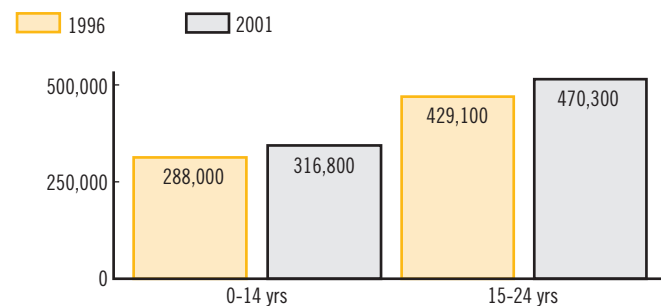
### What will the future bring?

By 2020, the number of children and youth under age 25 is expected to decline to 9.3 million from the current 10 million, and they will account for a smaller share of the population – from 32% in 2004 to 26% by 2020. This decline is expected among all age groups except infants and preschoolers.

### Where do they live?

The vast majority of Canadian children live in cities. In 2001, over three-quarters (76%) of all children and youth under age 20 lived in urban areas – up from 74% in 1996. (Urban areas are those with a population of at least 1,000 and no fewer than 400 persons per square kilometre.) In fact, in 2001, almost two-thirds (64%) of all children and youth under 25 lived in Canada's largest cities (or Census Metropolitan Areas) – up from 61% in 1996.

### NUMBER OF YOUNG IMMIGRANTS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Census of the Population, 1996 & 2001.



## ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### A growing population

In 2001, there were almost half a million Aboriginal children and youth in Canada. Between 1996 and 2001, their numbers increased by 16%, with the highest growth rate among youth aged 10 to 19, which rose by over 25%. Over the same period, the number of non-Aboriginal children and youth declined by 1.3%.

About half the increase in this population is due to demographic factors, such as a high birth rate. Greater awareness of Aboriginal roots likely accounts for another portion of the increase, as more people identify themselves as Aboriginal. As well, while not all reserves are included in Census counts, a larger number were in 2001 than in the past.

Among all Canadian children and youth, one in 20 reported Aboriginal identity in 2001 – 5.1%, up from 4.2% in 1996. About 65% of Aboriginal children and youth identify themselves as North American Indian, just under 30% as Métis, and about 5% as Inuit. Of the three groups, the largest population gain between 1996 and 2001 occurred among the Métis, where the number of Métis under age 25 grew by 31%.

### A young population

Overall, Aboriginal people are a much younger group than non-Aboriginal people. Children and youth under age 25 comprise 51% of Canada's Aboriginal population, whereas they make up only 32% of the non-Aboriginal population. In fact, one-third of the Aboriginal population is under age 15.

### Where do Aboriginal children live?

Almost two-thirds of all Aboriginal children and youth – over 318,000 – live in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Another 25% live in Ontario and Québec.

The concentration is highest in the Prairies and in the North. So while Ontario has more Aboriginal children and youth than any other province or territory – with over 86,000 – they comprise just over 2% of the young population in Ontario. This is in striking contrast to their proportions in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Territories.

#### CHILD & YOUTH POPULATION REPORTING ABORIGINAL IDENTITY, 2001

	% AGED 0-14	% AGED 15-24
NF & LB	5.7	4.9
PEI	1.7	0.9
NS	3.3	2.5
NB	3.8	2.9
QC	1.8	1.3
ON	2.5	2.1
MB	23.1	17.0
SK	24.9	16.6
AB	8.7	6.5
BC	7.4	5.6
YK	32.7	36.1
NWT	63.0	58.2
NV	94.6	90.4
CANADA	5.7	4.2

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Census of the Population, 2001.



Census data show a slow but steady growth of Aboriginal people residing in cities. In 2001, almost half (49%) of the population who identified themselves as Aboriginal lived in urban areas, up from 47% in 1996.

### What will the future bring?

By the year 2017, the number of Aboriginal children and youth under age 25 is projected to grow by almost 20%. The largest increase, however, will be among those aged 15 to 24; that group is expected to grow by over 26%. In addition, the number of Aboriginal adults aged 20 to 29 is projected to rise by over 40% – more than four times the expected growth rate (9%) for the same group in the overall population.

In the three Territories, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, the proportion of Aboriginal children under age 15 is projected to rise. By 2017, 37 of every 100 children in Saskatchewan and 31 of 100 in Manitoba will be Aboriginal (compared to 25 and 23 respectively in 2001).

## DIVERSITY

Canadian children and youth are ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse. In the last Census, more than 200 ethnic origins were reported. The changing source countries of immigrants to Canada – from Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Central and South America – have contributed to greater ethnic diversity. Many children now report multiple ethnic ancestries as a result of increasing intermarriage.

In 2001, the most frequent ethnic origin reported for those under age 25 was Canadian – 4.2 million. The next most common origins reported were British Isles (3.2 million), European (2.9 million), and French (1.6 million). Over one million children and youth reported having Asian origins, with the majority being East and Southeast Asian.

### Linguistic diversity

Children in Canada speak a variety of languages. In 2001, over 960,000 children and youth under age 20 – or 12.4% of that population – reported having a mother tongue other than English or French. This was an increase from 1996 (10.9%), even though the total population of this age group remained virtually the same over that period.

Anglophones – children and youth who reported English as their mother tongue – represented the majority (at two-thirds) in both 1996 and 2001. Just over one in five children and youth were francophones, citing French as their mother tongue.

Of the almost one million children whose mother tongue was neither English nor French, Chinese was the most common language reported in both years.

## LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

	1996	2001
<b>Persons under age 20 whose mother tongue is neither English nor French</b>	<b>855,565</b>	<b>962,130</b>
<b>PROPORTION WHO SPEAK:</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Chinese	19.5	19.2
Punjabi	6.8	7.9
Spanish	7.4	6.5
Aboriginal languages	7.4	6.2
Arabic	4.9	5.9
German	5.4	5.0
Polish	5.0	3.7
Vietnamese	3.8	3.3
Urdu	1.6	3.2
Portuguese	4.8	3.1
Persian (Farsi)	2.0	2.8
Tamil	2.2	2.7
Italian	4.4	2.7
Tagalog (Pilipino)	2.5	2.7
Russian	1.3	2.3
Korean	1.6	2.3
Greek	2.0	1.4
Somali	1.4	1.3

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Language Composition of Canada, 2001 Census.

When looking at the languages children speak at home, the picture is somewhat different. Only 8% of children and youth under 20 most often speak a non-official language at home, lower than the 12.4% who reported having a non-official mother tongue.

## Visible minorities

In 2001, 16% of Canadians aged 5 to 24 belonged to visible minority groups – up from 11% in 1991. The majority of children in visible minority groups (71%) live in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. In fact, close to half of all children and youth under age 18 in Toronto and Vancouver are members of visible minority groups – 44% and 43% respectively.

Among all visible minority children and youth under age 25, the three largest groups are South Asian (23%), Chinese (22%), and Black (20%).

By the year 2017, it is projected that about one of every five people in Canada will be a member of a visible minority group. They will tend to be younger, because the proportion of children and youth in the visible minority population will be greater than among the rest of the Canadian population.



## IMMIGRATION

In 2001, more than 316,000 (5.5%) Canadian children under age 15 were immigrants, up from 5% in 1996. Over 470,000 (11.8%) youth aged 15 to 24 were immigrants, up from 11.4% in 1996.

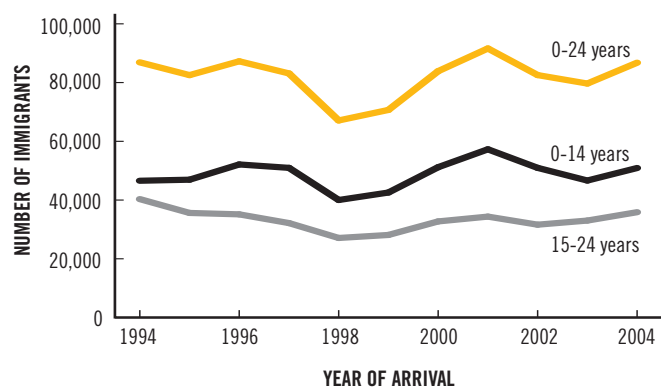
Among immigrants who arrived in Canada in 2004, 37% were under age 25. Of these 87,000 young newcomers, 51,000 were under age 15, and 36,000 were aged 15 to 24. The number of young immigrants was 9% higher than the previous year, but almost identical to the number who arrived in 1994. Fluctuations over the decade ranged from a low of 67,000 in 1998, to a high of 92,000 in 2001.

Today, it is estimated that 20% of Canada's young people under age 18 are immigrants or children of immigrants; by 2016, they will constitute 25% of Canada's children.

Immigrant children and youth come to Canada under a variety of circumstances. In 2003, 66% of those under age 15 were in the economic class, meaning their parents were selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy. About 19% were in the family class of immigrants, meaning they were sponsored by a Canadian citizen or by a relative who was a permanent resident. Slightly more than 5,200 immigrant children under age 15 came as refugees in 2003. They accounted for 14% of all young newcomers that year.

Among immigrants aged 15 to 24, the picture is somewhat different: 51% came in the family class and 31% were in the economic class. Just over 5,400 youth came as refugees, accounting for 16% of all newcomer youth.

## IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND YOUTH, 1994 TO 2004



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Citizenship and Immigration's Facts and Figures, 2002, 2003 & 2004.

## Countries of origin

According to 2001 Census data, 52% of immigrants under age 25 came to Canada from Asia; of those, 20% were from Eastern Asia and more than 12% from Southern Asia. In addition, 21% of immigrant children and youth came from Europe, and almost half of those were from Eastern Europe. Just over 8% came from Central and South America, 7% came from Africa. Less than 5% came from the United States.

Increasingly, immigrant children and youth speak neither English nor French upon their arrival in Canada. That was true for almost three-quarters (74%) of all immigrant children under age 15 in 2002, up from two-thirds in 1996.

## SOURCES

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