

The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile

A Perspective on **Alberta**

The *Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile, 3rd Edition*, is based on a comprehensive review of national and provincial data sources and extensive consultations with experts from many fields.

The *CICH Profile* contains ten chapters and 398 charts pertaining to the health and well-being of children and youth. It provides a relevant and clear picture of where our children are today, and gives some direction for where we might assist them as they explore their futures.

The following information from the *CICH Profile* addresses the health and well-being of children and youth in Alberta.

Population statistics:

- In Alberta, 80% of the population lives in an urban area compared to 78% of the entire Canadian population.
- 16% of the population in Alberta speaks a language other than English or French at home. The figure for Canada was also 16% in 1996.
- 5% of people in Alberta are Aboriginal, higher than the Canadian total of 2.8%.
- 30% of Alberta's residents are under the age of 20 compared with the Canadian average of 27%.
- In 1996, 17% of families in Alberta were headed by a lone-parent. The figure for Canada was 20% for the same year.

Pregnancy and birth statistics:

- In 1995, there were 14 live births per 1,000 population in Alberta, down from 17 in 1990. The Canadian rates for these two time periods were 15 in 1990 and 13 in 1995.
- In 1995, 6.3% of female infants and 5.7% of male infants in Alberta were born weighing less than 2,500 grams. Low birth weight, particularly very low birth weight, increases the risk of both short and long term health problems.
- In 1996, the rate of congenital anomalies in Alberta was 270 per 100,000 compared with a national rate of 486/100,000.

- In 1994, the teen pregnancy rate in Alberta was 54 for every 1,000 women aged between 15 and 19 years. The lowest rate for that year was 32 in both Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, and the highest was 137 in the Northwest Territories.

Death rates:

- The infant death rate in Alberta was 7 in every 1,000 live births in 1995, slightly higher than the overall Canadian rate of 6/1,000.
- Death rates in Alberta for all causes were similar to the national rate for all age groups.

Income inequity:

- 21% of children and youth under the age of 18 were living in poverty in Alberta in 1996. This is the same as the Canadian rate that year for the same age range.
- According to 1996 figures, a lone parent with one child would have to work 74 hours a week at the Alberta minimum wage to reach the low income cut-offs defined by Statistics Canada and commonly thought of as "poverty lines".
- The social assistance rates in Alberta are such that a lone parent with one child would receive a payment equaling 50% of that needed to reach the "poverty line".

Child care places:

- Alberta had regulated child care provisions for 9% of children aged 12 years and under in 1998. The Canadian rate for the same year was 10%.
- 24% of children in regulated child care in Alberta were subsidized according to figures compiled for 1998. For the same year, the Canadian rate was 31%, and the range was from 9% to 68%.

For information about the sources of the data, please refer to *The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile, 3rd Edition*. To order your copy of the *CICH Profile*, please contact:



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Dedicated to the Health and Well-being of Children and Youth