

# The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile

## A Perspective on **British Columbia**

**T**he *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 British Columbia.

### Population statistics:

- In British Columbia, 82% of the population lives in an urban area compared to 78% of the entire Canadian population.
- 22% of the population in British Columbia speaks a language other than English or French at home. The figure for Canada was 16% in 1996.
- 4% of people in British Columbia are Aboriginal which is just higher than the Canadian total of 2.8%.
- 26% of British Columbia's residents are under the age of 20 compared with the Canadian average of 27%.
- In 1996, 21% of families in British Columbia were headed by a lone-parent. The figure for Canada is 20%.

### Pregnancy and birth statistics:

- In 1995, there were 12 live births per 1,000 population in British Columbia, down from 14 in 1990. The Canadian rates for these two time periods were 15 in 1990 and 13 in 1995.
- In 1995, 5.7% of female infants and 5% of male infants in British Columbia 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 British Columbia was 479 per 100,000 compared with a national rate of 486/100,000.

- In 1994, the teen pregnancy rate in British Columbia was 41 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 British Columbia was 6 in every 1,000 live births in 1995, comparable to the overall Canadian rate of 6/1,000.
- Death rates in British Columbia for all causes were similar to the national rate for all age groups, but approximately half the national rate for the 1 to 4 year old group in 1995.

### Income inequity:

- 20% of children and youth under the age of 18 were living in poverty in British Columbia in 1996 compared to 21% of the same age group across Canada.
- According to 1996 figures, a lone parent with one child would have to work 61 hours a week at the British Columbia minimum wage rate in order to reach the low income cut-offs defined by Statistics Canada and commonly thought of as "poverty lines".
- The social assistance rates in British Columbia are such that a lone parent with one child would receive a payment equaling 61% of that needed to reach the "poverty line".

### Child care places:

- British Columbia had regulated child care provisions for 11% of children from birth to 12 years of age in 1998. The Canadian rate for the same year was 10%.
- An estimated 25% of children in regulated child care in British Columbia 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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