

The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile

A Perspective on Nova Scotia

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 Nova Scotia.

Population statistics:

- In Nova Scotia, 55% of the population lives in an urban area compared to 78% of the entire Canadian population.
- 3% of the population in Nova Scotia speaks a language other than English or French at home. The figure for Canada was 16% in 1996.
- 1% of people in Nova Scotia are Aboriginal, just less than the Canadian total of 2.8%.
- 27% of Nova Scotia's residents are under the age of 20, equaling the Canadian average of 27%.
- In 1996, 22% of families in Nova Scotia were headed by a lone-parent. The figure for Canada was 20% for the same year.

Pregnancy and birth statistics:

- In 1995, there were 11 live births per 1,000 population in Nova Scotia, down from 14 in 1990. The Canadian rates for these two time periods were 15 in 1990 and 13 in 1995.
- In 1995, 6.5% of female infants and 5.4% of male infants in Nova Scotia 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 Nova Scotia was 588 per 100,000 compared with a national rate of 486/100,000.
- In 1994, the teen pregnancy rate in Nova Scotia was 44 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 Nova Scotia was 5 in every 1,000 live births in 1995, slightly lower than the overall Canadian rate of 6/1,000.
- Death rates in Nova Scotia for all causes in 1995 were lower than the national rate for the 5 to 9 year age group, but similar to the national rate for all other ages.

Income inequity:

- 23% of children and youth under the age of 18 were living in poverty in Nova Scotia 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 68 hours a week at the Nova Scotia 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 Nova Scotia are such that a lone parent with one child would receive a payment equaling 63% of that needed to reach the "poverty line".

Child care places:

- Nova Scotia had regulated child care provisions for 7% of children from birth to 12 years of age in 1998. The Canadian rate for the same year was 10%.
- 20% of children in regulated child care in Nova Scotia 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