

Poverty | FOCUS ON CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Poverty remains widespread in Ontario affecting families and their children. Many struggle to survive. They live below a low-income cut-off, the poverty line, where they will likely devote a larger share of their income to basic necessities (food, shelter, clothing) than the average family.¹¹

In Canada, there are 4.8 million people who live in poverty¹². That's 1 in 7 Canadians, or 13.9% of the entire population of the country.¹³ A family or individual income is considered 'low income', if it is less than half of the national median income.¹⁴

In Ontario, more than 475,000 children or 17.2% live in poverty about 1.2 million children (17.4%) live in poverty. An adult working full-time (35 hrs/week) for the full year who only makes \$25,480 a year is considered low income.

Many municipalities in Ontario have become 'unequal' as poverty divides them.¹⁵ In Toronto, for example, where 1 in 4 children live in poverty, children from families of people of colour are more than twice as likely to be living in poverty: 23.3% cent compared to 11.4%. About 84% of Indigenous families with children are living in poverty.¹⁶

“Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid.” Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, The Joy Of The Gospel, #187 – November, 2013

These statistics reflect the precarious state of many families in Ontario. These families and their children have been marginalized by poverty. Ending child poverty has been discussed since the end of the last century. Candidates in this election must show a commitment to move forward with legislation that ends child and family poverty.

11 This is based on the low-income cut-offs (LICOs) which are income thresholds below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income on the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family, that is, 20 percentage points more than the average family on food, shelter and clothing. The LICO uses seven family sizes and five different populations of the area of residence which is intended to capture differences in the cost of living among community sizes. The LICO is calculated using typical family expenditures (food, shelter and clothing) for seven family sizes and five community sizes and results in a table of 35 cut-offs. This operation is done twice: once for before-tax cut-offs, once for after-tax cut-offs. {cf., Low Income Lines: What they are and how they are created, No.2, Research Paper 75F0002M, Statistics Canada. July 2016} 12 Poverty Trends 2017, Citizens for Public Justice. Ottawa 2018. 13 The low income measure (LIM) is the most commonly used low income measure. It is 50% of median adjusted household income, where “adjusted” indicates that household needs are taken into account, so a household of six has greater needs than a household of two. The LIM is calculated three times for market income, before-tax income, and after-tax income. They calculated using an annual survey of household income. The low income measure after tax (LIM-AT) is a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of households observed at the person level, where ‘adjusted’ indicates that a household’s needs are taken into account. {cf., Low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT), 2011 NHS Dictionary, Statistics Canada 2018.} 14 The poverty rate is defined by Statistics Canada, using the Low-Income Measure (LIM). It which defines poverty rate as less than half of the national median Canadian household income which is set at \$45,712. 15 “Unequal City: The Hidden Divide Among Toronto’s Children and Youth,” the 2017 Toronto Child and Family Poverty Report Card. Social Planning Toronto, November 2017 16 “Ending Child & Family Poverty Is Not Negotiable - Building Stronger Foundations for Ontario Families,” Report Card 2017 on Child and Family Poverty in Ontario, Campaign 2000. November 2017; and, “Toronto child poverty divided along racial lines,” Child poverty rate in Toronto is twice as high in racialized families according to a new study based on the 2016 census, Laurie Monsebraaten, Social Justice Reporter. Toronto Star, November 15, 2017