

2016 Census: The Canadian families of today and yesteryear ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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TRANSCRIPT

There are now 9.8 million families in Canada, according to the 2016 Census. This is 15 times as many as in 1871, when the first census was taken after Confederation. Yet as the number of families increased, their size decreased.

Back in the 19th century, Canada was mostly a rural society with small, family-run farms. Larger families meant that more children were around to help run the farm. But families have always come in different shapes and sizes. Even then, lone-parent families and stepfamilies were quite common, because mortality was much higher.

This led to early widowhood and remarriage. Other people stayed single for economic or religious reasons.

Many changes have taken place since then, such as the Divorce Act of 1968, the birth-control pill, the growing participation of women in both paid work and higher education, and the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Since the 1970s, women have been having less than two children on average.

Today, fewer families are made up of married couples, while common-law couples and lone-parent families have increased steadily over the last decades.

The family situation of children has also changed significantly, partly because today's parents often separate before their children have left home.

Many children now spend part of their childhood in a lone-parent family, possibly living part of the time with each parent or in a stepfamily.

In 2016, 10% of children aged 0 to 14 lived in a stepfamily. And, still others lived with only their grandparents, with other relatives, or in a foster family.

For the past 150 years, the Census has given us an insight into how Canadian families live and the dramatic ways that families have changed.

Along with millions of other Canadians, you took part in a long-standing tradition that helps us understand where we come from, who we are today, and how to shape our future.

Thank you for completing your census questionnaire and for watching this video. For more information, and to access results for your community from the 2016 Census, please visit www.statcan.gc.ca/census ^[3].

Region: Canada ^[4]

Tags: data ^[5]

demographics ^[6]

diversity ^[7]

family ^[8]

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/08/2016-census-canadian-families-today-and-yesteryear> ^[2]

<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/sc/video/2016census-families> ^[3] <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/census> ^[4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> ^[5]

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<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/diversity> ^[8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/family>