

Families, households and marital status: Key results from the 2016 Census ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF ^[2]

Description

The 2016 Census data show that, today, proportionally fewer households are composed of a 'mom, dad and kids' family and more people are living alone, as part of a couple without children, or as part of a multigenerational family.

Canadians' lives at home have evolved since Confederation, when large rural families consisting of a married couple and several children were common. In 1871, there were on average 5.6 people per household, a ratio that dropped to 2.4 by 2016.

These changes are the results of demographic shifts, such as population aging and increasing ethnocultural diversity, as well as social, economic and legislative changes. The evolving living arrangements and families of Canadians can also have consequences, for example on the housing market, on caregiving and care receiving and on intergenerational relationships.

Today, Statistics Canada is releasing the third series of data from the 2016 Census. This release focuses on families, households, marital status, and language. The data provide a portrait of a country where diverse living arrangements have replaced the family models of the past.

Through the years, the census has been used as a barometer to accurately capture changes in Canadian households and families. It measured common-law unions for the first time in 1981, same-sex couples in 2001, and foster children and stepfamilies in 2011. Census data help governments respond to changes in the lives of Canadians, by putting in place policies such as the Universal Child Care Benefit and Old Age Security.

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