

Study finds child poverty in every ward—even the most affluent—and calls for renewed action on poverty reduction strategy ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Read online ^[2]

Attachment	Size
 Child Family Poverty Report Municipal Election Edition.pdf ^[3]	8.84 MB

PRESS RELEASE

Child and family poverty is a disturbing reality in every ward in Toronto, a new report from a coalition of community agencies finds. Newly released census data shows that ten wards in the city have a child poverty rate between 33% and 47%, but even wards with relatively low rates include areas where child poverty is pervasive, at double or triple the ward average.

The report, entitled “2018 Toronto Child & Family Poverty Report: Municipal Election Edition,” is the first to use census tract data to show hidden poverty within the city’s wards.

“Twenty-five wards or forty-seven, no matter how you slice it, child poverty is a serious problem in every single ward in this city — even the most affluent have pockets of child poverty,” said Peter Clutterbuck, interim Executive Director of Social Planning Toronto. “In fact, statistics for the new 25-ward system hide the depth and breadth of child poverty within each of the wards.”

Eglinton-Lawrence (Ward 8), for example, has an average after-tax household income of \$119,469, and 55% of its residents own their homes. Of all of the city’s 25 wards, it has the lowest rate of child poverty, affecting 15.1% of the ward’s children. However, there are areas within Eglinton-Lawrence where child poverty is far more common, with rates as high as 52.6%. Ward statistics paint a rosier picture, masking the struggles that many families face within the ward.

The report shows that inequities within our city are deep, disproportionately affecting Indigenous, racialized, and newcomer communities. In addition to census data, this research draws on the “Our Health Counts Toronto” study of Indigenous peoples in the city, which found that a staggering 84% of Indigenous families with children live in poverty.

“The release of this report is very timely,” said Sara Wolfe, a founding partner of Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto and the lead community partner for the Our Health Counts Toronto study. “Indigenous children are over two times more likely than non-Indigenous children to live in low-income families. While the study found many signs of resilience and hope, the mechanics of colonization have had a lasting and damaging impact on Indigenous communities through the generations.”

“There is a national awakening as to the layers of system failures affecting Indigenous peoples in Canada, including in Toronto, and unacceptable gaps in areas including poverty, employment, education, and health. But if we build on many of our strengths and resiliencies, we will start to find hope for good health and equality,” said Wolfe.

“A third of racialized children and over 40% of newcomer children live in low-income families,” added Avvy Go, spokesperson with Colour of Poverty–Colour of Change. “We need a renewed commitment to poverty reduction from our next Mayor and Council that will improve conditions for families and address the severe inequities faced by racialized and newcomer communities in our city.”

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