

National scorecard on Canada's growth and prosperity: Measuring Canada's progress towards smart and sustainable growth ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpted from background

Canada is at a crossroads. Our population is aging, our workforce is not growing fast enough, and our fertility rates are below replacement levels. Projections indicate that birth rates could decline even more substantially due to Covid-19. ¹ If these trends continue and the number of working-age people declines relative to the number of people depending on them, our economy will suffer. This will mean fewer tax dollars to support essential and high-quality programs and services—including health care, income security programs, and necessary infrastructure. It will mean that key industries will grow more slowly, be less dynamic, and be less competitive. Without a growing population, we will not have the resources—whether we're talking about human resources or economic means—to advance the country's social, economic, or environmental goals.

To enhance our economic strength, diversity at home, and our influence abroad, we must prioritize population growth. Century Initiative has set an aspirational goal of 100 million people by 2100. But population growth alone is not enough. We must grow well into the future. Broadly, this means we must ensure that the benefits of growth are shared among all Canadians. Growth must also be pursued in collaboration with Canada's provinces, territories, cities, towns, and Indigenous communities, and with a commitment to environmental sustainability. In this time of crisis brought on by Covid-19, Canada has an opportunity to make foundational changes, planning for the future we want and preparing for the challenges we can expect over the course of this century and beyond.

The National Scorecard

Century Initiative is introducing its first annual National Scorecard on Canada's Growth and Prosperity. The Scorecard is designed to assess Canada's progress in key areas that are essential to supporting population growth (and the shared prosperity that comes with it), as well as to highlight successes and gaps that will need more attention to achieve smart growth in the years ahead.

The Scorecard has the following objectives:

- To start a conversation about what measures will contribute to building a bigger, bolder Canada, and how we are performing as a country when it comes to implementing or addressing these measures.
- To help policy- and decision-makers identify priorities in building a big, bold, and prosperous nation in 2100, and to encourage a discussion about what we need to do, collectively, to address gaps and leverage opportunities to achieve that vision.
- Century Initiative will use the findings in the Scorecard to help direct its research, education, advocacy, and convening efforts in its five key domains: immigration, urban development and infrastructure, employment and entrepreneurship, early childhood supports, and education. As our work progresses, the Scorecard will be our annual pulse check on the work that has been achieved and the steps ahead.

Child care

Indicator: Child care

Target: Top 10 of OECD countries. **Threshold:** 10th in the OECD was New Zealand with a 72.3% enrolment rate for 0 to 5 year-olds in 2017. The way in which the OECD tracks early learning and child care enrolment is not directly comparable to available Canadian data. While Canada does not appear in OECD data on this measure, OECD data provides a general benchmark to which Canada can be compared.

Where Canada is at: Canada had 59.9% of children aged 0 to 5 in some form of child care outside of the immediate family (not including kindergarten) in 2019.

Direction Canada is heading: Falling behind - Participation in child care in Canada, according to available data (which does not cover all forms of early learning and child care), is currently below the OECD average. Due to a lack of internationally comparable data, the degree to which Canada is falling behind in participation is not fully known. Canada's lack of a national policy on child care also puts it behind many comparable countries, though this could change with new federal commitments to developing a national child care system.

Why it matters: Early learning and child care provides an important foundation for child skills development and well-being. A robust child care system can enable greater participation in the labour force by parents, particularly mothers, which is essential to our economic recovery from Covid-19, and to longer-term prosperity. A strong child care system could also potentially impact decisions on whether to have children. There are disparities in participation in child care across Canada. A UN Sustainable Development Goal is for all children to have access to quality early childhood learning.

Region: Canada [5]

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Links

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