

Child care a key issue in a large number of tight ridings across the country: Environics Analytics ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

TORONTO -- Making child care more affordable has been discussed for a long time in Canada; this election has spurred some action by the parties in supporting parents – especially women – to return to the post-pandemic workforce.

The governing Liberals tried to cut deals with the provinces prior to calling the election with many signing on, while the opposition parties have proposed their alternatives.

The debates included some heated discussions about child care, including the ones in French. This may surprise some non-Quebecers, given that Quebec has been famous for its subsidized child-care program for many years.

Environics Analytics (EA) sought to understand child-care expenses for different segments of the Canadian population to sort out which races in the upcoming election could be most in play on this issue. Interestingly, Quebec is one region that figures strongly.

Environics Analytics created 15 voter segments to understand the people behind local voting patterns and the key election issues. We found that four of the 15 spend a significantly higher proportion of their household expenditures on child care than the other segments: from 26% to 41% more. Two of those segments are Francophone, including the one that spends proportionately the most, and two are primarily Anglophone.

- Les Familles (upper-middle-income suburban Quebec families). They tended to vote for the Bloc Québécois (BQ), with the Liberals close behind in 2019.

- Jeunes en Ville (young, educated starter families living in downtown neighbourhoods in Quebec). This segment tended to vote Liberal.

- Second City Suburbs (middle-class suburban families around cities other than Vancouver and Toronto). On balance these were Conservative voters, but in Ontario it was a close race in 2019.

- Big City Burbs (upper-middle-class, multi-ethnic families primarily around larger cities in B.C., Alberta and Ontario). They voted Conservative in B.C. and Alberta (with the Liberals close behind in B.C.), while they voted Liberal in Ontario.

The table below shows the relative spend by each segment on child care as a percentage of total household expenditures. We've expressed the share of expenditure as an index where the Canadian average share is shown as 100. The approach makes it easy to understand how different each segment is from the national average.

There is more information on the segments themselves, here.

Child Care Expenditures	
Voter Segment	Share of Expenditure Index
Affluent Families	93
Aging Heartland	69
Big City Burbs	126
Francophones aux Villages	101
Jeunes en Ville	126
Les Familles	141
New Canadian Mosaic	115
Older Rustic	54
Second City Suburbs	127
Young in the City	95
Indigenous Families	74
Suburban Nesters	54
Modest Metros	94
Célibataires et Couples Âgés	110
Metro Boomers	77
Canada	100
<i>Source: Environics Analytics - HouseholdSpend, PRIZM (2021)</i>	

When we turn the expenditure profile across the voter segments into riding-level child-care expenditure estimates and focus in on the close races from 2019, the results show that this is a lynchpin issue that could influence results in many races.

The 20 ridings with the highest shares of expenditure are all in Quebec (13) and Ontario (7), the regions most in play for the Liberals and Conservatives.

Looking a little more broadly, 89 ridings had child-care expenses taking up a significantly larger (>20% larger) chunk of expenditures compared to the Canadian average. Of these seats, the Liberals won 44, the Conservatives won 28 and the BQ won 14.

Close races (won by <10 percentage points) made up 23 of these ridings in 2019. That list is in the table below.

Riding	Childcare Expenditure Index (Canada = 100)	Winning Party 2019		Second Party 2019		Winning Margin
		Name	Vote Shr	Name	Vote Shr	Pct Pts
La Prairie, QC	164	Bloc Québécois	41.8	Liberal	36.6	5.2
Thérèse-De Blainville, QC	163	Bloc Québécois	41.8	Liberal	35.8	6.0
Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, QC	155	Bloc Québécois	40.6	Liberal	36.1	4.5
Châteauguay--Lacolle, QC	147	Liberal	38.4	Bloc Québécois	37.2	1.2
Whitby, ON	145	Liberal	43.7	Conservative	35.5	8.1
Kitchener South--Hespeler, ON	141	Liberal	40.2	Conservative	33.5	6.7
Saint John--Rothesay, NB	139	Liberal	37.4	Conservative	34.0	3.5
Montarville, QC	139	Bloc Québécois	42.8	Liberal	35.6	7.3
Markham--Stouffville, ON	136	Liberal	38.9	Conservative	30.6	8.3
Newmarket--Aurora, ON	135	Liberal	43.1	Conservative	37.8	5.3
King--Vaughan, ON	134	Liberal	45.0	Conservative	43.2	1.8
Carleton, ON	134	Conservative	46.3	Liberal	38.2	8.1
Kanata--Carleton, ON	133	Liberal	43.1	Conservative	36.5	6.6
Longueuil--Charles-LeMoyne, QC	133	Liberal	39.0	Bloc Québécois	36.5	2.6
Durham, ON	132	Conservative	42.1	Liberal	32.2	9.9
Saskatoon West, SK	129	Conservative	47.7	NDP-New Democratic Party	40.3	7.4
Aurora--Oak Ridges--Richmond Hill, ON	128	Conservative	44.4	Liberal	42.4	2.0
Shefford, QC	128	Bloc Québécois	38.6	Liberal	37.1	1.5
Cloverdale--Langley City, BC	127	Conservative	37.7	Liberal	35.2	2.5
Hochelaga, QC	126	Liberal	34.0	Bloc Québécois	33.3	0.6
Kitchener--Conestoga, ON	126	Liberal	39.7	Conservative	39.0	0.7
Longueuil--Saint-Hubert, QC	124	Bloc Québécois	38.5	Liberal	34.2	4.3
Fredericton, NB	124	Green Party	33.7	Conservative	30.4	3.3

THE TAKEAWAY

Child care is a key issue in a large number of close races in the very regions that the Liberals are trying to upset opponents or hang on to their existing seats. The Quebec child-care agreement should help them in six seats the BQ won and another three that they already hold, all with thin

margins.

In Ontario, the Liberals are fighting the Conservatives in the suburban areas of Toronto, Ottawa and Kitchener-Waterloo: they hold seven of these seats, while the Conservatives hold three.

The more-generous child-care platform the Liberals are offering should play well in these critical races, plus in tight races in other parts of the country listed in the table.

Environics Analytics is a Bell Canada company

METHODOLOGY

Environics Analytics used its HouseholdSpend database that combines data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending with its current-year postal code level demographic estimates to project current expenditures for each of Canada's approximately 800,000 six-digit postal codes. The data were aggregated to 15 different voter segments based on common demographics and tendencies in regional voting behaviours in the 2019 federal election. The expenditure data were also aggregated to ridings for this analysis.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: federal election 2021 ^[4]

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