Aboriginal children face terrible poverty in Canada: report

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EXCERPTS

A national network of advocacy groups released a report on Friday that paints a bleak picture of poverty facing First Nations children in Canada.

In its report called Oh Canada! Too Many Children in Poverty for Too Long, advocacy group Campaign 2000 says First Nations children are suffering the greatest levels of poverty of all children in the country.

The report says one in four children in First Nations communities lives in poverty and it calls upon federal and provincial governments to take action to ensure aboriginal children on reserves and in urban areas will thrive.

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According to the report, First Nations children face terrible daily living conditions and are more likely than other Canadian children to suffer health problems. Among the problems listed:

- One aboriginal child in eight is disabled, double the rate of all children in Canada.
- Among First Nations children, 43 per cent lack basic dental care.
- Overcrowding among First Nations families is double the rate of that for all Canadian families.
- Mould contaminates almost half of all First Nations households.
- Almost half of aboriginal children under 15 years old residing in urban areas live with a single parent.
- Close to 100 First Nations communities must boil their water.
- Of all off-reserve aboriginal children, 40 per cent live in poverty.

"Now is the time for governments at all levels to collaborate with First Nations governments and aboriginal organizations to ramp up social investments that enable young aboriginals to succeed," the report says.

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