

# Child poverty rate still high after years of Liberal promises: Report [CA-ON] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

One million children across Canada are growing up poor despite years of Liberal promises to help, says a new study to be released Wednesday.

Campaign 2000, a coalition of groups fighting child poverty, says the rate has held steady at about 15 per cent. It blames reduced access to employment insurance, lack of affordable housing, the high cost of child care and tax policies that penalize welfare families.

Real progress will cost Ottawa an extra \$18 billion a year, it says.

It's not an outlandish request in an era of successive budget surpluses, says Laurel Rothman, national co-ordinator of the coalition.

The cash represents 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product, the value of home-grown goods and services. It would build a solid base of crucial social supports, says Pathways to Progress: Structural Solutions to Address Child Poverty.

Prime Minister Paul Martin must back up lofty goals with action, says Rothman.

"He said in 1998 that we should establish the elimination of child poverty as a national objective, not unlike we did with the deficit."

Social Development Minister Liza Frulla agreed that more must be done.

"They're right," she said Tuesday outside the Commons.

But she stressed that Ottawa spent about \$8 billion last year for National Child Benefit payments to help working-poor families. The Liberals also committed \$2 billion over six years to build more affordable housing and upgrade shelters, she said.

These efforts, like the \$950-million federal push for a national child care program, can only work if provinces sign on, Frulla said.

The Campaign 2000 report calls for:

- More generous employment insurance access.
- Increased child tax benefits that aren't clawed back from welfare families.
- A universal, national, child-care program.
- Higher payments to the provinces specifically for social programs.
- More cash for affordable housing.

The report measures hardship using Statistics Canada's low-income cut-offs. By those standards, a family of four is deemed to be in "straitened circumstances" if its before-tax income is less than \$37,253 in a major city and less than \$25,744 in a rural area.

- reprinted from Canadian Press

**Related link:** Report: Pathways to progress: Structural solutions to address child poverty <sup>[2]</sup>

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** poverty <sup>[4]</sup>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/04/05/child-poverty-rate-still-high-after-years-liberal-promises-report-ca> [2]  
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