

Two-income families nearly doubled from 1976 to 2014 ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Families with both parents working are a substantial majority in Canada, with 69 per cent of couples with a child under 16 years of age having two incomes, according to Statistics Canada.

That contrasts sharply with 36 per cent of couples with a child under 16 having two working parents in 1976 and represents a 92 per cent increase.

In Quebec, the proportion of families with a stay-at-home parent declined faster than anywhere in the country, from 59 per cent of families in 1976 to 13 per cent in 2014.

The Statistics Canada study based on data from the Labour Force Survey shows the changes undergone by Canadian families in the past 38 years.

The survey gathered data on 2.8 million families in both 2014 and 1976, as the number of Canadian families with children remained constant.

Living on 1 income

The influx of women into the workforce in the 1970s and 1980s is credited with boosting the prosperity of middle-class households.

However, it is also true that few Canadian families can afford to live on one income as many did in 1976.

That makes the cost of daycare a perennial issue for many families and means legislation such as the income-splitting tax break pushed through earlier this year may be tailored for the kind of Canadian family that is no longer in the majority.

The share of couple families with children who had only a single earner declined from 59 per cent in 1976 to 27 per cent in 2014. That means only 500,000 couples across Canada, according to Statistics Canada.

But in 2014, it was far more likely that a stay-at-home parent was the father than in 1976. About 11 per cent of families with a stay-at-home parent said it was dad who was home with kids, compared to two per cent in 1976.

Among the families with two income earners, three-quarters of them had both partners working full-time, compared to two-thirds in 1976.

There were almost almost 700,000 lone parents with at least one child under the age of 16 in 2014 – more than double the 300,000 single parents in 1976.

About 69 per cent of lone mothers and 82 per cent of lone fathers were employed.

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Region: Canada ^[3]

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