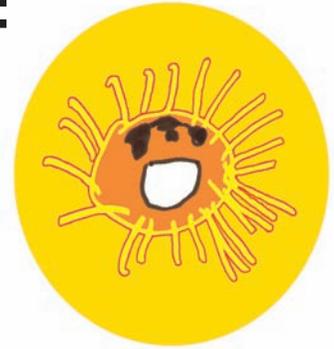


Catalogue no. 89-634-X - No. 001
ISSN 1918-4964
ISBN 978-1-100-11038-7

Analytical Paper

Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006: Family, Community and Child Care



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Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006: Family, Community and Child Care

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October 2008

Catalogue no. 89-634-X no. 001

ISSN 1918-4964

ISBN 978-1-100-11038-7

Frequency: Occasional

Ottawa

La version française de cette publication est disponible sur demande (n° 89-634-X au catalogue).

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Symbols

The following standard symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0 ^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^p	preliminary
^r	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the <i>Statistics Act</i>
E	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published

Acknowledgements

Statistics Canada wishes to acknowledge the collaborative partnership of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for the Aboriginal Children's Survey, who provided invaluable guidance and expertise throughout the development and implementation of the survey. This group was composed of a cross-section of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators, researchers, and other professionals in early childhood development. Special thanks are extended to all TAG members and honoured Elders for their commitment in advocating for a culturally appropriate children's survey and a process that respects First Nations, Métis and Inuit values.

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Table of contents

Table of Contents	3
Highlights	6
Introduction	8
Part 1 – First Nations children living off reserve	10
Introduction	10
Young First Nations children and their families	12
Family size	12
Age of parents	13
Living arrangements for young First Nations children living off reserve	13
Across the generations: Living with grandparents	14
Persons involved in raising First Nations children	15
Young First Nations children living in low-income economic families	16
Feelings about home and daily life	18
Feelings about community	19
Participation in traditional and cultural activities	20
Help with understanding First Nations culture and history	21
Child care arrangements	22
Child care that promotes traditional and cultural values and customs	23
Summary	23
Part 2 – Métis children	24
Introduction	24
Young Métis children and their families	25
Family size	25
Age of parents	25
Living arrangements for young Métis children	26
Across the generations: Living with grandparents	26
Persons involved in raising Métis children	27
Young Métis children living in low-income economic families	28
Feelings about home and daily life	30
Feelings about community	31
Participation in traditional and cultural activities	32
Help with understanding Métis culture and history	33

Table of contents (continued)

Child care arrangements	34
Child care that promotes traditional and cultural values and customs	35
Part 3 – Inuit children	36
Introduction	36
Young Inuit children and their families	36
Family size	36
Age of parents	37
Living arrangements of Inuit children	37
Adoption in Inuit families	38
Across the generations: Living with grandparents	39
Persons involved in raising Inuit children	40
Socio-economic status of young Inuit children	41
Feelings about home and daily life	42
Feelings about community	43
Cultural activities	44
Participation in traditional and cultural activities	44
Help with understanding Inuit history and culture	45
Child care arrangements	45
Child care that promotes traditional and cultural values and customs	46
Summary	47
References	48

About the Aboriginal children's survey

The Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) provides an extensive set of data about Aboriginal (Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve First Nations) children under six years of age in urban, rural, and northern locations across Canada. The Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) was designed to provide a picture of the early development of Aboriginal children and the social and living conditions in which they are learning and growing.

The survey was developed by Statistics Canada and Aboriginal advisors from across the country and was conducted jointly with Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

The Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) is a post-censal survey, that is, the sample was selected from children living in private households whose response on their 2006 Census questionnaire indicated that they:

- had Aboriginal ancestors and / or
- identified as North American Indian and/or Métis and / or Inuit, and / or
- had treaty or registered Indian status and / or
- had Indian Band membership.

While nationally the ACS covers First Nations children living off reserve, Métis children, and Inuit children, information was also collected in some First Nations communities in Quebec and in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Therefore, findings from the Aboriginal Children's Survey are not representative of all First Nations children living in Canada; however, they are representative of First Nations children (under 6 years) living off-reserve in the ten provinces and all First Nations children (under 6 years) in the territories. Additionally, non-Aboriginal children in the territories were included as part of the Survey of Northern Children. The focus of this analytical article is First Nations children living off reserve, Métis children, and Inuit children. A small number of Inuit and Métis children live on reserve and are not included in the ACS.

The Aboriginal identity definition is used in this report. For the ACS, children were identified by parents or guardians as North American Indian and / or Métis and / or Inuit. The term "First Nations children" is used throughout this report to refer to those children living off reserve who were identified as North American Indian.

It was possible to report both single and multiple responses to the Aboriginal identity question on the ACS (approximately 3% of children in the Aboriginal identity population of the ACS were identified with more than one group). In this publication, data represent a combination of both the single and multiple Aboriginal identity populations. As an example, the Métis data tables include those who were identified as Métis only and those identified as Métis in combination with another Aboriginal group (for example, Métis and North American Indian).

There are some instances where Census data is used in this report. In these cases, the single response Aboriginal identity population is used. Less than 1% of Aboriginal children under the age of 6 were identified as belonging to more than one Aboriginal group on the 2006 Census. Census counts have been used to describe the number of Inuit, Métis and off-reserve First Nations children rather than the counts stemming from the ACS for consistency with previously released Census data. Please refer the "ACS Concepts and Methods Guide" for a detailed explanation of the relationship between the ACS and the Census (catalogue number 89-634).

The Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) was conducted between October 2006 and March 2007. This report is based on information provided by parents or guardians of approximately 10,500 Aboriginal children under six years of age. Personal interviews were conducted in Inuit communities, the Northwest Territories (except for Yellowknife) and in other remote areas, while telephone interviews were conducted elsewhere. The overall response rate for the ACS was 81.1%.

More detailed information about the survey is available in the *ACS 2006 Concepts and Methods Guide* (catalogue number 89-634).

Highlights

- According to the 2006 Census, Aboriginal children are a growing proportion of all children; particularly in the territories and in the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
 - For example, while Aboriginal people made up 10% of the population living off-reserve in Saskatchewan in 2006, Aboriginal children made up 20% of all children under six years old.
- According to the 2006 Census, there were approximately 7,000 Inuit, 35,000 Métis and 47,000 off-reserve First Nations¹ children under the age of six across Canada².
- Compared to non-Aboriginal children, higher percentages of young Aboriginal children are growing up in large families and with young parents.
 - About 28% of Inuit children, 17% of First Nations children living off reserve, and 11% of Métis children were living in families with 4 or more children. This is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children in Canada.
 - Aboriginal children are more likely to be raised by younger parents than non-Aboriginal children. Among children under six years old, 26% of Inuit children, 27% of First Nations children living off reserve and 22% of Métis children had mothers between the ages of 15 to 24; this is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.
- Many persons, including extended family and community members, are involved in raising young Aboriginal children.
 - In 2006, among children under the age of six years old, 67% of First Nations children living off reserve, 69% of Métis, and 71% of Inuit received focused attention from their grandparents at least once a week. Furthermore, 26% of First Nations children, 24% of Métis children, and 35% of Inuit children received focused attention from Elders at least once a week.
- A greater proportion of young Aboriginal children were living in low-income economic families compared to non-Aboriginal children.
 - The differences are particularly large in urban areas. Over half (57%) of First Nations children in census metropolitan areas (CMAs)³ were living in low-income economic families, as were 45% of Inuit children and 42% of Métis children. This is compared to 21% of non-Aboriginal children in CMAs.

1. Children were identified as 'North American Indian'; however the term "First Nations children" is used throughout this report.

2. Indian settlements and reserves were excluded in the 10 provinces. All First Nations, Métis and Inuit children living in the Yukon and Northwest Territories were included in the target population for the survey. In total, the 2006 Census enumerated approximately 131,000 Aboriginal children under the age of 6 about 40,000 lived on reserve and 91,000 lived off reserve. (A reserve is land set apart and designated for the use and occupancy of an Indian group or band as such, the terms "on-reserve" or "off-reserve" are generally not applicable to Métis or Inuit). The 91,000 children included 47,000 First Nations children living off reserve, 35,000 Métis children, 7,000 Inuit children and approximately 2,000 who children were either identified as belonging to more than one Aboriginal identity group or were reported to be treaty or registered Indians and / or members of an Indian band or First Nation that did not identify with an Aboriginal group. Census counts have been used to describe the number of Inuit, Métis and off-reserve First Nations children rather than the counts stemming from the Aboriginal Children's Survey for consistency with previously released Census data. Please refer the "Aboriginal Children's Survey 2006: Concepts and Methods Guide" for a detailed explanation of the relationship between the Aboriginal Children's Survey and the Census (catalogue number 89-634).

3. Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) are formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centered on a large urban area (known as the urban core). A census metropolitan area must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the urban core.

- Parents or guardians of Aboriginal children reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with their finances and their housing situation compared to other aspects of their home and daily life.
 - The parents or guardians of 29% of Inuit children, 21% of Métis children, and 28% of First Nations children living off reserve reported they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their finances.
 - The parents or guardians of 30% of Inuit children, 10% of Métis children, and 16% of First Nations children living off reserve reported they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their housing situation.
 - Inuit children were six times more likely than non-Aboriginal children to live in crowded homes (43% compared with 7%). Higher percentages of Inuit children were also living in homes requiring major repairs (29%), compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.
 - Among First Nations children living off reserve, 18% were living in homes requiring major repairs as were 15% of Métis children.
- Parents and guardians reported relatively high levels of satisfaction with their support networks from family, friends and others.
 - The parents and guardians of 90% of First Nations children, 93% of Métis children and 89% of Inuit children reported that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the social supports available from family, friends and others.
 - Unlike the ratings in satisfaction with finances and housing situation, where there were large differences between those in low-income families and those not living in low-income families, there were little to no differences in levels of satisfaction with support networks (support from family, friends and others) between those in low-income families and those not living in low income families (for First Nations children living off reserve and Métis children).
- Although parents and guardians of First Nations and Métis children were generally satisfied with many aspects of their community as a place to raise children, they were less satisfied with access to activities and services that promote traditional and cultural values and customs.
 - At least half of off-reserve First Nations and Métis children were living in communities rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' by their parents or guardians in terms of good schools and adequate facilities for children. By comparison, about one in six were living in communities rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' as a place with Aboriginal cultural activities.
 - About 45% of First Nations children living off reserve and 31% of Métis children had someone to help them understand their Aboriginal culture.
 - In 2006, 24% of First Nations children and 14% of Métis children currently receiving child care were in an arrangement that promotes traditional and cultural values and customs.
- Inuit children appear to have more access to cultural activities than their First Nations and Métis counterparts.
 - Inuit children within Inuit Nunaat⁴ were more likely to have parents or guardians who reported that their community was 'excellent' or 'very good' as a place with cultural activities (31%) compared to First Nations children living off reserve (17%) and Métis children (16%).
 - Of Inuit children in child care, 56% were in arrangements that promoted traditional and cultural values and customs – this was significantly higher than First Nations children living off reserve (24%) and Métis children (14%). In Inuit Nunaat, 70% of children in child care were in arrangements that promoted traditional and cultural values and customs.
 - A large proportion of Inuit children (56%), especially those in Inuit Nunaat (63%), had taken part in traditional activities such as drum dancing or gatherings. This is compared to 46% of First Nations children living off reserve and 28% of Métis children.

4. Four regions comprise Inuit Nunaat which means "Inuit homeland" in the Inuit language. These four regions are: Nunatsiavut in northern Labrador, Nunavik in northern Quebec, the territory of Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories.

Introduction

Perhaps foremost, children are seen in diverse Aboriginal traditions as gifts from the Creator; they are cared for as the purpose of life. Care, education, is not bounded by schools or by mind-body-spirit fragmentations or by stages of life. From before birth until after death children are a sacred legacy on loan to parents by the Creator (Stairs et. al. 2002: 323).

A growing body of research indicates that the experiences during the first five years of a child's life have a major bearing on his or her future success in school, in the workplace, and many other aspects of a healthy, fulfilling life... Some argue that society's wisest learning investments are concentrated on early childhood learning and development, on the very solid grounds that the early years are overwhelmingly significant to all dimensions of life's prospects (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007).

Aboriginal children make up an increasing proportion of all children in Canada, and there has been increased attention to the importance of early childhood as setting the stage for life's prospects (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). There has been a lack of data on young Aboriginal children. To address data gaps, the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) was developed by Statistics Canada and Aboriginal advisors from across the country and conducted jointly with Human Resources and Social Development Canada. The survey provides an extensive set of data about Aboriginal children under six years of age in urban, rural, and northern locations across Canada. These data can be used to better understand the social and living conditions in which Aboriginal children are learning and growing and will help inform policy decisions that affect the lives of Aboriginal children.

This survey was developed with the direct participation of parents, front-line workers, early childhood educators, researchers, various Aboriginal organizations and others. A Technical Advisory Group (TAG), consisting of specialists in Aboriginal early childhood development and representing diverse Aboriginal backgrounds, was established to provide guidance on the development and implementation of the survey. Based on recommendations from the TAG, the ACS was designed to be holistic in nature, collecting information on a wide range of topics, including children's health, sleep, nutrition, development, nurturing, child care, schooling, language, behaviour, and activities. Since the children's environment is important to their development and well-being, some information was collected on the children's parent(s) or guardian(s) and their neighbourhood or community.

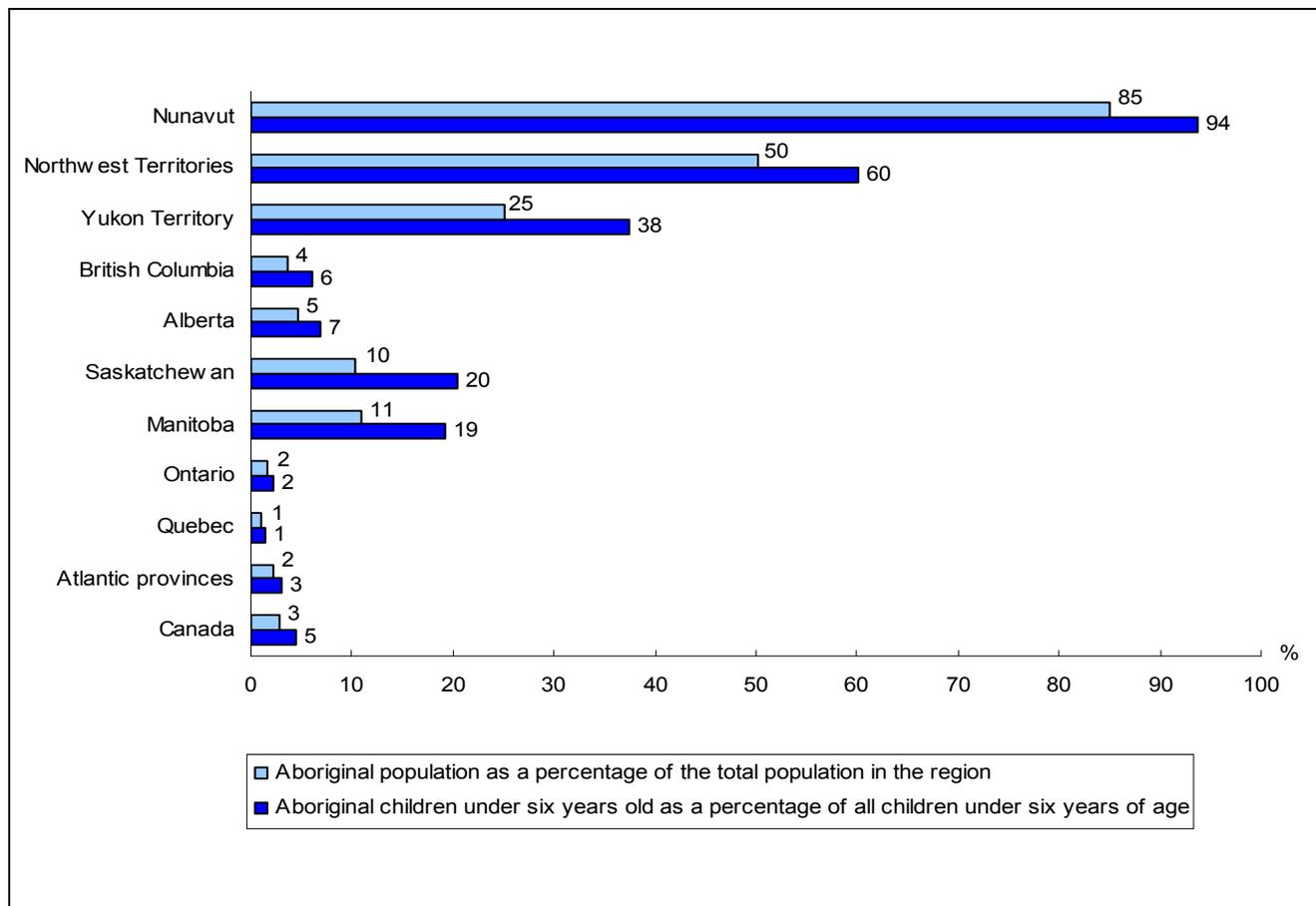
Setting the context

According to the 2006 Census, there were approximately 7,000 Inuit, 35,000 Métis and 47,000 off-reserve First Nations children under the age of six across Canada⁵.

According to a Statistics Canada report (2008), the Aboriginal population is growing quickly, at a rate that outpaces that of the rest of the Canadian population. Aboriginal children are a growing proportion among all children in Canada, particularly in some western provinces and in the Territories. For example, in Saskatchewan, Aboriginal people represent 10% of the total provincial off-reserve population; however, Aboriginal children under six years old represent 20% of all Saskatchewan's children under six years old (off reserve). (chart 1)

Chart 1

Aboriginal population as percentage of total population and Aboriginal children under six years old as a percentage of all children under six years, excluding reserves, Canada, provinces and territories, 2006



Note(s): All First Nations, Métis and Inuit children living in the territories were included.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

5. Indian settlements and reserves were excluded in the 10 provinces. All First Nations, Métis and Inuit children living in the Yukon and Northwest Territories were included in the target population for the survey. In total, the 2006 Census enumerated approximately 131,000 Aboriginal children under the age of 6 about 40,000 lived on reserve and 91,000 lived off reserve. (A reserve is land set apart and designated for the use and occupancy of an Indian group or band as such, the terms “on-reserve” or “off-reserve” are generally not applicable to Métis or Inuit.) The 91,000 children included: 47,000 First Nations children living off reserve, 35,000 Métis children, 7,000 Inuit children and approximately 2,000 children who were either identified as belonging to more than one Aboriginal identity group or were reported to be treaty or registered Indians and / or members of an Indian band or First Nation that did not identify with an Aboriginal group. Census counts have been used to describe the number of Inuit, Métis and off-reserve First Nations children rather than the counts stemming from the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) for consistency with previously released Census data. Please refer the “ACS 2006: Concepts and Methods Guide” for a detailed explanation of the relationship between the ACS and the Census (catalogue number 89-634).

This brief analysis examines the following themes: family, community, and child care. It is designed as a starting point to understanding the circumstances under which Aboriginal children are living and growing. The report is divided into three parts: Part 1 discusses these themes for First Nations children living off reserve, Part 2 for Métis children, and Part 3 for Inuit children.

The Aboriginal Children Survey (ACS), as a post-censal survey, was designed to deepen our understanding of broad trends outlined by the Census. As such, both ACS and Census data are included throughout this report. Comparative statements were included only where differences were significant at the 5% level.

Part 1 – First Nations children living off reserve

Introduction

“Children hold a special place in Aboriginal cultures. According to tradition, they are gifts from the spirit world They carry within them the gifts that manifest themselves as they become teachers, mothers, hunters, councilors, artisans and visionaries. They renew the strength of the family, clan and village and make the elders young again with their joyful presence.” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996)

In 2006, the Census enumerated about 47,000 First Nations children under the age of six years living off reserve in Canada⁶. The majority (78%) of off-reserve First Nations children were in urban areas (46% were in census metropolitan areas and 32% were in smaller urban centres). The remaining 22% were living in rural areas.

About two-thirds (67%) of First Nations children living off reserve were registered or treaty Indians. There are some differences in characteristics between off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status and those without registered Indian status. For example, in 2006, higher percentages of off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status had knowledge of an Aboriginal language, were living in low-income economic families, and were living in lone-parent families compared to off-reserve First Nations children without registered Indian status (2006 Census). Differences in findings for these two groups are included throughout the report. (For more information regarding Registered or treaty Indians, see text box: *Registered Indian status*).

This section examines some aspects of the family and community life of First Nations children under six years old living off reserve.

6. All First Nations children living in the territories were included.

Registered Indian status

The 2006 Aboriginal Children Survey (ACS) asked parents and guardians, "Is <child's name> a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada?"

The *Indian Act* sets out certain federal government obligations and regulates the management of Indian reserve lands, Indian moneys and other resources.

Registered Indians or "status Indians" are people who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a status Indian. Only Registered Indians are recognized as Indians under the *Indian Act*, which defines an Indian as 'a person who, pursuant to this Act, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.' Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

Generally speaking, Treaty Indians are persons who are registered under the *Indian Act* and can prove descent from a band that signed a treaty.

Not every individual who identifies as a First Nations person is a treaty or registered Indian. This may be because he or she, although a descendent of a registered Indian, is not entitled to be registered under the terms of the *Indian Act*. According to the 2006 Census, 67% of children under the age of six years old living off reserve who were identified as First Nations children were also treaty or registered Indians (31,425 children). The remaining 33% were not treaty or registered Indians (15,680).

For more information, including the inheritance rules regarding the passing of Registered Indian status from parents to children, see the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada website at: http://www.aic-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/wf/index_E.html.

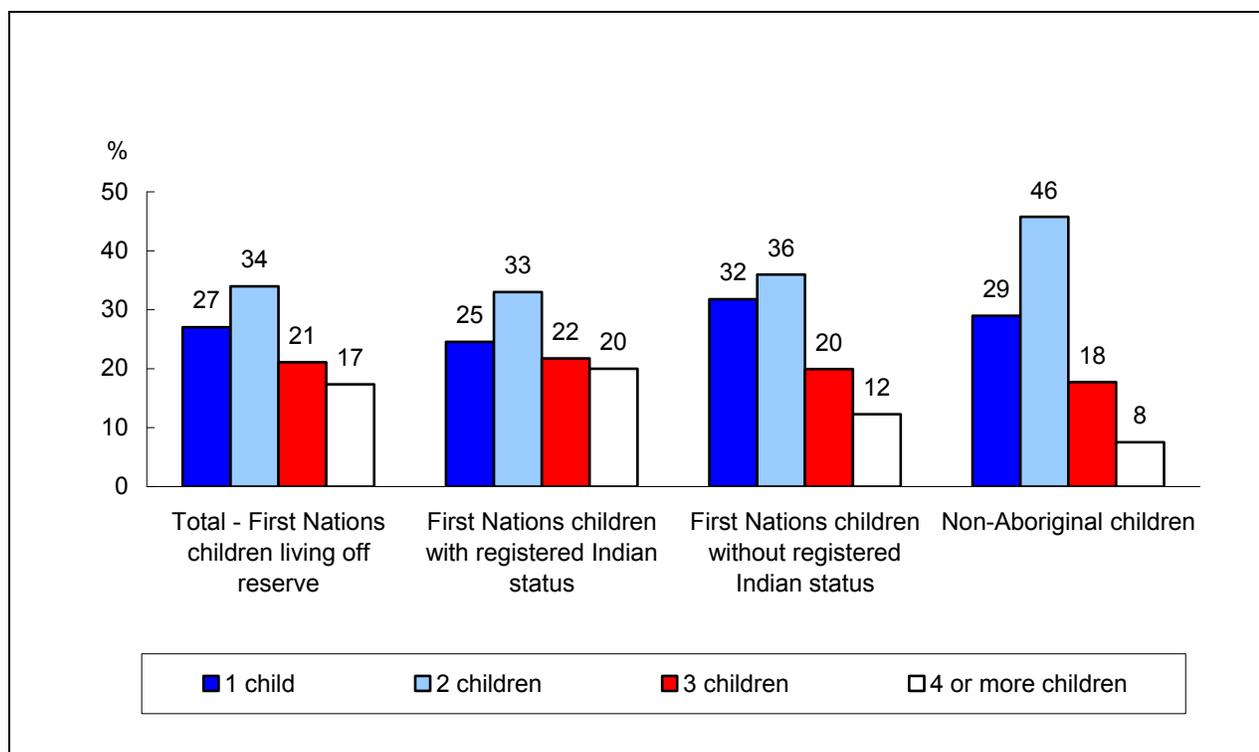
Young First Nations children and their families

Family size

Large families in Canada are becoming increasingly less common (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2006). This is not the case for some First Nations families living off reserve. Census data reveal that about 17% of young First Nations children were living in families with 4 or more children, compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children under the age of six. (chart 1.1)

A higher percentage of off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status (20%) were living in families with 4 or more children compared to those without registered Indian status (12%).

Chart 1.1
Number of children in the census family for children under six years old, First Nations off reserve and non-Aboriginal populations, 2006



Note(s):

A census family refers to a married couple (with or without children of either or both spouses), a couple living common-law (with or without children of either or both partners) or a lone parent of any marital status, with at least one child living in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. 'Children' in a census family include grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present.

Source(S): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

Age of parents

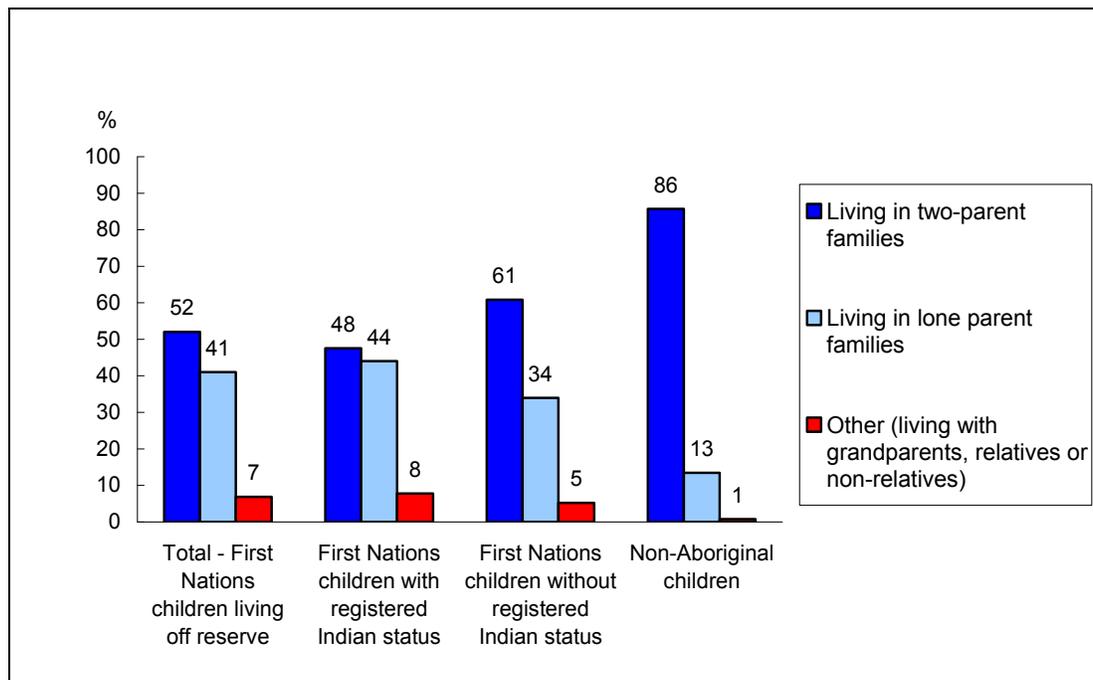
The Census shows that off-reserve First Nations children are being raised by younger parents than non-Aboriginal children. According to the 2006 Census, 27% of off-reserve First Nations children under six years old had mothers between the ages of 15 and 24; this is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.

Among off-reserve First Nations children under the age of six, 29% of those with registered Indian status and 23% of those without registered Indian status had mothers between the ages of 15 and 24.

Living arrangements for young First Nations children living off reserve

According to the 2006 Census, 52% of First Nations children living off reserve were living with two parents. A larger percentage of First Nations children were living in lone-parent households compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts (41% compared to 13%). (chart 1.2)

Chart 1.2
Living arrangements of children under the age of six, Canada, 2006



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

For the Aboriginal Children's Survey, the parent or guardian responded to the survey. For the majority of First Nations children (89%), this person was the birth mother or father. The remaining 11% included: grandparents (4%), foster parents (3%), and adoptive parents (2%). A comparable survey of the general population is the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY)⁷. In this survey, the parent or guardian was the birth mother or father in 98% of cases (2004/2005).

Across the generations: Living with grandparents

According to the 2006 Census, 9% of off-reserve First Nations children under the age of six were living with their grandparents compared to 5% of non-Aboriginal children. (table 1.1)

Table 1.1
Percentage of First Nations children under six years old living with grandparents, off reserve, Canada, 2006

Living arrangements	First Nations children living off reserve	Non-Aboriginal children
	percent	
Total - Living with grandparents	9	5
Multiple generation (children, parents and grandparents)	8	5
Living with grandparents and two parents	2	2
Living with grandparents and a lone parent	6	3
Living with grandparents only	2	0 ^s

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

7. The target population of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth comprises the non-institutionalized civilian population (aged 0 to 11 at the time of their selection) in Canada's 10 provinces, which, unlike the Aboriginal Children Survey, does not include children from the territories. The survey excludes children living on Indian reserves or Crown lands, residents of institutions, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and residents of some remote regions. Data regarding the 'person most knowledgeable' included in this report are from cycle 6 2004/2005.

Persons involved in raising First Nations children

In the 2006 ACS, 90% of First Nations children had parents or guardians who reported that they were not the only person involved in raising the child.

Mothers were most commonly reported as being involved in raising the child (93%) followed by fathers (72%) and grandparents (44%). More than one-quarter (28%) of First Nations children had relatives (such as siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles) playing a part in raising them. (table 1.2)

Table 1.2
Persons involved in raising First Nations children under six years old, off-reserve, 2006

Relationship to the child	Total - First Nations children living off reserve	Off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status †	Off-reserve First Nations children without registered Indian status
	percent		
Mother	93	93	94
Father	72	68	78 *
Grandparents	44	45	43
Relatives	28	31	24 *
Other	17	16	18

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from reference group at $p < 0.05$

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

The 2006 Aboriginal Children Survey (ACS) asked parents of off-reserve First Nations children about the frequency of focused attention that children received from parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, elders and siblings; that is, how often the child and different people in their lives “talk or play together, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more”.

First Nations children were most likely to receive focused attention at least once a day from their mothers (93%), followed by siblings (69%), fathers (64%) and grandparents (27%). Most First Nations children received focused attention from their extended family at least once per week (combination of daily and weekly) – 67% from grandparents, 55% from aunts and uncles, and 45% from cousins. (table 1.3)

Table 1.3
Frequency of focused attention on First Nations children under six years old, off reserve, 2006

Relationship to the child	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Never	Not applicable	Not stated
	percent					
Mother	93	2	1	2	0 ^s	2
Father	64	11	7	10	3	6
Siblings	69	3	2	2	21	2
Grandparents	27	41	23	6	2	2
Aunts and uncles	17	38	32	9	2	2
Cousins	12	33	35	12	6	2
Elders	7	20	25	37	9	3

Note(s):

'Daily' includes the response categories 'More than once a day' and 'Once a day'. 'Weekly' includes the response categories 'More than once a week' and 'Once a week'.

'Occasionally' includes the response category 'Less than once a week'. 'Not stated' includes 'not stated', 'don't know' and 'refusal'. 'Mother' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster mothers. 'Father' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster fathers.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Young First Nations children living in low-income economic families

Statistics Canada uses several different measures of low-income, including the low income (before tax) cut-off (LICO)⁸. In 2006, 49% of off reserve First Nations children under the age of six were in low-income families, compared to 18% of non-Aboriginal children.

The percentage of First Nations children living in low-income families was higher in urban areas than in rural areas (54% compared to 27%). Of young First Nations children living in census metropolitan areas (urban areas with populations of 100,000 or more)⁹, 57% were living in low-income families compared with 21% of non-Aboriginal children. (table 1.4)

Higher percentages of First Nations children with registered Indian status were living in low-income families compared to those without registered Indian status. For example, in census metropolitan areas, 63% of First Nations children with registered Indian status were living in low-income families compared to 45% of First Nations children without registered Indian status. (table 1.4) (*See text box: Registered Indian status*)

8. Low income before tax cut-offs (LICOs) - Income levels at which families or persons not in economic families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. Economic families in the Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and on Indian reserves were excluded as the low income cut-offs are based on certain expenditure-income patterns which are not available from survey data for the entire population. An economic family refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. For 2006, foster children are included.

9. Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) are formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centered on a large urban area (known as the urban core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the urban core.

Table 1.4
Percentage of First Nations children living off reserve and non-Aboriginal children under six years old who are members of low income families, 2006

Children under 6 years old	Total	Rural	Total urban	Urban census metropolitan area	Urban non-census metropolitan area
	percent				
Total - First Nations children living off reserve	49	27	54	57	50
Off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status	55	33	60	63	55
Off-reserve First Nations children without registered Indian status	38	18	43	45	38
Total - Non-Aboriginal children	18	9	20	21	17

Note(s):

Census metropolitan areas (CMA) are formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on area (known as the urban core). A Census metropolitan area (CMA) must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the urban core. Urban non-Census metropolitan areas (non-CMA) are smaller urban areas with a population 100,000.

Low income cut-offs (LICO) - Income levels at which families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. Low income cut-offs (LICO) are not applicable in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and on Indian reserves.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

The low-income before tax cut-off (LICO) is not applicable in the territories or on Indian reserves; however, other Census data reveal that in 2005, the median income¹⁰ for First Nations people living in the Yukon was \$20,300 compared to a median income of \$34,951 for the non-Aboriginal population. In the Northwest Territories, the median income for First Nations people was \$17,558 compared to \$49,219 for the non-Aboriginal population.

10. Income here refers to total income from all sources including employment income, income from government sources, pension income, investment income and any other money income received during the calendar year 2005 by persons 15 years of age and over. Median income is calculated for individuals with income. Median amounts are the income level that divides the population into two halves, i.e. half of this population receives less than this amount and half more.

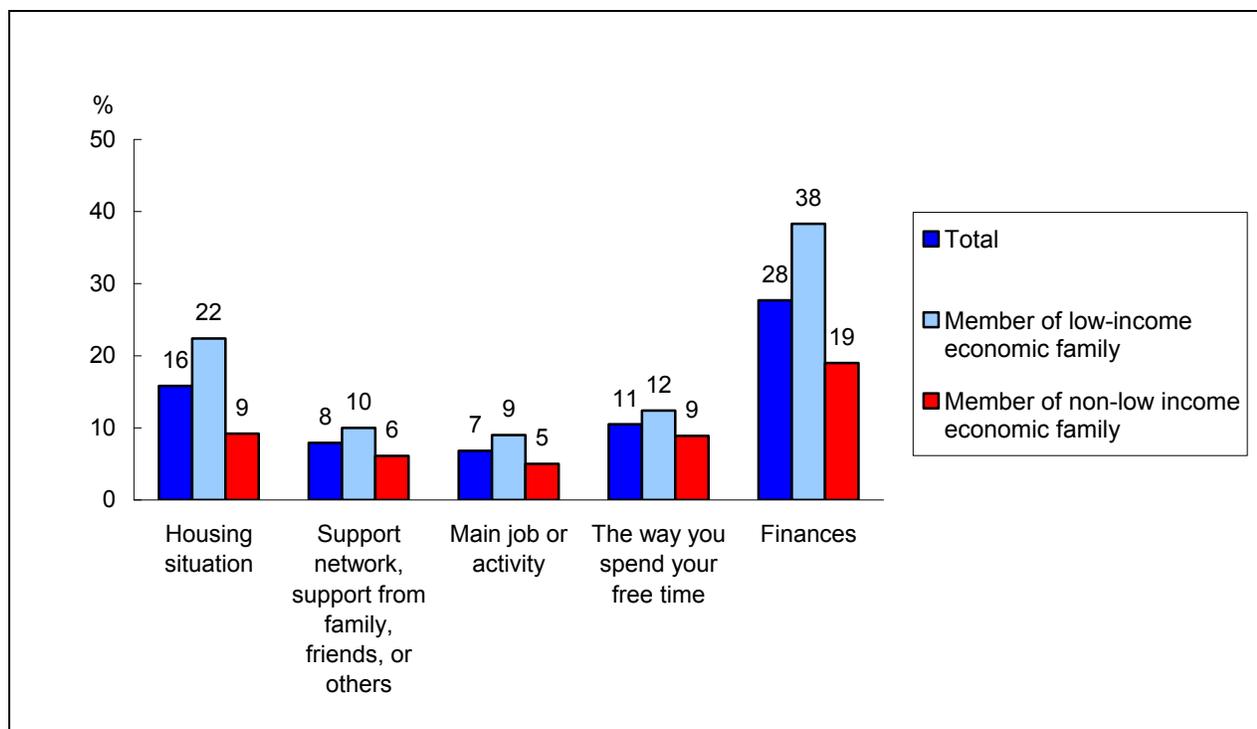
Feelings about home and daily life

On the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS), parents and guardians were asked to rate their feelings regarding certain aspects of their home and daily life. Among the categories of 'housing conditions', 'support network', 'main job or activity', 'free time', and 'finances', parents and guardians of young First Nations children were least satisfied with their 'finances' and 'housing conditions'. (chart 1.3)

Census data reveal that 18% of the First Nations children under six years old (off reserve) were living in homes requiring major repairs; this was more than twice as high as the percentage of non-Aboriginal children (8%). About 16% were living in crowded conditions, compared to 7% of the non-Aboriginal population. (Crowding is defined as more than 1 person per room.)

Chart 1.3

First Nations children under six years old living off reserve with parents or guardians who feel 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with...



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

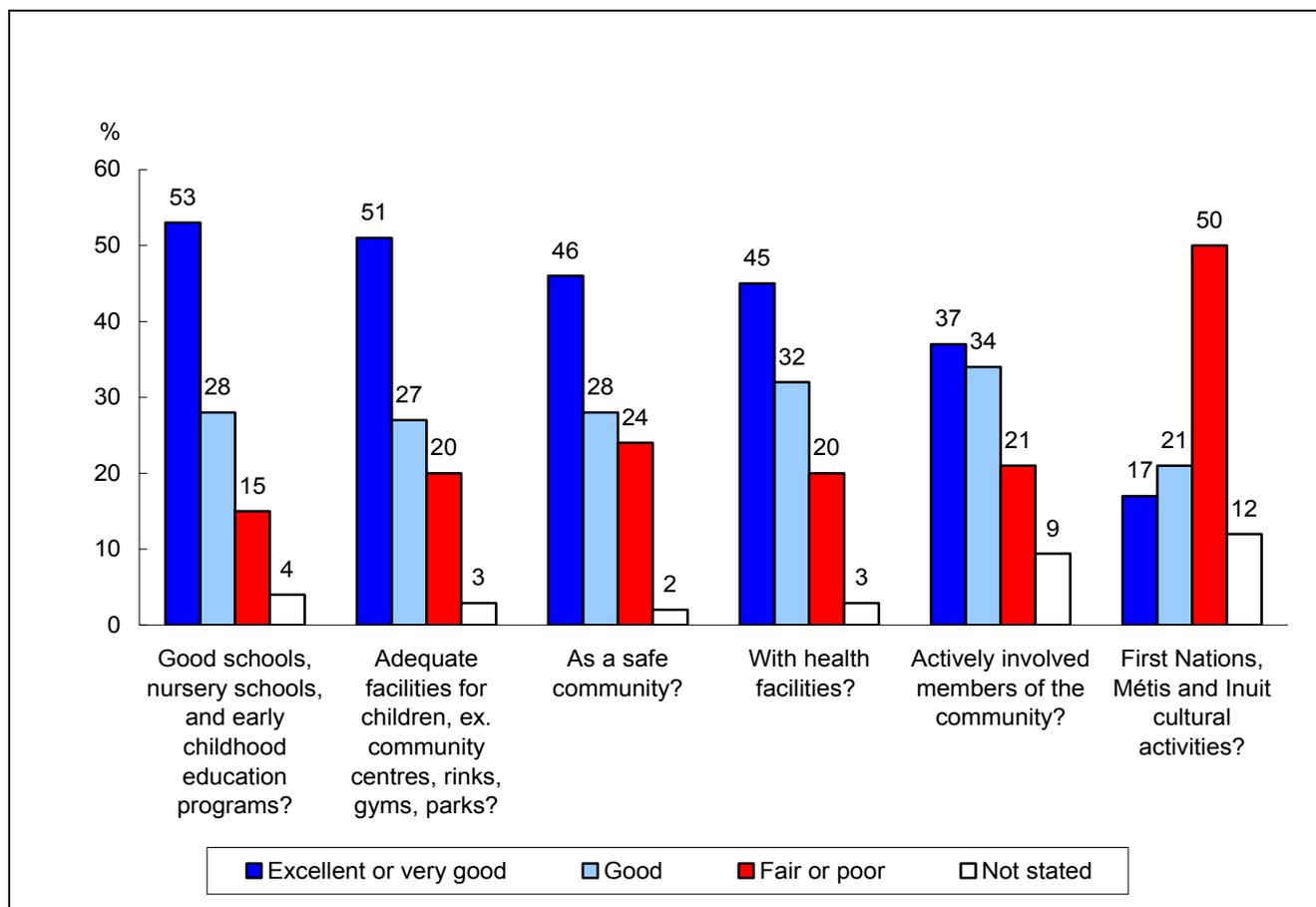
The parents or guardians of children who lived in low-income families reported lower levels of satisfaction with finances. About 38% of First Nations children living in low-income families had parents or guardians who reported that they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their finances, compared to 19% of those who were not living in low-income families. The percentage of those living in low-income families who reported being 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their housing situation was more than two times higher than those who were not living in low-income families (22% compared to 9%).

While the large percentage of First Nations children living off reserve in low-income economic families indicates that there are many challenges, in general, parents and guardians reported relatively high levels of satisfaction with the informal social supports available from family, friends and others. The vast majority (90%) reported that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their support network. There were no statistically significant differences in the levels of satisfaction with support networks between those in low-income families and those not living in low income families.

Feelings about community

Research indicates that children's well-being is linked to neighbourhood 'quality' (Curtis et. al. 2004). On the ACS, parent and guardians of First Nations children were asked to rate their feelings about their community. About half of off-reserve First Nations children lived in a community rated as 'excellent or very good' in terms of 'good schools, nursery schools and early childhood education programs' (53%), 'adequate facilities for children' (51%), as 'a safe community' (46%) and a place with 'health facilities' (45%).

Chart 1.4
Parents of First Nations children under six years old (living off reserve).
How would you rate your feelings about your community as a place with...



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

In 2006, 17% of young First Nations children were living in a community rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of being a place with First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural activities – half (50%) rated their community as 'fair' or 'poor' in terms of these cultural activities. (chart 1.4) Many young First Nations children living off reserve are growing up in communities where Aboriginal people represent a small minority among a diversity of cultures. In many of these communities, it is likely more difficult to maintain ties to traditional Aboriginal cultures than in communities where Aboriginal people represent the majority of the population (for example, in reserve communities).

Cultural activities

Participation in traditional and cultural activities

According to the 2006 ACS, 46% of young First Nations children living off reserve had participated in or attended 'traditional First Nations, Métis, or Inuit activities such as singing, drum dancing, fiddling, gatherings or ceremonies'. Higher percentages of off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status had participated in these activities compared to those without registered Indian status (57% compared to 32%).

In 2006, 45% of First Nations children living off reserve under the age of six had taken part in hunting, fishing, trapping or camping. Children in rural areas were more likely to have taken part in these activities compared to children living in urban areas (58% compared to 41%). About 30% had also participated in 'seasonal activities such as gathering goose eggs or wild plants for example berries, sweet grass, roots or wild rice'; again these activities were more common in rural areas than urban areas (40% compared to 26%). (table 1.5)

Table 1.5
Percentage of First Nations children under the age of six who have taken part in selected traditional activities, off reserve, 2006

Type of traditional activities	Total Off reserve	Urban †	Rural
	percent		
Participated in or attended traditional First Nations, Métis or Inuit activities such as singing, drum dancing, fiddling, gatherings or ceremonies	46	46	47
Taken part in hunting, fishing, trapping or camping	45	41	58 *
Participated in seasonal activities such as gathering goose eggs or wild plants for example, berries, sweet grass, roots or wild rice	30	26	40 *

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from reference group at $p < 0.05$

Note(s):

Includes those reported taking part in this activity 'more than once a day', 'once a day', 'more than once a week', 'at least once per month', 'at least once per year', and 'less than once per year'.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Help with understanding First Nations culture and history

In 2006, 45% of off-reserve First Nations children had someone who helped them to understand First Nations history and culture. This figure was higher for off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status (54%) compared to those without registered Indian status (32%).

Of those who had someone involved in helping them understand their history or culture, 60% were being taught by their parents, 50% by grandparents, and 20% by aunts and uncles. About 14% of First Nations children living off reserve who had someone to help them understand their culture were learning from their teachers or child care providers. (table 1.6)

Table 1.6
Persons involved in helping First Nations children understand First Nations culture and history, off reserve, 2006

Relationship to the child	Total - First Nations children living off reserve	First Nations children living off reserve	
		Registered Indian status †	Without registered Indian status
percent			
Percentage of children who had someone to help them understand First Nations culture and history	45	54	32 *
Of those who had someone to help them understand First Nations culture and history, percentage that had the following people help him or her:			
A mother or a father	60	61	60
A grandparent	50	54	42 *
An aunt or uncle	20	21	16
A teacher or a child care provider	14	16	10
Elders	9	10	5
A brother or sister	5	6	4 ^E
Someone else	9	8	11

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from reference group at p < 0.05

Note(s):

On the Aboriginal Children's Survey, parents or guardians were asked: "Does anyone help <child's name> to understand First Nations, Métis or Inuit culture and history?"

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Child care arrangements

In 2006, 47% of First Nations children under six years old living off reserve were in some kind of child care arrangement. This is compared to 51% of all Canadian children (excluding those living on-reserve and those living in the territories.)¹¹ In this report, child care arrangements refer to the care of a child by someone other than a parent, including daycare, nursery or preschool, Head Start, before or after school programs and care by a relative or other caregiver. These refer to regular arrangements that are used consistently, rather than sporadically (e.g. babysitting). Excluded from this analysis are children that are currently attending school.

These data refer to the *main* child care arrangement; that is the arrangement in which the child spends the most time. In 2006, about 18% of off-reserve First Nations children were in more than one type of child care arrangement.

Among young First Nations children living off reserve receiving child care, 42% were in a day care or child care centre. This was the most commonly reported child care arrangement. About 22% were being cared for by relatives, either within the child's home (11%) or outside the child's home (10%). About 15% were being cared for by a non-relative outside the child's home. (table 1.7)

Table 1.7

Type of Child care arrangement, First Nations children under six years old who are receiving child care, off reserve, 2006

Type of child care arrangements	percent
Daycare centre / Child care centre	42
Outside the child's home by non relative	15
Nursery school / preschool / Head Start program	12
Own home relative	11
Other home relative	10
Own home, non-relative	4
Other	2 ^E

Note(s):

Excludes children who are currently attending school. Percents may not add to 100 because missing data (i.e., don't know, refusal, not stated) were included in the calculation of all estimates.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Child care is used for a variety of reasons. In 2006, 64% of First Nations children were in child care arrangements because the parent or guardian was at work and 21% because the parent or guardian was at school. About 16% of parents or guardians of First Nations children indicated that they used child care arrangements to provide their children with developmental opportunities. (table 1.8)

11. Source: National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth, cycle 6, 2004/2005. The target population of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth comprises the non-institutionalized civilian population (aged 0 to 11 at the time of their selection) in Canada's 10 provinces. The survey excludes children living on Indian reserves or Crown lands, residents of institutions, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and residents of some remote regions.

Table 1.8
Reasons for using child care, First Nations children under six years old who are receiving childcare, off reserve, 2006

Reasons for child care	percent
Parent or guardian at work	64
Parent or guardian at school	21
For developmental opportunities	16
For support	4
Other	7

Note(s):

Parents and guardians were asked to 'mark all that apply' therefore the total categories do not add up to 100%.

Excludes children who are currently attending school.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Child care that promotes traditional and cultural values and customs

In 2006, 92% of First Nations children living off reserve receiving child care were in an arrangement that provided opportunities to participate in learning activities, such as songs, stories, or learning-based play. A further important aspect of quality of care for First Nations children is the provision of culturally appropriate learning environments (Ball 2002). Of those First Nations children currently receiving regular child care, about 24% were in child care arrangements that promoted First Nations, Métis or Inuit traditional and cultural values and customs, and 15% were in child care arrangements where Aboriginal languages were used.

Summary

The Aboriginal Children Survey (ACS) was designed to provide a picture of the early development of Aboriginal children and the social and living conditions in which they are learning and growing. This brief analysis of young off-reserve First Nations children revealed that many were living in urban areas, and in many cases, they were living in low-income economic families. The data also showed a diversity of living arrangements for First Nations children. Many were growing up with the involvement of extended family members. Further research using the ACS data could provide insight into the way that First Nations children are being nurtured in these families and communities, and how this may differ from other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families and communities.

About half of off reserve First Nations children were living in communities rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' by their parents or guardians in terms of good schools, adequate facilities for children, health facilities, and safety. By comparison, 17% of off-reserve First Nations children were living in communities rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' as a place with Aboriginal cultural activities. Perhaps linked to this finding is the fact that less than half (45%) of First Nations children had someone to teach them about their history and culture, and that 24% who were receiving child care were in arrangements that promote traditional and cultural values and customs. Further research using the ACS data could help to build understanding of how culture is being transmitted inter-generationally to these young First Nations children, and how exposure to cultural and traditional values and practices affect developmental and behavioural outcomes.

Part 2 – Métis children

Introduction

“As Aboriginal people we hold sacred the rights of the individual and of the collective. We have respect for each other, for the land and for the animal and plant life that surrounds us. We are people who honour and respect the family, our elders who hold the key to the past, and our children, who are our future.” (Métis Nation of Ontario)

In 2006, the Census enumerated about 35,000 Métis children under the age of six years in Canada. The majority (89%) of young Métis children were in the provinces of Alberta (25%), Manitoba (21%), Ontario (15%), Saskatchewan (15%), and British Columbia (14%). A relatively large proportion of Métis children were growing up in rural areas – 27% of young Métis children were living in rural areas compared to 18% of non-Aboriginal children. The remaining 73% of Métis children were living in urban areas (41% in census metropolitan areas and 32% in smaller urban centres).

This section examines some aspects of family and community life of young Métis children.

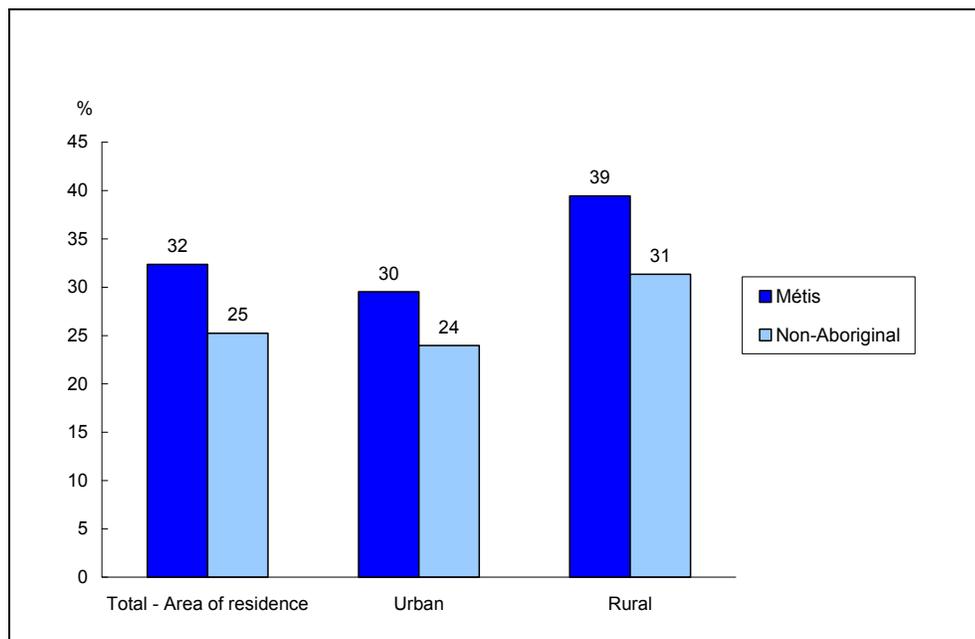
Young Métis children and their families

Family size

According to the 2006 Census, 32% of young Métis children were living in families with 3 or more children, compared to 25% of non-Aboriginal children under the age of six. A larger proportion of Métis children in rural areas (39%) were living in families with 3 or more children compared to Métis children in urban areas (30%). (chart 2.1)

Chart 2.1

Percentage of children living in census families with 3 or more children, Métis and non-Aboriginal children under six years old by area of residence, 2006



Note(s):

A census family refers to a married couple (with or without children of either or both spouses), a couple living common-law (with or without children of either or both partners) or a lone parent of any marital status, with at least one child living in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. 'Children' in a census family include grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census 2006*.

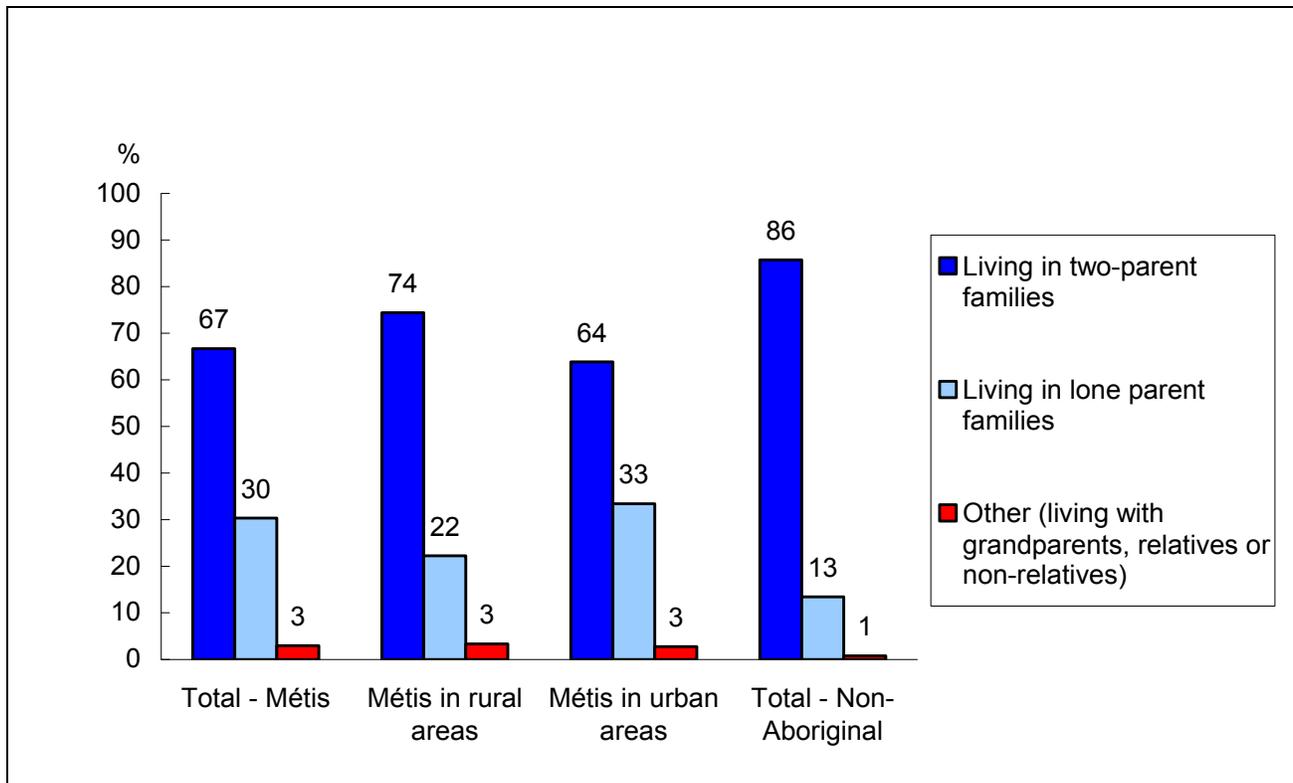
Age of parents

Métis children are being raised by younger parents than non-Aboriginal children. According to the 2006 Census, 22% of Métis children under the age of six had mothers between the ages of 15 to 24; this is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.

Living arrangements for young Métis children

According to the 2006 Census, 67% of Métis children were living with two parents. A larger percentage of Métis children were living in lone-parent households than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (30% versus 13% respectively). A higher percentage of Métis children living in urban communities were living in lone-parent households (33%) than those living in rural communities (22%). (chart 2.2)

Chart 2.2
Living arrangements of children under the age of six, Canada, 2006



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

Across the generations: Living with grandparents

According to the 2006 Census, about 8% of young Métis children were living with their grandparents, compared to 5% of non-Aboriginal children. About 1% of Métis children were living with their grandparents without a parent present, and 7% were in multiple-generation households (children, parents and grandparents). (table 2.1)

Table 2.1
Percentage of Métis children under six years old living with grandparents, Canada, 2006

Living arrangements	Métis children	Non-Aboriginal children
	percent	
Total - Living with grandparents	8	5
Multiple generation (children, parents and grandparents)	7	5
Living with grandparents and two parents	1	2
Living with grandparents and lone parents	5	3
Living with grandparents only	1	0 ^s

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

Persons involved in raising Métis children

In 2006, the vast majority of Métis children had parents or guardians who reported that they were not the only person involved in raising the child (91%).

Mothers were most commonly reported as being involved in raising the child (94%) followed by fathers (78%) and grandparents (41%). About one-fifth (21%) of Métis children had relatives (such as siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles) playing a part in raising them. (table 2.2)

Table 2.2
Persons involved in raising Métis children under the age of six, 2006

Relationship to the child	percent
Mother	94
Father	78
Grandparent	41
Relatives such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and brothers and sisters	21
Other (child care provider / teacher, other relatives not already specified and non-relatives)	17

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) asked parents and guardians of Métis children about the frequency of focused attention that children received from parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, elders and siblings; that is, how often the child and different people in their lives 'talk or play together, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more'.

Table 2.3
Frequency of focused attention on Métis children under six years old, 2006

Relationship to the child	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Never	Not applicable
	percent				
Mother	94	2	0 ^s	1 ^E	x
Father	71	11	5	8	2
Siblings	70	3	2	2	22
Grandparents	24	46	25	4	2
Aunts and uncles	12	39	39	7	1
Cousins	9	31	41	11	7
Elders	6	19	24	40	10

Note(s):

'Daily' includes the response categories 'More than once a day' and 'Once a day'. 'Weekly' includes the response categories 'More than once a week' and 'Once a week'. 'Occasionally' includes the response category 'Less than once a week'. 'Mother' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster mothers. 'Father' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster fathers. Percents may not add to 100 because missing data (i.e., don't know, refusal, not stated) were included in the calculation of all estimates.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Métis children were most likely to receive focused attention at least once a day from their mothers (94%), followed by fathers (71%), siblings (70%) and grandparents (24%). Many Métis children received focused attention from extended family at least once a week (combination of daily and weekly): 69% from grandparents, 51% from aunts and uncles and 40% from cousins. (table 2.3)

Young Métis children living in low-income economic families

Statistics Canada uses several different measures of low-income families including the low income (before tax) cut-off (LICO)¹². In 2006, almost one-third (32%) of Métis children under the age of six were in low-income families, compared with 18% of non-Aboriginal children.

The percentage of Métis children living in low-income families was higher in urban areas than in rural areas (36% compared to 20%). Of young Métis children living in census metropolitan areas (urban areas with populations of 100,000 or more), 42% were living in low-income families. (table 2.4)

12. Low income before tax cut-offs (LICOs) - Income levels at which families or persons not in economic families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. Economic families in the Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and on Indian reserves were excluded as the low income cut-offs are based on certain expenditure-income patterns which are not available from survey data for the entire population. An economic family refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. For 2006, foster children are included.

Table 2.4
Percentage of Métis and non-Aboriginal children under six years old who are members of low-income families, 2006

Regions	Métis children	Non-Aboriginal children
	percent	
Total children under 6 years old	32	18
Rural	20	9
Total urban	36	20
Census metropolitan area	42	21
Non-Census metropolitan area	30	17

Note(s):

Census metropolitan areas (CMAs) are formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a large urban area (known as the urban core). A Census metropolitan area must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the urban core. Urban non-Census metropolitan areas (non-CMAs) are smaller urban areas with a population of less than 100,000. Low income cut-offs (LICO) Income levels at which families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. LICOs are not applicable in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and on Indian reserves.

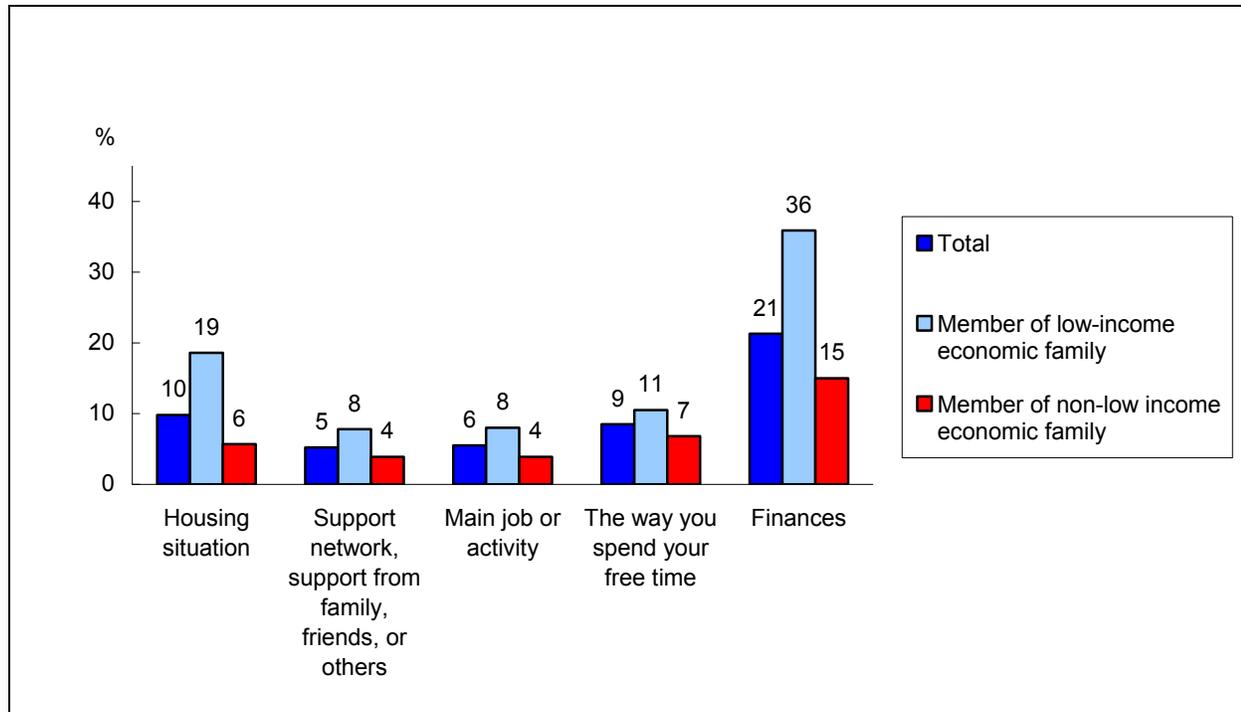
Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

Feelings about home and daily life

On the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS), parents and guardians were asked to rate their feelings regarding certain aspects of their home and daily life. Among the categories of 'housing conditions', 'support network', 'main job or activity', 'free time', and 'finances', parents and guardians of young Métis children gave the lowest ratings of satisfaction to 'finances'. (chart 2.3)

Chart 2.3

Parents or guardians of Métis children under six years old who feel 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with...



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Those who lived in low-income households reported lower levels of satisfaction with finances. About 36% of Métis children living in low-income families had parents or guardians who reported that they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their finances, compared to 15% of those who were not living in low-income families. The percentage of those living in low-income families who reported being 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their housing situation was more than three times higher than those who were not living in low-income families (19% compared to 6%).

The differences between percentages who reported being 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their 'support network from family, friends or others', 'main job or activity' and 'the way you spend your free time' was relatively small between those living in low-income families and those not living in low-income families.

While the large percentage of Métis children in low-income economic families indicates that there are many challenges, in general, parents and guardians reported relatively high levels of satisfaction with the informal social supports available from family, friends and others. The vast majority (93%) reported that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their support network.

Feelings about community

Research indicates that children's well-being is linked to neighbourhood 'quality' (Curtis et. al. 2004). On the ACS, parents and guardians of Métis children were asked to rate their feelings about their community. The majority of Métis children lived in a community rated as 'excellent or very good' in terms of 'good schools, nursery schools and early childhood education programs' (60%) 'adequate facilities for children' (55%) and being 'a safe community' (55%). By comparison, 16% of young Métis children were living in a community rated as 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of Aboriginal cultural activities. (table 2.5)

A relatively large proportion of Métis children were growing up in rural areas – according to the 2006 Census, 27% of young Métis children were living in rural areas compared to 18% of non-Aboriginal children. Based upon the ratings of community in the ACS, Métis children in urban areas were living in communities with better facilities than rural areas (urban communities had higher ratings than their rural counterparts in terms of 'adequate facilities for children' and 'health facilities'). (table 2.5)

Table 2.5

Percentage of parents or guardians of Métis children who feel that their community is 'excellent' or 'very good' ...

Community characteristics	Total	Urban †	Rural
	percent		
As a place with good schools, nursery schools, and early childhood education programs	60	61	57
As a place with adequate facilities for children, for example, community centres, rinks, gyms, parks	55	60	44 *
As a safe community	55	53	61 *
As a place with health facilities	48	50	40 *
As a place with actively involved members of the community	45	44	46
As a place with First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural activities	16	15	16

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from reference group at $p < 0.05$

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Cultural activities

Participation in traditional and cultural activities

In 2006, 28% of young Métis children had participated in or attended 'traditional First Nations, Métis, or Inuit activities such as singing, drum dancing, fiddling, gatherings or ceremonies'. (table 2.6)

More than half of Métis children (53%) under the age of six had taken part in hunting, fishing, trapping or camping. (table 2.6)

About 30% of Métis children had also participated in 'seasonal activities such as gathering goose eggs or wild plants for example berries, sweet grass, roots or wild rice'; however children living in rural areas were more likely to have taken part in these activities than children living in urban areas (40% compared to 26%). (table 2.6)

Table 2.6
Percentage of Métis children under the age of six who have taken part in selected traditional activities, 2006

Type of traditional activities	Total	Urban †	Rural
	percent		
Participated in or attend traditional First Nations, Métis or Inuit activities such as singing, drum dancing, fiddling, gatherings or ceremonies	28	27	30
Taken part in hunting, fishing, trapping or camping	53	50	63 *
Participated in seasonal activities such as gathering goose eggs or wild plants for example, berries, sweet grass, roots or wild rice	30	26	40 *

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from reference group at $p < 0.05$

Note(s):

Includes those reported taking part in this activity 'more than once a day', 'once a day', 'more than once a week', 'at least once per month', 'at least once per year', and 'less than once per year'.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Help with understanding Métis culture and history

In 2006, 31% of Métis children had someone who helped them to understand Aboriginal history and culture. This is compared to 45% of First Nations children living off reserve and 65% of Inuit children.

Of those who had someone involved in helping them understand their history or culture, many were being taught by their parents (56%) and grandparents (46%), as well as aunts and uncles (13%). About 14% of Métis children who had someone to help them understand their culture were learning from their teachers or child care providers. (table 2.7)

**Table 2.7
Persons involved in helping Métis children understand Métis culture and history, 2006**

Relationship to the child	percent
Percentage who had someone to help them understand Métis culture and history	31
Of those who had someone to help them understand Métis culture and history, percentage that had the following people to help him or her...	
A mother or a father	56
A grandparent	46
A teacher or a child care provider	14
An aunt or uncle	13
Elders	5
A brother or sister	4
Someone else	9

Note(s):

On the Aboriginal Children's Survey, parents and guardians were asked: "Does anyone help <child's name> to understand First Nations, Métis or Inuit culture and history?"

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Child care arrangements

In 2006, 48% of Métis children under six years old were in some kind of child care arrangement. This is similar to the percentage (51%) of all Canadian children in child care.¹³ In this report, child care arrangements refer to the care of a child by someone other than a parent, including daycare, nursery or preschool, Head Start, before or after school programs and care by a relative or other caregiver. These refer to regular arrangements that are used consistently, rather than sporadically (e.g. babysitting). Excluded from this analysis are children that are currently attending school.

It should be pointed out that these data refer to the *main* child care arrangement; that is the arrangement in which the child spends the most time. About 17% of Métis children under the age of six were in more than one type of child care arrangement.

Of those young Métis children receiving child care, 40% were in a day care or child care centre. This was the most commonly reported child care arrangement. About 21% were being cared for by relatives, either within the child's home (10%) or outside the child's home (11%). About 19% were being cared for by a non-relative outside the child's home. (table 2.8)

Table 2.8

Type of Child care arrangement, Métis children under six years who are receiving child care, 2006

Type of child care arrangements	percent
Daycare centre / Child care centre	40
Outside the child's home by non-relative	19
Nursery school / preschool / Head Start program	12
Outside the child's home by relative	11
Within the child's home by relative	10
Within the child's home by non-relative	5
Other	2 ^E

Note(s):

Excludes children who are currently attending school. Percents may not add to 100 because missing data (i.e., don't know, refusal, not stated) were included in the calculation of all estimates.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

13. Source: National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth, cycle 6, 2004/2005. The target population of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth comprises the non-institutionalized civilian population (aged 0 to 11 at the time of their selection) in Canada's 10 provinces. The survey excludes children living on Indian reserves or Crown lands, residents of institutions, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and residents of some remote regions.

Children are in child care arrangements for a variety of reasons. In 2006, about three-quarters (75%) of Métis children were in child care arrangements because the parent or guardian was at work, and 11% because the parent or guardian was at school. About 14% of parents or guardians of Métis children indicated that they used child care arrangements to provide their children with developmental opportunities. (table 2.9)

Table 2.9
Reasons for using child care, Métis children under six years old who are receiving childcare, 2006

Reasons for child care	percent
Parent or guardian at work	75
Parent or guardian at school	11
For developmental opportunities	14
For support	2
Other	5

Note(s):

Excludes children who are currently attending school.

Parents and guardians were asked to 'mark all that apply' therefore the total categories do not add up to 100%.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Child care that promotes traditional and cultural values and customs

In 2006, 95% of Métis children receiving child care were in an arrangement that provided opportunities to participate in learning activities, such as songs, stories, or learning-based play, while about 14% were in child care arrangements that promoted traditional and cultural values and customs. About 6% were in child care arrangements where Aboriginal languages were used.

Summary

This brief analysis revealed that a larger percentage of young Métis children (27%) were living in rural areas compared to non-Aboriginal children (18%). Métis children in rural communities were more likely than their urban counterparts to live in large families (three or more children) and to live in two-parent families. On the other hand, higher percentages of Métis children in urban areas than rural areas were living in low-income families. Parents and guardians of Métis children in urban areas rated their communities higher in terms of facilities (such as adequate facilities for children like community centres and parks, and health facilities) than those in rural communities.

Less than one-third of Métis children (31%) had someone to teach them about Aboriginal history and culture, compared to 45% of First Nations children and 65% of Inuit children. About 14% of Métis children in child care were in arrangements that promoted traditional and cultural values and customs; this is compared to 24% of First Nations children and 56% of Inuit children.

Part 3 – Inuit children

Introduction

Children are much loved by Inuit... In a culture where expression of affection is restrained, young children and babies provide an outlet for relatively uninhibited demonstrations of affection (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2006:17).

In 2006, the Census enumerated about 7,000 Inuit children under the age of six years in Canada. The vast majority of Inuit children (84%) under the age of six lived in one of four regions that comprise Inuit Nunaat which means "Inuit homeland" in the Inuit language. Four regions comprise Inuit Nunaat: Nunatsiavut in northern Labrador, Nunavik in northern Quebec, the territory of Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories. The remaining 16% of Inuit children under the age of six were living in urban areas (13%) and rural areas (3%) outside of Inuit Nunaat.

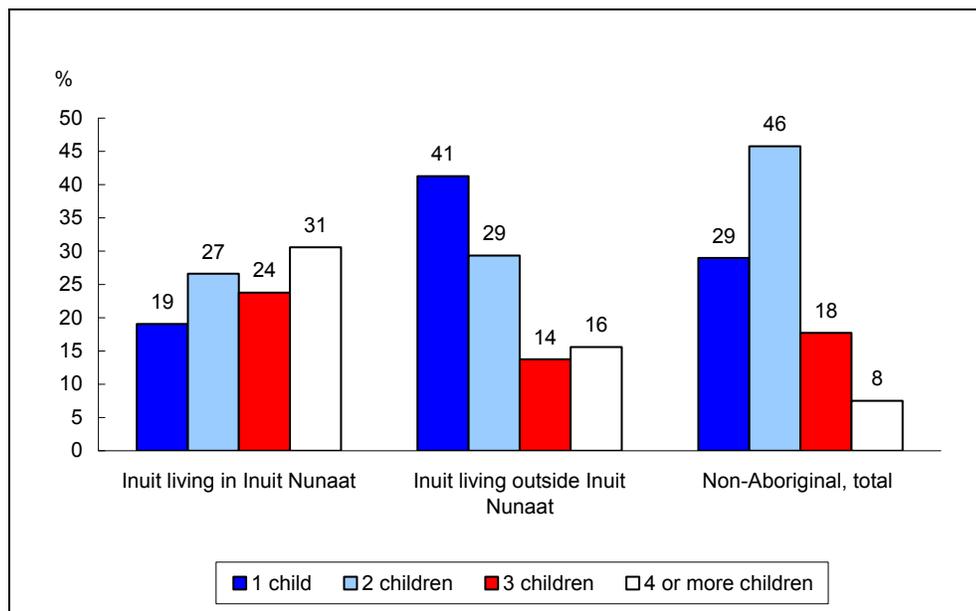
Young Inuit children and their families

Family size

The size of many Inuit families remains larger than other families across the country. For example, in 2006, 28% of young Inuit children were living in families with four or more children. This percentage was 31% in Inuit Nunaat, where the majority of Inuit children live. This is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children in the same age group across Canada. (chart 3.1)

Chart 3.1

Number of children in the census family for children under six years old, Inuit and non-Aboriginal populations, 2006



Note(s):

A census family refers to a married couple (with or without children of either or both spouses), a couple living common-law (with or without children of either or both partners) or a lone parent of any marital status, with at least one child living in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. 'Children' in a census family include grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

Indeed, fertility rates are higher among Inuit women than other Canadian women. In the 1996 to 2001 period, the fertility rate of Inuit women was 3.4 children, that is, they could expect to have that many children, on average, over the course of their lifetime. This compared with a figure of 1.5 among all Canadian women, 2.9 children for North American Indian women and 2.2 for Métis women (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Age of parents

Inuit children are being raised by younger parents than non-Aboriginal children. In 2006, 26% of Inuit children under the age of six had mothers between the ages of 15 to 24; this is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.

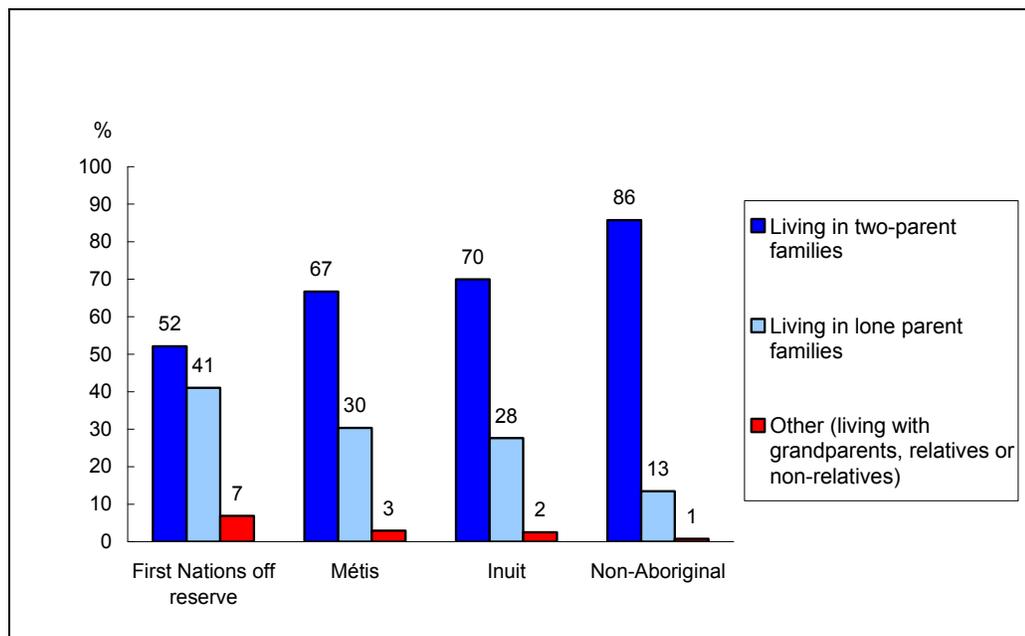
Put another way, the 2006 Census showed that 9% of Inuit women aged 15 to 19 had children, compared to 1% of non-Aboriginal women in the same age group. Of those 15 to 24 years, about one-quarter of Inuit women (24%) had children; this is compared to 6% of non-Aboriginal women.

Living arrangements of Inuit children

In 2006, the majority of Inuit children (70%) were living with two parents, and 28% were living with lone parents. The remaining 2% were living in other arrangements, such as with their grandparents or other relatives, or non-relatives. Of the three Aboriginal groups, Inuit had the lowest percentage of children living with lone parents and conversely the highest percentage living with two parents. (chart 3.2)

Chart 3.2

Living arrangements of children under the age of six, Canada, 2006



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

Adoption in Inuit families

For the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS), the parent or guardian responded to the survey. For the majority of Inuit children, this person was the birth mother or father (79%). A comparable survey for the general population of Canadian children outside the territories is the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY).¹⁴ In this survey, the parent or guardian was the birth mother or father in 98% of cases (2004/2005).

Grandparents (4%) and adoptive parents (12%) made up the majority of the remaining parents or guardians who responded to the survey for Inuit children.

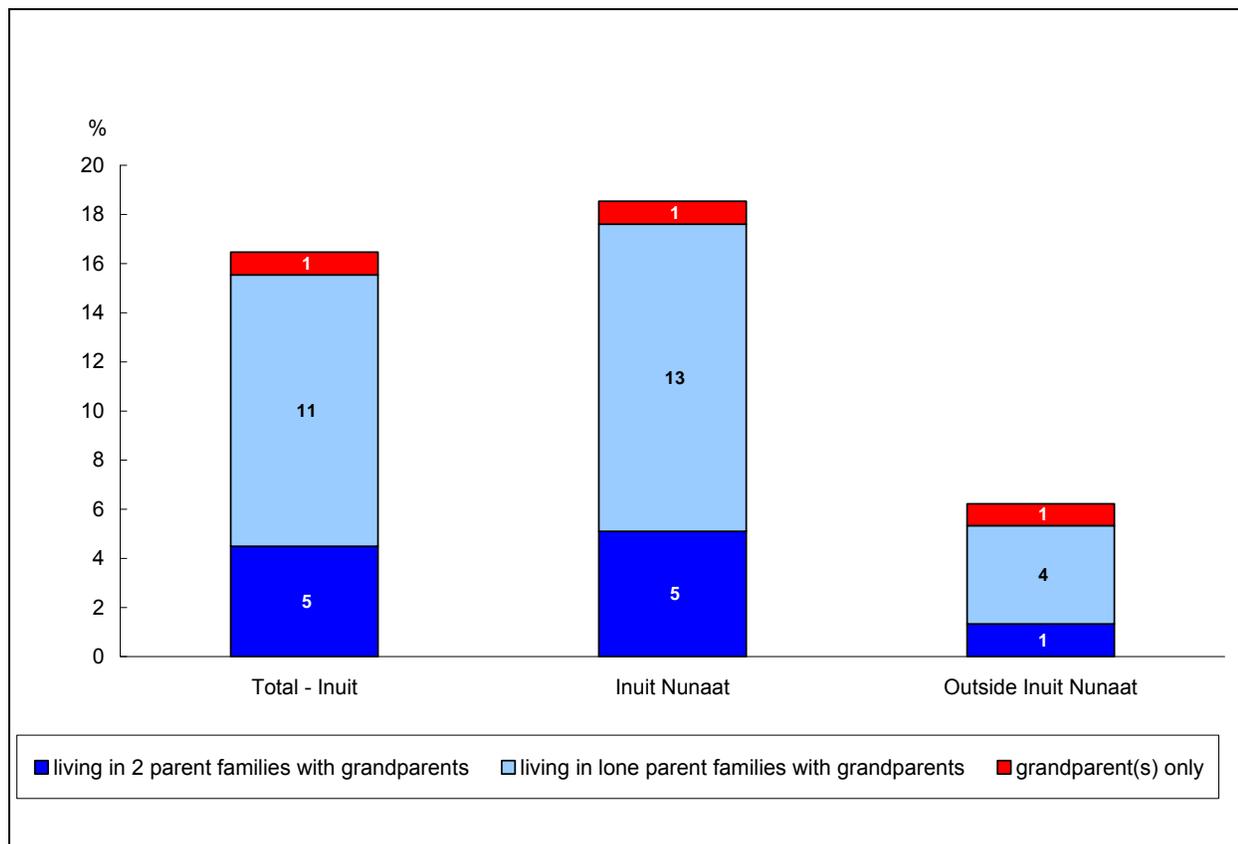
The proportion of adoptive mothers and fathers who responded to the survey as the parent or guardian of Inuit children (12%) was significantly higher than the Métis (1%) and First Nations children living off reserve (2%). Historically, adoption was a common practice in Inuit society and continues to be widespread. "In Inuit society, there is no stigma attached to being adopted. It is a practice... in which a child knows his or her birth parents and family members." (Tungasuvvingat Inuit, 2008) Indeed, traditional adoption practices of Inuit have been legally recognized by northern governments (Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2006:20).

14. The target population of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth comprises the non-institutionalized civilian population (aged 0 to 11 at the time of their selection) in Canada's 10 provinces, which, unlike the Aboriginal Children Survey (ACS), does not include children from the territories. The survey excludes children living on Indian reserves or Crown lands, residents of institutions, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and residents of some remote regions. Data regarding the 'person most knowledgeable' included in this report are from cycle 6 2004/2005.

Across the generations: Living with grandparents

In 2006, 1% of young Inuit children were living with their grandparents without parents present and 16% in multiple-generation households (children, parents and grandparents). The percentage of Inuit children living with grandparents is more than three times the percentage of non-Aboriginal children (5%). (chart 3.3)

Chart 3.3
Inuit children under six years living with grandparents by family type, Canada, 2006



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

While there may be cultural considerations to the large number of multiple generation households among Inuit, there is evidence that the housing situation among Inuit is a contributing factor. The percentage of Inuit children under six years living in crowded dwellings (43%) is more than six times higher than the non-Aboriginal population (7%). This issue is particularly prevalent within Nunavik where 59% of children under six years lived in crowded homes. Nunavik is also the region with the highest percentage of multiple generation homes approximately where approximately one in five (21%) Inuit children under the age of six live in households with children, parents and grandparents. (table 3.3)

Persons involved in raising Inuit children

While members of the immediate family are primarily responsible for the upbringing of Inuit children, in many cases it is also a responsibility shared by many in the community (Nunavut Arctic College).

In 2006, the vast majority of parents or guardians of Inuit children reported that they were not the only person involved in raising the child (91%).

Mothers were most commonly reported as being involved in raising the child (92%) followed by fathers (77%). Grandparents (46%) and other relatives (aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings) (47%) were also reported to be playing a part in raising the child. (table 3.1)

Table 3.1
Persons involved in raising Inuit children under the age of six, 2006

Relationship to the child	percent
Mother	92
Father	77
Grandparents	46
Other relatives (aunt, uncle, cousin, sibling)	47
Other (child care provider, teacher or other relative or non-relative)	19

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) asked parents of Inuit children about the frequency of focused attention that children received from parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, elders and siblings; that is, how often the child and different people in their lives 'talk or play together, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more'.

Mothers were most likely to give focused attention to the child at least once a day (92%), followed by fathers (73%), siblings (73%) and grandparents (43%). Most Inuit children received attention from extended family members at least once a week (combination of daily and weekly categories): 71% from grandparents, 72% from aunts and uncles and 69% from cousins. (table 3.2)

Table 3.2
Frequency of focused attention on Inuit Children, 2006

Relationship to the child	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Never	Not applicable	Not stated
	percent					
Mother	92	2 ^E	x	x	x	4
Father	73	5	3	5	4	10
Siblings	73	2	1 ^E	2 ^E	18	4
Grandparents	43	29	13	8	4	4
Aunts and uncles	42	30	15	7	2 ^E	4
Cousins	38	31	14	8	5	5
Elders	14	21	16	32	10	7

Note(s):

'Daily' includes the response categories 'More than once a day' and 'Once a day'. 'Weekly' includes the response categories 'More than once a week' and 'Once a week'. 'Occasionally' includes the response category 'Less than once a week'. 'Not stated' includes 'not stated', 'don't know' and 'refusal'. 'Mother' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster mothers. 'Father' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster fathers.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Socio-economic status of young Inuit children

In 2005 within Inuit Nunaat, the median income¹⁵ for Inuit was \$16,669. In comparison, the median income for non-Aboriginal people nationally was \$25,955 (the median income for non-Aboriginal people living in Inuit Nunaat was \$60,047). There are higher costs to living in the north. A recent study showed that in remote northern communities, a basket of healthy food feeding a family of four for one week would cost between \$350 and \$450. In the south, the same basket would cost about \$200 (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2007).

Outside Inuit Nunaat, many Inuit children were living in low-income economic families. In 2006, 45% of young Inuit children living in census metropolitan areas (urban areas with populations of at least 100,000) were living in low-income families. By comparison, 21% of young non-Aboriginal children in CMAs were living in low-income families¹⁶.

15. Income here refers to total income from all sources including employment income, income from government sources, pension income, investment income and any other money income received during the calendar year 2005 by persons 15 years of age and over. Median income is calculated for individuals with income. Median amounts are the income level that divides the population into two halves, i.e. half of this population receives less than this amount and half more.

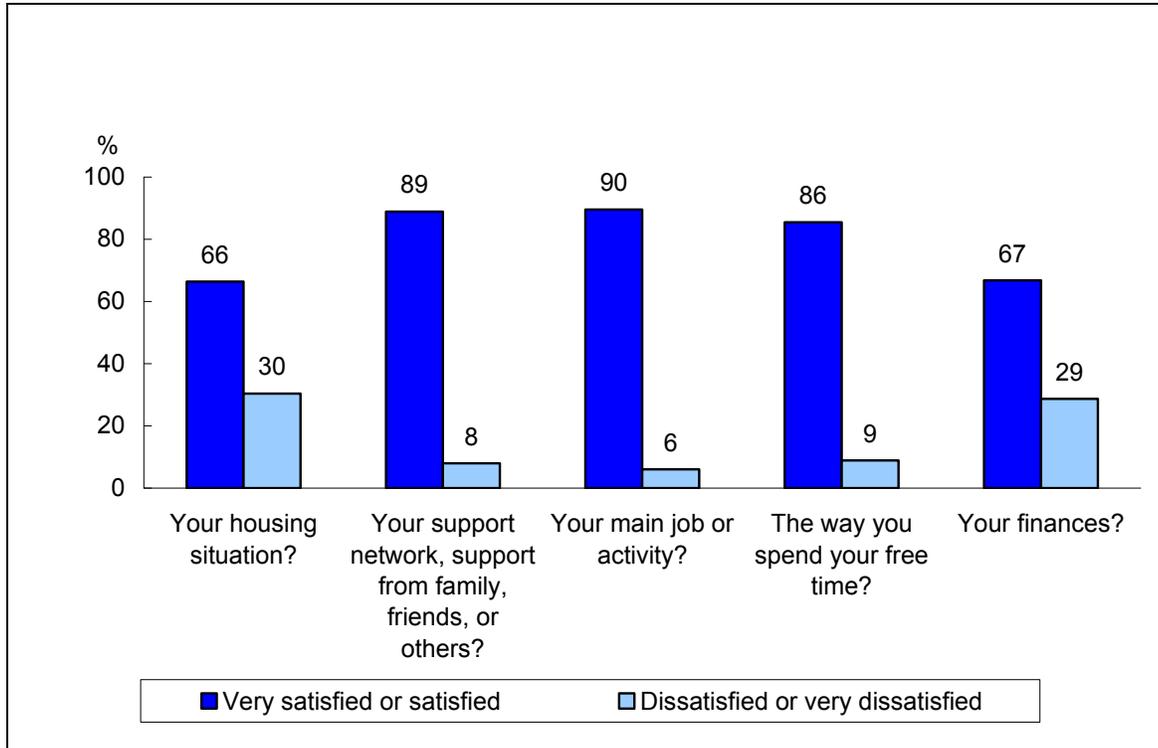
16. Low income before tax cut-offs (LICO) refers to income levels at which families or persons not in economic families spend are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. Economic families in the Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and on Indian reserves were excluded as the low income cut-offs are based on certain expenditure-income patterns which are not available from survey data for the entire population. An economic family refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. For 2006, foster children are included.

Feelings about home and daily life

On the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS), parents and guardians were asked to rate their feelings regarding certain aspects of their home and daily life. Among the categories of 'housing conditions', 'support network', 'main job or activity', 'free time', and 'finances', parents or guardians of young Inuit children gave the lowest ratings of satisfaction to 'housing' and 'finances'. (chart 3.4)

Chart 3.4

Parents or guardians of Inuit children under six years old how would you rate your feelings about...



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Levels of dissatisfaction with 'finances' and 'housing' were similar across the four Inuit regions (there were no statistically significant differences).

Dissatisfaction with housing is likely a reflection of the relatively poor housing conditions of some Inuit. According to the 2006 Census, 29% of Inuit children under six years lived in homes in need of major repairs compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children. As previously mentioned, 43% of Inuit children under six years old were also living in crowded dwellings, compared to 7% of non-Aboriginal children. (table 3.3)

Table 3.3
Housing characteristics, Inuit children under six years old by Inuit region, 2006

Inuit regions	Living in crowded dwellings	Living in dwellings requiring major repairs
	percent	
Total - Inuit area of residence	43	29
Total - Inuit Nunaat (Inuit Regions)	49	32
Nunatsiavut	14	28
Nunavik	59	45
Nunavut	48	27
Inuvialuit region	28	26
Total - Outside Inuit Nunaat	12	18

Note(s):

Crowded is defined as having more than 1 person per room. Not counted as rooms are bathrooms, halls, vestibules and rooms used solely for business purposes.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*.

Feelings about community

Research indicates that children's well-being is linked to neighbourhood 'quality' (Curtis et. al. 2004). This section looks at the communities where young Inuit children are living and growing.

Parents or guardians of Inuit children were asked to rate their feelings about their community on a variety of characteristics. Inuit children who lived within Inuit Nunaat had parents or guardians who were less likely to report that their community was 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of several of these characteristics than those living outside Inuit Nunaat. For example, while 27% of Inuit children within Inuit Nunaat had parents who rated their community as 'excellent or very good' in terms of 'adequate facilities for children', 59% of those living outside of Inuit Nunaat did so. (table 3.4)

Table 3.4
Percentage of Inuit children whose parents or guardians reported that their community was 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of selected characteristics, by Inuit region, 2006

Community characteristics	Total Inuit Nunaat †	Regions within Inuit Nunaat				Total - Outside Inuit Nunaat
		Nunatsiavut	Nunavik	Nunavut	Inuvialuit region	
	percent					
A place with good schools, nursery schools, and early childhood education programs	40	47 *	34	42	39	59 *
As a place with adequate facilities for children for example, community centres, rinks, gyms, parks	27	32	23	27	45 *	59 *
As a safe community	40	42	22 *	47 *	42	51 *
As a place with health facilities	34	26 *	29	35	42 *	45 *
As a place with actively involved members of the community	29	37 *	22 *	31	32	46 *
As a place with First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural activities	31	21 *	26	33	36	18 *

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from reference group at $p < 0.05$

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Young Inuit children in Nunavik were less likely than those in most other regions to have parents or guardians who rated their community as 'excellent' or 'very good' as a place with good schools, nursery schools and early childhood education programs. According to the 2006 ACS, the figure was 34% in Nunavik, compared with 42% in Nunavut and 47% in Nunatsiavut. In the Inuvialuit region it was 39%, although this was not significantly different from Nunavik or Nunavut.

Young Inuit children in the Inuvialuit region were more likely than those in all the other regions to have parents or guardians who rated their community as 'excellent' or 'very good' as a place with adequate facilities for children like community centres, rinks, gyms and parks. According to the 2006 ACS, the figure was 45% in the Inuvialuit region, compared with 32% in Nunatsiavut, 27% in Nunavut and 23% in Nunavik.

Young Inuit children in Nunavik were less likely than those in all the other regions to have parents or guardians who rated their community as 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of being a safe community. According to the 2006 ACS, the figure was 22% in Nunavik, compared with 42% in both Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit region and 47% in Nunavut.

Cultural activities

Participation in traditional and cultural activities

In 2006, about 63% of Inuit children under the age of six living in Inuit Nunaat had participated in or attended traditional Inuit activities such as singing, drum dancing, gatherings or ceremonies, and 58% had taken part in hunting, fishing, trapping or camping. Young Inuit children living in Inuit Nunaat were more likely to participate in these activities than those living outside of Inuit Nunaat.

In 2006, 60% of Inuit children under the age of six living in Inuit Nunaat and 33% outside of Inuit Nunaat had participated in seasonal activities such as gathering goose eggs or berries. (table 3.5)

Table 3.5
Percentage of Inuit Children under the age of six who have taken part in selected traditional activities, 2006

Type of traditional activities	Inuit Nunaat †	Outside Inuit Nunaat
	percent	
Participated in or attend traditional First Nations, Métis or Inuit activities such as singing, drum dancing, fiddling, gatherings or ceremonies	63	36 *
Participated in seasonal activities such as gathering goose eggs or wild plants for example, berries, sweet grass, roots or wild rice	60	33 *
Taken part in hunting, fishing, trapping or camping	58	45 *

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from reference group at $p < 0.05$

Note(s):

Includes those reported taking part in this activity 'more than once a day', 'once a day', 'more than once a week', 'at least once per month', 'at least once per year', and 'less than once per year'.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

In all regions across Inuit Nunaat, about six in ten Inuit children had taken part in traditional activities such as singing, drum dancing or gatherings and had also taken part in hunting, fishing, trapping or camping. Participation in seasonal activities like gathering eggs and berries was more common among Inuit children in Nunatsiavut (74%) and Nunavik (66%) than in Nunavut (57%) and the Inuvialuit region (55%).

Help with understanding Inuit history and culture

In 2006, two-thirds of Inuit children had someone who helped them to understand their Inuit culture and history (65%).

Of those who have someone involved in helping them understand Inuit history and culture, most were being taught by their parents (76%) and grand-parents (60%). (table 3.6)

Table 3.6
Persons involved in helping Inuit Children understand Inuit culture and history, 2006

Relationship to the child	percent
A mother or a father	76
A grandparent	60
An aunt or uncle	35
A teacher or a child care provider	24
A brother or sister	17
Elders	16
Someone else	7

Note(s):

On the Aboriginal Children's Survey, parents and guardians were asked: "Does anyone help <child's name> to understand First Nations, Métis or Inuit culture and history?"

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Child care arrangements

In 2006, 40% of Inuit children under six years old were in some kind of child care arrangement. In this report, child care arrangements refer to the care of a child by someone other than a parent, including daycare, nursery or preschool, Head Start, before or after school programs and care by a relative or other caregiver. These refer to regular arrangements that are used consistently, rather than sporadic child care (e.g. babysitting). Excluded from this analysis are children that are currently attending school.

It should be pointed out that these data refer to the *main* child care arrangement; that is the arrangement in which the child spends the most time. About 9% of Inuit children under the age of six were in more than one type of child care arrangement.

Of those young Inuit children that were receiving child care, 54% were in a day care or child care centre. This was the most commonly reported child care arrangement. About 19% were being cared by relatives, either within the child's home (11%) or outside the child's home (9%). About 8% were being cared for by a non-relative outside the child's home. (table 3.7)

Table 3.7**Type of child care arrangement, Inuit children under six years currently receiving child care, 2006**

Type of child care arrangements	percent
Daycare centre / Child care centre	54
Within child's home by relative	11
Outside the child's home by relative	9
Nursery school / preschool / Head Start program	8 ^E
Outside the child's home by non-relative	8 ^E
Within child's home by non-relative	6 ^E

Note(s):

Excludes children who are currently attending school. Percents may not add to 100 because missing data (i.e., don't know, refusal, not stated) were included in the calculation of all estimates.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*.

Children are placed in child care arrangements for a variety of reasons. Child care is often necessary for working parents in 2006, many Inuit children (78%) were in child care arrangements because the parent or guardian was at work, and 11% because the parent/guardian was at school. About 15% of parents or guardians of Inuit children indicated that they used child care arrangements to provide their children with developmental opportunities.

Child care that promotes traditional and cultural values and customs

In 2006, 90% of Inuit children receiving child care were in an arrangement that provided opportunities to participate in learning activities, such as songs, stories, or learning-based play, while 56% were in child care arrangements that promoted traditional and cultural values and customs. Within Inuit Nunaat 70% of young Inuit children in child care were in arrangements that promoted traditional and cultural values and customs; this is significantly higher than First Nations children living off reserve (24%) and Métis children (14%).

Moreover, 59% of Inuit children under the age of six who were currently in child care were in arrangements where the Inuit language is used. Within Inuit Nunaat, this figure was 82%.

Summary

Inuit are distinctive in terms of culture and history from First Nations and Métis children. Data reveal that Inuit families are large, with many having four or more children. It is apparent that the tradition of custom adoption is widely practiced among Inuit, as seen through the relatively high percentage of Inuit children with an adoptive parent responding to the survey as the parent or guardian. Many Inuit children live in multi-generational families with a grandparent in the home. Inuit children live in some of the most crowded housing conditions in Canada and parents or guardians expressed dissatisfaction with their housing arrangements.

Inuit children often have a large network of people involved with their upbringing, including parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Similarly, they frequently have a network of people to help them understand their culture. Higher percentages of Inuit children had parents or guardians who reported that their community was 'excellent' or 'very good' as a place with cultural activities than Métis and First Nations children living off reserve. A higher percentage of Inuit children in Inuit Nunaat (63%) had attended traditional activities such as drum dancing or gatherings than those living outside Inuit Nunaat (36%). In Inuit Nunaat, ratings for 'good schools', 'adequate facilities for children' and 'health facilities' were not as high as those outside Inuit Nunaat.

The Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) is a rich source of data with great potential for further research into these issues. For example, there are some indicators of community and cultural strength and resilience that could be further explored. The conventional measures of wellness may not be appropriate to Inuit, and ACS is a potential source of data to develop more useful and applicable indicators for young Inuit children.

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