

Families (1996)



Historically, the "traditional" family included a husband who worked outside the home, with a wife and children at home. Many factors are responsible for changing the predominance of this type of family. Since 1974, dual earner families have outnumbered the traditional family with more women working outside of the home. The growth in separation and divorce rates has contributed to the increase in lone-parent families. A rise in the number of couples deciding not to legally marry has resulted in a greater proportion of common-law unions. The acceptance of re-marriage has added to the fast growing phenomenon of "blended families". In the case of Aboriginal Peoples, their extended family is also regarded as part of their form of family.

There is no one definition that describes all aspects of "the family". Since this series of maps draws primarily on data derived from the 1996 Census, the word "family" will refer to Statistics Canada's definition of "census family". A census family is defined as "a now-married or common-law couple with or without never-married children, or a lone parent with never-married children, living in the same dwelling". Unfortunately this definition does not include all familial relationships or others living under the same roof such as adult siblings or grandparents. The definition further excludes lone parents as family members once their children marry or leave home.

The variables, or sets of data, used to generate these maps include: census family status, legal marital status, census family structure, and census family composition. Marital status is reported for every Canadian; however, the census family variables represent a subset of the total population. The reference to children in these maps includes all children, regardless of their age, that are living at home and have never been married.

All Canadians have a marital status, however it is possible that not all Canadians belong to a census family. Here are two examples of how the data sets relate: An unmarried person living alone would report "Single" as the legal marital status and would not be counted as part of a census family; while a person not legally married but living in a common-law relationship would be classified as part of a census family yet could have a "single" marital status.

Trends in the Canadian Family

Many statistics and trends that are of importance to understanding the Canadian family have been observed through the data available from Statistics Canada:

- Common-law and lone-parent families together comprise over one-quarter of all families (26%), with married couple families representing nearly three-quarters (74%).
- The number of families increased from 1991 to 1996 by 6.6%. In 1996 there were 7.8 million families in Canada.
- Although there are more families in 1996, there has been a decline in the proportion of Canadians living in families from 89% in 1971 to 84% in 1996.
- While the majority of Canada's children still live in married couple families, the number of children whose parents are living common-law has increased dramatically - by 52% between 1991 to 1996.
- The average family size has also decreased from 3.7 in 1971 to 3.1 in 1996. The Northwest Territories maintains the largest average family size of 3.6 persons in 1996, with high birth-rates being a major contributing factor.
- Parents are choosing to have children at an older age.
- Young adults remain at home longer than a decade ago.

Data and Mapping Notes

Mapping Notes

The data presented on the map layers were derived from the 1996 Census and were based on either the 288 census divisions (CD) or 5984 census subdivisions (CSD) for which data are released. The choropleth mapping technique is limited in use when displaying data for the large areas in the northern and rural regions, which contain small populations and are therefore, overemphasized. To view the population figures of a specific CD or CSD on a map, press the "Get Statistics" button and select the area of interest.

When comparing information between maps, it is important to understand that each map layer is based on a unique set of data. The class intervals used have been generated to represent the unique information on each map. As a result, the maps cannot be directly compared to each other. The individual maps, together with the supporting map text are the best sources for content comparison.

Note that in choropleth technique, areas are completely shaded and only one such layer can be viewed at a time.

At the time the census division boundaries were defined, Nunavut had not yet been designated as an official territory. It is therefore not referenced on the maps.

Definitions

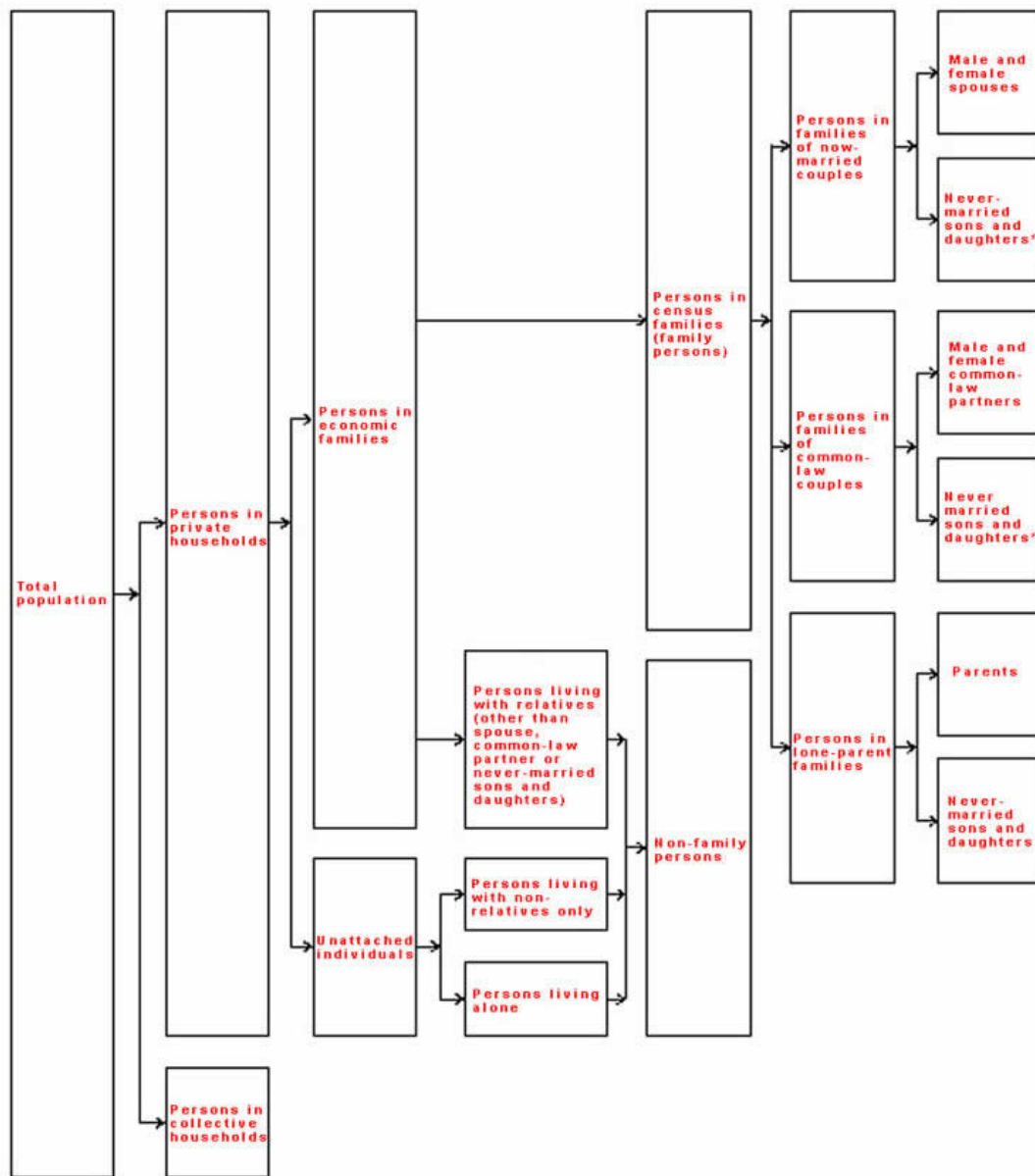
Census Family Status refers to the classification of the population according to whether or not they are members of a census family.

Family persons refer to household members who belong to a census family. They, in turn, are further classified as follows:

- **Spouses** refers to persons of the opposite sex who are legally married to each other and living in the same dwelling.
- **Common-law partners** are two persons of opposite sex who are not legally married to each other but live together as husband and wife in the same dwelling.
- **Lone parent** refers to a mother or a father, with no spouse or common-law partner present, living in a dwelling with one or more never-married sons and/or daughters.
- **Never-married sons and/or daughters** refers to blood, step or adopted sons and daughters who have never married (regardless of age) and are living in the same dwelling as their parent(s). Sons and daughters who are currently or were previously married, or who are living common-law, are not considered to be members of their parent(s)' census family even if they are living in the same dwelling. In addition, those never-married sons and daughters who do not live in the same dwelling as their parent(s) are not considered members of their parent(s)' census family.

Census Family Structure: refers to the classification of census families into **families of now-married couples** (with or without never-married sons or daughters of either or both spouses), **families of common-law couples** (with or without never-married sons or daughters of either or both partners) and **lone-parent families** by sex of parent.

Census Family Composition: "Refers to the classification of census families according to the number and/or age groups of never-married sons and/or daughters at home". The data is subdivided to include couples with and without children at home and provides age groups of children living at home.



*May or may not be present

Figure 1. Economic and Census Family Membership and Family Status

Source: Canada. Statistics Canada. 1996 Census Dictionary, Catalogue Number 92-351-XPE.

Definitions of underlined terms

Census Division: Census Division (CD) is the general term applied to areas established by provincial law which are intermediate geographic areas between the municipality and the province levels. Census divisions represent counties, regional districts, regional municipalities and other types of provincially legislated areas. In Newfoundland, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, provincial law does not provide for these administrative geographic areas. Therefore, census divisions have been created by Statistics Canada in cooperation with these provinces for the dissemination of statistical data. In the Yukon Territory, the census division is equivalent to the entire Territory. (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

Census Family: Refers to a now-married couple (with or without never-married sons and/or daughters of either or both spouses), a couple living common-law (with or without never-married sons and/or daughters of either or both partners) or a lone-parent of any marital status, with at least one never-married son or daughter living in the same dwelling. (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

Census Family Structure: Refers to the classification of census families into families of now-married couples (with or without never-married sons or daughters of either or both spouses), families of common-law couples (with or without never-married sons or daughters of either or both partners) and lone-parent families by sex of parent. (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

Census Subdivision (CSD): Census subdivision is the general term applying to municipalities (as determined by provincial legislation) or their equivalent (for example, Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories). In Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and British Columbia, the term also describes geographic areas that have been created by Statistics Canada in cooperation with the provinces as equivalents for municipalities for the dissemination of statistical data. According to the national hierarchy, census subdivisions add together to form census divisions. The CDs form provinces and territories. Two additional levels are defined in the national hierarchy to facilitate special data analysis. A special aggregation of census subdivisions called census consolidated subdivision (CCS) provides a level of geography between the CSD and CD which facilitates data analysis. In the rural context, the CCS is a grouping of smaller municipalities, usually contained within a larger municipality. For instance, a town located within a surrounding township will be grouped together with the township to form a CCS. In urban areas, CCSs are formed by contiguous groupings of CSDs. A principal user of the CCSs is the Census of Agriculture. (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

Choropleth map: A thematic map in which areas are coloured or shaded to create darker or lighter areas in proportion to the density or a particular characteristic of the theme subject in that area.

Legal Marital Status: Refers to the legal conjugal status of a person. (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

