



Children

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Business Planning • Strategic Services

**THE CITY OF
Edmonton** COMMUNITY
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CHILDREN

Highlights

- Sixty-four percent of Canadian children and youth (under age 20) lived in large urban centres in 2000, up from 56% in 1994.
- In 2001, families averaged 1.1 children and most children are an only child, or have only one sibling.
- We will likely see a gradual decline in the proportion of children in Edmonton's population in coming years.
- Edmonton has an appreciably higher proportion of lone-parent families (18.4%) than Calgary or the rest of the province.
- Across Canada, many children are spending a large portion of their day in the care of adults other than their parents. Alberta showed the smallest increase among the provinces; only 43% of Alberta children between the ages of 6 months and five years were in child care in 2003. In Alberta, the proportion of children being cared for by a relative jumped from 6% to 17% between 1994 and 2003. The proportion of very young children (6 to 11 months of age) in child care Canada-wide dropped from 44% to 29%.
- Children living in cohabiting (living together) families generally do not do as well as children in stable, two-parent married families.
- Parental divorce appears to have an important effect on children, perhaps even greater than does the death of a parent.
- Children in lone-parent families show many traits similar to children living in poverty. In fact, many lone-parent families are poor.
- In 1999, over 18% of Canadian children were living in poverty. While levels of child poverty are lower in Alberta and Ontario, the depth of poverty in these two provinces is greater than for the rest of Canada.
- Almost 25% of couple families with children who rented accommodation paid 30% or more of their gross income on shelter in 2000. 52% of lone-parent families who rented accommodation paid more than 30% more of their gross income on shelter.
- Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the population needing access to emergency shelter services, caused largely by a shortage of housing and the growing costs of housing.
- As many as one in ten Canadian children suffer from asthma.
- Motor vehicle accidents are the greatest cause of death and injury among children.
- Young Aboriginal children are four to five times more likely to die from injuries than other Canadian children.
- The proportion of Canadian families experiencing hunger rose by 39% from 1994 to 1996.
- The proportion of Canadian children and youth between the ages of 2 and 17 who were obese rose from 3% in 1978 to 8% in 2004.
- Rates of child abuse in Edmonton have declined during the last five years.
- Children under 15 make up 32% of our non-reserve Aboriginal population, as compared to making up 18% of the rest of the population.
- Over 25% of Aboriginal families are headed by a lone parent, and 39% of lone parent Aboriginal women had an income of less than \$12,000.
- About 60% of Canadian children and youth are not active enough to ensure optimal growth and development.

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CHILDREN

1. INTRODUCTION

In many ways, today's children are growing up in a much different world than their parents did — both in the world outside and within their own homes.

As of 2000, 64% of Canadian children and youth (under age 20) lived in large urban centres. This is a significant change from the 56% figure recorded in 1994¹, only six years earlier.

Most children today have fewer siblings than their parents had. In the 1950s, 20% of children in Canada had at least five siblings. In 1991, only 1% had five siblings. In 2001, families averaged 1.1 children and most children are an only child, or have only one sibling².

More than half of recent immigrant children belong to visible minority groups, as compared to 32% of those who came to Canada before 1986. Almost two-thirds of recent child immigrants speak neither of the two official languages.

2. POPULATION

Table 1 shows that between 1991 and 2005, there has been a slow but steady decline in the percent of the Edmonton population which is under 15 years of age. Table 3 shows that the proportion of 5-9 year olds and 10-14 year olds will increase slightly in 2011. Between 2005 and 2011 the number of children age 0-14 and their percent in the population is anticipated to increase slightly, with a larger increase in the 0-4 year age group. This *could be the reverse of a trend*, given continued healthy economic performance of Edmonton and Alberta. Strong demand for workers could continue the trend of significant in-migration from other parts of Canada. These migrants are generally young families, or individuals who may then choose to remain in the Edmonton area and raise families.

Table 1: Proportion (percent) of children ages 0 to 14 in the Edmonton population, 1991, 1993, 1996, 1999 and 2005					
	1991	1993	1996	1999	2005
0 to 4 years	7.9	7.5	6.8	5.9	5.3
5 to 9 years	7.3	7.1	7	6.5	5.6
10 to 14 years	6.1	6.3	6.8	6.5	6
0 to 14 years	21.3	20.9	20.6	18.9	16.9

Source: City of Edmonton Census

¹ CCSD. 2002.

² Statistics Canada. 2004b.

Table 2: Forecast numbers of children in the Edmonton population, 2005 to 2010								
	2005³	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 2005-2011
0 to 4	37,487	40,151	40,414	40,843	41,158	41,535	41,728	11.3%
5 to 9	39,554	37,646	37,705	37,792	37,760	37,924	41,104	3.9%
10 to 14	42,613	40,684	39,648	38,879	38,200	37,780	39,975	-6.2%
0 to 14	119,654	118,481	117,767	117,514	117,118	117,239	122,807	2.6%
All ages	712,391	720,000	727,000	735,000	740,987	74,8000	764,745	7.3%

Source: City of Edmonton Forecast Committee, 2006

Table 3: Forecast proportion (percent) of children ages 0 to 14 in the Edmonton population, 2005 to 2010							
	2005 (actual)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
0 to 4 years	5.3	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.4
5 to 9 years	5.6	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.4
10 to 14 years	6	5.7	5.5	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.2
0 to 14 years	16.8	16.4	16.2	16	15.8	15.7	16

Source: City of Edmonton Forecast Committee, 2006

In 2001 the Edmonton population was older than that of Calgary and the province as a whole. Calgary has grown significantly in recent years and much of this growth has been due to in-migration of young workers seeking jobs.

Table 4: Proportion of children in the population and other indicators of “age of the population”, Edmonton, Calgary and Alberta, 2001			
	Edmonton	Calgary	Alberta
0 to 4	5.8%	6.1%	6.3%
5 to 14	12.7%	13.2%	14.5%
15 to 19	6.9%	6.8%	7.5%
Median age of population (years)	35.3	34.8	35
% of population 15 and over	81.5%	80.8%	79.2%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2005a

³ Actual figures, 2005 Municipal Census

3. TYPES OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

The majority of couples (of all ages) have children at home (59.6%). Common law couples, which make up 12% of families in Edmonton, are less likely to have children than are married couples (Table 5).

Table 5: Types of families and number of children per family, Edmonton, 2001				
	Married Couple Families	Common-law Couple Families	Lone-parent Families	
			Female Parent	Male Parent
No children	39.9%	64.1%		
1 child	21.3%	18.8%	60.0%	67.5%
2 children	26.1%	11.8%	27.9%	25.0%
3 or more children	12.7%	5.4%	12.1%	7.6%
% of all families	59.6%	12%	15.1%	3.3%

Source: 2001 Canada Census

Edmonton has an appreciably higher proportion of lone-parent families than Calgary or the rest of the province (Table 6). A higher percentage (though not number) of children in lone-parent families experience difficulties than do children from two-parent families.

Table 6: Proportion of lone-parent families in the population and size of lone-parent families, Edmonton, Calgary and Alberta, 2001			
	Edmonton⁴	Calgary⁵	Alberta⁴
Lone-parent families (as % of all families)	18.4%	15.1%	14.4%
Average number of persons in family	2.5	2.5	2.6
Female lone-parent families	15.1%	12.3%	11.4%
Average number of persons in family	2.6	2.5	2.6
Male lone-parent families	3.3%	2.9%	2.9%
Average number of persons in family	2.4	2.4	2.5

Source: Statistics Canada, 2005a

In 1998, 8.8% of Canadian children under the age of 12 lived in step-families, compared to 7.5% in 1994⁶.

⁴ Statistics Canada. <http://tinyurl.com/mnura>

⁵ Statistics Canada. <http://tinyurl.com/lftpm>

⁶ CCSD. 2002.

4. CHILD CARE

“Busyness” is one of the major challenges facing Canadian families. Demands from work have increased and many people are working longer hours⁷. This has been particularly noticeable among women with children at home. In 1999, almost 80% of women with children were also working⁸. There has been considerable discussion in the media in recent years about the decreasing amounts of time that parents spend with their children. One of the visible symptoms is that many children are spending a large portion of their day in the care of adults other than their parents.

Statistics Canada⁹ has reported a significant increase in the proportion of Canadian children in child care over the period 1994 to 2003 — 54% of children (aged six months to five years) were in child care at the end of the study period, compared to 42% in 1994/95. Alberta showed the smallest increase among the provinces; only 43% of Alberta children between the ages of 6 months and five years were in child care in 2003.

About 90% of Canadian children in child care were in one of three forms of care: care by a relative, care by a non-relative outside the home, or in a day care. During the study period, care by a non-relative outside the home declined significantly (from 43% to 30%), while the other two forms of child care increased. In Alberta, the proportion of children being cared for by a relative jumped from 6% to 17% during the study period.

The proportion of very young children (6 to 11 months of age) in child care dropped during the period from 44% to 29%, possibly due to more generous parental leave allowances under the Employment Insurance Program¹⁰.

The study also revealed relationships between the types of child care employed and family demographics:

- Parents born outside Canada were more likely to place their children in the care of a relative;
- Rural families were more likely to employ the services of a relative to care for children than were urban families;
- More urban children were sent to day care centres than rural children; and
- Children from wealthy families were more likely to be cared for by a non-relative outside the home, while the largest proportion of children from lower income families were enrolled at a day care.

As shown in the following two charts, the amount of time working parents spend with their children is not evenly balanced. Mothers spend much more time than

⁷ Sauvé, 2002.

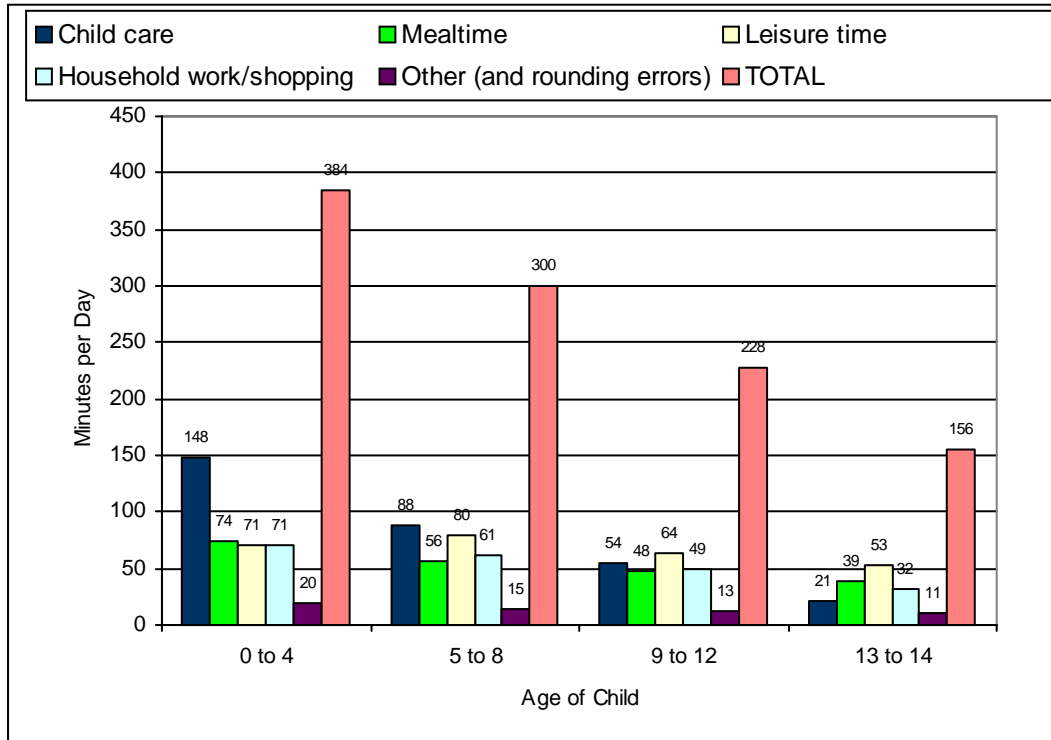
⁸ CCSD, 2001.

⁹ Statistics Canada, 2006a.

¹⁰ CCSD. *op. cit.*

fathers interacting with their children up to age 8. After that, the amount of time spent with children by either parent declines and is more evenly balanced.

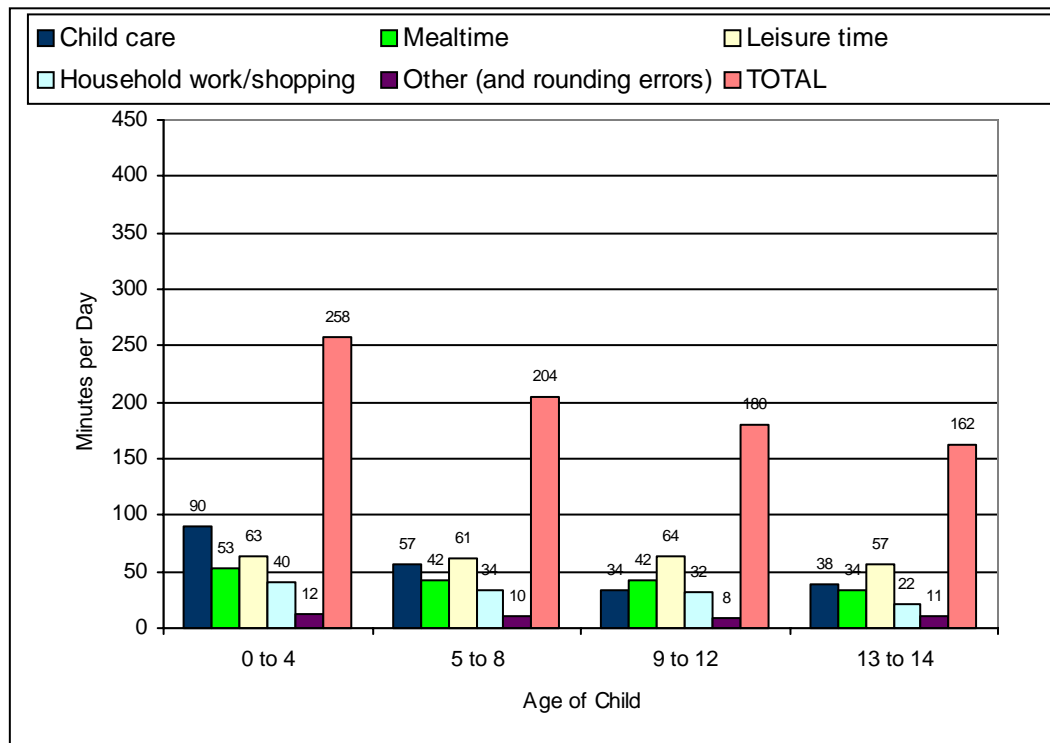
Figure 1: Minutes per day mothers spent ‘in presence of children’, by age of child, 1998



Source: Canadian Social Trends, 2000

In 2001, 74% of working mothers felt they had too much to do, as compared to 67% in 1991. During the same period, the proportion of working fathers who said they had difficulty meeting all of their commitments rose from 45% to 55%.

Figure 2: Minutes per day fathers spent ‘in presence of children’, by age of child, 1998



Source: Canadian Social Trends, 2000

5. RISK FACTORS AFFECTING CHILDREN

“One of the most important and consistent findings from studies of development is that as the number of risk factors increases, negative effects increase exponentially.”¹¹

FAMILY STRUCTURE

Cohabitation

A stable family structure has been shown to be an important element in helping children grow into healthy, productive adults. A study by Ambert¹² for the Vanier Institute of the Family looked at some of the effects of family structure on children. Some of her findings are presented below.

¹¹ United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. 2003.

¹² Ambert. 2005a.

The proportion of Canadians choosing to live together (cohabit) rose from the early 1980s, to 14% of all families in 2001, up from 6% in 1981¹³. Cohabitation relationships are generally not as stable as marriage, which can place children in the relationship at risk if the relationship dissolves. This is particularly true when their mother cohabits with a man who is not their father. In some households, there may be a succession of partners over the years. Even children whose parents cohabit will experience more instability than those whose parents marry before they are born.

One study found that children living with their mother and her cohabiting boyfriend had lower school performance and more behavioural problems¹⁴ than children in two-parent families. Children living in married two-parent families drop out of school less, go further with their education, and are less often on welfare than children with only one resident parent or a cohabiting parent. They are also less likely to become involved in crime than children with single or cohabiting parents.

Infant mortality rates are lower among married families. Children living within marriages also experience stronger economic security and more supportive emotional environments. As adults, they tend to benefit from better and more stable employment.

There may be advantages to cohabitation. When a single mother begins to cohabit, family poverty can be reduced by as much as 30%. The economic well-being of a cohabitation family is generally not as high as for married families, however. Cohabiting males earn less than married men, and better-off cohabitators are more likely to marry when or before they have children.

On average, married families (and their children) experience more stability, fewer stressors, and a greater level of long-term commitment on the part of the adults involved.

Lone-Parent Families

A report prepared for the Vanier Institute by Ambert¹⁵ documented some of the issues facing children in lone-parent families. The author pointed out that the research to date is incomplete and focuses heavily on the negative aspects. Notwithstanding, children from lone-parent families (as compared to children in two-parent families) are more likely to:

- Exhibit behaviour problems,
- Have a record as a young offender,
- Show poorer achievement in school and leave school at an earlier age, and
- Have difficult relationships.

¹³ **Statistics Canada. 2002.**

¹⁴ **Ambert. *op. cit.***

¹⁵ **Ambert. 2006.**

As adults, these same children are more likely to:

- Be a parent to a child born outside of marriage,
- Do poorly in school,
- Be unemployed,
- Have a lower economic status,
- Have a criminal record of serious offences, and
- Experience marital problems and divorce.

Three-Generation Families

In Alberta, 3.2% of all children 14 and under live in a household that includes at least one grandparent, and 0.6% of Alberta children live with just their grandparents¹⁶.

One-third of Canadian grandparents in multigenerational settings are sharing homes with a lone parent, usually the mother. Twelve percent of grandparents in shared households live only with their grandchildren because the children's parents are unable or unwilling to care for their children, or are deceased. The grandchildren in these situations are often some of our most *at risk* children; many have been exposed to parental conflict, abuse, addictions, poverty and a variety of other factors.

FAMILY BREAKUP

The more often a child experiences parental changes (death, divorce, separation) the less likely they are to remember their childhood as a happy time¹⁷. About 24% of children experiencing one such change remembered their childhood negatively; the figure rises to 50% for those who experienced three or more such changes before they were 15 years old.

Surprisingly, parental divorce seems to have a greater impact on children than even the death of a parent. Studies have shown that children from a divorced family are more likely to have emotional and social problems, are more prone to drop out of school or leave home early, and are more likely to end up in a low income situation¹⁸ than children who have lost a parent. Even before the final breakup occurs, young children in dissolving families tend to exhibit increased levels of depression and behavioural problems. These levels of depression usually increase even more after the divorce¹⁹.

Adults who lived through divorce as a child often experience instability in their own marital relationships. The recent trends show that almost 40% of marriages can be expected to end in divorce by the 30th wedding anniversary²⁰.

¹⁶ Milan and Hamm. 2003.

¹⁷ Williams. 2001.

¹⁸ Ambert. 2005a.

¹⁹ Statistics Canada. 2005c.

²⁰ Statistics Canada. 2004a.

CHILD POVERTY

“Children living in families on very low-income tend to display consistently poorer outcomes in every facet of their development.”²¹

“The well-being of children appears to be almost always associated with the household income of their family . . . regardless of the child’s age or how income is measured, higher income tends to be related to better physical, social/emotional, cognitive and behavioural well-being among children.”²²

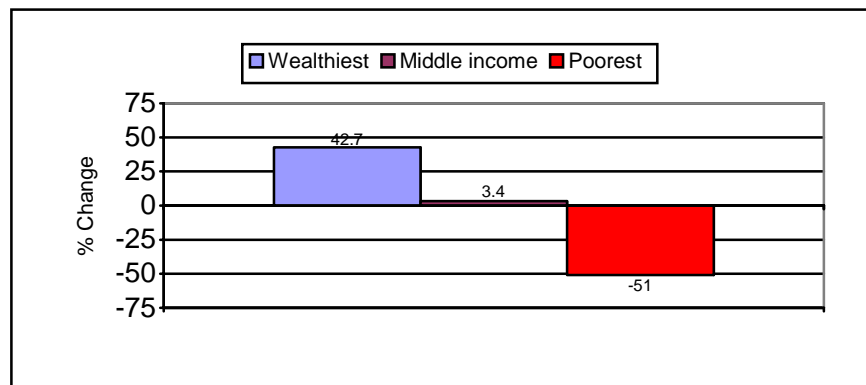
According to the 2002 report, *The Progress of Canada’s Children*²³ over 18% of Canadian children was living in poverty²⁴ in 1999. This is an improvement from the highest levels (21% in 1993), but still not as good as the figure of just over 15% recorded in 1989. Another CCSD report²⁵ cites UNICEF in saying that Canada has one of the worst child poverty rates among the world’s 16 industrialized nations.

In 1989 the Canadian Parliament voted unanimously to eliminate child poverty by 2000. Canada has been less than successful in meeting this objective.

The CCSD report states that the levels of child poverty in Alberta and Ontario are the lowest in Canada, but goes on to assert that the *depth* of poverty in these two provinces is deeper than the rest of Canada as a result of cuts to social assistance programs.

The gap between rich and poor in Canada is widening, and this has serious ramifications for children. The following changes took place in average family net worth between 1984 and 1999:

Figure 3: Change in average net worth for Canadian families, 1984-1999



Source: CCSD, 2002

²¹ United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. 2003.

²² Statistics Canada. 2006b.

²³ CCSD. 2002.

²⁴ CCSD. *op. cit.*

²⁵ CCSD. 2001.

The 2002 CCSD report identified a number of factors that researchers have linked to child poverty:

- Only 70% of poor children were deemed “ready for school”, as compared to 90% of children from homes where poverty was not a problem;
- Only 27% of children who had experienced poverty for two years had adequate reading and grammar skills; for children who had never experienced poverty the figure was 44%;
- A greater proportion of children who had the opportunity to participate regularly in sport and recreation activities were doing very well at school (48%) than among children who were not similarly active (32%).
- In 1998, 23% of Canadian children under 16 living in families with low income (under \$20,000) were deemed to be living in *dysfunctional* family environments. Only 9% of children from families with incomes over \$40,000 were experiencing similar problems;
- Among those same children from under-\$20,000 income families, 20% had a parent experiencing problems with depression. Among the over-\$40,000 group, only 5% had a parent suffering from depression;
- 20% of the under-\$20,000 children lived in families with low levels of social support (from family and friends); and
- The parents of recent (since 1986) immigrant families are more likely to work more than 50 hours per week, but one-third of recent immigrant children are still living below LICO, as compared to about 20% of non-immigrant children.

HOUSING

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation defined criteria used in evaluating **housing adequacy**²⁶:

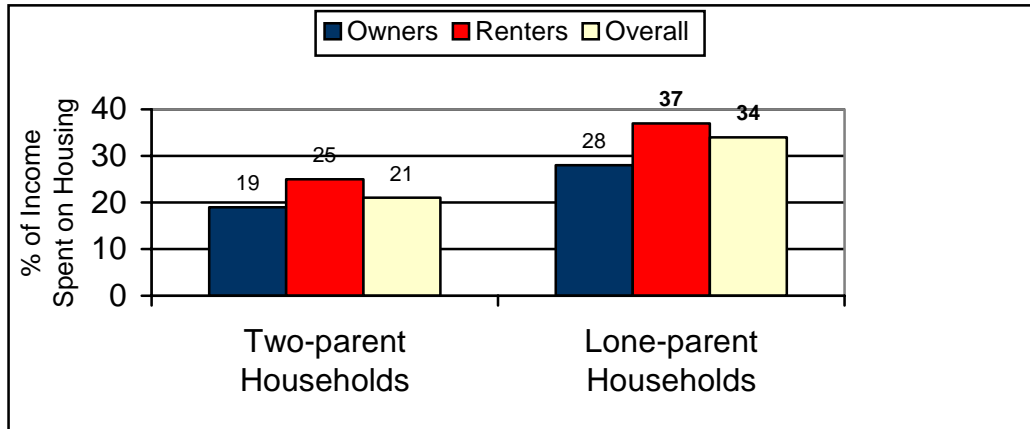
- The residents feel that the dwelling does not require major repairs.
- There are enough bedrooms, considering the size and makeup of the household.
- The household has to pay less than 30% of before-tax income to pay for the housing.

CMHC further defined a household as being in **core housing need** if any one of the first two criteria is not met *and* it would have to pay 30% or more of before-tax household income to find housing that does meet all three criteria, given the local housing supply and average rents.

²⁶ CMHC. 2000.

An evaluation of data from the 1996 Canada Census showed that most Canadian families had adequate housing according to the above criteria. There were noteworthy exceptions, however, as shown in the following.

Figure 4: Proportion of before-tax household income spent on housing by lone-parent and two-parent Canadian families, 1996



Source: CMHC, 2000

In 1996, the majority (88%) of Canadian children lived in adequately-sized housing, but 9% lived in circumstances where the housing was deficient by one bedroom to serve the family needs, and 3% had to cope with a two or three-bedroom shortfall.

Most (78%) households with children could find affordable housing, but 15% had to pay in the range of 30-49% of before-tax household income on housing, while 7% of households were spending 50% or more of their household income on housing.

A comparison prepared by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities from 1991 and 2001 Canadian census data showed that, on a large city basis, more two-parent families who rented were spending 30% or more of household income on shelter costs in 2001 (30.7%) than were doing so in 1991 (24.3%). For lone-parent families, the proportion declined very slightly from 49.9% to 49.4%). In Edmonton in 2000, almost 25% of couple families with children who rent accommodation paid 30% or more of their gross income for shelter. 52% of lone-parent families paid 30% or more of income for accommodation.

Table 7: Proportion of renter families with children spending 30% or more of household income on shelter costs, Canada, 1991 and 2001

	1991	2001
Two-parent families	24.3%	30.7%
Lone-parent families	49.9%	49.4%

Source: Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004

A survey of 112 emergency shelters in Canada's large urban areas in 1999-2000 looked at families with children making use of these shelters²⁷.

Only 10% of families using shelters had earned income; the balance had no income or depended on government support programs. In terms of the children themselves, over half were under the age of 5, and only 15% were over 12. Behaviour and school problems, as well as feelings of low self-esteem were common among these children.

While most of the shelter facilities met the basic needs of the families, overcrowding was often a problem — many reported that children or youth sometimes had to share bedrooms with kids from other families. Although the majority of the shelters said they accommodated school-aged children, less than half of them had adequate spaces for these children to do their schoolwork.

The study revealed that the majority of families using shelters were able to move on to their own housing, but it was also common for up to 25% of families to return to the shelter within a year.

HEALTH

In 1999, the average two-parent family with children spent \$1,505 on health care costs, an increase from the \$1,410 spent in 1998²⁸. In 2001, the typical Edmonton family spent \$1,878 on health care or 2.8% of their incomes.²⁹

Asthma is now the most common chronic disease affecting Canadian children³⁰; one authority cited an incidence as high as one in ten children³¹. There is increasing evidence that deteriorating air quality (caused by a variety of environmental factors) may play a role in the increase.

²⁷ CMHC. 2001.

²⁸ CCSD. *op. cit.*

²⁹ FCM Quality of Life Reporting System

³⁰ CCSD. *op. cit.*

³¹ Ostroff. 2006

Canada has made considerable progress in reducing the exposure of children to tobacco smoke in the home; rates dropped from 23% in 1999 to 14% in 2002³². However, poor children are still more likely to be exposed to tobacco smoke.

Other factors that seem to have a particular effect on the health of children are exposure to environmental toxins, particularly pesticides. Traditionally, research on toxic chemicals and safety standards have been focused on the effects on adult males, and our current safety standards were based on the effects on adult males (i.e., in workplace settings). Recent studies have shown that growing children react to toxins differently, and their behaviour means they may come in contact with chemicals in much different ways than adults.

Children living in poverty have higher concentrations of lead in their bloodstream than other children. This may be due to poor or older housing conditions, where they are more likely to be exposed to old lead-based paints.

Motor vehicle accidents were the leading cause of death and injury among children during the 1990s.

Aboriginal children are much more likely to die from injuries than children in the rest of the Canadian population. The rate of death among Aboriginal infants is four times greater; among pre-schoolers the rate is five times higher³³.

The lack of adequate nutrition is still an issue potentially affecting the health of children in Canada. About 75,000 Canadian families experienced hunger in 1996, an increase of 39% over 1994³⁴.

Early Childhood Health Factors

The following table illustrates that in many, but not all respects Edmonton area infants fare about as well, health-wise, prior to and immediately after birth as infants in the Calgary Health Region or in the province as a whole. One exception is in terms of low birth weight; a lower proportion of low birth weight infants are born in the Capital Health region than in the Calgary area, but more than for the province as a whole. The infant mortality rate for Edmonton is higher than for Calgary, but lower than for the province as a whole.

³² **Ostroff.** *op. cit.*

³³ **CCSD.** *op. cit.*

³⁴ **CCSD.** *op. cit.*

Table 8: Indicators of early childhood health, Capital Health, Calgary Health and Alberta, 1998 – 2000

	Year	Capital Health	Calgary Health	Alberta
Low birth weight (% of live births below 2,500 g)	1998	6.4%	6.9%	6.2%
	2000	6.3%	6.6%	6.1%
	2002	6.4%	7.3%	6.5%
Preterm births (% of live births at less than 37 weeks)	1998	8.2%	7.7%	7.5%
	2000	9.4%	8.7%	8.5%
	2002	9.1%	9.1%	8.6%
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	97-99	5.4% ³⁵	4.3% ³⁵	5.1% ³⁵
	99-01	6.6%	5.2%	5.9%
	01-02	6.2% ³⁵	5.7% ³⁵	6.5% ³⁵

Source: Predy *et al*, 2004

As many as three children per 1,000 live births have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; six per 1,000 have Fetal Alcohol Effects (a milder and more moderate disability). Furthermore, 77% of mothers who give birth to a child with either of these problems, give birth to another with these problems. These are lifelong disabilities; the majority of persons affected have mental health problems, many have difficulties in school or with criminal offences³⁶.

Obesity

Obesity rates have increased sharply for Canadians over the last decade and a half. Fortunately, the problem is not *quite* as severe among children as it is among Canada's adult population³⁷.

In 1978/79, 3% of Canadian children between the ages of 2 to 17 were obese. By 2004, the proportion had risen to 8%. While the proportion of young children ages two to five who were obese or overweight did not change much during this period, the proportion of adolescents 12 to 17 who were obese jumped from 3% to 9%. The proportion of this age group classed as overweight more than doubled, from 14% to 29%. This is of concern for the future, since adolescents who are overweight or obese tend to remain so as adults.

To put this into a North American perspective, the proportion of Canadian boys who are overweight or obese did not differ greatly from figures recorded in the United States. Canadian girls, however, are significantly less likely to be obese than girls in the U.S.

Children consuming a healthy diet were much less likely to be obese than those whose diet was not as well-balanced. Children spending a lot of time at passive

³⁵ Based on 2003 health region boundaries

³⁶ **United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. 2003.**

³⁷ **Statistics Canada. 2005b.**

activities (TV, video games, etc.) were also more likely to be obese than more active kids.

CHILD INTERVENTIONS

With the introduction of the new Family Enhancement Act for the province, what was formerly referred to as child welfare or child protection is now termed child intervention. In child intervention there are two program streams: Child Protection and Family Enhancement.

Table 9: Average monthly child intervention caseloads by calendar year, Edmonton and Alberta, 2000-2005		
	Child Protection	Family Enhancement
Edmonton,		
2000	4,120	
2001	4,355	
2002	4,737	
2003	4,286	336 ³⁸
2004	4,086	632
2005	2,988	1,140
Alberta		
2000	13,836	
2001	15,013	
2002	14,117	
2003	13,203	667 ³⁸
2004	12,351	1,734
2005	9,760	3,212

Source: Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Alberta Children's Services, 2006, unpublished data

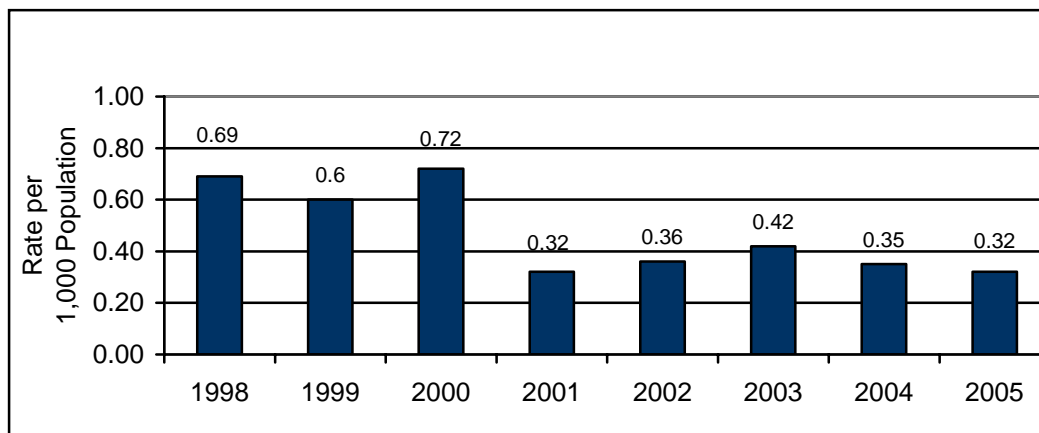
It is possible for a child to receive services through both Child Protection and Family Enhancement programs in a given month, therefore the average monthly cases for these two should not be added together as this would lead to double counting.

³⁸ Monthly averages for 2003 for Family Enhancement for both Edmonton and Alberta are based on April to December figures only.

CRIME AND VICTIMIZATION

Figure 5 shows that the rate of reports of child abuse to Edmonton Police has decreased in recent years..

Figure 5: Reported rate of child abuse cases, Edmonton, 1988 – 2005



Source: Edmonton Police Service, unpubl. data

The rate at which child abuse has been reported has levelled off at a lower rate than what was reported five to seven years ago.

A report by the Canadian Council on Social Development³⁹ states that a majority of Canadian school children and over 90% of parents feel that their neighbourhoods are safe.

Approximately 8% of Canadian children between the ages of 4 and 11 have been witness to violence in their own homes. This in turn makes these children more likely to exhibit hyperactive or aggressive behaviour themselves.

6. ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

While children 14 and under comprise 18% of Canada's non-Aboriginal population, they make up 32% of the Aboriginal population living outside reserves. Almost 70% of Canada's Aboriginal children 14 and under live in non-reserve areas.

Poverty is a particularly critical problem among Aboriginal families – over 25% of Aboriginal families are headed by a lone parent, and 39% of lone parent Aboriginal women had an income of less than \$12,000⁴⁰.

³⁹ CCSD. *op. cit.*

⁴⁰ CCSD. *op. cit.*

Eighty-three percent of parents of non-reserve Aboriginal children 5 and under rated their children's health as *very good* or *excellent*. For children in the general Canadian population the figure is 90%. The ratio improves as the children get older — for non-reserve Aboriginal children 6 to 14, 82% were in very good or excellent health, compared to 86% in the general population. There are slight differences among different non-reserve Aboriginal groups: 84% of Métis children 14 and under were in very good or excellent health; the figures were 81% for North American Indian children and 79% for Inuit children.

Although information specific to Edmonton is not available, two-thirds of North American Indian parents and about half of Métis parents living outside reserves said they felt it was important for their children to know an Aboriginal language. The survey showed that Aboriginal children with a variety of opportunities to learn their native language did better than those who relied solely on parents.

The survey results showed that more than half (53%) of non-reserve Aboriginal children between the ages of 6 and 14 had attended preschool programs of some type. The study also revealed the impact of recent government initiatives to provide educational programs designed specifically for Aboriginal children. Only 4% of 14-year-old non-reserve children surveyed had attended Aboriginal preschool programs, but the figure rose to 16% among children who were six years of age at the time of the survey.

Aboriginal children living outside reserves are also taking advantage of opportunities for extra-curricular activities:

- 71% participated in sports one or more times per week,
- 31% were involved in art or music,
- 30% were active in clubs or youth/music/dance groups,
- 34% spent time with Elders at least once a week, and
- 21% volunteered in their school or community.

Not surprisingly, school achievement was usually higher among those children involved in positive extra-curricular activities.

7. EDUCATION

The cost of education for Canadian families is increasing. In 2001 the average reporting Canadian household spent \$1,196 on education expenses (tuition, texts and supplies) for nursery school through secondary school. In Edmonton the amount spent was \$329, significantly less than the \$1,119 spent in Calgary or the national average.⁴¹

An increasing number of parents are enrolling their children in private schools; enrolment grew by almost 10% between the 1994/95 and 1998/99 school years. The trend is most pronounced in Ontario and British Columbia.

⁴¹ FCM Quality of Life Reporting System, *op. cit.*

8. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Statistics relating to the increase in obesity among Canadian children and youth were discussed earlier in this report (page 19). Poor diet and a deficiency of physical activity are two of the main factors relating to this trend. Other studies have shown that children who are inactive will probably lead a sedentary lifestyle when they reach adulthood. In other words, our society is likely to see even greater increases in obesity and the chronic illness that accompany this condition unless steps are taken to encourage our children to become more active.

Recent studies done for the Canadian Fitness and Leisure Research Institute summarized some of the statistics associated with childhood physical activity^{42,43}:

- About 60% of Canadian children and youth are not active enough to ensure optimal growth and development;
- As children get older, they become less physically active; and
- Only 48% of Canadian boys get enough physical activity for optimal health benefits; the proportion is only 38% among girls.

Earlier in this report, a number of references were made to factors which work to reduce the access children have to opportunities for healthy leisure and fitness activities. As well, this report has also mentioned the positive effects of participation in recreation on school achievement, social success and self-esteem.

⁴² Cameron *et al.* 2005.

⁴³ Craig *et al.* 2001

9. CITY OF EDMONTON INITIATIVES

The following represents a listing of key initiatives, services, and programs currently endorsed by City of Edmonton Departments for children:

Children's Services Framework

In 2003, the **Community Services Department** began working on a **Children's Services Framework** to help focus the department's efforts, determine service priorities, and integrate services provided to children. The **Framework** was approved by the Department Management Team in April 2004. The **Framework** defined a common direction, outcomes, and policies that will be managed at the strategic level across the department's services, programs, and facilities to ensure all relevant activities are child-friendly and child centric.

Community Services offers a wide variety of children's services. The **Framework** contains the following six goals that are consistent with Community Services' **Integrated Services Strategy**:

- advocate for children;
- align programs, services, and facilities to children's needs;
- eliminate accessibility barriers to programs, services, and facilities;
- strengthen development of children by supporting the role of families;
- enable Edmonton's children to become contributing citizens; and
- efficient and effective implementation of the **Framework**.

Note that particular consideration was given to the United Nation's "child friendly" cities initiatives that sprung from the U.N. **Convention on the Rights of the Child**. The following is a list of some of the opportunities, rights and activities that a child-friendly city provides to young citizens:

- influence decisions about their city; express their opinion about their city;
- participate in family, community, and social life;
- receive basic services, such as health care and education;
- be protected from exploitation, violence, and abuse;
- walk safely in the streets on their own;
- have green spaces for plants and animals;
- live in an unpolluted environment; participating in cultural and social events; and
- be an equal citizen with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender, or disability.

These rights and activities aligned well with the values of Community Services' **Integrated Services Strategy**. In addition, through one-on-one interviews, focus

groups, workshops and written surveys, external services/governmental agencies, children and community leaders, and Community Services staff reported a number of successful children's programs and services in Edmonton with the following key attributes:

- community connectedness;
- geographic and financial accessibility;
- support for the family;
- relevant and responsive program content; and
- linkages to community program anchors.

The **Framework** then moved to the implementation phase and a City Council Special Initiative, **Child Friendly Edmonton** was adapted to encourage action to make Edmonton a more child friendly place that recognizes and reflects the needs of children and young people.

Child Friendly Edmonton

Child Friendly Cities is a UNICEF (**United Nations International Children's Fund**) Initiative promoting the implementation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. It defines children and youth as persons under the age of 18 years, and includes all children regardless of economic status, ethnic origin, religion, disability, or gender.

Child Friendly Edmonton has identified a foundation principle, three goals, and several building blocks within each goal. In addition, **Child Friendly Edmonton** has broadened its scope of work within the City of Edmonton to include all departments and civic agencies.

The foundation principle is *Partnerships and Collaboration*. Partnerships and collaboration permeate all goals and building blocks. Goals and building blocks are *what* are to be achieved; partnerships and collaboration are *how* it will be done. Commitment to working together helps ensure long-term sustainability and ingrain Child Friendly principles into day-to-day operations.

The first goal is Advocacy & Awareness:

Goal Statement: The City of Edmonton and its partners will ensure a greater voice for Edmonton's children and youth and improve opportunities for their meaningful participation. The City and partners will also strive to build awareness on issues faced by children and youth so as to champion improvements and change.

This goal is aimed at generating more awareness and understanding of the issues facing, and opportunities for, Edmonton's children, as well as

promoting children's active involvement in the issues that affect them. Building Blocks are: State of Edmonton's Children Report, a Voice for Edmonton's Children, and Building Awareness.

The second goal is Accessibility:

Goal Statement: The City of Edmonton and its partners will strive to improve accessibility for all children and youth so that they have the choice and opportunity to join in and participate freely.

The creation of partnerships and collaborative opportunities to reduce and remove gender, ability, income, disability, transportation, equipment, and other barriers for all children to have equitable opportunities to participate. Building Blocks are Addressing Barriers and Pilot Projects.

The third goal is Services "Fit" for Children"

Goal Statement: the City of Edmonton will work to ensure the policies, services, and programs provided meet the needs of children, youth, and their families by striving for quality experiences that are child centered and take a holistic approach at best practices for child development.

The final goal focuses on the provision of quality experiences for children in safe environments, with qualified staff and volunteers in order to enrich skills, knowledge, and lives, in general. Building Blocks are Child Friendly Lens and Training and Development.

The values that guide **Child Friendly Edmonton** include a place where children and youth:

- have voice and influence;
- are protected from violence and abuse;
- feel safe;
- play and have fun;
- join in and participate freely;
- create friendships and relationships;
- feel welcome and have a sense of belonging;
- have opportunity and choice for life-long learning and building skills;
- feel respected; and
- understand responsibility to themselves and others.

Out-of-School Care

Qualifying families in need can receive financial subsidies to help cover costs of childcare for school-age children in out-of-school centres. The Community

Services Department monitors these centres, provides staff training, and ensures City standards are met.

The City of Edmonton provides financial assistance through the Out-of-School Care Subsidy Program. Program eligibility includes:

- applicant must live in Edmonton;
- applicant must be employed or registered as a student in a school or training program during the hours child(ren) require care;
- family income must qualify;
- child(ren) in Grade 1 to Grade 6 must attend a licensed and approved Out-of-School Care Centre, Family Day Home, or Day Care Centre;
- child(ren) must require 25 hours or more of child care per month;
- subsidy is not available for casual or drop-in care; and
- some special circumstances may apply.

The City of Edmonton promotes Out-of-School Care programs to adopt a policy of accepting *ALL* children into their programs, including those children with special needs and diverse cultural backgrounds. Staff members are encouraged to work with parents and other professionals, such as teachers and therapists, to develop activities to meet the individual needs of all children in their program.

Quality Out-of School Care Centres demonstrate or display the following:

- a Notice of Approval listing approved capacity, age of children, and hours of operation is posted which indicates that the centre provides care for subsidized children and the centre meets and maintains the **Out-of-School Care Approved Standards**;
- staff qualification certificates;
- nutritious snack menu;
- minimum of one staff member for every 12 children;
- variety of weekly programmed activities;
- wide selection of toys and equipment;
- well equipped and maintained playground;
- staff can explain child guidance and discipline used;
- staff interactions with children demonstrate respect, acceptance, and understanding;
- staff are involved in activity with children;
- a positive, relaxed, and fun environment is observed; and
- parent input is allowed into the program.

Community Services Department

The Community Services department has as its mandate the provision of social, recreational, and cultural opportunities; the development, management, and preservation of recreational and cultural facilities; the development, management, and preservation of parks and open spaces; and the building of community capacity, in addition to the coordination of emergency services; the provision of critical patient care; and the protection of lives and property during a fire or other emergency event.

In order to ensure that Edmontonians on low-income do not face social exclusion from recreation and related departmental services, the **Access to Recreation Strategy for Low-Income Edmontonians** was developed. The resultant **Leisure Access Program** (formerly known as the Fee Reduction Program) provides eligible low-income Edmontonians with access to participating City of Edmonton recreation facilities (including community recreation centres, golf courses, special collection facilities,⁴⁴ and arenas).⁴⁵

Low-income individuals and/or families living in Edmonton are eligible if they possess a valid **Health Benefits Card** (issued by the Government of Alberta) or fall below the Low-Income Cut-off line. In the former case, the applicant may go to any participating facility and show his/her valid Health Benefits Card and current photo ID. In the latter case, the applicant must complete the Leisure Access Program Application Form that is available from (780) 496-4918 or on line at <http://www.edmonton.ca/CommPeople/LeisureAccessApplication.pdf>.

In addition to unlimited, free admission to participating facilities (excluding golf courses),⁴⁶ the **Leisure Access Program** offers three registered programs per year for adults and seniors (no program restrictions) at 25% of cost (and 25% of the cost of materials where applicable) and four registered programs per year for children and youth (no program restrictions) at 25% of the cost (and 25% of the cost of materials where applicable).

Since the inception of the **Leisure Access Program** (January 2006), admissions to facilities have increased more than 100,000 over the same period in 2005 (January 1 to September 30). Also during this period, program registrations more than doubled.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a joint municipal/provincial partnership that funds and supports the development and delivery of preventive social service programs in Edmonton. FCSS funding is directed to

⁴⁴ Special Collection Facilities are the City Arts Centre, Fort Edmonton Park, John Janzen Nature Centre, John Walter Museum, Muttart Conservatory, Prince of Wales Armouries, and Valley Zoo.

⁴⁵ All public skate times are free. Times, as well as free skate and helmet availability, may be accessed by phoning (780) 496-4999.

⁴⁶ One round of golf is considered one registered program. Tee times must be booked in advance.

community-based social service programs that are preventive in nature, promote, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Table 10 shows that in 2006, FCSS funded twenty-four programs related wholly or partly to the needs of children.

Table 10: 2006 FCSS Funded Programs for Children, including Program Information			
Agency	Program	Program Description	Amount
Abbottsfeld Youth Project (AYP)	Community Outreach & Living Skills Program	Life skills program for children 6-12 years of age, comprised of three parts: In-school Program (provides one-on-one skills and small group life skills training), Community Explorer program (focused on helping children learn about and giving back to their communities), and Junior Leaders Program (supporting youth workers in providing the programs).	\$141,308
ASSIST Community Services Centre	Towards a New Generation: A Project for Safe and Healthy Asian Youths, Family Services Program	An interactive, preventive program open to immigrant and Canadian-born youth aged 11-15 years of Asian/Oriental descent. Cultivates the academic potentials, social competencies, positive identity and values, and leadership skills of at-risk youths.	\$51,027
Ben Calf Robe Society	Traditional Parenting Program	Provides programming for parents impacted by or raised by a residential school survivor to understand its effects on their life and the demands of modern day parenting. Works with parents and children to stop and prevent the cycle of physical, emotion, and sexual abuse.	\$55,000
Beverly Day Care Society & Family Resource Centre	ACCESS – Enhanced Program for the Disadvantaged	Promotes the well-being and healthy development of children from communities experiencing high levels of poverty – includes family support, quality childcare, and a safe place for children in a culturally sensitive environment.	\$138,566
Big Brothers Big Sisters Society of Edmonton & Area	Mentoring Program	A community-supported, mentor-based program committed to the healthy development of children in need and their families through the provision of quality volunteer relationships.	\$189,771

Bissell Centre	Early Childhood Program	A flexible, comprehensive early childhood support program offered free to families in need throughout the Edmonton area. Provides high quality care for infants, toddlers, and pre-school children on a drop-in basis. Programming is based on children's special needs.	\$234,762
Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Edmonton	Youth and Neighbourhood Centres	Six full-time and three part-time community-based Youth and Neighbourhood Centres for children & youth aged 6-17 years and their families. Centres serve as a base for social and recreational services/programs.	\$383,328
	Youth and Family Directions Program	Provides children, youth, and families associated with Youth and Neighbourhood Centres with counselling, advocacy, crisis intervention, parental support, and conflict resolution.	\$241,314
Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation	Edmonton School Lunch Program	Provides hot, nutritious lunches each school day and facilitates the Nutrition Snack Program, Snack in the Shack Project, Young Chefs, Collective Kitchen, the Breakfast Club, and a Community Garden.	\$109,278
	Clareview Head Start Program	Offers a pre-school learning environment with both Early Head Start and Head Start for economically disadvantaged children (1-5 years) and their families in the Clareview area.	\$70,000
Franciscan Sisters Benevolent Society	Children and Parents Preparing for Success (C.A.P.) Headstart Program	An early intervention program providing direct services to pre-school children and their parents in the Boyle Street, McCauley, Alberta Avenue, Parkdale, and surrounding neighbourhood of inner city Edmonton.	\$72,100
Fulton Child Care Association	Support & Advantages for Children & Families Program	A preventive program for infants to children six years of age and their families who are experiencing economic, emotional, or physical stresses.	\$64,390
Islamic Family & Social Services Association	Youth Development & Parenting Education Program	Provides children, youth, and families with education and skills to safeguard against negative influences and behaviour.	\$65,446
KARA Family Resource Centre	The KARA Program	Three activities provide support for families with young children: <i>Caring Families</i> (a 14-week parenting and personal development program for parents and their pre-school children), <i>Out-reach</i> (ongoing support for past participants of <i>Caring Families</i>), and <i>Drop-In</i> (short-term care for pre-school children).	\$170,254

Lansdowne Child Care & Family Centre	Early Intervention & Resources Program	Offers services to meet the needs of all children and parents within the program.	\$74,500
Metis Child & Family Services Society	Family Services Program	Provides a wide variety of support and assistance to Aboriginal children and families who may be experiencing personal, family, or community difficulties that could lead to intrusive intervention by Children's Services and/or justice or legal authorities.	\$90,000
Mill Woods Family Resource Centre Society	Family Support Program	Offers information, education, and support to families in the community to help develop coping skills and to maintain independence. Provides a children's program and telephone and drop-in support.	\$94,846
Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre	Early Start Program	A learning through play program for children ages 0 to 6 years of age.	\$274,640
	Head Start Program	An early intervention and prevention program aimed at pre-school children and their families living in Norwood and surrounding communities. Supports school readiness.	\$53,995
	Child & Youth Program	A drop-in after school program for children ages 6-12 years living in Norwood and surrounding communities. Offers children and their families a variety of educational, recreational, and multicultural activities to strengthen the personal development of children.	\$50,000
Oliver Centre -- Early Learning Programs for Children & Families Society	Head Start for At-Risk Pre-School Program	Provides early intervention services for children ages 13 months to 6 years through an intergenerational program for children and families disadvantaged due to poverty.	\$116,916
Partners for Youth Outreach Society of Edmonton	Outreach/Community Youth & Family Support Program	Offers a range of preventive social activities for children, youth and families. Works to reduce family violence, child neglect/abuse, and youth crime and to increase the number of stable families.	\$112,500
Terra Association – Meeting the Challenge of Teen Pregnancy	Child & Family Support Centre Program	A licensed on-site child care facility at Braemar School for teen parents and their children	\$67,342

YWCA of Edmonton	Children's Services Program	Provides children/youth with the opportunity to explore their thoughts and feelings, and to develop skills in dealing with life issues. Includes RAINBOWS (parental divorce/separation), Paths of Change (family violence), Time to Talk (death issues), Choices for Positive Youth Relationships (assists young women in developing skills for healthy relationship choices), and Individual Counselling (may include play therapy when appropriate).	\$51,381
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Note that programs receiving FCSS funding must be registered not-for-profit organizations that have been incorporated for a minimum of a year. Programs that provide primarily for the recreation needs or leisure pursuits of individuals; offer direct financial assistance, including money, food, clothing, or shelter to an individual or family; are primarily rehabilitative; or duplicate services ordinarily provided by a government or government agency are not funded by FCSS.

The City of Edmonton Community Investment Operating Grant program provides operating assistance to Edmonton's non-profit organizations whose activities result in benefits to the citizens of Edmonton. Organizations are eligible for grants if they are based in Edmonton, if they primarily serve Edmontonians, and if their programs/services have a social, multicultural, or recreation/amateur sport character. Table 11 lists the organizations serving children that received Community Investment Operating Grants for 2006.

Table 11: Organizations Providing Programs/Services for Children Receiving Community Investment Operating Grants for 2006

Organization	Amount
Abbottsfeld Youth Project (AYP) Society	\$10,327
ASSIST Community Services Centre	\$15,000
Basically Babies Ltd.	\$500
Ben Calf Robe Society	\$15,000
Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society	\$15,000
Bissell Centre	\$15,000
Cornerstone Counselling Society of Edmonton (The)	\$15,000
Edmonton Inner City Children's Project Society	\$9,469
Edmonton Minor Hockey Association	\$15,000
Girl Guides of Canada – Edmonton Area Council	\$15,000
Gordon Russell's Crystal Kids Youth Centre	\$15,000
Kids on Track Association of Edmonton	\$10,412
Partners for Youth Outreach Society of Edmonton	\$7,088
Sport for Every Child Club (The)	\$10,930
Uncles & Aunts at Large (Edmonton Area) Society	\$15,000

Organizations requesting grants must be registered (under appropriate provincial or federal legislation) as a non-profit for at least one year and have open membership; should not substantially duplicate the activities of other applicants or other government-supported organizations; and may apply for up to twenty-five percent of their total operating expenditures for the previous fiscal year (to a maximum of \$15,000).

Another initiative began in 2005, the **Play Area Accessibility Design Standard**. All new play areas will be universally designed and incorporate a minimum level of accessibility. This means park designs will use the most current approaches to designing children's play areas and play areas will have a base level of accessibility to ensure everyone in the community will be able to participate.

Edmonton Police Service (EPS)

The **Child Protection Section of Edmonton Police Service (EPS)**:

- Investigates complaints of abuse involving children under the age of 14 years.
- Investigates all complaints of child abuse that are sexual in nature, including historical incidents.
- Investigates complaints of child pornography.
- Investigates or coordinates the investigation of child abuse complaints involving severe physical, mental, or sexual abuse.
- Works closely with Ma' Mowe Capital Region Child and Family Services Authority, Capital Health Authority, and public and private agencies involved with children at risk.
- Provides information assistance and training/education to police and the community.
- Is involved in prevention and intervention strategies for children.

Its mission is:

- to provide fully integrated teams within the community whose focus is on the total wellness of children with emphasis on protection, investigation, family support, and preventive measures; and
- to allow Canada's resource for the future, children, our most important asset to mature and develop in an environment that is healthy, safe and nurturing.

The **EPS** and the **Child Welfare Department of Alberta Family and Social Services** have established four joint police/child welfare response teams. The goals of the **Child at Risk Response Teams (CARRT)** are to:

- provide an effective response to complaints of children at risk;

- ensure that children at risk are identified as early as possible; and
- provide follow-up services to these children by way of referral to appropriate agencies.

Each team consists of a uniform constable from **Edmonton Police Service** and a Crisis Unit/Child Welfare Investigator from **Alberta Family and Social Services**. The teams provide an initial response to:

- complaints of children abandoned or neglected;
- complaints of parent/teen conflict;
- complaints of physical or sexual abuse of children in the family unit;
- and chronic family/child issues.

CARRT teams complete investigations on child abuse complaints any patrol member would normally handle. Complaints that involve a major physical or sexual assault on a child are handed over to the **Child Abuse Unit**.

The **Child Lures School–Based Crime Prevention Program** educates junior high school students (grades 7, 8, and 9) about the 15 “lures” used by sex offenders to gain the trust of their victims. The program also teaches students about concepts of law, self-esteem, instincts, and the consequences of false reporting.

The **Child Lures Program** teaches children about the presence of sex offenders without causing them to fear for their safety. The goals of the program are:

- to educate children to recognize possible danger signs which may arise from contact with sex offenders;
- to educate children in dealing with dangerous situations; and
- to reduce levels of fear within children so that they feel confident in dealing with dangerous situations should they arise.

Edmonton Public Library

Edmonton Public Library has a number of programs for children of all ages. For younger children there are all types of books, including Aboriginal books; alphabet, counting, and concept books; bilingual books; picture books (stories without words); and books pertaining to various heritages. In addition, the Library has websites with colouring pages, as well as games and stories from such popular children’s TV favourites as Bob the Builder and Dora the Explorer.

There are licensed databases to help a child find a good book to read; there’s **Books in Print with Reviews**, **NoveList**, **What Do I Read Next?**; and **Something About that Children’s Author**. There is also **eBooks**

TumbleBooks for Kids and access to the special web sites of magazines, encyclopaedias, newspapers, and specialized resources.

Older children may find **Pathfinders**, a list of books, web sites and other information, helpful for homework tasks. In fact, many teachers send **Assignment Alerts** to the local library branch for their classes; a **Pathfinder** will then be prepared and books placed on reserve for use by class members.

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Appendix: Indicators for Edmonton's Children

The following benchmark statistics are taken from the most recent issue of *Edmonton's Children*, a 2003 report produced by the United Way for Success by 6 and in the most recent (2005) issue of *How Healthy Are We?* by Capital Health, on a variety of issues affecting children in our city. Only selected figures have been presented from the report card, since much of the information presented elsewhere in this report is based on more recent data. The Success by 6 report card is generally based on 2001 or older data the Capital Health information is based on 2004 information..

	Edmonton Data	Edmonton Trend	Comparison to Alberta
School Readiness (2001)			
Grade 1 students reading at grade level	84.7%	improving	worse
Grade 1 students writing at grade level	82.3%	unchanged	worse
Childcare (2001)			
Availability (licensed centres)	250	unchanged	n/a
Affordability (monthly cost)	\$475 - \$700	worsening	n/a
Immunization Rates (2000)			
2 yr olds – measles/mumps/rubella	94%	unchanged	n/a
2 yr olds – diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus/polio/hib	85%	unchanged	better
Grade 1 – immunizations completed	95%	unchanged	n/a
Use of Women's Shelters (2000)			
Women and children admitted	2,289	unchanged	better
Number of people turned away	5,283	improved	better
Birth Indicators			
Low birth weight (% <2500 grams)	6.5%	deteriorated	worse
Preterm births (% live births <37 weeks)	9.9%	deteriorated	worse