

# CHILD POVERTY in CANADA

## An unfortunate reality

by Canada Without Poverty

More than **1 in 7** children live in poverty in Canada.

With a **14%** child poverty rate, Canada ranks **24th out of 35** industrialized countries.

## Poverty is a key determinant of health

The Canadian Medical Association noted that **income**, **housing**, **nutrition** and **food security** are critical determinants of health.

**The majority of children living in poverty have at least one parent working full-time.** Low wages are a problem for families who face tough choices: pay the bills or feed the family. Minimum wages are too low to bring families above the poverty line.

**Housing and childcare are the two biggest expenses for families.**

Childcare costs across Canada range from \$154 in Quebec, which supports a public system, to \$1,975 in Toronto. Toronto is also home to some of the highest rents for a two-bedroom apartment with an average of \$1,183/month. Vancouver has the highest rate at \$1,261, with Calgary in third at \$1,150.

## Health & Nutrition

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ranks Canada **12th out of 21** nations for children's health and well-being.

Food insufficient households were **80%** more likely to report having diabetes, **60%** more likely to report high blood pressure, and **70%** more likely to report food allergies.

**Over 1/3** of people who access food banks **each month** are children.

**1.1 million children** experienced some level of food insecurity in 2011.

**Food insecurity is more common in households with children.**

Children in food insecure households are more likely to experience a range of behavioural, emotional, and academic problems.

Children's basic needs are  
**human rights**

**food  
water  
clothing  
education  
housing**

Canada has ratified a number of international conventions that place obligations on the government to ensure an adequate standard of living.

**Article 27, Convention on the Rights of the Child**

*States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.*

## Solutions:

Every **\$1** invested in the early years will reduce long-term **health, welfare** and **criminal justice costs**.

We need a **human rights approach** to poverty including:

- A national poverty plan that supports provincial and territorial strategies.
- A national food security strategy.
- A national affordable, public childcare strategy.
- A national housing strategy to ensure safe, adequate, affordable and accessible is available for everyone.
- Living wage policies that offer wages that reflect the actual cost of living.



CANADA WITHOUT POVERTY  
CANADA SANS PAUVRETÉ

We are a national charity dedicated to addressing the systemic causes of poverty using a human rights framework.

Learn more about our work: [www.cwp-csp.ca](http://www.cwp-csp.ca) or on **Twitter @CWP\_CSP**