

Families (2001)



A family portrait taken by the census at the outset of the 21st century shows that changes in the makeup of Canadian families during the past two decades are continuing. The proportion of "traditional" families - mom, dad and the kids - continues to decline, whereas families with no children at home are increasing.

As of May 15, 2001, Canada had 8,371,000 families, up from almost 7,838,000 in 1996.

Married or common-law couples with children aged 24 and under living at home represented only 44% of all families. These accounted for 49% of all families in 1991, and represented more than one-half in 1981 (55%).

Couples who had no children under 25 living at home accounted for 41% of all families in 2001, up from 38% in 1991. In 1981, this family type accounted for barely 34%.

The 2001 Census showed that an increasing proportion of couples are living common-law. Married couples accounted for 70% of all families in 2001, down from 83% in 1981. At the same time, the proportion of common-law couples rose from 6% to 14%.

In 2001, the census counted 5,901,400 married couples, 1,158,400 common-law couples and 1,311,200 lone-parent families.

The trend toward common-law was again strongest in Quebec, where the 508,500 common-law families accounted for 30% of all couple families. Almost 29% of children were living with common-law parents in Quebec, more than double the national average.

The number of common-law couples in Canada with children under the age of 25 is also increasing. In 2001, they accounted for 7% of all couples in Canada, compared with only 2% two decades earlier.

About 732,900 children, or 13% of the total, lived with common-law parents in 2001, more than four times the proportion of 3% two decades ago.

The text was adapted from Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, Tuesday, October 22, 2002. Statistics Canada information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from the Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, its World Wide Web site at: www.statcan.ca, and its toll-free access number 1-800-263-1136.

