

Census in Brief

Young adults living with their parents in Canada in 2016

Census of Population, 2016

Release date: August 2, 2017



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- . 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 *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

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Highlights

- More than one in three (34.7%) young adults aged 20 to 34 were living with at least one parent in 2016, a share that has been increasing since 2001.
- Over the same period, the share of all young adults living with their own family decreased from about one-half, or 49.1%, in 2001 to 41.9% in 2016.
- More than two in five (42.1%) young adults in Ontario were living with their parents, by far the largest share observed in the provinces and territories. This proportion has increased by 20.3% since 2001.
- Among the 35 census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in the country, Toronto (47.4%) and Oshawa (47.2%) had the largest shares of young adults living with their parents—almost one in two young adults.

Introduction

Do you have an older child in his or her late twenties still living with you? When you were their age in the 1960s or 1970s, you had probably already left your parents' home. If this describes your situation, you are not alone!

For decades, the proportion of young adults living with at least one parent has been rising in Canada, and the 2016 Census shows that this upward trend continues.

This article presents recent trends and regional differences associated with young adults living with at least one parent. It also briefly describes other changes related to the living arrangements of young adults.

Understanding trends in the living arrangements of young adults in Canada is important as they can have implications on their life course, for example, on their entry into the labour market and on their family formation.

Just over one-third of young adults aged 20 to 34 in Canada live with their parents

Between 2001 and 2016, the share of young adults aged 20 to 34 who were living with at least one parent increased with each census. It rose from 30.6% in 2001 to 33.1% in 2006, stayed close to that level in 2011 at 33.3%, and rose again to 34.7% in 2016 (Chart 1).

This proportion is similar to what is observed in other countries. For example, in the United States, 34.1% of young adults aged 18 to 34 lived with at least one parent (in 2016).¹ That was the case for approximately 30% in the same age group in Australia (in 2011), while it was so for approximately 48% of young adults aged 18 to 29 in the European Union (in 2012).²

More young men than women live with their parents. In 2016, five men for every four women aged 20 to 34 lived with their parents, even though the proportion of young women living with their parents rose twice as quickly as that of men over the preceding 15 years.

1. Vespa, J. 2017. *The Changing Economics and Demographics of Young Adulthood: 1975-2016*. Current Population Reports. United States Census Bureau. Washington.

2. However, there was a large variation between the 28 member states of the European Union, ranging from less than 20% in Finland to about 85% in Malta. Eurofound. 2014. *Social Situation of Young People in Europe*. Publications Office of the European Union. Luxembourg. Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2013. "Young adults: Then and now." *Australian Social Trends*.

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As expected, there was a significantly smaller proportion of young adults in their early thirties than in their early twenties living with their parents; however, the upward trend has been seen among all three of the five-year age groups (20 to 24, 25 to 29 and 30 to 34). Among those aged 20 to 24, the proportion co-residing with their parents rose from 58.3% in 2001 to 62.6% in 2016. Among those aged 30 to 34, it rose from 11.2% to 13.5%.

Young adults may be living with their parents because they never left home or because they returned home (see Text box 1). Living with one's parents may have temporary benefits in terms of logistical, emotional, or financial support while pursuing studies or finding full-time work. It may also be the result of cultural preferences, or a strategy adopted by young adults and their parents to deal with low employment earnings or the high cost of living in some areas of the country.

Text box 1: Moved back in or never moved out?

Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) on Family asks young adults currently living with a parent whether they have ever moved out of their parents' home. Of those aged 20 to 24 and living with their parents in 2011 (the latest year for data from the GSS on Family), 69.0% reported that they had never left their parents' home. Among those aged 25 to 29, the rate was 27.2%, and among those aged 30 to 34, it was 8.6%.

These percentages for 2011 are higher than they were in 2001. For all age groups combined (20 to 34), the percentage rose from 24.6% in 2001 to 35.0% in 2011. This suggests that, although more young adults may be moving back home than in the past, an even greater proportion are staying in their parents' home longer.

The census does not identify the reasons why young adults may be living with their parents. The direction of support can go both ways (from parent to child or from child to parent), and it can change over time.

The 2012 GSS on Caregiving and Care Receiving identifies a caregiver as a person who, over the past 12 months, has spent time and resources helping someone (family or friends) with a long-term health condition, a physical or mental disability, or problems related to aging. At the time of the survey (2012), 9.0% of all young adults between the ages of 20 and 34 who were usually living with their parent(s) were the primary caregiver for one or both parents.

Proportionally fewer young adults have their own family than in the past

As more young adults are living with their parents, a smaller percentage are living with their own family³ and without their parents. The share of all young adults living with their own family and without their parents dropped from about one-half, or 49.1%, in 2001 to 41.9% in 2016 (Chart 1).

In general, a smaller proportion of young adults are now living with children, either as part of a couple or in a lone-parent family, and with or without their own parents present: this proportion decreased from 32.9% in 2001 to 25.5% in 2016. Data sources other than the census have shown that the average age of women at the birth of their first child has been rising for an extended period of time, and was 28.8 years in 2013 (the latest year for which data are available).⁴

A small proportion (2.5%) of young adults are living with their parents and their own family (married spouse, common-law partner, or child). This proportion has remained relatively constant from 2001 to 2016.⁵

3. "With own family" includes those living with their married spouse, common-law partner, or child.

4. Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

5. Although not examined here, the 2016 Census provides information on the proportions of multigenerational households, as well as the number of children living with their parents and grandparents.

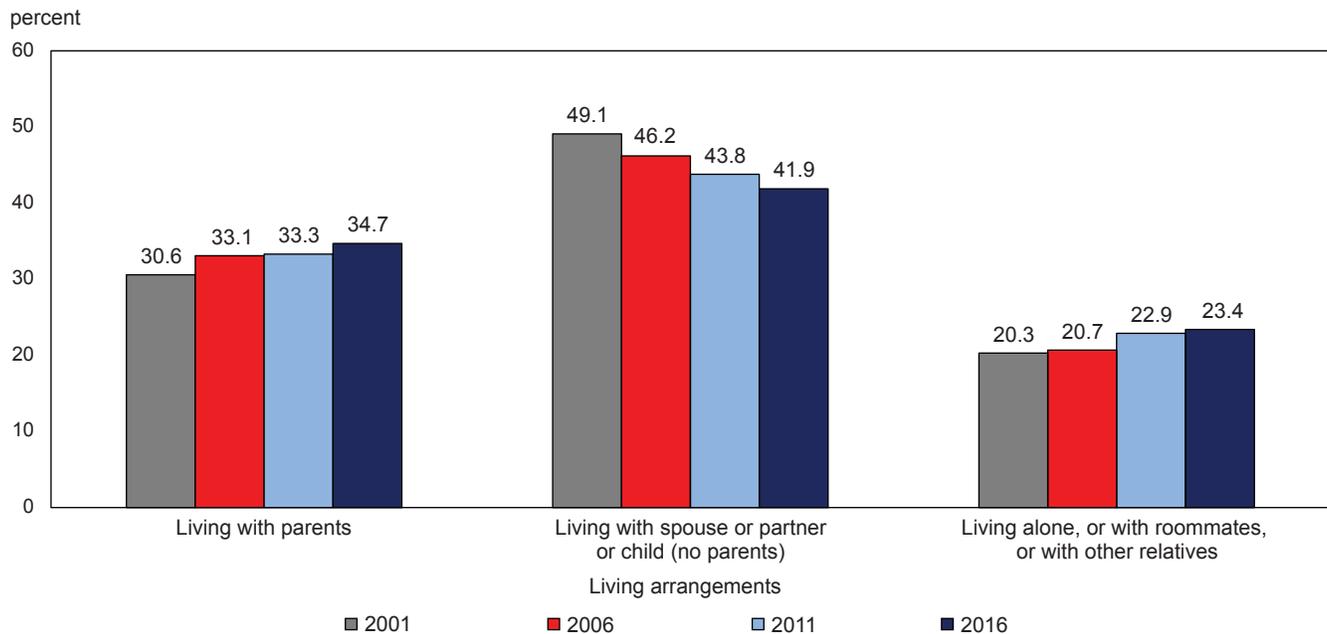
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Other living arrangements for young adults also on the rise

There was also an increase in the proportion of young adults who had other living arrangements (without their parents or their own family) over the period from 2001 to 2016, up from 20.3% to 23.4%. This group includes those living alone, with other relatives, or with roommates (Chart 1).

All these trends suggest that young adults today are establishing their own homes and their own families at older ages than previous cohorts of young adults.

Chart 1
Living arrangements of young adults aged 20 to 34, Canada, 2001 to 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2001 to 2016.

Highest share of young adults living with their parents in Ontario

The share of young adults living with their parents was the highest in Ontario, where the proportion of adults between the ages of 20 and 34 who were living with their parents was 42.1% in 2016, up from 35.0% in 2001—a 20.3% increase over the 15-year period.

Ontario was the only province with a larger share of young adults living with their parents than the national average of 34.7%. As the most populated province of Canada, Ontario is driving up the national average.

The high proportion of young adults living with their parents in Ontario is most likely the result of a combination of economic realities, including the high cost of housing, and cultural norms that favour young adults living with their parents for longer. Analyses from the 2006 Census and the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) suggest that immigrants, especially those who arrived as children, and those who are second-generation Canadians

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(born in Canada but with at least one parent born outside of Canada) were more likely to live with a parent than were Canadians of the third or more generations.⁶

Nunavut (34.6%), British Columbia (33.9%), and Newfoundland and Labrador (33.4%) were the other provinces or territories with at least one in three young adults living with their parents.

The lowest shares were observed in Saskatchewan (24.4%), Yukon (25.2%) and Alberta (26.0%).

In Toronto and Oshawa, almost one-half of young adults live with their parents

For the 35 census metropolitan areas (CMAs), the percentage of young adults aged 20 to 34 who lived with their parents was 36.2% in 2016, slightly above the national average.

Among rural areas (regions located outside CMAs and census agglomerations), the share of young adults living with their parents was lower, at 32.2%. However, the Atlantic provinces and the territories stood out as the only regions in the country where the share of young adults living with their parents was higher in rural areas than in urban areas.⁷ In Quebec and the Prairie provinces, the rural and urban shares were almost identical.

Among the 35 CMAs of the country, Toronto (47.4%) and Oshawa (47.2%) had the largest shares of young adults living with their parents—nearly one in two (Chart 2).

Toronto and Oshawa were followed by five other CMAs located in Ontario: Hamilton (44.5%), Windsor (43.0%), Barrie (40.8%), St. Catharines–Niagara (40.7%) and Brantford (39.5%).

Two CMAs located in British Columbia were ranked 8th and 9th: Abbotsford–Mission (39.1%) and Vancouver (38.6%).

Toronto and Vancouver were the only CMAs with a population of 1 million or more in 2016 that had a higher percentage of young adults living with their parents than the national average (34.7%) or the average for all CMAs (36.2%). The four other CMAs with a total population of 1 million or more in 2016 all had shares of young adults living with their parents lower than the national average: Montréal (33.1%), Ottawa–Gatineau (33.0%), Calgary (28.5%) and Edmonton (26.8%).

6. Jeong, Y.J., D. Hamplová and C. Le Bourdais. 2014. "Diversity of young adults' living arrangements: The role of ethnicity and immigration." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Vol. 40, no. 7.

Milan, A. 2016. "Diversity of young adults living with their parents" (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2016001/article/14639-eng.htm>). *Insights on Canadian Society*. June. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X.

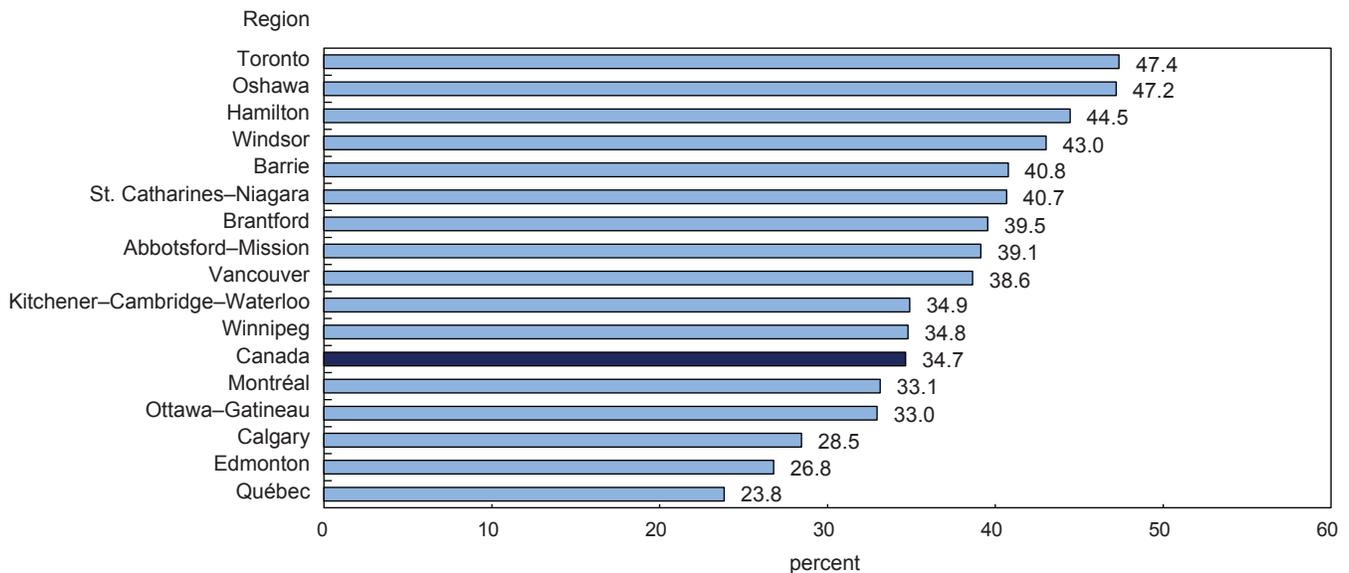
Statistics Canada. 2017. *Immigration and Diversity: Population Projections for Canada and its Regions, 2011 to 2036* (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-551-x/91-551-x2017001-eng.htm>). Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-551-X. Ottawa.

7. In this document, urban areas are defined as areas located in [census metropolitan areas \(CMAs\) and in census agglomerations \(CAs\)](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm>). Areas outside CMAs and CAs are considered to be rural areas.

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Chart 2

Proportion (percentage) of young adults aged 20 to 34 living with their parents, Canada and selected census metropolitan areas, 2016



Note: Included are all CMAs with a total population of 500,000 or more and smaller CMAs that had a proportion higher than the proportion for all CMAs (36.2%): Oshawa, Windsor, Barrie, St. Catharines–Niagara, Brantford and Abbotsford–Mission.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

A [map](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/thematic-thematiques/fam/thematic-thematiques-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/thematic-thematiques/fam/thematic-thematiques-eng.cfm>) showing the percentages of persons aged 20 to 34 living with their parents by census division in Canada also provides a picture of the differences within and among provinces and territories.

Data sources, methods and definitions

Data sources

The data in this analysis are from the 2016 Census of Population. Further information on the census can be found in the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

A previous analysis on this topic showed that the proportion of people who were in their twenties and living with their parents rose substantially from 1981 to 2011 (from 26.9% to 42.3%). That analysis, as well as the 2011 Census highlight table on the topic, was based on children in economic families (sons and daughters of the economic family reference person). The current paper is based on young adults living with at least one of their parents in the same household. There are no restrictions such as there are for children in a census family or children in an economic family.

These differences in concepts may affect the levels shown, but the historical trends and regional stories are consistent. For more information, refer to “Economic family status” in the [Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

[Census metropolitan areas \(CMAs\)](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm) have a population of at least 100,000 where 50,000 live in the core. [Census agglomerations \(CAs\)](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm) have a population of at least 10,000 residents.

Additional information on census data quality and comparability for families, households and marital status can be found in the [Families Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/002/98-500-x2016002-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/002/98-500-x2016002-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-500-X2016002.

Methods

Random rounding and percentage distributions: To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2016 Census, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Due to random rounding, counts and percentages may vary slightly between different census products, such as the analytical documents, highlight tables, and data tables.

Definitions

Please refer to the [Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-301-X, for additional information on the census variables.

Additional information

Additional analyses on families, households and marital status can be found in [The Daily](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170802/dq170802a-eng.htm) (http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170802/dq170802a-eng.htm) of August 2, 2017, and in the Census in Brief articles entitled [Portrait of children's family life in Canada in 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016006/98-200-x2016006-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016006/98-200-x2016006-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-200-X2016006 and [Same-sex couples in Canada in 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016008/98-200-x2016008-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016008/98-200-x2016008-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-200-X2016007

Additional information on families, households and marital status can be found in the [Highlight tables](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/fam/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/fam/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016004; the [Data tables](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Lp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=0&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2016&THEME=117&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Lp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=0&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2016&THEME=117&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=), Catalogue nos. 98-400-X20160024 to 98-400-X2016041; the [Census Profile](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E), Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001; and the [Focus on Geography Series](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001.

[Thematic maps](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/thematic-thematiques/fam/thematic-thematiques-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/thematic-thematiques/fam/thematic-thematiques-eng.cfm) for this topic are also available for various levels of geography.

A video providing an overview of Canadian families in the past and today is available from the [Video centre](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/video/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/video/index-eng.cfm).

An infographic entitled [Portrait of households and families in Canada, 2016 Census of Population](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017024-eng.htm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017024-eng.htm) also illustrates some key findings on families and households in Canada.

For details on the concepts, definitions and variables used in the 2016 Census of Population, please consult the [Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

In addition to response rates and other data quality information, the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-304-X, provides an overview of the various phases of the census, including content determination, sampling design, collection, data processing, data quality assessment, confidentiality guidelines and dissemination.

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by Stacey Hallman, Heather Lathe, Laurent Martel, and France-Pascale Ménard of Statistics Canada's Demography Division, with the assistance of other staff members of that division, and the collaboration of staff members of the Census Subject Matter Secretariat, Census Operations Division, and Communications and Dissemination Branch.