

2020 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia

Willful Neglect?

Lesley Frank, Laura Fisher and Christine Saulnier





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2020 Child and Family Poverty Report Card

Summary

By the numbers

The child poverty rate in 2018 was 24.6%, up from 24.2% in 2017 (a 1.7% increase).

- 41,370: Number of Children living in poverty in Nova Scotia
- Almost 1 in 4 children in Nova Scotia in poverty.
- 27.8%: child poverty rate in Nova Scotia in the year 2000
- 24.4%: child poverty rate in 1989 (the year the promise was made to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000)

Nova Scotia has the third-highest provincial child poverty rate in Canada, and the highest rate in Atlantic Canada, a consistent ranking over the last several years (using the CFLIM-AT).

Using Canada's official poverty line (the Market Basket Measure), Nova Scotia has the highest rate of child poverty (14.8%).

Between 1989 and 2018, child poverty rates decreased in every province and territory except Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia has performed the worst in reducing child poverty from 1989 levels.

The rates vary within the province:

- The child poverty rate for children under 6 is 28.5%, close to one in three young children, compared to 24.6% of all children.
- more than half (53.1 %) of the children living in lone parent families in Nova Scotia live below the CFLIM-AT (26,430 children) compared with 11.7% of children living in couple families (13, 820 children).
- The lowest rate of child poverty is 6.3% in Fall River, part of the Halifax Regional Municipality, and the highest rate is 78.1% in the rural postal code of Micmac, which includes part of the Sipekne'katik First Nations.

Nova Scotia has the lowest welfare incomes in Canada for single parent families with one child (only 57% of the Market Basket Measure poverty line), and the second lowest, for couple families with two children (61% of the MBM) (2019). In 2019, the maximum welfare income for a single parent with one child was \$18,372 which is \$900 less per year than in 1989 when adjusted for inflation.

In 2018, we saw a 38.7% reduction in child poverty due to all government transfers (a lesser amount of 37.1% reduction for children under 6). Indeed, without these government benefits 67,510 (instead of 41,370) children aged 0–17 would live in poverty in Nova Scotia.

No race-based data is available for 2018; however, using previous Census data (2015) we know that while the child poverty rate in Nova Scotia for all children using the LIM-AT was 22.2%, over one-third (37.4%) of visible minority children were low-income. For example, the census shows that 67.8% of Arab children, 50.6% of Korean children, and 39.6% of Black children were low-income compared to 20.3% of non-visible minority children. Census data also shows higher rates of low-income among new immigrant children (56.8%) compared to non-immigrant children (21.2%) and higher rates for off-reserve children of Aboriginal status (25.6%).

Provincial Government Recommendations

1. Use the CCPA-NS social policy framework to develop a comprehensive, robust Poverty Eradication Plan for Nova Scotia.

2. Create a Child and Youth Advocate office to protect and promote the rights of Nova Scotia's children and youth.
3. The Employment Supports and Income Assistance (ESIA) program must be reformed to meet the principles of income adequacy, social inclusion and respect for human dignity. The ESIA's benefit level should be set to a recognized standard/poverty measure and include regular cost of living increases taking into account housing/rental inflation and food inflation in particular.
4. The Nova Scotia Child Benefit should be further increased and broadened to include more families, and indexed to inflation.
5. Support First Nations in Nova Scotia to assume self-governance over child and family services to ensure they are able to meet their cultural, historical, and geographical needs and circumstances.
6. In order to eradicate poverty in communities that have particularly high poverty rates, employ an intersectional lens to invest in proactive strategies developed in collaboration with the affected communities.
7. Fund and build a high-quality early learning and childcare system that is child-centred, play-based, seamless (all day, full year), affordable and accessible.
8. Invest in public and social infrastructure, including extended universal public health care (mental health care, pharmacare, long term care, home care), strengthen inclusive public education, make post-secondary education more affordable, and invest to ensure essential costs are available and affordable (e.g., food, internet).
9. Enact a full moratorium on all evictions during the state of emergency, and permanent rent control, in addition to developing longer term policies to maintain rental quality and affordability, which must include significant and sustained investment to build affordable, social, non-profit, and co-operative housing.
10. Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in the next year with a plan to make it a living wage.
11. Amend the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code to better protect workers in the province and improve the lives of working families, including providing at least 10 paid sick days.

Introduction

CANADA HAS NOW PASSED the 30-year mark since the all-party resolution in the House of Commons to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000. In Nova Scotia, there is a widening gap between the national child poverty rate and the province's child poverty rate. While child poverty is anything but eradicated in Canada, it remains an even more looming problem in Nova Scotia. In last year's report card, when we asked what this new year and new decade would bring, we never would have imagined that a pandemic would be declared a few short months later. The child poverty rate in the province increased in 2018, even before more recent data can reflect the economic implications of COVID-19.

We know that both child poverty rates and COVID-19 impacts are gendered and racialized. Closures of schools, childcare centres, and the impact on female-dominated sectors put mothers and female-headed households at a higher risk for poverty¹ as they earn less income and take on more childcare and household tasks than fathers.² More women and racialized parents are employed in low-waged jobs and sectors disproportionately impacted by COVID public health restrictions, which means more of them lost their jobs than higher-income earners and those in male-dominated sectors.³ COVID underlined the lack of support for people who aren't able to do paid work, have no access to paid sick days, and who need to be home with children either due to their illness or to support their learning. Racial discrimination exacerbates the impact of COVID-19 for people of African descent⁴ because they face discrimination in the healthcare system, have experienced more

severe financial impacts, and have a higher likelihood of knowing someone for which COVID-19 has proved fatal.⁵

For children in Nova Scotian families who were already living in poverty, circumstances are likely to have worsened, while many more have undoubtedly joined the ranks of children living in low income this year. Prior to the pandemic, the annual Hunger Count in Canada showed an increase of 5% of new clients to foodbanks in Nova Scotia in March 2019 alone. Children made up 30% of those accessing foodbanks in Nova Scotia.⁶ Since the pandemic began, Feed Nova Scotia has seen a 15% increase in demand for food in Nova Scotia.⁷

This report card paints a bleak picture for families with children in Nova Scotia in 2018. While the outcome of the pandemic is yet to be realized in income statistics, the impacts will only deepen existing disparities in income, social supports, and access to healthcare. We need to take corrective action immediately through policy changes and social supports, as outlined in this report, if we are to begin to fulfill Canada's over 30-year-old broken promise to eradicate child poverty.

What stands behind these numbers remains unseen: parents choosing between paying rent and buying groceries; precarious employment that puts stress on families; the inability to engage in community life through opportunities that make life worthwhile such as recreation and arts programs or other enrichment opportunities. According to Adsum for Women and Children, out of the nearly 500 homeless currently in Halifax Regional Municipality, 62 are families, most of them female-led lone parent families.⁸

Children's poverty is family poverty. Poverty in all its forms is a systemic problem, not about individual failings. We recognize that poverty is first and foremost about a lack of income to meet basic needs, but poverty is also about social and economic exclusion. Poverty is linked to who is excluded from participating fully in our society and on what grounds. It is shaped by multiple and intersecting experiences of discrimination, including those based on sex, disability, race, ethnicity, migration status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and gender identity. Inadequate and inequitable systems and structures create conditions that marginalize some, leaving them few options, while benefitting others. Many face low wages, precarious employment, weak income supports, discrimination, continual colonialization, social and geographical isolation, and gaps in public services. Others, supported by weak employment regulations, tax loopholes, and unfettered access to whatever they need, increase their profits while offering charitable donations to fill the gaps left by a system that is heavily weighted in their

favour. *At what point do we begin to ask whether child and family poverty is not simply a matter of government neglect but in fact is a means of maintaining social stratification?* This report brings this question to mind as we examine yet another year with increasing numbers of children in Nova Scotia families living in poverty.

Reporting on poverty

THIS REPORT CARD provides the number and percentage of children living in poverty based on the most recent income-based statistics (2018). It provides analysis of how the rates differ by geography, social group, family type, and age. It also reports on the effect of government income support on the reduction of poverty amongst children. Throughout the report, we include some stories of family and child poverty amongst clients served by the Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre. These stories, shared by the Executive Director of that Centre, JoAnna LaTulippe-Rochon when she spoke to the Nova Scotia Standing Committee on Community Services, are anonymized to protect their identities.⁹

Appendix C provides an overview of the data sources and measures of poverty (including poverty line thresholds) used in this report card.

There are a few critical points to understand about the data used:

- The data in this report card have not been collected by the authors. The federal government collects the data either using surveys done by Statistics Canada (including the Census) or by analyzing data from income tax filing. The data are public, though not all are available via the Statistics Canada website.
- This report primarily uses tax filer data available from Statistics Canada's T1 Family File (T1FF)—2018¹⁰ to report on low income for

children (0–17 years of age). When doing so, it uses the CFLIM-AT (Census Family After-Tax Low-Income Measure) to indicate low-income status. The CFLIM-AT compares income of a census family¹¹ to the rest of the population of a similar family size. The CFLIM-AT is a relative measure of poverty that determines poverty thresholds set at 50% of the median Canadian family income, which means a family is considered to have a low-income if their income falls below the income amount that is positioned at the 25th percentile of all Canadian family incomes of the same size.

- When other data sources (Census, Canadian Income Survey, Welfare Incomes) and measures of poverty are used (Market Basket Measure (MBM)) in this report, they are referenced accordingly.
- For the poverty thresholds based on the CFLIM-AT see *Table 4* in Appendix C and *Table 5* for thresholds based on the MBM. The authors have prepared all figures, tables and related calculations in this report. Sources used to produce figures and tables are noted.
- This report card is the 2020 report card, which uses 2018 data. The data have a two-year lag time, which is the shortest time period for the data to be cleaned, analyzed and prepared for public use by Statistics Canada. There are no data sets that are more up to date for measuring poverty. The 2019 report card was delayed, and thus released in January 2020 based on data from 2017. This is the second report card released in 2020, but this one is based on data from 2018.

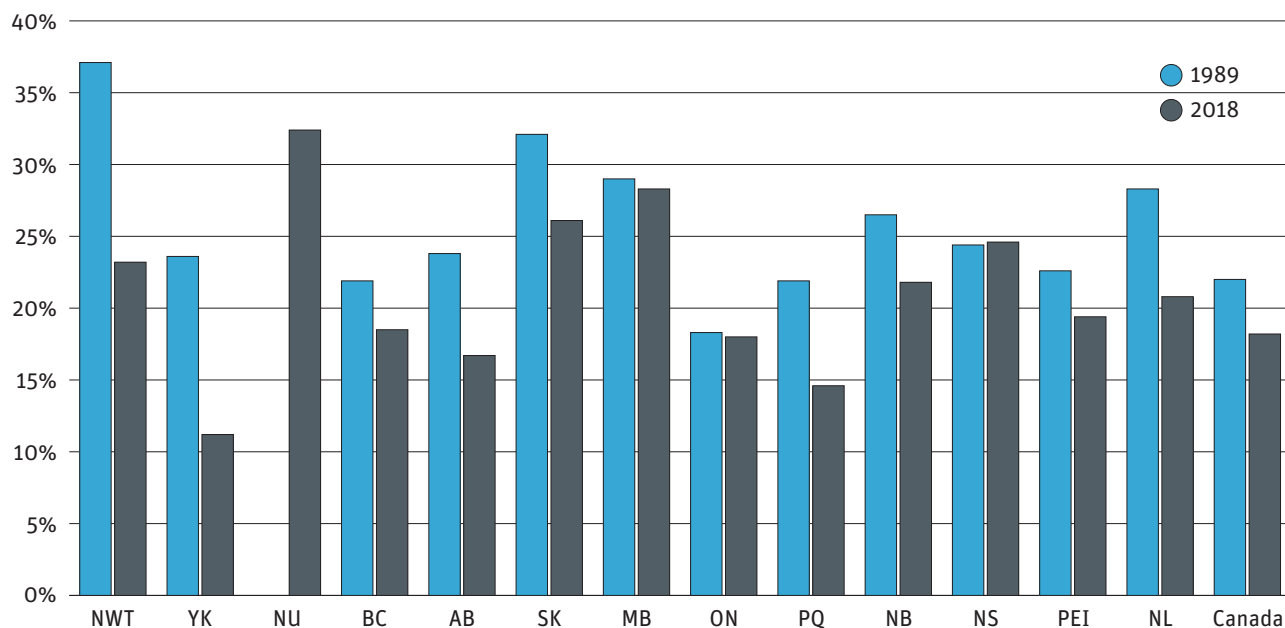
The record: Tracking child poverty 1989–2018

ON NOVEMBER 24TH, 1989, a motion was passed in the House of Commons pledging to “to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.” It is now 20 years past their deadline and unfortunately, we now have fewer children in our province, and slightly more of them are living in poverty. In 1989, the child poverty rate was 24.4 % (56, 960 children). Despite the promise of child poverty eradication by the year 2000, the incidence of child poverty in Nova Scotia in that year was in fact much higher than in 1989, when it rose to 27.8%, representing more than 1 in 4 Nova Scotian children (58, 730 children).

The child poverty rate in 2018 was 24.6%, up from 24.2% in 2017 (a 1.7% increase), a rate higher than it was in 1989. This means that 41,370 or almost 1 in 4 children in Nova Scotia are still living in low-income circumstances.

Figure 1 shows the overall change in child poverty rates between 1989 and 2018 in each province and territory in Canada. In 1989, Nova Scotia had the fifth-highest percentage of low-income children. By 2018, Nova Scotia has the **third-highest provincial child poverty rate in Canada**, and the **highest rate in Atlantic Canada, a consistent ranking over the last several years. Between 1989 and 2018, child poverty rates decreased in**

FIGURE 1 Child Poverty Rates, By Province and Territory, (CFLIM-AT), 1989 and 2018, Age 0–17

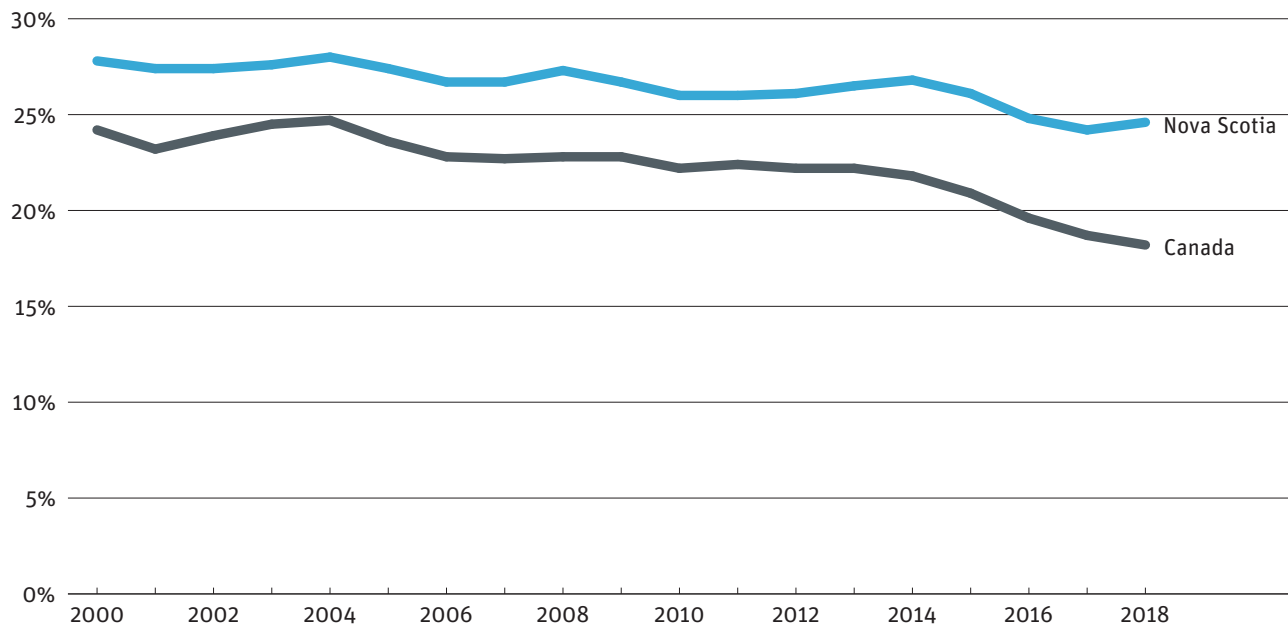


Source: Statistics Canada custom tabulation, T1 Family Files, 1989 and 2018.

every province and territory except Nova Scotia. While other provinces had higher rates to begin with, **Nova Scotia has performed the worst at reducing child poverty from 1989 levels.**

Figure 2 shows the trend of child poverty rates in Nova Scotia and Canada since the year 2000. The highest child poverty rate in Nova Scotia (28%) and Canada (24.7%) were in 2004. In Canada the overall trend of child poverty since 2000 shows a decline after 2004, with periods of little change or slight increases. Since 2014, the decrease in rates in Canada has been steadier. Similar to Canada, the child poverty rate in Nova Scotia decreased after 2014, until 2018 when rates increased slightly. The fluctuation in the child poverty rate in Nova Scotia to some extent mirrors the Canadian trend; however, rates have been consistently higher in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia also saw a more dramatic increase in 2008, and between 2011–2014. The difference in the rates between Nova Scotia and Canada shows that Nova Scotia has rates 5%–6.4% higher than Canada compared to the 2000–2013 time period when the difference in the rates was 3.1%–4.3%—indicating that **the difference between Nova Scotia’s rates and Canada’s is widening. Based on tax**

FIGURE 2 Nova Scotia, and Canada, Child Poverty Rate 2000–2018, CFLIM-AT

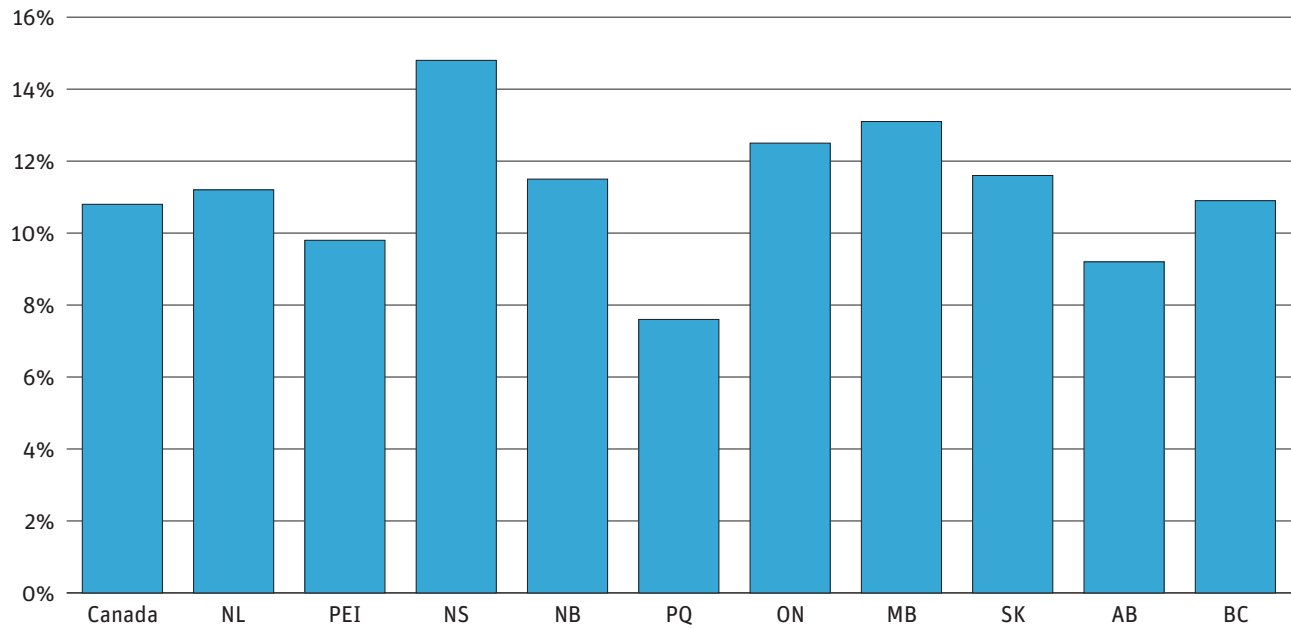


Source: Statistics Canada custom tabulation, T1 Family Files, 2000–18.

filer data, the child poverty rate declined between 2015 and 2017 in every province and territory (a 7.3% decrease in NS). However, in 2018—though the Canadian rate of child poverty decreased by 2.2%—rates increased slightly from 2017 levels in six provinces (all of the Atlantic provinces, Manitoba, and Alberta) and Nunavut.

In 2018, the Federal government adopted the Market Basket Measure (MBM) as Canada’s official measure of poverty.¹² The MBM is an absolute measure of material deprivation, which compares income to the cost of goods and services that would allow a family to meet their basic needs and have a modest standard of living.¹³ Unlike the CFLIM-AT which is a relative measure of poverty that compares income nationally, the MBM is sensitive to regional differences. When poverty rates are reported using the MBM, data from the *Canadian Income Survey* (CIS) or Census is used as to date it is not possible to calculate the MBM poverty rate with tax filer data. Also, this survey excluded First Nations communities. *Figure 3* shows that **based on Canada’s official measure of poverty, Nova Scotia has the highest rate of child poverty in Canada. On a positive note, this measure also**

FIGURE 3 Child Poverty Rates, 2018, MBM, Income in Canada Survey



Source Canadian Income Survey, 2018, Table: 11-10-0135-01

shows a 23.7% decrease in child poverty between 2017 and 2018.¹⁴ No matter the data set or low-income measure, Nova Scotia's child poverty rate remains high in relation to the rest of Canada, and Nova Scotia has performed relatively poorly in reducing child poverty.

Child poverty rates within Nova Scotia

Child poverty rates by Census Division and Federal Electoral District

Some families with children face higher risks of poverty and greater depths of poverty compared to others. Poverty is not evenly distributed across geographic communities. *Table 1* shows the differences based on Statistics Canada's Census Divisions in Nova Scotia. The lowest rates of child poverty are in Antigonish (20.2%) and Halifax (20.4%). **The child poverty rates are highest in Cape Breton (34.9%), Annapolis (34%), and Digby (33.1%), where more than 1 in 3 children lived below the LIM-AT.**

Nova Scotia's capacity to fund social programs largely depends on cost sharing arrangements with the federal government. To reduce poverty requires leadership from all levels of government. *Table 2* shows child poverty rates by federal electoral boundaries. **The Sydney-Victoria riding has a child poverty rate of 36.5% and six additional ridings (Halifax, West Nova, Cape Breton-Canso, Cumberland-Colchester, Central Nova, and Kings-Hants) have rates that are represented in the highest quintile of child poverty rates nationally.**

TABLE 1 Child Poverty Rate by Census Divisions, Nova Scotia

Census Division	Child Poverty Rate
Annapolis	34.0
Antigonish	20.2
Cape Breton	34.9
Colchester	25.1
Cumberland	31.1
Digby	33.1
Guysborough	23.1
Halifax	20.4
Hants	22.7
Inverness	26.0
Kings	23.3
Lunenburg	23.5
Pictou	25.9
Queens	29.3
Richmond	26.4
Shelburne	26.1
Victoria	27.3
Yarmouth	25.9

Source Statistics Canada, Income Statistics Division, T1 Family File, 2018

TABLE 2 Child Poverty Rate by Federal Electoral District, 2018

Federal Electoral District	Child Poverty Rate
Cape Breton Canso	27.5
Central Nova	24.3
Cumberland-Colchester	26.2
Dartmouth-Cole Harbour	23.0
Halifax	28.7
Halifax West	21.2
Kings-Hants	24.0
Sackville-Preston—Chezzetcook	14.6
South Shore-St. Margaret's	22.1
Sydney-Victoria	36.5
West Nova	28.2

Source Statistics Canada, Income Statistics Division, T1 Family File, 2018

Child poverty rates by postal area

Appendix A provides available child poverty rates by Nova Scotia postal citiesⁱ as well as rural routesⁱⁱ.¹⁵ These data show disparities of child poverty between areas throughout Nova Scotia that are hidden when poverty rates are calculated as provincial or regional aggregates (Census Divisions/Federal Electoral Districts). **Forty-one postal areas have child poverty rates at 30% and higher.** The range of rates is quite significant from a low of 6.3% in Fall River, part of the Halifax Regional Municipality, to a high of 78.1% in the rural postal code of Micmac, which includes part of the Sipekne'katik First Nations.

It should also be noted that postal cities for urban areas of the province (Halifax and Dartmouth) reported in Appendix A are aggregates of several postal areas. Such aggregates disguise higher child poverty rates in certain areas of urban Nova Scotia. For example, child poverty rates based on smaller postal units (Forward Sortation Areas [FSA]-Appendix B) within the Halifax postal city, range from 20.1% (B3H codes—South End/Waterfront/West End neighborhoods) to 36.8% (B3K codes—North End/Convoy Place neighborhoods) to a high of 48.2% in Spryfield (B3R codes). Similarly, rates range in the Dartmouth postal city from 10.3% (B3A codes—Colby Village/Cole Harbour/Forest Hill/Willowdale/Woodlawn neighborhoods) to 36.6% (B3B codes—Albro Lake/Brightwood/Crichton Park/Dartmouth/Harbourview/MicMac Village/Tufts Cove neighborhoods). Postal Area data suggest that both rural and urban areas in the province experience high rates of child poverty.

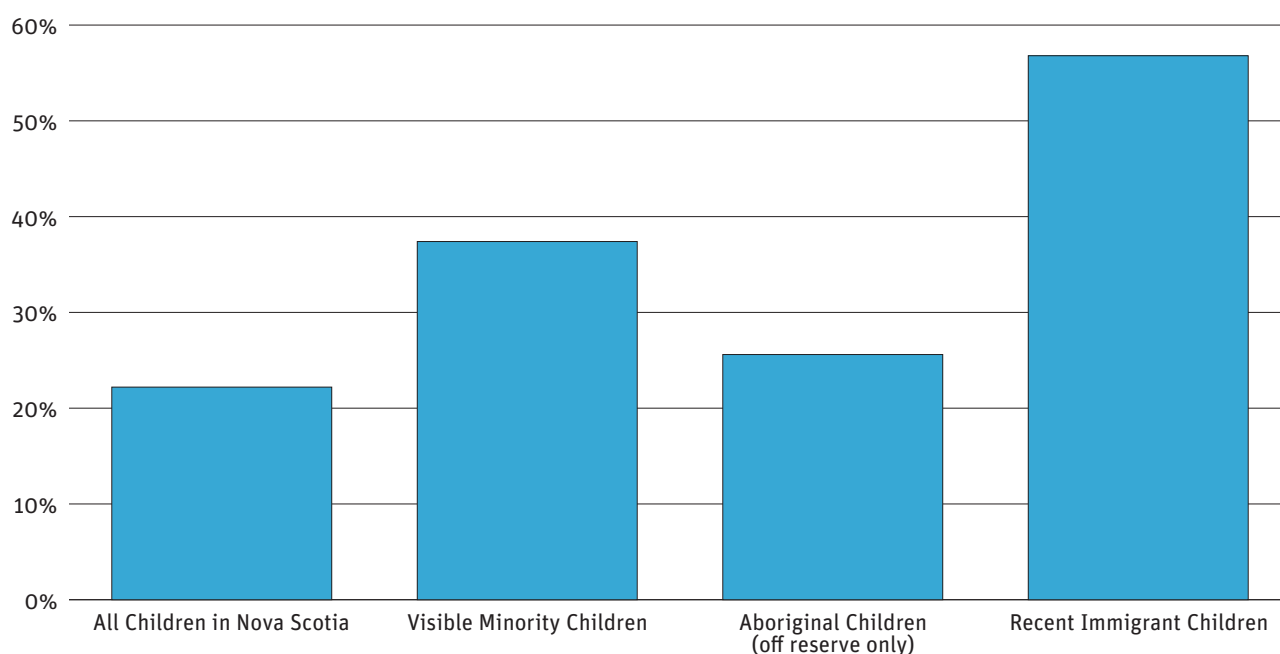
Child poverty rates for different population groups

Visible minority, immigrant, and Aboriginal children

The only data source that captures child poverty rates by identified groups of children is the 2016 Canadian Census, thus the most recent applicable data reports 2015 incomes. *Figure 4* report Census data that shows higher rates of poverty for children of visible minority status (Statistics Canada's term), and children who are new immigrants and of Aboriginal¹⁶ status. While the child poverty rate in Nova Scotia based on the same Census data for all children using the LIM-AT was 22.2%, over one-third (37.4%) of visible minority children were low-income. For example, the census shows that 67.8% of Arab children, 50.6% of Korean children, and 39.6% of Black children were low-income compared to 20.3% of non-visible minority children. Census data also shows higher rates of low-income among new immigrant children (56.8%) compared to non-immigrant children (21.2%) and higher rates for off-reserve children of Aboriginal status (25.6%).

While it is not possible to disaggregate Tax filer data (T1FF) from 2018 by groups of children (as socio-demographic questions are not asked on tax returns), patterns of higher child poverty rates are evident in postal geographies **where census profiles report higher populations of African**

FIGURE 4 Child Poverty rates for different population groups, Nova Scotia, LIM-AT, 2016 Census



Source Statistics Canada—2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016211.

Nova Scotian and Aboriginal children (including those that live on reserve). For example, the child poverty rate in North Preston (postal city) was 55.6% in 2018 (an increase from 52.9% in 2017). The FSA postal codes B1N (Whitney Pier) has a child poverty rate of 41.9%, Rural Route BoV1Ao (Digby) a rate of 44%, and 36.7% in the FSA postal codes B3K (Halifax North End).

T1FF data from 2018, also shows low-income rates well over 50% in postal areas that include reserve communities. It is important to note that income measures of poverty such as the CFLIM-AT may not reflect the complexity of poverty and well-being experienced by Aboriginal communities. As is outlined in the report by the First Nations Poverty Action Research Project, the First Nations communities involved “rejected the concept of poverty as defined in the mainstream society with an emphasis on income, employment and related measures. Instead, they approached the task from a much wider, holistic, perspective seeking to achieve the good life, one that included dimensions such as spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health and well-being; that stressed the idea of balance and harmony among the dimensions, and that showed a preference for “building our community together” rather than focusing on a disadvantaged subset of the community.”¹⁷

Families Living in Poverty in Cape Breton

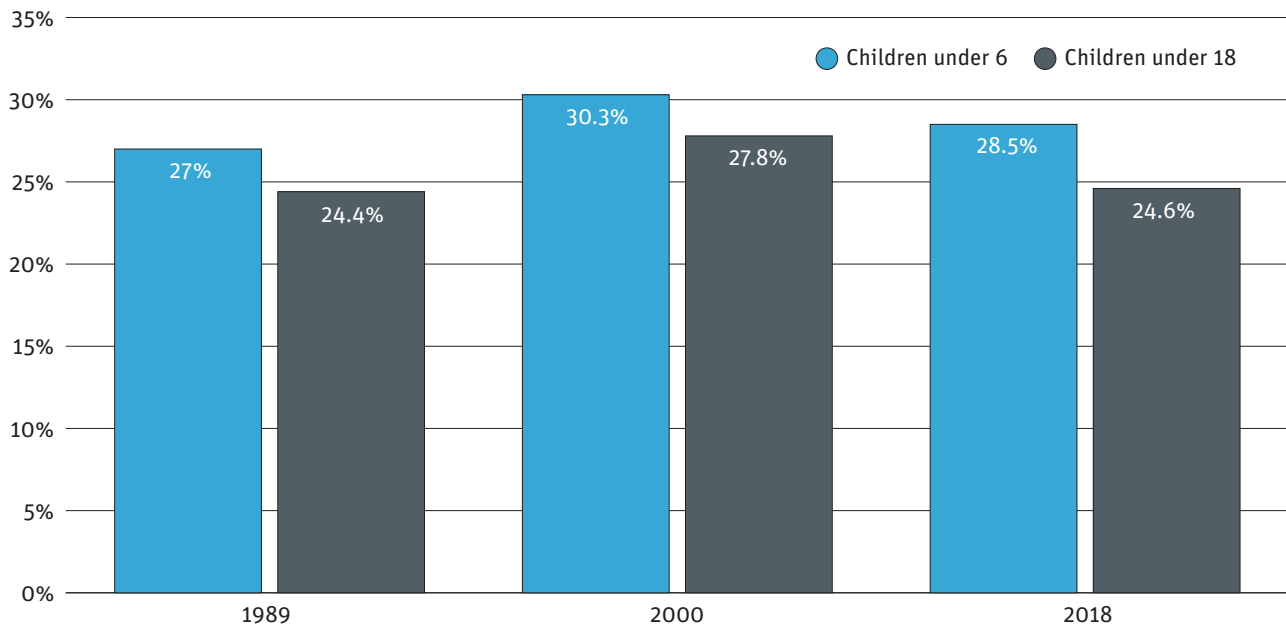
Jane is a mother of three, living separate from her partner and children. She has access visits with their middle child. She is challenged to try and understand the difficult physical and emotional road her youngest child, along with other transgender people have to travel to become the person they always knew they were. Jane suffers with mental health issues which leave her unable to consistently maintain or, at times, leave her small apartment. At times when her mental health spirals out of control, she is unable to maintain the required contact with other service providers. This results in reduced services and benefits being accessible to her. The family often experiences food insecurity. The loss of internet and lack of telephone access exasperates this situation. She is experiencing much by way of parental stress, strife and confusion in a situation that increases her level of mental unwellness.

Indeed, “poverty was not a concept with which they felt comfortable, and there is no term in Indigenous languages to express this idea.”¹⁸ Poverty, as a narrow concept of material deprivation focuses solutions on individual welfare instead of on the need to decolonize and to support rebuilding First Nation economies and societies.¹⁹ As part of the federal poverty reduction strategy, the Opportunity for All distinctions-based approach, and based on the principles of reconciliation, the federal government has committed to work with National Indigenous Organizations and others to identify and co-develop indicators of poverty and well-being, including non-income-based measures of poverty, that reflect the multiple dimensions of poverty and well-being experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis.²⁰

Rate of Child Poverty by Disability Status

Unfortunately, the 2016 census data does not report on the rate of child poverty by disability status. However, we do know that children with disabilities are twice as likely to live in households relying on social assistance and families of children with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty due to increased time away from work.²¹ The Longitudinal and International Study of Adults (2014) confirms that Canadians with disabilities face higher risk (23%) of low-income status. Among persons with a disability, the low-income status was more than 50% for lone-parent families.²²

FIGURE 5 Child Poverty rate for Children under 6 compared to all Children (CFLIM-AT), Nova Scotia, 1989, 2000, 2018



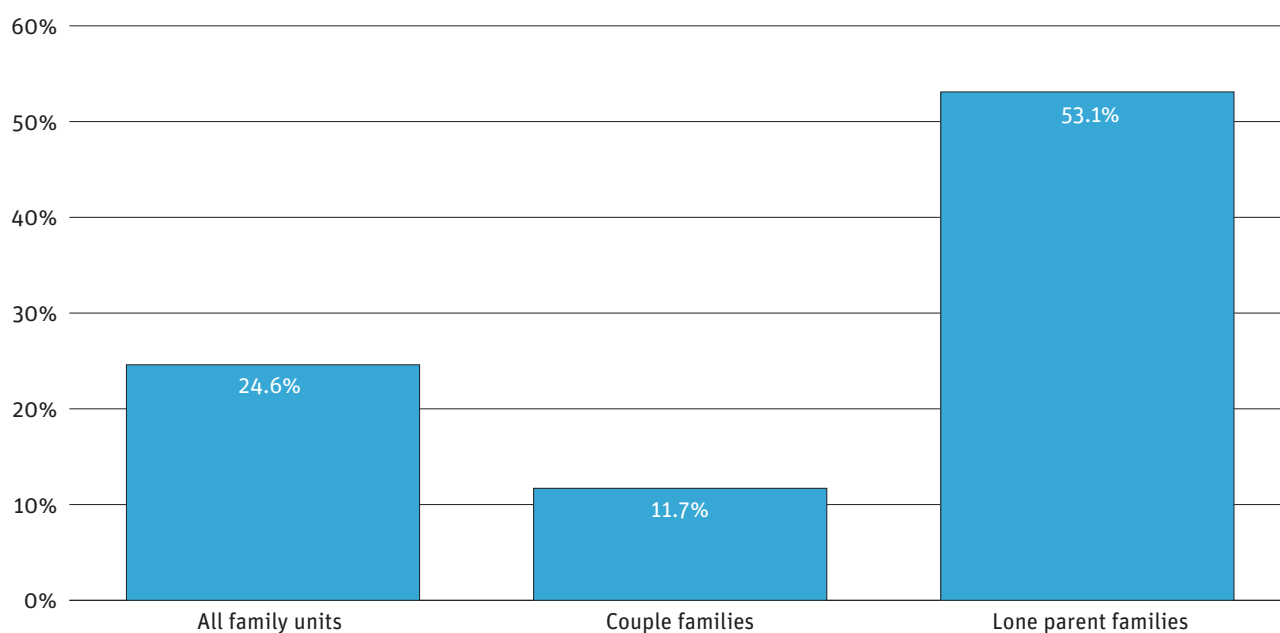
Source: Statistic Canada, T1 Family File, 1989, 2000, and 2018, Custom Tabulation, Reference R20049

Child Poverty by Age

Figure 5 shows the child poverty rate for children under six in 1989, 2000, and 2018. It demonstrates that **poverty rates for younger Nova Scotian children were higher in all three years** than they were for all children under 18. In 2018, the child poverty rate for children under 6 was 28.5%, close to one in three young children, compared to 24.6% of all children.

A lack of affordable childcare is likely to impede paid work in families with pre-school aged children, impacting the incomes of young families when families are forced to seek part-time employment or give up paid work entirely. We know that access to affordable, high quality early childhood education facilitates paid employment. In Halifax the median pre-school aged childcare fee in 2019 was \$861/month.²³ For many low-income families, such fees are out of reach, particularly for families with more than one pre-school child. Even though there are subsidies available, subsidies do not create spaces. High rates of child poverty in early childhood can partly be explained by the fact that the earnings of mothers tend to drop after childbirth, referred to as the ‘motherhood pay gap.’²⁴ Maternity and parental leave entitlements

FIGURE 6 Child Poverty Rate (CFLIM-AT) by Family Type, Nova Scotia, 2018



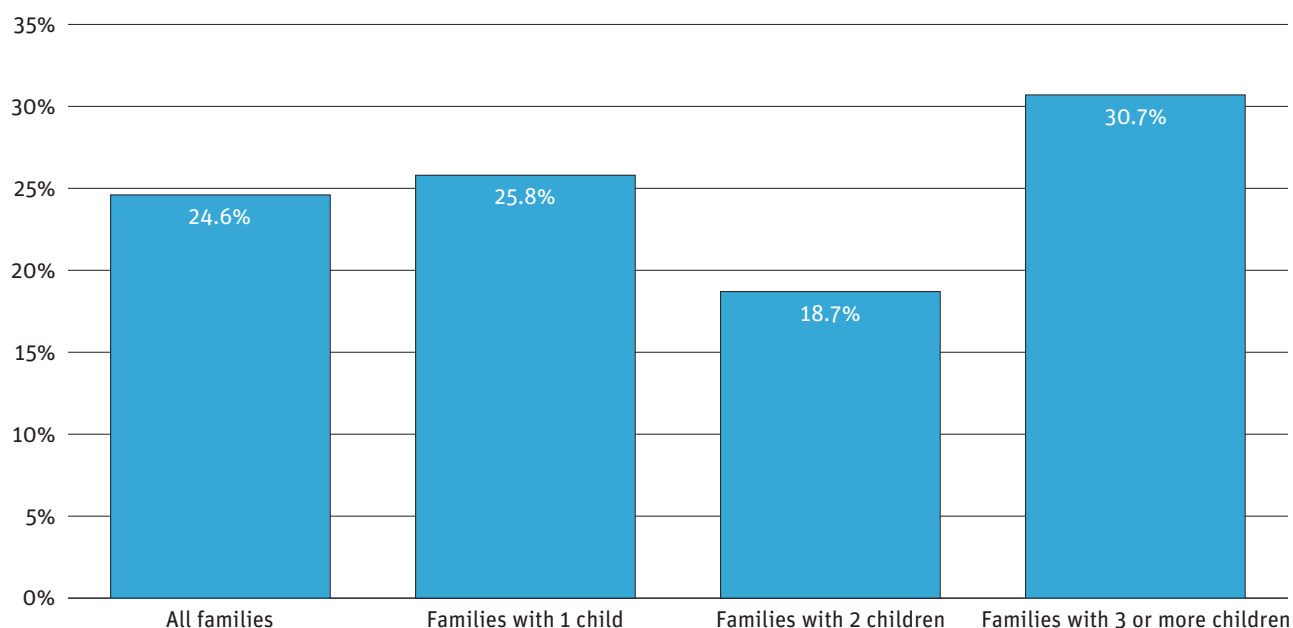
Source: Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 11-10-0020-01, 2018

amount to only 55% of earned wages, should you indeed be eligible for them. We know that women's access to employment insurance and maternity leave has declined over time because women are more likely to have non-standard work arrangements, which makes meeting the eligibility criteria more challenging.²⁵ Research from Nova Scotia shows that both maternity leave based on minimum wage employment and income assistance are inadequate to afford a basic nutritious diet throughout perinatal and early infancy periods emphasizing risk of food insecurity as a critical issue for families with young children in low income circumstances.²⁶

Child Poverty by Family Type

Figure 6 shows that children living in lone-parent families experience a much greater likelihood of living in poverty than children living in couple families. In 2018, **more than half** (53.1 %) of the children living in lone parent families in Nova Scotia lived below the CFLIM-AT (26,430 children) compared with 11.7% of children living in couple families (13, 820 children).

FIGURE 7 Child Poverty Rate (AT-LIM) by Family Size, Nova Scotia, 2018



Source: Statistics Canada CANSIM Table 11-10-0020-01, 2018

Income data from Census 2016 shows that gender of the earner affects child poverty rates as well; Nova Scotian children living in female-led lone parent families had a poverty rate (LIM-AT) of 48.9% in 2015 compared to 30.4% in male-led lone parent families.²⁷ We also know that 81.1% of lone parent families in Nova Scotia in 2018 were female-led²⁸ and 78.7% of mothers with children aged 0–5 work outside the home.²⁹

We also know that the 2018 median income for female led lone-parent families in Nova Scotia in 2018 was \$40,270 compared to \$56,580 for male led lone-parent families³⁰, and the hourly full-time average wage for females in 2018 was \$22.37 compared to \$24.87 for males.³¹ Women are less likely to be employed full time than men are and more likely to juggle multiple jobs at a higher rate than men.³² While the gender wage gap is narrowing, Nova Scotia received a C grade for its gender wage gap, in comparison to other provinces and its International peers.³³ Thus, in many cases child poverty is intricately linked to the dynamics of women’s poverty and the gender discrimination they face in care work and the labour market, and the challenges of unpaid caregiving that falls disproportionately to women.

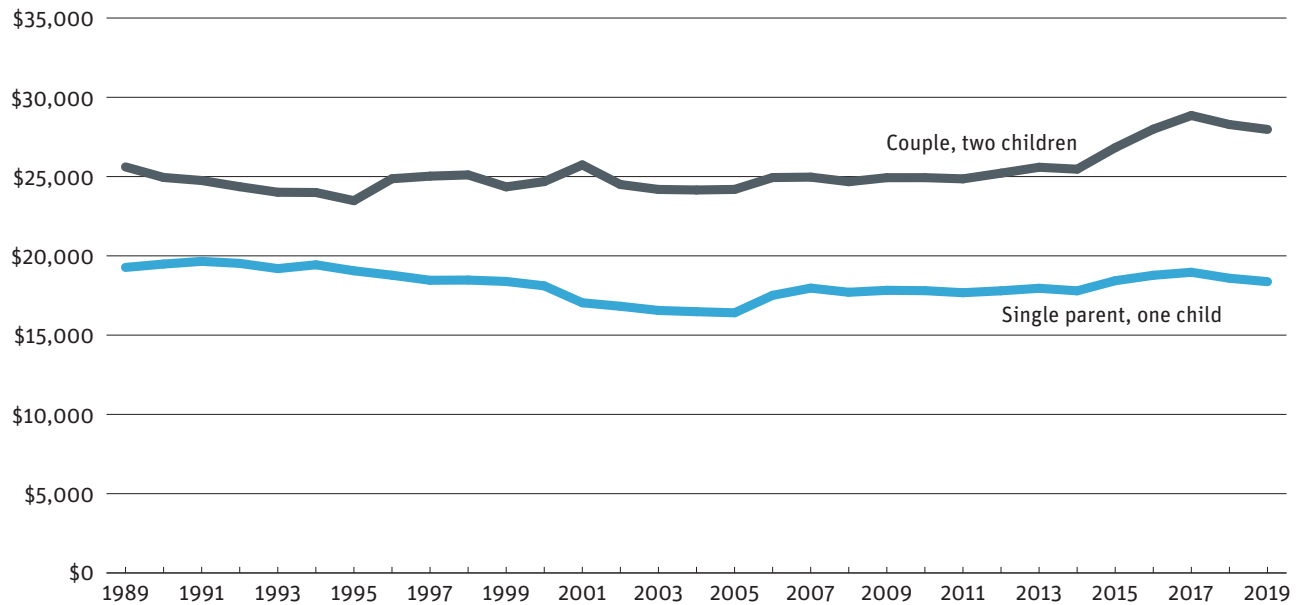
Nova Scotia children living in larger families also have higher rates of poverty. *Figure 7* shows that the poverty rate for children in families with

three or more children was 30.7 (up from 28.8% in 2017); compared to 25.8% for families with only one child (slight reduction from 2017 figures), and 18.7% for families with two children.

Families who depend on welfare for household income

CHILDREN IN FAMILIES that depend on welfare are poor by design. *Maytree* (2020) reports total welfare incomes in Canadian provinces and territories annually for two different family types with children (a lone parent with one child aged 2 years, and a couple family with two children aged 10 and 15).³⁴ Welfare incomes include income assistance payments, federal and provincial child tax credits, and other provincial government transfers. *Figure 8* illustrates that total welfare incomes for a single parent family with one child have remained relatively stagnant in Nova Scotia since 1989 with the lowest rates in the early 2000s. In 2019, the maximum welfare income for this family type was \$18,372 which is \$900 less per year than in 1989 when adjusted for inflation.³⁵ Between 2015 and 2017 incomes were trending upwards for both single parents and couple families, when maximum welfare incomes reached a 31-year high of \$28,852. This coincided with increases to the federal child benefit (CCB) that began in July 2016, which importantly was pegged to inflation in 2018. The data show, however, that the provincial government failed to leverage the federal investment to improve welfare incomes. In fact, since 2018, total welfare incomes have fallen for both family types as the province of Nova Scotia does not index income assistance rates or the Nova Scotia Child Benefit to the cost of living. Failing to do so means

FIGURE 8 Total Annual Welfare Income by Family Type, Nova Scotia, 1989–2019
(Constant 2019 dollars)



Source Welfare in Canada 2019, Maytree (2020)

that families are worse off over time as rents rise and prices for goods and other services increase.

Depth of poverty

A HUNDRED PERCENT of families that rely on government support as their only source of income, live in poverty in Nova Scotia, as the amount of support falls far below the poverty line. Maytree reports (see *Table 3*) that **Nova Scotia has the lowest welfare incomes in Canada for single parent families with one child (only 57% of the Market Basket Measure poverty line), and the second lowest, after New Brunswick, for couple families with two children (61% of the MBM).**³⁷ These household types are in **deep poverty** (having an income less than 75 per cent of the MBM).

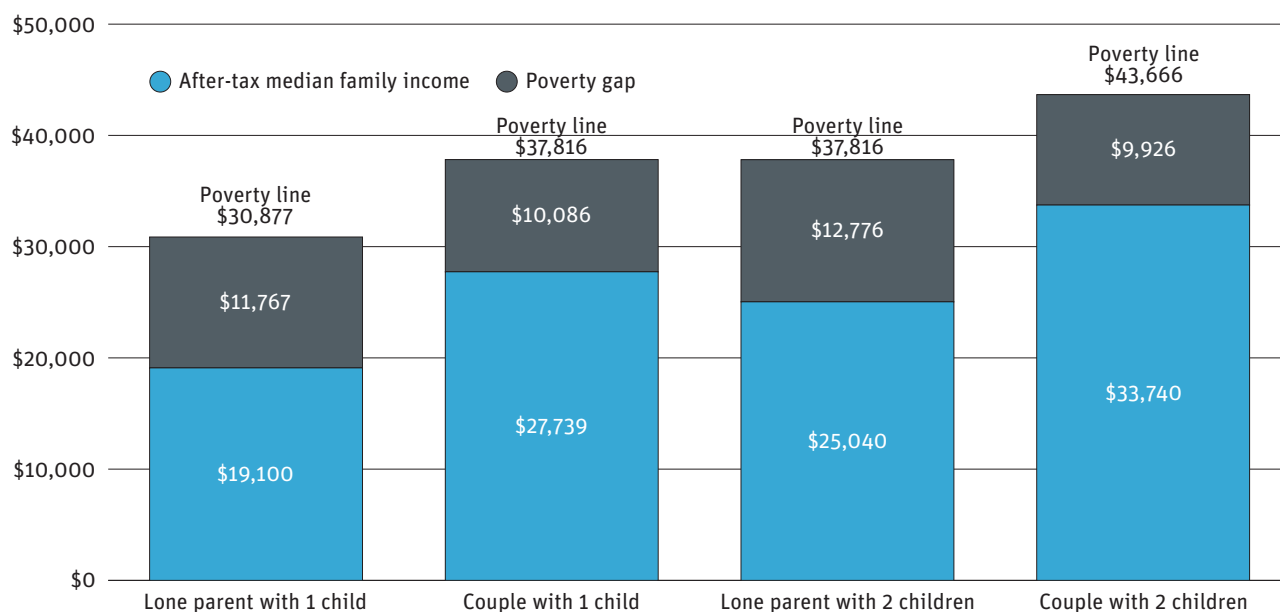
Depth of poverty can also be accessed by comparing the median after-tax incomes of families that are classified low-income to the poverty threshold (CFLIM-AT). *Figure 9* shows that **many low-income families live far below this poverty threshold.** Median incomes of low-income families were significantly below the CFLIM-AT for both couple and lone-parent families of different family size. For example, low-income couple families with two children in Nova Scotia had a median income of \$33,740 per year, leaving them \$9,926 below the CFLIM-AT poverty line. The median income of couple families with one child, and lone-parent families with one child, was \$10,086 and \$11,767 respectively below the poverty line. **Low-income lone parent families with two children had a depth of poverty of \$12,776 per year (only 66% of the poverty threshold)—meaning they are in deep poverty and would need an extra \$1064/month to bring them up to the poverty**

TABLE 3 Adequacy of Welfare Incomes, Halifax, 2019

Adequacy indicator	Single parent, one child	Couple, two children
Total welfare income	\$18,372	\$27,974
MBM threshold (Halifax)	\$32,436	\$45,872
Welfare income minus MBM threshold	-\$14,064	-\$17,898
Welfare income as % of MBM	57%	61%
LIM threshold (Canada-wide)	\$34,850	\$49,285
Welfare income minus LIM threshold	-\$34,849	-\$49,284
Welfare income as % of LIM	53%	57%

Source: Welfare in Canada 2019, Maytree (2020)

FIGURE 9 Depth of Low Income for Families in Nova Scotia with income below the CFLIM-AT, 2018



Source: Statistic Canada, T1 Family File, 2018

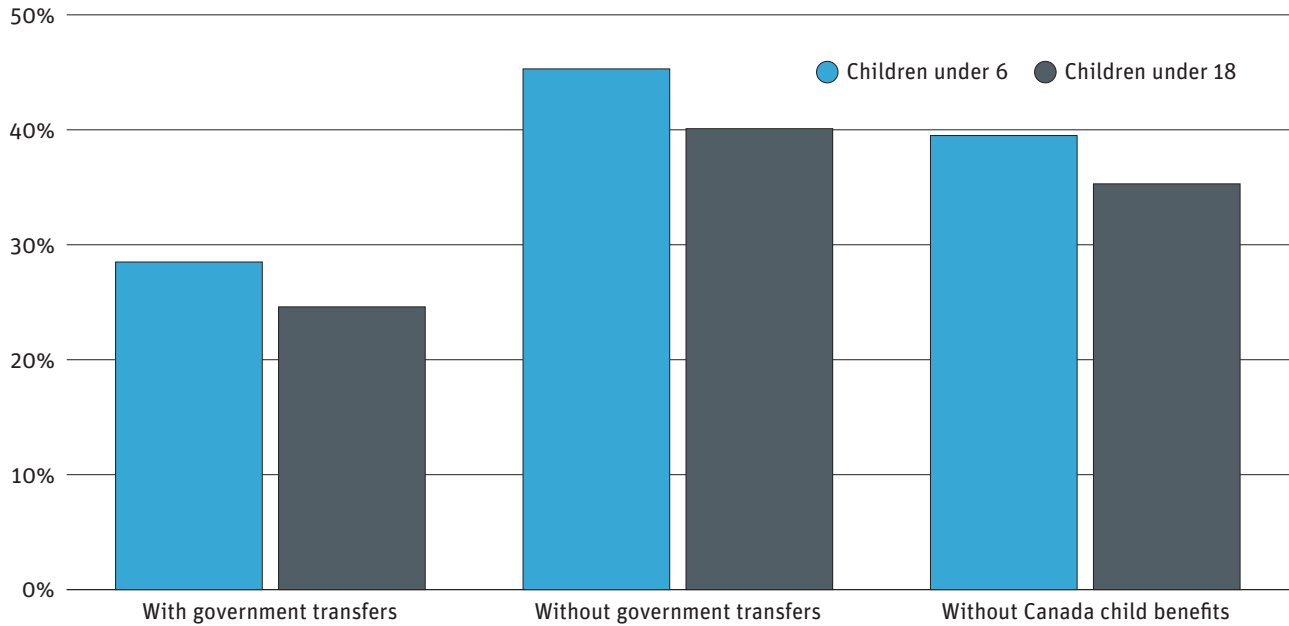
line. The gap between the median income of low-income families and the CFLIM-AT has widened in Nova Scotia between 2017 and 2018 for all family types displayed in *Figure 10* except couple families with two children.

The effect of government benefits

FIGURE 10 DEMONSTRATES that government income benefits to individuals and families are effective in reducing the rate of child poverty. These benefits are delivered by both the federal and provincial government and include both children's benefits and benefits to other family members (federal and provincial Child Benefits, the Goods and Services Tax credit, the Working Income Tax Benefit, Employment Insurance, Income Assistance, and the Affordable Living Tax Credit). The graph displays the level of poverty reduction that results from income supports to Nova Scotian families. **In 2018, we saw a 38.7% reduction in child poverty due to all government transfers (a lesser amount of 37.1% reduction for children under 6). Indeed, without these government benefits 67,510 (instead of 41,370) children aged 0–17 would live in poverty in Nova Scotia.** Examining the impact of the Canada Child Benefit only, shows a 30.3% reduction for children under 18, and a 27.8% reduction for children under the age of 6 demonstrating that a large proportion of the effect of government transfers in reducing child poverty in Nova Scotia can be attributed to the federal CCB transfer.

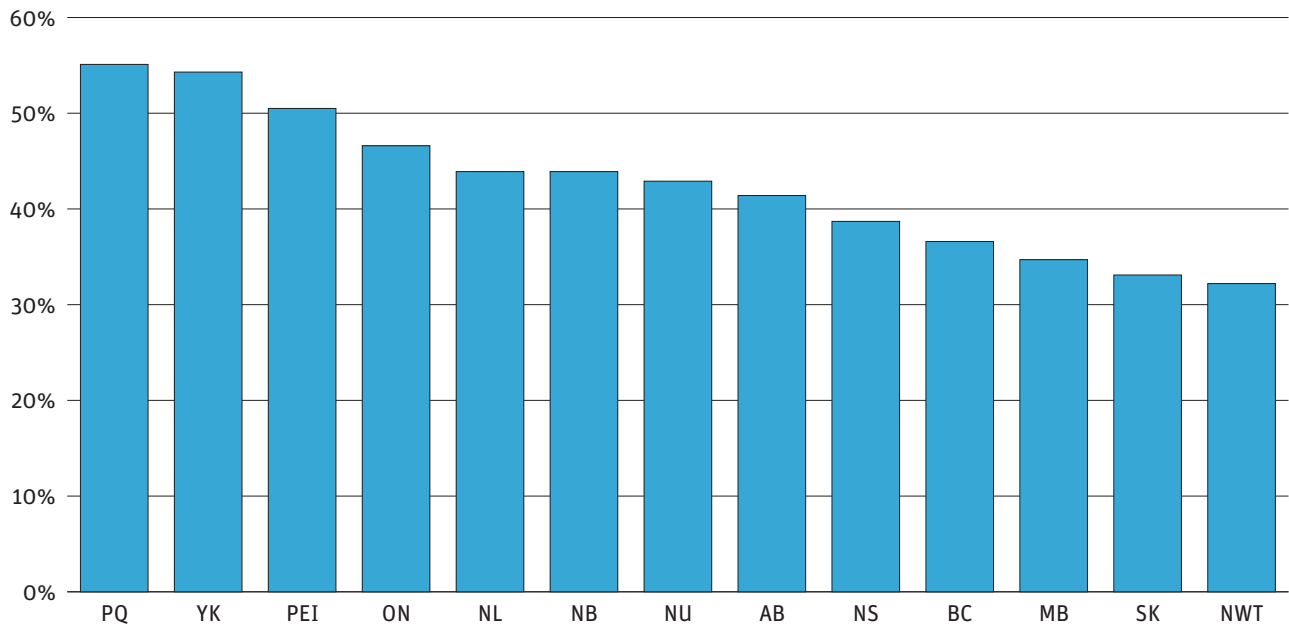
Figure 11 demonstrates that eight other provinces/territories were more effective in reducing child poverty through government transfers and that Nova Scotia's poverty reduction due to both federal and provincial transfers were the least effective in the Atlantic provinces.

FIGURE 10 Impact of Government Transfers on Child Poverty Rate, Nova Scotia, 2018



Source: Statistic Canada, T1 Family File, 2018, Custom Tabulation, Reference R20049

FIGURE 11 Percent Reduction in Child Poverty due to Government Income Supports, Provinces and Territories, CFLIM-AT, 2018



Source: Statistic Canada, T1 Family File, 2017, Custom Tabulation, Reference R20049

Ending child and family poverty in Nova Scotia

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS have not changed very much over the past few years because very little has changed to support families with children living in poverty in Nova Scotia. While the data in this report card is for 2018, we can predict that—just like we did two years ago—unless there has been or will be substantial investment in income support levels, the needle on the number of children who live in families in poverty will not move. Has there been any significant changes that could mean that our data does not reflect the reality of families living in poverty in Nova Scotia today? Have there been other changes that would affect these numbers either up or down?

Obviously, the impact of the pandemic is a significant change and our data do not reflect this crisis time period. We know however that the situation for most people living in poverty has likely gotten worse and that given spikes in unemployment, more people are likely to be living in poverty today than prior to the pandemic. For the most vulnerable families who rely solely on welfare income, we know with some certainty that things have only gotten worse because very little additional income supports have been made available except for a one-time \$50 payment from the Nova Scotia government and a one-time payment of \$300 per child from the federal government. Given that the base support for income assistance recipients is already far below

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We are working with a rural dad whose children were removed from the care of their mother while he was incarcerated. He is trying to get his home ready for his children to return as he recognized the need for appropriate furnishings and such. He is attempting to live on a single person's Income Assistance. He is often hungry when he arrives at Family Place to attend programs. We know that what we are serving as "snack" represents a meal for him. He has made significant progress and the ongoing plan for Child Welfare is to return the children to his care. So, he is very focused and wants to be sure that his house is equipped with the necessities so that Child Welfare workers will have no "reason" not to return the children to his care. To get what he needs for the children he has been going without basic necessities himself. This is the only way he has found to access funds to slowly get the items he needs.³⁶

the poverty line (see *Table 3*), these payments would not even make up for the loss of access to community supports because of closures or due to the increased cost of living for essential items over this time period. Families are struggling more than ever—as the stories shared in this report also illustrate.

The only people who might actually have been 'better off' during this pandemic for a short time are those income assistance recipients eligible to receive the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) because they were employed, and workers who were working at minimum wage, or precariously employed with few hours, or some self-employed workers. The CERB of \$2000 per month is much more generous than income assistance even when combined with the maximum earnings exemptions.³⁸ It is important to note that the Nova Scotia government did not allow IA clients to receive both income assistance and CERB despite the federal government urging provinces to exempt CERB payments. Eligible income assistance recipients were temporarily taken off the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) system but were able to keep their pharmacare. The Nova Scotia government said that any savings from removing these clients would be reinvested,³⁹ but there has been no transparency on how much was saved or reinvested. The 'savings' was not much in the context of a multi-million-dollar provincial government department, but is significant in the life and monthly budget for an income assistance recipient. These recipients will not have to reapply for income assistance, but will have to be reassessed for eligibility.

The current Nova Scotia government also points to the introduction of the Standard Household Rate (SHR)⁴⁰ that came into effect in January 2020, as a major structural change to ESIA. This dropped the policing of

how much people pay for shelter and incorporated the shelter maximums into the rates. While this change amounted to an increase of 2–5% for some recipients, it will only have lifted a small number of people over the poverty threshold because ESIA payments still do not reflect the real costs of covering basic needs. The Nova Scotia government also made changes to the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, increasing the annual amount from \$625 per year to \$925 for the first child for all eligible families with the first increase issued on July 20, 2020. This amounts to an additional \$25 per month per child for the lowest income families. The government also increased the threshold from a household income of \$26,000 to \$34,000 allowing more families to qualify,⁴¹ which will help some households who are working poor. Given that the median income for low-income couple families with two children in Nova Scotia is \$33,740 per year, that means that some of them will still not be eligible for the NS child benefit (see *Figure 9*).

The current government claims “historic investment” in the ESIA program last year and in the NS child benefit,⁴² but does this mean that fewer families and children are living in poverty? As *Table 3* above shows, these historic investments will still leave those relying on welfare income far below the poverty line. This government claims that comparing these income support amounts to the poverty line neglects the other ways that supports are provided including via rent supplements or childcare subsidies or even food banks. While these non-income based supports undoubtedly help some people, everyone deserves a decent income floor in addition to the other non-income based supports available. And as one non-profit service provider said recently, “There is just a huge disconnect that I’m feeling quite heavily between what we think we’re doing, what we’re intending to do, and what the actual impact on the ground is.”⁴³ The we in this scenario may well be all of us, but since the needle will only be moved by implementing policy solutions, the ‘we’ is first and foremost the responsibility of government. Despite the Deputy Minister of Community Services proclaiming that “rates of poverty are slowly and steadily coming down,”⁴⁴ for children and families, the evidence shows otherwise, and the evidence on the ground as can be seen by the stories shared, is that families are struggling.

Recommendations for the Nova Scotia government

All levels of government have an opportunity and a role in poverty reduction, indeed poverty eradication. In contrast to the Blueprint for Poverty Reduc-

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Families often deal with rodent issues. It got so bad for one family that the rats ate food that was put out to be prepared for her family's meal. When we covered the cost and sent an exterminator to the home (given that the landlord refused to do so), the exterminator reported that it was the worst he had ever seen—there were “several generations” of rats in the house. Her child gets so depressed about the state of their living arrangements, she has a difficult time going to school. Her mental health is worsened by the difficult living conditions such that she left home to move in with a neighbour. Her mother is devastated feeling unable to provide for her children.⁵¹

tion (2017–2022),^{45,46} the **provincial government needs to implement a comprehensive poverty eradication plan that includes legislated targets and timelines.** What can short-term grants for “action-oriented initiatives” that “test innovative ways of addressing poverty” as in the Blueprint achieve? We don't know because no evaluation has been made public even though we are almost three years into that strategy. What we do know is that one has to focus on root systemic and structural causes, including income inequality, and discrimination in all its forms to eradicate poverty. **The Social Policy Framework (SPF) released by the CCPA-NS should be used to develop a poverty eradication plan based on principles in the framework and aligned with a vision that will create a province that** “leaves no one behind, that builds a green economy and prioritizes climate justice and investments in taking care of each other, so we can all live in security, enjoy good health, and participate fully in society.”⁴⁷ A robust social safety net that is evidence-based, employs an intersectional lens, and incorporates principles of universality, decolonization, social inclusion, decent work and well-being, is what is needed as we move into the pandemic recovery period. This section outlines some recommendations that could address the short-term need to support families with children who are living in poverty through the immediate crisis period, the medium-term recovery as vaccines are rolling out, and in the longer term, which requires the eradication of poverty.

Recommendation 1: Use the CCPA-NS social policy framework to develop a comprehensive, robust Poverty Eradication Plan for Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia is one of the only provinces without a Child and Youth Advocate office. As the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers explain, “In other provinces these offices are involved in right-based public education, conflict

resolution, conducting independent reviews and making recommendations to governments on programs and services delivered to children and youth.” Moreover, it is critical that they are a voice for children based on individual advocacy, and that they play a role for policy and system advocacy.⁴⁸

Recommendation 2: Create a Child and Youth Advocate office to protect and promote the rights of Nova Scotia’s children and youth.

Enhanced Income Supports

The data presented in this report card shows the positive effect of government transfers to reduce poverty.

Given the depth of poverty faced by so many, none of these tax benefit/credit programs provide reliable incomes adequate enough to bridge the largest of gaps and actually lift people out of poverty. More robust combined federal and provincial enhancements, indexed to inflation, are needed to significantly improve the lives of poor families in this province. The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) has definitely helped families, and helped reduce child poverty. However, we know that there remain families who are still not receiving the benefit despite being eligible, and families who experience disruptions related to the CRA’s administration of the CCB.⁴⁹ It is critical that both levels of government work to remove all barriers to receiving CCB as quickly as possible, recognizing that for some families this could be the difference as to whether they keep custody of their children, can exit a domestic violence situation, or remain housed.

For its part, the Nova Scotia government has not provided an evidence-based justification for the level of income support provided. The ESIA policy manual says that it “will strive to provide residents of Nova Scotia who are in need with a level of assistance adequate to meet their basic needs for shelter, food, clothing, and personal care.”⁵⁰ It must not just strive to, it must do so.

Moreover, ESIA must cover all household essentials, including the costs of transportation, and communications (internet and telephone). The social isolation that has been heightened for some by COVID-19 has long been a reality for those receiving income assistance because these essential costs are not deemed basic, but ‘special’ thus requiring justification, paperwork and needless stress to receive.⁵²

We acknowledge that some changes to the ESIA have been positive. As of August 2018, the Department of Community Services stopped deducting child support payments from income assistance recipients. As outlined above, the other changes to ESIA include improvements to wage exemptions,

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Some of our participants who do not own a vehicle, do not drive, and cannot afford cab fare report that they feel “forced to perform sexual acts” to “pay” for their transportation for necessities—trips to the grocery stores, medical appointments for their children, and so forth. When living in rural communities, transportation issues are very limiting and not easily resolved.⁵³

increases to allowable asset levels, and the new standard household rate. While any increase is no doubt welcomed by cash strapped families, they are still left thousands of dollars below the poverty thresholds annually. This one-time Standard Household Rate reset (of 2–5% for some) along with other one-time marginal increases over the past several years (i.e., \$20/month in May 2016 to the personal allowance), and even the increase to the NS Child Benefit, will still do little to reduce poverty rates for families that rely on income assistance. Over the past few years, the combined yearly inflation rate in Nova Scotia has been just over 2%. However, the price of food in Nova Scotia rose by 3.9% between 2018 and 2019, and shelter by 2.4%⁵⁴ As it stands, ESIA’s income support is still not indexed to annual inflation, nor the NS Child Benefit, thus any small gains made in one year are lost in the next. Moreover, the ESIA system remains very punitive, and surveillance based, robbing people of their ability to be supported to have real options to exit poverty.

Recommendation 3: The Employment Supports and Income Assistance (ESIA) program must be reformed to meet the principles of income adequacy, social inclusion and respect for human dignity. The ESIA’s benefit level should be set to a recognized standard/poverty measure and include regular cost of living increases taking into account housing/rental inflation and food inflation in particular.

Recommendation 4: The Nova Scotia Child Benefit should be further increased and broadened to include more families, and indexed to inflation, as part of a poverty eradication strategy.

Address the legacy of colonialism

It is primarily the federal government which must commit to supporting self-determination for First Nations, both financially and jurisdictionally, with an emphasis on revenue sharing. The provincial, municipal govern-

ments, and all public institutions, must also commit to reconciliation and supporting Indigenous self-determination, while decolonizing mainstream institutions, and policies. The *Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey Education Agreement* provides an important model to follow when considering how devolution can be handled.⁵⁵ Given the high poverty rates and underfunding of basic services that First Nations communities face, it is imperative that more is done especially given the current violence and racism displayed against several First Nations, and in particular Sipekne'katik First Nations as they exercise their treaty rights and right to a moderate livelihood fishery. Income data presented here from Statistics Canada do show that the highest poverty rate (measured as income below the 50% of the Canadian median) in Nova Scotia is 78.1% in the rural postal code of Micmac, which includes part of the Sipekne'katik First Nations.

Recommendation 5: Support First Nations in Nova Scotia to assume self-governance over child and family services to ensure they are able to meet their cultural, historical, and geographical needs and circumstances.

Targeted measures for marginalized groups

The highest poverty rates are experienced by those groups who face discrimination based on Indigeneity, race, gender, immigration status, disability and sexual orientation. Any solution to address family poverty must ensure that the income supports, policies and programs, are responsive to the diversity of needs of all those living in low-income. For example, the provincial government should work with the African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition and support the implementation of their priorities, which include “establishing a legislative framework for recognizing African Nova Scotians as a unique people that results in an Act that establishes a new relationship between all People of African Ancestry and the Government of Nova Scotia.”⁵⁶ The United Nations Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent concludes that “Canada’s history of enslavement, racial segregation and marginalization of African Canadians has left a legacy of anti-Black racism and had a deleterious impact on people of African descent, which must be addressed in partnership with the affected communities.”⁵⁷ Much more needs to be done so they, and all those who face additional barriers, can fully and equally participate in all aspects of society.

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Denise is a grandmother providing primary care for her grandchildren in an urban community. A number of her granddaughters are still in school. One has identified special needs. Denise is on a fixed income, separated from a partner and living in a small rental unit. She does not always have access to transportation. The provision of school supplies and clothing for growing boys and girls are huge challenges. Through program experiences with Denise, we learn that she often goes without food in the effort to try and make more available for her family. Denise came to be the primary caregiver of her grandchildren after a family separation related to addiction issues.⁶¹

Recommendation 6: In order to eradicate poverty in communities that have particularly high poverty rates, employ an intersectional lens to invest in proactive strategies developed in collaboration with the affected communities.

Universal Public Services

A universally accessible, high-quality childcare system is also essential for child poverty eradication. Apart from facilitating work, and strengthening women's equality, early childhood education and care also supports healthy child development, school readiness and overall child well-being.⁵⁸ While the Nova Scotia government is to be commended for introducing a universal pre-primary program for four year-olds, it has some flaws in design and implementation that still leaves many families struggling to access the childcare they need including care for their children who are younger than four, but also to afford and find care for their four year-olds outside of regular school hours. While a step in the right direction, this government policy builds on a system of patchwork programs including subsidies, instead of building a full seamless and adequately funded inclusive system.⁵⁹ We know that these systems can pay for themselves and are essential to the recovery efforts.⁶⁰ Childcare is not the only public service that needs investment, though it should be a priority to support families, investing to expand universal public health care, and in making post-secondary education more affordable is also critical.

Recommendation 7: Fund and build a high quality, early learning and childcare system that is child-centred, play-based, seamless (all day, full year), affordable and accessible.

Recommendation 8: Invest in public and social infrastructure, including extended universal public health care (mental health care, pharmacare, long term care, home care), strengthen inclusive public education, make post-secondary education more affordable, and invest to ensure essential costs are available and affordable (e.g., food, internet).

Address the affordable housing crisis

Many parts of Nova Scotia face a housing crisis, with low vacancy rates and high rental rates, increasing housing insecurity and homelessness.⁶² Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments must build new public housing supplemented with a strategy for affordable housing that includes prioritizing the building of non-profit, and cooperative housing, and enacting permanent legislation that ensures rental quality and affordability.⁶³ More also needs to be done to address rental increases, for example, by legislating rent increase controls permanently. Housing must be reframed as a right and not a commodity.⁶⁴

Recommendation 9: Enact a full moratorium on all evictions during the state of emergency, and permanent rent control, in addition to developing longer term policies to maintain rental quality and affordability, which must include significant and sustained investment to build affordable, social, non-profit, and co-operative housing.

Make work lift people out of poverty

Although it is often assumed that working-full time is a pathway out of poverty, plenty of people who work at or around the minimum wage in Nova Scotia know a different reality. Improving the earned incomes for families with children is essential for poverty reduction. Stable employment helps to alleviate or reduce child poverty, but having a job, especially if it is at minimum wage or part time, in itself, does not solve the problem. During this pandemic, the lack of health and safety protection for workers in low-waged jobs providing critical services to our community, tells us our government does not do enough to support them. In addition, families must be able to isolate should they test positive or if their child has symptoms of COVID, or should public health close their child's school without the fear of losing their jobs or losing wages. At minimum, workers deserve 10 paid sick days and additional family leave provisions.⁶⁵

Families Living in Poverty in Cape Breton

Joseph is the father and primary caregiver to his two young children. Occasionally he finds himself also parenting another child that needs support. Addictions played a significant role in the break-up of their relationship and continues to have an effect on their children's lives. Joseph works full-time for minimum wage. His wages do not meet the needs of his family. He is dependent on the financial help of his aging parents—support they can little afford to give. Food insecurity, inconsistent access to reliable transportation, cost of educational and recreational opportunities are just some of the poverty-related challenges Joseph faces as he puts forward his best efforts to support his family.⁶⁶

Recommendation 10: The minimum wage should be increased to \$15 in the next year with a plan to make it a living wage.⁶⁷

Recommendation 11: Amend the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code to better protect workers in the province and improve the lives of working families, including providing at least 10 paid sick days.

Recommendations for the Federal Government

The federal government has a central role to play as the government with a much broader and deeper revenue base to invest in the supports and services needed to support families with children to get out of poverty. Campaign 2000's federal report card has more detailed recommendations for the federal government,⁶⁸ which include recommendations to strengthen the federal government's poverty reduction efforts with more strategic investments in income supports (including the Canada Child Benefit) and housing, to create employment opportunities, and expand universal public services (including childcare, and pharmacare), as well as increasing funding to the provinces and territories, in order to meet more ambitious poverty reduction targets. Campaign 2000 recognizes these federal investments must seek to implement the Spirit Bear Plan, and properly implement Jordan's Principle, among other actions to address child and family poverty in Indigenous communities.

Conclusion

NOVA SCOTIA CONTINUES to leave its most marginalized children behind. The children represented in these numbers live in struggling families that face daily decisions about which basic needs they can fulfill and how they can best keep their children safe and happy in difficult circumstances. As COVID-19 has demonstrated, many families are potentially vulnerable to joining the nearly 1 in 4 children living in low-income circumstances in Nova Scotia. Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child directs signatories, regarding the standard of living due to every child, to “take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing”⁶⁹. Both Nova Scotia and Canada must take action as outlined in this report to be able to meet this basic standard and provide the right for all children, indeed all people, to be valued and treated with respect, and able to participate fully in the life of our community.

Appendix A

Child poverty rates by postal area, Nova Scotia

Postal areas 2018 (i postal city; ii rural route)	Child poverty rate	Postal areas 2018 (i postal city; ii rural route)	Child poverty rate
Aberdeen ii	42.6	Coldbrook i	12.1
Afton Station ii	48.5	Dartmouth i	23.1
Amherst i	29.7	Debert ii	23.2
Antigonish i	22.0	Digby ii	44.0
Arcadia ii	16.7	Dominion i	26.7
Arichat ii	26.3	East Amherst i	17.6
Aylesford ii	26.9	East Chester ii	26.8
Barrington ii	25.9	East Preston i	33.3
Bear River ii	40.0	Eastern Passage i	15.6
Beaverbank i	11.0	Ellershouse ii	20.7
Bedford i	14.9	Elmsdale i	17.3
Beechville i	15.4	Enfield i	11.8
Berwick ii	25.6	Eskasoni i	73.8
Bridgetown ii	33.3	Fall River i	6.3
Bridgewater i	29.4	Falmouth ii	13.8
Brookfield ii	21.6	Florence i	38.5
Brooklyn Corner i	27.3	Forest Hill i	26.1
Caledonia ii	27.8	Glace Bay i	38.7
Cambridge ii	25.6	Granville Ferry i	32.1
Canning ii	27.4	Greenwood ii	10.9
Canso ii	38.9	Gulf Shore ii	36.8
Centreville ii	23.4	Halifax i	31.0
Chapel Island ii	42.9	Hammonds Plains i	7.8
Chester Basin ii	27.5	Hantsport ii	26.7
Church Point ii	25.0	Head of Chezzetcook ii	18.7
Clarks Harbour ii	26.7	Hubbards ii	19.7

Postal areas 2018 (ipostal city; ii rural route)	Child poverty rate	Postal areas 2018 (ipostal city; ii rural route)	Child poverty rate
Hubley ⁱ	11.4	North Preston ⁱ	55.6
Inverness ⁱⁱ	25.7	North Sydney ⁱ	36.5
Kennetcook ⁱⁱ	27.3	Oxford ⁱⁱ	30.0
Kentville ⁱ	27.8	Parrsboro ⁱⁱ	33.3
Kingston ⁱⁱ	19.6	Pleasantville ⁱⁱ	25.0
Lake Echo ⁱ	13.7	Port Hawkesbury ⁱ	27.4
Lakeside ⁱ	22.7	Port Williams ⁱⁱ	15.4
Lantz ⁱ	12.0	Porters Lake ⁱ	12.5
Lawrencetown (Annapolis County) ⁱⁱ	34.6	Reserve Mines ⁱ	38.7
Lawrencetown (Halifax County) ⁱ	8.6	River Herbert ⁱⁱ	38.5
Liverpool ⁱⁱ	31.7	River John ⁱⁱ	31.3
Linacy ⁱ	21.4	Scotchtown ⁱ	35.7
Lockeport ⁱⁱ	27.8	Sheet Harbour ⁱⁱ	33.3
Lower Sackville ⁱ	21.9	Shelburne ⁱⁱ	28.4
Lower Woods Harbour ⁱⁱ	31.3	Shubenacadie ⁱⁱ	26.8
Lower South River ⁱ	14.0	Springhill ⁱⁱ	40.8
Lunenburg ⁱⁱ	19.7	Stellarton ⁱⁱ	27.0
Lyons Brook ⁱⁱ	28.7	Stewiacke ⁱⁱ	19.4
Mahone Bay ⁱⁱ	24.5	Sydney ⁱ	28.7
Membertou ⁱ	51.5	Sydney Mines ⁱ	37.7
Merigomish ⁱⁱ	26.1	Tatamagouche ⁱⁱ	20.4
Micmac ⁱⁱ	78.1	Timberlea ⁱ	10.3
Middle Sackville ⁱ	12.5	Trenton ⁱ	30.1
Milford ⁱⁱ	14.3	Truro ⁱ	31.1
Millbrook ⁱ	60.0	Truro Heights ⁱ	29.0
Mill Village ⁱⁱ	31.3	Tusket ⁱⁱ	25.0
Milton ⁱⁱ	35.3	Upper Kennetcook ⁱⁱ	43.5
Mount Uniacke ⁱⁱ	18.6	Upper Rawdon ⁱⁱ	29.4
Monastery	38.5	Valley ⁱ	9.7
Musquodoboit Harbour ⁱⁱ	23.3	Wagmatcook ⁱⁱ	66.7
New Germany ⁱⁱ	28.2	Waterville ⁱⁱ	27.7
New Glasgow ⁱ	28.1	Westville ⁱⁱ	28.0
New Minas ⁱ	32.4	Weymouth ⁱⁱ	41.3
Newport ⁱⁱ	25.4	Williamstown ⁱ	13.9
New Ross ⁱⁱ	42.1	Wilmot ⁱⁱ	31.3
New Waterford ⁱ	44.7	Windsor ⁱⁱ	27.9
Nictaux ⁱⁱ	32.5	Wolfville ⁱ	25.0
North Alton ⁱ	25.0	Yarmouth ⁱ	41.2

Source Prepared using Statistics Canada, (T1 Family Files, 2018)

Appendix B

Child poverty rates by postal area (FSA),
Halifax Regional Municipality Urban Core, 2018

TABLE 4 Child Poverty Rates by Postal (FSA), Halifax Regional Municipality Urban Core, 2018

Postal Areas (FSA)	Neighborhood description	Child Poverty Rate
B2X	Bounded by Lake Charles/Micmac/Topsail	24.8
B2Y	Downtown Dartmouth south to Woodside	30.0
B3A	North Dartmouth/Harbourview/Highfield park/Albro Lake/Crichton Park	36.6
B3B	Burnside	32.4
B3H	South End Peninsula	20.1
B3J	Downtown Halifax	31.0
B3K	North End Peninsula	36.8
B3L	West End Peninsula	29.6
B3M	Bedford Basin	32.7
B3N	Fairview & south to Rotary	21.8
B3P	Armdale/Purcells Cove	21.3
B3R	Spryfield	48.2
B3S	Bayers Lake	32.5
B4A	Bedford	15.5

Prepared using Statistics Canada, T1 Family Files, 2018. Forward Sortation Area (FSA) is defined by the first three digits of a postal code. This table includes child poverty rates in the Halifax Regional Municipality Urban core where FSAs have a single place name associated with them. Neighborhood place names are assigned to postal codes using prior research⁷⁰ or Google Maps data.

Appendix C

Data sources and measures of poverty

THERE ARE THREE data sources that can be used to report on measures of poverty. The most comprehensive data source is the federal Census, which is a mandatory survey of the population conducted every five years. The last Census was conducted in 2016 and uses income data from 2015. Another source of data is the Canadian Income Survey (CIS), a yearly survey of a sample of Canadians that provides a portrait of income excluding residents of the territories, and persons living on reserves and other Aboriginal settlements. Third, is the T1 Family File (T1FF) which is collected every year from tax filers. According to Statistics Canada, the T1FF captures the income situation of 95.1% of families with children in Nova Scotia through child benefit records.⁷¹ The T1FF is closer to the Census in that it captures data from most of the population of families, however some information available in the Census is not collected through tax-filer data, such as visible minority, immigration, or Aboriginal status. The T1FF collects income data from First Nations reserves, unlike the CIS.⁷²

Along with these different data sources about Canadian incomes, there are different ways that poverty is measured. The CFLIM-AT (Census Family After-Tax Low-Income Measure) compares income of a census family to the rest of the population. The CFLIM-AT is a relative measure of poverty that determines poverty thresholds set at 50% of the median Canadian family income. After taking taxes and benefits into account and adjusting for family

TABLE 5 2018 Thresholds for After-Tax Census Family Low Income Measure*

Number of family members	Dollar amount
1	21,833
2	30,877
3	37,816
4	43,666
5	48,820
6	53,480
7	57,765
8	61,753
9	65,499
10	69,042

Source Technical Reference Guide for the Annual Income Estimates for Census Families, Individuals and Seniors. T1 Family File, Final Estimates, 2018. Statistics Canada—Catalogue no. 72-212-X 9

* The CFLIM-AT for any census family size can be calculated by multiplying \$21,833 by the square root of the family size. For example, the after-tax CFLIM for a family of 4 is \$43,666. This is calculated by multiplying \$21,833 by 2 (square root of 4).

size, those with incomes below this threshold, are considered low-income. When calculating the CFLIM-AT with T1FF data, the unit of analysis is the *census family*. The Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT) is also calculated using Census data and data from the CIS, however the unit of analysis is the *household*. Census families are members of a couple family, with or without children, and lone parents and their children. Households, in contrast, are any group of individuals who live in the same dwelling. The LIM is the most recognized measure of poverty internationally as it is the most strongly related to health status and developmental outcomes. It is used by UNICEF, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the European Union. As UNICEF explains this poverty rate, it captures: “**the proportion of children who are to some significant extent excluded from the advantages and opportunities which most children in that particular society would consider normal.**”⁷³

In 2018, Canada’s first federal government Poverty Reduction Strategy named the Market Basket Measure (MBM) as the official measure of poverty in Canada. The MBM is an absolute measure of material deprivation, which uses the cost of goods and services that would allow a family to meet their basic needs and have a modest standard of living.⁷⁴ The basket is costed in 50 regions across Canada⁷⁵ making it sensitive to regional differences, and includes the costs of specified qualities and quantities of food, clothing,

TABLE 6 Market Basket Measure (MBM) Thresholds for a reference family of 4, 2018 Constant dollars (2018 base year)

Market Basket Measure Thresholds	Dollar amount
Nova Scotia Rural	41,588
Nova Scotia, Population under 30,000	42,494
Nova Scotia, Population 30,000 to 99,999	42,800
Halifax, Nova Scotia	45,197
Cape Breton, Nova Scotia	41,533

Source Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0066-01

footwear, transportation, shelter and other expenses. The current MBM calculations use the 2018 as the base year (updated from 2008) for what constitutes a 'modest standard of living'. In addition, the income data used in the calculation of the MBM is based on the Canadian Income Survey (CIS), and the Census, and not yearly T1FF data.

Notes

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14 The data source used to calculate poverty rates using the Market Basket Measure is the Canadian Income Survey, which is a small sample-based survey that excludes everyone living on a First Nations Reserve, whereas tax filer data are used to calculate poverty rates based on the CFLIM-AT. The MBM rate is not comparable to the LIM rate because of the data source, and also because they are measuring different aspects of poverty. The LIM is a measure of relative poverty in relation to the Canadian median income, capturing income inequality, whereas the MBM is an absolute measure based on the cost of living regionally. Please see Appendix C for further explanation of low-income measures and data sources.

15 Appendix A includes communities (determined by postal cities and rural route defined by the Canada Post Corporation (CPC) with at least 60 low-income children residing there. Postal cities are a collection of postal codes that begin with the same first three digits. Any given postal city is only loosely associated with a community and may not align with other understandings of community boundaries. A rural postal code has the numeral 0 (zero) in the second position of the first three digits of the code.

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