

Childhood Poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador

Objective

To determine the extent of childhood poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) compared to other Canadian provinces.

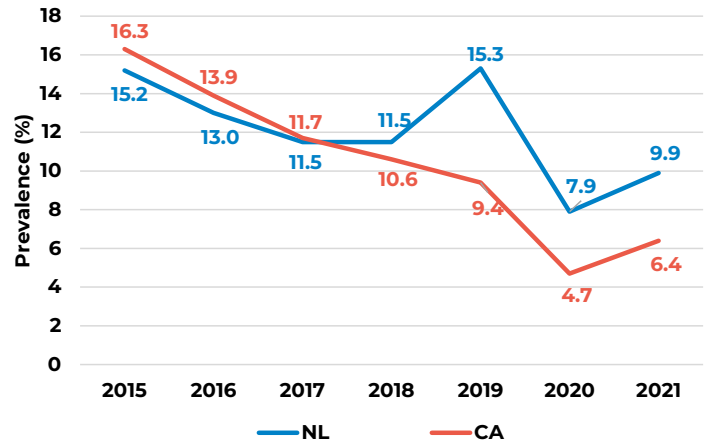
Practice Points

1. Childhood poverty is unjust. Children who experience poverty are at risk for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), have an increased likelihood of chronic illnesses, and have a shorter life expectancy.
2. The longer children live under conditions of material and social deprivation, the more likely they are to show adverse developmental and health outcomes.
3. The market basket measure (MBM) is the official measure of poverty in Canada (CA). The MBM is based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services (including food, clothing, shelter, transportation and other necessities) representing a modest, basic standard of living.
4. The NLMBM is produced by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (NLSA) and has the same definition and similar methodology as the MBM but it uses income tax data rather than survey data to determine if households or families are in low income. The MBM and NLMBM values for the province differ slightly for each year because of this distinction.

Methods

1. Data on low income prevalence was obtained from Statistics CA and the NLSA (Community Accounts; Department of Finance).
2. Low income prevalence was compared over time for NL and CA (2015–2021) and between provinces (2016 and 2021).

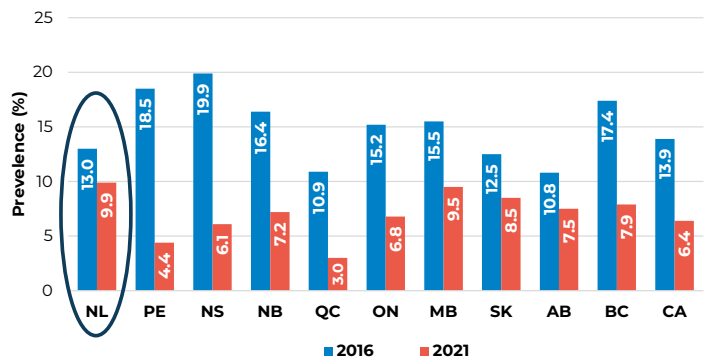
Results



Source: Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type, Table 11-10-0135-01, Statistics CA, Canadian Income Survey (CIS), 2015–2021

Figure 1. MBM – Low Income Prevalence for Persons Aged <18 Years in NL and CA (%), 2015–2021

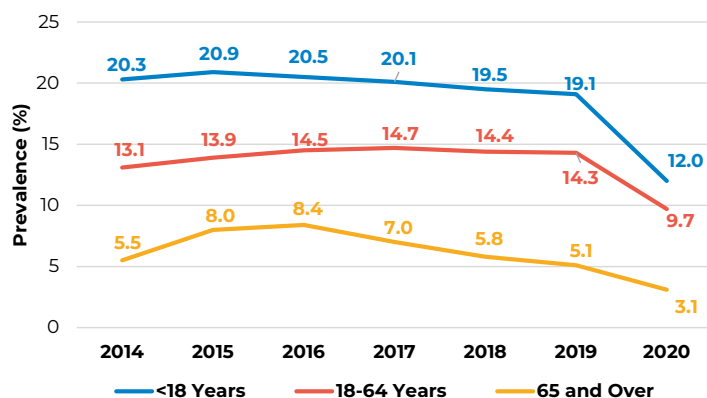
- Overall, low income prevalence for persons aged <18 years has decreased across NL and CA from 2015 to 2021. However, it did increase from 2020 to 2021.
- From 2015 to 2017, NL had a lower prevalence of low income for persons aged <18 years compared to CA. From 2018 to 2021, the prevalence was higher in NL.
- In 2021, the prevalence of low income for persons aged <18 years was 55% higher in NL compared to CA.



Source: Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type, Table 11-10-0135-01, Statistics CA, Canadian Income Survey (CIS), 2015–2021

Figure 2. MBM – Low Income Prevalence for Persons Aged <18 Years by Province (%), 2016 to 2021

- Among the Canadian provinces, NL ranked fourth in 2016 and tenth in 2021 for low income prevalence in persons aged <18 years (1 = best and 10 = worst).



Source: NL Market Basket Measure of Low Income. Statistics provided by Income Statistics Division, Statistics CA, based on methodology developed by the NLSA. See <https://www.communityaccounts.ca>. 2014 to 2020.

Figure 3. NLMBM – Low Income Prevalence by Age Grouping in NL (%), 2014–2020

- Similar to the MBM, the NLMBM shows that low income prevalence has decreased for persons aged <18 years from 2014 to 2020.
- Based on the NLMBM, persons aged <18 years are the most likely to experience low income in NL.
- Children living in lone-parent families are at a much higher risk of living in poverty compared to children living in couple families.
- Children living in female lone-parent families are at a higher risk of living in poverty compared to children living in male lone-parent families. In 2020, children in female lone-parent families were 44% more likely to be living in poverty than children in male lone-parent families.

Table 1. NLMBM – Families with Children Living in Poverty, 2015–2020

Family Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Couple Families with Children						
One Child						
Low Income Prevalence	5.1%	5.4%	5.3%	4.8%	4.3%	2.4%
Number Below Threshold	1,560	1,650	1,580	1,400	1,240	680
Two Children						
Low Income Prevalence	4.7%	4.8%	4.5%	4.2%	3.8%	2.0%
Number Below Threshold	1,160	1,170	1,090	980	880	450
Three or More Children						
Low Income Prevalence	10.0%	10.2%	9.1%	8.8%	8.7%	4.6%
Number Below Threshold	700	710	620	610	590	310
Lone-Parent Families with Children						
Low Income Prevalence	37.7%	37.3%	37.2%	35.8%	33.9%	21.7%
Number Below Threshold	9,530	9,440	9,500	9,210	8,820	5,690
Male Lone-Parent Families with Children						
Low Income Prevalence	20.6%	21.8%	23.2%	22.5%	22.9%	16.1%
Number Below Threshold	950	1,040	1,160	1,170	1,230	880
Female Lone-Parent Families with Children						
Low Income Prevalence	41.6%	40.9%	40.7%	39.1%	36.8%	23.2%
Number Below Threshold	8,570	8,410	8,350	8,040	7,590	4,810

Source: NL Market Basket Measure of Low Income. Statistics provided by Income Statistics Division, Statistics CA, based on methodology developed by the NLSA. See <https://www.communityaccounts.ca>. 2014 to 2020.

Conclusions

- NL has the highest low income prevalence rate among persons aged <18 years in CA.
- In NL, persons aged <18 years are more likely to experience low income than persons aged 18–64 years and those 65+ years. In 2020, approximately 1 in 8 persons <18 years of age were experiencing low income (based on the NLMBM).
- In NL, approximately 1 in 4 children living in female lone-parent families and 1 in 6 children living in male lone-parent families are living in poverty.