

chapter 11

Parent-Child Issues and Trends

KEY TERMS

artificial
insemination
assisted
reproductive
technologies
(ART)
child abuse
child neglect
congenital
anomalies
diminished
parenting
ecofeminists
embryo implants
in vitro
fertilization
low income
cut-off (LICO)
perinatal
persistent
poverty
physical abuse
self-fulfilling
prophecy
sexual abuse
verbal/emotional
abuse

CHAPTER EXPECTATIONS

While reading this chapter, you will:

- describe current perceptions, opinions, and demographic trends relating to childbearing and childrearing, and speculate on the significance of these trends for parent-child relationships
- explain the impact that current issues relating to parents and children have on the bearing and rearing of children
- demonstrate an understanding of the nature, prevalence, and consequences of child abuse, and describe strategies and programs that would facilitate its prevention and remediation
- summarize current research on the effects of divorce on child development and socialization
- summarize the impact of economic and political instability and migration on child development and socialization
- formulate research questions and develop hypotheses reflecting specific theoretical frameworks
- identify and respond to the theoretical viewpoints, the thesis, and the supporting arguments of materials found in a variety of secondary sources
- use current information technology effectively to compile quantitative data and present statistical analyses of data or to develop databases

RESEARCH SKILLS

- accessing demographic information from media and databases using the Internet and other sources



Parenting is a challenging job, especially when other factors enter into it to make it even more difficult.

CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

There are many changes and challenges facing parents and their children in Canada today. In this chapter, significant issues that affect parent-child relationships will be explored. Topics surrounding reproductive technologies will be discussed, then the impact of divorce on the development and adjustment of children will be considered. Following that, some of the difficulties that immigrant families encounter when adapting to a new culture will be examined. The long-lasting effects of poverty on children will be explored. Also in this chapter, the causes and effects of child abuse will be discussed. Finally, parents' and siblings' reactions to the death of a child in the family will be considered.

Issues Affecting Parent-Child Relationships

Most Canadians plan to become parents at some point in their lives. Canadian couples are marrying and starting families later. The motivation for most couples to have children is to seek fulfillment as both individuals and as a couple. Most couples practise birth control measures when they are young, to plan when they will begin their family. Unfortunately, infertility is a problem many couples do not consider. Realizing that they may never be able to have children because of the delay can be devastating for some couples. Others may find that their marriage cannot withstand the added stress of parenthood. The high divorce rate in Canada has sparked much debate on the effects of divorce on the overall social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of children who experience their parents' divorce. When couples plan to become parents, they do not consider that they may outlive their children. Dealing with the death of a child is a very difficult experience for parents. Many issues can affect a couple's expectations of parenthood.

Canadians in general enjoy a good standard of living, often failing to recognize that others may not have the same benefits that they have. Many Canadian children are suffering from the effects of poverty. Others have suffered from the effects of war and migration. Child abuse is an issue that most people find difficult to comprehend. It is difficult to understand how a child can be severely beaten or killed by the person who is responsible for loving and caring for them—the parent. As governments at all levels are cutting programs to deal with deficit budgets, the long-term effects of the loss of a social safety net will be felt by children.

“There is always one moment in childhood that the door opens and lets the future in.”

—Graham Greene

Reproductive Technologies

For some Canadian couples, having children is not easy, and they turn to **assisted reproductive technologies (ART)** to fulfill their dream of becoming parents. These couples undergo in-depth fertility investigations, and may use drug therapies and technologies, such as **artificial insemination**, **in vitro fertilization**, and **embryo implants**, to achieve their goal of having a child (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). Medical science has been working on assisted reproduction for a number of years and, as a result, many couples who could not have borne their own children before are now becoming

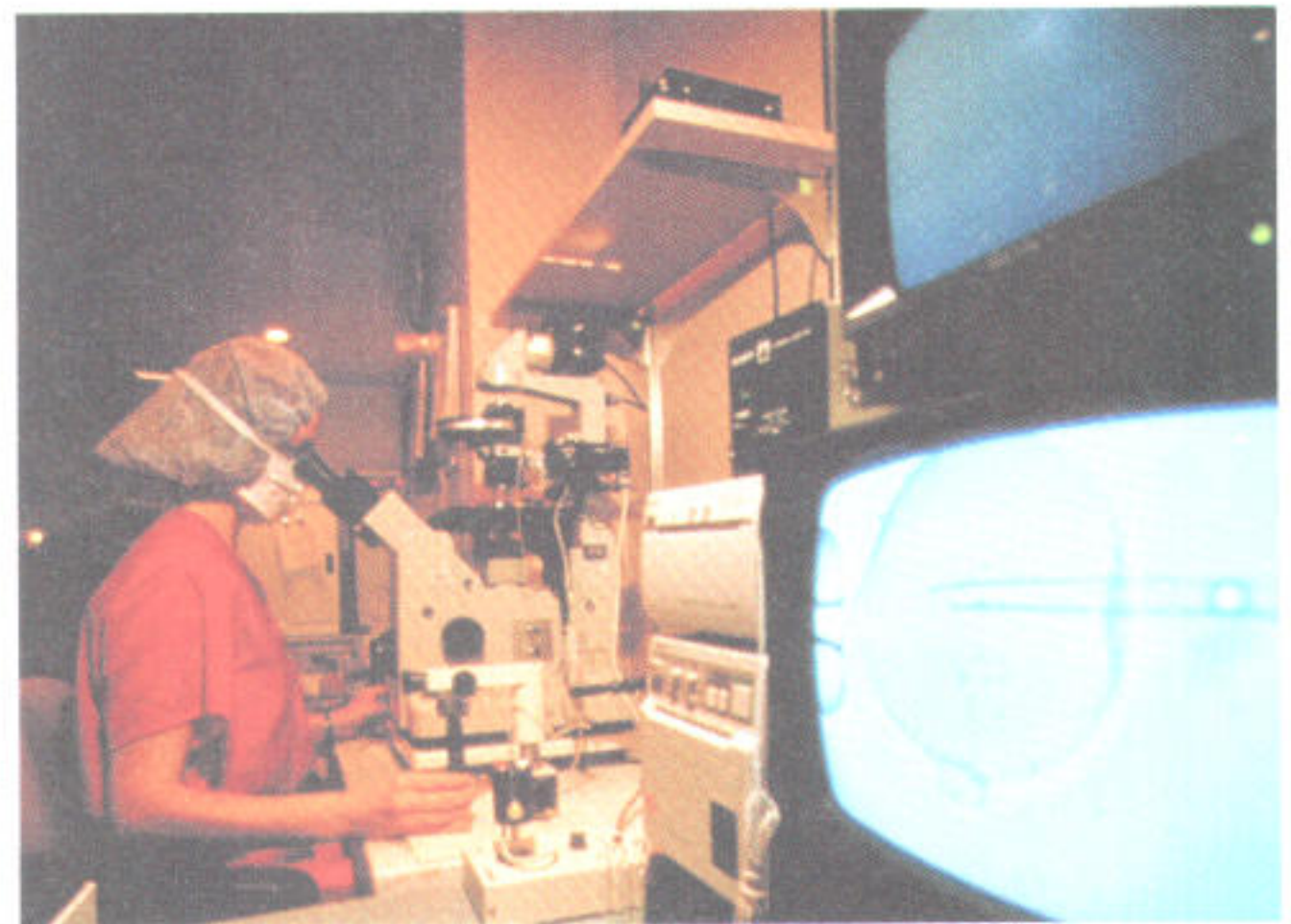
parents. This raises questions about the impact of assisted reproductive technologies on families, such as:

- How will older parents cope with the demands of parenting?
- What will be the long-term consequences of the increasing numbers of multiple births that have resulted from assisted reproductive technologies?
- How does the use of donated sperm or eggs affect the definition of parenthood? (Golden & Murphy Paul, 1999)
- What right do children conceived through in vitro fertilization have to accessing identifying information about the egg or sperm donor and their health records?

The whole issue of assisted reproductive technologies has caused much debate in the 1900s and 2000s. For couples who have had success, there is no debate—assisted reproductive technology was the miracle they were seeking. For those who do not conceive, ARTs are one of life's greater disappointments. Often, couples spend considerable time and energy attempting to conceive a child using ARTs, only to be disappointed (Kershner, 1996).

Much debate has occurred in Canada over the past two decades regarding reproductive and genetic technologies. Canadians are coming to some consensus about which technologies they approve of and which ones they have difficulties with. Most Canadians support placing limits on, or prohibiting, technologies that they do not see as reflective of human dignity and equality (Health Canada, 1999).

The first child conceived through in vitro fertilization is now in her twenties. Since her birth, there have been many children born who were conceived through assisted reproductive technologies. How are these children and their parents faring? Does waiting so long to become a parent affect parenting? Frederic Golden and Annie Murphy Paul claim that mothers who had their children with the use of ART tend to show more warmth toward their children, are more emotionally involved, interact more with their children, experience less stress related to parenting, and feel more competent in their parenting skills. Golden and Murphy Paul attribute these findings to the fact that these mothers desperately wanted to become parents and were very committed to parenthood. Other factors that may influence the parenting styles of mothers



Reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization help parents to conceive when otherwise they would not have been able to do so.

“Any parent who has ever found a rusted toy automobile buried in the grass or a bent sand bucket on the beach knows that objects like these can be among the most powerful things in the world.”

—*Sports Illustrated*

who used ART are that they tend to be older, as they usually attempt to conceive a child on their own first. They usually have more wealth than the general population and therefore can give their children advantages other mothers cannot. Dr. Dorothy Greenfield of Yale University states that couples who undergo ART have faced issues in their marriage that most couples do not have to confront, and therefore they have a stronger marriage (Golden & Murphy Paul, 1999).

Assisted reproductive technology has allowed many women, including lesbian mothers, to conceive a child with donated sperm. In the past, most lesbian mothers were involved in a heterosexual relationship when they had their children, and later declared that they were lesbian. Lesbian couples can now raise children from birth. Golden and Murphy Paul state that research has found that lesbian and heterosexual mothers raise their children equally well. Dr. Nanette Gartrell, of the University of California in San Francisco, studied discrimination against lesbian mothers and their children. Gartrell found that recently divorced lesbian mothers experienced a double psychological burden, that of divorce and of coming out. Gartrell found that the mothers' struggle affected their children. However, they tend to have a more equal division of household chores and duties (Golden & Murphy Paul, 1999).



Fertility drugs and assisted reproductive technologies have resulted in a dramatic increase in multiple births.

The number of multiple births has risen dramatically over the past decade, due to the number of older women having babies, fertility drugs, and ART, which place more than one fertilized egg at a time in a woman's uterus. Golden and Murphy Paul report research that shows multiple-birth mothers as tired and more likely to be depressed. The stresses of caring for an infant are increased as the number of infants increase. Mothers of multiples face stresses that mothers of single infants do not (Golden & Murphy Paul, 1999). Twins are more likely to be born premature and at low birth weights. As a result, they have an increased risk of neurological disabilities.

An Australian study found that babies born from in vitro fertilization are four times more likely to die in the first month (Kershner, 1996). Other concerns raised regarding ART are related to the costs—to governments, to health care, and to the individuals attempting to become parents. Drugs for aiding fertility



www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12

To learn about assisted reproductive technologies, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

are very expensive and are not covered by drug plans. Couples often spend great amounts of money attempting to have a baby. Wealthy couples can afford the technologies, but the average couple can risk losing all they own in an effort to have their own child. The chances of success vary by method of intervention, but overall the success rate is not high. The Canadian Royal Commission on Reproductive Technologies concluded that the only effective method of assisted reproduction is the treatment of blocked Fallopian tubes, to remove blockage. Considering the costs to both the health care system and the couples, some say that the money would be better spent improving the overall health of women and children (Kershner, 1996).

There has been a great deal of debate and controversy over the regulation of ART in Canada. Dr. Patricia Baird headed the Royal Commission on Reproductive Technologies, which filed its report in December 1993. Over a four-year period, the Royal Commission heard from 40 000 Canadians and made 293 recommendations. The government tabled Bill C-47, which dealt with reproductive technologies, in June 1996. In 2001, Health Minister Allan Rock unveiled a draft proposal before the House of Commons Health Committee. In the proposal, Rock is calling for a ban on some research techniques, while protecting couples who want to use assisted reproductive technologies to have children. His main concern regarding the technologies that allow couples to have children is with the safety of the procedure for both the mothers and the infants. New issues have arisen since the Royal Commission and the introduction of Bill C-47. Human cloning, once thought to be science fiction, is now becoming a reality (Pole, 2001).

Feminists have opposing views on assisted reproductive technologies and their impact on women. Some say that any interference in a woman's body, for example, removing eggs from the womb, is wrong. Others feel that if reproduction can take place outside a woman's body, then she is freed from the biological necessity of bearing children and thus becomes equal with men. **Ecofeminists**, who believe that the domination of women is directly connected to the environmental destruction of nature, and who promote the interconnected web of life, dislike intervention in the uterus because they say such intervention is essentially masculine and anti-woman. They claim that women's life-giving ability makes them different from men and gives them power over them (Lublin, 1998). The debate will continue for years to come. For many infertile couples, the chance to gaze into the eyes of their newborn infant is a risk worth taking.

by Preston Manning, Former Leader
of the Opposition, House of Commons, Canada

Some time soon, Health Minister Anne McLellan will introduce a bill to regulate assisted human reproduction and related science. The regulatory body to be created by this statute will likely become the principal regulator of “the genetic revolution” in Canada—a revolution created by breakthroughs in the life sciences, with enormous potential for both good and harm. I was a member of the standing committee on health that reviewed an earlier draft of this legislation. In presenting it, Allan Rock (then health minister) recognized the potential conflict between what was scientifically possible and ethically acceptable, saying: “There must be a higher notion than science alone . . . that can guide scientific research and endeavour. Simply because we can do something does not mean that we should do it.” But what might that “higher notion” be?

One of the candidates is “faith”—religious faith; faith in the existence of God; faith that the universe, including human life and the genome, is His handiwork; faith that we are somehow made in His image and subject to His providential care; and faith that there are universal and transcendent moral principles that ought to govern us in addition to the principles of physics, chemistry, and biology to which we are all subject. The pollsters tell us that although only a minority of our political, media, and scientific elites share this “faith perspective,” more than 65 percent of Canadians share various elements of it. The health committee recommended to the minister that, in addition to scientific and medical perspectives, the faith perspective should also be given “standing” before any tribunal charged with regulating the genetic revolution. The “faith perspective” that I bring to this question is that of historic Christianity. But

Preston Manning is concerned with many of the ethical issues raised by reproductive technologies.



most of the points I want to raise will also resonate with those whose faith is rooted in other religious traditions. My starting point is to pose questions—questions that occur to the person of faith when confronted with the potential benefits and risks of the genetic revolution.

First, relationships. My faith tells me that our relationships—with each other and with God—are the most important dimension of life, and that love is the supreme ethic that ought to govern those relationships. What does the genetic revolution do to our relationships? To the extent that it helps infertile couples to have children or prevents parents from passing on inheritable diseases to their children, surely it is to be supported and encouraged. But if it encourages man to play God or reduces human reproduction to a technological process to be carried out in a laboratory or a factory—surely those dimensions of the genetic revolution should be constrained. If you are a child of the twenty-first century, with five names on your birth certificate—those of the sperm donor, egg donor, surrogate mother, adoptive mother, and adoptive father—can love still be at the centre of that network of relationships? And, if not, what ethic will govern those relationships?

Second, the moral obligation to respect life. My faith teaches me that life is precious, not just for its own sake, but because it originates from God. More and more Canadians of all persuasions are acknowledging

our need to be more respectful of life—all life. There is growing acceptance of an “environmental ethic” that insists that we protect plants, trees, and animals from destruction and extinction. But what about greater respect for human life, dignity, and personhood? Particularly as science pushes back the definitions of when life and the distinguishing characteristics of personhood begin—from the newborn, to the fetus, to the embryo, to the pre-embryonic. To the extent that the genetic revolution is respectful of life and increases our understanding of its preciousness, it will be a great boon to humanity. But to the extent that it reduces our conception of life to the mere product of some biochemical reaction, it needs to be constrained and redirected. Will legislative efforts to regulate assisted human reproduction and related science reopen and inflame the old pro-life, pro-choice controversy over abortion? I am hopeful that the genetic revolution will put that conflict into a new context more conducive to resolution.

Over the past 20 years, the pro-choice movement has promoted women’s reproductive rights to the point where they are now well established in law and practice. At the same time, responsible pro-life advocates urge a parallel development of legal protection for the unborn—in particular, for human fetuses and embryos—and this new law about to be brought forward by the government will take several steps down that road. Then the issue will become, what to do when the legal rights of the unborn and the mother conflict? This is the issue that legislators and the courts should have been wrestling with all along, instead of avoiding it by embracing the now unscientific legal fiction that human personhood does not begin until birth. Parliament might well decide that where there is such a conflict, the rights of the mother should prevail, which in effect is the current state of the law. Or Parliament might at least start to address

possible exceptions, as when the activities of the mother (drug abuse or excessive alcohol consumption, for example) predestine the child to death or crippling disabilities.

Third, the moral obligation to heal. The Christian faith has long taught that we have a moral obligation to heal and care for the sick. I have been greatly encouraged by the numbers of scientists and medical people I have met in Canada’s hospitals and laboratories who are deeply committed to this objective. Of course, there are other motivations—scientific curiosity, profit, competitiveness—for participating in the genetic revolution. But to the extent that our scientists and medical people are motivated by a moral obligation to heal, surely they deserve our wholehearted encouragement and support. This, of course, brings us to a cruel dilemma. What do we do when the moral obligation to respect life and the moral obligation to heal conflict? For example, when our scientists seek permission to destroy human embryos in order to obtain embryonic stem cells that may be used to treat juvenile diabetes or some other degenerative disease.

Are there limits to our moral obligation to respect life? Are there limits to our moral obligation to heal? Are there any circumstances where it is morally justifiable to take life in order to save life? Are there other options—such as focusing on adult stem cell research—that may help us to avoid choosing between the lesser of two evils? My own faith perspective tells me that we should not destroy life to save life—even at the embryonic level—and should increase our efforts to find better ways to achieve the objective of saving life.

Fourth, the search for universal and transcendent moral principles to guide the genetic revolution. This is the “higher notion” of which the former health minister spoke. Do such principles exist? People of faith believe they do, even though we may disagree on what

they are, and all of us “see as through a glass darkly” when it comes to understanding them. What this means is that we must rededicate ourselves to the search for such principles, rather than abandoning it and settling for some inconclusive moral relativism that says, “You believe what you believe, and I’ll believe what I believe, and somehow everything will work out.”

Five thousand years ago, a man of faith came down from a mountain with two tablets of stone in his hands. Written on those tablets was a code—a code for governing human life at the individual and societal level by honouring the source of life and prohibiting activities that diminish or destroy life. In our day, men and women of science have also come down from the mountain with a code in their hands—a code written not on tablets of stone but in strands of DNA woven into double helixes. It, too, is a code for governing human life—at the most elemental level.

People of faith believe that the author of these two codes is one and the same, and that each sheds light on the other. The regulatory regime to be established by Canada’s new legislation will serve us well if it brings both science and faith to bear on the governance of the genetic revolution. ■

Source: *The Globe and Mail*. (2002, April 5). p. A15. Reprinted with permission of Preston Manning.

1. What is Manning’s thesis?
2. What is Manning’s concern with reproductive technologies?
3. For what purpose do you think reproductive technologies should be allowed?
4. What limits, if any, do you think the government should place on reproductive technologies? Support your argument.
5. What role do you see for other social systems, for example, religion, in this debate?

Divorce

Divorce is affecting an increasing number of Canadian families. The number of families with children under the age of 12 in which the parents are separated or divorced has tripled in the last 20 years (Voices for Children, 2002). Canadian statistics predict that 31 percent, or almost one in three marriages, will end in divorce. In 1995, there were 1222 divorces per 100 000 marriages, or 1.2 percent of all married couples (Ambert, 1998). This leaves many questions as to how parents’ separation and divorce affects their children. This has been the topic of much research in recent years in Canada and around the world. Originally, a great deal of the research focused on the negative aspects of divorce, such as looking for lack of adjustment in children. Recent research has tended to look at the factors that help some children adjust to their parents’ separation or divorce better than other children do.

There are several risk factors that have an impact on children’s development after the divorce of their parents:

- Parental conflict frightens children and does not show them how to solve problems in a healthy manner.

- The economic resources available for parenting are often reduced after divorce. Divorced women and their children are the fastest-growing group of poor people in Canada. Inadequate resources affect parents' ability to supply children with all of their needs.
- Parents adjust to divorce differently. Those who suffer from stress may not be able to parent as well as usual.
- Parents who rely on their children for support are putting undue pressure on them, which has a negative impact on their adjustment.
- Parent-child relationships change with divorce and must be renegotiated. Children need to be free to develop relationships with both parents after the divorce.
- A number of parents disappear from their children's lives. These children feel abandoned and have a difficult time adjusting (Freeman, 1999).

Questions are being raised about the underlying reasons for the negative consequences of divorce. Are they the result of divorce itself, or are they the result of the decreased standard of living most single divorced mothers and their children face? Mothers who are under severe economic strain find it difficult to parent. Carolyn Gorlick, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Western Ontario, cites studies indicating that children suffer from parental conflict, whether it is in divorce or an unhappy marriage. She suggests that children's ability to adjust to their parents' divorce has to do with a number of influences, including family relationships, income decline, and change in residence. The ages and gender of the children must be considered when looking at these factors, since each adjusts differently. The parents' ability to co-operate for the sake of the children also has an impact on their adjustment (Gorlick, 1995).

There is much debate on how children cope with their parents' divorce. Two well-known American authors have conflicting views on the subject. Judith Wallerstein, a researcher and psychologist, claims that half of all children suffer serious long-term consequences from their parents' divorce (Freeman, 1999). Long-term effects include poor social and emotional development, poor school results, substance abuse, and having their own marriages end in divorce. She claims that children of divorce lack the model of a healthy marriage, and thus have difficulties in their own marriages. Children of divorce often have long-term problems with trusting others, and show a reluctance to



When parents divorce, children are often caught in the process.

"As we read the school reports on our children, we realize a sense of relief that can rise to delight that—thank heaven—nobody is reporting in this fashion on us."

—J. B. Priestley

commit to a relationship (Peterson, 2002). Mavis Hetherington, a researcher and professor of psychology, disagrees and suggests that children of divorce can be divided into three groups: winners, survivors, and losers, with losers being a smaller group than shown in previous research (Freeman, 1999). Hetherington claims that much of the previous research has focused on the negative and ignored the possible positive effects of divorce, which may include taking children out of a hostile environment. Hetherington's long-term research shows that after two years, the majority of children of divorce are functioning reasonably well. Her studies reveal that for every young adult from a divorced family who is experiencing problems, there are four who are not. Twenty-five percent of children of divorce have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems, compared to ten percent of children from intact homes. Hetherington claims that most single mothers are providing good homes for their children and should be considered heroes. She points out that it is essential for children's success to have a competent, caring parent (Peterson, 2002).

FYI

The Consequences of Divorce on Children

Short Term

Children of divorced parents

- suffer from anxiety, depression, and emotional disorders
- show behavioural problems including aggressiveness, hyperactivity, and hostility
- are more likely to become young offenders
- are more likely to do poorly in school and to drop out of school
- experience social problems, have few friends, and are less involved in extracurricular activities

Long Term

Children of divorced parents

- are more likely to have children out of wedlock
- are more likely to experience teen pregnancy
- have lower overall levels of education
- experience more unemployment
- experience more marital problems
- are more likely to divorce when they are adults
- are more likely to be poor

Ambert, Anne-Marie. (1998). *Divorce: Facts, figures and consequences*. Ottawa: Vanier Institute of the Family.

The general assumption has been that divorce has long-term negative consequences for children. Carolyne Gorlick reports on findings that show that children of divorce are more likely to experience emotional and physical trauma, which is then blamed on the missing father and the overwrought mother. She states that children of divorce are more likely to be sick than those in two-parent families. It is assumed that children in two-parent families have a safer and more

comfortable environment in which to grow up. Children in single-parent and stepparent families are at greater risk in general for adjustment problems. These problems are not due to family structure; rather, they seem to be caused by other factors, such as social stresses, economic insecurity, living in poverty, and the time pressures of balancing work and family, especially in single-parent families (Gorlick, 1995).

The household income level of Canadian women after divorce is reduced by 50 percent, while men's income is reduced by only 25 percent. The poverty level of women before divorce is 16 percent, and it rises to 43 percent after divorce. Therefore, poverty and all of the stresses associated with it seriously affect children's adjustment after divorce (Voices for Children, 2002; Ambert, 1998). Dr. Anne-Marie Ambert, from York University in Toronto, claims that as well as poverty, **diminished parenting** and continued parental conflict after divorce are detrimental to children of divorce. Diminished parenting refers to the lessened ability to parent for people who are suffering the stress that comes with divorce and a newly single life. Parents who are facing increased emotional and financial burdens as a result of divorce cannot cope easily with the pressures of parenting. Continued parental conflict after divorce is very stressful and provides children with a dysfunctional model to follow (1998).



Many factors affect the development of children after divorce. Stresses on single mothers affect their ability to parent.

abstract | Parental Predivorce Relations and Offspring Postdivorce Well-Being

by Alan Booth and Paul Amato,
Pennsylvania State University

This two-part study uses national longitudinal interview data from parents and their adult children to examine the way in which predivorce marital conflict influences the impact of divorce on children. In the first study, we find that the dissolution of low-conflict marriages appears to have negative effects on offspring's lives, whereas the dissolution of high-conflict marriages appears to have beneficial effects. The dissolution of low-conflict marriages is associated with the quality of children's intimate relationships, social support

from friends and relatives, and general psychological well-being. The second study considers how parents in low-conflict marriages that end in divorce differ from other parents before divorce. We find that low-conflict parents who divorce are less integrated into the community, have fewer impediments to divorce, have more favorable attitudes toward divorce, are more predisposed to engage in risky behaviour, and are less likely to have experienced a parental divorce. ■

Source: *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63 (2001, February). pp. 197-212. Copyright 2002 by the National Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Ave. NE, Suite 550, Minneapolis, MN 55421. Reprinted by permission.

There is no such thing as a traditional divorce. Each family goes through its own process. Some families find divorce very trying, while others consider it a new beginning. Rhonda Freeman, a Canadian social worker and researcher, believes that divorce is a developmental process that unfolds over time. The process begins when the parents begin to think about separating and continues through the divorce until the creation of a post-divorce family. Divorce is a way for adults to resolve their problems, not for children to (Freeman, 1999). No matter what the family structure, a child's overall adjustment in life has more to do with the quality of parenting the child receives than the structure of the family. Children who have at least one positive, warm, and authoritative parent, regardless of the status of the parents' marriage, are likely to be competent and well-adjusted during childhood and later in life. Children adapt better in a harmonious single-parent household than in a two-parent household that is full of conflict (Voices for Children, 2002).

point of view

Chretien to Hear Calgary Youth's Divorce Concerns

by Chris Cob
Ottawa Citizen

Calgary teenager Clayton Giles handed a petition to Prime Minister Jean Chretien on September 18, 2001, and asked for changes to the federal Divorce Act that will give children the automatic legal right to have equal access to both parents. Fourteen-year-old Clayton, who told reporters that he contemplated suicide during a three-year separation from his father, has cycled 5000 kilometres across Canada and into the United States, collecting thousands of signatures in his campaign for custody and access reform in both countries.

Canada's Divorce Act is expected to be reformed next year [2003] but pro-father and grandparent groups fear that current recommendations from a joint Senate-Commons committee will be ignored by the Chretien government in favour of measures that stick to the existing regime of custody and access. The cornerstone of the parliamentary committee's recommendations tabled more than two years ago was a new system of

Clayton Giles cycled across Canada and the United States collecting signatures for a petition to gain children equal access to both parents after divorce.



automatic shared parenting in which both parents would have access to their children and input into their children's lives.

Clayton Giles, accompanied on his cycling trek by his father, Eric, told reporters on Parliament Hill that when a Calgary court separated him and his younger sister from their father in 1995, he sank into a depression. "When I lost my father," he said, "I also lost my grandmother, the most wonderful, loving person you will ever meet. Grandparents are special people and no child should ever be deprived of their love and attention."

In January 2001, Clayton went on a 19-day hunger strike to protest the court ruling and was eventually allowed to live with his father. “I had accomplished as much as I could accomplish,” he said, “but I have not stopped fighting. Divorce harms most children most of the time, but when children are used as pawns by warring parents and adversarial lawyers, the children are destroyed that much faster.”

In a self-assured presentation at his news conference, Clayton told reporters that the children of divorce are in a numerical minority, but comprise the majority of Canada’s problem children. “Although children of divorce make up only one-sixth of the child population,” he said, quoting from federal statistics, “they account for 91 percent of child suicides, 78 percent of young offenders, 65 percent of teen pregnancies, 90 percent of runaways, and 71 percent of school dropouts. They make up 85 percent of children with behavioural problems, 75 percent of the occupants of chemical abuse centers, and 80 percent of the adolescents in psychiatric facilities.”

Eric Giles, a contractor who lived 15 minutes from his children during the separation, owed \$10 000 in legal fees to his wife, which he said are now paid.

There were no other unpaid bills or allegations against him, he said. “I think I was punished because I represented myself in court,” he said.

Clayton said he has a “neutral” relationship with his mother but hopes to see more of her when he gets back to Calgary. His 12-year-old sister lives with their mother but visits her father regularly.

The father and son were at the end of their trek and on their way back home when they received a call saying the prime minister would meet with Clayton. ■

Source: *Edmonton Journal*. (2001, September 18). p. A17.

1. What rights do you think children should have when issues of custody and access are being discussed?
2. At what age should the courts consult the children?
3. How can the courts deal more effectively with custody and access?
4. What factors help children deal more effectively with their parents’ divorce?
5. What responsibilities do parents have toward their children when going through a divorce?
6. What responsibility does society have to protect the children of divorce?

Immigration

Fifteen to twenty percent of Canada’s children are either immigrants or refugees (Morton, Hou, Hyman, & Tousignant, 1998). Canada is an increasingly ethnically diverse country. In the early 1970s, the majority of children living in Canada were of British or French ancestry, with German, Italian, and Ukrainian being the next largest ethnic groups (Ross, Scott, & Kelly, 1996). The linguistic diversity in Canada is a reflection of the ethnic diversity due, for the most part, to immigration. Almost 80 percent of immigrants who came to Canada between 1991 and 1996 reported a first language other than French or English. During that time, the majority of immigrants came from Asia and the Middle East. In contrast, between 1961 and 1970, 54 percent of all immigrants could

not speak French or English, and two-thirds of immigrants came from Europe. Ontario, British Columbia, and Québec receive almost 90 percent of all immigrants to Canada, with most of them settling in large urban areas (Harmsen, 2000).

The way new arrivals adjust to life in Canada has much to do with the reason they came. Immigrants generally choose to come to Canada to build a better life for themselves and their families. Refugees, on the other hand, come to get out of a situation that is dangerous to either themselves or their families. Leaving home is often not their first choice. Both groups usually leave behind family members. When they arrive in Canada, immigrants have to adapt to a new culture and a new way of life. Culture is an important part of who we are. It is reflected in many ways—through art, music, as well as food and clothing. It is based on a shared language, values, attitudes, and customs. Culture provides emotional stability, self-esteem, and influences a person's behaviour. When immigrants come to Canada, Canadian ways may seem strange to them, and their ways may seem strange to Canadians. Children from immigrant families who maintain a strong identity with their culture do better than children who were forced to assimilate (Avard & Harmsen, 2000).

Many immigrant families experience poverty when they first arrive. Unlike Canadian families who experience poverty, immigrant families see it as a necessary and temporary part of resettling in a new country. They do not believe it will be long-term, and work to build the better life for which they came to Canada. It has been shown that even though many new immigrant families struggle in the first decade they are in Canada, after 10 to 12 years, they have caught up to or exceeded the national average wage. Poverty in the general population may be seen as part of a downward mobility and be associated with many other problems. Even though immigrant children experience more poverty than children born in Canada (30 percent compared to 13.2 percent), they experience lower rates of mental health problems. In school, immigrant children often out-perform children born in Canada (Morton, Hou, Hyman, & Tousignant, 1998).

Children and teens, especially, are faced with the challenge of balancing two cultures. Almost one-third of all new immigrants coming into Canada each year are children and youth under the age of 25. Most come as dependants of their parents, some come to study at colleges or universities, and others come to work. The biggest adjustments immigrant children and youth face are getting used to a new school system and balancing the expectations for children and youth in their new country with those from their country of

by Cathy Campbell

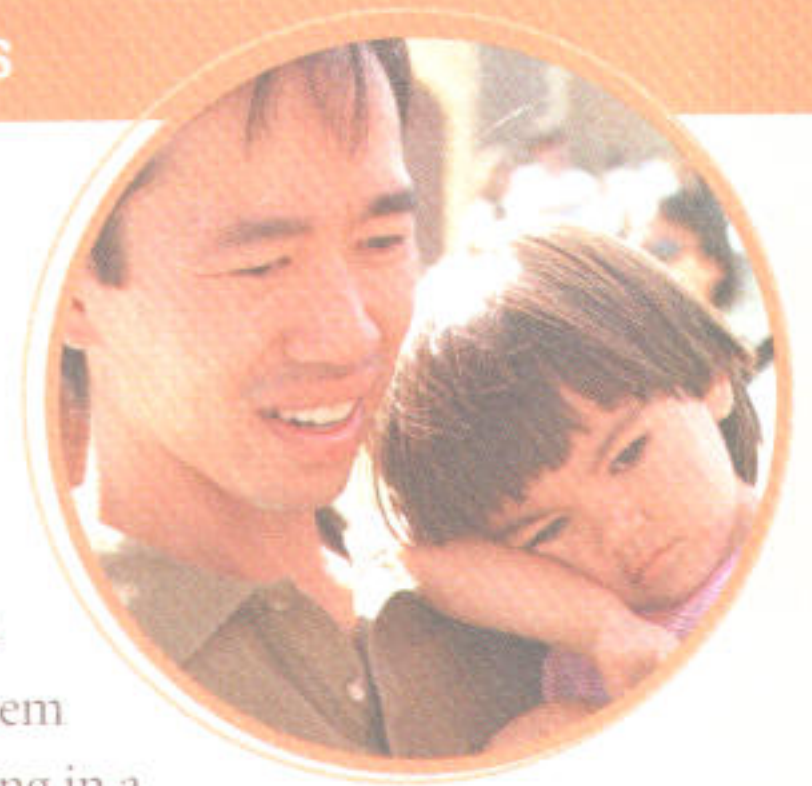
In the former Yugoslavia, Ahmed was a well-respected medical doctor. In Canada, he delivers pizza. His wife works full time in a bakery to help support the family. It's a story heard in immigrant and refugee families across Canada. A story of fading hopes and dreams. A story of fathers and their families.

"New immigrant fathers face a whole series of challenges as they attempt to adapt" to Canadian society, says David Este, associate professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. According to Professor Este, immigrant and refugee fathers confront under-employment, racism, language barriers, role reversal, and sometimes declining self-esteem. The whole family feels the impact.

In 1999, Professor Este and two colleagues at Calgary's Mount Royal College—Dr. Rena Shimoni, associate dean of the Faculty of Health and Community Studies, and Dr. Dawne Clark, chair of the Department of Child and Youth Studies—began to interview immigrant fathers about their experiences. Their findings were presented at a national symposium on fathering held in Montreal. Professors Este, Shimoni, and Clark, whose work was sponsored by the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society and funded by Health Canada, have also developed a manual for social service agencies. The manual provides information to increase awareness of the issues facing immigrant fathers and help agencies develop culturally appropriate materials for immigrant and refugee men "in the context that these men are part of a family," Professor Este says.

Issues include the problem of under-employment. According to the Burnaby, B.C.-based Opening Learning Agency, employment is a basic necessity for survival in a new country. Not only because the new immigrant depends on an income to be able to sustain a home and

Many fathers lose their sense of self in a new country where their skills are not recognized.



a family, but also as it relates to self-esteem and a sense of settling in a new country. In Canada, "we don't do a very good job recognizing qualifications obtained in other countries," Professor Este says. When immigrant and refugee men can't get work in their chosen professions, "it really damages their sense of self-worth," says Professor Este, who is also the director of research for the Cultural Diversity Institute at the University of Calgary. "There's a psychological let-down. People come to Canada because it's a rich country and they think they will have no difficulty getting jobs. Professor Este says that Canadians need to look at new immigrants and refugees from the perspective of the strengths and assets they bring. "We're dealing with some very talented individuals."

Racism and discrimination in the workplace are other issues facing recent immigrants, Professor Este says. Many men struggle because they can't speak either of Canada's official languages. Immigrant families "may experience severe role reversals," says Professor Este. "Immigrant and refugee women tend to be more flexible in what kind of work they're willing to take on," he says. As a result, women often find jobs more easily than men. Fathers who can't find work begin to take on greater responsibility in the home. "It's hard for some of these men to take," Professor Este says. On the other hand, fathers who work shifts or hold more than one job complain that they spend too little time with their children.

Until now, there has been little research done to examine the role of immigrant fathers in Canada, Professor Este says. About 30 men from Latin America, China, South Asia, and the former Yugoslavia were included in the Calgary study. ■

Source: *Families & Health*. (2000, October). Vol. 14, p. 1–3. Published by the Vanier Institute of the Family.

1. What does Campbell say are the concerns for immigrant fathers?

2. How does the lack of recognition for the knowledge and skills immigrant men bring to Canada affect their self-concept?
3. Why would some men find it difficult if he were at home while his wife were working?
4. How does the underemployment of immigrant men affect the economic and social well-being of their families?



Moving is difficult enough for children, but when it is from one country and culture to a completely different one, it can be challenging.

origin. Recent immigrants do not have as large an extended social and kin group as people born in Canada do, and thus lack the support system of other youth. They tend to spend more time in religious activities than do Canadian-born youth in the beginning. However, the longer they stay in Canada, the less time they are involved in them.

Many recent immigrant children and youth experience social isolation, because of language barriers that exist when they first immigrate. Many immigrant children and youth enjoy the new freedoms they experience in Canada; however, this can cause conflict with their parents, who have different cultural and behavioural expectations of them. Many immigrant children and youth report experiencing racism. Younger children report it at school, while youth experience it while looking for work. Many immigrant young people said they found it difficult to feel totally accepted in Canadian society because their accents and their physical features set them apart. They believed that their parents experienced more difficulties than they did, especially in finding a job. Many immi-

grant youth use services geared to them only for social functions and to go on organized outings (Hanvey & Lock Kunz, 2000).

Another important issue facing immigrant children and their families is health care. Different cultures have different attitudes and beliefs about health care issues. For some immigrants, Canadian medicine is an unknown and is therefore feared. Dr. Ben Tan, editor of a Canadian Pediatric Society book on health care for immigrants and refugees, advises physicians to get to

know their patients and to gain some understanding of their cultural beliefs around health care to better treat them. Many immigrants come to Canada having lived in difficult conditions that had inadequate health care. Ben Tan claims that physicians need to be aware of where immigrants come from in order to understand their needs and level of health. Some immigrants coming to Canada from developing countries bring with them a different set of health issues, such as intestinal parasites, dental problems, nutritional deficiencies, and irregular immunization, than those coming from developed countries. Canadian health care professionals must take this into consideration to help immigrant children develop to their full potential (Vanier Institute of the Family, 2000).

Poverty

Poverty is a serious issue that Canadian society must deal with. Brian Wharf, from the University of Victoria, claims that “the most significant crises which affect families arise from the absence of an adequate income” (1994, p. 55). Professionals who work with troubled families observe that poverty is a major issue underlying social problems. In Victoria, B.C., it is the most significant factor in the caseload of the Ministry of Social Services. This problem exists across the country. While the percentage of children living in poverty has been increasing, Canada’s social safety net has been eroded through deficit reduction at both the federal and provincial levels (Vanier Institute of the Family, November, 2000). Canadians are being told that they can no longer afford their generous social programs because they are too costly and take away the incentive to work from Canada’s poor. Often Canadians feel overtaxed, especially when compared to Americans, whose taxes are lower but whose social programs are less generous and whose poverty rates are higher. It has been shown that poverty rates are lower when social programs are universal, yet the Canadian federal government has made no move to provide universal support for families. Social assistance varies by province and is being cut in favour of deficit reduction by provincial governments (Baker, 1996).



web connection

www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12

To learn about issues that immigrant families in Canada face, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.



Children raised in conditions of severe economic stress rarely reach their full potential.

There are many web sites that have information on parent-child relationships. If you check the web connections in this text, you will be guided to many of them. Two of the main web sites for this course are for Statistics Canada and the Vanier Institute of the Family. Both of these sites have search engines.

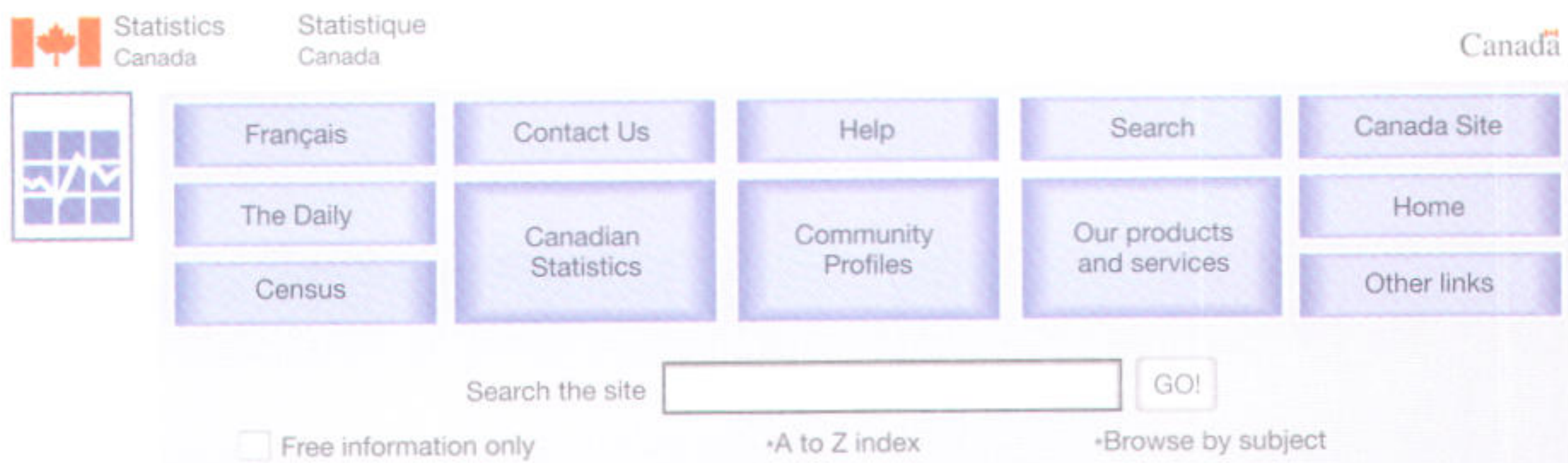
Searching the “Statistics Canada” Web Site

1. On the Internet, go to www.statcan.ca. This will take you to the Statistics Canada home page.
2. Click on the appropriate language for your search. The information is available in both of Canada’s official languages, French and English.
3. There are a number of options when you reach the next frame (see example below).
4. You can view *The Daily*, a daily news release with information relating to the latest census data released by Statistics Canada. It contains:
 - a) The **Census**, where you can obtain specific data related to the most recent census taken in Canada. You can also see the release dates for further information.

- b) **Canadian Statistics**, where you can access information from previous censuses. There are several categories to choose from, depending on your research topic. Some examples are: The Economy, The Land, The People, and The State. (The People is where you will find much information for this course under subject headings like Population, Education, Health, Families, Households, and Housing.)
- c) **Community Profiles**, where you can find information about specific communities in Canada.
- d) A **search engine**, which allows you to search the entire site for information on a topic. Some of the information is available free, while other information is available at a cost. You can choose to view only free information or both. Most of the information that is available at cost can be found in libraries.
- e) An **Other Links** page, which will direct you to other web sites.

Searching the “The Vanier Institute of the Family” Web Site

1. Go to www.vifamily.ca. This will take you to the home page.



Source: From the Statistics Canada web site; www.statcan.ca/start.html.

2. At the bottom of the page, the areas you can explore are listed (see below). If you click on any one of the topics, you will be directed to that page.

Example

Family Facts	What's NEW
Did You Know?	Speeches & Press Releases
Publications	Transition Magazine
Essays on Contemporary Family Trends	Families and Health Newsletter
Work and Family	Wealth & Family
About the Vanier Institute of the Family	Links Become a Member
Contacts	

- a) You can view **Family Facts**, which provides updated facts on families in Canada. Some of the topics covered here are: What is a family? How many families are there? How many families have children? How big are families? How many are married? How many are living common-law?
- b) You can view **Did You Know?** which offers information on questions about Canadian families, such as, How many hours do Canadians watch TV? How frequent is cohabitation?
- c) You can view **Publications**, which supplies a list of recent publications by the Vanier Institute,

many of which are available free as a download. Topics of publications varies.

- d) You can view **Families and Health Newsletter**, which was published from 1999 to 2000, and has many topics of interest to those studying the Canadian family.
- e) You can view **Transition Magazine**, the official magazine of the Vanier Institute. It is published four times a year and contains information on families. You can see which topics are in current and back issues, as well as those in upcoming issues. Back issues are available on-line for free, while current issues are available for purchase or in most public, college, or university libraries.
- f) You can use a **search engine**, which allows you to input a topic and search the entire web site for information. Some of the information is available for free, while some is available at a cost. You can choose to view only free information or both. Much of the information that is available at cost can be found in libraries.
- g) You can view the **Links** page, which will direct you to other web sites containing information on families. ■

Between 1989 and 1995, the number of children living in poverty in Canada has increased by 58 percent, to approximately 1 million, or 21 percent of all children (Voices for Children, 2002). The percentage fell to 19.8 percent in 1997, when the economy improved, but has not been reduced since then. This translates to approximately 1.5 million Canadian children living in poverty (Vanier Institute of the Family, 2000). Families living in poverty are those defined by Statistics Canada as living below the **low income cut-off (LICO)** point. Another significant factor is that the majority of Canadian families living in poverty are single-parent families headed by women. One child in five grows up in a family headed by one parent, usually the mother, and more than half of single parents

raise their families on incomes below the low income cut-off point (Voices for Children, 2002; Vanier Institute of the Family, November, 2000). Research from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) reveals that family type has a major influence on poverty rates in children, as shown in the table below (Ross, Scott, & Kelly, 1996).

Distribution of Poor* Children Aged 0 to 11 Years by Family Type, 1		
Family Type	Poor* (%)	Non-Poor (%)
Two-parent family	16.5	83.5
Single-parent family	68.0	32.0
Female single parent	70.9	29.1
Male single parent	30.7**	69.3

* Poverty is measured using Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs (LICO).

** Estimate less reliable due to high sampling variability.

Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication, *Growing Up in Canada (National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth Series)*, Catalogue 89-550, November 1996, p. 34.

1. Account for the large difference between poor and non-poor children in two-parent families.
2. Why are children of single-parent families headed by women more likely to be poor?

One of the issues under study using the NLSCY results from all families living in poverty in a certain year is hunger among Canadian children. They studied the families that reported that their children had gone hungry because they had run out of money to buy food, or run out of food altogether. They found that 1.2 percent of the families in the sample had experienced this problem. Translated into numbers representing the Canadian population, that would mean approximately 57 000 families have experienced hunger. Some characteristics of families experiencing hunger are as follows (Vanier Institute of the Family, November 2000):

- They are eight times more likely to be led by a single parent.
- They are four times more likely to be of Aboriginal descent and living off the reserve.
- They are thirteen times more likely to report their income as coming from social assistance or welfare.
- Mothers had less education than those in families who were not experiencing hunger.

- The primary caregivers in these families suffered more chronic health problems.
- The children reported poorer health than those who had not gone hungry.
- Cigarette smoking was higher among the mothers in families who experienced hunger. Cigarette use among disadvantaged women is said to reduce stress and suppress their appetite.
- Parents report skipping meals and cutting down on their personal food intake when food supplies were low.
- Families reported visiting food banks and seeking assistance from families and friends.

For children, the consequence of being poor is that their families have insufficient income, time, and energy, due to the pressures of poverty, to make sure they grow up in safe neighbourhoods, receive a good education, participate in sporting and cultural activities, or nourish them well enough to make them healthy (Wharf, 1994). Children living in poverty are twice as likely to be born prematurely and with low birth weights, have shorter life expectancies, and face twice the risk of chronic health problems. In the Early Years Study, McCain and Mustard explain the crucial impact of early environment on all aspects of childhood development (1999). Families' financial insecurity should not deprive Canadian children of an environment with appropriate and adequate stimulation (Voices for Children, 2002).

The NLSCY raises many other questions about the effects of poverty on children. Although early results of the study find that poverty has less effect than researchers expected, there are many reasons for these results and many factors yet to be explored. One of the concerns is the use of cross-sectional data to investigate the issue, which, in this case, means all families living in poverty in a certain year only. Within that group of families, some may only have been living in poverty for one year, while others may have been living in poverty for several years. The NLSCY plans to explore the differences between short-term and **persistent poverty**, which lasts for a long time, with the results of long-term research. Persistent poverty is more of a problem for lone parents than for two-parent families. When studying lone-parent families from 1982 to 1993, the Applied Research Branch of the Canadian government found that 75 percent were living in poverty during this entire period. The researchers involved in the NLSCY believe that as the long-term patterns emerge in their research, people's understanding of the impact of poverty will increase significantly. They see it increasing with the age of the child (Human Resources Development Canada, 1999).



Why do so many Canadian children and their families experience hunger?

web connection



www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12

To learn about Canadian children and poverty, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

Canadians need to be concerned about the child poverty rate in Canada, not only from a human perspective, but also from an economic perspective. Child poverty rates reflect how well the Canadian economy is doing and how well it will do in the future. Living with a close, stable, and supportive family provides children with important protective factors that reduce the possible negative effects of living in a low-income environment (Voices for Children, 2002). The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth and the Early Years Study support findings that good parenting can reduce the negative effects of poverty on children (Human Resources Development Canada, 1999; McCain & Mustard, 1999). All Canadians will eventually suffer the consequences of child poverty in terms of the future health of communities and the nation. Canada must be willing to invest in its children through such programs as Employment Insurance, social assistance, the Child Tax Benefit, and the taxation system in general (Vanier Institute of the Family, 2000).

point of view | Child Poverty

by Susan McClelland, Journalist

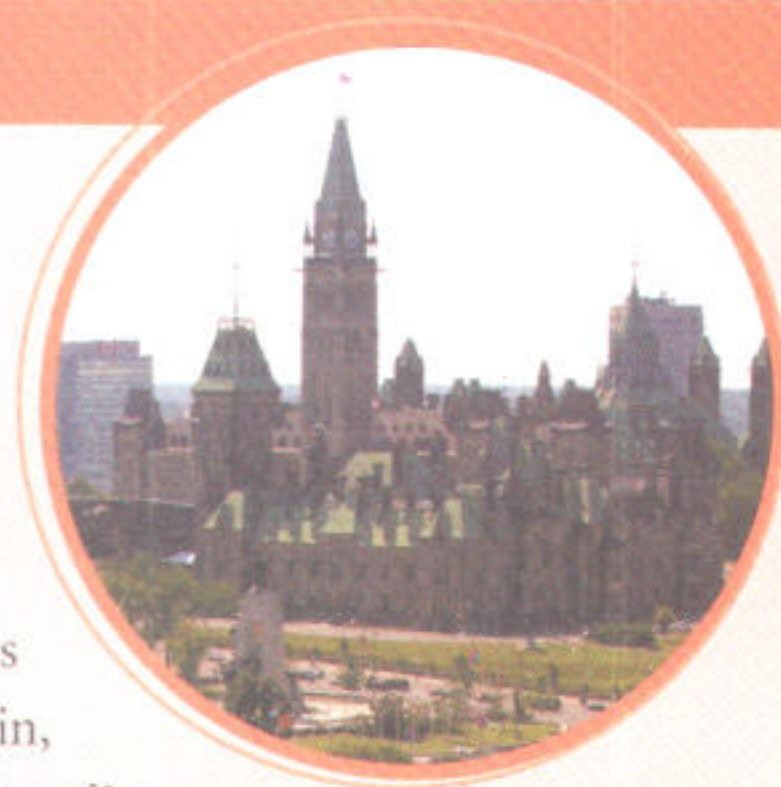
It was supposed to be Ed Broadbent's swan song, and his legacy to Canadian families. On November 24, 1989, in his final resolution in the House of Commons, the retiring leader of the federal New Democratic Party proposed to eliminate child poverty by 2000. Broadbent called the plight of poor children in Canada "a national shame, a national horror," adding: "Our obligation is to ensure that every kid in this country has full opportunity to become all he or she can become." The resolution passed unanimously.

Flip ahead a year, when Prime Minister Brian Mulroney co-chaired the United Nations World Summit for Children in New York. The high point of the event was the adoption of the Declaration on the Survival, Protection, and Development of Children. World leaders, including Mulroney, promised that in good economic times or bad, children's interests would come first. Delegates made firm commitments to reduce malnutrition, expand early-childhood development and education programs, and improve

When will our government fulfill its promise to end child poverty in Canada?

the living conditions of poor kids by, again, 2000. So what happened?

In 2001, at a United Nations' Special Session on Children, in September, child poverty in Canada is observed to be worse, not better. All levels of government in Canada have failed to provide for their most helpless constituents. More than a million children in Canada—an increase of about 28 percent since 1989—now live in households with incomes below what Statistics Canada calls the low income cut-off. Facing long waiting lists for subsidized housing, more families with young kids are ending up homeless. The number of people using food banks is up 92 percent over the past decade, and studies suggest about 40 percent of users are under the age of 18.



It's not just that governments failed to fulfill their noble goals. They did it knowingly. According to a 67-page report that Prime Minister Jean Chretien took to a United Nations' session in New York, Canada is a First World country struggling with inequality, and children of single parents and those of Aboriginal descent have been hit the hardest. Good intentions were derailed by the early 1990s' recession and deficit-reduction mania, and funding for social programs was not restored once the deficits were reined in. Meagre incomes were frozen or even reduced, widening an already gaping divide between rich and poor. Bridging that gap, says Senator Landon Pearson, Chretien's personal representative to the United Nations' session, is "a concern to our delegation. It doesn't seem to be something that worries some of our provincial leaders," she adds. "If we hadn't had the right-wing pressure accusing Liberals of spending, there might have been more programs in place."

There ought to be. For many families, the grip of poverty seems impossible to break. The federal report calculates that it now takes 75.4 weeks of work—the equivalent of one-and-a-half full-time jobs at an average wage—to cover basic expenses for the Canadian family each year. That's a dispiriting reality for single parents, of whom there were nearly 1.3 million in 2000 compared with 950 000 in 1991. According to Statistics Canada, more than a million of these families were headed by women, and their average annual household earnings were the lowest of any family type—\$25 000 after taxes. "One always wants a better record," Pearson concedes. "If we hadn't dealt with the deficit, we would have had more capacity to respond."

The Canadian report to the United Nations did cite several promising initiatives. In the early 1990s, Chretien's Liberals launched the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program and the Community Action Program for Children for kids up to six years of age. They provided such things as food, counselling, and education for at-risk families, including those in

isolated communities and in situations of abuse. The Liberals also established Aboriginal Head Start to improve health, education, and nutrition for Aboriginal kids on and off reserves. In 1998, a new child tax benefit was put in place, which, by 2004, will give back to Canada's lowest-income families up to \$2500 a child. And in 2000, the federal government agreed to transfer \$2.2 billion over five years to the provinces for programs such as early-childhood development. Among other things, the funds are to be used to strengthen child care, a breaking point for working families.

All good, say some child-poverty experts, but not nearly enough. "What we need is an ongoing commitment," says Marvyn Novick, a professor of social work at Toronto's Ryerson Polytechnic University. "Not 'Here is your money for three years, five years.'" Novick points out that the objectives of two of the programs are compromised anyway because some provinces are unwilling to play their part. When a family on social assistance in all of the provinces except Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland receives its child tax benefit, those provinces claw back that amount from the welfare cheque. And Ontario refuses to implement a child-care system with its portion of Ottawa's early-childhood development funds. "We've let Conservative governments led by Ontario and Alberta sabotage the national agenda," concludes Novick.

There's support for that hard-line approach beyond a few provincial capitals. Many critics claim that efforts to help poor kids by boosting their parents' income too often fail because the cash can be spent on non-essentials. And some Conservatives have a different measure for what constitutes poverty. Unlike some other countries, Canada has no official "poverty line," so most researchers rely on Statistics Canada's low income cut-off measurements, which are based on a complicated formula using family expenditure and income surveys.

But Christopher Sarlo, a professor of economics

at Nipissing University in North Bay, ON, whose work has been published by the Fraser Institute in Vancouver, challenges the rationale behind using the low income cut-off. Sarlo has created a series of poverty lines by calculating how much money a household requires for basic necessities. By Sarlo's reckoning, households that don't have these funds are considered poor. For instance, a single person in Halifax is living in poverty if he or she earns less than \$8946 a year; a family of four in Calgary, \$18 299. Using these rates, Sarlo places the prevalence of child poverty at closer to 10 percent, not the frequently quoted 17 percent that's based on Statistics Canada figures. "I'm not saying there is no problem," says Sarlo. "But if we want to measure poverty properly, we need to have better information, including the numbers of people who don't have enough money to meet their basic needs."

A 1999 study, however, suggests Sarlo's point is moot. In the report, Ottawa's Canadian Council on Social Development concluded that children in families whose incomes are below the Statistics Canada cut-off suffer poorer health, more behavioural problems, and worse grades in school than children from higher-income families. "The research isn't saying that all rich kids will be immune to these outcomes," says Paul Roberts, a research associate with the council and co-author of the report. "What it does say is that children with lower incomes are at greater risk."

Canada isn't the only developed country grappling with the issue. A 2000 report, *Child Poverty in Rich Nations*, published by the United Nations' Children's Fund, concluded that 47 million children in 23 of the wealthiest countries live in poverty. In Canada, there are a number of explanations for this, says economist Armine Yalnizyan: corporate downsizing, the growth of part-time and contract employment, and the

decline of stable positions. The situation has been exacerbated, she adds, by cuts to employment insurance, welfare, and social-housing programs that coincided with increases in private housing prices. "In the great economic boom of the 1960s, we had public investments, people's wages increased, and we expanded income-support programs," she says. "We have just gone through the biggest economic boom in 30 years, but we did the complete opposite."

That's evident in the United Nations' Children's Fund report. Canada ranked near the bottom among developed nations in the percentage of public dollars spent on social programs, and in the percentage of households with single and/or unemployed parents. The report calculated Canada's child-poverty rate at 15.5 percent—more than 10 percentage points higher than Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Rent De Grace, president and Chief Executive Officer of UNICEF Canada, says Canada has the equivalent resources of the Northern European countries, but doesn't use them as well. "It's our hope," De Grace says, "that all nations will be reminded that children are our best investment for human development." A lofty goal, and one, it is hoped, Canadian politicians act on. ■

Source: *Maclean's*. (2001, September 17). p. 18.

- What is the author's thesis?
 - What evidence does she suggest to prove it?
 - Is she successful in proving it? Why or why not?
- What factors contribute to children living in poverty in Canada?
 - How do the statistics of children living in poverty in Canada compare with those in other countries?
- What effects of poverty are described in this article?
- What impact would a wider gap between rich and poor have on poor families?
- What additional information would be useful for examining the issue of poverty?

Child Abuse

Child abuse is a growing concern in Canadian society. People are gaining a better understanding of the long-term negative consequences of abuse, as well as the need to break abusive cycles. There are many stressors that can affect a parent's ability to raise children well. Understanding these, as well as teaching parenting skills, are important ways to deal with the issue of abuse. As Canadian society has changed over the past few decades, definitions of child abuse have changed as well. In the past, spanking children was considered to be an acceptable, if not favoured, form of punishing children who misbehaved, since it quickly showed them the error of their ways and who was in control. Recently, there are citizens who call the police and file complaints of child abuse against parents who spank their children. Redefining punishment and abuse, and deciding when society has the right to intervene on behalf of a child, are some of the challenges faced by Canadian society today.

In abusive families, the abuser tends to victimize the weakest member, and thus women and children are the most vulnerable. According to research, the youngest children, under the age of six, suffer the most physical abuse. Some children suffer from neglect, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse by family and non-family members. Children who witness their parents' abusive relationships are also considered victims. They are more likely to suffer from physical abuse and neglect (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect detailed cases that were being investigated by Canadian child welfare agencies. They differentiate cases into the following categories:

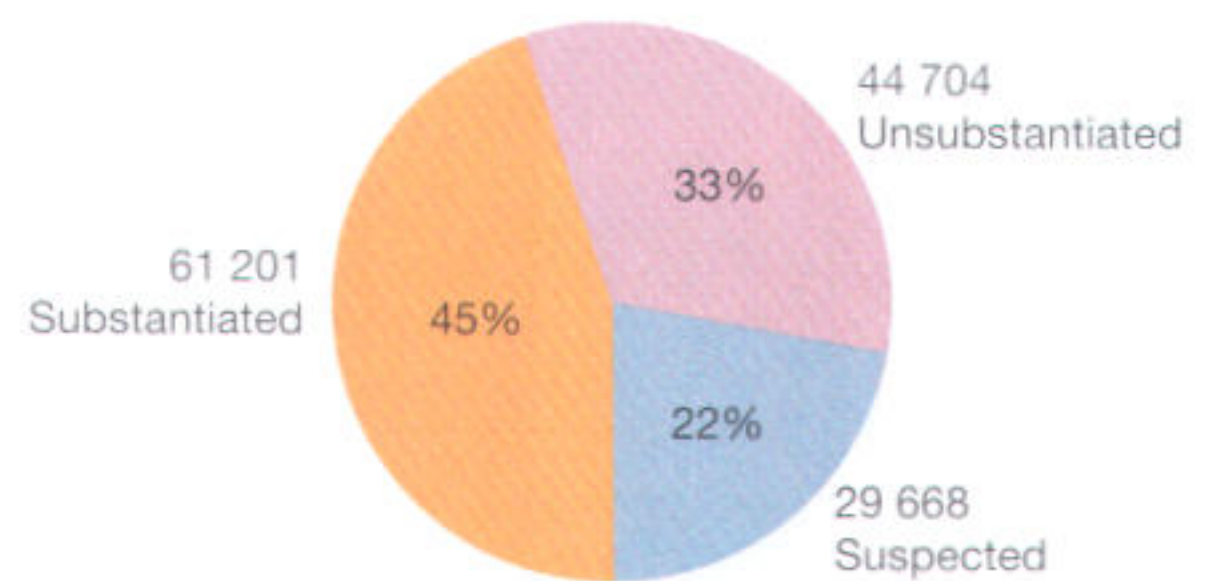
- substantiated—the balance of the evidence indicates that abuse has occurred
- suspected—there is not enough evidence; however there is a strong suspicion that abuse occurred
- unsubstantiated—the evidence does not lead to a conclusion of abuse

In 1998, the year of the study, there were 21.52 investigations of child abuse and neglect for every 1000 Canadian children (Trocmé, 2001).

“Children can stand vast amounts of sternness. They rather expect to be wrong, and are quite used to being punished. It is injustice, inequity, and inconsistency that kills them.”

—Robert F. Capon

Child Maltreatment Investigations by Level of Substantiation in Canada in 1998
(Weighted Estimates)



Source: Trocmé, N., et al. *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2001, Cat. H49-151/2000E.

1. How can one account for the number of unsubstantiated cases of abuse or neglect?
2. What is the total number of cases that are either suspected or substantiated?

Reading each day about the horrors visited on a seven-year-old Toronto boy named Randal Dooley, whose father and stepmother were found guilty in April 2002 of second-degree murder after a gruesome three-month trial, was almost too painful. A little boy beaten so badly and so often—with belts, fists and feet, a bungee cord—that, in his fear of his stepmother, he became incontinent. His dying body placed in a cold bath in the dark. His eight-year-old brother, Tego, setting him gently in bed, where he expired from massive brain injuries. His father boiling hot dogs as firefighters arrived after his 911 call.

Randal's murder sends a clear and disturbing message. Too often, Canada is failing to protect its children from abuse. This death should not be treated as simply another wake-up call—there have been plenty enough of those over the years in every province—but as a cry for a complete overhaul of child protection.

As every child's life is unique, so, too, is each preventable death. But a common theme is now clear. At countless stages, the child-protection system, and the people who make their living in it, are forsaking children, inexplicably so at times. This was the message from the 2001 inquest into the death by starvation of 35-day-old Jordan Heikamp, who was living with his mother in a Toronto women's shelter, under the supervision of the Catholic Children's Aid Society. It was the message in 1995 from B.C. Judge Thomas Gove, who investigated the death of five-year-old Matthew Vaudreuil, suffocated by his mother despite the extensive involvement of social workers and physicians.

Randal Dooley could have been saved. His Grade 1 teacher discovered that his back and arms were crisscrossed with welts. This brought him to the attention of Toronto's Children's Aid Society (CAS) and police. The CAS made a cursory check and accepted the



Too many Canadian children, like Randal Dooley, die at the hands of their parents or guardians.

stepmother's story that his cousin had whipped him in a game. Police wanted to interview Randal alone, but his stepmother insisted on being present. Five months later, he was dead.

Randal's death should be as much a watershed as that of 19-month-old Kim Anne Popen of Sarnia, who died of horrific abuse at the hands of her mother in 1976. County Court Judge H. Ward Allen spent four years on an inquiry into that death and his findings came to 1826 pages. Out of that came more effective protocols for responding to suspicions of abuse.

But the system has become fatally flawed. Bureaucratic interests have overtaken children's interests. Social workers are now spending 85 percent of their time on paperwork, and 15 percent on families and children, according to a study of Ontario's 55 child-protection agencies. Budget restraints during the first half of the 1990s led to higher caseloads and lower salaries. So burdened is the system—the Toronto CAS receives more than 54 000 reports of abuse a year, or

150 a day, seven days a week—that only the rare, witnessed act of violence against a child tends to receive much scrutiny. And recruiting and keeping workers across Canada is a major challenge.

From 1991 to 1999, there were 363 children 11 and under who were homicide victims in this country—roughly the number in a typical elementary school. Four out of every five were killed by their parents. The number of deaths, which fluctuate wildly from year to year, were roughly the same in 1997 as they were two decades earlier.

Astonishingly, the B.C. government is now dismantling some of the very improvements that Judge Gove had fought for. It is losing an independent

children's advocate. It is time for another look at the protection of children. Ontario should take the lead after Randal Dooley's needless death in setting up an inquiry. Randal belongs to all of us. We must not look away. ■

Source: *The Globe and Mail*. (2002, April 20), p. A20. Reprinted with permission from *The Globe and Mail*.

1. What is the thesis of this article?
2. What are some of the issues that are stopping Children's Aid Societies from protecting children?
3. a) What role does the rest of society have in protecting children from abusers?
b) Who should carry out those roles? How?
c) What role do you have?

Child Neglect

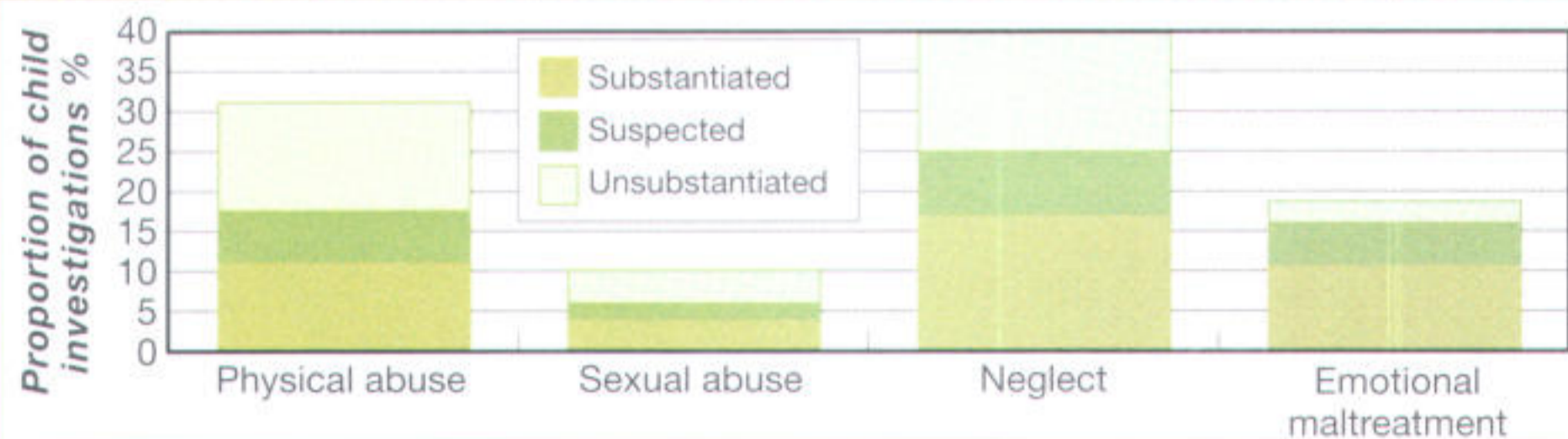
Child neglect covers a wide range of parental behaviours, from failure to provide the necessities of life, to inadequate supervision, to emotional neglect, when the parent withdraws emotionally from the child, providing little love or emotional support. Neglectful families tend to have a number of problems. They are characteristically led by a single parent, are poor, and have large numbers of children. Often, very young parents do not have the skills or emotional maturity to deal with raising a child, and their children are at high risk for neglect. Usually, the parents in this family do not have the time, energy, or resources to deal effectively with their children. Children of alcoholic parents suffer from neglect and are often left to fend for themselves. These children suffer lasting psychological, social, and emotional consequences (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). Results from the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect show that neglect was the most often reported form of abuse to be considered substantiated and suspected. In 1998, in 40 percent of investigations, neglect was the primary reason for the investigation (Trocmé, 2001).



Neglect means failing to provide a child with the basic necessities of life.

Children often suffer both **physical** and **verbal abuse** at the same time. Verbal abuse, which can also be referred to as **emotional abuse**, is emotionally damaging, because it hurts children’s emerging vision of who they are and how they define themselves. If children receive only negative messages of who they are, they believe them to be true and will be scarred for life. This is called a **self-fulfilling prophecy**. Physical abuse is defined as non-accidental physical injury to a child resulting from actions of a parent or guardian. The message children receive when they are physically abused is that they are so bad, they deserve to be mistreated. This message also damages children’s self-image. Severe physical abuse of children may lead to trauma, increased aggressiveness, nightmares, depression, neuroses, or an inability to express emotions. Children who do not suffer from physical abuse but who witness it have a tendency to be more aggressive, have difficulty in school, withdraw from social situations, oppose parental authority, and have sleep-related problems. The most disturbing characteristic of abused children is that they often become abusers in adulthood—they repeat the parenting behaviours they learned as children—or they become passive, willing victims, and are likely to be abused. As with neglect, abusive families are characterized as poor, large, with parents who do not have the resources and skills to deal effectively with their children. There is a higher incidence of abuse among parents who abuse alcohol or other substances (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). The age and sex of a child has an impact on whether or not they will be victims of abuse (Trocmé, 2001).

Primary Category of Investigated Maltreatment by Level of Substantiation in Canada in 1998



Source: Trocmé, N., et al. *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2001, Cat. H49-151/2000E.

1. What type of abuse is reported most frequently?
2. What type is substantiated most frequently?
3. What type of abuse is unsubstantiated most frequently?
4. What type of abuse is reported, substantiated, and suspected most frequently?
5. Why can abuse be misleading?

Child Age and Sex in Child Maltreatment Investigations by Incidence of Investigated Maltreatment and by Level of Substantiation in Canada in 1998 (Weighted Estimates)

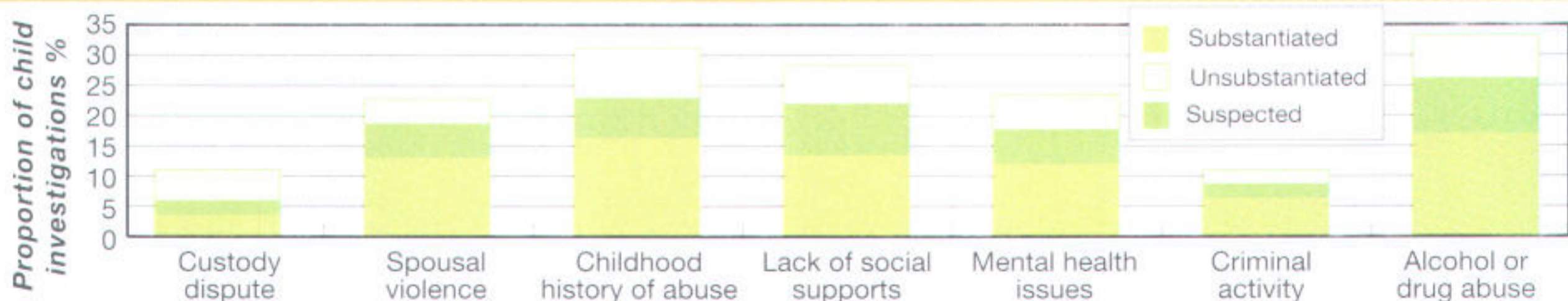


Source: Trocmé, N., et al. *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2001, Cat. H49-151/2000E.

1. At what age are males most likely to be abused? Account for this.
2. At what age are females most likely to be abused? Account for this.

Sexually abused children suffer from incest, intercourse with a blood relative, sexual assault, intercourse with a non-blood relative, abusive sexual touching either by the child being forced to touch the adult or the adult forcing the child to touch himself or herself, and sexual exposure of either the adult or the child. Girls are more often victims than boys are, since they tend to be more passive, and the abuser tends to be a heterosexual male, usually the father, stepfather, or a male cohabitor. Daughters of actively dating single mothers who bring their dates home are at highest risk for sexual abuse. These families tend to function poorly, be less stable, have poor interpersonal relationships, and experience less personal growth. Parents tend to be younger and less educated, have more children living at home, have few friends, and have above average levels of depression (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000).

Caregiver Functioning and Other Family Stressors in Child Maltreatment Investigations by Level of Substantiation in Canada in 1998



Source: Trocmé, N., et al. *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2001, Cat. H49-151/2000E.

1. List the factors that lead to abuse, in order of their significance.
2. Explain how each factor could lead to child abuse.

by Justice Marvin Zuker

Section 43 of the Criminal Code is an exception to the general rule that it is criminal assault to use force against another without consent. This section allows a parent, a person in the place of a parent, or a teacher to use force to correct a child in his or her care, where the force used is “reasonable under the circumstances.” Section 43 has been part of the Criminal Code since 1892.

Section 43 became a focal point in the debate about corporal punishment in childrearing because it does not define the nature or limits of the force that is justified other than to require that it be “reasonable in the circumstances” and be for the purposes of “correction.” Because of growing concern that physical punishment of children does more harm than good, it has been banned in Canadian schools, and the federal ministry of health has mounted an educational campaign teaching that hitting children is wrong. Canadian attitudes toward corporal punishment are changing, and many forms of it, at one time considered acceptable, are no longer so.

The Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law challenged Section 43 of the Criminal Code as unconstitutional, but the court dismissed the claim. The trial judge concluded:

Having regard to the history of the legislation, that Parliament’s purpose in maintaining Section 43 is to recognize that parents and teachers require reasonable latitude in carrying out the responsibility imposed by law to provide for their children, to

nurture them, and to educate them. That responsibility, Parliament has decided, cannot be carried out unless parents and teachers have a protected sphere of authority within which to fulfill their responsibilities. That sphere of authority is intended to allow a defence to assault within a limited domain of physical discipline, while at the same time ensuring that children are protected from child abuse....

The judge did summarize certain agreements of social scientists concerning corporal punishment. These included:

- Spanking is defined as “the administration of one or two mild to moderate ‘smacks’ with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities that do not cause physical harm.”
- Corporal punishment of very young children has no value, is wrong and is harmful.
- Corporal punishment of teenagers is not helpful and is potentially harmful.
- Use of objects, such as belts, rulers, etc., is potentially harmful and should not be tolerated.
- Corporal punishment should never involve a slap or blow to the head.

This decision was later appealed in the Ontario Court of Appeal and was denied. The appeal judge concluded that the best interests of the child were served by allowing Section 43 to remain, and that concerns about the misuse of corporal punishment were best addressed by educational programs. ■

Abuse and neglect of children has short- and long-term effects. Short-term effects are those that occur within two years of the incident. These include fear and anxiety; feelings of anger, hostility, guilt, and shame; depression; low self-esteem coupled with a poor self-image; physical illness and sleep disorders; disturbances in sexual behaviour and overall poor social functioning. In general, long-term effects of abuse or neglect are measured in young adults who were victims as children. These include depression, anxiety, psychiatric problems, post-traumatic stress, emotional and behavioural problems, and thoughts of, or attempts at, suicide. Adult victims of physical abuse also tend to be less tolerant, distrustful, suspicious, fault-finding, and resentful. They have difficulty forming relationships, experience more conflict in their relationships, and suffer from low self-esteem. Victims of sexual abuse suffer from high levels of addiction and neuroticism, sexual dysfunction, as well as the effects previously mentioned. All victims of abuse and neglect are at high risk for becoming abusers themselves as parents. When the other risk factors of abuse are combined with being a victim oneself, the danger increases. How well adults deal with childhood abuse and neglect depends on their coping strategies, the level of social support they receive, and the functioning of their family during childhood (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000).



One of the long-term consequences of abuse is the young person having excessive anger.

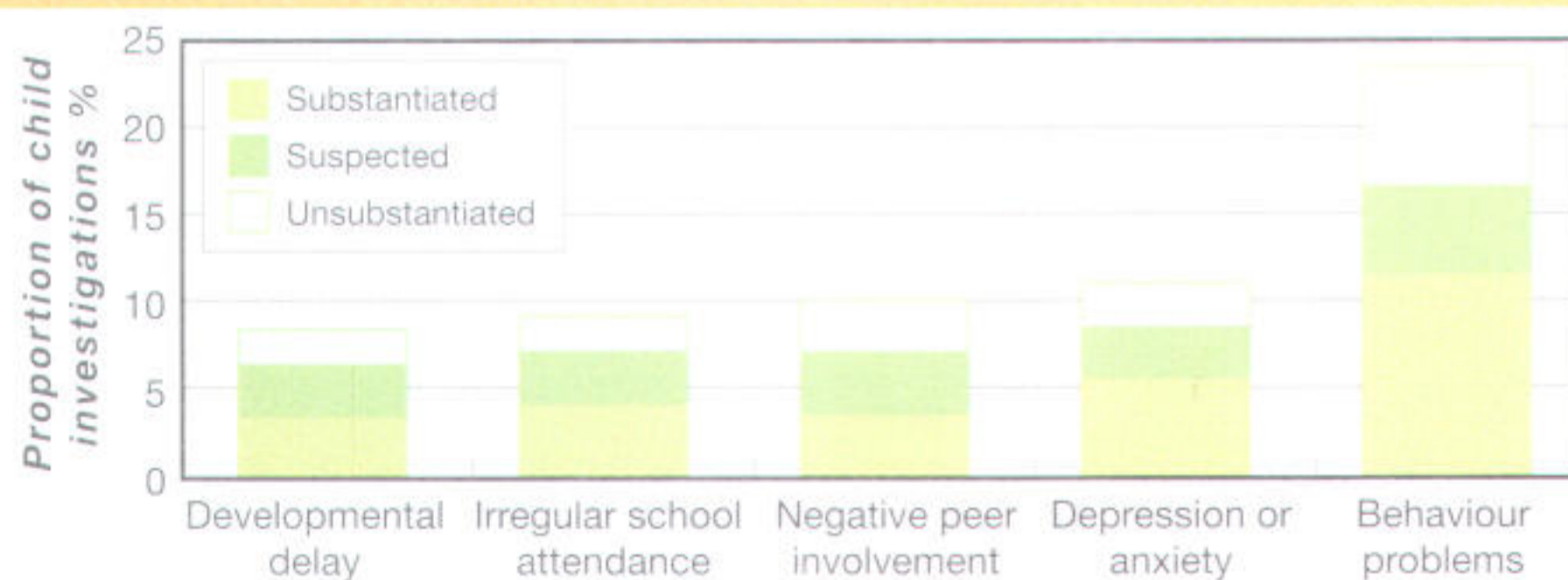


web connection

www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12

To learn about child abuse, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

Child Functioning in Child Maltreatment Investigations by Level of Substantiation in Canada in 1998



Source: Trocmé, N., et al. *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2001. Cat. H49-151/2000E.

1. What are the most serious consequences of child abuse?
2. Which consequences do you consider to be the most serious? Why?
3. Which consequences are considered long-term? Short-term?

by **Rory Leishman, Freelance Writer**

Is it always wrong to spank a child? Health Canada thinks so. In *Nobody's Perfect*, a program that teaches parenting skills to parents with children under five, this agency of the federal government states: "No matter how angry you are, it's never OK to spank children. It's a bad idea and it doesn't work." Millions of Canadian parents disagree. While they would never condone the use of excessive force to discipline a child, they would not rebuke a loving mother who mildly spansks her youngster for chasing a ball into the street.

Perhaps some parents have managed to raise well-disciplined children without ever spanking them. But is the achievement of a few parents reason for the state to invoke criminal sanctions as a means of forcing all parents to try to do the same? Surely not. Yet such drastic state interference in the autonomy of the family is a real threat. With the support of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and \$69 000 in funding provided by the Jean Chretien government through the Court Challenges Program, a fringe group of child's rights extremists —the National Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law (NFCYL) —is seeking a judicial ruling that would make it a criminal offence for any parent to spank his or her own child.

In the days when Canada was still a functioning democracy and judges were bound to uphold the law, the courts could have been counted upon to reject out of hand such a ludicrous lawsuit. Today, that is no longer the case. Under the pretence of upholding the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, our judicial masters on the Supreme Court of Canada have arrogated to themselves the right to strike down or amend any law that has been duly enacted by elected representatives of the people.

In our revamped criminal courts, it's often not so much the accused as the law that is on trial. In the anti-spanking case brought by the NFCYL, there was no accused before the court at all. This travesty of a trial focused entirely on the abstract merits of Section 43 of the Criminal Code: "Every schoolteacher, parent, or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances." In the end, the trial judge, Mr. Justice David McCombs of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, upheld the law.

Among other considerations, he pointed out more than spanking is at issue. "Without Section 43," he wrote, "other forms of restraint would be criminal, such as putting an unwilling child to bed, removing a reluctant child from the dinner table, removing a child from a classroom who refused to go, or placing an unwilling child in a car seat." On January 25, 2002, the Ontario Court of Appeal unanimously agreed with McCombs. Whether our nine arbitrary rulers on the Supreme Court will condescend to concur is anyone's guess.

Meanwhile, do the Chretien Liberals have no qualms about using taxpayers' money to help finance this litigious attack on loving parents? And what about the role of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies in this fiasco? This agency should concentrate upon preventing the kind of horrendous child abuse that killed Jordan Heikamp, the five-week-old baby who died of starvation while supposedly under the care of his mother and Toronto's Catholic Children's Aid Society.

Instead, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies is trying to persuade the courts to make Canada the first country in the world to criminalize

the behaviour of every loving parent who spanks his or her own child. This is outrageous. Who can have any reasonable confidence in an agency that has mounted such a totalitarian attack on the rights of parents to decide for themselves what reasonable measures to take for the discipline and instruction of their children? ■

Source: *London Free Press*. (2002, February 5), p A7.

1. What thesis does Rory Leishman argue in this article?

2. What arguments does he present to support his point of view?
3. Do you agree with the author? What are your reasons?
4. To what extent should the question of parental discipline be decided by law? Justify or support your answer.
5. The Ontario Court of Appeal ruling suggested that clearer guidelines defining spanking should be developed. What would you suggest they be? Why?

Katherine Covell, Associate Professor of Psychology, and Brian Howe, Associate Professor of Political Science, of the Children's Rights Centre at University College of Cape Breton, argue that the only way to solve the issue of child abuse is to force couples to get a licence to parent. They believe this would satisfy the demands for children's rights made by the United Nations. They claim the laws that exist in Canada today are merely reactive to the problem. Covell and Howe believe that people must become proactive to protect future generations of Canadian children from abuse. They cite three main reasons for their demand for licensing:

1. The number of children whose development is compromised by abusive situations.
2. The difficulties faced by child welfare agencies in protecting children from abusive situations.
3. The costs to individuals, and society as a whole, of abuse.

Covell and Howe advocate parent licensing to help adults better perform their role of raising children. They claim that parenting is a privilege, not a right (1998).

In recent years, there has been a great deal of controversy over the right to spank a child. Children's Aid Societies have filed charges against parents who spank their children. Many say that spanking is an unacceptable form of discipline and leads to abuse. Others argue that it is a quick and effective means to stop unwanted behaviour in children. In a poll conducted by *The Toronto Star*, 70 percent of Canadians opposed having the federal government pass a law that

"Remember, when children have a tantrum, don't have one of your own."

—Judith Kunansky

would stop parents from spanking their children. In the same survey, respondents were evenly split on whether or not they thought that a light slap was an effective way to make a child think. Children's Aid Societies feel that spanking is seldom done in a cool, objective manner and often leads to corporal punishment (McKenzie, 2002).

The Death of a Child



No parents are ever prepared to deal with the death of their child.

When a child is born, a parent looks into the future and sees him or her going to school, becoming a teenager, going on a first date, leaving home to go to work or to continue their education, getting married, and providing grandchildren. Parents do not consider the fact that their child could die before them. A child's death upsets the "natural order" of life. Dealing with it is a challenge parents fear and hope they never have to face. The death is not anticipated, because it is out of place in the life cycle (Herz Brown, 1989). At the beginning of the twentieth century, 1 in 7 children died between the ages of 1 and 14 years, so death was a common occurrence in families (Statistics Canada, 1999).

Functionalism suggests that because a child has few responsibilities in a family and in society, a child's death would leave fewer gaps to be filled by others than an adult's death would. In the twenty-first century, when the death of a child is rare, systems and social exchange theories recognize that children are an important emotional focus in a family, and are the extension of their parents' hopes and dreams for the future. Therefore, Fredda Herz Brown, Director of Training for the Family Institute of Westchester, concludes from her clinical work with bereaved families in the late twentieth century that "the death of a child is certainly viewed by most people as life's greatest tragedy" (1989, p. 446).

In Canada, few children die, but when they do, it is a devastating event for parents and families. The causes of death in children differ by age and sex. Most children's deaths occur as the result of illness. The greatest causes are **congenital anomalies**, or problems with which the children are born, that often cause death within the first few years of life, and **perinatal** problems, which are related to the birth, and that cause death shortly after the child is born. Other children develop cancer, or respiratory or cardiovascular diseases. Older children are more likely to die as the result of accidents, especially males aged 15 to 19, but the accident rate has dropped. Boys in this age group also die from suicide and murder more than any other age group (Statistics Canada, 1997). Death from all external causes has declined so that child mortality is "exceptionally rare in Canada" (Statistics Canada, 1999, p. 31). The impact of a child's death on the

Number of Deaths of Children by Selected Causes, Age, and Sex, Canada 1997

Ages	Less Than 1		1-4		5-9		10-14		15-19		
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
All Causes	4253	1076	852	250	205	176	140	246	154	824	331
Diseases	714	74	72	76	75	60	56	66	53	115	67
Congenital and Perinatal Causes	1531	783	620	28	32	14	8	10	11	21	4
Accidents	632	6	8	35	19	38	22	53	32	288	131
Suicide	312	—	—	—	—	—	—	39	12	207	54
Homicide	76	3	2	11	8	6	6	6	4	23	7
Other	988	210	150	100	71	58	48	72	42	170	68

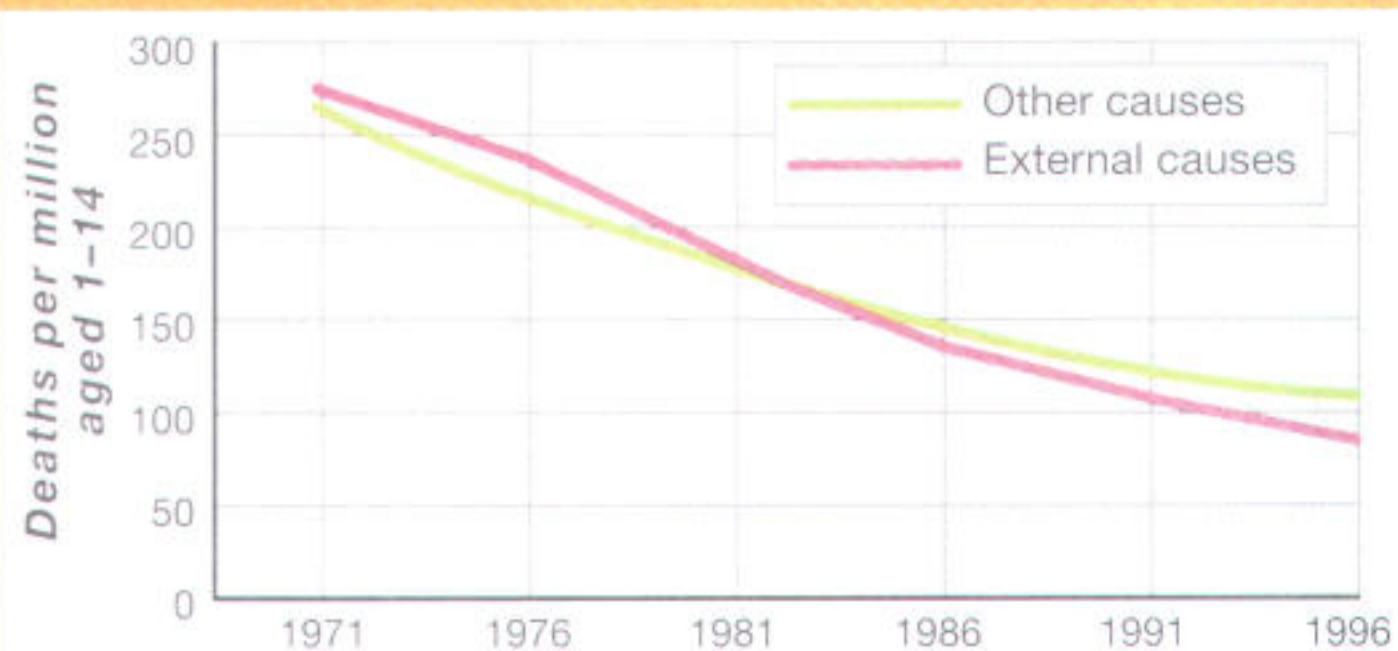
Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication, *Mortality, summary list of causes, 1997—Shelf Tables*, Catalogue 84F0209, April 2001.

1. Account for the differences in the numbers of accidental deaths between male and female children.
2. Account for the differences in the numbers of deaths from homicide between male and female children aged 15–19.
3. What factors could contribute to the fact that the total number of deaths for males is greater than for females?

family depends on the child's age and the degree to which the family perceives the death to have been preventable (Herz Brown, 1989).

A child's death from a serious illness has different effects on family members than a sudden death does. When a child is seriously ill, it is important to let the child and siblings know that the child is dying. Research by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross has determined that even young children anticipate their own deaths when they are very sick, and want to talk about their fears. Children may ask to prepare their own funeral. Other children in the family may feel guilty for wanting attention. Knowing that their child is dying has a profound effect on parents because they have to deal with their own sorrow at the same time as they provide support for the dying child and their other children. However, when the death is sudden, parents may feel guilty for having to inform others of the sad news. A sudden death does not allow parents and siblings time to prepare for the abrupt ending to their lives as they have known them (Kübler-Ross, 1983).

Mortality Rates, Children Aged 1 to 14, Canada 1970–1972 to 1995–1997



Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication, *Health Reports*, Catalogue 82-003, Winter 1999, Vol. II, No. 3.

After a child's death, parents, siblings, and the extended family have to let go of the child and cope with their sadness in individual ways. The ritual of a funeral allows individuals to say goodbye to the child and enables others to provide much-needed support. Young children should be allowed to attend if they wish, but they will express their feelings when they are ready. Siblings may experience difficulties at school, behaviour problems, or depression as they deal with their feelings of sadness, fear that they could die too, and perhaps a need to fill the place of the dead child in their parents' lives (Herz Brown, 1989). Parents may be haunted by thoughts of "What if?" and feelings of guilt that they did not prevent the death (Kübler-Ross, 1983). The more important parenthood is to an individual's sense of identity, the greater the sense of loss will be. The support of caring professionals before and after the child's death can help couples avoid the high divorce rate associated with this tragedy (Herz Brown, 1989).

case study | Donald and Louisa

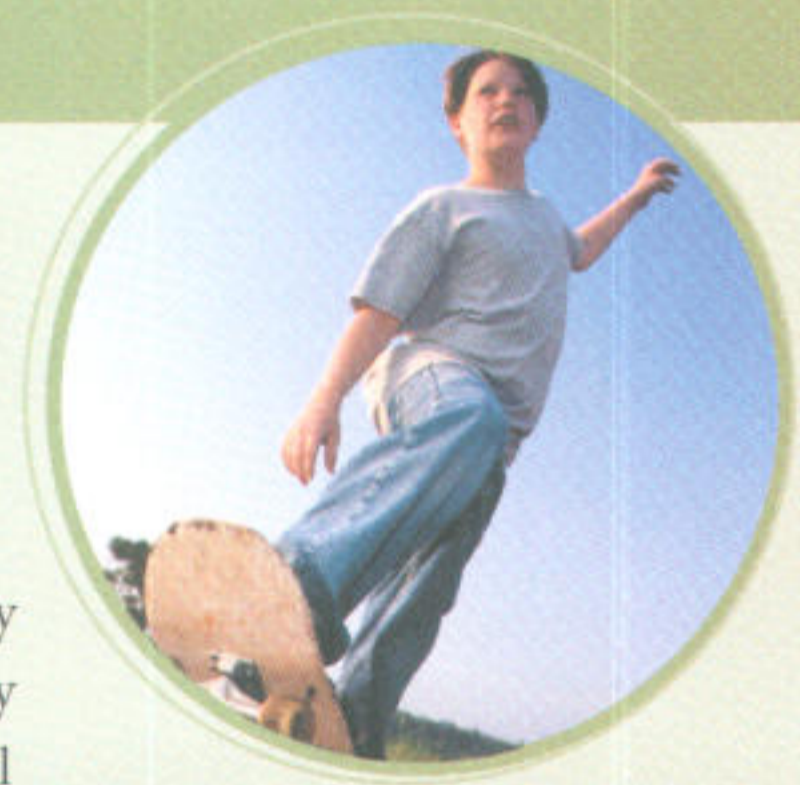
Donald and Louisa met in high school when Donald was in Grade 12 and Louisa was in Grade 9. They were inseparable from the moment they met, and they married just before her eighteenth birthday. They had both left high school before graduating and had settled into jobs at a local factory, where Louisa's older sister, Sophia, was already working. They received a great deal of support during their first few years together, particularly from Louisa's family, since many of them lived nearby. Louisa was the youngest of her mother's children and was only two years old when her mother, Toni, started to live with Ron, whom she later married. Of the seven children in Toni and Ron's blended family, Louisa was the one whom they had raised together and, for that reason, was special to them both.

Daniella, Donald and Louisa's first child, was born in 1982. Louisa quit work to look after her and supplemented Donald's factory wages by starting a home day care in their rented house, taking in three local children. Donald was able to work overtime occasionally,

Donald and Louisa's son Joey died in a skateboarding accident.

and eventually they had enough money to purchase a small home.

Life for their young family became difficult when Donald lost his job while Louisa was expecting their second child, Joey. The American-owned factory suddenly shut down with only a few weeks' warning and gave only a small severance package. Donald was forced to look immediately for other work. He was unable to find a job that paid as much as he had earned at the leather factory, so for the next few years he worked at a variety of jobs. Eventually Donald found a position at a local production facility of a large Canadian brewery. When he started working there, he felt that their economic future was finally secure.



Daniella and Joey prospered in the small Ontario community where they lived, near Barrie. Both children were popular at the local elementary school and in the larger community, and many of their best friends were other children who had grown up in the day care that their mother operated. Louisa decided to close the day care when a friend said that a nursing home in Barrie was looking for staff. There were fewer young children requiring care in the village, and Louisa was ready for a change. The new job involved shift work, but it paid more. The family was already accustomed to Donald's different shifts, and Daniella and Joey were getting to be independent by then. Because Donald and Louisa were both working in Barrie and Joey and Daniella were being bused to a high school there, Louisa suggested that they move there, because she felt that it would give their two teenagers more opportunities. Donald resisted the change, however, as he liked living in a village. Over the next few years, the couple continued to discuss the possibility of moving, and they finally put their house up for sale around the time Daniella graduated from high school.

Tragedy struck the family about a month before the move. Joey was an avid skateboarder and could always be found at the town's skateboard park. One summer evening after his parents had gone to bed, Joey was skateboarding with a few of his friends when he fell and was hit by a passing car. The accident occurred just down the road from his house, and he died in the ambulance with his distraught parents at his side.

For Donald and Louisa, there could be no greater grief than losing a child. Like all parents, they blamed themselves, because children are not supposed to die before their parents. They had warned Joey thousands of times about the dangers of skateboarding on the busy road where he was killed, especially at night

when it was more difficult to be seen by passing drivers. But, like all parents, they knew that teenagers take risks and this was part of growing up and becoming independent. They wondered whether they should have banned their son from skateboarding altogether, as some of the neighbours had done with their children. Donald especially regretted not making the move to Barrie earlier, and felt that if he had only listened to Louisa, their son's death might have been avoided. They also were troubled by the opportunities they had missed when Joey was growing up—the camping trips and outings that were postponed because of chances to work overtime.

During the year after his death, the family usually stayed at home, and Donald especially has been reluctant to participate in social activities with friends and family. Daniella has found it very difficult to work and has chosen to spend her time with her boyfriend and his family or with her grandmother. Some time has passed now since Joey's death, and the family still struggles to rebuild their lives without him. Donald and Louisa know that only time will heal the horrendous loss that they feel, but they also believe that their strong commitment to each other will ease them through the next few years, just as it helped them get through those terrible weeks after Joey's death. ■

1. What hopes and dreams might Donald and Louisa have had for Joey?
2. What conflicted feelings might Donald and Louisa have experienced after Joey's death?
3. How has Joey's death affected Donald, Louisa, and Daniella?
4. How has Daniella's relationship with her parents changed since Joey's death?
5. Suggest how Joey's death would affect others in his extended family.

chapter 11 Review and Apply

Knowledge/Understanding Thinking/Inquiry

1. Identify the arguments that have been used to propose that society should not explore reproductive technologies. Support each argument with evidence.
2. Find out how much it would cost a Canadian couple to undergo fertility treatments in Canada. Does the cost vary by province? Is any part covered by provincial health care plans? Do all Canadian couples have access to this type of treatment?
3. How does the way our society is structured have an impact on child poverty? Discuss the issues of child poverty from a structural functionalist approach.
4. What is the low income cut-off point? How has it changed in the last ten years?
5. Explain the various factors that influence how well children adjust to their parents' divorce.
6. Using research on abuse, develop a profile of someone who is likely to abuse a child.
7. What are some of the issues faced by immigrant children?

Knowledge/Understanding Thinking/Inquiry Communication

8. Write a personal essay about the death of a child from the perspective of a parent, caregiver, sibling, grandparent, aunt, or uncle. Describe the impact of the death on the family.
9. Write an essay defending your point of view on the use of a reproductive technology.
10. List the major problems that children living in poverty face. Write a brief article for a local newspaper that outlines the risks.
11. Arrange for a panel to speak to your class about the challenges facing immigrant parents and children when they come to Canada.
12. Create a documentary describing the ways our society can support parents to reduce the negative effects of divorce on children. Videotape your documentary to show to the rest of your class.
13. Write a case study that shows the cyclical pattern of child abuse. Make this case study into a play that could be presented to others in your school or community.

14. Debate the following topic: All prospective parents must pass a parenting test to receive their parenting licence prior to having children.
15. Select an article from this chapter and write a response in the form of a letter to the editor, using a different theoretical perspective than the article's. Identify both the author's theoretical perspective and yours.

Knowledge/Understanding **Thinking/Inquiry** **Communication** **Application**

16. Use the web connections in this chapter to access information on poverty rates in your province. Compare them to the rest of Canada. Make charts or graphs to show the difference. Write a brief explanation of the reason for the variations in different regions of the country.
17. Select an issue examined in this chapter and develop a hypothesis concerning a possible action for Canadian society to take. Use the web connections to conduct research about the current situation, and form an opinion about what steps need to be taken. Present and support your opinion orally as part of a town-hall debate about the role of your community regarding the issue.
18. Identify another issue that is currently affecting parent-child relationships. Do a web search to discover a variety of viewpoints on the impact of the issue.