

Business Indicators: December 2007

Children in BC Families

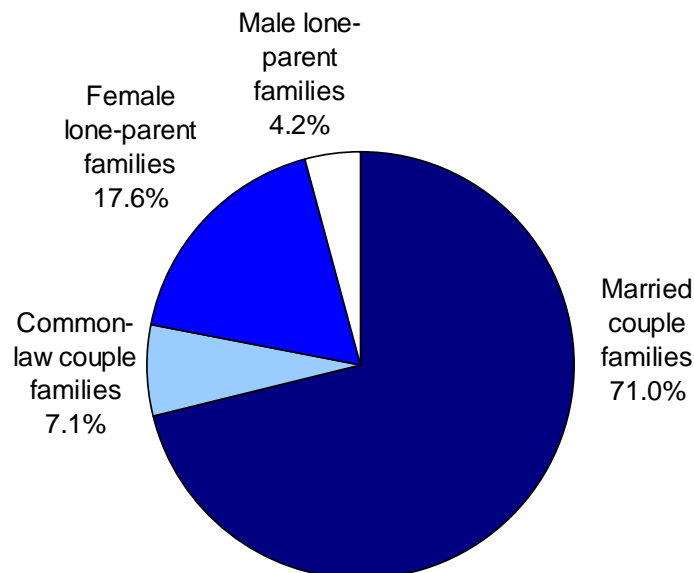
Overall Number of Children in BC Families

In 2006, there were just over 1.2 million children living in BC families. Census estimates show that the overall number of children in BC families increased by only 1.2% between 2001 and 2006, even though BC's total population grew by 5.3% over the same period. The slow growth in the total number of children in BC families may be associated with a number of factors, including the aging of Generation Y (baby boom echo), a decline in the number of couples deciding to have children, and a decline in the average number of children couples are deciding to have.

Children at Home by Family Type

Of the 1.2 million children living in BC families in 2006, 78% lived in two-parent families. This percentage has not changed since 2001. The percentage of children living in one-parent families (22%) was also the same in 2001, although the percentage living in male lone-parent families (4.2%) was slightly higher than in 2001 (3.8%).

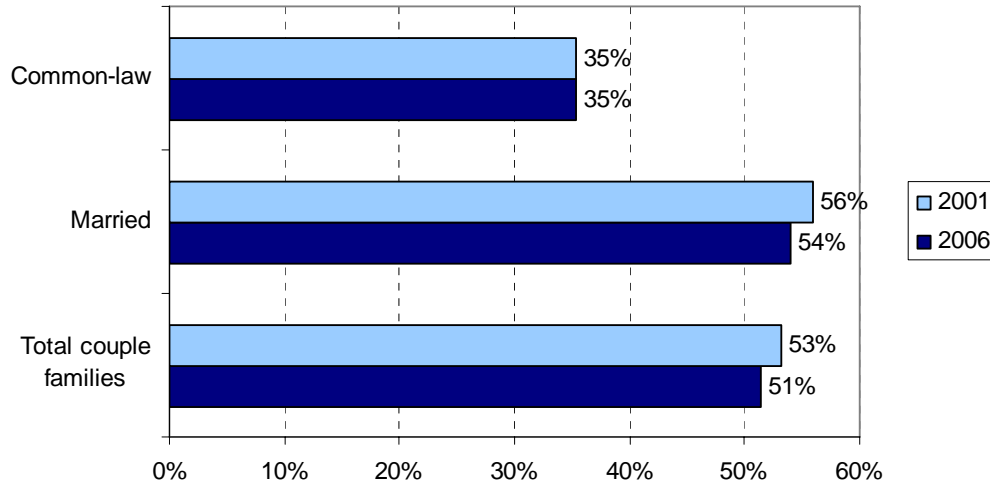
Over three-quarters of children in BC families live in two-parent households



Presence of Children at Home

Just over half of all couple families had children living at home in 2006. Married couples were more likely to have children at home than common-law couples. Compared to 2001, married couples were less likely to have children in the home, but the percentage of common-law couples with children in the home did not change between 2001 and 2006.

The proportion of married couples with children in the home has decreased since 2001



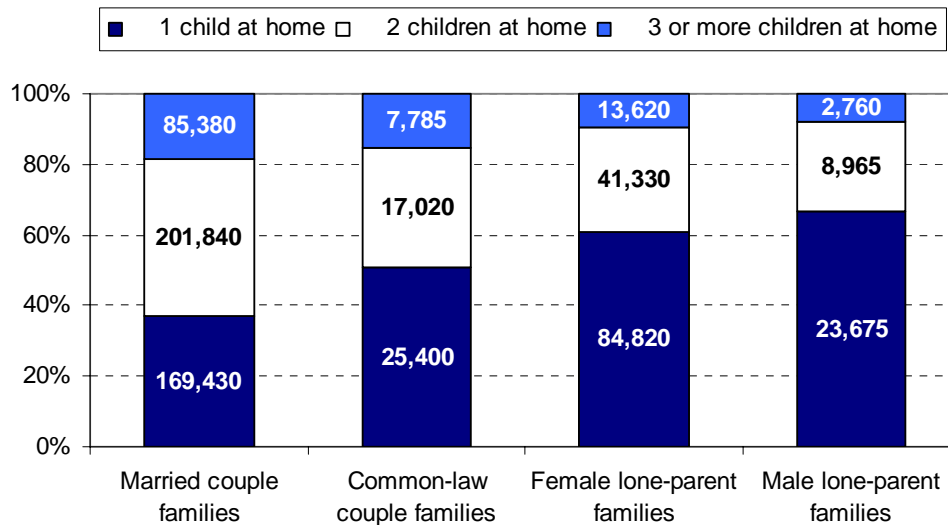
Number of Children at Home

The average number of children (per census family)¹ was 1.04 in 2006. When considering only families with children in the home, the average number of children per census family was 1.76, down from 1.81 in 2001. The average number of children at home varies by type of census family. Married couples with children had an average of 1.87 children in the home, while common-law couples with children had an average of 1.71 children in the home. Lone-parent families had an average of only 1.50 children in the home, but this figure was lower for male lone-parents (1.43) than for female lone-parents (1.52).

Differences in the number of children at home can also be examined by looking at the percentage of families with one, two, or three or more children in the home. Large families are becoming less common – in 2001, 18% of families with children at home had three or more children, but in 2006, this figure dropped to 16%. Just over half of all common-law couple families with children had only one child at home, while married couple families were more likely to have two children at home (44%) than only one (37%). Over 60% of lone-parent families had only one child at home.

¹ The average number of children per census family equals the total number of children in BC divided by the total number of census families in BC.

Most families with children had only 1 or 2 children at home in 2006



Age Groups of Children at Home

There are three major factors affecting the age structure of children in BC families. First, because more couples are choosing not to have children, the number of families with young children at home is declining. For example, the number of BC families where all children were under 6 years of age decreased by 2% between 2001 and 2006. The number of BC families where all children were between 6 and 14 years of age also decreased by 2% in this time period.

Second, as the previous generation of children ages, the number of families with older children at home is increasing. For example, the number of families where all children at home were between 15 and 17 years of age increased by 12% between 2001 and 2006, and the number of families where all children at home were between 18 and 24 years of age increased by 18%.

Finally, it appears that many children are staying at home longer. The number of families in which all children were 25 years of age or older increased by 16% between 2001 and 2006. Furthermore, the percentage of all 20-29 year olds living at home increased from 40% in 2001 to 44% in 2006.

The age structure of children in BC families varies by family type. While 97% of all common-law families with children have at least one child at home under the age of 25, this figure is only 90% for married couple families with children. Lone-parent families are the most likely to have all children at home 25 years of age or older, with 22% of female lone-parent families and 19% of male lone-parent families having all children at home in this age range.

Children Living with Grandparents

Less than one percent of all children in BC families lived with their grandparent(s) with no parent present. Young adults age 20-24 and 25-29 who lived at home were more likely to live with their grandparents (1.1% and 1.4%, respectively). Just over half (53%) of all children living at home with their grandparents lived with both grandparents. Children under the age of 18 were more likely to live with both grandparents, while adult children were more likely to live with only one grandparent.

Terms and Definitions

Census family – a married couple (with or without children of either or both spouses), a couple living common-law (with or without children of either or both partners) or a lone parent of any marital status, with at least one child living in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. 'Children' in a census family include grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present.

Children in census families – blood, step- or adopted sons and daughters (regardless of age or marital status) who are living in the same dwelling as their parent(s), as well as grandchildren in households where there are no parents present. Sons and daughters who are living with their spouse or common-law partner, or with one or more of their own children, are not considered to be members of the census family of their parent(s), even if they are living in the same dwelling. In addition, the sons or daughters who do not live in the same dwelling as their parent(s) are not considered members of the census family of their parent(s). When sons or daughters study or have a summer job elsewhere but return to live with their parent(s) during the year, these sons and daughters are considered members of the census family of their parent(s).

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census Dictionary, Catalogue no. 92-566-XWE