

Article

Inuit Children Under Six Years Old

November 2008





The Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) provides an extensive set of data about Aboriginal (Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve First Nations) children under six years of age in urban, rural, and northern locations across Canada. The Aboriginal Children's Survey was designed to provide a picture of the early development of Aboriginal children and the social and living conditions in which they are learning and growing.

The survey was developed by Statistics Canada and Aboriginal advisors from across the country and was conducted jointly with Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

Inuit Children Under Six Years Old

This fact sheet provides information on the families and communities of Inuit children under six years old, as reported in the Aboriginal Children's Survey and the Census in 2006.

In 2006, the Census enumerated about 7,000 Inuit children under six years old.

The majority of these young Inuit children (84%) lived in Inuit Nunaat which means «Inuit homeland» in the Inuit language. (Map attached)

The remaining 16% of Inuit children under the age of six were living in urban (13%) and rural areas (3%) outside of Inuit Nunaat.

Young Inuit children and their families

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey found that 91% of Inuit children were being raised by more than one person. Mothers were most commonly reported as being involved (92%) followed by fathers (77%), grandparents (46%) and other relatives (aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings) (47%). About 19% of Inuit children had non-relatives involved in raising them, for example, child care providers or teachers.

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey asked how often the child talked or played together with different people, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more. Inuit children were most likely to receive focused attention at least once a day from their mothers (92%), followed by fathers (73%) and siblings (73%).

Most Inuit children received focused attention from extended family at least once a week – about seven in 10 from grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins. About 35% received focused attention from Elders at least once a week.

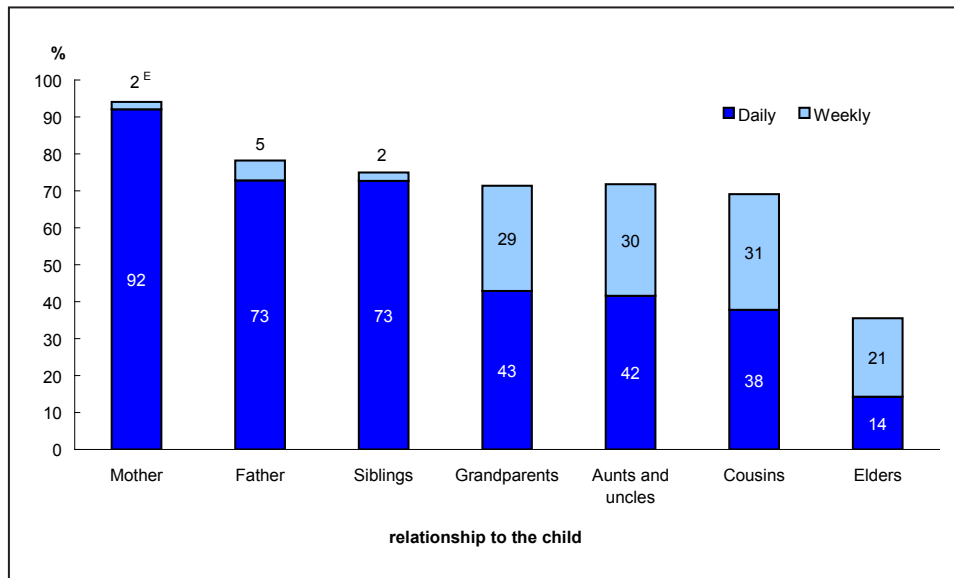
According to the 2006 Census, 28% of Inuit children under the age of 6 were living in families with four or more children compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.

Inuit children are being raised by younger parents than non-Aboriginal children. According to the 2006 Census, about one-quarter (26%) of Inuit children under the age of 6 had mothers between the ages of 15 to 24; this is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.

For the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey, the parent or guardian responded to the survey. For the majority of Inuit children, this person was the birth mother or father (79%). Grandparents (4%) and adoptive parents (12%) made up the majority of the remaining parents or guardians who responded to the survey for Inuit children.

The proportion of adoptive parents (12%) was higher than among First Nations children living off reserve (2%) and Métis children (1%). Adoption among Inuit is a common practice, historically and today.

Chart 1
Percentage of Inuit children under six years old who talked or played together with different people, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more, 2006



^E use with caution

Note(s):

'Daily' includes the response categories 'More than once a day' and 'Once a day'. 'Weekly' includes the response categories 'More than once a week' and 'Once a week'. 'Mother' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster mothers. 'Father' includes birth, step, adoptive or foster fathers.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*

According to the 2006 Census, 1% of young Inuit children were living with their grandparents without parents present and 16% were in multiple-generation households (children, parents and grandparents). The percentage of Inuit children living with grandparents was more than three times the percentage of non-Aboriginal children (5%).

While 28% of young Inuit children lived in a lone parent family in 2006, many of these children also had a grandparent living in the home (40%). While the share of multiple-generation households among Inuit may reflect traditional cultural values, a lack of housing may also be a contributing factor.

Housing

According to the 2006 Census, young Inuit children were six times as likely as non-Aboriginal children to live in a crowded dwelling¹ (43% versus 7%). About 29% of Inuit children under six years old lived in homes in need of major repairs² compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal children.

The Aboriginal Children's Survey asked parents or guardians to rate their feelings regarding their 'housing conditions', 'support network', 'main job or activity', 'free time', and 'finances'. The lowest ratings of satisfaction were given to 'housing' and 'finances'. Dissatisfaction with housing may be a reflection of the relatively high levels of crowding and need for major repairs.

1. Crowded is defined as having more than 1 person per room. Not counted as rooms are bathrooms, halls, vestibules and rooms used solely for business purposes.
 2. Refers to whether, in the judgement of the respondent, the dwelling requires major repairs. Major repairs refer to the repair of defective plumbing or electrical wiring, structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings, etc. (excluding desirable remodelling or additions).

Table 1
Housing characteristics, Inuit children under six years old by Inuit region, 2006

Inuit regions	Living in crowded dwellings ¹	Living in dwellings requiring major repairs ²
	percent	
Total - Inuit area of residence	43	29
Total - Inuit Nunaat (Inuit regions)	49	32
Nunatsiavut	14	28
Nunavik	59	45
Nunavut	48	27
Inuvialuit region	28	26
Total - Outside Inuit Nunaat	12	18

1. Crowded is defined as having more than 1 person per room. Not counted as rooms are bathrooms, halls, vestibules and rooms used solely for business purposes.

2. Refers to whether, in the judgement of the respondent, the dwelling requires major repairs. Major repairs refer to the repair of defective plumbing or electrical wiring, structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings, etc. (excluding desirable remodelling or additions).

Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Census, 2006*

Feelings about community

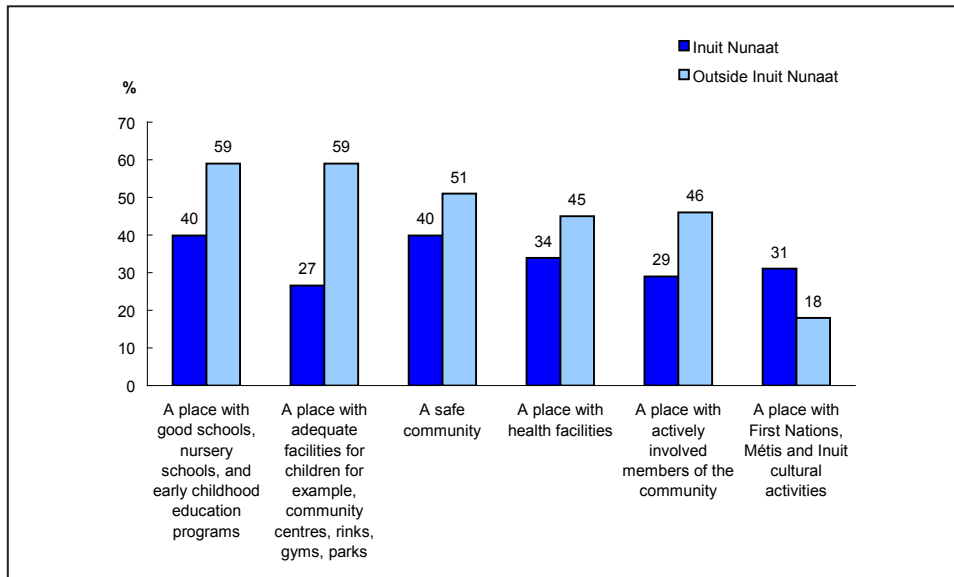
According to the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey, Inuit children who lived outside Inuit Nunaat were more likely to have parents or guardians who reported that their community was 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of facilities (such as good schools, facilities for children including community centres, rinks, gyms, and parks, and health facilities) than those living in Inuit Nunaat.

Young Inuit children in Nunavik were less likely than those in most other regions to have parents or guardians who rated their community as 'excellent' or 'very good' as a place with good schools, nursery schools and early childhood education programs. According to the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey, the figure was 34% in Nunavik, compared with 42% in Nunavut and 47% in Nunatsiavut. In the Inuvialuit region it was 39%, although this was not significantly different, statistically, from Nunavik or Nunavut.

Young Inuit children in the Inuvialuit region were more likely than those in all the other regions to have parents or guardians who rated their community as 'excellent' or 'very good' as a place with adequate facilities for children including community centres, rinks, gyms and parks. According to the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey, the figure was 45% in the Inuvialuit region, compared with 32% in Nunatsiavut, 27% in Nunavut and 23% in Nunavik.

Young Inuit children in Nunavik were less likely than those in all the other regions to have parents or guardians who rated their community as 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of being a safe community. According to the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey, the figure was 22% in Nunavik, compared with 42% in both Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit region and 47% in Nunavut.

Chart 2
Percentage of Inuit children whose parents or guardians reported that their community was 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of being...



Source(s): Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006*

Cultural activities

According to the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey, about 56% of Inuit children under 6 had participated in or attended traditional Inuit activities such as singing, drum dancing, gatherings or ceremonies. Within Inuit Nunaat, 63% had participated in these activities, compared with 36% living outside Inuit Nunaat.

Participation in seasonal activities such as gathering eggs and berries was more common among Inuit children in Nunatsiavut (74%) and Nunavik (66%) than in Nunavut (57%) and the Inuvialuit region (55%).

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey found about two-thirds (65%) of Inuit children had someone to help them understand Inuit culture and history.

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey found that 40% of Inuit children under 6 were in some kind of child care arrangement. In this report, child care arrangements refer to the care of a child by someone other than a parent, including daycare, nursery or preschool, Head Start, before or after school programs, and care by a relative or other caregiver.

Of those Inuit children receiving child care, 56% were in arrangements that promoted traditional and cultural values and customs. This was higher than First Nations children living off reserve (24%) and Métis children (14%). In Inuit Nunaat, 70% of children in child care were in arrangements that promoted traditional and cultural values and customs.

Of those in child care, 59% were in arrangements where the Inuit language is used. In Inuit Nunaat, this figure was 82%.

Four Regions of Inuit Nunaat



Source:

http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/aboriginal/maps/Inuit/InuitRegionsAboriginal_Reference_ec.pdf

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6 by telephone: 613-951-5979 or by e-mail at sasd-dssea@statcan.gc.ca.

Statistics Canada National Contact Centre

Toll-free telephone (Canada and the United States):
Inquiries line 1-800-263-1136

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed standards of service that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on www.statcan.gc.ca under About us > Providing services to Canadians.

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2008

All rights reserved. The content of this electronic publication may be reproduced, in whole or in part, and by any means, without further permission from Statistics Canada, subject to the following conditions: that it be done solely for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary, and/or for non-commercial purposes; and that Statistics Canada be fully acknowledged as follows: Source (or "Adapted from", if appropriate): Statistics Canada, year of publication, name of product, catalogue number, volume and issue numbers, reference period and page(s). Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, by any means—electronic, mechanical or photocopy—or for any purposes without prior written permission of Licensing Services, Client Services Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6.

Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.