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USER'S GUIDE  
TO  
1986 CENSUS DATA  
ON  
FAMILIES

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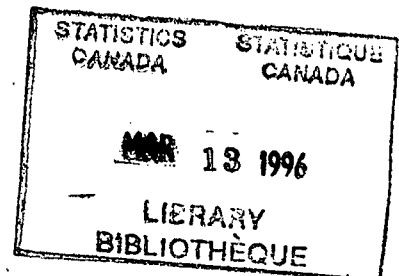
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**USER'S GUIDE  
TO  
1986 CENSUS DATA  
ON  
FAMILIES**

99-113E



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## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide basic information and to aid users in their comprehension of Canadian census data on families. Apart from the presentation of some data not published before, there is a description of concepts and how information is collected and the data processed to form families. Some of the strategies implemented and assumptions made in connection with this processing are pointed out to users. The discussions cover both the 1986 and 1981 Censuses, since the data collection and processing routines for family information were the same in both years. Aspects of data quality and availability which are of pertinence to users are also discussed. Finally, the paper reviews the way in which the census handles topical family subjects, such as common-law partnerships and the methods used to identify such family groupings as native and immigrant families.



## II. WHAT IS A FAMILY?

For the 1986 Census, as for 1981, the population in private households in Canada, in Hutterite collectives and in Canadian households overseas may be divided into persons who were members of census families and those who were not. The former (85.5% of the 1986 population) are simply termed **family persons** and the latter, **non-family persons**. The term family, however, is not as straightforward, nor is its meaning in everyday usage necessarily the same as in the census. The following indicate the range of ways in which the family is commonly described.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary: members of a household, parents, children, servants, etc.; set of parents and children, or of relations, living together or not; person's children.

New Columbia Encyclopedia: social group consisting of parents and their children. This is the nuclear, or conjugal family...

Encyclopedia Americana: a group of persons related by birth or marriage (ordinarily parents and their children) who reside in the same household. In common usage, the term has been extended to include ancestors (as in "family tree"). It is sometimes used for relatives of one spouse as opposed to the other (as in "my husband's family"), and colloquially for unrelated people living in the same household (as in "we're just one family").

Encyclopedia Britannica: family and marriage - basic social units having as their nucleus two or more adults living together in the same household and co-operating in various economic, social and protective activities and in the care of their own or adopted children.

Funk and Wagnall's Standard Desk Dictionary:

- parents and their children
- the children as distinguished from the parents
- a group of persons connected by blood or marriage
- a succession of persons connected by blood, name, etc.
- a household

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary:

- the collective body of persons who live in one house
- a father, mother and their children
- one's husband (or wife) and children
- a group of people related by blood or marriage; relatives

The census identifies two types of families:

**Census family:**<sup>1</sup>

- (a) a husband and a wife (with or without children who have never married,<sup>2</sup> regardless of their ages), or
- (b) a lone parent of any marital status with one or more children who have never married (regardless of age), living in the same dwelling.

**Economic family:** a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption.<sup>3</sup>

Persons living common-law are regarded as husband and wife. Consequently, all discussions of husbands and wives in this document (including husband-wife families) encompass common-law partnerships.

Though always referring to a group of two or more persons, the term family may mean different things to different people and sometimes to the same people at different times. Likewise, census usage may differ from everyday usage. Co-residence in conjunction with relationships is the essence of the census concept of family. While members of a census or economic family co-reside and thus belong to the same household, not all members of a household are automatically members of a family, as is suggested in some of the dictionary definitions provided earlier. Indeed, the distinction between members of a family and members of a household is a very important one, warranting the description provided later in this document. Figure 1 indicates who in a household are included in the census counts of families.

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, the distinction will be made between census families, as defined here, and families in the census, the latter referring to both census and economic families.

<sup>2</sup> Persons reporting their marital status as now-married, divorced, separated or widowed are not considered children in this definition, though they may be the sons and daughters of some member of the household.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to the definition of census family, married, widowed, divorced or separated sons and daughters are included in the definition of economic family.

**Figure 1. Persons Included in Family Counts in the Census**

---

**Census Family**

---

- (a) Husband = Father or stepfather, if unmarried children present  
and  
Wife = Mother or stepmother, if unmarried children present  
Unmarried children (may or may not be present)
- (b) Mother  
plus  
Unmarried children
- (c) Father  
plus  
Unmarried children
- 

---

**Economic Family**

---

All persons identified above for census family  
plus  
Brothers/Sisters  
Cousins  
Aunts/Uncles  
Nephews/Nieces  
Grandparents  
Grandchildren  
Married Children and In-laws

---



### III. DIFFERENCES IN COUNTS BETWEEN SAMPLE AND FULL COVERAGE DATA ON FAMILIES

Users should know precisely what family information from the census means and what are some of the analytical possibilities associated with it. Apart from the distinction between census and economic families and their associated data sets, users should know that there are two series of information on families available from the census. The first (referred to as the 2A count) was obtained on a 100% basis, i.e. from enumeration of the entire population.<sup>4</sup> It provides only basic demographic and family characteristics, such as number and sex of lone parents, age of husbands and wives, and number of children in census families. The second series was collected from the same questions as for the 2A series, but asked of a 20% sample of the population. The information was then weighted to be applicable to the entire population. Unlike the 2A data, this series permits detailed analysis of a wide range of socio-economic and cultural characteristics, such as income, education, ethnic origin and occupation of family members. Because of the effects of weighting, there are slight differences in the counts from these two series. The 2A counts indicate that there were 6,734,975 census families in Canada in 1986, accounting for 85.5% of the population. By contrast, the 2B counts are 6,733,845. The corresponding figures for economic families are 6,812,255 (2A) and 6,813,835 (2B).

---

<sup>4</sup> *The 2A or short form was used to enumerate 4/5 of all private households in Canada. The remainder of the population was enumerated primarily via the 2B (long form), the first portion of which replicated the 2A questionnaire. Other forms used during enumeration included the 2C for persons outside Canada and the Form 3 for institutional residents of collectives and for persons who did not wish their information to be included on a questionnaire with other members of their household.*





#### IV. IDENTIFYING FAMILIES

##### 1. The Target Population

Data used to identify families were collected from questions asked either of or regarding the target population in the census. In recent censuses, this target comprised:

- (a) Canadian citizens or landed immigrants in Canada on Census Day;
- (b) Canadians and landed immigrants whose usual residence on Census Day was a location in Canada, but who happened to be out of the country during enumeration;
- (c) Canadian citizens and landed immigrants aboard Canadian registered vessels;<sup>5</sup> and
- (d) Canadians abroad on government assignments, such as diplomatic postings and military duty.<sup>6</sup>

##### 2. Enumeration Methods

In the 1986 Census (as in 1981), almost the entire target population (99%) were enumerated via the self-enumeration method. Prior to Census Day (June 3, 1986), questionnaires were delivered for completion by household members on this date. Completed documents were mailed back to Statistics Canada (69%) or picked up by census representatives. The canvasser method was used for less than 2% of the population, with census staff visiting homes to collect the required information through interview. Canvasser enumeration was undertaken mainly in remote areas of the north.

##### 3. Questions and Concepts Pertaining to Family-related Information

In the 1986 Census, questions on the following topics were used to obtain information for identifying families:

Relationship to Person 1  
Date of birth  
Sex  
Marital status

The questions and accompanying instructions are provided in Figure 2.

---

<sup>5</sup> Although enumerated in the census, these persons are part of the general exclusions from data processing in connection with the identification of families, largely because of the low likelihood that families would be found among this group.

<sup>6</sup> Other Canadians and landed immigrants outside Canada on Census Day are enumerated if they so request and can indicate a usual residence in Canada.

### Figure 2. Census Questions and Guide

#### Question 2 - Relationship to Person 1

<b>2. RELATIONSHIP TO PERSON 1</b>		
For each person in this household, mark <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>one box only</b> to describe his or her relationship to Person 1. If you mark the box "Other relative" or "Other non-relative", print in the relationship to Person 1.		
Some examples of the "Other" relationships are:		
grandmother	room-mate's daughter	common-law partner of son or daughter
uncle	employee's husband	
<i>(See Guide)</i>		
01 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person 1		
02 <input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife of Person 1	09 <input type="checkbox"/> Brother-in-law or sister-in-law of Person 1	12 <input type="checkbox"/> Lodger
03 <input type="checkbox"/> Common-law partner of Person 1	10 <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild of Person 1	13 <input type="checkbox"/> Lodger's husband or wife
04 <input type="checkbox"/> Son or daughter of Person 1	11 <input type="checkbox"/> Nephew or niece of Person 1	14 <input type="checkbox"/> Lodger's son or daughter
05 <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother of Person 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Other relative of Person 1 <i>(print below)</i>	15 <input type="checkbox"/> Room-mate
06 <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister of Person 1		16 <input type="checkbox"/> Employee
07 <input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law of Person 1		<input type="checkbox"/> Other non-relative <i>(print below)</i>
08 <input type="checkbox"/> Father-in-law or mother-in-law of Person 1	17 <input type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 100px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>	

**Figure 2. Census Questions and Guide - Concluded**

**Question 3 - Date of birth**

**3. DATE OF BIRTH**  
Print day, month and year. Example:  
If you were born on the 10th of  
February, 1945, you would enter

1	0				
Day					
0	2	1	9	4	5
Year					

If exact date is not known,  
enter best estimate.

Day					
18					
Month		Year			
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	D			

**Question 4 - Sex**

**4. SEX**

20	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
21	<input type="checkbox"/> Female

**Question 5 - Marital status**

**5. MARITAL STATUS**  
What is your marital  
status? (See Guide)

Mark one box only

22	<input type="checkbox"/> Now married (excluding separated)
23	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated
24	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
25	<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed
26	<input type="checkbox"/> Never married (single)

## **Question 2**

To enable us to identify family groups within the household, it is necessary to select a reference person (Person 1), and to state the relationship of each household member to that person. For example, if John Smith lives with his father Thomas Smith, and Thomas Smith has been entered as Person 1, John Smith would mark "Son or daughter of Person 1".

There may be a member or members of your household whose relationship to Person 1 is not described in Question 2. In such cases, mark either "Other relative of Person 1" or "Other non-relative", and also print the exact relationship to Person 1 in the space provided.

"Other relative" includes persons such as uncles, aunts, cousins, grandfathers, grandmothers, and so on. "Other non-relative" refers to household members who are not related to Person 1 by blood, marriage, adoption or common-law. Some examples are employee's wife, employee's daughter, room-mate's son, landlord, and so on.

The term "common-law", as used in "Common-law partner of Person 1" or as may be used to describe any other such partnership in the household (for example, "Lodger's common-law partner") applies to any case of a couple living together in this type of union.

Note that stepchildren, adopted children, and children of a common-law partner should be considered as sons and daughters. Foster children, wards and guardianship children who are not related to Person 1 by blood, marriage, adoption or common-law should be listed as lodgers.

*This question is needed to identify family and non-family groups and persons living alone. Information on the numbers and characteristics of these groups is essential for planning of social programs such as old age security and family allowance. These data are also used in identifying future needs for housing and community services from health and education to recreation and transportation.*

## **Question 3**

*Information on age is essential in projecting future population trends and in better understanding social and economic changes. It is a key element in planning for a community's needs such as day care facilities, schools and senior citizens' housing.*

## **Question 4**

*This question is vital in studying population trends. Data classified by sex are needed to understand the changing social and economic roles of men and women.*

## **Question 5**

Mark "Now married" if you have a husband or wife who is now living, even if you are temporarily living apart because one of you is employed away from home, hospitalized, etc., but not if you are actually separated or have obtained a divorce.

Mark "Separated", if you are separated from your husband or wife due to causes such as desertion or marriage breakdown, or because you no longer want to live together, provided that no divorce has been obtained.

Mark "Divorced" if you have obtained a divorce and have not remarried.

Persons in a common-law type of relationship should mark one of the boxes "separated", "divorced", "widowed" or "never married" according to the guidelines provided above.

*Marital patterns of the population can affect family laws and social programs geared to such groups as single-parent families, the elderly living alone, etc.*

#### **(a) The Concept of Person 1 and Its Forerunner, Household Head**

The concept of Person 1 was instituted for the first time in the 1981 Census, replacing the contentious term, household head. This contentiousness was based on the connotation of dominance, bread-winning, leadership and decision-making, particularly in households where roles were neither well-defined nor necessarily fixed. There was the additional presumption of sexual bias in selection of the household head, consistent with the fact that up to and including the 1971 Census, only the husband in a husband-wife couple could have been selected as the household head. The 1976 Census permitted the wife to be identified as head of household and retained the other possibilities for determining the head, where neither a husband nor wife resided in the dwelling. The head of household then was defined as:

"either the husband or the wife; the parent where there was one parent only, with unmarried children; or any other member of a group sharing a dwelling equally."

The term Person 1 was perceived to be more neutral and less value-laden than its forerunner (household head), though there was in essence only a terminological rather than a substantive change. In the 1981 and 1986 Censuses, most family assignment rules were based on the relationship (e.g., son, mother-in-law) of other household members to the person reported as Person 1. A few other rules (and relationships) were determined by reference to another household member. This individual was, however, linked to Person 1 through a reported relationship such as room-mate or lodger. Thus, families could be identified from responses such as lodger's wife and room-mate's daughter. Since all household and family relationships were determined through direct or indirect reference to Person 1 (the household reference person), it is important that this concept be clearly understood.

#### **(b) Selecting Person 1**

Person 1 had to be an adult member of the household, of either sex. Persons less than 15 years were not acceptable as Person 1, though the age of adulthood (in this case, validity to be Person 1) was not specified on the questionnaire.

Respondents were not required to undertake any coding action in respect of Person 1. A pre-coded, pre-completed answer box already existed on the questionnaire, eliminating the need for the respondent to enter an "X". The only action required was to follow the instructions given on the questionnaire and enter the name of the person selected as Person 1.

Person 1 was not necessarily the person completing the questionnaire, nor automatically the person at home on Census Day. For example, housewives may have selected their working husbands as Person 1. In this connection, 70% of the individuals identified as Person 1 were male. The following guidelines for selection of the person to be reported as Person 1 were specified or implicit in information provided on the questionnaire.

As persons in common-law relationships were regarded as husbands and wives, they followed the rules identified in Figure 3. Either partner was acceptable as Person 1.

**Figure 3. Who Should Be Reported as Person 1?**

<b>Household composition</b>	<b>Household size (No. of persons)</b>	<b>Person 1</b>
(a) Only a husband and wife, without children or other persons present	2	Either the husband or the wife
(b) Only a husband and wife with their unmarried child(ren), regardless of the child(ren)'s ages	3 +	Either the husband or the wife
(c) One or more husband-wife families with other adults present (with or without unmarried children, regardless of age)	3 +	Any adult
(d) Lone parent and unmarried child(ren) only	2 +	The parent
(e) Lone parent and unmarried child(ren) with other adults	3 +	Any adult*
(f) A person living alone	1	That person
(g) Other configurations not identified above, e.g., a mother with a daughter who was once married	2 +	Any adult

\* Ideally, if the respondent adheres to the instructions regarding order of listing (see Appendix A), the lone parent would be identified as Person 1.

**(c) Relationships to Person 1**

Fifteen relationships to Person 1 were pre-coded and included as individual mark-box options on the questionnaire; see Figure 2. The respondent was required to enter an "X" in the appropriate box. More than 99% of the population were able to respond in this way (see Appendix B). If the relationship was not one of those for which a mark-box was provided, then the respondent had the option of writing an answer in the space provided. Some possible write-in responses (e.g., grandmother, uncle, employee's husband) were included as examples on the questionnaire. A few others, such as "live-in maid" and "cousin's wife" depended entirely on what the respondent thought was appropriate.

In the 1986 Census, there were 55,785 write-in responses indicating relationships for which there were no mark-boxes on the questionnaire. All were coded in Statistics Canada's regional offices immediately after the receipt of the questionnaires. Several other write-in responses (number unknown) were captured by census staff via a mark-box during regional office processing. Thus, a write-in of Bob's wife, where Bob was the brother of Person 1, would have been coded to and captured as sister-in-law.

**(d) Age/Date of Birth**

Age was calculated from the date of birth question. Respondents were required to provide an entry for day, month and year of birth, though "day" was only reviewed in cases where the reported month of birth was June, i.e. the census month. The objective of this review was to determine whether, at the census date, individuals born in June had reached their birthday. Age was calculated as age, in single years, at the respondent's last birthday.

**(e) Sex**

Only two options were provided on the questionnaire. The respondent was to be reported as either male or female.

**(f) Marital Status**

Respondents were required to report their marital status from among the choices indicated earlier in Figure 2. These choices were assumed to be indicative of a person's legal marital status. The 1986 Census Dictionary defined them in the following way:

Now Married (excluding separated): Persons whose husband or wife is living, unless the couple is separated or a divorce has been obtained.

Separated: Persons who have been deserted or who have parted because they no longer want to live together, but have not obtained a divorce.

Divorced: Persons who have obtained a legal divorce and who have not remarried.

Widowed: Persons who have lost their spouse through death and who have not remarried.

Never married (single): Persons who have never married (including all persons less than 15 years of age) and persons whose marriage was annulled.

For most persons married in Canada, being legally married would have resulted in the issuance of a marriage certificate by authorities in the provinces or territories. Those among Canada's native peoples who were married by Indian custom were requested to report themselves as now married, even though they might not have been in possession of a marriage certificate.

Persons reported as married may have had a spouse present or absent. The latter was not necessarily separated in the sense of what has been described above for the category "Separated". "Married/Spouse Absent" meant only that the marital partner of the respondent was not residing in the dwelling during enumeration and had been away for a period of six months or more. The reason for being away may have been confinement to an institution such as a hospital, chronic or special care facility, or prison. Some persons may have been away for work-related reasons, for example, service abroad with the Armed Forces. In some situations, marital breakdown or desertion may have been the reason for a spouse being absent from the household, though the respondent was unwilling to consider and report marital status as "Separated". Regardless of reason, the persons absent were not enumerated at their "home address".



## V. EDIT AND IMPUTATION AND THE FORMATION OF FAMILIES

All census information was validated via a processing routine referred to as **edit and imputation**. During this process, responses provided by household members were deemed to be valid or in conflict, on the basis of predetermined edit rules. Valid data were accepted without modification. Conflicts were resolved following a rule of minimum change to respondent-provided data. The resolution of conflicts allowed data to pass the edit rules and thus become acceptable. Data for each member of the household had to satisfy these edit rules.

### Edit rules for data pertaining to the formation of families

For the questions pertinent to the Family Assignment Program, the following constituted data conflicts and required corrective action:

- (a) blanks (non-response) for all questions;
- (b) month of birth less than 01 or greater than 12;
- (c) year of birth before 1865 or after 1986;
- (d) other than one response for sex;
- (e) other than one response for marital status;
- (f) other than one response (including a mark-in and a write-in response) for relationship to Person 1;
- (g) valid responses for any of the questions noted above which conflict with other responses for the same person, or another household member, e.g., marital status is "Now married" and the person is only 6 years of age.

Non-response rates during the 1986 Census were as follows: relationship to Person 1 (1.0%); age (1.2%); sex (1.1%); marital status (1.6%). Multiple and invalid responses, such as indecipherable entries, were negligible, amounting to well below 1/10th of 1% for each variable.



## VI. THE FAMILY ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM

### 1. Introduction

In the census, all families were identified via the application of a processing routine referred to as the Family Assignment Program. Persons in private households in Canada, in Hutterite collectives and in Canadian households abroad went through this automated process to determine whether they were members of census or economic families. Though enumeration was carried out in other collectives, such as hospitals, prisons and work camps,<sup>7</sup> families were not identified among the population therein.

Collectives (with a total population of 434,370 persons or 1.7% of the population of Canada in 1986) were excluded from the Family Assignment Program, mainly because of the low likelihood of locating families in most of these dwellings. Major difficulties also arise in controlling the order in which residents are listed and in determining possible family relationships among them. This is particularly true in very large collectives such as prisons and hospitals. In the 1981 Census, a manual operation was undertaken to identify families in collectives. Because of cost and efficiency considerations and what was believed to be a general lack of public interest in this information, a similar operation was not carried out in connection with the 1986 Census.

### 2. Edit Rules and the Family Assignment Program

Data within the Family Assignment Program had to satisfy a number of edit rules or validity conditions. These were:

#### (a) **One and Only One Eligible Adult Identified as Person 1**

Eligibility was based on the guidelines for identifying Person 1 indicated in Figure 3. Thus, in a household comprising a husband-wife family, either the husband or the wife was acceptable as Person 1; in a household comprising only a lone-parent family, only the lone parent could be Person 1.

Every household had to have someone identified as Person 1. This was the only compulsory relationship. If no one was reported in the space provided, then the person in the next reporting position was selected. Though only one individual was to be reported as Person 1, provision of the names of two persons was not precluded by the presence of two write-in boxes for respondents to enter names. The intention was to provide sufficient space to accommodate the family name and given names. This, however, did not generate any significant problems.

#### (b) **A Valid Age for all Household Members**

Validity commenced at 0 (for persons who had not yet reached their first birthday on Census Day) and extended to 121. It was based on age at the census date and calculated from the information on date of birth provided for each respondent.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Appendix C lists the collectives from which census information was collected, but for which no family assignment was undertaken.*

**(c) Sex Reported as Either Male or Female**

The question did not permit any other option.

**(d) Marital Status as One of the Following: Now Married, Separated, Divorced, Widowed, Never Married**

This was in keeping with the range of options presented on the questionnaire.

**(e) Only One Person Identified as the Husband, Wife or Common-law Partner of Person 1. This Person and Person 1 Were Not to Be of the Same Sex**

Since, in Canada at the current time, a husband can have only one wife and vice versa, there is a legal basis for the first part of this validity condition. Because common-law partners were treated as husbands and wives by the census, they were encompassed by the same rules. The requirement that husbands and wives not be of the same sex was consistent with the connotation of husbands as males and wives as females.

**(f) No More than Two Persons Identified as Father/Mother of Person 1. These Persons (if Two Present) Had to Be Now Married and Not of the Same Sex**

This condition was derived partly from the previous one and partly from what would generally be regarded as the usual situation. The father and mother of Person 1 were identified via an entry in the same answer box. If only one person was identified as father/mother of Person 1, the marital status was not important.

**(g) No More than Two Persons Identified as Father-in-law/Mother-in-law of Person 1. Both These Persons (if Two Present) Had to Be Now Married and Not of the Same Sex**

The same reasoning as posited above applied here. The presence of in-laws meant only that the individuals discussed in the previous edit rule would now be the mother and father of Person 1's spouse, rather than of Person 1.

**(h) Both Person 1 and the Wife, Husband or Common-law Partner of Person 1 Had to Be Now Married**

This was based on the implicit recognition of husbands as married men and wives as married women. Again, since common-law partners were considered by the census to be husbands and wives, the same interpretations applied to common-law partnerships.

Referred relationships, i.e. those contingent on the presence of lodgers, room-mates and employees in the household, had to satisfy the same general conditions identified above. For example, lodger's husband/wife was a valid relationship only if:

- (i) a lodger was present in the household;
- (ii) the lodger and the person reported as lodger's husband/wife were both now married; and
- (iii) these persons were not of the same sex.

As a corollary, a lodger was a family person if (i), (ii) and (iii) above were satisfied. In households where there was no lodger's spouse, a lodger's family could comprise the lodger and at least one never-married person reported as lodger's son/daughter.<sup>8</sup> All lodger's children who were reported as currently or previously married were not members of the lodger's census family. However, the possibility existed that they could constitute additional census families in their own right.<sup>9</sup> For example, write-in responses for lodger's son and lodger's daughter-in-law suggested the existence of other family groupings in the household. In these cases, the write-in responses would have been coded to lodger and lodger's spouse, thus permitting these additional families to be captured.

Lodgers tended not to be family persons. Of the 254,270 persons reported as lodgers in the 1986 Census, only 8,370 (3.3%) were in census families. Another 12,385 were reported as relatives of lodgers (e.g., lodger's son) and 12,210 were also members of census families.

### 3. Changes to Respondent-provided Information during Family Assignment

Within the context of the Family Assignment Program, some respondent-provided data were modified so that conflicts with a number of explicit and implicit census rules would be resolved. These rules were based on a combination of logic and what one would normally expect to find in the real world. In 573,692 households in the 1986 Census (6.3% of the total private households), corrective action was required for the information reported or the order in which respondents were listed. Situations which warranted these data modifications are outlined below.

The identification of an individual as Person 1 had to satisfy the conditions identified in Figure 3. Likewise, the reported relationship of household members to Person 1 had to satisfy a number of logical rules, such as a father being older than the person reported as his son.

#### (a) **Inverted Relationships**

Inverted relationships are cases where the reported relationship was that of Person 1 to another member of the household, rather than of the latter individual to Person 1. With inverted reporting, several members of the household had their relationships entered as father/mother, when they should have been son/daughter. Since the more logical relationship is one father/mother - more than one son/daughter per household, this misreporting situation was corrected by changing the reported relationship of father/mother to son/daughter. The following is an example of inverted relationships.

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<sup>8</sup> *The age difference between these persons could not be less than 15 years.*

<sup>9</sup> *In theory, all members of these census families based on relationships to the original lodger would constitute one economic family. However, the lodger's child(ren) and associated spouse(s), with or without grandchildren, would be recoded to form separate lodging families. As a result, economic family relationships comprising the lodger and his/her family are not maintained, though the number of census families in the household remains unchanged.*

Name	Reported relationship	Age	Sex	Expected relationship
John	Person 1	38	M	Person 1
Jocelyne	Wife of Person 1	36	F	Wife of Person 1
Richard	Father	15	M	Son
Suzanne	Father	13	F	Daughter
Peter	Father	09	M	Son
Lynne	Father	05	F	Daughter

In the above example, inversion in the reported relationship may also be detected through reference to other reported characteristics of the respondents. It may be noticed that the ages of the persons identified as father are not what would be expected for parents. In situations where both parents were present in the household (i.e. the household comprised a husband-wife family), the difference between the child's age and that of the younger parent had to be at least 15 years. In potential lone-parent families, this age difference criterion was not evaluated. The position was taken that the potential lone parent need not be the natural parent of the child. However, it is more reasonable to assume that, in lone-parent families, the relationship is one of parent/natural-born children, thus making the evaluation of age difference more relevant here than for husband-wife families.

**(b) Children Reported as Person 1**

For census family purposes, a never-married person living with one or both parents is considered a child. Regardless of age, an individual in this position was not accepted as Person 1. For resolution of this invalid reporting situation, the parent (male or female) in the next reporting position was assigned to be Person 1 and relationships in the household modified accordingly. In the example below, Brian would be identified as Person 1 and Mary as Person 1's wife. If Mary was in position 2, then she would be identified as Person 1 and Brian as the spouse. Either way, Diane becomes Person 1's daughter.

Name	Reported relationship	Age	Sex	Marital status	Expected relationship
Diane	Person 1	47	F	Single	Person 1's daughter
Brian	Father	76	M	Now married	Person 1
Mary	Mother	75	F	Now married	Person 1's spouse

The expected relationships are the ones which are maintained on the data base and used in the output program for information on families.<sup>10</sup> The other characteristics such as age, sex and marital status remain as reported.

<sup>10</sup> Since the 1981 Census, the reported relationships have also been maintained on the data base, though this information is not published. It is retained simply for provision of an audit trail.

**(c) Misreporting of Spousal Relationship**

This situation is already implied from the two previous examples. Here, the spouse of Person 1 was reported as mother or father of the other household members.

Name	Reported relationship	Age	Sex	Marital status	Expected relationship
Lucie	Person 1	53	F	Now married	Person 1
Claude	Father	56	M	Now married	Person 1's spouse
Marcel	Son	23	M	Single	Son
Justin	Son	20	M	Single	Son
Louise	Daughter	18	F	Single	Daughter

Corrective action was to change Claude's reported relationship from father to Person 1's spouse.

**(d) Change to Sex or Reported Relationship**

In 11,000 two-person households (out of a total of 2,137,712) in the 1986 Census, Person 1 and the spouse of Person 1 were captured as having the same sex.<sup>11</sup> Since the term "spouse" is usually applicable to persons of opposite sex, some corrective action was required for either the spousal relationship or reported sex. Following the principle of minimum change to reported information while resolving data conflicts, action could see either a change for the relationship of Person 2, or a change to the sex of either person. In cases where both individuals were reported as having a marital status of "now married", the absence of a spouse as a result of a change to the reported relationship was a potentially conflicting situation. Corrective action in such situations was therefore to change the reported sex of one partner. Since the names of persons were neither captured nor evaluated during data processing, a change to the reported sex of a household member did not generate any identifiable conflict.

For further information on the detailed technical aspects of the Family Assignment Program, readers could refer to Relationship to Person 1 and Family Characteristics: 1981 Census Head Office Processing Results, Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 99-944 (Hamm, Brian and Walton O. Boxhill (1985)).

<sup>11</sup> This was up from 8,000 in 1981 and consisted of 66% males and 34% females.





## VII. ORDER OF LISTING HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO FAMILY ASSIGNMENT

Instructions regarding the order in which household members should be listed were provided directly on the census questionnaire. The objective of these instructions was to have all members of the same family group listed together. The ordering of boxes for reporting relationship to Person 1 was based primarily on reporting frequencies in previous censuses. However, it also had the fortuitous effect of guiding respondents in following the prescribed order.

Person 1 was the first individual to be identified on the questionnaire. As noted, a pre-coded mark-box was provided and the respondent was not required to undertake any coding action.

Mark-boxes for recording the information pertinent to Person 2 were located in the next reporting position. This was the only place where the husband/wife or common-law partner of Person 1 was to be reported, if there was such a person in the household. Although there was no difference in treatment of husbands/wives and common-law partners during the Family Assignment Program, the provision of a separate mark-box for the latter permitted determination of the number of families in which Person 1 was a common-law partner. In the 1986 Census, more than 99% of the 486,940 families with common-law partners were identified in this way. The rest were determined from writings such as common-law partner of lodger, common-law partner of employee and common-law partner of son/daughter or other relative.

An answer box for the child(ren) of Person 1 and/or his or her spouse or common-law partner was next. This was not only consistent with the instructions regarding order of listing, but facilitated the grouping of persons in husband-wife and lone-parent families, based on reference to Person 1. The consistency between placement of answer boxes and instructions regarding the order of listing ceased here however. For example, one would expect that son/daughter would be followed by daughter-in-law/son-in-law, in keeping with the assumption of a natural tendency for spouses to report themselves together. Though failing to encourage this through questionnaire design is not catastrophic, the grouping of answer boxes by known family relationships would undoubtedly have a positive spin-off in the reduction of omissions from the household and in the assignment of persons to the correct families. In the absence of reporting by age, a pattern of placement which induces the reporting of persons according to census family membership may have more than cosmetic value. This is particularly relevant where relationships occur more than once in the household. For example, where there are two or more married sons/daughters and consequently daughters-in-law/sons-in-law in the household, assignment of these persons to the right family grouping is contingent on the order in which the respondent lists them. The following chart illustrates this and the problems which may result from listing these persons in any order.

Person	Age	Marital status	Reported relationship	Possible census family
1	64	Widow	Person 1	0 (= non-family person)
2	43	Married	Son	1
3	37	Married	Son	2
4	37	Married	Daughter-in-law	1 or 2
5	37	Married	Daughter-in-law	1 or 2
6	10	Single	Grandchild	1 or 2
7	8	Single	Grandchild	1 or 2
8	6	Single	Grandchild	1 or 2

In the foregoing example, Person 4 may be the spouse of either Person 2 or Person 3. There is not sufficient information to determine which. Because the spouses are not listed together, determining the correct census family groupings is problematic. On the other hand, if the individual currently listed as Person 4 was listed in position 3, one could safely assume that Persons 2 and 3 were spouses of each other. In the 1986 Census, the assumption was made that the second son listed and the first daughter-in-law would constitute one census family and Persons 2 and 5 in the example above would constitute another.

In households where relationships were not always clear, the order in which household members were listed and their age differences were assessed to determine which combinations were most reasonable. This was most important in households where the relationships were not all based solely on reference to Person 1. Thus, the reported relationship of lodger's son/daughter was based not on reference to Person 1 but owed its validity to the presence of a lodger in the household. In some cases, not only did the lodger have his/her own census family, but there were also ever-married sons and daughters of the lodger present, sometimes with children of their own.

It was possible to form other families by direct reference to Person 1, though the persons involved need not have been members of Person 1's census family. Again the placement of answer boxes provides guidance in listing household members and subsequently, in identifying family groupings. For example, the father and/or mother of Person 1 and any of their unmarried children would constitute one census family, so these answer boxes are located together. These unmarried children (the sons/daughters of Person 1's father or mother) would be the brothers/sisters of Person 1.

## VIII. CENSUS AND ECONOMIC FAMILY STATUS

Upon resolution of all data conflicts, potential family members were identified and grouped for analysis of relationships and assignment to a particular family. Person 1, his/her spouse and any never-married children constituted one group and were analysed separately from other household members. Any sons/daughters who were or had been married, sons-in-law/daughters-in-law or grandchildren (note that all these were identified with reference to Person 1) in the household were grouped separately, since they had the potential to constitute census families in their own right. Likewise, room-mates, lodgers and their potential family members were grouped and analysed separately.

Once household members were grouped and delimiters set to identify persons as members of the same family grouping, each individual was assigned a census family status. This indicated who was a census family person and who was not. Census family persons fell into three categories:

(a) husbands and wives (including persons of opposite sex living as common-law partners);

(b) lone parents, regardless of sex; and

(c) children.

Any household member who was not identifiable as a husband, wife, common-law partner, lone parent or child was classified as a non-family person.

Husbands and wives are assumed to live together in the same dwelling, with or without children. Lone parents are either fathers or mothers, with no spouse or partner present, living in a dwelling with one or more never-married children. Though non-family persons do not belong to a census family, they may be related to Person 1 through blood, marriage or adoption (e.g., brother-in-law, uncle), or unrelated (e.g., lodger, room-mate, employee). A person living alone is always a non-family person.

Economic family status was also assigned to members of the household. Every census family person was also an economic family person. In addition, persons who were related to other household members by blood, marriage or adoption (although not members of census families) constituted economic family persons. Among this group were two or more brothers, two or more cousins, two or more sisters, or various combinations of such persons. All other persons living in the dwelling were identified as unattached individuals.



## IX. CHILDREN IN CENSUS AND ECONOMIC FAMILIES

### 1. Age and Marital Status of Children in the Census

Like "family", the meaning of the term "children" in the census may not always be the same as in common usage. The census regards children as **natural (blood) or adopted sons and daughters, as well as stepsons or stepdaughters**, regardless of age, who have never married and are living in the same dwelling as their parent(s). With this definition used in the census, there were 8,578,335 children in Canada in 1986, down slightly from 8,666,685 in 1981. Just over 7.2 million of these children were living with both parents, while the other 1.4 million were in lone-parent families.

This definition of children has been operative since the 1976 Census. Prior to then, there was some variation in the age cut-offs and the way children were identified and data displayed in census publications. Harrison (1979: 47-48) provides the following information on the identification of children in previous censuses.

1971: Children in families "refers to sons and daughters, under 25 years, who have never married and are living at home. Children who have ever been married, regardless of age, are not considered as members of their parents' family even though they are living in the same dwelling. Unmarried sons and daughters 25 years and over living at home on the census date are also family members, but considered [and tabulated as] children only in a broad sense in a few tabulations."

1976: The age cut-off [used in earlier publications] was dropped and children were identified as "sons and daughters (including adopted and stepchildren), who have never married, regardless of age, and are living in the same dwelling as their parent(s). Sons and daughters who have ever married, regardless of age, are not considered as members of their parents' family, even though they are living in the same dwelling."

1981: The definition remained essentially the same, though a minor modification was made to clarify marital status at the time of enumeration. The 1981 Census Dictionary (page 61) notes that "child refers to sons and daughters (including adopted and stepchildren) who have never married, regardless of age and are living in the same dwelling as their parent(s). Sons and daughters who have ever been married, regardless of their marital status at enumeration, are not considered as members of their parents' family, even though they are living in the same dwelling."

1986: There was no change in the identification of children; see the 1986 Census Dictionary, page 77.

Several points are worth emphasizing in the definition of a child in the census. First, since 1976, age is not of relevance in determining who is a child and in displaying the resultant data for output. Persons 60 years of age would be considered children in the context of family status, as long as they have never been married and are living at home with a parent. Although 6.9 million persons identified as children in the 1986 Census were under 20, another 1.6 million were over 20 years old and may be considered adults solely on that basis.

The second point of note is that the identification of children is associated with the existence of census families. "Child" is not a reported relationship, but is derived in connection with census family status. Again, regardless of the ages of individuals under consideration, the parent-child relationship is important. For there to be children in a household, there must also be blood, adoptive or step-parents present. Any person who is identified as a child is always a member of a census family.

Thirdly, not being identified as a child in the census does not necessarily mean that a person is an adult, as may be the case in everyday usage. Indeed, adult is not defined in the census, though husbands, wives, lone parents, grandparents and most persons aged 20 or older may be so regarded.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that 3.3 million persons over the age of 15 and 1.6 million aged 20 or older were considered to be children in the 1986 Census. Of the 8.6 million persons identified as children, 5.2 million were aged less than 15.

Upon marriage or leaving the family home, persons cease to be children in the eyes of the census. Sons and daughters who are married, or were married, are not considered to be members of their parent's census family, even if they are living in the same dwelling at the time of enumeration.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, unmarried sons and daughters who may be away from home during enumeration (such as at boarding school), but whose usual place of residence is their parents' home, are considered to be members of their parents' family. Thus, not only is the terminology and its meaning very important, but where people happen to be living is also evaluated to determine whether they are members of a family or not.

## 2. Grandchildren

Grandchildren provide another interesting example of how census usage and measurement differ from everyday interpretation of the term. Grandchildren are included in the census counts of children only if the following conditions are met: (1) the grandsons or granddaughters must be never married and (2) at least one of their parents must be residing in the same dwelling. Thus, grandchildren would only be counted as children in multi-generational households consisting of grandparents, parents and children. In such situations, persons reported as grandchildren of Person 1 (regardless of their age) would be members of a census family in which their parents are also members. They, thus, satisfy all the criteria for being children in the census. In households where parents are not present eg., there are only grandchildren and a grandparent for their upbringing), all persons are regarded as non-family persons and the grandchildren are not included in the census counts of children. In the chart on the next page, the young persons in the household would not be included in the counts of children, since they are not members of a census family. By contrast, those in the second example are considered children, even though the demographic characteristics of the persons in both households are not very different.

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<sup>12</sup> *The age of adulthood in the census may be considered as implied from such cut-offs as 15+ for marital status and other variables.*

<sup>13</sup> *Sons, daughters, adoptees and stepchildren cease to be children once their marital status changes to now married. Regardless of their future marital status and living arrangements (including divorced or separated, but living at home with their parents), for census purposes, these individuals never revert to being children.*

Person	Reported relationship	Age	Sex	Marital status	Census family status
<b>Example A:</b>					
John	Person 1	62	M	Widowed	Non-family person
Peter	Grandchild of Person 1	14	M	Single	Non-family person
Susan	Grandchild of Person 1	12	F	Single	Non-family person
<b>Example B:</b>					
Marie	Person 1	62	F	Widowed	Non-family person
Marc	Son	32	M	Divorced	Lone parent
Suzette	Grandchild of Person 1	12	F	Single	Child
Pierre	Grandchild of Person 1	10	M	Single	Child

Within the Family Assignment Program, the assumption is made that Suzette and Pierre are Marc's children. Because a parent is present in the household, the grandchildren of Person 1 are considered children in the context of census family status.

Of the 160,325 persons reported as grandchildren in the 1986 Census, half were not in census families and were therefore not included in the national counts of children.

### 3. Nephews and Nieces

The treatment of nephews or nieces of Person 1 is similar to that of grandchildren. They are included in census counts of children, only if at least one of their parents is present in the household. Thus, a 5-year old who is living with (but not formally adopted by) an uncle and/or aunt would not be included in the census counts of children. However, if the parent is also present in the household, it is possible to identify a census family and the 5-year old would thereby be included in the counts. Of the 56,055 persons reported as nephews or nieces in 1986, only 13,000 were also identifiable as children.

### 4. Foster Children and Wards

Foster children and wards are not identified as children in the census. They are included as lodgers on the final data base and are not counted as members of the families with which they reside. By definition, however, they are members of the same household. Though in theory, two siblings who are foster children or wards in the same household constitute an economic family, data processing constraints within the Family Assignment Program prevent their capture as such. Prior to the 1976 Census, foster children and wards for whom no pay was received were included as members of the families with which they resided.

**5. Stepchildren**

Statistics Canada (1984) has identified stepchildren as "children from the former union of a spouse or common-law partner". Though no identification of who constitute stepchildren is provided in the census, the definition is assumed to be much broader than in the Family History Survey, referring to sons and daughters of one, but not both adults in a husband-wife family. This latter, less restrictive interpretation of who constitute stepchildren facilitates, for example, the inclusion of children born ex-nuptially to mothers who are now wives in husband-wife families.

It is not possible to disaggregate census data into natural, adopted or stepchildren, since they were all reported as sons and daughters in accordance with census instructions. Respondents were instructed to treat stepchildren, adopted children and children of a common-law partner as sons and daughters.

**6. Children in Census and Economic Families: A Summary**

The following chart summarizes the status of household members based on reported information such as relationship, age and marital status.

Person	Age	Marital status	Relationship	Census family	Economic family
John	63	Now married	Person 1	1	A
Marie	59	Now married	Wife	1	A
Julie	37	Widowed	Daughter	2	A
Robert	12	Single	Grandchild	2	A
Lucie	09	Single	Grandchild	2	A
Marc	25	Separated	Son	-	A
Nicole	12	Single	Niece	-	A
Benjamin	14	Single	Lodger (ward)	-	-
Brian	24	Now married	Lodger	3	B
Janet	21	Now married	Lodger's wife	3	B
Jerry	03	Single	Lodger's son	3	B

Note that this household comprises three census families. Census family 1 comprises John and Marie who are married to each other. Census family 2 comprises Julie (the daughter of John and Marie) and her two children, who have both been correctly reported as grandchildren of Person 1. Though Julie is the natural daughter of John and Marie, she is not a member of their census family, since she has been married. Her relationship to Person 1 has been identified as "daughter". Because of her marital status, she would not be considered a "child", thus eliminating conflict with the literal view of a child being a young person.

Marc is also the son of John and Marie though, like Julie, he is not a member of their census family. Since he has neither a wife nor never-married children residing with him, he is not a member of any census family; rather, he is a non-family person.

Census family 3 comprises Brian, Janet and their son, Jerry. Brian and Janet are married to each other but neither is related to any member of family 1 or 2. Census families 1 and 2 are considered to be related census families, while census family 3 is



a non-related family, because none of its members are related to Person 1. The members of the two related census families constitute one economic family, since all members are related.

If, for whatever reason, John's spouse is not a member of the household (i.e. John is divorced, separated, widowed, or married/spouse absent) or he is single, his family status is contingent on the marital status of any children who are members of the household. In the above example, John would be a non-family person, since both his children were married (Julie is widowed and Marc is separated). By contrast, if John had never-married children living with him, then together with John they would constitute a census family. John would be a lone parent and they would be regarded as his children.

In the household depicted in the chart on the previous page, only Robert, Lucie and Jerry are considered to be children by the census; Nicole is not. Since Benjamin is a ward and is not related by blood, marriage or adoption to anyone in the household, he is a non-family person and an unattached individual.



## X. COMMON-LAW PARTNERSHIPS

No census, including the one in 1986, has ever provided a definition of "common-law". The term, however, is viewed as describing a consensual union and a living arrangement in which two persons are not legally married to each other but live together in the same dwelling as husband and wife. As a corollary to this understanding of "common-law", persons reported as common-law partners could not be of the same sex. The edit rules also required that these persons be at least 15 years of age.

It is recognized that homosexual couples do exist and some (number unknown) are reported in the census. However, census processing identifies the reporting of common-law partnerships by persons of the same sex as a conflict to be resolved by changing either the reported relationship of Person 2, or the reported sex for either of the partners. This deterministic strategy was activated mainly in two-person households, where Person 2 was reported as common-law partner of Person 1. As pointed out earlier, since the census does not capture the respondent's name, the automated change to reported sex does not generate any conflict between name and sex.

To resolve conflicts generated by the reported age of the common-law partners (persons reported as being less than 15), the common-law relationship was altered so that it would pass the edits.

In both the 1971 and 1976 Censuses, there was subliminal reference to the subject of common-law relationships, though their reporting was not explicitly solicited by anything in the questionnaire nor in its accompanying guide. In fact, the only direct reference to "common-law" is contained in the guide to the questionnaire, with the request that persons living common-law report their marital status as "now married". The issue of common-law partnerships was not addressed in connection with any other question, though mention of "partner" in connection with relationship to head of household was ambiguous and potentially misleading.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the fact that the reporting of common-law relationships was not expressly requested in the 1976 Census, this did not prevent some 73,000 respondents from providing a write-in response indicating that they were living in a common-law type arrangement. Among these were "common-law", "fiancé", "future husband/wife", "boy-friend" and "girl-friend". Though these responses to the relationship to head of household question could all be taken as indicating common-law partnerships,<sup>15</sup> they were not maintained as such on the final data file. Rather, they were re-coded to an appropriate spousal relationship. For example, a write-in response of common-law partner of head of household would have been recoded to represent wife or husband of head.

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<sup>14</sup> The 1976 Guide notes that the respondent should "Specify as partner a person who is unrelated to the head of the household, who has equal access to dwelling facilities and/or shares responsibility for the maintenance of the household (e.g., a room-mate)."

<sup>15</sup> They all may be taken as persons living together in a consensual union. Note that boy-friend and girl-friend must be living in the same dwelling.

The 1981 Census was the first to attempt capture and retention of common-law responses, with the term "common-law" being used in several places, including the questionnaire (Question 2) and the instructions (see Figure 2).<sup>16</sup>

Common-law partnerships were determined in two ways:

- (a) provision of a pre-coded answer box for the common-law partner of Person 1;
- (b) use of the write-in space by all other common-law partners.

Examples of write-in responses indicating the existence of common-law partnerships are *common-law partner of Person 1's son, lodger's common-law partner, or live-in lover*. If the respondent failed to volunteer such detail, the information regarding common-law partnerships was not captured. For example, if the common-law partner of Person 1's nephew reported herself as niece of Person 1, then identification of the common-law relationship could not be achieved.

As in the 1976 Census, persons living common-law were included as husbands and wives in the census publications. Consequently, in the delimitation of census and economic families, persons living common-law were considered to be now married, regardless of their legal marital status. Husband-wife families were not disaggregated into now-married and common-law couples in publications from the 1981 Census. However, both subgroupings are available from the data base. The total 5,610,965 husband-wife families published in census tabulations comprises 5,254,360 now-married couples and 356,605 common-law partnerships.

There was no change in the automated processing of common-law partnerships between the 1981 and 1986 Censuses. However, during regional office processing, efforts were intensified towards avoiding the a priori identification of common-law partnerships because two persons were living together. Where common-law partnership was expressly reported, or where conjecture suggested that it was reasonable to assume the existence of such a living arrangement, data processing retained these partnerships on the data base.

Several tables in the published data from the 1986 Census make the distinction between now-married couples and common-law partnerships. Almost 487,000 common-law partnerships (or 8.3% of the 5,881,330 husband-wife families) were identified. However, the possibility cannot be discounted that some respondents who were common-law partners may have chosen to report themselves as husbands/wives, thus becoming indistinguishable from legally married couples.

According to the 1986 Census, common-law partners tended not to have children in the household, nor to reside with anyone else. Almost two-thirds (62.2%) of all common-law partnerships did not include children, down slightly from 65.7% in 1981. The average number of children per common-law family was 0.6, a little less than half of what it was for now-married couples. Most (92.5%) common-law partnerships were reported in households with only two persons.

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<sup>16</sup> It may be argued that a description of how couples living in a common-law type of arrangement are considered by the census does not in and of itself constitute an instruction on how respondents should report themselves.

## XI. LONE PARENTS

Lone parent refers to a mother or a father, with no spouse present, living in a dwelling with one or more never-married children. Being a lone parent should be distinguished from being a single parent, particularly since the latter often connotes being an unwed mother. Lone parents are persons who are raising children in the absence of spouses. They may be of either sex and any marital status.<sup>17</sup> Their households may include other persons, such as relatives.

According to the 1986 Census, there were 853,645 families in Canada headed by lone parents. This is an increase of 20% from the 1981 figure. Lone-parent families constituted 12.7% of all families in Canada, a slight increase over the 1981 figure of 11.3%.

Most lone-parent households included only the lone parent and his/her children. In only 16% were there other adults such as parents, brothers or sisters of the lone parent. Most lone parents were female and most had a marital status of divorced or separated.

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<sup>17</sup> Lone parents are normally persons who are separated, divorced, widowed or never married, the last as in the case of the single mother. However, some may also be married with spouses absent from the household for work-related reasons, or health.



## **XII. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CENSUS AND ECONOMIC FAMILIES**

### **1. Persons Included in Census and Economic Families**

The census family concept is based on husband-wife or parent-never-married child relationships. By contrast, the economic family includes both married and unmarried children, their parents, as well as cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, in-laws and other relatives residing in the same dwelling.

An economic family may consist of several census families. For example, an aunt and uncle of Person 1 (if married to each other) with their unmarried children (the cousins of Person 1) in themselves constitute a census family. Similarly, the grandparents of Person 1 comprise another census family. Together, however, all the persons discussed in this paragraph make up one economic family, since they are all related by blood, marriage or adoption and all reside in the same dwelling.

### **2. Cases Where the Census Family and Economic Family Are the Same**

In the following situations, the census family and economic family are one and the same:

- (a) the household consists of one husband-wife or one lone-parent family and no other persons;
- (b) two or more husband-wife and/or lone-parent families which are not related to each other share accommodation. In this situation, there are two or more census families and the same number of economic families; and
- (c) in addition to census family members, there are unrelated persons (e.g., lodger(s) and employees).

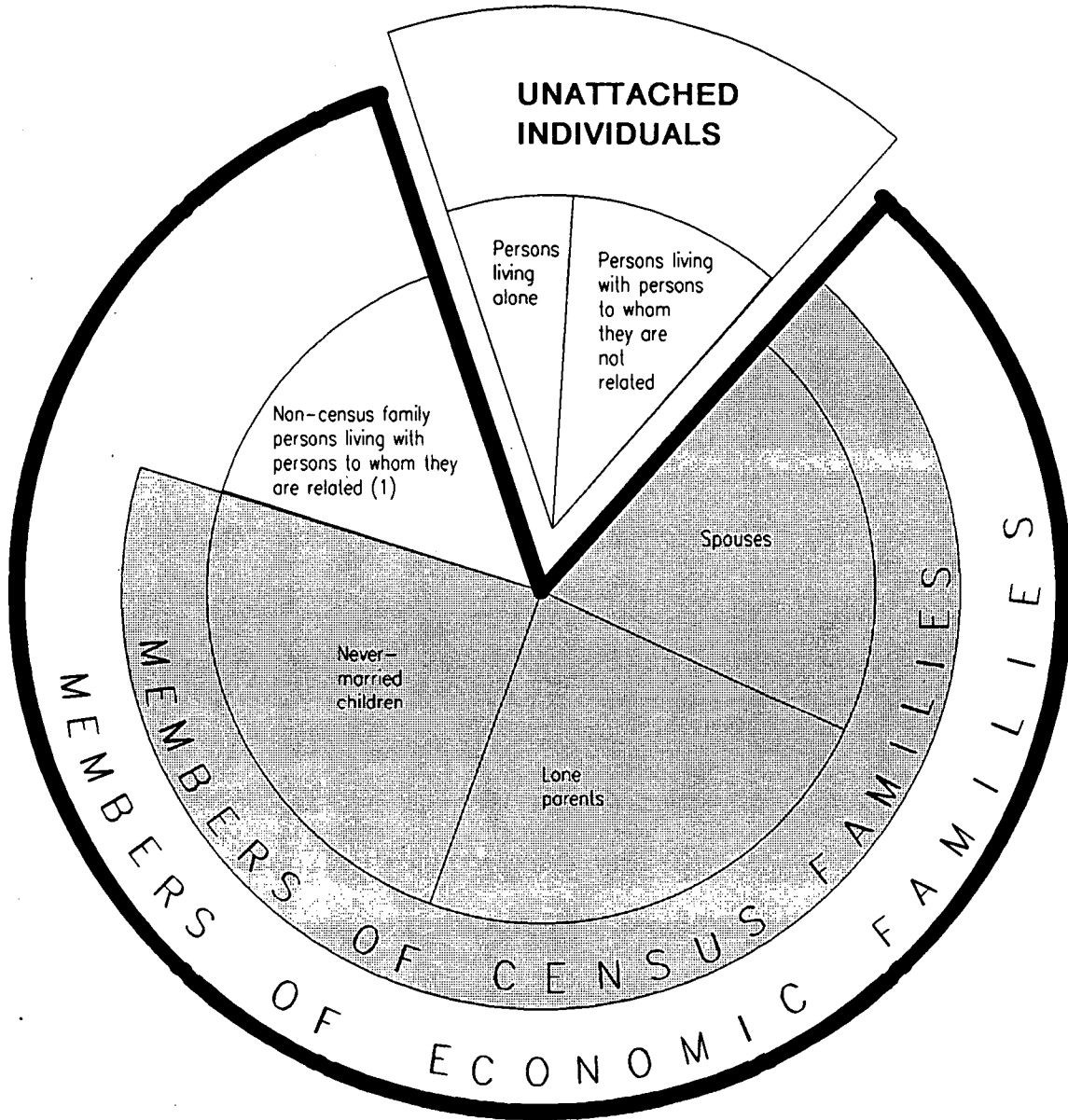
In all other situations, the economic family is larger than the census family. Figure 4 illustrates the composition of census and economic families.

### **3. Some Common Economic Families Which Are Not Census Families**

- two or more siblings with no parent present
- a grandparent and grandchild(ren)
- cousins
- a father (or mother) and a son/daughter who was previously married

All persons in these four households are non-census family persons, though they are all related to each other. However, since the relationships are not husband-wife, parent-child or common-law, they do not make up census families.

**Figure 4. Relationship Between Unattached Individuals and Persons Living in Census Families and Economic Families in Private Households**



(1) These relationships include: grandparent/grandchild; parent/ever-married child; sibling/sibling; in-law/in-law; aunt or uncle/nephew or niece.



### XIII. FAMILY VS. HOUSEHOLD

Most households comprise only members of the same family, with co-residence of members being a feature of both the family and households comprising two or more persons. This often generates confusion in interpreting the terms "family" and "household", and understanding the differences between them.

The census definitions of a family were provided in Section II of this document. A household, for its part, is defined as a person or group of persons who occupy a dwelling<sup>18</sup> and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada. There were 8,991,672 private households in Canada in the 1986 Census<sup>19</sup> as compared with 6,734,975 families.

A family always comprises at least two persons who are related to each other by blood, marriage (including persons living as common-law partners) or adoption. By contrast, a household may consist of persons who are not related to each other, or it may simply be a person living alone.<sup>20</sup> Two or more families living together in the same dwelling (a living arrangement described as "doubling") constitute one household. In addition, a household may consist of persons who are members of the same family sharing a dwelling with persons who are their lodgers.

<b>Family</b>	<b>Household</b>
Must comprise at least two persons	May consist of a person living alone
Members must be related by blood, marriage or adoption	Members may be unrelated, e.g., room-mates
Number of persons in the family never greater than number of persons in the household	Number of persons in the household never less than number of persons in the family

Some persons may always regard their blood relatives as members of their family, regardless of where they happen to be living and even if there has not been contact for many years. However, for census purposes, family members must be usual residents of the same dwelling (and thus members of the same household).

In the census, every person belongs to one and only one household and, if a member of a family, to only one. The de jure nature of Canada's census means that household members who are temporarily absent from their usual residence on Census Day are considered to be part of their usual household rather than the one where they happen to be during enumeration.

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<sup>18</sup> According to the 1986 Census Dictionary, by dwelling is meant "a set of living quarters in which person(s) reside or could reside. Each dwelling is a structurally separate set of living premises to which entry is made from a private entrance outside the building (e.g., in the case of single-detached dwellings) or from a common hallway (as in some self-contained apartments in rooming-houses). The entrance to each dwelling must be one which can be used without passing through someone else's living quarters."

<sup>19</sup> There were an additional 10,750 Canadian households overseas, with a population of 25,450. See Appendix C for information on collectives.

<sup>20</sup> An individual living alone is always a non-family person.



#### XIV. TERMS USED IN THE CENSUS TO DESCRIBE FAMILIES

##### 1. Family by Structure

###### (a) Husband-wife Family

A family comprising a husband and a wife with or without never-married children. Common-law partnerships are combined with husband-wife families in some 1986 Census tables. Prior to the 1981 Census, it was not possible to distinguish between a legally married couple and common-law couple.

###### (b) Lone-parent Family

A family in which there is only one parent and at least one never-married child. In the 1986 Census, most (82.2%) lone-parent families were headed by females.

##### 2. Family by Type (Primary and Secondary Family)

A primary family (sometimes referred to as a maintaining family) is one in which the person or any one of the persons responsible for household payments, such as rent, mortgage, taxes or electricity<sup>21</sup> is a member. All other families are secondary (or non-maintaining) families. This classification is applicable to both census and economic families occupying private dwellings but not to those in Hutterite collectives or households abroad.

There can be only one primary family per household, though not every household contains a primary family. For example, where individuals live alone, there are no primary families and indeed, no families at all. Similarly, where the person responsible for household payments is a non-family person, there is no primary family, though there may be one or more secondary families. If the person responsible for household payments does not reside in the dwelling, then, for tabulation purposes, Person 1 is considered to be responsible for these payments but no primary family exists. Note too that, in multiple-family households, the concept of maintaining (primary) versus non-maintaining (secondary) families becomes fuzzy, since it is reasonable to assume that household payments would be shared by members of more than one family.

Before the 1981 Census, primary families were identified as those in which the household head was a member. Although the current identification represents a conceptual change, the historical comparability of information on this subject is only affected slightly.

In the 1986 Census, there were 6,534,365 primary and 200,610 secondary families in private households. In 90% of households, Person 1 and the person responsible for household payments were the same person.

##### 3. Person 1 Family

A family (either census or economic) in which Person 1 is a member is a "Person 1 family", while all other families are referred to simply as "other than Person 1 families". As indicated earlier, a Person 1 family is not necessarily a primary family,

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<sup>21</sup> The person responsible for household payments is identified from the information provided to Question 8A on the census questionnaire. See Appendix E.

since the designation of primary families is contingent on the presence/absence of the person responsible for household payments, not Person 1. For inclusion in a Person 1 census family, an individual must be Person 1, or his/her spouse or common-law partner, or his/her unmarried child.

4. **Related Family**

A family in which members are related to Person 1, through blood, marriage or adoption, but are not included as members of Person 1's census family because they do not meet the criteria indicated in the previous paragraph. Related families comprise such persons as brothers, sisters, in-laws, nieces and nephews. Conversely, families in which the members are not explicitly related to Person 1 are referred to as "non-related families". Note that all related families comprise one economic family and there is no such thing as a related economic family.

## **XV. OTHER TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE FAMILIES**

### **1. Aboriginal and Immigrant Families**

Census staff have, on occasion, been requested to provide information on "native families" and "immigrant families" from census data. Any attempt to do this must reconcile the conceptual issue of assigning the characteristics of one person to a group in which that person is a member. Both "aboriginal" and "immigrant" are person level identifiers, while family refers to a group of individuals. Where all individuals in the group are aboriginal peoples or immigrants, then identification of the group as an aboriginal or immigrant family is not problematic. However, if only some individuals in the group are aboriginals or immigrants, then it is debatable whether their characteristics should be applied to all members of the group. These difficulties become more serious in the labelling of "blended families", i.e. where stepchildren are involved. Figure 5 illustrates some of the difficulties in identifying native and immigrant families.

Despite the difficulties associated with the description of a family on the basis of characteristics of only selected members, the census (1986 Census Dictionary, page 73) has provided the following definition of an aboriginal (native) family:

"Aboriginal census families are defined as those in which the husband and/or the wife (in a husband-wife family) or the lone parent (in a lone-parent family) is an aboriginal person."

In this definition and others, users should exercise caution in their assumptions about composition of the group described.

### **2. Blended or Re-constituted Families**

This term is not used in the census, though its incidence as a feature of family life in Canada may be increasing. It refers to families resulting from two spouses bringing children to a new union from previous ones. It has also been used loosely to describe situations in which a child of one spouse becomes the stepchild of a new spouse. Such children are legitimately coded as children and census data have never distinguished between the natural children of one spouse and the stepchildren of another. The instructions in the 1981 and 1986 Censuses specifically requested that stepchildren be included as sons and daughters.

Figure 5. Describing Families on the Basis of Selected Characteristics

	Husband	Wife	Lone- parent (male or female)	Children	Related non- family persons A(1)	Related non- family persons B(2)	Unrelated non- family persons(3)	Immigrant	
								Family	Household
Household A: Immigrant	X	X		X	X			X	X
Non-immigrant									
Household B: Immigrant	X	X					X		
Non-immigrant									
Household C: Immigrant	X							?	?
Non-immigrant		X							
Household D: Immigrant		X						?	?
Non-immigrant	X								
Household E: Immigrant	X								
Non-immigrant		X		X				?	?
Household F: Immigrant					X			?	?
Non-immigrant	X	X							
Household G: Immigrant			X		X				
Non-immigrant				X					
Household H: Immigrant						X	X		
Non-immigrant									
Household I: Immigrant							X	(4)	
Non-immigrant							X		?
Household J: Immigrant			X						
Non-immigrant				X					
Household K: Immigrant					X			?	?
Non-immigrant			X	X					

- (1) For example, in-laws. These persons are related to Person 1 in the census family but are not members thereof.
- (2) For example, two brothers or two cousins living together but no census family being present.
- (3) For example, two or more room-mates.
- (4) No family present.

Note: This matrix is not exhaustive but should indicate the complexity of situations. In those indicated by (?) it really is your choice of whether it is an immigrant family or household. Most are potentially contentious. In short, the ascription of characteristics to a group on the basis of the characteristics of an individual is not always a defensive strategy.

## **XVI. CENSUS OUTPUT**

Family statistics are only published for private households in Canada. Appendix D lists some common sources of such data from the 1986 Census. Though persons other than those in private households undergo Family Assignment (persons in Hutterite collectives and households outside Canada), they are excluded from published tabulations. This exclusion is to ensure comparability between the families universe and the ones used in tables on households and housing. Though Canadian citizens and landed immigrants aboard Canadian registered vessels are enumerated in the census, they are not included in the Family Assignment Program, unless they are included as members of the households where they usually reside.





## APPENDIX A. ORDER OF LISTING HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

(from the 1986 Census Questionnaire)

To ensure that all persons in the same family group are listed together, the following order should be used when printing the names of all members of the household in Question 1.

**(a) Person 1;**

Choose one of the following as Person 1:

- either the husband or the wife of a married couple living here;
- either partner in a common-law relationship;
- the parent, where one parent lives with his or her never-married son(s) or daughter(s) of any age.

If none of the above applies, choose any adult member of this household.

**(b) husband or wife (or common-law partner) of Person 1;**

**(c) never-married children or stepchildren of Person 1;**

**(d) other children of Person 1, and their families;**

**(e) other relatives of Person 1 (whether related by blood, marriage, adoption or common-law), and their families;**

**(f) persons not related to Person 1, and their families.**

Though not an explicit instruction, it is assumed that respondents will follow the sequence in (a) in order to make the appropriate selection of Person 1. This ordering system may pose problems for respondents who interpret Person 1 to be the pivotal person in the family and/or household. In households where this assumption is made and the individual selected as Person 1 is an unmarried offspring of elderly parents, it is debatable whether a data processing change to have one of the parents identified as Person 1 (see page 17) is the correct strategy.



**APPENDIX B. WRITE-IN RESPONSES FOR RELATIONSHIP TO PERSON 1  
IN THE 1986 CENSUS**

Employee's common-law partner	5
Employee's husband or wife	90
Employee's son or daughter	375
Lodger's common-law partner	115
Other relative, e.g., great-grandfather	39,580
Other relative's common-law partner	1,765
Other relative's husband or wife	1,795
Other relative's son or daughter	5,930
Room-mate's common-law partner	80
Room-mate's husband or wife	490
Room-mate's son or daughter	5,560
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55,785</b>

Coded answers (mark-boxes)

Person 1	8,991,675
Husband or wife of Person 1	5,312,370
Common-law partner of Person 1	484,975
Son or daughter of Person 1	8,608,030
Father or mother of Person 1	102,680
Brother or sister of Person 1	204,900
Son-in-law or daughter-in-law of Person 1	53,400
Father-in-law or mother-in-law of Person 1	85,835
Brother-in-law or sister-in-law of Person 1	71,980
Grandchild of Person 1	160,325
Nephew or niece of Person 1	56,050
Lodger	254,270
Lodger's husband or wife	3,180
Lodger's son or daughter	9,090
Room-mate	300,495
Employee	18,075
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,717,320</b>



**APPENDIX C. DISTRIBUTION OF COLLECTIVE DWELLINGS BY TYPE AND  
POPULATION, 1986 CENSUS**

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<b>Type of collective</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Population</b>
Hotels, motels, tourist homes	4,860	25,965
Lodging- or rooming-houses	3,065	25,500
School residences, YMCA/YWCA, etc.	2,260	22,575
Work camps	565	2,825
Religious institutions	1,705	31,360
Orphanages	515	4,620
Special care institutions	4,025	211,365
Hospitals, psychiatric institutions and treatment centres	1,740	54,595
Hutterite colonies	240	19,765
Correctional institutions	455	19,885
Military camps, naval vessels, merchant ships	375	15,905
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,800</b>	<b>434,370</b>

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**APPENDIX D. SOURCES OF DATA ON FAMILIES, 1986 CENSUS**

Statistics Canada (1987), 1986 Census of Canada, The Nation - Families: Part 1.  
Catalogue No. 93-106 (100% data).

Statistics Canada (1989), 1986 Census of Canada, The Nation - Families: Part 2.  
Catalogue No. 93-107 (20% sample data).

Statistics Canada, 1986 Census of Canada, Focus on Canada Series, Families in Canada,  
Catalogue No. 98-127, (forthcoming).

Statistics Canada (1989), 1986 Census of Canada, The Nation - Family Income: Census  
Families, Catalogue No. 93-117.

Statistics Canada (1989), 1986 Census of Canada, The Family in Canada: Selected  
Highlights, Catalogue No. 89-509.





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