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The contribution of foreign-born mothers to Canadian births from 1997 to 2024

by Claudine Provencher

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The contribution of foreign-born mothers to Canadian births from 1997 to 2024

by **Claudine Provencher**

Highlights

- In 2024, more than two in five newborns (42.3%) in Canada had a foreign-born mother (i.e., a mother who was born outside Canada), a proportion that has nearly doubled in just over a quarter of a century (22.5% in 1997).
- The adjusted proportion of foreign-born women among women of childbearing age was estimated at 32.3% in the 2021 Census, slightly lower than the percentage of births to foreign-born mothers, which was 33.0% the same year. This trend has been observed in the last five censuses, suggesting that foreign-born women are more likely to give birth in Canada than Canadian-born women of the same age.
- Without the contribution of foreign-born mothers, the total number of births in Canada would have declined faster since 2010.
- Without the contribution of foreign-born individuals to births and deaths, natural increase in Canada would have been negative since 2022.
- In 2024, nearly three in five babies (57.0%) born to mothers over the age of 40 had a foreign-born mother. At the other end of the spectrum, among babies born to mothers aged 19 and under, just over 1 in 10 babies (12.8%) had a foreign-born mother.
- In 2024, Ontario and British Columbia had the highest proportion of births to foreign-born mothers (48.7% each), while the lowest proportion was observed in the Atlantic provinces (23.6%).
- From 1997 to 2024, the largest increases in the number of births to foreign-born mothers were recorded in Saskatchewan (+437%), the Atlantic provinces (+298%), Alberta (+264%) and Manitoba (+206%).
- Among all births in Canada, the proportion of mothers born in India increased nearly fivefold, rising from 2.1% in 1997 to 10.3% in 2024. As a result, India was the most prevalent country of origin among foreign-born mothers in 2024.
- After India, the second-most common country of origin among foreign-born mothers in 2024 was the Philippines, representing 3.1% of all births, followed by China (2.0% of all births).

Introduction

Canada has been experiencing a decline in fertility since 2009 which has accelerated since 2017 (Provencher and Galbraith, 2024). Over the same period, Canada has experienced unprecedented population growth due to strong international migration (Statistics Canada, data visualization 71-607-X2019036). To better understand these demographic events, this study measures the contribution of foreign-born women to births in Canada by analyzing vital statistics birth data from 1997 to 2024. First, an analysis of the evolution of the number of births to foreign-born mothers from 1997 to 2024 is compared with births to Canadian-born mothers over the same period, followed by a look at the specific monthly fluctuations that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Next, the distribution of births in Canada by the mother's place of birth is examined for the same period, followed by a simulation of the estimated level of natural increase by mitigating the contribution of foreign-born individuals. This is followed by a comparison of the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers in Canada with those recorded in other countries. The variation and proportion of births according to the mother's place of birth are then discussed. The study then looks at the main countries of birth of foreign-born mothers over the last quarter of a century, followed by a description of national differences in the prevalence of foreign-born mothers by their age at the time of their child's birth, as well as changes in their average age of childbearing. Finally, an analysis by the mothers' province or region of residence is presented.

Evolution of the number of births in Canada by mother's place of birth

The total number of births in Canada would have declined since 2010 without the contribution of foreign-born mothers

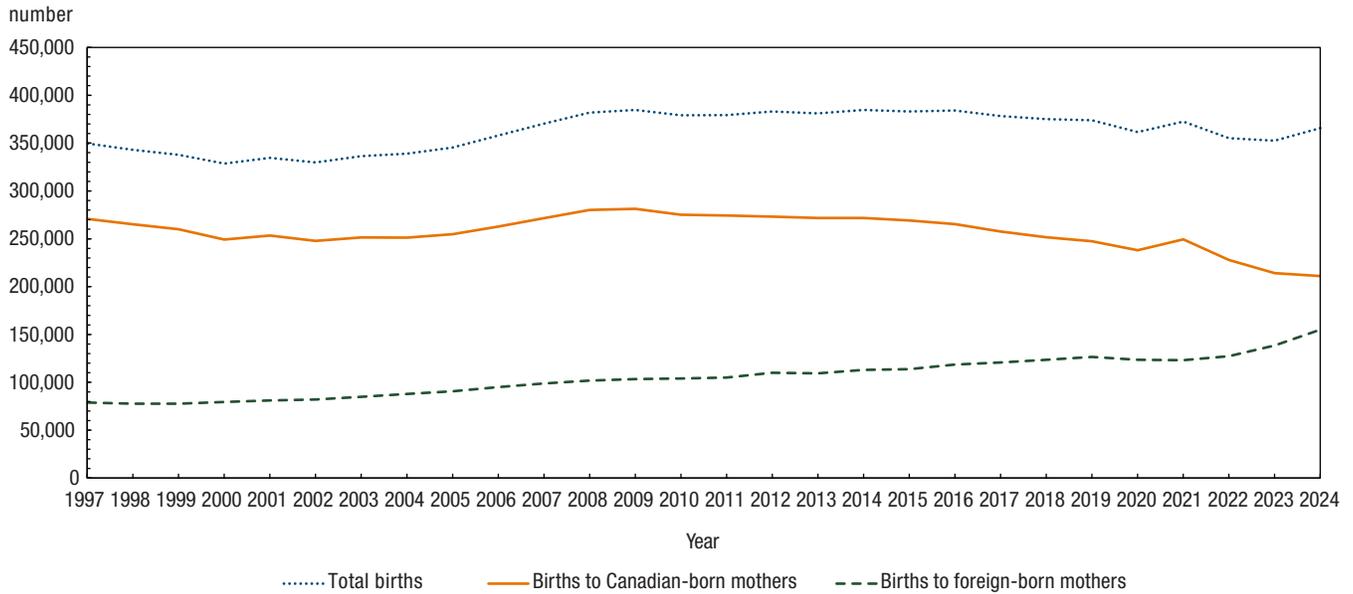
The annual number of births to foreign-born mothers generally increased from 1997 (78,785) to 2024 (154,687). The biggest exception to this trend was the period from 2019 (126,516) to 2020 (123,594), when this number decreased 2.3%. This decline coincided with the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, a year marked by the lowest population growth (in number) since 1945,¹ or the end of World War II (Statistics Canada, 2021). The restrictions put in place at the border and on travel in March 2020 to curb the spread of the virus led to a decrease in the number of international migrants, which fell by nearly half compared with 2019 (from 341,174 to 184,594). Furthermore, Canada lost more non-permanent residents² than it gained (-96,066). Such losses had not been seen since 2015 (Statistics Canada, data visualization 71-607-X2019036).

However, from 2022 to 2024, the country saw a large influx of newcomers (Statistics Canada, table 17-10-0040-01). At the same time, the number of births to foreign-born women rose considerably during this period, with annual increases of 3.4% in 2022, 8.9% in 2023, and 11.7% in 2024. The increase in 2024 is by far the largest of the increases observed during the period of study (from 1997 to 2024). As demonstrated below, the opposite trend occurred for births to Canadian-born mothers, which contributed to the increase in the proportion of births to foreign-born women.

1. The lowest percentage increase was recorded in 1916, during the First World War.

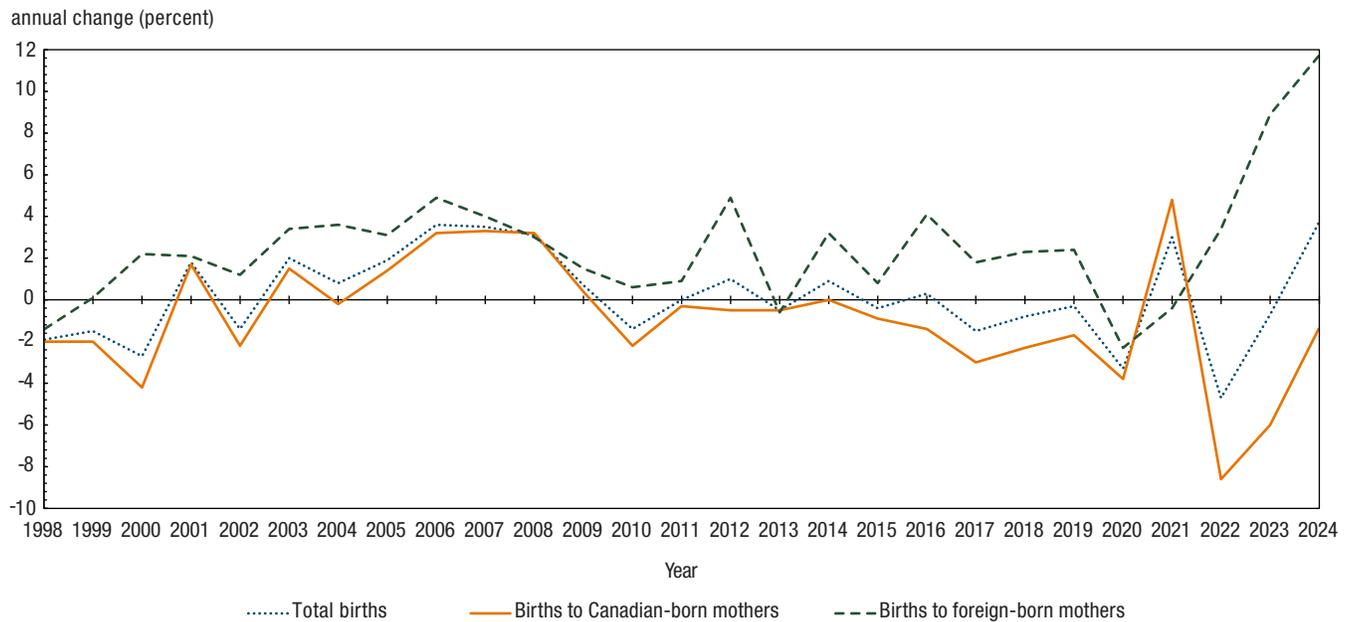
2. Non-permanent residents mainly include student or work permit holders and, to a lesser extent, asylum seekers.

Chart 1
Number of births, by mother's place of birth, Canada, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Chart 2
Annual change (percentage) in the number of births, by mother's place of birth, Canada, 1998 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

During this period, births to Canadian-born mothers followed a different trajectory than births to foreign-born mothers. Following almost constant annual declines (-1.7% on average) in the number of births until 2002 (247,792), a period of growth followed until 2009 (281,309). This period was marked by the federal government enhancing parental leave, adding 25 weeks of parental benefits to the existing 10 weeks, for a total of 50 weeks including maternity leave (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2005). In addition, an increase in the number of women of childbearing age (the children of the baby boom generation also called the “baby boom echo”) may have contributed to this growth. In fact, the results of the 2006 Census showed a five-year increase in the number of Canadian-born women aged 25 to 29, as well as an increase in the number of women aged 25 to 29 and 30 to 34 in the 2011 Census (according to unpublished census data).

The subsequent decline in births to Canadian-born mothers followed the 2008/2009 global recession triggered by the collapse of the U.S. housing market (Lindquist, 2022). This decline accelerated further beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic (-3.8% in 2020) and, after a rebound in 2021 (+4.8%), continued unabated in 2022 (-8.6%), in 2023 (-6.0%) and in 2024 (-1.4%). In fact, the temporary increase in births in Canada in 2021 was driven by the contribution of Canadian-born mothers, while foreign-born women gave birth to slightly fewer babies (-0.4%) in 2021 compared to 2020.

In short, given the decline in births among Canadian-born mothers, and without the contribution of foreign-born mothers, births in Canada would have declined sharply as of 2010.

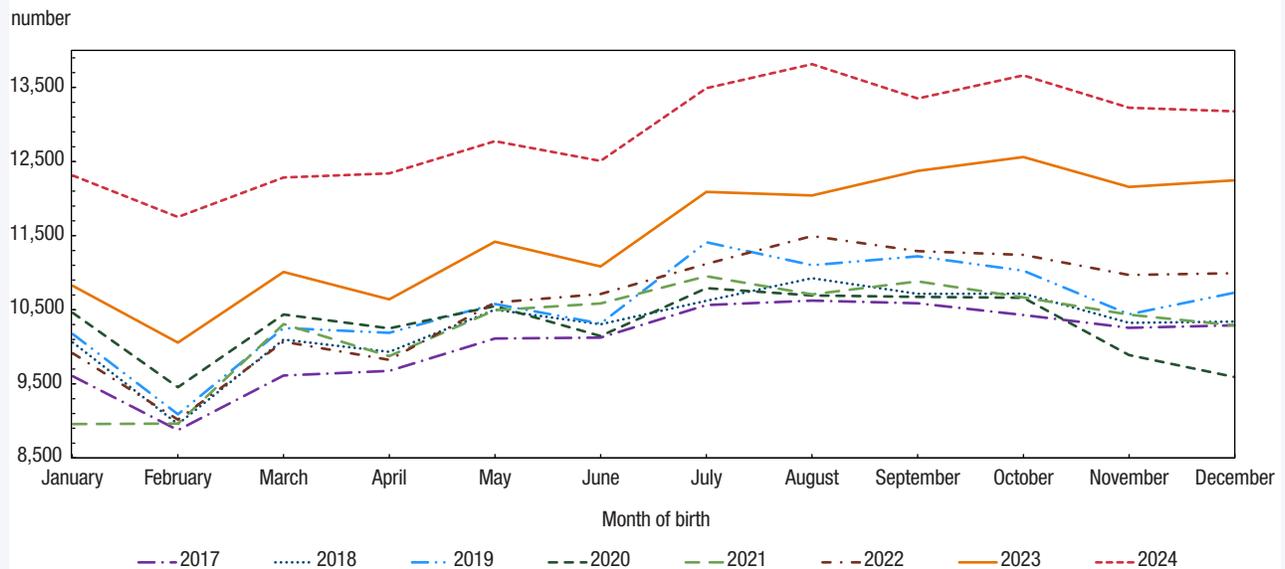
Monthly births during and after the COVID-19 pandemic according to the mother’s place of birth

Some of the largest monthly declines between June 2020 and May 2021, followed by record monthly increases in 2023 and 2024 for births to foreign-born mothers

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a global economic recession that also affected Canada. It is well known that fertility behaviours are influenced by major disruptive events such as pandemics, environmental disasters, and economic slowdowns or recessions (Alderotti et al., 2021; Fostik and Galbraith, 2021; Matysiak et al., 2021; Teng and Margolis, 2024; Winkler-Dworak et al., 2024). Typically, the response to these disruptions is to delay planned pregnancy rather than permanently forgo having a(nother) child (Sobotka et al., 2011). Monthly births across Canada fluctuated during the COVID-19 pandemic (Provencher and Galbraith, 2024), but were these changes the same according to the mothers’ place of birth?

Births to foreign-born mothers increased almost every year between 1998 and 2024. However, 2020 and 2021 were unusual years, as the year-over-year monthly declines were among the largest of the period and occurred consecutively from May 2020 to May 2021 (see Table 3 in the appendix). Border crossing restrictions following the COVID-19 pandemic declaration happened during that period. This downward trend was also observed in the U.S. monthly data on births to foreign-born mothers (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2025). The years 2023 and 2024 stood out due to record annual increases in births (8.9% and 11.7%, respectively), as well as record year-over-year monthly increases in virtually every month during this period (see Table 4 in the appendix).

Chart 3
Number of births by month, foreign-born mothers, Canada, 2017 to 2024



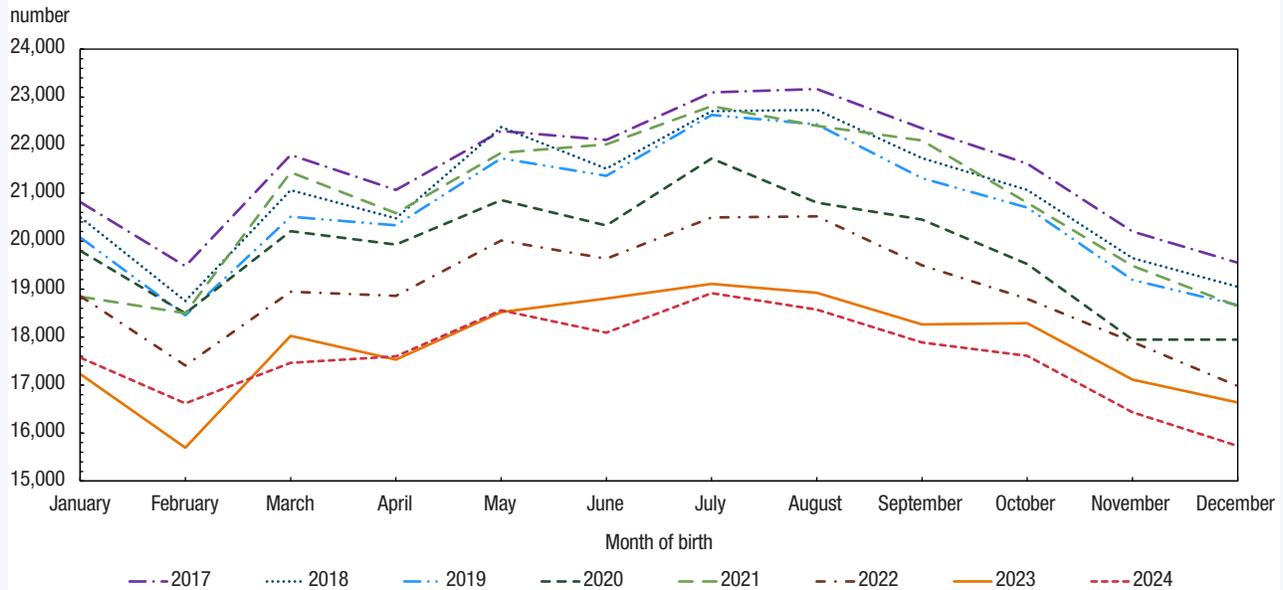
Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Record monthly increases in 2021 and some of the largest monthly decreases in 2022 and 2023 for births to Canadian-born mothers

The first year of the COVID-19 pandemic was characterized by a significant decline in the number of births to Canadian-born mothers, especially as of March 2020, with increasingly large differences observed in the subsequent months (see Table 5 in the appendix). This period coincided with border crossing restrictions and lockdown measures imposed by government authorities across the country. However, the fact that there was a greater decline in births from May to November 2020, even though these children were conceived between August 2019 and February 2020, suggests that this decline may be unrelated to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, this decline cannot be due to the stillbirth rate, which decreased that year³ (Statistics Canada, table 13-10-0427-01; Statistics Canada, table 13-10-0414-01; author's calculations). Moreover, abortions cannot be used as a potential influencing factor due to a lack of historical comparability before 2020⁴ (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2025).

3. The stillbirth rate decreased from 8.6 per 1,000 births in 2019 to 8.5 per 1,000 births in 2020, a drop of 1%. That said, a temporary annual fluctuation is not unusual in an overall upward trend that began after 2004, when there were 6.1 stillbirths per 1,000 births, compared with 8.8 in 2023.
 4. It cannot be determined whether there was a change in the trend in abortion data, given that there was a change in the data collection methodology for Ontario in 2020 to improve the accuracy of reported abortion volumes in Ontario.

Chart 4
Number of births by month, Canadian-born mothers, Canada, 2017 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother’s place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

The sole exception to the decreasing birth trend among Canadian-born mothers occurred in 2021, when a record increase in births was recorded, driven by increases during the months from March to December (see Table 6 in the appendix). This surge of births suggests a “rebound” of births previously postponed in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The evolution of the number of births to Canadian-born mothers in 2022 and 2023 stood out, in that the year-over-year monthly declines were among the biggest during this period and occurred in almost every month. The year 2024 partly coincided with the return of decreases seen before the pandemic, both on a monthly and annual basis.

Births in the United States to U.S.-born mothers also saw significant monthly variations starting in 2020, but the magnitude of these variations was smaller; there were declines in 2020, 2022, and 2023 and increases in 2021 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2025).

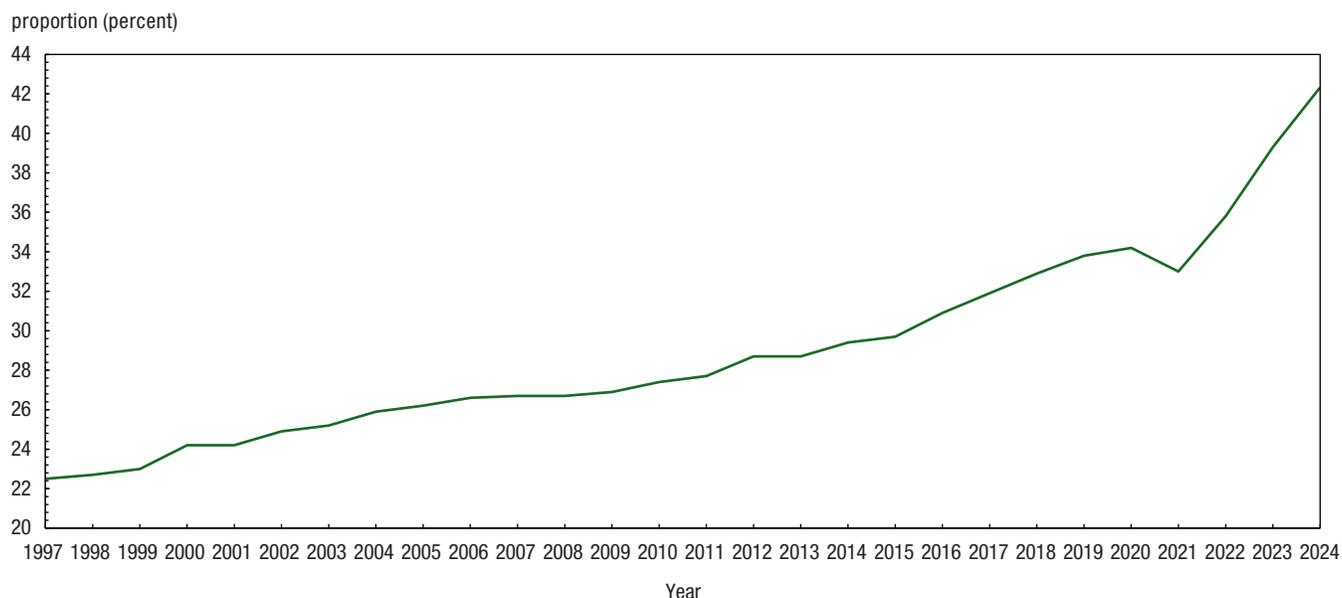
Distribution of births in Canada by mother’s place of birth

The proportion of births to foreign-born mothers nearly doubled in 28 years

Between 1997 and 2015, the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers rose gradually from 22.5% to 29.7%. It then began to increase at a faster pace until the year before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching 33.8% in 2019, which represents an average annual increase of 1 percentage point, compared with an average of 0.4 percentage points from 1997 to 2015. This acceleration coincided with marked increases in Canada’s immigration targets from 2016 to 2019 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2016a, 2016b, and 2017), particularly in the family reunification program. As a result, the number of births to foreign-born women appears to be sensitive to immigration levels. Furthermore, new immigrants were more likely to have more children than immigrants who have been in Canada for several years (Bélanger and Gilbert, 2003; Wilson, 2013; Street, 2015). In other words, fertility intensity declines with time spent in Canada, regardless of age.

In the years thereafter, the contribution of foreign-born mothers to the total number of births in Canada varied. In 2021, the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers was down slightly (33.0%) from the previous year (34.2%), at a time when births to Canadian-born mothers increased, while births to foreign-born mothers decreased slightly.

Chart 5
Proportion (in percent) of births to foreign-born mothers, Canada, 1997 to 2024



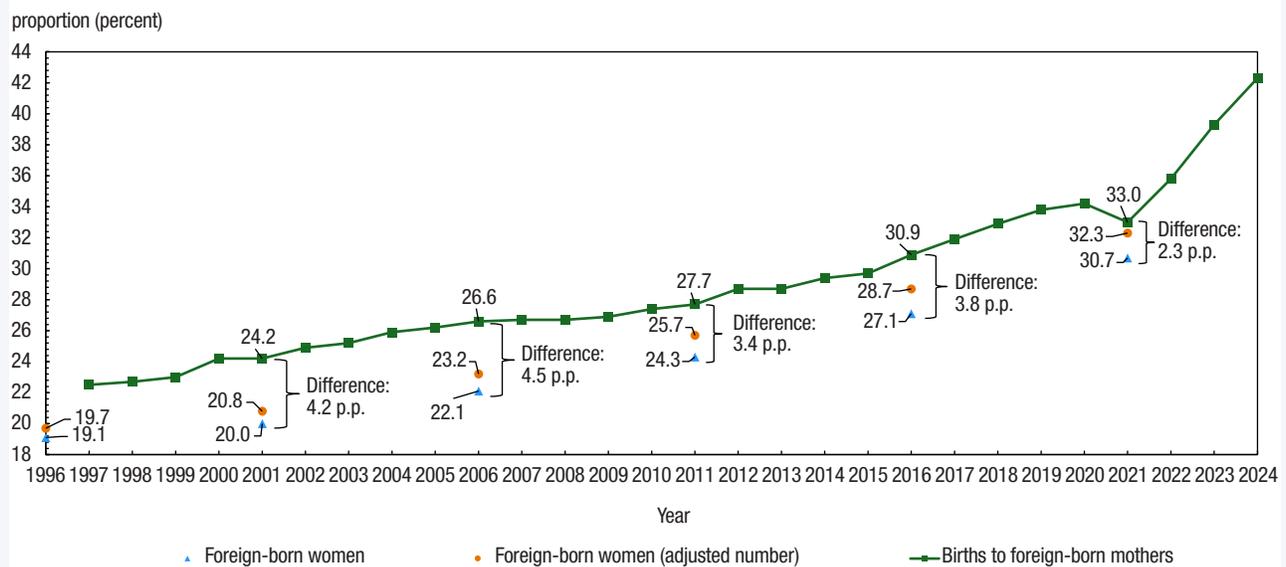
Notes: Births where the mother’s place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

In 2022, the contribution of foreign-born mothers to births in Canada resumed the trend observed before 2021, with this proportion increasing to 35.8%. The increase continued in 2023 and 2024, reaching a record high of 42.3% in 2024.

The population of foreign-born women according to the census

When comparing the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers from vital statistics data with the proportion of foreign-born women using census data, the latter proportion is consistently lower. For example, the difference ranged from -2.3 percentage points (in 2021) to -4.5 percentage points (in 2006). Similar to the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers, the proportion of foreign-born women aged 15 to 49 increased during the period, from 20.0% in 2001 to 30.7% in 2021.

Chart 6
Proportion (percent) of foreign-born women aged 15 to 49, values adjusted for census net undercoverage and unadjusted values, census years 1996 to 2021, and proportion (percent) of births to foreign-born mothers, 1997 to 2024, Canada



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary. The term "p.p." means "percentage point." For more information on the census data adjustment method, refer to the "Data source, definitions and methods" section.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB), Census of Population, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021.

However, census data are subject to net undercoverage of the population (Statistics Canada, 2024a). Although generally modest, this undercoverage affects certain subpopulations more than others, including non-permanent residents and their dependents, immigrants, and young adult males. When an adapted adjustment factor for these subpopulations is applied to 2021 Census data for correction purposes, the proportion of foreign-born women is estimated at 32.3% (see the section "Data sources, definitions, and methods" for more information on estimation), a result that remains below the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers. This difference suggests, but does not confirm, that these women proportionally have more newborns in Canada than Canadian-born women.

Contribution of the foreign-born population to natural increase in Canada

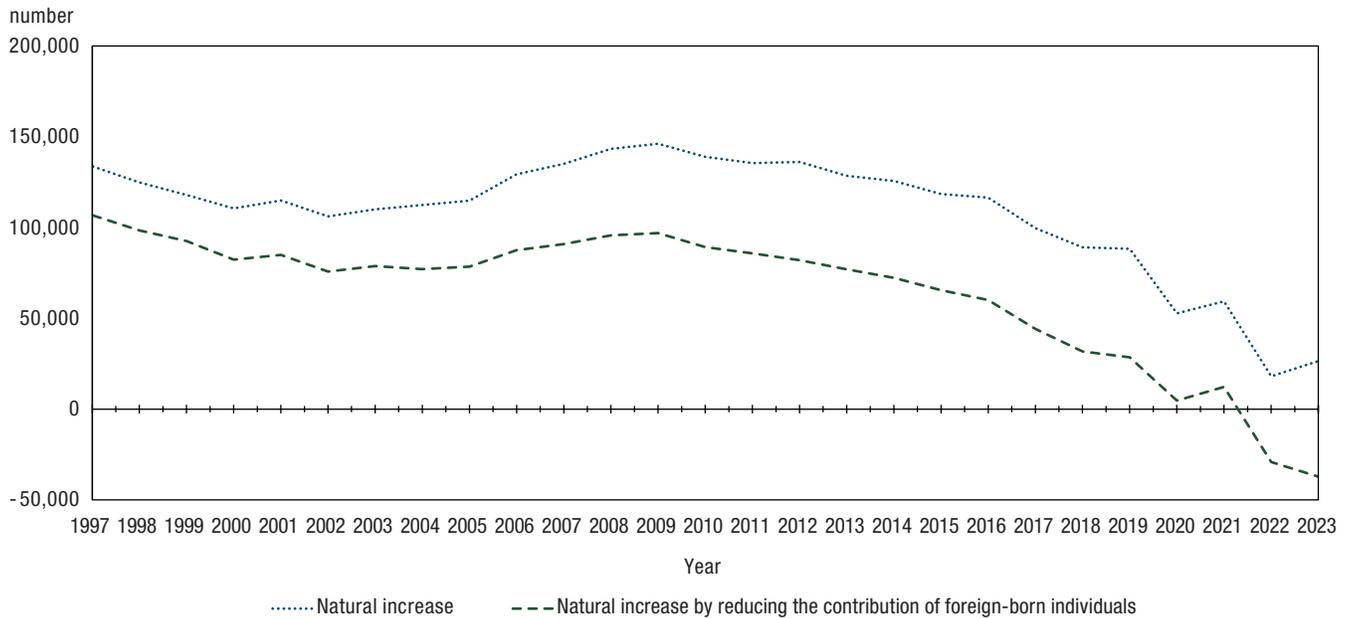
Without the contribution of births to foreign-born mothers and deaths of people born outside Canada, natural increase would have been in the negative since 2022

A country's population growth is based on natural increase (births minus deaths) and migratory increase (immigrants plus non-permanent residents minus emigrants). Not only do immigrants play a major role in international migration, but they also contribute to natural increase by having children in the host country and dying there. In Canada, natural increase has begun to decline overall since 2010, mainly because deaths are increasing year over year due

to population growth and aging, but also because of an overall decline in births amid lower fertility. As a result, natural increase saw one of its lowest levels in 2023 (26,426 people), after reaching a low of 18,136 people the previous year.⁵

Chart 7

Natural increase with the contribution of foreign-born individuals and with a reduced contribution, Canada, 1997 to 2023



Notes: Births where the mother’s place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Death data for 2023 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB), Canadian Vital Statistics - Death Database (CVSD).

So what would natural increase look like if the contribution of foreign-born individuals were reduced⁶? According to the results of a simulation that removes births to foreign-born mothers and subtracts deaths of people born outside Canada, natural increase would have started to be in the negative (i.e., more deaths than births) in 2022. If we look more closely at the components of natural increase, births to foreign-born mothers were on the rise, unlike births to Canadian-born mothers, which slowed the decline in natural increase resulting from more deaths among both foreign-born and Canadian-born individuals. Also, the proportion of deaths that were foreign-born persons remained generally stable during the period, ranging from 22.6% (from 2010 to 2012) to 24.4% (in 2020).

International comparison

Canada has the highest proportion of births to foreign-born mothers among nine selected countries

The proportion of births to foreign-born mothers was compared for nine countries, which were selected based on data availability, a standard definition of foreign-born mothers (as opposed to a more restrictive definition of mothers who do not have citizenship in the host country, for example) and their classification as high-income countries (World Bank, 2025). In 2023, Canada had the highest proportion of births to foreign-born mothers (39.3%), followed by Australia (36.5%). The United States were in the middle (30.7%), while the lowest proportion among the selected countries was in the Netherlands (21.3%), closely followed by Denmark (21.9%).

5. The calculations are based solely on vital statistics, as they are used to count the people born outside Canada.
 6. The data do not completely remove the contribution of foreign-born individuals, such as second-generation children or higher who give birth or die in Canada, or all births to Canadian-born mothers whose spouse is foreign-born.

Table 1
Proportion (percent) of births to foreign-born mothers, selected countries, 2023

Country	Proportion (percent)
Canada	39.3
Australia	36.5
England and Wales	31.8
Germany	31.8
Spain	31.3
United States	30.7
Switzerland	29.9
France	25.0
Denmark	21.9
Netherlands	21.3

Notes: For Canada - Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation.

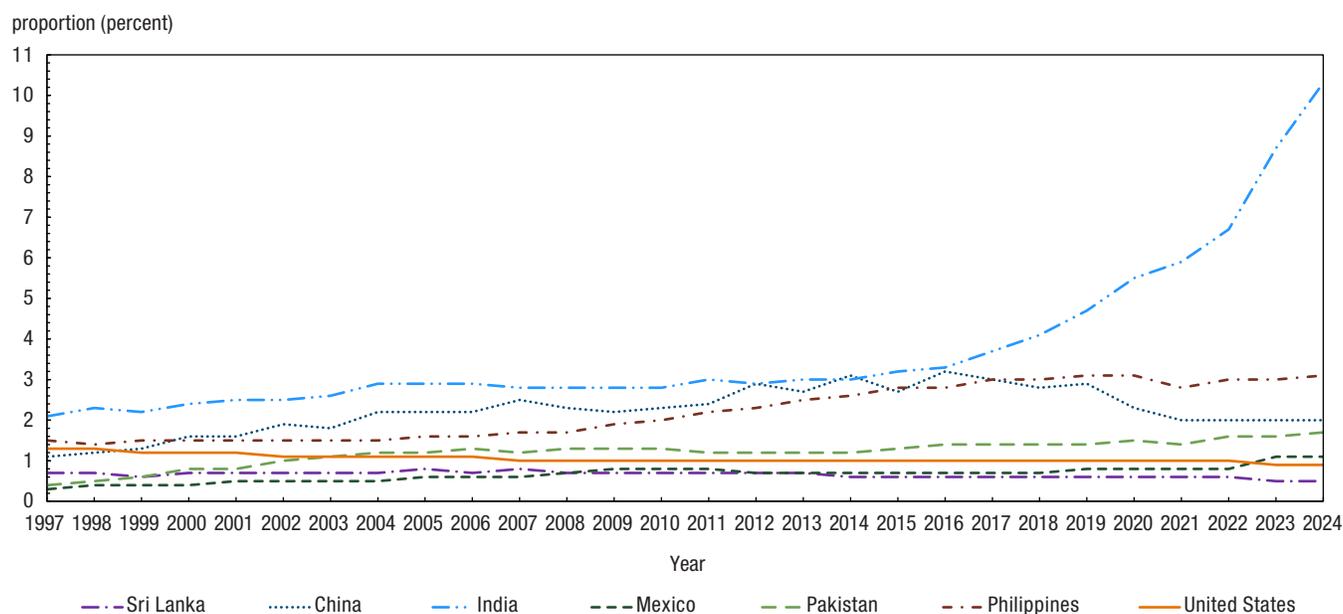
Sources: Canada: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB); Australia: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). Australia's mothers and babies, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/360904f6-8c47-4ea1-a98d-27381a239cb8/AIHW-PER-101-National-Perinatal-Data-Collection-annual-preliminary-update-2023.xlsx>; England and Wales: Office for National Statistics (ONS), statistical bulletin, Births by parents' country of birth, England and Wales: 2023, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/parentscountryofbirthenglandandwales/2023>; Germany: DESTATIS. Statistisches Bundesamt. Births by mother's country of birth, 2013 to 2023; Spain: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Press Release: Vital Statistics / Basic Demographic Indicators. Year 2023, <https://ine.es/dyngs/Presna/en/MNP2023.htm>; United States: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Natality on CDC WONDER Online Database. Data are from the Natality Records 2016-2023, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/natality-expanded-current.html> on Feb 3, 2025 7:10:05 PM; Switzerland: Federal Statistical Office, Births by sex and citizenship of the child, by age of the mother and father, and births of first child by the mother's civil status, <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/population/births-deaths/births.html>; France: Institut national d'études démographiques, Births by parents' place of birth, https://www.ined.fr/en/everything_about_population/data/france/births-fertility/births_nationality_parents/; Denmark: Statistics Denmark, Live births by region, mothers country of origin and time, <https://www.statbank.dk/FODIE>; Netherlands: Statistics Netherlands, StatLine - Births: key figures, <https://opendata.cbs.nl/#/CBS/en/dataset/85722ENG/table?searchKeywords=births>.

Main countries of origin among foreign-born mothers

The share of births to mothers born in India increased almost fivefold from 1997 to 2024

Although there were 270 possible countries of origin of the mother recorded on birth registrations for the period of study (which sometimes include regions of birth when the country is not known), the most prevalent at the national level were India, China, the Philippines, Pakistan, the United States, Sri Lanka, and Mexico.

Chart 8
Proportion (percent) of births, by the mother's country of birth (other than Canada), main countries, Canada, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Three key findings about the main countries of birth of foreign-born mothers during this period were identified. First, from 2016 to 2024, the share of Indian-born mothers among all births in Canada rose rapidly, from 3.3% to 10.3%. This increase coincides with a growth in the share of the population of Indian-born women of childbearing age living in Canada in recent years.⁷

Second, during the same period, the proportion of Chinese-born mothers among all births decreased from 3.2% to 2.0%; nevertheless, it was almost double the proportion in 1997 (1.1%). From 2016 to 2021, the proportion of Chinese-born women aged 15 to 49 in the female population of the same age group in Canada remained stable.⁸

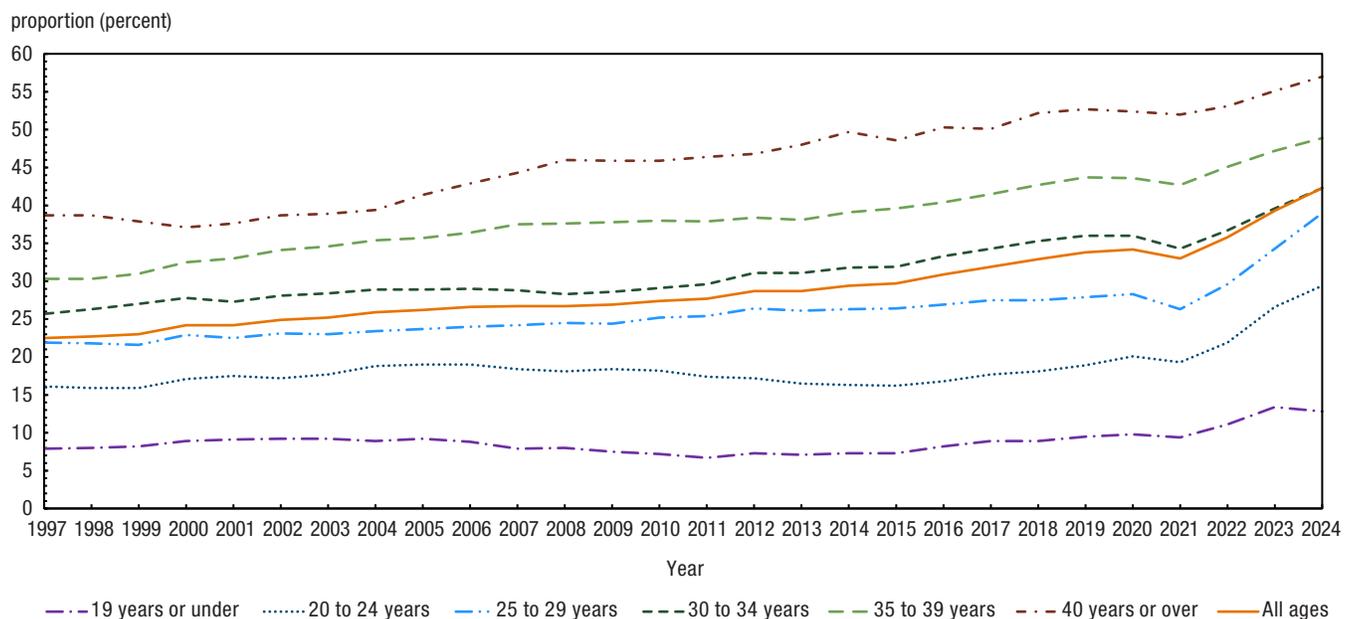
Third, the proportion of Philippines-born mothers among all births doubled from 1997 (1.5%) to 2024 (3.1%), surpassing the proportion of Chinese-born mothers from 2018 onward. This is consistent with an increase in the proportion of Philippines-born women aged 15 to 49 among women of the same age group in Canada.⁹

Distribution of births in Canada, by mothers' place of birth, age group and average age of childbearing

In 2024, women born outside Canada accounted for the majority of births to women aged 40 or over

A consistent gradient was observed over the period of study: the contribution of foreign-born women to births increased with age. Notably, the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers under the age of 25 was always below the proportion for all ages, while the opposite was true for those aged 35 and over. In 2024, 12.8% of births to women aged 19 or under were to foreign-born women, compared with 57.0% of births to women aged 40 or over. In 1997, these proportions were 7.9% and 38.7%, respectively.

Chart 9
Proportion (percent) of births to foreign-born mothers, by age group of mothers, Canada, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

7. According to the 2021 Census (custom data tables), the proportion of Indian women among all women aged 15 to 49 was 4.5%, second only to Canadian-born women. This proportion was up from 2.7% in 2016, when these women ranked third after those from China and the Philippines.
8. The proportion was 3.1% in both 2016 and 2021.
9. According to census data, the proportion of women aged 15 to 49 born in the Philippines nearly tripled from 1.1% in 1996 to 3.1% in 2021.

The lower contribution of foreign-born mothers to births in 2021 occurred consistently across all age groups of mothers. In 2023, the 19-or-under, 20-to-24, 25-to-29 and 30-to-34 age groups saw the largest year-over-year increases in the contribution of foreign-born mothers to births over the entire period (+20.7%, +21.5%, +16.1% and +8.1%, respectively). Annual increases for these age groups were among the highest in 2024 (excluding those aged 19 or under), similar to 2022.

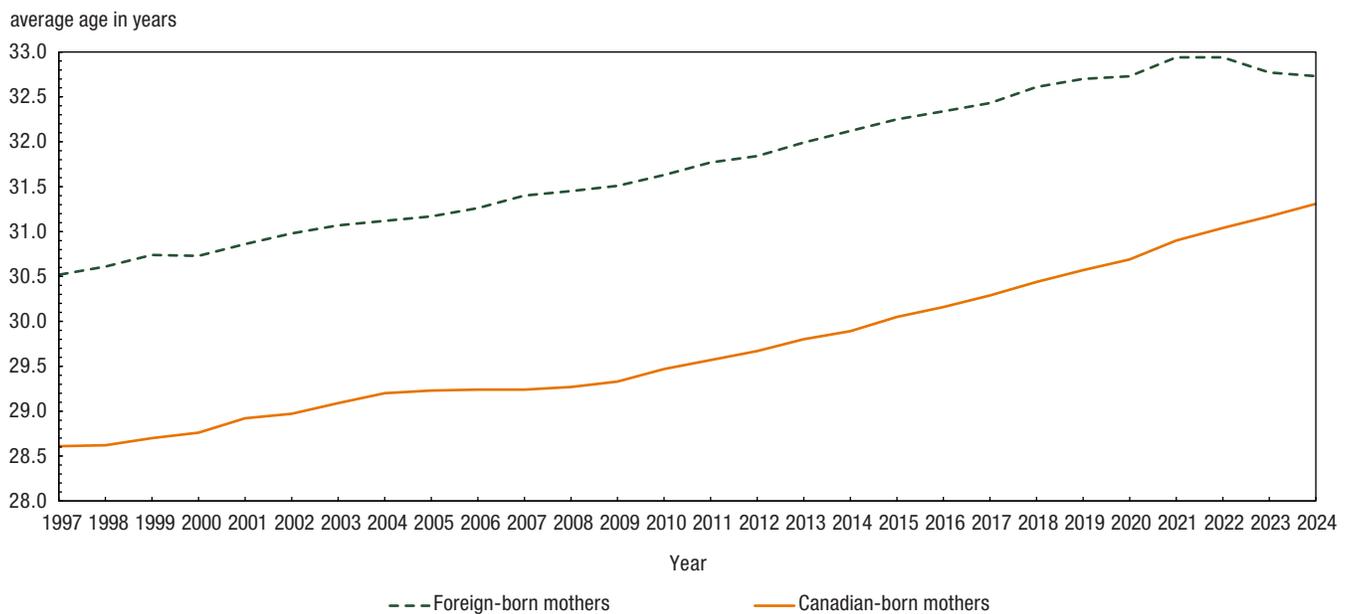
From 1997 to 2024, foreign-born mothers aged 35 to 39 years and 40 years and over had the largest percentage-point increases in their contribution to the total number of births: 18.7 percentage points and 18.3 percentage points, respectively.

The average age of foreign-born mothers is consistently higher than that of Canadian-born mothers

According to vital statistics data, the average age of childbearing¹⁰ increased during the period from 1997 to 2024, both among foreign-born mothers (from 30.5 years to 32.7 years) and Canadian-born mothers (from 28.6 years to 31.3 years). The average age of childbearing of foreign-born mothers was consistently higher than that of Canadian-born women by an average of 2.0 years. However, the gap began to narrow in 2022 and stood at 1.4 years in 2024. This may partially be due to the fact that the average age of Canadian-born women has continued to increase, while that of foreign-born women began to decline.

The most important factor driving the difference in the average age of Canadian-born mothers and foreign-born mothers is that foreign-born women arrive in Canada later in life and, as a result, are not all exposed to the risk of having a child (in Canada) from age 15, as Canadian-born women are. Furthermore, some foreign-born women may have had children before arriving in Canada, or their average total number of children may be higher than that of Canadian-born mothers. Both factors could also contribute to raising the average age of childbearing of foreign-born mothers in Canada.

Chart 10
Average age of childbearing, by mother's place of birth, Canada, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

10. The average age at childbirth was calculated using numbers as opposed to rates. For more information, see the "Methods" subsection under "[Data sources, definitions and methods.](#)"

Births by mother's place of birth and province of residence

Births to foreign-born mothers increased at a faster pace in the Prairies and the Atlantic provinces

From 1997 to 2024, the number of births to foreign-born mothers increased in all the provinces.¹¹ Ontario saw the largest increase (+27,564), followed by Alberta (+17,387), Quebec (+13,127) and British Columbia (+7,597). Conversely, the number of births to Canadian-born mothers fell in all provinces.

Table 2
Number, distribution and change in births, by mother's place of birth and region of residence, Canada and the provinces, 1997 to 2024

Region of residence	Total		Distribution		Change		Number of negative annual changes (out of 27)
	1997	2024	1997	2024	1997 to 2024	1997 to 2024	
	number		percent		number	percent	
Births to foreign-born mothers							
Canada	78,785	154,687	100.0	100.0	75,902	96.3	4
Atlantic provinces	1,138	4,530	1.4	2.9	3,392	298.1	6
Quebec	12,182	25,309	15.5	16.4	13,127	107.8	4
Ontario	42,473	70,037	53.9	45.3	27,564	64.9	7
Manitoba	1,854	5,674	2.4	3.7	3,820	206.0	6
Saskatchewan	659	3,540	0.8	2.3	2,881	437.2	8
Alberta	6,585	23,972	8.4	15.5	17,387	264.0	3
British Columbia	13,795	21,392	17.5	13.8	7,597	55.1	9
Births to Canadian-born mothers							
Canada	270,747	211,050	100.0	100.0	-59,697	-22.0	18
Atlantic provinces	23,826	14,631	8.8	6.9	-9,195	-38.6	20
Quebec	67,592	51,743	25.0	24.5	-15,849	-23.4	18
Ontario	91,342	73,650	33.7	34.9	-17,692	-19.4	16
Manitoba	12,805	9,948	4.7	4.7	-2,857	-22.3	16
Saskatchewan	12,210	9,495	4.5	4.5	-2,715	-22.2	17
Alberta	30,326	27,642	11.2	13.1	-2,684	-8.9	10
British Columbia	30,799	22,494	11.4	10.7	-8,305	-27.0	15

Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

From 1997 to 2024, the increase in births to foreign-born mothers outpaced the decline in births to Canadian-born mothers in Ontario and the Prairie provinces.¹²

From 1997 to 2024, the largest percentage increases in the number of births to foreign-born mothers occurred in Saskatchewan (+437%), the Atlantic provinces (+298%), Alberta (+264%) and Manitoba (+206%). One reason for these large increases is that these regions, except for Alberta, initially recorded a relatively small number of births to foreign-born mothers. British Columbia, where this number was already high in 1997, saw the smallest relative increase (+55%).

For most of the years studied, all the provinces saw annual growth in the number of births to foreign-born mothers (see Table 7 in the appendix). The only exception was the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, when all provinces recorded some of the sharpest declines in births in one or both years of this period. Conversely, in 2023 and 2024, some of the largest increases in births to foreign-born mothers were recorded in all the provinces.

Although a large proportion of Canada's births to foreign-born mothers occurred in Ontario, this share has decreased over time, mostly in favour of Alberta. In 2024, 45% of births to foreign-born mothers were in Ontario, down from 54% in 1997. The demographic weight of women aged 15 to 49 who were born outside Canada and living in Ontario also fell between the 1996 and 2021 censuses (55% and 49%, respectively). In Alberta, this proportion was 16% in 2024, up from 8% in 1997. The proportion of foreign-born women aged 15 to 49 living in Alberta also increased between the 1996 and 2021 censuses, from 8% to 11%.

11. At the time of writing, data for Yukon were not available from 2017 to 2022. Coupled with the fact that the number of births to foreign-born mothers is particularly low for the three territories in the other years studied, it was decided not to analyze these data separately.

12. Since the number of births to foreign-born mothers is low in each of the Atlantic provinces, it was decided to group them together.

The widespread declines in births to Canadian-born mothers in the provinces as of 2017 intensified in 2022 and 2023

From 1997 to 2024, the largest percentage decreases in the number of births to Canadian-born mothers occurred in the Atlantic provinces (-39%), British Columbia (-27%) and Quebec (-23%). The decreases in the other provinces were around 21% over the same period, excepting Alberta, where the relative decline was the smallest (-9%).

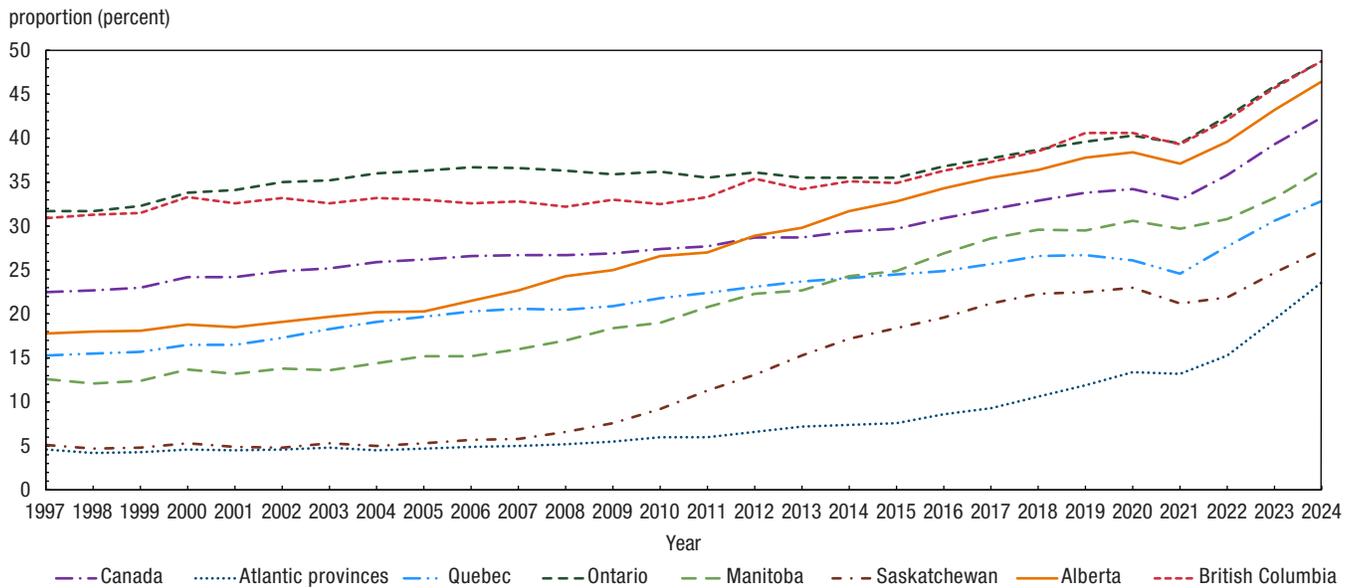
Fewer births to Canadian-born mothers affected most provinces after the 2008/2009 global recession (see Table 8 in the appendix). Widespread declines among all provinces were observed as of 2017, except in 2021, when one of the biggest increases over the period of the study occurred in all but one province.¹³ In almost all the provinces, some of the strongest drops were recorded in 2022 and 2023, followed by declines similar to those observed just before the pandemic in 2024.

Distribution of births in the provinces by the mother’s place of birth

Nearly half of all births in Ontario and British Columbia in 2024 were to foreign-born women

Overall, Canada’s provinces saw the same general trend as the national average, i.e., the contribution of foreign-born women to births gradually increased from 1997 to 2020, then decreased from 2020 to 2021, and finally rose sharply from 2022 to 2024.

Chart 11
Proportion (percentage) of births to foreign-born mothers, by region of residence, Canada and the provinces, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother’s place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

13. Namely in Manitoba, where the number of births fell very slightly.

Although the contribution of foreign-born women to births increased over time in all provinces, its extent varied. Ontario generally had the highest proportion of births to foreign-born mothers during this period, except in 2019 and 2020, when British Columbia had slightly higher proportions. For the entire period from 1997 to 2024, the Atlantic provinces recorded the lowest proportion of births to foreign-born mothers.

In 2024, Ontario and British Columbia had the highest proportion of births to foreign-born mothers (48.7%), followed by Alberta (46.4%). At the same time, the urban centres with the highest proportions of immigrants in 2021 were in these very provinces: Toronto (47%), Vancouver (42%), and Calgary (32%) (Statistics Canada, 2022).

In contrast, the Atlantic provinces had the lowest proportion of births to foreign-born mothers (23.6%) in 2024. Saskatchewan (27.2%), Quebec (32.8%) and Manitoba (36.3%) also had proportions below the national average (42.3%).

The proportion of births to foreign-born women increased the fastest in Saskatchewan, rising from 5.1% in 1997 to 27.2% in 2024. In the province, the number of new immigrants under the Provincial Nominee Program increased practically fivefold from 2007 to 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2024b), which may have contributed to this rapid growth.

The Atlantic provinces followed Saskatchewan close behind, where the proportion of births to foreign-born women increased from 4.6% in 1997 to 23.6% in 2024. In contrast, Ontario had the slowest growth in the contribution of foreign-born mothers to births over the study period, rising from 31.7% in 1997 to 48.7% in 2024.

Births by mothers' country of birth in the most populous provinces of residence

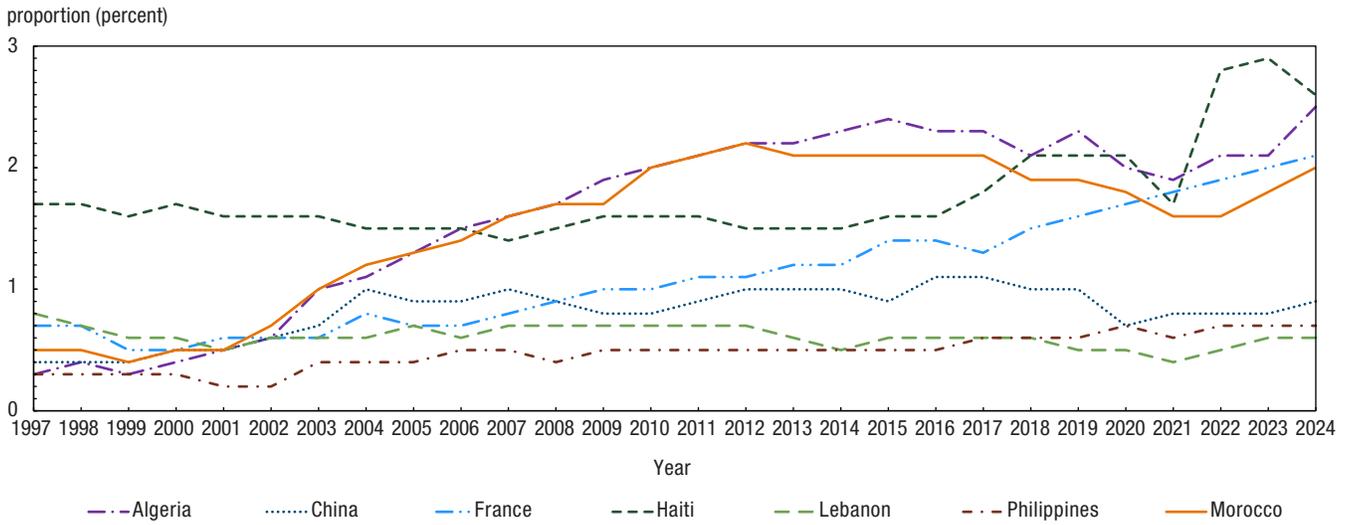
Haiti, Algeria, France and Morocco are the most common countries of origin among foreign-born mothers in Quebec

The most common countries of origin for foreign-born mothers living in Quebec¹⁴ differ significantly from the national picture. In 2024, the seven most common countries of origin were (in descending order) Haiti (2.6%), Algeria (2.5%), France (2.1%), Morocco (2.0%), China (0.9%), the Philippines (0.7%) and Lebanon (0.6%). This profile partly reflects the selection of international migrants who move to Quebec. These individuals are selected in part based on their knowledge of French, the language spoken by a significant proportion of the population in many of these seven countries. In 2022, this proportion was estimated at 98% in France, 42% in Haiti, 38% in Lebanon, 36% in Morocco, and 33% in Algeria (Marcoux et al., 2022). This proportion is not known for China and the Philippines; however, these two countries ranked second and thirteenth, respectively, among the world's most populous countries in 2023 (United Nations, 2024).

The combined contribution of these seven countries of mother's origin to births in Quebec increased from 1997 (4.7%) to 2024 (11.4%), mainly due to the rise in births to mothers born in Algeria, France and Morocco, as well as Haiti in more recent years. In 2024, the proportion of births to mothers born in Haiti represented more than one-and-a-half times the proportion in 1997 (2.6% compared with 1.7%, respectively). From 1997 to 2024, the proportion of births to mothers born in Algeria increased eightfold (from 0.3% to 2.5%), tripled among new mothers born in France (from 0.7% to 2.1%), and quadrupled among new mothers born in Morocco (from 0.5% to 2.0%).

14. The variable "country of birth" for Quebec includes the category "born outside Canada" for cases where the country is not specified. For more information, see the "Methods" subsection in ["Data sources, definitions and methods."](#)

Chart 12
Proportion (percent) of births by the mother's country of birth (other than Canada), main countries, Quebec, 1997 to 2024



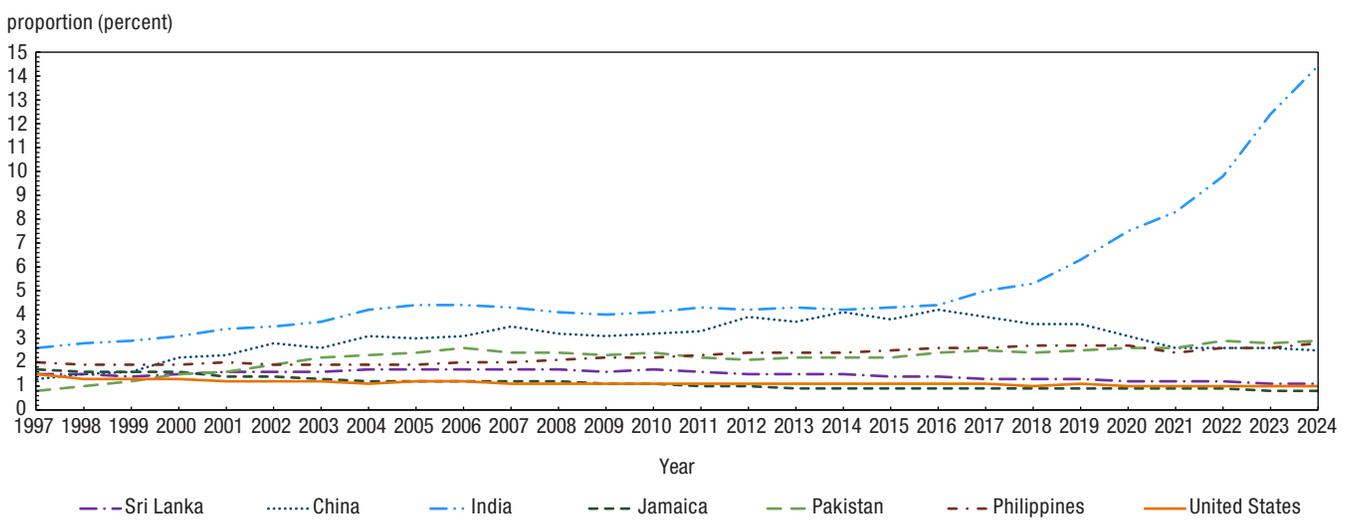
Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Sharp increase in the proportion of births to mothers born in India and living in Ontario from 2017 to 2024

In Ontario, the seven main birth countries of foreign-born mothers were: India, Pakistan, China, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, the United States and Jamaica.

From 1997 to 2016, the proportion of births to Chinese-born mothers tripled (from 1.3% to 4.2%) and then decreased to 2.5% in 2024. From 1997 to 2024, the share of births to Indian-born mothers increased more than fivefold (from 2.6% to 14.4%). Furthermore, the proportion of births to Pakistan-born mothers more than tripled between 1997 (0.8%) and 2006 (2.6%), then remained relatively stable at around 2.3% on average until 2019 and rose again in the following years to 2.9% in 2024.

Chart 13
Proportion (percent) of births, by the mother's country of birth (other than Canada), main countries, Ontario, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

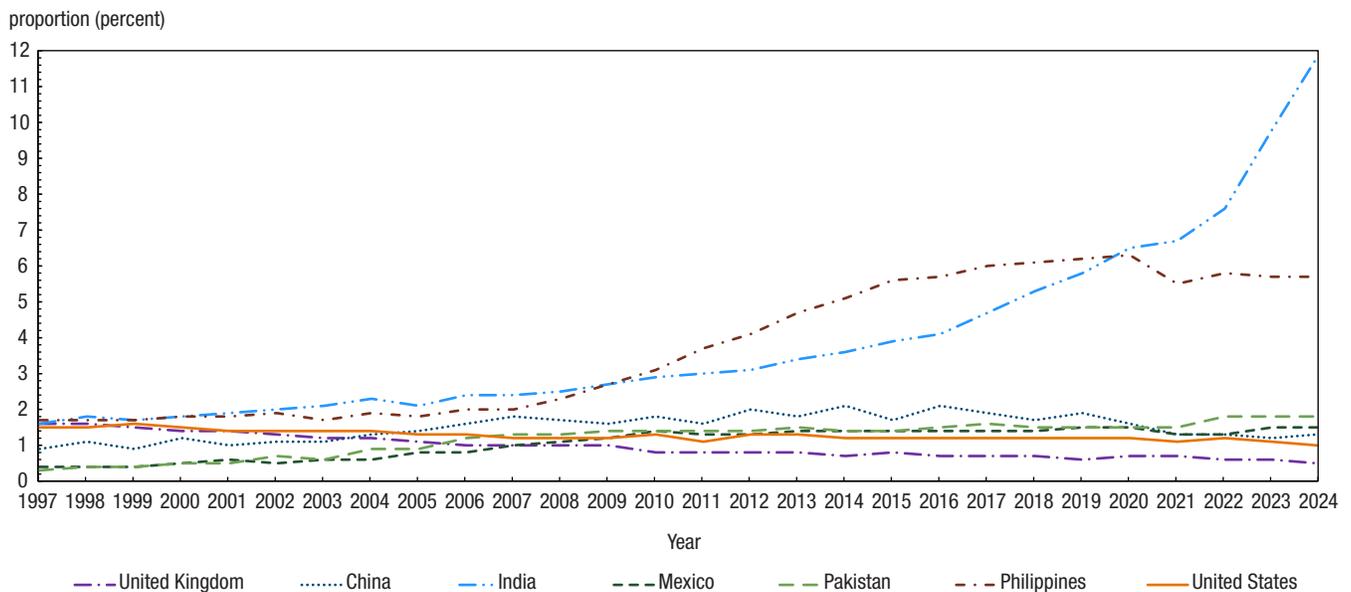
New mothers born in the Philippines are more likely to live in Alberta

In Alberta, the seven most common countries of birth for foreign-born mothers were India, the Philippines, China, Pakistan, Mexico, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In 2024, 23.6% of births in the province were to mothers from one of these countries, up from 8.0% in 1997.

Most commonly, the foreign-born mothers living in Alberta who gave birth from 1997 to 2024 were born in the Philippines or India. The proportion of births to Phillipines-born mothers rose quickly from 2.0% in 2007 to 6.3% in 2020, then fell slightly to 5.7% in 2024. Nevertheless, since 2011, this share was the highest among the most populous provinces, with British Columbia falling to second place since then. Moreover, births to Indian-born mothers increased rapidly in Alberta, from 4.1% in 2016 to 11.8% in 2024. The proportion of births to Pakistan-born mothers increased rapidly in Alberta, from 4.1% in 2016 to 11.8% in 2024. The proportion of births to Pakistan-born mothers increased sixfold during the period (from 0.3% in 1997 to 1.8% in 2024), while the proportion of births to Mexican-born mothers quadrupled (from 0.4% in 1997 to 1.5% in 2024).

Chart 14

Proportion (percent) of births, by mother's country of birth (other than Canada), main countries, Alberta, 1997 to 2024



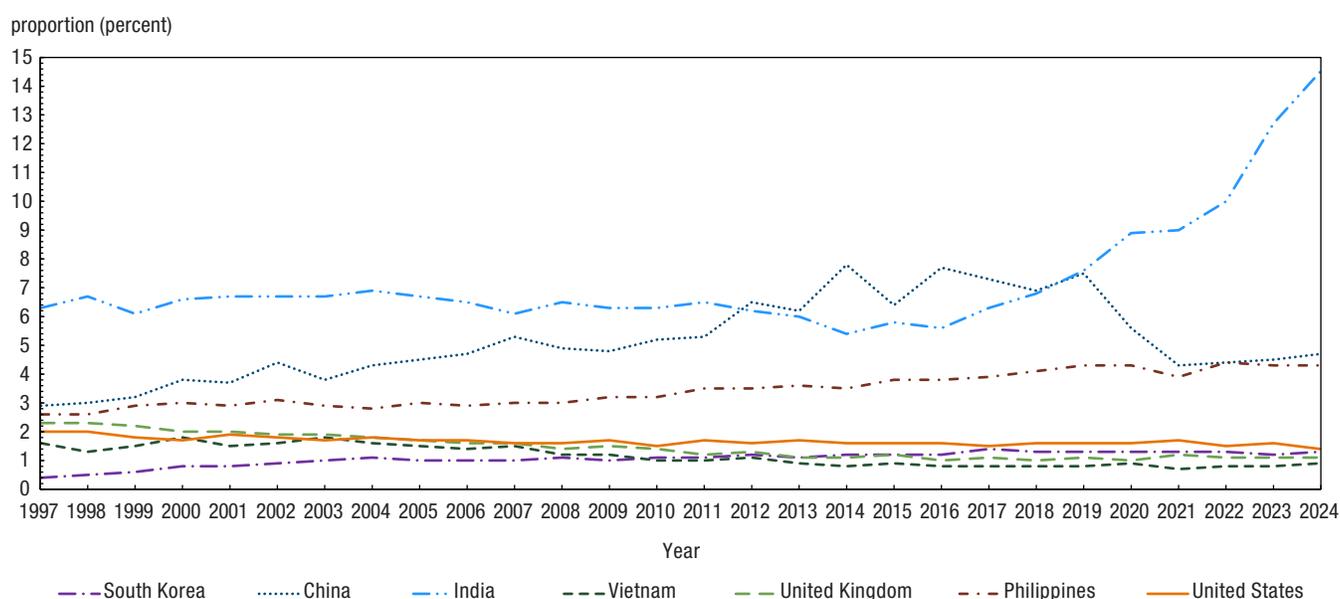
Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

British Columbia's foreign-born mothers are relatively concentrated among a small number of countries of origin

In British Columbia, the countries of origin of foreign-born mothers are more concentrated among seven countries: India, China, the Philippines, the United States, South Korea, the United Kingdom and Vietnam. The share of births to Chinese-born mothers living in British Columbia more than doubled in 17 years (from 2.9% in 1997 to 7.8% in 2014), then fell almost 40% over a 10-year period to 4.7% in 2024. At the same time, the proportion of births to Indian-born mothers fell by nearly one percentage point and went from the highest proportion among countries in 1997 (6.3%) to the second highest in 2014 (5.4%). In the ten years that followed, the contribution of Indian-born mothers to births in British Columbia rose more than two-and-a-half times to 14.5% in 2024, putting India back in top spot far ahead of the other countries. Throughout the period, the proportion of mothers born in the Philippines ranked third, rising from 2.6% in 1997 to 4.3% in 2024.

Chart 15

Proportion (percent) of births, by mother's country of birth (other than Canada), main countries, British Columbia, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Average age of childbearing in the provinces by mother’s place of birth

The average age of childbearing of foreign-born mothers continues to be lowest in Manitoba and highest in British Columbia and Quebec

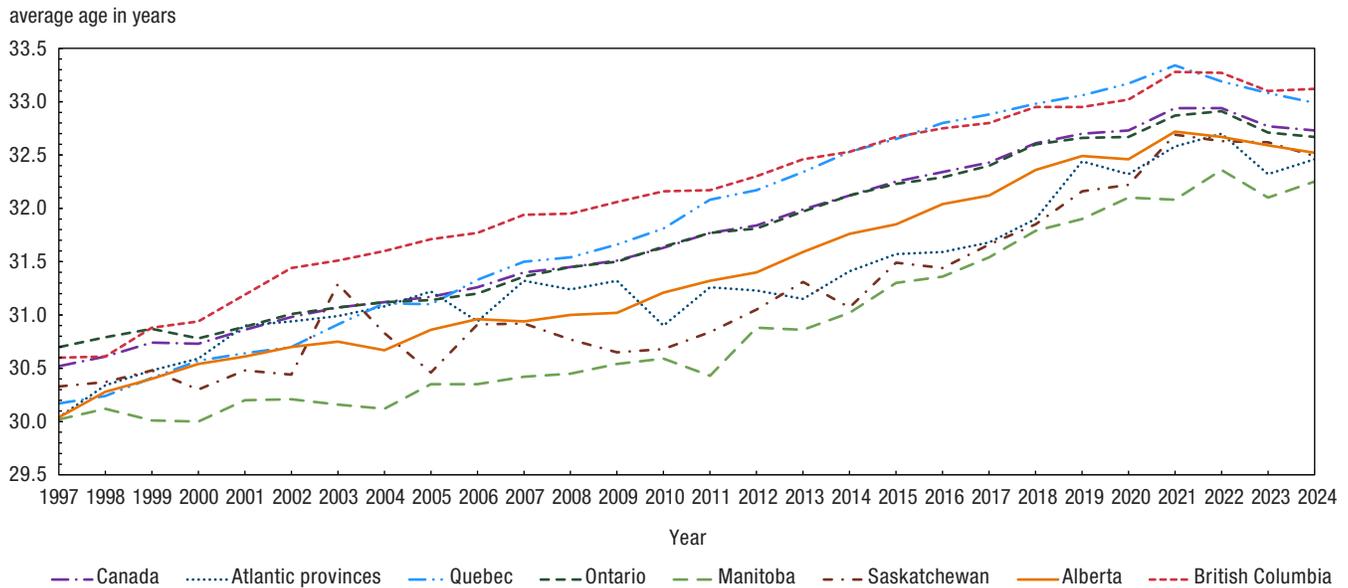
Despite some annual fluctuations, the average age of mothers born outside Canada rose in all the provinces from 1997 to 2021. It then plateaued in 2022, then declined in several provinces in 2023 and 2024. In addition, age differences between provinces grew slightly wider over the period.

During the period of study, foreign-born mothers generally gave birth at a younger age than the national average age of foreign-born mothers if they were living in the Prairie or Atlantic provinces.

Manitoba had the lowest age (30.0 years in 1997 and 32.3 years in 2024). Even these lowest ages were higher than the highest average ages at childbirth among Canadian-born women in Ontario and British Columbia (except in British Columbia in 2023 and 2024).

Chart 16

Average age of childbearing of foreign-born mothers, by region of residence, Canada and the provinces, 1997 to 2024



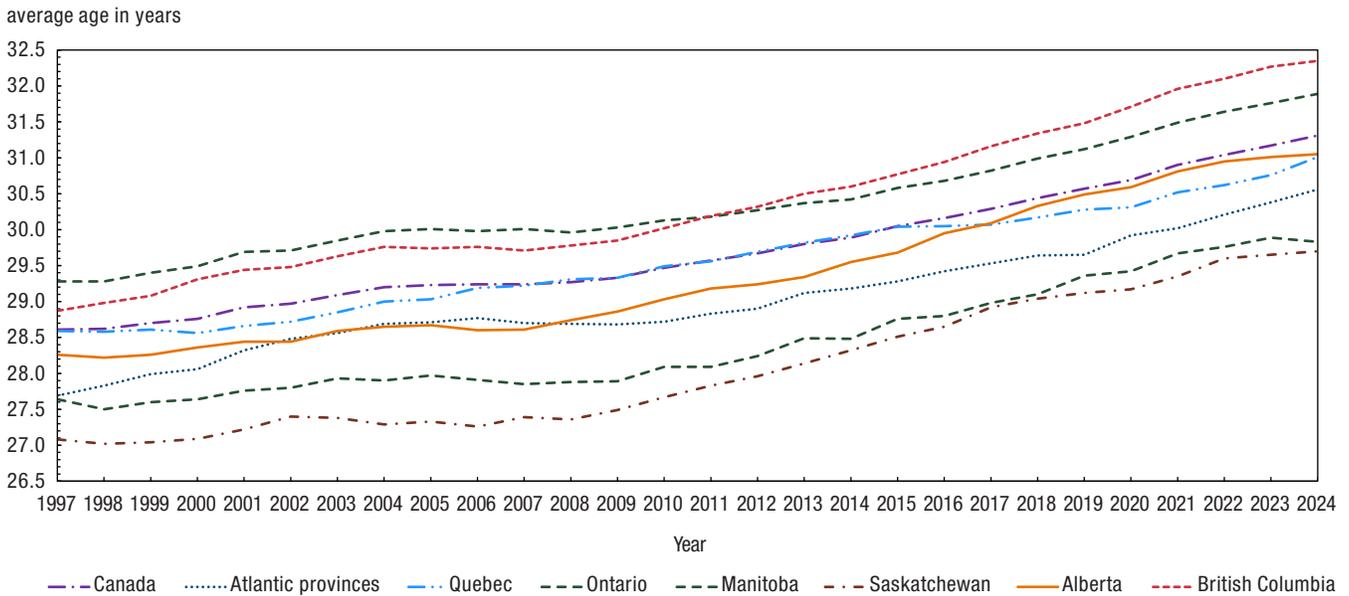
Notes: Births where the mother’s place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Foreign-born mothers living in the Atlantic provinces (whose average age was 30.0 years in 1997 and 32.5 years in 2024) and Saskatchewan (whose average age was 30.3 years in 1997 and 32.5 years in 2024) had slightly higher average ages of childbearing than those living in Manitoba or in Alberta (30.0 years in 1997 and 32.5 years in 2024).

Not surprisingly, the average age at childbirth of mothers born outside Canada who were living in Ontario (30.7 years in 1997 and 32.7 years in 2024) were similar to that of all foreign-born mothers, mainly due to the province’s large demographic weight.

The average age of childbearing among foreign-born mothers living in Quebec rose from 30.2 years in 1997 to 33.0 years in 2024, outpacing the national average from 2006 onward and reaching the highest average ages at childbirth among foreign-born mothers living in British Columbia (30.6 years in 1997 and 33.1 years in 2024). Lastly, foreign-born mothers have a higher average age of childbearing than Canadian-born mothers in all the provinces.

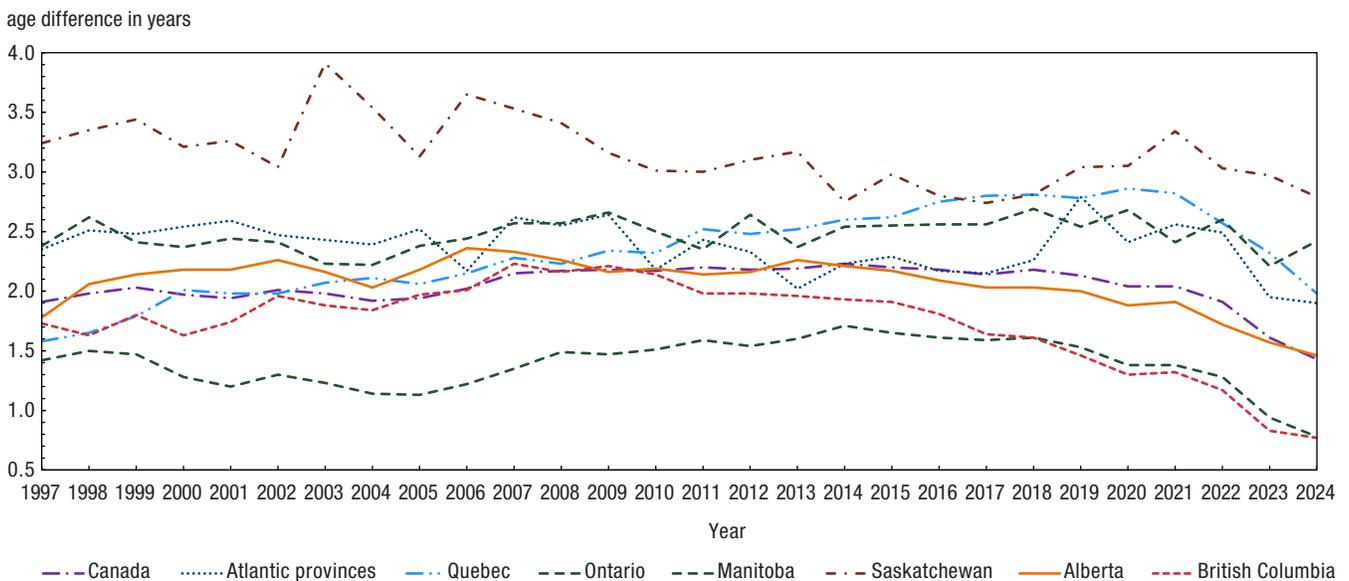
Chart 17
Average age of childbearing of Canadian-born mothers, by region of residence, Canada and the provinces, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Among Canadian-born mothers, regional differences in the average age of childbearing are similar to those observed among foreign-born mothers. In other words, the average age of childbearing is lower in the Prairie provinces and the Atlantic provinces, while it was higher in both British Columbia and Ontario.

Difference in average age of childbearing between foreign-born and Canadian-born mothers, by region of residence, Canada and the provinces, 1997 to 2024



Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Further examining the differences in the average age of childbearing between foreign-born mothers and Canadian-born mothers from 1997 to 2024, the variation between the highest and lowest values never exceeded 0.95 years in any province, except in British Columbia (1.46-year difference), Quebec (1.28-year difference) and Saskatchewan (1.17-year difference).

Conclusion

Beneath the overall decline in births in Canada since 2017, following nearly a decade of stagnation, there were significant differences in the number, trend and characteristics of these births according to the mothers' place of birth. This study showed that the number of births to foreign-born mothers increased during this period, while births to Canadian-born mothers declined after 2009, meaning that without the contribution of foreign-born mothers, births in Canada would have decreased since 2010. Furthermore, without this contribution of foreign-mothered births, as well as deaths of foreign-born individuals over this period, natural increase in Canada would have fallen into negative in 2022.

Similarly, the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers generally increased from 1997 to 2024, except in 2021, when this share fell sharply as the number of births to foreign-born mothers decreased while the number of births to Canadian-born mothers saw a large but short-lived surge.

Overall, more than two in five newborns in Canada had a foreign-born mother in 2024, almost twice the proportion observed in 1997. The contribution of foreign-born mothers to births was highest in Ontario and British Columbia, where nearly half of births in 2024 were to foreign-born mothers. In contrast, this proportion was just over one in five in the Atlantic provinces. Nevertheless, this region had among the highest increases in the proportion of births to foreign-born mothers from 1997 to 2024, along with Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba.

Births to Indian-born mothers accounted for the largest share of all births to foreign-born mothers, increasing nearly fivefold over the past 25 years. After India, mothers of foreign origin came from China or the Philippines. These are also the three most common countries of origin among foreign-born mothers living in Ontario and British Columbia. In contrast, in Quebec, the main countries of birth of foreign-born mothers were Haiti, Algeria, France and Morocco. The selection of immigrants based on their knowledge of French, the province's official language, most likely contributes to this difference.

Regardless of their country of birth, the average age of mothers at the time of birth increased over the period of study. However, the average age of childbearing was consistently higher among foreign-born mothers than among Canadian-born mothers at both the national and provincial levels. Furthermore, mothers' average age at childbirth was highest in British Columbia and lowest in the Prairie and Atlantic provinces, regardless of their country of birth. In addition, over the entire period of study, the contribution of foreign-born women to Canadian births increased with age. There may be several reasons for the older age profile of childbearing for foreign-born mothers: arriving in Canada later in life; having one or more children before moving to Canada; having more children on average; or simply waiting before having their first or another child. Further research could provide a more detailed portrait of the situation of foreign-born mothers giving birth in Canada.

Lastly, one of the limitations of the study is the impossibility of identifying whether mothers were citizens or residents (permanent or non-permanent), as this information is not available in birth registrations. Given the rapid increase in the number of non-permanent residents in Canada in recent years, future research to identify births to women with non-permanent resident status among foreign-born mothers would further our knowledge of the effects of permanent and temporary immigration on the renewal of the Canadian population. Another limitation of the study is that the country of origin of the father was not considered, underestimating births with at least one foreign-born parent.

Appendix

Table 3
Year-over-year monthly percentage change in births to foreign-born mothers, Canada, 1998 to 2024

Year	Month of birth												Total
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
	percent												
1998	-2.1	1.8	-0.3	-1.3	-2.8	-1.0	-1.8	-1.3	4.3	-1.9	-4.8	-4.9	-1.4
1999	-0.5	-2.1	-3.4	-1.4	-2.4	4.8	0.9	-0.4	-2.1	0.5	2.8	4.5	0.1
2000	3.8	3.7	4.5	0.9	3.4	0.2	1.5	0.8	-1.3	4.2	7.4	-2.2	2.2
2001	1.6	0.4	1.3	3.9	1.8	-0.5	-1.9	5.6	4.7	4.0	-0.7	5.1	2.1
2002	0.6	1.0	-0.4	1.8	-2.3	0.5	1.7	1.7	3.4	3.0	2.2	1.3	1.2
2003	1.2	3.3	3.3	0.6	6.4	3.4	6.2	1.2	3.6	2.5	2.3	6.4	3.4
2004	4.8	5.0	4.7	5.4	-0.2	4.7	2.6	6.1	4.3	0.2	5.2	0.7	3.6
2005	3.4	-1.2	3.3	4.7	5.7	4.9	3.5	1.5	2.6	3.0	2.3	2.9	3.1
2006	1.0	4.9	3.9	0.0	6.2	1.9	4.8	9.7	5.7	8.0	7.8	4.5	4.9
2007	7.4	3.6	2.3	3.9	2.1	4.9	4.0	1.6	1.5	5.2	4.8	7.2	4.0
2008	6.6	9.1	0.4	4.7	3.0	1.8	5.2	0.6	6.4	0.9	-1.1	-0.6	3.0
2009	-0.8	-2.8	7.1	3.0	0.3	2.9	0.7	0.4	-0.1	2.7	2.8	2.1	1.5
2010	2.3	-0.5	2.0	1.1	-1.4	0.2	-0.3	2.2	-0.8	0.0	0.3	2.5	0.6
2011	-1.2	2.4	-3.5	-0.2	4.3	3.8	1.2	1.7	1.9	0.7	0.9	-1.2	0.9
2012	1.9	6.9	3.7	2.4	2.7	-2.5	4.6	9.2	5.1	8.0	8.5	7.9	4.9
2013	6.6	0.0	0.4	-2.5	1.1	3.5	-1.3	-4.1	-0.5	-3.3	-4.7	-0.6	-0.6
2014	-1.8	1.5	3.3	4.9	4.5	2.9	6.7	2.1	2.2	4.3	5.9	2.1	3.2
2015	4.0	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.6	1.9	0.2	-0.6	0.8	-0.3	-1.3	1.5	0.8
2016	-2.6	6.1	5.8	5.9	4.1	2.0	2.3	8.5	6.1	3.0	5.0	3.8	4.1
2017	5.0	-0.9	-1.1	1.9	0.6	4.3	1.8	0.0	0.1	2.3	4.9	3.7	1.8
2018	4.7	0.9	5.0	2.7	3.8	1.8	0.5	2.9	1.2	2.7	0.7	0.5	2.3
2019	1.1	1.5	1.5	2.6	0.7	0.1	7.4	1.6	4.7	2.9	1.1	3.8	2.4
2020	2.8	4.0	1.8	0.6	-0.3	-1.6	-5.4	-3.7	-4.9	-3.3	-5.3	-10.6	-2.3
2021	-14.3	-5.2	-1.2	-3.7	-0.5	4.3	1.5	0.1	1.9	0.0	5.5	7.3	-0.4
2022	10.6	0.6	-2.3	-0.5	1.0	1.2	1.5	7.4	3.8	5.4	5.1	6.8	3.4
2023	9.2	11.5	9.4	8.3	7.7	3.5	8.8	4.8	9.6	11.7	10.8	11.4	8.9
2024	13.7	16.8	11.6	16.0	11.9	12.8	11.6	14.7	7.9	8.8	8.8	7.6	11.7

Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Table 4
Rank of year-over-year monthly percentage changes in births to foreign-born mothers, Canada, 1998 to 2024

Year	Month of birth												Total
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
	rank												
1998	25	13	21	24	27	25	25	25	9	25	26	26	26
1999	21	25	26	25	26	4	19	23	26	20	13	9	23
2000	11	9	7	18	10	21	15	18	25	8	5	25	15
2001	16	20	17	8	14	24	26	7	7	9	22	8	16
2002	20	17	22	15	25	20	14	12	13	10	17	19	19
2003	17	11	10	19	3	11	5	17	12	16	15	7	8
2004	8	6	6	4	21	5	11	6	9	21	8	20	7
2005	12	24	10	6	5	2	10	16	14	10	15	14	11
2006	19	7	8	21	4	15	7	2	5	3	4	9	3
2007	4	10	13	8	13	2	9	14	18	6	12	5	6
2008	5	3	19	6	11	17	6	19	3	18	23	22	12
2009	22	26	3	10	20	12	20	20	22	14	13	16	18
2010	14	22	14	17	24	21	23	10	24	22	21	15	22
2011	23	12	27	22	7	8	18	12	16	19	19	24	20
2012	15	4	9	13	12	27	8	3	6	3	3	2	3
2013	5	21	19	26	15	9	24	27	23	26	25	22	25
2014	24	14	10	5	6	12	4	11	15	7	6	16	10
2015	10	16	18	16	18	15	22	24	20	24	24	18	21
2016	26	5	4	3	8	14	12	4	4	10	10	11	5
2017	7	23	23	14	18	6	13	22	21	17	11	13	17
2018	9	18	5	11	9	17	21	9	19	14	20	21	14
2019	18	14	16	12	17	23	3	14	7	13	18	11	13
2020	13	8	15	19	22	26	27	26	27	26	27	27	27
2021	27	27	24	27	23	6	15	21	16	22	7	4	24
2022	2	19	25	23	16	19	15	5	11	5	9	6	8
2023	3	2	2	2	2	9	2	8	1	1	1	1	2
2024	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	1

Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary. Rank is determined by classifying monthly year-to-year changes from highest (rank 1) to lowest (rank 27).

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Table 5
Year-over-year monthly percentage change in births to Canadian-born mothers, Canada, 1998 to 2024

Year	Month of birth												Total
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
	percent												
1998	-4.9	-1.2	-1.1	-1.4	-3.1	-2.6	-2.7	-1.0	0.4	-1.2	-2.8	-2.7	-2.0
1999	-1.0	-3.3	-1.2	-6.8	-2.8	-1.4	-0.7	-2.4	-1.4	-3.3	0.4	1.0	-2.0
2000	0.3	1.7	-1.5	-1.7	-1.7	-2.6	-7.4	-3.2	-9.8	-7.9	-6.1	-10.5	-4.2
2001	-2.7	-4.0	-0.5	1.8	-0.2	-0.7	3.2	3.3	5.2	8.1	5.3	3.7	1.7
2002	0.0	-3.6	-5.9	-5.7	-4.0	-6.1	-0.8	-0.9	2.0	0.2	-0.6	-0.7	-2.2
2003	-2.8	-0.2	0.4	0.8	0.8	3.6	3.9	1.0	1.9	3.8	0.7	4.0	1.5
2004	2.3	2.8	2.4	1.1	-2.8	1.1	-4.1	-1.3	-1.8	-3.2	1.6	1.4	-0.2
2005	-0.3	-3.2	1.0	1.3	3.4	3.4	2.5	4.5	2.8	2.1	0.6	-1.8	1.4
2006	4.2	4.4	0.0	-1.0	3.4	1.4	1.4	4.5	4.7	5.3	5.1	5.8	3.2
2007	2.3	3.2	2.6	4.6	2.4	4.4	4.9	3.9	1.1	3.8	3.8	2.4	3.3
2008	3.2	8.1	2.8	4.3	2.9	0.2	4.8	0.1	5.3	3.5	-0.5	3.8	3.2
2009	1.1	-2.9	2.1	0.1	0.7	1.4	1.4	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.4	-1.2	0.4
2010	-1.6	-3.0	0.0	-1.2	-3.7	-2.6	-6.7	-3.5	-1.9	-1.7	0.2	0.5	-2.2
2011	-0.2	0.2	-2.9	-3.1	0.8	1.0	3.4	2.6	-0.6	-3.0	0.6	-2.8	-0.3
2012	0.8	3.1	-1.3	-0.3	-0.2	-2.2	-2.5	0.1	-2.8	1.3	-0.4	-0.2	-0.5
2013	-0.5	-3.5	-0.8	0.1	0.1	-1.4	2.4	-1.2	-0.7	-0.3	-3.1	2.3	-0.5
2014	1.5	-0.8	0.3	-0.6	0.6	0.9	0.6	-0.8	2.4	-0.9	-0.7	-3.0	0.0
2015	-3.0	-1.3	-1.6	1.6	-3.7	0.7	-0.8	-1.1	-1.2	-1.5	0.4	0.6	-0.9
2016	-0.7	2.6	0.9	-2.1	-1.6	-1.4	-2.9	0.3	-0.8	-3.0	-2.9	-4.7	-1.4
2017	-3.2	-4.5	-2.9	-5.0	-1.6	-2.6	-3.2	-2.7	-4.9	-1.5	-1.3	-2.4	-3.0
2018	-1.5	-3.7	-3.4	-2.8	0.4	-2.7	-1.7	-1.9	-2.8	-2.5	-2.7	-2.6	-2.3
2019	-2.1	-1.6	-2.6	-0.7	-2.9	-0.7	-0.3	-1.3	-1.9	-1.8	-2.3	-2.0	-1.7
2020	-1.4	0.2	-1.5	-2.0	-4.0	-4.8	-4.0	-7.3	-4.1	-5.7	-6.5	-3.9	-3.8
2021	-4.8	0.0	6.1	3.3	4.7	8.3	5.0	7.7	8.1	6.5	8.6	3.9	4.8
2022	0.0	-5.9	-11.6	-8.4	-8.4	-10.8	-10.2	-8.4	-11.8	-9.6	-8.1	-8.9	-8.6
2023	-8.6	-9.8	-4.9	-7.0	-7.5	-4.2	-6.8	-7.8	-6.3	-2.7	-4.4	-2.0	-6.0
2024	2.0	5.9	-3.1	0.4	0.2	-3.8	-1.0	-1.8	-2.0	-3.7	-4.0	-5.4	-1.4

Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Table 6
Rank of year-over-year monthly percentage changes in births to Canadian-born mothers, Canada, 1998 to 2024

Year	Month of birth												Total
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
	rank												
1998	26	14	14	17	21	18	19	14	10	13	20	20	18
1999	16	20	15	25	18	14	13	21	16	23	10	9	18
2000	9	8	17	18	17	18	26	23	26	26	25	27	25
2001	21	24	12	4	13	12	6	5	3	1	2	5	5
2002	10	22	26	24	24	26	14	13	7	9	15	13	20
2003	22	12	8	8	6	3	4	8	8	4	7	2	6
2004	3	6	4	7	18	7	23	17	17	22	5	8	10
2005	13	19	6	6	2	4	7	2	5	7	8	15	7
2006	1	3	10	15	2	5	9	2	4	3	3	1	3
2007	3	4	3	1	5	2	2	4	9	4	4	6	2
2008	2	1	2	2	4	11	3	10	2	6	14	4	3
2009	7	17	5	10	8	5	9	7	11	10	6	14	8
2010	19	18	10	16	22	18	24	24	18	16	12	11	20
2011	12	9	21	22	6	8	5	6	12	20	8	21	11
2012	8	5	16	12	13	17	18	10	21	8	13	12	12
2013	14	21	13	10	12	14	8	16	13	11	22	7	12
2014	6	13	9	13	9	9	11	12	6	12	16	22	9
2015	23	15	19	5	22	10	14	15	15	14	10	10	14
2016	15	7	7	20	15	14	20	9	14	20	21	24	15
2017	24	25	21	23	15	18	21	22	24	14	17	18	23
2018	18	23	24	21	10	22	17	20	21	18	19	19	22
2019	20	16	20	14	20	12	12	17	18	17	18	16	17
2020	17	9	17	19	24	25	22	25	23	25	26	23	24
2021	25	11	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1
2022	10	26	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	26	27
2023	27	27	25	26	26	24	25	26	25	19	24	16	26
2024	5	2	23	9	11	23	16	19	20	24	23	25	15

Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary. Rank is determined by classifying monthly year-to-year changes from highest (rank 1) to lowest (rank 27).

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Table 7
Annual percentage change in births to foreign-born mothers, by region of residence, Canada and the provinces, 1998 to 2024

Year	Canada	Atlantic provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia
	percent							
1998	-1.4	-11.4	-3.8	-0.6	-5.6	-8.2	3.5	-2.1
1999	0.1	2.2	-1.2	0.7	1.5	0.8	1.5	-2.2
2000	2.2	1.4	2.8	1.9	8.7	5.4	0.5	2.4
2001	2.1	-3.3	2.3	4.2	-4.6	-6.5	0.2	-2.1
2002	1.2	-1.1	2.6	0.3	4.1	-5.7	5.9	0.5
2003	3.4	4.1	8.1	2.6	-0.9	12.5	7.8	-0.8
2004	3.6	-6.0	4.5	4.1	5.0	-6.7	3.4	1.7
2005	3.1	3.2	6.7	2.4	7.7	6.2	4.0	0.3
2006	4.9	5.6	10.4	2.7	3.3	10.6	14.0	1.1
2007	4.0	3.2	4.6	1.2	10.5	9.2	14.2	5.2
2008	3.0	8.6	4.9	1.0	7.6	18.1	11.2	-0.5
2009	1.5	4.4	2.4	-1.1	11.1	20.8	4.7	4.0
2010	0.6	8.3	2.9	-0.5	2.2	21.5	4.5	-4.0
2011	0.9	-2.9	3.1	-1.8	8.3	22.2	1.8	3.4
2012	4.9	8.8	3.8	2.4	12.5	20.4	10.2	6.0
2013	-0.6	7.8	2.1	-3.2	2.3	16.5	4.8	-4.0
2014	3.2	3.4	1.1	0.2	8.0	17.7	11.3	4.0
2015	0.8	-1.0	0.5	-0.5	3.0	5.3	5.4	-0.6
2016	4.1	13.6	0.6	4.6	9.6	8.4	2.7	6.1
2017	1.8	5.0	0.5	2.6	6.9	7.3	-0.6	1.5
2018	2.3	11.0	3.2	2.5	3.7	3.8	0.2	0.8
2019	2.4	11.3	0.9	2.7	-2.0	-4.1	2.5	5.1
2020	-2.3	8.1	-4.6	-1.6	2.4	-1.4	-3.9	-2.7
2021	-0.4	1.7	-2.4	0.9	-3.1	-5.4	-1.6	0.7
2022	3.4	14.1	7.0	3.5	-2.2	-4.8	1.6	2.0
2023	8.9	19.7	6.4	9.3	5.8	10.5	10.9	7.0
2024	11.7	29.9	6.3	11.2	11.8	10.9	14.9	13.4

Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Table 8
Annual percentage change in births to Canadian-born mothers, Canada and the provinces, 1998 to 2024

Year	Canada	Atlantic provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia
	percent							
1998	-2.0	-3.2	-5.1	-0.6	-0.7	-0.3	2.5	-4.0
1999	-2.0	-1.2	-3.3	-2.0	-1.4	-1.5	0.5	-2.9
2000	-4.2	-4.3	-3.1	-4.9	-3.0	-4.1	-3.8	-5.5
2001	1.7	-2.5	2.4	3.1	0.0	1.5	2.0	0.7
2002	-2.2	-2.3	-2.5	-3.6	-1.6	-4.1	2.2	-2.1
2003	1.5	0.2	0.7	1.6	0.6	1.8	3.3	2.0
2004	-0.2	-0.5	-0.7	0.4	-1.8	-0.1	0.7	-0.8
2005	1.4	-1.6	2.2	1.5	1.4	-0.5	3.1	1.1
2006	3.2	0.5	6.6	0.7	3.0	2.2	5.7	2.8
2007	3.3	2.3	2.7	1.6	4.0	7.7	6.8	4.2
2008	3.2	4.2	5.4	2.7	0.2	2.8	1.6	2.4
2009	0.4	-1.2	0.2	0.4	1.3	2.9	0.7	0.5
2010	-2.2	-1.7	-2.2	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	-3.8	-2.0
2011	-0.3	-2.7	-0.6	1.1	-3.2	-2.1	-0.1	-0.6
2012	-0.5	-2.4	-0.7	0.0	2.6	1.6	0.5	-3.2
2013	-0.5	-1.6	-0.7	-0.8	0.2	-2.9	0.1	1.3
2014	0.0	1.0	-1.5	0.2	-1.6	2.8	1.6	0.0
2015	-0.9	-4.7	-1.6	-0.3	0.0	-3.0	0.4	0.1
2016	-1.4	-0.4	-1.3	-1.2	-1.5	0.1	-3.9	0.1
2017	-3.0	-3.4	-3.9	-1.4	-1.4	-2.9	-5.8	-2.9
2018	-2.3	-4.3	-1.2	-1.6	-1.2	-2.8	-3.5	-4.3
2019	-1.7	-2.4	0.5	-1.2	-1.9	-5.2	-3.6	-3.6
2020	-3.8	-5.1	-2.0	-4.5	-2.9	-3.8	-6.1	-2.9
2021	4.8	3.5	6.0	4.6	1.1	5.1	4.0	6.6
2022	-8.6	-4.5	-9.1	-8.9	-7.0	-8.8	-8.8	-9.5
2023	-6.0	-9.7	-7.3	-4.7	-5.4	-5.6	-4.3	-7.5
2024	-1.4	0.8	-4.3	-0.9	-2.4	-2.5	0.7	0.4

Notes: Births where the mother's place of birth is unknown were prorated using the donor imputation. Data for 2024 are considered preliminary.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database (CVSB).

Data sources, definitions and methods

Data sources

Birth data

Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this study are from the [Canadian Vital Statistics - Birth Database \(CVSB\)](#).

The CVSB is an administrative survey that collects demographic information annually from all provincial and territorial vital statistics registries on all live births in Canada. The 2024 data are considered preliminary. It should be noted that fewer births were recorded in for Nova Scotia in 2021 due to coverage issues.

The geographic distribution of live births is based on the mother's usual place of residence.

The mother is the person who gives birth to the child. This does not include adoptive parents (male or female). In certain jurisdictions, information on the mother or father could contain information on the other parent, which in some cases is another woman or man. Statistics Canada is unable to identify or quantify these cases.

Death data

The death data used in the section on natural increase come from the [Canadian Vital Statistics - Death Database \(CVSD\)](#).

The CVSD is an administrative survey that collects demographic and medical (cause-of-death) information annually and monthly from all provincial and territorial vital statistics registries on all deaths in Canada. The 2023 data are considered preliminary. It should be noted that fewer deaths were recorded in Nova Scotia in 2023 as a result of delays in registering deaths.

Population data

Data from the Canadian [Census of Population](#) for the years 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021 were used to calculate the proportion of the population aged 15 to 49 who were female (at birth) and born in another country. Statistics Canada conducts the Census of Population every five years to paint a statistical portrait of the country and its population on a given day. A sample of approximately 25% of Canadian households receives a long-form questionnaire that includes questions on place of birth. All other households receive a short-form questionnaire.

The census enumerates the entire Canadian population, on a "usual residence" basis (de jure). The population enumerated consists of usual residents of Canada who are Canadian citizens (by birth or naturalization), landed immigrants and non-permanent residents and their families living with them in Canada. Non-permanent residents are individuals who hold a work or student permit or who seek protection in Canada by seeking asylum (which does not mean that they are refugees or protected persons who are landed immigrants). The census also counts Canadian citizens and landed immigrants who are temporarily outside the country on Census Day. Foreign residents such as representatives of a foreign government assigned to an embassy, high commission or other diplomatic mission in Canada, and residents of another country who are visiting Canada temporarily are not covered by the census.

Definitions

Average age of mother at childbirth or at delivery: The average (or mean) age in a given year of mothers at the birth of their child. The age of a mother is considered her age attained at her last birthday preceding delivery. Births for which the mother's age is unknown were prorated using the observed distribution.

Foreign-born individuals: Individuals who report a country of birth other than Canada, including immigrants, non-permanent residents and non-immigrants born outside Canada.

High-income country: A high-income country is defined as a nation with a gross national income (GNI) per capita of \$13,935 (US\$) or more, as classified by the World Bank. These countries typically have advanced economies, high standards of living, and well-developed infrastructure.

Live birth: The complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception, regardless of the duration of the pregnancy, which, after such separation, breathes or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta is attached.

Natural increase: Variation in the size of a population between two dates resulting from the difference between the number of births and deaths.

Methods

Donor imputation when country of birth of the mother is missing

In cases where the country of birth of the mother is unknown, “hot deck” imputation was performed. Essentially, this involves replacing missing answers to certain questions with values borrowed from other respondents. The donor can be randomly selected from a group of donors with the same set of predetermined characteristics. In this case, the donor (the person from whom the country of birth answer is borrowed) was determined using the following variables: last name, postal code, age and, for births, the baby's birth weight. The choice of these variables is based on the following validated hypotheses: certain last names are more common than others in certain countries; first-generation immigrants tend to live in certain neighbourhoods based on their community of origin (more so based on their country of birth); age at the time of the event varies according to ethnicity; there is a disparity in the baby's birth weight based on the mother's ethnicity.

“Mother born outside Canada” category specific to Quebec

Quebec is the only province that uses the general category “mother born outside Canada” when the country of birth of mothers who live in the province was not reported. This category also has the highest number of births among all other countries. Moreover, in Quebec, among births to foreign-born mothers, one-third on average were from seven specific countries of origin, compared with half for the other most populous provinces. To assess the impact of this “catch-all” category on the distribution of the seven most common countries of birth of the mother in Quebec, donor imputation tests were conducted. These tests showed a small difference with the non-imputed data, indicating that the countries of birth of mothers are more heterogeneously distributed among the reported countries of birth of mothers living in Quebec than in the other more populous provinces. In addition, it should be noted that some Quebec institutions that return birth certificates to the ISQ more often check the category “mother born outside Canada” than others, yet not systematically, and that this category is proportionately less and less used. As a result, it was decided to retain the original data without imputation.

Calculating the average age of childbearing using numbers

The average age of childbearing calculated using numbers is the average age of mothers at the birth of their child for a given year. The mother's age is considered her age attained at her last birthday preceding delivery. For a given year, the average age is calculated by adding the births by single age that were multiplied by the age at mid-year, then dividing this sum by the total number of births. Births for which the mother's age is unknown were prorated using the observed distribution.

By comparison, the average age of childbearing calculated from fertility rates (Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0417-01) involves adding the single-age fertility rates multiplied by the mid-year age, then dividing this sum by the total fertility rate. It was decided to present the average age of childbearing calculated from numbers, since fertility rates were not available for foreign-born women, as their population for each year was unknown. The national average age of childbearing calculated from the numbers was slightly higher —by an average of 0.2 years for the period of study— than the average age calculated from fertility rates.

Imputation in the vital statistics Birth Database

Statistics Canada uses imputation to replace missing data for province or territory of residence, the child's sex, and the mother's age and date of birth. Missing data on province or territory of residence were imputed based on the province or territory of the location of the event. Missing data on the child's sex were imputed using the distribution of births in recent years. Missing age values were imputed using the date of birth (if provided) or the median age observed in the mother's province of residence. Missing dates of birth were imputed using a decision table based on the mother's age and the child's date of birth. In general, these imputations have a negligible impact on annual records.

Census net undercoverage of immigrant and non-permanent resident women

The proportion of women aged 15 to 49 born outside Canada, according to the Canadian censuses, is likely underestimated because, despite rigorous quality standards, there is still net undercoverage of the census enumerated (Statistics Canada, 2024a). Certain subpopulations are more affected than others, such as immigrants and non-permanent residents, and men more so than women. Therefore, when 2021 Census data are adjusted to account for net undercoverage¹⁵ of immigrant women in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia,¹⁶ and of non-permanent residents,¹⁷ the proportion of foreign-born women of childbearing age is estimated at 32.3% rather than 30.7%. When the same net undercoverage rate for immigrant women in 2021 is applied to previous censuses for which the rate was not calculated for this particular subpopulation, the adjusted proportion of foreign-born women according to the census is consistently higher than the known proportion, as shown in the chart in the box, "The foreign-born female population according to the census."

15. Estimated at 2.76% for immigrant women aged 18 to 64 living in a private dwelling only, based on internal work.

16. Over 93% of immigrant women in the 2021 Census were living in one of these four provinces.

17. According to population estimates as of July 1 (Statistics Canada, 2024c); part of the difference with census data on non-permanent residents is due to the fact that the estimates are as of July 1, while the census reference date was May 11.

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