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**Analytical document**

# **Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit**



**National Household Survey, 2011**



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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0<sup>s</sup> value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- <sup>p</sup> preliminary
- r revised
- x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- \* significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05)

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## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

### The National Household Survey

#### Highlights

##### Aboriginal people – Diverse groups living across the country

- New data from the National Household Survey (NHS) show that 1,400,685 people had an Aboriginal identity in 2011, representing 4.3% of the total Canadian population. Aboriginal people accounted for 3.8% of the population enumerated in the 2006 Census, 3.3% in the 2001 Census and 2.8% in the 1996 Census.
- The Aboriginal population increased by 232,385 people, or 20.1% between 2006 and 2011, compared with 5.2% for the non-Aboriginal population.
- The largest numbers of Aboriginal people lived in Ontario and the western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia). Aboriginal people made up the largest shares of the population of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

##### First Nations people

- In 2011, 851,560 people identified as a First Nations person, representing 60.8% of the total Aboriginal population and 2.6% of the total Canadian population.
- Many First Nations people lived in Ontario and the western provinces, but they made up the largest shares of the total population of the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.
- In 2011, 637,660 First Nations people reported being Registered Indians, representing 74.9% of all First Nations people, 45.5% of the total Aboriginal population and 1.9% of the total Canadian population.
- One-quarter of First Nations people (213,900) were not Registered Indians, representing 15.3% of the total Aboriginal population and less than 1% of the total Canadian population.

##### Métis

- In 2011, 451,795 people identified as Métis. They represented 32.3% of the total Aboriginal population and 1.4% of the total Canadian population.
- Métis represented 8.0% of the total population of the Northwest Territories, 6.7% of Manitoba's population, and 5.2% of Saskatchewan's population.
- Among census metropolitan areas, Winnipeg had the highest population of Métis, 46,325 people, or 6.5% of its total population. It was followed by Edmonton with 31,780, Vancouver (18,485) and Calgary (17,040). In addition, 11,520 Métis lived in Saskatoon and 9,980 in Toronto.

# Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

## Inuit

- In 2011, 59,445 people identified as Inuit. They represented 4.2% of the total Aboriginal population and 0.2% of the total Canadian population.
- Almost three-quarters of Inuit in Canada lived in Inuit Nunangat. Inuit Nunangat stretches from Labrador to the Northwest Territories and comprises four regions: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region.

## The Aboriginal population is young

- Aboriginal children aged 14 and under made up 28.0% of the total Aboriginal population and 7.0% of all children in Canada. Non-Aboriginal children aged 14 and under represented 16.5% of the total non-Aboriginal population.
- Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 represented 18.2% of the total Aboriginal population, and 5.9% of all youth in Canada. Non-Aboriginal youth accounted for 12.9% of the total non-Aboriginal population.
- About 6% of the total Aboriginal population were seniors aged 65 and over, less than half of the proportion of seniors in the non-Aboriginal population (14.2%).
- Inuit had a median age of 23, the youngest of the three Aboriginal groups. The median age of First Nations people was 26, followed by Métis at 31.

## Living arrangements of Aboriginal children

- Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada lived in a variety of arrangements, primarily in families with either both of their parents or with lone-parents. Other Aboriginal children in that age group were stepchildren, grandchildren living with grandparents with no parent present, foster children or children living with other relatives.
- One-half of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under (49.6%) were living in a family with both their parents, either biological or adoptive, compared with three-quarters (76.0%) of non-Aboriginal children. About one-third of Aboriginal children (34.4%) lived in a lone-parent family compared with 17.4% of non-Aboriginal children.
- Almost half (48.1%) of all children aged 14 and under in foster care were Aboriginal children. Nearly 4% of Aboriginal children were foster children compared to 0.3% of non-Aboriginal children.

## Box 1: National Household Survey

This is the first release of data from the National Household Survey (NHS). Roughly 4.5 million households across Canada were selected for the NHS, representing about one-third of all households.

This analytical document contains the results from the NHS on Aboriginal peoples. A companion analytical document [Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011001 analyses findings from the NHS on immigration, place of birth, ethnic origin, visible minorities, language and religion.

In addition, there are three articles in the *NHS in Brief* series entitled [Aboriginal peoples and language](#), Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011003, [Obtaining Canadian citizenship](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011003 and [Generation status: Canadian-born children of immigrants](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011003.

Further information on the National Household Survey can be found in the [National Household Survey User Guide](#), Catalogue no. 99-001-X. Specific information on the quality and comparability of NHS data on Aboriginal peoples can be found in the [Aboriginal Peoples Reference Guide, National Household Survey](#), Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011006.

## Part 1: Aboriginal people – Diverse groups living across the country

### Aboriginal people numbered 1.4 million in 2011

New data from the National Household Survey (NHS) show that 1,400,685 people<sup>1</sup> had an Aboriginal identity in 2011, representing 4.3% of the total Canadian population.

Aboriginal people accounted for 3.8% of the population enumerated in the 2006 Census, 3.3% in the 2001 Census and 2.8% in the 1996 Census.

Of the people who identified themselves as an Aboriginal person in the 2011 NHS, 851,560, or 60.8%, identified as First Nations (North American Indian)<sup>2</sup> only; 451,795, or 32.3%, identified as Métis only; and 59,445, or 4.2%, identified as Inuit only.<sup>3</sup> An additional 26,475, or 1.9%, reported other Aboriginal identities<sup>4</sup> and 11,415 or 0.8%, reported more than one Aboriginal identity ([Table 1](#)).

First Nations people made up 2.6% of Canada's total population while Métis comprised 1.4%, and Inuit 0.2%.

1. Some Indian reserves and settlements did not participate in the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) as enumeration was either not permitted, it was interrupted before completion, or because of natural events (e.g., forest fires). These reserves are referred to as 'incompletely enumerated reserves.' There were 36 reserves out of 863 inhabited reserves in the 2011 NHS that were incompletely enumerated. Data for these 36 Indian reserves and Indian settlements are not included in the 2011 NHS tabulations. While the impact of the missing data tends to be small for national-level and most provincial/territorial statistics, it can be significant for some smaller areas. Most of the people living on incompletely enumerated reserves are First Nations Registered Indians, and consequently, the impact of incomplete enumeration will be greatest on data for First Nations people and for persons registered under the *Indian Act*.
2. Respondents self-identified as 'First Nations (North American Indian)' on the NHS questionnaire; however, the term 'First Nations people' is used throughout this document.
3. Although single and multiple responses to the Aboriginal identity question are possible, the data for each of the three Aboriginal groups are based on the population reporting a single identity of 'First Nations,' 'Métis,' or 'Inuit.'
4. Other Aboriginal identities include people who reported having registered Indian status and/or being members of a First Nation or Indian band without reporting themselves as an Aboriginal person. Of the people who did not report being an Aboriginal person there were 17,360 people who reported being Registered Indians but were not members of a First Nation or Indian band, 3,580 people who reported being members of a First Nation or Indian band, but were not Registered Indians and 5,540 people who reported being both Registered Indians and members of a First Nation or Indian band.

## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

**Table 1 Aboriginal identity population, Canada, 2011**

Aboriginal identity	Number	Percent
Total Aboriginal identity population	1,400,685	100.0
First Nations single identity	851,560	60.8
First Nations single identity (Registered or Treaty Indian)	637,660	45.5
First Nations single identity (not a Registered or Treaty Indian)	213,900	15.3
Métis single identity	451,795	32.3
Inuit single identity	59,445	4.2
Multiple Aboriginal identities	11,415	0.8
Aboriginal identities not included elsewhere	26,475	1.9

**Note:** Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

### Box 2: Comparability of data on Aboriginal people over time

The following factors should be taken into account when comparing data on Aboriginal people over time, for example, when comparing between the 2006 Census and the 2011 National Household Survey:

- Slight differences in the wording and in the format of Aboriginal questions
- Differences in methodology in the 2011 NHS
- Legislative changes, for example Bill C-31 in 1985 and Bill C-3 in 2011, which affect concepts such as Aboriginal identity and registered Indian status
- Changes made to the definition of reserves
- Differences in the list of incompletely enumerated reserves

Over and above these factors, for a variety of reasons, some people report their Aboriginal identity and/or ancestry differently from one data collection period to another.

For additional information, please refer to the [Aboriginal Peoples Reference Guide, National Household Survey](#), Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011006 and the [National Household Survey User Guide](#), Catalogue no. 99-001-X.

# Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

## A growing population

The Aboriginal population increased by 232,385 people, or 20.1% between 2006 and 2011,<sup>5</sup> compared with 5.2% for the non-Aboriginal population (see [Box 2: Comparability of data on Aboriginal people over time](#)).

Between 2006 and 2011, the number of First Nations people increased by 22.9%, or 156,525 persons, Inuit increased by 18.1%, or 9,090 persons, and Métis by 16.3% or 63,315 persons.

Between 2006 and 2011, the number of First Nations people with registered Indian status (Status Indians) increased 13.7%, while the number of First Nations people without registered Indian status (Non-Status Indians)<sup>6</sup> increased 61.3%.

## Eight in ten Aboriginal people live in Ontario and the western provinces

Ontario was the province where the largest number of Aboriginal people lived, 301,425 people, representing 21.5% of the total Aboriginal population. In addition, nearly six in ten (57.6%) Aboriginal people in Canada lived in one of the four western provinces ([Table 2](#)).

In British Columbia, 232,290 people had an Aboriginal identity, representing 16.6% of the total Aboriginal population. In Alberta, there were 220,695 Aboriginal people, representing 15.8% of the total Aboriginal population; in Manitoba, 195,900, or 14.0%; and Saskatchewan, 157,740, or 11.3%.

In addition, 10.1% of the Aboriginal population lived in Quebec and another 6.7% lived in the Atlantic provinces.

In Nunavut 27,360 people had an Aboriginal identity, representing 2.0% of the total Aboriginal population in Canada. In the Northwest Territories, there were 21,160 Aboriginal people or 1.5% of the total Aboriginal population and 7,705 Aboriginal people lived in Yukon, less than 1% of the total.

## Aboriginal people represent the majority of the population of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories

Aboriginal people made up the largest share of the population of two of the three territories: Nunavut and the Northwest Territories ([Table 2](#)). In Nunavut they accounted for 86.3% of the total population and in the Northwest Territories they accounted for 51.9% of the population. In Yukon, 23.1% of the population had an Aboriginal identity.

Among the provinces, Aboriginal people accounted for 16.7% of the total population of Manitoba and 15.6% of the total population of Saskatchewan. They represented less than 8% of the total population of each of the other provinces.

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5. Data in this document showing changes in percentages and proportions between the 2011 National Household Survey and the 2006 Census data have been adjusted to account for incompletely enumerated Indian reserves in 2006 and/or 2011. Moreover, the 2006 Census data have been adjusted to the same universe used for the 2011 NHS (population in private households).

6. Although the terms 'Status Indian' and 'Non-Status Indian' are often used to describe people with and without registered Indian status respectively, for the purpose of this document, the terms 'with registered Indian status' and 'without registered Indian status' are used.



## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

**Table 2 Number and distribution of the population reporting an Aboriginal identity and percentage of Aboriginal people in the population, Canada, provinces and territories, 2011**

Provinces and territories	Aboriginal identity population	Percent distribution	Aboriginal identity population as a percentage of the total population
Canada	1,400,685	100.0	4.3
Newfoundland and Labrador	35,800	2.6	7.1
Prince Edward Island	2,230	0.2	1.6
Nova Scotia	33,845	2.4	3.7
New Brunswick	22,615	1.6	3.1
Quebec	141,915	10.1	1.8
Ontario	301,425	21.5	2.4
Manitoba	195,900	14.0	16.7
Saskatchewan	157,740	11.3	15.6
Alberta	220,695	15.8	6.2
British Columbia	232,290	16.6	5.4
Yukon	7,705	0.6	23.1
Northwest Territories	21,160	1.5	51.9
Nunavut	27,360	2.0	86.3

**Note:** Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

### First Nations people

There are more than 600 First Nations/Indian bands in Canada (for example, Musqueam Indian Band, in British Columbia, Sturgeon Lake First Nation, in Alberta, and Atikamekw of Manawan, in Quebec) and over 60 Aboriginal languages reported by First Nations people – an indication of the diversity of First Nations people across the country.

### Many First Nations people live in Ontario and the western provinces

In 2011, the largest First Nations population was in Ontario (201,100) where 23.6% of all First Nations people in Canada lived. The next largest was in British Columbia (155,020), where they represented 18.2% of all First Nations people. Moreover, 116,670 First Nations people lived in Alberta, representing 13.7% of all First Nations people in the country ([Table 3](#)). However, First Nations people living in these three provinces accounted for less than 4% of the population in each of these provinces.

First Nations people represented the largest shares of the total population of the Northwest Territories, followed by Yukon, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. First Nations people accounted for almost one-third of the total population of the Northwest Territories, close to one-fifth of the total population of Yukon and about 10% of the population of Manitoba and that of Saskatchewan.

## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

**Table 3 Distribution of First Nations people, First Nations people with and without registered Indian status, and First Nations people with registered Indian status living on or off reserve, Canada, provinces and territories, 2011**

Provinces and territories	First Nations people		First Nations people with registered Indian status				First Nations people without registered Indian status	
	number	% distribution	number	% distribution	% living on reserve <sup>1</sup>	% living off reserve <sup>1</sup>	number	% distribution
Canada	851,560	100.0	637,660	100.0	49.3	50.7	213,900	100.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	19,315	2.3	8,015	1.3	35.1	64.9	11,295	5.3
Prince Edward Island	1,515	0.2	765	0.1	56.2	43.8	755	0.4
Nova Scotia	21,895	2.6	12,910	2.0	68.0	32.0	8,985	4.2
New Brunswick	16,120	1.9	10,275	1.6	68.8	31.3	5,845	2.7
Quebec	82,425	9.7	52,645	8.3	72.0	28.1	29,775	13.9
Ontario	201,100	23.6	125,560	19.7	37.0	63.0	75,540	35.3
Manitoba	114,225	13.4	105,815	16.6	57.9	42.1	8,410	3.9
Saskatchewan	103,210	12.1	94,160	14.8	57.3	42.7	9,045	4.2
Alberta	116,670	13.7	96,730	15.2	47.3	52.7	19,945	9.3
British Columbia	155,020	18.2	112,400	17.6	44.2	55.8	42,615	19.9
Yukon <sup>2</sup>	6,585	0.8	5,715	0.9	...	...	875	0.4
Northwest Territories <sup>3</sup>	13,350	1.6	12,575	2.0	2.1	97.9	775	0.4
Nunavut <sup>4</sup>	125	0.01	90	0.01	...	...	40	0.02

... not applicable

1. This table shows data for First Nations people with registered Indian status living on and off reserve. The 2006 Census release on Aboriginal people, entitled [Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census](#), Catalogue no. 97-558-XIE, showed data for the total First Nations population living on and off reserve without a breakdown by registered Indian status.
2. There are no Indian reserves or Indian settlements in the Yukon included in the 'on reserve' definition (see [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#)).
3. There are only 2 Indian reserves in the Northwest Territories.
4. There are no Indian reserves or Indian settlements in Nunavut.

**Note:** Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

### Nearly half of First Nations people with registered Indian status live on a reserve<sup>7,8</sup>

Of the 637,660 First Nations people who reported being Registered Indians, nearly one-half (49.3%) lived on an Indian reserve or Indian settlement. This proportion varied across the country ([Table 3](#)).

In Quebec, nearly three-quarters (72.0%) of First Nations people with registered Indian status lived on reserve, the highest proportion among the provinces. This was followed by New Brunswick (68.8%) and Nova Scotia (68.0%).

In Ontario, 37.0% of First Nations people with registered Indian status lived on a reserve, the second lowest proportion among the provinces after Newfoundland and Labrador with 35.1%.

There were 323,290 First Nations people with registered Indian status who did not live on a reserve.

The census metropolitan areas with the largest populations of First Nations people with registered Indian status who lived off reserve were Winnipeg (25,970), Edmonton (18,210) and Vancouver (15,080). In Winnipeg they represented 3.6% of the total population, 1.6% in Edmonton and 0.7% in Vancouver.

First Nations people with registered Indian status who lived off reserve also represented relatively large shares of the population in several census agglomerations (see [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#)). In Prince Rupert, British Columbia, they represented 31.2% of the total population, in Thompson, Manitoba 23.4%, in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan 15.8%, in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories 13.1% and in Terrace, British Columbia 12.9%.

### First Nations people who are not Registered Indians now represent one-quarter of the First Nations population

First Nations people who were not Registered Indians represented 25.1% (213,900) of the total First Nations population in Canada. However, in some provinces, especially in the Atlantic Provinces as well as Ontario and Quebec, they represented a greater share. In Newfoundland and Labrador nearly 6 in 10 First Nations people do not have registered Indian status, representing the highest share of all provinces and territories.

The census metropolitan areas with the largest populations of First Nations people without registered Indian status were Toronto (14,505), where they represented 0.3% of the total population, Vancouver (13,635 or 0.6%), Montréal (10,540 or 0.3%) and Ottawa - Gatineau (Ontario part) (6,495 or 0.7%).

Among census agglomerations (see [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#)), First Nations people who were not Registered Indians represented 8.9% of the total population of Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador, 3.9% of Terrace, British Columbia and 3.4% of both Prince Rupert and Williams Lake, British Columbia and 3.2% of the total population of Pembroke, Ontario.

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7. In this document, data are shown for First Nations people with registered Indian status living on and off reserve. The 2006 Census release on Aboriginal peoples, entitled *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census*, Catalogue no. 97-558-XIE, showed data for the total First Nations population living on and off reserve without a breakdown by registered Indian status. In 2011, 37.6% of First Nations people lived on-reserve, while 62.4% lived off-reserve. Of the on-reserve First Nations population, the vast majority (98.2%) had registered Indian status; of the off-reserve First Nation population, 60.8% were Registered Indians, while 39.2% were not Registered Indians.

8. Data for on reserve are based on the 2011 definition of 'on reserve' (see [Box 6: Concepts and definitions – 'On reserve'](#)).

## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

### Box 3: [Registered Indians](#)

The NHS asked whether or not a person is a Status Indian (Registered or Treaty Indian) as well whether or not a person is a member of a First Nation/Indian band (see [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#)).

In 2011, 697,505 people reported being Registered or Treaty Indians. The vast majority of these individuals (91.4% or 637,660) also reported identifying as First Nations people. Another 4.8% (or 33,415) of Registered Indians were Métis. Additionally, 3.3% (or 22,895) of Registered Indians did not identify with an Aboriginal group (First Nations people, Métis or Inuit). Finally, relatively low numbers of Registered Indians identified with more than one Aboriginal group or were Inuit.

Among those who reported being a Registered Indian, 45.3% (or 316,000) lived on a reserve and 54.7% (or 381,510) did not live on reserve.

### Box 4: [Members of a First Nation or Indian band](#)

There were 675,485 people who reported being a member of a First Nation/Indian band in 2011. Most of these individuals (95.4% or 644,195) also reported identifying as First Nations people. Another 2.7% (or 18,415) of members of a First Nation/Indian band were Métis. Additionally, 1.4% (or 9,120) of members of a First Nation/Indian band did not identify with an Aboriginal group (First Nations people, Métis or Inuit). Finally, relatively low numbers of members of a First Nation/Indian band identified with more than one Aboriginal group or were Inuit.

## Métis

Métis in Canada are a people with their own unique culture, traditions, way of life, collective consciousness and nationhood.<sup>9</sup>

### The majority of Métis live in the western provinces and Ontario

The majority (84.9%) of people who identified themselves as Métis lived in either the western provinces or in Ontario. The largest population was in Alberta (96,865) where 21.4% of all Métis in Canada lived. The next largest was in Ontario (86,015), where they represented 19.0% of all Métis. This was followed by 78,830 Métis in Manitoba (17.4%), 69,475 Métis in British Columbia (15.4%) and 52,450 Métis in Saskatchewan or 11.6% of all Métis in Canada.

About 41,000 Métis lived in Quebec, representing 9.1% of all Métis in the country. Moreover, 5.1% of Métis lived in the Atlantic Provinces and about 1% lived in the territories.

Métis represented the largest shares of the total population of the Northwest Territories, followed by Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In the Northwest Territories Métis represented 8.0% of the total population, followed by 6.7% of Manitoba's, and 5.2% of Saskatchewan.

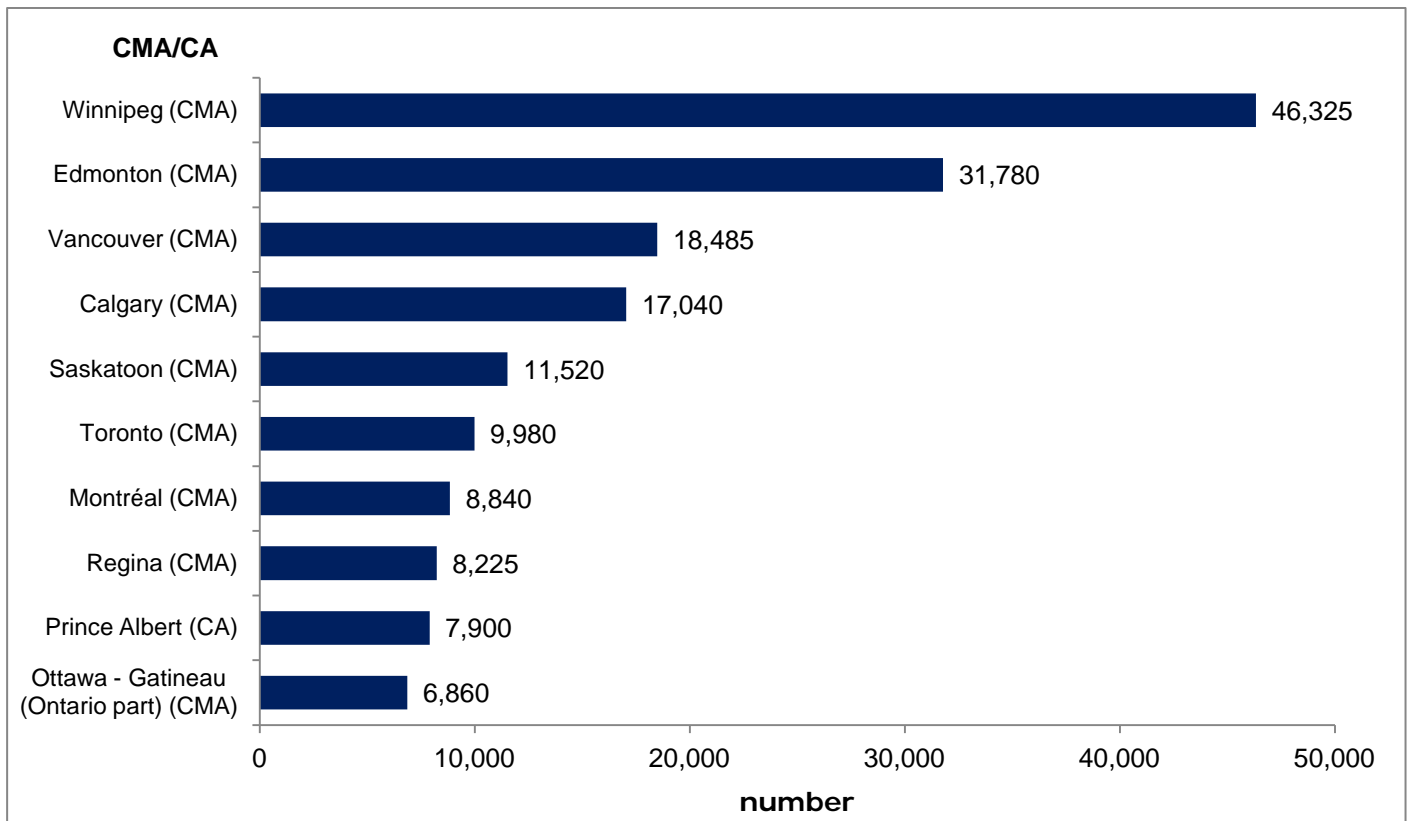
9. Métis National Council website: [www.metisnation.ca](http://www.metisnation.ca).

# Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

## Métis population highest in Winnipeg

One-quarter of Métis in Canada lived in four western census metropolitan areas. Winnipeg had the highest population of Métis, about 46,325, (Figure 1). It was followed by Edmonton with 31,780, Vancouver (18,485) and Calgary (17,040). In addition, 11,520 Métis lived in Saskatoon and 9,980 in Toronto.

**Figure 1 Ten census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with the largest Métis populations, 2011**



**Note:** Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Métis also made up a relatively large share of the population of several census agglomerations (see [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#)) in Ontario and the West.

In Ontario, Métis represented 10.0% of the population of Midland and 7.9% of the population of Kenora. In Manitoba, Métis accounted for 12.1% of the population of Portage la Prairie and 10.1% of that of Thompson. In Saskatchewan, Métis accounted for 19.3% of the population of Prince Albert, 9.3% of the population of North Battleford and 6.7% of Lloydminster. In Alberta, Métis accounted for just over 5% of the population in both Grande Prairie and Cold Lake. In British Columbia, they made up 9.6% of the population of Dawson Creek and 6.8% of that of Quesnel. In the Northwest Territories, Métis made up 6.2% of Yellowknife's population.

# Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

## Inuit

Inuit in Canada have a unique culture, core knowledge and beliefs. Many Inuit live within their distinct homeland.<sup>10</sup>

### Nearly three-quarters of Inuit live in Inuit Nunangat

According to the 2011 NHS, almost three-quarters (73.1%) of Inuit in Canada, or 43,460 people, lived in Inuit Nunangat (Figure 2). Inuit Nunangat stretches from Labrador to the Northwest Territories and comprises four regions: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories. About 16,000 Inuit lived outside Inuit Nunangat.<sup>11</sup>

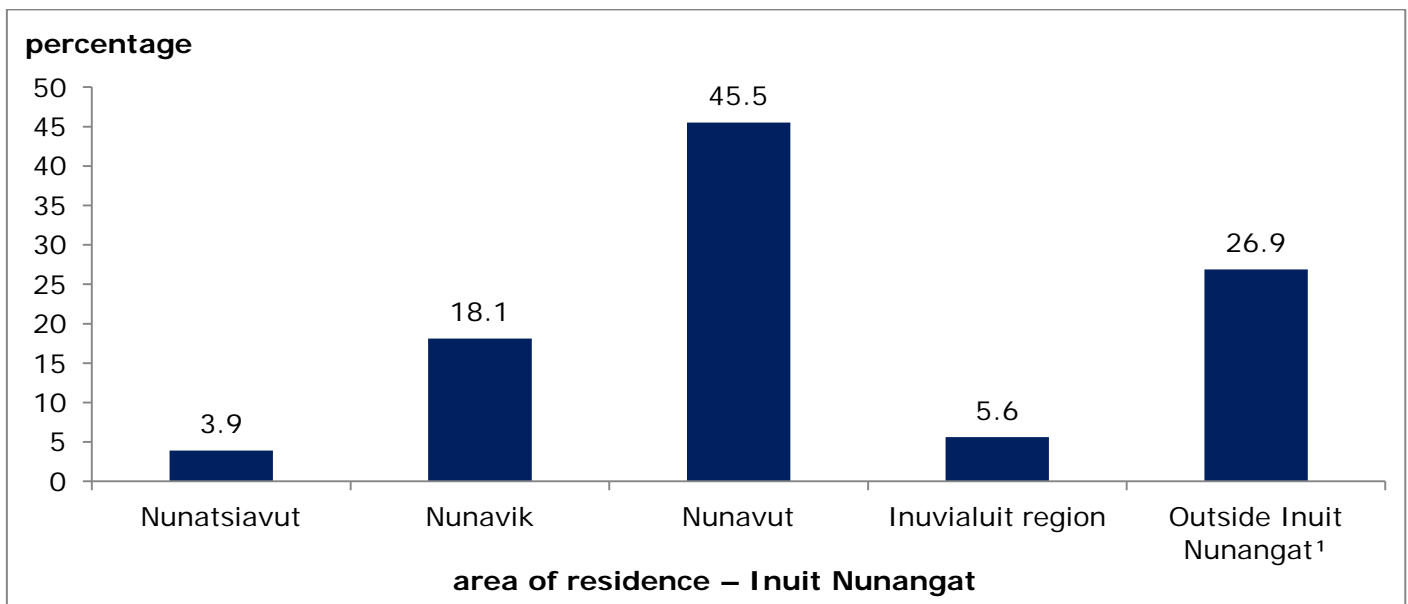
Nunatsiavut, in northern Labrador, has a population of 2,325 Inuit, or 3.9% of the total Inuit population in Canada. Inuit represented 89.1% of the total population of Nunatsiavut.

Nunavik, in northern Quebec, was home to 10,750 Inuit, or 18.1% of the total Inuit population. Inuit living in Nunavik accounted for 89.1% of the total population of this region.

There were 27,070 Inuit who lived in Nunavut, which has the largest land mass and biggest Inuit population within Inuit Nunangat. Inuit living in Nunavut accounted for nearly half (45.5%) of the total Inuit population in Canada. Within Nunavut, Inuit represented 85.4% of the total population of the territory.

The Inuvialuit region, in the Northwest Territories, had a population of 3,310 Inuit, or 5.6% of the total Inuit population. Inuit living in the Inuvialuit region accounted 57.6% of the total population of this region.

**Figure 2 Distribution of the Inuit population by area of residence – Inuit Nunangat, Canada, 2011**



1. Data for Inuit outside of Inuit Nunangat, as it represents less than 1% of the Canadian population, should be used with caution because of lower reliability.

**Note:** Refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

10. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami website: [www.itk.ca](http://www.itk.ca).

11. Data for Inuit outside of Inuit Nunangat, as it represents less than 1% of the Canadian population, should be used with caution because of lower reliability.

# Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

## Four in ten Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat live in a large urban population centre<sup>11</sup>

In 2011, 37.5% of Inuit living outside of Inuit Nunangat lived in large urban population centre (see [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#)).

The census metropolitan areas with the largest Inuit populations were Edmonton (1,115), Montréal (900), Ottawa - Gatineau (Ontario part) (735), Yellowknife (735) and St. John's (680).

### Box 5: [Aboriginal ancestry](#)

In this report the concept of Aboriginal identity (see [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#)) is used to provide a demographic profile of Aboriginal people in Canada. However, the NHS also contains a question on Aboriginal ancestry (ethnic origin). Ancestry refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondent's ancestors, an ancestor being usually more distant than a grandparent. A person can have more than one ethnic or cultural origin.

In 2011, more than 1.8 million people reported having at least one Aboriginal ancestry, either alone or in combination with other Aboriginal and/or non-Aboriginal origins. About 52,900 people reported more than one Aboriginal ancestry.

Nearly 1.4 million people reported a First Nations (North American Indian) ancestry, such as Cree, Ojibway and Mi'kmaq, alone or with other origins. They constituted the largest Aboriginal ancestry group. About 447,655 people reported Métis ancestry, alone or with other origins, and 72,615 people reported Inuit ancestry, alone or with other origins.

## Part 2: The Aboriginal population is young

The Aboriginal population is younger than the non-Aboriginal population. This is due to higher fertility rates and shorter life expectancy. First Nations people and Inuit tend to have higher fertility rates than the non-Aboriginal population, while Métis have a slightly higher fertility rate than the non-Aboriginal population.<sup>12</sup>

The 2011 NHS showed that there were 392,105 Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada ([Table 4](#)). They represented over one-quarter (28.0%) of the total Aboriginal population, and 7.0% of all children in Canada. In comparison, there were 5.2 million non-Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada, representing 16.5% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Additionally, there were more than 254,515 Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24, representing 18.2% of the total Aboriginal population, and 5.9% of all youth in Canada. Non-Aboriginal youth numbered just under 4.1 million, and accounted for 12.9% of the non-Aboriginal population.

In comparison, seniors made up a lower proportion of the total Aboriginal population. In 2011, there were about 82,690 Aboriginal people who were seniors aged 65 and over, accounting for 5.9% of the total Aboriginal population. This was less than half of the proportion of 14.2% for seniors in the non-Aboriginal population.

12. Statistics Canada, [Population Projections by Aboriginal Identity in Canada, 2006 to 2031](#), Catalogue no. 91-552-X.

## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

In 2011, the median age of the Aboriginal population was 28 years; 13 years younger than the median of 41 years for the non-Aboriginal population. (The median age is the age where exactly one-half of the population is older and the other half is younger).

Inuit were the youngest of the three Aboriginal groups, with a median age of 23. The median age of First Nations people was 26, and that of Métis 31.

**Table 4 Age distribution and median age for selected Aboriginal identity categories, Canada, 2011**

Age groups and median age	Total Aboriginal identity population		First Nations single identity		Métis single identity		Inuit single identity		Non-Aboriginal identity population	
	number <sup>1</sup>	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total - Age groups	1,400,685	100.0	851,560	100.0	451,795	100.0	59,445	100.0	31,451,635	100.0
0 to 24 years	646,620	46.2	415,660	48.8	184,455	40.8	32,110	54.0	9,270,245	29.5
0 to 14 years	392,105	28.0	258,795	30.4	104,415	23.1	20,160	33.9	5,200,695	16.5
0 to 4 years	136,100	9.7	90,995	10.7	34,860	7.7	7,195	12.1	1,737,585	5.5
5 to 9 years	125,835	9.0	83,490	9.8	32,845	7.3	6,700	11.3	1,677,585	5.3
10 to 14 years	130,170	9.3	84,310	9.9	36,710	8.1	6,270	10.5	1,785,520	5.7
15 to 24 years	254,515	18.2	156,865	18.4	80,035	17.7	11,950	20.1	4,069,550	12.9
25 to 64 years	671,380	47.9	389,215	45.7	237,705	52.6	24,905	41.9	17,712,545	56.3
65 years and over	82,690	5.9	46,690	5.5	29,635	6.6	2,425	4.1	4,468,850	14.2
Median age (years)	28	...	26	...	31	...	23	...	41	...

... not applicable

1. The estimates for the three Aboriginal groups do not add to the total Aboriginal identity population because only selected Aboriginal identity categories are shown.

**Note:** Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

### Youngest First Nations populations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba

In 2011, First Nations people were younger than the non-Aboriginal population in every province and territory ([Figure 3](#)).

First Nations people were the youngest in Saskatchewan and Manitoba where their median age was 20 years and 21 years respectively – half that of the non-Aboriginal population in these two provinces. The median age for First Nations people was 35 years in Newfoundland and Labrador, the oldest.

The 2011 NHS showed that there were 39,275 First Nations children aged 14 and under in Saskatchewan. They represented 38.1% of First Nations people in that province, and 20.0% of all children in Saskatchewan.

In Manitoba, there were 41,955 First Nations children, representing 36.7% of First Nations people and 18.4% of all children in that province.

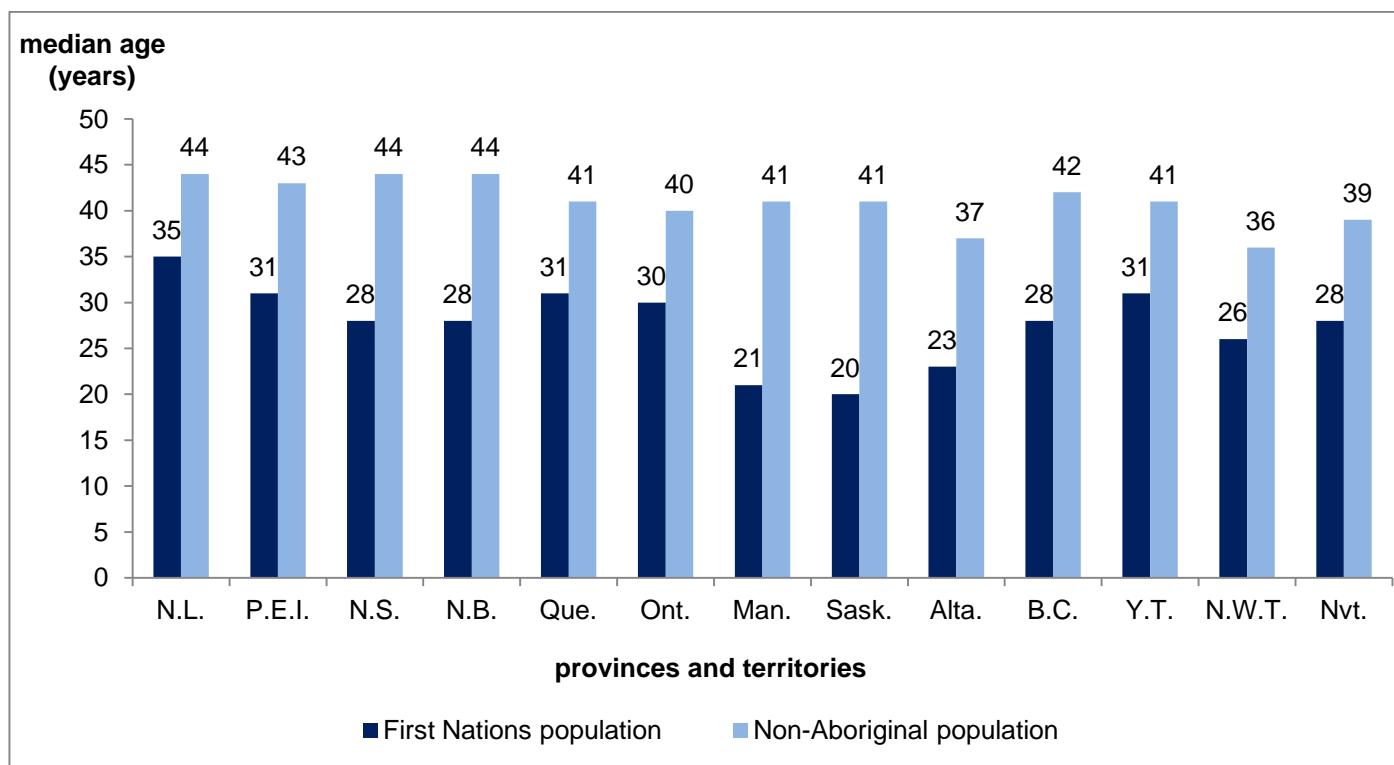
The median age for First Nations people who reported registered Indian status was 26. For First Nations people with registered Indian status, the median age was 24 for those living on reserve and 27 for those living off reserve.

The median age of First Nations people who did not have registered Indian status was 27.



## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

**Figure 3 Median age for First Nations and non-Aboriginal population, provinces and territories, 2011**



**Note:** Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

### Métis population is young, but oldest of the Aboriginal groups

Métis are also younger than the non-Aboriginal population with a median age of 31 compared with 41 for the non-Aboriginal population. The youngest Métis populations lived in Saskatchewan and Alberta, where their median age was 28.

The Métis populations were also relatively young in Prince Edward Island (29 years) and Manitoba (30 years), Yukon (31 years), the Northwest Territories (31 years), and British Columbia (32 years). Métis living in New Brunswick were the oldest with a median age of 41.

### Youngest Inuit populations in Nunavik and Nunavut

Inuit had a median age of 23, the youngest among the three Aboriginal groups. Nunavik and Nunavut were home to the youngest Inuit ([Table 5](#)).

The median age was 21 for Inuit in Nunavik and in Nunavut, 26 for Inuit in the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories and 29 in Nunatsiavut. The median age for Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat was 26.<sup>11</sup>

Almost four in ten Inuit were children aged 14 and under in both Nunavik and Nunavut. Children accounted for 27.8% of Inuit in the Inuvialuit region and 24.7% in Nunatsiavut. Children represented 29.9% of Inuit living outside of Inuit Nunangat.<sup>11</sup>

# Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

**Table 5 Age distribution and median age of Inuit by area of residence – Inuit Nunangat, Canada, 2011**

Age groups and median age	Nunatsiavut	Nunavik	Nunavut	Inuvialuit region	Outside Inuit Nunangat <sup>1</sup>
	percentage				
Total - Age groups	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0 to 24 years	43.9	58.4	57.3	47.7	48.4
0 to 14 years	24.7	37.0	36.6	27.8	29.9
0 to 4 years	9.5	13.1	13.9	11.2	9.0
5 to 9 years	7.3	12.4	11.7	8.8	10.9
10 to 14 years	7.7	11.5	11.0	7.9	10.1
15 to 24 years	19.1	21.4	20.7	19.8	18.5
25 to 64 years	50.3	39.0	39.5	46.4	45.9
65 years and over	5.8	2.7	3.3	6.0	5.8
Median age (years)	29	21	21	26	26

1. Data for Inuit outside of Inuit Nunangat, as it represents less than 1% of the Canadian population, should be used with caution because of lower reliability.

**Note:** Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

## Part 3: Living arrangements of Aboriginal children

Aboriginal children<sup>13</sup> aged 14 and under in Canada lived in a variety of arrangements, primarily in families<sup>14</sup> with either both of their parents or with lone-parents. Other Aboriginal children in that age group were stepchildren, grandchildren living with grandparents with no parent present, foster children or children living with other relatives.<sup>15</sup>

### Half of Aboriginal children live with both parents

The 2011 NHS showed that there were 392,105 Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada. One-half of these Aboriginal children (49.6%, or 194,585) were living in a family with both of their parents (biological or adoptive), compared with three quarters (76.0%) of non-Aboriginal children ([Table 6](#)).

About one-third of Aboriginal children (34.4%, or 134,845) lived in a lone-parent family compared with 17.4% of non-Aboriginal children. Among these Aboriginal children and non-Aboriginal children living in a lone-parent family, the majority lived with a female lone parent.

13. While the census definition of 'child' refers strictly to sons and daughters living in a census family with married, common-law or lone parents, for simplicity, the population aged 14 and under is often referred to in this document as 'children.' See the [Families Reference Guide, 2011 Census](#), Catalogue no. 98-312-X2011005 for more information on the concept of children.

14. The term 'family' in this document refers to the census definition of 'census family,' but for simplicity, the term 'family' is used throughout this report, unless otherwise specified. Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

15. Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

Fewer than one in ten (8.5%, or 33,405) Aboriginal children aged 14 and under were stepchildren, compared with 5.8% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. A stepchild is a child in a couple family who is the biological or adopted child of only one married spouse or common-law partner in the couple, and whose birth or adoption preceded the current relationship.

About 10,525 Aboriginal children (2.7%) lived in skip-generation families, that is, with one or both grandparents where no parents were present. This was the case for 0.4% of non-Aboriginal children aged 14 and under. Additionally, 9.1% of Aboriginal children, or 35,540, lived in multi-generational families, that is, with at least one of their parents and at least one of their grandparents, compared with 3.9% of non-Aboriginal children.<sup>16</sup>

The NHS results showed that 3.6% of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under (14,225) were foster children, compared with 0.3% of non-Aboriginal children (15,345). Almost half (48.1%) of all children aged 14 and under in foster care were Aboriginal children.

Aboriginal children aged 4 and under were somewhat less likely to be in foster care than those who were older (3.1% versus 3.9% of those aged 5 to 14).

In addition to foster children, a further 4,515 Aboriginal children aged 14 and under (1.2%) lived with other relatives<sup>17</sup> in arrangements that did not include at least one parent or grandparent. These relatives could be extended family, such as aunts, uncles or cousins. This was the case for 0.2% of non-Aboriginal children of the same age group.

**Table 6 Percentage distribution of the population aged 14 and under in private households by living arrangement for selected Aboriginal identity categories, Canada, 2011**

	Total Aboriginal identity population	First Nations single identity	Métis single identity	Inuit single identity	Non-Aboriginal identity population
<b>Living arrangements</b>	<b>Percentage (%) distribution of the population</b>				
<b>Total population aged 14 and under in private households</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Children of both parents <sup>1</sup>	49.6	45.0	58.0	61.6	76.0
Stepchildren	8.5	8.7	8.6	6.3	5.8
Children of lone parent	34.4	37.1	29.8	25.8	17.4
Of male lone parent	6.0	6.7	4.3	6.1	2.9
Of female lone parent	28.4	30.4	25.5	19.7	14.4
Grandchildren in skip-generation family	2.7	3.3	1.4	2.3	0.4
Foster children	3.6	4.5	1.7	2.8	0.3
Children living with other relatives <sup>2,3</sup>	1.2	1.4	0.5	1.1	0.2

1. Includes children in a two-parent family where there may also be step siblings or half-siblings present. Also includes children in a two-parent family for whom it cannot be determined if they are stepchildren.

2. Non-relatives may be present.

3. This category excludes foster children.

**Note:** Please refer to [Box 6: Concepts and definitions](#) at the end of the document for concepts and definitions.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

16. The children living in multi-generational families are included in the following categories of [Table 6](#): children of both parents or children of lone parent.

17. Non-relatives may be present.

### **Less than half of First Nations children live with both parents**

The NHS counted almost 258,800 First Nations children aged 14 and under in Canada in 2011. Forty-five percent of First Nations children (116,375) lived in a family with both of their parents, 37.1% (96,045) lived in a lone-parent family, and 8.7% (22,445) lived in a stepfamily as stepchildren.

Almost 8,500 First Nations children (3.3%) were not living with their parents, but instead lived with one or both of their grandparents in a skip-generation family. Additionally, 10.5% of First Nations children, or 27,100, lived in multi-generational families.<sup>16</sup>

Over 11,700 First Nations children aged 14 and under (4.5%) were foster children. First Nations children who were Registered Indians were more likely to be in foster care than those who were not registered (5.0% compared with 2.9%).

### **More than half of Métis children live with both parents**

In 2011, there were over 104,415 Métis children aged 14 and under in Canada. The majority (58.0%, or 60,605) lived in a family with both of their parents, 29.8% (31,095) lived in a lone-parent family, and 8.6% (8,935) lived in a stepfamily as stepchildren.

Just over 1,400 Métis children (1.4%) did not live with either of their parents, but with one or both of their grandparents. Additionally, 5.6% of Métis children, or 5,870, lived in multi-generational families.<sup>16</sup>

Nearly 1,800 Métis children (1.7%) were foster children.

### **About six in ten Inuit children live with both parents**

The 2011 NHS showed that there were more than 20,100 Inuit children aged 14 and under in Canada. About six in ten Inuit children (61.6%, or 12,415) lived in a family with both of their parents, one in four (25.8%, or 5,200) lived in a lone-parent family, and 6.3% (1,280) lived in a stepfamily as stepchildren.

Almost 470 Inuit children (2.3%) lived in skip-generation families, that is, with one or both grandparents where no parents were present. Additionally, 10.7% of Inuit children, or 2,165, lived in multi-generational families,<sup>16</sup> that is, with their parent(s) and grandparent(s).

About 570 Inuit children (2.8%) were foster children.

### Box 6: Concepts and definitions

**Aboriginal ancestry:** Aboriginal ancestry refers to whether a person reported ancestry associated with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada in the ethnic origin question. Ancestry refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondent's ancestors, an ancestor being usually more distant than a grandparent. A person can have more than one ethnic or cultural origin.

**Aboriginal identity:** The term 'Aboriginal identity' refers to whether the person reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or being a Registered or Treaty Indian, (that is, registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada) and/or being a member of a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the *Constitution Act, 1982*, section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

**Census agglomeration (CA):** Area consisting of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a core. A census agglomeration must have a core population of at least 10,000.

**Census metropolitan area (CMA):** Area consisting of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a core. A census metropolitan area must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the core.

**Children:** The population aged 14 and under is often referred to in this document as 'children.' However, the census definition of 'child' refers strictly to blood, step- or adopted sons and daughters (regardless of age) who are living in the same dwelling as their parent(s), as well as to grandchildren in households where there are no parents present. See the [Families Reference Guide, 2011 Census](#), Catalogue no. 98-312-X2011005 for more information on the concept of children.

**Family:** The term 'family' in this document refers to the census definition of 'census family,' but for simplicity, the term 'family' is used throughout this report, unless otherwise specified. A census family is composed of a married or common-law couple, with or without children, or of a lone parent living with at least one child in the same dwelling. Couples can be of the opposite sex or of the same sex.

**Foster children:** The population in private households who have been reported as foster children on the NHS questionnaire. Foster children are considered as 'other relatives' outside of a census family.

**Inuit Nunangat:** Inuit Nunangat is the homeland of Inuit of Canada. It includes the communities located in the four Inuit regions: Nunatsiavut (Northern coastal Labrador), Nunavik (Northern Quebec), the territory of Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories. These regions collectively encompass the area traditionally occupied by Inuit in Canada.

**Large urban population centre:** Area with a population of 100,000 or more and no fewer than 400 persons per square kilometre.

**Living arrangements of population aged 14 and under:** A person aged 14 and under living in a private household can be a child in a census family (see definition of family) or a person aged 14 and under not in a census family and living with other relatives (non-relatives may be present).

## Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

### Box 6: Concepts and definitions (continued)

**Lone parents:** Mothers or fathers, with no married spouse or common-law partner present, living in a dwelling with one or more children.

**Membership in a First Nation or Indian band:** An Indian band is defined as a body of Indians for whose collective use and benefit lands have been set apart or money is held by the Crown, or who have been declared to be a band for the purpose of the *Indian Act*. Many Indian bands have elected to call themselves a First Nation and have changed their band name to reflect this. With the 1985 amendment to the *Indian Act* of Canada (Bill C-31), many Indian bands exercised the right to establish their own membership code, whereby it was not always necessary for a band member to be a Registered Indian according to the *Indian Act*.

**Multigenerational families:** Refer to arrangements where grandchildren live with at least one of their parents and at least one of their grandparents in the same dwelling.

**On reserve:** 'On reserve' includes six types of census subdivisions (CSDs) legally affiliated with First Nations or Indian bands, i.e., Indian reserve (IRI), Indian settlement (S-É) (except for the five Yukon settlements of Champagne Landing 10, Klukshu, Two and One-Half Mile Village, Two Mile Village and Kloo Lake), Indian government district (IGD), *terres réservées aux Cris* (TC), *terres réservées aux Naskapis* (TK) and Nisga'a land (NL), as well as the northern village of Sandy Bay in Saskatchewan.

**Private household:** Refers to a person or a group of persons (other than foreign residents) who occupy the same private dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada.

**Registered or Treaty Indian (Status Indians):** Registered Indians are persons who are registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada. Treaty Indians are persons who belong to a First Nation or Indian band that signed a treaty with the Crown. Registered or Treaty Indians are sometimes also called Status Indians.

**Skip-generation family:** A census family that consists of grandparents and grandchildren without the presence of parents in the home.

**Stepchild:** A stepchild is a child in a couple family who is the biological or adopted child of only one married spouse or common-law partner in the couple, and whose birth or adoption preceded the current relationship.

**Stepfamily:** A couple family in which at least one child is the biological or adopted child of only one married spouse or common-law partner and whose birth or adoption preceded the current relationship. Couples with children for whom it cannot be determined if there are stepchildren present will be considered intact families.

## Additional information

Additional information on Aboriginal peoples can be found in the [NHS Data Tables](#), Catalogue nos. 99-011-X2011026 through 99-011-X2011033, the [NHS Profile](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X, as well as in the [NHS Focus on Geography Series](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011005.

For details on the concepts, definitions, universes, variables and geographic terms used in the 2011 National Household Survey, please consult the [National Household Survey Dictionary](#), Catalogue no. 99-000-X. For detailed explanations on concepts and for information on data quality, please refer to the reference guides found on the [2011 National Household Survey \(NHS\)](#) website.

## Note to readers

**Random rounding and percentage distributions:** To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2011 National Household Survey while maintaining the quality of the results, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values, since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Due to random rounding, estimates and percentages may vary slightly between different 2011 National Household Survey products, such as the analytical documents and various data tables.

**Comparability between counts from the 2006 Census long form and the 2011 National Household Survey estimates:** When comparing estimates from the 2006 Census long form and estimates from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) users should take into account the fact that the two sources represent different populations. The target population for the 2006 Census long form includes usual residents in collective dwellings and persons living abroad whereas the target population for the NHS excludes them. Moreover, the NHS estimates are derived from a voluntary survey and are therefore subject to potentially higher non-response error than those derived from the 2006 Census long form.

## Acknowledgments

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