

MNCHP Network Bulletin



best start
meilleur départ

by/par health **nexus** santé

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In this Bulletin:

This week's bulletin provides an overview of poverty, with a particular focus on child poverty, including recent reports and studies, resources, and links to organizations and programs. This selection of information is based on a preliminary scan and is not exhaustive.

We invite you to share other relevant information about this topic.

I. RECENT RESEARCH

1. [Study: Effects of Childhood Hunger Last for Decades](#)
Alice Park, Time Magazine (2010)
2. [ADHD Linked to Low Maternal Education, Lone Parents, and Welfare Benefits](#)
Science Daily (2010)
3. [Poor Infants Fare Worse Despite Canada Health Care](#)
Reuters (2009)
4. [Comparing the 2008-2010 Recession and Recovery with Previous Cycles](#)
Statistics Canada (2011) (available in French)
5. [Depression May Underlie "Transmission" of Poverty](#)
Reuters Health (2009)
6. [Neighbourhood Variation in Hospitalization for Unintentional Injury Among Children and Teenagers](#)
Lisa N. Oliver & Dafna E. Kohen (2010) (available in French)

II. RECENT REPORTS

7. [Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)
The Government of Ontario (2010) (available in French)
8. [Recommendations for an Ontario Income Security Review](#)
The Ontario Social Assistance Review Advisory Council (2010)
9. [A Blueprint for Economic Stimulus and Poverty Reduction in Ontario](#)
Sheila Block (on behalf of the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction) (2009)
10. [Greater Trouble in Greater Toronto: Child Poverty in the GTA](#)
Children's Aid Society of Toronto (2008)
11. [Reduced Poverty = Better Health for All](#)
Campaign 2000 (2010) (available in French)
12. [Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada](#)
Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (2010) (available in French)
13. [Welfare Incomes 2009](#)
National Council on Welfare (2010) (available in French)

14. [Hunger Count 2010: A Comprehensive Report on Food Bank Use in Canada and Recommendations for Change](#)
Food Banks Canada (2010)
15. [Hidden Cities: Unmasking and Overcoming Health Inequities in Urban Settings](#)
World Health Organization, 2010 (available in French)

III. CURRENT INITIATIVES

16. [Income Security Advocacy Centre](#)
The Income Security Advocacy Centre (2010) (available in French, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish)
17. [Campaign 2000](#)
Campaign 2000 (2010) (available in French)
18. [Dignity for All Campaign](#) (available in French)
Dignity for All (2010)

IV. RESOURCES

19. [Poverty Compendium: A Tool for Communities \(2009\)](#)
Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement
20. [Current Social Assistance Rates](#)
The Income Security Advocacy Centre (2010)
21. [Skyworks Foundation "Home Safe" Documentaries](#)
Skyworks Foundation (2010)
22. [25 in 5 Network](#)

V. FEATURED BEST START RESOURCES

23. ["I'm Still Hungry" Child and Family Poverty in Ontario](#)
Best Start Resource Centre (2010)
24. [The Impact of Poverty on Pregnant Women: A Guide for Program Managers](#)
Best Start Resource Centre (2003)
25. [Reducing the Impact: Working With Pregnant Women Who Live in Difficult Life Situations](#)
Best Start Resource Centre (2002) (available in French)
26. [Socio Economic Status and Pregnancy Fact Sheets](#)
Best Start Resource Centre (2002)

I. RECENT RESEARCH

1. Study: Effects of Childhood Hunger Last for Decades

Alice Park, Time Magazine (2010)

Researchers at the National Cancer Institute and the University of Calgary have completed the first long-term study on the effects of hunger on general health. The study (Kirkpatrick et al., 2010) followed children from birth to 21 years old and found that children and youth who experience hunger are more likely to have poorer health. Repeated exposure to hunger was particularly detrimental, including higher odds of chronic conditions and asthma.

Article: <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2008240,00.html>

Abstract: <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/164/8/754>

2. ADHD Linked to Low Maternal Education, Lone Parents, and Welfare Benefits

Science Daily (2010)

A recent Swedish study (Hjern et al., 2009) has determined that social adversity (in particular, low maternal education, lone parents, and welfare benefits) in the family predicts a considerable proportion of ADHD-medication in school children in Sweden. Researchers studied a national cohort of children and identified just under 8,000 Swedish-born children between the ages of 6 and 9 using a prescription for ADHD medication to further examine the issue. The findings indicate that coming from a family on welfare benefits increased the risk of ADHD medication by 135% when compared to households not claiming benefits.

Article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/06/100601072634.htm>

Abstract: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1651-2227.2009.01638.x/abstract>

3. Poor Infants Fare Worse Despite Canada Health Care

Reuters (2009)

Researchers examined the effect of socioeconomic status on the health outcomes of chronically ill newborns with universal health care coverage. The longitudinal, population-based study (Wang et al., 2009) found that despite universal health insurance, living in lower-income neighbourhoods is linked to an increase in hospitalization and possibly, mortality rates among chronically ill infants. This study demonstrates that although universal health care increases access to healthcare services, it does not address other factors that influence the health of an infant, such as safe housing, adequate nutrition, and costs related to caring for a child with chronic health issues.

Article: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE56L6O620090722>

Abstract: <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/163/7/608>

4. Comparing the 2008-2010 Recession and Recovery with Previous Cycles

Statistics Canada (2011) (available in French)

This study (Statistics Canada, 2011) illustrates that when looking at conventional measures (i.e., real gross domestic product, employment or hours worked) it would appear that the 2008-2009 recession in Canada was not as severe as previous recessions (1981-1982 and 1990-1992). This study highlights that these measures do not capture the major impacts of the global financial crisis, which has significantly affected global trade flows and decreased corporate incomes and spending. In response to policy measures in Canada and abroad, the economy began to stabilize in mid-2009. Compared to other countries, Canada had less pronounced declines in output and a quicker and more complete recovery (i.e., real output, private domestic demand, and employment have returned to pre-recession levels).

English: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/110113/dq110113b-eng.htm>

French: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/110113/dq110113b-fra.htm>

5. Depression May Underlie "Transmission" of Poverty

Reuters Health (2009)

Researchers have found that children growing up in poverty are more likely than their peers to be depressed as teenagers. These findings stem from a study (Wickrama et al., 2010) that used prospective data from 485 adolescents from Iowa over a 10-year period. The results offer evidence of intergenerational transmission of social adversity through health trajectories and social pathways. This cycle of poverty is of particular concern to researchers and they suggest that early intervention to increase resiliency must occur before children reach adolescence.

Article: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5064ZV20090107>

Abstract: <http://hsb.sagepub.com/content/49/4/468.abstract>

6. Neighbourhood Variation in Hospitalization for Unintentional Injury Among Children and Teenagers

Lisa N. Oliver & Dafna E. Kohen (2010) (available in French)

This recent research examined the rates of unintentional injury hospitalization by neighbourhood income

for Canadian youth (19 and under) in urban areas. The study found that “children in lower-income neighbourhoods generally have higher rates of hospitalization due to unintentional injuries, compared with children in higher-income neighbourhoods” (Oliver & Kohen, 2010, p.1). These findings are important to individuals and the health system. There is a significant impact of unintentional injury to health system costs, as well as long-term impacts on the health of those who are injured as children (e.g., disability and poor health-related quality of life). Identifying neighbourhood income as a possible risk factor to childhood injury can indicate where to focus preventative interventions.

English: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2010004/article/11351-eng.pdf>

French: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2010004/article/11351-fra.htm>

II. RECENT REPORTS

ONTARIO

7. Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

The Government of Ontario (2010) (available in French)

The Government of Ontario has developed a long-term poverty reduction strategy focused on the needs of children and their families. With a goal to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25% over the next five years, the strategy focuses on the following key areas:

- Increasing the child benefit in Ontario
- Increasing investment in education and early learning (i.e., tripling the number of Parenting and Family Literacy Centres to a total of 300 across the province and investing in an After School Program to give children activities after school)
- Building stronger communities (i.e., funding the Provincial Rent Bank Program and investing in both adult and youth employment and training opportunities)
- Creating a smarter government (i.e., review of social assistance with the goal of removing barriers and increasing opportunity)

The Ontario government is pledging a long-term commitment and is planning to collaborate across sectors to address poverty.

English: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/breakingthecycle/index.aspx>

French: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/French/breakingthecycle/index.aspx>

8. Recommendations for an Ontario Income Security Review

The Ontario Social Assistance Review Advisory Council (2010)

This review draws attention to the deep rooted and continued dissatisfaction with the current approach to social assistance that is felt by all stakeholders including: community groups, business, labour, policy makers, the people who run the system and those who receive its benefits. It highlights the particular discontent with Ontario's two main social assistance programs – Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program. The report demonstrates how rather than assisting people, the programs often trap people in the cycle of poverty with complicated rules that result in stigma and ineffective support. This review suggests that a renewed income security system in Ontario should:

- Contribute to labour market opportunities to ensure jobs provide real pathways out of poverty;
- Provide workforce development and related services to help all Ontarians do better, including support for out-of-work and underemployed Ontarians to transition into sustainable employment;
- Support Ontarians in good and bad times, through liveable incomes and community supports (Ontario Social Assistance Review Advisory Council, 2010).

<http://sareview.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/SARAC-Report-FINAL.pdf>

9. A Blueprint for Economic Stimulus and Poverty Reduction in Ontario

Sheila Block (on behalf of the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction) (2009)

Through consultations in 30 communities across Ontario, this report from the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction recommends a plan that could reduce the number of Ontarians living in poverty by 15% and the number of children living in poverty by 19% over three years. The report suggests the following to reduce poverty in Ontario:

- A \$100 Healthy Food Supplement to help all adults on social assistance access healthier food;
- A Housing Benefit to help low-income renters meet the rising cost of housing;
- An increase to the Ontario Child Benefit to \$92 a month in the 2009 budget and \$125 a month in the 2010 budget to protect Ontarians during the economic downturn;
- Building 7,500 new affordable child care spaces, crucial to supporting parents who need to work and retrain for the demands of a changing economy;
- Leveraging federal infrastructure dollars to build more affordable housing (Block, 2009).

<http://www.25in5.ca/Blueprint.html>

10. Greater Trouble in Greater Toronto: Child Poverty in the GTA

Children's Aid Society of Toronto (2008)

The Children's Aid Society of Toronto examined low income trends among children between the ages of 0 and 17 years old and their families in the Greater Toronto Area. This report finds that 50% of children living in poverty in Ontario live in the GTA and of those families; the majority are lone parent families. Another important finding is that poverty is racialized in the GTA with the majority of children living in poverty being of non-European heritage. Lack of childcare and affordable housing are two major factors contributing to families living in poverty.

<http://www.torontocas.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/castchildpovertyreportdec2008.pdf>

CANADA

11. Reduced Poverty = Better Health for All

Campaign 2000 (2010) (available in French)

This report card looks at the country's most recent child poverty rate compared to the rate from 1989 when the Parliament unanimously agreed to "seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000". Although the child poverty rate is slightly lower now (9.1% compared to 11.9%) than it was in 1989, there are still over 600,000 children and their families living in poverty. This report recommends that federal leadership is necessary to help Canadian families recover from the most recent recession and prevent increased levels of child poverty.

English: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/index.html>

French: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/french/index.html>

12. Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada

Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (2010) (available in French)

The Federal Poverty Reduction Plan looks closely at poverty in Canada and ways in which the federal government can contribute and support poverty reduction. The recommendations pay special attention to assisting children, families, and vulnerable populations. It also includes recommendations to increase housing and reduce homelessness as well as improve education, training, and employment to help increase incomes.

English:

<http://www.unicef.ca/portal/Secure/Community/502/WCM/Get%20Involved/Advocacy/Federal%20poverty%20reduction%20plan%20Eng.pdf>

French:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=4770921&Mode=1&Parl=40&Ses=3&Language=F>

13. Welfare Incomes 2009

National Council on Welfare (2010) (available in French)

This report examines the state of welfare in Canada in 2009. Its analyses show that welfare can be harder to get today than it was 20 years ago (i.e. people had to be living with lower incomes in order to qualify). All welfare incomes increased in 2009 compared to the previous year but welfare incomes were still far below most socially accepted measures of sufficiency.

English: <http://www.cnb.gc.ca/l.3bd.2t.1ils@-eng.jsp?lid=331>

French: <http://www.cnb.gc.ca/l.3bd.2t.1ils@-eng.jsp?lid=331&lang=fr>

14. Hunger Count 2010: A Comprehensive Report on Food Bank Use in Canada and Recommendations for Change

Food Banks Canada (2010)

This report examines the use of food banks in Canada. It shows that the need for food banks increased this year across a wide range of users, including: adults, children, youth, families with children, single people, women, men, Aboriginal people, seniors, and people with disabilities. One of the largest groups of food bank users was children (38%). Families with children comprised over half of the households seeking food assistance.

http://action.web.ca/home/crru/rsrscs_crru_full.shtml?x=130468

INTERNATIONAL

15. Hidden Cities: Unmasking and Overcoming Health Inequities in Urban Settings

World Health Organization, 2010 (available in French)

The World Health Organization (WHO) explores the inequities that exist in cities in this recent report. It highlights that no matter the size, the wealth, or the geographic location of a city, health inequity is a problem that persists in urban areas. These inequities are found to be a result of potential health risks that include: substandard housing and crowded living conditions, problems with food and water safety, inadequate sanitation and solid waste disposal services, air pollution, congested traffic, etc. The WHO recommends that a range of different players become involved in reducing health inequities, including organized communities and all levels of government – local, provincial, and national. The report suggests that local leaders and governments play a key role in promoting urban health equity.

English: <http://www.hiddencities.org/report.html>

French (executive summary): <http://www.hiddencities.org/es.html>

III. CURRENT INITIATIVES

16. Income Security Advocacy Centre

The Income Security Advocacy Centre (2010) (available in French, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish)

The Income Security Advocacy Centre works with and on behalf of low income communities in Ontario to address issues of income security and poverty such as: Social Assistance Rates and Issues, Special Diet Cancellation / Nutritional Supplement Program, Ontario Child Benefit, Rate Restructuring, Transition Child Benefit, the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), Back-to-School and Winter Clothing Allowances, Poverty Reduction, and the Universal Child Care Benefit.

English: <http://www.incomesecurity.org/resources.html>

French: http://www.incomesecurity.org/index_f.html

Languages other than English and French: <http://www.hiddencities.org/es.html>

17. Campaign 2000

Campaign 2000 (2010) (available in French)

Campaign 2000 describes itself as a “national public education movement to build Canadian awareness and support for the 1989 all-party House of Commons resolution to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000.” This initiative began 1991 out of concern about the lack of government progress in addressing child poverty. Campaign 2000 advocates for Canadian elected officials to keep their promise to Canada's children. Their website offers a number of resources, news, report cards, and information about how community members can take action to help reduce poverty in Canada.

English: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/>

French: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/french/index.html>

18. Dignity for All Campaign

Dignity for All (2010) (available in French)

Dignity for All is a campaign for a poverty-free Canada. The campaign is aimed at increasing action at the federal government level to address the structural, root causes of poverty in Canada. The campaign advocates for:

- A federal plan for poverty elimination that complements provincial and territorial plans.
- A federal anti-poverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability for results.
- Sufficient federal investment in social security for all Canadians (Dignity for All, 2010).

Their campaign includes a website and a bulletin to mobilize community members and keep those interested up to date on current movement with regards to poverty in Canada and their latest advocacy activities.

English: <http://www.dignityforall.ca/en/about-dignity-all>

French: <http://www.dignityforall.ca/fr/%C3%A0-propos-de-la-dignit%C3%A9-pour-toutes>

IV. RESOURCES

19. Poverty Compendium: A Tool for Communities (2009)

Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement

Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement has created a learning module based on Garry Loewen's resource, [A Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Frameworks](#). The resource profiles 147 strategies that groups have used to try to reduce poverty in order to share that knowledge and allow other groups to learn from various frameworks and strategies. This resource and learning space focuses on concrete actions that groups and communities can undertake to reduce poverty.

http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g3s61_VC_2009d.html

20. Current Social Assistance Rates

The Income Security Advocacy Centre (2010)

This document presents the current social assistance rates in Ontario. It shows the benefit rate amounts for Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The Income Security Advocacy Centre is a great resource for those accessing social assistance, or working with those who do in order to be up-to-date with regards to any increases or cuts (e.g., the 1% increase that was effective November/December, 2010).

<http://www.incomesecurity.org/documents/1percentincrease-NovDec2010.doc>

21. Skyworks Foundation “Home Safe” Documentaries

Skyworks Foundation (2010)

The Skyworks Foundation is a non-profit documentary film-making and community development organization. The “Home Safe” documentary series comprises of three films, “Home Safe Toronto”,

“Home Safe Calgary”, and “Home Safe Hamilton”, all of which explore how Canadian families with children live with the threat and the reality of homelessness in different circumstances.

http://www.skyworksfoundation.org/documentaries/productions/hs_toronto/index.html

22. 25-in-5 Network

25-in-5: Network for Poverty Reduction is a multi-sectoral network comprised of more than 100 provincial and Toronto-based organizations and individuals working on eliminating poverty. The network has organized around the call for a Poverty Reduction Plan with a goal to reduce poverty in Ontario by 25% in 5 years and 50% in 10 years. Eliminating poverty in Ontario is possible. It just takes leadership and commitment— and a plan. The website provides resources, publications, recent news, and more.

<http://25in5.ca/about/>

V. FEATURED BEST START RESOURCES

23. "I'm Still Hungry" Child and Family Poverty in Ontario

Best Start Resource Centre (2010)

A practical guide for moving from stigma to empowerment, including a review of the realities of child poverty and promising responses.

http://www.beststart.org/resources/anti_poverty/index.html

24. The Impact of Poverty on Pregnant Women: A Guide for Program Managers

Best Start Resource Centre (2003)

This resource assists program managers in supporting their frontline staff that works with pregnant women living in poverty and adds to the resource "Reducing the Impact" (below).

http://www.beststart.org/resources/anti_poverty/index.html

25. Reducing the Impact: Working with pregnant women who live in difficult life situations

Best Start Resource Centre (2002) (available in French)

Resource manual for service providers who work with pregnant women including current research, strategies and recommendations and references to further resources.

English: http://www.beststart.org/resources/anti_poverty/index.html

French: <http://www.meilleurdepart.org/resources/socio/index.html>

26. Socio Economic Status and Pregnancy Fact Sheets

Best Start Resource Centre (2002)

Practical tips for service providers on issues related to social economic status and pregnancy including: poverty, pregnancy and culturally diverse women; helpful ways to work with pregnant women; food access issues; impact of violence on pregnant women; stats and facts about poverty and pregnancy; poverty, pregnancy and the determinants of health

http://www.beststart.org/resources/anti_poverty/index.html

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Click here to access Health Nexus' other e-bulletins and listservs:

In English:

- [OHPE](http://www.ohpe.ca/) - The free weekly Ontario Health Promotion E-mail bulletin (OHPE) offers a digest of news, events, jobs, feature articles on health promotion issues, resources, and much more, to those working in health promotion. <http://www.ohpe.ca/>
- [Click4HP](https://listserv.yorku.ca/archives/click4hp.html) - An open, facilitated public listserv, is an international dialogue on health promotion. Participants exchange views on issues and ideas, provide leads to resources, and ask questions about health promotion. <https://listserv.yorku.ca/archives/click4hp.html>
- [Health Nexus Today](http://www.blogs.healthnexussante.ca/) - Health Nexus Today is our Blog on health promotion. According to Google, "Blog is short for weblog - a journal or newsletter that is frequently updated and intended for the general public." Find the latest on health promotion including breaking news, highlights, studies, and issues in health promotion and the determinants of health in Canada and internationally. <http://www.blogs.healthnexussante.ca/>

In French:

- [French distribution list](http://www.meilleurdepart.org/index_fr.html) - The free distribution list offers information in French on maternal, newborn, and child health promotion topics. http://www.meilleurdepart.org/index_fr.html
- [Le Bloc-Notes](http://leblocnotes.ca/) - The biweekly French language bulletin provides information on health promotion. <http://leblocnotes.ca/>