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Family Statistics: The Well-Being Of Families Around The World

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The structure of families is changing worldwide, and based on a new report, some children are better off living with one parent than two.

According to the [2013 World Family Map](#) report by [non-profit research centre Child Trends](#), children living in two-parent families did better in school in higher-income countries, but children in lower-income regions did better with one parent.

"In some single parenting examples, resources were controlled by the mother of the household, ensuring these resources went to the well-being of children," says Laura Lippman, senior program area director, education, and co-investigator of the World Family Map. "It suggests that some single-parent families may not benefit from a second parent who might be taking these resources away."

Using 10 different data sources and partnering with universities around the world, Child Trends looked at the well-being of families in both low-income and high-income countries and the outcome on their children's education. Based on the research, two-parent families are becoming less common, marriage rates are falling and a majority of children under 17 still live at home.

Overall, Canadian families appear to be flourishing, from both a personal and societal standpoint.

"Canada did well in levels of nourishment, parental employment and public spending on family benefits, including childcare," Lippman tells the Huffington Post Canada.

In particular, Canada did well in the areas of child care support, parental leave during birth and child allowances and family taxes provided by the government when compared with other countries. In terms of children's living arrangements, 78 per cent of kids lived with two parents, 20 per cent lived in a single-parent home and one per cent lived with no parents.

But when it came to talking about politics with teenagers, Canada needs a little push. Only 11 per cent of 15-year-old Canadians talked to their parents about politics and social issues, compared with 20 per cent in the United States and 39 per cent in Argentina. These kinds of conversations have been shown to correlate with [higher literacy scores in reading, math and science](#), according to a 2007 study.

The 2011 Census report found Canada's [statistics on marriage were also changing](#). The number of same-sex marriages in the country almost tripled between 2006 and 2011 — from 7,465 to 21,015 couples. Meanwhile, rates of [same-sex common-law relationships](#), [heterosexual common-law couples](#), [one-parent families](#), [couples without children](#) and [step-families](#) all increased in 2011.

Lippman says numbers like these are important for countries to determine how money is invested into the well-being of adults and children, and also helps assess how younger generations could feel about marriage and childbearing.

Significant Statistics From The Study

Two Parents vs. Single Parent:

DID YOU KNOW? Children in Asia and the Middle East under the age of 18 are more likely to live in two-parent families, compared to other regions in the world. Also, children are more likely to live with one or no parent in the Americas, Europe, Oceania, and Sub-Saharan Africa than other regions, according to the report.

Extended Family:

DID YOU KNOW? Living with extended family, which includes parents and other relatives outside the immediate family, is more common in Asia, the Middle East, South America, Sub-Saharan Africa and not any other part of the world.

Marriage:

DID YOU KNOW? Marriage rates are declining in many regions. Adults are most likely to be married in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Childbearing:

DID YOU KNOW? Childbearing rates are also declining, according to the report. The highest fertility rates are in Sub-Saharan Africa — a woman in Nigeria gives birth to an average of 5.5 children.

Living Together:

DID YOU KNOW? There have also been dramatic increases in cohabitation, divorce, and non-marital childbearing in the Americas, Europe, and Oceania over the last four decades, according to the report.

Population:

DID YOU KNOW? In the Americas and Oceania countries, women in these regions were having enough children for the population to replace itself from one generation to the next, or were slightly below these "replacement levels," according to the report.

Non-Martial Childbearing:

DID YOU KNOW? In South America, over half of all children were born to unmarried mothers — Colombia had the highest rate at 85 per cent.

Poverty:

DID YOU KNOW? The report also looked extensively at rates of children and absolute poverty around the world. Absolute poverty was measured as the percentage of the population living below \$1.25 a day. The report found Nigeria had the highest absolute poverty rate at 64 per cent.

Employment:

DID YOU KNOW? Between 45 and 97 per cent of parents polled were employed worldwide, and the highest employment rate was in Asia.

Family Life:

DID YOU KNOW? Between 31 per cent (in Russia) and 74 per cent (in Chile) of adults around the world are completely or very satisfied with their family life.

Household Work:

DID YOU KNOW? Approximately 55 per cent of couples in Russia and 88 per cent of couples in Philippines reported low levels of disagreement around household work.

Eating Together:

DID YOU KNOW? In Italy, 94 per cent of 15-year-old kids eat meals with their families regularly.

Family Structure:

DID YOU KNOW? In a majority of countries polled, respondents felt children were more likely to flourish in a home with a mother and a father. However, in Sweden, only 47 per cent of adults shared this belief compared to 99 per cent in Egypt, suggesting to World Family Map surveyors a more liberal attitude to changing family structures in certain countries.