

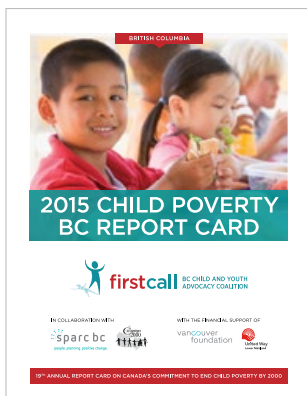
## SUMMARY

# 2015 BC CHILD POVERTY REPORT CARD

## STILL IN DENIAL: BC'S RELUCTANCE TO ACT BOLDLY TO REDUCE CHILD POVERTY

The latest figures from Statistics Canada (2013) once again show that too many BC children — 1 in 5 (20.4%) — are growing up in poverty. Our child poverty rate continues to exceed the Canadian average and BC remains among the provinces taking the least amount of action to reduce child poverty.

**Download the full report at [stillin5.ca](http://stillin5.ca)**



BC's child poverty crisis demands a much more urgent response from the provincial government. This year's report card again calls for BC to adopt a comprehensive provincial poverty reduction plan with legislated targets and timelines. Fifteen of First Call's 21 specific recommendations fall within provincial jurisdiction, which together would form the start of a plan. Yet our government remains resistant to the increasingly widespread calls for a plan from hundreds of organizations and community leaders across the province, including the Legislature's Finance Committee.

BC can afford to make sure all our children have enough to eat, decent housing and other supports they need to thrive. Tell the Premier you support the recommendations in this report by visiting [stillin5.ca](http://stillin5.ca).

**1 out of 5**  
BC children are poor



**First Call's first report card two decades ago showed that one in five (over 170,000) BC children were poor. It is profoundly disappointing that 19 years later the data still shows that one in five (167,810) BC children are poor.**



IN COLLABORATION WITH



WITH THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF



## THE COMMITMENT

IN 1989 ALL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AGREED TO **ELIMINATE CHILD POVERTY IN CANADA**

But instead the child poverty rate remains high in Canada and BC.

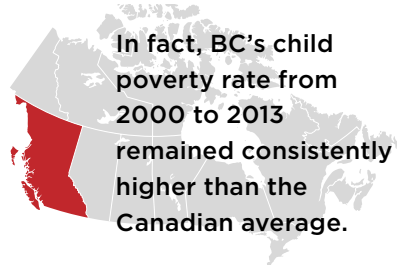
**1 out of 5**  
BC children are poor.



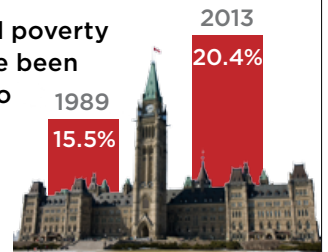
That's **167,810** BC children living in poverty — enough to fill the Disneyland theme park **4 TIMES**.



The early years are a critical time for child development, yet children 0–5 have an even higher poverty rate (20.7%).



BC's child poverty rates have been allowed to stay high for many years.



Child poverty touches **every part** of BC.

**23 of 29** regions had at least 1,000 poor children.



And child poverty in BC includes all family types.

But it's worse for children of single parents

**1** in every **2** BC children of single parents were poor in 2013.



As a result, many children are food and housing insecure.

BC has the **worst** rate of core housing need for two-parent families.



Many poor families are very poor

In 2013, the average **poor two-parent family with one child** lived on only **\$17,680** per year, 40% below the poverty line.



### FACES OF CHILD POVERTY

“Field trips, pizza days, dances—all these things and more cost money—the other children see Mason not participating.”  
— Mason's mom, Jessica

FOR MORE STORIES about real BC families with children, and to see the full report and maps, visit [www.stillin5.ca](http://www.stillin5.ca)



Positive policy change: death benefit clawback ended

“I am able to enrol him in more activities, like ice skating, and buy more clothes and food for him without all the stress I had before.” — Neil

## MEANWHILE...

A family of four on income assistance has to get by on only **\$22,041** a year.



Most poor kids have working parents: **1 in 3** have at least one parent who works full time.



A single parent working full time full year for minimum wage earns only **\$19,019**.



At the same time, income inequality is growing.

The richest 10% of BC families with children received 24% of the total income, while the **poorest 50% shared 25%.**



In 2014, **30,000** BC children relied on food banks, up **23%** from 2008.



## HOWEVER

Governments **can** and **do** help.

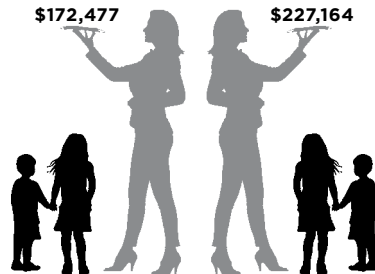
In 2013, **63,890** BC children were lifted out of poverty thanks to government help.



## The richest families' incomes grow while the poorest families lose

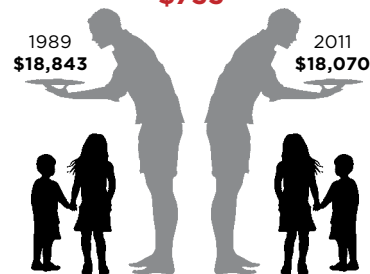
Richest families' incomes: **+\$54,687**

1989 \$172,477 2011 \$227,164



Poorest families' incomes: **-\$733**

1989 \$18,843 2011 \$18,070



## BUT THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS CAN AND SHOULD DO MORE TO END CHILD POVERTY.

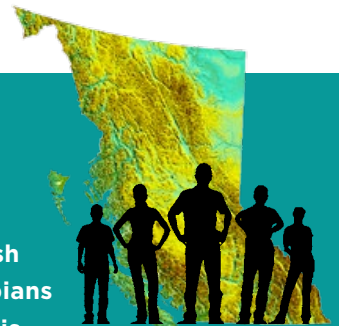
Beginning with adopting a **comprehensive provincial poverty reduction plan** with legislated targets and timelines.

## ELIMINATING CHILD POVERTY:

- Respects BC and Canada's commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Saves money and health care costs
- Builds healthier communities, with better school performance and long-term outcomes
- PUTS CHILDREN AND YOUTH FIRST.



**78%** of British Columbians think it is important for political leaders in BC to address poverty with a provincial poverty reduction plan with clear targets and timelines.





## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopt a **comprehensive provincial poverty reduction plan** with legislated targets and timelines, a cabinet minister with the authority and responsibility to ensure government is achieving its targets on time, and a goal of reducing BC's child poverty rate to 7% or lower by 2020.

Recognizing that children of recent immigrants and refugees, Aboriginal children, children of female lone-parent families, children in racialized families and children with a disability, are at greater risk of living in poverty, efforts should also be targeted to achieve major reductions in poverty levels for these populations.

To achieve this goal, the provincial and federal governments can:

1. Raise minimum wage to \$15 per hour, index it annually and apply it to all workers.
2. Ensure that public sector employers pay a living wage to all direct and contract employees.
3. Significantly increase income and disability assistance rates and index them annually.
4. End the clawback of federal maternity and parental leave benefits from people on income and disability assistance, and allow recipients to attend a post-secondary institution.
5. Redesign the BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit to cover children under 18 and increase the maximum to \$1,320 per child per year.
6. Implement the promised Canada Child Benefit with a maximum of \$6,800 per child under 6 and \$5,800 for children 6-17 years.
7. Continue to pay the children's benefit to grandparents on CPP Disability after they turn 65 when they are raising their grandchildren.
8. Increase funding for First Nations child welfare, education and health services, and develop a long-term plan to eradicate poverty among Aboriginal families.
9. Adopt and begin implementing the \$10aDay Child Care Plan.
10. Enhance maternity and parental leave benefit value, and extend to 18 months.
11. Scrap income splitting for families with children and invest the money in other recommended federal program enhancements.
12. Intensify efforts to help immigrants and refugees adjust to life in Canada, and improve employment and human rights protections.
13. Cancel all outstanding refugee transportation loan debt and cease indebting new refugees with these costs.
14. Remove financial barriers for low-income students and lower student debt levels through tuition fee reductions, student grants instead of loans, and interest free loans.
15. Immediately restore the provincial Education Guarantee to reinstate tuition-free adult basic education and English language learning.
16. Enhance supports for youth transitioning out of government care at age 19, and offer extended foster care to age 25.
17. Provide additional funds to groups who provide housing and other supports to queer and transgender youth at risk.
18. Restore access to Employment Insurance so most workers receive benefits they can live on while looking for work.
19. Reduce the number of families in core housing need and eliminate homelessness through investments in affordable housing.
20. Establish universal public dental care, prescription drug and eye care programs.
21. Create an independent commission on tax reform in BC aimed at making the tax system fairer and reducing income inequality.