

Poverty Saskatchewan Children

27 per cent of Sask. children living in poverty (Nov 2024)

The increased cost of living is leading to an increased number of children living below the poverty line with a significant number of those in Saskatchewan and even more the further north it goes.

Miguel Sanchez, who is based out of Regina and is part of the Campaign to End Child and Family Poverty, said the increase is alarming and the group he is part of has noted a large increase recently.

“In Saskatchewan, we have an additional 75,970 children becoming poorer,” he said. That equals to about 27 per cent and when the same guidelines are applied to Indigenous reservations, it is even higher.

“Almost one in three children in Saskatchewan are living below the poverty line and we have that 70 per cent of Aboriginal children living on reserves live below the poverty line,” Sanchez said. The numbers cited are from 2021, but are being reported as part of updated research now in 2024.

CECFP is calling for all levels of government to act and said they have a duty to improve the situation.

“We should look to the governments, both federal and provincial. No government should excuse themselves from the responsibility they have toward the welfare of all of the members of society – particularly of the most vulnerable and there are no more vulnerable members in society than our children.”

Between 2020 and 2022, child poverty rates increased nationally by almost five per cent. That was the first increase in years and the largest on record.

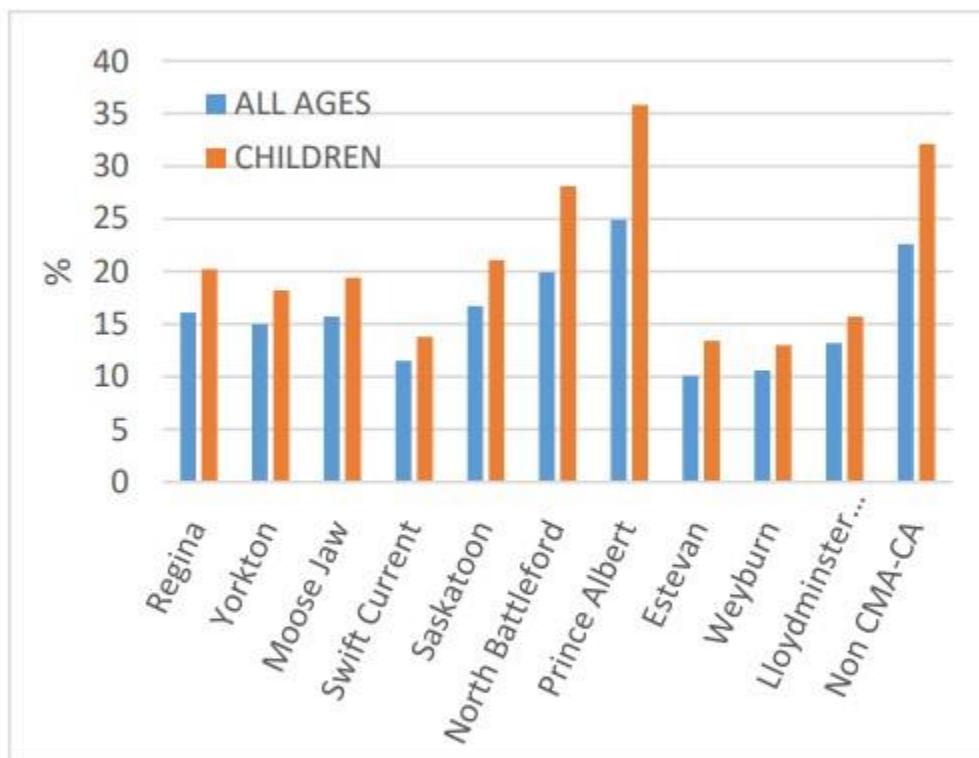
Saskatchewan’s poverty rates are generally higher than other provinces and, overall, poverty rates are higher in Prairie provinces than they are in other parts of Canada. According to the Saskatchewan report card, without Child Tax Benefit changes in the last decade and some changes in provincial transfers, the rate would be about 40 per cent of children living in poverty.

The Saskatchewan report card was authored by Sanchez. Using 2019 numbers, more southern cities in Saskatchewan such as Estevan and Swift Current had poverty rates of 10 to 13 per cent.

North Battleford and Prince Albert, however, ranged between 20 and 25 per cent in North Battleford and 28 per cent to 36 per cent in Prince Albert.

This graph is part of the report authored by Sanchez.

Figure 4. Poverty rates for all ages and children, Saskatchewan cities, 2019



Note: Non-CMA, non-Census Metropolitan Area, refers to Saskatchewan outside the nine cities. Source: Statistics Canada, 2019.

A federal increase to the Canada child benefit that was one of the first changes made by the federal Liberals when they were first elected has made a big difference but even that is not keeping up.

Sanchez said that government transfers, such as the CTB, are crucial in reducing child poverty.

“We do know that the Canada child benefit reduced child poverty by 9.2 percentage points in 2021 and that in 2022, it reduced child poverty by 7.8 per cent,” he said. What the group would like to see is provinces filling in gaps.

“If the federal government is being inefficient in protecting the most vulnerable members of society, then the provincial government has some moral obligation to step forward and protect the children by providing additional child benefits to those families,” he said.

Other recommendations of the group include changes in programs like the Child Disability Benefit, reducing barriers – whatever they might be – to racialized and immigrant children, creating a Child Poverty Supplement and having a sliding scale of between \$0 and \$10 per day for childcare.

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