

# 2011 Census: Age and sex

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According to data from the 2011 Census of Population, seniors accounted for 14.8% of the population in 2011, up from 13.7% in 2006. However, the proportion of seniors in Canada remained among the lowest of the G8 countries. A full analysis is available in the report, [The Canadian Population in 2011: Age and Sex](#).

In 2011, Canada's lower share of seniors compared with other G8 countries was related to the fact that most of its baby boomers were still part of the working-age population (aged 15 to 64). The baby-boom generation consists of people born between 1946 and 1965 and is the country's largest generation.

As a result, the share of the working-age population in Canada, at 68.5% in 2011, was among the highest of the G8 countries.

The share of children aged 14 and under fell from 17.7% in 2006 to 16.7% in 2011.

As the baby boomers turn 65 in coming years, population aging will accelerate and the share of the working-age population will decrease.

The census counted 9.6 million baby boomers, nearly 3 in every 10 people. Additional analysis on the baby-boom generation as well as other generations can be found in the *Census in Brief* article, "[Generations in Canada](#)."

## Population of seniors catching up with that of children

The number of seniors aged 65 and over increased 14.1% between 2006 and 2011. This rate of growth was more than double the 5.9% increase for the Canadian population as a whole. It was also higher than the rate of growth of children aged 14 and under (+0.5%) and people aged 15 to 64 (+5.7%).

As a result, the number of seniors has continued to converge with the number of children in Canada between 2006 and 2011. The census counted 5,607,345 children aged 14 and under, compared with 4,945,060 seniors. In the working-age population, the census counted 22,924,300 people.

The main factors behind the aging of Canada's population are the nation's below-replacement-level fertility rate over the last 40 years and an increasing life expectancy.

## Working-age population growing older

Canada's working-age population is also growing older. Within the working-age group, 42.4% of people were aged between 45 and 64, a record high proportion. This was well above the proportion of 28.6% in 1991, when the first baby boomers reached age 45.

In 2011, nearly all people aged between 45 and 64 were baby boomers.

For the first time, census data showed that there were more people in the age group 55 to 64, where people typically are about to leave the labour force, than in the age group 15 to 24, where people typically are about to enter it.

The 2011 Census counted 4,393,305 people aged 55 to 64. In contrast, there were 4,365,585 people aged 15 to 24.

In 2001, for every person aged 55 to 64, there were 1.40 people in the age group 15 to 24. By 2011, this ratio had fallen slightly below 1 (0.99) for the first time. This means that for each person leaving the working-age group in 2011, there was about one person entering it.



## Highest increase in number of young children since the end of the baby boom

The population of children aged 4 and under increased 11.0% between 2006 and 2011. This was the highest growth rate for this age group since the 1956 to 1961 period, during the baby boom. It was also the highest growth rate of all age groups below age 50 between 2006 and 2011.

## Centenarians represent one of the fastest-growing age groups

The 2011 Census counted 5,825 people aged 100 years and older, up from 4,635 in 2006 and 3,795 in 2001.

Between 2006 and 2011, the number of centenarians increased 25.7%, the second-highest growth rate of all age groups, after the age group 60 to 64 (+29.1%).

Additional analysis on centenarians can be found in the *Census in Brief* article, "[Centenarians in Canada](#)."

## Provinces and territories: Population of seniors

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of seniors increased in every province and territory except Saskatchewan. The increase was especially strong in the four Atlantic provinces, where seniors represented more than 16% of the population (above the national average of 14.8%) and in Quebec, where seniors represented 15.9% of the population.

Among the provinces, Alberta (11.1%) had the lowest proportion of seniors. Proportions in the three territories were much lower than the national average.

Provincial and territorial differences in the age structure are the result of differences in fertility and immigration, as well as in interprovincial migration.

## Provinces and territories: Working-age population

In 2011, the share of the working-age population was higher than the national average in three provinces (Alberta, British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador) and in two territories (Yukon and the Northwest Territories).

The working-age group represented 70.1% of Alberta's total population, the highest among the provinces. This situation was mostly the result of the net inflow of working-age people into Alberta from other parts of the country over the years.

## Provinces and territories: Children aged 4 and under

For the first time in 50 years, the number of children aged 4 and under increased in all provinces and territories between 2006 and 2011.

The largest increases occurred in Alberta (+20.9%), Saskatchewan (+19.6%), Quebec (+17.5%), Nunavut (+15.7%) and Yukon (+13.8%).

The main factors explaining the growth are increases in the number of women aged 20 to 34 in most provinces and territories, and increases in fertility levels in all provinces and territories.

## Census metropolitan areas: Younger populations in Western provinces

In 2011, all census metropolitan areas (CMAs) located west of Ontario had a proportion of people aged 65 and over below the national average of 14.8%, except for Kelowna (19.2%) and Victoria (18.4%), both in British Columbia. In Calgary, the share was 9.8%, the lowest of all CMAs.

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In comparison, nearly 1 in 5 people were aged 65 or over in Peterborough (19.5%) and Trois-Rivières (19.4%), the highest of all CMAs.

Additional analysis and maps at the census tract level for the CMAs can be found in the *Census in Brief* article, "[The census: A tool for planning at the local level.](#)"

## Most municipalities with highest proportion of seniors in British Columbia

In 2011, 7 of the 10 municipalities (census subdivisions) with the highest proportion of seniors were in British Columbia.

Seniors accounted for nearly 1 out of every 2 people (47.2%) in the population of Qualicum Beach, located in the census agglomeration of Parksville, British Columbia.

### Note to readers

Today, Statistics Canada releases analysis and data products on population by age and sex from the 2011 Census of Population. This is the second of four releases. Upcoming releases will focus on families, households, marital status, structural type of dwelling and collectives (September 19, 2012) and language (October 24, 2012).

### Definition

A census metropolitan area (CMA) or a census agglomeration (CA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (also known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000.

## Census website

Also available today on our website are various products and services from the [2011 Census Age and Sex release topic](#). This web page has been designed to provide easy access to census data, free of charge. Information is organized into four broad categories: data products, analytical products, reference products and geographic products.

Data products offer age and sex data for a wide range of standard geographic areas, available in the [Age and Sex Highlight Tables, 2011 Census](#), the [Age and Sex Topic-based tabulations](#) and the [Census Profile](#).

A new analytical product called [Focus on Geography Series](#) also provides data and highlights on key topics found in the 2011 Census analytical document and in *Census in Brief* articles for various levels of geography.

Geographic products now include [thematic maps](#) showing age and sex data for a variety of standard geographic areas. [GeoSearch2011](#), an interactive mapping tool, also displays age and sex data and thematic maps for a variety of standard geographic areas.

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3901.**

The report *The Canadian Population in 2011: Age and Sex* (98-311-X2011001, free) is now available from the *Key resource* module of our website under *Publications*. It focuses on the age and sex distribution of the Canadian population at the national level, for provinces and territories, CMAs, CAs, regions located outside CMAs and CAs, as well as municipalities across the country.

Additional analysis is also available in the *Census in Brief* series (98-311-X2011003, free): "Centenarians in Canada," "Generations in Canada," and "The census: A tool for planning at the local level."

A brief national portrait of the age and sex distribution of the population is presented on [video](#). Users are also invited to [Chat with an expert](#) on June 4, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., Eastern daylight time.

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