

# Study: Women in Canada: The girl child

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There were about 3.4 million girls aged 17 and under in Canada on July 1, 2016, accounting for about one-fifth of Canada's female population. Today, Statistics Canada releases a new chapter, "[The Girl Child](#)," from the publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*. This chapter describes the demographic characteristics of girls in Canada, and presents several topics related to their well-being, such as their living arrangements, socioeconomic conditions, health and education.

Some characteristics related to well-being differ between girls and boys, notably social and emotional health and development. Overall, about three-quarters of 12- to 17-year-old girls and boys rated their mental health as "very good" or "excellent." However, among those aged 15 to 17, girls (68.8%) were less likely than boys (76.4%) to have rated their mental health as "very good" or "excellent."

## Girls are more likely than boys to report high levels of daily stress

Girls aged 12 to 17 were more likely than boys to report high levels of daily stress. Specifically, 17.1% of these girls reported that, on most days, their lives were "quite a bit stressful" or "extremely stressful." A smaller proportion of same-aged boys (9.3%) reported a similar level of life stress.

Girls and boys aged 15 to 17 were more likely than their younger counterparts to report high levels of stress. Just under one-quarter (23.5%) of 15- to 17-year-old girls reported most days as having been "quite a bit stressful" or "extremely stressful." This proportion was about double the rate observed among boys of the same age (11.8%).

## Girls are more likely than boys to report a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder

Girls aged 12 to 17 were more likely than boys of the same age to report having been diagnosed with a mood disorder (such as depression, bipolar disorder, mania and dysthymia) or anxiety disorder (such as obsessive-compulsive disorder and panic disorder). For example, 5.0% of girls aged 12 to 17 reported having a diagnosed mood disorder, compared with 2.8% of same-aged boys. In addition, 7.4% of 12- to 17-year-old girls and 5.3% of same-aged boys reported having a diagnosed anxiety disorder.

## Girls are more likely than boys to report a strong sense of belonging to their local community

Just over 8 in 10 girls aged 12 to 17 (81.4%) reported having a "somewhat strong" or "very strong" sense of belonging to their local community. A smaller proportion of same-aged boys (77.8%) reported feeling this way.

Over 85% of girls (86.2%) and boys (85.6%) aged 12 to 14 reported a "somewhat strong" or "very strong" sense of belonging to their local community. In contrast, 15- to 17-year-olds were less likely to report a strong sense of belonging to their local community, with 71.7% of boys and 77.0% of girls in this age group rating their sense of belonging as "somewhat strong" or "very strong."



### Note to readers

Population estimates are available in CANSIM table 051-0001.

Self-reported data on mental health, mood and anxiety disorders, and sense of belonging to local community are from the 2013/2014 Canadian Community Health Survey.

Findings presented in *The Daily* focus on the social and emotional health and development of 12- to 17-year-old girls, compared with same-aged boys. These findings are taken from the chapter "[The Girl Child](#)" from the publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, released today. In this chapter, children, girls and boys are defined as people aged 17 and under. Topics examined in the chapter include demographic characteristics, living arrangements, socioeconomic conditions, physical health and development, mortality, emotional and social health and development, childcare, school readiness, education, and personal security.

Data in this report are presented and analyzed by sex, as per international guidelines for producing gender statistics. For more information, see United Nations Statistics Division, [Gender Statistics Manual](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3226](#), [3231](#), [3233](#), [3302](#), [3315](#), [3901](#), [4430](#), [4504](#), [5060](#), [5071](#), [5178](#), [5179](#) and [5185](#).**

This release is based on the chapter "[The Girl Child](#)", that is part of *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, seventh edition ([89-503-X](#)), which is now available.

The publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report* is a collaborative effort of Status of Women Canada and Statistics Canada.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).