

Changes in parents' participation in domestic tasks and care for children from 1986 to 2015

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The division of household labour has changed markedly over the past 30 years and while Canadian fathers are doing more, mothers still contribute the most time to unpaid housework and child care.

These are the initial findings from the 2015 version of the Time Use Survey, which has been conducted six times since 1986.

Fathers spending more time preparing meals

Not only are more Canadian fathers doing household chores than was the case in 1986, but the amount of time they spend per day doing them has also increased. The proportion of fathers participating in household work rose from 51% in 1986 to 76% in 2015. One of the key factors in the rise is the fact that 59% of fathers reported participating in preparing meals in 2015, compared with 29% in 1986.

What's more, fathers who performed household work spent more time on it in 2015 than before. Fathers spent an average of 2.4 hours per day performing household work in 2015, on days when they did such work, compared with an average of 2.0 hours per day in 1986.

Despite these gains, mothers continued to do the most household work. In 2015, 93% of mothers reported participating in different types of household work, similar to the proportion recorded in 1986. Among mothers who did household work, the average length of time was 3.0 hours per day in 2015, compared with an average of 3.4 hours per day in 1986.

In 2015, mothers accounted for 61% of the total number of hours of household work performed by Canadian parents, compared with 75% in 1986.

Despite increased participation from fathers, mothers provide nearly two-thirds of the total hours spent helping and caring for children

Fathers were also increasingly involved in helping and caring for their children. Nearly 49% of fathers provided help and care to their children in 2015, up from 33% in 1986. By comparison, 66% of mothers did so in 2015, the same proportion as in 1986.

Mothers spent more time than fathers on parental responsibilities for children age 17 and under. Overall, mothers in Canada provided nearly two-thirds (65%) of the total hours spent helping and caring for children in 2015.

Fathers in Quebec most likely to perform housework

Quebec had the highest participation rate for fathers performing housework, including cleaning, laundry and other household tasks. In 2015, 41% of fathers in Quebec reported having performed one housework-related task on a daily basis, compared with 25% of fathers in the Prairie provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta).



Note to readers

The focus of this analysis was on parents who were either married or living common-law and who had at least one child aged 17 or under. Both opposite-sex and same-sex couples were included in the analysis, while lone parents were not included.

The "2015 Time Use Survey" was conducted from April 2015 to April 2016. The target population for the survey was non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the 10 provinces. The survey's response rate was lower than expected, which may impact the quality of the estimates for smaller populations, certain provinces and smaller geographic areas.

For more information on data quality for the 2015 Time Use Survey, refer to the "General Social Survey 2015 Time Use Survey Technical Note" (89-658-X).

Available in CANSIM: table [113-0004](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4503](#).

These findings are taken from a new study, "[Changes in parents' participation in domestic tasks and care for children from 1986 to 2015](#)", part of the publication "[Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey](#)" (89-652-X). The full article includes additional information on time use by mothers and fathers.

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) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).