

# Help close at hand: Relocating to give or receive care

*by Kelly Cranswick*

Caring for family members or friends with long-term health problems generally means stopping by to cook a meal, picking up groceries, or driving them to a doctor's appointment. In some instances, however, the care required is too complex or time-consuming to be carried out in a visit or the distances involved are too great. At times like this, one partner in the caregiving arrangement — the caregiver or the care-receiver — may move closer to, or move in with, the other. The commitment these new arrangements require has a strong impact on the lives of both the caregiver and the care-receiver.

## CST What you should know about this study

This article uses data from the 1996 General Social Survey (GSS) on social and community support. The GSS interviewed almost 13,000 Canadians aged 15 and over living in private dwellings in the 10 provinces. Data were collected on formal or informal help received in the previous 12 months due to a long-term health problem or physical limitation, or to a temporarily difficult time.

This analysis captures only informal care, defined as the unpaid performance of tasks by family and friends, which helps maintain or enhance people's independence. Specifically, informal care includes the following: assistance with personal care; meal preparation and clean-up; house cleaning, laundry and sewing; house maintenance and outside work; shopping for groceries or other necessities; providing transportation; banking and bill paying; and childcare.

### **Most caregiving moves involve a parent or a friend**

Nearly half a million Canadians (470,000) moved in 1996, either to provide care to someone with a long-term health problem or to be looked after by someone else. More than 300,000 simply moved closer to each other, perhaps to the same neighbourhood or street. An additional 130,000 actually moved

in with the person they were helping or the person who was helping them. Some 40,000<sup>1</sup> people reported both types of moves, that is, they may have moved closer first and then moved right in, or vice versa.

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1. Subject to high sampling variability.

	All caregivers	Caregivers involved in move
		%
<b>Helping others resulted in ...</b>		
changes in your social activities	45	76
changes in holiday plans	25	45
repercussions at work	50	61
changes in sleep patterns	29	46
extra expenses	44	59
changes in health	21	30

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1996.

Fully one-half of caregiving relationships involving a move entailed an adult child taking care of an ailing parent. This is not surprising, considering that the ties between parents and children are generally very strong. More unexpected, perhaps, is that nearly one out of five (18%) of these relationships involved helping friends, speaking to the strength of friendship ties. Siblings, in-laws and extended family were the care-receivers in the remainder of instances.<sup>2</sup>

One might expect that caregivers who moved, or who had care-receivers move close to them, would have few family responsibilities; however, the majority were married (62%) and over one-third (37%) had children under the age of 15. Just under half (49%) were between the ages of 35 and 54. Over half (55%) worked outside the home,<sup>3</sup> while one-quarter (25%) worked at home raising children and keeping house. Most caregivers (69%) were women.

The recipients of these care providing activities were also mostly women (7 out of 10) and mostly seniors (58% were 65 years and over). This is to be expected, since long-term health conditions requiring a caregiver's assistance tend to occur in the senior years. Nine percent<sup>4</sup> of care-receivers had died in the year preceding the survey, which indicates the severity of their long-term illness.

2. In a small number of cases, a move involved a caregiver and more than one care-receiver. In these cases it is not possible to know which of the care-receivers precipitated the move.
3. Includes a small percentage who were attending school.
4. Subject to high sampling variability.

### Most relationships involved frequent contact

Caregivers who moved to help, or who had a care-receiver move close to them, were clearly committed to the relationship. Indeed, nearly half of caregivers (42%) saw their charges every day<sup>5</sup> and more than one-third (37%) had contact with them once a week. In addition, despite the considerable impact these responsibilities have on caregivers' lives, some people were providing care to more than one person, as some 470,000 caregivers were helping out 575,000 care-receivers.

In busy lives, the additional responsibilities associated with caregiving inevitably lead to some disruptions. For those involved in a move, pressures in all areas of life were particularly pronounced.

Most notable were the changes in social activities, affecting 76% of caregivers involved in a move. Also significant were repercussions at work, with over 60% of people reporting that caregiving adversely affected some aspect of their job. Another substantial issue, raised by nearly 60%, was the financial cost of providing care to someone with a long-term health problem. Since many caregivers were married women with children, their care-taking responsibilities raise serious concerns about the potentially heavy burden placed on them.

5. This figure includes people who lived in the same household and were therefore assumed to see each other daily.



## Self-employed hired fewer others

In 1998, nearly 2.5 million Canadians were working at their own businesses, more than double the number 20 years earlier. Although the rate of self-employment has risen steadily to about 16% in 1998, fewer self-employed Canadians hired paid help in the 1990s than in the 1980s. During the 1980s, total self-employment grew by 347,000 jobs: nearly two-thirds of this growth consisted of business owners who also hired employees, contributing to stronger growth in paid employment. This trend reversed itself in the 1990s, with nine out of ten of the 458,000 self-employed entrepreneurs working without any paid help, likely contributing to the weak growth in paid employment during much of the 1990s.

**Analytical Studies Branch**  
**Research paper no. 133**  
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## Kids happy but testing the rules

More than nine in ten 12- and 13-year-olds are happy with the way things are in their lives. Just as many also said that their futures looked good. Nonetheless, as these young people enter adolescence, they have begun to test the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Nearly one-third (31%) reported that at least once in the previous year they had stolen something from a store, school or from their parents; 41% had been in a fight or had threatened to beat someone up, but only 6% were in a fight with injuries serious enough to require care. Such behaviour was significantly influenced by peer relationships, with 15% stating that they belonged to a group that "did risky things." Risk-taking

was as much as six or seven times higher among youth who were members of such a group, as those who were not.

**National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth**  
*Special Surveys Division*  
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## Radio listening rebounds

The number of hours Canadians spent listening to their radios rose slightly in Fall 1998, after four straight years of decline. Average listening time was 20.4 hours per week in 1998, but was still below the most recent high of 21.6 hours in 1993. Although every province reported increases, the most avid listeners were in Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Alberta, all at 21.3 hours per week. Residents of British Columbia and New Brunswick tuned in for only 18.6 and 18.7 hours per week, respectively. Anglophone Quebecers listened more than all other Canadians — 23.7 hours per week, or 2.5 hours more than francophone Quebecers.

**Culture Statistics Program**  
*Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics*  
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## Teens whose parents divorce delay marriage, more likely to divorce

A study that tracked 122,500 teenagers between 1982 and 1995 concluded that teenagers whose parents divorced were more likely to delay marriage and to have their own marital problems later in life. Teenagers with a divorce in their background put off marriage, with about 40% of men and 54% of women whose parents divorced marrying by their late 20s and early 30s. In contrast, 50% of men

and over 60% of women raised in families where there had been no divorce were married by the same age. These former children of divorce also experienced higher levels of divorce and separation themselves; 25% of men had divorced or separated, as had 30% of women. Among those whose parents had not divorced the rates were 17% and 21%, respectively.

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## Births to first-time mothers over 30 increase

The last decade has seen a marked increase in women having their first child at or over the age of 30. They accounted for 19% of first-time mothers in 1987, but for 31% by 1997. Women in their twenties still accounted for the majority of first births, but their share slipped to 58% from 70% in 1987. Women 30 and older also significantly increased their share of total births to 44% from 31% in 1987. The proportion of births to women in this age group increased in all provinces and territories. Ontario led the national trend in 1997, with 50% of all mothers 30 and over, surpassing even women in their twenties (45%).

**Health Statistics Division**  
*Client Custom Services*  
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## First national survey of alternative measures for young offenders

In 1997/98, about 33,000 young offenders (aged 12 to 17) participated in Alternative Measures programs that offer non-judicial, community-based methods of redress instead of the traditional

court process. The most serious offence in the majority of alternative measures cases (70%) was a property-related crime. Almost 64% of participants were male. Some 22% of cases involved youth performing community service. In 18% of cases, offenders formally apologized to their victim. Other methods, such as financial compensation to a victim, educational sessions and essays, or presentations related to the offence, accounted for 13% of cases. The vast majority of young people (89%) in these programs successfully finished their agreements and had their files closed.

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## Adults upgrade with education and training

More than 6 million Canadians, or 28% of adults, participated in adult education or training activities in 1997. Three-quarters of people were taking courses to maintain or improve their competitiveness in the labour market. Participation was greatest (39%) among those aged 17 to 34, and lowest (5%) for those over 65. Educational level also influenced the likelihood of participation: 48% for those with a university degree, but only 11% for those who had not completed high school. Some 20% of unemployed people participated in job-related education or training, compared with 29% of the employed. Paid workers were almost twice as likely to participate (32%), as were self-employed workers (18%). Close to one-quarter of the employed were taking advantage of employer-sponsored education or training opportunities.

**Adult Education and Training Survey**  
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