Health Profile on Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Canada: Section 1

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In 2011, there were 945,130 children and youth under age 25 living in Canada who had immigrated from another country. Immigrant children represented 9.5% of the total population of children and youth in Canada. 376,915 immigrant children were between birth and 15 years, and 568,215 were aged 15 through 24 years.

Note: The proportion for Canada overall was 9.5%.


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1.2.1 Permanent Residents of Canada, 0 to 24 Years of Age, by Immigration Category, 2012

In 2012, 257,887 immigrants became permanent residents of Canada. Of those, 84,499 were children and youth between birth and 24 years of age. Of the permanent residents under age 25, the majority, or 66% (56,085) received residency status under the economic immigration class. Of those who immigrated to join family members already living in Canada (family class immigrants), there were 15,368 children and youth – making up 18% of children and youth. Another 10,810 people under age 25 obtained permanent residency status in Canada as refugees after fleeing their home countries (13% of all child and youth immigrants).

Immigrants to Canada are grouped into four classes: Economic, Family, Refugee and Other.

**Economic Immigrants:** “Permanent residents selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada’s economy.”

**Family Immigrants:** “Permanent residents sponsored by a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident living in Canada who is 18 years of age or over. Family class immigrants include spouses and partners (i.e., spouse, common-law partner or conjugal partner); parents and grandparents; and others (i.e., dependent children, children under the age of 18 whom the sponsor intends to adopt in Canada, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren who are orphans under 18 years of age, or any other relative if the sponsor has no relative as described above, either abroad or in Canada). Fiancés are no longer designated as a component of the family class under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.”

**Refugees:** “Permanent residents in the refugee category include government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada and refugee dependants (i.e., dependants of refugees landed in Canada, including spouses and partners living abroad or in Canada).”

**Other:** “Permanent residents in the other immigrant category include post-determination refugee claimants in Canada, deferred removal orders, retirees (no longer designated under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act), temporary resident permit holders, humanitarian and compassionate cases, sponsored humanitarian and compassionate cases outside the family class, and people granted permanent resident status based on public policy considerations.”

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Since 2003, the number of children and youth aged 0 to 24 years who entered Canada as economic immigrants has increased. The number of children and youth who entered Canada as family class immigrants declined over that same time period.

**Imigrants to Canada are grouped into four classes: Economic, Family, Refugee and Other.**

**Economic Immigrants:** “Permanent residents selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada’s economy.”

**Family Immigrants:** “Permanent residents sponsored by a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident living in Canada who is 18 years of age or over. Family class immigrants include spouses and partners (i.e., spouse, common-law partner or conjugal partner); parents and grandparents; and others (i.e., dependent children, children under the age of 18 whom the sponsor intends to adopt in Canada, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren who are orphans under 18 years of age, or any other relative if the sponsor has no relative as described above, either abroad or in Canada). Fiancés are no longer designated as a component of the family class under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.”

The definition of ‘dependent child’ changed in 2014 to include children under 19 rather than children under 22. If an economic immigrant sponsors his or her spouse and children to immigrate to Canada once he or she has already arrived, the spouse and children are considered family class immigrants.

**Refugees:** “Permanent residents in the refugee category include government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada and refugee dependants (i.e., dependants of refugees landed in Canada, including spouses and partners living abroad or in Canada).”

**Other:** “Permanent residents in the other immigrant category include post-determination refugee claimants in Canada, deferred removal orders, retirees (no longer designated under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act), temporary resident permit holders, humanitarian and compassionate cases, sponsored humanitarian and compassionate cases outside the family class, and people granted permanent resident status based on public policy considerations.”

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In 2012 almost half of the immigrants under 25 years who became permanent residents in Canada came from the Asia and Pacific Region. A further 25% came from Africa and the Middle East. A child’s or youth’s region of origin is not necessarily their place of birth. For example, research had found that many Jamaicans immigrate first to the United Kingdom, and then to Canada.¹ These individuals would technically be considered immigrants from the United Kingdom.

Section 1 - Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Canada

1.3.2 Trends in the Number of Permanent Residents under Age 25 by Origin, 2003 to 2012

Between 2003 and 2012 the number of permanent residents under age 25 who immigrated from Asia and the Pacific Region stayed stable overall – after some fluctuation. The number of permanent residents under age 25 who immigrated from Africa and the Middle East increased during that time period.
In 2011, the largest group of immigrant children and youth came from China and Hong Kong. A large number of immigrant children and youth came from low and middle income countries.
In 2012, of the 20,461 refugee claimants who arrived in Canada, 19% of them were 0 to 14 years of age and a further 19% were 15 to 24 years of age.
The number of individuals under 25 years who claim refugee status in Canada varies from year to year. The number of claimants was high in 2003, with almost 6,000 claimants from 0 to 14 years and roughly 7,000 from 15 to 24 years. By 2005, these numbers dropped significantly to just over 3,000 claimants aged 0 to 14 years and roughly 4,500 claimants from 15 to 24 years. After peaking again in 2008, the number of refugee claimants under 25 years fell substantially until 2012 to under 4,000 for both 0 to 14 and 15 to 24 year olds.

* Refugee claimants are defined by Citizenship and Immigration Canada as “Temporary residents in the humanitarian population who request protection upon or after arrival in Canada […] A refugee claimant whose claim is accepted may make an application in Canada for permanent residence.” http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/research-stats/facts2010.pdf.

The majority (more than three-quarters) of immigrant children and youth under 25 years belong to a visible minority group. The most prevalent ethnic groups with visible minority children and youth are South Asian, Chinese and Black.¹