

NATHAN BATTAMS



A SNAPSHOT OF

FAMILY CAREGIVING AND WORK IN CANADA





The Vanier Institute of the Family is a national, independent, charitable organization dedicated to understanding the diversity and complexity of families and the reality of family life in Canada. The Institute offers access to a range of publications, research initiatives, presentations and social media content to enhance the national understanding of how families interact with, have an impact on and are affected by social, economic, environmental and cultural forces.

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At some point in our lives, there is a high likelihood that each of us will provide care to someone we know – and receive care ourselves. Family members are typically the first to step up to provide, manage and sometimes pay for this care.

Families are highly adaptable and most of the time people find ways to manage their multiple work and family responsibilities, obligations and commitments. However, juggling work and care can sometimes involve a great deal of time, energy and financial resources, and employers can play an important role in facilitating this care through accommodation, innovation and flexibility.

This accommodation and flexibility is becoming increasingly important, as families and households are getting smaller, more family members in the household are working (leaving fewer people in the family to provide care), Canada's population is aging and the resulting rate and complexity of disability is increasing (meaning more people will be requiring care).

♥ **Caregiving is part of family life, and most carers manage paid employment with responsibilities.**

28% of Canadians (8.1M) report having **provided care to a family member or friend** with a long-term health condition, disability or aging need *in the past year*.¹



Three-quarters of this group (6.1M) were **employed** at the time, accounting for 35% of **ALL** employed Canadians.²

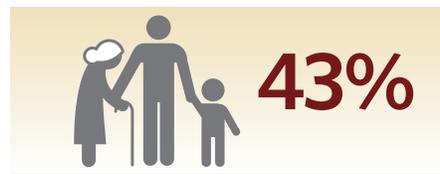
Since one can become a caregiver at any time, and because caregiving is not a one-time experience for many of us, the rate is much higher when examined **over the course of the lifetime**: 13 million Canadians, or nearly half (46%) of the total population, have provided care at some point in their lives.³

13 million



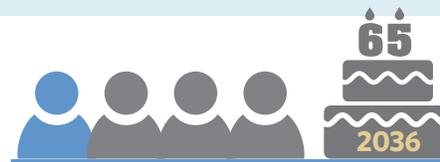
The number of Canadians who will require caregiving is forecasted to *double over next 30 years*.

43% of caregivers in Canada cared for **more than one** family member or friend **at the same time**.⁴

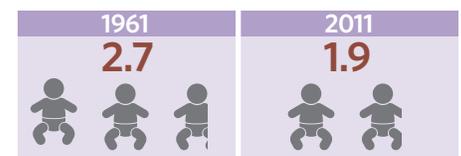


The number of Canadians who will require caregiving is forecasted to **double over next 30 years**.⁵

This is in large part due to **Canada's aging population**: An estimated 17% of Canada's population was aged 65 and older in 2016, but this is projected to reach approximately one-quarter (23%–25%) of the population by 2036.^{6,7}



Families and households are getting smaller, which means there are **fewer people** in family homes to readily provide care.



The average number of **children per family** in Canada **decreased** from 2.7 in 1961 to 1.9 in 2011.⁸

The average number of **people per family** in Canada **declined** from 3.9 in 1961 to 2.9 in 2011.

Another factor contributing to fewer people in households being readily available to provide care is the **rise of dual-earner households**.



69% of couples **with children** under 16 included **two earners** in 2014, up from 36% in 1976.⁹

In more than half (51%) of these couples, both parents were working **full-time** in 2014, up from 24% in 1976.¹⁰



According to the 2012 General Social Survey on Caregiving and Care Receiving, **age-related needs** were identified as the **single most common reason** for care requirements (28%).¹¹

13%
10 or more hours
per week



It's important to note, however, that even though aging was the top cited reason for providing care, it isn't generally associated with **high time commitment** for caregivers.

Only 13% of caregivers providing care for aging problems reported spending **10 or more hours per week** providing care, while this rate was highest for those providing assistance for developmental disabilities (51%), injuries (43%) and cancer (36%).¹²

Most family caregivers **don't have high time demands**, spending a median of 3 hours per week caring for an ill or disabled family member or friend.¹³



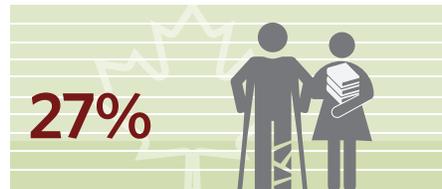
For some, the time devoted to caregiving can be **equivalent to a full-time job**, with 1 in 10 caregivers providing care for 30 or more hours per week.¹⁴

The share of family caregivers providing 30 or more hours per week of care was **highest** among those caring for their spouse (31%) or their child (29%).¹⁵

Age-related needs were identified as the single most common reason for care requirements.

♥ Young carers are an integral part of the “landscape of care” in Canada.

Canada is home to many young carers – people aged 15 to 29 who provide some form of care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or age-related need.



In 2012, there were 1.9 million **young carers** in Canada, or 27% of the population aged 15 to 29.¹⁶

Many young carers manage other commitments, such as paid work and school, in addition to their caregiving:

- 47% of young carers reported their main activity as going to **school**.¹⁷
- 42% reported their main activity as **paid work**.¹⁸

For some young carers, particularly those with higher caregiving time commitments, work and school can be affected:



- **1 in 5 young carers** enrolled in school said their **studies have been affected** by their caregiving responsibilities (e.g. missing deadlines, not attending classes, less study time, etc.).¹⁹
- Some young carers (7%) said they **could not attend school altogether** due to their caregiving responsibilities.²⁰
- More than one-third of young carers (36%) **arrived to work late, left early or took time off** due to their caregiving responsibilities.²¹
- A further 12% of young carers said they had to **reduce their weekly work hours** due to their caregiving duties.²²

♥ Caregiving can have an impact on family finances.

While most (83%) surveyed caregivers say their experience was positive,²³ caregivers incur direct and indirect **financial costs** due to lost time in paid employment, out-of-pocket expenses and/or career development.



- 28% of family caregivers caring for a child, 20% of those caring for a spouse and 7% of those caring for a parent reported **financial hardship** because of their caregiving responsibilities.²⁴
- 10% of employed caregivers **turned down or did not pursue a new job or promotion** because of their caregiving responsibilities.²⁵

- 15% of employed caregivers reported **cutting down on their regular weekly hours of work** to accommodate the caregiving needs of family and friends.²⁶

14% of *this group* reported losing some or all of their benefits, such as extended health benefits, dental benefits, employer-provided pension, life insurance and prescription drug plans.²⁷





♥ **Caregiving has an impact on employers and the Canadian economy.**

Employers can also experience *direct* and *indirect* costs associated with caregiving. For example, employers can face direct costs due to **absenteeism** (increased absences from work): 44% of employed caregivers report having **missed an average 8-9 days** of work in the past 12 months because of their care responsibilities.²⁸



Other **direct costs** to employers can include:

- Higher **turnover**
- Additional **benefit costs** (e.g. health care claims and disability leave for caregiving employees)

Indirect costs to employers can include:

- Reduced **return on investment** in employees
- **Presenteeism** (time spent at the workplace while not productively engaged in work)
- **Spillover effects** to co-workers, supervisors, customers and clients

There are **costs to the economy** as well:

- Every year, Canada loses the equivalent of **558,000 full-time employees** from the workforce due to the conflicting demands of paid work and care.²⁹
- Employers lose an estimated \$5.5 billion annually in lost productivity due to **caregiving-related absenteeism**.³⁰

\$5.5 billion in lost productivity



♥ **Caregiving impacts caregivers' health and well-being.**

While more than 9 in 10 surveyed caregivers in Canada (95%) say they are **effectively coping with their caregiving responsibilities**,³¹ it can at times be a source of stress that has an impact on the well-being of caregivers and their families.

- 28% of people who provided care in the past year reported that they found it "somewhat or very" **stressful**.³²
- 1 in 5 caregivers (19%) said that their **"physical and emotional health suffered"** in the last 12 months as a result of their caregiving responsibilities.³³



- About half (49%) of adult caregivers with children under 18 indicated that their caregiving responsibilities caused them to "reduce the amount of **time spent** with [their] children."³⁴

♥ **Caregiving is seen as a positive experience for most family members, providing benefits for many.**

Caregiving doesn't just have a positive impact on those who receive care but also on many of those from across the country who *provide* this care:

- 8 in 10 surveyed caregivers reported it as a **"positive experience"**.³⁵
- More than 8 in 10 young carers (aged 15-29) feel that their relationship with the care recipient **strengthened** during the caregiving period.³⁶

Caregiving doesn't just have a positive impact on those who receive care but also on many of those from across the country who provide this care.



Caregiving has been found to **provide carers with**:

- A **sense of giving back** to someone who has cared for them
- **Satisfaction of knowing** that their loved one is getting excellent care
- A sense of **personal growth**
- **Increased meaning and purpose** in life³⁷



Research has also shown that caregiving:

- Makes carers **feel good about themselves** and makes them feel they are needed
- Enables carers to learn **new skills**
- **Strengthens their relationships** with others³⁸

Family caregiving has been found to **enhance adolescent relationships**:

- Caregiving can **increase sibling activity/sharing**.
- Caregiving can foster **greater empathy** toward older adults.³⁹



For nearly all Canadians, caregiving is inevitable at some point over the course of their lives.

Reconciling care and work requires understanding, respect and recognition from employers that sometimes an employee's family circumstances need *focused attention*. Research shows that family caregivers and their employers benefit from policies that are inclusive, flexible and responsive, and when employees have a clear understanding of the process for handling individual requests for accommodation and customizing work arrangements.

For nearly all Canadians, caregiving is inevitable at some point over the course of their lives. Care is not always predictable and does not always arise outside working hours. Open communication and creative approaches to harmonizing work and care in a flexible manner benefits employees, employers, the economy and society.

Learn more about family caregiving in Canada with these Vanier Institute resources:

- *Family Caregiving in Canada: A Fact of Life and a Human Right*
- *It's Time to Care for Our (Young) Carers*
- *Caring Enough to Flex, Flexing Enough to Care*
- *Intergenerational Relations and Social Change*
- *Modern Caregiving in Canada*
- *Young Caregivers in Canada*
- *Young Carers in Canada: The Hidden Costs and Benefits of Young Caregiving*

Learn about the caregiving and work experiences of women with our *Women, Caregiving and Work in Canada* infographic.

¹ Maire Sinha, "Portrait of Caregivers, 2012." *Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 89-652-X (September 2013), <http://bit.ly/1jxgAAm>.

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⁶ Statistics Canada, "Estimates of Population, by Age Group and Sex for July 1, Canada, Provinces and Territories," *CANSIM Table 051-0001* (accessed January 26, 2017), <http://bit.ly/2afMALX>.

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⁹ Sharanjit Uppal, "Employment Patterns of Families with Children," *Insights on Canadian Society*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 75-006-X (June 24, 2015), <http://bit.ly/1FBbniM>.

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¹⁶ Amanda Bleakney, "Young Canadians Providing Care," *Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 89-652-X (September 2014), <http://bit.ly/1vgXS4X>.

¹⁷ Bleakney, 2014.

¹⁸ Bleakney, 2014.

¹⁹ Bleakney, 2014.

²⁰ Bleakney, 2014.

²¹ Bleakney, 2014.

²² Bleakney, 2014.

²³ National Opinion Research Center, "Long Term Care in America: Expectations and Reality," *Research Highlights* (May 2014), <http://bit.ly/2jBs3Vb>.

²⁴ Turcotte, 2013.

²⁵ Sinha, 2013.

²⁶ Sinha, 2013.

²⁷ Sinha, 2013.

²⁸ Fast, 2015.

²⁹ Fast, 2015.

³⁰ Ceridian, "Double Duty: The Caregiving Crisis in the Workplace," *Results and Recommendations from Ceridian's Working Caregiver Survey* (November 5, 2015), <http://bit.ly/2jVNxNp>.

³¹ Sinha, 2013.

³² Sinha, 2013.

³³ Sinha, 2013.

³⁴ Sinha, 2013.

³⁵ National Opinion Research Center, 2014.

³⁶ Bleakney, 2014.

³⁷ American Psychological Association, "Positive Aspects of Caregiving," *Public Interest Directorate Reports* (January 2011), <http://bit.ly/1KMUMRA>.

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³⁹ Diane L. Beach, "Family Caregiving: The Positive Impact on Adolescent Relationships," *Gerontologist* 37:2 (1997), <http://bit.ly/2jBMu4h>.

This content was reviewed by Janet Fast, Ph.D., Professor in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta and Co-director of the Research on Aging, Policies and Practice program (RAPP).



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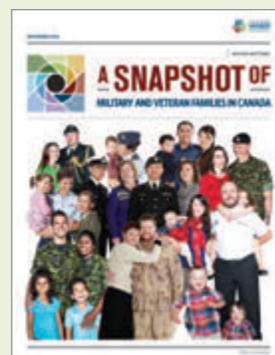
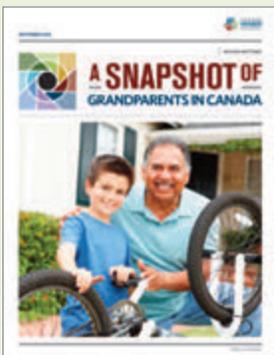
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