



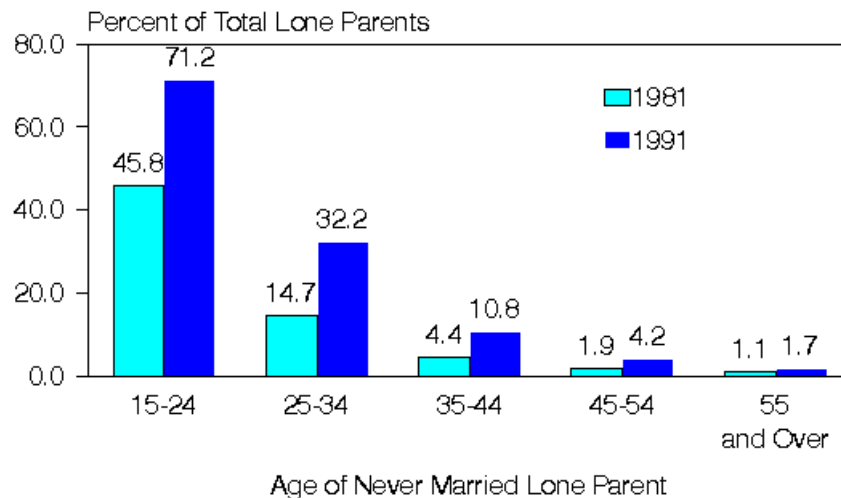
Census 91 Fast Facts

Issue 3: Lone Parent Families

Produced by: Labour and Social Statistics Section

- 107,385 British Columbians, or 410 out of every 10,000 adults,¹ were single parents in 1991, up from 78,725 ten years earlier.

The Percentage of Never Married Lone Parents Doubled Between 1981 & 1991



Source: 1991 Census of Canada

- Census '91 suggests that the upward trend in the incidence of single parent families is not caused by an increase in family breakdown. Instead, the trend is rooted in a growing tendency for children to be born out of wedlock. Relative to the total population, the number of previously-married lone parents changed only marginally during the last decade. At the same time, the number of never-married lone parents more than doubled, from 32 out of every 10,000 adults in 1981 to 66 per 10,000 in 1991.
- Among young adults, never-married lone parents now outnumber those who had previously been married. In 1981, five in every eleven lone parents aged 15-24 had never married; by 1991, the share had risen to five out of seven. Similar increases can be seen in the 25-34 year age group, where never-married lone parents now account for 32 per cent of the total.
- As might be expected, in the 55 and over age group, the increases were more moderate. Single parents in this age group would probably have had their children at a time when births out of wedlock were relatively infrequent.

¹ Adults are defined here to include all individuals who are at least 15 years old.

- Female single parents are less likely to have been married than males. In 1991, 18 per cent of all single mothers, and 72 per cent of those aged 15-24, had never been married, compared to only 9 and 57 per cent, respectively, of single fathers.
- The growing trend toward single parenthood among those who have never married is likely to result in greater demands on welfare and other social support systems, as the legal obligations of an estranged spouse or partner to support children will apply to a diminishing number of families.

Lone Parent Families in British Columbia

	Total Lone Parents				Sometime Married Lone Parents				Never Married Lone Parents				Never Married as a % of Total Lone Parents	
	-----1981-----		-----1991-----		-----1981-----		-----1991-----		-----1981-----		-----1991-----		1981	1991
	Total	Per 10,000 Population	Total	Per 10,000 Population	Total	Per 10,000 Population	Total	Per 10,000 Population	Total	Per 10,000 Population	Total	Per 10,000 Population		
Total	78,725	365	107,385	410	71,880	333	90,100	344	6,845	32	17,285	66	8.7	16.1
15-24 years	5,440	111	5,740	132	2,950	60	1,655	38	2,490	51	4,085	94	45.8	71.2
25-34 years	19,985	408	25,350	451	17,055	348	17,185	306	2,930	60	8,165	145	14.7	32.2
35-44 years	21,295	624	35,490	652	20,350	596	31,650	582	945	28	3,840	71	4.4	10.8
45-54 years	15,960	571	20,230	560	15,655	560	19,385	536	305	11	845	23	1.9	4.2
55 years & over	16,045	289	20,575	287	15,870	286	20,225	282	175	3	350	5	1.1	1.7
Males	14,140	133	19,140	149	13,510	127	17,460	136	630	6	1,680	13	4.5	8.8
15-24 years	320	13	305	14	195	8	130	6	125	5	175	8	39.1	57.4
25-34 years	2,075	85	2,690	96	1,860	76	2,020	72	215	9	670	24	10.4	24.9
35-44 years	4,225	242	6,540	240	4,070	233	5,975	220	155	9	565	21	3.7	8.6
45-54 years	4,010	278	5,040	274	3,935	273	4,880	266	75	5	160	9	1.9	3.2
55 years & over	3,510	139	4,565	138	3,450	136	4,455	135	60	2	110	3	1.7	2.4
Females	64,565	591	88,245	662	58,350	534	72,640	545	6,215	57	15,605	117	9.6	17.7
15-24 years	5,115	210	5,435	253	2,750	113	1,525	71	2,365	97	3,910	182	46.2	71.9
25-34 years	17,905	732	22,665	801	15,190	621	15,170	536	2,715	111	7,495	265	15.2	33.1
35-44 years	17,065	1,023	28,945	1,064	16,275	975	25,670	944	790	47	3,275	120	4.6	11.3
45-54 years	11,955	883	15,195	855	11,725	866	14,510	816	230	17	685	39	1.9	4.5
55 years & over	12,525	415	16,005	415	12,410	411	15,765	409	115	4	240	6	0.9	1.5

Source: 1991 Census of Canada