

Chapter 3

Population of Ontario

Key Findings:

Ontario has the largest population in Canada and, between 1991 and 1996, the population grew by 6.6%. This growth mainly resulted from immigration. The regions surrounding Toronto have grown the fastest, which means that additional services will be required in these areas.

The population is aging and the baby boom has now reached middle age. The proportion of seniors is increasing and will continue to increase as the baby boom generation ages. This will place a strain on existing services such as home care and chronic care facilities. Prevention should be applied early if chronic disabilities are to be prevented.

The population of Ontario has a very diverse cultural and ethnic mix. The proportion of immigrants and persons who do not speak English or French has increased between 1991 and 1996, particularly in Toronto and surrounding areas.

Introduction

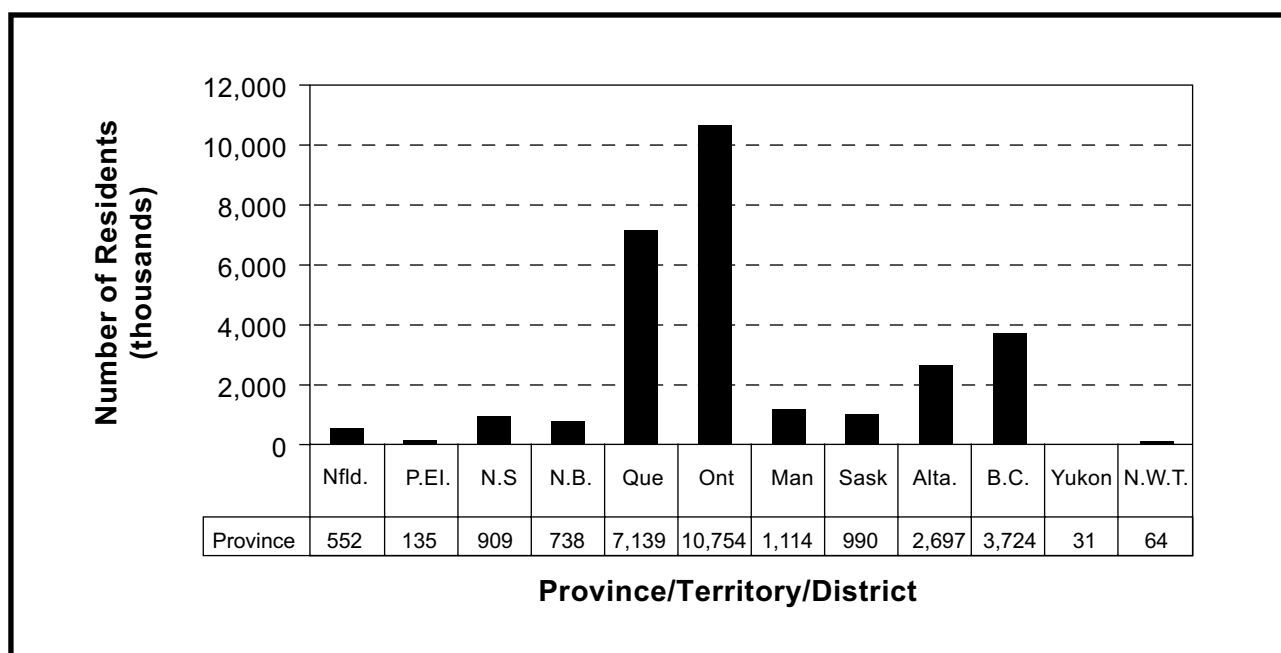
This chapter provides an overview of the health of the population of Ontario. Age and sex are related to health and the need for health services. For definitions of the key terms used throughout this chapter, consult the Glossary of Terms at the end of the chapter.

The growth and distribution of the population are reflected in the need for both preventive and treatment related health services. In urban areas, there is a high population density with concomitant social issues such as homelessness, increased spread of infections, and exposures to chemicals such as air pollution. In rural and northern areas, delivery of health care can be difficult because of the remoteness of some populations. Ontario is a very diverse province in which each of these extremes exists. One of the health goals for Ontario, as stated in the 1987 report “Health for all Ontario” was equity in health. This means that all residents have an equal opportunity for health. There is a need to accommodate these social and physical conditions in order to provide the appropriate mix of health services.

Ontario as a Whole

Ontario is the most populous province in Canada, containing 10,754,000 persons in 1996. This represents 37% of the population of Canada. The populations of the ten provinces and territories in Canada are shown in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1 — 1996 Canadian Population by Province



Source: Census Canada, 1996

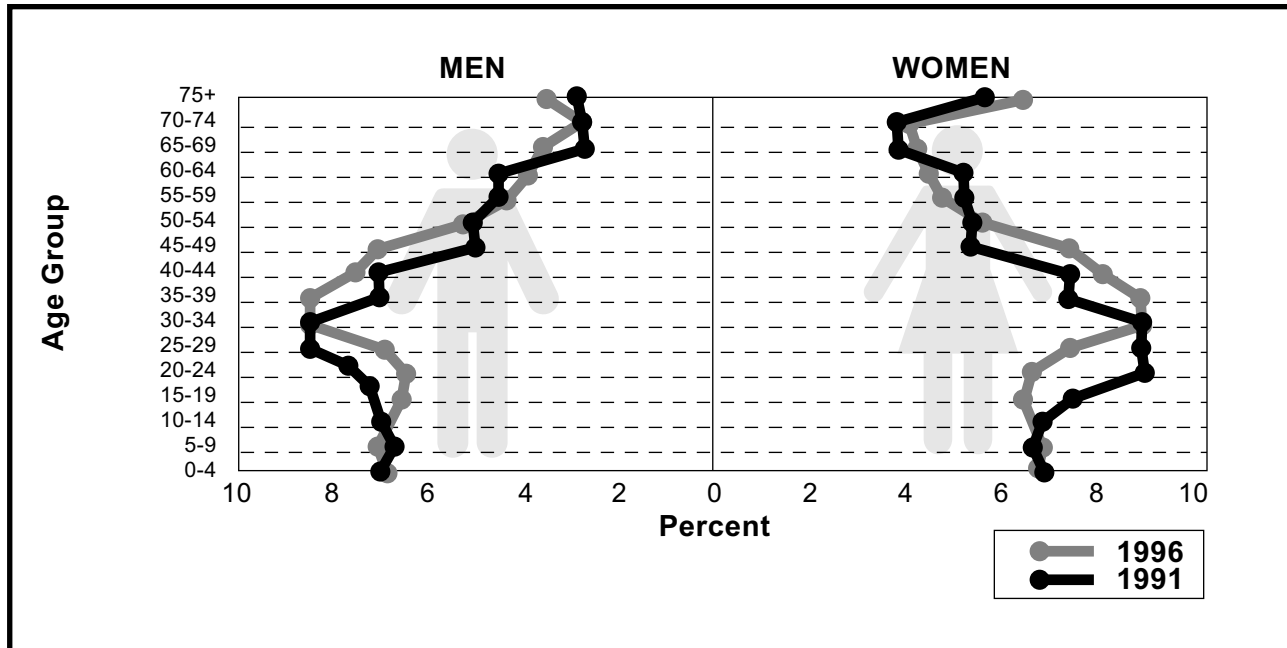
Ontario is also one of the largest provinces in Canada, spanning a total of 916,734 square kilometers. The population density for Ontario is approximately 12 persons per square kilometer. However, the population within Ontario is not evenly distributed. The population is mainly centred in certain areas, particularly along the shores of Lake Ontario in the area around Oshawa, Toronto, Mississauga and Hamilton. For example, the population density ranges from a high of 6,729 persons per square kilometer in downtown Toronto to a low of 0.03 persons per square kilometer in “Unorganized Areas” of northern Ontario. In 1996, 8% of the Ontario Population lived in the North, 14% lived in the East, 15% in the Southwest, and 63% lived in the central part of the province.

The population of Ontario has been increasing. Between 1991 and 1996, the population of Ontario grew by 6.6%. This corresponds to an increase of 668,700 persons over five years. This is slightly lower than the rate of growth between 1986 and 1991 when the rate was 10.8%.

The population pyramids for Ontario in 1991 and 1996 are combined in Figure 3-2. This figure demonstrates that the overall population is aging in two distinct ways. First, the aging of the population is reflected in the increasing number of seniors, particularly females. Second, the bulge of the baby boom population is moving into the older age groups. The implications for health prevention and health care when this age group reaches 65 years old around the year 2031 will be discussed in the chapter on seniors’ health.

The population of Ontario is aging as the baby boom generation is now mainly between 30 and 49 years old. The 1996 Ontario population is shown graphically as a population pyramid in Figure 3-2. In this pyramid, the bulge due to the baby boom population can be observed, as can the “echo boom” among children 0 to 9 years old. This “echo” is due to the increase in births from the baby boom generation having children themselves.

Figure 3-2 — Ontario Population Pyramid, 1991, 1996



Source: Census Canada, 1996

Dependency ratios have been increasing. This indicator comes from the previous decade's assumption that the workforce consisted of persons age 15 to 64 and represents the ratio of the population which is are "dependent" on the workforce population. While concepts of work and age have now changed with more seniors working and more persons pursuing higher education, thus delaying entry to the workforce, these measures of dependency do represent different indicators of the age distribution in the population. The dependency ratios are usually sub-divided into three types: the total dependency ratio; the child dependency ratio; and the aged dependency ratio.

In 1996, the total dependency ratio was 49.2%, up from 47.3% in 1991. Breaking this down into the two finer measures, the child dependency ratio in 1996 was 30.7% while the corresponding aged dependency ratio was 18.5%. Both the child dependency ratio and the aged dependency ratio increased between 1991 and 1996 due to the increasing number of children age 0 to 9 and the increasing number of persons age 65 and over. It is anticipated that the aged dependency ratio will continue to rise as the baby boom continues to age. Future values of the child dependency ratio depend heavily on factors such as fertility rate and immigration. Hence, the future trend for this latter rate cannot be predicted with certainty.

Immigration

The proportion of immigrants within the population of Ontario has been increasing. Between 1991 and 1996, the proportion of the population that were immigrants rose from 24% to 26%. This increase was most concentrated in Toronto, where the proportion of immigrants rose from 42% in 1991 to 48% in 1996. Thus, in 1996, almost one half of the non-institutional population of Toronto reported themselves as being immigrants to Canada. Table 3-1 shows the distribution of immigration across the seven regions and provides summary data for all Ontario.

Table 3-1 — Percent of Population Who Are Immigrants by Health Region, Ontario, 1991 and 1996

Region	1991	1996
Ontario	23.8	25.6
Central East	20.4	21.9
Central South	20.1	19.9
Central West	27.6	29.7
East	13.0	14.1
North	8.2	7.9
South West	15.4	15.4
Toronto	42.5	47.6

Source: Census Canada, 1996

Persons who have recently immigrated have different health needs from those who immigrated many years ago. For example, recent immigrants may be coming from areas where diseases such as tuberculosis are prevalent and thus, have a higher risk of developing this disease here in Canada. As a result, data are presented on persons who have immigrated within the last five years. This group is called “recent immigrants”. In 1996, the proportion of recent immigrants was 5.3%.

In 1996, non-permanent residents constituted 0.7% of the overall Ontario population. The highest proportion was 1.7% in Toronto while the lowest was 0.1% in the North Region.

Ethnicity and Language

Ontario has received immigrants from many areas of the world and has become a very multicultural province. The high rates of immigration, as shown above, are reflected in this diverse mix of languages and ethnicity. This section tries to provide some information to describe the diversity. However, since the analysis was limited to the Canadian Census whose definitions have changed over time, only selected indicators can be presented.

Ethnicity is a subjective measure. Since the categories for this item changed over time, only data for 1996 will be presented. For example, “Jamaican”, “Haitian”, and other more specific categories have recently replaced generic categories such as “black”. As well, some persons report themselves to be of multiple ethnic origins. The data presented below include persons with multiple responses. Readers are referred to the 1996 Census Canada documentation if more details are required.

In 1996, 25% of Ontario residents reported themselves to be Canadian while 29%, 18%, and 16% reported themselves to be English, Scottish or Irish respectively. French, Italian, and Chinese constituted 12%, 7%, and 4% of the population, respectively.

In the 1996 Census, data are available for persons who indicated that they have one or more mother tongues (English or French only). For all other languages, data are only available for persons who reported only one mother tongue. In 1996, looking first at English and French, the proportion which reported English as their mother tongue was 74% while 5% reported French. This is exactly the same percentage when one examines the single responses for English and French. For other languages, Chinese was the mother tongue for 3%, an increase from 2% in 1991. In 1996, Italian was the fourth most common mother tongue, reported for 3% of the population, and German was reported for 2%. The top five mother tongue languages are shown in Table 3-2. It should be noted that this table provides information on only those who reported a single mother tongue.

Table 3-2 — Mother Tongue in Percentages, 1996 — Top Five Languages by Seven Health Regions

Region	English	French	Chinese	Italian	German
Ontario	73.5	4.6	3.1	2.9	1.5
Central East	81.5	1.6	4.1	3.6	1.2
Central South	81.0	2.2	0.7	3.6	1.9
Central West	74.4	1.4	2.0	2.5	2.2
East	75.3	13.9	1.2	0.9	0.9
North	73.4	17.4	0.2	1.9	1.0
South West	85.0	2.1	0.6	1.5	2.3
Toronto	55.6	1.2	8.3	5.0	1.1

Source: Census Canada, 1996

Another indicator of cultural and ethnic diversity is language spoken at home. Traditionally, the pattern for this indicator usually follows that of mother tongue but the percentages are slightly lower since many people may have one language as their mother tongue but speak another in their home.

As with mother tongue, the percentages are calculated on the population which indicated they have only one home language. In 1996, 84.5% of the population of Ontario reported their home language was English while 2.8% reported their home language was French. Chinese, Italian and Portuguese were reported for 2.6%, 1.3% and 0.9% of the population. Many other languages were also reported but all were less than 1%. Table 3-3 shows home language for Ontario.

Table 3-3 — Home Language in Percentages, 1996 — Top Five Languages by Seven Health Regions

Region	English	French	Chinese	Italian	Portuguese
Ontario	84.5	2.8	2.6	1.3	0.9
Central East	91.0	0.5	3.5	1.4	0.2
Central South	91.8	0.7	0.5	1.5	0.5
Central West	86.3	0.5	4.6	0.8	1.3
East	84.4	10.1	0.9	0.4	0.2
North	85.1	11.6	0.1	0.7	0.1
South West	93.5	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.5
Toronto	69.4	0.5	7.3	2.8	2.2

Source: Census Canada, 1996

Table 3-4 — Percent of Population Who Speak Neither English Nor French at Home

Region	1991	1996
Canada	7.7	N/A
Ontario	10.7	12.4
Central East	6.5	8.4
Central South	7.1	7.4
Central West	10.7	12.9
East	4.5	5.4
North	3.7	3.2
South West	5.4	5.9
Toronto	24.7	28.8

Source: Census Canada, 1996

In Canada, French and English are the two official languages. In Ontario, an increasing proportion of persons do not speak English or French as their home language. Between 1991 and 1996, the proportion of persons whose home language was neither English nor French rose from 10.7% to 12.4%. In keeping with the higher number of recent immigrants, in 1996, this proportion was highest in Toronto where it accounted for 28.8% of the population. Table 3-4 shows the distribution of allophones by region. These people represent a group for whom English and French are not the main languages and this implies the need for special measures to reach them.

Regional Variation

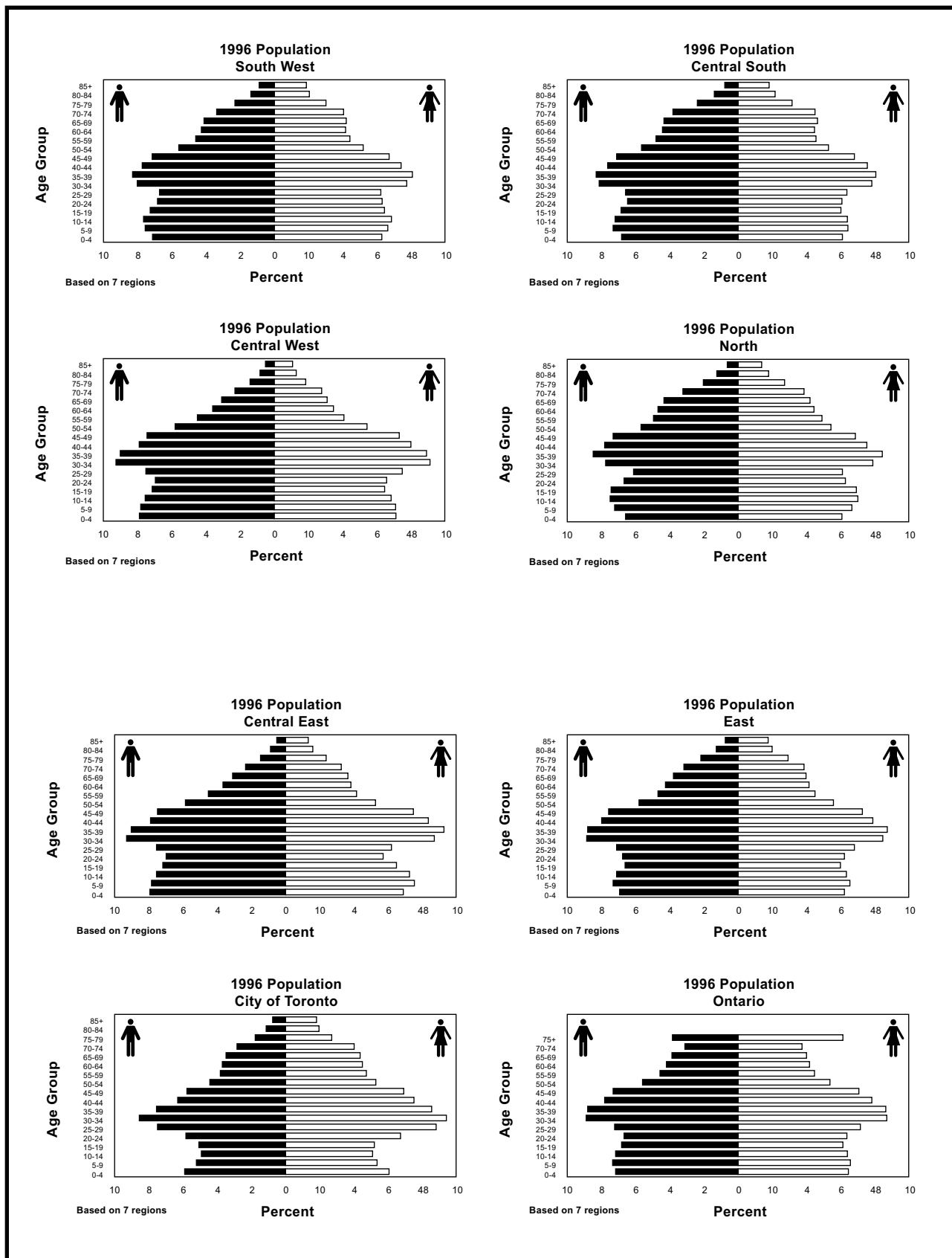
There is a great deal of variation across the seven health regions in Ontario. The 1996 population pyramids for each of the seven regions are presented in Figure 3-3.

While there are minor differences between regions, the overall distribution by age and sex across each region is remarkably similar. It is important to note that Toronto has proportionately more persons aged 30 to 34 years old. The degree to which this represents immigration from abroad or migration of young persons to the city is unknown. As can be seen, approximately 10% of the population of Toronto is in this narrow age band.

Central East Region and Central West Region have shown the greatest increases in population. These correspond to increases between 1991 and 1996 of 12.9% and 11.8% respectively. Most of this increase appears to be in the Greater Toronto area since Toronto itself has limited space in which to further expand. Toronto Region's population increased by 4.8% in the same time period. The North Region experienced the lowest increase of 0.9%.

The dependency ratios do vary by region, as shown in Table 3-5. The dependency ratios are lowest in Toronto and highest in the South West Region. This reflects the differences in the age structure of the population. Readers are cautioned that these rates only reflect summary measures of the age distribution and do not contain any economic information. Interpretation of these particular indicators should be limited to the differing age structures only.

Figure 3-3 — Population Pyramids for Seven Regions, 1996



Source: Census Canada, 1996

Table 3-5 — Dependency Ratios for Seven Health Regions 1991 and 1996

Region	Total Dependency Ratio*		Aged Dependency Ratio*		Child Dependency Ratio*	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Ontario	47.3	49.3	17.3	18.5	30.0	30.7
Central East	49.7	50.8	15.3	16.5	34.4	34.2
Central South	51.6	54.0	21.1	22.8	30.5	31.2
Central West	44.2	46.0	12.2	13.5	32.0	32.5
East	47.7	49.3	18.1	19.1	29.6	30.2
North	50.2	50.6	17.7	19.5	32.6	31.2
South West	53.2	53.9	20.4	21.3	32.9	32.6
Toronto	41.6	45.4	18.1	19.5	23.5	25.9

* Ratio is per 100 persons age 15-64 years old

Source: Census Canada, 1996

Toronto had the highest proportion of immigrants and new immigrants in 1996. In 1996, 13.4% of the population of Toronto has immigrated within the last five years. The North Region had the lowest rate of recent immigrants at 0.4%.

The distribution of different ethnic groups varied tremendously by region with the highest proportion of French persons living in the North region and the highest proportion of Chinese persons living in Toronto. Table 3-6 provides a break down by health region.

Table 3-6 — Ethnicity (Total) in Percentages, 1996 — Top Ethnic Groups by Seven Health Regions

Region	Canadian	French	English	Scottish	Irish	Italian	German	Chinese	East Indian
Ontario	25.4	12.5	29.0	17.7	16.2	7.0	9.3	4.0	2.9
Central East	29.9	9.3	34.2	19.6	17.7	8.8	7.5	5.1	2.4
Central South	27.0	10.2	33.7	19.6	15.2	9.8	11.8	0.9	0.9
Central West	24.0	7.6	28.3	17.5	15.2	7.0	11.8	3.0	5.4
East	32.5	23.7	32.0	21.4	23.2	3.0	9.1	1.7	1.2
North	32.2	29.8	29.1	17.6	17.2	6.8	8.8	0.4	0.2
South West	29.4	14.8	36.0	22.3	19.0	4.4	14.5	0.9	0.6
Toronto	13.2	4.8	17.7	10.8	10.0	8.6	4.5	10.0	5.8

Source: Census Canada, 1996

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition Used
Allophone	Allophone is defined as someone who did not identify either “English” or “French” as one of their “mother tongues”.
Aged dependency ratio	Ratio of the number of persons age 65 years and over divided by the total population aged 15 to 64.
Child dependency ratio	Ratio of the number of persons under age 15 years divided by the total population aged 15 to 64.
Mother tongue	Language a person first learned to speak as a child and can still speak at the time of the Census.
Non-permanent residents	Non-permanent residents are persons residing in Canada on student permits, employment authorizations, special Ministerial Permits, or as refugee claimants.
Population density	Ratio of the number of residents divided by the total surface area for a defined geographic region.
Population pyramid	A graphical distribution of the population showing the age and sex structure of a population by displaying two sets of horizontal bars, one for males and another for females. The length and area of each bar corresponds to the number of males or females in each age group.
Total dependency ratio	Ratio of the number of persons under age 15 and age 65 years and over compared to the total population aged 15 to 64.

