

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay

Child Demographics

Indigenous children are the fastest-growing group of the urban population.¹ Inter-generational family and kinship networks are important sources of strength and well-being. While many Indigenous families are thriving despite colonial interventions, Indigenous children and their families continue to face significant socioeconomic barriers and inequities. When compared to non-Indigenous children, Indigenous children are over two times more likely to live in low-income families.² To address these gaps, an expansion in culturally safe urban health and social services is required to sufficiently support child health.

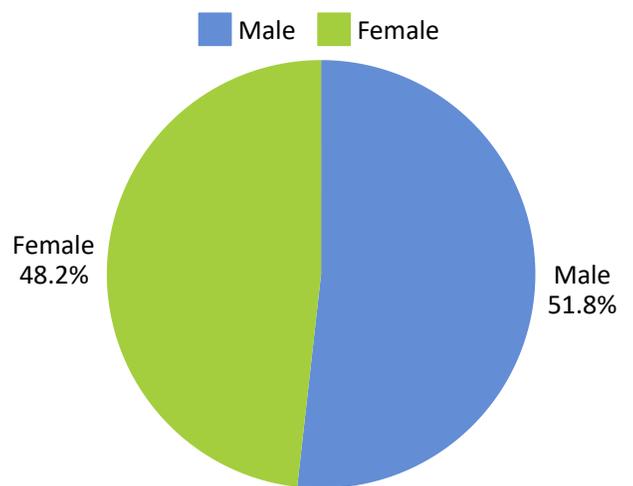
Identity

97% of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay identified as First Nations.

79% of First Nations children in Thunder Bay had status, compared to **97% of First Nations adults**.

2% of Indigenous children identified as Métis.

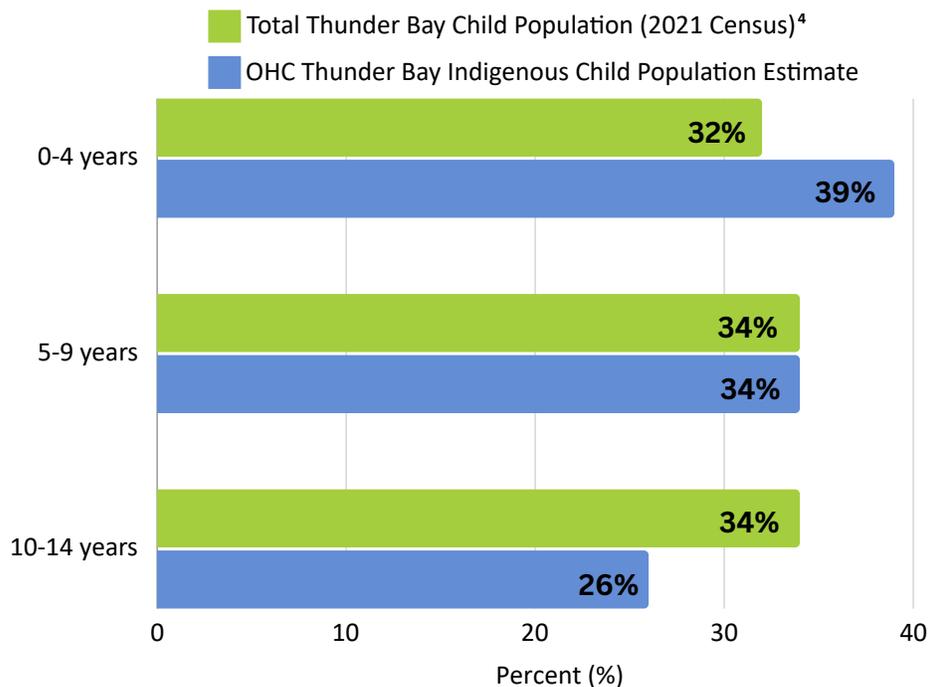
Gender



Population Estimates & Age

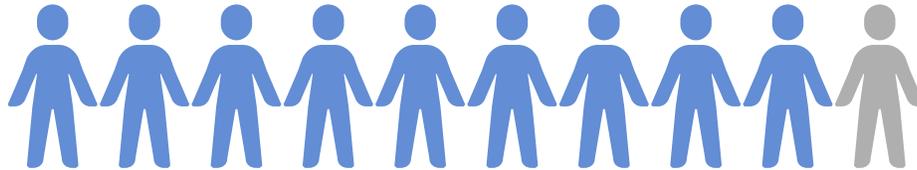
OHC Thunder Bay study findings indicate that **there are 1.5 to 3.1 times more Indigenous children in Thunder Bay (5,400 to 11,600) than estimated by Statistics Canada.**

The 2021 Census estimated that 3,710 Indigenous children (0-14 years) live in Thunder Bay.^{2,3}



Poverty

90% of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay live in households that fell at or below the before-tax Low-Income Cut-Off. Income is a significant determinant of health, as it influences all other living conditions, including access to health services, safe housing, food security, education, and transportation.⁵



Policy Implications

We call on the City of Thunder Bay, provincial, and federal governments to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples living in urban and related homelands and urban-based Indigenous organizations to:

1. Increase social and health programming for Indigenous children to account for population growth and size.
2. Design social and health programming for Indigenous children to address and prevent health impacts associated with income disparity.⁵
3. Promote and increase the accessibility of existing programming in Thunder Bay: Advocate for adequate, appropriate, accessible, and culturally safe programs for children facing socioeconomic disparities and related health impacts.

Implement TRC Call to Action 19: to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.⁷

Definitions	Indigenous children: persons 1 to 14 years self-identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, and/or Inuit) by their parent or guardian, and living or using services in the City of Thunder Bay.
Sources	1. Statistics Canada (2023); 2. Statistics Canada - Census of Population (2021); 3. Statistics Canada (2016); 4. OHC Indigenous Population Estimates for the City of Thunder Bay (2022); 5. National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (2022); 6. Wellesley Institute Thunder Bay Community Report (2019); 7. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).
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Population-based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling



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Child Demographics Reference

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada.

Adult participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

Child surveys were completed by OHC Thunder Bay adult survey participants who were parents/custodial relatives/guardians of children 14 years of age or younger. Children resided with them and were under their care.

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
How do you self-identify?	
First Nations	97.7% (95.5, 99.5)
Métis	1.7% (0.4, 3.5)
Don't Know	0.4% (0.0, 1.3)
Are you status (for individuals identifying as First Nations only)?	
Yes	79.2% (73.5, 84.1)
No	17.6% (13.2, 22.4)
Declined	0.4% (0.0, 1.3)
Age Group	
0-4 years	39.2% (32.5, 45.3)
5-9 years	26.4% (20.6, 32.5)
10-14 years	34.3% (28.1, 40.9)
What is your gender?	
Female	48.4% (41.8, 54.6)
Male	51.5% (45.3, 58.1)
Income: LICO	
Above before-tax LICO	8.8% (5.2, 12.3)
At or below before-tax LICO	90.3% (86.7, 93.8)



Well Living House

