

1 Mother Tongue

Description

- Percentage of the population by first language learned in childhood that is still understood at the time of the Census.

Specific Indicators

- Single response mother tongue
- English mother tongue
- French mother tongue
- Non-official language mother tongue
- Other language mother tongue

Ontario Public Health Standards

The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) establish requirements for the fundamental public health programs and services carried out by boards of health, which include assessment and surveillance, health promotion and policy development, disease and injury prevention, and health protection. The OPHS consist of one Foundational Standard and 13 Program Standards that articulate broad societal goals that result from the activities undertaken by boards of health and many others, including community partners, non-governmental organizations, and governmental bodies. These results have been expressed in terms of two levels of outcomes: societal outcomes and board of health outcomes. Societal outcomes entail changes in health status, organizations, systems, norms, policies, environments, and practices and result from the work of many sectors of society, including boards of health, for the improvement of the overall health of the population. Board of health outcomes are the results of endeavours by boards of health and often focus on changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices, environments, and policies. Boards of health are accountable for these outcomes. The standards also outline the requirements that boards of health must implement to achieve the stated results.

Outcomes related to this indicator

Societal Outcome (Foundational Standard): Population health needs are anticipated, identified, addressed, and evaluated.

Assessment and/or Surveillance Requirements Related to this Indicator

The board of health shall use population health, determinants of health and health inequities information to assess the needs of the local population, including the identification of populations at risk, to determine those groups that would benefit most from public health programs and services (i.e., priority populations).

Protocol Requirements Related to this Indicator

The board of health shall analyze population health data and interpret the information to describe

the distribution of health outcomes, preventive health practices, risk factors, determinants of health, and other relevant information to assess the overall health of its population.

The board of health shall collect or access the following types of population health data and information:

i) Socio-demographics including population counts by age, sex, education, employment, income, housing, language, immigration, culture, ability/disability, and cost of a nutritious food basket;

<http://www.ontario.ca/publichealthstandards>

Corresponding Health Indicator from Statistics Canada and CIHI

None.

Corresponding Indicators from Other Sources

None.

Data Sources

Numerator & Denominator: Canadian Census

Original source: Statistics Canada

Distributed by: Statistics Canada

Suggested citation (see Data Citation Notes):

[year] Census, Statistics Canada

1. Go to <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html>
2. Select the 'Browse by key Resource' tab
3. Select 'Census' under the 'Data tables' section
4. Select 'Data products' in the left-hand column in the '2011 Census' section
5. Select 'Topic-based tabulations'
6. Select 'Language'
7. Select 'Mother Tongue (8), Age Groups (25) and Sex (3) for the Population – Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Divisions and Census Subdivisions' for general groupings of mother tongue; for a detailed list select 'Detailed Mother Tongue (232), Knowledge of Official Language(5) Age Groups (17A) and Sex (3) for the Population Excluding Institutional Residents – Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Divisions and Census Subdivisions'

Survey Questions

Question 9. What is the language that this person **first learned** at home in **childhood** and **still understands**?

If this person no longer understands the first language learned, indicate the second language learned.

Options were English, French, or Other - specify.

- language this person spoke most often at home before starting school. Report two languages only if both languages were used equally often and are still understood by this person.
- For a child who has not yet learned to speak, report the language spoken most often to the child at home. Report two languages only if both languages are spoken equally often so that the child learns both languages at the same time.

The order of response options in language questions which have mark-ins for 'English' and 'French' is different depending on the language of the questionnaire. On English questionnaires, 'English' is listed before 'French.' On French questionnaires, 'French' is listed before English. In a similar way, the language of the questionnaire is the language mentioned first in the actual wording of the questions on knowledge of official and non-official languages.

Alternative Data Sources

None.

Analysis Check List

Alternative Data Source

Numerator & Denominator: [Canadian Community Health Survey](#)

Original source: Statistics Canada

Distributed by: Statistics Canada

Suggested citation (see Data Citation Notes):

Canadian Community Health Survey [year], Statistics Canada

Survey Question

SDC_Q6: What is the language that you first learned at home in childhood and can still understand?

Use & Limitations

CCHS is used for stratification or weighting other indicators, and should not be used to obtain a primary estimate of the population by mother tongue.

Analysis Check List

None

Method of Calculation

Non-official language mother tongue:

Percentage of the population with a first language that is not English or French:

$$\frac{\text{Population with a non-official language as their first language}}{\text{Total – Mother Tongue}} \times 100$$

English mother tongue:

Percentage of the population with English as their first language:

$$\frac{\text{Population with English as their first language (Total – single and multiple language responses)}}{\text{Total – Mother Tongue}} \times 100$$

French mother tongue:

Percentage of the population with French as their first language:

$$\frac{\text{Population with French as their first language (Total – single and multiple language responses)}}{\text{Total – Mother Tongue}} \times 100$$

Any language mother tongue:

Percentage of the population with any one language as their first language:

$$\frac{\text{Population with Any Language as their first language (Total – single and multiple language responses)}}{\text{Total – Mother Tongue}} \times 100$$

Basic Categories

- First languages: 1) English only, 2) English and other, 3) French only, 4) French and other, 5) English and French only, 6) English, French and other, 7) Other (neither English nor French), 8) Any given language
- Geographic areas: public health unit, census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations, census subdivisions.

Indicator Comments

- On the census form, individuals could indicate more than one language as their first

language learned.

- As in the 2006, 2001, 1996 and 1991 census, only the two official languages, English and French, appeared on the questionnaire. Other languages could be written in the space provided. In previous censuses, the most frequently occurring non-official languages were listed on the questionnaire.²
- To facilitate respondents' task an instruction which appeared in the 1986 Census Guide was added to the questionnaire in 1991, where it remained in 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2011. The instruction read as follows: 'If this person no longer understands the first language learned, indicate the second language learned.'²
- On the French version of all census forms, for all questions in the language module where there was a choice of response available, the order in which the choices appeared was modified after 1996 in order to give precedence to the category 'French.'²
- There have been some changes to languages included in results over time. The languages included in each census should be reviewed prior to making comparisons.²
- Francophone can be defined in different ways (using mother tongue, language at home, or other language and cultural indicators). The 2005 Second Report on Health of Francophones in Ontario used mother tongue.³ In 2009, the Ontario Office of Francophone Affairs introduced a new definition of Francophone, wherein Francophones are defined as 'Those persons whose mother tongue is French, plus those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English but have a particular knowledge of French as an Official Language and use French at home.'⁴
- Statistics Canada has observed changes in patterns of response to both the mother tongue and home language questions that appear to have arisen from changes in the placement and context of the language questions on the 2011 Census questionnaire relative to previous censuses. As a result, Canadians appear to have been less inclined than in previous census to report languages other than English or French as their only mother tongue, and also more inclined to report multiple languages as their mother tongue and as the language used most often at home.⁵
- The 2011 non-response rate for the question on mother tongue was 2.0% at the national level, and 1.8% in Ontario.⁵
- Language can provide socioeconomic advantages like access to certain goods and services offered by or for the immigrant community.⁶
- The rate of language retention is defined as the proportion of the population with a given mother tongue that speaks that language at home, either most often or on a regular basis. The retention rate provides an indication of different groups' linguistic vitality.⁷
- Language adoption and transmission could be estimated by measuring the percentage of the population whose mother tongue was a particular language and comparing that to the percentage of the population who regularly or often spoke that particular language at home.⁶

Cross-References to Other Sections

- None

References

1. Statistics Canada. National Household Survey User Guide, NHS, 2011. Available from: http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/nhs-enm_guide/99-001-x2011001-eng.pdf
2. Statistics Canada. 2011 Census Dictionary. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of Industry, 2012. Available from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/dict/98-301-X2011001-eng.pdf>

3. Public Health Research, Education, & Development Program, and Institut Franco-Ontarien. 2005. Deuxieme rapport sur la santé des francophones de l'Ontario. Available from: http://www.sdhu.com/uploads/content/listings/rapport_sante_jan06.pdf
4. Ontario Office of Francophone Affairs. 2009. More Inclusive Definition of Ontario's Francophone Population. Available from: <http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/franco-definition.html>
5. Statistics Canada. Language Reference Guide, 2011 Census. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of Industry, 2012. Available from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/guides/98-314-x/98-314-x2011005-eng.pdf>
6. Statistics Canada. Recent evolution of immigrant-language transmission in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of Industry, 2011. Available from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2011002/article/11453-eng.pdf>
7. Statistics Canada. Immigrant languages in Canada. 2011. Available from: http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011003_2-eng.pdf

Acknowledgements

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Changes made

Date	Type of Review-Form Review or Ad Hoc?	Changes made by	Changes
April 2015	Formal	Social Determinants of Health Subgroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated description • Addition of Ontario Public Health Standards description • Addition of outcomes related to the indicator, assessment and/or surveillance requirements related to the indicator, and protocol requirements related to the indicator • Updated the data sources • Updated the survey questions with accompanying instructions to interviewers • Added an alternative data source • Updated the method of calculation • Updated the basic categories

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revised the indicator comments• Updated the references• Added acknowledgements• Added changes made
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Date of Last Revision: April 17, 2015