

## Children in lone-parent families by census division<sup>1</sup>

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### Highlights

- Among census divisions (CDs) in 2016, the percent of children (under 15 years of age) residing in a lone-parent family was:
  - Higher than average in 4 of 8 metro CDs;
  - Higher than average in 11 of 17 partially non-metro CDs; and
  - Higher than average in 16 of 24 non-metro CDs.
- There is a wide range across non-metro CDs where the highest CDs (Manitoulin, 33%; Kenora, 28%) have double the percent of children in lone-parent families compared to the lowest CD (Huron, 14%).
- While many CDs with higher proportions are in southern areas, all those in the north are above average and the highest proportions are found in northern regions.

### Why look at children with lone parents?

Children living in a lone-parent family face different experiences compared to children living in a two-parent family.

*The family life of children may have a direct impact on their health, their economic, social and emotional well-being, and on their life course in the long run. For example, family life during childhood may affect the long-term relationship between children and their parents, particularly when the parents are older and need support themselves. Children living in lone-parent families or stepfamilies may also have a greater need for some services (childcare, for example) and may be more exposed to certain situations, such as living in a low-income family. (Statistics Canada. (2017) **Portrait of children's family life in Canada in 2016** (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 98-200-X201606) p. 1).*

Assessing the trends among children with lone parents will help inform planning by organizations that offer programs for both the parents and the children and youth in lone-parent families.

### Findings

Overall, in Ontario in 2016, 19% of children under 15 years of age were residing in a lone-parent family (see the orange line in Figure 1). There is a substantive variation in proportions of children living in a lone-parent family, but this is not a phenomenon showing distinct rural/urban patterns as each of the three categories of census divisions<sup>1</sup> (CDs) show diversity, where we see some CDs above and some CDs below the Ontario average.

There were 16 of 24 non-metro (CDs) with an above-average share of children under 15 years who were

living with a lone parent. In fact, in the Manitoulin CD, one-third of children (under 15 years of age) reside in a lone-parent family.

Across non-metro CDs, there is a wide range in the share of children living with a lone parent. The two non-metro CDs with the highest share (Manitoulin, 33% and Kenora, 28%) have double the share compared to the non-metro CD with the lowest share of children residing with a lone parent (in the Huron CD, 14%).

Higher proportions in northern CDs are due, at least in part, to the higher Indigenous population where, at the Canada level,

*Aboriginal children aged 14 and under were less likely than non-Aboriginal children to live with married parents, twice as likely to live with a lone parent and twice as likely to live with their grandparents. (Turner, Annie. (2017) **Living arrangements of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under** (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Insights on Canadian Society, Catalogue no. 75-006, p. 1).*

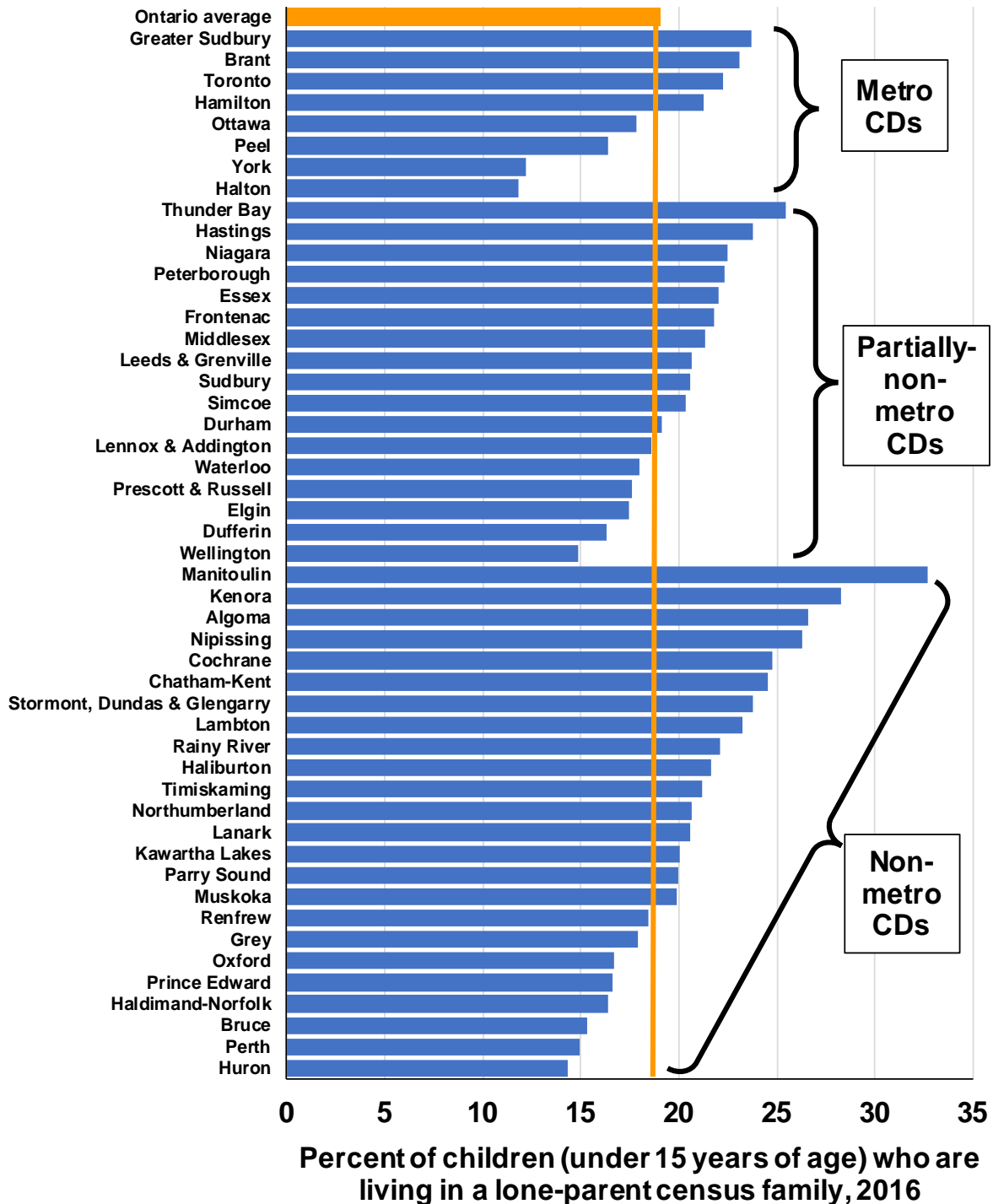
### Discussion

The wide range across non-metro CDs regarding the percent of children residing with a lone parent means there is wide range in the need for flexible education and employment opportunities for the parents and for communities to tailor their programs to address local needs.

<sup>1</sup> Defined in "[Rural Ontario's Demography: Census Update 2016.](#)" **Focus on Rural Ontario.**

Figure 1

## Ranking of census divisions by percent of children (under 15 years of age) living in a lone-parent family, Ontario, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 2016, Table 98-400-X2016041.

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<sup>i</sup> This is a companion to the **Focus on Rural Ontario** Fact Sheet entitled “Children in lone-parent families by census subdivision.”