

Highlights

- **Among Ontario's 24 non-metro census divisions, 75% of them (i.e., 18 census divisions) experienced an increase from 2011 to 2016 in the number of children residing in a lone-parent family.**
- **The census divisions with the largest increase in the number of children in lone-parent families were the Lanark census division (with an increase of 17.1%) and the Huron census division (with an increase of 12.6%)**

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 pace of change in the number of children with lone parents will indicate the localities faced with a need to change the scale of their efforts to provide programs for both the parents and the children and youth in lone-parent families.

Findings

In Ontario from 2011 to 2016, there was a 3.2% growth in the number of children (under 15 years of age) residing in a lone-parent family (see the orange line in Figure 1).

Three-quarters of the non-metro census divisions¹ (CDs) had an increase from 2011 to 2016 in the

number of children living with a lone parent (i.e., 18 of 24 non-metro CDs).

The growth was greater than the provincial average in 12 non-metro CDs. The greatest growth was in the Lanark CD (17.1%) followed by a 12.6% growth in the Huron CD.

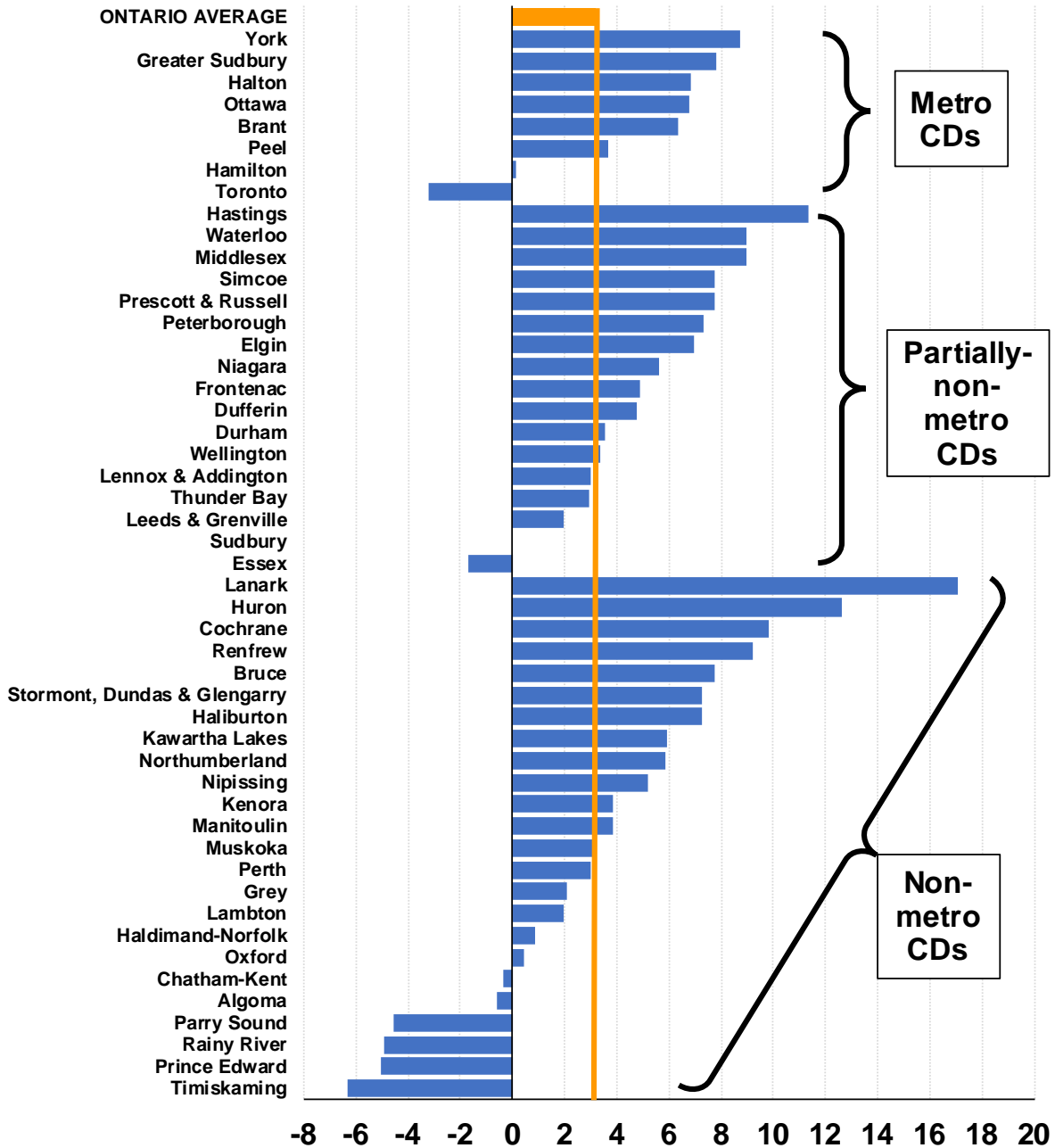
At the other end of the spectrum, the number of children in lone-parent families declined by more than 4% from 2011 to 2016 in 4 non-metro CDs (Parry Sound, Rainy River, Prince Edward and Timiskaming).

Discussion

There are wide differences in the pace of change in the number of children (under 15 years of age) residing in a lone-parent family across non-metro CDs. This suggests that different CDs are experiencing differing rates in change in the demand for social investment in programs and services for both the parents and the children in these circumstances.

¹ Defined in "Rural Ontario's Demography: Census Update 2016." **Focus on Rural Ontario**
<http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/focus-on-rural-ontario.aspx>

Figure 1 Ranking of census divisions by percent change in the number of children living in a lone-parent family, Ontario, 2016



Percent change in number of children (under 15 years of age) who are living in a lone-parent census family, 2011 to 2016
 [census subdivisions, within each census division, are excluded from the calculation of change if there was incomplete age data in 2011 or 2016]

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

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