

Census Snapshot: Children¹

Data provided about children by Statistics New Zealand from the 2001 Census to the Office of the Commissioner was included in information packs distributed nationally for Children's Day on 27 October 2002. A decision to release the information as a snapshot was made by Statistics New Zealand, and prior to its release Statistics New Zealand's Education Services Section worked with several schools in the Wellington area to produce pictures and stories around the information in the packs. The public release of the snapshot on 23 August 2002 provided an opportunity for children to meet with the Government Statistician, Brian Pink to discuss their work and hear about the other data presented in Snapshot 13: Children.

Overview

Almost one-quarter of New Zealanders (847,740 people) were under the age of 15 at the time of the 2001 Census, according to Statistics New Zealand. Whereas in 1971, children made up 32 percent of the population, they now account for 23 percent, a proportion that has remained unchanged in the past three censuses (1991, 1996, and 2001). In the next 50 years the number of children is projected to decrease by more than 100,000.

Children were more ethnically diverse than their adult counterparts, with 18 percent of children identifying with more than one ethnic group, compared with 6 percent of adults. The percentages of children who identified with New Zealand's major ethnic groups were: European (75 percent), Māori (24 percent), Pacific Peoples (11 percent) and Asian (7 percent). Although there was greater ethnic diversity among our children, they were less likely to have been born overseas than adults (9 percent compared with 23 percent). (Note that people could give more than one response; therefore, these percentages do not add to 100.)

One-third of New Zealand's households included children, at an average of 1.9 children per household. Sixty-nine percent of families with children were two-parent families while the remaining 31 percent were one-parent families.

The region with the highest proportion of children was Gisborne (27 percent) while the Otago Region had the lowest proportion (19 percent).

Overall, the North Island had a higher proportion of children (23 percent) than the South Island (21 percent). Between 1996 and 2001 Auckland Region had the biggest net loss of children from internal migration (-2,463), while the Bay of Plenty Region had the biggest net gain (+2,013).

1. Demographics

- Children aged 0-14 years accounted for almost one-quarter (847,740 people) of the population in the 2001 Census.
- For most of the 20th century, the number of children has increased. However, in the next 50 years the number of children is projected to decrease by more than 100,000, reflecting the combined impact of lower fertility rates and fewer women in the childbearing ages.
- Children comprised 32 percent of New Zealand's population in 1971, decreasing to 23 percent in 1991. This proportion remained steady at 23 percent during the period 1991-2001. However, it is projected to decrease further to 18 percent in 2021 and 16 percent in 2051.
- Numerically there are more people in the 10-14 years age group than in any other five-year age group, except for those aged 35-39 years (290,739 and 297,462 people respectively). The larger size of these two age groups reflects peaks in birth numbers that occurred around 1990 and 1961, respectively.
- Just over half of the children under 15 years of age were males (51 percent).
- Thirty-two percent of children were under five years of age, 34 percent were aged 5-9 years and the remaining 34 percent were aged 10-14 years.
- In the 10 years following the 1991 Census, the number of children aged 0-4 years decreased by 2 percent while the number aged 5-9 years and 10-14 years increased by 14 percent each. Overall, the number of children increased by 8 percent in the 10 years between 1991 and 2001.

¹ This snapshot was prepared by Fiona Smillie from the Social and Population Statistics Group of Statistics New Zealand.

- Gisborne Region had the highest proportion of children (27 percent) while the Otago Region had the lowest proportion (19 percent). Overall, the North Island had a higher proportion of children (23 percent) than the South Island (21 percent).

2. Diversity

- New Zealand children were more ethnically diverse than adults: 18 percent of children identified with more than one ethnic group in the 2001 Census compared with 6 percent of adults. In the under-five years age group, 21 percent of children identified with more than one ethnic group.
- Three-quarters (75 percent) of all children who specified their ethnic groups identified with the European ethnic group, 24 percent identified with the Māori ethnic group, 11 percent with the Pacific peoples ethnic group and 7 percent with the Asian ethnic group. (Note that people could give more than one response; therefore, these percentages do not add to 100.)
- Reflecting the younger age structure of the Pacific peoples and Māori ethnic groups, 39 percent of those identifying with the Pacific peoples ethnic group were children, while 37 percent of the Māori ethnic group were children. In comparison, 24 percent of the Asian ethnic group and 21 percent of the European ethnic group were children.
- An increasing proportion of children are projected to have Māori or Pacific peoples ethnicity in future. The increasing number of newborns of Māori or Pacific peoples ethnicity reflects the higher Māori and Pacific peoples fertility, coupled with the younger age structure of the Māori and Pacific peoples populations (compared with the New Zealand population overall). Two-fifths of babies born in 2001 were of Māori or Pacific peoples ethnicity.
- Of those who could speak, proportionately just as many children as adults could converse in more than one language (15 percent of children compared with 16 percent of adults).
- The proportion of children who could speak Māori (6 percent) was marginally higher than the proportion of adults who could speak Māori (4 percent).
- Although children had greater ethnic diversity than adults, they were less likely to have been

born overseas (9 percent versus 23 percent respectively).

- Thirty-four percent of children born overseas were born elsewhere in Oceania (Australia and the Pacific), while 27 percent were born in Asia and 21 percent were born in Europe.

Table 1

Birthplace of Children Born Outside New Zealand	
Birthplace	Percent
Other Oceania	34
North-west Europe	17
North-east Asia	15
Sub-Saharan Africa	10
South-east Asia	6
Southern and central Asia	6
The Americas	5
North Africa and Middle East	4
Southern and eastern Europe	3

3. Home life

- One-third of New Zealand's households included children.
- Of those households with children, there was an average of 1.9 children per household in March 2001. This is the same as recorded in March 1991.
- In total, 664,764 children were in a family with other children (84 percent), while 127,980 were in a family without other children (16 percent).
- Sixty-nine percent of families with children were two-parent families – down from 74 percent in 1991, and 31 percent of families with children were one-parent families – up from 26 percent in 1991.
- In 2001, over 4,000 grandparents had taken on the role of parent to their grandchildren.
- Overall, 16 percent of children lived in households with an annual income of \$20,000 or less and 26 percent lived in households with an annual income of over \$70,000.
- Household income of \$20,000 or less applied to 6 percent of children living in households comprising a couple with child(ren) only, whereas this level of income applied to 61 percent of children living in households comprising one parent with child(ren) only.

4. Access to telecommunication systems

- Overall, 5 percent of children usually lived in households without access to any telecommunications systems compared with 3 percent of adults.
- Children in the Pacific peoples (15 percent) and Māori (13 percent) ethnic groups were proportionately more likely to usually live in households without access to telecommunication systems than children in the European and Asian ethnic groups (2 percent each).
- Two percent of households comprising a couple with child(ren) did not have access to telecommunication systems, whereas 8 percent of households comprising one parent with child(ren) did not have access to telecommunication systems.
- Similar proportions of children and adults usually lived in households with access to a telephone (95 percent and 97 percent respectively).
- Children were proportionately more likely to usually live in households with access to the Internet than adults: 46 percent of children usually lived in households with access to the Internet compared with 42 percent of adults.
- Access to the Internet varied greatly by ethnic group: 60 percent of Asian children usually lived in households with access to the Internet, compared with 52 percent of European children, 25 percent of Māori children and 19 percent of Pacific children.
- Fifty-six percent of households comprising a couple with child(ren) had access to the Internet, whereas 30 percent of households comprising one parent with child(ren) had access to the Internet.

5. Housing

- Most children (62 percent) lived in a dwelling that was owned by the usual resident(s).
- Children (38 percent) were more likely than adults (31 percent) to be living in a dwelling that was not owned by the usual residents.
- Of the 294,996 children living in a dwelling that was not owned by the usual residents, 59 percent identified with the European ethnic group, 35 percent with the Māori ethnic group, 19 percent with the Pacific peoples ethnic group, and 7 percent with the Asian ethnic group.
- 22,947 children lived in households with no heating. Of those, 40 percent identified with the European ethnic group, 38 percent with the Pacific peoples ethnic group, 33 percent with the Māori ethnic group, and 10 percent with the Asian ethnic group. (Note that people could give more than one response; therefore, these percentages do not add to 100.)
- The same proportion of adults and children lived in households with access to a vehicle (both 93 percent).
- More than half (59 percent) of all children aged 5-14 years had lived elsewhere in New Zealand or overseas at the time of the 1996 Census. This compared with 56 percent of the population aged five years and over.
- Between 1996 and 2001 Auckland Region had the biggest net loss of children from internal migration (-2,463), while the Bay of Plenty Region had the biggest net gain (+2,013).

More information

Further information about the 2001 Census of Population and Dwellings can be found at: www.stats.govt.nz/census.htm?open.