



## UNICEF Report Card 11: Child Well-Being in Rich Countries

### KEY POINTS

- Canadian children are not doing as well as they could be. When factoring in the size of Canada's economy UNICEF's Report Card 11 clearly shows the overall well-being of Canadian children could be better.
- Canadian children rank 17<sup>th</sup> of 29 countries measured – a middle position that has not improved since last measured ten years ago.
- Particularly concerning is that Canada's ranking drops 7 places when children's views of their own life satisfaction are measured. Only five Eastern European countries rank lower than Canada in children's self-reported life satisfaction.
- Canada shines in some aspects of child well-being, and lags at the bottom in others. Among the greatest areas of concern include; the high rate of unhealthy weight (27<sup>th</sup> of 29), the high rate of bullying (21<sup>st</sup> of 29), the lower rate of children aged 15 – 19 participating in further education (24<sup>th</sup> of 29) and the high rate of cannabis use (29<sup>th</sup> of 29).
- Areas where Canadian children are doing better than their peers in most other countries include the low smoking rate (3<sup>rd</sup> of 29) and the high achievement of children age 15 and under in math, reading and science (2<sup>nd</sup> of 29).
- Canada, like most countries, has made progress in almost all indicators – unhealthy weight and children's views of their lives have worsened over the past decade.
- Child well-being is a shared responsibility, but all the indicators in the Report Card can be influenced by public policy. The Canadian government can improve the well-being of Canadian children by;
  1. Providing more information on how much money is being spent on children:  
Publishing annual government budgets that indicate direct investments in benefits and services for Canadian children will help determine whether Canadian children are receiving their fair share of resources and if investments are geared to needs.
  2. Reporting regularly on the state of Canada's children:  
Measuring progress is necessary for setting effective public policy and for the effective allocation of limited resources. An annual state of Canada's children report should measure the well-being of children in all childhood conditions that are influenced by governments.
  3. Ensuring the rights and views of children are prioritized in policy decisions:  
Applying a *Child Rights Impact Assessment* to government policies and legislation and establishing a National Children's Commissioner will help make children more visible to decision-makers.