

1990
June

TRACKING THE TRENDS



FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES
IN EDMONTON

1990 Edition ♦ Special feature on Families with Children



Tracking the Trends

**Future Directions for Human Services
in Edmonton**

**Second Edition
Special Feature - Families with Children**

Prepared by:

Community Trends Working Group
Alberta Family and Social Services
Alberta Health - Mental Health Division
Edmonton Board of Health
Edmonton Community and Family Services
Edmonton Social Planning Council
United Way of Edmonton and Area
June 1990

First Edition:
Tracking the Trends
Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton
Special Feature on Youth and Seniors September 1989

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Preface

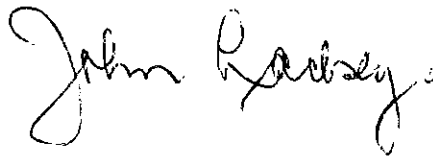
Tracking the Trends: Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton is the product of the hard work and shared concern of some of the major funders and providers of human services in the Edmonton area. The impetus for this study is the conviction that in times of fiscal restraint, it is crucial that government departments and community agencies monitor the significant trends likely to influence the need for human services in the coming decade.

This is the second edition of *Tracking the Trends*, which we hope will be as widely distributed and as useful as the first edition. We are particularly pleased that this collective community effort has proven to be so beneficial. While *Tracking the Trends* cannot be expected to provide immediate answers, it is obviously a valuable aid in the ongoing planning of new programs and policy initiatives.

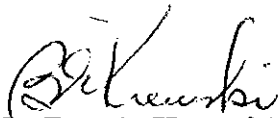
Once again community members have played a very valuable role in providing their insight and experience through a series of focus group meetings arranged by our Working Group. We are therefore very grateful to the people whose expertise is reflected in the special section on trends and service implications for families with children. We look forward to maintaining this excellent example of community participation as we continue to gain a better understanding of the important trends that will influence the development of human services in Edmonton and its surrounding communities.



Mr. Dennis Bell
Regional Director
Alberta Family and Social Services



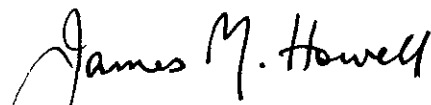
Mr. John Lackey
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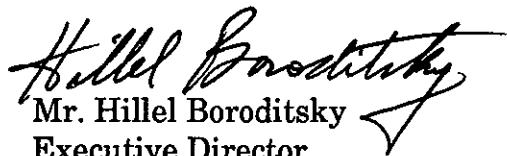
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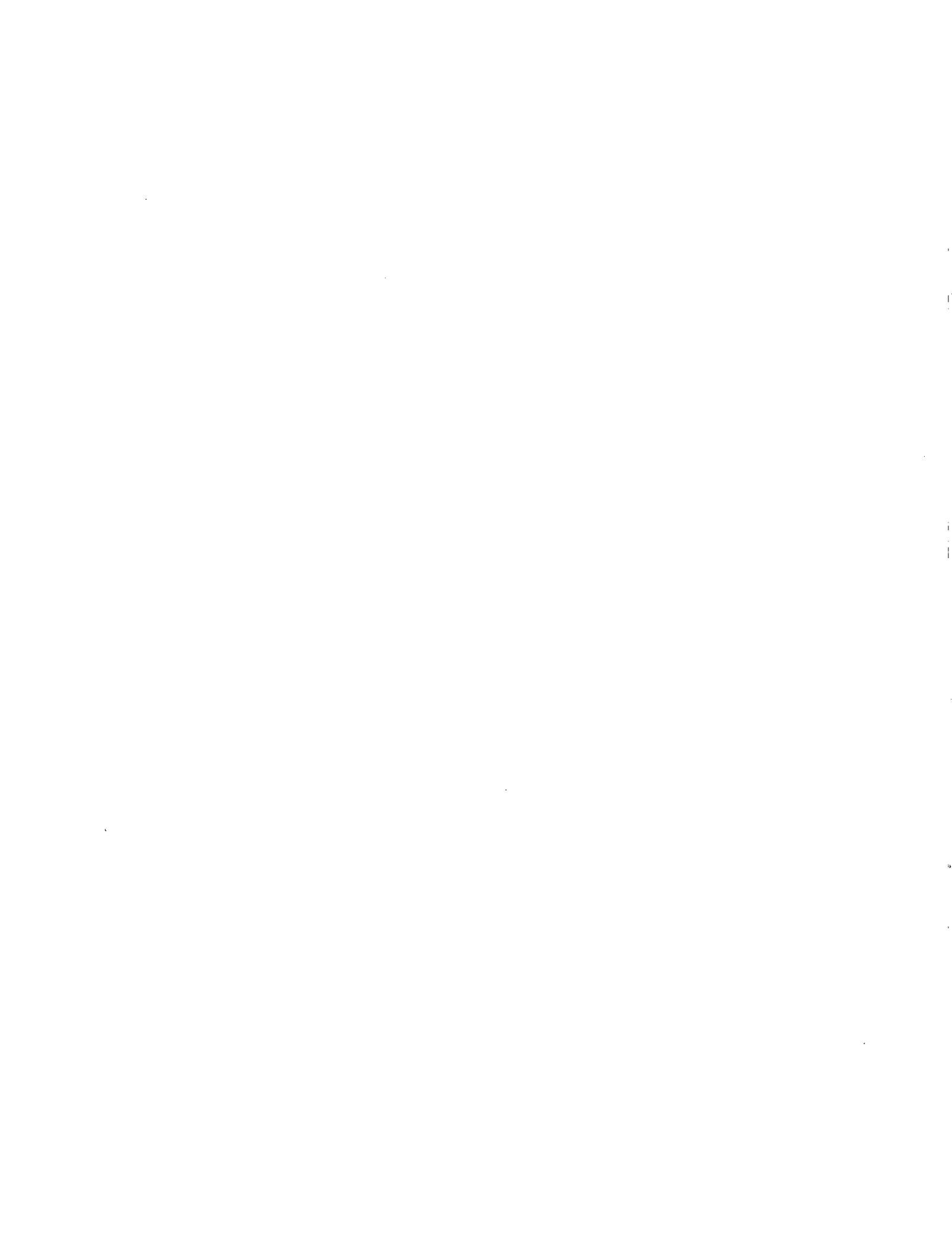


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Introduction

Why track the trends?

Timely information on major social and economic trends affecting Edmonton is important to Edmonton's human service agencies and their funders. Information on trends helps us gain a better understanding of present social conditions and how they may have changed. Perhaps more importantly, statistical trends can help us anticipate changing needs for human services. While there's no lack of useful statistics, the challenge has been to select the most relevant information and then relate it to one another in a meaningful way.

Tracking the Trends therefore provides insight into some of the major social and economic trends likely to influence human services in Edmonton – now and in the near future. As well this 1990 edition focuses on trends that will affect services for Edmonton's families with children.

How was it done?

In preparing this second edition of *Tracking the Trends* a Community Trends Working Group, including representatives from each of the major organizations involved, first reviewed the statistical material presented in the first edition. Where it was possible, updated information was then added to the relevant section or graph. As well, the Working Group responded to suggestions that were offered concerning additional information that might be included in the future editions. Consequently revisions have been made to some of the major sections. Also in response to a number of requests, the Working Group decided to include additional comparative information on the urban areas that surround Edmonton. All of this important material is presented in Part I, "Major Social & Economic Trends."

Part II of the publication, "Trends and Service Implications for Families with Children," provides statistical and trend information relevant to families with children. There are nearly 100,000 such families in Edmonton. These families include over 180,000 children. Many families are managing well in the current social and economic environment. For some families, however, this environment threatens their ability to function. Part II of the publication focuses on families in the latter group who may need to call upon services in the community for support or assistance.

In order to understand more about the human service needs of families with children, seventy 'key informants' participated in a two-phased process. First, they were invited to complete a questionnaire that asked them to identify the major trends and the likely service implications for families with children. Second, the 'key informants' had an opportunity to participate in a focus group where the various trends were ranked and the service implications discussed. The names of those who participated in this important process are listed at the conclusion of the report.

Community Trends Working Group
June 1990

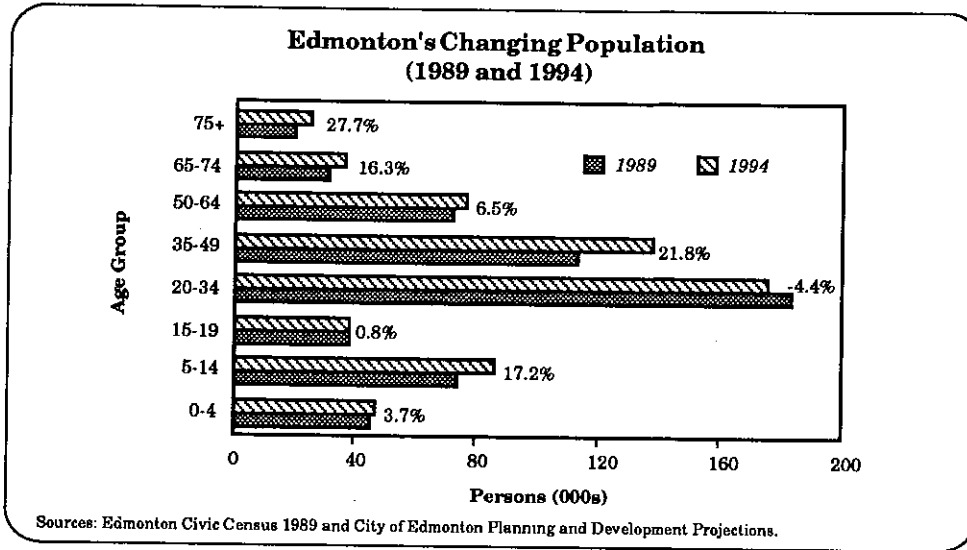


Part I

Major Social and Economic Trends

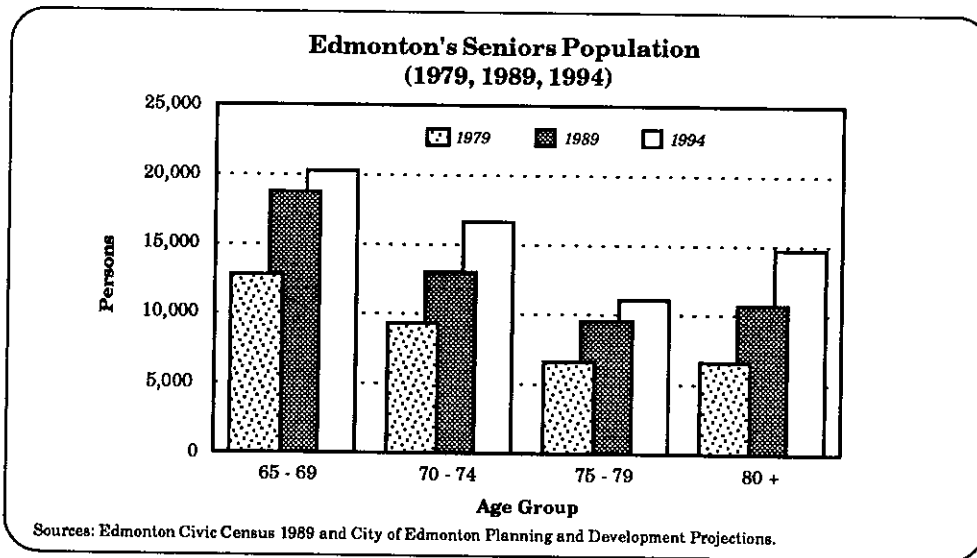
Population

In April 1989, the Edmonton population was 583,872. It is projected to increase by 8% to 630,600 by 1994. In particular, the number of middle-aged adults (35-49 years of age) and school age children (5-14) is projected to increase substantially over the next five years.



• Aging of the Population

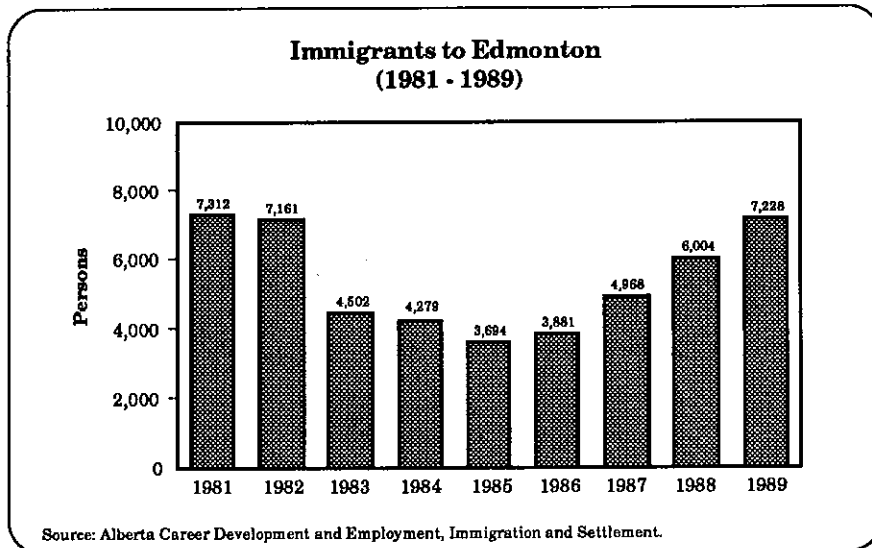
In 1989, 8.9% of the population (or 52,020 people) was 65 years of age or older. It is anticipated that by the year 1994, these figures will increase to 10.0% or 62,800 people.



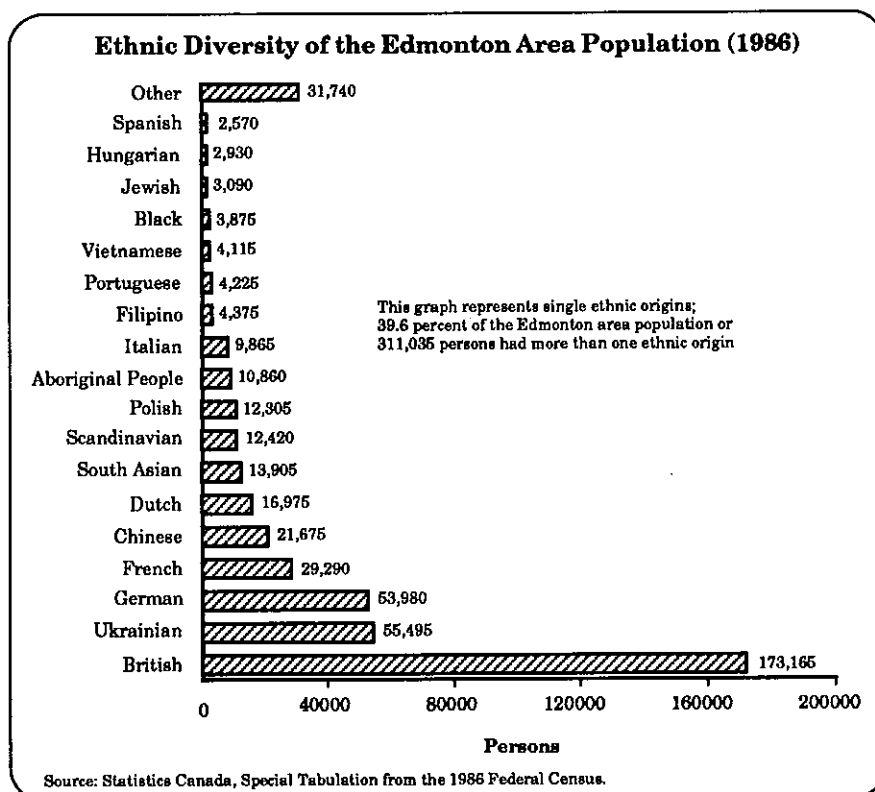
Aging of the population has occurred slowly since the turn of the century due mostly to the decline in the number of children being born. This trend will be somewhat accelerated as the baby boom generation enters its sixties and seventies. While concern has been expressed about meeting the cost of health and social care for an aging population, it is interesting to note that the oldest countries (in terms of population aging) have the highest standard of living, the best medical care, the most industrial development, and have experienced no more serious recessions, national debt loads or social crises than those with a younger population.¹

• Multicultural Nature of the Population

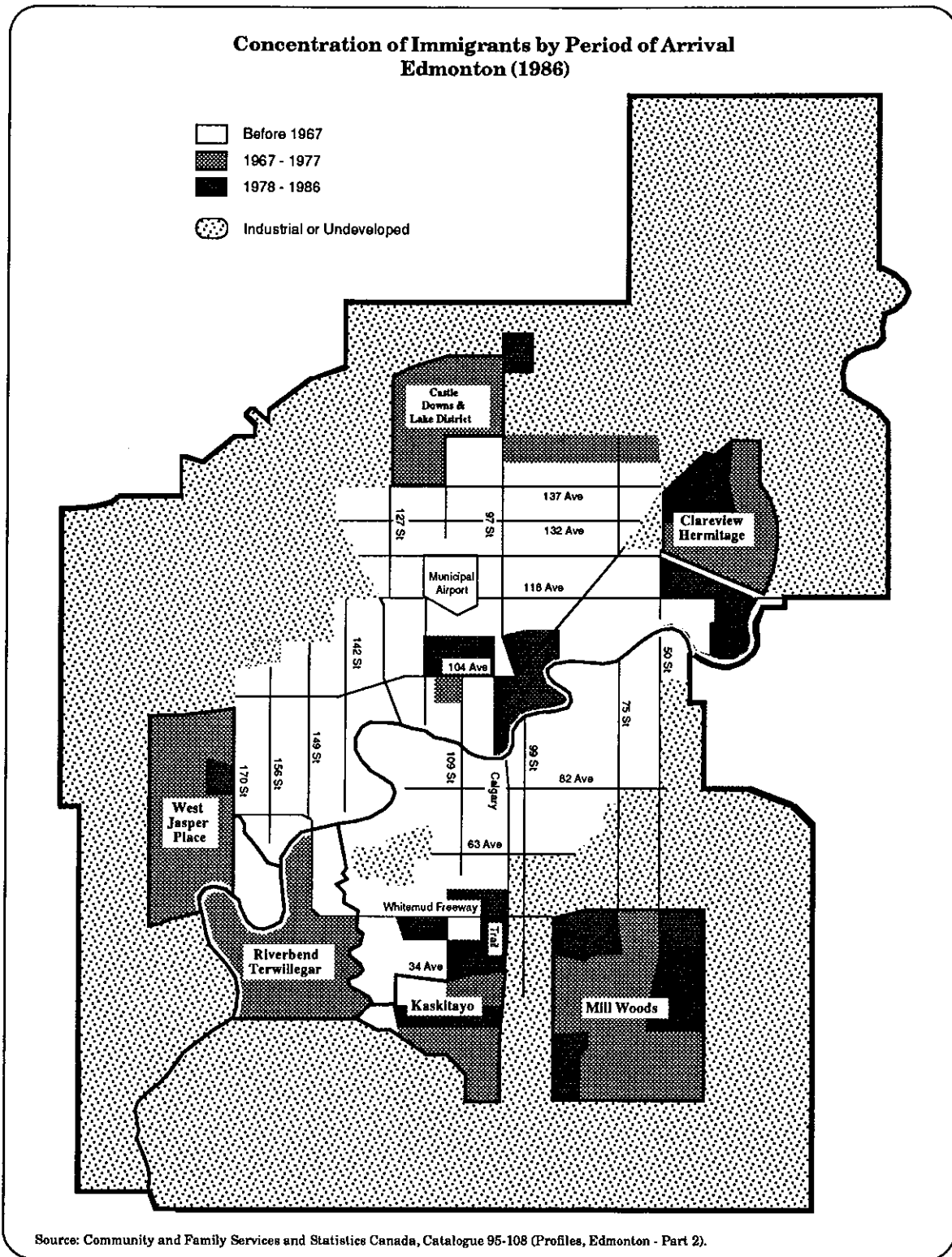
As of 1986, one in five residents of Edmonton (over 120,000 people) was born outside of Canada. While annual immigration levels declined from 1981 to 1985, they have since steadily increased. In 1989 over 7,200 new immigrants arrived in Edmonton.



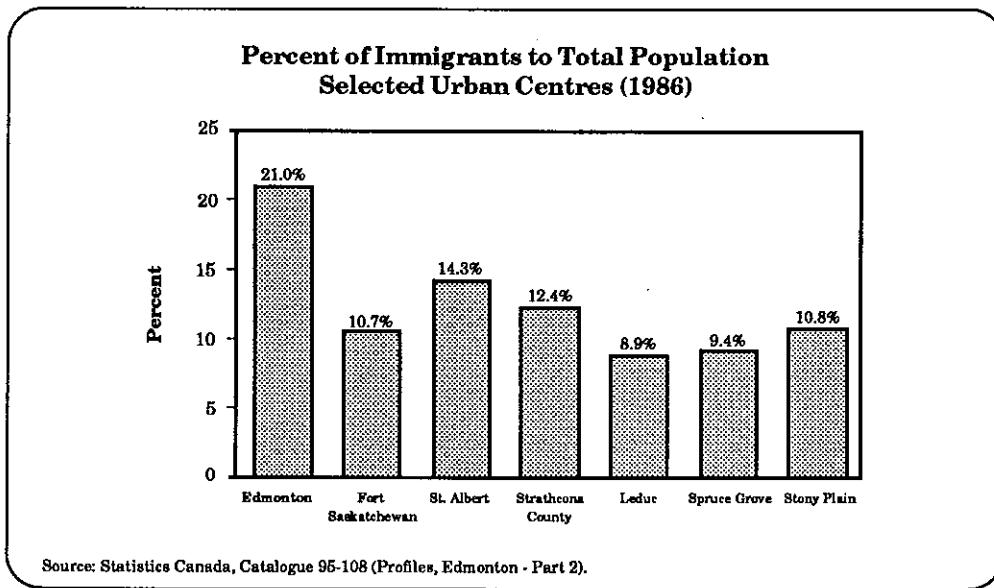
Immigrants from many countries have made Edmonton their home. Census data from 1986 indicate that Edmonton is the second most ethnically diverse city in Canada after Winnipeg.² In the first half of this century, immigration was largely from European countries. Since the late sixties, the range of countries of origin has expanded greatly and presently includes southeast Asian and Latin American countries.



The map below shows the distribution of the immigrant population based on their period of immigration. In general, the majority of newer immigrants have located in suburban communities with the exception of those who have settled in neighbourhoods directly north and east of the downtown core.



Edmonton has a substantially higher proportion of immigrants to its total population than surrounding communities. It appears that immigrants tend to locate in larger urban centres where community resources and cultural support systems are already available.

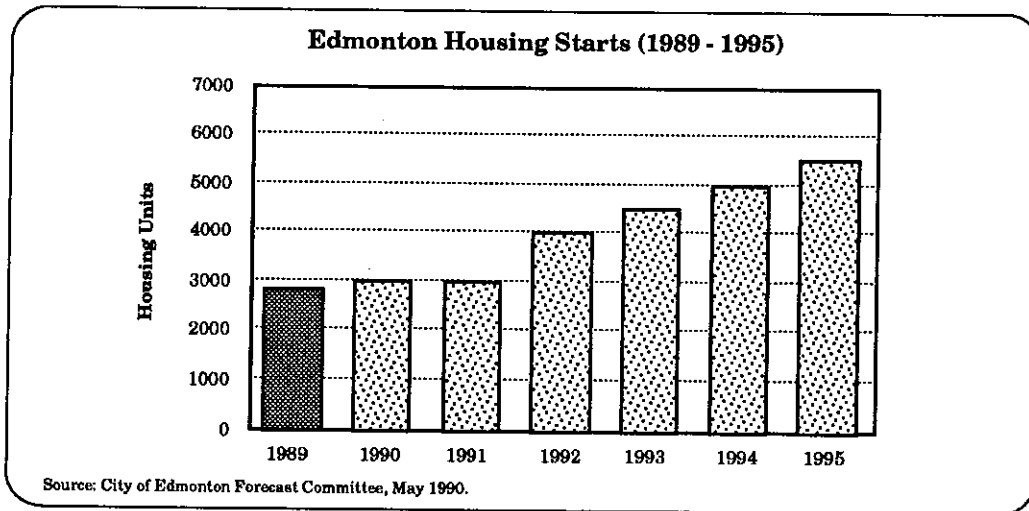


Economy

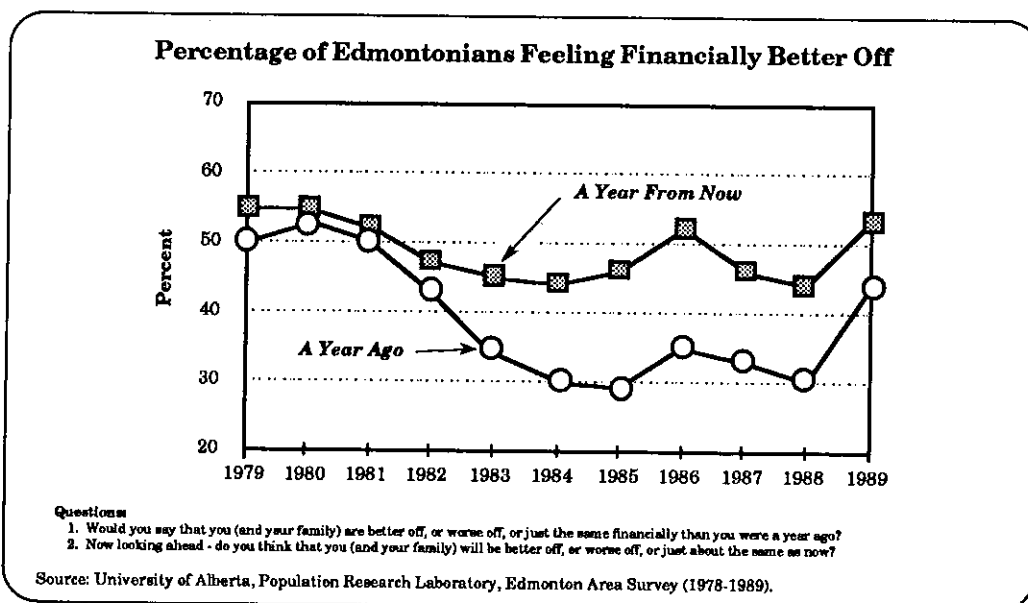
Edmonton's economy is highly dependent on the oil and gas industry. World oil prices, the United States economy, the Federal Goods and Services Tax (GST), interest rates, and inflation will likely combine to have the most influence on the Alberta economy in the near future. The City's Forecast Committee³ predicts a 1% to 2% increase per year in the price of West Texas Intermediate crude over the next five years after allowing for inflation. Other forecasts include:

- Inflation is expected to increase from 4.5% in 1989 to 6.5% in 1991 as a result of the GST and then decline to 5.0% yearly from 1993 to 1995; and
- It is anticipated that housing starts will nearly double to 5,500 units by 1995.

Improvements in the local economy, positive net migration, and low apartment vacancy rates are expected to increase demand for housing in the Edmonton region.



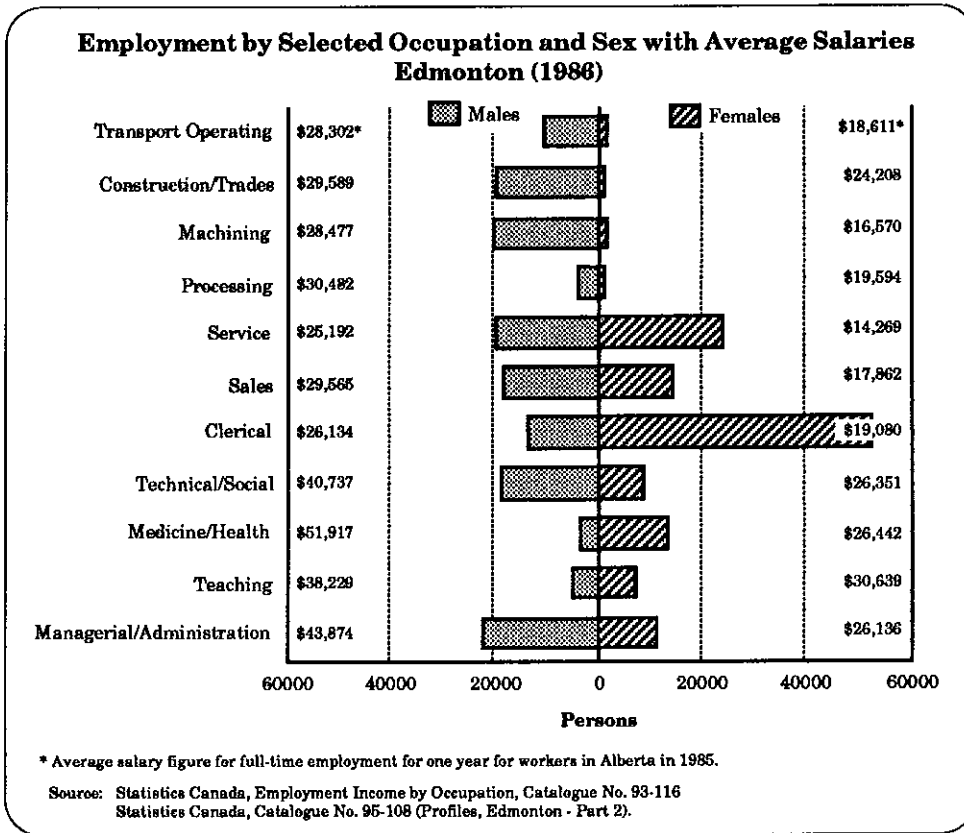
Although Edmontonians' general rating of financial well-being declined throughout the majority of the 1980s, this trend appears to have been reversed in 1989. In addition, the gap between hope and reality appears to be shrinking.



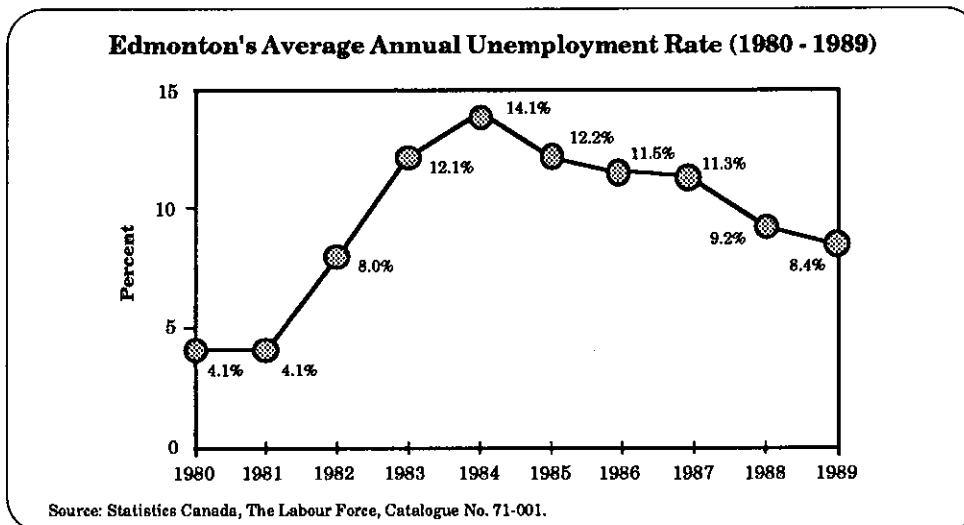
Employment

A community's well-being depends greatly on its level of employment. Employment influences spending patterns, social roles, status, and self-esteem. Alternatively, unemployment has tremendous bearing on the occurrence of social problems such as poverty, family problems, poor physical and mental health, and substance abuse.

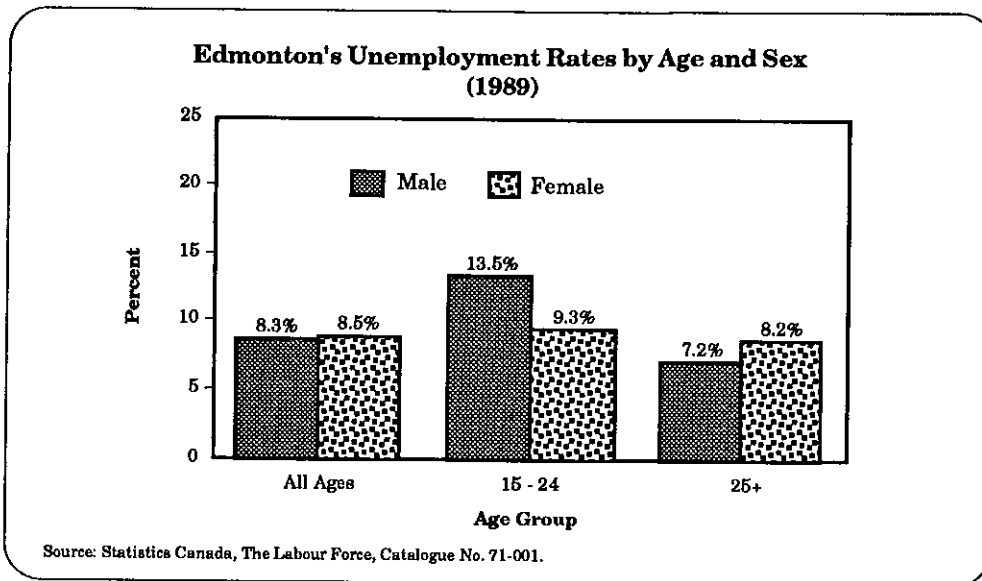
The following five figures illustrate several important trends concerning employment in Edmonton.



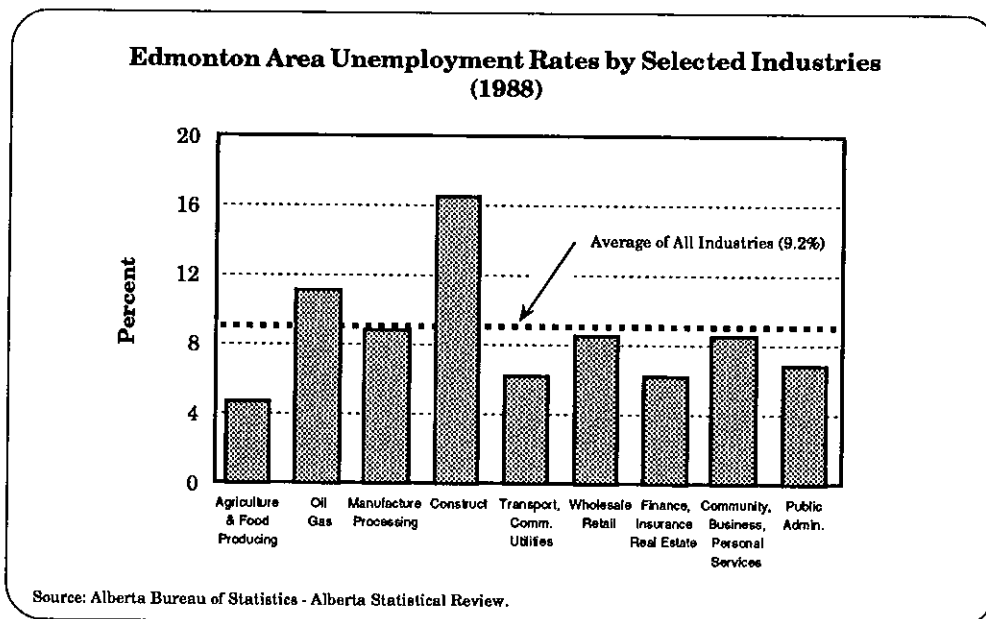
Unemployment rates continue to decline from the peak highs of the mid-1980s. According to the City's Forecast Committee,³ unemployment rates are expected to slowly decrease to approximately 6.0% by 1995.



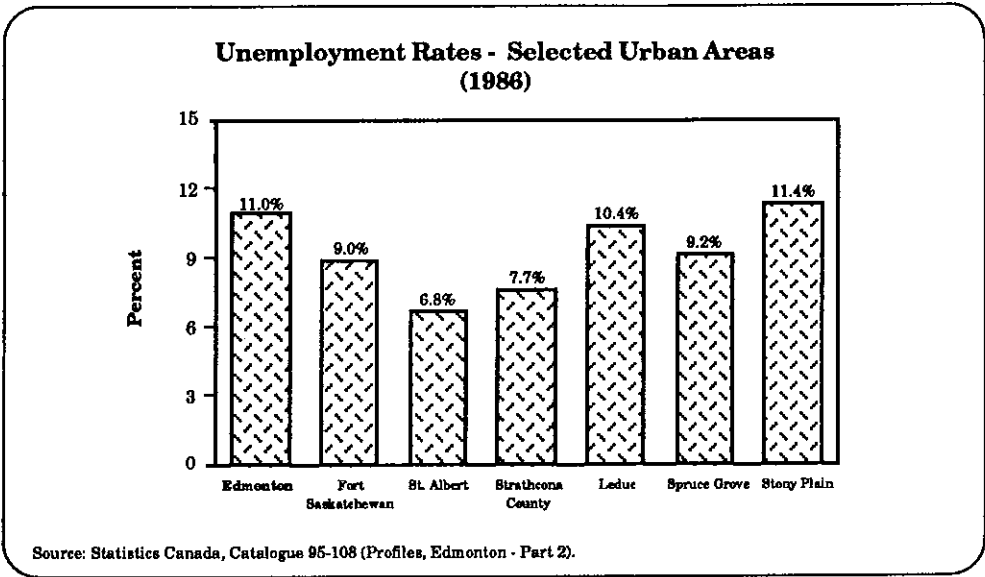
Unemployment rates for males have been consistently higher than for females throughout the majority of the 1980s. Although this gap persists in the younger age groups (15-24 years), the trend has now been reversed for those over 25, with women experiencing more unemployment than men.



The following figure shows unemployment rates for selected industries in the Edmonton area. In general, the oil and gas and construction industries have experienced the highest rates of unemployment.

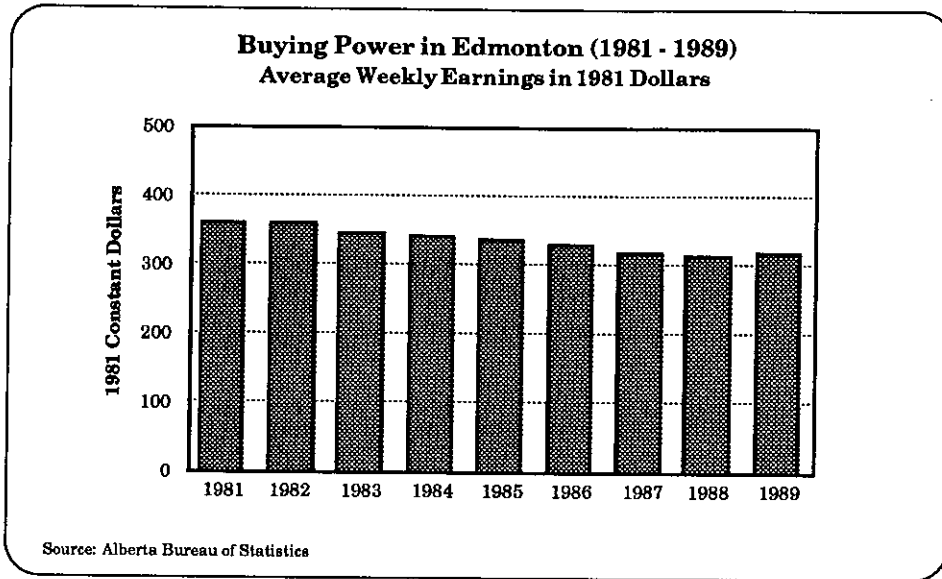


In 1986, Edmonton and Stony Plain had significantly higher unemployment rates than other surrounding communities. In general, these rates may be traced to differences in the populations. As Alberta's largest northern city, Edmonton attracts a substantial number of persons looking for work.

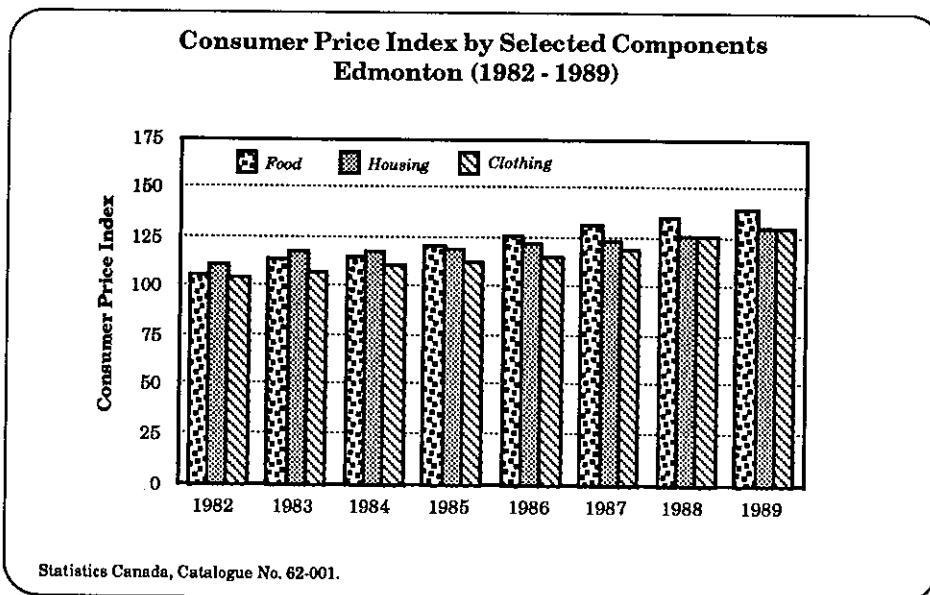


Income

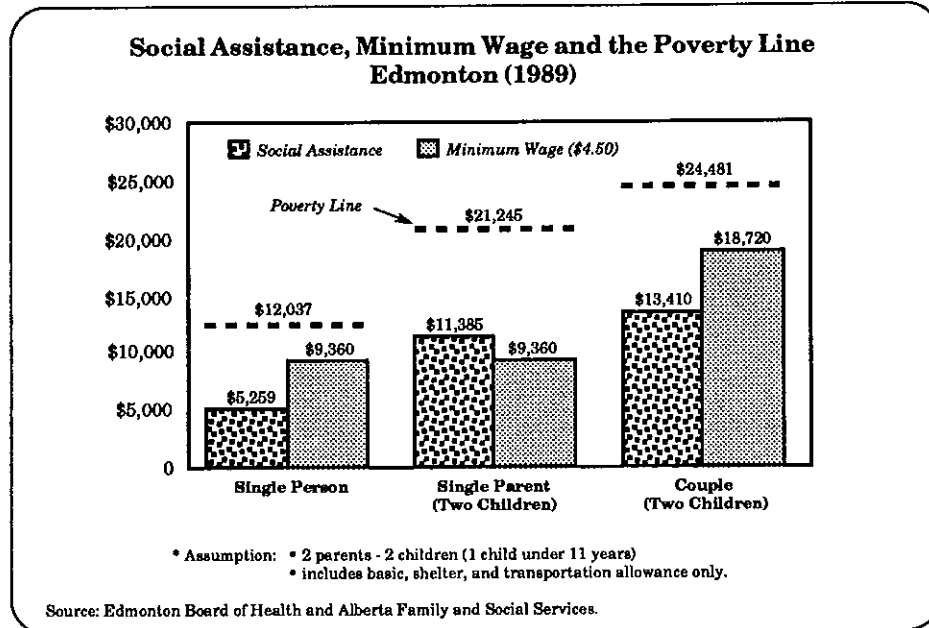
The following figures illustrate that wage increases during the majority of the 1980s did not keep pace with increases in the various components of the Consumer Price Index. Although the average weekly earnings of Edmontonians increased by over \$100 from 1981 to 1989, buying power declined every year during this period except in 1989.



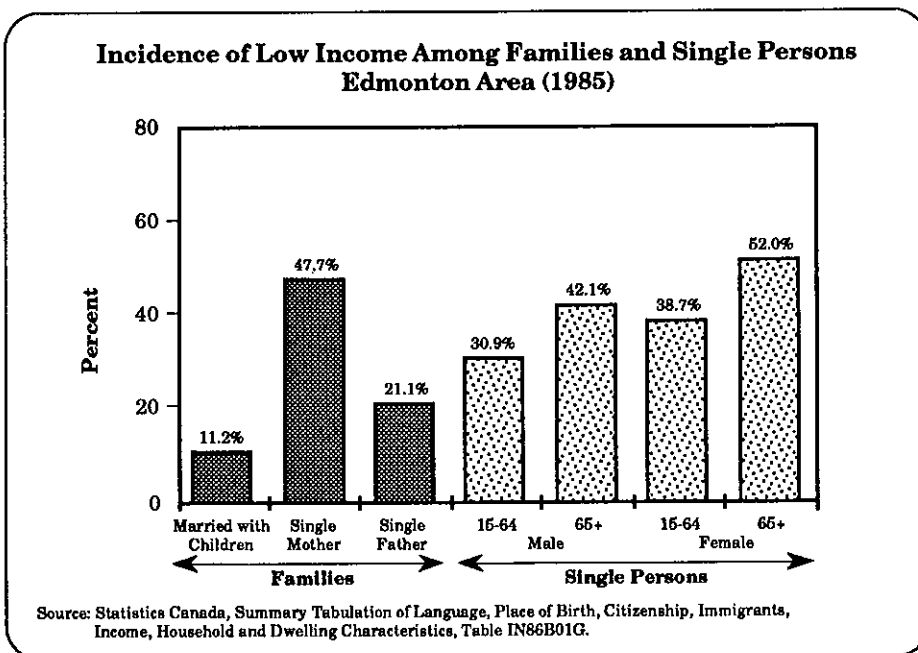
In Edmonton, during the 1980s, the cost of food had the highest rate of increase followed by clothing and shelter. These increases had the greatest impact on individuals living below the poverty line and those on fixed incomes who spend a higher proportion of their income on these three basic necessities.



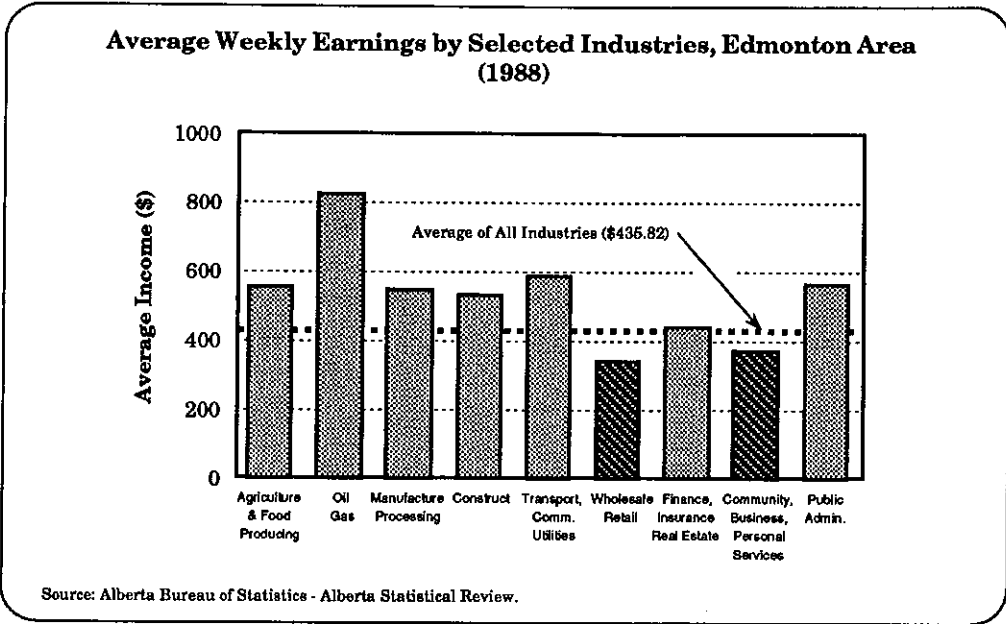
Wages or some form of government financial assistance are the primary sources of income for Edmontonians. As the following figure shows, many of those who are employed in low-paying jobs or who receive only social assistance are at risk of being poor. In 1989, a single person working at the minimum wage in Alberta would have had to work 51 hours per week to reach the poverty line. A single parent with two children would have had to work 91 hours a week to earn an income equal to the poverty line.



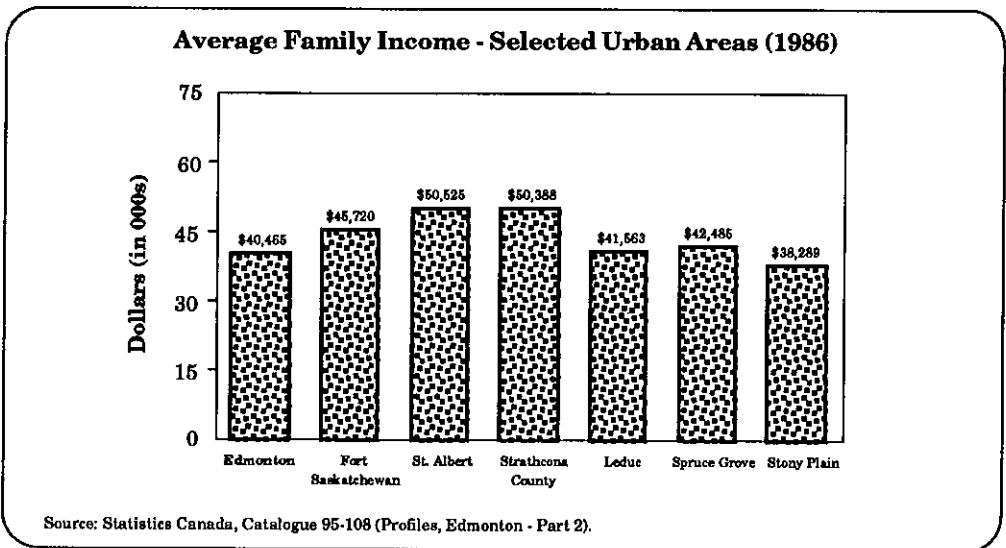
In 1985, it was estimated that 14.2% (29,565) of families in Edmonton were in the low-income category, compared to 10.7% in 1980. A low-income family devotes at least 58.5% of its income to food, clothing, and shelter. The figure below shows the incidence of low-income for different family types and age groups. Only about 3.8% of Alberta couples over 65 are low-income families,⁴ yet 52% of single, divorced, and widowed women aged 65 and over have incomes below the poverty line.



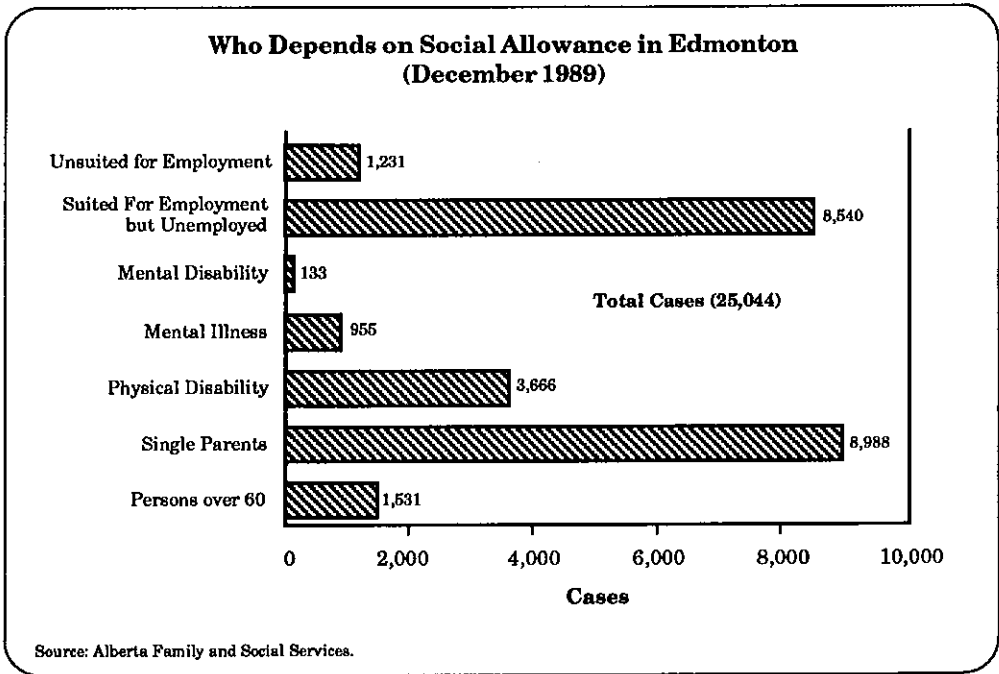
Individuals employed in wholesale and retail trade as well as in community, business and personal services have average incomes substantially below the all-industry average. In Edmonton, 57% of the labour force is employed in these two sectors.



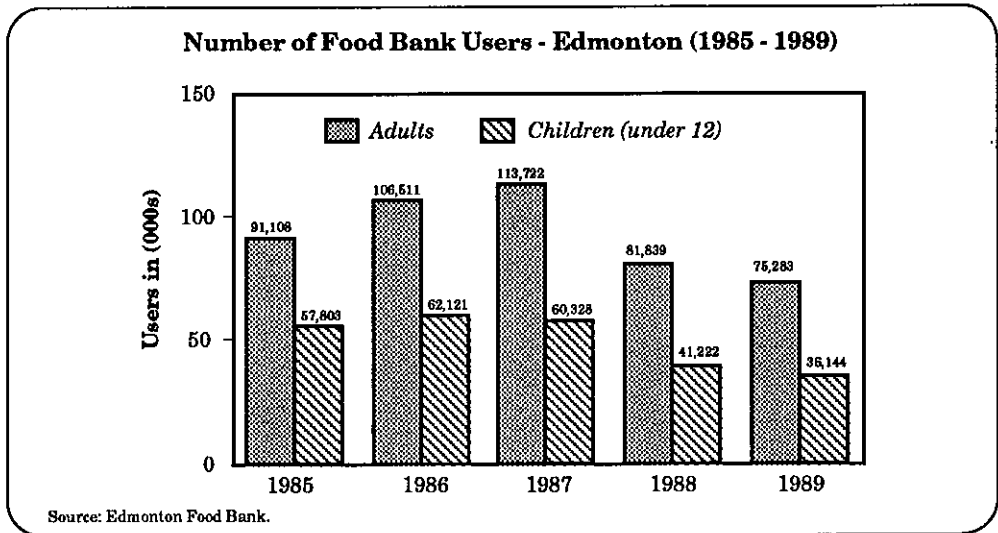
Average family income in Edmonton and Stony Plain is less than those of other surrounding urban areas. These lower average incomes are likely related to higher unemployment rates in these two urban areas.



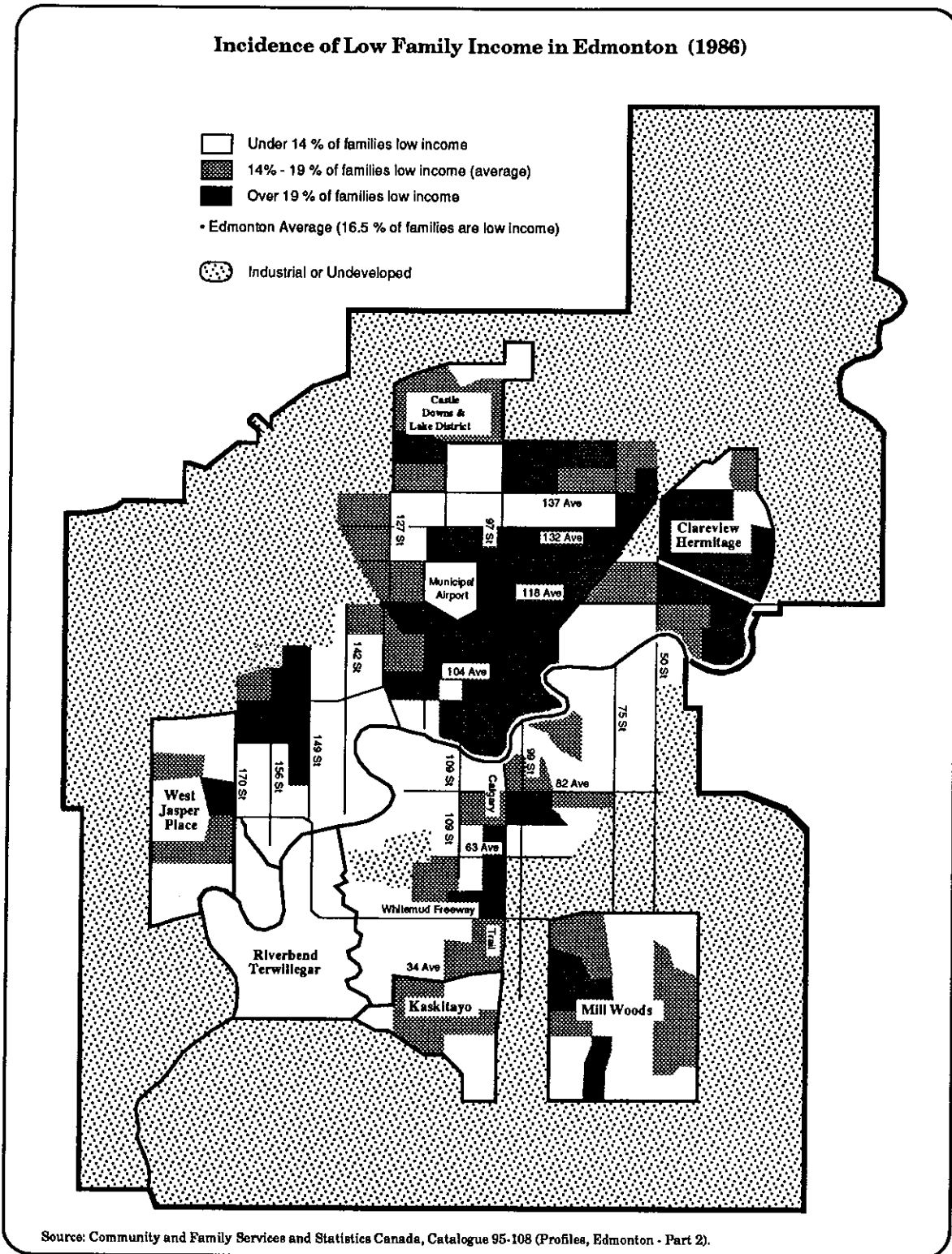
In December 1989, there were over 25,000 social assistance cases in Edmonton. The majority of social assistance recipients fall into two categories: 'unemployed' and 'single-parent'. Both of these categories include children.



Some Edmonton residents have had difficulty getting the food they need. The Edmonton Food Bank, in conjunction with other agencies, helps to fill the gap by providing hampers and meals. Although Food Bank usage has declined since 1987, Food Bank users receiving social allowance grew from 45% to 61% between July 1988 and October 1989. In October 1989, over 20% of the people using the food bank were children from families reporting social allowance as their source of income. In 1989, one in 13 Edmontonians received food from the Food Bank one or more times.⁵



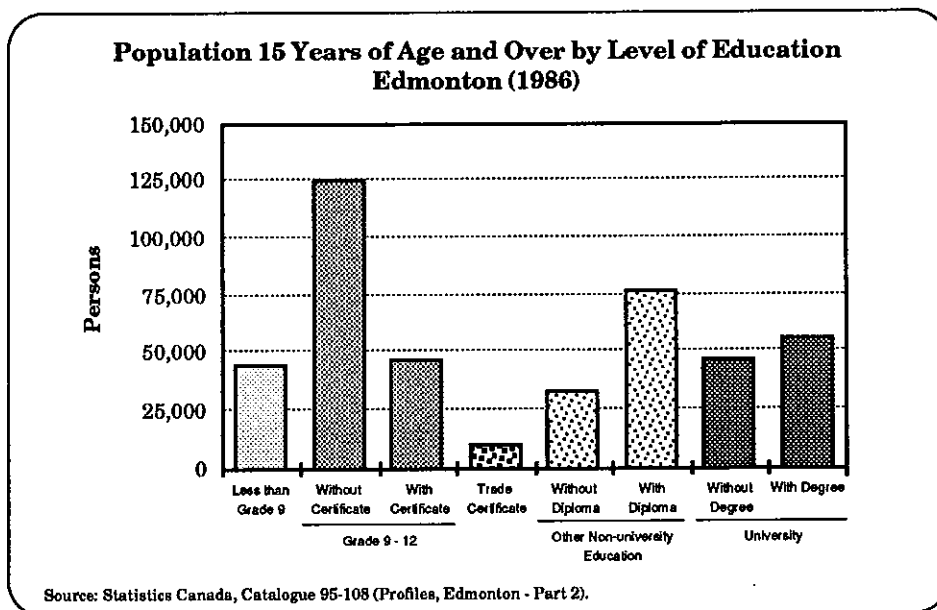
The map below shows the incidence of low family income. In general, communities north of the North Saskatchewan River have lower incomes than communities south of the river.



Education

Educational attainment continues to be important in determining career and employment opportunities, income potential and even a person's health. Although today's population is becoming better educated (approximately 12% of the population 15 years and older had university degrees in 1986 compared to 8% in 1976), a substantial portion continues to have less than a grade 12 education.

Literacy is fundamental to full participation in our society. Functional illiteracy is difficult to assess in the absence of survey data. However, using the UNESCO definition that those aged 15 or more with grade nine or less are considered functionally illiterate, it appears that just over 10% of Edmontonians are in this situation.

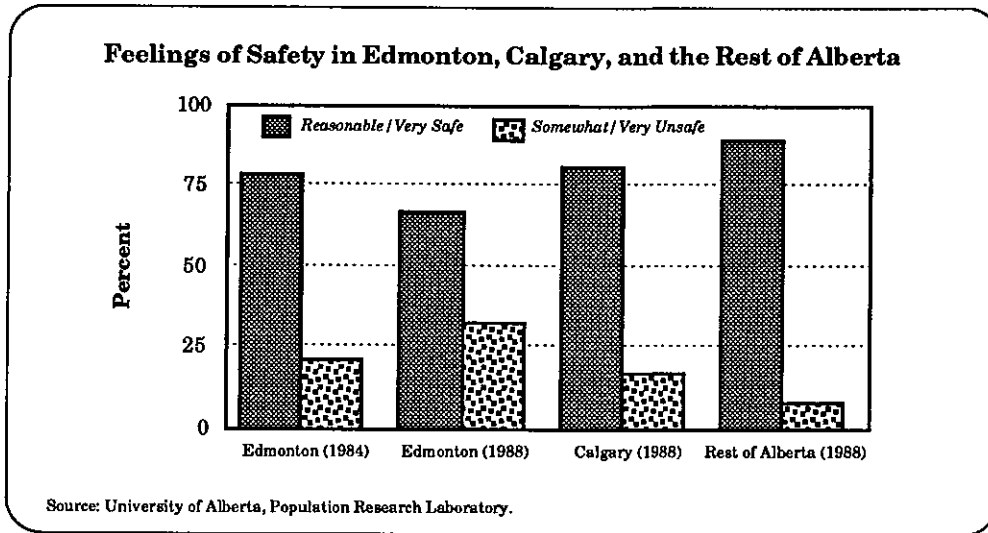


Other educational trends are listed below.

- In Alberta, more students are taking longer than three years to complete senior high school. The number of students returning to Grade 12 to complete or upgrade their academic qualifications has increased significantly. The competitive job market and high youth unemployment have resulted in more students staying to graduate.⁶
- The estimated annual early school-leaver rate in Alberta has declined. Between 1978/79 and 1986/87, the early school leaver rate in Alberta's public/separate/private schools declined from 12.0% or 17,388 students, to 9.4% or 12,731.⁶
- There is a trend away from general diplomas with minimal requirements to advanced diplomas with higher standards.⁶

Safety and Violence

In any community, it is important to feel relatively safe. The figure below illustrates feelings of safety people have walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark.



Information from the University of Alberta's Population Research Laboratory shows that over the past five years approximately one in five persons was a victim of crime. However, most parts of Edmonton rarely experience violent crime. According to an *Edmonton Journal* investigation, most murders occur in a small area where poverty and unemployment are highest. Edmonton neighbourhoods are relatively safe; the majority of the city's violent crime is in the inner core. About one third of all murders committed in the past five years occurred in the area between the river and 111th Avenue and 109th Street and 82nd Street.⁷

Physical Violence in Edmonton (1985 - 1989)

Type of Assault	1985	1987	1989
Common Assault	3936	3875	4349
Assault with a Weapon	823	902	999
Aggravated Assault	135	133	165
Family Disputes	5001	4654	4097
Homicides	19	24	24

Source: City of Edmonton Police Services.

Health

Selected aspects of the dimensions of health are listed below.

Perceptions of Health

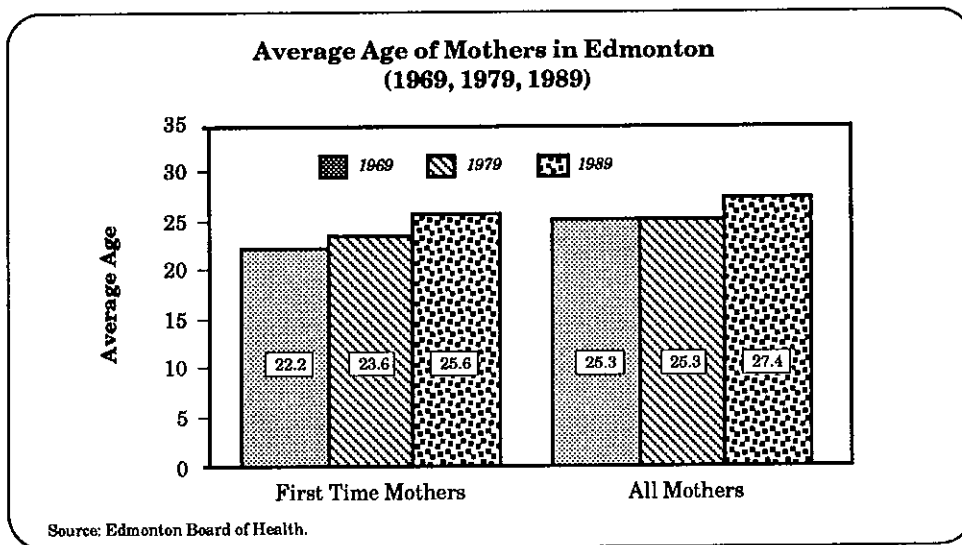
- The 1988 Population Research Laboratory survey on health showed that, on a five-point scale, 92% of Edmontonians rated their health as being good, very good, or excellent.

Fatal Illness

- In 1989 approximately 27% of all deaths were due to heart disease.
- In 1989 about 17% of all deaths were attributed to smoking.
- In 1989 the infant death rate in Edmonton was 7.0 per 1,000 births.
- As of February 1990, 73 Edmonton residents had been diagnosed with AIDS and 37 had died.

Reproductive Health

- The birth rate for women aged 15 to 19 declined from 46.4 per 1,000 women to 38.0 per 1,000 women from 1982 to 1989. Most of this decline has occurred in the 17 to 19 year age group.
- The average age at which mothers give birth is slowly increasing.



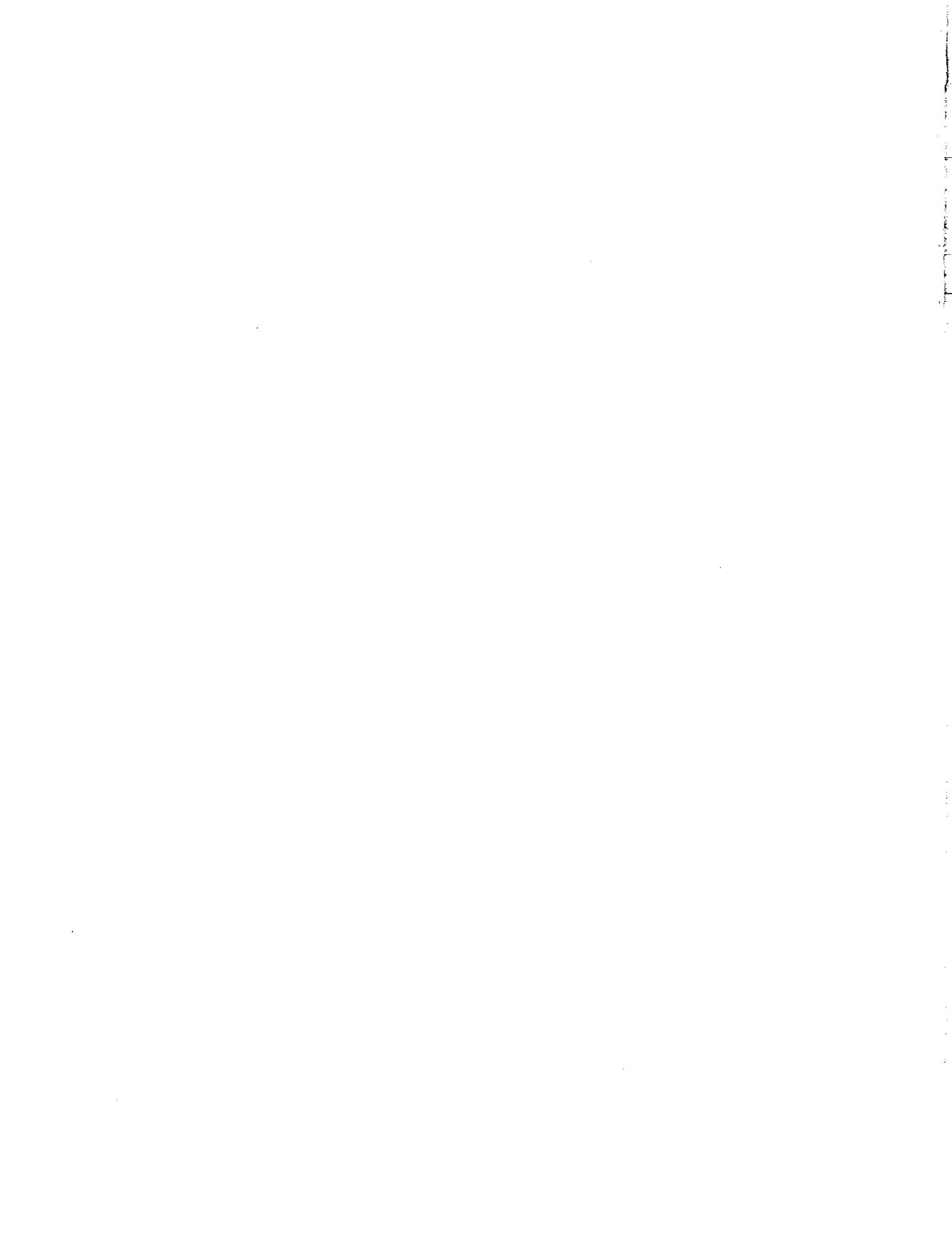
- For Edmonton women aged 25-54, menstrual disorders consistently ranked in the top three as the primary reason for admission to hospital.

Emotional/Psychological/Social Health

- A recent study has shown that approximately 34 percent of Edmontonians have had a diagnosable mental disorder at some time in their life.⁸
- Suicide fatalities are far more common for males than for females. In 1989, there were 73 deaths due to suicide for males compared to 33 for females in Edmonton.

Summary of Edmonton Statistics

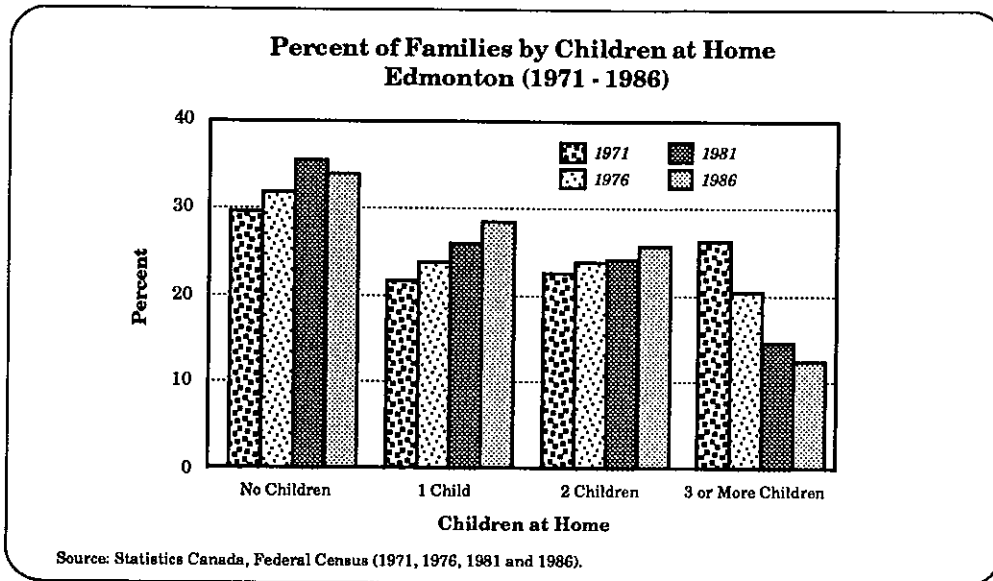
Population		1981	1989
Population		521,205	583,872
Annual Growth (percentage increase)		3.1	0.5
Net Migration		8,666	-4,091
Natural Increase		6,766	7,133
Population Segments	Number	Percent	Number Percent
0-4	32,499	6.2	46,148 7.9
5-9	32,890	6.3	40,506 6.9
10-19	79,801	15.3	72,460 12.4
20-39	219,839	42.2	234,035 40.1
40-59	100,074	19.2	116,522 20.0
60-69	30,910	5.9	40,905 7.0
70-79	17,552	3.4	22,528 3.9
80+	7,640	1.5	10,717 1.8
Seniors (65+)	38,892	7.5	52,018 8.9
Those under 15 as a % of 15 to 64 year olds		26.3	21.8
Those 65 and older as a % of 15 to 64 year olds		10.2	12.7
Economic			
Alberta GDP (1981 Constant \$) in Billions		50.5	58.2
Consumer Price Index		100	143.5
Labour Force			
Unemployment Rate		4.1	8.4
Participation Rate (Male)		84.8	80.4
(Female)		62.8	64.9
Income			
Percentage of Low Income Families	(Edmonton Area)	10.7	(1986) 16.5
Average Weekly Earnings		\$363	\$460
Family			
Birth Rate (per 1,000 population)		18.7	18.0
Death Rate (per 1,000 population)		5.7	5.8
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)		12.9	7.0
General Fertility Rate (live births per year to women aged 15-44)		68.7	67.7
Average Number of Children Born per Woman		1.7	1.7
Births to Teenagers		1,090	744
Percentage of Births to Teenagers		11.2	7.1
Births to Unmarried Mothers		1,730	2,608
Percentage of Births to Unmarried Mothers		17.8	24.8
Health			
Life Expectancy (Males)		71.7	(1987) 73.2
(Females)		78.0	(1987) 79.5
Percentage of Babies under 2500 grams (5.5 lbs)		7.0	6.2
Suicides (Males)		64	73
(Females)		17	33
Percentage of Males as Regular Smokers			(1985) 37
Percentage of Females as Regular Smokers			(1985) 32



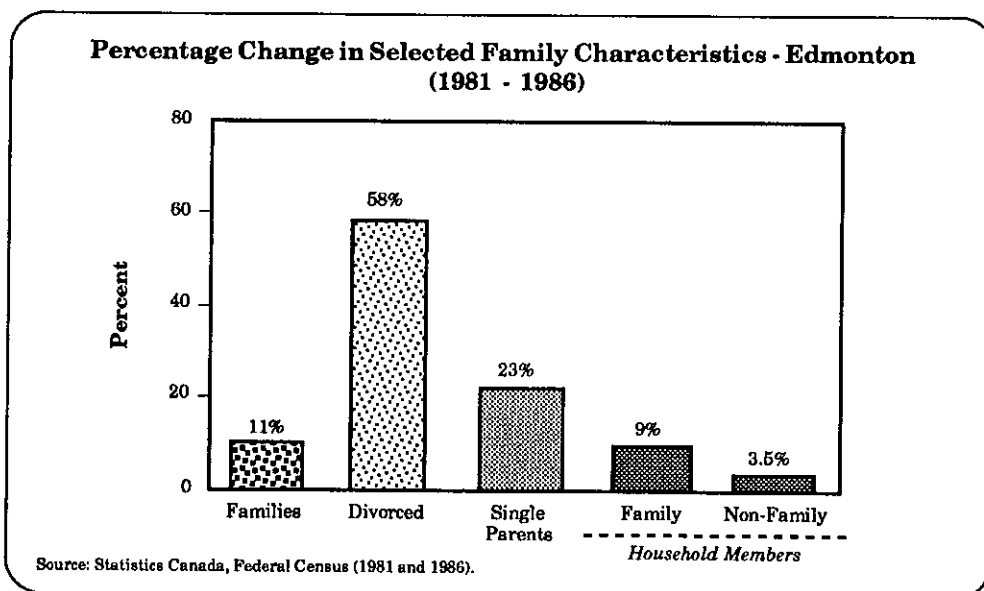
Families with Children

As elsewhere, family structure in Edmonton is changing. Some significant trends are:

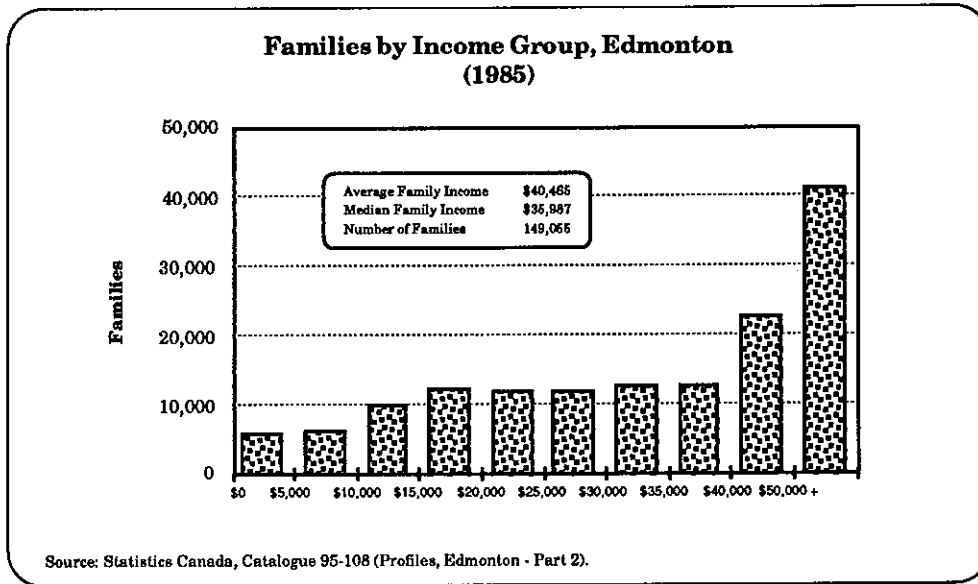
- The average size of families and number of children living at home continued to decline through the 1970s but stabilized in the 1980s to 3.1 people and 1.2 children per family.



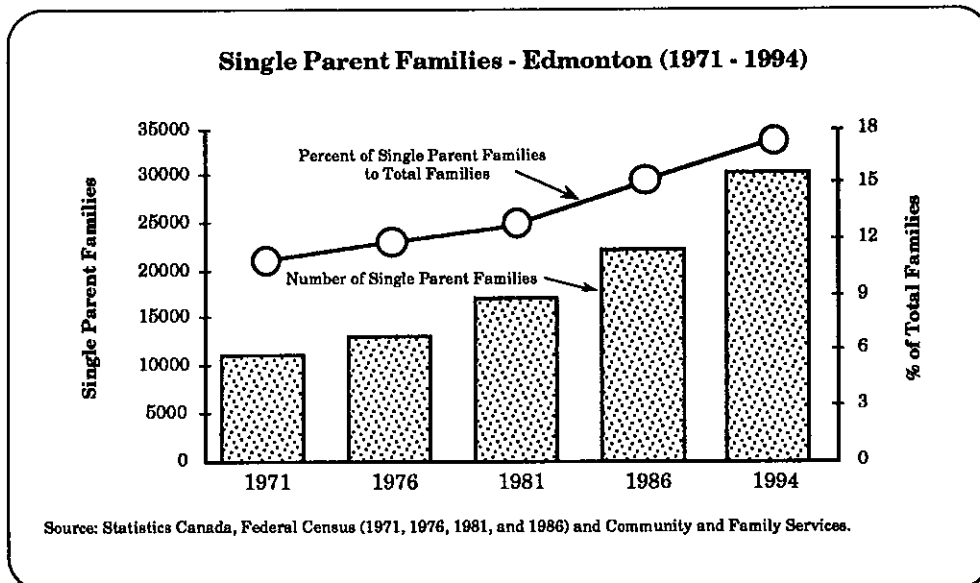
- Alberta's divorce rate is the highest in Canada. In 1987 Alberta had a divorce rate of 159 per 10,000 married women compared to the national average of 137 per 10,000 married women. This high divorce rate contributes to an increasing number of single-parent families.
- Divorced individuals and single-parent families are the fastest-growing segment of the Edmonton population. Although the number of families increased 11% between 1981 and 1986, the number of divorced individuals and single-parent families grew by 58% and 23%, respectively.



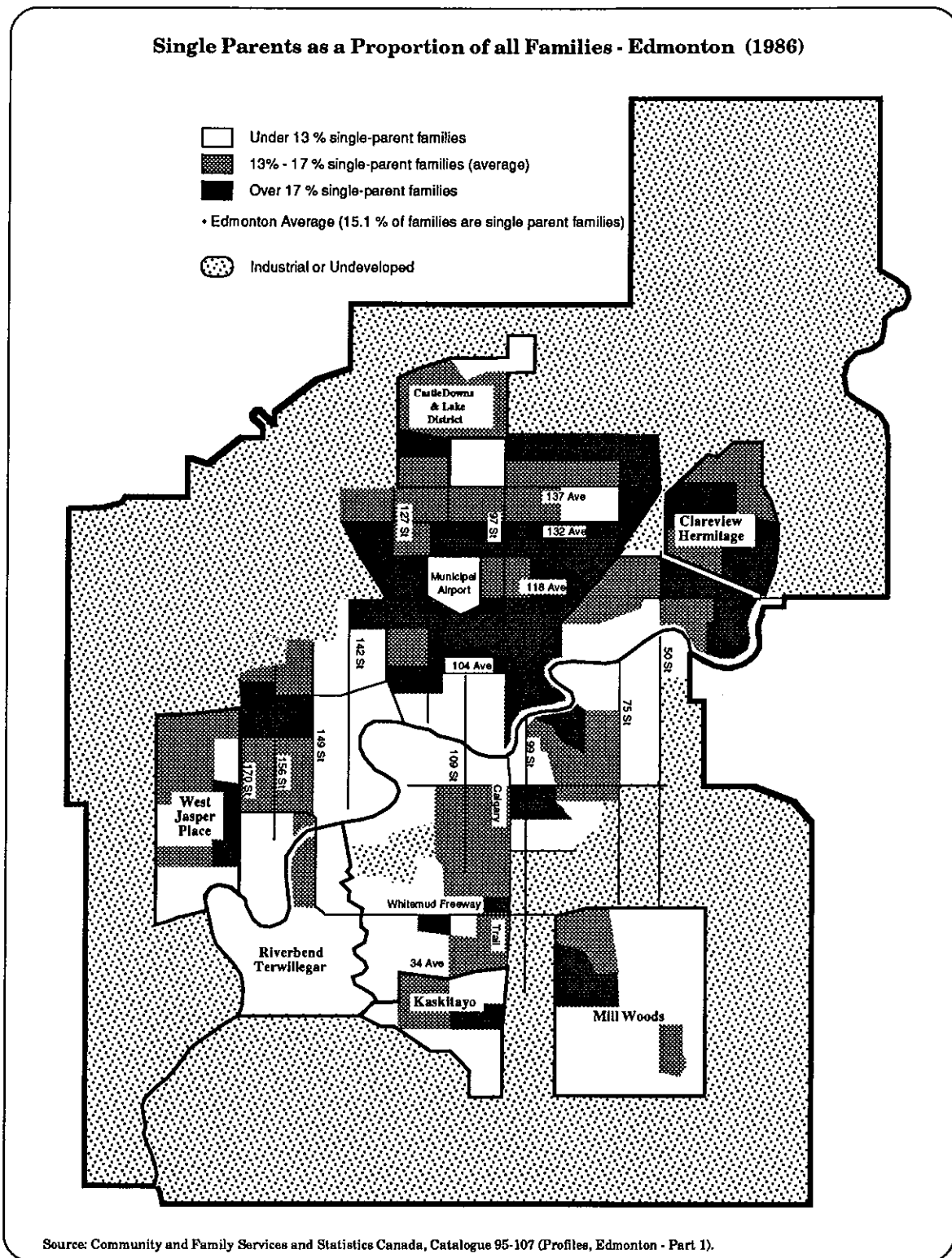
- In 1986, approximately 60,000, or 40%, of Edmonton families had incomes above the Edmonton average (\$40,465). Over 30,000 families had incomes below \$20,000.
- According to Statistics Canada, about 16 in 100 Edmonton families lived in poverty in 1985.



- It is expected that by 1994 nearly 18% of all families will be headed by a single parent. Over 85% of these single parent families will be headed by women. If recent trends continue, more than half of these families will live in poverty.
- Up to 1971, single parent status resulted primarily from widowhood. Since 1971, marriage breakdown has become the primary reason.⁹

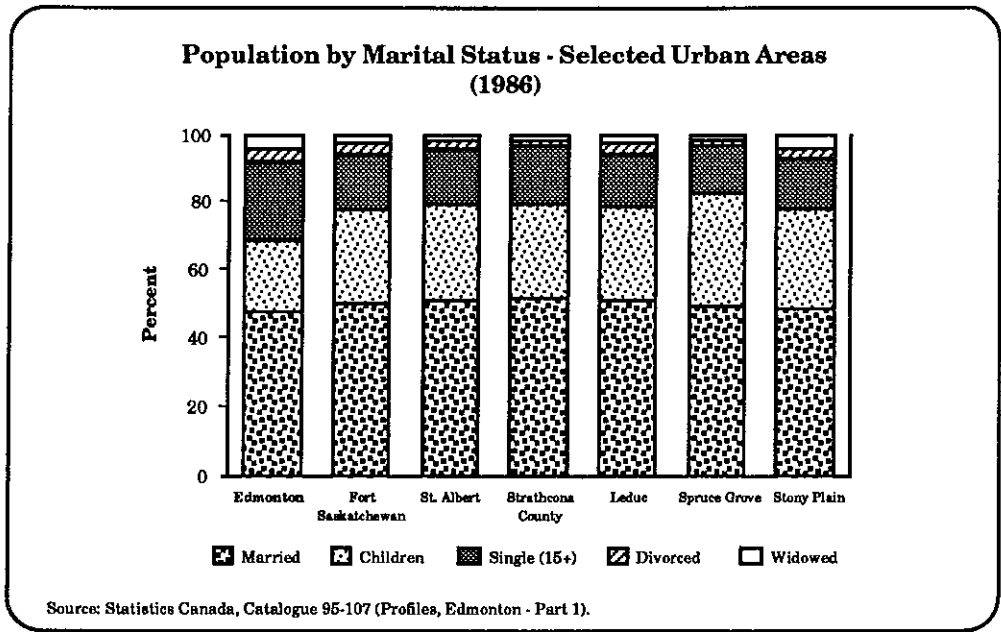


The map below shows the concentrations of single parents in Edmonton. In general, communities north of the North Saskatchewan River have a higher proportion of single-parent families.

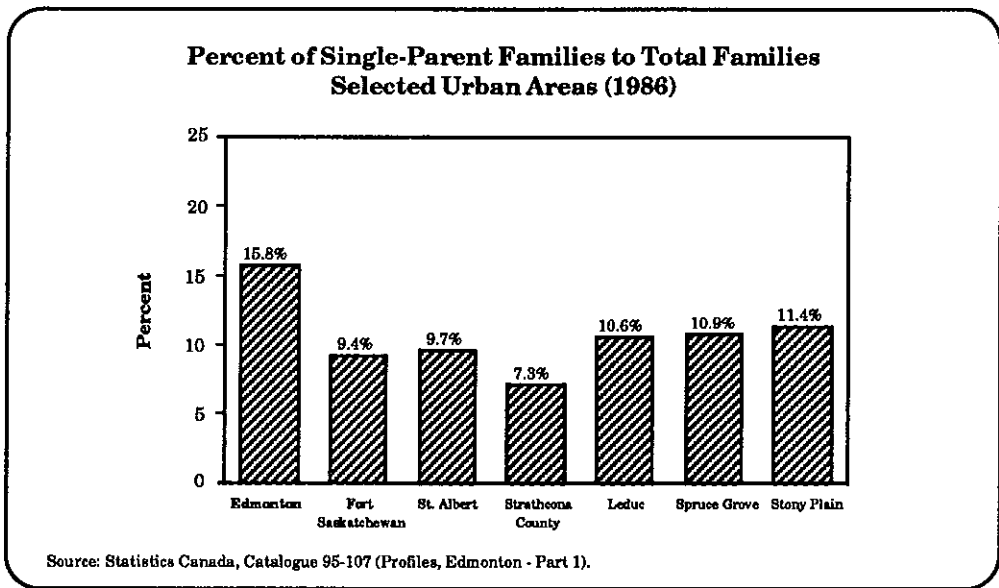


With respect to families with children, Edmonton's population is substantially different than those of surrounding urban communities. The following two figures show some of these differences.

- Edmonton has a significantly higher proportion of divorced and single adults to its total population than surrounding communities. As well, Edmonton has a smaller proportion of married people and children.



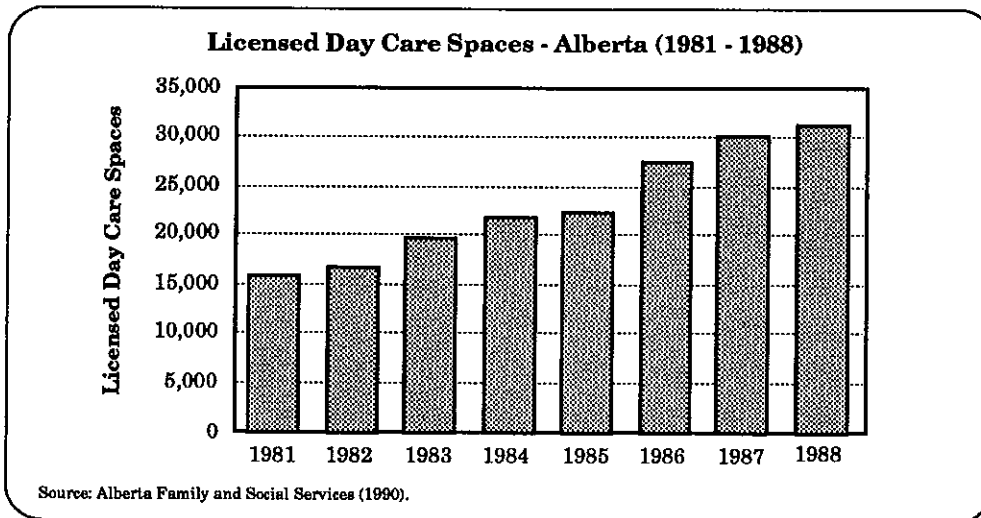
- Edmonton also has a much higher proportion of single-parent families than surrounding communities.



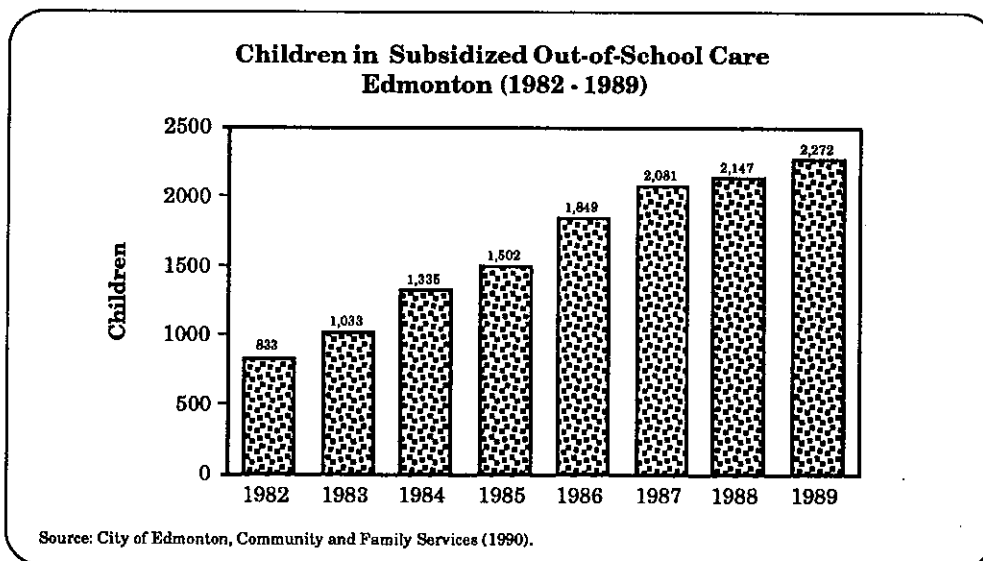
Child Care Highlights

Child care has become increasingly important for families with children, especially with the majority of women now participating in the labour force.

- Alberta has the greatest number of day care spaces per capita in Canada.¹⁰
- Alberta and New Brunswick are the only provinces which do not presently require special training for day care staff.¹⁰
- From 1981 to 1988, day care spaces in Alberta nearly doubled to over 30,000. In 1988, Edmonton had approximately 14,000 day care spaces.
- Throughout the 1980s, approximately 25% of Alberta as well as Edmonton day care spaces were vacant. The vacancy rate across the province was roughly the same.¹¹
- In 1986, 9% of Edmonton's day care spaces were non-profit and 91% were commercial compared to 38% and 62% respectively for Canada.



- Edmonton has about 3,500 licensed out-of-school care spaces. Approximately 10% of these spaces are vacant.¹²
- The City of Edmonton subsidized about 2,300 out-of-school care children in 1989, nearly three times as many as in 1981.¹²



Trends and Service Implications

Trend 1: The next decade will see an increasing number of families with children living in poverty. The gap between better off and poorer families will grow as the depth of poverty continues to worsen.

Sub-trends:

- There will be more 'working poor' families struggling to survive on marginal incomes from jobs that are poorly paid and offer limited benefits.
- Out of necessity, many families with children will require more than one wage earner or a number of part-time jobs to make ends meet.
- As a result of continuing high levels of unemployment in some sectors of the economy, families without any previous experience of poverty or welfare will be required to manage with few survival skills.
- For a growing number of families with children, it will become increasingly difficult to break the intergenerational dependency on welfare.

"The first depressing trend will undoubtedly be increasing poverty among families with children. There will be more families living below the poverty line, as a result of inadequate income security benefits, pensions, poor enforcement of maintenance payments, and especially low wages for part-time workers – many of whom will be women."

(Focus Group Participant)

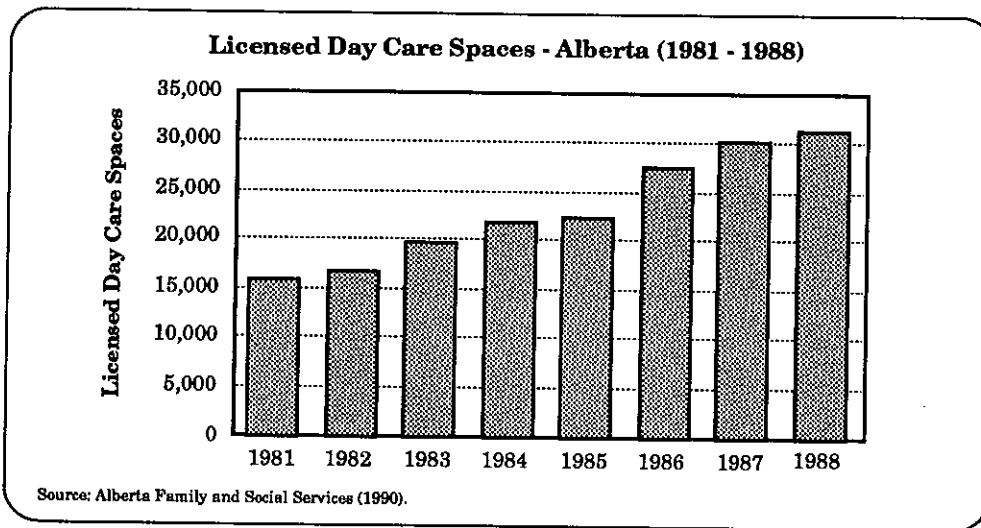
Service Implications:

- The need to focus on economic survival will likely mean that for some families their capacity to provide nurturing care and support to all family members will be greatly reduced.
- Growing financial pressures will lead to increasing stress and feelings of helplessness within some families.
- Demand for support services for troubled families and counselling programs for individual family members will continue to grow. More children will be seen to be 'at risk'.
- Limited increases in funding for human services, coupled with an increasing demand for programs from those who are comparatively well off, will likely mean that poorer families and their children will have access to fewer, poorer quality services provided through an increasingly 'two-tiered' system.
- Crisis intervention rather than prevention will characterize many of the services that are available in the future for poorer families and their children.
- Community agencies will see the need for increased advocacy on behalf of poor families and poor children, even if it means that resources will have to be drawn from direct service programs.
- There will be an increasing demand for good quality, affordable housing for poorer families with children.

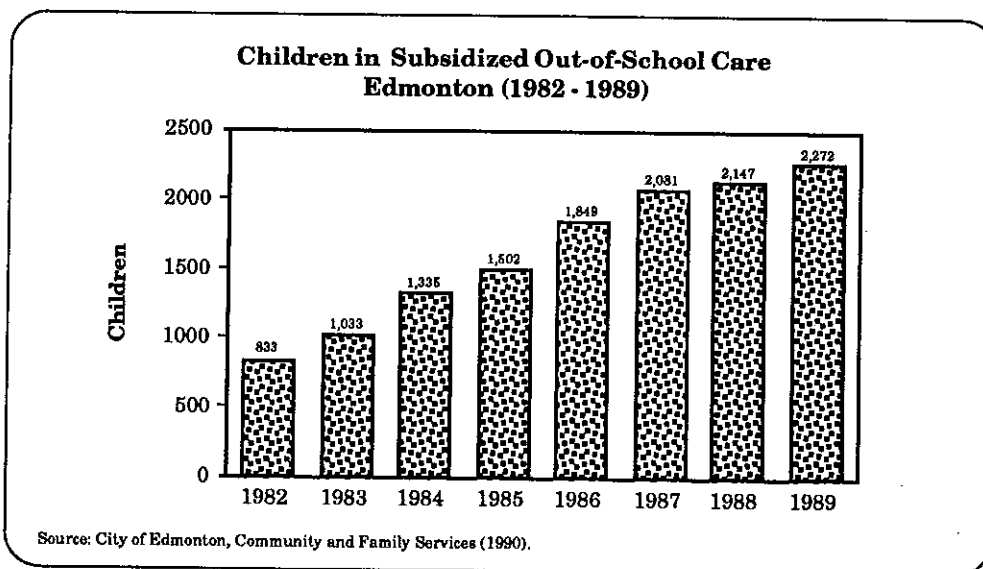
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Trend 2: The structure of the family will continue to change with increasing numbers of blended, single, teen and temporary families. At the same time, less support will be available from 'extended' family members.

Sub-Trends:

- Expectations concerning parenting have changed and as a result there will continue to be much less of a consensus as to what is considered appropriate parenting.
- The increasing number of immigrant families from diverse cultures will add another dimension to what is considered acceptable parenting and family values.
- The changing pattern of families will mean that fewer children will grow up with both of their natural parents in the same household.
- As a result of rising rates of divorce and separation there will be an increasing number of both male and female-headed single-parent families.
- Changing attitudes towards unmarried teenage mothers will see more grandparents involved in the parenting of their grandchildren.
- Difficulties in finding suitable employment will likely mean that many older children will continue to live with their parents for longer periods of time.

"Society will recognize that what constitutes a 'family': single parent, blended, immigrant, native, lesbian mothers / gay fathers, grandparent headed, adoptive, foster, etc., has and will continue to change."

(Focus Group Participant)

Service Implications:

- There will be a need to increase public education opportunities in order to achieve greater understanding and acceptance of the various family structures, including the possibility of gay and lesbian families.
- The changing roles and functioning of families will likely increase the pressure on the school systems, as well as on individual teachers, to provide counselling or support to children on matters that were traditionally considered to be parental responsibilities.
- There will be an increasing demand for parenting courses for young parents, especially young single parents.
- The greater likelihood of children having to cope with divorce and adjust to new family members will mean a need for additional programs to help children deal with the socio-emotional adjustments involved, such as establishing trusting relationships with adults.
- Assistance for husbands and fathers will be required so that they may accept a more sharing and supportive role in meeting the challenges of contemporary family life.
- As a result of less support from 'extended' family members, there will be a need for more outreach and self-help programs to assist families who are experiencing isolation.
- There will be an increasing demand for culturally appropriate programming to assist immigrant families to deal with parenting and other family concerns.
- Due to changing family forms, a growing number of boys and girls will not have had appropriate role models, and therefore the demand for programs such as Big Sisters and Uncles at Large will likely increase.

Trend 3: The economic patterns of families with children will change significantly in the decade ahead as both parents, out of preference and necessity, enter the workforce.

Sub-trends:

- The respective roles of family members will gradually be altered as they adjust to the new responsibilities of both work and family life.
- There will be increasing pressure on the youth members of some families to assume adult roles, such as taking on part-time jobs, in order to help support the family.
- With some family members taking on an increasing amount of part-time shift work there will be fewer opportunities for 'family time' together. As a consequence, there will be more isolation of individual family members.

"There will continue to be an increasing percentage of women in the work force, the majority because of economic need. Therefore they will not be as available to provide child care and support to extended family, to serve as volunteers, to provide informal networking and social support within neighbourhoods and communities."

(Focus Group Participant)

Service Implications:

- The need for many families with children to have either both parents working or a number of part-time jobs will mean a greater demand for affordable quality day care that is available on a more flexible basis.
- The changing employment circumstances of many families with children will require a better balance between work and family responsibilities and a new appreciation on the part of employers that arrangements such as parental leave and flexible hours of work will need to be accepted as essential conditions of work.
- Family support networks will be needed to assist families who relocate to new communities as a result of changing job opportunities.
- Educational institutions will require change with respect to hours of operation and course offerings that are more sensitive to the evolving family structure.

Trend 4: As government funding for social programs becomes more restricted there will be increasing pressure on families with children to accept greater responsibility for their own welfare.

Sub-Trends:

- Governments will continue to either deny the existence of many social problems or blame another level of government for the lack of a suitable response to an acknowledged social problem.

- An increasing emphasis on a market-driven approach to human services will mean a declining commitment to universal sharing of the costs of essential services.
- Governments will pursue policies of privatization and fiscal restraint and will attempt to shift responsibility for meeting some human service needs to families without a corresponding shift in resources.

"As the government focuses on the budget deficit, high interest rates will continue to translate into high unemployment rates... With continued high unemployment and changes to the unemployment insurance program restricting benefits, more and more of the responsibility for providing for families will fall into the laps of provincial social assistance programs Do we have the political will to reverse this trend?"

(Focus Group Participant)

Service Implications:

- 'Privatized' human services will mean less coordination and more competition among existing service providers and the eventual emergence of a 'two-tier' system where families without financial resources will be left with non-existent or inferior services.
- Cutbacks in resources received from governments will result in additional pressure upon community agencies to seek alternative funding and to become more reliant upon volunteers for the delivery of services.
- The lack of long-range planning and the dictates of a four year term of office will mean more reliance by the provincial government on short-term, crisis intervention, rather than long-term solutions to the difficulties being faced by families with children.
- There will be an increasing lack of clarity between government departments and between these departments and community agencies regarding responsibility for the provision of particular services to families with children.

Trend 5: An aging population and a gradual decline in the proportion of children will likely result in less attention being given to issues concerning families with children.

Sub-trends:

- The prevalence of an 'anti-child' sentiment will become more apparent with children seen as interfering with 'productivity'.
- Particularly among people who do not have children, concern will be expressed about their obligation to contribute to the cost of services intended for families with children.
- Increasingly society will expect families with children to accept greater personal responsibility for meeting the economic and social needs of their families.
- As a result of their dominant numbers, the 'baby boom' generation will strongly influence public attitudes and policy decisions concerning families with children.

"There will be less discussion of and concern for families with young children. The large group off 'baby boomers' will become more concerned with 'middle age' issues Legislators and funders will gradually become less interested in 'family' issues and more concerned with the problems associated with aging."

(Focus Group Participant)

Service Implications:

- Service agencies will need to ensure that standards and the continuity of care for families with children are not compromised.

Trend 6: Native and Metis families will continue to move to larger urban centres in the province.

"There will be an increasing number of Native families and their children moving into the province's urban centres. These families will require a network of services similar to those already provided to new immigrants."

(Focus Group Participant)

Service Implications:

- More settlement and support services will be required to assist Native and Metis families adjust to living in a new and larger community. Resentment will grow if it appears that resources are more readily available for immigrant groups.
- There will be a need for more networking and coordination among organizations that provide human services to native and Metis families.
- There will be continuing pressure to transfer resources and responsibility for the delivery of human services from governments to the hands of Native and Metis organizations.

Trend 7: The incidence of family violence will continue to increase there will also be a growing willingness to seek help and protection.

"The burden of poverty will continue to fall on women and children Since physical and mental illness accompany poverty we may see increasing demands on these services."

(Focus Group Participant)

Service Implications:

- There will growing pressure on the legal and law enforcement systems to reinforce the view that violence within families will not be tolerated.
- Further educational opportunities will be needed in order to encourage all family members to appreciate that there are alternatives to violence.
- The demand will grow for additional family counselling and support resources, as well for programs intended to assist perpetrators of violence.

Trend 8: There will be an increasing reliance on more formal, contractual means of intervention in attempting to resolve family differences and disputes.

"Professionals, the general public and parents will become more aware of the negative impact of divorce upon children. Governments will be more aware of the social and financial costs of divorce, while business will become more sensitive to the impact of family problems on productivity."

(Focus Group Participant)

Service Implications:

- Custody disputes and legal battles involving the rights of children will become more common.
- Additional legal, procedural and political efforts will be required to see that child support payments are honoured.
- Increasingly matters of principle regarding family issues will be resolved in the courts rather than by the family itself or in the community.

Trend 9: New reproductive technologies and the increased ability to save the lives of children born with severe disabilities will have an important impact on families in the next decade.

"With the integration of handicapped children into the schools and the disbanding of large institutions, more families will retain responsibility for the care of their handicapped children."

(Focus Group Participant)

Service Implications:

- Increasingly handicapped children will remain in their homes and not in residential institutions, and therefore their families will require more support in meeting their special needs.
- Respite care services will be required to allow for families caring for handicapped children to have opportunities for a break from their responsibilities.
- Increasing use of new reproductive technologies will encourage greater public concern about the related health care costs.

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Edmonton Social Planning Council
United Way of Edmonton and Area
Edmonton Community and Family Services
Edmonton Board of Health
Edmonton Region, Alberta Family and Social Services
Edmonton Region, Alberta Mental Health Services

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