

Families and Family Structure

Statistics Canada makes a distinction between a family and a household. A family or census family refers to a married couple (with or without children), a couple living common-law or a lone parent with at least one child living in the same dwelling. On the other hand, a household may consist of a family group with or without non-family persons, or two or more families sharing a dwelling, or a group of unrelated persons, or of one person living alone. There are more households than families.



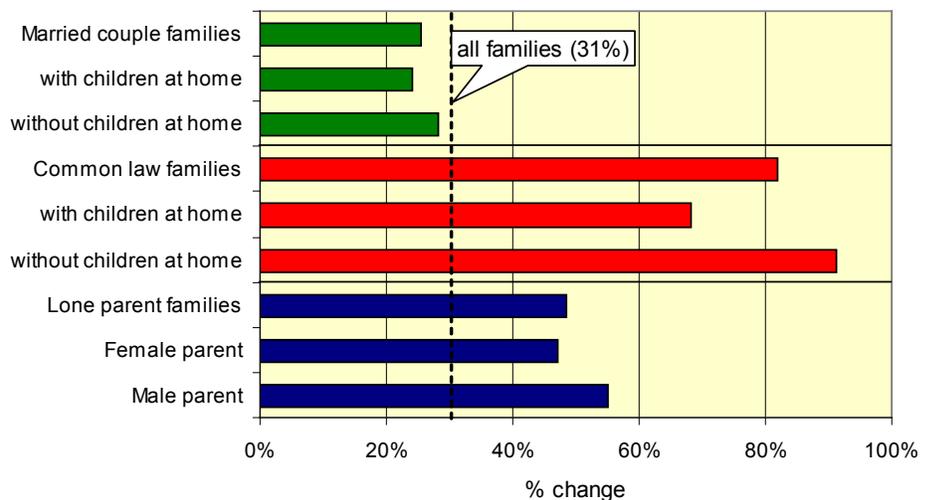
Between 1996 and 2006, the number of families in Halton has grown slightly faster than the population (31% versus 29%) to 126,400. Among the three types of families (married couple, common-law and lone parent), married couple families still remain as the dominant group (79%) but have been growing at a slower rate than the other two groups.

The fastest growing family type is the common-law-couple at 82%. In 2006, it represented 8.5% of all family types. Lone parent families have grown at nearly twice the rate of married couples. Almost one in eight of the families is headed up by a single parent.

In Canada, the 2006 Census recorded for the first time that families comprised of couples without children outnumbered couple families with children. However, in Halton less than 40% of the couple families were without children.

For families with children at home, the average number of children is less than two (1.8 children/family with children). There is no significant change since 1996. Less than one-fifth (17%) of the families had three or more children at home in 2006. About two-thirds (63%) of married couple families had children living at home as compared to about one-third (37%) of common-law couple families.

**Change in family structure (1996-2006)
Region of Halton**



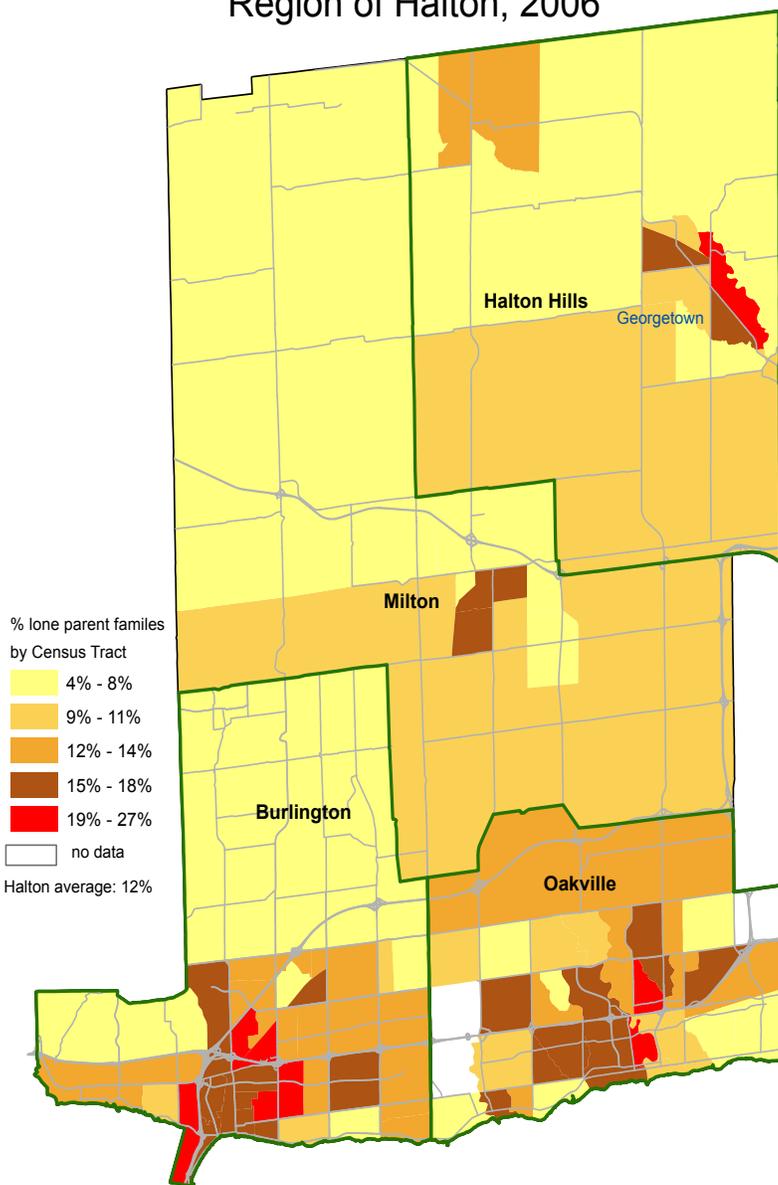
Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 and 2006 Censuses

Lone Parent Families

Lone-parent families represent 12% of all families in Halton. There are about four and a half lone-mother families to every lone-father family. In the last ten years, the growth rate for lone-father families has caught up with that of the lone-mother families (55% versus 47%). This change can be attributed to growing joint child custody arrangements following a divorce.

The map shows the geographic distribution of the proportion of lone parent families in Halton by census tract. A census tract as established by Statistics Canada is a relatively permanent area with a population range of 2,500 to 8,000 and the greatest possible social and economic homogeneity.

Proportion of Lone Parent Families
Region of Halton, 2006



Most of the areas in rural Halton are below the regional average of 12%. However, one area in Georgetown exceeded twice the regional average, with more than one in four of the families headed up by a single parent. Areas with high proportions of lone parent families also cluster around the inner city areas of both the City of Burlington and the Town of Oakville.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, DMTI Spatial

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