

Single Mothers



Single parenthood can bring added pressure and stress to the job of raising children. With no one to share day-to-day responsibilities or decision-making, single parents must provide greater support for their children while they themselves may feel alone. One in 8 families in Halton is a single parent family. Although there has been an upward trend of single father families in recent years, the majority of lone parent families are still headed by single mothers.

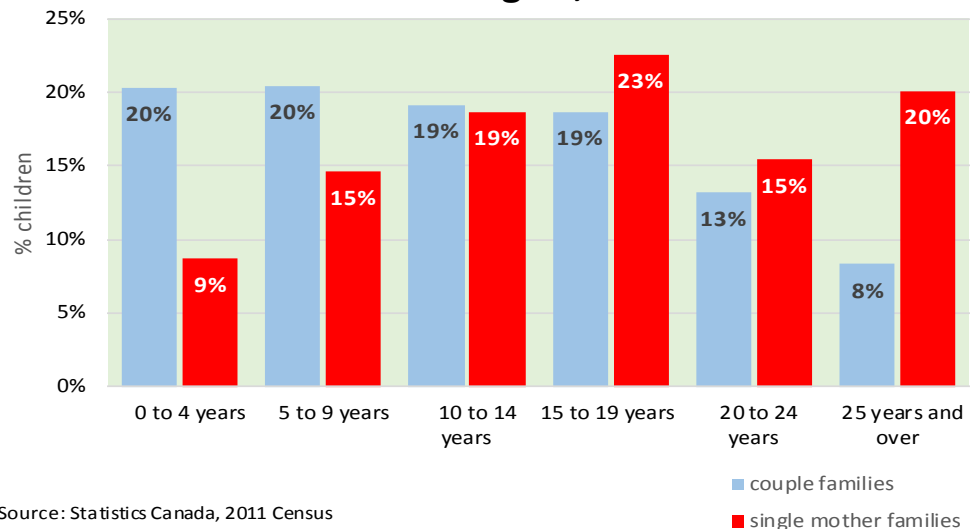
Between 2001 and 2011, single mother families continued to increase at a faster rate (49%) than all families (33%). In 2011, there were about 15,000 single mother families representing 80% of all single parent families. Close to two thirds (63%) of single mothers are divorced (36%) or separated (27%). Almost 1 in 6 single mothers (18%) have never been legally married. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of never married single mothers increased by 32%, which is higher than those who are separated, divorced or widowed.

In 2011, the median age of single mothers was 48.4 years of age, slightly higher than the provincial average of 47.2 years of age. About 15% of single mothers are seniors living with their children.

Over 23,300 children lived in single mother families representing 1 in 8 children in Halton. On average, there are 1.6 children per single mother family compared to 1.9 for married or common-law couple families.

Children in single mother families are generally older. About 40% children living in couple families are under 10 years of age compared to 22% in single mother families. At the other end of the spectrum, one fifth (20%) of the children living with their single mothers are 25 years of age and over. Given over 15% of single mothers are seniors, the presence of adult children at home can provide support and care of their elderly mothers.

**Proportion of Children at Home by Age Groups
Halton Region, 2011**

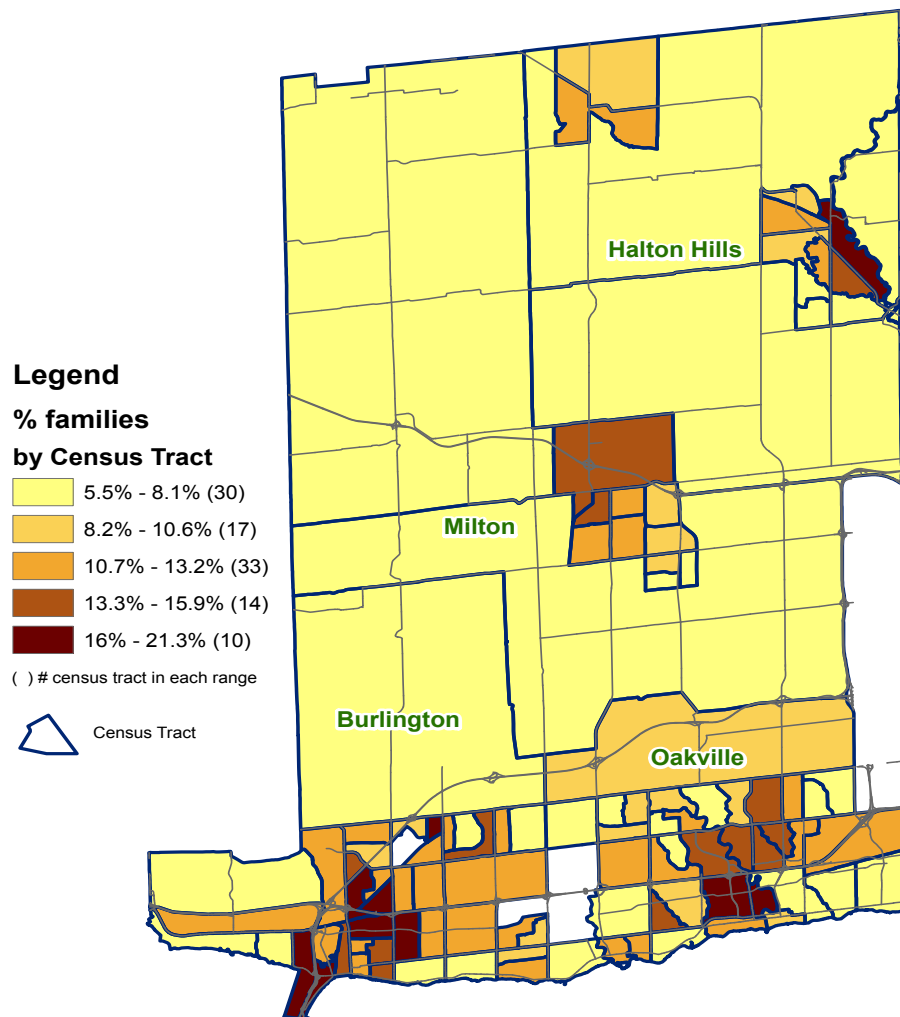


Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

With only one wage earner, single parents, especially single mother families, are less financially capable than their couple family counterparts. Single mother families not poor are at higher risk of becoming poor because of the precarity of having only one bread winner. Income statistics of single mother families are collected in past censuses. However, the quality of the income data collected by the voluntary 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) is questionable and cannot be compared with previous census (please see Community Lens #27 on Low Income Families based on data from 2006 Census).

Although Burlington and Oakville have equal shares (36%) of the number of families in Halton, the proportion of single mother families is slightly higher in Burlington (39%) than in Oakville (36%). Over half of the census tracts have higher proportions of single mother families above the regional average (10.4%). There are two census tracts (one in Burlington and one in Georgetown) with over one-fifth (20%) of families headed by single mothers, doubling the regional average.

Proportion of single mother families Halton Region, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

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Community Development Halton
 860 Harrington Court
 Burlington, ON L7N 3N4
 905-632-1975

www.cdhalton.ca