

Conceptualizing and measuring the care economy in Canada

Statistics Canada

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Statistics Canada's care economy project



- Care economy project launched in 2021
- Growing demands for data, knowledge on care from stakeholders, policymakers
- Conceptual framework on care economy
 - Report published in 2023 on scope, proposed definitions for Canadian context
 - Starting point for further development, refinement, standardization, collaboration



- **Care economy:** sector of the broader economy comprising the **provision of paid and unpaid care** work that supports the physical, psychological and emotional needs of **care-dependent persons**
- **Care-dependent groups:** people who require long-term help with activities of daily living to live and participate fully in their communities, including:
 - Children, because of their young age
 - Adults, with long-term conditions or disabilities
- **Care work:** paid or unpaid for care-dependent groups, including:
 - Direct, hands-on care (ADLs – feeding, bathing)
 - Indirect or more complex tasks (IADLs – cleaning, transportation, coordinating care)

Data and research on the care economy

Unpaid care

- Data collected through established social statistics program since 1986
 - E.g., Time Use; Caregiving and Care Receiving; Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating
- Data development: unpaid care from care economy lens
- Research on unpaid care:
 - Valuation of unpaid household labour
 - Unpaid sandwich caregiving, well-being

Paid care

- Data collected through variety of core individual- and business-level sources
 - Individual: Census of Population, Labour Force Survey, etc.
 - Business: Long-term care facilities, childcare facilities, etc.
- Robust programs on specific sectors
 - E.g., Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) program
- Recent research on paid care:
 - Gender differences in paid care-related occupations
 - Sociodemographics of ELCC workforce

Challenges in measuring Canada's care economy

1

Difficult to paint a **comprehensive picture** of the care economy as data can be siloed or disconnected.

2

Data on **unpaid** care work vary in terms of definitions, collection frequency.

3

Existing data on **paid** care work may be limited (lacks specificity, detail); no standards to ensure consistency.

4

Challenges in collecting and analyzing data that takes into account diversity and intersectionality.



Next steps on the care economy at Statistics Canada

- In Canada, ongoing data, research, and policy on the care economy
- Work towards setting international standards on paid care work
 - Statistics Canada is participating in the ILO Technical Working Group on International Statistical Standards for Care Work
- Development of new data on unpaid care
 - Broadening lens to care economy – includes children and care-dependent adults
 - Survey on Unpaid Care planned for 2026



Thank you!

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