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Toronto has highest child-poverty rate of Canadian cities: report

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A new report says Toronto has the highest percentage of children living in poverty of any large city in Canada.

The report, titled "Divided City: Life in Canada's Child Poverty Capital," says 133,000 children in Toronto – 27 per cent – were living in low-income families in 2014, the year the data were collected.

It says the closest runner-up is Montreal, where 25 per cent of children were living in poverty that year.

A coalition of groups including the Children's Aid Society of Toronto issued the report as the city weighs up to \$600-million in cuts to programs and services such as community housing, transit and student nutrition.

It says racialized families, new immigrant families, single-parent families and families with disabilities are up to three times more likely to live in poverty.

Only half of children in families with an annual income of less than \$30,000 were found to participate in out-of-school art or sports programs, compared with 93 per cent of students in families with an income of \$100,000 or more.

The groups are urging Toronto city council to follow through on its poverty-reduction strategy and address its fiscal shortfall to prevent cutbacks to social services.

"Despite Toronto's booming housing market and significant wealth, more than one in four children is living in poverty," one of the report's authors, Michael Polanyi of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, said in a statement.

"Now is definitely not the time to reduce city spending on critical services and programs."

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