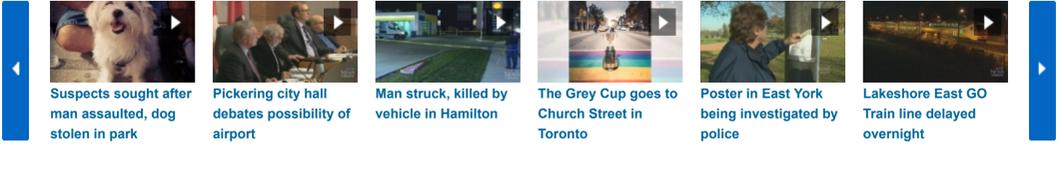


FEATURED



Toronto remains 'child poverty capital' of Canada, report finds



CTV Toronto: Toronto 'child poverty capital'
 Sean Meagher speaks with CTV News Toronto about a new report he helped author about Toronto's child poverty trend.

Codi Wilson, CTV Toronto
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Toronto-based social agencies are speaking out against potential budget cuts to city services following the release of a report on child poverty.

On Monday, The Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Family Service Toronto, Social Planning Toronto, and Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change released a report titled 'Divided City: Life in Canada's Child Poverty Capital,' which found that Toronto has the highest percentage of children living in low-income families among all urban areas in the country with over 500,000 residents.

The report indicated that 27 per cent of Toronto children were living in low-income families in 2014, ahead of Montreal (25 per cent) and Winnipeg (24 per cent).

PHOTOS



While there were 10,000 fewer children living in low-income families in Toronto in 2014 compared to 2013, 133,000 children still live in poverty, the report found.

"We are continuing to be the highest centre for child poverty in the entire country for major urban centres, so I think it's quite serious," Sean Meagher, executive director of Social Planning Toronto, told CTV News Toronto on Monday. "You can't build a great city and leave a quarter of your kids behind."

"We hope the report will put the 133,000 Toronto children living in poverty front-of-mind for Mayor Tory and council as they debate the city budget," Meagher said in the news release issued Monday.

"All children deserve a fair start in life, not just those whose parents happen to have high incomes."

The group says it fears that council will make matters worse by moving forward with up to \$600 million in cuts to community housing, transit, libraries and student nutrition.

"Despite Toronto's booming housing market and significant wealth, more than one in four children is living in poverty," report co-author Michael Polanyi, of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, said in the release. "Now is definitely not the time to reduce city spending on critical services and programs."

The report, which assessed 140 Toronto neighbourhoods, determined that the city is "deeply divided" when it comes to living conditions and opportunities for youth.

In terms of education, the report found that children in low-income neighbourhoods were less likely to be meeting provincial standards in Grade 3 math, reading and writing.

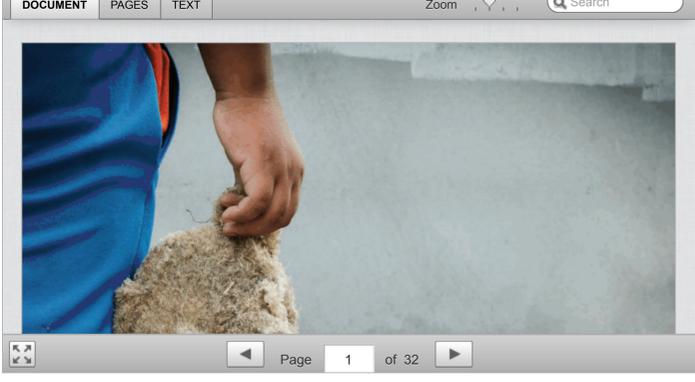
"When you cross Laird Avenue to go from Leaside to Thorncliffe, the rate of child poverty rate increases from 4 (per cent) to 52 (per cent)," Jessica Mustachi of Family Service Toronto, said in a written statement released Monday.

"This divide shows how we can and must do more to provide quality services to support low-income residents."

Speaking to CTV News Toronto, Meagher said the solution starts with investment in low-income communities.

"We need to see some investment in the strategies that help address poverty and poverty families and poverty for children," he said. "When you look at the maps in the report, one of the things that jumps right out at you is are the inner suburbs – Etobicoke, Scarborough, North York. We're not investing in the kinds of services that support kids in recreation programs, childcare, decent affordable housing (in those neighbourhoods). In those same neighbourhoods, you can see those kids are falling behind in school. So this isn't just a problem for today, it's a problem for the whole future of those kids."

Read the full report below:

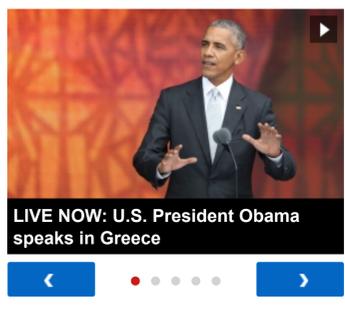


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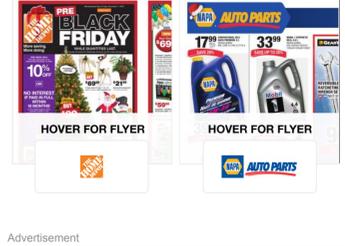
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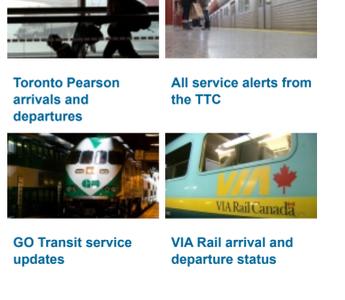
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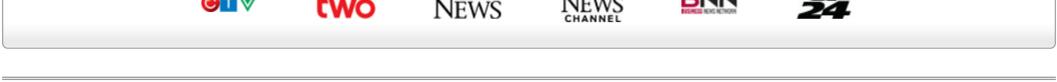
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