



How we recruited volunteer families to the study:

Participation in the study was voluntary. Eligible families were invited to participate if they:

- Had at least one child aged 12 years and under, AND
- Lived in the City of Edmonton, AND
- Received Income Support OR Alberta Child Health Benefit Program OR Alberta Adult Health Benefit Program OR used City of Edmonton Leisure Access Program OR lived in Capital Region Housing.

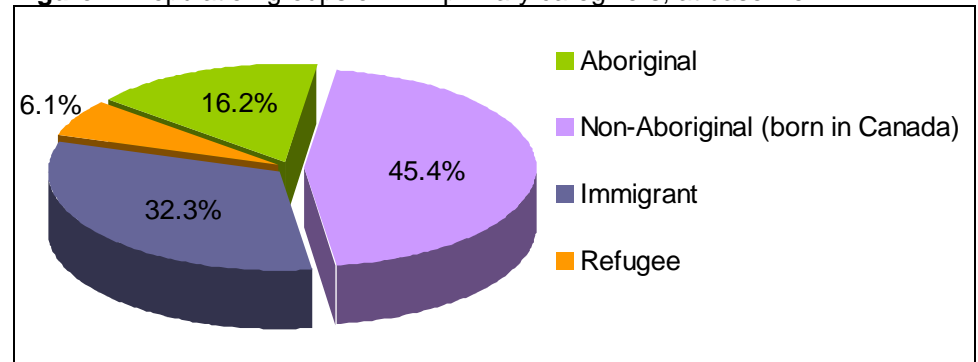
Our Aboriginal and multi-cultural partners and community agencies played an important role in telling families about the study. This was one strategy used to reach multiple types of families.

FFE Fast Facts: Who are the FFE Families?

The 1,279 Edmonton families who volunteered for the Families First Edmonton (FFE) study originate from a variety of cultural groups and family structures.

FFE families face complex issues rooted in social, economic and systemic issues that extend beyond the control of any one service delivery system. FFE is examining if a coordinated, proactive approach leads to healthier, more successful families and stronger communities. To better inform program and policy improvements it is important to first paint a portrait of the families that participated in the FFE study.

Figure 1: Population groups of FFE primary caregivers, at baseline



Source: Families First Edmonton⁴

When compared to city or provincial averages, a greater percentage of FFE caregivers self-identify as Aboriginal or as foreign-born ...

Even though Aboriginal families make up approximately 5% of all families in Edmonton and 6% of all families provincially,² approximately 16% of FFE primary caregivers self-identified as Aboriginal, a proportion three times higher than that reported for the general Edmonton population. The FFE study also has a higher percentage of foreign-born (i.e. immigrant or refugee) participants



Families First Edmonton

Families First Edmonton is a research project to determine whether delivering health, family support and recreation services in a coordinated way can lead to better outcomes for low-income families.

(38%) when compared to the proportion of foreign-born families in Edmonton or Alberta (23% and 16% respectively).²

The FFE caregivers vary greatly with respect to country of origin and first language learned (i.e. mother tongue). Overall, they originate from approximately 80 different countries and when asked about their first language learned, primary caregivers as a whole listed approximately 100 different languages/dialects. The five most commonly reported countries of origin and mother tongues are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Top 5 most commonly reported countries of origin and mother tongues

Country of origin		Mother tongue	
Canada	(61.6%)	English	(60.1%)
China	(8.1%)	Mandarin	(7.1%)
Philippines	(2.5%)	Spanish	(3.0%)
Pakistan	(2.4%)	Arabic	(2.5%)
India	(2.0%)	Cree	(1.6%)

Source: Families First Edmonton⁴

Most FFE families are headed by a lone-parent female and on average have 2.2 children ...

Fifty-seven percent of FFE families are female-headed, lone-parent families. When the general population of Edmonton is considered, only 15% of households are headed by single females.² The over-representation of single parent mothers in the FFE study speaks to the economic vulnerability of this group, as recruitment for the FFE project was targeted at low-income families generally.

The number of children within FFE households ranges from one to eleven children. FFE families have on average 2.2 children; similar to the Alberta family average of 2.1 children³, but twice as large as Edmonton families, with an average of 1.1 children².



Things to consider:

- Do you consider the needs of Aboriginal families in programming and service delivery (e.g. cultural sensitivity for staff, use of the medicine wheel)?
- Given that our urban Aboriginal population is fast growing and young, do you offer programs and services that welcome young, Aboriginal people?
- How can all levels of government, the non-profit sector and Aboriginal peoples work together differently to support low-income families?
- How are the program needs of refugee families different from families that do not have a refugee as the head of the household?
- Do you have good information, from good sources about the individuals you are working with? Who else do you need to talk to, in order to better understand the needs of low-income individuals? Where might you find information about small groups of low-income families which may not be as visible in this data (i.e. single dads...)?
- How can you work collaboratively with community groups to arrange translation, cultural brokering and culturally appropriate services?
- Does your organization/sector consider the impact of family size on your services, including housing and childcare?

For information about FFE data contact:

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