

AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY, 2000 AND 2017

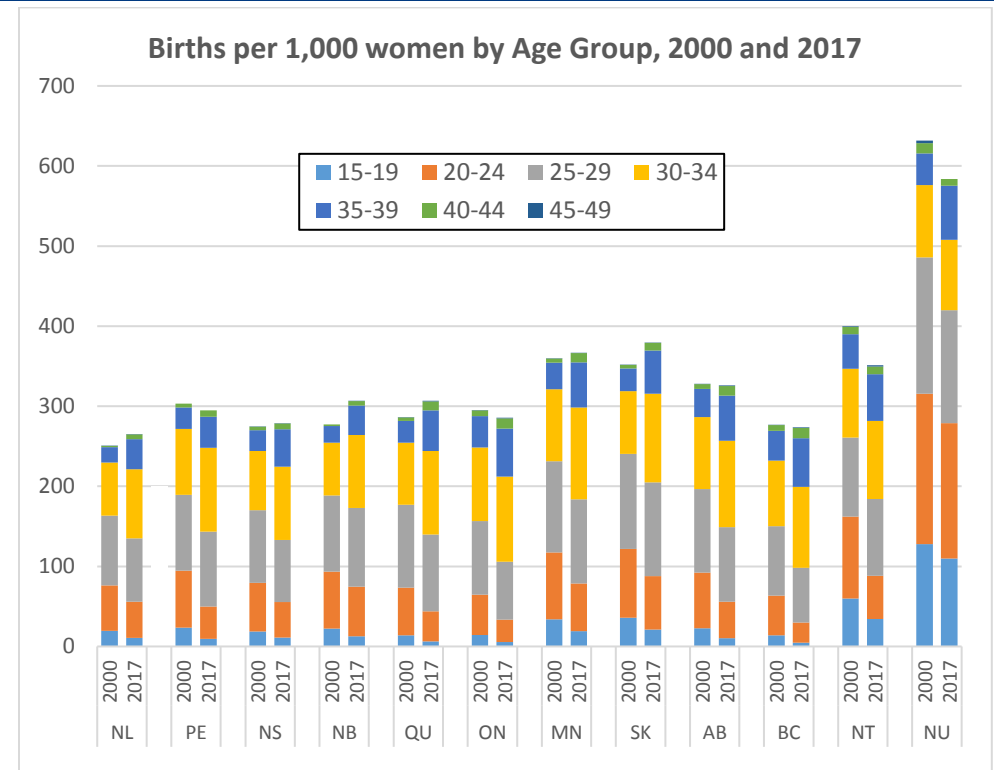
While total (all age groups) fertility did not change significantly between 2000 and 2017, it fell by significant amounts for women aged 30 years or less and increased for women in higher age brackets.

The figure presents data from 2000 and 2017 showing age-specific fertility rates in each province and territory. Age-specific fertility rates define the number of children born to women within specified age groups.

With the exception of women in New Brunswick aged 25-29 years, fertility rates of women aged less than 30 years fell in every jurisdiction between 2000 and 2017. With the exception of women in Nunavut (NU) aged 35-39 years, fertility rates increased in every jurisdiction for women aged 30 years and above. These changes in age-adjusted fertility rates were generally large despite the short time span. For example, the change in the age-specific fertility rate of teenage women aged 15-19 years fell by half in most jurisdictions. On the other hand, the fertility rate of women aged 35-39 typically increased by over 60% in every jurisdiction.

Fertility rates are sensitive to many influences including some that may be related to public policy choices.

Many factors influence the average rate of fertility in a province. For example, in the figure the higher fertility rates of indigenous women are apparent in the data for jurisdictions with higher than average indigenous populations. Economic considerations are also known to influence decisions regarding the timing of births. [Recent research](#) has suggested that high housing costs may cause women to choose to delay having children while they save for a down-payment. The relatively low rates of fertility for women aged 20-29 in Ontario and British Columbia, where housing costs are particularly high, is suggestive of such a relationship. On the other hand, the (somewhat smaller) fall in the fertility of this age group



Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM database, Table 13-10-0418-01. No data available for Yukon in 2017.

in all provinces and territories is suggestive of additional, broader influences.

In addition to housing costs, public policies may influence fertility rates by their impact on the cost and availability of child-care. Decisions regarding [sex education](#) in school curricula may play a role in determining fertility rates of 15-19 year olds. Public health support for fertility treatments may influence fertility rates for women in higher age brackets and changes to [parental leave provisions](#) have been shown to have had significant impact on the timing of births. Given the long-term importance of fertility decisions, the potential impact of public policies on fertility decisions is worth the attention of policy-makers.