

# Conceptualizing Canada's care economy: A framework from Statistics Canada

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Community Data Program Webinar  
March 26, 2024



Delivering insight through data for a better Canada



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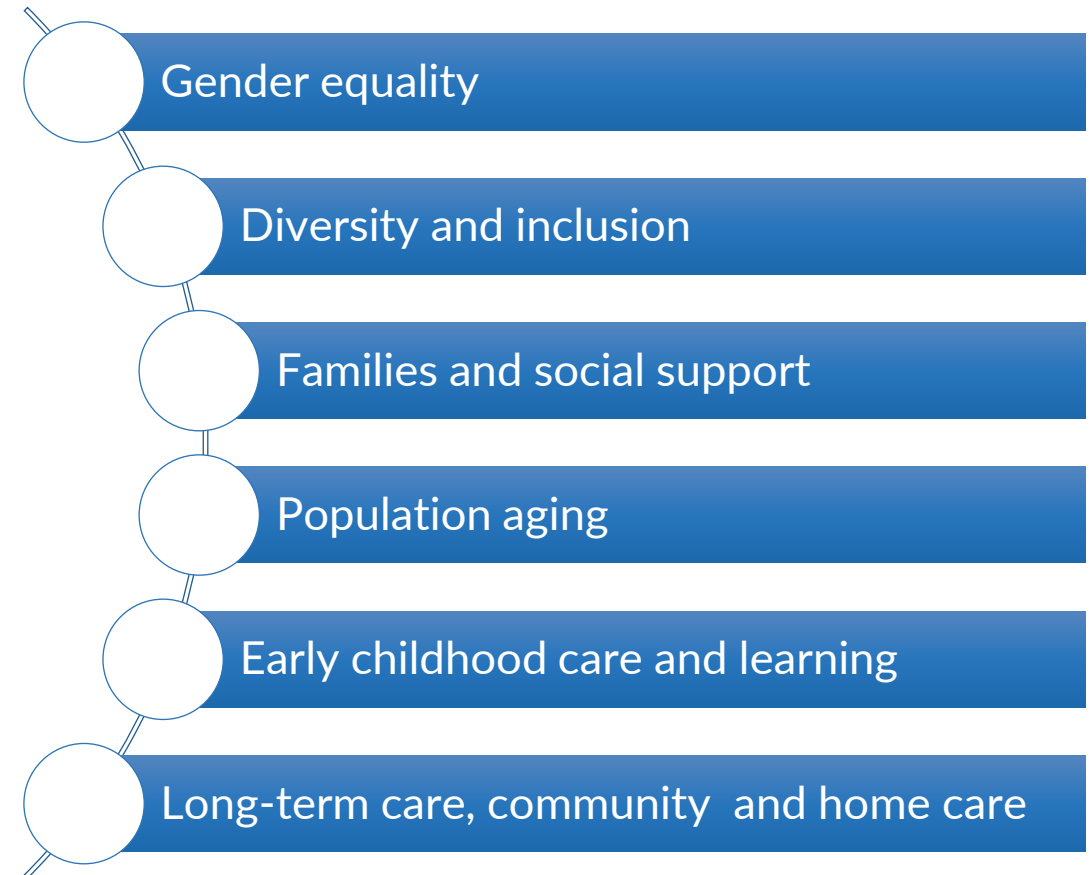
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# The importance of care in Canada

# Why is the care economy important?

- **2.3 billion** people in need of care globally by 2030 (ILO, 2018)
- **Pandemic** shed light on 'crisis of care' in Canada – paid and unpaid
- Care work is unevenly distributed
- Interwoven with other pressing social issues
- Care economy: key for prosperity and well-being



# Demographic pressures on care

## Population aging

- Population 85 & older is fastest growing age group
- Projected to more than triple over next 25 years

## Declining fertility

- Fertility has slowly and steadily decreased pre-pandemic
- In 2022, Canada's total fertility rate dropped to record low

## Diverse living arrangements

- 45% growth in multi-family hhlds over 20 years
- 1-person hhlds now most common for first time in history (2021)
- Multigenerational hhlds more common for immigrant, racialized groups

## Immigration

- Immigrants overrepresented as paid care workers – usually in lower-paid, lower-status jobs
- Linguistic and cultural diversity may impact unpaid care, depending on availability of paid care services

Source: [2021 Census](#); [Vital Statistics](#)



## Demand for care

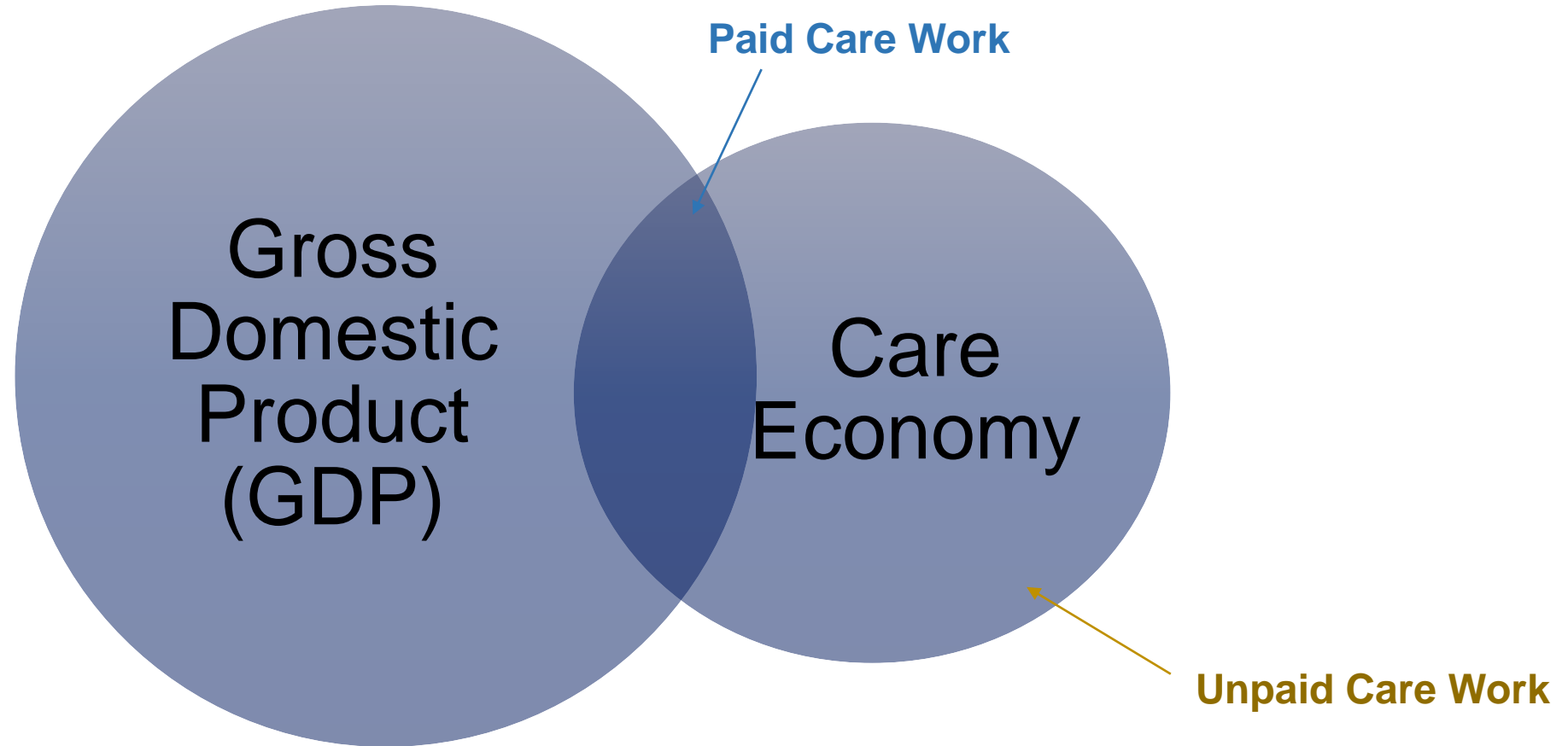
- Demand for long-term care: ~**380k** in 2019, projected to increase to ~**600k** by 2031
- Children under 6 in childcare: 42% in 1995 to **60%** in 2019
- Difficulty in finding childcare: 36% in 2019 to **49%** in 2023



## Supply of care

- **1 in 5** workers in care or care-adjacent occupations (2016)
- Women account for **75%** of all care or care-adjacent workers
- 2016: ~**504k** workers in early learning and childcare sector
- 2016: ~**100k** home support workers and related occupations

# Market economy and care economy



*Note: Circles are not representative to scale.*



# Valuing unpaid care work

**\$517-\$860 billion  
(25-37% of GDP)**

Valuation of unpaid household work\* in Canada

\* Includes, but broader than, care work

Source: Besporstov & Sinclair, 2022

**\$97.1 billion  
(4.2% of GDP)**

Valuation of unpaid care from family caregivers\*

\* Only includes care for Canadians with long-term conditions or disabilities

Source: Fast et al., 2024

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Valuation of unpaid care for children  
Valuation of total care economy (paid + unpaid)





# Statistics Canada's care economy project

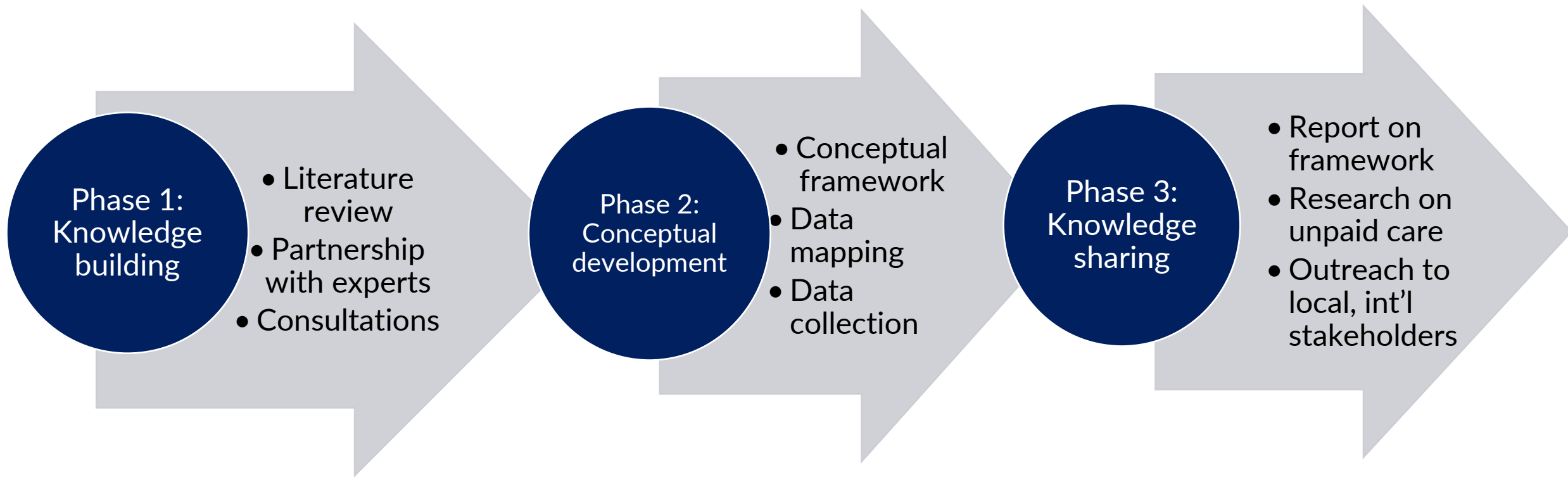




# Where did the care economy project start?

- Care economy project launched in May 2021
- Part of the modernization of social statistics under the General Social Statistics Program
- In part, in response to growing demands for more data and knowledge on care
  - Report of Standing Committee on Status of Women (2021): recommendation to StatCan to “properly and more frequently collect data on and track unpaid and caregiving work” ...
  - 2021 Federal Budget: discussed “care economy” and mentioned “care” nearly 400 times
  - Commitment in 2021 of [\\$100 million for gender equality](#) in care economy internationally
- Complementary partnerships with external researchers
  - “[Care Economies in Context](#)” at University of Toronto, led by Ito Peng
  - Knowledge partnership with Norah Keating and Janet Fast at University of Alberta

# StatCan's care economy project to date



# Care economy resources

- [Report](#) on the conceptual framework
  - Summarizes state of knowledge on conceptualizing care economy
  - Provides proposed scope, definitions for Canadian context
- [Highlight](#) on StatCan's Hub on Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Statistics
  - Compiles research at StatCan on the care economy
- [Initial findings](#) from Canadian Social Survey (Wave 6)
- Research article on “sandwich caregiving” (forthcoming - April 2)
  - Funded by Women and Gender Equality
  - Infographic and in-depth research article



# Conceptualizing Canada's care economy

# Care economy

That 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 under 15 years old, because of their young age
- Adults and youth over 15 years old, with long-term conditions or disabilities



# What is “care work”?

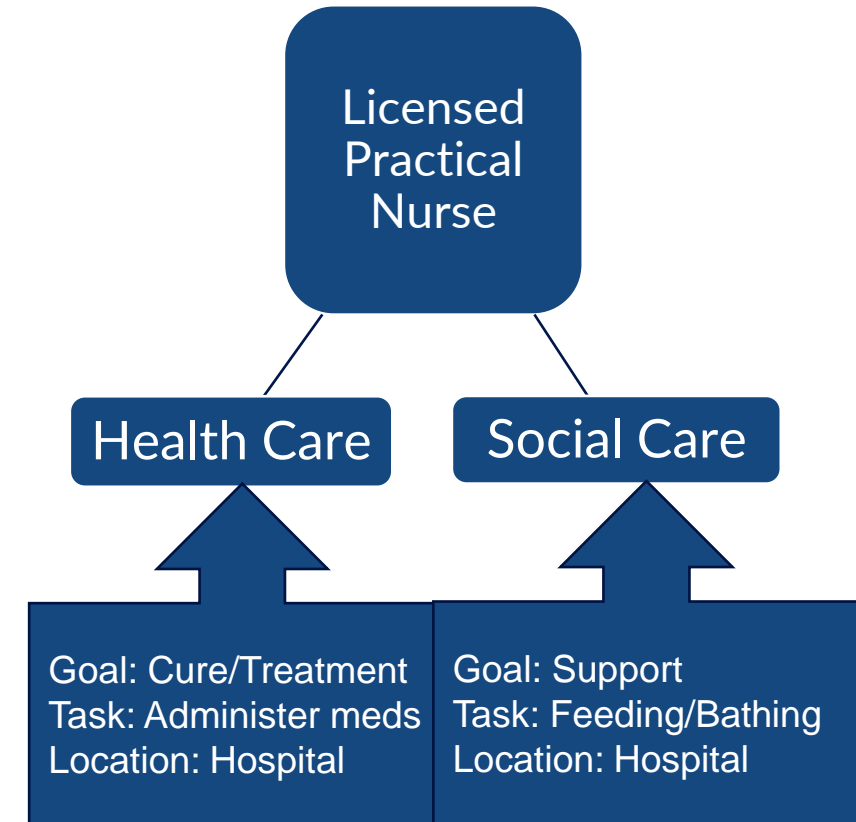
- Paid or unpaid
- **Direct**, hands-on care → ADLs
  - E.g., feeding, bathing, etc.
- **Indirect**, more complex help → IADLs
  - E.g., cleaning, transportation, etc.
- Long-term care that *necessarily* comes from external sources
- Social perspective on care



# Social care and intersections with health care

- Framework distinguishes long-term, social care from short-term, acute medical care
- **Social care:** services provided to those with a range of long-term conditions and disabilities that enable people to “live more independently and participate more fully in their communities”
  - Focus on activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs)
  - Location of care is more likely household or congregate settings than hospitals, medical centres
- Boundaries can be blurry between social and health care

*The difficulty of measuring social care and health care: Example of LPNs*



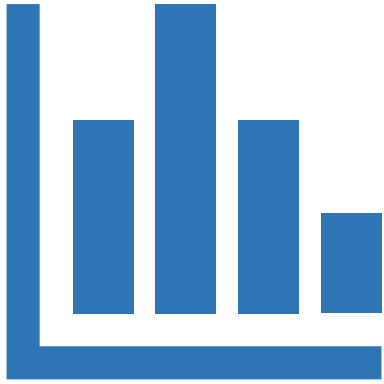
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*Key sources: Hall et al., 2021; Humphries, 2022; Mayhew, 2012; OECD, 2018.*



# Key questions

- I. Who **provides** paid and unpaid care in Canada?
- II. **How much** paid and unpaid care is provided?
- III. What are the **qualities** of care (e.g. intensity, duration)?
- IV. Who **receives** care?
- V. What are the **impacts** of caregiving for paid and unpaid care workers?
- VI. What **supports** are provided for unpaid caregivers in Canada?
- VII. What is the **magnitude** of the economic contribution of the care economy?



# Statistics Canada data on care economy

# A summary of data on care at Statistics Canada

## Unpaid care

### *Providing care*

- [Caregiving and Care Receiving](#)
- [Time Use Survey](#)
- [Survey on Giving, Volunteering, Participating](#)
- [Canadian Social Survey](#) (Wave 6)

### *Receiving care*

- [Caregiving and Care Receiving](#)
- [Canadian Survey on Disability](#)
- [Canadian Health Survey on Seniors](#)

## Paid care

### *Providing care*

- [Census](#) and Labour Force Survey
- Administrative [data linkages](#)
  - E.g., [Longitudinal Worker File](#), [Canadian Employer-Employee Database](#)
- Business-level data
  - E.g., [Nursing and Residential Care Facility Survey](#); [Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child Care Services](#)

### *Use of paid care services*

- Caregiving and Care Receiving
- [Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements](#)
- [Survey on Before & After School Care](#)

# Data from the General Social Statistics Program

Survey	Domain	Care receiver	Most recent data
Caregiving and Care Receiving	-Unpaid care provision	Care-dependent adults (and children with long-term conditions or disabilities)	2018
	-Unpaid care receiving -Use of paid care services	Care-dependent adults	
Time Use Survey	-Unpaid care provision	Both* (*care-dependence of adults not specified)	2022 (to be released June 5, 2024)
Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating	-Volunteering related to care	Both	2023-24 (in collection) (anticipated release 2025-2026)

# Challenges and gaps in data

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

Data on **paid** care work can lack details needs for specificity on care economy, and no existing data on what is done by paid care workers.

4

Challenges in collecting and analyzing data on ethnocultural communities, Indigenous communities and Canada's North.

5

Survey data provides limited ability to look beyond the **regional or provincial level** for caregiving or care receiving.



# Other care economy-related work in Canada



- “[Care Economies in Context](#)” – University of Toronto (PI: Ito Peng)
    - Funded by SSHRC, Open Society Foundation
    - StatCan is an institutional partner
  - Multi-national research project on care economies in 9 countries
  - Surveys (2022):
    - Eldercare (65+)
    - Childcare (<15)
  - Qualitative interviews and further survey follow-ups
- Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence
    - Stakeholder consulted for StatCan’s project
  - [Survey](#) (2023): caregiving for long-term conditions, disabilities, problems with aging
    - Does not include all children
    - Policy preferences, opinions, support needs
  - Qualitative interviews ongoing



# What the concept of care economy can offer

# Why care about the care economy?

- Provides a comprehensive look at how care impacts Canadians
- Generates new understanding of the impact of demographic trends
  - E.g., population aging, falling fertility, higher immigration, diverse living arrangements
- Examines a growing area of demand for the Canadian workforce
  - E.g., How many work in care jobs? Is there a mismatch between supply and demand?
- New insights on strains on system of health care
  - E.g., How much does it overlap with social care? How much unpaid care work goes unrecognized in supporting paid health systems?
- Important concept for more knowledge on well-being
  - E.g., What is the impact of caregiving – especially the uneven realities? What support is there for caregivers or care receivers?



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  - With simple and free data requests, technical and methodological questions;
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For questions, contact:

1-800-263-1136

[infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)

[Contact link](#)

# Questions? Feedback?



Get in touch!

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