Findings

• A large proportion of young parents in this study reported that they had moved house in the previous 6 months and they reported a variety of reasons for moving:
  • Housing instability (e.g., homelessness, having to move frequently, eviction) and, subsequently, losing custody of children
  • Poor housing conditions (e.g., mold; “renoviction”; demolition)
  • Difficult neighbours or housemates

• Desire for privacy and independence in housing: Many young parents in this study lived with their parents or other family members and they desired to head their own households.

• Many couples who wanted to live together with their children had difficulty doing so because of government policy that forbids “a spouse in the house”.

• In addition to high costs of renting, many other housing-related costs affected young parents’ ability to live on their own, including expensive utilities, transportation, and the cost of furnishing apartments.

• Most young parents rely on transit and want to live close to transit hubs. Transit hubs are also desirable locations for other renters, which drives up prices and limits vacancies.

Conclusions

Despite many challenges, parents in this study expressed optimism about housing in the future. They were keen to assert their autonomy as young parents or to have the opportunity to parent as a couple, rather than as a single parent. They viewed moving to better housing as helping them to pursue better jobs or educational opportunities or social supports elsewhere — or to escape dangerous living conditions. The study findings have implications for municipal, provincial, and federal housing policies. These results also provide evidence to inform the planning and implementation of other health and social services that support the needs of young parents and their children.

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