

For Generations To Come

The family...it has been condemned as a bastion of patriarchy, and praised as the last refuge of love and decency. Depending on what you read, the family is either alive and well, or it's under attack. And what is a family anyway? Is the model of dad, mom and two kids in a split-level out of date? Is it being replaced by something else?

In *For Generations To Come* acclaimed director William D. MacGillivray (*Life Classes*, *Understanding Bliss*) takes us from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic, searching for answers and celebrating the family with all its strengths and diversity. The families we meet take many forms, from the tightly-knit "traditional" rural family in Newfoundland, and the single mother and her daughter in Montreal, to the same-sex couple with three children in New Brunswick and the large "blended" family in Toronto.

For Generations To Come is a provocative film. It shows us the social, cultural and economic pressures on the modern family. It challenges our views about what a family is and what it will be in generations to come. Beyond the issues and the debates, the people who make up the seven families share their warmth, their humour, their honesty, their strength and their love, revealing a compelling picture of the Canadian family persevering amidst the changing times of the late 20th century.

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VHS

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For Generations To Come

FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

For Generations To Come



Directed by
William D. MacGillivray



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Printed in Canada

The Family

The headlines tell us that the family, as defined by the 1950's "nuclear" style of family, is under siege as never before. The social and economic changes of the late 20th century have challenged the concept of family, resulting in a broader definition of family, yet emphasizing its vital role in the lives of Canadians. Its structure may be changing, but public opinion polls overwhelmingly show that Canadians value the family as the most important aspect of their lives, providing the source of their joy, support and security.

The diversity of family forms includes:

Extended Families

parents, children, aunts, uncles, grandparents and other blood relations living together, or not

Lone Parent Families

one parent with a child or children

Childless Families

a married couple, without children

Cohabiting Couples/Common-law Marriages

without formalized marriage, with or without children

Blended Families

parents who have united to form a new family, including the children from their previous and current relationships

Affinity Families

people who have chosen to live together as a family for reasons of mutual support

Same-sex Families

two partners of the same gender, with or without children

Definitions of Family

A parent-child group bound by many and varied ties of mutual, lifetime support and for furthering the development of persons and societies at their source.—...‘family’ refers to a grouping of individuals who are related by affection, kinship, dependency or trust.—Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and Health and Welfare Canada’s joint initiative on Family Violence and Violence Against Women.

Family is defined as any combination of two or more persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption/placement and who, together, assume responsibilities for various combinations of some of the following:

- physical maintenance and care of group members;
- addition of new members through procreation or adoption;
- socialization of children;
- social control of members;
- production, consumption and distribution of goods and services;
- and
- affective nurturance—love.

—The Vanier Institute of the Family

From the film:

“I see a lot of strong families. There are a lot of families that are in trouble, but I don’t think that’s peculiar to our age. I think what’s peculiar to our age is that we are at a turning point and things are happening and we’re not sure where our country and our world is going. But in the midst of that, I see some incredibly strong families who are finding ways to love and care for each other that are creative and that give wholeness to people and are inclusive in ways that other generations have never had to be.”

—Jean Ward, United Church Minister
and mother in a blended family (Module #5)

For Generations To Come explores the emotional and the psychological dimensions of the human experience of family, while at the same time, illuminating the impact on the family of the social and cultural changes of contemporary society. *For Generations To Come* features seven families from across Canada, revealing how “traditional” values are flourishing, whatever form the family takes.

The Families

(In Order of Appearance)

Soofi/McNaughton Family



(Fred) Farhad Soofi came to Canada from Iran as a student in the '70's. He now owns two of the most successful restaurants in Regina. Mary McNaughton, Farhad's wife, born on a farm south of Regina, works in infections control at Regina General Hospital. Mary and

Farhad have a four-year-old daughter, Shireen. Their extended family includes Farhad's widowed sister-in-law and her two children, along with another brother and his wife.

Gaulton Family

Wanda and Garland live in a remote village on Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula. They have two children, William, 10 and Toni, 8. Garland's parents live with them in a small mobile home next door to Wanda's parents. Wanda and



Garland are both former fish plant workers who lost their livelihood when the fishery collapsed. They fear they will have to leave their extended families and their way of life in order to find work and give their children a better education and optimum opportunities. Garland's father, ill with cancer during filming, has since died.



Community Alternatives Society

Members of the Community Alternatives Society of Vancouver describe themselves as an "affinity family". Their apartment style "pod" (as in whale pod) is a unit of private bedrooms for each member and common living and cooking space. Members share household tasks, co-parent the children, and share the cost and preparation of meals. In the film we meet Velma Barbolet, who is a single mother, and her daughter Jasmine; Lori, who is the mother of 4 year old Max, and the newborn Marina; Maya, the teenaged daughter of Lori's partner; Barry, Velma's friend, who lives in a nearby pod; Thea, Jasmine and Maya's friend and neighbour;

and Ewan, 78. Ewan died of cancer some months after filming. He spent his final days at home, being nursed around the clock by his "affinity family".



Ward/Weaver/Allen/DeYoung Family

There are four parents and five children in the family, three children from one family and two from another. The children's names are Adriel, Rowan, Jason, Sarah and Leah. Two of the parents, Jean Ward and Nigel Weaver, are in a "committed relationship". David Allen was married to Jean and is the father of their two daughters. Their marriage ended when David acknowledged that he was gay. Jean, Nigel and David are all United Church Ministers. Pat DeYoung, a psychotherapist, was married to Nigel and is the mother of their two daughters and one son.

Pitsiulak Family

Lypa Pitsiulak, an internationally-known carver and printmaker, and his wife Annie, live in Opingivik, a tiny camp on Baffin Island. Six of their children — Simeonie, Louisa, Markoosie, Malaya, Eric, and Robbie — ranging in age from 2 to 18 live with them. The Pitsiulak's eldest son committed suicide in 1988. Litanie, another son, went to live in Pangnirtung, a hundred miles away, with Lypa's elderly mother, Kudlu, so she would not be alone but would "be happy and live longer".

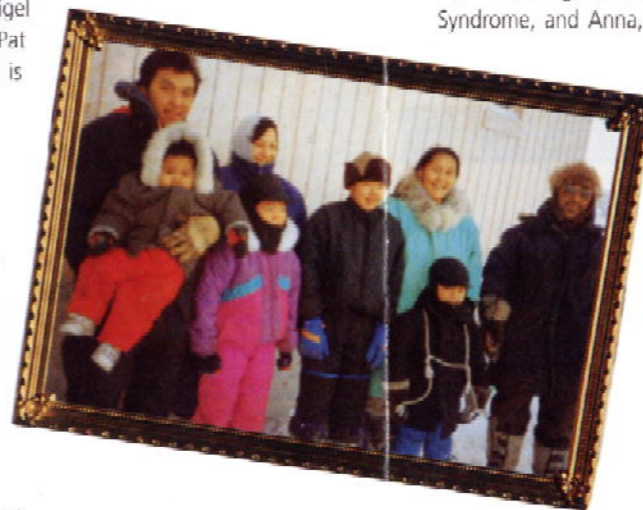


Brewer/Glencross Family

Writer Allison Brewer and Arlene Glencross, a law student, live in Fredericton. They had been together for three years when they decided to start a family. Arlene gave birth to the first of their three children, Oliver, 10. Allison gave birth to the other two children, Will, 8, who has Down's Syndrome, and Anna, 5.

Lalji Family

Yasmin Lalji, a Canadian originally from Tanzania, lives in Montreal. She is a single mother with one child, ten-year-old Nina. Yasmin lives on social assistance. Nina does very well in school and is encouraged by her mother who takes a great interest in Nina's education. The father of Yasmin's child died several years ago, and at the time of filming she was estranged from her strict Muslim family. She gets child support from her friend Janet Forbes.



Suggestions for Use

This film will be useful in a wide range of learning situations. It is suggested primarily for family studies or cultural awareness studies at the senior high level, or in education or sociology classes at the university level. It can also be used as an in-service tool to sensitize teachers to the increasing diversity of the Canadian family.

The film is made up of seven modules, allowing it to be viewed in parts or as a whole. It can be used in conjunction with the booklet "Canadian Families", published by the Vanier Institute of the Family.

Each module explores different issues. Modules can be compared and contrasted. The guide below lists some of the issues in each module.

Module 1 (10 min.) Soofi/McNaughton Family, Regina Saskatchewan. Immigrant families; extended families; cultural differences; accommodating different cultural backgrounds; keeping alive cultural heritage in a new country; balancing the demands of work and parenting.

Module 2 (11 min.) Gaulton Family, Bird Cove, Newfoundland. Extended families; dealing with the loss of livelihood; facing the prospect of moving from their extended family and community to find work and a future for their children; caring across generations; coping with the illness of a grandparent; importance of their environment; living in crowded housing.

Module 3 (8 min.) Community Alternatives Society, Vancouver, British Columbia. Co-parenting; children's role within the communal home; alternatives to living alone; effects of inter-generational living; impact on relationships of consensus approach to decision making; privacy within the communal home; concept of neighbourhood; effect of housing design on the family.

Module 4 (9 min.) Lalji Family, Montreal, Quebec. Lone parenting and poverty; the importance of informal support from friends; the role of suitable housing in creating family stability; parents' aspirations for their children; estrangement from extended family; conflict between immigrant and dominant Canadian cultural values.

Module 5 (12 min.) Ward/Weaver/Allen/DeYoung Family, Toronto, Ontario. Dealing with divorce and separation; coming to terms with new siblings; having a gay family member; children and shared custody; shared homes; integrating styles of parenting; the role of religion in family life.

Module 6 (12 min.) Pitsiulak Family, Opingivik, Baffin Island. Isolation; cultural assimilation; reclaiming one's culture; coping with teenage suicide; Aboriginal concept of family, adoption, and aging; integrating work and family; passing on traditions.

Module 7 (10 min.) Brewer/Glencross Family, Fredericton, New Brunswick. Same-sex parenting; balancing work and family; the stresses of child-rearing; emotional and special needs of families; living with a challenged child.

For additional resource material and post-screening activities, consult the "Tell Me About Your Family" learning and study guide prepared by the Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family 1994 in collaboration with the Vanier Institute of the Family, the Centrale de l'Enseignement du Québec (CEQ), the Bureau Québécois de l'Année Internationale de la Famille and the United Nations Association in Canada.

*Copies may be obtained from the Vanier Institute of the Family
120 Holland Avenue, Suite 300
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0X6
613-722-4007 FAX 613-729-5249*

Pre-Screening Questions

"Family is content, not form."

—Gloria Steinem

1. What is a family?
2. What are the most important things that a family does?
3. What is the relationship between the family and the community?

Post-Screening Discussion

(i) Blended Families, Modules 3 and 5

From the film:

"We have a really hard time convincing both our relatives and friends of the family that we're all right, that this set-up is all right, that everything's okay."

— Adriel Weaver, daughter in a blended family, Module 5

"The children around here tend to feel that they are part of the group...they are not isolated as much and they don't get angry...and they like themselves better."

— Ewan, *Community Alternatives Society, Module 3*

In 1967, only 10% of newlyweds had been previously married. By 1989, 33% of all marriages had at least one partner with previous experience in marriage. It is projected that more than 40% of marriages entered into today will end in divorce.

1. What would be some of the problems encountered living in a blended family?
2. What would be some of the advantages?
3. Do you expect to be married? More than once?

(ii) Family and the Workplace, Modules 1, 2 and 7

From the film:

"Whenever we get into a spot of difficulty we never have enough time, space or whatever to deal with it...so it catches up on itself after a while and you run into bigger problems...they have to be resolved by taking that time."

— Arlene Glencross, parent in a dual-earner family, *Module 7*

"We're hoping to go back to school...Garland would like to do heavy equipment and I'd like to do cooking...I can't even think about having to leave but I know we're going to have to...our children's future depends on it."

— Wanda Gaulton, recently unemployed fishery worker, *Module 2*

In seven out of ten Canadian families with children, both parents work outside the home. Twenty years ago it was just three in ten. Surveys show that 30-40% of parents feel under constant stress from trying to juggle the responsibilities of work and home. However, in most of today's families, two incomes are necessary just to make ends meet. Despite the new reality, surveys also show that most people would prefer to live in a two-parent family in which one worked and the other stayed at home.

However, the reality of the '90's is that many families are facing unemployment, retraining and/or upgrading their education, and sometimes the necessity to relocate for employment.

1. If both parents work outside the home, how might it affect family life?
2. Are there alternate work arrangements that might better enable parents to balance work and family responsibilities?
3. How important is an education in getting a job? What skills are required?

(iii) Lone Parenting, Modules 3 and 4

From the film:

"When I ended up being a single mother, which I never planned to do, I found that I was sometimes feeling resentful about being in that position...I really trusted that living communally would be a lot better than living in a nuclear situation and I think it was."

— Velma Barbolet, *Community Alternatives Society, Module 3*

In 1994, 13% of families were lone parent families. Forty years ago the percentage was similar and 66% of lone mothers were widows. By 1991, only 23% of lone mothers were widowed, while 57% were either separated or divorced.

There are almost one million lone parent families in Canada, 83% of which are headed by women. Six in ten female, lone parent families live below the poverty line. Children living with a lone parent mother are five times more likely to live in poverty than those living with two parents. More than 1.2 million of Canada's children, from all families, live below the poverty line.

1. Why are the majority of lone parent families led by females?
2. Why are many female-led, lone parent families living under difficult financial circumstances?
3. What do you think can be done to assist lone parent families living below the poverty line?
4. How do social service agencies play a role in the lives of lone parent family members?
5. How do alternative living arrangements, like co-op housing, provide emotional and financial support to a lone parent family?

(iv) Extended Families, Modules 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6

From the film:

"We gave her [grandmother] our son so she could be happier and live longer."

— Annie Pitsiulak, Inuit mother, *Module 6*

"It's pretty cramped here now for six people, but I mean we've got to do it. He's our family, I mean we love him."

— Wanda Gaulton, mother in an extended family, *Module 2*

Although most Canadian seniors do not live with their children, in 1991 there were 174,000 Canadian families who had an elderly relative living with them in an "extended family" situation.

As baby boomers age, more and more of them are assuming responsibility for both their dependent children and their aging parents, whether they live with them or not. Caught in the middle as they are between their children and their parents, such people are known as the "sandwich generation."

1. How do children (parents, grandparents) benefit from an extended family situation?
2. Why are extended families relatively rare today?
3. What would it be like to have members of your extended family living with your family?
4. What role can housing design have in improving the quality of life for members of extended families?
5. Would you like to be a member of an affinity family? Why or why not?
6. Is decision-making by consensus, including input from children and adolescents, viable in extended and affinity families?

(v) Differing Cultural Values Modules 1, 4 and 6

From the film:

"Iranian culture is a very rich, old culture and I've enjoyed learning a lot about it...every Saturday my daughter and I both go to Persian language school and I've learned to speak the language to a certain degree...my daughter is basically bilingual."

— Mary MacNaughton married to Farhad Soofi, immigrant from Iran, *Module 1*

"In the Muslim religion we have to marry a Muslim."

— Yasmin Lalji, immigrant from Tanzania, *Module 4*

Almost 1/3 of Canadians come from cultures other than British, French or Aboriginal. Contemporary Canadian families sometimes combine people of widely different cultural values.

1. What are some of the problems encountered by families whose members come from different cultures?
2. What are some of the advantages?
3. Can children in such families be of both cultures?
4. What are some of the unique problems faced by Aboriginal cultures?

(vi) Family and Values, All Modules

From the film:

"It doesn't matter if you are related or anything by blood, its just as long as you care for each other...that's a family."

— Sarah Allen, daughter in a blended family, *Module 5*

"They're loved. What more does a kid need?"

— Allison Brewer, mother, *Module 7*

The family, however its composition is defined, is the "basic unit of society", says the United Nations. It is society's most important source of nurture, culture and learning, the place where values are handed down from one generation to another.

1. Is there such a thing as a 'normal' family?
2. Do values differ greatly from one family type to another?
3. What are some of the most important values that families pass from generation to generation?
4. Have the core values and vital functions of family changed?
5. How do you think the children in the same-sex family in the film feel about their family?

(viii) Family and Society, All Modules

From the film:

"The role of parents hasn't changed in 3000 years—the notion of socializing children, not only for survival, but also for love and affection."

— Alan Mirabelli, Vanier Institute of the Family, transition between Modules 4 and 5.

Despite social changes that have altered their roles, families continue to provide "the natural framework for the emotional, financial and material support essential to the growth and development of its members", according to the United Nations. As such, families "warrant special attention and care".

1. What are some of the most important functions that families perform for society?
2. In what ways does the strength of the family affect the health of a country as a whole?

3. Discuss various ways in which society can most effectively support families.
4. Do you think families with same-sex parents are discriminated against in our society? If so, how and why?

Videography

Videos available from the National Film Board's Collection concerning family issues:

MI'KMAQ FAMILY/MIGMAOEI OTJIOSOG
 BLACK MOTHER BLACK DAUGHTER
 BORN AT HOME
 DOMINO
 FATHER AND SON (short version)
 MOTHERLAND: TALES OF WONDER
 WATCHING T.V.
 TOYING WITH THEIR FUTURE
 DROITS AU COEUR / RIGHTS FROM THE HEART
 RETURN HOME
 FAMILY CRISIS series
 FINDING OUR WAY series
 PARENTS IN CRISIS
 PARENTING (video compilation)
 RICHARD CARDINAL: CRY FROM A DIARY OF A METIS CHILD
 A KIND OF FAMILY
 DAD'S HOUSE, MOM'S HOUSE
 FOSTER CHILD
 OUT: STORIES OF LESBIAN AND GAY YOUTH
 FOR RICHER, FOR POORER

Credits:

Director
 William D. MacGillivray

Cinematographer
 Kent Nason

Sound Recordists
 John Martin
 Jim Rillie

Picture Editor
 Angela Baker

Supervising Sound Editor
 Alex Salter

Music Score Arranged and Performed by
 Scott Macmillan
 Scojen Music Productions Ltd.

Re-recording
 Shelley Craig

Video Post Production
 Barbara-Anne Hutchinson
 Philippe Vandette

Technical Co-ordinators
 Wayne Cormier
 Claude Cardinal

Unit Administrator
 Jane Boyle

Producers
 Shelagh Mackenzie
 Terry Greenlaw

Executive Producer
 Marilyn A. Belec

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(with access menu and locator codes.)

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To access a particular family module, simply match the number of the family listed in this menu with the corresponding number visible in the upper, right hand corner of the screen throughout the module.

1	Soofi/McNaughton Family	10 minutes
2	Gaulton Family	11 minutes
3	Community Alternatives Society	8 minutes
4	Lalji Family	9 minutes
5	Ward/Weaver/Allen/DeYoung Families	12 minutes
6	Pitsiulak Family	12 minutes
7	Brewer/Glencross Family	10 minutes