

Definitions of the Family

Name _____ Date _____

Consider the following definitions of the census family.

Census Family, Statistics Canada, 1996

The census family refers to a husband and wife (with or without children who have never married regardless of age), couples living together (with or without children who have never married, from one of both partners), or a lone parent (with one or more children who have never married regardless of age) living in the same dwelling.

Census Family, Statistics Canada, 2006

Census family is defined as a married couple and the children, if any, of either or both spouses; a couple living common law and the children, if any, of either or both partners; or, a lone parent of any marital status with at least one child living in the same dwelling and that child or those children. All members of a particular census family live in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. Children may be children by birth, marriage, or adoption regardless of their age or marital status as long as they live in the dwelling and do not have their own spouse or child living in the dwelling. Grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present also constitute a census family.

Individually, identify how the definition has changed between 1996 and 2006.

1996 Census Family	2006 Census Family

BLM 1.3 Continued

Compare your changes with a partner. Add to your list.

Join with another pair. Share your changes and identify societal reasons why you feel the definition has changed.

Family: The Vanier Institute of the Family, 2009

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 variant 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
- affective nurturance-love

You have now had the opportunity to examine three different definitions of the family.

1. Why is there is such variance in the definition of the family?

2. Why it is important to define family?

Consider our discussion about family, its composition, and its purpose. Create your own personal definition of family below.