

Study: Youth labour force participation, 2008 to 2014

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The youth labour force participation rate declined from 2008 to 2014, the first prolonged decrease since the early 1990s. The labour force participation rate during school months declined 6.1 percentage points to 46.4% for youth aged 15 to 19, while it fell 2.2 percentage points to 73.7% for youth aged 20 to 24.

Most (70%) of the decline among 15- to 19-year-olds was attributable to lower labour force participation among students. Increased school enrolment accounted for 16% of the decline, while lower labour force participation among non-students was responsible for 14%.

For the 20-to-24 year-old age group, increased enrolments explained 57% of the decline in the participation rate. The remainder was the result of lower labour force participation among non-students.

These findings come from a new study that breaks down, in an accounting framework, changes in the youth participation rate into components attributable to changes in school enrolment and in students' and non-students' labour force participation.

The percentage of 15- to 19-year olds who were neither in the labour force nor enrolled in full-time studies changed little, and stood at 4.2% in 2014, while that of 20- to 24-year-olds increased from 7.5% in 2008 to 8.0% in 2014.

Lower labour force participation among students was the reason for much of the decline in the participation rate for both Canadian-born and immigrants aged 15 to 19. However, the participation rate decline among immigrants aged 20 to 24 was entirely due to increased school enrollments.

For both 15- to 19-year-olds and 20- to 24-year-olds, the greatest declines in the participation rate were in the Prairie provinces and British Columbia. The percentage of youth in these two age groups who were neither in the labour force nor enrolled in full-time studies rose more in British Columbia than in the rest of Canada.

The smallest declines in the participation rate of youth aged 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 were in Quebec. The Atlantic provinces was the lone region where the labour force participation of 20- to 24-year-olds increased.

Youth aged 15 to 24 who were not in the labour force were about as likely to be full-time students in 2014 as they were in 2008.

Note to readers

This study is based on the Labour Force Survey. Annual data refer to averages for the months of January to April and September to December. Enrolled students refer to full-time students. Part-time students are therefore considered as part of the non-student population.



Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3701.

The research article "[Youth Labour Force Participation: 2008 to 2014](#)" part of *Economic Insights (11-626-X)* is now available from the *Browse by key resource module* of our website under *Publications*.

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