

Catalogue no. 89-654-X2015003
ISBN 978-0-660-02006-8

Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012

Developmental disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years and older, 2012

by Christine Bizier, Gail Fawcett, Sabrina Gilbert and
Carley Marshall

Release date: December 3, 2015



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- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
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- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Developmental disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years and older, 2012

The results presented in this fact sheet are from the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), which surveyed residents of private dwellings who reported an activity limitation and who were aged 15 years and older at the time of the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS).

According to the CSD, respondents are considered to have a disability only if they report a difficulty or impairment due to a long-term condition or health problem and they report that they are limited in their daily activities as a result of their condition. The exception to this is that people with developmental disabilities must have been diagnosed by a health practitioner. Their disability did not need to limit their daily activities. Appendix A describes how the CSD defines developmental disabilities.

The population living in institutions, including residential care facilities, was not included in the 2012 CSD. Further details are available in the *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012: Concepts and Methods Guide* [89-654-X2014001](#).

According to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), 3,775,900 (13.7%) Canadians aged 15 years and older reported some type of disability, and 160,500 (0.6% of Canadian adults) were identified as having a developmental disability (Table 1). It is important to note, however, that this refers only to the population living in private households and does not include those living in institutions. The most prevalent underlying developmental conditions reported on the survey were autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome.

Table 1
Prevalence of disability by type, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012

Disability type	Population	Percentage
Total disability	3,775,900	13.7
Pain-related	2,664,200	9.7
Flexibility	2,078,000	7.6
Mobility	1,971,800	7.2
Mental health-related	1,059,600	3.9
Dexterity	953,100	3.5
Hearing	874,600	3.2
Seeing	756,300	2.8
Memory	628,200	2.3
Learning	622,300	2.3
Developmental	160,500	0.6
Unknown	79,500	0.3

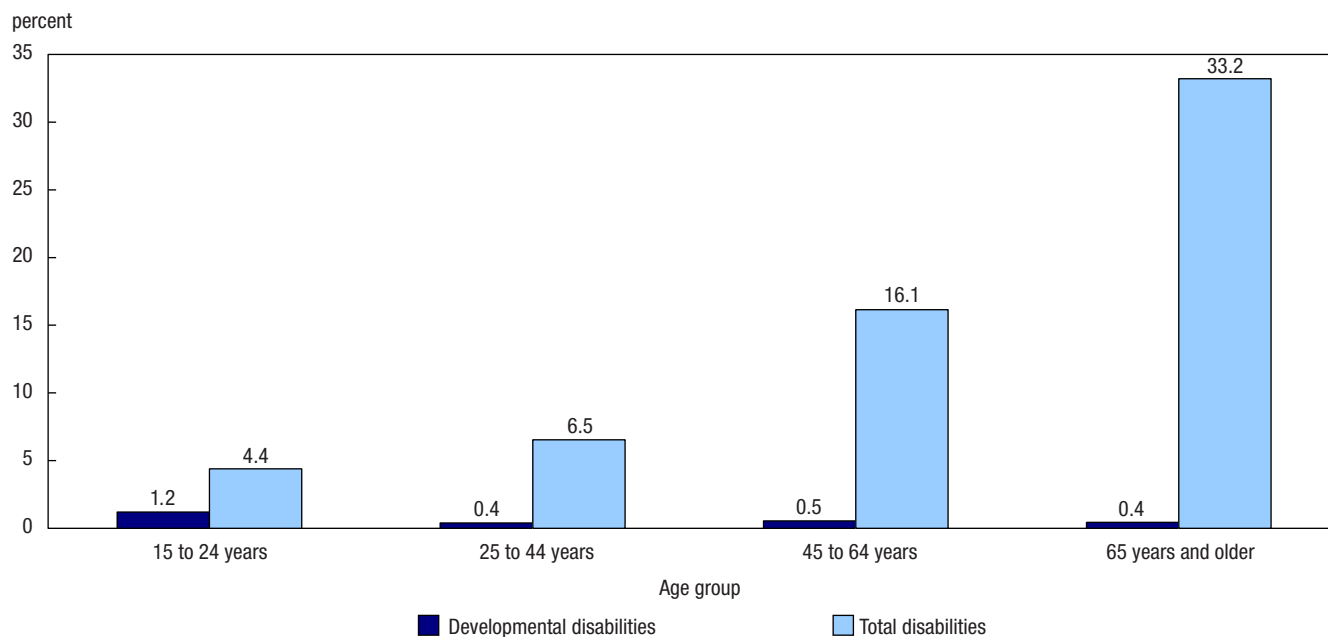
Note: Individuals may have more than one type of disability; therefore, the sum of all individual disability types is greater than the number of "total disabilities".

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

As highlighted in Chart 1, the overall rate of disability increased substantially with age, rising from 4.4% among those aged 15 to 24 to 33.2% among those 65 and older. The prevalence of developmental disabilities, however, does not follow this trend; in fact, the rate of developmental disability was highest among those between the ages of 15 and 24 at 1.2% and decreased with age to 0.4% among those 65 and older.¹

At ages 15 to 24, men were more likely than women to report a developmental disability (1.6% versus 0.8%); however, there were no significant gender differences in older age groups.

Chart 1
Prevalence of developmental disabilities and total disabilities, by age group, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

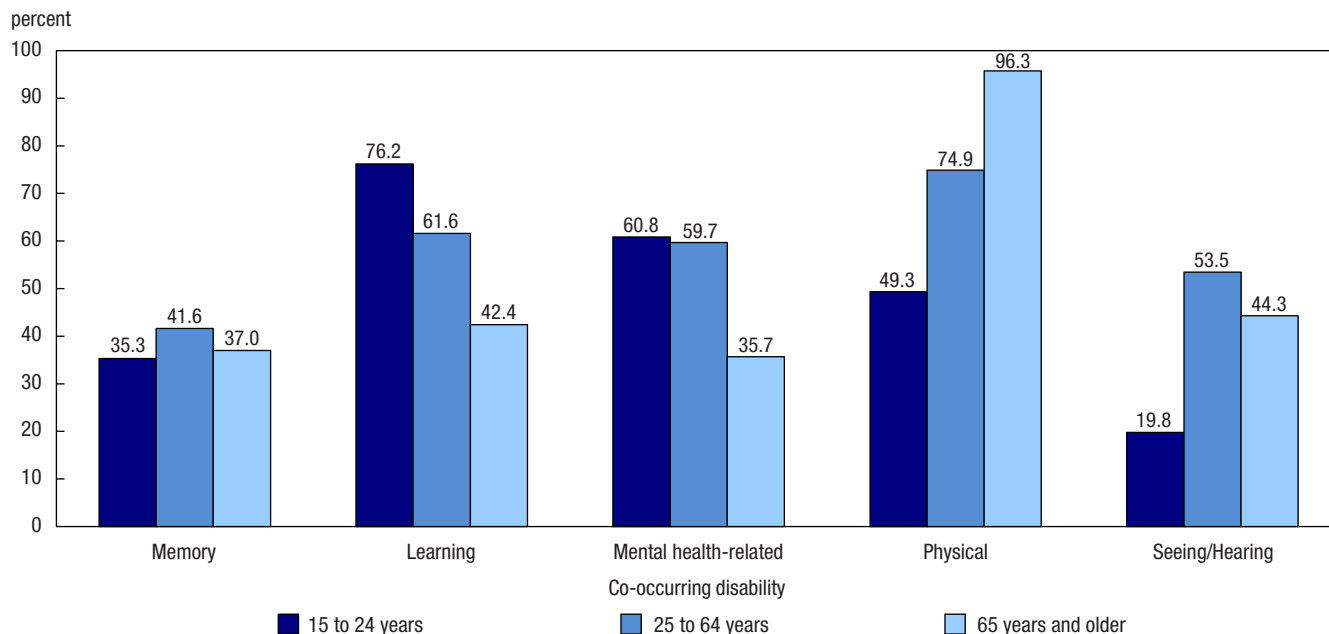
1. Due to the nature of developmental disabilities, diagnosis usually occurs during childhood. See: Lunsky and Weiss, 2012.

Multiple disabilities

Developmental disability frequently co-occurred with other types of disability: 94.0% of those with a developmental disability also reported at least one other type of disability in 2012.

Learning and mental health-related disabilities were common among young adults with a developmental disability; while among seniors, the highest rate of co-occurrence was with a physical disability (Chart 2).

Chart 2
Prevalence of co-occurring disability types among adults with a developmental disability, by age group, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



Note: Physical includes mobility, dexterity, flexibility and pain-related disability types.

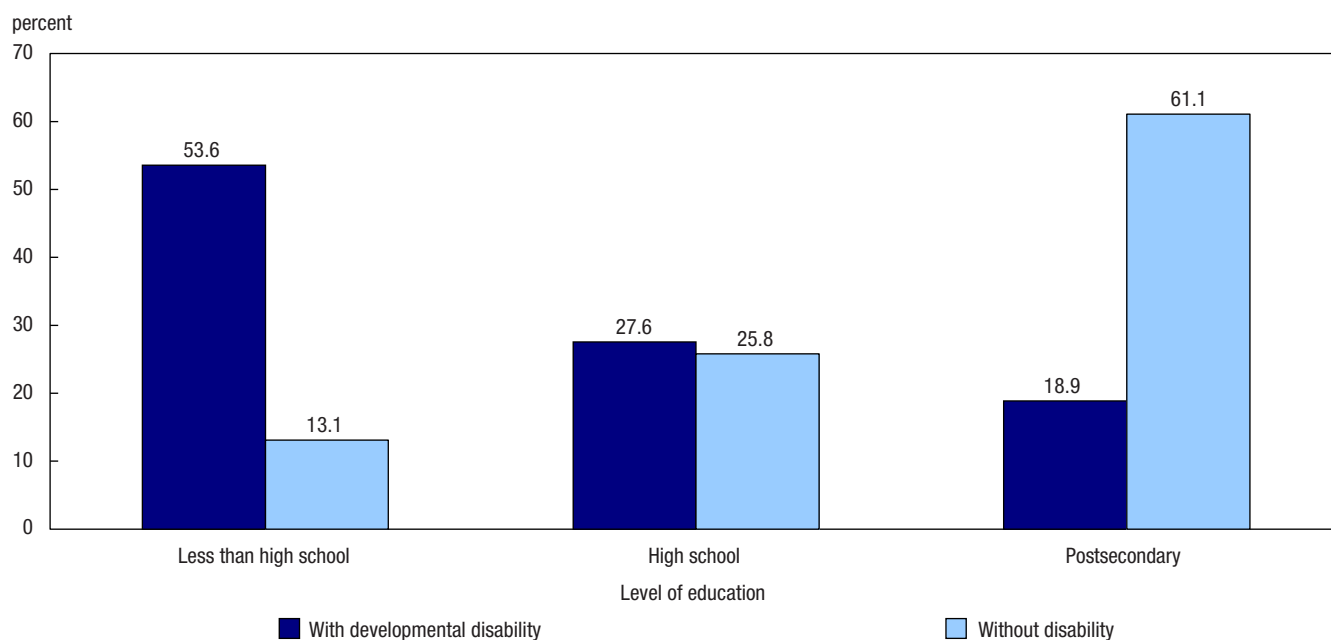
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Education

Educational attainment

Working-age adults (aged 15 to 64) with a developmental disability had lower levels of educational attainment than adults without disabilities, regardless of age. In fact, the gap in educational attainment between those without any disability and those with developmental disabilities was the greatest of any of the specific disability types. This suggests educational attainment for this population is a particularly challenging issue. Among those who were not still in school, adults with a developmental disability were four times more likely to have not completed high school compared to those without disabilities (53.6% versus 13.1%). As well, those without any disability were three times more likely than those with a developmental disability to have completed postsecondary credentials (61.1% versus 18.9%) (Chart 3). There were no significant gender differences in the highest level of educational attainment among those with a developmental disability.

Chart 3
Proportion of adults with a developmental disability compared to those without any disability by highest level of education, aged 15 to 64 years, Canada, 2012



Note: Excludes populations still in school.

Postsecondary includes trades certificates, college diplomas, university certificate below bachelor level and university degrees.

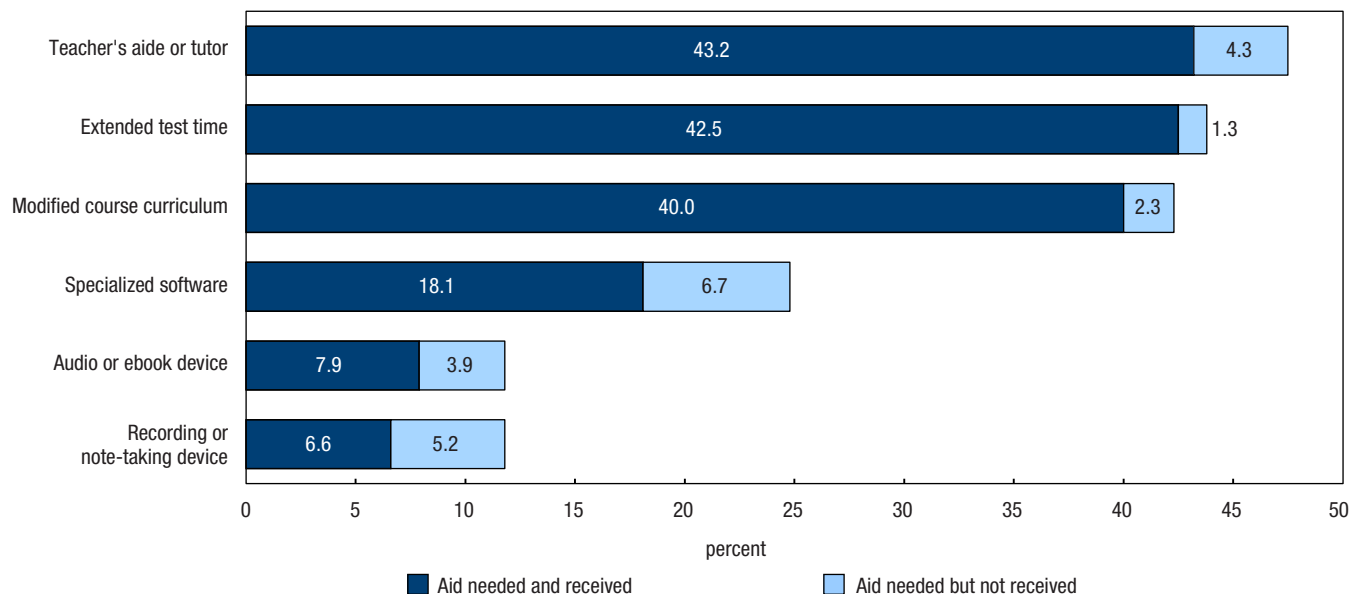
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Educational aids and services

Over half (62.2%) of adults aged 15 and older with a developmental disability currently attending or who had recently attended school required an education aid or service. The majority (77.0%) reported that all their needs for an aid or service had been met; 20.1% reported that some needs had been met; and 2.8% reported that none of their needs had been met.

Chart 4

Met and unmet needs for education aids and services among adults with a development disability who were currently attending or recently attended school, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

The most commonly required supports reported were teacher's aides or tutors (47.5%) and extended test time (43.8%) (Chart 4). These needs, in particular, were predominantly met, with more than 90% of those who required these supports receiving them. Technology-based supports, such as specialized software, recording devices, and audio/ebook devices were less likely to be needed. However, those needing technology-based supports were also less likely to receive them compared to those requiring teacher's aides or tutors.

Effect of disability on educational experiences

In the 2012 CSD, adults with a disability who were currently or had recently been in school were asked how their condition(s) affected their educational experiences.² Two-thirds of adults with a developmental disability reported that their condition(s) had influenced their choice of courses/careers, resulted in them taking fewer courses and resulted in them taking longer to achieve their current level of education (Table 2). More than a quarter had to leave their community to go to school.

Table 2
Effect of disability on educational experiences of adults with a developmental disability, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012

Effect of disability	Percentage
Choice of courses/career influenced by disability	66.1
Took fewer courses due to disability	65.7
Took longer to achieve current level due to disability	64.6
People avoided/excluded you in school due to disability	64.0
Attended special education classes in regular school due to disability	61.1
Bullied at school because of disability	52.2
Changed course of studies due to disability	38.6
Education interrupted due to disability	35.1
Changed school due to disability	33.1
Discontinued education due to disability	31.1
Additional school expenses due to disability	27.9
Left community for school due to disability	26.4
Began school later due to disability	25.5

Note: Developmental disabilities includes those in school within the last 5 years and had disability while in school.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Employment

Labour force status

A substantial majority (71.8%) of adults aged 15 to 64 with a developmental disability were not in the labour force and another 6.0% were unemployed. The employment rate of working-age adults with a developmental disability was 22.3%—less than a third of the rate for people without a disability (73.6%), and the lowest employment rate of any disability type.

Disability in the workplace

One in five (20.4%) adults with a developmental disability, who were employed, indicated that their employer was not aware of their condition(s).

Among those with a developmental disability, who were either currently in the labour market or had been within the previous five years, 66.8% believed their employer considered them disadvantaged in employment and 61.3% reported that they felt disadvantaged in employment. More than a third (34.6%) believed that they had been refused a job; 31.4% felt that they had been refused a promotion; and 28.3% believed they had been refused a job interview—due to their disability or disabilities. However, this is based on the impact of all disability types that individuals with a developmental disability may have had.

2. Note that these individuals may have had multiple disabilities, thus their educational experiences could have been a result of any combination of them.

Job modifications

Among those with developmental disabilities who were currently in the labour force or had been within the previous five years, 53.8% reported having some requirement for job accommodations such as modified work hours (30.2%), modified duties (27.5%³) and human support (16.9%). Of those requiring a modification, 39.6% reported that all their needs had been met, 41.1% had some needs met, and 19.3% had none of their needs met.

Hours worked

Employed working-age adults, aged 15 to 64, with a developmental disability worked an average of 26 hours per week³, less than the average number of hours worked per week by those without any reported disability (37 hours).

Not in the labour force

Among adults with a developmental disability, aged 15 to 64, who were not in the labour force, 75.2% reported that their condition(s) prevented them from working. Of these, 12.6% indicated that there was some type of accommodation that would allow them to work. As well, 22.8% indicated that they would look for work in the next 12 months.⁴ Respondents who planned to look for work were asked why they intended to do so:

- 20.5% expected their condition to improve;
- 13.8%⁵ expected workplace changes/improvements; and
- 30.5% planned to take training.

Many of those who were not in the labour force reported barriers that discouraged them from looking for work. Some of the most commonly reported job search barriers for those with a developmental disability were inadequate training or experience (19.7%), a lack of available local jobs (18.7%), unsuccessful past attempts (17.6%), experienced discrimination in the past (12.7%), and a fear of losing additional supports (12.6%).

3. Refers to the actual number of hours worked for pay during the week prior to the reference week on the National Household Survey (NHS).

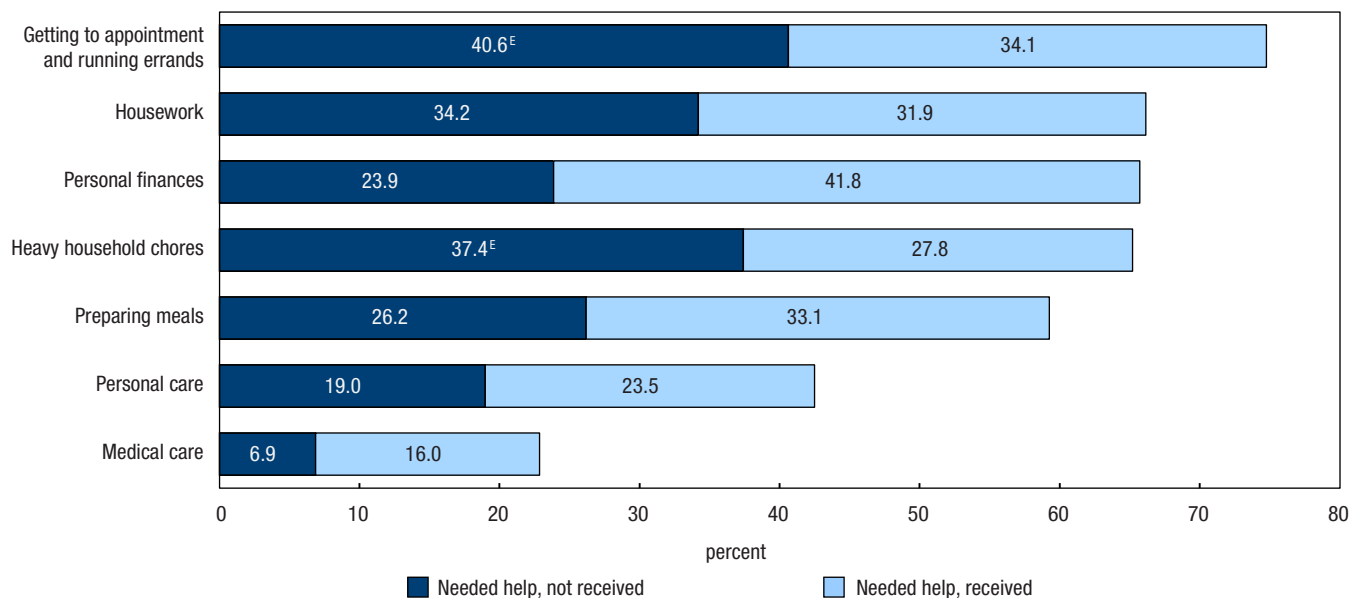
4. It is important to note that some individuals indicated that an accommodation would allow them to work and that they would look for work in the next 12 months.

Supports

Nine in ten adults with a developmental disability required help with some type of everyday activity, and nearly three-quarters (72.7%) of them reported some level of unmet need for at least one of these requirements. Overall, 87.2% of adults with a developmental disability received help with at least one type of everyday activity.

The level of unmet need varied depending on the specific type of support required (Chart 5). For example, 40.6%^E of adults with a developmental disability had an unmet need for help with getting to appointments and running errands; 37.4%^E had an unmet need with heavy household chores; 34.2% had an unmet need for help with housework; 26.2% had an unmet need for help with meal preparation and 23.9% had an unmet need for help with personal finances.

Chart 5
Met and unmet needs for help with everyday activities among adults with developmental disability, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



^E use with caution

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Help with everyday activities was most likely to come from family members, particularly those in the same household. For example, among those who received assistance, 75.6% received some help from family members living with them, and 35.6% received some help from family members not living with them. As well, 23.4% received help from a friend or neighbour, 30.7% from an organization-free of charge, and 26.2% paid an individual or organization for help.

Income

Personal income for working-age adults

The median personal income (before taxes) of working-age adults, aged 15 to 64, with a developmental disability was \$10,800—less than one third that of those without disabilities (\$31,200).⁵ Those with a developmental disability were also more likely to be reliant on government transfers⁶ as their major source of income compared with those without disabilities; for example, 71.9%⁷ of adults with a developmental disability relied on government transfers as their largest source of income compared with 18.7% of those without disabilities. Among those who had some income from employment, adults with a developmental disability had lower median employment incomes⁸ than those without (\$12,400 compared with \$34,100).

Conclusion

According to the 2012 CSD, less than one percent of the adult population in private households had a developmental disability. The prevalence of developmental disabilities is highest among young adults. Unlike many other disability types, limitations from developmental disabilities are typically experienced quite early in life, often resulting in challenges in school. More than half of this population had less than a high school education; and among those who were in school, there were high levels of requirements for educational aids and supports, most of which were being met. However, the impact of disability on the educational experiences of this group was quite high; for example, over one quarter had left their community to attend school because of their disability. These disadvantages in terms of education follow into the labour market, where less than one quarter of adults with developmental disabilities were employed; and even among those who were employed, there were high rates of part-time employment and low levels of earnings. This population also had high levels of requirements for caregiving supports, with over three-quarters requiring assistance with getting to appointments and running errands. While family members provided most of this support, there were still high levels of unmet need.

5. This calculation includes those with zero or negative personal income amounts before taxes. There were no statistical significant gender differences in median personal income for those with a developmental disability.

6. Government transfers include a variety of transfer payments from federal, provincial, territorial or municipal governments such as: Old Age Security; Guaranteed Income Supplements; Canada or Quebec Pension Plan; Employment Insurance; Social Assistance; Child Benefits; and other income from government sources.

7. Gender differences among those with a developmental disability with respect to reliance on government transfers were not statistically significant.

8. This includes income from wages, salaries, and self-employment. Again, gender differences among those with a developmental disability with respect to median employment income were not statistically significant.

Appendix A

Identification of adults with Developmental Disabilities

The 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) identified adults with developmental disabilities as those who have been diagnosed with a developmental disability or disorder as indicated in the following question:

DSQ_29 Has a doctor, psychologist/other health care professional ever said that you had a developmental disability/disorder? This may include Down syndrome, autism, Asperger syndrome or mental impairment due to lack of oxygen at birth, etc.

Although respondents were also asked how often daily activities were limited and the degree to which they were limited, these additional questions were not used to define a developmental disability. As such, this disability type is treated differently than other disability types in the CSD. This question was particularly rigorous in its reliance on a diagnosis since it is intended to identify those with a significant developmental disability. Upon the advice of the Technical Advisory Group, this exception was made since it is extremely important to identify this at risk population which has a low prevalence in the population among those living in private households.

Based on this definition, 160,500 adults aged 15 and older (0.6% of the population) were identified as having a developmental disability. Of these, 15.1% (24,200) indicated either never being limited or being rarely limited (with no difficulty or some difficulty).

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