

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND COVID-19: Impacts on children

In an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19, policy makers across Canada have employed remote learning approaches and closed schools. There can be unintended consequences associated with these measures, which may particularly affect the **5.7 million** children and youth who attend primary or secondary school in Canada (2018/19).



Vulnerable groups

- Families without adequate internet access or devices
- Families where no one can support home learning
- Children with learning disabilities



58%

of households with children do not have enough devices to support all members working or studying from home at the same time (2018)

- The pandemic has disrupted two school years
- School supports for children may be less accessible
- Internet access and devices become critical

8%

of children and youth aged 5-17 have a diagnosed learning disability (2019)

64%

of youth aged 15 to 24 reported a decrease in their mental health during the pandemic (2020)

- Children feel isolated without peers
- With reduced day-to-day interactions, in-school support for mental health may be less available

Vulnerable groups

- Children experiencing mental health challenges before the pandemic
- Families who were experiencing mental or financial stress pre-pandemic



5%

of children and youth aged 5-17 reported having a diagnosed anxiety disorder (2019)

ACADEMIC IMPACTS

MENTAL IMPACTS

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

PHYSICAL IMPACTS

Vulnerable groups

- Children living in low income
- Children experiencing food insecurity



- Parents may have to reduce work hours to support at-home learning
- Possible lack of access to school meal programs

11%

of children and youth aged 0-17 live in low income (2018)

44%

percent increase in the number of employed mothers who were working less than half their usual hours in January 2021 compared with January 2020 (with a child under 13)

- School as a safe space is no longer available
- No access to structured physical activities offered in school
- Increased screen time

61%

of children and youth aged 5-17 did not meet the physical activity guidelines (2016/17)

Vulnerable groups

- Children who mostly relied on school for physical activity
- Children at risk of family violence



22,299

children and youth aged 17 and younger were victimized by a family member; a parent (60%) was the most common perpetrator (2019)

Equity and diversity:

Some populations or groups may be overrepresented among the most vulnerable