



Health Nexus Weekly Bulletin

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SUBSTANCE MISUSE NEWS AND RESOURCES



COVID-19 pandemic had affected many people in multiple ways over the past six months. With the reported increased rate of substance use in Canadian families, service providers need to be more vigilant to support their clients during these difficult times. According to [the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addictions and NANO research](#), people across Canada had reported that the three major reasons for the increased rates of alcohol and cannabis consumption were related to lack of regular schedules, boredom, and stress.

Providers can access the following resources to guide their work and build awareness around substance use during the pandemic:

- On October 28th, 2020, the Child and Parent Resources Institute will be hosting the London FASD Conference dedicated to Scientific Advances and Community Innovation. To register for the conference, please visit the [CPRI website](#). We are also proud to share that Health Nexus's FASD Project Coordinator Angela Geddes will be speaking at the conference providing insight on her FASD work across Ontario.
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- On September 28th, 2020, [*Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction*](#) will be hosting a webinar on The Implications of COVID-19 on Substance Use and Mental Health – A Public Health Perspective. To register, please visit [*here*](#).
 - On September 14th, Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction will also deliver a webinar on the newly developed guidance documents that address the urgent needs of people who use substances, as well as service providers and decision-makers during the COVID-19 pandemic. To register for the webinar, please visit [*here*](#). To access the guideline, go to the [*Canadian Research Institute in Substance Misuse*](#).
 - [*Drug Free Kids Canada*](#) provides excellent resources for providers working with children, and how to support them and their families through these challenging times.
 - For additional webinars on substance and alcohol use during the pandemic, please visit [*here*](#).
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CHILD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DURING THE PANDEMIC

There are **8 million children** in Canada, and **1/3** of them do not enjoy a safe and healthy childhood.



1 in 3 Canadians have experienced abuse before their 15th birthday.



1 in 5 children live in poverty.



Suicide is now the leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 14.

The impact of COVID-19 on children's health

Violence against children

In Canada, Kids Help Phone has reported an **increase** in specific conversations about **physical, sexual and emotional abuse**.



As kids go back to school, reports of suspected child abuse may increase, since children will be interacting with trusted adults in their schools.

Vaccination rates

Pediatric infectious disease specialists say that **vaccination rates** among children have dropped as much as **20%** in parts of Canada...



...ramping up anxieties that the country could face a series of **infectious outbreaks** while still battling COVID-19.

Going to school: big worries

for children aged 10 to 17

MISSING SCHOOL



3 in 10 put the prospect of **missing out on more school** next year at the top of the list.

Worries about **losing class time** this year and next are higher among teenagers (aged 13-17), whose **graduation** or preparation for graduation are affected.



GOING TO SCHOOL ONLINE

75% say they feel they are keeping up

That doesn't, however, mean that they're enjoying it.



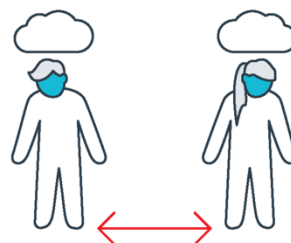
6/10 say that they **dislike it**

6/10 say they feel **unmotivated**

(Angus Reid Survey, 2020)

Mental health

for children aged 15 to 17



Crowdsourced data suggests that **57% of participants** reported their mental health was **"somewhat worse"** or **"much worse"** than it was prior to physical distancing measures during the pandemic.



CHILDREN FIRST CANADA

LES ENFANTS D'ABORD CANADA



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
O'Brien Institute for Public Health



Child health and well-being is on the line during the pandemic. According to the [*Raising Canada 2020: Ringing the Alarm for Canada's Children report*](#), "top threats to childhood, including mental illness, food insecurity, child abuse, physical inactivity and poverty may be increasing – or are in danger of increasing – because of the pandemic" ([*Children First Canada, 2020*](#)).

Here is the summary of key funding in the report as per Children First Canada (2020).

Suicide, depression, and anxiety:

- Then: Suicide remains the second leading cause of death for youth aged 15-24, and is now also the leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 14 in Canada.
- Now: 57% of participants aged 15 to 17 report that their mental health is "somewhat worse" or "much worse" than it was prior to physical distancing measures.

Child abuse:

- Then: Family violence against children and youth increased by 7% between 2017 and 2018.
- Now: The World Health Organization (WHO) calls violence against children the hidden crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Canada, Kids Help Phone has reported an increase in specific conversations about physical, sexual and emotional abuse. As kids go back to school, reports of suspected child abuse may increase, once children are seen by trusted adults in their schools.

Poverty:

- Then: In 2017, 18.6% of children under 18 (1,356,980) were living in poverty (using the Limited Income Measure). The prevalence of preschool children under six living in poverty was even higher, at 19.6% (462,360 children).
- Now: 29% of Canadians report that the COVID-19 situation is having a moderate or major impact on their ability to meet financial obligations or essential needs.

Physical inactivity:

- Then: Only 35% of five to 17-year-olds met the guidelines of 60 minutes of daily physical activity.
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- Now: Only 4.8% of children (ages 5 to 11) and 0.8% of youth (ages 12 to 17) are meeting 24-hour movement guidelines.

Food insecurity:

- Then: 8.7% of Canadian households were food insecure in 2017/2018.
- Now: 15% of Canadians indicated living in a household where they experienced food insecurity in the past 30 days.

Immunization:

- Then: 76% of two-year-olds had received all four recommended doses of diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine in 2017.
- Now: Paediatric infectious disease specialists say that vaccination rates among children have dropped as much as 20% in parts of Canada – ramping up anxieties that the country could face a series of infectious outbreaks while still battling COVID-19.

Systemic racism and discrimination:

- Then: The report highlights the limited availability of race-based data, but indicates that Black, Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit), and other racialized children in Canada experience adverse health outcomes.
- Now: In a recent survey of Canadian adults of Chinese origin, more than half of the adults surveyed are worried that Asian children will be bullied when they return to school.

According to the article titled [*Rapid Systematic Review: The Impact of Social Isolation and Loneliness on the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in the Context of COVID-19*](#) and published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, found that social isolation and loneliness increased the risk of depression and possibly anxiety in children and adolescence, which lasted from three months to nine years later. It was also found that the duration of loneliness was more strongly linked to mental health symptoms than was the intensity of loneliness (Evidence Exchange Network for Mental Health and Addictions, 2020).

To read the snapshot of the report, please visit [EEnet website](#).

Visit [our resources page](#) to discover all our many evidence-based, up-to-date resources!

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meilleur départ**

by/par health **nexus** santé



We have moved! Our new location is:

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