

Incidental impacts of COVID-19 series: Parents & children

Health indicator report

Background & key findings

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health measures have had **incidental impacts on health and well-being**. Indicators presented in this health indicator report can help to examine potential effects in Halton. The purpose of this report is to provide information about concerns related to parenting and child well-being based on the responses of Halton parents aged 18+ who participated in the *2020 COVID-19 Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS) survey*. However, **these data were collected during October and November 2020 – prior to the peak of the second wave of the pandemic – and therefore represent a snapshot in time. Continued monitoring is required to examine impacts over time, including during the pandemic recovery period.**



Canada

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on families. Nearly two-thirds of parents surveyed in June 2020 reported that they were very or extremely concerned about managing their children's **behaviours, stress levels, anxiety and emotions**. Nearly half were concerned about having less patience, raising their voice, and scolding or yelling at their children.¹

Canadians with young children have been more likely to report worse **mental health**, increased **substance use** and increased **household food insecurity** during the pandemic compared to those without children.²⁻⁶

Data from spring and summer 2020 show that 70% of children were experiencing **poorer mental health** than before the pandemic, mainly due to **social isolation**.^{7,8} In fall 2020, 70% of children were worried about **falling behind at school**, up from 55% in the spring.⁹

Some parents and youth have also noted **positive changes** during the pandemic, including eating meals together and interacting more often, spending more time outdoors, and engaging in positive coping behaviours such as exercise.^{2,10-12}



Halton

In October and November of 2020, most surveyed parents (95%) indicated that they thought they had handled the **day-to-day demands of raising children** somewhat or very well over the past two weeks. However, local data regarding the impacts of the pandemic on parents in Halton are currently limited and there may be certain groups who have been disproportionately impacted. It will therefore be important to monitor impacts over time.

Parents expressed a number of concerns related to their children. The **top concerns** were related to:

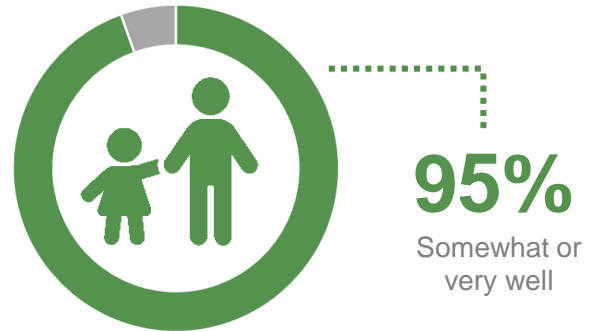
- Academic success
- Children passing COVID-19 to others
- Children becoming sick with COVID-19
- Screen time
- Mental health
- Physical activity
- Motivation and focus



Incidental impacts of COVID-19: Parents and children

Overview

- In October and November of 2020, 95% of surveyed parents said that they had handled the day-to-day demands of raising children somewhat or very well over the past two weeks.



Percentage of surveyed Halton parents aged 18 and over who indicated that they had handled the day-to-day demands of raising children somewhat or very well, Halton Region, October/November 2020

Sex

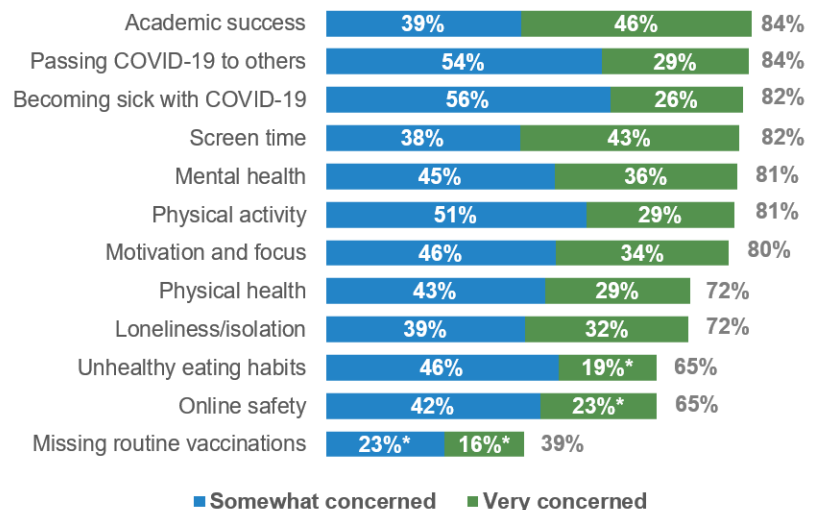
- In October and November of 2020, there were no statistically significant differences by sex in the percentage of respondents who said they had handled the day-to-day demands of raising children somewhat or very well.



Percentage of surveyed Halton parents aged 18 and over who indicated that they had handled the day-to-day demands of raising children somewhat or very well, by sex, Halton Region, October/November 2020

Parental concerns

- In October and November of 2020, Halton parents who were surveyed were asked about concerns related to their children over the past two weeks. The top concerns were related to academic success, children passing COVID-19 to others or becoming sick with COVID-19, screen time, mental health, physical activity and motivation and focus.



Percentage of surveyed Halton parents aged 18 and over who indicated they were somewhat or very concerned about issues related to their children, Halton Region, October/November 2020

About the COVID-19 Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS) survey

- The COVID-19 Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS) survey was conducted by the Institute of Social Research and York University. Data were collected from October 27th 2020 to November 15th 2020 among adults aged 18 and over living in Halton Region.
- Data were collected using an online survey panel sample (400 respondents) and convenience sample (834 respondents). For the panel sample, Canadian census data were used in an effort to generate samples that were representative of the population and incentives were used for survey participation. For the convenience sample, a link to the survey was promoted through the Halton Region website (Halton.ca) and social media accounts.
- Data for this report were analyzed with the convenience sample and panel sample combined. It is important to keep in mind that the survey respondents may not be representative of the population of Halton Region in terms of sex, age, income, education and other sociodemographic characteristics. Weights were used to adjust for differences in the age and sex distributions of the sample populations compared to the population of Halton Region.
- Statistical significance between groups was determined using non-overlapping confidence intervals. Statistically significant differences are differences that are unlikely to be due to chance alone.

Last updated: August 2021



Data notes

Data Source: COVID-19 Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System [2020], Halton Region Health Department and Institute for Social Research, York University.

Definitions: **Incidental impacts of COVID-19** are defined as effects associated with public health measures implemented in response to the pandemic, or impacts resulting from fear of exposure to COVID-19.

Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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