



U-REPORT CANADA

May 2020

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on
Young People in Canada

Poll 2: Examining the Issues

WWW.UNICEF.CA/ONEYOUTH

U-REPORT CANADA

U-Report Canada is a trusted, chatbot-based polling platform for young people aged 13-24 to have a say and decision-makers to understand their views. Developed by UNICEF, U-Report gathers youth perspectives on issues they care about to influence positive change. U-Report is a unique opportunity to get a quick and real-time pulse check of young people's views for a range of purposes, such as to understand how different groups of youth are being affected by decisions, policies, services and events, and involve youth in decisions that affect them. U-Report operates in more than 45 countries with 6 million U-Reporters and counting – every 30 seconds a new U-Reporter signs up somewhere in the world. Launched in Canada in October, 2018, U-Report Canada has more than 600 U-Reporters and counting, with young people in every province in territory on this panel, many of whom are furthest from opportunity. In Canada, U-Report is a partnership of UNICEF Canada and Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Kids Help Phone, The Students Commission of Canada, YMCA Canada, and the RBC Foundation. For more information about U-Report Canada, visit www.ureportcanada.ca.

Young People and COVID-19

Children and youth are the generation that is most affected by the social and economic impacts of the response to COVID-19, because it is taking a toll on all aspects of their lives at a critical time in their development. They will carry the impacts of this pandemic the longest. While young people are sometimes talked about during this crisis, they are rarely listened to.

Following the first U-Report Canada poll on COVID-19 that ran in March at the start of the pandemic lockdown in Canada, this poll ran from April 30 to May 5 2020 to take a more in-depth look at the issues young people are facing during the lockdown period. A total of 125 U-Reporters answered questions about how they and their household members are experiencing the pandemic. Respondents were provided with resources and information to help support them with the issues addressed in the poll.

Key Takeaways:

- U-Reporters vary in their feelings about missing school and whether they are keeping up, but generally report feeling the same or worse about schooling overall since the lockdown began. Among the challenges of schooling online, they most often cite a lack of motivation, difficulty focusing and not enough interaction with their teachers.
- A majority of U-Reporters (69%) say the pandemic has had a negative or very negative impact on their mental health.
- Most respondents (86%) are at least somewhat concerned about maintaining relationships with peers and family members, and many say that not being able to see their friends is the most difficult restriction for them.
- U-Reporters are experiencing material impacts of the pandemic: two thirds have lost current or potential employment, 20% have less money for groceries, and many are finding online learning challenging because of a lack of space or materials.
- Describing their family situations, U-Reporters most commonly state that their families are supporting each other well (43%) but are feeling more stressed (40%). Some respondents say that the opportunity to spend more time with family has been something positive to come out of the pandemic.

The results of this poll will be used to promote understanding among Canadians about how young people are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensure their views and experiences are taken into account in decision-making.

How are young people experiencing COVID-19? Here is what 125 U-Reporters said:

How much do you miss going to school?

Generally, respondents indicate that they miss going to school, with the greatest portion of U-Reporters saying they miss it very much. Close to half miss school at least quite a lot, and about half that (one in five) do not miss school.

Response	Percentage
1 - Not at all	11
2	9
3	22
4	24
5 – Very much	26
Does not apply	8
Total	100

Are you falling behind with your school work?

U-Reporters are divided about whether they are falling behind on their school work. A substantial proportion, 46%, say they are.

Response	Percentage
1. Yes	46
2. No	40
3. Does not apply	14
Total	100

Since the lockdown, how are you feeling about school?

The same, or worse.

Roughly 40% of U-Reporters say they are feeling worse or much worse about school since the lockdown, and almost the same amount say their feelings about school have not changed.

Response	Percentage
1. Much better	7
2. Better	14
3. The same	38
4. Worse	32
5. Much worse	9
Total	100

How easy or hard is it to do the work assigned by your teacher?

42% of U-Reporters are finding it hard or very hard to do their school work, and 26% say it is easy or very easy. Overall, looking at all of the poll questions about school, the online school experience is not a positive one for about one in four U-Reporters.

Response	Percentage
1 – Very easy	11
2	15
3	33
4	31
5 – Very hard	11
Total	100

Thinking of your relationships with your family since the start of the pandemic, which of the following statements apply?

Most U-Reporters report that their families are supporting each other well (43%) but are feeling more stressed (40%). About one in three say they are arguing more, while one in three say they are having more fun together and the same proportion say they are having more meaningful conversations.

Response	Percentage
1. We are supporting each other well	43
2. We are feeling more stressed	40
3. We are arguing more	33
4. We are having to share more (e.g. computers, food, school supplies, etc)	31
5. We are having more fun together	29
6. We are having more meaningful conversations	28
7. We are listening to each other more	20
8. Other	6
9. None of the above	6

In the next three questions, respondents were asked how concerned they are about the following:

Maintaining relationships with my peers and family members

The majority of U-Reporters (86%) are at least somewhat concerned about maintaining relationships with peers and family, with almost half (45%) very or extremely concerned.

Response	Percentage
1. Not at all	15
2. Somewhat	41
3. Very	35
4. Extremely	10
Total	100

Family stress

U-Reporters are slightly polarized in their concern about family stress, with 20% saying they are not at all concerned, and 15% extremely concerned. About one in four are very or extremely concerned about the level of stress they perceive within their family.

Response	Percentage
1. Not at all	20
2. Somewhat	39
3. Very	26
4. Extremely	15
Total	100

Violence in the home

The majority of U-Reporters (84%) are not at all concerned about violence in the home; 16% are at least somewhat concerned; 7% are very or extremely concerned.

Response	Percentage
1. Not at all	84
2. Somewhat	9
3. Very	5
4. Extremely	2
Total	100

How has the pandemic affected your employment?

Top selections: loss of current or potential employment.

While a third of U-Reporters have lost their jobs, and a third have lost a potential summer job, almost 20% say they are working more than before. 12% are leaving their house to go to work. Only 11% are receiving money from the government.

Response	Percentage
1. have permanently or temporarily lost my job (where I worked before the pandemic)	30
2. I have lost a potential summer job	30
3. I am working less than before	21
4. I am working more than before	19
5. I am working from home	16
6. I am still leaving my house to go to work	12
7. I am getting money from the government	11
8. Does not apply	11

How would you say the COVID-19 pandemic has affected your mental health?

Negatively – by a large margin.

The majority of U-Reporters (69%) say the pandemic has had a negative or very negative impact on their mental health. Conversely, 19% report a positive or very positive impact on their mental health. 11% say it hasn't affected their mental health.

Response	Percentage
1. Very positively	3
2. Positively	16
3. Negatively	47
4. Very Negatively	22
5. It hasn't affected my mental health	11
Total	100

How are your experiences with bullying different during the pandemic?

Most U-Reporters (75%) have not experienced a change in relation to bullying, and 17% are experiencing less bullying. Only 1% are experiencing more bullying.

Response	Percentage
1. My experiences with bullying haven't changed	75
2. I am experiencing less bullying	17
3. I am experiencing different kinds of bullying	7
4. I am experiencing more bullying	1

Have you experienced online bullying since you started staying home?

No, by a large margin.

The majority of respondents (93%) have not experienced online bullying since the lockdown began.

Response	Percentage
1. Yes	7
2. No	93
Total	100

Have you experienced bullying from siblings or other children or youth in your home?

Roughly one in ten respondents have experienced bullying from siblings or other children or youth in their home.

Response	Percentage
1. Yes	11
2. No	89
Total	100

If you are experiencing bullying, are you getting help?

Most likely, no.

Among respondents who are experiencing bullying, more than twice as many say they are not getting help.

Response	Percentage
1. Yes	6
2. No	14
3. I'm not experiencing bullying	80
Total	100

The COVID-19 pandemic is making it harder for many people to get enough healthy food. How has your access to food been affected by COVID-19?

Top response: less money for groceries.

20% of U-Reporters say they or their families have less money for groceries, and 12% say their communities are facing a shortage of healthy foods. Other responses included relying on friends, family, or delivery services for groceries because of isolation requirements.

Response	Percentage
1. I have/my family has less money for groceries	20
2. Other	17
3. There is a shortage of healthy foods in my community	12
4. I can't get food through a school program anymore	3
5. I am getting food from a community program	3
6. None of the above	54

What should be the top priority to open up when it is safe to do so?

Top response: health care services.

Health care services were ranked as the top priority to open up by 43% of U-Reporters, followed by schools (18%), jobs (13%) and mental health care (12%). Access to outdoor spaces and events were far behind.

Response	Percentage
1. Health care services	43
2. Schools	18
3. Jobs	13
4. Mental health care services	12
5. Access to youth programs	4
6. Access to outdoor spaces	2
7. Events (concerts, community events, etc)	2
8. Other	1

What is the COVID-19 restriction that has been the most difficult for you?

- Isolation from friends, and in some cases family
- Impact of social distancing measures on future plans (e.g. internships and classes cancelled, graduations delayed, upcoming jobs and opportunities lost)
- Lack of access to in-person physical and mental health services
- Staying inside the house

What is the most difficult thing about doing school from home?

- Lack of motivation
- Difficulty focusing
- Lack of support from and interaction with teachers; harder to ask for help or clarification
- Lack of help from peers and friends
- Material challenges of remote online learning: internet issues, lack of space, lack of access to resources and materials, distractions

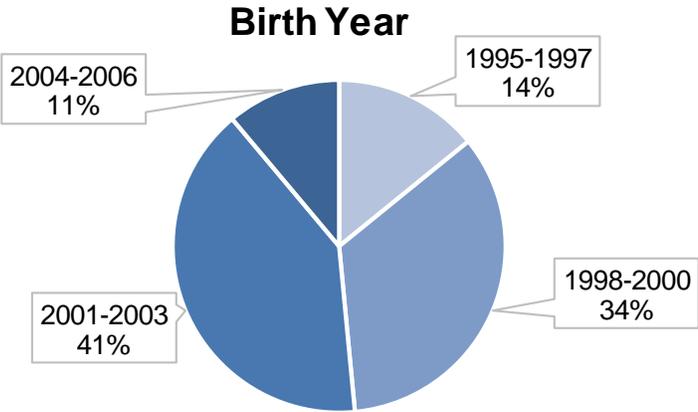
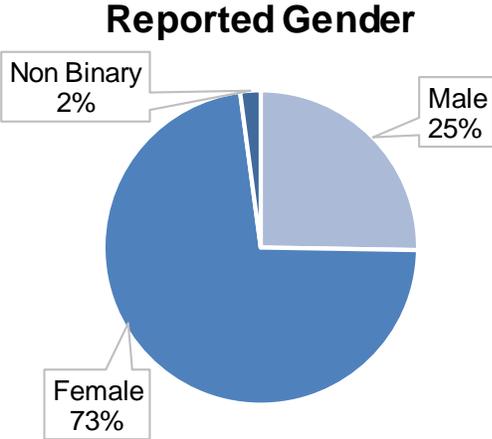
What would make doing schoolwork easier?

- Less homework, more flexibility with deadlines and expectations
- Physically going to school
- More interactive communication with teachers
- More structure/ regular routine
- Having a dedicated workspace with a desk, chair, laptop, and printer

Has this situation brought anything positive to your life? If so, what?

- More time to spend with family
- More personal time
- Opportunity to slow down and take a break from being busy
- More sleep
- Gratitude for the important things in life

Demographic Information



Province/Territory

