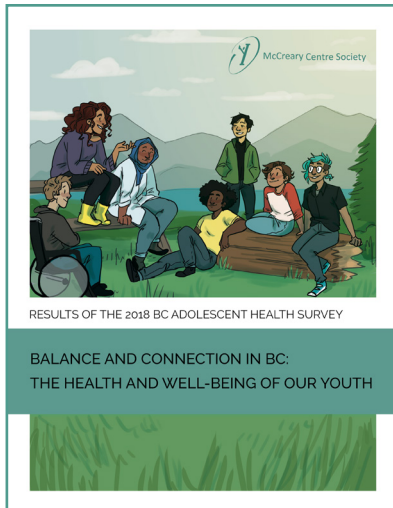


A PROFILE OF BC YOUTH WHO WORK



A 2018 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY FACT SHEET



This fact sheet uses data from McCreary Centre Society's BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS). The most recent BC AHS was completed in 2018 by over 38,000 youth aged 12–19. For more information about the survey methodology please visit <http://mcs.bc.ca/>.

In BC, children aged 12 and over can legally work. However, those aged 12–14 need written permission from their parent or guardian and under 16's are generally not permitted to work in excess of 20 hours a week.

Working during adolescence is believed to increase independence, develop interpersonal skills and can provide youth with money to participate in activities they may otherwise miss out on (Mortimer, 2010). However, working excessive hours has been associated with reduced academic achievement, school engagement, and sleep; and with increased stress and substance use (Bachman et al., 2013; Graves et al., 2017; Kalenkosi & Pabilonia, 2012; Safron et al., 2001; Staff et al., 2010).

OVERVIEW OF BC YOUTH WHO WORK

In 2018, 33% of BC youth aged 12–19 worked at a paid job during the school year, with no gender differences. This represented an increase from 29% in 2013, and was below the rates in 2008 (41%) and 2003 (37%).

As would be expected, older youth were generally more likely to have a job. For example, 45% of those aged 15 or older worked during the school year, compared to 17% of those aged 14 or younger.

Among youth who were employed, 28% worked less than five hours a week, 37% worked 5–12 hours, 27% worked 13–20 hours, and 8% worked 21 or more hours a week.

Youth in the Lower Mainland were less likely than youth in other parts of the province to have a job (e.g., 29% of Fraser youth worked during the school year vs. 41% of Interior youth).

Youth who work more than 20 hours a week

Males were more likely than females to work 21 or more hours each week (9% vs. 7%), as were older youth compared to younger ones.

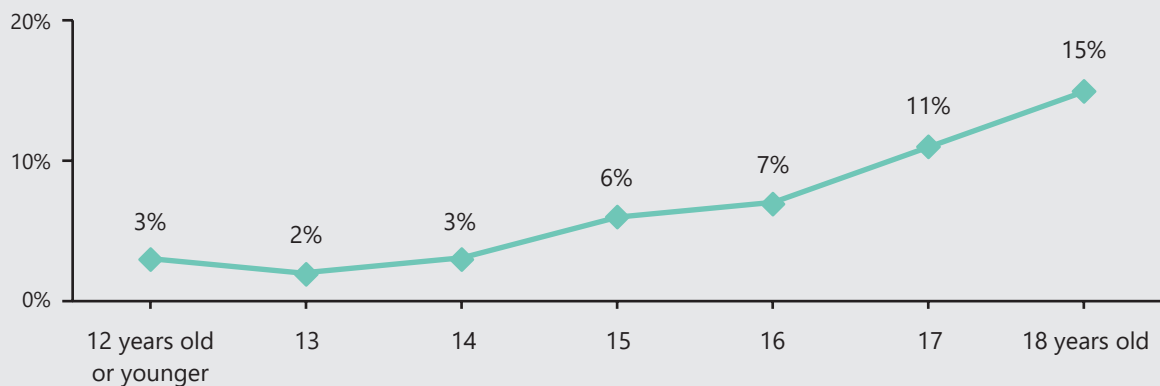
Among those who worked during the school year, youth in Vancouver Coastal were less likely than youth in the rest of the province to work in excess of 20 hours a week (e.g., 6% vs. 10% of youth in the Northern region).

Youth born in Canada were generally more likely than those born abroad to work at a paid job (36% vs. 24%). However, youth who arrived in Canada as refugees were more likely than Canadian-born youth to work in excess of 20 hours a week (20%* vs. 8%).

Youth who often or always went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home were more likely than those who did not go to bed hungry to work during the school year (41% vs. 33%) and to work in excess of 20 hours a week (18% vs. 8%).

Youth who reported being deprived of three or more items their peers had (such as access to the Internet and money for lunch, school trips and extracurricular activities) were also more likely to be working in excess of 20 hours a week (16% vs. 8% of youth who did not feel deprived of any items).

YOUTH WHO WORKED IN EXCESS OF 20 HOURS A WEEK DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR



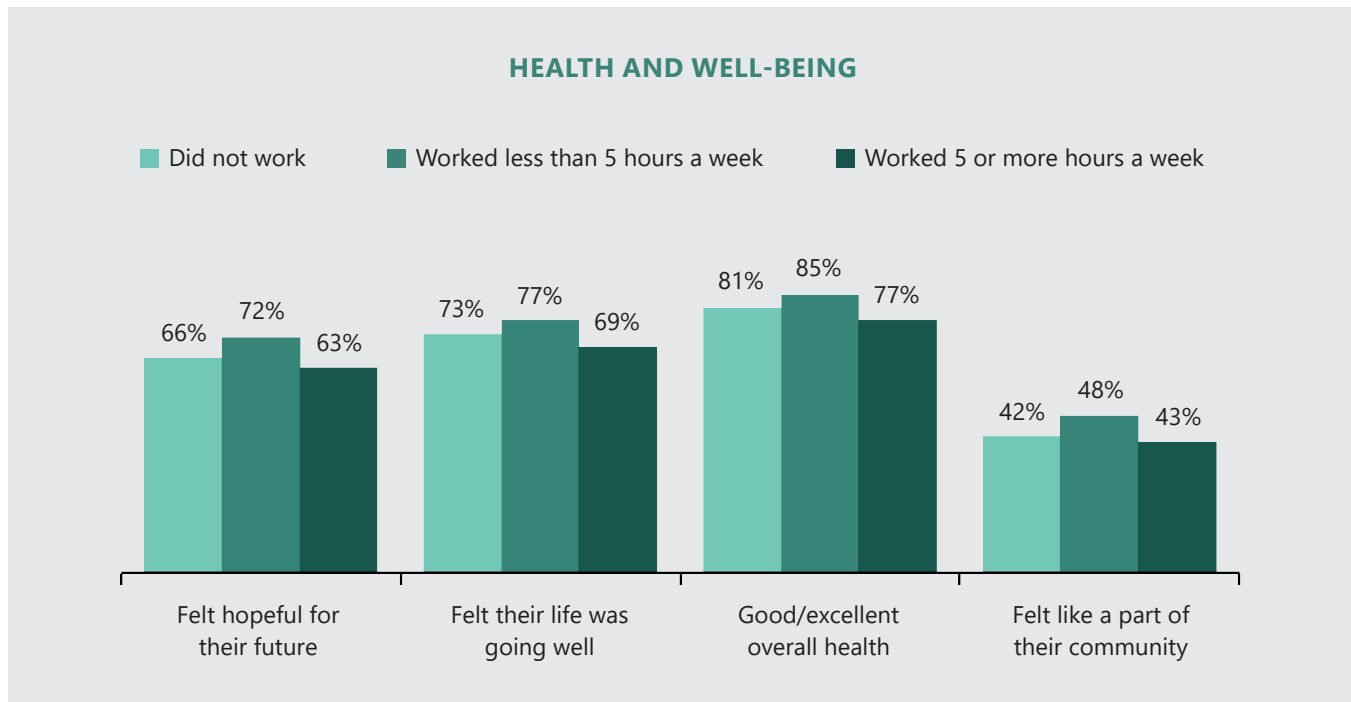
Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Working a few hours a week was associated with positive health and well-being. For example, youth who worked up to five hours a week were more likely to report good or excellent overall health and to feel hopeful for their future than those who worked more hours and those who did not work.

Youth who worked less than five hours a week were more likely than those who did not work to identify something they were good at (84% vs. 79%), and were also more like than those who worked a greater number of hours to report being good at something.

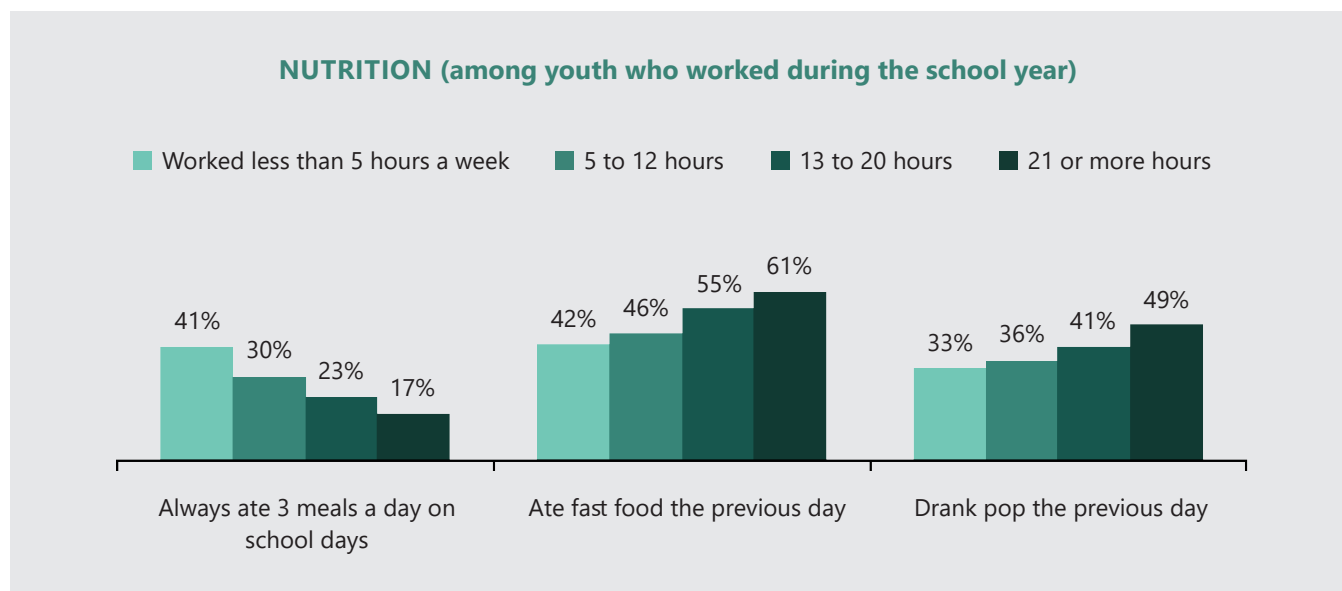
Also, those who worked less than five hours were more likely than those who worked more hours to usually feel good about themselves (61% vs. 54%), to report good or excellent mental health (75% vs. 65%), and to feel happy in the past month (66% vs. 60%). Percentages were comparable for youth who did not work and those who worked less than five hours.



Similarly, youth who worked less than five hours a week were as likely as youth who did not work to feel they spent the right amount of time with their family, friends, in nature, and on their own. The more hours youth worked, the more likely they were to feel they had insufficient time to spend in these areas (e.g., 18% of youth who worked less than five hours felt they had insufficient time with their family, vs. 23% who worked 5–12 hours, vs. 29% who worked 13–20 hours, vs. 42% who worked 21 or more hours).

Working fewer hours was also linked to better nutrition (e.g., eating three meals a day and not consuming fast food or pop the previous day), and to a greater likelihood of sleeping eight or more hours the night before completing the survey.

For example, 52% of youth who did not work or who worked less than five hours a week had slept eight or more hours the previous night, which was higher than among youth who worked 5–12 hours (38%) and those who worked in excess of 20 hours (29%).



Physical activity

Youth who worked were more likely than those who did not work to take part in weekly physical activity, such as organized, informal, or extreme sports, and dance, yoga, or exercise classes (79% vs. 73%). However, among youth who worked, the fewer hours they worked the more likely they were to engage in these types of weekly sports or exercise classes. For example, 86% of students who worked less than five hours a week participated in weekly sports or exercise classes, compared to 78% who worked 5–12 hours, 75% who worked 13–20 hours, and 68% who worked in excess of 20 hours a week.

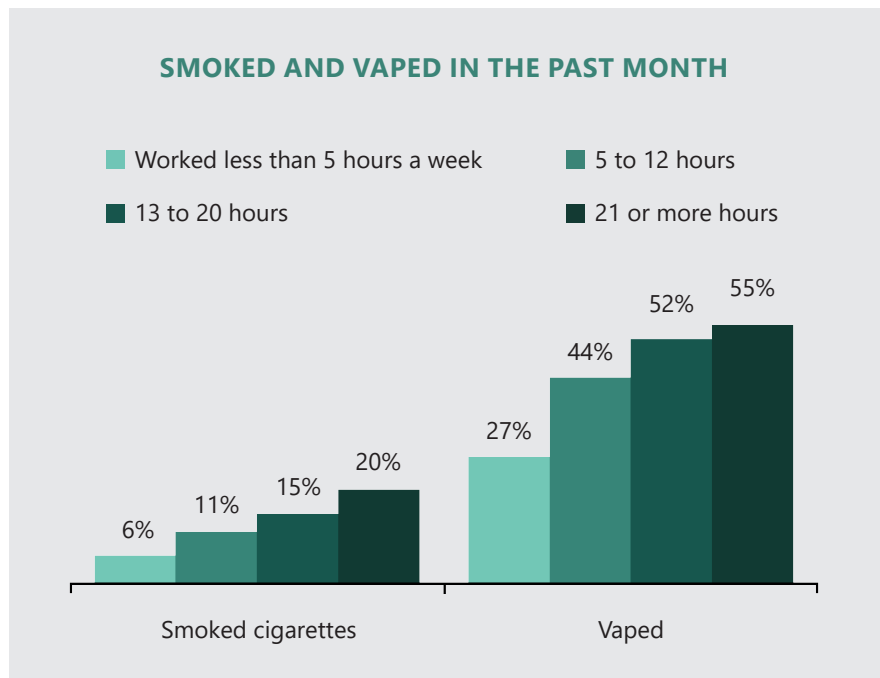
Substance use

Youth with a job were more likely than those without a job to have ever used cannabis (42% vs. 17%), but they were as likely to have used cannabis recently (among those who had tried it). Also, the number of hours youth worked was not associated with their likelihood of using cannabis in the past month.

Youth who were employed were more likely than those without a job to have tried alcohol (65% vs. 34%) and to have consumed it in the past month (71% vs. 57%; among those who had tried alcohol).

Youth who worked fewer hours were generally less likely to drink in the past month than those who worked more hours (e.g., 63% of those who worked less than five hours had consumed alcohol recently vs. 75% who worked in excess of 20 hours; among those who had tried alcohol).

Youth with a job were also more likely than those without a job to have recently vaped (42% vs. 20%) and smoked cigarettes (11% vs. 6%), and generally the more hours they worked the more likely they were to smoke and vape.



Note: For vaped, the difference between '13 to 20 hours' and '21 or more hours' was not statistically significant.

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT AND POST-SECONDARY PLANS

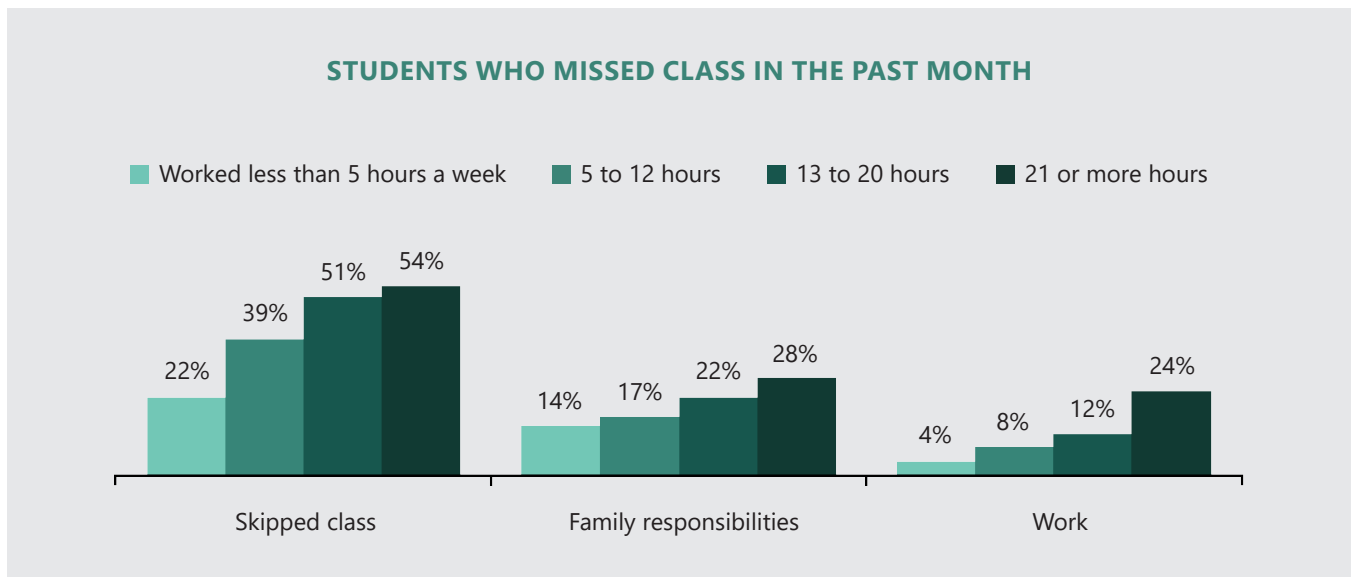
Youth who worked fewer than 13 hours a week felt just as connected to their school as youth who did not work (e.g., 61% of youth who did not work felt connected, which was the same percentage as for youth who worked 5–12 hours). However, those who worked 13–20 hours were less likely to feel connected (55%), and those who worked more than 20 hours were the least likely to feel connected to school (42%).

Youth with a job were more likely than those without one to have missed school in the past month because they skipped class (39% vs. 19%) and because they had family responsibilities (18% vs. 12%). Among youth who worked, the more hours they worked each week the more likely they were to have missed school because they skipped class, had family responsibilities, and because of work.

Just under half (48%) of youth who worked less than five hours a week reported doing homework after their expected bedtime.

This was similar to the percentage among youth who did not work, and was lower than among youth who worked five or more hours (56% did homework after their expected bedtime).

Youth who worked were more likely than youth who did not work to plan to continue their education beyond high school (86% vs. 82%). Among youth with a job, those who worked less than five hours a week were typically more likely than those who worked in excess of 20 hours to plan to pursue post-secondary education.



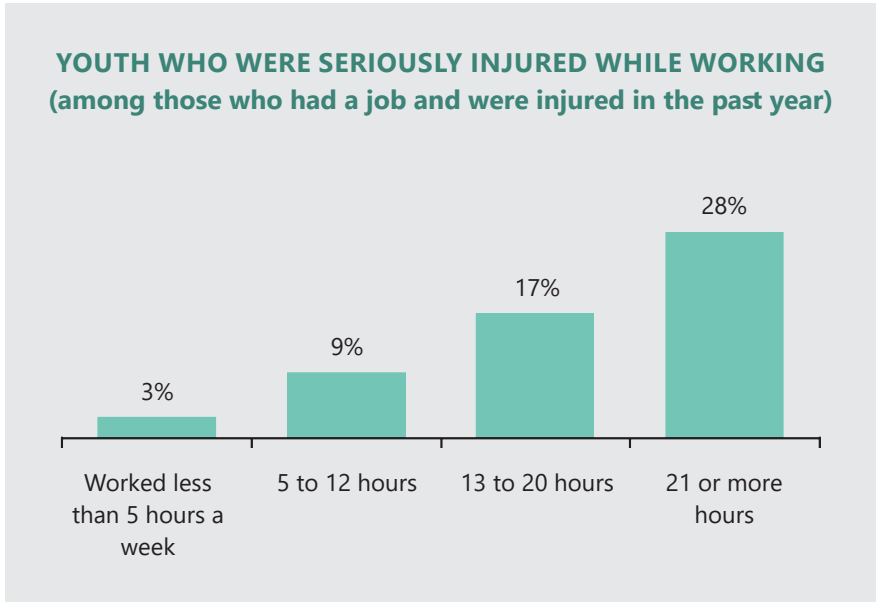
Note: For skipped class, the difference between '13 to 20 hours' and '21 or more hours' was not statistically significant.

WORKPLACE INJURIES

Among youth who had a job and were seriously injured in the past year, 11% reported their injury happened while working.

Females who worked were more likely than males to indicate their serious injury happened while working (12% vs. 10%), as were older youth compared to younger youth.

The more hours youth worked, the more likely they were to have been seriously injured while working.



SUPPORTING YOUTH WHO WORK MORE THAN 20 HOURS

Working in excess of 20 hours a week during the school year was not associated with the same benefits as working a few hours a week. However, some youth may have to work this frequently, and there appear to be a number of ways they can be supported. For example, youth who worked 21 or more hours a week were less likely to experience extreme stress in the past month when they had an adult in their life they could talk to if they had a serious problem (15% vs. 26% who did not have this type of adult in their life). Also, when they had an adult in the community who really cared about them, they were more likely to plan to attend post secondary (85% vs. 75% without such an adult in their life).

Youth who worked in excess of 20 hours a week and who took part in at least one weekly extracurricular activity (such as organized sports or volunteering) were more likely to feel happy at school (48% vs. 35% who did not take part) and feel like a part of their school (47% vs. 29%).

SUMMARY

A third of BC youth worked in the past year, and most worked less than 13 hours a week. Working a few hours a week was associated with positive health and well-being, while working too many hours was linked to less positive well-being. Findings in BC reflect those of other studies which highlight the importance of ensuring youth who are working excessive hours are supported and connected (Graves et al., 2017).

RESOURCES

The WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line can answer young people's questions about workplace health and safety, worker and employer responsibilities, and can take reports of a workplace accident or incident. The Prevention Information Line accepts anonymous calls.

Phone **604 276-3100** in the Lower Mainland, or call **1 888 621-7233 (621-SAFE)** toll-free in British Columbia. To report after-hours and weekend accidents and emergencies, call **604 273-7711** in the Lower Mainland, or call **1 866 922-4357 (WCB-HELP)** toll-free in British Columbia.

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