

**FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN,
AGING FAMILY MEMBERS,
&/OR SPECIAL NEEDS/
MOBILITY CHALLENGES**

COVID-19 led to unprecedented closures in all areas, including schools and daycares, in-person care services, day programs for elders and those with special needs as well as any respite services for caregivers. This intensely increased responsibilities at home for parents and caregivers with little indication of how long it would last.

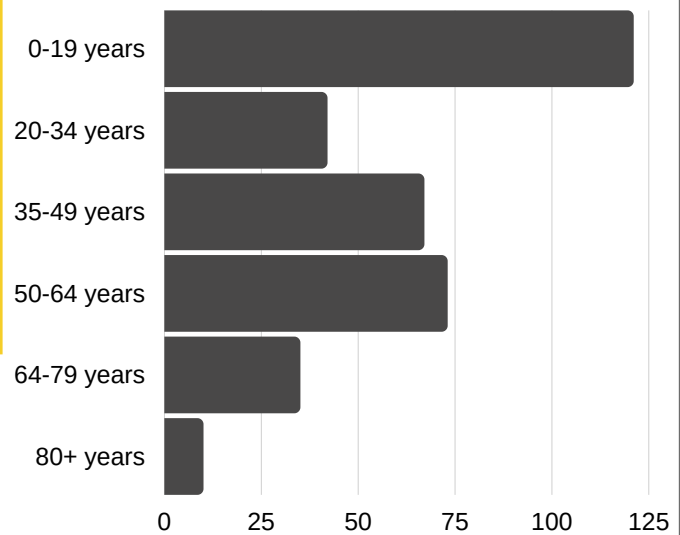
Isolation and missing family and friends was of course the most common challenge for many, while others appreciated extra time without the stress of daily commutes, errands and activities outside the home.

Those living in residential care homes were extremely isolated as they could no longer have visitors. The unintended consequences of physical distancing and new safety protocols led to extreme loneliness causing an increase in anxiety and depression.

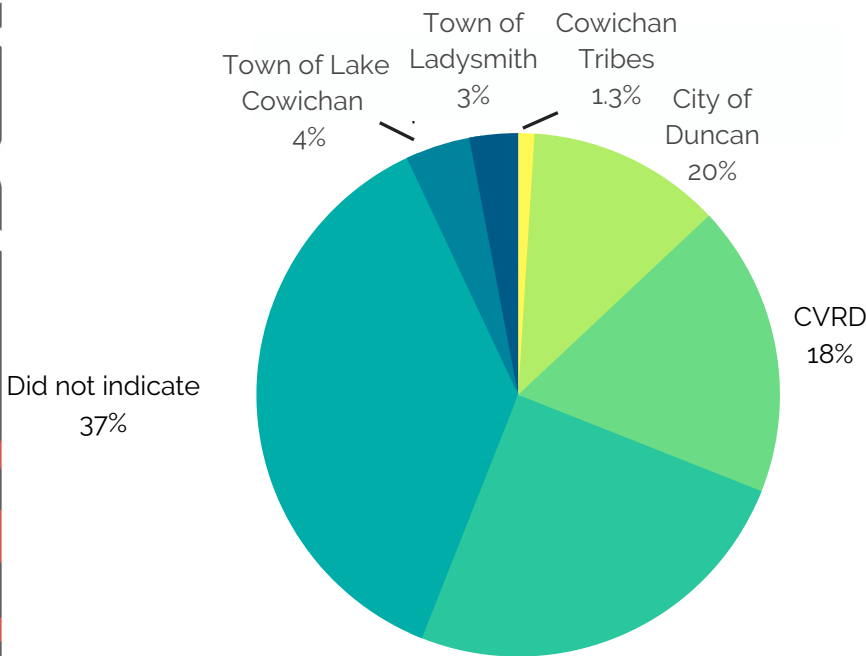
Depending on the circumstances, this time of shutting down was a welcome break for some but harmful for others.

150 ...total number of respondents to Survey #4

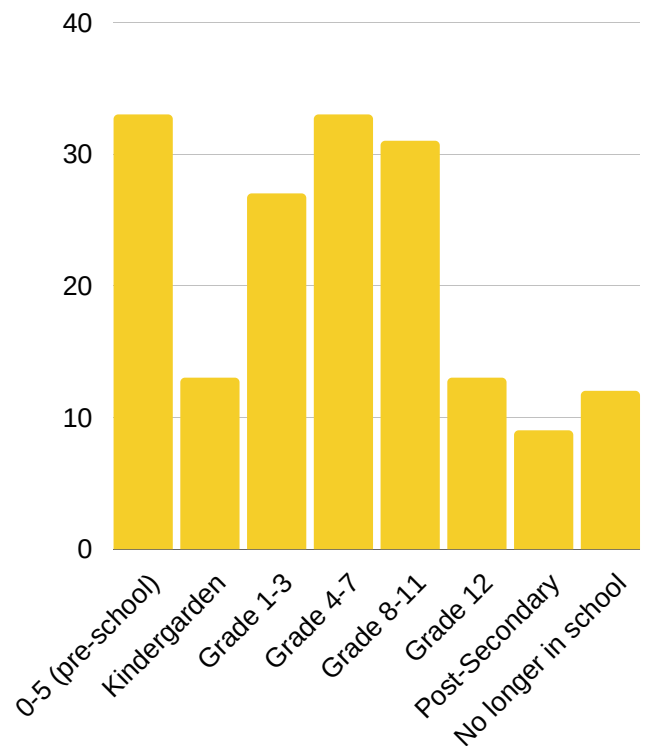
Household Age Representation of Survey Respondents



Household Location



School Levels for Children at Home



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76%

of survey respondents with children indicated their screen time had increased and observed the following changes in their child as a result...

- Increased outbursts, moody and impulsive behaviour & irritability
- More argumentative
- Poor sleeping habits, over tired, lethargy
- Less focused/more distracted, unmotivated
- Headaches

Benefits for Children & Families

- More quality time together - one-on-one and as a family unit
- Improved bonds and relationships
- Increase in outdoor activities & creativity
- Improved health including less stress, fewer colds/flu & more rest

Access to Internet & Technology

15% of respondents with children did not have the technology needed for at home learning due to:

- out of date technology
- competing needs with working parent(s) and/or siblings
- School District 79 loaned iPads with 3 months of free internet*

Respondents with aging family members got creative with technology by:

- talking on the phone through a window
- teaching/learning new video applications, email
- Care staff facilitating virtual connections

Ways Children Are Learning Outside of School Curriculum

- Reading, Educational Webinars, Online Learning Series/Apps, YouTube
- Nature walks, gardening
- Cooking, baking, crafts

Top Ways of Addressing Childcare

- 52% of parents who responded are not working/were laid off
- 21% have two parents taking turns
- 19% indicated children take care of themselves or each other/Non-parent family member(s) are helping out
- 16% rely on extra screen time

Biggest Challenges for Children

frustration
isolated confusion school
hugs stressed quiet
friends aggressive
bored listless depressed
missing irritated distant
afraid lonely worried
angry sad needy arguing
restless confused
family emotional
anxious weary
moody



[Click here for raw survey data](#)



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Top Concerns for Aging Family Members

56% of survey respondents were caring for/concerned about aging family members, who may or may not be living with them. Top concerns included:

- Not being able to see/visit them
- Loneliness, isolation and impacts on mental wellbeing
- Risks to health, existing health concerns/compromised immunity
- Confusion about the virus and social distancing

67%

of survey respondents with aging family members could only interact with them virtually or over the phone.

37%

of survey respondents have family members with special needs or mobility issues.

Challenges for Caregivers

Caregivers experienced extra stress with limited opportunities for support due to canceled services. Many stated they were not able to prioritize their own needs or take a rest.

- 16% of survey respondents felt the changes to their caregiving situation was unsustainable
- 13% experienced limited opportunities for residential respite or day programs
- 25% were concerned with allowing outside community support services in the home
- Added stress if aging family member was admitted to hospital as they could not be there to advocate or support them.

Services or Care Supports No Longer Accessible or Available

Assisted Bathing - Foot Care - Doctor
Dentist - Physiotherapy - Counselling
Cleaning Services - Hearing Specialist
Optometrist - Massage - Chiropractor
Aqua Therapy - Mental Health Supports
Occupational Therapy - Mobility Training
Home Support - Utility Service Workers
Home Maintenance - Day Programs
Respite Care - Case Workers

COVID-19 changes people want to see continue as we move forward:

Quality family time - Less spending/Less shopping - Cleanliness - Caring for/Helping each other
Slower pace of life - Telehealth - Supporting local - Time in nature - Growing food - Cooking
Appreciation for Frontline workers - Driving less - Less pollution - Work from home - Kindness
CERB into Universal Basic Income - Delivery/Curbside pick up - Gratitude

Questions for the future...

- How long should parents expect to work from home without child care or their children going back to school?
- What resources will be available for children who may not be able to return to school?
- When will there be respite for caregivers or other support services available?
- Will our systems (finally) make permanent shifts to accommodate accessibility for everyone?
- How long can we sustain living in isolation with increasing mental health and wellbeing concerns?

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"My eldest child has had a tremendous expansion in her creativity... I don't believe she would have tapped into this well of creativity without this time away from her regular activities. Our younger child is calmer and spends more time reading on her own...".

Increased family time is a positive for us. One of my children benefits from not being in school and is more fulfilled at home. We have been able to spend more time in the garden and also reflect on our family values.

"It gave us an excuse to take their (aging parent's) car off of the road!"

"Our children have formed a close bond and have very little conflict. Previously they were often tired and had less energy for each other."

"Yes a focus on the simpler things. Slow pace. Less exterior pressures. Less shopping trips!"

Are there any positive experiences or opportunities you have seen take place during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?

"Renewed interest in cooking & gardening"

"One child has experienced a substantial reduction in anxiety and has a much more positive outlook on life"

"Increased TV watching and decreased motivation to do other activities with less social opportunity."

"We have learned that our day to day life with school and two parents working is not the way we want to live..."

"This has increased Mom's anxiety and cognitive decline. Dad carrying the load alone primarily so his health issues have increased.."

"Their health both physical and mental well-being is a concern."

"They don't understand social distancing or the rules to protect them"

"...Unfortunately, we will have to get back to this schedule eventually."

What are the biggest concerns or challenges you have had during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?

"The care home staff has arranged Facetime calls, but Dad loses interest very quickly. Maybe he has forgotten us already."

"I have concerns about visiting but then have concerns about them (aging parents) being alone for too long and something happening."

"Timely access to online delivery, supply shortage of medicine, hand sanitizer and masks"