

ECONOMIC & MATERIAL WELL-BEING

INDICATOR #41 Parental Unemployment Rate

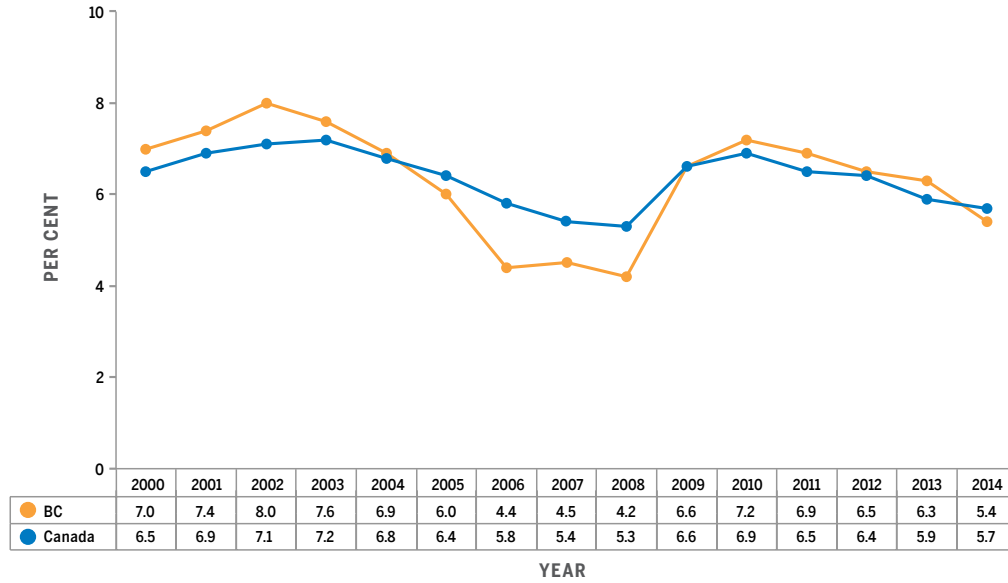
DEFINITION

INDICATOR #41 — Percentage of children for whom at least one parent reports having been unemployed in the previous year.

KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ “Unemployment” means without work and actively seeking work. Unemployment tends to lead to lower household income and increased likelihood of receiving social assistance, especially when employment insurance benefits expire.¹
- ▶ The Canadian, US, and European economies have had a slow rate of recovery from the 2008 recession.² Younger workers have been especially impacted by unemployment,³ so this trend has the potential to create or exacerbate economic stresses for younger families.⁴
- ▶ Data currently available do not include the percentage of children with an unemployed parent, but do include the percentage of households with at least one child or youth under age 16 with at least one parent reporting unemployment in the previous year. As such, analyses presented here show the percentage of households with these parameters as a proxy measure for examining the percentage of children with an unemployed parent.
- ▶ In BC, the percentage of families with at least one unemployed parent and a child or youth less than 16 years old was decreasing before the economic downturn of 2008 (see Figure 41.1). This percentage increased sharply from 2008 to 2010—an increase that was more dramatic in BC than in the country as a whole—before decreasing steadily through to 2014. Despite the decrease, this percentage is still well above the rate of unemployment achieved between 2006 and 2008.
- ▶ Figure 41.1 provides the provincial and national percentages of families with at least one unemployed parent and a child or youth less than 16 years old. It shows that between 2005 and 2008, the BC rate was substantially lower than the national rate. This appears to be the result of the relatively steep rate of decrease in BC from 2002 to 2006. Since the recession in 2008, this gap has closed and the percentage for BC is very close to that of Canada overall.
- ▶ Figure 41.2 shows that in 2014, BC was virtually tied with Quebec, Manitoba, and Alberta for the second lowest percentage of parental unemployment among provinces.
- ▶ Comparable data regarding households with unemployed parents were not available by health authority or health service delivery area at the time of this report.

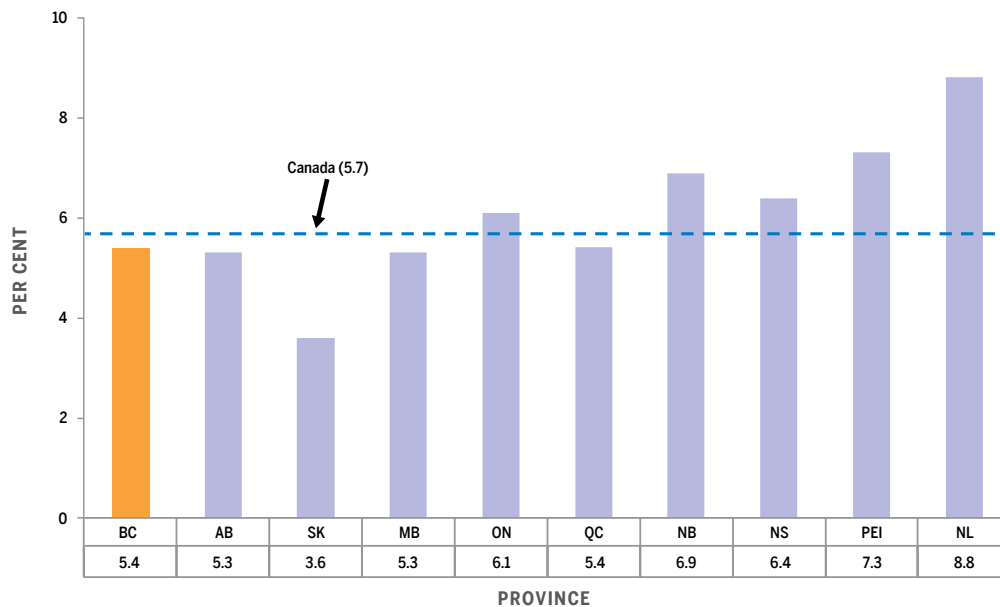
FIG 41.1 Percentage of Families with a Child or Youth Age 0-16 that Report Unemployment, BC and Canada, 2000 to 2014



Notes: "Unemployed" means at least one parent reported at some point in the last year being available for work and either on temporary layoff or without work but looking for work. See Appendix B for more information about this definition and data source.

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 282-0211, Labour Force Survey Estimates, by Family Type and Family Age Composition, CANSIM database. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

FIG 41.2 Percentage of Families with a Child or Youth Age 0-16 that Report Unemployment, by Province, Canada, 2014



Notes: "Unemployed" means at least one parent reported at some point in the last year being available for work and either on temporary layoff or without work but looking for work. See Appendix B for more information about this definition and data source.

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 282-0211, Labour Force Survey Estimates, by Family Type and Family Age Composition, CANSIM database. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

REFERENCES

- ¹ H. Krueger & Associates. Child and youth health and well-being indicators project: appendix I – economic and material well-being evidence review [prepared for the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the Canadian Institute for Health Information]. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Institute for Health Information; 2011 [cited 2016 Apr 7]. Available from: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/special-reports/appendix_i_-_economic__material_well_being_evidence_review.pdf.
- ² Ragan C. What now? Addressing the burden of Canada's slow growth recovery. Commentary 413. Toronto, ON: CD Howe Institute; 2014 Jul.
- ³ TD Economics. Special report: assessing the long-term costs of youth unemployment. Toronto, ON: TD Economics; 2013 Jan 29.
- ⁴ LaRochelle-Cote S, Gilmore J. Canada's economic downturn. Perspectives on Labour and Income. 2009 Dec;10(12):5-12.