

Ex|clusion Tracker

Interim National Findings Report

Child Care/Out-of-School Care and K-12 Education

February 2026



1. Introduction

Exclusion from school and child care has long been a reality for many children and youth with disabilities in Canada. For decades, families have carried these experiences largely in isolation—sharing stories with one another, questioning whether what was happening to their child was permitted, common, or simply unavoidable. Despite the prevalence of these experiences, systematic and coordinated data collection on exclusion has been almost non-existent, rendering the true scope of the issue largely invisible.

In response to widespread but often undocumented exclusion in British Columbia schools, the Exclusion Tracker was created in 2018 by BCEdAccess, a grassroots organization led by parents and caregivers of children with disabilities. Grounded in lived and living expertise, the Tracker provided families with a way to document exclusion as it was experienced in real time. What began as an effort to make sense of individual stories quickly revealed clear and troubling patterns: these were not rare or isolated incidents, but systemic barriers that continue to limit equitable access to education and care for children and youth with disabilities.

Since its launch, the Exclusion Tracker has collected more than twelve thousand reports of exclusion. Its data have been cited in academic research, referenced at both provincial and national levels, highlighted by Amnesty International, and used to inform the Citizens' Response to Canada's reporting under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Over time, the Tracker has become a trusted, community-informed source for advocacy, accountability, and systems change.

At the request of BCEdAccess, stewardship of the Tracker has transitioned to the Family Support Institute of British Columbia (FSI). In partnership with Inclusive Education Canada (IEC) and their affiliates across Canada, FSI is ensuring continuity of the Tracker's legacy while expanding its reach to support broader policy and advocacy efforts across Canada. This expansion reflects both growing demand and growing urgency. Families across the country are reporting similar experiences of exclusion, and the need for a coordinated, transparent national picture has never been greater.

The National Exclusion Tracker builds on this foundation, expanding its scope to include exclusion from both K–12 education and child care settings. It remains firmly rooted in the voices of children, youth, and families, using family- and child/youth-reported data to document exclusion as it is lived. Its purpose is not only to collect data, but to drive action, supporting advocacy, strengthening accountability, and advancing the ongoing fight for truly inclusive education and care.

2. Purpose of this interim report

This report has been created to share early national signals from the National Exclusion Tracker while data collection is still underway.

The purpose of this interim report is to:

- identify emerging national patterns related to exclusion in child care and K–12 education,
- highlight similarities and differences across systems, and
- surface early equity and intersectional concerns.

This interim report builds on the findings of previous BC-based data from the BCEdAccess Exclusion Tracker, recognizing that the national dataset is still developing. Findings should be understood as descriptive signals based on reports received to date, not as population-level prevalence estimates.

The intended audience includes families, advocates, educators, policymakers, researchers, and community organizations.



3. How the National Exclusion Tracker defines exclusion

The National Exclusion Tracker allows families to shape the definition of exclusion because each child or youth's experience is different.

The Tracker broadly defines exclusion as any instance where a child or youth with disabilities and/or complex learning needs is prevented from fully participating in their education or care. This definition reflects how exclusion is experienced by families in practice, including situations that are temporary, informal, or not documented through formal processes.

Exclusion includes, but is not limited to:

- being placed on a gradual entry plan that is not applied class-wide,
- being asked to stay home or being sent home from school or childcare,
- experiencing shortened school days or partial attendance,
- being excluded from field trips, classroom activities, extracurricular programs, or peer learning opportunities,
- being denied access to childcare, out-of-school care, or transportation,
- being educated separately from peers,
- being subjected to seclusion or restraint, or
- having essential health, safety, or personal care needs go unmet, resulting in reduced or denied participation.

This definition recognizes that exclusion is not limited to formal suspension or expulsion. Many forms of exclusion occur through informal or discretionary practices that are rarely reflected in administrative records, yet have significant impacts on children, youth, and families.

Child care exclusions can come in the form of denied enrolment, dual waitlists, and inequities in early learning settings.

By centering family and child/youth-reported data, the National Exclusion Tracker captures these lived experiences and provides a more complete picture of exclusion as it occurs across education and care settings.

4. About the data in this report

This interim report draws on data submitted to the National Exclusion Tracker from September 2, 2025 to January 21, 2026.

The dataset includes 515 total survey records, with analytic subsets used for specific questions depending on response completion.

Data is collected through a voluntary, self-reported survey. Respondents include parents, caregivers, and, in some cases, youth themselves. Not all respondents answer all questions. Percentages throughout this report reflect the proportion of respondents who answered a specific question unless otherwise indicated.

Reports are currently unevenly distributed across provinces and territories, reflecting differences in awareness of the tracker and advocacy networks. Findings should be understood as early national signals rather than representative national prevalence estimates.

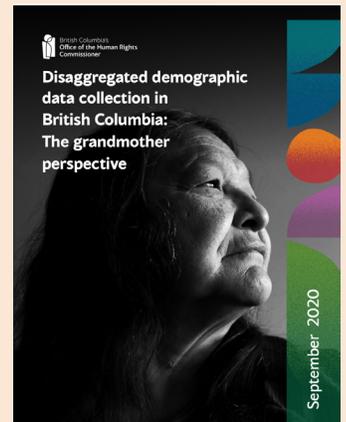
The National Exclusion Tracker applies the *Grandmother Perspective* as a guiding research lens, as articulated by Gwen Phillips of the Ktunaxa Nation and described by BC’s Human Rights Commissioner in this report:

<https://bchumanrights.ca/resources/publications/publication/datacollection/>

This perspective centres relationship, care, and accountability, and resists surveillance-oriented approaches to data collection.

Within this framework, disaggregated demographic data is understood as a tool, not an end in itself. Data collection must be grounded in the clear purpose of addressing systemic oppression and advancing equity, and guided by a process rooted in respectful relationships with impacted communities. Without this clarity, disaggregated data carries risk of harm rather than benefit.

Applied to the Exclusion Tracker, this lens situates exclusion as a systems failure rather than an individual one, and shapes how demographic data is collected, interpreted, and used in response to real and present harm.



Consistent with this approach, the Tracker is guided by principles of transparency, privacy law, and ethical data stewardship. Data collection is ongoing, allowing for more robust trend analysis in future reports.

5. Early national overview

Among reports received to date, the majority (81.4%) document experiences from K–12 education, while 18.6% represent experiences of childcare and out-of-school care exclusion.

While the dataset is still developing, early patterns are already visible across both systems, suggesting systemic practices rather than isolated or exceptional cases.

Early national patterns show that:

- exclusion is more often reported as ongoing rather than a single incident,
- informal and partial-access exclusion is more common than formal discipline, and
- families frequently describe exclusion as unresolved, normalized, and embedded in routine practice.

Observed changes over time in reported exclusion

In the early years of the Exclusion Tracker, families reported because they were seeking validation that what they were experiencing was in fact exclusion and that they were not alone in their child’s experiences. Eight years into data collection, many current reports describe exclusion as routine, ongoing, and expected, used as a practical response to manage behaviour, staffing limitations, or system capacity. This shift suggests not only greater recognition of exclusion by families, but a troubling normalization of exclusionary practices within education systems.

The sections that follow examine child care and K–12 education separately, while noting where patterns align.

“She was excluded due to lack of interpreter ability, which means she sits in the classroom, not physically isolated from her peers, but socially because they cannot communicate with her.”



“He has missed out on friendships and meaningful social interactions. He has missed so much education, I do not know if he can catch up.”

6. Child care and out-of-school care

6.1 At-a-glance

Child care and out-of-school care in this report refers to licensed or regulated early learning and care settings for children prior to school entry, as well as supervised care for school-aged children outside regular school hours, including before- and after-school programs and care during school breaks.

18.6% of total reports are about child care and out-of-school care.

The Tracker provides for two reporting pathways – access to care, and exclusion from existing care. Among childcare reports:

- Unable to access childcare: approximately **61.7%**
 - o Unable to access care and on a funding waitlist: **23.4%**
 - o Unable to access care, not on a funding waitlist: **21.3%**
 - o Funding waitlist only: **17.0%**
- Excluded from an existing childcare program: approximately **38.3%**

Child care/out-of-school care reports have been received from all provinces and one territory, with the highest concentrations in British Columbia and Nova Scotia. Northwest Territories and Nunavut are not yet represented in the dataset.

6.2 What the child care data is telling us so far

Among reports received to date, nearly one in five are for child care or out-of-school care. Prior to this year, the BC-based version of the Tracker did not record this demographic. The child care/out-of-school care reporting path was added to the National Exclusion Tracker with the 2025/26 school year.

Within child care reports, exclusion is most often described as ongoing rather than a one-time event. Among those who answered this question, more than four in five report that exclusion is continuing and unresolved.

The most common pathway to exclusion is not removal from an existing placement, but the inability for families to access care for their children with disabilities in the first place. Nearly two thirds of child care reports describe families who could not secure a placement in a child care centre for their child.

This pattern reframes exclusion in child care as a problem of access and system design, not individual fit or behaviour.

More than one third of child care reports indicate families are on waitlists for disability-related funding or supports, often alongside waitlists for spaces. At the same time, lack of available child care persists even when families are not on funding waitlists, suggesting compounding barriers.

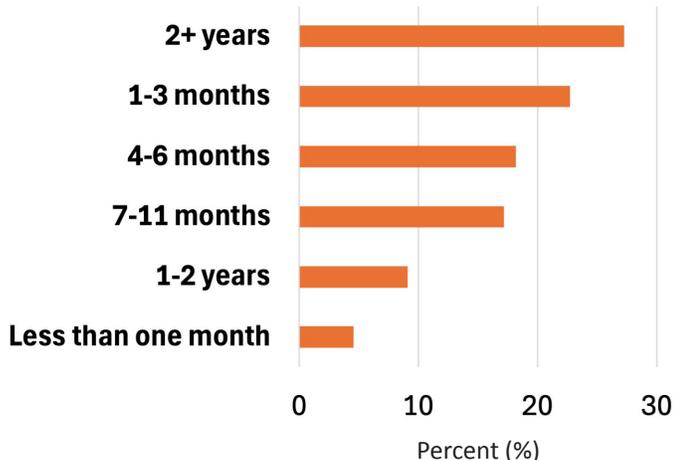
About one third of reports describe exclusion from a program the child had already been attending. In these cases, exclusion often results in immediate and complete loss of access, rather than partial attendance. The child is asked to leave the child care without possibility of return.

Despite differences in child care systems across jurisdictions, families describe similar experiences: exclusion framed as unavoidable, limited pathways for resolution, and responsibility placed on families to find alternatives.

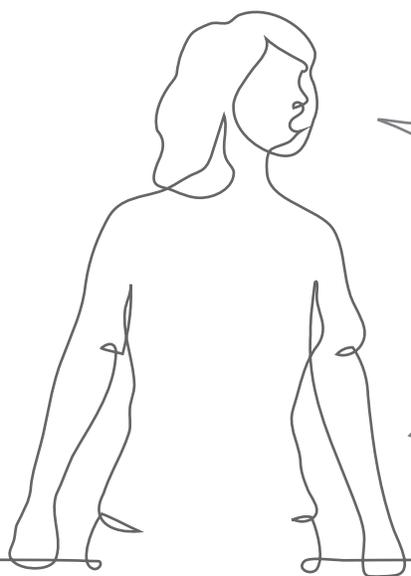
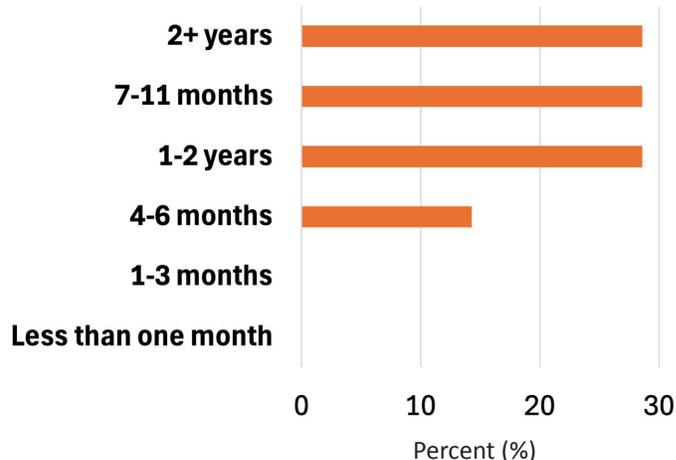
Taken together, these findings suggest that access to inclusive, supported child care remains a critical and unresolved inclusion issue.

Child care

How long has your child/youth been waitlisted for funding?



How long has your child/youth been waiting for a space?



“We were told to ‘find a better fit’ even though there were no behavioural issues and supports were already in place.”

“I had to reduce my work hours because child care was no longer available.”

7. K-12 education

7.1 At-a-glance

K-12 Exclusion: Key Indicators

- **81.4%** of reports
- Ongoing exclusion: **68.3%**
- Total reported incidents of exclusion from K-12 since September 2, 2025: **6,783**

Reports have been received from all provinces and one territory, with the largest proportions from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia. Northwest Territories and Nunavut are not yet represented.

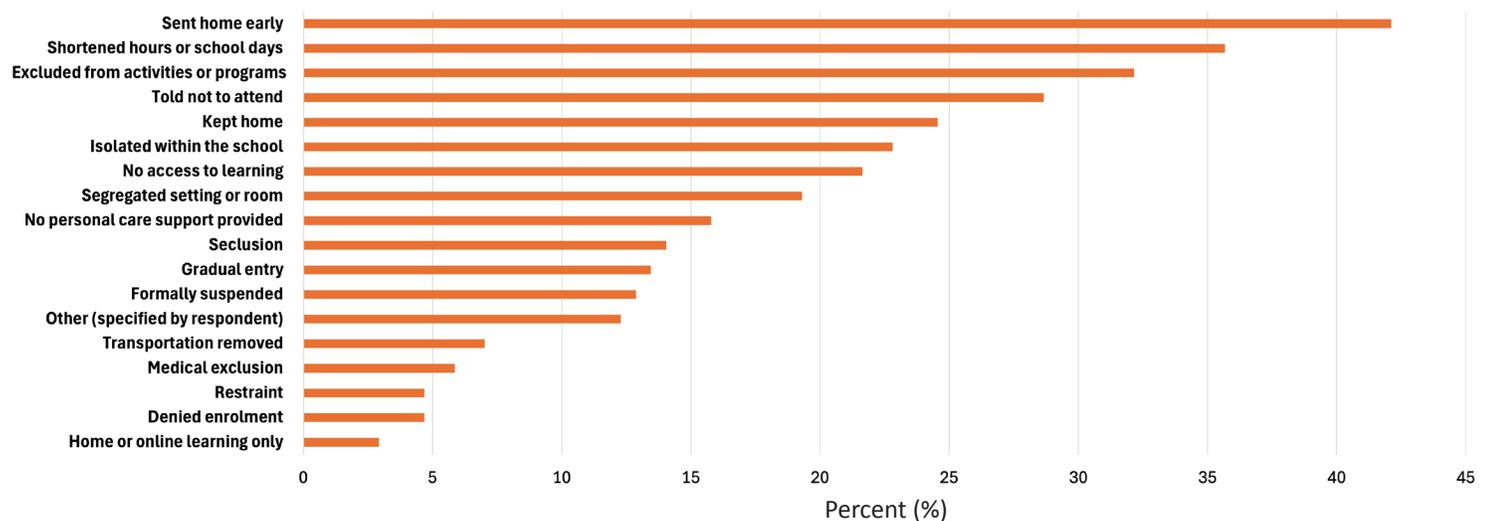
7.2 What the K-12 education data is telling us so far

Among respondents who have reported to the National Exclusion Tracker to date, just over four in five reports are for exclusions in K-12 education. This statistic is representative of reports submitted, not overall prevalence, and is reflective of the ongoing momentum established by the BC-based version of the Tracker used prior to the 2025/26 school year that tracked exclusions for K-12.

Exclusion is most often described as ongoing rather than a single incident. For many families, exclusion of their child or youth has become a sustained condition rather than a short-term response.

Exclusion from K-12 education most commonly occurs through informal and partial-access practices rather than formal disciplinary measures. Respondents could select more than one option when reporting how exclusion occurred. Percentages below therefore reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each form of exclusion and do not sum to 100%.

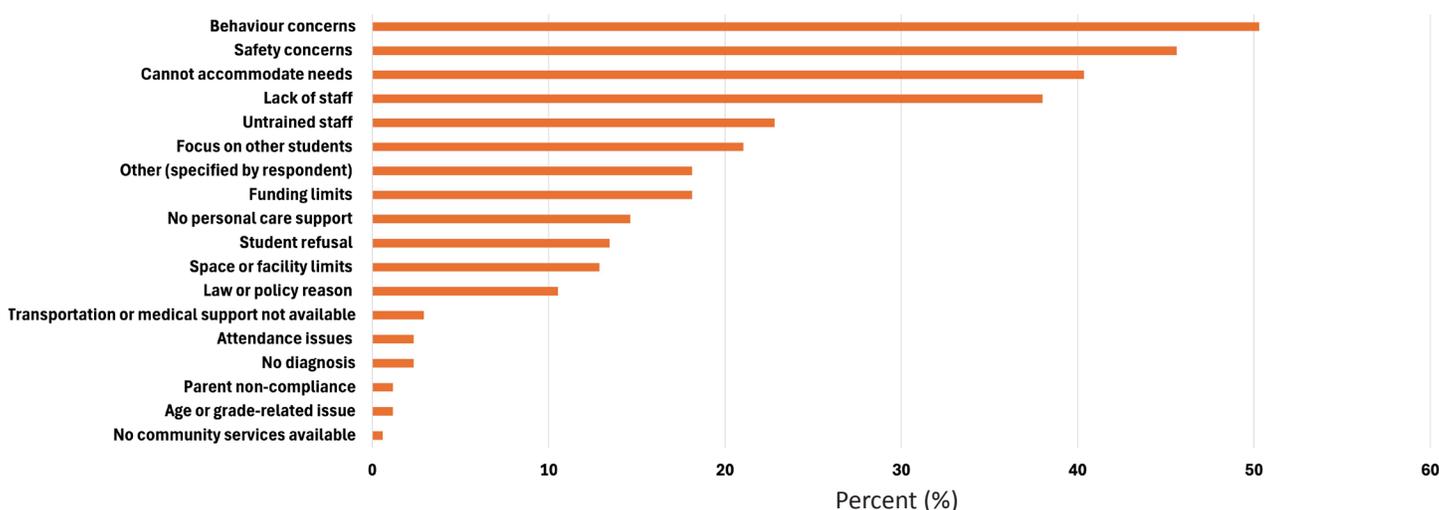
Forms of exclusion reported by respondents - K-12 education



The most frequently reported forms of exclusion involve informal, partial-access practices that limit a child or youth’s participation without formally removing them from school. In-school exclusion, including isolation and segregation, is also reported by a substantial proportion of respondents, alongside practices that result in reduced or inconsistent access to learning and supports.

Respondents were asked to indicate the reasons the school gave for excluding their child or youth. Respondents could select more than one option. Percentages below reflect the proportion of respondents who reported each reason and do not sum to 100%.

Reasons cited by the school for exclusion:



The most frequently cited reasons given by schools relate to behaviour and safety, alongside explanations reflecting system capacity, including staffing, training, funding, and the school’s stated ability to accommodate a child’s needs. Many respondents selected multiple reasons, indicating that exclusions are often justified using overlapping explanations rather than a single stated cause.

In expanding tracking of exclusions from K-12 education to a national level, despite variation in provincial and territorial education systems, we have learned that families describe similar exclusion experiences across regions.

Quotes from child/youth experiences – K-12 education

“We applied for full-time kindergarten, but were told staffing, training, and funding meant only part-time could be offered.”

“They kept telling me I was bad, but I didn’t understand what I was supposed to do, and no one helped me. After a while I didn’t want to go to school anymore.”

“I don’t feel safe.”



8. Who is being impacted: demographics and equity signals

This section summarizes demographic information provided by respondents who chose to answer optional questions. Results reflect the composition of reports received and do not necessarily indicate population-level prevalence.

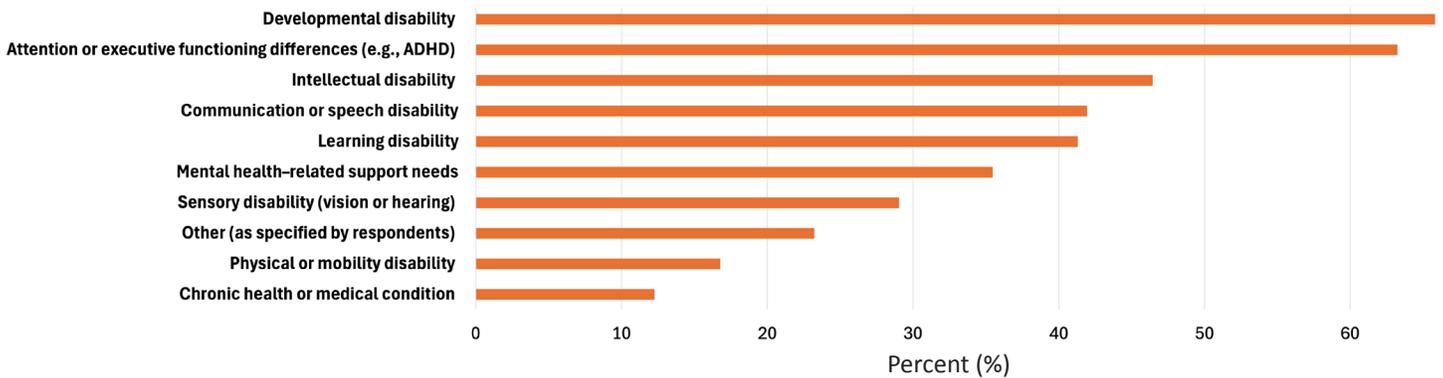
Percentages are the proportion of respondents who answered the specific demographic question, not a percentage of all survey respondents.

8.1 Demographic snapshot

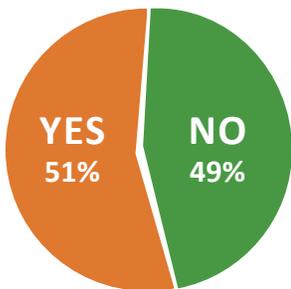
Disability and support needs

Respondents were asked to identify their child or youth’s disability or support needs. Respondents could select more than one option. As a result, percentages below reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each category and do not sum to 100%. Among respondents to this question, **79.2% indicated that their child or youth has more than one disability or support need.**

Reported disabilities and support needs:



Parent/caregiver identifies as having a disability



Just over half of those who responded to this question represent households of a child with disabilities whose parent or caregiver also self-identifies as having disabilities.

Race of children/youth

Respondents were asked to select their child or youth's race. Respondents could select more than one option, and some children and youth are therefore represented in more than one category below. Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each category and do not sum to 100%.

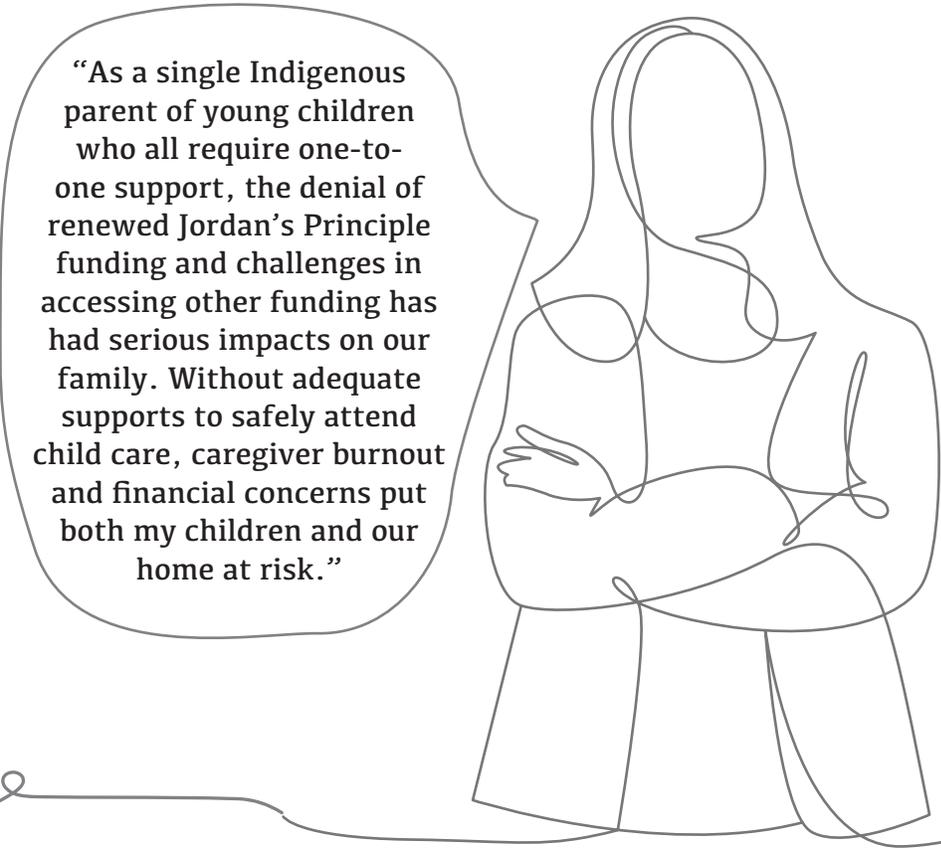
- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) – **19.6%**
(First Nations: 8.11%; Métis: 10.81%; Inuit: 0.68%)
- Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African-Canadian, etc.) – **4.73%**
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian) – **4.05%**
- Latin American – **2.70%**
- Other racialized identity (as specified by respondents) – **2.70%**
- South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan) – **2.03%**
- East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, Korean) – **1.35%**
- West or Central Asian (e.g., Turkish, Iranian) – **0.68%**
- Arab – **0.00%**
- Pacific Islander (e.g., Hawaiian, Māori, Samoan) – **0.00%**
- White (selected, alone or in combination with other identities) – **73.65%**

Of respondents who identified their child or youth as White, **67.1%** identified as White only, while the remainder selected White in combination with one or more racialized identities.

Black and Indigenous experiences



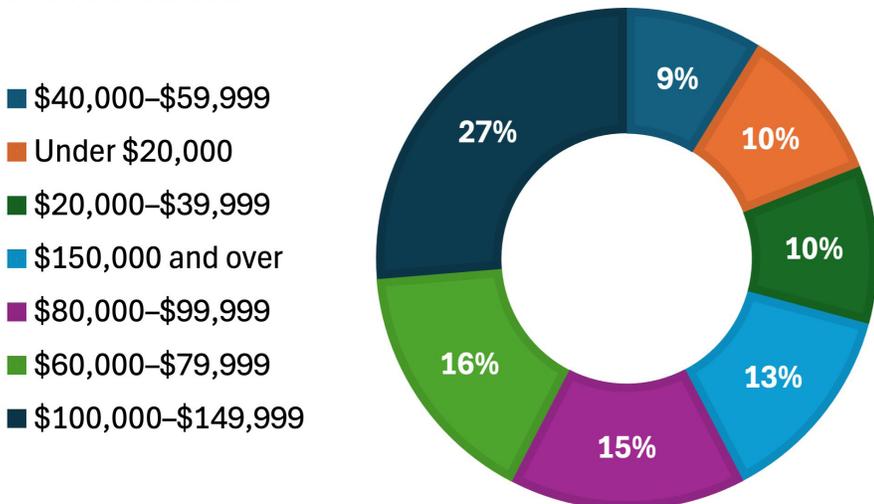
“My son was the only Black child in the program, and I believe his exclusion was unfair and went beyond disability alone.”



“As a single Indigenous parent of young children who all require one-to-one support, the denial of renewed Jordan’s Principle funding and challenges in accessing other funding has had serious impacts on our family. Without adequate supports to safely attend child care, caregiver burnout and financial concerns put both my children and our home at risk.”

Household income

Of respondents to this question, over **20%** of their households had an income of **below 40K**, considered low income in Canada.



Household caregiving structure

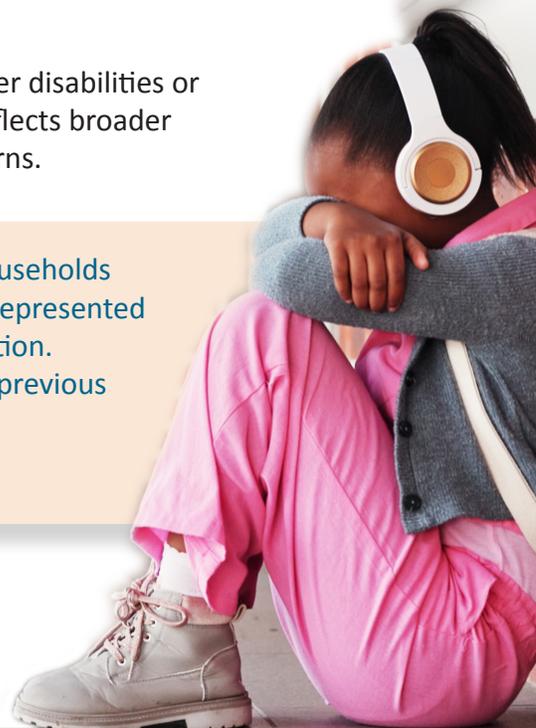
Nearly 25% of respondents to this question are single parent/caregiver households.

- Single parent/caregiver household: **24.66%**
- Two-parent/caregiver household: **66.44%**
- Multiple parent/caregiver, multi-generational, or extended family household: **2.05%**
- Other: **6.85%**

8.3 Disability and mental health overlap

In this dataset, mental health-related needs almost always co-occur with other disabilities or support needs. Exclusion described as related to mental health frequently reflects broader accommodation and inclusion gaps rather than isolated mental health concerns.

Among respondents who reported being single parent/caregiver households earning under \$20,000 per year, Indigenous and Black children are represented at rates notably higher than their proportion of the national population. While the dataset is not yet representative, this early signal echoes previous Exclusion Tracker findings and warrants close attention as national data collection continues.

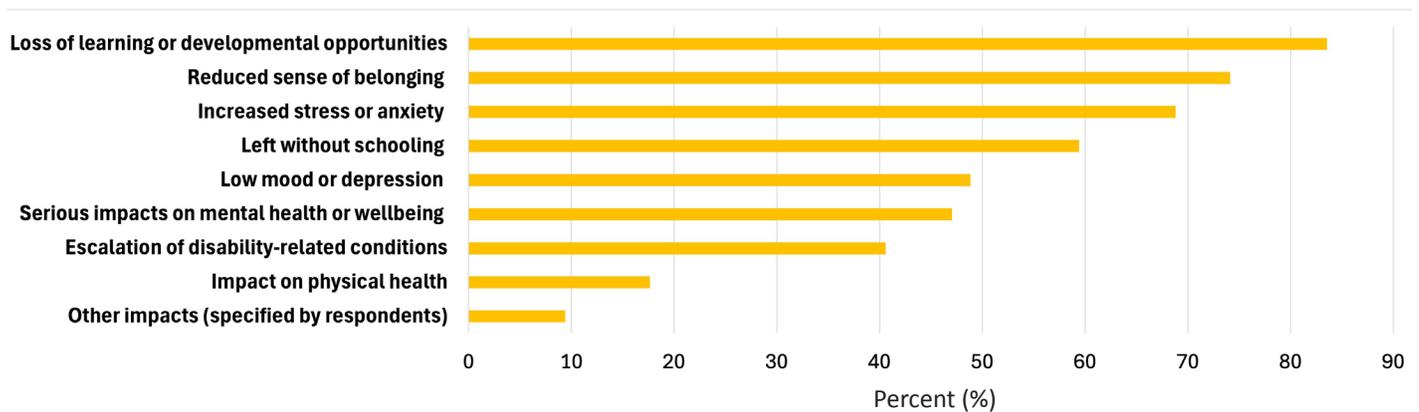


9. Impacts of exclusion

9.1 Impacts on children

Respondents were asked to identify the short- and long-term impacts that exclusion had on their child or youth. Respondents could select more than one option. Percentages below reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each impact and do not sum to 100%.

Reported impacts on children and youth:



Quotes reflecting impacts on children and youth

Abrupt exclusion without due process

“My child was permanently suspended from daycare without any prior warning, despite an active care plan and regular reviews.”

“We were told the program was ‘not a fit’ after 15 months, without exhausting all available supports.”

Lack of supports

“One-to-one support was reduced even though funding was in place, and my child was placed in larger groups where he struggled to regulate.”

“Supports were funded, but they were not consistently provided to my child.”

Situational instability

“The constant changes in who supported my child made it harder for him to feel safe and regulated.”

“I reduced my child’s hours because the environment was no longer working for him.”

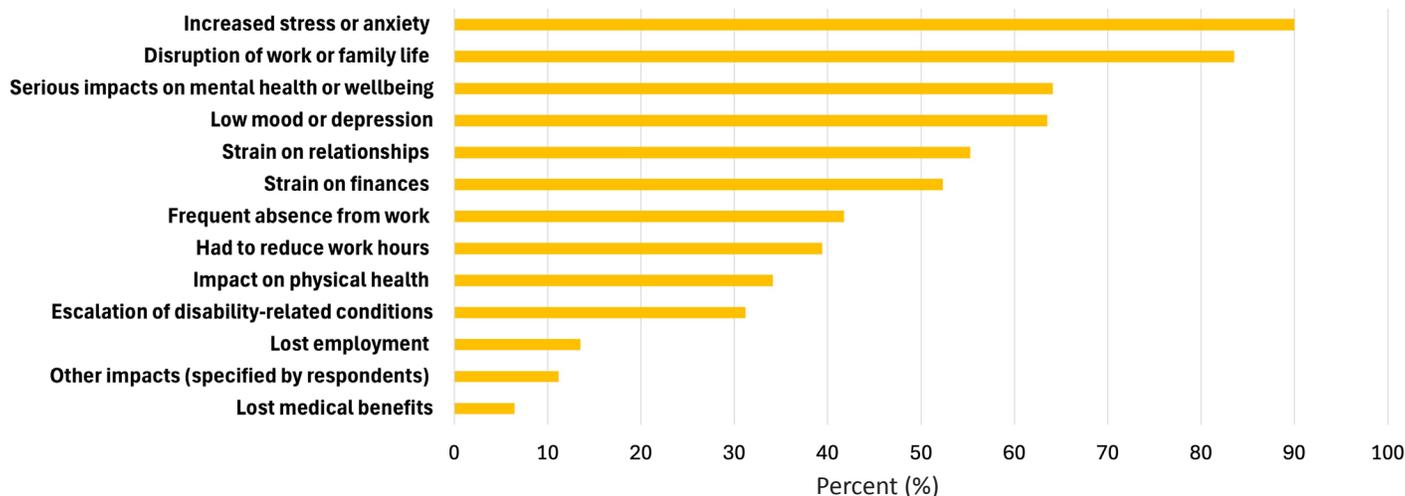
Social segregation

“Being offered only part-time attendance means missing learning and social opportunities, and being separated from peers every day.”

9.2 Impacts on families

Respondents were asked to identify the short- and long-term impacts that exclusion had on them as caregivers and on their family. Respondents could select more than one option. Percentages below reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each impact and do not sum to 100%.

Reported impacts on caregivers and families:



Quotes showing impacts on caregivers and families

Employment uncertainty or instability

“I’m currently on a stress leave from work resulting from extended exclusion from last school year.”

“I have never been able to work because of inconsistent hours.”

Loss of agency

“I feel our hands are tied as I know the school lacks the resources/capacity to meet our son’s needs.”

“They make the decision and then we live with it.”

Reduced access to care

“We were given one week’s notice during the holiday season, making it nearly impossible to find alternative care.”

“My nonverbal autistic child was put ‘on a break’ from child care for several days.”

Responses to both questions on impact highlight two consistent and overlapping areas of impact: mental health and economic stability. Mental health–related impacts were among the most frequently selected options for both children/youth and caregivers, while employment disruption, reduced work hours, financial strain, and loss of employment were also widely reported. The co-occurrence of these impacts suggests that exclusion is experienced not only as an educational disruption, but as a broader threat to family wellbeing and economic security.

10. Ongoing exclusion as a dominant pattern

Across both child care and K–12 education, ongoing exclusion is the dominant issue. The National Exclusion Tracker includes a direct measure of duration, asking respondents to indicate whether exclusion was a single incident or occurred over multiple days or on an ongoing basis.

Among respondents who provided duration information, approximately 75% reported that exclusion was ongoing at the time of reporting, while approximately 25% reported a single incident or exclusion that had ended.

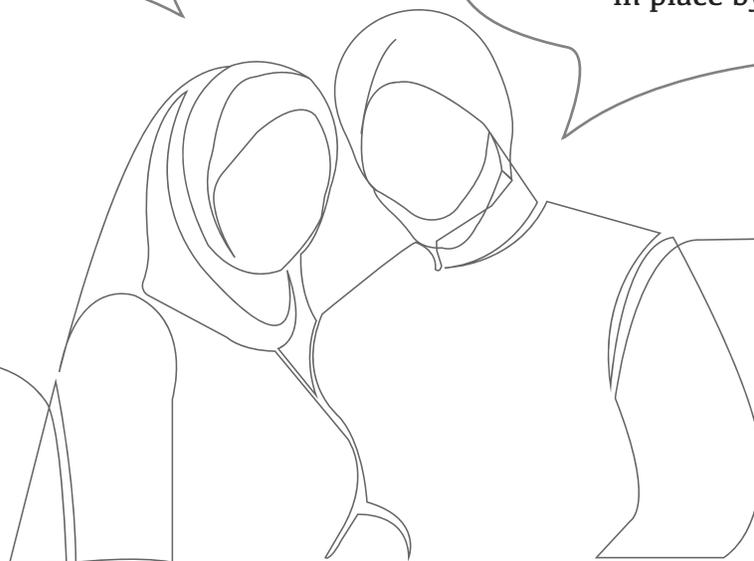
This pattern is reinforced by the forms of exclusion most commonly reported. Practices such as shortened school days, being sent home early, being told not to attend, gradual entry, or loss of access to learning are inherently repetitive and occur over time rather than as isolated events. These forms of exclusion are reported far more frequently than formal suspension or expulsion.

Reported impacts further support the prevalence of ongoing exclusion. Respondents frequently identified both short- and long-term consequences affecting learning, mental health and wellbeing, employment, and household stability, outcomes that reflect sustained disruption rather than brief or time-limited exclusion.

Taken together, the duration data and related response patterns indicate that exclusion is most often experienced as a prolonged and unresolved condition. Respondents shared:

“My child is regularly placed alone during rest time instead of being supported to rest with the other children.”

“My son has been placed on attendance restrictions since 2023. Even on days he’s been enjoying his time at school and there had been no deregulation he was still told he had to leave at the scheduled time put in place by the school.”



1.1. What the interim data is telling us so far

This interim report highlights several consistent national patterns emerging from the National Exclusion Tracker to date.

First, exclusion is most often experienced as **ongoing rather than a single incident**. Approximately three quarters of respondents reported that exclusion was ongoing at the time of reporting. This finding is reinforced by the prevalence of exclusion practices that occur over time—such as shortened school days, being sent home early, or being told not to attend—rather than one-time disciplinary actions.

Second, **informal and partial-access exclusion practices are widespread**. Across K–12 education, the most commonly reported forms of exclusion limit access without formally removing a child or youth from school. These practices frequently occur without clear documentation, defined timelines, or pathways back to full participation, making them difficult for families to challenge or resolve.

Third, **similar exclusion experiences are being reported across regions and systems**. Despite differences in provincial education and child care structures, families describe comparable forms of exclusion, reasons given by institutions, and impacts on children and households. This consistency suggests that exclusion is not confined to isolated jurisdictions or settings, but reflects broader systemic patterns.

Fourth, **equity concerns remain central**. While the demographic data is not yet representative, early signals indicate disproportionate impacts at the intersections of disability, race, income, and household structure. These patterns echo findings from earlier Exclusion Tracker reports and underscore the importance of continued disaggregated analysis as the national dataset grows.

Finally, the impact data makes clear that exclusion is associated with both **significant mental health impacts and concrete economic consequences**. Respondents frequently reported effects on emotional wellbeing, learning, employment, income, and household stability, indicating that exclusion extends beyond educational access and affects broader family wellbeing.

As an interim report, these findings should be understood as early national signals rather than definitive prevalence estimates. Continued data collection, improved regional representation, and future analyses will allow for deeper examination of trends, equity impacts, and system-level drivers over time.

Exclusion is pervasive and ongoing – quotes from respondents

“Additional training and support were offered, but the program refused to accommodate my child.”

“My child was excluded from field trips and out-of-school days.”

“He was separated from peers, taken out of school and is on partial days.”

“It was stated that my daughter was not at the same level as her peers and she was better off learning in a separate room with one other younger child.”

12. What comes next

This interim report represents an early phase of national data collection. As awareness of the National Exclusion Tracker continues to grow, future work will focus on strengthening both the depth and breadth of the dataset, alongside continued collaboration with national and regional partners.

Key next steps include:

Continued data collection and refinement

Data collection will continue across child care and K–12 education settings. Ongoing monitoring will allow for clearer identification of trends over time, including the duration and recurrence of exclusion, shifts in exclusion practices, and cumulative impacts on children and families across the country.

Improved national and regional representation

FSI will continue to work in collaboration with Inclusive Education Canada and provincial and territorial affiliates to increase awareness of the National Exclusion Tracker and improve representation across regions. These organizations play a critical role in supporting families, advancing inclusive education practices, and identifying systemic barriers within their respective jurisdictions. As reporting becomes more geographically balanced, future analyses will be better positioned to examine similarities and differences across systems.

Ongoing survey refinement

Survey questions will be reviewed and refined to reduce respondent burden while preserving the Tracker's ability to document lived experience and systemic conditions. Refinements will be informed by respondent feedback, data quality review, ethical considerations, and input from partners supporting families on the ground.

Planned future analyses and reports

Our next report is planned for the summer, after the end of the school year. It will explore patterns emerging from the larger sample sizes, including information on equity-related impacts, escalation pathways, and the relationship between exclusion practices and reported outcomes for children and families. As the dataset matures, longitudinal analysis will support stronger accountability and policy-relevant insights that complement the ongoing advocacy and systems-change efforts of inclusive education organizations across Canada.

Together, these next steps reflect a commitment to careful data stewardship and to working alongside organizations across Canada that are advancing inclusive education through advocacy, support, and systems change.

13. Invitation to participate

The National Exclusion Tracker relies on the voluntary participation of families, youth, and caregivers who choose to share their experiences of exclusion. Community organizations, advocates, and partners play a critical role in ensuring that these experiences are visible rather than isolated.

Families and youth who have experienced exclusion in child care or K–12 education are invited to contribute to the Tracker. Inclusive education organizations, provincial and territorial affiliates, and community partners are encouraged to share information about the Tracker within their networks, alongside their ongoing work supporting families and advancing inclusive practices.

Participation supports transparency, strengthens collective understanding, and contributes to a growing national record of exclusion as it is lived, while complementing the advocacy, education, and systems-change efforts already underway across the country.



Ex|clusion Tracker
Building a More Inclusive Canada

 **FAMILY SUPPORT**
Institute of BC
families supporting families

 **inclusive education Canada**



exclusiontracker.com

The National Exclusion Tracker (NET)TM is a tool for families in Canada to report and track experiences of exclusion faced by children and youth with disabilities in K–12 education and child care/out-of-school care.

14. Acknowledgements and notes

The Family Support Institute of BC extends heartfelt gratitude to the children, youth, caregivers and families who have candidly shared their experiences through the National Exclusion Tracker. Many of these experiences reflect ongoing and unceasing systemic harms; we acknowledge that describing them for reporting purposes may provoke difficult emotions. The decision to report requires time, trust, and mental and emotional labour. Those contributions are deeply valued.

The Family Support Institute of BC recognizes the foundational work of BCEdAccess in creating and stewarding the Exclusion Tracker since its inception as a provincial tool, as well as the leadership and commitment of Inclusive Education Canada and its provincial and territorial affiliates, who support families, advocate for inclusive education, and work within their regions to address systemic barriers. Their efforts provide critical context for understanding exclusion and advancing solutions across Canada.

Notes on data limitations, ethical use, and privacy protections have been included throughout the report to support responsible interpretation.

For questions about this report or the National Exclusion Tracker, please contact:



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As a provincial organization FSI acknowledges that our work spans across all of the traditional, ancestral, and unceded Indigenous territories in BC. Therefore, we respectfully honour all First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, as well as their ancestors, who have lived here and cared for these lands. It is with gratitude that we can live, learn and do our work in the province now known as British Columbia.