

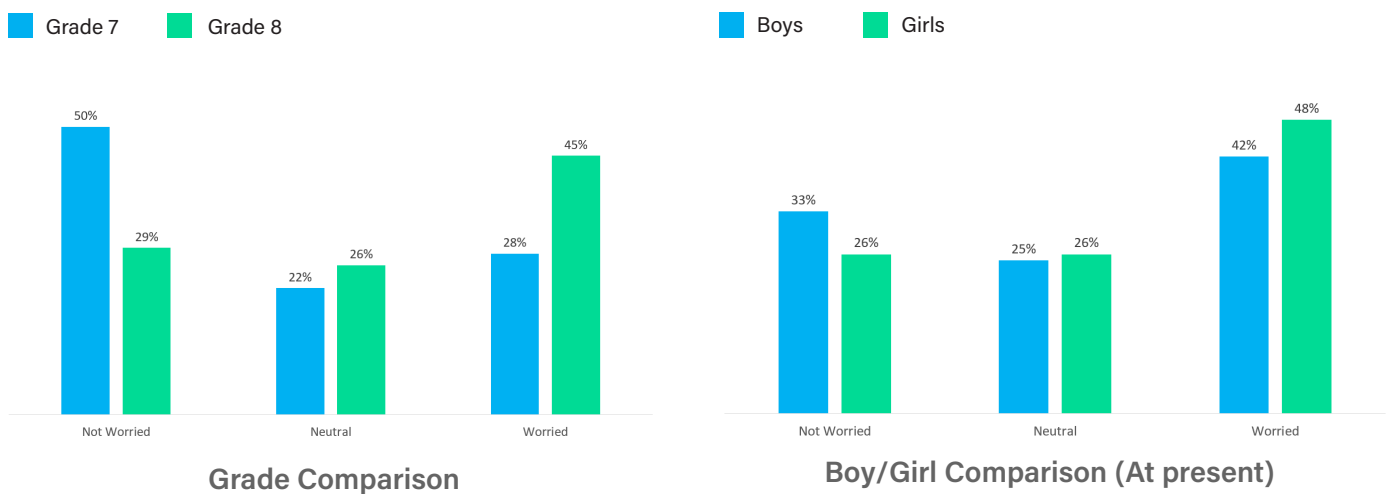
About HABITs: HABITs explores how teens’ diet, physical activity, sleep and screen time change as they transition to Grade 8. In addition, the study explores how the pandemic has influenced the mental health and behaviours of teens in Grades 7 and 8.

This report shows: Preliminary findings of data we collected among Grades 7 and 8 (N=268 from 15 schools) students before the pandemic and data we collected from Grades 7 and 8 (N=402 from 23 schools) students during the pandemic. All participants were recruited from schools located in the lower mainland in British Columbia, Canada.

To what extent are teens worried about getting COVID-19?

Somewhat concerned, and worry increased from Grade 7 to Grade 8. Girls tend to be more concerned than boys.

“I worry about getting the COVID-19 virus”



Has COVID-19 impacted the self-esteem and anxiety of Grade 8 students?

Yes, but only for girls.

Self-Esteem

In Grade 8, boys reported moderately high levels of self-esteem and their self-esteem tends to be higher than girls. In addition, we found that Grade 8 girls who completed the survey during the pandemic had lower self-esteem levels than Grade 8 girls who completed the survey before the pandemic. Interestingly, Grade 8 boys’ levels of self-esteem did not change during the pandemic.

Anxiety

In general Grade 8 girls reported higher levels of anxiety than boys. Similar to self-esteem, levels of anxiety were higher among Grade 8 girls during the pandemic than before the pandemic and boys’ level of anxiety did not change.

What changes have parents of Grade 8 students noticed during the pandemic?

82%

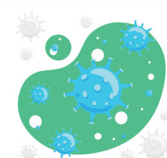
Parents of Grade 8 students indicated that their teens spend more time on screens outside of school work during the pandemic compared to before.

54%

Parents of Grade 8 students said that their teens spent less time playing outside during the pandemic compared to before.

57%

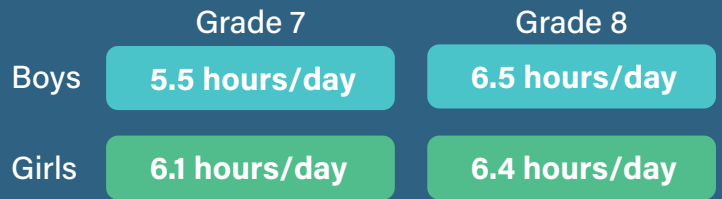
Parents of Grade 8 students reported that their teens’ sleeping schedule changed during the pandemic and that it had become less regular.



Screen time

Teens spent more time on screens after transitioning to secondary school, especially boys. Both boys and girls exceed the recommendation for leisure screen time.

We asked teens to report how much time they spent in front of screens outside of school work, such as watching TV/movies or playing video games. As shown by the numbers to the right, girls spent more time in front of screens than boys in Grade 7, but by Grade 8 boys and girls had about the same amount of leisure based screen-time.



A limit of 2 hours of recreational screen time per day is recommended¹

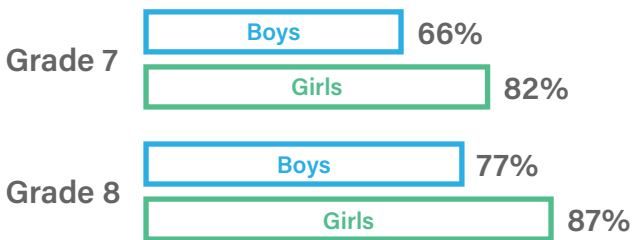


Social Media

Many teens have a social media account in Grade 7 and the number continues to increase as they transition to secondary school.

The percentage of teens with at least one social media account (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) is much higher for girls in Grade 7 as compared to boys and the gap narrows when teens transition to secondary school, though remains much higher for girls.

Percentage of teens with at least one social media account in Grades 7 and 8.

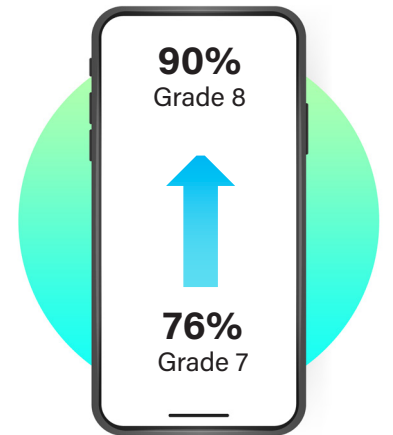


Cellphone Ownership

Almost all teens will have a cell phone by the time they are in secondary school.

Cellphone ownership is high in Grade 7 (76% have a cellphone) but it increases a lot by the time teens are in secondary school (90% have a cellphone).

Percentage of teens with a cellphone (right)



Sleep

Teens slept approximately 1 hour less per night after transitioning to secondary school.

10 hours/night
Grade 7

9 hours/night
Grade 8



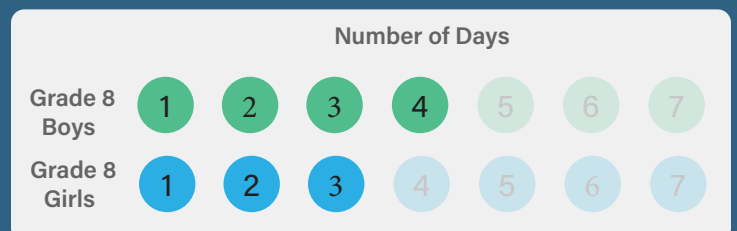
Current guidelines recommend 9-11 hours/night of sleep for those aged 5-13¹

Physical Activity

Girls exercise less when they are in secondary school as compared to Grade 7; however, boys maintained their levels of physical activity when they transitioned to secondary school.

Levels of physical activity in Grade 7 was quite similar between boys and girls. However, we noticed that girls exercise on average one day less per week than boys in Grade 8, so girls' physical activity declined when they transitioned to secondary school.

Days per week physically active 60+ minutes
Grade 8



Exercising for 1 hour every day is recommended, including 3 days per week of vigorous activity¹

References

https://csepguidelines.ca/wp-content/themes/csep2017/pdf/Canadian24HourMovementGuidelines2016_2.pdf

Questions? Please send an email to our research team at habitsproject@bcchr.ca

Principal Investigator: Dr. Louise Mâsse

