



NEWS RELEASE

Average hours worked (per week) for young Canadians declined by more than 16% from 1989 to 2023

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For Immediate Release

VANCOUVER—The median number of weekly hours worked by young Canadians (aged 15-24) has fallen 16.3 per cent since 1989 and youth employment rates remain below 1980s levels, finds a new study published today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Over several decades many governments across Canada have sought to boost youth employment but for the most part have been unsuccessful,” said Ben Eisen, Fraser Institute senior fellow and co-author of [*Recent Trends in Youth Employment*](#).

According to the study, in 1989 the average young Canadian worker (aged 15-24) worked 30.7 hours per week compared to 25.7 hours in 2023—a decrease of 16.3 per cent.

Similarly, the average hours worked per week declined from 30.9 in the 1980s to 28.0 in the 1990s—and the average from 2020 to 2023 was 25.6 hours.

Clearly, there’s a continuing decline in the hours worked by young people in Canada.

And from January 2023 to May 2024, Canada’s youth unemployment rate increased from 9.7 per cent to 12.6 per cent.

Why are these trends problematic?

Because when young people obtain experience in the workforce, it can have lifelong positive effects. Conversely, when young people have little work experience, it can negatively affect their employment prospects and wages in adulthood.

“If governments want to avoid the possible lasting harms from the recent spike in Canada’s youth unemployment rate, they should help improve the labour market environment for young Canadians,” Eisen said.

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