



What Does It Mean to Have Learning Disabilities in Quebec?

ADULTS 30 TO 44

TThis profile focuses on adults aged 30 to 44. People in this group have typically finished their schooling and are in the work force. They are also usually busy with their family lives.

The data in this section were taken from the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). PALS was a cross-sectional survey that was focused on disability. The PALS sample was selected from those people who answered “yes” to one or more of the disability questions on the 2001 Census of Population long questionnaire.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE LEARNING DISABILITIES?

Of those people aged 30 to 44, slightly less than one person in 100 (0.7%) said that they had a learning disability on the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). This rate was the same for both males and females.

Among those young adults who said that they had a learning disability, half of them were males.

WHAT TYPES OF FAMILIES DO THEY LIVE IN?

In the total population, 11.6% of young adults aged 30 to 44 reported that they lived alone compared to 23.6% young adults with learning disabilities. Just over half (51.6%) of people with learning disabilities reported that they were the head of their household or spouse of the head of household compared to 79.2% in the total population.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT AT SCHOOL?

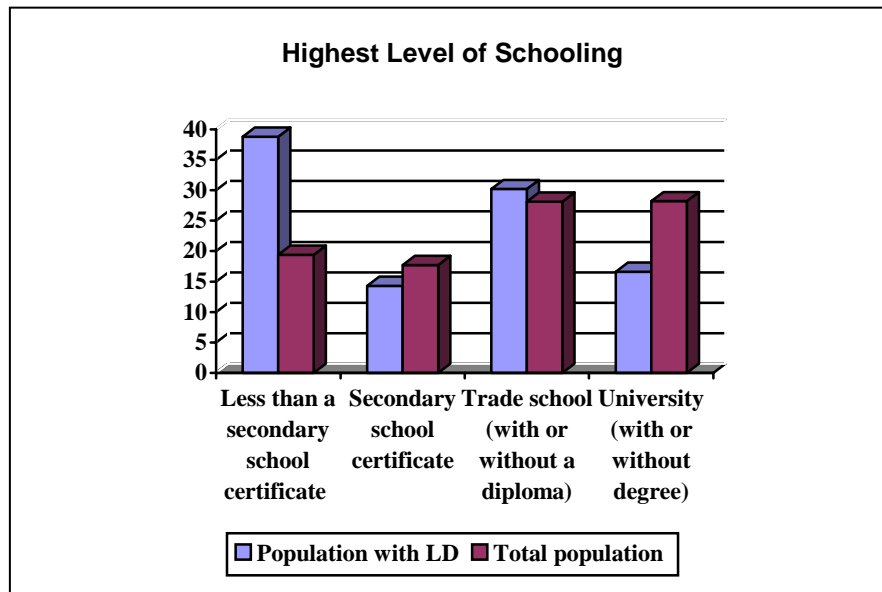
Thoughts from the Focus Groups

It was harder for me in high school. The classes were bigger and there was less one-on-one time with the teacher.

I had a tough time in high school. I always felt like my back was against the wall.

What the Data Tell Us

Almost four of 10 males and females aged 30 to 44 who said that they had a learning disability (38.8%) reported less than a secondary school certificate as their highest level of schooling while 16.6% reported some university.



41.2% of persons with learning disabilities reported that it took them longer to achieve their current level of education.

The story was different among the total population of Quebec aged 30 to 44. For this population, 19.4% reported less than a secondary school certificate as their highest level of school and 28.2% said they had some university (with or without a degree).

WHAT IS THE IMPACT AT WORK?

Thoughts from the Focus Groups

In my work, I constantly have to manage my disabilities. It's exhausting. I don't disclose at work but I choose the type of job I do and type of working environment I'm in. I'm very selective.

I have learned what my strengths are so I know what careers are definitely not for me.

What the Data Tell Us

People with learning disabilities aged 30 to 44 were less likely than the total population of the province to have said that they were employed in the week prior to the 2001 Census. The figures were 33.8% and 79.6%, respectively.

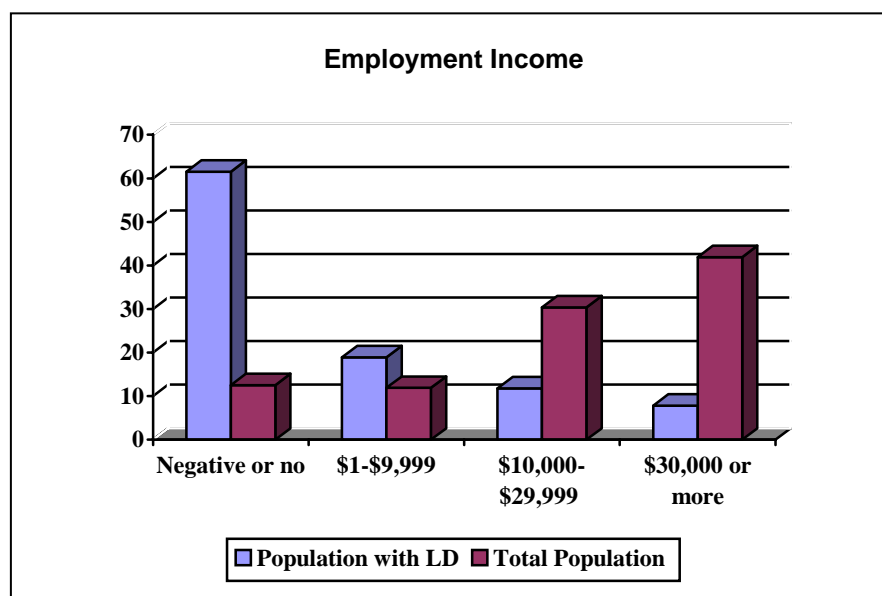
WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON INCOME?

Having a learning disability did have an impact on the amount of income earned by adults with learning disabilities. Adults aged 30 to 44 with learning

disabilities — both sexes — earned less than adults in the same age group in the total population.

61.5% of those with learning disabilities reported that they had earned either a negative or no

income in 2000; this figure was 15.8% among the total population aged 30 to 44. 18.9% of adults with learning disabilities said that they had earned between \$1 and \$19,999 in 2000 and 8.8% said that they had earned \$30,000 or more. These figures were 11.9% and 41.9%, respectively, for the total population aged 30 to 44.



Almost half (46.0%) of adults aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — were not members of low-income families (as calculated using data from the 2001 Census). This figure was 82.4% for the total population aged 30 to 44.

According to the *2001 Census Dictionary*, the **low-income cut-off** is defined as the income level at which families or unattached individuals spend 20% more than the average on necessities (i.e., food, shelter and clothing).

The data in this section were taken from the 2000 and 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), Cycle 1.2 – Mental Health and Well-being. The CCHS was a cross-sectional survey (it was only done once) that focused, in this cycle, on mental health and well-being. The sample for this survey was selected from the Canadian Labour Force Survey.

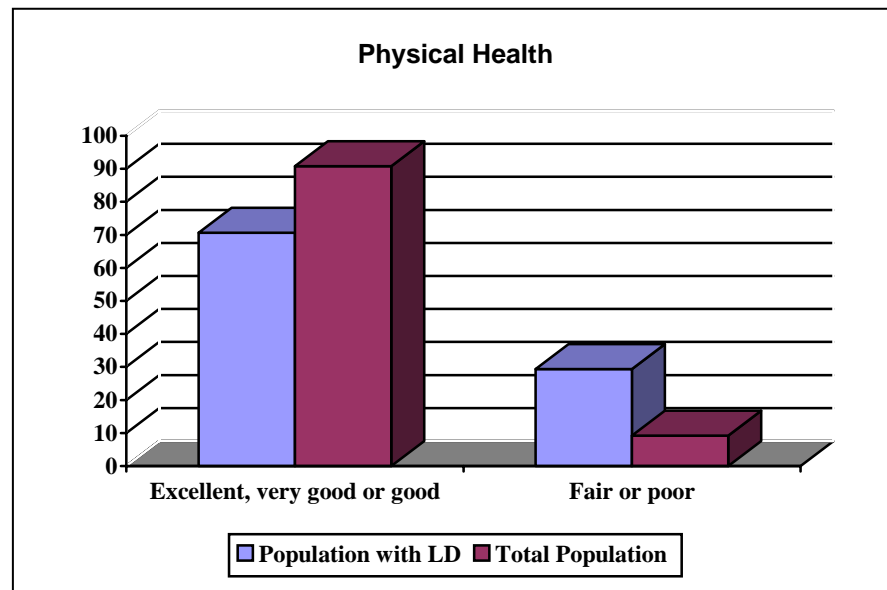
WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON HEALTH?

Almost eight of 10 (77.7%) of the survey respondents aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — reported that they thought their health in general was good, fair or poor. This figure was lower (32.1%) among the total survey population aged 30 to 44.

When asked about their physical health, more than two-thirds (70.6%) of the

population aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — rated their physical health as excellent, very good or good. The figure was 90.8% for the total population. Conversely, 29.4% of the

population aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities said that their physical health was either fair or poor. This is higher than what was reported by the total population aged 30 to 44; the figure for this group was 9.2%.



Survey respondents were also asked about their mental health. Amongst the population aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — 46.2% said their mental health was either excellent or very good. This figure was much higher at 68.2% the total population aged 30 to 44. 53.8% of the population aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — said their mental health was good, fair or poor. This figure was 31.7% among the total population aged 30 to 44.

The CCHS also asked respondents about their ability to handle the unexpected problems that can arise. Among both males and females aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities, 29.4% said that they thought their ability to handle unexpected problems was excellent or very good. Among the general population aged 30 to 44, the proportion was 61.4%. By contrast, 70.6% for the population aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities rated their ability to handle unexpected problems as good, fair or poor compared to 38.6% for the total population aged 30 to 44.

A similar pattern was reported when persons were asked to assess their ability to handle unexpected demands. 47.4% of people with learning disabilities aged 30 to 44 — both sexes — said their ability was either excellent or very good. This figure was 73.8% among the total population aged 30 to 44.

The data in this section were taken from the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). IALS was a cross-sectional survey (a survey that was only done once) that was focused on literacy. Along with Canada, this survey was conducted in seven other industrialized countries. The IALS sample was selected using two methods: the 1991 Census file was used to select the sample of Francophones from the province of Ontario and the Labour Force Survey sample file was used to select all other respondents.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON READING, WRITING AND MATH SKILLS?

A Brief Introduction to the Scales Used in the IALS to Define and Measure Literacy Performance

The IALS reported on three scales: prose, document and quantitative. Each scale ranges from 0 to 500. These scale scores have also been grouped into five literacy levels. Each of these levels implies an ability to cope with a particular subset of reading tasks. Individuals were assigned a literacy level based on the estimation that they will perform tasks at that point on the scale with an 80% probability of a correct answer.

Prose Literacy: measured the ability of the respondent to understand and use information contained in various kinds of text. Each prose selection was accompanied by one or more questions asking the reader to find information in the text based on conditions or features specified in the question.

Document Literacy: measured the ability of the respondent to process the information contained in documents such as schedules, charts, graphs, tables, maps and forms at home, at work or when traveling in their communities.

Quantitative Literacy: measured the ability of the respondent to perform the arithmetic operations that are required in everyday life.

Information from the *IALS Microdata User's Guide*, Statistics Canada.

Prose Literacy

The following outlines the five levels used to rate the respondents' prose literacy. For the purposes of this profile, Levels 4 and 5 were combined (as Level 4).

- Level 1 – Most of the tasks at this level require the reader to locate one piece of information in the text that is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the directive.
- Level 2 – Tasks at this level generally require the reader to locate one or more pieces of information in the text, but several distractors may be present or low-level inferences may be required. Tasks at this level also begin to ask readers to integrate two or more pieces of information or to compare and contrast information.
- Level 3 – Tasks at this level generally direct readers to locate information that requires low-level inferences or that meets specified conditions. Sometimes the reader is required to identify several pieces of information that are located in different sentences or paragraphs rather than in a single sentence. Readers may also be asked to integrate or to compare and contrast information across paragraphs or sections of text.
- Level 4 – These tasks require readers to perform multiple-feature matching or to provide several responses where the requested information must be identified through text-based inferences. Tasks at this level may also require the reader to integrate or contrast pieces of information, sometimes presented in relatively lengthy texts. Typically, these texts contain more distracting information and the information requested is more abstract.
- Level 5 – Tasks at this level typically require the reader to search for information in dense text that contains a number of plausible distractors. Some require the readers to make high-level inferences or to use specialized knowledge.

There were significant differences in the scores that resulted from the prose literacy tests included in the IALS. Just under three-quarters (72.2%) of adults aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — scored in Level 1; this figure was 18.5% among the total population aged 30 to 44.

Additional IALS Data

When asked to rate the writing skills that they need in their daily life, 45% of people aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — said their skills were excellent or good. This figure was 87.6% among the total population aged 30 to 44.

When asked to rate their reading and writing skills, 29.6% of people aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities — both sexes — rated their skills as either excellent or good. This can be compared to 76.7% of

the total population aged 30 to 44. Conversely, 70.4% of people aged 30 to 44 with learning disabilities rated their skills as moderate or poor. This figure was 23.3% among this age group in the total population.