

COVID-19 MARITIME FAMILY INTERVIEWS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

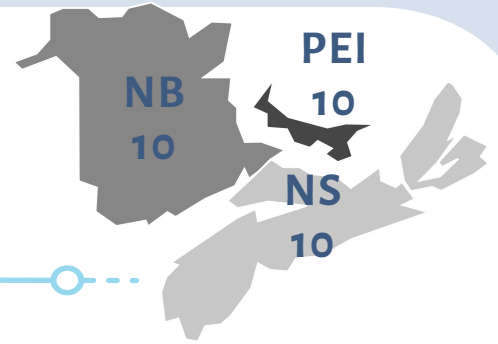
Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac & Dr. Joan Turner

Three sets of interviews with the same 30 Maritime families with children aged 0-8

The first interview occurred from July 14th-31st, 2020.

The second interview occurred from November 16th-30th, 2020.

The third interview occurred from April 20th-May 14th, 2021.



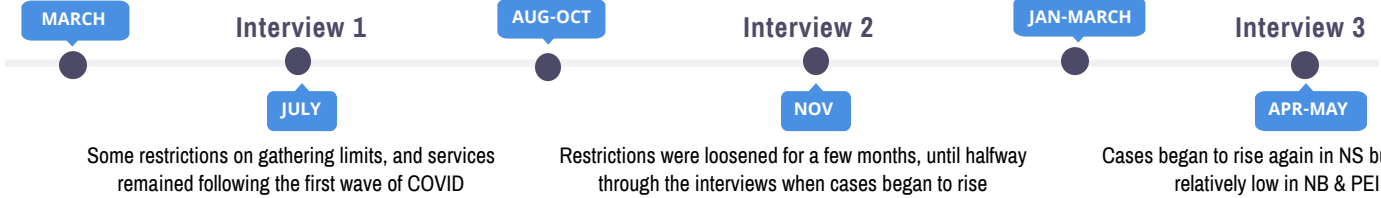
TIMELINE

Changing restrictions over time in 2020/2021

Restrictions were put in place across the Maritime provinces

Restrictions began to loosen for gatherings and services across the Maritimes as cases remained low

Restrictions began to loosen for gatherings as cases began to lower following the holidays



July 2020 (First interviews)

Adjusting to a New Reality

Families shared their initial experiences during the first wave of the pandemic. They spoke about adjusting to a life of new routines once restrictions started being lifted.

More time at home allowed families to spend more time together. Many appreciated the 'slowed-down' lifestyle.



The loss of developmental supports and services left families worrying over their children's progress and missed opportunities.

Many substituted structured school activities for other learning such as exploring outdoors or baking.



New Routines to Support Balancing Daily Life

Most parents balanced work and caring for children by flexing their hours and splitting duties.



While parents worked and completed household duties, children often engaged in independent play, organized activities, and screentime.

"If I had to do really focused work I would save it for her nap time...At the beginning I felt like I had to work even after she went to bed at 7:30 at night to try and get in all my hours but I was able to figure out a better balance for the schedule as the time went on."

Nov 2020 (Second interviews)

Modifying Typical Routines

Families shared how they were adapting to changing situations during the pandemic. Parents had to make decisions about their child's activities as a result of loosened restrictions.

While most parents were happy for their children to return to school & child care, they reported an adjustment to navigating new COVID protocols for when children are sick.



Developmental supports and services were re-opening with some continuing through online interventions.

Choices

Families put a lot of thought into whether they would enroll their child in after school activities.



"There were a lot of decisions of like "do I enroll her"... but at the same time she needs some sort of activities that promote her social interaction and teaches her how to be social, how to talk to people, how to listen to cues and doing all of that."

Some chose not to enroll their children in extracurriculars to minimize contact with others.

Other families felt that extra curriculars were essential for their children's mental and physical health.

April/May 2021 (Third interviews)

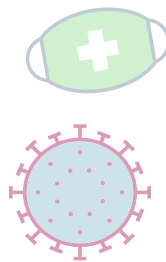
Families shared how they have been dealing with the fluctuations in cases and ever-changing restrictions over the past year. Parents discussed their reasoning behind decisions related to recreational activities, social circles, and minor illness symptoms.

Most families who enrolled their child in rec activities did so because they felt the benefits of the social and/or physical aspects of these activities outweighed the risk of them getting COVID from attending.



Many ensured opportunities for their child's social play for the same reasons.

Most never suspected that anyone in their family has had COVID. Usually because they had not been in close contact with any known cases or been at any exposure sites.



Adapting to Ever-Changing Restrictions

Many participants took similar precautions as earlier in the pandemic but were less worried and anxious about their family's likelihood of getting COVID-19.

"In September they obviously didn't like the fact that now they have to wear masks during their lessons but the kids have been pretty resilient and it's been working out fine, it's just kind of become the norm I guess."

About half of participants had friends or family who did not live the public health guidelines related to gathering limits and social distancing in the same way that their own family did.

