

Albertans work hard for a living^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

A new study out of the University of Alberta indicates that Albertans have among the lowest leisure time and longest work hours in the world.

The fact sheet, released by the U of A's Parkland Institute, shows that Albertans are spending less time with their families than anyone else in the country.

The study, called "Family Day on the Treadmill", indicates that the average Albertan has 182 hours less of social leisure time than the Canadian average.

Albertans average about 5.0 hours of leisure time per day compared to the national average of 5.55 hours.

The Institute says Albertans worked 7.5 weeks more than the average worker in the top 15 developed Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in 2010.

Albertans also have fewer vacation and paid holidays per year than most countries in Europe.

Alberta's vacation minimum starts at two weeks compared to European countries whose citizens enjoy an average of six weeks vacation per year.

Another factor that is influencing the higher number of work hours is access to affordable, quality childcare.

The institute says that only 17% of children in Alberta, aged 0-5, have access to a regulated child care space, and that number places us in the bottom three in Canada.

"Working this hard comes at a cost," says Parkland's Research Director Diana Gibson. "It means less time for family and community, higher levels of stress, and poorer health."

According to the Parkland Institute, the province allocates the lowest number of dollars in Canada for regulated child care spaces for kids aged 0-12.

The institute says that working this much comes at a cost and that working harder means less time for family, community, personal health and recreation.

The fact sheet references studies which show that those longer work hours are linked to depression, weight gain, increased smoking and drinking and a higher risk of injury at work.

"A statutory holiday named after families is not enough," says Gibson. "We're hoping that Albertans, and their government, will take pause this Family Day and reflect on policies needed to properly support Alberta's families and communities in the long term."

A 2011 report from the OECD placed Canada fourth for work hours out of 29 developed countries.

To read the report, visit the Parkland Institute's website.

Related link: Family Day on the Treadmill: Alberta families at risk of too much stress ^[2]

Region: Alberta ^[3]

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