

Family Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic

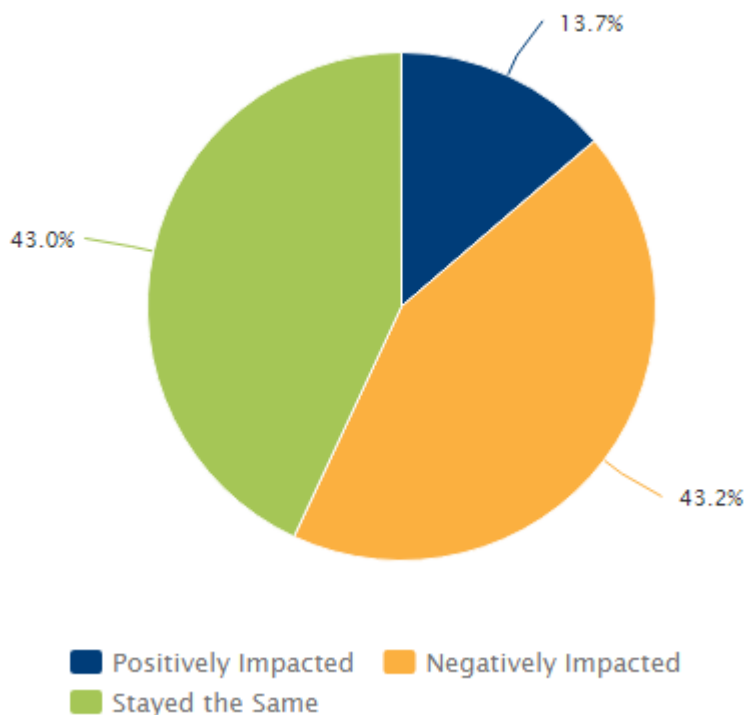
Disruptions to Children's Activities During Pandemic: Nov. 2020

California	Percent
Child Care Closed	16.0%
Medical or Dental Appointments Canceled	28.8%
Sports or After-School Activities Canceled	35.8%
Summer Programs Canceled	25.5%

Definition: Estimated percentage of adults with caregiving responsibilities for children ages 0-17 whose children's activities were disrupted in the period after the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, by type of disruption (e.g., in Wave 1 (Nov. 9 – Dec. 11, 2020), the children of 16% of California caregivers had experienced closure of their child care during the pandemic).

Data Source: *Family Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. (Dec. 2020). *Questionnaire:* American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Prevent Child Abuse America & Tufts Medical Center; *California oversample:* Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health & California Essentials for Childhood Initiative (California Dept. of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch & California Dept. of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention).

Household Financial Situation During Pandemic: Nov. 2020 California



Definition: Estimated percentage of adults with caregiving responsibilities for children ages 0-17, by household financial situation relative to the period before the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 (e.g., in Wave 1 (Nov. 9 – Dec. 11, 2020), the household financial situation of 43.2% of California caregivers had been negatively

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, measures of how children and families in California are faring during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic come from a national questionnaire, *Family Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Caregivers with children ages 0-17 were asked a series of questions relating to the pandemic's impact on family economic security, public service utilization, emotional and behavioral experiences, child care, and education. Estimates based on their responses are available for California and seven sub-state regions (Los Angeles County and six county groups). At the state level, data also are broken down by income level, race/ethnicity, and for families with and without children with special health care needs (CSHCN).

Why This Topic Is Important

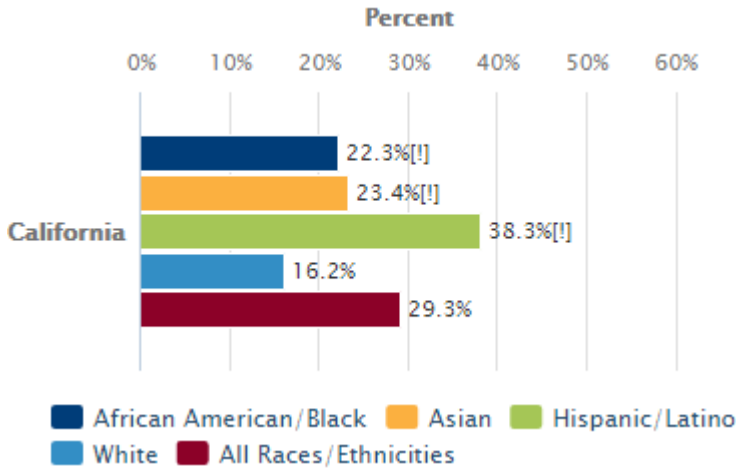
Before the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of U.S. families already were struggling with poverty, food insecurity, housing instability, mental illness, and difficulty accessing quality health care, education, and other resources. The onset of the pandemic dramatically worsened these issues, leaving many parents out of work or with reduced incomes and struggling to meet their families' basic needs. At the same time, families grappled with child care and school closures, shifts to remote learning and working, and disconnection from extended family, friends, and other social supports. Many families also experienced illness and the loss of loved ones due to the disease. Not surprisingly, mental health problems increased for both parents and children during 2020.

Some families were particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 crisis, including those already struggling to make ends meet, hourly workers and those with unstable employment, families of color (who faced inequities in health outcomes and access to care before the pandemic), and families with young children or children with special health care needs. The pandemic's effects on young people are of particular concern, as adverse childhood experiences (especially in early childhood) can have negative, long-term impacts on health and well being. The more traumatic events a child experiences, the more likely the impact will be substantial and long lasting. Every effort should be made to ensure that children and families recover from the pandemic and that their physical, emotional, educational, and material needs are met. Beyond meeting basic needs, children also need positive experiences and stable, nurturing relationships and environments in which to thrive.

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Data Source: *Family Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. (Dec. 2020). *Questionnaire:* American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Prevent Child Abuse America & Tufts Medical Center; *California oversample:* Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health & California Essentials for Childhood Initiative (California Dept. of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch & California Dept. of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention).

Caregivers Who Were Unemployed or Had Left Workforce: Nov. 2020



Definition: Estimated percentage of adults with caregiving responsibilities for children ages 0-17, by employment status relative to the period before the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 and race/ethnicity (e.g., in Wave 1 (Nov. 9 – Dec. 11, 2020), 3.1% of Hispanic/Latino caregivers in California were working fewer hours than they were before the pandemic).

Data Source: *Family Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. (Dec. 2020). *Questionnaire:* American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Prevent Child Abuse America & Tufts Medical Center; *California oversample:* Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health & California Essentials for Childhood Initiative (California Dept. of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch & California Dept. of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention).

Caregiver Discipline of Children in Previous Week: Nov. 2020

California	Percent
Spanked, Slapped, or Hit	16.8%
Threatened to Spank, Slap, or Hit	26.2%
Shouted, Yelled, or Screamed	46.9%

Definition: Estimated percentage of adults with caregiving responsibilities for children ages 0-17 who used physical or harsh verbal discipline on their children in the previous seven days, by type of discipline (e.g., in Wave 1 (Nov. 9 – Dec. 11, 2020), 46.9% of California caregivers shouted, yelled, or screamed at their children in the previous week).

Data Source: *Family Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. (Dec. 2020). *Questionnaire:* American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Prevent Child Abuse America & Tufts Medical Center; *California oversample:* Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health & California Essentials for Childhood Initiative (California Dept. of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch & California Dept. of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention).

How Children Are Faring

In the period after the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, California adults with caregiving responsibilities for children ages 0-17 tackled, among other disruptions, closure of their children's schools (72%) and child care facilities (16%), cancelation of children's health care appointments (29%), and postponement of young children's vaccinations (16%), according to estimates from a November 2020 questionnaire.

The pandemic also brought about a change in household financial situation for a majority of California caregivers—14% enjoyed a positive financial impact in contrast with 43% whose finances were impacted negatively, with the estimated share of caregivers negatively impacted increasing as household income level decreased. An estimated 12% of caregivers reduced their working hours during the pandemic in order to care for a child or other person (14% of female caregivers vs. 11% of male caregivers) and 29% of caregivers overall had left the workforce or were unemployed at the time of questionnaire. Across race/ethnicity groups, 38% of Hispanic/Latino caregivers were unemployed or had left the workforce, compared with 23% of Asian caregivers, 22% of African American/black caregivers, and 16% of white caregivers.

More than one in three California caregivers (34%) experienced feelings of nervousness or stress always or most of the time during the pandemic, and one in five (20%) felt difficulties piling up so high that they could not be overcome. Overall, fewer than four in ten caregivers (37%) felt confident in their ability to control important things in their lives at least most of the time. In the previous week, an estimated 18% of caregivers felt angry with their children every day and 17% had physically disciplined their children by spanking, slapping, or hitting. Among caregivers of CSHCN, estimates of physical discipline (25%) and daily feelings of anger towards children (22%) were higher than for caregivers in households without CSHCN (14% and 16%).

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/105/family-experiences-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/summary>



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