

The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

The REAL impact of COVID-19 on kids

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Dear Friends,

You've likely heard [Mark Twain's \(borrowed\) quip](#) that "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." When it comes to kids and COVID-19, the statistics only begin to hint at the pandemic's enormous impact on children.

The Statistics:

- **3.4 million**: the number of children who have contracted COVID-19.
- **14,000**: the number of children hospitalized with COVID-19.
- **3,000**: the number of children who developed the rare but serious condition known as multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C)
- **279**: the number of children who have died from COVID-19.

The Impact:

Grief:

- Roughly **40,000 children have lost a parent to COVID-19**. The number, reported in [JAMA Pediatrics](#), represents a 20% increase over non-COVID parental deaths. And this is just through February 2021. Three-quarters of those children were adolescents, and one-quarter were children younger than 10.
- More than **4,200 children** lost a parent or caregiver in New York State alone. As many as **one-quarter of these children are at risk of entering foster or kinship care**.

Increased racial inequity:

- The rate of COVID-19 hospitalization is **five times higher for Black children and eight times higher among Latino or Hispanic children** than it is among white kids, according to an August CDC study.
- The pandemic pushed the monthly poverty rate up nearly 2 points to 16.7% in September 2020, with increases **particularly acute for Black and Hispanic individuals, as well as for children**.
- Before the pandemic, as many as **16.9 million children lacked home internet access, and 7.3 million children did not have a computer at home**, inhibiting their ability to participate in online learning. These students disproportionately live in [low-income households](#) and are more likely to be Black, Latinx, or Native American.

- Feeding America projects that [21% of Black individuals \(1 in 5\) may experience food insecurity in 2021](#), compared to 11% of white individuals (1 in 9).

Expanded educational gaps:

- An estimated [3 million marginalized students — those with disabilities, experiencing homeless, in foster care, migrants students, and English-language learners — have stopped attending school](#). That number is equivalent to the entire school-aged population of Florida.

Increased — yet grossly underestimated — homelessness:

- At the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, 420,000 fewer students were identified as homeless, despite evidence of increasing homelessness. These figures suggest that as many as [1.4 million children experiencing homelessness may have gone un-identified and unsupported](#) by their school during the pandemic.
- More than [60% of children experiencing homelessness lacked internet access](#).

Rampant hunger:

- Feeding America projects that 42 million people (1 in 8), including [13 million children \(1 in 6\), may experience food insecurity in 2021](#).
- Child food service programs served 1.65 billion fewer breakfasts and lunches between March and November of 2020, a [30% decrease from the previous year](#).
- Experts project that the number of [children under 5 experiencing life-threatening food deficits will grow by nearly 7 million, or 14%, around the world](#), according to research published in The Lancet.

Decline in overall health and wellness:

- Preliminary [data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) projects a 44% drop in child screening services and mental health services for 2020, a 22% drop in vaccinations for children under 2, and a nearly 70% drop in dental services.

Soaring child poverty:

- Children began 2020 with the highest monthly poverty rate at 18.7%, according to Columbia University's Center on Poverty and Social Policy. By September, that rate had increased to 20.4% — [a rise of nearly 2 points](#). Consequently, the American Rescue Plan will have the [greatest impact on child poverty](#) — cutting it by roughly 56% in 2021.
- In general, households with children have been more likely to [experience job loss, a decline in household income and the loss of health insurance and other benefits](#) during the pandemic.

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