

Impact on South Carolina Child Well-Being



In 2020 Children's Trust of South Carolina released a COVID-19 Snapshot to highlight how the pandemic has impacted the well-being of children and families in South Carolina. This is an updated version of that snapshot.

South Carolina ranks No. 41 nationally in overall child well-being. Since March 2020, this public health emergency has shown that disparities in housing, health care, education and economic opportunity lead to greater vulnerabilities for families, especially children. Supports for South Carolina children and families need to be strengthened to ensure the well-being and safety of all children, especially children of color.

ECONOMIC INSECURITY



ROUGHLY
46%

(748,731) of South Carolinians suffering from unemployment also reported having a child in the household

The challenges of unemployment have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals with children in the household. This can cause unintended effects on children and families such as financial hardship, which can directly affect family relationships and access to living necessities for children.

How can you help?

- Advocate for a state-level refundable tax credit to match the federal refundable Earned Income Tax Credit.
- Strengthen economic supports like child care subsidies and create more jobs that pay a wage to ensure basic needs are met.
- Ensure children and families have consistent access to food and other basic living needs.

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES



82%

of South Carolina households with children reported that the pandemic affected their children's education

Changes in the way children received an education included distance learning with online resources, paper materials sent home, cancelled classes or other changes in classes. Sixty-five percent of all households reported that the most common type of educational change was using online resources. An emphasis must be placed on implementing infrastructures that make hybrid learning a smooth process for all. In doing so, broadband internet must be easily accessible for households with children in rural areas and free of cost to families unable to afford access.

How can you help?

- Work to provide access to broadband internet to rural areas for children and families.
- Advocate for internet service providers to set up hot spots in areas where families face educational challenges during COVID-19.

CHILD CARE



43%

of parents and caregivers report that their current child care arrangement is not ideal due to COVID-19

Parents and caregivers have experienced disruptive challenges during the pandemic, including alternating work schedules, working fewer hours, changing existing child care plans and providing in-home child care while maintaining a job. Safe, stable, nurturing relationships are important for a child's well-being, and affordable child care-related supports can help promote these relationships.

How can you help?

- Work with agencies and organizations to provide the resources and support necessary to open child care centers with the capacity to ensure the health and safety of all children.
- Providing discounted or free child care to essential workers would be most beneficial to families and communities during the pandemic.

FOOD INSECURITY



60,705

households report children not eating enough due to unaffordability during COVID-19

Economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused the number of households reporting children not eating enough to jump from 35,282 households to 60,705. While food insecurity in South Carolina has improved over the last few months, it is clear that the economic challenges caused by COVID-19 are affecting many families.

How can you help?

- Support and donate to programs and services where groceries or meals are provided for families: food pantries, schools, home-delivered meal services, places of worship, soup kitchens, and friends or neighbors.
- Advocate for food stores to invest in communities currently considered food deserts.

HEALTH CARE



15%

of children have a parent with no health insurance

Health care is an ongoing critical need in South Carolina, and this issue worsened during the pandemic. Additionally, families with lower incomes will not be able to afford coverage and uninsured medical services caused by unforeseen illnesses or health conditions related to COVID-19.

How can you help?

- Advocate for affordable access to health care and assistance for those experiencing financial hardship and faced with medical bills related to the pandemic.

MENTAL HEALTH



57%

of parents and caregivers reported that their current level of stress/anxiety along with other lack of social determinants is much higher than usual due to COVID-19

Due to the challenges posed by COVID-19, many parents and caregivers are experiencing higher levels of stress/anxiety. There are 620,220 adults in households with children who reported feeling nervous, anxious or on edge for several or more days. These concerns also stem from the challenges of balancing accessibility and affordability with quality when selecting options for child care during this unprecedented time. All of these factors, compounded by other disparities in housing, health care, education and economic opportunity, can create barriers to the mental well-being of parents and caregivers.

How can you help?

- Provide virtual mental health services to parents and caregivers to help them cope with crisis-related challenges.
- Provide socio-emotional supports for children to reduce the impact of toxic stress on child well-being.

HOUSING INSECURITY



64%

 of renter-occupied households with children

45%

 of owner-occupied households with children

lack confidence in their ability to make the next month's housing payment

Having basic needs met, such as housing, is necessary in preventing child abuse and neglect. It is important to provide more housing support and general financial support through the pandemic recovery for the overall well-being of children and families.

How can you help?

- Advocate for housing support, such as federal housing assistance, eviction moratorium, rental assistance programs and increased mortgage deferral options.
- Support your family, friends, neighbors and community members who need basic living necessities such as food, household supplies and personal care products.
- Advocate for stimulus support that can cover basic living expenses for the entirety of the pandemic.

Sources

Experienced and Expected Loss of Employment Income, by Select Characteristics: South Carolina. Household Pulse Survey. Week 27 (2021). United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp27.html>

Build It Back Better Survey Report (September 2020). Early Childhood Advisory Council, First Steps, the United Way Association, and Alliance for Early Success. https://earlychildhoodsc.org/media/h05j1io3/build-it-back-better-survey-report_sept-2020.pdf

Recent Food Insecurity for Households with Children, by Prior Food Insecurity (and Additional Food Related Household Characteristics). Household Pulse Survey Week 27 (2021). United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp27.html>

Children, Symptoms of Anxiety Experienced in the Last 7 Days, by Select Characteristics. Household Pulse Survey Week 27 (2021). United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp27.html>

Confidence in Ability to Make Next Month's Payment for Owner Occupied Housing Units, by Select Characteristics. Household Pulse Survey Week 27 (2021). United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp27.html>

Confidence in Ability to Make Next Month's Payment for Renter Occupied Housing Units, by Select Characteristics. Household Pulse Survey Week 27 (2021). United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp27.html>

Current Health Insurance Status, by Select Characteristics. Household Pulse Survey Week 28 (2021). United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp28.html>

Coronavirus Impact on How Children Received education for the 2020-2021 School Year, by Select Characteristics. Household Pulse Survey Week 27 (2020). United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp27.html>

For more information on ways that you or your organization can advocate or help

Dr. Aditi Srivastav

Director of Resesarch

803-744-4062

asrivastav@scchildren.org