

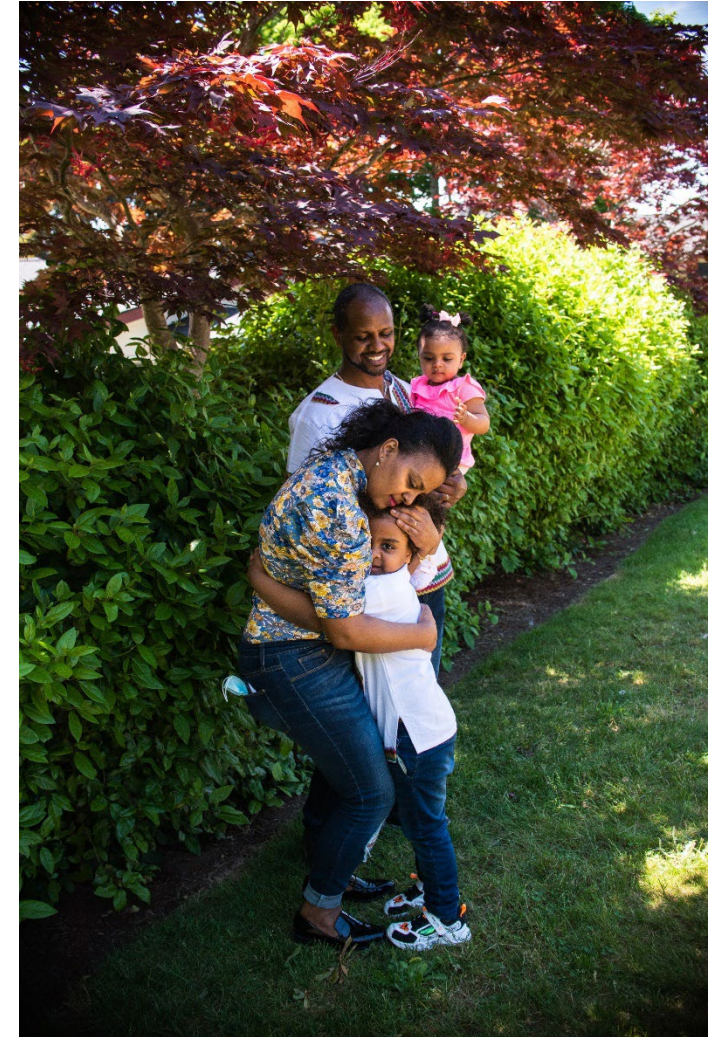
Impacts of the COVID pandemic on parents and young children in 2021, King County, WA

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

- This report provides relevant and timely information about the impacts of the COVID pandemic on young children and families in 2021 in King County, WA.
- The results come from the Best Starts for Kids Health Survey, a survey of over 7,000 parents and caregivers with young children in King County, WA. Families took the survey in seven languages online or by phone, and there was strong participation across demographic groups.





● BRIEF METHODS

- From January to September 2021, the Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Health Survey asked 7,033 parents and caregivers with children 5th grade and younger: **“Please describe any changes, positive or negative, that the COVID pandemic has had on this child/your family.”**
 - 90% of parents answered this question.



BRIEF METHODS

- How did we analyze parents' answers to these questions?
 - Translated Chinese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese responses to English.
 - Identified themes related to how COVID impacts families.
 - Reviewed a random set of responses, categorizing them into the themes, until no new information was found.
 - Identified and reviewed responses for African American, Latina/x/o, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI), and Vietnamese families¹, as well as low-income families², single- and LGBTQ- parent families, and families with children living with disabilities to make sure that themes for these populations were included.
- Additional survey results are provided to add context to themes shared by parents.

¹At the time this project started, these communities were experiencing higher rates of COVID outbreaks, deaths and/or hospitalizations. ²\$50,000 year or less per year

● SUMMARY: EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN DURING COVID

- Babies and toddlers missed out on important social development opportunities. Elementary-school children missed social interactions and felt isolated during remote schooling.
- Online school was a negative experience for many families. Some children struggling to stay engaged and fell behind in classes. Some parents said their child or family preferred online school due their child's learning style or being removed from a racist or unsafe school environment.

"...we saw huge academic leaps, but emotions worsened, and lack of confidence became [a] barrier to educational progress. [My child] has been the most adversely affected in terms of emotional, academic, and social growth by the pandemic. No way to explain what she has lost." – Parent of 0-5-year-old

● SUMMARY: EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN DURING COVID

- Parents were exhausted by the competing demands of work and schooling/childcare, with moms bearing the most additional responsibilities.
- Many families had financial uncertainty due to job loss, reduced hours, or the inability to meet basic needs.
- Yet, families were grateful for more time with their family, for the chance to see more about their child's schooling, and for the chance to reconnect and slow down.

"...having to teach the kids, having to be sometimes the teacher at home. I guess a positive one is that we have been able to learn some things from having to wear those different hats, being a teacher helper and I think we've grown closer together." – Parent of K-5th grader

IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT PARENTS TOLD US

- Families and children need supports to address changes in children's social-emotional development and mental health.
- Parents appreciated more insight into what happens in the classroom, and some students did well with online learning. Schools may want to consider how to continue these practices in the future.
- Access to in-person learning and support navigating referrals is important for children living with disabilities.

IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT PARENTS TOLD US

- Government programs and financial assistance were important sources of support.
- Access to open, affordable, and stable childcare was critical in supporting BIPOC families, moms, and children.
- The long-term effects of moms being especially impacted by the trade-off between working and childcare and the stressors of COVID need to be addressed in policies.