

# AMERICA'S FAMILIES NEED POLICY ACTION NOW TO PREVENT DANGEROUS LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON YOUNG CHILDREN



To track the pandemic's impact on young families, the University of Oregon created the Rapid Assessment of Pandemic Impact on Development – Early Childhood ([RAPID-EC](#)) project in April 2020 to measure access to basic needs, financial stability and overall health and well-being. The bi-weekly, nationally representative survey collects data and comments from caregivers in all 50 states, providing data snapshots and trends for households with at least one child under six years of age.

Families are struggling to access basic needs, in jeopardy of losing their income or homes and struggling to maintain their mental and physical health under these highly stressful conditions. Findings also show disparities due to race, income and geography widening the existing gaps between American families.

## THE STATE OF OUR YOUNG FAMILIES

### Financial distress is causing a chain reaction of emotional distress from parents to young children

- **42%** of [families nationally](#) are worried about paying for at least one basic need.
- **40%** of mothers with children under age 12 are [food insecure](#).
- **52%** of children within families with financial hardship are [facing emotional distress](#).

### Structural inequalities based on race, income and family structure are growing during COVID-19.

- **57%** of Black households and **53%** of Latinx households [face material hardship](#).
- **46%** of low-income households report [decreased income](#), compared to **33%** of middle-to-upper income households.
- **25%** of Latinx households and **27%** of Black households report major or extreme [financial difficulties](#) compared to **17%** for all other households.

#### *Q: What worries you most?*

*“Paying for food and necessities. We’re constantly running out of diapers, wipes, and food. Our rent [has] been late twice now and it’s actually not paid for this month since I didn’t get my Families First, which is only \$277 a month... that doesn’t last long.” – parent from TN*

## Caregiver mental health is tied to state infection rates of COVID-19.

- **47%** of families may not be able to return to work due to lack of child care.
- **63%** of caregivers have lost emotional support since the start of the pandemic.

## Families are experiencing sustained difficulties throughout the pandemic – data show disturbing trends.

- **More than 80%** of caregivers with a child with special needs report missing well-child visits over concerns of catching COVID-19.
- **Hunger** was a problem for 20% of families with young children prior to the pandemic; now 28% of families report being food insecure.
- **Caregiver distress** is significantly higher among single-parent households than other households.
- **Approximately 90%** of parents with young children report being the primary caregiver for their children, despite distance learning and work obligations.

## WHAT AMERICA'S FAMILIES NEED NOW

1. Extend provisions covered in the expired **CARES Act**, including eviction moratorium, unemployment insurance supplements and stimulus checks to American families.
2. Increase access to telehealth and **well-child** visits for low-income families.
3. Endorse health and safety measures for **all childcare providers**, such as increase funding for cleaning supplies and access to vaccinations, so children can go to school and parents can work.
4. Direct federal relief funds to temporarily expand child tax credits to cover the **costs of childcare** and early childhood education.
5. Allocate federal and state relief funds for **SNAP benefits** to support the increasing need among families.

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**RAPID-EC data show more families will face deeper financial and material hardships due to the pandemic, creating lasting impacts on child well-being and our economic recovery.**

**Policymakers must act now to support America's families.**

*“My husband works and his income can cover rent, and some utilities but not all. We are \$1,250 behind in rent and [we’re] depending on the eviction ban to allow us to catch up.” – mother from NC*

*“This virus is really exposing the delicate balance act we maintain in our regular financial life. Our need is greater, but our income is less. So we continue to go without. It’s just more painful now.” – parent from IL*