

Executive Summary

2021 COVID-19

Impact Survey Findings

Introduction

In Spring of 2021, First 5 Contra Costa conducted a survey with over 500 families in the county to understand the complex and prolonged challenges they are facing as a result of COVID-19.

Financial pressures, tough choices

Parents are experiencing intersecting challenges around loss of employment due to the pandemic, requisite loss of income, and loss of childcare. For families of color and low-income families, the adversity of loss of employment and income is only more pronounced. At the same time, parents are negotiating the financial tradeoffs of rejoining the workforce. Many parents lost childcare during the pandemic and left their jobs to take care of children. Now, they are facing the push and pull between needing childcare to work and having a job that pays enough for childcare.

Prolonged and compounding stress:

Parents' and children's mental health is also of great concern. Parents reported stress, anxiety, and depression as primary concerns for themselves, while also citing social isolation as a chief concern for their children.

Find the full survey findings at first5coco.org/2021-covid-19-impact-survey.

KEY DATA POINTS

EMPLOYMENT, INCOME , CHILDCARE

- More parents have household incomes of less than \$50,000 since the pandemic hit (**31%** pre-pandemic, **37%** Spring 2021) and work part-time or are unemployed since COVID-19 hit (**13%** pre-pandemic, **20%** as of Spring 2021)
- Families are experiencing unemployment for prolonged periods—of those that lost employment, **50%** report being unemployed for 6 months or more.
- Of parents who reported not working or having reduced hours, over one third (**39%**) cited caring for children not in school or daycare as the reason.

KEY DATA POINTS

PARENTS' CONCERNS

- Parents' greatest concerns for their children are increased screen time (**56%**) and social isolation (**54%**).
- Families' greatest concerns for themselves are parenting stress (67%), social isolation (**59%**), and household expenses (51%).
- Almost half of parents report feeling symptoms of anxiety (**45%**) or depression (**43%**) for at least several days in the last two weeks.

Concrete policy actions County agencies can take:

Cash assistance, debt forgiveness, and free or affordable childcare ranked high for parents; however, responses were fairly well distributed across the options, indicating many opportunities for the County to be responsive to the particular needs and asks of parents with young children.

Increasing COVID-19 vaccine uptake:

A lack of uptake may be related to access, hesitancy, or a combination of the two, depending on different demographic groups' trust in the safety of the vaccine, and by extension, medical and scientific institutions.

Find the full survey findings at first5coco.org/2021-covid-19-impact-survey.

KEY DATA POINTS NEEDS & ACTIONS

- Parenting support and unconditional cash were among parents' top-ranked needs.
- Half of families (**50%**) see cash assistance or stimulus checks as an action the County could take to support them.

KEY DATA POINTS COVID-19 VACCINE

- As of Spring 2021, most parents (**79%**) either plan on getting the COVID-19 vaccine or already got at least one dose.
- Generally, fewer parents of color have at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, compared to white parents. For those not planning to get the vaccine, over one third (**40%**) say they do not trust the vaccine's safety.

LOOKING AHEAD RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this data, responses to COVID-19 should include:

- A responsive, trauma-informed, and agile system of **mental health supports** for families with young children
- Viable, affordable childcare and **early childhood education** as parents and caregivers return to work
- **Community hubs** such as family resource centers where parents can find support, connection, and resource navigation
- Living wages and **financial supports** for hard-working families
- Long-term solutions for safe, secure, and affordable **housing for low-income residents**
- **Community-driven recommendations** that address root causes of the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black and Brown communities