

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FAMILY AND EDUCATION-A STUDY

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Abstract

“As everyone knows, when the pandemic hit, many workplaces closed and many low-income parents whose job situations were already unstable lost their jobs or had reduced hours and pay,” We separately observe the associations between economic hardship, exposure to the virus, and pandemic-induced increases in childcare time on parental mental health and stress, parent-child interaction, and children’s adjustment. Changes in parental employment induced by the COVID-19 pandemic may have increased the time that parents have available to be with their children but may also have changed the organization and patterns of family life, including how parents spend their time at home and with their children. School re-opening models have been implemented globally and nationally with varied distancing and infection control measures. A review of schools and early childhood education settings that remained open during the first pandemic wave - albeit with low attendance at epidemic peak - demonstrated low case numbers and secondary transmission rates, with rare child to child or child to staff transmission. In addition to learning, families and children rely on schools for social engagement, structured opportunities for physical activity, food access, access to some health services, and psychosocial support,³⁷ as well as enabling time for working parents to balance work and care giving demands.

Keywords-*Covid-19, Pandemic, Stress, Depressive symptoms, Diminished sense of hope*

INTRODUCTION

'Family' is a single word, with many different meanings. People have many ways of defining a family and what being a part of a family means to them. Families differ in terms of economic, cultural, social, and many other facets, but what every family has in common is that the people who call it a family are making clear that those people are important in some way to the person calling them his family.

The **“education”** has been derived from Latin words “Educare, Education of Educare.” Educatorn” and Educare” means to train, to bring and to nourish’ while educare’ `means to lead out’, so we can say that education is to bring up, to developing and shaping up the individual talent and his inner potentialities.

COVID-19 is a new strain of corona virus that has not been previously identified in humans. The COVID-19 is the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in **Wuhan, Hubei province, China.**

“As everyone knows, when the pandemic hit, many workplaces closed and many low-income parents whose job situations were already unstable lost their jobs or had reduced hours and pay,” “Those experiences impacted the family ecosystem, including children’s development, stress and well-being and parent-child interactions.”

Pandemic’s Negative Effects

The study asked questions about potential changes in parental depression, anxiety, sleep, loneliness, physical health, household routines, food access, employment, health and mental health care and more.

“We think it is nearly certain that COVID-19 has had negative effects on young children and family functioning,” “The balancing act that parents have to do is challenging enough for financially stable families, but low-income families may have to choose between making rent and buying groceries.”

“These low-income kids are also more likely to have unreliable internet access,” she adds. “Some of them don’t have devices beyond a parent’s smart phone, which makes connecting to teachers and classmates for learning, nearly impossible.”

That opportunities for learning shrank dramatically with the shift to remote instruction, especially for children with special needs. Teachers also struggled to motivate their young learners while parents struggled to find the time to help them,

- Nearly one in five parents reported that their child never communicated with their teacher during distance learning.
- Two in five children spent an hour per day or less on distance learning, as reported by their parents.
- Teachers added time for planning for remote learning and responding to student and parent questions to their “usual” responsibilities.

Supporting Vulnerable Children

“Whether schools are in-person or virtual in the fall, the resources that schools and teachers provide in the form not only of instruction but also of food, social and emotional support and access to the internet, will have a profound effect on the academic growth, health and well-being of young children and their families,”

We hope the survey results will be used by school districts and support staff to help them support low-income children.

“By distinguishing between families who are able to cope with the consequences of COVID-19 from those less able to withstand the pandemic-related stressors, we can inform the development and targeting of home and school-based interventions,”

The COVID-19 crisis and its reverberations resulted in levels of economic distress unprecedented since the 1930s. But COVID was a seismic social shock even for families that lost no income, due at least in part to abrupt school closures and the widespread threat of illness and death

The COVID-19 crisis will not affect all families equally, but may cause particular harm to children of low-income and less-educated parents and for preschool age children, who are especially sensitive to developmental inputs.

We may observe low income families with preschool-age children in society to understand family dynamics following the economic and social restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

We separately observe the associations between economic hardship, exposure to the virus, and pandemic-induced increases in childcare time on parental mental health and stress, parent-child interaction, and children’s adjustment.

We observe both positive and negative effects:

- **Parental job and income losses are strongly associated with parents’**
- **Depressive symptoms,**
- **Stress,**
- **Diminished sense of hope, and**
- **Negative interactions with children.**

However, these ill effects do not occur for parents who lose jobs but do not experience concomitant income losses. In fact, job losses without income losses are associated with more positive parent-child interactions.

Parents’ exposure to COVID-19 is associated with less positive parent-child interactions and more child behavior problems. In contrast, parents who report spending substantially more time in childcare as a consequence of the pandemic report more positive parent-child interaction. We discuss the implications of these results for policy and practice.

Parent time (especially mothers’ time) in childcare has increased in the wake of school closings and stay at home orders

The effects of an increase in time with children are uncertain. On one hand, caring for young children while isolated at home and potentially also juggling employment may be stressful for at least some mothers.

However, nationally-representative data show that the time that parents spend in child care provides the most feelings of positive affect and meaning compared to the time that parents spend engaged in any other activity and that this is especially true for low-income parents mothers from a range of income levels during the spring of 2020, average mothers who have greatly increased the time they spend caring for their children during the pandemic have disproportionately experienced substantial increases in stress, anxiety, and frustrations with their children.

However, this was true primarily for mothers who held themselves to a high standard of “**intensive parenting.**” Other mothers in their sample did not experience increased time with their children as a substantial source of stress and indeed even characterized the increased parenting time as a source of joy in otherwise difficult times.

The drivers of family dynamics and children’s adjustment in economically vulnerable families during the novel corona virus pandemic are not yet fully understood.

The present economic and social features of the pandemic may be associated with key aspects of parental mental health and family dynamics.

The **family dynamics** we focus on as outcomes capture three types of interactions between parents and children known to be central in the development of young children’s socio-emotional adjustment and anticipated to play a role in amplifying or mitigating the response to the novel corona virus.

These characteristics include parental mental health and stress, parents' time investments in children's development, and the quality of parent-child interactions. We also examine parents' reports of children's behavioral adjustment.

- **Parental mental health and stress:**
- **Parental mental health problems,**
- **Such as loneliness, hopelessness, depressive symptoms, and**
- **Parenting stress are risk factors for a more stressful home environment**

Unfortunately, low income parents in the society are already at risk for higher levels of mental health problems even absent the pandemic.

To the extent that the stresses of the COVID-19 crisis worsen parental mental health and increase stress this may increase children's behavioral and socio emotional problems.

Time investments. The times that parents spend with their children on developmentally stimulating or educational activities are important determinants of childhood development

Changes in **parental employment** induced by the COVID-19 pandemic may have increased the time that parents have available to be with their children but may also have changed the organization and patterns of family life, including how parents spend their time at home and with their children.

Consequently, we do not know whether the changes in time distribution helped or hindered child development. The children in economically disadvantaged households receive less time investment even absent the pandemic

It is possible that unemployed parents might increase time caring for children or other types of home production in response to reduced work in the marketplace. However, parents may spend less time in home production or with their children during the pandemic, perhaps because they do not know how to productively invest the time they do have in their children or because they or a family member is sick.

Quality of parent-child interaction. We may be observe have considered parenting style such as how warm, strict, or communicative a parent is as an important determinant of a child's skills

During a period when schools are closed, parents may have more opportunities to spend time with children and this may produce more positive parent-child interactions. However, the disruptions caused by changes in routines and economic changes or the threat of illness may produce more negative interactions. Harsh parenting – including shouting at young children may exacerbate children's behavioral and emotional problems

Even absent the pandemic, children in low income homes experience harsh parenting more often than do children in higher-income homes. **Developmental Timing** Our study focuses on families with preschool age children; early childhood is hypothesized to be a particularly sensitive period for exposure to economic and social stress.

The studies highlight the critical importance of early childhood for brain development and for establishing the neural functions and structures that will shape future cognitive, social, and emotional and health outcomes.

Discussion

While we hope the pandemic will come to a close soon, the results from our analysis can help us understand the broader impact of economic and social shocks on family dynamics. Our research provides new insights that can help policy makers and practitioners support low income families who are struggling with these shocks now and in the future.

First, our data show high levels of job loss, income declines, and perceived inability to make ends meet. Overall experienced either a job loss or a substantial household income loss due to the pandemic.

But it is the combination of job and income loss that seems to create stress and hurt child development. While this pandemic will one day come to a close, job loss will be with us forever and these results suggest that government efforts to stem the income loss associated with job loss could greatly contribute to family stability and child success.

Moreover, the economic stresses of the COVID-19 crisis have worsened mothers' mental health and stress, diminished their sense of hope for the future, and substantially increased the amount that parents yell and lose their temper with their young children.

This calls for interventions aimed at supporting mothers' mental health. Nonetheless, adverse effects are never apparent among the families in our sample who report a pandemic-induced job loss but not a concomitant household income loss.

We do not know how these families avoided a household income loss but there are several possibilities. Unemployment compensation plus federal stimulus money to families may have prevented income loss.

Other household members may have experienced an income gain from working more hours, for example as essential workers. Moreover, we find that this group of families who lost their jobs (and were unemployed at the time of the survey) but maintained their income sometimes reports better family interactions – they report more positive interactions with their child and they report that their child more often enjoys the time with them.

This highlights the importance of time to parenting. For parents having both income and time to spend with their children is important. If they can have more time with no loss income, their interactions will improve.

This may suggest generous paid family leave is a promising way to improve child outcomes. Although parents experiencing job and income losses and those reporting an inability to make ends meet are much more likely to report diminished mental health, they are no more likely to report being overwhelmed by their responsibilities as parents nor do these experiences detract from the quality of the parent-child interactions.

An exception here is the degree to which parents report yelling at their child, who is strongly correlated with job and income loss, income loss alone, and struggling to make ends meet (but, again, not job loss alone). Parents' reports of their own economic stress are also not correlated with their reports of their children's behavioral adjustment.

This suggests that many parents in our sample were able to shield their children to some extent from their own personal stress arising from household economic struggles. It will be important for future research to understand how long parents are able to remain resilient in this way, and the factors that shape the ability to do so.

It is certainly possible that if economic hardship wears on its ill effects could spill over into parent-child interactions. Parents' exposure to COVID-19 itself is associated with substantially lower levels of positive parent-child interaction and substantially higher levels of parents' reports of children's

The **world operates** in a patriarchal system that believes in hierarchy of men over women. While this system has been there for centuries, it adapts itself to its time to ensure its continuity. These changes often occur as a response to any resistance from the oppressed.

While the change allows for a slight concession to the needs of the oppressed, the overall system ensures that the disparity between men and women continues. One of the most common ways in which this system adapts is by providing an illusion of choice and progression in specific situations. In recent interactions with some of our clients, it has been observed that this illusion is a common thread among their narratives.

Behavioral non-compliance.

There is also a strong suggestion in the data that exposure to COVID-19 is associated with higher levels of parental life stress and a diminished sense of hope. In fact, exposure to COVID was the only one of our predictor variables that was correlated with children's behavioral adjustment. We do not know of other studies that have established this finding but it is certainly worrisome to the extent that cases continue to rise in various locations around the society.

A systematic found insufficient data to assess the efficacy of school closures during corona virus outbreaks and questioned whether environmental, hygiene, and infection control precautions may be as effective.

We have been conflicting. While models from the first pandemic wave suggested that school closures in the context of a broader pandemic response (e.g. social isolation and physical distancing) reduced SARS-CoV-2 transmission and case counts, other models noted that school closures were not as effective as other NPI strategies or sufficient as a stand-alone strategy.²⁶

An important limitation of earlier is the assumption that, as with other respiratory viruses, children transmit more than adults; this assumption is not consistent with subsequent evidence.

EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL REOPENING DURING THE PANDEMIC So far, there is limited published data on school re-openings and COVID-19 transmission. It mainly consists of case reports of contact tracing and prevalence studies; however, experiences globally and within suggest that schools can be opened without substantial increases in COVID-19 transmission.

School re-opening models have been implemented globally and nationally with varied distancing and infection control measures. A review of schools and early childhood education settings that remained open during the first pandemic wave - albeit with low attendance at epidemic peak - demonstrated low case numbers and secondary transmission rates, with rare child to child or child to staff transmission.

The re-opening of closed primary schools in Finland did not result in increased COVID-19 case counts, while Sweden did not experience elevated infection rates among children attending day cares, primary, and elementary schools that remained open throughout COVID Wave 1, with no increase in infection observed among school or day care staff.

The re-opening of preschool, primary, and secondary schools in Germany, Denmark, Finland and Norway did not result in outbreaks or significantly increased rates in younger children returning to school in countries with low community transmission, while the return of older students in a country with high community transmission appeared to increase rates among students but not staff. A number of jurisdictions have reported increased cases as a result of school re-openings however the data are difficult.

Impact of School Closures During the COVID-19 Pandemic interpret as most reports are anecdotal and in many cases testing and contact tracing were expanded concurrently, often coinciding with escalating community transmission.³⁰ No deaths have resulted.

A systematic narrative review of transmission risk related to the re-opening of school and day care settings in the context of COVID-19 is currently underway which will help moving forward.

Modeling studies in May 2020 suggested that partial reopening of schools in June would have minimal impact on transmission in the short-term, provided vulnerable adults maintain physical distancing and symptomatic individuals self-isolate. These models assumed that smaller numbers of children were in attendance than usual.

Age specific and overall trends in BC cases suggest that school re-openings in June were not associated with an increase in COVID-19 cases. However, the June 2020 experience cannot be generalized to September 2020 because community transmission was then at a nadir, class sizes were much smaller than planned for the fall and the re-opening of schools was brief.

Schools are embedded in communities, and strong control of community transmission reduces the risk of COVID-19 in schools. During high levels of community transmission, cases, clusters and outbreaks in schools are expected. Communicating and responding to these events will need to be part of school re-opening plans.

On the other hand, if community transmission is low the likelihood of school outbreaks is also reduced. Outbreaks in daycares, schools, and summer camps were all reported when either community prevalence was high and/or when public health measures were not followed.

In addition to learning, families and children rely on schools for social engagement, structured opportunities for physical activity, food access, access to some health services, and psychosocial support,³⁷ as well as enabling time for working parents to balance work and care giving demands. Schools are key in reducing inequities across society by supporting equitable access to resources for children and youth to learn and develop. The impact of school closures and, more broadly, of the COVID-19 pandemic, is likely to be experienced inequitably, or may even generate new inequities.

The following is a summary of global literature and BC data on unintended effects of school closures on children, youth, and families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Finally, we identify one dimension of low income families' pandemic experience that seems consistently positive – an increase in the amount of time that parents are spending with their pre-school age children in the wake of school closings. Seventy-five percent of the parents in our study reported that they were spending much more pandemic-induced time caring for their young children.

Although this experience was modestly stressful on average for parents in our study, it was also a significant positive predictor of the parents' perception that the child enjoyed the time with the parent and the parents' report of more positive interactions with the child.

These observes are consistent with prior work showing that the time parents spend with their children is characterized by very high levels of positive affect and meaning

In sum, these results make clear that the complete story of economic and social shocks on family dynamics and children's adjustment remains to be told. COVID-19 will eventually end, but the economic and social forces shaping family life will remain with us and may take new shapes in the future.

Understanding these phenomena, and crafting the appropriate policy response to mitigating these shocks on parents and children, should be a top priority for scholars and policy makers alike.

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