The Kid Angle
Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

Kids and Covid: By the numbers
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Contact: Michele Kayal, VP Media and Communications,
MicheleK@FirstFocus.org

Conversation series examines Covid's "outsized impact" on kids

Two years after the first COVID-19 cases were diagnosed in the United States, kids are back in school, more of them have health insurance, and life has begun to look a bit more “normal.” But that doesn’t mean the kids are alright.

Nearly 13 million children have contracted the disease, more than 241,000 have lost a caregiver. Our youngest children remain unvaccinated. And we have only just begun to consider COVID’s long-term effects on children.

That’s why First Focus on Children is launching “Kids and Covid,” a multi-week conversation series examining the pandemic’s ongoing, outsized impact on the country’s children.

The first session, on March 16, will tackle the mental health crisis afflicting the nation’s children and proposals for treating it.

Featured conversations run through April and will gather experts, advocates and lawmakers to discuss homelessness, vaccinations, children in foster care and the juvenile justice system, mixed status families, economic impacts, education and nutrition, and global health.
In the meantime, here are some numbers that outline the impact the pandemic and its economic fallout have had on every aspect of our children’s health and well-being. The numbers below tell only part of that story. But they are a good place to start.

**Physical health:**

Despite early misconceptions that children don’t get COVID, children account for 19% of all COVID-19 cases in the United States.

- **6+million:** Number of children who have contracted COVID-19
- **114,730:** Number of children hospitalized with COVID
- **7,459:** Number of children who developed the serious condition known as multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MISC)
- **1,433:** Number of children who have died with COVID
- **13:** where COVID-19 ranks among the top 15 causes of death in children
- **19 million:** the number of U.S. children under 5, for whom there is still no vaccine

**Emotional health:**

Our country’s children are in the throes of a full-blown mental health crisis.

- **31%:** percentage increase in mental health-related emergency room visits by 12-17 year olds in 2020
- **5:** where suicide ranks among the top 15 causes of death in children
- **0:** the number of states that meet the recommended ratio of one social worker for every 250 students
- **4,000+:** the number of students served by a single school psychologist in West Virginia, Missouri, Texas, Alaska and Georgia.
- **241,000+:** the number of children grieving a caregiver who died of COVID-19

**Economic stability:**

At the height of the pandemic in 2021, government programs in the American Rescue Plan cut child poverty by 36%.
- **3.7 million**: the number of children who slid back into poverty when improvements to the Child Tax Credit expired
- **6.7 million**: number of children expected to lose health coverage when the Public Health Emergency ends
- **1-in-6**: the number of children who experienced food insecurity last year
- **22%**: percentage of households with children who are behind on rent

**Inequity:**

Black, Hispanic, indigenous and other children of color are far more likely to contract COVID, be hospitalized, lose a caregiver to the disease, suffer economic consequences and endure other pandemic fallout than their white counterparts.

- **65%**: percentage of children who lost a caregiver to COVID who belong to racial and ethnic minorities
- **Twice**: the likelihood of Black or Hispanic children losing a caregiver to COVID, v. white children
- **5x**: the likelihood of American Indian/Alaska Native children losing a caregiver to COVID, v. white children
- **29%**: percentage of Black renters with children who are behind on rent, v. 22% for all renters with children
- **3x**: the rate of food insecurity among Black and Hispanic households v. white households
- **70%**: the percentage of total MISC cases that occurred in children who are Black or Hispanic
- **3 million**: the number of marginalized K-12 students — those with disabilities, experiencing homelessness, in foster care or who are migrants — who stopped attending school

**Where we go from here:**

Emergency pandemic aid — improved tax credits, increased food benefits, economic impact payments and other child-centered initiatives — achieved historic levels of well-being for children. These investments reversed more than a decade of decline in federal spending on children, helping lift nearly 4 million out of poverty and producing the largest year-to-year increase in the share of federal spending on kids since First Focus on Children began tracking 15 years ago.
We must capitalize on this progress. And propose long-term solutions to these long-term problems.