

# FACT SHEET: KIDS & COVID BY THE NUMBERS



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.

The pandemic and its economic fallout have had an outsized impact 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.

- » **12.6+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
- » **2x:** The likelihood of Black or Hispanic children losing a caregiver to COVID, v. white children
- » **4.5x:** 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.**

*\*\*Citations and links for all of the above available at: [www.firstfocus.org/resources/fact-sheet/kids-and-covid-by-the-numbers](http://www.firstfocus.org/resources/fact-sheet/kids-and-covid-by-the-numbers)\*\**