

Impact on South Carolina Children's Well-Being



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, South Carolina ranked No. 41 nationally in overall child well-being. Since March 2020, this public health emergency has shown that disparities in housing, health care, education and economic opportunity lead to greater vulnerabilities for families, especially children. Supports for South Carolina children and families need to be strengthened to ensure the well-being and safety of all children, especially children of color.

ECONOMIC INSECURITY



ROUGHLY
40%

(726,406) of South Carolinians suffering from unemployment also reported having a child in the household

The challenges of unemployment are exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals with children in the household. This can cause unintended effects on children and families such as financial hardship, which can directly affect family relationships and access to living necessities for children.

How can you help?

- Strengthen economic supports like child care subsidies and create more jobs that pay a wage that ensures basic needs of a family are met.
- Ensure children and families have consistent access to food and other basic living needs.

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES



90,395

households with children in school that do not have regular access to broadband internet

The lack of internet access during the pandemic has further exacerbated educational disparities of already disadvantaged students, such as those coming from rural or low-resourced communities.

How can you help?

- Work to provide access to broadband internet to rural areas for children and families.
- Advocate for internet service providers to set up hot spots in areas where families face educational challenges during COVID-19.

CHILD CARE



43%

of parents and caregivers report that their current child care arrangement due to COVID-19 is not ideal

Parents and caregivers have experienced disruptive challenges during the pandemic, including alternating work schedules, working fewer hours, changing existing child care plans and providing in-home child care while maintaining a job. Safe, stable, nurturing relationships are important for a child's well-being, and affordable child care-related supports can help promote these relationships.

How can you help?

- Work with agencies and organizations to provide the resources and support necessary to open child care centers with the capacity to ensure the health and safety of all children.
- Providing discounted or free child care to essential workers would be most beneficial to families and communities during the pandemic.

FOOD INSECURITY



99,782

households report children not eating enough due to unaffordability during COVID-19

Economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused the number of households reporting children not eating enough to jump from 35,282 households to 99,782. This represents 13% of all South Carolina households with children.

How can you help?

- Support and donate to programs and services where groceries or meals are provided for families: food pantries, schools, home-delivered meal services, places of worship, soup kitchens, and friends or neighbors.
- Advocate for food stores to invest in communities currently considered food deserts.

HEALTH CARE



14%

of children have a parent with no health insurance

There are 150,000 children who do not have access to health care in South Carolina. These children and their families may not be able to afford medical services that provide testing and treatment for COVID-19.

How can you help?

- Advocate for affordable access to health care and assistance for those experiencing financial hardship and faced with medical bills related to the pandemic.
- Make COVID-19 testing accessible and available at no charge.

MENTAL HEALTH



83%

of parents and caregivers reported that their current level of stress/anxiety compounded with other lack of social determinants is much higher than usual due to COVID-19

Due to the challenges posed by COVID-19, many parents and caregivers are experiencing higher levels of stress/anxiety. These concerns also stem from the challenges of balancing accessibility and affordability with quality when selecting options for child care during this unprecedented time. All of these factors compounded by other disparities in housing, health care, education and economic opportunity can create barriers to the mental well-being of parents and caregivers.

How can you help?

- Provide virtual mental health services to parents and caregivers to help them cope with crisis-related challenges.
- Provide socio-emotional supports for children to reduce the impact of toxic stress on child well-being.

STIMULUS PAYMENT USAGE



Top 3

expenses South Carolinians paid for with their stimulus payments were all basic living necessities

Of the nearly **four million** South Carolinians who reported receiving a stimulus payment, more than half used most of their payments for basic living expenses such as food, household supplies or personal care products, and utilities (electricity, internet, natural gas, cell phone). There were **383,250** people who reported not receiving a stimulus payment. Concrete supports are necessary in preventing child abuse and neglect as well as building resilient, thriving families.

How can you help?

- Support your family, friends, neighbors, and community members who need basic living necessities such as food, household supplies, and personal care products.
- Advocate for continual stimulus support that can cover basic living expenses for the entirety of the pandemic.

Sources

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For more information on ways that you or your organization can advocate or help

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