

How COVID-19 Is Impacting Babies and Families



The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the health and well-being of families across the country. As policymakers make decisions about the best response for our country, it is critical that they keep in mind the needs of the youngest and their families. The comments below highlight the threat of this crisis to families and babies across the country.

Basic Needs

“Due to COVID-19, my employer shut down. The fear of running out of food, not being able to pay utilities has made our lives more complex as days progress. Having to depend upon state assistance (TANF) for cash isn't really enough to make it past the first week of the month. Praying that this pandemic will pass soon, so that I am able to get back to work to be self-sufficient for my family.”

- **Fatimah from Dover, DE**

“Soy madre de dos niños pequeños. Ya llevo dos semanas sin trabajo por que trabajaba en un restaurante y este lo cerraron por el coronavirus. Esta situacion a impactado mucho en mi hogar por que no tengo como pagar mi renta y ya se me esta acabando el poco dinero que tenia.” (*Translation: “I am the mother of two small children. I have been left without work for two weeks, because I worked in a restaurant which was closed because of coronavirus. This has had a great impact on my household because I cannot pay my rent and the little money I have has run out.”*)

- **Laura from Dayton, OH**

“My kid can potty train when his wipes and pull ups run out, but there’s moms that have young kids who have no way to get diapers and wipes if or when they run out. Formula is running out in my town. There needs to be some effort to change the situation, otherwise babies will not get what they need.”

- **Jamie from Gillette, WY**

“I went into work today, and not even an hour later they asked me to go home because I have a cough. I did not test positive for COVID-19 (which is a BIG relief), but I was still sent home so I did not make any employees uncomfortable. Without pay. This is a big worry for me as I still have bills to pay and food to put on the table.”

- **Laura from Matawan, NJ**

“Our work hours are at a minimum and that means rationing. However when your kids are home from school that means all your expenses increase, and we’re very very tight on everything. Diapers have been hard to find and even some of the more affordable foods.”

- **Juliane from Orem, UT**

Child Care

“Oregon is now only working on child care for those on the front-lines. This is good and bad all at the same time. With so many facilities closed I worry about how many will be able to reopen once things stabilize and how expensive they will become so they can get back to a normal state.”

- **Tess from Oregon City, OR**

“Due to the pandemic, our daughter’s child care will be closed indefinitely. Since we are under contract, we will still have to pay child care fees on weekly basis. Because of our nation’s lack of paid leave and affordable child care, my husband and I had to make a decision. My husband will stay home with Ava which means cutting our income to one. And with one income we still have to pay the same amount of monthly expenses including child care fees.”

- **Shiela from Bridgeport, CT**

“My child care is Early Head Start, but since school is closed for the rest of the year, I have no child care. I work at home, but at night when my kids are sleeping or early morning, before they wake up. My husband got a job at the hospital, so he has to be at work every day.”

- **Teresa from Garden City, KS**

Paid Leave

“To be quite honest, things are hell. Without the option of paid leave, we are stuck going to work and exposing ourselves and our families, which just adds to the mental stress even more.”

- **Juliane from Orem, UT**

“My twins were born over two years ago, and my paid sick leave hasn’t rebuilt itself yet. So in order to stay home and self quarantine as advised, I would have to use all of my sick time and vacation (not even two weeks!) or go into leave without pay status. Caring for our families should not have to mean paying our bills and feeding our children or being present at home and going hungry together.”

- **Juliane from Orem, UT**

“We are doing our best to maintain structure and be a source of calmness for our kids because we know that amidst all of this that those things are essential. Paid leave legislation has the potential to transform the pandemic from a period of stress and chaos for families to a period of love, calmness, and togetherness.”

- **Ashley from Harrison, AR**

“Even with help from my husband, trying to juggle virtual meetings, workload, breastfeeding, pumping, cooking, naps, diaper changes for my two littles (3 years old and 9 months) is HARD. The world around us changed but expectations from work have not changed. Sometimes, I am not getting in bed until after midnight only to wake up an hour later to nurse a baby. We are exhausted!!!”

- **Shawnnita from Bedford, TX**

Physical Health:

“I work in a pharmacy and come into contact with sick people every day. I stress that I could become exposed and then bring that back into my house and expose my kids and husband as well.”

- **Sarah from Farmington, MO**

“I am worried that parents will bring a child to care medicated because the child has a fever and they need to work, and so are the families I serve. Families are canceling contracts with us over this.

- **Justine, child care provider from Los Angeles, CA**

Systems Disruptions

“We have been required to requalify for our son’s Medicaid. They changed the date, and now they want materials by next Wednesday. Unfortunately, however, everything is shut down, and I can’t get the required paperwork.”

- **Susan from Oxford, MS**

“My TANF was held up because my caseworker is in quarantine. It’s a mess!”

- **Christy from Talent, OR**

Home Visitation

“My home visitors can’t come to my home, and they haven’t been able to set up a system where they can at least video chat or Facetime with my children to help me through whatever problem I can’t figure out on my own. I just pray things get better because I need them. My kids need them.”

- **Anonymous from Chicopee, MA**

“For the time being we are managing without our home visitor. We do our best with what we know or other resources online, but we miss the trained, professional, hands on learning and support that our home visitor provides.”

- **Chris from Farmington, MO**

“I am in desperate need of community support. I really relied on support persons in the community. I am currently isolated to my home with my 18- month old daughter. I have no one to check on me or anyone to talk to. “

- **Amanda from Redding, CA**