



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

For some children, home is not a safe place.

The coronavirus is exacerbating some of the biggest risk factors for child abuse and neglect: domestic violence, financial stress, and social isolation.

According to Wayne State University School of Social Work **Assistant Professor Kristina Nikolova**, the closure of schools and other child-friendly public places removes children from contact with teachers, coaches, and others who can catch initial concerns about families under stress and refer them for help. Added to the extended amount of time children and caregivers are in constant contact with each other in a limited amount of space and conflicts can arise.

Caregivers are under financial pressures and the continued economic uncertainty is hindering parents' ability to rely on coping mechanisms and respond to children effectively. Under the current situation, families might not receive the assistance they need until events escalate.

Parents and caregivers may need additional help, many of whom are caring for children with special needs or children who have often experienced trauma in their own homes. Their usual network of support including case workers, teachers and therapists is disrupted. Many caregivers lack access to technology or sufficient internet connection for the bandwidth needed for online support.

What is child abuse and neglect?

Child Abuse: Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, by a parent, a legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare.

Child Neglect: Harm or threatened harm due to the negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.



'The number one reporters of child abuse are teachers, but kids aren't seeing them right now. Neighbors and other family members, PLEASE pay close attention.'

(Associated Press, [2020](#))



FACTS

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

and during the COVID-19 crisis we need to keep in mind that home is not always a safe place.

- Every year, over 150,000 referrals are made to child protection services in Michigan (CB, [2016](#))
- More than 37,000 children in Michigan are confirmed by child protection services as victims of child maltreatment each year (Kids Count, [2019](#)). That equals to 17 out of every 1000 children in Michigan aged 0-17.
- The most common type of maltreatment is child neglect, representing 63% of cases (CB, [2016](#))

MYTH If I make a call to Child Protection Services, they will take the children away from their parents.

FACT Less than 3.5% of referrals to Child Protection Services result in the removal of the child. More than 96.5% of families stay together. CPS provides many services to families to ensure they stay together.

[Learn more](#) (MDHHS [2020](#))



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Know that support is available for anyone struggling to deal with the fallout from coronavirus.
- Check in on family, friends, and neighbors that might be struggling.
- If you suspect child abuse or neglect, make a report calling 855-444-3911 ([Potential indicators of child abuse or neglect](#))
- If [you suspect domestic violence call the National Domestic Violence Hotline](#). For any victims and survivors who need support, call [1-800-799-7233](#) or [1-800-799-7233](#) for TTY, or if you're unable to speak safely, you can log onto [thehotline.org](#) or text LOVEIS to 22522. *Social workers are mandated reporters and are required by law to support suspected child abuse or neglect. Michigan has created an [online reporting system for mandated reporters](#).*
- If you or someone you know requires assistance with substance use call SAHMSA's National Helpline, available 24 hours a day and confidential: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or reach out to your [local Michigan services](#).



SUPPORT FOSTER CHILDREN

Show your support for foster children by making a donation to any residential agency that needs resources to keep kids in care safe, secure, engaged and healthy.

- [Methodist Children's Home Society](#)
- [Vista Maria](#)
- [Wolverine Residential Program](#)



RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Childhelp National Child Abuse Helpline
1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)
childhelpline.org



CALL



TEXT



ONLINE CHAT

Immediate confidential assistance is available through the **Childhelp National Child Abuse Helpline**, a hotline dedicated to the prevention and intervention of child abuse in over 170 languages. Childhelp provides support for children at risk for abuse, distressed parents seeking crisis intervention and concerned individuals who suspect child abuse may be occurring. The hotline offers crisis intervention, information, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources. Online chat is available at childhelpline.org. All calls, texts and chats are confidential.

Are you a parent or guardian struggling to cope during the current crisis? There are [community supports](#) available for every level of need.

- Resources for [Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- Ways to [Promote Children's Resilience to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Free Online Virtual Summer Camps \(2020\)](#)

Citations

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