

COVID-19 PARENTING UPDATE



One parent testified how it had been difficult for him to relate with his children on seemingly simple life issues – now he always starts the day with his typical ‘good morning’ greeting, but also extends it to questions like, ‘what do you have lined up for the day?’

- Forgotten Voices International, Zambia

The COVID-19 Parenting resources have now reached 137,9 million people !

We continue to work closely with NGOs, faith-based organisations and 33 national governments to support them in disseminating the resources as well as in learning about their impact on the lives of families and children.



COVID-19 Parenting Qualitative research word cloud (Sherr, Mebrahtu et al 2020)

IN THIS ISSUE

New milestone: 137,9 million people

UNICEF's Caregiver Guide

COVID-19 Playful Parenting South Africa

Global Parenting Digital Hackathon

Parenting digital resources: News & updates

World Carers Conversation Webinar

Parenting in the News

A new year of hope has arrived as vaccine campaigns have launched around the world. While many countries are still battling the COVID-19 pandemic, parenting remains at the heart of solutions to help keep children safe during these challenging times. Evidence shows that each year 1 billion children aged 2 to 17 are exposed to violence, especially younger children, and most of it occurs in the home.

By harnessing the power of collective effort, the COVID-19 Playful Parenting resources have reached more than 137,9 million people with over 600 implementing partners in approximately 204 countries and the support of 33 governments.

The coalition's shared vision is to reduce violence against children by 50% before 2030. As we continue to work tirelessly to make the parenting resources available in even more accessible and practical formats, we are committed to turning this goal into a reality by innovating digital parenting support, strengthening government commitment, and rigorously evaluating how these resources impact the lives of children and families.

We appreciate your involvement in this global parenting initiative!

- Dr Jamie M. Lachman, Co-Principal Investigator, University of Oxford

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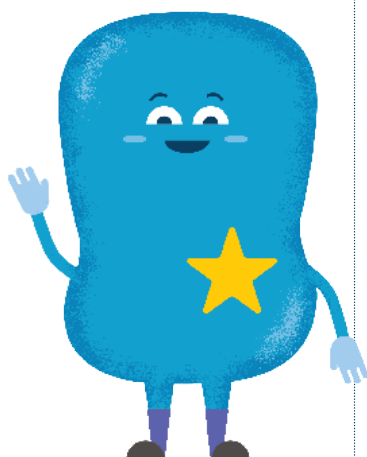
COVID-19 PARENTING UPDATE



NEW MILESTONE: We have reached 137,9 million people!

Understanding our impact on families

February has been an opportunity to not only achieve a new milestone of reach across the world, but also to understand the impact that the parenting resources are having on families. With the leadership of our partners globally, we utilised quantitative and qualitative tools (including pre-post surveys, retrospective surveys and in-depth qualitative interviews) to evaluate the impact of the parenting resources on outcomes of positive parenting, parenting stress, and physical and emotional abuse.



What we learned

We completed close to 600 surveys in India, Zambia, Malawi, North Macedonia, Nepal and Cameroon and currently have ongoing data collection in other countries including Paraguay, Ghana, South Africa and Sri Lanka. We learned that the parenting tips are having a positive impact on families during this challenging time. For example, the Gabriel Project in Mumbai completed 171 surveys and we learned the following about impact:

COVID-19 PARENTING IMPACT EVALUATION

Nepal | Malawi | Zambia | North Macedonia | India

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FROM FIVE COUNTRIES

Preventing violence against children through improving positive parenting in the time of COVID-19

OUR BACKGROUND

The University of Oxford and Parenting for Lifelong Health brought together a coalition consisting of the WHO, UNICEF, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, UNDAF and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop a set of open-source COVID-19 parenting resource sheets to support parents in keeping themselves and their children safe, happy, and healthy during this stressful period. These resources are based on evidence from multiple ICtS in Africa, Asia and Europe and have been translated into over 100 languages and have reached at least 137 million families in over 200 countries.

OUR M&E

We remain committed to building the evidence of effectiveness and learning about mechanisms of delivery of the COVID-19 Parenting resources using the Framework for Research, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance.



OUR IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Total n = 548

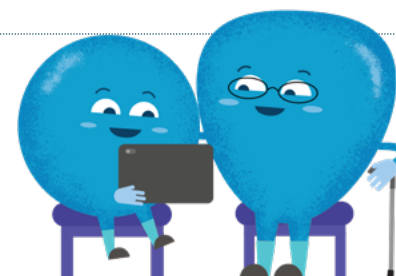


WHAT THE PARENTS SAID

"It's like I never knew how to parent. I could easily get disappointed, and change at my children. As a result, they were failing to express themselves. But now, it is just coming naturally, the smiles and laughter and a number of people have admired my style of parenting. To me, it has been this idea of not just reading them, but, being able to see - one by one, how the tips are making a difference in the life of my family. I really needed these tips." (parent, Malawi)

"The parenting tips we received have been very helpful in spending this crucial time with our children, managing stress levels and maintaining harmony among the family members. We do meditation, listen to our favourite songs and do fun activities together and try to learn something new every day." (parent, India)

*Results are based on 548 retrospective surveys conducted by the University of Oxford and Parenting for Lifelong Health. For more information, please contact info@covid19parenting.com.

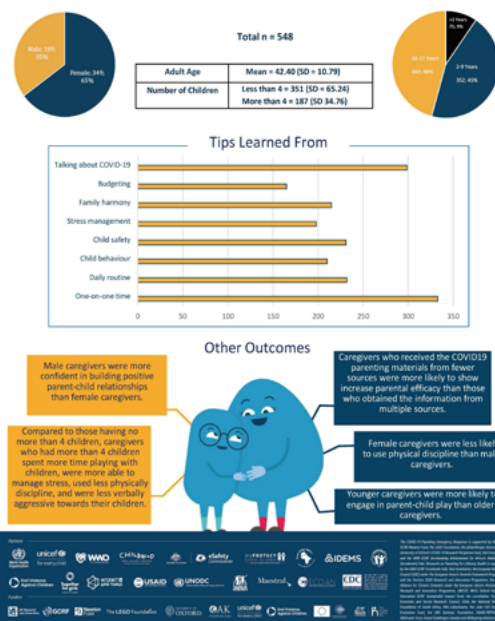


COVID-19 PARENTING IMPACT EVALUATION

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Read our **Impact Briefs** for individual studies in each country

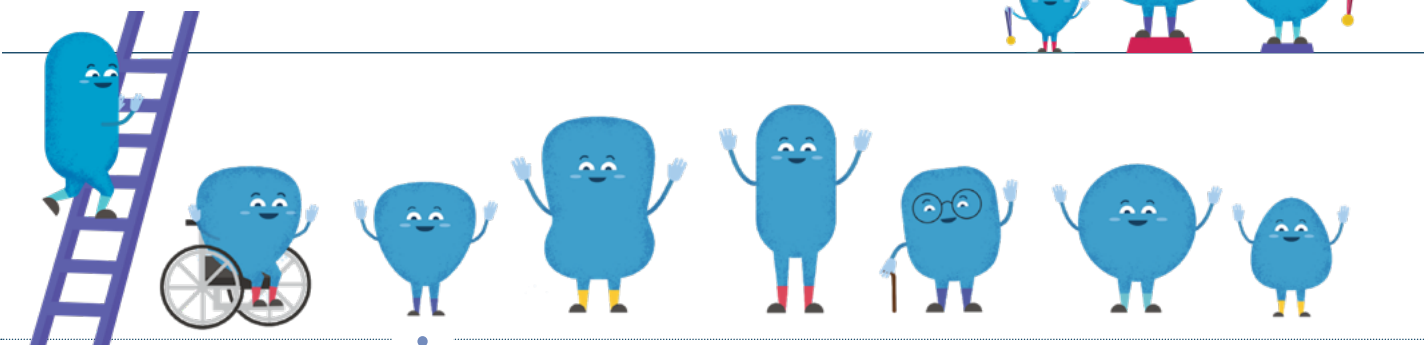
Partners



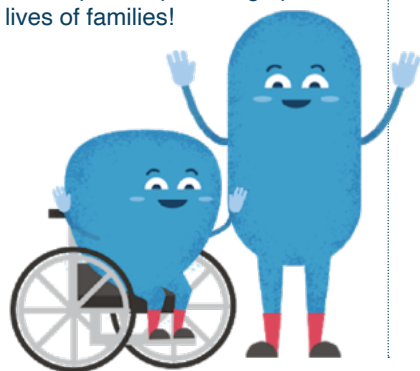
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COVID-19 PARENTING UPDATE



The in-depth interviews explored parenting challenges in COVID-19 conditions, perceptions of the need for the COVID-19 parenting tips, appraisal and comments on the parenting tips as well as the perceptions of the utility and impact of the parenting tips. This qualitative work helped us appreciate that parents are experiencing increased stress as a result of the pandemic and its consequences on everyday life. However, this work also highlighted the utility and the positive impact of parenting tips on the lives of families!



COVID-19 has brought new challenges to almost every aspect of the lives of parents and their children. Specific stressors that were widely described by participants included emotional stress, balancing work with parenting, assisting children with schooling from home, keeping children occupied, providing for families, low levels and/or lack of social support, and restrictions on activities/movement.

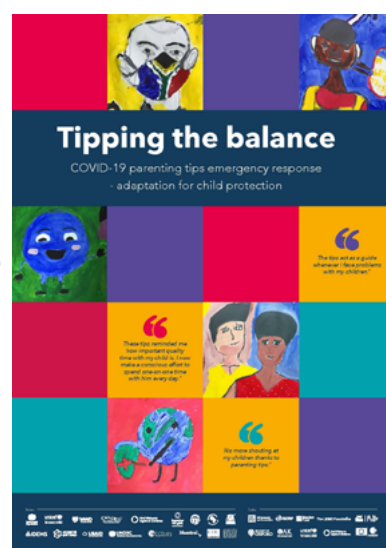


Figure 1: Word cloud representation of answers to the parenting challenges in the time of COVID-19



Figure 2: Word cloud from the 255 responses to Utility of COVID-19 Tips

The parenting tips equipped parents with information and practices for transforming their everyday lives, interactions and the challenges from the parenting pressures. They were found to provide prompts and permissions, enabled communications and offered ways to reduce stress, monitor behaviour, enhance communication and navigate discipline.

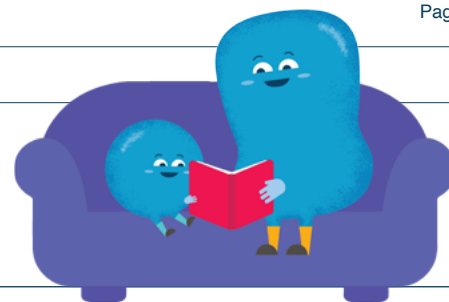


Read the **“Tipping the balance - COVID-19 parenting tips emergency response”** report

FEBRUARY 2021

REPORT

COVID-19 PARENTING UPDATE




UNICEF - Caring for the Caregiver during the COVID crisis Guide

UNICEF's Caring for Caregiver during the COVID-19 Crisis guide

The COVID-19 Parenting Resources have been included as essential resources in UNICEF's Caring for Caregivers during the COVID-19 Crisis guide

This guide aims to support countries in their efforts to promote parents'/caregiver's mental health and emotional well-being during the COVID-19 crisis, with a special focus on adolescent caregivers. Based on the Caring for the Caregiver prototype package, it was jointly developed by UNICEF, in collaboration with the University of Witwatersrand and Harvard, with the generous support of the LEGO Foundation. The guide includes key messages for advocacy, outreach and communication activities, practical guidance for designing and strengthening programs for supporting caregivers as part of a COVID-19 response, case studies for illustrating common challenges that may occur during the COVID-19 pandemic and information sheets on COVID-19 specific topics.

Please reach out to Radhika Mitter (rmitter@unicef.org) or Ana Nieto (anieto@unicef.org) with any questions, feedback or examples of how you are using the guide.

 Download the **UNICEF's Caring for Caregivers during the COVID-19 Crisis guide** here



COVID-19 Playful Parenting South Africa

Learning and bridging to global parenting support

We are delighted to thank the LEGO Foundation and the Oak Foundation for ongoing support of this initiative. Both are supporting the next stages of development and delivery of combined human-digital parenting resources.

The LEGO Foundation is supporting the next phase of the COVID-19 Playful Parenting Emergency Response. This will focus on strengthening existing resources and learning about what works and for whom in the context of South Africa, with the following overall goals:

Enable caregivers to nurture their children's development through playful parenting and learning through play in the context of reduced child-related services.

Protect children and support families in coping with the multiple stressors resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and preventing violence against children.

We will be working closely with UNICEF South Africa, the South African Department of Social Development, University of Cape Town, Mothers2Mothers, and Clowns Without Borders South Africa to pilot our innovative human-digital modalities of playful parenting programmes that include parenting apps, online parenting support groups, interactive parenting text messages, and media-based interventions.

These new digital and hybrid platforms are being designed to be accessible to those with a range of digital access, adaptive to different cultures and contexts, scalable to meet population-level demand, and easily modified to local contexts by governments, NGOs, and local organizations.



Learn more about the **Oak Foundation**



Learn more about the **LEGO Foundation**



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Global Parenting Digital Hackathon

Generali and the Human Safety Net (THSN) organized a global volunteering event from 2-3 February 2021, aiming to make COVID-19 parenting resources available in 22 languages and accelerate the dissemination to millions of families.

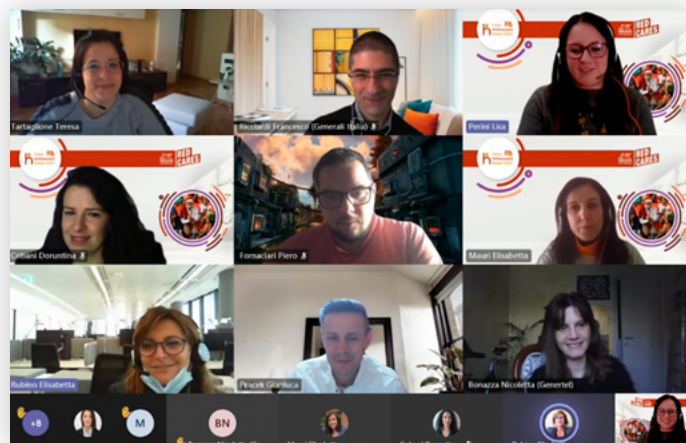
More than 800 volunteers from 22 countries translated the COVID-19 Parenting tip sheets, social media messages, and parenting video scripts. The volunteers also recorded parenting videos based on the previously translated scripts. These videos will be featured in ParentText, shared on social media and through other advocacy campaigns.



Learn more about The Human Safety Net (THSN)



In just two short days, THSN volunteers demonstrated an impactful example of global collaboration by completing 1500 translations and producing more than 1600 videos for families in need!



"I learned how to deal more effectively and efficiently with the implementation of home rules and routines with my son, how to listen to him, but still not to give up when I shouldn't, I successfully teach him what self-confidence is, we regularly cheer up, we praise for each of his good new behaviors. I succeed to cope with what I used to struggle with. Our life is even better and of better quality now. Now I have time for myself and for us."
 – Counsellor to village Headman Mphamba in Malawi - via RISE North Macedonia

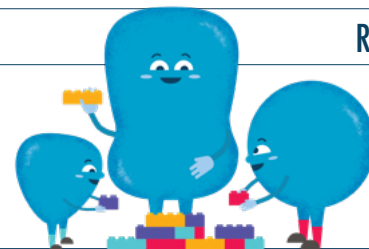
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Developing, testing and scaling up ParentText and ParentChat

In collaboration with The Human Safety Net, partners in Malaysia and Philippines will develop, test and scale-up ParentText and ParentChat, both of which are digital adaptations of the evidence-informed programme Parenting for Lifelong Health. The partnership will focus on strengthening these programmes, with additional support from funding partner Generali to produce and translate materials.

Spotlight on Malaysia:

Partners at Universiti Putra Malaysia, led by Professor Dr. Rumaya Juhari, have been adapting the Naungan Kasih evidence-based parenting programmes (including Parenting for Lifelong Health) for digital delivery. UNICEF Malaysia are supporting the deployment and evaluation of ParentText, a digital PLH strategy in which the programme is delivered through automated messages. Collaborators at the Universiti Putra Malaysia and the University of Oxford are also pilot testing the e-Naungan Kasih (ParentChat) programme, an online adaptation of PLH whereby parents participate in facilitated groups via an online social messaging platform. The team also aims to improve the wellbeing of children through the engagement of communities of faith. A faith-based package for use by religious leaders to support families affected by COVID-19 is being developed in collaboration with key government personnel in LPPKN and the Malaysia Department of Islamic Development.

Through these projects vulnerable families will have increased access to positive parenting resources in order to reduce risk of physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children and to increase positive parenting during the time of COVID-19.



I feel what I learnt opened my eyes not just to apply it on my own biological children, but also to challenge members I am serving at church. As a parent, I have been able to sit down with my children, and they have noticed an improvement in my parenting and listening.

- Forgotten Voices International, Malawi



ParentChat Update

ParentChat is a newly developed online version of the Parenting for Lifelong Health programmes for young children and adolescents, which will be delivered through online messaging services such as WhatsApp or Viber. Trained facilitators will guide parents through evidence-based parenting tips and activities over the course of 8 weeks.

Partners in six countries Malaysia, Philippines, South Africa, North Macedonia, Moldova and Montenegro are preparing for a pilot trial of this programme scheduled to begin next month across all countries. In January, coaches from all teams with experience delivering the in-person PLH programme took part in collaborative remote-training sessions with Dr. Jamie Lachman to prepare for online delivery.



Firstly, I imagine myself in my child's place and try to keep myself in her shoes. Then I realize the difficulties or expectation of my child from her parents.

This made it easier to deal with my child following the parenting tips that I learned. - Parent in Nepal, via KARKHANA

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COVID-19 PARENTING UPDATE



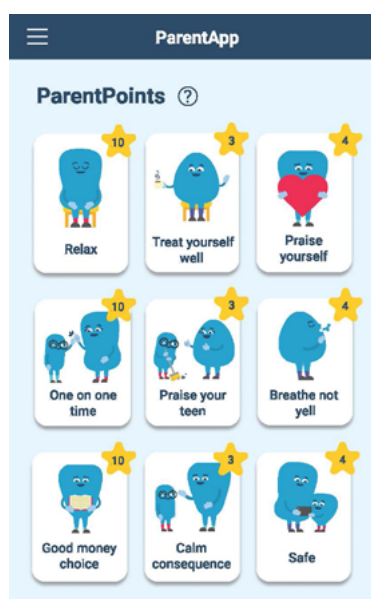
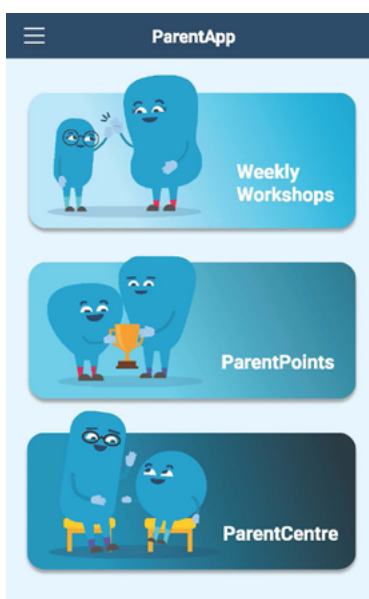
ParentApp Update



Our app-based version of the PLH for Teens programme is now in an advanced stage of development. An exciting new design for the app invites parents to join 11 interactive Weekly Workshops, which can be done alone, with another person or in a group. The Weekly Workshops are interspersed with scheduled messages of praise, reminders to relax, suggestions of fun family activities and encouraging check-ins that aim to keep parents engaged.

Parents can track their success in self-care and parenting through logging Parent Points, a fun habit-tracking tool. Parents also have access to the Parent Centre, which includes resources on-demand, providing instant access to essential content based on immediate concerns and needs, links to local resources, information on COVID prevention, and additional tailored content.

The team is looking forward to launching the app early this year.



Safeguarding Users of ParentText

ParentText is an interactive parenting chatbot that will be launched this year. Apart from offering evidence-informed content, ParentText will now also include information on intimate partner violence (IPV) and other safeguarding measures.

The IPV content has been developed based on recommendations by the WHO, which calls for gender-transformative strategies to prevent violence against women and girls. The content covers topics that range from treating each other as equals to learning strategies for resolving conflict peacefully.

Furthermore, based on UNICEF's chatbot safeguarding guidelines, ParentText is now designed to recognize high-risk keywords to detect possible disclosure of a dangerous situation via the chatbot. After detection, the chatbot offers the user an empowering response and emergency contact details (e.g. police, ambulance, hotlines).

This is a significant addition, as users who attempt to ask for help or support often receive no acknowledgement from typical chatbot services.



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End Violence
Against Children



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“Let’s Slow Down” cover - by Clowns Without Borders Brazil

Credit: Artists Striving to End Poverty

Songwriters: Mary-Mitchell Campbell and Crystal Monee Hall



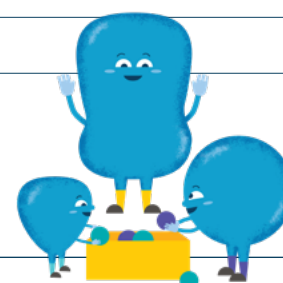
World Carers Conversation webinar

The World Carers Conversation Webinar was convened from December 13 – 17, 2020 to showcase cutting-edge caregiving research, innovation, and impact around the world.

The event, hosted by the National Alliance for Caregiving, U.S.A., had conversations around global challenges caregivers have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and evidence-based interventions that provide additional support to caregivers.

Dr Isang Awah (representing the COVID-19 Parenting team) gave a presentation for the panel on Caregiving in Africa and the Mid-East. She spoke on how the COVID-19 Parenting Response is supporting parents in Sub-Saharan Africa and used the opportunity to share the different parenting resources that the team has developed and is currently working on.

 Watch the **World Carers Conversation** webinar here



REACH BY REGION



Africa
24,321,615



Asia
34,480,726



Americas
2,793,730



Europe
13,495,436

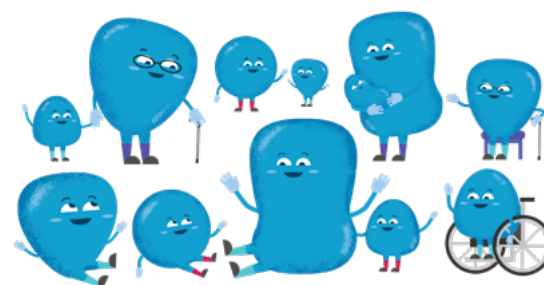


Middle East
2,398,167



Cross-Countries
61,422,254

Total reach: 137,9 million people
as of 24 February 2021



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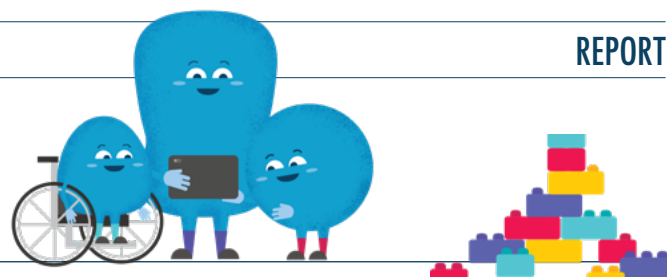
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NOVEMBER 2020

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PARENTING IN THE NEWS



Scientific outlets

BOLD – Blog on Learning and Development

Lockdowns threaten child development – can parenting programmes help?

The COVID-19 pandemic has been making life difficult for parents around the world. In these exceptional circumstances, many have struggled to give children the care and education they need.

Stuck at home, families from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds have been particularly affected, says Jamie Lachman, an Oxford University researcher who co-founded the Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH) initiative, a collaboration between WHO, Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town in South Africa, the universities of Oxford, Bangor and Reading in the United Kingdom, and UNICEF.

Factors such as increased financial stress and cramped living conditions have made it even harder to create a positive home learning environment, he says. “[Parents] are spending more time with their children, and the question is: what’s the quality of that time?”



[Read the full BOLD article](#)



Mainstream outlets

The Guardian

‘I’m stressed. I shout. Can I do better?’: experts advise on pandemic parenting

Dr Paul Kelly, a consultant educational and child psychologist, says: We’re all going to be changed in some ways by this experience, both children and adults. But while there’s a negative impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health, we also know that negotiating their way through adverse circumstances can help children and young people to develop resilience. This is especially true if children recognise they can use a support network and rely on others in times of need.

Children easily pick up on the emotional state of their parents and carers. But they don’t have the long-term perspective adults have, and may struggle to see a distressing event in the news as a temporary situation.



[Read the full The Guardian article](#)

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