

“...I'm watching every gain my kids and I have worked for over the years be for nothing.”- Mom of 3, Washington County.

We are witnessing an immediate crisis for families juggling financial stress, job loss, virtual schooling, and challenges in accessing technology and high-speed internet. Families involved in child welfare are experiencing additional stressors as they attempt to meet agency expectations in the midst of the pandemic. Black and Native families are disproportionately impacted by COVID and yet are not receiving proportionate support.

Current local data related to the COVID's impact on families is not yet available, especially the impact on vulnerable families potentially at risk for abuse and neglect. However, national data paints an alarming picture.



National Data:

- The [national hotline for RAINN](#) (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network) is experiencing the highest demand for services in its 26-year history since the pandemic began and over half of visitors its online hotline were minors.
- The [National Domestic Violence hotline](#) has seen a 101% increase in reported digital abuse.
- A [June survey](#) by the CDC found elevated levels of adverse mental health conditions, substance use, and suicidal ideation among adults.
- States are reporting up to 100% increases in calls to Suicide hotlines.

Findings from Focus Groups & Interviews

Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCAO), through their Prevention Community Advisory Council, engaged over 400 parents and 45 community leaders to identify the most pressing issues facing Oregon's children and families during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings include ([Learn more in our Detailed Findings & Potential Solutions Report](#)):

1. **Families, especially those with younger school-aged children, are at a crisis point with virtual school.**
2. **Disparities in access to technology and internet among our most vulnerable children, especially those in rural communities, leave them with little to no access to essential virtual supports.**
3. **Mental health support that is responsive to culture and language is in dire need.**
4. **Youth are at increased risk for online sexual predators.**
5. **Children and youth in unsafe home environments have always been told “tell a trusted adult” but currently lack confidential access to these adults.**
6. **Safe and stable housing is at risk for many families.**

Prevent Child Abuse Oregon cannot solve each of these concerns raised by families. We are inviting partners across sectors and agencies to join us in creating or enhancing supports to children and families during this ongoing crisis.

In response to these findings, PCAO will:

- Beginning January 2021, we are launching a virtual **emotional support series** with [Dr. Amy Stoeber](#), Licensed Psychologist and Trauma-Informed Consultant, along with a parent consultant: ***"I DIDN'T SIGN UP FOR THIS"***.
 - This series will validate the experiences of parents, address their concerns, and create a safe space for families to process stress in their current environment. It will offer tangible tools for parents to support their children and manage overwhelming stress.
- Create statewide **partnerships to elevate the struggles** *all* parents are experiencing and ways families can cope.

Partner with PCAO to support Oregon's children and families:

Offer Financial Support

- PCAO is investing in the initial launch of Dr. Amy's parenting series for children of all ages. Will you [consider investing](#)?
- How else might you be able to invest in our efforts?

Provide Expertise - What is Your Role?

- Create connections for parents – providing support groups or mentoring for parents
- Create connections for parents within school settings, to provide much needed support
- Connect community partners to align resources to better support children and families
- Weigh-in on the recommendations, or share new ideas, particularly on how to effectively provide relief for families



For more information, or to join the effort to support families, contact Pamela Heisler, Executive Director, pamela@preventchildabuseoregon.org, 971-350-9384. To access to this document and the full findings, visit our website: www.preventchildabuseoregon.org/news.

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE OREGON is dedicated to ensuring *all* children live in safe homes with supportive communities, regardless of race, class, culture, economic-standing, or geography. PCAO helps prevent child abuse and neglect, and childhood trauma, with a goal of reducing child welfare involvement and eliminating systemic inequities within Oregon's foster care system.