HRSA
Maternal & Child Health

National Survey of Children's Health
Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, **2021**

Data Brief | October 2022

ABOUT THE NSCH

The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) funds and directs the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), which the U.S. Census Bureau conducts.

The NSCH is the largest national and state-level survey on the health and health care needs of children ages 0-17, their families, and their communities.

It is an annual household survey completed by a parent or guardian, either by web or by paper and pencil.

TOPICS

- Early childhood nutrition and outdoor play
- Family health and activities
- Health care service use and access
- Health conditions and functional difficulties
- Health insurance status, type, and adequacy
- Impact of child's health on family
- Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Medical home
- Parental health
- Parental perceptions of neighborhood characteristics
- Physical and mental health
- Preventive and specialty care
- School readiness
- Transition to adult health care

STATE OVERSAMPLES

Oversampling increases sample sizes to enable more detailed analysis of specific populations, such as regions within a state or racial and ethnic groups. In 2021, six states and one metropolitan area sponsored oversamples: Colorado, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Atlanta, Georgia.
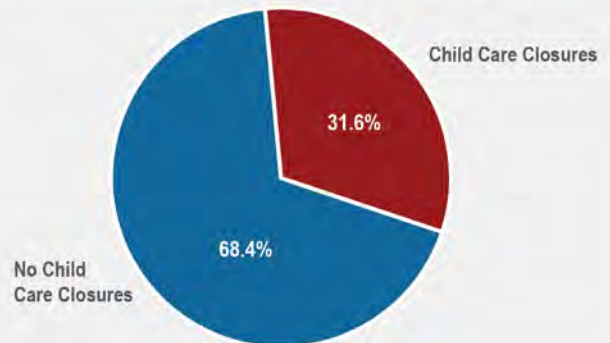
2021 DATA RELEASE

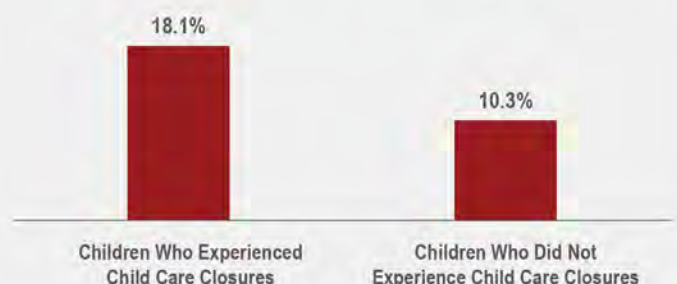Access the most recent data and supporting materials.

KEY FINDINGS
Child Care Closures because of the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Nearly one third (31.6%) of children ages 5 and under experienced at least one child care closure in the past year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This represents about 6.9 million children across the United States (US).

- Among children ages 5 and under who experienced child care closures due to the pandemic, nearly 1 in 5 (18.1%) had someone in their family quit, decline, or greatly change a job because of problems with child care, compared to 10.3% among children who did not experience a pandemic-related child care closure.

Proportion of Children Ages 5 and Under Who Experienced Child Care Closures Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Past Survey Year, 2021

Child Care Closures 31.6%
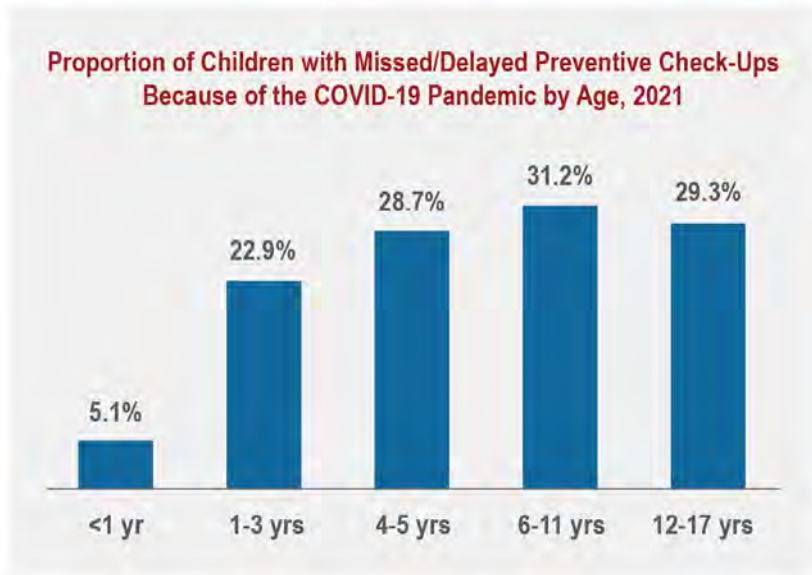
No Child Care Closures 68.4%

Proportion of Children Ages 5 and Under With a Family Member Who Quit, Declined, or Greatly Changed a Job in the Past Year Due to Child Care Problems by Child Care Closure Status, 2021

18.1% — Children Who Experienced Child Care Closures

10.3% — Children Who Did Not Experience Child Care Closures

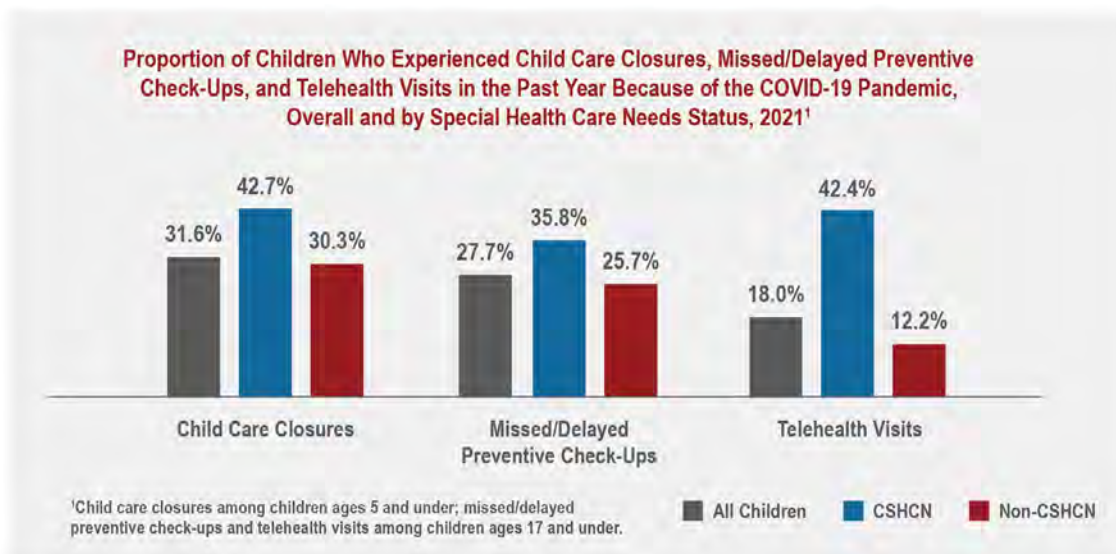## Missed or Delayed Preventive Check-Ups because of the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Children younger than 1 year of age had the lowest proportion of missed or delayed preventive check-ups in the past year because of the COVID-19 pandemic (5.1%). This is notable as children under 1 year have the highest number of recommended well-child visits each year compared to older children.

- Almost one quarter (22.9%) of children ages 1-3 had missed/delayed preventive check-ups.

- Nearly one third of children ages 4-5, 6-11, and 12-17 had missed/delayed preventive check-ups (28.7%, 31.2%, and 29.3%, respectively).

Proportion of Children with Missed/Delayed Preventive Check-Ups Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic by Age, 2021

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children with Special Health Care Needs

Children with special health care needs (CSHCN) are identified in the NSCH as children who need or use prescription medications, have an elevated need for medical or mental health care, have functional limitations, use special therapies such as physical therapy, or have developmental or behavioral challenges.

- Among children ages 5 and under, CSHCN were more likely to experience child care closures because of the COVID-19 pandemic (42.7%), compared to children without special health care needs (non-CSHCN; 30.3%).

- Among children ages 17 and under, higher proportions of CSHCN had missed or delayed preventive check-ups in the past year (35.8%) compared to non-CSHCN (25.7%).

- CSHCN were more than three times as likely as non-CSHCN to have telehealth visits in the past year because of the COVID-19 pandemic (42.4% vs. 12.2%).

Proportion of Children Who Experienced Child Care Closures, Missed/Delayed Preventive Check-Ups, and Telehealth Visits in the Past Year Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Overall and by Special Health Care Needs Status, 2021[1]

[1] Child care closures among children ages 5 and under; missed/delayed preventive check-ups and telehealth visits among children ages 17 and under.

DATA NOTE

In 2021, parents completed questionnaires for 50,892 children. Estimates presented in this brief are weighted to represent the population of children living in U.S. households. Combining multiple years of data enables more reliable estimates, especially for smaller subpopulations. The survey questions about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were first added to the 2021 NSCH. Therefore, it is not possible to combine data from multiple years, conduct comparisons to prior years, or examine trends over time.

HRSA
Maternal & Child Health