



Voices of Child Health in Chicago REPORT

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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

More than 3 in 5 Chicago parents were very concerned about COVID-19 affecting their family's health.

Non-Latinx Black parents reported the highest levels of concern about COVID-19.

Chicago parents had the most trust in COVID-19 information that came from their child's doctor or their own doctor.

Parental Concern and Trusted Health Information During the COVID-19 Pandemic

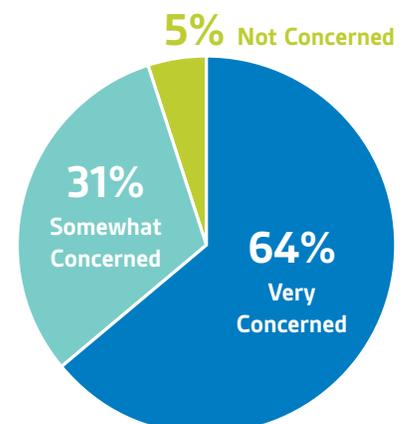
Parents, children and families in Chicago and across the world have faced unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is the illness caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2, and the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 19, 2020. At the time of publication, 94,599 Chicagoans have tested positive for COVID-19 and 3,038 have died (as of Oct. 26, 2020).¹ Public health emergencies such as this can cause great distress for families.^{2,3} Families have had to adapt to drastically different routines, new childcare and school arrangements, economic uncertainty, and new concerns about their health and well-being. In this report, we explore parents' attitudes about the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data in this report come from a newly launched survey project, the *Voices of Child Health in Chicago Parent Panel Survey*. Through this new project, we are surveying Chicago parents several times each year about health and well-being topics that impact Chicago children and families, and we will release regular reports on these data. For this report, we asked parents from all 77 community areas in Chicago how concerned they were about the COVID-19 pandemic, and how much confidence they have in information about COVID-19 from different sources. We surveyed families from May–July 2020.

The majority of Chicago parents were concerned about COVID-19 affecting their family's health

The majority of Chicago parents reported being concerned about COVID-19 affecting their family's health — 64% were “very concerned,” 31% were “somewhat concerned” and 5% were “not concerned” (Figure 1). Chicago parents were more concerned about COVID-19 than U.S. adults overall who were surveyed in a national poll in July 2020. Among U.S. adults overall, only 49% were extremely or very worried about COVID-19 infecting them or someone in their family, 31% were somewhat worried and 19% were not too worried or not worried at all.⁴

Figure 1. Proportion of Chicago parents who indicated each level of concern about COVID-19 affecting their family's health



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Parent concerns about COVID-19 varied by parent demographics

Concern about COVID-19 varied by demographics such as parent race and ethnicity, education, and household income. Non-Latinx Black parents were the most likely to report being very concerned about COVID-19 (75%) compared with 69% of Latinx parents, 63% of multi-race/other non-Latinx parents and 49% of White non-Latinx parents (Figure 2A). In the United States, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected people of color due to structural racism and disinvestment in communities of color.⁵ Factors that contribute to increased risk among people of color include limited access to culturally competent health care, lack of access to transportation and challenges taking time off work.⁶

Parents with a high school education or below were more likely to be very concerned about COVID-19 (70%) compared with parents who had some college or technical school (66%) and those who were college educated or above (56%) (Figure 2B). Additionally, parents were most likely to be “very concerned” about COVID-19 (72%) if they had low to middle household income (100–399% of the federal poverty level [FPL], the FPL in 2020 is \$26,200 for a family of four⁷), followed by parents with low income (below the FPL, 64%), and parents with high income (400%+ FPL, 53%) (Figure 2C). Parents with low to middle income may be less likely to be able to telework than parents with higher income, and it is known that essential workers face higher risk of COVID-19 infections than others.⁸

Parents were more concerned about COVID-19 if they were in worse health themselves

Parents’ own health status also was associated with their concern about COVID-19 affecting their family’s health. To assess parents’ health, we asked parents, “How would you rate your health?” Parents who self-reported that their health was “excellent” or “very good” were grouped as having “better health” and parents who reported “good,” “fair” or “poor” were

Figure 2. Proportion of Chicago parents with each level of concern about COVID-19 by demographics

A. RACE/ETHNICITY

	Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned
Black, Non-Latinx	7%	18%	75%
Latinx	3%	27%	69%
Multi-Racial/Other	*	36%	63%
White, Non-Latinx	7%	44%	49%

B. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned
High School or Below	5%	25%	70%
Some College or Technical School	6%	28%	66%
College Graduate or Above	5%	39%	56%

C. ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned
Low Income	4%	32%	64%
Middle–Low Income	5%	23%	72%
High Income	5%	42%	53%

D. PARENT SELF-REPORTED HEALTH STATUS

	Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned
Worse Health	4%	26%	70%
Better Health	5%	34%	60%

* Less than 10 survey respondents

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Concern about COVID-19 varied by demographics such as parent race and ethnicity, education, and household income.

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grouped as having “worse health.” The majority of parents were very concerned about COVID-19, but parents with worse health were even more concerned than parents in better health (70% vs. 60%, Figure 2D). Greater concern among parents with worse health aligns with research showing that underlying health conditions have been associated with more severe outcomes for COVID-19 infection.⁹

What are parents’ most trusted sources of information about COVID-19?

Parents get information about COVID-19 from a variety of sources, in which they have varying degrees of trust. We asked parents if they had “lots of confidence,” “some confidence” or “little or no confidence” in information about coronavirus/COVID-19 from the following sources: their child’s doctor, their own doctor, public health websites, news on TV and online, social media and hospitals. Parents could also indicate that they did not get information from a particular source.

Only 25% of parents said they had lots of confidence in information from news on TV and online, and 16% had lots of confidence in information from social media.

Overall, among parents who used each information source, parents had the most confidence in information from doctors, with 61% of parents saying they had lots of confidence in information from their child’s doctor and 62% in their own doctor (Figure 3). Half of parents said they had lots of confidence in information from hospitals (50%) and just under half said they had lots of confidence in information from public health websites (48%). Only 25% of parents said they had lots of confidence in information from news on TV and online, and 16% had lots of confidence in information from social media. These results are similar to a national poll of U.S. registered voters

that indicated the highest level of trust in COVID-19 information is from medical and health professionals, followed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and national media.¹⁰

Parent demographics and child health were related to trust in some information sources

There were some differences in trust in information sources by demographic factors. Parents with a college degree or above were more likely to have lots of confidence in information from their child’s doctor (70%) compared with parents with some college or technical school or high school or below (54% and

Figure 3. Proportion of Chicago parents who had each level of confidence in COVID-19 information sources



Parents who had a child in worse health were less likely to have lots of confidence in information from their child’s doctor than parents whose children were all in better health, and they were also less likely to have lots of confidence in information from their own doctor.

55%, respectively) and there were similar results with respect to parents’ own doctor (70% vs. 54–58%). Parents with a high school degree or below were more likely to have lots of confidence in information from social media (21%) than parents with some college or technical school or college degree or above (both 13%). Parents were more likely to say they had lots of trust in public health websites if they were high income (400%+ FPL, 57%), than if they were middle to low income (100–399% FPL, 44%) or low income (<100% FPL, 46%).

Finally, parents who had a child in worse health were less likely to have lots of confidence in information from their child’s doctor than parents whose children were all in better health (50% vs. 63%), and they were also less likely to have lots of confidence in information from their own doctor (50% vs. 64%). A similar pattern emerged for parents’ own health and trust in information from doctors.

Our next *Voices of Child Health in Chicago* report will explore parents’ thoughts about getting a COVID-19 vaccine for themselves and their children.

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HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

This report is based on data from the Voices of Child Health in Chicago Parent Panel Survey (Voices Panel). The survey is administered to a sample of Chicago parents by Lurie Children’s and NORC at the University of Chicago via internet and telephone surveys. The survey is administered to the same panel of parents three times each year. The data in this report was collected from May through July 2020. The sample consisted of 1,642 Chicago parents, step-parents, or guardians who had at least one child under 18 years of age in the household (referred to as “parents” in this report). Parents were from all 77 community areas in Chicago. In Wave 1 of the survey, 39% of the sample was Latinx, 21% was non-Latinx Black, 30% was non-Latinx White, and 9% was non-Latinx multi-racial or other race. The cumulative survey response rate was 2.24%. All analyses were conducted with statistical weighting so that the results are representative of the parent population in the City of Chicago during the time period of data collection. Survey questions are selected with the help of our Voices Panel Governance Committee. For more information about the VOCHIC Parent Panel Survey, visit luriechildrens.org/ParentPanel. For additional documentation of survey methods, visit our page on Open Science Framework at <https://osf.io/cjz82/>.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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