

Child Abuse During a Pandemic

Sarah Passmore, DO

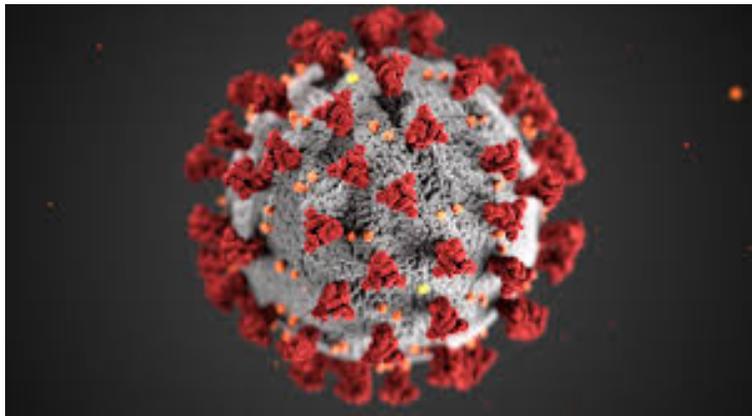
Michael Baxter, DO

Lauren Conway, DO

Team for Children at Risk

Department of Pediatrics

OU-TU School of Community Medicine



Disasters and Child Abuse

The background of the slide is white with abstract green geometric shapes on the right side. These shapes include overlapping triangles and polygons in various shades of green, from light lime to dark forest green. A thin grey line also runs diagonally across the right side of the page.

Natural Disasters and Child Abuse

- ▶ Violence increases after many emergencies compared to conditions prior to emergency
- ▶ Exposure to multiple types of abuse common
- ▶ Common predictors are food/shelter insecurity, lower socioeconomic status, substance abuse, child labor and exposure to violence
- ▶ Families and caregivers are main perpetrators of violence against children
- ▶ Sexual violence against girls is the most prevalent type of violence after conflicts.

Child Abuse in Natural Disasters and Conflicts: A Systematic Review, Hamed Seddighi et al, TRAUMA, VIOLENCE, & ABUSE, 2019

COVID-19

- ▶ Current pandemic
- ▶ Many states have shelter in place orders
- ▶ Most people are avoiding going out

Loss of Resources Occurring

- ▶ Loss of a job
- ▶ Loss of income
- ▶ Lack of safety net
- ▶ Lack of secure housing
- ▶ Lack of transport to get essentials



Child Abuse and Neglect

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Types of Abuse/Neglect

- ▶ Abuse
 - ▶ Physical
 - ▶ Abusive Head Trauma
 - ▶ Sexual
 - ▶ Emotional
- ▶ Neglect
 - ▶ Nutritional
 - ▶ Emotional
 - ▶ Environmental
 - ▶ Educational
 - ▶ Medical
 - ▶ Safety



Social Isolation

- ▶ Isolation is a large part of abuse
- ▶ Entire families are sheltering at home
- ▶ Anxiety is high
- ▶ Parents are worried about who will take care of their children if they are admitted to a hospital or die of COVID-19
- ▶ Children aren't being seen by teachers, counselors, coaches, etc.
- ▶ Child abuse reports increase when children are in school, decrease when out for vacations



Triggers of Abuse

- ▶ Lack of parenting skills
- ▶ Lack of support
- ▶ Young parent
- ▶ Single parent
- ▶ Drug/alcohol abuse
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Exhaustion



Disaster and Child Abuse Compounded



Parents have a right to be stressed. But don't take it out on your kids

By Melissa Merrick PhD and Robert Sege MD, PhD

🕒 Updated 9:02 AM ET, Tue April 7, 2020

- ▶ Talking with children
 - ▶ Ask children about their feelings.
 - ▶ Children need to know that they matter.
 - ▶ Address children's fears.
- ▶ Coping with stress
 - ▶ Many families are financially stressed, even more than usual.
 - ▶ Some of us have work we can do at home.
 - ▶ Be kind to yourself.
 - ▶ Parents sometimes need a time out, too.
- ▶ Reaching out and maintaining community
 - ▶ Kindness toward families.
 - ▶ More technology is OK.
 - ▶ Expect to have times of depression or anxiety.



Current Increase Risk of Maltreatment

- ▶ Household dysfunction increases child abuse risk
 - ▶ IPV
 - ▶ parental substance abuse
 - ▶ parental mental illness
- ▶ Parents don't have a reprieve from keeping children fed, entertained and educated
- ▶ Families are losing and changing housing because money is tight
- ▶ Anxiety and stress over loss of job, illness



Stress on the System

The background features a complex, abstract design of overlapping, semi-transparent green polygons. The colors range from light, pale greens to deep, dark forest greens. The shapes are angular and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall composition is modern and clean, typical of a professional presentation slide.

Child Protective Services

- ▶ Physical and emotional toll on caseworkers
- ▶ Agencies have cut back on in-person inspections of homes
 - ▶ Potential foster families are fearful of placements given concerns for COVID19
- ▶ Caseworkers don't have enough PPE

U.S. **The New York Times** [SUBSCRIBE NOW](#)

Coronavirus Roils Every Segment of US Child Welfare System

By The Associated Press

March 28, 2020     

NEW YORK — Child welfare agencies across the U.S., often beleaguered in the best of times, are scrambling to confront new challenges that the coronavirus is posing for caseworkers, kids and parents.

Courts/Foster Care

- ▶ Courts closed except for emergencies
- ▶ Foster kids missing visitation or visitation now virtual
- ▶ Parents who were making progress are now facing more delays in getting kids back
- ▶ Foster parents not wanting to take children
- ▶ Foster parents not wanting to keep children



Telehealth

- ▶ Many visits converted to telehealth
- ▶ Can't see entire child
- ▶ Child can't be weighed
- ▶ Child can easily be coached
- ▶ Providers can't speak with child in private



What are we seeing?

Some Areas Seeing Rise in Severity of Cases

 66° Tulsa, OK >
Wed, Apr 08, 2020

Newsweek

[U.S.](#) | [World](#) | [Business](#) | [Tech & Science](#) | [Culture](#) | [Newsgeek](#) | [Sports](#) | [Health](#) | [The Debate](#)

U.S.

TEXAS HOSPITAL CHILD ABUSE CASES RISE IN COVID-19 OUTBREAK: 'IT'S HARD TO THINK THAT IT'S JUST COINCIDENTAL'

BY **CHANTAL DA SILVA** ON 3/22/20 AT 1:17 PM EDT



Opinion

The Coronavirus Could Cause a Child Abuse Epidemic

This crisis has created the conditions for a rise in abuse that could go unchecked.

By **Nina Agrawal**

Dr. Agrawal is child abuse pediatrician.

April 7, 2020, 5:00 a.m. ET



As domestic violence surges, BBC journalist anchors news with hotline written on her hand

BY HALEY OTT
APRIL 7, 2020 / 1:28 PM / CBS NEWS



- New York and UK are seeing an uptick in domestic violence
- Suicide hotline calls are up around the country
- Children at risk of sexual abuse
 - Most confess to mom
 - Perpetrator remains in home because he is primary breadwinner
- Small acts of support can help
- Listening, virtual check ins

What can we tell parents?

Tip Sheet for Parents

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

The American Academy of Pediatrics Advises Parents Experiencing Stress over COVID-19

3/23/2020

Academy recommends parents seek help for themselves, and use positive discipline techniques like time outs, redirection and reinforcement of good behaviors

ITASCA, ILL. (March 23, 2020) — The American Academy of Pediatrics today advises parents facing stressors over COVID-19 to practice self-care, to reach out to others for help, and to use healthy discipline techniques, such as time-outs.



Ways to Promote Children's Resilience to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Authors: Jessica Dym Bartlett, Rebecca Vivrette

Publication Date: April 03, 2020

Topic: COVID-19



- ▶ *Social distancing doesn't have to mean emotional distancing*
 - ▶ Protective factor #1: Sensitive, responsive caregiving
 - ▶ Protective factor #2: Meeting basic needs
 - ▶ Protective factor #3: Emotional support for children
 - ▶ Protective factor #4: Support for caregiver well-being
 - ▶ Protective factor #5: Social connectedness

How can *MDTs* help?

Responding to Child Abuse During a Pandemic: 25 Tips for MDTs

Victor I. Vieth, Robert J. Peters, Tyler Council, Rita Farrell, Rachel Johnson, Stacie Leblanc, Alison Feigh,
Jane Straub and Pete Singer

1. Educate mandated reports about their role of protecting children during the pandemic.
2. Educate the public to be on the lookout for signs of abuse.
3. Encourage students to look out for one another.
4. Make a list of at-risk children and then develop a plan to check on them.
5. Develop safety plans and affirmative resources for LGBTQIA+ youth
6. CPS workers must adjust case and safety plans for children.
7. Recognize that children may find different ways to communicate abuse.
8. Accelerate victim services and court preparation.
9. Work with youth-serving organizations to modify their policies during the pandemic
10. Continue with safety checks
11. Resists defense attorney initiatives that increase the risk of abuse
12. Understand enhanced risks to online safety and act accordingly
13. Balance the risk of COVID-19 with the risk of child abuse
14. Prepare for the unique challenges facing rural communities
15. Rely on your MDT and CAC model
16. Consider the mechanics of safely conducting FIs and witness preparation
17. Poly-victimization screening
18. Consider the deterrent utility of proactive operations
19. Recognize shifting, safety-focused trends in evidence collection, submission and processing
20. Ensure relevant MDT members have adequate PPE
21. Use appropriate PPE and follow hygienic best practices
22. Develop a vicarious trauma plan for the MDT
23. Recognize the value of spiritual care for child abuse victims and child protection professionals
24. Turn the MDT's short term plans into long term innovations.
25. Reach out for assistance

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- ▶ Reach out for assistance

Team for Children at Risk Flyers

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the page, creating a modern, layered effect. The text is centered on the left side of the page.

TCAR Resource



3.25.20

Michael Baxter, DO
Lauren Conway, DO
Sarah Passmore, DO
Christine Beeson, DO
Garrett Jones, DO
Phone: 918-740-3390

Team for Children At Risk

SCAN Meeting

Our CAP team has transitioned to 24/7 coverage at St. Francis during this pandemic.

It is well documented that child abuse and neglect increases in times of stress including economic stressors and natural disasters. Our team plans to track child abuse and neglect cases during this time of uncertainty to assess for a likely correlation between an increase of child abuse and neglect and COVID19. As you know, children are out of school and some are facing food insecurity, unsafe caregivers or no caregivers, and families in crisis. Unfortunately, many children in our community have also lost access to their safe adults including teachers, counselors, and coaches. Our medical teams may be some of the only protective caregivers in these children's lives. As such, we need to be increasingly aware of our patients at this time. The infographic below demonstrates 5 strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect. All 5 of these competencies have been compromised secondary to COVID19.

The Children's Advocacy Center is currently closed. All outpatient CAP and follow up exams are now taking place at Fostering Hope Clinic.

Fostering Hope Clinic
1001 E 3rd Street, Suite A
Phone: 918-619-4384
Fax: 918-619-4395

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Many previously scheduled activities such as the CAN Superhero Challenge have been reschedule to a later date to be determined.

5 strategies to prevent child abuse & neglect

Change social norms to support parents and positive parenting

Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development

Strengthen economic supports for families

Provide quality care and education early in life

Intervene to lessen harms and prevent future risk

It is important to **monitor and evaluate** your efforts while the field of violence prevention **continues to evolve.**



Dr. Beeson's flyer:



**Good Parents Struggle, Too.
Good Parents Make Mistakes.
Good Parents Know When To Ask For Help.**

The community response to COVID-19 is necessary; however, it may be putting children at risk of abuse. Our goal is to increase awareness and strength of our Tulsa families in Tulsa to help prevent abuse from happening in our community.

What can you do to help your family?

The Children's Advocacy Center recommends the following:

- Responsible socialization at a distance of at least 6 feet.
- Have realistic expectations of yourself and your children.
- Encourage reading.
- Foster creativity. Connect with your child through various activities, like drawing, painting, playing board games, Legos®, building a fort or cooking together.
- Exercise daily. Try a YouTube yoga for kids video.
- Utilize educational resources for home, through your school, Scholastic Kids and TulsaKids
- Lean on your community resources and find what they offer online.
- If you're able, support your community. Order takeout to help keep local restaurants in business.
- Talk to your kids about the crisis. There are multiple resources online on how to discuss COVID-19 and stress with your kids.
- Ask for help. If you feel your stress is getting the best of you, reach out to a trusted family member, friend or neighbor (safely). Separate from your child and call for help.
- Report suspected abuse/neglect. Oklahomans are required by law to report if they believe a child has been abused or neglected. You can do this by calling (800) 522-3511.
- Stay informed. Keep up to date on current information via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>


Physicians

OUPhysiciansTulsa.com

Remember the children

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect. The text 'Remember the children' is positioned on the left side of the image, centered vertically, in a clean, sans-serif font.

Remember:

- ▶ Just ask "how are you doing?"
- ▶ Kids under 5 are at highest risk for abuse
- ▶ Keep list of mental health groups, social workers counselors who can do check ins with high risk families.
- ▶ Encourage parents to talk to each other
- ▶ Encourage parents to conduct remote learning groups, especially for kids
- ▶ Everyone is a mandated reporter



Resources

- ▶ Schenck-Fontaine, Income inequality and child maltreatment risk during economic recession, Children and Youth Services Review 112 (2020) 104926
- ▶ Sistovairis, M et al (2020) Child Welfare and Pandemics. Toronto, Ontario: Policy Bench Fraser Mustard Institute for Human Development, University of Toronto
- ▶ Beeson, C,
- ▶ Conway, L
- ▶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/opinion/coronavirus-child-abuse.html>
- ▶ https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVIDProtectiveFactors_ChildTrends_April2020.pdf
- ▶ <https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2020/03/28/us/ap-us-virus-outbreak-child-welfare.html>
- ▶ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/07/health/child-abuse-prevention-coronavirus-wellness/index.html>

Resources

- ▶ <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/The-American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Advises-Parents-Experiencing-Stress-over-COVID-19.aspx>
- ▶ <https://www.newsweek.com/texas-hospital-child-abuse-cases-rise-covid-19-outbreak-1493642>
- ▶ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/07/health/child-abuse-prevention-coronavirus-wellness/index.html>
- ▶ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/domestic-violence-uk-coronavirus-bbc-journalist-victoria-derbyshire-anchors-news-hotline-number-hand/>

I am not a burden.
I am just a child.

