

Income Loss, Job Loss, and Childcare Problems Early in the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 impacts on pregnant people and families in California, 2020

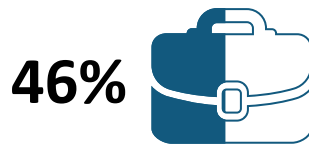


The COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching effects on the lives and livelihoods of families. Unemployment rates soared¹ and incomes dropped, resulting in financial hardships; in addition, disruptions in childcare availability resulted in many parents, particularly mothers, leaving the workforce.²⁻³

Among California families with infants born in the spring of 2020...



lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



had a parent who lost a job or lost wages during or after pregnancy.



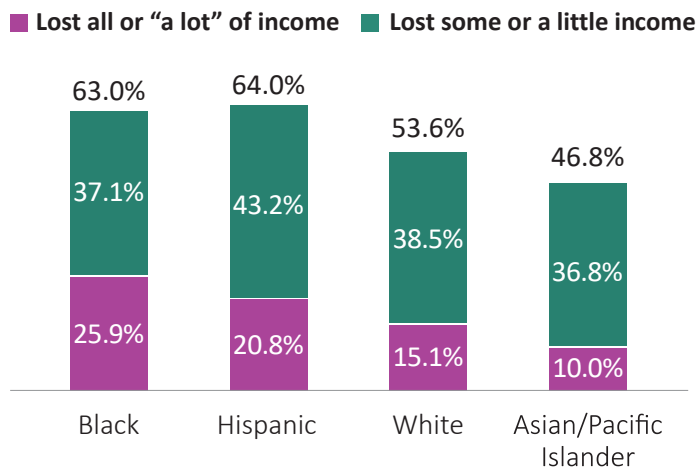
had a parent who quit, changed, or did not take a job due to childcare problems.

FAMILY INCOME LOSS

Most families lost income during the COVID-19 pandemic. Income loss was particularly severe among Black and Hispanic families, with two-thirds experiencing income loss, and one in four Black families and one in five Hispanic families having

lost all or “a lot” of income due to the pandemic. Following childbirth, families who lost all or “a lot” of income were nearly seven times more likely to have trouble paying bills than were those with no income loss.

Family income loss during the COVID-19 pandemic by race and ethnicity



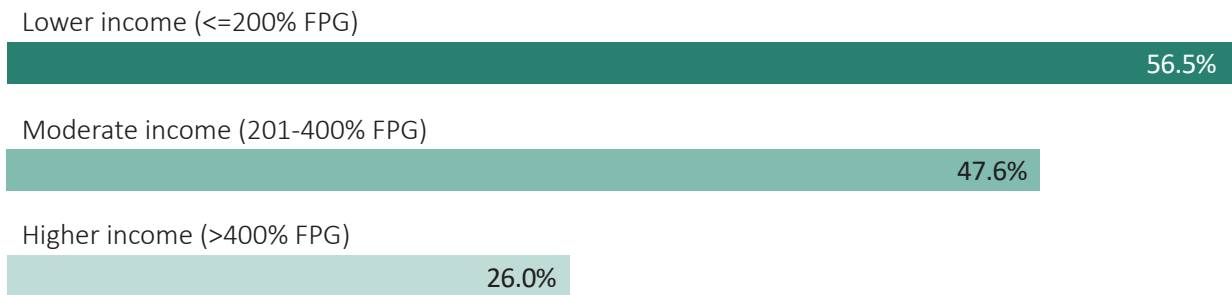
“During this pandemic it has been hard. We currently rent a bedroom so quarantine has been hard on us. We’ve applied at some apartments to isolate our family away from others in order to stay safe. Unfortunately we were declined due to insufficient funds because we lost some of our income.”
 – MIHA 2020 respondent

PARENTAL JOB LOSS

Lower income families experienced parental job loss at more than twice the rate of higher income families. Parental job loss is defined as losing a job, being laid off, or having pay or hours cut for either the birthing person or their partner, during or after pregnancy.

“Due to COVID-19, I lost my job— I was not fired, but don’t know when we will be called back. It’s hard for me and my spouse. We have 5 kids from ages 12 years to 3 months.”
– MIHA 2020 respondent

Parental job loss by household income*



*Income in 2019, expressed as a percentage of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG).

Following childbirth, birthing people whose families experienced job loss were...



4.2x more likely to experience **homelessness or housing instability**



3.5x more likely to experience **food insecurity**



2.4x more likely to experience **intimate partner violence**



1.5x more likely to experience **anxiety or depression**

...than were birthing people whose families did not experience parental job loss.

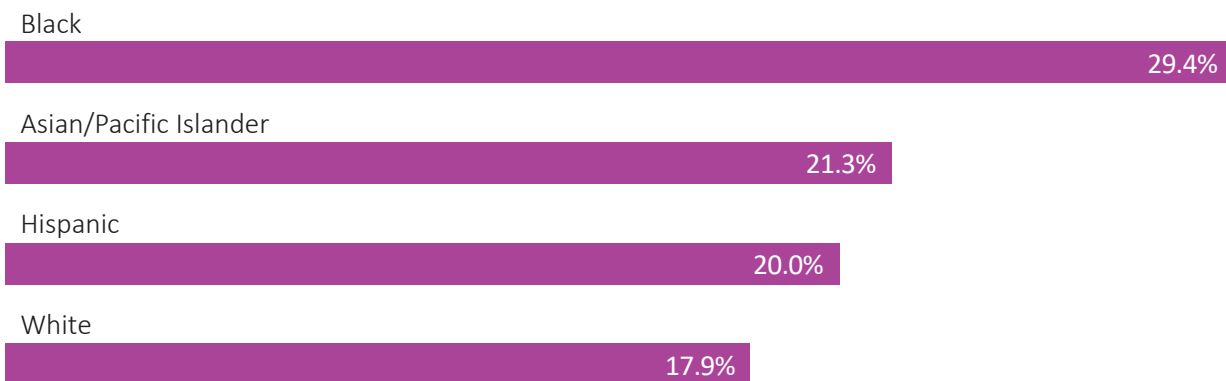
“I am currently worried about income, childcare and health insurance since the birth of my child. I am disabled due to birth-related complications. My family desperately needs help. The coronavirus has resulted in my husband losing his job and all our health insurance. He’s now working 14-hour days at a far lower pay rate and we are still struggling to pay bills.”
– MIHA 2020 respondent

CHILDCARE PROBLEMS

Problems with childcare early in the COVID-19 pandemic led many parents to not take a job, quit a job, or greatly change a job they had. Childcare-related job disruptions were significantly more

common for Black families than for families of other racial and ethnic groups. Across all groups, lack of childcare has disproportionately impacted women's employment.^{4,5}

Families with jobs impacted by childcare problems during the COVID-19 pandemic by race and ethnicity



INCOME, HEALTH AND POLICIES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

Socioeconomic well-being is strongly linked to health.⁶ Factors such as employment and income can determine access to fundamental resources like housing, healthy food and health care. These factors also impact stress levels, further shaping health.

COVID-19 pandemic-related job or income loss has had negative impacts on the health of families, including poor nutrition and food insecurity, poor mental health, and reduced access to health care, especially for families with lower incomes.⁷⁻¹¹ In prior recessions, job or income loss has also been linked to adverse birth outcomes and intimate partner violence.¹²⁻¹⁵

The increased caregiving burden during the COVID-19 pandemic associated with a lack of childcare has had negative impacts on parental mood and mental health, child behavior, and family well-being.⁷

Several federal, state, and local policies were enacted in response to the pandemic, including expansion of unemployment insurance, sick leave, paid family leave, food assistance, and Medicaid eligibility; eviction moratoria; cash assistance; and tax credits. These policies were crucial to the socioeconomic well-being of millions of California families during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶

This data brief series describes the well-being of Californians who gave birth early in the pandemic using data from the Maternal and Infant Health Assessment (MIHA) survey. The MIHA 2020 sample was drawn from births occurring from March 16, 2020 to June 15, 2020. For more information about MIHA visit www.cdph.ca.gov/MIHA.

For references, methods and other information, please visit go.cdph.ca.gov/MIHACOVID19.