

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 on British Columbia's Children with Medical Complexity and their Families

In August 2020, 156 parents/guardians of 188 medically complex children (age 0 to 18 years, inclusive) in British Columbia, Canada, completed a web-based survey about the impact of COVID-19 and its associated restrictions on their lives.



1 | Healthcare Services

Access to routine health care and medical specialty services decreased dramatically. Occupational, speech and language, and physiotherapy appointments were significantly delayed or cancelled.



64% OF CHILDREN

had at least one appointment with medical specialists cancelled or postponed by the clinic.

61% OF CHILDREN

did not attend school at all between March 17 and May 29, 2020.



2 | Education

Between March 17 and May 29, 2020, 19.5% of students attended school in-person full-time. This decreased to 10.6% between June 1 and the end of the 2019/20 school year.

3 | Social Services

Only 22% of children received Emergency Relief Funding offered by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).



39% OF CHILDREN

did not access any of the pandemic support measures introduced by MCFD.

73% OF PARENTS reported that their mental health is 'somewhat' or 'much' worse than one year ago.



4 | Family & Community

Almost half (49%) of the parents reported that their household income had decreased during the first wave of COVID-19. 36.5% of households had accessed the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Healthcare Services

- ➔ Utilize existing 8-1-1 network to provide families with access to skilled pediatric nurses and/or nurse practitioners.
- ➔ Offer individualised funding options to families whose home nursing support needs would be better served by hiring privately.

2 Education

- ➔ Provide technology and at-home staffing supports as needed for students to access and participate in education.
- ➔ Meaningful outreach by school-based case managers to assess individualised support needs to facilitate learning and peer socialization.

3 Social Services

- ➔ Reinstate emergency relief funding for a period of at least 6 months.
- ➔ In cases where contracted agencies are unable to fulfill their deliverables due to COVID-19 restrictions, those funds should be redirected to families as part of individualised funding .

4 Family & Community

- ➔ Fund mental health supports provided by registered clinical counselors and psychologists for parents in the form of one-on-one or family therapy.
- ➔ Ensure the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB) is accessible to parents, even those who were unemployed prior to COVID-19 due to caregiving responsibilities.



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To access the full report, please visit: <https://spice.nursing.ubc.ca/outreach/>
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