

Submission Id: 6827

Title

Changes in School-Age Children's Wellbeing and School-Related Needs post COVID-19 Pandemic

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Child and adolescent health

Presenters

Rachel Spronz, BS

Abstract

Context: The importance of school environments for child health has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, as emerging data suggest that pandemic-related school closures may have led to worsening child health and exacerbated racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic health disparities. Objective: To assess school-aged children's wellbeing and characterize changes in school-related needs from 2021 to 2022. Study Design and Analysis: Longitudinal survey. Weighted regressions examined associations among child's wellbeing, school-related needs, and socio-demographic characteristics. Setting or Dataset: Nationally representative survey conducted in the 2021-2022 academic year in June 2021 and again in June 2022. Population Studied: Surveyed a nationally representative sample of parents of children enrolled in grades K-12. Intervention/Instrument: Parents completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and reported their child's general health and needs for school-related services. Outcome Measures: Child's wellbeing, school related needs. Results: Follow up surveys were completed by 1,199 participants. The percentage of children with deficits in total difficulties, hyperactivity, and prosocial behavior decreased from baseline to follow up, while a high percentage of children continued to have peer problems. Almost three quarters of parents continued to have at least one school-related need following the 2021-2022 school year. Highest priority needs were for academic enrichment, socialization, physical activity, tutoring, and coping with stress. Conclusions: We observed a continued high burden of needs, particularly with respect to academic support and social-emotional wellbeing. Greatest deficits in child health were noted in social development. Improvements in child wellbeing were experienced unequally across demographic groups.

Annals of Family Medicine, Inc. For the private, noncommercial use of one individual user of the Web site. All other rights reserved. Contact copyrights@aafp.org for copyright questions and/or permission requests.