

COVID-19 AND ITS EFFECT ON YOUNG LEARNERS

by:

Jenilie N. Florendo

Master Teacher I, Mabayo Elementary School

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought great challenges in education and in the lives of millions of children. Young learners missed the opportunity to experience early childhood care and education due to the closure of their school settings. Little known to adults, that there is an adverse effect to the socio-economic development of young children. Early Childhood Care and Education is one of the significant stages that holistically meets a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical requirements to lay a solid and comprehensive foundation for lifetime learning and well-being. ECCE can raise future citizens who are compassionate, capable, and responsible. In addition, the global pandemic of COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the world (e.g., Prime et al., 2020). This also put at risk the chance of children to develop healthy brains and lives through depriving essential health and nutrition services, delaying early learning opportunities, adding stress and burden to families and parenting, increasing protection risks, and having a severe negative impact on families' household economies.

According to UNICEF latest available proof, in the Philippines, more than 80% of households reported a decrease in household income. Households that are already at a disadvantage before COVID-19 are those with small children, those who lived in rural and distant locations, and those who have low income – were disproportionately affected by the virus. It is alarming that there is a great While it is known that young learners need prudent care at this crucial stage: good health, proper nutrition, responsive caregiving, early learning and stimulation, physical and emotional stability, and safety. At a young age, children's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development can affect their readiness to learn in school, solve issues, relate to others, and general mental health and

well-being. This also has a significant impact on their adult lives, affecting their ability to earn a living and contribute to their communities. With these requirements of development as holistic individual, face-to-face classes are necessary because young learners will be able to get accustomed in going to school to study. They can also develop their social skills as they will learn with their peers. In this set up, their minds and social skills needed will be enhanced through interaction with other people and getting the experience of the real life outside of their shells.

References:

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01193-2>

Prime, H., Wade, M., & Browne, D. T. (2020). Risk and resilience in family well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The American Psychologist*, 75(5), 631–643.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01952/full>

<https://jite.org/documents/Vol6/JITEv6p499-514Miliszewska261.pdf>

<https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/for-young-people/face-to-face-vs-online-learning/>

UNICEF (2021). Young children and the pandemic. UNICEF Early Childhood COVID19 Response in East Asia and the

Pacific. <https://www.unicef.org/eap/youngchildren-and-pandemic>