



## | COVID-19 POLICY BRIEF SERIES

# New Childcare and Teaching Responsibilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Latino Families

March 10, 2022

## INTRODUCTION

One in 5 children in Washington state is Latino\* while Latinos only account for 13% of the state's population.<sup>1</sup> The growth of the Latino pediatric population in Washington State reflects the growth in the Latino pediatric population nationally. Since early 2000's, the share of Latino children of preschool and elementary school age in the United States has increased from 12% to 25%<sup>2</sup> and in Washington State among children K-12 in public schools from 12% to 25%.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the impact of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in disproportionately more new childcare and home-schooling responsibilities for Latino parents. In this brief, we describe the characteristics of Latino families with and without new childcare and home-schooling responsibilities and their resources to respond to these new duties resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## METHODOLOGY

We used data from the "Understanding Washington Latinos' Experiences Around

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COVID-19" survey developed by the Latino Center for Health and administered by DataStat, Inc. in collaboration with SeaMar Community Health Centers to their patient population in Washington State. Detailed information about the survey can be found on our website.<sup>4</sup> Briefly, from the 18,167 eligible patients, 2,500 were selected for the survey. To enhance representativeness, Spanish-speakers and men were oversampled and the sample was stratified by region including a northwestern region, the central west region, and the remainder of the state. A total of 327 of the 2,500 surveyed individuals completed the survey for a response rate of 17%. Results reported in this brief are based on unweighted analysis of survey respondents.

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\* Although "Latino" is the official name of LCH and is considered the most familiar term, we recognize that it is limited. We acknowledge that "Latino" is a male-gendered identifier and people in our community choose other forms of identity, including "Latina" and gender-neutral "Latinx" and "Latine." Our community is not a monolith, and we work to support all chosen identities.



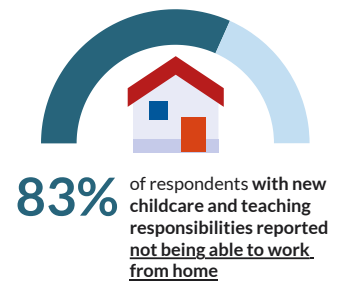
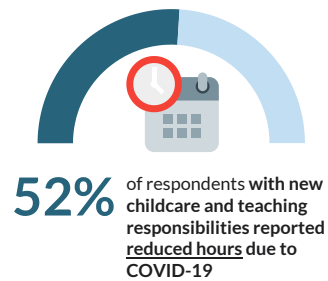
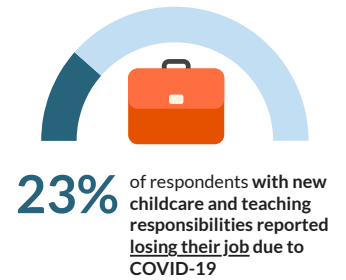
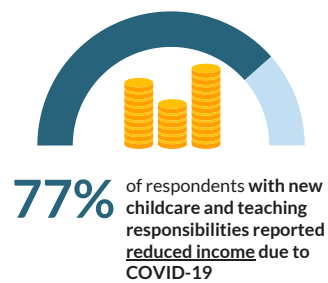
## RESULTS

Of the 327 respondents to the COVID-19 survey, 110 (34%) reported new childcare and/or home-schooling responsibilities (**Table 1**). When compared to those without these new responsibilities, they were more likely to be female, married, foreign-born and to speak primarily or exclusively Spanish. They were also more likely to have their income reduced and to report losing their job or having their work hours reduced due to the pandemic. (**Table 2 or figure**)

Among respondents with new childcare and home-schooling responsibilities, 86% reported having internet access, though only 44% reported high speed internet (**Figure**). Only 58% of survey respondents reported owning a computer or a tablet (devices that can be used with ease for school online participation), with the majority (76%) accessing the internet via cellphones.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In our policy brief, we identified large disparities in the needs and resources available to Latino parents during the COVID-19 pandemic to support the learning environment for their children. Only half of the respondents have access to a computer or a tablet for their children to attend school online. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Latino students in Washington already had lower access to digital tools and high-speed internet at home compared to other racial/ethnic groups.<sup>5</sup> This disparity was accentuated during the pandemic, as access to digital resources posed challenges for parents and students during the shift to online learning. In addition, survey respondents with new childcare and school responsibilities were more likely to speak primarily Spanish, to have educational levels less than high school and to be foreign-born. The added burdens of new childcare and other caretaking responsibilities, compounded by the lack of familiarity with the US school system, limited English proficiency and digital access barriers have undoubtedly had compounding effects on the ability of many Latino parents to support their child's school needs at home. Early evidence suggests that the disruption of education caused by the pandemic worsened existing educational inequities for Washington public high school students of color and low income, including Latino students.<sup>6</sup> This is a critical issue since statewide reading assessments done by the Washington State Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee have already demonstrated a 20-30% gap in achievement prior to the pandemic between students of color and White and Asian students.<sup>7</sup>





## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

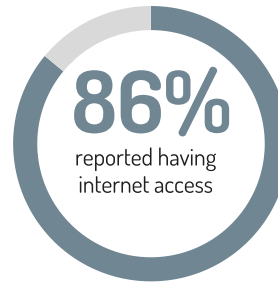
Based on our findings, we recommend the following:

- 1. To allocate additional resources to support education for children of Latino families in the post-pandemic period.** This includes immediate closing of the digital divide by ensuring all households, rural and urban, have access to high-speed internet service and providing updated computers and tablets to all students.
- 2. To ensure that all school districts utilize a family and community engagement framework** that specifically address the cultural and linguistic needs of Latino families such as communication in Spanish and the indigenous languages of Mexico and Central America, and provision of tutoring and other support systems for Latino students and families with limited English proficiency.
- 3. To prioritize tracking of educational achievement of Latino students in WA state,** to measure the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on student performance, and to identify needs and provide resources to diminish additional educational gaps and disparities.

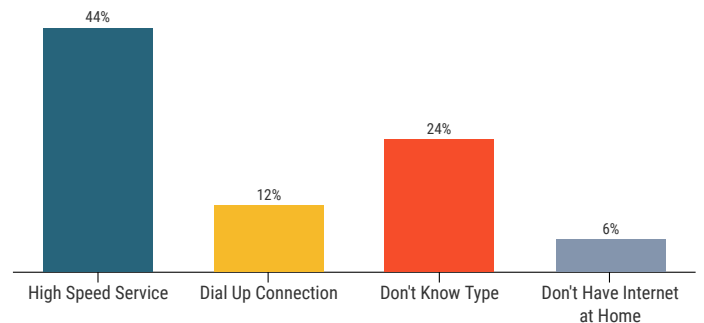
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**Currently, 1 in 5 children in Washington state is Latino; prioritizing the educational needs of Latino children is critical to ensuring the success of our state's future workforce.**

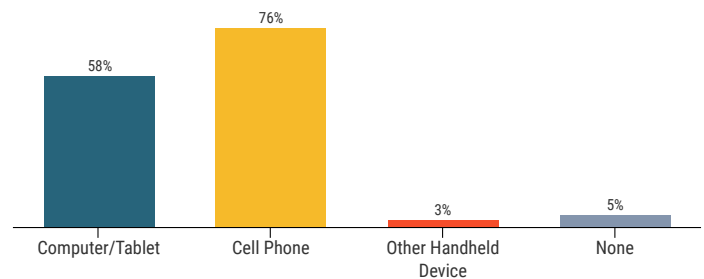
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### Type of Internet Service



### Devices\*



\*Respondents can access internet with more than one device, therefore percentages do not add to 100



**APPENDIX**

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of families with and without new childcare and teaching responsibilities.

Characteristics	New childcare and teaching responsibilities		p-value
	YES N=110	NO N=217	
Gender			0.21
Female	59%	44%	
Marital Status			0.00
Married/living tog	71%	45%	
Single	18%	33%	
Divorced/separated	9%	16%	
Widowed	0	3%	
Country of origin			0.002
Foreign born	80%	69%	
Time in the US			0.096
Less than 5 years	10%	7%	
5-9 years	5%	5%	
10-19 years	34%	27%	
20 years or more	48%	58%	
Language			0.001
Only/primarily Spanish	65%	50%	
Educational attainment			0.346
Less/equal high school	75%	64%	
Some college	9%	15%	
Associate degree	5%	7%	
College or more	7%	11%	
Housing			0.001
Private home	35%	32%	
Apartment	38%	38%	
Trailer	15%	8%	
Rent room	6%	17%	
Car/camper	0	<1%	
No Housing	2%	0	
Household number			0.000
1	1	25	
2-4	57	139	
>5	51	42	
Income reduced due to COVID			0.000
Yes	77%	56%	
Lost job due to covid			0.001
Yes	23%	15%	
Reduced hours due to covid			0.000
Yes	52%	34%	
Able to work from home *			P: 0.933
Yes	17%	18%	
No	83%	82%	

\*Unemployed and retired respondents not included.

**APPENDIX**

Table 1 Continued. Demographic characteristics of families with and without new childcare and teaching responsibilities.

**RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ONLINE LEARNING**

	<b>RESOURCES N= 110</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Access to Internet		
Yes	95	86%
No	9	8%
Type of internet service	N=95	
High speed service	48	44%
Dial up connection	13	12%
Don't know type	26	24%
Don't have internet at home	7	6%
Devices*		
Computer/tablet	58	58%
Cell phone	76	76%
Other handheld device	3	3%
None	6	5%

\*Respondents can access internet with more than one device; therefore percentages do not add to 100



## REFERENCES

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3. KIDS COUNT Data Center “K-12 enrollment by race/ethnicity, public schools in Washington” <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/4415-k-12-enrollment-by-race-ethnicity-public-schools?loc=49&loct=2#detail/2/any/false/2043,1769,1696,1381,1246,1124,1021,21/2273,172,133,3,4100,2274,107,169,13/10079,10080>
4. Latino Center for Health, University of Washington (2021). Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Latinos in WA State and its Toll on Women. <https://latinocenterforhealth.org/wordpress>
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### Latino Center for Health – University of Washington

The Latino Center for Health is a state-funded interdisciplinary research center at the University of Washington. Housed administratively at the School of Social Work, the center conducts community-engaged research through capacity building and authentic partnerships with community stakeholders to promote the health and well-being of Latino communities in Washington State.

<https://latinocenterforhealth.org/>