

Home-schooling parents experienced psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Credit: Tracey Nearmy/ANU

Parents and caregivers who home-schooled children during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced significantly higher levels of psychological distress compared to those who didn't, according to a new study from The Australian National University (ANU).

The study asked more than 1,200 Australian adults to report on their psychological well-being during the first wave of COVID-19 restrictions in March and April 2020.

Those who were home-schooling also experienced greater disruption to their work and social lives, the researchers found.

Having experienced home-schooling herself, lead researcher Professor Alison Callear says the results "make perfect sense."

"During home-schooling parents were so stretched. They were often trying to do their full-time job, as well as keeping their [kids](#) on track, as well as still doing everything else they have to do around the house," Professor Callear said.

"Their ability to actually have down time, which might reduce their stress levels, was taken away.

"In addition, most caregivers couldn't rely on their usual social networks for support. You couldn't have grandparents helping out for example, or take your kids to a friend's house."

Professor Callear said the results offer validation for those who have struggled with home-schooling.

"What they were feeling was real. This analysis was done during the first wave of the pandemic, my suspicion is the distress levels would be even higher now," she said.

"It's important for employers to be aware of this toll. I think there's a lot we could do to better support parents. We found those who had pre-existing [mental health problems](#) found it even more difficult.

"It can be as simple as knowing there is flexibility, and appreciation for what [parents](#) are doing," Professor Callear said.

The study has been published in *BMC Public Health*.

More information: Alison L. Callear et al, Psychosocial impacts of home-schooling on parents and caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic, *BMC Public Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1186/s12889-022-12532-2](#)

Provided by Australian National University

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