

Exposure to COVID-19 pandemic linked to delayed development at age 5

July 13 2023, by Elana Gotkine



Exposure to the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with delayed

development at age 5 years, according to a study published online July 10 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Koryu Sato, M.P.H., from Kyoto University in Japan, and colleagues examined the association between COVID-19 and early childhood development in a [cohort study](#) conducted between 2017 and 2019 in accredited nursery centers in a Japanese municipality. Participants (447 children aged 1 year at baseline and 440 children aged 3 years at baseline) were followed up for two years.

The researchers found that during follow-up, compared with those not exposed to the pandemic, the cohorts that were exposed were 4.39 months behind in development at age 5 years. This negative association was not seen for development at age 3 years. Regardless of age, greater variations in development were seen during versus before the pandemic. There was a [positive association](#) noted for quality of care at nursery centers with development at age 3 years during the pandemic; parental depression amplified the association between the pandemic and delayed development at age 5 years.

"It is important to identify children who have been detrimentally affected by the pandemic and provide them with support for learning, socialization, physical and [mental health](#), and [family support](#)," the authors write.

More information: Koryu Sato et al, Association Between the COVID-19 Pandemic and Early Childhood Development, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.2096](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.2096)

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