



SUPPORTING SAFETY OF LGBTQ CHILDREN AND YOUTH: RISK FACTORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT DURING COVID-19

In a [groundbreaking issue brief](#), the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation summarized how LGBTQ people could face disproportionate economic and health risks amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. As the virus continues to affect communities across the globe, growing attention has been given to the safety risks facing children and youth.

The following research brief provides information about the risk that LGBTQ children and youth, of which there are at least [2 million](#) in the United States alone, will face amidst COVID-19, as well as resources available to them as they navigate these times.

As the economic and health consequences of COVID-19 become reality to families across the globe, the increased risk of child abuse has especially garnered the attention of the media as well as leading national professional associations such as the [American Psychological Association](#).

CHILDREN ARE AT GREATER RISK OF ABUSE

Many children are victims to child abuse every year in the United States. According to [Child Trends](#), over half a million (674,000) children in 2017 across the United States were victims of child abuse and neglect. According to the [Children's Hospital of Philadelphia](#), parental violence history, socioeconomic status, substance use and neighborhood characteristics are linked with child abuse. Other sources show that [reporting](#) has significantly declined amidst COVID-19, putting children at even greater risk of staying in dangerous situations when rates of abuse will increase due to stay-at-home orders.

This has already played out in reality. While the Cook's Children Hospital in [Fort Worth, Texas](#) typically saw an average of eight instances of child abuse in one month, they saw six cases the week of March 21 alone, one of which resulted in death.

LGBTQ CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT EVEN GREATER RISK OF ABUSE DURING COVID-19

With increased risk for child abuse and neglect right now, LGBTQ youth will be especially impacted by this as their identities are often subject to criticism and violence at home, by their immediate family members. LGBTQ youth often find solace at school and in activities with their supportive friends and classmates; there is no perfect substitute for these in-person relationships and opportunities throughout the day to let others know if you are in need of support or services.

HRC Foundation found in its [2018 LGBTQ Youth Survey](#) that nearly half (48%) of LGBTQ youth had parents that make them feel bad for being LGBTQ, only 24% can definitely be themselves at home as an LGBTQ person and that youth are far less likely to be out to their parents because their parents make negative comments about LGBTQ people. As COVID-19 continues to worsen the financial and social situations of

48%
of LGBTQ youth had parents that make them feel bad for being LGBTQ

24%
can definitely be themselves at home as an LGBTQ person



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION

many families across the globe, LGBTQ youth are going to be at even greater risk of these instances of abuse and neglect, while hiding their identities will become more difficult yet necessary for their safety and well-being. Rejection, abuse and neglect too often lead many LGBTQ youth to leave home--if they are not kicked out.

LGBTQ youth, according to [True Colors United](#), are more than twice as likely to be homeless while simultaneously comprise 30% of youth in the foster care system. These experiences also lead many LGBTQ youth to suffer and develop poor mental health and well-being. In fact, the [Crisis Text Line](#), a text-only crisis-intervention hotline has seen a surge in its use. The most striking fact is that more than half of those using the hotline are LGBTQ, many of whom are teenagers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here are some tips from All Children - All Families participant [FosterAdoptConnect](#) for how you can help prevent child abuse during a pandemic:

- **Stay connected with parents and caregivers using virtual tools**
- **Provide care packages to parents and caregivers**
- **Schools and other youth-serving orgs should consider door-to-door check-ins**
- **Report suspected abuse and stay alert for potential signs of abuse.**

COVID-19 & LGBTQ COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Below are resources to help children, families, and professionals navigate the stress and uncharted waters of abuse during COVID-19.

- The HRC Foundation's All Children - All Families program developed a [tip sheet](#) specific to considerations for working with LGBTQ clients during COVID-19 and maintains an exhaustive list of [LGBTQ Resources for Child Welfare Professionals](#).
- The HRC Foundation's Youth Well-Being program developed a [tip sheet for school counselors](#) on supporting LGBTQ students during COVID-19 in collaboration with the American School Counselor Association.
- The HRC Foundation partnered with the National Education Association on an [educator checklist](#) to support LGBTQ students during distance learning.
- Human Rights Campaign maintains a [resource page](#) with contact information for direct online and phone support services for LGBTQ youth.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

[The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#) offers 24/7 call, text and live chat services with crisis counselors and interpreters who are dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. If you or someone you know is in harm, please call 1-800-422-4453 for crisis intervention or additional support resources.

[Prevent Child Abuse America](#) offers tips for parents, children and educators on staying connected, managing mental health and navigating coronavirus on their website. For more information and referral services to support resources, call 1-800-244-5373.

[Boys Town](#) provides 24/7 call services, along with 48-hr response periods to text and email services for people of all ages who are experiencing abuse or struggling with mental health. To connect with counselors, call 1-800-448-3000 or text VOICE to 20121.

[National Runaway Safeline](#) can be reached 24/7 through phone, text, email or forum at 1-800-786-2929. The organization works with parents, educators and youth service providers to prevent youth homelessness and runaways.