



COVID-19 Response

Awareness Campaign Strategy

Assessment Report



During the COVID-19 pandemic **Save the Children Rwanda** is leading a sensitization campaign to inform parents on the schedule for learning and reading as well as highlighting the importance of supportive home learning and reading environments and the role of parents in children’s learning and wellbeing at home.



INTRODUCTION

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Government of Rwanda enacted measures including a lockdown, social distancing, travel restrictions, and school closures to slow the spread of the virus. In a bid to raise awareness on the global pandemic, Save the Children Rwanda launched its **Awareness Campaign Strategy** to guide its interventions by:

- ✓ Ensuring that girls and boys, with or without disabilities, are safe in their homes, exercise their rights, and learn, survive, and are protected, and
- ✓ Facilitating REB to air radio and TV shows to mobilize parents and the wider community to support children to learn and read at home.

METHODOLOGY

The study mainly used a quantitative approach with a sample size of 851 parents, across the country, including 351 participants randomly selected from 2,841 parents of children directly benefiting from Save the Children’s projects in 15 districts, and 500 parents randomly selected by GeoPoll from around the country.

Method of Data Collection:

- ✓ Remote data collection was conducted by 14 SCI program staff who served as enumerators and trained by MEAL team on data collection, research ethics & principles, and the use of KoBo Toolbox to record the collected data, through remote telephone voice call interviews.
- ✓ GeoPoll collected data from a random sample of 500 respondents through an SMS based survey.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this assessment was to establish the current status of parent’s and children’s wellbeing and parents’ support to their children’s (with or without disabilities) learning at home during the lockdown.

Research Questions:

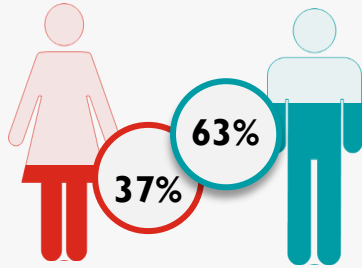
- ❖ % of parents providing support for their children’s literacy learning at home
- ❖ % of parents using positive discipline during this lockdown period
- ❖ The source of information to children and parents with or without disabilities

Study Findings

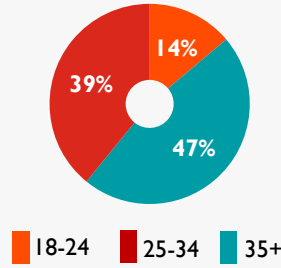
Demographic Characteristics

Eight hundred fifty-one caregivers successfully participated in remote data collection.

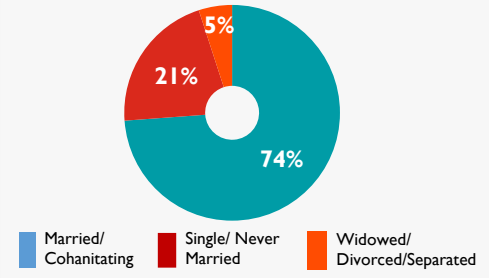
Gender



Age



Marital Status



As the graphs above indicate, 63% of respondents were male, nearly half of the respondents (47%) are aged between 25 and 34 years old, 74% are married/cohabiting, and 21% are single/never married but live with children in families.

107 (13%) of 851 respondents (Female: 14%, Male: 11%) reported to have a type of disability including:

Disability Status



79 with physical disabilities



11 with hearing impairments



7 with vision disabilities

In addition, 98 (11%) parents indicated that they have children with disabilities.

Parents' and Children's Perceptions of COVID-19

Parents feel more worried or stressed **74%** Agree **26%** Disagree

Children feel more worried or stressed **72%** Agree **28%** Disagree

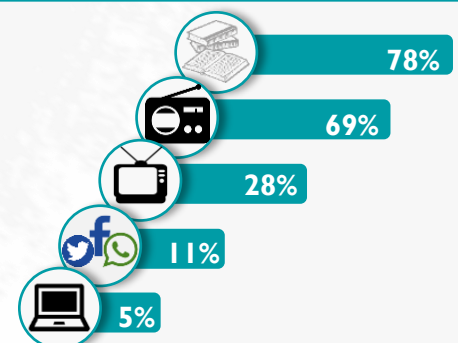
Young children crying, acting out, fighting, or refusing to eat **28%** Agree **72%** Disagree

Parents notice changes in children's behavior which can be difficult to understand and address as a caregiver. 74% of respondents reported to feel more worried or stressed, and 72% confirmed that their children express stress through their feelings and behaviors more than usual due to COVID-19, while 28% of respondents agree that their young children display signs of stress in the form of abnormal behavior such as extreme crying, acting out, fighting, or refusing to eat more than usual during this period of COVID-19. In addition, 77% of parents know strategies to help their children calm down and reduce their stress.

Parents' Preferences on Accessible Options for Children to Continue Learning at Home

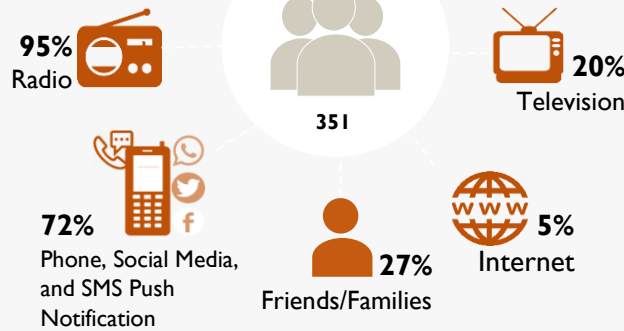
The majority (78%) of respondents pointed out that their children should use printed books to continue to learn at home.

69% and 28% of respondents thought that radio and television respectively are the best way to teach children during school closures, while 11% prefer to use social media, and 5% to use the computer.

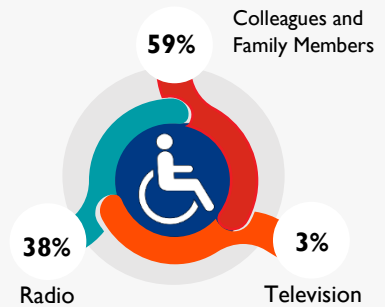


Study Findings

Channels Used to Be Updated on COVID-19



Children with Disabilities



As the above graph shows, the majority (95% and 72%) of respondents reported to get updates on COVID-19 and other interesting programs through radio and telephone, respectively, and 59% of children with disabilities get information from their colleagues and members of the family.

Education of Children at Home

How often did parents practice learning and reading activities with their child?

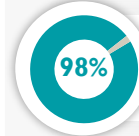


Very Often Sometimes Never

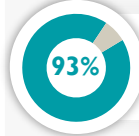
54% of respondents during the lockdown, very often or sometimes tell or ask children to retell a story, teach them new skills, support them in literacy and math learning, play, or sing, and set aside 15 minutes a day for reading with children.

86% of respondents did at least one of the above activities with their children during the lockdown.

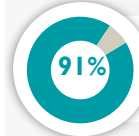
Positive Discipline and Parenting at Home



Show affection and care towards their children



Control their emotions before disciplining a child when he/she does anything wrong



Set any rules and plans together to help them behave better

- ☑ 71% of respondents very often or sometimes use positive methods to discipline their children and positive parenting in their everyday activities, and 74% did not use physical and humiliating punishment in the past month during the lockdown period.
- ☑ 79% and 87% of female and male respondents respectively agreed that during the lockdown period, men in their households take a greater part in parenting activities than ever before, and they learned more about co-parenting as they had increased opportunities to spend time with their families.

However, 22% and 16% of 851 respondents reported that girls and boys respectively are often engaged in domestic chores which can prevent them from learning and 31% reported that in their communities there are children [aged below 18] who do not have a place to live [street children] during the lockdown.

Recommendations

- ☞ Support at-risk children (street children or children separated from their primary caregivers) to receive safe, appropriate care and access necessary services
- ☞ Provide learning materials (textbooks, radio, etc.) to vulnerable families
- ☞ Ensure that distance learning prioritizes children's mental health and psychosocial wellbeing
- ☞ Consider respondents' suggestions on favorable and accessible ways of learning at home including providing books
- ☞ Support parents and caregivers to deal with multiple new stressors due to COVID-19 by providing mental wellbeing and psychosocial support tips
- ☞ Design interventions to sustain male engagement in parenting
- ☞ Promote positive parenting practices to reduce use of physical and humiliating punishment

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