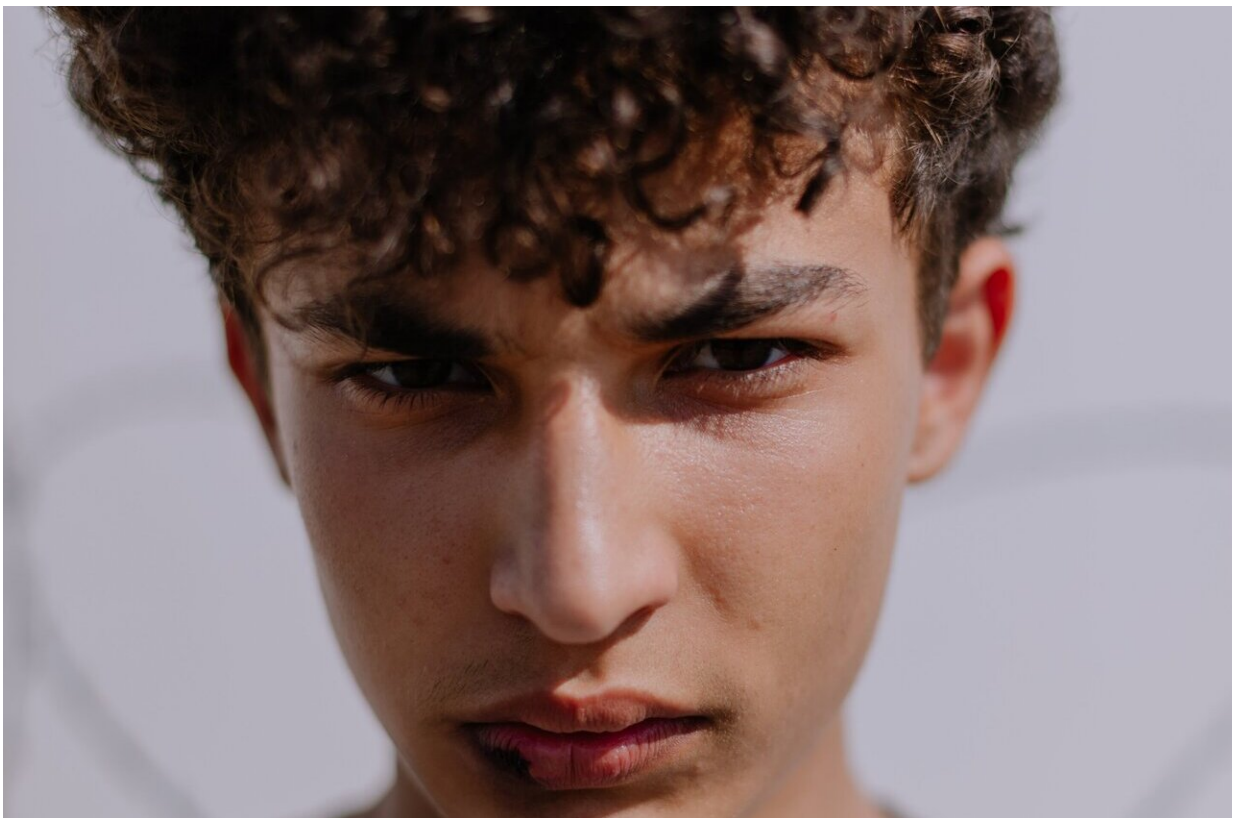


Latino/a adolescents who took on childcare duties during the pandemic at risk of depression, anxiety and school failure

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Credit: Pexels

Latino/a adolescents who took on greater childcare responsibilities due to COVID-19 experienced a significant increase in symptoms of

depression, anxiety and acting out behaviors such as aggression. They also experienced a significant drop in their grade point average, according to a study published today in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

"This study is the first to show how burdens on U.S. Latino/a families due to the pandemic have put adolescents at risk of serious mental health problems and poor school performance," Kathleen Roche, the lead author of the study and a professor of prevention and community health at the George Washington University, said. "If not addressed, such difficulties can lead to [suicidal thoughts](#), school failure and difficulties that last far into adulthood."

Roche and her colleagues surveyed 547 Latino adolescents before the pandemic and two more times several months after COVID-19 hit. They found that six months into the pandemic, one out of 10 Latino adolescents reported that a household member had been hospitalized due to COVID-19, more than one out of three reported increased childcare responsibilities and nearly 50% reported increased household [financial pressures](#).

Although household hospitalizations, family job and income loss did not have a direct effect on adolescent adjustment after COVID-19 started, such stress seemed to have harmful effects on adolescents because it led to an increase in adolescent childcare duties, Roche said. While other studies have shown that Latino/a families are at greater risk of COVID-related infection, deaths in the family, and [financial difficulties](#), this study is the first to show how pandemic-related stressors affected important outcomes for Latino/a adolescents a year after COVID-19 started, she said.

Adolescents are undergoing rapid biological, cognitive and social changes that increase their vulnerability to very stressful situations,

Roche said. Increased focus on caring for [younger children](#) may take time away from schoolwork and healthy coping behaviors such as time spent with peers and physical activity, she said.

The study, "COVID-19 Stressors and Latinx Adolescents' Mental Health Symptomatology and School Performance: A Prospective Study," was published April 6 in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

More information: Kathleen M. Roche et al, COVID-19 Stressors and Latinx Adolescents' Mental Health Symptomatology and School Performance: A Prospective Study, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* (2022). [DOI: 10.1007/s10964-022-01603-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-022-01603-7)

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