



## 13 WAYS SCHOOL CLOSURES HURT KIDS AND PARENTS

*Leading up to one-year anniversary of school closures, parents highlight the negative impacts of locking classroom doors*

OAKLAND, CA – March 1, 2021 – For nearly a year, 6 million public school students have been locked out of their classrooms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 7, 2020, the [Elk Grove Unified School District](#) was the first school district in California to shutter its doors. By March 13, 2020, [Governor Newsom ordered](#) that public schools would retain state funding even if they physically closed, and [by March 16, 2020](#) millions more K-12 children were sent home from school.

Over the next thirteen days, Open Schools California will highlight 13 examples of how school closures hurt kids and parents, concluding with a statewide day of action on March 13, 2021. Below are 13 reasons why school closures hurt kids and parents:

**#1: School closures are correlated with higher rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among children.**

According to a [study by the American Academy of Pediatrics](#), the rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts were higher in 2020 compared to 2019 and correlated with community fear, social isolation and school closures.

**#2: School closures have increased mental health emergencies for children.**

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reported that compared with 2019, the proportion of mental health-related emergency department visits for children aged 5-11 and 12-17 increased approximately 24% and 31%, respectively. Additionally, [UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland has](#) seen an alarming 75% increase in the number of children brought in for emergency mental health services that required immediate hospitalization.

**#3: School closures have trapped women and children at home with their abusers.**

A [United Nations policy brief](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on women found that more women and children are being forced to stay at home with their abusers, and in California, [there has been a steep decline](#) in reports of child abuse cases since public schools have closed as teachers are responsible for filing the [greatest number of reports](#) with Child Protective Services.

**#4: School closures are associated with a decrease in life expectancy.**

[Researchers from the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and the University of Washington](#) concluded that declining educational attainment due to school closures may be associated with a decrease in life expectancy in US children.

**#5: School closures have forced mothers out of the workforce.**

Since the pandemic began a year ago, [nearly 3 million U.S. women have dropped out of the labor force](#) as they assume caretaking and homeschooling duties. Before the pandemic, [women consisted of more than 50% of the country's workforce](#), underlining their importance to the economy. In a [recent CBS Evening News interview](#), President Joe Biden called the sudden loss of women in the workforce a “national emergency.”

**#6: School closures have resulted in significant learning loss.**

According to a January 2021 [PACE study](#), “There has been significant learning loss in both English Language Arts and Math, with students in earlier grades most affected.”

**#7: School closures and learning loss translate to future wage loss.**

A [study by McKinsey & Company](#) estimates the school closures through January 2021 translate to a loss of between \$61,000 and \$82,000 in lifetime earnings over a 40-year working life. For Black and Hispanic students, they would learn an estimated \$2,186 and \$1,809 a year less than their white counterparts, respectively.

**#8: School closures have disproportionately hurt Black and Hispanic students.**

“Black and Hispanic students continue to be more likely to remain remote and are less likely to have access to the prerequisites of learning—devices, internet access, and live contact with teachers. Left unaddressed, these opportunity gaps will translate into wider achievement gaps,” concluded a [McKinsey & Company](#) study from December 2020.

**#9: School closures are associated with unhealthy weight gain among children.**

[Numerous studies](#) show that closing schools is associated with increased weight gain and obesity among children, [especially among](#) boys, and Black and Hispanic children.

**#10: School closures and the loss of accessible free school meals have led to poor nutrition.**

Many low-income children and youth rely on school meals for healthy nutrition, but when schools close, nutrition is compromised, according to [UNESCO](#).

**#11: School closures are likely to increase dropout rates.**

A [McKinsey & Company study](#) estimates that COVID-19 school closures will probably increase high-school dropout rates. “In normal circumstances, students who miss more than ten days of school are 36 percent more likely to drop out... We estimate that an additional 2 to 9 percent of high school students could drop out as a result of the coronavirus and associated school closures—232,000 ninth-to-11th graders (in the mildest scenario) to 1.1 million (in the worst one).”

**#12: School closures and the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in fewer high school graduates enrolling in college.**

A [survey by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#) found that the number of students enrolling in college immediately after high school plunged nearly 22% this fall over last year.

**#13: School closures have led to challenges in measuring and validating learning.**

In 2020, standardized tests for K-12 students were [cancelled](#) in California, making it more difficult to measure learning loss and educational attainment.

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**Open Schools California**

*Open Schools California is a group of parents from across California who are committed to public education and believe their children should have access to safe, in-person education. Open Schools California believes in following the science—and the consensus by public health experts and medical and mental health professionals—which all tell us schools can be safely reopened with measures in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Learn more at [www.OpenSchoolsCA.com](http://www.OpenSchoolsCA.com)*

**Megan Bacigalupi**

Open Schools California

Parent Advocate

917-733-3821

Press@OpenSchoolsCA.com