



CHILDREN WITH BRAIN-BASED DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Canadians with developmental disabilities and their families have been flagged as an "at-risk" group by several media outlets, including in official statements.¹



CONCERNS



There is a concern that children with brain-based developmental disabilities may be more affected by COVID-19 than children without disabilities due to the potential for underlying health conditions that can increase the risk of complications.

Families in particular are concerned about the **risks** for their children.

WHAT DOES RECENT COVID-19 RESEARCH TELL US?



29 Studies involving:



2288

Children who tested positive for COVID-19



460

Children with a brain-based developmental disability



72

Children at risk of developing a brain-based developmental disability

Results

- Overall, the included studies showed that there is a **greater risk** of developing severe COVID-19 disease in children with brain-based developmental disabilities.
- Although mortality is very low in children overall, the **mortality rate appears to be higher** in children with disabilities compared to children without disabilities.

There is a significant increased risk of death or severe complications for persons with disabilities in studies that compared persons with disabilities who were hospitalized or living in care homes, in relation to others of the same age living in the same conditions.

An initial review of the literature was conducted in April 2020 and updated in October 2020.

Note that most studies included children that were hospitalized from COVID-19 in secondary and tertiary care centers. Results of this review should therefore be interpreted with caution.

WHAT CAN WE DO NEXT?



POLICY

Ask Canadian policy makers to **prioritize vaccination** in children with brain-based developmental disabilities, given their greater risk for severe complications.

Policy



ENGAGEMENT

Work with Canadian brain-based developmental disability organizations and families to design:

- Methods** for ongoing reporting about the occurrence and impact of COVID-19;
- Health, education, and social programs and supports** that take into account the specific needs of children with brain-based developmental disabilities and their families as the pandemic evolves.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

The Review

Dugas M, Stefan T, Lépine J, Blouin P, Poirier AA, Skidmore B, Faust LE, Costello C, Thomson D, Majnemer A, Goldowitz D, Miller S, and LeBlanc A. (2020). COVID-19 in children with brain-based developmental disabilities: **Update of a rapid review**. SPOR Evidence Alliance.

Dugas M., Carnovale V., Poirier AA., Mailhot, B., Skidmore B., Faust L.E., Costello C., Thomson D., Majnemer A., Goldowitz D., Miller S., and LeBlanc, A. (2020). COVID-19 in children with brain-based developmental disabilities: A two-week rapid review. SPOR Evidence Alliance. www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.05.01.20088021v1
The report: www.child-bright.ca/new-blog/2020/5/15/covid-rapid-review

¹ UNICEF

www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/COVID-19_response_considerations_for_people_with_disabilities_190320.pdf

CHILD-BRIGHT Network

www.child-bright.ca/covid-19-resources

The research literature review was conducted by the SPOR Evidence Alliance in cooperation with CHILD-BRIGHT Network collaborators including youth, parents, and researchers.

