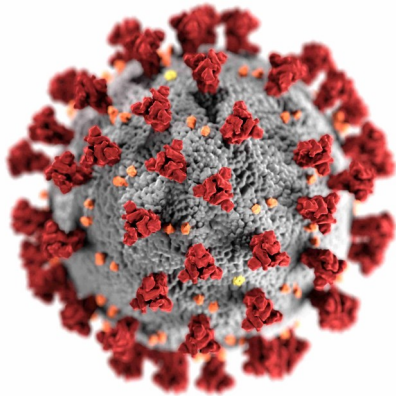


# Community Needs Assessment 2020 UPDATE



<b>Berrien</b>	<b>Cass</b>	<b>Van Buren</b>
Child Population (birth-5): 10,656	Child Population (birth-5): 3,056	Child Population (birth-5): 5,452
Children Living in Poverty: 21.1%	Children Living in Poverty: 17.3%	Children Living in Poverty: 23.2%
In Poverty & ALICE: 41.3%	In Poverty & ALICE: 40.4%	In Poverty & ALICE: 44.1%
3 & 4-year-olds in preschool: 47.1%	3 & 4-year-olds in preschool: 31.5%	3 & 4-year-olds in preschool: 38.9%
Less than adequate prenatal care: 41.9%	Less than adequate prenatal care: 52.4%	Less than adequate prenatal care: 37.1%



## COVID-19 Pandemic

The global pandemic has greatly impacted Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties, in addition to all aspects of the services Tri-County Head Start provides. As of the end of 2020, more than 16,000 people in the three counties have become infected, and 292 have died. Various changes in regulations have impacted services, including transitioning to all remote learning in March and November, with intermittent closures (transitioning to remote learning) due to quarantine and closure requirements, and school closures.

**Child Care**

**Health Care**

**Housing**

**Unemployment**

**Education**

**Mental Health**

The above areas are some that are currently changing during the COVID-19 pandemic that impact the services we provide at TCHS. They are areas that we will be watching closely, but may take a year or more to reflect the change in data.

- Child care availability was already an issue and there has been a decrease despite state incentives.
- Not only are regular well-child medical and dental check-ups more difficult to schedule, but also there have been obvious health disparities in our communities of color and the care they receive or don't receive.
- Currently there are protections in place to protect families from eviction, however once those protections are removed without other assistance, families could become homeless at an alarming rate.
- Unemployment in the three counties has varied wildly in 2020. Going from 4.5% up to 25% and back down to 4.6%. These rates may continue to change as protections for workers change and/or end.
- In K-12 education there is concern about children falling behind due to the flexibility and variability of teaching instruction (in-person, virtual, hybrid) and the availability of necessary technology and internet access.
- Mental Health is an area of constant focus but as the pandemic has impacted the ability for social connection and financial well-being, while dealing with the grief of losing the "normal" and the grief of losing loved ones during this pandemic. Mental wellbeing will take on a renewed focus.