

Study highlights stresses—and 'silver linings'—of pandemic for moms with limited resources

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A recent study from North Carolina State University finds that mothers with limited financial resources often experienced tremendous stress

during the pandemic, but that they also valued the opportunity to spend more quality time with their children. The work highlights both their resilience and the need for additional resources to support low-income families.

"We conducted this study because we wanted to gain a better understanding of the impact of the pandemic on [mothers](#) who have limited resources," says Mary Haskett, corresponding author of the study and a professor of psychology at NC State. "What challenges did they face? Were there any positive outcomes associated with the pandemic?"

To that end, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews of 15 mothers in central North Carolina who had limited [financial resources](#). The interviews were conducted during the summer of 2020 and included assessments of each mother's stress levels, as well as a test designed to assess the quality of each parent's relationship with their children.

"Even though all of these mothers were experiencing significant financial challenges, their experiences during the pandemic varied widely," says Jodi Hall, co-author of the study and an associate professor of social work at NC State. "Some mothers experienced relatively mild distress, while other moms had to deal with high levels of stress.

"But even the mothers with high levels of stress reported that there were positive aspects of the [pandemic](#)," Hall says. "All of the mothers reported having the opportunity to spend more quality time with their children, and felt that this was a silver lining."

"Two key takeaway messages from this work are that these women are resilient and that they would benefit tremendously from additional institutional support," Haskett says. "For example, access to affordable child care and mental health resources would make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for these women and their families. We

really hope policymakers take action to better support these families.

"In addition, while these findings are valuable, we would like to see similar studies conducted in other locales to get a better sense of how broadly these findings are applicable," Haskett says.

The paper, is published open access in the journal *Family Relations*.

More information: Mary E. Haskett et al, "It brought my family more together": Mixed-methods study of low-income U.S. mothers during the pandemic, *Family Relations* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/fare.12684](https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12684)

Provided by North Carolina State University

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