



ADVANCING PROTECTION AND CARE FOR
CHILDREN IN ADVERSITY

Statement from the Acting U.S. Government Special Advisor on Children in Adversity on the Lancet Article on the Number of Children Worldwide Who Have Lost a Parent or Caregiver to COVID-19

An estimated 1.5 million children worldwide have experienced the death of a parent, custodial grandparent, or other caregiver as a result of COVID-19, according to a new study published in [The Lancet](#) and an accompanying publication [Children: The Hidden Pandemic 2021 – A joint report of COVID-19- associated orphanhood and a strategy for action](#). The study examines how these children are at risk of profound short- and long-term adverse effects on their health, safety, and well-being.

Urgent action is needed to protect children who have lost a parent or caregiver because of COVID-19. Through the whole-of-government [Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity \(APCCA\) Strategy](#), the U.S. Government is investing in the development, care, dignity, and safety of the world's most vulnerable children and their families. In particular, when children and adolescents are, or at-risk of, living outside of family care, the *APCCA Strategy* calls on governments to ensure appropriate alternative care for children in nurturing and protective families. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Government has worked to respond to the rapidly evolving effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable children and families and integrate services to support children in COVID-19 response plans.

USAID is playing a key role in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic globally, which is helping reduce the number of children who will lose parents or caregivers to COVID-19 in the future. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID has been working with implementing partners and governments across the globe to ensure children receive protection services and to reform care systems so that children can live in families, where decades of evidence show they grow and develop best, not orphanages that fail to promote children's long-term health, education, and well-being. USAID's programs keep vulnerable children with remaining family members; support family tracing and reunification where necessary; and facilitate placement in alternative family care where this is not possible. USAID has a long history of supporting children who have lost parents due to conflict, disasters, and other diseases, including HIV/AIDS and Ebola. The Agency will continue to support long-term investments in child protection systems and social services to improve the capacities of local governments and civil society actors to respond to the needs of vulnerable children.

More information about the U.S. Government's work to advance the protection and care for children in adversity can be found at <https://www.childreninadversity.gov>.

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