Support the Guardian

Sign in Search Search jobs

Lifestyle



Contribute \rightarrow

Subscribe \rightarrow



Our goal

News

Opinion

Culture

More~

167.987

current supporters

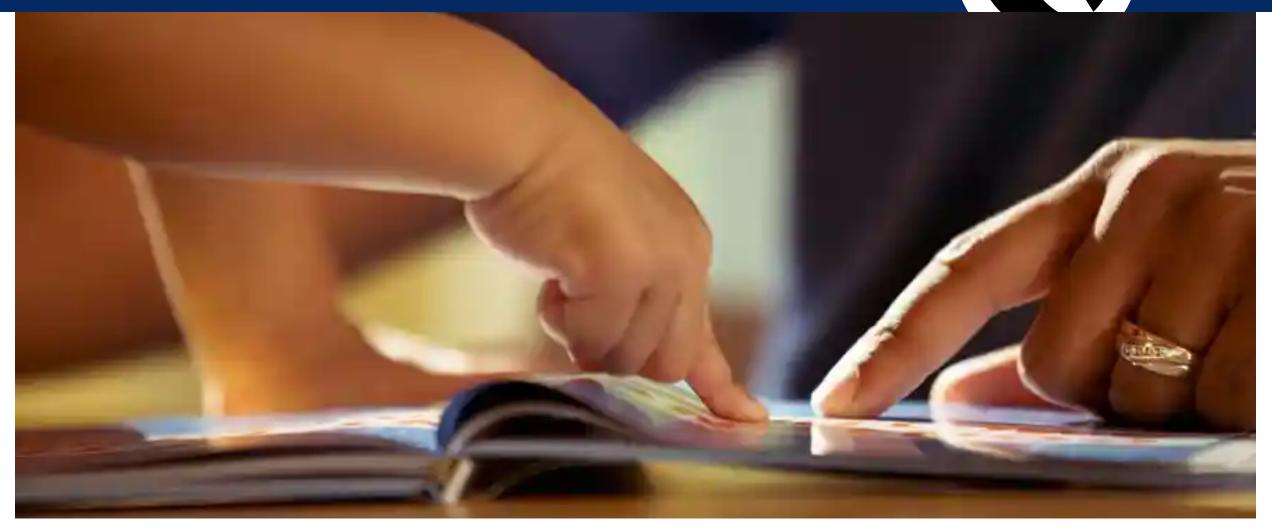
You've read 8 articles in the last year

Sport

In a media landscape dominated by a powerful few, Guardian Australia's fearless, fiercely independent voice is vital. With no shareholders or billionaire owner, we have the freedom to follow the facts wherever they lead - to provide rigorous, trustworthy news and analysis, free from commercial or political influence. And we believe everyone deserves access to it, regardless of their ability to pay. To help sustain this mission, we're aiming to grow our community of supporters to 170,000. Join us today from as little as \$1, and you'll help extend the reach of independent journalism in Australia and beyond. Together, we can be a voice for change. Thank you.

Support the Guardian \rightarrow





A Tests on children aged from three months to three years old suggest their cognitive development has been held back by the coronavirus pandemic. Photograph: Alamy

Children born during the coronavirus pandemic have significantly reduced verbal, motor and overall cognitive performance compared with children born before, a US study suggests.

The first few years of a child's life are critical to their cognitive development. But with Covid-19 triggering the closure of businesses, nurseries, schools and playgrounds, life for infants changed considerably, with parents stressed and stretched as they tried to balance work and childcare.



Nurseries in England feeling the pressure as 'pingdemic' hits children and staff

With limited stimulation at home and less interaction with the world outside, pandemic-era children appear to have scored shockingly low on tests designed to assess cognitive development, said lead study author Sean Deoni, associate professor of paediatrics (research) at Brown University.

 \rightarrow Read more

In the decade preceding the pandemic, the mean IQ score on standardised tests for children aged between three months and three years of age hovered around 100, but for children born during the pandemic that number tumbled to 78, according to the analysis, which is yet to be peer-reviewed.

"It's not subtle by any stretch," said Deoni. "You don't typically see things like that, outside of major cognitive disorders."

The study included 672 children from the state of Rhode Island. Of these, 188 were born after July 2020 and 308 were born prior to January 2019, while 176 were born between January 2019 and March 2020. The children included in the study were born full-term, had no developmental disabilities and were mostly white.

Those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds fared worse in the tests, the researchers found.

The biggest reason behind the falling scores is likely the lack of stimulation and interaction at home, said Deoni. "Parents are stressed and frazzled ... that interaction the child would normally get has decreased substantially."

Whether these lower cognitive scores will have a long-term impact is unclear. In the first few years of life, the foundations for cognition are laid, much like building a house - it's easier to add rooms or flourishes when you're building the foundation, Deoni said. "The ability to course-correct becomes smaller, the older that child gets."

Given this data comes from a relatively affluent part of the US, where social support and unemployment benefits are generous, the fear is that things could be worse in poorer parts of the country and the world, he added.

Sir Terence Stephenson, a Nuffield professor of child health at University College London, said the research was interesting given much has been written about the impact on the education of school-age children, but not much has come out on infants.

The key factor influencing these lower scores in infants has likely been stress on parents who faced challenges in both working and providing full-time attentive childcare, he said. "Perhaps not surprising that children from lower socioeconomic families have been most affected as this resonates with many of the other financial, employment and health impacts of the pandemic."

You've read <mark>7 articles</mark> in the last year	Article count <u>on</u>	
167,987	170,000	
supporters in Australia	ourgoal	

... in a media landscape dominated by a powerful few, Guardian Australia's fearless, fiercely independent voice is vital. With no shareholders or billionaire owner, we have the freedom to follow the facts wherever they

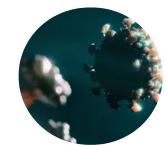
Most viewed



Australia secures Pfizer doses from Poland as Victoria chases mystery cases - as it happened



Live Afghanistan: Taliban enter outskirts of Kabul as US begins embassy evacuation - live updates



New Covid variants 'will set us back a year', experts warn UK government



Australia secures 1m Pfizer vaccine doses from Poland, with half earmarked for Sydney Covid hotspots



'No concept of how awful it was': the forgotten world of pre-vaccine childhood in Australia

lead. We provide rigorous, trustworthy news and analysis that is free from
commercial or political influence, and which holds firm against the spread
of misinformation and sensationalism.

Unlike many others, we are committed to keeping our journalism open to all readers, regardless of their ability to pay. We do this because we believe in information equality. More people across Australia can keep track of local and global events, understand their impact on people and communities, and become inspired to take meaningful action and drive positive change. Millions turn to us every day for quality reporting on the biggest stories of our times - from the pandemic and the vaccine rollout to the climate emergency and Indigenous affairs.

If you support our mission for high-impact, independent journalism that's available for all, join us today. To assure our future and strengthen our voice, we want to grow our community of supporters to 170,000. Every contribution, however big or small, makes a difference. **Support the** Guardian from as little as \$1 - it only takes a minute. If you can, please consider supporting us with a regular amount each month. Thank you.

	Support the Guardian	Remind me in September	er	
	Topics Coronavirus Early years education / Children / r	News		
	f		Reuse this content	
	<text><text></text></text>			<image/> <image/> <text></text>
More from Headlines				

	NSW Covid update / State reports 415 new cases and four deaths amid warning vaccination 'not a silver bullet'	Pfizer vaccine / Australia secures 1m doses from Poland, with half earmarked for Sydney Covid hotspots	 Live / Afghanistan: Taliban enter outskirts of Kabul as US begins embassy evacuation – live updates 12m ago 	<image/> <text></text>
Most popular	Across The Guardian	In World News		
	1 New Covid variants 'v experts warn UK gove	vill set us back a year', ernment	6 UK MPs urged to ban ' well as virginity testin	virginity repair' surgery as g
		ne Dorchester Hotel: 'Dismal orices' - restaurant review	T 'I can't work': the moth their children's mental	ners left to fight alone for I health care
	3 London's cafe culture stressed residents	London's cafe culture has left a sour taste for stressed residents		ny frosty future mother-in-
		: Taliban enter outskirts of nbassy evacuation – live	9 10 of Britain's best island	nds for a holiday getaway

Dental students in England offered £10,000 to switch university

Most commented

The Polo Lounge at the Dorchester Hotel: 'Dismal food at inexplicable prices' restaurant review



Incel ideology: a new blurry form of extremism incubated online

Most shared

London's cafe culture has left a sour taste for stressed residents



Education > Schools Teachers Universities Students

News	Opinion	Sport	Culture	Lifestyle	
<text><text></text></text>	and highlights from the	 About us Information Contact us SecureDrop Vacancies Privacy settings Privacy policy Cookie policy Terms & conditions Help 	 All topics All writers Events Digital newspaper archive Facebook YouTube Instagram LinkedIn Twitter Newsletters 	Guardian Labs Advertise with us Search UK jobs	