

A young girl with dark hair and a sad expression is the central focus. She is wearing a blue sweater with red stars and a dark blue turtleneck. She is holding a large brown stuffed animal, possibly a cow or horse, which has a white patch on its face. The background is a blurred, greyish landscape.

VULNERABLE CHILDREN & RISKS IN COVID-19 TIMES

May 2020

Vulnerable Children and Risks

All children and adolescents are affected by the Covid-19 global pandemic. While the virus does not discriminate, the most vulnerable will be hit hardest. UNICEF is particularly concerned about the impact on those that have an inequitable access to resources; those living in poverty, disabled, and socially excluded. The Covid-19 crisis has intensified inequities and increased the number of vulnerable people; some will be hit by recession and lack of social protection, they will have limited access to or no remote learning at all, they will suffer violence at home, and some will be deprived of essential nutrition, hygiene, protection and health. In this extraordinary situation, lacking quality access to internet is an obstacle to children, adolescents and youth's access to interconnectedness, playing and learning.

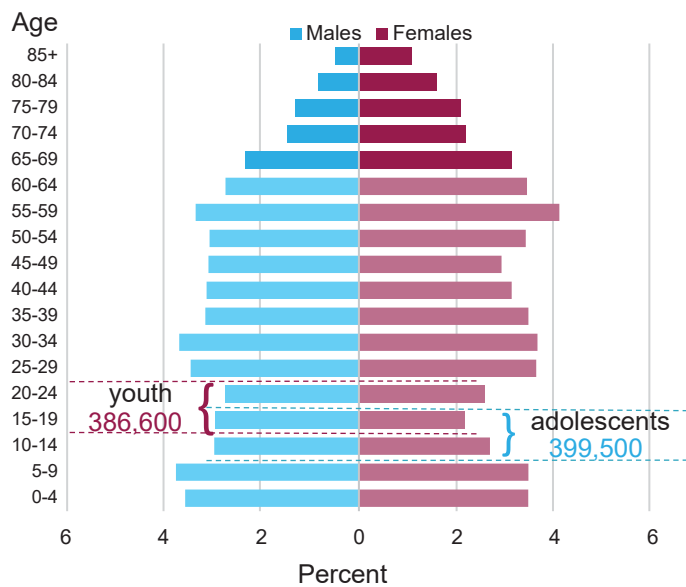
This brief identifies vulnerable children during in the current crisis. The information shown is obtained from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2018 and population and administrative data from Geostat, all ranging from 2018 to 2020. So this document reflects the situation of children and families before the Covid-19 crisis and it helps identifying children and families at risk and vulnerable. While we do not know yet in detail the real scale and the magnitude of affected and vulnerable children, this information is a well-informed indicative baseline that will help advocating for and engaging with those in need and vulnerable.

Country Measures

	Travel restrictions	YES
	Lockdown measures	YES
	Educational Institutions closed	YES
	Export of drugs banned	YES
	Reported problems accessing health services	Partially
	Reported problems with access to public services	Partially
	Prohibition of non-essential businesses operation	YES
	Prohibition of large gatherings	YES

Household composition

Household Population Age & Sex Distribution



Source: UNICEF, Rapid situation tracking for COVID-19 socioeconomic impacts: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/rapid-situation-tracking-covid-19-socioeconomic-impacts-data-viz/>

#StayAtHome



162,100 children living without at least one of their biological parents (54,100 of them have at least one parent abroad)

24,900 in Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti (15%)

59,100 in Tbilisi (36%)

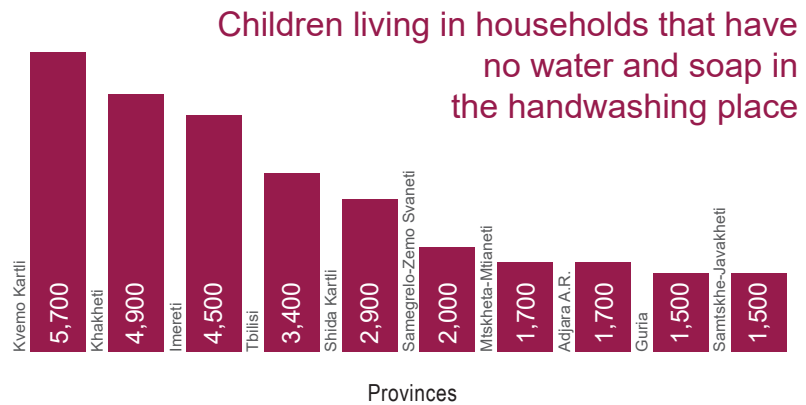
Preventing the spread of COVID-19

Living Environment: Conditions to Contain the Spread

Children living in overcrowded households or in inadequate conditions, like for example lacking hand-washing and other hygiene facilities, are particularly vulnerable to rapid Covid-19 transmission.

29,800

children have no handwashing facility with water and soap in the household



211,500

children live in households with 3 or more persons per sleeping room

Number of children living in the household with 3 or more persons per sleeping room

Household crowding

285,400

children live in households with at least one person 65+ years old

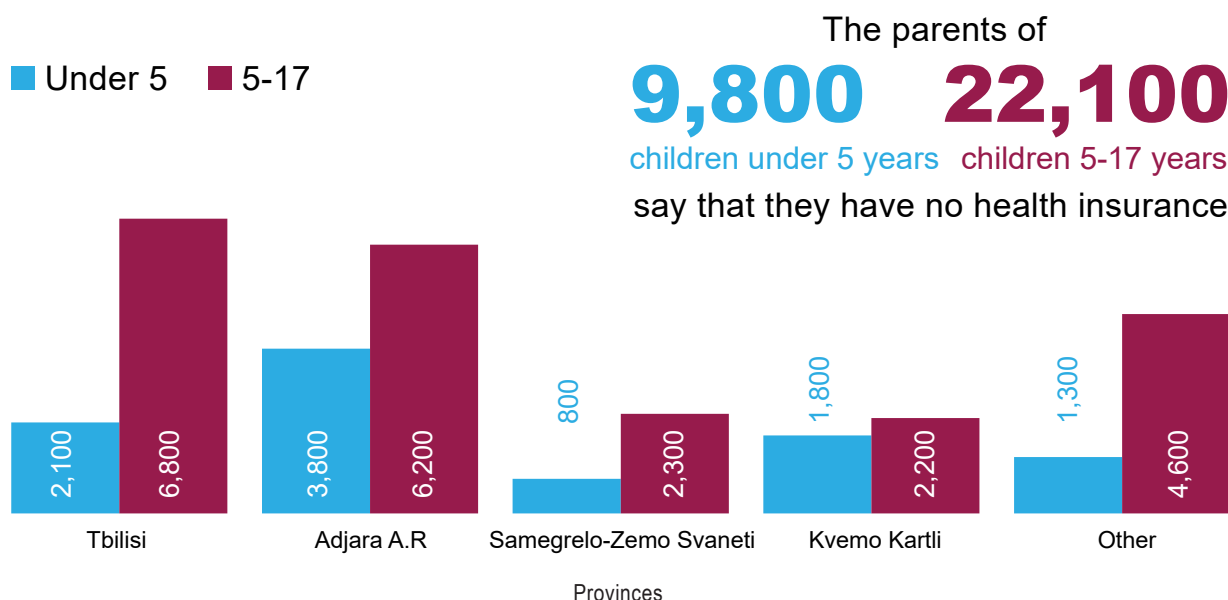


Socio-economic impacts on children

Access to Basic Health Services

Health staff and resources are being redeployed to treat the covid-19 crisis, it is important that children and their families have access to those available routine health services that are still functioning. Reaching out to the excluded ones is now critical to ensure they have also access to health care. Sometimes, it is a matter of raising awareness about the actual entitlements that citizens already have; for example, while children are covered in Georgia by a universal healthcare programme, many parents might not be aware of this and hence may self-restrict of using health care services when needed.

Children whose mothers / caregivers say that they do not have a health insurance



Psychosocial Support

Parents and caregivers may be less capable of providing appropriate care and support to children and adolescents. The reduction of resources such as school counsellors, case managers and social workers, to detect and refer those in need to mental health and psychosocial support, will affect those who are more vulnerable. In the table below, the number (in thousands) of vulnerable children because they have difficulties in particular domains.

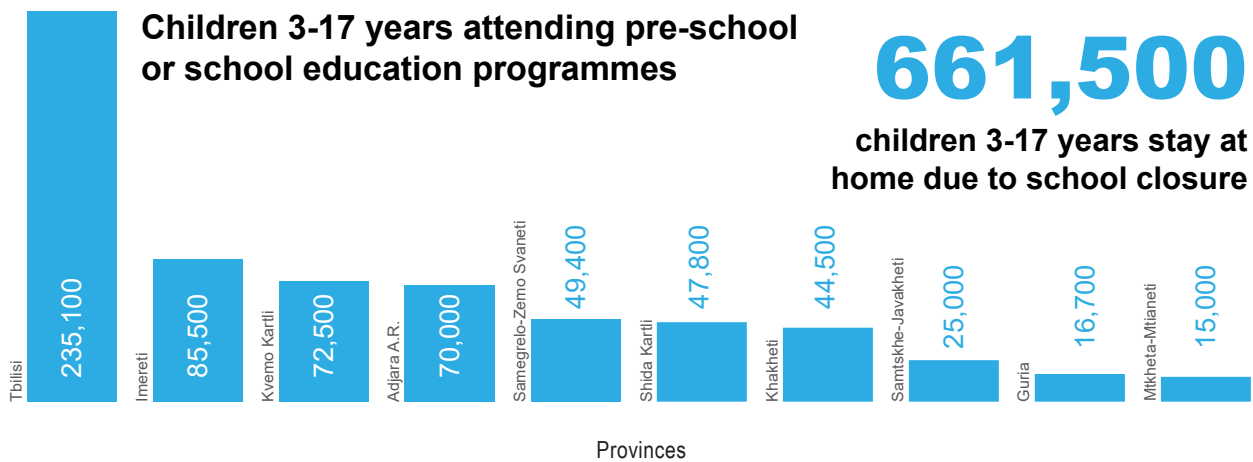
Children with functioning difficulties in different life domains (in thousands)

	Seeing	Hearing	Walking	Fine Motor	Communication	Learning	Playing	Controlling Behaviour	Self care	Remembering	Concentrating	Accepting Change	Making Friends	Anxiety	Depression
National															
2-4 years	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	2.0	1.4	0.2	0.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5-17 years	3.8	3.2	7.8	N/A	3.9	8.4	N/A	6.0	2.4	4.7	5.0	5.3	3.7	26.6	9.8

N/A Not Applicable

Education

All children should continue to learn during the ongoing crisis, and be able to safely return to school. Children who are already marginalized by lack of access to digital tools and internet connectivity, favourable home learning environments and parental support, risk falling further behind.

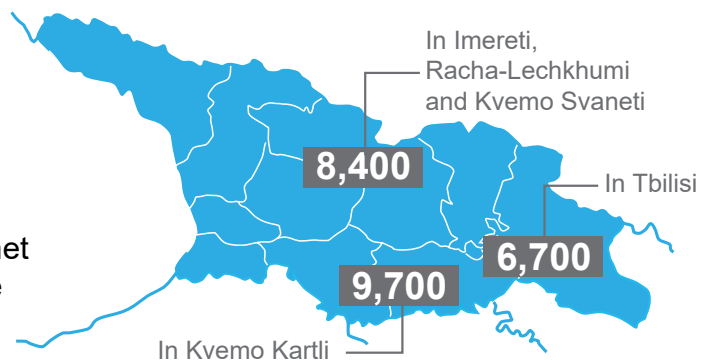


Conditions for continued learning



50,400

children 3-17 years have no access to internet and a computer at home



75,000

children 7-14 years have less than 3 books to read at home



36,800

children 2-4 years are not accompanied by an adult at home in activities that support learning and school readiness



88,100

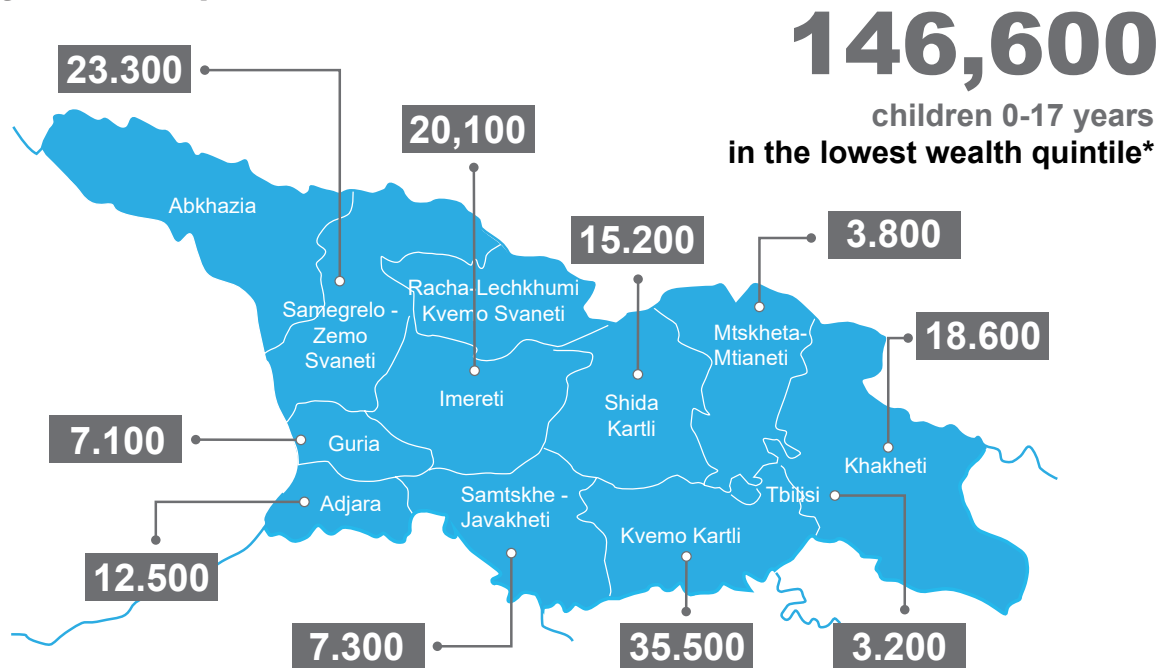
children 0-4 years have less than two types of playing things



Social protection

Loss of household incomes and livelihoods will probably increase further for poor children and their families, the dependency on others for their own survival. All children and their families directly impacted by COVID-19 should have financial access to goods and services essential for meeting their basic needs.

Families in the lowest quintile have a lower capacity to cope with and mitigate the impact of this crisis



* The lowest wealth quintile is the 20% of households with the lowest wealth index values. The index is calculated with information on availability of assets

221,000
children 0-17 years
are under national absolute poverty line

Source: population estimation using the Geostat poverty rates, April 2020

161,000
Children 0-17 years
receive Targeted Social Assistance

Source: SSA Administrative data, April 2020

334,600
children 0-17 years
live in households that receive
at least one retirement pension

122,300
live in households that
receive any other external
assistance program



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Child protection

All children and women at increased risk of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, due to COVID-19, should be protected through social and protection services in humanitarian and development contexts.

55,900

caregivers of children 1-14 years old, believe that physical punishment is needed to bring up, raise, or educate a child properly



457,400

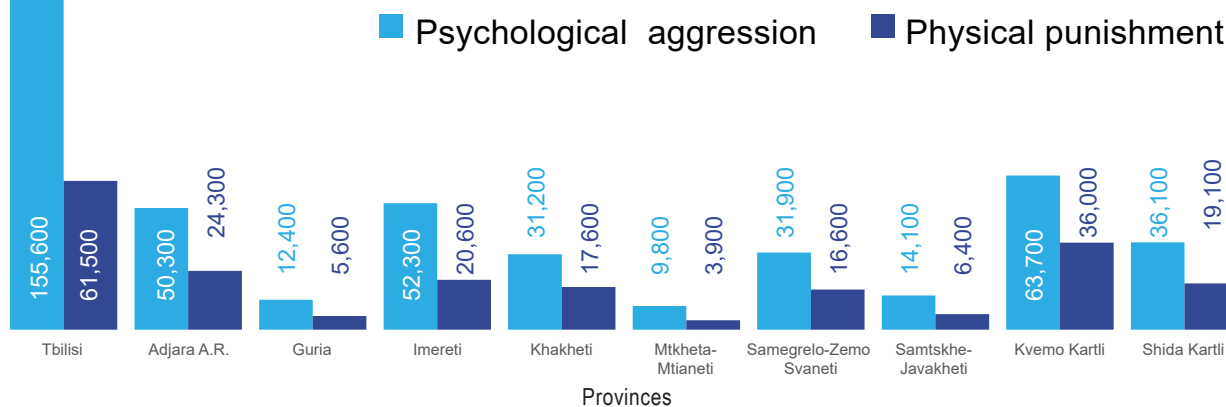
children 1-14 years disciplined with aggressive psychological measures



211,600

children 1-14 years suffered physical punishment

Children age 1-14 years who experienced violent disciplining



261 children left without parental care

Source: TransMonEE 2019 data base <http://transmonee.org/database/download/>

Children in alternative care face particular challenges. Kinship or foster carers – often grandparents and/or older adults – may need to temporarily step away from such duties, due to their health vulnerabilities.

Those who live in residential families are at risk of displacement due to closure of facilities without appropriate processes to ensure their safety and protection.

UNICEF Georgia & Europe and Central Asia Regional Office

Unless otherwise indicated, all the figures and charts are based on calculations that use information from the Georgia MICS 2018 Survey Findings Report (SFR) and the population data from 2019, TransMonEE database, both produced by Geostat. MICS data was collected in 2018 and is combined with the most recent population data from end 2019 to produce the estimates shown in this document. The interval estimates are not provided here for simplicity and communication purposes.

The estimates provided have been triangulated with other sources; this should continue being done when more recent information is available as the overall crisis situation evolves. The following tables have been used from the MICS 2018 SFR: page 2: SR.4.1, SR.11.1, SR.11.2; page 3: WS.2.1, SR.2.1; page 4: EQ.2.2, EQ.2.3, EQ.1.1, EQ.1.2; page 5: SR.9.2, LN.3.3, TC.10.1, TC.10.2; page 6: SR.2.3, EQ.2.7; page 7: PR.2.2, PR.2.1.

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