Pandemic Orphans

When we see pandemic-related statistics, they usually show us the number of cases, the trend in the number of cases, and the same statistics for Covid deaths. We may see vaccination rates in our part of the country and overall in the U.S., and for different countries around the world.

But one statistic that is seldom published is the impact the Covid pandemic has had on children of the people who were taken by the disease. A recent report by the Center for Disease Control and comparable organizations in other countries found that 142,637 children under age 18 in the United States experienced the definition of ‘orphanhood’ from the beginning of the pandemic until October of this year, due to the Coronavirus. That means these children either lost both parents, or they lost the custodial parent or grandparent caregiver who provided the child’s home and basic needs, including love, security and daily care.

Children of racial and ethnic minorities were disproportionately affected; even though their minorities, in aggregate, represent 39% of the total population, these minority children accounted for 65% of those who lost a primary caregiver due to the pandemic. One in every 753 White children experienced orphanhood or death of caregivers, compared to 1 out of every 612 Asian children, 1 of every 412 Hispanic children, 1 out of every 310 Black children and 1 out of every 168 American Indian children.

The most tragic part of this tale is that the U.S. was already experiencing an epidemic of un-cared-for children; there are an estimated 443,000 children in U.S. foster care today, more than 123,000 of whom are considered to be children hoping for adoption. Many were removed from their homes because their birth family subjected them to abuse, neglect and/or abandonment. On top of that, an estimated 1.5 million children are homeless in the United States, living on the streets.

Source:

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p1007-covid-19-orphaned-children.html>

<https://adoption.com/how-many-orphans-in-the-us/>