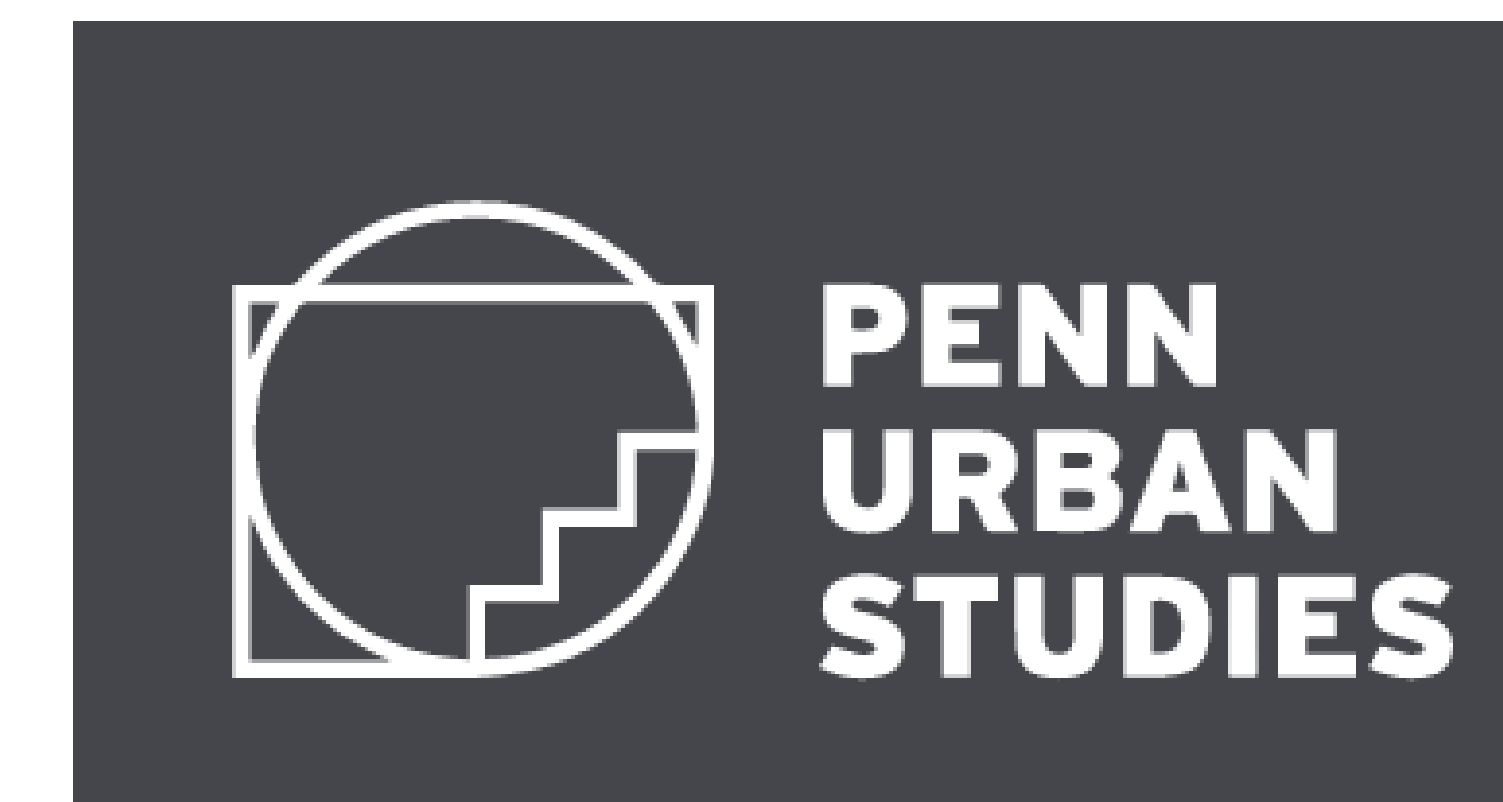


K-12 Family Networks During COVID-19



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Abstract

The COVID-19 quickly disrupted education. Parents had to take on greater responsibilities as their children attended school from home. Yet, the pandemic did not impact all families equally. This project sought to add to a better understanding of school parents' experience of the pandemic as well as how they drew on their social networks to support their children and themselves.

Results

Amara, an immigrant from North East Africa, detailed the challenges she and her family faced during the pandemic, and some of the welcome joys. Her daughter at first enjoyed being at home with family. Key struggles included:

- Adapting to new technology and software.
- Dealing with inconsistent internet connection.
- Keeping her children motivated, providing emotional support.
- Developing a routine.
- Managing her own classes and home responsibilities.

Methods

- Semi-structured interview with a stay-at-home mom of two elementary school children, aged eight and five.
- Interviewee was asked to reflect on her experience of the past years of schooling impacted by the pandemic.

Fall 19
Pre-pandemic.

Spring 20
Schools closed
March 27; remote
begins April 20.

Fall 20
Remote start,
opt-in hybrid.

Spring 21
Some schools
hybrid, A-B
schedule.

Fall 21
In person.

Spring 22
In person.

Background

- Learning deficits arose at the beginning of the pandemic, but leveled off once instruction resumed through remote learning.
- Isolating effects of remote learning may have been damped by use of virtual platforms and parental availability.
- Family engagement may look different across race and class, based on the resources available to each family.

“We have just two rooms, so it was hard to manage the space. I had to figure out a place that is quiet, tidy, and organized for her... We have a lot of people [in the house] sometimes, so it was hard to keep her focused the whole day.”

Implications

- Further research is needed to understand school communities and their impact on pandemic education.
- Teachers and administrators should consider greater adoption of and training for software that enables faster, low-pressure communication between teachers and parents.