

Women's work, housework, and childcare before and during COVID-19

The social distancing measures adopted to slow the spread of COVID-19 have placed a particular burden on families. Using survey data collected in April 2020 from a representative sample of Italian women, this column asks how working from home – combined with school closures – has affected the working arrangements, housework, and childcare provisions of couples in which both partners are employed. Most of the additional responsibilities have fallen to women, though childcare activities are shared more equally than housework.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world. Italy experienced the worst outbreak in Europe, especially northern Italy. At the beginning of March 2020, the Italian government imposed drastic measures to contain the growing epidemic. While these measures have largely stemmed the spread of the virus, they have also had a huge impact on labour market participation (Bertocchi 2020, Galasso 2020) and we expect them to have substantially affected housework and childcare...

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