

Danielle R. Flowers, MD

Pediatrician, and Physician in Charge, Mission Hills Clinic

Providing care for children during a pandemic hasn't been easy, especially when half your face is no longer visible to them as a result of wearing a mask.

"You can barely see your doctor's eyes behind all of the stuff we were wearing, so it was really hard to connect with the kids and make an already scary experience a comfortable one," said Dr. Danielle Flowers, a pediatrician at Kaiser Permanente's Mission Hills Clinic. "We've had to say things like, 'I'm smiling at you with my eyes,' and we have to do more with our voices and our body language to let them know that this is a safe environment and we're here to help them."

As a frontline pediatrician in the Southern California region, Dr. Flowers has witnessed first-hand some of the major difficulties facing children right now, including the loss of loved ones, transitioning to virtual schooling, and adjusting to new ways of socializing.

"As pediatricians, our job is to be the voice for all of these children who don't yet have a voice. It's our job to make sure that they stay as healthy as possible, which means getting their vaccines and physicals on time and talking to them to make sure their mental health is OK," Dr. Flowers said. "It's amplified now in this time. We're not on auto pilot in life right now - we're living this real moment where everybody has feelings, including our pediatric patients."

One of the bright spots of her job? Video visits with her patients. "It's been an opportunity to connect with families in a different way. You get people in their home environment and they're more comfortable."



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