

Parenting During the Pandemic

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'When Coronavirus Came to Town', written and illustrated by Dr. Angela Breidenstine, tells a hopeful and helpful story of the crisis for parents to share with their children. It's available to watch or download on the Louisiana Children's Museum website.

Looking for advice on how to talk to young children about COVID-19? Nearing the end of your rope coping with the stress of everyone in your household being at home all the time? Noticing emotional upsets in your kids?

There is a trusted source available to help: The [Louisiana Children’s Museum](#) and the [Tulane Institute for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health](#) have partnered to offer mental health tips and online discussions to support the well-being of families and children during the coronavirus crisis.

Julia Bland, a 1973 Newcomb College of Tulane University graduate and executive director of the museum, said, “At times like these, having people you can count on is critical. We have had a 20-year partnership with Tulane, and this is a very important chapter of our collaborative work.”

Early in the crisis, Bland brainstormed with Dr. Charles Zeanah, MD, professor of psychiatry at Tulane School of Medicine and director of the institute, and Dr. Angela Breidenstine, PhD, assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at Tulane School of Medicine and institute member, to develop “In Dialogue” sessions on the Tulane Zoom webinar platform. To date, nine sessions have focused on problems of concern to parents in an upended world. Led by institute faculty and residents, the sessions have been recorded and can be viewed through the museum’s [YouTube channel](#).

Also, on the museum’s website is a wealth of practical, reassuring advice in [“Building Resilience: Parenting During a Pandemic.”](#)

Breidenstine co-wrote the detailed, helpful document along with medical resident Dr. Silai Mirzoy, who is training in pediatrics, general psychiatry, and child & adolescent psychiatry.

Among the advice offered is that it’s as important to listen to children as it is to talk to them.

Breidenstine also picked a poem, “Compassion,” to include in the mental health tips. The poem, she said, is “a moving reminder of the importance of holding compassion for ourselves and each other.”

“Compassion”

By Miller Williams

*“Have compassion for everyone you meet,
even if they don’t want it. What seems conceit,
bad manners, or cynicism is always a sign
of things no ears have heard, no eyes have seen.”*

You do not know what wars are going on down there where the spirit meets the bone.”

“It seemed especially relevant right now given the multiple stressors everyone is experiencing,” Breidenstine said.

Breidenstine has also written an illustrated children’s book, *When Coronavirus Came to Town*, in English and Spanish (translated by Dr. Elizabeth Allain, a Tulane School of Medicine postdoctoral fellow in psychology). It is [downloadable](#) from the museum website.

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