The World On Pause: A Children's Book About Living During a Pandemic

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Introduction
The COVID-19 pandemic, which was declared in March 2020, has significantly changed the way we live as social beings. In December 2019, the virus was first identified in Wuhan, China. Since then, over 60 million have been infected and over 1.3 million have died from the notorious coronavirus. We are experiencing a public health crisis. The last pandemic occurred in 1918, many years before most of us were born. Since the pandemic is a health crisis, most generations have never experienced, adults and children alike are learning to cope simultaneously. Because children are developing physically, psychologically, socially, and emotionally, their experiences set the foundation for their physical and mental health as an adult. It is crucial that we think about the impact that this pandemic may have on the development of children.

Related Research
- During childhood, there is rapid growth in the frontal lobes.
- Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development says that children think and understand primarily through social interaction.
- Piaget’s preoperational stage is from ages 2-7. Children represent the world with words, images, and drawings.
- In a book, the settings and scenarios should be realistic or relatable to make it easier for children to understand and apply the lessons to real life.
- Children learn best through interactive activities.
- Parents are still children’s most important influence.

Goal of the Project
I decided to write a children’s book as a public health effort to educate children on the global pandemic and encourage them to make healthy decisions. The book aims to explain the concept of a pandemic, teach ways to prevent becoming ill, and provide information on how to manage emotions. I hope my book helps children and parents cope with their stress.

Discussion
This book brings light to the worldwide health crisis in an age appropriate way. Children can learn or be reminded of ways to stay physically and emotionally healthy and supported. Childhood can have an enormous impact on the future wellbeing of a person. If a child learns healthy coping strategies, this could help prevent the development of future mental health issues. The main character in the story, Kenny, is biracial in order to represent the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on racial and ethnic minorities. The story also brings attention to the hard work and sacrifice of healthcare workers. They have been working on the front-lines of the pandemic for the health of the community.

Results
My book is narrated through the perspective of the main character Kenny. It includes interactive portions where the reader can personally engage. Kenny shares how his life has been different during the pandemic. He explains that this virus has had a worldwide impact. In order to stay healthy, Kenny has been staying at home in quarantine. He makes sure to wear a mask every time he leaves the house and frequently washes his hands. Staying at home hasn’t been easy for Kenny. He has been emotionally impacted and learns how to cope with his stress through breathing techniques and talking with his parents. The main character learns that it is okay to feel different emotions and he shares how he has been staying busy while being home. The story ends with Kenny acting in a more positive way. He realizes that by staying home, he is helping others stay healthy.

Further Information
Link to storybook: https://www.storyjuicer.com/book/read/94145576

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