

**Covid Kids:
Joy's Story of Coping in a Difficult Time**

By Nanci Monaco, PhD and Mark Schachter, PhD

Illustrated by: Chiarra Corradetti

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Covid Kids: Joy's Story of Coping in a Difficult Time

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Illustrated by Chiarra Corradetti from Appignano del Tronto (AP), ITALY. Chiarra has been a freelance artist since 2018, drawing since childhood. Drawing helped her to concentrate and enjoy school. Chiarra has recently been focusing on children's illustrations. Communicating with her during the pandemic has been very interesting. Contact information:

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About the Authors

Dr. Nanci Monaco graduated from Emma Willard and Union College, with a BS in Psychology. She earned her PhD in Counseling and Educational Psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She currently teaches child development at SUNY Buffalo State, as an Associate Professor, in the School of Education. She has taught in the State University of New York system since 1984. She has been a licensed psychologist in private practice for 21 years. Dr. Monaco is the SUNY Buffalo State DASA Anti-Bullying Training Coordinator, a New York State Child Abuse and Neglect Training Provider, and a 2012 Anne Frank Fellow, conducting research on resiliency after trauma through the Buffalo State Resilience Project. Since 9/11, she has been actively involved in researching psychological trauma following disasters, assisting families displaced by tornados, hurricanes, and wild fires. She was named Mental Health Professional of the Year by the Interfaith Coalition of Churches and Temples for her work following Hurricane Katrina. She is a Past President of the Psychological Association of Western New York, winner of the New York State Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching (1990), and a recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching (2008). Dr. Monaco received a SUNY Conversations in the Disciplines Grant to study outcomes for first responders after 9/11. She served as a psychologist on a law guardian panel in New York and was previously a psychologist on a Child Protection Team in Orlando. She has assisted adult victims of child sexual abuse by clergy in preparing claims under the New York State Child Victims Act of 2019. She has presented with 27 undergraduate students and multiple graduate students at numerous state, national, and international conferences focusing on trauma and resilience. Dr. Monaco can be contacted at monaconm@buffalostate.edu.

Dr. Mark Schachter earned his PhD in Psychology from The Ohio State University in 1976, where he was a University Fellow. Prior to that, he earned a BS in Psychology with honors from Brooklyn College. He specialized in Developmental Disabilities and Neuropsychology. Dr. Schachter was the Chief Psychologist at Northwestern Regional Center in Thunder Bay, Ontario, a residential treatment facility for children and adults with intellectual disabilities and autism. He then became Chief Psychologist at the Robert Warner Children's Rehabilitation Center of Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo. His next position was Chief Neuropsychologist at Buffalo General Hospital. He has held academic appointments in the Departments of Pediatrics and Neurology at the University at Buffalo School of Medicine. Current interests include the role of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Learning Disorders and family dysfunction, lead poisoning, and mild traumatic brain injuries. He has served as a forensic expert for decades regarding child custody, termination of parental rights, damages due to lead exposure, damages due to traumatic brain injuries, and competency to stand trial.

Dedicated to all of the children and parents who have had their lives upended by Covid-19 and have strived to become more resilient, and to our children, Evan and Ashley.

Condolences to Paige, who recently lost her grandmother to Covid-19 and who has endured more hardship than any 7 year-old should.

Special thanks to our friend Joy, who has provided great support through these most trying times, and for graciously allowing us to name our main character after her.

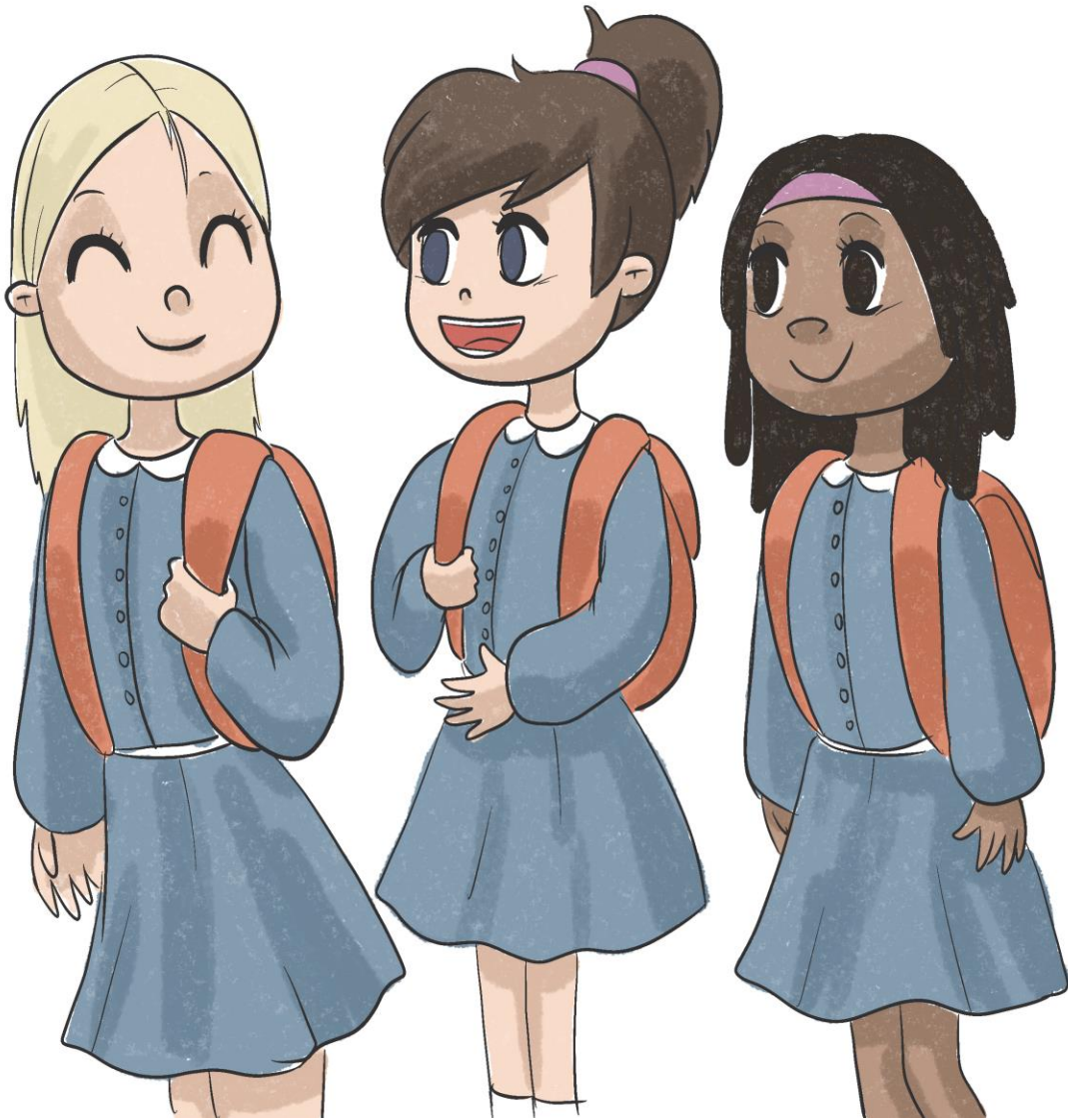
Thank you to Evan and JP for helping us with the marketing aspects of this project.

Thank you to my students, Christine, Nora, Katie, Elise, Kat, and Amy for your contributions to the SUNY Buffalo State Resilience Project.

Thanks to Connie, Al, Nan, Frieda, Bill, and Diane, who are constantly with us, inspiring us to do our best work and to Marv, Margaret, Evan, and Andy for encouragement and humor when times are challenging.



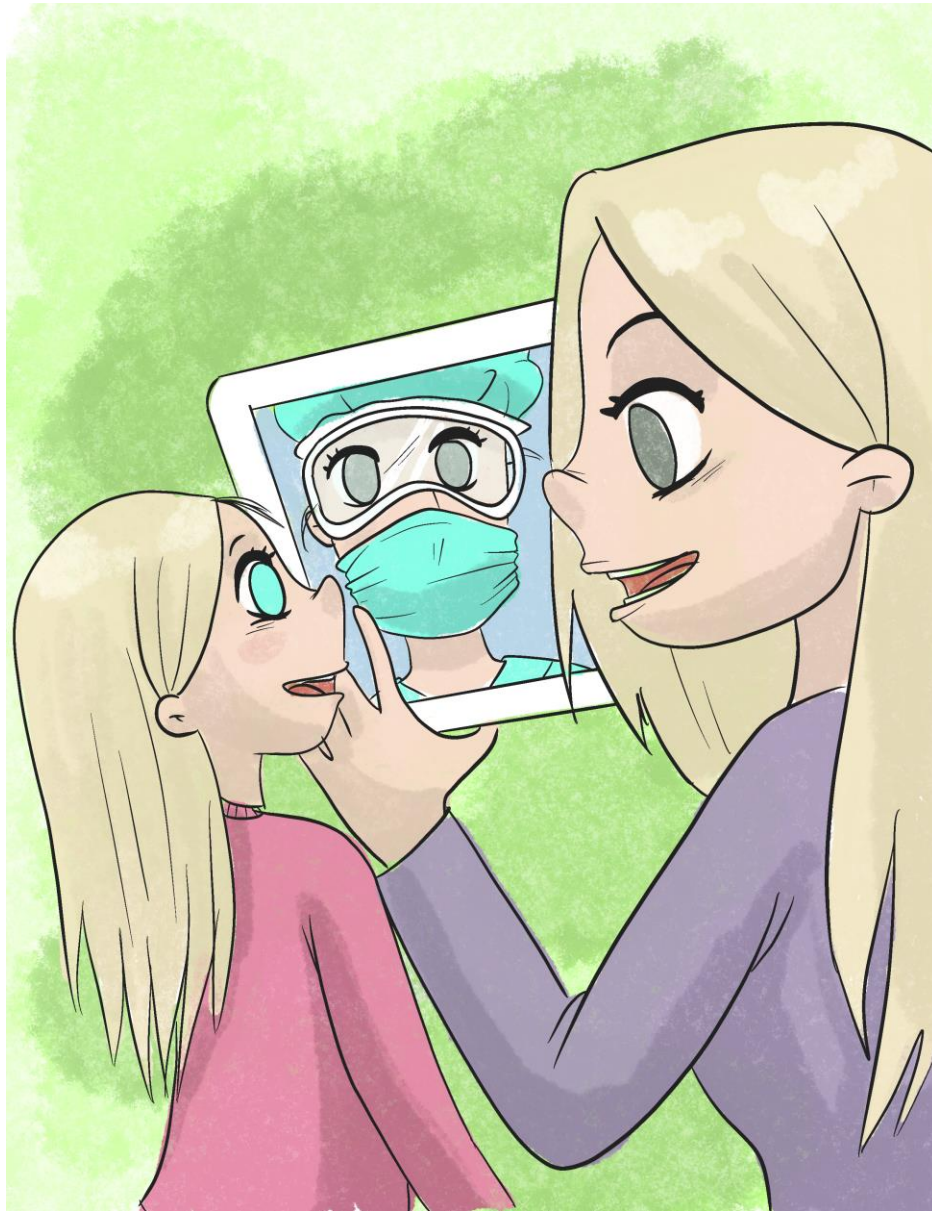
Joy is very worried about what is happening. It must be a terrible thing because even her mom cried when she came home from work the other day.



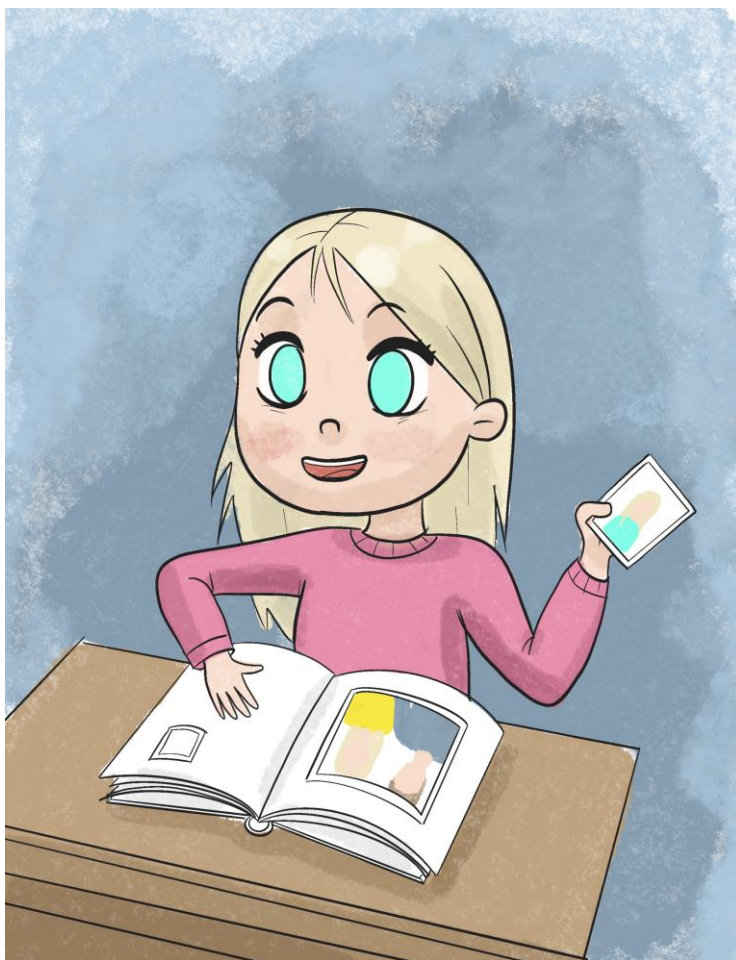
Joy and her classmates can no longer go to school. She misses them and her teacher. She worries about her class pet, a rabbit named Randall. She misses reading stories at school and feeding Randall. She loved being the line leader.

Her mom told her that they must all stay at home because they could get very sick with something like the flu if they go out. Joy doesn't really understand this because they have never stayed home like this for such a long time. Joy does some online work with her dad each morning while her mom is at work as a nurse. She and her brother eat lunch with her dad every day and walk her dog Max together. Joy sees her teacher online each day, but not everyone in her class.



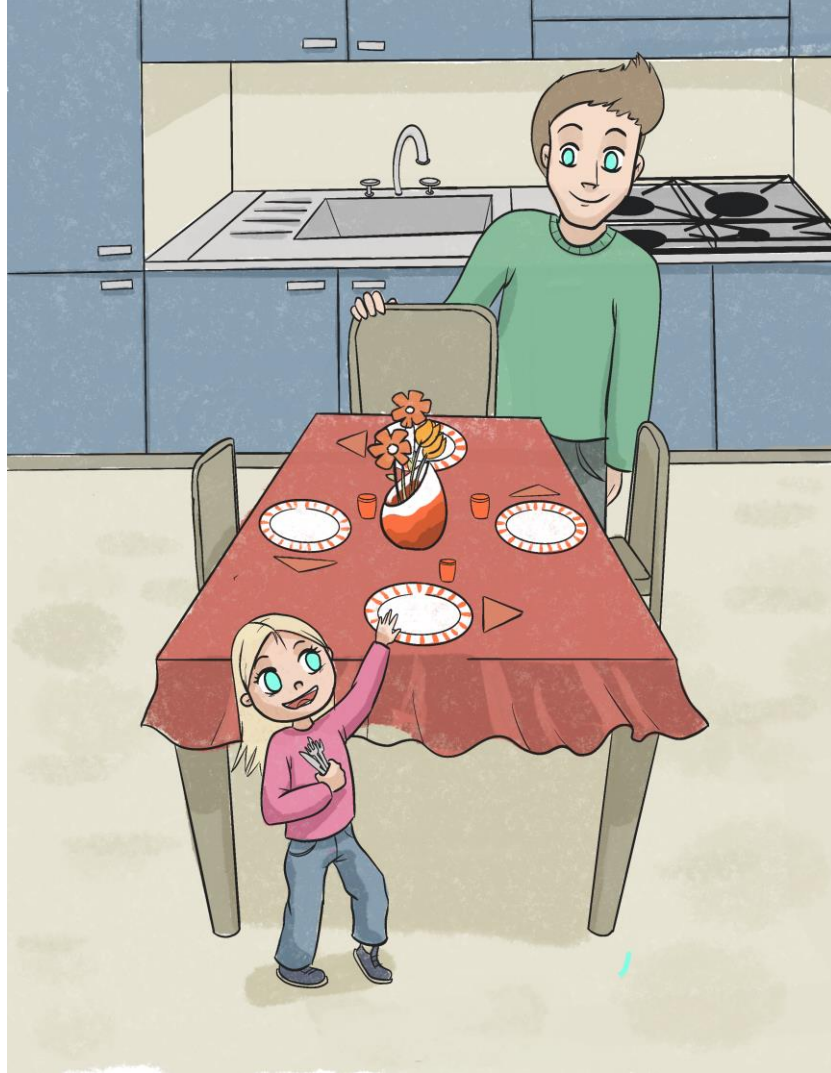


At first, Joy was not too scared. She did worry about her mom getting sick, but was so proud that her mom was helping sick people. Her mom showed her pictures of how she helps people at the hospital and the funny -looking mask and gown she wears to keep "germs" from getting on her and making her sick too. The "germs" must be little because they are not in the pictures her mom showed her. Mom calls the "germs" a virus.



Her mom was crying when she was talking to Joy's grandmother. She explained to Joy that older people can get very sick from this kind of “flu” so they have to stay home. No one else can visit them for now. Joy wonders why she can't go to her grandparents' house because she is not sick. She doesn't want them to be lonely or forget about her. Her mother tells her that she too is very sad about not visiting, but they can draw pictures to send to her grandparents and talk to them on the phone.

Joy asks her mom if they can visit grandma on her birthday. Her mom is not sure because her grandma's birthday is soon. She tells Joy that they can make a little book of family photos for her grandmother's birthday present. She will be so happy when she sees all the good times they shared together!



Her father misses his job as a cook in a restaurant. He seems sad. Sometimes, he even seems angry when Joy asks him a lot of questions about when everything will be open again. Even though Joy's dad is a chef, he does not usually cook for the family because he is at work during dinnertime. Now, he is at home and cooks for them every day. He told Joy that restaurants do many things besides cooking good food. Food is put on beautiful plates, with pretty napkins, and little pieces of fruit or lettuce for decoration. Sometimes, restaurants play music and put great smelling flowers on the tables. Joy never knew all of this! Her father asks her to make their lunch table very beautiful today, like they are eating in a restaurant. What fun!



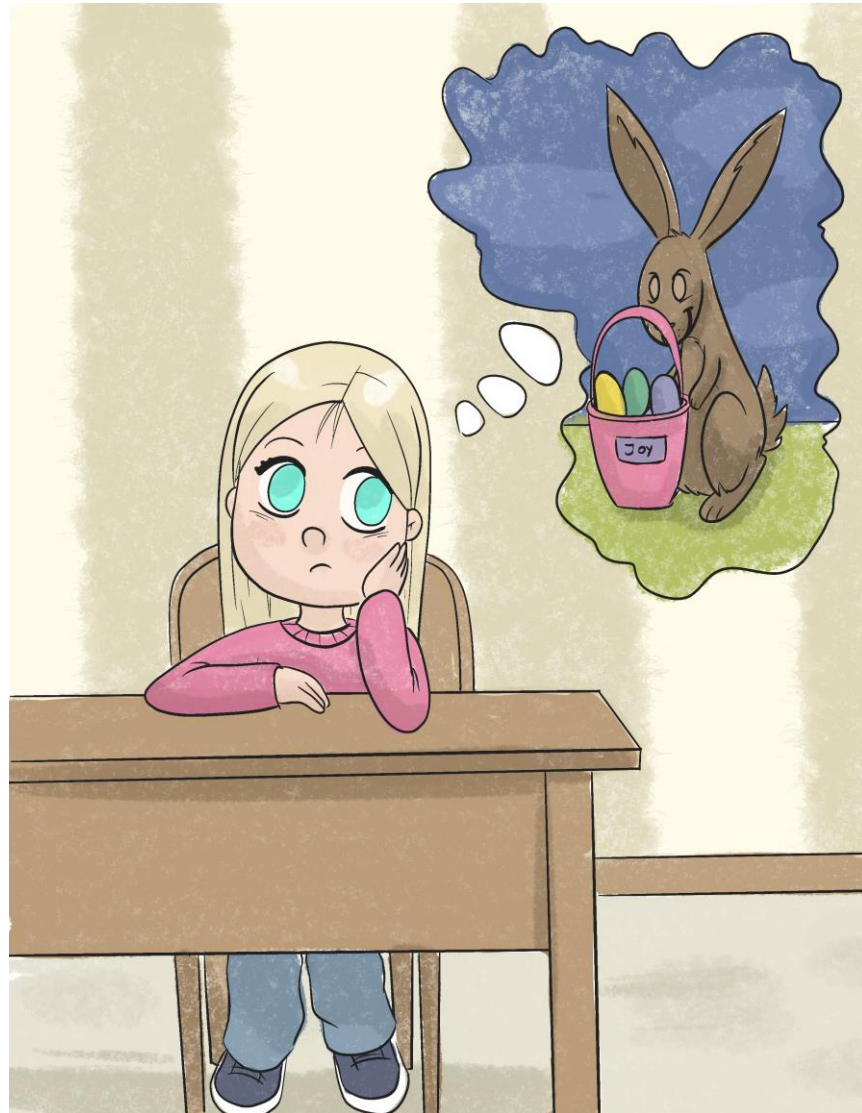
Joy loved going to the grocery store and picking out her favorite cereal. She doesn't go anymore. She misses playing in the park with friends. The gas station on their street is open, but her dad's restaurant is closed. She is not sure what is open or closed, or why they can't get haircuts.



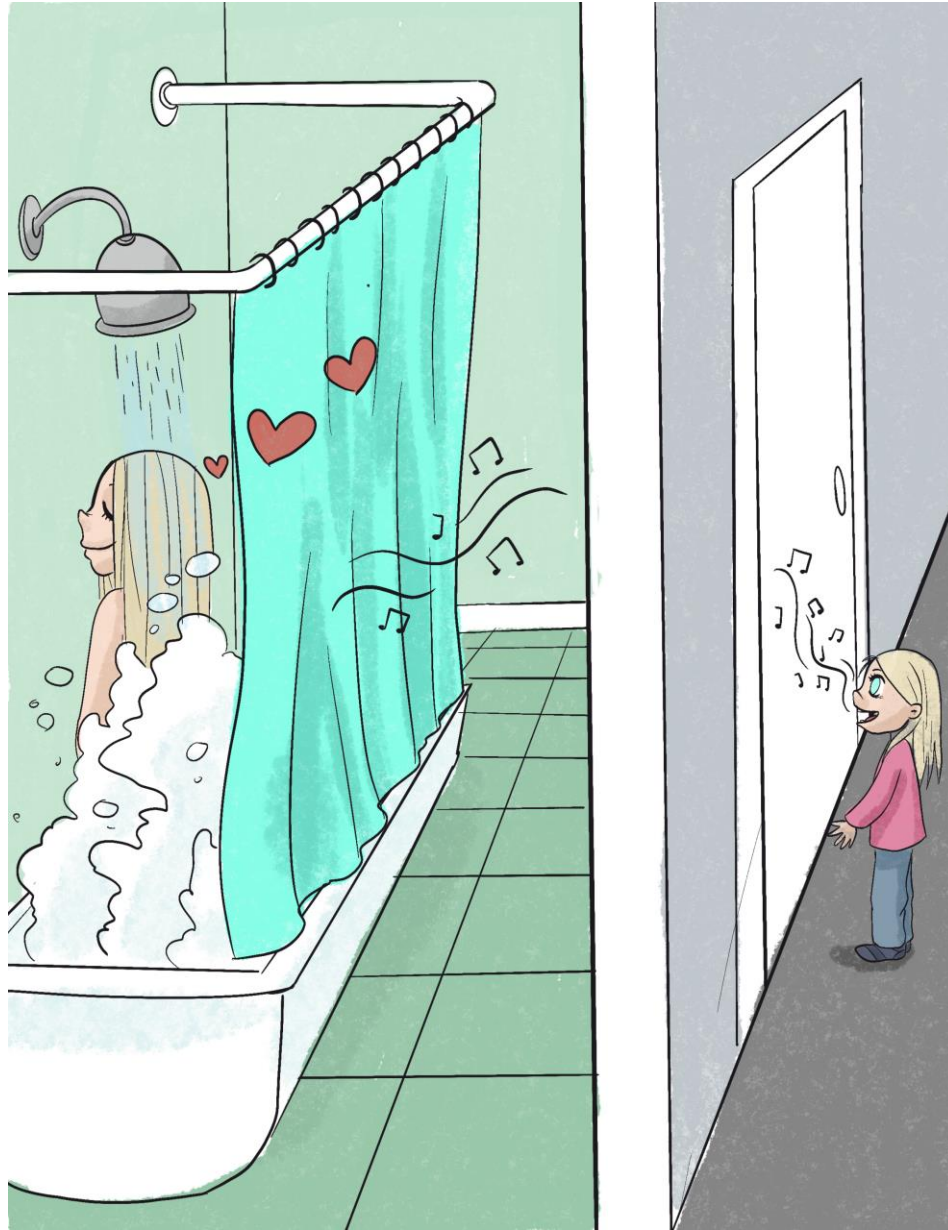
Joy's older brother watches a lot of TV. He is trying to make a mask that he saw on TV with rubber bands and a bandanna. Joy asks if Max her dog needs a mask too. Her brother laughs at her, saying that dogs can't get this virus. Joy's friend told her that they have to use wipes to clean off the counters, dinner table, and even the grocery packages. Joy wonders if this is true. She doesn't see anything dirty when she looks there.



Joy's mother told her how important it is to wash her hands so she doesn't get sick. Her mom taught her a special way of doing this so that she gets in between all of her fingers. Joy does this while singing the Happy Birthday song twice so she knows how long to wash. Sometimes, she washes them when her hands don't even seem dirty! Her mom said not to touch her eyes, nose, or mouth. How will she brush her teeth?



Sometimes Joy stops asking a lot of questions and just snuggles up on the couch with Max. Joy's dad said that they don't have as much money as they did when he had a job. She wonders if they have enough money for food, toys, and clothes. She didn't ask her dad, but she worries about this. She also wondered if the Easter Bunny would be able to come into her house to leave her candy and hide the Easter eggs. She usually reminds him where she lives when she sees him at the mall. He did come! Hurray!



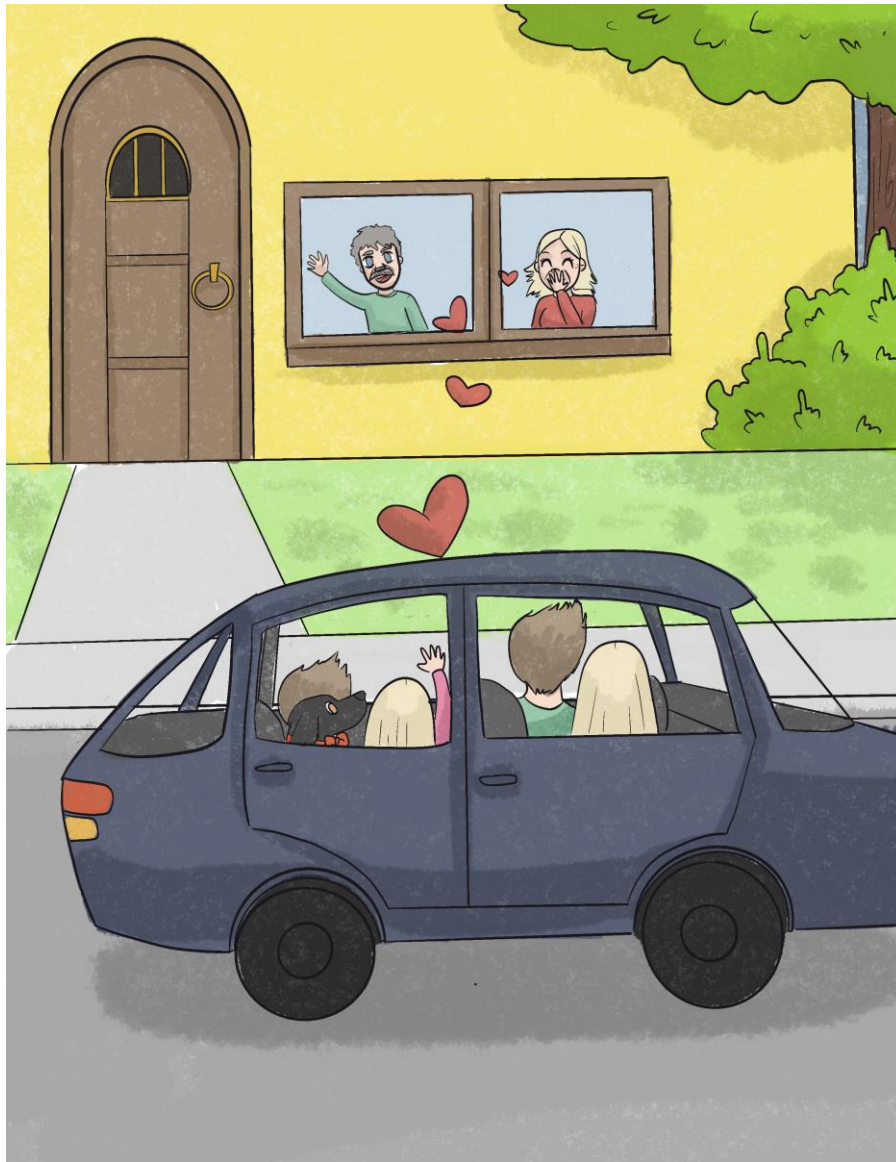
Joy's neighbor told her that her mom is a hero for taking care of sick people. Joy is so proud, but wishes that her mom was home more with her. When she gets home, she can't even hug Joy until she takes a shower! That feels strange to Joy. Her mom tells her to wait outside the bathroom door and sing her a song while she waits. What a great idea!



Joy, her mother, father, and brother have a family meeting to talk about the virus one night. Her parents tell her that many people have lost their jobs and their families need food. Her family is lucky because her mom has a job. Her family thinks about how they can help. They go into their kitchen and look for cans and jars to donate to a food pantry. She is happy to work on this project with her brother. She will give peanut butter!

Joy wants to buy a present for her mom for working so hard, but she doesn't have any money. Joy decides to make her a special treat... Peanut butter and jelly on crackers!

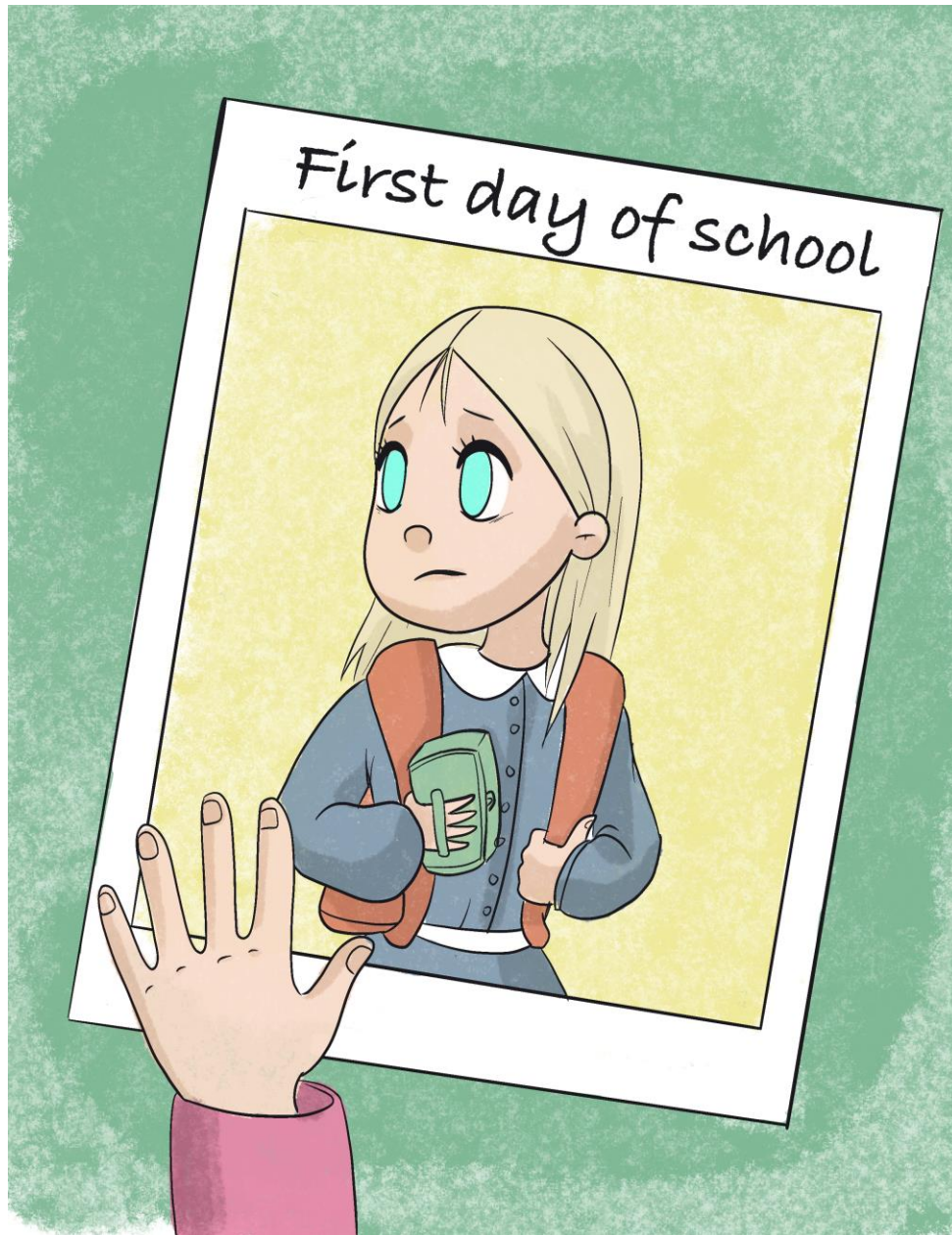




They also think about when they might be able to visit grandma and grandpa. Joy's mom suggests that she and her brother Evan make cards. After dinner, they will drive to her grandparents' house and stand by the huge front window of the house. Her grandparents will open the drapes and see the grandchildren, parents, Max, and the beautiful cards they made. What a wonderful idea! They call her grandparents and tell them when to look outside. Lots of cheers and blown kisses make everyone happy. Max even wears his bowtie!



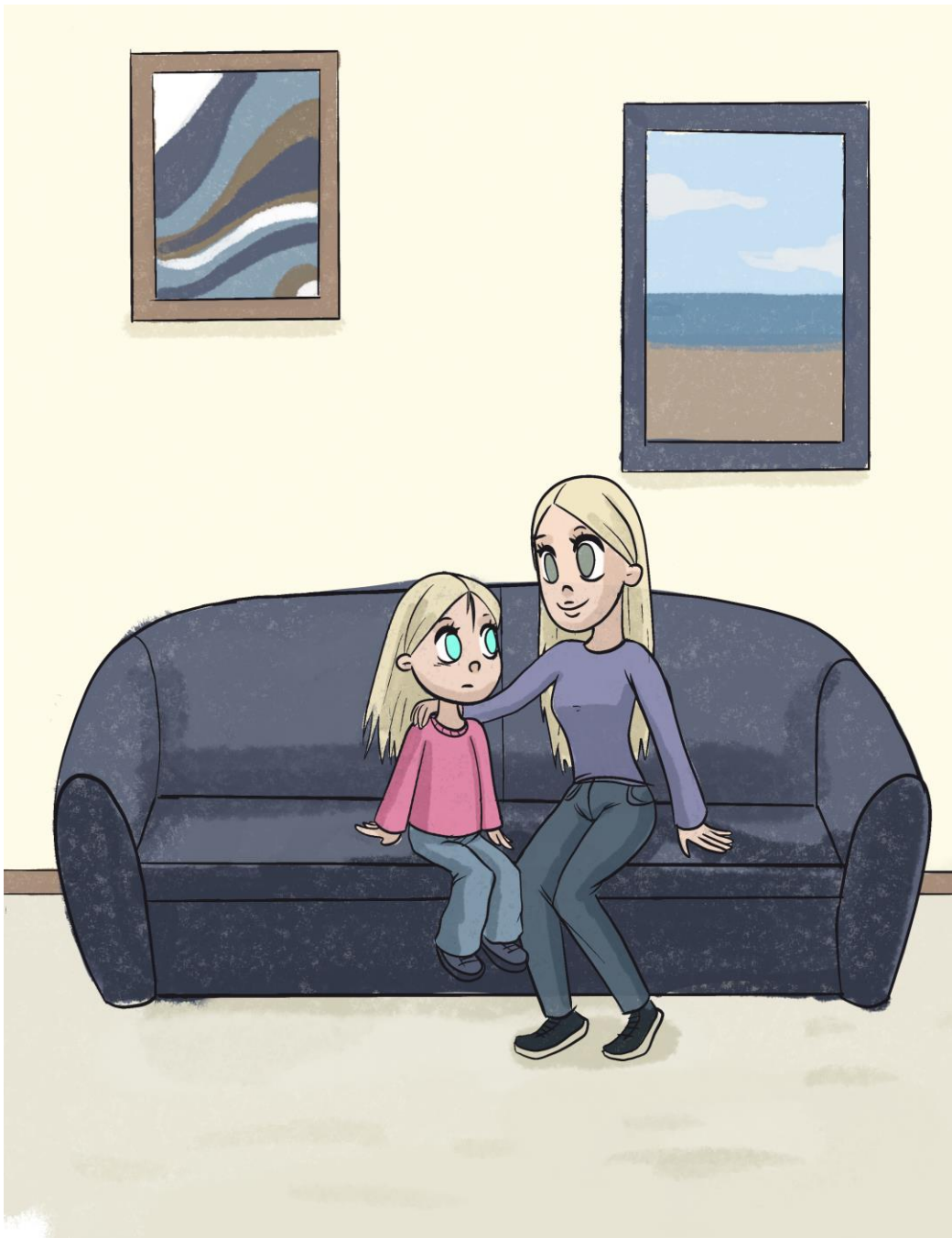
Today, Joy and her mom will make the family photo book for her grandma's birthday present. Joy and her mom look at lots of old photos. Joy sees her brother with a cast on after he broke his leg. He was so sad because he couldn't play sports. Joy, her parents, and all of their friends drew beautiful pictures on his cast, making Evan feel better. They also made a calendar so they could count how many more days until his cast was taken off and his leg was better!



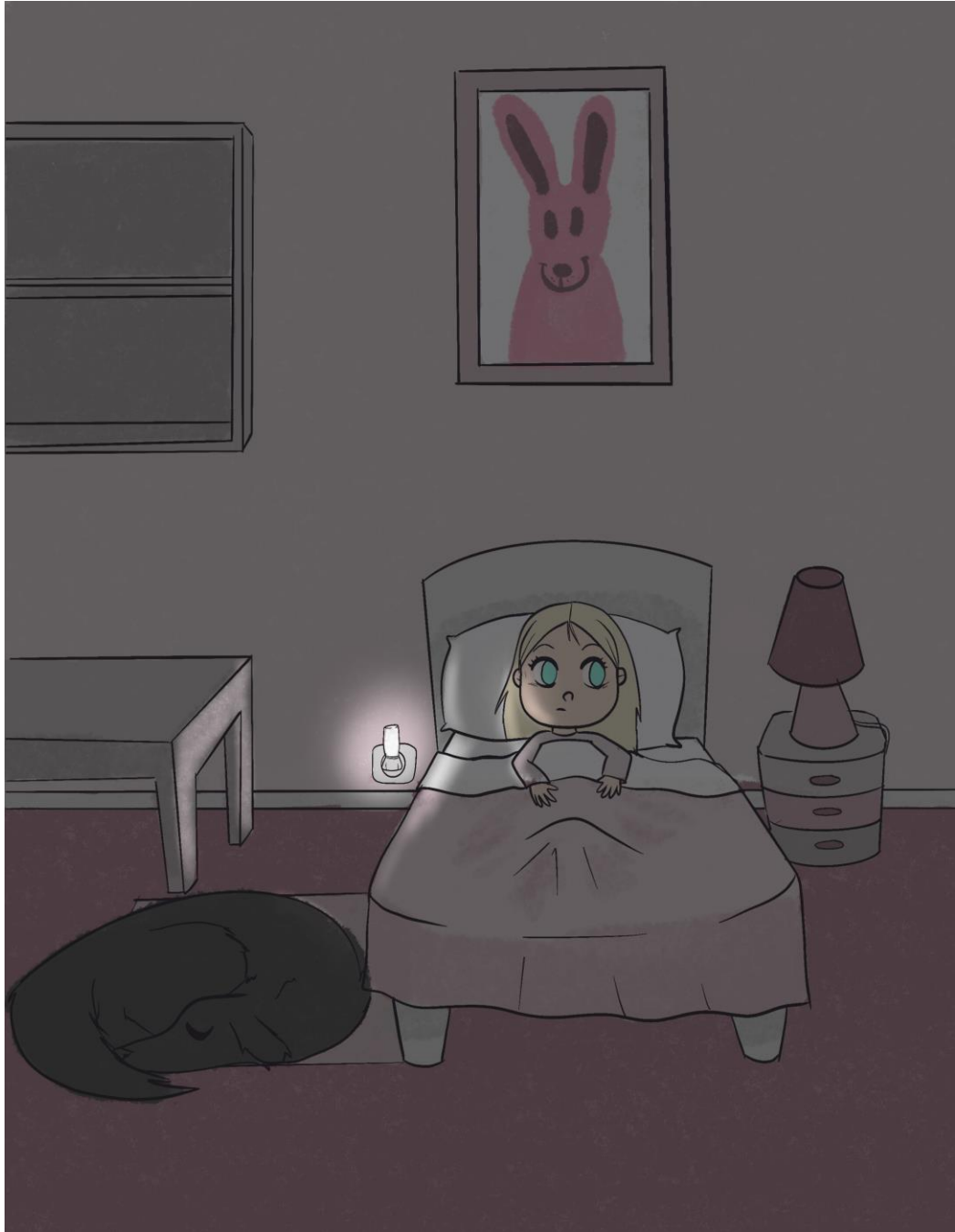
Next, Joy saw a photo of herself on her first day of school. She was so scared to go to school alone. She and her mom talked about how to make friends, how to find a friend to invite over to her house to play, and how to find a neighborhood friend to sit next to her on the bus. Joy even brought an extra cookie in her lunchbox to give to a new friend!

Joy saw another picture of her mom at college when she was studying to be a nurse. Joy and her brother used to put little pictures they drew into her backpack when she went to school to take her tests. Good luck mom! You can do it! Her brother wrote the messages; Joy drew the pictures. Grandma will love seeing all of these old pictures from the family!





Joy asks her mom when things will go back to normal. Her mom is not sure. Her mom tells her that they are so lucky because they are not sick and they have each other. (Sometimes Joy does not feel lucky to have her brother. He often teases her, but she doesn't say anything to her mom.)



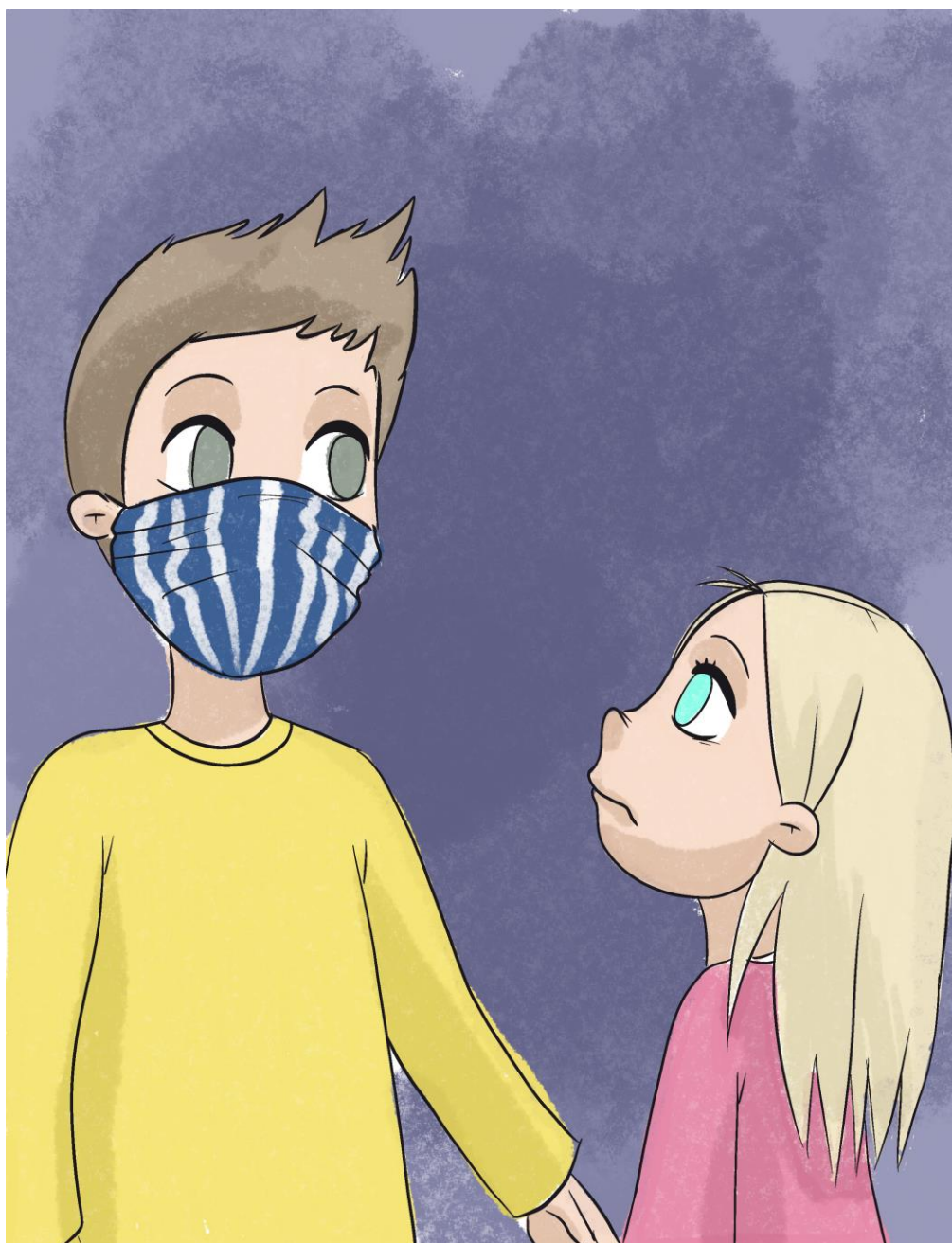
Her mom tells her that she was named Joy because she brought so much love and joy to the family the day she was born! That night, Joy feels a bit better knowing that her family loves her. She keeps her nightlight on just in case Max is worried.....



The next day is wonderful! Joy's teacher visits her in the driveway with a sign that says how much she misses her. Randall the rabbit is in the front seat. She tells Joy that she can have a "virtual lunch" with her tomorrow, over the Internet. They plan to eat together at noon and watch each other on the computer.



Joy doesn't even like it when they take walks on her street. It is too quiet and nobody is out playing. Joy's friend's mother calls them and asks them to decorate their front window with stuffed animals. All of the families on Joy's Street decide to decorate their front windows with stuffed bears, dogs, and even monkeys. Now when they go out for a walk, they have something fun to look at!



Joy's brother tries on the mask he made to wear outside to keep safe from the virus. He looks silly and scary. She is not sure about the masks. Her mom told her that they have to walk far away from other people when outside. Joy misses hugging her friends and running up to neighbors if she sees them outside.



Joy's brother is getting wild in the house. He is jumping over furniture and trying to play football inside. Her father is getting angry because he broke a vase in the living room. Her father decides that they will have a family game night tonight when her mom gets home. That will be fun! Tomorrow, her father will help them make the living room into a camp ground with tents made out of blankets after they finish their schoolwork.



Joy's mom comes home from work very late and tired. She seems sad. Joy thinks about all of the wonderful family photos she looked at with her mom. She thinks about all of the ways her family helped each other feel better when they were sad. Joy knows just what to do! She tells her mom that after she showers tonight, she will rub her feet with her best lotion. It smells like roses. She will pour her mom a lemonade in a beautiful glass like they have in restaurants. Joy is so good at knowing what to do!



Joy is not sure about all of the changes in her life. Her mom tells her that hundreds of doctors are working to cure the virus so people will not get sick any more. She does feel very lucky that she can tell her parents about her worries and ask them questions. Joy remembers how good her family is at making each other feel better when they are worried! She can also talk to Max. He is a good listener. Joy knows that her teacher cares about her because she came to see her and works with her daily on the Internet. Joy would love to see a drawing of what you are doing to stay safe and to keep from getting sad during Covid-19. After you draw your picture, your parent can scan it and send it to: monaconm@buffalostate.edu. Good Luck!!

Notes for Parents

Why read Covid Kids: Joy's Story of Coping in a Difficult Time with your child?

When we ask young children how they are feeling, it is often difficult for them to access their true emotions in words. They may not have the insight to answer accurately. When young children read someone else's story, it is easier for them to compare that story to their own circumstances. Reading a story helps children to relate to the various emotions and actions described in the book and to express what they are feeling. Simply asking "Are you all right?" or "Do you have any questions?" doesn't result in children having meaningful discussions about emotions because the questions are too open-ended. Talking about another person's situation allows children to "distance their anxiety." By talking about others, it feels less scary. Then, they can move to talking about themselves.

Intent of the book: This book is intended for young children, their parents, and teachers with the goal of exploring together fears about Covid-19, sadness and anger about disruption of routines, worry about social isolation, confusion about best coping strategies, stress regarding changes in family roles, and fear of family illness. It is not a prescription or blueprint for successful coping, but is one child's story about what happened as her family tried to cope with Covid-19 and the ramifications in her family. We hope that it will promote listening and reflection on the many wonderful activities that children and families are doing to strengthen their resilience - the ability to bounce back from a crisis.

Recognizing different types of families and challenges: Joy's family is a two-parent, suburban family with a large supportive network including grandparents and friends. While one parent has lost a job, the family still has a regular source of income. Neither child in the family has special needs. This book is a reflection of issues raised by the suburban, high socioeconomic clientele in our practice in Western New York—both by parents and children. Please stress with your child the ways in which Joy's neighborhood, family constellation, and circumstances are different from those of your family.

Communities of color, Hasidic Jewish communities, and rural communities, for example, have different Covid-19 challenges. Communities of color typically have residents with higher rates of diabetes, COPD, obesity, poor access to affordable healthcare, etc., known to place them at higher risk of Covid-19 and poorer outcomes. While these issues are not related to genetic predispositions, they are linked to poverty, lower rates of Covid-19 testing, food insecurity, and the inability to work from home. All of these are associated with poorer outcomes. Rural communities have seen recent closures of many of their hospitals and often have limited Internet access. Native American communities, homeless individuals, those with mental health challenges, and many other populations have unique obstacles when responding to the pandemic. Stressing to middle school aged children or older children how diverse communities are affected helps them to

better understand their neighboring communities, other states, and other parts of the world. It also helps to develop empathy.

The role of religion/spirituality in coping: Covid (19) Kids does not directly address the role of religion and/or spirituality in facing the current pandemic. Stress with your child how religion or spirituality is important in your family, if it is, in promoting strength and hope through these difficult times.

Becoming a good listener and providing reassurance: This book is intended, in part, to help parents become better listeners. Children's concerns may sometimes be illogical. I sometimes tell my college students that when children are scared or traumatized, it is as if "Pandora's box" is opened, setting free a whole host of additional fears such as fear of separation, of sleeping alone, of parental death, etc. Regressive behavior is also common. Children often go backwards developmentally speaking, using baby talk, becoming clingy, needing constant reassurance, having bad dreams, and having toileting accidents when anxious. This is normal and typically becomes less of a problem as children are comforted and reassured.

Providing hope: The mother in the book is emotional given what she is seeing at the hospital every day as a nurse dealing with Covid-19. She briefly shows emotion in front of her child, but she limits focusing on her own distress and helps her child to feel better. She shows her pictures of her protective gear to prevent her from getting sick. She also tells Joy about the many doctors working on curing the virus so she doesn't feel hopeless, or that her life will be disrupted forever. When worried about her separation from her grandparents, she gives Joy suggestions on how to stay emotionally connected to them. Showing too much emotionality in front of young children is a sign that everything is hopeless and scary. If the adults, especially our primary caregivers, are too emotional, children become extremely worried. If the helpers can't help, things are desperate. Limiting watching TV news in front of children is also recommended; there are many scary images of body bags, funerals, adults crying, and charts of death rates which are overwhelming - even for adults! While it is okay to tell your child that you do not know something, you want to be sure that you do not leave everything too open-ended. Without a timeframe for a return to normal life, it feels overwhelming. Discuss timeframes regarding back to school, return of shopping, etc., even if these have to be revised.

Understanding how young children think: Young children have trouble with commands such as "wash your hands longer" or "more often" or "don't touch your face." This likely seems unnecessary to them; these areas often don't look or feel dirty or sticky. The portion of the book where Joy sings the Happy Birthday song twice in order to know how long to wash her hands helps to give her a concrete way to know how long to wash. Young children are "intuitive" - they rely on their "gut responses." Their first response or thought is likely, "my hands are not dirty." Playing a game such as "I caught you touching your face" with parents can add some humor while

trying to stop this act. It reminds us of how hard breaking this habit actually is! Young children frequently think magically. A child may say, "I will shoot all the germs with my water gun, so nobody will be sick anymore." This is perfectly normal and gives them a sense of control; no need to correct such statements.

Routine is so important for young children: Routine is predictable and makes children feel safe. Without routine, they are more likely to be stressed, bored, or misbehave. Even at home, establishing a routine as much as possible is essential. The routine can involve a certain time for reading, other schoolwork, time outside, eating, watching a video, or engaging in art or music projects. Maintaining regular times to go to bed and to awaken in the morning is important. Rested children argue less, are more patient, and resist illness better.

Relax our bodies and our minds: Art, music, physical activities, an evening story time, or a warm bath can help children relax and reduce anxiety. Anxiety is the most difficult emotion for young children to identify or recognize. Anxiety that is not managed often results in hyperactivity or impulsive behavior (acting quickly without thinking about the consequences). Helping children to relax and talk about their worries and concerns, and how these can be reduced, will lead to a much happier household, especially while many of us are crowded into small spaces, without a lot of room to get away from annoyances, with little personal space. Some families actually report feeling more relaxed now than they were when juggling school, parents' jobs, lessons, and sports before the pandemic. Finding the right balance for your family between scheduled and flexible time is important.

The importance of chores: The act of feeding pets, setting the table, collecting laundry to wash, or making the bed gives children a sense that all is normal at a time when so much feels abnormal. It often takes longer when children perform these tasks and they may not be done as well as they would be if an adult did them. The results don't have to be perfect for these activities to help children.

Changes to holiday celebrations: Children will have difficulty celebrating holidays in their traditional ways during a crisis like this. Joy worried about the Easter Bunny finding her. Some children are used to large family celebrations for holidays. Many families celebrate religious holidays by attending a church, synagogue, or mosque. As families have to socially distance from each other, this disruption of usual practice may be of concern to some children and families who are missing the connections. Sending celebration photos to other family members or holding virtual celebrations over the Internet often helps. Allowing children to help create new ways of celebrating and new rituals during this temporary disruption helps to empower them. It may, however, be confusing. One young child asked, "If I don't have a birthday party, will I still be six?"

Balance the negative with positive news: Regularly show your children happy photos about how the "helpers" are doing a great job! There are hundreds of photos, YouTube videos, and news stories about individuals and companies ordering pizzas for medical staff, having parades to honor first responders, cities singing songs for hospital workers and clinic staff, and buildings lit up with hopeful signs such as hearts. There are videos about children who made masks to donate, raised money for first responders, made virtual cards for healthcare workers, and cheered for workers who fulfill our grocery and online orders. There are photos of empty cages after all of the dogs up for adoption found families and left shelters. Stress that even young children can contribute in meaningful ways. It is important to prompt your children to do something to acknowledge the helpers. There are even projects for "virtual volunteers." Doing this may also develop a lifelong habit of children giving back to their community.

Take your own "emotional temperature" as a parent: Know when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed by financial losses, rambunctious children in enclosed spaces, taking care of your children for more hours than is typical, not having a break from caregiving, not having regular contact with other adults, or not having time for your own personal hobbies or exercise routine. Many parents are also facing the additional stress of worrying more about their children and their aging parents, who are at a higher risk for contracting Covid-19. They may be alone or in a nursing home. Being aware of our stress and anxiety levels as parents and having a plan to manage stress can prevent us from overreacting to our children or passing along our anxiety to them. Just like the virus spreads, so does our anxiety and irritability! Try not to argue with your partner in front of the children. They may worry about the stability of the family in addition to Covid-19. Many children will not remember that the parents eventually worked through an issue. What is more memorable to them is the anxiety caused by the fighting.

Joy's father is a bit short tempered at times because he is not used to taking care of his young children all day. He has also lost his income. He does several things that help to make the situation much better. He sees a "teachable moment" when he tells Joy all about his restaurant, including preparing tasty food, plating it beautifully, and creating a wonderful experience for diners with music and flowers. He challenges Joy to do this by making the next family lunch more beautiful by decorating the table and picking flowers for the table. Joy learns more about what her father does for a living. He gives her a fun task to occupy her time and to help her feel capable of meeting the challenge of home confinement. He also leads the children in using their imagination when he suggests that they make the living room into a campground using blankets as tents. He reduced his stress by keeping the children engaged in activities.

Celebrate simple things: Create a theme for a meal, such as visiting another country and cooking food from that region. Take a bath with great smelling bubble bath. Style each other's hair. Work on a puzzle together. Garden together. Work on a small home improvement project. Dance. Help children to find pleasure in small gestures/acts that take their mind off all of the uncertainty in our

lives. Choose projects that are short enough to maintain their attention and give each child a specific role to reduce arguing. Give them gentle reminders about their specific roles to keep them focused. Joy sings to her mother to celebrate that she is home while waiting to spend time with her after she showers.

Remember the importance of all of our senses: Smelling homemade cookies or garden flowers can be very relaxing and reminds us of happier times. Joy helps her mother relax by rubbing her feet with rose-scented lotion after her nursing shift. Petting a dog reduces our blood pressure. Looking at a beautiful dance video, or listening to soothing music or natural sounds such as rain falling, is calming. Belly breathing and mindfulness techniques found on the Internet also help with relaxation and use multiple senses. Calming sensory experiences can be as important as reassuring children with words.

Reassure children even if they don't express worry: Children have many feelings that they don't express. Sometimes this is because they can't recognize what they are feeling. Other times, they may not have the vocabulary to tell an adult about their feelings. Sometimes they believe that if they disclose their true worries, it will make someone else feel bad. Joy doesn't tell her parents about her concern regarding not having enough money for fear that her father will feel worse about losing his job. She doesn't tell her mother about her worry that as a nurse, she might catch the virus from sick people. Maybe Joy feels that it would be selfish to say that she doesn't want her mom to go to work to help sick people.

Don't be afraid to say that you are "sorry" to your children: Tell them that this is a stressful time; we sometimes say or do things that we don't mean when we are anxious or irritable. Telling your child that you are sorry you yelled or overreacted is important, especially if you talk about what you might do differently next time.

Keep answers short and simple for young children: Keep explanations short when young children ask questions. "Why do people wear masks?" could be answered by, "To keep us from sneezing or coughing on each other." Once in a while, a young child asks something more sophisticated like, "Why would God make people sick?". A good answer might be, "He wants us to learn how to help each other." If these answers are not enough, children will keep asking additional questions. We don't want to make it too complicated for them to understand.

Sometimes young children hear a particular phrase repeated like "flatten the curve." If they ask about that, one could describe or draw a roller coaster going up and up before it dives down. Tell them that we want to push down the part where the roller coaster keeps going up, meaning more and more people getting sick. Pushing the curve down, or flattening it, means fewer people getting sick. Another common question from older children is, "Why is the virus called Covid-19 and coronavirus?" These are two names for the same thing. Covid-19 is the "real" or scientific name,

like somebody named "Robert." Corona virus is a more common name. It is like calling a boy named "Robert" Bob. Bob is not his real name, but is a shorter nickname for the same person. Concrete explanations work best when possible.

Some children seem unfazed by the virus. Since young children are often very egocentric, seeing only those things that directly affect them, it is not uncommon for them to show no concern for Covid-19. If any curiosity exists, it might only be expressed as, "Why can't I play outside with friends?" This is perfectly normal and needs no more information from the parent to "help them" see the larger perspective of threat or seriousness. They will have less anxiety if we restrict our comments to their limited interest given their developmental level.

Getting along better with siblings: Many parents have reported that even siblings far different in age have become closer through this pandemic. Making a mask together, helping with a home improvement project, listening to music together, or connecting through a service project to benefit first responders can connect children of different ages. Parents who wait a bit before intervening in sibling conflicts often find that the children figure out how to resolve their disputes while spending more time at home together.

Our responses to Covid-19 will go in cycles: Sometimes parents or children who were coping well start to get "quarantine fatigue." As this way of life starts to feel more permanent and the stress becomes long term, they have had enough! Also, as the economy reopens, there will surely be setbacks. This is common and a good point to enlist "children as problem solvers." What new things could we do? What projects might we start? Can we tell each other when we need to have some space? Recognizing moods and labeling them helps children to self-regulate. Once they have a label, they can talk about their feelings. This will help children to grow into adults who get along better with others and can calm themselves down before becoming out of control.

Assessing the job we are doing as parents: If we listen, validate children's concerns, provide love and stability, and focus on the things we can control during this pandemic, our children will be fine. Having this experience, with guidance, can actually make children more resilient, helping them to learn how to overcome adversity.

How to tell when a child needs professional help: Children who need additional help with anxiety or depression are those whose symptoms interfere with daily functioning or cause sleep disturbances. Problems socializing, withdrawal from activities, loss of interest in favored pastimes, and inability to concentrate on schoolwork are examples of more serious symptoms. As previously mentioned, children who display severe regressive behavior, such as toileting accidents or unwillingness to sleep alone (long after they were able to do so), may need professional help. Children who are losing hair, are constantly biting their nails, or who are displaying heightened emotionality, such as crying without clear provocation, may need further attention.

Teachers using this book: Several teachers have read this book to children in their classes. The results have generally been quite positive. Children have talked about what is occurring in their families to cope with the pandemic. Two issues that have arisen should be anticipated by teachers. Several children have mimicked political comments heard at home, such as comments about the handling of the pandemic by the President. Thus, be prepared to respond diplomatically to these issues by saying things like “We all want people to go back to work and school, but safely!” Second, be prepared for potential issues of family violence, parental alcoholism, or other inappropriate parental behavior to be disclosed by a small number of children. Be ready to tell the child that you would like to follow up with some alone time to talk privately to the child about their specific circumstances.