Children and Adolescents’ Lived Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract
The COVID-19 pandemic affected people across the life span, including children and adolescents. This study focuses on exploring the lived experiences of children and adolescents in the United States during the pandemic. We interviewed 12 children and adolescents in April 2020 and identified four themes: (a) change in school environment, (b) connection, (c) creative celebrations, and (d) hope. We discuss limitations, recommendations for future research, and implications for counseling.

Keywords
children, adolescents, COVID-19, school, counseling, hope

Introduction
The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis experienced by countries across the globe, affecting individual of all backgrounds and ages, including children and adolescents. With an estimated 22% of the population in the United States being under 18 years old (United States Census Bureau, 2019), it is crucial to investigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on this group, which was understudied previously during quarantine situations (Imran et al., 2020). In a systematic review of 10 studies on the psychological effects of quarantine on children, Imran et al. (2020) found seven studies related to quarantine situations prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and no studies focused on the perspectives or experiences of children and adolescents. The lack of research in this area is concerning because the effects of the pandemic could extend beyond its duration for children and adolescents, and last a lifetime for those who experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as abuse, violence, and stressors, affecting stability and safety (Fegert et al., 2020). In seeking to further understand the experiences of children and adolescents during the pandemic, we used behavioral systems theory (BST; Novak, 1996, 1998) as a framework for our study.

Behavioral Systems Theory
In developing BST, Novak (1996, 1998) integrated a systems approach with behavioral analysis. Therefore, within BST, development focuses on the continuous, reciprocal interactions between behavior and the environment. Two prominent behavioral systems for a school-age child are the home and school. The two systems have different behavioral expectations for the child that are reinforced in their exchanges with others within the particular system (e.g., parents and siblings in the home, teachers, and peers at school) over time (Pelaez & Novak, 2020).

In considering child development from a BST perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted children’s systems of interaction, including the home and school environment when schools closed, families were quarantined, and parents took on the additional role of being their child’s teacher (Pelaez & Novak, 2020). Children’s behavioral expectations for school and home became unclear with the blurring and overlap of these systems. Quarantine affected all aspects of a child’s life, leading to psychological stress, when the quarantine spanned an extended time (Imran et al., 2020).

Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic
Researchers emphasize the importance of family routines (communication that is instrumental) and rituals (communication that has symbolic meaning, such as holidays, special events including birthdays, and family meals) in maintaining the structure and well-being of the family (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted family routines and rituals. This has forced families to make difficult decisions about whether to cancel important family rituals, including holiday and birthday celebrations or to modify them to ensure the safety of their families.

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The continuation of routines and rituals is important, as resiliency is promoted through rituals (Harrist et al., 2019), and positive family interactions (Prime et al., 2020). Additionally, family rituals are positively associated with youth emotional well-being (Offer, 2013) and social connectedness (Malaquias et al., 2015), and negatively correlated with depressive symptoms among youth (Malaquias et al., 2015). Some positive effects of the pandemic have included increased quality time with family, reduced external stressors (e.g., overloaded scheduled with outside activities), relief from challenges presented at school (e.g., bullying), and development of life skills and resiliency (Clemens et al., 2020; Fegert et al., 2020). Additionally, thinking about the future and setting goals (being hopeful) can be a protective factor (Liu & Doan, 2020). Children’s perception of the pandemic may also affect the risk of mental health concerns (Xie et al., 2020). Researchers found children who were more optimistic about the pandemic had less depressive symptoms (Xie et al., 2020).

Children and adolescents may also experience the negative effects of the pandemic. This includes increased risk of mental health concerns due to changes in family routine (e.g., stress related to children attending school at home, many parents working from home), reduced socialization outside the family due to quarantine stigma, limited health care, economic challenges, and fearing illness and death of loved ones (Fegert et al., 2020). Additionally, Imran et al. (2020) reported emotional and behavioral changes in children in quarantine, as well as physical health concerns due to reduced physical activity. Quarantine also affects education.

There are approximately 55 million children in kindergarten through 12th grade in the United State (Golberstein et al., 2020), and an estimated 7 million do not have internet service in their home (Walters, 2020). Moreover, homes may have limited electronic devices. This is concerning due to schools transitioning to remote learning during the pandemic. Parents may also struggle with taking on the responsibility of educating their children at home, especially when their children have mental health or learning concerns that already make learning difficult (Walters, 2020). Marcotte and Hemelt (2008) found that children scored lower on state exams when they experienced unscheduled school closures. This was particularly concerning for children in lower grades.

During quarantine, schools struggle with providing important resources that extend beyond academics, including food, opportunities for socialization with peers and adults, support from trusted adults, and physical and mental health care (Golberstein et al., 2020). Teachers’ attitudes are important during quarantine. Morgan (2020) reported demonstrating passion and support might be more valuable than the academic content addressed during remote learning. Teachers may offer this support through checking in with students (Snelling & Fingal, 2020) and providing student-centered learning. Positive student relationships are also associated with academic achievement (Koşir & Tement, 2014). Additionally, Snelling and Fingal emphasize that teachers should avoid busywork; otherwise, students may suffer academically (Snelling & Fingal, 2020). Thus, it is important for teachers and other school personnel, including school counselors, to be intentional in connecting with children and adolescents during the pandemic to foster academic learning, and promote holistic growth and development, including healthy coping skills.

Scholars have discussed the possible effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and adolescents and have anticipated the short- and long-term consequences. However, in conducting a systematic review, Imran et al. (2020) found limited studies focused on the effects of quarantine on children and adolescent, with no studies focused on their perspectives. Additionally, scholars emphasize the need for further research on investigating the effects of social distancing and isolation, as well as the effects of electronic socialization on children and adolescents (Fegert et al., 2020). Thus, the present study focuses on the experiences of children and adolescents during the pandemic. The research question is: what are the lived experiences of children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Method
Research Design
We chose a phenomenological qualitative research design for our study. This design was appropriate due to the focus on exploring the lived experiences of the identified population (children and adolescents) with the phenomenon (living during the COVID-19 pandemic) (Cresswell & Poth, 2017; Moustakas, 1994). We explored the participants’ lived experiences during the pandemic, including major domains of their lives (e.g., home, school, socialization) through in-depth interviews. This included the contexts or situations affecting their experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Researchers
The researchers were three White females, two were counselor educators and the other one was a counselor education doctoral student at the time of the study. We all had experience working with children, adolescents, and their families in mental health settings. Additionally, we value the perspectives of children and adolescents and believe their voices are important regarding their experiences with COVID-19. Before beginning the study, we met to bracket our attitudes about quarantine and the pandemic, which included acknowledging the stressors, as well as the benefits.

Participants
Twelve children and adolescents participated in the study. There were four males and eight females that ranged in age from 6 to 15 years old. Additionally, the grades ranged from kindergarten to ninth grade, with 10 children in elementary grades, one in middle school, and one in high school. Eleven of the children identified as White, and one identified as half...
White and half Asian. Eight of the children lived in one of two Southern states (Florida, Kentucky), three lived in one of two Midwestern states (Missouri, Ohio), and one lived in a Western state (Montana).

Procedure
Following institutional review board approval, we posted a recruitment announcement to multiple parenting and pandemic support Facebook groups. We also posted an announcement on the CESNET listerv, a community for counselor educators, supervisors, and counselor education doctoral students, due to being a part of this community. Additionally, we sent the recruitment announcement to people we knew through email and Facebook Messenger. We used convenient sampling due to challenges with recruiting participants during the pandemic. When parents responded with interest, we send them a consent form. Contacting us to schedule an interview, after reviewing the consent form, constituted consent to participate. We obtained verbal assent from the children at the beginning of the interview, prior to asking any interview questions. We also asked the children if they wanted to talk with us alone or have a parent present with them during the interview, and parents were present in two interviews. We conducted one interview with each participant and adapted the questions slightly to be developmentally appropriate for the different age groups. To build rapport, we also included a pet or stuffed animal with the younger children and asked about interests for the older children and adolescents. The interviews occurred in April 2020 when all the children were attending school remotely, and they lasted between 15 and 45 minutes, with interviews involving younger children generally being shorter in duration. There was no compensation for participating in the study. All individuals who agreed to participate were included in the study. We used Zoom to record and transcribe the interviews. The first two authors analyzed the data following a review of the transcripts for accuracy. We also interviewed the parents separately for a parallel project.

Data Collection
The interview questions focused on the participants’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect of the pandemic on various aspects of their lives. This included asking about the following domains: education, family life, friends, extracurricular activities, spirituality/religion, and health and wellness. Sample questions included, “What is different about your life right now during the coronavirus pandemic?” “What hasn’t changed about your life?” The participants also answered demographic questions (e.g., gender, age, grade).

Data Analysis and Verification Procedures
To analyze the data, we used the phenomenological qualitative method described by Moustakas (1994). We began by bracketing our assumptions, beliefs, and values by discussing our personal experiences during the pandemic. We participated in this phenomenological reflection to set aside our experiences to better focus on the experiences of the participants. After reviewing the transcripts and making edits as needed to capture accurately the participants’ words, we individually analyzed the transcripts to identify significant statements, group the statements together by meaning units, and identify themes, a process known as horizontalization. We then met together to reach a consensus on the themes and to identify the quotations that most significantly represented the themes. Due to the various ages and abilities of the children, and not being able to meet with them in person, we were not able to do member checking. However, we met throughout the data collection process to discuss our experiences and to ensure we were engaging in a similar process for interviewing participants. Additionally, we kept reflexive memos to continuously bracket our assumptions. Furthermore, the third author analyzed the data analysis procedures and logic of the findings.

Findings
We identified four themes from the data. The themes were: (a) change in school environment, (b) connection, (c) creative celebrations, and (d) hope. Additionally, the connection theme had two subthemes: (a) nuclear family connection, and (b) loss of connection. We used pseudonyms in presenting quotations from participants in the themes below.

Change in School Environment
The participants identified the change in school environment, transitioning from in-person to remote learning, as a major adjustment in their lives during the pandemic. Elizabeth shared, “I think schools have been a big thing because it is taking up most of our time…we’re trying to get used to it…a big change.” Participants discussed a significant shift in learning related to limited interactions with their teachers. Samantha stated, “We’re having one class video chat…one day a week.” Jennifer reported, “I have to use Google Classroom…I have Google Meets on Fridays.” Additionally, Elizabeth remarked, “[We have] a list of assignments and it has articles…you can do the assignments and quizzes…Sometimes the teachers will Zoom to ask if you need help…some are…posting YouTube videos showing us how to do certain things.” Cameron also commented, “All my teachers…keep trying to assign like busy work…trying to make it so it makes it easier for us, but I just don’t think that’s helpful…YouTube videos they want us to watch for something to do.” Thus, participants identified various changes related to school with the integration of remote learning, including interactions with teachers, online learning platforms, and assignments.

In discussing their experience with learning remotely, some participants described it as a better experience for various reasons, including less work, more flexibility in completing assignments, more enjoyable activities, and a quieter...
environment to concentrate. Cameron stated, “I like it (school) a lot more because we hardly have any work…They just send like one assignment per week, and that’s it.” Additionally, Valerie commented, “I like it a lot because sometimes I get done with school early, then I could just do whatever I want. Yeah, more free time.” Emily also shared, “I get to do more fun activities then I get to do at real school.” Furthermore, George commented that he liked remote learning because there was “a lot less noise to bother me.”

In contrast, other participants described remote learning as being more difficult, including unclear and limited presentation of information, more assignments, difficult assignments, and issues with technology. Samantha shared, “It’s a lot easier when we can see each other in person…my teacher explains it much better than these videos.” Additionally, Elizabeth commented, “It’s hard for everybody. It’s hard for teachers and stuff too, but it’s also hard for us and I think everybody has to understand that.” She also shared, “I think they should know that it is really hard for us because a lot of kids already struggle in the classroom when they’re there…with the online stuff they’re struggling more.” Philip stated, “[There are] more assignments and less teaching…There’s a lot more work and not enough teaching about it.” Furthermore, William remarked, “We do less school than we usually do, but we have to do harder stuff.” He also shared, “The websites, they’re actually pretty hard because sometimes you might accidentally get logged off…or the computer doesn’t work like you want it to.” Finally, some participants also identified both pros and cons of remote learning, including flexibility but complex assignments. Elizabeth stated, “Pros and cons… I can get my work done in two to three days each week…but I do feel like some of the assignments virtually are not necessarily harder, but more complicated and there’s more steps…it’s new.” Hence, participants identified various approaches teachers used for remote learning and the difference of opinions about these learning experiences. This included some participants acknowledging the benefits, while also reporting the challenges and difficulties with the change in the learning environment.

Connection

The children discussed unique ways to connect while social distancing, including communication through messages on the sidewalk, playing with others at a distance and online, and communicating with school personnel at a distance. Regarding communication with friends, Emily stated, “I write chalk messages to some of my friends, and if you ask any questions…they can write messages back.” Additionally, Samantha shared, “Our next door neighbor is my best friend. We can still stay six feet away…we can play catch over the fence.” Cameron also remarked, “When I play video games, I talked to them [friends] the whole time, they’re playing with me.” Participants also discussed connecting with school personnel, including the principal and teachers. Stephanie commented, “Today we were driving by…our school and we are like honking [at] our principal because…she’s not going to be our principal anymore. We have someone else now…We did a quick honk and saw a lot of our teachers.” Thus, the participants reported creative ways to stay connected with both friends and adult role models (e.g., teachers) beyond the remote learning environment.

Nuclear Family Connection. In addition to general connections with others, the children and adolescents also discussed connections specifically related to their family. Elizabeth shared, “I think it’s really good because before all of this, when we were still going to school and having all of our activities and everything…we didn’t get as much [family time] as we do now…it’s really a good experience.” Ashley also commented, “I’ll remember the fun times with my family.” In addition to positive family time, some participants also discussed the challenges of being around their family all the time. Samantha shared, “Seeing them [parents] every day just gets annoying…[it’s] too much.” Hence, participants discussed both the benefits and challenges of increased time with their family.

Loss of Connection. Although participants identified ways they were able to continue connecting and socializing with others, they also discussed their experiences with loss of connection with friends, family, and teachers. Regarding changes and losses related to connections with friends, Samantha remarked, “I definitely miss my friends, but like I have Google Hangouts and I have Messenger Kids so I can talk with my friends through those two things.” Additionally, Elizabeth shared, “It’s just harder because we’re just used to the closure of [the] school year…saying goodbye…people are moving at the end of the year, like one of my good friends…I was sad that I won’t be able to see her again.” Valerie also commented, “I’ve had like a couple of Zoom playdates with my friends from school. It’s really hard not seeing friends and I really miss them right now. They’re a part of your life.” William stated, “I miss my teacher and my classmates.” In addition to the loss of connections with friends and teachers, participants also discussed losing their connection with family, as well as activities. Philip shared, “We don’t get to see family members, and we don’t get to go to the library.” Furthermore, Samantha stated, “We’re doing virtual piano lessons…but a lot of things [got] canceled.” Hence, participants reported difficulty coping with changes in how they connected with others; loss of connections with friends, teachers, family, and activities; and experiencing sadness related to the loss of connections.

Creative Celebrations. The children and adolescents discussed how they were able to celebrate creatively important events (e.g., Mother’s Day, Easter, birthdays) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Elizabeth shared, “Mother’s Day…and then our parents’ anniversary…we celebrated both of those things as a family…We just found ways to make it a special day.” Cameron stated, “Easter, my mom set up an Easter egg hunt in our backyard, we still dyed eggs…it’s not much different, except that we weren’t with my grandma.” Additionally, Philip commented, “Our [school’s] own version of the
Olympics...we’re doing like a field day [instead] separately, and then there’s scores you get and you add those together and it goes for your team, which is your class or your grade.” He also stated, “We did a little Zoom meeting, but it wasn’t as good as having a birthday in person...They said happy birthday to me. We sent little cupcakes to them...We did trivia...It was very different.” Thus, families were creative in finding ways to celebrate important family events and holidays.

**Hope.** The children discussed being hopeful about things getting better. Elizabeth stated, “It’s going to get better...[We] have good things in our lives...This isn’t the end of the world. We’ve gone through things before....We’re going to learn from this. We’re going to take these experiences and use them in our future.” Additionally, Valerie shared, “Everything’s going to be fine...Be safe, stay home, do what your parents say...[Be] grateful that you’re alive because some people are dying right now.” April also commented, “They [kids] shouldn’t be worried. Everything’s going to get back to normal.” Finally, Philip remarked, “It’s all going to be okay.” Hence, children believed things were going to get better.

**Discussion**

This project focused on exploring children and adolescents’ perspectives and lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study provides important information for further understanding the experiences of children and adolescents engaging in social distancing and quarantine. We identified four main themes from the data: (a) change in school environment, (b) connection, (c) creative celebrations, and (d) hope.

The first theme focused on the change in school environment, specifically related to engaging in remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the participants’ experiences with the change in learning approach. Children spend a significant amount of their life at school; thus, it is crucial to maintain normality for children during the pandemic. Participants discussed the benefits of remote learning, as well as challenges and frustrations. Although learning platforms and approaches varied, most participants reported limited contact with their teachers and significant changes in the educational process. This included learning being predominately self-directed through technological platforms that included assignments and videos. Although some participants appreciated the self-directed pace of their courses, the youth also perceived many tasks as busywork. Participants’ discussions related to difficulty with changes in the school context (e.g., limited interactions with teachers, changes in the educational process) are consistent with Pelaez and Novak’s (2020) description of the effects (e.g., disruption in behavioral systems) of the COVID-19 pandemic from a BST perspective, as boundaries were blurred between behavioral systems (home and school) and behavioral expectations become unclear. Additionally, limited contact with teachers, as well as classmates, is concerning due to contributing to social isolation that may result in mental health concerns for children and adolescents (Fegert et al., 2020). Researchers have found positive correlations between student–teacher relationships and academic achievement (e.g., Košir & Tement, 2014), emphasizing the importance of continued quality interactions and relationships between children and their teachers during remote learning. Participants’ experiences also contrast with recommendations for student-centered learning, routines, checking in with students, and avoiding busywork (Snelling & Fingal, 2020). Changes in educational experiences were also identified as a theme among parents in exploring their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic Weaver & Swank, 2021.

The second theme focused on connection and included an emphasis on connecting with one’s family, as well as experiencing the loss of connection. The participants discussed the increase in time interacting with their family as both a positive experience and a challenge. In accordance with BST, the disruption in systems of interaction within the home environment (i.e., parents working from home; children doing school at home), caused by the pandemic, created a need to develop and adapt to new behavioral expectations within the home, which may explain the challenges of being quarantined at home with one’s family. Nonetheless, researchers emphasize the importance of family time, reporting positive correlations between eating meals together, engaging in leisure time together, and emotional well-being of youth (Offer, 2013). Positive family relationships may also promote resiliency (Prime et al., 2020). Researchers also found that parents identified connections as a theme in exploring their experiences with the pandemic, which also included loss of connection/support, and change in connections Weaver & Swank, 2021.

The participants discussed the importance of finding ways to maintain connections with others outside of their immediate family despite social distancing, and the difficulty they experienced with losing some of the connections they had with others. Researchers have emphasized that individuals and families can practice social distance without social isolating themselves. This includes allowing children and adolescents to connect with others through social media and other electronic platforms (Imran et al., 2020; Liu & Doan, 2020). This is crucial as social isolation during the pandemic is one of several factors that may increase the risk for mental health concerns among children and adolescents (Fegert et al., 2020). However, it is also important to acknowledge that in addition to the benefits, social media use can have negative effects on youth (Uhls et al., 2017). Social isolation within one’s living space may also contribute to decreased physical activity, which creates a risk for health problems (Imran et al., 2020).

Holidays, events, and milestones are important to celebrate. The children discussed their families, and the school personnel, developing creative ways to celebrate holidays and important events during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included a variety of family rituals, including special family events (e.g., birthdays, anniversaries) and holidays (e.g., Easter, Mother’s Day). In exploring parents’ experiences with the pandemic, Weaver & Swank, 2021 identified meaningful experiences
and routines as themes, emphasizing the importance of rituals and routines for parents as well. Although celebrations may look different during quarantine and social distancing, it is important to continue to engage in family routines and rituals, as they promote structure and the emotional well-being of the family (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). Malaquias et al. (2015) found a positive correlation between family ritual meaning and social connectedness of youth, and a negative association with youth depressive symptoms. Rituals are also important in fostering resiliency when experiencing stressful events and situations, such as the pandemic (Harrist et al., 2019).

Several of the participants discussed feeling hopeful about things getting better and being able to return to their normal routines. They shared that they did not want other children to be worried, or for their parents to be worried about them. Feeling hopeful about the future is an important theme as it may serve as a protective factor (Liu & Doan, 2020), and reduce the risk of mental health concerns (Xie et al., 2020).

**Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

There are some limitations to consider in light of the findings. First, there were limited adolescent participants, with 10 of the 12 participants being in elementary school. Additionally, participation was limited to individuals who were willing and able to participate in an interview through an online platform. Conducting the interviews through an online platform also may have limited the level of interaction and depth of the interviews, despite our attempts to build rapport with the participants.

Future research may focus on replicating the study with diverse groups of participants, such as minority group identities, and diverse family backgrounds including parents’ employment. Additionally, researchers may conduct follow-up interviews with participants to explore their perspectives and experiences following the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers may also seek to examine quantitatively the constructs we identified as themes in this study. Furthermore, research may focus on examining the long-term effects (physical, emotional, mental, academic/career) of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Implications**

This study has important implications for teachers, school counselors, and other school personnel who serve as supportive adults and powerful role models for children. Interacting with these caring adults on a daily basis is especially crucial for children who have limited positive adult role models in their lives. Unfortunately, the participants discussed limited contact with their teachers during the pandemic and their disappointment about this loss of interaction. Thus, it is crucial for teachers and school counselors to identify ways to maintain consistent, ongoing communication and interactions with their students. This may involve short daily video conference check-ins with the students for them to see their teacher’s smiling face and to be told good morning, as well as for them to be able to say “hi” to their classmates. The school counselor can also have a check-in time with the students and facilitate classroom lessons, as well as have virtual walk-in hours. This provides opportunities for connection and social interaction, while also giving teachers and school counselors time to see all of the students to check on their well-being and safety, especially for children in high conflict homes. Teachers and school counselors can also make video recordings for students to watch, instead of relying solely on videos created by others, as students enjoy seeing people who they know and have established relationships with at school (e.g., teachers, school counselors) (Morgan, 2020).

School counselors and school-based mental health counselors can reach out to students more often who may need extra support, as well as make referrals to community mental health providers and connect families with other resources (e.g., food bank) as needed. They may also provide resources to parents to help encourage children and adolescents to engage in physical exercise, board games, and other activities (e.g., mindfulness) to keep their mind and body active, foster healthy coping skills and emotion regulation, and promote positive family interactions. Furthermore, school counselors and mental health counselors working in the schools, as well as teachers, can help foster hope and optimism among children. The findings also served as a reminder not to assume what children are feeling or thinking, and the importance of asking them. Several of the children in this study expressed being aware of their parents and other adults being worried about them, and yet feeling hopeful that things would be okay, and wanting adults to know that they needed to use safety precautions and not worry about them (children) so much.

There are also areas to consider following the COVID-19 pandemic. Bryant et al. (2020) discussed the importance of screening all children for ACEs, as this helps identify and treat trauma early. Screening may also occur during the pandemic, but it may not be possible to screen all children during that time. School counselors and mental health counselors in the schools can also be instrumental in working with teachers to help children adjust following quarantine and returning to the traditional school setting. In working with teachers, counselors can reach many students following the pandemic to help them adjust and focus on social-emotional learning (Imran et al., 2020). Adjustment difficulties may include struggling with transitioning back to a traditional classroom with a teacher without constant use of technological devices after the COVID-19 pandemic ends, as well as transitioning back to more collaborative learning instead of self-paced learning (Dovzhenko, 2020). Being aware of these potential difficulties can help teachers proactively prepare for students returning to school, fostering a successful transition.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a challenging situation for people of all ages, including children and adolescents. However, there are things adults can do to minimize the challenges for children and maintain a positive environment for them. Through creative thinking, problem-solving, and working collaboratively with children and adolescents, adults can create environments and experiences for children and adolescents who focus on promoting holistic growth and
development, fostering protective factors, while simultaneously reducing risk factors.

**Author’s note**
Jo Lauren Weaver is now at Alabama A&M University.

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