



RESOURCES FOR **YOUNG PARENTS**

A GUIDE FROM BLACK HEALTH NEW MEXICO
AND THE FIRST BORN PROGRAM IN NEW MEXICO

LETTER FROM THE TEAM

In the first three quarters of 2022, Black Health New Mexico was contracted by The First Born Program in New Mexico to develop a racial identity development curriculum under the leadership of young BIPOC parents. The goals of this work included:

- Recruiting young BIPOC parents in New Mexico to design home visiting materials.
- Providing them with an opportunity for dialogue and full articulation of their lived experiences through curriculum design.
- Peer and technical support for these young parent curriculum designers.
- Professional development opportunities to uplift their skillsets and lived experience.
- The creation of culturally congruent family-facing materials and professional development tools for home visiting staff in New Mexico.

Often, parenting can feel desperately

solitary. Our weekly meetings allowed these eight individuals to find common ground: commiserating on challenges like sleep deprivation, discrimination in schools and health clinics, and lack of time to shower or rest and rejuvenate. It provided time and space for them to gather as peers to share resources and proclaim deep joy about all things related to parenting.

Over time, they swapped advice on baby food, nursing, how to relax, and the infinitely impressive, beautiful, life-affirming milestones their babies and children achieve. Together they created culturally relevant training and support tools for parents and the home visitors who serve them.

This group of young parents collaborated to create a collection of advice, wisdom, and counter-narratives about what it means to be a BIPOC parent navigating all aspects of systems, oft times steeped in white supremacy, while living life in New Mexico. Every topic was generated from their interests and based on their lived

experiences to help inform home visitors and empower young families as they interact and build trust within their home visiting experience.

We hope that readers of this zine will walk away feeling less alone, more connected, and fully empowered to stretch and grow into the most crucial roles of mama, papa, auntie, uncle, caregiver, and cheerleader to our communities and families. We hope readers will also walk away connected to more resources to help navigate life and various systems, feeling comforted by the voices and wisdom of young parents like them.

This project, led by Black Health New Mexico, was funded and designed for The First Born Program in New Mexico. The technical equipment provided to each participating parent to support their work and to keep after the project ended, was generously donated by Bold Futures NM.

Nicole Morris, M.A. Ed
Lead Facilitator,
Black Health New Mexico



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WWW.BLACKHEALTHNEWMEXICO.COM

 [NEWMEXICOBIRTHEQUITYCOLLABORATIVE](#)

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TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

BY VANESSA

Let's get real; parenting is hard.

The long nights, lots of crying (from baby and parent), and many skipped meals and showers. All of these little things build up to one big thing. Fatigue. Mental fatigue. Physical fatigue. Emotional fatigue.

We put so much of ourselves into our precious bundles of joy that we lose our joy. What happens when your well runs dry? Don't get me wrong, having a baby is one of the most incredible and fulfilling things we as humans can accomplish, but what we want to focus on in this piece is how to handle things when you are not on that parent high.

TIP #1: ACCEPT HELP

When you're a first-time parent, sometimes it is hard to accept help from those around you. We spend so much time bringing this little creature into this world that we sometimes can't stand to part with them. It's okay. It's normal. It will feel weird without the little ball of dough on your hip for 30 minutes, but you must focus on yourself or your other responsibilities. If you feel overwhelmed or just flat-out tired, reach out to someone, especially on those days when the littlest breeze feels like it could knock you over.

LIKE MUSIC? CHECK OUT LINKIN PARK'S
ONE MORE LIGHT ALBUM OR WEBSITE:
[YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=TM8LGXTLQK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TM8LGXTLQK)
CHESTER.LINKINPARK.COM

TIP #2: EXAMINE YOUR LIFESTYLE CHOICES

We can make a huge difference in our emotional and physical health by making small changes in our lives. Things like diet, exercise, and even screen time can help transform your health more positively. Being a parent often includes skipping meals or opting for something quick and easy, but that's not always healthy. Remember to incorporate many fruits and vegetables in your diet to get all the necessary vitamins and minerals your body needs to function at its best. Consider including a multivitamin if it is hard to fit balanced meals into your diet. Another beneficial step you can try in your day is stretching. Even ten minutes of restorative stretching is enough to boost your physical health but also your mental state as well.

FOLLOW THIS LINK FOR A LIST OF QUICK AND EASY STRETCHES TO HELP REJUVENATE YOUR BODY:

EVERYDAYHEALTH.COM/FITNESS/QUICK-STRETCHES-FOR-STRESS-RELIEF

Just like the laws of inertia say, an object at rest tends to stay at rest, but an object in motion tends to stay in motion.

**SUICIDE/ MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE:
CALL 1-800-273-8255 OR CALL / TEXT 988**

TIP #3: HOW TO DEAL WITH A CRISIS

We all have our days. I struggle with clinical depression. Some days are better, and some days are worse. Dealing with your mental health and your child's health can be difficult sometimes. The littlest things can make you shut down, like

a high-pitch scream, a broken glass, or tripping over a toy for the twentieth time. Sometimes, trying to remind ourselves that we are doing a good job or are loved isn't enough. I can remember a few too many times when I would have to put my crying baby in his crib, and I would just go into my bathroom and cry. So what do you do when you feel yourself going towards that cliff? One of the most important things you can do in a crisis is to breathe. Our brains actually panic more when they start to lose oxygen.

IF YOU NEED SOME EXAMPLES OF DEEP BREATHING EXERCISES, FOLLOW THIS LINK:

GLAMOUR.COM/STORY/4-7-8-BREATHING-BENEFITS-EXERCISES

Reach out to someone you know and trust. If you don't feel safe reaching out to someone you know, ERs and mental health clinics across NM are open 24/7 if you ever need support. If you're uncomfortable being in a setting like that or you don't have transportation, there are plenty of sites and numbers you can reach out to to get support. Some of those resources are listed left.

PARENTING A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY

BY VANESSA

All children are beautiful and unique. These things that make our kids unique also come with distinct challenges. One of my sons is neurodivergent. In other words, he has autism. Having a child with a disability is challenging but also incredible because they see the world in such different and beautiful ways. Whether your child is verbal or non-verbal, needs assistance getting through their days, or needs extra space, they will need support and guidance from you. So many times, BIPOC children with disabilities are overlooked and underheard. Our hope with this piece is that we can empower parents to be voices for their children, disability or not.

TIP 1: EARLY INTERVENTION IS KEY

Some disabilities aren't physical. That can make diagnosing and getting help difficult. Whether you can see it or not, getting help is crucial. Babies have specific benchmarks that they should reach at each stage of their lives. If you notice any delay, talk to your healthcare provider. Healthcare providers care to provide additional support, frequently free of charge, with insurance or state funding. These services range from physical, behavioral, occupational, and speech therapies to counseling, home visits, and childcare. At each level, they can help you and your child adjust to any phase of life that you are in, thus reducing stress and empowering your child to regain a sense of independence. Attached is a link for an excellent starting site if you suspect your child might need any sort of assistance:

WWW.NMECCD.ORG/FIT-FAMILIES

TIP 2: EMBRACE AND ENGAGE YOUR CHILD

Kids can pick up on energy and moods. So often, kids with disabilities are treated differently or excluded from certain activities/events and conversations. When this happens, it can make a child lose their self-esteem and self-confidence, and this can set a dangerous precedent for when your child grows up. It can be challenging trying to find accommodations for activities for your child, but researching ahead of time can make a world of difference. Consider whether your child would need an ADA-compliant rampway or a family bathroom when out in public. Would they need to have a quiet, not-heavily-populated spot when they get overstimulated? Would you need to make accommodations for an ID cane or service dog? Just because an activity/event would be different doesn't mean it won't be enjoyable.

Another thing you can do when dealing with a special needs child is to talk to them like an average person. Don't dumb down your words, and don't sugarcoat experiences. Be open and honest while using age-appropriate wording. Don't be afraid to ask what your child would like to do. If they prefer to stay home, try to participate in whatever activity they are doing. Whether it is quietly reading a book next to each other, painting together, watching their favorite show, dying too many times on their favorite video game, kicking a ball outside, playing with their

favorite stuffed animal, or just eating food as a family, the quality time will mean the world to a child no matter the age.

TIP 3: PLAN TIME FOR YOURSELF

Having a kid with disabilities is hard. It can quickly become frustrating and overwhelming. Plan some time for yourself, whether it's a bath with a bit of lavender in it or going to get groceries while someone watches your child for you. Embrace the moments that you can find your inner peace. It's not easy having someone rely on you for everything; the more you can remember to care for yourself, the better you will be mentally and physically to help them.

TIP 4: GET AS MUCH HELP AS POSSIBLE

Many programs exist to help you and your child with special needs as a parent. In earlier tips, we've mentioned some early intervention programs, but what about at the school and state levels? If you have a school-aged child with any needs, physical or mental, it is always a good idea to start with your child's teacher, principal, and guidance counselor. Make sure they understand your child's situation so that they have a good support network starting out. The next step is to request an IEP (individualized

educational plan). IEP processes vary for each student and each school district, so it is crucial to get in touch with your local school administration to find out how to get the process started. If your kiddo gets denied an IEP, but you feel they would benefit from it, talk to your primary care provider. Explain the concerns, and they can write a recommendation for you to have a re-evaluation. As young BIPOC parents, our issues tend to get swept under a rug, so staying diligent throughout the process of gaining help is essential.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ARTICLE ON A STUDY
CONDUCTED INTO THE EFFECTS OF IEPs ON A CHILD:
[CHILDRENSRESEARCHNETWORK.ORG/KNOWLEDGE/
RESOURCES/DIGEST-VOICE-CHILD-
DISABILITIES-SEN](http://CHILDRENSRESEARCHNETWORK.ORG/KNOWLEDGE/RESOURCES/DIGEST-VOICE-CHILD-DISABILITIES-SEN)

On the state level, financial and social programs are in place to help those disabled families. Besides having daycare or home-visiting programs, you can request transportation through the state to get appointments and run errands. You can also ask for a nurse/caregiver to be appointed for a person that needs constant care for a disability. The state can pay up to 40 hours for a worker to watch your person-in-need for you. If you feel these resources could apply to you, schedule an appointment with your local HSD today.

WWW.HSD.STATE.NM.US/LOOKINGFORASSISTANCE/FIELD_OFFICES_1

TIP 5: BE THE VOICE

Even when it's hard, **ADVOCATE!** Be their voice! As BIPOC parents, we carry so many burdens. It's even worse when dealing with a child with disabilities, so it's important to never back down and always be resilient. My youngest son went through an awful time as a newborn, and we didn't know why for the longest time. It took us four doctors before we found one that would actually listen to us and help us figure out his problems. It was many sleepless nights and many tears of frustration. In the end, we learned my son doesn't absorb iron well, and it was clumping in his intestines. This was a huge discovery—even if the doctors didn't want to acknowledge it. Do your research, and don't take no for an answer. Often we feel powerless at a doctor's office and that their word is the law. That isn't always the case. As a parent, you have an intuition about your kid. If something doesn't feel right, say something. Change doctors if a doctor refuses to listen to or dismisses you. Don't settle for mediocre and unfair treatment. Your child's life could very well depend on it. While we want you to stand up to your doctor, we don't want you to be abrasive. Use phrases such as, "I know we tried this change, but I'm still

seeing _____ results,” or “I understand what you’re saying, but I still have this concern,” or “is there any test we could run that could give a definite answer?” While these phrases aren’t guaranteed to get you immediate results, they should at least prove that you will do whatever it takes to see your kid feeling better. The following link offers steps you can take to advocate for a child in a school setting, but with a couple of tweaks, it could also be used in a healthcare setting:

[WWW.UNDERSTOOD.ORG/EN/ARTICLES/
PARENT-ADVOCACY-STEPS](http://WWW.UNDERSTOOD.ORG/EN/ARTICLES/PARENT-ADVOCACY-STEPS)

PARENTING TIPS, TRICKS & COPING TOOLS

BY NIYSH AND JAMAIA



SAFETY AS A BIPOC PARENT

1. *Some Tips I Take To Keep My Black Kids Safe* (good for parents of brown kids too).

2. Instagram pages to follow for support and inspo:

@blacksupermamas

Helping create a safe, authentic, and supportive space for Black Moms during their motherhood journey

@zoiladarton

Badass mama who makes things, connects people & takes care of her son

@anaflores me

Latina Soul-centered Entrepreneur

@heybelovedmama

Blogger and supporter of all things motherhood

@indigenoumotherhood

Indigenous motherhood is the ultimate weapon in destroying colonialism, through the tenderness, and wildness, of Indigenous truth and love

SIGNS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP:

You respect each other.

You trust one another.

You communicate well as a couple.

You're both committed to the relationship.

You're kind to each other.

You enjoy each other's company.

You support each other's goals.

You make decisions together.

Your friends and family support your relationship.

You feel supported and cared for.

DOS AND DON'TS AS A BIPOC PARENT

BY NIYSH AND JAMAIA

FOR HOME VISITORS

Do ask the family what their belief / culture is (and be understanding if they are not comfortable sharing).

Do offer support places, if the parent(s) doesn't seem to be coping financially or mentally.

Do give the parents freedom to express their concerns, and listen with intent to help, not to belittle.

Do address the parents by their name; it may unlock vulnerability and lessen tension between you and the caregiver.

Do ask if there are any house rules that you must follow before coming into a home. For example, some families don't wear outside shoes in the home. In turn, you can be prepared with socks or slippers.

Don't project superiority over the family based on your own education, race, lived experience, or assumptions. Address all issues as though you are all equally looking to provide solutions and stability.

Don't have a preconceived or biased view on the family before entering their home.

Don't compare their home to your own. Each family is different

Don't have any expectations; this could create tension or dissatisfaction from the start.

Don't pretend to be "Black;" just be kind and understanding.

Don't judge the parents because of their age; we are just as capable to succeed at parenting.

FOR PARENTS

Do check for tongue and lip ties if you're experiencing difficulty breastfeeding.

Do be emotionally present, and ask for help if you don't know how to do something.

Do moisturize hair daily, and comb from ends to roots (scalp).

Do have support or emergency numbers on your phone and posted in your home.

Do take a deep breath; you got this.

Don't neglect your own safe care; your child desires a happy and healthy mama or dad.

Don't label yourself a failure; progress isn't always a steady line.

Don't doubt yourself; you were created for this.

Don't be so quick to throw the shoe/chanca. I know it can be hard mamas.

Don't give up, you always have a friend around the corner.

**NEW MEXICO PEER-TO-PEER WARMLINE
855-466-7100 PROVIDES CONFIDENTIAL
SUPPORT FOR PARENTS IN NEW MEXICO.
YOU CAN CALL OR TEXT.**



JITTER'S STORY

BY JITTER



I remember being a newly single mom with five kids (3 kiddos in diapers). I had to navigate child care, the court system, employment, rent/utility help, gas money, grocery shopping, finding a double stroller/ baby backpacks, hospital stays,



Addiction
Single mom + 5 kids
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Panic Attacks
de feac

Depression
Eviction Notice

Isolation
Survival mode

PTSD





Ha watta
Bla Bla Bla

m om Im
hungry

This is
sooooo
hard!



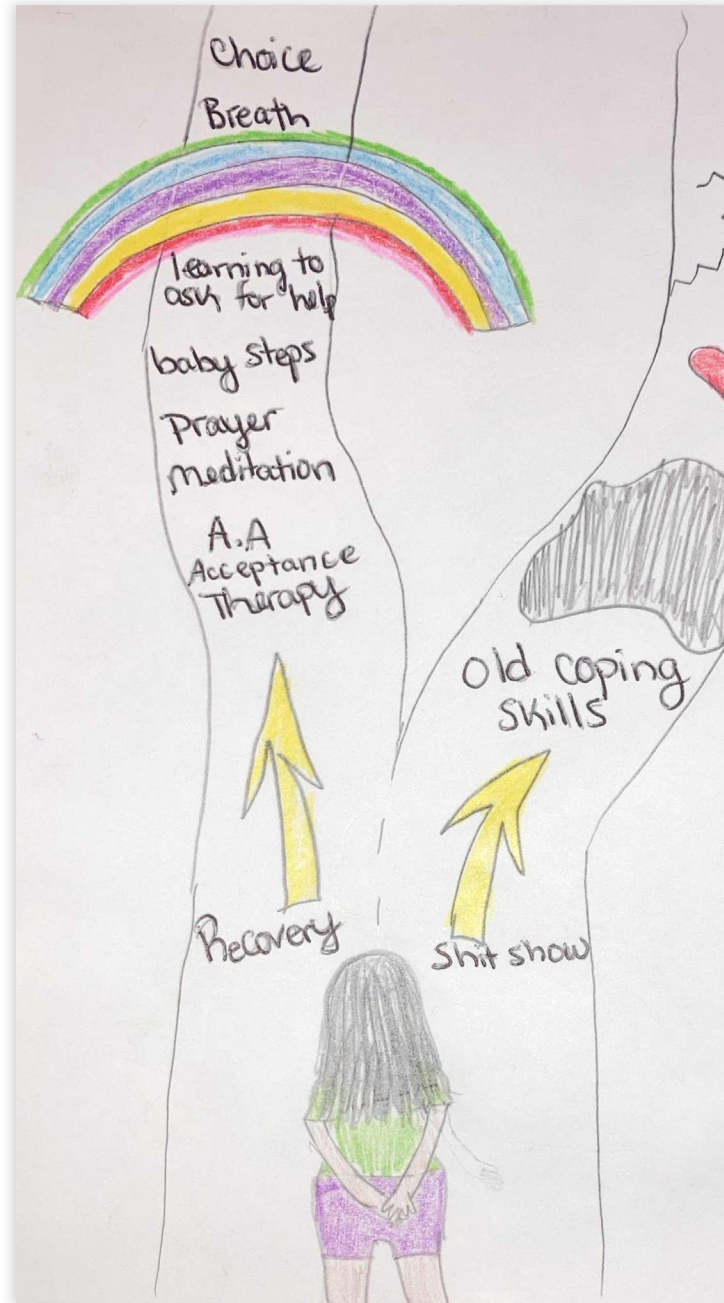
rez
Van



appointments, WIC offices, food stamps, domestic violence support connections, and kids counseling sessions all on my own. It was all too much to handle. Too much for one mom. Living in poverty is a full-time job. I turned to substance abuse as relief from the pressure. Finding support



for detox and sobriety was the peanut on the giant pile of shit. I couldn't leave my kids to go to treatment, but I couldn't keep using either. Through these challenging times, I've learned some fantastic tools and resources I want to share with you. Many other moms are experiencing domestic violence, substance abuse, homelessness, PTSD, poverty, child abuse, mental health concerns, and access to abortions, all with little or no family support. Think of this as kind of like a guide from survival to living and having a life of abundance and community support. I've gone from being a struggling single mom to a supported and empowered parent! I felt supported and dignified when home visitors, counselors, judges, and sponsors, talked to me in nonpatronizing tones, listened to learn rather than respond, and showed up with understanding and lots of love; less advice and more action through action. I had an amazing experience with a home visitor when my child was having behavioral issues. They guided me with a camera and a sound parenting plan. The best part of these lived experiences is that healing comes with vulnerability, courage, and A LOT of unlearning/ re-learning. I couldn't have made all of these changes without my thiyospaye (chosen family), my big sister, a kind partner, awesome kids, and all of these sweet resources available in our community. Doing it all on your own is not sustainable or possible. We absolutely need the community to thrive and raise children! You got this, and we got you!



I Want to share
these tools with
my community
Because we are
All Worth it!!

Housing for everyone
Accountability for everyone
Safety for everyone
Abolition for everyone
Healing for everyone
Health care for everyone
Education for everyone
Water/food for everyone

Jitter Press

RESOURCES TO PLUG INTO:

Share NM is a badass website with TONS of resources throughout New Mexico!! Type in your city and area of need, and boom!!! Support system activated! You and your family are a blessing to our community! Folks that get to be a part of your journey are grateful for you reaching out and sharing your awesomeness with the world. So check out all the ways to find support and care through Share NM.

No internet? No problem! Call *Help NM, Inc* at 1(505) 265-3717 to talk to a real human about connections in your area.

No phone? Shoot! We got you ;) Free mother-loving cell phones can be found at Safe Link Wireless. Another resource to find a free cell phone is Assurance Wireless.

Struggling with addiction and mental health? Call the New Mexico Crisis Line at 1-855-662-7474. You can also dial 988 for a 24-7 suicide prevention hotline.

Alcoholics Anonymous New Mexico offers free, confidential support meetings for addicts and alcoholics, adult children of alcoholics, and codependents too!

Planned Parenthood Rocky Mountain provides abortion support. You aren't alone!



DEALING WITH STEREOTYPES AND RACISM

BY PERLA & DAYANA

WHAT IS A STEREOTYPE?

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of our particular type of person or thing. Stereotypes are meant to divide people. It's what we make up about people, what we want people to be, even if we don't know them. Stereotypes are learned (white and black dolls- good, bad, or ugly). Stereotypes are created through brainwashing- exaggerations or generalized points directed toward another or a group of people that aren't always true.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY A STEREOTYPE?

Teach your children to identify and notice when generalizations are made about an individual or a group. Help them combat stereotypes. It is necessary to pay close attention to our surroundings to identify stereotypes; we all have absorbed ideas since we were children. For example, by watching TV, we already know who is the bad or good boy just by what we are shown repeatedly. We've always been told what kind of people we had to take care of ourselves, only



judging by their physical appearance and who we could trust, and we have some of those ideas so ingrained that even as adults, we think the same.

It is necessary to identify the stereotypes to which our society is exposed to be able to combat them and give our children a new perception of social groups. We must start at our homes, leaving behind the beliefs we have been taught as children, and relearn that in any race, culture, religion, or social group, there are different types of people and that we should not generalize and give a single perception to a group of people. Some tips that could work to help our children identify stereotypes:

TIPS TO COMBAT RACISM AND STEREOTYPING WITH YOUR CHILDREN

1. When watching TV or playing video games with your kids, keep track of the type of characters/people they see. How many are women? How many are men? How many are white, African American, Asian, Indigenous, or Latino? Can you see the relationship between the race and gender of the characters and how they are represented? Talk to your children about your observations. These kinds of questions teach your children to be more conscientious/mindful.

2. Find alternatives, and give your children more multicultural tools, such as books or toys.


3. Try to buy movies, video games, or games that are more inclusive in terms of race, gender, nationality, or religion so that your child learns that we can all coexist and live together and that there are no differences that should be causes for rejection.

4. Depending on the age of your children, you can talk about common stereotypes and analyze your children's perceptions. Use real-world examples to show that media portrayals are not accurate. For example, not all blonde girls are dumb, and not all Latinos are poor.

5. Recognize negative stereotypes on social media. For example, when a group is attacking a gender or race, teach your children not to continue or support this type of action in their networks.

6. Stereotypes can also be humorous, even those describing our friends and families, which can quickly turn into unsavory characters. It can be difficult for children and adults to determine when a joke based on a stereotype unfairly reflects a group. One way to guide them might be this: If your kids wouldn't tell a joke like that in front of that group, then the joke isn't funny.

7. Listen to them and play, see what comments can be risky, and explain it to them.



A clear example that we can see in children's cartoons is the famous Speedy González, the mouse from the "Looney Tunes." This character creates stereotypes of people from Mexico; the mouse wears a large hat, pants, and a white shirt along with a red bow and has been given a very particular accent, in addition to stealing food to give to his friends and colleagues.

Another example of stereotypes is seen in Disney princesses. They are always beautiful, with big eyes, small mouths, and noses. They are thin, tall, with long hair, and attractive within what has been socially established as the ideal feminine beauty.

We could make a long list of children's cartoons full of stereotypes; what we must do from home is to explain to our children that what happens in cartoons with characters does not define a social group.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS TO TEACH CHILDREN TO HONOR DIVERSITY

You can find these books at your local library or online booksellers.

The Skin I'm In: A First Look at Racism

Recommended for ages 4-7, this delightful picture book examines the topic of racism. Simply and serenely, it explores the fears, concerns, and questions surrounding such a complex subject.

Mariama—Different, But Just the Same

Recommended for children from 5 to 6 years old, This is the story of Mariama, a girl whose parents told her one day that she was going to take a trip to a very distant country. Everything was different there; nevertheless, they thought she was different.

We Are All Equal

Recommended for children over five years old. Living with those with physical and cultural traits different from ours in today's world can only enrich us. For this, tolerance of what is different is essential.

Antiracist Baby Picture Book

Recommended for ages 1-6. From the National Book Award-winning author of *Stamped from the Beginning* and *How to Be an Antiracist* comes a new full-sized picture book that empowers parents and children to uproot racism in our society and ourselves.

Here's a video as a recommendation on racism explained to children:

The Colors of Us - The author reads aloud her beautiful story that celebrates the beauty in diversity and differences in our skin tones!

PERLA'S THOUGHTS:

Everyone has their purpose at birth. Indeed, we are not born racists; we start behaving in a certain way, although at first, we do not understand why we do things. Becoming racist is greatly influenced by our environment and the stereotypes surrounding us.

As children, we coexist with everyone without any problem, but as we grow, we realize that stereotypes consume us, reaching a point where we are perhaps all racist in one way or another. But for now, for many of us, does racism begin with criticizing ourselves, by not accepting ourselves as we are? Of course, we must demand more in the things that we can improve since this is a development for ourselves. Still, there are aspects of ourselves that we only want to change to comply with the stereotypes that surround us, no matter how much hurt we can inflict on ourselves.

Stereotypes are one of the primary causes of racism; many people no longer live to be happy but rather to meet the expectations of others. Sometimes we try to attract attention or look like someone in particular to meet society's standards. Often we belittle or reject those who are far from what we expected them to be. Perhaps we are not comfortable with our appearance. Maybe sometimes or almost always, we dislike our physical appearance, but that is not a reason to be racist, discriminate, or disrespect anyone.

A full moon is visible in the upper left portion of the image, set against a twilight sky that transitions from a pale blue at the top to a darker blue near the horizon. Below the horizon, the ocean is visible with a wave breaking in the foreground, creating white foam. The overall scene is serene and contemplative.

DAYANA'S THOUGHTS:

Stereotypes are one of the leading causes of racism; many people live to meet the expectations of others, trying to appear something they aren't and belittling other people for not being as the world wants them to be. One time, I suffered from discrimination and stereotyping because I didn't know the English language, and the principal of my son's school ignored me and just rudely said, "I don't know Spanish."

My children and I have suffered from racism often in my community for not understanding the language spoken here.

DOULA SUPPORT FOR BIRTHING FOLX

I remember when I thanked my doula for being there for me, my partner, and my baby during our labor and delivery. I told her, “I think we are good...you can go home, and we will call you if we need anything.” I felt empowered thanking her and being able to release her back into her own life because we had done it; I had done it! I felt confident and capable as a person starting my journey as a parent no matter what.

There were times after that when I did not feel empowered or strong in this new role. I didn't feel empowered when I had difficulties nursing my baby, even though I'm a trained professional and have supported those in similar circumstances. I didn't feel empowered when I was sleep-deprived or starving. I especially didn't feel empowered when I went to the pediatrician.

That day, I felt stripped of my power and natural ability to intuit my baby's needs. I was told your baby is “jaundiced and severely underweight. This calls for formula and immediate admission to the hospital.”

Still, in my head, I heard only a tiny voice saying, “but NO... our milk is coming in! Please...” While this happened, a batch of fresh fry bread and pinto beans were being made for us, only to be put in the fridge for another day when we could eat together again as a family.

I felt empowered, however, when my milk came in despite the immense stress! It came in as the baby was admitted into the small neo-natal unit. I pumped 4 ounces using their hospital-grade pump without difficulty! That was the success of my life as a new parent, next to delivering a healthy baby of 8 lbs, 3 ounces, and 22 inches long.

WHAT IS DOULA???

A doula is a trained professional who provides continuous support during labor and delivery. Typically, a doula meets with the birthing parent on more than one visit before labor begins and stays present throughout the entire birthing process. Doulas are trained in ways that offer emotional and physical support to the birthing family or individual.

This continuity of care, or, in other words, staying present throughout the labor, is an essential factor in helping the birthing parent feel safe and supported during the entire birthing process.

THERE ARE OTHER TYPES OF DOULAS, TOO, LIKE:

Full-spectrum Doulas support birthing folks mentally, emotionally, and physically starting from preconception and throughout all pregnancy, labor, delivery, and postpartum stages.

Postpartum Doulas support during the postpartum period or 4th trimester after a baby has been born. They support new parents mentally and emotionally, along with ceremonies, support with infant feeding, and house organization.

Grief or Bereavement Doulas are trained to help folks grieve, or mourn the loss of their babies, whether that loss is through miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion, or a diagnosis that means the baby will not live long after birth.

HOW LONG HAVE DOULAS BEEN AROUND?

Doulas have been around since human beings gave given birth. Doulas are simply

the nurturing support to those giving life or grieving an infant's life.

HOW CAN A DOULA HELP YOU?

Doulas are great in advocating for a safe and educated pregnancy and birth experience. Doulas are often skilled in many methods to help create a space of calmness and security during these different stages of pregnancy, labor, and delivery, as well as during the postpartum period. Doulas, however, cannot prescribe or diagnose individuals and DO NOT deliver babies.

HOW CAN YOU FIND A DOULA? HOW DO YOU BECOME A DOULA?

[NEW MEXICO DOULA DIRECTORY](#)

[TEWA WOMEN UNITED FULL SPECTRUM DOULA TRAINING](#)

[BIRTHING FROM WITHIN](#)

[INDIGENOUS WOMEN RISING](#)



FATHERS BELONG HERE TOO

BY ZACH

For me, once I learned I was to be a new father, it was important that I woodwork a cradleboard for my child. That is traditionally the male/father/uncle role in Navajo culture. Very few people still practice making their own cradleboards and usually just buy one from the local flea market or trading post. So to track down this knowledge, I needed to follow a medicine man for several months and collect stories from him and other men who had created their child's cradleboards. I prepared the cradleboard for several weeks prior to my partner giving birth. When she went into labor, I brought the cradleboard with me. I also designed the birth space. We gave birth in a traditional Navajo hogan, with no electricity or running water. So weeks before the birth of our child, I also hauled water, food, wood for the stove, and medical supplies for the midwife. I arranged for my friend to weave her sash belt (to hang and squat during birth and belly bind postpartum). I was also alternating with the

doula, providing physical support during the 8 hours of labor in the hogan. As is customary in my culture and this ceremony, I was not allowed to be in the room at the time of birth. I supported my partner until the last hour when I stepped out of the hogan to continue cooking and getting supplies ready. Once our child was born, I rejoined my partner, the midwife, doula, and other female relatives to meet our son. We had an hour of skin-to-skin time with him before we wrapped him up, stoked the fire, and placed him in his cradleboard for the night. Men's roles at birth are vital and help connect us to our partners and children. Since we don't have the same biological or physical changes as the birthing parent, I need to understand the traditional roles of the non-birthing parent to prepare myself and connect to my newborn.

DEFINITION OF TOXIC MASCULINITY:

A set of attitudes and ways of behaving stereotypically associated with or expected of men is regarded as harming men and society as a whole.

DEFINITION OF HEALTHY MASCULINITY:

When men are in balance and welcoming femininity into their beliefs, attitudes, or ways of behaving. A belief that harmony can only be achieved when masculinity and femininity work together in harmony.

ADVICE FOR HOME VISITOR WHEN INTERACTING WITH FATHERS

Don't act surprised that a father is attending home visiting

Be trauma-informed and do not assume things about the type of abuse a father could have gone through (i.e., physical, sexual, etc.)

Be familiar with and refer fathers to hands-on activities such as hunting, butchering, cooking, and farming. These practical skills help fathers engage with their partners and children, especially in Indigenous communities.

Ensure that male home visitors like fathers, uncles, and two-spirit folks are on staff.

Tell fathers about groups that offer Father Talking Circles to support them in their journey.

Be informed and share what you know about cradleboard kits that fathers can assemble and learn about spiritual components and safe sleep.

FEELING CALM & CENTERED WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH

BY ASPEN

FREE PLACES TO FIND A FEW MOMENTS OF PEACE:

A MOMENT OF CALM WITH SOFT MURMUR

A website and smartphone app with ambient sounds to wash away distractions.

FIVE-MINUTE MINDFULNESS MEDITATION FOR POSITIVE ENERGY

VIRTUAL VACATION

A YouTube channel with “virtual windows” into cities worldwide! You can look into a virtual window of an airport in Tokyo, downtown Atlanta at night, look out of a hotel window in London, and many other cool places. Pretend you’re on vacation somewhere for five minutes to recharge!



PLAYLIST TO FIND PEACE AND GOOD VIBES:

Nonsequitur by Ariel Pink

Maya by Ahmed Malek

Je T'aime by Romare

El Amor by Ké Tealles

Afro Blue by Melaie De Biasio

Unspoken Word by The Soil

Baiana by Barbatuques

Woman Is a Word by Empress Of

Mountains by Sean C. Johnson

In the Kitchen (Acapella)

Work by Charlotte Day Wilson

Cradle Song by Sharon Burch

CONTRIBUTORS

DAYANA

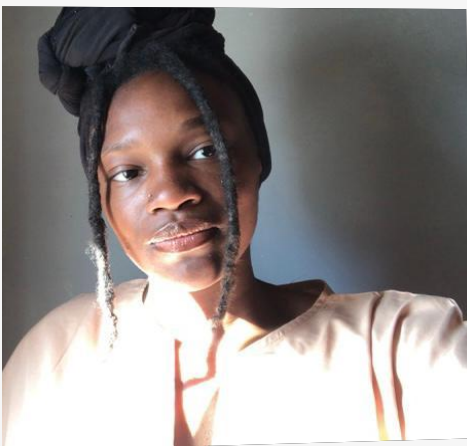
Dayana Zaragoza is 28 years old and originally from Chihuahua, Mexico. She is the mother to three wonderful children that she loves infinitely. They are the ones that motivate her to continue fighting for a better world every day, never giving up. She considers Albuquerque home now since coming to this country with her husband. She fights so that her children and future grandchildren will live in a world without racism and discrimination. She is a persevering person who fights for her dreams and tries to reach her clear goals, always with the help of God and her family.



Aspen D. Mirabel is originally from Taos Pueblo, New Mexico. She considers home where her family is and where her placenta has dried. She is the mama to a son, to whom she loves witnessing all of his “first-time” experiences.



Perla Magdalena Lopez Lazcano is Mexican, originally from the state of Chihuahua. She lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but there is not a day that passes when she does not miss where she was raised, along with her family and friends. She is a wife and the mother of a precious two-week-old baby. She is learning to be a mother while living in a country so very different from her country of origin. She always hopes to be able to look forward and never give up because she is just beginning her life. She tries to see the happiness that exists each day. She believes being a mother is the most immense and honest love you can feel for your children.

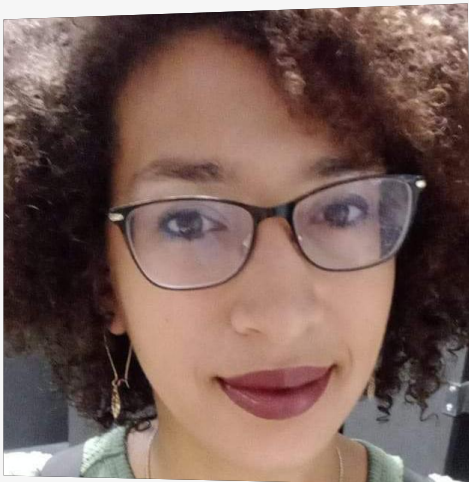


Ayniysh'Yah Thomas is from Georgia, the peach state where peaches grow as plump as the letter "P!" She now lives in northern New Mexico, the land of enchantment where the skies are bigger than dreams, boundaries are unknown, and the clouds look like milk in the sky. She has lots of children, but not nearly enough... and her favorite part of being a mother is being able to love them and support them unconditionally.

CONTRIBUTORS



Zachariah Ben, born and raised in Shiprock, New Mexico, is 26 years old. He is of the Diné (Navajo) tribe. He and his wife have an 18-month-old son. His favorite part of being a parent is knowing you planted a seed that you get to nourish, care for, love, and guide as they grow, while you grow together as a family.



Vanessa R Eiland is originally from and currently lives in Alamogordo, New Mexico. She has three children, two boys, and one girl. Her favorite part of being a parent is watching her kids grow into incredible human beings.



Jitter Ressler was born in Rapid City, South Dakota, and is an enrolled member of Pine Ridge Reservation. Santa Fe, New Mexico, has been their home for 13 years. Jitter has five children, Rhylee, August, Adonijah, Nahara, and Emilia. Jitter loves and is honored to be their mom. Watching them grow is the best part of parenting them.



Jamaia Houston is originally from Camden County Georgia, a small town rooted in traditional and military values. She grew up gardening in her backyard and ate self-caught fish with most meals. Her home is now in her heart; it is with her husband and children in a land of peace and justice. She resides in North West New Mexico surrounded by my sheep, goats, and beautiful mountains. She has birthed one child, with another on the way, has been a wife and teacher for many years, and feels like a mama to many. Her favorite part of parenting is learning how to break generational curses, loving her children to the moon and back, and training them up in the way that they should go. Plus, who doesn't love baby faces?!

