

*Something Happened In Our Park: Standing Together After Gun Violence* by Ann Hazzard, Marianne Celano, and Marietta Collins Illustrated by Keith Henry Brown. All three authors are psychologists focused on children's behavioral health, they bring expertise on how to be developmentally appropriate while discussing tough topics.

**Summary:**

When Miles finds out his older cousin Keisha was shot in the leg during a concert in their neighborhood park, he becomes frightened and anxious. He even pleads with his parents to move to another neighborhood.

His parents point out that since the factory located in their community closed, there has been more violence. But they also remind Miles of all the things that make their neighborhood special, and the ways that people take care of each other.

Miles still can't shake the feeling that he's not safe, especially when he hears gunshots on a different day. But Keisha helps him discover a couple of ways to "stay calm and keep living our lives."

Some time later, Keisha lets the family know that she's getting involved in a neighborhood group that is pushing for solutions to gun violence. Their advocacy leads to the Mayor funding a "Peace in the Streets" project, with youth programs and a new factory opening that will provide much-needed jobs.

Keisha seems to have returned to her cheerful self, but Miles is still struggling to get through his fear of visiting the park again. His mother reminds him of the positive changes that are happening. Plus, she tells him, they can't just avoid the park forever. "If we don't claim it, who will?" she asks.

Miles agrees to go to a festival at the park, and sees signs of the Peace in the Streets program being put into place. After taking part in a neighborhood art camp, he finds his own way to join Keisha in working for peace in their community.

**Tips for discussing gun violence from the authors of *Something Happened In Our Park*:**

- 1) Age-appropriate discussions about gun violence can ease children's fears. However, watching graphic footage of news stories can be frightening to children. Limit children's exposure to these.
- 2) Follow your child's lead in discussion about violence. After reading the book, say something like "Miles was worried after the park shooting. Have you ever felt like that?" When violence is in the news in your community, ask what your child has heard before diving into what happened.
- 3) When kids are stressed about what might happen to them, remind them of ways to become calmer. They might take deep breaths or draw pictures like Miles does, hum or sing, snuggle with a pet, picture a safe place, or return to a fond memory.

