Dear Mama,

Stop for a second, take a deep breath in...and exhale when ready. It is okay to breathe for a second. The children are okay, your family is okay, and you need to ensure you are okay. Being a mother is like being a superhero, but your arch nemesis is anxiety; that's how it feels to me most days.

I became a mother at 18 years old, I was essentially a teen mom. I didn't know what kind of mom I wanted to be or what parenting style I wanted to use; none of that mattered. I just knew that I wanted to love my child(ren) and wanted them to love me as well. Leading with love and treating children like individual people is a key that I think moms forget. You are human, and you have feelings, and so does your child. My mother instilled many things in me during my childhood, but one thing that sticks out the most to me as an adult is that my opinion mattered as a child, my thoughts were validated, and my grievances were heard. Allowing your child to learn about themselves and the world in a way that makes sense to them is so important.

For spring break this year, I took my children to Universal Studios, and my oldest son asked me why I kept taking pictures of everything, and we then conversed about memories. The legacy that I want to leave with my children is the experiences that they are living and the memories that we are creating. I believe that it is very important to let your kids experience the world, near and far. Things that may seem small, like giving my sons on Valentine's Day, to show them that they are allowed to be loved and shown affection; it's not "just for girls." I want to leave with my son the legacy of love. I love my children with every fiber of my being, and it is reciprocated. It is important to me that the love I felt as a child continues for generations. It is especially important that I instill in my boys, who will one day turn into men, that emotions make you human, vulnerability is okay, and that it is alright to have feelings.

Vonyce