



# Northmead's Reading Newsletter

## April 2020

Fourth Edition

The UN estimates that 1.25 billion children are currently at home as a result of the coronavirus lockdown. In millions of homes across the globe this very minute, parents are juggling like never before as they struggle to teach their children while earning a living. If I were put on the spot and asked the question "What is the best educational activity a parent can do during lockdown with their children?" my answer would confidently be 'Reading', be it a book, magazine, newspaper, recipe, back of a cereal packet.

Being cooped up together can be stressful for many and at present we do not have a clearly defined exit point. Reading, as an activity, can be therapeutic and comforting. Books, when you can't go out are a great escape.

Lots of authors, illustrators and publishers have risen to the challenge of keeping children entertained and engaged during these difficult times. Below I have listed some 'bookish' sites which may be of use.

<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

<https://bygosh.com/> (for some classic children's literature)

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk>

<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses-catch-up/>



Live draw- a- longs by famous children's authors are also available

<https://www.jimfield.me/draw>

<http://www.robbiddulph.com/draw-with-rob>



Being cut off from social interaction can be depressing for children who are used to spending their days surrounded by their friends at school. Comic writing can be a perfect pick me up.

These books were shortlisted for the 2020 Laugh Out Loud Book Awards. The Laugh Out Loud Book Awards (the Lollies) celebrates the best and funniest children's books in the UK and Ireland, voted for by children.

They may be worth a try:

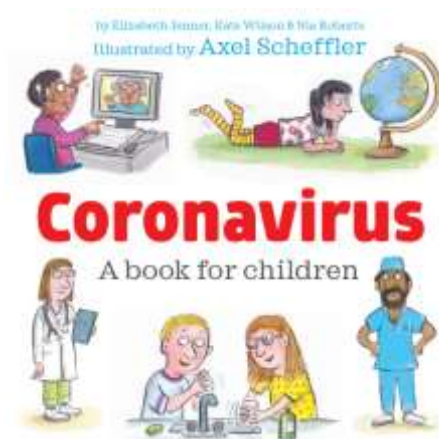


## Ages 6-8 Shortlist



## Ages 9-13 Shortlist





Coming soon on Twitter  
 (@JuniorNorthmead ) staff  
 good read recommendations.



The publishers at Nosy Crow have made this book available to download for free to help children to understand more about the coronavirus. It is very well written, clear and easily understandable being particularly aimed at primary aged children. It can be read on screen or printed out.

The book had expert input from Professor Graham Medley of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, so we can assume the information to be reliable.

The book aims to answer the following key questions in child-friendly language:

- What is the coronavirus?
- How do you catch the coronavirus?
- What happens if you catch the coronavirus?
- Why are people worried about catching the coronavirus?
- Is there a cure for the coronavirus?
- Why are some places we normally go to closed?
- What can I do to help?
- What's going to happen next?

Find it at:

<https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-today-free-information-book-explaining-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler/>

Thank you to all those parents and children who have already filled in the reading survey sent out last month. If you would like to offer your views you can do so by clicking on the following links:

Children's survey:-

<https://forms.gle/qVjgEhi9nz98KS219>

Parent survey:-

<https://forms.gle/WGEfJb3xdwypFfD66>





**Some parents posed queries about reading at Northmead and generally. I will attempt to answer some of these questions in each issue of our newsletter**

**My child doesn't like to read. Just doesn't seem to be his thing - which is sad.**

*It is worth trying to work out why your child doesn't like to read. "Any boy can and will get excited about reading, if you make it useful, fun, and funny," says John Scieszka, author of The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales.*

*Often boys may be more engaged by non-fiction. He might not like made-up stories. Try non-fiction books so your child is reading for a purpose or for knowledge; or choose one that's related to a hobby or an interest. Don't limit your child to traditional books, offer your child comics, graphic novels, newspapers, magazines. Funny books can also often appeal to boys. Is it that your child is actually afraid of reading because he thinks it's difficult? Share the reading together. Or just read to your child to start with. Help your child associate reading with feeling good. Being with a caring adult who has taken the time to read together is a great way to encourage a love of books. If reading is always associated with discomfort, failure and stress, it will always be disliked.*

**My child struggles to read fluently. What can I do to help?**

*A fluent reader reads smoothly and with expression. Limited fluency, or "dysfluent reading", demands so much energy to work out what the words are that there is little opportunity to think about what they mean. The child can read, but without getting the gist of what it was all about. An idea to develop fluency and comprehension could be **paired reading**. This is when an adult reads with a child to help model good reading and to support the child's own efforts. There are several kinds of paired reading*

**Assisted reading**

*Read a part of the text and let the child take over at an agreed point. You read every second page, for example, or, if the going is very slow, alternate lines or paragraphs.*

**Chorus reading**

*Parent and child read together out loud. This way the child gets a sense of your intonation, where you stop and pause and how you add expression. Listen closely to ensure that your child is able to read with you most of the time. If she/he is unable to read with you too frequently the reading material is too difficult.*

**Echo reading**

*This is effective for children experiencing significant difficulties with fluency. First you read the sentence. Then you and the child read the sentence together. Finally the child reads the sentence alone.*

**My child isn't a keen reader. I found if I push too much my child resists even more!**

*I would agree that if you nag your children about reading they are likely to regard reading as a chore, something to get out of the way and move on to something else. Remember that all reading counts – recipes, instructions picture books, comics, audiobooks. Don't make them finish a book they're really not interested in, because then it becomes a chore. Follow your children's interests; there really is a book for everyone. Try to read together for 10 minutes a day-it doesn't need to be all at once- a couple of minutes here and there is better than not at all.*

# Book of the Month- April



## What is the book about?

Toto the cat and her brother Silver live in a townhouse in London. Toto is almost totally blind, and learned to trust her senses from a ninja cat-master who taught her back in Italy where they were born. By day, Toto and Silver seem to be ordinary cats, but by night, they love to have adventures!

One evening, news reaches Toto that a king cobra has escaped from London Zoo! Together with help from a very posh rat and two hungry tigers, Toto and Silver must investigate.

## Who is the author?

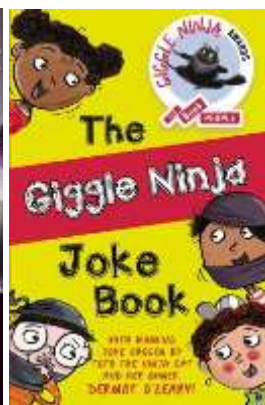
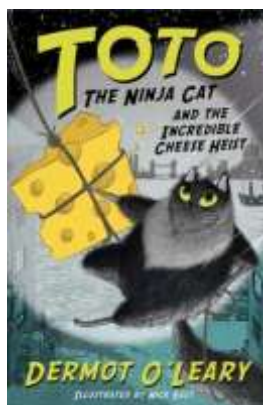
### **Dermot O'Leary**

Toto the Ninja Cat and the Great Snake Escape is the first book Dermot O'Leary has written for children, and was inspired by his real-life cats. Dermot is best known for being a television presenter. He started his career on T4 for Channel 4, and went on to present Big Brother's Little Brother. In 2007 Dermot hosted The X Factor and continued to present it for eight more series. He regularly presents Unicef's SoccerAid, and is also the host of the National Television Awards.



When talking about his books Dermot said: "The idea for Toto came to me when my wife and I rescued two stray cats from an olive grove in Italy. One of them, Toto, has been blind from birth, but we quickly realised she had ninja like reactions. Like a lot of cat owners, we like to imagine our pets having secret lives when we're asleep. So before I knew it I was writing about Toto and her brother, Silver's nocturnal adventures around London. I'm from a big reading family and children's books were a massive part of my upbringing. I wanted to write a book that my niece Josette, who is addicted to reading, would love. I really hope that Josette, and all the children who pick it up enjoy reading the adventures of a little Italian underdog (cat).

## What other books has this author written?



## Accelerated reader information

### Quiz number for this book

234213

### Book Level

5.0

### Colour Band

Light Blue