

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01HRS ON 30 APRIL 2020

Reading and traditional children's activities surge in lockdown – but significant minority are at risk of falling behind

- *Screen time has increased by two hours a day for young children since lockdown began*
- *But traditional activities including reading surge back into popularity*
- *Many say lockdown has meant they've read their child a bedtime story for the first time*
- *But 22% of families are not doing any home education with their children and 14% are not reading with their children*
- *Figures released ahead of BookTrust's annual Pyjamarama campaign – featuring parenting Vlogger and Author Louise Pentland along with Cressida Cowell and more of the UK's favourite children's authors – which takes place on 1 May*

Embargoed until 30 April 2020: New research reveals that 34% of parents say their children are being read to more during lockdown, and more are taking part in other traditional activities such as board games (62%), arts and crafts (60%) and listening to music (51%). But 22% of parents say that neither they or their partner are doing any home education with their children during the lockdown, and 14% of parents are not reading with or to their children.

The research, from [BookTrust](#), the UK's largest children's reading charity, suggests that whilst many families are dealing with lockdown by taking part in new activities (both on and off line) a significant minority of families are struggling to engage with education and reading.

Unsurprisingly screen time is booming – as digital devices are now being used for educational purposes and socialising with friends and families, with gaming (68%), school-work (54%), and watching tv (49%) the most popular with children aged 4– 11. Screen time amongst 4-11s has increased by 121 minutes a day, with 10-11 year olds' screen time up by 151 minutes. Parents are also engaging with online activities to entertain and educate their children, such as Joe Wicks' daily PE class (49%).

The research shows that 47% of parents say they are seeing their children reading more by themselves since lockdown; 34% of parents say their children are being read to more; and that more than one in ten parents (11%) say that the extra time at home has meant that they or their partner have read their child a bedtime story for the first time ever. But 28% of families questioned said that they are 'never' reading bedtime stories during lockdown, a proportion that increases according to social grade (11% from social group A, compared with 32% from social group E). A small minority of children (6%) are not reading for fun at all.

Parents are generally finding the lack of school structure tough. Over half (54%) of parents say they are finding it hard to stick to a timetable for their primary-school aged children and three quarters (75%) say they are taking a 'flexible' approach to school-work. Worryingly, 22% of parents say that neither they nor their partner are home-educating their children during the current lockdown.

The research has been conducted ahead of this year's annual [Pyjamarama](#) on 1 May – a day for families to wear pyjamas, enjoy reading and story-based activities together, and raise funds to get books and support to those in need.

On the day, BookTrust will be working with some of the nation's best-loved authors, illustrators and well-known faces to put together an exciting day of live events – all in pyjamas. Pyjamarama will

feature characters including Horrid Henry and Tracy Beaker and well-known faces including Cressida Cowell, Floella Benjamin, Ed Vere, Candy Gourlay and Chris Riddell. The exciting day of live events includes crafts, drawing and storytime – all in pyjamas. Visit www.booktrust.org.uk to find out more.

Gemma Malley, Director at BookTrust comments, *“We are so delighted that many families are making the most of this challenging time to spend time reading together, with one in ten families reading their child a bedtime story for the first time. Reading together isn’t just great to children’s educational outcomes; it also builds resilience, confidence and opens up conversations on difficult issues. With schools closed, reading together has never been more important, which is why we hope families everywhere will enjoy Pyjamarama on 1 May.*

“We’ve made it as easy as possible to get involved – a very relaxed dress code and a whole host of well-known faces sharing stories to entertain children. We’re delighted that many families are rediscovering the bedtime story, but we know that other families are really struggling: key workers, families facing poverty, families who simply don’t have access to laptops and books. Every £1 raised through Pyjamarama will help us get books to families via foodbanks, so that we can help ensure that every child can experience the wonder of a bedtime story.”

Louise Pentland Author, Vlogger and Optimistic Mum comments, *“Coronavirus has impacted so many families in so many different ways – including my own. But no matter what, reading has always provided the perfect escape. It gives us time as a family to cuddle up on the sofa and take us on magical adventures to far away wonderful places. Perfect at a time like this.... And to get the girls to sleep.*

That’s why I’m SO excited to be celebrating Pyjamarama this Friday. A guilt free day in your pyjamas and tuning into BookTrust for an enormous day of fun – yes please!”

BookTrust is raising money to get more than 30,000 copies of the children’s book, *My Pet Star* by Corinne Averiss, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw, published by Orchard Books, to families via foodbanks.

– ENDS –

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the research

The research was conducted by Opinium Research in April 2020 with 2,000 UK parents of children aged in primary school, aged 4-11.

About Pyjamarama

[Pyjamarama](#) is supported by Jacqueline Wilson and Nick Sharratt's Tracy Beaker (Penguin Random House Children's) and Catboy, Owlette and Gekko from Entertainment One's PJ Masks.

Pyjamarama will take place on Friday 1 May 2020 and we're asking children around the country to wear pyjamas, get involved in our fun activities and, if they can, make a donation to help those who may not have access to books and stories in their homes.

This year, we hope to give out copies of *My Pet Star* by Corrinne Averiss and Rosalind Beardshaw, published by Orchard Books, through food banks, and we're also developing other ways to send out books so we can help as many families as possible.

About BookTrust

BookTrust is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. Their early language development is supported and they also do better at school.

We are the UK's largest children's reading charity; each year we reach 3.9 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives.

We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. booktrust.org.uk