**“*ALEXA, READ A BEDTIME STORY*”**

* *Quarter of UK parents use tech such as home assistants to give bedtime stories*
* *65% give child time on smartphones, YouTube, tablets and TV before sleeping*
* *UK’s leading reading charity warns against danger of replacing story time with tech*
* *Bestselling author of Horrid Henry, Francesca Simon, backs BookTrust’s* [*Pyjamarama*](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/pyjamarama/) *campaign calling on parents to ditch tech and rediscover the bedtime story*

**Thursday 23 May 2019**:New research reveals that one in four (26%) British parents[[1]](#footnote-1) have swapped books for tech at bedtime, using home assistants, apps, Facetime and voice notes to give their child a story at night.

The study commissioned by the UK’s leading reading charity, BookTrust, reveals a growing reliance on digital storytelling and tech, which the charity warns risks children missing out on the proven benefits of bedtime stories.

Figures show that while half of UK parents (49%) aim to share a story with their child every night, just over a quarter (28%) manage to do so. A third (31%) say work or commuting stops them getting home in time, while one in five (20%) simply feel “too busy”.

The poll suggests that tech is picking up the slack, as 65% of parents admit to giving their offspring time on a smartphone, tablet, YouTube or in front of the TV, instead of sharing a bedtime story.

For parents who read stories with their child at night, tech is now a widely established part of that routine, as over half (53%) say they would choose to use a smartphone, tablet, app or YouTube for the task.

The increasing normalisation of tech at bedtime may be unsurprising, as the survey also reveals that 44% of children aged 10 or younger now own a tablet, while one in 10 (12%) own both a tablet and a smartphone.

In response, BookTrust and bestselling children’s author of the Horrid Henry series, Francesca Simon, are calling on parents to ditch tech and rediscover the joy of the bedtime story on Friday 7th June by celebrating [Pyjamarama](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/pyjamarama/), a nationwide fundraising campaign by BookTrust.

Pyjamarama asks Brits to donate £1 to wear their pyjamas all day on Friday 7th June and celebrate the bedtime story in any way they like. All funds raised will go towards helping help BookTrust ensure that every child experiences the life changing benefits of access to books and reading.

Francesca Simon, bestselling author, comments: “*Reading a bedtime story together is one of the best experiences a child and parent can share, and something tech cannot replace. The many evenings I spent immersed in books with my son, Joshua, until he was 11, not only inspired me to become a children’s author, but are also some of our best shared memories and gave my son the confidence, curiosity and thirst for learning that has set him up for life”.*

Simon continues: “*I’m supporting BookTrust’s Pyjamarama campaign because I’m hoping that on Friday 7th June, families will ditch the tech, pay a pound to put on their PJs and rediscover the joy of a bedtime story. Together we can help to raise money so that BookTrust can reach families everywhere with books and support, to ensure that no child IS missing out on the life changing benefits and joys of reading for pleasure.”*

Gemma Malley, BookTrust Director, adds: “*Life has never been busier and many parents are finding it harder and harder to fit in bedtime stories. I know from experience that it can be tempting to replace reading to your child with time on a device, but swapping books for tech can have profound consequences.”*

*“However, just ten minutes of reading a book together a day makes such a difference – it helps build children’s language, resilience, confidence and imagination and is an amazing way families to bond. That’s why we want children and adults alike to celebrate Pyjamarama on Friday 7th June and help BookTrust in its tireless work to make sure that even more children get bedtime stories”.*

Schools, nurseries, businesses and individuals can sign up for Pyjamarama fundraising packs by visiting: [booktrust.org.uk/pyjamarama](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/pyjamarama). All monies raised will go towards funding BookTrust’s work in supporting more families. For just £25, BookTrust could provide 15 pre-school children living in women’s refuge centres with their own book pack.

– **ENDS** –

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About the research**

The research was conducted by Fly Research in April 2019 with 1,000 UK parents with children aged 10 years or younger.

**About Pyjamarma**

Pyjamarama is supported by Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake’s Matilda (Penguin Random House), Tony Ross and Francesca Simon’s Horrid Henry (Orion Publishing, part of Hachette Children’s Group), Jacqueline Wilson and Nick Sharratt’s Tracy Beaker (Penguin Random House Children’s) and Ben and Holly from Entertainment One’s Ben & Holly’s Little Kingdom.

**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 3.4 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. Visit: [booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk).

Funds raised from BookTrust’s Pyjamarama campaign could go towards:

* £25 could provide 15 pre-school children living in women’s refuge centres with their own book pack
* £50 could provide 6 families from deprived communities with additional support through their children’s centre to develop a reading habit
* £100 could help us work with a struggling secondary school to support teenagers re-engage with reading
* £1,000 could enable us to support 740 children with a disability that impacts motor skills, providing them with specially created touch and feel books, finger puppets and guidance for parents
1. Research conducted by Fly Research in April 2019 with 1,000 UK parents with children aged 10 years or younger [↑](#footnote-ref-1)