



Coronawho?

By Claire Standley, Hannah Smith & Eleanor Southgate



It was a lovely spring Saturday. Elsie wanted to go to the zoo, but Mummy said they couldn't.

"Why not, Mummy?" asked Elsie.

"Because of the coronavirus," Mummy replied.

"Coronawho?" Elsie thought to herself. But she didn't say anything.

Later that day, Elsie went shopping with Daddy. Lots of people were wearing funny masks over their faces. Daddy said they shouldn't stand too close to anyone.

"Why, Daddy?" Elsie asked.

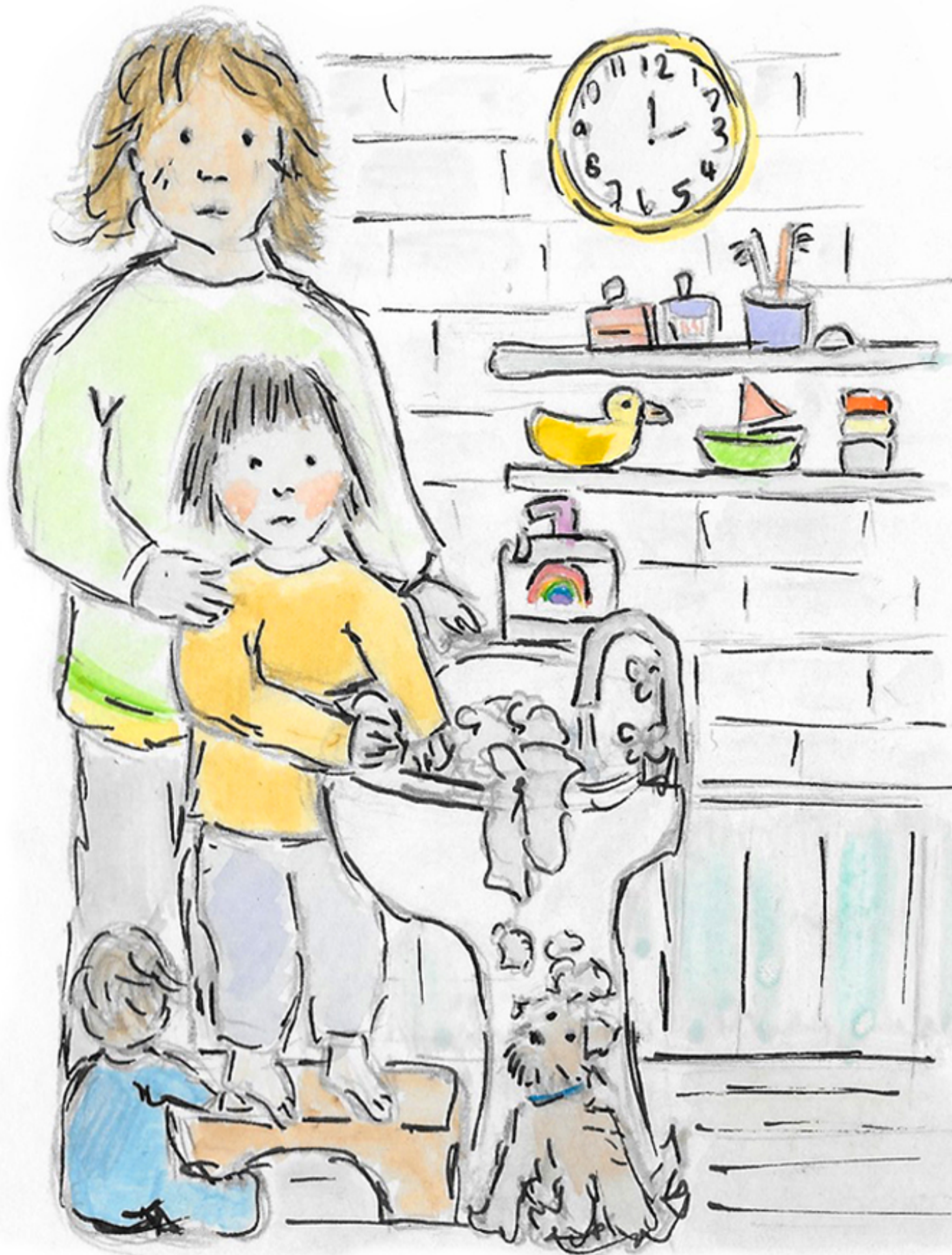
"Because of the coronavirus, Elsie," Daddy said gently.

"Coronawho?" Elsie thought to herself. But she didn't say anything.



When they got home, Mummy made sure that Elsie washed her hands with soap for a very long time.

It was quite boring, but Mummy said it was very important they all washed their hands carefully every time. So she did it.





The next day was Sunday, and Elsie was excited about going to see Granny and Grandad. But Mummy said they couldn't visit for a while.

"Why not, Mummy?" asked Elsie.

Mummy sighed. "Because of the coronavirus."

"Coronawho?" Elsie thought to herself. But she didn't say anything.

Elsie wanted to go to the playground. But Daddy said it was closed.

"Why, Daddy?" asked Elsie.

Daddy answered, "Because of the coronavirus."

"Coronawho?" Elsie thought to herself. But she didn't say anything.



On Monday, Elsie woke up early. She was excited about going to nursery and seeing all her friends. But Mummy said nursery would be closed for a while.

"But **whyyyyy**, Mummy?" cried Elsie. She was getting a bit fed up.

Mummy looked at Elsie. "Because of the coronavirus," she explained.



This time Elsie spoke up.

"Coronawho?!" she wailed. "I don't know who that is! They must be very mean, to close the zoo, and make us stay away from other people."



Mummy and Daddy exchanged a meaningful look. Then Mummy sat down next to Elsie.

"The coronavirus isn't a person. It's a virus - a tiny germ that makes people sick."

"People can give the germ to each other if they get too close together. It can stick to things like door handles if people cough and sneeze, and then don't wash their hands properly."

"It's not very dangerous for children, but it can be for older people."

"That's why we can't visit Granny and Grandad at the moment."



"I know things feel strange, and it's okay to be confused, or annoyed or sad. Sometimes it helps to talk about the way you feel. Sometimes you might just want a hug.

"But things will get easier. We don't know how long it's going to be like this. But for now, we have to do our best, and help each other follow the rules."





"We can still do lots of the same things, just in a different way."

Elsie thought about that for a moment. "Like what?" she asked.

"Well, why don't we make a zoo in your bedroom with all your toys?" Daddy suggested.

"Good idea!"
said Elsie.

So they did.



And they pretended to be superheros whenever they had to wear a mask.



Trips to the supermarket became super secret missions where they had to make sure they didn't get too close to other people.



They sang
'Happy Birthday'
twice whenever
they washed
their hands.

Elsie thought
that was very
funny because
her birthday
wasn't for
months.

And they spoke to
Granny and Grandad
every Sunday on
Mummy's computer.

Mummy carried it
around the room so
that Grandad could
pretend to be a
dinosaur and chase
Elsie.





Instead of going to the playground, Elsie went outside for a walk.

“Exercising helps to keep our minds and bodies healthy,” Daddy said.

So Elsie jumped in **every** puddle she could find.

And instead of going to nursery, Elsie pretended to be the teacher. She taught Mummy and Daddy how to draw, and count, and do puzzles. Mummy and Daddy took turns going to Elsie's "nursery", because they also had work to do.

"And do you remember why, we're doing all this, Elsie?"
Daddy asked.

Elsie nodded, "Because of the **coronavirus**!"

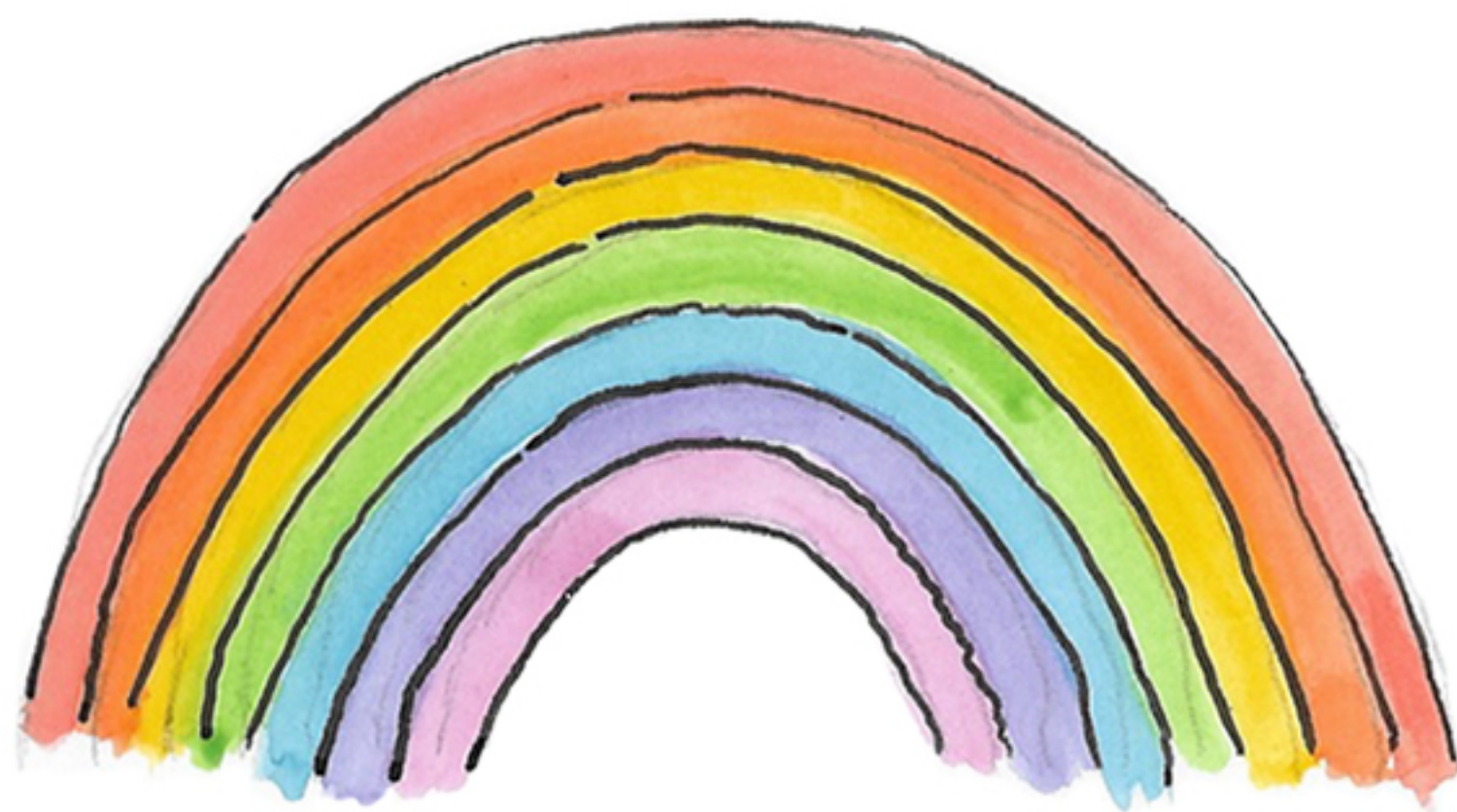




And even though things were still a bit strange, and a bit different, Elsie felt better.

The End





We see rainbows when the sun shines through the rain. When the coronavirus came, people started using rainbows to show that everything is going to be okay.

They are also a way to say thank you to all the people working hard to stop the coronavirus, and helping us to keep our lives as normal as possible until it's over.

Can you spot a rainbow on every page of the book?

Notes for grown-ups

Parents and carers the world over are faced with the daunting challenge of explaining this unprecedented time to our children, often when we are feeling a great deal of confusion and uncertainty ourselves.

We wrote this book to help comfort and guide our children through the disruption and change wrought by this global pandemic. We hope it helps you too, and of course you can use your own words for your child's caregivers, or for grandparents/other elderly loved ones, to make the story more relatable.

Stories can help children to explore and talk about their feelings. Here are some ideas to prompt further discussion:

- Elsie misses going to the zoo and the playground. What things do you miss doing?
- How do you think Elsie feels on page 7? How do you feel when you can't do things because of the coronavirus?
- Elsie and her family think up new ways to have fun - are there things that you like about having to stay at home?



For up-to-date information on the COVID-19 pandemic, visit <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> or your national health agency's website.



About us

Dr Claire Standley is a global public health researcher who specialises in infectious disease preparedness and response. She lives in Heidelberg, Germany with her husband, three-year-old daughter (the inspiration for Elsie!), and one-year-old son.

Dr Hannah Smith is an NHS GP who returned to work from maternity leave as the COVID-19 pandemic gathered pace. She has a special interest in paediatrics and psychology, and a fondness for drawing! She lives in London, UK with her husband and two young boys, Teddy and Stanley.

Dr Eleanor Southgate is a GP in training and Academic Clinical Fellow in Primary Care. Her second son was born at the end of 2019 and, with her partner working antisocial shifts in intensive care, she has spent her maternity leave telling stories to her three-year-old to help him make sense of the changes brought about by the pandemic. She lives in London, UK.

After 20 years of friendship, the authors are now navigating parenthood together. This is their first book.

Dedicated to T, E, B, C, H, C, G, S, P, O and S
With heartfelt thanks to Hatty Morris and Richard Southgate

