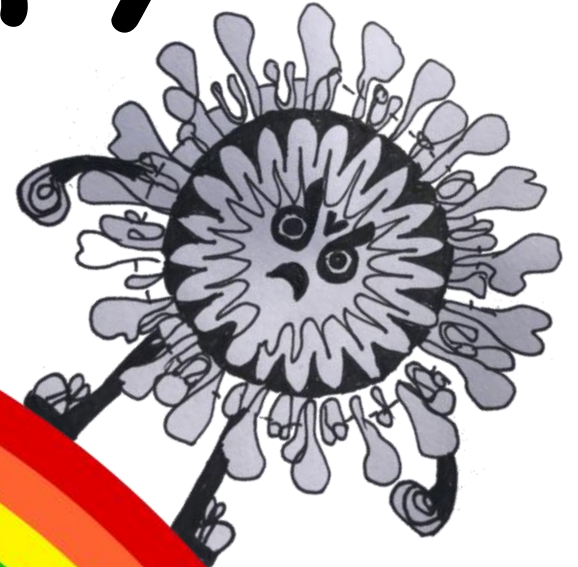


BUGSY BATTY

The Coronavirus



by

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To the Adults

At this time of the Covid19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, it is so important to talk to children openly about the changes they are seeing. To a lot of children seeing people wearing masks when they have not seen these before or empty shopping aisles and hearing misinformation from friends can be rather scary. Children will have lots of questions and we need to give them the space and time to ask these and to answer them as honestly as possible. If we don't know the answers then it's okay for us, as adults, to say we don't know but most importantly we need to help our children express their fears and anxieties and to reassure them in an age appropriate way.

Maybe they might have their own ideas. They could draw a picture or maybe even colour in the pictures in this book while you talk about what is happening. The pictures particularly are focussing on the expressions children will be seeing with them so that adults can talk to children about the different faces and discuss the feelings and emotions at the time whilst being sensitive to the child's age. Importantly, as adults we need to make sure we have space to process our own emotions too so that we don't pass on our fears to the children but we hope this book will help adults broach the subject with younger children.

Moreover, give children practical guidance such as reminding them that they can help too by keeping healthy; help them understand how important it is to wash their hands and catch, bin and kill their coughs and sneezes. Maybe they could come up with their own song to do this.

This book has been put together really quickly to help at this time of need. Each page has a rainbow on as a sign of hope that this time will pass reflecting the many millions of rainbows that children have been drawing all around the country to share some brightness in the world. Over all else, it is dedicated to our front line keyworkers who are risking themselves to help us get through this. To them, we owe a huge debt of gratitude.

Bugsy Batty turned up one day. He didn't look like anything anyone had seen before. In fact, he was virtually impossible to see but everyone knew he was there.

Henry was five and he had heard people talking about Bugsy Batty, the Coronavirus and everyone was trying to keep out of his way.

"Mummy" said Henry, "Who is Bugsy Batty?"

"He's a virus." said Mummy, "He's not good to be around."

"Why?" asked Henry.

"Because he can make people poorly" said Mummy.



Mummy seemed a lot busier than normal. Daddy had started working from home. But Henry was curious.

"How does Buggy Batty make people poorly?" Henry asked.

"Well," said Mummy, "he can make people cough a lot and some people get very hot. Others get headaches and other people get lots of aches. Everyone is different."

"He's a pain in the neck!" added Daddy looking up from his computer.

"Why?" asked Henry.

"Because we've all got to change the way we live to stay safe." said Daddy.



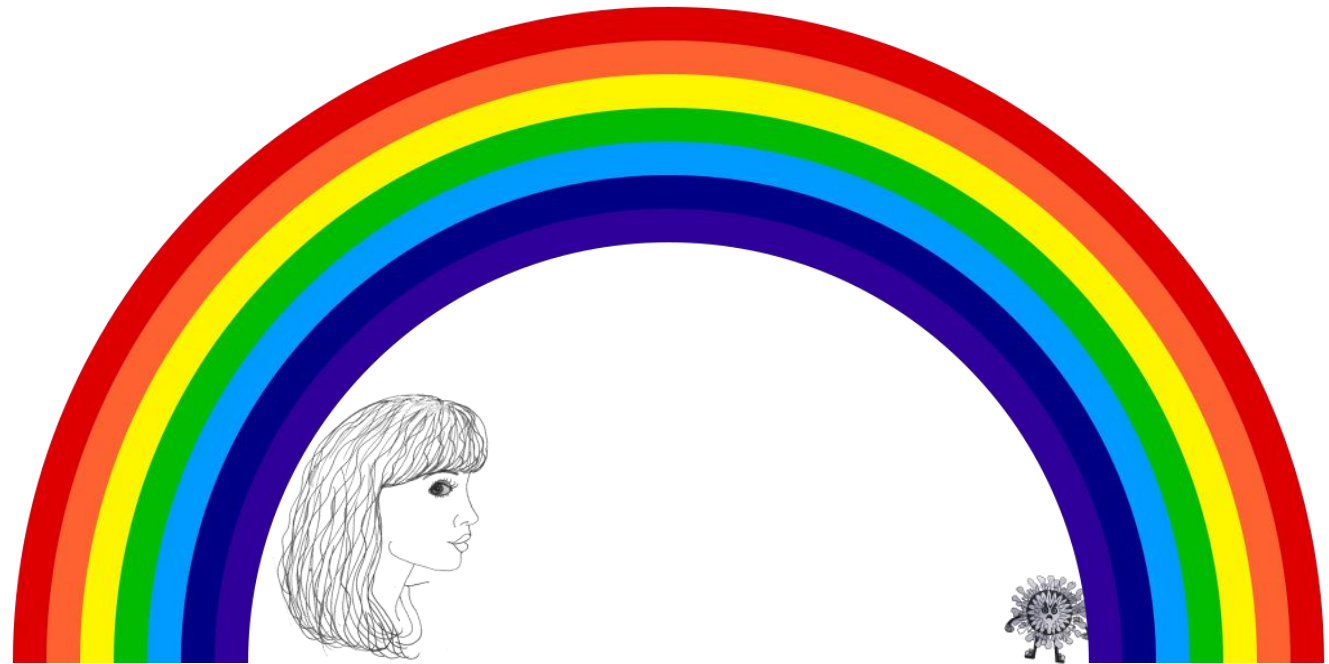
Henry wondered what that meant. He went and found his older sister, Alexia.

"Alexia" said Henry "Why do we need to change the way we live to stay safe?"

"Because of Buggy Batty" said Alexia. "He's a coronavirus and it means we have to wash our hands and stay at home a bit."

"Wash our hands?" asked Henry, "Why?"

"Because the soap melts Buggy's outer skin." said Alexia "And then he falls to pieces and can't make people poorly."



Henry went off to wash his hands with soap. Oliver was coming out of the bathroom.

"I'm going to wash my hands." said Henry "To melt Buggy Batty so he can't make me poorly."

"That's a great idea." said Oliver. "You can sing Happy Birthday while you do that if you want. If you sing it twice and wash the front and back of your hands and each finger and your thumb really well then Buggy Batty won't stand a chance."

"Ok" said Henry "That's what I'll do."



He started to wash his hands very carefully. "If everyone washed their hands then would no-one get poorly?" he asked Oliver.

"Well not everybody but it will help." replied Oliver "What also helps if we all stay apart."

Henry thought some more. He went back downstairs and found his other brother Gregory.



"Gregory, why do we need to stay apart?" asked Henry.

"Because Buggy Batty can jump from one person to another if we're not careful" said Gregory.

"How far can he jump?" asked Henry.

"Well I think about 2 metres so we must stay that far apart" said Gregory.

"Oh" said Henry, moving away from his brother.



At dinner that evening, Henry had more questions.

"Are you going to get poorly from Buggy Batty?" Henry asked Mummy and Daddy

"I hope not" said Daddy.

Mummy said "I hope not too."

"Who is going to get poorly then?" asked Henry.

"Anyone can" said Mummy. "But most people won't get too poorly. That's why it's important to stay inside and wash your hands regularly as well as sneeze or cough into a tissue and throw it away."



"Can the doctors make them better?" asked Henry.

"Well they are working very hard to find a cure" said Mummy.

"And they're trying to make a vaccination" said Daddy.

"What's a vaccination?" asked Henry.

"It's a medicine that will stop the virus making your poorly" answered Daddy.

"Will I get really poorly?" asked Henry.



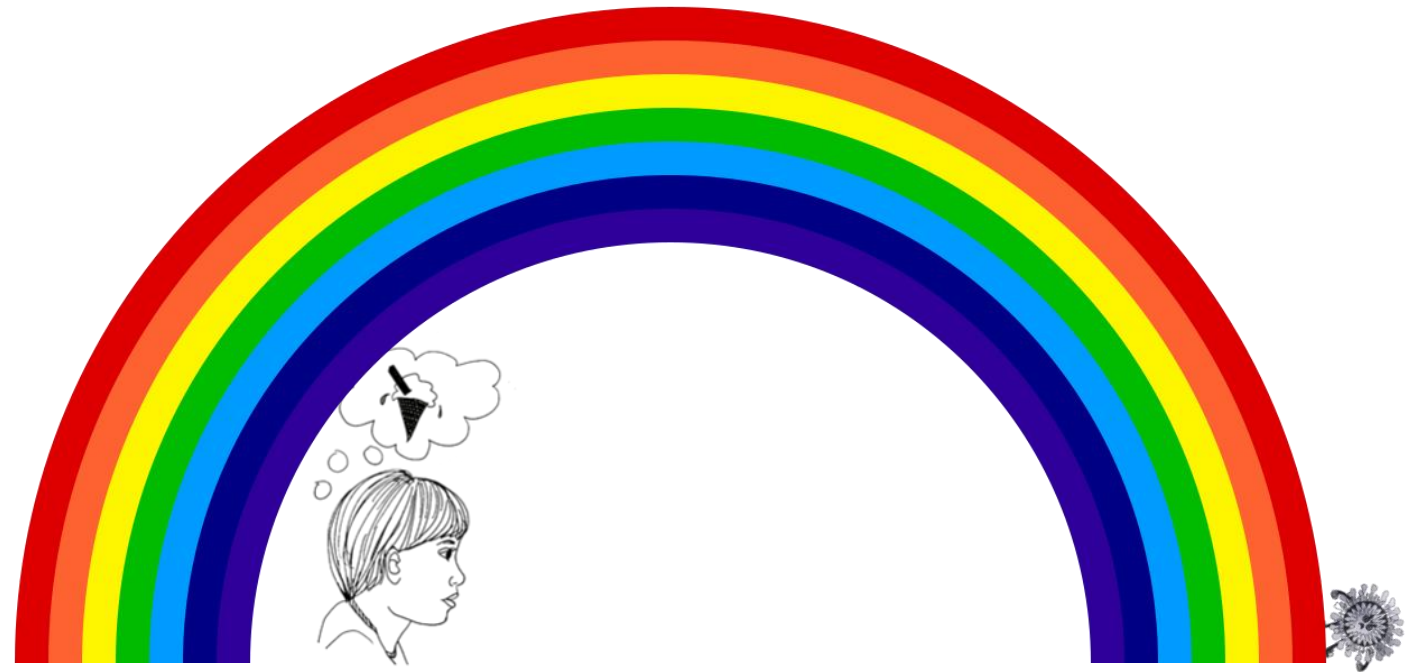
Henry was worried he might get sick from Buggy Batty and he didn't like that idea at all.

"For most people it's like getting a cold or the flu and most people will get better" Mummy reassured him.

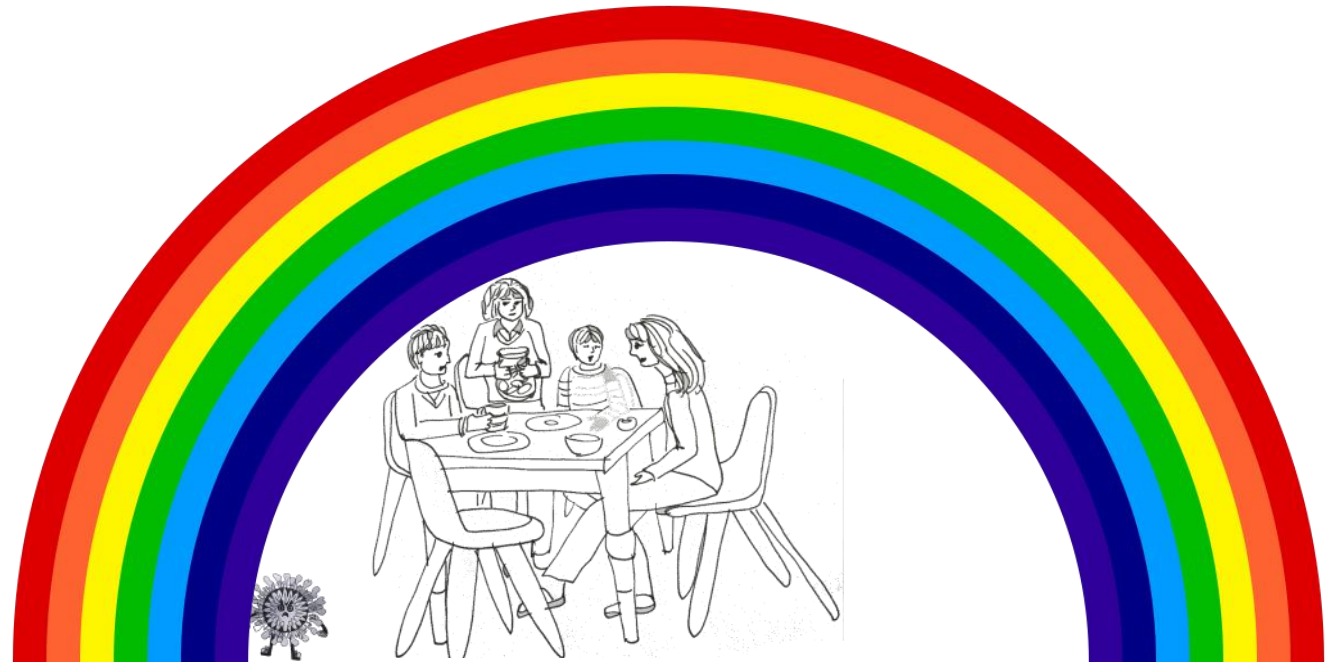
"I don't like Buggy Batty" declared Henry.

"No" everyone said "we don't either."

"Can I have more ice cream?" asked Henry.



Over the coming weeks Henry noticed a lot of little changes at home. It was nice spending more time with Mummy and Daddy and his brothers and sister but everything felt a little odd. Everyone had been told to stay inside and the adults seemed a bit more worried than usual. Everyone was a little tetchy which Henry didn't like but Mummy and Daddy spoke to him.



"You know Henry, we love you lots" said Mummy.

"Everything's a bit different at the moment" said Daddy "and that means sometimes we're saying and doing things that we maybe shouldn't but it doesn't mean we don't care about you."

"Why?" said Henry.

"Because" said Mummy "we have to all stay inside at the moment away from Buggy Batty."



"I'm scared" said Henry, starting to cry

"Now now" said Granny, who was living with them. "Come and sit on my lap and we'll have a story. It's all going to be just fine"

"Things might be a bit different now" said Oliver, coming into the room "But that's so we can be as safe as can be."



Henry cuddled into Granny. She gave the best cuddles. "Granny?" asked Henry "Why is everyone wearing masks all the time?"

"Oh those" said Gregory, joining in the conversation "Those are to keep people from picking their nose!" Everyone laughed a little.

"Well not entirely" piped in Alexia, "They also help keep Buggy Batty away. Some people think they keep the germs away."

"Oh, I see" said Henry "Can I have that story now Granny, pleaseeeeee?"



"Of course you can" said *Granny* picking up a book. She started to read from it.

"Once upon a time ..."

Henry interrupted, "Will *Bugsy Batty* ever go away?"

"We hope so!" *Granny* answered.

"We hope so!" Everyone said.

"Good" said Henry. "I hope he goes soon."

