



Illustrations © Laura Ellen Anderson 2019

Let's Get Silly with this summer's Silly Squad!

Fear not, although libraries across Hertfordshire may still be closed, children can still take part in the Summer Reading Challenge this year!

We are encouraging children to join the Silly Squad, an adventurous team of animals, and celebrate books that make us happy and laugh, featuring bespoke artwork from award-winning children's author and illustrator Laura Ellen Anderson.

Due to the Coronavirus, The Reading Agency has redesigned this year's Summer Reading Challenge into a virtual one. Now it is more important than ever to keep children reading over the summer months, and this year's Challenge aims to support parents and carers to do this.

The Summer Reading Challenge has started earlier this year, from **Friday 5 June**. The launch kicked off with a 'Let's Gets Silly' virtual event on the Summer Reading Challenge's Facebook page for the all the family to enjoy. You can still watch the short videos featuring a host of silly readings and family themed activities by celebrities and best-selling authors led by Jacqueline Wilson, Cressida Cowell, Philip Ardagh, CBBC's Sam and Mark to name a few.

The digital challenge platform is now up and running and is FREE for children and their families to join and use, providing a safe and secure sign-up process. This is a great opportunity to develop skills and enjoy reading as a family. To take part this year, log on to the [Silly Squad website](https://www.sillysquad.org.uk).

Children will be able to set up their own personal reading goals. We are encouraging them to read six books, although this year there is no minimum (or maximum!) number to be read. Also for this year, children may read anything! It can be in digital or print format from ebooks and e-audio books or books that are already at home. Don't forget we have lots of ebooks and e-audio in our online [BorrowBox](#) library and also now on [RBDigital](#). You can search by audience type to filter out books for children. The easiest way to listen is by downloading the apps – available for Apple and Android devices. If you aren't already a library member you can [join online](#)

Instead of coming into the library to collect stickers, children will be able to record their progress through the Challenge online and unlock virtual rewards as they go. You can also print a certificate at the end. The Silly Squad website will include games, quizzes and downloadable activities to keep everyone entertained at home as well as a book sorter which offers reading suggestions.

Whilst all the staff and volunteers in libraries will obviously miss hearing children talk about their books this year, we are looking forward to reading their reviews on the Silly Squad website. www.sillysquad.org.uk

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