

# SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENED IN MY CITY

A social story about the coronavirus pandemic for children



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Illustrated by GLOPO.JCCREATION AND ART CENTER



# Introduction



This book is for parents, guardians, and educators to help children ages 3-8 understand the coronavirus pandemic.

This can be a scary time for children and they may not understand why they need to stay indoors, or what is going on in the world.

One of the best ways caretakers can help young children cope is by sharing age-appropriate information, reassuring their safety, and learning about the many people working to fight the virus.



Something very strange happened  
in my city.

I can't go to school, the park,  
or my friend's house to play.

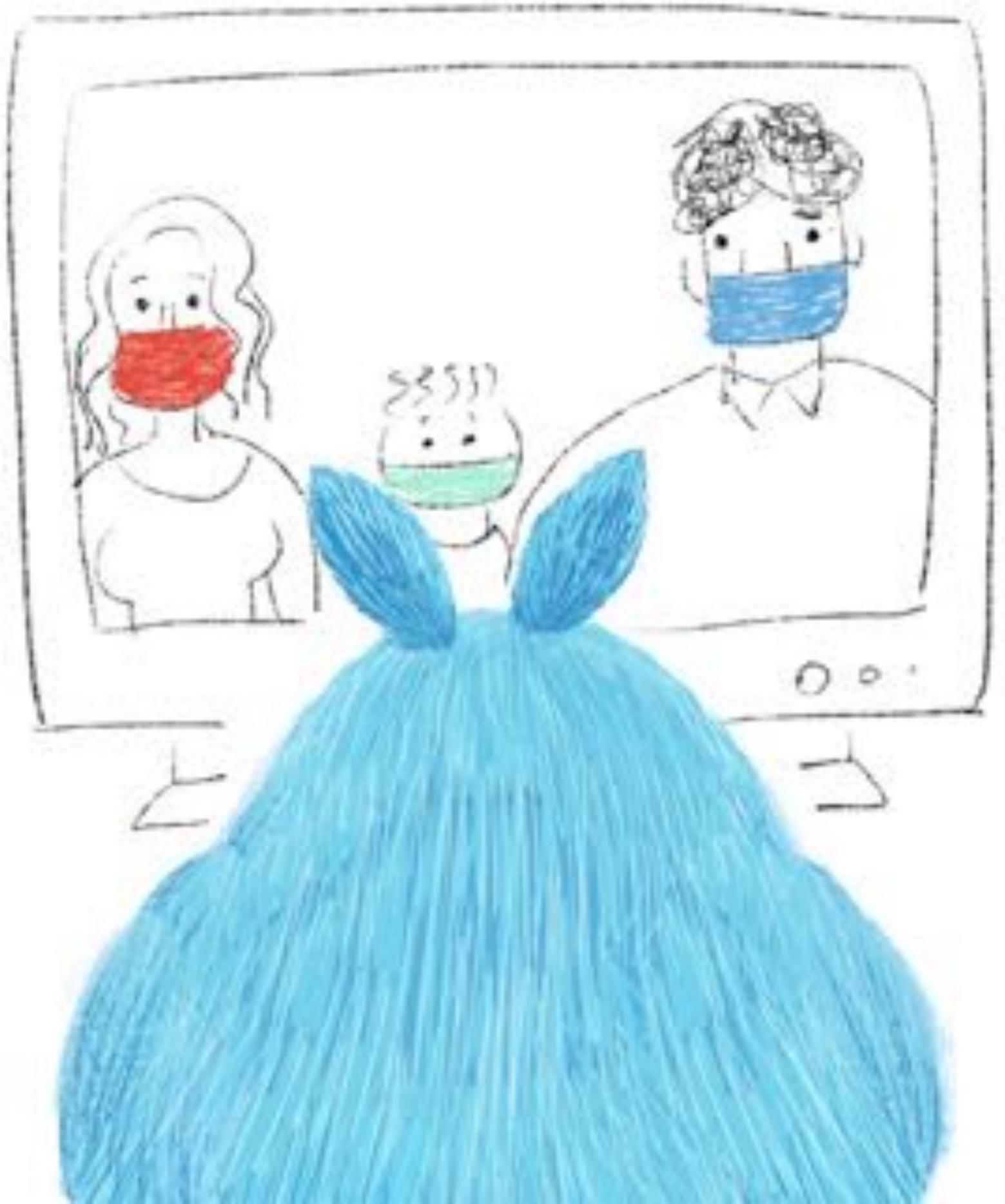
My parents can't go to work.  
My grandma can't go shopping.

The street looks empty.  
I wonder where people are.



Everyone on TV is wearing a mask.

Doctors and nurses on TV are wearing strange clothes from head to toe.



Does our city have a fever, Mama?

Is our city sick?

Why does everyone look so sad?

Why do people look angry and upset?

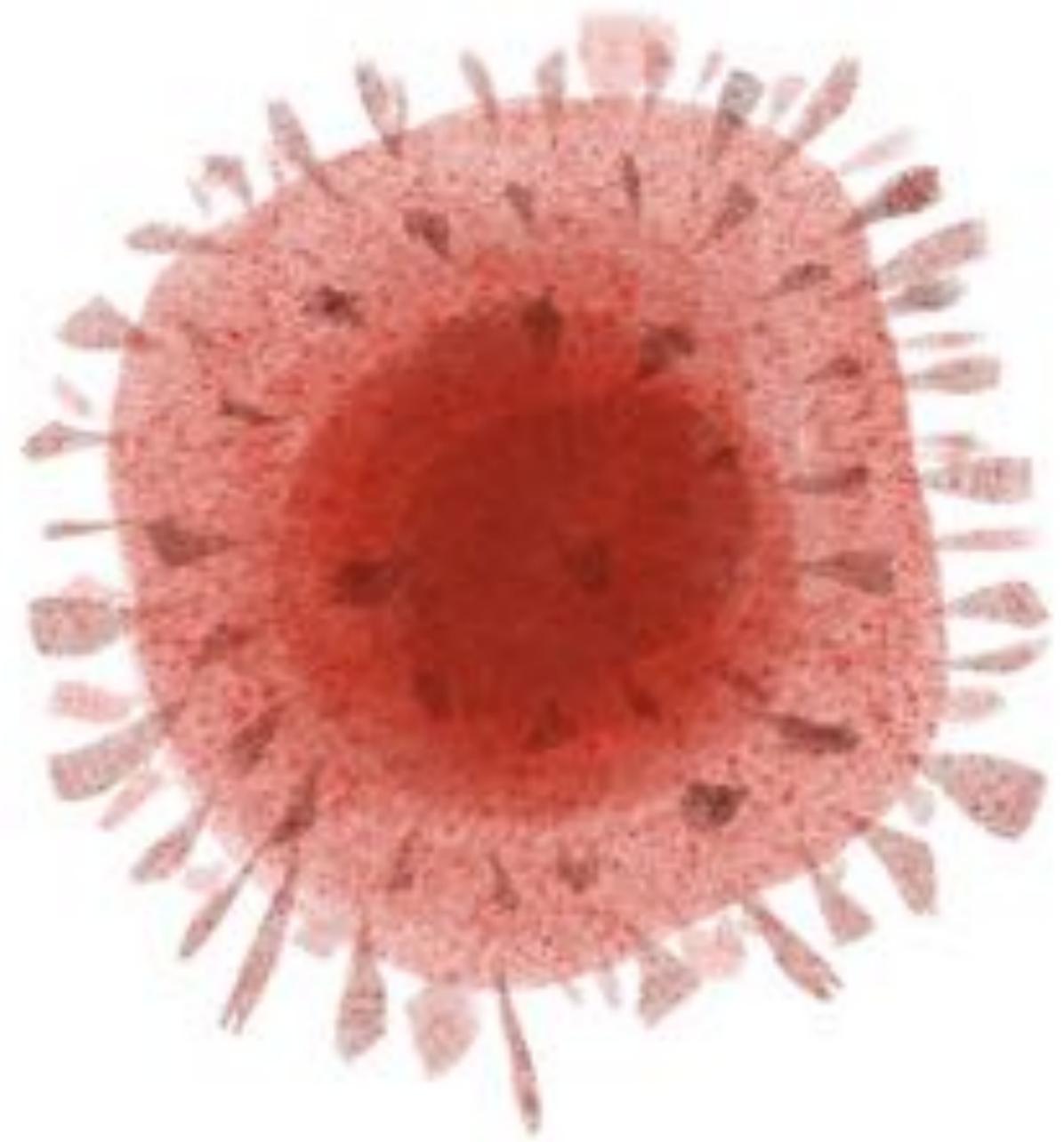
Why don't I see smiling faces anymore?



Yes, my love, our city is sick.

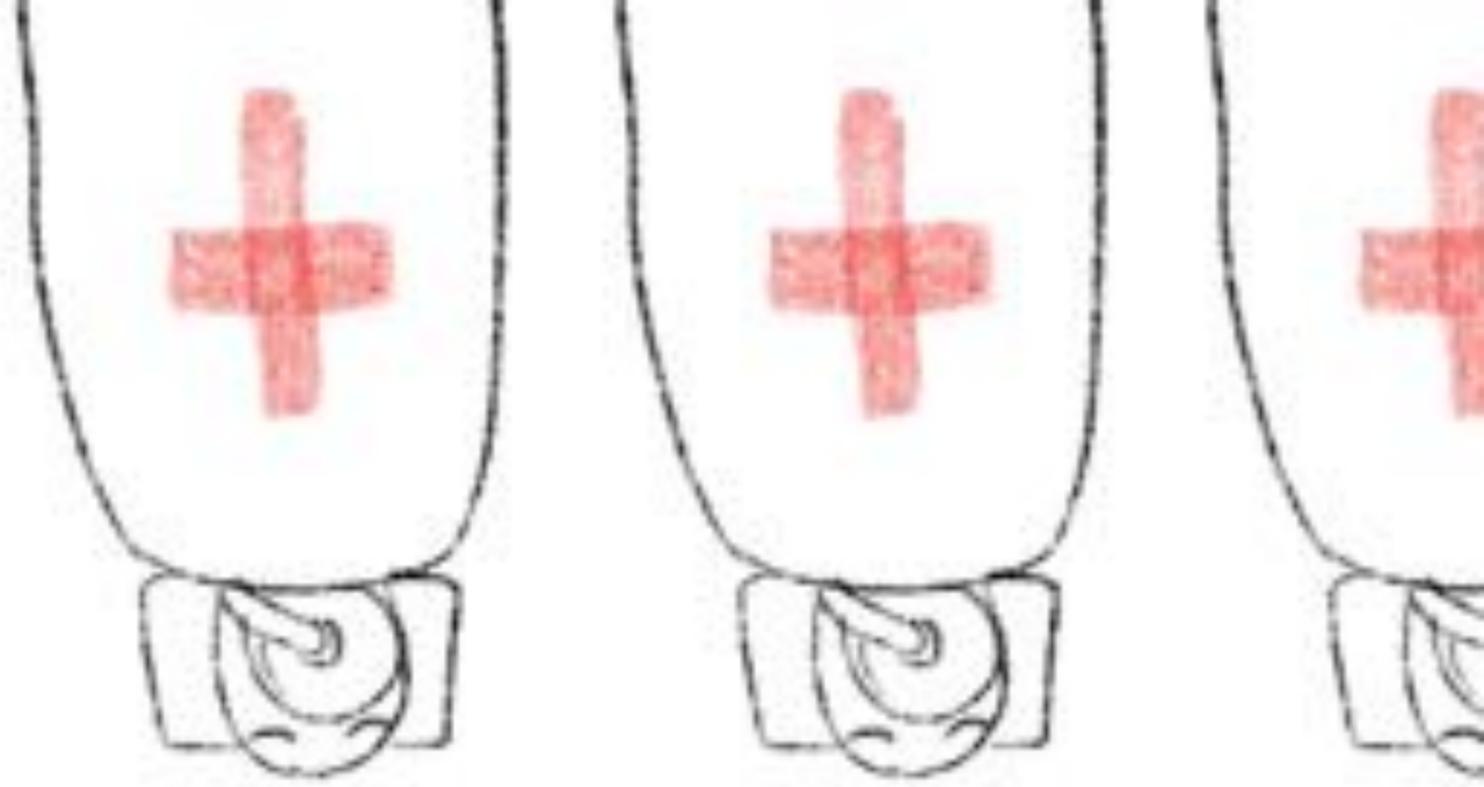
A new disease called COVID-19 that makes people sick is spreading very quickly around the world!

Unfortunately, our city got the virus too.



Mama, why can't people just go to the doctor and get a shot and take some medicine?





Well, lots of people are sick right now.

All the doctors and nurses are working  
all day and all night,  
but still can't help everyone who needs help.

Scientists are trying to make a shot  
that can stop the virus,  
but it takes time.



Will I get sick too, Mama?



Well, it is possible that everyone could get sick.  
But I know a way to keep you safe!

Wow, what is it? Tell me, tell me...



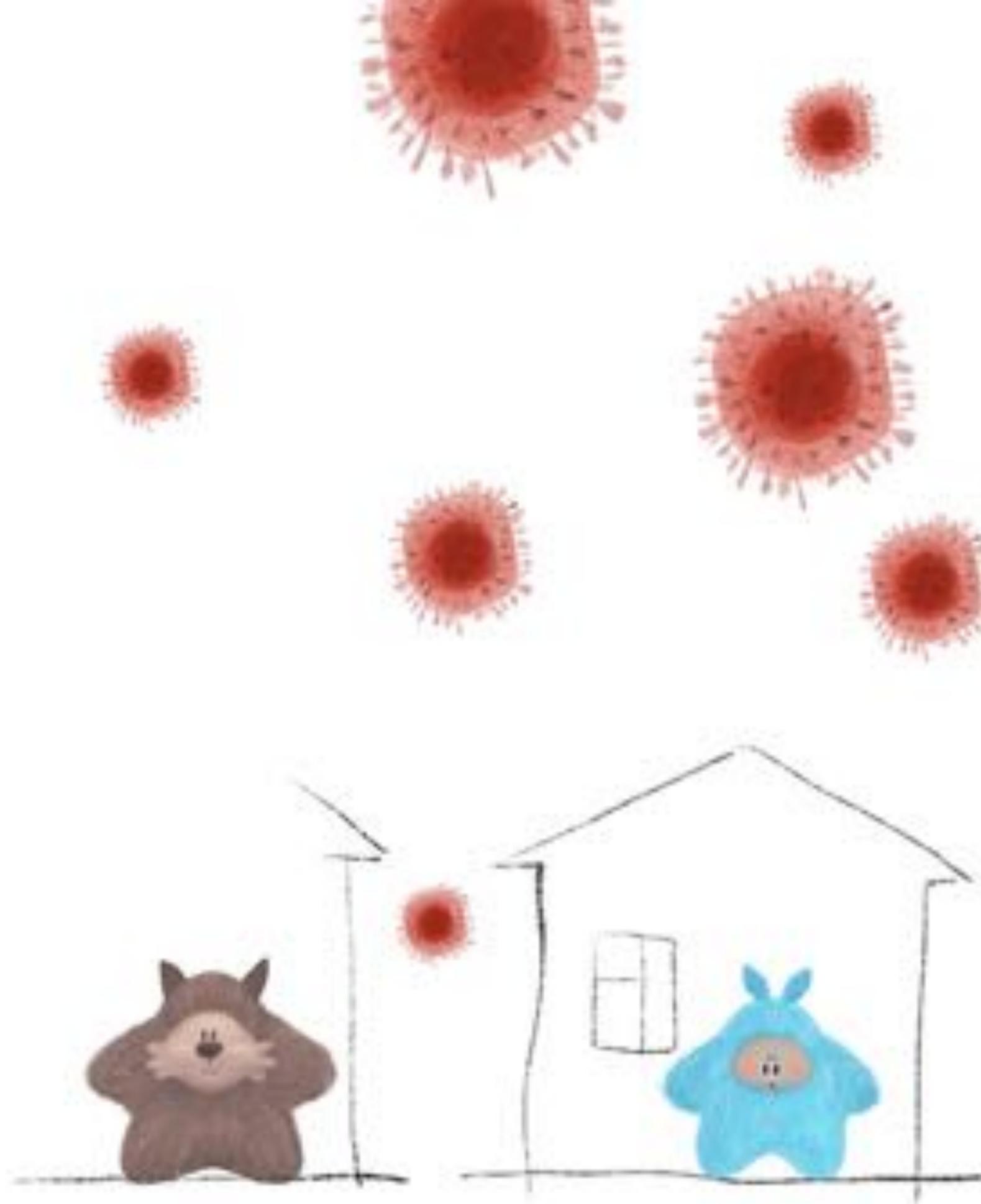
We will try something called  
“Social Distancing.”

What does this mean?

It’s like how you stay home from  
school when you don’t feel good.

We will stay at home so we won’t  
get the virus.

For now, we won’t see other  
people in person so we don’t  
spread the virus to other people.



If we need to go out, we will stay away from people.

We won't touch things and then touch our face, mouth, and eyes.

We will wash our hands with soap and warm water for more than 20 seconds to wash the virus off our hands.



Wow, I will do that. Will that be enough?

Well, my love, don't worry!

If everyone of us keeps a distance from each other,  
then the virus won't spread from person to person.

Also, Mama, Papa, Grandpa, and Grandma will try our best to protect you to make sure the virus can't reach you!



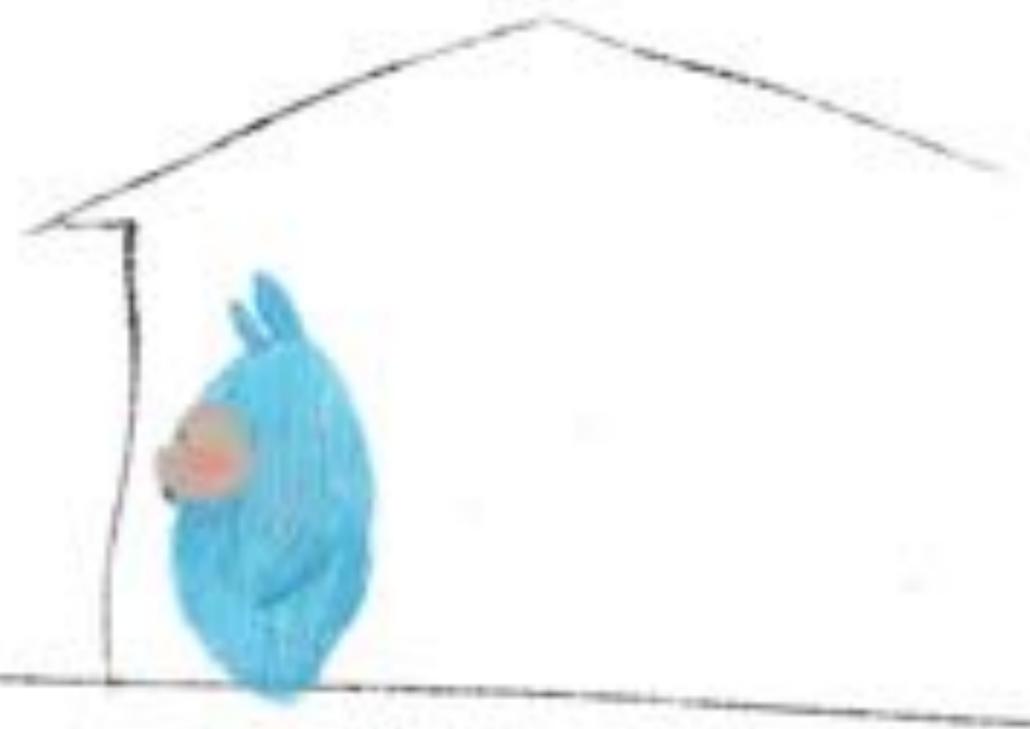
Plus, you know what?

The scientists also found that children's immune systems are stronger than adults' to defend against this new virus!

Wow, so I can beat the virus! Yeah!



But with social distancing,  
does this mean I can't play with my friends any more?



Yes, you can!

You can call, text, email,  
and talk online with your friends.

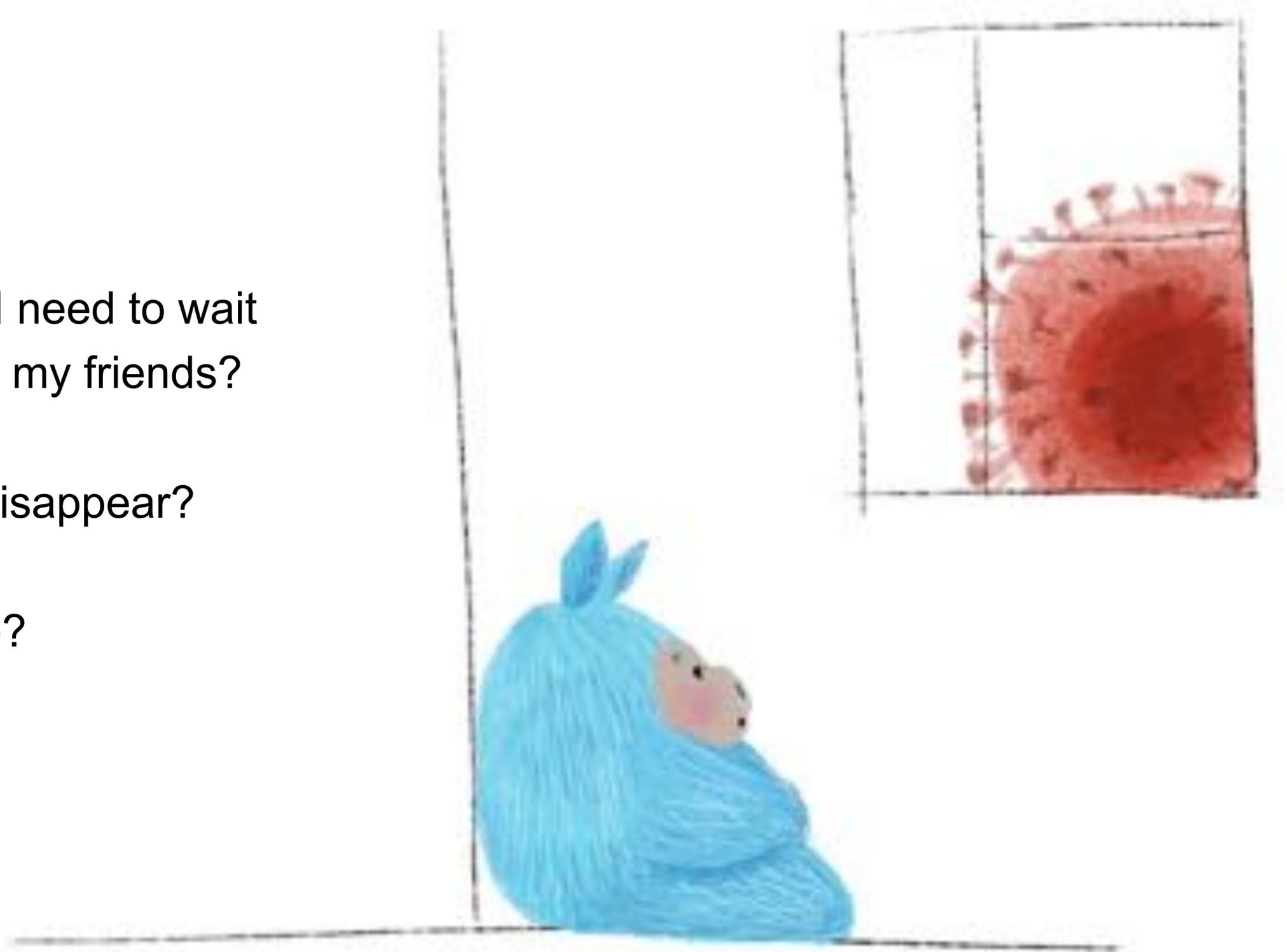
You can watch movies  
and videos together online!



Mama, how long do I need to wait  
to go out to play with my friends?

When will the virus disappear?

Will many people die?



My love, I just do not know.

BUT every doctor and nurse is trying super hard.

They don't want to give up on any sick person.

Many doctors and nurses are working so hard, they can't even go home and see their own kids.





Do the doctors' kids feel sad  
because they can't see their parents?



Yes, they are very sad because they don't get to see their parents every day.

But they would also be so proud of their parents for having the courage to fight the virus and save people's lives!



Wow,  
they are so great!

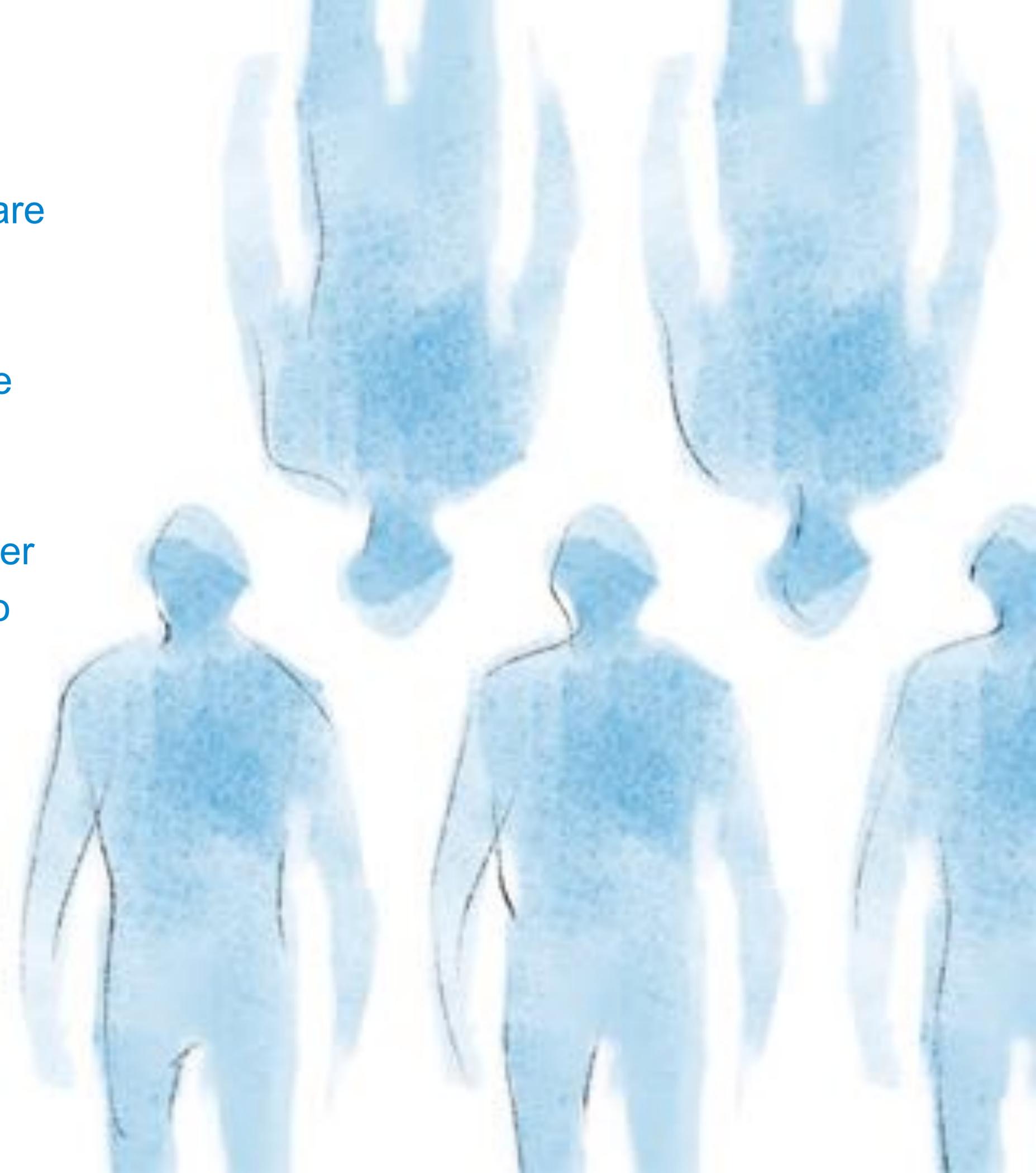
They are my **HEROES!**



There are a lot of heroes who are helping to fight the virus.

Scientists work hard to produce shots.

Delivery men and women deliver food to the people who can't go out to get food.



Journalists share good information  
with us on TV,  
in newspapers, and online.

There are many people working  
hard to keep everyone safe!



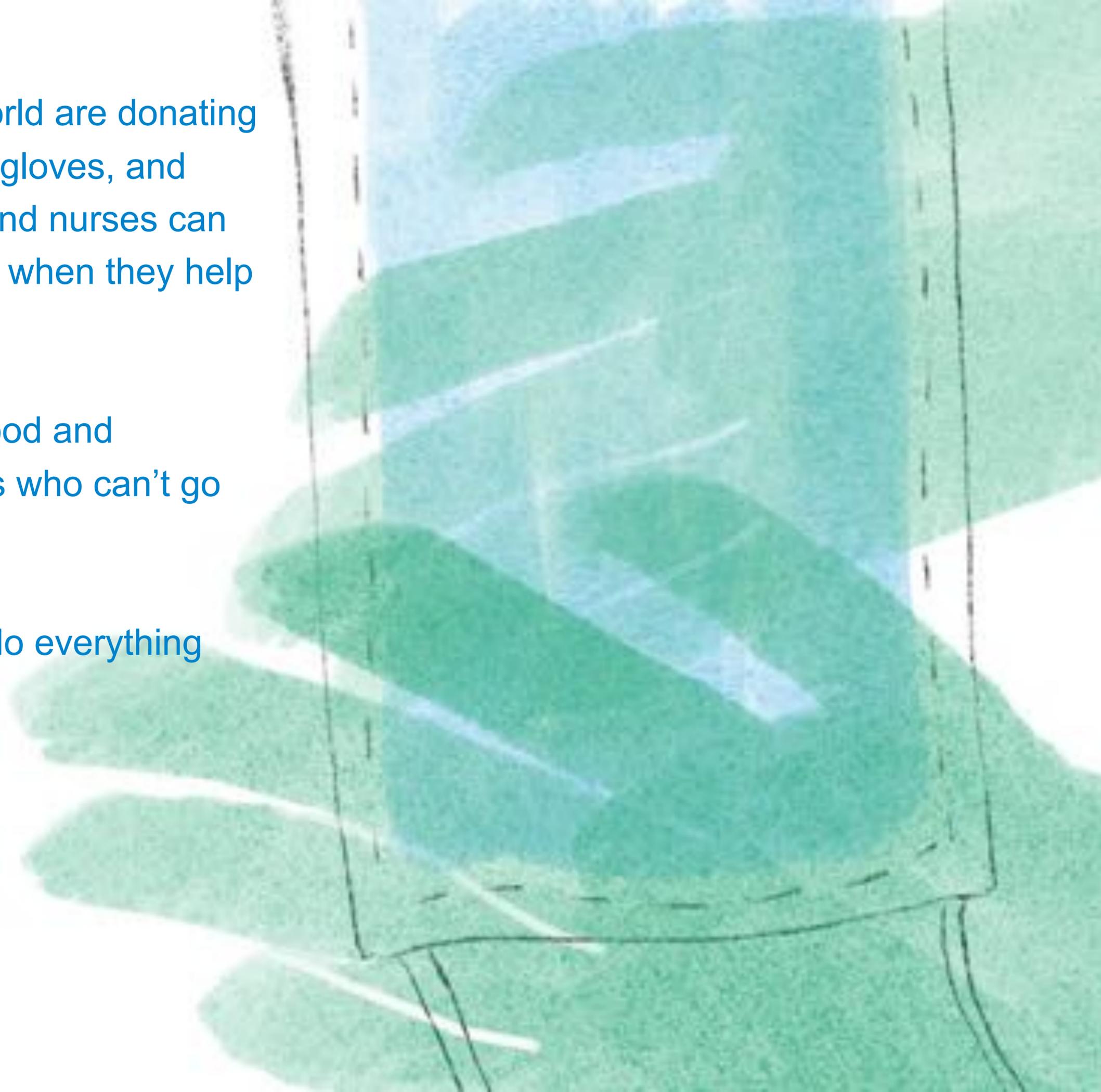


Wow, people are **AWESOME!**

People all over the world are donating money to buy masks, gloves, and more so the doctors and nurses can be safe and protected when they help patients.

People are bringing food and groceries to neighbors who can't go outside.

Mama and Papa will do everything they can to help.





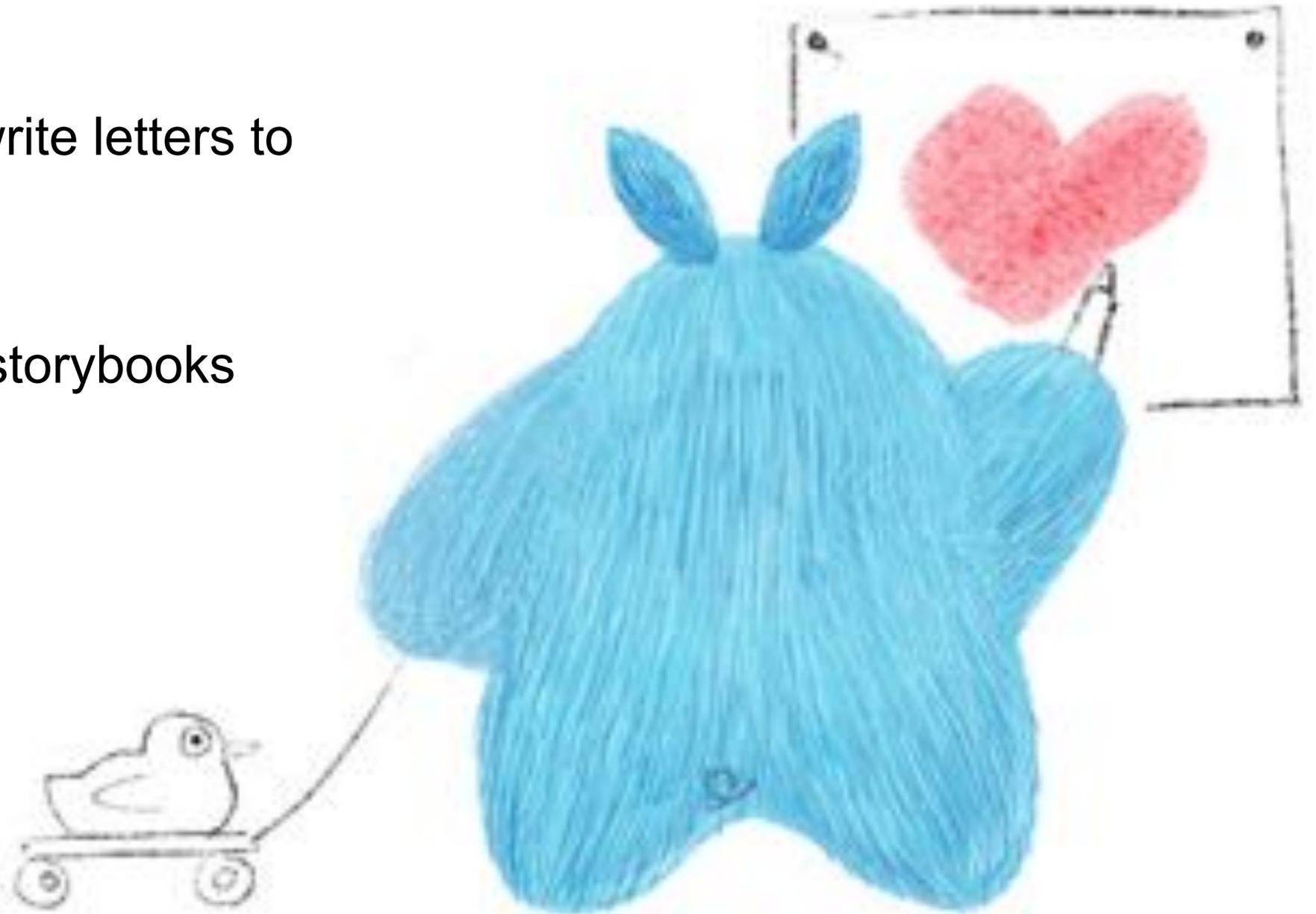
What can I do to help?

What do you think?



I can draw pictures and write letters to adults who are helping.

I can share my toys and storybooks with kids who need them.



What a good idea!  
It is so nice of you, my love!

Let's lend a helping hand to kids  
who need help!



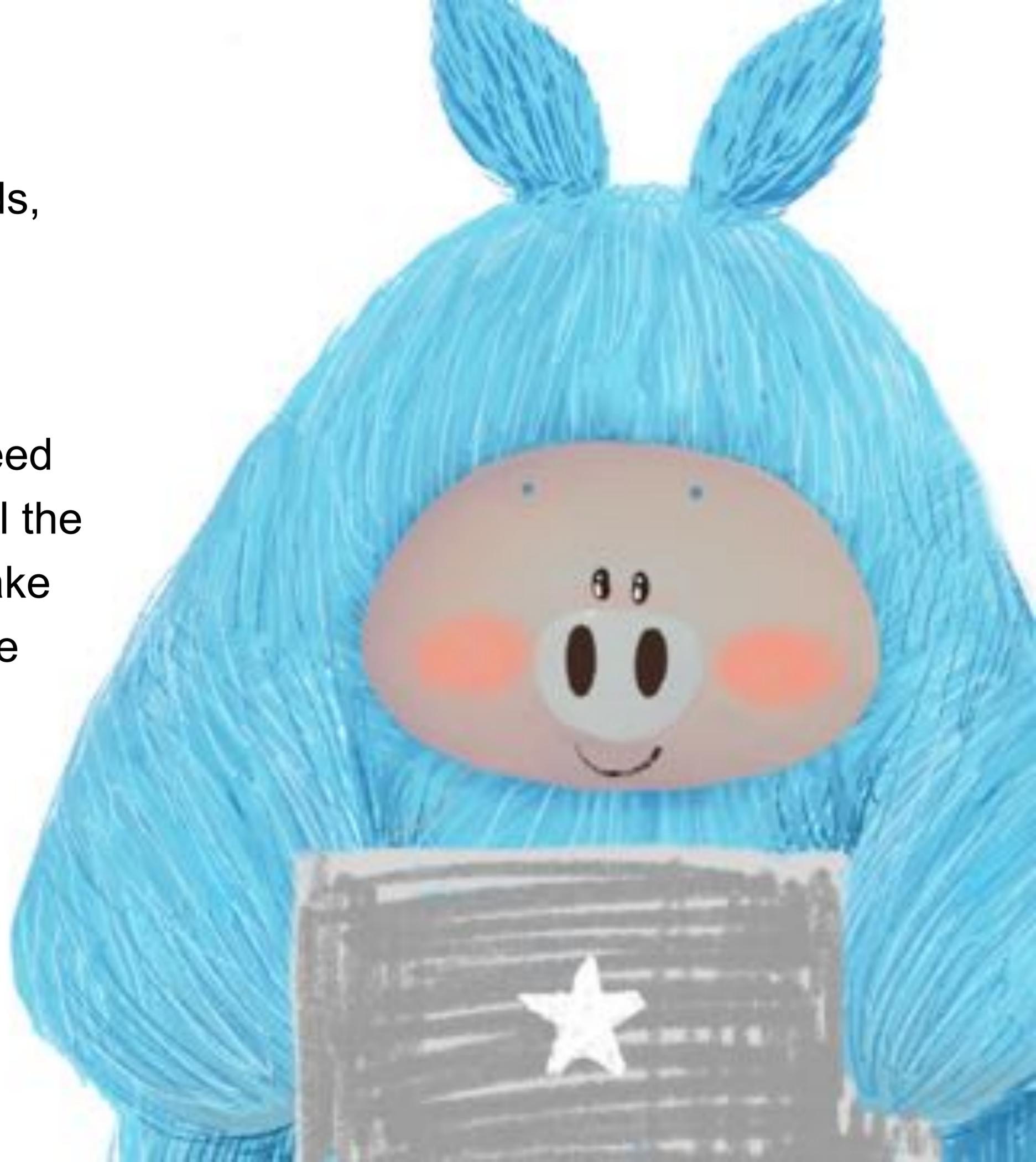
This is a battle where everyone in the world is fighting together!

Keeping yourself healthy and not spreading the virus are the best ways to help fight this pandemic!



Okay, I will wash my hands,  
stay in the house, and do  
things online!

By staying in, we won't need  
to go to the hospital, so all the  
doctors and nurses can take  
care of the people who are  
sick.



Let's all help to fight the virus together by practicing "social distancing!"

Okay, see you on FaceTime, Mama!





# Notes to Parents

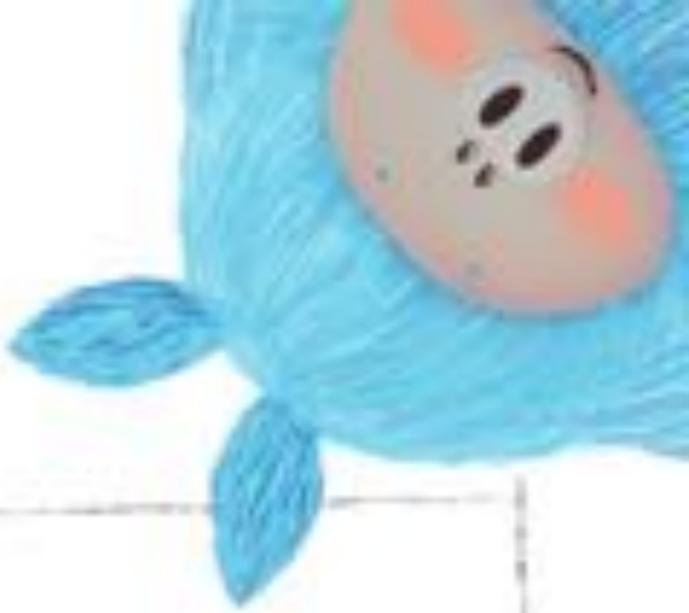
Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, young children around the world may have either experienced trauma (e.g., lockdown) from the coronavirus or have been exposed to scary images about the virus through media. It is extremely hard for children to understand why social distancing is happening, and why they can't play with their friends anymore.

## This book seeks to

1. reassure the child about their safety.
  2. redirect the child's attention to the positive actions undertaken by medical doctors and others.
  3. empower and engage children in helping acts.
  4. understand the importance of social distancing.
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# Notes to Parents



When a scary thing happens, children need their loved one to reassure them about their safety. Parents need to show more affection toward their children at this difficult time. We want to help children using social media to connect with their friends when they are doing “social distancing.”

Also, we want to empower children to look up to the many heroes and contribute to fighting this pandemic! After all, “taking good care of yourself and not spreading the virus” are heroic acts!



# Note about the author

Dr. Shu-Chen “Jenny” Yen is an associate professor in the Department of Child and Adolescent Studies, California State University, Fullerton. She created and shared her first social story with the public for the 911 terrorist attacks by the al-Qaeda on the United States on September 11, 2001. To date, she has created several social stories for young victims who were impacted by typhoons, earthquakes, hurricanes in Taiwan, China, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and the USA. With trauma-informed care practice in mind, she hopes this social story can help children living in the impacted areas find love and courage. She was the 2018 P.E.A.C.E Award recipient from the Peace Educators Allied for Children Everywhere (P.E.A.C.E.) She is nominated by the Educators for Peaceful Classrooms and Communities (EPCC) for the 2020 Honor an Early Childhood Educator Award, California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAAEYC).

# Acknowledgement

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