

"Summer was our best season: it was sleeping on the back screened porch in cots or trying to sleep in the tree house; summer was everything good to eat; it was a thousand colours in a parched landscape; but most of all, summer was Dill."

Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Fostering Connections' Newsletter, July 2025 edition

Dear Foster Carers

Welcome to our July newsletter.

Our quote is from *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

I love this book and also the film with Gregory Peck, who in my opinion plays **Atticus Finch** the protagonist in Harper Lee's 1960 Pulitzer Prize winning novel so well.



Harper Lee sets the summer scene where the children, Jem and Scout play outside during the warm summer days.

It conjures up:

Simplicity and Joy:

Sleeping on the porch or in the treehouse, and the abundance of good food, evoke a sense of carefree enjoyment.

Sensory Experience:

The "*thousand colours in a parched landscape*" appeals to sight and creates a vivid image of the summer environment.

Dill's Significance:

Dill is a young boy who visits Alabama, every summer "*but most of all, summer was Dill.*" His importance to the children was their ideal summer experience, emphasizing the emotional connection and importance of friendship.

Child's Perspective:

The quote, through its focus on simple pleasures and emotional attachments, reflects a child's perspective on summer.

Several new social workers have joined Fostering Connections, meet one of them... David.



Well, hello there! I'm David, one of the new social workers at Fostering Connections. I've been a qualified social worker since 2013, starting my journey with the Family Support Teams at ESCC—challenging times as you can imagine! Then, I dove headfirst into the thrilling world of Looked After Children's teams for over five years, where every day was never the same but was always rewarding working with foster children. Now, I'm a part-time senior social worker in the SPOA team, as well as working with Fostering Connections. Fun fact: I'm a proud Irish man from Dublin who once fancied himself as an actor. I even had a brief stint sharing the spotlight in a play with the dashing Jonathan Rhys Meyers! Plus, I rubbed shoulders with the legendary Brenda Fricker in an Irish TV show before England's shiny lights and the fabulous chaos of social work lured me away. Can you believe it? I traded my theatrical spotlight for the thrilling world of social work—talk about plot twists!

Thank you, David

"Summer afternoon – summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language." Henry James



An update from The Sheldrick Trust about our foster elephant, Toto



Kaluku team with the elephants and other orphans. Toto was his first singular elephant responsibility. Sammy assists Joseph. Sammy is quiet and unassuming, but he also has an innate talent for animal husbandry. Elephants are magnetised to his calm, kind presence.

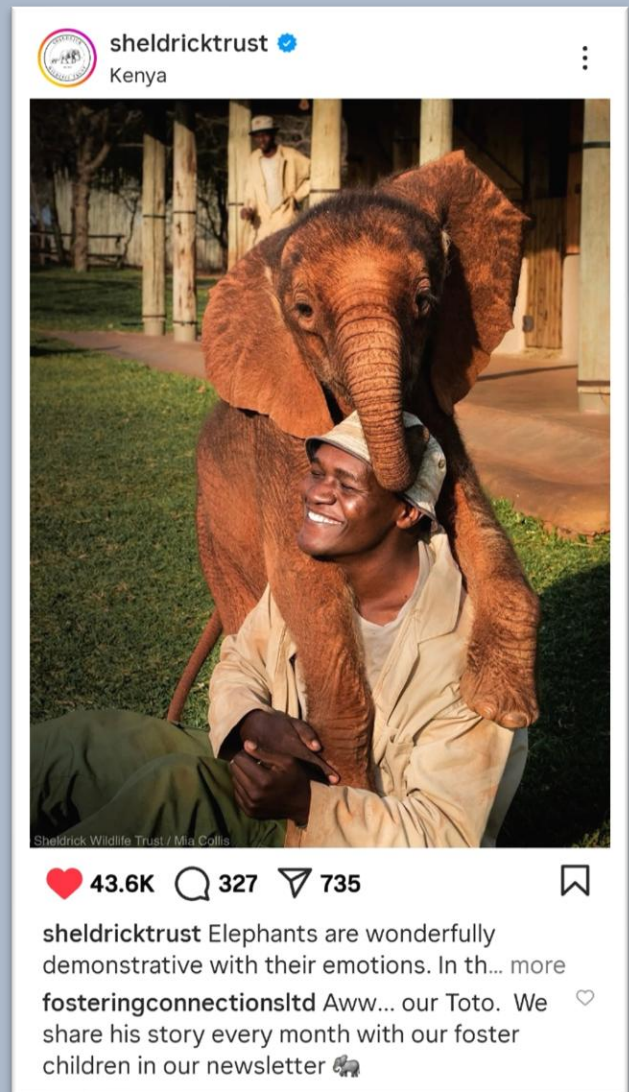
CELEBRATING THREE YEARS OF TOTO

Toto remains full of charm, with a quiet confidence. His calm demeanour seems to calm the other boisterous boys within the group, He has come such a long way from the day when he was found - 1st April 2022. He had been without milk for quite a while and the females that he was found with were unable to feed him.

He has grown strong and confident and loves his keepers. He loves having dusty soil shovelled over him to keep cool on hot African days. Toto is known as the tiny 'woolly mammoth' due to his unusually thick hair that covers his head and body. Wouldn't you just love a cuddle from him?

Toto was named from the Swahili word for baby, Mtoto. He was embraced by the Kenyan team and all the other orphaned elephants who had been rescued.

A team of Keepers care for each orphan. Toto being so young needed a single focus of a parent figure to thrive. His lead carer provided much-needed continuity so that Toto could get the care that he needed. Joseph looks after Toto. He started as a young ranger, looking after Humpty the hippo; then he went on to assist the



The Sheldrick Trust is thankful to us for fostering this remarkable little orphan to help support his ongoing journey. You can follow Toto's adventures on Instagram. Above is a comment made from Fostering Connections saying that we share his news with you in our newsletters.



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Book Corner

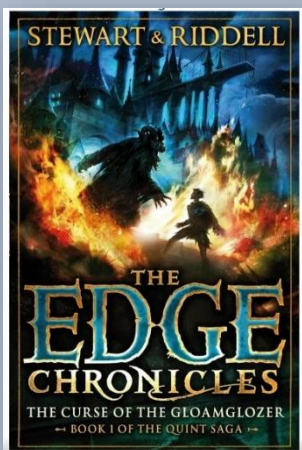


This month's book corner are recommendations from our families

Hannah, one of our foster carers has shared more books that her 3 children have enjoyed.

The Edge Chronicles is a children's fantasy novel series written by Paul Stewart.

Although a series of books, each book stands alone.



Quintinius Verginix, a sky pirate's son and his adventures when he moves to the floating city of Sanctaphrax in the First Age of Flight. S is currently reading this book

Write Your Own Sci-Fi and Fantasy Stories

This book has loads of inspiring ideas for amazing stories and plenty of space to write them down.

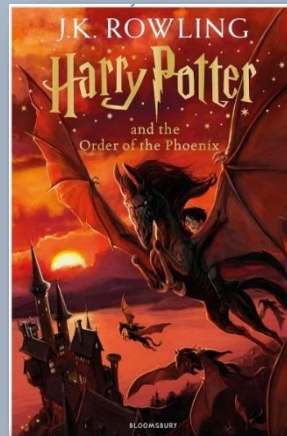
With lots of helpful tips for building new worlds.



T has been enjoying this and creating his own stories with the help of this book.

Harry Potter and the Order of The Phoenix

Everyone knows Harry...



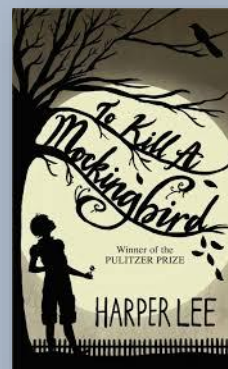
Enter the wizarding world

K has nearly finished reading this

Thank you for sharing these, Hannah. If anyone else would like to share what they are reading with us... please tell us on the Village WhatsApp.

If you would like to read or read again or watch the film... here is the book that our quote comes from this month.

"**To Kill a Mockingbird**," by Harper Lee, is set in Alabama in the 1930s, told through the eyes of young Scout Finch. It is about racial prejudice, and the childhood innocence of Scout and her brother Jem.



Atticus Finch, their father, a lawyer, defends Tom Robinson, a black man falsely accused of assaulting a white woman.

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News from our Team

From Corinna, our Director of Training

"I have recently been introduced to the work of Benjamin Kingston-Hughes... I'm going to order the books! Thought some of us might be interested"

He set up Inspired Children.



Inspired Children was started in 2011 by Ben and Karen Kingston-Hughes to provide training, support and consultancy for anyone working with children of any age.

Inspired Children provides unique CPD training, specialising in Play, Emotional Well-Being, Creativity and Behaviour, created and delivered by multi award-winning trainer Ben Kingston-Hughes and team.

Follow the link to find out more [Inspired Children](#)

From Wendy, our Agency Decision Maker

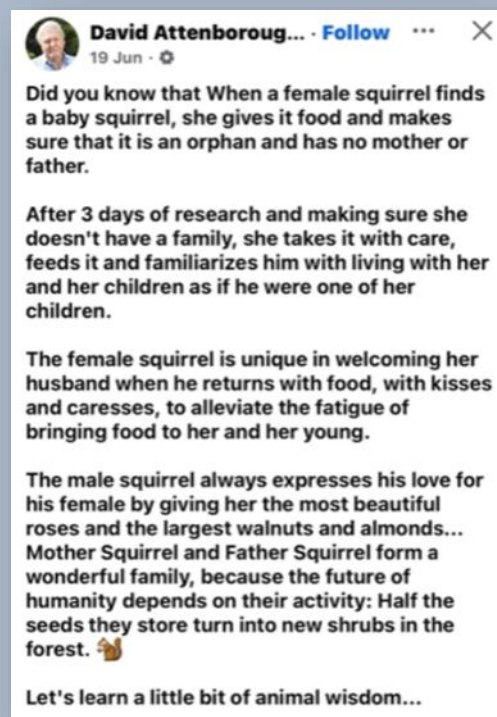
Wendy completed some research a few years ago on children who foster published by BAAF, British Association for Adoption and Fostering.

She shares this link with you

[The impact of fostering on foster carers' children](#)

An international literature review by Ingrid Höjer, Judy Sebba and Nikki Luke

Wendy also shared this



Do kisses, food, roses, walnuts and almonds work for you?! 🐿️

Nicole has shared

[Storyline online](#)

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation's Emmy® Award-winning children's literacy program, Storyline Online®, streams videos featuring actors reading children's books.

Reading aloud to children has been shown to improve reading, writing and communication skills, logical thinking and concentration, and general academic aptitude, as well as inspire a lifelong love of reading.

Storyline Online is available 24 hours a day for children, parents, caregivers and educators worldwide. Each book also includes supplemental curriculum aiming to strengthen verbal and written skills for English-language learners.

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Training

There are 3 new online courses available for you

- **An Introduction to AI In Social Care**
- **Caring for Sexually Abused Children**
- **Ciara Final Test Foster Care**

We are running 2 virtual training courses

- **PACE training** on the 23 September from 10am to 1pm.
- **Log Keeping training** on 20 October.

Both will be good for new foster carers and a refresh for others.

Please email Nicole to book: nicole@fostering-connections.com



Our young people's achievements and news

Congratulations S, on reaching level 20 in Sparx maths and for achieving excellent attendance during the 24/25 academic year.

We are very proud of you.

Friends of the Earth - Planet Protector's Pack

You should have received your packs in the post. We hope your children enjoy them and learn more about the world we live in and how we can protect our planet.

Please send us photos or drawings that may have been inspired by these packs.

All will be added to the book of your children's poems, short stories and artwork that we are going to create.

We are starting to get a lovely collection together



Children's Questionnaires

These have been sent out in the post to you. For your younger children, there is an option to draw a picture to explain their thoughts.

There is a question about their ideas for the newsletter. We would like to start a young person's column

We would also like to form a fun and informal participation group to help us design a page for our website This means we can get your children's feedback virtually next year.

We sent them in the school holidays when we felt the family may have some time to fill them out.

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Some ideas for the summer holidays

The school summer holidays are here, bringing with them longer days, warmer weather, and endless possibilities. But without the structure of school schedules and extracurricular routines, you may want some ideas for the wide-open freedom of the season. There are countless, inexpensive ways to embrace the season, laid-back afternoons, with a daily dose of vitamin D hopefully!

However you choose to spend it, summer is the perfect time to slow down, soak up the sunshine, and savour time with your family.

Pick Wildflowers

Go Mini Golfing

Volunteer at an Animal Farm

Go Birdwatching

Go to a Farmer's Market

Visit a museum

Watch the Sunrise

Make Your Own Ice Cream

Go Boating

Collect Seashells

Go camping in the garden

Make a time capsule

DIY Tie-Dye

Collect and decorate rocks

Have an outdoor film night

Fly a kite

Go for a long bike ride

Go hiking

Create a Summer Memories Box

Go Strawberry Picking

Make Your Own Bubbles



The whole team at Fostering Connections wish you a fabulous summer holiday, whether you go away or stay at home. Make some wonderful new memories with your families and don't forget to send us your photos.

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Charity work for good causes

Rob Staples, one of our panel members walked 150 miles, carrying 10kgs in July for Help for Heroes and Jackie, one of our foster carers and her boys are doing a walk for Alzheimer's.

[Rob's Help for Heroes Walk](#)

[Jackie's Alzheimer's Walk](#)



If you would like to share a charitable cause... get in touch.

There are so many great causes out there, we just wanted to share these 2 that were sent to us, but of course no obligation... just nice to see what people are doing.

Maybe your young people are doing something for a good cause, and you'd like us to share.

A gentle reminder about our trip to see Matilda

Wednesday, 13th August, matinée performance, 2pm start, at the Cambridge Theatre.

The show is 2 hours and 35 minutes including an interval.

We shall meet outside the theatre; time to be confirmed.

Any questions... get in touch with Fiona



And we leave you with... A boy's happy place.

Thank you for sharing, Alison

If you would like to share any photos, milestones or achievements with us to put in our newsletter, please either share on The Village WhatsApp, email us or let one of our social workers know, when they or the team check in with you.



Always here for you
The Fostering Connections' Team