My Thinking Cap
A Coloring Book about Epilepsy

By Mia Borzello
*My Thinking Cap* is a coloring book about epilepsy, a brain disorder that affects people of any age. It is a fun and easy way to help kids and their families begin to understand more about epilepsy. This book can be especially useful for children in countries where epilepsy remains misunderstood. Stigma towards people with epilepsy persists everywhere. It is my hope that this book is educational and supports the youngest patients in our epilepsy community.

To Zack and Annika, the youngest members of our neuroscience lab. You inspire me.

And, to our beautiful brains- I am amazed by you.
Hello! My name is Ella, and these are my best friends Jon-Jon and Dot!
We always have fun together. We like to play in the park. Dot loves to rollerblade!

Go Dot go!
Jon-Jon and I love to race. He is fast.

One day, while we were racing around the park, something happened.
Jon-Jon fell down suddenly, and started shaking. We called out to him but he didn't answer.

Dot stayed with Jon-Jon, while I ran to get his mom. She called the hospital and made an appointment with Dr. Syd.
When you go to the hospital there are all kinds of doctors—doctors that care for your eyes, your feet, your heart— you name it! The doctors who care for us and study our brains are called neurologists just like Dr. Syd.
Do you know what the brain looks like? Try drawing one here.
Does your drawing look like this?
Here is a quick and easy way to draw the brain in 2 steps.
The brain is made up of these four main areas.
The brain may look simple on the outside, but it's actually very complex. Beneath its surface, there are some 100 billion neurons. Neurons are special cells in the brain. The important parts of the neuron have been labeled in the diagram below.
Our neurons talk to each other; they are talking to each other all over our bodies right now. But they don’t talk like you and me, and they definitely don’t use telephones. The neurons inside our brains talk to each other using electrical signals. When neurons are acting in unison, brain waves are created.
Our brain is working all the time, even when we are asleep. These waves inside the brain help us everyday and we don't even know it! They help us eat, read, draw, run, and play.

These waves don't always work together though. Do you know what happens when they are interrupted?

A seizure.

When a person has a lot of seizures, it is called "epilepsy," a brain disorder.
Doctors can use a special device to see a patient's brain waves.
The device is called an EEG cap. I like to call it the thinking cap!

Neurologists use these special EEG caps when they are recording an electroencephalogram or EEG for short. These caps may look ordinary on the outside, but these polka dot caps can do amazing things!

Today, it's going to record Jon-Jon's brain activity! This is an important device for doctors because it helps test for epilepsy. Thanks to these thinking caps, not only can we better understand brain disorders like epilepsy, but we also know more about how our brains do the incredible things they do—like how we think!
Let's put a cap on Jon-Jon so we can start our testing.
Ella has one on too!
Don't worry, it doesn't hurt at all.
Those are Jon-Jon's brain waves on the screen! Even though they look like a bunch of squiggly lines, they tell us a lot. By looking at them, we know when Jon-Jon is awake, eating, napping or having a seizure.

When Jon-Jon fell, he had a seizure. The electrical signals in his brain got mixed up. Often seizures cause a person to start shaking or jerking, like Jon-Jon did. Dr. Syd's brain team can study those squiggly lines to decide whether or not Jon-Jon has epilepsy and will have more seizures in the future.
A few days later, Dr. Syd called to say that Jon-Jon has epilepsy. Dr. Syd reassured him that he'll still be able to play and do all the things he used to do! People with epilepsy are just like everyone else! In fact, 50 million people all over the world have epilepsy!
Jon-Jon is in good hands with Dr. Syd's team taking care of him. Friends and family can help too, by knowing what to do when Jon-Jon has a seizure.

Here’s how:

**Seizures happen unexpectedly.** Stay calm.

**Offer help and support.**

**Do not put any objects in or near his mouth.**

**Make your friend comfortable.** Turn her on her side.

Be a good friend.

**Pay attention to how long the seizure lasts.**

If the seizure lasts longer than five minutes or if there is an emergency, CALL emergency services, like 911.
A lot of people have epilepsy. All it means is that they have seizures from time to time. Don't worry, it's very common.

People who have epilepsy are just like everyone else!
In fact, epilepsy is one of the oldest diseases. Many historical figures, writers, musicians, and scientists, for example, have suffered from it and have gone on to do remarkable things! Seizures didn’t stop them… and they won’t stop you!

Lil Wayne  
(1982 - present)  
American rapper

Albert Einstein  
(1879-1955)  
German physicist

Charles Dickens  
(1812-1870)  
English author
Seizures can't stop you from jumping rope with pals!
Seizures can't stop you from playing your favorite songs!
Seizures can't stop you from playing soccer or hanging out with friends! They certainly can't stop you from having fun!
Now you know more about epilepsy, your brain, and how to care for a friend if they have a seizure!

Our brains rock!
There are many myths and misunderstandings in the world about epilepsy. For example, some people think you can swallow your tongue during a seizure. This isn’t true.

Many people also believe that epilepsy is caused by demons. Again, this is not true. Help us replace myth with fact by sharing what you know with friends.

Color the letters that have a black dot to learn a fact about epilepsy.

Answer: Epilepsy is not contagious.
Purple is the official color of epilepsy. March 26th is Purple Day, a special day where people all over the world celebrate epilepsy awareness.

Color the ribbon purple.
We can raise awareness EVERYDAY by supporting family members and friends who have epilepsy and sharing what we've learned with those around us. Join the team!