



# Sesame Family Newsletter

August 24, 2005

The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more



## For Parents

[Back-to-School Jitters](#)  
by *Jordan Brown*

A father helps his son prepare for preschool.

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**Games and More: Back-to-School Days**  
Brush up on your ABCs & 123s!

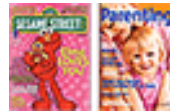
- [Bumper Cars](#)
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### From the Workshop



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Street musical revues.

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**Back-to-School Jitters**

## NOT A HAPPY CAMPER

"**No, Daddy.** I'm NOT going with you," our 4-year-old son Finn insisted, stomping over to the couch. "I'm staying home with Satchmo!"

While our dog Satchmo would have enjoyed this arrangement, I was determined to get my son to summer camp. After all, Finn had enjoyed camp for the past six weeks. He loves the messy art projects, the collaborative cooking activities, and lively water games. Most of all, he loves his teacher Jennifer. She really "gets" Finn. She encourages his sense of humor, never pressures him to join group activities when he doesn't feel like it, and has a sweet, upbeat personality.

What caused Finn's midsummer-day's nightmare was this: For the second session of camp in August, Jennifer would no longer be his counselor on Mondays. Instead a cheerful woman named Liz would lead his group of 3 and 4 year olds. Even though Jennifer would still be his counselor for Tuesdays through Thursdays, it didn't matter. He was upset that Jennifer would not, as Finn put it, "be my Monday guy." As I wrote in my last newsletter "Rituals and Rebellions," Finn is a creature of habit.

Despite Finn's objections, I managed to get him to walk with me from our apartment to camp. I promised him that I'd stay until he felt comfortable with Liz. After about half an hour, I gave Finn a goodbye hug and reassured him that I'd pick him up when camp was over. I sweetened the deal by suggesting that we'd go out for ice cream afterward to celebrate. Over the next few hours, I found it hard to concentrate on anything else but Finn's situation. Was he giving Liz a hard time? Was he miserable? It turned out my own anxiety was totally unfounded. At pick-up, the camp director whispered to me that Finn had a wonderful day. His jitters vanished as soon as Liz led the kids in wild water games, she explained.

The next day, even though his old pal Jennifer was back, Finn's protests returned. For one thing, all the kids in his group were new; none were the "fast friends" he made from the first session in June and July. Finn felt as if the rug had been pulled out from under him. Fortunately, by the third day, Finn had regained his footing. Much to my relief, he was completely comfortable with camp again. Phew!



**TRANSITIONS: TWO TO FIVE**

[How young children learn to handle change.](#)

**FEAR: TWO TO FIVE**

[Preschoolers' fears take on fantastic forms.](#)



## PRESCHOOL PREPARATIONS

**While Finn was getting over his anxiety about the switch in camp counselors, my wife Ellen and I kept thinking: "This Liz-Jennifer issue is small potatoes.**

What's going to happen in a few weeks when Finn starts the full-time preschool program?" We vividly recall Finn's first day of part-time preschool two years ago. We had selected a two-morning a week program, figuring that it would help our then 2-year-old son get his feet wet, but not overwhelm him. At a parent orientation meeting, one of the teachers compared the experience of a youngster starting preschool with an adult beginning a new job in a new city.

To help Finn get acclimated, Ellen took off work, and we both stayed with his class the whole day. During snack time, the other kids nibbled cheese and crackers, while Finn hid under a nearby table, and screamed, "No! No! No!" Fortunately, over the next couple months, our son became much more comfortable with his teacher Ann, the other kids, and the daily routine. By the end of the year, he couldn't wait to get to school. The next year, when Finn was 3, he participated in a three-morning-a-week program, and grew even more confident.

As Finn gets ready to start his five-day-a-week preschool program at the same school, Ellen and I plan to do some things that will hopefully boost Finn's confidence.

One step we've taken is setting up playdates with some of his new classmates. One boy, Rodrigo, shares many of Finn's interests including bike-riding, making bubbles, spraying water bottles, and playing hide 'n seek. These playdates also give us a chance to meet the parents of Finn's classmates.

Now that Finn will be at school through lunchtime, we've been thinking about what foods might be both nutritious and comforting. Perhaps, if we can get our act together, we'll include a little homemade surprise in each lunch--something to remind Finn of home. When I was little, my mother included a sweet note in my lunch bag. Having that connection to home meant a lot to me.



### PRESCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

[Veteran preschool parents share lessons learned.](#)

### MORNING MANAGEMENT

[Tips for making morning routines run more smoothly.](#)

### A GAME TO PLAY BEFORE KINDERGARTEN

["What if" games to help calm a child's first-day jitters.](#)

### PARENTS' PRESCHOOL JITTERS

[When the nervousness is all yours.](#)



## "NEW ANN" IS NEW AGAIN

Ellen and I were thrilled to learn that Finn's preschool teacher this year will be the same teacher he had two years ago. She was wonderfully patient and supportive when our son was going through a difficult transition. Finn had even come up with a fun nickname for her. His teacher happened to have the same name as one of his aunts and a part-time babysitter--Ann. For this reason, Finn had dubbed his new teacher "new Ann."

We are eager to see how Finn will blossom in Ann's classroom this year, now that he's much more familiar with the concept of going to school. While he will probably have morning jitters from time to time--especially at the beginning--he now knows that school can be an exciting, fun-filled place where you learn interesting things, and make friends. Finn also knows that moments after Ann and his classmates sing the "goodbye song," Ellen or I will be there to give him a big hug and take him home.

Here's to a great, jitter-free start to your school year for you and your children.

Jordan Brown

Sesame Workshop



### 10 WAYS TO GREAT DAYS AT PRESCHOOL

[How to ease the tears and fears.](#)

### BETTER BYE BYES

[Great ways to calm back-to-school jitters.](#)

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PRESCHOOLER

[An inside look at a day at preschool.](#)

### AFTER SCHOOL MELTDOWN

[Why good kids lose it after school.](#)

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## Weekly Trivia

**When Count von Count completes his counting, thunder sounds and lightning flashes.** What happens when Grandpa Count finishes counting?

- A. He coughs
- B. It rains
- C. It snows
- D. Numbers fall from the sky

Pencils down! The answer is C (those Von Counts sure have a thing for the weather!)

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## FROM THE WORKSHOP

In 1968 when it began, it was one little street. Now Sesame Street reaches around the world to over 120 countries. Your gift of support will allow Sesame Workshop, the non-profit organization behind Sesame Street, to use media for what may be the greatest good, helping children around the world reach their highest potential.

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### COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

[Tell us what's on your mind.](#) Kindly note that we are unable to respond to every email received.

### ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Sesame Workshop is a nonprofit educational organization making a meaningful difference in children's lives around the world. Founded in 1968, the Workshop changed television forever with the legendary Sesame Street. Today, the Workshop continues to innovate on behalf of children in 120 countries, using its proprietary research methodology to ensure its programs and products are engaging and enriching. Sesame Workshop is behind award-winning programs like Dragon Tales and Sagwa, The Chinese Siamese Cat, Pinky Dinky Doo and ground breaking multimedia productions in South Africa, Egypt and Russia. As a nonprofit, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds it receives from sales of Sesame Street, Dragon Tales and Sagwa products right back into its educational projects for children around the world. Find the Workshop online at [www.sesameworkshop.org](http://www.sesameworkshop.org)

Sesame Workshop

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