



Sesame Family Newsletter

March 30, 2005

The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more



For Parents

Celebrating Silliness

by *Jordan Brown*

On April Fool's Day, share the gift of laughter.

Featuring:

- Addressing Your Concerns
- Instant Fun...Just Add Water
- Our Daughter's First Giggles
- And THEN What Happened?
- Pranks for the Memories

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Games and More: **Get Silly with Ernie**

Have fun with Sesame Street's #1 trickster.

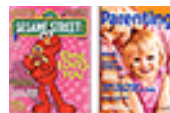
- [Ernie, the Artist](#)
- [Food Art](#)
- [Ernie & Bert Play in the Leaves](#)
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- [Weekly Trivia](#)

From the Workshop



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Celebrating Silliness

ADDRESSING YOUR CONCERNS

We recognize and apologize that last week's newsletter topic, "Celebrating Easter," did not address the many religions and beliefs of our readers. As you know, Sesame Street strives to be inclusive of all people and their cultures, and by no means intended to ignore readers who don't observe this particular holiday. In past years, we've addressed Easter along with other spring holidays, including Passover. However, because there was a large time gap between these holidays this year, we made the decision to focus on celebrating Easter. We sincerely wish everyone a happy spring.

•Sesame Workshop Family Newsletter

INSTANT FUN...JUST ADD WATER

Last year, in honor of April Fool's Day, I wrote a Sesame Family Newsletter about the important role humor and laughter play in our family. At that time, our 3-year-old son Finn was enchanted with acting sneaky and playing silly tricks. With April 1 just around the corner, it seems like a good time to reflect on our little prankster's developing sense of humor.

One thing that is guaranteed to tickle our son's 4-year-old funny bone is making a mess with water. The other day I was in my home office, working intently on my computer, when I heard Finn's hearty laughter coming from the other end of the apartment. Normally, my son's guffaws are one of the most delightful sounds, but hearing the high level of gaiety, I grew mildly concerned. I wondered what in the world he and his babysitter were up to. As Finn's laughter became more boisterous, I went to investigate. Sure enough, water was involved. My son was standing in front of the bathroom sink, squeezing the faucet with his hand, causing water to spray in all directions. "Daddy, daddy," Finn shouted. "Look! I made a FLOOD!"

The sight of his soaked clothes and the drenched floor might have upset me had I not also noticed the utter joy on his face. While surprised that the babysitter had not curbed his water play before it created a big mess, I actually found that I was happy that she decided to, um, go with the flow. After a long day of following rules in school, a little good-natured fun didn't seem out of place. It was also a great, if messy, way to burn off some of his seemingly endless energy.



SENSE OF HUMOR

Laughter helps children cope. Our experts look at the lighter side of growing up.

LOSING IT

Insanity is hereditary--you get it from your children.

As Finn's laughter continued, I grabbed a stack of towels from the linen closet, and said, "I'm glad you're having so much fun. When you're done, don't forget to clean up, and change into dry clothes." I didn't want to be a total killjoy; but at the same time, I wanted to make it clear that it was okay for Finn to make a mess--as long as he took responsibility to tidy up afterwards. When I checked in an hour later, I found that Finn and his sitter had not only cleaned up everything, but were calmly reading books, and eating a snack.

OUR DAUGHTER'S FIRST GIGGLES

Finn doesn't just enjoy laughing himself silly. He also gets a kick out of making others laugh. The person he likes to amuse the most is his baby sister Olivia, now almost 5 months old. Like many kids, Finn has a knack for finding things that make his younger sibling giggle uncontrollably. One surefire laugh-getter is when Finn holds her hands, and gently spins her arms in opposite directions, accompanied with a noise he makes that resembles the sound of a car struggling to start up on freezing wintry morning. "Errr--errr--errrr!" is all it takes and in seconds, Olivia is deliriously happy.



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AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

Getting Finn to laugh is easy--getting him to share the details of his school day is not. General questions like, "How was school today?" usually get me nowhere. But when I ask a specific question, I'm often treated to Finn's equivalent of a stand-up comedy routine. Last week, for example, while enjoying a post-preschool snack together, I inquired about his classroom's pet lizards: "Did you play with Rufus and Simone today?"

Finn's eyes lit up, "Sam hit the lizard tank really hard, and all the glass **BROKE**."

Sensing that my leg was being pulled, I reacted with mock shock and said, "And **THEN** what happened?"

Finn ran with it. "Rufus bit off all the teachers' heads. And



COMIC RELIEF
[From the mouths of babes
come the funniest stories.](#)

COMIC RELIEF
[White skies, boink beds and
a bird that can read.](#)

the other lizard ran down the hallway, and got on a BUS. And then•and then...the classroom FILLED up with water. And everyone was swimming•and, and...the water went up our NOSES!"

As Finn's story became more and more zany, we both laughed until we had tears in our eyes. Soon after creating the wacky version of his school day, Finn seemed much more receptive to sharing the details of what really happened.

COMIC RELIEF

Form of...ice cream! Shape of...a triangle! Kids' perspectives transform the mundane into the mirthful.

PRANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

When April Fool's Day rolls around this week, our little prankster won't need much encouragement. Still, a 4 year old can't plan all the mischief himself. After all, someone needs to help him fill my wife's pillowcases with popcorn. And he might need a hand blowing up all those Whoopee Cushions. And since April Fool's Day falls on a school day, he'll need a grown-up to scheme with him about an appropriate prank to play on his teacher. Now, who could that person be?

Hope your April Fool's Day is loaded with laughter!

Jordan Brown

Sesame Workshop



Weekly Trivia

"When people ask for a thumbnail sketch of what Sesame Street is, I always say it's a comedy show that teaches. We have the best comedy writers on TV working for us. That's why it works."•Arlene Sherman, Senior Advisor for Creative Development of Sesame Street.

FROM THE WORKSHOP

It all began in 1968 with a simple and, at the time, revolutionary idea; to use television to help children learn. Now, Sesame programs and initiatives reach children in more than 120 countries across the globe. Just as the child in your life learned the number of the day from the Count, a young girl in Egypt is learning she can grow up to be a doctor or an astronaut from Khokha. Support from people like you is making this possible. Learn more about what your gift will accomplish and how easy it is to give.

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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

Sesame Workshop

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