



Sesame Family Newsletter

August 4, 2004

The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more



For Parents

[It's About Time](#)
by *Jordan Brown*

Understanding time is tricky for toddlers.

Featuring:

- Water, Water Everywhere
- Toddler Tantrums... And How To Avoid Them
- Your Turn, My Turn
- Age Is Relative
- Timeless Memories

> [Read this issue](#)

Games and More: Happy Birthday, Prairie Dawn!

Party with Prairie with games and more.

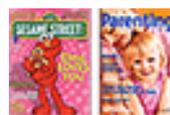
- [Girls Can Do Anything](#)
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- [Prairie Dawn Goes Fishing](#)
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From the Workshop



[Did you know? There's something special behind every purchase of a Sesame Street product...](#)

Sesame Store



[Subscribe to Parenting and receive the award-winning Sesame Street Magazine free.](#)

Beaches Resorts: A Proud Sponsor of Sesame Street



Elmo and Gordon are coming to Beaches, the Caribbean's favorite All-Inclusive Family Resorts, with live performances in September and October to kick off the year-round Beaches Caribbean Adventure with Sesame Street and friends Cookie Monster, Elmo, Grover and Zoe.

📖 [Read all about it!](#)

It's About Time

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

My 3-year-old son Finn loves playing water games at the sink. One of his favorites involves turning on the faucet little by little as the water builds in intensity. After a mild-mannered drip-drip-drip, he twists the knob slightly so a thin stream pours down. As he continues to turn it, the stream turns into a veritable fire hose. At the game's finale, Finn creates a rip-roaring gusher and screams, "Look out, Daddy, a FLOOD!" Of course, our shirts end up completely drenched, but the game ends with both of us roaring with laughter.

This kind of water play is messy, but it's worth it because (a) it's fun (b) it's a great way to beat the summer heat, and (c) it encourages Finn's passion for figuring out how things work. My wife Ellen and I are amazed at how quickly our son picks up concepts and vocabulary connected to the physical world. If Finn can see, touch, and experiment with a toy--bubbles, dominoes, water rockets, you name it--he'll joyfully persist until he masters it. Like many kids his age, however, Finn has difficulty understanding more abstract ideas--ones you can't see, feel, or have any hands-on experience with.

My son's understanding of age, for example, is fuzzy. He knows that he's 3 and that our dog Satchmo is 10 (in human years). But we think that's memorization because when we ask Finn the age of his baby doll (who he treats as an infant), he says, "Her is 5 and a half." Even though I'm a year older than my wife, Finn often insists that "Daddy is 5, and Mommy is 7." As for Laurie Berkner, his favorite singer: "That's easy. Her is one days old." Finn also has yet to grasp the days of the week. As far as Finn is concerned, any event that happened in the past--from the last day of summer camp to the end of the dinosaurs--occurred "on Friday."



THINKING: TWO TO FIVE
By a child's third birthday,
her capacity for abstract
thought has increased.



TODDLER TANTRUMS...AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

When Finn was 2, it was not unusual for him to throw huge tantrums when it was time to switch from one activity to another. If I told him that it was time to stop playing trains and walk the dog with me, he'd pitch a fit. I learned from other parents that many toddlers have difficulty with these types of transitions. One strategy that usually worked was giving Finn lots of warning before one activity was going to end. By alerting him, "Okay, Finn, we need to leave the sandbox in 2 minutes" and then saying "all right, 1 more minute" we gave our son enough time to prepare himself. Even though he didn't grasp the sense of how long a minute actually is, he was mentally ready for the switch, and this seemed to help.



HOW LONG IS A MINUTE?
[Telly teaches your child the value of time.](#)

YOUR TURN, MY TURN

Not having a clear understanding of how long a minute is, or any length of time, can be frustrating for Finn and his friends. Last spring, Finn and his pal Sam were having difficulty taking turns on a playground ride. So, I suggested to the boys, "First, Sam can have a turn and then Finn can go on it." Bad idea. Both boys feared that the other's turn would go on forever.

"I want to go first," Finn protested.

"No! I want to go first!" Sam shouted.

Fortunately, Sam's mother stepped in with a sensible idea. She proposed that each boy could stay on the ride for the count of 10, and then it was the other boy's turn. This worked beautifully. Both kids really got into the counting game, too. The time between turns was now something concrete, predictable, and fun.

These activities from Sesame Workshop have also helped Finn boost his counting skills.



FIRE-FLY MAGIC MATH
[Kids can count on having a good time playing this flashlight number game.](#)

COUNTING SCRAPBOOK
[Counting is easy as 1, 2, 3 with this colorful numbers book.](#)

AGE IS RELATIVE

Last week, while walking in our neighborhood, Finn and I passed an elderly couple who live in our apartment building. The man had recently suffered a stroke and, as a result, was walking very slowly. I was impressed (make that "shocked") that Finn walked over to the man, concerned, and gently touched his hand. I don't think he had ever seen a grown-up move that tentatively. The man smiled sweetly at Finn, then we went on our way.

At home, I explained to Finn that the man was very old, so he wasn't able to walk quickly anymore. But I pointed out that when the man was a young boy, he could run very fast, just like Finn. My son took this in then said to me, "You're new, Daddy." Even though I'm 40, Finn's comment made me feel young again. The only downside about Finn's insight was that the next time he saw his grandparents, he kept telling them, "YOU'RE getting older...I'm new!"



A SPECIAL KIND OF LOVE
Through their grandparents,
preschoolers learn about
empathy.

TIMELESS MEMORIES

When Finn says something amusing that reveals his vague understanding about time, I sometimes fall into the trap of thinking that I, as the grown-up, truly have a grasp of this concept. I mean, hey, I know to read a clock, I can recite the days of the week, and I certainly know how long a year is.

Or do I? Next week, my family is driving to Maine for vacation. The last time we made this journey Finn was 2 and a half. Wait a minute! Could that have been only one year ago? The progress that Finn has made over the last 12 months is truly astounding. A year ago, Finn was just learning how to speak. Today, as they say, "you can't shut him up." A year ago, the idea of his being toilet trained seemed unfathomable. Today, he uses the potty like a pro. A year ago, it seemed impossible that my wife and I could ever love our son more. But today, at the risk of getting sappy, that love grows every day. Hmm...Perhaps my understanding of time is more nebulous than I realized.

Hope you and your family make the most of every minute.

Jordan Brown

Sesame Workshop



Weekly Trivia

On August 3rd, Prairie Dawn celebrated her 7th birthday.

Like her fellow Leos Bert and Snuffy, Prairie is a natural leader. She shares her sign with several other strong women, including Jackie O., Dorothy Parker, and Mae West.

FROM THE WORKSHOP

You probably have a Sesame Street book, toy, video, or other product in your home. But what you might not know is those products actually help make our work possible. Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, puts the proceeds it receives from sales of its products right back into Sesame Street and its other educational projects for children here and around the world. So when you buy our products, you're not just entertaining and educating your children, but those around the world, too. Thank you for your support!



[To learn more, visit our products information page where you can watch a short video about how our product sales fund our work.](#)

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