



Sesame Family Newsletter

June 15, 2005

The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more



For Parents

[Nurturing Curiosity](#)
by *Jordan Brown*

A father encourages his young scientist.

Featuring:

- The Hottest Book This Summer
- Cooking as Chemistry
- Gaga for Gadgets
- Bonding Over 'Bots

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Games and More: Tasty Treats

Stories, games, and activities to put you in the mood for food!

- [Cookies Can't Laugh](#)
- [Let's Make Breakfast!](#)
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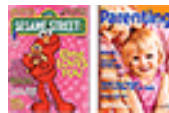


From the Workshop



[Your charitable gift to support Sesame Workshop will pave the way for Sesame Street...](#)

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Nurturing Curiosity

THE HOTTEST BOOK THIS SUMMER

If you're searching for an engaging page-turner for your kids this summer, look no further than **HOW TO MAKE LAVA**. This hot-off-the-press book is short, whimsically illustrated, and presents fascinating geological concepts with clarity and humor. The only snag is that only one copy exists. You see, it was "published" last week at our kitchen table. As you've probably guessed by now, the author is my 4-year-old son Finn.

Before I tell you what inspired this book, let me share its complete text.

HOW TO MAKE LAVA

By Finn Brown (as told to Jordan Brown)

Step 1: Get a frying pan.

Step 2: Cook a rock for a million minutes.

Step 3: Pour the lava in a bowl to see it boil. Don't touch the lava. It's hot.

Step 4: Let the lava cool to form rock again.

That's it!

Over the last month or so, Finn has become intrigued with volcanoes. He enjoys reading books about volcanoes, building models of them in the sandbox, and most of all, sharing his knowledge with others. It's not hard to figure out why many preschoolers are awed by volcanoes--they are huge, dangerous, and mysterious. And from a 4 year old's perspective, the violent eruptions show that even volcanoes have temper tantrums.

Although there's no way of knowing for sure, my wife Ellen and I wonder if Finn will become a scientist one day. Volcanoes are the just the latest scientific topic he's interested in. From naming all of the planets to learning how the vacuum cleaner works, Finn's curiosity about science just keeps growing. To encourage his interest, we find relevant books at the library, let him take apart appliances that no longer work, and take him to the local science museum.



CURIOSITY

[Take an age-by-age peek at curious minds.](#)

"WHY?...WHAT?...HOW?...
BUT WHY..."

[Questions, questions, questions!](#)

TRACKING NATURE'S TREASURES

[From twigs to rocks, point out the beauty and mystery of nature's gifts.](#)

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF HAVING FUN

[Kids can enjoy adult museums, too.](#)



COOKING AS CHEMISTRY

Finn and I love to bake. From chocolate fudge pie to carrot cake muffins with maple cream cheese frosting, together we've whipped up a variety of mouth-watering treats for family birthday celebrations. Finn especially loves helping me push the buttons on the mixer, food processor and other electronic gadgets. And, like all kids, he adores licking the beaters!

Finn's favorite kitchen creation these days is not quite as sophisticated as the ones mentioned above. He calls it "A Little Bit of This, A Little Bit of That." When in the mood to make this concoction, he gets a small mixing bowl, and a spoon. Then he takes an assortment of foods out of the refrigerator and shelves--ketchup, apple juice, mustard, strawberry jam, chocolate syrup, dry milk, cinnamon, oregano--and mixes together a small amount of each. Sometimes the whole mysterious mix is poured into ice cube trays in the freezer. Occasionally he'll spread it on crackers, and offer it to Ellen and me. When we're feeling brave, we try a nibble, other times it's clear that faking a bite would be wise for our well-being.

Last week, Finn's version of "A Little Bit of This, A Little Bit of That" featured three daring ingredients--baking powder, vinegar and red pepper flakes. The result was a red bubbly mixture that made us cough and brought tears to our eyes. Then we got tears in our eyes from laughing so hard. Even Finn realized that we weren't going to taste it!



THE JOY OF COOKING
What's cooking? Don't ask!

KRAZY GOO
Stir up some crazy goo in the kitchen!

GAGA FOR GADGETS

Finn has never met a tool, gadget or machine he didn't love. At the very young age of 2, he would enjoy exploring the innards of an old telephone or tape recorder with our help, of course. Other times, he would gleefully tell us about the difference between AA batteries, C batteries, and lantern batteries. His grandparents enjoy bragging that "He's going to be an engineer someday." He gets a kick out of taking things apart to see how they work. Soon after he learned to walk, Finn figured out how to operate our VCR (we were sooo proud), followed shortly by his figuring out how to make our VCR totally useless (did we say proud?) Today, anytime an appliance is on the verge of going on the blink, Finn says things like, "When the vacuum stops sucking up dirt, can we take it apart?"



BUBBLES OF FUN
Bubbles, bubbles, everywhere! Mix up a batch of bubble stuff and let your children make their own blowers.

Last week in the park, Finn and a friend were playing with balloon rockets. When these specially shaped balloons are pumped up and let go, they shoot high in the air, making a wild, high-pitched honking noise. When one of his balloon rockets hit the ground and popped, I expected a tantrum. Instead, Finn picked up the shredded balloon, and said, "This is actually good because now I can see inside it."

SODA-BOTTLE RAIN GAUGE

[Measure the weather with an easy-to-make rain gauge!](#)

BONDING OVER 'BOTS

This summer, Finn and I plan to embark on a new venture together: building robots. He loves playing with wind-up robots I've given him, and sometimes pretends that he's a robot himself. So far, I've purchased a basic book on the subject, and have started to explore what kinds of supplies we'll need to create mechanical creatures. I must admit I'm feeling a bit overwhelmed. I don't have a background in electronics, and only a minimal understanding of computer programming. But I'm determined to nurture Finn's curiosity about science and how things work, and I'd like to explore a totally new area with him. I figure that my own naïveté might actually be a good thing. We can have fun figuring out things together. I have to run now because I just heard Finn in the other room telling me it's time to make more lava.

Hope you find many wonderful ways to inspire your child's curiosity!



A PRESCHOOLER'S PARADISE

[Turn your yard into a creative wonderland for your child.](#)

Weekly Trivia

Did You Know?

Cookie Monster really eats rice cakes, not chocolate chip cookies! Chocolate, oil, and grease can damage the Muppet's hands, so prop makers often paint rice cakes to look like cookies.

FROM THE WORKSHOP

For over 35 years, Sesame Street has been touching the lives of children all over the world. Now you have a chance to help Sesame Workshop, the non-profit organization behind Sesame Street, reach out to more children and more countries than ever before. From Afghanistan to South Africa, the Workshop, with your help, will use media to help children reach their fullest potential.



[Learn how you can help Sesame Workshop today.](#)

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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