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The nonprofit educational organization  
behind Sesame Street and so much more



## Sesame Family Newsletter

May 13, 2009

### Celebrating Offbeat Milestones

by Jordan D. Brown

A dad ponders his daughter's quirkier milestones.

#### Featuring:

Remembering "Yardstones"  
Developing a Knack for Cracking Eggs  
"If My Older Brother Can Do It..."  
This Week on the Street



### This Week on the Street...

Playlists featuring games and videos to promote interactive learning.

- [Practice Makes Perfect](#)  
You won't get better unless you practice!
- [Persistence](#)  
Don't give up! You can do it!
- [Accidents and Mistakes](#)  
Don't worry! Everyone makes mistakes!

#### Spread a Little Love

[Your donation to Sesame Workshop can help children all over the world reach their highest potential.](#)



#### Sesame on the Web

Did you know that *Sesame Street* is on YouTube?

[Check us out!](#)

### Michelle Obama visits Sesame Street!

First lady Michelle Obama visited *Sesame Street* on May 5th to promote Sesame Workshop's "[Healthy Habits for Life](#)" initiative. Elmo and Mrs. Obama chatted about topics ranging from healthy eating habits to the importance of exercise. [Watch the public service announcement.](#)



See Sesame Workshop's "[Let's Get Healthy](#)" Collection for videos, games, and printables focusing on healthy habits you can practice every day.

## REMEMBERING "YARDSTONES"

Some childhood milestones get all the fame, glory, and attention. You know the ones I'm talking about--speaking first words, taking first steps, singing the alphabet, counting to 10, using the potty, riding a bike, and so on. These are the milestones pediatricians ask about at checkups, and parents brag about at the playground. While these developmental steps are certainly important to a child's growth, my most joyous parenting moments are helping my kids



conquer the quirkiest milestones. Now that my chatty, outgoing daughter Olivia is 4 years old, I can barely remember when she spoke her first words. But ask me about the first time she learned to blow bubbles, slide down the curly slide, or whistle? Now we're talking! I recall these mini-milestones, or "yardstones," as if they were yesterday.

On a crisp fall day, shortly before Olivia turned 3, she and I were in the kitchen. I was making oatmeal for breakfast, while she was playing with her dolls in the corner. From her expression, I could see she was telling her dolls something very important. Every time I came over to see what she was up to, she shooed me away. "Not now, Daddy! Can't you see I'm busy?"

A few minutes later, as I finished slicing bananas, Olivia ran over, bursting with excitement.

"Look at me, Daddy, I'm doing it! I'm doing it!" Olivia shrieked, as she stuck her hand in front of my face. I heard the world's cutest little "snap-snap." Olivia was eager to master this skill, ever since she and I had watched Mr. Rogers snap his fingers during his closing song on a rerun of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*. That night, Olivia was eager to show off her new talent to her mother and older brother. She could now add finger snapping to her list of kid-talents.

### [Through Your Infant's Eyes: Birth to Age One](#)

Support your infant's development through everyday moments together.

### [The World is Your Toddler's Oyster: Year One to Year Two](#)

Support your toddler's development through your everyday moments together.

### [First Steps](#)

Enjoy this video with your child of a baby taking her first steps.

## DEVELOPING A KNACK FOR CRACKING EGGS

Whether learning to "pop her cheek," doing the "Dorothy skip" from *The Wizard of Oz*, or putting her head underwater at the pool, Olivia's progress is usually gradual, with many mistakes and setbacks along the way. As a parent, I'm learning the importance of celebrating my children's first rough efforts as *if* they were perfect -- even if they are way off the ultimate goal.

When my kids' confidence is at a low point, a little fudging in the praise department can have a powerful effect. For example, I remember when Olivia learned to crack eggs. I've loved baking since I was a small boy, so I can crack eggs effortlessly (thank you very much). Olivia was eager to learn, but felt intimidated. "How hard do you have to hit it?" she asked.

I got out two dozen eggs -- a box for her and one for me. I demonstrated a few times. When I accidentally got some shell in the bowl, I made sure to point this out to her, so she'd realize that it was okay to make goofs. Her first attempt was much too gentle, barely scratching the shell. Her second attempt went the other way, with the yolk and white splattering all over the counter, and *us!* I encouraged her to laugh at these efforts, and kept saying, "Don't worry, you'll get it!" In addition, I said things like, "I didn't know how to crack eggs when I was 3 either. But Bubbie (my mother) showed me how to do it!" I don't recall what we made with those 24 scrambled eggs -- but I'm sure we ate a lot of omelettes that day!



### [I Tried](#)

Enjoy this song and video with your child about kids trying new things and succeeding.

### [Learning to Rollerblade](#)

A girl and her mom try rollerblading for the first time. Talk to your child about something new she or he would like to learn.

## "IF MY OLDER BROTHER CAN DO IT..."

Having an older brother like Finian (now 8) inspires Olivia to achieve milestones at an earlier age. While I know there are other factors at play, such as gender and personality, I'm sure Finian is a big motivator in Olivia learning to walk, talk, and use the potty much earlier than he did.

Of course, with an older sibling, a younger sib learns the quirky (and not always desirable) stuff earlier, too. For example, the other day while in the bath, Finian was using a cup to capture big air bubbles, and then releasing them. As the bubbles rose to the surface, they made a fun glub, glub, glub sound. Seeing that he had an audience in Olivia, he decided it was time to use other parts of his body to make sounds. In particular, he placed a cupped hand under his armpit, and pumped his crooked arm up and down... you know where this is going! Both kids were howling with laughter as Finian



### [Learning to Use the Toilet](#)

Don't stress out if your child is slow to learn.

### [Can Do](#)

Bob sings a song about being proud about tying your shoes and more. Watch with your little one and ask what he or she is proud of doing.

created sounds of a certain bodily function. When it was Olivia's turn in the bath, I knew that she'd start working on developing this, um, talent.

As you celebrate your children's many milestones, don't forget to enjoy the "yardstones," too.

Please note that beginning on May 22, 2009, we will begin emailing this newsletter on Friday instead of Wednesday.

Jordan D. Brown  
Sesame Workshop

## 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 <http://www.sesameworkshop.org>.

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