



Sesame Family Newsletter

August 16, 2006

The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more



For Parents

[Sing, Sing a Song](#)

by *Jordan Brown*

A father helps his son learn to love singing.

Featuring:

- Alien Invasion Sing-along
- Music, Music Everywhere
- Making Music
- A Breakthrough
- Ten Years Later

> [Read this issue](#)

Games and More: **Happy Birthday, Snuffy!**

Celebrate Snuffy's birthday with these fun games.

- [Snuffy's Safari](#)
- [Snuffy and Elmo: If Things Were Different](#)
- [Snuffy's Magic Garden](#)
- [Weekly Trivia](#)

From the Workshop



[A charitable gift to support Sesame Workshop will go a long way...](#)

Sesame Store



[Brought to you by the letter P...New on DVD! Elmo's Potty Time!](#)

McDonald's: A Proud Sponsor of Sesame Street



For years, Sesame Street has nurtured the wellbeing of children through learning, laughter and wonder. [McDonald's](#) is happy to be a sponsor, hoping to inspire kids everywhere to learn and to live more balanced, active lifestyles.

[Read all about it!](#)

[Sing, Sing a Song](#)

ALIEN INVASION SING-ALONG

"Daddy, Daddy, get ready to sing!" my 5-year-old son Finn shouts in our backyard. "I'm about to launch it."

The "it" he is referring to is a flying saucer toy that glides through the air via remote control. The song Finn wants me to sing is the rock classic "The End of the World as We Know It" by R.E.M. This song plays in the background of one of his favorite movies, CHICKEN LITTLE, as a fleet of alien spaceships attack Earth.

As I sing, Finn floats the flying saucer just above my head. He says, "C'mon, it's right there. You can touch it."

The moment I reach for it, he uses the remote control to zoom the saucer upward. With mock frustration, I shout, "I can't get it! It escaped!" Finn laughs with glee, and together we sing the song again.

Finn's interest in singing is relatively new. Since he was a baby he's enjoyed listening to recorded music. But until recently every time I sang--no matter what the song--Finn urged me to stop. I wasn't sure what was at the root of his protests, but I have a hunch that he didn't want me to sing until he felt ready to sing himself. Singing is another example of "every-kid-develops-at-his-own-pace." At age 3, one of Finn's friends used to love to sing all the words to "Elmo's World" and even "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!"



IMAGINARY SHOES

Play a musical make-believe game.

HAPPY FEET

When kids move to the music, they laugh and learn.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

Play the classic game you remember, with a new twist.

MUSIC, MUSIC EVERYWHERE

Ever since I was a little boy, singing has been a big part of my life. As a child, my family used to have sing-along marathons during car trips. In high school and college, I participated in choirs and musical plays. Now, as an adult and a parent, I want to bring this love of music to my own children's lives. One way I do this is that I've made singing a part of our "night-night" routine. Although Finn sometimes resists my singing efforts during the day, he insists that I sing "Edelweiss" or "Young at Heart" before he nods off. I also enjoy playing piano and guitar. Whenever I pull out these instruments, Finn and his 21-month-old sister Olivia, have a blast plucking the keys or strumming the strings.

This summer, our family moved from the city to the country. One of the biggest changes is that we now spend a lot more time in the car. To pass the time on the way to camp, the pool, or the supermarket, Finn and Olivia enjoy listening to a variety of CDs-- from show tunes and jazz to country and rock 'n roll.



ANIMAL SING-ALONG

Help your child learn about tempo as you keep time with favorite toys.

TOGETHER, WE MAKE MUSIC

Teach your kids about rhythm, tempo, and more.

"What do you want to listen to today?" I ask as we pull out of our driveway.

"Oompah!" Olivia suggests. I know that she's referring to the "Oompah Loompah" song from the soundtrack to the 1971 film WILLY WONKA AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY--one of my all-time favorite movies. In this song, a group of mysterious Oompah Loompah characters warn children about the dangers of overeating, being bratty, chewing gum, and watching too much TV. Although the lyrics contain some sophisticated vocabulary, Finn loves to memorize the words and sing-along. Olivia joins in during the choruses, which feature many funny nonsense words.

Whenever I try out a new song, I know it's a hit with Finn and Olivia if they shout, "Again! Again!" In fact, Olivia so loves shouting those words that she often calls them out in the middle of songs.

From what I can tell, Finn and Olivia have similar tastes in music. Olivia especially loves "Elmo's Song" from SESAME STREET, and "Moon Moon Moon" by Laurie Berkner, a popular children's singer. On a recent starry night (another perk of country life!), Olivia gazed upward as I sang the first three words of this song--"moon moon moon." I was shocked when Olivia then filled in the next two words..."shining bright."

The fill-in-the-blank singing game is one of my kids' favorites. When I sing "On Top of Spaghetti," I often leave out the last word of each line--and let one of the children fill it in. Or, I substitute a silly word which causes the kids to shout, "No! That's not it."

MUSICAL AMUSEMENTS
[Finger-snapping, toe-tapping musical amusements.](#)

MAKING MUSIC

On rainy days, when Finn and Olivia are bursting with energy, my wife Ellen and I often turn on the music.

Sometimes the kids pick the songs that we'll dance to. Their most popular "dance" involves a free-form spinning and jumping. We watch carefully to make sure that no one gets hurt.

In addition to dancing, we encourage the kids to create and play their own musical instruments, including homemade shakers, oatmeal container drums, and more. Inspired by the book OLIVIA FORMS A BAND by Ian Falconer, Finn and Olivia get a kick out of searching the house for any object that might be turned into a music-maker.



SHAKE-SHAKE-SHAKERS
[Shake it up with some homemade rhythm instruments.](#)

SOUNDS ON PAPER
Kids express their musical feelings on paper.

CARDBOARD KAZOOS
Kids love to play the pied piper on a homemade instrument!

A BREAKTHROUGH

Last week, while Finn and I were driving to his Taekwondo martial arts lesson, he seemed deep in thought. I turned the radio to a low volume so I wouldn't interrupt his concentration. A few minutes later, Finn said, "Daddy, want to hear some songs I wrote?"

I nearly swerved off the road. I said, "Sure." Finn explained that he had two songs he wanted me to hear. "They would both make terrible lullabies because they are both rock 'n roll songs--so they have to be loud."

He then sang loudly and rhythmically a bunch of mostly nonsense syllables: "Oh, dabba ya dabba DA. / You know it! / Oh, blabbity, blabbity BLOO. / Yea, baby!" I wondered if he was making it up as he went along. So when he finished I said those magical words "Again! Again!" and Finn sang the song back exactly the same way.

"You want to hear my second song now?" he asked. "Don't worry, it has the same 'fun-ness' as the first one."

Later that afternoon, Finn performed his two songs for Ellen and Olivia, beaming with pride.



ROCKIN'
Get in sync with your child's music tastes.

DO THE JITTERBUGGY
Crank up the tunes and encourage your child to wriggle, flutter, and buzz about!

TEN YEARS LATER

Most of the songs that Finn and Olivia enjoy are either kid classics, from TV shows, or from our CD collection.

Sometimes, as I watch Finn and Olivia make each other belly laugh, I daydream about what they'll be like during their teenage years. What songs will they want me to listen to? Will I appreciate their tastes? I guess only time will tell. But I hope that in a decade music will still be one of the things that brings our family close together.



Have fun exploring music with your children.

Jordan Brown

Sesame Workshop

Weekly Trivia

Did You Know?

Snuffy attends a preschool called Snufflegarden, and the Snuffleupagus Postal Service sends Snuffleupagrams.

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.

[Support the 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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