



Sesame Family Newsletter

The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more

October 27, 2004



For Parents

Stay-at-Home Dads

by *Jordan Brown*

Holding down the fort when Mom goes to work.

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Games and More:

FAMILY TIES

Family is number one in these Sesame Workshop activities.

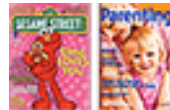
- [Elmo's Special Cupcakes](#)
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From the Workshop



[The longest street in the world starts at your door.](#)
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Sesame Store



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Read all about it!

Stay-at-Home Dads

OFF TO WORK SHE GOES

When it's time for my wife Ellen to head to the office, my 3-year-old son Finn and I hover near the front door. It has become our tradition that Finn calls out "GROUP HUG!" and the three of us embrace tightly. Empowered by our family huddle, we all feel ready to tackle the day's frustrations and challenges. And as Finn's stay-at-home father, I can count on a heaping helping of said frustrations and challenges--vegetables that don't want to be eaten, naps that don't want to get taken, toys that don't want to be shared, clothes that don't want to be worn, potties that don't want to be sat on...you know the drill.

Don't get me wrong. I wouldn't trade being a stay-at-home father for anything. It's been one of the highlights of my life. Spending large chunks of my time with Finn is both fascinating and fun...usually.



VIVA LA (DAD) DIFFERENCE!

[Research shows fathers play an important role in a child's development.](#)

THE FATHER'S ROLE

[Workshop experts discuss how fathers help their children grow.](#)

GOING FOR THE GOLD?

One recent weekday afternoon, I experienced one of the challenges of being a stay-at-home parent living in a large city. Satchmo, our dog, was overdue for a bathroom break just as Finn was ripe for a nap. As soon as I mentioned to my bleary-eyed son that it was time to walk 'Mo, Finn insisted that I carry him. Emerging from our apartment building, neighbors smiled as they saw Finn in one arm, and 'Mo attached to the other by leash. (Unfortunately for me, Finn rejected his stroller over a year ago.) A simple walk around the block wasn't so simple. I strained to keep 40-lb. Finn aloft, while preventing Satchmo from yanking the whole operation toward every squirrel that scurried by. Fifteen minutes later, as I returned to our apartment building, a stranger smiled at me and asked: "Are you training for the Daddy Olympics?"



THE SECRET LIVES OF SESAME DADS

[Your private joys, jolts, and challenges--revealed!](#)

GETTING DOWN WITH DAD

[There's a good reason today's fathers are more involved than ever. Read on.](#)

HOW I BECAME MR. MOM

Several years before Finn was born, I decided to leave my full-time job at a publishing company to pursue a career as a freelance writer. Having worked in an office setting for about ten years, I was ready for a change of scene. I was also extremely lucky and grateful that Ellen supported this decision--and that her job included benefits to cover both of us. I was also fortunate that I made this decision at a time when the Internet, fax machines, and other technology made working from home a real possibility.

When Finn was born in January 2001, the room I used for my home office became his bedroom. "JordCo. International" (my joke business name) was relocated to a tight corner of our apartment. During the time that Ellen was on maternity leave, she was Finn's primary caretaker. Then, when the time for her to return to work drew near, she asked me how I felt about decreasing my workload and caring for Finn full-time during the day for the next three months. I leapt at the chance. Even though it sometimes meant squeezing in phone meetings during Finn's naps, the advantages far outweighed the drawbacks.

Finn and I got into a groove and soon I found that three months had extended to almost a year. Eventually, as I increased my workload, we hired a part-time babysitter. While this change was an adjustment for both of us, I was grateful that working at home meant I would always be close by if Finn needed a hug, wanted to show me a painting, or ask me a question.



HOW DO THEY DO IT?
[Success secrets of stay-at-home moms and dads.](#)

THE DAD REPORT
[Straight from the dads' mouths: being a good father isn't just about earning money anymore.](#)

POST-SCHOOL PIZZA

Being a stay-at-home father has boosted my respect for all stay-at-home parents•be it mom or dad. But, in particular, I've gained admiration for two specific groups of parents. The first is single parents. I don't know how they do it. I'm enormously relieved when Ellen returns from work at the end of the day. While I teeter on burnout from caring for Finn during the day, she is delighted to be spending some special time with her boy. Finn, too, is energized by her appearance.

The second group is the stay-at-home fathers of earlier generations. Nowadays, it is becoming more common for men and women to switch traditional gender roles in parenting. More and more women today are the primary breadwinners while their husbands take care of the kids.



ARE TODAY'S DADS DIFFERENT?
[Hundreds of dads answer the million-dollar question.](#)

But stay-at-home dads aren't the norm quite yet. Last Friday, after I picked up Finn from nursery school, we joined several of his classmates at a pizza parlor. Four of the five adults there were mothers. At the end of a lovely lunch, one of the mothers asked me, "So, are you off on Fridays?" I explained that while the IRS considers me a writer, my top job--the one that absolutely comes with the greatest rewards--is being a stay-at-home parent.

THE MORE THE MERRIER

My responsibilities as a stay-at-home dad will increase exponentially in the next couple months. Around Thanksgiving time, we're looking forward to the arrival of a baby girl. The whole family is excited about the new addition. Well, perhaps not the WHOLE family. I can just imagine Satchmo thinking, "Oh, great...how is he going to walk me now?"

Jordan Brown

Sesame Workshop

DADDY'S GIRLS

Getting to the heart of the father-daughter bond.

Weekly Trivia

What is the name of Luis's and Maria's daughter?

- A. Maria Jr.
- B. Gabriela
- C. Betty Lou
- D. Rita

Thinking caps on?

The answer is B. Gabriela. At first, the character was played by Sonia Manzano's (Maria) real life daughter of the same name.

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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