



Sesame Family Newsletter

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The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more



For Parents

Winning Over Picky Eaters

by *Jordan Brown*

Getting kids in the mood for food

Featuring:

- Games Parents Play
- C is for Cooking... That's Good Enough for Us
- Vegging Out
- Food for Thought

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Games and More: Tasty Treats

Games to put you in the mood for food!

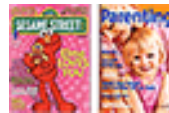
- [Cookies Can't Laugh](#)
- [Let's Make Breakfast!](#)
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From the Workshop



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Winning Over Picky Eaters

GAMES PARENTS PLAY

I watched in awe as my 3-year-old son Finn ate his entire lunch. Seated at our kitchen table, he proudly stuck his fork into a bowl of pasta. After several bites, he tried some steamed broccoli with garlic and olive oil. Crunch-crunch-crunch! In minutes, the broccoli was history. My son even asked for a paper towel to wipe his mouth. I marveled at how far Finn had come from his infant days when my wife Ellen and I would spoon feed him in a high chair.

Then, sadly, I woke up. Talk about rude awakening. This delightful lunch experience with my son was just a dream, a total fantasy that had no bearing on reality. *sigh*

In truth, Finn is rarely this independent or cooperative at mealtime. More often than not, our son eats one or two bites--then loses interest, and becomes deeply involved in another activity. When we try to gently divert his attention back to his plate, he'll say in a curt tone, "I'm full. I'm full" even if he's eaten only a tiny bit.

To help Finn eat healthy meals, Ellen and I resort to a variety of tricks. These tricks usually involve some kind of distraction. When Finn was 2, and things got desperate, we fed him as he played Elmo's World games on my computer. While delighted to see him eating, I prayed he wouldn't spit food bits on my keyboard.

Humor has always been a surefire strategy, too. The other day, for example, when Finn resisted pieces of hard-boiled egg at breakfast, we played a silly game in which he feeds me lines to say, as I, in turn, try to feed him food. The conversation went like this:

FINN: Daddy, you say, "I REALLY want to eat that piece of egg." Then take a nap.

ME: I REALLY want to eat that piece of egg. (closing my eyes) *snore, snore*

Finn immediately devours the piece of egg, and I pretend to wake up SHOCKED at the mysterious disappearance of my food.

If mealtimes are a struggle with your little ones, check out these articles from Sesame Workshop.



EWWW! I'M NOT EATING THAT!

[The dish on how to handle your picky eater.](#)

PICKY EATING

[Help! My 4-year-old child's diet consists solely of cereal, instant oatmeal, vanilla pudding, pretzels, and French fries!](#)

WHEN KIDS WON'T EAT

[My 2 year old eats very little. Is there anything I can do to encourage her appetite?](#)

PLEASING A PICKY EATER

[Chew on this: Picky eaters may be born that way.](#)

C IS FOR COOKING...THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR US

Finn is less •Finn-icky• about food when he helps make the meals. From shopping to chopping, there are many ways that he can lend a hand. As long as I allow enough time, try to be patient, and accept the fact that the kitchen will look like a disaster area, cooking and baking with Finn is a blast.

The other day we made buttermilk scones. During each cooking venture, I make a point of teaching him the names of the various kitchen tools, and frequently read the recipe aloud. With careful supervision, I let him mix ingredients, grease pans, switch on the standmixer, and so on. When it came time to crack the eggs, Finn said what sounded like, •Do it the Old Tin way.•

Huh?

After asking him to repeat his request, I figured out that he was telling me to crack the eggs, •the Alton way.• He was referring to a cooking program that we•d watched together on TV. The host of the show Alton Brown pointed out the perils of cracking eggs against the side of a bowl. By doing so, there•s a greater chance that eggshell will accidentally end up in the batter. A better way to go, according to Alton, is to crack the egg first on the counter, then separate the shell over the bowl. Weeks had passed since Finn and I had seen this program. I was amazed that he had not only understood it, but recalled it weeks later.

It gives me great pride to think that perhaps Finn will pick up my lifelong passion for cooking. This summer, to beat the heat, he and I are going to make several of the Workshop•s fun, tasty, and kid-friendly recipes. Now that Finn enjoys drawing, I•m thinking of making him a homemade cookbook, too, with pictures of his favorite dishes.



ALL-DAY SMOOTHIES
[Little helpers can add fruit to any of these three delicious drinks.](#)

**•GOING BANANAS•
FROZEN TREAT**
[Enjoy this easy-to-make chilly treat with your little monkey.](#)

FIVE-STAR SALAD
[Kids will flip for this tomato-and-cucumber salad at your next barbecue or picnic.](#)

**WACKY WRAPS AND
ROCKIN• ROLLS**
[Put a spin on lunch with these fun ideas.](#)

TOMATO ROUNDERS
[Your little helper will have a ball making this delicious tomato treat.](#)



VEGGING OUT

Forget kids, many of my adult friends and relatives hate to eat vegetables. Offer them steamed broccoli, spinach, or cauliflower, and they'll scoff. As far as they're concerned, if a vegetable isn't battered and/or deep-fried, forget it. When I've asked about the origins of their veggie-phobia, many explain that their parents didn't know how to prepare vegetables in appealing ways. An otherwise enjoyable vegetable can be ruined by poor preparation. I'm a die-hard fan of veggies, but even I have my limits. Serve me canned okra, and I'll run for the hills.

Fortunately for Finn, I've learned to prepare vegetables in ways that usually make them a hit. In general, the fresher and crunchier, the better. If a fruit or vegetable is in season, it's worth experimenting with Finn's taste buds. A little trickery doesn't hurt, either. To make string beans and other veggies more enticing, we often serve them with a side dish of sour cream, plain yogurt, or blue cheese dressing. We pretend that these sauces are a swimming pool, and the vegetables take turns diving in. Silly, yes. Time-consuming, you bet. But it works.

One time when Ellen and I were having a particularly difficult time feeding Finn, I joked that someone should invent a device called The Food Cannon. This absurd device would enable weary, frustrated parents to feed their offspring in a matter of seconds, not hours. In my fantasy, the parent loads the Food Cannon with a super-nutritious buffet, inserts a nozzle in the child's mouth, then--BANG!--mealtime is over! (The other fantasy invention for parents I'd love to see is •the Kid Off Switch•--which momentarily shuts down a child while an exhausted parent takes a much-needed nap.)

But I digress. For young children, learning to eat is not just about taste, or even nutrition. It's about developing healthy habits that help build independence. The Workshop has two articles that shed light on the emotional issues surrounding children's eating habits.



EATING

[Our three experts explain how children gain control over the eating process.](#)

THE FEELINGS YOU BRING TO THE TABLE

[The reasons why you get so emotional about your child's eating habits, and what to do about it.](#)



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Finn recently started day camp, a few mornings a week.

For lunch, parents are asked to pack a variety of nutritious snacks. At first I was worried that Finn would not have the attention span to sit for snack time--or would look to the counselors to help feed him. In our efforts to get Finn to eat well, had Ellen and I created a •monster• that required an elaborate •dog and pony• show in order to eat?



Fortunately, my anxiety was unfounded. The camp keeps the kids running around all morning that by snack time, Finn is ravenous. Since the counselors are less indulgent than Ellen and I, Finn is also getting better at the art of feeding himself.

Someday in the distant future, I look forward to Finn inviting us over to his house as he joyfully prepares a gourmet meal. (Hold the okra, son.)

•Til then, bon appétit to you and your family.

Jordan Brown

Sesame Workshop

Weekly Trivia

What is Cookie Monster's favorite saying?

- A. Time to eat!
- B. Me want cookie!
- C. Hello Wisconsin!
- D. Adios amigos!

Put your thinking caps on, but not too tight! The answer is (B). Cookie Monster constantly craves one thing: cookies!

FROM THE WORKSHOP

As a nonprofit, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds it receives from the sales of its products right back into Sesame Street and other educational projects for children here and in over 120 different countries around the world. So when you buy our products, you're not just entertaining and educating your children, but those around the world, too.



[Learn more about our mission-driven activities that our product sales help fund.](#)

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

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