COMMUNITY GUIDE

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A creation of sesameworkshop.

The nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street and so much more

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit educational organization that revolutionized children’s television programming with the landmark Sesame Street. The Workshop produces local Sesame Street programs, seen in over 150 countries, and other acclaimed shows to help bridge the literacy gap, including The Electric Company. Beyond television, the Workshop produces content for multiple media platforms on a wide range of issues including literacy, health, and military deployment. Initiatives meet specific needs to help young children and families develop critical skills, acquire healthy habits, and build emotional strength to prepare them for lifelong learning. Learn more at sesameworkshop.org.

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Together we can tackle anything!

Building resilience skills in children is a community effort, and families, educators, and community facilitators all play key roles. You can help young children (ages 2–5) learn to manage and express their emotions, be persistent, learn problem-solving strategies, and care for one another. By hosting events, leading workshops, and reaching out to families, you are helping children to reach their highest potential.

The Little Children, Big Challenges Community Guide
- introduces key ideas for building resilience;
- offers activities for families; and
- suggests ways to make the most of these resources at home.

A Helping Hand
To support you in the important work you do, Sesame Street has created Little Children, Big Challenges. This multimedia, multiphase initiative offers tips and ideas for building resilience skills and tackling everyday challenges like encountering new situations, making mistakes, and making friends.

For more Sesame Street resources on everyday challenges:
- Explore SesameStreet.org/Challenges
- Download the FREE Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame app
- Connect with Facebook.com/SesameStreetInCommunities
- Watch the playlist at Youtube.com/SesameInCommunities
- Access the Educator Activity Guide at http://bit.ly/Mli0gA

Caring Communities
You make a lasting impact on the lives of the children and families you serve. By connecting with your community and inviting other caring adults to participate in your work, you can magnify that impact. Consider including in your trainings leaders or groups from service organizations, schools, libraries, after-school groups, local government offices, medical or mental health services, and faith-based programs.
What’s Inside

This guide offers families in your community tips and strategies to help children develop resilience skills to manage everyday challenges.

By doing these activities, families will be able to
• name people in their “circle of care”;  
• label emotions;  
• know at least one strategy for calming down;  
• be able to come up with a plan when they encounter a problem; and  
• understand the importance of being persistent when overcoming a challenge.

This guide provides simple activities that introduce each of these key concepts and offers suggestions to use the broader Little Children, Big Challenges resources. You know your group best, so feel free to pick and choose the activities that work for you, and adapt them to the needs of your participants.

IceBreakers! To help make children and families feel more comfortable, you can
• play the “What We Are” anthem at sesamestreet.org/challenges as people enter,
• personally greet each participant (get down to eye level to greet children); or
• have participants fill out and wear name tags.
Care Everywhere (30 minutes)

Children and their families are better able to tackle problems when they know they have the love and support of others around them.

Goals

In this activity, you’ll help families to recognize and name the people who care about them.

• Parents and caregivers will gain strategies to help children understand how many people are there to support them.
• Children will identify people who care about them and are there to help.

Supplies

• Pocket Full of Hearts Printable (page 4)
• Crayons or markers
• Scissors (for adults only)
• Large, mural-size sheet of paper
• Tape

Setup

Print out one Pocket Full of Hearts Printable for each family. Hang up the large, mural-size paper on a wall, or lay it out on the floor.

Talk About It

• Explain that a Circle of Care is all of the family, friends, neighbors, and teachers who love and support a child. Let parents and caregivers know that having one adult the child can trust and count on can make all the difference.
• Tell children, “The people in your Circle of Care are those who pick you up from school and read you a story—people you can talk to about big feelings. They can help you feel strong, even during hard times.”

Directions

1. Help families identify people in their Circle of Care. Ask questions like, “Who do you spend holidays with? Who do you call on the phone or write letters to?”
2. Have children draw pictures of these people on the printable hearts, and have adults cut out the hearts.
3. Call children up to attach their hearts to the large piece of paper and share aloud.
4. Label the mural “People Who Care,” “Our Circle of Care,” or a similar title.

Take It Home

Suggest that families take out their hearts at bedtime or print out the My Super Stars mobile at sesamestreet.org/challenges and name the people in their Circle of Care. Also, page 11 of the Little Children, Big Challenges Family Guide has more activities to build a sense of connection and community within their Circle of Care.
Activity One: A Pocket Full of Hearts Printable

A Circle of Care is all of the family, friends, neighbors, and teachers who love and support you. In each heart, draw a picture of someone in your Circle of Care. Ask a grown-up to help you cut out the hearts, and make a collage of all of the people who care about you. Or, hold the hearts in your pocket to remind you that you have people who love and support you.
Feel It, Share It (20 minutes)
Everyone can have “big feelings” like anger or sadness. The first step to feeling better is to name your feelings.

Goals
In this activity, you will help families learn to clearly express their feelings.

• **Parents and caregivers** will practice strategies to help children name their feelings so they can cope with them.

• **Children** will learn strategies to label, identify, and express feelings.

Supplies
• Feeling Faces Printable (page 6)

Setup
Give each family a Feeling Faces Printable.

Talk About It
• Talk about feelings: “Sometimes we are really happy and excited, like when we have a birthday; other times, we feel sad or frustrated, like when we break a toy.” Explain that it is okay to have all of these big feelings.

• Mention, “Sharing our feelings with adults who care about us can help us to feel better.”

• Ask children, “How are you feeling right now?” Try to understand which feeling words children already know.

Directions
1. Hold up the Feeling Faces Printable and say, “Here are some of the feelings we have.” Read each of the feelings and give an example. Ask families to make a face that shows that feeling or ask, “Can anyone share a time they felt this way?”

2. Depending on the size of your group, break families into teams of two, or create groups of two families with each family acting as a team. Give one person a Feeling Faces Printable. Say, “If you have the Feeling Faces Printable, pick a feeling and put the page somewhere where the other team can’t see. Then act out the feeling you chose. When the other team guesses the feeling correctly, switch!”

Take It Home
Suggest that families use the Feeling Faces Printable when they are talking about emotions. Explain, “When your child is having a big feeling, you can help her find the picture that best shows how she’s feeling.” Also, use the “How Am I Feeling?” activity page on sesamestreet.org/challenges to help the child name, show, and express feelings anytime.
Activity Two: Feeling Faces Printable

Use the Feeling Faces as a tool to help children label and express their feelings. You may encourage children to color in each feeling face as well!
Breathe, Think, Do (30 minutes)
Learn the “Breathe, Think, Do” strategy as a way to cope with challenges and solve problems.

Goals
Families will learn how to remain calm and make a plan when confronted with a challenge.

• **Parents and caregivers** will gain one strategy for helping children to manage strong feelings and work through challenges. Parents and caregivers will take time to practice Breathe, Think, Do along with their children.
• **Children** will learn to Breathe, Think, and Do to solve a problem.

Supplies
• One set of Breathe, Think, Do Cards for each child (page 8)
• Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
• Upbeat music (for example, the “What We Are” anthem at sesamestreet.org/challenges)

Setup
Print and cut out one set of Breathe, Think, Do Cards for each child and a set for yourself.

Talk About It
• Share an example of a challenge or problem children might face—sharing with siblings, bedtime, or waiting for a turn.
• Hold up each card and explain, “When you have a problem, first stop and breathe. Put your hands on your belly and take three slow, deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Then think about how you feel and come up with a plan to solve your problem. Then do it! Try out your plan.”

Directions
1. Hand out the Breathe, Think, Do Cards and encourage children to color each one. Ask adults to talk with their children about times when they might use this strategy at home.

2. Say to families, “Let’s pretend that we have a problem. We want to go outside and play, but it’s raining too much. I’m going to play an upbeat song. We’ll dance around with all that energy, but when I stop the music, we’ll freeze and take three slow, deep breaths to calm down.”

3. Play an upbeat song, pausing every 15 to 20 seconds for children to take three deep breaths. After a few of these repetitions, say, “Good! Now we’re calm. Let’s think about a plan to solve our problem.” Listen to plans and then have children and caregivers draw one fun thing they’d like to do inside. Share the pictures and praise families for being such good problem solvers.

Take It Home
Families can download the Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame mobile app on iTunes or Google Play. Children can help the monster friend Breathe, Think, and Do through challenging situations. Encourage families to praise their child’s efforts as they use the app: “I like how you’re trying to breathe with the monster. It’s really helping you to calm down.”
Activity Three: Breathe, Think, Do Cards

Cut out one set of the Breathe, Think, Do Cards for each child and use them to help remember the steps to problem solving.

- Breathe!
- Think!
- Do!
Try, Try Again (40 minutes)

Trying again and again is one of the best ways to learn something new!

**Goals**

Families will discover that persistence is an essential part of learning and growing.

- **Parents and caregivers** will gain one strategy for helping children to be persistent and work through frustration or disappointment, as well as learn ways to praise children’s efforts when facing challenges.
- **Children** will understand that practicing and trying again can help them learn something new.

**Supplies**

- Computer or interactive whiteboard for viewing “Elmo Doesn’t Give Up” (parts 1 and song) at http://bit.ly/1da9DVI
- Construction paper
- Crayons or markers
- I Can Do It! Certificate (page 10)

**Setup**

Prepare the videos for viewing; make sure all participants can see the screen.

**Talk About It**

- Begin a conversation about persistence: “Learning something new can take a lot of tries. When you try and try again, you are being persistent.”
- Encourage parents and caregivers to tell about a time when they were persistent.
- Explain, “We are going to watch a video about a time when Elmo was trying something new. Watch to see if he is persistent.”

**Directions**

1. Watch “Elmo Doesn’t Give Up” (parts 1 and song) from *Little Children, Big Challenges*.
2. Then talk about the strategies Elmo used when he was having trouble buttoning his pajamas, and help children label Elmo’s feelings.
3. Explain to families, “Now, we are going to make posters of things we can’t do yet and of things that we learned by trying and trying again.”
4. Break families into groups to create “I Try” posters. Have families draw a line down the center of a piece of construction paper, with “Not Yet” over one column and “I Did It!” over the other. Have children and parents draw examples in each column.
5. Encourage families to share their posters.
6. Hand out the I Can Do It! Certificate to each family, and encourage parents and caregivers to praise children’s efforts.

**Take It Home**

Suggest that families talk about new skills they are learning at meal times, asking one another: “What was it like to learn __________________? What was the hardest part? How did you overcome that?” You can also have families look on pages 6 and 7 of the Family Guide for activities that encourage patience when children are practicing a new skill.
Activity Four: I Can Do It! Certificate

The I Can Do It! Certificate will congratulate children on how much they've learned! They can name their feelings and solve problems with Breathe, Think, Do!

I can Breathe, Think, Do!

I can name my feelings!

(can't read)

can do it!

We can solve the problem!