

“fruit...anytime
food. cookie...
sometime food.”

—Cookie Monster



HEALTHY HABITS FOR LIFE

Battling the obesity crisis
with a ravenous blue monster and
singing vegetables

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH
HEALTHY HABITS FOR LIFE

Addressing a public health crisis by getting a furry red monster *and* the First Lady in on the action



**A SCENE FROM
HEALTHY HABITS FOR LIFE**

ELMO: What does Mrs. Obama want to do today on Sesame Street?

MRS. OBAMA: Well, I'd like to have a healthy lunch at Hooper's store!

ELMO: Ooh! If Mrs. Obama wants a healthy lunch, Elmo wants a healthy lunch too!

MRS. OBAMA: But, first I want to get some exercise, so I'd like to take a walk around Sesame Street.

ELMO: Ooh! If Mrs. Obama exercises, Elmo wants to exercise too! Yay, exercise!

The childhood obesity rate has tripled in the past 30 years. Presently, one in three children in the United States is overweight or obese.¹

Sesame Street is committed to reversing this trend by connecting with preschoolers when they are forming their eating and exercise habits and setting them on track for a lifetime of wellness.

Since 2004, we have been integrating messages about nutrition and exercise into Sesame Street as part of our Healthy Habits for Life initiative. In 2006, in support of this initiative, we delivered multimedia outreach kits to child-care

centers. Kits included classroom activities, simple recipes, a storybook, and a DVD of *The Get Healthy Now Show!*—a game show headlined by Elmo and the Big Tomato.

In the program, fruits and vegetables literally talk back to their pint-sized critics, advising kids to “Eat your rainbow!” and “Move your body!” (The materials were later researched with family child-care programs, presenting a unique opportunity to understand how health messages can reach this underserved population.)

In 2009, we extended the program's reach by distributing the kits to the millions of families who are most at risk.

¹ CL Ogden, MD Carroll, LR Curtin, et al., “Prevalence of High Body Mass Index in US Children and Adolescents, 2007-2008,” JAMA.

² Mark Nord, Margaret Andrews, and Steven Carlson, Household Food Security in the United States, 2008; ERR-83, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Econ. Res. Serv. Nov 2009.

Parents eagerly embraced the kit's messages about nutrition and enjoyed using Sesame language, such as a "sometime food" (cookie) and an "anytime food" (apple), to motivate their children to make better choices. As one mother said, "Now I can tell them why they can't have that cookie... it's a *sometime* food!"

The Healthy Habits push continues through our programming. In one memorable recent episode, First Lady Michelle Obama pops by to plant a vegetable garden with Elmo. She also answers a pressing question from Big Bird: "Are you part

bird? You and I are both really tall. Maybe we're from the same family!"

Our latest endeavor: helping families with particularly limited resources to make healthy food choices.

Small budgets and healthy eating can make for a challenging recipe, but the multimedia outreach kit Food For Thought: Eating Well on a Budget gives parents the confidence that it can be done. Freezing leftovers, looking for sales, and tapping into community resources are just some of the simple healthy habits that can help stretch a budget.

In 2008

49

million individuals—
including

17

million children—were
food insecure at
least some time during
the year.²

4
million+

Healthy Habits for
Life kits have been
distributed through
the National Women,
Infants, and Children
Association.



The kit provides not just practical support but also much needed emotional support, empowering families and encouraging kids to have a positive outlook about food, and to think of it as something that “gives me energy to think, learn, move, and play!”

Through this and our other health initiatives, we continue to work toward making healthy habits an ingredient in every family’s life.

For more information on outreach projects like these, please e-mail us: outreach@sesameworkshop.org

IMPACT:

98%

of child-care providers reported that children either “improved” or “greatly improved” their food choices during participation in the program.

45%

of parents said their children talked about “healthy” topics such as eating more fruits and vegetables and “sometime” vs. “anytime” foods.

As a result of the program, both caregivers and parents spontaneously mentioned making better food choices as an example to their children.

Source: Sesame Workshop Healthy Habits For Life Impact Study conducted by Kidpoint, LLC, 2009, in partnership with Robert Wood Johnson and NAFC.

REACH: Over 4 million women and children, and “countless” Sesame Street viewers

PARTNERS

Nemours Health & Prevention Services, KidsHealth.org, National Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Association; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; NAFC; Department of Health and Human Services



212 595 3456 | sesameworkshop.org

™/© 2010 Sesame Workshop. All Rights Reserved.