



SESAME WORKSHOP DEBUTS 49TH SEASON OF *SESAME STREET* ON HBO ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2018

Exploring New “Learning Through Play” Curriculum, the Beloved Preschool Series Adds Imaginative New Segment and Primetime Special

Celebrity Guests Include Tiffany Haddish, Keegan Michael Key, Blake Lively, Chance the Rapper, Amanda Seyfried, Zoe Kravitz, Questlove, Bill Nye, and Solange Knowles

(New York, NY – October 29, 2018) — For almost five decades, *Sesame Street* has been using the power of media to help kids everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder – and this season, debuting on HBO on Saturday, November 10th, is no exception. The 49th season of the iconic children’s show will explore a “Learning Through Play” curriculum that models how kids can build school readiness skills as they try out different roles during play. In line with the new curriculum, the season will start with a new primetime special that puts a madcap spin on the familiar pretend-playing different careers. Also new this season is “Abby’s Amazing Adventures,” a recurring animated segment starring Abby Cadabby that shows how girls – and boys, and fairies-in-training! – can take charge of their own journeys.

Underscoring the power of guided pretend-play, this season’s episodes illustrate how kids can get more out of playtime with a little bit of planning and gentle guidance. Each week, the *Sesame Street* gang pretend to be bus drivers, chefs, directors, veterinarians, and more, complete with homemade props and scenery made from household objects. Simple career-oriented play is common among children, but when helpful adults empower kids to create their own plans, a game of “restaurant” or “train” can turn into an opportunity to foster both academic and social-emotional skills.

“Children learn best through play because they are actively engaged in joyful and meaningful activities that can be also be socially interactive and iterative,” said Dr. Rosemarie Truglio, SVP Content and Curriculum, Sesame Workshop. “It is through their play that kids learn to collaborate, self-regulate, communicate, and empathize with peers, motivated by their own interests and curiosities.”

By building on a common pattern of pretend play, this year’s curriculum will help children develop critical life skills and imagine new paths for themselves in a safe environment. Whether they’re building a school bus out of cardboard boxes or creating their own newspaper about life on Sesame Street, Elmo, Cookie Monster, Abby Cadabby and friends model how – with a little help! – children can start to see themselves in exciting futures while having fun together.

The concept of “Learning through Play” is whimsically interpreted in the season’s new primetime special, with special guests **Blake Lively** and **Amanda Seyfried**. “When You Wish Upon a Pickle” follows the adventure when a wishing machine appears on Sesame Street and the magical pickle

inside starts granting wishes! (Elmo finds out what it's like to run Hooper's Store, Cookie Monster's wish for more cookies goes awry, Abby Cadabby teams up with her favorite storybook detective, and more, until an unlikely – and grouchy! – hero restores order to the neighborhood.) Individual episodes throughout the season also celebrate the role-playing theme, with the gang learning about scientific inquiry with **Bill Nye**, exploring the library with **Zoe Kravitz**, playing the drums with **Questlove**, and more.

Also new this season is “**Abby's Amazing Adventures**,” a recurring animated segment starring Abby Cadabby. In each episode, Abby and her stepbrother Rudy travel beyond Sesame Street to solve problems in fantastical new places with the help of a magical basket. Together, they complete “missions” like traveling deep under the sea to photograph a rare fish, visiting an active volcano as scientists to find lava rocks, and even blasting into space as astronauts to fix a space station. Led by *Sesame Street*'s curious and determined fairy-in-training, “Abby's Amazing Adventures” serves as a valuable example of young girls thinking big and imagining exciting futures for themselves.

“‘Abby's Amazing Adventures’ continues a decades-long tradition of great animation on Sesame Street,” said Ben Lehmann, Executive Producer of *Sesame Street*. “Viewers will follow Abby and Rudy on magical adventures as they take on the roles of veterinarians, photographers, recyclers and more. This short series is the first to be produced entirely at Sesame Workshop, by our in-house animation team.”

Sesame Street content continues to be available to PBS KIDS viewers weekdays and Sundays on local PBS stations, daily on the new PBS KIDS 24/7 channel, and anytime via the PBS KIDS Video App.

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