

Pilot evaluation of Sesame Workshop's Coming Together programming October 2022

Introduction

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit media and educational organization behind *Sesame Street*, the pioneering television show that has been reaching and teaching children since 1969. Today, Sesame Workshop is an innovative force for change, with a mission to help kids everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. We're present in more than 150 countries, serving vulnerable children through a wide range of media, formal education, and philanthropically funded social impact programs, each grounded in rigorous research and tailored to the needs and cultures of the communities we serve. For more information, please visit www.sesameworkshop.org.

Coming Together is a Sesame-wide initiative that helps children grow up with a healthy self-identity and sense of belonging. We are working to create a world where all children can reach their full potential—and do so in celebration of their races, ethnicities, and cultures. Our research-based, child-centered resources include the whole family, inviting caregivers, educators, and providers to help children celebrate their own unique identities and become upstanders for themselves and one another.

Coming Together includes resources for children, parents, caregivers, and providers to help develop a complete ecosystem to support children's development of a healthy, positive identity. This includes child-facing content from Season 53 of *Sesame Street* and short-form YouTube content. Coming Together also includes adult-facing content – like parent-facing resources and professional development and classroom materials for teachers - developed by Sesame Workshop's U.S. Social Impact and Formal Learning teams.

The evaluation

We are seeking a research team to conduct a pilot evaluation of Coming Together, assessing the holistic nature of the program. Children will receive mass media and digital content to view at home, while their parents receive parent-facing content through community engagement programming. These same children will also be participating in school-based programming with teachers who have received training under the Coming Together umbrella and who use Coming Together resources in their classroom.

The interventions will take place over an 12-week period beginning in February 2023. The evaluation team will be responsible for identifying and selecting qualified schools and primary caregivers for a “treatment condition,” and to also recruit a separate but relatively similar set of qualified schools and primary caregivers for the “control/business-as-usual condition.”

Sample

We request that the children who participate in this study be mostly 4-and 5-year-olds. We are interested in potentially piloting this evaluation in at least two locations, ideally three, budget and implementation permitting. We are interesting exploring both communities that are racially, culturally, and ethnically homogenous as well as communities that are racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse. This research must occur in the United States.

The evaluator will develop a community perceptions survey, in collaboration with Sesame Workshop, to help determine the most appropriate site(s) for the evaluation. The sampling procedure must consider demographic variables such as child's current primary caregiver, race, socio-economic status, geographic region, parent's political affiliation, neighborhood type, and child age and gender. The analyses will examine the project's educational impact by SES, child's age, race and gender, parent's/guardian's age, race, gender, home language, and other variables, to be recommended by the proposer. A power analysis should accompany the description of sampling methodology.

Outcomes/Measures

We expect researchers to conduct pre-post assessments of children's self-concept and appreciation of diverse identities. We are also interested in parents, caregivers, and educators' confidence in helping children describe aspects of their racial, ethnic, and/or cultural (REC) identities; frequency in discussion and activities exploring REC identities with children; knowledge of implicit bias and of appropriate ways to recognize it when caring for young children; ability to support children's exposure to conflict resolution strategies through use of language, literacy, cultural practices, and community traditions. For educators, an additional outcome area of interest is in changes in use of resources and strategies that promote positive interactions with children and families around REC identity.

Valid/standardized measures should be used where possible, and researcher-developed measures can be used when necessary.

Timing

The interventions will take place over a 12-week period beginning in February 2023. Proposals should plan for a baseline data collection starting early January 2023 and an endline data collection in late April-May 2023.

Proposal Components

Proposals shall include a provision for delivery of the following elements:

1. **Research Design:** Proposals shall outline the design of a potential study or set of studies. Please note we are open to both quasi-experimental and experimental designs:
 - Description of community perceptions survey to inform evaluation site(s)
 - Description of measurement and suggested outcome measures
 - Data collection plan, including a description of monitoring and quality control measures for data collection; a description of how researchers are trained and ways in which researchers will ensure that they adhere to the ethical standards of research set forth by the Society for Research on Child Development (<http://www.srcd.org/about-us/ethical-standards-research>). We expect the evaluation team to obtain IRB approval for this work.
 - Data analysis plan that outlines how data will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the project's impact
 - Timeline
2. **Budget:** A detailed budget for the project shall be submitted with the research proposal. The budget shall include separate sections outlining costs associated with each data collection wave.

3. **Key personnel:** CVs or biographic summaries of key personnel.
4. **Past evaluations and references:**
 - A 1-2-page description of similar or comparable studies in which the agency has engaged in the past, or similar work sample
 - Contact information for at least 2 previous clients for references

Deliverables

Researchers will deliver the following for the evaluation:

1. Findings from the community perceptions survey. This will inform implementation site(s) for the evaluation.
2. Baseline report: After completing the baseline data collection, researchers will submit a report of findings.
3. Data analysis plan: Before endline data collection begins, researchers will submit a detailed data analysis plan that describes how data will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the project's impact.
4. Endline report: The researcher will submit a draft version of the report of the findings to Sesame Workshop for review prior to the completion of a final report (in English). The report must include an Executive Summary.
5. Topline summary: The researcher will submit a 1–2-page summary of findings with appropriate infographics created for a non-research audience.
6. Data, original instruments, videos, IRB approval document, consent forms, data, and other material: Researchers will be required to submit an electronic version of data (in SPSS or SPSS-compatible format), as well as original instruments, and any videos made of children during the research sessions. Instruments will be in the local language (if applicable) and English. Quantitative data will be submitted in English and qualitative data should be submitted in the original language and an English translation. These items will become the property of Sesame Workshop. Note: The researchers selected will have access to instruments used in previous Sesame Workshop assessments, which can be used as a base for creating questionnaires and other data collection devices for the proposed study.

Budget:

The research proposal should not exceed a total budget of USD150,000.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience in conducting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative research and knowledge of media research methodologies
- Experience conducting educational research with young children and families
- Experience conducting research with early childhood educators
- Experience conducting research focused on identity
- Experience conducting research in low-resource contexts
- Experience conducting research in English
- A demonstrated capacity to work in a range of settings and to deliver products in a timely fashion under tight and strict monitoring, management, and deadlines
- The ability to produce high-quality reports

- The ability to conduct high-level analyses such as multivariate analyses and multi-level modeling
- Feasibility of study within budget and time parameters
- Appropriateness of research design
- Capacity to execute proposed study

How to submit proposals

Submit proposals on or before **November 28, 2022**, via email to Kim Foulds:

kim.foulds@sesame.org.

Please note the following in the email subject heading: **Proposal for Pilot Evaluation of Coming Together**