

Subj: **Safety First**  
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Sesame Family Newsletter

October 2, 2009

## Safety First

by Elana A. Halberstadt

**Making our home safe for an active preschooler.**

### Featuring:

Slip, Trip, and Bump  
Fire and Water  
Kitchen Control  
A Soft Place to Land



## This Week on the Street...

Activities and videos for Fire Prevention Week.

### [Get Out Stay Out](#)

A song about fire safety.

### [Elmo's Fire Safety Game](#)

Play and learn with your child.

### [Let's Get Ready!](#)

Elmo and Grover help you prepare for emergencies.

## Watch Out for Banana Peels

Grover and the gang share useful safety tips in this fun book.

[Buy the Book](#)

## [Michelle Obama Plants a Garden](#)

First Lady Michelle Obama plants a garden on Sesame Street as part of the 40th season's focus on nature education through the lens of scientific exploration.

## Plan for Emergencies



Videos, games, and activities about staying safe in an emergency.

[Explore and Discover](#)



## [Earth's Best: A Proud Sponsor of Sesame Street](#)

Earth's Best brings you fun, delicious, organic, and healthy alternatives to kids' favorite foods with nutrient-rich Earth's Best *Sesame Street* breakfasts and snacks made from organic ingredients. Fortified with 8 essential vitamins, iron and zinc, Earth's Best helps to ensure that little tummies get the big nutrition they need.

## SLIP, TRIP, AND BUMP



### [3 and 4 Year Olds: On a Path of Discovery](#)

Info, videos, and tips to help understand your preschooler.

My son Max is active, curious and almost 3 years old. He gets into EVERYTHING! Max can be fearless when he runs, climbs, jumps, or even takes a bath. He is starting to understand consequences, but not always. Max doesn't grasp, for example, that if he doesn't look where he's going (running one direction, but looking the opposite way), he could bump into things. He charges down the hall at full speed.

"Mommy, look, I'm a run away train! Choo-choo!"

A second later, I hear a loud "bonk" as he runs sideways, smacking into a wall.

"Mommy, it hurts!"

I comfort him and then say, "Next time, look forward."

Five minutes later, he does the very same thing.

Or Max trips on the obstacle course of his toys, which appear daily on every floor, in every room, in multiple piles.

I'm always saying, "Max, watch out...your truck!" But sometimes it's too late and he trips and falls. I am constantly picking up things (not always in time), trying to keep the floor relatively clear of clutter for all of us.

Just when I think I have our safety bases covered, Max surprises me with a new skill (e.g., running faster, climbing higher, opening just about anything). When I noticed recently that he could climb higher on the jungle gym at the playground, I knew that meant he could also climb onto our countertops at home. I responded by putting the knives and cleaning supplies in spots he could not reach. Some of our stuff is stored so high, even I need a stool to get it--a small price to pay for peace of mind.

We do our best to pay attention and protect Max from every day dangers. This means setting limits and saying, "no." But we also want a home environment where we can say "yes" as much as possible. Our home is set up so Max can explore and play safely.

## FIRE AND WATER



### [Plan for Emergencies](#)

Tips for preparing for emergencies.

### [Kids Bathe with Rubber Duckie](#)

Ernie sings while kids take their baths.

Twice each year, we change the batteries in our smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and test them. After we light candles for holidays or special occasions, we blow them out quickly. Max loves going, "phoooo" with us. The moment we're done using matches, we put them out of reach. My

husband Andy and I have a fire exit plan that we put together after getting tips from our local fire department.

Until very recently, we used a safety latch on the toilet to prevent drowning. Now that Max is big and we are no longer at risk of his falling in, the latch is gone, but we keep the seat closed. We also keep the bathroom door closed when it's not in use, and we always stay within arm's reach when Max is in the bathroom or bathtub.

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## KITCHEN CONTROL



### Ernie Plays House

Ernie pretends to be a stove.

### What's Inside?

A peek behind kitchen cabinet doors.

Sharp objects like knives and scissors, and anything fragile or glass is high up, out of Max's reach. To encourage his independence and desire to explore, we made one of the lower cabinets into a dedicated Max space with his snacks and plastic cups. He feels empowered by this and in turn is less interested in the other cabinets.

When the stove or oven are on, I'll say, "Danger, hot!" and remind Max to stand clear. I use the back burners and turn pot handles in.

When Max sees me cooking, he sometimes says, "Me, too!" I remind him to stay away from the hot stove, but encourage his enthusiasm for cooking with safer activities, such as putting cheese on pizza dough or making his own pretend meal. I give him a small pot, a wooden spoon, and turn the seat of a kitchen chair into his stovetop.

Andy and I are firm and consistent about rules, such as staying away from the stove, even if we know it may result in a tantrum. Max's safety is more important to us than preventing a tantrum because he cannot do or get what he wants. He's learning that when things are not safe, we don't negotiate.

Max makes a lot of noise, but eventually he calms down and we explain things to him. "We love you and we need to keep you safe. Getting burned hurts. Ouch!" And we'll say, "When you are older, you can do it."

He repeats, "Yeah, when I'm older, I can do it! I can stir on the stove!"

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## A SOFT PLACE TO LAND



### Hold My Hand

Hootie and the Blowfish sing about crossing the road safely.

When Max first started climbing and jumping, we rearranged some of the furniture and padded sharp edges. We bolted bookshelves to the wall, so he couldn't knock them over or pull them on himself.

Our couch was his favorite jumping off place. No matter how many times I said, "No!" he kept it up. So, I moved the couch against the wall, and that stopped him. I put down rugs and pillows, so even if he falls, he has a soft place to land.

Here's to keeping your kids safe, sound, and happy at home.

Elana A. Halberstadt  
Sesame Workshop

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## GROWING UP WITH SESAME



For forty years, *Sesame Street* has shared cherished memories with families around the world. We are looking forward to the next generation of memories, but as a nonprofit institution, we need your help. Visit [Growing Up With Sesame](#) to find how you can get an exclusive family timeline when you support the Workshop.

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