

Subj: **Battling Winter Boredom**
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Sesame Family Newsletter

February 18, 2009

Battling Winter Boredom

by Elana A. Halberstadt

One family's coping strategies.

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WEATHER THE WEATHER



[ALL DRESSED UP](#)

Bert dresses warmly for winter in this classic video.

We are in the depths of winter on the East Coast. After the novelty of the first few snowstorms, the cold is getting old. My son Max (age 2) and I love being outside, but some days we have to stay indoors. Cabin fever sets in fast when the days are short but feel long. How do I keep us both from bouncing off the walls? I think about spring and chase away boredom with imagination games, music, dancing, and exploration.

Being stuck indoors with a toddler is a meltdown waiting to happen. So one recent evening around 6:00 p.m., I tried something new. I told Max, "We're going on a new adventure outside!" Max brightened and announced, "No stroller. Max walk! Hold Mommy's hand." I've never seen him put his coat on so fast. He even wore his mittens. My plan was to stay close to home, but my enthusiasm got him revved up. We'd been around our building many times before so why was this exciting for him? He had never been around the block in the dark AND in the middle of winter. Voila -- a brand new experience. Max shouted, "Snowboots on."

EXPLORE YOUR OWN WINTER WONDERLAND



[NURTURE YOUR CHILD'S SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY](#)

Try these ideas to help your child enjoy science exploration.

[MY STREET](#)

In this classic video Big Bird and Olivia sing about their neighborhood.

Ah, one whiff of fresh air -- immediate relief! Max jumped up and down and skipped back and forth over the sidewalk grates. We climbed on a snow bank, examined bushes with icicles, and watched squirrels scamper up a tree. Max had a conversation with a street lamp. "Hello. Wow, big light." We counted airplanes, stars, and fire truck sirens. The crunchy sensations under his boots (snow, ice, half-frozen puddles) gave him plenty to wonder and laugh about. I'm pretty sure he doesn't understand the concept of freezing, but he said everything is "cold and shiny." I pointed things out to him as walked along, naming objects. Later he showed me a fire hydrant and said, "fire truck." When we go exploring, it's fun to watch Max's reactions and see what sparks his interest and imagination.

We ended up in the dog walk area. Max played with furry friends, and I chatted with the dogs' owners -- a spontaneous outdoor playgroup we both enjoyed. We got cold, but Max still had some energy to burn, so we headed inside, where he ran down halls, watched laundry machines spin, got the mail, and finally rode the elevator home for dinner.

My husband Andy arrived as I tucked Max in for the night. He told Andy all about his adventure,

"Daddy, Max walk outside. No stroller! Stars... moon!"

Exploring the area right outside your door may be familiar territory, but there is always something new to discover. If you call it an adventure, you'll win the boredom battle in no time.

MORE WAYS TO ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS



CREATING MUSIC AND ART

Explore different ideas for combining music and art.

I try to mix quiet restful activities with loud active ones to match our moods and energy levels. Max also seems to enjoy a balance of together and alone time, even if I'm only a few feet away. When he's playing with trains and is in "Go away, Mommy" mode, I might read, call a friend, or look out the window to get a break. The key is shifting gears. If I see I'm feeling stressed, or Max is out of sorts, I change the activity. Sometimes that's all it takes to ward off a cabin fever meltdown.

Periodically, I sort through Max's toys and pull some out of his usual rotation. I put them away (while he is sleeping) and keep them for a bad weather day. When the doldrums come knocking, I go shopping... in the closet! Max loves getting "new" toys, and it extends the life of the toys, not to mention it is budget friendly. Everything old is new again.

To get moving and release our bouncing-off-the-walls energy, we listen to our favorite tunes and have a dance party for two. And yes, we bounce up and down.

We have a make-believe box with clothes, scarves, and plenty of odds-and-ends. Sometimes, I throw on a goofy hat and wacky pair of sunglasses. All it takes is one silly voice or animal sound, and Max picks it up from there. Our imagination gets a workout and dressing up is great for a laugh. Introducing Max the Cat-Lion-Train Conductor.

In our house, a key storm survival tool is the sweet treat! I bake us a batch of cookies. Max arranges the shapes on the baking pan. Mostly he helps me eat them. Yum!

Then there is the all-time great activity of curling up to read, which inevitably leads to my favorite of all indoor activities -- the nap! There is nothing like a cozy rest on a snowy day, especially when we pretend we're bears hibernating in a magical forest.

I'd love for spring to come early, but I feel lucky we're happy, safe, and sound inside. Wishing you a fun and creative winter -- inside and out.

Elana A. Halberstadt
Sesame Workshop

WEEKLY TRIVIA

Did You Know?

The Sesame Street Martians are jellyfish-like creatures who speak in simple declarative phrases that are a mixture of Martian and English.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP



Sesame Workshop is a nonprofit educational organization making a meaningful difference in children's lives around the world. Founded in 1968, the Workshop changed television forever with the legendary *Sesame Street*. Today, the Workshop continues to innovate on behalf of children in 120 countries, using its proprietary research methodology to ensure its programs and products are engaging and enriching. Sesame Workshop is behind award-winning programs like *Dragon Tales* and *Sagwa, The Chinese Siamese Cat*, *Pinky Dinky Doo* and ground breaking multimedia productions in South Africa, Egypt and Russia. As a nonprofit, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds it receives from sales of *Sesame Street*, *Dragon Tales* and *Sagwa* products right back into its educational projects for children around the world. Find the Workshop online at www.sesameworkshop.org.

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