



Season 50 Curriculum: The Power of Possibility

Early childhood is a time filled with wonder, curiosity, and possibility – but today’s preschool children are facing a pervasive problem.

“Young children are under an unprecedented amount of stress and pressure to meet certain academic and social-emotional benchmarks, often before they’re developmentally ready,” said Dr. Rosemarie Truglio, Sesame Workshop’s Senior Vice President of Curriculum and Content. “That mindset can make children reluctant to take even the safest risks – never pouring their own milk because they’re too worried about spilling it.”

Caring adults can help kids get out from under that pressure by giving them room to make mistakes and the resiliency skills to bounce back afterwards. And *Sesame Street*’s Season 50 curriculum – we call it “Oops and Aha! Embracing the Power of Possibility” – is here to help.

To stay resilient and curious when faced with day-to-day obstacles, children need to master the following skills: **positive thinking** (trying new things, embracing silly ideas, asking questions); **perseverance** (saying “It’s okay to make mistakes,” “I’ll keep trying,” “I won’t give up”); and **self-confidence** (thinking “I can do this!” even when the going gets tough). This season, Elmo and friends model those skills as they overcome social, physical, and academic challenges that will be very familiar to little ones. In one episode, Elmo wants to join his friends outside on a snowy day, but gets frustrated as he struggles with getting dressed on his own; with a little help from his friend Jacket, he remembers to take a deep breath and keep trying until he’s all bundled up and ready to play. In another episode, Abby Cadabby’s brother Rudy feels upset when he “ruins” a drawing; Alan encourages him to keep trying, and Rudy eventually creates a new picture inspired by his mistake.

Throughout Season 50, we hope to equip children and parents with a toolbox of self-regulation strategies and creative thinking skills to help them through common challenges, reinforced with easy-to-remember phrases and hand gestures. Tools include:

- **Expressing – and naming – emotions.** By learning concepts like “frustrated,” “nervous,” and “disappointed,” children can understand how they’re feeling – and recognize how *others* are feeling – through body language, facial expressions, and other cues.
- **A ‘stoplight’ strategy** that uses the familiar red, yellow, and green color scheme to encourage kids to Stop, Make a Plan, and Go.
- **Empowering self-talk** that encourages kids to say positive statements like “I can do this!” out loud to themselves.
- **Belly breathing**, a powerful calming strategy that children – and adults! – can use anywhere and anytime they need it.
- **Problem-solving language.** By approaching everyday challenges like a puzzle to solve, kids can observe, question, investigate, make mistakes, and try again in their quest.