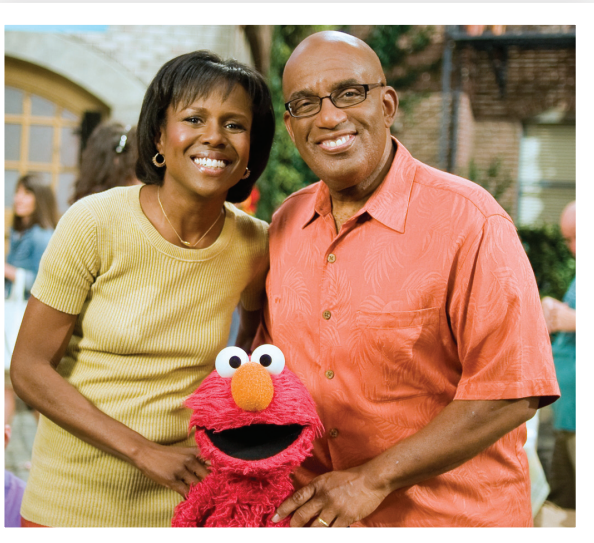


# families stand together™

Feeling Secure in Tough Times

**The Project** Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind *Sesame Street*, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting introduce *Families Stand Together: Feeling Secure in Tough Times*, a bilingual (English and Spanish) multiple media initiative designed to help families with young children experiencing difficult economic circumstances. Through simple strategies and tips that can be incorporated into everyday routines, *Families Stand Together* will provide families with materials that can lead to positive outcomes for their children's physical and emotional well-being.

photographer: Gil Vuknin



**The Need** In today's economic climate, approximately two out of three middle class families are at high risk of losing or not sustaining their economic security. Moreover, increases in job loss and income cuts have made families struggle with basic costs like housing, medical care, transportation, food, clothing, and child care. Too often, parents are being forced to make difficult decisions that affect their children. In this kind of environment, even basic family activities like talking, playing, and spending time together can easily be overlooked.

There are many tools and resources available to help families through these financial challenges, but some families, especially in lower income brackets, do not know how to access the resources or find the information. In addition, there are few tools available to help parents and caregivers mitigate their children's anxiety. There is no better time to provide U.S. families with resources that address the consequences of their economic insecurity.

[www.sesameworkshop.org/toughtimes](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/toughtimes)

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## Target Audience

Families with children ages 2 to 8:

- Confronted with significant financial changes due to the economic crisis resulting in the loss of a job or income, or the need to relocate due to eviction or foreclosure of their main residence.
- Who are "feeling the pinch" and experiencing lifestyle changes that impact their income, such as reduced work hours, need to change their spending patterns or increase their savings, or having fewer "extras."
- Of varied geographic locations; diverse ethnic groups and variations of family composition, including households with one or two parents.

## Overall Goals

- Support children's overall well-being and emotional development as they face life-changing transitions due to economic insecurity.
- Encourage positive strategies and model behavior for parents and care providers to support the entire family in the face of job loss, food insecurity, foreclosure, or economic crisis.
- Foster children's and families' hope for the future through short- and long-term planning strategies.
- Raise national awareness of families in crises and the need for community support.
- Help individual family and community members to understand that each has a role to play in giving to others and helping one another.



This initiative is made possible by generous support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting



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## Project Components

**Television Special** – A 60-minute PBS Special for family viewing that addresses the extraordinary needs of children and families facing economic insecurity. The Special, hosted by Elmo, Al Roker and Deborah Roberts, features documentary footage focusing on real families and their young children living through difficult economic conditions. They are joined by Jean Chatzky (financial expert) and Dr. Joshua Coleman (clinical psychologist), who address related questions and issues.

**Web-Based Resources** – The hourlong special and new video content, tips, strategies, and other resources may be found at [www.sesameworkshop.org/toughtimes](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/toughtimes) and [www.sesamestreet.org](http://www.sesamestreet.org).

**Community-Based Screenings** – Encore screenings of the 60-minute Special to be hosted by local PBS stations or community organizations this fall.

**Communications Plan** – A substantive launch event and plan to drive audience engagement and tune-in, promos on PBS, Google TV and other outlets, and promotion of community screenings and distribution of outreach kits.

**Research** – A study to assess the impact of the outreach materials and Web-based resources that will be utilized by English and Spanish-speaking caregivers with children ages 2 to 8.

## Distribution Plan

Sesame Workshop is collaborating with community organizations and PBS stations across the country to deliver 200,000 FREE bilingual (English and Spanish) educational outreach kits. Materials are also available free online at [www.sesameworkshop.org/toughtimes](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/toughtimes).

**Outreach Kits** – 200,000 bi-lingual (English & Spanish) educational kits to be distributed nationwide, comprised of a:

**Special DVD** (a cut-down version of the television special) featuring a *Sesame Street* story and documentary moments of families as well as content to help children and families talk about the feelings and stresses they are experiencing as a result of economic insecurity;

**Children’s Storybook** about a new *Sesame Street* character who needs to move because of the economic crises; and

**Parent/Caregiver Guide** providing strategies on how to meet challenges as a family, ideas about how to explain difficult situations to young children, and tips for short- and long-term planning despite so many big changes in home life.

photographer: Gil Vaknin



[www.sesameworkshop.org/toughtimes](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/toughtimes)

<sup>1</sup> Demos & the Institute for Assets and Social Policy, Brandeis University. (2007). By a Thread. Retrieved March 11, 2009 from <http://www.demos.org/pubs/BaT112807.pdf>.