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SESAME WORKSHOP HELPS FAMILIES NAVIGATE DIVORCE WITH NEW FREE RESOURCES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. New York, NY, December 11, 2012. Each year about 1.5 million children confront the divorce of their parents¹, a transition that can be challenging for the entire family, especially young children. While 40% of families experience this, there are few resources to show children they are not the only ones with big questions and feelings about divorce. In response, Sesame Workshop has launched [*Little Children, Big Challenges: Divorce*](#), a series of free multi-media resources, to support families through this transition which can be very difficult, especially for young children. These new materials are a continuation of Sesame Workshop's award-winning [*Military Families Initiative*](#) launched in 2006 that provides resources and emotional support to military families with children, ages 2 to 8, coping with challenging transitions in their lives.

As with all content produced by Sesame Workshop, this outreach initiative began with a thorough [research process](#), which included consulting with an [advisory board of key experts](#) in child development, early childhood, and mental health fields to guide and shape key content messages. Continuing the process, Sesame Workshop conducted focus groups with parents and service providers to ensure that all of the resources effectively meet the needs of children and families. Sesame Workshop created *Little Children, Big Challenges: Divorce*, in order to:

- Provide tools and language to help young children (ages 2–8) cope with and understand divorce at an age-appropriate level,
- aid families in communicating and expressing feelings around divorce and
- reassure children that they will be cared for, and that—together with their families—they can learn ways to adjust to their new life and have hope for the future.

“With our new resources on divorce, Sesame Workshop continues a 43-year-long history of tackling the most relevant and challenging issues for children,” said H. Melvin Ming, President and CEO of Sesame Workshop. “During difficult times, it’s vitally important that children feel supported and develop coping skills that will help them throughout their entire lives. Sesame Workshop is committed to providing the highest quality resources to families dealing with life’s challenges.”

Little Children, Big Challenges: Divorce includes:

- **A new *Sesame Street* DVD**, featuring the Muppets and real families, that highlights strategies around expressing emotions and how to talk to children about divorce;
- **A Parent/Caregiver Guide** providing helpful resources, language and advice for discussing divorce with children and helping them navigate changes;
- **A Children’s Storybook**, *Two-Hug Day*, about a young boy named Niko who is transitioning between his parents’ two homes, and
- **An online toolkit at sesamestreet.org/divorce** providing access to all project resources, as well as additional online-only materials:
 - **An Extended Family & Friends tip sheet**
 - **Webinars and online discussion sessions** giving service providers and families a thorough understanding of how to engage with their families and communities

¹ National Institute of Mental Health (2002). Preventative sessions after divorce help protect children into teens [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/science-news/2002/preventive-sessions-after-divorce-protect-children-into-teens.shtml>

- **A Facebook page called *Sesame Street in Communities*** connecting our online community to Sesame’s resiliency messages and materials.
- **A mobile app: *Sesame Street: Divorce***, featuring resources and tools for parents and caregivers; available on the App Store (SM) and Google Play™.

“With the frequency of children experiencing divorce and or separation today, it is critical to help children understand that the feelings or questions they may have are typical and should be discussed with a parent or caregiver, said Dr. Jeanette Betancourt, Senior Vice President for Outreach and Educational Practices at Sesame Workshop. “These strategies will help children cope with changes as well as support them in understanding they are not alone.”

The resource kits will be **distributed to military and veteran families through partnerships** with Military OneSource, Department of Veterans Affairs, The USO, and The Military Child Education Coalition. These resources are also **being distributed to families in the general public through** national partnerships with organizations such the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. On a local level, distribution will reach children and their families through faith-based programs, school and after school programs, through counseling and mental health services, parenting programs, and child care systems. Military families can contact Military OneSource directly at militaryonesource.mil to request a kit.

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About Sesame Workshop: Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit educational organization that revolutionized children’s television programming with the landmark *Sesame Street*. The Workshop produces local Sesame Street programs, seen in over 150 countries, and other acclaimed shows including *The Electric Company*, to help bridge the literacy gap. Beyond television, the Workshop produces content for multiple media platforms on a wide range of issues including literacy, health and military deployment. Initiatives meet specific needs to help young children and families develop critical skills, acquire healthy habits and build emotional strength to prepare them for lifelong learning. Learn more at www.sesameworkshop.org.

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Learn more about *Sesame Street*’s Military Family Initiative:

[Sesame Street for Military Families on Facebook](#)
