

Celebrating Ourselves On the Inside and Out

Nydia Ntouda: We can officially begin. Today on our webinar, we do have Antonio Freitas, and he will introduce himself. Antonio, you can take it away.

Antonio Freitas: Thanks so much, Nydia. Hello to the more than 300 different people from Head Start programs across the United States joining us today. We're so excited to have you as a part of today's conversation with Sesame Street Communities, and to help us think about more of the different ways to use our resources from the newest topic page we have on racial justice in an effort to promote social, emotional skills with children, families, and all of you that take deliberate help in supporting them.

Over the course of three webcasts, we'll explore together the six different types of assets you can use for work and play in every neighborhood. Today's conversation is going to start by exploring key components of identity and the ways that we celebrate ourselves on the inside and out. As Nydia mentioned, my name is Antonio Freitas, and I work as a presenter with the Internal Behavioral Health Working Group of the EDC's National Center for Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. As the director of educational experiences here at the Sesame Workshop in New York City, writing content for our digital platform and creating professional development resources to connect all of you working with children and families to easily embed this work into the fold of your daily programming.

I have a special place in my heart for Head Start. I was born and raised and grew up in Head Start programs and also ran them here in Spanish Harlem in New York City for over a decade. All of the work that we're talking about today, I have lived through, helped build out, and I'm excited to share with you. And I also have a place that is special in my heart for Bert, whose love of pigeons and paperclips as a Sesame Workshop Muppet was a fun and different way for me to learn about the world compared to my twin brother, Carlos, and his good buddy, Ernie.

I come to this place as a classroom teacher, and I'm humbled and very much aware of the expertise in this virtual room and all of the tireless ways that you are often all things to all people in your programs. You help children stay healthy, help families build community, and make every moment meaningful when you read books, open milks, help to share blocks, and help explain how the world works. As people in charge of classrooms, we all know that even the most prepared lessons, by seasoned vets, can sometimes fall by the wayside when life happens.

Grandparents pass away, parents get addicted, and families get deployed. We all know that when these small cracks don't get addressed in healthy ways, those singular traumatic experiences that a child may face can lead to severe consequences through adulthood. But like you, Sesame Street believes in the power of community. For over 50 years, we've worked with children, families, and providers, to build smarter, stronger, kinder communities, one relationship at a time. Over the course of these next 60 minutes, I'm going to show you some new resources that we've built to help children grow through a variety of life experiences.

I'm going to ask you to reflect on those children in your own care, and with me, to play in the sandbox with some of these resources that, again, might just be one more tool in the conversations you're already having. My goal is for you to leave today's conversation and the next two after it with relevant resources that you can easily embed into the folding of programming with everyone in your neighborhood.

For context, when we talk about the need and the importance of celebrating every aspect of a child's identity, we ground this in the idea of social-emotional strength, resilience, and also the truth that nearly half of American children under the age of 18 have been through at least one adverse childhood experience, with more than one third of those children under the age of 5. We, like you, understand that simple strategies can make a difference in mitigating the effects of some of these traumatic experiences. Together, we're learning that the more that we can help everyone in the family take small steps, the more we can increase their global chances of successful outcomes in school and in life.

Today's conversation is going to be the first of three different webinars, where we'll aim in slow motion to tease apart the big issues used to create Sesame Street Communities topic page on racial justice. We'll take a look by using a few of the specific assets made to meet that need. Today, we're going to explore ways that you can use and promote positive self-identity across programs using storybooks and workshops that help celebrate you and the variety of roles you play with children and families.

As we do that, we'll have some games, we'll do some trivia. It's important to get started by taking a minute, a breath with some Muppet meditations. With that, I'll take my voice and screen off so that you can have a quiet moment with everybody's favorite five fingered Muppet, Cookie Monster.

[Video begins]

Cookie Monster: It's Monster Meditation –

Andy: With Cookie Monster and me, Andy.

Cookie Monster: Ha-ha. Oh.

Andy: Hello, Cookie Monster.

Cookie Monster: Huh? Oh. It me friend Andy. Hi, Andy.

Andy: I see you're baking some cookies. Mmm, smells good.

Cookie Monster: Yeah, but they're not ready. Why cookies take so long to bake?

Andy: Yeah, it can be hard to wait for something you really, really want. Hey, you want to play a fun Monster Meditation while we wait?

Cookie Monster: Oh, what meditation?

Andy: It's an activity that can make waiting more fun.

Cookie Monster: Oh, boy, follow along and do Monster Meditation with me and Andy.

Andy: Great. We're going to play I Sense, a game of I Spy, but with our five senses.

Cookie Monster: Oh, me know those. Sense of smell, hearing, touch, taste, and sight.

Andy: Exactly. Now can you spy something with your sense of smell?

Cookie Monster: Me smell with me little nose cookies. Oh, boy. Oh, boy. Oh, boy. Oh.

Andy: Wait, Cookie Monster, the cookies still aren't ready. Let's pass the time by playing this game. But before we do, we're going to focus ourselves by doing some belly breaths. Put your hands on your belly. Now take a slow deep breath in –

[Deep breath in]

And slowly breathe out.

[Deep breath out]

Great job. Now that we've focused, can you spy something with your sense of smell?

Cookie Monster: Me smell with me little nose, strawberries.

Andy: Strawberries?

Cookie Monster: Oh, yeah, it's me, Strawberry Monster Shampoo, we had bubble bath today.

Andy: So with that smell in your nose, can you spy something with your sense of touch?

Cookie Monster: Hey, me fur. It's soft and fluffy.

Andy: Now with that softness in your mind, Cookie Monster, can you spy something with your eyes?

Cookie Monster: Me spy with me little eye you, me friends at home. Hi.

Andy: Wonderful. Now focusing on your friends, can you spy something with your sense of hearing?

Cookie Monster: Me hear loud ringing. Oh, Andy, can you answer your phone, please? We're trying to Monster Meditate.

Andy: Cookie Monster, that's a timer. Your cookies are ready.

Cookie Monster: Cookie. Oh, boy. Me almost forgot.

Andy: See, by focusing on your senses, you forgot all about waiting for your cookies to bake. And you still have one sense left.

Cookie Monster: Me do?

Andy: Yes. Your sense of taste.

Cookie Monster: [Gasping] Cookie. Num-num, num-num, num-num, num-num, num-num. Meditation fun and delicious. Oh.

[Video ends]

Antonio: We recognize that sometimes, talking about race, identity, and culture, can carry with it a lot of anxiety, a lot of stress, and can sometimes be a little anxiety-producing for all of us. That's OK. We at Sesame Street choose to bravely engage in these conversations with a fun lightness that helps us all talk about it through lenses of our own experiences in a way that helps ensure that we create community with all of the children and all of the families that make it.

Before we dive into this exciting conversation about the resources you can use with kids and families in your care, we did want to take a few minutes to really frame this conversation in the important ways that we bravely address these topics. When we talk about trauma and we talk about the trauma that is experienced directly with the lives that we live in our identities, we understand that it impacts our overall health outcomes. In addition to trauma, our overall health is also impacted by the conditions within the environments where we live, where we learn, where we work, and play.

When we think about health, we often think about our genetics and our physical health, yet 80% of our overall health outcomes are actually driven by things like our physical environment, social and economic factors, and our health behaviors. Many of these factors are described as the social determinants of health. SDOH, or those social determinants of health, have been defined as conditions in places where people live, learn, work, and play, that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life risks and outcomes.

When we think about those social determinants, they're essentially categorized into five different buckets. Economic stability, and this includes things like poverty, employment, food security, and housing stability. Education access and quality, which includes things like language and literacy, high school graduation and higher education, as well as early childhood education development. It also includes health care access and quality, that ability to navigate things like primary care and have health literacy to be able to respond when things are happening to our bodies and in our lives.

We also include in social determinants of health neighborhood and built environment, the quality of housing, crime and violence in our neighborhoods, environmental conditions that we

live in. Finally, social and community context. This takes a lot and thinks about social cohesion, civic participation, and perceptions of equity and discrimination, when we think about things like incarceration or institutionalization.

The Head Start community has an opportunity to strengthen the protective factors of those we serve as we think about these social determinants of health, when we think about health equity, and how we talk about and address racism. Because in this lens, racism itself is a social determinant of health, contributing sadly to negative social conditions and health outcomes through discriminatory practices across multiple levels and systems. The systematic level, for example, where our society policies and values exist, when we think about things like immigration, incarceration, and banking, are often laced with values and beliefs about certain groups of individuals.

This then leads to different resources being allocated in different ways to different people connected to things like racial segregation in schools. Our communities are still very much impacted by color lines. This impacts how folks are treated in organizations and the places that they visit or interact with. Child welfare reporting, for example, an organization that has policies that are intended to identify risks for child abuse and neglect, actually shows through research that it disproportionately differences its practices to the people that it serves.

Racism then impacts interactions between people, and it's manifested in stereotypes, in racial abuse, and racial bias. We think about that in a variety of different levels that you can see on your screen with regards to systemic levels, like immigration, incarceration, and like Patricia mentioned in chat window, housing. At the community level, thinking about how resources are allocated, how funding is provided, and how different neighborhoods are often grouping different students in different ways.

At the institutional level, it is the idea of hiring, promotion practices, and the overt or the undervaluation of different people's individual contributions. Interpersonally, it's this idea of internalized racism, stereotype threat, and being able to embody inequities that other people perceive in stereotypes. Finally, at an interpersonal level, it's thinking about how implicit bias and overt discrimination stops or starts relationships from happening and children from learning.

In a recent Ted Talk, Harvard professor, Dr. David Williams, described how racism makes us all sick. He described how racism is producing a truly rigged system that is systemically disadvantaging some racial groups in the United States. We know that racism has a direct impact on health. We see the shock and stress in the body contributing to very specific health conditions and chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension. Because racism is present across multiple levels as you saw in that previous slide, we see it in lots of different ways that often drive health inequities.

One of the many different ways that racism presents itself is in creating and then maintaining these barriers to access our health system. Research has demonstrated the differences that people of color experience when seeking health care services. As we've talked about this and

reflect on our own experiences in health care, the ways that we can remove these roadblocks by bravely addressing them with children and families will set everyone up for a success and a life of equity, collaboration, and community building.

In Head Start, we have that opportunity to address social determinants of health, to reduce health disparities, and to work towards health equity. Head Start can be a health equity intervention. You all have an important role in implementing, promotion, prevention, and intervention strategies to everyone in the neighborhoods that you serve and the classrooms and programs that you support.

It's not possible to do this work without having resources to support and to talk about, which is why Sesame Street Communities is excited to collaborate with all of you through this initiative to reflect some of the different needs that are being sought, and also being able to figure out ways to embed this into the field of programming that you do each and every day with Sesame Street in Communities.

When I talk about Sesame Street in Communities, I recognize that it's a long name. When I say SSIC, I'm also talking about Sesame Street in Communities, that model that uses those three components to reach children in communities through channels that traditionally, we have not been able to access. Our new digital platforms includes an online content hub, this curated collection of the best of our community engagement work over decades and with new content shared monthly.

It also includes my favorite portion, professional development resources. These help train staff members working with children across the United States in ways to better help them meet their needs with communities and things like webinars, training videos, courses, and webcasts. Finally, implementation partners like all of you that enable the children, and the staffs, and the families that you work with, to continue to have this work, and to have it live in a place that we can celebrate and get celebrating with other Muppets.

As we go through our work today, keep in mind those specific children, those families that you care for, and the ways that this can easily be folded into the things that you're already doing. It should not be a heavy, different, or new lift, it should be something that you can easily thread into the work. When we talk about Sesame Street in Communities, we have a variety of different resources. Each of our different topic pages introduces the topic we're addressing in lots of those different interactive ways to ensure that every moment between a child and an adult can be made meaningful.

Interactive games are those activities where children can use devices like phones, computers, and tablets to explore settings and circumstances as their furry friends. Here they can practice and role play the best ways to handle settings like a preschool, or a doctor's office, or role play the best way to think about a garden patch or any other scenario that they might see in their future. A small blue icon of a hand will let you know about these types of resources.

Videos on our page can show friends of Sesame Street, young and old, the different ways that we stay healthy, informed, and in control, when life feels a little overwhelming. All of these are found by looking at that small orange icon of a play button. Articles highlighted by the small purple icon of a newspaper are informative texts, usually at a third-grade reading level and with easy to access bulletin information. We found these to be most useful between providers and the families or the parents that you're sharing them with.

Articles, like all of our resources, have a single sentence summary on the top called The Big Idea, that let people know what the resource is all about. Principal resources are those documents that are easy to print out and have a small green icon of a paper at the bottom of each. These include coloring pages, directories, and card games to share with everyone. While we'll be reflecting on concepts associated with our racial justice topic page across all of these resources, for today, we're just going to focus on two, storybooks and workshops.

Storybooks, to the right side of your screen, are those interactive texts that children and adults can share in a few different ways. Kids can turn the pages of a digital book while an adult reads it to them, or they can simply press play and have the story read aloud from the screen. Finally, workshops are those bundled packages of resources that the team at Sesame Street in Communities has put together. These workshops may include a combination of two or three different resources from the list that we have found work really well together. You can feel free to use them in whatever way makes the most sense to you.

Sesame Street has been intentional in creating all of these different resources and wanting to share them for free in English and in Spanish with all of you because we're committed to working on the more than 50-year promise to serve and learn from families and providers working to build smarter, stronger, kinder kids. Before we dive in today's topic, we're going to play a little bit of Sesame Street trivia to see how well-versed everyone on this call is with some of your furry friends in the neighborhood.

I'm going to ask you to use your chat window and share with us what you know about Sesame with some fun facts. And we'll start with this first one. Besides any Muppet or human, who is considered Ernie's best friend? Click on it and use the chat window to share your answer. Remember, this is not a Bert, this is not another human, but what's a different friend that could be his? People are ready with the answers. If 392 people are all saying the same things, this is a quick group ready to learn. You are correct. It is Rubber Duckie. This is Ernie's favorite bath toy, either in or out of the bathtub. And without him, baths, as we know it, are just not the same.

Stay ready. Now that I know you all are awake, you're ready to jump into things, and you'll be able to answer these questions with clarity as we go through today's talk, I'll be peppering in a few more to test your knowledge. Let's take a step back now and dive into the history that helped create this racial justice initiative.

From the very beginning, Sesame Workshop has modeled inclusivity in Sesame Street's storylines and diverse cast of Muppets, humans, and guest stars, from Roosevelt Franklin, our first Black Muppet, through the years to include Rosita, Kami, and Lily, a furry friend reflecting

food insecurity and homelessness that so many families face. We've tried to include Muppets that reflect everyone in our neighborhoods. Truthfully, and over the past few years, we've been hearing from partners and advisors and thought that we should still be doing more. In 2019, we conducted a study and planned to convene advisors to discuss those social determinants of health that were on a few slides to talk about systemic racism and historical trauma.

Unfortunately, that got put to the back burner when COVID began. But after the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many more, we realized that we need to do more with a renewed sense of urgency. Everyone collectively felt like we were not doing enough and that we needed to be more explicit, that we realized that while diversity, and inclusion, and representation, are critical, they are not sufficient enough. To tackle racism, we have to be bold and explicit. We have to name it. With the CNN Town Hall, that first time that we explicitly defined what racism was, we started and continued to define and repeat it so that it is something that kids can understand, can recognize when it happens, and then to take action as an upstander to create and restore safety in a community that they belong in.

Across this initiative, you'll see a few new faces on the street, including Wes and his dad, Elijah. They moved to Sesame Street because mom, dad, Elijah, found great job opportunities – he's a meteorologist – and knew that it would be a wonderful and positive environment for Wes, their son, to grow up in. In addition to them, we're also excited about welcoming Ji-Young, a spunky, punky six-year-old who is a happy, silly fireball of energy. Ji-Young loves her guitar, loves her family even more. She shares with her friends on Sesame Street skateboards, music, and her South Korean heritage, with everyone in the neighborhood.

As we work to help children grow up with a healthy sense of self-identity and belonging, we wanted to create a world where all children can reach their full potential by seeing it in what they watch, what they read, and how they engage, and to do so in celebration of who they are. Our research-based child-centered resources include everyone in the family and thread in caregivers, educators, and providers to help children celebrate their own unique identities as upstanders for themselves and the people around them.

We know that all children need to form a positive self-identity based on how they look on the outside and who they are on the inside. It's especially important for Black and Brown children to celebrate their outward appearance in order to keep strong within themselves as they grow up in a racist society. While we can explain that how we look on the outside, like our skin and our hair features, is a big part of who we are, staff supporting children and families can also communicate that our inside qualities are important too.

Through a focus on today's resources with storybooks and workshops, we will ground the conversation in three key ways that you can assist children in your work to explore the ways that you can help promote positive self-identity. We're going to start this with a quick video from our Sesame Street in Communities topic page on racial justice. And this video is called, "Coming Together."

[Video begins]

Mr. Elijah: All right. This looks good.

Wes: Oh, OK. Dad, I think today is perfect.

[Laughter]

Mr. Elijah: Oh, full day with a forecast of sunny skies and smiles.

[Laughter]

Elmo: Hey, Wes. Hi, Mr. Elijah.

Wes and Mr. Elijah: Hey, Elmo.

Elmo: What are you two doing?

Wes: Dad and I are taking a break from our nature walk.

Elmo: Oh.

Mr. Elijah: Yeah. Then we stop for a moment to enjoy the colorful leaves.

Elmo: Oh, yeah.

Wes: Oh, look, Elmo, the leaves are falling.

Elmo: Yeah. And look, look, this leaf is red like Elmo's fur. And this leaf this brown like Wes' skin.

Mr. Elijah: Good observation, Elmo.

Elmo: Oh, thank you. Oh, Elmo has a question.

Wes: Oh, what is it, Elmo?

Elmo: Elmo wants to know why Wes' skin is Brown.

Wes: Oh, I know why, Elmo. My mom and dad told me. It's because of melanin. Right, dad?

Mr. Elijah: That's right.

Elmo: Melanin? Oh, what's that?

Mr. Elijah: Well, melanin is something that we each have inside our bodies that make the outside of our bodies the skin color that it is. It also gives us our eye and our hair color.

Elmo: Oh, and our fur color?

Mr. Elijah: Yes, that's right. Exactly, Elmo.

Elmo: But if we have melanin, why are we different colors? Like why is Mr. Elijah's skin a darker brown than Wes' skin?

Mr. Elijah: Well, that's a good question, Elmo. Well, it's because the more melanin you have, the darker your skin looks.

Elmo: Oh.

Mr. Elijah: The color of our skin is an important part of who we are. But we should all know that it's OK that we all look different in so very many ways.

[Chuckling]

Elmo: Oh, and Elmo's fur is red and soft.

Wes: Oh, and my hair is black and curly.

[Chuckling]

Mr. Elijah: Things on the outside, like our skin color, our hair texture, our noses –

[Laughter]

Mr. Elijah: Our mouths, and eyes, make us who we are. Many people call this race, but even though we look different, we're all part of the human race.

[Laughter]

Wes: Isn't it cool, Elmo?

Elmo: Very cool.

[Chuckling]

Mr. Elijah: Oh, Look at the leaves.

Elmo: Oh.

Wes: Oh.

Mr. Elijah: What do you two see?

Elmo: Oh, Elmo sees leaves that are of different colors.

Wes: And the different colors look really cool together.

Mr. Elijah: Yes. Those leaves came from one amazing tree. Standing strong, its branches, like arms, stretched wide, with leaves of many different colors, side-by-side swaying together in the breeze.

Wes: Oh, like this? Wow.

Elmo: Oh, yeah.

[Laughter]

Mr. Elijah: When people of all colors come together, we stand strong like this tree.

Elmo & Wes: Yeah.

Wes: Oh, yeah. Oh, look, Elmo.

Elmo: Huh.

Wes: This leaf looks just like us, two colors side-by-side.

[Chuckling]

Elmo: It's beautiful.

Wes: Beautiful together.

[Music playing]

[Video ends]

Antonio: As many of you mentioned in the chat window, this is a great video to watch, to both start conversations with children and families, to have them think a little bit more about what it means to be both inside our skins and proud of who we are on the inside and outside, and also in a developmentally appropriate way, to start to have brave conversations, to talk about our identities in ways that are meaningful and child-specific.

Connected to that, a study by Sesame Street and the University of Chicago demonstrated that children as young as preschool notice and talk about differences in race, class, gender, culture, and religion. Open conversations with even our youngest children can help them learn about themselves and others. In that study, "Identity Matters," that picture of the little blue packet on your screen, we wanted to know how parents and educators think and talk about children's identities in this rapidly changing social landscape.

Lessons from all helped us crystallize the ways that we can all promote positive self-identity in children with proactive conversations that acknowledge differences, language that celebrates uniqueness, and activities and experiences that create community. We want children to know that they are special, to affirm and extend that trait in others, and with the recognition of

special individual gifts, that we can all work together to create a smarter, stronger, and kinder communities.

As adults working around children in their circle of care, we also have a job to build a broader base for recognizing the positive values of various social identity factors. We want to shift conversations from reactive – those conversations that we have to have after something is hurtful or something mean is said – to proactive. These are conversations about joy and pride in feeling about one's heritage, color, family structure, and beliefs. Together now, we're going to explore these two different types of resources from our page on racial justice that you can share with members of your programming community to lead conversations through the use of storybooks with children and workshops for adults.

Storybooks, again, are those interactive texts that staff can share in a few different ways. Kids can turn the pages of a digital book while an adult reads it to them or they can simply have it read from the screen, again, in English or in Spanish. The book that you have on your screen, “Outside, Inside,” Wes and his father, Elijah, popped into varied photographs of community neighborhoods around the world and around the United States with playful prompts for children to act, to sing to, to reflect on, and to respond to.

My challenge to you is that, as we read this book, I'm going to ask you to reflect on the ways that you might integrate it into your own training and work with children and families, and to use the chat window to share your tips and tricks with the other more than 400 people on this call. As we do that, I'm going to show you how to access Sesame Street in Communities and get to the book “Outside, Inside.”

The first thing you're going to do is, click into ssic.org. As I mentioned before, Sesame Street in Communities is a great, long title, and so we've shortened it. Just by clicking ssic.org, you can easily access this page that shows you a list and a carousel of all of our newest features that have come out in recent days. As you continue to scroll over the top, you'll see in the top left-hand corner the option to volley between English and Spanish. When you click that button, everything on the page, all of the resources, all of the copy, and all of the content is reflected from one language to the next.

When you first join Sesame Street in Communities, you are invited before you even enter the page to click on how you identify, either as a provider, meaning someone who works with children as an employee or a staff member, or as a caregiver, someone who sort of has children or works with children through the lens of home or as a family. While we don't have too many differences and all of the resources are the same in both, the one slightly ones is, when you click on provider, that gives you this professional development tab. This is, again, one of my favorite parts of the page because we get to build it up with things like courses, workshops, and other videos you can use to get trained up in how to meet the need in ways that are most meaningful to you.

As I continue to roll to the right and scroll past those different tabs on the top of my second ssic.org screen, you'll see that under topics, I have more than 30 different topics that we can

talk through. And these range from everything from ABCs and 1, 2, 3's, with topics like school readiness, math, language, and literacy, to things like healthy bodies and healthy minds, topic areas like eating well, autism, and being able to move our bodies. Then our more difficult topics, things like adverse childhood experiences with traumatic experiences, homelessness, or even today, talking a little bit about racial justice.

I'm going to go and, then this a to z listing, I'm going to click over to R for racial justice, and it takes me to the page that gives me a quick banner. You'll see at the top a screenshot very similar to what we just saw because each and every topic page starts with that video that is intended for you, the adult working with children or being with children, to get a better sense of what the topic is all about. And as I continue to scroll down, sometimes we'll have subtopic pages where we've been able to curate the content into different buckets. Here we have, dealing with racism, talking about race, racial justice for military families, and community diversity.

If you're not quite sure what you're looking for or the best place to start, if you continue to scroll down, you'll see the library of all of the different resources that we have for racial justice, with those coding on the bottom right hand corner. Again, orange play button for videos, teal storybook for storybook, and then yellow people icons for workshops. Today, because we're sort of short on time and we're focusing on just two, I'm going to use the filter, and I'm going to switch from all of the different types of resources just to storybooks. What it will do is consolidate all of the resources so just those that are identified as storybooks will show up.

When I click into the storybook, "Outside, Inside," I'll get a big idea at the top that says, "part of racial literacy is exploring and celebrating our differences and similarities." Then a quick breakdown that includes the title, the topic page, the intended age for children – this is for kids 2 to 6, and about the length of time to have an activity with this resource. This is about 10 minutes. As we read it, again, I'm going to invite you to use the chat window to share with us how you might use this book with children in your care. This is "Outside, Inside."

[Video begins]

Narrator: "Outside, Inside." Wes and his dad, Elijah, just moved to Sesame Street.

Wes: I can't wait to meet new friends.

Elijah: You're so kind. I'm sure we both will.

Narrator: Sesame Street is filled with neighbors from all around the world. It's a wonderful place to live.

Wes: Some of our neighbors look different from us dad.

Elijah: Yes. The way we all look, sound, and where we're from, are some of the things that make us special. But we're the same in lots of ways too.

Narrator: Inside, we all have hearts and brains that let us love and learn.

Elijah: Hey, friends. Put a hand on your heart. Close your eyes if you like and think about someone you love and who loves you.

Narrator: We all have songs to sing.

Elijah: When Wes was little, we used to sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Wes"

[Laughter]

Hey, friends. Take turns naming a favorite song and sing it together. Move around to the music.

Narrator: We all have stories to tell.

Elijah: You know, Wes, one of our family's most important stories is how grandma and grandpa came here from Trinidad. When your mom was little, grandma would remind her, stand up straight and tall, strong and proud. Remember, you are a giant.

Wes: Grandma always ...

Narrator: We all need to explore.

Elijah: I love going on walks with Wes. He always looks up at the buildings because he's curious how they're put together. And I always look down at the ground and notice the tiny signs of the seasons. Between the two of us, we see it all.

Narrator: We all feel joy.

Wes: Daddy, I love being silly with you. Hey, everybody, take turns making silly faces at each other.

[Chuckling]

Narrator: We all live in communities.

Wes: Hey, dad, what's a community?

Elijah: A community is a group of people who live in the same place, like we live on Sesame Street now. You're an important part of our community, Wes. Hey, friends, name one important place in your community and say why it's special.

Narrator: We are all strong. We are all growing, outside and in.

Wes: Dad, am I always growing, like every second of every day?

Elijah: Yup. Friends, name one way in which you're growing on the outside and the inside.

Narrator: We can all be helpers.

Elijah: I appreciate you helping your mom and me. And there are lots of ways to help others, like your mom meditates with you to help you calm down.

Wes: And I'm a helper too. Outside at recess, if someone is sitting by themselves, I invite them to play.

Elijah: Now you tell each other some ways that you help others.

Narrator: We all have people who care about us and who we care about.

Elijah: I'm glad you're my family. I got you, Wes.

Wes: You got me, dad. And I got you. We got we.

Elijah: Give each other a high five, then make up a special family handshake.

Narrator: We can all be proud.

Elijah: My son, Wesley Malik Walker, is a beautiful African American boy. He is thoughtful, and imaginative, kind, and powerful. Malik is a strong, proud African name. It means king. Take turns saying ways in which you're proud of yourselves and the people in your family.

Narrator: We can all imagine and build a better world.

Wes: I'm a great builder. What are you good at?

Narrator: We can all be strong in our skin, together.

[Video ends]

Antonio: As many of you began to mention in your chat window, this is a great, both task that can be assigned to families to have conversations at home, at the beginning of a school year for parent, teacher, and family engagement nights, or also as just a way to connect and to share with children in the classroom similarities and differences.

In this video, Wes and his father, Elijah, were able to pop on the screen to help engage in meaningful, playful ways about some of the ways they can stay connected to themselves and everyone in the neighborhood. These interactions and being able to both see these on a page, to read them on a screen, or to talk them out with all of you, help children describe themselves and others on the inside and out, engage with concepts of community, understand that what makes us different is also what makes us special, and that we can connect and become friends with others who don't look, or act, or sound like us because we all matter equally.

It helps us to embrace racial, cultural, and ethnic differences and similarities, to appreciate working together, and to begin a lifelong dialogue about race and discovery about who we are

on the inside and out as we celebrate our shared humanity. Outside of all of the great suggestions that many of you talked about, potential activities could also include a picture walk through the text prior to reading, comparing and contrasting aspects of the neighborhoods with your programs and those in the pictures. Or maybe even after the book's conclusion, creating a book with the children in your space with a neighborhood walk, where you could include photos, drawings, and descriptions of the faces and the spaces that make it special.

It is very clear to me that the more than 400 people on this call know what they're doing and are already beginning to think about ways to thread this into your work. I'm going to throw you off a little bit and give you one more question to connect it to trivia as we move along. We're talking about some new best friends, Bert and Ernie, and occasionally, the Rubber Duckie. But for Bert and Ernie, what floor do they live on at 123 Sesame Street? Take a moment. Katrina's starting with the third floor – but let us know what you think about their living.

We had quick friends here. Lots of people are saying basement. I'm going to give a shout out to – let me see, Faith Young who said subbasement. The truth is that she is correct. They have a subbasement apartment in the 123 Sesame Street building. And you can see very critically on the back of this screenshot the crisscross windows at the ground level. Let's do one more and then jump back into our second assets. You may have seen this Muppet friend in recent times on the interwebs and via TikTok. What kind of pet does Zoe have? Use the chat window and let us know what you think.

We've got some great suggestions here. Before I show you the answer, I'm going to actually show you the answer in the picture as opposed to words. Let's see if we can take a look at it together. Right here.

[Video begins]

Elmo: That's Elmo's favorite. Oh, Gabby, can Elmo have an oatmeal raisin cookie instead, please?

Gabby: Oh, gee, Elmo. That was my last one.

Elmo: Oh, that's OK Gabby. I don't want it. Just take this one.

Zoe: No, no, no. Wait, wait, Elmo. Rocco says that he wants the oatmeal raisin cookie.

Elmo: Rocco! Rocco is a rock, Zoey! Rocco won't know the difference.

Zoe: Yes, he will. You can't have that cookie, Elmo. Rocco wants to eat it.

Elmo: How? How is Rocco going to eat that cookie, Zoe? Tell Elmo. Rocco doesn't even have a mouth. Rocco's just a rock. Rocco's not alive.

[Video ends]

Antonio: That singular video clip from 2004 widely circulated across social media, and it actually garnered more than 8 million views and thousands of responses from people that were actually feeling very much like in that moment, expressed that they could sort of see and appreciate his unhinged sense of exasperation. Shout out to all of you that guessed that and to Faith Young for being able to hold it down for two different trivia questions. Let's move in these last 15 minutes into our second type of resource for today's conversation workshops.

When we talk about workshops, again, what we're talking about are these topics that are a combination of all of those different resources that we've walked through in the past, that the team here at Sesame Street has found work really well together. In the workshops connected to racial justice on your screen, adults can explore with their stakeholders videos that celebrate community, like "We Are Wonderful," which makes unique things like printables and the, "What I'm All About," and to also hear from the lived experiences of two moms addressing race and racism in their own communities in the workshop videos, "Helping Parents Talk About and Stand Up Against Racism."

We all have special qualities that make us who we are. Those personality traits can serve the world and make a difference in our communities. Let's take a look and watch them together, the video, "We Are Wonderful," from the workshop, "Remembering What I'm All About." Just like with the storybook, as we watch, I'm going to ask you to consider the ways that you might introduce this video in the work that you're doing with children and families, and to put it in the chat.

[Video begins]

[Laughter]

[Interposing voices]

Rosita: Oh, guess what?

Elmo & Wes: What?

Rosita: We did the coolest thing at school today.

Wes: Oh.

Rosita: Yeah. My teacher had us in a circle, and we said, "We are all wonderful inside and out."

Wes and Elmo: Oh.

Rosita: Yeah. And then we went around and said what was wonderful of each of our friends.

Wes and Elmo: Oh.

Elmo: Oh, yeah. Elmo wants to try.

Wes: Yeah, yeah, me too

Rosita: You do? OK. OK. Oh, and you are part of our circle too.

[Laughter]

Elmo: OK, what are we doing?

Rosita: OK. I'm going to say something wonderful about you, Elmo. And then you say something about Wes. And then we just go in a circle like that.

Elmo: OK. Circle.

- OK. OK. All right.

[Clears throat]

Rosita: I see the wonderful in you, Elmo. You are a kind Monster.

Elmo: Aww, [Chuckling] thank you, Rosita. Oh, Elmo sees the wonderful. And Wes, Elmo likes your amazing story.

Wes: Aww, thanks, Elmo. Oh, OK. [Clears throat] I see the wonderful in you, Rosita. You give the best hugs.

Rosita: Aww, gracias, Wes. [Laughter] Oh, guys, I have an idea.

Elmo: What?

Wes: OK. Yeah.

Elmo: Oh, yeah!

Rosita: Yeah. OK.

Elmo, Rosita, and Wes: We see the wonderful in you! [Laughter]

Rosita: Group hug. [Laughter]

Elmo: I love you.

Rosita: Yeah.

[Video ends]

Antonio: So connected to this workshop, in addition to the video in the, "Remembering What I'm all About"

It also includes a printable. It's a little bit hard to see, so I apologize about that. It includes specific keywords on a printable piece of paper that you can send home with children and families that give them some sort of conversation starters to have with siblings and with parents and other caregivers to talk about what makes them special, and how they can remember who they are in times of challenge with people that love and support them.

You might consider encouraging families to watch this video of thinking about who they are on the inside and outside, and then send the printable home to complete it as a family before it gets returned, and maybe just put it up as a nice bulletin board outside of your space. I'm going to shout out and make loud Sabrina's comment. She said, I could see teachers using this during small group. I could also utilize it with staff during non-class day and have them split into groups, play a video, and then have them reflect with each other on the wonderful that they see at each other. That is a great, very leveled break breakdown of all the different moving pieces that you could integrate from this into your work. Nice job.

We recognize and we've talked a lot about how racism is everyone's problem and how we all need to do our part to stand up against it. Talking about or even thinking about racism can be a daunting task for many parents. Fear of making mistakes, offending others, can also hold them back from diving into this topic. Fortunately, there are things that parents can do to move past fear and into authentic action. Doing some of this heart work can really equip everyone in the family to lead and stand up against racism together.

In this workshop, parents are invited to watch short videos and consider questions to help them reflect on how they might practice the ideas and strategies from them in their own lives. Some of these questions may not be easy to answer, and that's OK. The hard work is worth it. In a moment, we're going to put up a poll on your screen, which have it to you the four different names of the four different chapters of videos for this workshop. And together, we'll take a look at the one that you think is most exciting. "Lifelong Journey, Lifelong Learning" takes a couple of minutes for these two different brilliant leaders, Patricia Taylor and Shannon Evans, to talk about how they began this process.

"Talking with Children" gives ideas of how they can integrate conversation starters into their work and play with kids. "Ideas for Families" are activities to do at home. And "Finding Your First Steps" give clarity and action as to what we can do to start to address this problem now. With that as a quick breakdown, I'm going to ask if we can have some help in throwing the quick poll out on the screen so people can take a look. Go and select the video that you would like to watch as a team all together. We'll put it up for about 30 seconds and then we'll go to the video.

As you're doing that, shout out to Joyce, who reflected on these different uncertain times, being able to engage and to teach, and engage with COVID, can also modify how you celebrate with other people, like things like a group hug or a fist with elbow high fives.

We're going to take 10 more seconds and then close out. We have about more than half of the 390 people that have participated. We're starting to close out. All right, we're going to go out

and end the poll and share the results. It looks like, overwhelmingly, people are excited about talking with children. Thank you for putting that poll up. Together, let's take a look at "Talking with Children." I'm going to go back into ssic.org. I'm going to go back through the banners for topics.

I'm going to go back down to racial justice. I know that this is something you may have done before, but it always helps me to do repetition. That way, I know exactly where I'm going, and I can lead you to that place. There's all these different resources that we can look at. If you are short on time or know exactly that we're looking for workshops, I'm going to go over to Filter. And under Type, I'm going to click on workshop. You'll see those two that we were just talking about popped up. "Remembering What I'm All About," including that principle in the video. But we're going to take a look at the second workshop, "Helping Parents Talk Up and Stand Up Against Racism."

The four videos are broken down in scaffolded sequence. Video one, "Lifelong Journey, Lifelong Learning." And video two is "Talking with Children." We're going to take a look at it together.

[Video begins]

Tara Wright: One of the things that we've found as we've been developing resources for families is that there's a discrepancy, a pretty large discrepancy about how early and often Black families versus white families or families of color have to talk about race and racism. Is there a conversation that all families need to be having? What would you all hope that families are talking about with their children?

Patricia Taylor: It feels touchy for me because it hits so close to home. I can hold the tension of wanting to shield your child and not wanting to have these super hard conversations out the gate about just the things of our world. But I think that we can approach it from day one with our kids, all parents. And Black parents tend to know that we have to because the safety of our children depend on it, and the way that we interact in the world and how the world views our children depends on that. That is the reality.

I think that it also points to the disconnect of, well, racism is a Black people and people of color problem, it's not a white person's problem. But it's all of our problem.

Shannon Evans: I think the appropriate time to have these conversations with our children is going younger and younger because of the world we live in. I think that rather than looking at it as a one and done conversation n— well, I talk to my kid about race, so I guess that's over with. The same way that we're trying to do for ourselves to make it an ongoing lifelong process, to look at it the same way in raising our children, that this is a conversation we're going to have to have 1,000 times before they leave home, whether the family is white or Black. But to create the world that we want to see, this conversation has to be happening.

[Video ends]

Antonio: Again, a great video that shows some guidance. What I do appreciate about both the work that we do and how we try to present it is that we give soft suggestions on how you might be able to integrate this into your work. You see underneath that video, it gives a breakdown of being able to give you specific steps. You might watch the video to hear why these conversations matter. You can read an article that's aligned to it, thinking about the ages and stages of racial understanding, and then to explore ways that you can incorporate ideas of empathy, identity, into the work that families are doing in everyday moments with sentence starters like, how would I feel if, or, how do you think that person feels?

As you encourage a positive self-identity by thinking about finishing sentences like, I am proud of, I feel confident when, and I am good at. Now to the point that many of you are using on the chat window, you can take this and use it in whatever way is most meaningful to you. If you are not sure and because of that are hesitant to use, let these be the starting tools.

Friends, I've been talking a lot and showing even more. We have just a few more minutes left in this conversation. We're going to end it with a couple of fun things. The first is trivia. Guy Smiley, one of my dear, dear Muppet friends – what was the profession of Guy Smiley? Take a moment to use the chat window to let us know if you remember who he is or what he looks like. Lots of people are saying dentist, weather man. Lisa's saying game show host.

News guy, reporter, and chef. These are all great ideas. He was a game show host. Nice job, Lisa. Evidently, Guy's birth name was Bernie Liederkrantz, and he changed it for the show business. Can you imagine that? Jim Henson created his voice and him. You can see that, similar to the way that we've talked in depth about Wes, Eli, and Ji-Young all of our stories, all of our characters, no matter how big or small, have hilarious backstories and very funny things that help shape who they are. It's not just a one and done, but there's a tapestry and a history to each of these different characters.

As we're starting to move and shift things down, Sesame Street in Communities, as a reminder, is the home to hundreds of free bilingual multimedia tools to help kids and families enrich their knowledge during early years. This robust site helps to enhance the amazing work you are already doing with everyone in your neighborhood. You might be able to use and consider these tips to help with the site. The first is to create an account. Log in to save favorite activities, register for webinars, and receive monthly email updates about upcoming topics and activities. You might also explore topics.

Resources can help kids and grownups with what matters most in young lives. Things like health and wellness, social-emotional skills, and school readiness. And there's also that third point, free professional development. You can level up your skills by viewing a webinar, a training video, or just simply completing a course. You can continue to customize your experience by – depending on the role of the lives that you play in kids closest to you, thinking about how you identify as a parent, or caregiver, or a provider, or a staff member, and then finding the resource that best meets that need.

As mentioned earlier, all of our resources, beyond and outside of professional development, are reflected in English and in Spanish. With the click of a button, you can switch all of those different resources in all of the different topic pages from language to the next. There are just so many ways to search. You can find the tools you need when you need them, and to use things like the search bar or filter by the age, time, or type of activity.

I want to thank you for your engagement, for your expertise, and for your willingness to share all of those great tips and tricks into the chat window. We're going to continue the learning in these next two weeks. We want you to join us and to help shape and share what these conversations can be like. Next week, save that time, we're going to be doing, "Bringing Families Together to Build Community Wellbeing." That's on Thursday, September 8, at 1:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.

Then the week after that, on September 15, we'll be able to use respect to develop success relationships – on September 15 at 1:00 PM also. As we start to round out this conversation, we have one last trivia question to make sure that everybody stays in the game. What is the name of that character obsessed with counting? Take a moment and see if you can answer that question.

As you do, there's a great question about ableism resources. As we are in the process of building some of those resources out right now. We have students, when we think about across divergent thinking and the autism spectrum, ways to connect with children of a variety of different neurotypical and atypical resources that speak to those needs, and we're beginning to delve beyond that as well.

You all are quick with the Count, and you are correct. He is the Count. And he was actually inspired by Bela Lugosi's portrayal of Dracula, and was voiced by Jerry Nelson, who performed the amazing Mumford, Harry the Monster, Mr. Snuffleupagus, and Sherlock Hemlock as well. He plays a couple of different characters. I want to start to close now. I've answered a couple of questions. Happy to stay on the line. I will pass it now back to Nydia. Thanks all for joining us. See you next week.

Nydia: Thank you so very much again to Antonio Freitas. This is such important and such fun resources. If you have any more questions, you can go to MyPeers or write to health@ecetta.info. The evaluation URL will appear when the webinar ends. Do not close the Zoom platform or you won't see that evaluation pop up. Remember, after submitting the evaluation, you will see a new URL, and this link will allow you to access, download, save, and print your certificates.

You can subscribe to our monthly list of resources using this URL. You can find our resources in the health section of the ECLKC or write us at help@ecetta.info. Thank you again to everyone for your participation today. OK. You can close out the Zoom platform. Have a great one.