



the David &
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FOUNDATION

A GUIDE FOR TRAINERS

*A Host's Guide to Workshops Supporting
Family, Friend, & Neighbor Caregiving*

**BUILDING TRUSTING
RELATIONSHIPS**

**STRENGTHENING
COMMUNICATION**

**CREATING CLEAR
ROUTINES**



It Takes a Village

Taking care of children—through the ups, the downs, the big learning moments, and the little discoveries is what Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers do every day. As someone who reaches FFN caregivers, you can strengthen the special power they have to build children’s brains during everyday moments, and create safe, welcoming spaces that will help children—and families—thrive!

In this guide, you’ll find ideas for facilitating workshops with FFN caregivers. The workshops touch on three things:

- building trusting relationships
- strengthening communication
- creating clear routines to support children’s development

During these workshops, encourage FFN caregivers to share things they already do as well as new ideas they discover through the activities.

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Join the Community!

Introducing you to...  *in*  **Communities**

You can use [Sesame Street in Communities](#) to support you in helping FFN caregivers be the best they can be for the children in their care!

On the site, you will find tools in both English and Spanish designed for children, from birth to six, and their parents and caregivers.

In this guide, you will find a deeper dive into the [Caring for Kids](#) topic area on the site—a section that has tons of resources to support FFN caregivers in their important work.

Creating Your “Workshop Community”

1

Have everyone share their name, who they care for, and a fun fact about themselves.

2

Ask the group what they’re most interested in learning. Feel free to choose activities based on their specific needs and goals. Skip others that are less relevant.

3

Share a schedule so the group knows what to expect. You might include when you’ll break, when the workshop will end, and where to find bathrooms or snacks.

4

Give an overview. Let them know they’ll be role-playing, moving around, and doing hands-on activities. In other words, playing!



You can join the [Sesame Street in Communities](#) page on Facebook or Instagram to stay up to date on the latest information and resources.

WORKSHOP

Your Unique Brain-Building Power

FFN caregivers are with children during a time in their lives when their brains are growing by leaps and bounds. In this workshop, you'll reinforce the lasting impact of caregivers' nurture and care on little ones' learning.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- Computer, phone, or tablet
- Chart paper or large paper
- Folders
- Pens, pencils, or markers
- [It's All Connected](#) infographic
- [Treasuring Childhood](#) printables

A Starting Place

Write down the Nigerian Proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child" so everyone can see it. Ask: "What do you think about this statement? What and how do you contribute to the lives of children and families? What are some things you do every day to help children and families learn and grow?"



ACTIVITY IDEAS

LEARNING CONNECTIONS

Bring attention to the connection between children's behaviors and what they are learning.

- On a computer, phone, or tablet, launch It's All Connected and explore the interactive in small groups.
- Say: "Little ones' brains are constantly changing and growing! The experiences you give children while they're in your care help build their brains and make learning connections that last a lifetime."
- Give each group a large piece of paper with two columns labeled: 1) The Behavior and 2) The Connection.
- In Column 1, have them share children's simple, silly, or strange behaviors (e.g. choosing the biggest cookie on the plate).
- In Column 2, have them write down what the behavior might reveal about what children are learning (e.g. the difference between big and small). Then share out!

TREASURING CHILDHOOD

Track the signs of children's learning to share.

- Share the [Treasuring Childhood](#) printables. Caregivers can use these to keep track of how much children are learning and growing. Each change is a sign that a child's brain is developing.
- As you explore the printables together, say: "You can use these with children from when you first meet them all the way through the time they're in your care. You'll see (and you'll be able to show their parents) how much they're learning and growing."
- Hand out folders for caregivers to decorate as "Look at Me Learn" folders for each child in their care. They can store the Treasuring Childhood printables in these folders to share with families.
- As they work, ask FFNs: "What are some of the things you treasure most about the children you work with and about being a caregiver?"

WORKSHOP

Building Trusting Relationships With Families

Little ones look to the adults around them for comfort. When their parents and caregivers are at ease, children can feel safe as they explore and learn! In this workshop, FFNs will share their existing strategies and explore new ideas for creating strong connections with parents.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- [Getting to Know Me](#) printable
- Chart paper or large paper



A Starting Place

FFNs have to get to know children and parents quickly. This activity helps bring forth the range of feelings that can come up.

- Have caregivers partner with someone unfamiliar. Partners should stand ten feet apart, looking in the opposite direction.
- Have partners turn around and look at each other for ten seconds, then turn away for ten seconds, and take a backwards step closer. Repeat until you are an arm's length away from each other.
- Now turn around and say hello; then turn away for ten seconds. Face each other again, give a compliment, and turn back around. Lastly, partners face each other and take turns asking how their day has been. When both have asked and answered, they turn back around.
- As a group, reflect on how you felt standing ten feet apart: Was there discomfort or anxiety? Then share how you felt when you were face to face: Was there a new sense of comfort? Ask: "How is this similar to getting to know parents? What are some things you do to get to know parents better?"

ACTIVITY IDEAS

LEARNING ABOUT ME, LEARNING ABOUT YOU

Pass out the Getting to Know Me printable and let FFNs know they can use this to guide them in those first few conversations with parents.

- Divide the group into pairs for a role-play scenario, in which one person is a caregiver and the other is a parent.
- Explain that role-playing can help us realize what parents need to trust and feel reassured. It also provides practice for how FFNs can best share their caregiving experience in order to help parents feel confident that their children are in good hands.
- Break into pairs; one person plays the caregiver and the other plays the parent—then switch. Caregivers can use the printable, the questions they answered at the beginning of the workshop, as well as their own previous experiences to guide their conversations.
- After the activity, reflect as a group. Would they do or ask anything differently, having played conversations from the perspective of the parent?



WORKSHOP

Bonding With Children

FFN caregivers know that relationships with little ones take time, trust, and patience. This workshop offers tips and ideas to help FFNs strengthen their relationships with children.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- Paper
- Crayons or Markers
- [Saying “No”](#) article
- [What Will We Do Today?](#) article

A Starting Place

Assure caregivers that the simple act of doing something fun together can jump-start the bonding experience!

- Share the [What Will We Do Today?](#) article. opposites, and shapes). Caregivers can share an activity they’ve done before or one that comes to mind. By the end, they’ll have a new collection of learning activities to try out in their own settings.
- Break into groups and come up with one additional activity for each learning category (feelings, letters, rhymes,



ACTIVITY IDEAS

FEELING SAFE AND SECURE

Setting boundaries and establishing rules help children feel safe and secure in their environment. Work through ways to do this in a positive way.

- Together, read the [Saying “No”](#) article. Talk about some of the ways you can say “no” in a positive way. For instance, rather than saying, “No, don’t touch that,” you can say, “Please keep your hands to yourself.”
- Have caregivers share examples of rules in their own settings and how they can rephrase them with positive language.

- Say: “It can be tough for little ones to remember the rules—especially if they’re different from rules at home. Posting rules in a place where everyone can see them can be a helpful reminder.”
- Pass out paper and crayons or markers for caregivers to make rule charts to hang up in their settings. They may want to include pictures for the little ones who can’t read yet.



Communication Is Key

Children benefit when the people who are most involved in their lives have open and meaningful communication. In this workshop, you'll share and practice strategies for improving caregiver and parent conversations.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- [Tips for Parent-Caregiver Communication](#) printable
- [Sharing Your Day](#) article
- Poster paper and chart paper
- Art supplies (e.g. crayons, markers, glitter glue, stickers)
- Old magazines

A Starting Place

Begin by talking with caregivers about how they've been successful in talking with families in the past. Then ask: "What are some challenges you've had when communicating with families, and how have you worked through these challenges?" Talk through examples, such as parents wanting constant communication throughout the day, talking to parents about a child's challenging behavior, or families who don't show interest in communicating with you.



ACTIVITY IDEAS

PART 1: STARTING UP COMMUNICATION

Regularly sharing moments from a child's day can help parents feel at ease.

- Distribute and read through the [Sharing Your Day](#) article. Then brainstorm creative ways to "share the day" with parents, such as sharing photos, writing a newsletter, or making audio recordings.
- In pairs, caregivers can use poster paper and art supplies to create and decorate a photo board where they can post pictures of children and add captions during the week. When parents pick up or drop off, they can take a look at what their child has been up to and feel "in the know."

PART 2: CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

Use these activities to help caregivers manage uncomfortable conversations with families.

- Say: "Take a moment and think about a difficult conversation you had with a family. What was it about? What made it difficult?" Encourage them to think about their words, tone, and body language as well as those of the parents.
- Read aloud the [Tips for Parent-Caregiver Communication](#) article.
- Have caregivers partner up and practice respectful communication using the scenarios they came up with and/or these samples:
 - a child biting or hitting
 - a child not eating
 - parents arriving late to pick-up
 - parents disagreeing with the caregiver's rules or practices.
 - parents' late payments
- Ask for volunteers to role-play in front of the group. Share what each person did to communicate respectfully (e.g. making eye contact, sharing concrete examples, not interrupting).



WORKSHOP

Setting Up Successful Routines

Children rely on structure and routines. This workshop will inspire caregivers with ideas for creating reliable settings and predictable routines.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- [Grown-Ups Come Back](#) video
- [Bye Bye for Now](#) song
- [Everyday Brain Builders Activity Cards](#)
- Construction Paper (Red, Green, and Yellow)
- Scissors
- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Computer, phone, or tablet



A Starting Place

- Before watching, ask caregivers to describe the hardest goodbyes they've seen and what made them difficult (e.g. parent took a long time to leave).
- Do a video screening of the [Grown Ups Come Back](#) and [Bye Bye for Now](#) videos.
- After watching, have caregivers share good strategies from the video that make separation easier. Then talk about how they could use them with families (e.g. giving two kisses and a hug, drawing a picture to let the parent know the child misses them, practicing peek-a-boo to help babies learn that things reappear).

ACTIVITY IDEAS

MOVING RIGHT ALONG

As caregivers know, one of the most important and most challenging transitions of the day is the “goodbye.” This activity can help make goodbyes and transition moments a little bit easier.

Explore the Everyday Brain Builders Activity Cards for “transition time.” Let caregivers know that having a picture or symbol that children associate with changing activities can help them know what to expect. This can make transition time a little easier.

- Pass out red, green, and yellow construction paper and scissors. Tell providers they’ll be creating a traffic light by making green, yellow, and red circles, and pasting them onto paper. They can use the traffic light in their settings as a symbol for switching gears.
- When an activity begins, they can hold up the traffic light and point to the green light. When they’re getting ready to transition, they’ll point to the yellow light. When it’s time to stop, they’ll point to the red light. This helps children know what to expect and prepare for transitions.



Learning Through Play Every Day!

Children love to play—and it’s one of the best things FFN caregivers get to do with them! As children play, they’re exploring the world around them and practicing crucial brain development skills. This workshop will encourage caregivers to explore the relationship between play and learning.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- [Play All Day](#) storybook
- [Enriching and Extending Play](#) video
- [Sensory Learning](#) video
- Chart paper
- Found household objects (e.g. pillows, used paper-towel rolls, boxes, pots and pans, blocks)

A Starting Place

Watch the [Enriching and Extending Play](#) video. Then talk in small groups about cherished memories of playing. Ask: “What’s something you loved to play as a kid? What did you love about it? How do children in your care play in similar ways? What do you think they’re learning when they play like this?”

Explain that when children play like this, they’re:

- Developing social skills like sharing and cooperation
- Learning new words and concepts
- Practicing problem-solving skills
- Overcoming fears
- Learning to wait and take turns (self-control)
- Building memory
- Developing gross and fine motor skills
- Inspiring creativity

ACTIVITY IDEAS

PLAYING HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE!

Sharing books can help strengthen the connection between home and care settings.

- Split into groups and assign each group a page of the story. Say: “By doing similar activities at home and in care, children’ brains will create connections about what they’re learning.”
- Encourage groups to brainstorm activity ideas, inspired by the story, that they can share with families. For example, similar to Elmo’s grocery letter hunt, parents might do a letter hunt on their walk home, looking for letters on street signs, storefronts, and billboards.

SENSORY ADVENTURE

Watch the [Sensory Learning video](#) together and create a “sensory adventure” in your space.

- Lay out some of the found materials around the room. Split caregivers into pairs, and have them take turns being blindfolded and exploring the materials as children would, to figure out what they are. Say: “Explore using all five senses—touch, smell, hearing, perhaps even taste!” Then switch roles.
- Discuss together: “What did you learn from this experience? What similarities are there between this activity and the way a baby or toddler experiences the world?”
- Brainstorm ways caregivers can continue encouraging exploration through the five senses in their settings. For instance, snack time is a great opportunity to explore new foods by touching, tasting, and smelling!

