

A multi-phase outreach initiative from Sesame Workshop offering resources and support to military families with young children

The Project In recognition of the contributions made by military families, Sesame Workshop developed a groundbreaking, bilingual (English/Spanish), multimedia initiative called Talk, Listen, Connect. Since 2006, Talk, Listen, Connect has served as a critical tool to build resilience in military families and their young children coping with challenging transitions such as deployments and changes due to a combat-related injury.

Below are descriptions of the resources offered through the initiative. In addition, a new phase is in development to help young children cope with the death of a loved one.

Sesame Workshop is proud to continue its work towards bringing sunny days to military children and their families.



Talk, Listen, Connect: Helping Families During Military Deployment

Launched August 2006 sesamestreet.org/tlc

- **500,000 bilingual kits** (English/Spanish), with a DVD featuring the Sesame Street Muppets and documentary footage of military families, and print materials for adults and young children.
- **Free distribution** through Military OneSource. Within the first two weeks, more than 100,000 kits were requested.
- **An Emmy-nominated television special**, *When Parents Are Deployed*, hosted by Cuba Gooding Jr., aired on PBS stations nationwide and on the V-me channel (in Spanish).
- **Major support provided by** Walmart Foundation, with additional support from the New York State Office of Mental Health and the Military Child Education Coalition.
- **Research:** A summative study found that *Talk, Listen, Connect* helped families prepare for and feel better during a parent's deployment.
- **National and local press coverage**, including *The Today Show*, *ABC World News*, and C-SPAN.
- **Feedback:** "I never thought that Elmo could make an Airborne Ranger cry....My daughter was 5 months old when I left and she didn't know who I was when I returned. The video brought out emotions in me I never realized I had. It is very powerful and exactly on target....Thank you very much." – Military Dad



Talk, Listen, Connect: Deployments, Homecomings, Changes

Launched August 2008 sesamestreet.org/tlc

- **1,000,000 bilingual kits** featuring two DVDs and print materials for adults and young children, with the additional topics of multiple deployments and a parent's return home changed due to combat-related injury.
- **Free distribution** through Military OneSource, the New York State Office of Mental Health, the USO, the Military Child Education Coalition, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **An award-winning television special**, *Coming Home: Military Families Cope With Change*, featuring John Mayer and Queen Latifah, originally aired April 1, 2009. The show focuses on the courage of military families and their children in adjusting to life after a service member's injury. Above all, hope and resilience shines through. Free, streaming video available online.
- **Major support provided by** the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Military OneSource, Walmart Foundation, and American Greetings Corporation.
- **Additional support provided by** the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the New York State Office of Mental Health, the USO, the Military Child Education Coalition, and the Joseph Drown Foundation.
- **National and local press coverage** including *Good Morning America*, the BBC, *CBS*, and National Public Radio, as well as *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek*.
- **A V-me Television Special**, *Changes: Lives of Military Families (Cambios: Vivencias de Familias Militares)*, hosted by Gabi Rivero aired in Spanish on Veterans' Day.
- **Feedback:** "We had a triple amputee come in recently who had not seen his 3-year-old daughter since his injury and was afraid of how she would react. I gave him the TLC kit and explained the materials to him. He was so happy that he started to cry with joy. He asked me to say thank you to you, Sesame Street." – Army Staff Sergeant





The Sesame Street Experience for Military Families: A partnership with the USO

Launched July 2008

sesamestreet.org/tlc

- **A free, live Sesame Street Muppet performance** exclusively for military families, plus giveaways including Talk, Listen, Connect kits, storybooks, and information from organizations serving military families.
- **Reach:** 91 shows at 43 installations in 23 states, reaching 75,000 children and adults.
- **Press coverage** including stories on CNN, NBC Nightly News, and in numerous local broadcast, print, and radio media.
- **Feedback:** *"It is so kind and amazing that you are doing this for our kids. Sometimes they get forgotten when it comes to events for deployed family members, so the fact that this is for them is truly so kind and remarkable. You have no idea what it means to me and my deployed husband."* – Military Mom



Sesame Rooms

Launched July 2009

sesamestreet.org/tlc

- **Sesame Street is providing a "room-in-a-box"** with a rich and engaging set of materials to brighten up spaces and provide a much needed child friendly place for military children to play.
- **Reach:** 35 locations across the United States including children spaces in military hospitals, libraries, child care centers, and family support centers.
- **Feedback:** *"I cannot tell you how much your gift to our program has meant to us. It is wonderful to have a company like Sesame Street recognize that military families have special needs. Your gifts are helping us fulfill our motto of "Serving those who serve America!" Thanks so much."* –Recipient of a Sesame Room



Sesame Street Family Connections

Launched July 16, 2009

SesameStreetFamilyConnections.org

- **A bilingual (English/Spanish) child centered online space** where both children and adults can interact and stay connected when distance makes everyday communication difficult.
- **Provides a unique, free experience** for military families to share artwork and videos, compose encouraging messages, and upload photos.
- **Winner of the Interactive Media "Best in Class" Award** for the "Kids" category in 2009.



Talk, Listen, Connect: When Families Grieve

Launching April 2010

sesamestreet.org/grief

- **A Sesame Street television special** hosted by Katie Couric, *When Families Grieve*, featuring the personal stories of several families with children who have experienced the death of a parent, will air on PBS April 14, 2010 at 8 pm (check local listings). Starring the Sesame Street Muppets, this powerful and heartwarming show will share strategies that have helped these families cope with grief.
- **370,000 bilingual kits** featuring a DVD and print materials for military families with young children coping with the death of a parent will become available starting in April 2010.
- **Free distribution** through Military Services casualty offices, TAPS, childhood grief centers, counselors, and other organizations that provide services and resources to grieving families.
- **Major support provided by** Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, BAE Systems, Iraq Afghanistan Deployment Impact Fund, and Walmart Foundation.
- **Additional support provided by** Lockheed Martin Corporation, Military OneSource, New York State Office of Mental Health, McCormick Foundation, USO, Military Child Education Coalition, Joseph Drown, Bank of New York Mellon, Oshkosh Defense, and Department of Veterans Affairs - Vet Center Program.