

# bounce back

A Story About Resilience & Persistence



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## Dear Parents and Providers,

This story introduces Alex, a new Sesame Street friend who's been through a lot. When Alex's father was incarcerated, Alex and his family faced big challenges, and he coped with big feelings such as fear and anger. But they've moved through those hard times, learned coping strategies, and are stronger for it.

Whether the problems young children face are big or small, it helps to build their resilience—the ability to move through challenges and bounce back from setbacks. Persistence is an important piece of resilience, and, like all people, Alex needs to find a way to tolerate frustration and practice patience with himself.

Share this story, then do the activity together. Invite children to celebrate all the amazing skills they've learned so far—and look forward to learning new ones!

**For more resources on resilience, visit [SesameStreetInCommunities.org](https://www.sesamestreetincommunities.org)**

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## SESAME WORKSHOP

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street, the television show that has been reaching and teaching children since 1969. Sesame Workshop has a mission to help kids everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. We're active in over 150 countries, serving vulnerable children through media, formal education, and philanthropically-funded programs, each grounded in research and tailored to local needs and cultures. For more information, please visit [sesameworkshop.org](https://www.sesameworkshop.org).

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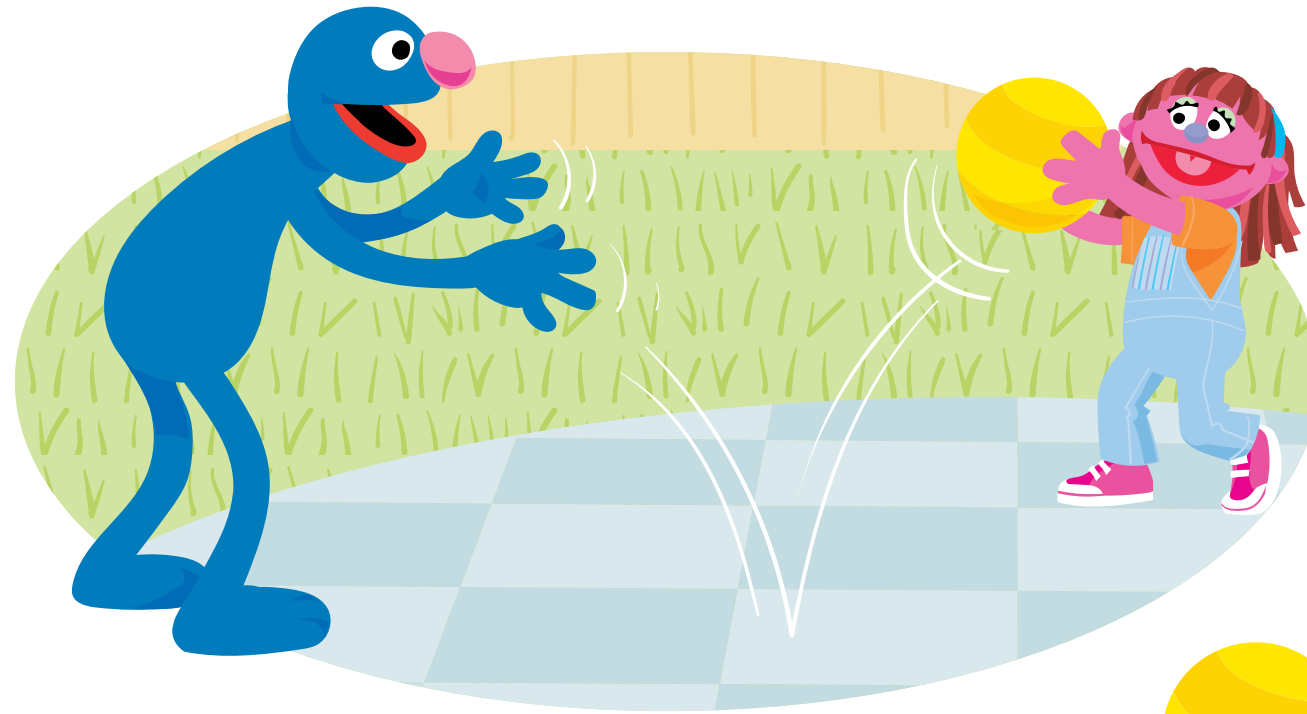
UnitedHealthcare is dedicated to helping people live healthier lives and making the health system work better for everyone. UnitedHealthcare supports a wide range of programs and services, promoting physical and mental wellness for individuals of all ages. UnitedHealthcare offers a full spectrum of health benefit programs, and contracts directly with more than 1.3 million physicians and care professionals, and 6,500 hospitals and other care facilities nationwide. UnitedHealthcare is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified health care company.

"Hello, everybodee!" Grover said to his friends Lily, Karli, and Alex. "Let's play SUPER BOUNCE! I will bounce this super-duper bouncy ball to Lily. Lily, you catch it and bounce it to Karli. Karli, you catch it and bounce it to Alex. Then, Alex, you catch it and bounce it back to adorable, furry little me!"

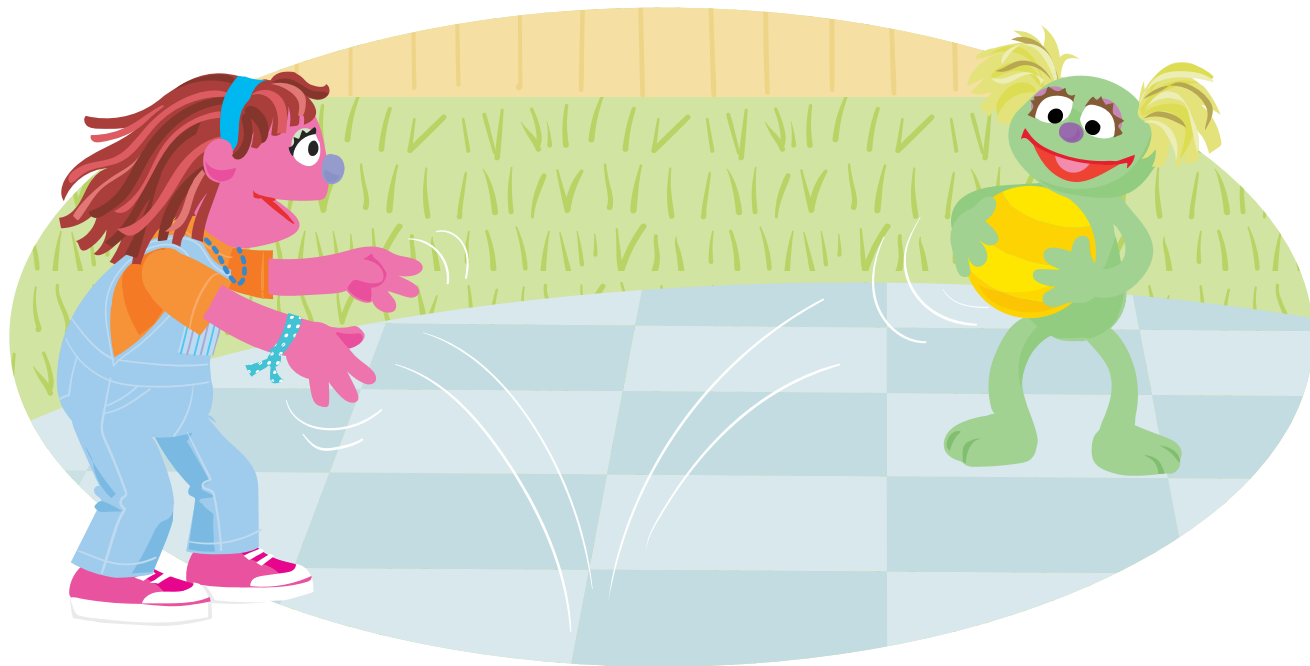


"Ready?" Grover asked.

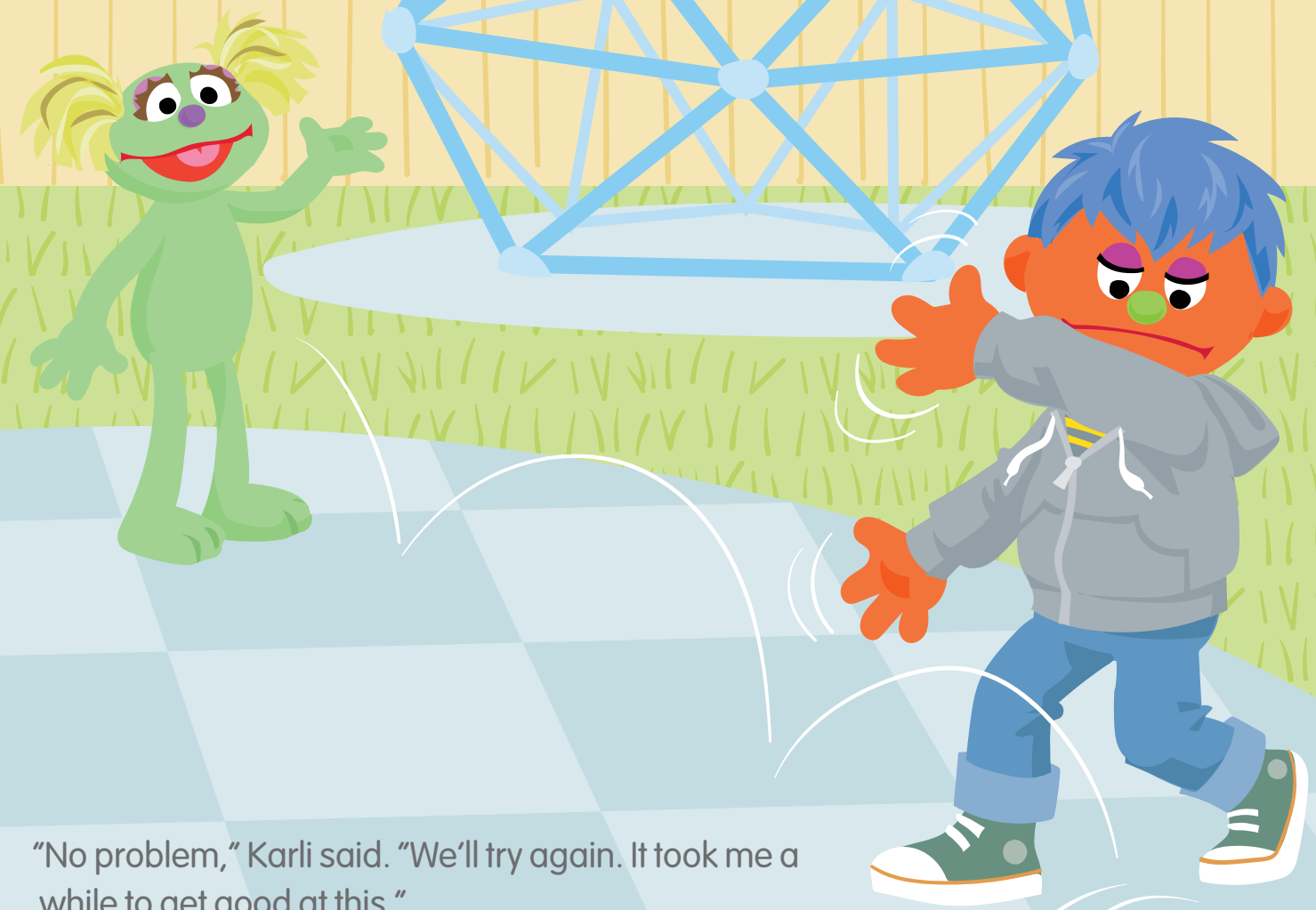
"Ready!" the friends said. Bounce! Grover aimed the ball at Lily, who reached right out and caught it. She smiled proudly and turned to face Karli. Bounce!



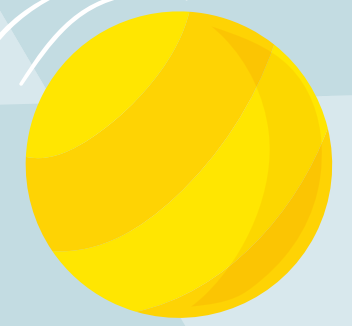
"Got it!" Karli said. "Here you go, Alex!"



"Oh!" Alex exclaimed as the ball bounced off his arm. "I missed."



"No problem," Karli said. "We'll try again. It took me a while to get good at this."  
She bounced the ball towards Alex. Bop!  
"I missed again!" Alex frowned.  
"Try holding your arms in front of you," Karli suggested.





But Alex didn't want to. "I'm not playing!" he said and went to sit near his Aunt Anna. "Are you okay, Alex?" she asked. Alex shrugged.

"I'm fine. I just don't want to play their game."

"I see you're feeling a little angry and frustrated. Let's take a break," Aunt Anna said. "Want me to push you on the swing?"

Alex smiled a little. "I don't need a push anymore, Aunt Anna!" he said. "I can push myself now!"





“See, watch me,” Alex said. “I pull back with my arms. Then I point my feet to the front to swing up—and point my feet back to swing back. Wheeee!”



Alex grinned as he pumped higher and higher on the swing. “Look!” he called to his aunt. “Pull back... feet up... feet back!”

Alex kept pumping his legs, swinging up and back, up and back, up and back. He didn’t even have to think about it.



"Wow," said Aunt Anna. "Well, you definitely don't need me to push you anymore!"

"I couldn't swing by myself at first," Alex said. "I kept trying and now I can swing really high!"

Then he looked over at his friends. "I want to try Super Bounce again," he said.

Aunt Anna smiled. "Ah," she said. "I see you're ready to bounce back."

"That's silly," Alex giggled. "Only balls bounce!"

"Well, not only," explained Aunt Anna. "Bouncing back is for people too! It's part of getting stronger—not in your body, but in your mind and heart. It's about getting through tough times. See, when you're frustrated, you can bounce back by taking a break and do something you like—something you're good at, like swinging. Then... you try again! Bounce!"



"Can I play again?" Alex asked.

"Sure!" Karli said. Alex watched closely as Karli bounced the ball towards him, and he reached out his hands and caught it.

"Yay, me!" he shouted and did a little dance.

So did Grover. "Great catch, Alex!" he cheered. "I knew you could do it! Now it's your turn to bounce that super-duper bouncy ball back to me."



"Yup!" Alex said. "I bet this time the ball will bounce really good... just like me!"



# Take a Break & Bounce Back!

Everyone feels frustrated sometimes. It can help to take a break and do something else you like for a little while. Then you can bounce back... and try again.

Circle the things you like to do, then try one!



**playing**



**drawing**



**snuggling**



**singing**



**reading**



**stretching**