Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, in partnership with Sam’s Club and MetLife Foundation, has developed Healthy Teeth, Healthy Me, a bilingual (English/Spanish), multimedia outreach initiative. The initiative leverages the power of the beloved Sesame Street characters to motivate children 2 to 5 years of age, their parents, and their caregivers to care for children’s oral health…early.

The project objectives include:
- Empowering children to make healthy choices that will have a positive impact on their oral health.
- Educating adults about the benefits of young children’s preventive oral care and recommended strategies to establish a foundation for healthy habits early in life.

Project Components
The bilingual (English and Spanish) Outreach Kit will include:
- An original Sesame Street DVD featuring songs by Elmo and Abby.
- A Guide for Families providing useful information and tools to use with children to reinforce important routines that keep teeth healthy and clean.
- An online Brushing Teeth game engaging children in brushing all their teeth.
- A digital Guide for Providers supporting health practitioners as they create partnerships with families.

The Need
One of the most common health problems affecting young children is dental caries (tooth decay) in their primary teeth\(^1\). Over 40% to 50% of children will be affected by tooth decay before age five\(^2\). Of the 4 million children born each year, more than half will have cavities by the time they reach second grade\(^3\). According to the May 2000 Surgeon General’s report, Oral Health in America, more than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related conditions\(^4\). Tooth decay is highly preventable, so high-quality preventive education is crucial.

Key Messages
Children:
- My teeth are important to me. Keeping my teeth healthy helps to keep my whole body healthy, too!
- I show off my teeth to my mom, dad, and other people like the dentist, dental hygienist, doctor, or nurse who can help take good care of my teeth.
- I brush every tooth every morning and night…to keep my teeth healthy, clean, and bright.
- My teeth like healthy foods like fruit, veggies, low-fat cheese, and water.

Parents:
- Start early. Care for your child’s first teeth.
- Help your child brush his teeth.
- Dental check-ups are important at every age.