

Why the Cookie Monster should never become the Veggie Monster...  
A Classical Argument

“Can you tell me how to get, how to get to Sesame Street?” Hearing the lyrics and the tune seems nostalgic and reminds us of simpler times: our childhood. While Sesame Street may only be intended for three or four year olds, Jim Henson’s ragtag group of puppets has made a mark on America’s pop culture over the years. We see fashion retailers selling t-shirts with the face of Elmo or Cookie Monster upon them and we have chuckled at the various parody videos of Sesame Street characters on YouTube. However, after such a long legacy, can you imagine if our beloved characters were changed? What if your own child was subjected to the image of Veggie Monster instead of Cookie Monster? In light of recent struggle to fight childhood obesity, many have advocated to change the Cookie Monster character to the Veggie Monster in order to encourage more children to eat healthy. I propose, while their intention may be well mannered, Sesame Street, and more specifically Cookie Monster is not the right avenue to express these opinions and the Cookie Monster should remain the Cookie Monster.

While we have only discussed the general popularity of Sesame Street, we have yet to even discuss Cookie Monster, himself. Cookie Monster with his voracious appetite proves to be adorable and often, provides comic relief on the show. Cookie Monster along with his pals Big Bird and Elmo has become one of the most popular icons of the show. Changing Cookie Monster would mean changing the essence and identify of the show itself. Cookie Monster has been a character on the show ever since its premiere in 1969. While Sesame Street passed its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary mark in

2009, it continues to spark and fascinate young children who watch it. In 2001, Sesame Street explored the ramifications of 9/11 through the reactions of the beloved character Elmo. For a show that has discussed many controversial topics and brought educational television programming to popularity, Sesame Street's essential identity should never be changed. Cookie Monster has always eaten cookies and should always eat cookies. A healthy diet is not a new notion but something that has existed for many years. So, why change Cookie Monster now? Let the beloved character continue to inspire and educate children just as successfully as he has in the last few decades.

Many parents and educators argue that Cookie Monster may promote unhealthy eating habits by showing children his voracious appetite for cookies (or pretty much anything edible). However, I believe, this is just a symptom of lazy parenting. Education television programs should be included in a child's early education but should never replace parenting. Parents should be responsible enough to teach their children about the dangers of eating so many cookies. Parents have done well over the years and that shouldn't necessarily change now.

Sesame Street may have encountered different topics or added different characters over the years, but its essential identity should never change. It has grown in popularity because it is very good at what it aims to do- educate and entertain young children. Cookie Monster is a character that is integral to the identity of the show and should never be replaced or altered. Why fix it if it works? Lazy parenting should never be an excuse for changing anything. Rather than pointing the finger at the TV, parents should take responsibility and teach their

children about healthy eating habits. Imagine a Sesame Street scene where Cookie Monster didn't disrupt a scene with another character by eating everything. Impossible.

#### Works Cited

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