



Jones and Abby Cadabby (pink hair) go back to school

'Street' News

With more and more educational shows on TV, an old favorite adds a new character. **BY DENENE MILLNER**

Sesame Street

Premieres
Aug. 14, check
local listings
PBS Kids

Sesame Street's getting a run for its money, what with *Blue's Clues* hugging it out with Joe, and Dora inspiring a generation of sleuths to explore *en español*. So in this

37th season of PBS' cornerstone kids' show, Elmo and friends welcome the first female Muppet to be introduced in more than a decade: Abby Cadabby, a new monster buddy to boost their posse—and ratings—a move surely meant to attract fickle preschoolers who might consider *SS* baby stuff. As the magically mischievous Abby begins her first day at the Storybook School, she gets a little hapless with her wand—she's prone to accidentally “poofing” herself to different locations—and it falls to her teacher, Mother Goose (played by Shirley Jones), and some classic fairy-tale characters to show her the ropes.

And for the parents watching, *SS* delivers plenty of pop culture references and eye candy: There are spoofs of *Law & Order: SVU* and *Survivor*; and Amy Sedaris, John Legend, and Matt Lauer all have their celeb turns. But it's the bread-and-butter sketches—a girl learning basketball from a player in a wheelchair, an art class with kids in Bangladesh—that keep the show on the must-see-TV list for the toddler set, proving that sometimes the best exploring is right there on every kid's favorite block. **A-**



Backstory

+ Jamie Foxx gets up close and personal with Elmo this season, joining an illustrious group of celebs who have mingled with the Muppets—from Maya Angelou and Rubén Blades to Robin Williams and Trisha Yearwood.