



Parent-Child Mother Goose

Spring is in the air and breathes a new life around the world.

Mother geese have already laid their eggs, and are getting ready to welcome their babies. They are sharing and practising stories and rhymes they heard from their parents and grandparents, older sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles ...

We asked Meena Ahuja, an Early Childhood Educator working with infants and their families, about her childhood memories about rhymes and storytelling; how she kept the tradition (and her culture) alive with her children; and whether she uses nursery rhymes and stories at work.

Meena Ahuja:

“I personally enjoyed Hindu mythology stories a lot as a child. Mostly my sister would tell me stories. I liked all kinds but my favourite ones were with Hindu Gods. I loved hearing those even if they were repeated over and over again. In addition, being together with my sister was a wonderful bonding time.

I enjoyed rhymes also but more when in school with friends.

Yes, I did tell my daughter all the stories that I was told growing up.

Also, I use rhymes at work, singing to the children in my care. E.g. “Johny, Johny, yes papa”. The children enjoy them also during snack time when I say, “Open your mouth. Ah, ah, ah!” These rhymes can be incorporated anytime during the day.

Since I studied in English (British English) in India, some of the rhymes we learnt were a little different and new to the children here in Canada. I taught my daughter and she taught and played with her cousins and friends singing along these rhymes. As a result, they learnt and enjoyed them as well.

I believe rhymes and storytelling develop and enhance language development in children.

I remember fantasizing and imagining the stories that were told to me.”




Johny, Johny
 Yes, Papa?
 Eating sugar?
 No, papa!
 Telling lies?
 No, papa!
 Open your
 mouth
 Ah, ah, ah!

Spring is in the air

Inside this issue:

Tell me a story	2-3
Nursery rhymes	4-5
MG across Canada	6
MG across the world	7
News	8

TELL ME A STORY ...

AFRICA

This beautiful Bantu tale from Southern Africa is Catharine Spencer's (Saint-Armand, Quebec), favourite one to tell in her programs.

Thank you, Catherine!

Once upon a time, in Africa, the rains did not fall one year, so the plants and trees did not grow food and all the animals were very hungry.

Now there were four animal friends who remembered there was a magic tree in the forest that could produce magic fruit if its name was said aloud underneath it. So they decided to go to the middle of the forest where the magic tree was. But when they got there, none of them remembered the magic name.

"What are we going to do?" There was a deep silence.

"I know," said lion, "We will go to the sacred mountain and ask the mountain spirit. He'll tell us the name of the magic tree."

"I'll go first," said monkey, "I'm the fastest." And off he ran. When he got there he called out, "Sacred Mountain, speak to me, tell me the name of the magic tree."

Then a great voice called out, "Awongalema!"

"Of course!" said the monkey. He went running back as fast as he could to tell his friends. But monkey wasn't looking where he was going, and he crashed head first into an enormous anthill. The name fell right out of his head! When he got back and didn't remember the name, his friends were very disappointed.

"I'll go next," said buffalo, "I'm the strongest." When he got to the top of the mountain, he called out, "Mountain spirit, speak to me, tell me the name of the magic tree." The great voice called out, "Awongalema!"

"Of course!" said buffalo. And he ran back fast as he could. But oh-oh, he too crashed head first into the enormous anthill, and the name fell right out of his head. Now the animals were very, very sad and hungrier than ever.

"I'll go next," said lion, "I'm the smartest." Off he went. When he got to the top of the mountain, he called out, "Mountain spirit, speak to me, tell me the name of the magic tree." "Awongalema!" said the mountain spirit.

"But of course!" said lion. And he zoomed back as fast as he could. But you know what happened. He was not looking so he too crashed into the enormous anthill and the name fell right out of his head.

Now the animals looked around. Who else could get the name? The only one left was little tortoise. They all laughed at the thought but they had to let him try because all the rest had failed.

Off went tortoise slowly, slowly, slowly. When he finally reached the top of the mountain he called out, "Mountain spirit, speak to me, tell me the name of the magic tree," and the great voice called out, "Awongalema!"

"Awongalema!" said the tortoise to himself. "Of course! Awongalema!" So back to his friends he went, carefully repeating the name on every slow footstep. "Awongalema, Awongalema, Awongalema!" When he got to the anthill, he carefully walked around it. And when he got back to the magic tree, he called out its name, "Awongalema!"

Immediately, the tree burst forth with all kinds of wonderful, magical fruit. The animals had more than enough to eat that season and they never forgot the name of the magic tree again.

Will you



If you enjoyed this story, Parent-Child Mother Goose publishes a re-told version of a similar tale (The Name of the Tree: A Bantu Tale by Celia Barker Lottridge) that is available in book form on our website along with other stories:

<http://nationalpcmgp.ca/resources/shop/>

NURSERY RHYMES CORNER

Sung To: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Little bird, little bird, fly around,
Up to the sky, down to the ground.
Little bird, little bird, flap your wings.
Open your beak and sweetly sing.
Little bird, little bird, fly to your nest.
Now it is time to take a rest.

Here is a frog

Here is a frog
(Make a fist with one hand)
And here is a pond
(Open palm of other hand)
A frog in a pond am I
(Set fist on open palm)
I can jump so far
(Throw fist out sideways)
I can jump so high
(Throw fist upward)
Hippity, hippity, hop.
(Bounce fist in palm 3 times)
I sit on a lily pad high and dry
(Place fist on the back of other hand)
And watch the fishes swimming by
(Wiggle fingers)
Then splash!
(Clap hands once)
How I make the water fly
(Throw hands up and apart)
Hippity, hippity, hop.

Hello spring, Hello spring, Hello spring, We hope you're here to stay
(to the tune of "Goodnight Ladies")

Rain on the green grass
Rain on the tree
Rain on the housetop
But not on me



Here is a nest

Here is a nest for robin
(Cup hands together)
Here is a hive for bee.
(Touch fingertips of one hand to the other)
Here is a hole for rabbit.
(Make a big circle with both arms)
And here is a house for me.
(Touch hands together with arms held above your head)

Mother Goose Across Canada

I have completed my 5th session of the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program and am looking forward to planning and facilitating many, many, more! I am overjoyed to be recognised as the first to receive full licensing in the Brome-Missisquoi area in the province of Quebec. I feel like such a pioneer!

The Community Learning Center in Bedford, Quebec has been able to offer three sessions since October 2017. I have been able to watch the program expand and have had returning families since the first session, as well as new families.

What has surprised me the most is the fact that with their children as there have been mothers; in fact, we sometimes have more fathers at certain classes than mothers. The fathers see this as their special “alone” time to further bond with and enjoy their children while leaving the mom some personal time. We also have grandparents that participate for the same reasons.

It has been a ride down memory lane singing songs and telling rhymes that I have not sung or told in such a long

**Saint-Armand,
Quebec**

Catharine Spencer

time. It was challenging and a little scary at first to memorise new stories to tell in front of a group of people and trying to make them sound interesting enough to keep the attention of the group. I since have gotten over this and now enjoy telling stories that give inspiration to the families. People have actually mentioned that they enjoy story time, which encourages me to tell more.

I enjoy snack time as this gives me a chance to “remove myself” to some degree from the forefront and listen to the group talk among themselves, comparing experiences they are having with their children – they offer each other advice from their own experiences and I also get to put my two cents’ worth in too! It could be talking about food intolerances – following a lactose free, or gluten free diet, to talking about what the best car seat on the market is...it is all great information to be shared!

This program gives parents a chance to remove themselves from their everyday responsibilities, and to relax and enjoy their children and each other’s company while singing and dancing around the room – rhyming, learning finger plays. I will never get tired of seeing a child who starts the program at 6 months old intensely watching everything going on in the class and who becomes developed enough to start participating in the class and copy the hand movements! It is truly amazing.

My favorite song has been, “Silly Willy”; my favorite rhyme for finger play is “Tommy Thumb is Up” and my favorite story is, “The Awongalema Tree”.

*We have just as many
fathers who have
participated ..*

*The fathers see this
as their special “alone”
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NEWS

TD StoryJam Family Storytelling Day on March 24 was part of the 2019 Toronto Storytelling Festival. “Just Enuff” was the motto of the event at the Atrium of the Toronto Reference Library, which hosted storytellers who also work with the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program. Children and families enjoyed stories and rhymes they love, which were told and finger-played by Sarah Abusarar, Ruth Danziger, Lynda Howes, Leeya Solomon and Megan Williams.

Here is the Earth

Here is the Sky

Here are my friends

And here am I.



Enjoyable and easy to remember stories were told about: how to make something from nothing; Eliza-Lou and the china doll; why the shell of a tortoise is cracked and why he stays close to the earth; a generous man who fell out of luck but was ultimately rewarded for being so kind by the animals he had helped; a French settlers’ story about the wise woman who was allowed to pick one wish and combined the wishes of three people at it.

“This story reached my ears and I told it to you. And I hope you will tell it to others”, is how Ruth Danziger finished her story.

I was there, too. I listened. I played. I sang. I enjoyed it.

Ivanka Gotcheva

Parent-Child Mother Goose Program®



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Share your program with the rest of the P-CMGP Family!

Write about your program. It brings joy, strengthens the network and creates new energy when you share your stories across Canada and across the world.

We love to include your stories, rhymes, pictures and news.

Please send submissions to :

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