



Parent-Child Mother Goose



I believe that the first 5 years of a child's life are crucial for the development of the individual. I believe that if you 'missed the first 5 years' it will be hard afterward to help you put your life in order.

Do we know how to bond with our children?

What is bonding?

If you look in the dictionary, you will find the following definition: "Bonding is the establishment of a relationship or link with someone based on shared feelings, interests, or experiences".

Someone can ask, "I love my children very much. Is it not enough? How do you do bonding?"

Here is where Parent-Child Mother Goose Program (PCMGP) comes to help parents and children to bond together - with its focus on the pleasure and power of using rhymes, songs and stories together. It helps parents to take a break from their busy life and spend time with their little ones, seeing the lovely effects of one to one/face to face attention.

PCMGP helps parents nurture their relationships with babies and young children. The accepting and supportive atmosphere builds confidence in all participants and creates a feeling of community and mutual support within the group. Caregivers and young children learn language and gain communication skills. Parents also learn parenting skills.

Parents gain skills and confidence which can enable them to create positive family patterns during their children's crucial early years, and give their children healthy early experiences with language and communication.

Happy BONDING!

Ivanka Gotcheva

The bond between a parent and child is the primary bond, the foundation for the rest of the child's life. The presence or absence of this bond determines much about the child's resiliency and what kind of adult they will grow up to be.

Jane Fonda

In family relationships love is really spelled t-i-m-e, time."

Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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Bonding



NEHIYAWAK

The Creation Story

I learned this story when I took a "Indigenous Canada" course with the University of Alberta.

It is about a Wisacejack, a being that the Nehiyawak have many stories about. He has no gender and often gets into trouble.

Ivanka Gotcheva

A long time ago all the creatures that walked, crawled, slithered and flew lived peacefully together on Turtle Island. The island got that name because North America sits on the back of a giant turtle. All was well and the Creator was happy to see such harmony.

So, the Creator had given powers to take care of the first people and to make sure everyone lived in harmony. But Wisacejak became lazy and the great peace and friendship did not last. The creatures of Turtle Island began to disrespect each other and there was much fighting. The Creator warned Wisacejak that if he did not obey he would take all his power away. The Creator would take away the land, forests, mountains, everything. Still Wisacejak did not believe the Creator's words and the fighting continued.

Then it began to rain. The Creator decided to begin anew, to take everything away and wash the ground clean.

The flooding did not harm the swimming creatures, but the water was rising higher and higher and all other creatures were drowned.

The world entirely filled by water, there were only four survivors: Wisacejack, Beaver, Otter and Muskrat. They sat together on a large tree floating in the middle of the ocean. Wisacejack wept at his stupidity and laziness. He wept at the thought of all those lost lives.

Beaver, Otter and Muskrat looked sadly at him and asked if there was anything that they could do. At these kind words, Wisacejack took courage and began to think of a plan. He knew that if he could get a little bit of the old earth from underneath the water, then he could use what was left of his power to make a little island to live on. Fortunately for him, he was with three incredible swimmers.

He asked Otter if she could dive down to bring up a bit of the old earth from beneath the water. The Otter was a strong swimmer and dived down deep. When she came up, she was gasping for breath and her paws were empty of any dirt.

Next, Wisacejack asked the Beaver if he could dive down and bring up a piece of earth. The Beaver, also, was a great swimmer. He dove down deep and was gone for a long time. He stayed down so long that he came back almost lifeless but still his paws were empty.

Wisacejack had lost all hope.

TELL ME A STORY ...

The two best swimmers with him had nearly died trying to get the old earth and did not succeed. Then a small voice spoke up, "I can get some earth for you, Wisacejack". It was Muskrat. Beaver and Otter broke out into hysterical laughter. "You, Muskrat? How can one so little and so small do what we could not?" But Wisacejack did not laugh. He bent down and picked Muskrat up in his two hands, looked into her little brown eyes and said, "Do you really think that you can do this, Muskrat?". "Watch me", she said. Muskrat dove into the water and stayed down for a long time. When she came up Wisacejack looked in her paws but no earth was to be found. "Muskrat, I can smell earth on your paws, you are very close". Sensing his excitement and hope, Muskrat took a deep breath and dove back into the water. Wisacejack, Beaver and Otter watched the water for signs but there was nothing. A long time passed and Beaver and Otter regretted laughing at Muskrat. Wisacejack stared at the surface of the water and at last he saw some bubbles coming up. It was Muskrat who barely had the strength to make it back to the log. Wisacejack had to reach way down and scoop up little Muskrat's nearly lifeless body. Almost dead, she opened her paws to reveal a tiny piece of the old earth.

Immediately Wisacejack took the earth and blew his power into it, expanding it and creating the island. Some say that the Creator took pity on Wisacejack and his friends and made all things again. Others say, that Wisacejack used the log and some bones to recreate everything again. ♦

NURSERY RHYMES CORNER

Snow is falling

Snow is falling, falling down;
Snow is falling hit the ground.

(Wiggle fingers like snowflakes)

Flurries, flurries (sing slowly)

Snowing, snowing (sing faster)

Blizzard (Sing Loud and very fast)

Snowey Pokey

You put your right mitten in,
You take your right mitten out,
You put your right mitten in
and you shake it all about.
You do the Snowey pokey
and you turn yourself around.
That's what it's all about.

Continue with additional verses:

You put your left mitten in ...

You put your scarf in ...

You put your right boot in ...

You put your left boot in ..

You put your hat in ...

You put your snowself in ...

Etc.

www.everythingpreschool.com

Way up high in the winter sky, Two little snowflakes caught my eye. (Point 2 fingers to sky)

Down to the ground they fell without a sound. (Twist around)

And before very long, It was snowing all around. (Hold arms out)



Bedtime blessing

Bedtime,
Curling up,
Finding a poem or two.
Reading.
Snuggling down,
Sharing the wonder with you.
Listen, ponder,
Feel the release.
Imagine, wonder,
Surrender to peace.
Everything warm and cozy
As you drift towards dreamland.
Wake the next day with grace in your
heart
And hold the world in your hand.

*Julie Andrews
(Julie Andrews' Collection of Poems, Songs
and Lullabies)*

Mother Goose Across the World ...

How do you adapt a Parent-Child Mother Goose program to deliver it to pregnant and parenting young people aged 15 to 21 years who are either expecting a baby or already have an infant with them in class?

This has been the challenge faced by Kathrine Bray, an early parenting practitioner who, for the past 15 months, has been facilitating a weekly two-hour 'Parent Ease program' that combines elements of Parent-Child Mother Goose and early parenting education as part of an innovative Young Parent Education Program (YPEP) running at Learning Hubs now operating at two locations in Melbourne's outer southeast.

Participants in YPEP are all young parents or parents-to-be who want to complete their secondary education. They attend classes at their Learning Hub three days a week with their babies and study the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning and a Certificate 2 Vocation Education and Training qualification at the same time.

Facing more pressures than parenthood and a workload

As Kathrine has learned, the challenges these determined young parents and parents-to-be are facing typically go well beyond juggling parenthood and a student workload.

"The young parents in our classroom are often going through major life issues," Kathrine says. "They may be experiencing a relationship breakdown or extended family issues. They may be dealing with the Department of Human Services. They may

Melbourne

Australia

Peter Dann



have housing difficulties, or be coping with Family Court proceedings in the middle of their studies. On top of that, they have to deal with feeling that others are looking at them and judging them. They're under a lot of stress. At the same time, they all want to do more with their lives, both for themselves, and for their children's sake."

Outside comfort zone

Kathrine says introducing these young women to the Parent-Child Mother Goose program from scratch has been quite challenging, as most have not had songs or rhymes sung to them as a child. An experience of nurturing warmth frequently puts them outside their comfort zone.

"We run a two hour session at each Learning Hub and I always have a session plan, though I sometimes have to throw it out the window," Kathrine says.

"We'll often start with a craft activity that I'll link with infant brain development or the bond between parent and child. We might make toys from recycled materials or we might create a plate or mug using a child's

footprint. While we're doing that, I'll talk about the importance of touch, or if we're making something for a grandparent, I'll talk about the importance of relationships."

"We talk about the importance of nurturing ourselves, too. We do mindfulness activities like colouring in, which can be a great activity for the young parents to do with a small child later on, too. We prepare healthy finger food together and talk about nutrition. I might show the young parents how to make custard out of the formula their baby hasn't drunk. This isn't typical Parent-Child Mother Goose, of course, but through these activities the young parents start developing a sense of familiarity with us while also absorbing useful insights into parenting."

How Kathrine and her co-facilitator introduce singing depends on the group. Both of Kathrine's groups in 2019 include young parents who attended last year's program while expecting a child but who have now had their babies. Even before the 2019 program began, some of these were already asking on their closed Facebook group when Mother Goose would be resuming.



... Mother Goose Across the World

"If you walked into the latter part of one of my sessions last year," Kathrine says, "you might think you'd joined an ordinary Mother Goose session. The young parents will be sitting in a circle with their babies — or in the cases of parents-to-be, perhaps with life-sized dolls — and they'll be singing songs and doing interactive rhymes. We probably won't have a folk tale, but we might make up an interactive story based on 'Three cheeky monkeys jumping on the bed' or 'The wheels on the bus' song. We'll model infant massage as we go or model how to move the children's legs as wheels. I might also mention the benefits of doing this with a child who has wind pain."

'Ripple effect' when parents start noticing their baby respond

Kathrine says that once the young parents become familiar with songs and rhymes, there's often a 'ripple effect' as they start to notice that their babies respond, for example by ceasing to cry or fuss when they hear their mother (or father) singing a familiar song.

When starting an entirely new group where no-one has any prior experience of Parent-Child Mother Goose, Kathrine introduces songs whenever suitable occasions arise during craft or food preparation activities. As well, her co-facilitator might sing to babies on the floor while Kathrine is working with their parents elsewhere in the room on some activity.

"I believe it really is Mother Goose we're delivering," Kathrine says. "We're delivering it in a very flexible way though, to help us connect with these very vulnerable young parents."

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Peter Dann

As an example of the kinds of sensitive issues that can arise for participants in a program like this, Kathrine recalls an instance when a young mother-to-be was tracing her fingers across the face of a doll while speaking the words of *The moon is round*, and this was enough to trigger a strong adverse trauma reaction.

"These young people may have had a background of physical or sexual abuse that is always in the back of their mind when they're parenting," Kathrine says. "They may have had a stressful birth experience. Their own mum may not be around to show them how to do something. No matter how 'well' we deliver our program, my co-facilitator and I rarely come away from a session on the kind of 'high' I've often experienced working in other Parent-Child Mother Goose programs. To do this kind of work, you need strong self-care skills yourself, and you certainly need the ability to see positives in the small things — a little eye contact here, a smile there."

Recording detailed observations

After each session, Kathrine and her co-facilitator spend time together comparing their observations, which Kathrine writes up in detail weekly. These, in turn, form the basis of reports Kathrine submits to those co-ordinating the YPEP, together with before and after survey results which Kathrine gathers from participants.

Kathrine has been told her observations, in particular, have been very valuable, and these are likely to be one element among others feeding into a formal evaluation of YPEP to be conducted later this year by Monash University.

In the meantime, what is Kathrine's own sense of the value of her weekly two-hour sessions with these young parents and parents-to-be?

Kathrine says she believes that through Parent Ease she's helping to make a difference in the lives of these young people, but acknowledges the evidence is often subtle.

"We had a young mother-to-be in our program last year who re-joined us this year after having had her baby. When she came back, I asked her what songs she was singing to her baby. It turned out her favourite was *The ants go marching one by one*, which I probably wasn't expecting. It was clearly empowering for this young woman, though, when we took up this song as a group and began singing it together for her and her baby and for all of us. These young people so often feel unworthy and insignificant. Any way we can empower them and let them know they're doing a great job has to be worthwhile." ♦



The future of PCMGP

Since the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program's earliest beginnings in church basements in Toronto in the 1980's, the program has spread far and wide. It has touched hearts and changed lives from Newfoundland to British Columbia and far into Canada's North. It has been enthusiastically adopted in Australia. Programs have been established in the USA, China and Iran. There are programs conducted in sign language, programs specifically for grandparents, and programs held in libraries, parks, community agencies, even elder care facilities.

What makes this growth so remarkable is that it happened with very little money, without advertising or promotion or advocacy campaigns. Word of a wonderful program for babies and their families spread from one person to another, and PCMGP took root in new places and in new ways.

Now, the directors of the National Council want to engage you, as members, in a discussion about the future of Parent-Child Mother Goose. We want to make sure that we have a sound foundation and a stable structure that can support continued growth for years to come.

We began the process of looking at our governance structures more than a year ago, by asking five former key leaders in the PCMGP to review the program and make recommendations for changes that would help to ensure a strong future. That group included:

* Celia Lottridge of Toronto -- one of PCMGP's original developers and teachers, and the Executive Director for many years;

PCMGP National Council

Marilee Peters, Chair

* Glenna Janzen of St. Catherines -- a teacher, trainer and former Executive Director of the Vermont Square and the National Program;

* Dana Brynelsen of BC -- the first chair of the National Council and a long time supporter;

* Dianne Blewett of Winnipeg -- a former chair of the National Council and supporter; and

* Joan Turner of Whitehorse, Yukon -- a former member of the National Council and a program developer and supporter.

I'm pleased to report that after much work and many meetings, this group has responded with a comprehensive set of 14 recommendations that map out a future path for Parent-Child Mother Goose.

The recommendations cover three areas:

* Structural arrangements and responsibilities;

* Program integrity including teacher training, reporting and the development of a program manual; and

* Communication amongst programs, teachers, program offices and with participants.

Here are some of the key recommendations:

* Establish Teacher Training Workshop delivery and local, regional and national roles in organizing workshops

* Support the growth of regional offices for the PCMGP

* Set standards for the PCMGP to include program delivery and teacher training.

* Promote communication between PCMGP Teacher-Training workshop facilitators.

You can find all the recommendations on the National Parent-Child Mother Goose Program website

http://nationalpcmgp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Recommendations_NationalCouncil.pdf

Please take a few minutes to review the recommendations, and let us know what you think -- will implementing all or some of these recommendations, in your view, strengthen PCMGP? Do you have expertise or skills that could help us as we embark on the work of putting these recommendations into practice? What experiences are you having in your region and do you think these recommendations will encourage the growth of new programs and the support of ongoing programs and teachers?

We want to hear your feedback. You can send your comments to info@nationalpcmgp.ca.

Please use the subject line "Comments on PCMGP Recommendations". We'll review all the comments we receive and report back to you in the next issue of this newsletter.

As leaders and organizers of programs across the country, you are the very heart of the PCMGP. We commend you in your work and want to support you in it. ♦

REFLECTIONS

"Nice to learn new rhymes"

"I use these songs while changing her diaper and before bed/naps. They seem to soothe her and she follows along."

"I definitely noticed recognition for my son. He recognized the songs and rhymes and got excited."

"Yes this program met my expectations. I think it's essential for development and socializing at a young age."

"The songs were excellent for my daughter's age and interest. I sing them to her during diaper changes and in the car, both times when she is typically fussy. They're the only thing that calms her."

"The program consistently exceeds my expectations. Not only is it good for my daughter to learn and socialize, it's so helpful to meet other moms! It really is good for my emotional well-being."

"Great program! Have seen an improvement in my child's listening and attention."

"Exceeded my expectations!"

"Very helpful program. Learned a lot of new songs and helpful tricks."

"So practical and helpful!! My baby learned to clap and copy actions to Roly Poly and to sing more."

"Thank you ladies. It was great!! Will highly recommend."

"Please offer more classes"

"Amazing!"

"Thank you, thank you!! Loved the program. So practical. I use the songs all the time – especially when she is fussy. Keeps her happy in the car. I am recommending this to everyone I know."

Parent-Child Mother Goose Program®



November 2019



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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For inquiries relating to Member- ships, Certification Process and National

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