



Parent-Child Mother Goose

Dealing with Isolation Means Focusing on Staying in Touch

Have you noticed? The days are getting shorter, the air is getting cooler. Winter is around the corner – the season of storytelling in many traditional cultures and societies the world over. Telling stories and singing songs to while away the long dark evenings made sense, since during the spring and summer months everyone was too busy growing, gathering and hunting food to take time out for storytelling.

With many agencies still closed and face-to-face programs impossible in most locations across the country, sharing rhymes, songs and stories in a Parent-Child Mother Goose program this winter is going to continue to be challenging. But as lots of program teachers are discovering, “challenging” doesn’t mean “impossible”. In this issue, you can read about the experience of program teachers in the Yukon delivering a hybrid in person and online PCMG.

For more ideas, inspiration, and advice, check out our Parent-Child Mother Goose blog, where teachers from around the country have been sharing their innovative techniques for keeping in touch with parents and maintaining program momentum. Do you have a creative solution for delivering culturally sensitive programming to families? Send us a note and we’ll post about it on our blog so that teachers around the country can learn and benefit.

Some of the techniques that are being used include:

- * Running a virtual Parent-Child Mother Goose program using a video conferencing platform (like Zoom, Teams or Skype).
- * Phoning or facetimeing with families to check in with them
- * Developing pre-recorded programs for delivery by email or posting on Facebook
- * Sending rhymes, songs and a story by mail each week to families who may not have internet access

Diversity and Inclusion

The National Council is interested to hear your thoughts about promoting diversity and inclusion in Parent-Child Mother Goose programs. Do you have a process for evaluating the songs, rhymes and stories that you frequently use in your program? Have you heard from parents in your programs about the use of culturally sensitive stories and rhymes?

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The Anxious Leaf

The leaves are changing, the air is cooler and school is well on its way. Fall.... the beauty of it, the close of the warm sun replaced by the cool breeze.

This little story, written by Henry Ward Beecher over a century ago, teaches us about the changing of seasons, and how even with change, especially since we are all dealing with the pandemic Covid, that life does go on.

April Jennings



Once upon a time a little leaf was scared, as leaves often are when a gentle wind blows through their branches. The twig asked, “What is the matter, little leaf?” And the leaf said, “The wind just told me that one day it would pull me off and throw me down to the ground.”

The twig told it to the branch on which I grew, and the branch told it to the tree. And when the tree heard it, it rustled all over and sent back word to the leaf, “Do not be afraid. Hold on tightly, and you shall not go until you are ready.”

As so the leaf stopped worrying but went on nestling and singing. Every time the tree shook itself and stirred up all its leaves, the branches shook themselves, and the little twig shook itself, and the little leaf danced up and down merrily, as if nothing could ever pull it off. And so, it grew all summer long.

And when the bright days of autumn came the little leaf saw all the leaves around becoming very beautiful. Some were yellow and some scarlet, and some striped with both colors. Then it asked the tree what it meant. And the tree said, “All these leaves are getting ready to fly away, and they have put on these beautiful colors to bring joy to others.”

Then the little leaf saw that it was created for a purpose and there was no reason for it to be scared. The little leaf wanted to bring joy to others too. For it knew for a season it was to be fed by the tree and let the branches protect it. But as time went on the little leaf would need to let go and share the beauty and joy with others. Just then a little puff of wind came, and the leaf let go, without even thinking of it, and the wind took it up and it blew in the wind to share what it had learned with others. ♦



NURSERY RHYMES CORNER

Here comes the fall
with the leaves changing color
Here comes the fall
with the climate getting cooler
Here comes the fall
with the leaves falling down
Here comes the fall
with the wind blowing loud.

(Source: Have Fun Teaching)

Make motions to show the leaves falling down, getting cold, wind blowing etc.

Pat your head
And rub your tummy
Tickle your toes
And hug your mummy

(This rhyme can be done by a child patting his own head or by a mother patting her child's head and so forth. Just be sure to end with a hug)

("Zoom, Zoom, Zoom and Other Rhymes To Play With Your Child". You can buy this and other books with rhymes and stories here: <http://nationalpcmgp.ca/resources/shop/>. With your purchase you will support Mother Goose Program)

**Star light, star bright, The first star I see tonight;
I wish I may, I wish I might, Have the wish I wish tonight.**



This little girl found an egg

Wiggle child's little finger

This little girl cooked it

Now the ring finger

This little girl peel it

The middle finger

This little girl salted it

The pointer

And this little girl

ran all the way home

Wiggle the thumb, then ran your fingers

up the child's arm

And ate it.

End with a tickle under the arm.

These are Lisa's fingers

Touch the baby's fingers

These are Lisa's toes

Touch her toes

This is Lisa's bellybutton

Round and round it goes

Run your fingers around her bellybutton

("The moon is round and Other Rhymes To Play With Your Baby". You can buy this and other books with rhymes and stories here: <http://nationalpcmgp.ca/resources/shop/>. With your purchase you will support Mother Goose Program)

Mother Goose Across Canada ...

A baby crawls across the studio floor, eager to touch another little one about two metres away. Her mother grabs her by the seat of her pants, and for about the 8th time that morning, pulls her back into her lap. No sooner than the mom lets go, the baby is off again, trying to touch another baby. They coo and smile at each other and reach for one another with their arms. We all smile and laugh and revel in the joy of witnessing their connection.

We are in the first live Parent-Child Mother Goose gathering since the Covid-19 pandemic erupted in March. While there have only been 15 cases in the Yukon, like the rest of Canada, everything has shut down. This fall, we're seeing the return of many programs in Whitehorse, like Parent-Child Mother Goose, in their new, Covid-safe, incarnations. This means parents have been asked screening questions, had their temperatures taken at the door, sanitized their hands, and donned face masks provided specifically for this group.

The floor of the giant dance studio we have rented is marked with tape to indicate where



Parent-Child Mother Goose program in the era of Covid-19

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parents should sit, and the space has an empty, echoey feel to it. It's difficult to recognize each other as our faces are mostly covered by a face mask, and parents are quieter and shyer than in our previous groups. It seems we are all adjusting to this new "normal" way of gathering, and it's a bumpy transition.

A snack break part way through the class gives us a moment to remove our masks and share a smile. It occurs to me that just the ability to see each other's facial expressions is a key part of building rapport and community. Before starting our groups, we thought about how important it is to be able to see each other's faces. We know that a big part of communication is visual, that babies need to see our mouths to catch visual cues and emotions, and that

it helps for speech and language development. For these reasons, we bought special, clear face masks, designed for use with people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

But in our experience, these masks were thick and heavy, difficult to sing in and muffled our voices; they fogged up, moisture built up, and some people were having difficulty breathing with them on. We left it to each parent to decide which mask was best for them: the clear one we provided, a disposable one, or one of their own.

Now we've had more sessions, and the process is becoming smoother. Our restrictions are likely to ease in the next few weeks, meaning that we can remove our masks and no longer take parent's temperatures at the door. Just those two changes will make a world of difference. Imagine, welcoming parents at the door with a warm smile, rather than a

... Mother Goose Across Canada

mask and a laser thermometer.

We will keep the protocols around maintaining 6 feet apart and asking that we sanitize, sanitize, sanitize! Food will remain in separately sealed, individual packets as well, and we will all stay in our bubbles, even if we are singing circle, dancing or active songs.

At the heart of it, a lot of the essential elements of Parent-Child Mother Goose have remained the same despite gathering during a pandemic: parents are given an opportunity to get out of their house with their little ones and connect with each other; babies get to see each other live, not over a screen; we can all experience the power and joy of



singing together as one; there is sharing of songs, stories and rhymes as a positive parenting tool; and parents are bonding with their little ones.

Ultimately, these benefits make all the inconveniences worthwhile and deepen our appreciation for the little things. A smile. A hello. Sharing space and uniting our voices. The ancient act of sitting together, in a circle, on the floor, with no devices, no tools, no props, no toys, has never been more radical. ♦



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Let us know what parents have told you about songs, rhymes, and stories they like – or don't like – and why. Are there songs or rhymes that have been helpful in developing connections between parents? To share your perspective or thoughts on this issue, please reach out to us at info@nationalpcmgp.ca.

Storytelling Resources

Looking for a great story to use in your next program? If you haven't visited the [Resources](#) section of the national website recently, it is time to take another look! You can order these story resources from our online shop:

Ten Small Tales: easy-to-tell stories for children and adults

You Can Tell a Story: a guide to finding, learning and telling stories.

I Bring You a Story: a collection of tales from program participants from around the world.

Also check out the [Storytelling Tips for Program Facilitators](#) suggested by the Australian Parent-Child Mother Goose program for advice to reinvigorate your storytelling!

We hope that we will all be able to go back to face-to-face programming, with appropriate safety precautions, in the coming year. Until then, stay safe, stay well, and keep rhyming, singing and storytelling using whatever works best for you and your community!

Marilee Peters

Parent-Child Mother Goose Program® Programme la Mere l'Oie pour parents et enfants



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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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