

## **Moving with Mother Goose**

### **Do you remember a nursery rhyme from your childhood? What memories does it instill?**

Mother Goose, often learned in the kitchen or on the front porch from Grandma & Grandpa was once a rich part of children's lives. It is seemingly being replaced by distance & technology. Many adults have not learned nursery rhymes and thus they are not being passed on to our children. It seems somehow an entire generation has missed out on this important component of Americana.

Nursery rhymes impact language development, emergent literacy and nurture social skills & emotional well-being. Combining movement with nursery rhymes provides a unique perspective & affects all developmental domains..

Carol Biddiss tells us, "The child who knows a lot of nursery rhymes gains social benefits. These lucky children can sing-along, or listen intently if pre-verbal, with grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and friends or even with perfect strangers they meet, say, in child care or preschool settings. ...a child who is quite upset cheers up considerably at group time when familiar songs are sung together. They suddenly feel as though they belong."

### ***Based on the work of Anne Green Gilbert of Creator of 'Braindance'***

"...a series of exercises based on eight developmental movement patterns that healthy humans naturally move through in the first year of life. Research has shown these patterns are crucial to the wiring of our central nervous system. As babies we did these movements on the floor...these patterns at any age, have been found to be beneficial in reorganizing our central nervous system...repeating patterns may help fill in any missing gaps in our neurological development or not enough tummy time as a baby...it is a centering body/brain exercise for brain organization, oxygenation, and recuperation." *Anne Gilbert*

#### The patterns impact

- Breath-All movements & rhythms are based on breath.
- Tactile-Variety of touch leads to bonding, sensory integration, proprioception & appropriate behavior.
- Core-distal-Reaching out connects us to world beyond selves. Curling back returns us to our own self.
- Head-tail-Propels us through space, creates open path for central nervous system to function.
- Upper-lower-Grounding reach into space, relate to people, emotional stability, reach goals & set boundaries.
- Body-Side-Left & right brain hemispheres are strengthened. Develop horizontal eye tracking for READING
- Cross-lateral-Connects both sides of the brain, for higher thinking. Vertical eye tracking for READING.
- Vestibular-Moving off balance develops vestibular system. Strengthens eye tracking, hearing proprioception, balance & coordination. Every movement stimulates the brain.

*Source: 'BrainDance' DVD*

## Benefits of Nursery Rhymes

- Impact emergent literacy through language development and phonemic awareness.
- Kinesthesia and language play, specifically rhyming are important components in connecting literacy to learning...learn best when movement is involved. *Jensen*
- Fun, engaging oral activities facilitates language acquisition, increases phonological awareness & improves phonemic awareness through rhyme recognition. *Widdowson*
- Rhyme is particularly beneficial for struggling and reluctant readers. *Beers*
- Nurture social skills and emotional well-being.
- Most natural introduction to poetry. *R.Luken*
- When combined with movement give children a multi dimensional sensory experience.
- Provide a link between home and school that fosters a feeling of security. *J. Glazer*
- Perpetuate our literary heritage, linking generations together. *Mary E. Shorey*
- Exposure by age 3 more likely to have higher level of phonemic awareness when enter Kindergarten.
- One indicator of how well children read is their ability to recite when walk in the kindergarten. *Cunningham et al*
- Encourage children to enjoy participating in music-making through various activities of listening, predicting, singing and moving to music. *Biddiss*
- Singing helps form social bonds...singing together releases oxytocin, known to be involved in establishing bonds of trust between people. *Levitin*
- Pass on common knowledge i.e. counting, alphabet, days of week.
- Rhyming, rhythm and song aid memory, beat attracting attention. Poetic imagery is powerful pathway to storing memory. Melody & harmony attract the brain to listen because they give enjoyment. *Biddiss*
- Possibility that types of song helped to shape us throughout tens of thousands of years. *Levitin*