Grandfather Moose

A Mixed Bouquet

rhymes, games, and chants in sign language

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**Mother Goose and Grandfather Moose**

Mother Goose rhymes have delighted children for centuries. Their appeal has been linked to several common features (3). First of all, children can actively participate in the rhyme by chanting the verses, which are short and easily memorized. Children may also perform the actions to accompany the rhyme as in the action chants "London Bridge" and "Pat-A-Cake".

Mother Goose rhymes also have a good narrative quality. They tell a good story with a quick rise in action, a climax, and a conclusion. This is quite evident in a rhyme like "Little Jack Horner".

The characters of Mother Goose have great appeal to children. Kings, queens, animals, or children are often the central figure of a rhyme.

The content of the rhymes also often reflects the interests and concerns of children. There are rhymes about everyday experiences like losing mittens as in "The Three Little Kittens" or falling down as in "Jack and Jill".

The varied humor embodied in the rhymes is very appealing to children. They thoroughly enjoy the ridiculous situations portrayed, as in "Rub-A-Dub-Dub", or the utter nonsense of "The Cat and Fiddle". The cruelty or misfortune of others expressed in rhymes such as "The Old Woman in the Shoe" also has a humorous appeal to children.

Perhaps the most appealing facet of Mother Goose rhymes is their varied language patterns, rhythm, and rhyme.

Hearing children simply love the sound of similar words reverberating through the verses. Games that have rhyming verse to accompany the action, such as "Red Rover" and One Potato, Two Potato", are also very popular with children.

For hearing-impaired children the rhythmical, rhyming facets are often lost, particularly when verses are learned primarily through sign language. Similarity between signs is based on the visual elements of the signs themselves and not on the spoken words for the signs (2,4). Although "down" and "crown" (in "Jack and Jill") sound a great deal alike, the signs for the words are nothing alike.

Deaf poets utilize the visual similarity of signs to create their own rhyme in either of original poetry or translations of oral poetry. Other elements such as the choice of signs to create a smooth flow of movement in the transition from one sign to the next, the systematic movement of signs up or down the body, and poetic distortions to create new meanings or facilitate the transitional flow of movement between signs are also employed (4).

Thus, the poetic devices of signed and spoken languages don't necessarily mesh and word-for-word translation of Mother Goose does not provide the hearing-impaired child with the same rhythm and rhyme that the spoken version does for the hearing child. For this reason, Grandfather Moose rhymes were created. These rhymes were written with the visual poetic devices of sign of mind. Primarily, limited sets of very similar handshapes are utilized throughout the verses and special attention is often paid to the transitional flow movement from one sign to the next.
Occasionally, slight distortions are made in signs to "fit the rhyme" (see the sign HOUSE in the game "Black Mouse") or to create "new" meaning from "old" signs (see the sign CHOMP, derived from BITE, in the game "Lion Chomp"). Merely using visual poetic devices will not give a rhyme, game, or chant child-appeal, however. Grandfather Moose rhymes have also been written to follow in the Mother Goose tradition of being short and easy to memorize, to allow for child participation and to tell a good story with content, characters, and humor that are appealing to children. The games are variations of street games children play that maintain the game action and rules for the most part and add verses that rhyme in signs. The action chants also utilize sign rhyme verse and allow for children and adults to become physically involved by performing the actions described in the chant. Use these rhymes, games, and chants as you would a Mother Goose rhyme, game, or chant (see 3 for some ideas) and create your own (see 1, 5 and 6 for rhymes, games, and chants that can be adapted to sign).


rhymes
"BIG BLUE SHARK"

BIG
BLUE
SHARK
NEAR
MY
BOAT
SWIM
AWAY
SWIM
AWAY
SWIM
AWAY
NOW
“SAMMY, SONNY, AND SULLY

SAMMY
BREAKS
HIS
BICYCLE

SONNY
BREAKS
HIS
SHOE

SULLY
BREAKS
HIS
DRUM

ALL
BECOME
SAD
"ANIMALS NEAR MY HOUSE"

MONKEY

BEAR

TIGER

LION

DON'T

WALK

NEAR

MY

HOUSE
games
"WOLF, WOLF"

This game is a variation of a game Spanish-speaking children play called "Senor Lobo". In this game the wolf is in his house eating cake. The children come by and ask the wolf "Wolf, Wolf, How many cakes?". They know that a wolf with cakes to eat is content, but one who has none will chase them. The wolf tells the children how many cakes he has (e.g. 3), and to wait. The children keep asking until the wolf says "none". Then the chase begins. If the wolf catches a child before the child reaches a "safe base" (e.g., a marked off area, a tree, anything made of metal, anything the color blue...) that child goes to the wolf's jail. The last child not caught can become the wolf or pick someone to be the wolf. During the game the wolf can allow his prisoners to help him catch children if he likes.
This is a simple chase game. The bees are in their hive (the "safe base"). They leave and fly to mother who says "Bad bee, don't bother my baby." Mother then chases the bees back to the hive. Any bee tagged or swatted before reaching the hive is out of the game. The last bee not tagged can become the mother or choose who will be mother. Other variations of this game allow mother to say "Bad bee, shoo away", "Bad bee, fly away", "Bad bee, don't enter my house", "Bread and sugar will be my breakfast. Bad bee, don't enter my house", "Bad bee, please don't enter my house", "Bad bee, please don't bother my breakfast", or "Don't enter here, bad bee."

A more advanced version of this game has the bees fly to mother and say "Open your window, please" and mother answers, "Unuh, bad bee, don't enter my house." Then the chase begins. (UNUH would be signed with 5-hands, palm out, shaking accompanied by a negative handshake.)
"BLACK MOUSE"

WHERE

IS

BLACK

MOUSE

BLACK

MOUSE

COME

to

THIS

HOUSE

BLACK MOUSE

This game is a variation of "Red Rover". Two teams are chosen. Each team forms a line and faces the other team. One team asks "Where is Black Mouse?". The other team chooses one of its members to be Black Mouse, the first team then chants "Black Mouse, Black Mouse, Come to this house," and joins hands. Black Mouse then runs and tries to get through the other team's line. If he is successful, he takes a player back to his team. If he can't get through, he stays on the other team. The first team to have all the players but one is the winner.
LION CHOMP

This is a simple chase game. One player is the lion. The others are standing on a line near the lion. The lion chants "1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Lion Chomp," and the chase begins. The children can run to a "safe base" to get away from the lion. Any children caught go to the lion's jail. This is done repeatedly until only one child is not caught. That child can become the lion or choose someone to become the lion.
"YELLOW POTATO, GREEN POTATO"

YELLOW

POTATO

GREEN

POTATO

PURPLE

POTATO

BLUE

SLAP

YELLOW POTATO, GREEN POTATO

This game is a variation of "One potato, two potato". The players form a circle and one person is "it". All players put in both fists, palms down. "It" signs YELLOW, then uses the bent V hand from the sign POTATO to tap the top of the first palm-down fist. The other colors follow with "it" then tapping the next fist in the circle, after signing the color, with the bent V forming the sign POTATO. When BLUE is signed, "it" slaps the fist that is in line and that fist goes out behind the players back. When a player has both fists slapped he is out. The last player with a fist still in is the winner.
chants
"TIGER TICKLE"

ONE  TWO  THREE  FOUR  FIVE

TIGER  TICKLE

TIGER TICKLE

In this action chant one player says "1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Tiger Tickle", and then goes to tickle the other player(s). It is very good for family members to play with young children. As the signer counts and gets to TIGER, the anticipation builds and the child can't wait for the accompanying sign and action, tickle.
"1, 2, JUMP"

In this action chant, the players follow the directions of the leader to jump, fall, and stand up. This is a good activity for physically involving children in language. Children also like to be the leader and change the order of the commands.
"ALLIGATOR MARCH"

A

B

ALLIGATOR

MARCH

ALLIGATOR MARCH

This action chant is very useful for getting children from one place to another in an organized fashion. The children line up and say "A, B Alligator march", and then repeat "Alligator march" as they march off to their destination.
"3, 2, 1 GO"

To start any race or activity this is a good action chant. The countdown to "one" and the rhyming of "go" and "one" make this an excellent verse for initiating simultaneous movement or action by two or more children.