



A Flip Chart of Finger Plays Reflecting Froebelian Principles

INTRODUCTION

This assignment focuses on the relevance of using familiar traditional songs and rhymes to early years children. Those illustrated were chosen as they promote Froebelian principles and have meaningful significance to the children attending the kindergarten setting. It explores the rationale behind the teaching of finger rhymes and songs to young children and how the teaching of a rhyme and actions may lead to further learning experiences aligning with children's current understanding and interests.

RATIONALE

Fingerplays and action songs that adults use with children have their origins in Froebel's 'Mother Songs'. Froebel devised a series of finger rhymes, action songs and games for mothers and other family members to share with babies and young children at home. Froebel argued that these were not just trivial amusements to occupy babies but provided key learning experiences.

Fingerplays support literacy, mathematical concepts, embed finger dexterity and spatial awareness. They also support vocabulary and rhythm acquisition. Circle time at the setting provides a daily opportunity for building connections, introducing ideas, and encouraging curiosity to explore interests and build on skills.

Children who encounter repetition of familiar stories, songs and rhymes can soon identify and use rhyming patterns which is an important aid to reading prediction.

IMPLEMENTATION

Three Fingerplays were written on a flip chart and included illustrations of finger movements. Each finger play also includes photographs at the base attached by Velcro so children can take off and look at these up close and provoke further interest and curiosity. The conversations at the group time, have the possibility to help children to build physical knowledge, aesthetic knowledge and scientific knowledge.

Two of the flip chart finger plays allow children to manipulate the illustrated characters. The spider could be pulled up and down the spout by a piece of string, the sun and rain cloud could be flipped over the flipchart, and the bees can fly out of the hive and be attached to the flowers of the child's choice.

A New Zealand variation of the traditional 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' fingerplay was introduced using Māori terminology as a way of acknowledging our dual heritage and promotes an acceptance to 'play with words' and introduce variety from the traditional rhymes.

EVALUATION / SUSTAINABILITY

The staff reflected that the fingerplays are best shared with a small group to allow children to each take a turn at manipulating the characters on the flip chart.

We initially anticipated illustrating around 10 rhymes and songs within the assigned timeframe. However, there is the commitment to include more to the three completed and to continue to reflect on the wholeness of children's learning in the songs and rhymes we include.

It is recognised that there is a need and commitment to introduce the value of finger plays in formal and informal communications with parents and visitors to the centre and to stress the significance Froebel had in informing current theories reflected throughout Te Whāriki.

CONCLUSION

A Froebelian approach is not static but is continually evolving as ideas are reflected on and adapted for changing times and uncertain futures. Tovey, (2019). Considerable thought was put into the illustrative finger play flip chart poems and songs for use with the children at the setting.

The intention was to reflect on Froebel's original illustrated Mother Songs in 1884, which he developed along with illustrations that reflected the historical context in which he lived at the time and replicate a 2021 version by creating a flip chart illustrating contemporary, well-known rhymes and songs using a variety of symbols for children to interpret meaning. The completed flip chart fingerplays are proving popular with the children. The illustrations are providing provocations for further play and learning opportunities.

REFERENCES

Bruce, T., (2012) *Early Childhood Practice Froebel Today*. London: Sage | Dyke, J., Tovey, H. (2019) *Songs, Rhymes and Finger Plays*. Froebel Trust. | Ministry of Education (2017) *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa – Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington: Ministry of Education | Tovey, H. (2019) *Froebel's Principles and Practice Today*. Froebel Trust. | Whitehead, M. (2009) *Supporting Language and Literacy Development in the Early Years*: Berkshire: Open University Press

